

June 2026

ARCHITYPE

THE DIGITAL MAGAZINE OF AIA CONNECTICUT

Elizabeth Mills Brown AWARDS

AIA '26 Recap

Design Impact of
Silence on Policy

**Business
Architecture
Awards**

*Will AI Change
Billing forever?*

**Emerging
Professionals
Awards**





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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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As we move into the summer season, this issue of *Architype* highlights the many ways architects continue to shape our communities, profession, and future. From national recognition and emerging leadership to evolving technologies and public advocacy, the stories in these pages demonstrate the breadth and impact of architecture across Connecticut and beyond.

This month, we celebrate significant achievements by our members and firms. **Centerbrook Architects & Planners has earned a National AIA Architecture Award** for its transformative renovation of the Yale Peabody Museum, a project that beautifully honors the past while creating an inspiring future.

We also recognize recipients of the **2026 Business Architecture Awards, Elizabeth Mills Brown Awards, Emerging Professionals**

Awards, and the prestigious **Tau Sigma Delta Architecture Medal awarded to John Hoffmann, FAIA**.

These honors remind us that excellence in architecture takes many forms—from design and preservation to leadership, scholarship, and service.

Leadership remains a central theme throughout this issue. At the AIA'26 in San Diego, we welcomed the newly elected members of the AIA Board of Directors, that reminds us that the strength of the profession depends on those willing to serve and lead.

Closer to home, our member updates offer insight into the projects and conversations shaping Connecticut, while our summer interns bring fresh perspectives and energy to the work of our association.

The profession itself continues to evolve rapidly. Artificial intelligence is no longer a future consideration—it is becoming a practical tool influencing how firms manage contracts, workflows, and even business models.

At the same time, we cannot lose sight of our role as advocates and citizens. The article on Citizen Architects challenges us to consider the consequences of silence in public policy discussions and reminds us that our expertise carries responsibility.

This issue also highlights the meaningful work of the Connecticut Architecture Foundation. Through CAF grants, we see how investment in education, outreach, and community engagement is helping build the next generation of design leaders and expanding public understanding of architecture's value.

As you read through this issue, I hope you find inspiration in the accomplishments of your colleagues and encouragement in the opportunities ahead. Together, we continue to advance a profession that not only designs buildings but also strengthens communities, shapes public dialogue, and creates lasting positive change.

Thank you for your continued engagement with AIA Connecticut and for all you do to elevate the value of architecture.

Best,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Gina'.

Gina Calabro, Hon. AIACT

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



AI A26 in San Diego is now behind us. It was my 27th AIA national conference ... a bit hard for me to comprehend. My past national AIA involvement led me to these annual pilgrimages of architects to a host city, but the role this year of AIA CT President was extra special. In fact, it was more gratifying than many past years for several reasons.

Annually, this conference is a source of inspiration and invigoration for me – just what I need at just the right time. Core themes this year concentrated on forward-looking practice strategies such as AI and Practice Transformation, Climate Resilience and Policy, Urban Revitalization and Adaptive Reuse, and Equity and Community Advocacy. Keynotes focused on the bridge between Food and Architecture (Padma Lakshmi), leveraging AI in our practice (Charlene Li), and global city planning and urban resiliency (Sameh Whaba). 2026 AIA Gold Medalist Shigeru Ban hosted an “Architalk” detailing his paper/timber structures and global humanitarian response projects. New AIA Chief Economist Richard Branch shared financial market outlook data and joined other discussions with AGC and ACEC economists. And finally, one of the most impressive presentations came from the founders of 2026 AIA Architecture Firm Award recipient Duvall Decker, a 20-person firm, advocating for design excellence and public value in resource-limited rural communities around Jackson, MS.

AIA27 is in Philadelphia next year. Make every effort to take advantage of its proximity!

AIA CT members at AIA26 shined as well. Besides representing AIA CT on the AIA Strategic Council, Paolo Campos spoke alongside AIA President Illya Azaroff and AIA CEO/EVP Carole Wedge about regenerative design. Aurora Perreault led a program on equitable design for diverse gender identities. Tom Haskell met with architecture foundation leaders nationwide to compare best practices, and Karen Patriquin met her SFX colleagues to advance mutual interests. Awards were bestowed. Ersa Llakmani not only participated and spoke at NAC, Women’s Leadership, and Next to Lead programs, she also received the 2026 AIA Associates Award. And speaking of honors, let us also congratulate John Neary, FAIA on his elevation into the College of Fellows this year!

I conclude this column with a brief statement on the value AIA brings to its members. It is true there have been some bumps in the AIA road the past couple of years, but it has been many years since I have seen AIA national progressing in such a positive manner – financially, structurally, and philosophically – with former, current, and future leaders who will make that happen. AIA has heard its members loud and clear that “advocating the value of the profession” is priority #1, and we will collectively ensure this happens.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "F. Michael Ayles".

F. Michael Ayles, FAIA, NCARB



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AIA'26 Annual Meeting San Diego

Priority topics included architects' use of AI, revenue sources for the institute, and a plan for restructuring AIA's governance.

By AIA Staff

AIA President Illya Azaroff, FAIA, welcomed delegates and attendees to the 2026 meeting, introduced nominees for 2027 AIA board positions, and provided an update on current membership numbers: a little over 101,000. He also announced that AIA will not be increasing its national membership dues in the coming year.

Azaroff credited AIA's strong financial position with making a landmark contribution to the chapter network possible. Chapter Sustainability Funds have been secured for the next 25 years, providing chapters with the long-term financial foundation they need to serve members and grow. Complementing this investment, \$2 million in Activation Funds will empower chapters to develop bold initiatives aligned with [AIA's Strategic Plan](#), with successful efforts scaled across the country in pace with AIA's broader organizational goals.

"We know this model works," he said of the Activation Funds, citing AIA's Women's Leadership Summit, which started as a workshop at the component level. Azaroff called it "a single local idea that grew into one of AIA's most impactful national programs."

Azaroff also highlighted the work of AIA's Government Affairs and

Public Policy team [thus far in 2026](#), citing the institute's work at the federal, state, and local levels in the areas of emergency preparedness, opposition to the proposed White House ballroom, proposed changes to the Kennedy Center, the Department of Education's RISE Rule, and climate action. He also added that AIA is in the process of updating its [Framework for Design Excellence](#) to embrace regenerative design and touted a forthcoming initiative that will allow members to work with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction to conduct disaster risk assessments across the world.

"We have to do better as we approach 2030—that is the rationale," he said regarding AIA's work on regenerative design and disaster preparedness. "We need to actively repair the earth through our work. Quite frankly, we have no other choice, and the board is walking the walk with these priorities," he said.

AIA Treasurer Report

"Our priority has been stabilization," said AIA Treasurer Lisa Kennedy, FAIA, during her update on the institute's finances, citing the pandemic, the transfer of ownership of AIA's Contract Documents, and the renovation of the [AIA Global Campus for Architecture & Design®](#) as factors influencing the organization's finances in the last five years.

Kennedy announced that the board will be actively exploring new sources of revenue to fund the organization's activities moving forward and decrease overall reliance on member dues.

In 2025, AIA revenues and expenses were both down; however, the organization exceeded its required reserves balance due to an increase in total net assets following a mortgage payoff of the AIA building, an increase in building valuation after the headquarters renovation, the AIA Contract Documents transfer of ownership, and investment gains. AIA received a clean audit again for FY2025.

In an update to attendees, EVP/CEO Carole Wedge, FAIA emphasized the outsized role that architects have on the economy, providing nearly [\\$700 billion in construction value and support](#). She announced a commitment to member communication via the release of [two new AIA podcasts](#), provided an update on the AIA Global Campus for Architecture & Design, and promised an update on AIA's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan during her Thursday mainstage session.

AIA Task Force updates

Two AIA task forces provided updates on resolutions passed at the 2024 and 2025 AIA Annual Business Meetings.



Michael Daly, AIA, who sponsored a 2025 resolution on the creation of an AI Task Force, and Niknaz Aftahi, co-chair, provided an update on the [task force's work so far this year](#), including the publication of foundational documents: an AI position statement, responsible use guidance, and an article on architects and their use of AI. A member survey was completed in May and will be released later this summer, and an AI Toolkit is currently in the process of a soft launch.

The four key areas of focus for the task force thus far have been education and knowledge sharing; research and innovation; community and engagement; and governance, policy, and ethics.

Mickey Jacob, FAIA, chair of the Governance Task

Force, shared the [task force's recommendations](#) for restructuring AIA's governance model. The changes seek to address role clarity, member service, inefficiencies, decision processes, and oversight.

A formal structural transition will take place over a period of time, Jacob said, sharing a framework of the proposed new structure, which includes the creation of a Knowledge Advisory Forum to strengthen member pathways to knowledge sharing, research, and practice enhancement.

We have to do better as we approach 2030—that is the rationale. We need to actively repair the earth through our work. Quite frankly, we have no other choice, and the board is walking the walk with these priorities



New Leaders Elected to AIA Board of Directors



Joyce Owens, FAIA
**2027 President-elect/
2028 President**

Owens is an internationally respected architect and founding principal of Architecture Joyce Owens Studio AJO, a Florida-based architecture and interiors firm established in 2007. She is widely recognized for award-winning, climate-sensitive design — particularly resilient coastal and island homes, resorts, and commercial projects.

A dedicated AIA leader at the local, state, and national levels — including AIA Florida President and Strategic Council member — she was elevated to the AIA College of Fellows in 2018.



Jonathan Matthew Taylor, AIA
2027-2028 Secretary

A seasoned AIA governance leader, Taylor brings decades of sustained service at the national, regional, and chapter levels. At the national level, he has served on the AIA Secretary's Advisory Committee, Resolutions Committee, National Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and Strategic Council — helping steward the Institute's bylaws, rules, Code of Ethics, and public policy positions.

Taylor has served on Rhode Island's board of directors, including as chapter secretary and president.



Sarah Woynicz, AIA
**2027-2029 At-large
Director**

Woynicz is an architect, author, and changemaker committed to the power of design to improve lives.

A Virginia Tech Bachelor of Architecture graduate with a minor in Leadership and Social Change, she serves as vice president and project manager at HKS. Active across AIA at the local, state, and national levels, she has chaired the AIA Young Architects Forum and served on the Strategic Planning Committee for the 2026-2030 AIA Strategic Plan.

She is also founder of Pride by Design and co-founder of Out in Architecture, advancing LGBTQIA+ equity, visibility, and representation in the profession.

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Len Baker '64, Charles B. Johnson '54, and Ed Bass '68 participate in the 2017 ribbon-cutting ceremony for Yale's new residential colleges.
Photo by Tony Fiorini.

The Quiet Benefactor of Yale

When a new class of students gathered at Yale's School of Architecture last summer, Dean Deborah Berke welcomed them with an unusual lesson. She shared a set of seven guiding principles that she keeps taped beside her computer—not her own words, but those of one of Yale's most influential and least visible benefactors, Edward P. Bass '68.

Berke told the incoming students that Bass was “an extraordinary man” whose values had shaped both his life and his relationship with Yale. The moment carried special significance. Nine months earlier, a gift led by Bass's wife, Sasha, had established one of the largest endowments in the

architecture school's history, naming Berke's position the Edward P. Bass Dean of the Yale School of Architecture.

