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Editor's letter



Justin Burnham, Assoc. AIA
Editor, *Iowa Architect*

Welcome!

I will never forget the week in February when my parents and wife received their first dose of vaccine. The former received Moderna mRNA-1273 and the latter received Pfizer-BioNTech. The creation and distribution of these tools has been the result of a lot of dialogue. This spring will be very different than the last: hopefully, the trajectory of the pandemic will continue to downshift.

This issue intends to consider architectural contrasts—some nuanced, others palpable—that have led to changed perceptions. We look at three projects that address existing buildings: one preserves the exterior while adding contemporary inserts within, another utilizes its enclosure to flip from inward- to outward-looking, and the last all but erases its predecessor in an effort to honor its well-known neighbor. We consider how two new projects fit into older and smaller-scale neighborhoods: a wellness facility that is practical and imaginative, and a mixed-use building that is sensitive and engaging. In each instance, we shed light on the conversations that led to finding common ground.

Architecture is capable of framing aesthetic differences with intention. Pythagoras said, “If there be light, then there is darkness; if cold, heat; if height, depth; if solid, fluid; if hard, soft; if rough, smooth; if calm, tempest; if prosperity, adversity; if life, death.” How does a project harmonize contrasts? Philosophically speaking, the designer’s job is to channel beauty through a variety of arrangements—often contrasting ones.

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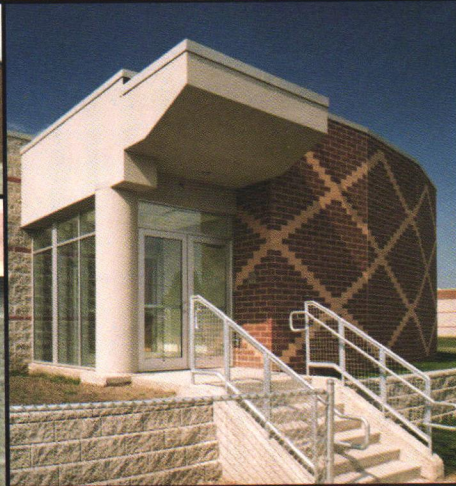
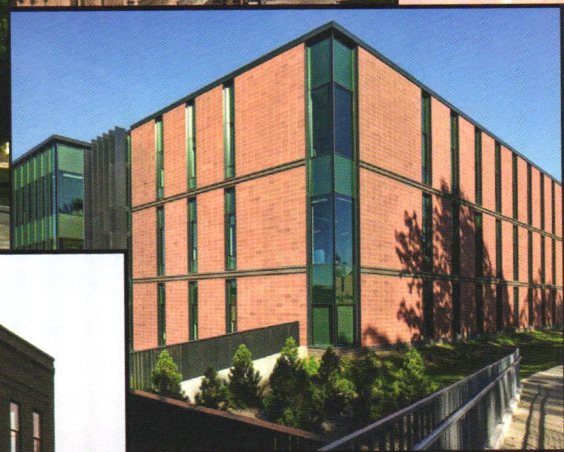
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Correction It has been brought to our attention that the photography credit for the Lester Buresh Family Community Wellness Center was incorrect in the winter issue (page 22). The photographer is Cameron Campbell, AIA, Integrated Studio. We apologize for this error.

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Celebrating Their Dedication to Community through the Citizen Architect Program

AIA Iowa recognizes our members who advocate for the profession through community leadership

WORDS: AMY SPIKE

IMAGES: COURTESY OF BETHANY JORDAN, AIA



Above: Save Cedar Rapids Heritage uses heart bombing as an activism tool to draw attention to vacant and underused buildings that are worthy of preservation. **Opposite:** Bethany Jordan, AIA, participated in a "Show of Love" for an endangered (and ultimately demolished) building in the New Bohemia area of Cedar Rapids.

Since 2008, the American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter (AIA Iowa) has recognized the larger role that our members play in their individual communities across the state. The AIA Iowa Citizen Architect Program is an annual program that recognizes AIA Iowa members who represent AIA's values in their communities through public service. This program is a recognition bestowed upon all AIA Iowa members who serve as an appointed or elected member of a government committee, council, or body at the local, county, regional, or state level; or serve as a volunteer for a nonprofit organization that seeks to benefit people in need, communities, or the state as a whole. Celebrating our members' dedication to community involvement helps spread the Iowa Chapter's mission to be the voice of the profession of architecture, promote the value of good design, and advocate for the health and safety of the public.

One of this year's Citizen Architect Community Track Participants is AIA Iowa member Bethany Jordan, AIA. Jordan currently serves as the Board President at Save Cedar Rapids Heritage, a nonprofit organization that works to preserve historical resources by developing preservation and reuse strategies. Jordan explains why she's motivated to be involved in this organization: "It is important to me that people understand the valuable role historical buildings play in strengthening our community, conserving resources, and encouraging economic redevelopment. They make our neighborhoods and downtowns unique. When historical buildings are demolished, we lose part of our shared heritage. I want to prevent unnecessary demolition and promote maintaining and reusing these important community assets."

Giving back through volunteering not only benefits Jordan's community, but it also has had an impact on her as well. "I learned at a young age if you want something to change, you should go do something about it. Volunteering gives me a sense of purpose and shared vision. There are numerous articles and studies that show the benefits of volunteering can include a greater sense of purpose, increasing self-confidence, combating depression, and other improvements to both mental and physical health."

April Is Architecture Month in Iowa

WORDS : AMY SPIKE

Every April, members of the American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter spend the month celebrating the profession of Architecture. Through social events, online campaigns, and networking events, we come together to highlight the role that architects play in their communities. Iowa Architecture Month's purpose is to celebrate the Architecture profession in Iowa for its nationally known quality of design that promotes and celebrates the cultural heritage and values of the state. This good design builds a better future for our communities through well-planned, well-designed buildings that embrace the principles of livability and resiliency. This month-long celebration engages Iowa communities and the public in creating healthier, safer, and more dynamic places to live, work, and play.

Join us this year as we celebrate amidst the pandemic in new and different ways. Check out our social media channels, pick your favorite building in the AIA Iowa People Choice Awards program, and more!

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THANK YOU TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE
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| Monica Bailey, AIA | Nathan Griffith, AIA | Raymond Phillips, AIA |
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on the boards

Projects
In Progress



Nettleton Dental Group

Mason City, Iowa
BERGLAND + CRAM

A non-descript brick and mansard-roofed building will be revamped to more authentically represent a lively dentist practice. To reinforce a sense of well-being and confidence—the hallmarks of successful dental care—the exterior will utilize smooth and modulated cladding materials to convey a more stark, sanitary, and tidy aesthetic. Large areas of transparent glazing facing parking and entry points will open the building considerably. These large views of the inner workings of the practice will remove the barrier of the unknown for new patients entering and will help to reinforce confidence in the high level of care all can expect to receive within.



Lely North America

The new 108,000-square-foot Lely North America facility is Phase 1 of a planned Lely campus, set in a restored prairie south of Pella, Iowa. The LEED-certified precast concrete and glass structure will provide assembly space and serve as a distribution hub for robotics that support the North American dairy industry. Daylit office and meeting spaces, as well as training facilities for field technicians, will visually connect to the factory floor and to the exterior. Common café and collaboration spaces overlooking the prairie will serve all employees and connect to the landscape via a system of walking trails.

Pella, Iowa

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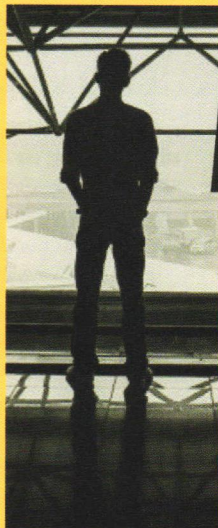
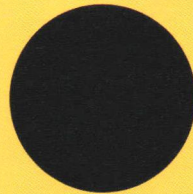
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Monumental Messages

How the mural boom in local communities impacts architecture and public dialogue

WORDS : ANNA AVERSING, ASSOC. AIA

From urban centers to rural roadsides, a multitude of new murals have peppered Iowa streetscapes and landscapes in recent years. What is behind this surge in public artwork? What impact does art at this scale have on communities?

“Part of the surge in interest in public art is generational,” explains David Schmitz, Administrator of the Iowa Arts Council. “While younger people still appreciate museums and the experience of engaging with art in a formal way, research confirms younger generations are much more informal in how they consume arts and culture, and public art just fits that experience really well.”

