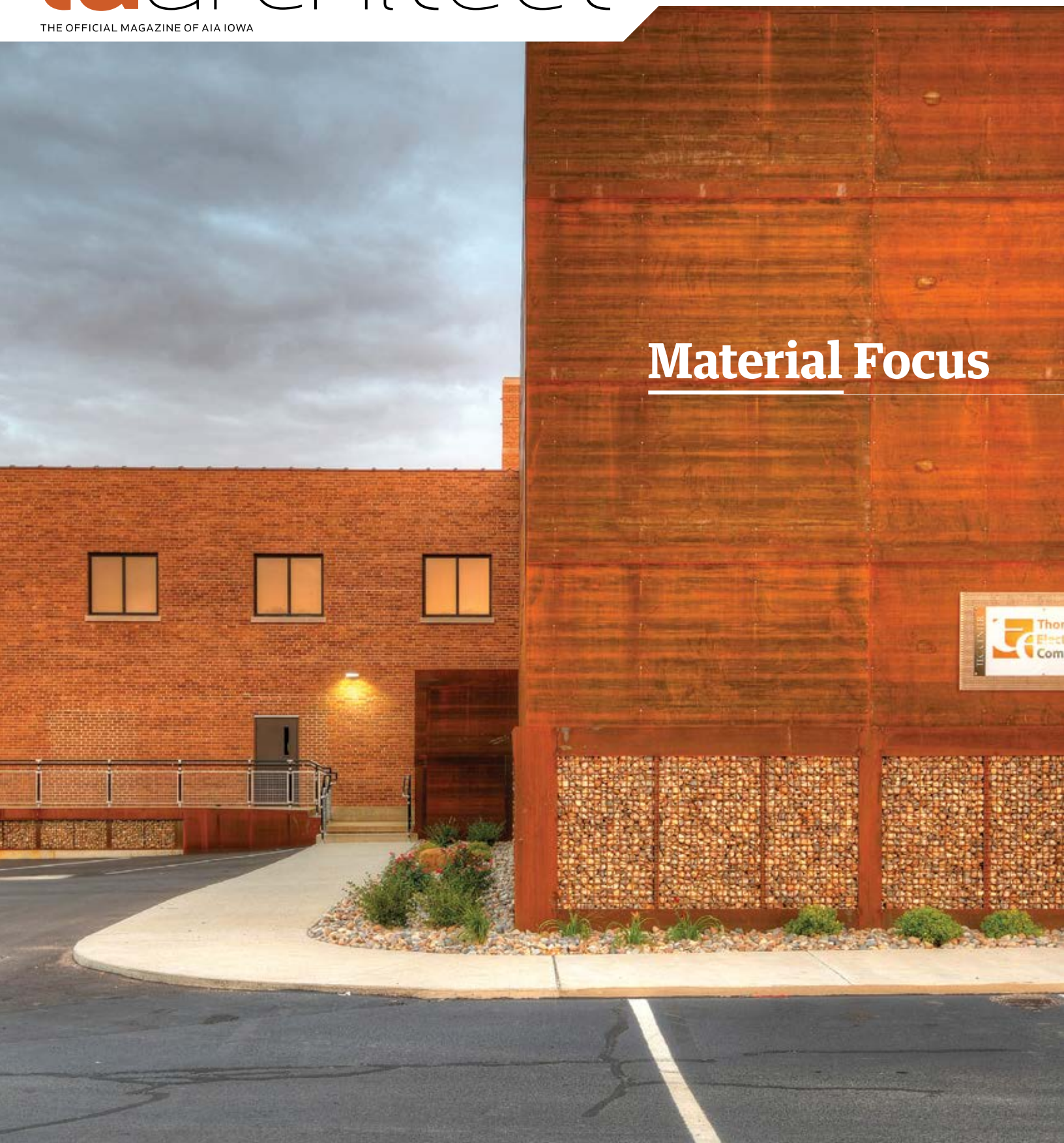


# ia architect

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF AIA IOWA

## Material Focus







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# editor's letter



## Welcome!

While architectural forms have become more elaborate over the years it is more often the quality, texture, and skillful manipulation of what the spaces are made of that makes architecture truly memorable. The materials used can enrich and enliven spaces and help bring the architectural design down to a tactile human level. This goes to the very heart of what Mies van der Rohe meant when he said, "God is in the details."

In this issue of Iowa Architect we explore projects that have embraced the materials they are made of and use them as an integral part of the architectural experience.

---

**Evan Shaw, AIA**

*Editor, Iowa Architect*

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# contents

IOWA ARCHITECT MAGAZINE SPRING 2015



^ Modern Material Mindset, p. 16

## Features

### 16 **Modern Material Mindset**

Cedar, steel and concrete make up this modern South Dakota home.

### 20 **Light up the Night**

Visual poetry on Court Avenue in Jun Kaneko's pump station mural.

### 24 **Steel and Stone**

A Sioux City warehouse gets a facelift.

### 30 **Unification Theory**

Terrazzo floors and clean lines revitalize a condo in a historical Des Moines Building.

### 34 **The Value of Function over Form**

Madhouse Brewery's new building puts beer front and center.

## Departments

### 07 **Collected**

Concrete lamps by Levi Robb, Assoc. AIA; ISU students tackle design challenges at the Venice Biennale.

### 10 **Profile**

Dale McKinney, FAIA, National Council of Architectural Registration Boards 2015 President.

### 12 **On the Boards**

Kenyatta University College of Architecture; Wauke Center for Advanced Professional Studies.



#### **ON THE COVER**

A Sioux City industrial building is revitalized as the TEC Corporation Headquarters p. 24

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WORDS: COLE NORUM  
IMAGES: LEVI ROBB, ASSOC. AIA

## CREATIVE CONTRASTS

### Artist's curiosity inspires unconventional lamps

They're a lot like the Pixar lamp, only without the athleticism. That's because Levi Robb's works are about 10 pounds heavier and handcrafted from concrete. Robb, Assoc. AIA, an intern architect with BNIM, juggled odd jobs in the years leading up to his time studying architecture at Iowa State University. Pouring roads for counties laid the foundation for his current passion, although he didn't know it then. "When you're doing those jobs, you're constantly dealing with the material of concrete," Robb says. "[It is] work that you don't think you really enjoy at the time, then down the road it may have an influence on you."

Robb discovered his knack for designing and crafting lights housed or framed by concrete when he was confined

to small workspaces in college—it was a byproduct of inconvenience, the result of determination.

