Summer Destinations

A new slant on cabin living

COVER: MADELINE ISLAND RETREAT, PAGE 22
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Is Fort Snelling’s long-neglected Upper Post any closer to making a comeback? “The Upper Post’s locational amenities may make the site attractive to any number of potential developers,” writes Camille LeFevre. “But those buff-and red-brick buildings . . . present considerable challenges, and opportunities, to anyone with an overall vision for the site.” That’s because any adaptive reuse of the ailing structures hinges on the resolution of complex ownership and land-use-designation issues.
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Many of the building projects we highlight in Architecture Minnesota are notable for their large size, the complexity of their program, and their bold or respectful response to their urban, suburban, or campus setting.

Gleaming corporate headquarters, towering medical centers, bustling mixed-use residential—these multidimensional buildings reveal architects working at the height of their powers. But, I must say, it’s been immensely enjoyable for those of us at the magazine to turn our attention to a modest building type: the weekend cabin. If there is an overarching theme to this issue, it is this: Good things do indeed come in small packages.

Cabins are written in our collective DNA here in Minnesota, and for that we should be thankful. They’re an antidote to modern life with its 60-hour workweeks, hour-long commutes, and six-minute meals on the go. Cabins invite us to slow our pace, soak in the cool woods and the shimmering lake, and, most important, savor the company of family and friends. And the respite they offer doesn’t end on the Sunday drive home—daydreams of the next escape help lower our blood pressure in the workaday world.

The list of virtues doesn’t end there. How about sustainability? So much of what we deem eco-friendly design is fundamental to the intimate getaway. David Salmela’s Roland Cabins (page 38), for example, take pains not to disturb the forest floor, with the significantly redesigned main cabin maintaining the original footprint and reusing many of the original materials. Albertsson Hansen Architecture’s Cable Lake Guest Cabin (page 36), an inspired renovation of a tiny boathouse and sleeping room, is proof that a few hundred square feet of well-designed space is all that one or two people really need in a cabin. Both projects promote a scaling back of energy use and material needs, and show us that life size may be a little smaller than we think.

The endeavor to build a small shelter in the woods often yields adventurous design as well, in part because owners want out-of-the-ordinary visual connections to the surrounding landscape. That was certainly the case with Julie Snow’s own arresting minimalist Weekend House (page 28) on the North Shore of Lake Superior and SALA Architects cofounder Dale Mullinger’s inventive Madeline Island Retreat (page 22), which the owners enthusiastically refer to as a “glass tent.” But why stop at transparency when you can opt for open-air? Ghost (page 17), an annual midsummer design/build event in Nova Scotia, ups the ante by producing a sanctuary of cabin-sized structures designed and constructed to interpret the maritime landscape rather than keep out the wind and rain. (Some of the structures were later finished to house participants during their two-week stay.)

Best of all, architect-designed cabins can be affordable. Swan+Simmons Architecture’s contemporary Swan Fish Camp (page 34), for example, boasts the comfort and finish of a luxury home at only $150 per square foot. A less sophisticated (though no less inspired) shelter would obviously be even more affordable. If you’re a fresh-air enthusiast who’s always wanted to work with an architect, a small cabin project—whether it’s a new cabin or a renovation—might just be the place to start. Owners of architect-designed getaways will tell you it’s a path worth exploring, with many pleasing discoveries along the way. And that the view from the trail’s end simply can’t be beat.

Christopher Hudson
hudson@aiamn.org
The Minnesota Zoo *Russia's Grizzly Coast* exhibit attracts visitors from around the world and our own back yard. As the builder of this extraordinary exhibit, we are proud to reflect our commitment to sustainable construction. The next time you plan to break ground, let us be a part of your valuable journey.

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Great Debates | WHAT HAPPENED TO HERZOG?  Posted by John Dwyer, AIA

Two weeks ago, I had the chance to run around the Tate Modern in London and gasp at all of the brilliantly elegant details that seemed to fill every corner. Even a back utility stair (shown here) has a clean resolution to the continuous handrail, which also incorporates the stair's lighting. It's beautiful in its simplicity of form and purity of function.

On the ground floor were the plans for its expansion, a confused sculpture of completely inefficient forms. And I couldn't help but wonder what happened. How did Herzog & de Meuron go from the Tate, a monument to simple forms, innovative skins, and elegant functionality to the Walker and the Tate addition—the latter a mix of confused and unnecessarily complicated sculptures with a circulation system right out of an M.C. Escher drawing? Is this the natural evolution of a small, rigorous studio into a large international firm?

In Plain Sight | TCAAP  Posted by Brandon Stengel, Assoc. AIA

It's only fitting that the "nature overlook" at the edge of the now-abandoned Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP) would have all the subtleties that come with federally owned land. Barbied-wire fence? Check. Twelve-foot-wide asphalt "wilderness trail"? Check. Propaganda-laced signage? You bet.

However, as the proverbial wheels of government inch forward, an impressive era of reuse awaits these 2,400 acres. Plans are shaping up to finally return this rolling, wild, unkempt swath of Arden Hills to public use with bike trails, ski areas, and habitat restoration.

Now Open | BURNSVILLE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER  Posted by Brandon Stengel, Assoc. AIA

As the centerpiece of the controversial $150 million Heart of the City redevelopment, the Burnsville Performing Arts Center sits amid an ongoing battle that seems to pit urban against suburban, foresight against short-term concerns, and—perhaps most infuriating—art against economy. Elegantly designed by Ankeny Kill Architects, the 1,000-seat BPAC has, so far, only attracted attention because of its $20 million price tag and the politics behind its approval.

Is it fair to cry foul when a showy (and color-changing) cultural destination opens its doors in such a bitter economic climate? The planning process, after all, began three years ago. Can we predict BPAC's viability before the paint has been given a chance to dry? Will its design affect either of those questions?
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Head south to Red Wing for an enchanting excursion to one of Minnesota's best-known historical getaways  

PICTURE THE PAST

Culture enthusiasts and historians alike revel in the offerings of Red Wing, Minnesota, named one of the Top Historic Destinations in the World by National Geographic's Traveler magazine, as well as one of the Dozen Distinctive Destinations 2008 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Featuring such architecturally significant structures as the historic Red Wing Depot, designed by railroad company architect J.M. Netterstrom; the Blodgett Memorial Gateway at Oakwood Cemetery, designed by Minnesota architect Clarence Johnston; the handsomely restored Sheldon Theatre, originally built in 1904; and the 1875 Italianate St. James Hotel, designed by the Minneapolis firm of E.P. Bassford, this southeastern Minnesota jewel, located just one hour from the Twin Cities, is definitely worth the drive. —Ann Kohler

Concerts in the Park
www.redwingartsassociation.org/concerts.htm

Dubbed Red Wing's "Community Living Room," Central Park hosts an array of summer concerts in a serene setting every Wednesday at 7 P.M. during the month of July. These free concerts, showcasing big band, country, folk, blues, and brass band music, draw crowds from all around to a site that was once home to the original Hamline University building. Previously housing just two small structures—a south balustrade wall and a north bandstand—the park now features a new band shell, a gracious gift from the Jones Family Foundation, to be dedicated on July 4—just in time for the city's annual Independence Day celebration.

Wacipi Celebration
www.prairieisland.org

Hosted by the Prairie Island Indian Community, Red Wing's annual Wacipi Celebration Powwow is a must-attend for visitors looking to delve into the community's cultural heritage. Organized to celebrate life and family, as well as to honor dignitaries, royalty, and the Mdewakanton culture, this sacred gathering, held July 10-12 this year, features dancers, drummers, traditional regalia, authentic Native American foods, handcrafted jewelry, tools, artwork, and more.

Red Wing Arts Association Garden Tour
www.redwingartsassociation.org/garden_tour.htm

To see what makes Red Wing such a special place to live or visit, take a self-guided walk through the themed gardens of extraordinary Queen Anne, Classical Revival, and Prairie Style homes, on the Red Wing Arts Association Garden Tour, held this year on July 12. Local master gardeners will be on hand at each site to answer any plant-specific questions, while live music will allow visitors to get lost in the moment.

River City Days
www.rivercitydays.org

No event showcases the true spirit of this thriving river-bluff town better than River City Days, Red Wing's annual community festival. The three-day celebration, taking place this year from July 31 to August 2, includes activities ranging from the ever-popular Taste of Red Wing to a Venetian Boat Parade. Before heading home, be sure to pick up a one-of-a-kind Red Wing treasure at the city's regionally renowned arts and craft show.
MASONRY SOLUTIONS FOR EFFICIENT, EXPRESSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The Regis Center for Art building establishes a new entrance to the West Bank Arts Quarter at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Durable clay brick was an obvious choice for this university facility conceived to provide multiple centuries of service. The tectonic use of brick by MS&R in a skewed brick corbel with attendant details at windows and corners helps celebrate brick as a unique, plastic material when sculpturally detailed. The architect has also designed the brick surface for mounting works of art on a regular grid of structurally imbedded toggles to allow attaching or anchoring exterior works or graphic signs. The brick surfaces were especially conducive to provide that support and to be durable and readily cleanable surfaces against which temporary works could rest.
Cabin Mate

Thinking of building, buying, or revamping a cabin? One little book has everything you need to consider before you get started.

