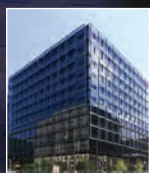


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ARCHITECTUREDC



Urban Upswing: Major Projects Poised to Transform DC's Core



Inside:

CityCenterDC Aims to Redefine Downtown
NPR Headquarters Brings Cultural Anchor to NoMa
Progression Place and Wonder Bread Factory Energize Shaw
Ahead: The Wharf Seeks to Redefine the City's Waterfront



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Lobby of the NPR Headquarters,
by Hickok Cole Architects.

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ON THE COVER: Rendering of the retail-lined pedestrian street at CityCenterDC, now nearing completion in downtown Washington. Rendering by Seventh Art, courtesy of Shalom Baranes Associates

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A RAPIDLY CHANGING CITY

Maria Carey



On one of those wretchedly hot and humid days in July, I took a cab to a friend's birthday party at a hotel in Washington's NoMa area. Starting at my house in Adams Morgan, the driver dropped down to U Street, which took me close to the Shaw area's recently renovated Howard Theatre and newly built Progression Place and Wonder Bread Factory projects, which you'll read about on page 40.

Approaching my destination near New York Avenue, I was among NoMa's many new office buildings, residential buildings, and restaurants, all of which seem to have appeared overnight. If you aren't a regular rider on that part of Metro's Red Line, you could easily have missed the rapid emergence of this new mixed-use district, which is big enough to be the downtown of a mid-sized American city. Among NoMa's many new buildings is the new NPR headquarters facility, which you'll read about on page 28.



Welcome!

Exiting the cab, I was struck by how this quick ride on a Saturday afternoon had provided a stunning reminder of the city's growth and change. And Washington is growing quickly indeed—by more than 1,000 people a month, which in turn is driving a rapid rate of change in several parts of town. In a recent lecture at the National Building Museum, Uwe Brandes of the Urban Land Institute said that equivalents to Washington's current rate of construction and development can be found today only in fast-growing Asian cities.

Rapid growth isn't always well planned, but the new CityCenterDC development on the old convention center site is the result of a carefully considered master plan that drew on lessons from well-functioning mixed-use neighborhoods in European cities. While the construction of CityCenter's buildings has progressed quickly, the project reflects a 10-year process of study and design development. See page 14 to view the result.

Like the city, **ARCHITECTUREDC** itself is growing. With this issue, which focuses on projects with a strong urban design element, we have more than 20,000 readers.

We hear that readers like to keep back copies of **ARCHITECTUREDC** as references, which is part of the reason why our articles include citations to earlier issues, but if you are one of our newer readers, or if you can't find a certain back copy in your collection, remember that you can find back issues online at architecturedc.net.

And as always, we welcome you to the District Architecture Center on 7th Street, NW, where you'll find exhibits (see the list at aiadac.com), classes, and resources for the public. Hope to see you soon!

Mary Fitch, AICP, Hon. AIA
Publisher
mfitc@aiadac.com

Contributors

Denise Liebowitz ("Rediscovering the Riverbank"), formerly with the National Capital Planning Commission, is a frequent contributor to **ARCHITECTUREDC**.

G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA ("Re-Centering Washington" and "This is NPR") is an independent curator and writer, as well as senior curator at the National Building Museum. He is the editor of **ARCHITECTUREDC**.

Ronald O'Rourke ("Center Stage") is a regular contributor to **ARCHITECTUREDC**. His father, Jack O'Rourke, was an architect in San Francisco for more than four decades.

Correction and Additional Credits

Due to an editorial error, the article "City (Part 1)" in the Summer issue of **ARCHITECTUREDC** incorrectly listed the name of Suman Sorg's firm. It is **Sorg Architects**, not Sorg and Associates.

Due to incomplete information supplied to the magazine, the article "City (Part 2)" in the Summer issue omitted some of the project credits for In Living Color. The full credits are as follows:

Architects: **Suzane Reatig Architecture**;
Suzane Reatig, FAIA and
Megan Mitchell, AIA
Structural Engineers: **Tadger-Cohen-Edelson Associates**
Civil Engineers: **CAS Engineering**
Contractor: **McCullough Construction**

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DesignDC 2013

by Mary Fitch, AICP, Hon. AIA

Members of the public are welcome at DesignDC, which brings together architects and other practitioners for a three-day education conference at the Walter Washington Convention Center and the District Architecture Center. This year's DesignDC, our seventh, takes place September 25-27. Members of the public will find two of the conference's plenary sessions and several of its tours of particular interest.

Shaping the Future —September 25 at 10:00 a.m.

The conference opens with a presentation by the well-known New Urbanist, Andrés Duany, FAIA. Along with his wife and partner, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, FAIA, Duany has designed more than 300 area master plans, including the one for Seaside, Florida, which *Time* magazine called the most influential new development in America. Duany's talk will show how architects and others who care about architecture and planning are in a unique position to shape and improve the future. Attendees will leave inspired about their role as agents of change within their own communities.

Safety and a Great Learning Environment —September 27 at 4:15 p.m.

Following the tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut, school designers and security officials have focused once again on how to ensure physical security on school campuses while still fostering comfortable, open learning environments. WAMU's Kojo Nnamdi will moderate a panel discussion on the topic featuring four local and national experts on school design and safety:

- **June Locker**, deputy director of capital construction services, DC Department of General Services, Washington, DC
- **Daniel J. McMahon, Ph.D.**, principal, DeMatha Catholic High School, Hyattsville, MD
- **Marisa R. Randazzo, Ph.D.**, managing partner, SIGMA Threat Management Associates, PA, of Alexandria, VA
- **Howard Levinson**, founder and lead consultant, Expert Security Consulting, Boston, MA

This diverse panel will examine design and operational guidelines that have proven to increase safety; approaches for creating a safe environment by changing the school culture; and how stakeholders can better work together to create schools that are both safe for students and teachers and engaging environments for learning. In Kojo's trademark style, the audience will be engaged throughout the program.

Tours—September 27

The final day of DesignDC takes place at the District Architecture Center and includes six tours of several new architectural projects around DC including Dunbar High School, the area's first LEED Platinum public school. Also on the schedule is a tour of CityCenterDC, which you'll read about on page 14 of this magazine, to be led by the project's architects and developers.

For more information about DesignDC or to register for any of these programs, please log on to www.aiaadesigndc.net. DesignDC is produced by AIA | DC, AIA Northern Virginia, AIA Potomac Valley, and the DC Chapter of the Congress for New Urbanism.

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Rendering by Neoscape,
courtesy of Shalom Baranes Associates

Aerial rendering of the first phase of CityCenterDC, with the two condominium buildings in the foreground, the rental apartment buildings in mid-ground, and the pair of office buildings in the background.

Re-Centering Washington:

CityCenterDC Aims to Redefine Downtown

by G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA

Where is the heart of Washington, DC? Most tourists would reply that it is the National Mall, or perhaps one of the more obvious federal landmarks such as the Washington Monument or the Capitol. For locals, however, the answer may be more complicated. Many area residents enjoy visiting the Mall for recreational purposes or a special event, and have a fond regard for the Washington Monument as a civic symbol, but the typical area resident actually visits the city's central federal enclave only rarely. Washingtonians are more likely to view the city as having a series of focal points—neighborhood commercial strips, local parks, churches, and other community magnets perhaps—but would struggle to identify a single *municipal* core.

