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SPRING 1990

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Lobby materials and colors were chosen to enhance a postal mural painted in 1941 that hangs in the new Howell, Michigan post office.
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What Is A Small Town?

In a recent telephone conversation with a fellow architect who lives in Marquette, the topic of small towns came up. The question posed to me was whether or not Marquette was considered a small town. My immediate reaction was how could Marquette be categorized as anything but a small town? I lived in Marquette for eleven years and had my architectural practice there prior to moving to Ann Arbor five years ago. But when one considers that it is the largest town in the Upper Peninsula, that it is the “hub” of the medical and university communities, and that the next town in Michigan of equal or greater size is almost 400 miles away, it is difficult, especially for Marquette residents, to consider it a “small town.”

This question concerning Marquette’s status as a small town made me ponder the question — What exactly is a small town?

The general conception in my mind was that a small town was anything in the State of Michigan other than Metro Detroit, and possibly Grand Rapids, Lansing and Flint. Having grown up in a large metropolitan area myself, Cleveland, I have noticed that many of our cities and towns in Michigan have a distinct small town “feel.” This feeling is characterized by a place where everyone knows everyone else, a main street which is the center of activity, a real community spirit, a more “laid-back” attitude away from the hustle of the mainstream, etc.

As you can imagine, everyone has their own definitions of what a small town really is. The bureaucrats simply attach a number, like 50,000 or 100,000, and use that as the ultimate guideline. Some would conjure in their minds the categories of urban, suburban, rural, village, etc., and attempt a classification based strictly on terminology. Well — I guess you can see the difficulty we as the editorial committee experienced when reviewing submissions for an issue featuring “Small Towns!”

There are architectural firms which practice in small town settings and others whose clients are small towns or small town businesses or individuals. One thing is certainly clear and that is working or living in a “small town” is a unique experience for architects today. There is a great sense of accomplishment and pride associated with work in a small town. We hope that this issue reflects the small town image that you conjure up when asked, “What is a small town?”

Lincoln Poley, AIA
Barrier Free Design Law

Marc Therrien, AIA

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A If the change affected less than 50 percent of the existing floor area, only the changed area and a barrier free route to it, from and including the nearest entrance, would be required to be barrier free.

If the change affected 50 percent or more of the existing floor area, the entire facility would be required to be barrier free. Rules pertaining to the existing areas of the building are less stringent than those for new areas.

Q What if my situation is unique, and compliance is a hardship?
A At the time this standard was enacted Michigan lawmakers recognized that at times the standard could present difficulty to building owners. So, at the same time the standard was enacted, the Legislature also created the Barrier Free Design Board and authorized the Board as the only agency in the state with the authority to grant exceptions (variances) to the barrier free design requirements.

The law specifically prohibits any person in the state from granting an exception to the barrier free design requirements, except for the Barrier Free Design Board.
In order for the Barrier Free Design Board to consider a request for exception (variance) a formal application must be submitted.

The exception process is a lengthy one and should be applied for well in advance of applying for a building permit.

Q What must I do to comply with the law?

A Regardless of whether an exception is needed or not, the law requires that a plan review be conducted for proposed construction and renovation and that compliance with the Barrier Free Design requirements be provided for prior to any building permits being issued. Your licensed architect is obligated to review the Barrier Free Design Law and conform to its requirements.

(Reprinted from Bureau of Construction Codes — Barrier Free Design Division, Barrier Free Design Graphics (June 1987).)

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— by Roger K. Lewis, FAIA

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Schematic

schematic: adj. pertaining to the nature of a schema, diagram, or scheme; diagrammatic; n. a diagram, plan, or drawing.
schema: an underlying organizational pattern or structure, conceptual framework.
scheme: a plan, design or program of action to be followed.

Successful in meeting aesthetic, spatial and economic goals. It is important for the client to recognize that the final project will evolve from this schematic design and the client’s understanding and approval of the schematic design is essential.

Thus, the term “schematic” literally refers to a physical set of drawings and documents defining the building’s design, but it also connotes an important phase of the professional services provided by the architect, a significant step in the process of transferring building needs into real structures.

