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# Architect Outlook

## BRINGING INNOVATION AND PRODUCTIVITY HOME

Mark Johnson, FAIA, AIBD

Innovation is a major force behind the tremendous productivity gains in the U.S. I suggest that these gains are spilling over from the workplace into the home and creating new expectations. It follows that consumers are seeking to be “incredibly productive” in all areas of life. Whirlpool Corporation detected this pent-up demand through extensive consumer research and has responded with breakthrough products noted for their imaginative utility.



The long-term growth rate of productivity is currently projected at 2.5% per year, which will allow living standards to double in just 28 years. It's not difficult to predict that as affluence spreads, architects and building designers will find a larger audience of clients who are able to both afford design services and build homes that maximize efficiency.

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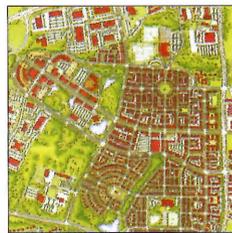
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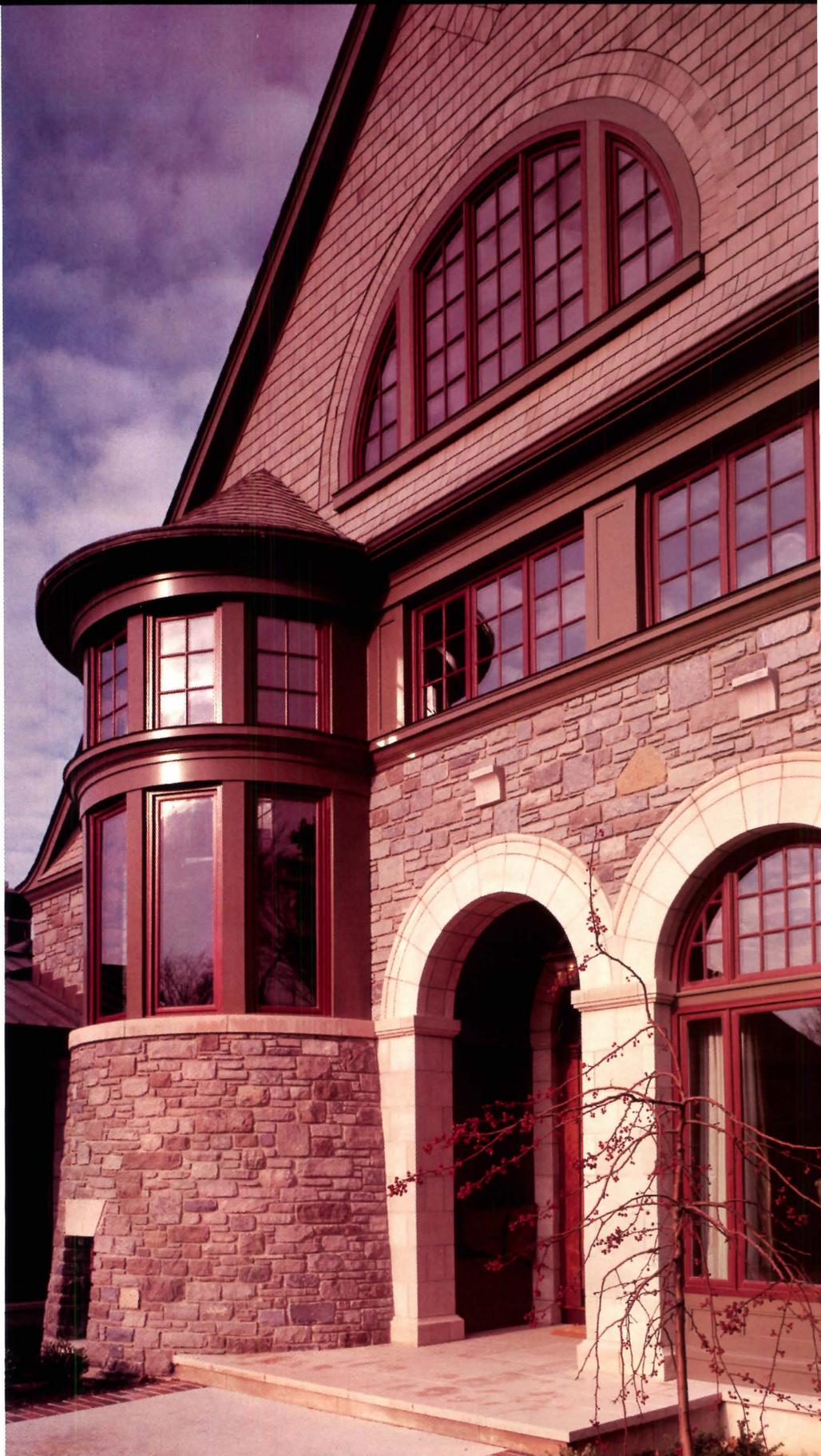
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from the editor

# the name game

should you name your firm after a person, place, or thing?

by s. claire conroy

When journalists observe something unusual, they make a mental note of it. If they see it again, they think they've discovered a trend. Three times, and they'll probably write about it. Last issue, we covered five young architecture firms finding their way in the profession (November/December 2003, "Start-ups"). At some point, each had to name their fledgling enterprise. Three out of the five chose abstract names rather than their own monikers. We had "In Site: Architecture," "Architect Works," and "Inscape Studio." Many other baby firms we considered profiling had similar "concept" names instead of the usual "John Hancock Architects." I think there's a movement afoot among young architects toward a more democratic or even collective approach to running a company.

Choosing a concept name allows architects elbow room to reinvent themselves over the years. Maybe they'll add partners, associates, or other related design pros to the mix. Everyone feels a greater sense of ownership (even if only principals hold the shares) and belonging, or so the theory goes. The firm

is a team, even if it's obvious there's a star player or two. This template solves a number of problems. Chief among them is that the public identity resides with the practice and not with a single practitioner. So, if an important principal decides to leave one day or joins Frank Lloyd Wright in the great beyond, the firm doesn't have to reconceive itself. It simply chugs along, doing what it's always done.

Some established firms who've survived the loss of a key "name" partner have also chosen the "brand" route. When Sarah Susanka left Mulfinger, Susanka, Mahady & Partners, the firm decided to choose a name that more accurately represented the collective nature of the practice. Each architect does his or her own work, rather than supporting the name partners' oeuvre. They settled on "SALA," a word that means "a special room" in Latin-based languages. According to partner Michaela Mahady, "Having our name be a single word instead of the partners' surnames shows that we're not structured traditionally, with just a few principals in control." Centerbrook Architects and Planners is another example of this solution. Responding to the departure



Mark Robert Halper

of founding partner Charles Moore, the firm renamed itself after its home base of Centerbrook, Conn. Both SALA and Centerbrook are pleasant-sounding names that suggest a quality of work.

More activist-sounding names can also convey a message. For instance, calling your firm "Resolution: 4 Architecture," as Joseph Tanney and Robert Luntz, architects of the Dwell Home, have done, implies a high-concept venture. Indeed, the firm is committed to the advancement of modular technologies as a means of making houses more affordable.

The brand or concept route may well be the way of the future, but I wonder if we lose something important in barreling down that path

without detour. Custom home design, in particular among niches, with its intimate relationship between client and architect, seems to cry out for a real person's name on the plans—a special talent in charge. Maybe I'm not ready yet to give up the idea of star architects. And I don't mean the clichéd prima donnas who browbeat their clients into paying for their vision, but the gifted few who stand just a bit taller than the rest. **ra**

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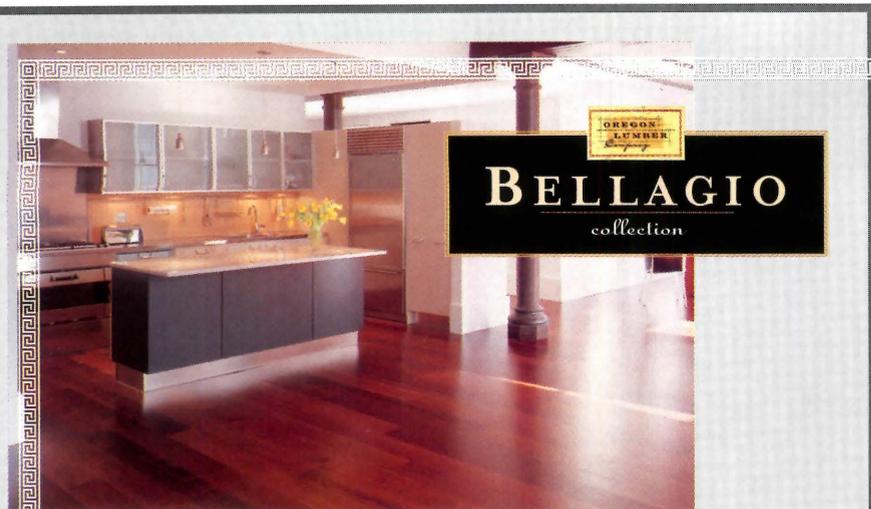
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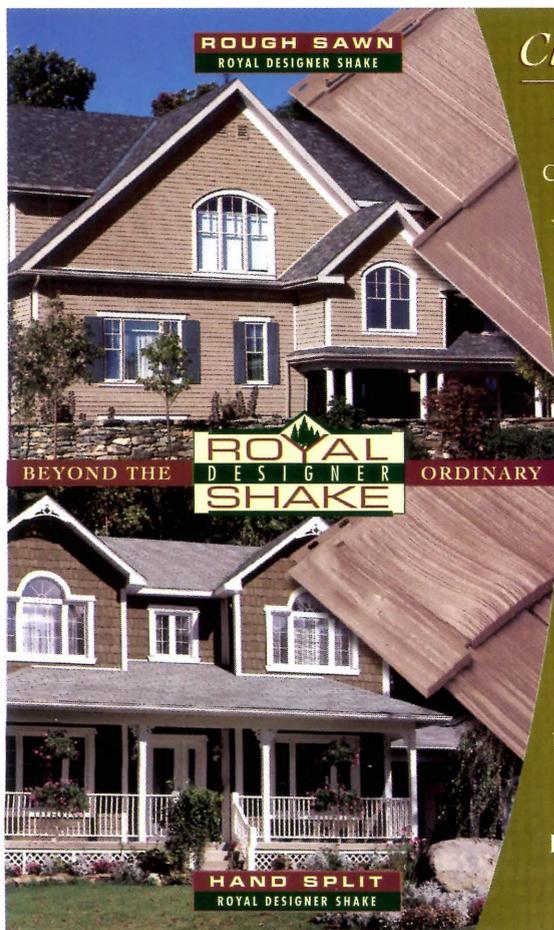
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# letters

keep those cards, letters, and e-mails coming.

## barrier beef

I very much enjoyed your editorial in the July issue of *residential architect* (“Vacation in Place,” page 15). We routinely rail against the “devil’s appraisal system” and the resale conventions that, as you say, “indenture” home buyers, trapping them “in the dull status quo.” The idea that people may look

make use of your arguments in my practice, I am uncomfortable with the apparent reality that most vacation homes diminish the quality of the beautiful surrounding environment for everyone but the private owners. The examples in this issue of your magazine (“No Vacancy,” page 68) appear to be on large tracts of land right in the middle of the cherished natural environments we would all love to visit.

For every home like Ron Mason’s 17-acre camp (left), several families are fenced off from access to the wilderness by these private barriers. The homes are all beautiful and wonderfully simple and personal; however, they sit empty much of the year while other people go without adequate housing.

We need a better balance in our system of providing housing and we need to encourage more sharing of access to our natural treasures and less sprawl-inducing use of the land.

*Michael Kephart  
Kephart Architects  
Denver*

## wake-up call

I have been a heart patient since 1968, with several attacks and bypass surgery twice since then. Recently, my wife

joined the heart-attack ranks, with a bypass and valve replacement. We have thus started to pursue a retirement home much more vigorously than we did during the years of my problems.

Out of the hundreds of floor plans and models that are sent to me, not one addresses the problems of ADA or even senior difficulties that come with advanced birthday syndrome. When will architects who design retirement communities wake up and realize that they are designing for seniors with at least a few problems of mobility? Even the model homes we visited presented barriers that gave us difficulties.

Here in Fayetteville, they have an annual New Home Week. Not one of the homes we have seen over the eight years we have been trying to relocate has been wheelchair-accessible! We may not be quite that far yet, but stairs can still be a burden. Also commodes that are buried in 2-by-4 closets. And spa tubs with high sides and no grab bars.

Come on, you guys. Wake up and realize that seniors are a significant segment of the home-buying public.

*Don Kemp  
by e-mail*

## vacation inspiration

I have been a reader of your publication for the past few months, and find the quality exceptional. Though all our work is not residential, it is our favorite sector.

Your editorial in the June issue was incredibly timely (“Art or Service?” page 11).

While I was vacationing on the South Carolina coast, sitting on the beach trying to relax and untangle the problems of running a small practice for 20 years, your editorial gave me a new way of looking at what we “have to do.” Even the least attractive project can indeed be a real opportunity.

Yes, we are all lucky to be in this work.

Thanks for the inspiration.

*Ronald P. Hadaway,  
Associate AIA  
HDH Partners  
Atlanta*

## redlines

*residential architect* would like to clarify a quote from Todd Hansen in the November/December 2003 story “Start-ups.” The quote, which begins on page 54 and ends on page 56, should read: “I was bringing in projects that represented a third of total billing in my last year there.”



Greg Hursley

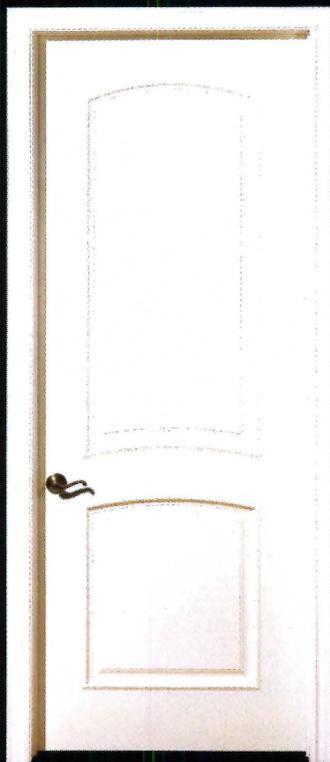
at second homes or vacation homes in a more personal and unfettered way clearly points out that there are more important qualities in home design than those continually regurgitated by what I call “the evil axis”—the real estate, appraisal, and banking industries.

While I found the concept you proposed enlightening and will certainly



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# home front

tips and trends from the world of residential design

## celebrity siting

**a**ndersen Windows is holding a premiere at the Sundance Film Festival. But the century-old window company hasn't branched out into making movies.

Instead, it's opening a new show home, the Andersen inHOME, on January 15, the day the festival begins. Located in independent-movie mecca Park City, Utah, the project uses both old-fashioned and cutting-edge technologies to

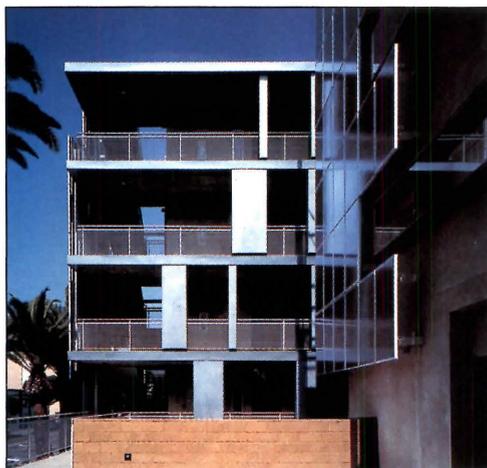
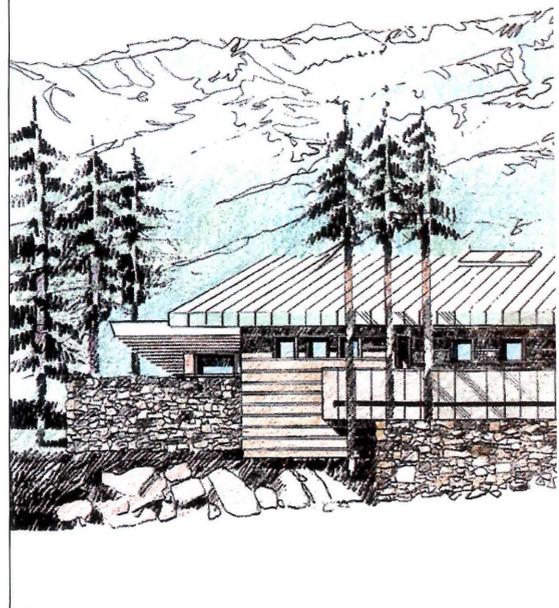
show architects and builders just how much of an impact windows can have on a home.

