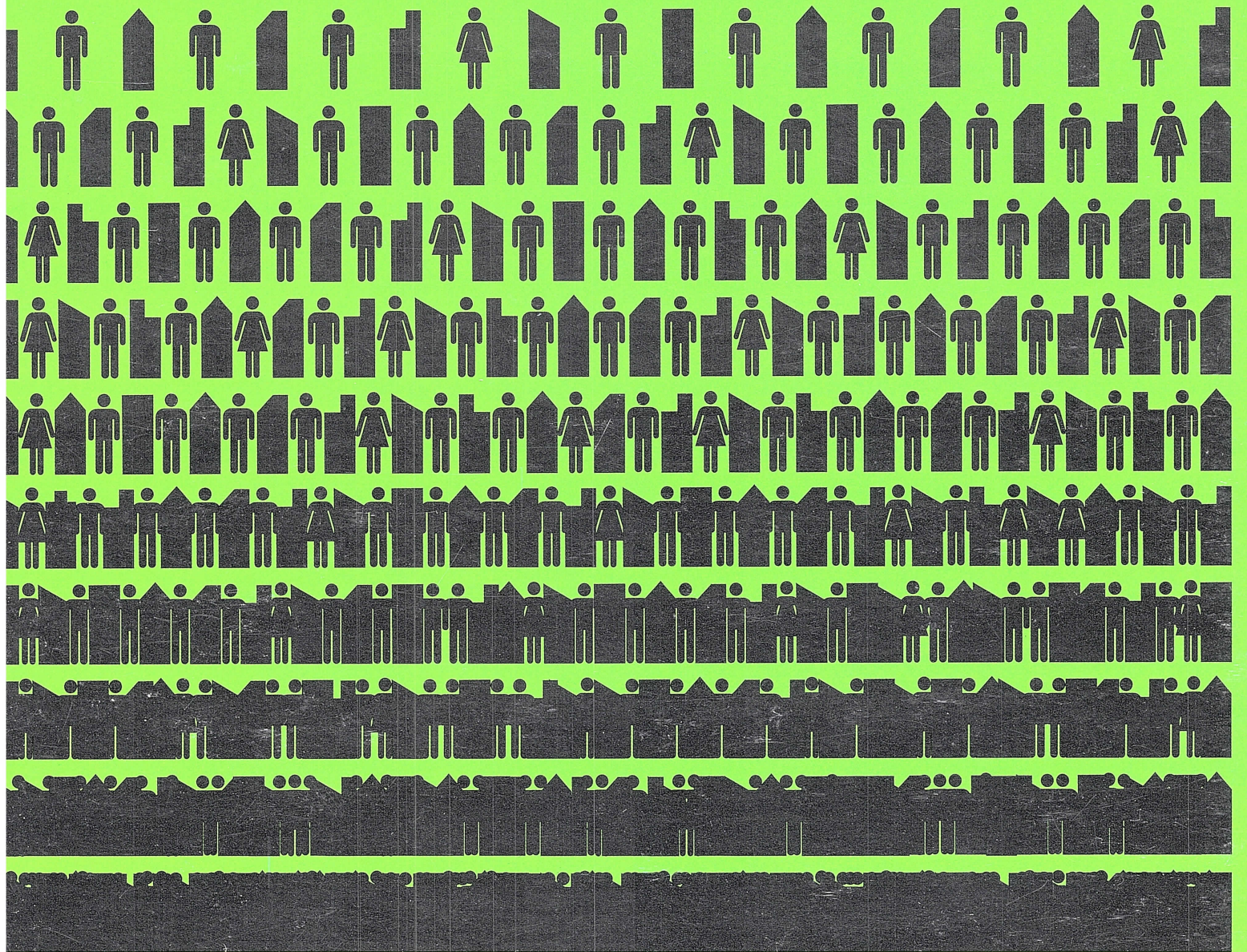


Spring 2008

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PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS NEW YORK CHAPTER VOLUME 70 ISSUE 1 \$10

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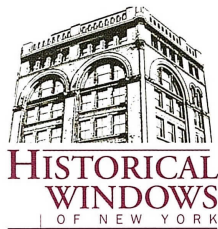




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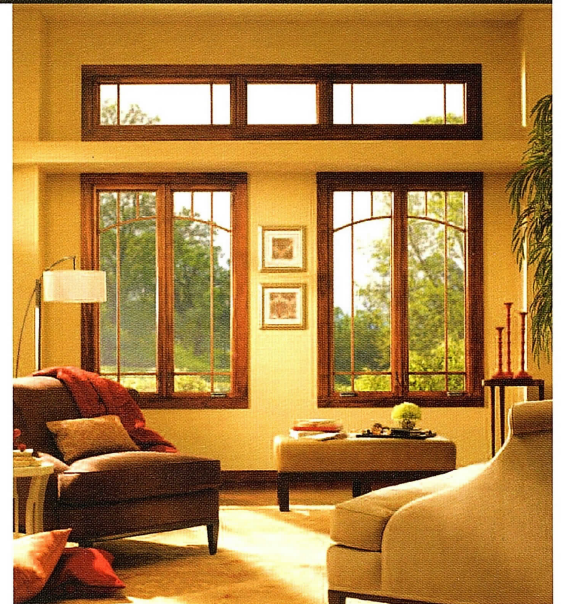
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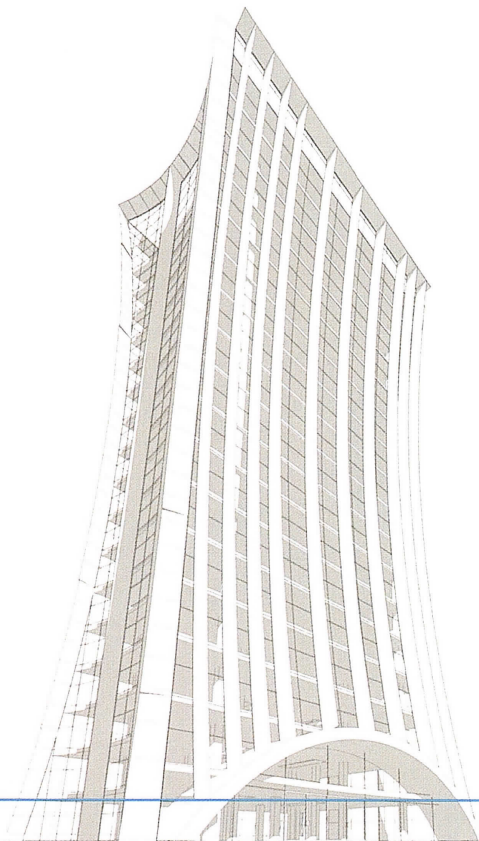
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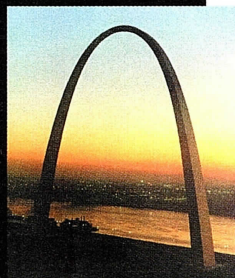
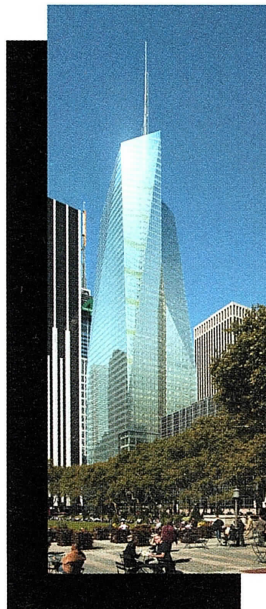
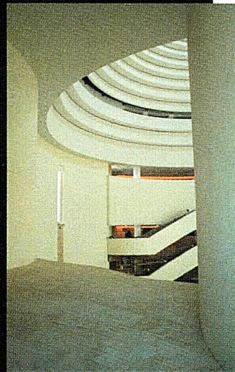
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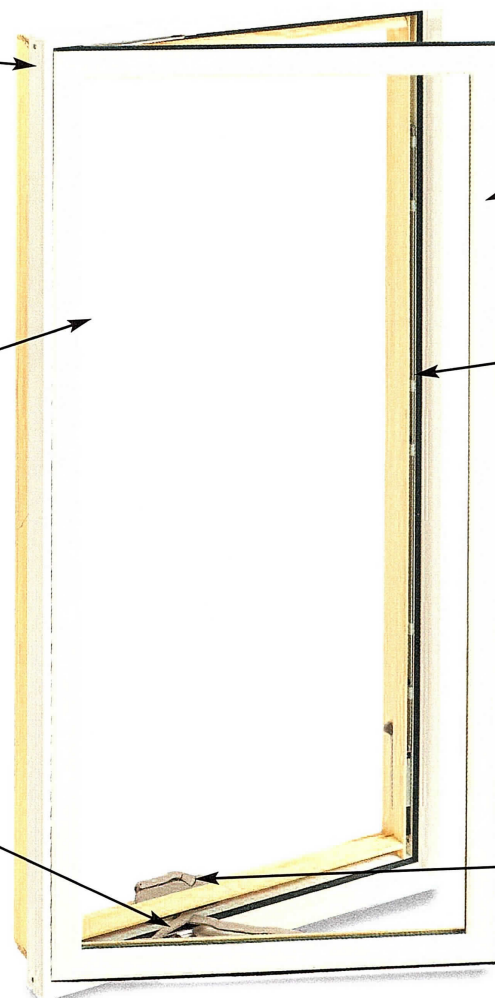
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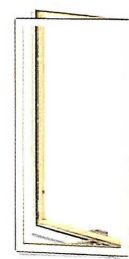
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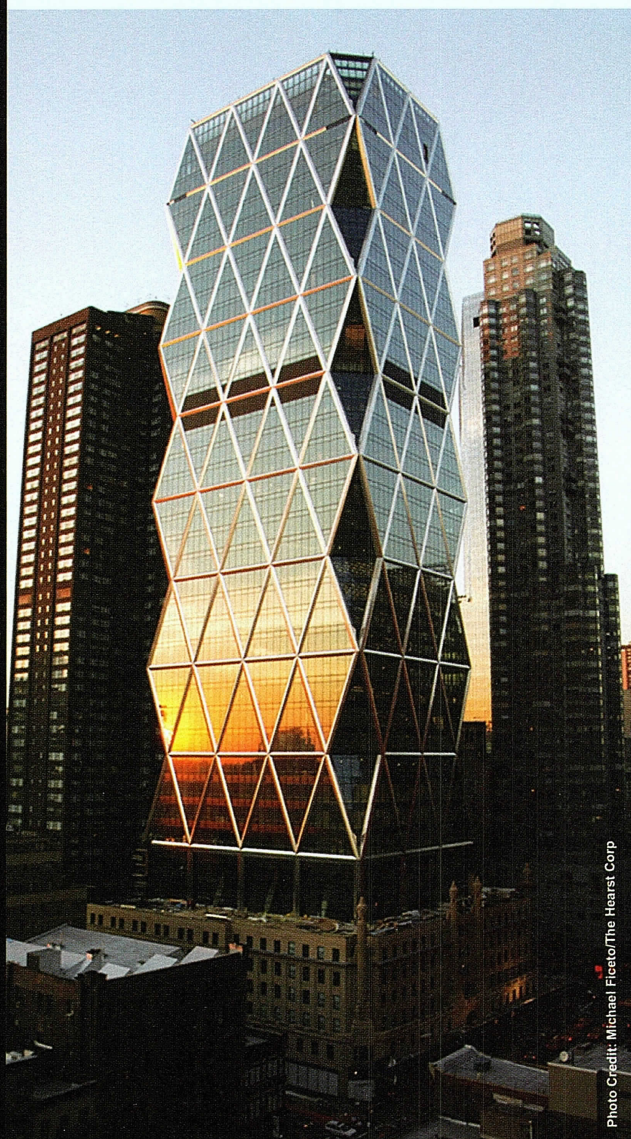


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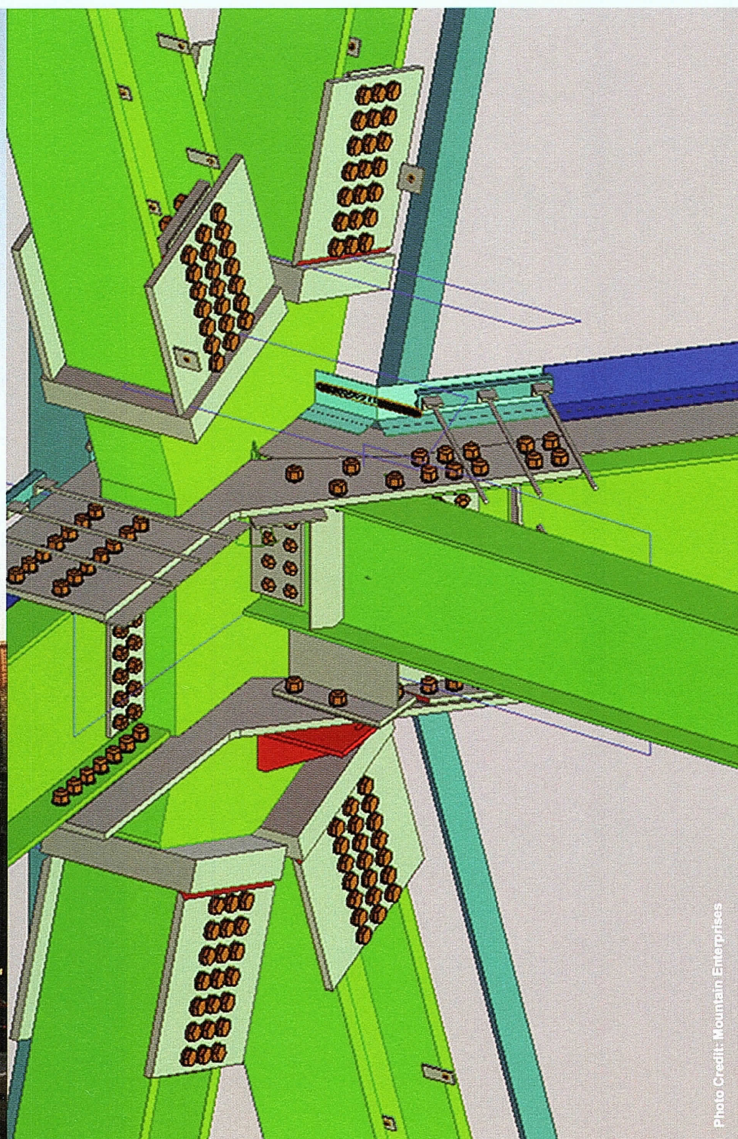


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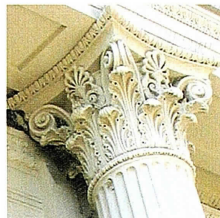
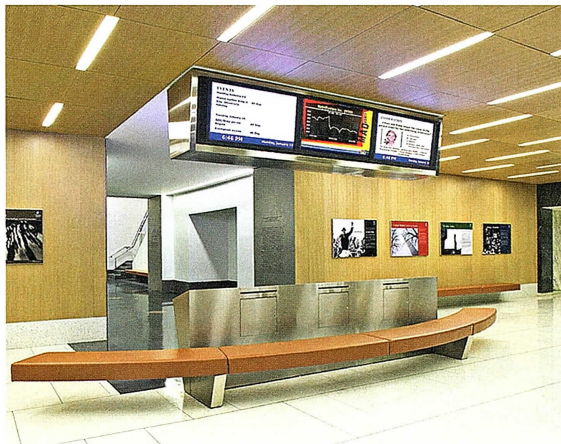
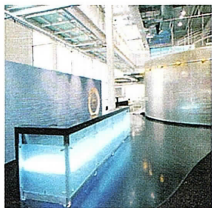
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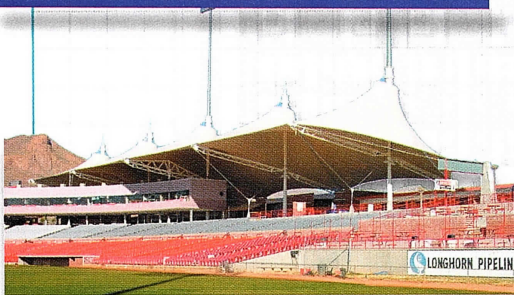
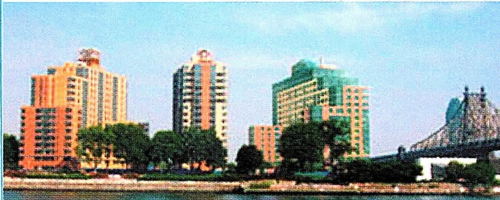
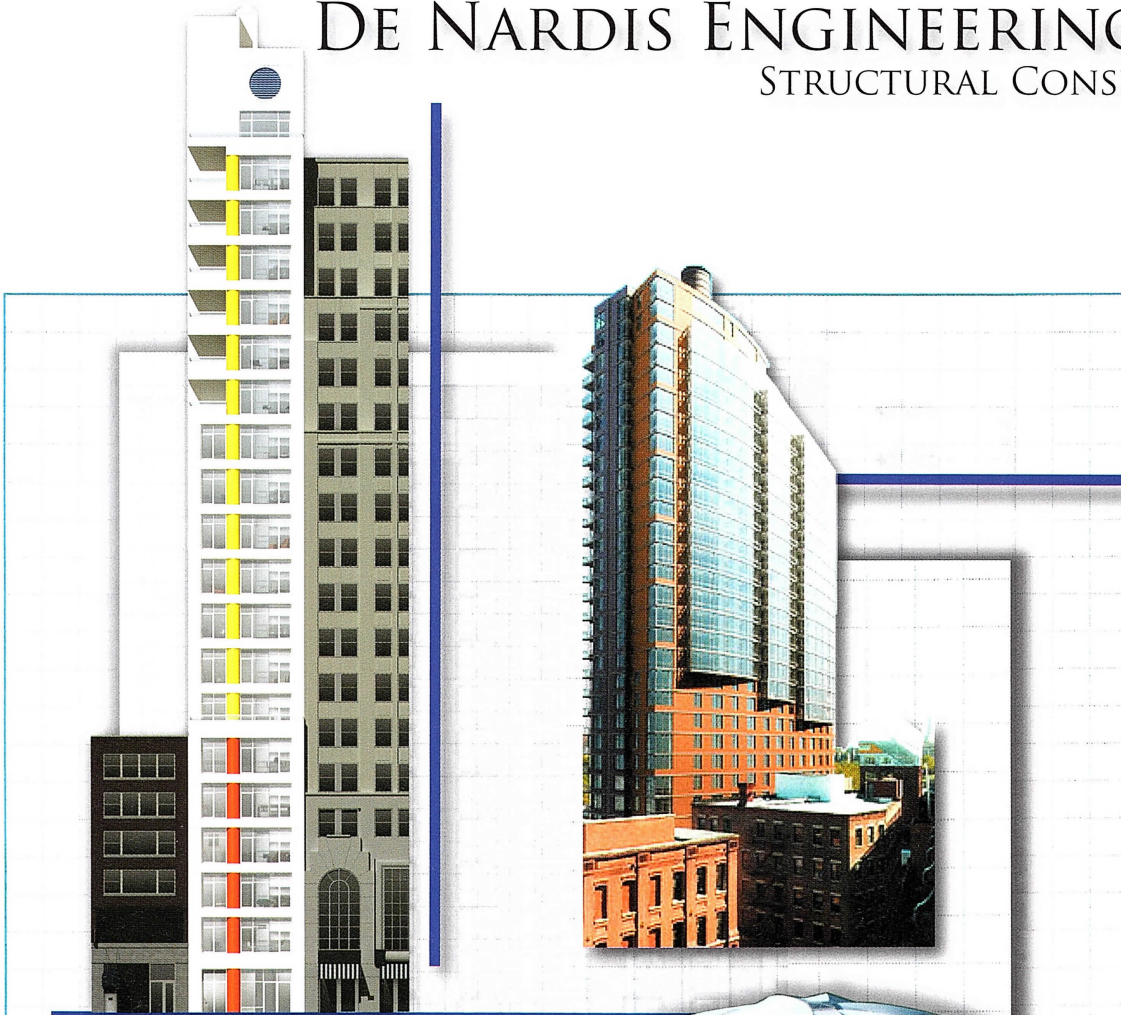
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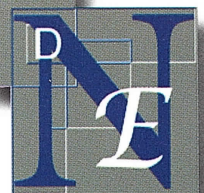


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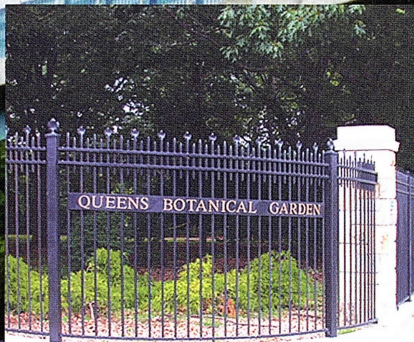


