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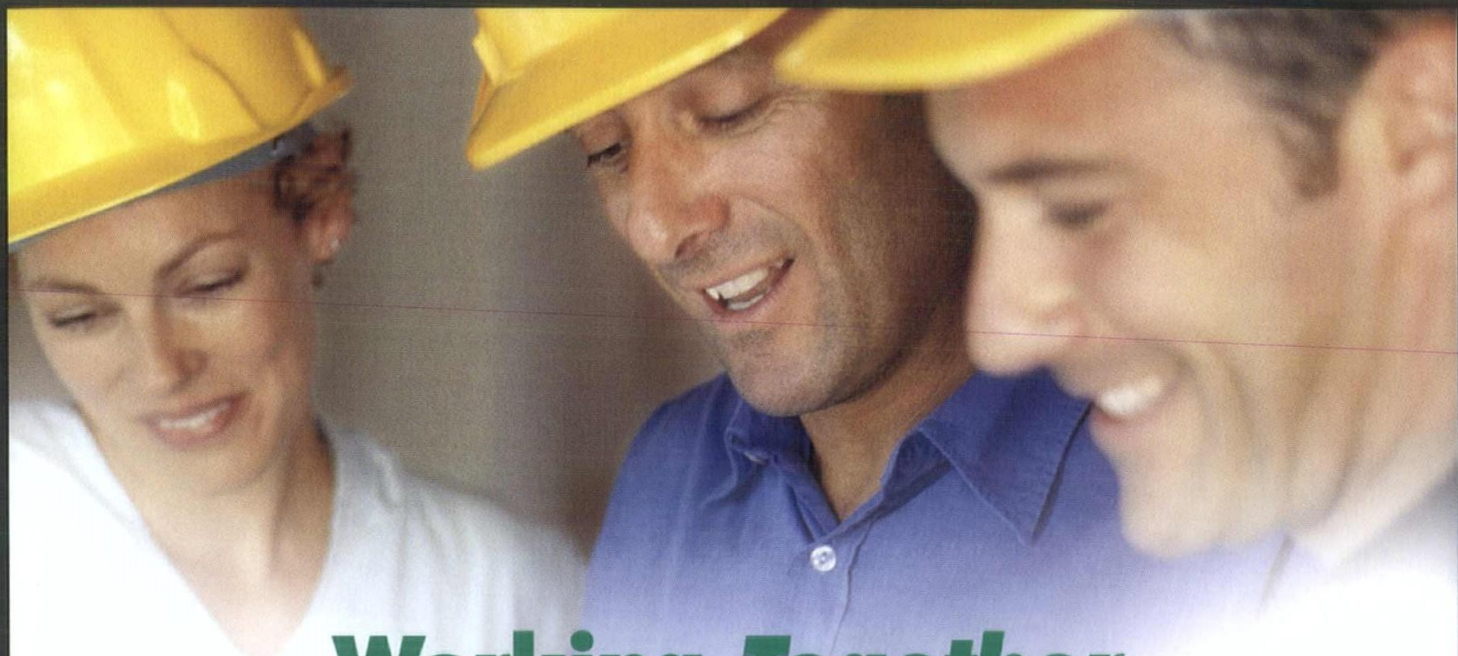


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INNOVATION

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COVER

Two Rivers Marketing Group

Firm: Shiffler Associates Architects

Photographer: Cameron Campbell, AIA ©

HOW ARE THOSE NEW MARKETING MATERIALS COMING ALONG? :)



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Innovation is a word often bandied-about by companies wanting to sound progressive. It is often confused with creativity and invention.

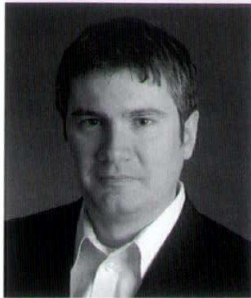
No matter how powerfully an idea is implemented, the question must be, "In service of what?" Though powered by an endless supply of creative ideas, the dot.com house of cards proved that ideas aren't enough and ultimately collapsed because it failed to create value. What value will be created by this new idea—for the customer, the organization, the community, the world?

Innovation, then, could be seen as the creation of value.

The challenge now is to live and thrive in the *new world*, where the call is for more innovation. When faced with increasing uncertainty, our natural impulse is to avoid risk at all costs. What we actually need is to face risk and manage it effectively.

The hardest thing about innovation is people. People are resistant to change, indeed fear change.

All of us are surrounded by deeply rooted assumptions that we rarely, if ever, question. When we do question our assumptions, we usually don't go deep enough to challenge the assumptions that lie below the obvious ones on the surface. Plus, there are other assumptions that are so ingrained, we often don't even realize that they're assumptions.



"There is truly nothing more risky than not innovating, with the possible exception of confusing innovation with something that fails to create value."

—ANCIENT CHINESE PROVERB (NOT REALLY)

The nature of innovation is now increasingly open, collaborative, multidisciplinary and global. And to reap the benefits of this evolution, an organization's processes and practices must adapt.

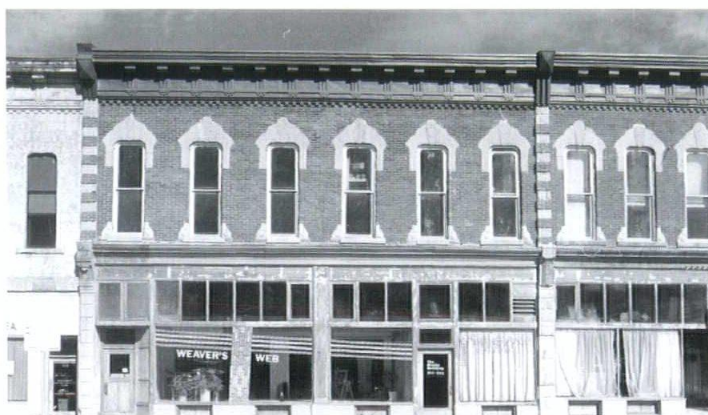
In "Alternatives," Jim Dwinell reminds us that new is not always better. Neumann Monson creates a new paradigm for building form and usage in Iowa City that challenges that town's established modus operandi. Shiffler Associates Architects, Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture, and Substance Architecture rethink established patterns of existing building re-use. Baldwin White Architects transforms the educational model of the traditional auditorium lecture hall. The RDG Dahlquist Art Studio fuses design and fabrication. And lastly, RDG Planning & Design 'asks the kids' how to make a great school. These projects are creative and inventive. If they are truly *innovative*, they are creating value.

Innovation triggers and enables other things—it is a difference that makes a difference.

Channing Swanson, AIA
Editor, Iowa Architect

ALTERNATIVES

BY JIM DWINELL



DETAIL 1

EAST SIDE

DOWNTOWN

Jim Dwinell

DES MOINES –
A Photographic Time Capsule

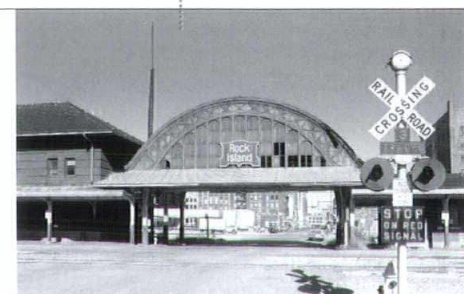
1979

In 1976 Jim Dwinell was actively involved in the restoration of the old Iowa Des Moines National Bank which earned Charles Herbert & Associates (now HLKB) their first national design award. Through this experience, he became more aware of the changing face of downtown Des Moines and the need to photographically record the venerable buildings of that time. This exhibit represents a photographic time capsule of what Des Moines looked like in the late 1970s. It focuses on buildings that have been displaced in the downtown central business district, the west side, the east side, and the warehouse district.

Jim is native to Washington state, grew up on a farm in eastern Nebraska, and graduated from high school at Bedford, Iowa. He received his bachelor of architecture degree from Iowa State University in 1963. He obtained an officer's commission in the U.S. Navy's Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island and served three years on active duty in the Civil Engineer Corps on Okinawa and in California.

Jim joined the firm of Charles Herbert & Associates in 1967, becoming a registered architect in 1970. While practicing with the Herbert firm, most of his experience was serving as project architect for buildings on the Iowa State University, University of Iowa and University of Northern Iowa campuses. In 2000, he retired as senior architect at Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture, the successor firm to Charles Herbert and Associates.

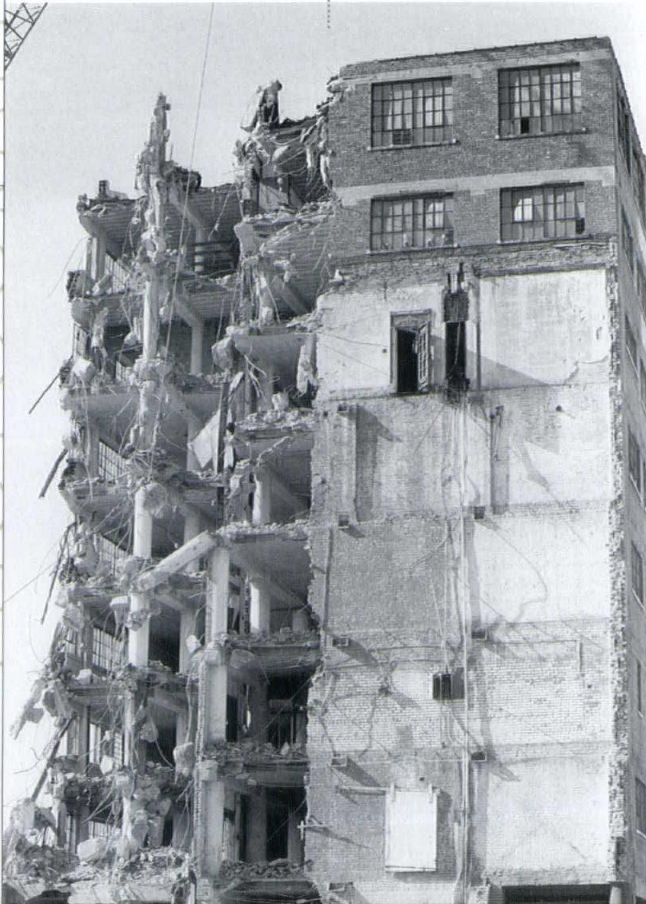
This exhibit was curated by Pete Goché and sponsored by Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture. It was featured in spring 2006 at Gallery w/o which is located on the third floor of the Fleming Building, 218 6th Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa.



