



CULUS

6

Affordable Housing:
Another Crisis?

11

Expanding
Battery Park City

15

What Makes
Theater?

17

Discussing
"Civic Lessons"

REVIVING LOWER MANHATTAN

PHOTO: SCOTT FRANCIS

Battery Park City
Guard Booth
by Alexander Gorlin,
Architect

Volume 58, Number 10, June 1996

Editor: Jayne Merkel
Senior Editor: Noel Millea
News Editor: Nina Rappaport
Managing Editor: Kira Gould
Assistant Editors: Amy Lamberti
and Johnathan Sandler
Art Direction and Production:
Cathleen Mitchell, McRoberts Mitchell
Design Consultant, Cover Design:
Michael Gericke, Pentagram
Staff Photographer: Dorothy Alexander

**American Institute of Architects
New York Chapter**

200 Lexington Avenue
New York, New York 10016
212-683-0023
email: aiany@way.com

Board of Directors 1996

Jerry A. Davis, FAIA, *President*
Robert Geddes, FAIA,
President-Elect/First Vice President
Deborah Berke, AIA, *Vice President*
Walter A. Hunt, Jr., AIA, *Vice President*
Edward Mills, AIA, *Vice President*
Linda Yowell, AIA, *Secretary*
Robert S. Buford, Jr., AIA, *Treasurer*
Drew Greenwald, AIA, *Director*
Jeffrey Murphy, AIA, *Director*
Li Chung Pei, AIA, *Director*
Raymond Plumey, AIA, *Director*
Marion Weiss, AIA, *Director*
Patricia Forero, Associate AIA,
Associate Director
James D'Agostino, AIA, *Public Director*

Oculus Committee

Harley Swedler, AIA, *Chair*
Carol Clark
Jerry A. Davis, FAIA
Steven M. Davis, AIA
Walter A. Hunt, Jr., AIA
Suzanne O'Keefe, AIA
Terrence O'Neal, AIA

Chapter Staff and Services

Carol Clark, Executive Director (ext. 13)
William Gray, Membership (ext. 18)
Amy Lamberti, Project Manager (ext. 11)
Judith Rowe, Committee Programs (ext. 17)
Johnathan Sandler, Executive Assistant (ext. 16)
Stephen Suggs, Bookkeeper (ext. 19)
Advertising (ext. 12)
RSVP for Chapter Programs (ext. 21)
©1996 The American Institute of Architects
New York Chapter. All rights reserved.
Reproduction in whole or in part without
written permission is strictly prohibited.

Oculus, published ten times a year,
September through June, is a benefit of
AIA New York Chapter membership. Public
membership is \$60. A year's subscription
to *Oculus* is \$40. Send a check and your
mailing address to *Oculus* subscriptions,
AIA New York Chapter, 200 Lexington
Avenue, New York, NY 10016.

For more information on professional
and public memberships, please call the
Chapter at 683-0023, ext. 18.

Advertise in *Oculus*! Rates are reasonable
and readership is extensive. Contact the
Chapter for more information.

The views expressed in *Oculus* are not
necessarily those of the Board of Directors
or staff of the AIA New York Chapter. With
the exception of the material appearing
under the title "Around the Chapter," this
publication is produced by the *Oculus*
editorial team.

News

from the executive director, Carol Clark.

The Chapter's Lower Manhattan Task Force
and its Zoning and Urban Design Committee

have been analyzing the proposed changes to New York City's Zoning Resolution. Provisions to change current regulations governing public plazas created in conjunction with commercial building development are now in the public review process.

Long-awaited proposed zoning changes, which would allow megastores to be built in manufacturing areas without zoning restrictions, have recently emerged from the environmental review process. The big-box retail debate will be one of the more heated local regulatory controversies in memory. Ultimately, the Chapter's position on this issue will be determined by the degree to which urban design guidelines are framed to ameliorate the incongruities of meshing retail facilities with the physical fabric of New York City's diverse neighborhoods.

The Lower Manhattan Task Force has met regularly with the Manhattan Office of the Department of City Planning on proposed zoning changes in Lower Manhattan. The discussions have focused on the proposed height and setback regulations for new buildings, intended to define building envelopes for new development sites downtown. Because real estate development on the three vacant sites south of Chambers Street is unlikely to take place soon, the task force has focused on other urban design policies to ensure that alterations to the existing building fabric will enhance the area's historic character and economic viability, and help create a 24-hour community. The task force applauds the general goals of the proposed rezoning effort: to encourage as-of-right and mixed-use development, to simplify the Zoning Resolution, and to facilitate conversion of outmoded buildings.

While the Chapter continues to refine and communicate its position on comprehensive reform of Lower Manhattan zoning, the Department of City Planning has launched a limited package of relatively noncontroversial initiatives into the public review process. Chief among them is a measure aimed at property owners of buildings constructed between 1961 and 1977 who would not otherwise qualify for the city and state incentives established last fall. Other initiatives include elimination of the Business Relocation Assistance Corporation (BRAC) provisions in Lower Manhattan and an allowance for accessory parking. The highly controversial proposed transfer of development rights from an area in the historic core of the financial district – first suggested late last fall to City Planning's Advisory Committee for Lower Manhattan – is still under discussion, but it is not a part of the current zoning package.

Another topic of interest to the Zoning and Urban Design Committee is the proposed change for Eighth Avenue and the theater district. The Department of City Planning is soliciting comments from a wide range of organizations on a plan to create a Theater

continued on page 22

Battery Pier

by *Nina Rappaport*

Anxious to encourage tourism in Lower Manhattan, the Conservancy for Historic Battery Park and the Battery Park City Authority have engaged the team of **Ken Smith**, landscape architect, the **Weisz & Warchol Studio**, and **Design/Writing/Research** (Abbott Miller), graphic design, to design a temporary plaza and information kiosk for the old fire pier where visitors gather en route to Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty, Clinton Castle, Battery Park, or the parks in Battery Park City. (Meanwhile, long-term plans for **Beyer Blinder Belle's** Pier A Plaza inch along incrementally.) The new project consists of a series of circular benches and a giant kiosk, also with circular seating. The image of a shell — projected in sweeping bands of black-and-brown asphalt paving that pull people through the plaza — symbolizes the maritime history of the site, the shape of the plaza, and the crowning pediment on the historic pier structure.

Descriptions of the Battery from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* appear in the concrete bands between the colored asphalt paths.

High-Tech Communicating

For a fast growing state-of-the-art communications company, Connors Communications, **Lee Skolnick Architecture + Design Partnership** has designed a new office by inserting workstations into an open loft space in a Flatiron district building. Low dividers made of translucent screens and wood-and-glass partitions differentiate the public and private spaces. Colored walls and stained woods delineate solid volumes for storage units and closets. A video viewing room has TV monitors and a comfortable seating area.

For the Scholastic Gallery in Soho, Skolnick designed an all-in-one, interactive product test space, showroom, offices, reception area, and art gallery. The space is divided into Scholastic's product categories: home products, school products, and the classroom of the future. Mobile computer kiosks are networked to display programs on a 10-by-16-foot grid of monitors for group activities.

Accessible Health Care

Two opposite scales of new hospital facilities have recently been completed in New York. On the smaller end is the innovative conversion of a supermarket in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, into an ambulatory-care clinic as the Sister Thea Bowman Family Health Center, part of St. Mary's Hospital.

The 10,000-square-foot supermarket had been abandoned when the firm **Architecture for Health, Science & Commerce**, of Tarrytown, New York, transformed it into a new center in April. Because of its vast open space, the store was ideal for conversion. Staff offices were easy to separate from public zones. Skylights bring natural light into the waiting areas. The simple, new, geometric masonry-and-glass-block facade is highlighted with an arched doorway that enhances the streetscape.

On the mammoth end is Bellevue Hospital Center's newly expanded and modernized emergency department, completed on April 10 and designed by architects **Albert Schunkewitz & Partners** of New York. As the largest emergency department in the city (65,000 square feet), it must be transformed into a command center for city crises and also serve as a sanctuary from disaster. The second busiest in the country, it is prepared to handle over 110,000 patient visits this year.

The existing buildings were a maze of unplanned spaces, gradually added over time. In 1990, the architects began the first of two phases, which include remodeling the existing space and building a new 31,000-square-foot structure for the adult and pediatric sections. The old emergency area will be turned into psychiatric, radiology, and administrative areas.

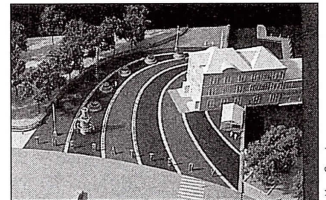
A new component of the center is the separate monitored entrances for adults, children, and prisoners: A cheerful pediatric area lessens the confusion for children; the adult space has decontamination areas and isolation rooms for contagious diseases. Skylights and soothing colors help alleviate tension. Emergency-care patient areas are arranged in concentric spaces for easy staff surveillance.

Islamic Center

Construction began in April on the Islamic Cultural Center School on Third Avenue between 96th and 97th streets, adjacent to the mosque designed by SOM in 1991. The nonprofit cultural and religious organization's building was designed by **Rogers, Burgun, Shahine and Deschler, Inc.**

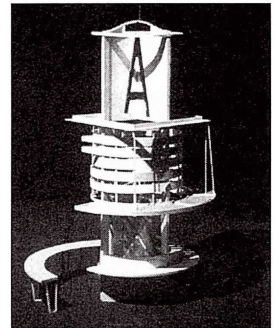
Of interest is the architects' use of the existing site, which drops 19 feet on the Second Avenue side. They stacked the three floors of the curved building into the side of the hill within a comparatively small footprint. This tactic freed up space to create a semicircular ceremonial plaza that mirrors the circle-on-square geometry of the mosque's dome. The plaza, which separates and unifies the two buildings, will be used for recreation and as a gathering place for prayers on feast days.

The three-story, 35,000-square-foot building, which will be completed next year, includes



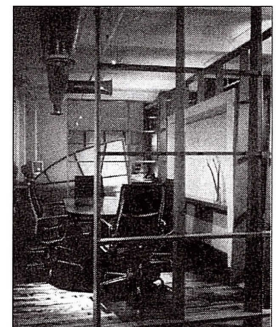
Ken Smith

*Kiosk for Pier A,
Ken Smith,
Weisz & Warchol Studio,
Design/Writing/Research*



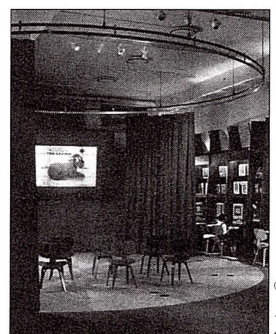
Ken Smith

*Pier A temporary plaza,
Ken Smith,
Weisz & Warchol Studio,
Design/Writing/Research*



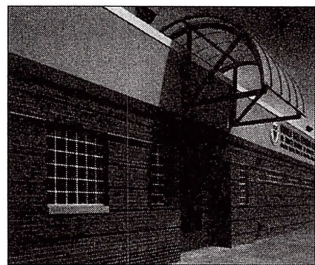
Andrew Garm

*Connors Communication,
Lee Skolnick
Architecture + Design*



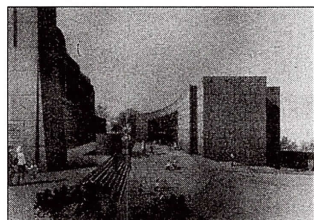
Andrew Garm

*Scholastic Gallery,
Lee Skolnick
Architecture + Design*

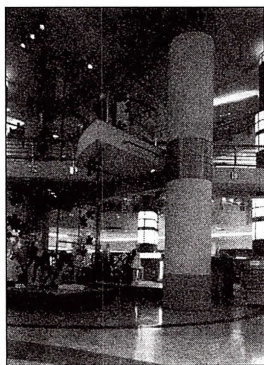


AHSC

*Sister Thea Bowman
Family Health Center,
Architecture for
Health, Science & Commerce*



*Islamic Cultural Center school,
Rogers, Burgun, Shahine
and Deschler, Inc.*



Dub Rogers

*Robinson Ramindra
department store,
Bangkok, Thailand,
Walker Group/CNI*



Eric Bowman

Dan Kiley

a ground floor with a cafeteria, a library, offices, and mechanical systems that will later house an exhibit space and auditorium. Classrooms for 240 students occupy the second and third floors. The lobby is a three-story space capped with a skylight. The school the potential for future construction on the flat roof and at grade level.

Clad in honed granite, the building echoes the adjacent mosque, but takes on its own character with clear volumes and geometric patterning based on Islamic decoration.

East Village Libraries Restored

The Department of General Services continues to restore New York's historic libraries despite budget cutbacks.

Rothzeit Kaiserman Thomson & Bee has begun designs to restore the New York City landmark Ottendorfer branch at 135 Second Avenue, built in 1884 by William Schickel for the Ottendorfer family. Later donated to the city, it is the oldest operating library in the New York public library system. Its landmarked interior features a cast-iron and glazed mezzanine, a spiral staircase, and glass floor panels. Making the building handicapped-accessible while retaining its historic elements will be a major challenge.

In May the architects completed the renovation of the 1904 Tompkins Square branch of a Carnegie library at 331 East Tenth Street, designed by McKim, Mead & White.