Robb is an active observer, constantly perceiving his surroundings. This curiosity grew with him on his small farm in Southeast Iowa, where as a child he would venture deep into the woods around him. It was an exploration, an exercise of wonder and discovery, as he would come across rusted objects amidst the milieu of mossy logs and felled branches. "It was kind of about investigating ... the juxtaposition between the man-made and the natural," Robb says. When Robb sets out to craft a product, its longevity and consistency are his top considerations. "Where is this going to be in 50 years? In 100 years? Is it an object that has a certain amount of richness?" Robb says. "I want it to have a high level of craft."

From this state of perpetual analysis springs ideas. Robb describes it: "You see something, whether it's an interaction

with something in the city or the natural world, and you say, 'Oh, I wonder what that would be like if I implanted it into design.'"

For Robb, working in close quarters with concrete is a respite from the at-times daunting endeavor of planning a building. "A lot of times I think I went to product design because it was kind of a relief; designing a building takes years and years to get it done, with thousands of issues," Robb says. "A product has some of the same issues, but it's small enough that you can actually get your hands around it and enjoy the testing quality of it."

Robb's projects take months, if not years, to see to completion. For him, the amount of time is directly correlated with the quality of his product. "It's all about the level of craft you want. You can put something on paper and build it in a week, but is it the most successful design?" Robb says. "It usually isn't."

WORDS: KELLY ROBERSON

IMAGES: CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA; PETER GOCHÉ, AIA

## FOR THE SAKE OF *design*

Travel, said 20th-century suffragist and historian Mary Ritter Beard, “is more than the seeing of sights; it is a change that goes on, deep and permanent, in the ideas of the living.” Certainly that was the case for Iowa State University Department of Architecture students who journeyed to Venice last October: They were there to install a piece at the 2014 Venice Biennale of Architecture.

Created in 1999, the Venice Biennale is a contemporary art exhibition held every other year and curated by a designer of note. Rem Koolhaas of the Office of Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) curated the 2014 festivities around the theme of modernity. Three exhibitions—“Absorbing Modernity 1914–2014,” “Elements of Architecture,” and “Monditalia”—gathered students, designers, artists, architects, and others from across the globe. “The Biennale is a celebration of architecture that puts the contemporary work in context of current practice,” says Cameron Campbell, AIA, associate professor of architecture in the College of Design at ISU. “It is the most recognized, if not the only, celebration and exposition of architecture that happens on a biannual basis.”

Each national pavilion in attendance was asked to explore how modernity and globalization has affected today’s architecture practice. They were also challenged to attend to the fundamental elements of architecture—floor, wall, ceiling, roof, door, window, façade, etc.—as well as focus on Italian design. The ISU Department of Architecture contingent included 45 students and Deborah Hauptmann, Assoc. AIA, chair of the department, as well as faculty members Campbell; Mitchell Squire, associate professor of architecture; and Peter Goché, AIA, senior lecturer.

In Venice, the students created an installation—“Caution Wet-Floor: Slipping Into Deep”—that included a two-day student workshop to address the second Biennale theme. “The workshop component was in direct relationship to the theme of the 2014 Biennale fundamentals,” says Campbell. “The floor, the simple material, and the basic means of manipulation all





addressed fundamental design methodologies. Additionally, it addresses the context and history of Venice.”

It was the combination of process, project, and place that was weighty for students. “In the end, they provide a venue for the students to work, but not just any venue: A workshop in the heart of Europe, with design and history. Students know they are working at the pinnacle of the design community and presenting to an audience that is truly interested,” says Campbell.

ISU students and staff also attended a one-day colloquium to address the first of the Biennale’s themes, “Absorbing Modernity 1914–2014.” Speakers included Reinier de Graaf, partner, OMA; Eva Prats and Ricardo Flores, Flores & Prats Architects; and ISU alumni Jeffrey Morgan, Historic Boston Incorporated, Massachusetts; Nora Wendl, professor of architecture University of Portland; and Eric Smith, VAULT founding partner, Chicago, Illinois. “They were able to merge successful ISU alumni from practice, academy, and alternative practice along with global practitioners. They represent disciplining modernity—a play on the term of ‘discipline’ but also a challenge to modernity and fundamentals,” says Campbell. “Jeffrey challenged community design issues, Nora challenged architectural research, Eric challenged the future of practice, Reinier de Graaf challenged globalization, and Ricardo Flores challenged media and making in practice.”



**Opposite:** ISU students installed their project, titled “Caution Wet-Floor: Slipping Into Deep,” in Venice during the Biennale. The students assemble the pieces of the installation. **Above:** A view of the finished installation; ISU faculty also led a one-day colloquium.



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# profile

Person of  
Interest



# Dale McKinney

**WORDS:** ABBY GILMAN

**IMAGE:** COURTESY OF DALE MCKINNEY



Serving on a reconnaissance platoon in the hot and muggy Central Islands of Vietnam, Dale McKinney, FAIA, decided he wanted to be an architect. McKinney enjoyed drafting and drawing as a young man, but it wasn't until he became close with a platoon member—a landscape architect back home—that he considered architecture as a viable career path.

"I knew I needed to do something with my life, and I just had an interest in finding a career choice. Architecture seemed to be a logical one," McKinney recalls. "I sent a letter back home to my wife and asked her to get me enrolled in school." McKinney was granted a 90-day-early discharge, returned home to his wife and child on a Saturday in 1971, and was in a classroom at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the following Tuesday.

McKinney has come a long way in the 33 years since: He graduated with a bachelor's of art in architecture



from Iowa State University, bopped around between architecture firms fresh out of college, and formed M+ Architects, a planning and interior design firm in Sioux City. Last June, McKinney was installed as president of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) for fiscal year 2015. And, as if the position weren't enough praise for his dedication to the field, he was awarded the Council's highest honor: the President's Medal for Distinguished Service.

Dennis Ward, AIA, has worked closely with McKinney as NCARB first vice president/president-elect, and looks up to McKinney for his thoughtful and pragmatic leadership. "He listens to the many voices around him and then takes the information to assist in making an informed decision," Ward says. "He is of even temperament, never overpowering, and creates an atmosphere of collegiality while still maintaining the position of final decision-maker."

An active member of the AIA Iowa Chapter since graduation, McKinney quickly climbed the ranks and was elected president of the state organization in 1989. His dedication to the field of architecture and inherent leadership skills were evident to his colleagues and propelled him to his appointment of Director from Central States on the national AIA board in 1997. At the end of his three-year term on the national board, McKinney was prodded to submit his name to the governor of Iowa to be appointed to the state's licensing board, accepted the appointment in 2001, and served three consecutive three-year terms ending in 2010; NCARB was the next natural step.

McKinney approaches his tenure as president with a holistic outlook, looking to his predecessors to continue to improve the future. During his 12-month term, McKinney plans to move the organization forward by studying strengths and weaknesses, resolving issues, and recommending changes, and then keeping the change continuous when his term ends in June.

