

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER

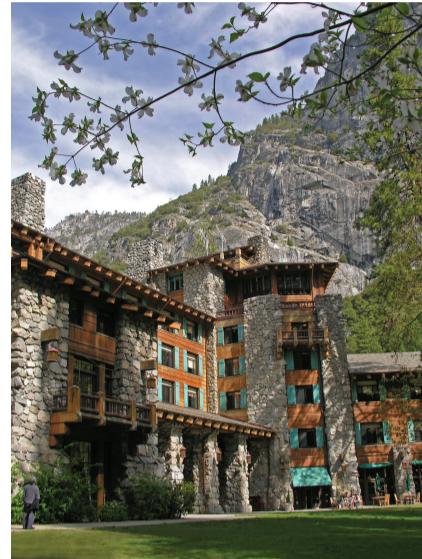
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COURTESY KMD

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LA TRANSIT OFFICIALS PASS LONG RANGE PLAN

METRO MOVES

On October 21, after several postponements, the LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (METRO) voted to approve its Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The measure outlines how METRO will allocate about \$300 billion in funding over the next 30 years, focusing on major mass transit initiatives like LA's Westside subway extension of the Red Line to Santa Monica and its Expo Line light rail extension to continued on page 6

LAWRENCE HALPRIN, 1916–2009

Ever since 1970, when Ada Louise Huxtable dubbed Lawrence Halprin's Auditorium Forecourt Fountain in Portland, Oregon "one of the most important urban spaces since the Renaissance," much has been written about this maverick trailblazer. Always looking back while looking ahead, Halprin described himself on the dust jacket of his urban treatise *Cities* (1963) as "a landscape architect continued on page 8

SAN FRANCISCO'S CRUISE TERMINAL WILL FINALLY SET SAIL

PIER PRESSURE

On November 10, the Port Commission of San Francisco approved the joint venture of KMD Architects and Pfau Long Architecture to redesign Pier 27 at the base of Telegraph Hill. The 178,000-square-foot pier and shed will eventually be converted into a new cruise

terminal and public plaza. The Department of Public Works selected the team in late September, pending the Port's sign-off.

"We were looking for a high-quality iconic building along the waterfront that could also be a cost-effective cruise operation," said John

Doll, cruise terminal project manager at the Port.

Estimates for the redevelopment range between \$60 and \$85 million. The Port is expected to fund the project with the \$19.3 million earned from land it sold to the Watermark condo developers at the site. It also will likely issue revenue bonds to cover the remaining cost.

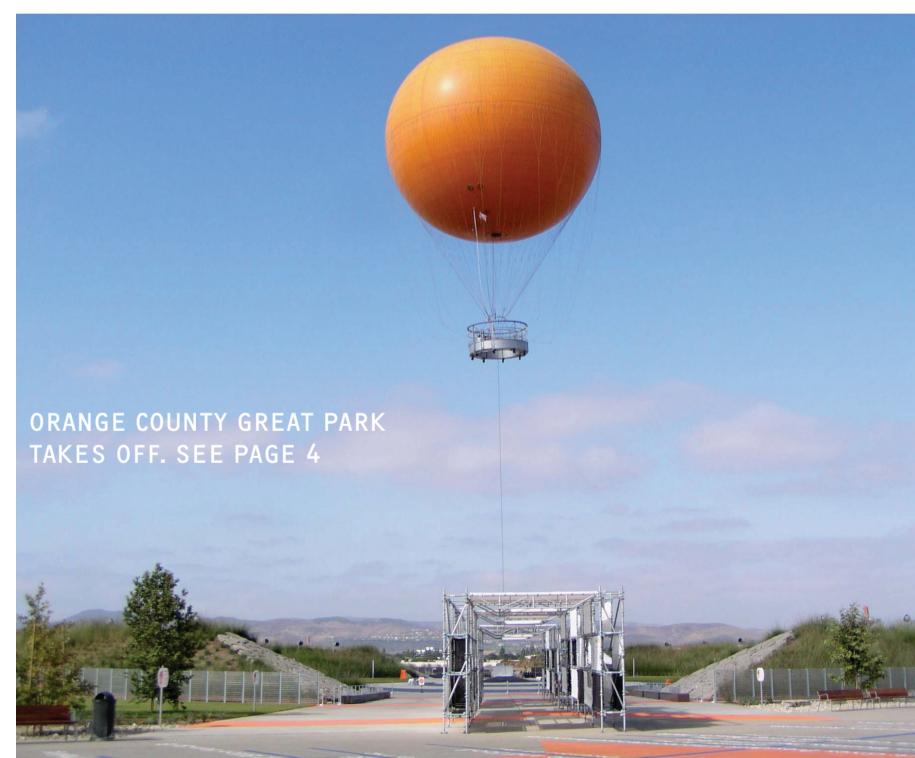
While the city has been using Pier 35 for years as a cruise terminal, it is run down, too short for modern cruise ships, and too costly to renovate. "Why continue to pour money into Pier 35 when we should be investing in a new cruise continued on page 6

ON, OFF, ON

Never say never. After a three-year wait, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (PUC) finally broke ground last week on a new headquarters that is on tap to become the city's greenest office building.

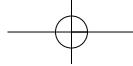
The 13-story project, outfitted with environmental features like rooftop wind turbines and solar panels, is designed to exceed LEED Platinum requirements when it opens in spring 2012. The glass-clad tower is expected to generate 32 percent less energy than a typical Class A office building.

"Our intent was to create the most energy-efficient urban office building in the United States," continued on page 6



ORANGE COUNTY GREAT PARK TAKES OFF. SEE PAGE 4

COURTESY GREAT PARK STUDIO



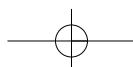
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LETTERS**COUNTING ALL ARCHITECTS**

I am writing to clarify some points made in the article, "Insider Job" (CAN 08_10.28.2009). You report that San Francisco's Bureau of Architecture does the lion's share of city architectural work, but that makes an inaccurate impression. In reality, the lion's share of work is new buildings and major remodels, which are routinely contracted out to local firms. We currently have more than \$50 million in architectural fees contracted out to more than 20 local firms and joint ventures. Local architectural firms are responsible for two new hospitals, a police headquarters, a major office building, and 13 new or renovated branch libraries.

I would also like to respond to the asser-

tion that the quality of design work is sub-standard and a comment that in-house design "does not measure up to work being done around the world." As architects do everywhere and in this case, we design buildings to please our clients. A better example, the city's Branch Library Improvement Program recently won a local AIA Special Achievement award for its design excellence program with work by both in-house and private sector architects.

Finally, the implication that contracting out work typically done by in-house staff would improve the economy for architects in San Francisco ignores the fact that it merely shifts work from qualified professionals in public service to qualified professionals in private practice. Unfortunately, the

Urban Land Institute's fall conference came to San Francisco a couple of weeks ago. Attendance was better than expected, but the regular participants I talked to said there wasn't much new to hear: nothing is happening and the economy is still in the dumps.

But interestingly, a design and engineering company that was formed during the last downturn is proceeding as if nothing were wrong with the present economy. AECOM, the merger of six firms back in 1990, bought Minneapolis-based architecture firm Ellerbe Becket for an undisclosed sum in late October.

In architecture, where a company of 100 is big and one with 1,000 employees

is a giant, AECOM's 45,000 people represent a completely different scale. Not

only is the company a global player, it provides a very broad range of services,

making it quite a different species from an HOK or SOM. Besides architecture

and engineering, site planning, and transportation and water systems design,

AECOM also manages Libya's \$50 billion infrastructure and housing program

and organizes pools of military vehicles for the Department of Defense in Iraq

and Afghanistan. Seventy percent of its business is in government, and about

half of its business is overseas.

At the ULI conference, a business development representative for another large architecture firm wondered how the competitive landscape was going to change. His company competes with Ellerbe Becket for sports arenas, so he was curious to see if Ellerbe would gain an edge. It's true that after AECOM acquired the planning and landscape design company EDAW, it won the contract for the master plan for Lower Manhattan. (AECOM was already signed up to do the World Trade Center's transportation hub with Santiago Calatrava.)

If AECOM continues to pick up expertise in different sectors—another recent takeover was of economic analysis firm ERA—will there be fewer players for the biggest, most important projects? Should the Federal Trade Commission start to monitor architecture deals for antitrust concerns? At the moment, the danger of a monopoly seems remote: in the global markets where AECOM operates, there are numerous firms both within the U.S. and without that it competes with.

The more far-reaching question is, Are these mega-conglomerates appropriate for the design challenges that lie ahead?

"Certainly, you aren't as nimble when you get big, and the question is how well you can respond to a single customer when there's a whole bureaucracy to get through," said John Rogers, a financial analyst with D.A. Davidson. "But one thing that has allowed companies like AECOM to emerge is technology that allows you to work on the same project effectively, even if you're not sitting next to each other. I think we're going to see more of this type of consolidation—AECOM is just at the forefront."

If architecture firms are integrated with other complementary disciplines, perhaps the resulting architecture will be more inclusive—less about iconic buildings and more about iconic landscapes and communities. The last time architecture really captured the public imagination on a grand scale, it was all about the romance of the suburbs, in the all-season paradise of California. The Case Study Houses embodied the freedom and adventure possible on a single lot. Today, it seems morally deficient as well as pragmatically short-sighted to think about one well-financed family at a time. Today, freedom is not being stuck in traffic, not being isolated—physically and economically—from your community. The most expensive, desirable housing is often found in the cities, not on the outskirts.