Bangkok Store

More commercial activity in the Far East for New York-based design firms includes a new department store for Robinson Ramindra in Bangkok, Thailand, which was completed last year to appeal to a younger, less afflu-

ent family customer than other branches of the same store in the city. **Walker Group/CNI** designed the interiors with a lively graphic design program, bold colors and patterns, and inexpensive materials and fixtures, such as vinyl flooring rather than terrazzo, wallpapers, vinyl wood replicas, and laminates. Each floor has a different theme: "style" on the first floor, "youth" on the second floor, "lifestyle" on the third floor, and "market-place" in the basement.

Awards

The American Academy in Rome announced the winners of the hundredth annual Rome Prize competition on Monday, April 29. The fellowships allow American artists, architects, and scholars to live and work at the Academy's villa and facilities in Rome. The prizes in the field of architecture were awarded to **Kimberly Ackert** of New York City; **Nichole Wiedemann** of Gainesville, Florida; and **Mark Robbins** of Columbus, Ohio. Prizes in historic preservation and conservation were given to **Anthony Robins** and **George Segan Wheeler**, both of New York City.

Landscape architect **Daniel Urban Kiley** was elected to the **American Academy of Arts and Letters** this year, joining artists, writers, musicians, and architects who are honored every year for their outstanding achievements. Kiley combines a modernist sensibility with a respect for nature and the classical tradition (*Oculus*, April 1996, p. 16). The American Academy of Arts and Letters, founded in 1898, is chartered by Congress and grants awards of half a million dollars each year.

The **Van Alen Institute Projects in Public Architecture** announced the winning entries for its Governors Island competition at a ceremony on April 24. The first prize of \$10,000 and designation as the inaugural Van Alen fellow in public architecture went to **Peter Hau**, a graduate student in landscape architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, for "Open Narratives." A second prize of \$2,500 was awarded to **Kimberlee J. Douglas**, another student at Penn in landscape architecture, for "Wired Island." **Dilip da Cunha** and **Anuradha Mathur**, both of Philadelphia, shared the \$1,000 third prize, and three honorable mentions (\$250 each) went to **Archi-tectonica** of New York, **James Corner** of the Penn landscape faculty, and **Kimberlee K. Yao**, an architecture student at Princeton. The jury included **Christine Boyer**, **Miriam Gusevich**, **Judith Heintz**, **Carlos Jimenez**, and **Enric Miralles**. The over 200 entries will be on exhibition at the Van Alen Institute, 30 West 22nd Street, until mid-June.

Drawings and models of ideas by community members to "Help Design Frederick Douglass Circle" are on exhibition at the Charles A. Dana Discovery Center in Central Park through June 23. The Central Park Conservancy and the National Museum of Design sponsored the competition to develop plans for the barren, paved traffic circle at the corner of 110th Street and Central Park West, which will contain a memorial to Frederick Douglass. One scheme turned the subway station at the circle into a metaphor for the Underground Railroad, for which Douglass was a "conductor," and proposed a skylight to shed light on underground commuters.

Affordable Housing: Another Crisis?

by Nina Rappaport

Awaiting news on federal budget allocations, New York housing activists fear there is little future for the traditional publicly-funded affordable housing. Besides the general decrease in public funding for housing assistance programs, the main concerns in New York are the cutbacks to the incremental Section 8 housing subsidies, the city's plan to dispose of 30,000 units of housing stock seized for nonpayment of taxes, and the Finance Department's initiative to sell tax liens without full consideration of the implications for affordable housing stock. Although the Department of Housing, Preservation, and Development has initiated some well-managed smaller housing programs this year, the more comprehensive policies have a direct impact on low-income people who are housed in the oldest urban housing stock.

"There is a resurgence of activism now that we have a true crisis," said **Beth Greenberg**, chair of the AIA New York Chapter Housing Committee, which initiated a resolution for the National AIA to revive the national task force on housing, the Search for Shelter Committee. In his March lecture at Parsons School of Design, **David Burney**, head of the design division for the New York City Housing Authority since 1990, spoke about the future of public housing. Tracing the history of public housing in New York City, he said, "There is room for optimism even in the darkest times."

NYCHA has had unusual success with even less funding. Federal funds allowed the renovation of city in rem properties and the construction of 300 new units a year from 1990 until 1995. But the city is now in desperate need of more units and subsidies. Every NYCHA unit is rented, and over 130,000 families are on a waiting list. Next year there is only the potential for modernization work and the construction of 13 new units of transitional housing for families with AIDS by **James McCullar & Associates** on the Lower East Side. Burney calls these the "Last Houses," in contrast to the First Houses of 1935.

Recent NYCHA projects are innovative high-density, low-rise housing projects: in East New York, Marcy Green, with 87-units, and Hoard Park, with 150 units, by **Shelly Croop**; a 56-unit courtyard scheme on the Lower East Side by **Becker and Becker Associates**; 87 units of senior housing designed by **James McCullar & Associates** at 91st and Columbus; and the Dome site at 84th and Columbus by **Castro-Blanco, Piscioneri and Associates**. NYCHA is also renovating existing community centers and facilities, and runs social programs.

But now, Burney said, the buzzword is asset management. Congress feels that HUD should be run like a real estate company, selling off the smallest units and getting the government away from building housing.

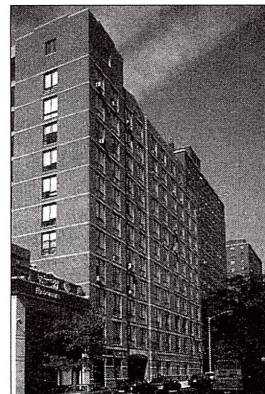
Frank Braconi, executive director of the Citizens Housing and Planning Council, asked, when HUD takes away the incremental Section 8 to facilitate privatization, "Where can you put the homeless and impoverished people,...in public housing? There is no room." The lack

of subsidies will bring abandonment again because landlords won't be receiving rent and won't be able to pay taxes or make repairs.

"The issue of housing doesn't even appear in Giuliani's framework," said Jay Small, executive director of the Association for Neighborhood Housing Developers. "The city is now primarily trying to rid itself of its stocks in the portfolio of housing. They want to break the in rem cycle, but they are doing it in a dangerous way since they are not taking care of distressed properties." The tax lien bill initiated by the Finance Department can foreclose even occupied properties.

David R. Jones, president of the Community Service Society, said he is concerned that the sales lists initially issued by the Department of Finance contain numerous errors, which HPD is trying to identify and remove. He said he worries that the loss of the incremental Section 8 will make it impossible for non-profits and community-based housing groups to improve or develop housing.

One solution to the homeless problem that has proven successful is the new trend toward developing supportive housing, a type of SRO with social services and community-oriented programs. Examples are now featured in a photography exhibition, "Almost Home," sponsored by the Corporation for Supportive Housing, Common Ground, HPD, and the SRO Providers Group, at the Times Square Lobby Gallery at 255 West 43rd Street through June 7.

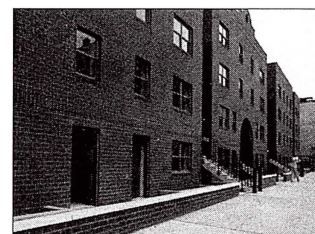


Peter Mauss/Esto

*Sondra Thomas apartments,
James McCullar & Associates*

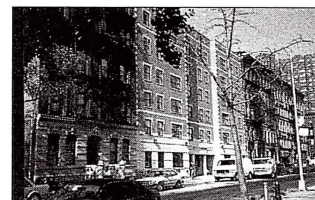


*189 Stanton Street,
James McCullar & Associates*



Becker and Becker

*740 East 9th Street,
Becker and Becker Associates*



David Castro-Blanco

*Dome site,
Castro-Blanco, Piscioneri
and Associates*



REVIVING LOWER MANHATTAN

by Jayne Merkel

“We want to create an environment where it’s no longer safe to shoot a commercial with lions and bulls running through the streets,” City Planning Commissioner **Joseph B. Rose** told a standing-room-only audience at Columbia University’s symposium, “Reviving Lower Manhattan: Preserving the Past to Ensure the Future.” Nineteen different speakers at the six-hour marathon on March 29 agreed that Lower Manhattan needs to be converted to a night-lively, mixed-use neighborhood and that its historic building stock is one of its greatest assets. They parted ways on whether it should be protected as a single landmarked district, as students in the historic preservation program of the

Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation proposed in the study that inspired the event, *Reviving Lower Manhattan: Preserving the Past to Ensure the Future*.

Before debate ensued at the end of the afternoon, the audience had learned about the architectural history of the area, and what is being proposed, planned, and carried out in Lower Manhattan from the people who are doing it.

The History

“We can’t overestimate the importance of Lower Manhattan to New York’s identity internationally,” began **Robert A. M. Stern**, FAIA, the director of the historic preservation program at Columbia. As a romantic old photograph of the harbor filled the screen, he said, “That skyline is the

troubled icon of our time that we must both preserve and revitalize. It is the seat of our government, home to our major institutions of commerce....”

It wasn’t always. Stern was the first of several speakers to explain that the southern tip of Manhattan started out as a port and only later became “Wall Street.” After World War II, more change came with “a loss of faith in the past,” he said. “The general feeling was that new buildings were better than what they replaced.” The Chase Manhattan Bank Building (of 1960) “contradicted the street plan with its floor plate and the skyline with its profile.” The new preservation plan is, in part, a reaction to that disregard for precedent.

In a compact history of the plans for Lower Manhattan, **Richard Plunz**, the director of Columbia’s division of urban design, showed how “looking to a post-port city” had separated the area from its roots. “The Lower Manhattan Downtown Association, led by David Rockefeller in 1959, was intent on wiping out manufacturing and the port. The actual job-producing activities were held in great disdain. Anything but finance was said not to be the highest and best use,” he said.

Plunz showed a series of plans for Lower Manhattan, all with the West Side Highway in place for commuters. “Tribeca was seen as expendable,” he noted. A land-use map from the 1960s located finance in the center of the island and housing on the periphery, where it was eventually built. A plan for Battery Park City had harbor-view corridors cut through the old, irregular Dutch street plan.

“The *Plan for Lower Manhattan* of 1993 presented quite a dif-

ferent point of view,” he said. Problems were acknowledged, declines in population and office rentals admitted. Even the Second Avenue subway was resurrected. The Peterson/Littenberg plan of 1995 “emphasized actual design, space-making. The whole history of planning up to this time had been land-use planning,” he said, “but this was not a land-use plan.”

The speakers at the symposium shared the assumptions of the recent plan that there were serious economic problems to solve in Lower Manhattan and that the old divisions of the area into separate uses had to go. Historians **Andrew S. Dolkart** and **Carol Willis** showed how recently those divisions were made. The first strictly commercial buildings were not built until the nineteenth century (on Schermerhorn Row between 1811 and 1850). “One thing that’s interesting is the way Lower Manhattan has been able to reinvent itself” over the centuries, Dolkart said. Comparing a map of 1660 to a recent one, he showed how much of the area was built on landfill.

Willis said, “I have reservations about broad historic designation downtown in favor of individual buildings,” but acknowledged that many different types of buildings should be preserved because “a complete history of the skyscraper can be told within Lower Manhattan,” where the skyscraper museum she is organizing will be located. “I would endorse legislation saying that the canyons of Broadway, Broad Street, and Wall Street should not be penetrated.”

“One of the healthy debates between the students and the faculty was about whether designation puts too many restrictions on new construction,”

explained **Françoise Bollack**, AIA, an architect who taught in the studio that prepared the preservation plan. Her description of Lower Manhattan, informed by an architect’s sensibility, showed how “the buildings respond to each other” and how architects adapted classical language to the irregular street patterns.

For example, in 1893 James Brown Lord located the colonnaded entrance of Delmonico’s on the pointed corner of Beaver and South William streets, establishing a classical symmetry on a most unclassical site. The famous old restaurant building, recently converted to apartments, formed part of a five-pointed star created by five different Flatiron-shaped buildings converging where the corner intersects with William Street. (Later the Corn Exchange building on the northwest corner was destroyed for a modern tower that was never built.)

Sites such as the one at five corners that absolutely require sensitive, moderately-scaled infill are one reason the students consider landmarking essential.

The Preservation Plan and the Players

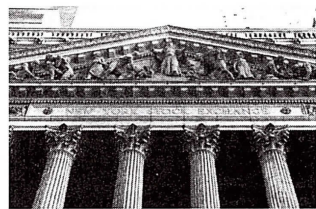
The AIA’s **Carol Clark**, another faculty member who directed the study, pointed out that before making their recommendations, the students considered “planning, zoning, and real estate perspectives. They studied the 1916 zoning code and the 1961 revisions.” She noted that the buildings there now “were built at a bulk and density far in excess of — double — the 15 FAR allowable today [a fact that makes it unlikely anyone would want to tear a building down]. A large percentage were built before 1935, and of the 603 buildings,

181 of which are significant structures, only 40 are individually landmarked. And there are three small historic districts.” She explained that the students wondered why so little was designated and concluded that it was because of opposition from real estate interests and the absence of a large, vocal residential constituency downtown. They recommended National Register listing largely for the tax credit.

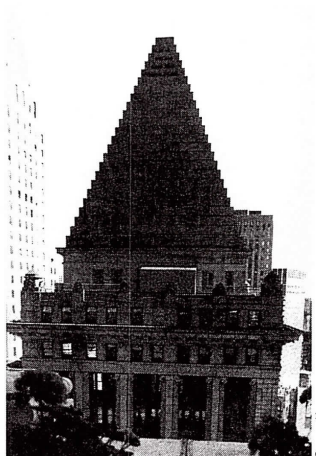
The executive director of the Landmarks Commission, **Anne G. Seel**, said a lack of staff was responsible for the small number of designations, but that ten buildings had been designated during the last year along with the Stone Street historic district, where the commission has its offices. She is convinced that if they had tried to designate the whole district, “We’d still be talking with the owners.” But, she said, “the mayor’s tax incentive plan has done wonders.”