That may change in the coming months with the completion of the first phase of CityCenterDC. A vast mixed-use development that is currently one of the largest construction projects on the East Coast, CityCenterDC will ultimately contain more than three million square feet of office, retail, hotel, and residential space built in three phases. Perhaps most important, the complex will include a series of open public spaces that





are unlike any others in Washington, and are already generating excitement among high-end retailers, restaurateurs, and prospective homeowners who believe the project is destined to become the new heart of downtown DC.

A Civic Vision

Former DC mayor Anthony Williams saw the obsolescence of the old Washington Convention Center, a dismal, windowless megastructure completed in 1982, as an opportunity. With plans in place to build a much larger, more modern, and more attractive convention center north of Mount Vernon Square, Williams envisioned the transformation of the old center's huge site—spanning from 9th to 11th Streets, NW, and from H Street to New York Avenue, NW—into a vibrant urban place. He was especially eager to reopen the portions of Eye Street and 10th Street that had been obliterated by the old, multi-block convention facility. Williams appointed a task force to study options, and in 2002, the District of Columbia government issued a request for proposals (RFP) for the development of the entire site.

“There was something pretty novel in that document,” recalled **Shalom Baranes, FAIA**, principal of **Shalom Baranes Associates**, one of the firms that would ultimately design large portions of the project. “The city was promoting the idea of reinforcing the L’Enfant Plan by re-knitting the street grid and reopening 10th and Eye Streets, but also promoting the need for serious open space. The document called for a *town* center—not federal—and the city didn’t necessarily want the public space to be adjacent to existing streets.”

The RFP cited examples of existing civic spaces that exemplified the city’s goals for the core of the project. “Interestingly,” noted Baranes, “all but one of the examples were European, and every single one of them was modern. The city knew what it wanted.” The RFP also called for approximately 300,000 square feet of retail space—an ambitious goal that took all of the interested developers by surprise, and which many of the participating architecture firms felt might be unachievable given the constraints of the site.

The process of selecting a development team took more than a year and generated near-continuous debate among DC officials, real estate interests, and community organizations. In the end, the city chose the proposal submitted jointly by the development firms of Hines Interests and Archstone (Hines later bought out Archstone’s ownership interest in the project). Hines hired the London-based firm of **Foster + Partners** to oversee the master plan for the site, with Shalom Baranes Associates as associated architects for the master planning phase.

Construction photo taken from between the two condominium buildings, looking westward down the pedestrian street.

Photo © Kea Taylor/Imagine Photography

View of the rental apartment building along H Street, NW, by Shalom Baranes Associates, showing the layered façades and terra cotta panels.



Photo by Shalom Baranes Associates

Construction photo looking eastward through the public plaza.



Photo © Kea Taylor/Imagine Photography

A New Kind of Civic Space for DC

The city's RFP called for a public plaza covering at least one acre, out of a total site area of 9.85 acres. Early in the planning process, the architects searched for an example of a similarly sized, retail-lined urban space that might serve as a good model, but they were unable to find one—a one-acre plaza was simply too large to support the vigorous level of retail and restaurant activity that DC officials desired. Following additional analysis of the site, the architects landed on the idea of creating a smaller central plaza linked to 9th and 11th streets by a long, relatively narrow pedestrian path, running due east-west, lined with shops and restaurants. Shorter open corridors would connect the plaza to H Street on the south and to Eye Street on the north, which would be reopened along with 10th Street in accordance with Mayor Williams' vision. All told, the smaller plaza and connecting pathways, plus a new park at the northwest corner of the site, exceeded the one-acre goal for open space set in the RFP.

Having settled on this approach, the architects then had to determine the appropriate proportions for the pedestrian path. Staff members from both architecture firms and from Hines measured exemplary streets and alleys in various cities and assessed their relative merits. The team wanted to ensure that CityCenterDC's internal, car-free street would be lively, but not uncomfortably crowded. They settled on a width of 24 feet—big enough to allow a 12-foot-wide path at the center for strolling shoppers, diners, and residents (and emergency vehicles, if necessary), plus six feet on either side for sidewalk cafés, store displays, and the like.

One logical result of the open space plan was the division of the first phase of the project—covering the entire site except for a wedge bordered by New York Avenue and 9th, 10th, and H streets—into three pairs of buildings. On the westernmost plot, between 10th and 11th streets, would be two office buildings. In the middle plot would be a pair of rental apartment buildings, while to the east would be two condominium buildings. The central plaza was sited at the juncture of the four residential structures.

Project: CityCenterDC,

Washington, DC

Master Planners:

Foster + Partners;

associated architects:

Shalom Baranes Associates

Design Architects for Office Buildings and

Condominium Buildings:

Foster + Partners

Design Architects for

Rental Apartment Buildings:

Shalom Baranes Associates

Executive Architects for Entire Project:

Shalom Baranes Associates

Landscape Architects:

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Meanwhile, the design team was experimenting with the overall massing of the project. In this regard, the architects had a tremendous advantage over many of their colleagues designing other buildings in height-limited Washington: the city government, which owned the land, was at liberty to set unusually flexible parameters for the scale of the individual buildings within the development. The residential components could rise to the full height permitted under federal and District law, but did not have to fill out the entire volume that normally would be permitted on such a site (and which a site's owner would usually need to fill in order to justify the high cost of building on urban land). In short, the city was willing to sacrifice a small portion of the potential rentable or sellable space in exchange for other civic amenities, and that trade-off was built into the financing deal between the city and the private firms developing the project.

The practical effect of that arrangement is that the rental apartment and condominium buildings could be designed to step down toward the open spaces within the site. This not only makes the proportions of the public plaza and pedestrian street more pleasant, but also ensures that they will receive abundant natural light and air throughout the day. In addition, the arrangement allowed the upper portions of the residential buildings to be sculpted into a cascade of balconies and terraces, making the adjacent individual living units more desirable.

Now that the project is nearing completion, the wisdom of the architects' unconventional approach to the design of the open spaces is becoming clear. Washington is often compared to Paris, inasmuch as both cities are known for their wide, grand avenues. But in Paris, those boulevards complement a complex network of narrow, winding, medieval streets, many of which are limited to pedestrians and are lined with charming shops and restaurants. Washington has very few of these more modestly scaled streets, and even fewer in retail districts (Cady's Alley, in Georgetown, is one very pleasant example). The pedestrian alley at CityCenterDC promises to provide a welcome balance to the city's typically broad thoroughfares, while the plaza is likely to be a popular gathering

spot, filled with outdoor cafés and fountains and animated by frequent performances and events. While the developers have not yet released an official list of tenants, several very high-end retailers and prominent restaurateurs reportedly have already signed leases.

Three Distinct Architectures

Once the master plan was complete, the design team shifted its focus to the architecture of the individual buildings in the first phase of the project. Foster + Partners was the design architect for the office buildings and condominium buildings, with Shalom Baranes Associates as executive architects. Shalom Baranes Associates was the design architect for the two rental buildings in the middle, and also coordinated the design of the vast underground structure, including parking, loading docks, and service functions, that connects all of the seemingly discrete structures above.

The two darkly elegant office buildings are part of the wave of glassy commercial architecture that has hit Washington and other major cities over the past decade. In this case, the buildings hark back to one of Lord Norman Foster's seminal early buildings, the Willis Faber & Dumas headquarters in Ipswich, England, completed in 1975, which is notable for its reflective black glass curtain wall that becomes transparent when the building is internally lit at night. Unlike Willis Faber, however, the CityCenterDC buildings are relieved by a grid of sunscreens on the east, south, and west façades, which serve the practical purpose of reducing solar heat gain but also lend visual depth to the architecture. The sunscreens are deeper toward the tops of the buildings, which are exposed to more sunlight than lower levels.

