

Florida/Caribbean ARCHITECT

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SHIFTING PARADIGMS:

Community, Technology and Climate

2025 Convention & Trade Show

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Architects of the Featured Projects

Jason Jensen, AIA, is the president and CEO of WJArchitects, an interdisciplinary architecture firm with five offices throughout Florida. He is a frequent guest lecturer for several universities and civic associations, and he also advocates for design and urban planning initiatives.



Dawn Gunter, AIA, is principal and managing director of Gensler's Miami office where she focuses on understanding the essence of her clients' goals and delivering projects that exceed their expectations and has been key to establishing the firm's presence in Florida. With more than 35 years of experience, she combines Gensler's research and point of view with the client's desire to bring the highest level of design and industry knowledge to the project team.



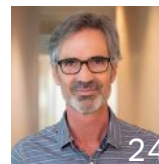
Kristopher Stuart, AIA, is a global office developers leader and build to suit and headquarters leader for Gensler's South Central region, with expertise in the design of high-performing office buildings and mixed-use developments. His successful collaborations with developers showcase his acute understanding of how to attract premiere tenants and maximize return on investment.



Jonathan Parks, FAIA, connects people with place. He champions community identity through architecture, urbanism, interior design and preservation while fostering a more resilient, carbon-free future. As founder and principal of Florida-based SOLSTICE Planning and Architecture, his projects are recognized among the most sustainable in the nation, and the firm received National AIA Honors in Urban Design in 2024. Beyond new construction, Jonathan has specialized in restoring mid-century modern projects by Paul Rudolph. Originally from Amherst, New York, Jonathan earned his graduate degree in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania.



Jerry Sparkman, AIA, a founding principal of Sweet Sparkman Architecture & Interiors, has been crafting resilient, thoughtful designs since the firm's inception in 2002. His work reflects a deep understanding of the coastal environment, emphasizing the integration of local culture, history and long-term community growth. Jerry's design philosophy of "respect the land and the people, and the rest will follow" is exemplified in projects where he has merged innovative design with environmental stewardship to create vibrant public spaces. His portfolio spans high-end residential projects, public parks, higher education facilities and community spaces, all shaped by active listening and a meticulous approach to financial, physical, social and environmental factors. With a belief that nature provides unlimited inspiration, Jerry continues to create spaces that harmonize with their surroundings while meeting the needs of diverse communities.



Architects design the spaces where we spend our lives, whether it is at work, home or recreation. Living in Florida, we are under the constant threat of hurricanes and other impacts of weather. Architects design to mitigate risk and help communities get back to their homes and businesses as quickly as possible after a natural disaster. This issue features projects that incorporate resilient design solutions.



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Photo by Ryan Gamma.

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BUILDING SMART IN FLORIDA

*The Right Structural Choice
for Florida's Climate and
Building Codes*



Florida's unique climate and stringent building regulations demand careful material selection. Whether designing single-family homes or multifamily developments, architects must consider hurricane resistance, humidity control, energy efficiency, and long-term durability.

So, how do concrete block, wood frame, bamboo panels, compare for Florida construction?

Let's break it down.

Hurricane & Wind Resistance

With Florida's exposure to hurricanes and high-wind events, structural resilience is non-negotiable. Concrete block is the gold standard for hurricane-resistant construction. Time and time again it has proven to withstand extreme winds and flying debris, with reinforced designs meeting Florida's strictest wind codes. Wood frame, block's closest competitor in the residential housing industry, is much more vulnerable to storm damage and requires additional bracing and hurricane straps to meet Florida Building Code (FBC) standards, adding extra costs to a typical project. A new entry into the residential construction industry is pre-engi-

neered bamboo panels. Although used in some areas with seismic issues, they are susceptible to moisture and water damage and are, yet, unproven for hurricane resistance.

Best for Wind Resistance: Concrete Block

Case in Point: In 2022, a residence built in Fort Myers Beach utilized reinforced concrete block construction to meet Florida's stringent wind codes. During Hurricane Ian, which brought wind gusts up to 120 mph, the home sustained minimal damage, demonstrating the effectiveness of concrete block construction in hurricane-prone areas.

Moisture & Termite Resistance

Florida's high humidity and heavy rains create ideal conditions for mold, mildew, and termite damage. Concrete block is

impervious to termites and moisture damage and mold will not grow on it. Wood frame is highly susceptible to moisture and termites. Pressure-treating the wood against moisture and borate treatments to fight termites are both effective to a limited extent but increase costs. Bamboo panels are resistant to some pests, but not all, and are highly vulnerable to Florida's humidity, thus welcoming mold, mildew, and water damage if not sealed properly.

Best for Moisture & Pest Resistance: Concrete Block

Case in Point: An affordable senior housing development in Orlando switched from wood frame to concrete block after repeated termite infestations in earlier wood-framed projects. The switch eliminated costly maintenance and extended the building's lifespan.





Energy Efficiency & Cooling Costs

With Florida's warm climate and long cooling seasons, energy-efficient construction is crucial. Concrete block has a high thermal mass value which helps regulate indoor temperatures, reducing heating and cooling loads. Adding insulation further improves performance for a highly efficient energy saving environment. Wood frame construction is prone to heat transfer, requiring continuous insulation and a complete sealed air envelop for optimal efficiency. Bamboo Panels provide much the same features as wood frame in theory but are still in the testing stages as far as overall durability.

Best for Energy Efficiency: Concrete Block

Case in Point: A custom net-zero energy home in Tampa, combined insulated concrete block walls with solar panels. This integration resulted in an 80% reduction in cooling costs compared to similar-sized wood-framed homes, showcasing the energy efficiency achievable with concrete block construction.



Fire Safety & Insurance Costs

Florida homes face wildfire risks in many areas, and fire-resistant materials increase safety and reduce insurance premiums in both multi-family and single-family construction. Concrete Block is completely

non-combustible and highly fire-resistant, leading to lower insurance rates, and greatly increased protection of life and property. Wood Frame on the other hand is highly combustible and requires fire-resistant treatments to be usable, which add cost and maintenance. Bamboo panels are flammable as in the case of wood frame. They also require treatment with fire retardants. Fire ratings vary by manufacturer.

Best for Fire Safety & Insurance Savings: Concrete Block

Case in Point: A custom home, built in Naples, used 100% concrete block construction. The non-combustible nature of concrete contributed to the homeowners qualifying for up to 25% lower insurance premiums compared to neighboring wood-framed houses, highlighting the fire safety benefits of concrete block.



The Smart Choice for Florida Homes & Multifamily Projects

For single-family homes, concrete block and wood framing remain the most common choices, with block offering superior protection and efficiency.

For multifamily developments, only concrete block construction provides the combination of strength, durability, and energy efficiency needed to meet Florida's unique environmental circumstances.

One last Point: Concrete Block-A sustainable and resilient choice for Florida's future

With new research highlighting concrete's ability to absorb CO₂, its role in energy-efficient, low-maintenance, and hurricane-resistant construction is stronger than ever. Architects seeking

carbon-conscious, high-performance materials should reconsider concrete block as a smart investment for Florida's climate challenges.



About Block Strong and BlockStrong.com

Block Strong is a partnership between Florida Concrete & Products Association, Inc. and Florida Concrete Masonry Education Council, Inc. The awareness program's primary mission is to help consumers, construction professionals and designers understand the vital link between quality building materials and the health and safety of those people living in the homes and structures that they design and build. Block Strong also serves as an information source for aiding prospective homebuyers as they go through the various steps of the home-buying journey.

To learn more about the benefits of concrete block, homebuyers, designers, and builders can visit BlockStrong.com. This site's extensive list of information and resources includes an interactive storm tracker feature that provides real time radar imagery which is especially beneficial during Florida's unpredictable rainy season. Plus, mortgage and mold mitigation calculators allow visitors to customize their search to their specific buying journey.





"...solutions currently being implemented to increase building resilience are not for a distant future. They are having a significant positive impact right now."

President's Perspective

Elizabeth Camargo, AIA

As architects, we are entrusted with the health, safety and welfare of people and communities. However, our duty extends beyond that. Besides shaping the built environment around us through the buildings and structures we design, we also have an important role as innovators. Inherent to this role is the ability to problem-solve and reimagine new ways of improving building design to allow for the enhanced comfort and well-being to its users in a more efficient and sustainable manner. In this issue, we highlight projects that have approached design in creative ways, seamlessly integrating new structures into their communities and fostering growth.

Another powerful way we can fulfill our role as innovators, and perhaps the most important one, is through advocacy. Early in my involvement with AIA Miami and later with AIA Florida, I recognized the importance of connecting with legislators on issues that directly affect our practice. This past Legislative Day on February 4, I was inspired by the enthusiasm of our members and architecture students who joined us in Tallahassee. We reached recordbreaking attendance with more than 200 registrants from all 13 components. Together, we highlighted the importance of licensure and regulation of architecture, as well as the need for continued dissemination of resilient building design, best practices through education and financial incentives. Additionally, we had the opportunity to promote the significant work being done by the AIA Florida Resilience Committee. We presented our resilient building standards appendix submitted

earlier to the Florida Building Commission for consideration, thus solidifying our position as trusted experts.

