Architecture
New Jersey
Issue 2:1991
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Carriage House
Robert Cerutti Architect

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Rothe-Johnson Associates

Gateway 195 Office Building
Peter Lokhammer Architect

Bayfront House, North Beach
Michael Ryan Architects

Oceanfront House, Harvey Cedars
Michael Ryan Architects

Hopewell Township School
Kanalstein, Danton, Johns, PA

King’s Crossing, Clinton
Saphire Associates, P.C.

Thirty Seconds in Iran

Charles Weiler’s mideast trip for earthquake relief.

Introducing: Barton Myers

Los Angeles architect commissioned in New Jersey.

Exhibition Notes: “Small Town, Distinguished Architects”

Recent exhibition reviewed by Caroline Hancock.

Books: Modern Architecture in Europe

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News

Cover: Exploded axonometric drawing of oceanfront residence in Harvey Cedars by Michael Ryan Architects.
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CVA2
Current Work

Discussing “current work” in 1991 is almost an oxymoron.

The construction industry always leads our regional economy in its upward or downward movements, and New Jersey architects are among the first to feel the effect. After riding the highs of the ’80s expansion, what happens to architects, and architecture, in our present troubled economy?

Responses can vary. Professionals may try to get a bigger piece of a shrinking pie via aggressive marketing. They may move into other pies by expanding the types of services offered (interiors, graphics, planning). They may also lessen their financial “appetite” by reducing personnel and overhead expenses.

More importantly, architects will now have the opportunity to refine their efforts. Clients will need to retool established building envelopes, systems, and interiors to meet emerging market demands. New projects will need to take shape in light of current social, economic, and regulatory realities. All this calls for informed, resourceful design, the very thing architects do best.

—RY
House on the Palisades, Rockland County, New York
Jay D. Measley Architects, Red Bank, New Jersey

The site was the major factor determining the design of this three-bedroom house for a family that entertains frequently. To capitalize on the dramatic views to the east—to the Hudson River, Tappan Zee Bridge, and the Piermont Peninsula—principal rooms are arrayed linearly north to south so that each room has a spectacular vista, and balconies are placed along the house's river side. The entry sequence leads boldly from an entrance bridge past a central staircase to a dining room projecting prow-like towards the Hudson.

On the entrance side, a strong presence is created so that the street is reinforced.

Exterior surfaces of the house are stucco. The entrance trellis is ebonized cedar, and the roof is standing-seam copper. Other wood trim is mahogany. The structure of the house is steel frame on reinforced concrete retaining walls and footings.
This 105,000-square-foot complex for the Community College of Philadelphia contains classrooms, a conference hall, and a dining facility, as well as a 22,500-square-foot gymnasium. The complex consists of two L-shaped buildings arranged to create three linked outdoor “rooms” on its 2.75-acre site just north of Center City. A view is maintained to CCP’s architectural focus, the former U.S. Mint Building.

Exterior materials include gray brick and metals painted to extend the silvery palette of the existing campus. Strong accent colors are introduced at the entries and at points throughout the interiors.

The project will be completed this summer.
Carriage House Addition, Princeton, New Jersey
Robert Cerutti Architect, Princeton, New Jersey

The architect was commissioned to design a carriage house on the site of an existing one-story Mies-inspired house. To retain the dignity of the scale and symmetrical plan of the original house, the two-story addition was situated apart from the house, with an open covered walkway connecting the two structures. The carriage house is at right angles to the main house, creating an entry court. The carriage house contains a two-car garage and storage space on the first floor, and a multi-purpose room and bath on the second story.

The exposed steel structure of the original house is extended along the walkway and across the front of the carriage house to create a uniform one-story scale to the entry court, and to mediate the scale of the two masses. The second level of the new building is clad in bronze mirrored glass, reflecting the surrounding landscape and de-materializing the second story.
This $110-million complex is Trenton’s largest redevelopment project, and will span an entire block within the State Street Redevelopment Corridor in the city’s downtown. The 600,000-square-foot complex will accommodate offices for the Department of Motor Vehicle Services, a broadcast facility and offices for New Jersey Network, a U.S. Post Office, and retail stores, and will include a 1,500-car parking structure.

The project will be the first to comply with the Capital City Renaissance Plan. The brick and rose-colored cast stone facade is designed to relate to adjacent buildings. A glazed multi-level atrium serves as the main entrance and breaks the State Street massing into two parts. Round and octagonal towers define three corners of the site.

