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CONTENTS

IOWA Architect
Issue No. 93:208

DESIGN AWARDS 1993

Tenth Annual Review of Midwest Architecture

Introduction .................................................. 9
Perishable Distributors of Iowa ...................... 10
Stage Center ................................................. 12
Maryville Aquatic Center .......................... 14
Forest Avenue Library .............................. 16
Iowa Teleproductions Center ..................... 16
Pulmonary Medicine, P.C. ..................... 17
Whitfield Handrail ........................................ 17
Oakdale Canopy ........................................... 18
McCormick Place Expansion ..................... 18
University of Florida Brain Institute .................. 19
Stormwatch One .......................................... 19
Searley Hall, University of Northern Iowa ............ 20
Principal Financial Group Auditorium .............. 22
West Bend Elementary School Addition ........... 24
Dr. Jeffrey Carithers' Office ...................... 26
B.A.D. Productions Studio ....................... 28
Kruse/Berg Kruse Residence .................... 30
Schwartz Residence ................................... 30

DEPARTMENTS

The Arts .................................................. 6
Portfolio .................................................. 7
Design Digest ........................................... 32
Journal ................................................... 33
Advertisers Directory ................................. 36

Cover
Central States Region Excellence Award winner Perishable Distributors of Iowa, Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunk Architecture, Des Moines. Photo by Farshid Assassi
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The Garden in the Galleries

Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen’s colossal fountain-sculpture Spoonbridge and Cherry and Shah Armajani’s 375-foot-long Irene Hixon Whitney Bridge are two artworks that have become landmarks in Minneapolis and helped attract more than 280,000 visitors to the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden last year. Through a new exhibition at the Walker Art Center, viewers will be invited to more fully appreciate the work of familiar Garden sculptors.

The Garden in the Galleries, on view February 20-September 4, will present works by 18 artists whose sculptures are featured in the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. By highlighting connections between artists’ indoor and outdoor pieces, the exhibition will demonstrate how they maintain a consistent vision while adapting their work to different circumstances.

Artists represented
Among those represented in the exhibition are Kinji Akagawa, Deborah Butterfield, Mark di Suvero, Ellsworth Kelly, Martin Puryear, Richard Serra and Judith Shea. In addition to presenting work in a variety of media, including painting, drawing and video, as well as sculpture, the exhibition will feature maquettes and working drawings for Garden sculptures, providing visitors with insights into the evolution of those works.

Focus on the basics
A special focus of the exhibition will be on the basic elements of sculpture, including materials, scale, mass and three-dimensional form. The properties of various materials and the significance of artists’ choice regarding them will be explored through the work of American artists Butterfield and Puryear. The effects brought about through changes in scale will be examined through the work of architect Frank Gehry and Pop artist Oldenburg. The properties of mass and balance will be explored through the weighty constructions of Serra and the delicate kinetic sculptures and mobiles of Alexander Calder.

The Garden in the Galleries will also include a selection of works that address the human figure, both as subject and as a user of objects. Works by British sculptor Henry Moore and American artist Shea offer different interpretations of the human form, while artists such as Akagawa, Armajani, Scott Burton and Isamu Noguchi offer variations on functional objects such as benches, chairs, bridges and lamps.

Special programs
Like the inaugural exhibition “Inside, Outside,” The Garden in the Galleries takes full advantage of the Walker’s unique position as both a conventional museum and a sculpture park, revealing itself as a significant cultural asset for the Midwest. Workshops for teachers and students are planned, including the creation of an interactive sculptural learning space in the museum’s Art Lab. Minnesota-based sculptor Steven Woodward has been commissioned to create the installation.
EMC Expansion

Brooks Borg and Skiles Architects and Engineers has completed schematic design for a 425,000 square-foot expansion of EMC Insurance Companies in downtown Des Moines. Located adjacent to EMC’s existing headquarters, the expansion consists of a 20-story office tower next to a three-story support facility. In addition, the project provides three new skywalks and two levels of underground parking. Construction of the estimated $50 million building will commence in the fall of 1994.

Federal Courthouse Annex

Construction has begun on the Federal Courthouse Annex in downtown Des Moines. The project was awarded through a design competition to Architects Wells. The building’s design was based upon opening a realm of discourse concerning the current thinking towards the symbolic, functional and experiential qualities of government buildings.

Office/Warehouse Facility

Construction has begun on the 15,000 square foot office/warehouse facility for Intertrade Limited in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The facility, designed by OPN Architects, Inc., will be located in the River Ridge North Office Park. The design accentuates the sales area, administration area, and warehouse as three distinct elements unified through the use of common materials. The entry is highlighted by a wall supporting a translucent-panel skylight and suspended aluminum canopy.