Schmitz says not to overlook social media either. “For a lot of building owners and developers, they see images of new murals just rocketing around online, and that only serves to expose their business.” Social media exposure can be useful for artists, too.

There is a lack of public understanding about the selection processes for artists and content. These processes are often dependent on public interest, funding sources, and whether a public arts master plan has been implemented.

“I think the process has to reflect the local culture to some degree,”

says Schmitz. “Communities are realizing public art doesn’t always have to go through a competition or RFP process. This may actually create a greater public appetite for more public art, which can lead to the more integrated forms within architecture.”

ICDD vs GoFundMe – Iowa City

Iowa City Downtown District (ICDD) is a nonprofit organization representing property owners and stakeholders in the Downtown and Northside neighborhoods of Iowa City. Public art is a natural fit for the organization’s goals of drawing people downtown and investing in local artists.

Most of the murals in the downtown Iowa City area were coordinated and funded through ICDD. Bringing on artist Thomas Agran as the Public Art Director has been key to growing the program and discovering local talent.

Nancy Bird, executive director of ICDD, explains. “One of the most important things we do is provide artists work opportunities and pay them for their time and talent. We’re building an industry for both professional and amateur artists.”



Opposite: Artist Shelby Fry brings "Solidarity" to Dubuque's downtown district. Over 75 community members volunteered to help create this grand-scale "paint-by-number" public work of art. **Top:** "The Fate of the Santa Clara" by Miles Turner of Voices Productions at 1460 Central Avenue in Dubuque, IA was completed in May 2019. **Bottom:** "Reciprocal of Humanity" by B. Robert Moore and Dana Harrison creates an impact in Iowa City's Northside neighborhood.

Ross Nusser, developer of Market House, a mixed-used residential tower in the Northside neighborhood, looked to GoFundMe to pay artists for work he commissioned. Market House serves as the canvas for Reciprocal of Humanity—a collaboration between artists B. Robert Moore and Dana Harrison.

The mural stretches harmoniously over the gray slate panel facade and ascends three of the building's five stories. It depicts two Black women gazing out over a Northside roovescape, flanked by two hovering goldfinches set against a striking neon magenta moon. Moore and Harrison created the piece to reflect a message of unity that elevates the lives of Black residents in Iowa.

"Public art absolutely influences culture and the environment," Moore says. "Most people don't think of art in terms of space, but that's what murals do for whole neighborhoods. They have the potential to create a sense of community in an exterior space in a way that nothing else can."

Nick Lindsley, AIA, project architect with Neumann Monson Architects, would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with artists and property owners on future public arts projects.

"Murals are an art form that can have a huge experiential impact—so in that regard, I think they're highly beneficial for creating a sense of place," he says. "I walk by it each morning on the way to work, and seeing it gives me the sense that—albeit slowly—the world is progressing in the direction of inclusivity."

Voices Productions – Dubuque

Voices Productions, a small nonprofit collective of nontraditional art activists, is responsible for most of the murals—around 50 in total—in Dubuque.

Sam Mulgrew, director at Voices, explains that, in 2015, the organization made the decision to move from a massive gallery space in the Millwork District to a more visible domain—the streets. Voices decided to ask: Why is Dubuque devoid of public art?

The group kicked off a mural initiative. "This is the most democratic form of art," Mulgrew says. "You're creating a great opportunity for engagement. Murals are one of the most impactful and cost-efficient ways to transform and uplift the urban experience—they move the needle in the right direction; they are transformative; they take a fallow space and activate it in a moment."

The intersection between public art and architecture creates the opportunity to participate in street life. Through public art, alleys become more inviting and dilapidated walls become vibrant. Because artists typically want to avoid working on surfaces that are in a state of decay, murals can precipitate much needed preservation work and help to preserve a building's integrity.

In this sense, Voices Productions has not only transformed Dubuque's historic downtown atmosphere, but also visitors' connection to the city and residents' perception of public art.

For artist Shelby Fry, large-scale pieces of artwork draw visitors and help Dubuque's culture flourish. "I think the work Voices has created has brought a more modern way of thinking and living to the city," she says. "By giving artists like myself the opportunity to create large-scale public art, Voices is supporting artists' careers and letting us speak our truths."

Advocating for Our Future Profession

For Mindy Aust, AIA, volunteerism has brought opportunities for change at the local, regional, and now national level

WORDS : ANNA SQUIER, AIA

Armed with a passion for public architecture coupled with a commitment to mentorship and community involvement, Mindy Aust, AIA, has devoted her career to not only thoughtful design but volunteerism as well. As 2021 Moderator for the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Strategic Council, Aust facilitates discussions amongst this 50+ person nationwide council on critical issues impacting the practice of architecture.

Q: Could you provide a brief summary of the AIA Strategic Council?

A: We are a group of many backgrounds, strengths, geographies, and experiences. We are a national body with representation from all the different regions that assesses opportunities and threats to the architectural profession, and makes the national AIA Board and other AIA groups aware of them. We are forward-looking and forecasting how the profession of architecture needs to adapt to better our communities, considering many critical issues.

Q: How were you led to this opportunity, and how does this fit into the kinds of volunteerism you choose?

A: This opportunity is a natural progression of my volunteer efforts with the AIA to date. It all started at the local committee level with the design of the registration desk for our Chapter's Annual Convention. I stayed involved with our Chapter Board, eventually as President, expanded regionally, and most recently put my name in to be our region's representative for the AIA Strategic Council. I was interested in being a part of the cutting-edge discussions surrounding the profession, and the opportunity to collaborate with people across the country.

Q: What are some of the positives of volunteering with the AIA, and how has doing so affected your career?

A: Volunteerism has always been a critical part of my professional development. I am the type of professional I am today because



I give back. Having active and successful AIA mentors from our region, like Kate Schwennsen, FAIA, and Paul Mankins, FAIA, has been influential. The AIA has provided me with leadership skills outside of practice, as well as expansive networking opportunities. It has broadened my perspective on the different paths possible in architecture.

Q: How can we best engage with our current challenges (global pandemic, systemic racism and social injustice, economic uncertainty, accelerated climate change) and demonstrate the leadership that our society needs at this time?

A: We cannot sit back and wait to be viewed as agents of change—we need to be the change agents. Now is the time to get involved. There should be a lot of discussion about the multiple crises of 2020 and how they will shape the profession in 2040-2060. The AIA and the Council are asking provocative questions such as:

- How can the profession show more empathy?
- What will scalable climate action look like in the urban, rural, and suburban landscapes?
- How will we define great design?
- What services will we be providing in the future and how will new technologies influence this?
- How can we increase our contributions to create equitable communities?

Q: What advice do you have for individuals looking to get involved with the AIA?

A: See the AIA as a vehicle to accomplish your goals for the profession. You lose the right to complain about an organization and its policies if you are not participating. It's about finding your passion and creating a path that supports that passion—what's your superpower and how can you best use it to elevate discussion surrounding our profession?