WAREHOUSE DISTRICT



HEWITT BUILDING



"He became more aware
of the changing face
of downtown Des Moines
and the need to
**photographically
record the venerable
buildings**
of that time."



WEST SIDE

One (Very Large) Room Done Really Well

WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN

A precise 'machine for working' has been transformed from a former parts warehouse into a marketing firm studio with the full array of functions enclosed in the enormous space.

While Des Moines is distinguished by its continuing success in the banking and insurance trade, the city also has a vital and historical connection to the agricultural and automotive industries with two tire manufacturers, several component suppliers and various large dealerships. In this environment, the city was built by the blue collar class laboring day and night to provide those companies with products and supplies for efficient operation. In 1935, as part of this hoped for industrial boom during the midst of the Depression, an expansive building was constructed east of the downtown district for General Motors to function as a parts warehouse for its automotive and truck lines.

Now 70 years later, the stark industrial building that had once stored thousands of parts until the 1990s, is an impressive studio for the creative activities of the Two Rivers Marketing Group, an advertising firm whose main clients are in the agricultural and automotive fields. The circuitous path to this current building, however, was realized by the firm outgrowing its previous space in the Teachout Building and a fire that destroyed its next location, the former Ramsey Pontiac dealership shortly before move-in. That structure had been renovated by Shiffler Associates Architects, P.L.C. for the advertising firm but now a new space had to be selected.

That space was the GM warehouse and Shiffler Associates Architects commenced to renovate the long low building of 140 by 275 feet—nearly the size of a football field. Project manager Dan Rice stated that “the building was in good shape ‘as is’ and was in no danger of being demolished” with the exterior retaining its original brick walls and flashing. This elongated rectilinear massing resembles many postwar buildings including the General Motors Technical Center by Eero Saarinen with its sprawling footprint exhibiting the assembly line efficiency of mass production.

As the exterior was in fine condition with only routine cleaning needed and original glazing replaced by more efficient aluminum framed windows, it was the voluminous 40,000-square-foot interior that would create the atmosphere desired by Two Rivers for a visual and psychological connection to its client base. The structure was essentially cleaned of grease and dirt with clear sealant used on both the exposed concrete floor and silver painted structural steel. A fully exposed snake-like HVAC ductwork system further establishes the industrial aesthetic and appears as a complex labyrinth inserting itself into spaces and denoting regularly spaced order in this immense open volume. In addition, a photo studio was built adjacent to the loading dock for the easy transport of large exhibits into the space for shoots.

Right: The low four-foot brick wall visually connects the building to the ground and the long rows of industrial windows encompass the modern grid of industrial efficiency and clean function.

Project: Two Rivers
Marketing Group
Location: Des Moines, IA
Architect: Shiffler Associates
Architects
General Contractor:
Larson & Larson Construction
MEP Engineer: The Waldinger
Corporation
Structural Engineer:
Korpela Engineering
Photographer: Cameron
Campbell, AIA ©

MARK E. BLUNCK





The most important decision in the project was to design an interior element as a new addition centrally located within the 16-foot-high building and creating an important historical connection to the factory aesthetic begun during the Industrial Age. The client and architects inserted this additional element to recall vintage factories and illustrate how industrial components are designed, assembled and connected. The impressive 3,000-square-foot mezzanine in the middle incorporates the catwalk configuration of high ceiling factories overlooking machinery and the assembly line process below, but in this project the mezzanine encloses executive offices and support staff within steel, fiberglass and plywood walls.

The truly creative aspect of this elevated industrial component is the support columns slanted for purely aesthetic purposes since engineers generally prefer right angles. According to Rice, "this was a fun way to approach the issue as it enhances the floating effect desired by the architects." In fact, by incorporating this angle into the building's rectilinear design, the mezzanine not only appears as a floating element, but appears to be suspended from the ceiling and not supported from the floor even though all loads are evenly distributed. This angle continues into the mezzanine and the slanted walls follow the supports and it seems as though the entire unit gracefully landed in place from another dimension, and with staircases

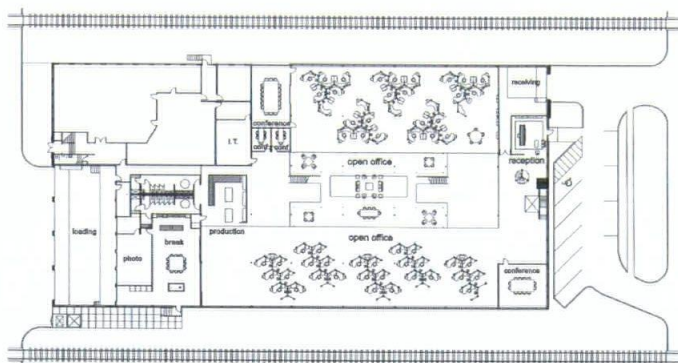


Above: The mezzanine level is constructed of three by three-inch-square steel tube and perimeter channels left unpainted in keeping with the unfinished aspect of the original steel components.

Left: A staircase landing incorporates the entire assemblage of elements used in the project with a composition of industrial materials of steel channel, corrugated fiberglass, plywood, square gridded balustrades and chrome handrails.

Below top: The marketing firm studio is positioned between two railroad tracks indicating its former use as a parts warehouse with open office areas situated throughout the 40,000 square feet and the mezzanine level centrally located.

Below bottom: The center of the mezzanine with plywood apertures and angled walls is open to the ground floor below that functions as an informal space for impromptu meetings and brainstorming.



at each end it appears as an entryway into a ship's command center. The mezzanine angles are juxtaposed against the rectilinear configuration of the old structure and this simple but very effective design enables the project to be much more than just a refurbishing of an old decrepit warehouse.

Whenever an expansive space is composed of hard industrial materials, the foremost question concerns the acoustical aspects of the space and if normal conversational tones are intelligible or annoyingly echo from surface to surface. Despite an exposed concrete floor and unfinished structural components, the sound level is remarkably good and one doesn't need to alter





CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA ©

Left: The sealed concrete floor shimmers with light and reflects the raw materials in the original building with the new mezzanine and corrugated translucent fiberglass wall sections filtering light and creating a limited degree of privacy.

their voice. The unstained and sealed plywood wall partitions provide visual warmth and soft upholstered furniture along with office commercial carpeting also assist in sound dampening.

The rapid construction time for this renovation project was a mere nine-month period in 2005 and this remarkable effort was possible as different crews were able to work without running into one another in the 40,000-square-foot space. The decision to keep the original and new structural elements in their raw and original finish displays an honest use of materials with no attempt to conceal or embellish these components. For the client, this multidisciplinary work environment approach allows all marketing functions to thrive

in a single large space and allows a separation of departments and individuals with pure volume as opposed to traditional walls and partitions. It is perfectly appropriate that a former parts warehouse has been adapted for a marketing firm with industrial clients and the building's lifecycle is in synchronicity with the circle now complete.

—Mark E. Blunck worked in several warehouses during his twenties and now wants to live in one. He needs the expansive space for his mid-century modern furniture classics and extensive Stanley Kubrick film poster collection.

Iowa City's Tower

BIG CITY BUILDING FOR A SMALL MIDWEST TOWN

Iowa City's 14-story Plaza Towers is an innovative variation on the block and tower parti that has prevailed in large American cities for over a century. By permitting its block to address the public while its tower addresses the private, it masterfully resolves the difficult issues of a 21st-century development in a 19th-century Midwestern town.

Below: Relaxing on the roof terrace of Plaza Towers with College Street pedestrian mall below.

Plaza Towers is a version of a block and tower *parti*. It combines a three-story block that conforms to Iowa City's small-scale townscape with a pair of 11-story towers that rise from the block in an independent manner. The block addresses the pre-established city grid, provides street-related grocery, restaurant, lobbies, gym, conference center, and office space, and is scaled to the surrounding pedestrian mall. The two towers are linked and are situated on the block, set back from the street face, with one tower on grid and one tower at an angle. The towers serve largely individual residential needs, with hotel suites on floors four through six, and condominiums on floors seven through fourteen.

The goals of the program call for a volume larger than what might fit well in this college town. By visually separating block and tower, the architect is able to lessen the impact of the building. For this reason, too, the tower is remote from the street, detaching itself and distinguishing itself with its unique position. The primary axis of the east tower runs north-south on the grid, with the west tower turned 45 degrees. This twisting of the plan acknowledges the neighboring 10-story hotel, which is also off the grid. The manipulation of the second tower creates a third floor outdoor terrace, offers the best light to the towers' inhabitants, and