The rules she shared were simple:

Work hard. Be nice. Have fun. Be humble. Be generous. Be grateful. Everyone deserves your respect.

In an era when major philanthropic gifts often come with naming rights and public fanfare, Edward P. Bass has taken a different path. Over the past three decades, the billionaire investor and Yale alumnus has quietly become one of the university's most influential benefactors, helping shape its academic priorities, physical landscape, and institutional future while largely remaining out of the spotlight.

Though many Yale students may not recognize his name, Bass's impact can be seen across campus—from Science Hill and the Peabody Museum to the university's newest residential colleges. Through donations estimated at more than \$300 million and decades of service in university leadership, Bass has become what many Yale administrators describe as one of the institution's most consequential supporters.

His approach reflects a philosophy rooted in humility, generosity, and service rather than personal recognition.

Born in 1945 into the wealthy Bass family of Fort Worth, Texas, Ed Bass arrived at Yale in 1963. His father, Perry Bass, was a Yale graduate and successful

oilman who encouraged his sons to attend the university. By the time Ed enrolled, he was already financially secure, having inherited millions from his great-uncle, legendary oil tycoon Sid Richardson.

Bass graduated in 1968 after delaying completion of his undergraduate degree and briefly pursued graduate studies in architecture at Yale. However, he In the early 1970s, Bass became involved with Synergia Ranch, an experimental communal community near Santa Fe, New Mexico. Inspired by environmental thinker and inventor Buckminster Fuller, the ranch emphasized ecological sustainability, innovative design, and alternative ways of living.

In 1973, he established the Institute of Ecotechnics, a nonprofit organization supporting environmentally focused projects and research.

This period profoundly shaped his worldview. Ed pursued interests in ecology, architecture, and scientific exploration. Though often described as an environmentalist, those who know Bass suggest his deeper interest lies in scientific inquiry itself.

In 1990 he donated \$20 million to establish the Yale Institute for Biospheric Studies, then one of the largest gifts in the university's modern history.

Unlike many major donors who make a single transformative contribution, Bass continued giving year after year. His support expanded to environmental science facilities, architectural projects, museum renovations, and academic programs.

What distinguishes Bass from many large-scale philanthropists is the nature of his giving. This approach became especially important during the 2008 financial crisis. As Yale's endowment suffered significant losses, plans for two new residential colleges faced uncertainty. Bass personally helped provide critical funding that allowed architectural planning to continue during the downturn.

Despite his enormous contributions, Bass has consistently avoided public recognition. While many donors seek naming rights for buildings and programs, Bass has repeatedly declined such opportunities.

Several prominent Yale facilities that Bass helped fund bear the names of other individuals because he preferred it that way. Even when he contributed substantially to projects such as Kroon Hall and the Class of 1954 Environmental Science Center, others received naming recognition.

When Bass donated \$10 million to the Yale Science Building, he requested that a lecture hall be named after paleontologist O.C. Marsh rather than himself.

This reluctance to seek attention helps explain why many students remain unfamiliar with one of Yale's most significant benefactors.

While Bass rarely imposes his will on university projects, his expertise carries considerable weight when he does speak.

Having studied architecture and maintained a lifelong interest in design, Bass is respected for his thoughtful observations about buildings and campus planning. University leaders often seek his perspective on major projects, and colleagues note that his suggestions frequently prove valuable.

Bass's architectural philosophy is difficult to categorize. Rather than championing a specific style, he focuses on how buildings interact with their surroundings, history, and purpose. His interest lies not in architectural trends but in thoughtful, enduring design.

At 80 years old, Bass shows little sign of stepping away from Yale. In fact, his latest contribution may be among his most transformative.

The Yale School of Architecture recently announced the Bass Challenge, a financial aid initiative that could allow future architecture students to graduate debt-free. If alumni raise \$20 million, Ed and his wife, Sasha

Bass, will contribute an additional \$40 million to eliminate loans from student financial aid packages.

The gift will be the largest in the school's history.

It is a fitting continuation of a philanthropic career defined not by headlines or naming rights but by sustained commitment to institutional excellence.

His personal principles still ring true.

Work hard. Be nice. Have fun. Be humble. Be generous. Be grateful. Everyone deserves your respect.

Those values offer perhaps the clearest explanation for why one of Yale's most influential benefactors remains one of its least visible. While others have built legacies in stone and signage, Ed Bass has quietly built his through stewardship, service, and an unwavering belief in the enduring power of institutions.

Yale

[Click here](#) for Jonas Loesell's complete article, The Quiet Architect at Yale: How Ed Bass built a legacy at Yale without putting his name on it., at Yale News.

2026 National AIA Award for Yale Peabody Museum



Centerbrook Architects and Planners has received a 2026 Architecture Award from the American Institute of Architects for its comprehensive renovation and expansion of the Yale Peabody Museum. The honor, recognizing excellence in contemporary architecture, was announced June 10 during the AIA Awards Gala at AIA26 in San Diego.

The project represents the museum's first major renovation and expansion since its opening in 1925. Guided by more than a decade of planning, the LEED Gold-certified transformation expands teaching, exhibition, and collection spaces while improving visitor circulation, advancing sustainability goals, and preserving the museum's historic character.

The 172,355-square-foot project includes extensive renovations and a new 57,631-square-foot, four-story infill addition between the Peabody and the neighboring Environmental Science Center.

A new glass entrance tower and skylit central gathering space enhance campus connections and create a more welcoming visitor experience. Throughout the museum, exhibitions and learning environments were reimaged with remounted fossil displays, expanded anthropology galleries, restored dioramas, updated natural history exhibits, and integrated digital interpretive systems.

Research and collections spaces were modernized with advanced climate-control systems, restoration labs, and upgraded storage. New classrooms, laboratories, and a K-12 learning center further strengthen the museum's educational mission. Sustainability features include bird-safe glazing, stormwater management systems, water-conservation measures, and high-efficiency mechanical systems designed to reduce energy consumption despite the building's expanded footprint.

The AIA Architecture Award is among the profession's highest honors. For Centerbrook, it marks the firm's first national AIA Architecture Award since 1998 and the fourteenth award earned by the Yale Peabody Museum project.

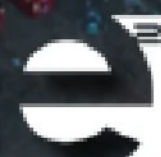
"It was an honor to do the project and it is an honor to win this award," said Mark Simon, Principal at Centerbrook. "Hundreds of people worked together to bring the new Peabody into being, and they share in this recognition."

"From our very first meeting, Mark Simon and his team worked tirelessly to understand what we were trying to accomplish within a complex and challenging project," said David Skelly, Director of the Yale Peabody Museum. "The new museum functions better than I could have dreamed, and the spectacular design has already inspired hundreds of thousands of visitors."



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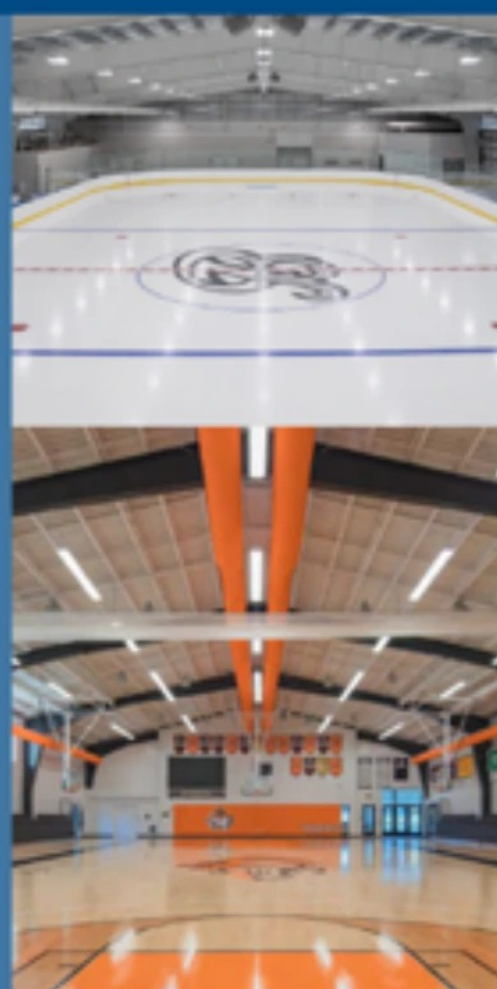
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Business **Architecture** Award

This biennial award recognizes architects and their clients whose collaborative projects demonstrate the power of design to advance organizational objectives and create significant impact through the built environment.

Submission include projects designed for organizations employing fewer than 50 people, and projects designed for organizations employing 50 or more people.

EXCELLENCE Less than 50 employees

Connecticut Humane Society Pet Resource Center Amenta Emma Architects

The Connecticut Humane Society Pet Resource Center is a 13,971 SF facility on an 18-acre wooded site in Wilton, replacing CHS's outdated Westport branch with a modern campus supporting adoption, veterinary care, community education, and pet owner resources. The design balances public welcome, compassionate animal care, and efficient operations through clear zoning, warm materials, thoughtful acoustics and daylighting. Features include adoption areas, a veterinary clinic, training and support spaces, off-leash yards, and walking trails. Integrated into the natural landscape, the facility reflects

CHS's mission to provide dignified, community-centered care for animals and the people who love them.

The jury praised the project for its welcoming, non-institutional design and thoughtfully organized spaces that enhance both animal welfare and community engagement. Jurors also recognized the project's measurable impact, noting that the facility has strengthened operations, expanded services, and created a transformative environment for staff, visitors, and animals alike.



Photo: ©Robert Benson Photography



2026 Jurors



David H. Barkin, FAIA
Chief Architect
State of Connecticut, DAS
Hartford, CT



Angela D. Cahill, AIA, NCARB, NOMA, LEED AP
Project Executive STV Inc.
West Hartford, CT