CABINLOGY
By Dale Mulfinger, Taunton Press, 2008

If, like any Minnesotan with chainsaw lubricant coursing through his veins, you’ve harbored a dream of having your own north-woods cabin on the shores of an undiscovered lake, communing with red-eyed loons over morning coffee while listening to the wind whistle through the pines; and if you later decided to set the fantasy aside because of firsthand experience with septic-tank pumping, dock maintenance, window-screen repair, and gravel driveway regrading, I warn you: Do not read Cabinology!

Authored by architect Dale Mulfinger, FAIA, Minnesota’s master of the woodsy vernacular, the tiny tome should come with an FDA label alerting readers to its highly addictive nature. Give Mulfinger half an hour, and he’ll lull you with his easy-breezy, avuncular prose into believing that a cabin is not just a nifty weekend getaway but a spiritual necessity.

Like that moon-eyed puppy at the pound who stole your heart and got chauffeured to the pet store to pick out a new collar when you were “only looking,” Cabinology can turn even the firmest cabin skeptic into a flannel-wearing, knotty-pined believer. And the best part? You can savor all of the joys of cabin ownership by proxy, in the safety of your own home.

But set aside enough time to really get into the zone. You’ll find yourself transfixed by a photo of an ordinary porch railing, its white paint flaking. You’ll wonder at the simplicity of cabin construction, explained in plainspoken and bite-sized paragraphs. You’ll even find yourself drawn to the rustic notion of a rickety little outhouse perched over a hole in the ground. “Why, I could dig that hole in a weekend!” you’ll exclaim out loud to your partner/spouse/dog.

Mulfinger scraps the linear step-by-step format found in other Taunton Press offerings to create a book that is all rumination. Accordingly, each spread is arranged as a patchwork of photos, sketches, personal recollections, inspirational words from the likes of Whitman and Yeats, and snappy, instructional sidebar commentary that, in the following example, borders on the Norman Rockwell-esque: “While sitting on your deck, you’ll want the best view possible to the lake below, especially when your kids or grandkids are playing on the beach.”

The book’s six chapters (and topics) each move from general concept to intimate detail. Each nugget of insight or information and each Cabin Story (penned by one of many guest contributors) is discrete and whole and can be digested and enjoyed without prologue or summary conclusions. Mulfinger crafted Cabinology to subvert the task-driven or otherwise methodical way we read operating manuals and Russian novels. Like a day at the lake, the book encourages spontaneity and rambling. It doesn’t strive to make you a better person—just, for a moment here and there, a happier one.

—Phillip Glenn Koski, AIA
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Since it opened its doors in 1991, model-making firm Feyereisen Studios has bucked the trend of fly-through animations, crystalline renderings, and other gorgeous 2-D visuals that architects often produce. Instead, the firm built its reputation on delicate and detailed models that reside in protective glass cases—that is, until the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) asked Bob Feyereisen, Assoc. AIA, to build a model that would also serve the blind and people with low vision. That model, of a proposed conversion of the Stillwater Lift Bridge to a pedestrian and bicycle crossing by SEH Inc., marked the first time that Feyereisen was asked to create a model for an audience who would never see it—except with their hands.

"There has been a great effort made, especially on public projects, to incorporate principles of Universal Design [design that is accessible to all, regardless of ability or disability] into the planning phase," says Feyereisen. This is a welcome trend, because, for the 21 million U.S. citizens with significant vision loss (more than a million of whom are legally blind), no amount of digital or glossy rendering will include them in the design process.

Feyereisen Studios, along with blind consultants Jo Taliaferro and Ken Rodgers, reconsidered each part of the model from the perspective of those with limited or no vision—and thus turned their task into an exercise for the greater good. "The fee was absolutely fixed," says Feyereisen, "but we ended up spending three times as many hours as we had originally planned, because we realized there were unexpected elements that we had to include to make the model serve its purpose."

At the outset, the decision was made to double the original scale, yielding a miniature environment about six feet in length. "Unless people could actually get their hands inside of it, there really wasn't a point," says Feyereisen, adding, "we also took extra care to detail the gusset plates on the bridge because we've all heard so much about them in the news. We wanted to make them accessible to those with limited vision." Other unique features include break-away lampposts that right themselves with magnets, textured surfaces that indicate direction of travel, Braille annotations, large-print text, and a "texture key legend" that identifies the tactile materials.

While some citizens have objected to the costs of modeling proposals in this way, Mary Elizabeth Jackson, pedestrian and bicycle planner with the MnDOT Office of Transit, which commissioned the project, sees the underlying value: "The model has raised awareness of the need to put project information in an accessible format because we, as citizens and taxpayers, all deserve to know what our public projects are about."

—Brandon Stengel, Assoc. AIA
If you could design your dream window, what would it be?

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An annual design/build event in Nova Scotia produces a coastland of provocative eco-friendly structures that stir up questions about the meaning of shelter

For more than a decade, celebrated architect Brian MacKay-Lyons has been leading an annual two-week design/build internship for architects, professors, and students at his seaside estate near Halifax, Nova Scotia. The program, described by MacKay-Lyons as “a crash course in material culture,” started as a month-long “free lab” for architecture students at the Technical University of Nova Scotia. What evolved is an old school, master-apprentice, primitive craftsman event called Ghost that yields a coastal landscape of arresting wood structures.

The curious name actually fits the lab well: A few of the structures are built on the remnant foundations of centuries-old dwellings, all embrace the framing and ship-building traditions of the region, and all appear otherworldly when lit from within at night. While all of the projects are essentially open-air follies with a simple structure, a closer look reveals complexity and paradox. Ghost 6, for example, erected two towers (one of which is shown above) with multiple levels and no stairs. Participant Bryan Anderson, AIA, of SALA Architects in Minneapolis says the project had no concern for building envelope or even program; the idea was simply “to build lanterns of wood and nails that could easily be returned to just that.”

Ghost 10 is a guesthouse that overlooks the ocean but shields the view from within. Why? “The fishermen traditionally have no windows that face the ocean, because that’s where you go to die,” explains team member Jon Boelkins, Assoc. AIA, of Marlon Blackwell Architect. He adds: “Ghost is a reductive process with minimal materials and minimal tools. It’s about the minimum you can do to make a mark on the landscape. We were given a foundation and determined a program: a courtyard house with a central lantern. Then we got it to the point where the architecture was present, and we stopped. After that, it could be finished or not.” (Some of the Ghost structures have been finished to function as apartments and studios for lab participants.)

But perhaps the best encapsulation of Ghost comes from Thomas Fisher, Assoc. AIA, dean of the University of Minnesota College of Design and Ghost 6 participant. In Ghost: Building an Architectural Vision (2008), Fisher writes, “Both abstractly modern and culturally rooted, [Ghost] architecture undermines the apparent opposition between the two, and highlights their often overlooked commonality: the desire to live lightly on the land, to see change as an inevitable part of life, and to view freedom arising from a reduction of one’s material possessions. Of all the lessons learned on the Ghost projects, those might be the most profound.”

—John Dwyer, AIA
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Glensheen, Duluth

Glensheen, a remarkably preserved Jacobean Revival mansion set on wooded grounds on the shore of Lake Superior, is the closest thing to a grand European estate you’ll find in the Upper Midwest. It’s home to parterre gardens, a carriage house, constructed creeks, and a pier that reaches out into the greatest lake. Although built relatively recently, as castles go, the 1908 family home of the Congdons is a study in architectural history. It was opened to the public in 1979 (it’s managed by the University of Minnesota–Duluth) and today attracts visitors from all over the world. Why do they come? What makes Glensheen such an engaging example of good design? —Adam Regn Arvidson
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THE ESSENTIALS FOR
MAKING A GETAWAY
TO THE SIMPLE LIFE

BY CHRISTOPHER HUDSON

If only we approached residential life the way we do cabin life. Our cabins and cottages celebrate the essentials of the good life: blissful solitude, and the gathering of family and friends for a whole host of fun, stress-relieving outdoor activities. And because cabins are typically compact structures with low energy needs, they offer a design freedom that can yield breathtaking results, as the projects in the following pages illustrate. But perhaps their leading virtue is the way they raise our awareness of our natural surroundings and inspire us to live lightly on the land. Salmela Architect’s Roland Cabins (page 38), for example, are designed to be “sufficient for the kind of modest living that we will all need to embrace if we are ever to reduce our ecological footprint,” writes Thomas Fisher. The owners of the SALA Architects-designed Madeline Island Retreat (page 22) took this notion to heart, turning their glassy getaway into a year-round home after coming to the realization that they could live with far fewer things than they thought they could. We should all make such a getaway—to the simple life.
haute nature

By Linda Mack
A two-story blue box is cantilevered from the thick wall that ties it to the main house, a glass pavilion topped by an upturned roof.