Michael Plautz, AIA, of RSP Architects in Minneapolis, strung

the floor plan along its ridged site to take full advantage of mountain and city views. He carefully placed exterior windows and doors to allow passive heating and cooling. And he visually expanded the 6,000-square-foot house with a windowed winter garden that opens up sight

lines throughout the first floor. "This house is not about adding more windows," he says. "It's about a more thoughtful use of windows."

In addition to time-honored techniques like passive solar design, Plautz incorporated some high-tech ideas from



Courtesy National Building Museum

Among the 18 projects in the National Building Museum's exhibition "Affordable Housing: Designing an American Asset" are the Row 8.9n Townhomes (left), by Nashville, Tenn.-based Everton Oglesby Architects, and Colorado Courts (right), by Pugh + Scarpa Architecture in Santa Monica, Calif.

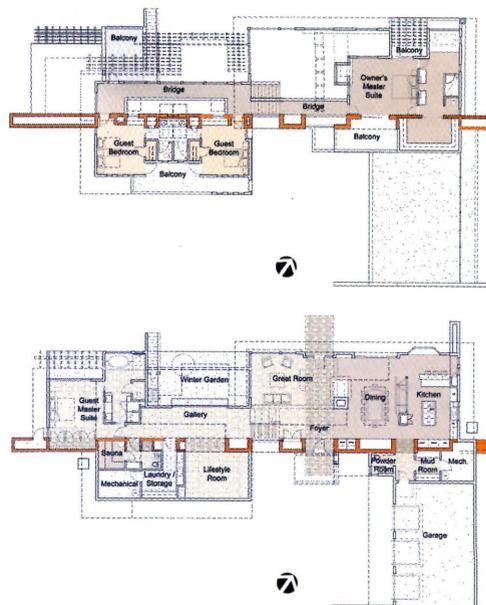
## shelter show

**a**ffordable housing can and should be beautiful. That's the premise of "Affordable Housing: Designing an American Asset," a new exhibition at the National Building Museum opening February 28 and continuing through August 8, in Washington, D.C. "Housing is the topic of greatest interest to our visitors," says NBM chief curator Howard Decker, FAIA, "but this is an issue within the built environment that most people don't think about. We've selected 18 fantastic projects that we hope will help dispel the negative myths that Americans have about affordable housing."

Models, photographs, drawings, computer simulations, and videos illustrate the designs,



Courtesy Andersen Windows



For the Andersen inHOME at Sundance Film Festival, Michael Plautz, AIA, combined common-sense passive solar design with newly developed window technology.

Andersen's research department. Many of the rooms, for example, feature interior windows with switchable glazing. The glass goes from clear to opaque with the touch of a button. The company's multimedia window concepts, in which panes of glass serve as computer screens

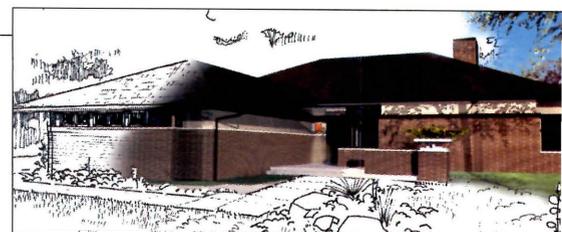
and speakers, make appearances, too. None of these futuristic prototypes have made it into the marketplace yet; their purpose in the house is to stimulate the imagination. "The inHOME is really a test lab for Andersen, not so much to test new products as to explore what the next

trends in windows are going to be," says Frank Quadflieg, director of marketing communications at Andersen. The home will remain open by appointment through the end of the 2005 Sundance Film Festival. For more information, go to [www.anderseninhome.com](http://www.anderseninhome.com).—*meghan drueding*

which were selected from among 180 nationwide submissions. A database of all submissions and involved architects will be available on CD and through the museum's Web site. A related symposium on March 30 and 31 will discuss the viability and benefits of good design in affordable housing. And a corresponding exhibition titled "Stories of Home" (December 4 through March 7) will present photographs and narratives exploring the impact of affordable-home ownership. Lectures by the architects and tours of those projects in the D.C. area are also scheduled. For museum hours, call 202.272.2448 or go to [www.nbm.org](http://www.nbm.org).—*shelley d. hutchins*

## planning ahead

**K**en Dahlin, AIA, wants to serve mid-range home buyers by offering a design-savvy alternative to "bland builder production homes that all look alike." This spring, he's moving his family into a prototype "New Prairie Concept Home." Clients will use the house's floor plans and elevations as a starting point, and Dahlin's firm, Racine, Wis.-based Genesis Architecture, will tailor the home for a set fee. "I've felt for years that a client who wants a home of \$250,000 to \$400,000 is underserved by production homes, but it's difficult to design a house from scratch in that range and make a profit," Dahlin says. The 2,600-square-foot concept home can be built for \$110 to \$150 per square foot; an additional \$10,000 service package covers architectural consultation, site planning, interior design services, and coordination with the builder. Borrowing from Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian principals, the design features an open, streamlined floor plan. Insulated Concrete Forms (ICFs) and Lite-Deck concrete flooring with radiant-heating systems contribute energy efficiency and durability. "The look is a little more conservative than I would normally design, but I wanted to appeal to a broad range of people," says Dahlin.—*s.d.h.*



Courtesy Genesis Architecture

calendar

**ceramic tiles of italy design competition**

deadline: january 30

Celebrating its 11th year, this awards competition recognizes inventive use of Italian ceramic tile. A winner in each category—residential, commercial, and institutional—receives \$5,000 plus a trip to Coverings 2004 in Orlando, Fla. Winners are also eligible for a trip to Cersaie 2004 in Bologna, Italy. Shown: The O’Neill Center for Healthy Families, by Scranton, Penn.–based Hemmler + Camayd Architects, winner of the 2003 residential prize. For entry requirements, call 718.783.3160 or visit [www.italytile.com](http://www.italytile.com).



Christopher Barone

**frederick p. rose architectural fellowship**

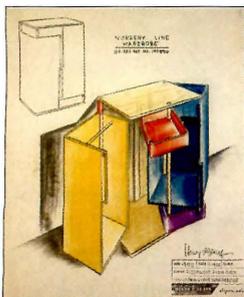
deadline: march 29

Sponsored by the Enterprise Foundation, this fellowship awards new architects a \$40,000-a-year stipend plus benefits and training opportunities for three years. In exchange, fellows partner with nonprofit organizations to design and build community-based projects such as affordable housing. Call 435.655.3226 for an application or go to <http://www.enterprisefoundation.org/RoseFellowship/>.

**the world of henry glass**

january 9–april 10

architech gallery, chicago



After fleeing Vienna in 1938, architect and industrial designer Henry P. Glass came to the U.S., where he enjoyed an illustrious career spanning 65 years. He worked under Russell Wright and Gilbert Rohde and went on to design hotels, showrooms, and innovative furniture, such as this 1950 Swingline Wardrobe.

Architech’s exhibition showcases Glass’ drawings, models, and prototypes. For gallery hours, call 312.475.1290 or visit [www.architechgallery.com](http://www.architechgallery.com).

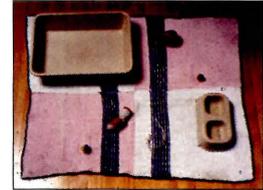
**from house to home: picturing domesticity**

february 1–may 3

moca at the pacific design center, west hollywood, calif.

Through a variety of media, contemporary artists convey their vision of what makes a house a home.

Featured luminaries include Kevin Appel, Jeff Koons, and Joel Shapiro. Shown: *Ougi*, by Mike Kelley, 1990. For more details, call 213.626.6222 or go to [www.moca.org](http://www.moca.org).



Courtesy MOCA

**world of concrete**

february 16–20

orange county convention center, orlando, fla.



Operating in conjunction with the World of Masonry and sponsored by residential architect’s parent

company, Hanley Wood, this conference and trade show encompasses more than 1,500 exhibitors and 96 educational seminars in nine different tracks, including residential and decorative specialties. To register, call 866.962.7469 or visit [www.worldofconcrete.com](http://www.worldofconcrete.com).

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**continuing exhibits**

**Frank O. Gehry: Work in Progress**, through January 26, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 213.621.2766; **Stories of Home**, through March 7, National Building Museum, Washington, D.C., 202.272.2448; **The Undiscovered Richard Meier: The Architect as Designer and Artist**, through April 4, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 404.733.4400.—*shelley d. hutchins*



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Stahr Home

# k + b studio

## kitchen: concrete impressions

Few can resist the lure of smooth, wet concrete calling out for carved initials or a quick hand imprint while no one's looking. Designer, artist, and concrete fabricator Fu-Tung Cheng of Berkeley, Calif.-based Cheng Design has been yielding to such temptation since the early 1980s, and perfecting its artful application ever since. "Concrete is fundamentally earthier than granite or other stone," explains Cheng. "It's an earth matrix that nature sets up with a variety of aggregates that we select and mix up to create our own result."

In this 24-by-18-foot kitchen, Cheng enhanced and softened the naturally rugged appearance of concrete with polished surfaces, integrated color, embedded gemstones, and his signature ammonite fossil imprints. The homeowner, says Cheng, is an artist who "wanted to live with art rather than display it."

The elliptical island holds a six-burner gas cooktop with slide-out storage for cookware below. Its sides slope gently inward to eliminate the need for a toekick, accentuating the material's monolithic character. Because concrete can stain, Cheng tucked a perforated stainless steel shelf into the corner curve to serve as a receptacle for hot pots and cold drinks.

The floors of the informal eating area are also poured-in-place concrete, as is the half-wall that supports one end of the dining table and delineates the adjacent vaulted living room. The nearby floating stairs are cast concrete bolstered by steel ziggurats tied into floor joists. Although delicately rendered, all this concrete is quite weighty and requires careful attention to structural engineering. The accommodation is worth it, Cheng says, because substance and mass are a solid part of concrete's appeal.—*shelley d. hutchins*



Not an inch of island space is wasted. Wide, roll-out drawers provide storage for pots and pans. Perforated stainless steel doors conceal a trash-bin cubby (opposite page, far right.)



In addition to concrete, the kitchen's palette of materials includes custom-made ceramic tile designed exclusively for Cheng, maple floors, sycamore cabinets, stainless steel shelves and countertops, and Honduran mahogany accents.



Photos: Matthew Millman



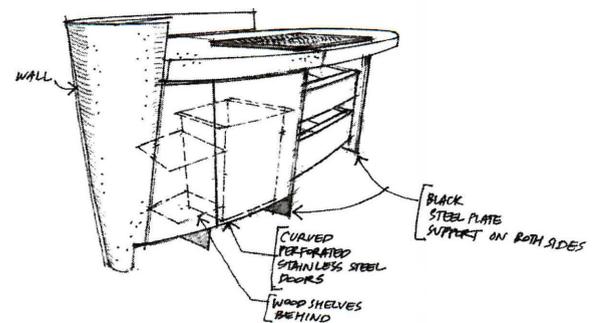
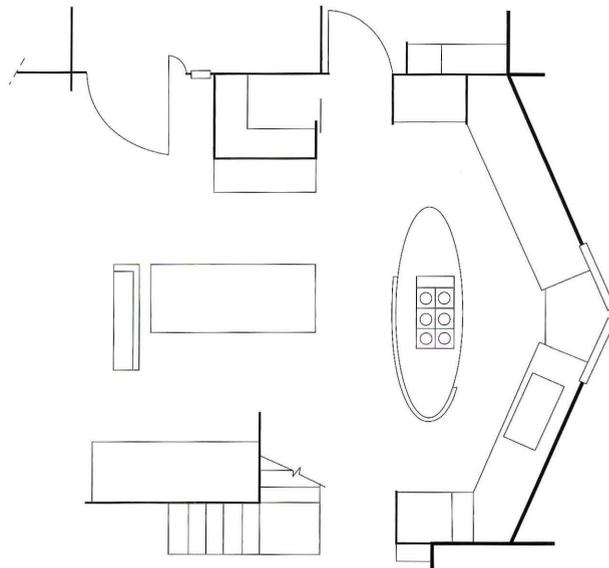
**designer:** Cheng Design, Berkeley, Calif.

**general contractor:** Tom Heyenga Construction, San Jose, Calif.; **cabinet-maker:** Guba & Associates, Oakland, Calif.

**resources:** ceramic tile: Gary Holt Design; light fixtures: Halo; plumbing fixtures: KWC; range: Russell; range hood: Cheng Design; refrigerator: Sub-Zero; oven: Gaggenau



The concept for the open, eat-in kitchen was "multiple island areas that were useful sculptures," says Cheng. Positioned around the main island are an informal dining table, a desk, and a small sitting nook.



# k + b studio

## bath: gray's concrete anatomy

“Concrete is fluid and shapeable. Aesthetically, there are many ways to get different effects. But it’s also heavy and expensive,” says Malibu, Calif.–based architect David Lawrence Gray, FAIA. Gray believes strongly enough in its benefits that reinforced concrete is the sole structural material for all of his designs. As in most of his projects, the architect’s own Malibu beach home features post-and-beam concrete construction with

radiant-heated concrete floors.

The material is left exposed and unsealed throughout—even in wet spaces such as this master bath. Gray describes his house as “a concrete skeleton with glass, stone, and glass-block infill.”

The “infill” for the concrete-wrapped master bath consists of marble for an open shower/soaking tub and glass block for the exterior wall. Steel-framed transparent glass above the tub is part of a skylight cruciform that runs the entire length and width of the third floor. A north-facing transom completes the glass litany, offering bathers direct sunlight from dawn to dusk.

Gray selected sustainably harvested teak doors as a nod to the waterfront setting and to add warmth.

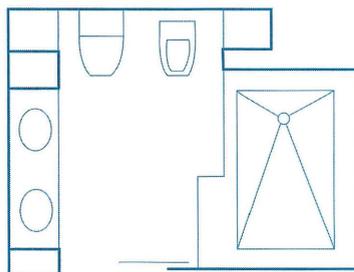
“Wood is beautiful but impractical,” notes Gray. “Concrete is a timeless material that minimizes threats of fire, flood, rot, mold, termites, salt water, and extreme temperatures. And it’s green building in its purest sense.”—*shelley d. hutchins*



Tim Street-Porter



Courtesy David Gray



Sunlight streams through a gabled skylight and transom, warming the bathroom’s concrete walls and marble tub. Glass block admits more light while affording bathers privacy.