Nancy Greenwald
Executive Director
The Construction Institute, Inc.
Meriden, CT

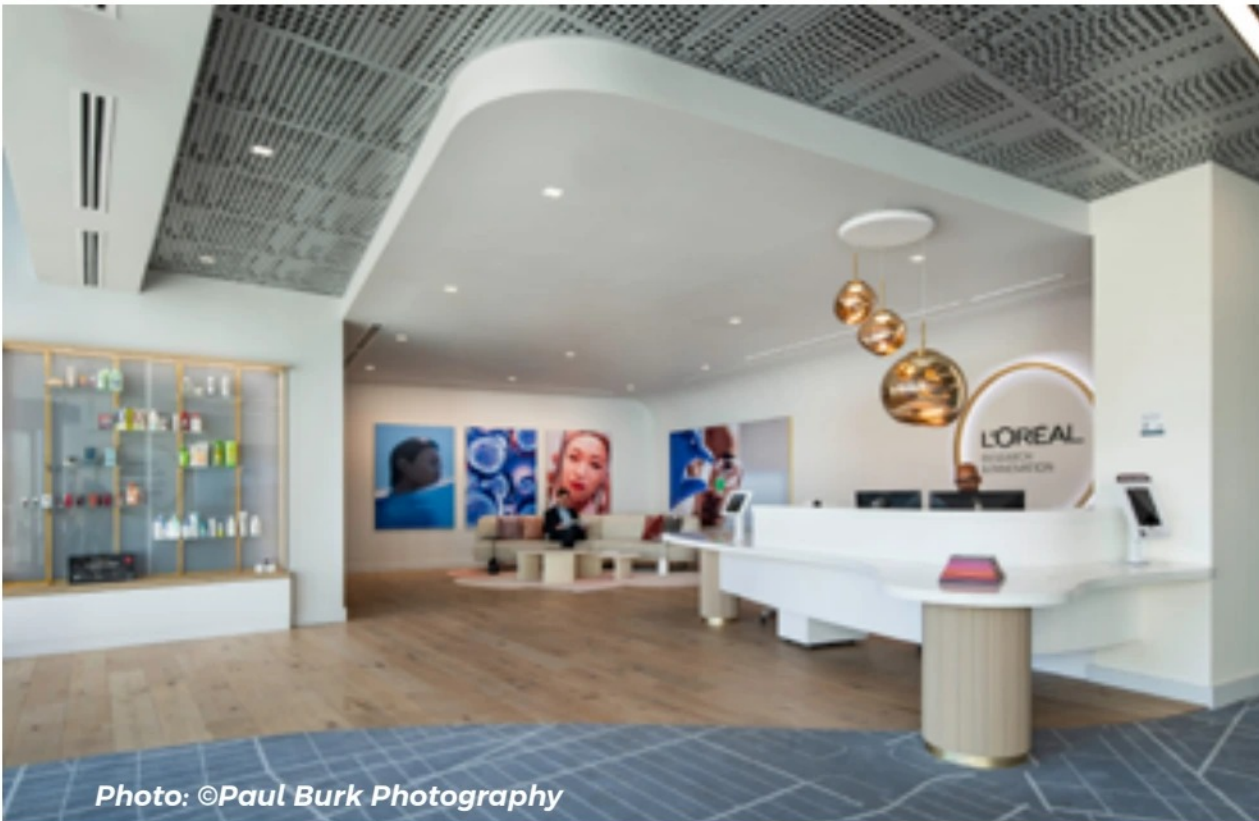


Photo: ©Paul Burk Photography

L'Oréal, North America Research & Innovation (R&I) Center **The S/L/A/M Collaborative**

L'Oréal Groupe's North America R&I Center in Clark, NJ is a 257,185 SF state-of-the-art facility advancing beauty innovation, science, and sustainability. The project consolidates five buildings into one integrated campus for more than 600 scientists, engineers, and researchers, combining advanced laboratories, consumer evaluation spaces, and an on-site mini factory to accelerate product development. Supporting L'Oréal's Beauty Tech and Open Innovation initiatives, the Center strengthens

collaboration across brands and partners. Targeting LEED Platinum certification, the facility emphasizes renewable energy, reduced carbon use, biodiversity, and employee wellness through daylight-filled, flexible, and biophilic workspaces designed for collaboration and creativity.spaces.

The jury recognized the project for its impressive, transparent interiors that create a showcase environment blending science, innovation, and collaboration. Jurors highlighted the project's success in supporting business

EXCELLENCE
More than 50
employees



goals through the consolidation of functions, enhanced interdisciplinary interaction, operational efficiency, and ambitious sustainability achievements, including a net-positive energy strategy and LEED Platinum certification.

Elizabeth Mills Brown Awards

AIA Connecticut



The Elizabeth Mills Brown Awards recognize excellence in the preservation of Connecticut's architectural heritage through the restoration, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, and sensitive stewardship of historic buildings and sites. Named in honor of Elizabeth "Betty" Mills Brown, the awards

EXCELLENCE

Washington, Connecticut Farmhouse Elizabeth Roberts Architects

Built in 1783 and expanded around 1900 by architect Richard Dana, this Washington, Connecticut farmhouse was carefully rehabilitated to support contemporary family life while preserving its layered history. Following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, the project retained original floors, millwork, doors, hardware, staircases, and the restored brick chimney with its beehive oven. Modest additions and interior updates improved functionality while respecting the home's historic character, ensuring its continued contribution to the architectural heritage of Washington Village.



Photo: ©William Jess Laird

The jury praised the project's thoughtful, light-touch approach, noting its sensitivity to the home's historic fabric and evolution over time. They commended the discreet additions and creative reuse of existing space, highlighting how the design successfully introduced modern functionality while preserving the farmhouse's character, charm, and architectural integrity.



celebrate the legacy of one of Connecticut's most influential architectural historians, preservationists, civic leaders, and authors. The Elizabeth Mills Brown Awards are presented in collaboration with Preservation Connecticut.

2026 Jurors



Gregory Farmer
Preservation Consultant
Agawam, MA



Jeffrey Gonyeau
PPreservation Massachusetts
Plymouth, MA



Scott Winkler, AIA, LEED AP
Wessling Architects
Braintree, MA



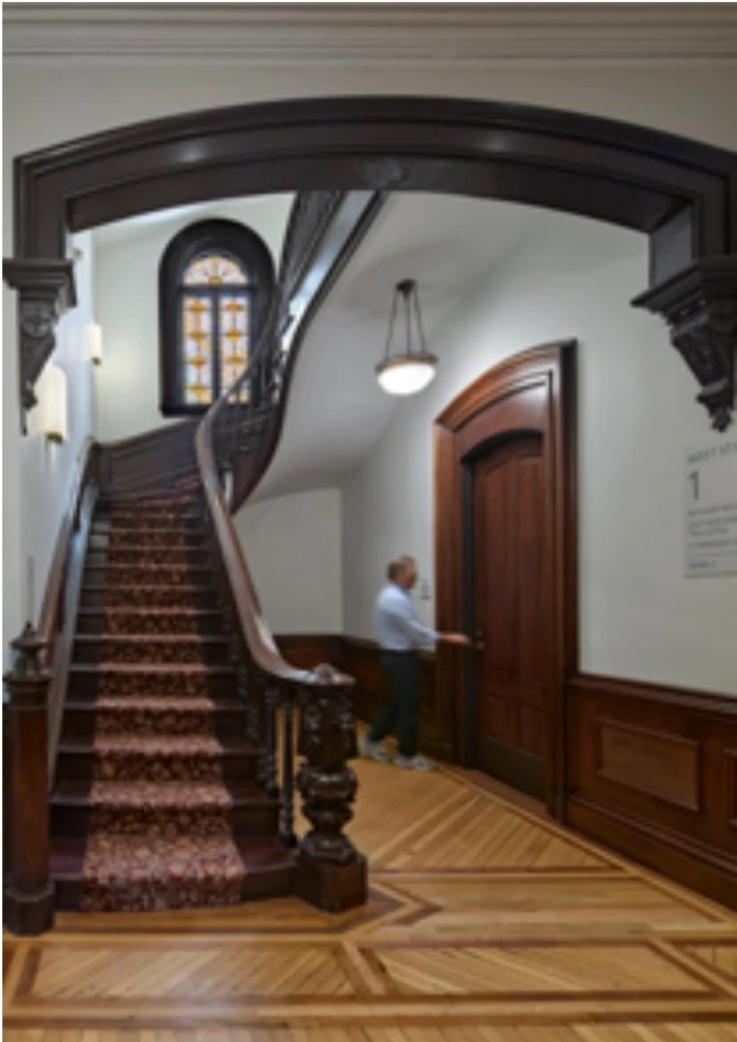
EXCELLENCE

37 Hillhouse Avenue
Christopher Williams Architects LLC

37 Hillhouse Avenue, the 1866 Graves Gilman House, is a contributing property within the Hillhouse Avenue Historic District and was renovated and expanded to serve Yale University's evolving academic needs. The project combined restoration of the 11,250 SF Italianate villa with a 6,500 SF addition designed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Historic features were carefully preserved while new

accessible, all-electric, high-performance spaces support offices, laboratories, and classrooms. The addition complements the historic structure while extending its life and reinforcing Hillhouse Avenue's architectural legacy.

The jury commended the exemplary restoration of the historic 1866 building, highlighting the high quality of both the exterior and interior preservation work. They commended the seamless integration



of the addition, noting its respectful scale, distinct identity, and ability to accommodate modern accessibility, sustainability, and programmatic needs while reinforcing the character of the original structure.

EXCELLENCE

Lapham Field House

Apicella + Bunton Architects, LLC

Lapham Field House, Yale Athletics' historic Georgian clubhouse since 1924, was comprehensively renovated to serve Yale's football, cross country, and track and field programs. The project improved accessibility, upgraded building systems, and modernized interiors while preserving the building's historic character. Original features, including wood paneling, fireplaces, railings, and lanterns, were carefully restored, and landscape enhancements improved access and functionality. Completed without expanding the original footprint, the renovation ensures the continued role of Lapham Field House as a central part of Yale Athletics.

The jury recognized the project's thoughtful modernization of a historic 1920s athletic facility, noting its success in accommodating contemporary functional, accessibility, and sustainability goals while preserving the building's historic character. They highlighted the creative integration of upgrades within the existing envelope and the minimal impact on the building's defining exterior features.



Photo: ©Apicella + Bunton Architects, LLC



MERIT

Saltbox Farm Haver & Skolnick Architects

Built in 1770, this historic Sandy Hook saltbox farmhouse was restored to its original form after decades of additions had obscured its character. The rehabilitation repaired the hand-hewn timber frame, rebuilt the center chimney using salvaged materials, and preserved original architectural features. A large but carefully sited addition accommodates contemporary family living while maintaining the prominence of the historic house. Inspired by the scale and materials of the original structure, the addition incorporates reclaimed timbers, traditional



Photo: ©Robert Benson Photography

finishes, and geothermal systems to blend historic character with modern performance.

The jury recognized the exceptional restoration of the historic saltbox itself, citing the high quality of craftsmanship and the faithful preservation of the home's original character both inside and out.



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emerging **Professionals** AWARDS

The Emerging Professionals Award recognizes emerging architects and recent graduates who have demonstrated exceptional promise and innovative contributions to the profession. The award honors individuals who have distinguished themselves through design excellence, leadership, professional achievement, and meaningful service to their communities.

Recognizing accomplishments both within and beyond architectural practice, the award celebrates those who are advancing the profession through creativity, collaboration, advocacy, and civic engagement. By highlighting the achievements of the next generation of architects, the Emerging Professionals Award supports and encourages continued growth, impact, and leadership in the built environment.

Congratulations to the 2026 awardees!

Leen Hariri, CPHC, LEED GA, Assoc. AIA *Shepley Bulfinch*



Leen Hariri is an emerging architectural professional whose work reflects a strong commitment to design excellence, sustainability, and leadership within the profession. Her experience spans residential, educational, and healthcare projects, where she has contributed to innovative design solutions that prioritize environmental performance and occupant well-being. As a Certified Passive House Consultant and LEED Green Associate, Leen has played an active role in advancing Net Zero and Passive House design strategies, helping to promote a more sustainable built environment.

Beyond her professional practice, Leen has demonstrated exceptional dedication to supporting and advancing emerging professionals. She completed the Connecticut Professionals' Leadership Academy and served as Co-Chair of the AIA Connecticut Emerging

Professionals Committee, where she helped develop networking opportunities, ARE study groups, and professional development programs for the next generation of architects. Her service also extends to AIA Connecticut's Women in Architecture and Committee on the Environment (COTE), reflecting her commitment to equity, inclusion, and sustainable design.