A MADELINE ISLAND RETREAT BY DALE MULFINGER, FAIA, PUTS A NEW SLANT ON LAKEFRONT LIVING

Does a retreat on Lake Superior's Madeline Island have to look woodsy? Not a bit, if the getaway SALA Architects designed for Michael Childers and Glenn Carlson is any indication. A long road winding through the woods reveals an unusual composition: an upturned roof and a two-story blue box tied together by a bronze-paneled wall. Walk through the opening in the wall and you're in a different world—a glass pavilion wrapped in nature.

When Childers and SALA founder Dale Mulfinger, FAIA, met to discuss the project, "we talked about the idea of transformation," recalls Childers as he sits in his open living room. "We had lived in California and loved the Spanish courtyard idea. It's unexpected, but it's fun."

Despite the architectural high jinks, the plan is simplicity itself. The classically proportioned pavilion holds the main living spaces: an open living/dining space centered on a freestanding wood-burning stove, and, behind a partial wall, the main bedroom, which is simply a bed with floor-to-ceiling glass on two sides. Ten slender white columns order the space.
1. Bath
2. Sleeping
3. Deck
4. Gallery
5. Gathering
6. Laundry/Utility
7. Dining
8. Kitchen
9. Sleeping
10. Bath
11. Deck

SUNLIGHT AND AIR FLOOD THE MASTER BEDROOM.
The open bedroom may be just behind the wall to the left, but it isn't visible from the kitchen/entertaining area (below). The office/guest room/movie room (opposite, top) on the upper floor of the blue box is a treetop getaway.

Tucked into the thick, sheltering wall are bathrooms, closets, bookshelves, and a 16-foot-long kitchen sheathed in white pine (one woodsy nod to the cabin feel—along with some half-walls that anchor the space). Just left of the front door, you step behind the wall and walk through a dramatically lit gallery to reach the blue box. The box, cantilevered from the wall, holds a guest room on the main floor and an office/TV room up narrow skip-step monk's stairs. The treetop space is a getaway within a getaway—a perfect spot for popcorn and a movie, an extra guest, or a project that demands concentration.

Decks expand the 2,000 square feet outdoors. A large one off the living room works for entertaining, a smaller one off the master bedroom for reading or sunning. The outdoor shower—a favorite amenity—is just around the corner.

Outside, a generous yard overlooking the lake is punctuated with a fire pit and 22 rocks representing the 22 Apostle Islands. (Madeline is the only inhabited one.) An overlook leads to a long stairway down to a dock set dramatically among red rocks. "It's my place for morning coffee," says Childers.

Floor-to-ceiling glass walls create a pleasing rhythm of openness and definition.
"I never get tired of looking outside. It's like living in a glass tent."

—Homeowner Michael Childers
Compact skip-step stairs (left) lead to the upper floor of the blue box. The thick wall serves as a gallery/passageway (above) from the living areas to the blue box—a retreat within a retreat.

Associate architect Dan Wallace, AIA, detailed the floor-to-ceiling glass walls to create a pleasing rhythm of openness and definition. Clerestories over the kitchen introduce north light. With the house situated exactly east-west, sunlight floods deep into the living room in winter but is shielded by the roof overhang in summer. In-floor heating and black concrete flooring maximize comfort.

When the house was finished in 2006, it served as a second home. Now Childers and Carlson are living there year-round. (Their discovery: You don’t need as much stuff as you think you do.) They find their place compact but flexible: The 22-by-34-foot living room works for a fundraising party or one or two people reading. The dining area defined by the back of the partial bedroom wall makes a great setting for a dinner party or buffet table. A steel table in the kitchen doubles as work island and serving table. The blue box provides privacy for guests or work. And the gallery artfully displays Childers’ floral portraits.

Best of all is nature’s variety. “It changes all the time, every day—the light, the colors,” says Childers. “I never get tired of looking outside. It’s like living in a glass tent.” Adds Mulflinger: “It began with nature, as the original concept was first sketched at the site in the snow. And we built that concept.”

MADELINE ISLAND RETREAT
Location:
Madeline Island, Wisconsin
Clients:
Michael Childers and Glenn Carlson
Architect:
SALA Architects, Inc.
www.salaarc.com
Principal-in-charge:
Dale Mulflinger, FAIA
Associate architect:
Dan Wallace, AIA
General contractor:
North Woods Construction of La Pointe Inc.
Size:
2,000 finished square feet
Completion date:
Fall 2006
Photographer:
Don F. Wong
In the design of her own North Shore retreat, architect Julie Snow strips away every extraneous detail until only breathtaking panoramic views remain.

Cabin culture in Minnesota has a long history of clutter, clunky furniture, and kitschy décor. In that context, the North Shore weekend house that architect Julie Snow, FAIA, and mechanical engineer Jack Snow have designed for themselves, family, and friends stands out as everything that cabin culture is not. Spare, elegant, and refined, it is completely uncluttered—an “un-cabin.”

Julie Snow calls it “minimalist” and “maximalist” at the same time. “The simplified life of modern architecture allows you to also have more complexity,” she says, “to have a more complex relationship with nature, with what you are doing, with what you love.” By reducing this house to a few essential elements, she accentuates the beauty of the lake and the surrounding woods. “We wanted it to be like camping, with a dishwasher,” she says with a laugh.

The design of the dwelling certainly delivers on that goal. When approached from the driveway, the long, flat-roofed cabin looks like three-dimensional Morse code: a black dash and dot that dart across the blue horizon of Lake Superior and punctuate the vertical trunks of the surrounding trees with telegraphic precision.

The black Skatelite cladding and minimal exterior detailing reinforce the impression that the light, post-and-beam structure is floating in the landscape. “From some perspectives,” says Snow, “it looks like the black monolith in 2001: A Space Odyssey,” with the exterior walls and glass doors standing outside the structural frame, supported by steel angles. That one move enhances the house’s uncanny quality, as if the floor and roof had almost no thickness.
The floor-to-ceiling glass walls provide expansive views of the lake (top) and contribute to the openness of the minimally detailed interior (above). The lightweight structure seems to float above the sloping site (opposite and above left).

For all of its mystery, though, the cabin is also “hyper-rational,” says Snow. The 16-foot-wide structure has 8-foot bays, with a 64-foot-long main house, a 32-foot-long deck, and a 16-foot-square studio. The rational nature of the cabin occurred not only in its design but also in its construction by contractor Brad Holmes. “He was amazing,” says Snow. “He thought through the house so completely, and yet he would patiently wait for me to come around to seeing why we had to build it his way.”

Inside, the 1,000-square-foot main house seems surprisingly large, thanks to an open plan, white finishes, and floor-to-ceiling glass walls. Two bedrooms and a bathroom occupy one end of the house, with an open living/dining/kitchen space at the other. Two-foot-deep cabinets run along the north wall, containing the usual clutter of a cabin: closets, a shop, washer and dryer, even the refrigerator. “It’s very stealthy,” says Snow.

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The colors and forms of a Swedish fishing village (below) inspired Kerrik Wessel’s design, but he developed a contemporary take on the vernacular.
The newest Concordia Language Village 
weaves Swedish design and culture 
into a wooded lakeside setting

It's not every day that an architect gets to design a village. But that's the opportunity that landed on the drafting table of St. Paul architect Kerrik Wessel, AIA, in 2004. Concordia Language Villages, the nation's premier language school, wanted to add a Swedish village to its 800-acre facility near Bemidji, Minnesota, and the Swedish-American Wessel, whose father and grandfather were also architects, was recommended.

The language villages, a 50-year-old program of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, offer a cornucopia of architectural design along with their 15 languages. In keeping with the school's philosophy of teaching through cultural immersion, each of the 10 villages has been designed as authentically as possible. The Spanish-language village, for example, features white stucco buildings with red-tiled roofs and sienna-colored trim. The mansard-roofed centerpiece of the French village is modeled on a castle north of Paris. Salolampi, the Finnish village, focuses on a charming red-frame hall inspired by a 19th-century railroad station and designed by Architectural Resources of Hibbing.

But Wessel's design for Sjölund, the Swedish village, takes a step forward by combining a respectful nod to the past with a contemporary bent. The master plan was completed in 2005. The first buildings in the village—a weaving studio and a boathouse—opened in 2007, and the first cabin, or stuga, was christened in 2008.

Wessel Design's 2005 Master Plan for Concordia Swedish Village: 1. Matsal (dining hall); 2. Bibliotek (library/meeting room); 3. Stuga (student housing/classroom); 4. Bostäder (staff housing); 5. Vävstuga (weaving studio); 6. Båthus (boathouse); 7. Bastu & Pavillon (sauna & pavilion)
Kerrik Wessel's design combines a respectful nod to the past with a contemporary bent.

The first stuga (above), or cabin, illustrates Wessel's playful variations on the vernacular theme. Wood touches soften the inside of the weaving studio (opposite, left). Music (opposite, right) plays a big role in Concordia Language Village's cultural immersion.