The project’s developer, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, was chosen by the State in 1988, and the architect was named after an extensive selection procedure. Project completion is scheduled for late 1992.
Gateway 195 Office Building, Hamilton Township, New Jersey
Peter Lokhammer, Architect, Hopewell, New Jersey

To render a four-acre office park site feasible for development, the architect proposed shifting its two-acre detention basin and locating a parking deck over the basin. A three-story, 62,000-square-foot office building was then designed to be built over and beyond the parking deck.

The south portion of the building reflects the structural grid of the parking level at its ground level, and its relentless repetition is presented unabashedly, with little relief, to the highway alongside it. The north side, on the other hand, is not built over parking and is free to assume a curved form, from which emerges an entry pavilion angled to face the approach road.

Inside, as an alternative to the elevator/stair core, an additional, more interesting route is provided to encourage movement up through the building. It leads up along a stairway from the lobby, through a central two-story atrium, and up to the third floor, where an overlook breaks through the southern facade of the building.
Bayfront House, North Beach, New Jersey  
*Michael Ryan, Architect, Loveladies, New Jersey*

This summer house now nearing completion on Long Beach Island will accommodate a family with four grown children and numerous guests. The aim was to encourage community and permit privacy as well, and this aim was pursued by the clustering of highly individual forms on either side of a central living room and courtyard. All living areas are six feet above grade, as per flood regulations.

The central courtyard provides access upward to the living room, which is given a tent-like feeling: Concrete columns support a ceiling composed of two intersecting curved structural systems, glu-lam timbers and stress-skin panels.

To the south of this central wing is a two-story section housing the kitchen and dining areas as well as adult guest and master bedrooms. The roof of this wing is vaulted, and clerestory windows illuminate the second-story ceiling.

The north wing consists of two parts: a family room with a bunk room above it and a deck on the roof; and a two-story shed roof structure containing four children’s bedrooms, with windows angled towards the bay. At the corner of this wing, next to the entrance courtyard, are two triangular towers, one housing a stair, the other containing outdoor showers on three levels.

Roofing is Fiberglas over plywood. Cladding is shingles and, for the towers, tongue-and-groove cedar.
This summer house for a family with two children is to be built on an oceanfront lot which, while deep, has a buildable section only 45' by 43' in size, with a 10' jog on the northern edge. The house, to be built to these imposed limits, has children's and guest bedrooms and a children's living room on the first floor (which is one story above grade) and living, dining, and kitchen areas and master bedroom on the top floor. The ten-foot jog will accommodate a tower with decks at each level, and with a stair to the roof deck.

Above the open ground floor, the first floor will be clad with cedar shingles. The upper level uses columns and panels to suggest an infill system. The flat roof, of Fiberglas, floats above the house, its overhangs shading the house like an umbrella.
The Hopewell community wished to retain the historic nature of their Township School in the restoration of the existing building and in the additions made to it.

The original 1929 building was a simple block, but subsequent wings began to define a courtyard to the rear. The proposed additions complete the courtyard, and a new entry to the building draws visitors to this feature. An "interior street" runs along two sides of the courtyard and through the building, and these are enlivened by geometric forms and primary colors.
The architects aimed to achieve a traditional neighborhood image in the design of this 92-unit housing development. For this purpose, the town of Williamsburg, Virginia, and other communities were studied as inspiration for the project, which will be built on a 23-acre site adjacent to a public park in the town of Clinton.

To establish a relatively intimate scale, front yard setbacks are kept to ten feet. Each "house" is actually two two-story dwelling units, and each garage, separated from the house, shares a wall on the opposite property line. Private rear gardens are thus clearly defined.

In keeping with the traditional imagery desired, natural wood siding is being used, along with built-in gutters with dental moldings.
On the evening of June 9, 1990 NW Iran was hit with a devastating earthquake which killed more than 40,000 people and left 500,000 homeless. The epicenter was in a high alpine valley near the village of Dehlamond, about 50 miles south of the Caspian Sea.

I had the great privilege of joining a private volunteer group and traveling to Iran as the guest of the Islamic Republic Housing Foundation and Housing and Urban Development agency.

Our disaster relief group was the first American group allowed into Iran since the Islamic Revolution and hostage crisis 12 years ago. We were treated like honored guests. We arrived in Teheran on August 6, 1990, four days after Iraq arrived in Kuwait.

In 30 seconds, 1,500 towns and villages were destroyed. More than 80 percent of the buildings in an area 200 miles long and 100 miles wide were leveled.