The extreme regularity of the office buildings' perimeter façades eases somewhat along the pedestrian street. The buildings step back above the second floor, and two pairs of mini-atrium towers provide vertical accents along the walls of the alley. One tenant—a law firm—has leased all of one building and most of the other, with an option to take over the remainder if the need arises later. In order to allow the two buildings to work almost as a



Rendering of the entrance to the public plaza from H Street, NW, showing the portal lined with digital art.

Rendering by Seventh Art, courtesy of Shalom Baranes Associates

single structure, the architects provided a series of minimalist bridges spanning the retail walkway.

Across the newly reopened 10th Street from the office buildings are the pair of rental apartment buildings, designed by Shalom Baranes Associates, which are shaping up to be the most distinctive components of the project. Their façades are composed of a syncopated pattern of windows, balcony openings, and solid panels, the proportions of which all emphasize the vertical. The solid panels—some of which are rain screens, offset from the solid planes that actually enclose the structures—are, in turn, sheathed in horizontal terra cotta tiles of several slightly different colors, giving the buildings a subtly mottled character. The use of terra cotta tiles as a finish material recalls the prevalence of glazed terra cotta and other forms of masonry in much of the late 19th- and early 20th-century commercial architecture of downtown Washington.

The apartment buildings take advantage of a provision of DC regulations that allows portions of residential structures to project over sidewalks or other public spaces, within certain limits. “We used projections as a primary massing technique,” noted **Robert M. Sponseller, AIA**, lead design architect for the project at Shalom Baranes Associates. “The outer perimeter of each building is defined by the terra cotta plane, but behind that, balconies weave in and out, creating varied shadows and giving [the buildings] a sense of depth.” In accordance with the overall massing plan for the project, the upper levels step back from the pedestrian corridor, creating tiers of green roofs and providing space for a fitness center with a rooftop pool.

The biggest surprise in the rental apartment component of the project is a 40-foot cantilever at the northwest corner of the public plaza. City officials, concerned that the open space might become too isolated from the street, asked the project team to leave a much wider passage open to Eye Street. The architects, unconvinced that the city’s concern was justified, proposed the cantilever as a compromise. By lifting that wing of the building off the ground, they ensured the plaza’s visibility from the street, but retained the vital sense of enclosure that is likely to make the plaza so attractive in the first place.

At the eastern edge of the site, the two condominium buildings, designed by Foster + Partners, also take advantage of projections into public space, but employ a very different aesthetic from that of the rental apartment towers. The façades of the condominium buildings generally emphasize the horizontality of the balconies and floor slabs, particularly on the south-facing H Street side, where the window wall is consistently set back from the balcony line, yielding strong shadows on a sunny day. The condominium façades incorporate sliding, louvered panels that can be adjusted based on residents’ desires, thus adding an irregular and changeable aspect to the buildings’ appearance.



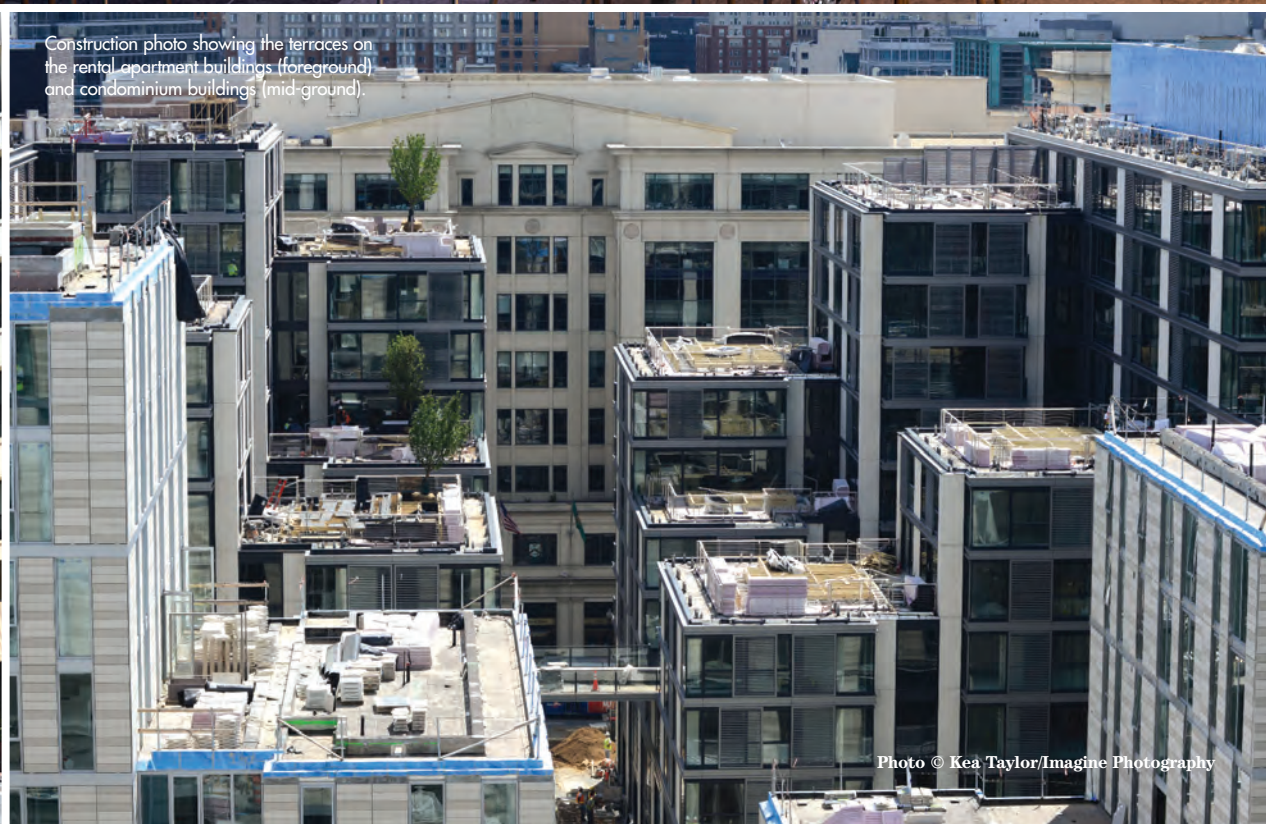
Rendering of the public plaza, with the condominium buildings to the left and the rental apartment buildings to the right.



Construction photo of the condominium buildings, by Foster + Partners.



Rendering by Seventh Art, courtesy of Shalom Baranes Associates



Construction photo showing the terraces on the rental apartment buildings (foreground) and condominium buildings (mid-ground).

Photo © Kea Taylor/Imagine Photography

“We both have an interest in supporting ‘downtown’ life,” said Fred Dever, who is buying a condo at CityCenterDC with his partner Eric Czander. Dever and Czander, who just sold their row house in Mount Pleasant in anticipation of the move, were also attracted to the green aspects of the project (which is aiming for LEED Gold certification for Neighborhood Development), including easy access to mass transit. “Upon every run or bike ride past [the site],” added Dever, “we both feel proud to call CityCenterDC home.”

At the point where the southerly rental and condominium apartment buildings meet along H Street, the passageway to the central plaza will be marked by a portal lined with digital art. The upper canopy of this portal will shield visitors arriving via elevators from the public parking garage below. If cleverly programmed, this electronic art gateway could become a popular and distinctive landmark in its own right.

