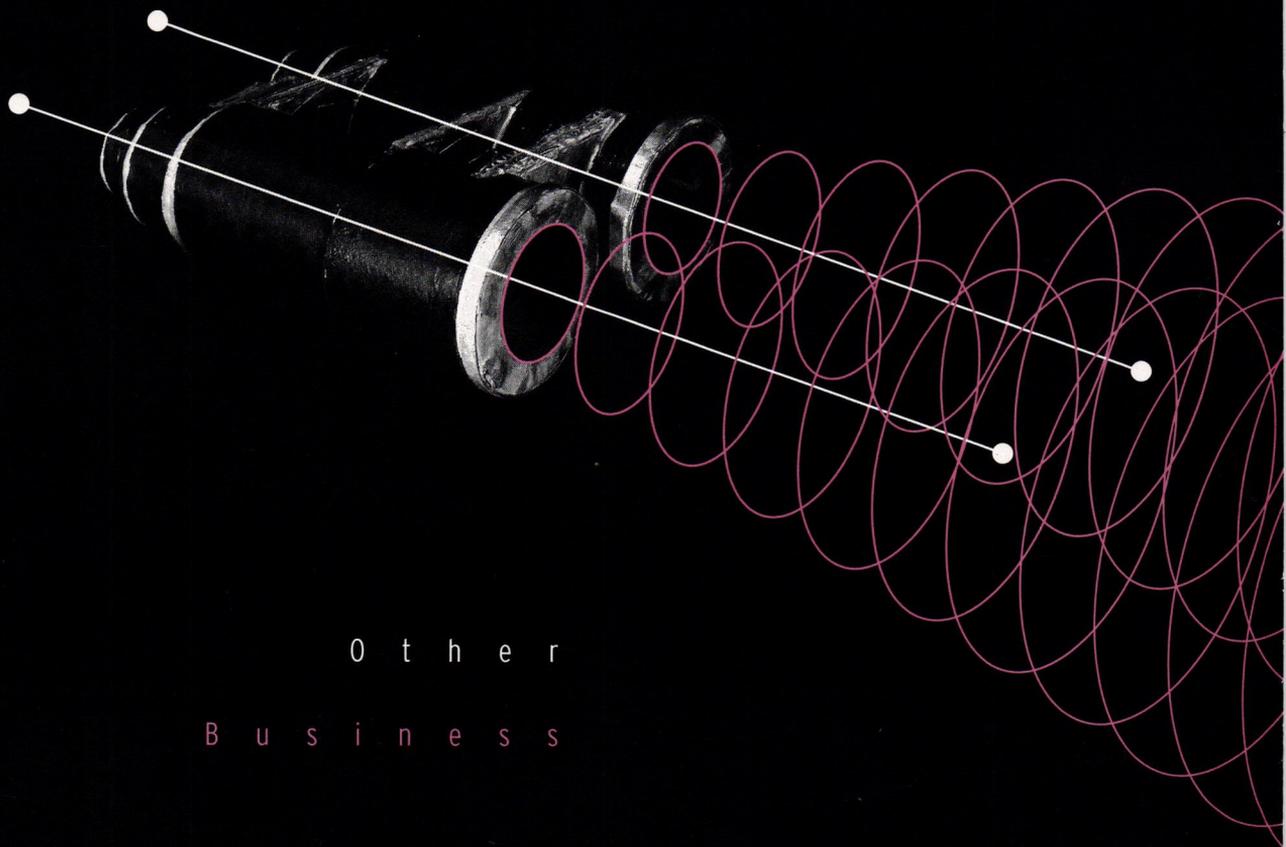


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B u s i n e s s

architects on alternative paths

- **Optional Profiles**
- **The Dwight Way**
- **A. Quincy Jones in Palo Alto**

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Comment

In this issue, we profile architects—or people educated as architects—who have chosen to apply their knowledge, experience, and insight in ways other than everyday architectural practice. One can frame this idea either as an expansion of practice or as an alternative to it. Taking an alternative route can be an expression of any number of motivations, and some of these are understandably critical of the profession: the concern, for example, that architectural services are not typically available to the neediest among us.

The expansion of practice can be critically motivated, as well. An expanded practice—one that addresses, for example, not just the composition of a building's form but also the composition of its *pro forma*—can help architects gain a greater voice in deciding what gets built, where, and how. Strengthening that voice brings valuable expertise to bear in the shaping of the built world, which is a good thing.

The motivations for expanding one's practice are, nevertheless, inevitably mixed. However sincere we are about bettering the world, we are also looking for ways to make a dime. (The "we" here is not rhetorical; I'm looking to make a dime, too.) In that search, it can become unclear whether added services are in fact an expansion of architectural practice, or whether they're something else altogether. Not that it matters in any particular case. If you're good at some service—architectural or otherwise—that a client needs, more power to you.

But there is the danger that, the more architects are seen to be doing things other than designing buildings, the less important the design of buildings may appear to be. Heaven knows, we don't want that.

I have one suggestion for avoiding it, which may be obvious, but it bears saying. It is, that we should take care how we use the word "design." In unguarded moments, it's easy to say "the design" when what we really mean is "the way it looks": "I like the design, but the construction is poor," or "It's a nice design, but it doesn't function very well." We know better: the design includes the construction, it includes function, and—not unimportantly—it includes the way it looks. When we're expanding our services *as architects*, it includes, as well, financial analysis, development strategy—indeed, everything we bring to the table. What we're bringing is not a grab-bag of services, but an integration of factors, the relations among which may be hard for others to see.

The integration of apparently unrelated things—lumens, column spacing, and social space, for example—is the core of what we do, and it would serve us well if we reserved the word "design" for that integration. We should be prepared to demonstrate, through vivid examples, how design can serve a gamut of interests, from the fiscal to the social to the visual. And whenever anyone uses the word "design" to mean anything less than this rich synthesis of concerns, we should call them on it. Because anybody can put together a grab-bag.

Tim Culvahouse, AIA, editor

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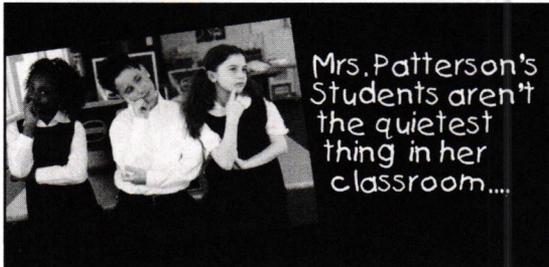
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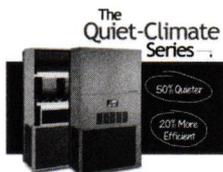
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Contributors

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Paul Adamson, AIA is an architect and co-author of *Eichler: Modernism Builds the American Dream*. He is a founding member of the Northern California working party of DOCOMOMO (Documentation and Conservation of the Modern Movement) an international modernist preservation group devoted to education of the principles of the modern movement and preserving its built works. Mr. Adamson has written several articles on mid-century design, including an essay on postwar American planning for the book, *The Modern City Revisited*, published by SPON Press in 2000, and articles on the Eichler Homes for *Echoes* magazine and the London-based academic quarterly, *Journal of Architecture*. Since 1994 he has been a design architect with the San Francisco-based firm, Hornberger + Worstell, where he is a senior associate. He may be reached at adamson@hwiarchitects.com.

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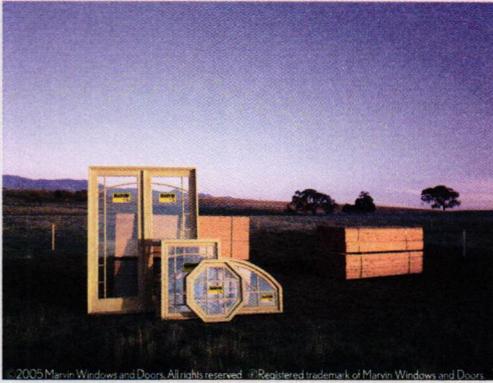
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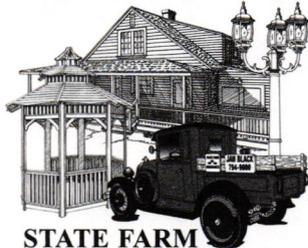
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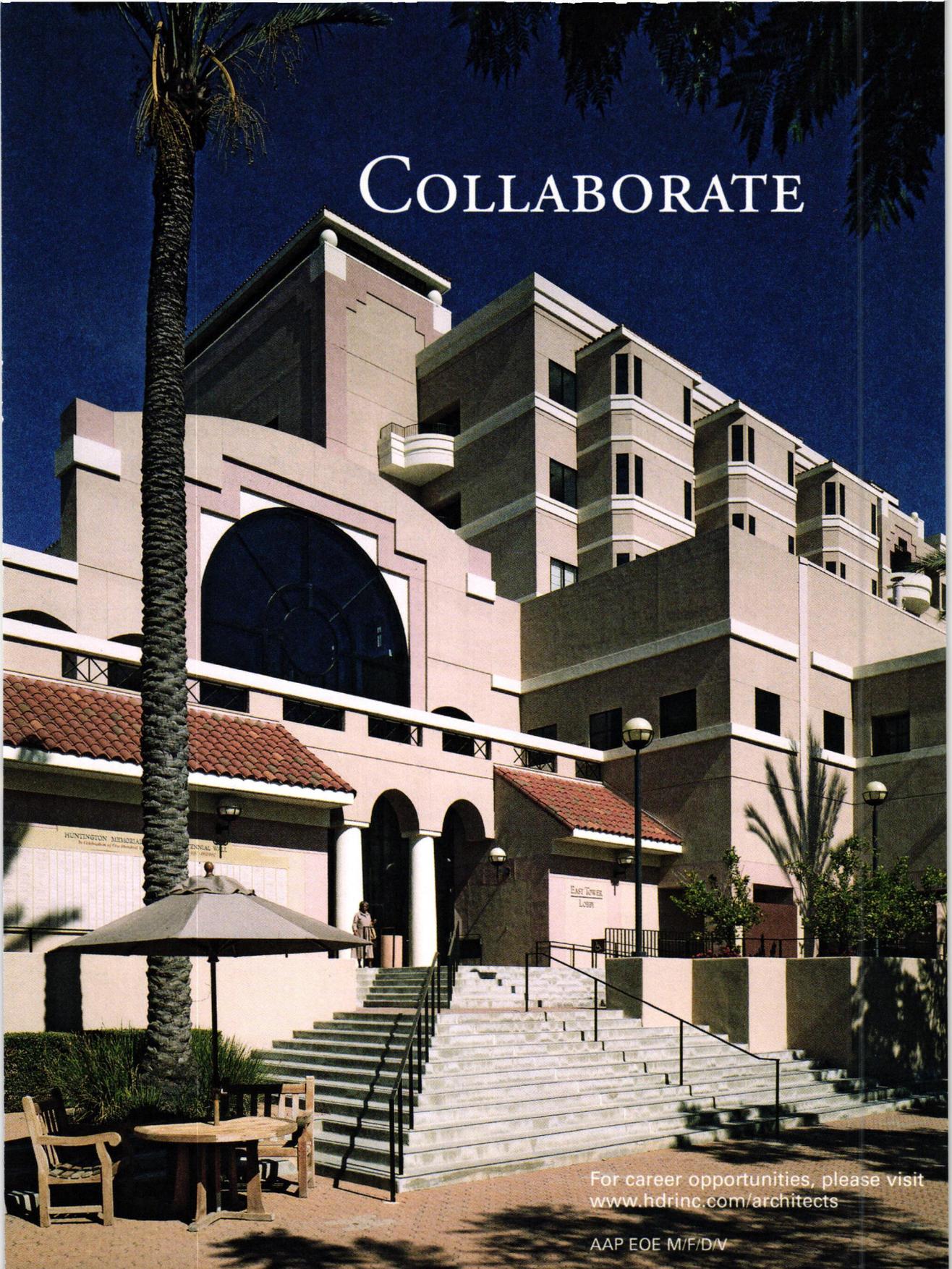
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Correspondence

regarding **arcCA 05.1, "Good Counsel"**:

As a lawyer-turned-architect, I read your May issue ("Good Counsel") with interest. It was nice to hear such positive and grateful remarks about the contributions of lawyers like Jerry Weisbach and Ken Natkin. I'd add just two observations to the discussion.

First, while I agree with John Cary's argument that architects should increase and make formal their *pro bono* practices, we shouldn't idealize how lawyers do it, nor judge architects too harshly. For example: I'd guess that it's easier—at least financially—to contribute *pro bono* hours when your firm is earning tens of millions of dollars representing large corporations, and you yourself earn well into the six figures per year, with a nice end-of-year bonus on top. And there are a good number of architecture firms that devote a large part (much more than 1%) of their practices to social change work—low-income housing, urban repair, and green design, for example.

Second, with regard to how lawyers and architects view each other, there's a definite "grass is greener" dynamic in action. When I announced my decision to return to graduate school to study architecture, my lawyer colleagues uniformly expressed jealousy over my joining such an exciting, glamorous, creative profession. Nowadays, I hear from colleagues who express disbelief that I'd leave law (along with its power, prestige, and high pay)—right down to Tim Culvahouse's half-joking characterization of such a path as "craziness"!

Andrew Lee, J.D., M.Arch, AIA

ELS Architecture and Urban Design, Berkeley

I appreciated and thank you for the article about the legacy of Natkin & Weisbach. It was very much our intention to raise the awareness of the design professions with regard to their legal interests, and it is gratifying to see our efforts recognized.

For those readers, however, to whom the term "legacy" implies something past (or even posthumous), I write to say that my legacy is a work still in progress, as I continue to practice and counsel design professionals from my law offices in Oakland, California.

Kenneth Natkin, FAIA

Attorney at Law / Arbitrator / Mediator, Oakland

and the discussion begun in **arcCA 04.4, "School Daze,"** regarding ADPSR's prison boycott, continues:

Doug Robertson, AIA, in responding to ADPSR's call for architects to boycott prison design, misunderstands both state budgets and the efficacy of prison systems. In the same budget highlights that Mr. Robertson cites, one can learn that per-pupil spending fell from \$9,477 to \$9,302, while spending on prisons increased \$800 million. As prisons increasingly detract from the budget for education, the bigger question is, what are we getting for our money? Homicide and rape rates today are the same as in 1970, but the number of prisoners is seven times as great, and the "Corrections" budget is 22 times what it was then (according to statistics from the CA Attorney General's office). Either security today is vastly more difficult to supply, or the prison system needs an audit à la Enron. Simply put, we can neither afford nor ethically allow imprisonment if no public safety benefit is achieved—without even considering the other problems, such as endemic violence and institutional racism, that are hallmarks of the California prison system.

Boycotting prison design may seem like a "moonbat" proposition to Mr. Robertson, but, faced with a prison system that keeps expanding and becoming more expensive, and whose increase has no correlation with an increase in security for Californians, ADPSR thinks it is common sense to call for more promising alternatives. Community development and job creation have been shown to decrease crime—the drop in crime in the 1990s has much more to do with increasing job opportunities than final success in "locking up the bad guys." However, state government cannot afford new investments in community development and job-creation while at the same time building and operating ever more prisons. Furthermore, our current prison system actively disrupts and disempowers poor communities, worsening the chances of realizing crime prevention where it is most needed.