The following narrative is about Masuleh, a picturesque town in northwest Iran about 30 miles west of Rasht and about 50 miles from the epicenter. First settled in 500 AD at the end of a blind canyon, the town steps up the mountainside so quickly that the roof of one building forms the street for the building above. The streets are connected only by steep steps and alleys. There are no cars. All the buildings are painted yellow ochre, now faded and dusty.

Masuleh is somewhat of a summer tourist town. The winters are hardest in the canyon and the population dwindles to perhaps 2,000 persons, but the cool summer weather and clear mountain air swells the population to 5,500. A mountain stream fills the valley at the bottom of town.

30 seconds in Iran...

It was midnight in Masuleh and most people were asleep. Those with a television were watching the World Cup Soccer match from Italy. The occasional cheers and yells were easily heard in the night air.

The screaming started in the middle of the soccer game. No ground movement, no shakes, no tremors, just the sound of wailing and screaming getting vaguely louder with the seconds. Could it be children or others watching television? The screaming got horribly loud and urgent. Then the windows and dishes started to rattle. The TV was blurring and sliding.

The screaming was coming from the mountainside, from below the house, from inside the walls. No one heard the crying of the children being knocked out of bed by the moving, screaming earth. Thirty seconds later all was silent.

Masuleh was lucky. Only about ten roof/floors/streets collapsed during the first 30 seconds of the earthquake, which registered 7.3 on the Richter scale. The stepped buildings and mountainside moved as one and settled down together with little major damage.

The real damage came shortly after the 'quake, when part of the mountaintop broke loose and fell about 1.5 kilometers, bowling through the town, killing ten and destroying about eight houses. The 200-ton two-story-high boulder came to rest in the middle of town, four or five streets/roof tops above the valley.

The threat of more of the mountaintop falling is too much for the people of Masuleh to live with. They are moving away at a regular and increasing rate.

Our disaster relief group has made a proposal to the Iranian government to help solve the problem at Masuleh. We are exploring ways to stabilize or remove the granite escarpment, the whole top of the mountain, which threatens the future of the town.

The Iranian government is making an heroic attempt to change the basic fabric of construction in the earthquake-damaged areas, starting with the current reconstruction effort. In a single generation, they hope to change the basic housing materials from unreinforced mud and stone to wood and concrete. They will subsidize any reconstruction using wood and light timber framing, bamboo and thatch, or reinforced concrete, but will not help anyone build with loose-laid stone or mud brick.

Charles Weiler is a Partner in the firm of Franke & Weiler Architects in Mount Laurel, NJ, and a Founding Principal of World Services Delivered.
These Sketches were made by Charles Weiler on site in Iran.

A wooden gate and fence guard a road with two large gardens to continue a gentle wind. A gate with a lattice is reminiscent of the Old. Fresh flowers from the festivities.

The tents line the woods between the river and the woods.

Architecture New Jersey 91:2 21
Late last year, Barton Myers Associates of Los Angeles was chosen to design the Concert Hall for the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark (see ANJ 1:91, Editorial). Myers is best known for the Portland Performing Arts Center (a joint venture with ELS and BOORA), which integrates new halls and a renovated old theater into the existing urban fabric.

Myers, born in Virginia and educated at the University of Pennsylvania, designed the Portland project while in Toronto, where he practiced for 20 years. Other prominent projects he worked on in Canada are the Housing Union Building in Edmonton and the Seagrams Museum in Waterloo, Ontario. In 1980 Myers set up an office in Los Angeles. Among his current projects are the U.S. Pavilion for the 1992 World’s Fair in Seville, and the Cerritos Arts Center in Cerritos, California, in which one flexible space will be converted into five different configurations, from 900 to 1850 seats.

On these pages appear illustrations from Myers’ past and current work, and an interview with ANJ Consulting Editor Susan Doubilet.

ANJ: Newark is no longer generally perceived as an appealing center. Do you believe that the Performing Arts Center can redress that situation? And do you see any other encouraging signs that might foretell a renaissance for the city?

BM: In fact, Newark has a number of things going for it. Newark appears to have a positive political climate, with fewer of the tensions that one sees in other American cities like Detroit and Phoenix. The mayor is both energetic and capable, and major businesses, such as insurance companies, are forging coalitions with the community. There are five institutes of higher education in Newark, a positive sign. Newark has excellent transportation systems to other centers — Amtrak, commuter railways, and major airlines. Companies formerly based in Manhattan continue to move out to nearby areas such as Newark.

Newark also has an infrastructure of very good buildings, many recently restored. The Performing Arts Center itself will have a fine view to Manhattan, reinforcing the concept of a second center separated from the primary one.