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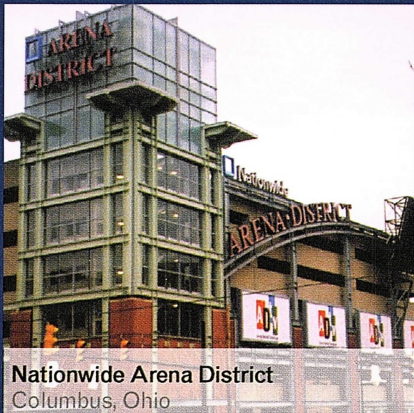
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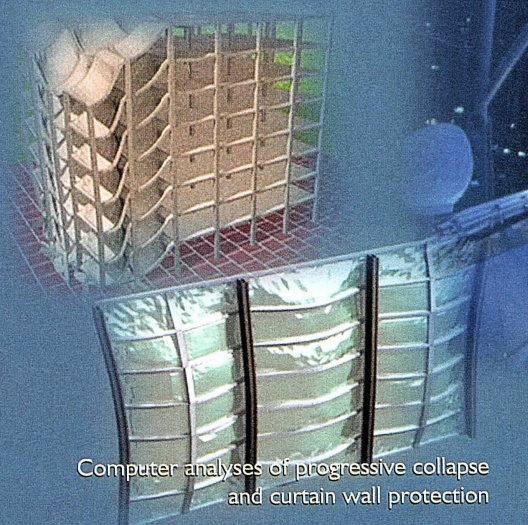
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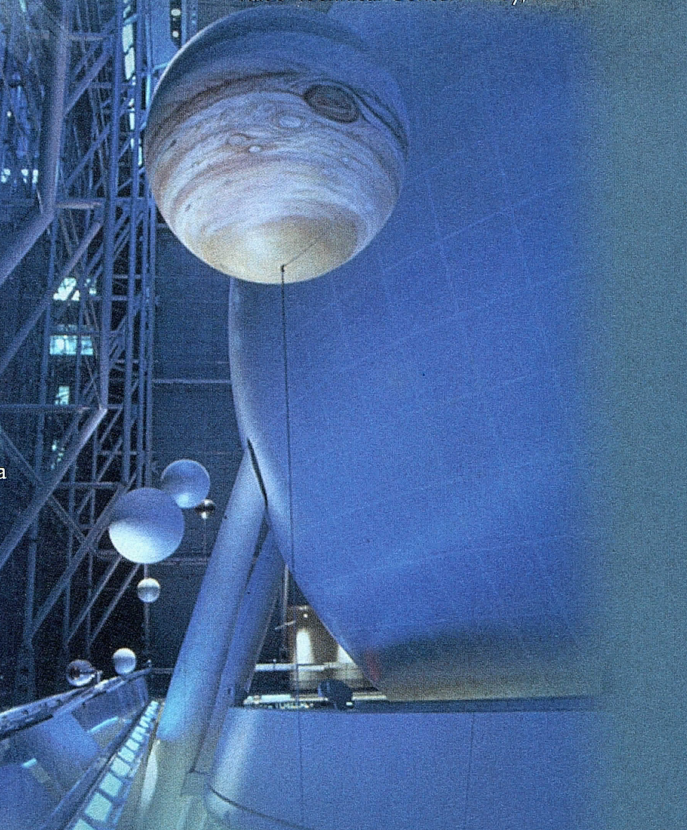
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# Architecture: Designs for Living

We are living in an exciting and challenging time. Our city has recovered from 9/11 and is experiencing a record population growth and the revitalization of its neighborhoods – a stunning renaissance undreamed of even a decade ago. As globalization proceeds at a rapid rate, we are increasingly part of an emerging global community, from our own neighborhoods to expanding urban centers around the world. The need for new sustainable solutions in an era of global warming has never been greater. This is a design problem that applies equally to small projects and entire cities.

Our 2008 theme, Architecture: Designs for Living, is envisioned as a “big tent” covering the broad range of building typologies that shape our neighborhoods and urban design that defines our city and region. It incorporates and expands on themes by my predecessors: Architecture: Bringing Cultures Together (Susan Chin, FAIA, 2005); Architecture as Public Policy (Mark Strauss, FAIA, AICP, 2006); and Architecture Inside/Out (Joan Blumenfeld, FAIA, IIDA, LEED AP, 2007). As Joan’s Inside/Out focused on the interiors of buildings, Designs for Living continues the progression from buildings to community. It is our response to Mayor Bloomberg’s initiatives for PlaNYC, which anticipates the addition of one million new residents by 2030 and requires sustainable typologies from infrastructure to housing.

This year’s theme supports partnerships between our committees and local and international organizations that have produced many exhibitions and programs since the Center for Architecture opened. Last year alone, under Joan’s leadership, the Center presented timely exhibitions such as “School Buildings – The State of Affairs,” “New Housing New York,” “Five Visions for Governors Island,” “Architecture Inside/Out,” and “Berlin-New York Dialogues.” The new theme is expressed in the following areas:

Public programs will include theme-related events planned by the Center, AIANY committees, and other organizations, and two additional events: a Public Lecture Series by our design committees exploring

First Words  
Letter from the President



BARB STEFFEN

new directions for the typologies that form the building blocks for new growth envisioned by PlaNYC; and Global Dialogues, which joins the UN, NYU Rudin Center for Transportation, and the Regional Plan Association in support of regional and international sustainable urban design, and sponsor programs with the Swiss Consulate General and NYU Maison Française.

Nine major exhibitions begin with “One Bryant Park,” a sustainable project showcase, and “Building China: Five Projects, Five Stories,” and will conclude with “Architecture: Designs for Living.”

Design Awards will extend design excellence recognition through new Biennial Building Type Awards, co-sponsored with the Boston Society of Architects.

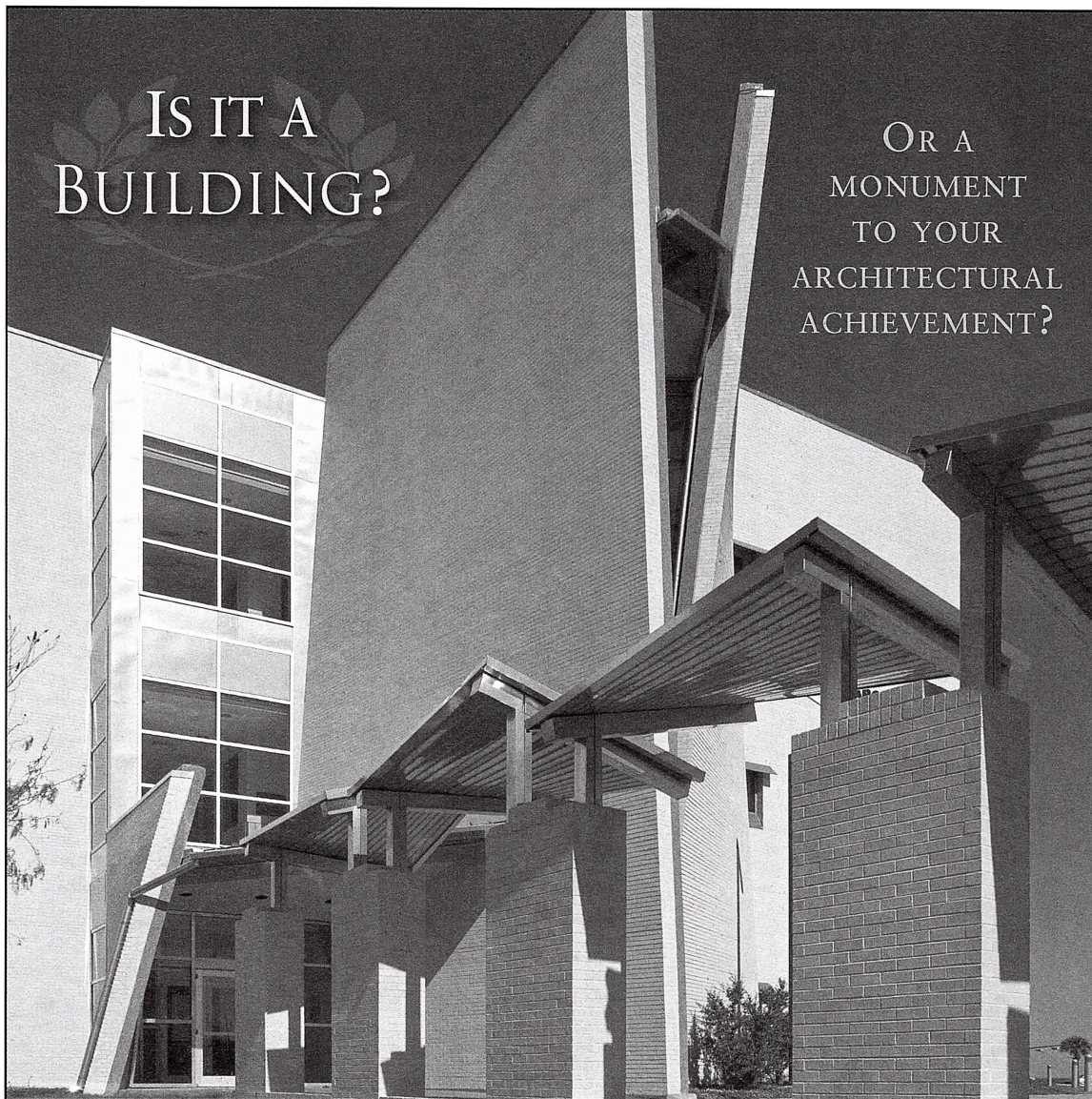
As past chair of the Housing Committee, I am pleased this issue of *Oculus* begins with a focus on housing, but also discusses justice facilities, zoning, and a new parks program. We look forward to subsequent issues that will examine other typologies so critical to the realization of PlaNYC.

James McCullar, FAIA  
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# What if...and when?

A Word from the Editor

There were 117 submissions from 30 countries in the recent NYC Office of Emergency Management's "What If New York City..." Design Competition for Post-Disaster Provisional Housing. Among the 10 winners and 10 honorable mentions were six teams from New York City. As much as we'd hoped to include them in this issue, they were announced too late to meet press deadlines.

What struck me most in reviewing the entries online ([www.whatifync.net](http://www.whatifync.net)) was how many look like viable designs for permanent housing – a fact not overlooked by the jury. In the final Jury Report (also available online), Competition Facilitator Lance Jay Brown, FAIA, notes: "The jury discussed if this was a desirable feature or not....As many proposals would be, temporarily, on private property, suggestions or expectations of permanence could be a drawback."

But it's not really surprising that some entries took on the air of permanence. The competition criteria included a number of points that apply to any type of design for living, and many are covered in this issue of *Oculus*: flexibility, livability, accessibility, sustainability, and security, among others.

We begin with an overview of housing options in the Big Apple, and a brief history of how once-illegal loft life in Manhattan has evolved into a chic lifestyle world-wide. Getting back to basics, experts in their fields talk about the myths and realities of affordable housing, the changing face of senior living (the mayor's office anticipates a 44% increase in the 65-and-older population by 2030), and new strategies to attract – and retain – the young, creative class. With the recent Pew Center on the States report citing that 2.3 million-plus Americans are behind bars (one in every 100!), it is timely to look at the current evolution of a housing type not often considered in design publications: prisons. On a good-news note, PlaNYC 2030 is transforming our outdoor living rooms, the city's green spaces. On the subject of zoning, change may be difficult – as the AIANY Chapter's Zoning Task Force can attest – but it's necessary. Finally, John P. Eberhard, FAIA, one of the founders of the Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture, discusses why neuroscience should be embraced by architects.

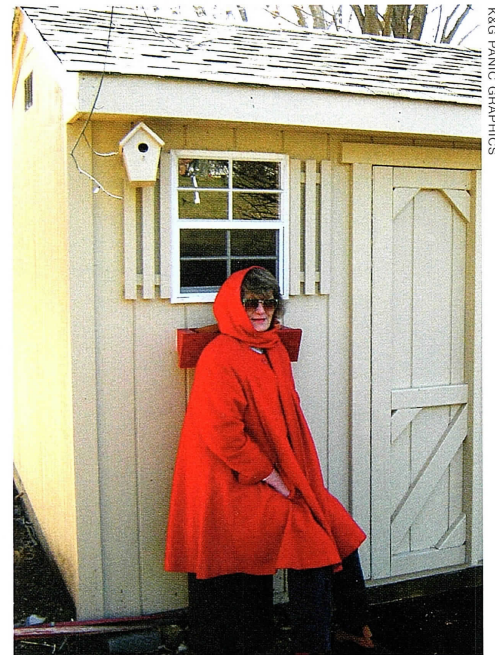
In our regular departments, "So Says..." talks to Executive Director of Citizens Housing and Planning Council of New York (and former Housing Commissioner) Jerilyn Perine about the rules and tools needed to house another million people by 2030. For an "Outside View," Vancouverite Michael Geller is hopeful that his city will become more like New York. "Good Practices" returns after a hiatus with some solid pointers on how to create buzz for your residential architecture. "In Print+" takes on two tomes that call for a return to Classicism (including Boston University ex-president John Silber's savage attack on the avant garde), an erudite study of American architectural history, and an architecture handbook for high schoolers and their teachers. "Click Here" evaluates AIANY's Public Information Exchange (PIE) one year after its launch.

Lastly, I'd like to point out a few changes in the masthead and content. Our deepest thanks to Fred Bernstein, who, after five years, has decided to step down from his keen watch over "XX-Year Watch." Stepping up to take on the charge, I'm thrilled to announce, is John Morris Dixon, FAIA, former editor of *Progressive Architecture* magazine and a current contributor to a number of publications. His first watch looks at Riverbend and Waterside Plaza housing by Davis Brody & Associates.

We also welcome Alex Mindlin, a *New York Times* reporter well known for his people-friendly stories based in various city neighborhoods and published in the Sunday paper's "The City" section. Mindlin will write a regular column called "One Block Over" about the city's living environments, beginning this issue with Brighton Beach's vanishing bungalows.

I'm still stuck on the "What If New York City..." jury's comment about temporary housing where a sense of permanence may be a possible drawback. Drawback, indeed. New Orleans should be so lucky!

Kristen Richards  
[kristen@ArchNewsNow.com](mailto:kristen@ArchNewsNow.com)



Editor as Red Riding Hood in front of a just-right house (for garden tools, anyway)

K&G PANIC GRAPHICS





AIA New York Chapter congratulates the following Chapter members who have been elevated to the College of Fellows in 2008. We are proud of them and of their achievements which are recognized with this honor.



Diana I. Agrest, FAIA  
Agrest & Gandelonas Architects



Stephen A. Apking, FAIA  
Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, LLP



Ian Bader, FAIA  
Pei Cobb Freed & Partners



Deborah Berke, FAIA  
Deborah Berke & Partners  
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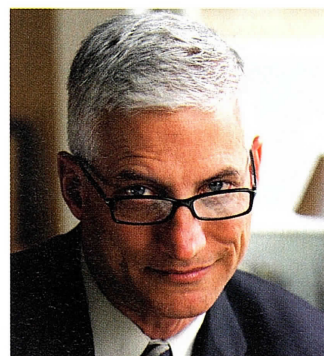
Louise M. Braverman, FAIA  
Louise Braverman Architect



Hillary Brown, FAIA, LEED AP  
New Civic Works



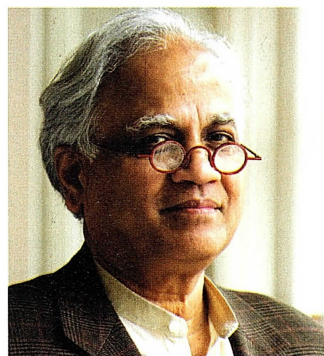
David Burney, FAIA  
New York City Department of  
Design and Construction



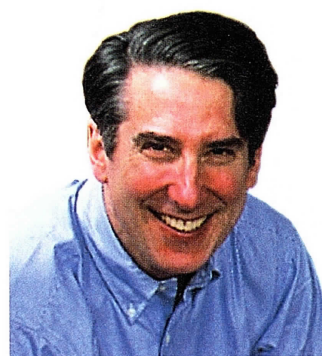
Gerard (Guy) F.X. Geier, II, FAIA  
FXFOWLE Architects



Nathan C. Hoyt, FAIA  
Davis Brody Bond Aedas



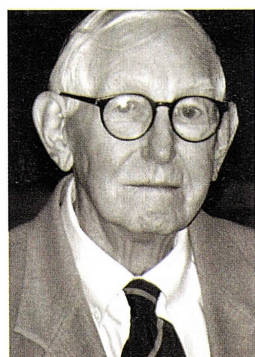
Sudhir Jambhekar, FAIA  
FXFOWLE Architects



David M. Leventhal, FAIA  
Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates, P.C.



Pamela J. Loeffelman, FAIA  
Perkins Eastman



Paul W.T. Pippin, FAIA  
Skidmore, Owings &  
Merrill (retired)



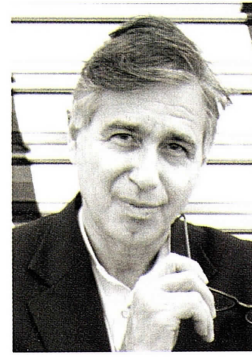
Robert M. Rogers, FAIA  
Rogers Marvel  
Architects, PLLC



Richard W. Southwick, FAIA  
Beyer Blinder Belle:  
Architects & Planners



William H. Stein, FAIA  
Dattner Architects



Bernard Tschumi, FAIA  
Bernard Tschumi  
Architects





Margaret Helfand, FAIA  
1947-2007

## Margaret Helfand Center for Architecture Endowment

Margaret Helfand, FAIA, was passionate about expanding design awareness and opportunity in its related professions. She had a dream that became New York's vibrant Center for Architecture. In this vision she saw the Center, the re-invigorated AIA New York Chapter and the Center for Architecture Foundation as critical to promoting an awareness of the value of design. Architecture shapes our lives. Margaret saw the imperative of sharing ideas through exhibitions and programs, and by supporting scholarship and research.

The Center for Architecture honors the legacy of Margaret Helfand by establishing the Margaret Helfand Center of Architecture Endowment. The funds raised through this effort will support the Center for Architecture exhibitions Margaret helped establish and cared about so passionately.

Dear Friends,

On the Center's opening day, Margaret said: *"Congratulations... for launching this extraordinary ship - the Center for Architecture. May she sail to undiscovered places through uncharted waters."*

Margaret sought beauty in her life's work, but more important to her was that beauty be available to all to see and enjoy. She contributed many years of effort to furthering the dream that became the Center for Architecture. Much of her life was spent fostering collaboration, opening doors to opportunity and promoting the value of quality design with a wide audience.

We have only just begun to share the idea of establishing an endowment in her honor and the newly created fund has reached \$250,000. With your support, we can reach our goal of \$500,000 to ensure that Margaret's impact is felt for many years to come. Please join us in this fitting tribute to and remembrance of Margaret.