Urban planners have been talking about transit-oriented, walkable communities for years, but we still need iconic examples—complete with iconic pictures, or perhaps YouTube videos—that can serve as a guiding vision. Think Case Study Communities. There, we'd be able to appreciate the great architecture but also how gracefully it connects to the surrounding neighborhood. We'd be scrutinizing how well it hooks up to public transportation, integrates local retail and services like care for elders and youngsters, and consider metrics like its "walk score." Who knows? Maybe a company like AECOM, which considers Google its model, can sell community development projects as the next big thing. After all, virtual community can only get you so far. **LYDIA LEE**

fact remains that in the current economic environment, there is simply not enough work to support the design industry. DPW plans and implements major and minor improvements to the city's infrastructure and that role directly benefits the architectural profession. It is impossible to do that without talented in-house professional architects, executing some and contracting out others. Nationally, there are thousands of architects in public service and one would expect AN to advocate for the economic health of all architects, whether in private practice or public service.

GARY HOY, CITY ARCHITECT

MANAGER, BUREAU OF ARCHITECTURE

SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS



COURTESY LA FOOTBALL STADIUM

LA: GOAL!

On October 22, Governor Schwarzenegger signed a bill exempting a proposed LA football stadium in the City of Industry, about 15 miles east of Los Angeles, from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. The move is a major victory for the project, which is being proposed by locally based Majestic Realty.

The measure will nullify a lawsuit by Walnut-based Citizens for Community Preservation, who claimed that Industry approved the project without sufficiently reviewing its environmental impact.

The privately-funded, multibillion-dollar project, which includes \$800 million for the stadium, would be located at the southern side of the Highway 57 and 60 interchange on a 600-acre parcel of open space currently under lease to Majestic by the City of Industry.

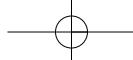
"This is the best kind of action state government can create—action that cuts red tape, generates jobs, is environmentally friendly, and brings a continued economic boost to California," said Governor Schwarzenegger in a statement. The announcement said the stadium would generate more than 18,000 jobs and more than \$762 million for the area, but opponents fear its environmental and traffic impacts.

Less excited was Citizens for Community Preservation's Howard Wong, who told *The San Gabriel Valley Tribune*, "This stadium saga makes us believe that citizens are powerless when confronted by big campaign contributors."

The 75,000-seat stadium is being planned by Dan Meis of Aedas Sport, who also designed the Staples Center in downtown LA. The site's undulating topography helped inform a unique design: The general seating is set into a hillside and the suites and club seats are located in a free-standing building on the other side of the field. The plan would create an outdoor feeling to the complex with picnic seating and a retail promenade. The planned LEED-certified stadium would also include permeable parking lots, recycled construction materials, water-conserving fixtures, and recycled water for landscaping.

With the environmental exemption in place, Majestic Realty has one more job. It needs to sign a team. If they can do this as swiftly as the governor did in clearing the way, construction is anticipated to take 24 to 26 months.

SAM LUBELL



THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER NOVEMBER 23, 2009



CONSTRUCTION MOVES AHEAD FOR IRVINE'S ORANGE COUNTY GREAT PARK

Great Expectations

One of the nation's most ambitious new parks got a green light last month. The board of the Orange County Great Park approved \$65.5 million in new construction, setting the stage for the first complete swath of what will eventually become a 1,347-acre public space—and a model for how to integrate recreation, ecological restoration, and urban agriculture in the 21st century.

The October 22 announcement marks a milestone for the project, which has been in the works for more than a decade as part of a bid to reinvent Irvine's former El Toro

marine air station, which closed in 1999. The park was born after developer Lennar Corporation purchased the former base at auction, and transferred the park parcel to the city of Irvine as the core of a planned 4,700-acre, mixed-use development. The immense scope of the project—it includes an entire canyon carved from scratch—makes the present phase seem almost slight by comparison.

"While \$65 million is a lot of money, it's a small piece of the billion or billion-and-a-half dollar project," said Ken Smith, the landscape



COURTESY GREAT PARK DESIGN STUDIO

architect who leads the Great Park Design Studio. "So the issue we've been struggling with is, do you build a smaller area to full detail and amenity, or do you try to stretch the money out over a large area with less detail?"

In the end, designers opted for a compromise targeting 200 acres, fewer than initially planned, but with more robust amenities. Set for completion by 2011, the new construction capitalizes on the success of the 27.5-acre "preview park," opened in 2008 and known for its popular observation balloon. Among the new elements are a series of sports fields along a nine-acre "walkable timeline"—a corridor featuring shade structures, seating, and a system of historical markers—as well as a palm-tree grove flanking

a renovated hangar that can be used for exhibitions and special events.

But the most extensive areas to be constructed aren't so much for recreation as for hard work: a 100-acre farm with a 2,500-tree orchard, plus a community garden, food lab, and an iconic farmer's market pavilion to be designed by Enrique Norten of TEN Arquitectos. "Agriculture was part of the original idea of what makes a contemporary park contemporary," Smith said. "It is also one of the less costly things to do to engage a large acreage." In addition to Norten, Smith's team includes LA-based landscape architect Mia Lehrer, ecologist Steven Handel, and engineer Pat Fuscoe.

The park's progress has been complicated by litigation launched

Far left: The park will eventually cover 1,347 acres of the former marine base. Left: The walkable timeline.

by Forest Lawn, a cemetery whose owners claim Lennar backed out of an agreement to jointly develop a 73-acre cemetery in the surrounding development. The lawsuit has halted the transfer of certain development funds to the Great Park, but officials are optimistic. "We are moving forward in spite of the obstacles put in our path by a lawsuit filed against the city of Irvine by owners of Forest Lawn Cemetery," park board chairman Larry Agran said in a statement. "I commend our staff and the Great Park Design Studio for giving us a plan to build as much as we can under challenging circumstances."

Funding for future phases is expected to come from tax-increment financing derived from Lennar's adjacent development. The recession has put the brakes on those funds, which may not materialize for five years. The gradually-phased approach, however, does have its benefits. "It allows the park to develop and move forward in a way that we learn from it," said Smith, noting that the preview park has already offered several instructive lessons. "One thing we learned is that we can't plant enough shade fast enough." **JEFF BYLES**



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AIA CONFESSIONS

Who knew that the AIA/LA Awards could be such a great place to come clean? After being handed the AIA Gold Medal at the event, architect Michael Rotondi confessed that he and longtime-girlfriend, artist April Greiman, had actually eloped two years ago in Winslow, Arizona. (Awards host John Kaliski couldn't help then quoting the Eagles song "Take It Easy," which references Winslow.) Rotondi also revealed his strange inspiration for being an architect: As an incubator baby, he experienced early how architecture could save your life. So why not more glass boxes, Michael?

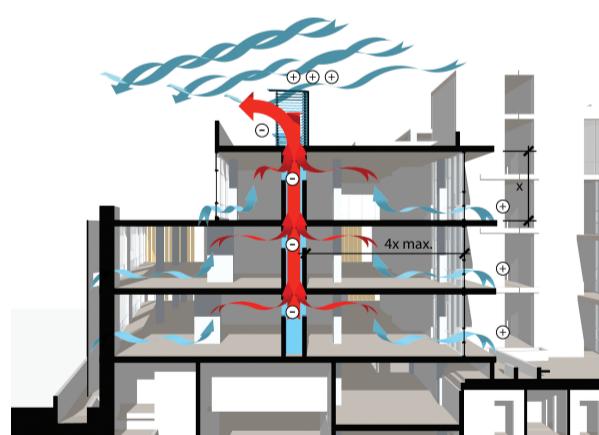
FACEBOOK FOR ARCHITECTS?

It was only a matter of time before architects figured out this social networking thing. The new site architizer.com seems to be the first major entry. On the site, architects can show off their projects, promote their firms, and look for jobs and competitions. Members include Steven Holl, Office dA, and Touraine Richmond. But the most striking thing for us are the personal profiles. First of all, those are not your father's professional headshots. Those are some sexy poses, people! With all those bare midriffs, we think this site is being used to find dates, not work. And who knew there were that many good-looking peacocks, I mean, architects! Our profession is looking good, at least, personally!

SCI-ARC STAYING PUT, FOR NOW

After an article in *The LA Downtown News* (see AN's blog) asserted that SCI-Arc might leave its current location in downtown LA's Arts District (according to the story, its lease will expire next November), school director Eric Owen Moss called to set the record straight. He stressed that the school's own lease with developer Meruelo Maddox isn't up till 2019, that the school is happy staying where it is, and that it faces no pressure to leave. "SCI-Arc's not going anywhere. SCI-Arc has no plans to go anywhere, and is not obligated to go anywhere," he said. Still, Moss didn't completely rule out a move if the right property popped up. "If a great opportunity came up, we'd take a look at it," he said.

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HAYDEN

It's not all extreme form-making in Culver City. Cunningham Group Architecture (CGA) has announced that it is going ahead with REthink Development to build the first high-performance building in Culver City along the architecturally adventurous Hayden Tract office development. The project, simply called Hayden, should break ground in 2011 and be completed by 2012.

The four-story concrete office building will occupy around 63,000 square feet,

including 10,000 square feet for CGA themselves.

By reducing energy use up to 70 percent, the building is expected to earn at least LEED Gold certification while pushing for Platinum. It will include natural ventilation (diagrammed above), radiant heating, non-mechanical temperature control, and maximization of daylight, among other green elements.