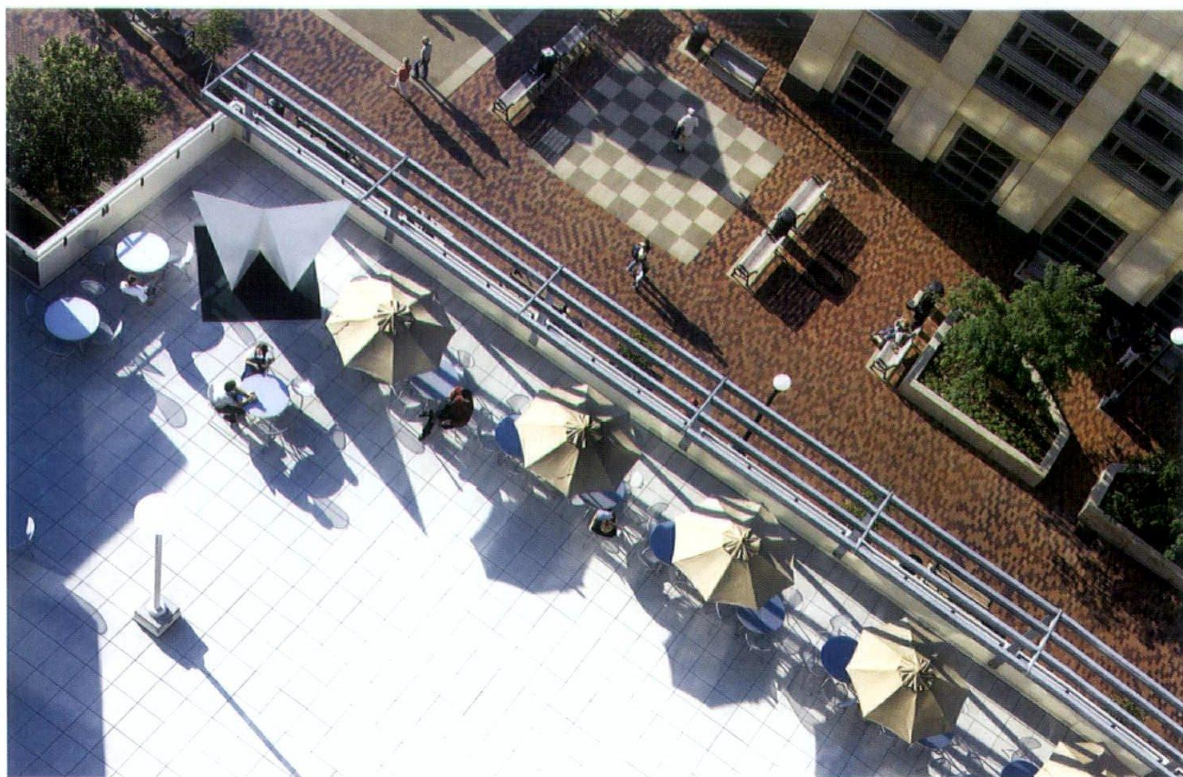
presents a view as unique in this town as it might have been in Paris in 1889 with the building of the Eiffel Tower. In addition, the impact of the shadow of the building is greatly diminished by the tower's angled position and by its withdrawal from the street.

The independence of tower from block accommodates the building's dual allegiance in other ways as in the form of exclusive dwellings and the block, which is devoted to street-related, communal functions. Economical in that it builds out the site, the block combines diverse functions in a single form. Each function is treated as a discreet and separate entity, one that generates its own volume. All volumes are then packed neatly in the block itself.

In addition, the structural layout of the complex permits its block to conform to the city grid while allowing its west tower to break the grid. The *parti* is one of collage, and a sort of somatic adventurousness encouraged as the visitor moves from place-volume to place-volume. That is to say, the lobby, the grocery, the gym are readily understood entities that can be comprehended from a distance, often from the street itself. Their relationship to one another, however, is one that must be discovered by the visitor moving through the block. The architect offers several paths for this discovery, most notably a vertical promenade that

Project: Plaza Towers
Location: Iowa City, IA
Architect: Neumann Monson Architects
General Contractor: McComas-Lacina Construction
Electrical Contractor: Merit Electric
Electrical Engineer: Alvine & Associates
Mechanical Engineer: Alvine & Associates
Structural Engineer: M2B Structural Design
Interior Designer: Neumann Monson Architects
Photographer: Farshid Assassi, Hon. AIA Iowa, Assassi Productions ©

DANIEL NAEGELE





includes a feature stair that defines the lobby to the three-story block. By traversing the stair—it shifts at the second level and meanders up to the third, reinforcing one's sense of finding and underscoring the importance of experiencing the building somatically—one discovers the amenities of the block's upper level: a conference center, office space, a health club.

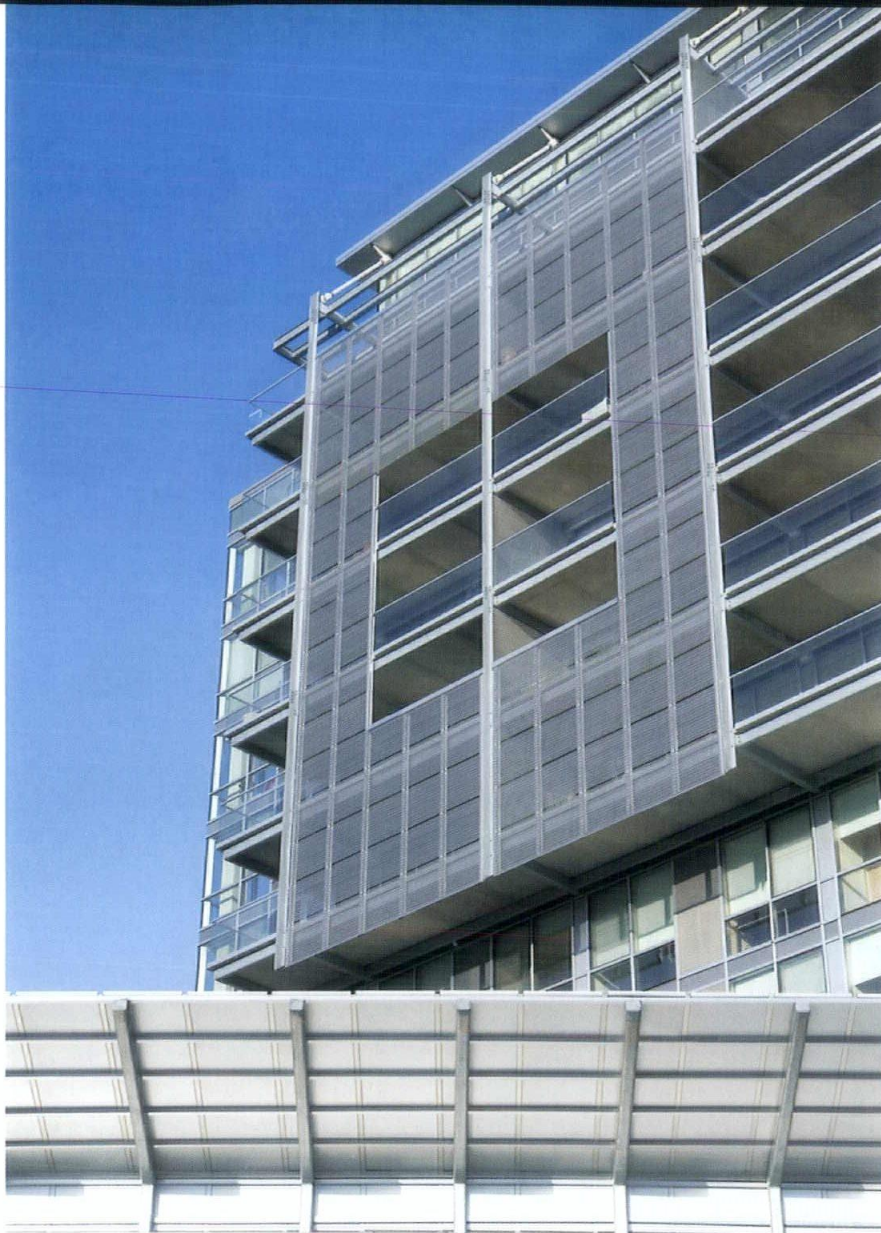
All of this offers a less regimented, smaller-scale unit that more readily relates to the intimacy of the surrounding environment. The street serves as corridor to ground-level units—a grocery store, for instance, or a restaurant, as well as two lobbies. This use of the street reinforces the vitality. In addition, commercial/retail tenants occupying block volumes no longer need to identify themselves with either the tower or the hotel lobby, as is so often the case in Modernist versions of the *parti*.

The towers' exterior is comprised of large expanses of glazing which reflects the exterior and reveals the interior. Stainless steel metal panels complement the glazing. This palette is then extended to the block's street elevations with the addition of precast concrete, which provides a solidity that relates to the surrounding buildings. Stainless steel has many benefits. It is relatively inexpensive, suggests high technology in brutal yet acceptable terms, and allows for the use of off-the-shelf materials that might not otherwise be considered



Above: View of hotel lobby interior.

Below: View of registration desk on entry to the hotel lobby.



appropriate to a sophisticated aesthetic. In addition, it offers an authenticity no longer found in natural—and therefore categorically not high-tech—materials such as brick and wood. Stainless steel reflects light, creating a sense of spaciousness that undermines the reality of heavy, inert materials and reduces the apparent impact of the building's volume. At night, stainless steel amplifies artificial light: energy becomes ambiance and the building becomes a light phenomenon analogous to a backlit computer screen.

In Plaza Towers, screens of perforated stainless steel form a veil of planes which wrap the traditionally framed tower. This layering exaggerates the sensation of light in space, reinforcing the enigmatic and intriguing, and labeling the building unmistakably twenty-first century.

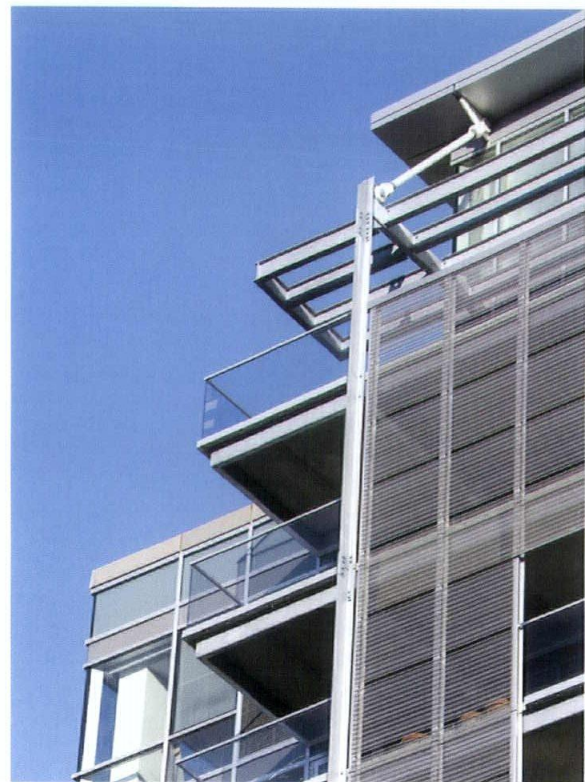
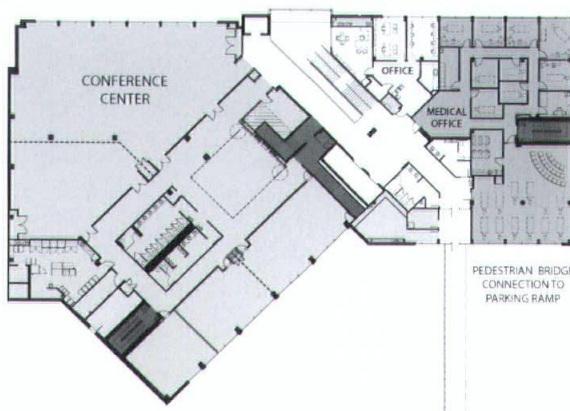
More abstractly but perhaps most importantly, Plaza Towers demonstrates how a building of considerable size and height might be made to fit commodiously into a preestablished urban condition. It has much to commend by extending the scope of Iowa City to allow for large-scale development projects that have been the hallmark of urban renewal for more than half a century.

