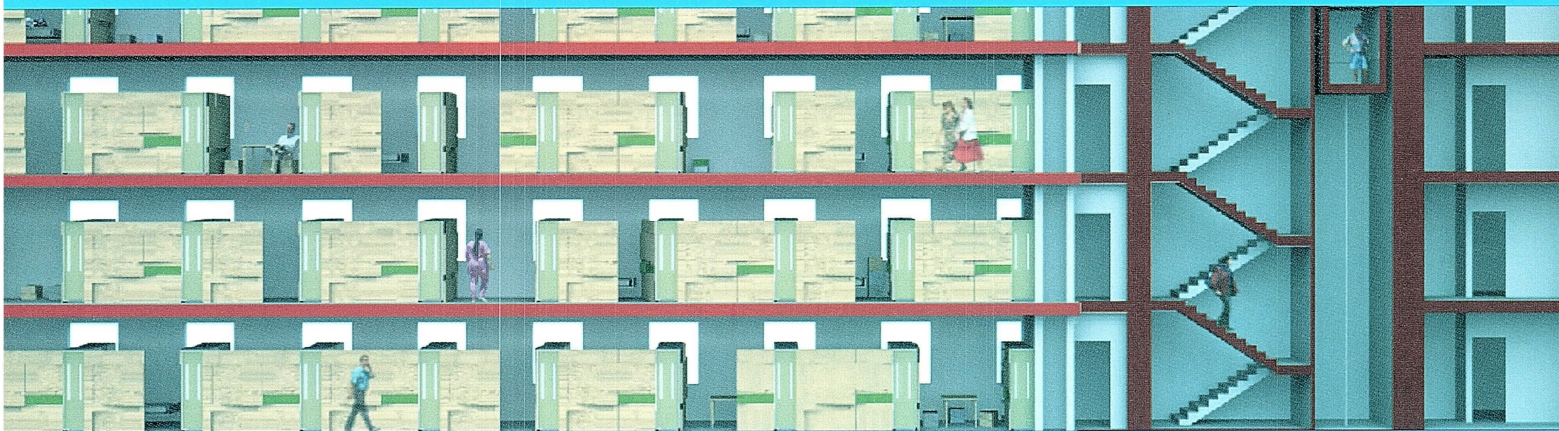


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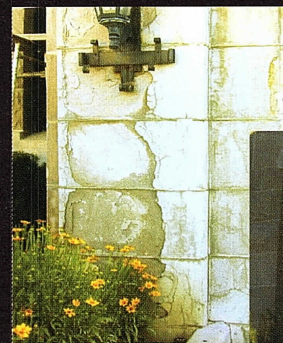


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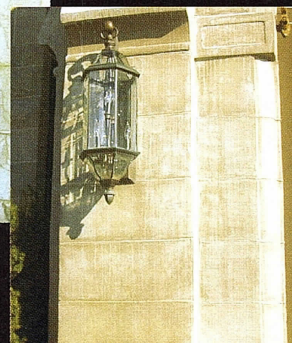


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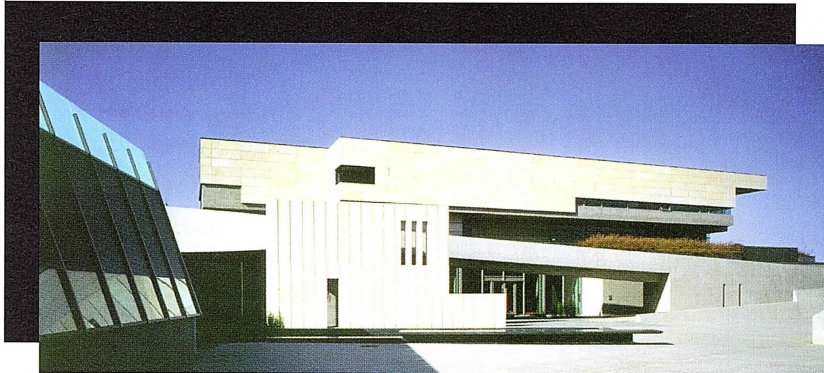
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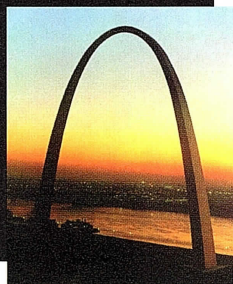
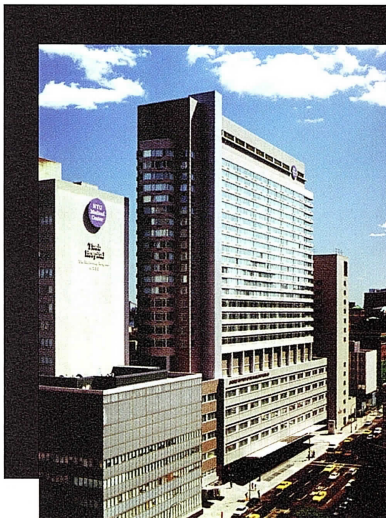
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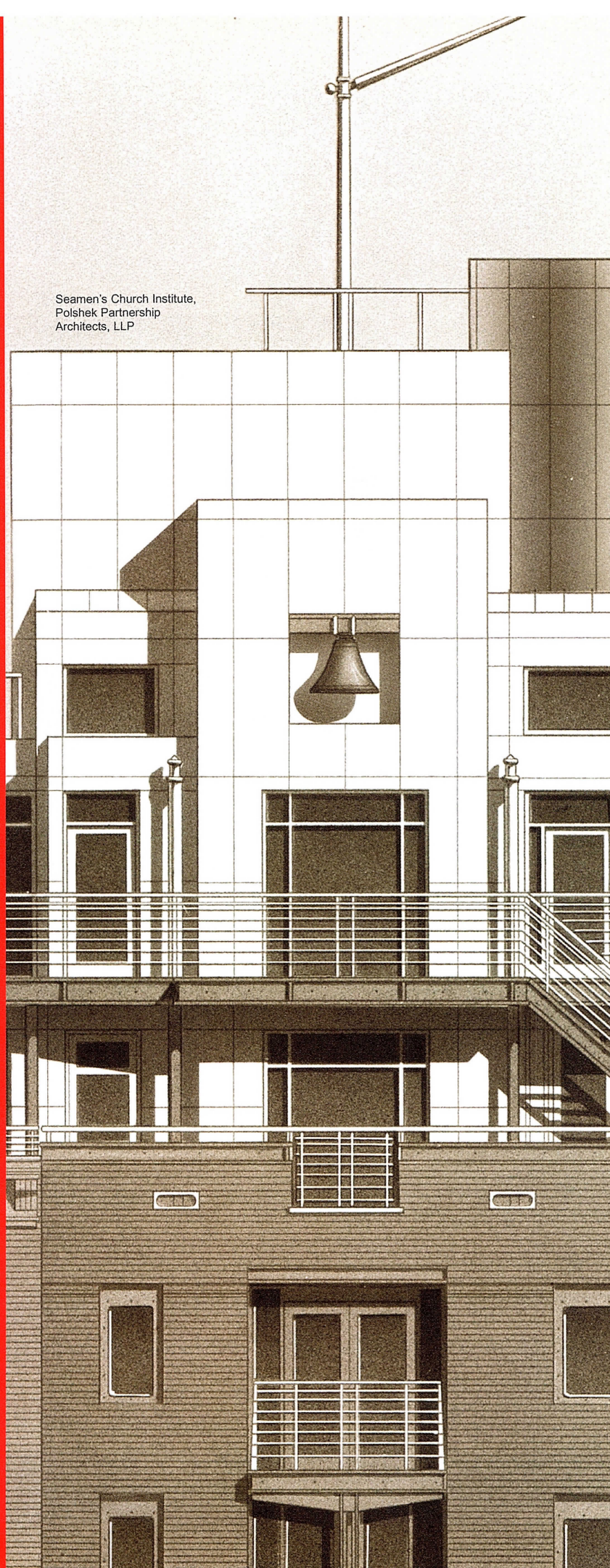
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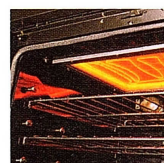
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New York Times Tower, a 52-story, 1.54 million SF office tower, to be framed entirely in structural steel. Architect: Renzo Piano and Fox & Fowle. Developers: The New York Times Company, Forest City Ratner Companies, and ING Real Estate.

Times Square Tower, a 47-story, 1.44 million SF office tower framed in structural steel. Architect: Skidmore Owings & Merrill LLP (Chicago). Developer: Boston Properties.

AOL Time Warner Center, the podium and office portions of the twin-towered multi-use complex, located at Columbus Circle, framed in structural steel. Architect: David Childs of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Developers: Related Companies and Apollo Real Estate Advisors, LP.

Hearst Magazine Building, a 42-story, 856,000 SF office tower addition to the landmark Hearst Building to be framed in structural steel. Architect: Lord Norman Foster and Partners. Developer: Tishman Speyer Properties.

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Adequate

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First Words

Letter from Two Presidents

With this issue of *Oculus*, we turn to one of the great challenges in our urban areas: the adequacy of housing and the many ways that New Yorkers and other Americans live. Today, we live in a society where most people are well housed, yet many in our city and country are not as fortunate. The Federal Government spends some \$140 billion on housing. Approximately \$30 billion funds the Department of Housing and Urban Development's budget, \$20 billion goes to tax programs that support affordable housing, and some \$90 billion is spent on mortgage and property tax deductions.

These government expenditures appear high, yet the need for affordable housing is higher. In New York, only 15 to 20 percent of households can afford market rate new construction. Typically, for every unit of affordable housing there are hundreds of applicants, and we need to build 100,000 units of additional housing in the next few years even to start meeting demand. Twenty percent of New Yorkers pay over 50 percent of their income for housing, and our housing costs are among the highest in the nation.

This may help explain why New York City has historically been in the forefront of housing issues. From developing the model for the National Public Housing program, to the innovative housing of the 1960s and early 1970s, to Mayor Koch's 10-year plan that produced 58,000 units of new and substantially rehabilitated housing, to the current plan Mayor Bloomberg courageously launched despite the severe fiscal stress, New York City has made a larger financial commitment to housing than any other large city in America.

For many years our Chapter has taken the lead on housing issues. Most of the innovative housing developed in New York has been designed by Chapter members. Our active housing committee has held many presentations, discussions, reports, and policy statements over the years, yielding innovative ideas and greater understanding of the issues and solutions.

The Chapter has been working on the New Housing New York design ideas competition with the City Council, CUNY, and the New York City Departments of Buildings, Planning, and Housing Preservation and Development. The results should be announced in February. We expect the winners will propose fresh ideas on how to build housing and promote changes in our regulatory environment. The results of this competition will be on display at the Center for Architecture.

At the Chapter's annual meeting, Michael Pyatok, FAIA, received the Andrew J. Thomas Pioneer in Housing Award and in November, Pyatok delivered the annual Ratensky lecture. In this *Oculus*, Richard Plunz, the subject of "So Says..." discusses the next steps in achieving more affordable housing in New York. Plunz has focused his pro-

fessional career on housing issues, and his 1990 book, *A History of Housing in New York City*, explores the city's housing development since 1850. Moreover, the Chapter has issued a task force report, "Ten Steps to Create More Affordable Housing in New York City," which is packed with recommendations to improve the setting for designing housing in New York and getting it built.

Mayor Bloomberg's initiatives to increase the density of certain neighborhoods will stimulate more building. New York developers will build more housing of all types if given a reasonable financial return. At the same time, our state and local governments must be pressured to support housing initiatives with financial incentives.

We hope that this issue of *Oculus* and the Chapter's activities will intensify the discussion about what makes good housing – and lead even more members to work toward providing adequate housing for all.



Ginsberg (left) & Miller

KRISTEN RICHARDS

By the time this issue of *Oculus* reaches you, our new Chapter President, Mark Ginsberg, will be installed and our Chapter will be in capable hands as we enter the first full year of operation at the Center for Architecture. Together, with the dedication of volunteers and staff, we have achieved a great deal in the last 12 months, most notably the opening of the Center, but not to be overlooked among the many successful initiatives is the Chapter's yearlong focus on housing, the topic of this *Oculus*. The opportunities that the Center provides our community are great and this year's programs and exhibitions will add to the public's understanding of design and the value of architecture. It has been a pleasure serving you and I look forward to working with you to elevate the voice of the design community. Great design matters and we can make a difference!

George H. Miller, FAIA

I want to thank George Miller for his leadership over the last year as Chapter President. Under his direction we built and opened the Center for Architecture, re-launched *Oculus*, and continued to increase our public outreach. We are grateful that he will continue to serve us as one of our regional directors.

Mark Ginsberg, AIA

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An aerial, black and white photograph of a skyscraper under construction in a dense urban environment. The building's steel framework is visible, with a large section of the upper floors covered by a white tarp. Scaffolding and construction cranes are visible on the left side of the building. The surrounding city is filled with other tall buildings, creating a canyon-like effect.

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There's no place like...

First Words

**Letter from
the Editor**

Farmholm, Wanderholm, Pineholm. These are the homes I grew up in. Since then, I've been a renter – East Side, West Side, Chelsea, East Village, Brooklyn Heights – always moving into a neighborhood before it became “hot.” And even then, I could barely afford it.



Whoville, USA

When is housing not an issue for most New Yorkers – or most Americans, for that matter? The subject begs our attention. We address it in all its complexity in this issue of Oculus – with featured projects that illustrate today's heightened sense of urgency and designers' heightened sensitivity to residents and their environments.

To kick things off, “So Says...” features Richard Plunz, Director of the Urban Design Program at Columbia University. In this Q & A, the man who wrote the book about the history of housing in New York offers his views on the current and future state of housing in New York City. For “Good Practices,” Michael Pyatok, FAIA, the AIA New York Chapter's 2003 Pioneer in Housing Award honoree, takes up affordable housing design practice. “40-Year Watch” is an up-close-and-personal look at a housing complex originally designed to offer fresh air and views but which instead created hazardous living conditions. “In Print+” reviews a maverick solution for downtown New York and two websites: one is a voice of the future; the other revels in the past.

Looking ahead, the 2004 editorial calendar for Oculus takes on these intriguing topics:

Spring: New York Next: Emerging Talent

Summer: On the Waterfront: New Growth in Lower Manhattan

Fall: The Secret Lives of Architects (what they do when they're not designing buildings)

Winter: Fun City: Cultural/Entertainment Architecture

As always, your input and insights are most welcome.

Kristen Richards
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Remembering Edward Durell Stone

I enjoyed very much the summer issue of *Oculus*, especially the article regarding Ed Stone's SUNY campus at Albany. When I worked in his office, in the 1960s, the project was under construction, but it wasn't until last August that I had the chance to see it.

I was glad to read that additions and renovation work is being done there because I was disheartened to see how rundown it was. It gave me the feeling of a Mayan ruin – minus the vines. Most of the concrete surfaces were badly stained, a great deal of the pavement was cracked, and one of the dormitory towers was shut down for repairs. Hopefully, this unique project will be completely restored.

Roy A. Euker, AIA

P.S. I would just like to add that working at Stone's office was a marvelous experience. He was no one to tangle with, but he had a good sense of humor and loved design, especially architectural drawings (I can remember five of us working on a 30-foot-long elevation of a building for the Naval Academy). He was also generous and paid for overtime work, which was rare then and probably even rarer today.

Affordable housing: More to do

Last summer, New York City saw the start of the most significant housing initiative since the 1980s: Mayor Bloomberg's "New Housing Marketplace." If fully implemented, the Mayor's plan could produce and preserve 65,000 housing units during the next five years.

Everyone agrees that New York City must increase its housing supply – and especially its supply of housing affordable to working, low-income, and homeless residents. The worsening housing situation combined with the recent recession has pushed many families beyond the limits of their resources. More and more households are living in overcrowded, unsafe, and unhealthy conditions; the numbers of homeless families with children are at record levels.

Mayor Bloomberg's housing plan is a critical step in the right

direction. But is it enough? The projected 10-year investment of city capital funds in housing already has declined by about \$1.2 billion. Unfortunately, the city's housing efforts are being held back by the poor economy and budget crisis.

Three years ago, Housing First! – a coalition of community, business, civic, labor, and religious organizations – forged a 10-year, \$10 billion plan to build and save more than 185,000 homes. The plan represents the consensus of housing industry leaders, advocates, and policy experts on the magnitude of the effort ultimately required to provide relief from the housing pressures felt by too many New York City households, especially our vulnerable neighbors – senior citizens, homeless families, and individuals with special needs.

In addition, we can increase funding for housing by prudently redirecting funds the city already receives. For example, the city receives federal dollars to manage and renovate abandoned city-owned buildings. But, the city has sold off most of these buildings, freeing up money that could be used to build and rehab more affordable housing.

Administrative, zoning, and regulatory reforms can also boost the creation of decent housing for working families. The city's progress on streamlining the Building Code and improving the way we plan for public land should simplify and promote housing production. Further, the Bloomberg administration has taken bold steps to rezone parts of the city to increase land available for residential development.

But we have more to do. We need new programs and zoning laws that remove barriers to building housing at the densities appropriate to our neighborhoods and give developers real incentives to build affordable housing.