Sincerely,

Rick Bell, FAIA  
Joan Blumenfeld, FAIA  
Walter Hunt, Jr., FAIA

Elisabeth Martin, AIA  
Zack McKown, FAIA  
George Miller, FAIA

Rolf Ohlhausen, FAIA  
Calvin Tsao, FAIA

Jon Turner  
David Whitcomb

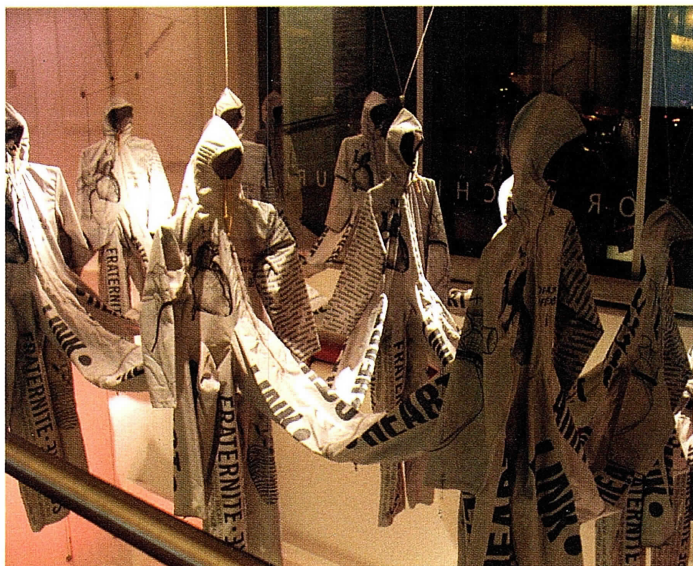
We are proud to recognize the key contributions that have been given to the Margaret Helfand Endowment to date:

Leadership Gifts: \$100,000  
Jon Turner  
David Whitcomb

Patron Gifts: \$10,000  
Edward I. and Elaine Altman  
Steve and Emily Swanson  
Rolf Ohlhausen and Suzanne Davis  
Tsao & McKown Architects  
Walter and Judith Hunt

as well as other generous gifts of varying levels

For more information on how to contribute to the Margaret Helfand Endowment at the Center for Architecture, please contact Vanessa Crews, Director of Development, at 212.358.6108 [vcrews@aiany.org](mailto:vcrews@aiany.org)



**The Fashion of Architecture: CONSTRUCTING the  
Architecture of Fashion at the Center for Architecture,  
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# Center Highlights

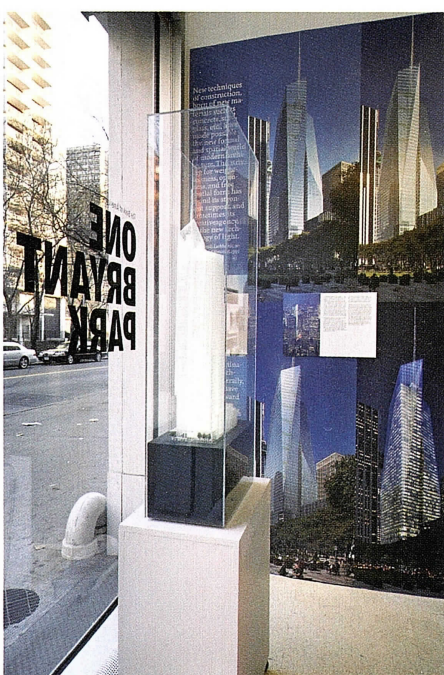
Center for Architecture

TOM POWELL



**Project Showcase: The Bank of America Tower at One Bryant Park designed by Cook+Fox Architects, Gerald D Hines Gallery, exhibition curated by Margaret Maile Petty and designed by Morris | Sato Studio; project models in the newly dedicated Margaret Helfand Gallery (below left).**

TOM POWELL

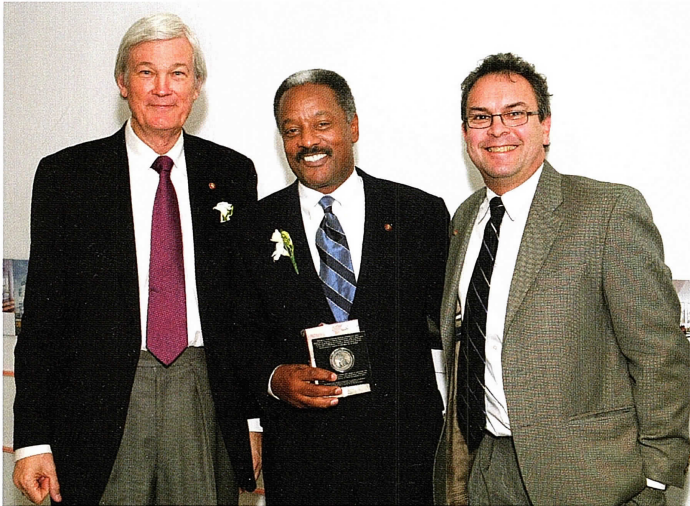


SAM LAHOZ



**One Bryant Park panel discussion: Collaboration and Green Design (l-r): lighting designer Francesca Bettridge, Cline Bettridge Bernstein Lighting Design; MEP engineer Scott Frank, Jaros Baum & Bolles; structural engineer Edward Depaola, Severud Associates; Jody Durst, Durst Organization; architect Richard Cook, AIA, Cook+Fox Architects; (not pictured: interior architect Rocco Giannetti, AIA, Gensler).**





SAM LAHOZ

**AIA New York Chapter 2008 Board Inaugural:** James McCullar, FAIA, AIA NY 2008 President; Marshall Purnell, FAIA, AIA National 2008 President; Rick Bell, FAIA, AIA NY Executive Director.



SAM LAHOZ

**Board members past and present gathered together at the 2008 Board Inaugural including:** Kenneth Ricci, FAIA; Susan Chin, FAIA; Anthony Schirripa, AIA, IIDA.



STACEY SIDENIS

**Ibex Annual Holiday Party:** AIA NY Vice President, Design Excellence, Illya Azaroff, AIA, and Andy Frankl, president of Ibex Construction.



JESSICA SHERIDAN

**Jurors for the AIA NY Emerging NY Architects (ENYA) committee's third biennial international ideas competition, South Street Seaport: Re-envisioning the Urban Edge (l-r):** Michael Sorkin; Nina Baniahmad (winner of the 2006 ENYA competition); Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen; Calvin Tsao, FAIA (jurors not pictured: Sara Caples, AIA, and Maia Small). The \$6,000 ENYA Prize was awarded to Sangmok Kim and Sungwoo Kim.



MEGAN CHUSID

**Jurors for ENYA's Scheduling Call for Portfolios competition included (l-r):** Professor Lance Jay Brown, FAIA; artist Nancy Goldring; and The Architect's Newspaper Editor-in-Chief William Menking (juror not pictured: Sherida Paulsen, FAIA). The winners: Francis Hur, Manole Voroneanu, and Evangelique Zhao.

## Center for Architecture Foundation



ERIN MCCLUSKEY

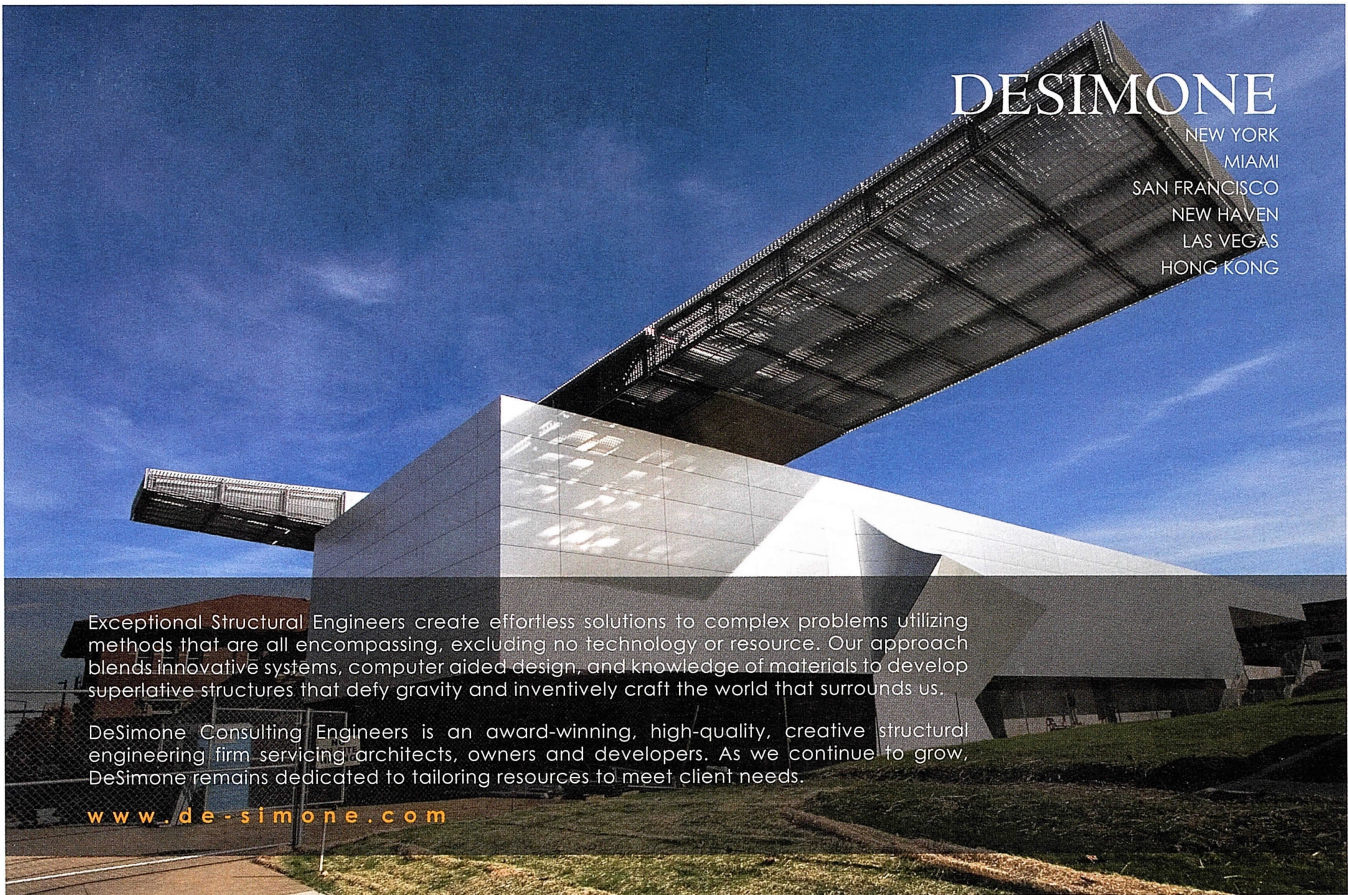
**Mark Behm, Assoc. AIA, from Mancini Duffy, joined the Center for Architecture Foundation and PS 9 for Community Design Day to help create a new vision for the school's playground.**



ERIN MCCLUSKEY

**Students created fanciful landscape models. Contact the Foundation at 212.358.6133 for information about and to support the Community Design Program.**





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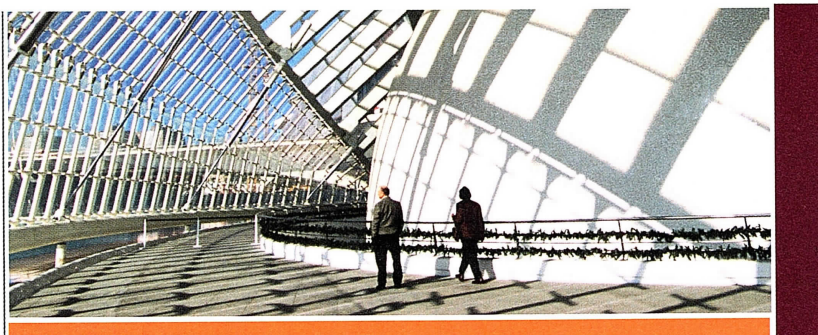
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# Brighton Beach's Vanishing Bungalows

One Block Over  
By Alex Mindlin

Around 8 p.m. on January 23, the smell of smoke awakened Daisy Enriquez from an after-work nap. "We thought the house was on fire," she later said. "It was scary."

A part-time college student and laundromat employee, Enriquez, 21, was not far off. The smell did not come from her house, a sagging yellow bungalow she shares with nine relatives. It came from down the street, and it told a familiar story: another abandoned bungalow was ablaze.

Enriquez lives in one of the city's richest collections of bungalows: a group of some 200 little peak-roofed one-story houses, painted white, pink, and canary yellow, clustered half a mile inland from the Atlantic in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn.

The bungalows were built between 1919 and 1923 on top of a defunct racetrack, and they were real-estate throwbacks almost from the start. By 1925, developers were already tearing down seaside bungalows by the hundreds in Brighton Beach to make way for apartment houses. "The ground," the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported that year, was "too valuable for summer bungalows." Apartment buildings sprang up in the neighborhood throughout the 1920s and '30s, replacing hotels, music halls, and anything else in their way.



The sad fate of a number of bungalows

Throughout all this, the bungalow district remained miraculously intact, an area apart. A lacework of narrow, leafy lanes, unlit and sometimes unmapped, connected its streets. Most of the houses had front and back gardens. "It had a countryish feeling," said Aviva Klein, 73, who lives in a ramshackle, rust-colored cottage on Brighton 4th Street.

These days, however, developers have discovered the neighborhood in earnest. The streets ring with hammering, and workers scale scaffolding on every block; some construction sites are separated only by a single building. Roughly a third of the bungalows have already been torn down, replaced by beige concrete condominium buildings of six stories or more.



A Brighton Beach bungalow – still occupied

As the bungalows disappear, life is getting rapidly worse for those who still live in them. In 1995 mailmen stopped walking the narrow lanes, which were deemed unsafe; residents now pick up their mail from boxes fixed to poles on the street corners. The Department of Sanitation does not collect trash in the lanes, either; residents haul their garbage to the wider streets and leave it there, where the bags block foot traffic and sometimes tear open, scattering litter.

Most unsettling are the fires, widely believed to be arson, that have become almost routine here. At least 14 fires have burned in the neighborhood since last summer. Most were in empty bungalows whose owners had kept them off the market, waiting to tear them down or sell them.

Judd Fischler, 77, is the neighborhood's unofficial mayor, a small man with a bristly dark goatee. In late January he gazed stonily at the site of the latest fire, a barn-shaped house whose charred timbers gave off a marshmallowy scent. "The neighborhood is dead," Fischler said. "What are they going to downzone? It's all gone."

I wanted to know how the neighborhood's new residents felt about the disappearing bungalows, so I lingered outside an eight-story building, painted in shades of turquoise and oatmeal, which had replaced half a dozen bungalows on Brighton 4th Street in 2003. Several elderly ladies went to elaborate lengths to avoid me. Finally, I spoke with Regina Segal, 39, who moved here with her family from Midwood five years ago.

Did she like the building, I asked? "It's much better than those private houses," she said immediately. "I don't like those. They're old and dirty. I would be glad if my whole street was only new buildings."

Alex Mindlin is a writer who lives in Brooklyn. He contributes regularly to the *New York Times*.

ALEX MINDLIN

ALEX MINDLIN



# So Says... Jerilyn

KRISTEN RICHARDS



Jerilyn Perine, twice commissioner of NYC Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), was the author of Mayor Bloomberg's New Housing Marketplace Plan, announced in December 2002, which provides \$3 billion over five years to preserve and create more than 65,000 units of affordable housing. Perine is now executive director of the Citizens Housing and Planning Council (CHPC), a venerable New York institution founded in 1937 to work closely with Senator Robert Wagner in crafting the National Housing Act of 1937; its advocacy and policy research focuses on sensible growth and the preservation of the aging housing stock. Ernie Hutton, Assoc. AIA, FAICP, co-chair of New York New Visions, interviewed Perine in her new Lower Manhattan offices, where in her spare time she is lovingly cataloguing CHPC's incredible archives of historic planning documents.

**Ernie Hutton** Jerilyn, you've had a distinguished career, formerly commissioner of NYC HPD under two mayors. How did they differ?

**Jerilyn Perine** Technically, every mayor has the same job but completely different sets of problems – different economy, different political context. Mayor Giuliani's city felt like it was out of control: how to reduce crime, and what to do with remaining tax-foreclosed property emerged as key priorities.

When I took over at HPD, the challenge was to define programs that used resources at hand – an improved tenant interim lease program that removed barriers for low income tenant co-ops, and programs for new small entrepreneurs for renovating and running buildings in largely minority communities. We began to look for ways to redevelop the old industrial waterfront.

**EH** How did your charge change under Mayor Bloomberg?

**JP** We realized even at the end of the Giuliani Administration that foreclosed housing stock had been both a burden and a benefit – fueling a renovation pipeline that allowed the city to build a large, sophisticated housing development industry, both not-for-profit and for-profit. As property inventory dwindled, we had to rethink what to do as a housing agency. We'd built impressive machinery to solve the problems of the 1970s and 80s, but it wasn't designed to solve the vastly different issues of the future. We were no longer facing population shrinkage and the need to figure out how to attract people back to Morrisania. We faced different problems and needed different machinery, different tools.

That began the New Housing Marketplace plan – telling the industry things are different. Now you have to think about the problems in your community, how to get privately owned sites into the marketplace. In government, we had to create developable land through rezonings, and put money out there for the private sector to attract capital where we needed it. It was a tremendous privilege for me to be in the housing department at these historic times of real change, taking a hard look at problems, devising tools and priorities, and deciding what we needed from the private sector. Luckily, we had two mayors back-to-back who focused on what, from a housing point of view, were the core issues.

**EH** About the time you became director of Citizens Housing and Planning Council, Mayor Bloomberg came out with his new PlaNYC 2030.

**JP** To have a mayor who puts out a plan like this for people to talk about is extraordinary. It raises another level of challenges for our government and our residents. Again, you've got to rethink the role of government: What does it do best? What problems is it really trying to solve? It's about challenging us as participants in the civic society. The real value of the 2030 plan is that it makes us consider what kind of a city we want NYC to be, how it's going to grow, and what it means to say you're going to add a million people by 2030 – and that's the *net* number they're projecting.

**EH** Yes, they are calculating in-migration, out-migration, births, deaths. But who will these million people be? What are their characteristics and demographics?

**JP** The newest New Yorkers will be what you see now, the fastest growing immigrant groups – people from South America, Central America, all over the globe – who come with different skill sets, issues, concerns. They're wonderfully diverse.



# Perine

**EH** Then there's population aging, the mongoose going through the snake.

**JP** Yes, there's a white non-Hispanic population and an African-American population that is shrinking slightly and aging. And there's this growing in-migration of foreign-born, now younger, but over the next 25 years beginning families and aging as well. That raises lots of issues. There have to be ways to adapt the existing housing stock for people as they age. That's going to be one of the big gaps. And the other big gap is that communities that attract new immigrants are not seeing the necessary increases in housing construction. Most new construction in the last five years has followed the city's strategies of rezoning old industrial areas, of increasing density in different places in Manhattan, the waterfront, downtown Brooklyn, etc. That's good, but Jackson Heights is not adding housing at that rate. And it's not likely that even a rezoned Jamaica will see a huge spike in construction.

The needs of households are also changing. We're doing some work at CHPC that suggests people are not forming households as they used to. For instance, there are many more single-headed households. And as housing standards improve, you have more people who can't afford them, so they are living outside those standards. For example, you have four recent college graduates living together, splitting the rent, although having more than three unrelated individuals in the same apartment is illegal under our standards of habitability.

**EH** But this is an economic necessity for many of them.

**JP** And a big social change. People are staying single much longer. Roommates are competing with families, pushing into the fragile, older rental stock with more housing purchasing dollars than a couple with two kids – an uneven competition. It's even happening in more traditionally ethnic neighborhoods.

**EH** So your point is that the tool has to relate to the problem, rather than "to a hammer, every problem is a nail." We need new tools for 2030.

**JP** And as hard as the city has worked to increase density, everywhere you're seeing neighborhood pushback. For instance, contextual zoning has basically zoned out elderly housing, because it has to have an elevator. It doesn't have to be a 20-story building, but it's got to be relatively tall. Every contextual zone is eliminating that, yet, given elderly needs, we should be screaming for more funding and more sites and looking for more ways to integrate the elderly into mainstream housing development.

**EH** The mayor's plan is an integrated one that relates housing to things like transit – not necessarily having clusters around transit stops everywhere, but within a 10-minute walk, trying to build in demand to make possible needed transit improvement.

**JP** But we've got a regulatory infrastructure that doesn't reflect those priorities – for instance, parking requirements in current zoning. You have to be careful when you make a plan. When everything is a priority, nothing is a priority. If you want to make reduction of automobiles a priority, don't require parking for 50% of the units you're building outside Manhattan. You can't have it both ways. That's pushing everybody to the opposite ends of the boat.

**EH** So the mayor's plan is not yet a plan. It's a strategy – maybe rather a series of interrelated plans that have to be different for different communities. To make it work, you're saying we have to have tools that are created for the new problems we're facing.

**JP** We have the most complicated Zoning Resolution on the planet, I'm sure. But look at what Buildings Department was able to achieve with the building code. It can work. You can take an old, arcane document and actually engage the industry in a constructive conversation to improve it. Somehow, our ability to do that with the Zoning Resolution has always failed; people get worn out and stop trying. That is not going to serve us well. We're now going into a recession. We can't find lenders to finance the construction of projects that were hot six months ago. This is not when you want to have the most complicated set of rules in the world. That is not going to aid our effort. We will need a regulatory infrastructure to meet the objectives of our vision of the future.

**Ernie Hutton, FAICP, Assoc. AIA**, is a planner/urban designer and principal of Hutton Associates Inc. His work focuses on downtown, cultural, and preservation planning, with a special emphasis on outreach and participation.



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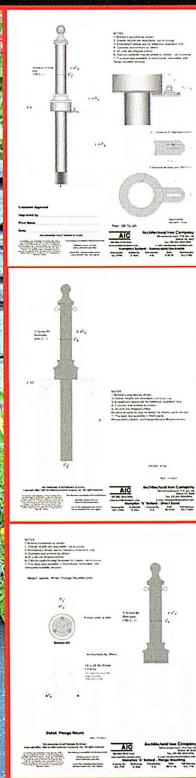
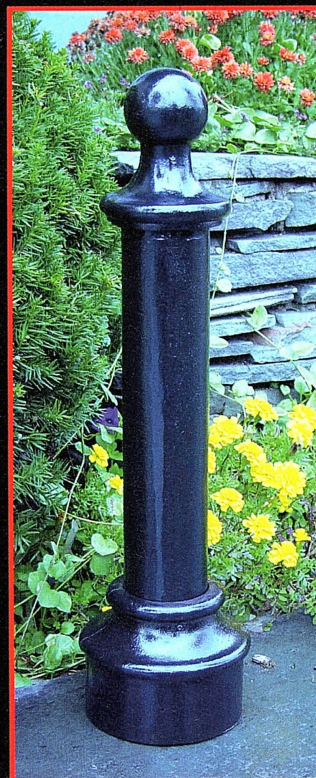
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# Fifth House

What major challenges do architects face in developing housing and neighborhoods as New York's population grows to more than 9 million by 2030?  
By Roger Yee

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**Affordable Housing: Myths and Realities 28**

**Senior Class 30**

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**New York's Zoning Resolution: High Times for a New Look 38**

**Mind Over Matter: Can neuroscience improve architectural design? 40**

**It's a nice place to visit, but you wouldn't want to live here.**

People have been saying this about New York for generations, even as the nation's largest city – a title it has held since the first census in 1790 – continues to grow. In 1944, Betty Comden and Adolph Green highlighted the paradox in their lyrics for “New York, New York” in Leonard Bernstein's *On the Town*. As they gleefully noted, “New York, New York/A visitor's place/Where no one lives on account of the pace/But seven million people are screaming for space.”

