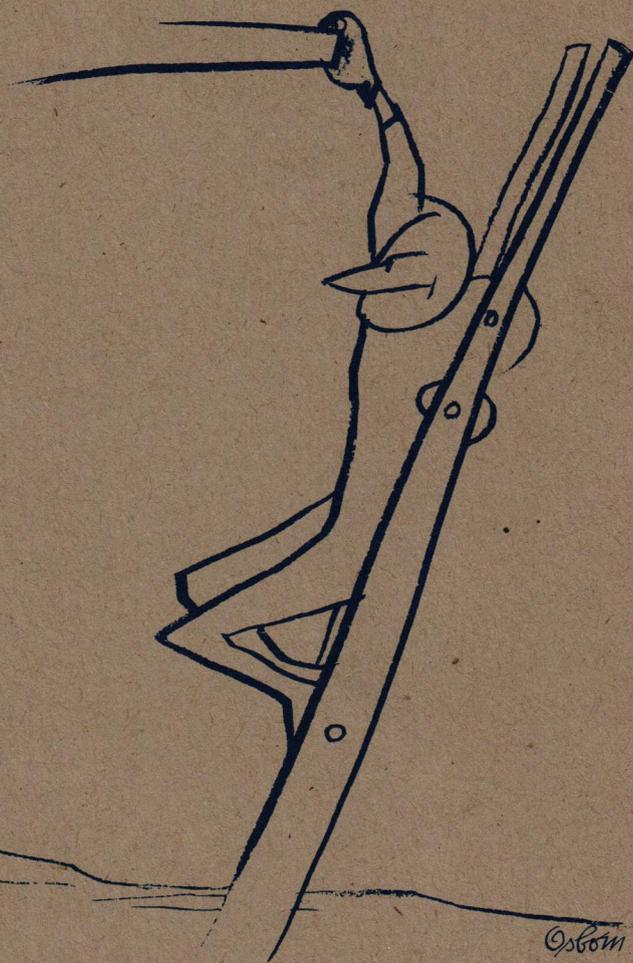


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*The Architect*

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# From the Editor

With this issue, the Editorial Board invites reflection on current developments in California practice. Empirical experience (as well as the results of the April *Architecture* survey) tells us that while economic opportunities are scant and jobs scarce, nonetheless newcomers with drafting tools are arriving from parts east everyday. While idealists believe that economic recovery is inevitable and the Golden State the likely leader, a sober postmodern critic reads the Commerce Department reports. This fall, the National Association of Realtors advertised 'home affordability' at a fourteen-year high, while the Commerce Department showed that home sales plunged to the lowest in over two years in September, with the West being the hardest hit.

The Federal Reserve Board recently announced the greatest increase in quarterly growth rate since the decline began in mid-1989. *Technically*, the recession has ended. Yet 'double-dip' theories abound, the U.S. budget deficit is at a record high, and the gap between rich and poor has widened dramatically. California's massive growth allows it to lead employment expansion figures despite considerable job loss, but California's Federal Reserve Bank reports that the state's economy is "continuing to deteriorate."

Economist John Kenneth Galbraith has charged that "extreme and often mindless speculation in urban real estate" led "the inevitable saving and loan liquidations [to] depress real-estate markets and restrain new construction." Additional recessionary factors particular to California are bank mergers idling thousands of employees, down-sizing of the defense industry, and growing out-migration of business.

In the dim and distorted light of these facts, California AIA members, scholars, and clients offer us their knowledge and experience. Their responses to the eco-

nomie climate can be found in the subtext: 'what is the best path to survival?' Some writers dream about the sense of community design professionals share (despite increasing competition), while others point to the success of particular forms of practice. Issues range from university education for a profession changing too rapidly to predict its future but still crying for 'skills', to the growing number of women and architects of color in the profession. Our guest academicians focus on design, highlighting its market value and, alternately, its role in 'excellent' practice and extending our notion of architecture as a 'social practice' into postmodern terms. Often with candor, clients offer insight into their particular agendas and valuations of architectural services. My interviews treat two of the most promising opportunities of the future—Pacific Rim based collaborations and planned University of California growth. And, lest we too quickly embrace the demands of the market, a leading California architect—struggling against the future's ebbing tide—incites us to remember 'real architecture'.

The 'Letters' that close this issue remind us that the growth Californians must contain and manage is bread and butter for those who feed (that is, build) upon the land. Puzzling over the implications of the adage 'half empty is half full', I invite *Architecture California* readers to reexamine professional values in the face of today's business facts. For me, the essays assembled in this issue frame a challenge to architects caught in the grip of blind faith, clinging to reactive tactics that narrow self-definition, protect the profession's boundaries, and, thereby, threaten to diminish a potentially expanding field. The challenge is to imagine a future-oriented architectural practice.

Lian Hurst Mann, AIA

# A Snapshot of the Architectural Profession: The Nation & California (How Do We Stack Up?)

W. Mike Martin, AIA, PhD

The September issue of *Architecture*, the major trade journal of the AIA, reported the results of an April reader survey that took the pulse of the architectural profession with questions about design, practice, and education. One element of the survey addressed the impact of the current recession on the work force of the profession. Nationally, 47 percent of the respondents were “doing fairly well,” even though 28 percent indicated that there had been “significant cuts to profits and staff.” Of the remaining 25 percent, mostly based in the Midwest and West (California), the recession “was having no effect on their practice, underscoring the resilience of professional practice in these two regions.”

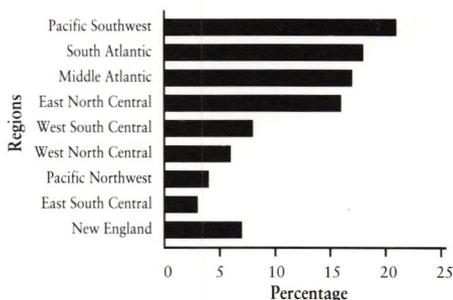
Now it is December, and from what I hear things have changed significantly. That “resilience” has softened and the recession is being hard felt in California.

The following is a brief snapshot of conditions both nationally and in California compiled from the AIA’s *Architecture Factbook: Industry Statistics*, from the Management Design 1990 Survey for California Architectural Firms, and other trade journals and papers. This snapshot is intended to provide a framework for assessing our own situations in relation to trends and to provide a context for interpreting the articles in this issue of *Architecture California*.

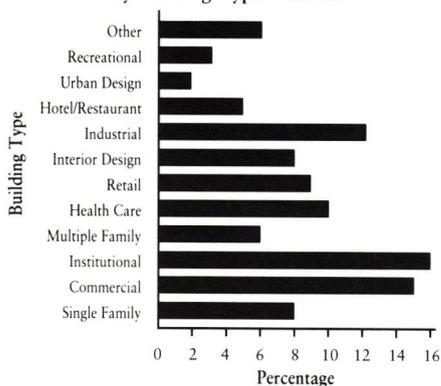
## THE INDUSTRY

In 1988, architectural design firms billed their clients an estimated \$10.1 billion—an increase of almost 35 percent from 1986. This translated into \$200 billion being spent on materials and labor in the construction industry. Firm revenue generated by type of construction includes 8 percent in non-construction, 30 percent in rehabilitation, and 62 percent in new construction. Five of the top ten markets for new residential starts were in California. Four of the top ten markets for new nonresidential construction starts were also in California. The three graphs below indicate the percentage by regional distribution of firm billings, sources of firm revenues by building type nationally, and sources of firm revenues by building type in California.

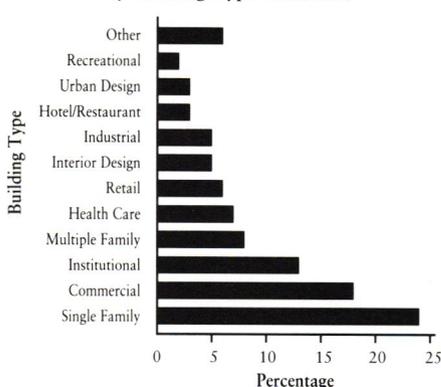
Distribution of Total Revenues by Region



Sources of Firm Revenues  
by Building Type National



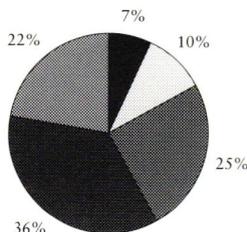
Sources of Firm Revenues  
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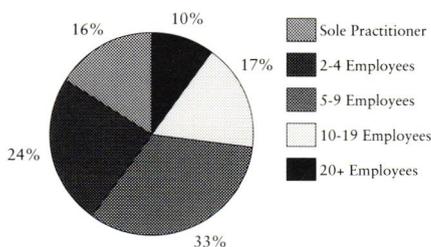
## THE FIRM

One of the most striking aspects of architectural practice is the number of small firms. Nationally, 58 percent of firms employ fewer than five people. In California we find similar data with 40 percent of the firms employing less than five people. In contrast, only 7 percent of firms nationally employ twenty or more employees, but represent 56 percent of the total billings. In California, 11 percent of firms employ twenty or more people. There are no data available on billings in California, but there is no indication that they would be substantially different. The following two charts indicate the distribution of firms by size nationally and in California.

Distribution of Firms by Size Nationally



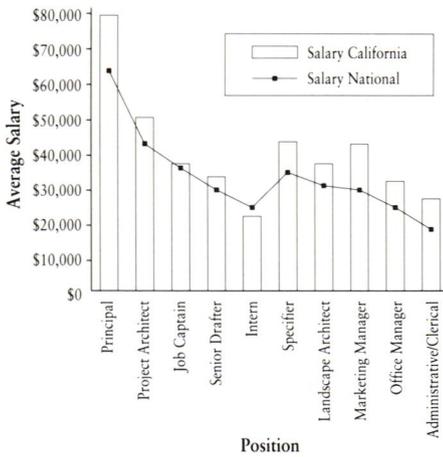
Distribution of Firms by Size California



## THE INDIVIDUAL

Fifty-eight percent of architects currently active in architectural practice are between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five. Eighty-three percent of all AIA member architects are employed in architectural firms. Of this group 22 percent are located in the pacific southwest region of which California is a part. (Other states include Arizona, Colorado,

Average Compensation by Position  
California/National



\$23,000 per year on a national average. In California, the average salary of an architectural intern is \$17,500. The chart illustrates a comparison of average compensation by position nationally and in California.

This is only a snapshot of conditions surrounding architectural practice. Given the economic climate these conditions are subject to considerable change, influencing not only individual roles in the profession of architecture, but also the structure of firms, and the larger building industry.

Hawaii, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah.) Forty-seven percent of architects have been licensed ten or less years.

Of the 130 National Architectural Accreditation Board accredited programs, 67 offer Bachelor of Architecture degrees and 63 offer Master of Architecture degrees as the first professional degree. There are approximately 18,000 students in accredited bachelor's programs and another 4,300 in master's programs. Women constitute approximately 30 percent of all degree candidates in architecture schools. One-fifth of all architectural students nationally are minorities. In California, approximately 30 percent of all professional degree candidates are minorities. In 1989, 4,200 students graduated from accredited bachelor's and master's degree programs. Of this group approximately 380 were in California.

Compensation continues to be a major concern of the architectural profession. The AIA debates this issue each year as it approaches its long range planning efforts. Nationally, principals of architectural firms earn just over \$60,000 per year on the average. In California, the average income of principals is \$78,000. At the other end of the spectrum of professional architectural employees, the architectural intern enters the profession at just under

# The New Structure of Demand

*Robert Gutman*

The growth of the overall demand for services has been accompanied by important shifts in the types of services architects are expected to provide. Many of these shifts threaten traditional ways of conceiving of the profession and its skills.

One feature of current demand that illustrates the shift is that clients are looking for services that have not formerly been identified as specific skills of the architect. These include maintenance cost estimates, post-occupancy evaluation, and building diagnostics, plus two subjects that have become major preoccupations of clients: interior architecture and space planning, and 'facade architecture' or 'imageability'. The last two services are linked to the growth of the commercial and office building markets.

By identifying these services as new, I do not mean to imply that demand for them was wholly lacking in the past, or that firms were unresponsive to providing these services. On the other hand, it has only been since the 1960s that many offices recognized these services as billable items, and organized their practices and promotional activities in order to highlight them.

The willingness of architectural firms to emphasize interior architecture makes good sense economically. The design of interior space, especially office space for high level personnel and floor space in department stores and other shops marketing consumer items, produces high fees for the practitioner. Interior space is also replaced much more frequently than the building shell and facades. It therefore offers the possibility of repeat work, which generally results in bigger profits.

The market for facade architecture is not a new development historically, but it does represent a definite break with the nineteenth century and modernist traditions that centered architectural interest on the total building product and its functionality. The current demand for architects to decorate the outside of buildings also incorporates a new twist, in that clients will now turn to architects for just this service and nothing more. Clients in these situations either handle the structural and technical systems of the building by using in-house designers, or turn the job over to a contractor or another architectural firm than the one they use to 'style' the building. The emphasis on appearance has something to do with the belief among clients that buildings with a distinctive or unusual appearance will excite public attention, and thus attract a large number of more affluent tenants. As the Philadelphia architect and critic Stephen Kieran, AIA, points out, it is a form of consumer packaging:

Given the competition between a relatively large number of architectural firms for a limited number of projects, the market economy has created unprecedented demand for image differentiation within the profession itself. At least at the highest levels of practice, uniqueness is a prerequisite for survival. Since the core service performed by all architects is essentially the same, differentiation must be achieved in the secondary, formal realm. Packaging, style, special optional features, brand names, and overall quality can all be

manipulated to establish specific, identifiable position within the marketplace.<sup>1</sup>

Because there is still strong pressure within the profession in support of the belief that an architect should assume responsibility for the total building product, few firms choose to present themselves as willing to design only facades and interior ornament. In fact, however, there are several firms that are selected by clients largely for this reason, including many of the firms that have achieved recognition because of their postmodern stylistic inventions. Should clients not be familiar with the availability of this service, there are books and manuals that urge them to think in these terms. Thus the author of a guide to real estate development writes:

It is not advisable to try to change the style of an architect; but to find an architect who in the opinion of the market analyst is in demand. The architect who is in focus with consumer demands and is flexible in his design should be the target of the developer.<sup>2</sup>

The interest of clients in finding architects who are prepared to confine their services to specific features of the product or particular stages of the building process has become a general characteristic of the new demand. This is not restricted to issues of interior decor or aesthetic questions. Many jobs are limited to a feasibility study, program development, schematic layouts, or diagnosis and evaluation of problems in existing buildings. Often the performance of these services will lead to further work on the project or another job for the same client. Just as frequently, however, the scope of the assignment is confined to the original commission.

Once a firm gets a job it does not always know the tasks the project will

involve. The official AIA handbooks and guides to practice warn architects to be wary of this situation, and advise writing the contract so as to guard against changes in the job description. The advice, however, is impractical. Clear and precise provisions stating the scope of service benefit the architect should the client wish later to reduce the commission, but firms prefer to leave certain arrangements ambiguous in hopes the job will expand. Unpredictability can result from the client's bureaucratic system of management. Under this management system, many levels within the hierarchy of the organization can be assigned responsibility for deciding the range of services required: in-house professionals, financial officers, and different user groups. At the chief executive level, family members and friends sometimes get into the act. The difficulties are intensified when the building problem is complex or when the project is for a relatively new building type such as many organizations are now constructing in order to capitalize on advances in building technology:

[O]ften there is no one 'client'—no single individual on the owner's side who can identify the required criteria. The information has to come from multiple sources: the plant engineer, the security supervisor, the office manager...and the accounting or data processing department. Sometimes a facilities manager may attempt to act as middleman between these departments and the architect—with varying degrees of success.<sup>3</sup>

With so many participants, the work that will be specified in the final commission is frequently difficult to forecast, for the client and for the architect.

The structure of demand is also changing because coordination of the design and building processes is becoming the domain of other professionals. Architects believe this role is important for

them to assume because that is the only method which guarantees that the building will be completed as it has been designed. Centuries of experience with the building process have demonstrated the inclination of clients and contractors to modify the design during the construction stage. The gradual loss of the function of coordinating all the work that goes into the making of a building results partly from the contemporary definition of the architect as a purveyor of specialized technical services. Because many clients now believe that architects, and professionals generally, are knowledgeable only in limited areas, they have taken over the coordination function themselves, either by employing their own staff or by hiring construction firms who have a reputation for managing complex operations. With the loss of the integrative function, many leaders in the profession fear that the major rationale for the architect to maintain extensive control over projects has been lost. On the other hand, critics of the profession have noted that the profession itself has collaborated in the dispersal of its authority, in order to reduce their moral and legal liability for performance failures.<sup>4</sup>

Anxiety arising from fear of losing control of work routines is now found among all parties to the building process. It may simply reflect the inherent complexity of the process and therefore the persistent instability of the industry. With progress going on in building technology, and as a result of changing policies and resources, none of the participating individuals and groups can be sure its influence will continue at the same level. Carpenters, often regarded as the most solid and assured of all construction workers, have been shown to display this concern.

Of the features changing the structure of demand, the most important remains to be mentioned. It is also the most positive change from the point of view of the profession. This is the big expansion in the range of building types that Americans

now believe requires the intervention of professional architects. Among the building types that fall into this category are the ordinary commercial or 'spec' office building and the standard housing development and tract house. In the past, the majority of office buildings were designed by engineers, while the mass-produced tract house was designed by developers or individual owners using stock plans.<sup>5</sup> The significance of this market for demand is that the tract house represents one-third of the total volume of new building constructed each year, and the office building an additional 15 percent. In view of these statistics, it is not surprising that by 1982, work on commercial buildings was the single largest source of architectural firm receipts. Forty-five percent of firm receipts were derived from commercial buildings, up from 31 percent in 1972.<sup>6</sup> Fifty percent of housing units are currently designed by architects, but this does not show up prominently in the statistics of private firms. The architects who are involved are mostly staff members of housing and development firms.

The use of architects for secular and commercial building types is a considerable switch from practice in the nineteenth and earlier decades of the twentieth century, which focused on churches and church related buildings. Factories and workers' housing associated with them were not regarded as buildings deserving the attention of architects until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Office and other commercial buildings first entered the architectural canon at the end of the nineteenth century, with the work of the great Chicago architects Adler and Sullivan, Jenney, Root, and Burnham.

Modern clients, in their search for technical advice, have turned to architects for the design of many ordinary buildings. However, this phenomenon is also very much an indication of the consciousness that architecture is an art and that art has economic value and carries social benefit. Buildings that are aesthetically pleasing

are admired for the pleasure they give and also because buildings so endowed are more likely to attract tenants and yield higher rents. A corporate headquarters is now a "giant architectural logo," making the company conspicuous in the urban landscape. Fashionable interior design is justified on the grounds that it contributes to employee morale and aids recruitment. The chief executive of Proctor and Gamble is convinced, for example, that the luxurious interior fittings of the headquarters building designed by Kohn, Pedersen and Fox have been a big help in overcoming the resistance of managerial talent to moving to Cincinnati.<sup>7</sup>

The new emphasis on design quality is clear from the management and marketing policies of the big comprehensive practices. Many of them are trying to overcome a reputation for designing efficient but dull buildings by hiring architects with established reputations as designers. It tells us something about the changing market for architecture that firms should be worrying about this issue, given the fact that many other offices aspire to be known for their competence in dealing with the technical and practical problems of buildings. A more traditional technique that is becoming more widespread is for firms to undertake joint ventures with a celebrated designer for purposes of entering a competition, or to pursue a specific job. This strategy is in part a response to the growth of cultural and economic elites in America's smaller cities who want their public and institutional buildings to count on the national scene. As a result of this movement, cities of the middle rank, such as Atlanta, Des Moines, Syracuse, Seattle, Cincinnati, Austin, and San Diego, have been getting buildings designed by Johnson, Pei, Venturi, and Graves. All these strategies, taken together, are a sign that the profession has been following the acquisition, merger, and contractual models that are standard now throughout the industries of capitalist economies.

