Design Excellence Awards 2002

Distinguished Building, Interior Architecture and Unbuilt Design
Want to See More?
The winners will be on display at the Chicago Architecture Foundation, 224 S. Michigan Ave., from October 14 to January 5, 2003. Or, if you prefer a more virtual experience, visit www.aiachicago.org where every submission is on exhibit.
For many of us, Chicago has been a destination for architecture. We have made our careers in a city centered on high-quality design. Working in Chicago, directly out of college, was a graduate program in and of itself, where one was exposed to building styles, systems and processes that expanded our horizons and our minds.

That culture continues today. The quality of design, coupled with technical expertise, makes Chicago a laboratory for the profession’s best practices. With the 2002 Design Excellence Awards, we celebrate the work of our peers who maintain and advance these traditions.

The design awards are granted in three categories: distinguished building, interior architecture and unbuilt design. There were 265 entries this year, representing local, national and international projects designed by Chicago firms. The juries selected seven Honor Awards, 20 Citations of Merit, and six Special Recognition Awards.

Winners will be recognized in several ways. In addition to being published in this issue of Focus, they were honored at Designight on October 11. They also will be displayed at the Chicago Architecture Foundation, 224 S. Michigan Ave., through January 5, 2003 and at www.aiachicago.org, together with all submissions.

I extend my congratulations to each firm that entered this year’s competition, and especially to the winners.

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Congratulations, AIA 2002 Design Award Winners!
The Distinguished Building Award was established 47 years ago to recognize significant achievements in the planning, design and execution of recent building projects. Projects are eligible if they were completed between January 1, 1999 and May 1, 2002 and were designed by a registered architect in the Chicago metropolitan area.

Cary Grove High School Media Center Addition
Cary, IL

**Honor Award**

Architect – Perkins & Will
Client – Community High School District 155
General Contractor – Boller Construction Co.
Consultants – C.E. Anderson & Associates; Mechanical Services Associates Corp.

This 30,000-square-foot addition to a 1950s building recasts the image that Cary Grove High School presents to its community. Perkins & Will "made a virtue out of an elemental metal frame structure," noted jurors, ingeniously extending the original building's materials of brick, anodized aluminum fascias, and clear glass into a highly refined skin. The skillful placement of windows and the gently curved wall of the new reading room greet the school's main drive and transform the school from banal to brilliant.

"made a virtue out of an elemental metal frame structure"
South Kenwood Residence
Chicago, IL

Architect — Vinci Hamp Architects Inc.
Client — Allison and Susan Davis
General Contractor — Norcon Inc.
Consultants — Nayyar & Nayyar International (structural); Klaucenas & Associates (MEP); Gary A. Wiss Inc. (civil)

"This house plays with scale in a very interesting way," noted a juror, pointing to a concrete main staircase that occupies almost as much space in plan as the living room. The generosity is well balanced by clear organization and overall restraint. Cubes of Roman brick walls trimmed in limestone come together in classical volumes moderated by planar elements. A terrace is suspended off the circulation spine and overlooks a garden to the rear of the deep site. Entry stairs at the house’s corner gesture openly to the street and neighbors. Jurors agreed that this modern home "quite remarkably takes its place in the [historic Kenwood] neighborhood" without resorting to historic devices.

quite remarkably takes its place in the neighborhood
It's a lot of building, yet the architect was in control of it.

Philips Headquarters at Breitner Centre
Amsterdam, Netherlands

**Honor Award**

Architect – Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP
Client – Philips
Owner – Sedii.ko B.V.
Consulting Engineer – Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP

The architects organized this small building in a new high-rise district into three slender towers to emphasize its height. The slab-like towers step down between taller buildings nearby and lower residential buildings on the river. Deft use of linear continuity through facade elements creates an exhilarating rhythm that thrilled jurors. A skin of matte and polished panels and glass stretches over changing forms with weight placed at the corners, making for a solidity not found in most curtain wall buildings.
Rennebohm Hall, School of Pharmacy at the University of Wisconsin
Madison, WI