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WHOLE > ITS PARTS

A series of new insertions offer exquisite dining within a relic of the past

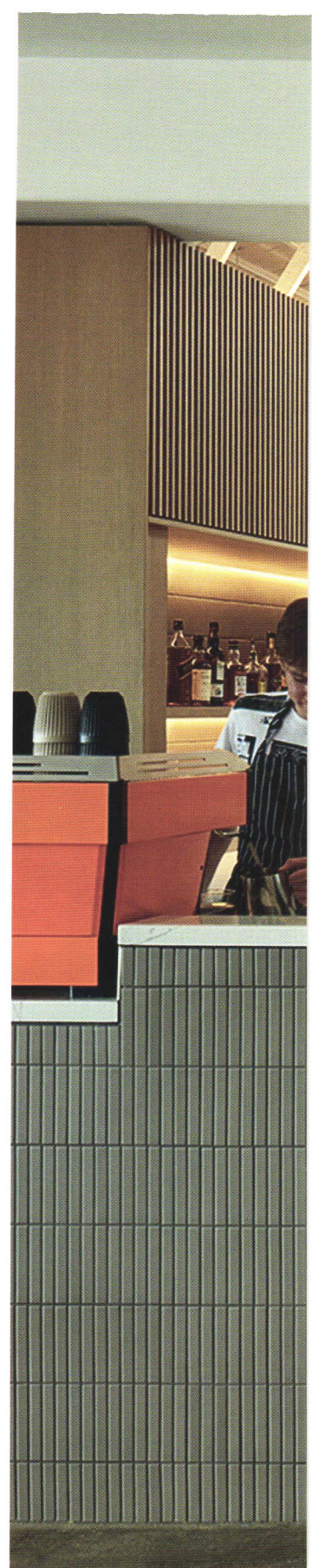
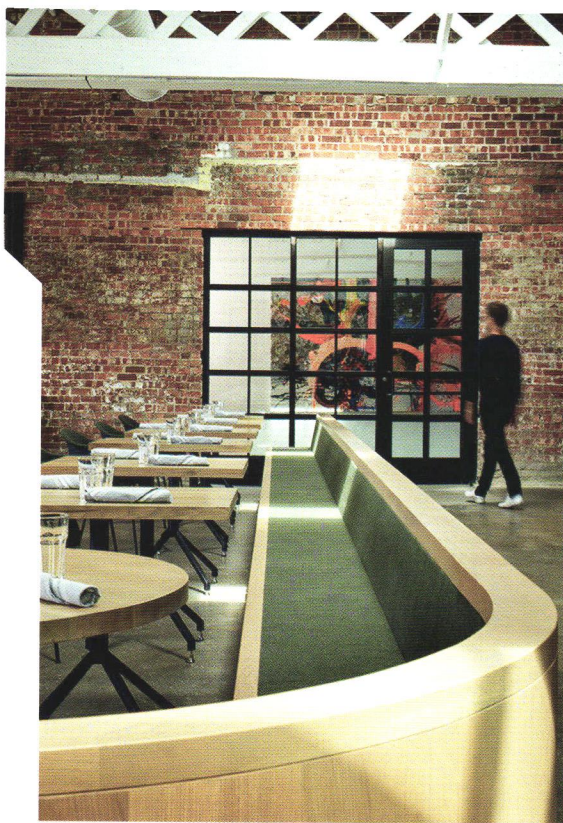
WORDS : CURTIS EHLER, AIA
IMAGES : COREY GAFFER
ARCHITECT : SUBSTANCE ARCHITECTURE

When architect Cody Knop, AIA, of Substance Architecture, restaurant owner Alexander Hall, and developers Tim Rypma and Scott Cutler first went searching for the future home of St. Kilda Collective, they convened at the southern end of 5th Street in Valley Junction adjacent to the old train depot and began strolling north.

Having long been synonymous with bars, bistros and eateries, the historic neighborhood was the perfect locale to conceive a full-service restaurant dedicated to farm-fresh dishes, baked pastries, and artisanal coffee.

The business district of Valley Junction is typically bustling with energy, but on the day of their search it appeared relatively vacant. “Since we had the place to ourselves, we simply strolled down the centerline of the street,” says Knop. They quickly passed by both the one and two hundred blocks (the traditionally livelier portions of Valley Junction), but nothing emerged as an obvious candidate. Instead of shifting to a new part of town, they decided to explore one block farther. There, at the corner of 5th and Walnut, they discovered a single-story nondescript brick building.

Built in 1916 and expanded in 1919, the structure had been home to one of the first automobile showrooms and maintenance garages in the region and was one of the last surviving of its kind. The century-old masonry body and wood frame skeleton had fallen victim to decades of renovations that sheathed the defining arrangement of barrel-arched trusses and brick pilasters behind layers of plaster and drywall. A cluttered floor plan of multiple partitions, stacked ceilings, and raised dance floors obstructed the once open space. “When we found it, there was a dance studio with poorly defined rooms and no real relationship to the original building,” tells Knop. “The first action was to peel back the layers and uncover each part of the original building.”



Top: Custom millwork throughout allows movement and provides separation of spaces. **Bottom:** The marriage of culinary craft and architecture is apparent as spaces complement one another in design and purpose. **Opposite:** The bar rests proudly in the center of the space, serving coffee and spirits to patrons.



Once the shell had been prepared for its next chapter, the project essentially became a two-part venture. The first was a historic rehabilitation of the building shell with additional involvement from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the city of West Des Moines, and local historian Jennifer James. After extensive research, the team identified key historical elements and began to make critical decisions on what to discard and what to reclaim. While the inherent focus was on the historical exterior façade and storefront, the architects recognized the value in considering how the existing elements could be used to impact and exemplify the second half of the project: the interior tenant improvement.

“The first action was to peel back the layers and uncover each part of the original building.”

— Cody Knop, AIA

“The restaurant’s design was basically a collection of highly crafted millwork pieces,” says Knop. “Each new element was arranged in such a way that responded to the old framework of the building without ever touching it.” It was the dialogue between these two parts that made the project less about the old, less about the new, and more about those relationships and the spaces in between.

The restaurant’s program is organized with meticulous intent. All cooking, cleaning and back-of-house functions are placed along the southern end of the space to hide the necessary hoods, ducts, and exhausts while coolers are re-clad in millwork to appear less utilitarian and offer greater elegance. The bakery and everyday

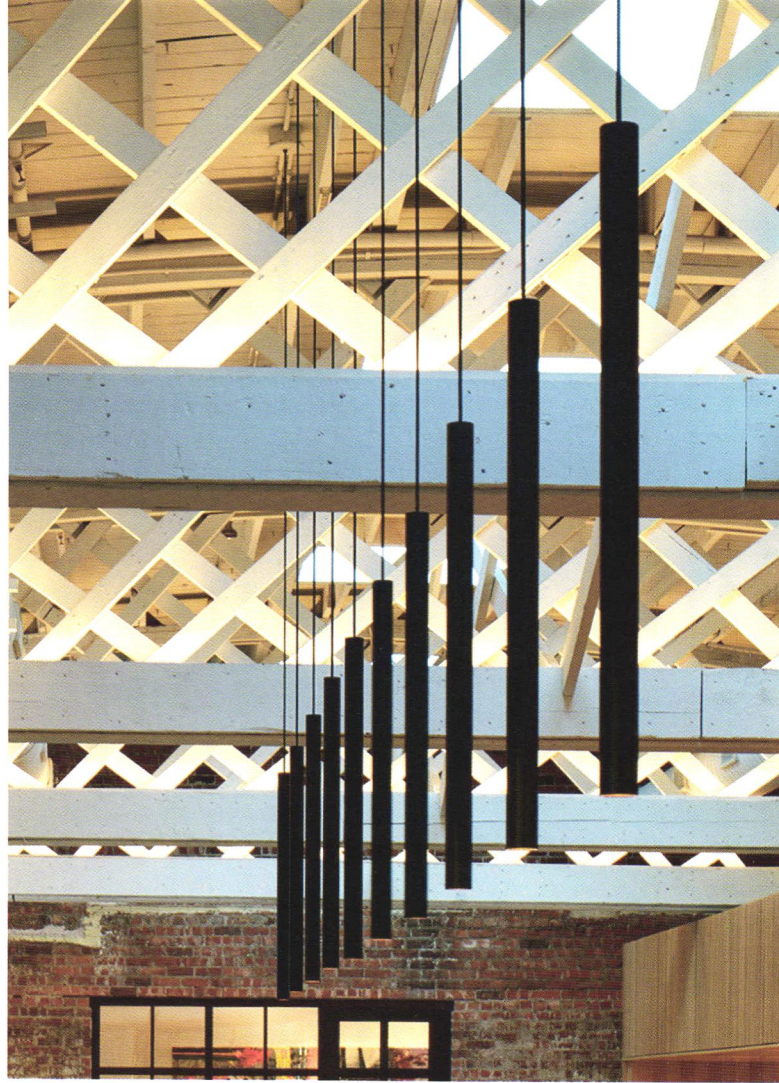
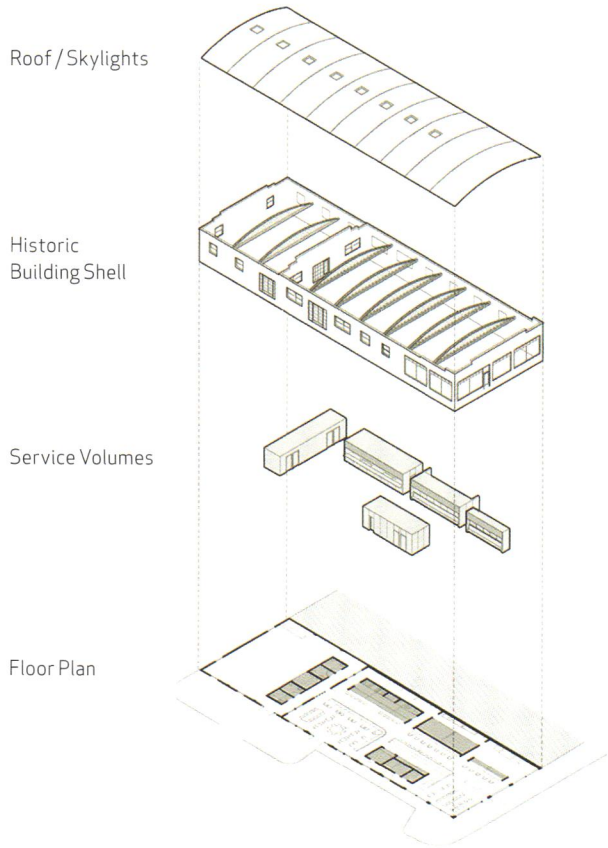
dining areas take a more public position in the original vehicle showroom along the western storefront. Guest seating is placed toward the north side of the building where the windows can yield comfortable natural light year-round. The bar rests proudly in the center of the space, serving coffee, wine, and spirits equally to all patrons, while the more sophisticated dining experience is tucked privately behind the bar and opposite the open kitchen.