Another example of the changing structure of demand is seen in the measures clients take for obtaining services. Corporate and institutional clients in particular exhibit a reasonably explicit strategy in choosing firms. A standard approach is to designate classes of building types and then seek different kinds of architectural groups to handle the jobs for each class. Routine building problems are dealt with by the facilities management department or other in-house staff. Buildings for which there are many established precedents in the architectural tradition, but which the company in question has not constructed previously, are given to competent, experienced but undistinguished architectural firms. Corporate headquarters for which the company may want high visibility, or building problems that demand innovative solutions, are assigned to firms known for their record in producing highly imageable structures, or for experimental achievements in other realms of architecture. Corporate and institutional clients are able to adopt rational procedures because of their extensive experience with construction programs, and their large physical planning and building maintenance departments.

The rationality of clients' market behavior is evidence that their willingness to interview a large number of firms should not be interpreted as confusion on their part about the types of service they require. The accessibility of clients comes as a surprise to many architects of an older generation who were brought up to believe that the only way to get a job was through private, and often hidden, contacts and connections. The market is much more open now, consistent with the establishment of routine application, selection, and purchasing procedures in many areas of business and government. The readiness to interview a dozen or more offices simply indicates that clients are trying to identify the firms that are most likely to meet specific needs, or

whose style of operations meshes best with the client's management and organizational style. There is a wide range of questions clients may have in mind. Does the firm have demonstrable capability for the project? Does the information presented in the firm's brochure correspond to the reality of the firm's organization and skills? What procedures does the firm adopt for making sure work will keep to schedule? Who are the individuals the clients will be dealing with in the architectural firm?

Current demand requires that architects be competent at promoting and selling their firm. Although the problem of dealing with the entrepreneurial side of practice is an old issue for the profession, some architects seem to resent the requirement more now than ever before. They are irritated by the strenuousness of the effort they have to make to get a job: finding out how they are perceived by the client community; developing and distributing different versions of a brochure; spending time soliciting clients by mail, phone, and personal visits; and getting advice from marketing specialists and public relation consultants. Architects who are disturbed by the emphasis put on these activities prefer the collective efforts to establish the importance of the profession with the public and among the community of potential clients. These efforts include programs of awards given to what architects define as good buildings or urban designs, career days sponsored by the profession in high schools, the development of materials for lessons in architecture in the elementary schools, the advocacy of landmark and preservation legislation, and television programs intended to foster the awareness of architectural values.

What architects resent most about marketing programs is the assumed implication that architecture is a business enterprise rather than a profession, and that the business side is taking precedence and guiding the definition of the field.

Architects recognize that they can survive in practice only by getting jobs, managing their offices efficiently, pleasing clients, and making a profit. However, some in the profession fear the extent to which these activities, in effect, advertise the business side of their work to clients and the public. To many architects, being known as a business person means that clients will imagine they place profitability and self-interest ahead of concern for building quality and the well-being of the client. The latter concerns are the hallmark of professionalism. They are what architects believe—and like clients to believe as well—distinguish them from builders, contractors, stock plan designers, and purely commercial operators in the building industry.

I believe architects ought to worry about the heavy emphasis the AIA and many firms now place on marketing programs. It is all too consistent with the view of the profession in many sectors of the community, especially among building users and the general public. Users of buildings and urban environments are very suspicious of architects' motives. The profession is looked upon as venal and selfish. Architects are perceived as people who are mainly interested in advancing, often on the basis of spurious arguments, the economic interests of building owners and developers; and therefore, indirectly, the wealth of professionals themselves. The public's trust in the fidelity of the profession is being undermined. The importance of this trust is the large part it plays in enforcing the client's respect for architects. This respect is based only circumstantially on confidence in technical skill. More important for the continuation of respect is the belief that architects will apply their skill not only for the benefit of the persons who pay their fees but also in response to the interests of persons, groups, and communities beyond the purview of the immediate client. For this reason, one can say that the public's and the user's conviction that the architect

is indeed committed to the professional ideal is a fundamental source of the demand for the services of architectural firms. Architects who ignore this fact in their selling efforts imperil the future of their own practices and the practices of other architects.

Although I believe it is important to recognize the hazards of the marketing mentality, it is unrealistic to expect offices to ignore the economic pressures impinging on all professions and producer services in this period of growing competition. Indeed, it is possible that market research makes a positive contribution to the quality of the environment by alerting architects to the services and building types for which there is a social and economic need. These marketing programs thereby enable offices to respond to the current requirements of clients, users, and the public. By allowing firms to identify the markets they wish to enter, market studies also give practitioners better control in deciding the kind of work they wish to do.

I have reviewed a half-dozen or more changes occurring in the structure of demand. These changes help us to understand why the large firms with fifty or more employees have become critical influences within the profession. An office that commands a wide range of skills, employs a multidisciplinary staff, and operates in many cities and countries is attractive to the big national and international clients, with diverse building and planning needs. However, I also have noted that despite the economic ascendancy of the large firms, the profession continues to be dominated numerically by offices with fewer than twenty employees. The nature of architectural work and the organization of the building process make it feasible for a small design team to handle the complex program of a much larger client organization. In addition, the smaller firms often specialize in one particular service or skill required in modern buildings. There are also many

simple building projects that small firms can handle themselves. However, it would be incorrect to conclude from these facts that only the biggest firms represent a new type of practice. The way the small firms operate, too, is different from the situation of the majority of the profession in the 1950s or 1960s. Furthermore, what I call the small office includes more architects and other technical personnel than it used to: the small office is a bigger small office than it was in the recent past. A major reason for this trend, too, is the changing structure of demand for services.

## NOTES

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2. Gene Phillipppo, *The Professional Guide to Real Estate Development* (Homewood, Ill.: Dow Jones-Irwin, 1976), 87.
3. Bea Sennewaid, "Smart Buildings: Facts, Myths and Implications," *Architectural Technology* (March/April 1986): 23.
4. Julian E. Lange and D. Quinn Mills, *The Construction Industry: Balance Wheel of the Economy* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1979), 7.
5. Robert Gutman, "Architects in the Home-Building Industry," in Judith Blau, Mark LaGory, and John Pipkin, eds., *Professionals and Urban Form* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 210.
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7. Joseph Giovannini is the author of the phrase "giant architectural logos," which appears in his article "The Grand Reach of Corporate Architecture," *New York Times*, 20 January 1985, sect. 3. The claim of the head of Proctor and Gamble is from the *Economist* 12-18 April 1986, 97.

Reprinted with abridgements from Robert Gutman, *Architectural Practice: A Critical View* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), 13-22.

# Reflections on the Practice of Architecture

*James V. Vitale, AIA*

Architectural practice mirrors the rise and fall of our economy. While 'general practice' doctors, lawyers, and certified public accountants ride through these ups and downs, the practice of architecture is the first to feel the impact and the last to recover.

## TWO DECADES

During the 1960s, our educational and practical tools were onion skin, Dazor lamps, and Maylines, with many syllabi barely postdating 1950.

As graduate mechanics, we faced the 1970s, which brought white sketch paper, Luxor lamps, Maylines, and revised building codes resulting from the Sylmar Earthquake. The decade began and ended with recessions in the construction industry. In Los Angeles, architectural practice was marked by the advent of the high rise, and with it, large corporate commissions. San Francisco similarly saw new and distinctive towers added to the already rising skyline. Parallel with this growth in office space, a new industry developed: that of commercial interiors. Space planning and interior design were old words to architects, and yet the large architectural practices that opened the decade with interiors departments closed them by the decade's end, while the majority of the new interiors firms were succeeding without architects.

During this decade, the average employee struggled to raise salary scales. High mobility due to the lack of opportunity to advance in smaller firms was met

with the formation of a fledgling architectural employees' group, which sought to establish equitable salaries and transferable benefits. (Doesn't this sound like the Intern Development Program, but without benefits?) While architects struggled to meet payrolls, interior design firms' salaries exceeded the average architectural employee's by 25 percent.

The 1980s similarly began and ended in the throes of recession, in the meantime witnessing a boom in housing, retail, and mid-rise commercial construction.

While we competed for commissions, the ranks of successful interior design firms continued to expand into market niches overlooked and/or bypassed by the architectural community as being without merit.

Salaries in architecture continued to lag behind those of other professions with similar educational requirements. Interiors firms reached a degree of saturation during this decade that is even now being reflected in the demise of organizations founded during the boom of the mid-1970s.

We are now into the 1990s, a fast-paced decade of CAD, PCs, FAX, and car phones. Again, just like the previous two decades, we begin in recession. Design competitions abound for public commissions; the ever-increasing competition for ever-diminishing commissions—with the attendant reduction in fees—equals tomorrow's claims. This is evidenced by the extraordinary rise in condominium-defect litigation during the past decade and into the present one. Similar statistics are evident in public sector construction

claims as well. Those of us with two or more decades of experience are survivors, keepers of the flame. Yesterday's craftsmen are gone. Hastily prepared documents by inexperienced technical staffs working under inadequate supervision by overworked principals is a formula for failure.

In this context, the largest architectural and design community in the United States is concentrated in California, and nearing critical mass. In spite of this concentration, design schools continue to proliferate. This is evidenced by the rapid increase in interior design programs, money-makers for schools with declining enrollments; Southern California has added a new program in the San Fernando Valley, and San Diego has established a new school of architecture.

As experienced practitioners struggle, how will these would-be architects be absorbed? Disappointment awaits many graduating students.

The Sunday classifieds of *The Los Angeles Times* for April 21, 1991, are an indicator of the dire straits presently faced by our profession: They contain no more jobs than in February of 1971, when I first entered the profession. The difference is that today there are ten times more job applicants than in 1971.

## THE EXAM

Recent test results during California's three-year experiment with CALE, in lieu of NCARB, exposed apparent deficiencies in our institutions of higher learning. This, together with inadequate postgraduate experiences, was reflected in the low pass-rates for all segments of the exam. Each year, the basic knowledge required of an architect increase. Course loads already exceed our ability to complete classes in the time allotted. The five-year minimum degree now requires six years of course work to keep students current, and even this may be inadequate.

## SKILL

The reality is that *experience* is still our best teacher. Yet architecture of the present and future demands skills previously untaught and rarely learned. And continuing experiences with skilled professionals (in the form of continuing education) is essential in order to remain current with technology and to keep abreast with new management techniques. Today's architects must be prepared to undertake uniquely different responsibilities in research, marketing, forecasting, financial source development, and alternative-use recommendations. Anything less is reflected in the failures of seasoned and less experienced architects alike, major names as well as unknowns.

The Beverly Hills City Hall and John Wayne Airport should be viewed as brutal lessons. A view behind the glossy photographs in *Architecture* of AIA award winners will reveal more errors and omissions claims than ever imagined. Over-budget and poorly-detailed projects with porous curtain walls and leaky roofs, these 'winners' are often 'losers'. Read between the lines. Look behind the scenes and reconsider your responsibilities. We possess a strong licensing act: respect it, support it, and it will support you. Master your destiny by snaring your oversights, so that those of us less experienced may learn. In architecture, knowledge is wealth, and experience is a measure of that wealth.

## BUSINESS

It is not enough to say 'I have established a track record in my profession'; in order to survive in the 1990s, you will need a farsighted business plan and a willingness to implement it. Architecture of the 1990s will be marked by innovative solutions to ever-increasing legislative and jurisdictional restraints. As architects, we must become businesspeople and increasingly

social beings: 'networking', 'joint venture', and 'interaction' must become our by-words.

## A FINAL REFLECTION

Is the traditional practice a thing of the past? No. As we mature within our communities, we become a resource of increasing value. City officials and their staffs come and go, while we remain the keepers of our community's history. Los Angeles is relatively young when compared to other large metropolitan areas. Housing in many parts of Los Angeles averages only thirty to fifty years old with some commercial districts of sixty to seventy years of age. Our skyline, nonexistent in the 1960s, today features distinctive towers set within a decaying core.

Today's high cost of development spells opportunity in renovations, retrofit, expansions, and remodels. In-fill opportunities are there for innovators. In order to seize the opportunities traditional practices must embrace change. Small practitioners must seek out niches of specialization in order to survive. Mid-size firms must continuously re-identify market trends and flex with their demands. Large practices will encounter ever-increasing competition for major commissions. They must also spend ever-increasing marketing dollars to stay abreast of their competition.

We have been trained to review, evaluate, plan, and design buildings. This process is no different today as we analyze the market into which we each best fit. Unlike the 1960s, when in school it was assumed we would 'only' become architects, today one may become a head of facilities, business manager, interior designer, product development head, housing administrator, public services chief, or professional consultant among numerous other options. Each responsibility requires organizational skills to carry out multiple tasks: Each requires an architect's skill.

As we grapple with the economic realities of the 1990s and reevaluate architectural practice in California, let us look to and borrow from those among us who are more skilled, join with groups outside our ranks, and cultivate relationships with which to rebuild the cities of the 1990s and beyond.

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# Debunking the Myths About Mass: A Personal View of the Benefits of a Large Firm

Kim Day, AIA

I often hear members of our firm describe the resources of Daniel, Mann, Johnson, and Mendenhall (DMJM) as an umbrella, symbolizing something that protects us. While it is true that this umbrella exists as a facet of our overhead (legal counsel, accounting, and risk management, for example), a more descriptive symbol of the operations of our firm would be that of a large *library*.

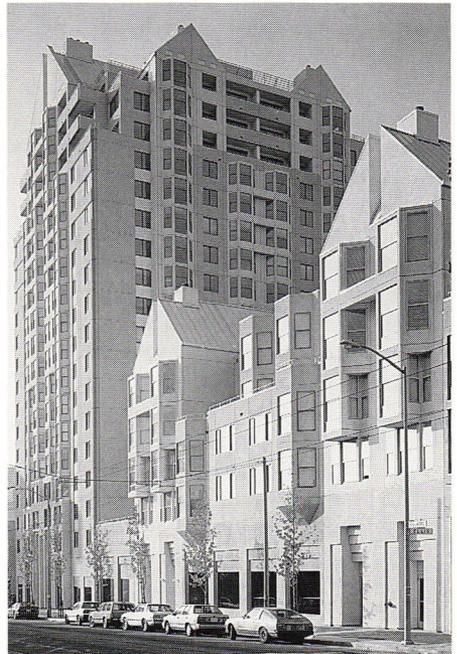
To take the analogy further, I would describe DMJM as a reference library: innumerable resources on different subjects, with some subjects covered in greater depth than others. We have indexes of people, their expertise, and their past experiences, not unlike a card catalog. If you need experience in a particular area, just look it up.

DMJM began forty-five years ago, as three architects and an engineer, designing elementary schools in Santa Maria, California. Today, the firm continues to be multidisciplinary, and has grown to 1,200 people. Our services include architecture, engineering, planning, and construction management. On the boards are such diverse projects as the \$500 million renovation of the Pentagon and the Long Beach-to-Los Angeles Rail System.

Headquartered in Los Angeles, the firm has over twenty domestic offices and ten abroad, with approximately half of the firm's employees located in California. The firm's overall ratio of professionals is nearly two engineers to one architect, but the San Francisco office, where I am located, is primarily an architectural

practice. With gross revenues of over \$100 million in 1990, DMJM continues to rank among the very largest architecture and engineering firms in the country.

The depth and diversity of our firm is exceptional. This is one of the main reasons clients with unique and complicated jobs approach us. In contrast to the myth that they will get lost in a monstrosously large and complex machine, clients find that they receive a high level of personal service as well as the specialized resources necessary. This is because



San Francisco Filmore Center. Daniel, Mann, Johnson and Mendenhall. Photo by Jane Lidz.

within the larger firm of DMJM, a small, singularly dedicated team sees its project through from start to finish, providing day-to-day contact with the client, while accessing firm-wide resources when appropriate.

What this means for an individual team member is having pride in one piece of a much bigger whole that is large, complex, and geographically diverse. For the individual this can broaden experience while developing an expertise, traveling, and working on high-profile projects.

In some areas one finds that the leading expert in a certain field is actually a co-worker who is more than willing to pass on his or her knowledge. A speciality, such as contract or specification writing, programming, design of correctional facilities, or graphic design, can be developed, enabling a young practitioner to find a niche within the firm's 'library' of experts.

This depth and diversity has two distinct benefits relative to the firm's bottom line. First, by having experts in-house, all the revenue stays within the firm. Second, because our resource diversity results in market diversity, the firm has the ability to remain busy throughout the recession.

Accessing the library of resources has become much easier now that we are computerized. We have elaborate networking and software systems that provide sharing of information and detail libraries among different groups and offices, as well as elaborate 3-D systems. Although computers cannot replace human expertise, instantaneous input can be obtained and incorporated.

Another advantage is the size and scope of projects that we can undertake as a large and diverse firm. Our scope of experience allows us to obtain unique commissions and then capitalize on our abilities by utilizing the in-house expertise, project control systems, quality assurance and control programs, interdisciplinary checking, as well as unlimited person-power.

Often the motivation for a firm to grow comes from not only the advantages of specialization or increased project size, but the larger fees associated with larger projects. However, the misconception in this profession is that the larger gross revenues result in larger profits per employee. In actuality, overhead grows as fast as—or faster than—the firm size. It is not cheap to develop a resource library of individuals. Along with sponsoring in-house seminars, the firm must send people to training sessions, conferences, even back to school, if necessary, both to develop their knowledge base and to keep them on the technical cutting edge. Sometimes a job will be taken at a less-than-profitable fee in order to gain experience and a reputation in a new market. Also, experts in their fields are not low-salaried employees. Even the annual updating of the 'card catalog' of resources has a hefty price tag.

And what about the normal operating expenses? Sure, all firms pay rent and phone bills, but as the firm grows, the accounting becomes more difficult and the outside accountant retained on an as-needed hourly basis becomes a full-time employee, then a department. Soon the firm needs a controller and special staff for payroll and accounts payable. Likewise, outside legal services can become in-house counsel, and ultimately, a separate contracts division is developed. This is the umbrella that I mentioned in the beginning of the article. You can see how quickly it can grow into a pneumatic structure, just as the small reference library can grow into a municipal library system, with various branches in disparate geographical areas.

The bottom line for me personally is that bigger is better. I will never see a cornerstone of a building that says "Architect: Kim Day, AIA." I will, however, see numerous buildings that say "Architect: DMJM" and will take singular pride that it is one "we" did.

# Exurban Very Short Stories

*John K. Miller, FAIA*

## *Synecdoche*

[A figure of speech in which a part is used for the whole, where a small event may represent a larger event or events]

### TOWN ARCHITECT

“What’s happening? Have you joined the Moose yet?” Bob Marquis, architect in San Francisco, has this sideways look and he is questioning Craig Roland about things in the North Bay counties, in Santa Rosa, about what it takes to practice up there, and about what you can do. What will they let you do?

The important California cities are where the architects are: Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Sacramento, Berkeley/Oakland. That’s where the important corporate and institutional clients go for their services. If you have to—or want to—be somewhere else, how does it work? One thing Marquis can do to help, and did, was refer a client up there who wants a modern sheepherder’s house on Rancheria Creek, Yorkville, Mendocino County. Otherwise, if you want to go up there you’re on your own.

### THE CONDOMINIUM DEVELOPER

The Petaluma developer called this morning and he needs to talk to me. The partner-in-charge is out of town, and it won’t wait. Everyone is in the conference room. Everyone includes the two people who have worked on the project, because he wants to meet the team, and me.

It’s very simple, he says. He knows that we worked with the former property

owners to design twenty-some condominium units, and now that there are city approvals, he purchased the package. We were the architects, our name was on the drawings, and he wants to push ahead and build it. He needs a complete design package in ten days for design review. Yes, he knows that only a site development plan has been accomplished.