The discourse is based on dichotomies of mass and void, security and accessibility, their appropriate textures, connections and symbols, all based within the context of the Des Moines River and a historical district.

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From the summer floods across the Midwest to the materials which comprise our buildings, the various environments in which we live, work and play all left an indelible impression on our lives in 1993. As architects and designers, we are gaining a greater awareness of the impact we can have on the environment, and the ways in which the environment can impact both our buildings and our lives.

"Design and the Environment" was the theme around which both the Central States Region Convention and AIA Iowa Annual Convention revolved. Historically, speakers at these conventions are asked to serve as jurors for the design awards programs which also take place during the conventions. Steven Paul Badanes, a founding principal of Jersey Devil Architects; Edward Mazria, AIA, Mazria Associates; Bob Berkebile, FAIA, BNIM Inc.; and John Rahenkamp, FASLA, John Rahenkamp Consultants, Inc., were chosen to speak at the AIA Iowa Convention based on each person’s career as an environmentally-conscious designer. All were invited to address the convention attendees and participate on the awards jury. With the exception of Berkebile, these jurors reviewed approximately 80 submissions from which they selected seven award recipients. Showcased on the following pages are those projects, two of which received honor awards, while five received merit awards.

Also showcased on the following pages are those projects which received awards from the Central States Region Design Awards Program. This year’s jury consisted of William McDonough, AIA, William McDonough Architects; Margaret Helfand, Margaret Helfand Architects; and Kenneth Frampton, AIA, Ware Professor of Architecture, Columbia University. Iowa firms captured six of this year’s eleven region awards. In light of the fact that both awards program jurors were chosen based on similar criteria, the outcome of each jury was not, by any means, overly concerned with environmentally-responsive projects.

Congratulations are due not only to those individuals and firms receiving state awards, but to the entire architecture community of Iowa for its overwhelming success in the Central States Region Awards Program.

Todd Garner, AIA
Iowa Architect Editorial Board
1993 AIA Iowa Design Awards Committee
Perishable Distributors of Iowa (PDI), a regional wholesaler and distributor of perishable food products, was seeking to expand the office portion of its Ankeny-based distribution center. A key objective for the 14,000 square-foot addition was the clear expression of the company’s highly progressive managerial style, notable for its openness, accessibility and encouragement of employee involvement. Further, the project was tightly constrained by PDI’s demanding construction schedule and limited budget. The architects for the project, Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture, Des Moines, responded with an elegant and deftly-crafted construction which tangibly demonstrates PDI’s commitment to its underlying corporate philosophy without sacrificing the pragmatic necessities of the company’s budget and schedule.

The addition is structured around a central core of open-office workstations, situated beneath a broadly-sloping, clearstory roof monitor. Defined by an accessible network of finely-detailed office enclosures, the space is continually bathed in cool, diffuse sunlight emanating from the clearstory above. The atmosphere is cheerfully crisp, free-flowing and particularly accommodative to informal interaction among staff members.

Flanking either side of the central work area are blocks of support space: conference and seminar rooms, employee lockers and exercise area, staff lounge, file storage, and a limited number of private offices. Each area shares with the central work space an open, engaging personality, punctuated by a fine sophistication of detail, and illuminated in natural daylight.

Throughout the project, the architects skillfully exploit a familiar palette of industrial materials and components: metal decking, steel bar joists, exposed duct work and utilitarian light fixtures, each chosen in direct reference to the textural character and construction of the adjoining warehouse facility. What distinguishes this assemblage from its predecessor however, is the refined manner in which each component is introduced and placed within the overall composition. Overhead duct work purposefully matches across the ceiling plane, defining concisely ordered spatial bays. Exactly-positioned fluorescent light fixtures illuminate the disciplined rigor of the building’s structural system. Each connection, column to beam, beam to joist, and joist to deck, has been carefully examined and consciously assembled. The resulting construction possesses the richly interwoven texture of a delicately-crafted tapestry.

The space is not, however, without its sense of wit. The extensive use of glass block suggests a playful reference to the crystalline structure of ice, not an entirely coincidental allusion to PDI’s business of refrigerated storage and distribution. For the receptionist desk at the addition entry, a splaying fiberboard enclosure mimics the planar character of the shipper’s utilitarian cardboard packaging box. Elsewhere, a familiar yellow and black striped motif ordinarily denotes the presence of hazardous conditions is appropriated to form a decorative cornice atop freestanding partitions. The gesture is more than a clever graphic citation; it also emphasizes PDI’s commitment to a safe work environment.