“We talked for years about what it would look like,” says Allison Spenader, the Swedish-village dean who guided the design. “Should it be nostalgic or modern? I was an early advocate for a more contemporary approach. If Swedes were to build a summer camp today, it would not look 200 years old.” Adds Wessel: “It became a unique, authentic, 21st-century interpretation of a Swedish village.”

First Wessel and his wife and design partner Heather Sexton immersed themselves in Swedish architecture and found two precedents for the village, which will soon add more cabins, staff housing, a dining hall, and a library. In a typical farmyard configuration, the buildings group around a courtyard. In a fishing village, they are strung along the water. Sjolunden, which translates as “lake in the glen,” is on Turtle River Lake but also in the forest, so Wessel merged the two: The cabins, which include classroom space, sit along an existing path. The dining hall, staff housing, and library cluster on a large courtyard needed for outdoor gatherings. From there a path leads to the lake and boathouse.

Then Wessel and Sexton devised four design parameters outlining color, materials, forms, and spaces. “We wanted it all to belong to itself,” says Wessel.

Traditional Swedish villages (see photo on page 30) are generally all white or all red. The Concordia village will be mostly white with touches of red, ochre, and dark gray. The stains will all be traditional Falun paints.

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THE "HEART OF THE HOME," SAYS ARCHITECT AND OWNER ANDREA PESCHEL SWAN, IS THE MAIN LEVEL, WHERE THE KITCHEN, DINING, AND LIVING SPACES OPEN FREELY INTO EACH OTHER. SHE STRATEGICALLY PLACED THE FURNISHINGS TO ENCOURAGE CONTINUAL INTERACTION AND CONVERSATION BETWEEN FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

SWAN FISH CAMP
Location: Lake Mille Lacs, Isle, Minnesota
Clients: Andrea Peschel Swan, AIA, and Bret Swan
Architect: Swan+Simmons Architecture, Ltd.
swanandsimmons.com
Principal-in-charge: Andrea Peschel Swan, AIA
Project lead designer: Andrea Peschel Swan, AIA
General contractor: Nor-Son, Inc.
Size: 1,860 square feet of conditioned space; 965-square-foot garage
Cost: $150/square foot for finished spaces

Completion date: March 2009
Photographer: Scott Amundson Photography
FISH CAMP. The expression conjures images of army-issue tents—large ones, the kind you stand up in—nestled in the woods next to a pristine lake, where friends and family gather to clean and cook the day's catch. Smoky, messy, buggy, and a lot of fun. So when Andrea Peschel Swan, AIA, and her husband Bret came across one of the last remaining unbuilt lots on the eastern edge of Lake Mille Lacs, Minnesota's premier walleye lake, the avid anglers decided to step it up a notch and construct a fish camp they could also call (a second) home.

After purchasing the lot "for less than the assessed value," Swan says, she and Charlie Simmons, her partner at Swan+Simmons Architecture, designed a three-level, Scandinavian A-frame structure with a 20-by-60 footprint. They contracted with Nor-Son, Inc., to build the home for less than $180 per square foot. "We were determined to custom-design a home in the current economy by taking advantage of lowered construction costs," says Swan.

But she also credits the extended project team with completing the cottage in a record-setting four months. Because she was opening her architecture firm, giving birth to her first child, and designing and building the house all at the same time, the team took a collaborative approach to creating the retreat.

The exterior features low-maintenance materials in a nautical color palette—dark-navy metal roof and white Hardie Board siding—with windows positioned for maximum lake views. The team selected spray-foam insulation to add in R-value and reduce energy bills "from the get-go," says Swan. They also chose a high-efficiency heating-and-cooling system, augmented by passive solar heating, operable windows, and ceiling fans that draw warm air up and out through the loft windows in the summer.

The lower level, embedded in a hillside, "is meant for dirt," says Swan. The long two-boat, one-truck garage has a heated mudroom with easy-to-clean, commercial rubber flooring. Stairs lead to "the heart of the home," says Swan: an open-plan main level with a kitchen, dining area, and living room.

"Audrey Hepburn said, 'The best thing to hold on to in life is each other,' and that's true for us," says Swan. She designed the floor plan and placed the

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An American husband and Swedish wife recruit Swedish-American architect Christine Albertsson, AIA, to gently re-craft a boathouse cottage in the Scandinavian tradition

By Philip Glenn Koski. AIA

A Step Up

The stepped boathouse and guest cottage paint a quaint picture on the shores of Cable Lake in Wisconsin.

CABLE LAKE GUEST CABIN

Location:
Cable, Wisconsin

Architect:
Albertsson Hansen Architecture, Ltd.
ahaarchitecture.com

Principal-in-charge:
Christine Albertsson, AIA

Project team:
Ryan Fish, AIA;
Sonya Carel, Assoc. AIA

General contractor:
Scott Haan Construction

Size:
230 square feet

Completion date:
October 2007

Photographer:
Peter Bastianelli-Kerze

The boathouse lies just down the wooded shore from the main cabin, which Albertsson Hansen also renovated.
Climbing the stairs to the second-floor studio of Albertsson Hansen Architecture in Minneapolis' Uptown neighborhood, one begins to sense the architectural conventions of a previous era. The neatly formed terrazzo stairs are narrow and steep, the landings shallow, and the plaster walls of the upper hallway sparingly punctuated with frosted glass doorways with overhead transom windows.

If Garrison Keillor's fictional detective Guy Noir had an office in Minneapolis, it would be here.

Christine Albertsson, AIA, is no detective, but the firm she founded with her husband, Todd Hansen, AIA, has established itself as one of the premier practitioners of a studied architectural traditionalism. Rather than investigate crimes, Albertsson Hansen explores vernacular architecture with an eye toward finding artful ways to renovate and add on to older homes. Not surprisingly, the firm's portfolio of work includes not only primary residences but also renovations of heirloom cottages and cabins.

Its reputation eventually reached a couple looking to rehabilitate a 1920s cabin and a boathouse and sleeping room on Cable Lake in northern Wisconsin. Albertsson instantly connected with the couple, especially the wife, with whom she shared a Swedish heritage (Albertsson is fluent in the language and the culture). Although the boathouse—the project profiled here—was in poor condition, the clients were enamored with its small size, stepped composition, and intimate interior, and they envisioned it as guest quarters for the 10-acre property. Accordingly, Albertsson devised a plan that would keep the bones of the boathouse while reorganizing the interior to accommodate a queen-size bed, half-bath, kitchenette, and freestanding wood stove.

The most dramatic alteration was the replacement of the rotting roof structure with a vaulted wood-joint ceiling. "I don't usually like vaulted ceilings; they create spaces that feel too big and out of scale for a home," says Albertsson. "But in this tiny space, it felt right to open the room to the rafters."

Otherwise, interior modifications were minimal. The floor is Douglas fir (bed and seating area) and slate tile (entry/hearth, kitchenette, and

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Deep Impression

A captivating cabin compound by Salmela Architect shows the way to live lightly on the land

BY THOMAS FISHER, ASSOC. AIA
We hear a lot these days about our ecological footprint, a term used to describe the impact humans have on the planet. With our current levels of consumption, our footprint has outgrown the globe itself, which makes reducing our use of resources and lowering our generation of greenhouse gases so urgent. The cabin compound that David Salmela, FAIA, has designed for Chris and Helen Roland on Wisconsin’s Madeline Island offers some insight into how we might reduce our ecological footprint, while also living less stressful and more modest lives.

A first step in lessening our impact involves reusing whatever we can, and the main cabin does that out of necessity. The Rolands had purchased a cabin that the original owners had built themselves. “It stood on log stumps,” says Chris Roland, “and it was falling apart. We had read about David Salmela,” he continues, “and we knew that he did small houses, but when we saw the two black sheds [May/June 2004 issue] on the island, we knew he was our architect.” Zoning laws, however, had changed since the original cabin was built, and they no longer allowed a building so close to the shore of Lake Superior. This restriction, says Salmela, required that “we use the same footprint as the existing cabin, and reuse as many of its materials as possible, in order to meet the letter of the law.” He adds: “It’s like obeying the speed limit. You can break it when passing another car, but if you go too fast all the time, you’ll get caught. We didn’t tear anything totally down in the main cabin, so that it could be considered a major remodeling.”

Given the carbon-sequestering role that plant life plays, Salmela’s siting of the buildings in among the trees becomes not just cost-effective and aesthetically pleasing but environmentally responsible as well.