Condominiums? I thought we designed a thoughtful subdivision layout with detached, single-family homes, separate lot lines, and city streets? Maybe that’s what you thought, he said; but they’re condominiums now with private streets and a homeowner’s association—the nice folks who hire attorneys.

Let’s talk about something else, he says. First, he wants to know about our professional liability coverage. We’d better have it, because he always gets sued. The architect gets sued, sometimes soon after the project starts to sell. Accept that as a given; it goes with the project.

Fine, he concludes. Are these things we can handle: the schedule, the coverage, and the lawsuit?

### THE INSURANCE PREMIUM

Let’s see if I’ve got it straight. If we have \$300,000 professional liability coverage, they want a \$60,000 annual premium. There will be a \$15,000 deductible. What’s wrong with this picture?

Haven’t we been doing an excellent job? Design and quality are top priorities. We’ve got experienced, knowledgeable architects producing our work, and the attention to detail during construction services is careful and conscientious. We’ll

do whatever it takes to keep a client happy, and we're not paying out claims.

Any suggestions? Anybody.

How long would it take to save \$300,000 if we took the \$60,000 each year and put it away at 8 percent compounded annually? At four years it would be \$291,996. Let's compound it quarterly and get it done in four years. If we haven't paid any claims during that time the \$300,000 is ours. Did you say that the average insurance claim was paid around five years after the fact, if ever? Maybe we should consider self-funding.

## GEYSERVILLE

What's there? It's a small community, off Highway 101 in northern California, north of Healdsburg, unincorporated. There are a number of small shops, small businesses, arranged along Old Redwood Highway, surrounded by one-story clapboard bungalows. It looks like a Hollywood set for a 1940s boy-meets-girl small-town romance. There are a couple of Victorian bed and breakfasts. The tourists come through on their way north or to some of the surrounding vineyards and wineries. It's really quite beautiful, and living there doesn't look stressful. The building site is along the main drag, everyone will see it.

Why does the utility company want to be there? It needs a customer service



PG&E Customer Service Center, Geyserville, California. Roland Miller Associates. Photo by Tom Ryder.

center, operations office, and corporation yard in that location to serve the local community and the north-south Highway 101 corridor. Take a look at the site. The site slopes down to the railroad tracks; most of it is technically below the flood plain. That means we have a relatively narrow band near the road on which to locate the buildings. They're lined up nose-to-tail, separated by use, operation, and building material. The rest of the site accommodates the corporation yard and vehicle storage.

The architecture looks like it fits in. The typology, use of materials, fenestration, and colors reflect those of the existing neighborhood. The design was evaluated by an ad hoc design review committee at the Grange Hall about a mile away. They like it. The buildings made them feel comfortable. You think nostalgia? Make no mistake: this is a thoroughly contemporary building. Everything works, has a purpose.

Frankly, I like working in towns like this: Kelseyville, Guerneville, Geyserville, Yorkville, Booneville, Forestville....

## THE COMPETITION

These are the circumstances. A San Francisco physician has two hundred acres of Alexander Valley vineyards and wants a winery designed. He proposed a competition among four architectural firms to make up his mind. Each firm will receive \$1,000 for participating. The client has already hired and fired two architects for the design of the facility.

There is a short, incomplete program. We will not get to meet the client. The client's representative has no advice to offer us regarding the program or the client's views. There are only three weeks to respond. We are not able to present our solution to the client.

Competitions are a way for clients to get a lot of work from architects at little cost. We have rarely done well in competi-

tions because of the missing client contact. A 50,000 case winery would be a wonderful commission. We decided to participate. We lost.

## RFQ

We used to receive calls from people who heard we were dependable architects; they would come to our office and discuss their project. Afterwards we would all go up to the site and get started. Very simple and straightforward, just like they told us it would be in school. Our energy, creativity, and enthusiasm would be channeled into the project.

Then someone invented marketing and sales. Now it is a cold call to a public agency to find out what their capital improvement plans are. A letter goes to the agency expressing specific interest in their upcoming work: the agency sends us a Request for Qualifications.

We prepare and send our response. It attempts to convince them that we are qualified, experienced by building type, to receive a Request for Proposal. We receive the agency's RFP outlining a dozen issues we must address.

Our RFP response is thoughtful, substantial, and convincing, carefully written in detail, and published desk-top on our laser printer in the back room. It must be there by 4:00 p.m. tomorrow or we'll be disqualified.

The agency sent out fifty RFPs and gets back fifty responses, six copies each. The long short list identifies eight firms. They must prepare for the initial interview. A short list of three firms is selected. They prepare for the second interview. Someone gets the job. Funding problems cancel the project.

## THE FUTURE OF EXURBAN PRACTICE

Should we have a marketing director, a marketing coordinator, and a marketing

consultant? Who is going to make the cold calls? No volunteers. In a recession, do we hire a graphics company to give us an appropriate professional identification? Can we afford to spend a lot of money on this?

We have to talk about the future of exurban practice, highlighting the mid-sized firm, which is supposed to be the point of this article. With twenty male and female design professions, and located in a North Bay city of roughly 100,000 people, we fit the profile. Our client base is principally the public sector, with a significant amount of private corporate work. There is not enough of this work in one city or town to support the practice, so it's necessary to reach out to other northern California communities.

It doesn't hurt to have something unique to offer. We define ourselves as a design-oriented firm providing strong services, but that's not enough. Clients are looking for specialty services from architects: educational facilities, health care centers, municipal offices, interiors, industrial complexes, whatever. We're generalists. It helps that we have experience in parks and recreation, police and fire facilities, municipal and county offices.

Meanwhile, urban architects are fanning out over the countryside in search of the same projects. The recession and the collapse of the developer-private sector has everyone chasing public agencies.

We're going to have to work harder, go farther, and be more effective to stay even. This is going to affect our design viewpoint as well. We should probably drop the notion that our work is regionalist. It's too limiting. Our work will continue to express the path it is taking. Style is unimportant.

But don't forget that we work and live in these small communities. We are involved in the same local issues, politics, community goals. We can identify with these clients, and they with us.

Okay, what do you want to talk about next?

# The Practice of Architecture with Developer Clients

*Warren Douglas Thompson, FAIA*

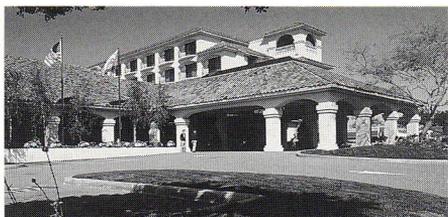
This essay reflects, with a broad brush approach, the influences that have molded my practice. It also is a history of a semi-rural community practice located in Fresno, despite the fact that our clients have given us interesting projects all over California and in eleven western states. Our firm size has varied from three in the beginning to a high of thirty-five employees. We are presently at ten people. I believe the hallmark of our practice has been 'Service to the Client' with our personal design satisfaction taking second place.

September 1991 marks the thirty-first year of architectural practice enjoyed by this author. They have been pleasant years, but not without some unpleasant times. The positive side of the practice has been the long list of personal friends gleaned from the clients of the firm, the wonderful people who have helped make the firm go, and the financial successes enjoyed over the years. In a community, the base of personal influence built from these personal client relationships can be quite powerful. This broad circle of client-friends extends your influence as a practi-

tioner, and it has been my experience that most of the projects you end up doing come from referrals from those old client-friends. The negative side of the practice has been very slight compared to the successes: economic downturns, rampaging regulatory growth, and less-than-honest developers.

The last thirty years have seen at least four major economic downturns. Some have been more severe and longer lasting than others, but the fact is that each time a downturn is experienced, one is faced with the rebuilding of the practice. The developer-friends made during the good times remain friends if one carefully handles the relationships as the downturn shuts off the construction industry. Developers—the good ones—are serious businesspeople, and the downturn affects them just as it does the architect. Developers are also optimists and risk takers, and they will react by creating new projects at the slightest glimmer of recovery.

Government has entered the life of the practitioner with a force that has accelerated in recent years. As an old-timer, it is possible for this writer to remember easier times when one could predict what the review process would cost and reflect that cost in the fee. In self-defense, our firm has begun removing the review process from our fee quotes, choosing instead to charge the client hourly for the entire regulatory process. The profession needs to work concertedly and energetically on the resolution of this problem. The regulatory process is just



Hyatt Westlake Plaza, Westlake, California.  
Thompson Architectural Group.

that: a bureaucratic process that does not add anything positive to the final product, that is, the building being built. It is my belief that architects are capable of designing buildings and supervising their construction; in fact, they are licensed to do just that. Bureaucratic reviews are an insult to our profession as they are presently enforced, and they only add to the increasing dearth of affordable buildings.

Generally, developers are dreamers, optimists, and sometimes businesspeople. A good developer, on the other hand, is a good businessperson, a visionary, and always optimistic, in that order. The real negatives in our practice center around the three or four developers that either intentionally stifled us or let their dreams and optimism cloud their business decisions, which left them unable to pay their fees. It is very important to screen your developer clients carefully before beginning any work and to keep them current with monthly billings to avoid large losses.

An architect that practices in the developer arena must know the business of development. He or she must also be able to offer broad ranges of services. These services can be individually identified, with a fee charged for each. Programming and human factors research provide opportunities for additional services. Feasibility studies and planning phases of a project can also be separated from basic architectural services and billed as work performed.

This writer's knowledge of development is based on experience developing some projects for my own personal portfolio and on an intensive research effort undertaken at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, as part of a master's degree program especially for practicing architects. Research into the architect as real estate developer opened this writer's eyes to the real opportunities available to architects who practice in the developer arena. I would encourage every practitioner to conduct

research vital to his or her practice as a method of infusing knowledge and enthusiasm into the daily tasks of architecture.

An architect who follows the regimen outlined above must have a high energy level and possess the capability to work efficiently. He or she must also be prepared to handle a high volume of work in order to sustain the practice. It is unlikely that an architect working with developers will achieve 'star' status within the publications of architectural media; however, there is great satisfaction in knowing that your efforts have had a positive influence on the thousands of users of your end product: your buildings.

Another area of personal satisfaction available to the architect who practices with developers is the peer recognition achievable by bringing a high energy level to one's professional organization. I recommend to all who read this that they become active at all levels of the AIA. The pragmatic approach learned through working with developers can serve the American Institute of Architects well.

I chose to work with developers early on in my career, and I am not unhappy with the result after thirty-one years. In fact, I have worked with a few of those clients over the entire span of my career. I am very proud of our ability to maintain such long relationships. In conclusion, I recommend working with the real movers of the real estate/construction industry and encourage young practitioners to follow a similar course.



Thompson Architectural Group Offices, Fresno, California. Thompson Architectural Group.

# “Why Can’t They Be Like We Were, Perfect in Every Way?”

*Sam Davis, FAIA*

Ever since the preparation of the architect and the practice of architecture were separated and universities took over education, there has been a recurring debate about a gap between the schools and the profession. As in the song “Kids” from *Bye, Bye, Birdie*, practitioners want a new generation in their own image.

In the early years of their existence, schools of architecture looked toward the profession for both their orientation and their faculty. In the past thirty years, architectural education has changed dramatically, but practicing architects by and large have not participated in, generated, or recognized the change. Universities have reoriented themselves toward the broad goal of improvement of the environment, a goal in which architects are certainly players, but not the whole team. The profession’s interest, meanwhile, has been on standardization and unity.<sup>1</sup> Whereas the schools have become the harbingers of knowledge and technology about the environment, the profession was once the primary purveyor. Even studies about the profession itself are now the concern of the academy, through faculty like Robert Gutman and Dana Cuff.

The debate endures primarily because the profession needs to sustain itself through the continuous influx of talented employees who can add economic value to practices at minimal cost. By the early 1980s in the United States, nearly 10,000 students were graduating each year with professional degrees in architecture or from undergraduate programs with a substantial architectural component.<sup>2</sup>

Current enrollment and graduation rates remain high and do not seem likely to diminish anytime soon. Each year, then, another large cohort enters the job market. As schools change, graduates acquire abilities and knowledge different from those expected by the profession. The perceived cost to practitioners rises, and with it the friction between academia and the profession. A look at how the schools have evolved suggests that the gap between the profession’s expectations and the schools’ performance will persist. A change in how we perceive the gap will be as effective in its amelioration as a change in actuality.

## EVOLUTION OF SCHOOLS OF ARCHITECTURE: THE BERKELEY EXAMPLE

Thirty years ago, eighteen of the thirty-one members of the architecture faculty at University of California, Berkeley were in active professional practice.<sup>3</sup> They were generalists skilled at making buildings. About that time several studies and publications signaled a change in the makeup of the faculties of architecture schools. The reports suggested that architecture should mirror other learned professional schools, such as law and medicine, by offering a liberal, humanistic, preprofessional degree followed by a more focused professional program.<sup>4</sup> This curriculum is now known as the ‘4+2’ program. Along with the ‘4+2’ formula came ‘4+3’, a four-year liberal arts (non-architecture) degree followed by a three-year (or longer) professional master’s.

During the decade between 1959 and 1969, UC Berkeley created a College of Environmental Design, within which the Department of Architecture resides, and began a '4+2' program as well as a PhD program in architecture. In so doing, the institution acknowledged that all aspects of the environment were connected and that design should and could entail not only physical formulations (buildings and landscapes), but also the designs of systems, methods, and programs that form the political, social, and intellectual context for such building.<sup>5</sup>

The result of the confluence of the reports with the creation of the environmental design college and the PhD program seems obvious. If one were to mount an inclusive undergraduate program, unencumbered by narrow professional needs and constraints and cohabiting with other liberal arts curricula in a major research university, then that program must be taught by credentialed scholars equivalent to others within the academy.

Architecture in the academy had long suffered both an inferiority and an identity complex because of a seeming lack of discipline and methodology. What actually was architectural research? These insecurities gave further impetus to the changes. The creation of a college of environmental design gave credence and credibility to the academic egos of the schools' faculties. Architecture departments throughout the country welcomed new faculty in building science, history, design methods, and social factors, most of whom held non-architecture doctorates. By 1990, there were only eleven architects in practice on a permanent faculty of forty-one in UC Berkeley's Department of Architecture.

#### THE ARCHITECT AS TEACHER: A DIMINISHING ROLE

While there is a long, rich, and important tradition of practicing architects teaching,



Tom F. Walters

the roles, responsibilities, allegiances, and commitments of full-time faculty who are also in practice have become increasingly complex. Well-known and established architects have been great teachers, but few have consistently worked as full-time faculty members.

As architecture programs have placed more emphasis on scholarship, specialists in building science, history, and social factors have become the majority, and architects in practice, a minority—significant from both pedagogical and administrative viewpoints. This reorienting has created a caste system within the academy. As pointed out by James M. Mayo in a recent issue of the *Journal of Architectural Education*, it is becoming more difficult for practitioners to achieve tenure or promotion.<sup>6</sup> The principal obstacle is that the academic institution in which the professional school resides is much more likely to recognize faculty achievements, scholarship, and creativity in forms it finds familiar (articles in refereed journals, books, research grants, and extramural support). Building design, to be recognized by the institution, must be extraordinary and acknowledged as such through awards, publications, and highly visible commissions. Most faculty educated and working as architects are ill-equipped to deal with the institutional expectations of scholarship as researchers, and are increasingly unable to measure up to the assessment as notable practitioners.

Practicing professionals who teach part-time, like clinical professors in medical schools, can make valuable contributions to a school's offerings. They bring important real-life concerns into the academy, but they rarely have substantive impact on the curriculum or influence through advising students, as their limited appointments do not provide for the necessary commitment.

As each new wave of faculty representing scholarly fields has achieved stability, success, and visibility within the institution, that group's influence over the curriculum has increased. Since the one constant in all architecture school curricula is *design*, design courses—traditionally taught by practitioners—become the focus of debate over content, staffing, and resources. Teaching design is a separate endeavor, one where nimbleness of thought and what Donald Schon calls 'reflection in action' are the objectives, and it is seen as the method by which faculty attitudes, values, and research agendas are transmitted to the students.<sup>7</sup>

In the halcyon days of the university, the debate on the substance and direction of the curriculum and the place of design within it was less acute, buffered by expanding numbers. Those days are gone, and with them the substantial role of the teacher-practitioner in education.

## THE STUDENT: IN THE MIDDLE

The approach to management of the growth in course offerings and the diversity of the curriculum gave rise to the method of organizing the student's program. At UC Berkeley, for example, courses are organized into areas of specialization, and students are generally expected to move horizontally through the areas at the beginning, and then vertically into one (or more) later. This conceptually simple system has both a positive and a negative effect for the student. Since faculty within each group

act relatively autonomously, they have ample freedom to fashion a cohesive program, and students have ample opportunities to work substantively within the area. On the other hand, as each area has developed an identity and strength, mini-departments have evolved within the faculty. When these become balkanized they preclude attempts at the desired intra- or interdisciplinary approach anticipated by the program and expected with the creation of an environmental design college.

At UC Berkeley, not only are there impressive resources within the department, but also on the entire campus, and students are expected to make the most of them. Yet the institutions offering the '4+2' formula, including UC Berkeley, have never fully clarified the intention of the broadly-based program for incoming students. At the same time, freshmen entering architecture have a narrow conception both of the general educational objectives of the '4+2' program and of the potential roles and positions available to them upon graduation. With an eye to the requirements of graduate study and employment, their inclination is to limit rather than expand their perceptions.

The students' dilemma is not just a matter of tolerating ambiguities and managing choices in the curriculum. Many want to be sure that an increasingly costly six years of education, even at state schools, can be justified. The additional admission hurdle after the fourth year is becoming increasingly difficult to clear as students who once had an opportunity to attain a professional degree are less likely to survive this second round of competition. These students fear that their options are narrowed rather than expanded by the '4+2'. They are caught in the gap.

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE LEARNED

As professional school curricula become more academic, the perception of a



widening gap between education and practice exacerbates the tensions between the two. In response to the desire of practitioners for professional education that combines theory and practice and brings to bear the ideas and concepts of the field on everyday reality, schools have developed teaching approaches that rely on the precept that one learns by doing.

The first method is to introduce—or re-introduce—aspects of professional needs, concerns, and skills into an academic program. But no matter how practical a course might be, it is still a simulation, an artificial context in which some elements receive more emphasis, depending on the goals, biases, or agenda of the instructor.<sup>8</sup> As Dana Cuff points out, design, in this context, is an end in itself. In studio, students are encouraged to experiment, err, invent, discover, and gain confidence in their own values. Design, then, is a method of understanding. In practice, however, design is a means to an end, the process by which requirements are met.

Second is the technique of appending or attaching a practicum onto the academic program, relying on those outside the institution to undertake the mission. Cooperative work-study programs, internships for credit, and professional development programs admit that only outside the institution can students attain appropriate 'real-life' experience.

A third, more innovative approach is the creation of a new institution, part school and part employer. This idea,

proffered by Ron Filson, dean of architecture at Tulane University, suggests clinical programs in architecture much like those offered by teaching hospitals.<sup>9</sup> Filson envisions these clinical programs undertaking community projects and attacking broad-based social ills that the free-market profession generally ignores.

These last two approaches share a common trait: they imply a longer, more comprehensive period of entry into the profession. Many educators feel that in order to restore the architect to a role of prominence and control in the building process, the graduate needs to know more. They advocate lengthening and intensifying education, perhaps elevating the first professional degree to a doctorate. The economics for the student and the institutions notwithstanding, such proposals ignore the fact that schooling will always be a relatively short component of one's overall professional life, and that information changes and grows so rapidly that no amount of course work would be sufficient. Educational reformers, like Donald Schon and Dana Cuff, feel that while the knowledge base is indeed expanding, the critical problem is how one learns to act upon that knowledge.