**architect:** David Lawrence Gray Architects, AIA, Malibu, Calif.

**general contractor:** LCG Construction, Malibu;  
**structural engineer:** Dimitri Vergun, Santa Monica, Calif.

**resources:** cabinets: Siematic; light fixtures: Halo and Lightolier; plumbing fittings and fixtures: Dornbracht and American Standard



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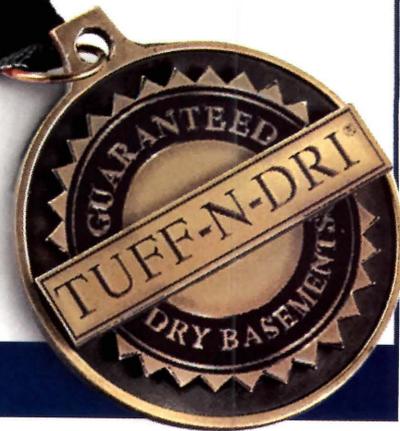
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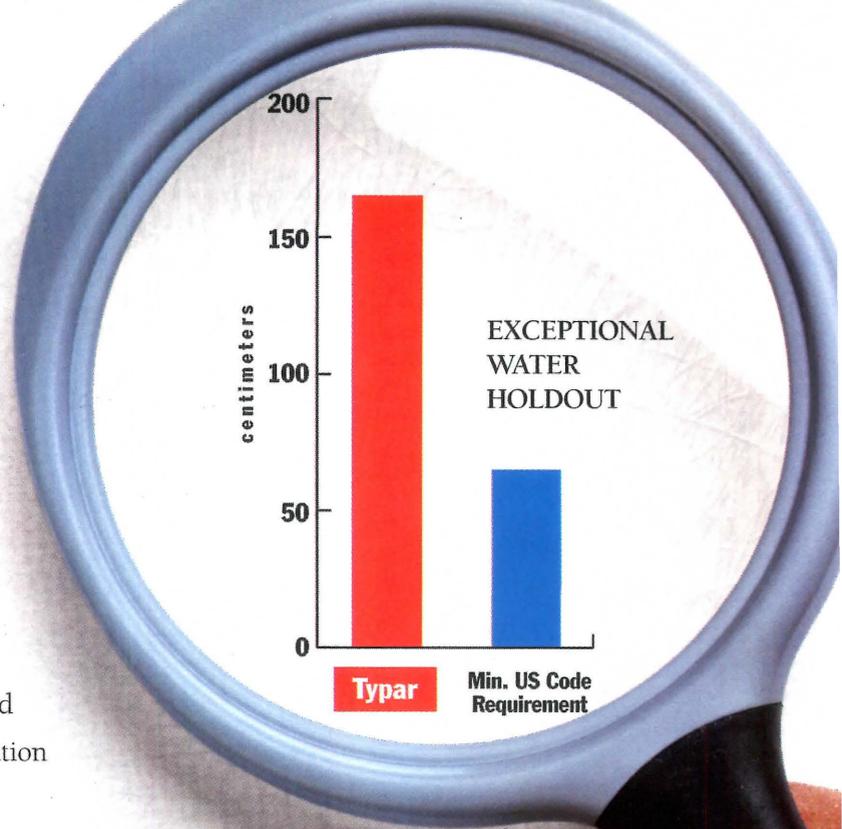
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# model behavior

designing a show home is not all glamour and congeniality.

by donald m. rattner

**b**y definition, a model home is a dwelling created for purposes that go beyond the standard rationale of providing shelter or profit. In some instances a model home may be fueled by a social, aesthetic, or philosophical agenda, as when Prince Albert erected a prototypical worker's cottage in London's Hyde Park in 1851. Albert's effort to improve the conditions of a social class became the progenitor of many socially minded model homes created in America and Europe since then.

In some cases these demonstration dwellings, as they were later termed, simultaneously provided architects with an opportunity to advance an artistic program. Best known to design professionals today are the 20th-century houses built to espouse Modernism. In America, the Case Study Houses designed by various architects and built in California from 1945 to 1966 epitomize the confluence of aesthetic and altruistic objectives. Conceived and published by John Entenza in his magazine *Arts & Architecture*, the homes promoted the notion that Modern design could



Photos: (top) Mick Hales; (above) Maura McEvoy

Rattner's design for the *Town & Country* show home at The Greenbrier in West Virginia sets an upscale tone for the new community being developed at this historic resort. Working with interior designer Victoria Hagan of New York, he created a home that respects the formality of its context while accommodating contemporary lifestyles.

address the requirements of postwar, middle-class suburban life from a technological, artistic, and cost perspective.

Model homes have seldom been produced purely for charitable purposes, however. Entenza's homes were created in collaboration with developer-builders, sold for profit, and occupied. In many cases ven-

dors of building materials or technologies provide their products at a discount in order to access a potential market. Architects assume their practices will benefit from the accrued exposure. In fact, nearly every party involved likely enters into the project expecting to advance their corporate objectives as well as larger, collective goals.

## first resort

Lately a new variation of the model home has appeared that injects its historical characteristics into a contemporary context. This current permutation emanates from developers using model homes as a mechanism for promoting their projects.

I recently completed one such home at The Green-

brier, a historic springs resort in West Virginia, on behalf of the Georgia-based development company Dolan, Pollak & Schram. Its uniqueness as a project type offers insights into the opportunities and challenges for architects working on nonconventional houses.

Several aspects of the Greenbrier commission were appealing. From an architectural standpoint, the most intriguing was the chance to promulgate in built form a standard for design and construction quality applicable to the emerging community. Facing the sobering reality that I might not be the only architect ever to design a custom home there, I drew up a set of design guidelines per the developer's request. These rules would ensure a coherent vision for the other custom homes, as well as reinforce property values by setting high standards. Our model home would be expected to com-

qualities of a 200-year-old resort, while adapting this legacy to the needs of 21st-century homeowners. These dual qualities gave me occasion to explore my growing interest in synthesizing Traditional and Modern design, adding to the appeal of the project on a personal level.

Of course, pursuing one's artistic interests might be routine for many architects, but the Greenbrier job differed from the normal process in that the client did not exist. Instead, the project team created a fictional client profile to drive the program and provide a basis for making decisions. While one might think this would be typical for a speculative home, it is unlikely that most developer-builders give it the depth we did or contend with the thematically rich context of The Greenbrier. More important, once the schematic design and image of the house were determined, the developers largely left design

model would be among the first custom homes to be designed for the 500-lot, 5,000-acre property. Coming to a development so early positioned us well for creating the relationships and tangible products necessary to pursue other private commissions there. Once the house was built, it would serve as a three-dimensional brochure for our architectural qualifications.

Equally beneficial would be the exposure offered by *Town & Country* magazine, with whom the developers had partnered to produce the house. A large-circulation, upscale publication, the magazine committed itself to producing a lavish story at the project's conclusion. It also brought most of the vendors into the project. The magazine's presence echoed the intertwining of architecture and media in the famed Case Study Houses, and underscored the fact that each participant benefits from the other.

Finally, the project created an attractive opportunity to work closely with a highly talented interior designer, Victoria Hagan. Victoria's keen eye and architectural sensibility yielded a better scheme than would have resulted if we'd worked alone.

### final analysis

Despite these enticing circumstances, an architect ought not lose sight of potential hurdles in this kind of project. Foremost among them is financial sacrifice. Often the architect will be

required to lower or defer fees until sale, in return for enjoying future benefits. Putting further pressure on this decision is the additional time required to coordinate an expanded project team. Generating marketing materials, interacting with the magazine, and facing intractable deadlines add extra hours of work.

Since *model homes* today are frequently driven by interior design, architects also should evaluate the degree to which their efforts will be appreciated. Fortunately, in her *Town & Country* essay, design writer Sarah Medford discussed at length the value of fostering collaboration between architect and interior designer. Her doing so not only helped validate our efforts, but also advanced an important idea for the public as a whole.

Last year the Greenbrier residence was sold for a substantial sum, and in October 2003 the owners moved in. At that point the model house became a real home, and our work as its architects was truly done. ■

*Donald M. Rattner undertook the Town & Country show home while a partner at Ferguson Shamamian & Rattner. He founded the New York City firm Studio for Civil Architecture in 2002. Rattner is also working with residential architect's sister publication BUILDER on a show home for the 2005 International Builders' Show.*

“an architect ought not lose sight of the potential hurdles in this kind of project.”



Courtesy Studio for Civil Architecture

municate these values clearly and skillfully.

Advancing the aesthetic interests of the developer neatly dovetailed with my own artistic proclivities. We both sought to respect the historic and environmental

to the project team, giving us substantial latitude for creativity.

### plus side

More material considerations were evaluated as well, such as the fact that this



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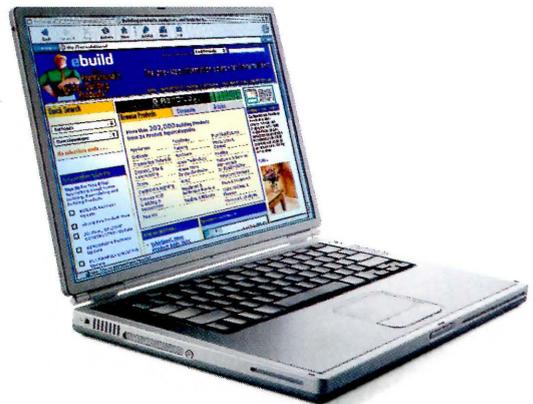
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3. Visit manufacturer's Web site.
4. Spend next two evenings going through trade catalogs.
5. Ask my contact at local supply house.
6. Hunt down Frank at the lumberyard.
7. Frank thinks that product was discontinued.
8. Attend trade show one week later.
9. Success! I found the manufacturer!
10. Sales rep in booth will call me back with local distributor contact.
11. Wait one week.
12. Sales rep calls with distributor name.
13. Call distributor, leave message with Jessica, the receptionist.
14. Wait two more days.
15. Sales rep calls back, can't fully answer my warranty questions.
16. Or my specifications questions.
17. And he can't give me CAD drawings.
18. Order product.
19. Wait two weeks for delivery.
20. Product arrives—with no manual.
21. Call sales rep, leave message with Jessica.
22. Grasp hair firmly at temples.
23. Bellow loudly.
24. Pull hair out.
25. Discover installation instructions are also missing.
26. Wonder why you didn't listen to your mother and become one of those nice park rangers.
27. Or a piano player, like cousin Geoffrey.
28. Inform client of delay.
29. Switch to another job for the rest of the week.
30. Next week, sales rep returns call, promises manufacturer will overnight warranty information, manual, and installation instructions.
31. "Overnight" apparently means "within 7 to 10 business days."
32. Receive collateral materials.
33. Install product.
34. Send résumé to National Park Service.
35. Rent "Grizzly

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# shades of gray

developing a seniors-housing niche means splitting a few hairs.

by cheryl weber

In Naples, Fla., WCI Communities recently completed a beachfront tower that targets well-heeled buyers in their 50s. Its penthouse is priced at \$12 million. In Atlanta, James, Harwick + Partners is designing a subsidized apartment building for low-income retirees that includes a surround-sound theater and a fitness center. And in Sarasota, Fla., the master-planned Lakewood Ranch community will include an on-site assisted-living facility.

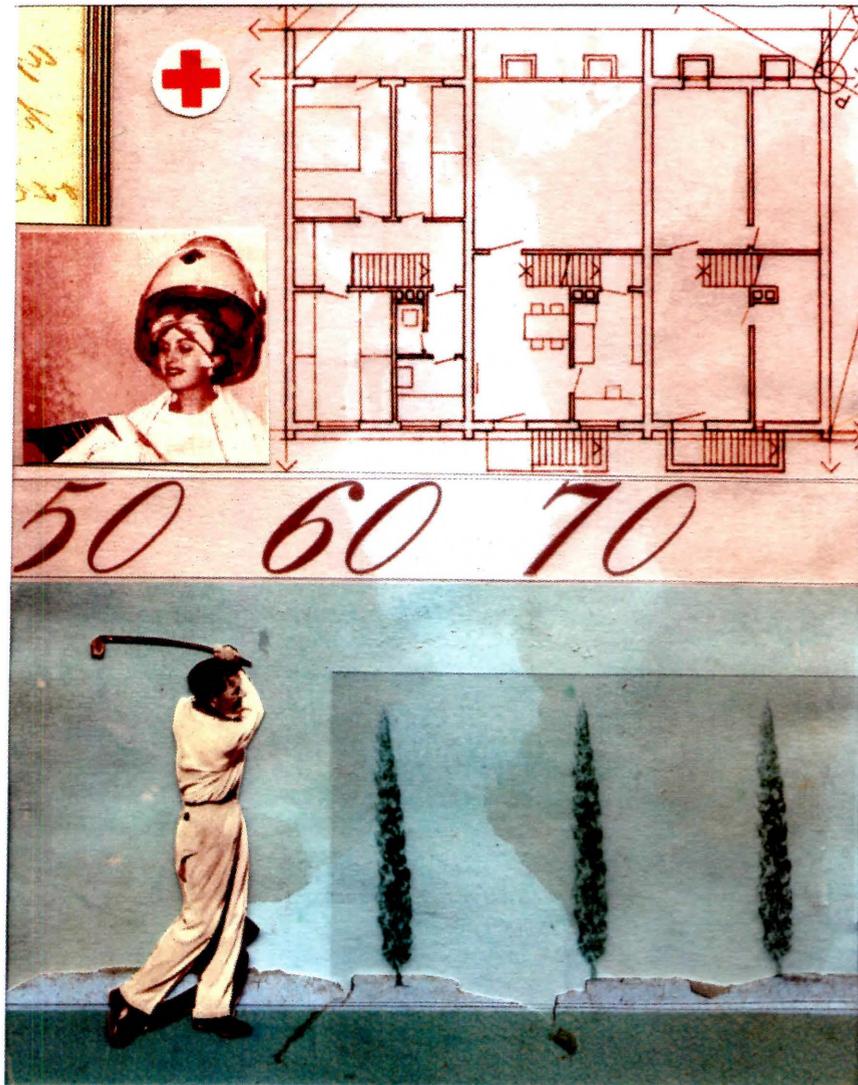
Once upon a time, so-called seniors housing was designed for the 70ish set. In addition to institutional nursing homes, it usually consisted of apartments or a string of cottages with access to medical care. But architects doing retirement housing today are dealing with a more discerning and complex group of buyers, people whose ages can span 40 years and whose income levels, lifestyles, and health needs range just as widely. The types of businesses venturing into this market have become more diverse, too. Private developers, non-profit groups, large corporations, hospitals, insurance companies, and universities all are getting in on the act.

As the market heats up, architects who can identify the hot buttons of baby-boomer housing and provide thoughtful, cost-conscious design have a ready-made niche that will take them far into the future.

Retirement housing has many parts. At one end of the spectrum are active-adult communities that look, to

consumers, like any other residential development. About 9.5 million U.S. households are living in age-targeted or age-restricted communities, estimates the NAHB Seniors Housing Council. At the other end of the line are continuing-care facilities—more than 17,000 in the U.S., according to Thomas Fairchild, director

of special projects on aging at the University of North Texas, Fort Worth. Between these extremes are independent-living projects, which offer hospitality services, and assisted-living facilities, which are hard to define because they have no single blueprint and regulations governing them vary from state to state. The Assisted



Jackie Parsons

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## practice

Living Federation of America defines an assisted-living facility as a core of housing with personalized services for those who need help with daily living, including nursing care for Alzheimer's patients. ALFA puts the number of such residences at 20,000. But it's the active-adult segment that's growing the fastest, because boomers are retiring earlier.

### retirees at play

"The number of active-adult communities is growing rapidly, largely because of the recognition that baby boomers are marching toward golden ponds," Fairchild says. Indeed, most production architects have been led into age-restricted housing by their longtime clients. As baby boomers entered their 50s and 60s over the past decade, developers moved with the market. Vacation destinations such as Hilton Head, S.C., evolved into retirement havens. Now, though, builders are seeing growth opportunities outside of Sun Belt states, in metro areas like Cleveland and Chicago. Many retirees have no intention of leaving the familiarity of their hometown.

Like any other housing market, the active-adult segment of the seniors population breaks down into niches from which architects can pick and choose. "The fragmentation of the market is the thing we're all paying attention to," says Mike Kephart, Kephart Architects, Denver. "What can they afford? What cultural background do they come from?"

*"the fragmentation of the market is the thing we're all paying attention to. what can they afford? what cultural background do they come from? what kind of lifestyle interests do they have?"*

—mike kephart

What kind of lifestyle interests do they have—city life, rural life? The wise builders are selecting the ones they can deal with as a service, and going at it that way."

Architects who wish to pursue this market must be able to convince builders that they have a good idea who the buyers are—their interests, their income level, and their psychographics. "The biggest issue is that the active-adult buyer is a discriminating one, no matter if they are blue-collar or a corporate executive," says Gary Snider, AIA, of Bloodgood Sharp Buster's Boston office. "You have to understand the price point in your market and design to that price point. On top of that, you have to design something that's better, in terms of community planning, lifestyle, and features, than what they have now. You must be able to show them how they will live in that house now, and 10 years from now, and 10 years after that. The more specifically you define the values of your buyer profile, the more successful you will be."