Architects can take a financially sound position of ethical leadership by advocating for alternatives to prisons, or we can wait to see prison contracts cut as the state budget is brought to reality and society moves on without us. I expect Mr. Robertson will be on the latter side; supporters of ADPSR should join us at www.adpsr.org/prisons.

Raphael Sperry

President, ADPSR

Dearest Jen,

The discussion class that I have on Tuesdays deals with issues of design and communication, and in particular the interdisciplinary nature of the architectural profession. Our professor, Clark Kellogg, inspires us in every lesson, and today we got to hear a panel of speakers who came out of architecture school and are each doing something completely different, 25+ years on.

One is a freelance environmentalist / graphic designer / strategist / consultant; one is a multi-disciplinary architect / project manager / construction consultant / PhD student writing a dissertation on "collaboration"; and one is an architectural magazine editor / teacher / architect / with history as an associate dean, department chair, and writer.

They are all successful, but they never took a direct path to where they are in the present. Most of their lives are determined by unforeseen opportunities that come along the way, and passion is the predominant, underlying factor that drives them each day. I guess it is a fair trend for the "P" generation like ourselves, who indulge in the luxury of doing only the things that we enjoy—which seems exceedingly selfish; but to look at it in a positive light—why be stuck in a monotonous job to pay for things that only bring momentary pleasure—when you can do work that you really enjoy, even if it means your rewards are limited, when you are going to be working most of your life anyway?

We are definitely living in a world of homeless intellectuals, a society based on transferable knowledge. One is no longer confined to a single disciplinary career for the rest of his/her life. What's interesting is that not a single person in this class wants to be "for sure" a registered architect when they graduate. (Most of my colleagues are in their final semesters of an undergrad program.) In fact, nobody is interested in architecture as it is perceived in a traditional sense.

We are living in a world of multiple citizenship, in which our origin, culture, eating habits, and social status are of little consequence when compared to our ability to be flexible, open-minded, adaptable, and mobile. In a globalized context, a notion of leading the life of the Nomads seems now to be idealized, romanticized, and probably in the process of being actualized.

We find multiple sites of dwelling and find, within ourselves, multiple identities in the global, multi-cultural, cosmopolitan society of the 21st century. Our values are no longer limited by capitalist accumulation of goods, because the idea of affluence is experienced by a greater number of people (yes, of course this couldn't be further from the truth when, yes, people in the third world are being continually exploited

and malnourished)—our values are internalized, we become less consumed by the outside, but more consumed by the self. Our values depend less on those expressed in the public, but focus more on the wisdom and knowledge from within. It seems that our greatest teacher, and our greatest enemy, both reside within us.

We no longer know what to do with ourselves.

We no longer know who we are.

We no longer know where we are going.

We rejoice at finding ourselves, yet we recoil at the loss of a huge part of ourselves—tradition, convention, and the familiarity and comfort of indifference. Yet we experience joy in being able to possess nothing, because we are not hindered by the pain of loss when there is nothing to be lost.

This is the reality.

There hasn't been a better time to find out who we are and to figure out why we were brought into this world.

What is your identity?

I am delighted to announce that I am well on my way to finding out.

**Love,
Annie**

Annie Ja Yeun Lee may be reached at ja_yeun@yahoo.co.nz.



A Non-Traditional Practice

Bob Hale, AIA

We are a non-traditional practice. That is, we are not an architecture firm, if that is what is meant by “traditional practice.” We are a design firm. All four partners are registered architects, but we each have additional registrations or expertise: as landscape architects, as interior designers, as urban designers, or as graphic and product designers. We are all very different people, with very different experiences and training, but we are bound together by our passion for doing great design work, our shared values incorporated in that work, and our relationships with each other.

We apply a strong interdisciplinary, collaborative approach to our design process. We try to inspire and develop thoughtful, comprehensive design for projects of all scales and complexities. Our practice literally extends from city-scale urban design and master planning for developers, communities, and non-profits, such as the Baldwin Hills Conservancy; to large scale commercial and institutional projects, like the new administrative campus for the California Endowment or the renovation of the Century City Shopping Center, where we have been able to create a complete synthesis of indoor and outdoor spaces; to urban streetscapes and landscapes, such as Grand Avenue in downtown LA or Douglas Park in Santa Monica; to schools, childcare centers, hospitals, housing, interiors, single family homes; to plates and glasses

....a forward thinking balance of rigor
and wit, assertion and decorum,
experiment and experience;
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the diversity of our
culture, and a mission to bring more
beauty into the world.

and graphics for playing cards or children's bedrooms.

This breadth of attention is perhaps unique among contemporary, architecture-based practices. A similar diversity can be found in design firms whose roots are in graphic design—such as Sussman Prejza in Los Angeles or Vanderbyl Design in San Francisco—or in product design, such as IDEO; but the work of these firms does not typically extend to the building and urban planning scales.

The unique diversity of the practice is the result of a particular tolerance or even affinity for the ambiguity inherent in creating such an integration of disciplines. And, of course, there is a certain amount of self-selection, the result of the shared values that permeate our office: a forward thinking balance of rigor and wit, assertion and decorum, experiment and experience; a desire to give expression to and to derive meaning from the diversity of our culture; and a mission to bring more beauty into the world.

Mark Rios, FAIA, ASLA, founded the practice in 1985 with his initial partner, Charles Pearson. Mark's education and licensure as both architect and landscape architect form the foundation for the comprehensive, integrated, multidisciplinary approach of the practice. Mark's creative leadership and talent as a designer have been recognized many times over with numerous awards and publications. His entrepreneurial ambition has led to the unique vision for the practice.



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Frank Clementi, AIA, AIGA, and Julie Smith Clementi, ASID, came to work with Mark, each individually, in the early 1990s. They had both worked previously with Craig Hodgetts and Ming Fung; before that, Frank worked with Ettore Sottsass and Matteo Thun. Frank's multiplicity of talents was nurtured and extended by his experience in Italy, particularly in product design. Julie developed a special interest and experience with interiors, which has led her ultimately to the position of CEO at notNeutral, the practice's product development and retail business.

When Bob Hale, AIA, left his position at Universal Studios, Mark asked him to join the firm to provide additional leadership and management, as Mark had just accepted a position at USC as Director of the Landscape Architecture Department and made the commitment to open notNeutral. Bob's tenure as Vice-President of Design and Planning for Universal Studios, along with his previous twelve years as a principal with Frank Gehry, gives him experience with ambitious, large-scale architecture and planning, as well as responsibility for comprehensive creative development of projects. His experience with projects around the globe brings another new element to the practice.

Our current partnership, Rios Clementi Hale Studios, was birthed at the end of 2003.

We don't see the world as a series of discrete "market sectors." Perhaps there are some complex programs and environments and products where the specialized expertise required to plan them effectively is so enormous that there is room only for that . . . but we're not sure we believe it. We can do a great job at solving problems, too, but that's not what differentiates us. It goes without saying that the places and things we make be planned and constructed efficiently and effectively; technique is important. But, in our view, most things and places that are made should be thought of as bringing more beauty and meaning into the world, too. If we can do this, we create additional value for our clients.

We strive to make our practice a "design think tank." The intention is to open up our field of consideration

and to allow us to become unshackled from the normal constraints of a design “problem.” We believe that in this mode we create the highest value for our clients, maximizing the intellectual and inventive components of practice.

Part of our design process is to do fairly extensive research at the outset of a project. We become well informed by precedents and current thinking by other experts. We often enlist specialists or are brought together on a team as collaborators with other designers who have special expertise. We bring the cohesion and the insistence on a comprehensive and synthesized design, one that must “solve the problem,” but is also—and maybe even more importantly—beautiful.

We share a deep intellectual curiosity about the world around us and our place(s) in it. This leads us to encourage a certain amount of independent research, not constrained by clients and project demands. It also encourages a more collaborative and synergistic view of creating greater value for the office when doing research for a particular project. We have created structures and systems for retention and dissemination of information that we gather in these research efforts, so that it can be utilized easily by the whole office.

Another component of the research is a system of committees established within the office that focus on various topics, such as sustainability, building technology, etc. The topics morph a little over the years and as new interests and issues appear. The assignment of staff to each committee also morphs over time as people’s individual interests change. Additionally, the committees are a forum for staff to assert leadership, practice presentation skills, and generally develop more skills in collaboration.

Yet another aspect of the think tank component is expressed in our firm’s commitment and involvement within the rich academic environment of the various design educational institutions in Los Angeles. We are blessed here in LA with almost a dozen significant design and architecture programs. Mark Rios is the Director of the Landscape Architecture program at USC, and Frank Clementi has been on the faculty at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena for over ten years. Bob has taught variously at USC and UCLA and has been part of the NAAB accreditation review process. The firm is supportive of other staff taking on limited teaching responsibilities as well as critic roles with the various design juries that regularly occur around Los Angeles.

We encourage being an active part of our communities. Many of our staff hold positions of responsibility throughout the community, from being part of design advisory boards to being leaders in the Girl Scouts to producing yearbooks for their kids’ schools. And we value participation and leadership

within the professions: Bob has served as President of the LA/AIA and Mark and Bob have served on its board of directors.

Ultimately, our self-perception is manifest in our own offices. Two years ago, we rebuilt a 9,000 square foot, two-story office building on Melrose Avenue. The location is a reflection of our diversity in both staff and projects. Many projects and clients are in downtown LA, but as many are on the West Side. Likewise, much of our staff once lived in Venice and Santa Monica, and some still do. More and more, however, our staff live in Silverlake, Korea town, Hollywood, and beyond to the north and east. Our Hollywood location is exactly in the middle of greater LA.

The offices themselves reflect our non-hierarchical diversity. In our second floor studio we inter-mix disciplines and project teams. Everyone works in a similar, open space, including all of the principals. Our studios all share one big wall, which we use constantly to pin up new work, so that we all can see what’s going on. Design discussions are planned, and spontaneous and creative segues are frequent. There is a kind of design baton tossing and an energy that flows from the creative sparks and helps projects build rigor and discipline.

One of the most unusual aspects of our practice is our retail business, notNeutral (www.notneutral.com). There are probably many other manifestations of design firms as entrepreneurial practices, but designing, making, and selling products directly to the consumer market is unique, especially among architects.

notNeutral designs, manufactures, licenses, and sells housewares of all types, from our award-winning deck of playing cards, to furniture, tableware, fabric, lighting, and glassware, including a unique, joint branding with Blenko glass. The products have been developed based on our own ideas and interests. Julie Smith Clementi leads this aspect of our practice. We operate it as a separate business, but the employees and culture flow from one studio to the other. We also have a product design and manufacturing business developing products for other manufacturers for licenses or “private labels.”

This non-traditional practice, probably like most practices, requires constant care and feeding. Interestingly, much of that comes from the staff, in addition to the principals. We collectively try to contribute in everything we do to a more sustainable future. We are trying to move towards a self-sustaining model of a design practice, one that is less about the individual personalities and more about the synergy of the whole . . . a new interpretation of sustainability. ●

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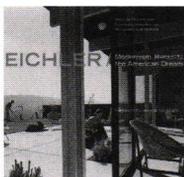
Paul Adamson: Conserving Modernism



Paul Adamson, AIA

For the past ten years, I have been involved in a variety of educational and public advocacy efforts focused on the Bay Area's recent architectural history, both collaborative work with local institutions and individual efforts, including lecturing and research.

I am a founding board member of the San Francisco-based northern California working party of DOCOMOMO (Documentation and Conservation of the Modern Movement). DOCOMOMO's mission is to espouse the ideas and concepts of the modern movement and to help preserve its built work. Following the example of the European branches (the organization was founded in the Netherlands), the local group has, since 1995, been documenting significant examples of modern architecture in San Francisco, compiling a series of profiles, or "fiches," intended for eventual hardcover quarto publication. Additionally, we host several public events each year, including tours, lectures, and film presentations, typically featuring the works of mid-century architects and designers.



Although the group is not as widely recognized as more established preservation organizations, advocacy efforts such as lobbying to save the Daphne Funeral Home in San Francisco, a classic 1953 piece of California Modernism by A. Quincy Jones and Frederick Emmons, have helped raise our profile. Public recognition has given us some political leverage; architects and their clients, preparing for planning approval for proposed alterations to mid-century buildings in the city, look to us for advice and support. Additionally, civic institutions, including the San Francisco Planning Commission and the Landmarks Board, seek our council; I am one of two board members who sit on SHPO's modern committee to assist their preservationists when evaluating resources of the recent past.

My initial interest in local modern architecture led me to study the Eichler Homes, first in graduate school in New York, then more in earnest after returning to San Francisco. As I gathered more information, I began writing articles for journals and magazines and

co-curated a travelling exhibition of Eichler photographs, artifacts, and newly reconstructed details. Collaborating with the editor of the newsletter *Eichler Network*, I developed a series of articles that formed the basis for the book, *Eichler: Modernism Rebuilds the American Dream*, published by Gibbs-Smith in 2002.

My architectural taste has always leaned toward modernism, and I found intellectual encouragement in graduate school at Columbia University in the 1980s, where a staff of influential modernist historians emphasized the social potential of architecture. The most senior among them, Kenneth Frampton, preserved the orthodoxy. I remember him critiquing a student's residential plan analysis that incorrectly lumped kitchens in with the social zones. Professor Frampton set the record straight, declaring emphatically, "the kitchen is a laboratory for the production of food!" Mary McLeod, a noted Corbusier scholar, argued strenuously that modern movement designers should benefit those who followed. After taking a group of students to visit Pierre Chareau's jewel-like *Maison de Verre*, she questioned its place in the modernist canon, because it failed to provide a model for reproduction. Gwendolyn Wright, a leading historian of American residential architecture, pointed out the effects architecture and planning could have on the values and quality of everyday of life.

Here in the Bay Area, we are blessed with a benign climate and spectacular physical surroundings that have inspired a particularly sensual brand of modern architecture. In my experience, many local architects have only a tenuous relationship with this legacy (perhaps because so few of them are natives), but there is a wealth of exemplary design contemporary architects can tap into for innovative, often inexpensive ways of making good architecture that fits our regional needs.

By recording, celebrating, and lobbying for the protection of regional architecture such as this, my colleagues in DOCOMOMO and I aim to raise awareness of regional culture and, thereby, expectations for contemporary work. One motivation for writing the Eichler book was to demonstrate by example the potential for good design even (or perhaps especially) in the all-too-often mundane context of the suburban tract. Implicit in my appreciation of the Eichlers is encouragement for designers and builders to hone their craft against the lessons of earlier masters. Further, it's a form of consumer advocacy; by defining our regional body of historic resources—a legacy by which contemporary and future work might be measured—the general public, city-dwellers, and suburban homeowners alike, as well as builders, might be encouraged to pursue alternatives and adaptations for our own time. ●

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On Air with Frances Anderton



John Chase, AIA

Even if Frances Anderton had never set foot in an architectural office, she would still have a superabundance of talent for her job as producer for distinguished public affairs news moderator Warren Olney on KCRW public radio. Always engaged and sympathetic, excited by the world at large and culture in particular, everything about Frances from her eye-popping wardrobe and her rich BBC accent to her cascade of blond hair and equally cascading laugh give her instant entree to the hearts and minds of all who encounter her.