In March, CGA earned the entitlement to the industrial-zoned property. The firm worked with the surrounding community to present a solution that meshed with the single-story residential vernacular that bounds the

site. A small courtyard separates the mass of the building, breaking the floor plate into two low-rise towers. While taking advantage of the warm climate, the courtyard was mainly created for its passive environmental qualities. The open space will help mitigate swinging temperature extremes and allow for the flow of air and natural light into the rooms.

The building's facade also pays tribute to the area's surrounding movie production studios. A ribbon made of sheet metal winds around and into the courtyard like an unraveled filmstrip. It shades exterior windows on the north and east from direct sunlight. Shading devices fitted to low-e windows and sensitive to climate conditions will automatically open and shut. Below grade there will be a two-story garage for the building. The project is seeking permitting next month. MD

Architect: Cunningham Group Architecture
Developer: REthink Development
Location: Culver City, CA
Scheduled Completion: 2012

OPEN> ENTRANCE



> TIMBERLINE LODGE
27500 Timberline Road
Government Camp, OR
Tel: 503-272-3311
Designer: rhiza A+D

Reminding us that ski season is upon us, in early October, Portland-based architecture and design firm rhiza A+D opened its Entrance Tunnel at the Timberline Lodge on Mt. Hood in Oregon. The parabolic exterior is more than a formal exercise. The undulating frame is designed to carry a load of 20 feet of snow. The structure, made from a dozen water-jet-cut, half-inch-thick aluminum plate arches, will be erected every year in October and broken down and stored every May. Each arch leans on the next, creating an efficient transfer of loads. Daylight penetrates the double skin of easily replaceable translucent polycarbonate panels while the snow is light. Once it really hits, the entrance will become a snug cove that transitions from the outside to the inside of the lodge. The temporary structure replaces a quonset hut structure that has been used since 1955. The lodge itself was built in 1937 without the realization that the large stairway in front would be made completely inaccessible by the snowfall. "The concept is that the entrance tunnel arrives with the snow and disappears with the snow," said Ean Eldred, a principal at rhiza A+D. And it has: A light dusting of snow came on the day of the opening ceremony. MARTINA DOLEJSOVA

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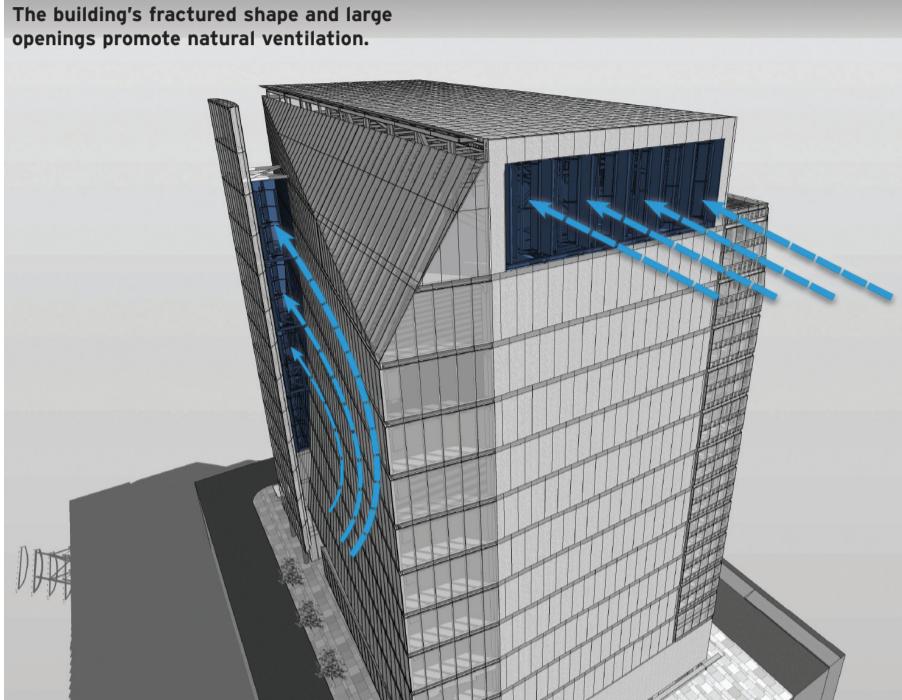


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The building's fractured shape and large openings promote natural ventilation.

COURTESY KMD

ON, OFF, ON continued from front page

said Ryan Stevens, director of design at KMD Architects in San Francisco, the building's designers.

The 270,000-square-foot headquarters will come with a variety of water conservation features like a graywater recycling system that will reuse water for the building's toilets and cooling system. Waterless urinals, faucet sensors, and on-demand water heaters are expected to shave water usage from an average of 12 gallons per day per person to five. Daylighting features, like sun-filtering shades and high-performance glazing, will be used extensively. A solar chimney, which improves ventilation through air convection, will also be added.

Still, some flashy design features were scrapped for cost. Out went some of the wind turbines—which had created a line along the building's northern face—and the photovoltaic cells embedded between the windows. For well over a year, it didn't seem like the PUC would get a new headquarters at all. The agency's new general manager, Edward Harrington, balked at the rising price when he was hired last summer and put the project on hold. Concern over a rate-

payer insurrection—the PUC was spending billions on seismic upgrades—was an added incentive for the delay.

The recession, however, forced agency executives to reconsider their decision. Building materials and labor became cheaper, and falling interest rates made borrowing money easier. Consolidating its 1,000-member staff from two leased buildings into one building would also save money.

"The numbers came down to the point where it became economical to build," said Tyrone Jue, a PUC spokesman.

The \$190 million building is being largely funded by the sale of Certificates of Participation (COPs), which are lease financing agreements packaged as securities (these let the city lease facilities until they pay off the debt). Since 1978, when California voters approved Proposition 13, municipalities have needed a two-thirds vote, instead of a simple majority, to issue bonds. COPs have become the preferred way for cities across the state to put up buildings without voter approval. In September, the agency raised \$172 million through the sale of COPs, and is waiting to receive \$18 million in federal stimulus funds. **KRISTINA SHEVORY**

PIER PRESSURE

continued from front page
terminal?" said Doll. Construction is expected to start in early 2012, and the terminal to open in time for the cruise season in April 2014.

The cruise ship terminal has been through a range of failed development plans over the last ten years. Three years ago, Lend Lease defaulted on a \$400 million proposal to erect a cruise terminal and office project. Shopping mall developer Mills took over the site, but eventually scrapped plans last year to build a mall after running into a buzzsaw of neighborhood opposition. Last year, Shorenstein Properties mothballed plans to develop an office

complex, prompting the port commission to take the project public.

During the selection process, the architects presented their qualifications and did not present design plans. Although the Port Commission earmarked \$3.5 million in June to spend on design and architecture plans, the money will be split between the architects and the city's Bureau of Architecture. Financial details are still being negotiated.

"We want to create a vision for the city that reflects the values of San Francisco and the Bay Area, and how it serves as a portal to the world," said David Hobstetter, a principal at KMD Architects.

KMD had a leg up on

competing architecture firms, which included Perkins + Will and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. For the last nine years, KMD has been working with the city to design the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission headquarters near City Hall (see "On, Off, On," page 1).

The firm also has extensive experience with transportation projects, including a railroad station at the Anchorage airport, and the Tom Bradley Terminal at Los Angeles International Airport. Pfau Long has a strong local presence in San Francisco and its most recent project is the new San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) Urban Center.

KS

NOT SO ROUGH continued from front page the most architecturally splendid of all the national park lodgings. The six-story structure's sturdy walls of rough-cut granite seem to emerge from a 3,700-foot cliff-face. The lofty, well-appointed interiors feature sweeping views of Yosemite Valley, Half Dome, and Yosemite Falls. Even with room rates starting at \$420, the hotel is usually booked solid.

The project will involve a seismic retrofit as well as updating the electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems. The interiors will also be spruced up. The public spaces and most of the 109 rooms and 14 cottages will receive a new coat of paint and restored furnishings. "Architecturally and visually, we're not looking at any changes," said Scott Gediman, public affairs officer for the

park. "The challenge with renovating a historic landmark is how to update it while keeping its historic integrity." While the scope of the work is still being finalized, the remodel is not currently emphasizing sustainability and there has been no mention of alternative energy sources. Gediman did say, however, that new energy-efficient lighting might be part of the renovation. The project, which is estimated to cost \$80 to \$100 million, will be paid for with National Park Service funds along with a capital-improvements fund raised by the park concessioner. Stimulus money, however, will not be part of the financing. An environmental impact report is expected in the late fall, and a public comment period on the proposed plan will continue to the spring

of next year, with work anticipated to begin in fall 2010. The renovation should take about two to three years to complete.

The project drew about 50 proposals from firms across the country, and the selection was made by a panel of historic preservation architects, landscape architects, and structural engineers put together by the National Park Service. Hornberger + Worstell was chosen largely for its experience working on historic hotels such as the 1888 Hotel del Coronado in San Diego and the 1904 Westin St. Francis in San Francisco. According to Gediman, the firm also had an edge because it was located relatively close by and had relationships with a wide range of specialized subcontractors.

LYDIA LEE



COURTESY DNC PARKS & RESORTS AT YOSEMITE

METRO MOVES continued from front page

Culver City and Santa Monica.

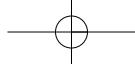
While LA County is aided by its new sales tax increase Measure R, approved last year and expected to bring in up to \$40 billion over the next 30 years, federal support—including stimulus money—will remain a key component of successful funding.