As an international emerging professional, Leen has been a thoughtful advocate for diversity and the evolving future of the profession. Through presentations at CACX conferences and her ongoing leadership, mentorship, and community engagement, she continues to elevate the voices of emerging professionals while making meaningful contributions to Connecticut's architectural community.

Hillary Kossou, Assoc. AIA, NOMA **FCA Architects**



Hillary Kossou is an emerging architectural professional whose leadership, service, and advocacy have made a meaningful impact on both the profession and the broader community. Through her active involvement with the National Organization of Minority Architects Connecticut Chapter (NOMAct), she has helped strengthen professional networks, support underrepresented voices, and create opportunities for future design professionals. Serving as Treasurer and Sponsorship Chair, Hillary has contributed to the organization's financial growth, expanded partnerships, and increased support for scholarships, programs, and community initiatives. Her dedication was recognized with the NOMAct Jose Hernandez Member of the Year President's Award.

Committed to mentorship and outreach, Hillary works with students and emerging professionals through programs such as ACE Mentor, Project Pipeline, and My Architecture Workshops. She has also served as a juror for student reviews and competitions, inspiring future architects while promoting greater diversity within the profession.

Since joining FCA, Hillary has become an active contributor to the firm's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion initiatives and strategic planning efforts. Through her professional achievements, community engagement, and commitment to advancing the next generation of architects, Hillary exemplifies the leadership and service that strengthen both the profession and the communities it serves.

James Regnier, AIA, CPHC, AIACT YAR **Amenta Emma Architects**



James Regnier is a Project Architect at Amenta Emma Architects whose work demonstrates a strong commitment to design excellence, innovation, and professional leadership. He has contributed to several complex projects, including the new School of Nursing building at the University of Connecticut, while advancing firmwide initiatives in material research, emerging technologies, and sustainable design. As a Phius Certified Passive House Consultant, James brings both technical expertise and a collaborative approach to the design process.

Beyond practice, James is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Architecture at the University of Hartford, where he

teaches courses in architectural technology, visualization, and design. Through his mentorship and engaging teaching style, he helps prepare and inspire the next generation of architects.

James is also actively involved in professional service and advocacy. Elected as AIA Connecticut's Young Architect Representative for 2026-2027, he has contributed to leadership and advocacy initiatives through the Young Architects Forum and the Connecticut Professionals' Leadership Academy. Through his work as an architect, educator, and emerging leader, James exemplifies a dedication to advancing the profession and shaping a more innovative and sustainable built environment.



AIA Strategic Council Update

By Jessica O'Donnell, FAIA
Strategic Council Moderator

The Council study groups are diligently moving their work forward.

The Regenerative Design group has teamed up with the National Associates Committee (NAC) for an Ask Me Anything session at AIA26. Illya Azarov, FAIA, Carole Wedge, FAIA and AIA Paolo Campos, AIA were on hand to give updates and answer questions.

June marks approximately 6 months of current study group efforts. Later this summer, groups concluding at the end of 2026 will provide final reports, and groups continuing on through 2027 will provide progress reports. This information will be synthesized and shared with the Board at their September meeting.

Below are snapshots of work in progress. We welcome insights, comments, and questions on these topics and encourage readers to reach out to their state representative on the Council or any of the Councilors.

HOUSING

The group has engaged with the members from the National Associates Committee and Government Advocacy

Committee to enhance the group's discussions within the four-focused mission legs. The group has also invited additional speakers from diverse fields for upcoming meetings later this spring/summer.

NEUROARCHITECTURE

The group is outlining its draft progress report for refinement this summer along with drafting some speaker recommendations for AIA consideration.

PRACTICE

The Career Development subgroup met with key AIA team members to learn more about AIAU, the AIA Business Academy and what the Institute is working on in terms of Career Development. The Business subgroup is wrapping up interviews that spanned topics including finding pathways in other industries for architects, alternative client services in hospitality, art, software development / firm management, technology research, BIM consulting, and digital side of practice systems.

REGENERATIVE DESIGN

The group is excited to share a 1-pager defining Regenerative Design soon. It's themes and

content were discussed in this Earth Day AIAU webinar, now available to AIA members for free: <https://aiau.aia.org/course/details/a-regenerative-approach-to-design-excellence>

Over the next few months, the team will divide into subgroups to focus on 3 key areas related to ways to achieve widespread adoption of regenerative design, brainstorming content for AIA members, and identifying ways to help architects advocate for regenerative design to clients.

VALUE

The Protecting the Profession subgroup and the Pay Equity subgroup merged this month to learn more about current initiatives in New Mexico.

The Public Messaging subgroup will be engaging with members of the public at AIA26 to gain insights about future messaging topics.

We value your input! If you have questions or ideas for the Strategic Council, email us at StrategicCouncil@aia.org.

To learn more about the work of the Strategic Council, please visit the Strategic Council webpage at www.AIA.org



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AIA Connecticut Welcomes Summer Interns

AIA Connecticut is pleased to welcome two outstanding students, **Harper Irwin** and **Richard Morton**, as Summer Interns for 2026. Both bring impressive academic achievements, leadership experience, and a passion for learning that will contribute to our ongoing efforts to serve the architectural community across Connecticut.



Harper joins AIA Connecticut as a student in the Architectural Engineering program at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, where she maintains a 4.0 GPA and is expected to graduate in 2029. Harper has already distinguished herself through her involvement in the ACE (Architecture, Construction, and Engineering) Program in New Haven, where she collaborated with an architectural team on the design of an artist's residence and gallery and participated in site visits that deepened her understanding of the design

and construction process. She is currently involved with the American Institute of Architecture Students and Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Steel Bridge Club, where she continues to expand her engineering and design skills. Harper's commitment to academic excellence has earned her numerous honors, including the ACE Connecticut Scholarship and recognition from the Society of Women Engineers.



Also joining AIA CT this summer is **Richard**, a Hospitality and Tourism Management student at the University of New Haven pursuing both bachelor's and master's degree pathways. Richard brings strong organizational, customer service, and event coordination skills that align closely with AIA Connecticut's member programs and events. His experience includes serving as a Substitute Para-educator with Hamden Public Schools

and as a Team Member at Panera Bread.

Richard also demonstrates a commitment to leadership and service through his role as Eminent Recorder on the Executive Board of Sigma Alpha Epsilon at the University of New Haven.

As Summer Interns, Harper and Richard will support AIA Connecticut's educational programming and member engagement initiatives. They will be joining committee meetings, coordinating event logistics, and maintaining program records..

We are excited to have Harper and Richard join our team and look forward to the energy, ideas, and perspectives they will bring to AIA Connecticut this summer.

Please join us in welcoming them as they begin this important professional experience and contribute to our mission of advancing architecture and supporting architects throughout Connecticut.

Welcome,
Harper and Richard!





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Will AI Change I

AI's efficiency gains may cause firms to move away from hourly billing—and provide an opening for architects to show off their value.

By Patrick Sisson- **AIA**Architect

No AI prompt can determine the lasting financial implications of architecture's embrace of AI. But with many predicting that AI will overrun numerous aspects of building design, it's possible the traditional hourly payment model of architecture is under threat. Technology may force a reckoning: Will practices organized around selling their time need to pivot to selling their value?

"This is such a great opportunity to finally rebalance the business model a bit," said Keir-Regan Alexander, a British architect who has [written about the potential for this kind of shift](#). He believes the industry has needed a conversation on the subject "for many years."

The traditional model

The longstanding billable hour model used in the architecture, engineering, and construction industry tends to be a risk-management mechanism that protects firms with guaranteed work amid extended deadlines and lengthy redesigns. But the model also disincentivizes innovation, said Bhrgan Paramanantham, a civil engineer and author of the [Last Week in ConTech](#) newsletter.

For general contractors especially, a 100-hour project budget tends to encourage firms to attempt to hit the exact hourly budget without a minute more of effort. If the firm goes over, the client wins. The old standard may be

comforting during a period of reduced opportunities and anxiety about the architectural economy. We're currently in such a period: The [AIA/Deltek Architecture Billings Index®](#) from March showed flat billings as well as the 25th straight month of decreasing value for newly signed contracts.

But now, Paramanantham said, larger firms involved in design and build projects believe that, with the advent of AI, they can set a flat fee for work and reap bigger margins as improving technology allows them to do more in less time with fewer workers. Troy Rudd, an executive at the design and construction firm AECOM, [recently noted during an earnings call](#) that the firm's clients are increasingly "bringing up in the dialogue how they would like to move to a method of contracting that recognizes that value—so moving away from something like cost plus to something that looks more like a fixed fee."

Last November, AECOM [acquired the AI firm Consigli](#) for \$390 million. Paramanantham argues that the acquisition indicates AECOM's leadership was clearly starting to think about ways that AI and automation can bring business benefits and change how it charges for work. (Consigli calls itself the "autonomous engineer").

"There's definitely a recognition that AI has changed things," he said. "I think everyone knew that the billable hour model was broken, but the business was so good, right? If there's no incentive to change, why cannibalize your core business?"

The drawbacks of a flat fee system

Some warn that an embrace of flat fees might put an uncomfortable spotlight on budgets and timelines. Barry

LePatner, an attorney, author, and construction and infrastructure expert, expressed concern regarding the need for architects to deliver "certainty about cost or date of completion."

Others speculate that broad AI adoption in design will potentially disadvantage small architecture firms. If larger, more established companies can invest more quickly and broadly in the latest technology, they may be able to submit more designs, out-compete smaller companies, and realize the increasing margins that make a flat fee scheme more appealing. Such an outcome could create a more concentrated industry.

"Bidding with AI enables you to increase your throughput, so you can bid more often for more things," said Alexander. "It's a big investment, but when you make it and teams get good at it, they are bidding in shorter periods of time."

The worth of the profession

Reminding clients of the true worth of the profession may be as vital as rethinking payment structures. "Maybe we shouldn't work for free," Alexander said, in reference to contests and other work done for clients before contracts get signed. "It's quite controversial, because people think it's anti-competitive to not be able to work for free, but

Billing Forever?



I just see it as degrading the profession.”

Alexander also advocates for a professional focus on competency, making sure that anyone who calls themselves an architect has the ability and expertise to do what they ask AI to do. It’s important to agree on a baseline standard and train juniors to that level, a practice that might be at risk with firms that, because of AI, may not hire younger architects or may recruit less qualified workers to simply be prompt engineers.

Architects should also promote their duty of care: They’re ultimately responsible for projects, and more importantly-

and of more value to clients—can guarantee a better, safer, higher-quality project. Alexander said architects are already seeing clients shoot back renders or project images they themselves have edited or mocked up with AI, a suggestion, whether implicit or not, that clients can play a larger role in the design process.

Ultimately, Alexander hopes that the fee conversation, catalyzed by the adoption of AI, becomes as much about professionalism and best practices in the industry. A shift in how architects look at fees ultimately asks the question of what architects are selling and what their work is worth.

“Personally, I feel that we need a campaign about this in professional services, to be confident about the value we provide our clients and the important services we deliver,” Alexander said. “We can’t be bashful about it. We’re not just clicking buttons—that’s not what we do.”

Want to learn more about AI’s impact on the profession? Check out [guidance, tools, and insights from AIA’s AI Task Force](#).

