

THE WEST ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

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SANTA MONICA CHOOSES OMA FOR MAJOR MIXED-USE PROJECT

DOWNTOWN DUTCH

Last month, Rem Koolhaas and his Rotterdam-based firm OMA defeated two powerhouse teams to win a 1 million-square-foot, mixed-use development project in Downtown Santa Monica on Arizona between 4th and 5th streets. OMA's winning proposal, which is being called The Plaza at Santa

Monica, was part of a package submitted in response to an RFP issued by the City of Santa Monica earlier in the year. A selection committee made up of officials from several city departments chose the scheme.

This will be OMA's first project at this scale in Los Angeles. The firm has tried to

win commissions in Los Angeles on three other occasions with proposals for LACMA, downtown's Broad Museum, and Universal Studios in the San Fernando Valley. The other two finalist teams included Brooks + Scarpa with Robert A.M. Stern and BIG with Koning Eizenberg, **continued on page 4**



LAWA

EXPANDED TOM BRADLEY TERMINAL OPENS AT LAX

JET SETTING

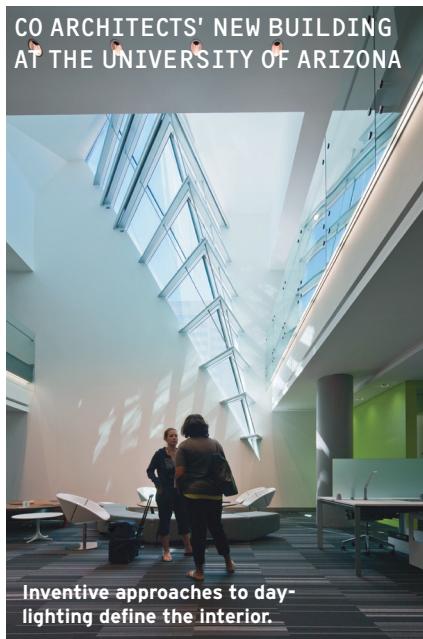
Ocean waves inspired the terminal's form.

Once upon a time, Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) was considered the transportation hub of the future, packed with gleaming new terminals centered around the Space Age-inspired Theme Building, bursting out of the ground like a white concrete spider. That was about 50 years ago. Since then, with a few exceptions, it's been pretty much downhill. Until now.

Fentress Architects' new \$1.9 billion addition to the airport's Tom Bradley

International Terminal is a surprisingly soaring testament to the awe-inspiring, hopeful spirit of flight. Although it's unfortunately reserved mostly for jet set international flyers, the terminal is nonetheless the grand space that the airport has long been lacking.

The terminal's curving, grey steel roofline, inspired by waves breaking on the Pacific coastline, pops up behind the original Tom Bradley Terminal, which **continued on page 3**



BILL TIMMERMAN

CO ARCHITECTS' NEW BUILDING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Inventive approaches to day-lighting define the interior.

COPPER PHOENIX

Architecture in downtown Phoenix has gotten its booster shot thanks to the angular facade, cuts, notches, and skewed floor plan of the new Health Sciences Education Building.

A collaboration of the University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University, the facility for students in medicine and related fields was designed by Los Angeles-based CO Architects (design and executive architect) and the Tempe office of Ayers Saint Gross Architects + Planners (associate architect and master planner). The **continued on page 8**



THINKING SMALL

CALIFORNIA'S SMALL DEVELOPERS ARE REBUILDING URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS WHILE FOCUSING ON DESIGN. SEE PAGE 13

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LEHRER ARCHITECTS

The park occupies the site of a former parking lot.

SPRING STREET PARK OPENS IN DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES

Urban Backyard

Downtown LA's Historic Core finally has the backyard its booming residential population sorely needs. Spring Street Park opened last month on the former site of a surface parking lot between several high-rise residential buildings.

The process of transforming the plot began when the city's Bureau of Recreation and Parks purchased the site in 2009 using Quimby Fees—paid by developers to fund public open spaces. Rec and Parks then hired the Architectural Division of the city's Bureau of Engineering as project managers, and Los Angeles-based Lehrer Architects as its design collaborator. The Architectural Division led a public outreach process, which revealed that the community wanted the park to be a **continued on page 2**

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AS ROME BURNED

Many in LA's art and architecture circles breathed a loud sigh of relief when the tumultuous reign of MOCA director Jeffrey Deitch finally came to an end. But while Deitch deserved to be terminated for his reckless behavior and his disregard of the city's artists and art institutions, this doesn't suddenly heal our community.

In his wake we, of course, get the mutated *New Sculpturalism* show at MOCA, which, while flawed, and stripped of its original direction, reveals some incredibly beautiful work and documents a period of significant experiment and growth in the city's architecture. But the drama surrounding it, besides exposing supreme dysfunction in one of the city's largest arts institutions, reveals that, somehow, the Los Angeles architecture community's biggest fear is being labeled: being labeled sculptural, or being labeled superficial, or being labeled anything at all. The only thing the show is called now is *Sculpturalism* with a scribble through it. What does that say?

As difficult as it can be, architects in the city should allow themselves to be called anything; that's what it means to become a part of the public discourse. If they try to control that discourse too much then they will be labeled the worst thing of all: nothing. The public will become tired of their behavior and move on. Just as clients do when their demands aren't met in the field.

And in their place will continue to rise a breed of "architecture" that is much worse than any of the projects dreamed up in the show. Just look at what's being planned in Los Angeles at this moment. Have you seen the sterile, ugly, anti-urban hotels being planned near the convention center? Have you seen the insensitive towers being planned next to Capitol Records in Hollywood? Have you seen the knock off condo towers near the historic core and the bland mixed use projects along Wilshire? How about the suburban style developments being proposed all over for a city that is, despite its objections, densifying more than almost any other?

There are some very exciting exceptions, including the return of top-flight firms like OMA and Gehry Partners to Santa Monica; splendid work by smaller firms near transit lines and in small lot subdivisions; cultural ambitions like the new Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Museum and the Broad Museum; transit ambitions at Union Station and LAX; and, of course, the incredible ongoing tradition of superb single family housing. But on a larger scale we're still experiencing the same dichotomy between splendid ideas and not so splendid second-rate civic work.

Our insular world needs to engage with the public discourse—as ugly and, sometimes, plain wrong as it can be. The political process and the development processes are much uglier than any of the beautiful ideas and models that they'll continue to dream up. RFQs and value engineering and city contracts are a pain, but they are reality. And if we want a more beautiful, effective city we need to engage with it. **SAM LUBELL**



Looking inside the new Spring Street Park.

URBAN BACKYARD continued from front page sophisticated, outdoor urban space with something for everyone.

The 0.7-acre, \$8 million park makes efficient use of its L-shaped parcel. A diagonally oriented grassy ellipse crosses the northern end, where the majority of sunlight falls throughout the year. A water feature doubles as a fence in the northwestern corner, and a children's playground occupies the north-eastern corner. A long plaza occupies the southern end of the park, which may one day be home to an outdoor café.

Spaces throughout the park encourage private uses by one person or small groups. Urban serenity is also available on a circumnavigating path, which provides a circuit for people and strollers. A diagonal walkway bisects the site, providing a potential future passage between the northern and southern ends and connecting the rear alley to Spring Street. An adjacent driveway could also become space for *al fresco* dining for a soon-to-open restaurant.

Live bamboo rings the space. As it grows it will provide a screen, increasing the backyard feel of the space. The bamboo motif is continued in the pattern of the aluminum chairs found throughout the site. The patterns change in different light conditions, creating a varied experience throughout the day.

City officials gathered at the park's opening to celebrate it as a "jewel in the crown" of a changing Los Angeles. It is number 16 in former Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's "50 Park" initiative, which has seen small green spaces go up around the city. At the opening, Rec and Parks Commission President Barry Sanders said the number of parks that the initiative will eventually achieve will be even higher: 53, or a 20 percent increase in the total number of public green spaces in the city. **JAMES BRASUPELL**

LETTERS

GEHRY SPRAWL

The following comment appeared on blog.archpaper.com in response to the post, "Gehry Lets Loose on Los Angeles, Downtown Ambitions," which cites an interview Frank Gehry did with *Los Angeles Magazine*.

The only thing that makes Los Angeles unique is that so much of it was built during the auto era (albeit on an infrastructural framework established during the interurban rail era). Different parts of Los Angeles were developed in a manner that was identical to how other cities across North America were being developed at the same time. The same succession of transportation, construction, and development technologies created

a downtown in Los Angeles that is nearly indistinguishable from portions of San Francisco, Chicago, and Manhattan.

The fact that the city also has linear urban spaces, such as along Wilshire, does not make Los Angeles unique nor incompatible with the sort of transit-oriented, mixed-use urban living that has been thriving for over a decade in our major cities. "Linear Downtowns" such as Wilshire are not currently pedestrian "friendly." The scale and velocity of such spaces have long been attuned to the auto. The city could use focus on retooling these areas to serve both motorists and pedestrians. The Purple line extension will be an important step.