“The goal of the restaurant was to offer thematic and theatrical dining,” says Knop. “Alex is the son of an architect and values what our profession offers. He was involved in every decision and has an eye for good design, which makes him both an amazing client and an excellent restaurateur.”

The marriage of culinary craft and architectural design is apparent in the layout, but the harmony and the arrangement between its details and design ingredients is where the project truly comes to life. Fabricated steel elements elucidate the building’s strong and delineated rhythms while correcting misalignments from age. It is in the addition and subtraction of old and new that Substance Architecture found the project’s true character.

To create a minimal solution, details often needed to be worked, reworked, and revised before ultimately settling into simplicity. “There were very few shop drawings used throughout production,” explains Knop. “We created detailed architectural documents and then met on-site with the contractor—Hildreth Construction Services—and their subcontractors. We sketched and discussed each piece before, during, and throughout fabrication until the team was satisfied with the result.” There came a point in the project where Knop visited the job site almost every day, constantly collaborating with the construction team to ensure proper execution.





A polished appearance takes meticulous care and effort, especially in the minutiae. Select sections of the old stately trusses were cut out to allow mechanical ducts to pass through without even the most delicate contact. Lighting was carefully integrated to enhance customer experience and offer dramatic scenes. Even the temperature of the filament was selected based on the perception and enhancement of the edibles. Slatted walls, designed largely for acoustics and to minimize the need for disruptive cloud ceilings, offer gaps through which light fixtures emerge. Regularly spaced up-lights cast an ambient glow on the old wood trusses, while downlights focus attention on the refreshments below. New millwork, precisely cut and sanded to perfection, sharply contrasts the rough-sawn lumber and bare concrete floors.

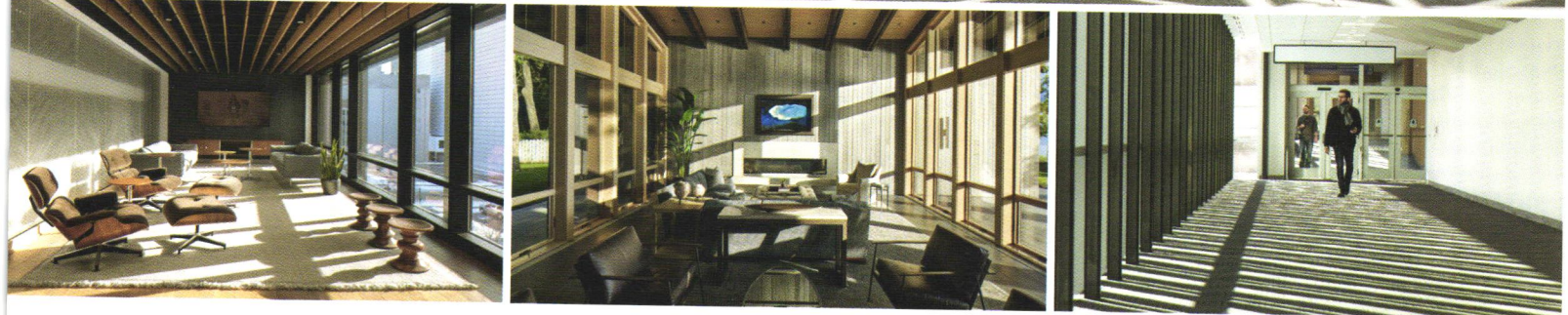
Each of these gestures highlight and enforce a continuous dance between structure and sustenance, traditional and modern, old and new. In a place where vehicles, gadgets, and grease once dominated, patrons now find a quiet atmosphere filled with elegant design and fine dining.

Opposite: A goal of the restaurant is to offer thematic and theatric seating that appeals to all visitors. **Top Left:** The axon drawing identifies key historical elements that were reclaimed along with new services inserted within the existing building shell. **Top Right:** Strategic lighting highlights the old wood trusses and historical elements of the space. **Bottom Left:** Patrons can find a quiet atmosphere and fine dining.



Top: Each gesture both big and small, old and new, creates a space of elegant dining and community for all who wander to St. Kilda Collective. **Bottom:** Historical features of the spaces were designed to shine, presenting a conversation between new and old.

CONTRASTS



IF IT WERE NOT FOR SHADOWS, THERE WOULD BE NO BEAUTY

substancearchitecture
DES MOINES IOWA

INSIDE OUT

Flipping the script to mark the city's cultural hub

WORDS : GRANT NORDBY, AIA

IMAGES : AURORA PHOTOGRAPHY, CHADD GOOSMANN

ARCHITECT : PLAN ARCHITECTURE



How do you invert a building's relationship to its surroundings while preserving something of the original?

That was the challenge facing Sioux City-based PLaN Architecture while tackling a complete remodel of the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce offices. When the original building was constructed in the 1960s, its neighbors included huge multistory warehouses to the north and a nearby auditorium's windswept parking lot to the south and west. The designers' response at the time to these surroundings was to turn the building inward which produced a squat, nearly windowless, brutalist bunker of a building, its solid brick walls infilling a skeleton of battered limestone piers.

After nearly 60 years, occupants wanted its opposite: an outward-facing, luminous landmark capable of holding its own among an expanded events center and auto-oriented infrastructure on three sides. In contrast to more typical fare of 100+-year-old restoration projects in Sioux City's historic core, PLaN had the unusual challenge of convincing the owner to keep any of the original whatsoever. "The parti in this case was not a series of subtle interventions, but rather treating the existing elements as the remnant-based intervention in an otherwise newly constructed space; flipping the script," states architect Nathan Kalaher, AIA.

The interior had been remodeled in recent decades, so there was little left to save there. Early in the design process, the Chamber worried that the low existing structure would not allow for the light and space they had come to crave. But architects at PLaN found that strategically removing the dropped ceiling could create needed height in larger spaces. They also created daylight and views by removing brick infill between the original skeleton of limestone piers.

Drawing inspiration from western false-front storefronts in the nearby historic Pearl Street district, the architects wrapped the limestone skeleton in a lofty glass skin with a parapet that slips above the original eaves. This conceals new mechanical equipment while standing as a lantern-like beacon to motorists approaching downtown on Interstate I-29. Together with the Gilchrist Learning Center across the street, the renewed Chamber marks the city's cultural hub with a language of simple, luminous volumes.

A fine lattice of exterior louvers shades the interior from solar glare while bouncing diffused daylight deep into interior spaces through glazed partition walls. Patina from 60 years of exposure to weather was left intact on the existing limestone piers, enhancing its contrast with the brilliantly white new envelope. Spaces requiring privacy are tucked behind remnants of solid masonry, which serves as both structure and privacy screen. Whereas most renovations of historic structures remain 90% old and 10% new, here only the skeleton of the original remains. A transparent skin illuminates its essential structural and programmatic role, throwing the contrast between new and old into relief.



Opposite: The lofty glass skin allows 101 Pierce to illuminate the city's cultural hub for all those traveling to downtown Sioux City.

Top Right: The drop ceiling was strategically removed from the space to create a visually larger space. **Bottom Right:** The remodeled façade allows the community to connect to the chamber within.