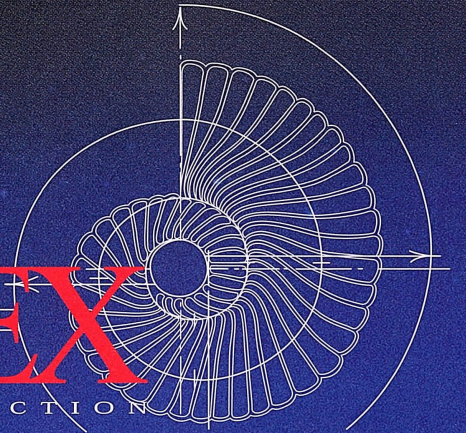
The challenge of housing a vibrant, growing city is formidable, but a sustained and comprehensive effort is essential to ensuring that all New Yorkers have a safe, decent, affordable place to call home.

Joe Weisbord, Staff Director
Housing First!

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The Center for Architecture

Congratulations and Self-Congratulations

Many thoughts about the Center for Architecture were inscribed in a big black sketchbook during the Architecture Week opening in October. A very small sampling of these comments follows, selected at random (legibility of handwriting was the main criterion) by AIA Executive Director Rick Bell, where all blame should be lodged for misspellings or omissions.

As a place for exhibitions and public discussion, the Center will enhance the discussion on architecture and planning in our City, enriching our built environment. [George H. Miller, FAIA \(2003 President, AIA New York Chapter\)](#)

May this fabulous week be the beginning of a wonderful era of collaboration, education, respect and pleasure! [Paul Segal, FAIA \(2003 President, New York Foundation for Architecture\)](#)

On behalf of the New York Building Congress, I extend our heartfelt good wishes for the wonderful new Center for Architecture. [Richard T. Anderson, FAICP](#)

Good job, to look in below and through, to go down for geothermal, very good. [Diana Balmori](#)

The beginning of a new era of environmental architecture in New York. [Bill Bobenhausen, FAIA](#)

A wonderful beginning. [Max Bond, FAIA](#)

How does one describe a space that leaves you wanting for nothing – absolutely beautiful, it is an innovation and inspiration to all architects. [Effie Bouras, Associate AIA](#)

The possibilities are endless. [Mary Burnham, AIA](#)

The opening of the Center heralds a new era for interaction among the design disciplines and for dialogue between designers and the public. Cool space too. [Chris Calori](#)

A room of one's own – long overdue. [Robert Campbell, FAIA](#)

May you spread the word and unite the disciplines. [Clodagh](#)

The potential of the Center as a meeting ground is so exciting. Bravo! [Kinshasha Holman Conwill](#)

The building is great. [Don Elliott](#)

Let this be the beginning of a new age of architecture. [Bruce Fowle, FAIA](#)

The graphics, until now, have led the charge – they'll now live well within a vibrant and active home. [Michael Gericke, Pentagram](#)

We tip our feather hats to our architectural colleagues whom we respect unconditionally for understanding space as we hope we understand meaning. [Ric Grefé, AIGA](#)

May the Center's new sidewalk home bring an abundance of life to our public dialogues and the city's streets. [Bonnie Harken, AIA, APA](#)
Congratulations to the entire staff and board for launching this extraordinary ship – the Center for Architecture. May she sail to undiscovered places through uncharted waters! [Margaret Helfand, FAIA](#)
How wonderful to reach the Center and find a gurgling, clear spring at its heart! [Tony Hiss](#)

Congratulations on the realization of a much-needed dream. [Kenneth Karpel, AIA](#)

The Center is a wonderful culmination of great work by many, many good people using their creative talents. [Leevi Kiil, FAIA](#)

I am very pleased by AIA New York's ever growing commitment to sustainable design. [Craig Kneeland](#)

Bravo for a great dream that many talented people have made an even greater reality. [Brenda Levin](#)

Congratulations and good luck with this wonderful space. I'm glad to see another space in the city for architecture and design. [Paul Makovsky, Metropolis magazine](#)

Congratulations for creating the greatest turning point in our architecture / planning community – a place to congregate and celebrate and debate. [Jonathan Marvel, AIA](#)

A contribution of beauty, community, and clear commitment to the shared purpose of great architecture. [Victoria Milne](#)

Very refreshing comments were made today. Look forward to many more, as a student and professional (soon!). Thank you for providing us with a place to come to. [Federico Negro \(Parsons M.Arch.student\)](#)

What's next? [Rolf Ohlhausen, FAIA](#)

Congratulations on your courage and forethought in creating a home and opportunity for NYC to celebrate architecture, planning and landscape architecture. [Anne Papageorge, ASLA](#)

The space, the access, the level of discourse, and the exhibit are all terrific. [Sherida E. Paulsen, FAIA](#)

Congratulations on this great accomplishment! Already showing a great sense of community. [Susie Rodriguez, FAIA](#)

What a wonderful place to come together, share ideas, grow with peers and sometimes simply shoot the breeze! [Porie Saikia-Eapen, AIA](#)

This is a wonderful place – I think the "design-in" is a preview of what a lively, vital center this will be. [Bob Tierney](#)

The Center represents the tremendous progress in the development of AIA New York Chapter over the last 10 years, and the beginning of a new integrated approach toward the design of great architecture. [Richard Tomasetti](#)

Congratulations – I look forward to many hours spent at the Center for Architecture. [Andrew Winters](#)

A triumph. Congrats. [Bob Yaro](#)

So Says...

Richard

Richard Plunz is an architect and historian teaching at Columbia University, where he has served as the Chairman of the Division of Architecture, and is currently Director of the Urban Design Program. He received the Andrew Thomas Pioneer in Housing Award from the AIA New York Chapter in 1991. Kajima will publish a Japanese edition of his book, *A History of Housing in New York City*, next year. He recently offered *Oculus* his views on the current and future state of housing in New York City.

Kristen Richards: You have written about public housing in New York and elsewhere. Where is the greatest demographic need for housing in New York City?

Richard Plunz: I suppose this is terribly obvious, but the sector getting little attention involves the lowest quarter of the population. Historically, public housing and various hybrid programs like Section 8 have covered this group. But today, this group is falling out of the picture. For example, consider “Public Housing,” which is our oldest form of direct government intervention. There are at least 750,000 people in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) projects alone, and a huge waiting list – but NYCHA is not in a position to build. Its activity has been relegated to management and piecemeal maintenance.

Certain other recent social housing programs are more or less related to what has been historically known as the “deserving poor” – people with jobs, one- or even two-income families. In this regard, the “big news” in the 1990s relative to social housing was “home ownership” programs designed to help lower middle income families to move up a notch or two, but did very little for the group below that.

KR With NYCHA building little, and the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development also limited by budgetary and other constraints, what is the future of publicly supported housing in the city?

RP There has to be an evolution back to a reasonable level of publicly supported housing production. This implies that adequate housing is a basic human right and a government responsibility, a position that may sound quaint and out-of-date. On this point, sooner or later we as a society will be forced to come back to a balanced system of housing production.

And in some respects we slowly are. In the United States, after 60 years of devaluation of the city, there is a growing re-affirmation of “urbanism as a way-of-life,” and in time a new mandate for adequate urban housing is bound to be a part of this awakening. Urban centers are no longer easily discredited as living environments, for many

reasons including the question of resources. Let's just say that when the price of our gasoline reaches its true cost, things will change. We cannot maintain dominance of global resources forever in order to sustain an “American Way of Life” – which is inherently unsustainable. As our global political and cultural assumptions catch up with us at home, the housing and urban implications will be staggering – and positive to my mind.

KR What are the implications for housing types?

RP The situation is not so easy to generalize. I am not sure one can always correlate a housing type with family income. For example, housing innovation that reflects the new definitions of family structure tends to move across the income spectrum. Yet it is also true that, as demonstrated in the last half-century, high-rise housing may work for middle and upper incomes, but presents demonstrable problems for lower incomes.

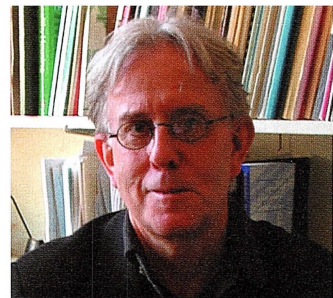
And relative to these venerable categories of “high,” “middle,” and “low” income, there now is more divergence than at any time in memory. This is true across the country, but especially in New York City. Manufacturing is gone, which for many people leaves only sub-salaries in service industries – the “McJobs” phenomenon.

In New York City, along with growing divergence between income groups, for those on the bottom there is a growing demand for housing together with a scaling back in housing production. One cannot help but wonder how long this can go on before there is a radical political manifestation around the housing question in New York.

KR How would you suggest that housing construction be significantly increased in New York City? How can it be financed?

RP Certainly any increase in housing production for the lower quarter will not happen without heightened local and national political commitment. The recent Giuliani and Bloomberg housing plans were political decoys and neither adequately conceptualized the problem. But at least they were again talking about housing!

Of course there are more considerations than income. For example, much of the social housing built in New York City in the 1980s and 90s used densities far too low to support the infrastructure that was already in place. New York put a lot of effort into rebuilding housing on city-owned land left empty by the 1970s burnout, but deployed low-density housing types. Now the city has little such land left. The rebuilding was a missed opportunity. Charlotte Gardens in the South Bronx was the most extreme example of land not put to the highest possible use – 90 single-family houses in an area that for-



KRISTEN RICHARDS

merly supported thousands of residents. There were plenty of alternative models to study. In the 1920s, Jackson Heights combined relatively high-density with home ownership. This remains some of the best housing in the city. It had gardens. It was efficient and well designed. You cannot say that about the Nehemiah housing of the 1980s and 1990s – and there is no excuse.

KR Do your students at Columbia care about housing, or are they focused on other design studio subjects?

RP The Housing Studio at Columbia has been the backbone of the Master of Architecture program since I came here in the 1970s. Of course, things have changed. Back then it seemed important to study and understand history and typologies relative to housing design. By the mid-1980s, younger faculty interests shifted to other concerns under the loose rubric of housing “phenomenology.” We are likely to move again toward typology, but more importantly, now is a period when we need to put the economic issues related to public/private financing for housing on the front burner.

Happily, urbanism is a re-emerging subject within architecture. At Columbia, interest in urban design has grown enormously in the last 10 years. I am not sure we know exactly how to redefine urban design today, but grappling with that question is part of the excitement. Urban design is a strategic operation – a political tool. It requires public debate. As an architect you cannot convince the public to support a strategy if it is not presented in language that is accessible. Urban form-language is the province of architects. Urban design is expanding the relevance of architects.

KR What do you consider as some of the major issues facing the city that have urban design implications?

RP New York has experienced a long period of prominence as a global capital. Yet there has also been a long, dry period in terms of developing physical infrastructure compared to other modern global capitals. There has not been any major infrastructure projects here since the 1950s and 60s road building – the new rail link to JFK notwithstanding. Compared to airport links in other global capitals, it is pretty deficient. The same can be said for our attempts to deal with sanitation needs. Infrastructure is extremely expensive and long-term, and the allocation of resources is creating debate and a lot of second-guessing. The debates surrounding the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan bear this out.

We are at a moment of either renewing New York’s role as a global economic engine, or simply hoping that it can just hold its own. For renewal, we need large-scale public investments strategically placed. And we need to protect existing infrastructure as an irreplaceable

resource. The last rail yard in Manhattan went the way of Trump’s condos. Now the politicians are starting to catch up, but from behind! There is talk again about the Second Avenue Subway. Giuliani did try to revive plans for the freight tunnel to Brooklyn that has been proposed for about 80 years. But right now, and perhaps forever, that kind of investment is prohibitive. So we cannot afford to give away our existing freight capacity. We have eradicated a lot of irreplaceable stuff, which we may well need again. Throughout history, the science of city building has had a way of amplifying the deficiency of short-term strategic decisions through their long-term effects. The handwriting is on the wall.

KR As a teacher you have influenced at least three decades of students, including many now in practice. What satisfaction do you get, if any, from what they build?

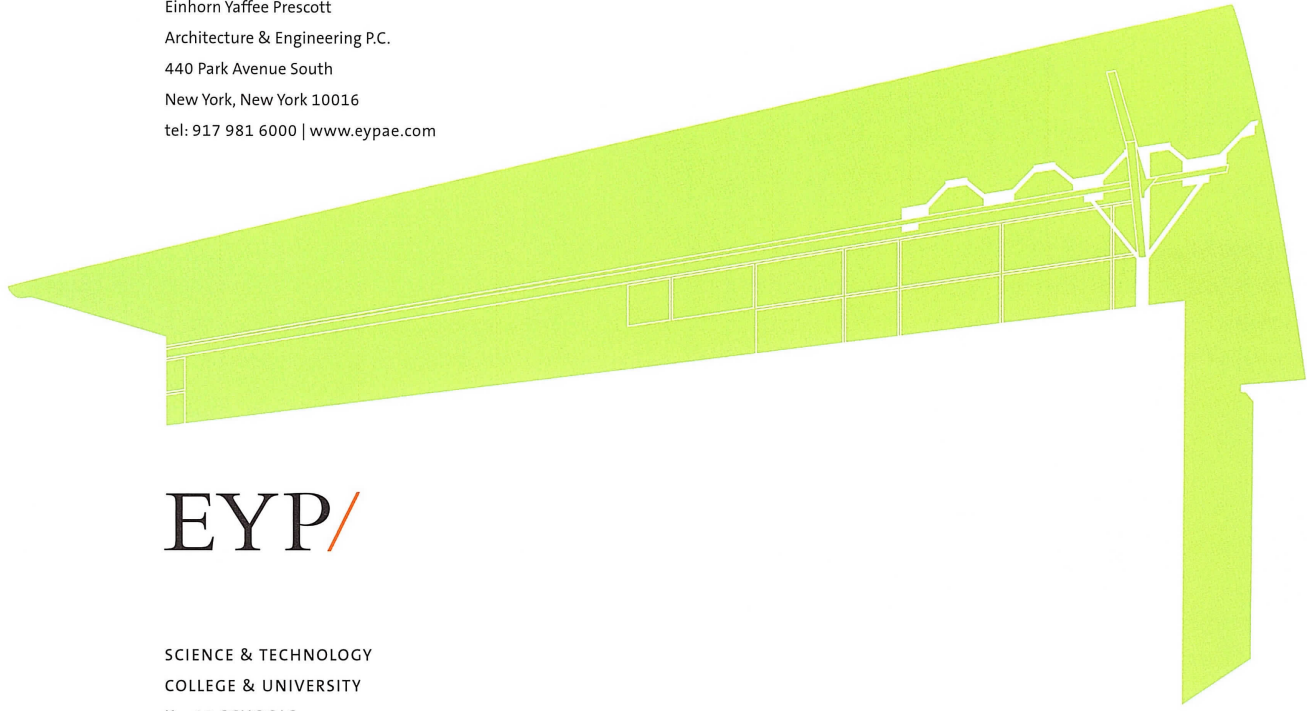
RP When I came to Columbia, it was a very different place. The academy was coming out of the 60s, and out of social programs that helped a sizeable number of students who otherwise could not have afforded an elite private university. They were bright, interested in making a difference, vocal, and opinionated. Their presence made a big difference. It was a very exciting, nitty-gritty time. Students had spirit and they had a positive drive which included questioning what mainstream architecture was all about.

That generation’s concerns eclipsed as economic support decreased and costs rose. We moved into the so-called “narcissistic phase,” with homogenous, relatively well-off students who could afford Columbia. In the mid-80s through the 90s, glamour and style overly dominated, driven by the print media and new media. But today a third generation is moving in another direction. “Design” is not their only reason for being. Students are interested in strategic urban mechanisms – how cities function relative to economics, ecology, and information technology. Perhaps they are again becoming political animals in the best “public good” sense.

KR Any regrets about not having designed more housing yourself?

RP Yes, of course. But a bigger regret is that over the years more of my students have not had the opportunity to design more housing. The real pity is that we have two generations of students with rather limited opportunities within the professional world of architecture. Some of the most gifted left to enter other fields. The good news is that architecture students’ training allows them to do so. By this I refer to their immersion in design studio pedagogy, which is a unique and very significant form of critical inquiry, and useful in all aspects of environmental problem-solving.

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Around the corner

The Plaza District

By David Sokol



PETER MAUSS/ESTO



CHUN Y. LAI PHOTOGRAPHY

For everything shopping culture sucks from our wallets and egos, it does give back. Let's take a look at a tourist shopping Mecca, the Plaza District. When I find myself strolling Madison, Fifth, and 57th, I feel that it's not all take, take, take. I get inspiration in return. The pink wall/aloe vera combination in Ungaro? Did it in my living room. A trip to Etro is akin to entering an opium den. And checking up on Barney's creative director Simon Doonan's hijinks is more likely to tickle the palate than to confound. Visual merchandisers, store designers, and window dressers of the Plaza District, I salute you.

It's a salute with some hesitation, as these folks don't always get it right. For a refresher in minimalism, for instance, I seek CK Pawson. But here, as in less worthy white boxes, a hurricane of products occasionally obscures the good bones. The sin, really, is the hunger to show something for everybody, pique any and all interests, and get customers into the store. The visual chaos signifies desperation more than identity.