With a current population of 8.2 million that the city projects to reach 9.1 million by 2030, Mayor Michael Bloomberg's administration has developed PlaNYC 2030, a comprehensive plan to lay the groundwork for those 900,000 new residents. It's a refreshingly candid and progressive vision of the city. In reviewing the city's options for housing development, the plan openly acknowledges citizens' fears that change will erase the character of their communities, rather than enhance it. (For details, see [www.nyc.gov/html/planyc2030](http://www.nyc.gov/html/planyc2030).)

To assess the broad issues architects face in accommodating the pending human wave, *Oculus* spoke with a handful of knowledgeable people in the field, including AIA New York Chapter members active in housing projects. The challenges are complex, yet everyone agreed that the prospects look good for planning and designing housing New Yorkers actually need.

## **The rise of the foreign born**

Despite the alarm the media have expressed over the continuing flight of young, middle-class families, New York City is growing. A record 8.25 million people now reside in Gotham, according to U.S. Census Bureau data for 2006, a gain of some 40,000 since 2005. The increment is part of a long-term trend that has seen increases of 9.4% in New York, 6% in Los Angeles, and 4% in Chicago, compared to 13.1% in the nation as a whole, from 1990 to 2000.

What give these statistics a New York edge are the people making the city grow. “The real story in the census figures is the rise of the foreign born,” declares Jerilyn Perine, executive director of the Citizens Housing and Planning Council of New York. “The City Planning Commission is looking at neighborhoods where the foreign populations are, and predicting they will generate much of our future growth.” (See “So Says,” page 20.)

Planners are not the only New Yorkers noticing that 36% of the population is foreign born (compared to 41% in Los Angeles, 22% in Chicago, and 11% in the nation). Residents in all five boroughs have discovered that immigrants have established thriving communities with the distinct feel of faraway places like the Caribbean, Korea, and Russia. Typically located in places that had previously stagnated or declined, these communities have altered neighborhood development in an unexpected and healthy way. “Affordable housing has followed in the wake of the run-down stock New York City took over in the 1970s, in such places as the South Bronx and Bedford-Stuyvesant,” Perine explains. “Preserving these communities through public investment was a huge accomplishment, a big bet that paid off.”

Other demographic trends with implications for housing include the stabilization of the white population (44% in New York, 30% in Los Angeles, 31% in Chicago, and 69% in the nation), the increase in public school enrollment (now totaling 1.1 million students), the continuing desire among young people to start careers here, and the burgeoning ranks of the elderly. Even artists, the shock troops of urban renewal, have survived Manhattan's rising rents by finding new outposts in Brooklyn and Queens.



## Renewal's mixed blessings

With the highest population density in America at 26,403 people per square mile (compared to 7,877 in Los Angeles, 12,750 in Chicago, and 80 in the nation), the Big Apple has little if any room for new residents in many neighborhoods. Not only does this cause available land and existing homes to soar in value in established neighborhoods, it also exposes transitional neighborhoods to gentrification and displacement of established residents.

Part of the problem is how much density New Yorkers want and tolerate. "The city has reduced its allowable density and limited its ability to accommodate growth," explains Mark Ginsberg, FAIA, principal of Curtis & Ginsberg Architects. "If most neighborhoods are already built out, land prices soar when the population grows." As Ginsberg points out, New York's 1916 zoning plan called for a build-out for a population of 40 million, a 1961 revision anticipated a peak of 12 million, and PlaNYC 2030 sets a cap of 10 million. One consequence of the drop in maximum density is that even if Manhattan reaches a target population of 1.7 million by 2030, it will still fall short of the more than 2 million it sheltered in the early 20th century.

In addition, PlaNYC 2030 designates several areas for a "Potential Population Growth Scenario," including Lower Manhattan, St. George on Staten Island, downtown Brooklyn, the South Bronx, and Jamaica, Queens. Fostering growth in these areas would take pressure off the neighborhoods encircling the city's central business district in Midtown Manhattan and launch satellite business and residential centers to exploit the extensive infrastructure in the new areas of opportunity.

## Immigrant communities have altered neighborhood development in an unexpected and healthy way.

"The transformation of neighborhoods like Williamsburg by young people and immigrant populations is good," argues James McCullar, FAIA, principal of James McCullar & Associates, Architects and 2008 president of the AIA New York Chapter. "The Bloomberg administration has helped the process by patiently rezoning communities, using low density to preserve some areas, while raising the density elsewhere. It's important that it acknowledges both historic values and present-day realities. We want to preserve the old schoolhouse, but we'd also like a corner deli."

Conflict may be all but inevitable in some transitional areas, as established residents resist changes triggered by population growth. For example, Manhattan's Meatpacking District and Lower East Side are abruptly shedding their 19th-century aura as they become magnets for the young and hip, and Brooklyn's Atlantic Yards project may never cause all residents to swoon over the coming of a sports stadium, office and apartment towers, and architecture by Frank Gehry, FAIA. Turf battles are enshrined in city lore. "New York has been a company town since 1648, attracting people who come to do business," Perine reminds architects. "In the past, this has caused us to be ruthless with our heritage. But that doesn't mean we can't have preservation with growth today."

EDWARD REED



Mayor Bloomberg presenting PlaNYC.

## A call for new housing

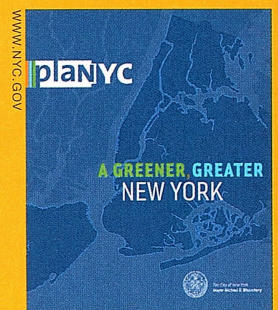
Architects engaged in market and affordable housing are painfully aware of longstanding issues that make housing an endless source of controversy. Besides being too costly for many New Yorkers, housing is trapped in a regulatory framework of housing codes, multiple dwelling laws, and other regulations designed for 1950s society. Adding insult to injury, housing has only been rediscovered recently as a building type worthy of serious attention by New York architects. New Yorkers of all walks of life know how overpriced, mediocre, and ill-suited much post-war housing architecture is.

"Approximately 80% of New Yorkers can't afford market housing," Ginsberg believes. "Take 30% of the median household income of around \$40,000, and you have \$1,000 a month for rent. What will that get you?" Home ownership starts at \$200,000 for 1,000 square feet

### Where will we house 900,000 more New Yorkers?

PlaNYC 2030 addresses the problem with multiple strategies that show considerable promise:

- \* **Continue publicly initiated rezonings: Pursue transit-oriented development, reclaim underutilized waterfronts, and increase transit options to spur development.**
- \* **Create new housing on public land: Expand co-locations with government agencies, and adapt outdated buildings to new uses.**
- \* **Explore additional areas of opportunity: Develop underused areas to knit neighborhoods together, capture the potential of transportation infrastructure investments, and deck over rail yards, rail lines, and highways.**
- \* **Expand targeted affordability programs: Develop new financing strategies, expand inclusionary zoning, encourage homeownership, and preserve the existing stock of affordable housing throughout New York City.**





– before land and soft costs. New Yorkers not lucky enough to have rented or bought years ago must share rental units or tolerate less than optimal living conditions.

New initiatives suggest that better housing is on its way. Lance Jay Brown, FAIA, principal of Lance Jay Brown, FAIA Architecture + Urban Design and founding member of the Steering Committee for New Housing New York, indicates that more architects are aware of the age-specific role housing can play in serving New Yorkers. “In our lifetime, we progress from modest beginnings to prosperity to retirement, and our housing should offer appropriate choices at each stage,” he asserts. “We should be housing people of all ages in units designed for their needs: the young wage earner, the family raising children, and the retiring worker returning from the suburb. Looking beyond the traditional studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom model would enable all income classes to co-exist.”

**“We should be housing people of all ages in units designed for their needs.”**  
– Lance Jay Brown, FAIA

#### A housing renaissance?

Initiatives from the city such as PlaNYC 2030 and forward-thinking management at various key city agencies, such as the Department of Design and Construction and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, should also raise planning and design standards for affordable and market housing alike. “You can’t distinguish the best affordable housing from market housing anymore,” McCullar claims. While some of his colleagues may not agree with him, new affordable housing projects are incorporating usable public areas, attractive façades, convenient parking, and retail space. Most projects mix affordable and market housing with common entrances so residents are indistinguishable by income.

So, while high-stakes real-estate developers and their “starchitects” send wealthy New Yorkers to exquisite jewel boxes in the sky, more down-to-earth non-profit organizations and enlightened builders are bringing better housing to areas ignored by the media or known mainly to immigrant populations. Is this housing renaissance for real? Listen to Wids DeLaCour, AIA, a principal of DeLaCour & Ferrara Architects and co-chair of the AIANY Housing Committee: “I like low-rise, high-density housing, though it has been hard to do,” admits DeLaCour, who focuses on housing projects in Brooklyn. “Thanks to a new housing code that the AIA helped prepare, there’s now more opportunity to create affordable ‘quality housing’ that is short and squat and works with new zoning requirements to reflect the way neighborhoods really function.”

Can time, money, and the best efforts of architects working with their clients and the city get New Yorkers the housing they actually want? We hope we won’t have to wait until 2030 to find out.

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

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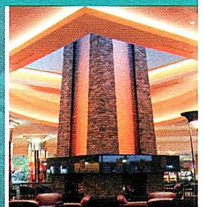
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How once-illegal dwellings evolved  
into chic residences worldwide

By Gabriela Hodara

# Loft Living: Learning from Manhattan

GABRIELA HODARA



In the Palermo neighborhood of Buenos Aires, Hollywood 1 is among a number of new residential projects offering the aura of loft living

It all began in Manhattan in the 1950s by artists in search of places where they could afford to live and work – usually an abandoned building formerly used for industrial or commercial purposes. The loft became the answer to their prayers: the American reincarnation of the distinctive Parisian atelier. Lofts provided an abundance of natural light and vast spaces. Tall ceilings enabled work on large pieces, and undivided floor plans promoted a mix of personal and artistic life. Emergence of the loft phenomenon was a successful merger between the needs of the initial tenants and the space available in former industrial buildings.

The growing worldwide popularity of loft living owes its beginnings to these accidental trailblazers. Their many transgressions included rebelling against zoning restrictions that once made it illegal to use such buildings as dwellings. Those restrictions made sense when industrial and commercial enterprises swamped a neighborhood, but not after these businesses left the area. By rebelling against the now inadequate zoning regulations, artists were on the side of renewing life in parts of the city prone to misuse and decay. The rules were so tough that the early loft pioneers disposed of their garbage several blocks away to hide where they actually lived.

## Europe-bound

It didn't take long for the concept of loft living to cross the Atlantic. In Berlin, it started in the Kreuzberg neighborhood, an area containing a vast array of former industrial buildings from the 1800s. After the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the Kreuzberg was isolated on the outskirts of the city, with most structures abandoned and facing the threat of demolition. By the 1980s, most of the Kreuzberg's buildings were still standing but vacant. They were saved from demolition by members of the Okupa movement – squatters who settled in them illegally.

Loft living emerged as housing options in other parts of Europe as well, and during the 1970s and 80s it was seen as a lifestyle mostly for the eccentric, creative, and wealthy. It wasn't until the early 1990s that developers, namely the Manhattan Loft Corporation, massively introduced lofts as residences to the London real estate market. The United Kingdom has since become Europe's epicenter for loft developments.

## South of the border

South America also is on to the trend. Lofts there have become so desirable for people who want to live in style that some developers of new buildings advertise "loft-style" apartments. Leading the transformation are Buenos Aires, Argentina, and São Paulo, Brazil – thanks, in part, to the efforts of residents and developers to provide non-traditional housing options.

Buenos Aires, which boasts a curious blend of conservatism, entrepreneurial spirit, and persistent population growth, is experiencing a well-deserved makeover of its downtown area and surround-



ings. Puerto Madero, a river strip lined with huge warehouses once used for storing cargo, is ahead of the curve in architectural innovations. For more than a decade, locals have masterfully restored old buildings, blurring the limits between the port and the city and effectively extending the downtown area, much as on Manhattan's South Street Seaport. Refurbishments include historical buildings turned into elegant, stylish office space featuring lofts on the upper floors, and sumptuous restaurants along the waterfront. These reinvented docks offer apartments that are in sharp contrast to other close-by luxury rentals.

Casa FOA, a design fair held every year in Buenos Aires since 1985, has also helped disseminate the loft concept, acting as a catalyst for renovation and redevelopment. With the 1989 restoration of a former textile factory in the Colegiales district, for instance, the area bloomed and became a magnet for actors and entertainers wishing to live in an alternative yet fashionable way. Moreover, the old cookie factory where Casa FOA was headquartered in 2006, in the one-time industrial neighborhood of Barracas, has also been converted into residential lofts.

### Industrial chic

Although contemporary lofts around the world include renovated industrial buildings, old farmhouses, and garages, they do not necessarily originate as a way to re-function structures from the past. In fact, architects and developers are designing and constructing new buildings that include loft-style apartments. To prospective tenants these apartments are seen as different, cool, and funky – like movie sets for a New York romance. The impact of this industrial chic is everywhere to be seen.

In São Paulo, the city's first lofts were built as new residential buildings, recreating such characteristic traits as open plans flooded with natural light, exposed brick walls, hardwood floors, iron beams, and high ceilings. That's because most of the city's industrial buildings are in districts that lack the basic services and infrastructure that would make them suitable for residential use. So, while Manhattan lofts emerged due to the exodus of industrial and commercial activities from areas fit for residential purposes, in São Paulo they had to be created fresh as false lofts.

Some of these initiatives might suggest that the essence of loft living has lost touch with its humble origins, but modifications from the original



GABRIELA HODARA



GABRIELA HODARA

**Top: Puerto Madero in Buenos Aires: from port warehouses to lofts and restaurants “à la mode” Bottom: An old cookie factory in the one-time industrial neighborhood of Barracas in Buenos Aires is now residential lofts and HQ for the Casa FOA design fair**

concept may be more lasting and influential than the pioneers had ever foreseen. Good ideas are rare – and in housing markets notable for being traditional and predictable, lofts are too good an idea to ignore.

Gabriela Hodara is an architect at Davis Brody Bond Aedas in New York City. An Italian and Uruguayan citizen educated in Uruguay and the United States, she wrote her final university thesis on “Lofts: The Manhattan Experience.”





# Affordable Housing: Myths and Realities

Architects, developers, and officials give the inside scoop on non-market housing in NYC

By Bill Millard

**MHG Architects: Hobbs Court on East 102 Street, for Phipps Houses | Urban Builders Collaborative and sponsored by NYCHA and HPD, includes 261 units of affordable and Section 8 housing**

A look at practically anyone's rent bill makes it obvious: affordable housing is New York's severest need. Yet knowledgeable architects, developers, and officials characterize the city's affordable housing optimistically, despite these common misconceptions:

## Myth 1: Affordable housing is warehousing for the poor

"The number one myth," says developer Jonathan Rose, "is that people at different income levels don't want to live together." Amid successful collaborations with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), including the new Via Verde (see sidebar), the Rose Companies president cites as counterexamples the New Housing Opportunity Program's 50/30/20 developments, reflecting respective percentages of market-rate, middle-income, and low-income apartments.

Spokesperson Howard Marder of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) distinguishes local public housing from projects elsewhere that concentrated the lowest-income residents in isolated, indefensible spaces. "It was never meant to be welfare housing; 44.6% of our population are working families," he says. Also unfounded are NIMBYish beliefs that affordable development is cheaply built and degrades land values. Adam Weinstein, president and CEO of nonprofit builder Phipps Houses Group, observes that affordable and market buildings differ little in quality. "The things that drive the cost of construction have less to do with affordability to the end user and much more to do with basic elements of construction methods," he says.

NYCHA buildings tend to stabilize neighborhoods, not stand apart from them. Deputy General Manager for Capital Projects Louie Rueda, RA, mentions the \$3-million condos being built across the street from Fort Greene's Whitman-Ingersoll veterans' residence as a testament to interclass compatibility. Moreover, HPD and NYCHA are addressing the middle-class gap, says HPD Assistant Commissioner

Holly Leicht, through new programs aimed at residents earning 100% to 175% of area mean income (AMI).

## Myth 2: Government programs are becoming extinct

Federal support has been sorely lacking, but the city government has stepped in where the market has failed. The 2004 New Housing Marketplace Plan aims to create and preserve 165,000 units by 2013. HPD is taking over 100,000 abandoned units through tax foreclosure and incentivizing new developments. At this writing, 69,000 units of affordable housing had been created or preserved, according to HPD Press Officer Neil Coleman.

## Via Verde: The Bronx Is Greening

The South Bronx will soon host a model mixed-use development combining design excellence, community services, and sustainability. The New Housing New York Legacy Project, a juried competition involving AIA NY, HPD, NYSEDA, Enterprise Community Partners, and the Center for Architecture Foundation, selected an all-star team of two developers and two leading architecture firms to create a unique but replicable community on a city-donated railroad brownfield site. Remediation begins this year, with completion set for 2011.

Phipps Rose Dattner Grimshaw's Via Verde will link multiple building styles (an 18-story tower, a mid-rise duplex, and townhouses), blending urban and agrarian life with a unified rooftop fruit and vegetable garden. Its design maximizes natural daylight and ventilation alongside geothermal and photovoltaic technologies. Public, private, and semi-private green spaces combine with LEED Gold-level construction and materials to create a uniquely biophilic atmosphere. Self-sufficiency includes an on-site primary-care clinic, fitness center, and Just Food co-op.



### Myth 3: Affordability means no-frills construction

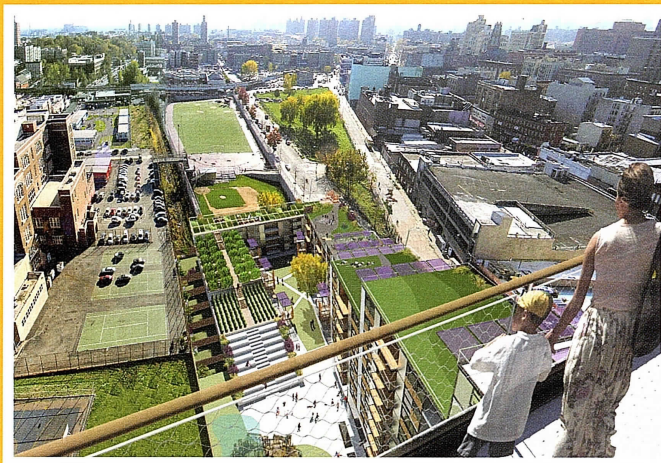
Clockwork Orange-style deathtraps, Brutalist in style and brutal in atmosphere, were never dominant here. Developers “realize there’s a payback to making it as nice a building as possible, making residents proud,” says MHG Architects Co-Principal Michael Gelfand, AIA. “When they’re not, it becomes a bigger issue to manage a building.” Gelfand and MHG President Herbert Mandel, AIA, find mid-rise designs emerging as the optimal scale for manageability and economic efficiency.

James McCullar, FAIA, 2008 AIANY Chapter President, credits former NYCHA Design Director David Burney, FAIA, and HPD’s Barbara Skarbinski, AIA, for raising recent standards: more light, better security, new community centers, integration with streetscapes. HPD also supports impressive small-scale projects like the 18-unit Chelsea Court for Palladia (formerly Project Return Foundation), where economical renovations by Louise Braverman, FAIA, won the 2003 AIA-NYS Merit in Design award.

### Myth 4: Green design is too costly for affordable buildings

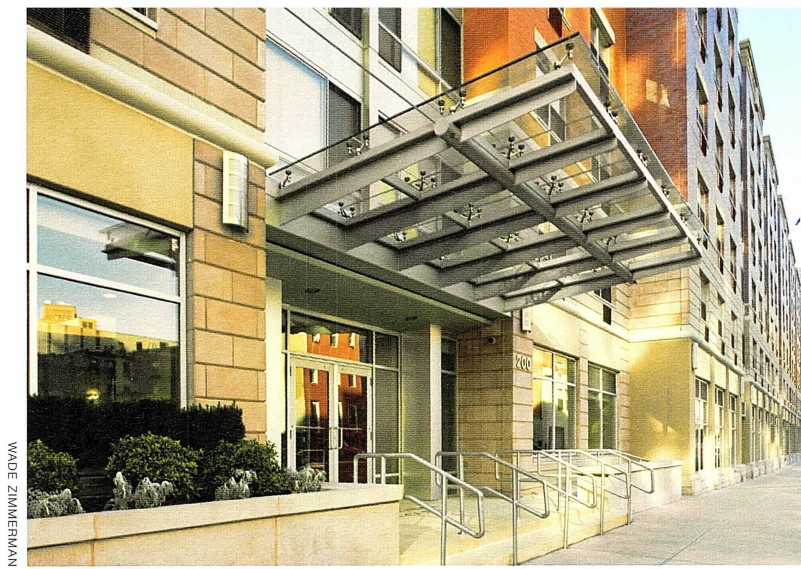
Even the most energetic sustainability advocates acknowledge that a green premium still exists. “Talk to ten different developers and contractors” about the size of the premium, says Mandel, “and you’ll get ten different answers.” But the payback in energy savings is substantial, whether it’s recouped in two years or 20. McCullar says greening appeals to many financially tight projects: when the not-for-profit Ridgewood-Bushwick Senior Citizens Council enlists consultant Steven Winter Associates, “they’re not being idealistic, saying, ‘Let’s do a green building.’ They’re saying ‘How can we cut our costs?’”