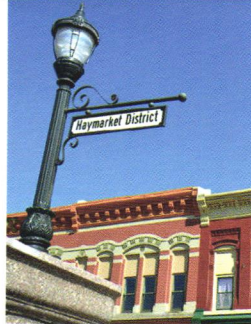


Top Left: Exterior elements allow the building to have dimension without creating any barriers. **Top Right:** The original building was a solid and brutalist-type building closed off to the public. **Bottom:** The new exterior amplifies the connection the Chamber desires to have with the public.



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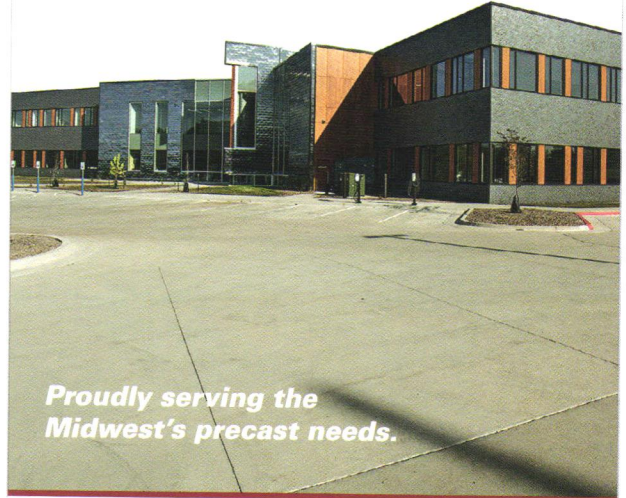


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SHED A LITTLE LIGHT

To nurture well-being, the Dr. Percy and Lileah Harris Building is both practical and imaginative

WORDS : KELLY ROBERSON

IMAGES : CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA, INTEGRATED STUDIO

ARCHITECT : OPN ARCHITECTS

Pre-pandemic, how many people thought about public health: the people who provided it, the places that delivered it? Conjure up an image of a typical public health facility, and you'll probably think of some place that is cramped and windowless, too long neglected by budget constraints and overtaxed professionals.

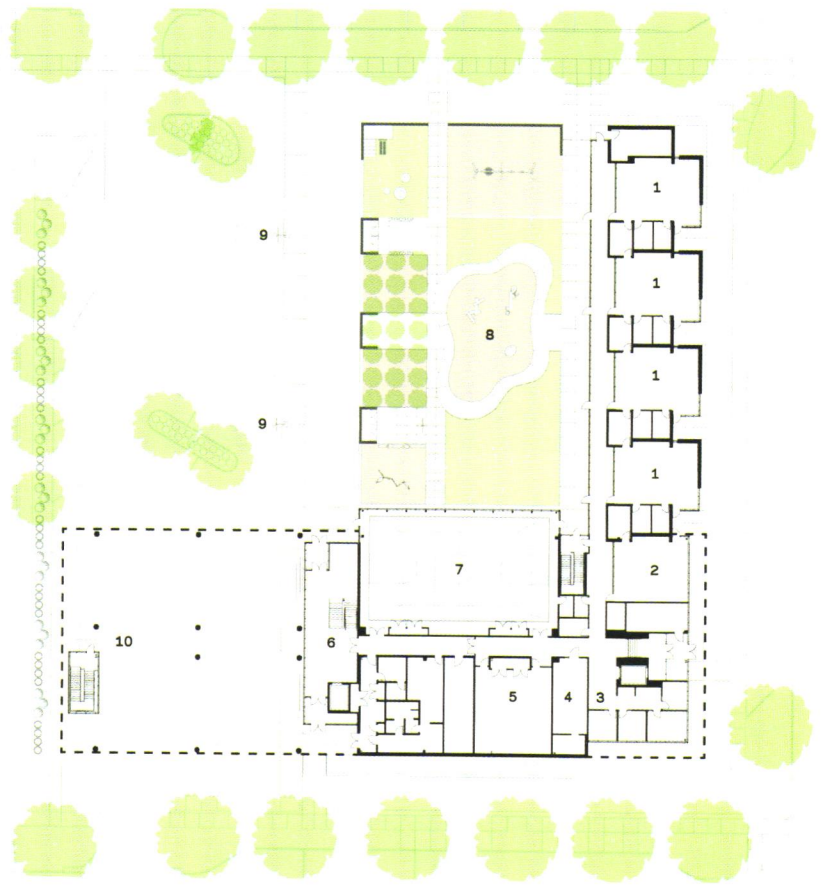
But the Dr. Percy and Lileah Harris Building that houses Linn County Public Health and Linn County Child & Youth Development Services by OPN Architects is a facility that articulates with deftness and beauty what public health can and should be; a way to integrate into the fabric of the community. Opened in November 2019, the 63,000-square-foot facility serves families dealing with multiple stressors. "These stressors can be associated with lower levels of physical activity and higher exposure to crime and

psychological stress," says Gloria Witzberger, child and youth development services director with the facility.

The site for the facility, says David Sorg, AIA, with OPN Architects, used to house the Linn County community services building. When it was flooded in 2008, the space in the downtown Oak Hill neighborhood sat empty, but not unused; residents used it as a park. "There's this really wonderful cohesiveness to the neighborhood and a lot of pride," says Sorg. "It was really important that the space bring people together, even with a large building."

That led to lots of community input during the design and development process, including conversations with neighbors and goal-setting of making the area even better for livability and

1. Classroom
2. Infant Room
3. Child Development Offices
4. Kitchen
5. Play Room
6. Public Lobby
7. Gym
8. Playground
9. Community Basketball Courts
10. Covered Parking



Opposite: The Dr. Percy and Lileah Harris Building provides a space for community gatherings and connection. **Top:** The L-shaped plan allows for the facility to have a visual connection to the neighborhood with specific spaces dedicated to community needs. **Bottom:** Physical activity has been shown to lower exposure to crime and psychological stressors, allowing this space to heal through treatment and connection.



usability. The conversation process is reflected in the building's light-filled, open airiness and in its name: the Harrises were local civil rights advocates devoted to the community's health and well-being.

"The building is both public health and child and youth development, so it had to be both practical and imaginative," says Sorg.

Because public health is a critical function, it had to be elevated, while child and youth services needed direct exterior access, as well as its own controlled entrance. The challenge was integrating the two and sharing areas to reduce the budget impact.

The result is an L shape, with the single-story child-focused spaces broken into a series of classrooms. Intermediate support spaces create a neighborhood-like rhythm and orientation focused on a light-filled hallway. Views are out when they can be; it is a visual connection to the neighborhood, to the raucous and fun natural playground that's accessible to the community after hours and on weekends. The large gym, too, establishes a connection with the outdoors.

The three-story public health section of the building has a mostly open design, better to improve natural light and views, with respite spaces to allow retreat and pause. Materials include exposed wood and lantern-like glass conference rooms (viewable from downtown). "We had a commitment to creating a building that people wanted to work in, that was the opposite of institutional," says Sorg. "You should feel better and be more comfortable when you are there."

The impact of the Iowa Derecho in 2020 and the current pandemic have put the new building through its paces, and it has withstood the challenge. "When you see the community using the building after hours, it is truly giving back. Public health can sometimes come about because you're in stressful situations, and anytime you can reduce stress, you're helping," says Sorg.

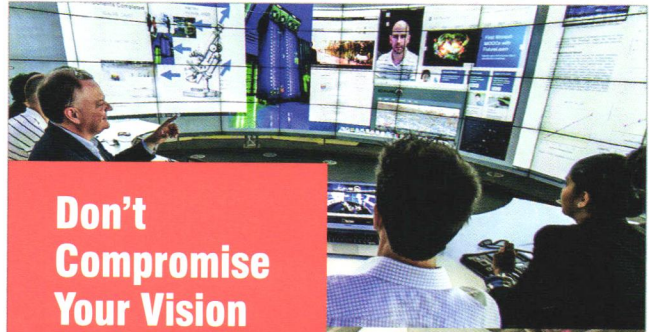


Top: Natural light and views allow for respite and retreat. **Middle:** Outdoor spaces allow for the environment to infiltrate the interior spaces to provide comfort. **Bottom:** The upper level corridor overlooks the double-height lower level corridor, clerestory windows provide daylight and views into the gymnasium.