In the case of architecture, a similar lack of confidence makes for the blahs. The Plaza District is home to two major categories of store. The first tries to carry the torch of monastic luxury. White walls, limestone floors, lots of glass, and wood accents "frame" the product, as the lingo goes. An analogy: Think of a convention hall, filled to overflowing with Italian furnishings. Spend an hour and all I see is homogeneous crispness, numbing beauty, and I wonder what's innovative and what's simply derivative.

The second retail type cries domesticity. In these stores, the person is the object to be framed. Woods and similarly warm materials, as well as plush fittings, are meant to make the consumer feel at home, safe, and pampered. Again, when one store after the next offers mahogany paneling and a sweeping staircase, consumers may feel comfy – especially since they've already replicated the style in their McMansions – but the "wow factor" (more lingo) is rendered null. This is an environment in which brand recognition more than design drives customer choice.

Unlike much of the multifamily and office product we've seen go up in the last three years (or decades), retail and restaurant interiors

have given our hometown design scene some street cred.

There are exceptions. The Ralph Appelbaum-designed Steuben shop, opened in 2000, recreates an era in which shopping environments were movie sets, not entirely within reach. The new Burberry by Gensler is an exercise in modernization, without completely ditching heritage. And ARO's diaphanous Qiora, if a bit outside of our geographic boundaries, does better at portraying escape than most of its neighbors to the north. Since I'm harping on lingo, I'll mention that the lingo also tells us that retail architecture needs to be an "experience," the kind that transforms a shop from a space to a "destination." Architects can't design engaging salespeople or memorable service. But for what's within their power, these three shops set a decent standard.

Of course, the trio is not perfect. The disjunction between Burberry exterior and interior can be interpreted as more jarring than energetic, while Steuben's lighting should be tweaked downward a few notches. But what defines these spaces as standouts is their throwing caution to the cash register, digging in their heels, and transporting you – or just catch your eye for one second longer. When you can get a triple-take knock-off on Canal Street, that's more important than kowtowing to a product.

The Plaza District is constantly in flux. Some newcomers of note: the neo-modernist Ferragamo flagship on Fifth Avenue, designed by Janson Goldstein; new digs for Swiss couturier Akris by Christoph Sattler of Hilmer & Sattler und Albrecht Gesellschaft, in the same vein; and, dressed more for historicism, furrier Dennis Basso's new space care of architect Michael Leclerc and interior designer Kenneth Alpert.

By contrast, consider the Meatpacking District, where Lindy Roy flirts with danger at Vitra, William Russell revels in otherworldly sinuousness at Alexander McQueen (ignore the poor relation across the street), and Ali Tayar wonderfully manages a twentieth-century palimpsest (and moves beyond it) at Pop Burger. Let's hope that the next generation of Plaza District retailers and architects are inspired by such boundlessness, rather than the yawning Joneses on the street where they live.

David Sokol is managing editor of *I.D.* magazine. Previously, he was the associate editor of *Retail Traffic*. His guest-edited issue of *Architectural Design* will be published in the U.S. in March 2004.

Correction: In the Fall 2003 "Around the Corner: Southtown, Roosevelt Island by Gruzen Samton," Schuman Lichtenstein Claman Efron Architects should have been credited as the Architect-of-Record.

Left: Ralph Appelbaum Associates: Steuben, 667 Madison Avenue. Right: Gensler: Burberry, 9 West 57th Street.

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Everything Housing

Households with one full-time minimum wage earner cannot afford to rent a modest one bedroom apartment anywhere in the country.

Source: The State of the Nation's Housing; 2003, Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University; Graduate School of Design and John F. Kennedy School of Government

The statistics are staggering. The entire country – especially urban areas – is coping with serious housing issues, but nowhere is the crisis more acute than in New York City.

According to the 2002 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey, the city's housing stock is an estimated 3.2 million units – impressive until one starts breaking down the numbers. As of May 2003, the New York City Housing Authority, which serves about 419,000 residents, reported close to 266,000 applicants on waiting lists for subsidized housing. Some 80 to 85 percent of New Yorkers cannot afford market rate housing, notes AIA New York Chapter President Mark Ginsberg, AIA. And many are spending over 50 percent of their income on market rate and affordable housing.

There is also a dwindling supply of housing stock for low- to middle-income residents – for a variety of reasons. Landlords are opting out of their 20-year contracts for HUD subsidies. Past – and current – low-density developments have their hearts in the right place, but ultimately will do little to alleviate the current and future housing crunch. There is not much city land left to develop, and much of what remains is subject to outdated zoning and building codes relating to density and brownfield reuse.

There is good news: The city is getting out of the landlord business: it has reduced its “in rem” inventory (city-owned due to tax foreclosures) from at least 100,000 apartments 40 years ago to about 6,400 as of the end of fiscal year 2003. Since 1987, the city has sponsored the new construction or rehabilitation of 211,964 units of housing. In 2003 alone, it completed 8,400 homes and apartments and began construction on 8,330 more. Much of this progress is due to public/private collaborations between city, state, and federal programs and owners, developers, and non-profit or community organizations. And let's not forget Mayor Bloomberg's \$3 billion New Housing Marketplace initiative.

For those who really want to crunch the numbers, one of the most thorough reports on current conditions is the 398-page “State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods 2003,” published by New York University's Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy.

With a focus on affordable housing in the city in general and Harlem in particular, the two lead features offer insights into the complexities of working within the intricate – and often frustrating – constraints mandated by an alphabet soup of city housing agencies, zoning boards, non-profits, and community groups.

Other features zero in on specific solutions to dealing with meager budgets, special populations, historic preservation, adaptive reuse, and NIMBY-ism. But it is not all grim statistics and bureaucratic hoops. The rewards (though not always monetary) often outweigh the challenges, not only for the architects, but also for the residents and neighborhoods – and the city itself.

There is still much to be done and many more lessons to be learned. Crucial to the success of any housing program is the growing awareness of the importance of design, evidenced by the number of exhibitions, conferences, and competitions around the city – including the Center for Architecture and the Architectural League – in the last year.

As you read this, the results of the NewHousingNewYork Design Ideas Competition will be on view at the Center for Architecture. Says competition coordinator Lance Jay Brown, FAIA, Chair, School of Architecture, Urban Design and Landscape Architecture, City College of New York: “[This is an] opportunity for those who have been dreaming about and thinking creatively about the form of housing and community for the future to put their ideas forth in the public realm. This is an opportunity for excellence to surface, for passion to be exercised, and for social responsibilities, from affordability to sustainability, to be reaffirmed.”

Though he was referring to the competition specifically, his comment should apply to everyone in both the private and public sectors: architects, designers, developers, government officials – and residents – looking to make a difference.

The challenge is here for the taking.

Kristen Richards

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Making Affordable Housing Possible:

Construction of affordable housing is shifting away from publicly owned units to developments created through a mix of public and private support. New York City is to spend \$3 billion on the Department of Housing Preservation and Development's (HPD) New Housing Marketplace program. The plan is to create 65,000 units of housing for low- and moderate-income residents. In a time of budget cutbacks, Mayor Michael Bloomberg has not cut back on housing expenditures.

Meanwhile, "There are 135,000 families on the waiting list" of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), says David Burney, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Design and Construction. Those families aren't the only ones struggling for shelter – but they're among those who suffer the most.

NYCHA provides housing for more than 170,000 families, and is improving many of the dwellings it owns and manages, making their residents' lives more pleasant and safer, and adding well-designed community centers.

Furthermore, HPD intends to complete a long-term program of renovating housing that the city acquired through tax foreclosure. A major side benefit: land for 7,000 units of housing.

This program marks a shift in the city's mindset. Its focus will be on providing support for housing rather than subsidizing it directly. "We also plan to push people to do better design" in public housing, says Chris Cirillo, managing director of HPD's division of neighborhood planning.

Cirillo likes much of what he's seen to date. He cites the Madison Park and Madison Plaza buildings on the east side of Madison Avenue between 117th and 120th Streets in Harlem, designed by Leslie Feder Architects. "The quality of materials is so rich that you see them and you don't think that they're affordable housing."

For architects who design low- and moderate-income housing, one measure of success is that these structures fit in their surroundings, rather than prompting passersby to view them as lesser buildings. That judgment is shared by residents, claim architects and planners who work closely with them.

Architects may favor contemporary approaches to affordable

housing design, but they cannot ignore the users' concerns. Residents worry keenly about being viewed as living in a different, inferior type of dwelling. "Much has been said about the need for experimentation in design, especially in affordable housing as practiced in European countries," observes James McCullar, FAIA, chair of the AIA New York Chapter Housing Committee. "However, in our recent past, that has meant top down, government sponsored non-contextual designs – 'towers-in-a-park' – that looked different from market housing and developed undesirable associations. Community boards everywhere want to preserve their neighborhood character, and this has translated into a contextual, bottom-up approach. Residents want their housing to be mainstream, not singled out as 'lower income'."

Perhaps it's better to offer adventurous design to those for whom being different carries no stigma. According to Petr Stand, APA, of Magnusson Architects and Planning (MAP), people who will live in affordable housing tell him that they do not want to be part of an architectural experiment. Stand's planning work includes the Melrose Commons initiative in the South Bronx.

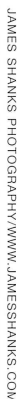
Scary statistics

Some housing numbers are disturbing, especially for New York's poorest. Frank Braconi, executive director of the Citizens Housing and Planning Council of New York, points out that from 1987 to 2003, the shelter allowance for New York state welfare recipients did not increase – November saw the first rise.

But there are troubling trends, notes Joe Weisbord, staff director of Housing First!. Between 1999 and 2002, the rental vacancy rate dropped from 3.12 percent to 2.94 percent. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1 in 5 New Yorkers are in worst-case housing need (compared to the U.S. national average of 1 in 7). This means that a person or family is spending 50 percent or more of household income on housing (compared to a norm of 25 percent), and/or lives in seriously deficient housing.

"There's been an upsurge in homelessness," states Weisbord. Every night, he says, almost 39,000 New Yorkers sleep in shelters, including some 17,000 children.

By Thomas D. Sullivan



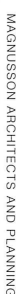
Brownfields + zoning + detailing

In spring of 2003, the Chapter's Housing Task Force published a practical guide, called "Ten Steps to Create More Affordable Housing in New York City." The proposed reforms are technical – adjusting zoning regulations, allowing four-story walk-up apartments, reducing parking requirements for mixed-use buildings, adopting the International Building Code. Most feel that their cumulative effect would produce a sharp rise in the number and density of housing units, at the same time reducing housing construction and planning costs.

Because most of the land zoned for residential use is now built up, developers must begin to build on “brownfields” – land formerly in industrial use, which often calls for toxic cleanup. New York City should simplify the use of such areas, Cirillo says.

There is a precedent. MAP's Magnus Magnusson, AIA, took on building in a brownfield in his Rheingold Gardens project, now under construction. It includes 71 two- and three-family homes on the former site of the Rheingold brewery in Bushwick, Brooklyn. At an event sponsored by the Housing Committee and Planning and Urban Design Committee, Magnusson described hurdles his firm encountered in constructing on a brownfield site.

The soil at the Rheingold site was judged to be contaminated, so



Top: Michael Avramides, Architect: Father David Casella Housing for the Elderly, Bronx. Center: Magnusson Architects and Planners: Rheingold Gardens, Brooklyn. Bottom: DeLaCour & Ferrara Architects: Cauldwell Avenue Partnership Homes, Bronx.

it was critical to move as little of the earth as possible. Magnusson's solution was to put the dwellings on pilings, which minimized excavation – a shrewd solution enhanced by elegant forms. Since the start of construction, New York State has passed brown-field legislation that will make it easier to use such sites for housing.

From his experience in designing housing in the city, Wids DeLaCour, AIA, of DeLaCour & Ferrara Architects underscores the need for more zoning adjustments. "Low-rise building works" for affordable housing, he says, but "New York City is not friendly" to low-rise, high-density building. And the zoning requirements for rear yards are excessive, he says, which also "doesn't lend itself to solving the parking problem."

In the Cauldwell Avenue Partnership Homes in the Bronx, DeLaCour shows how attention to detail in affordable housing pays off in handling the materials (brick veneer, aluminum siding in a frame construction). The houses even have bay windows, which DeLaCour persuaded the developer that the carpenters could execute well. Make affordable residences look like "what people expect homes to look like," he urges. "Brick is important – people in New York want a brick house."

Detailing is also a big factor in the success of Michael Avramides' design for the Father David Casella Housing for the Elderly in the Bronx. Avramides created a double-height lobby and added sconces for the lighting fixtures to highlight the building's residential feel. Community rooms overlook a street corner on every floor for people-watching – a favorite pastime of residents. Going back a year after he finished the project, Avramides found that the residents are "really pleased that somebody was thinking about how they lived."

Much more to come

Some affordable housing projects are of high caliber, but professionals are disappointed at how much remains to be done.

Michael Kwartler, FAIA, an architect and frequent writer on housing issues, notes that current zoning restrictions would forbid an architect today from re-creating First Houses, NYCHA's popular housing development on Avenue A and 3rd Street in Manhattan.

Kwartler is especially puzzled that current zoning doesn't allow designers to "build what's there" – to create structures like those that already exist in neighborhoods. As for design, he says it would be "nice to go back to a higher level of mediocrity," applying the lessons of the remarkably adaptable row house.

George Miller, FAIA, 2003 president of the AIA New York Chapter, sees the affordable housing situation as "tragic." "All the dreams of architects will be largely unsuccessful," he argues, "unless developers and the city really get behind" ways to adapt formerly industrial sites for housing.

Thomas D. Sullivan is an architecture and design writer in New York. He was formerly the architecture critic of *The Washington Times*.

By Thomas D. Sullivan

Case Study

The residents wanted foyers in their apartments. Because when the pizza delivery guy comes to your apartment, you want to be able to get the pie without showing him your living room. And when you want to, you can open the foyer door for a guest.

Allowing people to greet visitors in different ways was one lesson learned by Magnus Magnusson, AIA, and Petr Stand, APA, and their colleagues at Magnusson Architecture and Planning (MAP), when they planned and designed for residents of Melrose Commons, a 35-block urban renewal area in the South Bronx.

The planning process was anything but simple. It brought together neighborhood residents, city officials, politicians, non-profit leaders, architects, and planners. It began in the early 1990s, when Yolanda Garcia and other Melrose Commons residents learned about renewal plans for their neighborhood. The plans, developed without their input, would have displaced many local residents. In response, they formed a community organization, "Nos Quedamos" ("We Stay") to fight for their neighborhood. "We weren't going to be pushed around," says Garcia, who leads the group.

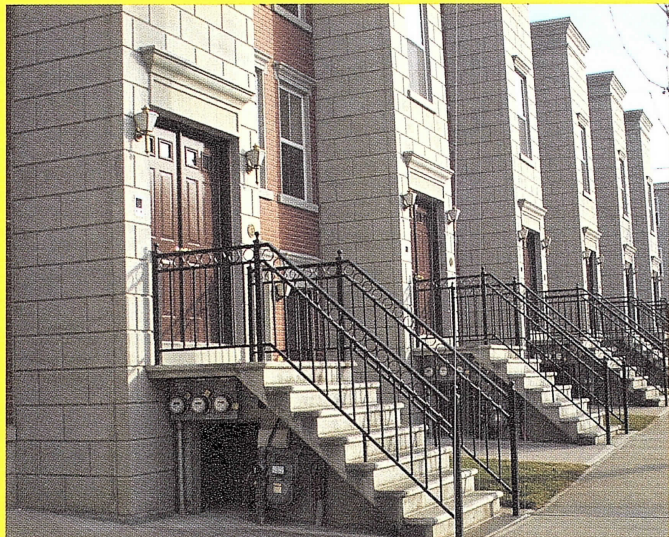
Nos Quedamos helped shape a revised plan which was signed into law in October 1994. The residents of Melrose Commons had much to teach the design professionals and city officials. "People who are committed to live in a community know so much" about their neighborhood, states Stand.

The residents weren't shy about making their views known. Talking to Stand, one dweller slammed a mid-1960s copy of *Progressive Architecture* on the table. Speaking of the Modernist work on the cover, the man said, "I hope this isn't the garbage you're going to give us."

But uncovering what residents wanted took time. A simple questionnaire was aggressively distributed to the neighborhood. The key questions were: What do you like about where you live? What do you want to change the most?

Responses and meetings guided the revisions to the plans: Residents preferred mid-block parks and low-rise buildings that provided "eyes on the street." Aluminum siding was out. Color is popular – so MAP includes three colors on the façades at Melrose Commons. Magnusson notes that it takes considerable time and commitment to earn the trust of a community, which is essential to

Melrose Commons from the Grass-Roots Up



LES BLUESTONE-BLUE SEA CONSTRUCTION

understanding what its residents want and need. “We get in on the ground floor of a 10- to 20-year cycle of development.”

The MAP firm has completed approximately 500 units in Melrose Commons, and has approximately 1,000 more units under design, according to Magnusson. An additional 1,000 units are in planning, awaiting financing and development.

Garcia praised simple design features like broad counters for kitchens. These allow mothers to work in the kitchen while their children do homework on the opposite side. She has also begun to champion cavity-wall construction made with brick and block, which prevents the growth of mold inside apartments – and, she says, reduces the incidence of asthma among residents.

Another firm is also engaged in interesting work in Melrose Commons. David Danois Architects, PC, has completed 30 townhouse units (Melrose Commons II), and will complete 40 more in 2004 (Melrose Commons III). With the exception of the townhouses’ rear walls, the units are built entirely with precast concrete panels. The design by Daniel Danois, AIA, won the 2003 Green Building Award from the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association in the residential project category.