What is perhaps surprising for such an astute work of architecture is its fiscal prudence: the project was completed on schedule and under budget. It is in this striking convergence of pragmatic discipline and inspired imagination that PDI finds its standing as an award-winning project.

Roger Lynn Spears lives in Raleigh, North Carolina and currently teaches architecture at North Carolina State University.

(Right) The receptionist’s desk exploits a playful reference to cardboard box construction.

(Below) The elegantly-detailed clearstory monitor bathes the central work space with diffuse natural light.
As a sophomore at Oklahoma State University in 1970, Rand Elliott was asked to select and analyze any recently completed building. For young Elliott there was no question: the Mummer Theater complex would serve as the topic of his assignment. The theater was the creation of architect John M. Johanson and completed that year amid controversy and international acclaim. Even then Elliott viewed the building as an inspired work and felt it his destiny to contribute to its success.

The theater was originally designed for the Mummer’s Theater Company, a regional theatrical group that enjoyed remarkable success during the late 1960s. However, the group did not have business skills sufficient to maintain the theater; it closed shortly after its opening. For the next 20 years the complex suffered through a history of brief, unsuccessful ventures, and then sat idle for several years. Eventually, plans for demolition brought the interest of the Oklahoma City Arts Council (OCAC).

The complex was conceived as an electronic circuit consisting of three distinct pods: a thrust theater, arena theater and rehearsal hall. Each is linked by service corridors and elevated people tubes. The unconventional design was well received in many circles, but widely misunderstood and criticized locally. The complex’ repeated failures and location in a transitional, semi-industrial area made demolition a near certainty.

Despite the building’s history, the OCAC undertook a four-year fund-raising program and sought to reinvent the complex as an expanded-use facility. Stage Center is now primarily a center for arts and community activities, but also supplements the city’s nearby convention center and serves as an art gallery, a site for business seminars, and a setting for small private and public gatherings.

Working with Johanson, Elliott set about to transform the complex while maintaining the original character. The primary concern was to update the building’s mechanical systems to meet current codes. As originally designed, the building had one service zone, was virtually uninsulated and, as a result, was prohibitively expensive to operate. Today the complex has 27 separate service zones, an array of sophisticated HVAC systems, and has been thoroughly insulated, all of which combined to drastically reduce operational costs.

The original connecting people tubes were by today’s standards an ADA nightmare. Extensive renovation was required in order to make the complex accessible and increase circulation. The rehearsal hall was changed into a small public space dubbed the Cabaret. The Cabaret is now a social gathering place used prior to and after performances. With its bar and catering kitchen, the skylit Cabaret is an ideal space for small public gatherings and private parties.

On the exterior, the complex was kept as close as possible to its original appearance as possible. ADA renovation required some alteration, but for the most part the site’s inventive design remains intact. The most significant change on the exterior is dramatic lighting that accentuates the building’s energetic, sculptural elements, while improving security through the complex.

Stage Center’s new multi-use versatility is finally lead to sustained success. Local groups gradually discovering the utility and unique beauty of this complex, and in time may regard Stage Center as one of the city’s most treasured places.

Stage Center’s new multi-use versatility and finally lead to sustained success. Local groups gradually discovering the utility and unique beauty of this complex, and in time may regard Stage Center as one of the city’s most treasured places.
Since at least WPA days, the local swimming pool has been a cool respite from oppressive summertime heat and humidity. The Maryville Aquatic Center opened last spring, and despite the summer’s catastrophic weather, exceeded attendance expectations while being open for less than half of the traditional May Day to Labor Day season.

The success of the aquatic center was unexpected and is doubtless the result of sound planning and colorful design. The facility is the centerpiece of an established city park, intended to serve as a family center for Maryville and surrounding communities. The aquatic center effectively complements a sheltered picnic area, softball fields and volleyball courts, and is the park’s most colorful attraction. While last summer’s successful results may or may not be indicative of the park’s eventual popularity, they are very encouraging.

Designed by Shaughnessy Fickel and Scott Architects, the aquatic center is an updated version of the traditional public swimming pool and a more relaxing alternative to burgeoning water-slide parks. The aquatic center is made up of traditional elements (bathhouse/concession building, wading pool, shallow end, deep end and diving boards) but differs significantly in execution.