Patrick Sisson is a freelance writer covering architecture and design. He lives in Los Angeles.

AI for Construction Contracts Speed, Clarity, Confidence

By Devin White, Director, Product Management, AIA Contract Documents

This shift matters in construction, where speed isn't optional. Decisions and payments depend on timing, and no one has time to search through contracts to answer one question. But when your team can't quickly find the right clause, form, or requirement, delays and mistakes stack up.

With Catina's AI Assistant built directly in-app, teams can:

- Ask contract questions conversationally.
- Gain confidence in contract decisions and execution earlier.
- Understand legal-heavy language in plain terms.
- Navigate the platform and documents more efficiently.

This isn't just a faster search. It is an in-app assistant that helps your team move quickly through contract decisions, without leaving the workflow or pulling in expensive legal support.

This is how top firms are shifting their workflows. Here's what it looks like in practice.

Why Speed in Construction Contract Workflows Drives Results

The speed and clarity of your construction contracts ultimately drive cash flow, reduce disputes, and keep teams aligned.

Here's how inefficient workflows can slow your team down:

- Uncertainty about which agreement applies.
- Hesitation due to a lack of clarity on legal terminology.
- Delays in payment due to incomplete or unclear documentation.

These issues show up across delivery methods. Whether you're working in design-bid-build or design-build, contract structure drives how workflows and risk are managed.

AIA documents follow clear family and relationship structures, but teams often spend time connecting the dots among agreements, general conditions, and roles.

This is exactly where AI changes how teams work.

3 Ways AI Improves Construction Contract Workflows

Catina's AI Assistant enables your team to navigate your construction contract management more quickly and with greater clarity

Here are three practical ways teams are using AI to improve contract workflows today.

Find the Right AIA Document Faster

Most delays start with the wrong decision. Instead of guessing, "Which document do I use?" start by describing your project to the AI Assistant.

- How is the contractor getting paid?
- Which agreement fits this delivery method?
- Do we need a cost-of-work structure or a fixed price?

AI maps your questions to the right document family and agreement structure, removing guesswork early. Compensation structure and delivery method directly impact cost control, so getting it wrong creates downstream issues.

Understand How AIA Documents Connect

Construction contracts do not stand alone. Agreements, general conditions, and subcontracts all work together.

Coming soon, AIA Contract Documents (ACD) is launching AI inside the Catina platform to change how architecture and construction teams work through contracts. Instead of digging through documents or quickly turning to outside legal resources, teams can now ask questions directly to an AI Assistant in the platform and get clear, actionable answers in real time.

For example, [A101®](#) pairs with [A201®](#) for general conditions, and [B101™](#) defines the architect's role with those agreements.

AI Assistant helps teams see these relationships instantly. Without that visibility, teams often miss how one document impacts another, leading to gaps and misalignment.

Move From Question to Next Step

Speed only matters if it leads to action. AI Assistant helps teams:

- Confirm the right agreement before drafting.
- Keep projects aligned with the right documents for each phase.

Contracts



- Align roles and responsibilities early.
- Reduce back-and-forth during construction.

For example, if you need to determine how much the latest change order added to your contract, you can ask AI Assistant. It can quickly surface the exact value without you having to dig through documents.

How to Use AI in Construction Contract Management

If your team wants to improve contract speed with fewer surprises, start with a consistent, low-friction contract workflow that leverages AI:

- Loop AI Assistant into your project requirements so it can help you pick the right agreement.
- Use AI to identify the best-paired documents based on the delivery method.
- Use standardized documents to reduce ambiguity.
- Align roles across owner, architect, and contractor before work starts.
- Use AI to answer contract questions in real time.
- Keep documentation clear to support payment and closeout.

AI Assistant is not about adding complexity. It's about removing friction from the decisions your team makes every day.

Key Takeaway

Speed, cash flow, and closeout all tie back to how your team works through contracts.

AI inside Catina helps you:

- Get to answers faster.
- Make better decisions earlier.
- Keep projects moving with fewer disputes.

The firms adopting this approach are not replacing expertise. They are scaling it.

[Opt-in for access in Catina now](#)

By Jeremy Jamilkowski, AIA

I have been called things in community meetings that I won't repeat in print. I deserved some of it, in a professional sense, as the person standing at the front of the room representing a large housing project to the community it would impact, yet had been excluded from decisions and conversations surrounding its planning. It was a neighborhood that had been underserved long enough that residents knew exactly what this new development meant, and what it would cost them. They weren't wrong to be suspicious. They showed up in force, organized, vocal, and legitimately angry. They fought through every public channel available to them. They lost, not because their arguments were wrong, or the design was right, but because the zoning codes had been written in a way that gave them little legal leverage. The process was followed, boxes checked, and the project was approved.

I left that room understanding something I hadn't fully grasped before: design is not the most powerful force in that equation. The law is. The policy framework that determines who has legal standing and who gets to define "community benefit" is where the real decisions are made. Architects show up at the end of that process and draw what has already been decided is possible.

What I witnessed in that room was not a new failure, but a familiar one. Architecture has a long and uncomfortable history of arriving after the policy decisions have been made and calling it objectivity. When urban renewal displaced tens of thousands of low-income residents, disproportionately Black Americans, the profession provided the drawings. When public housing was designed to concentrate poverty, architects delivered the plans. In each case,

the profession's neutrality was not impartial. It was a choice that shaped communities and lives for generations.

New Haven provides a tangible case study. Despite decades of reinvestment and millions of dollars of redevelopment, what was taken from the Oak Street and Hill neighborhoods is still visible in the gaps along Route 34. The empty parking lots are a constant reminder that decisions made seventy years ago outlast the administrations that made them.

This pattern is why the current pressures feel so urgent — and so familiar. Since early 2025, a series of executive orders have targeted diversity, equity, and inclusion programs across the federal government and the institutions it funds. The language has been clinical: "merit-based," "colorblind," "anti-discrimination." The practical effect is the rapid dismantling of frameworks that brought equity considerations into public procurement and federal contracting.

The effects are real, and they are local. Earlier this year, AIA CT convened a panel on equity in architectural practice. Some firms declined the invitation, not because they had retreated from their values, but because they couldn't afford the risk of speaking openly while pursuing federal contracts. They continue to do the work behind the scenes, carefully and deliberately. While I understand those decisions, it is difficult to accept an environment in which firms with genuine commitment must choose between their values and their viability.

For many architects, the instinct has been to step back. We have clients to serve, projects to deliver, and firms to run. We are trained to solve problems through form and space, not legislation and litigation. But when architects go quiet, the frameworks that shape

Citizen A The Design

our work get written without us.

Early in my role as co-chair of the AIA CT EDI Committee, when the federal government released its list of Restricted Words, our committee, our board, and our executive director had a choice. We could find softer language, quietly retire the name, make the discomfort go away. Instead we held our ground, renaming the committee not to retreat, but to bring our name into alignment with our national organization, keeping those words intact. A small decision bureaucratically. Not a small one to the colleagues and members who needed the stability.

That is what it looks like when a profession refuses to be silent. Not a grand gesture: people deciding that the words still meant what they meant. Not politicians, but



Architects on Impact of Silence on Policy

citizen architects. That clarity, not of building form but of policy and practice, is exactly what this moment needs.

Years later, I sat across from the leader of that community again, this time as peers, with no project on the line and no room full of people waiting to be angry. Two people who cared about the same place, finally able to talk honestly about what had happened and why. It was a conversation I hadn't known I needed. What it clarified was simple. The failure wasn't one of design. It was a failure of framework: the legal definitions of who had standing and what counted as community benefit, written before any of us arrived, by people who were not thinking about that neighborhood. A different set of rules would have put us on the same side from the beginning.

This is what I am asking architects to help build: the next set of rules.

Our profession has done this before. In my career, I have watched sustainability move from a burgeoning area of practice into our building code. Environmental responsibility is now embedded in how we are educated, licensed, and evaluated. The profession made sustainability non-negotiable; we owe that same commitment to the communities our buildings are meant to serve.

Architects know how to do this. It is our skillset. We read systems, find leverage points, and make complex things legible to the people who will live inside them. Show up to planning board meetings and legislative hearings where the policies of your community are being established by people who may never have drawn a building. Get in the room.

Mentor a student who doesn't look like the architects who taught you. Speak up when you see injustice. Write the article. Put your name on it.

The community that fought that development did not lose because they were wrong. They lost because the framework wasn't written for them. The rules are being rewritten now, in much bigger ways. This time, the profession has a choice.

Silence is a design choice.

Jeremy Jamilkowski, AIA, is a project architect and AIA Connecticut board member based in New Haven, Connecticut. He serves as co-chair of AIA Connecticut's EDI Committee and has been an active voice at the intersection of architectural practice, civic engagement, and community advocacy.

Redefining Leadership in Building Safety

Omarys Vasquez's career journey and lasting influence, the longest serving woman building inspector in Connecticut history.

By Lorelei K. Harloe

Omarys Vasquez is

Through her role as State Building Inspector with Connecticut Department of Administrative Services, Division of Regulatory Compliance, Omarys Vasquez is known for advancing a collaborative code discussion that values all perspectives for safer communities with a lasting impact. As an industry innovator, she's also known for advancing women's leadership roles in building safety.

Vasquez is the second woman to serve as Connecticut's state building inspector since 1971 serving as the state's first appointed minority and now longest serving woman state building inspector in Connecticut's history. She is also a founding architect of the Connecticut chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMAct).

"Stepping into this role was intimidating at first, but it also reinforced an important lesson

early on: when opportunities come your way, you have to be willing to step forward, even if you're not completely sure where they will lead," said Vasquez, AIA, NOMA, NCARB, LEED-AP. "You may be surprised at what you're capable of when you do."

Following 16 years as an architect in her close to 20-year career, Vasquez said her transition into building safety was pragmatic.

"Right out of college, my initial motivation was probably more practical than I realized at the time," she said. "I didn't love having to revise my work repeatedly while being mentored by more experienced architects early in my career. But looking back, that experience ended up shaping everything that followed in a really positive way."

Code Competency: A Framework for Efficiency

Increasing her code knowledge as a designer improved Vasquez's problem-solving efficiency.

"As I became more familiar with the code, I started to see it less as an obstacle and more

as a framework that actually made me a better, faster, and a more confident designer," said Vasquez. "I began memorizing chapter structure, and eventually specific requirements like accessibility reach ranges, shaft ratings and egress provisions. The more comfortable I became with the code, the less time I spent searching through it – and the more time I could focus on design and problem-solving at the schematic level."

Her deepening code knowledge also led to a change in the workplace. Coworkers started coming to Vasquez with code questions, which led to her developing code summaries and assisting with plan reviews.

"That experience helped me realize how much I enjoyed the intersection of design and code compliance and ultimately led me toward building safety as a career path where I could use both perspectives in a more meaningful way," Vasquez said.



Mentors Matter

Along her journey, Vasquez recalled two mentors who were especially influential: Ron Cooper, a registered architect, and Philip Sherman, P.E., a code consultant.

Both played an important role in her professional development—not only through their technical expertise, but in how they emphasized the importance of detailing and understanding the building codes at a deeper level. Vasquez credits Cooper and Sherman with encouraging her to think critically and to stay grounded in the details.