Everyone building green affordable housing has favorite energy-saving strategies – rooftop boilers for Rose, tankless water heaters for Marder and Rueda, CFL bulbs for Mandel and Gelfand – and green features have advantages beyond the utility bill. Rose notes that pho-



**Looking down on the green roofs of Phipps Rose Dattner Grimshaw's Via Verde**

City, state, and federal subsidies allow a mix of low- and moderate-income rentals, plus co-ops for families making up to 130% of AMI. AIANY President McCullar describes Via Verde as an exemplary project that may lead the way for green schools, libraries, and justice facilities.



**James McCullar & Associates: State Renaissance Court, Brooklyn, a 158-unit, structurally innovative 50/30/20 building atop the Hoyt-Schermerhorn subway station, with middle-income units as the 20%**

tovoltaics can provide shading as well as power. Weinstein reports fewer employee sick days after Phipps adopted non-volatile-organic-compound paint and green cleaning chemicals. Backers need these benefits translated into financial terms, says NYCHA Assistant Deputy General Manager for Development Ilene Popkin: “Lenders don’t yet take into account, in their underwriting of affordable housing, the energy savings that are going to be there.”

### Myth 5: That city apartment is going to be sold out from under you

“I don’t know how many times I’ve said we have no intention of selling a property,” says NYCHA’s Marder. “We don’t gain anything by kicking people out of their apartments.” The authority has issued RFPs for infill developments on underused spaces such as parking lots, adding mixed-income housing without privatizing existing residences.

### Myth 6: Current responses are adequate to the city’s needs

Every effort faces formidable obstacles: finding space, keeping up with construction costs, navigating regulations. Some developers, particularly smaller ones, find the process too onerous to pursue, even for 80/20 tax abatements. Section 8 vouchers have been confined to emergency applicants since May 2007. Mitchell-Lama properties have expiration dates (usually 20 years); mandating permanent affordability would require government to break its promise to owners, notes Weinstein, and refinancing to preserve affordability means finding stakeholders committed to remaining in the program. NYCHA has more than 120,000 families wait-listed.

As the Center for Housing Policy recently reported,\* housing costs are outpacing earnings nationwide, with a particularly acute gap in New York. The bright side of the picture is that NYC, while leading the nation in the scope of the problem, also remains a leader in the public commitment to solve it.

\*Paycheck to Paycheck: Wages and the Cost of Housing in America, January 29, 2008 (<http://www.nhc.org/chp/p2p/>).

Bill Millard is a freelance writer and editor whose work has appeared in *Oculus*, *Icon*, *Content*, *The Architect's Newspaper*, and other publications.



# Senior Class

Aging gracefully is the  
name of the game

By Richard Staub

What is the best environment for aging? It is clear that there's no-one-size-fits-all answer as Baby Boomers enter their senior years. The standard model for retirement living is the Continuous Care Retirement Community (CCRC), which is usually located in the suburbs. Its facilities include independent living (your own apartment with shared facilities such as evening dining), assisted living (someone comes to help with daily needs like dressing, cooking, and bathing), and nursing home (for those bedridden and dependent on others for help with most or all functions). Though the architecture and interior design of CCRCs tend to be cozy traditional with suggestions of the shingle style, there are great variations in that model as for-profit and not-for-profit providers and Baby Boomers themselves create other options.

## Community of choices

For starters, many seniors are choosing to stay in their own homes as long as possible, hiring home care as they need it, and then going directly to a nursing home when at-home assistance isn't sufficient. "It's not uncommon for neighborhoods to become virtual independent living and assisted living communities as the residents age," says Richard Rosen, AIA, a principal of Perkins Eastman and head of the New York office's senior living practice. "Most seniors want to stay in the communities where their friends are, and that can mean either staying put or moving to a nearby CCRC where they know people. This is beginning to include likeminded groups such as gays and faith-based centers."

Baby Boomers' values influence what they look for in facilities, according to Rosen. For them, every person is special and has an

MILROY AND MCALEER PHOTOGRAPHY



**Perkins Eastman: Japan's first urban high-rise CCRC is the 31-story Sun City Ginza East in Tokyo, and includes a podium with two levels of public space and 134 units of nursing-specific floors above; the top 24 floors contain 276 independent living apartments**

individual destiny, looks for opportunities to improve if not perfect his or her life, and always wants a choice. They view themselves as being at least 10 years younger and want facilities that will cater to their wide variety of interests.

Both for-profit and not-for-profit providers do detailed research to understand the preferences of the particular demographic they serve. As a result, CCRCs now offer a greater variety of facilities and programs. The large, all-purpose dining hall has been replaced with a café for coffee and light snacks, a bistro for sandwiches and informal meals, and a formal dining room. There are also extensive wellness centers that include fitness equipment, a pool, and other amenities; lounges; beauty salons; libraries; and activity rooms. Indeed, the model for CCRCs is shifting from hospital to hotel, with upscale versions resembling trendy boutique hotels with a sophisticated ambience.

CHUCK CHOI ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY



**Perkins Eastman: Kendal on Hudson, Sleepy Hollow, NY, a combination of 222 independent living apartments, 24 enriched housing residences, and 42 skilled nursing units, is a CCRC based on the Quaker ideals of respect and inclusion for all, regardless of age or ability**





WOODRUFF BROWN PHOTOGRAPHY

**Gruzen Samton: Jacob Reingold Pavilion, a long-term care facility, provides 170 residents with a variety of social amenities including lounges, a museum, and a spa/pool**

### Town and gown

"The changing demographic also calls for more CCRCs in cities," says Michael Gelfand, AIA, principal of Michael H. Gelfand Architects and a long-time advocate for affordable housing. "Urban dwellers who've retired want to take advantage of what a city offers. That combination of facilities could easily be stacked in a high-rise building, like the combined hotel and residential condominium towers now rising in New York City. The Time Warner Center would have been a terrific place for such a complex."

Colleges and universities are beginning to welcome retirement communities adjacent to the campus for loyal alums who see their alma mater as a source of cultural, intellectual, and physical stimulation. Developers are including facilities that would be of mutual benefit to the university and retirees, such as classrooms, conference complexes, and fitness centers.



MICHAEL BERARDISCO

**MHG Architects: Seaview Senior Housing, a six-building, 352-resident affordable assisted living and independent living campus for the Sea View Hospital Historic District on Staten Island**

Another option is co-housing, a type of collaborative housing that began in Europe, originally for young families. Sustainable co-housing communities created by like-minded elderly, such as Elder Spirit in Abingdon, Virginia, consist of 20 to 60 private homes and shared spaces for dining, gatherings, and other functions. Residents actively participate in the design and operation of their neighborhoods and make a commitment to living as a community.

### Neighborhood models

Also shaping the design of facilities for the aging are new ideas about how to treat dementia – and especially Alzheimer's – and the best environments for nursing homes. Rosen says that planners of nursing facilities have switched from a medical to a neighborhood model. The nursing station becomes a resource center, with rooms clustered around to allow more interaction. Special units for Alzheimer's and dementia patients can likewise include a neighborhood environment with secure "wandering houses" and garden "wander paths" with activity areas along the route.



STAN RIES

**Gruzen Samton: Sunrise at Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, a 104-unit senior living community offering services ranging from independent living to Alzheimer's care, includes a 24-hour bistro and a lighthouse-inspired fourth-floor screened porch**

One CCRC that has successfully adjusted to the changes in senior living is The Hebrew Home in Riverdale, New York, according to Peter Samton, FAIA, a partner with Gruzen Samton Architects. "We've built seven buildings for the home's campus over the last 40 years, and they've adapted to new styles of senior care, anticipating many facilities that other complexes now call for." The most immediate example is a Judaica museum, designed by Louise Braverman, FAIA, of Louise Braverman, Architect, which will display historic artifacts from New York City's Jewish Museum collection that are usually kept in storage. Located on the ground floor of the Gruzen Samton-designed Jacob Reingold Pavilion, "the museum galleries will look as contemporary as any found in Chelsea," says Braverman.

Facilities for our aging population will continue to undergo change. This is partly dictated by longer life spans, continuing research about how we age, and a better appreciation of what keeps body, mind, and spirit vital. And the senior population of each generation will, in many ways, be leading the charge. For, as the mainstream culture focuses on how young people define themselves, retirees are having their own say about what makes life and living meaningful.

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



# The New College Try

How to attract ambitious young people to New York – and keep them here

By Rachel Schauer

New York has long been a destination for young people, whether to attend school or pursue their dreams to “make it big.” The city has relied on its cultural and economic attributes to maintain a steady young population, and universities have fed off the city’s diverse amenities to sell themselves to students. But as other cities step up the competition by offering reliable public transportation, vibrant nightlife, open spaces, and, most importantly, affordable housing, New York risks pricing out the very population that has established its reputation in the first place. The good news is that universities are finding ways to design spaces that attract students and keep them in the city. And young people are using their own ingenuity to make affordable spaces work for them.

## On Campus

Faced with the challenge of attracting a more diverse body of stu-

dents, the City College of New York saw on-campus housing as a major opportunity. The college asked Goshow Architects to design the school’s first residence hall, an 180,000-square-foot facility with 164 apartments. The architects worked closely with administrators and students to get a sense of the kind of housing preferred. “Students wanted suite-style living,” says Eric Goshow, AIA, LEED AP, a partner at Goshow Architects. “Dormitory-style was definitely out.”

To keep costs affordable for students, Goshow designed spaces and chose finishes with an eye towards efficiency rather than luxury. Larger perks, such as lounge spaces, coffee stations, and a fitness center, create a community feel within the hall. Kitchen, dining, and living spaces provide students individual areas and encourage the independence to acclimate to New York. College administrators hope the students will feel comfortable enough in the city that they will remain here after graduation.

CHUCK CHOI ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY



The Towers at CCNY by Goshow Architects: Stunning views from student lounges give a sense of city life in the school’s first residence hall



At the Bronx campus of Fordham University, dorm facilities were already in place but needed refinement. With its Tierney Hall project, designed by Helpern Architects, the school hoped not only to upgrade the options available, but also to redefine the lifestyles of students in what has been aptly called “live/learn spaces.” Tierney is a conventional dorm fused with common spaces in which residents also attend classes; at night, these spaces become study and lounge areas wired with the latest technologies.

To strike a balance between comfort and function, Helpern Architects chose finishes and furniture that are both welcoming and practical. Slate tile and new carpeting add color and texture, while moveable walls and furniture on castors offer flexibility in common



**An uncovered brick wall and resurfaced floors add warmth to Daniel Ludevig's loft space.**

areas. Subtle details, such as lowered ceilings along corridors, break up the monotony of institutional staleness often found in dorm buildings. Upgraded kitchens, lounges, and coffee bars were also added throughout the facility. “The transition from a comfortable home to a dorm can be difficult,” explains Robert Carroll, project designer at Helpern. “We wanted to give [residents] something that would be reminiscent of where they came from.” Students respect their spaces more because they remind them of home. In return, the spaces allow students to ease safely into city life.

## Off Campus

While dorms offer secure and reliable living accommodations, the pull of larger spaces, cheaper rents, and freedom from university regulations off campus can be too strong for some young people to resist. New York University, however, may be on to something. The school's new graduate residence hall in Brooklyn Heights is an existing rental building that offers apartment-style living for 115 students, with a courtesy van for nightly commuting (yet many students are understandably disappointed to pay Manhattan prices for a Brooklyn zip code).

Though it is said to have the best student housing in the city, even Columbia University accommodations can't always sway its students to live in its dormitories. Urban design student Jenny Chou, for example, was unwilling to give up her Fort Greene space when she was accepted to graduate school. The commute may be an hour and a half each way, but the neighborhood, open floor plan, and reasonable

price are enough incentive for her to remain in Brooklyn. Concrete floors offer industrial charm rather than the modern sterility of most dorm housing, and Chou's favorite feature – high ceilings – stretch the utility of her 500 square feet, allowing for a large loft bed.

Around the corner, Katie Commodore, 29, studio manager at Maya Lin Studio, found her perfect space in an old Tootsie Roll factory rehabbed by Hugo S. Subotovsky A.I.A. Architects. Though her rent is comparable to those in Manhattan, Commodore is able to have a full one-bedroom apartment with ample space for her art studio. Boasting an open floor plan, exposed columns and beams, and oversized windows, she values the sheer size of her loft space the most. Juggling full-time work and many other obligations, the artist is left



**Tierney Hall by Helpern Architects: Lounges with the latest technologies provide both study and leisure spaces for students.**

with little time to focus on her own projects, hence the benefit of an in-home studio. “When I come home, I'm surrounded by my art and I think, ‘I'm supposed to be working!’” says Commodore. In an art scene as competitive as New York's, the extra motivation can mean all the difference to her success.

While some young New Yorkers find affordable solutions in other boroughs, those willing to put in a little elbow grease can hit upon dream spaces in Manhattan. Daniel Ludevig, a junior designer at Kushner Studios, saw beneath the crude exterior of his showroom-turned-loft-space in Midtown. After uncovering an original brick wall and fireplace, resurfacing hardwood floors, and building structural walls to create private bedrooms and storage, the space now expresses the recent graduate's unique vision more than an already finished apartment could. His attitude captures a common sentiment among young creative people who seek unusual spaces more reflective of their personalities and lifestyles. “The people who have the coolest apartments are the ones who say, ‘I couldn't find what I was looking for, so I made it on my own,’” declares Ludevig with pride. When asked why he invests so much time and money in a space he's only renting, he gives an answer most people can relate to: at the end of the day, it's nice to come back to a place that feels like home.

Rachel Schauer is concentrating her graduate studies on architecture and sociology at New York University's Gallatin School. She also is an e-Oculus contributor and its graphic designer.

NORMAN MCGRAITH





**Above: The 131,000-square-foot Bayamon Correctional Medical Center, a joint venture by Urbahn Architects and DS+C Architects & Engineers of San Juan, centralizes Puerto Rico's correctional medical and psychiatric services** **Left: The Brooklyn Federal Detention Center, designed by Urbahn Architects, includes 1,000 maximum-security cells located in the Bush Terminal historic warehouse district**

# Reforming Prison Design

Architects are thinking outside the box – for those who have to live in one

By Linda G. Miller

There's no place like OZ, a fictional maximum state penitentiary featured in the controversial HBO series of same name. OZ portrayed an experimental high-tech unit where inmates lived in glass-enclosed cells, and rehabilitation and learning responsibility were emphasized. Perhaps this life in a fishbowl was designed for aesthetic reasons, or maybe the show's creators were making a statement about prison reform.

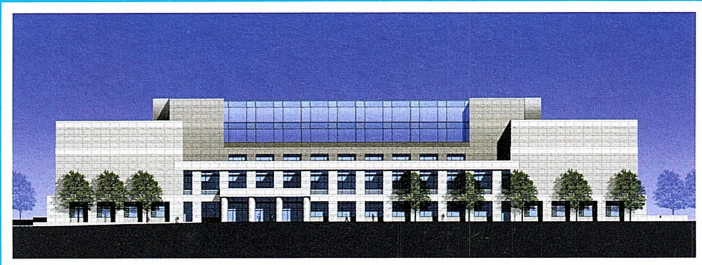
An estimated 2 million people are currently incarcerated in the U.S. – a population the size of Houston. To house them, architects working in justice planning and design, which includes courthouses, pre-trial detention centers, and post-trial penitentiaries, are creating facilities not as futuristic as OZ, but certainly not as archaic as the landing-cellblock design of a Sing Sing or San Quentin. "Architecture should act as a therapeutic tool," according to Kenneth Ricci, FAIA, president of Ricci Greene Associates, who has been designing correctional facilities for 40 years.

Indeed, many newer prisons are designed in a decentralized "podular" layout with individual self-contained housing units arranged around a central control station. Direct supervision, a progressive management system, is said to control inmate behavior by combining architectural design with a philosophy that believes in behavioral boundaries instead of physical ones. Instead of being housed by crime committed, inmates are housed based on their behavior, ranging from minimum to maximum security, and correctional officers are stationed inside the living unit with the inmates. These program-intensive facilities allow inmates to pursue educational, counseling, and recreational opportunities and are said to be more humane and safer for inmates and staff. They also reduce the likelihood of re-offense and recidivism, and are even less expensive to operate. Following formal recognition by the National Institute of Corrections in 1983, direct supervision has been endorsed by the American Jail Association and the AIA Committee on Architecture for Justice.

The new approach to prison design is being adopted in New York City, where the average daily inmate population of the Department of Correction (DOC) fluctuates between 13,000 and 18,000. On 400-acre Rikers Island alone, the population can swell to 17,000 inmates among 10 distinct jail facilities – seven for male detainees, one for sentenced males, another for sentenced and detained females, and a detention center for adolescent males. To help relieve conditions at the aging and isolated Rikers, the DOC now proposes to decentralize prisons in each borough to bring inmates closer to the courts, social services, legal counsel, and families.

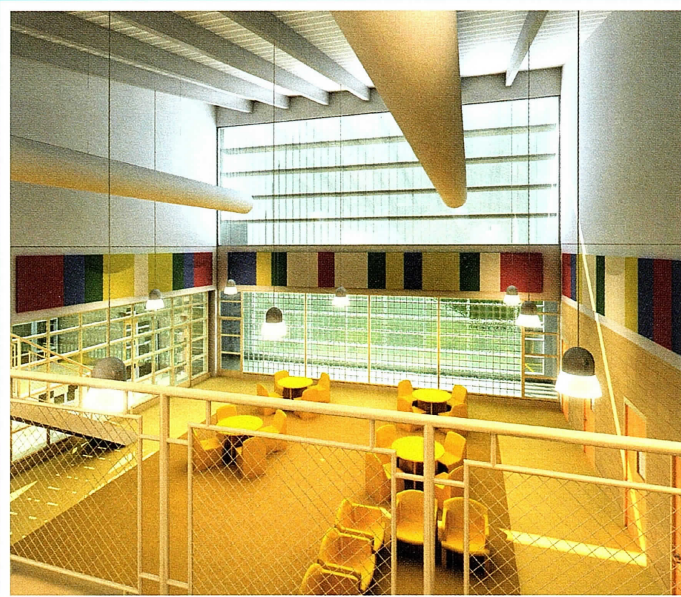
An idea currently being floated is to reopen and expand the Brooklyn House of Detention in Boerum Hill. The NYC Economic Development Corporation issued a Request for Expressions of Interest calling for inclusion of residential and/or retail establishments. One proposal, from a team of for-profit and not-for-profit developers with Rogers Marvel Architects and Rotterdam-based MVRDV, suggested replacing the existing facility with a Re-Entry and Rehabilitation Center. The center would be surrounded by Common Ground Community First Step Housing and affordable and market-rate housing, and a new, smaller detention center would be built nearby. The





HARTMAN-COX ARCHITECTS

**Above: Ricci Greene Associates' programming for the Denver Detention Center, designed by Hartman-Cox Architects and OZ Architecture, will include a variety of direct-supervision housing units. Right: Union County Juvenile Justice Center, Linden, NJ, by Ricci Greene Associates, uses daylight, playful colors, and acoustic materials to create a more normative environment for residents.**



HYPERTEXTURE STUDIO

proposal was rejected, however, because it did not address the objective to retain the existing building.

### A new generation of correctional facilities

"We're designing as humanely as possible for a specific subculture, and we are constantly learning how creative inmates can be," says Donald Henry, Jr., AIA, LEED AP, principal at Urbahn Architecture. "It is our job to design so they cannot harm themselves or others or vandalize property, and, unfortunately, this is one population that can charette longer than an architect." Henry has lived and breathed projects for federal, state, and local agencies during his 20 years working in this sector. One of his early projects is the White Street Jail, a 500-bed addition to the Manhattan House of Detention and the first "mixed-use" facility, featuring a two-story street front set aside for commercial and community use, with inmates residing in the tower above. A project currently on the boards is a hybrid medical/correctional facility for the Puerto Rico Department of Corrections.