In our next issue of “Jargon,” we will examine another of those words or phrases you have always wanted to know but were afraid to ask about. If you, our readers, have specific words you would like to have explained, write to “Jargon,” c/o Place Magazine, Michigan Society of Architects, 553 E. Jefferson Avenue, Detroit, MI 49226.

Jim Shane, AIA

Place magazine’s ongoing effort to demystify the language of architectural practice, we dug into the tail end of a building project with our examination of “Punch List.” This time we take a term from early project stages, a relatively common word, but one with a specific connotation in the architectural process.

The standard Random House definition of “schematic,” given above, is clear enough. But as we said earlier, the dictionary definition does not tell all. In addition, “schematic” is not the exclusive property of the architect. An electronics bug refers to a “schematic” to trace circuitry in a stereo or video set, and the instruction manual for my furnace labels as a “schematic” view a drawing providing parts and assembly information.

To the architect, however, “schematics” (or “schematic drawings”) are the product of an intensive design phase. The dictionary definition describes this process quite appropriately, albeit not completely.

During the Schematic Design Phase, the architect translates the client’s building needs or program into physical building form. Space and area relationships, building shape, size and exterior appearance are explored and alternate approaches to design and construction are reviewed with the client.

At the end of this process, “schematics” are submitted to the client for formal approval, and generally include site and floor plans, exterior views, outlines of materials and systems to be used, preliminary cost estimates and other illustrative materials such as models or drawings needed to present the concept.

This meshes well with the dictionary definition. The schematics clearly present the conceptual framework of the project and the designs or program of action to be followed. But, beyond the dictionary definition, “schematics” are also a contractual milestone and cannot be underemphasized if the project is to be successful.
THE MARQUETTE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Marquette, sitting on the shores of Lake Superior and once titled the "Queen City of the North," is the regional center of the Upper Peninsula.

The Marquette Area Chamber of Commerce is an active participant in area services as an informational center to travelers as well as a center for business development. The Chamber's original building was constructed in the 1960s and, since the building presents one of the first images of Marquette a tourist sees, in 1986 it was felt by the Chamber that an expanded welcome and information center was needed. The addition to the building that was decided on is only approximately 380 square feet but has transformed the space considerably. The steep gable form that can be seen throughout Marquette welcomes approaching visitors. A small park to the south of the building was reworked to provide additional parking as well as much needed recreational vehicle access and parking, while maintaining most of the park monuments, vegetation and benches.

The project, funded by a small state equity grant and local donations, was constructed by subcontractors from throughout the area. The architect served as construction manager and all of the work was completed within the anticipated budget. Today, the completed project has become a source of community pride and has resulted in increased tourist stops and a growth in Chamber membership.

Marquette Chamber of Commerce
Architect: Barry J. Polzin, AIA
Marquette, Michigan
Owner: Marquette Area Chamber of Commerce
Photography: Barry J. Polzin
In 1985, Whirlpool purchased the Washington School for use as an administration center for its KitchenAid Division.

BACK TO SCHOOL

Prominently located on Main Street in downtown St. Joseph, Michigan, Washington School was a particularly beautiful facility with a long history and close ties to many in this small town. Originally, a 1937 Works Progress Administration Building, the three-story, 29,000-square-foot structure was the third school on the site. When it was closed in 1983 due to declining student enrollment, the community lost its symbol of 125 years of education.

In 1985, the Whirlpool Corporation, headquartered in adjoining Benton Harbor, purchased the school for use as an administrative center for its KitchenAid division. The decision, spearheaded by Washington School graduate and Whirlpool's then chairman and CEO Jack D. Sparks, rescued the building from potential demolition, added a previously tax-exempt facility to the tax rolls, and created 85 permanent jobs for the community in the bargain.

Whirlpool commissioned Albert Kahn Associates (AKA), a Detroit architectural and engineering firm, and the Lathrop Company, a Toledo construction management company, to proceed on an adaptive reuse basis, which maintained the building's architectural integrity while it replaced the mechanical and electrical systems, allowing the building to comply with contemporary code requirements.

Design and construction proceeded concurrently, based on a guaranteed maximum price Lathrop prepared from AKA's preliminary design. Purchasing custom materials and selecting craftsmen uniquely tailored to the project was driven by Whirlpool's desire to preserve the character of the school wherever possible. For example, Pewabic Pottery in Detroit was commissioned to research and duplicate the original ceramic tile glaze.

