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GENERAL CONTRACTORS BUILDING SUCCESS

Good Architecture Is Good Business

by Alan J. Cuteri, AIA



"Where we have seemed to fail is in understanding our own value, communicating or demonstrating that value and obtaining appropriate compensation."

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On the cover: Carnegie Mellon University's Intelligent Workplace. Photo by Karl Backus courtesy of Carnegie Mellon University.

In 1968 while I was in elementary school,

I witnessed the daily construction activity of a new Roman Catholic Church. The folded plate, reinforced concrete structure took shape on a forest of scaffold and planking. It was a dramatic site that captured my interest for an entire year. Every day during recess and just before the lunch hour, I could watch and listen to the symphony of construction activity taking place. I soon learned that the individual who was responsible for this menagerie of activities resulting in this fascinating construction was called an architect, and the course of my life was set. I decided to be an architect.

As I would realize some 25 years later, architecture is a rapidly changing profession that originated over 3,000 years ago on the principles of the master builder. The master builder was to be knowledgeable and educated in the art of construction, physics, physical proportions, the arts, the sciences and weather. These principles of design are delineated in the *Ten Books of Architecture*, a manuscript written 2,000 years ago that would serve as a basis for the design of buildings into modern times.

Today, we find ourselves at a crossroad of change in the profession brought on by the dynamics of commerce, construction practices, innovations in technology, and an unbridled legal system. In 1929, a large Pittsburgh high school was constructed with a set of drawings, roughly 30 sheets, which graphically showed the final design of the building. The drawings were minimal in their detail and notation, yet clear in their intent and selection of materials. Accompanying these documents was an 85 page book, hard bound, 1/2 size pages that were the complete specification and contract for construction. Simplicity of documentation belied the intricate wrought iron handrails, terra cotta cornices and intricate wood working that embellished this building. Renovation and expansion of this facility some 55 years later required over a hundred and thirty drawings of significantly greater detail and complexity. The specification was published in two volumes with approximately 750 pages, full size. Many things have changed in fifty-five years.

Architects today are responsible for complying with 1,000 page code books, multiple government agencies and ev-

ery conceivable rule and regulation regarding subjects from wetlands to freon escaping from an old refrigerator. Architects are also responsible for creating invincible documents that hold up to the most creative and sometimes illogical scrutiny. We are expected to provide detailed evaluation and design of multiple building systems for climatic comfort, cost-effective operation and energy efficiency. We must provide innovative, technology enhanced buildings with the latest materials and construction techniques, built within budget and, of course, *no change orders*.

With the skills, liabilities and demands of our profession increasing, architects today are still considered a commodity by some. Unbelievable. Architects are the only professionals that are trained and educated to provide for complete coordination of the hundreds of thousands of decisions that are necessary to execute even a modest building project. We create real measurable value in buildings we design: value in the design of low maintenance facilities, value in the operational efficiency of a corporate headquarters, value in the flexibility of our buildings to be refitted and adaptable for the latest technological changes of climate control and computer systems, now and in the future, at minimal cost.

Architects routinely take raw sites and through detailed site utilization studies, zoning variances and code analysis, create a site that can sustain real capital development. The architect has increased the value of that property before a structure is built. Where we have seemed to fail is in understanding our own value, communicating or demonstrating that value and obtaining appropriate compensation. A corporate executive engaged in a major or minor project should already know that 'Good Architecture is Good Business'. Architects must begin to think like the executives for whom we design. We already anticipate the future trends and understand the bottom line. What we must do is educate our clients to retain us and compensate us as the valuable resource that we are.

During the coming year our public relations efforts, program events, and other efforts on behalf of our members will be measured against our theme for this year, "Good Architecture is Good Business". ▲

AIA Pittsburgh serves 12 Western Pennsylvania counties as the local component of the American Institute of Architects and AIA Pennsylvania. The objective of AIA Pittsburgh is to improve, for society, the quality of the built environment by further raising the standards of architectural education, training and practice; fostering design excellence; and promoting the value of architectural services to the public. AIA membership is open to all registered architects, architectural interns, and a limited number of professionals in supporting fields.