Still to Come. . .

As part of the first phase of the CityCenterDC project, landscape architecture firms Gustafson Guthrie Nichol Ltd. and Lee and Associates are overseeing the design of a small, triangular park at the northwestern corner of the site. The park should be fairly prominent not only because of its location along New York Avenue, an important thoroughfare, but also because it will be, in effect, the front yard of a major retail store on the Eye Street side of the northerly office building. Although rumors are rampant as to which retailer is taking the space, at the time of this writing, the lease has not yet been signed.

To the east of the triangular park is a wedge-shaped parcel that will be the site for the much smaller second and third phases of CityCenterDC. The second phase, developed by Hines, consists of a hotel the design of which has not yet been publicized. The final phase, at the northeastern corner of the overall site, will be an office building developed by Gould Property Company and designed by Pickard Chilton.

Once all three phases are complete, CityCenterDC will include approximately 300,000 square feet of retail space—the figure that seemed improbably ambitious to so many observers when the project was first proposed over a decade ago. According to Shalom Baranes, there are already signs that the development will create a turning point in Washington’s retail scene. Other projects his firm is designing nearby are attracting interest from potential retail tenants that would have been considered highly unlikely prospects just a few years ago. Soon, thanks in large part to CityCenterDC, downtown Washington may finally have the critical mass of retail and dining establishments that it has long lacked. 🍷

Construction photo of the office buildings, by Foster + Partners, with one of the rental apartment buildings by Shalom Baranes Associates in the right background.



General view of the construction site, with the condominium buildings at left, rental apartment buildings at center, and office buildings at right. Visible between the apartments and offices is the block of 10th Street, NW, that is being re-opened as part of the project.





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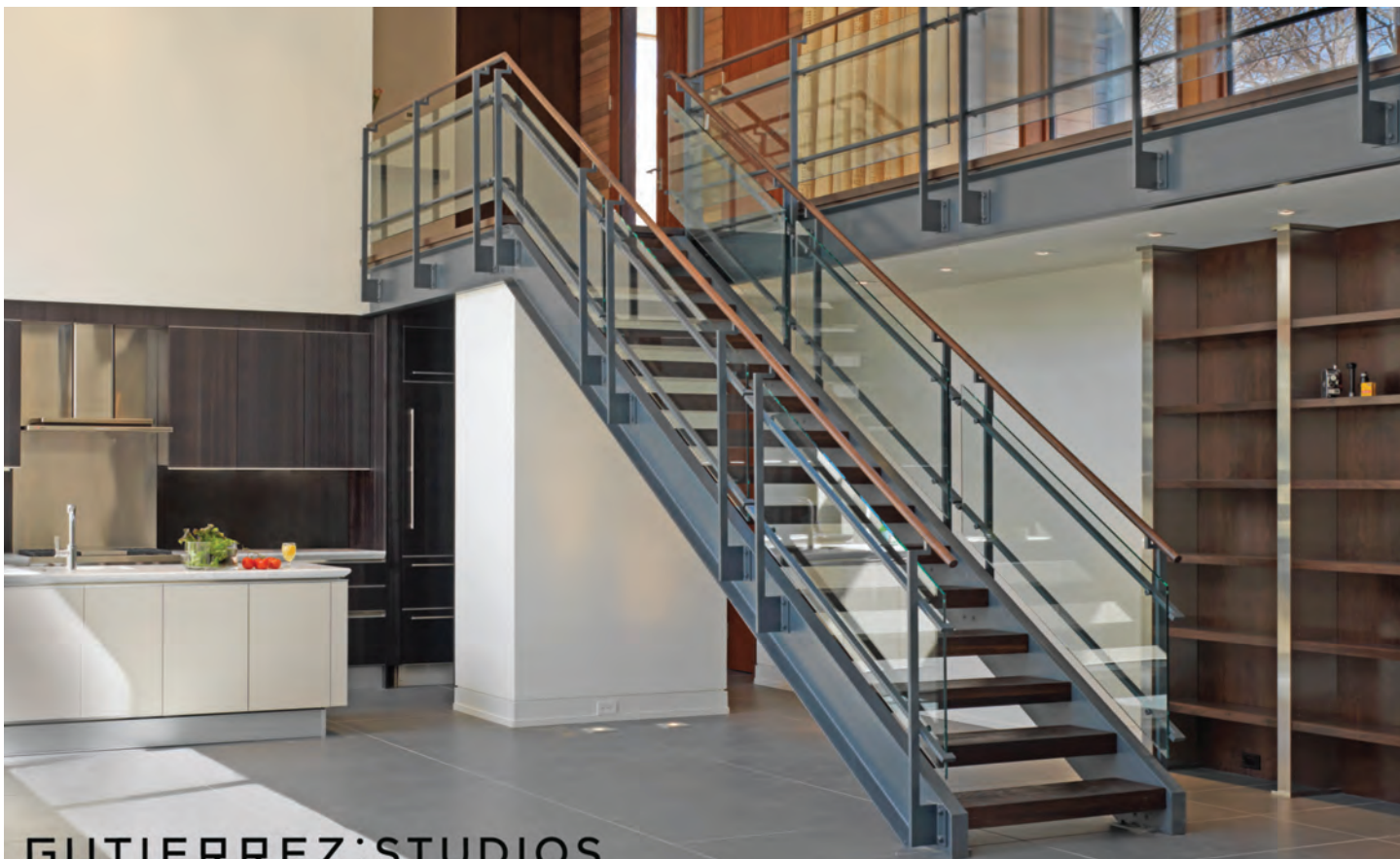
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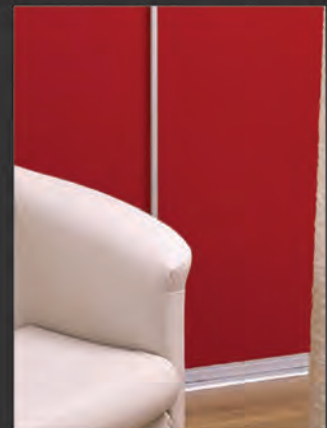


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Lobby of the NPR Headquarters, showing the "Media Mosaic" wall surrounding Studio 1.

This is NPR:

New Facility Reflects Radio Network's Distinct Culture

by G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA

"Fifth floor," says a recorded voice as the elevator doors open to discharge a group of visitors to the headquarters of NPR. Suddenly, the elevator passengers all smile in unison as they recognize the comfortingly familiar voice as that of Susan Stamberg, the legendary broadcast journalist who has been a fixture of public radio for more than four decades. "That's awesome," coos one visitor. "It's like she's part of the building."

So it is with NPR's new home, a 330,000-square-foot facility in the rapidly developing NoMa (North of Massachusetts) neighborhood near Union Station. The custom building, designed by **Hickok Cole Architects**, expresses the client organization's identity in ways large and small. From the site selection process to the patterns of glass fins that adorn the upper levels, the entire project

is a reflection of NPR's earnest, modest, and endearingly nerdy corporate culture.

For nearly 20 years, NPR was based in a nondescript building on Mount Vernon Square. Built in stages in the 1960s and '70s as a commercial office building, it strained to accommodate the public radio network's highly specialized needs. A single news story or radio program might involve staff members working on different floors—or even in different buildings, once the network outgrew the main property—making face-to-face collaboration and information-sharing difficult. Moreover, as the pace of news-gathering and reporting accelerated in the digital age, the old building could not keep up with burgeoning data and communications requirements.