I do not think anyone is suggesting that we abandon the automobile or the spaces it has created, but Los Angeles' downtown

will continue to become a better place as more people choose the lifestyle that level of density affords. For decades, all development in Los Angeles was auto-reliant. Now a small portion of new development has been working to revitalize a late-19th/early-20th century urban downtown. This is long overdue, and serves a demand for urban living that has been nearly impossible to find in Southern California.

Master architect or no, Gehry is wrong, and pedestrian-oriented urbanism continues to be on the rise. As a west-sider, and a member of a previous generation, he appears to hold the same anti-downtown prejudices outlined in Mike Davis' *City of Quartz*.

RANDOLPH RUIZ
PRINCIPAL, AAA ARCHITECTURE
SAN FRANCISCO

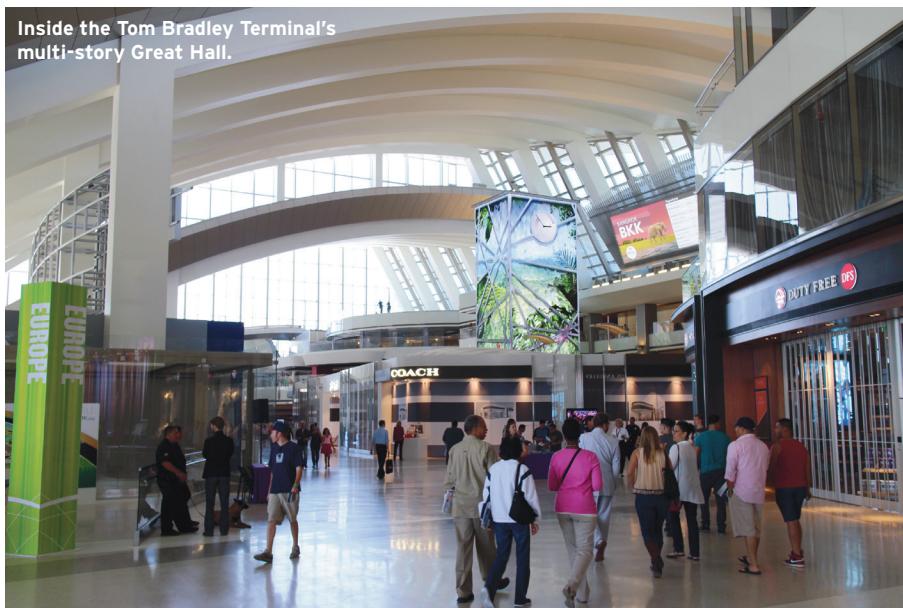
FIRST DOGGY DOO-DOO IN FLIGHT

Are you afraid of taking Rover with you on your next flight because he might have to go potty in the airport? Well, pet-packing passengers flying through San Diego's Lindbergh Field can rest easy. The airport's recent \$1 billion "Green Build" Terminal 2 expansion includes the nation's first and only "pet relief" comfort station. Located between gates 46 and 47, the 75-square-foot rest room is decked out with features to get your four-legged friend in the mood to go, including ersatz grass and a fire hydrant. This may be the first, but it won't be the last. **Tom Rossbach**, director of aviation architecture at **HNTB**, told the *San Diego Union-Tribune* that the firm is offering the amenity to its other airport clients.

FLIGHT DELAYS

LAX finally opened its shiny new Tom Bradley terminal, designed by **Fentress Architects**, to quite a hullabaloo in July. The throngs who showed up for "Appreciation Days" got to enjoy shopping, music, and even free LAX keychains and knickknacks. But one of the most prominent elements was missing: the public art. Major pieces by **Ball-Nogues**, **Pae White**, and **Mark Bradford** were all delayed for what one participant called "a lack of sophistication on LAX's part" in shepherding such work through. In other words, the officials didn't get how to pull this kind of thing off. Well never fear, despite the bumps, contract disputes, and many miscues, the installations will begin opening in late September and continue through the end of the year. Better late than never.

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Inside the Tom Bradley Terminal's multi-story Great Hall.

SAM LUBELL

JET SETTING continued from front page was recently given a \$723 million renovation by Leo A Daly.

The 110-foot-tall Great Hall is the interior's centerpiece, with its series of white arches and giant white vaults. Natural light streams into the space through large windows and clerestories, illuminating the 150,000 square feet of retail and dining. The retail facilities, overseen by Westfield, have a modern aesthetic, with woven metallic canopies at ground level and a stacked series of mezzanine spaces stepping upward toward the top floor. The inspiration for the space seems to be a mix of *The Jetsons* and Prada.

In its entirety, the new facility—including the concourses, security facilities, 18 gates, glassy light wells (one of which is still awaiting its Ball-Nogues installation), and more retail—measures 1.2 million square feet, doubling the space of the existing Tom Bradley Terminal. The many arches and overhangs and vaults and entryways across the variety of levels keeps passengers' eyes in constant motion. A series of interactive displays designed by Canadian company Moment Factory adds to the visual barrage. These include an 80-foot LED "Welcome Wall" that greets visitors with soothing videos, two "Concourse Portals" consisting of 10 video columns that respond to movement, and the 72-foot "Time Tower," a four-sided LED extravaganza surrounding

the terminal's main elevator.

Of course, most projects of this scope include corner cutting, and LAX did demand serious value engineering, said Fentress principal Curtiss Fentress. But overall he was happily surprised with the airport's commitment. In fact, once officials started to grasp the scope of what was being built they started asking for "more, more, more." Hence the original scope increased, as did the original \$1.4 billion price tag. Fentress, it should be noted, has become the country's airport architect *du jour*, completing recent facilities in Denver, Sacramento, San Jose, Raleigh-Durham, and Seattle-Tacoma. The firm's next project is a control tower in San Francisco.

And for those who complain that LAX is still a mess despite this terminal, there seems to be good news on the horizon. The airport's capital improvements program budget is \$4.1 billion, including a new central utility plant, an update to terminal 6 (also by Fentress), several more terminal renovations (2,3,4,5,7, and 8), and the recent restoration of the Theme Building. Perhaps the most noticeable change opened concurrently with the new Tom Bradley Terminal: AECOM's roadway enhancements, including new LED light ribbons above roadways, Y-shaped light poles, and perforated metallic canopies.

SL

> SHED

25 North Street
Healdsburg, CA
Tel: 707-431-7433
Designer: Jensen Architects



MARIKO REED

A new kind of community center has opened in Healdsburg in the heart of Sonoma. Designed by Jensen Architects, SHED, which ushers the traditional barn typology into the 21st century, is a combination coffee shop, restaurant, mercantile store, and meeting space. Glazed garage doors and other large openings on two levels expose the interior to the surroundings, including a restored habitat made up of large shade trees and a garden that captures and filters storm water. On the high-tech side, the pre-engineered metal frame is made up of 70-percent recycled steel coated with non-VOC paint. The building is clad with prefabricated metal panels that are insulated with polyisocyanurate foam. Rooftop photovoltaic panels produce about a third of the building's energy needs. Going back to basics, the interior features intricate tile arrangements by Sonoma Tilemakers, salvaged wood elements sourced by local firm Aborica, and wood furniture created by area woodworkers. **SL**

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Left: Overhead view of the large-scale development; Right: One of the project's several open space elements.

DOWNTOWN DUTCH continued from front page Rios Clementi Hale, and RTKL.

OMA is design lead on the project in a joint venture with Metropolitan Pacific Capital, Clarett West Development, and DLJ Real Estate Capital Partners. Santa Monica-based firm VTBS (Van Tilberg, Banvard & Soderbergh) is the architect of record and the Los Angeles office of OLIN is designing the landscape.

OMA's design is composed of block-length bars that step up and back from Arizona Avenue, canting one way and then the other to open

up cascading roof terraces and, as the proposal states, a number of "exchange opportunities for indoor and outdoor program continuity." These four elevated terraces, which include gardens, cafés, and other public amenities, overlook a public plaza with a central water feature that will be transformed into an ice skating rink in winter.

Pocket parks on the 4th and 5th Street faces mark entrances to the 400,000-square-foot, 12-story building, whose program includes retail, office, live/work space, an open-air market, and a four-story, 225-room boutique hotel. Parking,

always a critical issue in Santa Monica, is extensive and tucked away underground.

The project will seek a LEED Gold rating with a number of sustainable features, such as green roofs and multi-modal transportation infrastructure, including a bike path, bike facilities, a bike share station, and provisions for a gondola station that could directly tie the project into the planned Expo light rail station at 4th Street and Colorado Avenue. By maintaining 20,000 square feet of public space along Arizona Avenue, the design opens itself up to Santa Monica's 3rd Street Promenade.