Active-adult communities

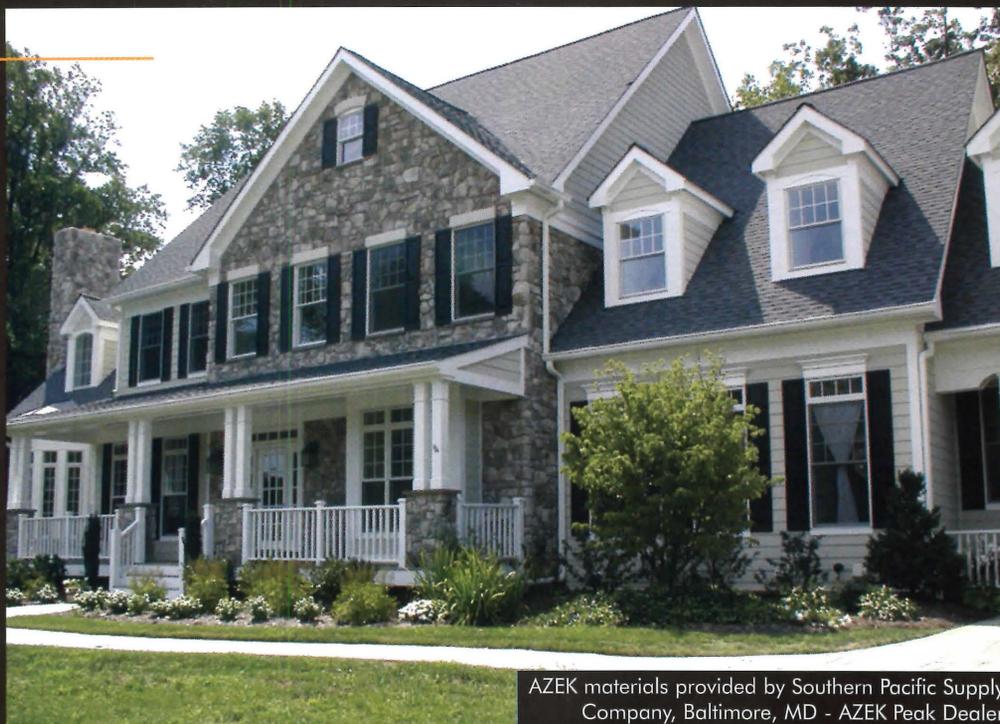
typically include some of the elements of a town center, such as a post office, a library, a large sports facility, and meeting spaces, so the land-planning element is as important as the design of the homes. Legibility issues are critical—how one navigates the site, the width and configuration of streets, and whether to use intersections or roundabouts. Developer Tom Zanic, president of New Urban West, Santa Monica, Calif., says he looks for architects who are as well-versed in the big-picture issues of community layout, technology, and security as they are in the things that make houses easier to live in, such as flexible spaces and universal design.

### aging in place

Three years ago, James, Harwick + Partners, Dallas, coattailed into seniors housing after funding for a HOPE VI project fell through. The developer, with whom JH+P had worked for 15 years, quickly put together creative financing that supported two multifamily independent-living projects on a portion

*continued on page 44*

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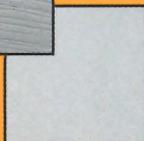
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*“the more specifically you define the values of your buyer profile, the more successful you will be.”*

—gary snider, aia

of the site. One was a three-story building with an elevator, the other a one-story building with four units. “We learned that once you provide an elevator, it’s most efficient to go to a three- or four-story building, getting as many units per floor as you can and reducing the footprint, or the distance people have to walk,” says

Ron Harwick, AIA. “It’s hard for residents to navigate long corridors.”

Through research, the firm has also learned that multifamily seniors units should be 50 to 75 square feet larger than similar market-rate apartments. That’s because most residents are leaving homes in which they’ve raised children and

have gathered furniture over the years that’s sized for a larger house. “When they make the transition to an apartment, they ought to be able to bring some of the things that are near and dear to them,” Harwick says. “We needed to educate developers about the need to upsize the living areas in the units, and the costs associated with that.” Nevertheless, he points out that the discipline of multifamily work—avoiding unnecessary circulation space such as hallways and creating rooms that look bigger—works particularly well for seniors, who want step-saving lay-

outs that feel expensive.

JH+P is partnering with the Atlanta Housing Authority and developer Columbia Residential on its second such project, subsidized seniors housing. The 132-unit rental complex will include amenities usually reserved for higher-end projects: large computer rooms, a dining area where food is brought from off-site, an arts-and-crafts room, a library, a fitness center, and a movie theater. “We had seniors housing pegged for the last four or five years as a growth niche market and did the appropriate research so we

*continued on page 46*

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*“when we do research and development on our own, without fee or compensation, clients appreciate that we have the information and are willing to share it, especially if they’re not in that market now.”*

—ron harwick, aia

could handle it when the opportunity came along,” Harwick says. “Now we’re doing independent living, but we’re headed toward assisted living and even more institutional-type markets.”

**care package**  
Baby boomers are a moving target. With increasing age come increasing health challenges. Over the years, the mix of amenities in active-adult communities has shift-

ed. Clubhouses now include offices for dentists and doctors. Small-scale medical-care facilities appear on site. In a bid to hold on to clients as they grow older, developers and land planners are designating sites in or near master-planned communities for a hospital or Mayo clinic, assisted living, and continuing care.

Don Evans, AIA, The Evans Group, Orlando, Fla., is keeping pace with aging boomers. Twenty-five percent of his firm’s work is in seniors housing now, compared with 10 percent a decade ago, though most clients assign the medical compo-

nents to specialists. “We find ourselves doing these retirement projects on a joint-venture basis,” he says. “We’re responsible for certain portions of it and oversee the project with municipalities, but are told to use a particular firm for the design of the total life-care facility.”

CSD, in Baltimore, is one of a handful of large firms across the country that design and oversee the total package, often teaming up with local architects. Its projects, many of them \$30 to \$50 million and up, include fully independent single-family homes, duplexes,  
*continued on page 48*



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*“it’s not just housing, not just nursing, and not just country club ... that’s what i find so addictive about it.”*

—glen tipton, faia

and apartments; assisted-living facilities that deal with dementia; and continuing care. “It’s very specialized because it’s not just housing, not just nursing, and not just country club,” says Glen Tipton, FAIA, the senior vice president and senior-living studio director, who oversees a staff of 90. He also chairs the AIA committee on design for aging. “It’s a mixture of hospitality, medical services, independent living—and, frankly, that’s what I find so challenging and addictive about it. We just opened an office in Dallas to begin reaching farther west, because the demand is everywhere.”

Given their complexity, the learning curve on these projects is long—Tipton says it took 10 years for CSD to get up to speed—and so is the time from concept to completion. The projects don’t have a predictable schedule, and may sit for a while in the zoning and design process. “They can take four to six years to come to fruition, so it takes staying power,” Tipton says. “You have to have the capacity to absorb the peaks and valleys of these kinds of projects moving through the firm.”

Architects must also be very familiar with multiple regulatory codes and the liabilities of a licensed environment. Because it’s self-managed, continuing care

isn’t quite as litigious as the condo industry, but “there is that aspect to it,” Tipton says. “You are being scrutinized by the legal industry for meeting legal requirements for getting these things financed, so you have to be able to work your way through the HUD process or tax-exempt bond financing.”

The projects’ finances are tightly controlled, and their cost-sensitivity can be a blind spot. Tipton notes that a good deal of value engineering goes on, and massaging the costs can require a major reversal of decisions made earlier regarding systems or the size of the project. And there is much tangential work beyond basic services, such as getting through zoning and site planning review, a process that varies greatly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

When structuring a fee, graphics services must also be identified. As marketing strategies evolve to appeal to the next generation of retirees, Tipton says, an increasing amount of material is being required, from scale models to professional renderings. Often, the architect is asked to participate in presentations to prospective residents. All of this, Tipton points out, is time-consuming.

In the past, continuing-care retirement communities have been less profitable than

the other types of projects Tipton’s firm takes on. But he expects that to change as clients get savvier about the relationship between fees and services received. “We’re very thoughtful about the work that’s required, and use that to negotiate the fee,” he says. “We’re working off years of experience to educate the owner.”

### getting connected

To tweak Ikea’s slogan: It’s a big market, someone’s got to serve it. Architects are entering the gray areas selectively and through various means. Designing an age-targeted community for WCI Communities gave JBZ Architecture + Planning, Newport Beach, Calif., an entree into some assisted-living projects. The firm is currently working on one in Corona del Mar,

Calif., with a small builder. “We’ve limited ourselves to doing high-end projects because the major assisted-living builders seem to use a formula approach,” says Don Jacobs, AIA. “We like a customized approach, almost like working on a boutique hotel.”

Having spent several years doing research through the Internet, conferences, and trade publications, JH+P takes the initiative to educate its clients. “We like to work as a team with our clients,” Harwick says. “When we do research and development on our own, without fee or compensation, they appreciate that we have the information and will share it, especially if they’re not in that market now. Usually we do design sketches and studies, looking at costs of projects to give

*continued on page 50*

## who’s who in the seniors housing industry

Participating in industry events gives architecture firms exposure to the big guns and the best ideas. Check out these professional associations and their Web sites to receive information on major conferences, award-winning designs, newsletters, and the latest market trends.—c.w.

**AIA Design for Aging Knowledge Community**, Washington, D.C., 202.626.7300; [www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org)

**American Association of Homes and Services for Aging**, Washington, D.C., 202.783.2242; [www.aahsa.com](http://www.aahsa.com)

**Assisted Living Federation of America**, Fairfax, Va., 703.691.8100; [www.alfa.com](http://www.alfa.com)

**NAHB Seniors Housing Council**, Washington, D.C., 202.822.0200; [www.nahb.org](http://www.nahb.org)

**Urban Land Institute**, Washington, D.C., 202.624.7000; [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org)



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*“it’s how you position the amenities in the project that creates the sizzle.”*

—noel khalil

them a feel for what their investment might be.”

By traveling to see award-winning projects, the firm absorbs the best ideas. Recently, Harwick flew to California to review a project that won an award from the NAHB Seniors Housing Council. “It’s beneficial to go on site, talk to the people who run the project, find out what works and what doesn’t, and walk the project myself to figure

out why it won this award,” he says. “You learn things you wouldn’t have learned through a magazine. It’s worth the time and expense.”

Developer Noel Khalil, a partner with Atlanta-based Columbia Residential, is a longtime business associate of JH+P’s. He looks for architects who can put together a strong elevation and a cost-effective floor plan, give a competitive price, and present the product in a way that

excites the customer. He says that on the Atlanta project, JH+P had done their homework on universal-design issues, such as the ideal height for doorknobs and electrical switches, and how to designate a higher number of handicapped units for the first floor. And the proposed building’s presentation was strong. “When prospective residents drive up, they see the fitness center from the exterior through a lot of glass,” Khalil says. “It’s how you position the amenities in the project that creates the sizzle.”

Over the next 25 years, as the baby-boom stragglers

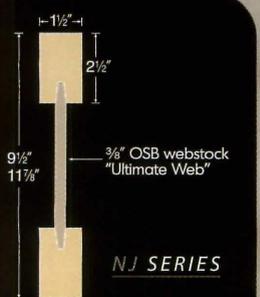
settle into their last residences, marketing experts will have plenty to say about this discriminating, evolving, and endlessly studied part of the population. And architects will be paying attention. “The seniors market won’t go away,” says Evans. “It’s just a matter of asking ourselves what we want to participate in. When the developers come to us, we can apply all of our talents—land planning, architecture, landscape architecture. We can flex our muscles and use all our power in the firm.” *ra*

*Cheryl Weber is a contributing writer in Severna Park, Md.*

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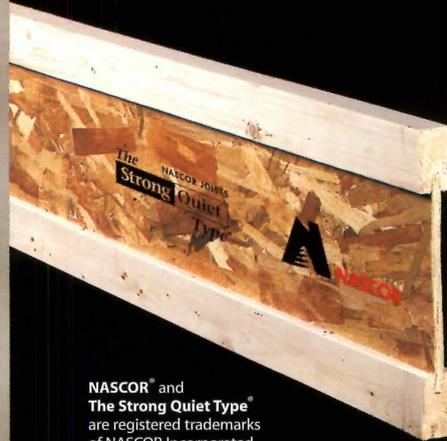
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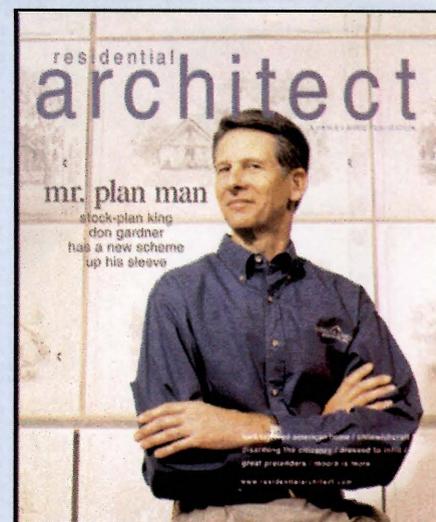
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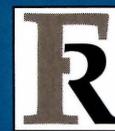
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Torti Gallas' future holds plenty of urban infill work. Case in point: The Ellington, a mixed-use building under construction in Washington, D.C.



Torti Gallas and Partners

Built in 1978, Montrose Oaks, Potomac, Md., (left) epitomizes the suburban tract-housing mentality of the old CHK. Eighteen of the firm's 22 current principals and associate principals perch on the rooftop of The Ellington (opposite).

# change of heart



Bill Cramer

torti gallas and partners  
helped invent sprawl.  
now they're leading the  
charge against it.

by meghan drueding

As a young architect a few years out of Notre Dame in the late 1960s, John Torti, FAIA, had an awakening. “I was working at a boutique firm in the Midwest, idealistic and starving, and realized you couldn’t make money doing the kind of architecture you dream about in school,” he says. “I bundled up all those ideals and put them in a box under my bed.” In 1973 he took a job with CHK Architects and Planners, an established production housing firm in Silver Spring, Md., and contented himself with designing unimaginative suburban subdivisions.

But this awakening was a false one. He didn’t realize it until the recession of the early ’90s, when the formerly prosperous CHK plunged into dire straits. Two of the original partners, Jack Cohen and Leonard Haft, had long since retired. In 1993 the third, an ailing Jack Kerxton, did, too, after naming Torti his successor as president. Now in charge of a foundering firm and with little to lose, Torti made a bold decision. Combining a New Urbanist philosophy with company CFO Tom Gallas’ recommendation that CHK pursue a more diverse client base, he announced a radically different, design-oriented direction for the 40-year-old firm. This gutsy move marked John Torti’s true awakening. And it led to a rebirth of the firm now known as Torti Gallas and Partners.

## back story

Of course, the full story is a bit more complicated. CHK had built a solid reputation as a firm that could deliver cost-effective developer housing. During the 1950s, ’60s, and ’70s it designed more than 200,000 homes in the Washington, D.C., suburbs. In the 1980s it branched out into hotels, office buildings, and high-rises but always kept merchant housing as its backbone. “They did not have an agenda that related to making great cities, towns, communities,” says current principal Neal Payton, AIA, who also worked for the firm in its CHK days. “They made great housing, but it didn’t relate to anything larger.”

That was OK with Cohen, Haft, and Kerxton. They knew they’d never be esteemed in design circles. Their strength lay in their ability to give developers what they wanted, on time and on budget. Their tight professional and social relationships with clients meant they didn’t have to market at all, and their employees were well

# change of heart

compensated financially. Talented designers like John Torti came to the firm and stayed, because it gave them a chance to practice architecture while earning a comfortable living.