Photo © Adrian Wilson



Photo © Anice Hoachlander

In 2008, NPR bought a large site on North Capitol Street that included a historic warehouse built by the C&P Telephone Company in 1926-27. The old warehouse was plain but nonetheless handsome, with modest Art Deco details and remarkably solid walls made of poured-in-place concrete. It was also a locally designated historic landmark, meaning that any significant changes to the building would require the approval of DC government authorities. A majority of the warehouse was restored as part of the NPR project, though DC officials approved the demolition of the rear of the structure in order to free up needed space for an addition that is substantially larger than the original building.

NPR was attracted to the site for a couple of reasons. One was practical—it was large enough to fit the organization's substantial space needs. But the second was more emotional. When NPR moved into its previous headquarters in 1994, it was in a truly transitional neighborhood—somewhat downtrodden after decades of disinvestment, but with excellent prospects for rejuvenation as inner cities were becoming popular

once again. The organization relished the opportunity to be at the leading edge of that renaissance.

NPR viewed the NoMa site in similar terms—in this case, the redevelopment of the neighborhood was already well under way when NPR bought the property, but as yet the area lacked an obvious anchor. NPR views itself not just as a media organization, but as a cultural institution, and the network's leadership was eager to engage the community surrounding its new home. The building therefore was designed to be not merely a container for offices and broadcast studios, but also an amenity for the neighborhood, incorporating an exhibition area and a ground-floor auditorium for public events and performances. The project also includes a small, pleasantly landscaped public plaza at the southwest corner of the site. The plaza is punctuated by a tall, lighted pylon bearing the NPR logo, which has already become a landmark in the area.

The architectural composition of the new structure was conceived to complement the historic warehouse. Inspired by the existing building's relatively large windows



Main newsroom, with broadcast studios at left and the main staircase at right.

Photo © Adrian Wilson



NPR Headquarters, with the renovated historic structure at left. Note the glass fins lining the curtain wall of the new office block, the irregular pattern of which is an abstraction of an FM radio wave.

Photo © Adrian Wilson

Project: NPR Headquarters,
Washington, DC

Architects: **Hickok Cole Architects**

Landscape Architects: **Oculus**

Graphics/Branding Consultants:

Poulin + Morris

Lighting Consultants:

Bliss Fasman Lighting Design

Studio and Theater Architects:

Bloomfield & Associates

Acoustics Consultants:

Shen Milsom & Wilke, Inc.

Building Envelope Consultants:

Simpson Gumpertz & Heger

Structural Engineers:

Thornton Tomasetti

MEP Engineers: **Dewberry**

Civil Engineers: **VIKA, Inc.**

Development Managers:

Boston Properties, Inc.

General Contractor: **Balfour Beatty**



Soundbites café.

Photo © Adrian Wilson

set into heavy concrete walls, the architects designed the addition as an assemblage of glassy volumes outlined by robust concrete frames. While the broad expanses of glass are unmistakably modern, the concrete frames clearly relate to the older building by virtue of their substantial mass and similar color. The composition of the building also expresses the various functions within, with public areas on the lower levels of both the historic warehouse and the addition, the newsroom at the core of the complex, and offices occupying a distinct, projecting block at the top of the new structure. The glass curtain walls on the upper levels are lined with blue glass fins, the seemingly irregular pattern of which is actually an abstraction of an FM radio wave.

The main entrance to the building is off the public plaza, through a glass wall delineated by one of the concrete frames. Electronic signage and graphics, both inside and outside the main lobby, animate the entry sequence and break down perceived barriers between the public and private realms. Above the exterior doors, facing outward, is an electronic “crawl,” or ticker, that

broadcasts news headlines. Inside the lobby, directly opposite the main doors, is a “Media Mosaic” wall, consisting of a patchwork of textured panels, printed graphics, and electronic screens with changing imagery (plus another crawl, in case the visitor missed any vital news tidbits on the way in). The Media Mosaic wall turns a corner at the south end of the lobby, where it lines one side of a corridor that serves both as a linear exhibition space and as the circulation link to the public auditorium, known as Studio 1.

At the north end of the lobby, just beyond a small gift shop where visitors may buy NPR swag and other items—who could resist a Carl Kasell “Little Thinker” doll?—is the main reception area, which sits at the juncture between the renovated warehouse and the new structure. The space blends sleek new materials and preserved elements of the historic warehouse, including several of the brawny “mushroom” columns—cylindrical columns with flared crowns—that are characteristic of the older building. Nearby, on the ground floor of the historic warehouse, are a conference center and the main employee

café, known as Soundbites, which also serves as a venue for staff meetings and events.

One of NPR's explicit requirements for the new facility was a single, contiguous newsroom with 100,000 square feet of floor space. Given that the total footprint of the building—including the historic structure—was less than 90,000 square feet, it was clear that the newsroom would have to occupy more than one level. To create the open, seamless space that the client desired, the architects split the newsroom onto two floors linked by an internal atrium. Despite its location at the very core of the building, both vertically and horizontally, the atrium is almost miraculously bright thanks in large part to a generous band of clerestory windows (on the exterior, the clerestory also serves to provide visual separation between the roof of the historic warehouse and the new projecting office block, helping to ensure that the former continues to read as a distinct element within the larger composition).

Along the perimeter of the atrium are various broadcast studios, which are highlighted by brightly colored panels and supergraphic studio numbers. The smaller studios are used for regular news broadcasts throughout the day and night. Thanks to the latest digital technology, news readers may now control their own broadcasts directly from the studio, though another staff member may still handle the controls from an adjacent booth or, when necessary, from a desk on the main newsroom floor. At the northern end of the space, on the lower level, is Studio 31, now the home base of many of NPR's most popular programs, such as *All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition*.

The two levels of the newsroom are connected to each other—and to floors above and below—by a spacious staircase. Though enclosed for fire protection purposes, the stairway is visible from each floor through large windows, and is designed to be a pleasant space in which staff members may meet randomly, potentially fostering the sharing of ideas and information. On the office levels, open-plan desk systems and perimeter hallways serve a similar function. For those occasions when privacy is needed, various “30-minute” rooms with small meeting tables are scattered throughout the work areas.

For **Yolanda Cole, AIA, IIDA, LEED AP**, a senior principal of Hickok Cole and principal-in-charge of the NPR headquarters, the quality of the project may be judged by the extent to which the design has enhanced the radio network's ability to fulfill its mission. “We wanted to make it easier for them to communicate and collaborate with each other,” she said. One indication of success came in an e-mail written by a delighted NPR staffer after the organization moved into the new building. Referring to the architects' assurances about the potential positive impact of the design, the staffer wrote, “Everybody was right about everything.” 🐼



A corridor in the conference center.



Aerial view of the NPR complex, showing the green roof atop the historic C&P Telephone Company warehouse.

Photo © Anice Hoachlander



Photo © Adrian Wilson



Main reception area, showing some of the preserved mushroom columns from the historic warehouse.

Photo © Adrian Wilson





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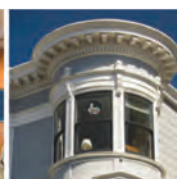
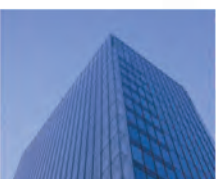
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Progression Place, with the glassy office block in the foreground, and the residential component in the left background.