According to a public report issued on July 10, Santa Monica's selection panel—composed of city staff from the departments of Planning and Community Development, Community and Cultural Services, Public Works, and Housing and Economic Development—selected the OMA team's proposal because they felt it was the "most compelling." Key factors were the thoughtfulness of the design approach on all sides of the property, how it integrated with the overall city, its highly flexible interior space, and how it activates all areas of the site. The panel also appreciated how the tiered design maximized public space and view opportunities and how it could allow for adaptation in the future.

The selection committee's recommendation contains just one caveat. It encourages the design

team and the Santa Monica City Council to "pursue affordable housing as an element of the project." The current proposal does include a provision for the possible inclusion of affordable or workforce housing.

Sarah Johnson, principal analyst for the City of Santa Monica's Housing & Economic Development department and project manager for this redevelopment project, said the City Council is scheduled to take action on the formal recommendation on August 27. At that meeting the selection committee will formally recommend that City Council enters into "exclusive negotiations" with the winning team and then begins an extensive phase of community outreach on the project's design and open space programming. A development agreement is expected in 2014.

GUY HORTON



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Applications will be considered starting on August 1, 2013 but will continue to be accepted well after that date. Full details about this position and the application process can be found at <http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/###information-for/faculty/open-faculty-positions.html>

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER AUGUST 14, 2013

Clockwise from top left: The 16-story courthouse is a major presence in downtown; natural light pours in, a rarity for court architecture; overhangs and scrims provide shade; terra cotta panels clad the building's west side.



RICHARD MEIER GIVES DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO A NEW CIVIC ICON

DAY COURT

As America expanded westward, courthouses were the building blocks that gave new settlements a sense of legality and permanence. For a time they were the principle focus of civic identity, before being swallowed up in a tide of commercial highrises. The new San Diego Federal Courthouse strives, in its siting and elegant design, to enrich both downtown and the experience of its users. A slender 16-story tower rises from a park, and its lobby reaches out to neighboring federal buildings to create a civic hub. All the interiors, including the courtrooms, are naturally lit, and many are naturally ventilated.

This is the third federal courthouse that Richard Meier & Partners has designed, and West Coast principal Michael Palladino was determined to make it site-specific and take full advantage of the benign climate.

"The GSA has a 2,450-page manual that you have to follow to get your plan approved, but we challenged some of its rules," he said. "If we had created a block with up to eight courtrooms on each floor, as they recommended, we would have occupied the entire site."

Over several meetings he convinced his clients that it would be less expensive and more efficient to stack pairs of

courtrooms above the public spaces, with court offices at the north and south ends. That would eliminate corridors and allow a single bank of dedicated elevators to serve judges, the accused, and other users. Public spaces on the east side would be fully glazed, the west side would be screened with terracotta panels, and courtrooms would be lit from clerestories to the front and rear.

Palladino also persuaded judges to allow courtrooms, which they regard as their privileged domain, to be reconfigured. He reduced the height of the bench to make it less overwhelming, and designed divisions and furnishings of blond wood. Engineering firm Arup ran lab tests on models to ensure good natural acoustics, and several judges have already praised the courtrooms for improving attitude and behavior.

The public is equally well served. The narrow footprint is sandwiched between the traffic artery of Broadway and E Street, which has been pedestrianized. That footpath wraps around an oval-shaped entry rotunda, and leads into a landscaped plaza. To accommodate the mandatory 50-foot setback while preserving the building line on E Street, the first two floors are recessed and the upper stories cantilever out. The entry hovers half a level above the ground plane and is accessed by a broad ramp from Broadway and two narrow switchback ramps from the

plaza. These double as a security barrier and Robert Irwin (who lives in San Diego) turned them into a green artwork, with Corten steel plates enclosing plantings. A second Irwin artwork—a prismatic acrylic obelisk created for a Northridge mall and kept in storage since the 1994 earthquake—reflects and refracts light within the lobby. The basket-like screen that encloses this lofty space was inspired by the wood-lathe roof vault of the botanical garden in San Diego's Balboa Park. The jury assembly room opens onto a terrace and can be used for public events after hours. Translucent windows

allow natural light into the marshals' spaces below grade and judges have their own terrace near the top of the tower.

A Gold LEED rating is one measure of the Courthouse's efficiency, but it triumphs in many other ways: as a graceful departure from the lumpish mediocrity of its neighbors, as a guardian of green space at the heart of the city, and by transforming public perceptions of the law in action. At a time when many have lost confidence in government, it's salutary to be reminded that one branch can still serve the common good.

MICHAEL WEBB



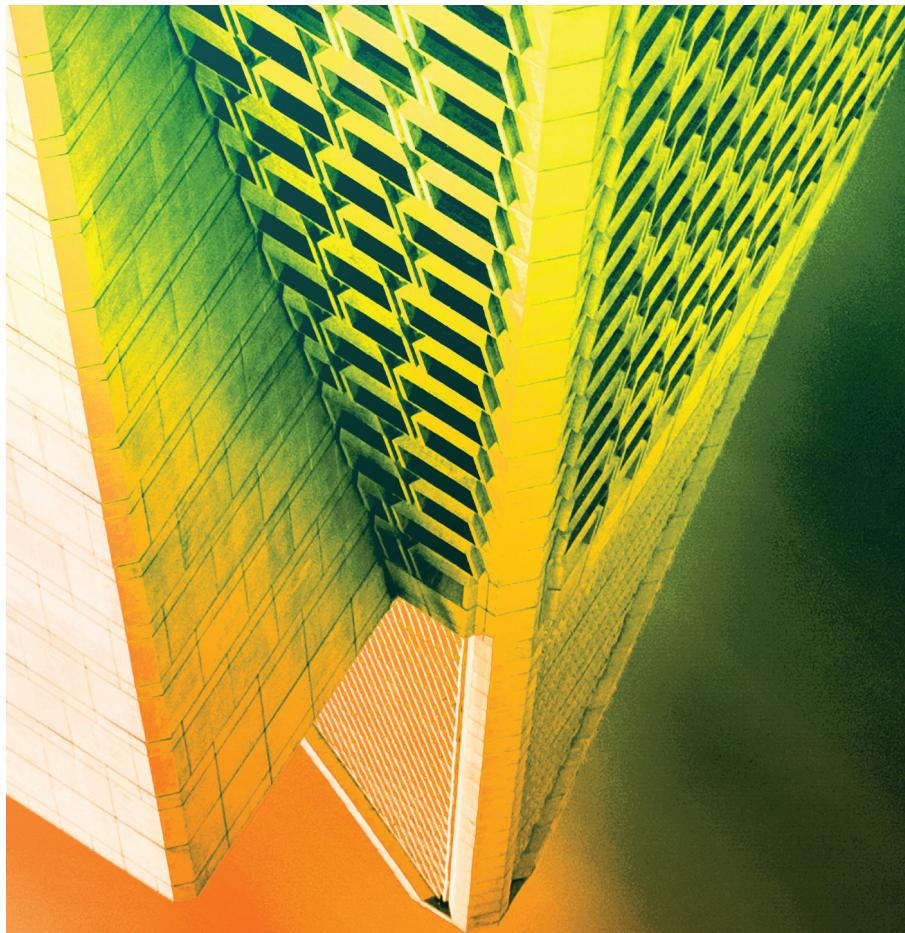


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William L. Pereira & Associates, *Transamerica Corporate Headquarters Tower*, San Francisco, California, 1973. Photograph by Albert Tam, 2011. www.albert-tam.com



BILL TIMMERMAN

COPPER PHOENIX

continued from front page
268,000-square-foot building, located on the Phoenix Biomedical campus, decisively breaks the chain of rectilinear precedents established by many nearby works that mimic and conform to the local grid.

The monumental six-story structure rises from its flat site like a desert plateau. Its composition consists of a north-south base, and east-west wings that form a dramatic "canyon," or courtyard, in their negative space. This 90-foot-tall space (as well as other slots and notches) infuses natural light into the building's interior. Lightweight tensile structures are integrated into the roof, shading the far-falle-shaped courtyard, making it comfortable even during 110-degree summer days.

The face of the heavy massing displays "geologic" striations suggestive of millennia of sedimentary layering. On closer inspection, the textured facade is a copper rain screen—evocative of the Southwest's

rich deposits of the metal. The skin, which is perforated in places, wraps around the exterior of the complex and snaps up in horizontal bands on the south to allow for fenestration as well as shade glazing. On the western wall, the envelope juts out as a canopy to protect the floor-to-ceiling glass of the entry and cafeteria from early morning solar gain.

The architects worked closely with the subcontractor to create 26 varieties of copper panel. Out of this mixed-and-matched scheme emerges a seemingly infinite assortment of natural patterns and facets that invigorate the surface, bringing it to life via the glints and highlights of the Arizona sun.

Inside, the building includes lecture halls, teaching and conference rooms, study spaces, an anatomy lab, simulated clinical exam suites, a library, student lounges, a cafeteria, and offices. Each floor, related to a different type of clinical and academic instruction, is color-coded. The design amplifies the trend of

Above: The staggered copper facade evokes desert earthforms; Below: Light pours into an internal stairwell. Bottom: Looking at the complex from above;

integrating medical classrooms with simulation labs, group study, and collaborative learning, bringing together health disciplines rather than segregating them.