—Daniel Naegele, Ph.D., is an architect and assistant professor of architecture at Iowa State University.

Above: Condominium balconies with stainless steel screens veil sleeping areas.

Left: Floor plan of level 2 showing arrangement of stair and conference room locations.

Right: Detail of metal screening near the top of the residential tower.





Above: The Plaza Towers complex at night from College Street pedestrian mall.

Left: Translucent glass wall at Plaza Towers' second-floor conference center.

Clear Intentions

A CONSIDERED STUDY OF NEW VS. OLD

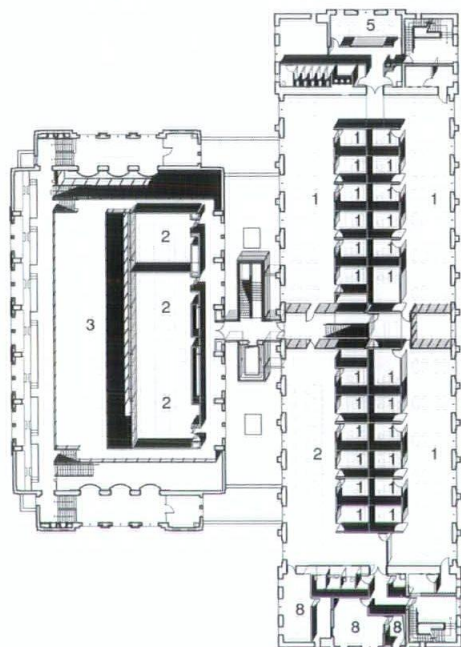
HLKB turns a difficult renovation at the University of Northern Iowa into an opportunity to celebrate the divisions between new interiors and restored exterior shells.

The Innovative Teaching and Technology Center (ITTC) at the University of Northern Iowa, designed by Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture, is a curious assembly of academic departments inserted into an unusual combination of buildings. The charge from the university was to house geography, anthropology, digital technology, the Center for Enhancement of Teaching, the Center for Educational Technology, the Center for Academic Achievement, Academic Advising, and the Computer Consulting Center into the previous East Gymnasium and Pool Complex. The East Gymnasium was constructed in 1905 and the East Pool in 1939. Both are handsome examples of their time, the gym being a fine Beaux Arts style brick structure and the pool showing characteristic Art Deco detailing in a restrained and refined low rectangular box. These, however, don't look like they would contain eight departments of multi-use functions stacked inside. They

appear as carefully restored singular use edifices neatly set together on campus, next to the wonderful 1969 Maucker Student Union Building by Hunter, Rice & Engelbrecht. It's what awaits inside that is so remarkable.

In 1958 Carlo Scarpa began work on the Castelvecchio Museum in Verona, Italy. Over the course of the next 16 years he transformed the original castle structure into one of the most innovative museums in northern Italy. However, what was significant about the project was much more than the artwork contained within, it was Scarpa's unique approach to renovating the 14th-century structure. Rather than repeat the historic style of the building he made clear separations between new insertions and existing building elements. We largely take this approach for granted now, but in its time this was a new idea about how to deal with historic structures. This approach, of carefully restoring the existing building shell and clearly inserting new elements within, is what distinguishes the ITTC building. The material selection and detailing are nothing like the Castelvecchio, but the clear and consistent idea of new and old separation is carried out with great skill.

While approaching from campus the gymnasium building dominates the scale of the pool building, and aside from the presence of the newly landscaped entry



Left: The building plan shows the arrangement of the original pool building on the left and the gym on the right. The composition of elements is clear with cores housing enclosed spaces and interstitial space left open to the existing shells. The stair and elevator tower floats discreetly between the two buildings.

Project: Innovative Teaching and Technology Center, University of Northern Iowa

Location: Cedar Falls, IA

Architect: Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture

General Contractor:

Peters Construction Corporation

Electrical Engineer:

Alvine Associates

Mechanical Engineer:

Alvine Associates

Structural Engineer:

Charles Saul Engineering

Telecom/AV Consultant:

Shen, Milsom, Wilke

Photographer:

Farshid Assasi, Hon. AIA Iowa, Assasi Productions ©

Below and right: The original stately Beaux Arts gymnasium exterior has been carefully restored and appears better than new. Large steel beams had to be inserted through the upper windows to create the upper floor of classrooms. Around the back, the stair and elevator tower hovers between the two original structures. The tower is detailed in a minimal fashion that makes it more beautiful infrastructure than intrusion.



JASON ALREAD



FARSHID ASSASSI, HON. AIA IOWA, ASSASSI PRODUCTIONS ©



Left: Modern steel and glass classrooms and a mezzanine student lounge have been inserted into the original Art Deco pool hall. The juxtaposition of materials between the modern insertions into the restored pool hall is sharp while the color palette remains neutral throughout.

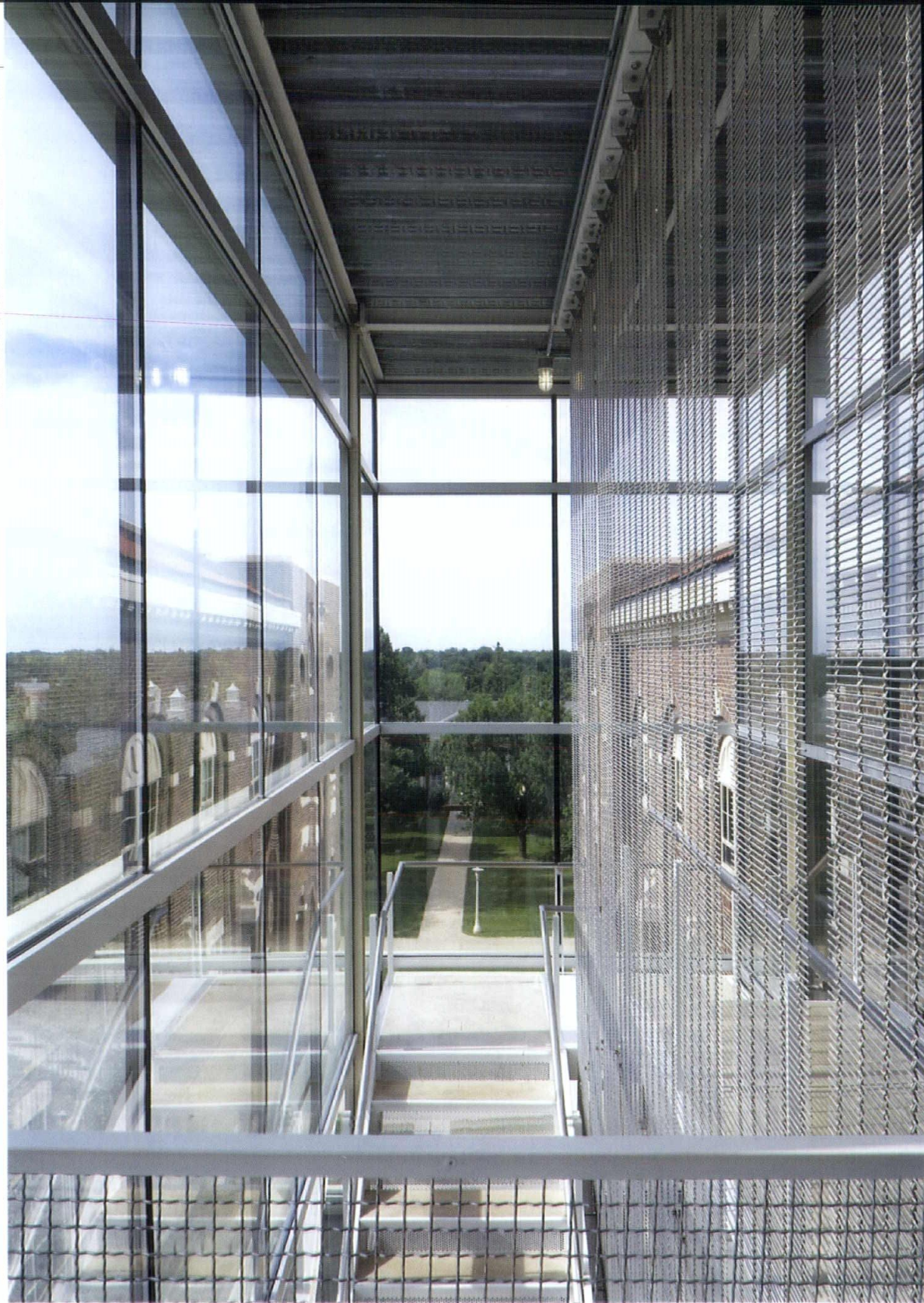
Right: Typical top floor classrooms preserve the volume created by original heavy-timber trusses by utilizing acoustically laminated glazing.

walk there is little indication of the revised functions within. Walking around the structures reveals a narrow glass circulation tower that hovers between the two buildings. This is the big move on the exterior, and it effectively acts to both unify the two structures and announce that a functional change inside the buildings has occurred. At the smaller scale there is a consistency developed between how the buildings have been renovated. Windows and doors are handled the same throughout and the elements that people touch, such as the doors and pulls, are identical between the structures. This adds a subtlety to tying the buildings together that is most apparent at the human scale of interacting with the project.

The moment you walk inside the building there is an immediate separation of the shell from the new interior. This extends from floor to walls to ceiling. The original floors have been maintained in as many places as possible along with the original pressed tin ceilings. Even where lowered ceilings are required they tend to float as thin planes below the original ceilings, leaving a gap that reveals the existing structure above. Moving through the two buildings shows that they were constructed very differently from one another. The gym has a masonry exterior shell with a wooden truss roof, and the pool building is constructed with precast concrete bents that clear span over the original pool. In both cases these structural systems have been preserved and exposed, with all the newly required structural systems made of steel. The new steel structure works to visually tie together the differences created by the original disparate structural systems. The interior insertions really do seem to float within the buildings, and open public gathering, studying, and collaborative areas occupy the zone between the existing shell and the new enclosed spaces.