In Portland, Los Angeles, and New York’s west side, Arts Centers have served as catalysts for change. Ultimately, the NJPAC will attract a great deal of income to Newark. But it is critical that other important developments occur as well —
mixed use development, with offices, shops, and housing as extremely instrumental. Hotels are already being attracted because of the airport.

ANJ: Do you see the separation of the Arts Center site from the existing Symphony Hall as a problem? Won’t Symphony Hall suffer?

BM: Not necessarily. Newark need not put all its cookies in one jar. Intelligent marketing will enable Symphony Hall to be retained as a major player.

ANJ: What is the program for the NJPAC?

BM: The two-phase program is being developed by theater consultant Jules Fischer. The first phase calls for a 2700-seat multi-purpose hall to serve for popular as well as Classical music, and to be the initial home of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. And the second phase will add a 2000-seat Concert Hall, an ideal size for the Symphony Orchestra. The first project is especially challenging: It is tough to make a 2700-seat hall intimate and acoustically excellent, to compete with Carnegie Hall, the best in the area.

ANJ: Are there to-be-important exterior spaces?

BM: Yes: Therein lies the second major challenge of the program. In the development plan conceived by James Polshek and Partners and SOM, both of New York, the exterior space is critical. I would like to see a space that accommodates casual use, impromptu celebrations (when the local team wins, for example), the circus, Aida...and that will be beautiful when empty, as well.

ANJ: What is the timetable for the project?

BM: The design process should take about two years, and the construction a further two to three years. Funding is proceeding successfully.

ANJ: Why do you think you were awarded this commission?

BM: First of all, as a relative outsider, I have perspective on the project and come with an optimistic viewpoint—unlike Northeasterners, who seem to feel defeated about the environment before they even begin.

Then, the selection committee really liked our Portland project, which emphasized the qualities of Portland itself—the balance of old and new, of open space and buildings. In viewing my Cerritos project, the committee members were excited by how adventuresome it is.

I believe it was felt I could create an inviting, accessible, romantic, festive place. I intend to do so.
"Small Town, Distinguished Architects"

A recent exhibition presented by the Historical Society of Princeton pointed up the surprising number of well-known architects who have left their mark upon that "small town." Both the University and wealthy residents (many alumni) have been patrons, commissioning important architects from both New York and Philadelphia to design Princeton buildings. The exhibition, at Bainbridge House in Princeton this past fall and winter, displayed works by 33 architects, including projects in Princeton and elsewhere.

The earliest designer in the show, Scottish emigré Robert Smith (1722-77), was a Philadelphia-based carpenter-builder who designed Nassau Hall and the present Maclean House in Princeton. At our end of the timeline is Princeton-based Michael Graves, who is represented locally chiefly by residential work, yet is executing large-scale projects worldwide.

In between, many familiar architects, such as McKim, Mead and White and I.M. Pei, designed buildings for the University. Frank Lloyd Wright designed a house (alas unbuilt due to budget overruns) for patrons who, years later, hired Robert Venturi to design his first built residential commission, a house addition designed with William Short.

One attempts, of course, to compare the local and national (or international) work of each architect to find some consistency of style. This is often difficult, however, due to the pre-Modern belief that different functions dictated different stylistic expressions. Who, for example, can tell by visual inspection that Palmer Stadium was the work of New York’s Plaza Hotel designer, Henry Hardenburgh? There is more continuity between the Barenholz addition on Rosedale Road, Princeton, and Ohio State University’s Wexner Center for the Visual Arts, both by Peter Eisenman, than between Aymar Embury’s Colonial Revival residence on North Road, Princeton, and his starkly monumental Bronx-Whitestone Bridge for New York City.

The catalog for the exhibition (articles by Constance Greiff and William Short in the Journal of the Historical Society of Princeton: 8&9) is available at Bainbridge House, as is a pamphlet presenting a Princeton walking tour.

Reviewer Caroline Hancock, R.A., works with CUH2A Architects in Princeton.
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Modern Architecture in Europe:
A Guide to Buildings Since the Industrial Revolution

by Dennis & Elizabeth DeWitt
E.P. Dutton, New York, 1987

Twelve years ago, when I showed Swedish friends my Eurail map, they laughed. All that we then called Eastern Europe was blank. In fact, this map — with white spots where eastern Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and the Balkan countries lay — represented fairly well the image Americans had of contemporary Europe.

Unfortunately, despite major political changes in the world, this lacuna is still with us in the existing guides to architecture in Europe. Dennis & Elizabeth DeWitt's Modern Architecture in Europe, published in 1987, is one of the most recent architectural guides to Europe available. While comprehensive in scope at the time of its publication, it does not cover the new entity which we now know as Europe. While the DeWitt guide had no choice but to reflect the time in which it was written, it serves to point out the need for an expanded work.