Cohen, Haft, and Kerxton were strong businessmen, but their training was still in design rather than financial matters. When Cohen and Haft began to phase out in the mid-80s, Kerxton cast his net for a business director to handle the company's affairs. He ended up hiring a hotshot Price Waterhouse accountant named Tom Gallas in 1985, and the other half of the Torti Gallas equation clicked into place. Gallas wasn't a designer, and to CHK that was one of his strengths. He could look at the way the firm functioned and make judgments based on his experience in the financial world. The fresh eye he brought to the firm would eventually become the catalyst Torti needed to make his design vision a reality.

## new look

By the time Torti officially took control, CHK's deep well of clients had dried up. It wasn't that they'd gone to another architect—they'd simply gone out of business. CHK's payroll dropped from 165 people to 37. If the firm didn't find new sources of work soon, it was in serious danger of going the same way its clients had.

At Torti's suggestion, Gallas started a marketing division. He researched the possibility of working with recession-resistant, public-sector clients like the military, city housing agencies, and local governments. Though CHK had no experience in such areas, Gallas managed to convince Torti that the future of the firm lay with public-sector work. "Because Tom knew the firm so well, he was not shy about telling the partners what to do," says Torti. "Three years later, two-thirds of our business was with public clients, up from zero for the 40 years before that." Gallas also began pursuing national private clients to take the place of the bankrupt local ones.

In addition to the change in client base, the firm underwent a drastic structural revamping. The planning, design, and project-management divisions of CHK had always been entirely separate. "Under the old system, the designer did the design and then walked away," says Gallas. Not anymore. Under the new model, a design team would be responsible for a project from start to finish—getting the job, designing the site plan and architecture, and overseeing construction until the last brick was mortared into place.

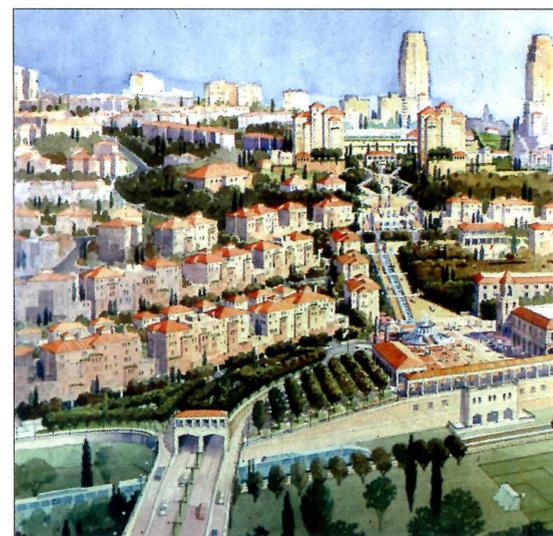
The system gave the architects more control over the execution of their work, and it got CHK closer to its goal of achieving high-quality design while still turning a handsome profit. For the first time, the firm started a profit-sharing program that involved every employee, as well as a bonus system based on project team performance rather than individual accomplishments. "When your team succeeds, you succeed," explains Gallas. "It creates an interdependence."

## plan of attack

CHK's new setup wouldn't matter much if the firm couldn't sell itself to the new client types it wanted so badly. That was where John Torti's conversion to New Urbanism came in. Having grown up in a front-stoop-and-corner-store neighborhood in the Bronx, N.Y., he knew well the charms and benefits of urban living. But he hadn't considered the marketability of old strategies in new neighborhoods until he heard the charismatic New Urbanist pioneer Andres Duany, FAIA, speak at Catholic University's summer lecture series. "I began to listen to him in the '80s," Torti says. "It tapped into my own discontent with what I



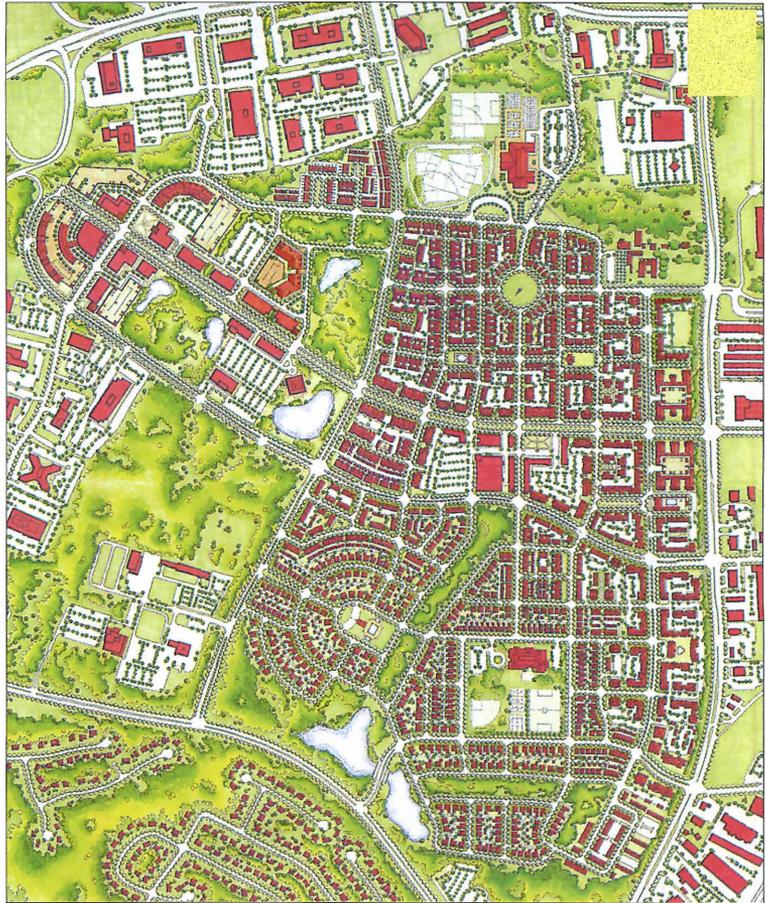
King Farm in Rockville, Md., started in 1997, (above and right) marked Torti Gallas' first foray into large-scale, green-field New Urbanism.



One of Torti Gallas' first overseas projects, a new town in Turkey called Bahcesehir, won a 2000 AIA Honor Award for regional and urban design.



Kenneth M. Wyner



Torti Gallas and Partners

The firm focuses equally on architecture and planning. At King Farm it designed both the master plan (above) and some housing (left).

*“[the old chk] did not have an agenda that related to making great cities, towns, communities.”*

*—neal payton, aia*



Dariusz



Torti Gallas and Partners

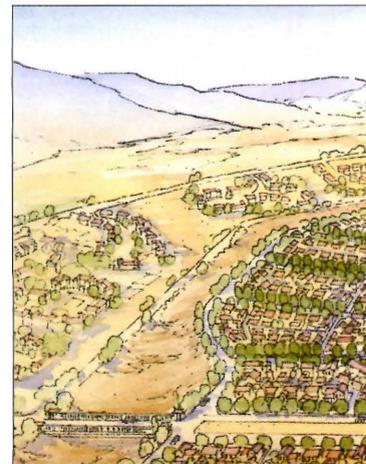
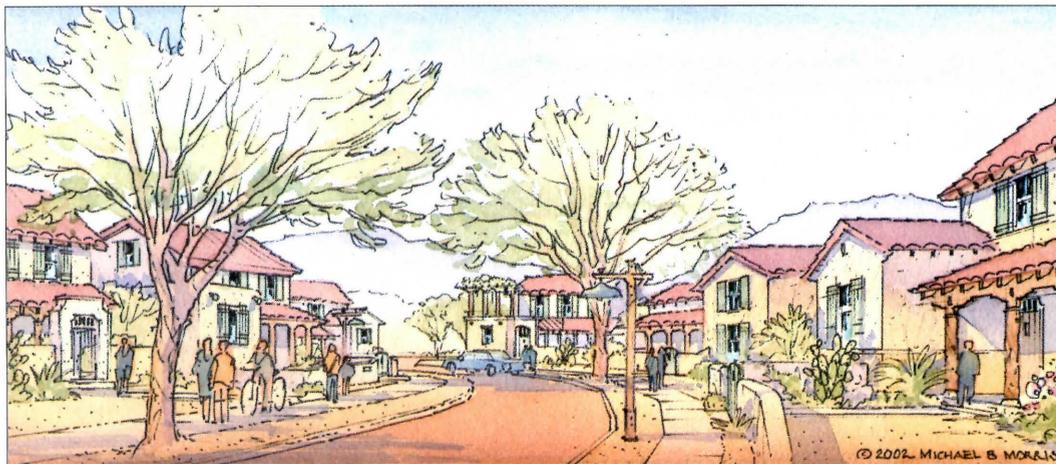
The housing at Lemoyne Gardens (2002), a HOPE VI project in Memphis, Tenn., emulates the scale and style of homes in the surrounding area.

# change of heart



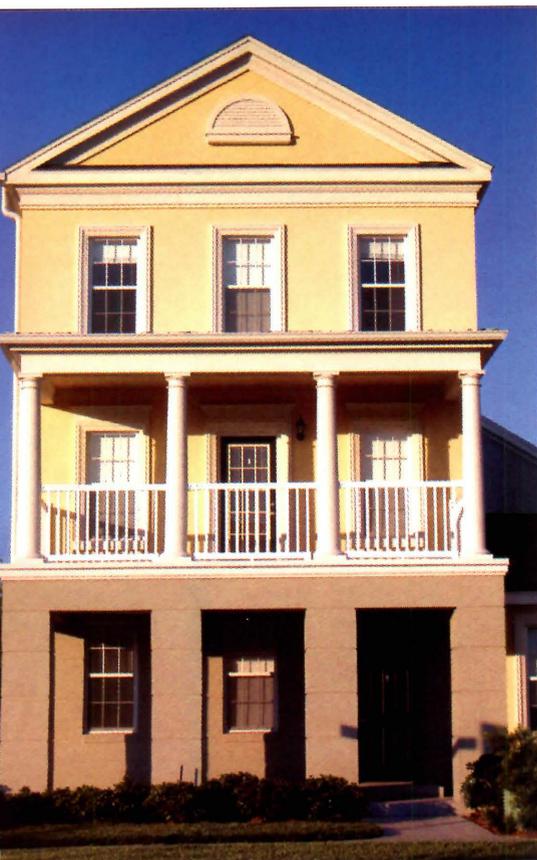
As with most of its projects, the firm designed The Galleries at Barrington (2002) seniors housing in Barrington, Ill., with an exceptional amount of public input.

Steve Hall/Hedrich-Blessing



Illustrations: © 2002 Michael B. Morrissey MRAIC

*“our work is an exact mirror of my interests in architecture and urban design. it’s rare to find that.”—cheryl o’neill, associate aia*



Torti Gallas and Partners



The commission to design and plan Centergate (2002), a neighborhood in Celebration, Fla., cemented Torti Gallas' reputation as a top New Urbanist firm.

Sustainable design meets military housing at Fort Irwin, an energy-efficient community under construction in the California desert for the U.S. Army.

was doing in the suburbs, compared with my goals as a young architect.”

Listening to Duany's ideas moved Torti to educate himself about Traditional town planning, and then to decide that CHK should become a completely New Urbanist firm. He didn't approach that goal halfheartedly. He learned the movement's principles inside and out, joining the Congress for the New Urbanism and eventually becoming an influential member. And he aggressively recruited talent from the worlds of academia and practice, seeking out others who shared his desire to create pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use communities.

As they'd agreed, he and Gallas redirected their energies toward public and national private clients. They used New Urbanism to market themselves, trying to convince potential customers they could offer something different from standard developments. The going was tough at first. Because CHK had no experience working on the kinds of projects it now wanted to do, developers harbored understandable skepticism. The firm's background seemed so unsuited for public-sector work that the Navy actually asked Torti and Gallas to stop applying for work on its bases, telling them (mistakenly, as it turned out) it would never hire them.

But they'd already committed themselves to pursuing new client types and to New Urbanism, and they weren't turning back. In 1994 they had two breakthroughs—a commission for public housing in Baltimore under HUD's HOPE VI program, and a Progressive Architecture award in urban design for the plan of South Riding, a Traditional Neighborhood Development in Virginia. Shrewdly, Torti and Gallas talked up these successes into other opportunities. Spinning them as examples of their firm's ability to create thriving neighborhoods, they began to land key commissions—Army base housing at Fort Meade, Md.; a TND called King Farm in Rockville, Md.; more and further-flung HOPE VI commissions. Persuaded by Torti's convincing rhetoric, one gifted architect after another joined the firm. “Our work, especially the HOPE VI work, is an exact mirror of my interests in architecture and urban design,” says principal Cheryl O'Neill, Associate AIA. “It's rare to find that.”

## turning point

By 1995, it began to look as if Torti, Gallas, and their rapidly growing staff were going to pull off the transformation of CHK. But their very success worried Torti. He feared that a firm taking on so many new jobs and employees would lose its hard-won focus. So he instituted a “Design Discourse”—a two-year series of debates and lectures on urban design given by in-house architects and attended by everyone from principals to administrative staff. “The Design Discourse sent a signal out that we believed in something,” says Payton. “It said we were committed to a value system.”

The outside world was catching on. In 1997 the firm won a national AIA Honor Award for regional and urban design, for the Baltimore HOPE VI project, Lafayette Courts. By that point CHK had work going on all over the country: military privatization, seniors housing, downtown mixed-use complexes, and Neo-Traditional neighborhoods. It was even designing a couple of new towns in Turkey. It had gotten so far away from the CHK model of suburban tract housing, in fact, that the time had arrived for a name change. CHK became Torti Gallas and Partners that year. Torti's name represents the firm's strength in design and Gallas' its business acumen. “We're one-hundred percent design, one-hundred percent business,” Torti says. “That's the pact Tom and I made.”

Wisely, they didn't throw away the entire CHK legacy. The old incarnation may not have won AIA Honor Awards, but it knew how to produce housing that people

# change of heart

wanted to buy and live in. "It's not like they had a bad heritage," says Jonathan Barnett, FAIA, head of the urban design department at the University of Pennsylvania. "They had a good heritage that they had to transform. Their technical knowledge about the implementation of housing has been one of the reasons for their success." Architect Maurice Cox, who is also the mayor of Charlottesville, Va., concurs. A commercial-corridor study Torti Gallas did for his city won an AIA Honor Award in 2003, the firm's fifth to date. "Not only are they urban designers, but because of their long experience in building houses they were able to speak to the housing types needed in Charlottesville," Cox says.

## here and now

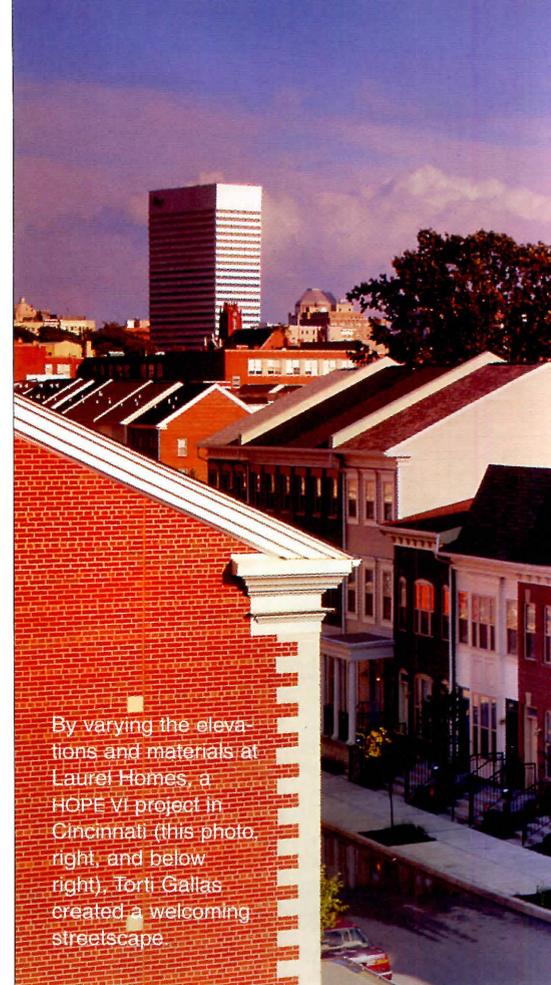
Now, in 2004, the question of whether Torti Gallas could successfully transform itself has long been answered. The 51-year-old, 150-person firm has projects going on in 47 cities across the country, and its principals are regulars on the urban design and development lecture circuit. In 2003 it had its best financial year ever.