The threshold between the buildings and organizing element of the project is the new glazed stair and elevator tower. It brings natural light deep within the spaces and effectively orients users moving through the building. While I was there a woman walked from the first floor to the top of the stair and said to her friend, "I walk this multiple times every day, just to do it. I could just live in this building, isn't it gorgeous?" This, beyond concerns for egress or convenience, is why we build interesting stairs. In an era of sustainability and concerns about inactivity this is the human value of design, not definable by LEED but incredibly powerful. The beauty of the ITTC is that it turns most of the awkward moments, like inserting a new circulation stair and elevator inside the project, into opportunities.

As a last test I visited the bathrooms before departing from a visit (the standard architect's vetting process), and they provided an interesting insight to the conception of the project. The stalls and sinks are



Right: The view from the top landing of the stair tower shows the minimal detailing and the use of a stainless mesh that is suspended in the stair gap from top to bottom, acting as both diaphanous screen and continuous guardrail.

separated by a central corridor, and each side responds to the existing building in a microcosm of the overall building approach. The stalls float free from the existing structure as a uniquely new element, but the sinks sit in niches cut into the original shell of the building. Most notable were the cuts made into the shell for the sinks, which were left unfinished at the edges. The decision to leave the edges exposed, while possibly too industrial for some viewers, gives an indication of the amount of refinishing effort that occurred everywhere else things were demolished and put back together. The ITTC manages to do this immensely difficult task in a way

that feels completely straightforward, and after over three of years of effort by HLKB the original ideas from the start consistently flow through to the end product. This is what really makes great projects and the Innovative Teaching and Technology Center, while not the most important building on the University of Northern Iowa campus, is certainly one of the best.

—Jason Alread, AIA, LEED AP, is a partner in the Des Moines-based firm of Substance Architecture, and teaches design, history and technology at Iowa State University.



Left: Office spaces are housed within a low block with mechanical systems neatly organized above, but not hidden. The original wood gym flooring has been restored along with the pressed tin ceiling. The effect clearly separates new from existing.

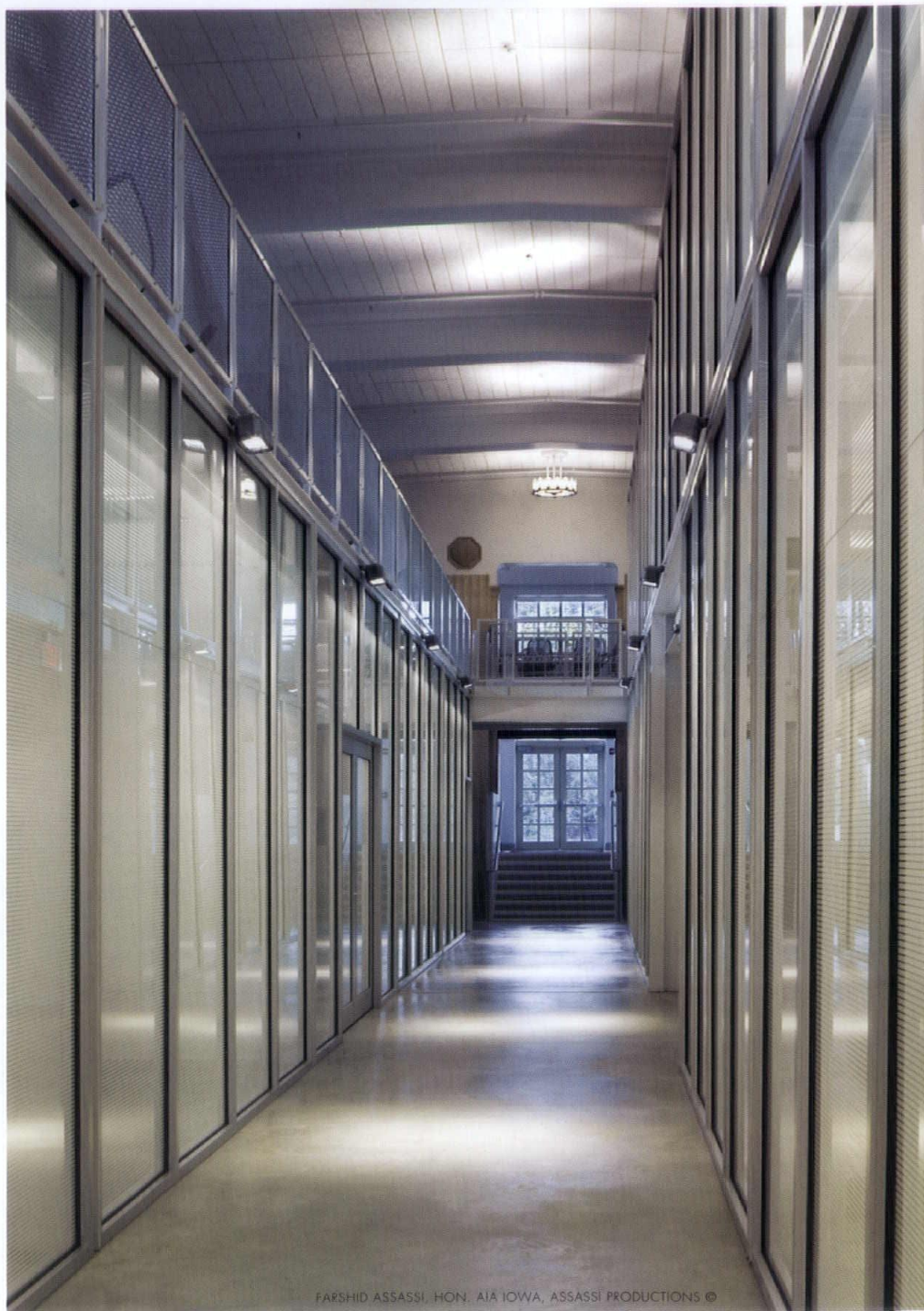


FARSHID ASSASSI, HON. AIA IOWA, ASSASSI PRODUCTIONS ©

Left: The old and modern contrasts continue into the bathrooms. Stainless steel and solid surface lavatories have been inserted into old door openings. The rough edges remain from the renovation process.



FARSHID ASSASSI, HON. AIA IOWA, ASSASSI PRODUCTIONS ©



FARSHID ASSASSI, HON. AIA IOWA, ASSASSI PRODUCTIONS ©

Above: The wooden trusses and deck have been sandblasted and restored, while skylights were added into the upper level classroom spaces. Laminate glass separates the lower walls from the roof deck, allowing the walls to float free of the roof structure and the light to travel throughout the spaces.

Above: The glass canyon of the pool hall. The patterned glass screens vision enough to keep the educational process open while minimizing intrusions from the circulation halls.

Room to Move

RETHINKING THE COLLEGE LECTURE HALL

At Iowa State University's LeBaron Hall Auditorium, Baldwin White Architects created a lecture hall that offers students flexible seating arrangements and close proximity to instructors.

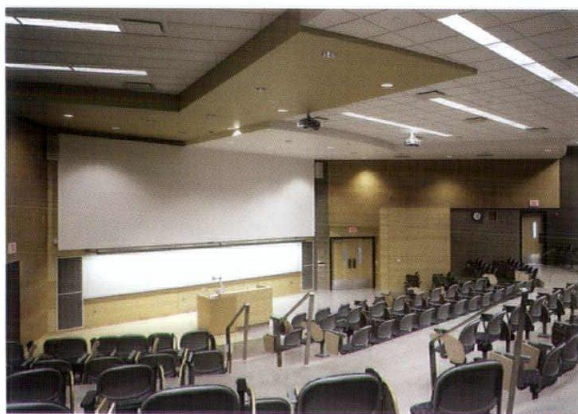
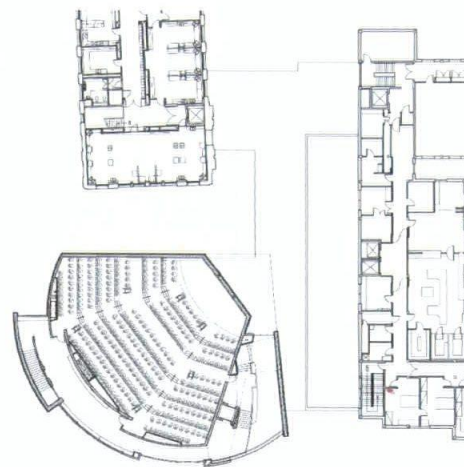
Above right: The two-tier seating system, in addition to enhancing group interaction, provides plenty of aisle space and room for backpacks.

Right: The auditorium floor plan reveals the innovative two-row tier seating system. Corridors follow the rear wall on the ground and second floors, providing easy movement for students.

Below: A generous sidewalk follows the auditorium's rounded façade, giving pedestrians a short-cut around the busy street corner and a peek at the activity inside.

Fixed seats, steep inclines, dusty chalkboards and narrow aisles—they're the familiar traits of the traditional college lecture hall. In creating a design for the LeBaron Hall Auditorium on the Iowa State University campus, Baldwin White Architects cast tradition aside in favor of an intimate, yet roomy, facility where seating configurations can be adapted for small group interaction; where the instructor is close to the students; and where the electronic technology is part of the original design, rather than a retrofit.