Over the past year, we have experienced the devastating effects of extreme climate events firsthand. Hurricanes, unprecedented tornadoes, and even snow in the panhandle have made it clear that resilience is no longer a theoretical concern — it's an actual need we must address now. To underscore our efforts, this year's Legislative Day poster showcased the resilience of projects that have withstood the many natural disasters we faced last hurricane season. It's a reminder that the solutions currently being implemented to increase building resilience are not for a distant future; they are having a significant positive impact right now.

As we navigate the increasing climate challenges, the innovative nature of our profession presents opportunities for growth. Just as the climate changes, so too must we evolve and adapt, learning and sharing knowledge to respond to the new demands. Our role as problem-solvers requires us to meet these challenges head-on.

I invite you to join us in Tampa Bay for the AIA Florida Convention & Trade Show this July. Located in an urban setting with a vibrant waterfront, this year's event will offer outstanding speakers, a wide range of sessions and tours of Tampa's architectural highlights. I hope the convention will inspire you and provide the tools you need to continue your work as innovators in your own communities. See you there!



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Clearwater Beach Fire Station 46

Clearwater Beach, Florida

WJArchitects | St. Petersburg, Florida



Many an adult will remember peeking into a fire station as a child to get a glimpse of the brightly colored trucks, serpentine hoses hung up to dry and, of course, the characteristic poles that firefighters would slide down so as not to lose critical seconds when an alarm sounded. The new Fire Station 46 in Clearwater Beach, designed by WJArchitects, boasts glass-paneled overhead doors for the fire trucks (known as “apparatus”) and large ground-level windows that virtually invite passersby — adults and children alike — to indulge their curiosity. The front façade even highlights the fire poles by placing them behind a full-height glass wall right by the main public entrance.

The project site has been occupied by fire stations for more than a century. The original station was a small stone structure with a hip roof. It was replaced in 1964 by a more modern facility that was remodeled in the 1980s but had become outdated. The latest station, completed in October 2023, reuses a number of elements salvaged from

its predecessor, including the firepoles, a freestanding flagpole, and integrated bollards that protect the corners of the apparatus bay doors.

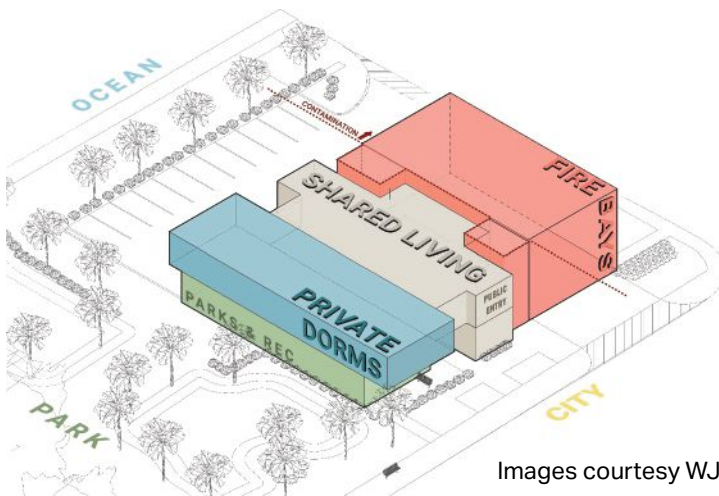
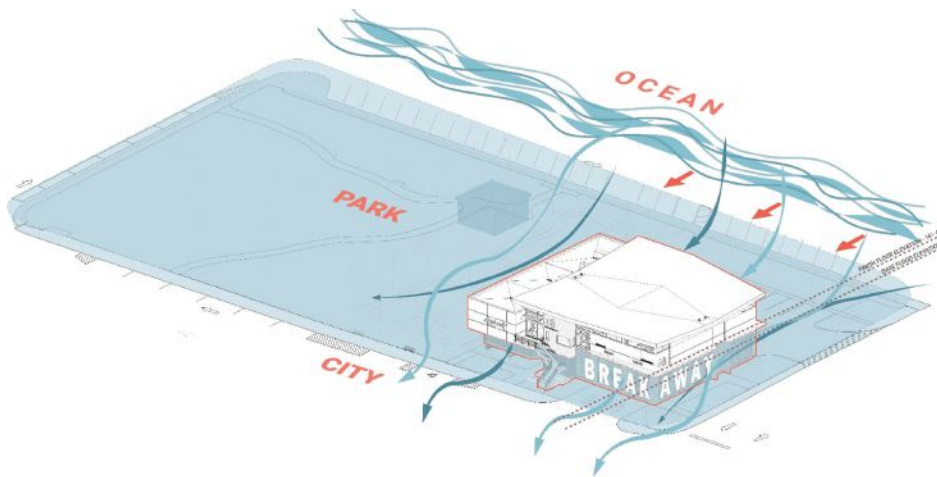
Given the building’s location just a couple of hundred yards from the shoreline of the Gulf, resilience was a design priority. “Our initial idea was to elevate the apparatus bays, with ramps leading up to it, so the trucks could remain in place during a storm,” explained Jeff McDowell, Assoc. AIA, studio director for public safety at WJArchitects. “But that proved too costly, so we went for a split-level design instead. All of the firefighters’ living spaces are on the second floor, while the first floor was constructed with breakaway walls that can be sacrificed in the event of a storm surge without endangering the building or its occupants.”

To resist minor flooding, all ground-level walls were waterproofed, and flood vents allow any water that does get into the building to drain as quickly as possible.

All of the mechanical and electrical equipment was elevated to the second floor, out of harm’s way even during an extreme storm surge. According to McDowell, the station suffered no damage during hurricanes Helene and Milton.

Another technical challenge that the architects faced was creating a proper foundation. “We were originally looking at auger piles, but then they found a void under the station from all the hydraulic fluid that had leaked out of the previous station,” said McDowell. “We ended up doing a solid mat foundation located below the scour line. Small piers from there support the finish floor slab.”

In addition to two apparatus bays and adjacent storage rooms for firefighting equipment, the ground floor includes a space for beach rescue equipment plus storage areas for the Clearwater Parks & Recreation department, though the inclusion of the latter came about in an unexpected way.



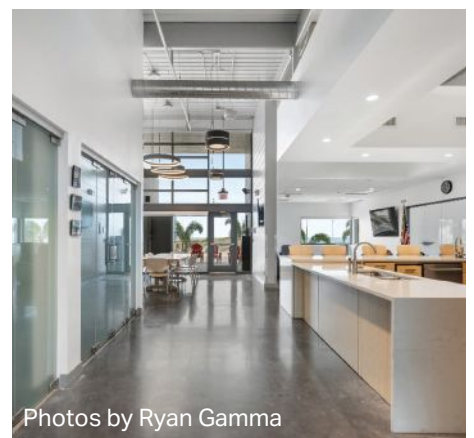
Images courtesy WJArchitects

"Unfortunately, there was a building that the parks department had built very recently — within the previous year or two — that was exactly on the most beneficial site for the fire station," said Jason Jensen, AIA, LEED AP, president and CEO of WJArchitects. "How do we break it to them that they put it in the wrong spot? We figured out a way to incorporate their facility into the new building so that it wouldn't add any cost. The carrot we offered was to give them more storage space than they had before. Meanwhile, this solution allowed us to preserve as much park space as possible on the rest of the site, so it was a win-win."

A major concern in the design of fire stations is the protection of occupants' health. Firefighters are exposed to numerous dangerous substances — many of them carcinogenic. With that in mind, WJArchitects established a clear separation between "hot zones" (the apparatus bays and adjacent spaces where toxic debris enters the station), "warm zones" (where dangerous substances are removed or

filtered out), and the firefighters' living quarters, which incorporate a positively pressurized ventilation system and non-porous surfaces for easy cleaning. Shared living spaces including a day room, a large kitchen, a dining room, an exercise room and office space occupy the central portion of the second floor. This arrangement serves to buffer noise between the two-story apparatus bay and the individual firefighters' dorm rooms on the opposite side of the building.

"A lot of fire stations reflect the belief that natural light is a detriment because of the firefighters' sleep schedules," said Jensen, "but we know that natural light is good for everyone. Having some rhythm to your day is important, so we made sure the living spaces have plenty of light while including darker dorm rooms as needed. The finish materials, such as pressed bamboo on the kitchen cabinets, have a hospitable, residential look, but are as hard as concrete, easily maintained, and never need to be repainted."



Photos by Ryan Gamma

"One unique aspect of this station," Jensen noted, "is that it is a destination not just for tourists but also for firefighters from other places. Firefighters from across the country visit and they trade patches from their companies. We put that patch collection on display as a reminder of that sense of hospitality and camaraderie."



Industrial Revival



Photo: horttonphotoinc.com

Sleek metal cladding infuses new life into historic Raleigh Iron Works

PAC-CLAD Tite-Loc Plus roofing panels in a Zinc finish top the two former foundry structures, while the walls feature the texture of M-36 exposed fastener wall panels to complete the urban chic design.