The Association for the Study of Higher Education identifies six competencies to be acquired by graduates of professional schools in general.<sup>10</sup> Practitioners generally expect two of these competencies from new architecture graduates: *conceptual competence* (graduates have acquired the basic knowledge of the field) and *technical competence* (they possess the basic skills). The other four are *contextual competence* (graduates understand the broad political/economic/social context in which the field operates), *adaptive competence* (they can respond to changes in social or technical contexts), *integrative competence* (they have the ability to make judgments based on the other competencies), and *interpersonal communication competence*. During the past three decades, schools of architecture—acknowl-



Sue Rosoff

edging the need for broader competency—have shifted focus from the first two to accentuating the others.

## REDEFINING THE PROBLEM

One way to ease the friction between the academy and the profession would be for one or both sides to redefine the characteristics of an architect as well as their respective functions in the formation of a professional in the building enterprise.

Historically, professions have shared several characteristics that distinguish them from vocations. Among these are the fact that they are well organized, usually by means of a professional association, that the members share common values and ethics, that they command high incomes and social status, that they work autonomously, and that their personal identity is closely related to their careers.<sup>11</sup> Changes in economics, in society's expectations of architects, and in competition from within and outside the field have so eroded these traditional indicators that they may no longer apply. To define professionals as all those licensed or holding membership in the AIA limits one to a relatively narrow spectrum of those who influence the design of the built environment. While the AIA has a substantial membership, it does not license professionals and it comprises only 60 percent of those registered and even a smaller percentage of those educated in architecture.<sup>12</sup> As the building enterprise becomes more complex and its processes

prescribed by regulators, politicians, and expanding technology, architects find it harder to describe what they do and where they fit, or to define and defend their autonomy.

Professions also define themselves in terms of the procedures by which newcomers join. For architects, this process includes education, apprenticeship, and testing.<sup>13</sup> But of the three parts, only the examination is consistent among candidates.

By default, then, the licensing exam serves as the profession's gatekeeper. Yet its usefulness as a definer or controller of those involved in the building enterprise is marginal, in part because many professions and businesses integral to the building industry have no licensing procedures, even though they exert considerable influence on the built environment through development, lending, and patronage.

What we need is a paradigm shift, a new understanding of the nature of a professional in the building enterprise. We cling to myths and perceptions of what we were because it is easy, comfortable, and exclusive, like the indomitable image of the American family composed of mom, dad, and 2.3 children. If we reframe our definition to include the full range of activities that constitute the making of the built environment, then the gap between education and practice diminishes. *All* competencies attained in school, not just those deemed desirable by a small segment of those working toward improving the environment, are seen as valuable currency.

If, however, we refuse to expand our definition of professionalism, and our concept of architecture and its reward system, we bring upon ourselves unfortunate consequences, two of which are pointed out by Gutman.<sup>14</sup> First, the continued influx of highly-educated, talented people into the narrowly-drawn job market will continue to suppress salaries, perpetuating the sorry state of compensation and the corresponding starving artist

image. Second, employment in relatively mundane jobs will further limit the mobility of the work force and erode its morale. In the short run, the supply of highly-educated, eager young talent is a boon to those in practice. While they may complain that new graduates need substantial on-the-job training, the flood of novices nevertheless constitutes a highly competitive source of labor at low wage rates. But over time, these same conditions are detrimental not only to the participants but, eventually, also to the profession, which—having viewed itself narrowly—is being forced to retreat into a yet lesser role in the building enterprise.

The success of any educational endeavor should be measured by what the student, the institution, and ultimately, the citizenry, gain. If the purpose of a university education is to increase students' abilities to be critical thinkers and to nurture their desire and motivation to exercise judgment effectively, then the '4+2' curriculum is largely successful. This education has empowered graduates to think creatively about the environment, to ask the important questions, and to forge links between the liberal arts and the components of a diverse professional program.

In spite of this success, convention and tradition resist this challenge to redefinition and continue to suggest that our profession should limit its viewpoint, strengthen and restrict both the definition of an architect and the method by which architects become educated and credentialed, and draw a tight circle around the 'image'. Schools would be compelled to refocus their curricula on the knowledge and competencies that fall within that circle. The knot tying education and practice together would be secure, with shared objectives serving only to tighten it. The gap would be closed.

Clearly, this will not happen: The pressures, inclinations, and momentum of education and an increasingly complex building enterprise will not allow it.

## NOTES

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3. The data are taken from the University catalogs. Faculty in 'active practice' are those whose firms bear their name or in which they are the principal.
4. Lawrence B. Anderson, *California Education in Environmental Design and Urban Studies* (Sacramento, Ca.: Coordinating Council for Higher Education, 1969); Robert L. Geddes and Bernard P. Spring, *A Study of Education for Environmental Design* (Princeton, NJ: American Institute of Architects, 1967). The reports also included several ASCA Teacher Seminar proceedings under the direction of a joint ASCA/AIA Committee on Teaching of Architecture. The principals of this committee included Harold Bush-Brown, Lawrence Anderson, and Holmes Perkins.
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7. Donald A. Schon, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987).
8. Cuff, *Architecture*, 65-66.
9. Ron Filson, "Architectural Education: Can Schools Span the Gap to Practice?" *Architectural Record* (November 1985): 63-69.
10. Joan S. Stark, Malcolm A. Lowther, and Bonnie M.K. Hagerty, *Responsive Professional Education: Balancing Outcomes and Opportunities* (Washington, DC: Clearinghouse on Higher Education and the Association for the Study of Higher Education, 1986), 48.
11. Dana Cuff, "The Architecture Profession," *The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice* (Washington, DC: The American Institute of Architects, 1988), 3-4.
12. Gutman, *Architectural Practice*, 10.
13. Not all states require a professional degree, or any formal education, as part of the registration and licensing requirements. The NCARB is pushing for such a requirement.
14. Gutman, *Architectural Practice*, 28.

# The Current State of the San Francisco Design Community

*Joyce M. Jackson*

The city of San Francisco sits majestically atop breathtaking hills that overlook a windswept Bay. Its distinctive skyline has been shaped over the decades by a cadre of talented architects. Its character has been shaped over the decades by a wild, enterprising spirit that harks back to the Gold Rush days when individuals trekked to San Francisco seeking a better way of life, greater job opportunities, and the promise of untold riches.

The men and women that comprise the modern-day San Francisco design community are in some ways like their professional forebears. Many have migrated to the Bay Area seeking a better lifestyle while hoping to capitalize on the locale's job opportunities. Unlike their professional forebears, however, today's San Francisco design community faces an uncertain future within a rapidly changing profession and marketplace.

The current community can be characterized in one word: diverse. Many ethnic groups, both sexes, and all educational backgrounds are represented in all facets of design work—from individuals on the leading edge of residential design to large, prominent firms world-renowned for their specialties in health-care facilities.

With its wide spectrum of diversity and creative talents, the San Francisco approach to architecture is basically conservative. While this conservatism has evolved historically, it certainly is not a limitation. In fact, it is one of the community's great strengths.

A unique Bay Area signature architecture has been in existence for over four hundred years. Appearing near the turn of

the century as the 'First Bay Tradition', this purely local invention took on a variety of forms in wood-built, single-residence designs. The popularity and widespread use of this style throughout northern California lasted well into the 1950s. Even today there are still a few local architects skilled in this historic architectural design. Gradually, however, due to economic, cultural, and environmental changes, this persistent style has been replaced.

Today, the uniqueness of the San Francisco signature manifests itself in three distinct areas. The first can be broadly termed 'institutional architecture'. The Bay Area is home to noted firms that specialize in the planning and design of hotels, government buildings, and recreational facilities. Most conspicuous within this institutional group, however, is a large concentration of architecture firms that specialize in the planning and design of medical facilities, and it is this group that produces some of the most progressive, innovative, and state-of-the-art medical facilities today.

Bobbie Sue Hood, FAIA, owner of the San Francisco firm Hood Miller Associates and current president-elect of the American Institute of Architects, San Francisco Chapter (AIA/SF), describes these institutionally focused firms as 'specialty service firms'. "Each firm has a narrow design focus that enables them to put out a good product," says Hood. "They do one thing very well and the result is a very high quality product."

The second area of distinction is the product of a relatively small coterie of

innovative residential designers. This group of creative individuals usually works as singular architects or through small offices. They explore a range of ideas and themes from boldly redefining and rethinking concepts of urban housing to freely expressing experimental designs in upscale, independent residences.

The third area of distinction is interior design. Most notable is the creative expertise within the institutional field of architecture. These designers exhibit an unparalleled level of knowledge of the institutional client and its particular building requirements. More importantly, they have learned to foster creative development and innovation within the potentially generic, harsh, and sterile environments of hotels, hospitals, and resorts.

For all its world-class architecture, the San Francisco design community is a friendly and close-knit, yet competitive, group. Mitchell Green, principal at Kaplan, McLaughlin, Diaz and director of its International Division, came to the Bay Area via Boston, Chicago, Houston, and Tokyo, and finds these qualities unique. "This is one of the few places where people still queue up for the bus and BART [Bay Area Rapid Transit]. That tells you a lot about people's attitudes toward each other here," says Green. "It filters down to a certain type of sensitivity and respect towards one's fellow professionals that is not found in too many other places."

This friendliness may be unique when considering the large size and high density of the design population for such a relatively small city. AIA/SF statistics show approximately five hundred architectural firms in San Francisco. A recent informal AIA/SF survey of these firms found that around 80 percent are small firms of ten people or less. The San Francisco design community is smaller in numbers of individuals than its creative counterparts in New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Houston, or

Dallas, but roughly a comparable number of firms is found within the much larger cities of New York or Los Angeles.

The Bay Area, with its higher-than-national-average salaries and its lower-than-national-average unemployment continues to be an attractive place to live for many people, including people in the design profession.

The constant influx of talent has molded San Francisco into a 'buyer's market'. Architectural firms have historically been able to pick the best professionals from the large pool of job seekers, and this situation persists today when there are even fewer jobs available.

Gordon Chong, AIA, owner of the San Francisco firm Gordon Chong & Associates and current president of the AIA/SF, speaks of the lower number of available jobs as the result of a changing market and profession. "It's not just the recession," says Chong. "We are seeing things happening today within our profession, community, and market that we have not seen before."

The new circumstances that Chong alludes to began to unfold in 1985. That year Proposition M passed in San Francisco. This now famous, or infamous, voter initiative limits the amount of new building within the city of San Francisco. The result has been a virtual halt to the commercial development market. Six years later the situation is no better. Currently, there are some eleven million square feet of empty commercial space in San Francisco, with an additional four million square feet already approved by the city to be built. This amount of surplus space will be more than enough to meet the needs of the city well into the next century. Gone is the once-lucrative San Francisco commercial market and the jobs with it.

The other circumstances Gordon Chong talks about are also forcing changes. Banks and lending institutions are more stringent in their financing practices for building projects than ever

before. Greater San Francisco city and California state regulations, codes, and lengthened approval processes are forcing firms not only to leave the city but the state as well.

John Field, FAIA, partner in the San Francisco firm of Field Paoli Architects, also attributes the present air of uncertainty to a changed clientele and the globalization of architecture. "The regional loyalty of clients in the past is gone," says Field. "The market is now global, and major projects in San Francisco are now frequently designed by architects outside of the region. In two or three years when the effects of the recession wear off, we will not be going back to business as usual."

While the long-term impact of these changes is unknown, their immediate effect has been negative, accentuated by the current recession. Like the rest of the country, northern California cities rumbled with widespread layoffs this past fall and winter. Karen Hargarther and Larry Bongort, AIA, associates with Stone, Marraccini & Patterson in San Francisco, are amazed at the increase in those out of work due to the recession. "Since January the amount of resumes we've received has at least doubled," says Hargarther. "I now take folders of them home with me at night just so I can go through all of them." "What astounds me," adds Bongort, "is the number of resumes I'm seeing from former principals, firm owners, senior designers, and project managers. There are a lot of people out there with twenty years of experience looking for a job. I've never seen anything like this." The resulting market-wide slowdown has caused healthy, growing firms to stabilize, financially shaky firms to make deep horizontal and vertical cuts, and questionably managed firms to close altogether.

While the community was negatively affected by the economic downturn, it is weathering the recession better than most areas of the country. A major reason for

this is the multidimensional local economy, a large chunk of it being service-based. While not immune to typical sinusoidal economic fluctuations, this service-based economy fluctuates with much less magnitude than do manufacturing, heavy industry, or oil.

Another layer cushioning the Bay Area during the recession is California's large health care market, which is affected more by political rumblings in the state legislature than everyday economics. However, recognizing the strength in the California health care market, out-of-state firms are also now vying for the available projects, and competition is fierce. Kazumi Komar, co-owner of the San Francisco firm Tsunami Ponder, sees this heightened competition as a positive: "We have had to sharpen our marketing skills in order to survive. It forces us to become better at providing services to our clients."

Further cushioning is provided by San Francisco architects expanding their practices to more of the Pacific Rim countries. Mitchell Green, describing his successful entry into the Asian market, specifically Japan since 1988, sees the future there as bright: "It's been a lot of work, but we're very successful. We are uniquely capable of interpreting their needs and delivering a good product. We're there to stay."

And what of the future of the San Francisco design community? Its success or failure in dealing with the changes it now faces depends upon the character of the men and women within it. They can try to resume business as usual, waiting for the market to pick up and awaiting certain professional death. On the other hand, they can adapt to the changing market and increased competition by charting a course to better design and professional services. The latter shows signs of being the chosen path.

The San Francisco design community will continue to be a much-sought-after place for firms seeking a piece of the market and individuals in search of jobs.

# Project Management Practice

*Richard Sullivan, AIA*  
*Lee Schwager, AIA*

An alarming fact: most architecture is built without architects guiding the delivery process. Most often the process is managed by people with limited ability to assess design decisions, whose primary focus is on cost and schedule considerations. Yet effective management requires an ability to evaluate the quality of decisions being made throughout a project.

From the time of Imhotep to the mid-twentieth century, project management has been one of six essential architectural activities (the others are project definition, planning, design, construction documents, and construction contract administration). It was at this time that projects became so technically and procedurally complex that they began to outstrip many architects' traditional project management skills. Serious problems escalated in an increasingly litigious environment, precipitating a liability crisis that sent design professionals scurrying for the security provided by liability insurers. Insurers, who equated liability with responsibility, in essence told architects to leave project management alone because it led to trouble. The architect's project management responsibility was diminished and the corresponding capability allowed to atrophy as the wagons were circled in defense.

Into the gap rushed a variety of players calling themselves construction managers. A few were architects or other design professionals; most were contractors seeking a new way to market themselves. The best construction managers recognize their limitations in understanding the design process and provide a viable service in cost control and construction scheduling; but many construction managers deal with the design professional as

just another subcontractor to be cost-contained.

The architect's loss of responsibility was accompanied by fee erosion. After all, owners reasoned, since architects no longer concerned themselves with project delivery, their reduced fees could be diverted to a new consultant who, like sirens calling to Ulysses, promised cost savings beyond imagination. The AIA, viewing the trend as inevitable, joined the bandwagon by publishing construction management version contracts.

The situation is headed the wrong way. Architecture is, always has been, and will continue to be the profession whose activities span the entire project delivery process. Architects are the logical professionals to manage it. How can the current situation be turned around?

## WHAT OWNERS WANT

Owners want a professional who is skilled in the art, methods, and technology of project management. Owners want a professional who understands both the design and construction process, is able to clarify and communicate owner needs, and is concerned about schedule and budget constraints. Most owners would prefer that their architect manage the project delivery process rather than dilute responsibility for project leadership with another consultant. For the owner, employing a construction manager requires dealing with yet another consultant—one without standardized credentials or scope of practice.

On the other hand, owners sense architects lack the management skills

necessary for fulfilling project delivery. Conventional wisdom in the client community is that architects, left unattended, will tend to subordinate more mundane project considerations to loftier visions, a view that does, indeed, have some basis in reality.

Among owners, there is an ambivalence between wanting architects to take charge of project delivery and not quite trusting them to do so. This creates an opportunity for those architects who have the education, inclination, and disposition to specialize in project management as a subdiscipline within the profession.

We use the term 'project management' to distinguish it from 'construction management'. Project management implies directing a project from its earliest inception, when program and design are emerging as the response to an owner's needs through to the occupation and full operation of the constructed result.

At this point we must pay homage to the fact that the project management role does indeed now exist within the architectural profession. It is practiced by architects working for agencies, institutions, and private sector owners. That architects occupy these positions is ample testimony to the value that owners place on the architect's knowledge, skill, and professionalism in the project delivery process. This article, however, proposes project management as a specialty—whether through an expanded practice or as an independent consulting service—and the 'project management architect' as the specialist.

### **PMA SERVICES**

Most project management services are not design-oriented. They are activities that either architects traditionally performed or expected of their knowledgeable owners. Unfortunately, many owners do not have the ability, interest, and/or the resources to perform these functions.

Architects often must expend time and resources shoring up owners in these areas just to get projects done, or expend unbillable hours explaining and justifying project decisions. This effort is seldom recognized in the fee and often contributes to cost and schedule lapses for which the architect is subsequently held accountable.

A project management architect focuses on the following services:

- Project delivery planning
- Due diligence
- Project team and role definition
- Design consultant selection
- Communication and information management
- Team management and consensus building
- Schedule management
- Cost management
- Design and document review
- Consultant and agency coordination
- Contractor selection
- Owner representation, particularly during construction
- Occupancy and start up planning
- Owner education

### **PMA TRAITS AND EDUCATION**

As a discipline, project management depends heavily on personal attributes and experience. A project management architect must be a team player and consensus builder. Project management activities demand architects who are people oriented. Architects practicing project management must be clear communicators, capable of leading meetings involving participants with diverse and sometimes adversarial views, and, finally command a sense of integrity and fairness that elevates them above the finger-pointing so endemic to the project delivery process.

While these traits and experiences are most important to project management, adjustments in traditional architectural

# Higher Visibility: Making the Future Different for California's Architects of Color

*Regina Davis*

The future will be different for California's architects of color. These African American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American architects are growing fast in overall numbers, now awarded larger commissions than ever before, expanding their professional organizations, and receiving increased media exposure.

## GROWING FAST IN OVERALL NUMBERS

The national AIA reports that minority architects make up 6.5 percent of total membership, while in California minorities are 14.4 percent, more than double the national figure. Currently, nearly 30 percent of all architects of color in the country practice in California. The national AIA also reports a 9 percent growth in minority membership compared to only a 1.9 percent increase for total membership.<sup>1</sup> These percentages are very similar to those of women architects, who make up 7 percent of all architects and

are growing 11 percent annually. Both minority and women architects will more than double in number over the next ten years. Women architects of color, however, are not enjoying the same increase in numbers. Currently, black women architects in California make up a miniscule 0.1 percent of architects.<sup>2</sup>

The number of persons of color studying to become architects in California sheds more light on the future. At University of California, Berkeley's Department of Architecture, both Asian and Hispanic students have increased enrollment by 1000 percent since 1980 while African American and Native American enrollment has remained flat. The Fall 1991 freshman class in architecture is 36.4 percent white, 27 percent Asian, 22.7 percent Hispanic, 5.6 percent African American, 0.02 percent Native American, and 0.02 percent Filipino. Programs to increase the number of underrepresented students of color graduating with degrees in architecture were

Registered Architects of The American Institute of Architects (AIA)\*  
by Ethnicity in California and Nation-wide

Ethnicity	AIA National	%	CCAIA California	%	State (% of National)
African-American	380	1.1	53	1.0	13.9
Hispanic	785	1.9	151	3.3	19.2
Indian & Other	190	0.4	57	1.0	30.0
Asian	1,530	3.6	575	9.9	37.6
Total Minority Members	2,885	6.5	836	14.4	28.9
All Members	44,470	--	5,791	--	13.0

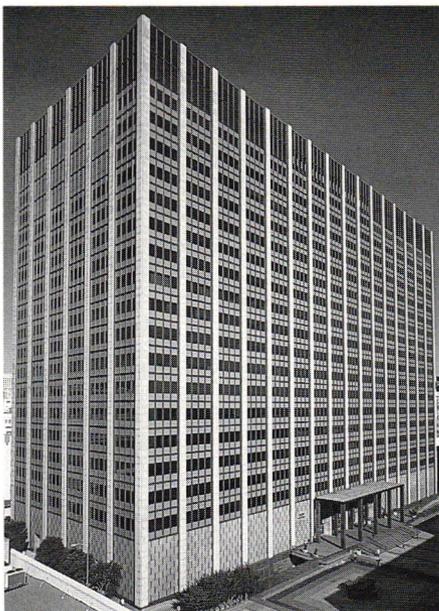
\*AIA, a trade organization of professional architects, generally represents 50% of all registered architects. For example, there are 771 African-American architects nation-wide and 380 or 49% are AIA members. In the state of California there are 110 registered African-American architects and 53 or 48% are AIA members.

recently established within the architecture departments of UC Berkeley, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and the University of California, Los Angeles, but support for these programs has been reduced by budget cutbacks.