Honor Award
Architect – Perkins & Will
Architect-of-Record – Potter Lawson Inc.
Client – State of Wisconsin, Division of Facilities Development
General Contractor – Kraemer Brothers LLC
Consultants – GPR Planners (lab planning); Arnold & O'Sheridan Inc. (structural); Ring & DuChateau (mechanical)

“Sensational, very elegant, and proportioned,” praised a juror, who joined the others in admiring this 205,000-square-foot building designed on an educational rather than clinical model. “The building’s dynamic geometry seems appropriate on this site plan.” Three distinct masses create an identity for the School of Pharmacy while defining a new quadrangle and addressing a pond. Curtain walls enclose public spaces including the lobby and a library volume while a grid of punched openings in solid masonry walls reflects the modular nature of the laboratories they enclose.

The skin celebrates the uses!
29 North Wacker
Chicago, IL

Citation of Merit
Architect – Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP
Client – Hines Interests
General Contractor – Taisei
Engineers – Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP

Addressing a prevailing problem for architects across the country, this renovation economically transforms a nondescript, mid-rise 1960s office building into a vibrant and elegant player in today’s downtown. Without changing the aperture of the windows, architects reconfigured the building’s exterior proportions with a floating stainless-steel grille that picks up patterns from neighboring buildings and creates a strong identity for itself. In fact, jurors speculated that a shrewd client might have purchased the unassuming mid-rise at a bargain price and come away with a trophy building.

Archer Courts Renovation
Chicago, IL

Citation of Merit
Architect – Landon Bone Architects
Client – Chicago Community Development Corp.
General Contractor – Burling Builders
Consultants – G/FR Inc. (engineering); McKay Landscape Architects

A bland and neglected 1950s building was purchased from the Chicago Housing Authority and transformed—with all tenants in place—to an animated expression of the life within. The new look came at half the cost of replacement. Where a chain-link fence had enclosed stacked galleries, a glass wall now shows off colorful walls and doors and brings the public space inside. This subtle change makes arrival to the units more engaging than the original design and is an intelligent choice for Chicago, where sheltered access and warmth are key.
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Tel: (630) 833-1000 • Fax: (630) 833-1747
Beach House at Rainbow Park and Beach
Chicago, IL

Citation of Merit

Architect – David Woodhouse Architects
Client – Chicago Park District
General Contractor – R. Rudnick & Co.
Consultants – Nayyar & Nayyar International (structural); Primera Engineers (mechanical)

"Whoever designed this was loving every piece of it, even though they had very little money to spend." A sense of play and commitment to a beach aesthetic teased an extraordinary amount of fun out of a small institutional project. Rest rooms, a lifeguard station, and a concession stand are accommodated in sand-colored concrete block and silver-painted steel reminiscent of driftwood on a beach. Horizontal beams and translucent, corrugated fiberglass disks create shadows and transitional spaces between service areas, the beach, and the neighborhood.

Damore House
Fort Myers, FL

Citation of Merit

Architect – Annex5 (An A. Epstein and Sons International Design Group)
Client – Michael and Sharon Damore
General Contractor – David Dickerson

"I love the restraint of this house," commented one juror. Extreme transparency is the effect, though the architect employed heavy walls to create shade and display art in this south Florida home. A 1,000-square-foot courtyard extends visual lines without increasing air-conditioned space and an exposed, polished concrete floor slab maintains a cool feeling throughout. Sand-finished plaster bearing walls are married with exposed structural steel beams, allowing the east and south perimeter walls to be almost all glass. The placement of rooms alleviates the need for curtains, while omission of base or trim on walls and doors allows the eye to rest on walls or wander to outdoor gardens.
Habitat Africa! The Forest
Brookfield, IL

Citation of Merit
Architect – EHDD Architecture
Client – The Chicago Zoological Society
Consultants – McCler (program manager); Klein & Hoffman Inc. (structural); Environmental Systems Design Inc. (MEP, fire protection); Edwin Hancock Engineering (civil); Mesa (exterior exhibits, landscape); Progressive Communications (lighting); Oppenheim Lewis, Inc.

Zoo buildings present the great challenge of creating architecture for exhibits of “outdoor” space. The key to this successful solution is a back wall broken into unequal elements set at slightly varied angles and clad in common asphalt shingles. Inside, the wall engages a 9,300-square-foot African rain forest exhibit. Outside, the building demurs to landscape, becoming a series of abstract planes sometimes barely seen through surrounding forest.