The focus of the designer’s attention was on the complex of buildings that include the bath house, filter room, life guard office and clock tower. Like theme parks, arcades and movie theaters, the structure creates a suitably playful character and establishes in no uncertain terms that this is entertainment architecture. The exposed, sloping aluminum roof seems to float above the changing rooms, showers and concession area on the pool side. On the outside, the facility uses far less gregarious coloration.

The anchor of the complex is the guard’s office and clock tower. Pipe railings, awnings and boardmassing give the structure a strong sense of nautical design and solidity. The bright yellow and aqurine paint accentuate the facility’s energetic environment, and a trellised arcade runs the length of the bath house and provides space for a short rest. Visually, the trellis adds to the facility’s composition and ties the entire complex together.

The pool itself also differs from traditional pools. There is a deep end, diving boards and competitive swimming lanes, but there is also a sophisticated surge pump that separates the shallow from the deep end and calms the water surface. The children’s area has a zero depth pool (artificial shoreline), whimsical water fountains and plenty of comfortable seating for parents.

Providing that 1994 will not be the year of the locust or other such natural catastrophes, Maryville Aquatic Center should enjoy its first summer. Prayers around the guard house are for long, lazy, hot and humid season, and the kind of mindless, splashing fun that is a midwest birthright. But remember, no running, and no swimming for half an hour after you eat.

Robert Tibbetts is a frequent writer on art and architecture living in Oakland, California.
The aquatic center's complex of buildings respond with playfulness to the traditional public pool elements. A view of the swimming pool from the diving boards.
CENTRAL STATES REGION
EXCELLENCE AWARD

FOREST AVENUE LIBRARY
Des Moines, Iowa

Owner: Des Moines Public Library
Architect: Baldwin Clause Architects, Des Moines
Structural Engineer: Charles Saul, P.E.
General Contractor: Taylor/Ball
Mechanical Contractor: Waldinger Corporation
Electrical Contractor: ABC Electric
Photographer: Farshid Assassi


CENTRAL STATES REGION
MERIT AWARD

IOWA TELEPRODUCTION CENTER
Des Moines, Iowa

Project: Iowa Teleproduction Center
Owner: Iowa Teleproduction Center
Architect: Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture, Des Moines
Structural Engineer: Gerald Katzmann
General Contractor: Pace Company, Inc.
Photographer: King Au/Studio AU

PULMONARY MEDICINE, P.C.
Des Moines, Iowa

Project: Pulmonary Medicine, P.C.
Owner: Dr. Stephen Zorn
Architect: Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture, Des Moines
Structural Engineer: Structural Consultants, P.C.
Mechanical/Electrical Engineer: Mosher Engineering Company
General Contractor: Big Boy's Construction
Photographer: Farshid Assassi

Previously appeared in Winter '92 Iowa Architect.

WHITFIELD HANDRAIL
Des Moines, Iowa

Project: Whitfield Handrail
Architect: Todd Garner, AIA, Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture, Des Moines
Owner: Whitfield & Eddy, Des Moines, Iowa
Structural Engineer: Structural Consultants, P.C.
Photographer: Farshid Assassi
OAKDALE CANOPY
University of Iowa, Iowa City

Architect: Roger Spears, AIA,
Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck
Architecture, Des Moines
Owner: University of Iowa,
Iowa City

McCORMICK PLACE EXPANSION
Design Competition, Chicago, Illinois

Architect: Steve Parker,
Hellmuth, Obata &
Kassabaum, Inc., St. Louis
Owner: Metropolitan Pier &
Exposition Authority, Chicago
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
Brain Institute

ARCHITECT: Richard Olson,Hdrrup Corporation
OWNER: University of Florida, Jacksonville, FL

STORMWATCH ONE

ARCHITECT: Wendy Ornelas, Condia Ornelas
ASSOCIATES, Kansas City
Corporate and educational buildings often suffer more indignities and seem to be the most altered structures in existence. Over the course of several decades, the original program is frequently transformed and the end result is a conglomeration of disparate functions under a single roof.

On the University of Northern Iowa campus in Cedar Falls, Iowa, stands such a building. Constructed in 1908 as the library, Seerley Hall is a brick structure that exudes a quality of elegance inherent in its style. In the mid-1960s, a remodeling converted the library into the business school, and its Great Reading Room was subdivided into lecture halls. A magnificent mural was taken down and put in storage. The serene symmetry of the exterior was annihilated by a projected stair tower at the northwest corner. Throughout the years, more remodeling continued to clutter circulation paths, but finally in 1991, Thorson Brom Broshar Snyder Architects began the renovation and restoration of this campus building.