Subtle exterior changes included cleaning the elaborate limestone moldings and refurbishing the copper light fixtures. Although the continues
Custom materials and craftsmen were used to preserve the character of the school wherever possible.

green asbestos shingles resembling slate were replaced with real slate, the roof’s crowning glory remains a copper cupola and weather vane depicting a schoolboy at his desk with his dog nearby.

Five shades of brick used to construct a 1,300-square-foot addition were obtained from several sources, hand sorted, then laid in a pattern duplicating the original. New rooftop air handling equipment was concealed behind a brick screen wall. Aluminum windows from a previous remodeling were replaced with aluminum-clad wood windows in the original cream color.

The entrance was converted to a semicircular terrace enclosed by a limestone wall connecting the existing stone piers. Employees now use the north and south entrances, where new vestibules were created using custom oak doors, sidelights, and arched transoms which match the original entrance.

Interior remodeling was more dramatic. Lockers and walls separating the classrooms from the central corridor were replaced with arched openings and common walls between the classrooms were removed to create open office space. Slate chalkboards, oak moldings, doors and cabinetry were salvaged and relocated. Selected classrooms featuring generous bay windows were converted to executive offices.

The building’s many ornate interior details — ceramic tile wainscoting punctured with “picture tiles,” terrazzo floors, drinking fountain alcoves lined with ceramic tile in colorful sunburst patterns, and a cast plaster animal frieze in the center vestibule — were carefully preserved.

The jewel of the school is the kindergarten, now restored to its original condition and used as the lobby and product display area. Lined with knotty pine paneling, the room features a linoleum floor inlaid with a compass and al-
The Kindergarten features a linoleum floor inlaid with a compass and a fireplace faced with tile in a blazing fire pattern.

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Architect: Albert Kahn Associates, Inc. Architects and Engineers Detroit, Michigan
Owner: Whirlpool Corporation
Photography: Beth Singer, Photographers, Inc.
For many years, the Howell Post Office had been an important civic and economic anchor in downtown Howell, Michigan. When lack of space in the existing facility necessitated the construction of a new post office, community interests lobbied strongly and effectively to keep the post office in the downtown area and to assure that the new building was responsive to Howell's longstanding, small town, midwestern architectural heritage.

In approaching the design of the new post office, there were several goals and requirements that had to be addressed: it had to continue to play a role as a major civic building in the downtown area; serve as a gateway building when approaching the city from the south; relate to the traditional and historical midwestern small town environment; provide a technically state-of-the-art postal facility that would include high-energy efficiency and low maintenance and provide a fitting showcase for displaying the restored “Rural Delivery” mural that was to be relocated from the existing post office.

What resulted was a 12,000-square-foot post office that uses siting, form and choice of materials to relate to the small community's historic fabric. The new facility is located on the site of the former Howell High School, two blocks from the center of town. The building is situated on the center of the site and oriented on an axis perpendicular to the main street frontage. The pitched metal roof form, the barrel vaulted entries, and the brick and limestone exterior were all chosen to harmonize with the surrounding civic and residential buildings, creating a small town, mid-America feeling. The pitched roof's gable end, with an arched glass entry vestibule below, combine to form a strong “civic” facade.

A continuous high bay clerestory is used to bring daylight to the workroom and lobby, enhancing the atmosphere and energy efficiency of these spaces, and providing an ideal location in the lobby for the 1941 postal mural, which was restored in 1985 for this project. It is hung directly opposite the arched vestibule, making it clearly visible upon entering the building.
One of the goals of the design for the new Post Office was to provide a showcase for a restored postal mural.

A continuous high bay clerestory is used to bring daylight to the workroom and lobby.

and, when illuminated in the evening, it is visible from the street through the glass archway.

Lobby materials and colors were chosen to complement and enhance the mural. The lobby floor is a quarry tile with a glazed inset tile and walls are painted gyp board. Counters and writing tables are custom designed.