The lone realtor on the podium, **Charles Reiss** of the Trump Organization, said its “purchase of 40 Wall Street was predicated on the assumption of designation. We want what’s around it to survive. Developers don’t always respond to cold, hard facts. They sometimes respond to emotions, and there is a great deal of emotion in Lower Manhattan...[but] it’s still very difficult. The area raises some significant questions about adapting residential. The ability to connect to transportation is essential.”

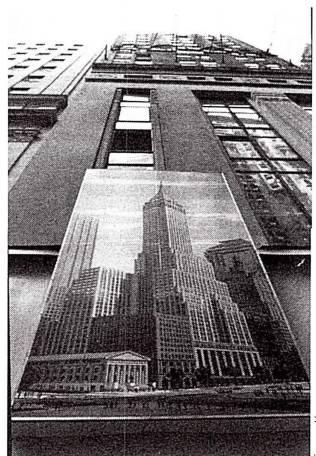
Tony Goldman, a developer who prefers to call himself “a restorer, a reviver, or a facilitator,” thinks the area offers “the opportunity to create the perfect urban neighborhood of the twenty-first century without any crack cocaine or the usual social problems.” He is



Pediment of the New York Stock Exchange



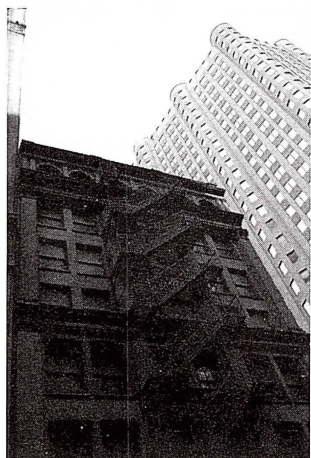
Pyramid atop 14 Wall Street



40 Wall Street with advertising for renovation

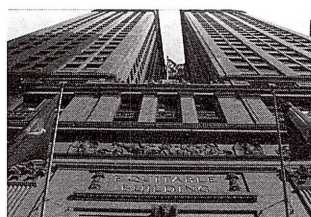
Seong Kwon

Seong Kwon



Seong Kwon

Commercial building with fire escapes — signs of conversion



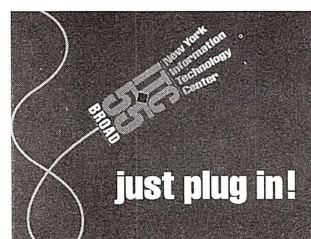
Seong Kwon

The Equitable Building, home of the Alliance for Downtown New York



Environmental Simulation Center

Computer model of Downtown Manhattan, Environmental Simulation Center



Brochure for 55 Broad Street, Information Technology Center

already converting buildings there, as he did earlier in Soho, Tribeca, and Miami Beach. “I think what we’re going to see in the future is the development of flexible space that can be used for living or working.” Goldman praised the students’ coherent vision, but said, “We have to be realistic about how you get there. We’ll get there, but we’ll get there in stages.”

What’s Going on Down There?

City officials look at downtown buildings differently than historians and preservationists — or even developers. Deputy Mayor **Fran Reiter** explained that, in designing the incentive program to abate the loss of jobs and tax revenues from office vacancies, “we split buildings into three categories: those that were no longer viable as commercial space but could become so with major investment by owners, those that were not upgradable but could be converted to residential or mixed uses, and those that were not viable in any case but might become development sites. At the same time, we wanted to preserve the district and to create a 24-hour community.” She talked mostly about the successes downtown: Tourism is up; the Heritage Trails program is in place; downtown hotels are booming. High-tech businesses are moving in. Public buildings are being cleaned and renovated. “Transportation is the most difficult problem,” she said. There is still no direct commuter access from Long Island or the northern suburbs, though the plan to improve automobile access on the West Side is under way and the downtown loop is up and running. “We think we’ll see 1,000 new units of housing this year,” she said. “Wall Street is coming back in all the ways we had hoped.”

The city’s director of planning, **Joseph B. Rose**, was also optimistic: “Much of what we have to do is get out of the way.” He explained that the Planning Commission has liberalized home occupancy rules to make more living units in former office buildings legal. It has removed the density requirement, cutting the minimum size of an apartment in half (to 900 square feet), and allowed accessory parking in basement garages, even though that will only be feasible in a few locations. It is eliminating the conversion tax and creating a special zoning district for Lower Manhattan with new height and setback rules. But “there is not going to be an area-wide historic district,” he said, partly because blanket regulatory controls have proved excessively restrictive and unenforceable elsewhere, and partly because “once the economy improves, there will be a need for large floor plate office buildings.” Existing buildings in Lower Manhattan are not in danger now, though they may be one day.

The head of the Alliance for Downtown New York, **Carl Weisbrod**, said, “Although there is a sense [in the audience] that property owners and real estate interests have opposed designation, there has not been a single opposition, at least since I’ve been there [fall 1994]. Still, the reasons I am opposed to district designation are that it would make investment more difficult, especially with public funds for transportation, it would require an affirmative vote from all property owners, redevelopment would lie in a never-never-land while the effort was being made,...and there is no building that is threatened today.”

Although he, too, admitted that transportation is a vexing

problem, Weisbrod touted the good news. Wall Street is still the third largest business district in the country (after Midtown Manhattan and the Chicago Loop), with 300,000 workers and 15,000 residents, 80 percent of whom walk to work, an unprecedented percentage in this country. It is one of the safest parts of the city. Most business improvement districts have to allocate almost all their resources to security and sanitation. Lower Manhattan is so clean and safe that only 40 percent of the Alliance’s money has to be spent on those services. The rest can be used to focus on longer-term issues such as construction of the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, Route 9 (the substitute for the West Side Highway), and the open space and schools that will become necessary as more residential units are created. One hundred new units already exist; 5,000 are expected in the next few years. “The abatement program is probably worth \$300 to \$400 a month, enough to make it attractive to the middle class,” Weisbrod said. He noted that the commercial vacancy rate has stabilized, and New York Life has moved into One Liberty Plaza. The Alliance is trying to establish an arts complex and more artists’ housing. It is working with **Richard Kaplan**, an architect and director of the J. M. Kaplan Fund, on the Heritage Trails project for tourists. Kaplan is also involved with the Environmental Simulation Center’s computer-mapping program to aid the rezoning process.

Expert Opinions

Mitchell Moss, who directs NYU’s Taub Urban Research Center, said he thinks “Lower Manhattan is fabulously well-situated in terms of transportation,” despite the lack of commuter connections, because all

the subway lines converge there. He agreed that it needs more places for people to eat, shop, and exercise, but he said, "We have to shrink the supply of space. Demolition isn't a dirty word." He believes the mixed-use conversions for living and working will be successful because "self-employment is the fastest growing segment of the economy" and "Manhattan has a one percent residential vacancy rate."

Political economist **Saskia Sassen** said, "Nobody denies the value of the historic building stock," but she also said she was "glad to see this consensus on economic value rather than just historic values. I think Lower Manhattan is a place where you can experiment rather economically." She said she believes space in historic skyscrapers will appeal to the high-tech and design industries forming a nexus in Manhattan now. "Obviously Lower Manhattan has to have a mixed economy, and residential uses shouldn't be confined to the periphery. Financial services will remain crucial, but it's very different than it was in the 1980s." International companies will be establishing small offices in global cities such as London and New York.

"I think there's a real problem with the landmarking of an entire district," economic development director **Charles Millard** said. "The one word I haven't heard anyone talk about is 'money.' I care about jobs."

City Councilman **Kenneth Fisher's** main concern was with "maximizing the profit motive" so the government would have more tax revenue. He said he thinks the way to do that is to make the area a 24-hour neighborhood. "I don't think the government folks have received enough credit. You

don't realize how unusual the lack of controversy here is." He told the students that if they wanted to take the next step, they had to get broad public and political support.

Richard Shaffer, the former director of city planning, said he believes the same goals could be accomplished with zoning. "It should be as-of-right, with clear guidelines, and new building should be sympathetic to the existing environment." But he said he believes that "substantial investment in public infrastructure" is crucial to the area's long-term success.

Questions from the audience revealed that many people had a deep-seated skepticism, but a strong confidence in preservation, presuming that it would automatically lead to economic gain as it had in Soho and Tribeca. Everyone, however, seemed to care passionately about the fate of Lower Manhattan.

The Columbia Preservation Plan

by Amy Lamberti

The student preservation plan, *Reviving Lower Manhattan: Preserving the Past to Ensure the Future* (New York: Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation of Columbia University, 1996, 48 pages, 63 black-and-white illustrations, 9 x 9, \$15.00 paper) is a compact book full of detailed information about Lower Manhattan, from its history to its current conditions. Columbia students spent a year studying the area below Fulton Street, surveying every building and identifying 181 possible individual landmark buildings and 49 potential interior landmarks. They concluded that Lower Manhattan represents an architectural,

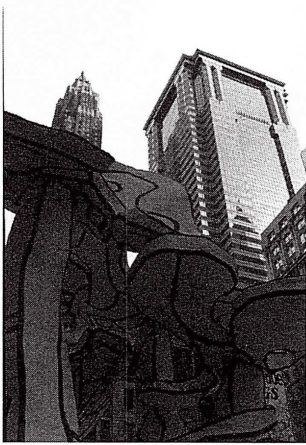
cultural, and historic treasure that must be preserved.

The study calls for increased regulation to achieve economic benefits and to preserve historic resources. A common misconception is that preservationists fail to consider economic realities. But these students advocate the creation of a National Register historic district to offer a 20 percent tax investment credit for building owners who rehabilitate and reuse contributing buildings.

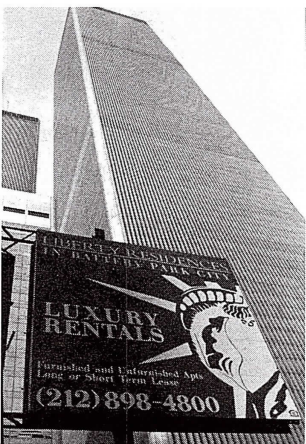
The plan outlines many conservation problems facing the area's historic resources. The buildings have deteriorating masonry curtain walls; the parks and subway stations suffer from years of deferred maintenance; and piers of all types are severely deteriorating. After identifying five key areas for conservation focus, it suggests that a preservation advocacy group based in Lower Manhattan could advise property owners and managers about the day-to-day maintenance of the buildings.

The students explain why a comprehensive approach is needed to make preservation the cornerstone of a revitalized Lower Manhattan. Many of their recommendations could be implemented through the structure already in place at the Alliance for Downtown New York, which could also help with the holding of easements and the establishment of a revolving fund. Certainly the goals of both groups are in line with improving business and creating a 24-hour community. This publication deserves consideration by the players involved in the revitalization of downtown New York.

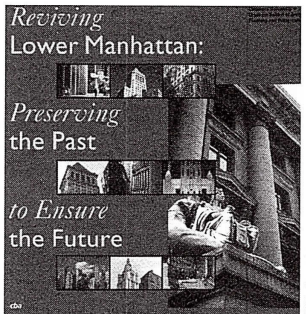
Amy Lamberti is a graduate of the preservation program at Columbia.



Jean Dubuffet sculpture on Chase Manhattan Plaza with Morgan Bank and 1 Wall Street in background



World Trade Center with advertisement for Liberty residences



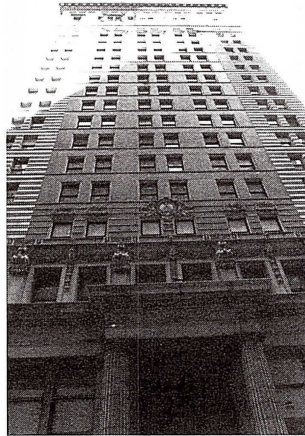
Cover of the Columbia preservation plan

Seong Kwon

Willi Kunz Associates



90 John Street,
renovation by CK Architect



The Exchange office tower
at 25 Broad Street

Retrofitting Lower Manhattan

by Jayne Merkel

A walk through the Wall Street canyons these days proves the speakers at the Columbia symposium were not just whistling "New York, New York." Ten old commercial buildings are about to be converted to apartments, as the buildings at 3 Hanover Square, 26 Beaver Street, 125 Cedar Street, and 55 Liberty Street were earlier. Unfortunately, too few follow the model of the latter, where architect **Joseph Pell Lombardi** sold 89 apartments as raw space, beginning in 1980. He created a spectacular home for himself in the old Sinclair Oil offices at the top of the 33-story building overlooking the Federal Reserve Bank and the Chase Manhattan Plaza. Though the people who bought co-ops in this initial office conversion chose parcels averaging 1,600 to 1,700 square feet, many of the new projects will contain smaller, more conventional studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units. But the old buildings are being saved, and Lower Manhattan is beginning to turn into the day-and-night community planners envisioned.