The east exterior wall features a procession of arched windows separated by vertical Indiana limestone elements that also appear on other facades. This contrasts with the red-face brick and the low elongated roof. A new stair tower was added to the southwest corner and the older tower was reworked to match this new construction. Balance has now been restored to the building. This necessary evil propagated by the first alteration has significantly changed the character of the building and is an example of faulty decision-making prior to the first tower.

Interior renovation was extensive and has returned the former library back to a stately grandeur inherent in the original program. To simplify circulation, a second stair was reconstructed, enabling a symmetrical access between the lobby and the Great Reading Room. This splendid room that spatially dominated the interior features new lighting, windows and woodwork that closely match original construction details. Two small murals in the Reading Room were refurbished and the enormous 12 foot by 86 foot mural on the west wall was restored and reinstalled. The meticulous restoration of this room is apparent with the ceiling sections and murals hovering above the period chairs and tables.

The lobby was restored along with auditorium on either side of the Reading Room. The same intricate care employed in the large room was carried on in other spaces. Seminar and class rooms have been created in appropriately-sized areas on the first three floors. The fourth level now houses offices for History Department faculty.

This type of work on such a large building is a daunting task for a design firm. When a structure has been carelessly altered many times, this effort to restore sanity becomes even more difficult. In this case, symmetry was only accomplished by adding an element identical to the one that upset the balance in the first place. The interior restoration, which the important quality sought by the user, has been beautifully achieved with appropriate materials. Now that the building has been returned to its former stature, students and faculty may enjoy it much as the first occupants so long ago.

Mark Blunck frequently writes for Iowa Architect.

(Below left) Limestone and brick surround arched windows on the east wall and throw shadows and light into the Great Reading Room.

(Below) The identical stair towers resemble the initial brick and stone, but clearly impact on the integrity of the original building.

(Right) The Great Reading Room is the showpiece of the interior with its restored murals and detailed ceiling.
Inside an important building is a new auditorium reflecting the exuberance of the Deco and Streamlined periods with shapes, materials and colors from the era.

(Right) An overall shot depicts the use of rich materials and design clues to create an impressive corporate image.

Project: The Principal Financial Group Auditorium Renovation
Location: Des Moines
Completion: April 1991
Owner: Principal Mutual Life Insurance Company
Architect: RDG Bussard Dikis, Des Moines
Project Team: Project Director - Dave Duimstra, AIA; Project Architect/Designer - Paul Klein, AIA; Project Designer - Jeff Schaub
Structural Engineer: Jim Wilson, Des Moines
Mechanical/Electrical Engineer: Brooks Borg & Skiles, Des Moines
Acoustical Consultant: Coffeen-Fricke & Associates, Lenexa, Kansas
Lighting Consultant: Imero Fiorentina Associates, New York City, NY
General Contractor: Taylor/Ball, Des Moines
Other Contractors: Baker Mechanical; Brown Brothers Electric
Photographer: King Au

DECO ON DISPLAY
The Principal Financial Group Auditorium Renovation

On High Street in downtown Des Moines stands a landmark building now owned by The Principal Financial Group. Upon its completion in 1939, this restrained Art Deco structure was a technical and structural showcase. The exterior is replete with vertical elements associated with the Deco style but fortunately lacks the chevrons and zigzags often associated with this design type. This is due to the influence of the Streamlined aesthetic which flourished in the mid- to late-1930s when all added ornamentation was excluded.

In 1991, RDG Bussard Dikis completed construction of a new corporate auditorium within a "found" space once occupied by a gymnasium and stripped auditorium, both fallen into disuse. The new space is an elegant and impressive exercise in utilizing design clues from other parts of the building with a combination of using rich materials of the Deco period and shapes from the later Streamlined era.

The original space had a flat floor and high stage area that made executives feel as if they were on display when making presentations. To eliminate this "human as object" sensation, the stage was lowered and a sloping floor was built on steel studs, metal deck and concrete. A new proscenium arch designed from the original with expressive fluting provides a dramatic frame for the stage.

The most sumptuous forms, however, are the beautiful radius curved wall sections on each side of the room. The streamlined panels of African ribbed mahogany and brass trim recall both the materials of Deco and the shapes of later thirties design. Polished mahogany also appears on all setbacks of a curved section enclosing the projection room. Upholstery is a teal shade with a very subtle ornamental pattern that contrasts nicely with the wood and brass trim and is an appropriate color for the era. Inverted triangular sconces thrust light upward, emphasizing the white curvilinear upper acoustical wall panel separated from the hardwood with deep green bands. Neon cove lighting reiterates the radial curves of the walls and borders a perforated mezzanine floor concealing gypsum board.