Developers sing its praises. "They combine style and vision with practicality, and they truly respect the community," says Maureen McAvey, a senior resident fellow at the Urban Land Institute who has also worked with Torti Gallas on the developer side. The firm's high percentage of winning RFPs has allowed it to take unusual risks with its fee structure. In certain cases, it's started to charge developers a reduced design rate in exchange for an extra "success" fee if its plan is selected.

The appeal of its phoenixlike history notwithstanding, the most interesting piece of the Torti Gallas puzzle is its continuing effort at self-improvement. Torti and Gallas seem to have drawn courage from the initial CHK makeover, for they and the other 15 principals are constantly tweaking the way they operate. The quality of the firm's architecture is uneven at times, especially compared with its urban design. Rather than accept this situation, they're challenging themselves head-on. They've started up a second Design Discourse that is devoted specifically to architecture, much as the previous one centered on planning. "We're trying to develop an ideology around our work that is identifiable and explainable," Torti says. "As a large firm, we need a way of coming to some common ground." In addition to how-to workshops and philosophical discussions, the series also includes studies of work by architects the firm admires, such as Robert A.M. Stern, Pyatok Architects, Michael Dennis, and Hartman-Cox.

Gallas, now executive vice president, has led an effort to expand the firm's sustainable design capabilities by bolstering its roster of LEED-certified architects and bringing in green-building experts to speak to the staff. As a result, Torti Gallas has several sustainable projects in the works, including Fort Irwin, energy-efficient military housing in the California desert, and Salishan, a new rainwater-conservation community in Tacoma, Wash. The firm is also forging ahead with innovative retail design ideas for its many mixed-use projects. "We're trying to rethink some of retail's basic concepts," explains principal Maurice Walters, AIA. "We want to figure out how to bring mom-and-pop businesses back in by taking affordable housing ideas to retail."

The vogue for New Urbanism among developers may be an obvious trend now, but it wasn't in 1993. By remaking CHK the way they did, Torti and Gallas took a huge gamble. Most firms in their position would have waited for the economy to turn around, hoping that they'd get their clients back and be able to do the kind of work they'd always done. But John Torti's ideals escaped that box under his bed. And they're not going back. *ra*



By varying the elevations and materials at Laurel Homes, a HOPE VI project in Cincinnati (this photo, right, and below right), Torti Gallas created a welcoming streetscape.

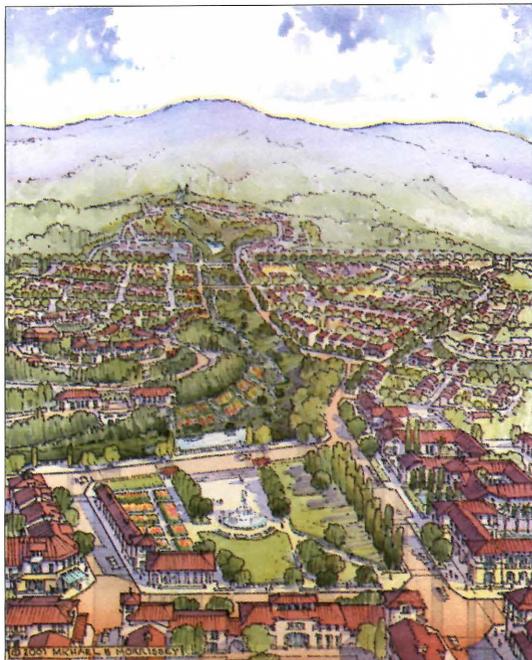


Interface Multimedia

Just down the street from Torti Gallas' headquarters, the Silver Spring Transit Center will include housing, retail, office, and hotel space adjacent to and on top of an existing rail and bus station.



Photos: Steve Hall/Hedrich-Blessing



© 2001 Michael B. Morrissey MRAIC

Reorganizing sprawl is a Torti Gallas specialty. In Azusa, Calif., the firm plans to link a series of new infill neighborhoods with pedestrian-oriented parks, greenways, and water features.



The firm relies on Traditional, contextual designs to mend the urban fabric of a city. Historically based architecture grounds the units at Laurel Homes (2003; above and top two photos).

*“we’re one-hundred percent design, one-hundred percent business. that’s the pact tom and i made.”*

*—john torti, faia*



Paul Rocheleau

Park DuValle / Louisville, Ky.



Oak Hill / Pittsburgh

# the great blight hope

*despite some notable successes,  
hud's hope vi program may  
prove there's no one-size-fits-all  
solution to the country's  
public-housing crisis.*

by cheryl weber



Bruce Martin



Courtesy SHA

NewHolly / Seattle

The house-trailer-like duplexes at Park Lake Homes will soon vanish from this part of King County, just north of Seattle, replaced by the welcoming townhouses, parks, and orderly streets of a village called Greenbridge. Built in 1943 to house factory workers during World War II, Park Lake Homes was converted into public housing a decade or so later. Now, says residents' council president TerryLynn Stewart, the buildings are "rotting from the inside out."

The number of dwellings here will swell from 500 to 1,000 to include new public-housing, affordable, and market-rate units. Rather than benefit from the transformed neighborhood herself, Stewart plans to relocate permanently with a Section 8 certificate, to be near her daughter and new grandchild 60 miles away. "My circumstances cause me to move, but I think they're doing a good thing here that will bring the community up and make it a better place," she says.

Greenbridge is one of 193 redevelopments in 114 cities that have been funded by HOPE VI since Congress created the program in 1992. An acronym for Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere, it was designed to lessen concentrations of poverty by replacing them with mixed-use communities where market-rate and subsidized houses stand seamlessly side by side. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development pays for community-support programs and the replacement or renovation of deteriorated public housing; other investment money comes from public and private sources.

### a social village

HOPE VI projects present architects with the unusual opportunity to change the complexion of whole neighborhoods, not just aesthetically but also socially and economically. Park Lake Homes, for example, occupies 90 acres that are underused compared with the density around them. "It's unusual to find that much land in which to redevelop a whole community," says Chris Libby, AIA, a principal at GGLO Architects, Seattle, which is working on Greenbridge and another local HOPE VI redevelopment called Rainier Vista. "From a planning standpoint, it's a fantastic opportunity to create a main street that has some *there* there." Without a great need for retail at Greenbridge—there is a shopping center several blocks away, and the community's density would not support more stores—GGLO is investigating ways to create energy and activity on the street, not just a neighborhood with eyes but one with a soul, too. The firm is inventing a social village of public-service buildings with a storefront presence; a food bank or counseling service can join the streetscape, rather than being tucked off in a stand-alone building. And the housing authority expects to lure a coffee- or sandwich-shop vendor or two to provide a place to socialize.

HOPE VI projects are also exercises in letting go of conventional thinking, of loosening up and collaborating. In Portland, Ore., where the Seattle firm Mithun is working on a design for New Columbia, residents representing 20 different language groups gather in the local gym for intense design charrettes, with the help of translators. They're asking for built-in flexibility, such as duplexes that can be locked off as separate units or combined into one large home.

At High Point, a 2,200-unit HOPE VI in Seattle that includes mixed-use, seniors, and young families, Mithun is working with the public utilities to create a pilot stormwater-reuse system. "You have a huge

## the great blight hope

project and you can experiment with it,” says Bill Kreager, FAIA. “If it works, we’ll take it public and expand our city codes.” Mithun is also recycling materials from the demolition and spending money on high-efficiency framing and HVAC systems. Whereas traditional developers may dismiss such measures as too costly, sustainability appeals to housing authorities who must maintain the neighborhood over the long term.

The HOPE VI approach to transforming public housing goes beyond an architect’s usual bag of tricks. This isn’t ordinary development, but a melting pot of rental and for-sale units, in a blend of public-housing, affordable, and market-rate residences. The units at every income level must not only be virtually indistinguishable from each other, but must also be affordable to build and manage. And, to avoid the public-housing label, their design must create the impression that the community has evolved over time. At Rainier Vista, which fits 1,000 units onto 95 acres, building styles include Craftsman, Colonial, and Cape Cod. Still other units have a contemporary but historically evocative palette with rectangular board-and-batten bays.

“We’re concerned about the context we’re putting these in, but since we’re creating a village, we have the opportunity to introduce styles you can make into a context, and that’s kind of interesting,” Libby says.

Yes, the work is interesting, and emotionally appealing as well. “HOPE VI brings out the latent socialist in me,” Kreager says. “It’s a remarkably unique

*“hope vi brings out the latent socialist in me. It’s a remarkably unique opportunity to impact the community for the good.”*

—bill kreager, faia, mithun

opportunity to impact the community for the good.”

### rewards for the poor

Inventive minds have long been at work on the best ways to house the poor. Lawrence Vale, head of the department of urban studies and planning at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, says there have always been two different approaches to low-income housing. One is as a coping mechanism for those who are least able to sustain themselves economically in their community, harking back to the almshouses of 19th-century England. The other approach sees housing as a reward for the worthy working poor, to tide them over for a few years until they get their resources together.

“When public housing was built in America in the 1930s, it was mostly part of the reward tradition, for highly selected households with stable work histories and the right family size and composition,” Vale says. “It was harder to get into public housing in the ’30s than into a top American university; one in every 10 families was accepted.” By the 1960s, however, public housing was back to serving as a catchall for the least advantaged in American cities. As mortgage subsidies and other federal programs made it possible for more people to make it on their own, public housing began to attract an increasingly desperate segment of society. “HOPE VI is an attempt to shift public housing back to being part of the reward tradition instead of the coping mechanism,” Vale says. “It’s an attempt to get a level of selectivity about tenants back and to have communities that are not comprised entirely of the least-well-off.”

*continued on page 66*



# park duvalle / louisville, ky.



**architect of record:** Urban Design Associates, Pittsburgh  
**developers:** The Community Builders, Boston; Housing Authority of Louisville; Louisville Development Authority  
**general contractors:** Mattingly & Sons, Louisville; David Cosby Construction, Louisville; Mathis & Sons, Louisville  
**landscape architect:** LaQuatra Bonci Associates, Pittsburgh  
**project size:** 715 to 1,500 square feet per unit  
**site size:** 125 acres  
**construction cost:** \$80 per square foot  
**rental price:** varying subsidized and affordable rates; market rate \$475 to \$750 per month  
**sales price:** \$85,000 to \$250,000 per unit  
**units in project:** 1,213 (150 off-site)

The gracefully proportioned homes along the treelined boulevards of Park DuValle, on the west side of Louisville, Ky., are almost indistinguishable from the classic prewar buildings of East Louisville's best addresses. But they are new, replacing the Housing Authority's derelict Cotter and Lang Homes. At 1,116 units, the development constituted the city's largest public-housing project and had a population that was 78 percent unemployed.

In restitching the neighborhood to the larger city, Urban Design Associates, Pittsburgh, strengthened a tenuous connection: the Algonquin Parkway, the withered end of an Olmsted park system that meanders through the strong urban neighborhoods in East Louisville. "We imported the idea of this being on an Olmsted park system and designed the master plan as an extension of those parkways and parks," says principal Rob Robinson, AIA. "It's important to establish identifiable addresses, things that are memorable. Particularly on these sites, which are often the worst in cities, the perception is the most difficult thing to overcome." Planting patterns—streets lined with specimen hardwood trees and a second row planted in front yards—were copied from Olmsted archives.

UDA's master plan is a scripted kit of parts that includes residential and commercial block patterns and specifies architectural styles found in Louisville, such as Victorian, Arts and Crafts, and Colonial Revival with two-bay porches. The parkways—and the gridded streets behind them—are interwoven with single-family homes, three-story row houses, and small apartments designed as three-, four-, and six-unit buildings, none taller than two stories. The apartments are concentrated on the community's eastern edge near the new town center, which is the knuckle between old, established neighborhoods and the new housing.

The architects carefully allocated the budget for the greatest impact. These houses are very simple boxes, but they're clad in richly colored fiber-cement board; windows are solid PVC. "If we need brick in the budget, we'll save it for buildings where we can use it effectively on all four walls rather than as a pastiche," Robinson says. "The nice, deep color really helps to balance the mix of materials." He adds, "We try to fight for the things that are important on historic architecture, such as getting porches on the houses and raising the house out of the ground a couple of feet instead of building slab on grade. In an urban neighborhood, you need to be able to get up off the street level to feel comfortable on the porch."

The project's third phase, the town center, is nearly completed. It includes commercial and retail space with two-story living units on top, a 40,000-square-foot medical center, a community center, education and social-service facilities, and an apartment building for the elderly with ground-floor retail.—c.w.



Pleasant neighborhoods linked by a network of streets and parkways replace the barracks-like public housing. The front porches, lawns, and trees evoke traditional Louisville neighborhoods. Mixed-income rental and homeowner units line a street leading to a rehabilitated neighborhood school (above). Apartment buildings face a central green leading to the park, while street-level storefronts face the town square (left).

Photos by Paul Rocheleau; site plan courtesy Urban Design Associates

# the great blight hope

Indeed, the current mode attempts to fix the failed barracks- and International-Style high-rise template, where the goal was to house the poor efficiently and bring services to them. Those support services were often inadequate and problems compounded. Then along came HOPE VI's mixed-income model as a path to self-sufficiency, and, with it, the New Urbanist principles of compact, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods. "Just when the whole New Urbanist philosophy was gaining wide acceptance, the two came together as a core design philosophy for HOPE VI, demonstrating that by proper design you could reduce street crime," says John McIlwain, a senior fellow at the Urban Land Institute. From 1993 to 1997, then-HUD secretary Henry Cisneros endorsed New Urbanist principles at planning conferences, and HOPE VI projects fell in step.

The new-town developments that blend a range of income levels were meant to improve upon the original HOPE VI vision. The program's earliest grants were used for renovation and required one-to-one replacement of public-housing units slated for demolition. Although the law was later amended to 50 percent replacement, the policy created a logjam in innova-

*"there are some individual success stories that have stood out. but success has been less than widespread."—michael liu, assistant secretary of the office of public and indian housing*

tion, says private developer Richard Baron, McCormack Baron Salazar, St. Louis. "That was always the provision that stopped any kind of demolition of public housing," he says. "There was no ability to do an in-place redevelopment of the areas that surrounded these public-housing sites" in a way that would attract private investors.

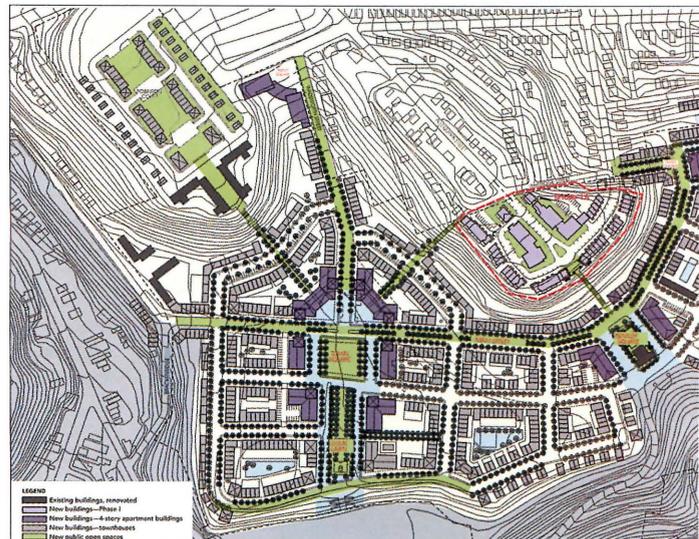
Determined to show such housing could pay for itself financially and return benefits to the community, in 1994 Baron went to HUD for waivers that would allow him to reconfigure a St. Louis public-housing project, now known as Murphy Park, as a mixed-finance and mixed-income community. He got the green light, the project was deemed a success, and Murphy Park became a forerunner of today's HOPE VI redevelopments. Previously, HOPE VI had excluded state tax credits and other public and private financing, Baron notes. Murphy Park provided a prototype for HUD officials to see how the financing and legal channels could work.