Re-framing the dialogue



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DIALOGUE: OF-THE-PLACE

How Market House has added life back to a corner of an Iowa City neighborhood

WORDS : NATHAN KALAHER, AIA

IMAGES : CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA, INTEGRATED STUDIO

ARCHITECT : NEUMMAN MONSON ARCHITECTS

A design parti is a solution to a design problem. Architects' designs are informed by the owner's wishes, but also by outside constraints such as site context and community. Iowa City's Northside neighborhood has long been host to relatively smaller scale structures filled with a broad assortment of tenants. When Iowa City real-estate developer Ross Nusser acquired an underutilized parcel within the district, a vision came to fruition that would add value and density to the neighborhood.

Nusser saw the site's potential to increase activity and better compliment the surrounding neighborhood. He worked with Neumann Monson Architects to replace pavement and a vacant drive-up bank with a mixed-use mid-rise. In architecture, project designs are in dialogue with their contexts whether they are intended to fit in or to contrast with their surroundings. Neumann Monson worked with the city and neighborhood to define those aspects of the area that would be critical to the success of the project. As Neumann Monson's Nick Lindsley, AIA, states "the neighborhood is warmly eclectic with a diverse mix of small retail and restaurant spaces, all pedestrian-oriented. The client wanted to build [Market House] on the already strong atmosphere but also activate an underutilized corner to fill out the block."

Market House's design parti promotes small-scaled pedestrian-friendly commercial spaces which helps the developer seek out users for the proposed commercial space that would be engaging to the district, such as a restaurant at the ground floor. Activating the parcel in a fitting way was just one of the challenges for the design team though; the other was maximizing density to increase use while at the same time being sensitive to the smaller urban scale of the district. To resolve this second challenge, contrasts of materiality were used. "The goal was to break up the building massing to better relate to the

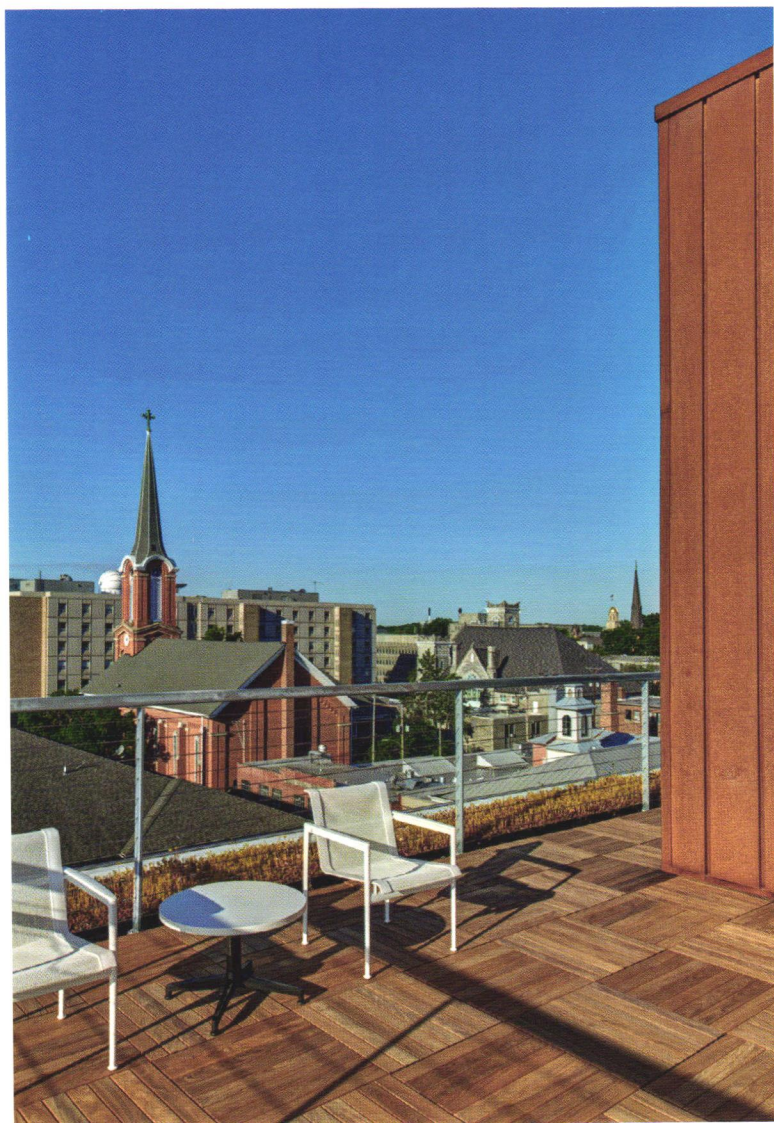


Top: Interiors of the residential units utilize concrete floors and "white canvas" walls, encouraging the tenant's individual expression.

Bottom: The building aims to create new housing options for retirees and young professionals near the Central Business District.



Above: A five-story mixed-use building, brings new prominence and vitality to its previously underutilized corner lot, tying together pedestrian routes between the neighborhood's two major thoroughfares.



smaller two- and three-story retail structures along Linn Street, most of which are masonry. We chose grey slate for the majority of the residential volume because it was a contrasting masonry material to the historic orange brick of the neighborhood. The weathering steel was used to mimic the warmth of contextual brick,” says Lindsley.

The materials chosen for the exterior of Market House were themselves similar to others found in the district; but, in this project the materials used have a different texture or color from the vernacular. “It is different than the other buildings around ... but that’s 100% okay, as it lends itself well to the natural diversity of the neighborhood,” states developer Nusser. Thoughtful contrast of these facade materials visually breaks down the larger volume of the five-level Market House building into smaller, more pedestrian-relatable components. In a thoughtful irony, this modernist and relatively tall building uses contrasts to create a building that is simultaneously different from its surroundings and fittingly of-the-place.

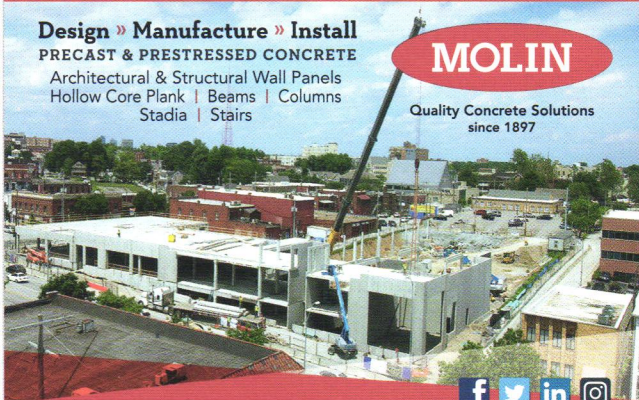
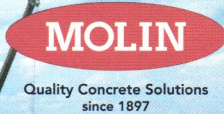
Top: The exterior material palette brings contextuality of masonry tones with ribbed weathering steel panel on its east residential block.

Bottom: A wood parquet rooftop terrace provides panoramic views of the city and surrounding canopy.