"Dale is a true leader who is not content to sit back and let processes continue status quo," Ward says. "He is proactive rather than reactive, challenging all around him to constantly re-evaluate programs and systems to determine if they can be even better. He is a proponent of 'blue-sky' thinking and constantly urges one to think outside of the box; to dream big and then develop the processes to obtain success. This is a new era for NCARB, and this approach can be seen on all levels throughout the organization. Dale is a forward-thinker and the right person to lead this organization at this time."

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## Kenyatta University College of Architecture

Nairobi, Kenya / DLR Group



Intended to be a flagship facility for the redevelopment of Kenyatta University Ruiru

Campus outside Nairobi, the new 96,068-square-foot College of Architecture building offers views of Mount Kenya from its high-profile location. Architects from DLR Group's Des Moines office collaborated on the design concept that combines the rifts and valleys of the Kenyan landscape and natural forms to create unique spaces for collaboration and integration for five new programs. The café/ramp/terracing component of the approach provides a dynamic setting for all occupants to socialize and learn in a comfortable, shaded space. The dynamic roof form hovers and enfolds the top of the building, creating an opportunity for renewable energy resources. The vertical collaboration spaces and open studios connected by transparent stairwells infuse the building with visual and aural energy and promote communication. DLR Group also provided master planning, sustainable consulting, and architecture services for this project.



## Waukee Center for Advanced Professional Studies

Waukee / INVISION Architecture

The Waukee Center for Advanced Professional Studies (WCAPS) is a new high school facility for the Waukee School District centered on an inquiry-based learning model. The program utilizes collaboration between education, business, and the greater Waukee community to provide students with real-

world projects and experiences, offering value-added services and projects for their business partners and other collaborators. Strands of study are based on current economic trends within the metro area and throughout the state of Iowa. The WCAPS programs will be continuously reinventing themselves to meet current business partner and economic trend needs. The architectural response is to provide a studio surrounding a large co-working area, enabling collaboration on multiple levels and throughout. The architecture and systems of the building are planned to be adaptable for future needs. Education does not stop at the doors to WCAPS, and will extend into the landscape with pollination gardens and prairie landscaping. Construction will begin in March 2015 and be complete in August 2016.





# University of Iowa Emergency Power Station



Iowa City / Shive-Hattery Architecture  
+ Engineering, AEI Engineering

The University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics is planning to erect a remote emergency power generation facility to serve the needs of its expanding campus in Iowa City. Shive-Hattery Architecture + Engineering, in conjunction with AEI Engineering, has designed the 10,000-square-foot facility as an efficient, modular system that will withstand EF3-rated winds. The design

is characterized by two banks of double-sided louvered air passages that serve the needs of the generators within the building and allow for the building footprint to be kept small, minimizing the impact of the building on the adjacent University of Iowa facilities. Construction is expected to begin in spring of 2015.



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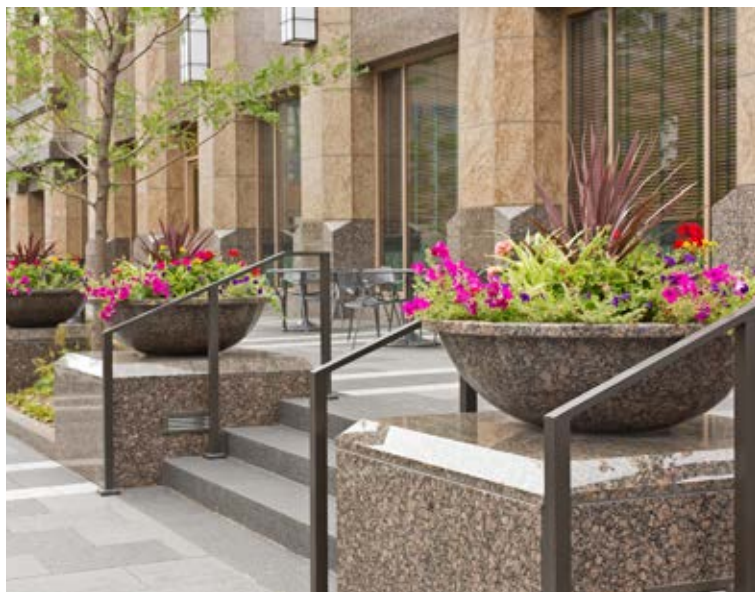


Bennett Rolfe Memorial Chapel, Integrated Studio, Cameron Campbell

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# MODERN MATERIAL MIND SENT

Modern residential design is an expression of architects and clients creating forms and spaces to realize a contemporary living sensibility. This began in America in the late 1920s and 1930s, with residences designed for a wealthy clientele, and is best known in Iowa with the 1937 streamlined modern Butler House on Fleur Drive in Des Moines. In the postwar period, a fresh approach was seen in California with the Case Study House Program and Eichler Homes built from the mid 1940s through mid 1960s. The Golden State was also the originator of the Cliff May ranch house, and this more financially accessible and weather-appropriate design model spread like wildfire and can be seen in nearly all towns and cities across the nation.

Modern homes are often situated along waterways and in coastal areas with panoramic ocean views. There is a special aspect of relaxation inherent in this type of setting and reflected in the overall form that seems to attract a specific type of person. Architects are always on the search for new clients and projects to

sustain their business and creativity. A rewarding occurrence is when a previous building encourages a potential new client to establish contact. This is precisely what occurred with this house in Dakota Dunes, South Dakota.

Architect Nathan Kalaher, AIA, of PLaN Architecture in Sioux City, had designed a remarkable house for John and Jean Darnell at Lake Okoboji (featured in the Fall 2011 issue of *Iowa Architect*). The prospective new clients had already owned an existing vacant lot for some time and always desired a modern home. One of the new clients went for her routine jog and came across this Okoboji house and knew she had to contact that specific architect. He could be the one!

The architect and couple began a collaboration that has resulted in another exemplary modern home by Kalaher adjacent to a body of water. The clients had rather uncomplicated requirements. "I like clean, simple lines, absolutely no ornamentation, and cascades of natural light penetrating the interior spaces







throughout the day. And I especially dislike artificial illumination when not needed,” she says.

The significant characteristic of the house is the honest use of materials in both the exterior and interior. Since the house is located in a flood plain and only 100 feet from a lake, the probability of another flood is quite high.