## moving mountains

Even if such an approach can work, it has proven difficult to manage. Now, at the end of a 10-year trial period, HOPE VI's future is uncertain. Reviews of the projects are as mixed as the residents' incomes. Impressive achievements abound, but so do examples of projects that dragged on for years beyond their scheduled completion dates and others that failed the families they were supposed to serve. Of the 193 grants awarded, only 22 projects are complete, leaving \$3 billion in the pipeline. "There are some individual success stories that have stood out," says Michael Liu, assistant secretary of the Office of Public and Indian Housing, which oversees HOPE VI. "But success has been less than widespread. It's one of the reasons we've proposed a pause in the program."

It's the delays that concern HUD most. One of the problems has been that only housing authorities can apply for funding, and most of them

*continued on page 68*



Courtesy Goody, Clancy & Associates

# oak hill / pittsburgh

**architect of record:** Goody, Clancy & Associates, Boston

**developers:** Housing Authority of Pittsburgh; Beacon/Corcoran Jennison Partners, Boston

**general contractor:** Allequippa Construction, Pittsburgh

**landscape architect:** LaQuatra Bonci Associates, Pittsburgh

**project size:** 614 to 1,687 square feet per unit

**site size:** 80 acres

**construction cost:** \$101 per square foot

**rental price:** varying subsidized and affordable rates; market rate \$535 to \$1,495 per month

**sales price:** \$75,000 to \$85,000 per unit

**units in project:** 664

Dating to 1943, the former Allequippa Terrace was Pittsburgh's largest public-housing project. It consisted of 83 three-story apartment buildings on a steep hill atop an abandoned coal mine. The ends of the barracks-style buildings faced the street, a design disaster that contributed to the incidence of drive-by shootings and a general sense of isolation. And while the views went on forever, the streetscape was a dead end, physically and metaphorically.

The newly named Oak Hill offers a mix of housing, 70 percent of it affordable and 30 percent market rate. Of the existing 1,700 units, nearly half were empty, and about 400 residents moved back. Replacing the stigmatizing buildings are 664 residences ranging from townhouses to mid-rise apartment complexes. "We wanted to develop a new community in which there was no distinction between affordable and market-rate units," says Marty Jones, president of Corcoran Jennison, Boston, who developed and manages the property in partnership with The Beacon Companies, also of Boston. "The physical design creates a big impression." She adds, "The other piece is giving the existing resident organization a voice in determining how and when things will happen. On every debate, they constantly bring us back to how decisions affect their everyday lives."

The residents wanted their new homes to look like the single-family houses in adjacent working-class neighborhoods, and safety was a top priority. Goody, Clancy & Associates, Boston, designed a traditional prewar neighborhood of tree-shaded streets and sidewalks, public squares and parks, mid-rise apartments, and townhouses pulled out to the street edge. To economize, the architects limited the number of unit types but varied the colors, materials, and massing. Many of the townhouses crowning the ends of blocks have a tower; others feature bay windows. All have front porches with Arts and Crafts detailing, recalling the stick-built worker housing from the early part of the last century. "Pittsburgh residential architecture is straightforward and practical," says Geoffrey Wooding, AIA, a principal at Goody Clancy. "But it's nicely scaled and proportioned, and front porches enliven the streets." The design team persuaded the city to allow parallel parking in front of the houses, so the streets feel inhabited and safe.

Oak Hill hooks up to West Oakland, downtown businesses, and the nearby University of Pittsburgh Medical Center via an extension of Terrace Street, a main road that had previously skirted the projects. On-site support services help residents improve their long-term prospects. Housing Opportunities Unlimited, a Boston-based family-services and job-training entity, has an office on site. It provides driver's education, child care, and social-service referrals, and works with local businesses to help Oak Hill residents find jobs.—c.w.



Mid-rise apartment buildings are scaled to blend in with the townhomes that descend the steep slopes toward downtown Pittsburgh. Some ground-floor apartments have individual front doors and yards; all units have decks or patios that help animate the street. Gridded streets interspersed with pocket parks and communal areas where children can play in view of adults supplant a serpentine dead end.

Photos: Bruce Martin

# the great blight hope

have no experience with private development. Unresolved legal battles between housing authorities and residents' groups create other holdups. And, Liu admits, HUD's approvals process has simply been too burdensome. "Some of the issues related to slowness were the result of HUD not being timely on approval of documents, providing legal review when needed, or stepping into the process when we shouldn't," he says.

Housing officials say the biggest problems occurred in the early years, and that they are learning from their mistakes. Elinor Bacon was deputy assistant secretary for public-housing investments at HUD when Andrew Cuomo was at the helm, from 1997 to 2001. As she explains it, "There was a whole community of public/private partnerships that needed to be created. We felt the previous hands-off policy wasn't the right way, letting housing authorities figure it out for themselves." Expeditors were brought in to get all the players together—planning practitioners, developers, community activists, and financing experts—to create some real structure. Annual HOPE VI conferences showcased best practices. And consultants were assigned to projects that were stuck.

Liu says those efforts continue.

"Up until recently, there was a lack of attention to good old-fashioned project management," he says. "We sat down with our awardees over a year ago and created project schedules—many had barely passable project time lines. Now we have protocols for accountability and sanctions for not producing as promised." HUD also gives preference to housing authorities who submit applications showing that they have partners who know what they're doing. And, adds Liu, HUD

*"some places have used hope vi money responsibly. other cities have treated it as an opportunity to get rid of poor people in desirable areas of the city."*  
—lawrence vale, mit

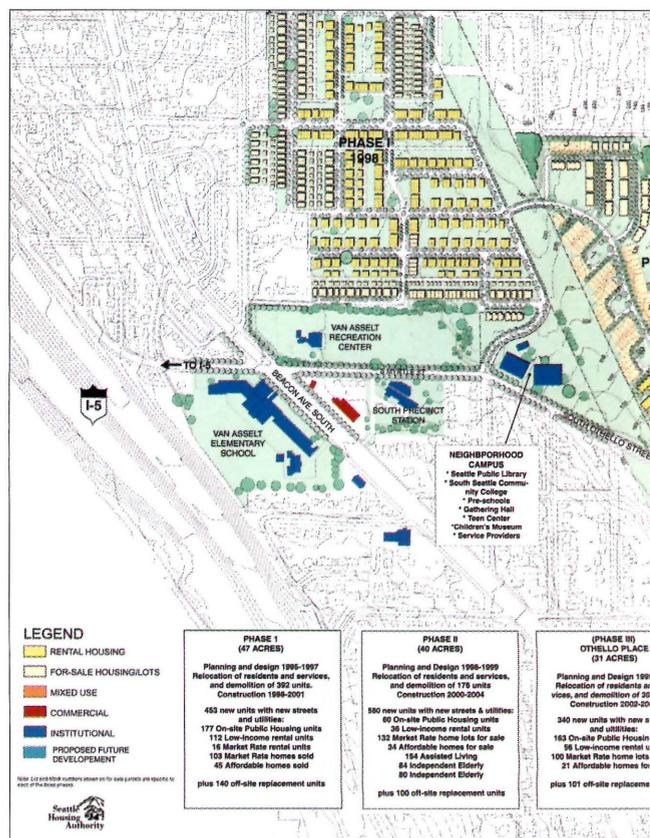
project managers are getting away from being micromanagers.

Marilyn Melkonian, president of Telesis, a development company in Washington, D.C., that plans, finances, and builds urban communities, thinks less micromanaging is a good thing. "We all want to strive to be more efficient in redevelopment efforts that require so many people," says Melkonian, who has participated in 12 HOPE VI projects. "That may be possible in terms of standardizing certain documents and removing the layers of reviews." However, she adds, "there are certain kinds of things in development that take time—changing zoning, getting the city to put in capital improvements, or getting the state to award tax credits. Merely saying you're holding someone to a time line ignores the reality. But there are ways of cooperating to make this process more efficient."

## urban removal

Another troubling result of HOPE VI, critics say, is that its mixed-income model—typically one-third public housing, one-third affordable, and one-third market rate—contributes to the loss of public-housing units, which are designated for the poorest of the poor. According to the Oakland, Calif.-based National Housing Law Project, deficits created by HOPE VI and other redevelopment activities in the last decade add up to a net loss of more than 107,000 public-housing units, and the average waiting list in

*continued on page 70*



# newholly / seattle



**architect of record:** Weinstein A/U (formerly Weinstein Copeland Architects), Seattle

**developer:** Seattle Housing Authority

**general contractors:**

Absher/Pacific, Puyallup, Wash.; Walsh Construction Co., Seattle

**landscape architect:** Nakano Associates, Seattle

**project size:** 678 to 2,012 square feet per unit

**site size:** 118 acres

**construction cost:** \$85 per square foot (rental units); \$89 per square foot (for-sale units)

**rental price:** varying subsidized and affordable rates; market rate \$630 to \$1,200 per month

**sales price:** \$175,000 to \$316,000 per unit

**units in project:** 1,731 (341 off-site)

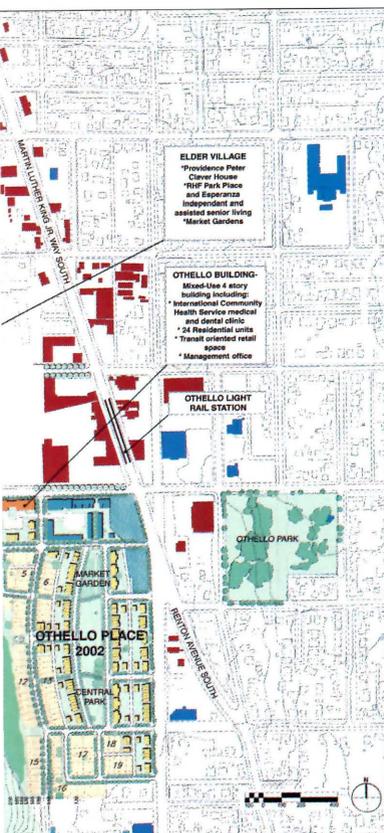
A criticism of HOPE VI is that these projects are often poorly managed, resulting in extended delays. Although it had its share of holdups, NewHolly is a shining example of how to manage a complicated process. After it was awarded a HOPE VI grant, the Seattle Housing Authority, acting as sole developer, assembled a panel of blue-ribbon experts to provide guidance. Begun in 1998, the project is now in phase two, and on track to complete the third and final phase by 2005.

Within the first year, the consulting team had achieved consensus with community and design review boards on housing types, designed and priced them out, and designed and permitted the infrastructure. That was no small challenge. NewHolly was the first community in the Northwest to provide for-sale and rental housing in the same neighborhood. "The building products being economically indistinguishable from each other created financing and entitlement difficulties," says Ed Weinstein, FAIA, Weinstein A/U, Seattle. Another hurdle was the language barrier: Participating communities represented nine translated languages and multiple others.

Weinstein replaced the circular street patterns of the old garden-apartment public housing with a grid, knotting it into the fabric of adjacent neighborhoods—but at a higher quality, with parks, sidewalks, and open space. The architectural design provided both diversity and economies of scale. The standard housing in phase one is the two-family duplex, an abstracted Craftsman bungalow composed of one foundation and one main-floor configuration, to which Weinstein added three different upper floor plans. Each creates a different exterior appearance and roof form. The budget dictated plain-Jane vinyl windows and siding, but firm members fought for every piece of real wood they could get, using it for trim on porches, where it could be appreciated.

HOPE VI critics also contend that the inclusion of market-rate units has contributed to housing shortages for the neediest families. The Seattle Housing Authority addressed that potential pitfall by partnering with local nonprofits to fully replace the 871 units of very-low-income units that were removed, says SHA's program manager Ed Rose. Forty-one percent of the housing, some of it off site, is designated for very-low-income households; 21 percent is designated for those with incomes below the Seattle median; and the remaining 38 percent will be market rate. The "neighborhood campus" helps residents reinvest in their community and their future. On site are a Seattle public library branch, classrooms for South Seattle Community College, Head Start, child care, youth tutoring, entrepreneurial opportunities, and employment programs.

Although NewHolly won a Charter Award from the Congress for the New Urbanism for its use of New Urbanist principles, Weinstein says the team was simply trying to create a typical Seattle neighborhood. "We felt the satisfaction of being able to create a necessary and viable community from whole cloth in a very short period of time," he says. "It has become a neighborhood the residents really cherish."—c.w.



Abstracted Craftsman-style duplexes (above) read as single-family homes. Weinstein A/U took its design cues from houses in surrounding neighborhoods. The master plan, now in its final phase, includes independent and assisted-living facilities for the elderly, a neighborhood campus offering education and social services, and a light-rail station.

Photos and site plan courtesy SHA

# the great blight hope

jurisdictions that received HOPE VI projects in 2001 contained nearly 5,000 families. “The biggest downside is the extent to which public-housing families have been displaced from their homes and don’t get to take advantage of the greatly improved conditions that redevelopment brings,” Vale says. “In the worst cases, it really has been a form of urban renewal as urban removal.”

Flawed relocation and right-of-return practices are part of the problem. Existing residents can choose to return to the redeveloped community, locate elsewhere with a Section 8 voucher, or move into other public housing. According to a recent National Housing Law Project paper called “False Hope,” only about 11 percent of former residents have actually ended up in the redeveloped sites. Fifty percent moved into other public housing in the housing authorities’ portfolio. About a third were given vouchers to go elsewhere in the private market, and the rest were lost. The report states that the reasons for this trend include harassment, inadequate relocation services, poor lines of communication, the lack of affordable housing on redevelopment sites, and unreasonably stringent re-

admission screening criteria. Liu says that some of the criticism about low-income displacement is based on the frustration that so few redevelopments have come to fruition. “No one who wants to stay in the program and is following the rules is left without housing resources,” he says.

*“you have to make an effort to bring jobs into the mix, making sure plenty of people have work.”*

—*michael pyatok, faia,  
pyatok architects*

HOPE VI’s impact on existing residents has varied widely from city to city and neighborhood to neighborhood. “Some places have used HOPE VI money responsibly to rehouse families living in troubled projects,” says Vale. “Other cities and neighborhoods have treated it as an opportunity to get rid of poor people in desirable areas of the city for more lucrative forms of development.”

An example of this controversy is Centennial Place Apartments in Atlanta, acclaimed by HUD and planners across the country as a stellar example of what HOPE VI can accomplish. The developers focused on building in educational opportunities, including an on-site preschool, a YMCA offering youth programs, and a reconstituted elementary school that is now the second-highest-performing elementary school in the Atlanta public school system, according to Renee Glover, president and CEO of the Atlanta Housing Authority.

But the housing authority has been criticized for being heavy-handed in its approach to fixing this community. Begun in 1995 and on target to finish this year, Centennial Place replaces the former Techwood Homes and Clark Howell Homes, 1,195 units of low-density public housing occupying 13 three-story apartment buildings and seven two-story townhouses. The finished project will include 905 apartments and townhomes, and is striving for a public-housing replacement ratio of about 62 percent, some of it off-site.

Larry Keating, a professor of urban studies at Georgia Tech, who documented the project, notes that the 60-year-old former community was on the National Register of Historic Places. The homes had

been renovated in the 1980s, and two years before demolition the dwellings had been pronounced solid enough to last another six decades. In a paper published in the *Journal of Urban History* in March 2000, Keating suggests that because of its location across the street from Coca-Cola’s world headquarters and adjacent to the Olympic Park stadium, the project was motivated primarily by interests other than helping the poor receive better housing. Perhaps most disturbing, 92.9 percent of the original residents did not return.

When asked what happened to the tenants, Glover says that almost all of them chose to enter the Section 8 program, and those who didn’t pass the screening test for re-entry moved into other public housing. In 1994, “the Atlanta Housing Authority was not a very effective manager, and the families’ distrust of AHA ran deep,” she explains. “The AHA was asking families to trust them with demolishing their homes despite not having a track record to indicate that it had the capacity to accomplish its objectives.”