The lobby for this exquisite auditorium contains elements equally important to the ambience of the building. The new design recreates the entrance lost to previous building expansion. It features a large bas-relief sculpture that had been storage since the mid-1950s. This former exterior work is a superb design resembling WPA murals with perfectly-formed bodies engaged in activity. Tan travertine marble and green granite matching the exterior stonework is used in the new lobby. In keeping with the thirties period are broomsticks with three curved rails in each section to match balustrades in other parts of the building. 

MARK BLUNCK

Iowa Architect No 93.208
This three line motif was often employed as the only acceptable ornamentation of the time and has been coined “the cult of the trinity.”

Vertical features in the lobby include what appears to be an oversized wall sconce completely out of scale for its location. This is actually the back wall of the projection and control room. Graceful semi-circular stairs with bronze railings have been added to provide access from the skywalk to the lobby area. Deco-inspired bronze upright lamps appearing at stairway landings complete an extraordinary juxtaposition of metal against stonework.

The construction of this new corporate auditorium by The Principal and RDG Bussard Dikis illustrates a success only possible when a client is willing to do things right. A streamlined auditorium as splendid as the work of Donald Deskey and other designers represents both a 1920s and 1930s aesthetic with material and form reminiscent of both decades.

Mark Blunk lives in Oakland, California, and frequently writes articles on architecture and film.
A GOOD PLACE
West Bend Elementary School

An addition to an early nineteenth century school building retains the architectural integrity and spirit of the original structure, while adding necessary elements to accommodate a growing school population.

(Right) The addition addresses the dignity and symmetry of the original 1916 school.

Project: West Bend Elementary School Addition
Location: West Bend, Iowa
Owner: West Bend-Mallard Community School District
Architect: Allers Associates Architects, P.C., Fort Dodge, IA
Design Team: Terry Allers, AIA; Designer - Randall Milbraith (Assoc. AIA at the time)
Structural Engineer: Allers Associates Architects, P.C.
Mechanical and Electrical Engineer: Dale Schnackel Company, Omaha, Nebraska
Contractor: Sande Construction and Supply Company, Humboldt, Iowa
Civil Engineer: McClure Engineering Company P.C., Fort Dodge, Iowa
Heating and Plumbing Contractor: Drees Heating and Plumbing, Carroll, Iowa
Electrical Construction: Packard Electric, Belmond, Iowa
Photographer: Terry Allers, AIA

The important places that bind small town America are few: Main Street, church, post office, diner and tavern. More often than not, however, the public school is the anchor of such towns. It is where everyone spends 13 of their first 18 years, learning the golden rule and “three Rs.” The gymnasium is where you vote, cheer for the home team and applaud grade-school pageants. In the cafeteria, the volunteer fire department holds fund-raising suppers, and the marching band sponsors ice cream socials. The schoolyard is where fist fights erupt, friendships are forged and young people first fall in love. The small town school is where the most important events in your life take place, and the source of immense pride.

In West Bend, Iowa, the school house sits prominently on a rise at the end of main street. Originally built in 1916, the school was typical for its time: bold massing, earthen brick and limestone trim. In 1957, the dignity and symmetry of the building was marred with the introduction of a boxy, buff-colored gymnasium. The building, though, is impeccably maintained and has gracefully endured.

A sharp rise in birthrates in recent years required additional space; according to architect Terry Allers, the people of West Bend were very concerned and enthusiastic about the eventual design. Allers’ firm had conducted a masonry restoration on the school some years earlier and saw the addition as an opportunity to extend the influence of the original building and mitigate the presence of the 1957 gymnasium.

The addition provides classroom space for grades K-4, administration offices, a media center and gymnasium lobby. Designers were able to reemphasize the prominence of the 1916 structure by creating a broad, symmetrical mass which is bisected by an assertive new entrance. The horizontal form enhances the bold massing of the original structure and diminishes the imposition of the gymnasium block. Detailing and coloration were respectfully adopted from the original building and give the overall appearance a vivid sense of continuity.

The emphasis on the interior design was to optimize circulation and increase natural light. Circulation was improved through the introduction of an octagonal rotunda, off of which the building’s main corridor extend. The rotunda is naturally lit through generous clerestory windows and is one of the school’s most popular spaces. Another focus of the interior is the intersection of the addition and the original building entrance. Allers has made the 1916 stone work a focal element, which like the rotunda, marks the spine of the building’s main corridor with a strong sense of tradition and permanence.