Linchpin

Two Adjacent Projects Create A New Center of Gravity in Shaw

by Ronald O'Rourke



Photo © Anice Hoachlander

The redevelopment of Washington's Shaw neighborhood, which has been gaining momentum since the 1990s, now features two new construction and renovation projects—Progression Place and the Wonder Bread Factory—that are completing the rejuvenation of one of the neighborhood's key blocks.

The block in question is located on 7th Street, NW, the area's main north-south artery, and is bordered on its other sides by S Street, T Street, and Wiltberger Street (a narrow passage midway between 6th and 7th Streets, NW). The block is bracketed at one end by the recently renovated Howard Theatre (see the Fall 2012 issue of *ARCHITECTUREDC*), and at the other end by an entry to the Shaw Metro station. Progression Place occupies

almost all of the 7th Street side side of the block, while the Wonder Bread Factory takes up most of the Wiltberger Street side.

Progression Place

Progression Place is a mixed-use development designed by **Eric Colbert & Associates (ECA)** and **Devroux + Purnell**, which has now been succeeded by a new firm, **d+p partners llc**. The overall project architect at ECA was **Paul Andresino**; he was assisted by senior project architect **Ira Tattelman**.

The project includes a new office building with 103,000 square feet of space, a new residential building



The residential portion of Progression Place, with restored historic structures below.

Photo © Anice Hoachlander



Rendering showing the residential block with historic row houses in front.

Courtesy of Eric Colbert & Associates

Project: Progression Place, Washington, DC

Architects: **Devroux & Purnell** (initial design architects for exterior of office and residential buildings); **Eric Colbert & Associates** (design architects for interiors of office and residential buildings and restoration of historic structures; executive architects for entire project)
 Landscape Designers: **Peter Liu Associates**
 Structural & Civil Engineers: **Delon Hampton & Associates Chartered**
 MEP Engineers: **META Engineers PC**
 Historic Preservation Consultants: **EHT Tracerics**
 LEED Consultants: **Millar Associates**
 Historic Building Restoration Contractor: **Worcester Eisenbrandt Inc.**
 General Contractor: **Davis Construction** in joint venture with **Gilford Corporation**

with 205 apartments, and several low-rise structures along 7th Street, NW—most of them renovated, a couple of them new infill structures—with 19,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space. Planning for the project spanned several years and included multiple meetings for soliciting public input. A principal occupant of the office building is the United Negro College Fund, which has moved its headquarters to the building. In the residential structure, one-quarter of the apartments are designated as affordable units.

The office building's sleek and outwardly canted walls, clad in silver-tone metal and glass, suggest a structure that is leaning into the future. The angled walls and a small, triangular-shaped street-level pavilion that projects

outward from the building at its corner help define a plaza for the Metro station entry. A knife-point end on the entry-level pavilion can be viewed as a counterpoint to the sharply angled end of the Watha T. Daniel-Shaw Public Library (see the Winter 2010 issue of *ARCHITECTUREDC*), which is located about a block away, near the Shaw Metro station's other entry.

The new residential tower is set well back from the street, behind the project's low-rise commercial structures, so as to not overwhelm either those structures or the historically significant Howard Theatre. "A lot of time was spent with the [District government's] historic division looking at the massing in the context to the Howard Theatre," said Eric Colbert, the principal of ECA.

"The design team sculpted the northeast mass of the building with views to the Howard Theatre in mind."

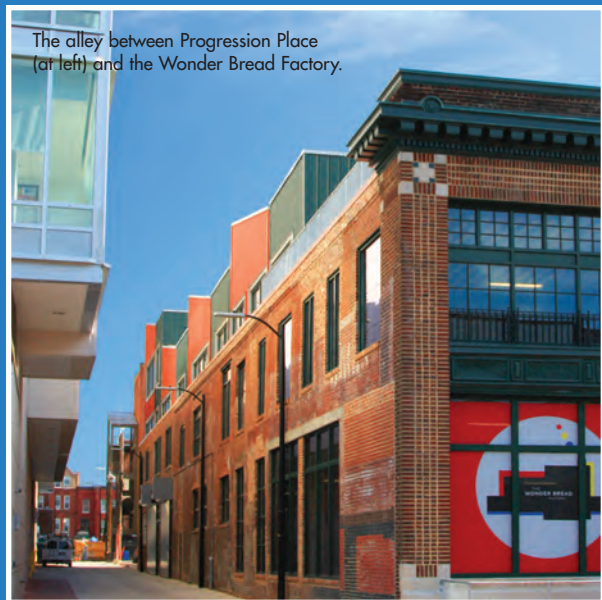
For the restoration of the façades of the low-rise commercial buildings, ECA worked closely with Emily Eig of **EHT Traceries**, a research and consulting firm specializing in architectural history and historic preservation in the Washington metro area. "She provided historic photographs for us to use in recreating the original detailing, and specifications for the restoration of the original brick work and other historic materials," Colbert said.

The residential building includes a glass-clad segment on the side facing the Metro entry, completing the very modern look of that plaza, but otherwise is sheathed primarily in masonry, like most of the older buildings in the area. "Since the residential portion sits above the historic structures on 7th Street, the use of brick helps to create a link between old and new at the north end of the site," Colbert said.

"The transition in scale from the historic structures on 7th Street to the setback residential mass is accomplished through the use of bays which pick up the rhythm of the historic row buildings," he added. "Material type and color were manipulated to break down the mass of the new residential façade. The dark metal of the top floors sits comfortably on the warm masonry below."

The project, Colbert noted, "reflects several priorities of the DC Office of Planning, including density atop intermodal transit locations, mixed uses to create a daytime and nighttime destination, architecture that complements the surrounding historic district, and LEED Silver Certification for the office building and environmentally friendly design for the apartments."

The newly restored façade of the Wonder Bread Factory.



Courtesy of R2L:Architects



Courtesy of R2L:Architects



Wonder Bread Factory

The Wonder Bread Factory project, designed by **R2L:Architects**, preserves the brick outer walls of the old Wonder Bread factory building at 641 S Street, NW, while completely rebuilding the interior to create a project with 98,000 square feet of retail and office space on four levels plus a basement.

The building, whose oldest section dated to about 1913, was originally built for Dorsch's White Cross Bakery, which is why the façade incorporates white crosses. The facility was bought in 1936 by Wonder Bread, which continued to operate it as a bakery for Wonder Bread and Hostess Cake products until the late 1980s. The property remained vacant for the next two decades, during which time the interior of the building decayed.

The design for the renovation increased the building's height to four floors. The fourth floor is set well back from the building's front on T Street, NW, preserving the appearance of the historic façade when viewed from the street. On the building's long (Wiltberger Street) side, the newly added levels employ setbacks to break up the building's mass and coordinate with reference lines established by the historic side wall.

Recalling the building's industrial past, the added volume is sheathed in corrugated metal panels reminiscent of shipping containers. The panels are painted in orange and green tones that complement the darker brick of the building's historic outer walls, and are punctuated by large aluminum-framed windows. The newly built interiors offer loft-like spaces with open plans. The ground floor and basement level are being offered for retail use; the top three levels are intended as Class A office space.