Other major initiatives supported in the plan include the city's Gold Line light rail extension east to Pasadena and beyond, a downtown regional connector, and a Green Line extension to LAX. The LRTP projections are no sure thing: They're based on revenues from federal, state, and local taxes and subsidies, and income from passenger fares, advertising, and real estate rentals.

While still resisted by many, including a few key LA City Council members, approval of the plan officially confirms a trend that's been developing for years in LA: a shift in

approval for mass transit. "Everybody wants transit now," said Aspet Davidian, METRO's director of project engineering facilities. "We are really fortunate to have this kind of support." The passage of Measure R, for example, required a two-thirds majority in the midst of a recession.

Yet, Davidian added, the rollout of mass transit is still hampered by difficult economic times and by the needs of a huge county where highway funding is still a major priority. While public transit operation is a big part of the plan (\$106.5 billion, or 36 percent), highway maintenance and improvement makes up an equal number (\$94.4 billion or 32 percent). The other major obstacle is time. Even by generous projections, METRO's signature project, the "Subway to the Sea," or Red Line extension to Santa Monica, will likely not be completed until 2020. **SL**



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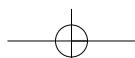
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER NOVEMBER 23, 2009

LAWRENCE HALPRIN, 1916-2009 continued from front page in the tradition of the Olmsteds." While breaking ground as a modernist designer, he did not always turn his back on Picturesque traditions.

Halprin passed away at his home in Kentfield, California on October 25 at the age of 93. It was just two months earlier that his office had celebrated 60 years of practice in the Bay Area and scheduled to close its doors for good this month. Larry was looking apprehensively toward retirement. With his richly illustrated autobiography now complete (to be published by the University of Pennsylvania Press) and a number of his celebrated designs such as the Portland Chain of Open Spaces experiencing a newfound appreciation, Larry no doubt would have continued his frequent visits to Sea Ranch (co-designed in 1963 by Halprin with Charles Moore and Joseph Esherick), to once again be a Sunday painter and to enjoy nature and his grandchildren.

A love of design, people, nature, the shaping of cities and spaces, and the blurring of lines between his personal and professional life energized Larry. Optimistic, sensitive, thoughtful, and cherubic, he will be remembered for his built legacy as much as for his multidisciplinary workshops, which gave rise to his RSVP Cycles (Resources, Scores, Valuation, and Performance), a process that recognized that creativity, like nature, is not necessarily linear, while soliciting creative "input." This could take the form of an interpretive dance or a sculpture made from popsicle sticks and Cheerios.

Just four years ago, still going strong at the age of 89, Halprin and his office completed three capstone projects: the astonishing trifecta of the Letterman Digital Arts Center and its signature eight-acre meadow at the Presidio, the WPA-inspired outdoor theatre at Stern Grove, and Yosemite Falls. Ironically, it was because these projects were still to be built that scholars were late to evaluate

Halprin's work, and unlike Dan Kiley or Philip Johnson—who both would live to see multiple National Historic Landmark designations listed during their lifetimes—Halprin instead witnessed the demolition and redesign of several of his projects from the 1970s, including Nicolette Mall in Minneapolis, Skyline Park in Denver, and the sculpture garden at the Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond. In addition, two of his revolutionary 1976 Bicentennial Commission projects, Seattle's Freeway Park (the first park over a freeway in the U.S.) and Fort Worth's Heritage Plaza (the progenitor of the outdoor rooms that would be employed at his FDR Memorial) were also targets for less-than-sensitive design proposals that threatened their integrity.

It was this shared concern to guide these landscapes into the future and give them a voice that served as a personal bond between us. Since 2003, as part of my work for the Cultural Landscape Foundation, I had the opportunity to film Larry at his offices in downtown San Francisco and Larkspur, California and at his home and dance deck in Kentfield and at Sea Ranch. In a 2003 interview, Larry said of his projects, "I treasure them all just like you treasure children. Some of your children are more problems than others. But even so, you love them. I don't think from my point of view that there's much difference in my attitude about my children and my works of art."

Just a few weeks before Halprin passed away, Heritage Plaza was recommended by the Texas Historical Commission for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It is now at the National Park Service awaiting approval by the Keeper of the Register. Let the celebration and rediscovery of his legacy begin.

CHARLES A. BIRNBAUM IS THE FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE FOUNDATION.

AT DEADLINE

ESTOLANO OUT

Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency CEO Cecilia Estolano is stepping down from her post at the end of November. Estolano was widely-praised for her aggressive moves to promote affordable housing, turn around struggling neighborhoods, establish a Clean Tech corridor in downtown LA, and bolster the agency's funding in spite of difficult economic times. While Estolano made no statement, she was outspoken about her dismay over recent budget reallocations. "It was unconstitutional," she told AN (Q&A, CAN 08_10.28.2009). She is reportedly taking a job with Green For All, an Oakland-based environmental group focused on generating green jobs in underserved neighborhoods.

MAYNE GOES PRESIDENTIAL

Morphosis Principal Thom Mayne has been appointed to the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. He is the only practicing architect on the list. Of the 24 other committee members, there is one other architect, Christine Forester, though she left the field for marketing and branding in the 1980s. Ed Norton is also a committee member, as are Teresa Heinz Kerry, Yo-Yo Ma, Sarah Jessica Parker, Kerry Washington, Forest Whitaker, and Anna Wintour.

DERAILED

A tentative deal between the city of Los Angeles and Italian manufacturer AnsaldoBreda to build 100 rail cars for LA County's transit system fell through at the end of October. If it had passed, the deal would have ushered in plans for a \$70 million factory in the city's emerging Clean Tech Corridor downtown. The city is now scrambling to find a replacement business in the area.

VISION TIME

California has awarded Berkeley-based Calthorpe Associates a \$2.5 million contract to devise a set of detailed growth scenarios for the state. "Vision California" will investigate land use and transportation investments in California and it will also include merging the state's existing regional plans from organizations like the Association of Bay Area Governments and the Southern California Association of Governments.

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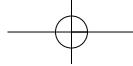
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The Police HQ stands at the corner of First and Main streets in downtown LA.
Below: An angled glass facade reflects buildings, particularly City Hall.



GUARDED SYMBOL

The new headquarters for the Los Angeles Police Department, which opened one week to the day before the city's reform-minded chief left his post on Halloween, is one of those civic structures so deeply committed to satisfying the best of everyone else's intentions that the building feels like a bland afterthought. Ten stories tall and clad in limestone and glass, the Police Administration Building, as it is known, was designed by AECOM Los Angeles. The city spent \$437 million, and what it got for this enormous sum is less the product of the architects' imaginations than of the need to cloak an air of openness over a hardened pile of post-9/11 trepidations. The 75-foot setbacks—a security requirement—alone withdraw the building behind a very real moat, and no amount of softening landscaping can hide that this turf is off-limits.

Which might be okay if PAB, as LAPD officers are now calling it, weren't sitting at the pivotal intersection of First and Main in downtown Los Angeles, directly across from City Hall. The tower in large part is designed to demonstrate deference to the seat of civilian power, and in doing so, misses an opportunity to make a statement of its own. "We face City Hall, and it is reflected in that glass as you walk in front of the building," said outgoing chief Bill Bratton at the ribbon-cutting. "That reflects the

supremacy of City Hall over the Los Angeles Police Department." Alas, such sentiments hijacked whatever architectural identity the new headquarters might have had. You cannot help but feel that the design flows from an institution struggling to live down its reputation for corruption, political intrigue, brutality, and racism, and not from the pens of designers anxious to give the city an entirely different idea about a much-reviled and distrusted department.

Such ambitions are nowhere present. Strictly speaking, the building is an ordinary L-shape, with a knife's edge extending from its front facade. This wedge gives the illusion of slenderness, and creates an axis that frames a vista and a physical pathway diagonally through the site. The slice affords a view of the city's early cathedrals, St. Vibiana's to the southeast and Raphael Moneo's Our Lady of the Angels to the northwest, while allowing pedestrians to filter through. Fronting the building is a large plaza; on its flanks are a sculpture garden by Peter Shelton, a pocket park, a restaurant, and a free-standing auditorium meant for public occasions. At the rear of the auditorium is an elevated garden that looks out onto the backside of the skyscrapers that line the city's modern core. In the other direction, City Hall glistens in all of its cardinal symmetry.

Meanwhile, exterior limestone

and precast concrete vary in color and texture, references meant to evoke the natural irregularities in the ashlar base of City Hall. On the plaza side, corridors clad in glass connect staff inside to passersby outside. A street-side newsstand (scheduled to open in early 2010) completes the series of gestures to the surrounding city. "Good urbanism," AECOM's Jose Palacios said, "is the ability to lace into the city. In this case, we've made a building that has no back."

True enough—PAB has no back. To the residents of the Higgins building, it offers an inviting greensward. To the denizens of *The Los Angeles Times*, it gives an unobstructed eyeful of Thom Mayne's bitter-sweet Caltrans. To the mayor and members of the City Council, it throws up a slightly fractured, gauze-like mirror image of their putative throne.

And so it goes. The trouble is these gestures, however earnest and intended to signal a break from the LAPD's past, plough no new ground. What's missing is a building that expresses—or at the very least, tries to express—the renewed place in civil society for a department many still regard as an army of occupation. If the New Centurions are now more or less figments of the past, and today's LAPD is the polyglot city in microcosm, where is the building that speaks in these terms? The answer cannot be



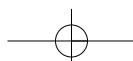
TIM GRIFFITH (ABOVE), JACK COYIER (BELOW)

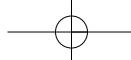
a structure that might easily be mistaken for any routine, bureaucratic administration building.