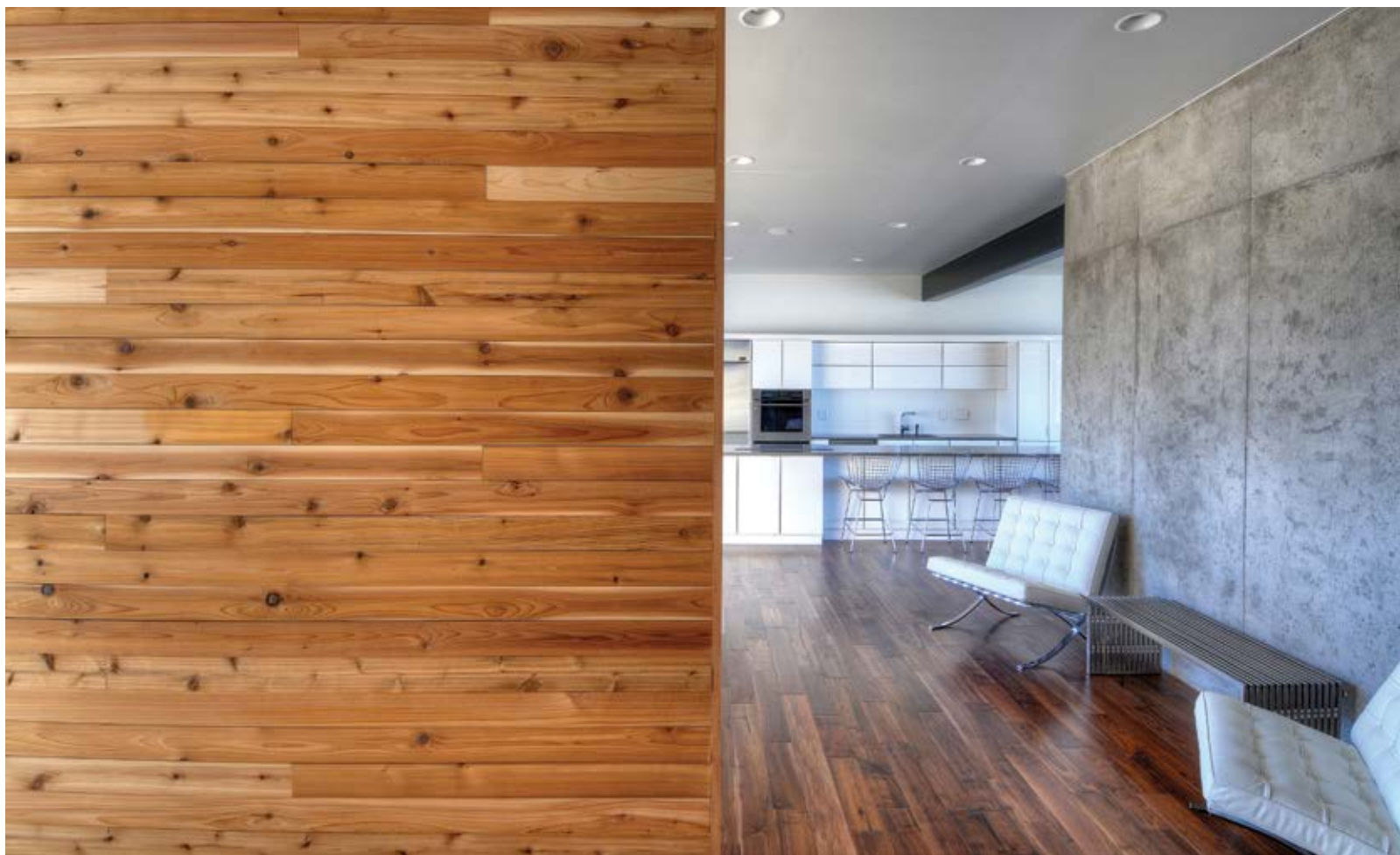
The primary use of structural concrete is an intelligent choice for several reasons. The elevation facing the lake will bear the major brunt of impending flood waters and concrete is an excellent material to prevent leakage. This resilient material is also beneficial for tornado and fire protection, the first of which many Iowans are well aware. But the use of concrete goes much further for the client. “I’ve always liked exposed brick and concrete,

and those materials can make a house feel warm like any home.” Perhaps there was an influence from architect Tadao Ando, whose residential design motif is bare concrete walls. “The material selection was a result of what the clients wanted in design and programming. It plays from the form of house and what they were doing. They were fine with exposed concrete walls even in the children’s bedrooms. This was definitely driven by the clients,” says Kalaher.

The structural steel frame holding the concrete panels and other building components together continues to be an unusual use of materials in residential construction. In many situations, it is merely a matter of the best material for that application. The strength provided by steel is advantageous in severe

weather and in spanning long distances in buildings. “With this house, a concrete chimney serves as the hub for the framing and a lattice of steel beams throughout the house forms an extremely strong structure. A 40-foot-long great room occupies the main living area and is supported by diagonal bracing,” says Kalaher. This steel section frames an impressive expanse of floor-to-ceiling windows with beautiful views from both sides. As with the use of unfinished concrete, the client is also an admirer of exposed steel. She notes that the basement beams have been painted black and provide an agreeable contrast with the bare gray concrete walls.

The attractive cedar wall siding is the perfect wood species to use in this location. The color and grain is just right



in linking the house to the environment and provides a fine textural juxtaposition of smooth and rough surfaces. While many architects and clients stain and seal exposed wood surfaces to maintain the original color, the idea of material honesty once again comes into play as the cedar is left completely untreated. “This graying-out process has already begun, and within a few years will nearly match the concrete panels,” Kalaher says.

This principle of honesty to materials was best expressed in the 20th century by the varied works of Charles and Ray Eames. Plywood looks like plywood, wire looks like wire, fiberglass looks like fiberglass, and hardware looks like hardware: There is no reason for further embellishment. This house continues that wonderful sense of “materialness” with

the exposed concrete and cedar walls extending into the interior architecture. When an exterior wall penetrates interior spaces, the material remains the same. This linking of outside and inside elements visually expands the rooms and makes one feel as connected to the exterior as to the interior.

This Dakota Dunes house of well-proportioned rectilinear forms is assembled in a manner to create a calming and peaceful ambience. The solidity and transparency aspects are pleasing to the eye, and the elongated horizontal building layout reflects the silent flow of a lake. The skillfully crafted connection between nature and the built environment is firm, yet casual.

**Above:** The house is only 100 feet from the lake, and the entire lower portion of this elevation is concrete. While this material is sealed below grade for water protection, the above-grade sections are not sealed to allow for the building to breathe.

**Opposite:** A pleasing assemblage of simple rectilinear forms echo the calm flow of the lake. Complete relaxation permeates the house and its connection with nature.

**Previous Spread:** Approximately 50 percent of the interior cedar and concrete walls are an extension of the exterior walls with identical materials. The dark walnut flooring provides a strong contrast with the cedar walls that should not gray as much as the exterior cedar.