Kline Creek Farm Visitors Center
Winfield, IL

Citation of Merit
Architect – Teng & Associates Inc.
Client – Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
General Contractor – Kwaske Construction

In a beautifully rendered architect’s drawing, the barn-like Visitors Center huddles on a low horizon of grasses under a huge slate-blue sky. For jurors, this “signaled everything about the intention of this building—a very thoughtful interpretation, with contemporary materials, of an agricultural building.” Situated at the head of a trail that leads to the farm, the center cleverly organizes exhibit space, a welcome desk, and bathroom and storage facilities into “served” and “service” areas. Cedar wood interior walls grace the simple steel structure, which is clad in galvanized corrugated sheet metal. These vernacular materials are applied in a modern use and composition, alluding to the fast-disappearing status of the farm in northern Illinois’ landscape.
Situated on a prominent Berlin street, this retail center achieves urban scale without sacrificing pedestrian appeal. A broad passageway cut boldly through the building provides a succession of varied spaces within the block as well as urban linkages between surrounding streets and plazas. Double-glazed glass and steel on an exposed concrete frame form planes—walls, roofs, and projecting elements—that alternately reinforce and blur the building's boundaries. The same theme is explored in changing displays of colored light throughout the building. The plan's complex geometries are played up by pavement patterns that celebrate pedestrians' angled journeys through the building.
Michigan Place
Chicago, IL

Citation of Merit
Architect – David C. Hovey, FAIA
Client – Michigan Place LLC
General Contractor – Optima Inc.
Consultants – ELN Structural Engineers (town homes); CHRI Engineering Inc. (condominiums)

A strong site plan confidently mixes a few 100-year-old structures within a new development of town homes and condominiums. Undulating green terraces serve to downplay indoor parking and create an undisciplined landscape that negotiates spaces between the buildings’ differing aesthetic systems. “[This project] is an excellent neighbor without having to mimic the architecture of IT,” the Miesjan campus across the street. Glass and aluminum towers balance smaller concrete and masonry masses in “a compelling marriage of mid-rise apartment with a town house community.”

Munich Airport Center
Munich, Germany

Citation of Merit
Architect – Murphy/Jahn Inc.
Client – Flughafen München GmbH, MFG Delta KG and ALBA GmbH
General Contractor – Hochtief / Bauer Arge (rough structure); Dobler (façade); Wolf/HEF1 (roof); ROM (mechanical); Siemens, Honeywell (electrical); Stingl GmbH (plumbing); Sulzer Infra; Thyssan, Schindler (elevators); Worthing, Stegmüller (steel); Kohlhöfer + Koltz (paving)
Consultants – HL-Technik (mechanical); Ove Arup & Partners, Grebner GmbH, and Werner Sobek Ingenieure GmbH (structural); Peter Walker & Partners and Professor Rainer Schmidt (landscape)

A huge arched truss with a glass canopy roof announces the architects’ ambitious intention for this “Airport City.” Serving as connection between hotel, retail stores, and service functions, the covered plaza or “Forum” aims to create urban, rather than mall-like, experiences that introduce the traveler to the city to which she’s just arrived. This innovative center establishes “a new prototype that probably has international significance.”
Wabash YMCA Renovation
Chicago, IL

Special Recognition for Historic Preservation

Architect - Weese Langley Weese Architects Ltd.
Client - The Renaissance Collaborative
General Contractor - Powers & Sons Construction Company Inc.
Consultants - Consolidated Consulting Engineers

After decades of abandonment, this 1913 building—now on the National Register of Historic Places—was faithfully restored to serve its original function as a YMCA. Original materials were discovered and reproduced, resulting in a handsome marble-tiled and oak-trimmed entrance, dignified and airy single-room occupancy units, and a restored ballroom. A mural painted in 1936 by a prominent African-American artist was carefully restored and reminds visitors of the Wabash Y’s history as an orientation center for blacks migrating from southern states to Chicago. Jurors particularly appreciated the restoration of the building to its original purpose. “The building retains robust qualities that YMCAs need to have,” with a handsome—and never contrived—result.