This is a vast change from the old lecture hall of the same name, which the university razed in 2004. The old hall, which held 214 students, had a couple of obvious problems—no air-conditioning and poor lighting. But there was a bigger problem: As a lecture hall, it just

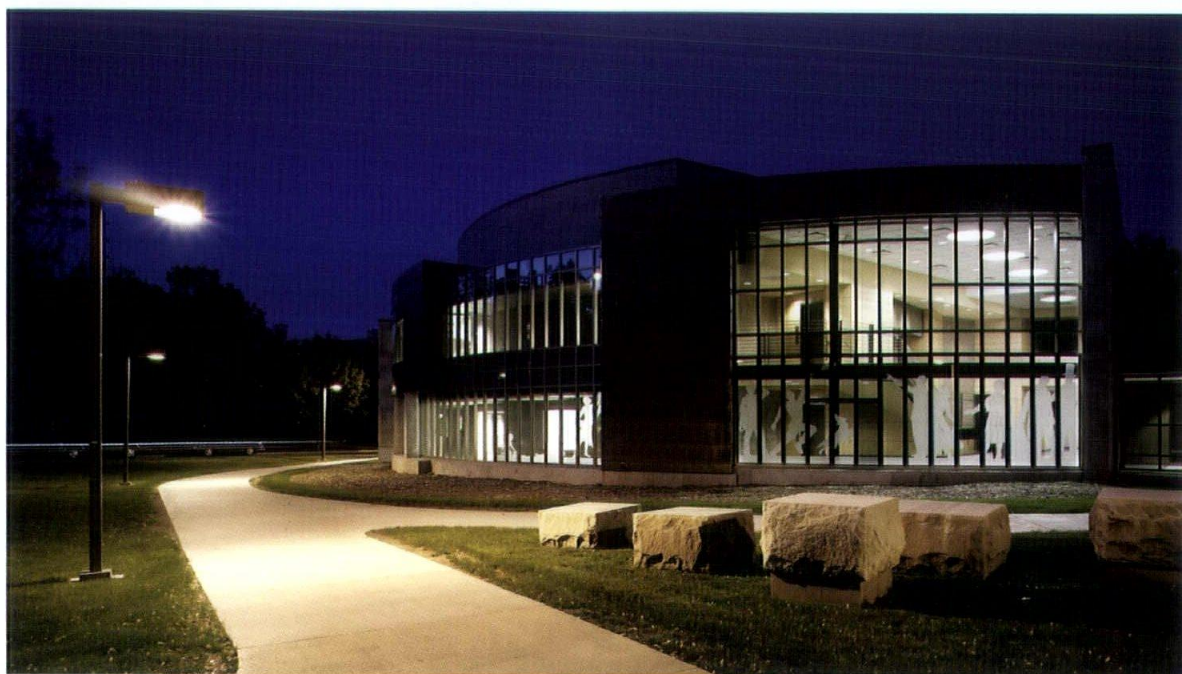


wasn't equipped for the different types of teaching and learning styles employed by instructors and students.

Baldwin White Architects listened to university planners' needs and came up with a design that could be the shape of lecture halls to come. An innovative two-tier seating does two things. First, it reduces the verticality of the room, which improves eye contact between students and instructors. Second, it allows for two rows of seats on each tier, for a flexible seating arrangement which works like this: The front row of each tier of seating has custom configured seats. They look just like the seats in the second row of each tier, but these seats can swivel 240 degrees. So, when an

Project: LeBaron Hall Auditorium,
Iowa State University
Location: Ames, IA
Architect: Baldwin White
Architects
General Contractor:
Harold Pike Construction
Civil Engineer: Snyder & Associates
MEP Engineer: KJWW Engineering
Structural Engineer:
Charles Saul Engineering
Photographer:
Cameron Campbell, AIA ©
and James Twetten

ERICH GAUKEL





CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA ©



CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA ©

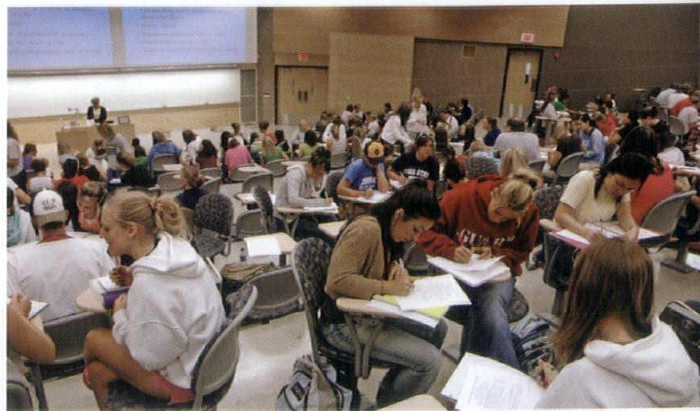
Left: The auditorium's north side provides ground-floor access. Upstairs, students enjoy a seating nook with natural light.



CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA ©

Center: Working within the context of the red-brick and limestone façades of the nearby buildings, the auditorium's exterior materials—copper, limestone and glass—echo the other structures on this busy campus corner.

Below: The two-row tier seating configuration facilitates small-group interaction. The front-row seats on each tier swivel 240 degrees.



JAMES TWETTEN

Above left: The structure's interior materials—stainless steel, terrazzo, wood paneling, granite and burnished block—give the interior a contemporary feel and will withstand years of heavy use.

instructor asks students to break into groups, students in the swiveling seats can rotate, which immediately reconfigures the seating layout from large group presentation to small group discussion.

The lecture hall's side walls frame the auditorium in a 75-degree wedge. This extra-wide design spreads students out horizontally rather than vertically. That puts all 363 students within 12 rows (or just six tiers) of the instructor. For students requiring the use of the elevator, three of the six seating tiers are accessible.

The seating arrangement offers the same benefits for students when it comes to viewing and interacting with the hall's abundant audio, video, Internet and network technology.

Even though the new building is larger than its predecessor (it has an additional 147 seats), it maintains a modest footprint on this busy street corner near

the heart of campus, where it elegantly rejoins two existing classroom buildings.

The building's curved façade—a contemporary blending of glass, limestone and copper—takes its cue from the auditorium's interior shape. The colors and materials echo the limestone and red brick buildings across the street.

From the curved sidewalk outside LeBaron Hall Auditorium, used as a shortcut between Morrill Road and Osborn Drive, pedestrians can glimpse the activity inside, where the architects have positioned built-in benches throughout the corridors, stairs and queuing areas. Here, students can study, visit, finish papers or just sit and enjoy the views of the towering maples and pines outside.

—Erich Gaukel is the editor of *New Horizons* magazine.

There's No Place Like School

SUGGESTIONS LEAD TO A CHILD-CENTERED, HOME-LIKE ATMOSPHERE IN AN EDUCATIONAL FACILITY

Hillside Elementary in West Des Moines combines students that previously attended three separate centers in a facility that focuses on children, serves as the center of the community, and provides an extension of the home setting.

Right: Classrooms for each grade level are clustered around "living rooms" that can be shared by opening large sliding doors and overhead doors.

Below left: Bumpouts extend the "living rooms" of several grades and admit natural light.

Below right: The building exterior is precast architectural tilt-up panels and concrete block in a prairie stone finish for an earthy feel.

Principal architect Philip Hodgin and the team at RDG Planning & Design can't take all the credit for innovations that fill West Des Moines Hillside Elementary School. Many features of the 82,000-square-foot facility started with the students themselves.

The team, including educational designer Eliz Erbes, interior designer Cathy Neumann, project designer Kevin Nordmeyer and project architect Jack Topp, spent months talking to children and parents before

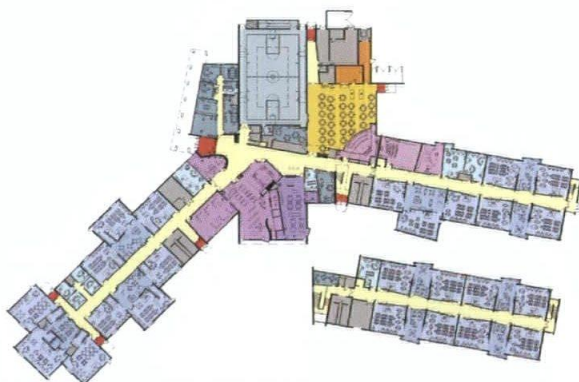
starting work. "We asked kids, 'Where do you like to learn? What are your favorite places to learn?'" Hodgin says. "A lot of the stuff that came out of those conversations made it into the building."

A major innovation: The concept of the school as an extension of home. The most visible example: A "hearth room" just inside the main entrance.

Many children said they like to read in their living room, or by the fire, so "The fireplace became a theme," Hodgin says. The homey, multiple-purpose room has a gas log fireplace—financed with private donations—and comfortable chairs.

"It's not institutional. It's more hospitality oriented," Hodgin says. Since the school opened in fall 2004, "I've probably been there 30 times, and I've never seen that room empty."

The home concept carries through to the classrooms, which are clustered by grade level around "living rooms"—extended learning spaces. Sliding, 12-foot-wide "barn doors," as Hodgin calls them, and overhead doors connect the classrooms to the living rooms and to halls, letting teachers create an open area so grade sections can share activities and collaborate.



Project: Hillside Elementary School
Location: West Des Moines, IA
Architect: RDG Planning & Design
General Contractor: The Weitz Company
Electrical Engineer: KJWW Engineering
Mechanical Engineer: KJWW Engineering
Structural Engineer: Shuck Britson
Interior Designer: RDG Planning & Design
Landscape Architect: RDG Planning & Design
Energy Consultant: The Weidt Group
Photographer: Kun Zhang Photography

THOMAS R. O'DONNELL





KUN ZHANG PHOTOGRAPHY



KUN ZHANG PHOTOGRAPHY

Each living room is personalized for the appropriate age level. For kindergarten and the lower grades, "We made it more intimate ... and brought the scale down," Hodgin says. "It feels much cozier," with floor lamps, rocking chairs, rugs and age-appropriate toys. Sixth grade living rooms, in contrast, have a more academic flavor, with easels and access to technology and science equipment.

Flexible space reigns. A sliding wall connects the lunchroom with the slightly elevated music room, allowing for planned and impromptu performances. The media center and a reading room across the hall have facing overhead doors, allowing for a free-flowing connection.

The media center is smaller than usual because the school emphasizes literacy, Hodgin says. Reading materials appropriate to each grade level are placed in the living rooms, encouraging students to browse.

Technology also infuses the building, starting with overhead projectors, surround-sound speakers and interactive whiteboards, and continuing with energy-efficient systems, including in-floor radiant heat. Sensors dim or brighten interior light, depending on the amount of natural light reaching each room.

Students can learn about these and other systems, because many are left exposed, turning the building itself into something of a teacher. Hodgin says some visitors joke and ask, "When are you going to finish it?" "Others say, 'Oh I get it now. I can see where the chilled water pipes are, the heat ducts, the wiring,'" he adds. Just by observing the building systems, "You could do a whole curriculum unit on energy conservation."