Melrose Commons is a success, Garcia contends, because of the “involvement of people.” Talks with city officials and others who helped plan the community – which continues to grow – helped residents discover their voice. The design of the new buildings has a palpable impact on people in her neighborhood. “Architecture is art – you protect it,” Garcia says.

Melrose Commons showed Magnusson how vital it is to partner closely with a community group. To help it grow, he muses, “Every neighborhood deserves an architect.”

Editor’s note: Magnusson Architecture and Planning merged for a time with another firm, and was part of Larsen Shein Ginsberg + Magnusson while Plaza de Los Angeles and La Puerta de Vitalidad were designed. Magnusson was the design architect and partner-in-charge for those dwellings.

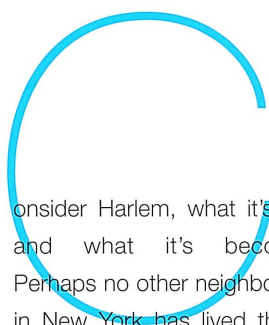


MAGNUSSON ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS

David Danois Architects: Melrose Commons II Partnership Homes has 30 three-family homes (top). Magnusson Architects and Planning: Melrose Commons Community Development Plan (above).

Re-housing Harlem

By Richard Staub



Consider Harlem, what it's been and what it's becoming. Perhaps no other neighborhood in New York has lived through such changes of identity and fortune. Now, with housing construction just completed or underway on virtually every block, and the coming of mainstream retail centers,

office space, and a recently announced hotel designed by Enrique Norten/TEN Arquitectos, it's in the midst of yet another transformation.

Harlem became a community for African Americans at the turn of the 20th century, when a glut of new housing uptown attracted blacks driven from

midtown areas that were newly popular with whites. Subsequent decades witnessed the flowering of the Harlem Renaissance, jazz, and the liberation struggles in the 1920s, the post-WW II flight of black families to the suburbs, the civil rights and black power movements of the 1960s, and the drug-driven desolation of the 1970s and 1980s.

By the mid-1980s, the drug plague had done its worst, and some residents felt there was no place to go but up. There were abandoned townhouses and tenement buildings on almost every block, deserted by landlords in default on taxes. Empty buildings became nests for crime and were sometimes gutted by fires set accidentally by drug users. Ironically, the new landlord was often the City of New York, which took possession of buildings in lieu of tax payments but lacked the personnel or financial resources to maintain them.

New York City began to remedy the crisis in 1986 when Mayor Ed Koch budgeted \$5.1 billion dollars for new housing in Harlem and the South Bronx, an amount larger than that year's

This group of seven mixed-use projects is representative of contemporary designs in Harlem. The tour goes diagonally uptown from the east side to the west. Larsen Shein Ginsberg Snyder: 384 Pleasant Avenue (between East 117th and 118th Streets); an eight-story, 38-unit building with community meeting space on the ground floor and basement level (above). Magnusson Architecture and Planning; Costas Kondylis & Partners: 1955 First Avenue (between East 100th and 101st Streets); a seven-story building offering 232 units, parking for 60 cars, 15,000 square feet of retail and community space (below).



LARSEN SHEIN GINSBERG SNYDER



MAGNUSSON ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING; COSTAS KONDYLIIS & PARTNERS



ANDREAS KORNFELD PHOTOGRAPHY



ROBERTA WASHINGTON ARCHITECTS

federal housing budget. To get abandoned properties back on the tax rolls, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development began selling most of the buildings they owned for \$1 each.

By the mid 1990s, with a robust national economy and a safer Harlem, black and white homesteaders willing to make a financial or sweat equity investment began to buy and restore landmark quality brownstones. While the growing stream of new homeowners was only one part of the residential turnaround, it was the most publicized. There was an anxious buzz in the air that Harlem was being gentrified.

In fact, the turnaround began in the late 1980s, when

Harlem's churches and community organizations launched development programs to reclaim the deserted properties that surrounded them. Sheena Wright, the Director of the Abyssinian Development Corporation, recalls that when the Abyssinian Baptist Church started its first program to house the homeless in 1987, it was virtually the only occupied building on its block. The success of these programs has been such that today, "Harlem has reached a critical mass in terms of development," according to Wayne Benjamin, Director of Housing for the Harlem Community Development Corporation (HCDC), "and there's such a demand that displacement and gentrification are a huge issue."

But Harlem's transformation hasn't been just another Darwinian real estate story. More than any other urban community in the U.S., Harlem symbolizes the struggles and triumphs of African Americans for equality and their share of the American dream. What gets built there, who designs it, and who owns it are sources of creative strategizing and controversy.

The rewaving of the community's residential fabric lies in building rehabs – renovating the large quantity of derelict housing that ranges from tenement buildings to single family houses, almost all built before 1930. They are being rehabbed for low- and middle-income Harlem families who have long made do with substandard conditions.

For the architects who design these renovations (almost always for very low fees), it's a labor of love. African American architects Victor Body-Lawson of Body Lawson Architects and Zevilla Jackson-Preston of J-P Design Group are each renovating several buildings. For Body-Lawson, the goal of renovations is "to

empower residents through housing, putting in amenities that will make them feel part of the mainstream. This means including day-care centers, laundry rooms, and meeting facilities, and using materials in a creative way." Jackson-Preston, a life-long resident of the area, says she acts as an advocate for residents in working with developers. As a native, she feels she knows the extra design elements that offer a reassuring streetscape or interior.

David Danois of Danois Architects became involved in rehabilitating buildings in Bedford Stuyvesant nearly 35 years ago. He has recently completed several new buildings and renovations in Harlem, including the Mount Morris Park West Condominiums, nine Neo-Renaissance brownstones whose façades have been completely restored. Since most of the buildings had been gutted during previous unsuccessful adaptive reuse programs, all of the interiors are completely new.

The architecture firm that likely has done the greatest amount of renovation work in

GF55 Architects: Madison Court Apartments and Townhouses (Madison and Park Avenues between East 117th and 118th Streets); a full-block complex that consists of an eight-story mid-rise apartment building with 96 units, 15,000 square feet of commercial space, offices with private entrances, and a courtyard with a row of 18 three-family townhouses (above left). Roberta Washington Architects: 1400 Fifth Avenue (at 115th Street); an eight-story building and four-story townhouses offering 128 condominium units. Billed as Harlem's first affordable "green" and "smart" building, with over 60 percent of the building constructed of either recycled or recyclable materials. Apartments are wired for communications and technology including fiber optics (above right).



DAVIS BRODY BOND



GREENBERG FARROW ARCHITECTURE

Harlem is Larsen Shein Ginsberg Snyder, which in the last three years has completed or begun more than 100 building renovations. Susan Wright, who heads up this work, has two primary non-profit clients in Harlem, CATCH and UHAB, both of which renovate housing for low-income tenants through programs that leave tenants to control the buildings. Wright says, "I see my role as a design

advocate. My team meets with tenants to explain the design process, show them design ideas for apartment layouts, and works with them on preferences such as open kitchen design versus enclosed. During construction, we give them options for the color palette in the apartments."

When it comes to introducing new buildings into Harlem, architects can respond to an

enviable context of landmark quality residential and public buildings that date as far back as the eighteenth century. The few sections already landmarked have approximately the same number of buildings as similar districts in the West Village and Brooklyn Heights. Michael Henry Adams, a local architectural historian and preservationist who curated the recent exhibit "Harlem Lost and Found" at the Museum of the City of New York, has been an outspoken advocate for landmarking all of Harlem.

Whether the design solutions are post-modern or contemporary, they continue the successful urban model of retail and public spaces on the ground floor with residential

units above. Since most of the projects occupy full blocks on major thoroughfares, they will have a noticeable impact on both the residential and commercial life of Harlem. And community boards such as Community Board 10 are making sure that the retail components match the aspirations of the tenants, meaning no fast food outlets or bodegas.

But all this building activity hasn't resulted in greater opportunities for architects or developers of color. HCDC's Benjamin estimates that just 10 percent of the housing projects, whether renovations or new buildings, are being designed by African American architects, and the cause is a familiar bind. Clients don't want to hire archi-

Davis Brody Bond: Strivers Gardens (Frederick Douglass Boulevard and West 135th Street); a 12-story, 170-unit full service condominium building with 40,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space, 10,000 square feet of professional offices, and underground parking (above). Greenberg Farrow Architecture: The Hamilton (West 145th Street between Bradhurst and Edgecomb Avenues); an eight-story residential building offering 77 units and ground floor retail (above right). Meltzer/Mandi Architects: Bradhurst Court (Frederick Douglass Boulevard, Bradhurst Avenue, West 144th and 145th Streets); an eight-story apartment building and row of townhouses that occupy a full city block with 128 residential units, a supermarket, and below grade parking garage (below).



MELTZER/MANDI ARCHITECTS

fects that don't have experience in creating housing, and architects can't get that experience until they've designed an apartment or condominium building.

Roberta Washington, AIA, the African American founder of the 20-year-old firm Roberta Washington Architects, says she was awarded 1400 Fifth Avenue because the developer, Full Spectrum of NY, is black-owned, and its COO, Carlton A. Brown, is committed to hiring black architects. However it is one of the few such development firms active in Harlem or elsewhere in the city because, according to Kenneth Knuckles, chairman of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone, they don't have the same access to capital as white firms.

Whether African American architects bring a distinct design approach or identity to their projects has been hotly debated since the civil rights movement of the 60s. A December 2002 feature article in *Metropolis* magazine explored just that question with a variety of Harlem-based architects and architectural historians. Washington incorporated African decorative motifs on 1400 Fifth Avenue – as well as making it uptown's first green and fully-wired residential building. However, when asked recently what her view was, Washington commented simply that she relies on her experiences as an African American woman to inform her projects.

J. Max Bond, FAIA, a partner with Davis Brody Bond, has designed housing in Africa and the U.S. and several projects in Harlem, including Strivers Gardens. Frustrated by the lack of opportunity for black architects in Harlem, Bond also

has little patience with the quality of what's being built and sees it as a profound misreading of the Harlem community. (See sidebar.)

The next step in Harlem's development may be the most difficult. With most of the city-owned land and buildings now in development, Daniel Perez, Chairman of Land Use for Community Board 10, says the next struggle will be with private developers who own property in Harlem and will want to build high-rise luxury housing. Whatever gets built, the fundamental issue will still be how community boards, non-profit community groups, private foundations, and city agencies can foster development that serves the community and still guarantees homes for low-income residents. Having weathered Harlem's decline and with rents rising around them, they are wondering if they will have a place to live.

Lucille McEwen, president and CEO of Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement, is a veteran of Harlem's housing crises. While she's encouraged by the continuity of Harlem's rich cultural identity, McEwen says, "What will keep the community intact is assuring opportunities for home ownership as the beginning of community wealth." It is a fundamental way to insure that what is essential to Harlem, its creative, hard working residents, will survive and thrive.

Richard Staub is a marketing consultant and writer who focuses on issues important to the design and building community.

Viewpoint

J. Max Bond, Jr. FAIA, speaks out on New York City housing, developers' failure of nerve, and the design of housing for Harlem.

The design quality for housing in New York is awful, a fact that reflects our values and aesthetic concerns as a society. An example of what happens when Postmodernism is confused with contextualism is visible in Harlem, where several new row house developments pretend to replicate the older buildings, but introduce the wrong proportions and materials, and make a mockery of contextualism.

Much of the time, these projects are built as cheaply as possible, with inexpensive exterior materials and shoddy decorative elements, for example plastic cornices. Inside, the layouts are dismal. We can benefit from the many examples of successful contemporary housing in France, Holland, and the UK. There are also numerous good designers here, but they lack the institutional support necessary for experimentation and innovative design. Developers get locked into a formula and select architects who will repeat it for a low fee. The city has been unwilling to support experimentation and, as a consequence, housing suffers across the board. In order to maintain the basic fabric of the city, we must start demanding more of sponsors and developers.

Ultimately, budgets and terms are set by society, not by architects. And in housing, education, and healthcare, we are in crisis and failing to meet basic needs. In terms of what society demands, Harlem isn't much worse than the rest of the city, where everything is judged by how cheaply it can be done. Case in point: Trump's construction on the West Side. These are grave problems caused, in part, by the current

“There are many talented young architects of color who could design innovative housing for their own community.”

economic structure, and we won't see change until there is a shift in values.

In designing housing for Harlem, the people who are hired make false assumptions about what black people want. They assume that we want housing that recalls the past and seem to think historicist architecture carries an image of prestige. That's an incredible misunderstanding of African Americans because the Harlem community is as varied in its taste as any other community, and its artists have not shied away from innovative and visionary art and culture.

The rebuilding of Harlem could be an opportunity to design inventive contemporary buildings. Developers always use the excuse that they want to hire firms with a lot of experience, which I know many architects of color don't have. But housing isn't rocket science; it's common practice for architects to associate with production firms; and who would better understand the needs of the Harlem community and its rich diversity than the architects who live there. There are many talented young architects of color who could design innovative housing for their own community. Until racial and cultural stereotypes stop being played out, we will still not be given the opportunities we deserve, and the new buildings will neither be as good as, nor as representative of their time as are the existing buildings in Harlem.

J. Max Bond, FAIA, is a partner of the firm Davis Brody Bond.

The range of Harlem housing renovations extends from multi-unit tenement buildings to former single-family landmarked homes. These three are representative of historic buildings being put to new use. J-P Design Group: 34 West 130th Street; one of an ensemble of landmarked three-story brick row houses called Astor Row, dating from the 1880s. The facade has been restored and interiors converted to offer three units (top). Larsen Shein Ginsberg Snyder: 308 West 151st Street; one of a group of six tenement buildings renovated in two phases and offering 18 units as well as community and laundry rooms (center). Danois Architects: Mount Morris Park West Condominium; a row of landmarked, late nineteenth-century brownstones that were all but completely gutted during the 1980s, then reclaimed in 2003 with restored facades and 49 new condo units (bottom).



J-P DESIGN GROUP



LARSEN SHEIN GINSBERG SNYDER



DANOIS ARCHITECTS

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CULTURED STONE®



It's more than just good design skills that get the firm hired, contends TEK (Thanhauser + Esterson + Kapell) Architects. TEK has made a name for itself with work for non-profits; but only "a fraction of this work is design," says Jack Esterson, AIA (who runs the 20-person firm with fellow principals Charles Thanhauser, AIA, and Marty Kapell, AIA). Much of the work is building and maintaining relationships with the clients, as well as the agencies and organizations that trigger and run the projects. Here are two renovations and one ground-up building that show a range of the design and budgetary hurdles presented by this type of work – as well as the rewards.

Coalition for the Homeless/Coalition Houses

Coalition Houses is a restoration (and joining) of three contiguous Upper West Side brownstones, totaling some 16,000 square feet. The client is Coalition for the Homeless; the project manager is Dan Iacovella of Community Revival, based in Norwalk, Connecticut. Some of the funding for the project came from the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development, and some from state historic tax credits, so the renovation must remain true to the buildings' Renaissance Revival heritage. TEK worked closely with the historic preservation consulting firm Higgins and Quasebarth. They renovated the façades of the landmark brownstones in accordance with the New York City Landmarks Law. But it went even further, restoring and at times replacing the original interior woodwork, an effort that ate up a large part of the project budget. In addition, the building's entrance was made ADA compliant and the vertical circulation was reconfig-

ured to make the three buildings work together. Each of the 40 units needed identical amenities – and installing cabinetry and fixtures for 40 kitchens and bathrooms on a tight budget called for no small level of creativity, especially in its attention to details and finishes.

To complicate matters, the buildings were already occupied, making full building surveys difficult. And while the tenants were the same people who would benefit from the project – the formerly homeless – some were skeptical about being allowed to move back in. "There was a huge trust issue," notes Esterson. The project was done in three phases, one for each building. During each phase, tenants were relocated from one of the three buildings to another and then eventually moved back in, but for "each phase, two to four people refused to leave," comments Esterson. Six years later, the project is almost ready to open.

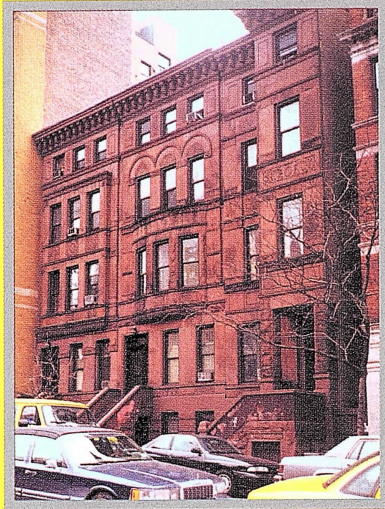
Edwin Gould Residence

When complete, this five-story building on 110th Street between Madison and Park Avenues will overlook the north end of Central Park. The 40,000-square-foot project is being built for the Edwin Gould Foundation (and managed by New York City-based Housing Services Inc.) to house and support young adults on their way out of foster care. It provides 52 residential units – studios and one bedrooms – along with ground-floor facilities for healthcare and counseling. TEK's intention was to design spaces that integrate the clinical services with the residential units, without creating an institutional atmosphere. "We wanted it to feel like a regular apartment building,"

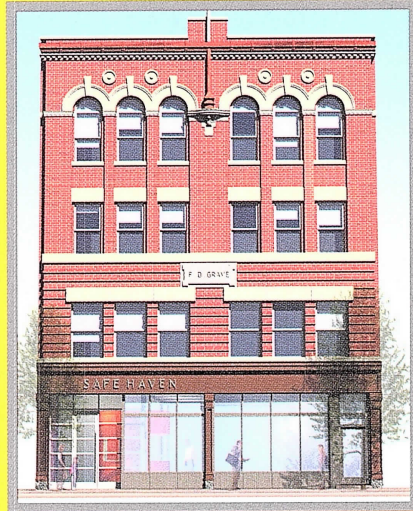
By Sara Moss

Non-Profit

Three new projects challenge – and reward – TEK Architects



BRIAN ROSE



TEK ARCHITECTS

Edwin Gould Residence, East 110th Street (opposite)
Coalition for the Homeless Coalition Houses, Upper
West Side (far left). Liberty Community Services' Safe
Haven Residence, New Haven, Connecticut (left).