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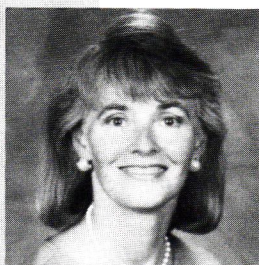
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What's It All About?

by Cheryl R. Towers

Maybe it's the season, but I've been

having lots of ontological moments of late — the “why am I here?” kind of stuff that can drive you crazy if you let it. Fortunately for me, it's not of a personal nature, so at least I'm clear on that front.



“Call me simplistic, but I think we might have a better shot at focusing our thinking as a region if we would be honest about the results of our actions not just today but a generation or two from now.”

It seems that every meeting that I've attended of late, every group process that I've facilitated, and the feedback coming in from various articles all seem to center around one thing: we simply can't seem to articulate as a region what our priorities are, small pockets of sanity notwithstanding. This isn't news to anyone, of course, but I am struck by how much it has begun to intrude on daily life. This lack of common vision isn't something abstract or “out there” that we intellectually know affects us, but that we're not conscious of every time we turn around. Instead, group after group is either paralyzed in its decision making or at least impeded from moving ahead as it should be able to do.

I suggest applying the “rotten outcomes” test to all planning and decision making. I can't take credit for elevating the phrase to a policy level. That belongs to a gentleman named David Hamburg, retired president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, one of the country's most influential foundations. Hamburg was talking about social issues when he condensed the Corporation's goals into the eloquently phrased “prevention of rotten outcomes”. What a concept! Of course, where we get lost is in defining exactly what constitutes a “rotten outcome”.

Instead of focusing solely on proposed goals and projects at the macro level (e.g. do we need another highway?), let's also look at the logical outcome of our thinking at its micro level — how it affects us folks on the ground going

about our daily lives. There is plenty of research available and you don't have to be Sherlock Holmes to figure this stuff out. Look at the *Reshaping the Region* report for a start — do dumb things and it's easy to see what you get — a rotten outcome. Call me simplistic, but I think we might have a better shot at focusing our thinking as a region if we would be honest about the results of our actions not just today but a generation or two from now.

We should be encouraged by the findings in our article about Pittsburgh as a design hub. There is sufficient creative energy here to power the next generation of the starship Enterprise, and I have confidence that enough of that energy will continue to spill into the arena of policymaking to affect the quality of our region's outcomes. We should also be encouraged by the energy at the grassroots level that Bob Kobet, AIA alludes to in his article and by the technological expertise available to make the built environment not just attractive but *smart*, as CMU's Intelligent Workplace demonstrates.

Starting with this issue, we're bringing you up to date on some aspects of planning that don't make the popular press. Rob Pfaffmann, AIA and Maura Guttman, AIA, for instance, have put together a progress report on the revamping of the City of Pittsburgh's building code. As Rob pointed out to me when he proposed the article, “We're frequently criticized as a profession for not understanding the City codes, so it's important to get this information out to all architects.” In future issues, look for other updates, including planning efforts by some of the area's leading environmental organizations.

In the meantime, Happy New Year to everyone and please join me in my resolution for 1998 to help reduce rotten outcomes wherever they may be. 🏠



COLUMNS is printed on recycled paper.

"Office of the Future" Opens at Carnegie Mellon University

On December 9, 1997, top executives from the consortium that funded the Intelligent Workplace gathered at Carnegie Mellon University to celebrate the facility's grand opening. Representatives from organizations such as the Bank of America, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Energy, the National Science Foundation, Siemens and Steelcase toured the facility and viewed demonstrations of the IW's innovative technologies.

The Intelligent Workplace, a 7,000-square-foot "living" laboratory is a unique research, development and demonstration project whose objectives are to improve the health, motivation and productivity of the more than 50 million members of the U.S. office workforce. At the same time, the IW seeks to improve the organizational flexibility and

technological adaptability of facilities at a fraction of the energy requirements and with less environmental impact of existing facilities.