The first building being converted under Mayor Giuliani's revitalization plan is 25 Broad Street, where **Costas Kondylis**, AIA, of CK Architect is creating 345 rental apartments for Crescent Heights Investors of Miami, Florida, almost doubling the supply from earlier conversions. To be called the Exchange, the 21-story, 500,000-square-foot Renaissance Revival commercial building, begun by Robert Maynicke in 1899 and revised by Clinton and Russell in 1900, will contain a mixture of studios, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments that are 20 percent larger than the

New York standard. Rents will range from \$1,350 to \$1,800 for one-bedroom units and from \$1,750 to \$2,600 for two-bedrooms. Construction begins this month.

Crescent Heights is also converting a building at 75 West Street, across from Battery Park City, to studios and one-bedroom apartments. West Street Equities Group is creating nine units in two phases at 47 West Street. And Rockrose Development is creating residential units in a 538,000-square-foot building at 127 John Street.

Developer Tony Goldman has been assembling a collection of small buildings in and around the proposed Stone Street historic district, where Francis Greenburger's Time Equities is about to offer 40 apartments at 56 Beaver Street (in the grand Flatiron-shaped structure built by the Delmonico Brothers, who owned the famous restaurant on the ground floor). Architect **Mark Kemeny** completed conversions begun in the early 1980s by Henry George Greene for another developer.

Goldman is creating loft-like apartments in nineteenth-century buildings at 15-17 South William Street, 85 Pearl Street, 70 Broad Street, and with Joseph Pell Lombardi at 11 Hanover Square and 33 Rector Place.

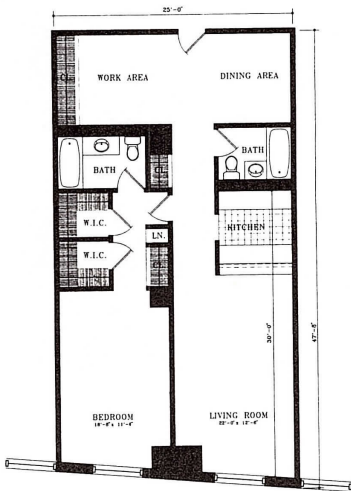
These projects, however, are just a beginning. **CK Architect** is also doing feasibility studies for another 500 units of housing in a 350,000-square-foot building at 21 West Street, 15 floors of the tower at 45 Wall Street, 213 apartments in the 21-story building at 60 Broad Street, 173 apartments in the 20-story one at 67 Broad Street, 120 apartments on eleven floors at One Broadway, 134 apartments on

22 floors at 90 John Street, and 754 apartments on 57 of the 72 stories in an office building **Der Scutt**, FAIA, the architect of the Trump Tower, is renovating at 40 Wall Street for the Trump Organization.

Donald Trump recently bought the building, according to rumor, for less than \$8 million. Once the tallest building in the world, the landmarked 1.3 million-square-foot tower, designed by Severance, Matsui and Shreve & Lamb in 1929, is intended to become once again "one of the premier addresses on Wall Street." Scutt's plans for the facade and expansion of the 5,500-square-foot lobby with finely detailed marble work, a patterned marble floor, a coffered ceiling with new lighting, a new centrally located concierge desk with a computerized building directory, and a new secondary entrance on Pine Street received approval from the Landmarks Commission in March.

Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum is responsible for the infrastructure improvements and new telecommunications facilities.

Even the idea of turning the area into Silicon Alley is no longer a pipe dream. Rudin Management spent \$15 million converting 55 Broad Street into the New York Information Technology Center with **Fox & Fowle Architects**, which helped the owners develop a conversion strategy for the boxy modern building designed by Emery Roth & Sons in 1967. Its nonsense functionalism was maintained in the renovation, when a big digitized screen was installed in the lobby, but most of the work went on behind the walls. The building, which has a lot of small offices, opened in late March and is already half leased. According to the brochure, it



Prototypical residential floor plan,
CK Architect

offers "unrivaled telecom access: single- and multi-mode fiber optic service, high-speed Category 5 copper wire with turnkey maximum bandwidth (up to 100 mbits), very low-cost DS-3, 10 megabit, T-I, fractional T-I and ISDN, an in-building Internet switch and ethernet connectivity; LAN and WAN connectivity, state-of-the-art telecom and data security, clean reliable electric supply, and space suits." Actually, it doesn't say anything about space suits. We added that. But they would probably make more sense there than navy blue suits and club ties.

One reason New York is a natural location for this kind of facility is that a wealth of connections exist here, and Con Edison offers the world's most reliable electric service, twice as good as the next most reliable U.S. utility and about nine times the national average. In Manhattan, where electric service is delivered underground from multiple-feeder distribution networks, reliability is even better — an average of two minutes outage time per customer in 1995. The proximity to numerous potential customers for new high-tech companies in the financial community nearby is another incentive, as is the accessibility of lending sources for investment.

Expanding Battery Park City

by Jayne Merkel

Across West Street, renovations and building conversions proceed apace, but in Battery Park City there are cranes on the horizon, a site that has been all too rare in New York for a long time. Construction trailers flank the waterside site where **Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's** Mercantile Exchange is rising east of the World

Financial Center. In Robert F. Wagner Jr. Park on the south end, the stepped hexagonal Museum of Jewish Heritage by **Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates** is rising towards its 85-foot height, near the spot where New York's first Jewish settlers arrived in 1654. Planned as a living memorial to the Holocaust, the 30,000-square-foot structure overlooks Ellis Island, where millions more arrived. The park itself, designed by **Machado and Silveti Associates** of Boston, is composed of a pair of allees extending from the sidewalks of Battery Place and Battery Park to the pavilions that frame the Statue of Liberty.

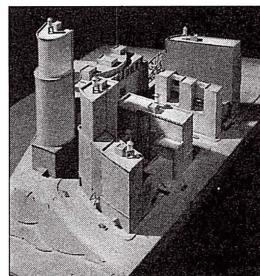
At the other end, just south and west of Stuyvesant High School, three new apartment buildings and a school will soon be under way. According to an article in *Global Architecture* last year, "The idea in the new [North] neighborhood is...to replicate a city of gradual growth...without recourse to the picturesque strategies of post-modernism." So each building has been awarded to a different developer and architectural firm — or firms — to guarantee variety. A set of design guidelines developed by Princeton dean **Ralph Lerner**, **Alexander Gorlin**, architect, of New York, and **Machado and Silveti** is intended to ensure a certain cohesiveness, but judging from the architects' drawings and models, the cluster will not have anything like the integrity of Gorlin's mass model that illustrated the *GA* story — or of Pelli's World Financial Center in the middle of the BPC.

Ironically, the building that adheres most closely to Gorlin's scheme is also the most postmodern — **Robert A. M. Stern** and **Costas Kondylis's** River Terrace Apartments, with a facade curving along

the water and a water tower on top. The 27-story, U-shaped brick structure at River Terrace and Chambers Street frames an open court with a one-story pool house to the south. Each wing is a different height and has a slightly different facade. The trick for the architects was to make the 529-unit complex look enough like separate buildings to break down its scale and enough like a single project to satisfy the owners, Related Management. River Terrace will have ground-floor stores with metal awnings, similar to those across West Street in Tribeca, and a mixture of studio, one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments, including convertible units.

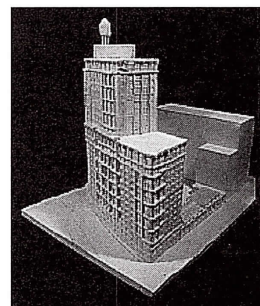
Just north, also on the waterfront, **Gruzen Samton** is building a more modern 42-story, 400-foot-tall, brick-and-glass residential tower abutting its Stuyvesant High School. The base, which has shops along Chambers Street and is aligned with the city grid across West Street, will reflect Tribeca's imagery and scale. The tower, rotated to the BPC grid, will resemble the World Financial Center. Like its neighbors, this 340-unit project of the Rockrose Development Corporation will contain an 80/20 mix of market rate and affordable apartments.

A third building — 245,000 square feet with 151 large apartments on 27 floors and a school at its base — is being built by the Battery Park City Authority across the esplanade of North End Avenue, where the residential entrance will be located. **John R. Menz & Richard Cook Architects** is designing the facades; **Anabelle Selldorf** is doing the lobby; **CK Architect** is planning the apartments. **Pasanella + Klein Stolzman + Berg** is responsible for the school,

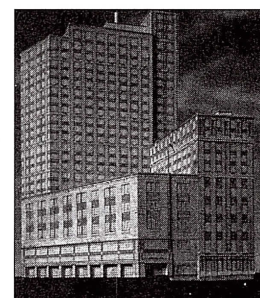


Jack Polite/Esto

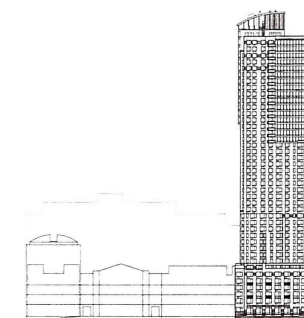
Battery Park City North Neighborhood, mass model, Alexander Gorlin



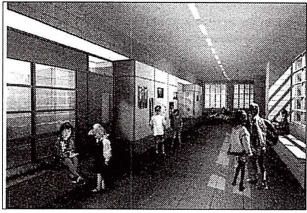
River Terrace, Robert A. M. Stern Architects



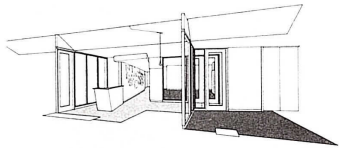
Apartments by John R. Menz & Richard Cook Architects and CK Architect; P.S./I.S. 89, Pasanella + Klein Stolzman + Berg



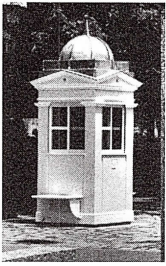
401 Chambers Street apartment tower, Gruzen Samton



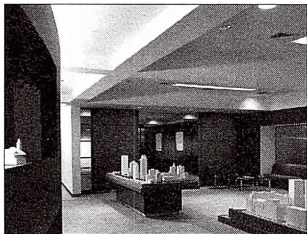
P.S./I.S. 89, Pasanella + Klein Stoltzman + Berg



Battery Park City satellite offices, Margaret Helfand Architects

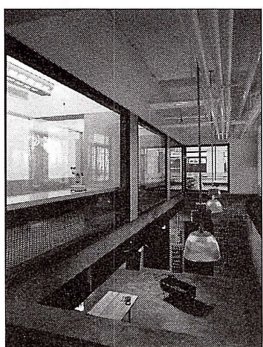


One of four designs for Battery Park City guard booths, Alexander Gorlin



Eduard Hueber

Battery Park City Authority, Buttrick White & Burtis



Paul Warchol

Battery Park City Parks Corporation facility, Deborah Berke, Architect

which will have entrances on the north by the Tribeca Bridge and on the south, connected by a glass-walled corridor looking onto the West Street playground and into the glass-walled cafeteria. **Wayne Berg**, AIA, has been working with neighborhood parents and teachers from P.S. 234 in Tribeca on the plans, which call for glass-walled corridors on every floor looking into classrooms and forming gathering spaces with little amphitheaters on the ends. Classrooms at P.S./I.S. 89 will be located on the periphery around the cafeteria, auditorium, gymnasium, and fifth-floor library, which has its own roof deck.

The BPC Authority is certainly spreading the talent around. It is turning its little peninsula into a museum of new architecture with whimsical security and information booths by **Alexander Gorlin**, dignified executive offices by **Buttrick White & Burtis**, and imaginative storefront satellite offices by **Margaret Helfand Architects** and **Deborah Berke, Architect**.

Gorlin's follies take the form of colorful little postmodern gatekeepers' cottages in the old New York-style residential neighborhood on the south end. In Hudson River Park, where they are on wheels, they look more like big toy robots from some futuristic playland.

But it's serious business on the twenty-fourth floor of One World Trade Center, where Buttrick White & Burtis managed to create elegant, adaptable offices for the Authority's administrative staff on a limited budget. Visitors enter a generous reception area in the 19,000-square-foot space, where they encounter a large, curved freestanding wall filled with models of ongoing projects and pierced by cutouts

with views of the harbor. Gridded birch plywood panels, stained steel gray, open to accommodate large crowds or separate the lobby from the conference room, where reddish brown reconstituted wood cabinets with black reveals maintain the horizontal grid of the panels and interior window walls.

Helfand's 7,500 square feet of BPC satellite offices at 21 South End Avenue will soon contain a 1,300-square-foot community room, administrative workstations, and a precinct-like area for the park police. The three spaces are linked by a long central corridor with shifting vertical planes and views of the Hudson River through a virtual map depicting the area's geographic history.

Across South End Avenue facing the South Cove, Berke and her associates have packed 18,000 square feet of programmatic requirements into 10,000 square feet of space on two levels, visually connected by glass-block floors, open staircases, and two-story spaces. These offices, workshops, and conference spaces for administrative, recreation, maintenance, and horticultural departments occupy the ground floor and lower level of an apartment building in unoccupied commercial space, filled with natural light. With blond wood pierced by circular openings for decorative effect and exposed steel trusses and details, the architects managed to provide dignified meeting and work space and interior access for maintenance vehicles.

BPC officials are reviewing proposals for hotels on two sites, with entertainment facilities such as theaters and cinemas to bring nightlife to the area.