View the
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FIS Headquarters

Jacksonville, Florida

Gensler | Tampa, Florida



Every digital payment by a consumer or corporate entity — whether a swipe of a credit card, a flash of a smart phone or a click on a computer screen — relies on a global network of software and hardware. Working behind the scenes to facilitate trillions of dollars' worth of such transactions each year are companies like Fidelity Information Services (FIS). Based in Jacksonville, Florida, FIS employs 56,000 people in 58 countries, according to the firm's website.

FIS recently completed its first from-the-ground-up new headquarters in Jacksonville's Brooklyn neighborhood on a site along the St. Johns River. Designed by Gensler, the building was conceived as both an expression of, and a driver

of, the client's corporate culture. It also sets new standards for both the company and the city in terms of its environmental resilience, sustainability and community engagement.

"Most members of the [FIS] leadership team were from Jacksonville," said Kristopher Stuart, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, who is office developer leader, design director and principal in Gensler's Houston office. "It was important to them that this would reflect the company's role in the city."

Both the exterior and key interior spaces manifest a subtle nautical theme that speaks to the building's riverfront location and the boating culture of the region — in fact, several FIS executives are avid

boaters and advocated for the dock in front of the building. Curved corners evoke streamlined nautical forms, while diagonal lines in the glass curtain wall of the tower suggest forward momentum toward the water. A large outdoor terrace off of the third floor is reminiscent of the deck of a passenger ship, with the tower above conjuring images of a superstructure or even a sail.

Interior spaces reflect FIS's organizational needs. "I think that tech companies are at a point where they understand that their headquarters is as much about driving innovation as it is about providing a place to work," said Dawn Gunter, AIA, managing director and principal in Gensler's Miami office. "When we met with FIS's leadership

team, they envisioned a headquarters that created an atmosphere of connectivity."

For FIS, the goal of connectivity applied not only among its own employees, who can take advantage of communal cafés and other informal gathering spaces on each floor, but also between employees and clients. Hence the project incorporates a "client experience center" on the first floor, which includes product demonstration facilities, exhibit areas, meeting space and an auditorium. These spaces also serve as a powerful tool for employee recruitment.

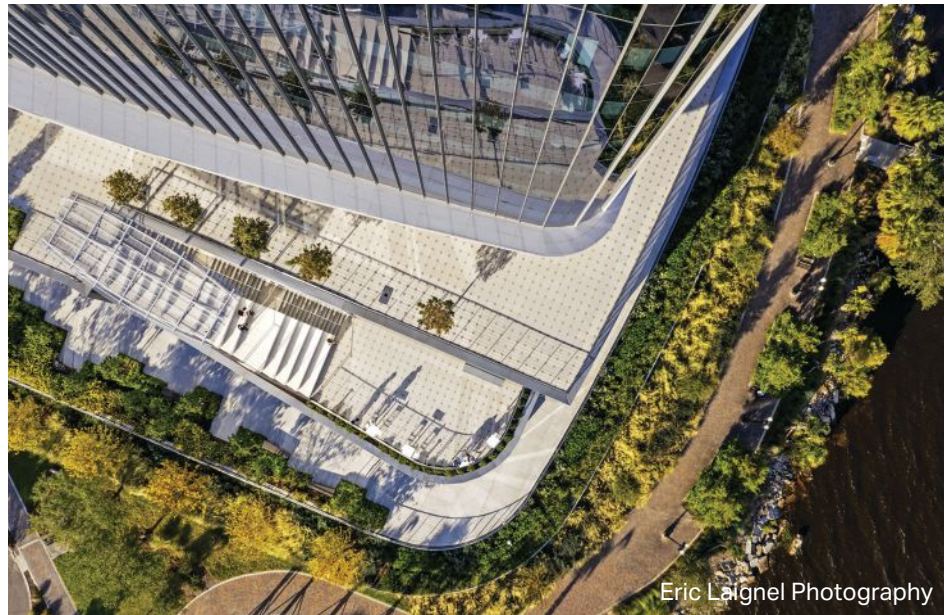
The second floor contains the main employee entrance, a fitness center and a call center. The third floor is devoted to food service and dining areas that open onto the outdoor terrace. Both the ground floor conference area and the third-floor dining facilities can be made available to community organizations that FIS supports.

Flexibility was critical in the layout of the main office floors. "FIS has a long history of acquiring other companies," said Gunter. "FIS has a cultural of absorption, bringing other companies' value systems into their own."

Gensler accommodated this pattern of frequent change in part by providing a dedicated flex space on each floor that can serve as, say, a temporary podcast studio, a storage area or whatever else the company might need at the moment.

Early meetings with FIS managers revealed that environmental concerns were not a priority for the company. However, "In a conversation with the [then]-CEO, he challenged his team to elevate the brand of FIS to reflect their commitment to resiliency and sustainability.

That conversation opened the door for Gensler to make resilience and sustainability essential aspects of their design solution. Given the project's location, it was susceptible not only to flooding from the river but also to hurricane-force winds. The response to these threats had a substantial impact on the design of the building's ground floor, the surrounding landscape, and the juncture between the two.



"Starting at the base of the building, we had to address wave action, which could lead to serious damage and erosion," said Gunter. "We raised the finish floor elevation, introduced a berm and retaining walls, upgraded the existing rip rap [rock barrier], and added a flood protection system at openings in addition to impact-resistant glass throughout. Now, if the river rises, the water flows gently around the building."

"This is the first project I've been involved with that had a sea level consultant," added Stuart. "But rather than creating a barrier, our design really engages the river. There's a hike-and-bike trail along

the edge, and FIS really wanted to be close to that, so as people walk by they can experience the building."

Gensler estimates that the FIS headquarters will be protected from up to three feet of sea-level rise and 11.45 feet of potential wave crest during a hurricane. All of the resilience strategies combined cost less than 0.05 percent of the total project budget. Moreover, thanks to an array of sustainable design features that minimize energy and water consumption while protecting occupants' health, the building is on track for LEED Platinum, WELL Silver and Energy Star certifications.

Wellness & Sustainability Strategies:

- (01) Update existing rip rap to latest standards
- (02) 'wave action' wall
- (03) Terrace retaining wall
- (04) Raised building finish floor elevation one foot from original design to 11'
- (05) Raised garage finish floor elevation one foot from original design (mitigate nuisance flooring inland)
- (06) Added 12-inch concrete curb at curtain wall system
- (07) Added flood protection barrier system at openings
- (08) Impact glazing at lower levels

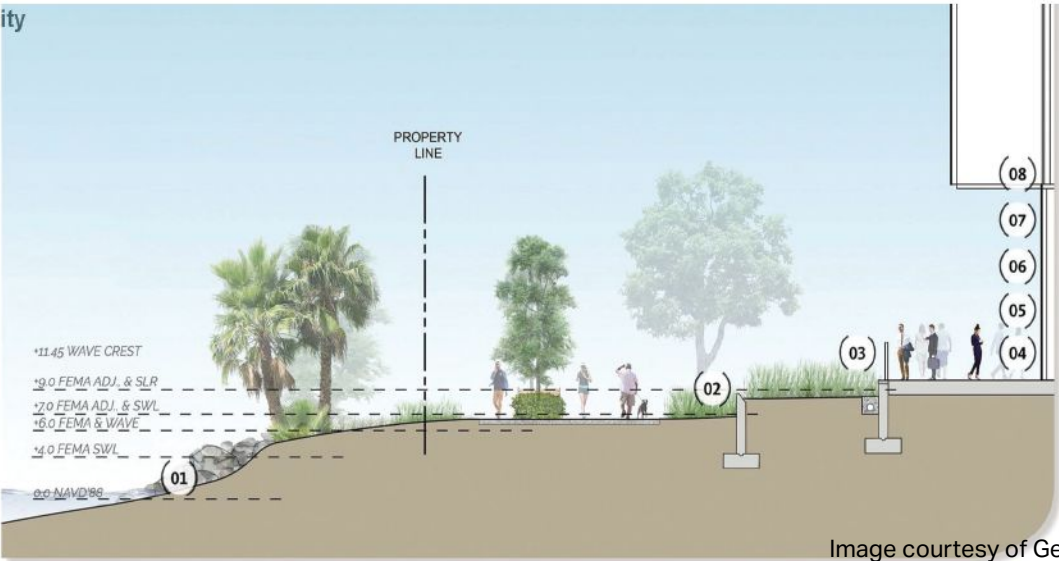
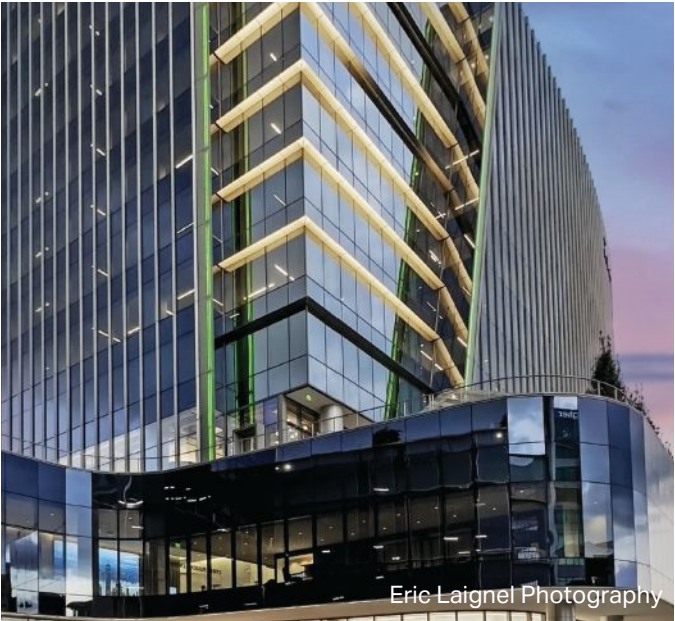