Cadillac Palace Theater Renovation
Chicago, IL

Special Recognition for Historic Preservation

Architect - Daniel P. Coffey & Associates Ltd.
Client - Palmette Venture LLC
General Contractor - W.E. O’Neil Construction Co.
Consultants - Don Belford Associates (structural); Dickerson Engineering Inc. (electrical, mechanical); Tong & Associates (mechanical)

The architects’ role in this meticulous commercial renovation was to attend to process and detail. Jurors were impressed with the results. The scope included expanding the existing stage and support areas, creating a new vertical core, and restoring the auditorium to its original physical state, in addition to renovating the interior and exterior of hotel, office, and retail spaces. “From a civic point of view, it’s fantastic that it’s preserved,” said one juror who further commented that the architects’ work was pure and ambitious, likening the project to the passionate restoration of a well-loved automobile.
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The Interior Architecture Award was established over 20 years ago to promote interior architecture as a unique profession by recognizing outstanding projects. For award purposes, interior architecture is defined as the space within a building envelope, including design of lighting, finishes and furnishings. The jury considered a wide range of design projects completed between January 1, 1999 and May 1, 2002.

They recycled it into something that really sings

Tribune Interactive
Chicago, IL

Honor Award

Architect – Perkins & Will
Associate Architect – McClier
Client – The Tribune Co.
General Contractor – Pepper Construction
Consultants – McClier (structural, mechanical, plumbing, fire protection); Byrne & Associates (electrical)

The muscular, industrial character of a former printing press room under Chicago's Tribune Tower was skillfully worked down to an interior scale in this new headquarters for the internet-based media division of The Tribune Co. The architects created a 3-story-high main hall volume by stripping the space to its structural framework and carving away at unneeded floor plates. To bring in natural light, an existing loading dock was refitted with glass. Glass-walled conference rooms stacked into canted, semi-transparent towers form shapes within the central volume and allow diagonal views. Steel bridges connect balconies housing 270 open workstations, with communication and power connections integrated into the handrail detail so that employees can “plug in” virtually anywhere in the space.
The owner of this condominium envisioned an open and serene environment with expansive views of Lake Michigan and nearby Chicago landmarks. The architect delivered by removing and reconfiguring existing walls to create an open plan that elegantly accepts a rich material palette of plaster, stained maple, stainless steel, and limestone. Translucent glass walls defining the master bathroom create a luminous interior volume visible from the entrance hallway and bring natural light into an otherwise dark corner. Detailing is applied cleanly and consistently throughout the home, with an effect jurors deemed “gorgeous.”
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Citation of Merit
Architect – Gensler
Client – Allsteel Inc.
General Contractor – Knutson Construction Services
Consultants – KJWW Engineering Consultants

What happens when you purchase an abandoned, long, low, 65,000-square-foot Iowa factory and make it into a corporate headquarters? In the case of century-old furniture manufacturer Allsteel, a juxtaposition of robust industrial elements and warm furniture and lighting strengthens a brand and breaks down company hierarchies. A circular form with clerestory windows pops from the roof and brings natural light to a main meeting room deep in the building’s interior. Jurors complemented the plan’s tension between architecture and furniture, which works to encourage interaction between employee groups and customers and to showcase the client’s products in real-world applications.

Transora
Chicago, IL

Citation of Merit
Architect – The Environments Group
Client – Transora
General Contractor – Turner Construction Co. SPD
Consultants – Environmental Systems Design

Cool colors and flowing lines bridge the gap between an energetic dot-com aesthetic and a more corporate sensibility in a most imaginative way, concurred jurors. A trick in the elevator hallway subtly sets the tone—panels are applied to a blind wall creating reveals that suggest total symmetry with the elevator doors opposite. Cantilevered walls and generous curved forms define public and meeting areas, breaking up the grid and pushing into perimeter circulation areas.
Louise Wells Kasian Children’s Activity Room at Lake Forest Library  
Lake Forest, IL  
Citation of Merit  
Architect – David Woodhouse Architects  
Client – Lake Forest Library  
General Contractor – R. Rudnick & Co.  
Consultants – Thornton-Tomasetti Engineers (structural); Innovative Engineering Group (mechanical)  