The panels, form, and proportions of the building contribute to the success of the architects' goal to create a "visual connection with the surrounding mountains and a sense of solidity, coloration, and striations apparent in the northern and southern mountain range," said CO Architects principal L. Paul Zajfen. The project's achievement must also be credited to its sustainability and responsiveness to the desert. Jack Black, principal at Ayers Saint Gross, said the school's siting is "based on respect of the Sonora, which is strongly impacted by the presence of the sun and can have a diurnal temperature swing of as much as 30 degrees." The architecture is not only shelf shading, but provides smooth, even light deep into the building.

The project illustrates that symbolism and meaning continue to play a role in contemporary architecture. It's success, though, is ultimately judged by its end-users. In this case, first-year medical student Aaron Klassen said, "I think the building is excellent, and I know that my colleagues feel similarly. With the amount of time we spend here, one would expect us to begin to feel claustrophobic or cut-off from the outside world, but that doesn't happen with such an open design and so much natural light in every space." **BRADLEY WHEELER**





Visitors check out the robotic arms inside the raw space.

REED HUTCHINSON

UCLA LAUNCHES CAMPUS IN PLAYA VISTA

SUPRA SPRUCE

Once the business and technology hub of billionaire eccentric Howard Hughes, the Hercules campus in Playa Vista is becoming another laboratory to imagine the future, this time of architecture.

This fall, UCLA moves Suprastudio, its one-year M.Arch II program, to the historic campus, much of which has been renovated by architect Brenda Levin. Set within the vicinity of Google, YouTube, and 72andSunny, the program looks to investigate the potential of advanced technology to change the

practice of architecture. Suprastudio is making its home in Building 14, right beside the gigantic hangar that witnessed the Spruce Goose under construction.

The new headquarters, recently revealed to the public, is a 13,000-square-foot space with a bow-truss ceiling, original redwood interior walls, and concrete floors. Because the building is a California historical landmark, UCLA kept much of the industrial space's raw character, only making a few tenant improvements such as new drywall, an updated electrical system, installation

of a new high-speed network, and new lighting.

"We wanted to preserve that sense of the past," said Hitoshi Abe, chair of UCLA's Architecture and Urban Design program. Worn paint, and inklings of what's come before are still very much in evidence. "The UCLA main campus is beautiful," added Abe, "but this is an exciting space where you can make a creative mess." It is a scaled-up version of one's garage, perhaps in homage to the many bootstrapped tech-driven projects that have since changed society.

Once open, the space will house three separate studios led by Frank Gehry, Thom Mayne, and Greg Lynn; a shop area; a project showcase section and room for four robotic arms, which will be used during the program. No fixed interior walls will be built, according to Abe, to encourage the exchange of ideas and interaction among students.

CARREN JAO

AT DEADLINE

WHOSE FAULT IS IT?

While the Capitol Records-blocking Millennium Hollywood towers finally got LA city approval recently, the controversial \$600 million project is now facing another obstacle: mother nature. Geologists say that the 35-story and 39-story towers may sit on top of the active Hollywood Fault, and the state is demanding more testing to find out if the location presents a threat. According to state law, new projects cannot be built within 50 feet of an active fault. If the fault is found on the site it could hold up other Hollywood developments as well. "We want to make sure we don't set some sort of precedent because there are suspicions that a fault line might be somewhere, that it stops all economic activity and development activity. It would cause irreparable harm to our economy if we proceeded that way," fretted California state councilman Mitch O'Farrell.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH

While it's been well documented that China has been "borrowing from" U.S. designs for some time, it appears that relationship is starting to go both ways. A new residential project in Downtown LA bears a striking resemblance to Steven Holl's Linked Hybrid apartment complex in Beijing, with a porous, gridded facade and glassy sky bridges, to name just a couple of similarities. The mixed-use Medallion 2.0, designed by Kevin Tsai Architecture, would be located off the corner of 3rd and Main streets. It is scheduled to break ground in 2015 and includes 400 rental units, a theater, retail, and over half an acre of green space.

PETERSEN MAKEOVER COMING

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) isn't the only museum in town planning a significant redo. The Petersen Automotive Museum, just across Wilshire Boulevard from LACMA, has retained Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates (KPF) to imagine a radical redesign of the exterior of the museum's home. The institution will select a preferred concept sometime in August and will reveal the final design when it hosts a discussion outlining its goals on August 18. An early concept design, a radically kinetic, glassy exterior, which leaked to the press in July, is just one of several that KPF has been presenting to museum directors.

WWW.ARCHPAPER.COM

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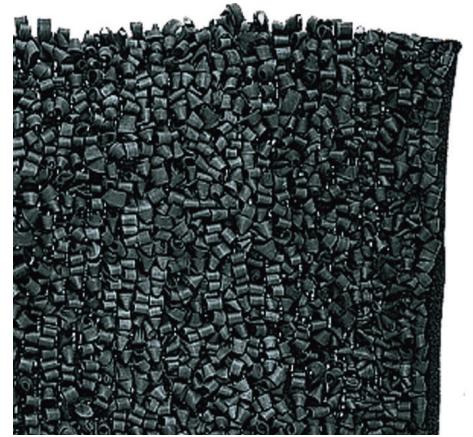
A RANGE OF FURNISHINGS AND FINISHINGS FOR HOSPITALITY, RETAIL, AND PUBLIC URBAN SPACES THAT CAN WITHSTAND THE ELEMENTS. BY EMILY HOOPER



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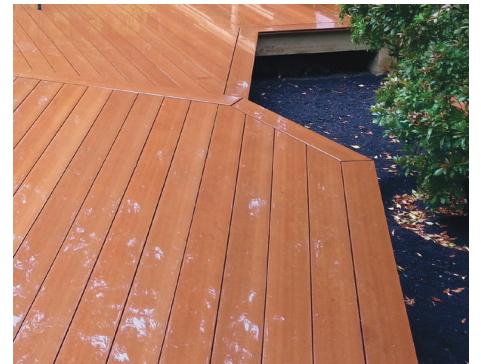
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7



8

COURTESY RESPECTIVE MANUFACTURERS

**1 HEDGE-A-MATIC
GREENSCREEN**
GREENSCREEN.COM

Define outdoor space with greenscreen's fiberglass planters. They come in a curved or straight 48-by-18-inch base in 21 colors with a gloss, orange peel, sand, or matte finish. A 3-inch-deep powder-coated screen—also available in a curved or flat profile—is available in green, silver, black, or white for an overall height of 58 inches.

**2 QUARTZ SERIES
KORNEGAY DESIGN**
KORNEGAYDESIGN.COM

Inspired by the facets of raw quartz crystals, Kornegay Design captures both the sharp edges and smooth surfaces in this collection of pre-cast concrete planters. Weighing just less than 2,200 pounds, the furnishings can withstand extreme weather and heavy pedestrian traffic. Four sizes range from 27 inches to 39 inches in height, and 23½ inches to 36½ inches in width, in a range of custom-mixed pigment dyes.

**3 BICICLETA
NANIMARQUINA**
NANIMARQUINA.COM

Inspired by a visit to India—where bicycling is one of the most popular transportation methods—Nanimarquina's hand-loomed Bicicleta is made from repurposed 130/140 bicycle inner tubes. The 100 percent recycled area rug features a springy pile height of just under 1½ inches with an overall size of 5.6 feet by 7.9 feet.

**4 DECKING
RESYSTA**
RESYSTA.COM

This decking material is extruded from 60 percent rice husks, 22 percent salt, and 18 percent mineral oil. Its unique construction makes it ideal for outdoor applications. It can withstand rain, sun, snow, and salt water with or without a proprietary surface glazing that comes in 21 shades. Unlike conventional wood decking, Resysta features a Class A fire NFPA fire rating, and is also resistant to pest and fungal growth.

**5 VIGOR TABLE
ROYAL BOTANIA**
ROYALBOTANIA.COM

Kris Van Puyvelde designed this outdoor dining table, which features thick, rough-hewn teak or mahogany boards dovetailed to a powder-coated aluminum frame for a handcrafted touch. The table measures 126 inches in length and 43 inches in width, with an overall height of 30 inches. Sled-based stools and a bench are also available for a complete dining collection.

**6 SPRING
WILDSPRIT**
DAPOSTROPHE.NET

Strips of steam-bent bamboo form Spring, a tabouret for use across a wide range of applications thanks to the fibrous material's inherent strength and flexibility. Designed by Erik Jansen, its classic hourglass shape is suitable for backless seating or an ad hoc side table. Spring measures 19.7 inches in height and 16.1 inches in diameter.

**7 ROCKING CHAIR
SIXINCH**
SIXINCH.US

Belgian furniture company SIXINCH recently established headquarters in Indiana to bring more than 50 products to the U.S., including the Rainer Mutsch-designed Rocking Chair. Made from rotational molded plastic, the chiseled outdoor piece comes in 20 bright colors and measures 25½ inches in height and 38½ inches in width, with a seat height of 15 inches.