Another project designed by Urbahn is the 2,000-bed Federal Detention Center at Bush Terminal in Brooklyn, occupying an entire 3 ½-acre city block. One third of an existing warehouse was adapted to accommodate a 500-bed interim facility, and the remainder was demolished to make way for a new nine-story building. The first three floors contain administrative and support functions. General housing occupies floors four through eight, with each floor containing three housing units grouped around administration offices. Each housing unit contains 63 cells, recreation rooms, dining and day rooms, a food preparation area, an officer's station, and a large outdoor recreation area. The ninth floor contains two special-needs housing units of 31 beds each, a small outdoor recreation area, a visiting room, a law library, and a hearing room.

### Promoting reintegration

"Environment cues behavior," says Ricci of Ricci Greene Associates, who credits prison reformer Donald H. Goff as his mentor. Therefore, a "normative environment" cues normative behavior. Ricci's firm practices what it preaches, as is evident from its three recently completed juvenile facilities: the Union County Juvenile Justice Center in Linden, New

Jersey; the Superior Court and Center for Juvenile Matters in Bridgeport, Connecticut; and the Rhode Island Training School in Cranston, Rhode Island, which could be mistaken for a corporate or college campus. Though different in size and scope, the facilities are designed to teach basic living skills, including respect for oneself, others, and property, and to promote the eventual reintegration into the community. Normative environments are quiet and full of daylight. Glass replaces bars, toilets and sinks are separate from sleeping spaces, the dining room has regular tables and chairs. For the training school, the building itself forms a "square donut" with an internal recreational courtyard, eliminating the need for the facility – and its inmates – to be fenced-in.

Currently, Ricci Greene is planning and programming the 1,500-bed Denver Detention Center, designed by Hartman-Cox Architects and OZ Architecture as part of the new Denver Justice Complex in the city's Civic Center. The project has the design challenges of an urban jail, plus issues of assuring security in a normative environment. The facility will include a variety of direct supervision housing units determined by a behavior-based classification analysis, along with a maximum-security section, central booking, arraignment courts, a medical unit, a full kitchen, and visitation rooms. "Modern jails," says Ricci, "are legitimate public buildings, and they can make good neighbors."

In 2004 the Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR) initiated a Prison Design Boycott, calling on architects and design professionals not to participate in the design, construction, or renovation of prisons. The organization purports that if professionals won't design prisons, they won't get built and society will be forced into developing alternatives. According to Ricci Greene Principal Frank Greene, FAIA, "America may not need more prisons, but it desperately needs better ones."

Linda G. Miller is a New York City-based freelance writer.



# Great Spaces in Public Places

How PlaNYC 2030 is transforming parks and waterways, bringing more fun to Fun City By Charles McKinney, Affil. ASLA

There are two construction types you cannot build overnight: parks and infrastructure. Unlike other architectural endeavors, they demand immense foresight. Fortunately, New York City has a solid track record of planning for future generations. Its aqueducts, subways, and Central Park were all constructed long before most people thought they would be needed. Long-term thinking made possible the livable city New Yorkers enjoy today.

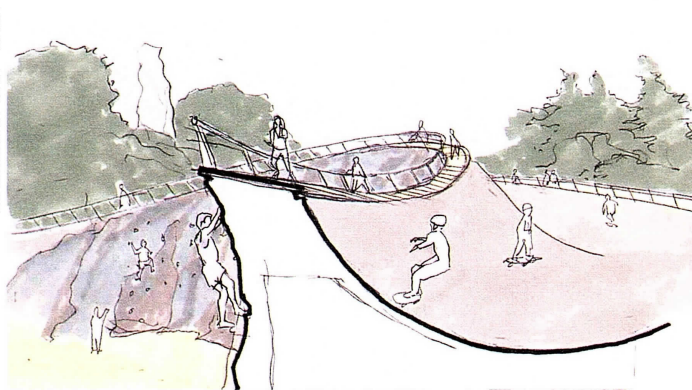
So when you look at Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC, you realize with a shock that its 2030 target date is only 22 years away. That's a flash in time when you consider how long it takes to grow a tree to maturity, to clean up a stretch of contaminated land, or, toughest of all, to accommodate the recreation and transit demands of a million new citizens.



NYC Parks & Recreation: Calvert Vaux Park schematic

## Walking the walk

The first park on the construction schedule is Calvert Vaux Park in the Gravesend neighborhood of Brooklyn, now a collection of ad-hoc fields and parking lots on landfill from the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. Emmanuel Thingue, RLA, a Parks Department landscape architect, sculpted the park to create a hill and a naturalized shoreline. To cool the air and clean the storm water, trees and gardens will surround sports fields and a parking lot.



Weisz + Yoes Architecture: Rockaway Park concept illustration

PlaNYC also includes goals to:

- Ensure that all New Yorkers live within a 10-minute walk of a park
- Open 90% of our waterways for recreation
- Upgrade our energy infrastructure
- Reduce global-warming emissions by more than 30%

The plan allots responsibilities and milestones to every city department. The Parks Department has received \$927 million to complete eight underdeveloped parks, light 36 athletic fields to extend playing time, convert 25 athletic fields to synthetic turf, create 800 new Greenstreets (replacing unused portions of streets with planted areas), and plant one million new trees over the next decade.

## Exploiting present assets

Since many neighborhoods suffer from a shortage of parkland and available property, Parks is intensifying the use of existing facilities. A participatory design process will convert asphalt schoolyards to landscaped parks. The department plans to open 290 schoolyards to the public by the end of 2009, giving every neighborhood a park within a 10-minute walk.



Rogers Marvel Architects: McCarren Pool concept illustration

After it closed in 1984, most people believed the football field-sized McCarren Park pool in Greenpoint/Williamsburg, designed by Aymar Embury II in 1936, would never reopen. Now, Rogers Marvel Architects and Jan Hird Pokorny Associates are designing a new McCarren Pool. It promises to be a veritable cruise ship of recreation and social gathering for a growing Polish community and young professionals. The pool will provide diving, lap swimming, water-play events, sunbathing, and a terrace for eating and socializing in the summer and ice skating in the winter.

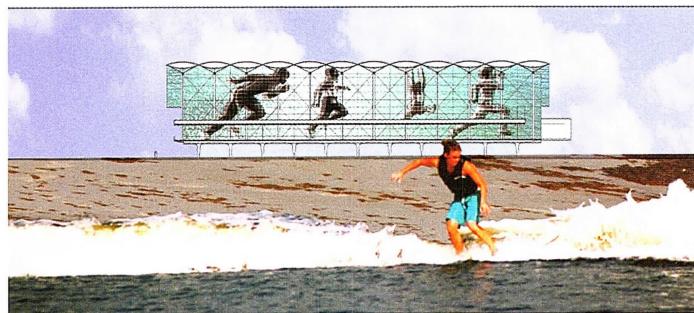
Landscape architects MKW + Associates are designing Ocean Breeze Park on the Atlantic shore of Staten Island, providing sports fields and a cross-country trail. It will protect the sand dunes and wet-



lands, connect to adjacent natural areas, and absorb storm water. Sage and Coombe Architects is working on an indoor competitive track; the firm hopes to elevate the building over the parking lot to capture ocean breezes and sparkling views.

Stantec is planning improvements for Fort Washington Park in Upper Manhattan, a remnant of the original Hudson shoreline, punctuated by the spunky Little Red Lighthouse. The company plans to untangle a messy system of access routes, since the neighborhood is cut off from the park by rails and highways, and most users arrive on bikes from the south.

Thomas Balsley Associates will design Soundview Park on the Bronx River. Despite its sweeping views of Long Island Sound, Soundview suffers from invasive vegetation and a history of illegal dumping. Community members expressed alarm over soil contamination and requested more active recreation, ecological restoration, access to the river, and improved security. Parks expects to deal with all of these concerns.



SAGE AND COOMBE ARCHITECTS

**Sage and Coombe Architects: Ocean Breeze Track Facility concept diagram**

it will bring hikers and bikers to Manhattan and the Bronx on the restored Croton Aqueduct trail.

Meanwhile, in Brooklyn's Ridgewood/Glendale neighborhood, where the Highland Reservoir is surrounded by 25-foot earthen ramparts, Mark K. Morrison Associates has mapped the wetlands habitat and identified invasive vegetation. This hidden place plays a role in the regional ecology and migration routes of birds; it's also one of the only sites to provide active recreation in a part of Brooklyn that is notoriously underserved.

These projects are part of the largest investment in the city's parks since the 1930s, notes Parks & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe. In the last year alone, Parks has opened more than 200 new or renovated facilities, an average of four per week.

Charles McKinney, Affil. ASLA, is Chief of Design of Capital Projects for the Parks Department of the City of New York. His task is to provide design direction for landscape and architecture projects throughout the five boroughs.

**Left: Schoolyard-to-Playground sites (blue dots); adequate playground access (green); underserved areas (gray) Below: NYC's new destination parks**



NYC PARKS & RECREATION

At the eastern end of the Rockaway Peninsula, the plan is to reinvent Rockaway Park. The ocean is turbulent at that point, and Parks has already opened two surfing beaches and facilities for scuba diving. The work of Quennell Rothschild & Partners and weisz + yoes architecture is likely to restore dunes and focus on new forms of recreation, including an adventure course and a skate landscape.

The legendary High Bridge, the 1848 stone arch bridge designed by John B. Jervis and James Renwick Jr., spans the Harlem River and once brought water to Manhattan from the Croton Aqueduct. Soon



NYC PARKS & RECREATION



# New York's Zoning Resolution: High Time for a New Look

Change is difficult  
but necessary  
By Mark Ginsberg, FAIA



**Tribeca Abbey (121 Reade Street), designed by The Stephen B. Jacobs Group in 1997, is an example of contextual zoning**

New York's present Zoning Resolution is overcomplicated and confusing. It has outmoded remnants, limits design flexibility, and does not encourage sustainability. It should be updated. Change is hard, however, given environmental review and the many constituent groups in the city with sharply different objectives. Still, the city needs to rewrite the Resolution, making an effort to develop a consensus of the different stakeholders' objectives.

The AIA New York Chapter's Zoning Task Force had taken a modest first step to deal with some of these problematic issues. We had brought to public review changes to the Resolution with the following objectives:

- Deal with a largely built-up, mature city where development sites tend to be infill and are often irregularly shaped.
- Allow flexibility to encourage variety and design excellence consistent with sound planning and urban design principles.

- Encourage/permit sustainable design.

As this article goes to press, AIA NY has decided to provisionally withdraw these proposals to allow for greater public review and participation. (See [www.aiany.org/committees/PlanningUrbanDesign/zoning](http://www.aiany.org/committees/PlanningUrbanDesign/zoning) for more information.)

The NYC Planning Commission needs to find a way to achieve these objectives in a more comprehensive process, along with all the other initiatives the understaffed Department of City Planning is undertaking. Moreover, it should consider the following two additional goals, hopefully not mutually exclusive:

- Find areas of the city that could be up-zoned to increase a full build-out above the currently permitted 10 million people by Floor Area Ratio calculations to allow for the projected population growth.
- Protect the character of existing neighborhoods.



The current Resolution basically has two different sets of controls, along with many special districts. (See sidebar for a short history of how the resolution has evolved into the mess we have today.) As changes have been implemented, old and outmoded sections have not been deleted. Unprecedented development has occurred in the

#### Paper Trail

**1916 and 1961 Resolutions:** Under the 1916 Resolution, full build-out allowed for a population of 40 million. The current Zoning Resolution, adopted in 1961 as a complete overhaul of New York's 1916 Resolution, aimed for a sharply lower build-out of 12 million and greater control and segregation of uses. It was developed to encourage the Corbusian ideal of the tower-in-the-park by creating significant open space known as "height factor" buildings. Often, the open space came to be used largely for parking, creating towers in the parking lot instead of towers in the park. Height-factor zoning worked best for post-war urban renewal developments consisting of large, contiguous, often super block sites. It did not often work well for infill in a largely built-up city with clearly defined street walls.

**1987 addition:** Contextual zoning was added in 1987 to mitigate problems raised by the 1961 zoning. It mandates a lower rise, high-density envelope with higher permitted lot coverage. The concurrent Quality Housing Program calls for elements such as mandatory private community space, floor area deductions for corridor density, insulated windows, and street tree plantings. Contextual zoning with Quality Housing was optional in all higher density residential districts (R6 to R10) and required in mapped contextual districts.

**1999 proposal:** This sought to combine height factor and contextual zoning into Unified Bulk. For areas of the city lacking contextual districts, it would have created a more flexible version of contextual zoning. The proposal was defeated due to opposition from the development community which, among other concerns, opposed the height limits, and from community groups who felt controls on development were not tight enough.

**Special districts:** Over the years, two types of special districts have been created. One includes areas such as waterfront, mixed-use (e.g., manufacturing and residential), and inclusionary housing. The other was created for specific areas of the city, such as Midtown, Hudson Yards, West Chelsea, Greenpoint/Williamsburg, and City Island. The special districts acknowledge and promote local differences at the cost of a much larger and more complex Zoning Resolution.

Contextual zoning has reestablished street-wall building, but at the cost of uniformity and often good building layouts. Buildings in a contextual district tend to look alike, limiting innovative designs. The required setback, while good urban design, makes good apartment layouts difficult.

last 10 years, much of it in neighborhoods that have long had no new construction. As a result, the developments were often out of scale with their neighborhoods. This has led to extensive mapping of Contextual Districts (see sidebar), many of them also taking the form of down-zonings or lower permitted density. I was recently told by Rohit T. Aggarwala, director of the Mayor's Office for Long-term Planning and Sustainability, that a full build-out under the current zoning would house only about 10 million people (New York's current population is approximately 8.1 million people). The cost of vacant land has increased 70% per year over the last few years, according to NYC Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Shaun Donovan. Much of this is explained by increased population and a decrease in the permitted build-out.

Zoning for the 21st century in New York should be a tool to manage growth – not just a reaction to items people don't like. It should be used to carry out broader planning objectives such as green design, greater residential density, and greater reliance on mass transit. It should be less prescriptive and more performance-based, and written so the general public gets a better understanding of land use controls. Last, it should permit varied, high-quality design. Carrying out the proposals in the Mayor's PlaNYC is a good first step.



KRISTEN RICHARDS

I.M. Pei's 1966 Silver Towers (110 Bleecker Street) are an example of height factor buildings

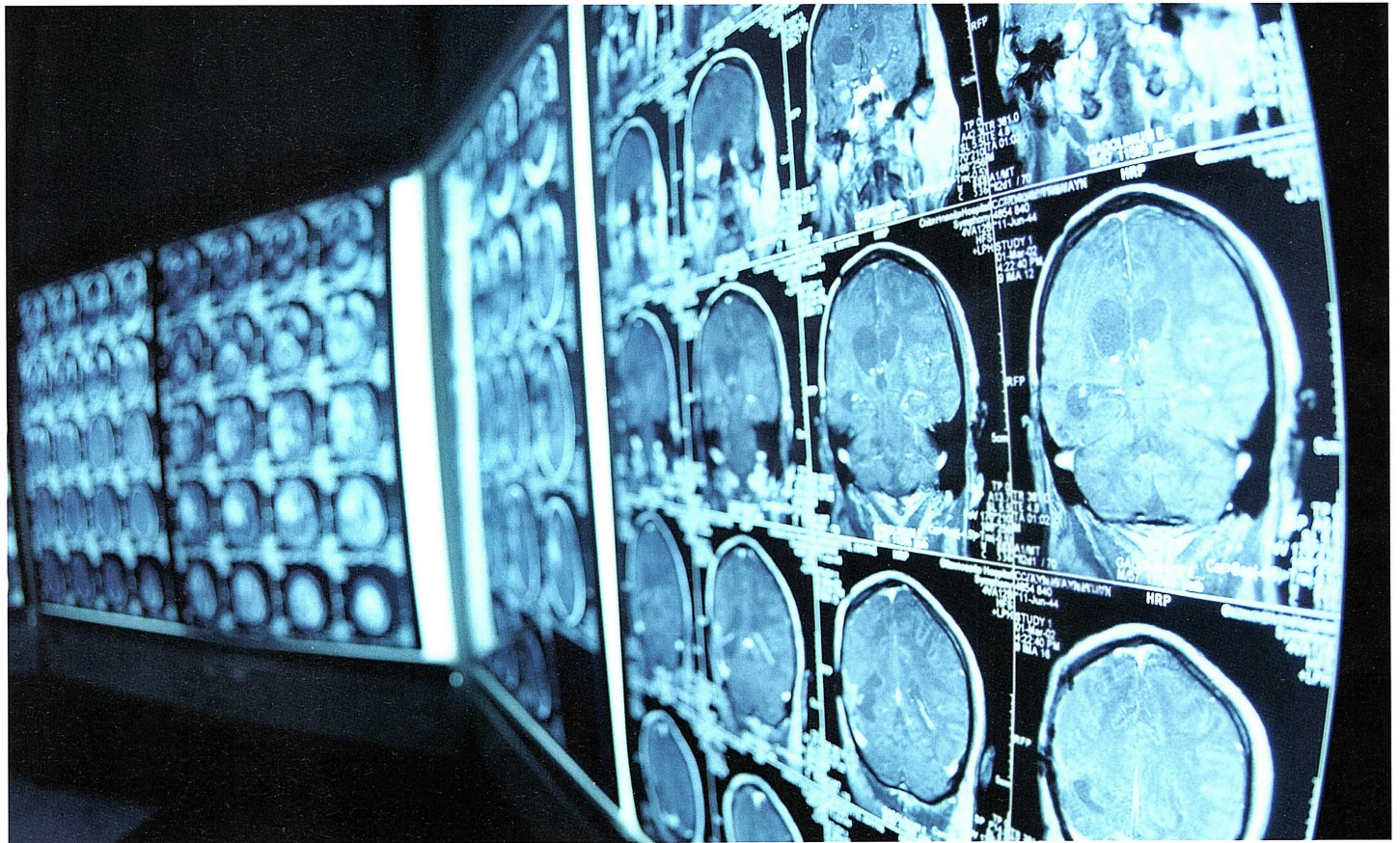
Mark Ginsberg, FAIA, is a partner at Curtis + Ginsberg Architects. Much of his firm's work is multi-family housing and urban design. He was the 2004 president of the AIANY Chapter and a former chair of the Chapter's Housing and Planning and Urban Design Committees.



# Mind over Matter: Can neuroscience improve architectural design?

A conversation with John P. Eberhard, FAIA

By Stephen A. Kliment, FAIA



**J**ohn P. Eberhard, FAIA, an architect long active in research and a former dean at SUNY–Buffalo and head of Architecture at Carnegie-Mellon, has become the profession's first expert on the arcane subject of neuroscience and its great potential when applied to the design of spaces for every form of human endeavor. The author of *Architecture and the Brain* and a founder of the Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture, Eberhard spoke with *Oculus* Editorial Director Stephen Kliment, FAIA, about the directions and prospects for this still novel area of expertise.

**Oculus** Why should architects explore neuroscience?

**John P. Eberhard** We know that a child in a classroom seems to learn better with more natural daylight, and that a patient in a hospital room with a pleasant view recovers faster than one with a view of a blank wall. These experiences are the result of the sensory information provided to people's brains and their ensuing mental processes. We know very little about these mental processes, however, and even less about how such processes are affected by architectural variables of color, shape, acoustics, temperature, and light. But neu-

roscientists recognize that the enjoyment of everyday experiences in architectural spaces could benefit from their attention. My book is intended to give architects an introduction to these possibilities.

**Oculus** How soon can neuroscience be expected to put forth its knowledge in terms that designers can use to apply to design?

**JPE** It will be some time. We haven't even begun to furnish such applied neuroscientists or graduate architectural doctoral students with the necessary training.

**Oculus** You argue that greater emphasis on research and clinical practice is a way to groom architecture students to apply neuroscience. How would that work in practice?

**JPE** Medical education changed dramatically about 1914 with the Flexner Report, which recommended that medical students be exposed to real patients with real illnesses, instead of imaginary patients discussed in lectures. The report led to establishing clinics attached to medical schools where students could apply the latest



research in treating patients and observe the results. Architectural education needs to create clinical experiences that link research being done in neuroscience laboratories to actual occupants of buildings.

**Oculus** How specifically?

**JPE** The graduate students would supplement traditional lectures and studio with excursions to meet with real clients – such as school boards, schoolchildren, teachers, department heads. The grad students would explore the potential for enhancing the schoolchildren's experience through the application of neuroscience and improve their own neuroscience-inspired design skills.

**Oculus** To the five senses you have added a sixth, "proprioception," which tells you where your body is in a space. How would you turn this into designer-useful information?

**JPE** Proprioception is not a stand-alone concept you can convert to guidelines or a syllabus. The brain and its many parts are interrelated in ever-changing, complex ways that are driven by all the senses. It's like a symphony performed by an orchestra; you cannot take just one instrument from the orchestra and develop a set of rules that apply to it alone.

**Oculus** In your book you cite Professor Herbert Simon of Carnegie Mellon University arguing that architects use the memory of how to design, acquired as students, to develop and perfect a unique ability to "learn" about problem solving. Can you elaborate?

**JPE** Simon refers to how "procedural memories" are formed. Memories we use to play the piano or tennis or to design a building take a long time and much practice to become well enough formed to make someone an "expert." Simon states it takes a minimum of 10 years for this process of memory formation. That's probably why most well-known architects are well into their 50s before they are considered experts.