Newly wed to movie auteur and collaborator Robin Bennett-Stein and mother of seven-and-a-half year old Summer Grace, Frances is also producer and on-air moderator of her own show, *DNA*, airing every third Monday at 2:30 pm. Back issues of the show can be found at KCRW.com, filed under arts and culture.

Frances's career in architecture began with enrollment in the Bartlett State School in London. She had begun by studying art history and French prior to that, but was repulsed by the idea of being one more female English dilettante in Art History. Architecture school actually had both sexes studying, and this appealed far more to Frances's desire to be a full-fledged professional and citizen of the world. In addition, a gap year following high school in Florence, Italy, had introduced her to the wonders of architecture—she finagled a job restoring an old farmhouse while there. The fourth year of architecture school required six months in an architect's office and six months on a building site. The site turned out to be a housing estate in east London in need of an overhaul. The six months in an architect's office turned into a year. While at the office, Frances met a friend who was going to Jaipur to study the typology of courtyard building there. The more Frances saw of the non-English world, the better she liked it, the origin of her status as a dedicated expatriate.

The fifth year at the Bartlett was supposed to be more school courses, but Frances didn't want to go back into the classroom. Instead, she took a job running the 9H architecture gallery in London. By that point, she had written an article for the *Architect's Journal* about being on a building site and how different the reality of that was from anything taught in architecture school. While working at the gallery, she received a call from the *Architectural Review*, a distinguished

journal of world architecture, because of the article she had written for the *Journal*. She was hired on as an editor, and her first assignment was to cover architecture in Los Angeles. It was love at first sight. It would be difficult to say who was more charmed—Frances, or the Los Angelenos who met her, hooked and bemused by her enthusiasm, her passion for what turned out to be her new home. In 1991, she became the editor of the AIA Los Angeles house organ, *L.A. Architect*. In 1999, she began regular contributions to the "Currents" column in *The New York Times*, running on Thursdays.

The Rodney King riots galvanized the city in 1992, along with the architectural community. Architects and planners were keen to have a role in rebuilding. It became evident, however, that they did not have access to the wider community and were not well placed to implement their ideas. Frances found *Which Way L.A.*, a show of local current affairs, to be the single best podium for discussion in the city, and she volunteered for the program in 1994. The volunteer gig turned into a full-time job, eventually working with moderator Olney on both *Which Way L.A.* and *To the Point*, a national current affairs show. In 2002, Frances went on air with *DNA*, a show intended to give architecture and design a higher profile. Her programming ranges from doggie fashions to Disney Concert Hall. It is the only show devoted entirely to design and architecture on a radio station in the U.S.

So how did Frances's architectural education and training contribute to her ability to do what she does best? "What you get from the study of architecture is a broad introduction to a broad range of subjects, from engineering to art," explains Frances. "It's a subject that is scientific, artistic, and practical at the same time. Architecture and building are extremely important to the human condition. Yet, the architecture world is very insular, and architects and planners tend to become marginalized." *DNA* is an opportunity to give architects and planners access to the larger community, to be heard and understood. Guests on the show have ranged from rocker David Byrne to architecture diva Zaha Hadid. Frances's greatest satisfaction has been getting e-mail from culture-loving members of the general public who have an appreciation for architecture, but have not had access to other venues for design discussion.

The big challenge with *DNA* is to make it accessible to the general public, to get the content across while eliminating the jargon that might mystify listeners. Frances has been able to take her architectural training and combine it with the journalist's ability to convey the sense of complex occurrences. Her architectural education has given her the deep understanding of design that allows her to communicate the subject to a general audience. She is the complete architectural insider with the know-how to reach the person on the street. ●

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John Cary in the Public Interest



an interview with arcCA

arcCA: *What is it you're doing that's other than or in addition to normative architectural practice?*

JC: I direct Public Architecture, a nonprofit organization founded and based out of a private firm, Peterson Architects, in San Francisco. To the best of my knowledge, ours is one of only two arrangements of this type, at least in the U.S. Public Architecture acts as a catalyst for public discourse through education, advocacy, and the design of public spaces. Our "1%" program (see **arcCA** 05.1), through which architecture firms pledge one percent of their time to the public good, aims to create a culture of *pro bono* work within the profession. Just to insure full disclosure to the readers of **arcCA**, I learned about Public Architecture through a conversation with **arcCA** editor, Tim Culvahouse, AIA. Tim had observed my longtime involvement with a related nonprofit called ArchVoices, whose mission has a great deal in common with Public Architecture.

arcCA: *How has your architectural education/experience prepared you to do these things?*

JC: I wish I could say that my formal education in college and graduate school, or California's increasingly prescribed internship experience, prepared me for this kind of work. If either did, I believe there would be many more opportunities for architects to take on and be recognized for nonprofit and public interest work of this type. Instead, my education and my subsequent pursuits have led me to question, and often critique, the system—at least the system we've come to rely on for determining who is an architect and who is not.

arcCA: *What values are at work? or, simply, why are you*

doing these things?

JC: Despite their different approaches and immediate audiences, both Public Architecture and ArchVoices challenge the profession to serve a much broader segment of society and think as critically about itself as it does about buildings. It doesn't take or cost much to do what we do, in either case. Do I believe these are things that the AIA—on the local, state, or national levels—could and should be doing? Absolutely.

arcCA: *Do you consider these pursuits to be a critique of normative architectural practice, an extension of it, or something else?*

JC: Most of my work has been accidental—meaning, I stumbled across the opportunities, rather than pursuing them. While I'm often associated with the purported 50% of graduates that don't enter practice, I can't imagine being any more embedded in normative or traditional architectural practice. I work in a vibrant firm setting every day of the week and I spend more of my free time than not participating in AIA activities.

arcCA: *What insight might these pursuits provide to normative practice?*

JC: It's easy for me to say, but I believe normative practice could learn a great deal from—as well as contribute to and benefit from—the work of nonprofit organizations like Public Architecture. The most significant insight is that the vast majority of society cannot afford professional design services or doesn't realize they have access to such services on a *pro bono* basis. ●

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On Campus with Marc Fisher



John Chase, AIA

Since 2002, Marc Fisher has been the ceaselessly energetic Associate Vice Chancellor for Campus Design and Facilities at the University of California Santa Barbara. Picture a fit and handsome version of Jason Alexander ("George" on *Seinfeld*). Witty, optimistic, and a born conversationalist, Fisher readily transforms obstacles into opportunities. A keen student

of human nature, he is adept at the nuances of doing business in a large organization with many highly gifted and powerful players. At 46, he is a true connoisseur of the built environment. Fisher is capable of dealing with any scale of design, from a planter of ground cover on up to a campus master plan.

"I wanted to be an architect from the time I was five years old. I became really interested in landscape, because my father had an interest in a nursery for a short period of time," says Fisher. He attended West Virginia University in landscape architecture as an undergraduate. He first worked for Dickinson Heffner Inc., a developer doing "a little bit of what I do now, a lot of master planning and also landscape design, everything down to picking furniture. It was not bad training." (The firm owned most of the buildings around the Baltimore Washington International Airport.)

Fisher went back to school and got his Master of Architecture degree from the University of Pennsylvania. After Penn, he worked in the Washington D.C. firm of Fisher-Gordon Architects (no relation), who did big houses and high-end retail. He came to California to work for Barton Myers, in whose office he met his current wife, architect and urban designer Kris Miller-Fisher, when they were both working on the Southwest Campus Carrying Capacity Study for UCLA.

After two years at Barton Myers's office, Fisher spent six years working for Emmet L. Wemple and Associates Landscape Architects. Emmet Wemple was the universally acknowledged dean of L.A. landscape architects for decades. During that time, Fisher worked on landscapes for the J. Paul Getty Center, as well as the Anderson Graduate School of Management, the Science and Technology Research Building, and the Ackerman Student Union at UCLA. From there he went on to become first the Campus Landscape Architect, next the Director of Design, and then finally the Campus Architect for UCLA. He was in those UCLA roles for a total of seven years.

Speaking of the difference between landscape architecture and architecture as professions, Fisher notes that a landscape architect often has less direct access to the client and less creative and project control than the architect. Another difference is the factor of time: "A landscape is not really finished when it is contracted. You are dependent on the client and their stewardship of the landscape."

Fisher believes that in his current role he has not left the discipline of architecture. "My job is like being a senior partner. A senior partner doesn't draw everything on all his buildings. He makes things happen. Whether you are in charge of a movie studio or a college campus, you are managing construction, and you deal with all scales of design. You are involved with what things will look like in 20 or 30 years, as

well as property maintenance details as small as weeding and selecting trash cans. This is a chance to build what you like and then manage and take care of it properly. That's a little bit different from the typical role of an architect, when you finish the building, take your pictures, and hope for the best. My job is more like the landscape architect, who sees the project evolve over time."

Fisher believes that design professionals who deal with him appreciate his role as a participant in design and management. "A good client makes for a better product. The architects and landscape architects like the advantage of dealing with a person on the client side who actually knows what they are talking about, who understands what they are trying to do."

Speaking of his role at UCSB, Fisher says, "The key aspect of this particular position is to create a built environment that's worthy of the natural setting. It's a spectacular natural environment, and there's an extraordinary level of academic achievement, but the built environment is not on par." One of the opportunities the job offers is to make Isla Vista into a true college town. "We own all the edges of Isla Vista; the University can't change the town core directly, but it will be affected, nonetheless, as we plan and influence its edges." Current campus studies include some 3000 new units of housing for UCSB students, faculty, and staff.

Fisher believes that jobs like his should be better known as potential career paths for young architects. "It's a good area of architecture," he believes. "There are \$800 million in new buildings on the campus, a great body of architecture being built in a short time. It's a chance to work on a variety of building typologies, from housing to science labs."

Marc Fisher, in his role as Associate Vice Chancellor, is a great match of an extraordinary individual to a key job at a major institution. There is no doubt that there are many improvements to come to the architecture and landscape architecture of UCSB because of Fisher's identity and training as a design professional. ●

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John Loomis: Monuments and Lasers



an interview with arcCA

arcCA: *What are you doing that's other than or beyond normative architectural practice?*

JL: Right now, I happen to find myself doing a lot. I am teaching at Stanford University where a new major in architecture is being developed, as well as at the University of San Francisco. I have been writing for *Architectural Record*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Urban Land*. I continue to be invited to lecture. Recently, the venues have ranged from The Getty Conservation Institute in Brentwood to the Mattress Factory, an inspiring experimental arts foundation in Pittsburgh. I am consulting on an opera that will be based on a book I wrote a while back called *Revolution of Forms, Cuba's Forgotten Art Schools*.

Along with all this, what is occupying the greatest part of my time is my recent appointment as Director of Development and Communications of the non-profit start-up CyArk (www.cyark.org), a project of the Kacyra Family Foundation. The pronunciation "CyArk" will probably cause some confusion among my colleagues, since it sounds just like an architectural school in Los Angeles. CyArk's mission is the preservation of endangered World Heritage Sites through documentation by high definition laser scan surveys and by archiving this data on the CyArk website network. HDS technologies can scan a complex site in the fraction of the time conventional surveys take, and the deliverables are accurate to within .5 cm. These scanned data produce 3D-point-cloud models, which can be put to many uses: archival, diagnostic, interpretive, etc. HDS technologies are rapidly becoming adopted by professions from civil engineers to archeologists for the documentation of complex structures and spaces. HDS is becoming regarded as a "best practice" in the documenting of endangered World Heritage Sites, and it is surprising how many of the World Heritage Sites on UNESCO's list or the World Monuments Fund's list have no records, no as-builts, whatsoever. CyArk intends to redress this very serious situation.

Right now, my responsibilities at CyArk include project development, creating partnerships, managing communi-

cations, and fundraising. We intend to go public within the year.

arcCA: *How has your architectural education / experience made it possible for you to do these things?*

JL: All the above activities are architecture related. At this moment, I am not involved in normative practice, creation of design and execution of construction. But through teaching at Stanford and USF and working for CyArk I am very involved in architecture. My undergraduate degree was in Art History, and I have always been drawn to that side of architecture throughout my career, even when I was deeply involved in practice at Mitchell/Giurgola and Kiss + Cathcart Architects during my years in New York. I am now also involved somewhat in the pragmatics of the profession. At CyArk, among other things, I review plans and evaluate proposals and budgets for heritage site surveys, skills which are derived not from architectural education, but instead from professional experience.

arcCA: *What values are at work in what you're doing? Or, simply: Why are you doing it?*

JL: Creativity. All my current activities involve the creative process, the act of participating in enabling the endeavors of students or projects or new technologies to take on lives of their own.

arcCA: *Do you consider this work an implicit critique of normative architectural practice, or an extension of architectural practice, or something else altogether?*

JL: John Ruskin wrote, "To study architecture is to study all things." This might sound like a bit of a conceit to people outside the profession, but architecture does indeed touch all things. And you never stop studying. The whole idea of there being a discipline of architecture and a profession of architecture, and that the discipline of architecture is more noble because it is a critique of normative professional practice, is so '90s. It is time to move beyond that worn out dichotomy. A large firm like SOM can, and does, very much engage in critical practice. A self-professed "theoretical" architect can be capable of great banality. The Latin word *disciplina* means both "discipline" and "profession." ●

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Evan Markiewicz: Rebuilding Nicaragua



Evan Markiewicz

I am currently the Executive Director of ViviendasLeón, an organization I founded based in the U.S. and Nicaragua. It is the result of work that began in Nicaragua in 1993. I first traveled to León that year, thirteen years after the success of the Sandinista Revolution, and 3 years after the FSLN became an opposition party in the 1990 national elections. The objective was to discover whether architecture could be a vehicle for social change, and a catalyst for social order.

I entered architecture school in 1974, having grown up during the Vietnam War, the peace movement, and the social transformation that was taking place. I brought with me the certainty, not unusual at the time, that architecture was a medium that could embody social ideals; that, because it occupied the public realm, was an aesthetic medium (thus communicating visually), and spatially supported the interactions of people and the activities of institutions, architecture could be a vehicle for social change.

By contrast, my experience in school emphasized the consistency of a project's internal logic, the creative imagination one brought to the assignment, and the importance of being the sole author of a design. While there were frequent discussions of the social importance of architecture, there was little in the way of a foundation, developed from a social agenda, to build from. In the end, we were being trained as members of a professional class in support of an economic system, not as revolutionaries.

As a result, what was once a certainty became a question in search of an answer. While my analytical and creative abilities were developed, a meaningful basis for decisions remained a mystery, and the larger questions of architecture's potential to be a vehicle for social change went unanswered.