J. B. Jackson and Lauretta Vinciarelli at the Urban Center (Separately)

by Jayne Merkel

Serendipity may have placed J. B. Jackson's drawings next to Lauretta Vinciarelli's watercolors in adjacent Urban Center galleries in March and April. Together, however, the two shows (the first organized by the Municipal Art Society, and the second by the Architectural League) defined perimeters of architectural experience in ways that shed light on the relationship between architecture and culture — and each artist's unique contribution. Both Jackson and Vinciarelli depart from the traditional concept of architecture as built form — Jackson by making landscape his subject, whether the landscape is rural or urban, and Vinciarelli by creating interiors that exist only on paper and in the mind's eye. Both depict architectural space without figures, but in neither case is the space empty, and in both cases the place of man in landscape is implicit in the imagery.

The similarities end there. Jackson's are an observer's drawings, Vinciarelli's an architect's. Jackson studies the landscape "to learn what man has done — or tried to do — on the face of the earth," as he does in his books and essays and did in *Landscape*, the magazine he founded and edited from 1951 to 1968. Vinciarelli invents spaces, describes them, and makes them available, if not habitable, for the viewer.

Although both were born in Europe (Jackson in France, Vinciarelli in Italy), lived their adult lives in America (Jackson in La Cienega, New Mexico, Vinciarelli in New

York), and taught here (Jackson at Harvard and Berkeley intermittently, Vinciarelli at Columbia continually since 1978), Jackson remains the American he was born (his parents were American) and educated (at Harvard), and Vinciarelli's sensibility (developed during her training in Rome) remains essentially Italian.

J. B. Jackson's "A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time"

John Brinckerhoff Jackson's small pencil, ink, crayon, and charcoal sketches in the show by curator Eleanor M. McPeck spanned half a century and two continents. The earliest were done in England and France while he was an intelligence officer during World War II, the most recent in 1994 near his ranch in New Mexico.

Though unpeopled, all Jackson's drawings portray man's place in the world as symbolized by the landscape, and that position changes from place to place, and decade to decade. The wartime European drawings are quiet and still, even peaceful. Though he did them for strategic reasons, Jackson seems to be depicting the landscape as it ought to be, without war. There is no sense of impending doom.

Man is present in those early pencil sketches because of what is made there, be it a building (as in the English houses from 1943), a town (such as Villedieu-les-Poels of 1944), or a cultivated field (as in another English landscape sketch of 1943).

A colored crayon drawing of Trafalgar Square of 1962, on the other hand, is filled with frenetic energy — jagged lines, smears and passages of color,

and white marks suggest fast-moving traffic. But the traffic is framed and contained by the buildings all around, just as the earlier European buildings and towns were contained and enveloped by landscape.

Jackson's sketches of European cities almost always depict plazas — man-made landscapes in a man-made world. In the United States landscape prevails and it is, if not larger than life, larger than architecture. It absolutely pulsates with energy — more and more as the years go on.

Landscape dominates the American drawings not only because the American landscape is so vast or because Americans prefer the countryside, but because the landscape (and the way it was divided) represents what is unique and important about America in Jackson's view.

In a videotape accompanying the show, Jackson explained that American lands were divided into square-mile parcels. "The square means honest, commonplace, a good citizen. It is a landscape that is devoted to equality. The notion is that everyone should have a square or a part of a square and be involved in square values. The national grid represents a very radical shift in social philosophy. It is a way of recognizing a very different idea of the individual's right to make his own decisions, but it deprived him of the support of community and of the presence of social space."

Lauretta Vinciarelli's "Spatial Reverberations"

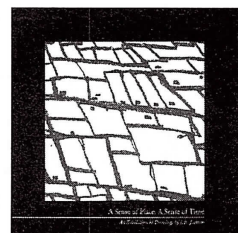
Nothing could be further from the concerns of Vinciarelli's exquisitely rendered, subtly colored interiors than social organization. For her, function follows

form. Although she has lived in New York for almost 20 years and the drawings in this exhibition grew out of her experience in southwest Texas, the experience they portray is profoundly Italian.

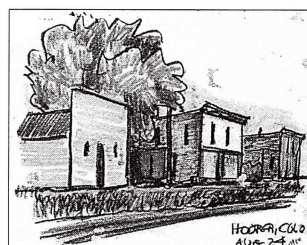
Vinciarelli's broad, vaulted chambers open to a wide Texas landscape with purple mountains and barren plains. Glimpses of this landscape appear through slits in walls and arched openings that are not quite windows or doorways but admit light and provide vistas in the same way.

The spaces inside could not be entered if they were built, for they are filled to the brim with still water. The water creates an uncertain depth, but offers a field for the play of light and reflections that gives the spaces bilateral symmetry — and intensifies the mystery of their purpose. They resemble rooms at Pompeii or abandoned Roman baths, filled with a sense of lost human presence but devoid of specific connotations, intriguing because they elude characterization or definition by use.

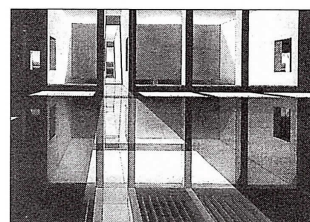
These are spaces that only an architect could create. And even though they are not exactly unbuildable, they are interesting because they are not designed for habitation. They are purely architectonic and much more like the neoplatonic spaces in Italian Renaissance paintings than the real vernacular landscapes Jackson analyzes. Even his loosest sketches illustrate, whereas Vinciarelli's watercolors, though much more detailed and defined (every shadow is described precisely), are primarily works of art. The translucency of the paint and the mottled texture of the handmade paper she uses counter the sense of illusion.



*Catalog of the exhibition with
J. B. Jackson drawing of land parcels*



*Main Street, Hooper, Colorado,
pastel drawing by J. B. Jackson*



*Watercolor from
"Spatial Reverberations"
by Lauretta Vinciarelli*

On Skyscrapers and New York's Uniqueness

by Jayne Merkel

Inspired by the thesis of Carol Willis's recent book, *Form Follows Finance*, the Buell Center's colloquium, "Who Builds the City?," on March 4 examined the roles of the architect, the real estate market, and other cultural forces. As its subtitle, "Form, Finance, and the Urban Skyline from the Past to the Future," promised, the discussion updated Willis's analysis of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century skyscrapers by including authors of books on the skyscraper's later phases.

Two young architects from Madrid, Iñaki Abalos and Juan Herreros, who won the Buell book fellowship for their study of postwar skyscrapers, *Técnica y Arquitectura en la Ciudad Contemporánea, 1950–1990* (Madrid: Nerea, 1992), participated, as did Joel Warren Barna, author of *The See-Through Years: Creation and Destruction in Texas Architecture and Real Estate, 1981–1991* (Houston: Rice University Press, 1992).

Willis explained how law and economics shaped the skyscraper; Abalos talked about the role of the architect; Herreros emphasized the importance of technology; and Barna discussed the influence of corporate philosophy. Only Willis said she believes the skyscraper is alive and well.

Abalos said, "Skyscrapers today are mainly history." Barna concurred, "I think skyscrapers are no longer an American phenomenon outside New York." Willis, the only New Yorker on the panel, maintained, "The very competitive nature of the city enables us to find a future use even for outmoded skyscrapers," as people are doing today in Lower Manhattan.

Abalos said he thinks "the technologies are completely different today and need to be redescribed," a role he envisions specifically for architects. "If it is true that skyscrapers were not invented by architects," he said, "they as artists uniquely understood their significance" and created "the idea of centrality" in the city. "Architects," his coauthor said, "participated in the construction of the city by inhabiting that territory between the market and the culture."

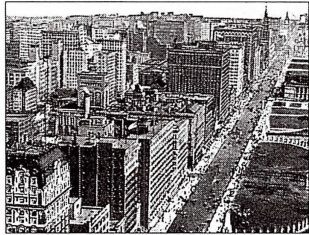
Herreros also explained how the original theoretical premises of the skyscraper were turned inside out because of technological changes during the postwar period: "The aim of enhancing wind resistance led to...moving the structure to the enclosure, contradicting the modern ideal of the independence of the skin." Similarly, the post-and-lintel grid gave way to "concentrating the structural mass in a few points," he said, making the free plan even freer. He showed how "the rise of climate control...detached man from the plane of the facade," and how the early "thin, dematerialized, single, and inert glass skin" turned into "a thick, subjective conception, doubled and active in its energy mode."

Barna concentrated more on economic history, noting that when "rentable office space is commodified, the imperative of the real estate business is to create perceptible differences, which is what people demand from architects," as Gerald Hines, the developer, realized early on. Barna explained how the Allied Bank developed visibility (and respectability) when it expanded into Dallas from Houston by hiring I. M. Pei & Partners, a firm that had done several important buildings in Houston, including the Museum of Fine Arts. He said Johnson/Burgee's Republic Bank Building, a high-rise take

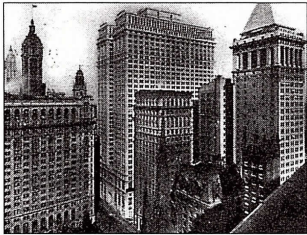
on traditional Dutch architecture, made "another kind of statement about banking" with an image of "money as a Republican virtue" that "gave the bankers of Houston a link to Europe and the Dutch."

But like a lot of Texan investors, Barna said he thinks skyscrapers' days are numbered, because corporate executives believe low-rise suburban office buildings, where people walk by their colleagues on the way to their desks, foster "the human-relations style" of management in vogue today "with bottom-up communication." Skyscrapers project "a positive image of power," he said, more suitable to "Taylor-style management with a central concentration." He predicted that the sprawl typical of Texas — with low-rise office parks clustered at thruway interchanges, where land is as valuable as it is downtown — will prevail everywhere but in New York (and maybe Chicago).

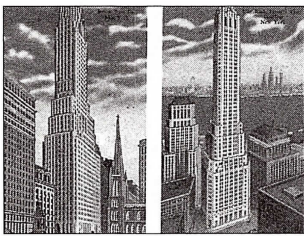
Willis, whose book is subtitled *Skyscrapers and Skylines in New York and Chicago*, is placing her bets on old-fashioned cities. Her research revealed that development takes place in cycles, and it showed why New York became New York and Chicago, Chicago. New York's colonial street pattern with its tiny, irregular lots prevented the big square blocks with interior courts and the uniform cornice lines typical of Chicago, where a restriction on height after 1892 capped buildings at 130 feet. In New York, height was unlimited, even after the first zoning law was passed in 1916. Willis explained how legislation and economics affected building form over time and shaped "the great unintentional masterpiece, the city [of skyscrapers] itself." Answering Barna, she said she is convinced that you cannot predict the future merely by projecting current trends forward.



Aerial view of Michigan Avenue, Chicago, late 1910s, from *Form Follows Finance*



Skyscrapers of Lower Manhattan, around 1915, from *Form Follows Finance*



Zoning envelope towers after 1916, New York, Irving Trust, 1927, and City Bank Farmers Trust, 1931, from *Form Follows Function*

What Makes Theater?

by Jayne Merkel

At the first symposium where every panel appeared in front of a different colored backdrop, a star-studded cast of architects and theater people discussed prospects and problems in one of New York's most important industries. Hugh Hardy, Barton Myers, Gerald Schoenfeld, and Jonathan Barnett were among the speakers at the three-day event on April 25–27, cosponsored by the AIA New York Chapter's Art and Architecture Committee, the Cooper-Hewitt National Museum of Design, and the Municipal Art Society. "What Makes Theater? The Next Hundred Years" was organized by **Robert Goldberg**, AIA, **Linda Herd**, and **Francesco Russo**, AIA, of the committee, and **Egle Zygas** of the Cooper-Hewitt.

Although most of the panels took place on stage at the Westside Theater, the event began, appropriately, upstairs at Sardi's with a discussion on the economics of the business that generates 25,000 jobs and has an impact of more than \$2.3 billion annually on the city's economy. Moderator **George Wachtel**, a principal of Audience Research and Analysis, said polls show that theater is the number one reason visitors come to New York. Last year attendance exceeded nine million — the highest in ten years.

But all is not necessarily well for the Broadway theaters themselves. Broadway productions are increasingly costly (\$8 million is not unusual) and spectacular, requiring spacious backstage facilities and a large seating capacity not available in the historic houses. So while Broadway booms, restored historic theaters are often dark. "All producers care about is a

reasonably clean house with good sightlines," and the architecture really doesn't matter, said **Ralph Roseman**, general manager of *State Fair* and many other productions — as the assembled architects gasped. Today the more intimate plays that old Broadway theaters were built for usually take place Off Broadway, where they can be produced for \$350,000 to \$400,000 instead of the \$1.1 million Broadway union contracts and theatrical production standards cost.

Other trends mentioned were a decrease in the number of Broadway shows, with most playing longer and making more money, and a decrease in subscriptions at institutions such as Lincoln Center, with symphonies and ballet companies suffering and opera thriving. Broadway shows now play to more tourists (70 percent) than New Yorkers, though for Off Broadway the reverse is true. Touring companies of Broadway shows make even more money than those here. They often play in the multi-purpose art centers that are springing up throughout the United States. Those centers create work for architects, but many are built without home-grown companies or audiences to fill them. Light, sound, and other electronic technology play an increasing role in both performances and theater design.