**Oculus** What shapes the brain functions we use when experiencing architectural spaces? DNA? State of health? The climate?

**JPE** All of these. The genes we inherit influence the development of our brains in ways that affect all our experiences, including those related to architectural settings. If we are healthy, our brains perform better than the brains of people with Alzheimer's, dementia, or Parkinson's. Climate probably has more of an impact on the homeostatic condition of our bodies (heart rate, digestion, comfort level, etc.) than on brain functions. But again, the nervous system and the networks of the brain are interrelated.

**Stephen A. Kliment, FAIA**, an architect, journalist, and teacher, is the founding editor of Wiley's Building Type Basics book series, and Adjunct Professor of Architecture at the City College of New York. He is a former editor-in-chief of *Architectural Record*.

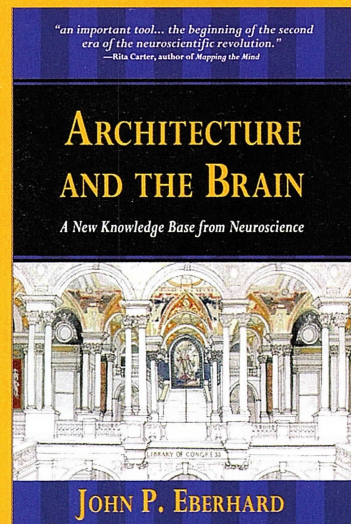
**Architecture and the Brain: A New Knowledge Base from Neuroscience**, by John P. Eberhard, FAIA. Atlanta: Greenway Communications/Ostberg, 2007. 135 pages. No index or glossary. \$39. Reviewed by Stephen A. Kliment, FAIA

Architects have long held that design can improve our lives, but the missing link has always been the tools for identifying the triggers of human reaction to space. Now neuroscience offers a methodology that could revolutionize the architect's ability to create spaces to stimulate emotions.

At the forefront of the movement is architect John Eberhard, FAIA, the first to spot the significance of neuroscience to the profession. Eberhard defines neuroscience as the scientific study of the human brain, which consists of many parts. Each part has a function, such as processing color, registering fear, turning sound into speech, recognizing a face, and even – believe it or not – distinguishing a fish from a fruit. It's all processed by a part of the brain known as the hippocampus, which sends out signals to the appropriate brain conductors that activate the body's machinery to react.

In her foreword, science writer Rita Carter, author of the classic book *Mapping the Mind*, notes: "...until now, environment behavior studies have depended on observing how people react to the built environment *after it is built* [reviewer's emphasis]...architects have had to intuit the effect of their design, and then find out later if they got it right...Neuroscience allows that process to be reversed." Eberhard provides a lucid introduction to a complex topic. He explains how the brain is made up, how it functions, how it experiences architecture, what its processes are, and how memory of architecture works (fleeting perceptions are created in the brain's frontal lobes and held until consigned to long-term memory or forgotten altogether). "For an experienced designer to perform well," Eberhard writes, "he or she will need access to a substantial amount of knowledge and skill that has been stored in long-term memory."

There's still no easy-to-use handbook that quickly tells the designer which design decisions (color, form, sound control, scale, light, ornament, temperature, air movement, and more) generate particular behaviors. But thanks to the Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture, where Eberhard serves as a senior consultant, odds are that such a guide will eventually appear so designers can base their decisions on scientific fact, not on intuition rooted in after-the-fact assessments.





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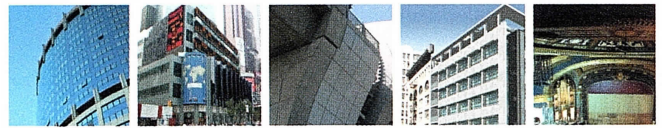


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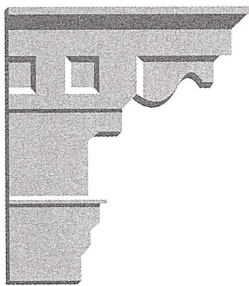
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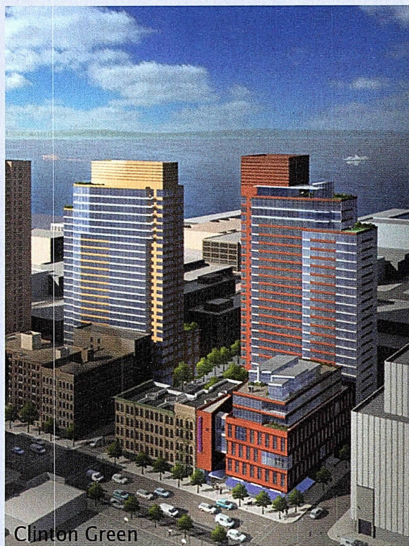
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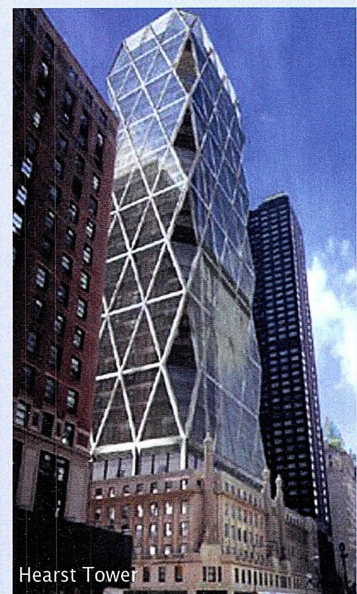
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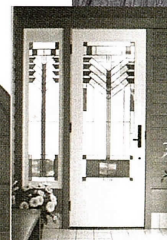
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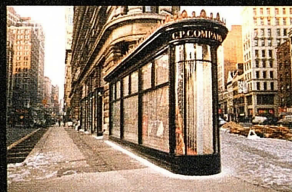
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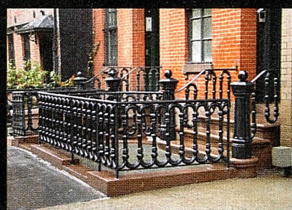
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# Developers Give Vancouver Another Shot

**Outside View**  
By Michael Geller

I first visited New York City on a school trip with the University of Toronto's Faculty of Architecture. I remember the date, November 22, 1965 – the night the lights went out. The entire city was black, except for a bright red “New Yorker” sign. It was an image I will never forget. For a young Toronto architectural student, New York was Mecca.

After graduation I left Toronto and moved to Vancouver. Over the next 40 years I returned to New York on only four occasions, since Southern California had become my new Mecca. But each time I visited New York, I was overwhelmed by the increasing height and scale of the buildings. I was also impressed with the growing sense of safety, security, and civility on the streets.

While Vancouver's developments are modest in scale compared to many New York City projects, it seems like New York's earlier problems with crime, drug addiction, and homelessness have moved across the continent to our otherwise beautiful city. The streets of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside are unequalled in Canada in terms of the open drug trade, poverty, and human anguish. This is particularly tragic given the affluence of the adjacent Business District.



HENRIQUEZ PARTNERS ARCHITECTS

In an effort to reduce the number of deaths by overdose, the city has opened a legalized “safe injection site” for heroin addicts. It is also planning to offer crack addicts disposable mouthpieces for their pipes, in an effort to curtail the spread of hepatitis C.

It remains to be seen how these measures will help revitalize the community. However, I am placing more hope in our city's architects and developers who are now taking an interest in the area, since hous-

ing land prices are in excess of \$200 a square foot. One major initiative could be key – the redevelopment of a once-derelict department store property. The 45-story Woodward's District project will comprise 500 market condominiums, 200 small social housing units for the needy, a new Simon Fraser University School for Contemporary Arts, civic offices, retail space, and, of course, a major drugstore.



HENRIQUEZ PARTNERS ARCHITECTS

**Left: Henriquez Partners Architects' Woodward's District in Vancouver will include market-rate and affordable housing, and incorporate the 1908 Woodward's department store. Above: The Woodward's project includes a number of public spaces.**

The development is designed by Henriquez Partners Architects, one of Canada's most accomplished firms, and the community hopes it will become a remedy for the revitalization of the neighborhood, but in a manner that will not displace existing low-income residents who want to remain. In anticipation of its success, a dozen development inquiries and proposals for market and non-market housing are awaiting City Hall consideration on nearby sites.

As I reflect on our two cities, I am hopeful that Vancouver will become more like New York, if not in terms of the forms of development, then in terms of an improved sense of safety and reduced crime on our streets. In 2010, Vancouver/Whistler will be hosting the Winter Olympics. This would be a good time for New York architects to come and see what we have learned from New York's experiences.

Michael Geller is a Vancouver-based architect, planner, and property developer who created UniverCity, a sustainable new community adjacent to Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia. He recently completed an eight-month around-the-world sabbatical, documented in his *Vancouver Sun* column, “Homes away from Home.”



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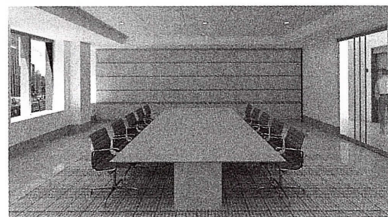
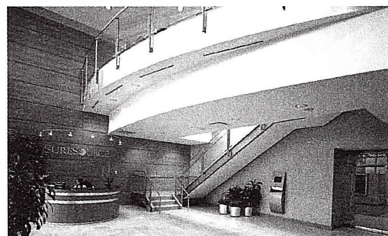
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# 41-Year Watch

**Riverbend and Waterside  
Plaza housing, by Davis  
Brody & Associates,  
1967 and 1966-1974**

**By John Morris Dixon, FAIA**

By the mid-1960s, the failings of urban renewal, with its destructive “slum clearance” and tower-in-the-park replacements, were widely recognized. Yet government programs were still committed to subsidized housing. So planning agencies and developers looked to Manhattan’s unused waterfront sites as locations for residential complexes that could be shaped in more community-conscious ways. The developer HRH Construction and architects Davis Brody & Associates (now Davis Brody Bond Aedas) produced two of the most innovative of these developments, Riverbend in Harlem and Waterside on the Midtown East Side.

Riverbend occupied scraps of land left over after the construction of Harlem River Drive and related ramps. Mapped but unused streets crossing the site presented a daunting bureaucratic hurdle. Resisting an easy one-tower-per-mapped-block solution, HRH Construction and Davis Brody persisted with a more creative scheme, including two high-rise apartment blocks linked by lower stretches composed of stacked duplexes. Reached by open galleries, these floor-through duplexes are like townhouses, each with a small front porch elevated a few steps above a shared access walkway. At the center of the complex are extensive courtyards above on-grade parking. Altogether the complex includes 622 units, parking for about 200 cars, and four retail spaces along its street frontage, sorely need in this location. Riverbend was built – and now operates – as a city-administered Mitchell-Lama cooperative.

To give Riverbend the character of traditional brick walls within Mitchell-Lama cost limits, the architects invented a 5½- by 8-inch brick, later used at Waterside and other Davis Brody projects. But the then-still-popular board-formed concrete, used here for exposed

framing and some walls, has required lots of patching. This has been crudely done, producing a sad checkerboard effect on many surfaces.

Riverbend’s apartments, though limited in floor areas by Mitchell-Lama regulations, remain very appealing and well maintained by the co-op residents. Public spaces have become quite bleak, however, with broken paving, clogged drainage, and only the hardiest surviving plantings.

Because Waterside Plaza was built over – not along – the river, approval to build it took years. Although it did not extend beyond the established pier-head line into navigable waters, the project was subject to regulations allowing the Feds to seize the site without compensation. It took an act of Congress to prohibit such seizure, legisla-

tion that became a model for enabling other over-water developments. The complex shares its platform with the United Nations International School, with which it merely coexists, since the school and its architects rejected any efforts to coordinate their designs.

Waterside Plaza included a forward-looking mix of uses. Along with its 1,470 apartments, it contains 60,000 square feet of office space. Shops and a restaurant line two sides of the plaza, and parking for 700 cars underlies the complex at street level. An ample health club is perched along FDR Drive, where its glass-enclosed pool space provides an attractive lantern after dark.



ROBERT GRAY PHOTOGRAPHY / COURTESY OF DAVIS BRODY BOND AEDAS

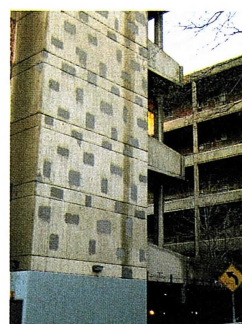
**Above: Riverbend: Apartments remain appealing and well maintained, but public spaces have become quite bleak Below: Board-formed concrete walls around Riverbend have been crudely patched, creating a sad checkerboard effect Left: Waterside Plaza: View of two of four towers and the plaza, which has been completely resurfaced and redesigned**

The complex has always been a totally rental development. While a portion was originally reserved for subsidized tenants, all units are now at market rate, with some 10% of residents receiving government support through “sticky vouchers.”

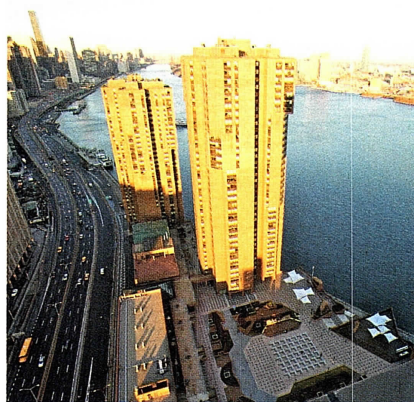
Waterside management observes that more has been spent on maintenance and improvements in the past decade than on building the whole complex. Most notably, the plaza has been completely resurfaced and redesigned, with planted berms to relieve its earlier minimalist expanse and fabric canopies providing welcome shade.

Both of these developments show that there may be constructive alternatives to today’s neo-traditional planning of residential precincts.

John Morris Dixon, FAIA, left the drafting board for journalism in 1960 and was editor of Progressive Architecture magazine from 1972 to 1996. In recent years he has written for Architectural Record, Architecture, and other publications.



JOHN MORRIS DIXON



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# Premises, Premises

Making sure the house you design gets its due

By Joan Capelin, Hon. AIA, FSMPS

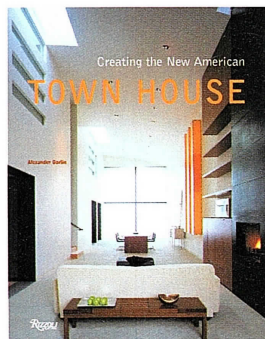
**H**ow to succeed as a residential architect? Here are the experiences, perspectives, and advice of five flourishing New York architects of single-family houses and three savvy editors.

## Part 1: Residential stars

Housing seer Sarah Susanka, FAIA, asked an AIA audience in 2005: "How do you explain the success of the few residentially oriented firms whose workload is steadily increasing and whose financial status is robust?" Well, Sarah, here's how New York's best do it:

**Ben Baxt, AIA**, says his "young office" of 11 professionals is "small because partner Michael Ingui, AIA, and I stay intimately involved in each project." Working first from his Cobble Hill, Brooklyn, house, he realized that "once you have an office outside of your home, it legitimizes you." A developer neighbor recommended Baxt for the first non-moonlighting houses he did. His firm is also very visible through its advocacy work in the community: Ingui for the Gowanus Canal, and Baxt for historic preservation.

**Alex Gorlin, FAIA**, whose office does 80% residential work, started out with a house for fashion editor Grace Mirabella, met improbably through a mutual acquaintance who was interested in Le Corbusier, about whom Gorlin had written. That house went into *Architectural Digest* and, well, we all know the drill. "Today I understand you plan this all out," Gorlin comments. After doing some townhouses in Seaside, Florida, he wrote a book on townhouses for Rizzoli and other books, though "doing a book is tough," he says. "Oddly enough, I don't think I've gotten a project from a book – but someone else did because his house was on my book cover."



**Two books on townhouses cemented Alex Gorlin's reputation in this specialty**

**James Harb's** business is half residential projects. A project for a gallery owner in Chelsea jumpstarted his work when he moved to New York. The *New York Times* Magazine recently gave Harb's latest art-filled project royal treatment. He admits he should have spent more time getting published in any way possible. "Then you have a portfolio to show," he says.

**Peter Pennoyer, AIA**, started out designing the house of a friend's parents, a nice twist on the usual story. That good-luck house was for author Louis Auchincloss, who wrote about the process in *Architectural Digest*, so the house was greatly anticipated and published further. Pennoyer, who interned at the Landmarks Commission and worked for Robert A.M. Stern Architects before going to graduate school, is today an acknowledged scholar in classical architecture. He

JONATHAN WALLEN



**Peter Pennoyer's reputation for residential design includes his knowledge of historic preservation**

leads a combined design and, with Anne Walker, preservation research office of 30. He says there is "an absolute relationship between our writing and the continuing work."

**Bart Voorsanger, FAIA**, won a National AIA award for his first house. Obviously special, the project nonetheless must have angered some god, since the owners divorced, the contractor went bankrupt, and someone was killed. "You have many roles that are not explained in architecture school," Voorsanger understates. His 24-person office has a range of work, including three or four houses a year, one of them 45,000 square feet. "These people are important," Voorsanger observes. "You have to listen to them; you can't go on autopilot." His advice: "Get published, get awards, and get onto Google."



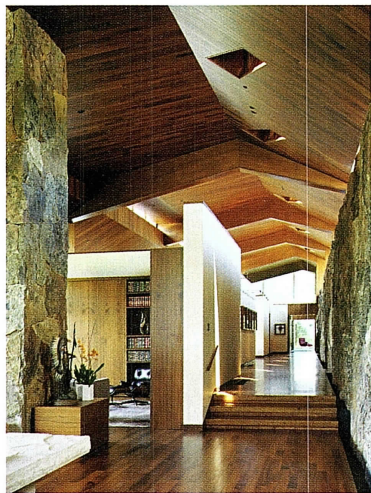
## Part 2: Editorial stars

*Architectural Record's* Special Sections Editor Jane Kolleeny, responsible for the magazine's housing coverage, always scouts for good work. She's also a national juror for the AIA Housing Committee's design awards. *Record's* "House of the Month" and other website features are read more than the magazine, thus providing great exposure.

But although *Record's* website has careful instructions about sending information and visuals by mail, some architects transmit huge files that crash her computer. This does not sit well. Besides, *Record's* printer is strictly utilitarian, she says, so anything it prints will be of lower quality than the editorial group wants to see. "How can they design a house if they can't submit materials?" she ponders.

**Barbara Dixon** is constantly in motion as editorial director of the Cottages & Gardens Publications. "We're about ideas, not price point," she says; copy focuses on a very distinct audience. Her experienced advice: "Everything is about contacts." "You have to be an extrovert. 'Drive by' every function." "It's always show time." "Get in and get out, say what you have to say, and don't drone on ... and on."

**Meghan Drueding**, who is senior editor at Hanley-Wood's *Residential Architect* and *Custom Home*, scours local magazines like *Texas Architect*, *San Diego Home & Garden*, and the *Charlotte Observer's* "House of the Month." Sometimes awards competitions also show the non-winning entries. "Just because it didn't win doesn't mean it's not of merit or interest to us." Drueding expects to find your work – and you personally – at programs like the Boston Society of Architects' Residential Design Convention or on house tours.



PAUL WARCHOL

**Voorsanger Architects: The Wildcat Residence in Snowmass, Colorado, has won three awards and one medal, and has been published in *Innovative Home*, *Western Interiors & Design*, *H.O.M.E.*, and *Wired***

## Part 3: Principles in reputation development

- Don't get stressed out about your public relations. You are reaching for only three things: visibility, credibility, and access to people who can help you advance. Decide which one you want, and build your campaign accordingly.
- Don't stop thinking about tomorrow. Now that you're published, now that the book is in the stores, there's always something more you can do. Are you in *Architectural Digest*, for instance? Then shoot to join The AD 100 list of top architects.
- Do get permission from the client before you talk about your work together.
- Do get to know the neighbors. Wids DeLaCour, AIA, co-chair of the AIAANY Chapter's Housing Committee, did a house for his family in Brooklyn Heights. Word of mouth got him into affordable housing.
- Do have the courage to get published. According to British columnist Ian Martin, "The First Law of Journalism is not 'seek out the truth' – it's 'fill the space.'"

## Part 4: Best ideas

Nowadays, everyone – repeat, everyone – sifts through the Internet to consider their options. "It establishes a comfort level," says Baxt. Drueding quantifies: "Seventy percent of the time, that's how we find the people we write about." Dixon wants to see your face: "People want to see what you look like and relate to you."

- There are more than 500 firms listed in AIAANY's firm directory that do residential design, according to Member Services Director Suzanne Mecs. She advises that you make sure AIA links to your website, and that you have a current, hard-copy portfolio in the Center for Architecture's library.
- If you need help, ask for it, from a mentor or a public relations firm.
- To join the AIA's quarterly home-design trends survey panel of 500 residential architecture firms, contact Jennifer Riskus at [jriskus@aia.org](mailto:jriskus@aia.org). You won't be named, but you can find many ways to use the information.
- No programs that suit you? Then start a mall show, an exhibit sponsored by a local paper, or a house tour.