From the moment the LAPD headquarters was proposed for the city's most important intersection, there was the question of appropriateness. Originally, the land was slated to become a public plaza, installed with one of Robert Smithson's last earthwork designs, "Palm Spiral," a 150-foot-diameter grove of 72

native California fan palms that would have been a living meditation on the iffy place of nature in Los Angeles. When that plan was scuttled, Thom Mayne cried, "Of all things, you want a police headquarters as the symbol of your city!"

What the city has acquired is a caution, not a symbol. If Los Angeles were ever the center of innovative public design, those days are over. **GREG GOLDIN**





THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER NOVEMBER 23, 2009

HOUSE OF THE ISSUE > ROBERT CHOEFF AND KRYSTYAN KECK



On a nondescript back street in Venice, a trapezoidal-shaped, polycarbonate-clad, second-story addition punctuates a row of single-story homes. Sitting on a "table" composed of five steel beams and seeming to have no connection to the original painted-gray, slanted-roof

structure below it, the form looks more like a *Teddy Cruz* scheme for Tijuana than a Venice residence. At night, the lower structure is almost invisible, while the second floor glows.

Yet the addition is the result of responses to Los Angeles' plethora of zoning and building regulations

enjoined with clarity, not the chaos of Tijuana. "This house, the concepts are pretty clear," said architect Robert Choeff. "It's a box over an existing house."

With the needs of a growing family on the horizon—Choeff and his co-architect and wife Krystyan Keck met as graduate students at Princeton, and first worked together for Rem Koolhaas—they set about adding more living and work space to the original 800-square-foot cottage. They needed to do it within a tiny lot: 1,800 square feet that carried punitive 15-foot setbacks at the front and back of the property. Thus grew the translucent upstairs structure, the corners of which touch the boundaries of buildable

space and leave the form of the original home almost untouched.

The couple converted the first floor to three bedrooms, while the addition holds an L-shaped open-plan kitchen, dining area, elongated desk/work place, and living space. Though the room offered ten-foot-high ceilings, during the modeling process Choeff became concerned that a traditional skin like stucco would render the 585-square-foot space too claustrophobic, so he considered transparent materials. Polycarbonate resolved the problem. It also invited the couple to mirror an old-school Venice building technique in which windows expose structural members.



LARRY UNDERHILL

The polycarbonate-clad addition floats on stilts above the original bungalow (top left, bottom left). The new space's airy kitchen is emphatically demarcated with matte black cabinets surfaced with blackboard paint (top). The living area (above) is marked by light wood storage spaces.

Adjoining the two contrasting environments is a third form, a structurally independent tower that encases a twisting staircase. The self-supporting space leads from the first floor to the addition's roof, puncturing it with a translucent cube and exiting through a glass door. Skinned with glass and polycarbonate, the airy and expansive tower component provides additional sitting space via cork landings and benches, and connects the old and new. Trapezoidal glass panels

placed level with the bungalow's roofline create a "vertical threshold" between the previously existing and new households, noted Choeff, and allow visitors to see both the remains of the building they are exiting and the new realm they are moving through. Positioned in the gap between the form's skin and the staircase's steel railings, the couple placed irregularly shaped, orange-colored vertical cabinets to maximize storage.

Though Choeff understatedly describes the project as a box over a house, that isn't its entire story. Through both their material and structural choices, Choeff and Keck have created a home that both stands apart from surrounding residences, and is of the neighborhood as well.

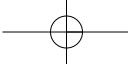
window indicating the dining area. A nine-by-seven-foot aperture opens on the south elevation.

Downstairs, in the stucco-surfaced original building, the windows have cheap Milgard aluminum frames. But for the addition, the ever-meticulous Choeff took T-sections from Metal Window Corp. and had them welded into frames that would accept glass and polycarbonate to form a single, waterproof skin. The long but narrow window bank between kitchen cabinetry and counter space cools the residence by admitting the ocean breeze. In addition to bringing in natural light and ventilation, the home incorporates sustainable building materials such as formaldehyde-free MDF, soy-based sealant on stair lumber, and recycled-denim insulation.

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TIBBY ROTHMAN





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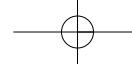
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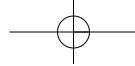
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From scandalous teardowns to cross-town moves, museum pieces and in-situ saves: Southern California has a love-hate relationship with its architectural heritage.

Is it possible that it's now on the brink of transformation?

HISTORY IN TURNAROUND

Opposite page, top:
Johnie's Broiler in Downey, outside of LA, was abruptly torn down in 2007. A reproduction was recently completed.

Opposite page, bottom:
The Stiles Clements-designed Lou Ehler's Cadillac on Wilshire Boulevard in LA was demolished in 2008.

On April 11, 2002, the infamous demolition of Richard Neutra's Maslon House in Rancho Mirage was featured on the cover of the *Los Angeles Times* Living section. For many, it was a shocking first close-up of what appeared to be a Wild West-style race to summarily destroy midcentury icons as fast as possible. Schindler's famed Wolfe House in Catalina and his Packard House in Pasadena were demolished in 2000 and 2001. Gregory Ain's Mar Vista tract home facade at 3542 Meier Street was demolished in 2002. A classic Cliff May Ranch home interior in Sullivan Canyon was gutted in 2002.

Myron Hunt's famed Ambassador Hotel in Koreatown came down in 2006 along with the original Rand Buildings in Santa Monica. Although the Wolfe House and the Rand Buildings both went through local public hearing

processes, they were still destroyed, the former because the building was deemed irreparable due to lack of structural maintenance and the latter for the greater good of the Santa Monica Civic Center Plan.

How was this allowed to happen? For one, Southern California is not only home to hundreds of works by renowned 20th-century architects and modernist mavericks, but it is governed by an equally unwieldy number of local city entities. Los Angeles County alone packs in 88 different municipalities. At the time of the Maslon House loss, Ken Bernstein, then director of preservation issues for the Los Angeles Conservancy and now managing director of the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources, told the *Los Angeles Times* that, "Many local governments have the misconception that if a building is not officially designated a local

landmark, it does not need to be considered as a potential historic building. Under CEQA (the California Environmental Quality Act), a city has an obligation to decide if a building is significant or not. You cannot destroy historical properties without a review."

Yet few cities exert their legal authority or responsibility to question or stop property owners or developers in the process of permit requests to demolish residential, retail, or commercial structures. Cities not only badly need ordinances that can stay or halt demolition, they also need surveys of historic properties, and support organizations to convince people why the properties should be saved. Furthermore, they need their citizens to back some reasonable measure of preservation without stifling real estate development and the experimental architecture that

continues to make LA an important metropolis for design.

On the positive side, the loud outcry following recent teardowns has clearly propelled the wheels of change here. It doesn't hurt that midcentury modernism has been hot for a decade. Late modernist works ooze "Mad Men" cool, adaptive reuse projects have prompted turnarounds in several neighborhoods, and Los Angeles is the heart and soul, center and sprawl for postwar architecture. Still, as *Los Angeles Times* critic Christopher Hawthorne noted last month, "the effort to round up support for postwar buildings is often far from straightforward—and can easily prove a minefield of contradiction and irony."

Bernstein is passionate about getting Los Angeles a state-of-the-art preservation program, including a revised Cultural Heritage Ordinance with the back-

FEATURE
13

ADRIENE BIONDO



LARRY UNDERHILL

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER NOVEMBER 23, 2009



LARRY UNDERHILL

Above:
Columbia Savings Building (Irving Shapiro, 1965) at Wilshire and La Brea, is seriously threatened with demolition.

Opposite page, top:
Minoru Yamasaki's Century Plaza Hotel in Century City is also under threat.

Opposite page, center:
A traditional-style house replaced Schindler's Packard House in Pasadena.

Opposite page, bottom:
Richard Neutra's Maxwell House has been relocated to Angelino Heights.

bone to actually halt demolitions, and an upcoming citywide inventory known as Survey LA, which is near the end of phase one of its two-part, five-year plan.

While LA's existing preservation ordinance was the first among major U.S. cities, the legislation is now one of the weakest in the country. Unlike in New York, San Francisco, San Diego, and Sacramento, where the municipal authorities can in fact prohibit demolition of structures, the existing LA ordinance can only enforce a limited stay of demolition, even for existing Cultural Monuments. Proposed amendments to the existing preservation ordinance—which were approved by the LA Planning Commission in September and are expected to be voted on by the city council in early 2010—not only strengthen the city's power to stay and halt demolitions, but improve due process

for property owners and developers, increase the cultural heritage commission's board membership from five to seven so that consensus can be reached more frequently, and provide more protection for cherished individual projects to match the strength and success of LA's Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) program.

Survey LA, largely supported by the grants, working papers, and continued partnership of the Getty, will be completed in 2012. And it's about time: While LA has over 900 Historic-Cultural Monuments and 24 Historic Districts, only about 15 percent of the city has been surveyed to date.

The project's first wave of localities will follow a rolling model, making survey work available for consideration as each neighborhood updates its community plan. Another step is the development of preservation education and

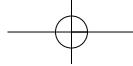
training. Ken Breisch, director of the Historic Preservation Programs at USC—the only accredited preservation program in LA with both masters and certificate tracks—has seen a significant increase in participation in these programs since their inception six years ago. The program supports the growing rise of interest in post-war architecture, while Bernstein was proud to note that graduates are now working for local historic resource consultants who are piecing together Survey LA.