The black-clad cabins sit unobtrusively in their largely undisturbed wooded site (above). A high-ceilinged screened porch opens the main cabin out to the lake, while skylights bring daylight into the adjacent living room (above right).
ROLAND CABINS

Location: 
Madeline Island, Wisconsin

Clients: 
Christopher and Helen Roland

Architect: 
Salmela Architect
www.salmelaarchitect.com

Principal-in-charge: 
David Salmela, FAIA

Project lead designer: 
David Salmela, FAIA

Project architect: 
Cary Coulson, AIA

General contractor: 
Northwood Construction

Size: 
809-square-foot main cabin, 
928-square-foot guest cabin, 
128-square-foot sauna, and 
512-square-foot garage/shop

Completion date: 
June 2008

Photographer: 
Peter Bastianelli-Kerze

THE EXTERIOR CLADDING, WATERPROOF SKATELITE, USES RECYCLED MATERIALS. THE TREE COVER ON THE SITE COOLS THE CABINS WHILE STORING CARBON.
While constrained by the small footprint of the original cabin, the Rolands owned an adjacent lot that allowed them to build a guest cabin farther back from the lakeshore, as well as a garage and a sauna. Here Salmela took another step to reduce the compound's ecological footprint. "We located the guest cabin, garage, and sauna to minimize the removal of vegetation," he explains, "disturbing the land as little as possible, allowing native plants to fill in the gaps." Given the carbon-sequestering role that plant life plays, Salmela's siting of the buildings in among the trees becomes not just cost-effective and aesthetically pleasing but environmentally responsible as well. "Thin ribbons of concrete lead from the garage to the guest cabin, across a bridge over the ravine, and down another ribbon to the main cabin," he says. In that way, Salmela controlled the movement of people on the site and further minimized human impact on the land.

The cabins themselves also have multiple sustainable features. Clad in black Skatelite panels made of recycled paper, the structures contain recycled timber that Salmela calls "a wiser product, without the irregularities of new wood and the twists and turns of life." Large operable windows and skylights flood the cabin interiors with daylight while also allowing for ample ventilation without air conditioning. Likewise, the main cabin's screened porch, with its 13-foot-high roof and cross-braced structure, has two skylights that bring light into the main living space.

The Rolands' compound may serve as a year-round vacation retreat, but the cabins, each around 900 square feet, seem sufficient for the kind of modest living that we will all need to embrace if we are ever to reduce our ecological footprint. The buildings' careful placement on the land, thoughtful arrangement of interior spaces, and compact sense of comfort all convey what a good life might entail once the old, unsustainable "good life" is gone. AMN

Ample windows and skylights fill the cabins' wood-walled living spaces (opposite) with light. A narrow bridge over a ravine (above) provides access to the guest cabin and garage on what was once a separate lot.
Saving the Upper Post

Exciting adaptive-reuse opportunities may soon abound at Fort Snelling's endangered Upper Post—if the property's many stakeholders succeed in unraveling a tangle of ownership and land-use-designation issues

BY CAMILLE LEFEVRE, WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK GUSTAFSON

The Fort Snelling Upper Post is a 141-acre site separated from the Lower Post by Highway 55.

Bldg. Original use
#53 Gymnasium
#54 Medical Detachment Barrack
#55 Post Hospital
#56 Hospital Steward's Quarters
#57 Band Barracks
#62 Dead House (Morgue)
#63 Quartermaster's Shops
#64 Fire Station House
#65 Post Guard House (Prison)
#66 Telephone Exchange
#67 Post Headquarters
#76 Civilian Employees' Quarters
#101 Barracks
#102 Barracks
#103 Barracks
#112 Post Bakery
#151 Bachelor Officers’ Quarters
#152 Officer’s Quarters
#153 Officer’s Quarters
#154 Officer’s Quarters
#155 Officer’s Quarters
#156 Officer’s Quarters
#157 Officer’s Quarters
#158 Officer’s Quarters
#159 Officer’s Quarters
#160 Officer’s Quarters
#161 Officer’s Quarters
#175 Club House
#178 Garage
#182 Garage
#201 Cavalry Drill Hall
If the three important criteria of marketable real estate remain, even in this economy, "location, location, location," then a prime site in the Twin Cities metropolitan area has it all: open space, river views, recreational fields, historical resonance, and old-growth vegetation. Just minutes from both downtowns on light rail or urban freeways, the site is also adjacent to a state park with a swimming lake, bicycling and cross-country ski trails, hiking paths, and an interpretive center.

But most Twin Citians know little about this real estate. Oh, they've sped past it en route to the airport or the Mall of America. Maybe played ultimate Frisbee, baseball, soccer, golf, or polo on the site. Or even, having taken the wrong exit off the Crosstown Highway or Mendota Bridge, found themselves in a ghost town of short streets—lined with crumbling houses and grand dilapidated structures—that begin and end seemingly in the middle of nowhere.

Welcome to the Upper Post of Fort Snelling. That's right, Upper. Not the more familiar Lower Post, with its underground visitor center and bluff-top Historic Fort Snelling, where interpreters in period costumes reenact fort life in the 1800s. And not Fort Snelling State Park below, where bicyclists and hikers explore the woods and prairies at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers.

Fort Snelling's long and storied history may soon start a new chapter with the revitalization of the Upper Post.

The Preservation Alliance of Minnesota is hosting a special tour of the Upper Post, led by architect Chuck Liddy and the National Park Service's Dr. John Anfinson, on Saturday, September 26. For tickets and more information, visit www.mn preservation.org.

1805 Lt. Zebulon Pike negotiated a treaty with the Dakota tribe granting the U.S. government 100,000 acres at the confluence of the Mississippi and St. Peters (Minnesota) rivers.

1819-1825 The lower post was constructed.

1820 Col. Josiah Snelling became the new commander of the regiment.

1849 The Minnesota Territory was formed, with St. Paul as its political center. As the western frontier became more remote, Fort Snelling became more of a tourist attraction than a military necessity.

1850 & 1859: OFFICER'S QUARTERS
All of the houses on Officer's Row were mothballed in 2007 and 2008 to prevent further damage from water, vandals, and animals (new roofs were added; porches, windows, doors, and basement entries were covered in plywood; eaves and soffits were repaired).

#67: POST HEADQUARTERS
All windows were covered in plywood and entry points were secured in summer 2008. Scheduled work for 2009 includes masonry repairs.
The Upper Post is a 141-acre site separated from the Lower Post by Highway 55. While no less historic (both parcels are National Historic Landmarks and part of a larger National Register District that includes portions of both rivers and their environs), the Upper Post and its 28 buildings (27 of them historic) have languished for decades.

The Upper Post's locational amenities may make the site attractive to any number of potential developers. But those buff- and red-brick buildings—from an imposing headquarters with a grand clock tower, to rows of barracks, to a lane of once-stately officers' homes with columns and porches—present considerable challenges, and opportunities, to anyone with an overall vision for the site.

Why? The structures, whose only hope of long-term survival lies in adaptive reuse, are enmeshed, along with the land they occupy, in reams of bureaucratic red tape. Only after decades of historic designations, endangered listings, public meetings, grant proposals, stabilization work, and deed evaluation are the diverse organizations that have been working on behalf of the Upper Post beginning to unravel the tangled threads that have kept the site in limbo.

"It's such a culturally important site, and has been for millennia, in addition to being an ideal location," explains Preservation Alliance of Minnesota field representative Erin Hanafin Berg. The nonprofit Alliance has cited the Upper Post numerous times on its annual list of Minnesota's 10 Most Endangered Historic Places. "If we can get all of the logistical hurdles out of the way," Berg continues, "the Upper Post is a prime site for a wonderful adaptive reuse."

"If we can get all of the logistical hurdles out of the way, the Upper Post is a prime site for a wonderful adaptive reuse."

—Erin Hanafin Berg, Preservation Alliance of Minnesota

1861-1865 The outbreak of the civil war and the U.S.-Dakota Conflict prompted the reactivation of the fort.

1858 Fort Snelling and 8,000 surrounding acres were sold under dubious circumstances to Franklin Steele, a former sutler, for $90,000. Following the sale, the fort was abandoned.

1866 The army decided to retain the post for use as headquarters for the Department of the Dakotas.

1879 At the recommendation of Gen. Alfred H. Terry, to provide better accommodations for the officers and men of the Department of the Dakotas, work began on 30 new buildings. Headquarters, officer's quarters, and support facilities were constructed.

1889 New brick infantry barracks were constructed.

1903-1907 New barracks, officer's quarters, stables, warehouses, artillery sheds, and workshops were constructed. The enlarged post was now at its fullest development.
**THEN AND NOW** The story of the Upper Post actually begins with the Mdewakanton Sioux. The tribe lived in the area where the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers meet until, in 1805, they ceded via treaty 100,000 acres to the U.S. government. In 1819, Fort Snelling was built on the bluff above the confluence of the rivers to protect fur traders and white settlers, and control exploration and trade in the area. The fort remained in use through the creation of the Minnesota Territory, Sioux-U.S. conflict, civil war, Spanish-American War, Mexican Expedition, and two World Wars.

In the late 1880s, the military constructed dozens of additional buildings in the Upper Post area for training, supplies, housing, and administration. But after World War II, it began selling off parcels of the Upper Post to various federal and state agencies, and therein lies one of the major logistical hurdles to saving its historic structures.