While the Intelligent Workplace demonstrates a number of advances and innovations in materials, components and assemblies for thermal, visual, acoustic, air quality and spatial performance, the effectiveness of these elements in the built environment depends on how they are integrated with each other, and how they address overriding concerns about resource management, health and individual effectiveness.

You can read more about the Intelligent Workplace at <http://www.arc.cmu.edu/cbpd/iw.html>

From NCARB

Architects should be aware that interns working in their offices under contract arrangements may not receive training credit in NCARB's Intern Development Program (IDP). In order for an intern to receive IDP training credit, he or she must be under the direct supervision of an employee of the same organization. The intern who works in an architect's office under the terms of a contract with an outside labor provider may not be considered to be under the direct supervision of the architect. For more information, call the NCARB Intern Services Department at (202) 879-0500 or visit NCARB's website at www.ncarb.org.

Registration v. certification: what's the difference?

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have registration boards that regulate the profession of architecture in their jurisdictions. These boards form NCARB, whose mission is to protect the public health, safety and welfare.

In order to practice architecture in a U.S. state or territory, architects must register with that state's board. While registration requirements vary from state to state, generally the architect must prove he or she is qualified by satisfying a number of education and training requirements and by passing a national licensing exam.

After registering in one U. S. jurisdiction, architects may seek reciprocity by applying directly to other licensing authorities. However, 22 member boards require the NCARB Certificate for interstate registration.

For information on NCARB certification, call (202) 783-6500 or visit NCARB's website at www.ncarb.org.

A moving experience

ACTION-Housing, Inc. has moved from Gateway Center to Suite 950, 425 Sixth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1819. Phone: 412/281-2102.



Kudos

The following members were recognized at the November 18 Design Awards ceremony at the Byham Theater.

Contributions to the Profession: P. Richard Rittelmann, FAIA, the executive vice president of Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates. Dick founded Burt Hill's energy division and is an internationally recognized expert in energy efficient design, state-of-the-art laboratories and teaching facilities. He has been responsible for large, complex projects including the \$123,000,000 Vista (now Doubletree Hotel) in Pittsburgh and the \$88,000,000 Biomedical Science Tower at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

Medal of Distinction and Honor Award for Furthering Artistic Appreciation: Sylvester Damianos, FAIA, was honored with both of the above awards, given by AIA Pennsylvania. Mr. Damianos is a principal in the Pittsburgh firm Damianos + Anthony. A recent project is the Carnegie Library Branch in the former Bank Center downtown. Syl is also an artist and board member of the Associated Artists of Pittsburgh.

Kudos also to AIA Pittsburgh's **Committee on the Environment** on winning a Best of Category Award from the Printing Industry of Western Pennsylvania. The award was given for the publication *Reshaping the Region: Planning for a Sustainable Future*, **David Pecharka, AIA**, project chair, **Cheryl Towers**, editor and professional affiliate, Robert Bowden, design, printing by Graphic Arts Color Corporation.

Is Pittsburgh A Design Hub, Or Is It All in Our Minds?

by Cheryl R. Towers

Area architectural firms are busier than ever. What's up?