And while Schindlers, Neutras, Mays, and Ains have been bulldozed or remodeled beyond recognition, private citizens and public institutions have made some nice saves. Oscar Niemeyer's Strick House in Santa Monica, his only project in the United States, was landmarked by the city and restored by Michael and Gabriel Boyd *in situ* in 2003. Just a year

ago, Richard Neutra's Maxwell House was precisely sliced like a Gordon Matta-Clark installation and moved by developer Barbara Behn on flatbed trucks from Brentwood to Angelino Heights to recapture the form, if not the context, of this classic 1957 work. In 2008, the homes of lesser-known but remarkable midcentury modernists like Romanian-born Haralamb Georgescu and Swedish-born Greta Magnusson Grossman were thoughtfully restored with complementary additions and renovations in Beverly Hills. On June 4, 2008, the MAK Center welcomed the Fitzpatrick-Leland House donation as part of its roster of Schindler projects available for public consumption and as home to the MAK Urban Future Initiative. And on November 7, 2008, the LA Conservancy's efforts to save the Driftyland Dairy-Port in El Monte from a strip mall demolition were rewarded with a unanimous vote of acceptance on the State Landmark Registry. This summer, Santa Monica opened the Annenberg Beach House, including docent-led tours of the Marion Davies guest house and dips in the original mansion pool.

Further afield, Jim Louder, owner of two Bob's Big Boy restaurants in Torrance and West Covina, just finished a recreation of the almost-completely steamrolled Johnie's Broiler in Downey. The new restaurant—Bob's Broiler—opened for business on September 26. This teardown turnaround story was made possible by Los Angeles Conservancy volunteers who had procured copies of the original drawings for Johnie's state landmark process. Without these, restoration would have been impossible, as a tenant's demolition crew reduced the building to rubble in 2007. In 2008, Neutra scholar Barbara Lamprecht wrote successful statements of significance for the Poppy Peak and Pegfair developments in Pasadena, getting these projects on local, state, and national registries this year and greatly expanding the lexicon of highly regarded postwar developments. Similarly, the Eichler Balboa Highlands Tract in Granada Hills is now a proposed HPOZ.

Back in Palm Springs, Neutra's famed Kaufmann House stands restored, unauctioned, and back for sale, while his nearby Miller House is being carefully brought back to life. On April 15, the city of Palm Springs approved a historic designation for Donald Wexler's west facade of the Palm Springs Airport. And in the aftermath of the Maslon House demolition, Rancho Mirage completed their citywide historic survey and inventory in 2004, noting that the home was the most architec-



FORA CHOU



JENNIFER DOUBLET

turally significant work within city limits prior to its demolition in 2002.

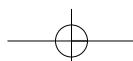
Nevertheless, threats still abound from developers weighing the value of maintaining existing structures versus tabula rasa visions. Some choice projects still on the chopping block include Minoru Yamasaki's Century Plaza hotel in Century City, Luckman Pereira's Robinsons-May department store in Beverly Hills, and Irving Shapiro's Columbia Savings and Loan building on Wilshire Boulevard. Welton Becket's Beverly Hills Trader Vic's and his Century City Gateway West Building have already lost their battles and sit quietly on death row. Equally ominous is the financial fragility of projects in good hands. Cal Poly Pomona's Neutra VDL House has stabilized its annual operating and maintenance costs through

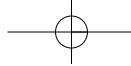
tours and architectural fundraising events, thanks to its energetic director Sarah Lorenzen. But it is in urgent need of \$100,000 for roof repairs (plans for these repairs have been drawn up by Marmol Radziner) to stave off continued damage from rainwater infiltration.

While the economy has slowed the actual bulldozers, the LA Conservancy is busier than ever.

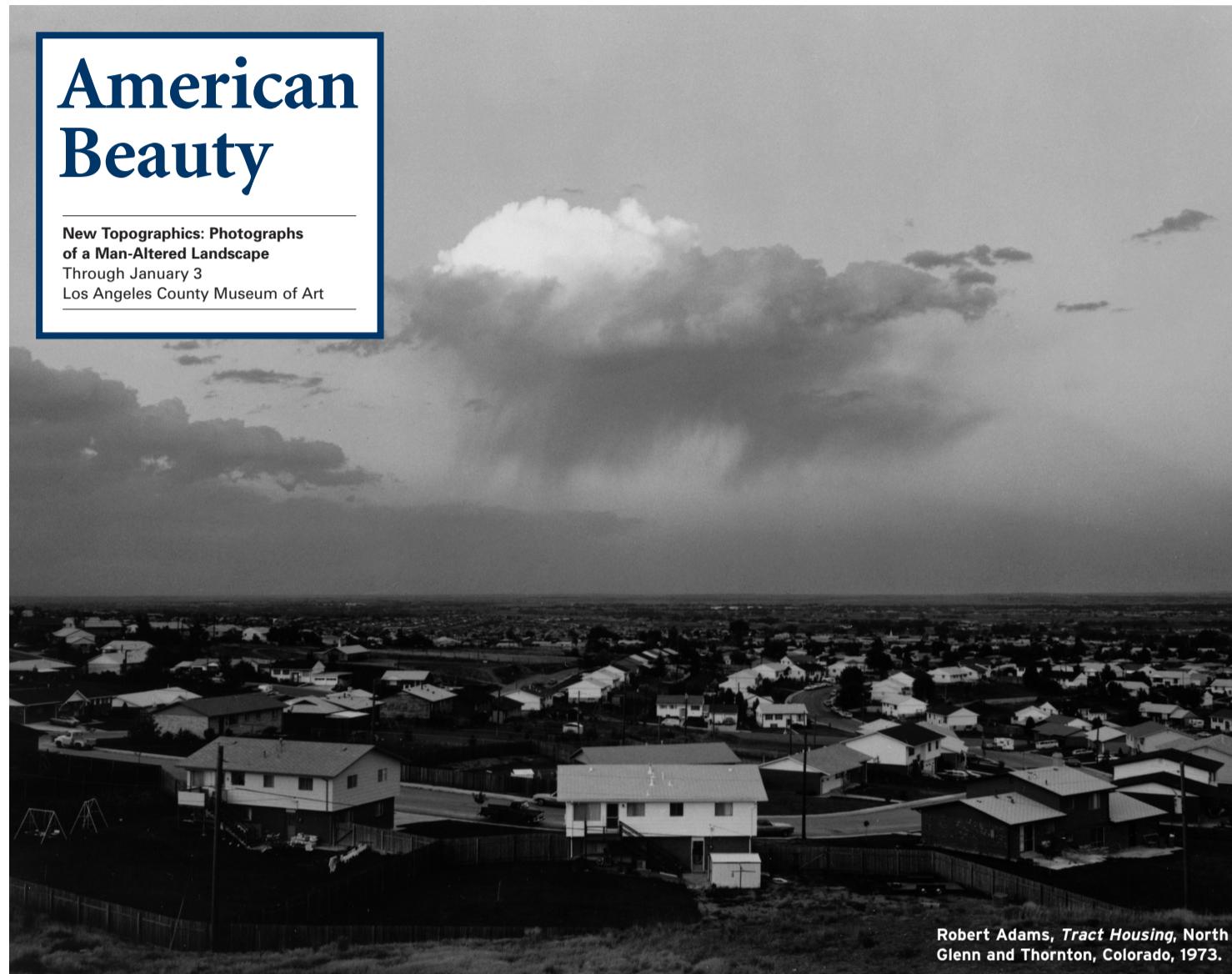
"We think this is the best time for us to tune up our preservation policies in advance of the next economic cycle," said Bernstein. "There are still misconceptions as to what historic preservation means; that it will freeze a property in time. But I think there's a growing understanding between preservationists and the economic community alike that preservation is a key component of economic revitalization."

JENNIFER DOUBLET IS A LECTURER AT OTIS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN.





REVIEW 17



Does banal equal boring? The ordinariness of tract homes, strip malls, shops, and other economically engineered buildings litter the black-and-white photographs of LACMA's new exhibition, *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape*. Curator of photography Edward Robinson reintroduces us to this exhibit of selected photographs from its original display in 1975 at the International Museum of Photography, George Eastman House in Rochester, NY.

Grouped by artist, the photographs share the straight shots that eschew artistic prowess in favor of documenting the landscape's transformation with "cheap" and "ugly" real estate. While perhaps anyone with a camera could capture this reality, when I looked at the prefabricated parks of Colorado by artist Robert Adams, I asked myself, why would anyone make the commitment to do so?

This is the unsettling phenomenon created by the ten artists that include Lewis Baltz, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Joe Deal, Frank Gohlke, Nicholas Nixon, John Schott, and Henry Wessel, Jr., who abandon pretty pictures to investigate the static impressions left by technological progress. Stephen Shore is the only participant in the show who used color photography.

But walking through and viewing the paved roads and flat roofs, it is what one **continued on page 18**

FUDGING SYMMETRY

The Poetics of a Wall Projection
Jan Turnovsky
Translated by Kent Kleinman
Architectural Association, \$26.00

God isn't always in the details. What is, however, according to Jan Turnovsky, is the repressed anxiety of the architects who design them. Originally published in German in 1985 and newly translated by Kent Kleinman, *The Poetics of a Wall Projection* is an exhaustive analysis of a small, pilaster-like protrusion on a wall in the Stonborough House in Vienna (1928), a protrusion that architect/philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein designed to work his way out of a pickle.