Today the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources owns the Upper Post under a Federal Lands to Parks deed, which means the site must be used for parks and recreation. Accordingly, the DNR leases the site's large open-space areas to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (the aforementioned soccer and ball fields, formerly the Parade Grounds and Polo Field). Meanwhile, the Upper Post’s historic buildings have remained unused, victim to deferred maintenance and vandalism.

In 1998, the DNR hired Miller Dunwiddie Architecture to assess the buildings’ structural integrity and reuse potential. On a scale of one to five (with five being excellent condition), 11 of the 25 buildings received a four or higher, says Miller Dunwiddie principal Chuck Liddy, AIA. In 2006,
the DNR asked the firm to update the study. The deterioration was significant: Only three buildings were deemed a 4 on the exterior, and none were above 3.5 on the interior. Most dropped at least one point, and part of the roof of the prison had begun to collapse.

But in 2006, "the planets began to align for the Upper Post," Liddy says. The National Trust for Historic Preservation listed it as one of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places, bringing national attention to the site; and the DNR and Hennepin County (the Upper Post is an unincorporated portion of the county) provided $50,000 for emergency stabilization that fall. In 2007, the county assisted the DNR in securing a National Park Service Save America's Treasures grant for $150,000 to stabilize the buildings, matched that amount with its own funds, and used laborers from its Sentence to Service program to mothball more buildings and forestall further deterioration.

As work crews began re-roofing buildings, patching holes in the walls, sealing up windows and doors with plywood, and covering up porches, other stakeholders took steps to disentangle the Upper Post from the red tape restricting use of the site.

The DNR is actively seeking to transfer its deed to a federal monuments status, which allows for a wider range of possibilities at the site, including the adaptive reuse of the historic structures. In anticipation of that status change, Miller Dunwiddie completed a new study, funded by an $8,500 grant.

"We need a master plan and a coordinated approach to the site's rehabilitation and reuse. If people start cherry-picking buildings or peeling off spaces, an overall, unified project will become too difficult for developers to make happen." — Britta Bloomberg, Minnesota Historical Society
Photographer Mark Gustafson shares his experiences documenting a neglected cultural landscape

I first set foot in the Upper Post on a cold January day in 2006, camera equipment in tow. The low angle of the winter sun gave excellent light throughout the afternoon, and I was struck by how the buildings seemed to be decaying before my eyes. With the nearby soccer fields and golf course deserted in winter, it was a lonely place, even when deafening jet engines roared overhead.

On ensuing visits that winter and spring, I passed near the airport fence to photograph some of the officers' houses, and on two occasions the police approached me. I must have been a strange sight carrying a large format camera on a tripod, a backpack full of gear, and a bucket of sodium sulfite for my Polaroid negatives. I mumbled something about having a grant, and the officers decided I was harmless and let me continue.

Photographing the 28 old buildings posed significant challenges. I felt the need to educate viewers and show the grandeur of many of the buildings, but I hope I also succeeded in capturing the overwhelming sense of abandonment. While shooting the headquarters clock tower, I saw that the clock hands were frozen at half past midnight.

Those three words became the title of my photo exhibit.

Half Past Midnight has brought me into a network of preservationists, government officials, and ordinary citizens who share a passion to preserve the Upper Post. My favorite personal encounter was meeting 92-year-old Vern Stevens, a war veteran from Kimball, South Dakota. Through a fortuitous series of circumstances, I got to spend half a day with Vern and hear his stories of life at the Upper Post in 1941-1942. Amazingly, Vern had not visited the Twin Cities or the fort since 1942—a span of 65 years! When I think about saving the Upper Post, it's not just about preserving historic architecture. It's about honoring veterans like Vern and the thousands more who are no longer with us.
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Theresa Anderson
Jeanne Danmeier
Ruthann Burford
Phone: 952-893-1933
from Sweden, which contain copper residue and have been used for hundreds of years.

The materials will be vertical board-and-batten wood with metal roofs and wide fascia boards. The forms will be simple rectangular shapes with a 12/12 roof pitch. The interior spaces will be simple and clean with vaulted ceilings.

 Appropriately enough, the 900-square-foot weaving studio, or vavstugan, was the first building to open. Most Swedish children learn to weave and knit in school, says Spenader, and the studio became an instant icon for the new village. Wessel says images of weaving inspired the a-b-b-a rhythm of thin and thick boards that gives the building’s red façade a woven look. The narrow gable ends are white. The roof is made of durable metal panels that look like clay tile.

Inside, two weaving studios with vaulted ceilings, concrete floors, and big square windows are divided by a wood-floored entry with a low wood ceiling. "We listen to music and watch the sailors on the lake through the giant windows," says Spenader, noting that the Swedish village is the only one to offer sailing.

A slatted red fence provides privacy for a pergola-like patio often used by knitters. The fence, or "red thread," will wind through the village, creating a literal interpretation of the Swedish phrase, "det roda trädet," or "the common thread."

The diminutive boathouse is another charmer. Ochre with white trim, it sports an oversized porch that doubles as an outdoor stage. The inside is used for boat storage and "land school" on days not good for sailing. (Concordia is a master of using one space in many ways, says Amy Rutten, Concordia’s construction and special projects coordinator.) The first stuga is white with ochre trim. As the village grows building by building, Wessel plans to use the trim colors to create playful variations on the aesthetic theme.

Staff housing is being built this summer, and a second cabin is in the works. "What captures people’s imaginations, and ultimately their resources, is envisioning a site that embodies cultural character," says Christine Schulze, Concordia Language Villages’ executive director. "When we’ve shown Kerrik’s plan to people, it has really pulled the heartstrings." AMN
matching grant from the National Trust's Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation, that details design guidelines for the reuse of the historic open space, including where new construction would be appropriate.

In 2008, the State of Minnesota allocated $500,000 in bonding money for permanent repairs to the historic structures' exteriors, which will include re-pointing deteriorated brick and stonework. And Hennepin County is preparing a Request for Proposals for a Station Area Plan around the Fort Snelling LRT station, located in an area called the West Quarter, which is adjacent to the Upper Post. Now here's where things get really tricky.

The West Quarter, off Bloomington Road, was historically the support area for the fort and includes a mix of historic and non-historic buildings, in addition to the LRT station. Like the Upper Post, the West Quarter is a checkerboard of parcels, with different owners. The U.S. General Service Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, and navy have parcels. So do the Minneapolis Park Board and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. In addition, the Boy Scouts of America Northern Star Council recently purchased the old Cavalry Drill Hall in a corner of the West Quarter, for a training and recreational center.

A portion of the West Quarter is also included in the National Historic District, which includes the Upper and Lower posts. As such, the West Quarter will be included with the Upper Post in any Request for Proposals for a redevelopment master plan for the entire area. And redevelopment, preservationists agree, is the means to the end of the Upper Post's historic-structures dilemma.

"Our mission as a nonprofit is to preserve and protect historic sites," says Berg, "and the Upper Post is a prime example of a significant site with a lot of historic fabric woven into the buildings and the landscape. It's also a site that should be in continual use to the benefit of everyone."

"But a major hurdle to a private developer is the varying level of federal and state ownership and involvement throughout the site," Berg continues. "A developer will need to coordinate across the site,
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and we'll need a master plan that integrates the historic museum-quality aspects of the Lower Post with the nearby parkland and historic structures of the Upper Post—as well as the structures and open space of the ancillary West Quarter.

Britta Bloomberg, the deputy state historic preservation officer for the Minnesota Historical Society, also describes the Upper Post as "a gem of an area. A constellation of factors makes it an appealing place." But because of those factors, "it's the kind of place that requires all of our best creativity in finding future uses that are sustainable and preserve the resources for future generations."

"We need a master plan and a coordinated approach to the site's rehabilitation and reuse," Bloomberg continues. "If people start cherry-picking buildings or peeling off spaces—everyone's interested in the administration building with the clock tower, it seems—an overall, unified project will become too difficult for developers to make happen. And we can't afford to not see it happen."

LOOKING WEST As for how the Upper Post's historic buildings might be adaptively reused, infill structures designed, open spaces integrated, and light rail and other West Quarter amenities incorporated, preservationists are open minded. "Our role isn't to put thumbs up or thumbs down" on a development proposal, says Bloomberg. "We want to be open and flexible to the range of uses possible. I see mixed use. But we don't have a vested interest in what the use is; we just want to see these buildings rehabilitated and the cultural landscape preserved."

Berg agrees that the site poses possibilities for "a dynamic mixed-use area. There are tremendous opportunities for a range of small offices, a mid-scale corporate headquarters or two, aligned nonprofits, and some supportive retail." She also cites a similar project, Fort Vancouver on the north side of the Columbia River in Vancouver, Washington, as a possible model for how the Upper Post might be preserved as a cultural, historical, and public amenity.