Esterson points out.

"The client has been wonderful," he continues, adding, "The biggest challenge is budget." A large part of that small budget, it was decided, would go to the front elevation on 110th Street. The team wanted to provide a distinctive façade to the redeveloping East Harlem community and daylight to the tenants within. Further amenities include parking and an outdoor garden behind the building. Construction begins early in 2004.

Liberty Community Services/Safe Haven Residence

New Haven-based Liberty Community Services, which provides supportive housing and outreach programs to people with AIDS and HIV, bought a former cigar factory, a nineteenth-century four-story high loft building in New Haven's Ninth Square, a district currently being redeveloped. The project, also managed by Iacovella, is for formerly homeless people who either have AIDS or are HIV positive. The 28,000-square-foot project has 33 residential units, and about one third of the building is dedicated to support services. Because of the tenants' needs, "the ratio of support space is very high," Esterson explains.

While the renovation was a complete one, elements of the building's past were saved, including timber beams and pine flooring. "The building has great bones," says Esterson, "But you have to have code compliance." All new systems were put in, as well as staircases. Even though the budget was higher than in most other non-profit projects, there were other difficulties. Esterson found Connecticut to be less

friendly to this type of project than New York, where many of the services are already in place: "While publicly funded projects in New York take time, Safe Haven took five years to get into the construction phase. There were a lot of hurdles to overcome and quite a bit of state and local politics involved." He cites the "tenacity of the client" as a major force in making the project happen.

While these three projects add to TEK's list of non-profit work, Esterson is quick to point out that the firm doesn't specialize. It is the mix of work – commercial, private residential, and institutional – that enables the firm's commitment to the non-profit sector. More lucrative projects support the housing, which, if they take a long time to build, may even cause the firm to lose money. And working on a high-budget small project can provide the psychic relief from the battle of having to design within tight (and fixed) parameters.

It is the non-profit projects, however, that give the firm a singular gift – the clients' joy. "It's not about having to convince people," Esterson claims, "it's more a matter of revealing to people what they can have." And being there to witness that moment, when the client sees the completed building, is this work's great reward. "They walk in," says Esterson, "and they can't believe that they are entitled to this."

Sara Moss, a former assistant editor at *Architecture* magazine, studied at Columbia University where she earned a master's degree in architecture. She lives in New York and works on the Fulton Street Transit Center.

Lessons

ABold First Step

A design competition sponsored by Common Ground and the Architectural League leads to intriguing solutions for much-maligned but much-needed SROs. By Thomas D. Sullivan

Thirty-three square feet is not a very big space to stand in, much less to live in. Sixty-six feet is a lot better, a fact made evident by the designers for the First Step Housing Competition exhibit last November and December. Within a once glorious but now faded ballroom of the Prince George, a midtown residence Common Ground Community manages, Irene Cheng, Jolie Kerns, and Brett Snyder, all recent graduates of the Columbia School of Architecture, constructed exhibit spaces the size of dwellings: from a monastic cell in France, a college dorm room, and a budget hotel room, to a one-bedroom apartment in New York City, and a suburban house – with the footprints marked on the floor in red paint.

Thirty-three square feet is not a very big space to stand in, much less to live in

The exhibit displayed the responses of 180 entrants from 13 countries to an unusual program: design a 66-square-foot individualized dwelling unit, including a lay-

out, for a typical floor of The Andrews, a building on the Bowery where Common Ground Community housing group plans to revive the lodging house model for short-term residency.

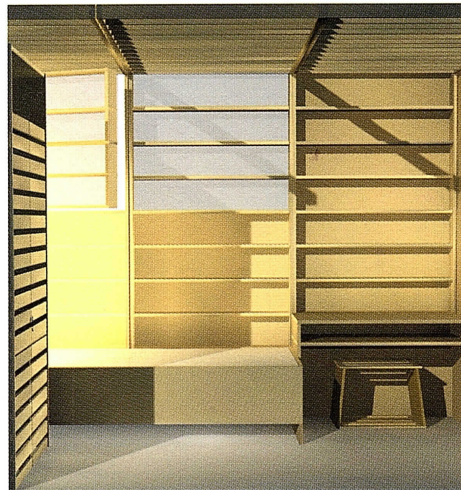
Several of the winning designs address the psychological dimensions of the homeless lifestyle

Common Ground joined with the Architectural League to organize the competition. The design jury included: Michael Bell; Julie Eizenberg, RA; Andrew Freear; Rosanne Haggerty; Steven Holl, AIA; and Toshiko Mori, AIA. Tate (his first and last name), a Common Ground Fellow, was the competition coordinator.

The winners received \$2,000 and will develop their designs for use in The Andrews. Rosanne Haggerty, president and founder of Common Ground, hopes to reinvigorate the lodging house model, noting that good design is “an important dimension” of such projects’ success. The homeless are often unwilling to go into shelters – sometimes because they want to remain anonymous. Several of the winning designs address this psychological dimension of the homeless lifestyle.



DAVID GWINN/BASIL LEE/TOM MCMAHON



DANIELA FABRICIUS

“Nesting” by David Gwinn, Basil Lee, and Tom McMahon of Harvard Graduate School of Design, is intended to be “unintrusive, like a piece of furniture.” It is a set of modular elements made of four different materials, including birch plywood and colored Lucite. The team considers their project one that’s easy to unload off a truck and easy to install – an approach that could be applied to other temporary living solutions (above left). **“Cocoon”** by Daniela Fabricius of Brooklyn aims to create a sense of security. The limitations of the standards, she says, drew her to consider “positive models of isolation and seclusion,” which brought up the image of the cocoon. Part of the design brief is that units do not share walls – a realistic approach, Fabricius says, when there’s “a lot of hurt in close proximity” and residents “need their own space” (above right).



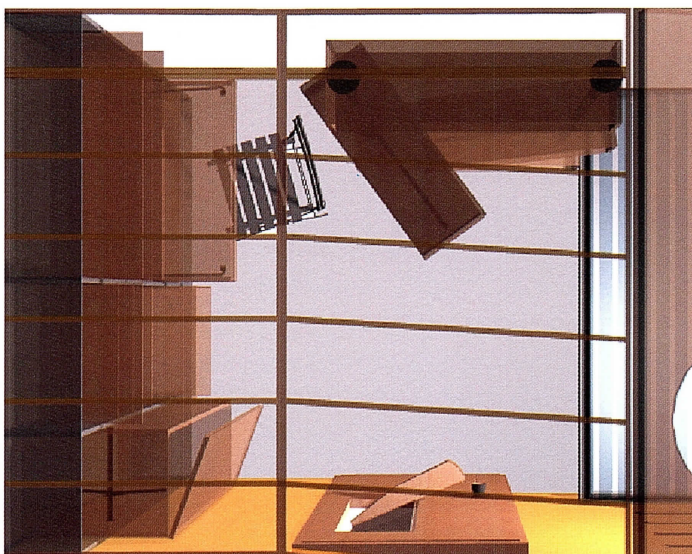
KATHERINE CHANG/AARON GABRIEL



FORSYTHE + MACALLEN DESIGN

“Soft Home” by Vancouver-based Stephanie Forsythe and Todd MacAllen of Forsythe + MacAllen Design, is perhaps the most mysterious winner. It uses a soft, translucent material to admit light and provide a sense of security, comfort, and privacy. The designers’ choice of a soft material is counterintuitive, but Forsythe points out, “Things can be flexible, durable, and resilient” (above).

“Ordering of Things” by Katherine Chang and Aaron Gabriel of New York came out of studying the habits of transient men who often have collections of things. The architects focused on “the pleasure of the ritual of ordering things.” At first, Chang says, she and Gabriel were struck by the unit size restriction. They realized that the residents’ collections of various kinds would require storage, and designed units to “go up easily, quickly, cheaply” (above). **“Kit of Parts”** by the New York-based LifeForm team of Rafi Elbaz, Nanna Wulfling, and Julia Tate is a dwelling-in-a-box model. This competition, Elbaz says, “sharpened our research,” and led his team to think of broader applications. The ultimate result, he says, would be developing “plug-and-play” kinds of prefabricated building types (right).



LIFEFORM

Raising the Bar in Affordable Housing

Louise Braverman, Architect, Murphy Burnham & Buttrick Architects, and Amie Gross Architects challenge the axiom that bad design is acceptable in affordable housing. *By Linda G. Miller*

The three projects presented here, though very different in scope, do have a common thread. Each architect recognizes the need to build bright, tranquil, secure housing incorporating good design for low income residents and to create a community that is an integral part of the neighborhood and the city. As with most not-for-profit sponsored projects, the prep work is usually more extensive and the remuneration significantly less than market-rate projects. The mandate to meet codes and budgets and still go the extra design mile is both a challenge and a reward.

Louise Braverman, Architect - Chelsea Court

When Louise Braverman, AIA, saw a glass bowl from Jenny Holzer's Survival Series at the Whitney Museum store, she had to have it. The words etched in the bowl, "Use what is dominant in a culture to change it quickly," seemed to capture her own thoughts about the process of designing Chelsea Court.

At first glance, Chelsea Court could be mistaken for an art gallery, a store, or an office – its street front fits in so seamlessly with other buildings in Chelsea. But neighbors remember when 105 West 17th Street, formerly an SRO/crack house, was in such a state of disrepair that they forced the city to condemn it in 1994. The circa 1900 building was subsequently rescued and rehabilitated by Palladia, Inc, one of New York's largest not-for-profit social service agencies.

Palladia purchased the building for \$1 from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and in 2001 commenced a complete renovation, including new structural and mechanical systems, under Braverman's direction. The entire project cost \$2 million, funded by HPD's Supportive Housing Loan Program in concert with Federal Low Income Housing tax credits syndicated by the Enterprise Foundation.

Braverman, a solo practitioner, made her mark by designing video installations in Grand Central Terminal. She also works on private residential projects. For Chelsea Court, her job was to gut, restore, and redesign the dilapidated three-part building into a living space for

people on the low end of the economic ladder.

Eighteen permanent rent paying tenants, many of them formerly from the ranks of the homeless, now live in studio apartments and share communal spaces. Rent is fixed at \$563 per month with an annual income ceiling of \$26,400.

In addition to a front office, the building contains common indoor and outdoor spaces. Tranquil blues, greens, and yellows bathe an interior accented by foam Piero Lissoni lounge chairs and Philippe Starck plastic "Bubble Club" couches. The project is so highly styled it was featured in the *New York Times* House & Home Section (Currents: "A Building and Its Residents, No Longer Down on Their Luck," Elaine Louie, May 8, 2003).

Last June, Chelsea Court received the 2003 AIA New York State Design Award of Merit. According to Braverman, "Good design is for everyone, no matter what their means."

Client: Palladia, Inc.

General Contractor: P&P Contracting Corp

Structural Engineering: Goldreich Engineering, P.C.

Consulting Engineers: Kallen & Lemelson

Code Consultant: Design 2147, Ltd.

Photomural Artist: Ana Marton

Murphy Burnham & Buttrick Architects - Habitat NYC East 150th Street

"Unlike cities in Europe, we've never used housing to enhance our city," says Jeffrey A. Murphy, AIA, partner-in-charge of Murphy Burnham & Buttrick Architects' project for Habitat for Humanity – New York City in the South Bronx. The six-year-old firm, which has an extensive institutional, commercial, and residential portfolio, was intent on breaking the mold when it designed 13 single-family three-story row houses. In a former vacant lot located in an area formerly synonymous with urban blight, a tight-knit community of homeowners is taking root.

New affordable housing has filled many a vacant lot in the South Bronx, but Murphy was determined to "raise the bar" and focus on the amenities that can make a three-bedroom house a special home



SCOT FRANCES

– oversized windows, a skylit stairway, open kitchen with a garden view, a window seat that faces a neighborhood park – giving the space a loft-like feel.

To further a sense of community security, oversized front stoops have built-in seating perfect for socializing. The fenced front yards are raised 18 inches higher than the sidewalk – giving notice that this is a private property and also preventing them from being used for parking.

Habitat NYC bought the 13 lots on East 150th Street, bounded by Tinton and Union Avenues, from the HPD for \$1 per lot and financed the \$2 million project. “Partner families” donate supervised “sweat equity” in lieu of a financial down payment. The new owners, who already lived in the neighborhood, agreed to 600 hours of labor at the site. In return, Habitat NYC has provided them with 30-year, interest-free \$135,000 mortgages. Another stipulation is that each new homeowner’s household income be between 55 and 80 percent of the area median – or \$52,000 for a family of four.

“Despite a bare-bones budget, we designed an affordable housing unit that anyone in our office would be excited to live in,” says Murphy. However, there was one line item that was cut for budgetary reasons that the firm was not willing to forgo – planters for each front yard. Some sunny day in March, project manager Adam Campagna and the entire 20-person MBB staff will be on site to build and install 13 planters in time for spring sowing.

Project: Habitat NYC East 150th Street

Client: Habitat for Humanity - New York City

Contractor: Maskow Masonry

Consulting Structural Engineer: Dunne & Markis

Mechanical Engineer: D’Antonio Consulting Engineers

Amie Gross Architects - Genesis Neighborhood Plaza

Affordable housing projects are the life-blood of Amie Gross Architects, a firm that specializes in socially responsible projects and working in neighborhoods that are on the verge of recovery, and according to Amie Gross, AIA, it’s “a way to practice my politics.” For the firm to thrive, AGA broadened its areas of expertise and has designed recreational facilities, offices, and stores, including the prototype for Circuit City. These commercial projects also prepped the firm for master planning and designing Genesis Neighborhood Plaza in the East New York section of Brooklyn, a major, four-phased work-in-progress.

The project’s sponsor, HELP USA, founded in 1986 by Andrew Cuomo, is one of the country’s largest non-profit builder, developer, and operator of transitional housing. Phase 1 of the 135,000-square-foot development, which opened in 2001 at 360 Snediker Avenue, contains 52 apartments, job- and computer-training centers, and a health clinic. This first phase cost \$10.2 million, with approximately \$7 million funded by the Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program and more than \$3 million from a New York City tax incentive program. Subsequent phases two through four will contain an additional 69 housing units, offices, community related facilities including a day care center, 8,000 square feet of retail frontage, recreational facilities, supermarket, and a corner restaurant. “Housing alone



MURPHY BURNHAM & BUTTRICK ARCHITECTS



AMIE GROSS ARCHITECTS

doesn’t create a neighborhood,” Gross says.

Designed with families in mind, the majority of apartments have two bedrooms. Every apartment in this fully wired building, including the studios and one-bedrooms, has a separate homework area, complete with donated computers. Genesis Neighborhood Plaza even has its own “Garden of Eden” – a back yard with a grove of trees, a fountain, and a basketball court.

The complex’s “entry box” perhaps makes the boldest statement on the impact Genesis has already made. In an area that once had the highest murder rate in the city, the entry way is fronted with double height glass and not a single barred window faces the street.

Client: HELP USA

Builder: Newtown Construction and Development Co.

Landscape Architect: Office of William B. Kuhl

Structural Engineer: Severud Associates

Systems Engineer: Liliker Associates

Linda G. Miller is a freelance writer. She most recently served as director of communications at the Municipal Art Society.

Opposite: Louise Braverman, Architect: Chelsea Court, Manhattan. Top: Murphy Burnham & Buttrick Architects: Habitat NYC East 150th Street, South Bronx. Above: Amie Gross Architects: Genesis Neighborhood Plaza, East New York, Brooklyn.

Adaptive reuse, new construction, and environmental standards revitalize an historic seaport block designed by Cook + Fox Architects. By Kristen Richards

Now that the temporary PATH station and a free shuttle-bus around Lower Manhattan are in operation, living a few blocks from the South Street Seaport is no longer like living in a transportation vacuum. And now underway is the Historic Front Street project. New York City's Economic Development Corporation solicited bids for 11 early-19th-century brick warehouses and three vacant lots lining both sides of a block on Front Street and the southern edge of Peck Slip in the South Street Seaport historic district.

Yarrow LLC, a group comprising Zuberry Associates and Sciamé Development Inc., won the bid with a proposal designed by Cook + Fox Architects, LLP that passed through the approval process – including review by the Landmarks Preservation Commission – in just a few months. The 148,000-square-foot undertaking includes approximately 81,000 square feet of renovation work, with the balance in new construction. When completed in 2005, there will be 96 single-floor and duplex apartments, from studios to three-bed-rooms. An eclectic collection of small-scale independent shops will animate the street level of both new and old structures.