Image courtesy of Gensler



Eric Laignel Photography



Eric Laignel Photography

Building Stack:

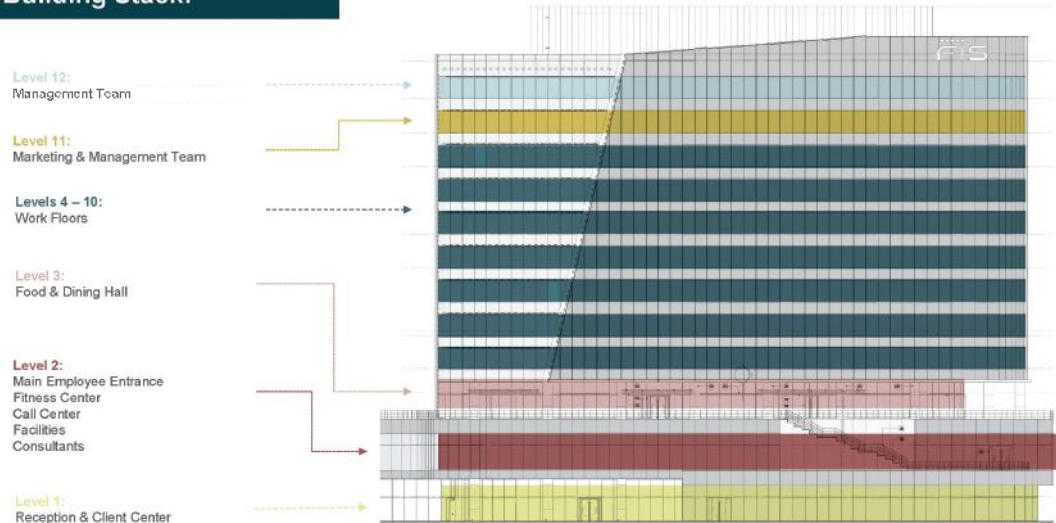


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St. Armands Garage

Sarasota, Florida

SOLSTICE Planning and Architecture | Sarasota, Florida

St. Armands Key is a small island in Sarasota Bay that was initially developed in the 1920s by circus magnate John Ringling. A part of the City of Sarasota, St. Armands is connected to the mainland by a roughly two-mile-long causeway named for Ringling. At the heart of the island is St. Armands Circle, which, along with adjacent streets, is home to more than 130 shops and restaurants.

A popular destination for both locals and tourists, the St. Armands commercial center was until recently desperate for more parking. SOLSTICE Planning and Architecture was hired to design a new garage located on the opposite corner of one of the blocks adjacent to the circle itself. The garage occupies an irregularly shaped corner lot across the street from several single-family houses on one side and a church parking lot on the other — a low-rise context that the design team was determined not to overwhelm.

When the project was announced, Jonathan Parks, FAIA, founding partner of SOLSTICE, was eager to reassemble the team from an earlier garage project on Palm Avenue in downtown Sarasota (which was mentioned in the article about the Art Ovation Hotel in the Summer 2024 issue of *Florida/Caribbean Architect*). “We had learned so much from doing the Palm garage, we knew we had to compete for this one,” said Parks. The team ultimately beat out 25 others for the commission.

“Our earlier garage at Palm Avenue was the first structured parking in almost 40 years,” said Parks. “When it was completed, the city needed someone to run that asset. That’s when they hired a full-time parking manager named Mark Lyons. He was really a dream client. He was all about the future of parking, he was at symposiums, he was part of the trade group, and when he took over the department in Sarasota he elevated it in terms of both structured parking and street parking.”

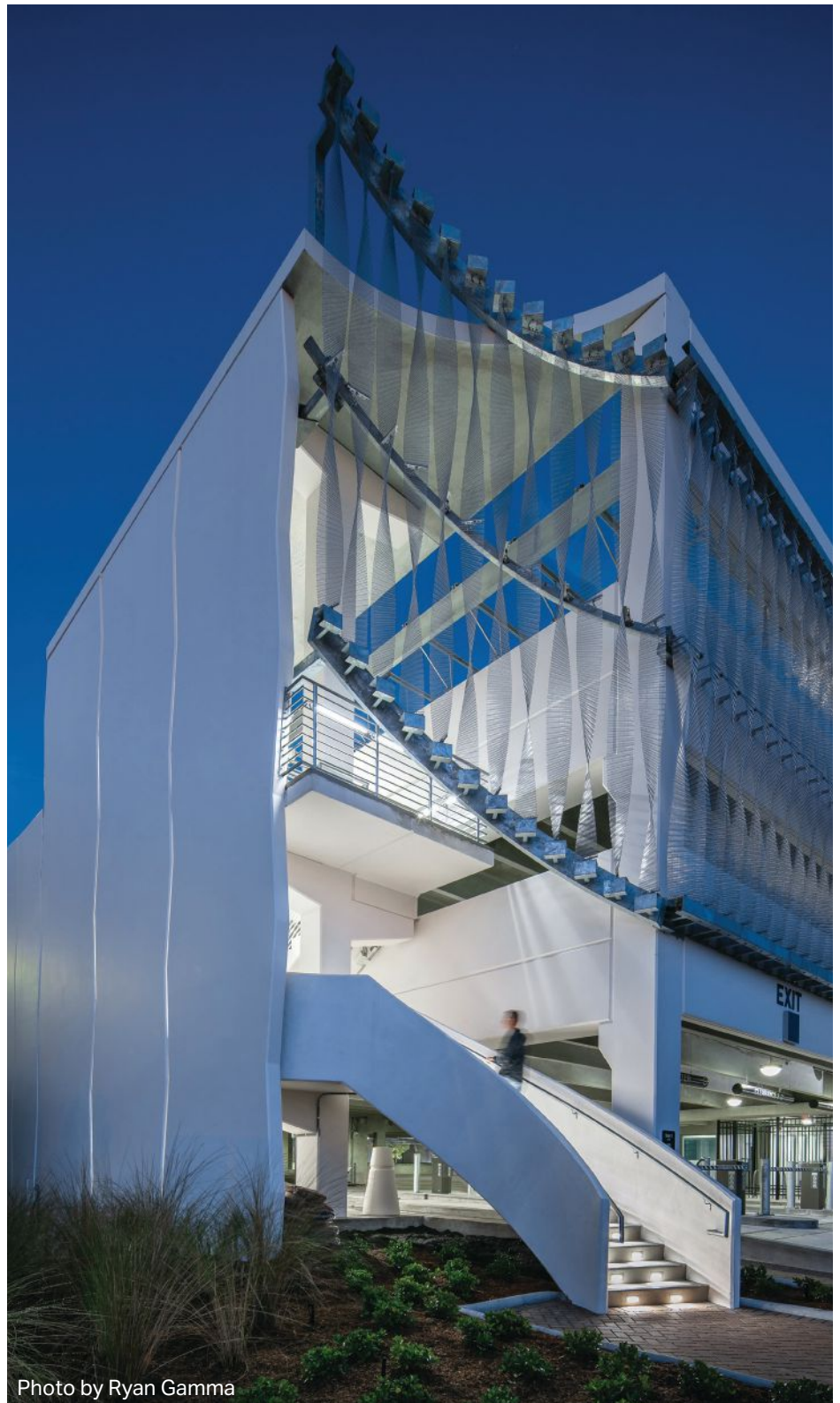
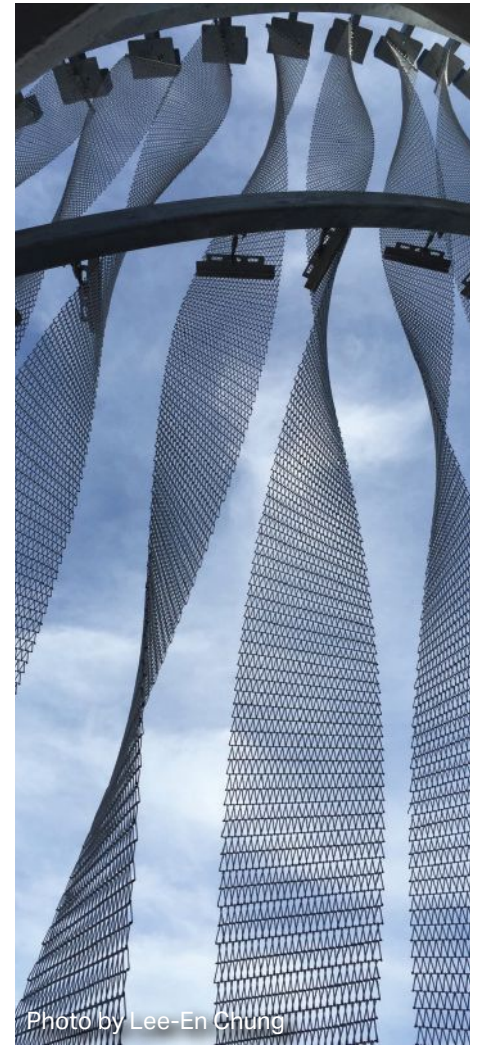