Major program spaces in the post office include the public lobby and lockbox area, a workroom with adjacent support areas, and separate exterior truck and letter carrier loading areas. ▼

Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
Landscape Architect: Fred Veresh, Pinnacle Landscaping
General Contractor: ARTCO Contracting, Inc.
Photography: Balthazar Korab
Architects do down­
towns... and small towns... and street­
scapes, and landscapes. In recent times, more
and more communities are looking to architec­
tural firms to help set directions for their physi­
cal environment. The methods employed by
many towns are similar in outline: the ar­
chitects, landscape architects and planners of
the firm's team inventory existing conditions,
look for patterns and opportunities and pro­
vide guidance as to how to best realize the
town's potential as a place. The key to the suc­
cess of these efforts is in finding ways that in­
cremental changes can move the community's
built environment toward future goals. Anoth­
er key is the consensus-building which this
planning process brings. Planning guidance,
combined with the momentum that consensus
provides, carries through the plans developed.

On the following pages we will look at three
communities and the directions taken in plan­
ing their built futures. Cherry Hill, Holland
and Rochester, Michigan are outstanding exam­
pies of community vi­sion and a pro-active
approach. Ranging in
population from Cherry
Hill's 200 to Holland's
26,000, these are truly
Michigan small towns.
Their concerns and ap­
proaches are instruc­
tive. We'll let each tell
their own story.
Brian K. Craig, AIA

Cherry Hill
Preservation Plan

This small crossroads hamlet is located in
the western portion of Canton Township, near
Detroit. The residents of Cherry Hill, and the
township government in general, expressed a
desire to preserve the agricultural character of
the Cherry Hill community while not shutting
out development completely and commissioned the firms of Quinn Evans/Architects and Norman Tyler Architect to survey the historical resources in the community and propose a preservation plan to address these concerns.

Cherry Hill has remained pretty much the same for over one hundred years. The Methodist Church, first established in 1834 by the community's earliest settlers, still forms the center of social life. The cemetery next to it represents the history of Cherry Hill's families. A one-room brick schoolhouse, first built in 1876 and enlarged by Henry Ford, is now used as a community center. Thus, although Cherry Hill is small, with a population of about 200, it has the elements which make it an excellent representative of a rural hamlet type of community.

The Preservation Plan, developed by Quinn Evans/Architects, proposes a three-layer protection plan. The first layer is the establishment of a historic district which includes all the significant historic structures and sites in Cherry Hill.

The second layer would establish a buffer area of farmland around the community, extending approximately 40 acres in each quadrant, which would keep an agricultural backdrop for the immediate area.

The third layer in the proposal was an innovative zoning scheme for the areas beyond this buffer area which would encourage cluster housing schemes, rather than the more typical track schemes.

The Cherry Hill Preservation Plan represents an effort to recognize and preserve elements that represent the township, once known as "The Sweet-Corn Capital of the World." It suggests a reasonable resolution to the development/preservation conflicts inherent in such an area of growth.

Architect: Quinn Evans/Architects
Ann Arbor, Michigan
Historical Architectural Survey: Norman Tyler Architect
Ann Arbor, Michigan
The Alleys of Rochester

Incorporated as a city in 1864, Rochester, Michigan has managed to maintain its small downtown character for over 125 years while suburban sprawl has engulfed it. People from surrounding communities as well as local residents are attracted to what this small city has to offer. The Downtown Development Authority, established in 1982, has directed its efforts towards preservation, revitalization, and enhancement of the downtown district. An Alley Master Plan, prepared by Schervish Vogel Merz, PC for the alleys behind Main Street, is yet another step the DDA has taken to encourage more activity downtown.

The goal of all involved in the design process was to create a Master Plan that would accommodate the functional needs of the businesses and promote the aesthetic potential for a more pedestrian-oriented alley. The exploration of an architectural facade and streetscape improvements, keeping in mind land use requirements, led to a Master Plan that visually unifies the Rochester Alleys for pedestrians and vehicles alike. A historic theme, for both the architecture and site furnishings, was selected to be compatible with the existing environment. Form, scale, color and materials are coordinated to optimize visual harmony and identity.