One of the most striking aspects of the project is the environmental technology being applied. Ten geothermal wells will provide heating and cooling and reduce electrical consumption by roughly a third for the entire project. Instead of unsightly compressors, there will be a 10,000-watt photovoltaic system on some rooftops that will supply electricity to public areas. Fabricated with silicon recycled from discarded computer hardware, the photovoltaic cells are laminated to standing seam metal roofing on new penthouse apartments. Elsewhere, planted “green roofs” will protect the roofing membrane, reduce heat islands and storm water runoff, and improve air quality.

So much for the facts. It is the spirit of the project that is most compelling. The buildings have been through many incarnations since the days when New York's seaport was an important commerce center for the city. (Edith Wharton's family owned one of the buildings, and some say Herman

Melville placed Ishmael on this very street in *Moby Dick*.) They were “in a romantic state of collapse,” as described by Richard Cook, AIA. “Actually, they were in horrific condition.”

For Cook, a major challenge was not to over-restore: “We did not want to lose that sense of history – showing layers of time.” He portrays the project in epic literary terms. “As *Moby Dick* is incredibly episodic, tied together by a common narrative, so too is the architecture – modern and historic – each delves into its own ‘episode’ on the street wall that ultimately come together in a common architectural dialogue that tells a larger story.”

Funding is being provided by a combination of preservation tax credits from the State Historic Preservation Office, energy rebates from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, and \$48 million in Liberty Bonds issued by the federal government to promote the revival of downtown Manhattan. The Liberty Bond funding came under some fire because only about five percent of the apartments have been allocated to affordable housing – and their cost (averaging over \$1,700 per month) will still put them out of reach of a typical low-income household.

But all in all, the project is a model of public/private development that combines adaptive reuse, new construction, and environmental standards that can – and should be – applied to historic districts everywhere.

Client: Yarrow LLC

Architect: Cook + Fox Architects, LLP (formerly Richard Cook & Associates, Architects)

Structural Engineer: Robert Silman Associates, P.C.

Mechanical Engineer: Laszlo Bodak Engineer, P.C.

Energy Design Consultants: NYSERDA; DMJM + Harris; Steven Winter Associates, Inc.; Water Energy Distributors, Inc.

Historic Preservation Consultants: Higgins & Quasebarth; Mary B. Dierickx Architectural Preservation Consultants

Elevator Consultant: D.T.M. Inc.



COOK + FOX ARCHITECTS



DEBIO STUDIO

Tax Revolt

V Studio/Walker Group delivers conventional services in unconventional ways in the conversion of a former IRS headquarters. By Roger Yee

You could easily pass 50 Murray Street in Manhattan's Tribeca neighborhood without looking twice – until V Studio/Walker Group converted the former New York headquarters of the Internal Revenue Service to a 389-unit, 22-story apartment house. Of course, the nondescript, mid-1960s building had its virtues – an historic neighborhood, height, abundant glass, and panoramic views. Yet these features alone would not have attracted New Yorkers to live just two blocks from Ground Zero, nor would they inspire the pleasure and sense of community that residents now derive from their new home.

50 Murray Street is more than another pricey filing cabinet in the sky. V Studio/Walker Group decided to give new life to an archetype that had become formulaic and sterile. They were supported by a farsighted client who wanted a distinctive property. "We asked what should happen when you turn a federal office building into a private residence," recalls Jay Valgora, design principal of Walker Group and founder of V Studio, a subsidiary launched to pursue projects that are out of the ordinary.

The building's deep floor plate allows for loft-like apartments that accommodate spacious offices and studios. But it is at street level that the building makes its transformation known. "The design plays with notions of 'public' and 'private,' in keeping with the character of a downtown club or restaurant," Valgora says. The façade of folded glass with frosted bands and a series of overlapping spaces create shifting perspectives: "Is the street revealed as theater, or is the lobby on display to the street?" Valgora muses.

The lobby is a series of rooms-within-rooms where private seating areas open into larger public spaces. The concierge desk is a glowing, low-slung prism of backlit acrylic. Beside it stands a glowing, clock-like, glass-sheathed tower whose LEDs change color during the day.

The lobby's most striking feature is the mailroom along the sidewalk wall. It is a shimmering glass cube with a bank of mailboxes along the window wall backed with light-diffusing acrylic panels that, from the street, creates a constantly changing display of light and shadow from the activities of postal carriers and residents (the radical design required approval from the U.S. Postal Service). The mailroom has become a popular gathering spot, complete with a suspended industrial wire bin that Valgora calls "an altar to junk mail where resi-

dents can 'circular file' their unsolicited mail – with style." A 3,500-square-foot roof deck is an "outdoor room" that mirrors the lobby design.

Concerned about the downtown housing market after 9/11, when 50 Murray Street was 40 percent completed, WorldWide Holdings and V Studio decided to proceed, convinced that the unique design and rent subsidies offered through the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation would sustain their project. Smart move: the apartments are fully leased.

Client: Lionshead 110 Development, LLC, c/o
WorldWide Holdings, New York, NY

Design Architect: V Studio/Walker Group

Architect-of-Record: Meltzer Mandl Architects PC

Lighting Design Consultant: Dusti Helms

General Contractor: Marson Contracting

Roger Yee is an editor of books on architecture and interior design for Visual Reference Publications and a consultant to organizations in the design community.



PAUL WARCHOL

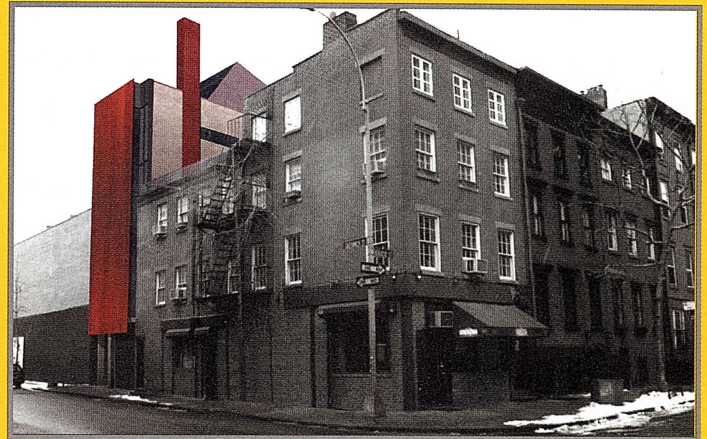
At the intersection of two historic Lower Manhattan districts – one commercial, the other residential – a 17-ton steel plate makes the new façade of a finely detailed townhouse designed by Matthew Baird Design. By Roger Yee

A partially demolished Lower Manhattan butcher shop stands where a handsome, 4,700-square-foot, four-story, four-bedroom contemporary house is about to emerge. Dilapidated as the shop is, it's a fitting harbinger for 829 Greenwich Street, designed by Matthew Baird Design to straddle the Greenwich Village Historic District and Gansevoort Meat Market. The residence will acknowledge the site's gritty, commercial heritage and changing prospects with its distinctive front façade: a 40x14-foot-by-1.5 inch, 17-ton Corten steel plate.

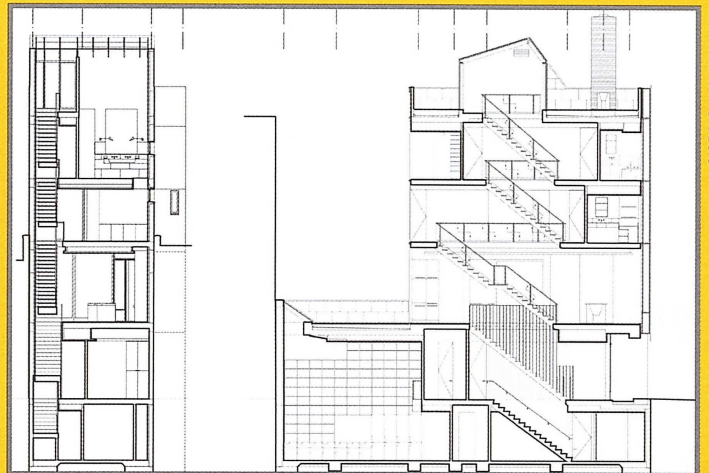
For all its heft, the plate won't dominate the house. In fact, 829 Greenwich should be exceptionally airy, open, and spacious enough to shelter a couple and their two young children in comfort and privacy. The project's intricate form is the result of an urban design by principal Matthew Baird, who served as project architect of the American Museum of Folk Art for Tod Williams Billie Tsien and Associates, and the young staff of the firm he founded in 1999.

The façade recalls Baird's work on the Folk Art museum. Winning approval from the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Greenwich Village Historical Society, and local community board has been another matter, for which Baird enlisted Elyse Quasebarth, an historic preservation consultant. To his surprise, the project has met with little opposition. The robust, industrial-style façade and the residential scale struck reviewers as appropriate symbols of the neighborhoods that converge at the site.

What the inhabitants of the building will experience most, of course, is the refined interior, where space flows unimpeded; daylight and views penetrate the east façade's floor-to-ceiling windows, rooftop and first floor skylights, and open stairwell. Crisply detailed suspended ceilings, finished walls, and smooth wood floors float past each other. The straightforward stacking plan includes a cellar garage and home office, first floor living room, kitchen, and dining room, second floor children's bedrooms, bath, and library, and third floor master bedroom, master bath, and guest bedroom. Where is the steel plate in this picture? Windows lining its vertical edges make its drywall finish appear as detached and weightless as 17 tons of anything can be.



829 Greenwich Street straddles the historic Greenwich Village and Gansevoort Meat Market districts (above). Sections (below).



Architect/Interior Designer: Matthew Baird Design, LLC

Structural Engineer: Severud Associates

Mechanical/Electrical Engineer: Mottola Rini Engineers, P.C.

General Contractor: Alcon Builders Group

Lighting Designer: Renfro Design Group, Inc.

Raising the Iron Curtain

Sun and Shadows

House of

The brilliant subtropical sun and warm glow of nightlife in Okinawa's capital are eloquently captured by a Naha City Gallery and Apartment House designed by 1100 Architect. By Roger Yee

It was only in 1972 that Japan's Okinawa prefecture was established, following 27 years of control by the United States over Okinawa and the Ryuku Islands. Today, Okinawa is reestablishing its own identity and Naha, its capital city, is witnessing the development of its metropolitan region, including such neighborhoods as Naha City, site of a new Gallery and Apartment House designed by 1100 Architect. The four-story, 6,265-square-foot reinforced concrete structure located close to the town center is the kind of construction this community may expect in coming years.

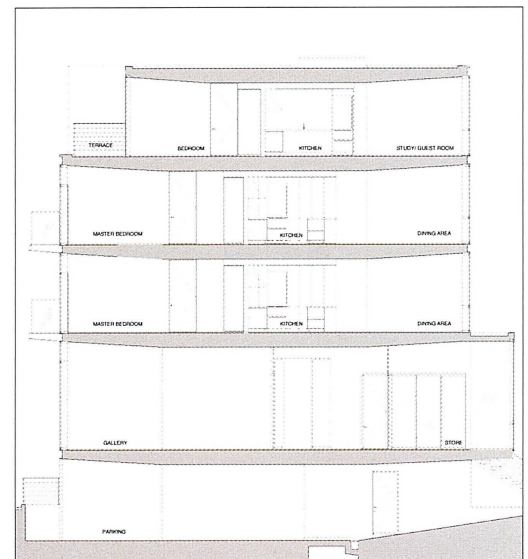
Not only does the design respect Naha City's strict zoning – a concept foreign to much of Japan – it offers creativity despite such controls as FAR [floor area ratio], set-backs, and height limits. When an art dealer asked 1100 Architect to accommodate her art gallery and retail store plus three short-term rental apartments on a compact lot, she sought something different from the vernacular construction of stucco, clay tile, and peaked roofs. The design team has exploited the high quality of Okinawan concrete work to create a finely detailed composition that draws in daylight and views through its lens-like north and south façades of glass and metal, and screens out the sidewalls that future neighbors will erect along its monolithic concrete east and west façades.

Efficient as the building is – Juergen Riehm, AIA, a principal of 1100 Architect, notes that, “Our as-of-right design maxes out the FAR” – it is also remarkably open and airy. This is because the floor spans need no columns; the north and south curtain walls are entirely glazed with transparent, translucent, and opaque glass; the east and west bearing walls are pierced by small, deep openings; required parking is concealed below grade; and all infrastructure is concealed, unlike typical Japanese practice.

From the rear of the refined interiors of concrete and plaster walls, concrete ceilings, wood floors, and stainless steel kitchens, the building offers views of the new municipal park.



MASAHARU SHINJO'S PHOTO STUDIO



1100 ARCHITECT

Three full-floor apartments sit atop the first floor gallery (right). Section (far right).

Client: Yoko Higa, President, YS Shouji

Design Architect: 1100 Architect

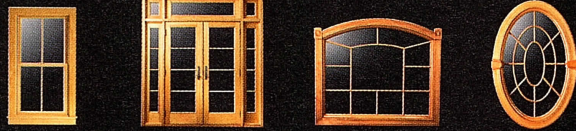
Architect-of-Record: Masaharu China, Easel Architects Engineers

MEP Engineer: American Engineering Corp.

General Contractor: Katsuko Tokuchi, Taishin Kensetsu



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Outside View

Found "landscapes"
become new urban
design tools

By Steven Litt,
The Plain Dealer, Cleveland

As a graduate student in New York in the late 1970s, I lived in a loft in TriBeCa on the far west side of lower Manhattan. One of the neighborhood's best amenities was an elevated section of the defunct West Side Highway, long since demolished. It was a graffiti-covered park in the sky, a magical carpet that floated above the streets below, with fantastic views of the Hudson River, the Twin Towers, and the 90 acres of sand that would soon become Battery Park City.

Every city needs such places, though, of course, they should be beautifully designed as parts of the public realm, not simply abandoned and left to rot. Everyone needs access to big views and a sense of connection to the larger landscape around a city.

Over the past two years, most of the press coverage about architecture and planning in New York has focused on the redevelopment of Ground Zero. Equally worthy of attention are dozens of projects throughout the metropolitan region aimed at creating new parks, reclaiming forbidden waterfronts, opening up big vistas, and making New York and environs more livable.

These efforts capitalize on federal regulations that have made the air and water cleaner, and on the decline of traditional heavy industry. They all fall under a heading that might be called landscape urbanism, an emerging polyglot discipline that can touch on everything from brownfield reclamation to historic preservation.

Examples of this trend around the country include Houston's new plan to reclaim 10 miles of the Buffalo Bayou, which runs past the city's downtown, or Cleveland's evolving plans to build a regional trail system along the Cuyahoga River. Such projects have enormous potential to improve city life and trigger renewal.



ALEX MACLEAN



BETSEY PINOVER SCHIFF

In the New York metropolitan region, I've been inspired by James Corner's and Stanley Allen's proposal to turn the Fresh Kills landfill into a park, and by the business executives, activists, and mayors who recently announced plans to turn the Hackensack Meadowlands into a vast greenspace 10 times the size of Central Park.

I haven't yet seen in person landscape architect Thomas Balsley's Gantry Plaza State Park in Long Island City. It has fantastical industrial archaeology in the form of two giant steel cranes, spectacular views of the East River, and generous greenery.

On the Hudson River in Beacon, 90 minutes north of Manhattan by train, Canadian architect John Patkau [along with Gruzen Samton Architects and landscape architect Reed Hilderbrand Associates] is developing plans for an ecologically-friendly hotel that will stand in a parklike setting open to the public. Developer Ned Foss of Albany wants the architecturally ambitious hotel set back from the water's edge amid generous promenades, with boat docks and ramps where kayakers and canoeists can launch their vessels.

Such projects show that New York and surrounding communities are finding new ways to reconnect to the water and rekindle connections to the common regional landscape. Parks and waterfronts aren't frills; they're vital to the survival of the city. In pursuing them with vigor, New York is setting a hugely positive example for other cities to follow.

Steven Litt is the Architecture Critic of *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland, Ohio.

Above: Thomas Balsley Associates: Gantry Plaza State Park, Long Island City. Left: James Corner and Stanley Field Operations: Fresh Kills Park proposal, Staten Island.

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40-Year Watch

Bridge Apartments by
Brown & Guenther
By Fred Bernstein



WILL HEALEY

In 1963, my parents decided that a one-bedroom “garden apartment” in Queens wasn’t suitable for a family of four. They were considering buying a house in Nassau County, but first they wanted to check out the Bridge Apartments – four new towers that had recently been built just east of the George Washington Bridge (above the section of Route 95 dubbed the Trans-Manhattan Expressway).

I was seven at the time, and I remember being dazzled by the sleek, aluminum faced buildings, which resembled the Girder & Panel building sets I loved to play with. To my mother, who had grown up in a Bronx tenement, and my father, the child of the Williamsburg “projects,” the shiny new buildings by Brown & Guenther were luxury housing. According to a Washington Heights “nostalgia website,” when the buildings opened, there was a waiting list to get in.