Photo by Ryan Gamma

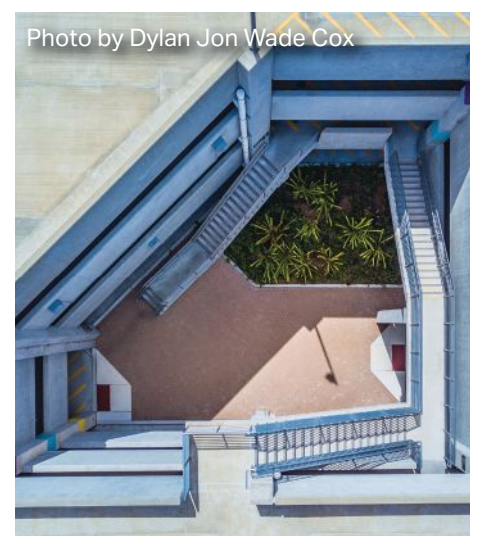


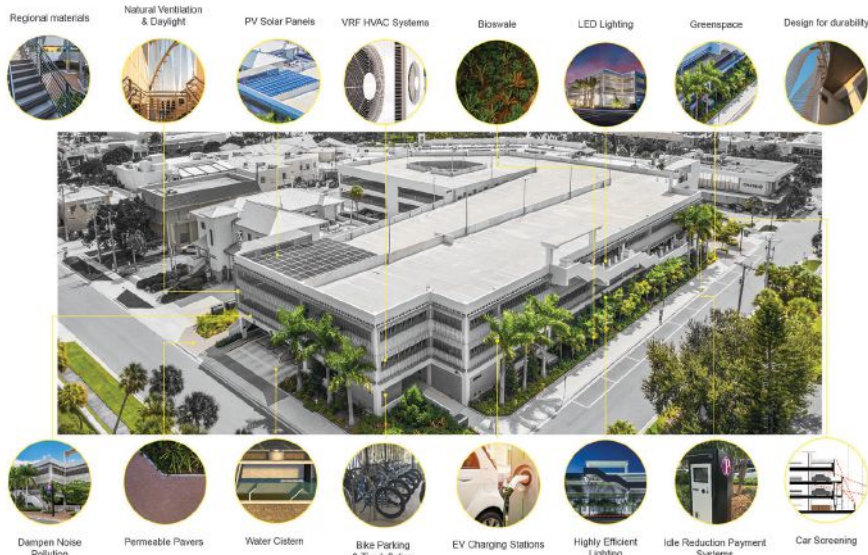
The priorities for the St. Armands garage were numerous, and included sustainability, resilience, sensitivity to context, parking efficiency, and ease of maintenance. “St. Armands is surrounded by an immense volume of salt water,” noted Parks. “It sometimes gets a corrosive salt fog. If you are not staying up on the maintenance, a building will look bad pretty quickly.”

The Palm Avenue project was the first parking garage in the U.S. to achieve LEED Gold certification, but for St. Armands, the client and the design team agreed to pursue Silver certification under the Parksmart program — a sustainability benchmark geared specifically to parking structures and administered by Green Business Certification Inc. “We had to do a lot more for Parksmart than we ever had to do for LEED,” Parks said. “That included the usual green design features, but also EV charging plus tire inflation stations to maximize users’ gas mileage. Parksmart even extends to cleaning products used on the structure after it’s built.”

To minimize noise and neighborhood disruptions during construction, the design team opted for a precast concrete structural system (the contractor also managed to find an electric crane for precast installation rather than a diesel one, reducing noise and fumes even further). After a great deal of research into concrete mixes, the architects specified an admixture made by BASF that forms a non-soluble crystalline substance in the capillary pores of the concrete, thus rendering the material virtually impermeable. They also increased the thickness of the concrete coverage over the outermost layer of rebar, further ensuring that it would be safe from damaging salt intrusion.

The garage’s two street-facing façades are lined with delicate, twisted ribbons of stainless steel mesh that contrast with the robust concrete structural frame. These ribbons not only allow for the parking areas to be naturally ventilated, but also help to screen headlights inside the garage from neighboring houses. Each slender ribbon is





attached at only three places, necessitating a custom attachment strategy that the architects devised in collaboration with the fabricator.

The project's resilience was tested during the multiple Gulf Coast hurricanes of 2024. "The city allowed local residents to park for free on upper levels during the storm," said Parks. "Both the St. Armands and the Palm Avenue garages probably accommodated double the number of cars that we ever anticipated. Since we went above and beyond the codes, both held up well — there wasn't even a light bulb that got broken."



Photo by Ryan Gamma



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The Bay, Phase 1

Sarasota, Florida

Sweet Sparkman Architecture & Interiors

Sarasota, Florida



Photo by Ryan Gamma



Photo by Calvin Wren | Sweet Sparkman

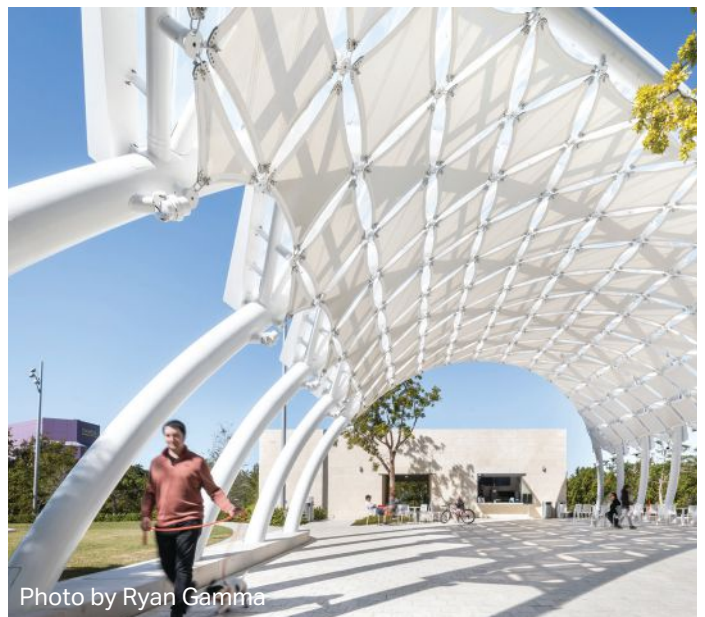


Photo by Ryan Gamma

Just northwest of downtown Sarasota, along the Boulevard of the Arts, stands a new open-air pavilion that extends asymmetrically toward the sidewalk in a way that draws pedestrians almost irresistibly into the park of which it is the centerpiece. The pavilion, designed by Sweet Sparkman Architecture & Interiors, may appear to be a simple architectural folly, but it is much more than that. It is simultaneously a sophisticated homage to the previous building on the site and an effective response to a basic programmatic need: shade.

The pavilion anchors the first phase of a new park called The Bay, which is a transformation of what was originally known as the Civic Center. The area is home to several architecturally significant but long-disjointed landmarks such as the Art Moderne Sarasota Municipal Auditorium, the mid-century modern Sarasota Garden Club building, and the fanciful "Blue Pagoda," designed in the 1950s by Victor Lundy for the city's Chamber of Commerce. The master plan for the park, created by Boston-based Sasaki Associates in collaboration with Agency Landscape + Planning, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, seeks to enhance the site's resilience, encourage public engagement with the waterfront, and weave the existing cultural facilities into a more coherent enclave.

The swath of land that constitutes Phase 1 of The Bay was previously occupied by a 1970s library designed by Walter Netsch, of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Netsch, whose works ranged from the exquisite U.S. Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel in Colorado Springs to the overbearing Brutalist campus of the University of Illinois Chicago, was famous (and infamous) for his Field Theory, a complex framework that employed fractal patterns of rotated squares to bring mathematical order to architectural composition and planning.

"When we got hired, the [former library] had been abandoned for years," said Jerry Sparkman, AIA, NCARB, principal at Sweet Sparkman. "Some people wanted to try to save it, but the city decided that it was better to have a new park with greenspace rather than an abandoned building and surface parking lots. It also presented an opportunity to create a more resilient

shoreline and connect the waterfront to the city."

With the former library to be razed, the new structures easily could have ignored the site's past, but Sparkman became intrigued by the challenge of finding inspiration in Netsch's work while creating something that was both aesthetically fresh and effective in providing much-needed shade.

For the principal pavilion, which provides shelter for patrons of the adjacent café and anyone else seeking respite from the sun, the design team adapted the underlying geometry of Netsch's building to create an overhead grid of translucent ETFE panels that are fritted to filter sunlight. Rotated 45 degrees and superimposed on the pavilion's structural grid, the composition casts shadows that directly evoke the former library's characteristic fractal squares. Whereas Netsch's building was quite heavy, however, Sweet Sparkman's design is both figuratively and literally an exercise in lightness.