Because the house's breakfast room is part of a semi-detached volume, the exterior and interior faces of its southeast wall share a different axis of symmetry. This means that the single window that Wittgenstein wanted to place on this wall could either be centered on its exterior elevation or its interior, but not both. This is not a terribly unusual situation in

architecture, and Turnovsky provides examples of designers who, for various reasons, privileged one over the other. Adolf Loos centered his windows on the interior of the Duschnitz and Mandl Houses, while in contrast, Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach chose to preserve the symmetrical austerity of the facade in his Belvedere project. For Wittgenstein, however, who was so obsessed with proportions that he demolished the freshly plastered ceiling of a room to raise it three centimeters, a compromise was out of the question. To alleviate his angst, he centered the window on the exterior, and designed the wall projection (or "WP," as Turnovsky affectionately calls it) to augment the proportions of the interior wall so that the window appeared symmetrical on the inside. This sounds simple enough. The problem is that every attempt to restore equilibrium on one wall of the house led to instability in others. This is in part because the house's plan (which Wittgenstein inherited from the architect Paul Engelmann, who started the project) was largely based on a traditional Viennese mansion, with asymmetrically displaced rooms surrounding a central entrance hall. This resulted in walls with irregularly positioned openings, which

made it next to impossible to create interior elevations that obeyed the laws of symmetry. The Stonborough House is what you get when you try to force the interior or something empirically driven (like a British country house) toward conceptual purity (like the Villa Rotunda). The two don't mix. What results are things like L-shaped radiators stuck into corners, mysterious wall niches, and metal curtains on pulleys that disappear into the basement through slits in the floor.

The first part of the book cautiously links this tension between the conceptual and the empirical in the Stonborough House to Wittgenstein's nearly opposing early and late philosophical periods. Before his two-year stint as an architect, he was convinced that everything meaningful that could possibly be said could be demonstrated using the rules of logic. (All else, he famously argued, "had to be passed over in silence.") After the Stonborough House, he refuted the idea that language was governed solely by universal rules, and began seeking the meaning of words in the real-life circumstances within which they are used.

Turnovsky's treatment of the sticky relationship between abstract concepts and the intractable mate-

rial realities of buildings is excellent, as relevant today as it was when it was first written. However, most of the book is dedicated to a laborious deconstruction of the WP. Separate chapters devoted to its front surface, its edge, and its side, for example, vacillate between rational analysis and associative flights of fancy (where eventually the WP "appears to swell like a sine wave"). All of this destabilizes any value one might be tempted to assign this or any other piece of architectural syntax in the building. This part of the book will be enjoyable for those nostalgic for the semiotic craze of the 1980s. For everyone else, it will feel like a long and unproductive detour. By the time you make it through the references to Benjamin, Croce, Norberg-Shulz, Mukarovský, Kant, Adorno, Schlegel, and Eco, you have all but lost track of the little bump in the wall (or the house) that triggered the discussion in the first place. But it is only through this labyrinthine process that you slowly realize that *The Poetics of a Wall Projection* was never, after all, about the WP. What this late poet, musician, and architectural theorist has given us is a poetic mirror of Wittgenstein's lifelong uncertainty: of his inability in the end to confidently say whether the answers he was seeking were

THE POETICS OF A WALL PROJECTION

Jan Turnovsky

ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION LONDON

located in the physical stuff of the world, or in the underlying principles that govern it. Through this, we get a rare glimpse into fin-de-siècle Vienna, which Wittgenstein shared with figures like Karl Kraus, Sigmund Freud, and Loos; for whom words, thoughts, and objects were signs of the tension between the surface of things and the deeper truths lurking just beneath it.

BRADLEY HORN IS DIRECTOR OF THE MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE PROGRAM AT THE CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK.

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER NOVEMBER 23, 2009

TSCHUMI PÈRE

Jean Tschumi:
Architecture at Full Scale
Jacques Gubler
Skira, \$85.00

The child is the father to the man, said Wordsworth, tracing the mysterious balance of invention and inheritance in the formation of character. This principle applies to *Architecture at Full Scale*, the handsome new monograph by Jacques Gubler about the brief but bright architectural career of Jean Tschumi (1904–1962), whose name is today familiar through that of his son, sometime starchitect Bernard Tschumi. "My father died on my 18th birthday," Tschumi fils touchingly writes in the foreword. He describes the book as "a detective story, in which carefully laid-out clues lead us to another, fuller understanding of what architecture can be." The tacit mystery is the familial prehistory of Bernard Tschumi's own epochal work as part of the so-called Deconstructivist moment in architecture. As with many early modernists, the explicit mystery is the striking transformation, in Tschumi's career, from the moderne classicism of early works to the urbane modernism of a short generation later.

The masterwork of that career is the 1956–1960 headquarters for Swiss food conglomerate Nestlé at Vevey, Switzerland. A swooping Y-plan (reminiscent of the contem-

porary UNESCO complex in Paris by Marcel Breuer and others) preserves old-growth cypresses and ingeniously reoccupies the land parcels of a demolished hotel on the site. Glass and aluminum curtain walls above angular reinforced concrete pilotis neatly assimilate what could have been dissonant Miesian and Corbusian influences. A swooping folded aluminum entrance porch and bravura double-helix lobby staircase recall Eero Saarinen's similarly scintillating spiral stair and canopies at the 1956 General Motors campus in Warren, Michigan. The tessellated folds of the lobby ceiling, its lines paralleled in the floor pattern below, translate the sectional tilts of the pilotis deep into the plan: Viewed obliquely, albeit somewhat willfully, these intricately disciplined disjunctions between orthogonal and diagonal geometries evoke the interests later developed by Tschumi the Younger.

The Vevey complex for Nestlé, along with the similar MVA Insurance building in Lausanne, Switzerland, came late in a career that was, like Saarinen's, sadly abbreviated. One of the detective mysteries of the book is what might have been. But to present-day readers, Jean Tschumi's career has the virtue of unfamiliarity. Unlike the all-too-polished tales of the usual midcentury suspects, the arc of Tschumi's work from the early 1920s to the late 1950s illuminates a complicated confluence of forces and feints as a generation of designers attempted to reconcile Beaux-Arts training with modern times—and get work. Much as the life of a working character actor tells you more about Hollywood

than the narrow trajectory of a leading man, *Architecture at Full Scale* shows us how the dazzling changes of those turbulent times filtered out from a narrow avant-garde into the deep reserve of the profession.

Like those of Aalto or Asplund, Tschumi's early projects featured a picturesquely streamlined classicism, which reached its fullest expression in his piquant Nestlé corporate pavilion at the 1937 Paris World's Fair. Interior design work, also in Paris, saw detours into decorously moderne styling, as with a sleekly Chareau-esque 1933 office suite for manufacturer Edgar Brandt, and an unrealized boardroom for André Citroën. An association with Art Deco furniture maestro Jacques-Émile Ruhlmann led to a 1934 commission to design staterooms on the ocean liner *Normandie*. The dapper built-ins and boudoirs that resulted were worthy of Astaire and Rogers. Tschumi's Perret-like 1949 Sandoz industrial laboratory in Orléans, France, tops a modern ferroconcrete facade with a vast quasi-Doric cornice: The interestingly awkward result speaks to what history-in-progress looks like, before the historians tidy it up.

Gubler's history is clearly a labor of love, as much a digressive diary of his own encounters with Tschumi's legacy as a critical survey. An index would help scholars, as would an expanded narrative situating Tschumi's work beyond the internecine complexities of a very local Franco-Swiss design scene. An interesting appendix discusses the relentless pedagogy of the Paris École des Beaux-Arts sequence, and Tschumi's modernizing of his experience therein as a

Grain Silo, Renens, Switzerland (1956–1959).



ARCHIVES DE LA CONSTRUCTION MODERNE, LAUSANNE

founding teacher at the Polytechnic School of the University of Lausanne (EPFL). "I could wish my days to be bound each to each," Wordsworth wrote a few lines after his familiar aphorism on child and father, expressing the hope that life could proceed with all the predictable continuity

of, say, semesters. Or of mere genealogy. Jean Tschumi's story, in Gubler's telling, is stranger and stronger: a case study in resolving the unpredictable inventions and inversions of one's times into work both orderly and supple.

CRITIC THOMAS DE MONCHAUX IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.



COURTESY GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE COLLECTIONS

AMERICAN BEAUTY continued from page 17 doesn't see at first that is most significant, and most striking. While the trailers of Adams' photographs take over the ground plane, the natural world of the sky and mountains are on the horizon. It's reminiscent of 17th century Dutch painters who captured the vastness of the sky and the poetic integration of landscape with towns. In this exhibit, what we see is the absence of this. It is instead concrete, wood frame, and sheet-metal construction, infrastructure and signage: a nascent landscape.

This is where the documentary style of the images comes to life. It is in finding the "natural" parts of an urban environment with Gohlke or the dense subversions in Boston by Nixon. I see it in observing the industrial constructions among fields documented by Baltz to the pleasantly decaying shafts photographed by Becher. I wonder how the boring managed to creep over previously dynamic sceneries, inside and outside of urban environments, to become a standard.

Left: Nicholas Nixon, *Buildings on Tremont Street, Boston, 1975*.

Made 30 years later, the film by the Center for Land Use Interpretation scrolls aerial views of the oil industry expanding over stretches of land. It documents the acceleration of machine and man-made materials dominating American landscapes.