I started to take seriously these unanswered questions in 1993, when I began working with an international solidarity organization with the idea of forming a construction program. I thought that to work in communities that had literally no permanent buildings would be to discover the social importance of architecture. It was consistent with the organization's mission to develop progressive North-South relation-

ships with Nicaragua and to improve, through community development, the standard of living of rural communities, some of the poorest in the Western Hemisphere.

The program that was developed brought U.S. volunteers to work on delegations during the summer on school construction projects. Between 1993 and 1998, we built a total of six preschools and, between 1999 and 2004, four houses for rural families. All of these projects were built with communities and volunteer delegations. They were experiments in making the best use of traditional building materials and methods that intended to reinforce an existing construction culture. We introduced rammed earth construction, a safer form of the same adobe construction they had used for 300 years. The buildings were engineered to resist earthquakes, so that by example we were supporting their culture by building with earth, while demonstrating a novel way to improve safety.

The idea to build schools fit my interest in buildings that could reflect a social agenda. We were building something permanent for the first time in communities that had lived for countless generations in rickety buildings built without floors and of discarded materials. Our methodology included the participation of all members of the project, thus shifting the creative role from one person to many. This was the first project they had imagined and built collectively, and one that represented the effort of the entire community. With the construction of a school, the community felt much more committed and connected to their place.



In 1997, I began work on a project to bring more economic independence to the León region. By 2002, we had developed a staff in León and completed two of three houses in a pilot program that demonstrated the ability to build for working families, offer credit far below the market, and form partnerships that insured repayment of the loans. It was the beginning of what is now ViviendasLeón, an organization that designs and builds affordable housing and makes available affordable credit to working families. ViviendasLeón also continues to operate as a volunteer program using the same model as before, supporting rural communities with school and housing construction.

It has taken twelve years to build the organization

in two countries that I now run. It has required the use of much of the practical knowledge I had acquired earlier, both in school and while working as an architect. ViviendasLeón now offers the opportunity to work on the design of buildings with communities or groups of families, investigate new construction materials and methods, run an organization that defines projects and significantly controls their trajectory, and most importantly do the kind of work that is most meaningful.

This year, ViviendasLeón is preparing to enter its next phase, which will include the construction of nearly 400 units of housing over the next three to five years for the medical professors and technical workers of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua (UNAN) on various sites. With this new scope of work, it is my hope that we can engage the architecture community in a meaningful investigation of the potential of architecture as a social enterprise that contributes to the intelligent development of a new society in Nicaragua. ●

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In the Gallery with Liz Martin



Nina Lewallen

Alloy Design and Technology, the name Los Angeles-based designer Liz Martin chose for her one-woman practice, is a telling indication of her approach. "An alloy is a mixture of different metals," Martin says, "and that mixture makes it stronger." Martin views her wide range of activities—as a curator, writer, teacher, musician, social activist, and architect—as part of her practice of architecture. She is interested in crossing boundaries, finding connections, and sparking dialogue, all in an effort to bring the outside world to bear on architectural design.

Throughout her childhood, Martin studied at the Manhattan School of Music Preparatory division and, as a result, has always seen the creative process through the eyes of a musician. She credits her childhood experience as a violinist with shaping her desire to connect with the world outside of traditional architectural practice. When she decided not to become a professional musician and instead to attend architecture school, receiving a B.Arch. from Tulane and a Master's degree in Architecture from SCI-Arc, Martin immedi-



ately understood the similarities between a music education and a design education. Her thesis project at SCI-Arc investigated the dual processes of design and composition through an analysis of music, allowing her to have one foot firmly planted outside the sphere of traditional architectural practice. Profoundly influenced by John Cage, Martin corresponded at length with the avant-garde composer during her thesis research. The resulting thesis, published in the Pamphlet Architecture series, brings together ten projects by musicians and architects that explore the language, philosophy and character of both disciplines.

Martin's subsequent position as the founding director, and *de facto* curator, of L.A.'s first museum of architecture, A+D Architecture and Design Museum, allowed her to continue to expand her field of engagement. The Museum's mission was to enable people of all ages, backgrounds, and interests to appreciate and understand architecture and design. Through multiple exhibits, many designed to attract a non-architecture audience, Martin was successful in involving the general public with issues of design, landscape, and public space.

The recent *Soft Boundaries* installation, a project she spearheaded during her year as Paul Rudolph Visiting Professor at the School of Architecture at Auburn University, is a good example of Martin's praxis. Martin and the students in her Curatorial Studies seminar sent 5 x 7-inch wooden boxes to 100 Mexican, Canadian, and American artists. They asked the artists to create, within—or with—that container, an artwork that addressed the topic of boundaries, as articulated in an essay composed by the students. In order to exhibit the resulting artworks, in the gallery of the Art Department across campus, the seminar students collaborated with students from Martin's fourth-year architectural studio to create an installation; the studio students fabricated and installed topographical landscape mounds using industrial felt and non-toxic gelatin that hardened into a form similar to plastic or resin. Already at this point in the project, barriers between academic departments had been breached and national boundaries had been transcended. Perhaps more importantly, connections had also been made: the curatorial team who

wrote the statement on soft boundaries established a dialogue with the artists who responded in tactile form, and the studio and seminar students had developed a working relationship. After the exhibit, the students auctioned off the boxes and donated the money to the Camden School of Art and Technology, a secondary school in poor, rural, and predominantly African-American Wilcox County, Alabama. The Auburn students themselves voted on Camden to receive the funds, establishing a link between a respected architecture program at an undergraduate university populated by students of relative privilege and a fledgling technical school that is aiming to provide its disadvantaged students with something more than vocational training. Architectural education became communication, fabrication, collaboration, and social activism, rather than simply the making of beautiful things.

Giving back, finding connections, breaking boundaries. While many might see all these activities as detracting or leaching valuable time from her architectural practice, Martin sees them all as a part of a balance. Her most recent commission proves the point: she has been asked to design a house on the hillside in historic Hollywoodland and to simultaneously compose a companion musical piece. Design, research, exhibition, teaching: all elements of Liz Martin's dynamic metallic amalgam. ●

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Amy Noble: Researching Home

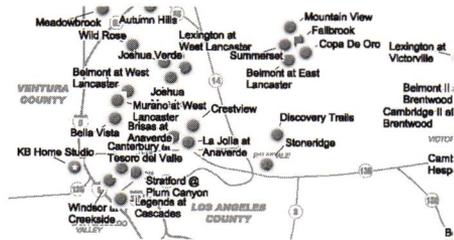


John Melcher, AIA

It is interesting to note, when considering Amy Noble, Ph.D., that the first four letters of "architecture"—a-r-c-h—are the last four letters of "research," for that is what Amy is about. Educated at Rice University and the Harvard School of Design, and holder of the degree of Doctor of Design from the latter institution, Amy today is immersed not in architecture, but in research work—research work in which her background in architecture figures very prominently.

Amy is Director of Research for KB Home Architecture, the full-service, in-house architecture department of one of the nation's largest home builders. One of the home-

builder's distinctions is its extensive use of research to drive the architectural design process. Amy directs a research staff of seven, designing and conducting the research that informs the designs of the firm's architects to assure that they best meet the demands of the marketplace.



Amy's journey to this juncture is an interesting one. Her fifth year at Rice was spent, as fifth years there are, working in the profession. Then, after completing her sixth year and with her B. Arch. degree in hand, she returned to the same firm—in her case, Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates. There, for four years, she had a hand in the full range of the firm's commissions—including one stint "designing and redesigning" a single façade for one of the firm's projects.

That experience, plus chancing upon Robert Gutman's *The Design of American Housing*, in which he attempts a re-appraisal of the architect's role in production housing, and which she describes as having been a "seminal influence," led her to Harvard, where she studied under the likes of Kermit Baker, Ph.D., the AIA's chief economist, and produced a dissertation entitled *A Market Research Method for the Design of Single-Family Prototype Housing*.

Her formal education complete, Amy and her husband made their way to Los Angeles in 2003, where Amy founded her own firm, Homebuyer Research, and conducted custom homebuyer research for homebuilders. Soon enough, she attracted the attention of KB Home, which she joined this year.

Amy's enthusiasm for her work is infectious. She has always had, she says, "the sense that housing makes up the majority of our built environment," that the relationship between architect and client is closer in housing than in any other building type, and that she is "drawn to the relationship between the client and the architecture."

Asked if she thinks that someday she'll return to the profession, Amy says that she "hopes so," and states that she wants to combine design and research. As for licensing, "it's always out there"; in fact, she maintains her NCARB file, even though for now she's not actively preparing for the exam. And AIA? She hasn't "thought about it much since leaving school."

Although the number of newly issued architect licenses has declined steeply in recent years, the number of

graduates has continued to rise, which suggests that an architect's education is highly valued well beyond the narrow limits of the profession, and that the future of the profession, rather than being worrisome and bleak, is bright with promise. Amy Noble, Ph.D., is a case in point. ●

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In the Classroom with Alison Quoyeser



an interview with arcCA

arcCA: *Tell us about what you're doing.*

AQ: I teach fourth grade at Ross School, a high-achieving school in a high socio-economic community in Marin County. I originally intended to teach in a low-income, inner-city, ethnically-diverse school, but, when I was looking for jobs, no such districts were hiring.

arcCA: *How have your architectural education and experience contributed to your ability to teach?*

AQ: Well, I know that my background is one reason I was hired. Ross appreciates interesting, real world experience. For instance, we have another architect, a lawyer, and an accountant on the teaching staff.

arcCA: *What values led you into teaching?*

AQ: I was always a people person. In fact, before architecture, I considered becoming a clinical psychologist. But I didn't want to be a teacher, because 1) so many of my family members are teachers; and 2) I wanted a "man's job." I liked being an architect, but I always felt anxious that I wasn't catching on fast enough learning how to put buildings together. Also, I didn't have the personality or talent to be a head designer. (I was most successful in the design development phase of projects.) My bosses appreciated me for being a good team member and for drawing well (this was before the advent of the age of computers at every desk), but I didn't like the idea of being mediocre in my field. When I finally realized I wanted to become a teacher, I knew that I could be excellent in my job.

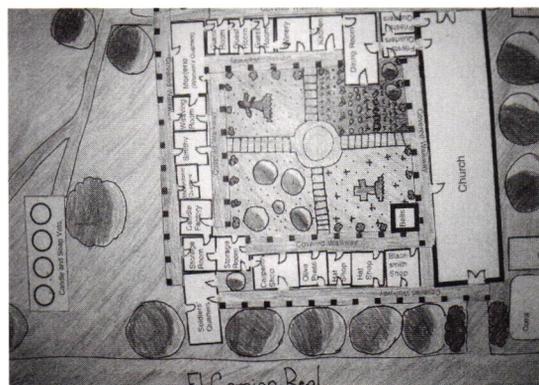
arcCA: *Do you think of your teaching as an extension of architectural practice, a critique of it, or something entirely unrelated?*

AQ: It's a little bit of a critique, since I prefer to teach about caring for the natural world rather than to work with developers to "develop" the natural world. On the other hand, many skills I learned as an architect serve me well as a teacher. Architects tend to be generalists—"Renaissance man" (or woman) kinds of folks—just as elementary teachers have to be. We like hands-on, project-based learning, which is the approach that turns on most kids. My graphics skills come in handy for bulletin board design, stage design, art projects, worksheet graphics, and so on. And then I was one of two teachers to serve on the Facilities Design Committees for our middle school (built) and our totally new school (project on hold due to lack of community support). The kids and their parents are impressed that I am an architect, and I think that contributes to my good reputation in the community.

arcCA: *What insights does your current perspective offer on architectural practice?*

AQ: I think I would have felt more confident as an architect if I had had more exposure to construction, looking at the way things go together and discussing how and why to detail buildings a certain way. Recently my husband and I completed the construction of our dream house, and I learned a tremendous amount about design, working drawings, construction, and project management by being involved from start to finish. I think architecture students could benefit greatly by following a local design/construction project from start to finish. ●

Design for a California mission by one of Alison Quoyeser's fourth grade students.



Stephanie Reich: Designing Santa Monica



John Chase, AIA

Stephanie Reich brings a dignity, balance of judgment, and intelligence to her role as urban designer for the City of Santa Monica that transcends any preconceptions one might have about an architect who is also a bureaucrat. Passionate about good architecture and about the truths of modernism, Reich is a born communicator and diplomat, who makes her arguments for improvements gently but firmly. A commanding presence, her long hair perfectly coiffed, always elegantly attired, Reich also is a living reprimand to any clichés about planning drowsiness.

She has a résumé that would sink a battleship. She comes to the City of Santa Monica (a city of 100,000 with a daytime worker population of 300,000) with a thorough working knowledge of every aspect of the architect's role, having worked in design and supervisory capacities in a series of distinguished design offices. Going backward from the present, Reich has worked for the City of West Hollywood as interim urban designer, had her own consulting firm from 2001-2003, and during that time worked with Siegel Diamond Architecture and AZ Architecture Studio. Prior to that, she worked with larger corporate office such as NBBJ, DMJM/Keating, and Zimmer Gunsul Frasca. She has also worked with smaller design offices, including Studio Daniel Libeskind, Morphosis, Coop Himmelb(l)au, Karahan Schwarting Architecture Company (New York), and David Beck Architects (Philadelphia). She has taught at Cornell and Woodbury University.

In her job as urban designer for the City of Santa Monica, she leads the staffing of teams for the Landmarks Commission and for the Architectural Review Board. She also provides project design review for individual development projects that go before the Planning Commission, and she provides the Planning Division urban design expertise on policy projects.

Reich arrived in Santa Monica in 2003, at an important watershed for the City. The architectural review process, involving the Planning Commission, the Landmarks Commission, and the Architectural Review Board, had become burdensome and complex. Because of her high level of professionalism, decisiveness, and apt judgment, Reich has been able to inspire a level of trust in all parties, which has made the review process easier for everyone. The Planning Commission, Landmarks Committee, and Architectural Review Board have full confidence in

her stewardship, limiting the complications and uncertainties that inevitably result from design review by committee.

"The profession of architecture is broader than many architects realize," says Reich. "I believe that most architects and the profession itself have unnecessarily narrowed what the profession of architecture can and does include. I couldn't say that I'm practicing architecture in the conventional sense, although I believe I am helping shape the city, as I engage in a dialogue with architects about their projects. The breadth of my role here includes looking at the design of the city and each building within it in a holistic way. Understanding the practice of architecture as well as the making of architecture is vital. Being an architect is crucial for the part of the job in which I have a dialogue with architects about potential improvements to their proposals. Very often what I do is build alliances with architects to raise design standards."