Having reinterpreted Netsch's geometrical vocabulary in the design of the shading devices, Sweet Sparkman went a step further, adding a literal twist to his rigidly rectilinear syntax.

"I remember a sketch we did early on for a structure over a fishing pier that was supposed to extend into the bay," Sparkman recalled. "If you went straight up from the pier and just put a roof over it, the people fishing would not get shade because of the angle of the sun. Then we thought, 'What if we roll the shade structure over the edge of the pier?'"

That revelation ultimately led to the asymmetrical, tunnel-like form of the completed shade structure by the café. Coupled with the structure's diagonal orientation from southwest to northeast, this shape optimizes solar shading, especially during the mid-to-late afternoon when the sun can be particularly brutal. Meanwhile, the curvilinear form creates an aesthetic counterpoint to the rectilinearity of the adjacent café pavilion, which also includes public restrooms.

"I've always felt that putting a curved line against a straight line creates tension,"

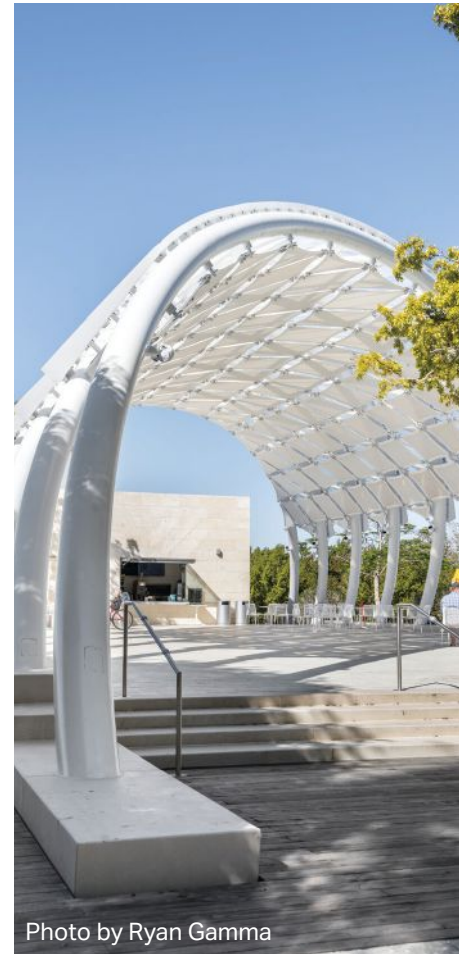


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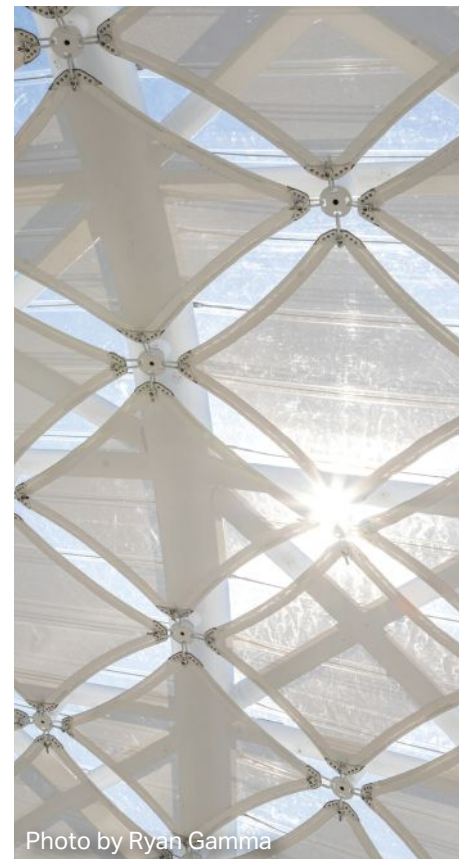


Photo by Ryan Gamma



Photo by Ryan Gamma

said Sparkman. “When we move through space our bodies are usually positioned in relationship to a vertical line. Here, where there are some exterior steps along the eastern side of the café, the curved ribs of the shade structure come down right next to you so that your body gets close to a non-orthogonal element.”

The first phase of The Bay faced severe tests not long after it opened as no fewer than three hurricanes — Debby, Helene and Milton — brought damaging winds and flooding to the Florida Gulf Coast in 2024.

“We are very proud of how the [redesigned portion of the] park fared during the storms,” said Diana Shaheen, director of park guest experience at The Bay. “The shade structure endured — it didn’t lose a single mesh panel, and there wasn’t an arch that was torqued. It was standing tall and strong. We got the park reopened just one day after Hurricane Milton. We had been in the middle of an anniversary celebration and asked the community if they wanted us to resume our activities after the storm, and 90 percent said yes.”

Shaheen noted that the first phase of the park drew 315,000 people in its first year to enjoy a range of programming including concerts, dances, Zumba classes, lectures and markets. “We hold 50 or more free events every month,” she said. “Our promise is ‘One Park for All,’ and we are open to the full and rich diversity of our community.”



Photo by Ryan Gamma



Photo by Ryan Gamma

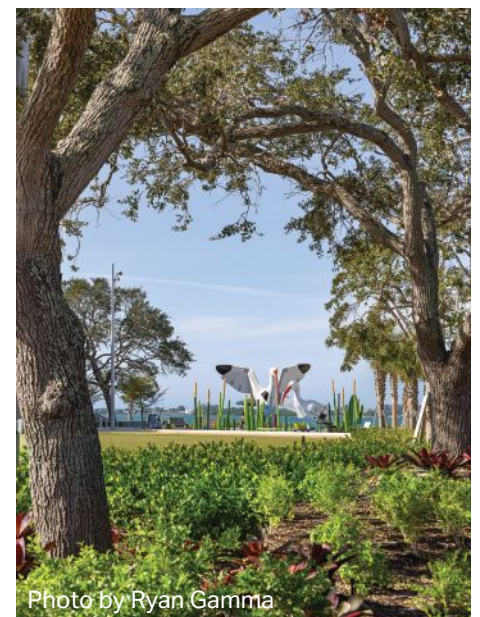
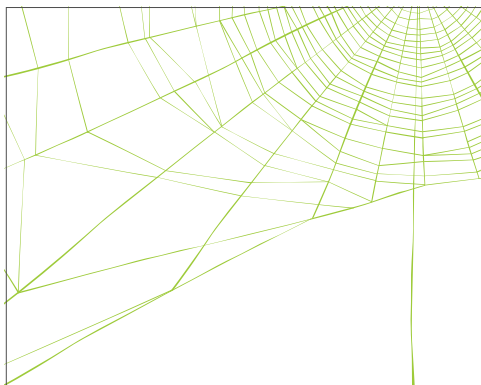


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Designed to Endure

The Work of the AIA Florida Resilience Committee



Elizabeth Camargo, AIA
2025 President



Julian Norman-Webb, AIA
2025 Vice President of Resilience

There was a time when the typical Floridian didn't worry much about potential climatological disasters except during the height of hurricane season. Even then, many just kept their fingers crossed that an oncoming storm would head elsewhere. Those days are gone; however, as the frequency and intensity of storms are increasing, sunny day flooding makes routine activities difficult, and soaring home insurance premiums offer a constant reminder of the state's precarious situation.

Recognizing the seriousness of these threats, AIA Florida formed a Resilience Committee about five years ago to gather and disseminate relevant information to architects, political leaders and the public. The inaugural committee was led by former AIA Florida vice president Lindsey Perez, AIA, LEED Fellow, GGP, Fitwell Amb., then the committee was led for two years by Elizabeth Camargo, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP BD+C, who is now the chapter's president.

The current chair is Julian Norman-Webb, AIA, RIBA, NCARB, LEED AP BD+C, architecture practice leader in the Sarasota office of Goodwyn Mills Cawood and vice president of resilience for AIA Florida.

"The strategic aim of our committee is to educate both our members and the public

about what resilience is and to provide resources to further their education," said Norman-Webb. "We advocate for resilient solutions at the state level and publicize our members' success stories in designing resilient buildings."

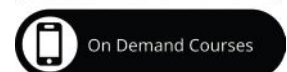
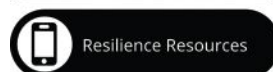
The resources to which he was referring include a series of webinars and white papers that are now available on the AIA Florida website.

The webinars feature experts — academics, practitioners, and regulators — discussing topics such as resilient construction methods and materials; energy and water resources; and housing. The committee expects to expand the number of these resources substantially over the coming year. Architects may

earn continuing education credits for these webinars through AIA Florida's on-demand library.

The committee has also formed a task force to draft an appendix to the Florida Building Code (FBC) focusing on resilient design. To break this effort into more manageable pieces, the task force was initially divided into three subgroups focusing on moisture, resources and flooding, respectively. The committee intends for this to be an ongoing initiative and to address other topics, including economic arguments for resilience, in the future.