As easy as it is to dismiss much of the photographed architecture of this exhibit, I do believe it is thought-provoking and worth visual exploration. Here is where I turn to Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown's *Learning from Las Vegas*. Their manifesto is found in a case nearby to give historic context alongside artists who also documented the everyday, like Ed Ruscha and Walker Evans. It was Venturi and Brown who listed traits of the "ordinary" and equated it with urban sprawl, and asked, "If it is all bad, then why is it so inspiring?"

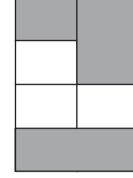
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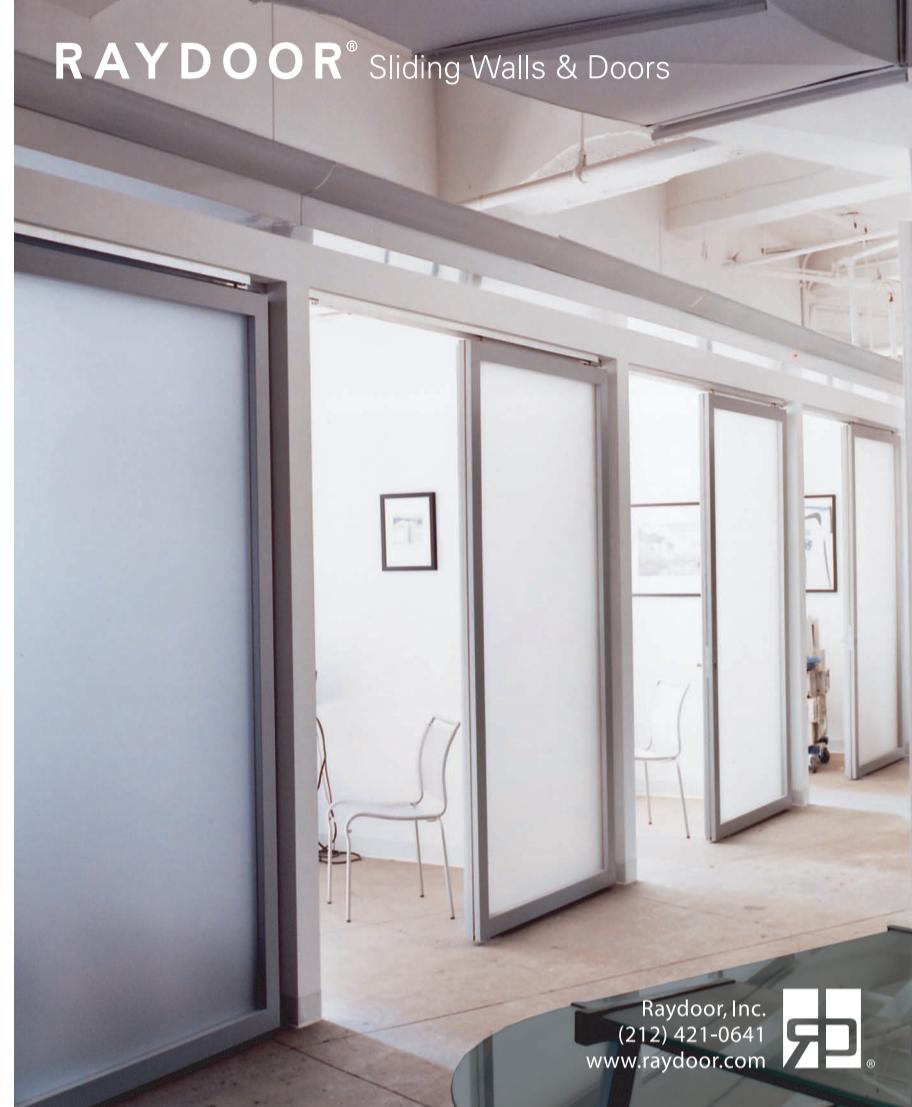
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LESLIE WILLIAMS

LONG SHELF LIFE

William Stout is a contrarian. Despite the downturn in the economy, especially the architecture economy, and the closing of independent bookstores, the owner of William Stout Architectural Books on San Francisco's Montgomery Street opened a second outpost on Mission Street in late September. Not only is he reaching out to architects in SoMa, he is also acting as his own distributor for his growing booklist. A/N paid Stout a visit at his warehouse and office in Richmond, California.

The Architect's Newspaper: How did you decide to open a second store on Mission Street at the California Historical Society?

William Stout: An employee of mine went down to the California Historical Society to see if they might sell some of our titles. We have books on Esherick, Royston, Church, Greenwood Commons. He came back and reported that the lady in the bookshop didn't want to carry our titles. So I went up and talked to the director. I offered to run the bookstore for them because we need exposure south of Market. Instead of running their bookstore, he suggested we take the bookstore over. We sell the California Historical Society's publications, but we are independent of the museum.

But they only have two or three exhibitions a year, right?

Yes, but we need exposure south of Market. I could never find the right space

at the right rent. In addition to the architects and museum-goers, there is the new SPUR headquarters, and there are a lot of Academy of Art students in the neighborhood. That corridor must get two million people a year. It's a great location.

Could you go back and describe the beginning of your bookselling?

The shop started in 1974 up in the Belli apartment building at 1218 Montgomery Street. Like now, it was a down time in architecture and there weren't very many good bookstores on architecture in San Francisco. Steven Holl and I were sharing an apartment, and he convinced me to start a bookshop with the books I had. So I used my own library to stock the shop. I decided to take a trip to Europe and bought art and architecture books, and came back very excited.

We had a really nice apartment, and we made it into a small bookstore. It was just open during the lunch hour. We just put out a notice to the local architecture firms that they could buy books during the lunch hour. There must have been 30 architectural firms within 15 blocks. The apartment was on the top of Montgomery and Union Streets. We were living in the upper unit that had 180-degree views from Treasure Island all the way around to Russian Hill.

How did you keep it going?

In the beginning, the only way that it real-

ly worked is that Chuck Bassett [design partner at SOM] really liked books and acted as a patron. SOM had a wonderful library that was built around his tastes. So he came up one day and looked around and was really pretty excited about what he saw. He then went back and started a library committee to pick books and enhance the SOM library.

We were at 1218 Montgomery for three or four years. It was getting to a point where there were a lot of books. The building was old and in a sad state of repair, and I became worried that the floors wouldn't hold the load.

Once I was walking back from the Alcoa building and turned up Osgood Place. As I was walking up the street, I noticed someone who was moving out of 17 Osgood Place and I took down the owner's name, Barrish. He ran a bail bond company. He had a space available on the first floor, which contained three or four rooms and a kitchen and then a bedroom in the back. So I told him I'd be very interested in renting the space for a bookshop.

Two days later, he called and said, "I've decided you can have the space if you want it." But, he said, "I don't want anybody in there that's going to bitch." He said, "I've had too many people I don't like." That space is where the soft porn movie *Behind the Green Door* was filmed.

In the old bookstore on Osgood?

Yes, on the first floor. I was really intrigued with the urban aspect of that space. The alley, the garden in the back—it's one of those urban spaces that you might find in London or New York City. I was there until '84. I was there about ten years, I think. It was a really nice place to live and work.

While I was there, they built a terrible building across the street that blocked the light and I decided to move. That's when I found the present location at 804 Montgomery Street. When I first opened the Montgomery location, I was living in the basement space because the rent was so high and the shop had more space than I needed at the time.

How do you feel the bookshop influenced the architecture culture?

I never really thought of it at that level. My idea of running a bookstore in the beginning was to be able to add to my library. It was a place for me to buy books. Maybe there was an intention that with a better bookstore, it might influence the architectural culture. I don't think the bookstore influenced the architects as much as maybe it did the patrons of architecture for this city.

People used to come in who were on building committees and buy books to learn about what they were supposed to know and look at work by prominent architects they might have heard of, or might want to hire.

So do you see the publishing side now growing?

I don't think anyone really knows what's going on. The Prairie Avenue Bookshop went under last month. What a cultural loss for Chicago.

Berkeley is a city that's always been

very favorable for booksellers, and yet they don't have many bookstores anymore. Students basically buy on the Internet. We have finally found a way to work with Amazon where they sell our books, but they don't undercut us.

What has been your biggest philosophical change? I don't mean necessarily about bookselling, but about architecture and urban design.

Philosophically, I don't think there's a change for me. The difference between practicing architecture and selling books is that as a bookseller you have a product. If your client doesn't like the product, they can bring it back for a refund. You don't have to beat yourself up about something that your client doesn't particularly care for because they may have misunderstood the process. Architecture has too many variables for me.

Bookselling and publishing allows me to have a library, which is what I've been working on all these years. I assumed that all architects would start building a library when they got out of school, like lawyers. The library is really about inspiration and sharing knowledge. That was the reason that I have my library and my bookstore: to share with the community.

I think it's interesting how the hobby evolved into the bookshop and then publishing, but in the end all of it supports the original passion.

Basically, I am a collector. I love to buy things. I travel all over to see other booksellers and share architecture. Each fall I try to go to the Frankfurt Book Fair to keep abreast of the latest publishing trends and see what the latest direction is, also to see my book friends. It has always been my intention to have a shop where you find rare and unusual books on architecture and design. Books that years after you've bought them remain special. A case in point is I just found in my library a Becher & Becher book on early industrial building photographs that I bought from George Wittenborn in 1973. It was signed by the Bechers. It brought back fond memories of one of New York City's great booksellers. I hope in years to come people can say the same thing about me.

Below: The Stout Annex on Mission Street.



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