What it does cover, it covers rather well. Like most earlier guides, the DeWitts organized their work geographically, with a chapter for each of the countries included. Within each chapter the listings are grouped by city or area. In addition, lists of buildings indexed by architect and building types are provided at the rear. No lists categorized by date or style, however, are included to help those whose travels are shaped by these particular approaches.

Unlike Jerry Griffin's & Bob Sinclair's landmark publication of 1978, Where It Is & How To Get There: A Guide to Modern European Architecture, which included directions via public transit, the DeWitt guide assumes all visitors to Europe are traveling by car. Buildings, in fact, are coded by designations based on license plate country codes. Subway stations are sometimes given, but other forms of transit are omitted as being too susceptible to change. Nor is there any attempt to list the hours for buildings open to the public.

The DeWitts also take the presumptuous position of assigning a "relative importance" value (one to three asterisks) to some buildings. It may surprise you to learn that in all of Germany there is only one three-asterisk building (the Fagus Factory by Walter Gropius). France gets four, Britain and Spain three each, and the Netherlands, two. Austria, Finland, and Sweden each have one three-asterisk listing. Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, and Switzerland have no Modern three-asterisk buildings. Needless to say, this system is highly subjective, and since it is so mean, it is of questionable value to both professional and layperson.

Throughout the book one is reminded of the Anglocentric perspective of Dennis & Elizabeth DeWitt. In their preface, we are told that the Industrial Revolution in Britain and France was where "the quest for new means of architectural expression began." While the Industrial Revolution did, indeed, provide the social and economic impetus for change, many consider Frank Lloyd Wright the first to give architectural form to the Modern Age. While nodding to American developments such as the exceptional buildings in Columbus, IN, and Mercer's concrete fantasies in Doylestown, PA, the DeWitts take swipes at American university master planning, 1930s Art Deco design, and Philip Johnson. Perhaps more offensive are their regrets that the Germans have attempted to eliminate all WW II damage — even bullet-ridden stone. Stylistically, the English obsession with "High Tech" (which Thomas Hines has correctly renamed "Technological Romanticism") comes through not just by some of their selections, but by their insistence on using the term "tectonic" on what seems like every other page.

But the above is a listing of minor faults in a very valuable piece of work. Its 5 1/4" by 10 1/2" format is handy. The initial historical overview, as well as the country and city introductions are insightful and well-written. The maps are clear, and the individual building descriptions make one want to visit the real thing. The only major fault with the DeWitt's Guide is that we need more of the same.

While the general public celebrates the opening of the Brandenberg Gate, as architects we look forward to increased access to the Bauhaus in Dessau, the Einstein Tower in Potsdam, and the various projects of Mies van der Rohe which...
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Rothe-Johnson Associates, of Edison, announces the following promotions: Thomas A. Fantacone, AIA, Director of Architecture, and Peter M. James, AIA, Director of Urban Design and Planning, to the position of Partner; William L. Thole, AIA, Director of Justice Facilities Design, has been promoted to Associate Partner. Irving Leong, AIA, has been promoted to Associate.


Michael Burns, Architect, of Rocky Hill, was the recipient of the Award for Outstanding Adaptive Re-Use from the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association for Romo Books in Far Hills, a former 19th century carriage house that has been converted into a retail bookstore, resembling an old English book shop.

Harry B. Mahler, FAIA, Chairman and CEO of Grad Associates, P.A., of Newark, was selected to be one of the recipients of the “Business Leaders of the Year” award by New Jersey Monthly for his service to the business and civic communities of the State.

William H. Short, FAIA, founding partner of Short & Ford Architects of Princeton, died of cancer on February 20, 1991. A retrospective of his career will be featured in a future issue of ANJ.

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were for so long lost behind the Iron Curtain. But we need more than access: we need education. Developments in Czechoslovakia and Hungary are merely alluded to in the Guide’s introduction. Yet how little we know about architectural development in Central Europe. Can the entire story of Art Nouveau be told without a thorough survey of Prague? Has anyone begun to document the fascinating Polish church-building program of the 1980s? As Americans rush headfirst into participating in the future of Central Europe, we architects should make our contribution by helping to understand its past. There are now many additional chapters that need to be written in the next guide to European architecture.

Reviewer Regan Young, AIA, Principal of Regan Young Architects, Hainesport, NJ, is an ANJ board member.

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