"Step one is to create a true appendix and have it approved and issued as a part of the Florida Building Code," said Norman-Webb, "then to update and expand



it. The first portion has just been submitted to the Florida Building Commission, and we are now advocating for that, which will be about an eight-month process. The worst-case scenario is that we end up with a wonderful document that we can publicize and share, but obviously the goal is to have it accepted as part of the 2026 edition of the FBC."

Although state legislators do not have a direct role in reviewing building code amendments, Norman-Webb reports that they have been supportive of the committee's efforts. "It was striking that when we went to the capitol for Legislative Day and we mentioned the appendix, the reaction from everybody was that it was a no-brainer," he said. "There was just an acceptance that this sounded beneficial."

The concept of resilience is often lumped in with sustainability, which can be confusing to the public and even to some architects. "The consensus of our committee was very much that sustainability was one sector of resilience," said Norman-Webb. "It's hard to have a resilient project that isn't sustainable. Resilience is the ability to resist whatever force comes along — whether severe weather or something entirely different, like the pandemic — and to absorb that force, accommodate it and then recover."

Norman-Webb emphasized the importance of broad-scaled thinking. "Obviously when you've got a collection of resilient buildings you are building a resilient community, and for a community to stay together for a long period of time, it's got to be able to withstand those kinds of events," he said. "When you talk about it as a community, that's when you start to leverage those other aspects of resilience, which can be economic and social resilience. The conversation is even expanding to include affordable housing and social equity."

"Resilient design is key to helping Florida's communities withstand and recover from natural disasters. Architects are equipped through our training to lead the way to a more resilient future, protecting the health and safety of people and property," said Camargo. "The work of the task force drafting and submitting the Florida Building Code appendix for consideration by the Florida Building Commission is a major step towards achieving this goal. Hopefully, there will be many more to come! I'm grateful to the task force members who

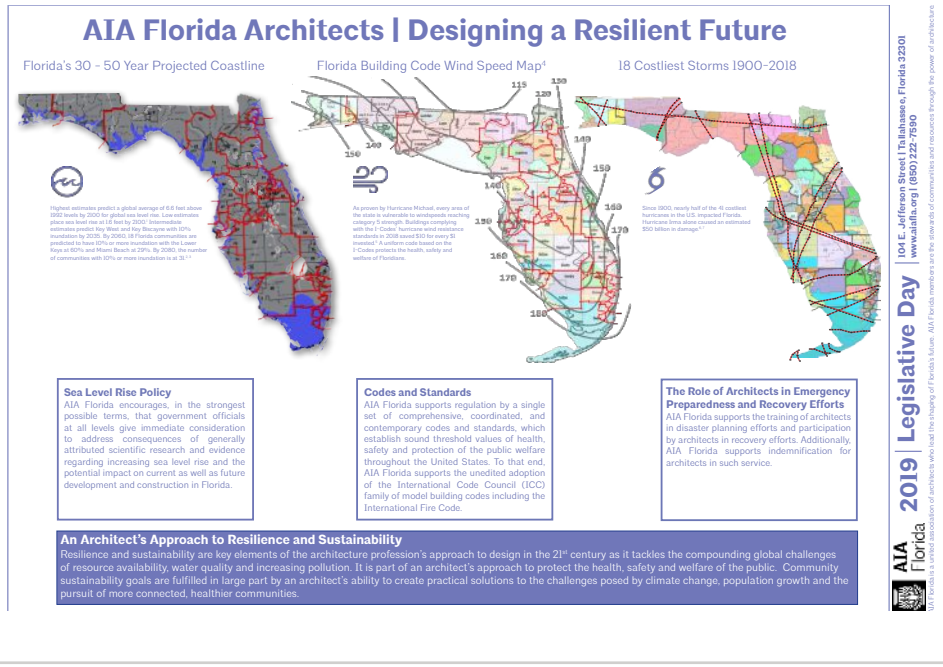
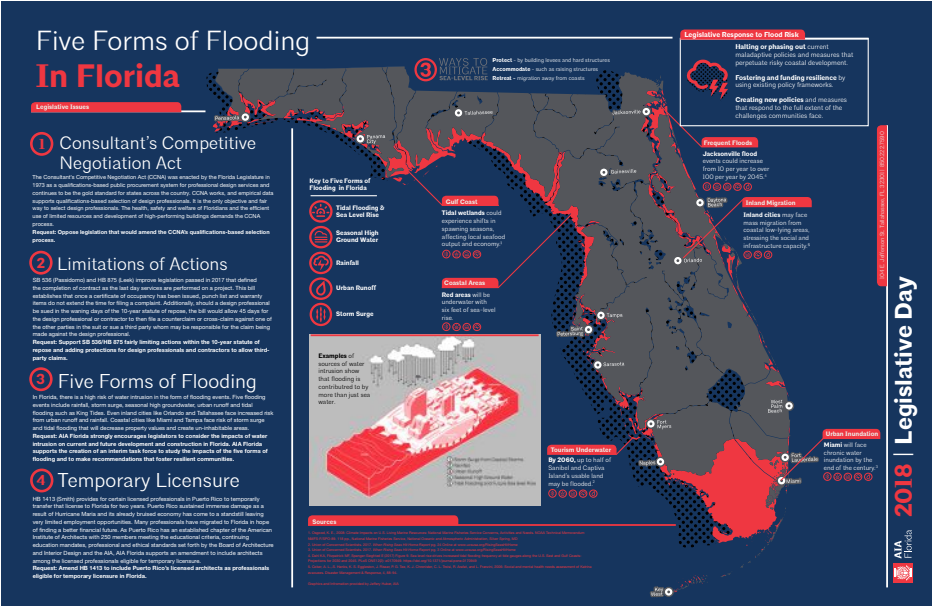
lent their time and expertise to this effort for almost two years. Independent of its adoption, the appendix will serve as a very useful resource."

"I think the membership of the committee and how it's worked show how much can be achieved in a relatively short time when you collaborate and have a clear goal," said Norman-Webb. "It does pay dividends. AIA Florida can claim some credit for why these issues are recognized in Tallahassee. It's not something we can run away from or ignore.

If we look at history, the communities that lasted were the ones that were resilient."

Camargo added, "We should be very proud of being Florida architects. Through my participation in AIA National committees I further understood the importance of the work we do here. Many states look up to Florida for our robust building code addressing hurricane and flooding resistance, as well as the engagement and commitment of our architects with causes that affect our profession."

AIA Florida has been presenting resilience issues to the Florida Legislature for several years.



CRAFT | COMMUNITY | CULTURE

AIA Florida members are the stewards of communities and resources... through the power of architecture.

Legislative Issues

Demolition & Sunset

After a 15-year sunset period, AIA Florida's 2020 Legislative Blueprint will expire. AIA Florida is currently working on a new blueprint to ensure the organization's mission and vision are reflected in the new blueprint. The new blueprint will be presented to the AIA Florida Board of Directors for approval in early 2021.

CCNA

The CCNA (Construction Code of Ethics) is a set of guidelines for architects to follow. It is a commitment to the highest standards of professional conduct and ethics. AIA Florida is currently working on a new CCNA to ensure it reflects the current standards of the profession.

Housing Trust Fund

The Housing Trust Fund is a fund that provides financial assistance to low-income housing. AIA Florida is currently working on a new bill to increase the funding for the fund. The new bill will provide an additional \$10 million to the fund.

Climate Resilience

Climate resilience is the ability of a system to recover from a disturbance. AIA Florida is currently working on a new bill to require buildings to be designed to withstand climate change. The new bill will require buildings to be designed to withstand a 100-year flood event.

2020 Legislative Blueprint

The 2020 Legislative Blueprint is a document that outlines AIA Florida's legislative priorities for the year 2020. It includes a list of bills that AIA Florida is supporting, as well as a list of bills that AIA Florida is opposing. The blueprint is a key document for AIA Florida's legislative efforts.

2020 | Legislative Day

AIA Florida is a united association of architects who lead the shaping of Florida's future.

Bridging the Gap: Architects Solving Issues

Livability. Resilience. Prosperity.

Legislative Issues

1 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Florida's population of 22 million residents is projected to grow to 25 million by 2025. A growing population combined with rising costs has created a shortage of affordable housing. AIA Florida supports legislation enhancing affordable, attainable and resilient housing.

2 BUILDING CERTIFICATION

The tragic collapse at Surfside showed the immediate need for a statewide standard for buildings to be initially inspected earlier than 30 years. It is estimated that two million Floridians live in condos 30 years or older. AIA Florida supports a building inspection involving a team of design professionals. Architects should remain as one of the design professionals performing inspections. AIA Florida encourages the adoption of the Joint Surfside Work Group recommendations.

3 BUILDING CODES

In an effort to protect Florida's residents, Florida is threatened annually by hurricanes and directly impacted by flooding. As Florida continues to recover from Hurricanes Ian and Nicole, AIA Florida supports building codes that are comprehensive, coordinated and establish sound threshold values of health, safety and protection of the public welfare. AIA Florida encourages building codes addressing increasing sea level rise and flooding and the potential impact on current and future development in Florida.

4 SAFE SHELTER

AIA Florida supports and encourages an annual review of public buildings that are utilized as shelters. AIA Florida supports analysis of existing shelters and providing funding to improve non-compliant shelters.