### LARGER COMMISSIONS THAN EVER BEFORE

Thus far, no substantial critical review of design work by architects of color has been done. Some of the larger projects may seem aesthetically no different from other mainstream works. Robert T. Coles, FAIA, principal of his own firm since 1963 and fellow of the AIA, contends that “Black architects are different from their white counterparts. They have to be responsible to their communities and produce buildings that are useful, not objects of adoration.”<sup>3</sup> However, in my review of a few recently designed large projects, no singular intercultural architectural statement emerges. Nonetheless, it is clear that large projects currently on the boards of mid-size architectural firms are evidence of the tangible progress being made. The thirty-member firm of Del Campo and Maru Architects is designing a \$90 million renovation of the San Francisco Federal Building, and the twenty-six-member firm of Martinez, Cutri & McArdle Architects is designing the \$110 million new Ritz Carlton Hotel in San Diego.

Steven Lott, an African American principal of the twelve-person firm of RAW Architecture says, “African American developers and government clients had difficulty acknowledging RAW’s principals’ past accomplishments as architects at Gruen Associates and Skidmore Owings & Merrill. So, as a new firm, we built up our practice with smaller projects for mainstream private-sector clients. Our first big project was renovating a 250,000 square foot office building on Wilshire Boulevard for Larry Flint Publishers. Now we go right past the issue of color.” Norma



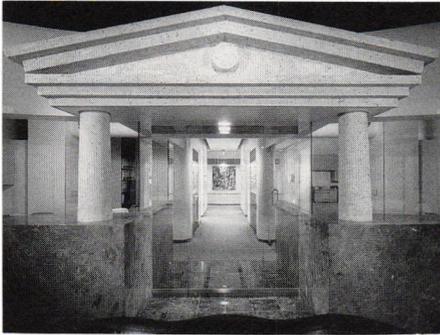
San Francisco Federal Building Renovation. Del Campo & Maru, Architects/Engineers/Interior Designers. Photo by Ron DiDonato.



Ritz-Carlton, Harbor Island. Martinez, Cutri & McArdle, Architects.

Sklarek, FAIA, a principal in Los Angeles’ Jerde Partnership design group agrees, “It comes down to the first big building you do that allows people to see beyond color and demonstrates your capability.”<sup>4</sup> Native American architect Bodrell Joerdan Smith, AIA, concurs, “We won the open design competition for the \$24.5 million San Francisco State University dormitory project. It was purely a beauty contest, they didn’t know who we were.”

To gain opportunities to work on larger design projects, small and mid-sized firms may participate in joint ventures with larger firms seeking public projects from agencies requiring minority subcon-



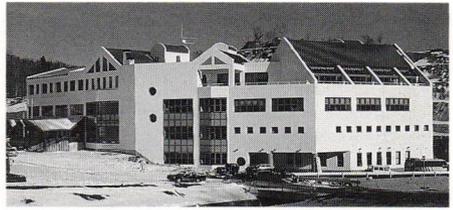
Medical Office, Beverly Hills. RAW Architecture.



Residential Apartments. Bodrell Joer-dan Smith Partnership. Photo by Russell Abraham.

tractors' participation. Although each of the firms interviewed is certified as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), they are quick to point out that being a 'minority sub' on a joint venture design project is a mixed bag. They work on larger projects than usual, but the quality of that participation with respect to design delegation can be less than satisfying.

In a more unusual joint venture, Ted Tanaka, AIA, Los Angeles architect, notes that his firm is in demand in Japan because he understands the design values of American-style luxury and comfort, but he also speaks the language and knows the customs of Japan. While his seven-member firm designs custom homes and commercial interiors in West Los Angeles, Japanese clients have given him the opportunity to design a \$300 million ski resort village with a larger Japanese design firm.



Shirane Kogen Ski Resort. Ted Tanaka Architects.

As MBE architectural firms have moved into the arena of these larger projects, the economic recession has simultaneously reduced their traditional client base, such as government public works projects, Black churches, and historically Black colleges. Firms are coping by specializing in recession-resistant institutional clients, such as hospitals, jails, and schools. Other firms have merged with larger majority firms to survive in the present economic situation. Max Bond, AIA, of former Bond/Ryder Architects merged with Davis and Broady Architects to become the first Black in New York to be a partner of a major firm.

#### INCREASED MEDIA EXPOSURE

As they complete more significant buildings, architecture firms of color are bound to attract more national and local media attention. The National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) organized "How to Get Your Design Work Published" workshops led by national architectural press representatives at the 1990 national NOMA conference. The *NOMA Newsletter* reports that, "The fruits of NOMA's labors are evident as minorities in architecture have recently received a great deal of media attention. In the past few months, features have appeared in the February issues of *Progressive Architecture* and *Black Enterprise* magazine...[and] the April issue of *Architecture* magazine."<sup>5</sup>

Although 90 percent of the firms interviewed for this article have had articles about their firms' work published in local media, only a few have had projects

reviewed in the national architectural press, which tends to focus on the plight of minority firms rather than on their specific building design accomplishments. In a recent letter to the editor of one such publication, Mario Del Campo commented: "While I am pleased to see your April issue included the article 'Invisible Architects' regarding the struggles of minority firms,...consider a series featuring good design work from the minority architectural community." This will not be an easy task since there are no prominent architectural writers or editors of color and little research has been done. Exciting exceptions to this type of coverage are the recently produced half-hour nationally televised specials featuring the design works of RAW Architects in the USA and Ted Tanaka in Japan. Also published this year are *Monograph: Black Architects in Current Practice* by Jack Travis, Kisho Kurokawa's *Intercultural Architecture: the Philosophy of Symbiosis*, and Peter Nabakov's *Native American Architecture*.

The results from a survey of California architecture firms of color show that more than 70 percent of firms are promoting their services through leadership positions in professional and community organizations, seeking opportunities to have articles about their projects published in client-oriented outlets, seeking work opportunities through government set-aside programs, facility management contacts, and joint ventures with larger firms, and backing political candidates.<sup>7</sup> However, only half of the architecture firms interviewed have a marketing person on staff at least 50 percent of the time, even though the average firm size was twenty persons. Sylvia Kwan, AIA, principal of Kwan/Henmi Architects, says, "We should not be afraid of doing self-promotion. We should flood the media."

Linda Crouse, marketing director for Gordon Chong Associates, says, "We had an image study conducted on our firm with thirty past and prospective clients.

#### California Architecture Firms of Color Increase their Visibility

	% of respondents
Principals are leaders in professional organizations	100
Principals are leaders in community organizations	100
Firm is certified as Minority Business Enterprise	100
Firm's projects are published in local or nat'l outlets	90
Principals are board members of orgs. or commissions	80
Principals participate in electoral politics	70
Firm contacts developers or facilities managers	70
Firm participates in joint ventures w/larger firms	70
Principals appear as guest speakers at public events	60
Firm has at least 50 percent marketing staff position	50
Firm supports staff participation in prof/comm orgs.	50
Principals teach architecture	40
Firms provide pro bono services	40
Other efforts to heighten visibility	40

We found that the clients who had used our services before were *less informed* about our capabilities than prospective firms. We were surprised. Minority firms must make stronger PR programs in the future."

#### EXPANDING PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

In California, ten professional organizations support the interests of architects of color with a combined active membership of 570 out of a possible membership of approximately 1,700. The chair of NOMA's Visibility Task Force, Robert Easter, says, "Nothing will change without active participation of minority architects. Their numbers can make NOMA into something powerful. California ought to be leading the way in this. What happens there will eventually happen everywhere else."

Professional architecture organizations will have greater political clout as they build coalitions among themselves and with other professional and political organizations. Mario Del Campo explains, "The 'M' in MBE should really stand for multicultural....Locally, Black and brown firms have united through the local chapters of NOMA to monitor and consider percentages of contracts given to minority firms by public agencies...such as universities that are supported by tax dollars yet

**California's Professional Architecture  
Organizations of Color**

Organization Name	Date	Members Calif/Nat'l
National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) of LA and SF	1972	170/600
American Indian Council of Architects and Engineers	1976	3/63
Filipino American Society of Architects and Engineers (FASAE)	1976	-/-
Asian American Architects and Engineers (AAAE) of LA and SF	1978	240/-
AIA Minority Resources Committees (MRC) of LA and SF Chapters	1983	115/-
Filipino Architects, Contractors and Engineers (FACE)	1990	22/-
Society of Hispanic Architects, Planners and Engineers (SHAPE)	1991	20/-
Total		570/798

shirk their responsibility to spend these funds equitably.”<sup>8</sup>

Various ethnically-based professional organizations are actively cooperating with ethnic business organizations to improve their visibility or protect their interests. According to Phil Delacruz, a San Francisco engineer, the newly-formed Filipino Architects, Contractors, and Engineers (FACE) was specifically organized to support political candidates for seats that appoint members to boards responsible for making decisions about design and building contracts. The Asian American Architects and Engineers (AAAE) was successful in its 1989 efforts to keep Asian Pacific Americans eligible for Federal minority business programs. Los Angeles architect Robert Moore says, “Two years ago in LA they [potential clients] were saying they didn’t know any black architects. Well NOMA made them known through exhibits of our works, an active speakers’ bureau, and meetings with procurement officers. They have started to call us with crumbs. Now we need to turn those crumbs into loaves so we can eat.”

Also, the California Council of the American Institute of Architects Minority Resources Task Force has changed its name to Minority & Women’s Resources Task Force in order to include CCAIA’s 527 women architects. The Task Force is

publishing a directory of CCAIA minority and women architect members to distribute to state agencies to improve procurement opportunities.

The challenges to higher visibility for California’s architects of color are achieving equitable distribution of public projects and satisfactory design-delegation agreements in joint ventures, researching and reporting design achievements of architecture firms of color, building broader coalitions with related businesses and other ethnic groups, creating more forceful public relations programs in firms, and encouraging more students of color to study architecture. California’s architects of color are leading the way to make our future different.

**NOTES**

1. Micqui Miller, *1991/1992 Proposed Plan CCAIA Minority Resources Task Force* (Sacramento, Ca.: CCAIA, 1991).
2. Todd Stein, “Black architects find color is barrier to success,” *San Francisco Examiner*, Sunday 25 August 1991, F, 6.
3. Julie V. Iovine, “Architects: Builders of Dreams,” *Emerge* (August 1991): 35.
4. Stein, “Black Architects.”
5. *NOMA Newsletter*, 21, no. 1, (First Quarter, 1991).
6. Mario Del Campo, Letter to the Editor-in-Chief, Deborah Dietsch, of *Architecture*, dated 29 June 1991.
7. I wish to thank the architecture firms which participated in this survey: Bodrell Joer-dan Smith Partnership, Gordon H. Chong + Associates Architects/Engineers, Del Campo & Maru Architects/Engineers, Diseño Maritza Delgadillo Architect, Gerson/Overstreet Architects, Kwan/Henmi Architects, Martinez Cutri & McArdle, Robert S. Moore Architect and Associates, Architects/Planners, RAW Architects, and Ted T. Tanaka Architects. These firms were selected to compose a diverse group of firm sizes, regional areas, and ethnic backgrounds of principals. Firm size ranged from 1.5 to 45. Regional distribution was: 60 percent San Francisco, 30 percent Los Angeles, and 10 percent San Diego. Ethnic background of principals was: 30 percent Asian, 30 percent black, 30 percent Hispanic, and 10 percent Native American. A broader study is warranted in the future.
8. Del Campo, Letter.

# The Architect as Comprehensivist

W. Mike Martin, AIA, PhD

The Vision 2000 study initiated by the American Institute of Architects in 1988 has set in motion a new wave of activity addressing the nature of architectural practice and the education of future professionals of the twenty-first century. Traditional professional practice has defined the role of the architect as that of a *generalist*. This role as generalist is most commonly understood as relating to the evolution of a project through its phases from design conception to building occupation. It has become increasingly clear that the traditional boundaries that guide this design and construction process for architects do not serve the architect well. It is believed by many that the architect enters the design and construction process too late and leaves before all of the critical decisions are made.

Futurists are generally in agreement that the thrust of the twenty-first century will be focused on the management of information. For the architectural profession this means the architect's role will be an interpretive one, requiring decisions that will lead to consequences resulting from the interaction of complex disciplinary bodies of knowledge, skills, and values ranging from history to anthropology, sociology, economics, politics, engineering, art, information science, and many others. Clearly, this process of interpreting how the world 'is' and making judgments about how the world 'ought to be' leaves little—if any—knowledge, skill, or value outside the realm of the architect's role if leadership in the building process is to be maintained.

A review of the Vision 2000 Trend Study suggests several shifts in the priority of services the architectural profession

should provide to society in the twenty-first century. Examples of these shifts include changes in the national mood toward pragmatism and a new social ethic grounded in a return to traditional commitments and the search for self-fulfillment. This seems to be coupled with a renewal of idealism about resolving the major problems facing the current and future populations of our globe in order to create a higher quality of life in terms of our places of work, play, and living. The demographic distribution of our population will necessarily produce several significant changes, including slower growth rates, increased average age, increased numbers of women in the workplace, and a dramatic increase in numbers of minorities in the population.

For the architectural profession, the nature of practice will shift from new construction to rebuilding the decaying infrastructure in older public and private sectors. This will include rehabilitation, retrofitting, and restoration of residential, commercial, and institutional environments. This will also result in the development of what is being termed the 'urban village', produced by a pattern of growth clustered around large regional shopping and work centers. In addition, this shift will result in the small to moderate-sized cities in the United States becoming the centers of new construction and development.

Advances in technology will continue to create major shifts in the activities of the architect. The computer will assist in organizing data, tracking design decisions, creating and producing documentation, and managing the complexities of the new service/business character of the profes-

sion. Energy concerns will return to play a major role not only in the design of building form but also in the selection of materials and construction processes. Synthetic materials will revolutionize the way we build. Construction of the physical environment will become automated: human workers will be replaced by robotics systems.

Shifts in economic conditions, such as the globalization of the economy, adaptation to foreign trade markets, and increased demand for a larger variety and higher quality of products will affect levels of production and utilization and distribution of natural and human resources. The continued worsening of environmental conditions will refocus interest on issues of population control, air and water quality, utilization of non-renewable resources, and food production.

The nature of the workplace will change in response to the transition from an industrial to an information-age society. The workplace will move closer to home, and there will be a greater emphasis on productivity to assure competitive positions in the new global economy.

Finally, the increased regulatory and political control at the state and local levels will democratize our decision-making process. This will result in increased accountability relative to the services and products of the architectural profession.

For architects, this expanded context and role will result in a potential expansion of professional practice and an expanded role for the architectural educator in preparing the future architect.

One manner of illustrating this change is to position the architect not as the traditional generalist but as a *comprehensivist*. Who is this new comprehensivist? On one level, individuals filling this role must possess a broad general education, wherein a priority was placed on the development of citizens capable of interacting within their environment through a critical review and evaluation of everyday life. In addition, a commitment to a

professional orientation grounded in a process of synthesis based on broad and diverse arenas of knowledge, skill, and values is required. This process of synthesis will also require an in-depth understanding of the relationships between the built and natural environments as well as the ability to create a balance between the technological and artistic capacities of society. This mandates individuals well educated in the methods and theories of decision-making, the historical and contemporary roots of the architectural profession as well as our allied disciplines, the technologies of construction, and the strategies for managing the interactions of the varied components and participants in the processes of planning, designing, constructing, and operating our physical environments.

If this role of the comprehensivist is to be pursued in a serious manner, it must be governed by three simple principles: (1) the architectural profession must be dedicated to the conservation, design, and construction of the physical environment; (2) these activities must be carried on at the highest possible theoretical and practical level; and (3) architecture must be seen as a learned art, a social art, based upon a learning process committed to action. This action must be guided by theory and method as well as the tools of practice and management.

In summary, the architect's new role of comprehensivist will require a major commitment on the part of both professionals and academics to work cooperatively to transcend the everyday pragmatic problems of education and practice and to establish an optimistic vision of the role of architecture and its related professions in the twenty-first century. It is time to believe in ourselves and take control of our future. Our strength is in our commitment to achieve a common set of goals in an environment guided by reason and trust.

# Lessons From Practice: An Interview with John Lautner, FAIA

Jo Walker

Architecture California *excerpts portions of an interview with John Lautner, FAIA, Emeritus, conducted by Jo Walker, a graduate student in the Department of Architecture at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.*

*How long have you been practicing in the state of California?*

A little over fifty years.

*That's a long time. Do you think things have really changed?*

I don't see any real change, except that it just gets worse. I mean, it's more strictly commercial. When I started there were still a few architects who were quite concerned with architecture as real architecture and not just with the latest fad or the latest gimmick or the biggest business deal.

*How would you define architecture as 'real architecture'?*

Real architecture is as all-encompassing and undefinable as life itself, because it involves absolutely everything in life. Real architecture is something that contributes to life and incorporates all the values that are essential to human beings that are never addressed at all.

*It sounds like the perfect definition of social responsibility.*

Yeah, well, that's left out. When architects are dealing with the fashion world and the fast buck, the human being is totally left out. A recent play review in *The New York Times* pointed out the humanizing power of art saying that art is probably the only humanizing influence; everything else is business. If architects understood that contributing to human life is more

important than a quick buck, we might see some common decency, let alone beautiful design.

*Do you have any ideas about how it got to be this way?*

The profession, especially in the United States and southern California, is entirely managed as media-made business. Nobody knows anything else, because the only thing that comes out is media-made advertising and media-made names; they all go by names. Of course, southern California is worse because Hollywood is all names, and they manufacture names. People are merchandise too. The ideals that most people in this area know are 'make a fast buck and get the Hell out of there, but don't do anything'.

*Your office is right in the heart of Hollywood. How did that happen?*

Well, it's the center of the whole area, even though I've never liked Los Angeles. It represents everything bad as far as I'm concerned. But the reason I'm here is that there are about ten million people here, and out of that many I get a few real individuals who are concerned.

*How do people come to you? From the beginning when you first broke away from Mr. Wright, how did you build your clientele?*

I built a practice the same way that Frank Lloyd Wright built his: on work. So I built my own house. That was the first thing I did. Some people saw it, and eventually, someone who saw it was going to build and they came to see me. I never had a PR man or a salesman or any of that stuff.