**Joan Capelin**, Hon. AIA, FSMPS, of Capelin Communications, is a New York-based public relations strategist for the design and construction industry.

## U.S. publications that cover single-family houses:

<i>Architect</i>	<i>Log Home Living</i>
<i>Architect's Newspaper</i>	<i>Metropolis</i>
<i>Architectural Digest</i>	<i>Metropolitan Home</i>
<i>Architectural Record</i>	<i>Modern Homes</i>
<i>Architectural West</i>	<i>New Small Homes</i>
<i>Builder/Architect</i>	<i>New York Spaces</i>
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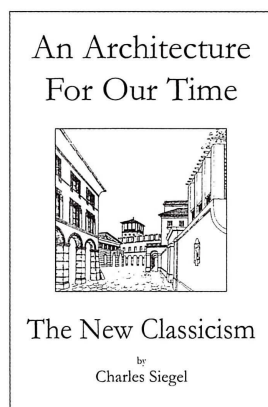
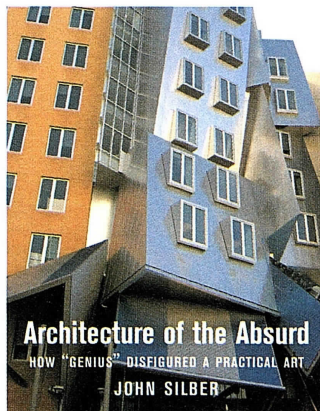


# Architecture on the Edge

In Print +

**Architecture of the Absurd: How "Genius" Disfigured a Practical Art, by John Silber. New York: Quantuck Lane Press, 2007. 98 pages. \$27.50.**

**An Architecture for Our Time: The New Classicism, by Charles Siegel. Berkeley, CA: Preservation Institute, 2008. 56 pages. \$8.95.**



What these two works share is a cordial dislike of the more spectacular expressions of avant-garde architecture, in particular the works of Frank Gehry, Daniel Libeskind, Steven Holl, Zaha Hadid, Peter Eisenman, and Rem Koolhaas. To uncover why these six so irritate Silber, consult the *Oxford English Dictionary* for its Silber-endorsed definition of "absurd": "inharmonious, tasteless, foolish" and "out of harmony with reason or propri-

ety, incongruous, unreasonable, illogical." To Charles Siegel, the six architects fail to please simply because their work does not conform to his ideals of a civilized culture.

To Siegel, the solution lies in Classical architecture. It's the only style in his view that has embodied civilization over the centuries, thanks to its form, proportion, scale, siting, materials, ornament. If he could, Siegel would impose Classicism on virtually every typology today – residential suburbs, schools, civic centers, office parks. He argues that placing technology on a pedestal in the Modernist manner is a slap in the face to amenity and human nature.

Aside from the legal, political, social, and financial hurdles of imposing a Classical style on all new and existing construction, why is one style of architecture a better carrier of civilization than another? Yet concerns such as frankness, honesty of expression, originality, innovation, and authenticity don't seem to worry this author; he would not hesitate to reinforce a fat stone column with steel rods, and the fakeness of applied Classical pilasters doesn't bother him. How would he feel about a toaster topped by an egg-and-dart cornice?

There's no shortage of material to back Siegel's anti-Modernist case. He blasts Eisenman for disregarding client satisfaction. The problem, however, lies not in Modernism or what he labels "avant

gardism," but in Eisenman's apparent hierarchy of values. It's hard not to chuckle at this anecdote about the Eisenman-designed Falk House II on their Vermont farm: "[The house] had a flat roof, which would not hold up under Vermont's heavy snow...it had hardly any interior walls; there were just half-walls between the bedrooms and no privacy even in the bathroom. ...sounds could be heard through the entire house, and the Falks' son was not able to play inside during his entire childhood because his parents needed quiet to work." Decades later, Eisenman reportedly explained, "I was interested in doing architecture, not in solving the Falks' privacy problems."

Where Siegel makes a pitch for Classicism, Silber channels his dislike for the work of the six (plus selected others) into a homily against all their work. A special target is Gehry's Stata Center at MIT, a many-volumed, many-faceted, multicolored confection that many claim has not fulfilled a major stated goal of providing a venue for chance meetings of scientists and students. It further has detailing and structural problems (MIT is suing Gehry's office to recoup the cost of the repairs needed, a highly unusual step for such an august client). Silber cites one eminent scientist who could not use his office due its odd configuration.

The trouble with *Architecture of the Absurd* is that though it's clear what the author is against (sharp angles, unconventional massing and forms, buildings that leak, seemingly arbitrary configurations, unnecessarily complex details, and costly materials), it's hard to figure what he is *for*. On his watch as president and later chancellor of Boston University from 1971 to 2003, he built 13,729,143 square feet of building on the BU campus – classrooms, dormitories, science and research buildings, a school of management, a boathouse, a field house, and a 6,500-seat arena. At a conservative construction cost of \$300 a square foot, we're looking at roughly \$4 billion of construction, surely evidence of his likes. Yet in the book not a single one of these buildings shows its face. That is unfortunate because it would have given us an inkling of Silber's architectural philosophy.

Perhaps Silber's deep respect for his late architect father, Paul George Silber, AIA, a stickler for rigorous detailing and methodical follow-through, rubbed off on John as he looks at much contemporary architecture. He's frustrated by what he sees as the posturing, self-aggrandizing, notoriety-seeking, undisciplined creations as reflected by its exponents. He is also upset, with some justification, by the incomprehensible designerbabble and gobbledygook many architects use to describe their work. Perhaps these culprits are motivated by Eleanor Roosevelt's famous dictum that people tend to admire most what they don't understand.

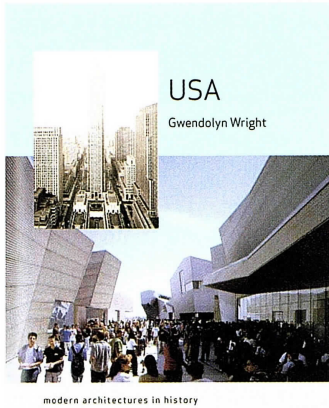
The reader may be puzzled by the book's belligerent, dialectic tone. The book is actually the expansion of a speech Silber gave at the 2003 convention of the Texas Society of Architects on the occasion of



his election as an honorary member of AIA. He aimed at his audience of 4,000 architects a shower of rhetoric that looks odd in print.

Both Silber and Siegel condemn the work of a small cadre of contemporary architects. They should realize that, for better or worse, they are up against a culture that regularly celebrates innovation, brashness, ostentation, bling – the very attributes they condemn.

Stephen A. Kliment, FAIA



**USA: Modern Architectures in History, by Gwendolyn Wright. London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2008. 320 pages. \$29.95.**

A volume in the publisher's Modern Architectures in History series, *USA* is the work of Columbia Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation Professor Gwendolyn Wright. She traces American architecture in seven stages

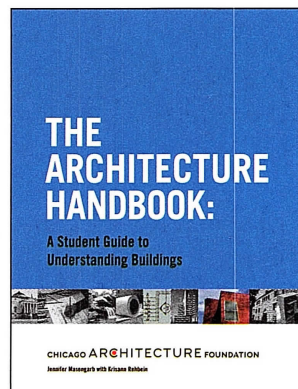
back to 1865, the year in which she argues architecture first set out to represent what she calls the Second American Revolution, marking the nation's sudden ascendancy to status as a modern nation. Successive stages, labeled Modern Consolidation; Progressive Architectures; Electric Modernities; Architecture, the Public and the State; the Triumph of Modernism; and Challenging Orthodoxies, lead up to the present period she names Disjunctures and Alternatives.

Wright contends that American Modernism is more than a branch of the Modern movement transported from Europe by the likes of Gropius and Mies; it's an autonomous entity with its own unique attributes.

Stephen A. Kliment, FAIA

**The Architecture Handbook: A Student Guide to Understanding Buildings, by Chicago Architecture Foundation. Student edition: \$75. 400 pages. Teacher edition: \$125. 600 pages (includes student pages and CD-ROM).**

This monumental opus meets head-on a vital challenge to today's society – how to develop future enlightened clients and patrons who will serve society by selecting architects and holding them to the highest visual, functional, technical, and business standards.



Designed for 10th and 11th graders, *The Architecture Handbook* helps students explore a variety of disciplines that shape the built environment. The handbook employs six projects to point out connections between architecture and its allied disciplines, including planning and urban design. Students take part in more than 80 hands-on activities, laid out in detail for students and in a separate volume for teachers. As of last fall, the book was used in high-school classrooms throughout the Chicago region and beyond.

That said, however good the printed matter, the long-term effect will be no better than the inspiration, enthusiasm, and perseverance provided by the teacher.

Stephen A. Kliment, FAIA

**Click Here:** [www.pieaia.org](http://www.pieaia.org)  
(Public Information Exchange/PIE)

The AIA New York Chapter's Public Information Exchange (PIE) is almost ready to celebrate its first year. A national effort to mark the 150th anniversary of the AIA called Blueprint for America provided the impetus for this AIA150 community service initiative. A click on [www.pieaia.org](http://www.pieaia.org) leads to a roster of projects "of overarching significance and transformational in their contexts" in the five boroughs of New York City. In addition to serving as an archive for the Center for Architecture, it is designed to illicit comments from professionals and the public in keeping with the Blueprint's mission to "inspire people to change the way they view architecture and its role in our daily lives."

Oddly enough, a click on the AIANY home page does not link to PIE, but PIE does sport a link to [www.aiany.org](http://www.aiany.org). Perhaps this explains the small number of comments posted in reply to very good questions featured next to projects and meant to solicit thoughtful responses. This is an easy thing to correct, as is the inclusion of a search option, presently missing. Otherwise, a click on the project image will lead to a Google map, drawings, photographs, and links to related articles. This is definitely a site to bookmark, as it is poised to serve the growing public interest in designs for living.

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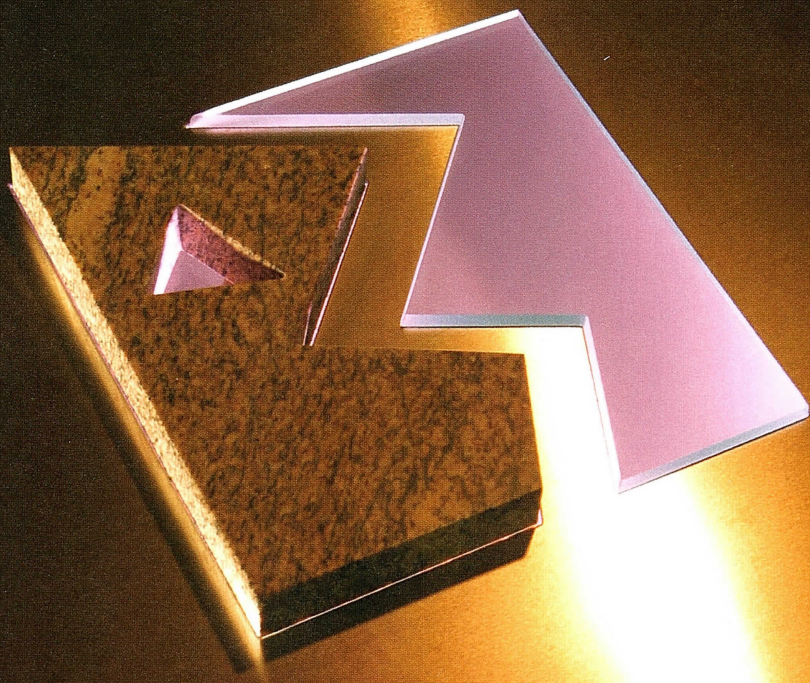
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# Designs for Waiting

## Last Words

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

**And the railroads came out with new schedules containing new mistakes instead of the old ones that the commuters had grown used to...**

(from *The Beautiful and the Damned*, 1920, by F. Scott Fitzgerald)

**Take the last train to Clarksville,**

**I'll be waiting at the station.**

**We'll have time for coffee flavored kisses**

**And a bit of conversation.**

**Oh, no, no, no!**

**Oh, no, no, no!**

**Take the last train to Clarksville,**

**Now I must hang up the phone.**

**I can't hear you in this noisy**

**Railroad station all alone.**

(from "The Last Train to Clarksville," 1966, by The Monkees, written by Tommy Boyce and Bobby Hart)

One of the most impressive first-day presentations at the AIA New York Chapter's Center for Architecture was by Michael Gericke of Pentagram, who brought a large clock as a prop and spoke of what a waiting passenger might do for 10 minutes in a place such as Penn Station, noting that often those catching trains to the suburbs had approximately that amount of time to spare. This is enough time to buy a newspaper, buy a beer, use the public toilet, and make a few calls on a mobile phone. Commuters do not take the time, however, to look at the archival black-and-white photographs of the demolished McKim Mead & White structure, a building that lasted only 54 years (1910-1964), and whose images now perversely grace the columns in the Eighth Avenue waiting room. Architects find no memorial plaque in the adjacent restroom where Louis Kahn died.

There are better train stations than Penn Station in which to spend 10 minutes – or an hour. Despite homeland security protocols and the dogs of war, Grand Central Terminal in New York and Union Station in DC are habitable and hospitable spaces. Bookstores and decent bars make the wait acceptable. So, too, are the Hauptbahnhof in Berlin by Gerkan, Marg & Partner, and the Stadelhofen Railway Station in Zurich by Santiago Calatrava. Many others evoke similar memories, from Paddington in London (the *Bourne Ultimatum* chase scene filmed there lasts 10 minutes) to Haydarpasa in Istanbul, in service since 1908.

The politics of waiting in a train station used to seem democratic, at least since the 1960s. Perhaps there were, before, first-class waiting rooms at the original Penn Station and Grand Central, and there were, of course, the adjacent hotels. But more recently, the stations have taken a page from the profit-driven class distinctions of the airlines; the Acela Express has a ticket-holders private club carved out behind a

security desk to resemble the high-flyer air-line enclaves. Previously, we were all thrown together to stand or sit sullenly when trains were late.

Waiting rooms are spaces where people who have no other place to go can get warm and find a place to wash up or sleep. Train and bus stations do provide some asylum and respite, a place away from the streets and the office, a transition point on the way to somewhere else. Shops and restaurants, for those who have the money, can make the waiting time fly by. The shopping concourse animated the underground PATH Terminal at the destroyed World Trade Center. A Westfield-run shopping mall will again be a destination theme of the down-under transit concourse at the new WTC regional rail hub. Commuters and straphangers can shop until dropping down for the long ride home.

Special events, such as architectural exhibitions and the occasional design charrette at Vanderbilt Hall in Grand Central, demonstrate how to transform waiting space into an active public room. The History Channel's event on the future of NYC took place in the train station, as did the exhibition of the Olympic Village proposal by Thom Mayne of Morphosis and Gruzen Samton for the NYC2012 Summer Games. With such efforts, and the annual Earth Day festivities sponsored by the Durst Organization, Grand Central has become a Center for Architecture at the grand scale.

One definition of waiting is "remaining inactive in one space while expecting something." What are we expecting?

- We expect airfares to increase radically with fuel and insurance costs.
- We expect long-distance trains to be seen by the next administration in Washington as the environmentally correct and time-efficient way of traveling.
- We expect Amtrak, progressive municipal government, and regional public authorities to continue to invest in the center city portals that these designs for public living rooms provide.
- We expect congestion pricing or significant tolls on New York's bridges and tunnels to make regional rail and ferries more important than ever.
- And we expect Daniel Patrick Moynihan to be posthumously rewarded for out-waiting the forces of lethargy and delay – with a glorious new train station in his honor and his name to rise on Eighth Avenue.

So what are we waiting for?



**From McKim's Baths of Caracalla to Kahn's Last Stop, Bell with time to spare at Penn Station**

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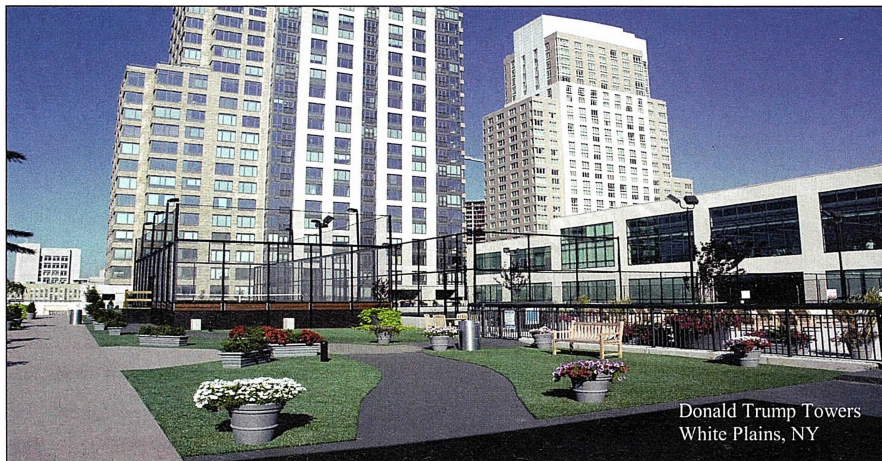
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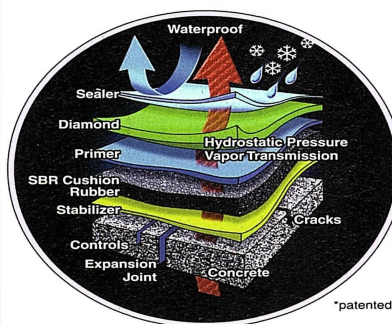
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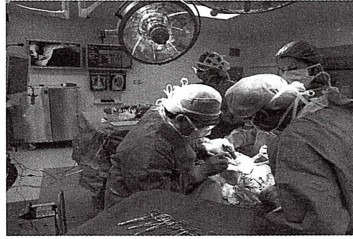
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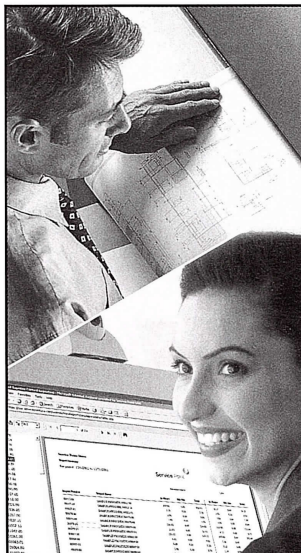
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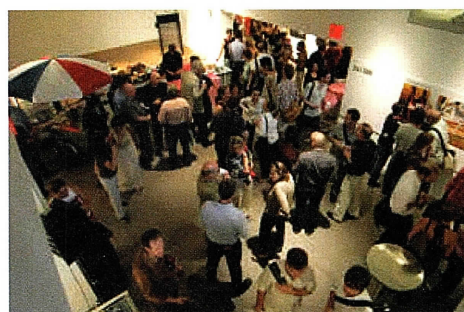
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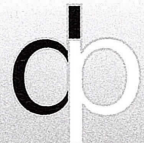


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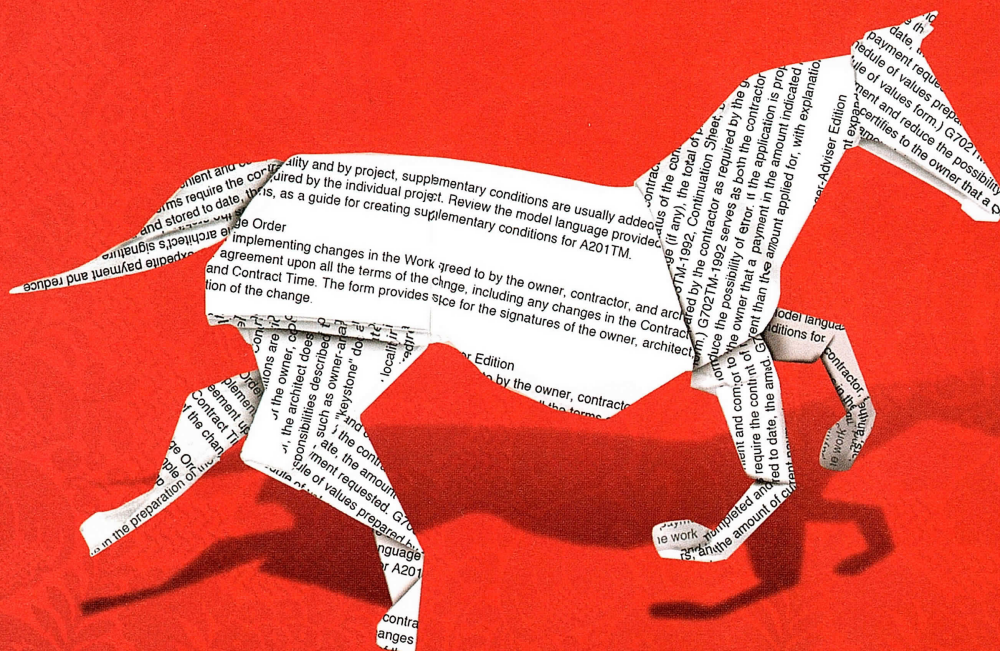
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