She continues, "Most architects, including myself before working in this job, find the idea of architectural review distasteful. Admittedly, the process in Santa Monica—before the implementation of the urban designer position—had an often unstructured approach and level of subjectivity, as is the case in many cities that have design review committees. The architect experiences these boards as an arbitrary process based on arbitrary grounds of judgment. What we found in Santa Monica was that the urban designer functions as an interface with the architect or other applicant, which often has the result of providing an improvement in the individual project. It provides an opportunity for the design to be valued in a way that the client may not have valued it themselves. I am an advocate for the architects to provide their best design, even when it may not be paramount to the client. This dialogue also helps address issues of scale and compatibility that are vital to the Architectural Review Board and to the community at large. Many architects, after engaging in this dialogue, find that it is helpful not only in moving them through the design review process; it also helps them improve the design in a way that appearing in front of seven individual members of a design committee, as part of a formal meeting, may not."

And, she concludes, "My staffing of the landmarks and architectural review bodies, as well as teams of planners, empowers advocates for good design, sustainability, and preservation."

The urban designer position as a role in government is a model that is beginning to catch on in California. Cities that are in the process of creating the position more recently include Glendale, Long Beach, and Santa Cruz. They will be lucky if they get urban designers with the clear vision, negotiation, and leadership skills that Reich has demonstrated in Santa Monica. The role of urban designer is a privileged

role, in which the ability to affect projects transcends the normal scale of endeavor of the architect. It allows the urban designer to become a collaborator and an influence on the built environment in a much broader way than they can working on the design of one building, or even one urban design plan for a section of a city. This is a model that we hope will continue to spread and to attract architects of Stephanie Reich's caliber.

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On Set with Glenda Rovello

Kenneth Caldwell

Glenda Rovello is a production designer for the television show Will & Grace. We spoke to her in Los Angeles.

arcCA: *What was your emphasis in architecture school?*

GR: I went to the University of Texas at Austin. The emphasis was on design; on getting the big idea. I was completely under-prepared when I went to my first job.

arcCA: *Where did you go to work?*

GR: I went to work for Barton Myers in LA. Before that, I had an internship with Robert Venturi and had been a teaching assistant for Charles Moore.

arcCA: *What kind of projects did you work on?*

GR: I was very, very junior, and I worked for a year and a half on the Phoenix City Hall complex. At that time, Barton did a lot of books, and I did diagrams and illustrations for those, too.

arcCA: *How did you get into television work?*

GR: After Barton, I had gone to work for an architectural designer, and I just knew this was not for me. I had a very good friend who was a Vice President at Paramount, and he set up a lunch so I could meet a production designer who was doing a variety show at Paramount. There were two other production designers in the restaurant, and they joined us. All

through lunch, these three guys grilled me with all kinds of questions. By the time I got home, another production designer had left me a phone message, and he said he was my ticket to success in Hollywood. I met him the next day, finished up a side job, and worked for him for thirteen years.

arcCA: *Is there a parallel with the traditional client process?*

GR: A producer calls and asks if I am available, and I say, "Maybe." I read the script and take notes, I note where there are swing sets and basic sets, and I imagine the way an actor might move through the space. Like architecture, the plan is very important, so I work on the different ways that a director could have the action take place. It is about movement first, then style, and then I introduce the layers of details on top of that. But, first and foremost, it is about the plan.

arcCA: *What's a swing set?*

GR: Swing sets are the sets that might be used one time, but can be recycled. A basic set, like a character's workplace or home, recurs week to week. This season, I am doing a show that takes place in a junior high school; that is a very large, basic set. Another show has a character inheriting his mother's apartment in the Apthorpe in New York, and another show takes place in a lingerie design lab.

arcCA: *What do you show your clients after you read the script?*

GR: I tell them my impression of the script and show them a lot of images. For the basic set I just mentioned, I would show them images of the actual Apthorpe apartment building. For the design lab, I will do research on what I would like the style of the building to be. Once I see that we are on the same track, then I build a model; some people show sketches, but I prefer to see the true scale, so I present models. I design what are called multi-camera sets, which tend to be proscenium sets, so there is no fourth wall; it is open to the audience.

arcCA: *How did the design process work on Will & Grace?*

GR: The writers of that show are very design savvy. They asked for an amazing New York apartment. When I took over the project, we showed the writers the ideas for the set, and they liked it. Then we met with the director, and he did some adjustments so he could shoot it in a way that he wanted to. For example, he raised the kitchen. You need to plan for other sorts of uses that may be required in the future, but not called

for in the pilot script. That's why the upstage spaces like the terrace and TV room are there.

arcCA: *During the design process, does the producer ask you to develop dozens of schemes?*

GR: I don't present multiple options. I give my complete effort in one direction, and then it can change. Remember, I can have a set built in a day. But it is constantly evolving. When you see the physical appearance of the actors, the set must adjust to work with them.

arcCA: *Are you constantly redressing an apartment?*

GR: Yes, like in real life. Will now has a remodeled kitchen with a stainless steel countertop. These changes can become a part of the story.

arcCA: *How long do you have to design a set once the idea is approved?*

GR: The minute I know where we are going, the carpenters have to start building. Sometimes I have to design the whole thing in 24 hours, and I might have six days to build it. For one script, I needed the Temple of Dendur. We had the reflection of the atrium walls and a truckload of Egyptian icons from various prop houses. In that same time period, we did a stage area of Jack's [from *Will & Grace*] television show, and we had to create an office for Alec Baldwin and a portion of Central Park. Our drawings are dimensioned like working drawings, but of course you have no mechanical, no foundations. The drawings are like interior elevations, except you have to indicate where the walls break.

Sometimes we are shooting for a few days and then all the scenery has to be changed and the new scenery has to fit and be ready for the director by the next day. Now that gets complicated! And it means a lot of work at midnight.

arcCA: *Can you talk about the permanence or impermanence of your work?*

GR: During pilot season, I am always so excited, because it's like having kids; you watch them grow and mature, and then they are gone. It can be a little melancholy. Yesterday, I was admiring the Aphorpe set, and I don't know if I will see it again. These sets are more recognizable and more accessible than many buildings. That doesn't make them permanent, just more visible. ●

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Growing Up with Beth Rubenstein



Beth Rubenstein

Working with teenagers, I think about what tools and skills they need to become happy, productive, independent twenty-somethings. How did we set ourselves up on a path to meaningful work and relationships? How did we figure out what we wanted to be and do when we grew up?

As little kids, asked what we want to be when we grow up, our answers reflect what we like to do (writing, dancing, soccer) or tangible professions we see (teacher or firefighter) or what our parent does. At this point, there is neither the need nor the ability to wonder, "How will I get there?" As a teenager and college student, many of us are daunted (I was) by that question, precisely because we have no idea how to get there. We may love or hate school, but what does it have to do with our adult lives? And, what are our options as adults? Few teenagers or college students are exposed to the breadth of work possibilities. I watched many peers choose law, medicine, architecture, and business because the paths to those professions were clear. Those schools are, strangely, vocational: they teach you a trade that is marketable immediately after graduation. My English major friends knew that what they were learning was important, but it was unclear where they would go from there. It had to be invented.

Looking at my own path from my schooling to my work life, I see that the most important role models, besides my parents, were my teachers. They taught me the keys to becoming an adult. My high school teachers taught me how to look critically at things and to wonder about the world around me. My architecture professors opened a door to a complex and deep way of seeing the world. Architecture for me embod-



ies a brilliant symbiosis between ideas and physicality, between the abstract and the concrete. Architecture is inherently multi-disciplinary: it creates webs of meanings and connections among history, science, art, and anthropology. This combination speaks to me.

In graduate school, not only was I learning about architectural ideas and design, but I was also watching my teachers teach. I wondered about learning. How do you create an environment where learning can happen—where intellectual risk, experimentation, and personal insights are valued? In my second year, I became a teaching assistant in the college classes. As I graduated and continued my teaching, I worked for a professor who was an inspiring teacher and designer. For him, there was a fluidity between making and teaching; they easily informed each other.

After school, I developed a small practice that focused on community projects, while at the same time I taught at the college level. I was drawn to architectural projects that had impact on a community of people. Many of my projects involved design and building, and they never felt that different from my classroom/studios. I was a learner and a teacher in both situations.

As important as all my jobs through my twenties and thirties is the way my architectural education has shaped the way I see the world. Whether I am designing a project or not, I always feel like I see the world as an architect. I look for the relationships between the built world and people's experience; I wonder about how our built environment supports us, speaks for us, and oppresses us; and I look for ways in which we can redesign and reshape our place so it reflects the future we want.

This way of thinking led me five years ago to co-found in San Francisco a nonprofit arts education organization—Out of Site: Center for Arts Education—that works exclusively with public high schools. I was looking for a way to weave my educational beliefs and my architectural view of the world together: the mission of Out of Site reflects this. Teenagers are in the midst of forming themselves. They need to see how their learning can be relevant; they need to be challenged and supported to find their own voice; and they need experience in architecture and the arts so that they can better understand the world. Out of Site's programs support and nourish young women's and men's intellectual and emotional growth.

Creating Out of Site is an expression of my belief in the transformative power of education and the transformative power of art and architecture. To invent something—whether it is a building or an organization or a relationship—you need to be tenacious and curious. To invent something is to have a view of the future. ●

The mission of Out of Site is

- to DEVELOP new models of teaching and thinking about the arts at the high school level,
- to INSPIRE community engagement and activism by participating in the world through the creation of art, and
- to CREATE connections among communities through programs that are diverse in their participants and their content and teaching methods.

For more information about Out of Site: Center for Arts Education, visit our website at www.outofsite-sf.org

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Margo Warnecke-Merck: Special Needs



Margo Warnecke-Merck came from New York to Northern California in 1996, leaving an executive position with John Carl Warnecke and Associates and devoting herself to providing housing for lower-income families and persons with disabilities in Sonoma County. She brought along the business acumen and skills honed in a successful career in project management, design, and development. She's comfortable talking development minutiae to bankers, lawyers, developers, and realtors. She's also at home navigating through governmental planning processes and funding sources. She has a great sense of where, who, and how hard to push to get something done.



While not pursuing a traditional architectural career path, Warnecke-Merck feels that the work she is doing in affordable housing is actually the cutting edge of where architecture should be going. The real clients are "the peo-

ple,” not the developers or the corporations. Too few architects understand how housing is developed through good housing element policies, through advocacy for very-low-income people with disabilities, through land-use planning, legislation, and—if need be—the court system. Developing special-needs and multi-family housing puts architects doing this work right in the middle of today’s social, environmental, political, and economic realities. This is where society’s most pressing problems and solutions lie.

In her role as president of the non-profit Community Housing Development Corporation of Santa Rosa, Warnecke-Merck has spearheaded efforts to build housing for very-low-income individuals in Sonoma County, one of the most expensive places to live in the state. For a recently completed project, she put together a joint venture partnership of several non-profits to develop an innovative project of sixteen units of permanent supportive housing. Financing for the project was provided by the Corporation for Supportive Housing, the City of Santa Rosa, and other sources. These are groups that have not previously worked together, but, through Warnecke-Merck’s efforts, they are providing much needed housing.

Warnecke-Merck has a fierce determination to see that all persons in our communities have decent affordable housing. Do not tell her that land is too expensive or the constraints too great; in her mind, there are plenty of infill sites and possible joint ventures with for-profit developers to keep her non-profit busy. Her enthusiasm and energy are contagious—it’s hard to be around her for more than a few minutes without being enlisted in one or more of her projects.

Warnecke-Merck has a special talent for building coalitions and consensus. She’s organized coalitions of groups that had previously been at loggerheads, including environmental groups, labor unions, housing developers, homeless advocates, church groups, and community groups. She is one of the founding members of the Sonoma County Housing Coalition, a broad-based coalition of diverse groups and interests (see www.schousingcoalition.org). She also currently serves on the governing council of the newly formed Housing Trust Sonoma County.

Warnecke-Merck’s unique talent for bringing diverse interests together to deal with the affordable housing crisis is most apparent in her work on behalf of persons with disabilities. She was instrumental in building a statewide coalition to advocate for passage of legislation to prohibit local governments from discriminating against persons with disabilities in zoning and land use policies and activities. The 2002 legislation, known as SB 520, also requires local governments to conduct periodic assessments of housing needs; to remove

constraints in zoning and land use ordinances to housing; and to provide reasonable accommodation to housing developers, providers, and consumers.

In addition to her many other activities, Warnecke-Merck has been a major catalyst, advocate, and activist in a diverse coalition of groups and individuals known as the Housing Advocacy Group (HAG). This group works to encourage housing development for lower-income households and persons with special needs. In addition to those avenues, HAG has successfully filed lawsuits against local governments that fail to meet their affordable housing obligations. The results have been significant: Santa Rosa opened a new 40-bed shelter, with plans for an additional 40 beds to open next year, and the County also opened a 40-bed shelter. Warnecke-Merck understands that getting public officials to do the right thing sometimes requires more than just being “nice” to them. If necessary, she is prepared to be not so nice. For someone as nice as she, that takes courage. ●

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Deborah Weintraub: Engineering Los Angeles



Deborah Weintraub

It has been 30 years since I graduated from Princeton University with a major in architecture, and 27 years since I received my masters degree in architecture from U.C. Berkeley. What distinguishes my career, and I believe the careers of many in architecture, is that I have been learning and growing the entire time. What more could one ask from a life’s work?

To many, my career path has been non-traditional, though, from my personal perspective, it has been quite logical. As I look back on the opportunities I have had, my focus has consistently remained on the power of design to transform, uplift, and create positive change.

My architectural education at Berkeley and Princeton taught me that solutions to large problems are within my grasp, and that creativity needs to be nurtured and fed.

My early professional experiences were quite traditional, as I apprenticed in various architectural offices, working my way up the ladder in terms of professional responsibilities, and pursued licensing. I worked on large scale restoration and preservation projects, large scale master planning, multi-family housing, single family housing, and new office and commercial projects. I then practiced in small partnerships and as a solo practitioner, doing mostly residential and small commercial work.

With the birth of my first child, I decided I wanted the companionship of a larger office and the potential to interact more regularly with professional peers. Unfortunately, my timing corresponded with a downturn in the economy, and half of the registered architects in California were unemployed. As an architect, though, I had been taught how to make something out of nothing, out of a few pieces of flimsy, so I grabbed an opportunity to work for the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs in the Consulate in Los Angeles, promoting the work of sustainable design firms from Canada in the western U.S. The Canadian professionals I worked with during this period gave me a graduate-level education in the principles of sustainable design, long before LEED was even a concept in anyone's mind. Their passion for the science of building and the marriage of this science with beautiful and site-specific design was inspiring. Again, I was learning.

My leadership of an AIA sponsored sustainable design charette for the City of Santa Monica, with a focus on their government civic center, led to my next professional relationship, working with the Design and Engineering Services group at Southern California Edison, an internationally trained group of mostly engineers who work on the cutting edge of technically high-performing buildings. I was an architect working for an investor-owned electric utility, doing demonstration energy efficiency and sustainability projects for Edison customers. The experience was broadening and fascinating, and it gave me a front row seat at the energy deregulation process in California. My projects at Edison included one of the earliest sustainably designed new schools in California—a prototype for the very successful CHPS (Collaborative for High Performance Schools) program—energy-efficient production homes, a sustainable, relocatable classroom building, and an involvement in the state policy discussion on energy and green technologies.