In 1998, Historic Fort Vancouver, along with officer housing, barracks, an aviation center converted to a museum, and the surrounding open space,
The Un-Cabin
< continued from page 29

Because the glass walls extend above the ceiling and below the floor, the interior feels one with the outdoors. "I didn't want window frames," says Snow. "With the horizontal frames out of view, you feel the expansiveness of the sky and the ground plane." The black anodized-aluminum-clad fireplace continues that visual play on our perceptions. Its tall, narrow firebox has a guillotine glass door that slides down over the opening, disappearing out of sight when not in use.

Thanks to the mechanical engineer in the family, the heating system received the same careful consideration. "With in-floor heat, the fireplace, and south-facing glass walls," says Snow, "by noon of the first day we were there, in the middle of winter, it was 80 degrees inside." Nor is air conditioning necessary. "With the glass doors open in summer, there's no need," she says.

Indeed, Snow shows that there is no need for a lot of what people put in cabins. If we go to cabins to get away from the clutter of daily life, then why not leave clutter behind and give ourselves what this "un-cabin" has to offer: serene space?

Saving the Upper Post
< continued from page 53

was established as a National Historic Reserve. An historic home on the 366-acre site has been transformed into the Vancouver National Historic Reserve Trust's office space, from which the trust oversees the reserve's operation and development and manages several of the restored buildings as lease properties.

In addition, the trust is collaborating with such stakeholders as the U.S. Army and the National Park Service on how to preserve and reuse the barracks when the army vacates the facility in the near future. The trust is also charged with preserving, enhancing, and operating the historic reserve for the public's benefit, through a variety of education programs, resource-development strategies, and cultural events.

Chuck Liddy says the Vancouver National Historic Reserve Trust is "a model worth following," as the similarities between the Upper Post and Fort Vancouver sites "are astounding." The key to the Upper Post's survival, he adds, "is a master plan and a master developer with vision, cultural sensitivity, and real ideas about how to reuse the different historic buildings—and who, in the meantime, will try not to overdo it."
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A Step Up
<< continued from page 37

bathroom), and the ceiling and walls are painted a pristine white. To increase daylight and views, Albertsson added a triplet of windows to the entry side of the cabin to match the existing triplet of windows overlooking the lake. And in a nod to Swedish tradition, a single pendant light is hung in front of the kitchenette window — a beacon for those arriving after dark.

On the exterior, new wood-board siding matches the profile of the original shiplap siding. The color — a bright red — echoes not only the original color of the boathouse (Albertsson did her homework) but also that of traditional Swedish villages (a famously durable paint colored with the cast-off iron pigments from copper mining in the Dalarna region has been used in Sweden for centuries). The red siding, silver standing-seam metal roof, and snow-white corner boards and window casings all vividly contrast with the verdant setting. Such careful attention to detail makes one wonder if Albertsson Hansen has out-Sweded the Swedes. At the very least, the firm has crafted a compact lakeside retreat that is achingly picturesque. AMN

Modest Modern
<< continued from page 35

furnishings so family and friends are always facing or interacting with each other. “Our focus is on family, but we also want to celebrate catching the walleye, and preparing and eating the walleye, so it’s easy to communicate with someone in the kitchen or dining room from wherever you are.”

Sliding glass doors open onto a deck with views of the lake. The master bedroom and bath are tucked into the back of the main level, where an open, cable-rail stair leads to the loft, which offers a pullout couch for guests, a second bath, and an area for movie watching. Swan designed the round picture window so that, when viewed from the loft, “where lake meets sky is perfectly centered between the horizontal mullions on the window.”

The cottage’s clean, contemporary aesthetic allows the “architecture to serve as a stage for views of the lake,” says Swan. “We also find solace in simplicity and natural light. We enjoy an exceptional quality of light throughout the day, and at night the vibrancy of the stars is reflected off the lake. So the play of light is never-ending at the cabin. It’s magical.” AMN
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Firm Personnel by Discipline
Architects 17
Interior Designers 3
Engineers 5
Other Professional 12
Technical 41
Administrative 12
Total in Firm 90
Work %
Education/Academic 98
Churches/Worship 2
Representative Projects
Minnetonka District-wide work, MN; Anoka-Ramsey Community College Courtyard (addition), Coon Rapids, MN; Kennedy Secondary School, Fergus Falls, MN; Lourdes High School, Rochester, MN; First Lutheran Church, Litchfield, MN; Living Word Christian Center, Brooklyn Park, MN

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Firm Personnel by Discipline
Architectural 7
Administrative 2
Total in Firm 9
Work %
Housing/multiple 45
Office Buildings/Banks/Financial 25
Retail/Commercial 10
Manufacturing/Industrial 5
Municipal/Civic 15
Representative Projects
Hennepin District Court Southdale (renovation), Edina, MN; Wells Fargo Banks (renovations), Various Locations, MN; Munger Apartments (renovation), Duluth, MN; The Roosevelt (renovation), Cedar Rapids, IA; Minnesota Army National Guard Armories (renovations), Various Locations, MN; Multi-Family Affordable Housing (renovations), Various Locations in MN and Other States

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Architectural 5
Work %
Housing 5
Industrial/Manufacturing/Warehousing 10
Municipal/Civic 5
Planning 5
Residential 70
Retail/Commercial 5
Integrated Work (total of all work percentages can exceed 100%)

Interior Architecture 65
Restoration/Preservation 15
Sustainable Design 50
Representative Projects
Familial Cabin, Minong, MN; Wellington Condominium (restoration/renovation), Minneapolis, MN; Franklin Avenue Seward Neighborhood (re-visioning), Minneapolis, MN; BookStairCase, Lowertown in Saint Paul, MN; Bungalow Transformation, Minneapolis, MN; Barrie D’Rozario Murphy Advertising Office, Minneapolis, MN
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Firm Personnel by Discipline
Architects 45
Interior Designers 14
Other Professional 61
Technical 17
Administrative 46
Total in Firm 183

Work %
Housing/Multifamily 20
Office Buildings/Banks/Financial 25
Retail/Commercial 5
Churches/Worship 5
Municipal 5
Educational/Academic 10
Entertainment/Gaming 30

Representative Projects
Watertown-Mayer High School (renovation), Watertown, MN; Harrah’s Cherokee Casino & Hotel (expansion/renovation), Cherokee, NC; Helleland Lewis Nilan & Johnson, P.A. (remodel), Minneapolis, MN; Washington Technology Magnet Middle School (renovation), Saint Paul, MN; Memorial Hospital Labor and Delivery (remodel), Bakersfield, CA; Minneapolis Community and Technical College Workforce Program and Infrastructure (remodel), Minneapolis, MN

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Firm Personnel by Discipline
Architect 1
Work %
Residences 30
Office Buildings/Banks/Financial 10
Sustainable Design 10
Consulting, LEED documentation 50

Representative Projects
EcoDEEP Haus (remodel), Saint Paul, MN; Maison Asper (remodel), Saint Paul, MN; Phresq Spa/Salon (remodel), Saint Paul, MN; Helleland (addition/renovation), Saint Paul, MN; W.E. Burger U.S. Courthouse (renovation), Saint Paul, MN

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Firm Personnel by Discipline
Architects 7
Technical 4
Administrative 3
Total in Firm 14

Work %
Housing 100

Representative Projects
Centennial Hall, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN; Griggs-Midway (renovation), St. Paul, MN; Catholic Eldercare, Minneapolis, MN; St. Cloud Technical College, Allied Health Center, St. Cloud, MN; Roosevelt Elementary (addition), Willmar Public Schools, Willmar, MN; Country Manor Nursing Home (rehab care addition), Sartell, MN

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Firm Personnel by Discipline
Architects 1
Architectural 4
Interior Designers 2
Administrative 2
Total in Firm 9

Work %
Housing 100

Representative Projects
Kenwood Queen Anne (restoration/remodel), Minneapolis, MN; Arts and Crafts Residence (restoration/remodel), Deephaven, MN; Lowry Hill Beaux Arts Kitchen (restoration/remodel), Minneapolis, MN; Mediterranean Revival Residence (remodel), Birmingham, MI; Elliot Park Brownstone (restoration/remodel), Minneapolis, MN; Summit Avenue Condominium (restoration/remodel), Saint Paul, MN
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Firm Personnel by Discipline
Architects 6
Administrative 1
Total in Firm 7

Work %
Residences 10
Churches/Worship 20
Municipal 15
Education/Academic 15
Museums/Cultural Centers 25
Planning 15

Integrated Work (total of all work percentages can exceed 100%)
Restoration/Preservation 90
Sustainable Design 15

Representative Projects
Alexander Ramsey House, Saint Paul, MN;
Gale Mansion, Minneapolis, MN; Mount
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Firm Principal
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Firm Personnel by Discipline
Both Architect and Interior Designer 1
Architects 2
Technical 2
Administrative 1
Total in Firm 6

Work %
Residences 85
Housing/Multiple 10
Education/Academic 5

Representative Projects
Beck Residence, Greenwood, MN; Markoe Residence, Dellwood, MN; Chamberlain Storehouse (restoration), Le Sueur, MN; Weaver Residence, Pequot Lakes, MN; Thompson Residence, Arden Hills, MN; Gerlach and Perrone Residence, St. Paul, MN