Historic, small-scale, single-use theaters are still preferred in New York, at least by architects. The New York architects who spoke about their work, **Hugh Hardy**, FAIA, and **Francesco Russo**, AIA, both discussed restorations, Hardy of the New Victory and New Amsterdam theaters, Russo of the Virginia, Eugene O'Neill, and Shubert theaters. **Barton Myers** of Los Angeles talked about new multipurpose buildings for

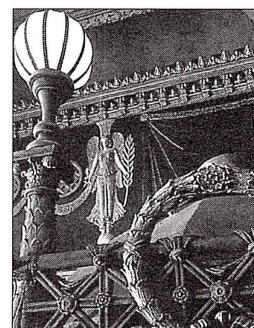
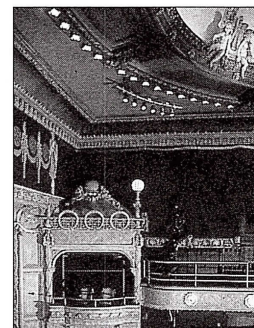
Portland, Oregon, Cerritos, California, and Newark, New Jersey. The session on architecture, chaired by architectural historian **Carol Krinsky**, featured a talk by **Anthony Robins** of the New York Landmarks Commission, in which he described how impresarios such as Oscar Hammerstein and David Belasco created elaborate theaters in their own images, whereas the theatrical companies that flourished after World War I usually had more modest goals. He also explained, "America changed the theater. In Europe if you pay more, you go in a different entrance. Here theaters were built by immigrant families who resented that, so in America everyone comes in the same entrance and boxes are de-emphasized."

Theater historian **Brooks McNamara** of New York University and the Shubert Archive pointed out that the idea of an historic theater district is relatively new. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the theater district moved steadily northward — to Union Square, then to Madison Square, to Herald Square, and finally to Times Square, where it stayed largely because of the Depression and then competition from movies and television. Now New York has the biggest and most glamorous theater district in the world, Myers noted, saying he tried to create that atmosphere wherever he could.

Jonathan Barnett, FAIA, who was the city's director of design in the late 1960s, said it was inconceivable then that the historic theaters would be preserved. "Thirty years ago, the question was whether the theater district should continue to be a district," he said, as Midtown office development edged west. "A study by the



photos by Elliott Kaufman

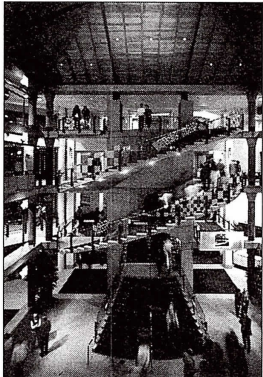


New Victory Theater,
renovation by Hardy Holzman
Pfeiffer Associates



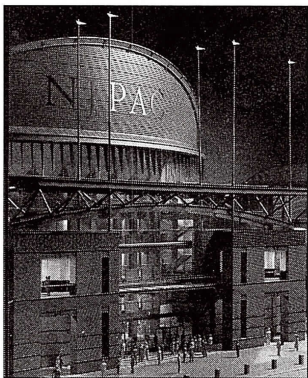
Tim Street-Porter

Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, Barton Myers Associates

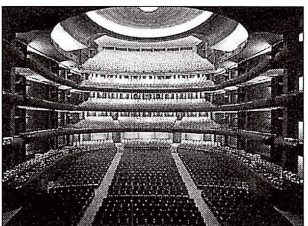


Tim Street-Porter

Main lobby space and central staircase, Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, Barton Myers Associates



Zugoc Photographers, Inc.



Zugoc Photographers, Inc.

New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Barton Myers Associates

CUNY Graduate Center said it wasn't necessary to have all the theaters in one place.

"We proposed a special zoning bonus if developers would build a theater while building an office building," he said. The Minskoff, Uris, and Circle-in-the-Square theaters were all built under that provision. "They still give bonuses for theaters, but now only for rehab....City planning is going to propose air rights transfer for theater owners, but what threatened them in the first place was the upzoning that made building office buildings possible."

Rebecca Robertson, the president of the 42nd Street Redevelopment Project, also talked about the history of the street, as well as plans for its future that build on its past but give it a new family-oriented twist. Hardy explained how he has been dealing with this history in the renovations there, where he is sometimes trapped in "a preservation battle between people who want to stop time" and show only what is original, even if it is all flaking and broken, and those who want to "turn back the clock and think it should be taken back to opening day. The problem usually is which period of history do you preserve?" At the New Amsterdam, his clients have opted for the earlier period in some instances, such as the murals of goddesses, because when Ziegfeld took over "the goddesses were turned into babes."

He closed by comparing a slide of the restored 42nd Street with a 1984 *New York* magazine cover of postmodern Johnson/Burgee skyscrapers slated for the area: "People always complain that things take too long in New York. Sometimes that's a good thing."

Grand Public Architecture

by Jayne Merkel

With almost uncanny timeliness, as "Civics

Lessons" was preparing to open, showing the numerous but relatively modest recent public projects in New York, the French government sent over Emile Biasini, the former French Secretary of State in charge of Les Grands Travaux, to lecture. He shared the podium at the Alliance Française on March 13 with the architect of the first and foremost of the projects, I. M. Pei, FAIA, who was responsible for the renovation and reorganization of the Louvre.

Most sobering was the price tag for the collection of enormous projects by world-famous architects — 35 billion francs or about \$7 billion, about the price of an aircraft carrier. It soon became clear that the French were able to undertake a public cultural building program on this scale not only because they had in François Mitterrand a leader committed to the cause, but also because they don't consider those expenditures excessive and because they value their cultural heritage in a way most Americans don't.

"This is a name I don't like," Biasini said, referring to the phrase Les Grands Travaux. "I'm not exactly talking about the Great Wall of China. My goals were much more modest."

"Artistic creation — paintings, books, architecture — all those things that are witness to our past and that will be our future...and the fact that it has become accessible to us today, to so many people, is one of the hallmarks of a democracy," he said wistfully. But even in France, "maintaining all these treasures is a very difficult thing to do, and by the end of

the century we were ending up with facilities that had fallen behind because, as you know, budgets usually go to take care of immediate things."

The Louvre came first because the problems there — inaccessibility, crowding, and deferred maintenance — were the most vexing, and expansion room was nonexistent. Even I. M. Pei was intimidated.

"At first I thought he was joking," Pei said. "It's probably the greatest urban composition in the world, but there was no room for support space, and there was nowhere to expand. I didn't say I would do it. I said I would try."

Obviously he did — by placing most of the new facilities underground, moving the Ministry of Finance to another site, and bringing light into the underground space with a gigantic version of the crystal pyramid he had used at the East Wing of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

After the Louvre, the other nine projects in Paris — and a few in other cities — were almost easy. The Bibliothèque Nationale, discussed by the architect, Dominique Perrault, at Columbia University on April 22, was necessary to preserve the collection of twelve million works, a third of which were "falling into dust."

Biasini managed to get all the projects practically to completion in seven years. "I learned how to set up a plan that would not be turnaroundable. I managed to get involved with entrepreneurs who accepted fixed contracts, never used before in France, with fines of up to 700,000 francs a day if there were any delays on the part of the contractor or the government."

Civics Lessons Symposium AM: Have We Learned Our Lesson?

by Kira Gould

After a welcome by **Fran Reiter**, Deputy Mayor of planning and economic development, and a review of the legacy of public architecture in New York by **Marilyn Jordan Taylor**, AIA, a partner at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, the morning session of the "Civics Lessons" symposium on April 18 got off to a very political start with a look at the condition of the city's public schools. **Mitchell Moss**, director of New York University's Taub Urban Research Center, moderated. **Peter Vallone**, speaker and majority leader of the New York City Council, began the discussion by saying, "We are supposed to be educating kids, but they're sitting in schools with asbestos sifting down and roofs falling in. In 343 schools, the heat is provided by coal."

Manhattan Borough President **Ruth Messinger** dramatized the situation: "Imagine the lesson we are teaching to hundreds of thousands of kids — what they must be learning is that the adults who sent them there do not care about them, their futures, or what they can produce." As the city adds some 23,000 students a year to the more than a million that are in the system now, these problems escalate, she noted.

Alan Hevesi, New York City Comptroller, blasted the mayor and others for the budget gap and warned the audience not to believe that the money from the sale of the water system that he had blocked would have gone to pay for schools: "Selling that system would have been like selling the house to pay off the credit cards." He warned the audience not to expect money for school repairs for at least three years.

All three elected officials departed immediately after their presentations for other commitments, staying neither to hear the other officials nor to respond to questions from the audience. The remaining panelists offered a sober and more accountable look at the issues. **Anthony Shorris**, a member of the Commission on School Facilities and Maintenance Reform, summed up its findings. "The commissioners aren't people who are big on government spending," he said, "but they were shocked at the calamitous conditions in the schools and the fact that the city spends \$1,000 less per child than the state average. We've added 1.5 million square feet of space in the last few years and provided no additional maintenance funds." Shorris acknowledged the need for a new revenue source. "This group of property holders signed a report recommending a new property tax," he said. "It is our responsibility."

The chief operations officer for the Board of Education, **Harold Spence**, asked the audience to consider that during the decade beginning in about 1915, the city fathers responded to a school crisis with a round of building. "Those city fathers had aspirations for those kids...The single thing that the government can do to raise property values is spend money on schools; it's been proven again and again."

The second panel was designed to reveal varying perspectives on what public architecture means to the city; **Richard Kahan**, president of the Urban Assembly, began the discussion with a stern reminder that the human agenda is more important than the built one. The architect **Richard Dattner**, FAIA, likened working in the public realm to being in an emer-

gency atmosphere, and cited a recent success, P.S. 234. "That project was long and hard, but it worked because we were commissioned by the community." **Robert Yaro**, executive director of the Regional Plan Association, said that the Yankee stadium debate was a stellar example of how not to achieve good design or good public policy. "Subjects such as the stadium have to be used as catalysts for regional efforts, or our crisis will continue." **Saskia Sassen**, professor of urban planning at Columbia University, said, "We have to invest in the public landscape of the city to maximize and sell the city's urbanity. That's the only way that New York can compete with global regions, such as Lille, that are really way ahead in terms of understanding regional transport and cooperation."

Civics Lessons Symposium PM: The Public Potential

by Jayne Merkel

Frustration dominated the afternoon sessions of the "Civics Lessons" symposium. First, keynote speaker **Richard Leone**, president of the Twentieth-Century Fund and former chairman of the Port Authority asked, "Why is it so difficult to create public architecture?" Then he suggested, "I think there are some things missing today that used to be there." One, obviously, is money, which he attributed to the lack of public and private savings and to "libertarian modern economics that says anything public is bad."

Leone said he thinks "the notion that we owe nothing to each other is killing this region. It's already responsible for places around the country that are virtually gone," such as Camden and Newark. He said he believes examples from the past provide some clues



*Fran Reiter,
Deputy Mayor for
economic development*



*from left: Norman Koonce, president,
American Architectural Foundation,
Carol Clark,
Marilyn Jordan Taylor, AIA*



*Peter Vallone,
Speaker and majority leader
New York City Council*



*Ruth Messinger,
Manhattan Borough President*



*Alan Hevesi,
New York City Comptroller*



Harold Spence,
deputy chancellor
for operations,
Board of Education



from left:
Richard Dattner, FAIA,
Saskia Sassen,
professor of urban planning,
Columbia University,
Richard Kahan, president,
the Urban Assembly
Robert Yaro, executive director,
Regional Plan Association



from right:
Robert Geddes, FAIA,
Peter Eisenman, FAIA,
Jonathan Barnett, FAIA,
Rafael Vinoly, FAIA,
Bernard Tschumi, AIA



The exhibition designer,
Stephen Cassell, partner,
Architecture Research Office

for ways out of the contemporary dilemma, noting that Bob Moses could get things done because he could put together alliances with powerful people in the region to influence the public. But he also said he finds hope in the large generation of aging baby boomers who will soon be thinking about retirement. When they do, he said, "The savings rate in this country is going to increase dramatically."

Asked whether we should develop a common agenda around something large and bold, he said, "I think you need a few big symbols." And with that statement, he paved the way for the afternoon's panel discussion on "New York and Grand Projects: Yes or No?"

All the participants assembled by AIA New York Chapter president-elect **Robert Geddes**, FAIA, agreed that grand projects are not all that is needed. **Peter Eisenman**, FAIA, began by appealing to civic pride. "The Venice Biennale this year is giving a new award to cities that they feel have excelled in architecture and urban design. When asked about New York, the director, Hans Hollein, said, 'It's not even on our list.'" Eisenman said he sees the lack of excellence and social progress as a matter of policy. "In Berlin, the projects I've been involved with are at least 50 percent housing, because the developer is not allowed to come in without it — or without showing the kind of architecture he's presenting," he said.

"I'm not here as a defender of signature architecture or of grand projects, but because I think architects who have been involved all their lives with education and urban design should be involved. [Eisenman is Irwin S. Chanin professor of architecture at Cooper Union.] There was a time when architects like this

were. Today we're involved in Bangladesh and San Francisco, Turkey, Beirut, and Jerusalem. It's very sad for me. Like Palladio, who could build only on the Guidecca, I've never been allowed to build in Manhattan," he said.

Dean **Bernard Tschumi**, AIA, of Columbia University, who won the competition to design the Parc de la Villette, explained, "The grand projects were only the tip of the iceberg in Paris. Hundreds and hundreds of competitions take place there for schools and housing and everything. It's the principal of democracy that everything goes through competitions.

"The grand projects were all located in slightly derelict parts of the city, with an urban strategy to have a strong economic effect," he said. "The purpose also was to revitalize and energize the construction industry. New York should ask the construction industry if we can't be on the forefront rather than sticking to the way we always do it.