WORDS: LIZ LIDGETT  
IMAGES: PAUL CROSBY  
ARCHITECT: SUBSTANCE ARCHITECTURE

# LIGHT UP THE NIGHT

"Expansion" Light Mural by Jun Kaneko

When colored glass bands are illuminated, it becomes visual poetry revitalizing the space and reconnecting with all ages.

JESSICA ROWE, GDMPAF  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Public art has the ability—when created successfully—to transform a space. A haunting alleyway can become an inviting corridor, an overlooked street corner can become a conversation starter, and in Des Moines, a water pump station can become a favorite photo backdrop.

Art as placemaking can happen in some of the most unexpected locations. In this case, the Court Avenue Water Pump Station became an elegant solution to a necessary project. After Des Moines suffered the second “500-year flood” in 15 years, it became apparent that a water pump station was needed. Substance Architecture was asked to create the station as a continuation of another project, the Hub Spot, just across the street.

While the Hub Spot had not yet been completed, with the help of the Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation (GDMPAF), Jun Kaneko’s ceramic sculpture “Dangos” had already been chosen for the location. With this in mind, Kaneko was selected to create a glass mural, “Expansion,” for the new water pump station. As architect Paul

Mankins, FAIA, states, “Substance hoped to use these two buildings and the artwork to create an understandable public space and a gateway of sorts for the Court Avenue Historic District.”

The 15-foot-high by 21-foot-wide mural is constructed from blown glass and lit from behind so that it can be easily seen both night and day. Kaneko selected a color palette of red, yellow, blue, black, and white for his unique grid pattern. Many partners came together to create the artwork. Substance developed the installation and lighting details, and worked with Derix Glass Studios in Germany and C3 Lighting in California. The mural was installed by Architectural Wall Systems and Baker Electric over the course of two months in fall 2013. “The mural was ultimately entitled ‘Expansion’ because Jun views it as a continuation of the plaza and his ‘Dangos’ at the Hub Spot. The mural expands this space to create a unified whole,” says Mankins.

While driving by the mural at night, it’s not unusual to see people striking a pose

against the colorful wall. It has become a favorite stop for a group photo or “selfie” on the way to nightlife on Court Avenue.

“In the evening, when colored glass bands are illuminated, it becomes visual poetry revitalizing the space and reconnecting with all ages. The site marries art and architecture in a total environment that is inspiring. One reason Kaneko’s public art project and the buildings designed by Substance Architecture work so well together is that they do not overwhelm visitors. It is an empowering place where people feel that by going they are participating in cultural and civic life. Every art experience is a participatory action,” says Jessica Rowe, executive director of GDMPAF.

“Expansion” shows the best of how art can transform a space. Through collaboration of an architecture firm, a foundation, an internationally known artist, and several other companies, a place was created for people to connect, interact, and linger both day and night.



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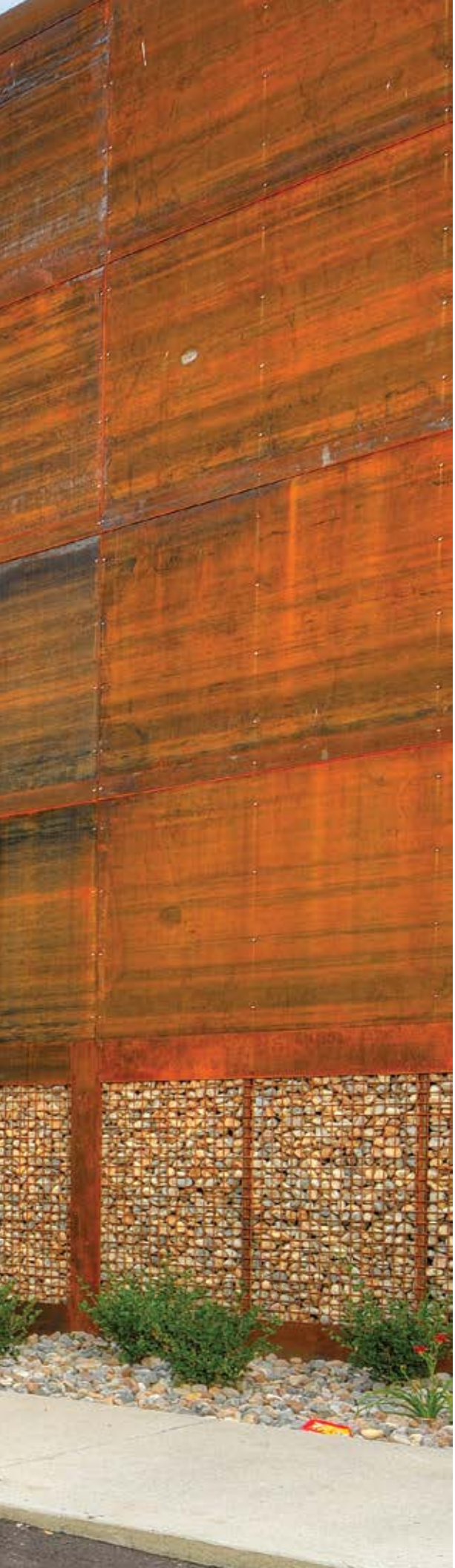






# STEEL *and* STONE





**WORDS:** KELLY ROBERSON  
**IMAGES:** AURORA PHOTOGRAPHY  
**ARCHITECT:** M+ ARCHITECTS

What do you do with an industrial building that's past its prime? Embrace it, for a revitalized space that works hard, morning to night.

When the railroads crisscrossed America, with them came all those infrastructure practicalities necessary for moving substantial quantities of people and goods thousands of miles. Warehouses and manufacturing facilities in particular were always in close proximity, their owners lured by ease and speed of transport, as well as that most valuable resource: people.

In Sioux City, the rail lines ran just a few blocks east of what would become the metropolitan area's downtown, and Standard Oil became owner of one of those squat-but-expansive spaces. Built in 1937, the Standard Oil Company's industrial building was notable for extravagant detail, the kind of indulgence typically absent from such spaces: curved brick and glass-block corners and large windows.

Most of the building was warehouse and distribution, with a small office space carved out of fewer than 1,000 square feet. In the late half of the 20th century, a plumbing wholesale business bought the building and clunked on a two-story concrete block addition; by this time exterior insulation and finishing systems covered most of the windows, too. This time, there would be no fanciful details—just a gray-green paint on the lumped-on space. And then, early in this century, the structure was vacated. “This was probably the worst building in the neighborhood—there's a nice auto parts facility to the north, a Sue Bee Honey warehouse and corporate office to the south,” says Dale McKinney, FAIA, with M+ Architects in Sioux City.