West Bend Elementary School is simple, durable and attractive. The transition between the old and new is seamless and unpretentious, and the charter, dignity and purpose of the original building are maintained. Generations of children will continue to rattle doors and teachers’ nerves, and learn who they are and how to survive with integrity. In a time when the efficacy of public education is being questioned in cities throughout the nation, the certainty of this simple, small-town fact is warmly reassuring.

Robert Tibbetts is a one-time resident of Iowa currently living in Oakland, California.
(Left) Plan of the addition to the school.

(Left) The rotunda helped improve circulation, and is one of the school's most popular spaces.
A delightful turn-of-the-century fire station begins a new life with a facelift for a doctor involved in human reconstruction.

Over the past few decades, older buildings that no longer serve their original purpose have been adapted to new uses. In large cities, abandoned warehouses have been converted to striking live/work lofts commanding prices comparable to single-family housing. On a much smaller scale, diminutive structures have been renovated for use as residences and office space for all types of businesses.

One such project is the office of Dr. Jeffrey Carithers, housed in an elegant city fire station constructed in 1901. This two-story late Gothic Revival-style building, enclosing a mere 1250 square feet, has been renovated by Shiffler Associates Architects. A north addition of 634 square feet was also part of the project to provide space for exam rooms, consulting and office functions.

The architects faced a difficult decision. Program for the original building was too large to squeeze into the existing structure. Yet to add on to the building would require appropriate homage to the much beloved street facade. That dilemma ultimately provided Shiffler Associates the concept they needed.

The street elevation of the addition was designed as a background facade. Its purpose was to match in spirit, not detail, the original building. Once around the corner and no longer in view of the front, the addition grows more playful. Exaggerated historic elements combine with the fire station’s horizontal brick banding to create an addition that is both rooted in the past but looking to the future.

Exterior restoration consisted of new wood-frame windows, brick replacement and tuck-pointing. The prominent arched door that has seen both horse-drawn and motorized fire pumps was reconstructed as a fixed window for the lobby. The brickwork at street elevation provides a contextual link to the addition as rows of indented brick reveals radiate from the window and are expressed on the three sides of the addition. A visual connection is thereby established even though a cursory glance will differentiate between the two structures.

Color and design clues from the original building further connect the two spaces to one another. The rich reddish-brown base brick is carefully matched and the addition is clad in a brick similar to the side and back of the old firehouse. Original tan brick at streetside provides a pleasing and subtle contrast to the addition with its various angles and corner details.

The lobby has two historical features with the original trepole in place and an arched stained glass window, found in storage, now positioned above the reception counter. The former exterior brick wall of the firehouse is an interior wall created by the addition and a linking corridor. This brick is visible on both levels and provides a historical union between the two buildings. Interior furnishings and pattern employed in the lobby, decorated by Inter Concepts, evoke an early 1900s ambiance, carried throughout the interior renovation.

This project is an excellent example of the importance in utilizing existing architecture when feasible. Despite difficulty in matching original materials the overall effect imparted is one of fine detailed work. When clients and architects embark on this project type, not only are resources efficiently used, but neighborhoods are able to retain architectural diversity that makes them a joy to behold.

Mark E. Blunck lives in Oakland, California, and frequently writes articles on architecture and film.
In creating a modest office and studio space for a Des Moines video producer, Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture has exposed the powerfully poetic virtues of an architecture explored at its experiential roots.

Opposite page) Materials are common to promote an endeavor for the roots of architectural expression.

(Right) The larger room for public gatherings is sparse in appearance, but rich in architectural substance.

(Far right) A floor plan details the studio.

There is a seductive allure to an architecture of absolute spareness. It is a cool, dispassionate poetry in search of experience at its most elemental core. It is an art ultimately concerned not so much with conception as distillation.

"Minimalism" is perhaps not nearly succinct enough a term for this instinctual examination of architecture’s essence. The endeavor intends far more than mere economy of expression. It intends to lay bare the undiluted substance of architecture squarely at its roots.

As such, the office and studio space for a writer, producer and community activist seems an unlikely venue for so cerebral an investigation. This humble setting, crafted by Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture, would, at first glance, appear too shallow a canvas for such depth of expression. Yet it is precisely this narrowness of intent which offers its architect a concisely-framed context for the exploration of architecture’s most fundamental instincts.