"The profession has been reluctant to encourage competitions, when you know it is how the younger generation gets to work. You constantly hear talk about the crisis in the profession," Tschumi continued. "I wonder if it's not something we have brought on ourselves."

"A completely unique experience that we went through in Tokyo shows that it is not just different, it's Mars," said **Rafael Vinoly**, FAIA, who is completing the enormous Tokyo International Forum. "These people think there is not much of a difference between what we think of as art and what we think of as commerce. There is this incredible realism that the Japanese culture has in equating development forces — and not just real estate devel-

opment forces — in one major engine. Here, the idea of public investment is somehow magically charged with the idea that every public investment is a loss," he said, reiterating Leone's point.

"If we didn't invent the grand projects, we came up with something very close with the Brooklyn Bridge, Central Park, Park Avenue, and Riverside Drive. Even the Rockefeller family projects — Rockefeller Center, the United Nations, Lincoln Center — are similar," said **Jonathan Barnett**, FAIA, who has spent most of his career influencing public policy on urban design.

Geddes mused, "It may just be that with the fall of the Wall and the fall of communism, what we ought to do is pay attention to the civic realm."

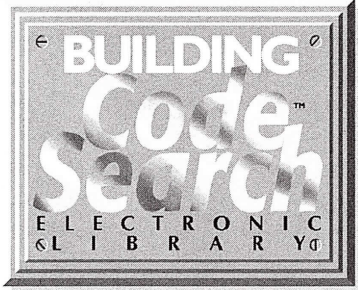
"The western form of capitalism is not working for cities," Eisenman said.

Tschumi suggested "a new tax, mainly on construction companies and developers — one percent — that they would have to pay for every piece of housing, every police station, whatever they build." He also noted, "England has started a lottery to fund grand projects in the twenty-first century."

Barnett said, "The problem for a designer who is interested in the city is that you have to invent not only what should happen but also how to make it happen."

"We have 2,500 members," Geddes recalled. "If we marched on City Hall it would be one of the largest marches ever."

THERE'S A BETTER WAY TO KNOW THE CODE



Instant access to Title 27 of the NYC Administrative Code and Titles 1, 2, & 3 of the NYC Rules & Regulations on your personal computer or laptop.

- Browse
- Add notes/navigation markers
- Keyword search
- Jump to cross-reference text
- Mark and print text
- Export to word processors

Updated Quarterly.

Interested? Call 1-800-541-2681 for more information, or to schedule a free demonstration.

ONLY FROM NEW YORK LEGAL PUBLISHING



ALLIED COVERAGE

**Professional Liability Insurance
Designed for the Specialized Needs of
Architects & Engineers**

390 North Broadway
Jericho, New York 11753

Tel. 516-733-9231
Fax 516-681-7390

*For information please contact
Amy Wollman Wistreich*

AIA Weighs in on Plaza Regulation Reform

by Kira Gould

The AIA New York Chapter's Zoning and Urban Design committee participated in the debate about proposed changes to the plaza zoning regulations at a city commission meeting early this spring. Plaza Task Force chair Linda Herd spoke at the meeting, first applauding the City Planning Department for its effort to simplify what she called the hieroglyphics of the present zoning code. The 1961 plaza bonus that is available in certain commercial zones does not, in fact, provide the kind of public amenity that its authors intended. "We must spare the city from poorly planned, eleventh-hour design created solely for the benefit of the developer," Herd said. "Open space is an integral part of urban life. Sometimes it happens naturally, as a function of geography, but more often these days it is planned." However, under the revised resolution, certification of new urban plazas by the City Planning chairman would not be required, allowing plazas to be built as-of-right everywhere except Midtown. "Without someone designated to oversee the proposed plaza development, we are concerned that design considerations might be overlooked," she said. "Relocation of a plaza on a lot, for instance, must be carefully reviewed on a case-by-case basis."

To maintain safety for passersby, many of these plazas are closed at night. Herd

June 28

Submission deadline for the Municipal Art Society's seventh annual New York City preservation awards. Eligible projects must have been completed in the last year and must be located within the five boroughs of New York. Contact Vanessa Gruen at 935-3960 for an application form.

July 1

Programs available for the Greenport Waterfront Park design competition, sponsored by the Village of Greenport. Jurors include Nicholas Quennell, James Stewart Polshek, FAIA, and Billie Tsien, AIA. (Registration deadline is October 19, and submission deadline is November 15.) Contact Greenport Waterfront Park Competition, 400 Front St., P.O. Box 463, Greenport, New York, 516-477-3000.

September 18

Submission deadline for the AIA New York Chapter 1996 Design Awards. Three categories of awards — architecture, interior architecture, and projects — will be evaluated by three separate jurors on September 25. The next day, jurors will discuss their decisions in a public forum. A more detailed call for entries will be mailed out during the summer when jurors are announced.

5th Avenue and 19th Street

Sunny Penthouse designers' offices
24' ceilings, 18' x 32' conference room,
18' x 18' private office,
12 9' x 7' workstations,
All or part available. Price negotiable.
Call Allyson at 212-228-5588.

- June 5, 5:30 pm
Public Architects
(Guest speaker: Susan Chin, AIA, from the Department of Cultural Affairs)
- June 6, 8:30 pm
Professional Practice
- June 10, 6:00 pm
Housing with Building Codes
- June 11, 6:00 pm
Computer Applications at Hilliers/Eggers Group
- June 12, 8:30 am
Public Sector Liaison
- June 13, 6:00 pm
Minority Resources
- June 19, 12:30 pm
Architecture for Education
- June 19, 6:00 pm
Architecture Dialogue
(Guest speaker: Lenore Lucey, FAIA, of Lehrer McGovern Bovis)
- June 20, 6:00 pm
Building Codes
- June 20, 6:00 pm
Marketing and Public Relations
- June 21, 8:00 am
Zoning and Urban Design
- June 24, 6:30 pm
Learning By Design:NY
- June 25, 6:00 pm
Design Awards
- June 26, 6:00 pm
Women in Architecture

Please confirm meeting times and locations by calling AIA New York Chapter headquarters at 683-0023, ext. 17.

remarked that it would be “preferable to have the plazas designed safely in the first place. Plazas in areas of high evening traffic, such as those around the theater district, [should] have extended hours to accommodate activity that exists during what are considered ‘off-hours’ by the city.” Herd added that increased specificity on the types of barriers and closure mechanisms should be included in the revisions.

After hearing the comments, the commission revised the resolution further; the time period allowed for referring plaza changes to the local community boards was expanded from 30 to 45 days, and the certification process was strengthened and extended to include both residential and urban plazas. According to the City Planning Department, this will improve the approval process for plaza changes. The City Planning Commission passed the revised Zoning Resolution several weeks later and sent it on to the City Council; a public hearing was planned for the middle of this month.

Though the resolution seems likely to simplify the design process for plazas, there are many who don’t think it is enough. In response to comments about Sheffield Plaza at Ninth Avenue and 57th Street, which is often infested with rodents, filled with trash, and has a low grade and walls that make it a generally unsafe environment, Commissioner Amanda Burden reminded the panel that “under the new regulations, Sheffield Plaza could be built again.” The department acknowledges that the design standards need additional attention and plans further study in the near future.

Professional Practice Panel Offers Financial Management Tips
by Kira Gould
Getting jobs is tough enough, but converting a successful proposal into a contract can be a nightmare. A recent panel organized by the Professional Practice Committee of the AIA New York Chapter took these issues head on. Joseph Roher, a consultant to architecture firms, urged the architects in the audience to track projects meticulously and use the information to inform the company business plan. The process that most affects a firm’s business balance, he said, is the job contract. “Use the contract as a vehicle of communication with the client,” Roher said. “Make it a bilateral agreement.”

The panel participants agreed that in most cases firms should use the standard AIA contract, but that firms must not be afraid to customize the contract to make it fit the job and make the job fit the firm’s abilities, staff, and configuration. For instance, a large, established firm wouldn’t need to ask for a retainer, but small firms should consider doing so, Roher said. Joseph Fleischer, FAIA, a partner at Polshek and Partners Architects, called a contract without a schedule a deal-breaker. “Consider for a moment that the architect only has control over the design development and construction documents phases — schematic design and construction are completely out of the firm’s control,” he said. “A schedule should have up to 25 percent flexibility built in, but it’s got to be in the contract.”

Gerald Gurland, FAIA, reminded the audience that the more the fee can be broken down, the better the architect will fare. “If it’s broken down into discrete services from the outset,” he said,

“then as the client asks for an expansion of the architect’s role, the fee will have to be adjusted to reflect that.”
The role of the bank, of course, is important for any firm’s business plan to be successful. Glen Celentano, vice president for new business development at Citibank, reminded the architects that the bank is essentially a part of the external management team. “Many small businesses don’t ask enough of their banks,” he said. “We can be a part of the creative problem-solving process, help firms find lending sources, and guarantee that they are able to hang on to key employees in lean times.”

Chapter Notes
The 1996 Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, June 27, at Caspary Hall, Rockefeller University, 1230 York Avenue at 6:00 pm. This annual event honors Chapter members and others who have contributed to the architectural profession through their work in communities, education, and other areas. The Chapter’s Medal of Honor, the Public Architect Awards, and other important honors will be presented at 6:00 pm, followed by a reception for all Chapter members.

□ The Chapter is pleased to welcome two new staff members. Johnathan Sandler, executive assistant, comes on staff after several months of outstanding service on a part-time basis, working mainly on government affairs and AIA public voice matters. Amy D. Lamberti, the consultant who did such a remarkable job managing the “Civics Lessons: Recent New York Public Architecture” exhibition and symposium, is now a project manager. She will be responsible for managing the Chapter’s executive committees, assisting with program committees and

“Last Friday the job market got more competitive. Twelve of your friends learned CADD at The CFA/CADD Training Center.™
Now it's your turn to catch up.”

Why Consulting for Architects, Inc. for CADD?

AIA/CES Pilot Provider: Our program meets AIA/CES Quality Level 3 criteria. Participants earn 60 LU's (learning units) for each 20-hour course.

Multiple Softwares Taught: State licensed courses in Autodesk's AutoCAD®, Intergraph MicroStation PC®, and many others.

Flexible Schedule: Morning, afternoon and evening sessions at our classroom facility or at your office by the hour.

Minimized Down Time: Learn CADD in one week, intensive 20-hour courses; including construction documentation and design; (basic, intermediate and advanced).

Small Class Size: Taught by state licensed A/E/C instructors for design professionals: limit 6 students per class in high-quality learning environment.

Three Months Free: Each class includes practice time in our computer lab; Prepare a project for your portfolio.

Custom Training: We teach your staff our curriculum, or train them by the hour on your projects.

Other Services: Job Placement; Service Bureau; CADD hardware and software consultation and rental.



Reserve your Classes now
Call The CFA/CADD Training Center™
at 212-532-4360



Autodesk.

Premier Training Center

We are a private school licensed by

The New York State Education Department.

Curriculum developed with The Boston Society of Architects

VISA, MasterCard & Discover accepted.

Rizzoli Bookstores' Top 10

As of April 15, 1996

1. **Kohn Pedersen Fox, 1986-1992**, Warren James (Rizzoli, paper, \$42.50).
2. **Contemporary California Architects**, Philip Jodidio (Taschen, paper, \$24.99).
3. **Frederick Fisher, Architect**, Frederick Fisher (Rizzoli, paper, \$40.00).
4. **Los Angeles Grand Tour: Recent Architecture**, Dian Phillips (Artemis, paper, \$14.95).
5. **Michael Graves**, Michael Graves (Rizzoli, paper, \$40.00).
6. **American Masterworks: The Twentieth Century House**, Kenneth Frampton (Rizzoli, cloth, \$60.00).
7. **Charles Rennie Mackintosh**, Peter Fiell (Taschen, paper, \$24.99).
8. **Cafés and Coffee Shops**, Martin Pegler (McGraw-Hill Companies, cloth, \$59.95).
9. **Elegant Hotels of Europe**, Wendy Black (Rizzoli, cloth, \$29.95).
10. **Morphosis, Volume I**, Richard Weinstein (Rizzoli, paper, \$40.00).

Urban Center Books' Top 10

As of April 15, 1996

1. **S, M, L, XL**, Rem Koolhaas (Monacelli Press, cloth, \$75.00).
2. **A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time**, J. B. Jackson (Yale University Press, cloth, \$22.50).
3. **Delirious New York**, Rem Koolhaas (Monacelli Press, paper, \$35.00).
4. **Light Construction**, Terrence Riley (Museum of Modern Art, paper, \$30.00).
5. **Studies in Tectonic Culture**, Kenneth Frampton (MIT Press, cloth, \$50.00).
6. **Form Follows Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines in New York and Chicago**, Carol Willis (Princeton Architectural Press, paper, \$22.50).
7. **Mirrors of Infinity: The French Formal Garden and 17th-Century Metaphysics**, Allen S. Weiss (Princeton Architectural Press, paper, \$14.95).
8. **Raimund Abraham: (UN)Built**, Raimund Abraham (Springer Verlag, cloth, \$95.00).
9. **Tadao Ando**, Frances Dal Co (Phaidon, cloth, \$75.00).
10. **White Walls, Designer Dresses**, Mark Wigley (MIT Press, cloth, \$40.00).

The American Institute of Architects New York Chapter is grateful to the following for their support of *Oculus*:

Benefactors

Jaros Baum & Bolles
National Reprographics, Inc.