The 66,000 square footage and location would prove, once again, to be the building's salvation. TEC Corporation, a commercial and residential electric company that also does fire alarm and security work, had locations dotted around Sioux City, and its owners were interested in consolidating those spots. The company, which also does work for other electricians in and around town, has branches in Sioux Falls and Omaha, and wanted separate entry points for electricians and customers. They also wanted a training room that would fit all of their employees at one time.

Initially, both TEC Corporation and M+ Architects considered tearing down the addition, but realized they couldn't accomplish all of their goals by doing so. “We had to keep it, so we had to figure out what to do with it,” says McKinney.

Instead of picking the quick-and-easy solution—paint—McKinney embraced the space as an opportunity to examine and expose systems, material, and structure, and how the three intersect. The exterior of the original brick portion of the building was simple to update: Re-open the windows, clean up the brick, and respect the space's lines and form. The addition, however, required a different approach.



“We had all these cantilevered loading docks that needed to get closed off with something,” says McKinney. “We had thought about doing some COR-TEN steel to give it patina over time. And I had seen wire mesh filled with rock used as retaining walls in other buildings around the country.”

McKinney aligned the lines of the brick façade with new lines on the addition by creating a steel rain screen made of wide and narrow panels. On the bottom are gabion-like wire mesh cages, trimmed in weathering steel and holding river rock; at night they are gently washed by concealed LED lighting. The exterior has weathered enough that, taken together with the brick, the color palette is nearly seamless. “The rock mesh actually catches the dribble of the steel during the rainy season,” says McKinney.

Inside the building are standard office and workspaces as well as innovative approaches to helping the company and its employees perform more effectively. Pre-assembly happens in a huge ground-floor room. “Instead of an electrician on his knees in the mud assembling box and conduit, all of those pieces are assembled inside the shop and sent to the job,” says McKinney.

The war room—where staff goes through final bid numbers—includes big-screen TVs and writeable sheetrock, a detail that makes an appearance in other areas and is used so employees can track jobs and other information. On the second floor, a space holds a growing part of the company’s business—data hosting capabilities—as well as a break room that’s equal parts retro bar and relaxing area, as well as a fitness area and showers. “Skip Perley, the president of the company, is a very community-minded person and active,” says McKinney. “He didn’t hesitate: He wanted a really nice environment inside the building for staff to work.”

There were on-the-fly detail fixes that saved money and helped the architects and construction team use local suppliers and contractors when possible. For example, the two existing stairs had handrails that didn’t meet code. “Instead of tearing them out and starting over, which would have been fairly costly, we had the foundry next door fabricate a mesh panel similar to the exterior one that was just galvanized to infill the slot between concrete steps. That panel runs from the basement floor up to the third floor,” says McKinney.

From a start in late summer 2012 to finish, the project took just six months and “went amazingly smooth,” says McKinney. The worst that happened—during the reroof phase—was the discovery of a steel deck full of rusted-through pinholes, a result of an issue with the coatings from the 1970s. The solution was to open some of the roof to set the HVAC system. And if that’s as bad as it gets with an 80-year-old warehouse building, that’s not very bad at all.

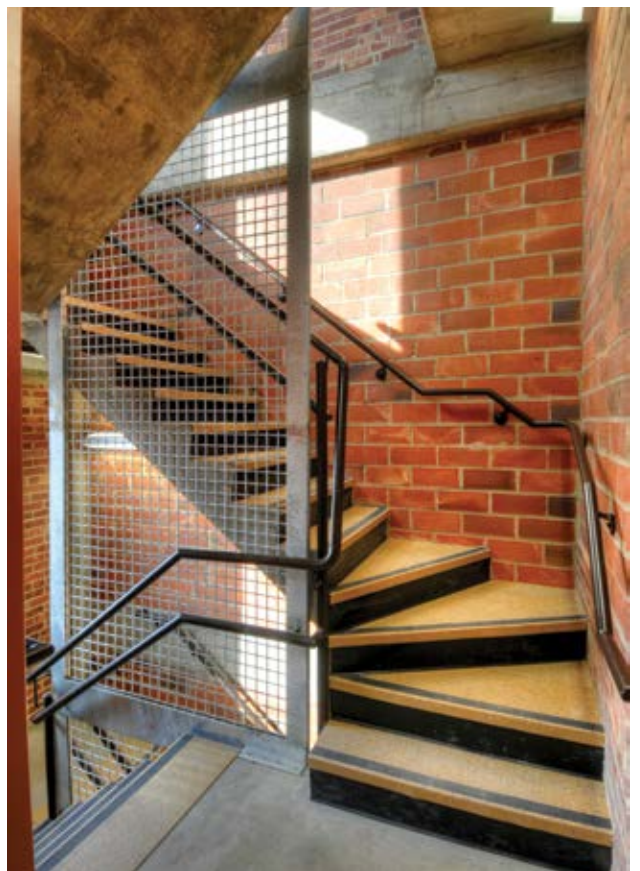
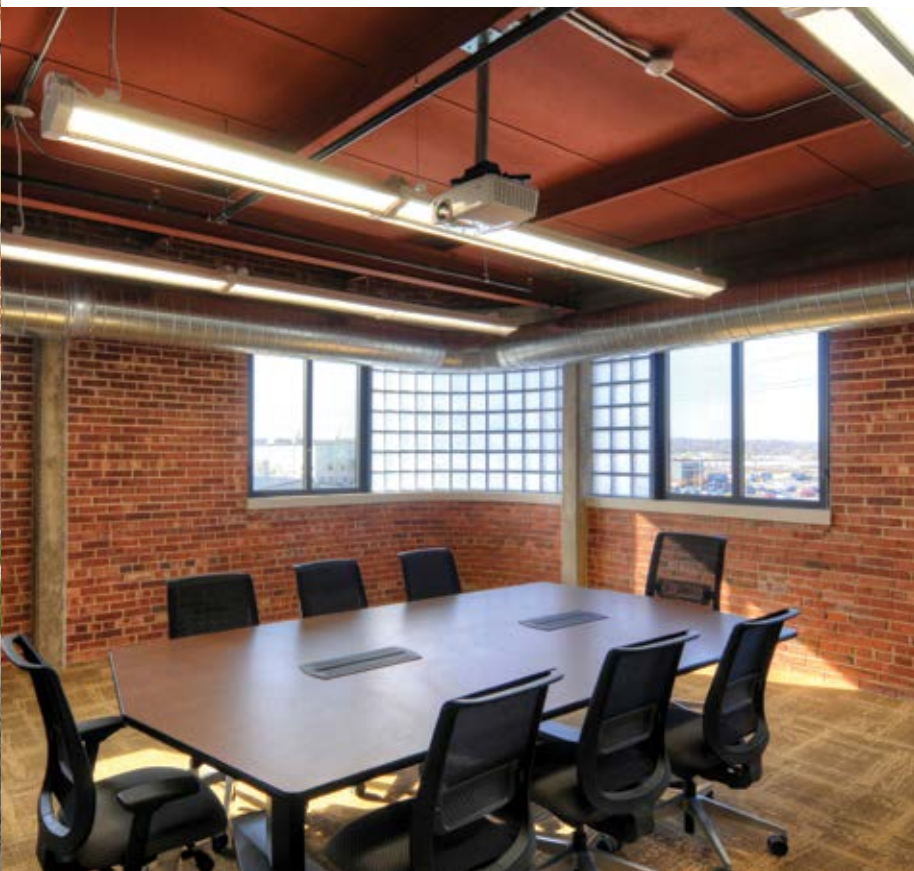
“They are really the perfect client, and it doesn’t always happen that way,” says McKinney. “This was a project that everyone was really excited about.”