A sunken courtyard illuminated by skylights recalls secret garden imagery and asserts that children’s spaces needn’t look like a toy box. Jurors deemed “magical” a maple cabinet wall—almost featureless when closed—that unfurls in pleated panels to engage space and create imaginary rooms. A stage, a puppet playhouse, and tables for story-based art programs are revealed in a way that “gives kids credit for having intelligence.”
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Citation of Merit
Architect – David C. Hovey, FAIA
Client – David and Eileen Hovey
General Contractor – Optima Inc.
Consultants – Thornton-Thomasetti Engineers

For a Sonoran desert home that is all core and no shell, the idea was to allow interior spaces to flow seamlessly outside. Steel beams and generous cantilevers top ground-face concrete block walls, casting shadows that pass undisturbed through glass veils of frameless walls and windows. Interior colors and finishes, in a similar way, stress unity with the surrounding landscape. Furnishings—sisal rugs, leather upholstery, and solid walnut casework—are soothing, and building materials intentionally left raw project coolness while providing a neutral setting for artwork.

Spencer Stuart
Chicago, IL

Citation of Merit
Architect – The Environments Group
Client – Spencer Stuart
General Contractor – Interior Construction Group

Straightforward programmatic requirements only added to jurors’ appreciation of this sure-handed design of an office for an executive recruiting firm. Careful treatment of ceiling and floor planes forms distinctive open spaces that create energy in a densely populated plan. Confronted with low ceilings but wanting to avoid an industrial look, designers exposed ceilings to gain height in public areas—entry, reception, and team spaces—and then suspended tensile fabric to conceal ductwork and soften acoustics. Reflected ceiling plans and a diverse color scheme demonstrate the skill and subtlety that create elegance without the use of expensive materials. “The project goes into a nondescript slab of space and creates magic,” said a juror. “This is what we all try to do every day.”
Zenith Electronics Corp.
Lincolnshire, IL

*Citation of Merit*
Architect – Valerio Dewalt Train Associates
Client – Zenith Electronics Corp.
General Contractor – Turner Construction Co. SPD
Consultants – WMA Consulting Engineers Ltd.; Charter Sills & Associates

A 50,000-square-foot headquarters facility helps shift Zenith's operations from manufacturing to the development of consumer electronics. Similar in plan and material selection to many other office interiors, Zenith won jurors' notice through careful detail that leaves a statement of elegance. High ceilings in open office areas are enhanced by use of a continuous light shelf mounted at the head of windows to reflect light deep into interior spaces. Electronics and wet lab spaces are housed in the building's core. Mushroom air diffusers stand out as sculptural ceiling elements in a meeting room, and the cafeteria features a display of early Zenith products in an overall atmosphere that jurors thought well suited to both corporate and worker needs.

A Consulting Firm – 15th Floor
Chicago, IL

*Citation of Merit*
Architect – VOA Associates Inc.
Client – Confidential
General Contractor – Turner Construction Co.
Consultants – McGuire Engineers

A Mondrian-inspired concept of interlocking cubes and planes is elegantly carried out in plan and detail in this space for a technical innovation group. Primary colors are applied boldly to carpet and drywall, with thoughtful reveals and insets holding the look together at the junctures. A main pathway leads through the design at an angle, maximizing the impact of an existing atrium without creating unused space. To reduce overall costs, designers elected to reuse 50 percent of existing carpeting and 85 percent of HVAC, lighting, sprinkler, and ceiling systems.
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The Zipatoni Co.
Chicago, IL

Special Recognition for Re-imagining the Knowledge Workplace

Architect — Environ Inc.
Client — The Zipatoni Co.
General Contractor — Hensley Construction Inc.
Consultants — Cosentini & Associates (engineering);
Kelly Erbschloe (industrial designer)

The client's notion of an unorthodox working environment for its creative force found brilliant expression in this 25,000-square-foot interior build-out. Utilizing raw materials including milled steel, concrete, unfinished drywall, and exposed metal raised flooring to establish a hard, industrial character, the design invites office inhabitants to "color" and "soften" their own environment. This brave concept results in an imaginatively fun—but absolutely adult—workplace. Novel use of garage doors to enclose conference space opens up the floor plan to a central lounge and client area featuring a full bar, kitchen, and café seating, while available natural light is reserved for open offices.