The position opened up at the City of Los Angeles for the City Architect five years ago. My varied background was an asset. I had experience in traditional architectural practice, I had worked in large bureaucracies, I understood systems thinking for the optimization of buildings, and I had worked in engineering-run organizations. My responsibilities

as the City Architect included overseeing the in-house architectural, landscape, and engineering staff designing and managing building projects, now an office of 70 people, and working with the consulting community to design and build City projects. I was also the City's in-house advocate for the power of design, demanding the best quality from the investment of public dollars.

I was recently promoted and now am a Deputy City Engineer in the Bureau of Engineering (the first architect and the first woman to hold the position). I oversee the Architectural Division (my former office), as well as the Construction Management Division, the Structural Engineering Division, the Mechanical and Electrical Group, the Geotechnical Engineering Division, the Environmental Group, the Real Estate Division, our Design Standards and Investigation Group, and our Survey Division. These groups are the core of the Bureau's engineering, landscape, and architectural staff, providing technical and design support for a wide range of City projects.

The thread that holds together my career path is that I have had a passion for being at the center of vibrant debates that alter our environment and that provide opportunities for architects, landscape architects, and engineers to transform the built world. I wanted to be at the front end of the discussions and to bring to the table an architectural perspective. My most exciting current project is the City's effort to craft a Master Plan for the Revitalization of the Los Angeles River, but I am equally excited by my recent success at holding the first design competition (by invitation) for a City project, a new neighborhood City Hall. I am also proud of the architectural input on a large retaining wall that is part of a major street project in Los Angeles, as well as for my work on small additions and new facilities for City parks. I was also able to lead the City's effort to adopt LEED for City projects, with extensive support by our City Council. And my abilities and skills grow daily.

I suppose one could say I have had a non-traditional career path, or one could say I took the strengths of an architectural education and applied them liberally to the opportunities that came my way. I do believe that architecture training is a formidable background for leadership of complex tasks, and that our country would be better if more architects ventured into non-traditional work roles.

My identity as an architect had never wavered; it defines my world view. ●

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Representatively Unique:

Kurt Lavenson, AIA



arcCA sat down with Oakland architect Kurt Lavenson, AIA, to learn about his path from UC Berkeley architecture student to design-build general contractor to licensed architect and public advocate. Unlike many of the individuals profiled in this issue of arcCA, Lavenson's career has always revolved around the design of buildings, but like many architects it has involved departures of various sorts. We asked Lavenson to describe his career—unique and at the same time representative of the diverse ways in which architects engage the world—in his own words.

UC BERKELEY

When I first arrived at Berkeley, I was close with Joe Esherick, because we were both from a Pennsylvania Quaker background. His uncle Wharton, a sculptor, lived up the road from our house near Philadelphia, in the art studio that he built with Lou Kahn. I was drawn to Joe's calmness, and I felt taken under his wing. That was reassuring and helpful, because I was out of my depth, having moved across the country for college and being entirely freaked out by the brutality of Wurster Hall, to the point of tears. I could not believe I had relocated to the other side of the country for this. The Wurster shock turned out to be okay, though. It was like jumping into a cold pool. It shocked me and opened my eyes.

Another big influence for me was Stanley Saitowitz, who was a new faculty member then and an outsider. He had us reading Italo Calvino stories and drawing cities from them. I was energized by the poetic crossover. I was engaged by writing and drawing from the imagery, seeking architecture in an almost dreamlike way. I remained interested in architecture and have pursued it until now, but my digressions have been just as important, if not more so. My path to being an architect was more of a spiral than a straight line.

A year or so into my degree, I started studying under William Garnett. He was already in his 70s, I guess, and

was rather famous as a pioneer of aerial landscape photography. He was one of the last vestiges of the Visual Studies Group, which were leftovers from the artsy '60s College of Environmental Design. Garnett was inspiring for me, because to him photography was all about perspective and point of view and communication of the big idea, which brought together architecture, drawing, and observation. I was learning the architecture of light, what Corbusier called "the masterful play of forms in light." The experience with Garnett was formative, because he was old-school, a rigid instructor. He supported you in your work, but he demanded commitment and excellence. He didn't go for any flaky, "I'm a photographer, here's a picture of my foot" stuff. Abstraction and artistry were fine, but casual folly was not. Ultimately, his lessons sunk in, and I won the Eisner Prize in photography the year that I graduated.

I learned as much about architecture from Garnett's training me to make beautiful photographs as I did from my design studios. The two fields share a focus on frames of reference. What is your experience of the space and the light? What is the message the designer conveys by composing the experience and the point of view? Photography is narrative and spatial. It is also very much about the hands-on craft of making the image. Interestingly, it is often the primary

medium by which many works of architecture are known and judged. The photograph of a building is the experience in many circumstances. I have always enjoyed that irony, in which the craft of the photographer in a moment can supersede the craft of the architect over many years.

GENERAL CONTRACTING

During the semester breaks, I started to work with a carpenter/contractor, to earn money for school. I became invigorated by this other side of architecture—the hands-on approach, where we essentially sculpted the space as we went. I worked for an architect during school, as well, but by the time I received my degree, I did not want to work in an office. I was addicted to the variety and satisfaction of design-build. I went back into construction, got a general contractor's license, and spent around fifteen years designing and remodeling houses. A few others of us from Wurster Hall did the same. Cass Smith and I met this way and ended up doing some great projects together. Brennan O'Brien and Kelly Keyes helped me build out a few of my larger jobs. It was intoxicating. At twenty-five years old, we had clients, jobs, budgets, and a lot of control. We were winging it and learning a lot along the way. That was also when I started to get my projects published. I was hooked on the independence and recognition, which contrasted with what I had experienced in offices.

I've noticed—this is an oversimplification, of course—that many people have taken an almost servile path through architecture, going to big offices and doing small things over and over and over. And they've gotten a little trapped inside the big firm. I understand that is essential to mastering the profession, but I regret seeing some people lose their spirit in the process. Now, there are parts of me that regret not going to a big firm myself, because maybe I could be working on schools, libraries, and tall buildings, to make a much bigger impact on the environment. It's a trade-off that I have to accept. My path has limited me to the residential scale for now, but I think that, through my writing and my community volunteering, I am finding my way to the urban scale, the community scale.

ARCHITECTURE LICENSURE

Near the end of the '90s, I burned out on contracting. It had stopped being about craft and love and had become an exercise in putting out fires. I was tired of having employees, and I struggled with a bit of a juvenile attitude in the construction industry. So I remodeled my career. "Remodeling" is a great metaphor for what we do. It's all remodeling, at different scales. After I got married, I took two years off work, remodel-

The Montclarion

The newspaper with the hillside slant

Friday, November 26, 2004

Montclarion.com • Newtown

Sports O'Dowd girls win NCS cross country title **[C1]**

Arts Alexander mystique endures for centuries **[C16]**

Stairs project receives award

A group repairs four sets of stairs that link together separate parts of the hillside community

By Tricia Caspers
The Oakland Heritage Alliance has presented its Partners in Preservation Award for enhancing Oakland to the Oakland Home Association, former City Councilman Dick Speers, City

Councilmembers Juan Quan and Oakland's Public Works Agency for the rebuilding and repair of four sets of stairs that link together separate parts of the hillside community

Kurt Lavenson, a member of the Oaklanders group, says the award highlights the community spirit that, after three years of activism, ensured that the project created the final line.

"We also wanted to acknowledge Public Works for overcoming bureaucratic inertia," Lavenson said. "There are so many reasons that projects like this die."

Lavenson and Virginia Lind discussed with Oakland officials about repairing the displaced stairs, which connect Leimert Boulevard and Bridgeway Drive, Bridgeway Drive and Arden Way, Leimert Boulevard and Oakland Drive, and Oakview Drive and Hoover Avenue.

Lavenson said Mike Heary, engineering division manager of the Public Works Agency, also

deserved credit for the project's successful completion.

Neary agreed to suggestions "that didn't cost a lot more and made the project special," Lavenson said.

The 400 steps re-opened in July after 18 months and \$300,000 worth of work, according to Joanne Elderly of the city's Public Works Department.



OAKMORE RESIDENTS Joan and Howard Proulx lived in the area since 1970. By the ribbon-cutting ceremony July 14.

Oakmore Stairs in *The Montclarion*

eled my house, and studied for the architecture exams.

I took the last paper-and-pencil ARE over in San Francisco in '96, right before they switched to computers. I sat for the whole battery of tests in one shot. Hundreds of us were lined up for days, at tables inside one of the piers at Fort Mason. We had to bring our own drafting equipment, including the board, plus food and water. A friend joked that it was like the Donner Party expedition—right down to the low survival rate. Most of my peers had gotten their licenses five or ten years before that, but I had been on my spiraling course as a designer-builder. I came back to the professional fold and got the architecture license. Contracting is technically about manufacturing products, while architecture is defined as providing professional services. It took me many years to appreciate the difference, and now I value my architecture training more than ever.

I work from my house. I took over a couple of rooms upstairs, where I look out over the Bay and see the Golden Gate Bridge every day. That warms my heart, because I'm still this guy from Pennsylvania who thinks the Golden Gate Bridge is really exciting. Working from home has also afforded me time to write. When I write, I feel like I can affect a much larger number of people, compared to my architecture practice, where I'm limited to a few residential clients. Writing is a way to leverage my point of view, personal experience, and design training. What already exists? What could be? How are they linked? How can I express this in a way that will connect with other people and their emotions? I'm interested in narrative and the way it links people together.

Architects are alchemists who make something out of nothing. As designers, we're well-trained to evaluate and visualize a situation—any situation. So why does our profession suffer so often with a sense of powerlessness? Does it begin with a culture of being beaten down in critiques? We struggle with not being compensated well enough or respect-

ed highly enough, compared to lawyers and accountants and other professionals with similar training and liability. Yet, ironically, there is a perception in the public that we are somewhat magical characters who know how to create and draw and radically transform the environment. We often don't see how heroic we are and how much power we actually have.

PRO BONO COMMUNITY WORK

Years ago, my wife and I moved out to the suburbs, so my stepson could go to a better school. I'm still intrigued by how rootless and isolated we were out there. We were there seven years and essentially did not put down roots. It's as if there were no nutrients for us in the social soil. We moved back to the Bay Area, to the metropolis, and became energized again. We started running into people we knew from years before. We realized that this was fertile ground for community activities and relationships. Though my suburban clients and friends might disagree, I think the complexity here also makes for better design. The demands and competition usually lead to better buildings, better restaurants, and a richer street life. I think it has to do with energy being focused publicly outward instead of privately inward.

While trying to figure out how to use my design ideas and my reawakened excitement about the city, I became interested in my new environment and started talking to neighbors. Soon I found myself on the local homeowners' association, and I got involved in some local public works projects. They were trying to get the neighborhood public stairs restored. I learned that our neighborhood—Oakmore Highlands—was a very progressive development from the 1920s. Walter Leimert, the developer, had the foresight to buy 150 acres of “undesirable” land that was isolated from the main boulevard by Sausal Creek. He hired George Posey, who had also designed the Tube into Alameda, to create a grand bridge over the creek. Next, he negotiated for a spur of the Key System Railway to cross his new “Leimert Bridge” into his subdivision. At this point, his land was no longer remote. He had transformed the access *and* the perception, which boosted the land value dramatically. Then he hired some of the best architects in Oakland, like Miller and Warnecke, who designed the house that we're sitting in, to do model homes to get people excited about the subdivision. Leimert understood branding and the value of design.

The more I learned about the neighborhood and about Leimert, the more interested I became in adding my efforts to the Oakmore tradition. I dedicated a lot of *pro bono* hours to being on that board and helping them work with the Public Works Agency to rebuild four staircases in the hills.

These were old-time public access stairs like you find connecting the streets in Europe and a few older U.S. cities. They had fallen into disrepair, and the homeowners association had been pushing for their renewal for several years. By politely refusing to take “no” for an answer, they finally won the City's cooperation and funding.

At a certain point, the association was not able to communicate effectively with the Public Works Agency. That's where my expertise was particularly valuable. I became the point man. I understood the issues, and I could work with the Public Works people to resolve construction problems on the fly. I also found that I could deal with irate neighbors and draw them into the process. Additionally, I worked with others in the association to stay in touch with the press and with our City member person, to garner recognition for the project. When the stairs were completed in the summer of 2004, I submitted the project to the Oakland Heritage Alliance, for recognition of the private-public cooperation that this venture had achieved. It won a “Partners in Preservation” award in their annual competition. I also submitted it to our local East Bay AIA chapter.

Acknowledgment is a primal motivator. It is important to us as individuals and to organizations. I think it's important for architects to practice seeking publicity for good works and to be visible in the community. Building is a political act, and design is a creative offering. Both things benefit from healthy recognition. When architects participate publicly, we gain more power to make a positive impact on the environment. Press coverage is a very effective design and planning tool.

REFLECTION

Last year, I had the pleasure of dining at the French Laundry with some wonderful colleagues from the AIA East Bay chapter. We ran the gamut of age and experience, and we were sharing practice stories. A woman who was preparing for the licensure exams and evaluating her future career choices asked me how long I had been “on my own.” My answer was, “The whole time.” I was reminded at that moment that the risks and responsibilities of self employment have been outweighed by the opportunities and by gratitude for the freedom to define my own career. I also realized that when I felt lonely in private practice, my *pro bono* involvement had connected me back into the community. ●

Kurt Lavenson can be reached through his website, www.lavensondesign.com.

Some Contract Language

Ava Abramowitz, Esq., Hon. AIA.

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What follows is honest-to-goodness owner-drafted contract language Each analysis will follow the same path: architect's view, owner's view, and a cure Notice that I said "a" cure, not "the" cure. There are lots of ways to mend bad contract language. After all, where there's a word, there's a way. Regardless of which route the owner and you choose, if word-smithing is the solution, I'd try to use as much of the owner's own language as I can. In that way, I signal to the client that I want to meet them on their playing field; the client doesn't have to come over to mine. But there are other solutions besides words, and we will consider them also.

* * * * *

CERTIFICATION

The Architect certifies that the construction of the Project to the date of this Certificate is being diligently prosecuted and the quality and construction of the Project are, in all material respects, in accordance with the approved Drawings and Specifications.

Before we analyze this paragraph, let's talk about certifications and their close kin—guarantees and warranties. Each in some way asks you to

promise that something is true and accurate and worthy of the other's reliance and belief. Can you certify, guarantee, or otherwise warrant that you are an architect? Yes, if in fact you are an architect. Otherwise, you cannot. You may want to. You may wish you could. You may feel guilty that you can't, but, unless you can swear under oath that something is true without fear of being prosecuted for perjury, you cannot certify that same thing as true.

Is refusing to certify something unfair to the owner? *Au contraire*. You want your clients to trust you and rely on you Earning that trust is dependent, in part, on your being candid with your clients. To agree to something that is not true, or to something where you have no basis to know whether it is true or not, actively conveys misinformation to your client. You owe your client more than that. So, let's not be afraid of the words "certify" or "guarantee" or "warrant." Let's instead look at the scope of what you are being asked to certify and check to see if you know it to be presently true and accurate. If it is, sign away.