*It seems like most of your work has been residential. Do you feel like you've been*

*slotted into that or have you selected to do that?*

They do that on purpose, I think. They tried to do that with Frank Lloyd Wright. "Oh Hell, he's no good. All he does is houses." And all these other guys do big stuff. Big stuff is easier than houses! An office building, all you do is make two floor plans. It's the easiest damn thing in the world. With cute facades....As for schools and public work, they're so politically involved, I don't have a chance with them.

*You do beautiful houses that are pretty expensive and only a few people can afford them. Do you do lower cost work?*  
I've done them from \$2,500 to \$12 million. That's the range.

*How do we go about building responsible and human housing for not an outrageous amount of money?*

I've thought about that all my life, and I've wanted to do it. I analyzed it, and even fifty years ago, the cost of a house might have been only 30 percent for financing, interest, and profit. Now, I think it's over 50 or 60 percent. It used to be that a house would be 50 percent for materials and 50 percent for labor. Now it gets to be more like 25 percent for materials and 75 percent for labor. Something like that. But also, there's no way to do it. Actually, there is a way. The only way I could figure out was the way Henry Ford did it; you have to control the whole thing. That's what I'd like to have. All the materials. All the machinery. And I would just manufacture it and say, "there it is." And you could have low cost housing.

*You're talking about multiples of the same design.*

I have imagined things that could have quite a bit of variety and still have some repetition. That's what Henry Ford did with the car. He knew exactly what it was going to cost: material, labor, machinery, everything. Then he said to a subcontractor, "Ok, do you want to make 10,000 of these for two bucks? If you don't, go to hell." You could do the same with hous-

ing, but nobody gives a damn about housing. All they want to do is make money.

*Seems to me that's a national malaise. California may be bad, but it's something you see everywhere.*

It sure is. It's terrible. I was just reading that there are more people in jail in the United States than in anyplace in the world. Of course we just got through with a 200,000 massacre that was a total waste. They could have put that in housing. *One scud missile and you've got yourself a housing complex.*  
It's insane.



Malin 'Chemosphere'. Photo by Julius Shulman.

*Do you ever feel like you have difficulty getting clients to take some of the risks involved in your work?*

No, I don't. They come to me for something, and I'm producing something. When they want something and I give it to them, usually they're pleased that it's better than anything they ever dreamed of. That's what I consider real architecture. And they're happy when I do that. Otherwise, they might as well do it themselves.

*So the way you have related to your clients has pretty much stayed the same throughout your practice. You don't think clients' expectations have changed at all?*

No, they are individuals. There's all this baloney about 'high tech' and God knows what: that people will change. People haven't changed for three or four thousand years. I'm dealing with the essential

parts of people, the intangibles, the heart, the soul, the space, the freedom, all of the intangibles that are the essence of good architecture, and they are timeless besides. *How many people are working in your office?*

Usually just four or five.

*Are they students or registered?*

Mostly all architects. I used to have students when I first started, I had students who would work for nothing. Now they want to be paid, and they're good for nothing. Even after a year they don't contribute anything much.

*About how many projects do you handle in your office at a time?*

Well, on the average I've had ten to fifteen projects a year. It seems to take at least that many just to keep the office open, because they go ahead, and then they stop, and you have to juggle everything. For years, I had no problem, I could keep fifteen jobs in my head—every single detail. When I first started, I had all the best guys in town. I could get a house in complete working drawings in two or three weeks, or a couple of months. Now it gets to be a year or more.

*Do you do your own working drawings in the office here?*

Sure.

*So you have complete control over the whole project.*

Sure.

*Do you think that the changes in codes over time have had much impact on the way that you design a building or how your buildings come out?*

No. When I first started it was difficult to get permission for certain things that violated the code. But at that time they had a board of appeals. So, if you had a reasonable situation, a common sense thing that wouldn't affect public health and safety, you could do it. The big drag is money. The bankers won't finance a new idea *at all*. It's not the building code, it's the damn bankers! It's the *status quo*....In Germany, you could have a ten-page code. People trust each other. Here

in the United States there's no honesty, no trust, no nothing.

*It seems that in your practice you must have tremendous trust all the way across the project.*

That's right. Most architects wouldn't put their neck out like I do. A long time ago, I did an apartment in Westwood, and the hallway passages didn't fit any of the requirements that were in the code for apartment buildings. So I just made a drawing showing these passages out in the open air, out in space. I got approval. But if I hadn't gotten approval, I would have been \$10,000 in the hole, which was a lot of money at that time. I would risk that to do good architecture.

*For the idea?*

Sure. But nobody else would. When I give a talk, they say, "what about the code?" I say, "I'm not designing for the code, I'm designing for people." Actually, if they wanted to do something constructive, they should cut the code back to the essentials of protecting the health and safety.

*Do you think the codes are worse in California than in other states?*

Oh yes. Almost anyplace is simpler than this place.

*What about the construction trades?*

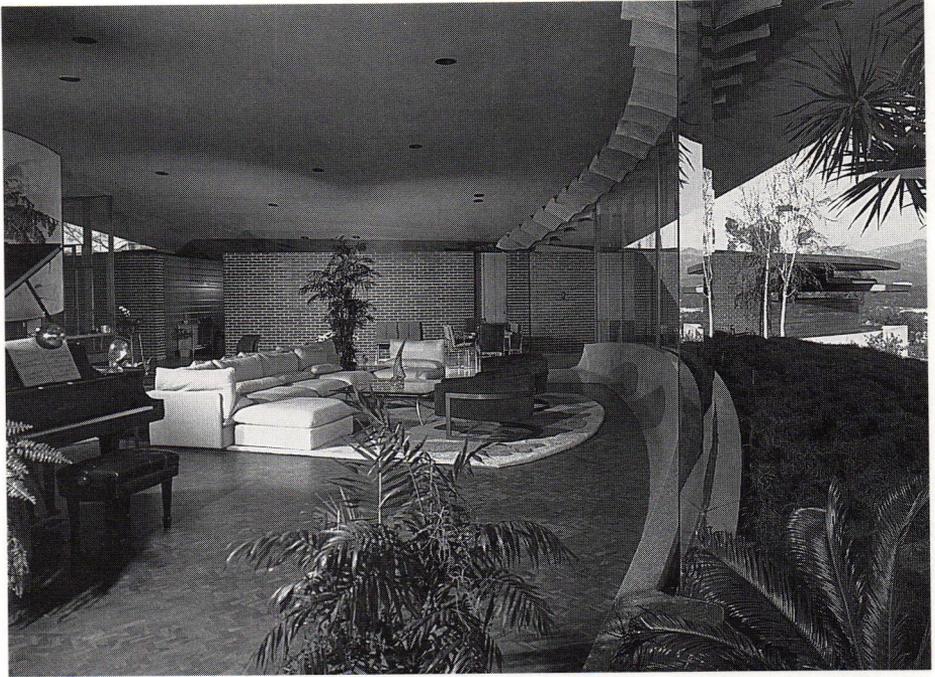
The contractors in this country have no use for architects at all, because the architects are just in the way of their cheating or making more money or getting away with this or that. Also, the architects don't know what the Hell they are doing half the time, because they haven't had any experience. I've had experience; I can tell contractors how to do it, and what to do. Otherwise, I'd never have been able to make it at all.

*Do you think that has affected your practice over the years?*

Sure it has. I determined to do enough contracting myself so that no contractor can tell me it can't be done or that it costs such and such. I can tell him to go to Hell, which I do.

*So you're doing your own contracting?*

Essentially, but I haven't made the money.



Reiner/Burchill 'Silvertop'. Photo by Julius Shulman.

I didn't become a contractor because for the first twenty to thirty years that I practiced, architects were supposed to have some kind of code of ethics. If you contracted, then you would never be able to get a public job.

*Now it seems like many architects are their own contractors.*

Right. They do any damned thing. They're developers, they're builders, they're everything.

*And you think it's a function of money-making?*

Originally it was considered a real conflict of interest, which it still is, except that—in another way—if it's a civilized human being providing the total service, it could be very economical and reasonable. But generally, the architect is just a flunky in the contractor's office. And it ought to be the other way around.

*How do you think it has happened that the overall level of workmanship or craftsmanship in the building trades has declined?*

Because all of the developers want it faster and cheaper, and the only motive is money. There is no motive of service or beauty or building or craftsmanship.

There's nothing like that. I remember that when I first came here I was shocked. I came from Michigan/Wisconsin. We had a cabinet shop that made shop drawings three, four, five feet wide, fifty feet long. Full-size details of the whole house. And in one week you had an absolutely perfect building. My God, it was just a dream! I came here, and they'd never heard of a shop drawing. The foreman says to the carpenter when it's under construction, "does it fit?" And the guy says, "no." Then the foreman says, "does it touch?" And the carpenter says, "yes," and the foreman says, "nail it." That's the story in southern California: get it done fast and make a buck.

*What about insurance, completion bonds, things like that? Have you found that they have an impact for you more than they did fifty years ago?*

No, because I can't afford insurance. I tell clients right away. If they want insurance, they have to pay for it.

*As an additional cost?*

Yeah. I don't bother with any of those things.

*Have you ever been sued?*

Yeah. For no reason. So we still had to spend money on attorneys.

*Did you win?*

Well, I think one I did, right away. But I've only had one or two. There's one still going on.

*A lot of young architects are almost paralyzed by the thought of the liabilities that are involved these days.*

Well, you have to be right, and you have to tell the truth, which is what I do.

*So you don't use any of the standard AIA contracts?*

Well, yeah. But we cross out all the crap. I write in the contract that I am not responsible for this and this and this.

*A modified AIA contract.*

Yeah. That's right. You have to do that because everybody's suing everybody. In this country we're all working for lawyers and insurance companies. What the Hell else are we working for?

*Do you think that the ability to talk to people and work out difficulties, disagreements, and whatever has really changed in fifty years?*

When I started, I could have an architectural agreement by word of mouth or on the phone, and I'd do the job and get paid. Now that's impossible....I have clients who know that I don't have a dime, so they can't sue me for a million dollars. It's silly, that's all.

*It sounds like what you're talking about is mutual trust.*

Yeah.

*And respect.*

That's right.

*Your initial architectural training was with Mr. Wright at Taliesin. Was that all the formal education that you had?*

I had a liberal arts bachelor's degree from Northern Michigan University. I studied

philosophy, ethics, anthropology, physics, chemistry. I had everything. That's what architects should have.

*So you were a renaissance man from the outset.*

Yeah.

*You were studying with a lot of other people at Taliesin. Did you keep connections with all of those people?*

No, I've been alone all my life.

*Do you feel like that created any problems for you? It sounds lonely.*

Well, it is. But I've devoted my life to architecture so completely that fifty years have gone by, and I don't know where. But I would have enjoyed some back and forth or some kind of inspiration outside of my own. I've had to go out all my life; nothing coming in at all. All there is is dirt and crap, which is no inspiration.

*Do you find that you take inspiration from other fields?*

Like I said at the beginning, architecture includes everything in life. So I read, and I've always been interested in philosophy. God knows what contributes to my thinking about architecture. Everything. *If you could make a choice, how would you train young architects?*

I'd just do it the same way Mr. Wright did it, through apprentice training. In Europe, some start when they're ten or eleven years old, working as flunkies in an architect's office. They do construction, they do everything, so they learn everything by doing, by building. That's the only way.

*What do you think about current architecture programs, the way they're set up, especially in southern California?*

I could understand the old academics, to some degree sticking to old historical stuff. But it seems like the new academics in architecture are on the bandwagon that the media tells them to be on. They go along with a fad as though it were real architecture. So they're not contributing anything to the students.

*So, the way you see it, the future of the profession is being adversely impacted.*

Oh, absolutely. I don't think there is any. *Any future?*

I mean I don't think there is any architecture going on right now. I think there definitely should be a *future*. The man made environment is one of the most important things in life. But people don't seem to understand that..

*So, what would you do?*

Well, incorporate apprentice training and building. They've all been leery of that. I can understand. I've got it all figured out—deconstructive, juxtaposition of graphics—anybody can do it. So there's no thinking required. And thinking is hard, hard work. Everybody's happy because everybody's an architect overnight. They can juggle geometrics; they can do all the 'blah-blah' that they write about. And they all think they're architects.

*Have you ever taught?*

Taught? No, I used to go to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo for about a week once a year. It wasn't bad a long time ago, even the students seemed to be better. Now they seem so...they're educated by the media. I have no communication with them. When I was at Pomona six or eight years ago, they were absolutely dead.

*Really?*

Yeah, they had no reaction at all. And then I came the last time, and there was a big reaction. And I asked the teachers, "What the Hell happened?" The teachers didn't change. They said that it's a new generation. So there is a little hope. I mean that's the first hope I've seen. It was a live response, a natural, live response from students who weren't already converted to some narrow-minded academic approach.

*What would you say to young people coming up?*

I'd say that you have to do everything yourself, that the potentials of architecture are so great and so untouched that in a lifetime, you can't even start. Being an architect is the biggest contribution you can make. There's no end to it, and it includes everything.

*What about women?*

I think there should be many more women in architecture, because they are more concerned with human life, as mothers.

The more I think about it the more important I think it is. I'm just delighted to see women getting into government. I think if we had a woman governor and a woman mayor we could probably change the damned building code. But men, they just go along with business as usual and succumb to the whole thing.

*Women students tend not to have the background in slinging a hammer that a lot of young guys have.*

They don't have it either. Any girl concerned can do whatever is necessary on the job and can understand what's happening in construction. They don't have to be big and strong. They just have to have common sense.

*What about the interface between women architects and the construction industry, which is typically male-dominated?*

Well, as I said, that's a problem for me, too.

*Anything else that you'd like to say about California in particular?*

Well, the main thing that I see is that there isn't any architecture for the California climate. I mean, the whole place was sold on the basis of climate to start with and now there's not a single California building. They're air conditioned, or you can't get outside, there's no, or only occasional, green space....

*What about the AIA?*

They've never done anything. They're so *status quo*, so cagey, they're like the academy. They go for cute details, or historic, or play it safe. They've never done anything.

*Can you think of anything else that you want to say?*

If they use some of the things we've said, it will be a better article than they have ever had before. It will be interesting to see what they actually use. Usually, there's an editor who knifes anything that's interesting....The whole magazine thing is a farce.

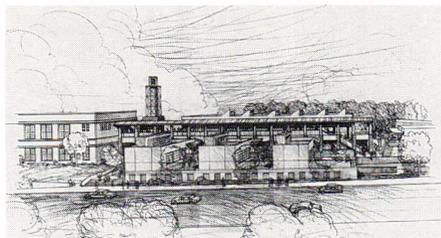
# A 'Government' Architect's Perspective on Architectural Services

*Sam M. Moore, AIA*

As the chief architect of the Los Angeles Unified School District for the last decade, I have been heavily involved in the evaluation and selection of literally hundreds of architectural firms.

First a little background: the LAUSD is the second largest in the nation after New York. We currently have over 840 schools of all kinds with almost 11,000 buildings. This encompasses over 52 million square feet of building area with an estimated replacement value in excess of \$5 billion.

The decade of the 1980s saw an enrollment growth of approximately 64,000 students leading to the present 800,000 total. Demographic studies of enrollment growth, which can be quite accurately predicted five years into the future, indicate that this growth rate will continue and even be exceeded. The difference between the 49,000 new classroom seats that the District has in planning and construction for completion before the end of the century and the much greater projected growth, unfortunately, will only be accommodated by placing more existing schools on year-round operation and by purchasing hundreds of relocatable classrooms to be sited on existing school playgrounds.

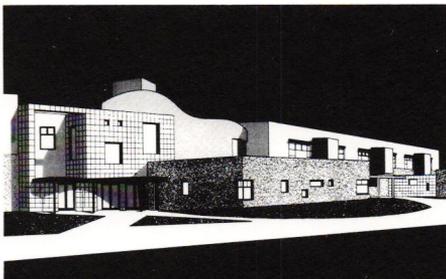


Romona Elementary School, Son+Francis Architects.

This over \$600 million capital improvement program is split up into new school projects—elementary, middle, and high schools—and individual buildings at existing schools. Typically, an architect is commissioned to design the entire project. The architect's services start with schematic design and continue through observation of construction and preparation of record drawings. Usually the architect is required to prepare more than one bid package for phased construction. These projects have a construction dollar value ranging from \$8 million for a new elementary school to \$30 million for a new high school. Individual buildings can run from \$2.5 million to \$7 million.

At present, almost all funding for school construction comes from the California State Allocation Board, which apportions funding to eligible school districts through the sale of statewide school bonds. Since the number of eligible projects far exceeds the amount of bond money available, many are delayed for long periods during the application, design, and approval processes. This frequently strings out projects for years. In addition, all school designs must be approved by the Office of the State Architect, which also adds several months to the project time.

Architectural firms soliciting work with the District are asked to supply a Federal Form 254 and a firm brochure, and to complete an affirmative action form giving information on ethnicity and gender of principals and owners. Currently, we have about 350 firms in our computerized architects data bank. There are more outstanding firms than we can



Jefferson Elementary School, Siegel Diamond Architects.

ever commission; the hard part is selecting among them!

For a particular project, a short list of firms is selected for interview by District staff. This list is based on staff assessment of the best match of firm to project. The firm's references are checked and then they are interviewed by a committee that includes District architects, project managers, and, if possible, the school principal.

The Board of Education is concerned with affirmative action and with preventing an 'old boys club' situation where the same firms are exclusively appointed over and over again. Architects who have not done work for the District before, or who have no schools experience, are selected based on staff perception of their overall ability and their references.

When checking references, it is important for us to get to the right people and to ask the right questions—for example, to ask the maintenance people whether a building has been easy or difficult to maintain, and how the heating/ventilating/air-conditioning system works; or, to ask the client's facilities people about the attitude of the architectural firm—for instance, did they seriously attempt to respond to the client's requirements, or were they more concerned with making a statement.

During the interview, there are several things that impress or conversely turn off the committee. Among the pluses are a firm's ability to proactively analyze its weak spots and to joint venture or associate in order to present a strong,

balanced team. This is also a good way of presenting affirmative action in minority and female participation on a design and management level, up front. We are interested in observing whether the right people show up and take a lead in the interview. Are they the ones who will actually do the work, or are you looking at the firm's top brass, supersales types whom you will never see again (the old bait-and-switch tactic)? Assuming that they are the genuine article, do they have the authority to commit the firm to decisions, or do they have to go back to—or risk being overridden by—higher echelons? The turn-offs are receiving the impression that an architect has an attitude problem or picking up hints of underlying arrogance rather than eager professional confidence.

The District rates the architect's performance during design, construction, and after project completion. The perception that the architect genuinely cares about the project program and the end users—in our case the children—is very important. We also try to discern whether the firm is 'public service oriented'. The completeness of the architect's and engineering consultant's drawings and specifications—especially interdisciplinary coordination—is highly important. An excessive number of errors and omission change orders results in our never using the firm again. Continuity of direction within the design team, including the architect and engineering consultants, is crucial.



School Lunch Shelter, Angéil/Graham.

# Architectural Services from a Developer's Point of View

*Sharon Lee Polledri, AIA*

## DEVELOPERS COME IN DIFFERENT SHAPES AND SIZES

A developer's view of architectural services varies according to the area of development in which one is engaged as well as one's business objectives. An individual who is developing on his or her own account looks at architectural services in a different way than an insurance company that builds projects as part of an investment portfolio. A developer of an urban retail center may select an architect chiefly for his or her vision of human interaction in the life of a city. A developer engaged in building numerous suburban hotels in a short time will choose an architect who is willing to conform to standardized procedures intended to maximize production efficiencies and minimize costs.