Weathered steel creates a patina that blends seamlessly with the older brick section of the building. To create an element that's both textural and complementary, the architects used rock-filled wire elements. **Left:** Curved glass block at a corner was salvaged, maintaining one of the hallmarks of the building's original construction. **Below:** Nearly unadorned interior spaces allowed the architects to focus on the inherent beauty of the building's materials. Local fabrication helped the architects respond to construction and design challenges, including deftly executing a contemporary-minded handrail on an interior staircase.







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A single wall intersects the space, and then only partially, to maximize the expansive feeling of the space. The outstanding views the condo affords can be enjoyed through large windows on three walls. Even the workspace encompasses both north and west views of downtown Des Moines.



**WORDS:** PAULA MARSHALL  
**IMAGES:** CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA  
**ARCHITECT:** GOCHÉ INCLUSIONS, LLC

# UNIFICATION THEORY

A condo renovation creates a thoroughly modern living space in a landmark Des Moines building.



Good design goes with good design, the saying goes. So turning an interior space in the Liberty Building, a noted example of early 20th-century Midwestern architecture, into a sleek mid-century marvel was a natural progression.

To select the elements needed to bring that vision to life, Kevin Schnell and Josh Garrett followed their contemporary design instincts to Projects Contemporary Furniture and Kelli Linnemeyer. “We wanted ideas to make a much-desired and already selected Poliform/Varennia kitchen system integrate with the overall space, which was to be clean, white with no trim—super minimal,” says Linnemeyer. So they recruited Ames architect Peter Goché, AIA. The team collaborated on a redo of the entry, kitchen, and dining and living areas, plus a home workspace for Schnell. “Our assignment was to convert this space into a smooth and unconstrained set of rooms,” says Goché. “The immediate challenge was developing a complementary material palette that performed well with the intense variability of lighting conditions.”

Success was ensured with thorough planning and collaboration. “We spent a lot of time on decision-making,” says Goché. Solid backgrounding paid a high return in a smooth construction process. “The details were worked out ahead of time,” says builder Matt McClure of McClure Remodeling. The final space was





true to the design plan and the elements well organized before construction began, especially critical for the custom-made cabinets imported from Europe, notes McClure.

To begin, the 15-by-50-foot space was updated to reflect the desired sleek aesthetic by dispensing with the lesser-quality colonial trim and repairing warped wall surfaces. Now smooth plaster walls

with a reveal base and a complementary treatment surrounding the windows wrap the space. Recessed lighting in the kitchen and entry, "Nothing" lighting by Artemide, and sleek 1-by-8-foot ductwork throughout only minimally interrupt the continuous white planes.

Terrazzo floors ran throughout the space, perfectly representing both past and proposed design styles: A standard

commercial flooring, it is atypical in all but high-end mid-century modern residences. However the years were unkind to the floor. "Everyone liked it," says Goché, "so we tried to correct what was there." Cracks and water stains couldn't be ground away so a new highly polished terrazzo floor was installed. "Ultimately, this was the next best thing to restoration," he says.

Window treatments are layered along



**Opposite:** Matte finishes, including honed quartz and Poliform Spessart Oak, are the perfect foil to the glossy floor.

Balancing the right angles and flat surfaces, the curved Poliform chairs and round pendants of the Bocci chandelier add an inviting softness to the dining room. A series of evenly spaced matte-lacquer Poliform shelves are perfect for displaying a curated collection of favorite objects.

**Right:** Office to living room: Schnell's library of references to mid-century modern, especially Taschen's seminal work on Richard Neutra, guided the design team.

the three exterior walls to modulate natural and reflected light, views, and temperature. A base of roller shades, practically hidden in the window frame, creates a near blackout condition and provides thermal control. Adding a strong vertical element, two layers of linen floor-to-ceiling drapes in soft neutrals are hung from separate tracks in the ceiling. Custom constructed at the Bergin Drapery

Workroom, these cover the walls between pillars as well as the windows and allow control of light and views. One of the few textiles employed, the drapes also buffer noise and visually soften the space.

In the kitchen, the cabinets have no external pulls to detract from the white, high-gloss finish.

Installation required a level of perfection. "Everything had to be true

and square," notes McClure. That's where the heavy-duty work fixing the walls came in. The island's warm, dark-hued Spessart oak topped with gray honed quartz created contrast. The fine Italian oak then wraps to define the dining area on a newly constructed wall.

At the north end of the space is Schnell's home office. The quiet room continues the flow of streamlined materials, a confident period capping the design.





A great deal of creative effort was focused on the building exterior, where the brewery's name and slogan were put front and center, to create a striking street presence. **Right:** Limited floor space and fixed layout requirements made a creative approach to customer traffic a must. Rotating stock shelves allow the floor plan to open up, giving brewery workers control over traffic flow.





# the value of FUNCTION over FORM

Madhouse Brewery infused with new life

**WORDS:** CHAD TAYLOR

**IMAGES:** CAMERON CAMPBELL, AIA

**ARCHITECT:** SLINGSHOT ARCHITECTURE

When Madhouse Brewery decided to move its operation from Newton to Des Moines, it did so with the goal of greater customer involvement. That meant that its new home needed to not only be eye-catching, but also had to be built with the customer experience in mind.

"They are a functioning brewery, so they had a system in place, in terms of what was connected to what," said Slingshot Architecture's Dan Drendel, AIA, who headed up the project. "But they were adding a public function, in terms of a tasting room, merchandise sales, and ways to bring the public in. The idea is that a patron will come in for a brewery tour, hang out around the merchandise, go through the back of the facility, then come around to the tasting room, and leave back through the merchandise again. So that flow pattern in that small of a space really dictated the location of things.

"For the most part, the beer is in its own sterile environment," Drendel continues, "so our concern was really just being able to clean up after that process. Our designs were fairly pragmatic, in regards to materials."