Longtime affordable-housing advocate Michael Pyatok, FAIA, Pyatok Architects, Oakland, Calif., has recently taken on a HOPE VI project in East Oakland. He agreed to participate because the housing authority board is committed to a one-to-one replacement of all 195 units that house very-low-income residents, and will acquire smaller sites around town to include the entire program. In some instances, he believes, it’s best not to mix income levels at the expense of disturbing the human bonds that have been forged through the years. “It doesn’t have to be a third-third-third mix, and a lot of communities can be successful without having a host of homeowners,” he says. “You just have to make an effort to bring more jobs into the mix, making sure plenty of people have work.”

## hope for the future

So, will HOPE VI continue? To date, HUD has exceeded its goal of demolishing the nation’s most distressed housing projects. There are 140,000 aging public-housing units that have been or are slated to be torn down using HOPE VI and other HUD funds, compared with the 86,000 units HUD counted in 1992.

Both the U.S. House and the Senate have reauthorized the program, but at amounts significantly reduced from the \$500 million appropriated each year in 2001 and 2002. At press time, the House bill stood at \$50 million, the Senate at \$195 million, but the budget hadn’t been finalized. With the 2003 grantees not yet awarded, however, HUD expects HOPE VI program dollars to continue through 2008. Even if the program is phased out, housing authorities will be able to continue with redevelopment work. According to HUD, more than \$800 million has been generated in the last two years alone through financing strategies such as capital bonds and state tax credits. “HOPE VI was not created to solve all the housing problems in America, but to address the condition of some of the worst public housing,” says Bacon. If so, the program may have accomplished what it set out to do. Either way, the lessons of the last decade will continue to guide policy-makers and architects alike on how best to fulfill the hope of decent housing conditions for everyone. **ra**

*Cheryl Weber is a contributing writer in Severna Park, Md.*



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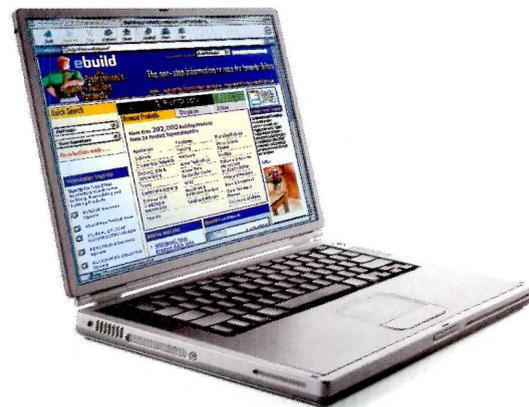
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4. Wait one week for callback.
5. No callback.
6. Visit manufacturer's Web site.
7. Fumble through incomplete Web site, give up.
8. Spend next two evenings going through trade catalogs.
9. No dice.
10. Ask my contact at local supply house.
11. Get blank stare.
12. Hunt down Frank at the lumberyard.
13. Frank thinks the product was discontinued, but he's not sure.
14. Attend trade show one week later.
15. Success! I found the manufacturer!
16. Sales rep in booth will call me back with local distributor contact.
17. Wait one more week.
18. Sales rep calls with distributor name.
19. Call distributor, leave message with receptionist, Laura.
20. Wait two more days.
21. Distributor calls back, chewing on his lunch, promises to "look into that" for me.
22. Wait four more days.
23. Try to deal with other projects while waiting for distributor callback.
24. Distributor calls back: They don't have it in stock, but they can get it.
25. But not in the color the client wants.
26. Call client to find out if "ecru" is close enough to "beige."
27. "Well, I suppose it will have to be."
28. Call distributor back.
29. "I'm sorry, he, like, stepped out for a moment," Laura says.
30. Leave message, wait for Laura to hang up.
31. Scream at top of lungs.
32. Throw cell phone into next county.
33. Chase it down; crush it underfoot.
34. Wait two days for callback from distributor.
35. Distributor calls back with product availability.
36. Order product.
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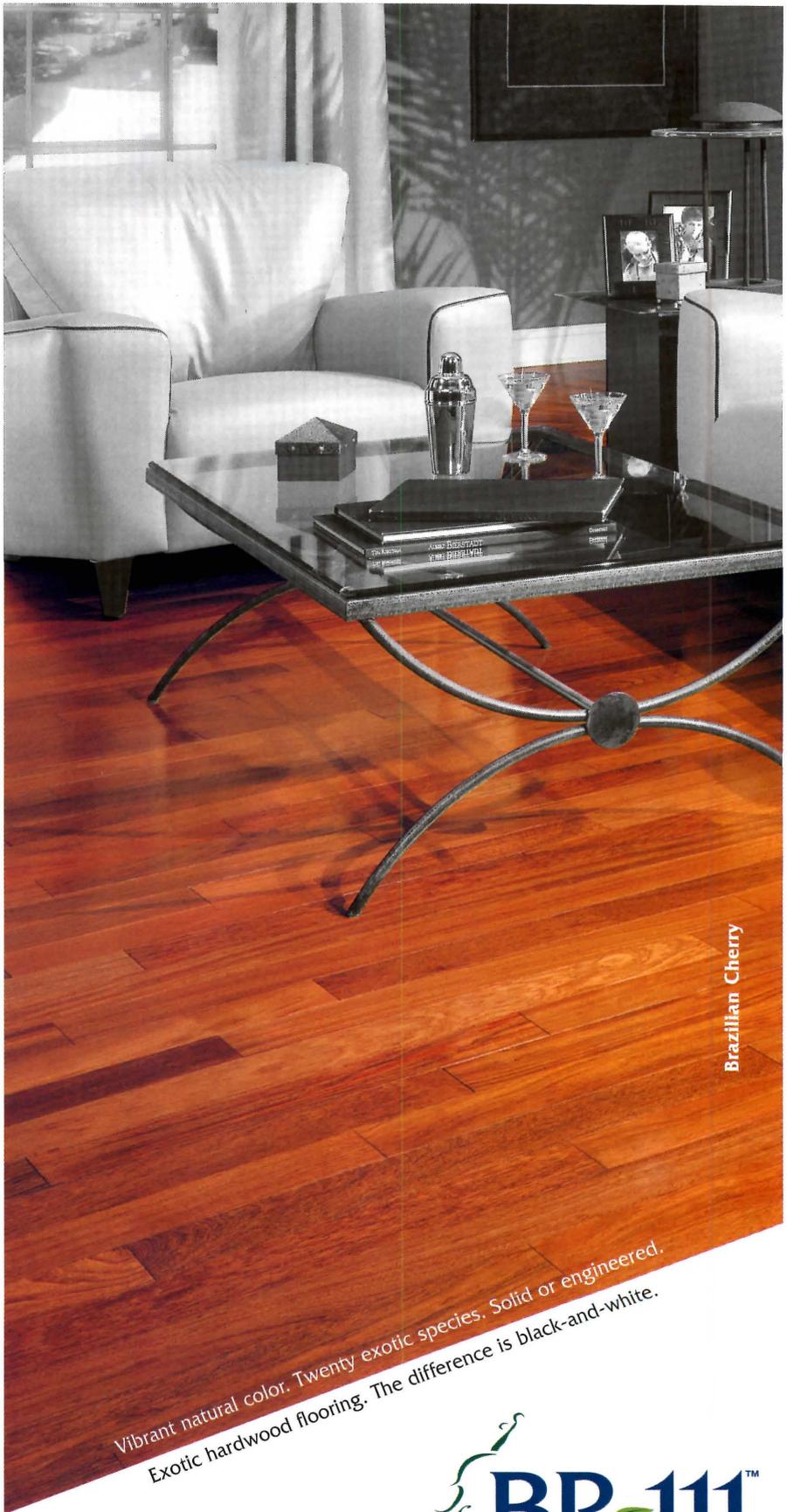
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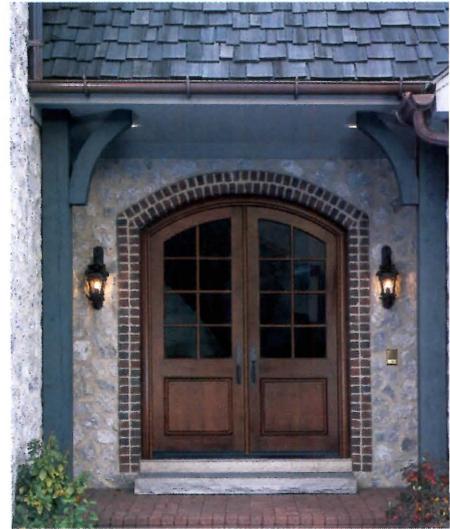


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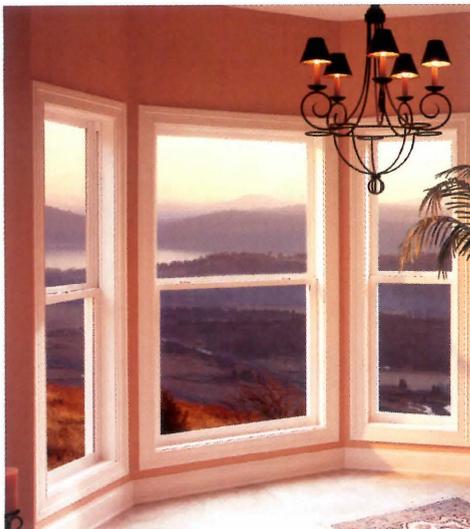
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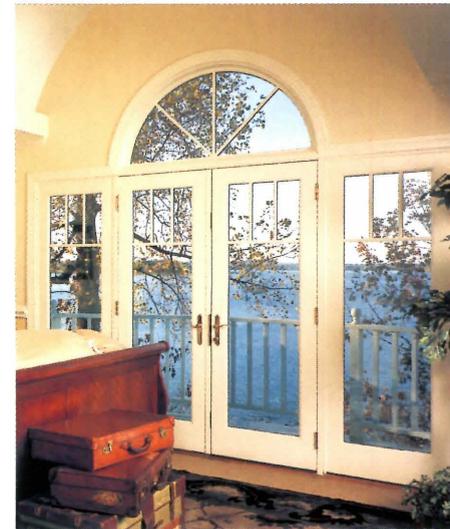
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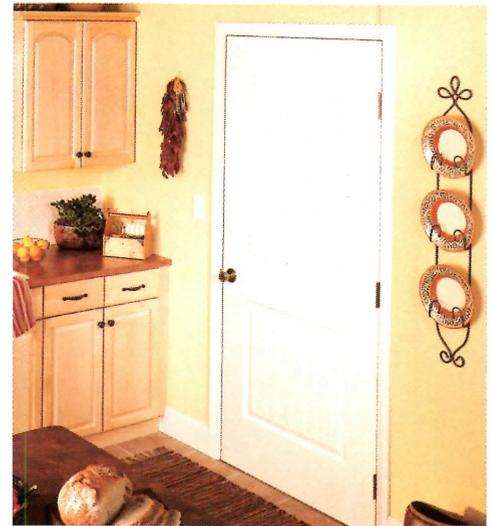
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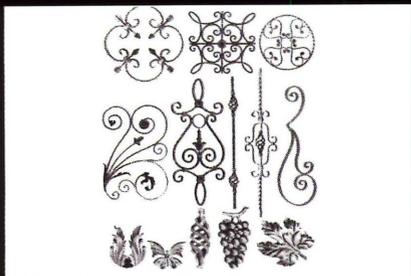
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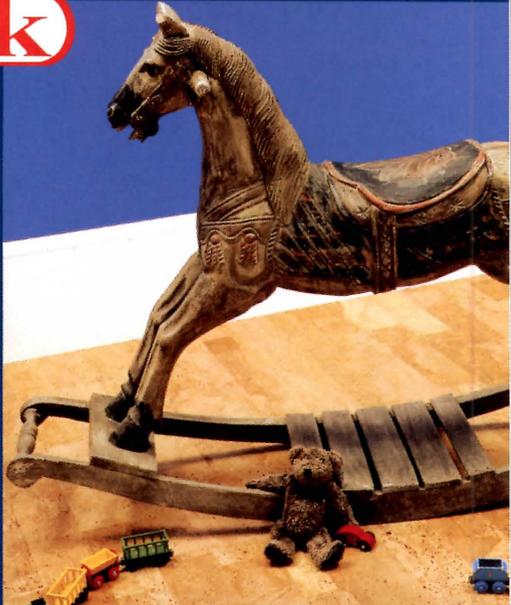
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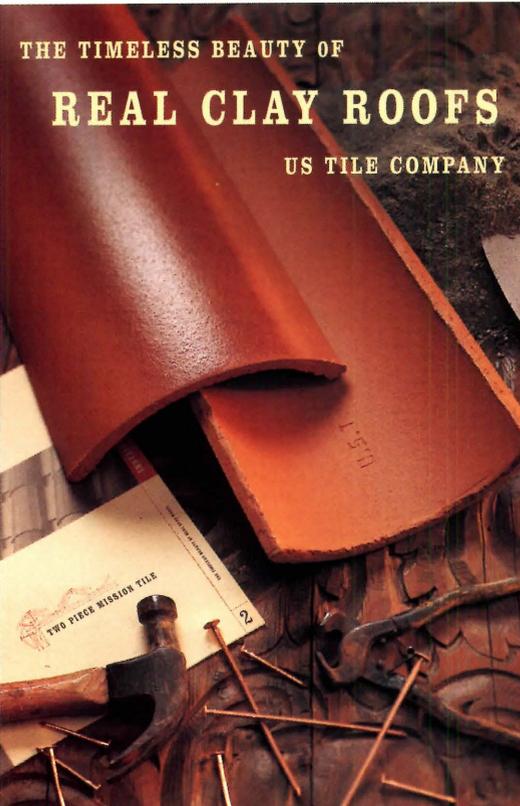
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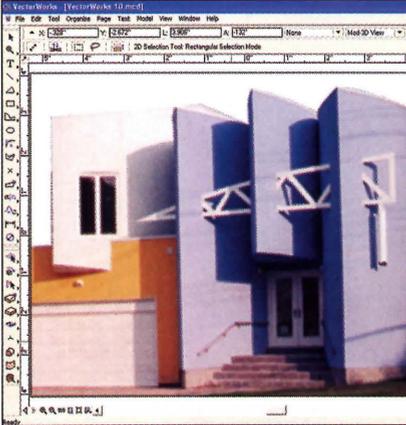
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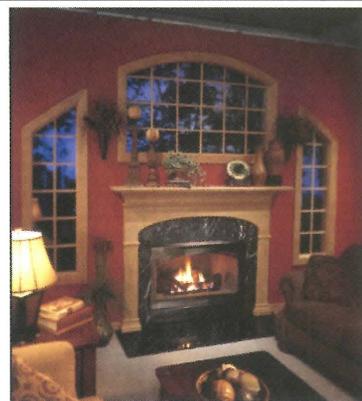
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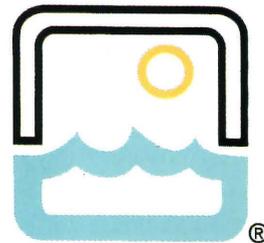
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# modern life

el pueblo ribera court, la jolla, calif., 1923  
rudolf m. schindler

*“it is not enough appreciated how directly and clearly our attitude toward life is expressed through our houses.”*

*—rudolf m. schindler*



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Through their flowing floor plans and elemental materials, the homes designed by Rudolf Schindler emphasize creativity, calm, and openness to new ideas. This relationship between home and lifestyle comes through clearly in the 12-unit housing complex at El Pueblo Ribera Court near San Diego. Schindler arranged the attached, U-shaped units in an interlocking pattern so that each one had the luxury of a private outdoor room.

In addition to its intricate site plan and fluid interior spaces,

Pueblo Ribera is also notable for its then-experimental poured-concrete frame. Schindler designed wooden forms supported by a metal framework to hold each slab of concrete in place while it dried. As soon as one slab was finished, the contractor poured another on top of it. Redwood and glass join concrete as the project's dominant materials.

The units at Pueblo Ribera are still privately occupied, as they were in Schindler's time.—*meghan drueding*