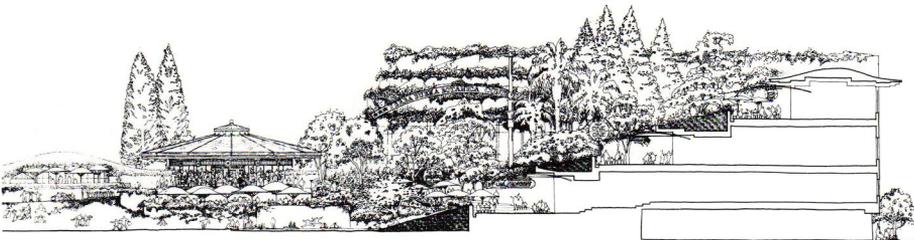
While all developers expect to realize a profit through their basic activities—that is, envisioning a land use opportunity and concept, financing it with partners or lenders, designing and building it, and finally, leasing or selling the space created—how they go about development as a business determines what they seek in

the services architects provide. These differences also exist among large development companies.

## A PARTICULAR DEVELOPER'S VIEW

Olympia & York specializes in the development of large commercial projects in partnership with local governments. These projects include office, retail and entertainment uses, extensive public spaces, and arts programs.

Projects include World Financial Center in Battery Park City, New York (eight million square feet of office space, 200,000 square feet of retail, and plazas on fourteen acres); Canary Wharf, London (twelve million square feet of office space, 500,000 square feet of retail and entertainment in several phases, twenty-five acres of open space, one hundred acres total); Queen's Quay Terminal, Toronto (renovated warehouse that is part of 75-acre Harbour front on Lake Ontario, 360 square feet of office space, 90,000 square feet retail, and condominiums); and, Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco (twenty-five acres



Retail and entertainment project Yerba Buena Gardens. The Jerde Partnership, Inc.

in partnership with the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, 1.7 million square feet of office space, 200,000 square feet of retail/entertainment, cultural facilities, and fifteen acres of parks and plazas).

The company is privately held and retains ownership of the properties it develops, thus there is a hands-on interest in how a building is maintained and operated as well as its initial construction. To attract tenants such as financial services and Fortune 100 companies, there is an interest in design that will endure the fashion of the moment and an emphasis on quality of construction and materials. As the projects are often partnerships with the public sector, there is a great deal of interaction with public authorities and a mutual interest in creating a significant new place in the city.

The projects are complex in physical, financial, and political terms. Architectural services are segmented to suit the problem at hand. In addition to the standard services from concept design to working drawings, extensive analyses of development and leasing strategies, and studies for the review and input of community groups are carried out.

## TYPICAL SELECTION PROCESSES

How architectural firms are selected varies according to the project. Typically, different firms are retained for the design and the production stages. While there are no set procedures, noted below are some common practices at the conceptual design stage.

Limited competitions are held in response to a detailed brief. This provides an introduction to new firms; establishes a common basis for evaluating each firm; and distributes decision-making among the different functional departments within the company.

Collaborations between innovative younger or small design-oriented firms

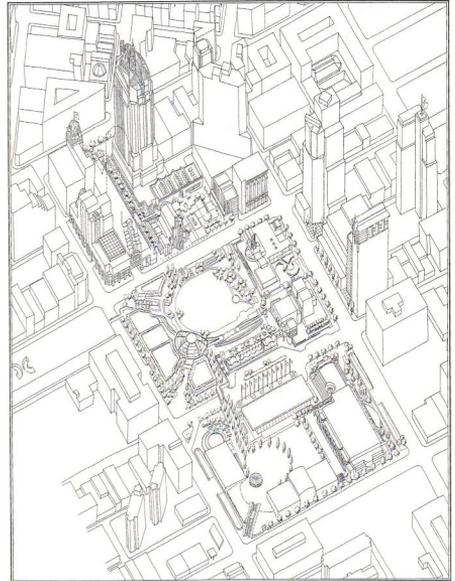
and large firms experienced in the building type are often encouraged.

Participating firms are identified through surveys of other developers, architects, leasing experts, and public officials, and by visiting and keeping abreast of new projects.

Selection of the architect of record is a different process that is managed by the construction division of the company. Demonstrated expertise in the building type and similar scope is critical. Past performance is used as a basis for evaluation.

Candidates are often identified by surveying major contractors, A&E firms, and other members of the multi-disciplinary team required to build the project, including leasing experts and contractors. Existing projects are visited.

The selection is narrowed after interviews with key members of all the respec-



Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco. Twenty-five acres of parks, recreational, and cultural facilities supported by commercial uses. Olympia & York and the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. Architects: MGA Partners, Fumihiko Maki Associates, James Stewart Polshek and Partners, Mario Botta, Cesar Pelli & Associates, The Jerde Partnership/Zeidler Roberts Partnership, Anthony Lumsden/DMJM.

tive firms noted above. Visits to offices occur at this time.

Proposals are sought once the project scope has been defined. Particularly valued is the proposed organization of the project, from staffing to the building approvals process. Assignment of key individuals to the project is important. We also are interested in the capability of the firm to handle the job with its current workload and its working relationships with other selected architectural and engineering team members, particularly the design architect. Normally the two architectural firms will propose how they will collaborate, and individual contracts are drawn with each firm delineating respective roles and responsibilities.

## PERFORMANCE

From a developer's perspective, the most important aspect of day-to-day performance is responsiveness. The projects are complex and conditions are often rapidly changing—in leasing conditions, in the political dynamics of the entitlement process, in financial approaches. These variables are not in the developer's control, yet they must be harnessed in order for a project to proceed.

In addition to supporting the developer's efforts to respond to external factors, the architectural firm is also evaluated according to its responsiveness to different functional departments within the company, such as leasing, development, and construction, each with its own priorities and viewpoints.

Because the projects are large and involve many people, a cohesive team is important. It is an enormous help to work with a well organized project team, in the sense that a shared culture has developed that communicates well both across functions and at different levels and that has a consistent caliber of staff at every level.

These aspects of performance, along with completing a project on time and on



Office Building at Yerba Buena Gardens. Cesar Pelli & Associates. Photomontage by Wolfgang Hoyt/Esto.

budget, support a developer's effectiveness in meeting the external factors of the market or entitlement process. Nonetheless, these are merely a point of departure for the architect's work. At both the design and production stages, we look to the architect for ideas. While it may not be explicitly articulated, we expect a level of thoughtfulness and insight applied to the problem at hand that reflects the architect's greater responsibilities in terms of his or her role in society, knowledge of construction, aesthetic expression, and understanding of architectural history or the way people inhabit spaces. It is always interesting to see how enthusiastically the most unlikely members of management will respond to a creative and well-considered solution and the obstacles they are prepared to surmount to see that it is implemented.

# Concern for the Edge...But Also for the Center: The Long Arm of Constituencies at UCI

*An Interview with Joseph F. DiMento*

*Joseph F. DiMento is professor of Social Ecology and assistant executive vice-chancellor, Office of Land Management, at the University of California, Irvine. Lian Hurst Mann discusses with Dr. DiMento the various constituencies and issues now shaping development decisions that impact architectural projects on the Irvine campus.*

*Dr. DiMento, Irvine—and in particular, the University campus—has been a center for both urban planning and architectural experimentation in recent years. As former director of the School of Social Ecology, how would you characterize your current task of managing the development-for-profit of University-owned land at the fringes of the the Irvine campus?*

Ours is a project in the making. It is a little more than two years old. It involves offering University land—where the campus meets the surrounding community—for long-term ground-lease to private developers. The Office of Land Management was created, in part, because the University needs resources to keep the academic programs strong, especially under the current economic conditions.

The OLM doesn't actually build projects: we do pre-development concept planning, entitlement, and the leasing of land. But the list of constituencies and constraints impinging on any project we might get involved with is as long as my arm: Our job is to come up with an optimum equation that factors in all of the

interests as well as constraints. Input comes from the Regents, the Academic Senate, and the campus administration, from the adjacent cities of Irvine and Newport Beach, and from a wide range of environmental agencies that are concerned about the preservation of the wetlands area adjacent to campus. All of these groups want to contribute to decisions about, for example, what land uses would be 'tolerable'.

*What are the Academic Senate's guidelines, for instance?*

Senate guidelines require, at most, only 'insignificant amounts' of classified research; no polluting research or development, no use of hazardous materials. Superimposed over these explicit conditions has been the tacit notion that these clients, if you will, are working on University land and, therefore, they should be 'high quality end-users' who mirror the standards of the University itself.

*How do the concerns of these multiple constituencies compare?*

Well, for example, the Academic Senate is primarily concerned about the nature of the user and specific biological impacts. The city of Irvine shares those concerns, but their overriding concerns have to do with the environmental impact of those users, especially with traffic, and their effect on the wetlands.

*And the aesthetics?*

Aesthetics has really been a hidden issue. The city of Newport Beach stands at the front door of the campus, and our projects border on the city of Irvine. We are being

looked at very carefully by members of the surrounding community who are more comfortable with the Charles Moore and Frank Gehry buildings being on the campus *interior* than having them marched along the meticulously manicured and planned edges of Irvine. Our review process has to be sensitive to their concerns for the edge of the campus, for what kind of statement we make at the edge. For these reasons, OLM is not the area where we thought the University would be doing innovative architecture.

*So there is one set of aesthetic standards for interior campus development by the 'public sector' and another applied for edge projects that are developed by the 'private sector'?*

In projects that fall within the bounds of campus there are less constraints than there are in the seemingly more 'public' private-development projects of the OLM; campus development has less need to fit into the marketplace or accommodate the local government. As a public institution we must be responsive. In the end, I am impressed that despite the number of constituencies determining what we are doing, it somehow works.

*On campus, are there constituencies equally as diverse that compete for voice in the process of determining what will happen to the physical environment?*

In the course of long-range planning for growth and expansion at Irvine, and also in the construction of individual buildings on campus, we are doing 'quad planning' with consultants like the Urban Innovations Group at UCLA and independent architects, among other groups. The point is to figure out what happens in a quad. Things like orientation and massing of buildings are being looked at with an eye to giving each quad a different character. The dynamics among users on campus strongly mirror the issues that plague our OLM constituencies. It is striking when deans, chairs, faculty, and Regents come together in a participatory way to work with architects. Users and architects are

pitted against each other in one dilemma after another. An interesting case involved discussion about where a lecture hall would be physically placed: the Dean wanted it removed to the fringe so as not to disturb faculty; the architect was committed to a design that embraced it. Finally a decision has to be made.

The long range development plans of the University call for twice the number of square feet that presently exist to be added in the next fifteen years. The quad plans are a way to preview that. It's very interesting to see the drama of long-term quad planning played out in advance, so to speak, in the course of discussions about our next social science building. Some people don't believe there will ever be a need for that much square footage. Some accept the long-range plan in the abstract, but reject its implications for individual building sites that need to be developed now. In other words, they don't want to make concessions on current projects for the sake of the campus's future.

If we build out to our long range development plan, we are going to build dozens of buildings on this campus over the next fifteen years, and I hope there will be great interest in making some of that architecture as notable as the architecture of the Perriera and Neuman phases. But this is a recessionary period, and if only for that reason, some of the ground rules are changing. Now there is as much interest in project management, maintenance, and the overall 'doability' of a project as there is in artistic patronage. *As a patron of architecture as well as a consumer of architectural services, how does the University balance these aspects in relation to the constituencies you have mentioned?*

The rub has been, I think, trying to find ways of being at the cutting edge aesthetically while attending to the mundane requirements of maintenance and function of a building. It's a little like the tension between our biology faculty—who know everything about every plant in the wet-

lands—and the facilitates maintenance people—who need to cut down the grass.

But, as a matter of fact, the whole question of patronage interests me a great deal. It seems clear that if the University of California continues to grow as has been mandated, it will be one of the major users of architectural services; whether that necessarily means we are patrons is, in part, an open question.

Some of my colleagues criticize the change in administration and the move away from leadership like David Neuman's. We are sometimes written off as Philistines for not acting as patrons. When I bring up the fact that the Gehry building is non-negotiable at class time or that, as I am told, the building is deteriorating much more quickly than we had hoped it would, the response is that the building is state-of-the-art, that it is truly a credit to the University to be supporting architecture. *Architecture* magazine called UCI an 'architectural zoo', an unfortunate suggestion, but it is certainly possible to call it a 'museum of postmodern architecture'. Even people on the fifth floor here (people in administration who are concerned about project management and maintenance and finance) are excited to see that architecture has added a considerable notoriety to UCI.

Some people are more concerned with function and post-occupancy evaluation in practical terms, while others say "no, no, architecture is a form of communication," "it's an end in itself," "we should be doing beautiful and also controversial architecture as a metaphor of what the campus is as an intellectual community." I must say that pushes me a bit; I don't see controversy as an end in itself. A friend in the drama department thinks the role of drama is to provoke and push and make people come to grips with what they are complacent about. I think that is fine for drama; I don't know if that generalizes to the building in which I have to teach a class. *The University of California educates architects as well as commissioning their*

*services. At UCI, the School of Social Ecology and the Humanities Research Institute—each of which has sponsored conferences on architecture—bring these different points of view to discussions about the relative success of campus building efforts. Other than as users of these buildings, are these different academic approaches brought into the decision-making process, for example to assist with design review?*

I am hoping to create some forums for that. The Humanities Research Institute is physically in a different quadrant—and intellectually removed—from Social Ecology. There is no reason it has to remain that way. Bringing those groups together could produce something very interesting; for one thing, it would reveal the fact that the two camps are by no means mutually exclusive. Yet, there are big differences between those who want to do research and be published on these matters, those who design buildings, and those involved as constituents. Participatory planning is often 'substance devoid' and merely gives the image of involvement. If you are one of the constituent interests, you frame your needs, you fight it out, and try to win; but maybe you lose. When you are administration, you must resolve those constituent interests in the final project. And, assuming that your goal is not just appeasement, but that you are reaching for architectural design of substance, you have to aim higher than the lowest and worst common denominator. To do that carries the greatest responsibility.

*Given these conditions, what are the prospects for architects?*

Well, oddly enough I am beginning to see the benefits as clearly as I see the down sides. In some ways it will be discouraging to anyone who wants to work with us. On the other hand, we are one of the big games in town now, and if one is looking, it's even possible to see opportunities lurking in the dense camouflage of constraints.

# The Value of Good Design

## *An Interview with Okitami Komada*

*Okitami Komada is chief executive officer and president of Mitsui Fudosan (USA), Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Mitsui Fudosan Co., Ltd., the leading real-estate developer in Japan. Lian Hurst Mann talks with Mr. Komada about the approach Mitsui Fudosan (USA) takes to commissioning architectural services.*

*Mr. Komada, California architects have considerable interest in Japan, the Pacific Rim, and the economic ties that are developing. Mitsui Fudosan (USA) has been doing business in the United States since 1973. How did you decide to locate your headquarters in Los Angeles and build the Figueroa at Wilshire tower, now known as the Sanwa Bank Plaza building? Japanese did not invest in foreign real estate until the liberalization of foreign investment laws in 1972. The first wave of investors sought markets in the US and in southeast Asia. At that time there was some argument as to whether we should start in California or New York: California is closer to Japan and there is greater familiarity, so we decided to locate our corporation in Los Angeles. We began with a limited partnership to develop Palomar Airport Business Park, an industrial park in the northern county of San Diego.*

*We began our general partnership in the late 1970s: Our main line of business is office buildings. After acquiring the Crocker National Bank property, now known as the AT&T Center, Mitsui Fudosan (USA) decided to build a new office building. I came in 1987; we broke ground in February 1988, opened our*

*marketing center, and began pre-leasing. Sanwa Bank California, the major leasing tenant, came shortly after that.*

*When did the architecture firm of Albert C. Martin & Associates become involved?*

*The A.C. Martin firm's involvement was almost historical. We transferred development rights, and substantial negotiation with the Community Redevelopment Agency was completed by 1983. A.C. Martin was involved in submitting the proposal, although the design concepts later changed.*

*How did Mitsui Fudosan (USA) select A.C. Martin as a firm to work on the proposal?*

*I wasn't involved yet, but I know that A.C. Martin was known as a most active local architecture firm.*

*Was there a particular concern to have a local architect?*

*Yes, it was not a definite requirement, but we are always interested in local architecture firms. It's very simple: the local architects know the market; they know what the users want. Most of the users are American. For example, Sanwa Bank California is an American company, and employees from Japan make up only three percent of the workforce. It is important that A.C. Martin is good not only as a design firm. They have great connections with local communities, including the government. A good local firm is most helpful for approval in negotiation, like with the Community Redevelopment Agency. Also, the firm is very sensitive about the community's concern for the environment and other social issues, which also affect the design. We could get a star Japanese architect, but American users*

may not like it. Obviously, he would have no connection with the local community. So it wouldn't be helpful to making a successful presentation.

*In Mitsui Fudosan's approach, what role does the architecture firm play as distinguished from other types of firms? For example, the Gerald D. Hines Interests became involved in the design development, construction, marketing, and leasing of the Figueroa at Wilshire Tower. What is the relationship between the two firms?* Well, the architecture firm's role is obviously to develop an attractive, exciting design. I am very proud that this building has been well received by the community. It is hard to create a human environment compatible with the urban downtown. I think David C. Martin, AIA, partner in charge of design, did an excellent job. But we are not developing just a beautiful showcase. It has to make commercial sense. Otherwise, we would go bankrupt. So there must be a good co-working relationship between the architect and the owner.

Gerald D. Hines, in this case, with an extensive national track record, was hired as development manager in late 1986 when we had a schematic design. Hines knows the US market better than we do. They are on the owner's side and control the development as an owner and developer would.

I will never hire an architecture firm as a development manager. The roles are different. We have to look at the building from the point of view of the market. Of course, good architects must have knowledge about what is important for users, but in many cases they are not necessarily knowledgeable in terms of the cost and return relationship. We can spend tons of money to make a gorgeous building, but the highest rent from the tenant in accordance with the current market has a certain limit. The quality of the design is itself a significant factor, but we need to evaluate a proposed design in terms of value engineering. We must evaluate the

costs, and that is a process that has to be professionally managed by a skillful developer. Naturally, in many cases architects' proposals for design are cancelled or modified to satisfy economic objectives. As you may see we are not a cheap development company. Not at all. In that sense I think we appreciated David Martin's very attractive design. We tried to keep as much of it as possible. In general, we accept some additional costs, but that has to be very strictly controlled.

I don't think Hines or Mitsui Fudosan has any in-house architects. Rather than keeping in-house architects, we use external talented architecture firms. In the case of Hines, they use two kinds of archi-



Sanwa Bank Plaza Figueroa at Wilshire Building. Albert C. Martin & Associates. Photo Courtesy of Albert C. Martin & Associates.

pects—design architects and production architects. Then also they hire structural and mechanical engineering companies and coordinate them. They have very experienced construction managers with extensive knowledge of the costs of construction.

*Was there a different production architect for the Figueroa at Wilshire building?*

Hines recommended it, but we kept A.C. Martin for production architecture as well. We were pleased with the complete job.

*Many firms would like to retain full services within the architectural firm.*

*Other firms specialize in design only.*

Yes, boutique firms like John Burgee.

*In other projects that Mitsui Fudosan is doing across the country, is working with a professional development firm that commissions both a design architect and a separate production architect the typical model?*

This is becoming our style. It depends upon the situation. If we hire a firm like Skidmore Owings & Merrill, they provide the whole package. In the case of our Hawaii hotel, Edward A. Killingsworth is the design firm. Another firm did the production drawings. We like Killingsworth's design for its simplicity and beauty.

*On what basis do you measure or judge architects?*

The most important requirement is to have a good talent in order to establish the most attractive concept for a particular site and particular environment that also satisfies its practical purpose as a commercial property. It has to be very attractive in order to be the best type of property.

However, we are not living in the time of the Renaissance when the owner did not need to worry about economic return.