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Firm Personnel by Discipline
Architects 33
Interior Designers 9
Administrative 8
Total in Firm 50

Work %
Housing/Multiple 10
Residences 10
Office Buildings/Banks/Financial 15
Education/Academic 15
Libraries 10
Museums/Cultural Centers 10

Representative Projects
Bud Werner Memorial Library (renovation/expansion), Steamboat Springs, CO; Carleton College Arts Union (adaptive re-use/expansion), Northfield, MN; Harvest States Head and Sack House City House Project (restoration), St. Paul, MN; MCAD Academic Expansion (renovation/expansion), Minneapolis, MN; St. Louis Park Emergency Program Facility (renovation/expansion), St. Louis Park, MN; University of Minnesota Morris Community Services Building (renovation), Morris, MN

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Charles D. Liddy, AIA
Mark J. Miller

Firm Personnel by Discipline
Architects 30
Interior Designers 4
Other Professional 1
Technical 1
Administrative 4
Total in Firm 40

Work %
Office Buildings/Banks/Financial 10
Retail/Commercial 10
Medical/Health Care 10
Churches/Worship 20
Education/Academic 20
Aviation/Transportation 30

Representative Projects
University of Minnesota Fairview Hennepin County Medical Center Express Care (remodeling/addition), Minneapolis, MN

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**Work %**
- Residences: 90%
- Municipal: 10%

**Representative Projects**
- Miller Residence (remodel), Saint Paul, MN.
- Barton Residence (remodel), Minneapolis.
- MN, Buss/ASID Showcase House: Steve Walkert and Lionel Hunter Home (addition/remodel), Saint Paul, MN.
- Shopa Residence (renovation), Golden Valley, MN.

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**Work %**
- Residential: 100%

**Representative Projects**
- Front Porch Facelift (renovation), Minneapolis, MN: Rolling Green Area (new home), Edina, MN: Kitchen (remodel), Edina, MN: Sustainable Retreat, Duluth, MN: Kenwood Area Residence (sunroom and facelift addition/renovation), Minneapolis, MN: Lake Harriet Area (new home), Minneapolis, MN

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<tr>
<td>Total in Firm</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Work %**
- Housing/Multiple: 15%
- Residences: 85%

**Representative Projects**
- Seasons of Cannon Falls, Cannon Falls, MN: Crocus Hill Home (renovation), Saint Paul, MN: St. Martin’s By-The-Lake Church (renovation/addition), Minneapolis, MN: Kenwood Italianate Home (renovation), Minneapolis, MN: Lowry Hill Residence (restoration), Minneapolis, MN: Summit Avenue Mission Revival Residence (renovation), Saint Paul, MN

### WOLD ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS

305 St. Peter Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102
Tel: (651) 227-7773
Fax: (651) 223-5546
Email: mail@woldae.com
www.woldae.com
Established 1968
Other Offices: Palatine, IL; Royal Oak, MI
Contact: Vaughn Dierks, AIA, LEED® AP

**Firm Professionals**
- Michael S. Cox, AIA
- R. Scott McQueen, AIA, LEED® AP
- Vaughn Dierks, AIA, LEED® AP
- Kevin Marshall, PE, LEED® AP
- Matt Mooney, PE, LEED® AP

**Firm Personnel by Discipline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Total in Firm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architects</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Designers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in Firm</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Work %**
- Municipal: 10%
- Education/Academic: 65%
- Judicial/Corrections/Detention: 20%
- Planning: 5%

**Representative Projects**
- George Gibbs Jr. Elementary School (new);
- Carver County Justice Center (additions/remodel);
- Washington County Government Center (expansion), Stillwater, MN;
- Drono Schools Facilities (renovations), Shakopee Elementary School (new);
- Shakopee, MN: City of Richfield (new city hall/police/fire), Richfield, MN.
Architect: SALA Architects, Inc.
Principal-in-charge: Dale Mulfinger, FAIA
Project manager: Dan Wallace, AIA
Project team: Dale Mulfinger, FAIA; Dan Wallace, AIA
Structural engineer: McConkey Johnson Soltermann, Inc.
Lighting designer: Van Tullis Interiors, with SALA Architects, Inc.
Interior design: Van Tullis Interiors
Construction manager: North Woods Construction of La Pointe, Inc.
Cabinetwork: Rob’s Custom Cabinetry
Flooring systems/materials: Stained concrete and wood
Window systems: Eagle Window and Door, Inc.
Architectural metal panels: Una-Clad
Photographer: Don F. Wong

Sjölundén Swedish Language Village
page 30
Location: Bemidji, Minnesota
Client: Concordia Language Villages
Architect: Wessel Design
Principal-in-charge: Kerrik Wessel, AIA
Project lead designer: Kerrik Wessel, AIA
Project manager: Kerrik Wessel, AIA
Project architect: Kerrik Wessel, AIA
Project team: Kerrik Wessel, AIA; Heather Sexton; Craig G. Andersen
Structural engineer: Roland V. Johnson
Construction manager: Amy Rutten, AIA
Cabinetwork: Bernie Built Cabinets
Flooring systems/materials: Yellow pine and concrete
Window systems: Integrity Windows by Marvin
Photographer: Scott Gilbertson Photography

Swan Fish Camp
page 34
Location: Lake Mille Lacs, Isle, Minnesota
Client: Andrea Peschel Swan, AIA, and Bret Swan
Architect: Swan+Simmons Architecture, Ltd.
Project lead designer: Andrea Peschel Swan, AIA
Project manager: Andrea Peschel Swan, AIA
Project architect: Andrea Peschel Swan, AIA
Project team: Andrea Peschel Swan, AIA; Charlie Simmons; Colby Mattson
Structural engineer: Joe Cain, Matson MacDonald Young Structural Engineers
Lighting designer: Swan+Simmons Architecture, Ltd.
Interior design: Swan+Simmons Architecture, Ltd.
Construction manager: Jason Strom, Nor-Son, Inc.
Final grading and hydro seeding: Dan’s Sod
Excavation and septic: Tom Kosec Excavating
Water well: North Star Drilling
Mechanical contractor: Air Concepts Plumbing: Gravelie Plumbing
Electrical: Magnum Electric
Roofing: Pro-Snap, Dark Blue, Midwest Manufacturing installed by At-Con Construction
Concrete work: Nor-Son, Inc.
Millwork: Nor-Son, Inc.
Insulation: Expert Insulation
Drywall: Cobi Hood Drywall
Finish/paint: Geo’s Paint and Finish
Granite countertops: Polished Kashmir White Granite, supplied by Terrazzo & Marble Supply Companies, fabricated by Custom Stone Interiors
Backsplash mosaic: Recycled Oyster Glass Mosaic, installed by owner
Cabinetry: Crystal Cabinet Works, Inc.; Nor-Son, Inc.
Appliances: Sears
Living room flooring: Solid Bamboo T&G flooring, nailed and glued
Bathroom flooring: American Olean Highland Ridge Series (color: Desert HRS0)
Lower-level mud hall and stair flooring: Johnsonite Roundel Resilient Rubber Flooring (color: Moonrock) through Multiple Concept Interior
Carpet: Royalty Stainmaster Tactesse Nylon (color: Surprised Sand) through Multiple Concept Interior
Decking: TREX, installed by Nor-Son, Inc.
Handrail: Custom wood design includes CableRail, installed by Nor-Son, Inc.
Fireplace: SCAN 2 Gas Stove, supplied by owner (purchased from Woodland Stoves & Fireplaces), installed by Nor-Son, Inc.
Tub surround: Solid Cultured Marble Sheets (matte white), installed by Nor-Son, Inc.
Window systems: All exterior doors and windows by Marvin, Inc.
Commercial garage door: Brainerd Overhead Door
Interior doors: J.B. O’Meara, TRUSTILE
Window/door treatments: Anne Marie Cox, Bella Drapery
Photographer: Scott Amundson Photography

Cable Lake Guest Cabin
page 36
Location: Cable, Wisconsin
Architect: Albertsson Hansen Architecture, Ltd.
Principal-in-charge: Christine Albertsson, AIA
Project team: Ryan Fish, AIA; Sonya Carel, Assoc. AIA
Structural engineer: A.M. Structural Engineering
Window systems: Marvin Windows
Photographer: Peter Bastianelli-Kerze

Roland Cabins
page 38
Location: Madeline Island, Wisconsin
Client: Christopher and Helen Roland
Architect: Salmela Architecture
Principal-in-charge: David Salmela, FAIA
Project lead designer: David Salmela, FAIA
Project architect: Carly Coulson, AIA
Project team: Ryan Fish, AIA; Jim Berry
Interior design: Tia Salmela Keoboumpheng
General contractor: Northwood Construction
Cabinetwork: Rod & Sons Carpentry
Window systems: H Windows
Photographer: Peter Bastianelli-Kerze

Window/door drapery: Anne Marie Cox, Bella Drapery
Photographer: Scott Amundson Photography
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