BRIDGING THE GAP

AIA Florida supports and encourages an annual review of public buildings that are utilized as shelters. AIA Florida supports analysis of existing shelters and providing funding to improve non-compliant shelters.

SAFE SHELTERS

Architects design safe shelters. According to the Department of Emergency Services, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Florida's Emergency Shelter Plan requires that Emergency Shelters be designed to meet the needs of the community. Architects are encouraged to design public buildings that can be used as emergency shelters.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Architects design affordable housing. Inspired by Fort Lauderdale's new affordable housing project, AIA Florida supports legislation to encourage the development of affordable housing. Architects are encouraged to design affordable housing projects that are integrated into the community.

HURRICANE MITIGATION

Architects design to Florida's climate and hurricane risks. Architects design to Florida's climate and hurricane risks. Architects are encouraged to design buildings that are resilient to hurricanes and flooding. Architects are encouraged to design buildings that are resilient to hurricanes and flooding.

SHIFTING PARADIGMS: Community, Technology and Climate

Architects protect the health, safety and welfare of the public through the power of design.

Licensure and Regulation

Architects are licensed to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public. The number of Florida licensed architects has increased by more than 1,000 in the last year. Licensure and regulation ensure only those qualified are practicing architecture and only licensees may call themselves architects.

Resilient Building

AIA Florida is presenting resilient building standards to the Florida Building Commission for adoption as a voluntary appendix in the 9th Edition (2020) of the Florida Building Code. Developed by architects and other code experts, the proposed appendix provides recommendations for the design and construction of more resilient, healthier and longer lasting buildings.

Support the adoption of resilient building standards in the Florida Building Code

Financial incentives to build resiliently will encourage owners to incorporate resilient strategies. The proposed Florida Resilient Building Advisory Council will provide the Department of Environmental Protection and the Legislature with recommendations on resilient buildings and hurricane resilience.

Support SB 62 by Sen. Rodriguez and HB 143 by Rep. Barmine creating tax credits for resilient building and forming the Florida Resilient Building Advisory Council with an architect as a member.

Hurricane Helene

October 26, 2004 - 141 mph

Hurricane Milton

October 9, 2005 - 125 mph

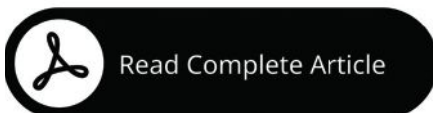
Hurricane Debby

September 26, 2006 - 105 mph



Jane Lanahan Decker, AIA, CBO, CFM, CRC, is Building Department director for the City of Doral, Florida. In a recent article, she advocates for cooperation among code officials, architects and local building officials in advancing resilience.

An edited and condensed version appears to the right, but the full article is accessible online via the QR code below.



Building Resilience 365: Architects & Code Officials Need to Join Forces for a Stronger Tomorrow

Jane Decker, AIA, CBO, CFM, CRC | City of Doral, FL

Did you know that May is Building Safety Month? The International Code Council (ICC) partners with local jurisdictions around the world to concentrate on building safety this time of year. But why limit safety to a single month when we can build a better world all year round? The American Institute of Architects (AIA) can join forces with local jurisdictions to tackle some of our most pressing built environment challenges, turning the tide on floodplain risks, moisture intrusion and community resilience — one day at a time, 365 days a year.

- 1. Floodplain Fortification.** Don't leave it to the state legislature to mandate solutions that don't work in your region. The ICC can provide the code framework, while AIA members can contribute innovative design solutions that work within these codes. Local jurisdictions can then implement and enforce these standards.
- 2. Moisture Mastery.** Regular joint workshops between ICC code experts, AIA designers and local building officials can foster knowledge-sharing and inspire new approaches to moisture control that are both code-compliant and architecturally innovative.
- 3. Resilience.** By establishing ongoing working groups that include representatives from the ICC, AIA and local jurisdictions, we can ensure that resilience strategies evolve in real time, responding to new challenges as they emerge.

Working hand in hand with local jurisdictions, the ICC and AIA can ensure that innovations fit seamlessly into existing neighborhoods, respecting local character while boosting overall safety and sustainability. The AIA can spearhead design charrettes in local communities, bringing together ICC experts and local officials to create visually appealing, code-compliant and resilient neighborhood plans. Architects can join ICC committees, bringing design expertise to code development, while local jurisdictions can invite AIA members to participate in planning boards, ensuring that aesthetic considerations are balanced with safety requirements.

Together, we're not just constructing buildings — we're building a future where our communities stand strong, come what may, 365 days a year.

On the Boards

1613 Senior Affordable Housing

Miami, Florida

Neuvio Architects | Fort Lauderdale, Florida

A proposed affordable housing project for seniors in Miami will be built of prefabricated, interlocking blocks reminiscent of Legos. Made by RENCO in Jupiter, Florida, the patented blocks are composed of recycled glass fibers, recycled plaster, resin and stone and can be used for walls, floors and roofs. According to the manufacturer, the blocks are 23 times stronger than concrete and, when assembled on site, produce significantly less waste and noise than traditional construction methods.

Designed by Neuvio Architects for Miami-Dade County Housing and Community Development, the project draws on the area's Art Deco precedents, with curved balconies and overhangs that shade windows below. The building's massing, consisting of two primary blocks set at an



angle, reflects the geometry of the site. Exterior finishes include painted stucco, vertically striated concrete and wood-toned

fiber-cement panels. Shared circulation areas will be naturally ventilated to reduce reliance on mechanical cooling.

Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital & Medical Center

Christiansted, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands

Flad Architects | Tampa, Florida

In September 2017, the U.S. Virgin Islands were hit by two catastrophic hurricanes — Irma and Maria — in just two weeks. The double disasters severely damaged the already outmoded Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital & Medical Center — the only such facility on the island of St. Croix — highlighting the urgent need for a replacement.

Flad Architects is designing a new 482,000-square-foot, 115-bed facility that will bring expanded and improved care to St. Croix's 40,000 residents as well as patients from neighboring islands. Given St. Croix's vulnerability to various natural disasters, including not just hurricanes but earthquakes and tsunamis, coupled with the island's notoriously fragile electrical and other infrastructure, the design team is



Significant blending of indoor and outdoor spaces includes extensive natural light and clear, open views to the ocean, promoting patient recovery and enhancing staff and visitor experiences.

focusing on resilience and adaptability, incorporating redundant systems, low-energy operation capabilities and enhanced water efficiency. A lushly

planted entry courtyard and a green roof will mitigate the building's environmental impact while creating welcome fresh-air amenities for patients, visitors and staff.

Silica City Master Plan

Silica City, Guyana

University of Miami School of Architecture / Perkins&Will

Coral Gables / Miami, Florida

With the discovery in 2015 of oil deposits off the coast of Guyana, the long underdeveloped South American country is now poised to become one of the world's leading offshore oil producers. The discovery led Guyana's president, Mohamed Irfaan Ali, to champion the construction of a new urban center dubbed Silica City, to build away from the flood-prone capital of Georgetown. Irfaan Ali envisions a sustainable city with a diversified economy including a high-tech Innovation Village, cultural facilities and a university campus.



A University of Miami team led by Professor Jose Gelabert-Navia, AIA, and supported by the Miami office of Perkins&Will has been collaborating with the Guyana Innovation Group and the Guyanese government — notably the president and the minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal — to develop a master plan for Silica City. The plan consists of a cluster of linked nodes organized around key uses. Development-free buffer zones will protect natural features such as creeks and forests, as well as Indigenous communities.



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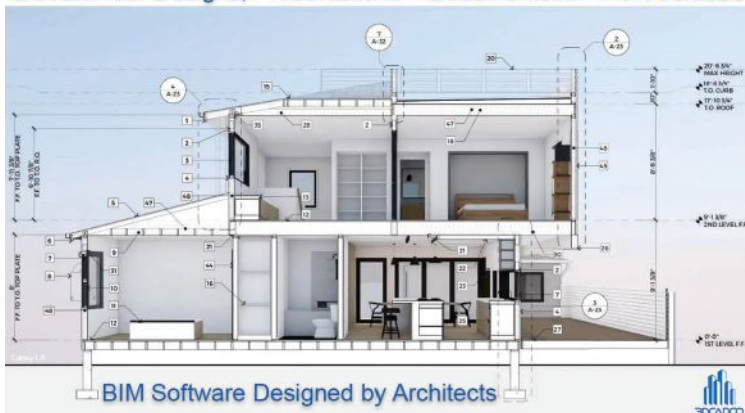
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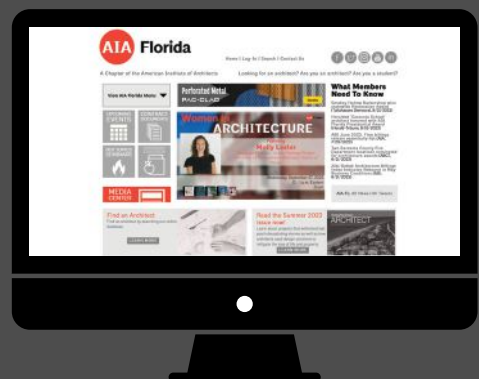


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