*Nonetheless, there is a large investment in art and sculpture at Samwa Bank Plaza.*

*The building itself is part of that investment. It has a strong aesthetic image.*

I am glad you make such a comment. That is our objective. As I said we did cancel some of David Martin's proposals in

design development because we could not afford them, but we adopted many others. We knew that some additional costs would occur, but we believed that the added expense would make a difference with our prestige-conscious tenants. It did: we get premium rent, above that of other competitive new buildings. Our tenants are very prestige conscious, and they are all happy paying higher rent.

Even in our building operations we try to make the property different from others. You may notice that we have a doorman. Actually, other buildings have started to copy. We have a pianist playing at lunchtime. The restaurant is delayed, but it will be very nice. We wanted to develop a human environment. The plaza was very important for us as well as the atrium and the Eric Orr sculpture.

*What changes in development are occurring in Japan?*

Many American, especially California, architects have become very active now in Japan. There is a trend to bring in American architects to develop something new. These are design architects. The trend really started when the land prices went up so high in Japan that in the major developments, such as office buildings, 90 percent of the cost is land. If developers are blind and build too cheaply they will kill the product. To add value, different designs are being developed with more expensive materials, such as marble or granite. American architects enjoy this. For Mitsui, this is always a well thought out professional compromise.

# Excellent Practice: The Origins of Good Building

Dana Cuff

*In this excerpt from her new book Architecture: The Story of Practice (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991), Dana Cuff analyzes the results of three case studies of buildings that are deemed excellent by a variety of standards, that are diverse in office size and type of organization, building type, and client type, and that all happen to be in California—the Bergren House by Morphosis architects Michael Rotondi and Thom Mayne (1986), the San Juan Capistrano Library by Michael Graves (1983), and the Monterey Bay Aquarium by Esherick Homsey Dodge and Davis /Rhodes for the Packard Foundation (1984).*

## DYNAMIC FORCES AND PRINCIPLES FOR UNCERTAINTY

From the interviews I have conducted, there appear to be a set of contradictory forces at work that frame the development of an outstanding building.<sup>1</sup> These opposing tendencies embody tension and opportunity: the tension generates a high level of energy among participants; the opportunity is to create an excellent work of architecture. Such dialectics arise from the individuals who described their roles in the three building projects. The dialectics I describe are the architects' attempts to resolve dilemmas by means of mixed strategies, reflecting the complex contradictions of the circumstances involved.

## QUALITY DEMANDS

In everyday architectural practice, early meetings between architect and client

resemble the early throes of courtship. But the ordinary encounter is analogous to a blind date when compared to early stages in the relations between players in excellent projects. Ordinarily, architects and clients know little about one another, yet they may be anxious to establish a business relation, and may use fee or schedule as the decisive factor. The everyday practice of clients who shop for architects, looking for cut-rate fees, is mirrored by architects who accept any project that helps subsidize the office. Those projects may be presented by clients as a set of functional requirements and budgetary limits, without professed interest in other architectural objectives. In everyday practice, clients demanding quality (and willing or able to pay for it) are rare, as are architects unwilling to compromise their standards of design at any cost.

By contrast, in excellent projects the client demands an architectural quality that architects themselves are accustomed to demanding from clients. From their very first encounters, architects and clients hold each other in high mutual esteem because they have done their homework. In each of the three case studies, the clients selected the architect based on knowledge of previous design work, and not on cost of services, convenience, or a friend's recommendation alone. In addition, the client comes with a formal precedent in mind, and thus begins with not only functional but physical and aesthetic concerns. That precedent may be the architect's past projects, as was the case for Bergren when she chose Morphosis, or it can be part of the project's context, as

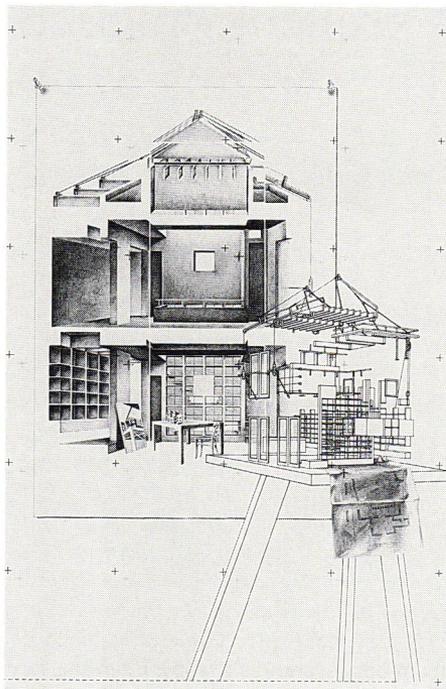
was the Mission for the library and the cannery for the aquarium. The precedent, interpreted for its structural underpinnings by the architects, does not unduly restrict design freedom, but because the client begins with some vision of the final outcome a certain level of uncertainty and anxiety is avoided. Conventional assumptions about roles are defied, each seemingly adopting the other's position. Architects feel fortunate to work with the clients, demonstrating sincere concern for the clients' needs, requirements, desires, and interests.

Perhaps the simplest yet most significant clue as to whether a project has the potential for excellence is a client's early and informed demand for quality. Strong architects and clients demand quality while respecting one another's interests.

#### SIMPLICITY WITHIN COMPLEXITY

Normally, architects and clients spend a great deal of their time together establishing a rapport, based upon rather generalized foundations, such as conversational ease, shows of kindness, and so on. In excellent projects, rapport is built primarily around issues related to the task at hand. In each of the three cases, those identified with needed expertise are relied upon throughout the design process. This arrangement creates a relatively efficient organizational structure to carry out any task, permitting each consultant to contribute his or her best work. It also reduces the ambiguity that plagues everyday practice, because knowledge and authority are more clearly associated with a particular individual. In excellent projects, as in all projects, that expertise is occasionally challenged by other participants. Nevertheless, unambiguous expertise provides one form of simplicity within the inherently complex context for design.

Under normal circumstances, a large client organization with a complex project seeks a large architectural firm whose structure may in fact mirror that of the client. When the architect's organizational



Bergren House/Venice III. Analytic Drawing. Drawing by Morphosis.

web intersects with the likewise tangled client web, chaos threatens. Managerial skills then take precedence over design quality, coordination over intense individual efforts, moving things ahead over doing them well.

The three case studies suggest that excellent projects do not result from multilayered complexity, but from responding to complexity with simplicity, which itself takes various forms. There is, in each of the cases, a dialectic between simplicity and complexity such that the project's success appears to depend on an appropriate blend of each, since too much complexity can overwhelm the potential for excellence and too much simplicity may preclude the rich texture of outstanding work.

Faced with complexity, architects and clients in the case studies streamlined some aspects of the operations, either by simplifying decision making through an insistence on face-to-face interaction, or

by simplifying the organization's structure so that decision making was concentrated among a limited number of people, as happened at both the aquarium and the library. By contrast, the 800-square-foot, single-client Bergren House offered enough simplicity for two designers to work cooperatively to develop a sophisticated and intricate concept.

#### STEREOVISION

In everyday architectural practice, there are frequent mismatches between the architect's and the client's understanding of what is being designed. For example, architects often complain that clients' demands are completely inconsistent with the building's basic idea. Clients have similar complaints. In some cases, architect and client appear to aim for entirely different outcomes. In some cases, the architect's and client's concerns emanate from opposed and exclusive interests, so that one's triumph is the other's loss: the client who insists upon minute functional requirements prevents the architect from achieving conceptual integrity.

In light of the mismatches between architects and clients in everyday practice, I imagined that the participants in excellent projects held a shared vision of the design outcome. I was mistaken. Instead, the architects and clients saw the building in what I call 'stereovision', in that their separate views, though different, combined to make up a single composite. The client and architect portray the project in very different terms, appreciating different aspects of the design: Rotondi speaks of visual and organizational axes, Bergren about the house's nurturing effects; Graves describes the courtyard as a structuring device, the clients talk about its openness, the light, and the special place it creates in the library. These perspectives are not the same, and what characterizes excellent projects is that they do not conflict, but complement one another, dovetailing to create a strong bond between two sets of interests.

Rather than sharing their architect's vision, the clients in excellent projects understand the architect's goals in their own terms, and take a special interest in the view through the architect's glasses. In everyday practice, clients often make physical design demands or request specific architectural elements. In the case studies, clients generally avoided stepping into the architect's role, keeping an arm's length from formal design. The clients were actively engaged in the design process, but when it came to architectural expertise they trusted their consultants.

#### OPEN BOUNDARIES

Much of what transpires in everyday architectural practice is directed toward establishing limits. Architects and clients take defensive positions, making sure the other party understands their own constraints, boundaries, and bottom lines. This structures the design process by defining what constitutes an unacceptable solution and mapping the realm of acceptability. Declarations about limits are absolute and close-ended, framed in negative rather than positive terms. Such boundaries are frequently based on stereotypes, such as the 'tightwad' client or the 'impractical' architect. Architects, constructing such an image of the client, may show examples of their most costly past projects to entice the client to higher quality construction. Or clients will insist upon hiring their own project architects, cost control specialists, and space planners to keep the architect in line. Often, espoused theory produces its own results.

In the excellent projects, however, architects and clients established limits at the same time as they set goals. These goals were open-ended and positive, rousing participants to perform to their best ability. Excellent clients demand excellence from their architects and set them a challenge: Bergren wanted the architects to do the best building they had ever designed; the library clients wanted a building that would rival the Mission; Mr.

Packard expected the aquarium to be built to last fifty years. These challenges are upper limits, rather than bottom lines, positing an ideal to guide individual actions.

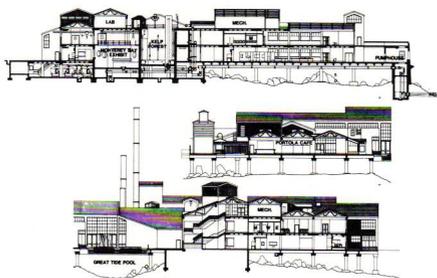
If the client in excellent projects is demanding, the architect is principled. The building design develops in the hands of someone who holds a particular philosophy about architecture, for example as multilayered experience, as idea, as problem-solving, as figurative rather than abstract. The particular philosophy guides and underlies actions, so that the architect behaves in a more or less consistent, principled fashion. Perhaps the most significant expression of these principles for action in the case studies is the strong architectural concept behind each excellent project. Each architect maintains that the building's idea was strong enough to protect the building's integrity even after the inevitable modifications during planning and construction phases.

In contrast to the one-shot commissions found in ordinary practice, the architects for excellent buildings view projects within the overall development of their thinking responding to past work and leading to future explorations.

#### FLEXIBILITY WITH INTEGRITY

Those architects and clients in everyday practice who busily set limits are at the same time demonstrating a high degree of determination, and sometimes integrity, about the project undertaken. There are other architects and clients who seem to express a high degree of flexibility in one or more areas crucial to a successful project; for example, an architect who does not protest a committee's revisions to his or her original plans, or a client who worries only about the construction cost, leaving appearances to the designer. There are ordinary projects at both extremes, in which participants are either uncompromising or highly malleable, but this is rarely the case in outstanding projects.

A certain intensity as well as intimacy characterizes the excellent projects I studied. The intimacy that develops between active participants includes not only positive regard for one another, but strong disagreements and battles of will. Chuck Davis [lead partner for the aquarium] compares his relation to Linda Rhodes [the architect who had initially conceived the project] to a brother-sister relationship in which there are quarrels as well as the necessity to resolve them. The fundamental connection between partici-



© MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM

Monterey Bay Aquarium. Esherick Homsey Dodge and Davis, Architects/Linda Rhodes. Drawing by Jim Lattz.

pants, the building they are trying to produce, underlies the instabilities caused by conflict. Unlike everyday undertakings in which actors expend great effort to avoid conflict, participants in these three cases recall great arguments during the design process. Davis talks about nearly getting fired for trying to save the boilerhouse of the old cannery in the new aquarium; at the library, they argued about shifting the axis; during construction, Bergren decided she needed a way to see out of the bedroom and would not accept a quick solution that the architects were not completely happy with. Around key decisions, actors voiced their disagreement and confronted the concomitant risk; these buildings mattered enough for them to struggle energetically to find the best solutions.

Another distinctive quality of excellent projects is the flexibility both archi-

tect and client bring to the process. Since each respects the other's competence, each takes the other's opinions seriously. Participants' stories indicate that such open-mindedness comes from recognizing the other party's expertise while simultaneously feeling confident in one's own. Most issues are thus resolved relatively amicably, though this does not preclude the conflict that erupts when strong convictions are at stake.

In excellent projects, the participants' flexibility is tied to their acceptance of the dynamic circumstances and the uncertainty inherent to the design process. Architects who are principled also embrace the ongoing evolution of any design solution, and are prepared to rethink their proposals. Demanding clients also adapt to changing circumstances, reconsidering program, budget, and design preconceptions. By taking the risk of giving up what was once thought necessary and true, architect and client become more invested in the overall process. Thus, for example, when the clients chose the Graves competition entry for the library, they actually contradicted their own recently established design guidelines. That they broke their own rules to select the Graves scheme represented a singular commitment on their part, one they did not want to later retract.

#### TEAMWORK WITH INDEPENDENCE

Watching everyday practice I have often imagined collaboration, or even a cooperative organizational structure, to be the ideal form of working together to produce a building.

The excellence cases, however, suggest a different model from the cooperatives I had idealized. Certainly a team-like sensibility bonded the central players who struggled together to create the excellent outcome, but these individuals did not necessarily participate equally or collaboratively. Instead, key individuals played key roles; their talent and authority was reported to be essential to the

building's success. The teams I observed in everyday practice lacked these key individuals.

This is not to say that every building has a single genius behind it, but it does support the widespread belief that good buildings are not designed by committee. Instead, excellent projects are designed by a few leaders, who, working together, are able to move the project along and coordinate the group of contributors.

When an excellent building is finished, its contributors all claim it as their own. A client talks about "my" library, and laughs when the architect says the same thing.

#### EXCEEDING THE LIMITS

Ordinarily, when a project is finished it has usually exceeded the client's original budget, taken longer than expected to complete, and made less profit for the office than the architect hoped. In this sense, ordinary projects often exceed the limits set by architects and clients, as do outstanding ones. In everyday circumstances, however, neither architect nor client believes those excesses were entirely justified. Everyday practice also produces many pleasant surprises; the final buildings may go beyond what was imagined. Clients may see that the architect's insistence on a certain issue was well founded; architects find the quality of light exceeds their expectations. Between the excellent and the everyday, the difference is one of degree, rather than kind, when it comes to breaking limits.

When an excellent project is complete and ready for occupation, it exceeds the expectations of its makers, particularly those of the clients. The building goes beyond their ability to imagine, a direct result of giving the architect freedom to invent design solutions that the clients themselves could not conjure up. When these clients describe their satisfaction, there is a sense that the architect read their innermost dreams in order to design a building that captures what they them-

selves could not articulate: the library catalyzed the community's sense of place; the house is a nurturing mother.

In another sense, opening day reflects only part of the results of the design process. With excellent projects, architects, clients, and consultants enter into long-term ongoing relations that do not end when the building is completed. Good work breeds more good work. A building can take the architects' thinking a step forward, establish their expertise in a particular building type, or provide a publicly visible recommendation for subsequent commissions. By contrast, in everyday practice I met architects who had never visited their completed buildings (even when they were nearby), and clients who never paid their final bill, indicating that neither held a long-term view of the working relation.

Finally, with regard to outcome, the basic rule of 'give more, get more' pertains. Both client and architect appear to give more, financially, than they might have expected to give. Yet none would say, after the fact, that they had made a mistake or would do it any differently.

## IN SEARCH OF NEW EXCELLENCE

These principles of excellent projects outlined above depict practice in a radical new light, and provoke a number of questions. Is it possible to make a profit and design an excellent building? Could all everyday practice be turned into the practice of excellence? Can an excellent prospect be identified from the first architect-client meeting? If I generalize from this study, the preliminary answers are rather shocking. Design excellence and profitability may be incompatible. For this reason, some projects can be outstanding but not all projects from any single firm. The architect should be able to recognize a project that has the potential for excellence from the client's initial stance. Excellence, however, comes not from a

talented architect or exceptional client alone, but from an emergent chemistry among principal participants. Thus, we cannot speak of excellent firms or excellent architects—only excellent projects.

At this point, these are provocative hypotheses. There are broader conclusions to be drawn from this final study of the three cases, along with the extensive field work and interviews that preceded it. Perhaps the most basic discovery I have made during this research is that the mythical architect as lone genius-artist is a false image, insofar as it represents a simplification of actual circumstances. At the other extreme buildings can be created by committees, but not usually with the highest caliber results. Instead, individual talent, leadership, even genius are important to architecture when they exist in a social context that is conducive to such effort—a context that consists of other demanding talented individuals who operate as a team. What I have tried to demonstrate is that the context in which a building is developed is not static but vital, dynamic, and actually formative. The cast of characters, the limits and goals they impose, the power they project, the expectations they hold, the organizations that structure their roles, the conflicts they endure, the intimacy they share, and the respect they are given—all compose a fluctuating constellation of possibilities. From that constellation, participants design a building utilizing all available human material. It is in this sense that design is a social art, and that the practice of architecture is a culture.

## NOTE

1. A content analysis of the interview transcripts generated a list of some forty statements that could be made about all three projects. These statements were sorted several times into different categorical groupings by the Q-Sort method, from which arose the primary and secondary organizations reported here.

# Letters

Dear Editor,

I wanted to write and tell you how much I appreciated all the good work that went into the publication of the August 1991 issue concerning 'Growth in California'. Peter Calthorpe's article on the 'Qualities of Growth' was most interesting, as was John Field's and others....

[I look forward to an issue] dealing with energy conservation in our built environment.

Douglas Simms Stenhouse, AIA, AICP  
Torrance

Dear Editor,

Received the new issue of AC, 'Growth in California', and read it with great interest. The scholarly format was a nice, somewhat austere touch; and after all, these are austere times. But...the first three or four articles were so damn dense...that they nearly drove me away before getting to the good stuff....The plethora of five-syllable, \$1.50 words and indecipherable phrases...completely obscured my understandification of the inherent content particularized therein.... Simply put, if you have something to say, please state it clearly....

Peter M. Saucerman, AIA  
Sacramento

Dear Editor,

[Excerpted]...Most of your contributors wish that if only those ugly motives of profit on land could be surgically removed and that responsibility given to Willy Brown and others, we would surely have a better place to live....I say 'hogwash' to that supercilious prattling of liberal ideals on land control by Government.

You might ask your contributors if they ever paid for seats or a plate at a fund raiser to get work from the County or City or State....If you want to become the most successful civil engineer in Boom Town,

USA, here is the recipe. First, you hire all the old timers that leave the County or City Engineering Departments. Have the most gregarious of the bunch pal around with their former buddy-bureaucrats. Tell them about our once-a-month tuna fishing trip to Baja. Tell them to bring a few friends from Sanitation. We have a bit of a problem with our next sewer plant. First prize for the biggest fish caught is a new Pontiac station wagon for 'the Mrs.' Make sure the Sanitation guy gets the biggest fish....

Don't forget the banker and the savings and loan executive: the money guys. Without them, we can't function. So take them golfing: they all play golf.

That's how Los Angeles got built, like it or not. It will continue to be built that way, slow growth or no growth, it doesn't matter....Instead of passing a new zoning ordinance, perhaps we ought to pass a prayer.

Christopher R. Wojciechowski, AIA  
Los Angeles

Dear Mr. Wojciechowski,

The failure in our form of government is not that the laws are not obeyed or that money is more powerful than the law, although both occur in an imperfect state. The real failure is that, with the positive exception of Harvey Gantt, those architects who could well serve government don't. We are the best trained general problem solvers in our society, but we choose to carp and complain instead of contributing that skill. The success of democracy depends upon the quality and capacity for leadership of the citizens who participate. Cynicism accepts defeat without ever trying.

John Field, FAIA  
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*Architecture California*

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