For Drendel, the biggest challenge the space presented was accommodating the influx of customers without losing sight of

the fact that the space is, first and foremost, industrial. To drive that point home, Drendel's team focused on a function-over-form approach that kept materials simple and honest, while still ensuring that Madhouse's branded aesthetic carried through.

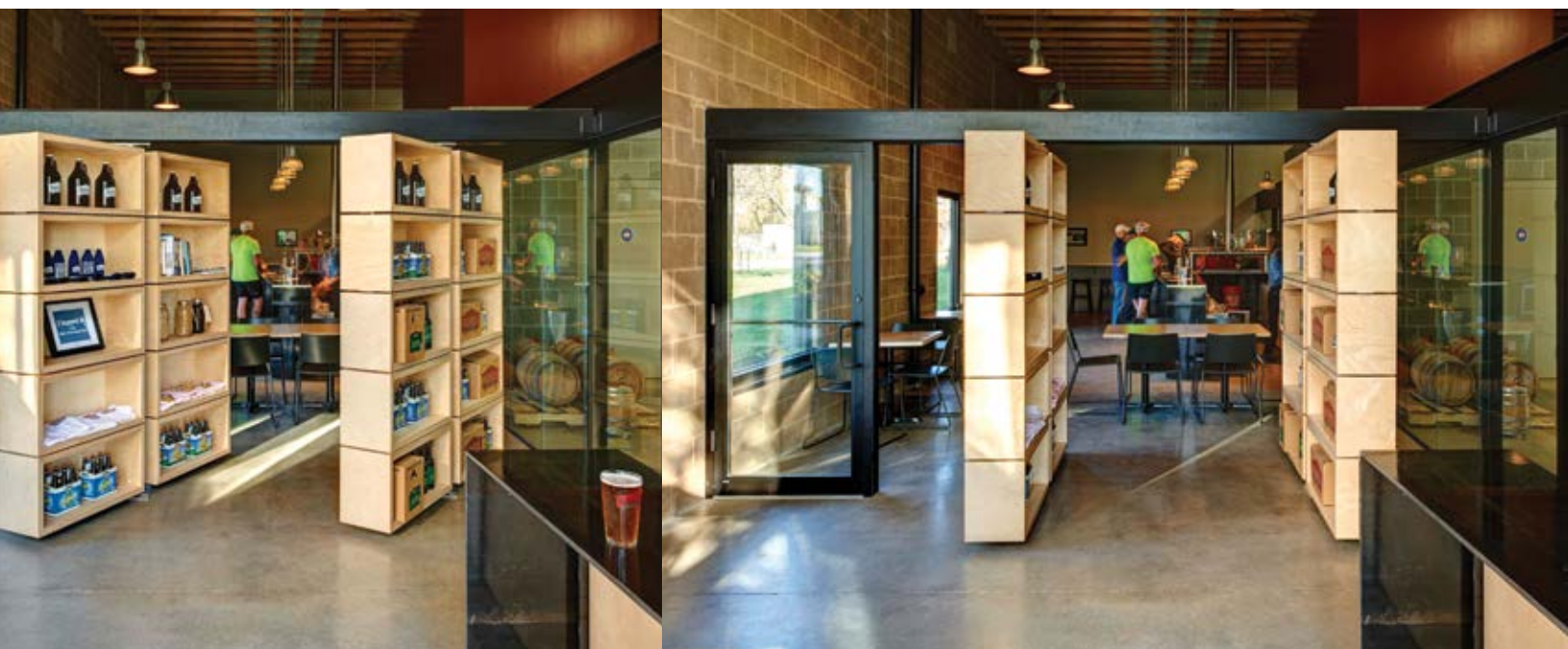
"It's not a bar," Drendel explains. "We wanted to establish the feeling of 'this is where we make stuff.' So the materials are kind of honest. The steel is clear-sealed, the beer is transported through a plain stainless pipe. The biggest thing was to take a very closed-in space and make it feel open. The exterior's black paint scheme makes the building's original openings feel much bigger. We put big glass windows in so everyone knows where the door is, and changed the character of the building. We wanted to make sure that it felt like a brewery first."

On the exterior, the new paint scheme and wall pattern give the building more of a visual pop that announces the brewery's presence at street level. Adding to that effect is the illuminated signage that proclaims the brewery's slogan: "Crazy Good Beer."

"The roofing membrane on the existing wood soffit had failed, so we knew we had to do some extensive repairs there," Drendel says. "So we turned that into a sign element with clear polycarbonate that lights up at night."

Throughout the process, Drendel wanted to ensure that the patron experience was as pleasant as possible without hindering the beer-making process.

"We really put their brand right out on the street, so everyone would know they were there. Using what was there, making the dimensions have big impact, putting a trellis on the outside. Simple stuff."





# Imagine the Possibilities...

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**Location:** Dakota Dunes, SD  
**Contractor:** Brown Wegher Construction  
**Engineer:** KC Engineering, Structural Engineer  
**Photographer:** Chadd Goosmann, Aurora Photography

### Light up the Night 20

**Architect:** Substance Architecture  
**Location:** Des Moines, IA  
**Artist:** Jun Kaneko  
**Photographer:** Paul Crosby

### Steel & Stone 24

**Architect:** M+ Architects  
**Location:** Sioux City, IA  
**Contractor:** W.A. Klinger  
**Engineer:** Performance Engineering  
**Photographer:** Aurora Photography

### Unification Theory 30

**Architect:** Goche Inclusions, LLC  
**Location:** Des Moines, IA  
**Contractor:** McClure Construction  
**Photographer:** Cameron Campbell, AIA  
**Equipment and Furniture:** Projects Contemporary Furniture

### The Value of Function over Form 34

**Architect:** Slingshot Architecture  
**Location:** Des Moines, IA  
**Engineer:** Raker Rhodes Engineering  
**Photographer:** Cameron Campbell, AIA  
**Owner:** SE Bottoms, LLC  
**Steel:** Artistic Iron Works  
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## advertising index


AIA Iowa	28, 37	OPN Architects, Inc.	9
Architectural Wall Systems	13	Pigott, Inc.	36
Black Hills Energy	38	PLaN Architecture	BC
Charles Saul		Projects Contemporary	
Engineering Inc.	15	Furniture	29
Commercial New		Shive-Hattery Architecture	13
Construction	23	Substance Architecture	IBC
Confluence	15	The Weidt Group	15
Historic Park Inn	11	Tometch Engineering, Inc.	37
IEDA	14	United Brick and Tile	IFC
Iowa State Center	22	Wells Concrete	36
Liz Lidgett	37		
Masonry Institute of Iowa	6		
Neumann Monson			
Architects	4		

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