—Thomas R. O'Donnell lives in Urbandale and writes about science, architecture and personal finance.

Above left: Hillside Elementary's main entrance has a long awning and wide pedestals, where children can gather before and after school. It's located just outside administrative offices for passive supervision.

Above right: Window seats provide a cozy place for children to read or to share conversations.

Below: The reading room is just inside the main entrance, demonstrating the school's commitment to literacy. The overhead door can be raised to connect the room with the media center across the hall.

KUN ZHANG PHOTOGRAPHY



An Office of Substance

SUBSTANCE ARCHITECTURE CHOOSES INNOVATIVE SIMPLICITY OVER SIMPLE INNOVATION

"Innovate as a last resort."
—Charles Eames

Few firms have come with the expectations that have accompanied Substance Architecture's first year, but firm partner Paul Mankins is surprisingly reticent about the firm's instant reputation for design inventiveness. Citing Eames, he notes that innovation is only successful if it emerges from, and is embedded in, architectural function. "Let's not assume the operative model," he says, describing the firm's approach, "but let's not do a different door every time just for the sake of being new or different." Problem-solving, not formal or material novelty, is where Mankins and his partners see the firm's ultimate charge.

When they saw the raw, semi-industrial space on the second floor of a brick warehouse in the auto district west of downtown Des Moines, Mankins and partners Tim Hickman, Jason Alread and Bill Anderson realized that most of the qualities they wanted were already there—light on three sides and a completely open space. Hickman notes that they saw their task as "not screwing

up what was already there." Partitions would have carved up the space, blocking light and building barriers between staff. Instead, they realized that a few simple moves would provide the work surfaces they needed while preserving the open, light quality of the space.

Substance's standard work desk is a 36-inch-high surface with a side bin for drawings and reference books. The high desk is intentional—it puts a seated staff member at eye level with someone walking by, making conversation natural and eliminating the feeling of being hunkered down within a cubicle. Work surfaces in Baltic birch plywood are conscientiously connected in a continuous, origami-like ribbon visually emphasizing what Hickman calls a 'desk culture' that enables communication, rather than separating staff. Likewise, the desktop computer monitors are deliberately large, to enable small groups to comfortably see what's on a screen during informal meetings. Essentially, every space in the office becomes a potential meeting space.

These workstations are complemented by a single linear service zone, which holds product libraries, storage cabinets, and a small kitchen. Again, the division is simple and uncluttered, thoughtful rather than striking. At the front of the office, an enormous glass conference table allows large meetings, while a small reception area offers Prouve chairs—an intentional statement of integrated comfort and aesthetics. The office's signature piece is a 10-foot pivoting metal door, with the firm name de-bossed to one side. Mankins describes this not as a door, but as a 'wall that's missing' when open, the office gains light and space from the lobby outside, and the door reads as just another wall, expanding the interior space.

This is an impressive entrance, but it is the single dramatic innovation in Substance's offices. Elsewhere, their restrained approach to the existing building has been matched by a thoughtful, quiet approach to details, planning and furnishing, and the result is an office where the daily work is on display much more than any formal or spatial gymnastics. In this sense, the door feels like a richly deserved burst of energy, set against a more disciplined, but no less impressive, approach within.

—Thomas Leslie, AIA, is an associate professor of architecture at Iowa State University.

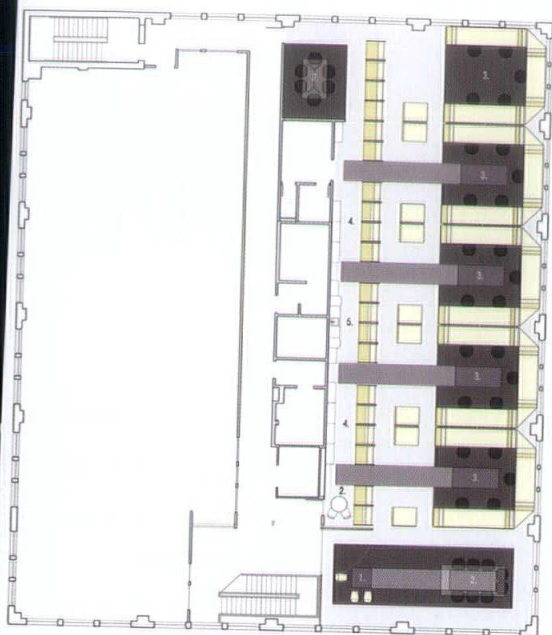
Right: View toward the reception area showing product library and bookshelves.



FARSHID ASSASSI, HON. AIA IOWA, ASSASSI PRODUCTIONS ©

Project: Substance Architecture Studio
Location: Des Moines, IA
Architect: Substance Architecture
General Contractor: Nelson Construction Services
Photographer: Farshid Assassi, Hon. AIA Iowa, Assassi Productions ©

THOMAS LESLIE



Left: Substance's office plan blends meeting spaces and work surfaces into a continuous ribbon, enabling work at all scales from individual to large groups.

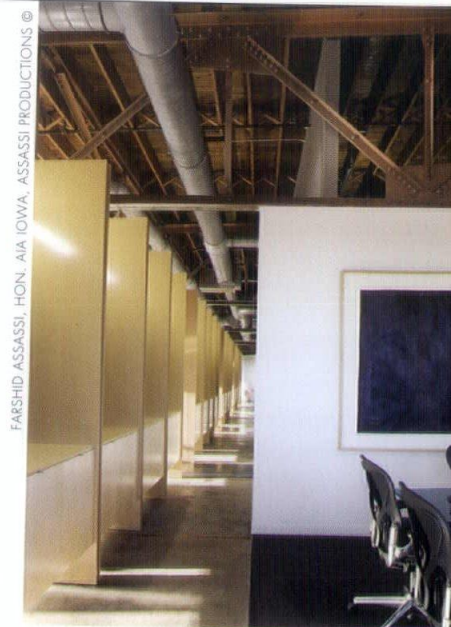
Above: A minimal palette and a concern that the loft space not be filled with partitions led to a careful approach. Here, the service zone contains elements that would otherwise carve up the loft's open volume.

Center: Work tables feature large monitors for impromptu meetings, and an integrated book and drawing rack within a Baltic birch 'ribbon.'

Below: A 10-foot metal door pivots to open Substance's reception space to the building's main lobby. A conference table in the reception area emphasizes the role that collaboration plays in the firm's work.

substance

The Prouva chair has become one of the firm's signature greetings—offering integrated comfort and appearance.



Hybrid Practice

THE CROSS-CULTIVATION OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The RDG Dahlquist Art Studio finds renewed validity in an interdisciplinary effort.

Historically, architecture and design were directly related to the fine arts: drawing, painting, sculpture etc. The master architect was skilled in the various genres of art and building. Over time, with the advent of 'professionalism,' these disciplines separated. During the 1900s, the architect continued to collaborate with those proficient in the arts. These artists, or cooperation of artists, became known as artisans. The mystique and allure of architecture is born of the means, methods and intellect possessed by the traditional master architect and artisan.

The modern era in architecture has rid buildings of ornament and symbol and as a result, critical engagement with artisans. And although the delight of modernism is its bare essence, the current authors of this nakedness are less skilled at clothing space, buildings and landscapes. Equally, contemporary artists have become less apt at integrating art with building and context given the distance between disciplines established by the modern movement.

The return to a hybrid-practice or cross-cultivation of art and architecture in an increasingly on-demand world is a difficult effort indeed, for the work itself is dependant on research and innovation.

The RDG Dahlquist Art Studio, lead by David B. Dahlquist, has made this return passage. This recently established venture between two independently established agencies has given both entities distinction. This merger now operates as a single corporation in effort to creatively influence life for the better through purpose-driven design. As a result, RDG has increased its ability to meet additional design challenges while gaining the capability of fabrication and manufacturing; RDG Dahlquist Art Studio acquires direct commission potential and delivery expertise. Collaboratively, the union enjoys an expansion of their means and methods repertoire.

Right: Parade of Floats—based on early parades that featured products and culture from San José.

Below: Flying Shuttle—based on cotton bobbins related to industries predominate in Charlotte and Piedmont, North Carolina.

Project: "Parade of Floats," San José

Location: San José, CA

Artist: Andrew Leicester in association with David B. Dahlquist, RDG Dahlquist Art Studio (a division of RDG Planning & Design)

Lighting Designer: David Raver, RDG Planning & Design

Metal Fabricator: Jim Dawson, Iowa Metal Fabrication

Photographer: David B. Dahlquist

Project: "Flying Shuttle," Charlotte Bobcats Arena

Location: Charlotte, NC

Artist: Andrew Leicester in association with David B. Dahlquist, RDG Dahlquist Art Studio (a division of RDG Planning & Design)

Lighting Designer: David Raver, RDG Planning & Design

Metal Fabricator: Jim Dawson, Iowa Metal Fabrication

Photographer: David B. Dahlquist



PETE GOCHÉ



DAVID B. DAHLQUIST



DAVID B. DAHLQUIST

Left: Flying Shuttle—detail at pilasters surrounding the entrance of the Charlotte Bobcats Arena.

Right: Parade of Floats—detail at shaft of float representing the ethnicity and diversity of San Jose.

Below: Parade of Floats—mixed media featuring 20 tons of architectural terracotta integrated throughout the new urban setting.



DAVID B. DAHLQUIST

The art works depicted in this article are merely the beginning of such effort. They represent a typological challenge before us as designers; the reintegration of artistry into the production of meaningful environments. Both of these installations, the "Flying Shuttle" and the "Parade of Floats," are fabricated primarily of terra-cotta and take their symbolic form from the heritage of the people who make up their respective communities. As the collaboration between RDG Planning & Design and RDG Dahlquist Art Studio matures, perhaps a deeper integration of both the sculptural forms and the constructed environments will develop.

Essentially an applied art, architecture tends toward prescriptive means for making. This type of knowledge application is dependant, in every respect, on innovation. To engage in the research and development of new methods and means with other disciplines, then, should be the basis of any architectural practice. The

true benefit of such an arrangement is its potential dialogue or exchange of knowledge.