“From Phil in particular, I learned to focus not just on what the code requires, but why it requires it—an approach that shaped how I continue to evaluate and apply code today,” she said. “I also found value in supplementing that understanding through resources like International Code Council (ICC) opinions and other formal interpretations which helped reinforce a more thoughtful, well-rounded perspective.”

The Inspector Life

As Connecticut’s state building inspector, Vasquez works closely with the Codes and Standards Committee and other state partners to help guide the development, administration and consistent enforcement of the Connecticut State Building Code.

In this role, she oversees a team of building officials and inspectors. With the help of her team, Vasquez supports code updates and amendments, issues interpretations and advisories, reviews appeals and modification requests and promotes consistent application of the code across all municipalities.

Her department also supports day-to-day code enforcement by responding to technical questions, managing permits, inspections and certificates for state-owned buildings and overseeing elevator and boiler inspection programs. Vasquez and her team also follow legislation affecting the built environment and play a key role in the

training, education and licensure of building officials, ensuring a well-informed and capable code enforcement community.

[Read the full article](#)

The Building Safety Journal (BSJ) Weekly is a weekly newsletter from the International Code Council that covers the latest news on the building safety and construction sectors. It offers everything from in-depth technical articles about innovative technologies to quick tips, personal perspectives and more. [Click here to subscribe.](#)

Lorelei K. Harloe is an independent communication partner and writer to national trade associations, primarily in the building, architecture and energy industries. She has held leadership roles with professional groups and is located in the Washington, D.C. area. Her outside interests include hiking, golf, teaching English as a Second Language and other volunteer activities.



Building the Future: CAF Grants in Action

By Nancy Clayton, AIA, CAF President

Architecture doesn't begin in a studio. It begins the moment a child stacks blocks, asks why a bridge holds, or wonders who designs the buildings they walk past every day. The Connecticut Architecture Foundation's 2026 grant cycle puts that belief into practice.

The CAF raises and awards funds to advance architecture and design education across Connecticut by investing in people at every stage, from the curious child to the emerging professional. Our vision is a Connecticut where architecture thrives in a community of professionals ready to shape the built environment for everyone. With the help of our donors and sponsors, here's what we've funded this year.

Starting Young, Thinking Big

The **Architecture Resource Center** has been a CAF grantee since its founding in 1991. ARC trains teachers to bring design thinking, building, and creative problem-solving into K-12 classrooms — reaching students well before they ever consider architecture as a career.

Now in its fifth year of CAF support, **My Architecture Workshop's** summer camp at Strawberry Hill Farm in Stamford has grown by 50%. This summer, 60 K-8 students will spend six weeks in studio-based learning — exploring architecture, engineering, and design in ways many wouldn't encounter otherwise.

New this year, we're excited to fund **NOMAct's Project Pipeline** camp — a national initiative introducing middle and high school students from underrepresented backgrounds to architecture. After a successful three-day pilot with Yale School of Architecture and My Architecture Workshops, the camp is expanding to a full week for 30 students, completely free for every participant.

For the second year, CAF supported AIA Connecticut's spring break library programs, reaching 7- to 12-year-olds at six public libraries across the state. In honor of Earth Day, students built mini solar houses, introducing kids to sustainable design and the architect's role.

Clearing the Path to Licensure

Inspiring the next generation is only part of CAF's mission. We also help emerging architects move closer to licensure. Student debt is real, and exam fees add up. For the sixth consecutive year, CAF is providing ten free **ARE** test prep subscriptions through **AIA Connecticut**. Last year, we also supported **NOMAct's ARE Scholarship initiative**, helping cover exam costs for 15 candidates.

Architecture in Conversation

Architecture shapes public life, and CAF's support for the **WPKN** podcast series

Architecture in Humanity, hosted by **Duo Dickinson**, **FAIA** and **Common Edge** founder Martin Pedersen, takes that conversation beyond the profession and into the public.

Recent episodes have tackled design journalism, the fading Starchitect era, and the deceptively simple question, "What is ugly?" This year's lineup includes James Wines reflecting on seven decades of work that challenged convention, and in the most recent episode, focused on the housing crisis, Duo and Martin speak with the co-founders of the Living Communities Initiative about QIMBY (quality in my backyard) and how better design can shift neighborhood opposition to increased density.

Help Expand our Reach

CAF's grants reach across the profession's full arc: children discovering design in summer camp, emerging architects clearing the final hurdles to licensure, and public audiences engaging with architecture in new ways. The more people we reach, the stronger our profession — and the better our built environment — will be. Learn more and support our work at **cafct.org**.

Nancy Clayton, AIA is the 2026 President of the Connecticut Architecture Foundation



Amenta Emma Breaks Ground on Rehabilitation Facility for Waveny LifeCare Network



Amenta Emma Architects is proud to celebrate the groundbreaking of a new 41,000-square-foot short-term inpatient rehabilitation facility for Waveny LifeCare Network in New Canaan, Connecticut.

Designed in close collaboration with Waveny's clinical teams, the two-story center will feature 30 private patient rooms, expanded inpatient and outpatient therapy services, dedicated education and training spaces, an interfaith chapel, and advanced rehabilitation technology, including telemedicine capabilities. Thoughtfully designed family spaces will further support patient recovery and engagement throughout the healing process.

The building's dramatic curved terracotta and glass façade creates a welcoming arrival experience, while evidence-based design principles shape the interior environment. Biophilic elements, warm natural materials, nature-inspired colors and patterns, and expansive windows in every patient room are carefully integrated to promote comfort,

wellness, and recovery. The facility will serve individuals age 16 and older recovering from illness, injury, or surgery.

"This project reflects our belief that the built environment is inseparable from the quality of care," said Myles Brown, AIA, Principal at Amenta Emma Architects. "We worked closely with Waveny's clinical and operational teams to design a facility that is not only functionally excellent, but genuinely restorative—a place where patients feel supported from the moment they arrive."

Scheduled for completion in Spring 2028, the new facility will more than double Waveny's private-room rehabilitation capacity and enable the organization to serve more than 400 additional patients annually. The project is a key component of Waveny's Build the Future of Care campaign, a philanthropic initiative dedicated to expanding access to care, strengthening the regional healthcare workforce, and supporting residents who outlive their financial resources.

Waveny Care Center

Waveny's existing Care Center operates at more than 90% occupancy and is currently able to accept only a small percentage of hospital referrals for short-term rehabilitation. Upon completion in spring 2028, the center will more than double Waveny's private-room rehabilitation capacity and enable the organization to serve more than 400 additional patients annually.

The project team includes Wesley Stout Associates as landscape architect, LandTech as civil engineer, CES as MEP engineer, Michael Horton Associates as structural engineer, A.P. Construction as construction manager, and M&T Bank providing project financing.

AMENTA|EMMA

Make space for listening
to the echoes of the past

For architect Scot Samuelson, it was about having respect for the history and significance of the work that came before him. So, for the reimagining of a Connecticut home designed by renowned early-20th-century architect J. Frederick Kelly, Samuelson included custom, historically inspired Marvin Ultimate collection windows and doors in his plans, ensuring that this transformation honored the character of Kelly's original vision.

marvin.com/architects



Featured Collection: Marvin Ultimate™

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John Hoffmann Awarded 2026 Tau Sigma Delta Architecture Medal

Hoffmann Architects + Engineers, a design firm specializing in the rehabilitation of building exteriors, announces that founder and Executive Chairman [John J. Hoffmann, FAIA](#) was selected as the recipient of the 2026 Silver Medal from the University of Hartford's Gamma Nu Chapter of the [Tau Sigma Delta Honor Society for Architecture and the Allied Arts](#), the highest honor awarded by the local organization to a practicing professional.

John J. Hoffmann, FAIA was awarded the Tau Sigma Delta Medal from the University of Hartford for "outstanding design work and years of service to the profession and the academy."

A national honor society for architecture and design students, Tau Sigma Delta admits members whose academic performance falls in the top 10% of the student body and who have demonstrated not only scholastic achievement, but also leadership and character. Members of each Tau Sigma Delta chapter select one professional in the field of architecture, landscape architecture, or the allied arts as the recipient of the Silver Medal, the chapter's highest honor.

"After numerous nominations and careful consideration, it gives me great pleasure to announce that John J. Hoffmann, of Hoffmann Architects + Engineers, has been chosen as the University of Hartford Tau Sigma Delta chapter's recipient of the 2026 Silver Medal. We would like to take this opportunity to recognize John Hoffmann for his outstanding design work and



years of service to the profession and the academy," said Dr. Theodore Randall Sawruk, Ed.D., NOMA, Assoc. AIA, Associate Professor of Architecture and Tau Sigma Delta Faculty Advisor.

Tau Sigma Delta members presented John Hoffmann with the medal at the Gamma Nu Chapter's annual luncheon on Monday, April 27, 2026 at the University of Hartford 1877 Club in West Hartford, Conn.

Hoffmann Promotes Robert Delagrange to Director of Business Development

Hoffmann Architects + Engineers, a design firm specializing in the rehabilitation of building exteriors, announces the promotion of Robert G. Delagrange to Director of Business Development. The advancement recognizes his leadership, dedication, and proven success in developing new business opportunities while cultivating long-term client relationships.

Previously Senior Business Development Manager for Hoffmann's Connecticut office, Delagrange focused on expanding the firm's presence throughout Southern New England, particularly in the higher education and healthcare sectors. He played a key role in identifying opportunities, qualifying leads, and collaborating with technical and marketing teams to develop competitive proposals and client-focused strategies.

In his new position, Delagrange will lead strategic growth initiatives across Hoffmann's three offices, drawing on his extensive experience to strengthen the firm's presence throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. Working closely with colleagues in Connecticut, New York, and Virginia, he will continue building the strong client partnerships that have become a hallmark of his career.

"Bob has become an indispensable liaison to the community, consistently exemplifying our



highest standards through his integrity, professionalism, and genuine approach to building relationships," said Lawrence E. Keenan, AIA, PE, Director of Technical Services. "Through his dedicated outreach to clients and the broader professional community, he has cultivated enduring relationships that are both strategically valuable and mutually beneficial."

Delagrange joined Hoffmann in January 2016 as Business Development Manager after earning a bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of Connecticut and an MBA from the University of New Haven. He was promoted to Senior Business Development Manager in 2021 and, in 2024, became a shareholder and owner of the firm in recognition of his significant contributions to Hoffmann's growth and reputation as a leading building enclosure specialty practice.

A familiar figure throughout Connecticut's design and construction community, Delagrange is actively involved in numerous industry organizations. His commitment to service extends beyond the industry. Delagrange serves as President of the Board of Directors for the Howard Whittemore Memorial Library, Trustee and Chair of the Business Committee for the Congregational

Church of Naugatuck, and a board member of the Grove Cemetery Association of Naugatuck. He is also an active participant in Hoffmann's community outreach efforts, including Habitat for Humanity volunteer projects.

"Equally analytical and proactive, Bob is not content simply to identify opportunities—he creates them," said Keenan.

Outside of work, Delagrange is an accomplished musician who performs regularly with local bands and community ensembles and an avid homebrewer who enjoys sharing his craft beer with friends.