**8 SPONECK
CHAIR & TABLE**
GREEN-FORM.COM

Designer and architect Julia von Sponeck connected two curved sheets of fiber cement for a sturdy yet forgiving outdoor seating solution. Optional felt covers in gray, red, or a vibrant chartreuse coordinate with the body's cement gray or custom coloring. Dimensions measure 31-by-24-by-20 inches with a seat height of 10 inches, while the coordinating 20-inch square table matches the seat height.

HOUSE OF THE ISSUE > RNLA HOMES

MINARC



Every day, non-profit Restore Neighborhoods Los Angeles (RNLA) deals with down-and-out homes. They purchase foreclosed or abandoned properties, fix them up cost-effectively and put them on the market at a price low- and medium-income household can afford.

Recently, RNLA decided to do something different with three of its 15 current properties. "We wanted to build hyper-efficient, net-zero homes in South Los Angeles," said John Perfitt, RNLA Executive Director.

A team made up of Santa Monica architecture firm Minarc and housing organization Habitat for Humanity (HfH) was chosen to design the homes, none of which cost more than \$130 per square foot. The residences were finished on July 13. Minarc's construction system makes use of factory-manufactured expanded polystyrene foam panels cut to

size, which are then transported on flatbed trucks to the construction site. A crew then slots these panels into a recycled steel frame. Construction can take as little as three days. It is a method that has been used on multimillion-dollar commissions; the price difference lies in the material finishes.

The system has been in development for eight years and has been accepted by the building and safety departments in Santa Monica and Los Angeles. This prior approval helped the team smooth over any potential delays in building that would have cost RNLA time and money. All three homes use the same number of panels, but are configured in different ways, like taking the same Lego blocks and re-arranging them. Minarc adjusted the design and orientation depending on site demands. Speaking about the process,

Minarc principal Tryggvi Thorsteinsson said, "80 percent of it is the system, but 20 percent of it is custom."

Each home is an approximately 1,200-square-foot, single-story cubist dwelling finished with cement fiberboard siding and interrupted by elongated windows. "There is an interplay of the void and solid in our design," said Minarc's other principal, Erla Dogg Ingjaldsdottir. "That's another way we minimize waste." By introducing a "void," Minarc created a ventilation space for the home to breathe, while reducing waste on the factory floor. "Each time you cut a window in a panel, that becomes waste," said Ingjaldsdottir.

What reads as a single vertical window is actually two dual-glazed windows on a white vinyl frame, stacked one atop the other. The

top window allows heat to escape; the lower window, covered by a cedar board shutter, allows cooler air inside the home. "We tried to design so the homes wouldn't need to use air conditioning," said Thorsteinsson. **CJ**

The houses are designed to generate 95 percent of their electricity needs on site.



ART GRAY



MILLENNIUM TOWER San Francisco, CA



CITY HALL Las Vegas, NV

COSMOPOLITAN RESORT & CASINO Las Vegas, NV

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ABRAMSON TEIGER ARCHITECTS

SMALL SCALE, **BIG CHANGE**

HOW SMALL DEVELOPERS ARE RESHAPING LOS ANGELES' NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Above: Runyon Group's Platform, designed on the site of a former car dealership by Abramson Teiger Architects in Culver City's Hayden Tract.

Below: Platform's layered compositions and contemporary details differentiate the project from the cookie-cutter designs often commissioned by large developers.



It used to be that Americans dreamed of moving to the idyllic suburbs. But cities are undergoing a major revival. Based on the Census Bureau's estimates, from July 2011 to July 2012, cities with more than a half million residents grew faster than their suburbs. Meanwhile a 2012 residential trends report by the Environmental Protection Agency confirms that between 2000 and 2009, 21 percent of new residential construction occurred in previously developed areas.

To quote Casey Lynch, principal at Los Angeles real estate development company LocalConstruct, "Infill development is the 'new normal' in real estate." With it comes the rise of small-scale development.

Over the years, this type of targeted development—enhanced by measures like LA's Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance, which allows owners to divide larger lots into smaller parcels—has become an avenue for growth both in real estate and in architecture. What was once untested territory has even piqued the interest of larger developers, heating up competition for once-overlooked properties. Just ask brothers Hardy and Kevin Wronske, principals of architecture and development firm Heyday Partnership, which builds small lot homes in LA.

"We're getting outbid more often on properties," said Hardy. But they aren't too worried. Despite

increased competition, Heyday has honed a strategy founded on good design, close attention, and efficiency. "By becoming focused on one product type, you become the best at it," said Hardy. With three small lot developments and seven entitled projects under its belt, Heyday has proven it can deliver.

Another small outfit, LA-based Linear City Development, concentrates on turning old industrial buildings in downtown into vibrant, mixed-use projects. With architect Aleks Istanbulu, they transformed a 180,000-square-foot warehouse into Biscuit Company Lofts, 104 live-work units over popular eatery Church & State. Linear City also turned, with Clive Wilkinson Architects and Donald Barany Architects, the Toy Factory Lofts, a 250,000-square-foot warehouse, into 110 live-work units atop 12 double-height commercial spaces. At 7+Bridge, three industrial buildings became living spaces with a nearby Italian restaurant, Bestia, and a speakeasy.

"Part of our goal is to bring people back to the center of the city to save them from being dependent on the car," said Yuval Brenner, principal at Linear City and a downtown LA resident. "We're trying to develop an urban core that can provide services you need within walking distance."

While Linear City's improvements are thoughtful but minimal ("It's a



Above: Linear City's future plans for Barker Block, their hugely successful development in LA's Arts District

Center: LocalConstruct is branching into new markets, in this case a residential redevelopment in Boise, Idaho.

Below: Barbara Bestor's Blackbirds, a multifamily development for LocalConstruct in LA's Echo Park neighborhood.



LINEAR CITY

LOCALCONSTRUCT



BARBARA BESTOR ARCHITECTURE

canvas for future residents," said Brenner), ambitious design works hand in hand with Heyday's expertise. Heyday uses standard materials in new, creative ways, allowing them to build more cost effectively while delivering on decent profit margins. "Anybody can build a nice house if you have lots of money. The same goes for a crappy house, if you have no money," said Hardy Wronske. "The challenge is to build homes at a decent cost, but to still provide high design."

Their creativity is paying off with brisk sales. All six homes within their LEED-rated Buzz Court project in Silver Lake sold within a little over a month of its public introduction. The development was recently part of the exhibition "By Right/By Design," at Woodbury University's WUHO Gallery, showcasing residential projects that have pushed the envelope of multi-family residential design. At the height of the recent housing crisis, in 2010, all 15 homes in Heyday's Rock Row development in Eagle Rock sold out within a month.

Efficiency and good design aren't the only tools in the small developer's arsenal. Often living in the same neighborhood as their projects, small developers become sensitive to the needs of the community. They act as curators, introducing elements that they as locals need and want to see in their neighborhoods.

Culver City-based real estate company Runyon Group brings in specialty brands and designers for its projects. Founder Joseph Miller is working with local firm Abramson Teiger Architects to transform a four-acre auto dealership site on the industrial lot-cum-creative office and arts haven Hayden Tract into eight spaces connected by gardens, populated by specialty retailers and room for seven creative lofts.

"For a long time this wasn't a desirable neighborhood, but now you've got companies like Beats by Dr. Dre and galleries like Blum and Poe moving in," said Miller, a

Culver City resident. "What we were missing was a nexus. We're in the middle of all these creative industries without a central gathering spot." That's what he hopes Platform would be for Culver City.

Rather than build malls for mass consumption, Miller is tailoring his development for a more nuanced market, requiring each retailer to bring something unique to the table. Two confirmed tenants are New York chef Michael White, who will be opening his first west coast restaurant, and Blue Bottle Coffee, which is making a foray into the LA market. "I feel like we're not in the real estate business," said Miller. "We're in the business of eating great food and shopping in great stores and figuring out what makes great neighborhoods."

Their proximity to their projects provides another competitive edge. They can more easily reach out to the community and work closely with the city. "Large developers aren't able often to really send principals to develop meaningful relationships with community stakeholders. They'll hire expeditors to do that for them," said Mott Smith, principal of Civic Enterprise Associations, a small development firm that works in emerging neighborhoods of Southern California.

Over the past two years, Civic Enterprises has been working with the Los Angeles County Health Department to iron out the regulatory requirements for an unprecedented multi-tenant, wholesale food manufacturing facility in Northeast LA. According to Smith, the facility is meant to be the equivalent of a co-working space, but geared toward local small- to medium-sized food producers. His firm is in negotiations to acquire the property, and Smith hopes to start construction by the end of the year. By exploring new development types and following them through to implementation, his firm has become a pioneer, reaping the highest benefit while paving the way for others to follow.