Given what you just read, can you sign off on the certification above? No, because here the owner is asking you to take responsibility for construction you did not perform, built by someone, the contractor, over whom you had no power. Further, unless you were in every square foot of the site 24/7, you wouldn't know enough or have seen enough to attest to quality and construction in "all material respects." Even if you wanted to sign this certificate, under those facts and circumstances you would have no basis to do so. To sign it is to give your client an empty promise.

Why then would owners ask you for this language? They want someone, anyone, you, to guarantee the contractor did the job and did it well. Think about it. You can't blame them. Construction is that complex. Moreover, 10 to 1 if it's a private project, and 100 to 1 if it's a public project, the contractor was hired competitively and primarily, if not only, on price. I, too, would want someone to guarantee that a contractor selected on that basis did right by me. So would you. Now, given this reality and the depth of the owner need for construction certainty, how can you cure this paragraph?

Again, you have choices, depending on (1) the facts and circumstances facing you, (2) your

capabilities, and (3) the responsibilities and powers you and the owner can agree on. At the macro level, the choices are these:

- You can help the owner mitigate the problem that created the owner's need in the first place.
- You can expand your services to meet the owner's need.
- You can limit the scope of your services to meet the interests behind the owner's request.
- You can wordsmith.

Let's start from the last option, if only because that's where most architects are taught to start—and stop.

Wordsmithing. Wordsmithing is a most powerful tool used by us lawyers. To cure certifications, you can invoke legal weasel words, what I affectionately call "blah-blah." You know the words: "To the best of the architect's knowledge, information, and belief," or "In the architect's professional judgment." And then you insert whatever the owner wants you to certify. Usually, that works. Sometimes you have to do more to make the certification true. Here you might say, "Based on visual observations made during biweekly visits by the Architect, the Architect concluded that, in his professional judgment, the construction seems to have been diligently . . ." But wouldn't you rather help the owner manage the dilemma that caused the owner to draft the language in the first place? It's that skill that makes an architect valuable and valued. Let's see how that approach works using this certification language as a guinea pig.

Mitigate the owner's problem. Owners who want you to ensure contractor compliance with your CDs may be signaling they need someone to monitor their contractor. Perhaps they fear they will not choose their contractor well and, hence, look to you to make up their decision vacuum. Instead of arguing over words, why don't you help them out so they don't have the need in the first place? Talk to them about contractor selection and how it can make or break a project. Introduce them to the Qualification Based Selection (QBS)-like templates of both the AIA and the AGC (the AIA's can be found in the twelfth edition of the *Handbook*, page 747). Ask if they want a list of three to five contractors capable of doing their

job. Encourage owners to refine the template and then sit with them as they interview each of the contractors, asking the questions owners need answered. Encourage them also to build partnering into the project and to actively participate in the partnering effort. Make the need for a 24-hour-a-day monitor disappear. This reframing of the issue away from what you cannot do toward what you can do to meet the owners' interests may be just the solution the owners really want.

Expand your services. Remember *quid pro quo*? If your owner wants you to certify contractor compliance, step up to bat and agree if the owner also agrees to hire you as the design-builder and pays you accordingly for the increased risks and responsibilities. Absent that agreement, you can still help out the owner through expanded services, again if the owner agrees to retain you to provide agency construction management services along the lines of CM141. Or, if you're not prepared to provide those services, ask the owner to retain you to provide B352 Project Representative services. In other words, get yourself on the site and help your owner out. If the owner is serious, these negotiations should be easy. If not, there is no better way to determine the real seriousness of an owner's demands than to offer to meet them for a fee.

Limit your scope. If the owner doesn't want to expand your services, yet still wants you to certify something, you can limit the scope of the certification to something you can indeed certify. An example: A Class A New York-based, nationwide law firm once asked the late Robert Calhoun Smith, FAIA, to certify a plethora of matters from zoning law compliance to contractor compliance, and more. Many of these certifications effectively required him to practice law without a license. Some even asked him to foresee the results of others' conduct that would not occur until far into the future. I suggested he ask the owner's lawyer, preferably in front of the owner, whom he knew well, whether he would allow his own architect clients to sign the certification he drafted. Everyone smiled, and they worked out a scope that Bob could certify. At the end of the project, the owner gave Bob a plaque that read, "I, Robert Calhoun Smith, FAIA, hereby certify that I am an architect." Call it what you will—your turn, my turn, or what's good for the

goose is good for the gander—the negotiation tool of mutual reciprocity is yet another way of testing owner need and intention.

Thinking this way may force you into a new and very different mindset. That's okay. Once you get used to it, I'm betting you find it a most comfortable one. It keeps you focused on your client and on project success, and isn't that why you decided to become an architect in the first place?

* * * * *

INDEMNIFICATION OF THE OWNER

The Architect-Engineer shall indemnify, hold harmless, and defend the Owner, its employees, agents, servants, and representatives from and against any and all losses, damages, expenses, claims, suits, and demands of whatever nature resulting from damages or injuries, including death, to any property or persons caused by or arising from, in whole or in part, errors, omissions or negligent acts of the Architect-Engineer or its employees, agents, servants, or representatives under this contract.

This is an indemnification clause. You know that because the owner has kindly labeled it as such. What the owner is asking you to do is to indemnify him or her—that is, to serve as his or her personal bank and insurance company and absorb some loss, real or imagined, suffered by the owner.

It is critical to read these clauses *out loud*. They can be very convoluted, and the devil is in the details. Here's a guide: To know whether you will agree to indemnify the owner, you have to read the scope of the promise and decide whether you personally (or with the help of your insurance company) want to take on the risk. If the exposure is one you are capable of managing, and if the owner gives you all the responsibility and the power you need to manage the exposure, you probably will agree to take the indemnification risk on. For example, would you agree to indemnify the owner against injuries caused by your negligence to the same extent as you were proportionately negligent? Sure you would. Why not? As we learned in Chapter 3, being responsible for your own negligence is American common law. But would you agree to indemnify the owner against the contractor's negligence? Of course not, because you have no responsibility for the contractor's conduct and no power to control it. Would you agree to indemnify the owner against the acts of the owner's

employees? No, and for the same reason—no capability, no responsibility, and no power to control.

With that said, let's look more closely at the scope of this indemnification not to cure it word by word—you can't—but to understand the clause in all its glory. Putting the issues in subsets (with the most salient concepts in bold), this is what the owner wants you to undertake—three activities:

- to indemnify—to agree to the transfer of the owner's risk from them to you and, further, to reimburse the owner for their losses after those losses have been determined in negotiation, mediation, arbitration, or litigation;
- to hold harmless—to agree to protect the owner even from suits by third parties, such as contractors and building users; and
- to defend—to agree to pay all the owner's defense costs should anyone sue them, even if this puts you and the owner into a conflict of interest, and even if you have done nothing to cause the suit.

Moreover, the owner wants you to do these three things to protect five groups of people: (1) the owner, (2) its employees, whoever they are, (3) its agents, whoever and whatever they are, (4) its servants, and I have no idea what in this day and age this group includes, and (5) its representatives, clearly a distinct group of people who are also not employees, agents, or servants. And the owner wants you to protect all of these people regardless of whether or not they are actively involved in the project and regardless of whether you or anyone under your direct control have any dealings with them.

As if this were not broad enough, the owner wants you to shield these groups of people (and here is the scope of the indemnification parsed out in all its glory so that you can assess the gravity of what is being asked of you) *from and against: any and all—losses, damages, expenses, claims, suits, and demands—of whatever nature—resulting from damages or injuries, including death—to any property or persons.* This language, coupled with that of above, has you shielding the owner and the gang of others from whatever comes the owner's way (and paying for all of the group's defense costs in the process so there is no reason for any of them to settle any time quickly), including protecting them against mere allegations,

You are only insured
for your negligence and
nobody else's,
and, unless you are very rich,
you probably
don't have the money
to live up to
the crisscrossed promise
exacted by the owner.

which is precisely what undecided (or unsettled) claims and suits, and mere demands, are.

Now, is this reasonable, given the complexity of design and construction? Let's look at the triggering language. What must you do, if anything, to cause this language to be activated? Again, look at the scope. The loss or mere allegation must have been *caused by or arising from—in whole or in part—errors, omissions, or negligent acts—of the Architect-Engineer or its employees, agents, servants, or representatives—under this contract.* Translating this into English, you need not have been negligent for your purse to become the owner's. Why? Because a mere or a major non-negligent error or omission triggers the indemnity. Had negligent been a prerequisite of error, omission, or act, this clause arguably would have been insurable. Transposing the negligence to limit it to acts made it not. Moreover, the seeming

badness need not be a result of your negligence. It can merely “arise” from it, so that, if the owner can make any argument that takes you in, you get taken. One percent negligent, non-negligent, or 100 percent negligent, with this language, you bought the store.

Owners are not bad people. Why then, do they ask for this language? Some say it is because of the AIA’s traditional and continuing refusal to include a standard of care in the B 141 contract on the grounds that common law negates the need. The owner is merely filling the vacuum. Others say owners are asking for indemnification clauses in response to architects’ requesting that owners limit their (the architects’) liability to them (the owners). Still others point to social causes: People these days don’t like taking responsibility for their actions. They want a risk-free life, and, if the Good Lord won’t give it to them, they want the next best thing to protect them. On the construction site that means they want you and your insurance policy, assuming you have one, to protect them from all badness. And some architectural thinkers posit that owners pay so much to put the building up that they need someone else’s kitty to cover unanticipatable events. Whatever. These reasons may all be true. The problem with them and the clauses they generate, though, is that *wrongly conceived indemnification clauses hurt the project*.

Shocked you, didn’t I? You expected me to write that crisscrossed indemnification clauses are uninsurable and, thus, empty promises to boot. Well, that’s true. You are only insured for your negligence and nobody else’s, and, unless you are very rich, you probably don’t have the money to live up to the crisscrossed promise exacted by the owner. But remember, we are assertive practitioners. We don’t think from the perspective of insurance. We think what’s best for our clients’ projects, because if we achieve project success, the owner and we will be taken care of in the process.

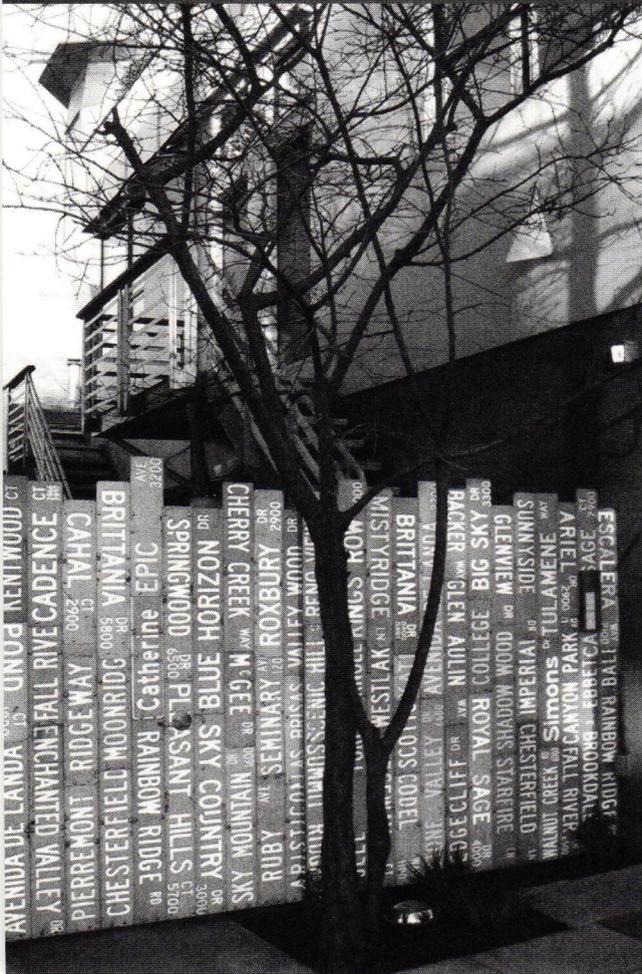
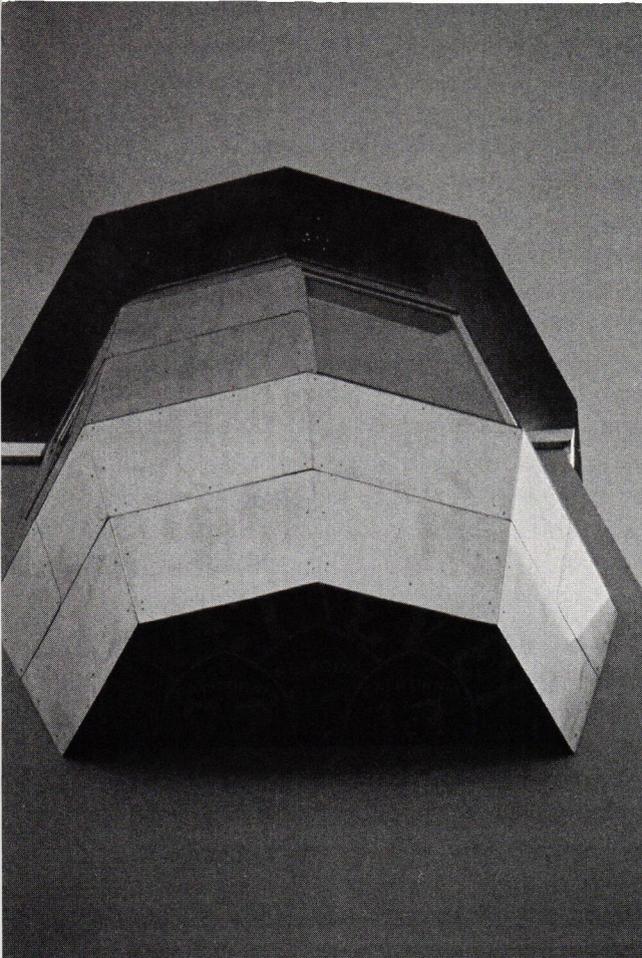
In design and construction, to achieve success, all parties must be working on all cylinders all the time. When each person on the construction site puts forth full time and attention to each and everything he or she is doing, the chance of something going wrong plummets. Crisscrossed indemnification clauses, however, induce sloppy thinking and give people permission to hedge. “Oh, why question this? The architect (or the owner or the contractor or

whoever) is indemnifying me. If I’m wrong, he or she will be the one to pay. Not me.” Sure, some insurance company may kick in, but life is short; who needs the claim in the first place?

How do you cure the clause? Many insurance companies say with language as broad and as egregious as this, just walk away if the owner won’t agree to less. But why? If you and your client have built a relationship based on common ground and, thus, mutual reciprocity, you probably won’t have to. An example: When one large-city airport client asked its architect to agree to absorb its risk by acquiescing to an indemnification clause much like this, the architect merely said the truth: “The best way to forestall claims is to require everyone to be responsible for their negligence to the extent they are negligent. That way everyone is incentivized to act reasonably and prudently. We don’t ask you to limit our liability for our negligence. We stand behind our conduct. We just are asking you to do the same.” This mutuality of promises prevailed.