"In many ways, this promotion is less a recognition of a position he has earned than an acknowledgment of the role he has already created through his leadership, initiative, and impact," Keenan added. "It reflects both the value he brings to our organization today and the tremendous potential he will continue to realize in the years ahead."



Tanner White Architects Highlights Growing Demand for Residential Design

As homeowner priorities continue to evolve, residential architecture is playing an increasingly important role in shaping living environments that balance functionality, sustainability, and long-term value. Tanner White Architects, a Westport-based architectural firm, is highlighting the growing demand for custom residential design as Connecticut homeowners seek personalized spaces that reflect modern lifestyles and future needs.

Across the United States, the housing market has undergone significant changes in recent years. Homeowners are placing greater emphasis on flexible layouts, energy efficiency, and designs that support both everyday living and remote work. These shifts have increased the value of thoughtful architectural planning, particularly in suburban and coastal communities where renovation and custom home construction remain strong.

Connecticut, and especially towns such as Westport, has seen continued interest in residential projects that combine aesthetic appeal with practical functionality. As a result, experienced architects are becoming essential partners in helping homeowners navigate the complexities of design, construction, and local regulations. Architectural firms are increasingly called upon to provide expertise that extends beyond visual design to include zoning compliance, site planning, sustainability strategies, and long-term property value considerations.

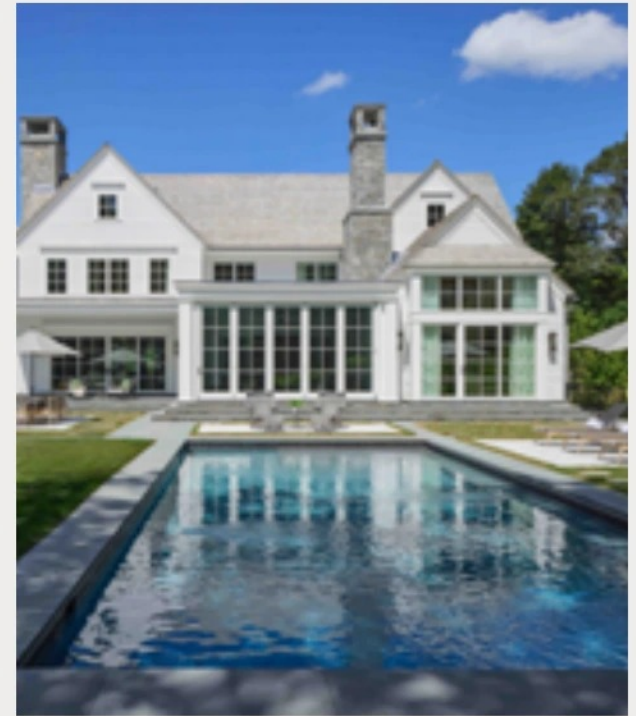
The demand for residential architects has been fueled in part by lifestyle changes that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic and have persisted in the years since. Many homeowners now prioritize dedicated home offices, adaptable living spaces, enhanced outdoor environments, and energy-efficient systems. These preferences have reinforced the importance of working with professionals who can create homes that

accommodate changing needs while maintaining architectural integrity.

Tanner White Architects emphasizes the benefits of engaging architects early in the planning process. Early collaboration can help homeowners identify opportunities, avoid costly revisions, and ensure that projects align with local regulations and environmental requirements. In Connecticut, where zoning ordinances and coastal development regulations can be particularly complex, professional guidance can be a critical factor in achieving successful project outcomes.

Sustainability has also become a defining influence on residential architecture. Homeowners are increasingly interested in environmentally responsible design solutions, including high-performance building materials, passive solar strategies, smart home technologies, and energy-efficient systems. Architects play a vital role in integrating these elements into cohesive designs that support both environmental goals and everyday comfort.

Beyond immediate functionality, residential architecture is increasingly viewed as a long-term investment. Well-designed homes often contribute to higher property values, improved energy performance, and enhanced quality of life. By focusing on craftsmanship, efficient spatial planning, and designs that respond to their surroundings, architectural firms help create residences that remain relevant and valuable for years to come.



Tanner White Architects' portfolio reflects a diverse range of residential projects, from custom homes to comprehensive renovations, each designed to meet the unique needs of individual clients. The firm's work demonstrates how thoughtful architecture can enhance both the living experience and the broader character of residential communities.

As housing trends continue to evolve, industry professionals expect demand for custom residential design to remain strong. Homeowners are increasingly seeking residences that align with changing lifestyles, emerging technologies, and environmental priorities. Architectural firms that prioritize education, collaboration, and innovative design solutions are well positioned to help shape the future of residential living.

Through its commitment to thoughtful design and informed planning, Tanner White Architects continues to support homeowners in making confident decisions about their architectural projects while contributing to a broader appreciation of the role architecture plays in both individual homes and community development.

Additional information about the firm and its services can be found at [Tanner White Architects official website](#).

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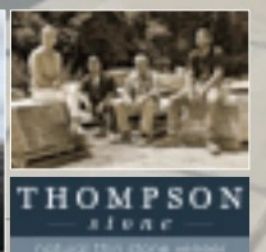
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John R. Mastera Unveils Design for Our Lady of Aparecida Church

Architect John Mastera blends tradition and modernity in the design of Our Lady of Aparecida Church in Bethel, CT

John R. Mastera Architects has unveiled an inspiring new design for Our Lady of Aparecida Parish Church in Bethel, Connecticut—a transformative project that reimagines sacred architecture for a modern, multi-purpose congregation. Led by acclaimed architect John R. Mastera, AIA, the proposed church brings together timeless Catholic symbolism, contemporary design innovation, and the evolving needs of a growing faith community.

Set on a scenic yet challenging site, the design honors centuries of Catholic tradition while embracing modern materials, functional flexibility, and community-centered planning. “We wanted to stay true to the history and sacred purpose of Catholic architecture,” said Mastera, “while creating a space that truly serves today’s parishioners—spiritually, socially, and culturally.”

The proposed church incorporates iconic architectural elements, including a dome, apse, and cloister, while utilizing contemporary construction methods to create a light-filled and welcoming environment. Rather than relying on the heavy stone and terracotta traditionally associated with cathedral architecture, the design achieves a sense of dignity and reverence through modern forms and materials.

One of the project’s early challenges involved maintaining the symbolic orientation central to Catholic church design. Traditionally, the apse faces east, representing the resurrection, while the entrance faces west. Mastera carefully adapted this historic principle to the realities of the site, preserving its spiritual significance while addressing practical constraints.

Beyond its role as a place of worship, the church was envisioned as a vibrant community gathering space. Flexible areas throughout the building are designed to accommodate educational programs, wellness classes, movie and game nights, parish celebrations, and large community events, including the

parish’s annual gala. This multi-purpose approach reflects the church’s role as both a spiritual home and a center for community life.

A defining feature of the design is the cloister encircling the sanctuary. Bathed in natural light, the cloister creates a peaceful pathway for reflection and prayer. Inspired by the nurturing spirit of the Virgin Mary, Mastera designed the cloister columns with graceful, flowing forms that symbolize warmth, protection, and maternal care.

Developed through close collaboration with parish leaders and congregation members, the design reflects the community’s vision for a welcoming, enduring place of worship. Balancing tradition with innovation, the proposed church aims to become a lasting landmark that enriches faith, celebrates culture, and serves future generations.

[Learn more](#) about the project at Mastera Architects.

**JOHN R MASTERA
+ ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS, AIA**
NEW YORK NEWPORT BEACH NEW CANAAN



Architects & the Economy Report

Quantifying the Impact of U.S. Architecture and Design firms

A powerful economic engine

While often viewed through the lens of individual projects, the profession's influence reaches far beyond the built environment. With 116,000 licensed architects and approximately 205,000 employees working in architecture firms across the U.S., the profession is a catalyst on a much larger scale. Architectural services help enable nearly \$700 billion in construction value and support more than 5.6 million jobs nationwide.

A profession positioned for long-term growth

The long-term economic trajectory of the profession reflects its essential role in the built environment. Gross billings at U.S. architecture firms grew from \$44 billion in 2008 to \$104.1 billion in 2023—a 136% increase over 15 years. The [AIA/Deltek Architecture Billings Index](#), the leading monthly economic indicator for nonresidential construction, has tracked the profession's long-term growth. Architectural employment is projected to continue that trend, with an 8% increase forecast through 2033—faster than the national average for all occupations.

Architecture addresses America's biggest challenges

Beyond the economic numbers, architecture and design firms are at the forefront of the challenges that define how Americans live, work, and build community.

Housing affordability & innovation

With over 40% of the U.S. population struggling with monthly housing costs, architects are designing the solutions — developing ADU prototypes, pre-approved modular plans, and cost-effective building systems that expand supply and improve equity. California's ADU legislation demonstrates the power of architect-led design solutions paired with policy: permits grew from 1,181 units in 2016 to nearly 25,000 by 2022.

Climate change mitigation & sustainable design

Buildings account for approximately 40% of U.S. energy consumption annually. When architects design sustainable, resilient buildings, they reduce energy consumption by 30–50% compared to traditional construction. LEED-certified buildings consume 25% less energy and 11% less water, while delivering average operating cost savings of 10.5% in year one, growing to 16.9% over five years. The AIA 2030 Commitment leads the profession's effort to design all buildings to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Workplace transformation

Architects design workplaces that are healthy, productive, and worth showing up for. Thoughtful design improves air quality, access to natural light, acoustic comfort, and spatial flexibility—all of which are measurable drivers of occupant wellbeing and organizational performance. The business case is clear: Wellness-oriented office design improves productivity, reduces absenteeism, and strengthens talent retention, with tenants paying 4.4–7.7% more per square foot in rent for spaces that carry health and wellness certifications.

[Read the full report](#)

About the Architects & the Economy report

AIA commissioned Piedmont Crescent Capital to assess and report on the economic impact of the architecture and design industry. The financial analysis and conclusions were produced by Chief Economist Mark Vitner in conjunction with AIA's research and economic team, including AIA former Chief Economist Kermit Baker, PhD, Hon. AIA; Vice-President of Research Michele A. Russo; Senior Director Jennifer Riskus; and Senior Manager Shakira Gonzalez Peña Dubé.