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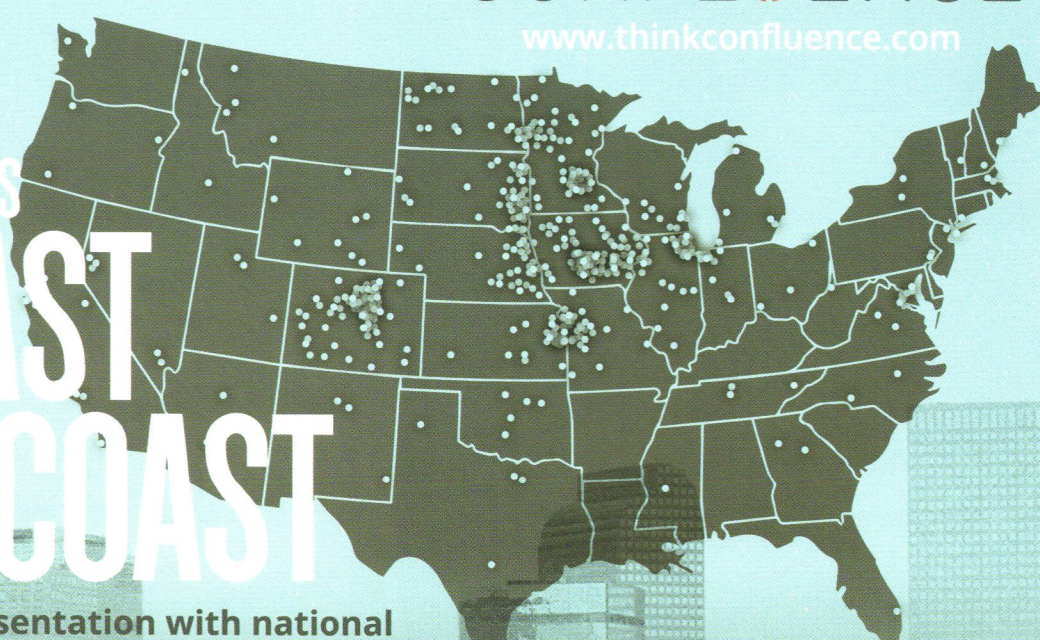
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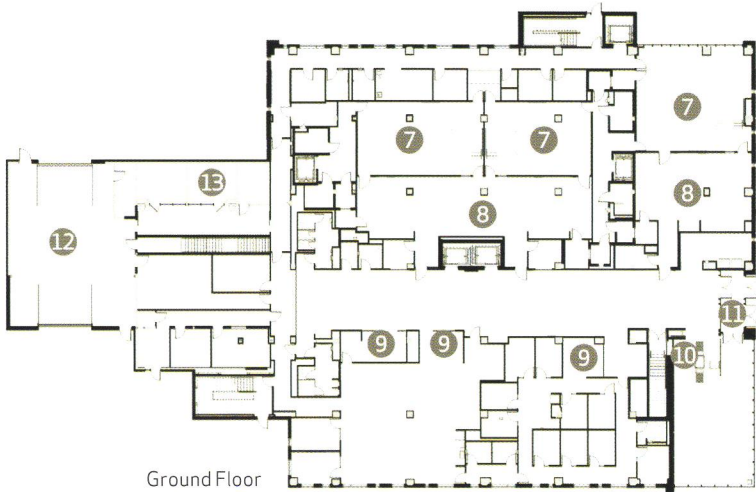
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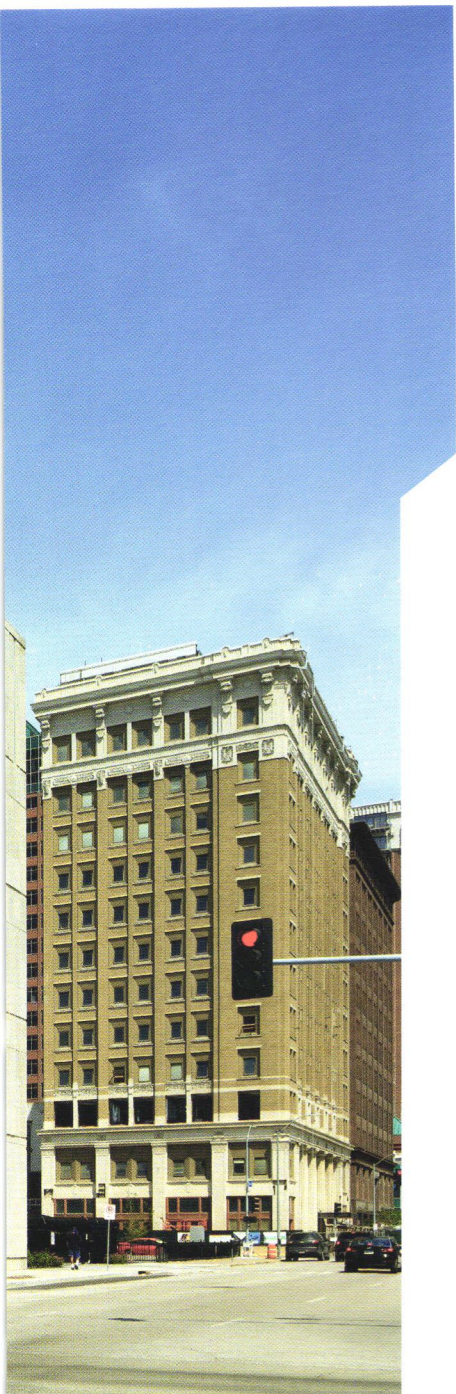




Ground Floor



Upper Floor



JUSTIFIED TRIO

Polk County Criminal Courts balances more than meets the eye

WORDS: JUSTIN BURNHAM, ASSOC. AIA

IMAGES: WAYNE JOHNSON, MAIN STREET PHOTOGRAPHY

ARCHITECT: OPN ARCHITECTS

Polk County Criminal Courts is part of a carefully cultivated trio. Specifically, it serves the best-known member of the trio: The Polk County Historic Court House by architects Proudfoot and Bird, built in 1906.

In 2013, voters approved a \$81 million bond referendum to be spread across three adjacent projects: Phase 1) Justice Center; Phase 2) Criminal Courts; Phase 3) Historic Court House Renovation. This approach to save the Polk County Historic Court House, with a campus that divvies up major court functions, contrasts a previous referendum that failed.

Joe Feldmann, AIA, project architect with OPN Architects, says, “The whole idea was being able to bring people downtown. They know where *the* court house is. But if I were to tell you how to get to the traffic courtroom ten years ago, it was in a nondescript mall.”

The original plan, proposed by another architecture firm, would have abandoned the historic court house in favor of one master building. After that initial referendum failed, Feldmann explains, “We then stepped in and started looking for another version.” OPN Architects studied numerous other building sites owned by Polk County, including the former Convention Center (now the Downtown YMCA) and River Place.

Decisions came out of an intensive master programming process steered by the Fifth Judicial Circuit, Polk County, and OPN Architects. The foremost goals were to bring the court house back to life and to relieve crowding in the court system. “The historic court house was pretty cut up: What used to be, like, one courtroom was now serving three courtrooms type of deal,” Feldmann notes.

Once a land swap deal was brokered with Wellmark, the pieces for this project began to fall into place. The county now owned the sites to the north and west of the historic court house. First, this allowed the Justice Center to occupy a defunct JCPenney department store to the north. Second, the site for the Criminal Courts would take the place of an abandoned jail to the west. The former would consolidate traffic and juvenile courts and the latter manages criminal matters, which would allow the historic court house to focus solely on civil matters.

1. Courtroom
2. Deliberation Room
3. Detainee Holding
4. Attorney Room
5. Future Courtroom
6. Judicial Support
7. Courtroom
8. Attorney Room
9. Service Counter
10. Security
11. Main Entry
12. Sally Port
13. Detainee Holding

Top: To transform a former eight-story county jail into a criminal courts facility, the top six floors were removed while the remaining two were taken down to structure. **Bottom:** The layout of Criminal Courts employs a three-bar diagram: courts on the north, circulation in the middle, and support on the south.



Below Informs Above – Safety & Movement

Once the program was settled, the Criminal Courts had to address this question: What is the best approach for the jail site?

Demolition of the eight-story jail was an obvious choice. Built in 1981, the building’s cruciform plan and shallow upper-floor ceiling heights did not seem to invite renovation. There was deferred maintenance and many in the community considered its lack of windows and fortress-like street level walls to be an eyesore.

There was one caveat: Infrastructure.

The basement level served the historic court house. Before court appointments, detainees still arrived at the old jail because the ground-level secure entry (sally port) was still operational. Under 6th Street, they would pass through a tunnel to the courts. Additionally, large boilers that serve the historic court house mechanical systems are located there.

The design team had to debate whether to build new or reuse part of the existing structure. The team chose to reuse: keeping the tunnel and boilers. Feldmann admits, “We probably would have had a shorter and longer building, had it been all newly built.” Instead, they found that the program arranged atop the footprint of the jail yielded a five-story massing in dialogue with the five-story historic court house across the street, establishing a dialogue between new and old.

Safety was of foremost concern in the floor plan design. Defendants’ movements—both vertical and horizontal—needed to be separated from that of plaintiffs. “You have to solve that problem first,” says Feldmann, “Then there’s the courtroom layout.”



The architects worked with Bryan McCombs, structural engineer with Shuck-Britson, to keep as much structure as possible. When problems arose, such as the required elimination of a column in the large northeastern courtroom, the engineers were key. Ultimately, two levels of existing concrete structure were saved with three new levels of steel structure placed atop.

According to Feldmann: “It came out to a million-dollar savings to reuse existing structure despite the fact it directly impacts the layout and function of spaces.”