It’s a good thing my parents chose Long Island. The Bridge Apartments weren’t luxury housing for long. As Robert A.M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman wrote in *New York* 1960:

“The project’s four 32-story aluminum-clad north-south slabs, housing 960 families, were not only banal but were subject to appalling environmental conditions: noxious fumes from the traffic below rose from the highway that separated the pairs of slabs, rendering the balconies useless and the apartments almost uninhabitable.”

These days, banal would be a blessing. The façades’ aluminum

panels have tarnished, and the painted sections are peeling. Inside, the depressing lobbies are dominated by bulletproof guard booths. Riding one of the elevators, I asked a young man how he felt about his home. “It’s ironic that you’re asking that,” he said. “I was just thinking what a shithole this is.” Arriving at the 27th floor, he kicked open the door to a stairwell so I could smell the stench of urine. His family’s apartment, which he let me see, felt claustrophobic (thanks to the less than eight-foot ceiling). Lace curtains obscured the view (mostly Route 95 and the adjacent building) – a futile attempt to create a homey feeling under inhospitable conditions. The sound of traffic didn’t let up.

In the *AIA Guide to New York City*, Norval White and Elliot Willensky dismiss the Bridge Apartments in six words: “The buildings’ curtain walls are fussy.” Perhaps, but that’s the least offensive thing about them. What the Bridge Apartments prove, once and for all, is that highways and housing don’t mix.

Fred Bernstein, an *Oculus* contributing editor, studied architecture at Princeton University, and has written about design for more than 15 years; he also contributes to the *New York Times*, *Metropolitan Home*, and *Blueprint*.

Bridge Apartments: Brown & Guenther (1963), Washington Heights



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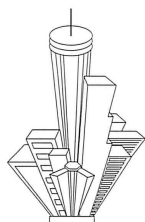
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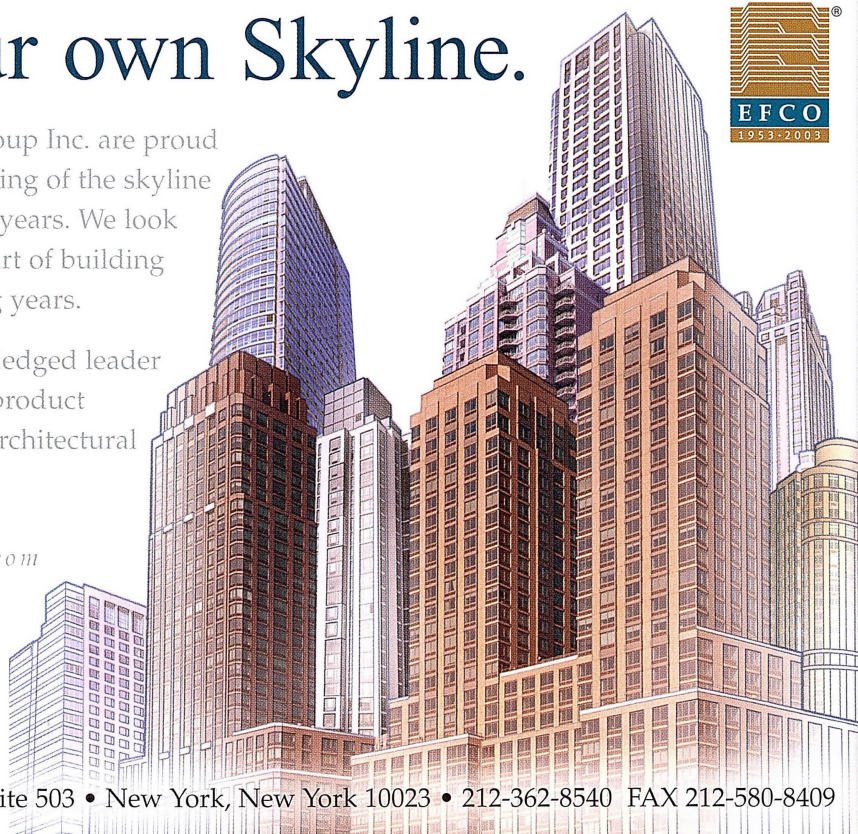
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Affordable Housing: An Option for Professional Practice?

Good Practices

By Michael Pyatok, FAIA

“Affordable housing design” is a catch-all phrase that encompasses a wide range of professional activities that could include anything from concocting economic development strategies in low-income communities, to helping to organize protests against absentee slumlords, to facilitating large community meetings, to helping communities envision alternative future uses for valuable sites fancied by marauding big-box retailers or developers, to pressing elected politicians to take more seriously the housing needs of lower income communities. And yes, last but not least, is the strenuous effort to design the most extraordinary places in which people can live, in spite of the budgets that may prevent that from happening. To pursue this niche is a challenge. None of the above, when taken alone or together, makes for a profit-making enterprise.

The mission statement for Pyatok Architects, Inc. states its commitment to designing durable, attractive, affordable housing for lower income communities, which also fosters smart growth through high-density, mixed-use development within inner cities and suburbs.

Our work stretches across this spectrum of activities. But accomplishing all of this while running an office as a business is not always easy. Even without this partial list of “meta”-activities mentioned above, the core of architectural services we engage in to produce well-designed affordable housing nearly always requires an amount of labor that far exceeds the available fees. As our firm grew in size to 25 people, with offices in Oakland and Seattle, staffed more and more by people under 40 facing skyrocketing costs of living, financial sacrifice could not be expected of them, as it had of the founder and original staff, who bought into these regions at earlier prices.

To face this reality we hired a management consultant specializing in A/E firms. He told us that, while he admired our work and

products, of the 400 or so firms he advises, we were 400th on his list in terms of financial stability. We were not certain whether to puff our chests with pride and see this as a badge of honor because, last we looked, our doors were still open, or to cry because we were failing our younger staff. If “social responsibility” does not pay their rent, then we cannot be of much help to those who would be in much worse shape if we folded.

We applied the usual efficiency principles, like reducing the constant distracting political chatter in the workplace that was eroding our fees (not an easy task), and cutting down personal e-mails and web surfing during office hours. But diversification of work became the emerging solution to stabilizing income, with university housing and developer housing balancing the affordable housing. These new projects now comprise about 25 percent of the firm's income and are still growing. While they have improved the office's financial picture, they do present challenges for the culture of the office.

As the clients change, even only modestly, personal daily connection to those most in need diminishes. Conversations, values, and the focus of attention around the office shift to those clients who are not suffering in their daily survival. This reduced sense of urgency leads some of the staff to be more conventionally concerned about their personal and professional advancement, and less about a social cause much larger than themselves.

This is the next challenge: how to keep a sense of the original mission as we expand the client base. Clients serving the poor and working class communities cannot be given less attention because newer clients can pay more. Most importantly, keeping the staff connected to the daily life of the working poor, in spite of our professional cocoon, is the most challenging goal.

All architectural firms are socially engaged in one form or another. Serving those with less economic or social clout is no more deserving of praise than any other firm doing its best to improve the condition of our overall environment and the lives of the general public. Those of us who choose the former simply have to do it with fewer resources, but then again, we learn many lessons from our clients and the residents, who get by on far less than we. When put into that perspective, we have it easy.

Michael Pyatok, FAIA, received the AIA New York Chapter's 2003 Pioneer in Housing Award, and gave the Chapter's 2003 Sam Ratensky Lecture in November. He founded his firm in 1984. He is a professor of Architecture at the University of Washington in Seattle, a Buchsbaum Professor of Affordable Housing at Harvard University, and co-author of the book *Good Neighbors: Affordable Family Housing* (McGraw-Hill, 1996).



Pyatok (far right) and staff

In Print+

Starting from Zero: Reconstructing Downtown New York, by Michael Sorkin. New York: Routledge, 2003. 144 pages. \$16.95 paperback.

Michael Sorkin is not happy with what's happening at Ground Zero, viz the following excerpt: "Writing this at the beginning of March 2003, shortly after the 'final' decision about a rebuilding strategy has been announced by the authorities, I cannot help feeling that the process has been corrupted by a meagerness of vision and a vanishing and over-aestheticized sense of loss. There is something nauseating about the celebratory atmosphere that has surrounded this act of 'closure,' about the haste of it all, and about the wheeling and dealing that led up to it and continues as various parties vie for control of the site."

But it would be a serious error to confuse Sorkin's anger with negativism. In fact Sorkin, who heads the Graduate Urban Design program at City College and is principal of Michael Sorkin Studio, argues there is a solution. Leave the site alone, and distribute the commercial eggs that have always been crammed in the downtown Manhattan basket (the reviewer's metaphor, not Sorkin's) and spread them around the five boroughs. He advocates leaving the entire present site alone so it ends up rivaling and being used like such animated public venues as Rome's Piazza Navona, Mexico City's Zocalo, Khomeini Square in Isfahan, and Central Park.

The trouble is time. While Daniel Libeskind's winning scheme is being nibbled to death by turtledoves, Sorkin's plan would take too long to carry out, given the odds against consensus from clearly split constituencies. One reads in the daily press of differences among the lead architects, and what will happen if Larry Silverstein receives \$3.5 billion or \$7 billion. The only constant has been the sanctity of the

site, which Governor Pataki has declared inviolable. The memorial contest-winning design by Michael Arad and Peter Walker was announced in early January to polite applause but few cheers.

In *Starting from Zero* Sorkin mobilizes the power of his original, fertile, and iconoclastic mind. At first, he proposed a temporary structure – a huge round earthen berm to surround the site. This would serve to secure and mark the place and to preserve the site indefinitely while the developers, politicians, consultants, and citizens agreed on what to do with it.

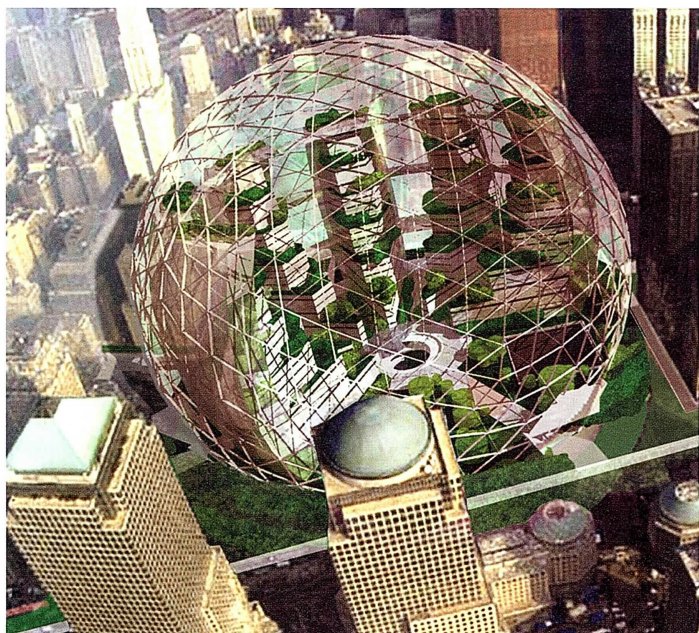
Sorkin eventually replaced the idea of the berm with a great transparent geodesic dome – a form he sees as at once "legible, evocative, and different" (see photo). He would place the memorial in a cave beneath the site of the former towers, with the walls bearing the names of the fallen (see photo). He's highly skeptical of the argument to replace the lost 10 million square feet of office space at or near their original site. Sufficient square feet are available, he argues, in other parts of Manhattan as well as the other boroughs, which if occupied would grow the kinds of citizen-friendly neighborhoods that Lewis Mumford praised and Jane Jacobs adored.

Nevertheless, it is clear that Sorkin's dispute is not so much with the results to date as with the process. He aims his howitzer at the computer-laden "Listening to the City" process used at the Javits Center to drum up ideas after the debacle of the original six schemes. Perhaps unfairly suspecting the motives and method of the Javits event managers, he says he felt as though he were a delegate at a Soviet Party Congress. Everyone was allowed to speak but no one was allowed to decide anything. Still, he does credit that celebrated event with having at least one crucial beneficial result: "Emerging from the self-congratulatory and coercive process was a genuine act of protest: the audience clearly exercised the one planning power that's left in the hands of citizens, the power to say 'no'" to all six of the submitted alternatives.

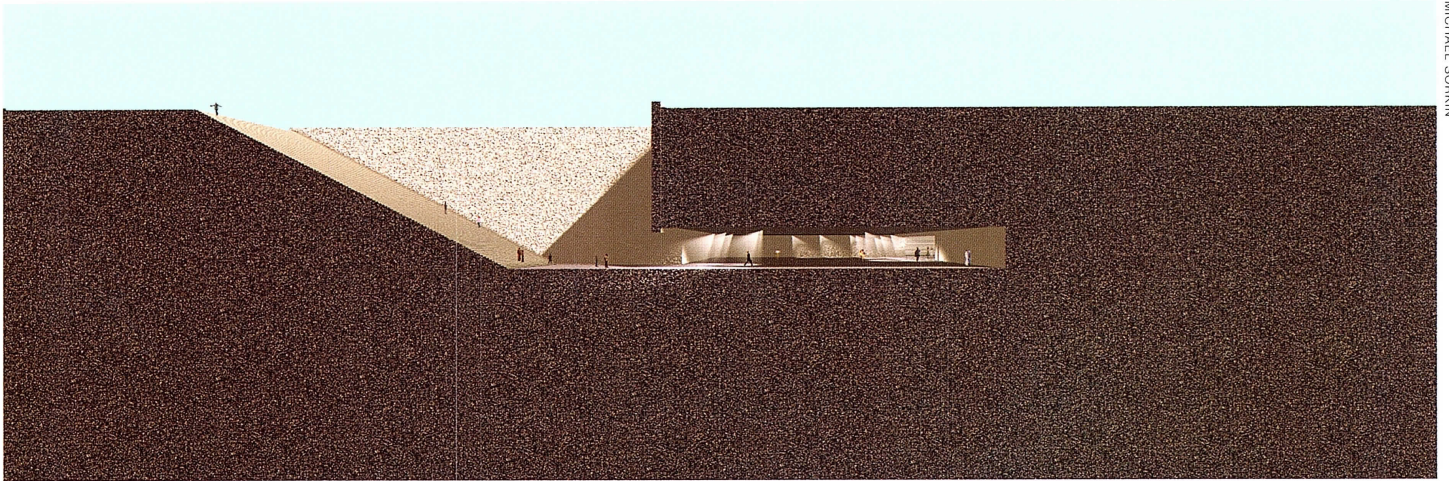
Be that as it may, Sorkin has a special affection for the coalition New York New Visions, in whose report Sorkin uncovered "a variety of sensible findings, most crucially a call to look beyond the immediate site of the towers and consider the planning of downtown Manhattan as a whole."

Sorkin began to write and assemble *Starting from Zero* before the final competition winner was chosen. The work is made up of new material, along with pieces published in 2002 in *Slate*, *Metropolis*, and *Architectural Record*. His take on the seven finalist schemes is not kind: "Predominantly strategies for locating vast amounts of office space on or near the site, including various versions of the world's tallest building." By the end of the book the winner was known, but if Sorkin had a favorite, it remains a secret.

Although Sorkin and his studio had developed two temporary schemes, the earthen berm and the dome, he resolved in the end



MICHAEL SORKIN



that less was more, and indeed that nothing was everything: "...I finally could not discover a convincing necessity for building. Visiting the site over and over again I have become more and more convinced of its power and dignity as a space... Ground Zero in its voided condition belongs to a family of great spaces in both its scale and proportion... And, at the end of the day, there can be no stronger repository of meaning than the space of its void. Grandeur, dignity and universal access best mark both tragedy and renewal. Nothing need be built here."

Stephen A. Kliment, FAIA

Click Here: www.CelluloidSkyline.com

Did you know that New York has been under surveillance for decades? Hollywood has been preserving New York frame by frame and storing her many portraits in the Lillian Michelson Reference Library in Los Angeles. Click on www.CelluloidSkyline.com and prepare to be astonished by the collection of images familiar to any New Yorker and many film buffs around the world.

The site, which debuted in October at the Center for Architecture, is a virtual extension of the book *Celluloid Skyline* by James Sanders. Visitors are encouraged to browse on "hotspots" embedded in 110 reference photographs in "Vision of the Dream City." These provide a wealth of information, especially for the typical New Yorker – who rarely looks up. Visitors to "Building The Dream City" will be informed about film production and will be able to view some examples of New York City's many guises.

If there is a problem with this site, it has to do with the visual limitation of a small computer screen. One longs for the big screen of Hollywood productions to view these borrowed images – especially the day and night comparisons that are so compelling. The real advantage of the site is apparent in the feature "Sidewalk Glimpses." It is a kind of candid camera begun in 1896 in the form of

55 films from the Library of Congress's Paper Print collection. Here, you can download documentary shorts of life as it was lived on the streets we walk today, and have seen in countless movies.

Margaret Rietveld, AIA

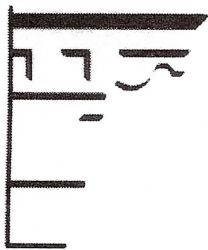
Click Here: www.ArchVoices.org

Today, when a successful professional architect of a certain age is asked about "the intern years" it is likely to yield memories of personal training with a mentor of the white male genius kind. Fast-forward to our information-age, click on www.ArchVoices.org, and it is evident that the profession that once relied on apprenticeship has its hands full instead with the far more diverse experience of internship. The interns are taking over and a good thing it is too because even a quick review of the site reveals that this is a serious matter. Their passion and commitment constitute the future of architecture. Co-founders John Carey, Jr. and Casius Pealer nurtured their think tank out of a handful of helpful e-mail correspondence and maintain a comprehensive source of information for the nascent architect eyeing the registration exam. It is a well-organized site with a live news link to ArchNewsNow.com. The site is also useful to the architectural office in search of improvement as it holds up a mirror to contemporary practices through folders on Education, Internship, Licensure, Resources, Careers, and Voices. ArchVoices promotes the contemporary relevance of our profession by keeping the focus on the meaning of internship.