Civic Enterprise is only one example of a smaller developer's nimbleness. Lynch's LocalConstruct is another. "The biggest advantage we have as smaller developers is the ability to act quickly on investment opportunities and to recognize emerging trends in niche markets. We can also often take on entitlement risk that larger developers can't or won't because of acute local market knowledge," said Lynch.

Since its inception, the company has transitioned from single-family to multi-family construction as market conditions have changed. Last year, LocalConstruct began working with Barbara Bestor Architects on Blackbirds, 18 small lot homes clustered around a living street. This year, the company is setting its sights on turning the oldest hotel in Idaho, Owyhee Plaza, into office, retail, and residential



NICO MARQUES/PHOTEKT

Above and below, left: Heyday developed and designed Buzz Court, a popular small lot development on Silver Lake's Rowena Avenue.

Below, center and right: Linear City's 7+ Bridge brings courtyards and greenery to Downtown LA's Arts District.

spaces with the help of Portland, Oregon-based architecture firm Beebe Skidmore and Idaho firm TAO.

While bigger developers may threaten to take some business from small developers, they aren't competitors in all scenarios. "You do and don't compete with big developers," said Liz Faletta, curator of the By Right/By Design exhibit at WUHO. Civic Enterprises has sometimes worked with a larger developer on projects. In 2011, after securing the entitlement,

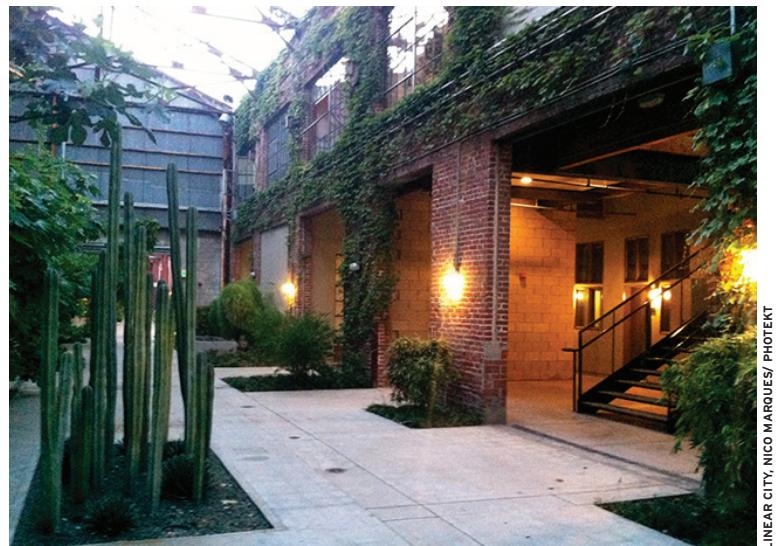
Heyday Partnership sold what was to be a 19-house development in Eagle Rock to Pulte Homes, one of the nation's largest homebuilders.

To ensure the continued success of smaller, local developers, Faletta recommends the city provide more tools to give them the flexibility they need to stay ahead of the trends including selectively allowing the densification of single family areas, addressing rent control, and reducing parking requirements. Small developers should also keep

abreast of LA's newly-re-launched comprehensive zoning code revision effort. "Planning and policy play a huge role in making this profitable or not."

Changes in policy notwithstanding, what sets smaller developers apart from their larger counterparts is the amount of personal investment they make in each project. "Part of our motivation isn't just economic opportunity," said Smith. "It's a chance to help make Los Angeles."

CARREN JAO



LINEAR CITY, NICO MARQUES/PHOTEKT

AUGUST

THURSDAY 15

EVENT

Introduction to Design Thinking

9:00 a.m.

Frye Art Museum
725 Ninth Ave.
Seattle

fryeartmuseum.org

FRIDAY 16

EXHIBITION OPENING

Quality is Contagious: John Economaki and Bridge City Tool Works

Museum of Contemporary Craft
724 NW Davis St., Portland
mocc.pnca.edu

THURSDAY 22

LECTURE

Never Built Los Angeles: Behind-the-Scenes Tour with Greg Golden and Sam Lubell

7:00 p.m.

A+D Museum
6032 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
aplusd.org

FRIDAY 30

EVENT

Architecture and The City Festival: Opening Night Party

6:00 p.m.

Obscura Digital
729 Tennessee St.
San Francisco
archandcity.org

SATURDAY 31

EXHIBITION OPENING

Mark Lackey: On Pleasure Bent

Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
hammer.ucla.edu

SEPTEMBER

TUESDAY 3

LECTURE

Architect as Developer with Jonathan Segal

6:00 p.m.
AIA San Francisco
130 Sutter St., San Francisco
archandcity.org

FRIDAY 6

EXHIBITION OPENING

SCI-Arc Graduate Thesis Weekend

SCI-Arc Campus
960 East Third St., Los Angeles
sciarc.edu

SATURDAY 7

EXHIBITION OPENING

Alex Slade: What City Pattern? (Revision 2)

11:00 a.m.
Edward Cella Art + Architecture
6018 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
edwardcella.com

TUESDAY 10

EVENT

Who Designed That?

6:00 p.m.
San Francisco Design Center
2 Henry Adams St.
San Francisco
archandcity.org

THURSDAY 12

FILM

Pat O'Neill: Spatial Affects

7:00 p.m.
MOCA
250 South Grand Ave.
Los Angeles
edu.moca.org

EVENTS

SPUR San Jose Grand Opening

5:00 p.m.
SPUR San Jose Headquarters
76 South First St.
San Jose, CA
spur.org

Constructed Realities Awards Announcement + GOOD design

6:00 p.m.
Steelcase Showroom
475 Brannan St.
San Francisco
archandcity.org

EXHIBITION OPENING

2012 SECA Art Award

SFMOMA
151 Third St.
San Francisco
sfmoma.org

SUNDAY 15

SYMPOSIUM

What's Next? The future of LA architecture

3:00 p.m.
MOCA
250 South Grand Ave.
Los Angeles
edu.moca.org

TOUR

Ennis House Tour: Explore Hollywood's Favorite Home

Ennis House
2607 Glendower Ave.
Los Angeles
aialosangeles.org

TUESDAY 17

LECTURES

Frank Lloyd Wright's Marin County Civic Center: Past, Present, and Future

6:00 p.m.
Marin County Civic Center,
Board of Supervisors Chambers
3501 Civic Center Dr.
San Rafael, CA
marinciviccenter50th.org

Craig Dykers of Snohetta

12:00 p.m.
AIA San Francisco
130 Sutter St., San Francisco
archandcity.org

WEDNESDAY 18

LECTURE

Graham Harman: Strange Objects Contra Parametricism

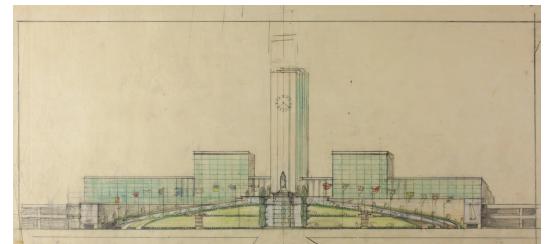
7:00 p.m.
WM Keck Lecture Hall, SCI-Arc
960 East Third St.
Los Angeles
sciarc.edu

THURSDAY 19

LECTURE

Teddy Cruz

12:00 p.m.
AIA San Francisco
130 Sutter St.
San Francisco
archandcity.org



COURTESY AIA SAN FRANCISCO

UNBUILT SAN FRANCISCO

Multiple venues
San Francisco
Through November

AIA San Francisco/Center for Architecture + Design, California Historical Society/SPUR, The Environmental Design Archives at UC Berkley, and the San Francisco Public Library present this ambitious collaborative exhibition of architecture that never came to be. Spread throughout five venues, *Unbuilt San Francisco* describes a parallel history of "what if's" and "could have beens" of architecture and urban design that were too fantastic or too grandiose for the City by the Bay. These unrealized visions offer San Franciscans a glimpse of the hopes and ambitions of past generations, as well as provide inspiration for the future of architecture and the city. Images offered in the exhibition include a grand casino on Alcatraz, freeways encircling the city, rejected neighborhood renewal plans, alternate designs for famous landmarks including San Francisco City Hall and the Ferry Building, and ecological provocations of today's architectural vanguard. The opening reception will be held in Annie Alley between 678 and 654 Mission Street in San Francisco on September 6 at 5:00 p.m.

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Smith and Williams' Shoreline House for the Orange County Home Show, 1957.



AL SPENCER

Connecting the Dots

Pacific Standard Time Presents: Modern Architecture In L.A.
Various venues

Just in the way of Raymond Chandler, this spring and summer's Pacific Standard Time Presents (PSTP) exhibits showed us that things in LA aren't necessarily what we

thought they were. It turns out that we are the city of Victor Gruen and William Pereira as well as of Charles Eames and Frank Gehry. The next question is, can we handle this?