Many key recommendations are incorporated in the Alley Master Plan, such as burying overhead utilities, upgrading the utility infrastructure, and reducing the amount and speed of traffic in the alleys by establishing a one-way traffic flow. Organizing public parking access and establishing a common identification system, discouraging employee parking in alleys, coordinating waste management locations, and providing delivery pull-off zones for trucks for shared groups of businesses, together form the overall scheme. Rear architectural improvements will be encouraged for entries of privately owned businesses adjacent to the alleys. The Alley Master Plan will compliment Rochester’s well established small town character, encourage downtown patronage, and unite the downtown district core.
Holland STREETSCAPE and Centennial Park Pavilion

Holland, Michigan is a community of old-world charm and new-world spirit. Its unique Dutch heritage blends an affection for timeless beauty with an inclination toward innovation. At the heart of Holland, its downtown area has long been the center of both commerce and culture, retaining the flavor of another era while “modernizing” for convenience.

Recently, however, successful retail centers in the City’s outskirts threatened encroachment upon this popular area. In response, a funding program was developed to study, plan and execute downtown improvements. In 1986, Mainstreet Holland was formed to recommend and implement a Master Plan.

The project came to be known as Holland STREETSCAPE, with a plan to accommodate five goals: 1) enhance the traditional and historic character of downtown Holland; 2) integrate divergent building styles; 3) clarify and control vehicular direction and pedestrian movements; 4) connect the prime project area with adjoining Hope College, historic residential districts, the downtown Centennial Park and the waterfront edge; and 5) provide a suitable setting for the vast resources of the yearly Tulip Festival.

The primary objective of overall beautification was achieved by creating an integrated theme that centered on designing a turn-of-the-century, traditional style into each STREETSCAPE plan was one of overall beautification while maintaining its old-world charm.
SCAPE detail. Pedestrian lights, similar to those found in the 1920s, were made of cast iron, intricately detailed and capped with the familiar large luminaires of the era. The lighting fixtures, in turn, matched banner poles and control bollards, each dotting brick pedestrian walkways at regular intervals. The modular brick pavers and limestone-capped brick walls give a warmth and charm to walking through STREETSCAPE. Single and group benches also absorbed the design flavor, with wrought iron supports and slatted wood seating reminiscent of parks from the early 1900s. Holland's famous passion for lush flowering gardens was incorporated into a series of classic-looking flower pots and flower beds, which border the sidewalks and pedestrian travel. Trash receptacles bear traces of the early century, with their lean, sculptured, black metal appearance.

As STREETSCAPE gained momentum, it became a catalyst for additional community projects. One such project was the construction of the new pavilion in the central downtown park, called Centennial Park. This area, designed in the Victorian style, circa 1876, is designated as a historic place.

The pavilion is located near the location of the park's original wooden bandstand, which was destroyed by fire at the beginning of the 20th century. Consequently, one important parameter was to design the new pavilion with noncombustible materials.

The design is a direct response to the Victorian character of the park and its environs. Elements such as a delicate wrought-iron railing and decorative glazed brick were used to evoke the Victorian era. The architects coordinated details and materials on the pavilion with the STREETSCAPE improvements to strengthen the consistent treatment of the renewed downtown district.

The pavilion incorporates public toilets and a storage room on the lower level and a public stage on the upper level. An indication of the community support for this project is evidenced by the efforts of the Holland Home Builder's Association, whose members volunteered their time and materials to construct the pavilion.

Frank Lloyd Wright On Brick
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Architect: M.C. Smith Architectural Group, Inc.
East Grand Rapids, Michigan
The need to modernize, to expand, to bring up to code, to remodel or to build anew are problems that are faced nearly every day by the governing bodies of large and small cities alike across the United States.

However, when a small town council faces these dilemmas, its challenge, many times, is compounded because of the need to retain the specific character and charm that is found in the community where the project will be built or altered.

The solutions to these challenges are usually left to the architectural firm that is contracted to design the alteration.

Five projects from five different small towns were chosen for inclusion in this issue. The way each challenge was met by the same architectural firm and the beautiful results are what follows.

The Foote House

The Henry K. Foote House, located in Milford, Michigan, is a 3,500-square-foot landmark brick Greek Revival residence built in the 1840s. The building was enlarged in the 1870s with a handsome Gothic wing, and added to again in the 1880s with a more utilitarian extension to the rear. The great grandson of the home's original owner reoccupied the house in 1982 with the specific intent to restore it to single-family use.