Margaret Rietveld, AIA

Far left: A transparent geodesic dome organizes the site to allow people to flow across from every adjoining street and covers the transit center.

Above: The memorial is placed in a cave beneath the site of the former towers. Walls bear the names of the fallen.



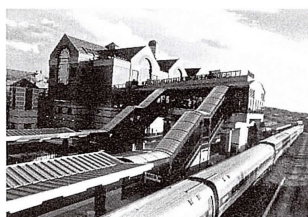
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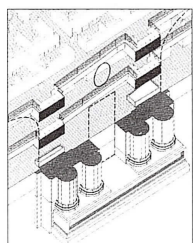
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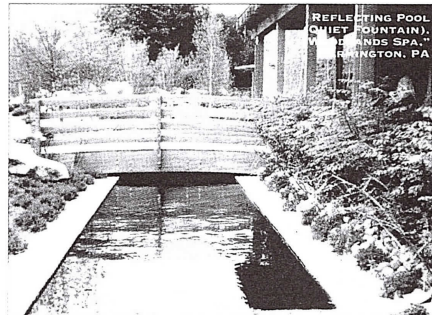
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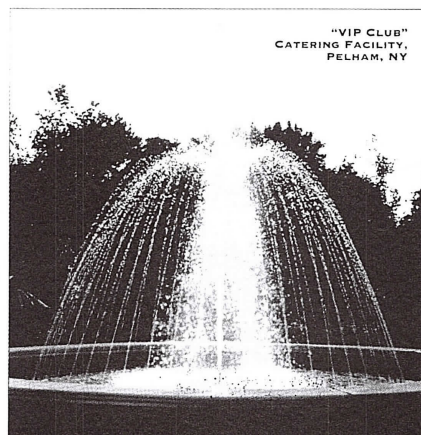
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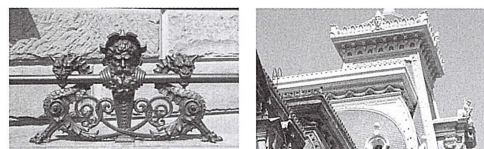
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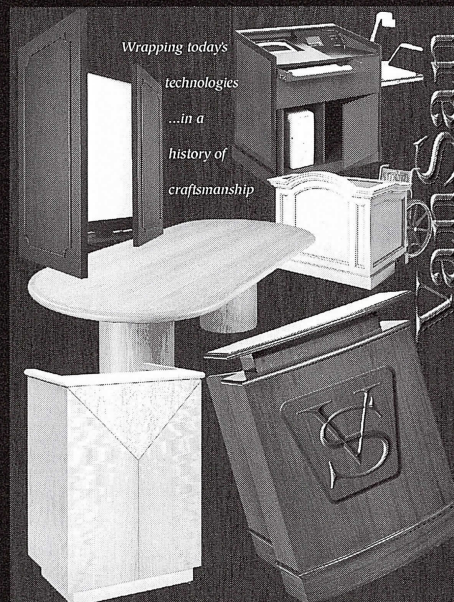
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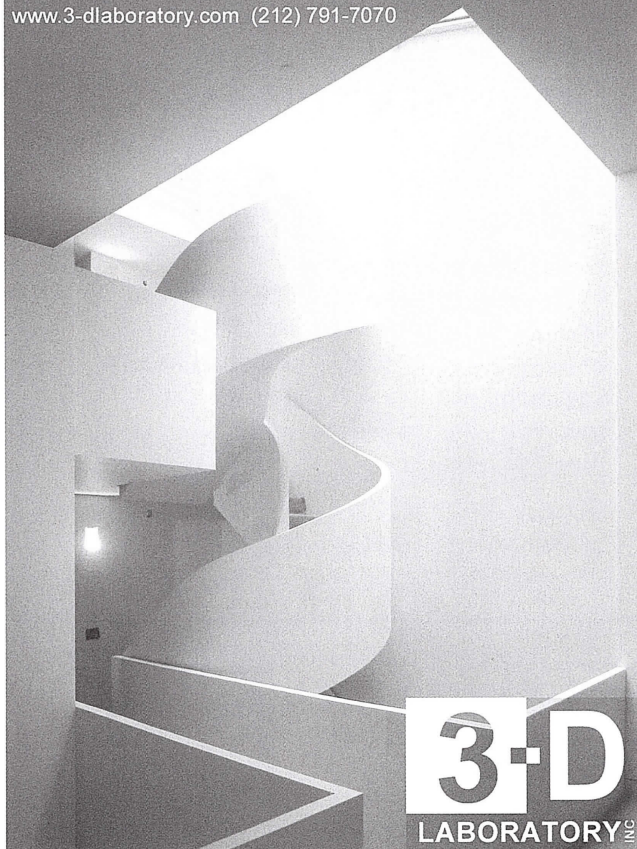
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Last Words

I'll Take The Village

**Rick Bell, FAIA, Executive
Director, AIA
New York Chapter**

"The 'village' meant an actual geographic place where individuals and families lived and worked together.... For most of us, though, the village doesn't look like that anymore." – Hillary Rodham Clinton in *It Takes a Village*

The housing question," Engels wrote, "can be solved only when society has been sufficiently transformed for a start to be made toward abolishing the contrast between town and country." In Greenwich Village, in the mean time, it is time to beg the question. Jane Jacobs in *Death and Life*, and in exile, had the answer to the utopian juxtaposition of scale and density. Having briefly lived, and cheaply, in an 1848 timber-frame rear-warehouse on Perry Street with courtyard ginkos on three windowed sides, I can speak personally of urban paradise lost.

Living or working in the Village has everything to do with pleasant mismatch. University Towers frame Neil Estern's statue of Mayor LaGuardia amidst the ivy. Pei's Silver Towers sit astride Picasso's lawn. From Washington Square Park to Chumley's entranceway, structures in Greenwich Village are defined by figure-ground reversal. Void delineates volume. Parks and courtyards frame the still points of culture shock. O. Henry commented: "The streets have run crazy and broken themselves into small strips called 'places.' These 'places' make strange angles and curves. So to quaint old Greenwich Village the art people soon came prowling, hunting for north windows and...low rents."

Affordable housing need not be a polemic. In his 1890 utopian romance *News from Nowhere*, architect/poet William Morris envisioned London in the year 2102: "quaint and pretty houses, some new, some old, blended together by the bright sun and beautiful surroundings, including the bright blue river." Engaging the river in the design of housing means being attentive to the democratic enjoyment of views and access. It also requires reflection on continuity. Ivory-tower coast development of isolated monoliths devoid of any linkage has been the Jersey barricade, and has created, in Bob Yaro's words, "a Scarsdale-by-the-Sea." Hudson River park connectivity brings to mind the scale relationships on Manhattan's West Side, where the 79th Street Boat Basin has, since the 1930s, brought habitation to the water's edge.

Does increasing density, a given of environmental correctness and a hallmark of urban necessity, require diminishment of housing quality? Does unit size matter? New Yorkers, more than any other American apartment dwellers, pay for the less is more design

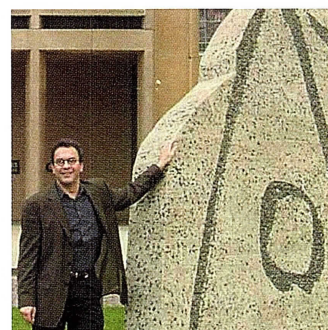
approach. In *My Petition for More Space*, set in the architectural future, John Hershey wrote "No desk, no chair, no rug, no lamps, no TV, no books. Nothing. I have achieved a highly personal style by reducing my property – and my needs – to an absolute minimum. People think I am either pathetically poor or barren in imagination, but I have noticed that whenever I have guests, they get very high in my space, just from being in it. That is because so much of it is space...But it is not large enough."

Housing design is determined by code, zoning, and market forces. Reconsideration of one or another of these is the subject of the affordable housing competition, "New Housing New York," organized by the AIA New York Chapter, the City Council, and the City University (with the support and participation of the Building Department, the City Planning Department, and the Department of Housing Preservation & Development). Can the mixed-use competition results be built? Come see the exhibit at the Center for Architecture and decide for yourself.

In *Utopia or Oblivion*, Buckminster Fuller writes: "I have been asked: 'What would you do if you were building commissioner of the U.S.A. or even of the world?' I would resign! It is popularly assumed that democracy's checks and balances – its political and economic institutions – frustrate logical housing solutions...Man now sprawls horizontally upon the land – unchecked by planners who enjoy only the right to 'suggest.'"

My advice for the world's building commissioner is simple:

- **Build housing first (see the Housing First! website at www.housingfirst.net).**
- **Change regulations that impede mixed-use housing and neighborhoods.**
- **Stop sprawl, starting in the Garden State, where current legislation is fruitless.**
- **Learn from the Village, home of Jane Jacobs Houses and Silver Towers, of Meier's twins and the Bottom Line; let it provide continuing education in housing of diverse size, type, and scale, an architectural all-hallows parade of non-conformist use.**
- **Visit the Center for Architecture on LaGuardia Place every day.**



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Bell with Pei and Picasso (above)

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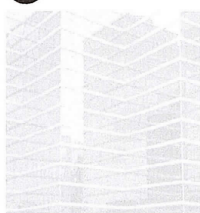
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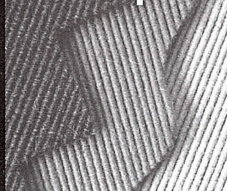
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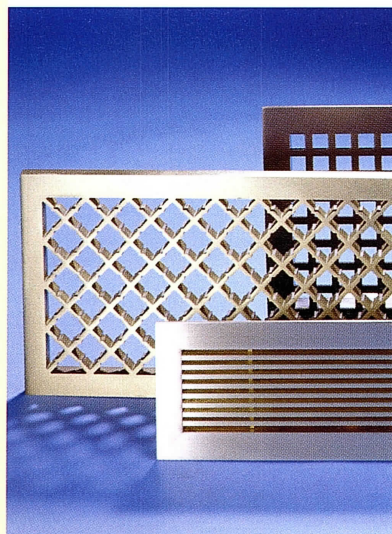
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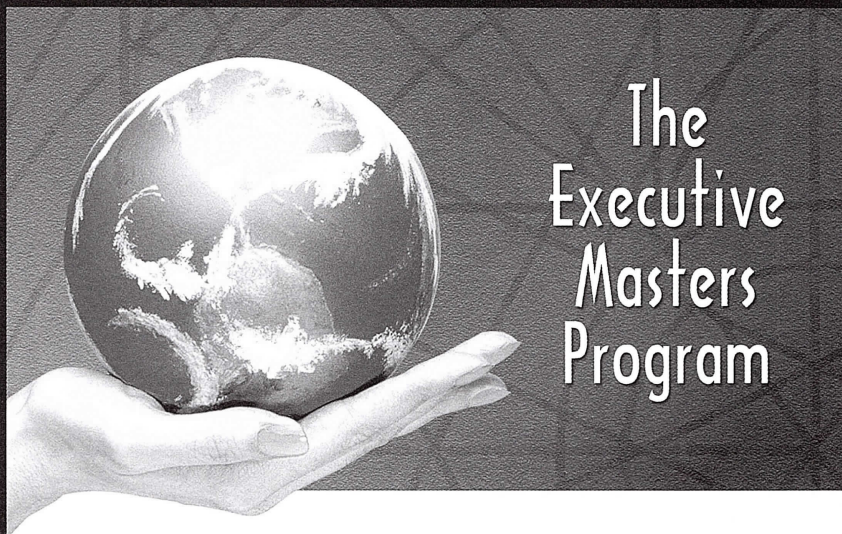
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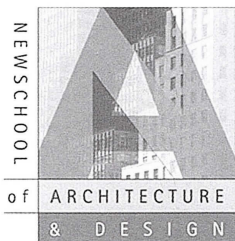
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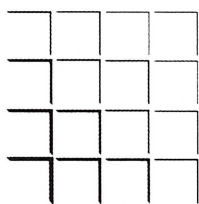
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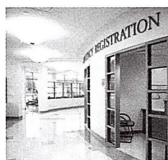
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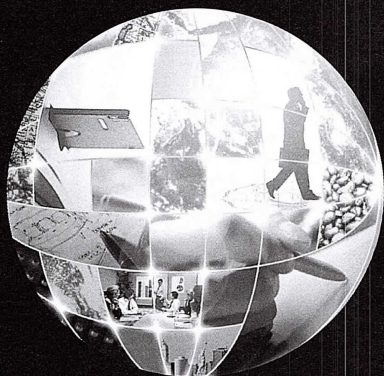
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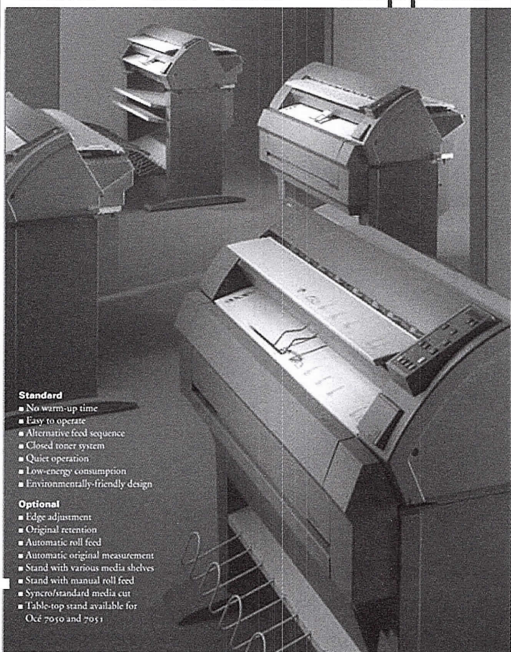
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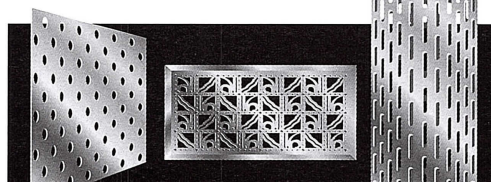
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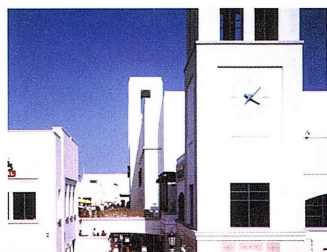


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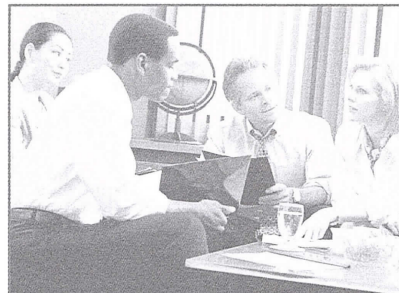


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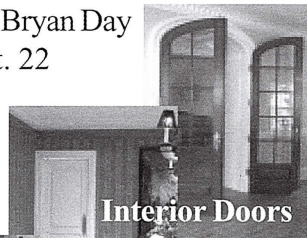
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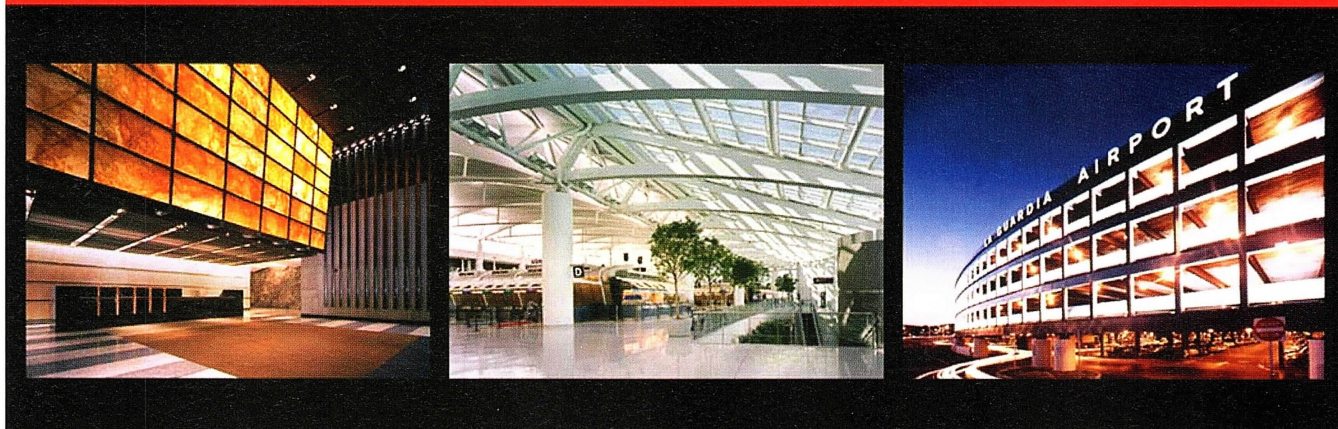


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