Taken together, the eleven southland exhibits in the series lay to rest the old yarn that LA's only significant contribution to world architecture is the Modern single-family house. PSTP's mothership exhibit at the Getty, *Overdrive: Los Angeles Constructs the Future 1940-1990*, told the same stories of design innovation in commercial and public architecture as we've come to appreciate in those beautiful steel and glass houses for which we're famous. Drawing on three decades of new scholarship, "Overdrive" sets a broad stage for a new story with buildings that have rarely been seen in exhibits: the high rises of Sidney Eisenshtat and Claud Beelman; the high-tech campuses of Kem Weber and A.C. Martin; the coffee shops, car dealerships, and shopping centers of Armet and Davis, John Lautner, and Edward Killingsworth; the housing tracts of Palmer and Krisel and Edward Fickett, and so on.

It's about time. An entire social-urban engine generates such wide-ranging design, not a small group of avant-garde architects. Two key exhibits—*Windshield Perspective* at the Architecture and Design Museum and *In Focus: Ed Ruscha* at the Getty—concentrated our focus on the layered, colliding, intertwined, pragmatic vernacular environment of this LA. The creative ideas embedded in this popular and vernacular landscape echoes through many of the other exhibits.

Through this lens of diversity, even our most famous architecture looks different. The solidly researched and original approach

taken by Cal Poly Pomona's exhibit *Technology and Environment: the Postwar House in Southern California*, rescued the single-family residence from the gilded cage of fashionableness by analyzing the bones beneath their glamorous steel and glass skins: These beautiful creatures have real jobs moderating the sun and heat, real souls serving their residents day by day.

Though small, this exhibit drew on an admirably broad cross section of work in the 1940-1990 period, including examples by Ray Kappe, Charles Moore, Frank Gehry, Raphael Soriano, Schindler—everything from Modern to Postmodern.

Two other exhibits highlighted the fact that we don't really know what we thought we knew about two specific offices: the UC Santa Barbara Art, Design & Architecture Museum's *Outside In: The architecture of Smith and Williams, and the Hammer's A. Quincy Jones: Building for Better Living*. Yet both exhibits raise the troubling question, why have such major, prolific talents been overlooked by our major institutions for decades? And why are we still overlooking other influential architects, such as Stiles O. Clements, Douglas Honnold, George Vernon Russell, Harold Levitt, and Millard Sheets?

This is a complex question. In many ways, Southern California has been blessed by the absence of a strongly rooted critical, historical, and publishing establishment. In other architectural centers such entrenched establishments have **continued on page 18**



MARVIN RAND, JASON SCHMIDT, TOM BONNER

A New Sculpturalism, the contested, once on, then off, then on again exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art's Geffen Contemporary annex, has been generating heated arguments and debate since its inception. First there was the problem with the "superficial" title. Then Frank Gehry backed out. Then MOCA and the show's guest curator, Christopher Mount, parted ways. The whole thing was in free-fall until Thom Mayne's handpicked team—and a lot of assistants and pedestal makers—stepped in to save it.

Isn't all of this quite possibly the best pre-opening buzz a show could ever hope to have? Time will tell. But it seems like that fighting, the back and forth, and the rush to pull it out of disarray—not to mention pushing the opening date back two months—set the show up for a rough landing.

A New Sculpturalism is about the work and the lives that go into the architecture. The blood, sweat, and time. It is work that is never absolutely finished. To be finished would equal death for a profession that must continue to reinvent itself cycle after cycle.

Here we are at the end of the Great Recession, and architecture has somehow carried on. The architects have been busy! The work continues regardless of what the world thinks. Regardless of what the title is. All the work on display, from sketchbooks to models and even the three "pavilions" that dominate the entrance could be said to have been stopped rather than absolutely finished.

A case in point would be Michael Rotondi's expressive sketchbooks, arrayed under glass and illuminated like rare manuscripts. They exhibit, in an explosive and precise hand, the font of his architecture. And just adjacent and on the wall are some playful, sinuous, and technologically fabulous pages from Neil Denari's ruled sketchbooks. Yes.

Architects can still draw.

Then there are all the islands of intricately wrought models—those LA models with the gesso and color influenced by early Morphosis et al. and leading up to cleaner, if somewhat soulless, 3D-printed distant cousins and laser-cut acrylic. This and so much more that you could pull out of an architecture office, like the huge curved glass panel prototype Hagy Belzberg has been working on, all sit under Alexis Rochas' suspended multimedia installation, *Flock of Walls* where we see the architects themselves projected and hovering over their work.

All the artifacts are tools, operations, the materialization of sometimes very personal thought-worlds that, once built, can either take flight in the minds of viewers or get crushed under the weight of critique. So it goes. It's architecture; always misunderstood and struggling with representation. So critique away! The participants can take it. Otherwise they wouldn't be doing this. We here in architecture land already get this. The question is will the public get it? Will they even show up?

As Eric Owen Moss asked as moderator of the panel discussion on the show that took place on June 18, "Who says what architecture is? Is the architect what the architect says he is? Is it what Christopher Hawthorne says it is?"

Regardless, there are a lot of aesthetics going on in the exhibition. There is even, one could argue, a lot of beauty. But don't look for a simplistic story that goes from A to Z. Don't look for the coherent narrative or syllogism. It's the circus that came to town, pitched its big top, and brought out its trapeze artists, tightrope walkers, and fire-eaters. It's something amazing and difficult. There are many lives and careers assembled in that room. But it has to be accepted in that spirit without the **continued on page 18**

ADVANCED UNCERTAINTY

A New Sculpturalism, Contemporary Architecture From Southern California
The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA
152 North Central Avenue
Los Angeles
Through September 16

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER AUGUST 14, 2013



JURGEN NOGAI

A. Quincy Jones' Sunnylands

good architects who deserve to be part of the story. But this much attention throws PSTP out of balance—as demonstrated by the almost complete absence of Charles Moore, another profound presence in the 1970s. Today's urbanism sorely needs his perspective on place, history, and popular taste.

CONNECTING THE DOTS continued from page 17 enforced an oppressive orthodoxy, while our generally benign, laissez-faire attitude has allowed John Lautner's spirit of experiment and Wayne McAllister's pragmatic creativity to flourish.

Will PSTP's avalanche of new information produce a narrow, orthodox architectural culture, or encourage experiment and diversity? On this question will rest the ultimate judgment of PSTP.

Indeed, some of PSTP seems to be under the thrall of avant-garde nostalgia—the deeply rooted Modernist belief that architecture is led by a handful of architects who push away the boundaries of design and form. Fully three of the nine institutions participating focused on one group of architects (sometimes called the LA School) who emerged in the 1970s to become well-known locally and globally: SCI-Arc's *A Confederacy of Heretics*, MAK Center's *Everything Loose Will Land*, and MOCA's *A New Sculpturalism*.

The victors are claiming their time-honored right to write history. These are

Even more out of place among the curatorial gems unearthed in other PSTP exhibits is LACMA's *The Presence of the Past: Peter Zumthor Reconsiders LACMA*. The title seems to promise fresh insights into William Pereira, the influential Southern California architect who designed LACMA's original buildings. But the continuum from the city's past identity to the proposed Zumthor LACMA replacement remains unexamined.

Raymond Chandler taught us that knowledge is usually attained at a price. We Angelenos have been pleased with our international reputation as the city of the classy Case Study houses. Will we be reluctant to embrace a reputation as a diverse, democratic, suburban metropolis throwing off creative sparks across the entire spectrum of class, ethnicity, and taste?

The test will come when we see how—and if—our major institutions follow through on the subjects PSTP raises and left out.

ALAN HESS IS THE ARCHITECTURE CRITIC OF THE SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS.

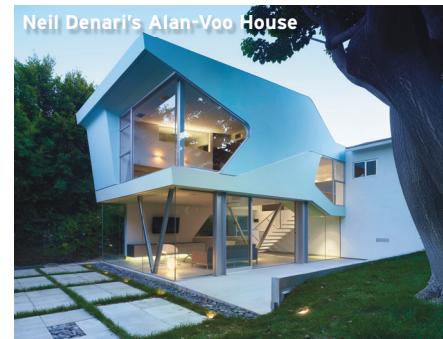
ADVANCED UNCERTAINTY continued from page 17 expectation that it all holds together in some perfect, totalizing vision. Just enter it like you might a strange yet somehow familiar city. Step behind the curtain and allow yourself to move from one object to the next. Outside of the fact that they coexist in the same institutional context, there is no absolute narrative. That being said, the materials are remarkably similar in spirit and exhibit creative forces that mutually resonate.

Sculpturalism has been critiqued for being a bunch of models and drawings in a big room. But so what? This is what happens when you put stuff in a museum. The show hardly needs any artifice or superstructure to prop it up. The work stands up.

If we didn't already get this fact, *Sculpturalism* puts in high relief how LA architecture has as much to do with the ideas and struggles that emanate from the city's practices as it does with what gets built, or not built as the case may be. It is not a bad thing to put more of this creative process under the public's eye.