Project work included writing a National Register nomination for the property (the house was listed on the Register in the spring of 1985), preparing historic preservation tax certification applications, preparing an existing condition report, and providing contract documents for restoration of the exterior (including recreation of several missing porches and the

SPRING 1990 * PLACE

20
The Foote House has been restored to its original 1840s appearance with all the comforts of a 1980s residence.

Architect: Architects Four, Inc.
Ann Arbor, Michigan
Photography: Doug Larime

Milan City Hall and Police Station

The Milan, Michigan City Hall is a 7,000-square-foot building which, along with the new police station, completes the Library Government/Public Safety complex. It provides a 75-person auditorium for City Council and other meetings; an administrative office wing of 3,500-square feet and ancillary spaces such as public meeting and conference rooms, toilet rooms, and expansion spaces. The new City Hall is attached to the existing 2,000-square-foot City Hall, which is a historic power station.

The new Milan Police Station totals 9,000 square feet and provides the 20-person department with public spaces, offices and conference rooms, the communications (dispatch) area; the secure sallyport; booking, cells and interview rooms; and officer areas such as lockers and squad room, all of which are located on the ground floor. The basement contains exercise training and mechanical/storage rooms.

The facility is self-contained and provides up-to-date security, communications and functional requirements. It is located near, but not immediately adjacent to City Hall.

The entire governmental complex is located overlooking the Saline River.
The Boulevard Inn

This historic Tecumseh, Michigan home was built in 1848 (Greek Revival portion) and added to in 1888 (Italianate). It was later divided into apartments and had been allowed to deteriorate severely. The owners have converted it into a Bed and Breakfast Inn and a private residence for themselves and their two children. The exterior of the building was restored to its Victorian splendor and the interior completely renovated to accommodate the comfort of guests and family members alike.

Architect: Architects Four, Inc.
Ann Arbor, Michigan
Photography: Doug Larime
Zingerman's Deli

Zingerman's is a very popular delicatessen located on a very small site in Ann Arbor, Michigan's historic Fourth Ward. The owner decided to remodel in order to increase the efficiency of the operation, to improve customer service and to increase the number of products for sale.

Remodeling eventually expanded to include an addition, restoration of the original highly-detailed brick exterior, and renovation of the original interior.

The exterior of the 750-square-foot addition was designed to complement the original building, yet add contemporary detailing and identification of entry. The rusticated brick banding was continued from the original facade and a limestone pediment, with "Zingerman's" sandblasted into it, was included at the new entry. Glazed block was added as trim and color.

Architect: Architects Four, Inc.
Ann Arbor, Michigan
Consultants: James Partridge Associates
(Mechanical & Electrical)
Photography: Fred Golden

Lapeer City Hall

A reuse study for this historic City Hall in Lapeer, Michigan was prepared by the architect in 1982 and its recommendations have now been implemented.

Existing inappropriate additions at the rear of the building were removed and replaced by a new addition that contains restrooms, office space, a second stairway, an elevator, employee lounge and public entry/lobby space.

The original existing building and early additions were completely rehabilitated to provide first-rate contemporary offices and services. The exterior of the original building was restored to its 1880s appearance. Additional parking has been provided at the rear of the building, along with a new, landscaped plaza, establishing an attractive and dignified presence at the entrance to downtown Lapeer.

Architect: Architects Four, Inc.
Ann Arbor, Michigan
Consultants: James Partridge Associates (Mechanical & Electrical)
Robert Darvas Associates (Structural)
Trompe L'Oeil Architecture by William "The Great Karnac" Kessler

Livingston County Courthouse in Howell, Michigan
Architect: Albert French
Restoration: William Kessler

Courthouse Office Annex
Architect: William Kessler
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- SMACNA CONTRACTORS customize the air handling system for your specific requirements.
- SMACNA CONTRACTORS provide shop drawings so other mechanical trades can properly install their work.
- SMACNA CONTRACTORS coordinate the assignment of other mechanical services without jeopardizing your control over separate bids.
- SMACNA CONTRACTORS are leaders in the field, continuously researching for better and more efficient ways to offer Mechanical Air Handling services.

SMACNA CONTRACTORS believe it is our responsibility to give our customers our most competitive price, performance, quality and efficiency. If that's what you need, give us a call.

3221 W. Big Beaver Rd.
Suite 305
Troy, MI 48084-2896
(313) 649-5450
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