Emanuel Congregation Sanctuary Renovation
Chicago, IL

Special Recognition for Use of Materials to Evoke Spirituality

Architect — Ross Barney + Jankowski Inc.
Associate Architect — Les M. Jacobs
Client — Emanuel Congregation
General Contractor — Leopardo Companies
Consultants — Dennis Kinsel (custom interiors contractor); Vector Custom Fabricating (metal fabricator)

The program for this renovation of a 45-year-old sanctuary called for a flexible area capable of accommodating large crowds or small gatherings. Architects removed fixed seating and converted the higher, sloping rear of the existing auditorium-style space into a raised platform that becomes the heart of the temple. Around the platform, 26 sliding translucent sailcloth scrims create a transformable tent. Panels can be drawn closed to form a sanctuary-within-sanctuary, or opened to flank the platform in its use as a stage for social events or for ritual during special services. Overhead, white Lycra® sheets forming geometric shapes float just below a black ceiling, diffusing light, enhancing acoustics, and contributing to the ethereal ambiance.
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Unbuilt Design Awards

by Susan Larson

The Unbuilt Design Award was established in 1991 as the result of the 1990 exhibition, “Roads Not Taken.” None of the projects will be built, yet the award is intended to recognize projects for the significance of their concept and the quality of design. Submitted projects must have been commissioned by a client; however, they may include competition entries or urban design schemes. A jury of three prominent local architects considered design work completed between January 1, 1999 and May 1, 2002.

Jubilee Park Pavilion
London, England

Honor Award

Architect – Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP
Client – Canary Wharf Ltd.
Consultants – Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP

This project is an exploration of the relationship between glass and nature. The pavilion, sited at the southern edge of a multi-acre park, was designed as a pedestrian gateway. A suspended glass and cable steel enclosed room embraces the park and a large, below-grade retail facility. The transparent envelope and structure allow for daylight while laterally dissolving the line between the interior and exterior. Spatially, the pavilion creates multi-level views to the park, contrasting panoramic surface vistas with deep vertical space.
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Blue Springs, MO

Citation of Merit
Architect – DeStefano + Partners
Client – Central Bancompany
Consultants – Daniel Weinbach and Partners: Halvorsen & Kaye Structural Engineers PC

This client approached the design of its new headquarters as an opportunity to illustrate its state-of-the-art standards and project its expectations for future growth. Responding to this directive, the architects designed a 3-story, 30,000-square-foot building with the services core at the north end of the plan and single-loaded corridor connecting to a stair at the south end. This yields a 50-foot bay of office space with unusually flexible office planning opportunities. The first two floors were reserved for initial occupancy, and the third floor would be leased to a tenant but planned for the future expansion requirements of the client.
Qatar Broadcasting Services Complex
Doha, Qatar

Citation of Merit
Architect – Perkins & Will
Client – Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Undersecretary for Engineering Affairs

The design of this broadcasting complex is a modern interpretation of traditional Islamic architecture and urbanism. The bazaar that is the heart of most Islamic cities is interpreted by organizing the program elements along a linear spine or “electronic bazaar” of video monitors. Musharabiyya – exterior screens common in Qatar — are referenced by a metal umbrella roof that controls solar gain, provides shade, and channels breezes to passively cool the facility. The project also includes a traditional walled garden and intimate courtyards that bring natural light into the facility.

Entry in Chicago’s Design Competition for Mixed-Income Housing
Chicago, IL

Special Recognition
Architect – Garofalo Architects
Client – ABLA Homes, The Chicago Housing Authority

Most mixed-income housing is in a predicament because the highly individual nature of homeownership is at odds with the standardized, repetitive design of most public housing. This entry for a Chicago Housing Authority design competition for low-rise affordable housing proposes a “weave” of elements. Landscape and materiality are combined to form a backdrop for community relations. The rich palette of discrete, yet related, construction systems unify the scheme—without making outward distinctions between residents—but still expresses the diversity of individual lives. Within the site, a complex pattern of unit types ties together residents of varying family structures and incomes.
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