So as the negative reviews pile up and the architects shout from the balconies, what we shouldn't lose sight of is the fact that *Sculpturalism* is the most ecstatic tribal dance around the bonfire of contemporary Los Angeles architecture to have been staged in recent memory. Here the arguments are loud and the fire burns ever so brightly. Let it burn, ABI Billings Index. Let it burn, critics. Let it burn in office after office. Let it burn in the schools and across the city—even if mostly at residential scale.

If we absolutely have to have an



BENNY CHAN

Neil Denari's Alan-Voo House

alternative title because some of the participating architects are overly-sensitive about being misrepresented, it should be called "Busy Working, Not Hiding." And when did architects become so sensitive anyway? Was the term "Sculptural" viewed as reductive rather than open and provocative? Open to interpretation? Since when did architects become so literal? No matter what is written or said, the basic truth of the work shows that this fire we call LA architecture burns brightly no matter what forms it may take. Moreover, now that the public can get a rare glimpse into the rarefied world we call contemporary architecture, hopefully it will no longer just be the architects getting emotional. The more opportunities for the public to understand *and* even misunderstand what architects do, the better.

In the words of participant Tom Wiscombe, "We don't have a name anymore. What's important for shows like this is something that resonates, something people can identify with."

GUY HORTON IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.



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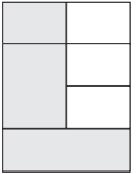
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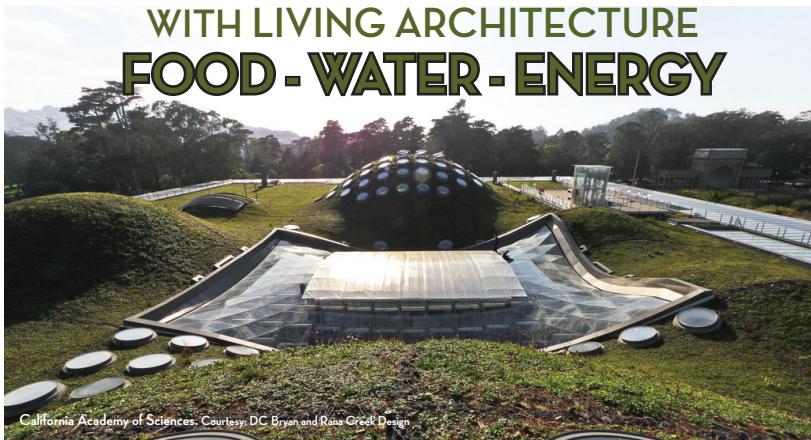
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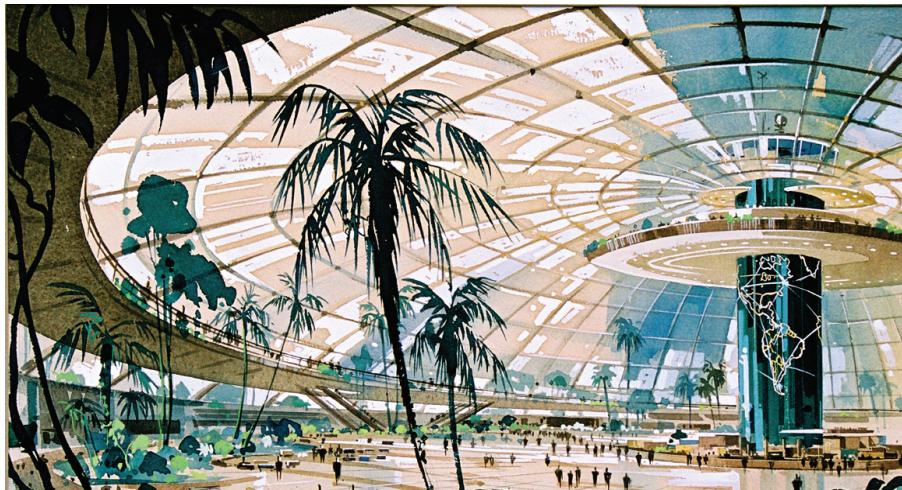


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along with the city we have, but build the city we need.

The right answer is density, even if "density" is the least popular word in post-war suburban America. We often throw the word out as a verbal firebomb against new development. However, the right density is really our solution. Not everywhere of course, only within walking distance of a transit station. To offset building concentrations, we can become less dense in between transit lines to the point where we can create new open space. Yes, a better, denser, and more sustainable city can also mean less dense areas and more parks! If we succeeded in creating a balance between higher density along public transit lines and new open space in other areas of the city, we'd once again create a model for the world to admire and imitate.

Imagine our city with bustling pedestrian zones, coffee shops, and corner stores, markets, plazas, and lots of housing options surrounding our public transit hubs. Then imagine those hubs separated by low-density areas filled with picturesque narrow residential streets, bicycle networks, community gardens, and parks. All could be connected with public transit, and all of this in our near-perfect climate, and you could still drive, if you chose to.

But we cannot achieve this by only making minor adjustments to our land-use laws based on the popular consensus of people who want to continue to drive yet want all the other people to get off the road. We need to change much more rapidly and radically and we must get people mobilized toward change. We must create grass roots "YIMBY" (Yes, in my yard!) movements that demand different solutions; that is really the challenge of our time.

Perhaps the reason that could convince car-love stricken Angelenos toward a catalytic change is that we want to keep money in local pockets and contribute to a thriving local economy, with jobs and opportunities right here at home. In the 1940s, we used approximately 3 cents of every disposable dollar on one of the best public transit networks in the U.S. (yes, here in LA). Today, we are spending 19 cents of every dollar not being able to move around much.

Angelenos without a car will have upward of 10 percent to 15 percent more money to spend and probably will do so locally. If we could eliminate only 10 percent of the vehicles in LA County, we would infuse \$4.7 billion a year into our local economy. Imagine what our city would be with an extra \$4.7 billion circulating locally, per year, every year.

GERHARD W. MAYER IS A LOS ANGELES ARCHITECT AND URBAN DESIGNER; HE CURRENTLY SERVES AS CHAIR OF AIA-LA'S URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE. HE ALSO IS THE FOUNDER OF RAILLA.

CALLING FOR A REVOLUTION IN CAR COUNTRY

Angelenos, we must build a different city—or drive ourselves broke...

According to the American Automobile Association, it costs, on average, approximately \$8,500 per year to own and operate a car. An infographic from the National Building Museum finds that of that \$8,500, less than \$1,500 stays local. For every car on the road in LA, more than \$7,000 per year goes elsewhere—much to international oil companies and car manufacturers.

Let's do the math. In 2009, LA County had 6.7 million registered vehicles. 6.7 million times \$7,000 not spent locally equals approximately \$47 billion! This is the amount we are taking out of our local economy per year, every year, because we drive.

At the sunset of Mayor Villaraigosa's administration we rightfully celebrate our city's amazing recent accomplishments and return to public transit. However, we are only halfway done. The next steps won't be easy, nor are they obvious. Yes, we need to continue to build new transit infrastructure, but we must also build a different city around the shiny new transit network that can maximize its benefits.

Decades of development and sprawl are rightfully blamed for the degradation

of our quality of life, and for our near unbearable congestion. This has turned many Angelenos against development and into NIMBY activists ready to object anytime to anything. But contrary to NIMBY creed, we cannot do nothing. The path we are on is really an economic fiasco in waiting.

In greater Los Angeles, we are using more than 60 percent of our land for our automobiles (roads, parking lots, landscaped buffers, traffic islands, etc.). According to Christopher Alexander's book *Pattern Language*, the ideal percentage of land given over to automobiles in a city with balanced transit options (that also include cars) is 19 to 20 percent of the land area.

Examples for this can be found in those areas of Boston, Brooklyn, or Philadelphia that were built before the automobile. In these areas, four out of every five acres generate tax revenue to improve the shared infrastructure on that one remaining acre. In LA, on the other hand, only two out of every five acres create revenue. Those two acres that actually generate revenue need to support the remaining three. No wonder we can't even keep up with our potholes.

This structural imbalance was not felt

while we were sprawling, because new growth generates new money, once. It is a well-known secret that many communities survived mostly through collecting development fees for new growth to maintain the previous one, and that worked for a while. But then we got stuck in traffic, and stopped sprawling, and observed our communities going into financial distress.

These issues are connected. Popular lore is that we have gotten too big, too dense. NIMBY groups blame growth for most of our woes. But by protesting growth they are also cutting off the funds that have kept us going thus far; and NIMBY activist's resolve is putting the fear of God into our politicians if they just think about new development.

Building public transit into a city with an automotive DNA is not nearly enough. Public transit needs ridership to sustain itself. In our car-based city, people are living too far apart from each other to make it possible for enough of us to walk to transit. Once we are in a car, not enough of us get out to switch over to trains. Metro calls this the first mile, last mile problem. There are lots of smart people working on this problem, but the only way to fully resolve it is not to limp

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