Past Informs Present – Diagram & Dignity

The architects were instructed to build cohesiveness while simultaneously allowing each project to have its own identity. “Obviously, we were always trying to keep the historic court house in mind, but we can’t recreate it.” Feldmann refers to it as a crown jewel.

The old court house is located at the terminus of Court Avenue—an east-west vista. The layout of Criminal Courts celebrates the idea of a vista with a three-bar diagram: courts on the north, circulation in the middle, and support on the south. From the courtrooms there are views toward downtown. From the public corridors there are framed views of the old court house. The main entry and a grand five-story stair are clad in glass and located on the east façade, facing the old court house.

Materials lent another means to build cohesiveness and identity. The building is clad in Indiana limestone sourced from the quarry nearest to that of the 1906 cladding. But the detailing of the stone and glass is done in a distinctly contemporary fashion.

Some reflections are literal and others are figurative. The tall corner glass reflects the court house. Feldmann frames the gestural idea behind the slots and lights as individuals, standing tall, and acting together as one: An analogy for moving through the justice system.

Bringing dignity back was front-of-mind because court can be a stressful experience. Says Feldmann of a south-facing balcony: “Moments of relief and the ability to get outdoors were a big part for staff. Imagine going through, in and out of, metal detectors and having to do all that check in on a constant basis.” The interiors deploy warm finishes, such as wood and zinc, to create a sense of calm.

In a society with heightened attention on the justice system, Polk County’s campus serves as a model that strives for overlap and consistency.



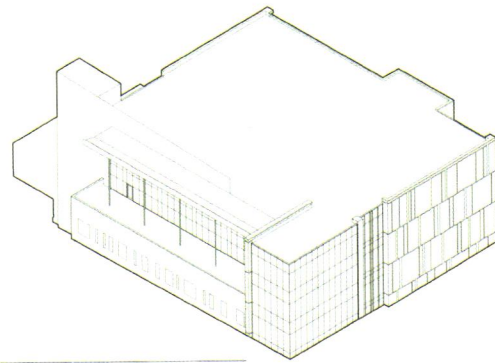
Opposite Top: By activating an abandoned building, an eyesore in a redeveloping downtown core was replaced by a facility that instills a sense of civic pride. **Opposite Middle:** Wood and zinc elements identify the courtroom entrances and complement the exterior material palette. **Opposite Bottom:** Six high-volume criminal courtrooms and four criminal jury courtrooms are now located in the building, with the flexibility to add five more in the future. **Top:** The five-story stairs surrounded in glass provide views of the city. **Bottom:** A south-facing balcony was added to help bring some peace to what is typically a stressful experience for building users.



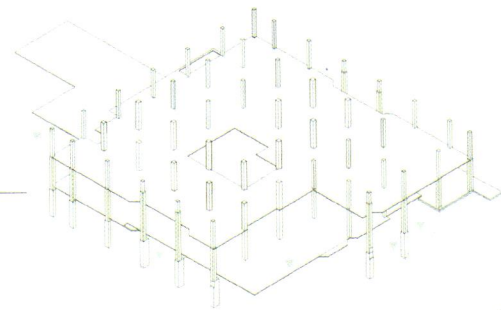
Left: The original building, a former jail, was transformed to meet the needs of the county. **Bottom:** The axon drawing depicts two levels of existing concrete structure with three new levels of steel structure placed atop.

“It came out to a million-dollar savings to reuse existing structure despite the fact it directly impacts the layout and function of spaces.”

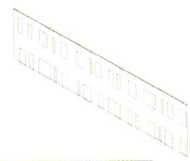
— Joe Feldmann, AIA



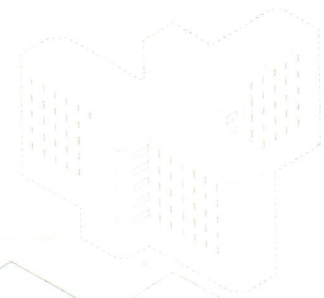
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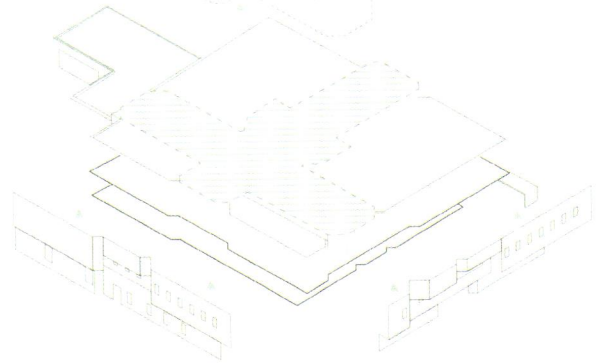
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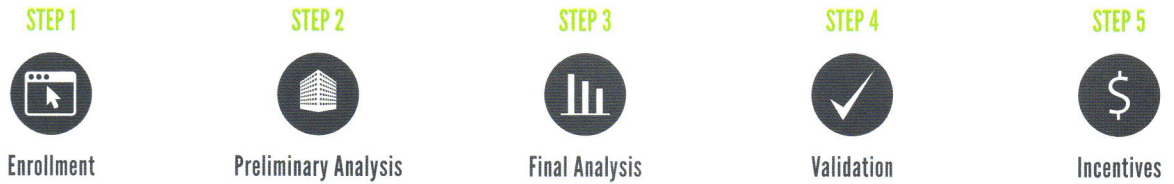


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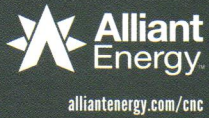
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Architect: Substance Architecture
Historical Preservation Consultant: Jennifer James Preservation
Contractor: Hildreth Construction Services
Civil Engineer: Civil Engineering Consultants
Structural Engineer: KPFF
Photography: Corey Gaffer

Inside Out | 20

Architect: PLaN Architecture
Contractor: MBW Construction
Civil Engineer: True Engineering
Structural Engineer: Performance Engineering
MEP Engineer: West Plains Engineering
Photographer: Aurora Photography, Chadd Goosmann

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Architect: OPN Architects, Inc.
Contractor: Rinderknecht Associates
Civil Engineer: Schnoor Bonifazi
Structural Engineer: M2B
Mechanical Engineer: West Plains
Photographer: Cameron Campbell, AIA, Integrated Studio

Dialogue: Of-the-Place | 28

Architect: Neumann Monson Architects
Contractor: McComas Lacina Construction
Civil Engineer: McClure Engineering
Structural Engineer: Raker Rhodes Engineering
Photographer: Cameron Campbell, AIA, Integrated Studio

Justified Trio | 32

Architect: OPN Architects, Inc.
Contractor: Neumann Brothers Construction
Cost Estimating: Stecker Harmsen
Civil Engineer: Snyder & Associates
Structural Engineer: Shuck Britson
MEP Engineer: Alvine Engineering
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UP THE CREEK ~~WITHOUT A PADDLE?~~ WITH A TEAM!

The day after receiving a Purchase Order from Koestner Construction Company for the precast concrete for the West Public Services Facility, Coreslab Structures (Omaha) Inc. seemed to be literally up the creek without a paddle. Cataclysmic runoff from rain and snowmelt, resulting in flooding that caused an estimated \$10.8 billion in damage in the Midwest, also put the Coreslab Structures' plant under water and production out of commission for nearly two months.

Meanwhile, the West Public Services Facility project, comprised of six buildings meant to (ironically) support public infrastructure for the City of West Des Moines, was waiting. With the support of the City of West Des Moines, Coreslab Structures (Omaha) Inc. was able to coordinate with the project's team to rearrange schedules and shuffle which areas of the project would be worked on first. The team that worked on this project pulled together and not only gave Coreslab Structures (Omaha) Inc. the time they needed to repair the plant and replace equipment – they got in the canoe with them to help paddle!

PROJECT TEAM



John Karrmann, AIA
Vice President Architect
FEH Design
Role: Architect Project Manager



Cory W. Sharp, AIA
Associate Principal Architect
FEH Design
Role: Project Architect



John Schmidbauer, P.E.
Structural Engineer
Kueny Architects, LLC
Role: Structural Engineer



Colton Taylor
Project Manager
Koester Construction Company
Role: Project Manager - GC



Alec Stubbe, P.E.
Structural Engineer
e.Construct
Role: Precast Specialty Engineer



Zach Abild
Project Manager
Northwest Steel Erection
Role: Precast Erector



Mark McCaulley
Sales/Project Consultant
Coreslab Structures (Omaha) Inc.
Role: Precast Supplier