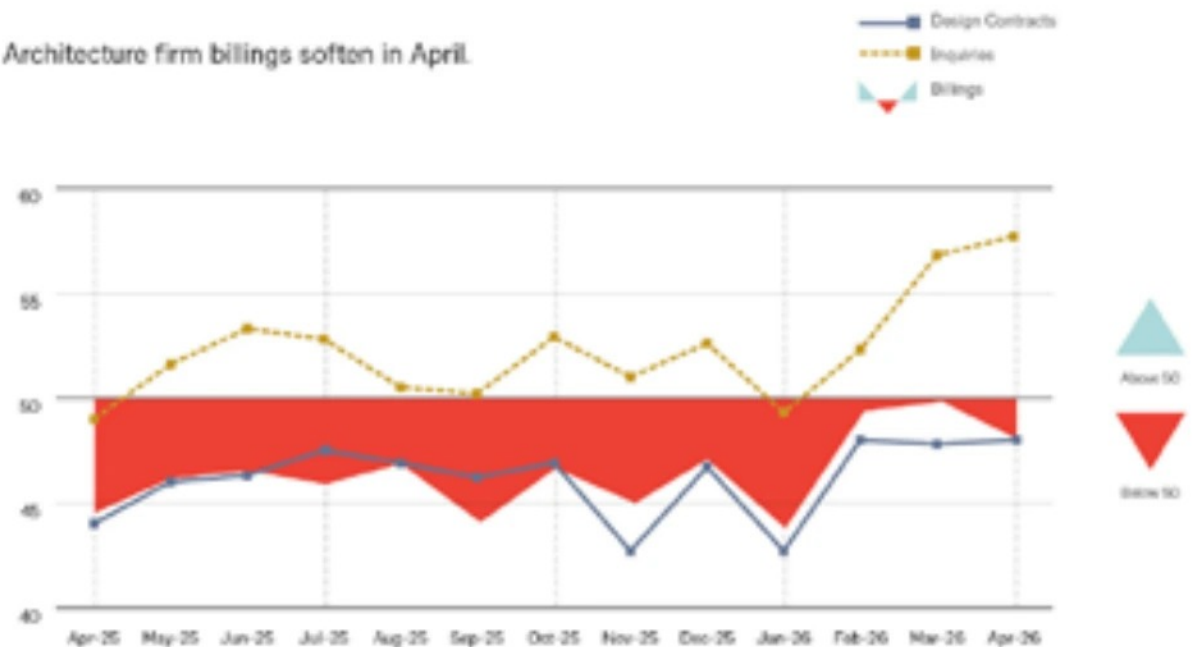
ABI April 2026: Architecture Firm Billings Retreat

Amidst ongoing instability in the broader economy, architecture firm billings retreated modestly in April



NATIONAL

Architecture firm billings soften in April.



The AIA/Deltek Architecture Billings Index® (ABI) score declined from 49.8 in March (meaning that billings at firms were essentially flat) to 48.3 in April (indicating that the share of firms that reported a decline in billings was greater than the share that reported an increase). National architecture firm billings have not crossed the 50-point threshold, a development that would indicate growth, since January 2023. However, inquiries into new projects increased for the third consecutive month in April, and the value of new design contracts remained close to returning to growth.

Business conditions stayed soft at firms in all regions of the country in April, with none reporting growth. For the third consecutive month, firms located in the West were the least likely to report a decline in billings, while firms in the South reported that billings softened further after showing encouraging signs of growth at the beginning of the year.

Billings continued to decline at firms with a commercial/industrial specialization, which has been

one of the weakest sectors for the last six months. However, firms with institutional and multifamily residential specializations reported modest growth in April, a promising sign that new projects are on the horizon.

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Uncertainty continues in the broader economy

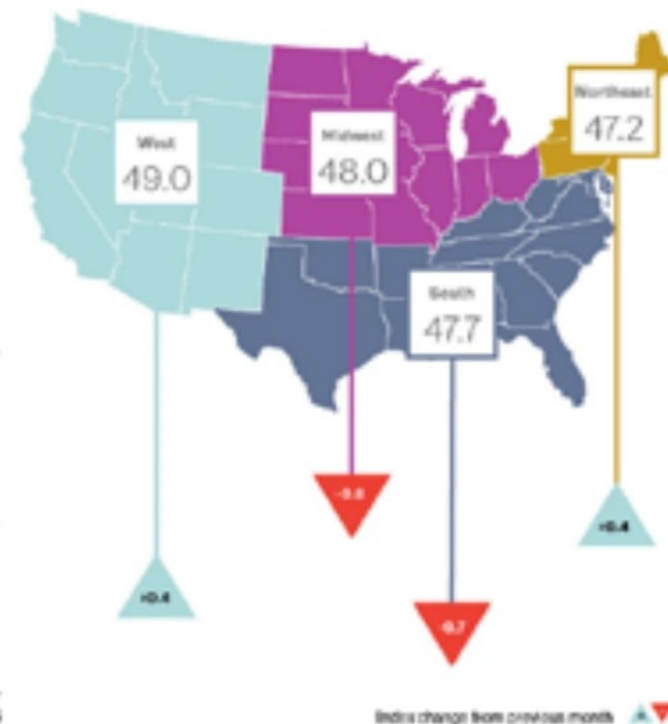
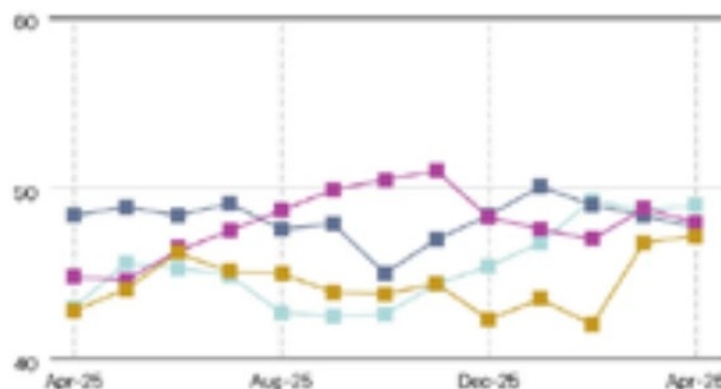
With the lingering conflict in Iran and closure of the Strait of Hormuz, conditions in the broader economy remained mixed in April. On the positive side, nonfarm payroll employment grew modestly, adding 115,000 new positions. However, architectural services employment declined for the first time this year in March, decreasing by 600 jobs. (March's data is the most recent available for that statistic.)

In addition, inflation continued to increase in April, as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 0.6% from March and by 3.8% on an annual basis. Continually rising energy prices were the largest contributor to the increase this month, but shelter and energy prices rose



REGIONAL

Business conditions continue to decline at firms in all regions.



as well. The proposed gas tax holiday may provide some relief, if enacted, but energy prices are unlikely to decline significantly until the Iran conflict ends, and even then, they may take some time to recover.

International projects accounted for an average of 6.5% of gross billings at firms working on them

This month's special practice questions asked architecture firms about their recent international work. Overall, just 9% of responding firm leaders reported that their firm has had any billings over the past five years from international projects, defined as projects that will be built outside of the U.S. for either a foreign or domestic client. This share was highest at large firms, as 21% of firms with annual billings of \$5 million or more reported international projects, and at firms located in the Northeast, where 12% of firms reported billings from international projects.

Regarding the past five years, 54% of firms with international billings reported projects in East

Asia and the Pacific (excluding China), and 50% of firms with international billings reported projects in Canada. Those were the most commonly cited locations for international projects. In addition, at least one in five responding firms reported projects in Central America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and Eurasia, the Middle East and North Africa, Mexico, and South and Central Asia (including India).

Among firms that have had international projects in the past five years, 65% reported that they currently have billings from international projects. These firms indicated that an average of 6.5% of their firm's gross billings over the past year came from international projects, and 24% reported that international billings accounted for 10% or more of their firm billings over the past year.

While nearly half of these firms (47%) reported that their share of gross billings from international projects is currently about the same as it was one year ago, more than one-third (35%) reported that billings from international projects are now slightly higher than they

were a year ago. On the other hand, 18% of firms reported that billings from international projects are currently lower than they were a year ago, with 6% indicating that they are significantly lower.

Finally, 14% of firm leaders responding to the survey indicated that their firm has future plans to work on international projects, while 81% said that they have no plans, and 5% said that they're uncertain. For firms that have no future plans to work on international projects, the most commonly cited reasons were:

- The potential headaches of international projects (50%)
- Their lack of interest in international work (43%)
- Their plentiful supply of domestic work (41%)
- Their lack of knowledge regarding how to pursue international projects (41%)

Join us for FREE at the next AIAU live webinar, Economic Update: Q3 2026 ABI Insights, on July 24, 2026, at 2 pm ET.

AIA Out & About

Branford Building Supplies Allied Adventure New England Brewing Co.

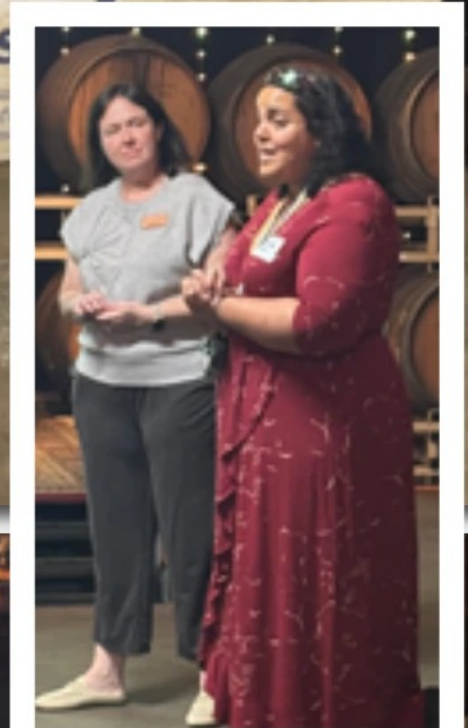
May 21st

Branford Building Supplies invited attendees to the New England Brewing Company to an evening of Connect Your Home w/Marvin and Branford Building Supplies!

It was an opportunity to learn more about their operation and offered two continuing education programs - Improving Health and Safety Through Smart Home Enabled, presented by Alex

Barmashi, Business Development at Marvin. Modern Doors For Today's Projects was the second program offered by Eric Bacon, Territory Sales Manager at TruStile.

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Getty Granite Allied Adventures

June 3rd

Participants joined us for a tour of our Quarry & Manufacturing facility at Getty Granite, followed by a presentation on Sustainability & Safety Practices in Granite Quarrying. The tour demonstrated how their products are processed, from the initial step of quarrying the stone from the ground through the many stages required to prepare it for shipment on a pallet. Attendees also participated in a HSW program presented by Chris Carboni of Getty Granite,

Sustainability & Safety Practices in Granite Quarrying, which focused on Sustainability and Safety practices used within a natural stone quarry & manufacturing facility. Getty Granite is a Natural Stone Quarrier & Manufacturer specializing in natural stone products, including Raw Slab, Landscape Steps & Boulders, Full Bed Veneer, Thin Stone Veneer, Architectural Stone, and Wire Sawn material.



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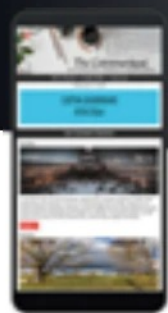
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AIA  **Connecticut**

JUN

19

AIA CT Office Closed - Juneteenth

20

HisTOURy Tours | Colonial Homes of Litchfield County: A Tour of Connecticut

24

2026 Trivia Night!

25

2026 Mansions of The Gilded Age

26

WIA & EDI Collaboration Coffee Meetups

JUL

1

Public Service Awards | Nominations Open

3

AIA CT Office Closed - Day before Independence Day

8

Building Performance & Regulations: AI Plan Review: How to build a Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC)

EDI Knowledge Community Meeting

10

Design Awards | Final Registration & Submission Closes

Women in Architecture (WIA) Meeting

13

Committee on the Environment (COTE) Meeting

14

Designing Nature: AIA CT Tour & Case Study of Batterson Park's Renewal

15

Professional Practice Knowledge Community Meeting

16

Emerging Professionals (EP) Community Meeting

17

Public Service Awards | Nominations Close

AIA CONNECTICUT CALENDAR

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FROM CONCEPT TO PERFORMANCE

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