Project: Wonder Bread Factory Renovation,
Washington, DC

Architects: **R2L:Architects**

Structural Engineers: **MGV Consulting Structural Engineers, Inc.**

MEP Engineers: **Schwartz, Sievers, Anolia Engineering, LLC**

Civil Engineers: **Dewberry**

General Contractor: **McCullough Construction, LLC**



Photo by Bradley W. Johnson, AIA|DC

A Shift in Materials

In combination with the Howard Theatre, Progression Place and the Wonder Bread Factory create a block with a mix of residential, cultural, retail, and office spaces intended to further strengthen Shaw as a live-work-play neighborhood. At the same time, in combination with nearby projects such as the Watha T. Daniel-Shaw Public Library and numerous modern residential buildings by Suzane Reatig Architecture (see, for example, the Summer 2013 issue of *ARCHITECTUREDC*), Progression Place and the Wonder Bread Factory are helping to shift the Shaw neighborhood from an area dominated by brick buildings to one that is more of a mix of masonry, metal paneling, and glass. The emerging result is a more varied built environment that displays layers of history rather than a single historical moment. 🏠

Rear addition to the
Wonder Bread Factory.



Photo by Bradley W. Johnson, AIA/DC

A photograph of the interior of a dining hall, featuring long wooden tables, red chairs, and a high ceiling with exposed wooden beams and hanging lights. The space is bright and modern.

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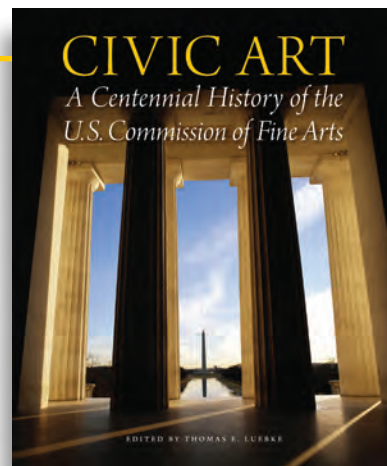
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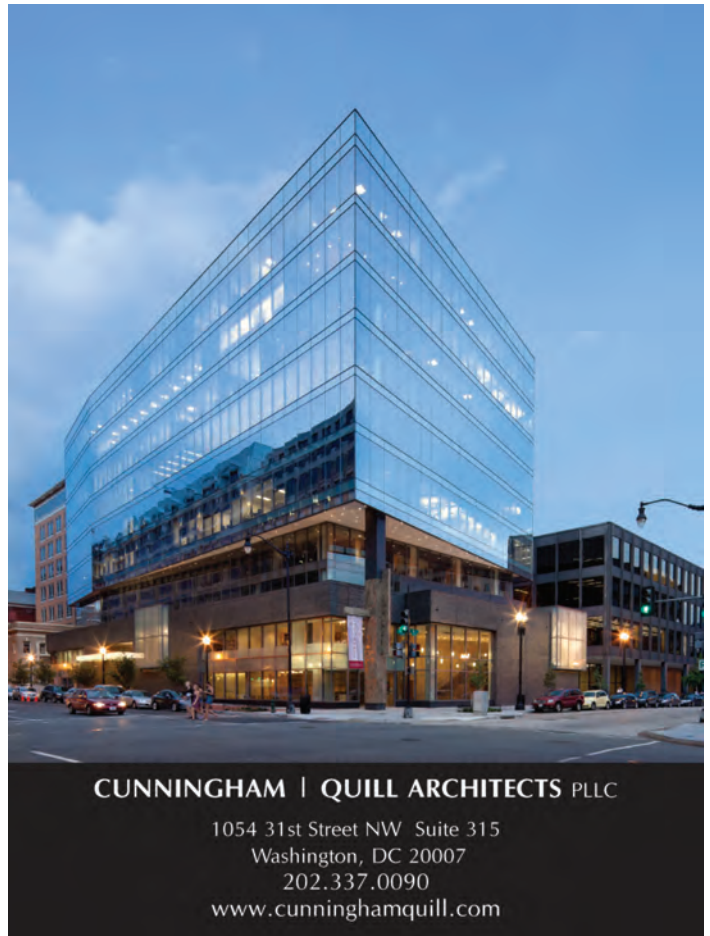
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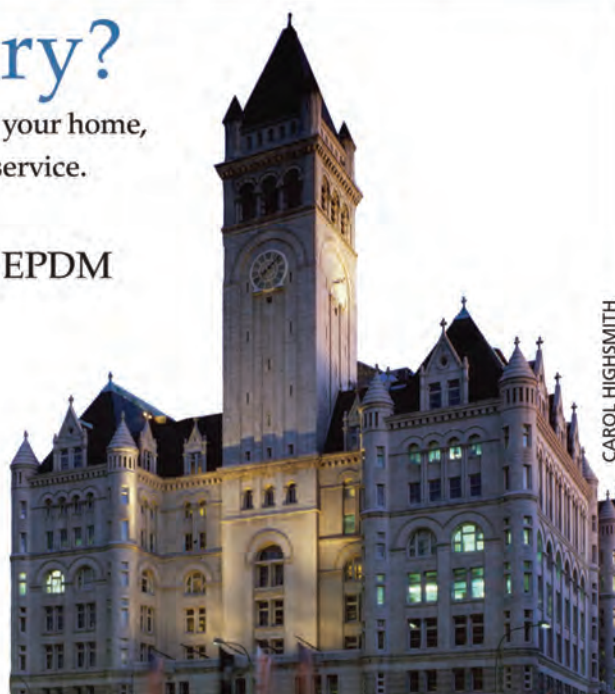
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Aerial rendering of the first phase of The Wharf.

Rendering © Perkins Eastman



Rendering of "Parcel 2," with a slot through one of the buildings allowing views from Banneker Circle to the water.

Rendering © Perkins Eastman



Rediscovering the Riverbank:

Southwest Waterfront Plan Promises Vibrant New Urban Precinct

by Denise Liebowitz

For generations, Washingtonians have loved to hate their Southwest waterfront. Get ready: here comes the big makeover. If the project's designers and developers make good on their promises, this much-maligned, long-neglected backwater will soon take its place among other urban waterfront success stories such as Seattle's Pike Place and Baltimore's Inner Harbor. The area will boom 24/7 with commerce, culture, and recreational activity; it finally will fully connect to the rest of the city; and it will be a model of sustainable waterfront practices.

Known as the "Sixth Street Wharf" since the time of the Civil War, the Southwest waterfront was once a working seaport, with fish wharves, municipal piers for tobacco and farm produce, ice and coal docks, and steamship wharves. In its prime, the area was an important driver

of economic growth. But as in so many other cities, when industry began to recede from Washington's urban landscape, its waterfronts were abandoned and fell victim to blight and decay.

Increasingly, civic leaders, urban planners, and city residents recognize that the best use for prime waterfront real estate may not always be parkland. Instead, they envision vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods that attract both locals and visitors, that are animated throughout the year, and that are unapologetically urban. The Wharf, a high-profile project now being planned by Hoffman-Madison Waterfront, a joint venture of PN Hoffman & Associates and Madison Marquette, promises to be such a neighborhood.

Rendering of the proposed waterfront mews at The Wharf.



Rendering © Perkins Eastman



Rendering of a retail corridor through the residential project by Handel Architects.

Rendering © Handel Architects

Stretching along the water's edge between the Washington Channel and Maine Avenue, The Wharf, when completed, will extend across 27 acres of land and 24 acres of water and comprise ten mixed-use buildings ranging from two to twelve stories high. It will include 960,000 square feet of office space, 680 hotel rooms, 1,300 rental and condo units (including a significant number set aside for below market-rate housing), lots of street-level retail, a music hall, and 2,300 underground parking spaces. Intimate mews and landscaped plazas between the buildings will lead pedestrians from Maine Avenue to the waterfront lined with new marinas, 500 boat slips, and several commercial and recreational piers extending into the channel. At the western edge of the development, Washington's historic fish market will be preserved, while a three-acre public park will anchor the eastern end and the approach to Fort McNair.