There’s the key. Mutuality. So next time you face language like this, instead of walking away from a commission or losing goodwill over a word-smithing session, explore with your client the insertion of mirrored indemnification clauses where you each protect the other from each other’s negligence to the extent either of you is negligent. If your client won’t buy that, you probably have other, bigger problems than an indemnification clause. Explore them, and then decide for yourself: Is this a client for you? ©

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Under the Radar

The Dwight Way

Berkeley

Leger Wanaselja Architecture

www.lwarc.com

The Dwight Way is one of the most thoroughly “green,” small, mixed-use development projects in the Bay Area. Built originally as a corner grocery store with apartments above and a large side yard, the property had fallen into neglect, and the corner had become one of the noisiest and busiest in the city. By restoring the existing building and adding four small, two-bedroom units and a commercial space in an environmentally sensitive way, the project transforms this site into a tranquil, green showcase.

Leger Wanaselja Architecture, who were also the builders and the developers, set ambitious goals: to re-invigorate a busy but dreary urban corner; to create a landmark development from a non-descript old building on an underdeveloped big lot; to design and build as ecologically as possible; and to use ecological features as an integral part of a well-designed, highly crafted, and beautiful aesthetic.

Some of the most ecological features are also the most striking architectural features. Throughout, the designers transformed discarded, underutilized and banal materials into striking architectural elements:

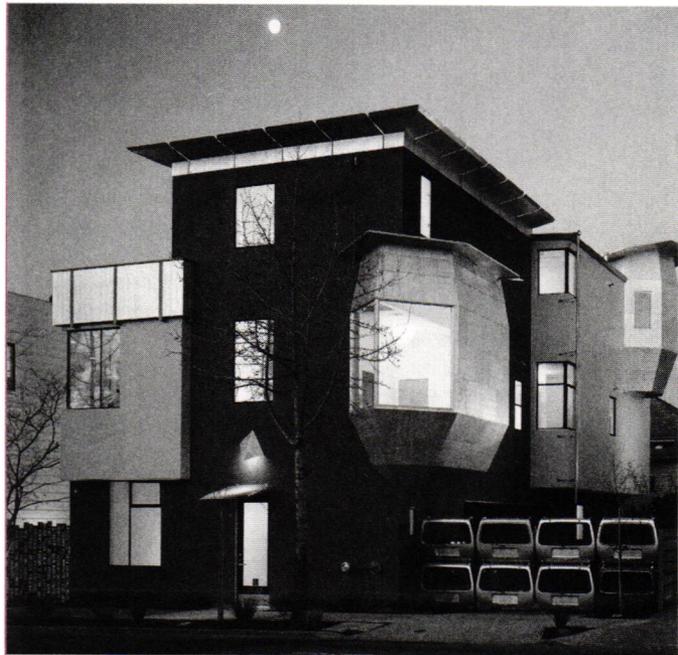
- Car parts enliven the buildings with Mazda hatchback railings, Porsche hatchback awnings, a gate made from Volvo doors, car headlight landscape lighting, and bathroom shelves made from car windows.
- Discarded CalTrans street signs were sanded and deployed as aluminum siding.
- Lath hidden behind plaster for almost a century was reused as a rich interior siding.
- Old growth Douglas fir and redwood were salvaged from the job and reused as window sills, walls, floor patches, and custom doors, and were finished with natural oils to highlight their beauty. Wood counters were hand crafted from salvaged, storm-downed trees.
- Salvaged Douglas fir beams were sculpted into richly shaped columns.
- Units are filled with natural light; high ceilings, oversized windows, and skylights dramatically reduce the need for artificial light.
- Unique glass terrazzo kitchen counters are made with 100% recycled glass.
- Stained concrete creates stylish and colorful but durable floors, eliminating the need for additional floor coverings.

Many other ecological features are less visible but contribute to the buildings' energy efficiency, low toxicity, low embodied energy, and lack of virgin materials:

To conserve energy, the architects used 50% fly ash (a waste product of coal burning) in all the concrete; fitted the roof with photovoltaic solar panels; replaced existing single-pane windows with double-pane, argon, low-e windows; used energy efficient and Energy Star appliances throughout; and built all new walls with FSC certified, sustainably harvested, 2x6 framing lumber to create extra-thick insulated walls.

To eliminate the use of toxic materials, they specified low- or no-VOC paints and finished woodwork with natural oils; installed formaldehyde-free kitchen and bathroom cabinet boxes and 100% wool carpet; and insulated all walls and ceiling with cellulose insulation made from recycled newspapers. Most interior walls are plastered, largely eliminating the need for paint, caulk, and trim.

To reduce the need for virgin building materials, nearly all framing lumber, flooring, trim,



doors and door jambs from the existing building were reused, and all construction waste was sorted at the jobsite. Anything usable was sold or donated for salvage, clean wood scraps (without paint, adhesives, or treatments) were composted, and all metal was recycled. A magnet was even run through all waste to collect discarded nails, screws, etc.

Outdoors, permeable decomposed granite paving at the parking area and a series of drywells replenish groundwater, and plantings are native and drought resistant species.

The new building is sited to take maximum advantage of the sun and to create a garden refuge. The mews, created by holding the new building eleven feet away from the existing structure, serves as the entry to most units, as well as bike parking and mail center. A sunny garden at the end creates an inviting refuge from the busy street. The space between the buildings allows winter sun to penetrate second floor living spaces. Placing the new rear unit's deck at the second instead of the third floor gives the mews more sunlight and the middle unit distant views. South windows are placed high on the wall to bring sunlight deep into the building for both heating and lighting. Big skylights bring more sun into the building. The new decks are located on the south side of the building where the sun heats the slate floors, making them comfortable even on a winter day. ●

Credits

arcCA welcomes submissions for Under the Radar. To be eligible, a project or its architect must be located in California; the project must not have been published nationally or internationally (local publication is OK); and construction must have been completed within the last twelve months or, for unfinished projects, must be 60%-70% complete. Architects need not be AIA members. Submissions from widely published firms (as determined by the arcCA Editorial Board) may not be accepted. Please send your submissions to the editor by email at tim@culvahouse.com, attaching three to five JPG images with a combined file size of no greater than 1.5MB. Describe the project in fewer than 200 words in the body of the email, providing a brief caption for each image, keyed to the image's file name. (If you don't have the capability to submit by email, you may send the equivalent information by regular mail to: Tim Culvahouse, AIA, Editor, arcCA, c/o AIACC, 1303 J Street, Suite 200, Sacramento, California, 95814, Re: "Under the Radar.")

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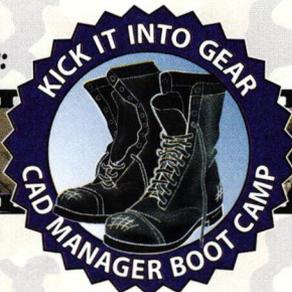
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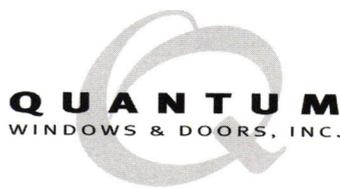
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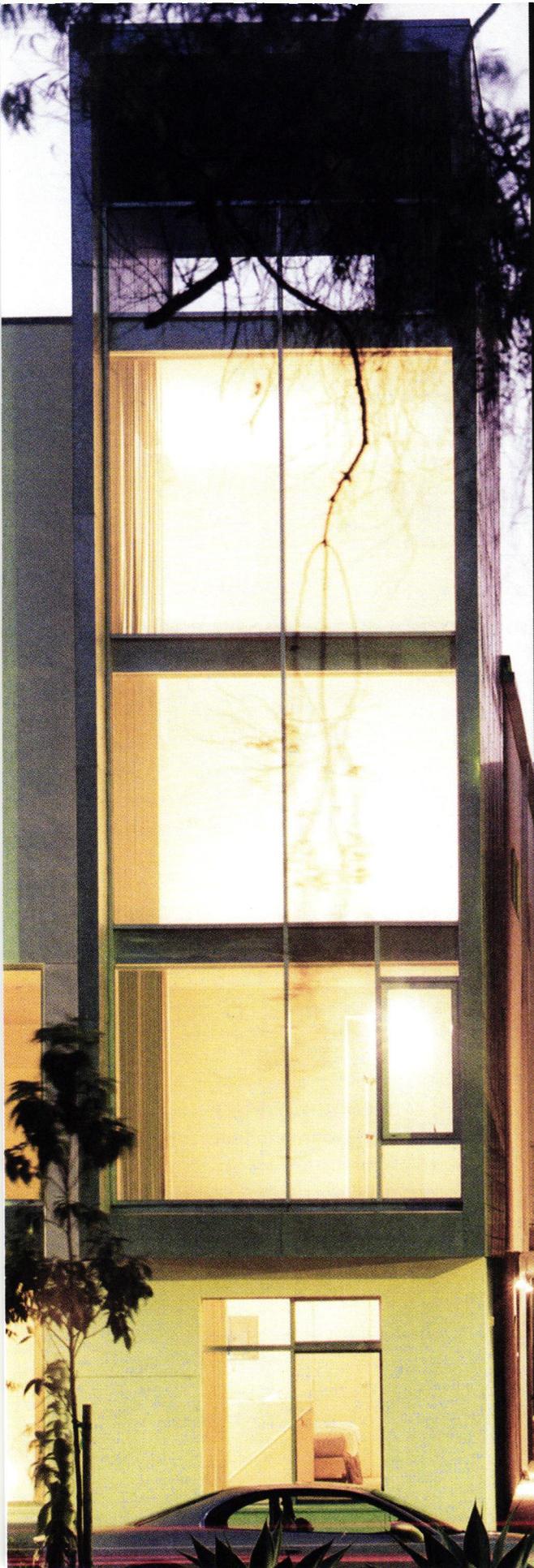
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Eichler's Edgewood Shopping Center: An Architectural and Historical Gem

Paul Adamson, AIA

Located on Embarcadero Road at Highway 101, Edgewood Shopping Center marks a gateway to Palo Alto, the Palo Alto Baylands, and Stanford University. It is also the center of a universe. This is where visionary developer Joseph Eichler built two of his early residential subdivisions in his distinctive mid-century modern style. Here he also built the Edgewood Plaza Shopping Center to serve the new homeowners. And, within the mixed-use Edgewood complex, Eichler established his business headquarters, centered amidst the burgeoning suburban culture of Palo Alto of the 1950s and '60s.

Eichler engaged the architecture firm of Jones and Emmons to design Edgewood Plaza. A. Quincy Jones was an influential designer and educator. He is recognized as a leader of California modern architecture and for many years was the Dean of Architecture at the University of Southern California (USC), a center of progressive design in the postwar years. Jones, who devoted much of his career to community planning, designed the Edgewood Plaza to fit with the nearby Eichler neighborhoods, which he also helped to plan. Jones is responsible not only for the clear and effective planning of the Center, but also for its elegant architectural form. Designed for the efficient and comfortable use of shoppers arriving by car, the Center is also pedestrian-friendly. Full height glass walls and partially covered exterior courts allow connections with the landscape and climate. Post and beam structures enable long, low slung roofs with deep overhangs that keep the overall profile unimposing while exploiting the

expressive potential of this building technology to create the illusion of soaring, seemingly weightless forms. Edgewood remains a vital example of suburban commercial architecture. Alan Hess, architecture critic for the *San Jose Mercury News*, wrote two years ago that Edgewood "is still one of the most innovative, best designed shopping centers in the state."

Palo Alto is Eichler central. Over 2,500 Eichler homes were built here, spanning almost the length of Eichler's developer career. Edgewood Plaza is unique among his accomplishments, the only commercial development designed as an integral part of a residential neighborhood, lending it added historic significance. Civic leaders across the country have recognized and exploited the value of distinctive vintage shopping centers and districts, investing in preservation and revitalization efforts that have attracted new users and re-inspired civic pride. A restoration of Edgewood Plaza would likewise add prestige to Palo Alto, preserving and promoting the City's modernist heritage. Equally important, Edgewood's restoration will improve the revenue-making potential of the center, resulting in valuable tax generation.

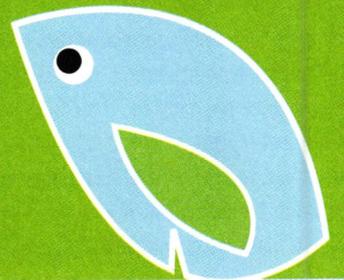
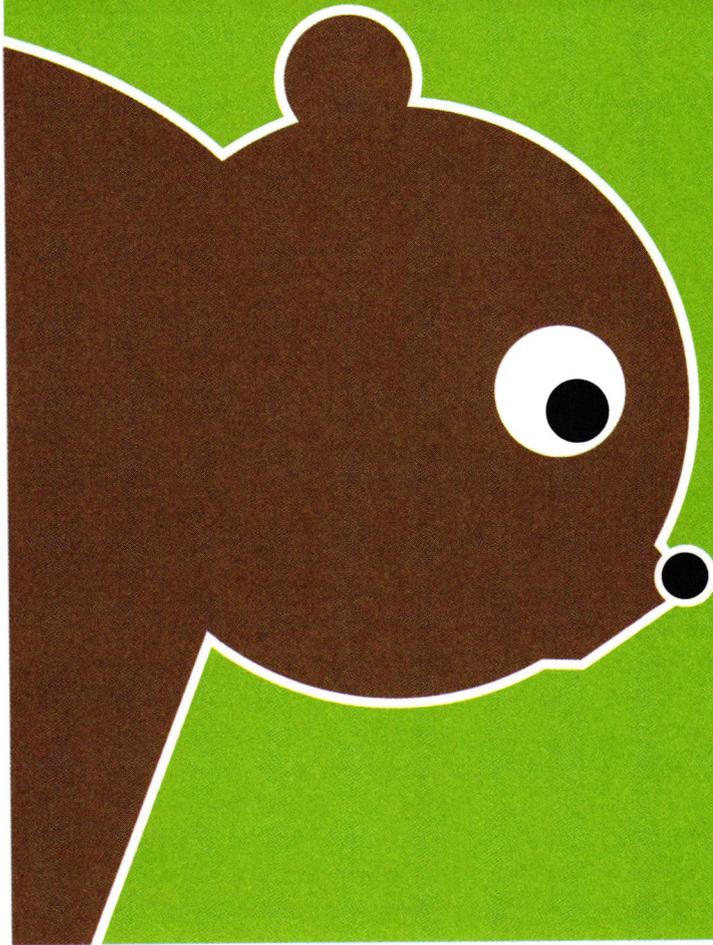
Joseph Eichler's Edgewood Plaza is an icon of Palo Alto's mid-century modern legacy. Not only an integral part of its community, this innovative complex is, as well, a precious cultural resource—a nationally significant example of enlightened and holistic suburban design. Edgewood's fate will serve as an important gauge of Palo Alto's contemporary civic values. ©

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