Studio discourse regarding scale, proportion, chromatic variation, volume, materiality, craft, meaning and culture is critical to good design as a matter of experience as well as aesthetics. In contemporary practice, discussions of this sort have narrowed or even fallen silent given our discipline's lack of fervor as it relates to issues beyond utility, cost, schedule and code compliance. This has been compounded and even excused due to 'specialization' and shortened delivery schedules. The direct cooperation of an architectural office and an arts studio provides a platform for the revival and perhaps expansion of this qualitative debate regarding the act of making.

—Pete Goché is a cultural inclusionist native to rural Iowa.

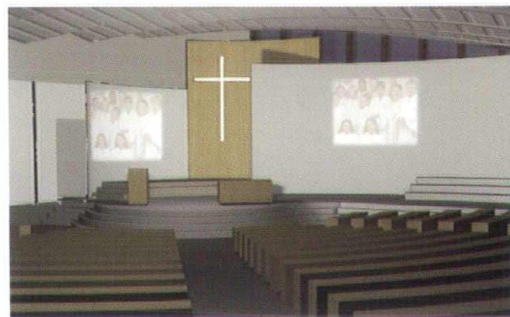
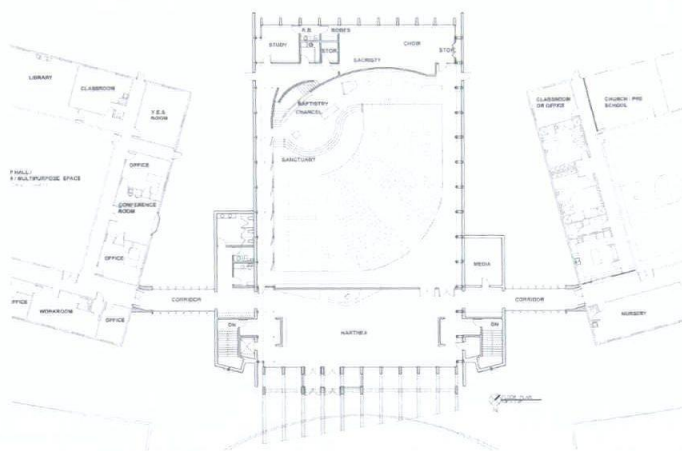
PORTFOLIO

BY EVAN SHAW

West Des Moines Christian Church—Integrated Studio

An innovative combination of design services has resulted in the construction of a new sanctuary for West Des Moines Christian Church in West Des Moines, Iowa. The design of the sanctuary began with Cameron Campbell, AIA, who brought together Pete Goché, AIA, and Chris Beorkrem for a “virtual” design team. The project has gone through the construction document phase with Shiffler Associates Architects, P. C. This blend offers the client a diverse group of design expertise—computer graphics, artistic sensibility, and experienced project delivery.

The project design incorporates religious meaning into the plan configuration with an immersed sanctuary. The baptistry is integrated into the design as a focal point. On the outside the curved plane of the roof is designed to enhance the sanctuary space as well as provide an outside form that responds to the context. The blend of function, design, and spiritual meaning is the result of strong communication between the design professionals and the client. ●



Westgate Condominiums—Jeffrey Morgan Architecture Studio



The Westgate Condominium Lofts, developed by Hatch Development Group and proposed for downtown Des Moines’ West End, proves that innovation doesn’t always start with something new—it may simply introduce something anew. Rising from two existing buildings that housed Taylor Motor Car Company (1917) and Kruidenier Cadillac Company (1919), a new 10-story glass and steel condominium tower gives new life to a familiar location. With the highly anticipated completion of the nearby Gateway Park in sight, this proposal responds by rejuvenating the existing commercial front of Historic Auto Row with an integration of shops, restaurants and office space, while layering the residential lofts within to create a density of mixed-use architecture that supports the idea of a vibrant downtown. This appeal to preserve the block’s existing structures, inhabiting them with new businesses and creating street-side public courtyards for pedestrians, connects the Gateway to its history while encouraging new uses and new life. ●

BY CATHERINE THOMAS

Architected s'coo?

Looking to beef up your new vocabulary at the office tomorrow? Try using some new words hitting the street in the realm of architecture and just about anything else you might think up.

www.urbandictionary.com has created an online dictionary open to the public to define slang and buzz words that are being used in everyday language around the world. The Urban Dictionary has received press from numerous reviews noting the uniqueness of defining and spreading slang. Although you most likely won't see any of these words and definitions in Webster's Dictionary anytime soon, you may hear them from across the table. And like any public forum, a word of caution: not all material is suitable for all audiences so be careful what new words you choose to use at the office tomorrow.



Architected: An object or building with interesting or clear design aspects. Something that looks like someone went to great pains to design, with great results. "Man, that pencil holder is architected. That podium sure was architected."

Jump off: Something that is hip, chic or in fashion.

Yoink: Noise made when object is stolen.

B: Short for "my bad."

Only: Internet slang, short for "Oh, really?" ●

Second in command

Gordon E. Mills, FAIA of Dubuque, IA, recently was elected second vice president of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) at its 87th Annual Meeting and Conference in Cincinnati, OH. Mills has served as the council's treasurer for the past two years. He is chairman and chief executive officer of the Durrant Group, Inc., a 73-year-old multidisciplinary professional services firm based in Dubuque.



The firm serves a diverse domestic and international client base with 12 offices located in eight states.

Mills previously was managing director of Durrant's Midwest offices as well as the firm's secretary-treasurer. He joined Durrant in 1967 and has helped the firm grow in size, capabilities, and reach. Mills has a significant list of honors, titles and awards that he has achieved throughout the years. ●

Des Moines Art Center museum on National Historic Registry

The Des Moines Art Center, known for its world-class collection of contemporary art, has made its way into history, having been recently placed on the National Register of Historical Places. The Eliel Saarinen and I. M. Pei wings of the Art Center, completed in 1948 and 1968 respectively, are not part of the national registry along with Carl Milles' *Man and Pegasus* sculpture, found in the Art Center courtyard. The announcement comes as a result of a four-year effort led by Des Moines architect Kirk Blunck, FAIA, a member of the Art Center Board of Trustees. "This designation is indeed a milestone for the Art Center and for the Des Moines community," said then Art Director Susan Lubowsky Talbott. "In addition to recognizing the Art Center as a national treasure, the designation opens new doors for funding sources that will address the critical infrastructure needs of our aging buildings."

Recognized by international art critics as a world-class museum in the heart of the Midwest, the Des Moines Art Center has amassed an important collection with a major emphasis on contemporary art housed within three major buildings. The third of the Des Moines Art Center buildings by Richard Meier, completed in 1985, is considered too recent for registry consideration, which requires that a structure be at least 50 years old. ●

Vision > Sight

Total blindness for life was the diagnosis from five eye doctors in May 2000. Five years later Atlanta artist Allan Eddy, an award-winning Atlanta College of Art graduate and winner of the Forward Arts Foundation Scholarship in 1987, has been hailed as the next Kandinsky, Matta or Miro'. His art hangs in many collections, including Elton John's and has been seen in numerous galleries.

Diagnosed with meningitis, Allan spent six weeks at Emory University Hospital fighting the disease. After two days in the hospital he went totally blind from the condition, a disease that normally causes hearing loss when it causes complications. Over the next three years, Allan's vision improved only slightly. "When I draw or paint, I cannot see my own fingers. I thought I could never draw again."

For the past two years, there have been no more improvements in Allan's vision. However, he is now comfortable with the loss of his vision to paint passionately and prolifically. "I'm more inspired and determined than ever," concluded Allan. "This impairment has forced me to take the next logical step in my artistic development. My palette is much brighter and my work has even more sculptural elements, which reflect the change in my vision." ●



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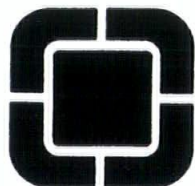
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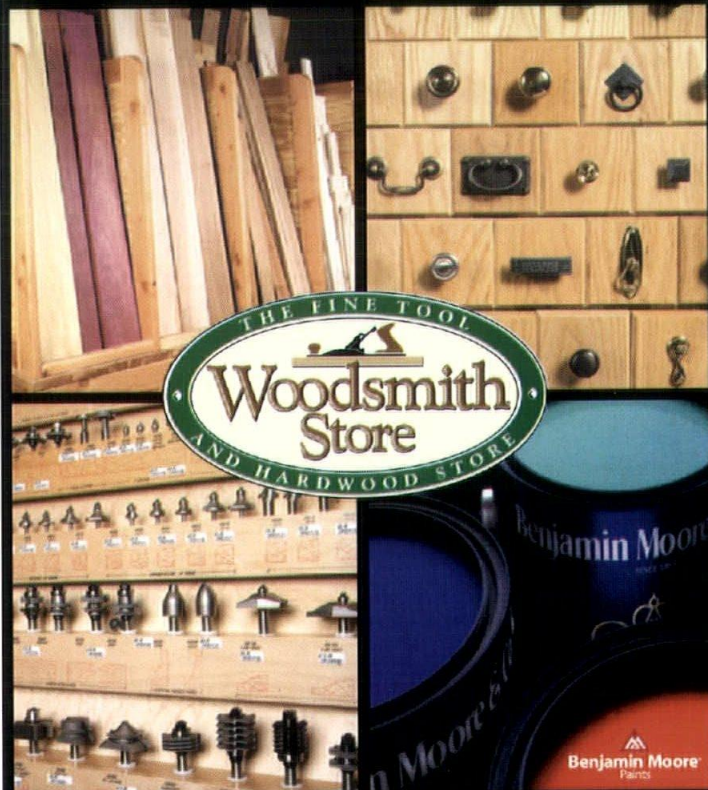
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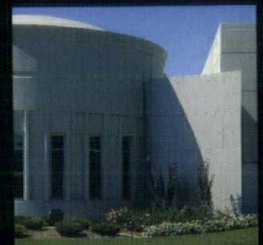
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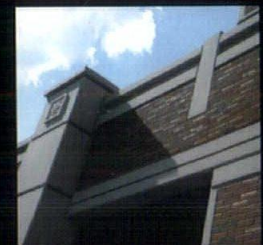
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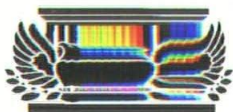
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