Maine Avenue will be refashioned as a tree-lined boulevard, and on the water side, between the channel and the line of buildings, a wide pedestrian promenade will accommodate bicycles, a limited number of slow-moving vehicles, and outside dining. The master plan shows streetcars running along Maine Avenue, and the

area is already within striking distance of the L'Enfant Plaza and Waterfront Metro stations. Across Maine Avenue, The Wharf's developers, working with federal planners, are designing a grand staircase that will descend from Banneker Overlook, connecting the waterfront to 10th Street, SW, and the National Mall.

"We are bringing the city right to the water's edge in a way that will transform this part of the city," said the project's master planner and lead architect, **Stanton Eckstut, FAIA**, founding principal of **EE&K**, a **Perkins Eastman Company**. "It's a modern, *mercantile* waterfront, a place for authentic city life where normal commercial activity can thrive." Eckstut stressed the year-round appeal of The Wharf: "It's not just a summertime destination, but a place that will draw people in the winter or on a rainy Thursday night in March, with restaurants, theater, ice skating, and culture. We're designing a neighborhood where first the locals will love to come and then the tourists will want to follow."

Eckstut noted that the master planning team worked on the water plan before they even began to think about what to put on land. "What goes in the water—piers, docks, boats, moorings—all that actually drives what





Rendering of the residential project
by Handel Architects.

Rendering © Handel Architects



Rendering of the District Pier as seen from the water.

happens on the landside. If you don't really pay attention to the water, the place becomes just another city street." His team worked with boat captains, maritime operators, and harbor police to program water activities. He said that 22 different types of vessels—motor yachts, dinner cruise boats, sail boats, kayaks, canoes, tall ships, etc.—would make The Wharf "a great harbor, like Sydney or Baltimore."

Along the length of the development, plans call for several zones of different activity levels and each with its own distinct character. The west end of the waterfront, an area called Market Square, with a refurbished fish market and a new intersection, will be a busy meeting place with lots of activity. The City Pier, at Ninth Street,

SW, is imagined as an active civic space with a Santa Monica-like town square and a light tower. Further east, a new home for the Capital Yacht Club will be near the Gangplank Marina, and fountains, a park, and an ice skating rink will stretch beyond that while directing access to the Arena Stage and evening dinner boats.

The ambitious project is being built in two phases. Phase one on the western end of the site includes four buildings containing shops, restaurants, 900 residential units, hotels, offices, underground parking, and a music hall.

Developers envision the music hall as a multi-purpose entertainment and event space accommodating a standing audience of 5,500 on its flat floor. Shawn Seaman, principal and senior vice president of development for PN Hoffman



Rendering of pedestrian street in the Wharf complex.

Rendering © Perkins Eastman



Rendering © Perkins Eastman

& Associates, said, “Its size makes this a unique venue in Washington; it will fall somewhere between DAR Constitution Hall and the Verizon Center. The space will be flexible enough for a variety of events like exhibits, concerts, and conferences.” Hoffman-Madison Waterfront has been in discussions with the 9:30 Club, the popular DC nightclub, about managing the music program.

To give the new neighborhood the authentic character and architectural interest that Eckstut and the other project planners seek, a variety of architecture and landscape design firms are working on the project. The Music Hall will be designed by the **Rockwell Group** of New York, the firm responsible for the Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles, the new home of the Academy Awards; **BBG-**

BBGM will design the InterContinental Hotel; and overseeing the master plan is Eckstut’s firm, **EE&K, a Perkins Eastman Company**, which has extensive experience in major waterfront design.

In January 2013, the DC Zoning Commission approved the architectural designs and specific plans for the project’s first phase. PN Hoffman’s Seaman said he expected construction to begin in December 2013.

Living On The Waterfront

“Stan Eckstut is the best master planner I’ve ever worked with,” gushed **Gary Handel, AIA**, founding partner and managing principal of **Handel Architects** in New York, whose firm is designing The Wharf Residences. “He’s a genius at finely textured and perfectly scaled urban environments. When he set out the various building parcels, he left all of us [architects] clues about how our individual pieces might best fit into the overall project.”

Handel’s piece, a 12-story residential and retail building, will contain a total of nearly 300 rental and condo units and 77,000 square feet of shops and restaurants on two levels. The large structure is broken into various components using a broad palette of materials and varied building heights and forms to break down its apparent scale. The building’s podium is split by a “Piazza Mews” and further broken into two-story pavilions. While the forms and materials of the podium—brick, black metal, and glass—evoke the waterfront’s industrial heritage, the different frontages of the building are treated individually based on the spaces they will face.

“On Maine Avenue where we look toward the Capitol, the façade will have a more formal, monumental treatment,” said Handel. “On the waterside, where the condominiums rise above the podium, that treatment will be much glassier and more appropriate for the views

Rendering of the waterfront mews at The Wharf.

Rendering of the Capital Yacht Club
by Cunningham | Quill Architects.





Rendering ©
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out to the channel.” A smaller, more intimate architectural scale will be used along the Piazza Mews, a landscaped pedestrian passageway and seating area connecting Maine Avenue to the water. Both sides of the mews will be lined with small-scale retail, and a bridge and walkway will span the mews and connect the building pavilions.

“Although this project will be going up in the near future and all at once,” Handel added, “all of us want it to have the richness and scale of a long-established city neighborhood that feels like it has developed over time.”

Reviving Washington’s Boating Tradition: A New Home for the Capital Yacht Club

Directly opposite The Wharf Residences on the promenade, a smaller-scale structure will perch at the water’s edge, extending over the channel and opening out to piers and southern views. The new home for Washington’s venerable Capital Yacht Club will be a point of interest both for boaters on the water and for pedestrians along the promenade. Designed by local firm **Cunningham|Quill Architects**, the 7,500-square-foot clubhouse is built partially on land and partially on pilings in the water. It is designed to be experienced on all four sides and to provide expansive views up and down the channel.

Principal **Lee Quill, FAIA**, pointed out that a carefully considered palette of building materials signals the maritime function of the building and its historic antecedents. On the landside, where the yacht club addresses the larger-

scale buildings of The Wharf development, the smoothly honed stone of its north façade has the weight and formality appropriate to its urban context. On the water-side, “We were inspired by historic naval architecture,” explained Quill. Here, “the building is wrapped in pre-patinated copper, a material commonly used for sheathing the hulls of British ships in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.” Large areas of glass looking out to the water are shielded by horizontal sunscreens. Bold, vertical glazing delineates the transition between the stone and copper façade materials. Expansive terraces on both levels open to the public piers and the yacht club marina.

The architects also drew inspiration from the Capital Yacht Club’s historic building constructed on the Southwest waterfront in 1922 but demolished in 1969. The new building will be Cunningham|Quill’s modern reinterpretation of that classic yacht club icon with its peaked roof, cupola, and second-story balcony.

From its north entry on the promenade, the clubhouse will open onto Club Plaza, a public space that the designers expect to be an animated, year-round gathering spot. A pedestrian passage leads from the Club Plaza to Maine Avenue and Quill points out that his design team carefully sited the Yacht Club to maintain open water views from Maine Avenue.

Like The Yards, an ongoing development project along Washington’s Southeast Waterfront, The Wharf promises to be transformative, restoring the city’s intimate relationship with the two rivers that were once its lifeblood. 🏡



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