The programmatic brief for B.A.D Productions was, itself, expressly minimalist. The client, Des Moines producer Beverly Ann Davis, requested a space which reflected only her manner of work: long hours laboriously logged astride one or more computer terminals, a space for theatrically-charged presentations before her astute but impressionable clientele, room for casual interludes among the company of friends and associates, and a comforting place disposed to moments of quiet contemplation and introspection. She required flexibility in atmosphere and a physical setting discrete removed from the distractions of day-to-day in-town Des Moines.

Located in a turn-of-the-century brick warehouse just west of Des Moines’ central business district the studio is constructed within a windowed second story lease space. Both setting and program suggest a workplace consciously focused inward upon itself.

The studio is composed of two flanking, lin volumes, the larger concerned with the business gathering (meeting, presenting, conversing), and smaller attendant to the needs of an individual work alone. Massive ten-foot-high oak and cedar doors, selected from the building owner’s collection of architectural salvage, were appropriated to create a “movable” wall between the adjoining spaces.

The spaces share, above all else, a deliberate spareness. The palette is monochromatic. The materials, (raw metal, gypsum, particleboard and marble) though elegantly placed, are intentionally unembellished. Furnishings are limited to three custom-designed work tables perched on rolling casters. Any gesture that might mediate direct experience of the architecture itself is scrupulously expunged.

As a consequence, the spacial experience of studio transcends the narrow limitations defined by its intended use. The elongated, apsidal form of the conference room assumes a near reverent state, evoking a sallow remembrance of mythic, sacred places. The room’s brusque, metallic appointments - a presentation shelf, work counter and lava lamp - acquire the aura of ritualized vestments. In effect, the space transports the small, imperceptible necessities of work to a realm of much loftier contemplation. For B.A.D. Productions, it is this merging of the utilitarian with the spiritual, the prosaic with the poetic, that so persuasively justifies an architecture of absolute spareness.

Roger Lynn Spears lives in North Carolina and on an occasional basis for Iowa Architect.
KRUSE/BERG KRUSE RESIDENCE
Des Moines, Iowa

Project: Kruse/Berg Kruse Residence
Location: Des Moines, Iowa
Architect: Herbert Lewis
Kruse Blunck Architecture; Rod Kruse/Jan Berg Kruse, Des Moines
Structural Engineer: Charles Saul Engineering
General Contractor: Eggers Construction Services
Photographer: Farshid Assassi


SCHWARTZ RESIDENCE
Parkersburg, Iowa

Owner: Richard and Linda Schwartz
Location: Parkersburg, Iowa
Architect: David A. Block
AIA, Ames, IA
Contractor: Hosch-Abbas Construction, Aplington
Photographer: King Au

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Calendar

Directory 1994

Spring Issue 94:209
Interiors

Summer Issue 94:210
Architecture for the Aging

Fall Issue 94:211
Education

Winter Issue 94:212
1994 Design Awards

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The playful rhythm and elegant line of the Hide and Seek Cabinet enhances the practicality of its technical design. Curved sliding doors offer the option of exposing either the central television area, with a pull-out swivel, or the side openings, with adjustable shelves designed for stereo components. Four storage drawers are housed in the base, aligning with the radial plan of the tapered openings. Hide and Seek Cabinets are available in maple or cherry woods as the main structure, with the option of exotic wood veneer fronts or milk paint fronts in six different colors.

Playback
 Vecta
214.641.2860

Playback is a series of wood frame chairs with a selection of nine interchangeable wood back designs and one upholstered back. These options offer the flexibility for use in a variety of environments. Available in arm and armless versions in fabric, leather, and vinyl. Wood finish selections are natural, mahogany, pear, honey and ebony stains on beech.

The Pyramid
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An inverted pyramidal form is juxtaposed with a slender steel rod base to form a planter which gracefully hovers above the floor. The Pyramid is available in a variety of sizes and heights as well as metal and wood finishes.

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TABELA pays homage to perfect geometric harmony by utilizing four distinctive shapes: the cone (base), the curve (arm), the line (arm) and the circle (shade). The jointed arm rotates 360 degrees and is adjustable and can be positioned in all directions. The finish is heat-resistant black. TABELA won 1995 Roscoe Design Award for Best Lighting Design and Product of the Year.
nality and discipline of Modern architecture.
Located on a spectacular sloping site on the Maine coast, the summer school for artisans and craftspeople is a village-like collection of shingled workshops, dormitories and communal structures sharing simple geometric forms. The entire project is set on piers several feet above ground so the decks and structures seem to float above the rocky slope.
The modest barn-like buildings cost only $5 per square foot when they were built in 1962.
Haystack represents a significant milestone in American architecture. Designed when many architects were moving to elaborate sculptural forms, Barnes made a strong statement with his Haystack.
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