Patrons

Charrette Corporation
DVL Consulting Engineers

Corrections

Oculus apologizes to Ben Thompson Associates of New York for erroneously reporting that Benjamin Thompson & Associates was associated with Perkins Eastman Architects on P.S. 109 in the announcement of the Arts Commission Awards in the April 1996 issue.

In “The Next Incarnation of Union Square” (March 1996), *Oculus* neglected to mention that Bloch Hesse and Shalat was architect for the Palladium in association with Arata Isozaki, and is also the architect for the proposed House of Blues. Philip Winslow played a critical role in the redesign of the square and in preserving neighborhood buildings. Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer did not withdraw before presenting a scheme for the Union Square South competition as reported.

Oculus regrets that the wrong second-to-last paragraph of Todd Bressi’s review of “Civics Lessons” was published. It should read as follows:

“It’s not reasonable to expect a singular civic language to emerge from New York’s civic architecture, as diverse in function and scale as these projects are; we must settle for localized insights. The expansive, open concourse of the International Arrivals Terminal at JFK airport (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill) could turn out to be a powerful place, a haven of order in that crazy-quilt complex. The translucent 104th precinct house speaks of a welcome openness and transparency not normally associated with the police. But these glimpses are too few; in general, the projects suffer from a flatness, a monofunctionalism that I suspect deadens their impact on the city.”

continued from page 2

Transfer Fund and use air rights transfers to revitalize Eighth Avenue and encourage theater use and preservation.

On the national front, a ground swell of support for housing policies resulted from a resolution prepared by the AIA New York Chapter’s Housing Committee for discussion at the recent AIA annual convention in Minneapolis. The prescience of the Chapter’s Housing Committee in articulating the housing policy goals of architects around the country is impressive. More daunting still will be the task of defining the steps to implement policies and creative design solutions for affordable housing production, addressing what some term the shelter crisis in America. We will keep you posted on this and on other committees’ progress.

membership outreach efforts, and extending the Chapter’s reach in the civic and professional community. The Chapter is fortunate that its long-term core staff — William Gray, membership, Judy Rowe, committee programs, and Stephen Suggs, financial and technical affairs — continue to work diligently to meet the diverse range of member needs. Please direct any questions regarding Chapter staffing to the executive director, Carol Clark, at 683-0023, ext. 13.

□ Lobby Day ’96 was a great success thanks to the commitment of the many Chapter members who joined the trip to Albany to raise legislators’ awareness about the need for a third-party statute of repose in New York State. This important initiative would relieve design professionals from the threat of perpetual liability that currently exists. New York is currently one of only three states without a statute of repose for architects and engineers. Working along with AIA New York State and others from throughout the state, New York Chapter members met with 16 New York City legislators to communicate the need for this long overdue legislation. For more information, call Johnathan Sandler at 683-0023, ext. 16.

□ On Thursday, June 20, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm, the Interiors Committee is sponsoring a walking tour of three workplace interiors that emphasize the relationship between architecture and natural light and views. The tour will be held from 6:00 to 9:00 pm and will start at the Met Life building at 200 Park Avenue. The cost for members is \$5 and for nonmembers, \$10.

□ A representative of the AIA New York Chapter Housing Committee will attend the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, HABITAT II, in Istanbul, Turkey, from June 3 through 14. The conference will deal with two themes: “sustainable human settlement development in an urbanizing world” and “adequate shelter for all.” The AIA New York Chapter will participate in the conference as a nongovernmental organization (NGO), along with representatives from local governments, academics, professionals, foundations, the private sector, labor unions, and community-based organizations (CBOs). The hope is that through partnerships formed at HABITAT II, the AIA New York Chapter and the other participants can implement solutions to the worldwide problem of housing.

□ Although *Oculus* is not published in July and August, the Chapter will keep members informed about upcoming events through mailings. Important dates to keep in mind are September 18, when submissions for the 1996 Design Awards program are due, the September 26 Design Awards jury presentation, when jury members discuss their decisions, and the Carnegie Library Forum cosponsored by the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in early October. Also, those in practice less than ten years should begin thinking about projects to be considered by the Chapter’s Honors Committee in October for nomination for National’s Young Architects Citation.

REQUEST FOR GRAPHIC STANDARDS

Charles Scalera, AIA, a retired architect who is teaching architectural design at the High School of Art and Design, needs copies of *Graphic Standards* for his students. He would appreciate contributions of new or used copies. If you have one — or some — please contact him at 60 Sutton Place South, New York, NY 10022-4168. Thank you.

The Old World Builds the New:
**The Guastavino Company and the
Technology of the Catalan Vault,
1885-1962.** *Miriam and Ira D.
Wallach Art Gallery, Schermerhorn
Hall, Columbia University,
16 St. and Broadway. 854-7288.
Closes June 15.*

Help Design Frederick Douglass Circle.
*Charles A. Dana Discovery Vault,
Central Park North at Fifth Ave. 860-
6321. Closes June 23.*

Adriaan Geuze and West 8:
Landscape Architecture. *Storefront for
Art and Architecture. 97 Kenmare St.
431-5795. Closes June 29.*

23 Skidoo: The Flatiron Building.
*Michael Ingbar Gallery of Architectural
Art, 568 Broadway. 334-1100.
Closes June 29.*

Young Architects Forum 1996.
*The Architectural League,
457 Madison Ave. 753-1722.
Closes July 6.*

80 Years of Design Education.
*New York School of Interior Design,
170 E. 70 St. 472-1500.
Closes August 23.*

Fifth Avenue in the New Millennium:
A Design Brainstorm. *The Municipal
Art Society, Gallery III, 457 Madison
Ave. 935-3960. Closes September 4.*



Wadia Construction
Fine Residential Building & Renovation
203-966-0739

**GREENPORT WATERFRONT
COMPETITION**

LONG ISLAND VILLAGE REQUESTS CRE-
ATIVE DESIGNS FOR 4-ACRE WATER-
FRONT PARK AND HARBORWALK. CAR-
ROUSEL PAVILION, DOCK MASTER'S
OFFICES, PUBLIC AMENITIES.

\$20,000 IN PRIZES
WINNING PROJECT TO BE BUILT

FOR INFO. AND TO RECEIVE MAILINGS:
ATT: CHRISTIE HALLOCK
GREENPORT WATERFRONT COMPETITION
400 FRONT STREET, P.O. BOX 463
GREENPORT, NY 11944
TEL. 516.477.3000 FAX 516.477.2488
INFO. AVAILABLE JULY - DUE NOV. 1996.
REGISTRATION FEE \$50.00

**Law Offices
C. JAYE BERGER**

- Real Estate Law
- Building Construction Law
- Environmental Law
- Contracts
- Litigation in State, Federal,
and Bankruptcy Courts

110 East 59th Street 29th floor
New York, NY 10022
212-753-2080

Pratt Manhattan

295 Lafayette Street
New York, NY 10012-2722
212-925-8481

Premier Autodesk Training Center
AutoCAD, Designer, 3D Studio,
AIA Provider

**BOOKKEEPING PLUS
FOR ARCHITECTS**

(re)Organize records,
project invoicing, banking,
special projects, etc.
Call 212-260-6414

500 TENTH AVENUE (38-39 Sts)

13,000 sq ft of spectacular, LOW COST,
A/C penthouse space & adjoining 5,000 sq
ft terrace w/ fantastic views of mdt
Manhattan available for RENT. Ideal for
architects & designers, office, studio, &
showrm use. A one minute walk from the
offices of Richard Meier, Gwathmey Siegel,
Vignelli, and Buttrick, White & Burtis.
212-714-6422



BROKERAGE ASSOCIATES, INC.

JOHN JOHNSON

*Architects' and Engineers' Professional Liability Insurance
A Full Service Agency*

25 West 45th Street • Suite 1305 • New York, N.Y. 10036
Tel 212 382 3717 • Fax 212 382 3866

1

Saturday

Workshop: Reclaiming Gardens
Sponsored by the Municipal Art Society Planning Center and the Bronx Green-Up Program. 10:00 am. New York Botanical Garden. RSVP 935-3960. Free.

4

Tuesday

Lecture: Hariri & Hariri, Work in Progress
Given by Gisue Hariri and Mojgan Hariri. Sponsored by the Monacelli Press. 6:00 pm. Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. RSVP 935-3595 or 831-0248.

Lecture: Irish Gardens
Given by Mac Griswold. Sponsored by the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. 6:30 pm. 2 E. 91 St. 860-6321. \$15.

5

Wednesday

AIA NEW YORK CHAPTER EVENT
Lecture: Cultural Institutions Planning for the Next Century
Given by Susan Chin, AIA. Sponsored by the Public Architects Committee. 5:30 pm. 200 Lexington Ave., sixth floor. 683-0023. Free.

6

Thursday

Event: Les Journees des Artisans, A Celebration of Craftsmanship
Sponsored by the Colbert Foundation and the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. 2:00 pm. The Arthur Ross Terrace and Garden, 2 E. 91 St. 860-6321. \$10. Continues on Friday at 10:00 am.

Lecture: Studies in Tectonic Culture
Given by Kenneth Frampton. Sponsored by the Architectural League. 6:30 pm. Caspary Hall, Rockefeller University, 1230 York Ave. 753-1722. \$7.

8

Saturday

Tour: Park Slope, Brooklyn
Given by Andrew S. Dolkart. Sponsored by the Municipal Art Society. 1:00 pm. 935-3960. \$10.

11

Tuesday

Lecture: Survival Guide to Design Firm Legal Issues
Given by C. Jaye Berger, Esq. Sponsored by the Second Tuesday Designers' Forum. 9:30 am. 979 Third Ave. 759-8815.

Tuesday

Panel: People in Glass Houses, Preservation Challenges of Transparency
Sponsored by the Municipal Art Society and DOCOMOMO. 8:30 am. 457 Madison Ave. 935-3960. \$5.

12

Wednesday

Symposium: Transportation and Urban Design
Sponsored by the Central Park Conservancy and the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum (in conjunction with "Help Design Frederick Douglass Circle"). 6:30 pm. 2 E. 91 St. 360-1421. Free.

Panel: The World Capital? New York in the Eyes of Foreign Journalists
Sponsored by the Municipal Art Society Fellows. 6:30 pm. RSVP 935-3960. \$7.

13

Thursday

Lecture: Writing on Graphic Design
Given by Ellen Lupton and J. Abbott Miller. Sponsored by the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. 6:30 pm. 2 E. 91 St. 860-6321. \$10.

15

Saturday

Tour: Day One on the IRT
Sponsored by the New York Transit Museum. 10:00 am. RSVP 718-243-8601. \$15.

18

Tuesday

Symposium: Public Art and Memorialization
Sponsored by the Central Park Conservancy and the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum (in conjunction with "Help Design Frederick Douglass Circle"). 6:30 pm. Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Ave. 360-1421. Free.

19

Wednesday

AIA NEW YORK CHAPTER EVENT
Committee Meeting: How Are Architects Performing?
Given by Lenore Lucey, FAIA. Sponsored by the Dialogue Committee. 6:00 pm. 200 Lexington Ave., sixth floor. 683-0023, ext. 21. Free.

Lecture: Arterial Highways of New York City
Given by John Kriskiewicz. Sponsored by the Municipal Art Society. 6:00 pm. Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. RSVP 935-3960. \$10.

Lecture: Hadrian's Villa in Antiquity
Given by William MacDonald. Sponsored by New York University and the Institute for the Study of Classical Architecture. 6:30 pm. NYU, 11 W. 42 St., room 421. 790-1608. Free.

20

Thursday

Tour: Manhattan Modernism
Given by Laurily Epstein. Sponsored by the Municipal Art Society. 12:30 pm. 935-3960. \$10.

AIA NEW YORK CHAPTER EVENT
Tour: Celebrate the Summer Solstice – Interiors and Natural Light
Sponsored by the Interiors Committee. 6:00 pm. 683-0023, ext. 21. \$5 members (\$10 nonmembers).

22

Saturday

Tour: Art on Display
Given by Wendy Feuer, director of MTA Arts for Transit. Sponsored by the New York City Transit Museum. 11:00 am. RSVP 718-243-8601. \$9.

26

Wednesday

Lecture: Hadrian's Villa in the Renaissance
Given by John Pinto. Sponsored by New York University and the Institute for the Study of Classical Architecture. 6:30 pm. NYU, 11 W. 42 St., room 421. 790-1608. Free.

27

Thursday

AIA NEW YORK CHAPTER EVENT
Annual Meeting
Caspary Hall, Rockefeller University, 1230 York Avenue. 6:00 pm. 683-0023, ext. 21. \$5 members (\$10 nonmembers).

29

Saturday

Tour: Community Gardens of the Bronx
Given by Terry Keller, New York Botanical Garden's Green-Up program. Sponsored by the Municipal Art Society. 1:00 pm. RSVP 935-3960. \$30.

JULY

10

Wednesday

Lecture: McKim, Mead & White, Travels to Europe
Given by Mosette Broderick. Sponsored by New York University and the Institute for the Study of Classical Architecture. 6:30 pm. NYU, 11 W. 42nd St., room 421. 790-1608.

17

Wednesday

Tour: Manhattan by the Sea
Given by Andrew S. Dolkart. Sponsored by Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. 7:00 pm. 860-6321. Circle Line Tours, 42nd St. at the Hudson River. \$45.

AIA New York Chapter
The Founding Chapter of
the American Institute of Architects
200 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10016

Bulk Rate
US Postage
Paid
New York, NY
Permit No. 4494