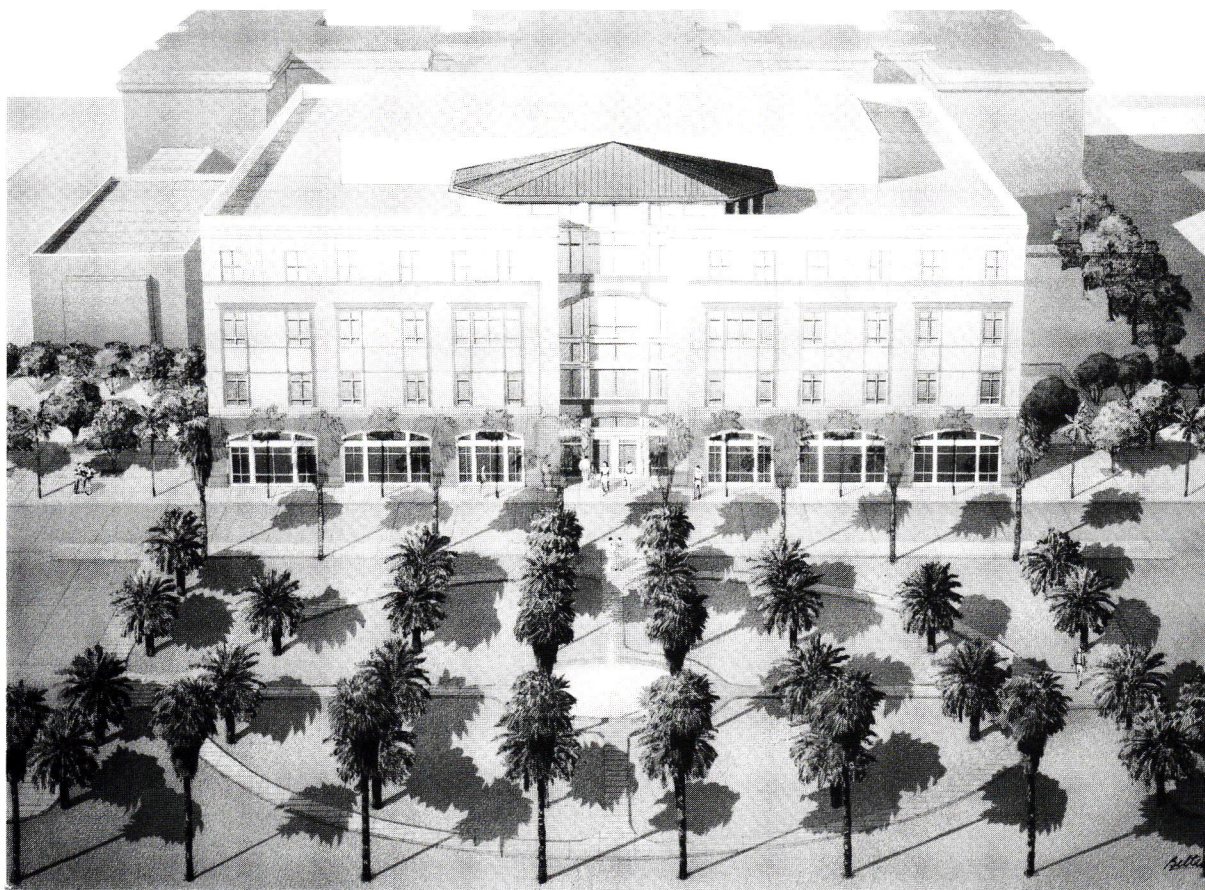


Illustration of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Transplant Hospital, Palermo, Sicily by L. D. Astorino & Associates, Ltd.

In 1992, the Democratic party battle cry was "It's the economy, stupid!" The economy was in recovery by then, but few believed it yet, and former President George Bush was swept out of office at least in part for appearing insensitive to the average person's anxieties. There is no question now that the economy is booming in much of the country, irrational exuberance notwithstanding.

Business is up for architectural firms nationally, and Pittsburgh firms are riding the wave. But is it more than that? Has Pittsburgh not only benefited from a good economy but moved beyond that to establish itself as a recognized

design center? Certainly, when you think about what's between Chicago and the East Coast with the exception of Pittsburgh, there isn't much to report. With all due respect to our comrades in Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Buffalo and Scranton, what is going on locally appears to outshine them all.

Of course, it's easy to jump to the wrong conclusion from impressions, and there is no small amount of civic pride at stake. To try and move beyond that, we contacted Kermit Baker, chief economist for AIA and a staffer at the Housing Research Center at Harvard for suggestions on how to proceed. His guidance led to the questionnaire sent to a sam-

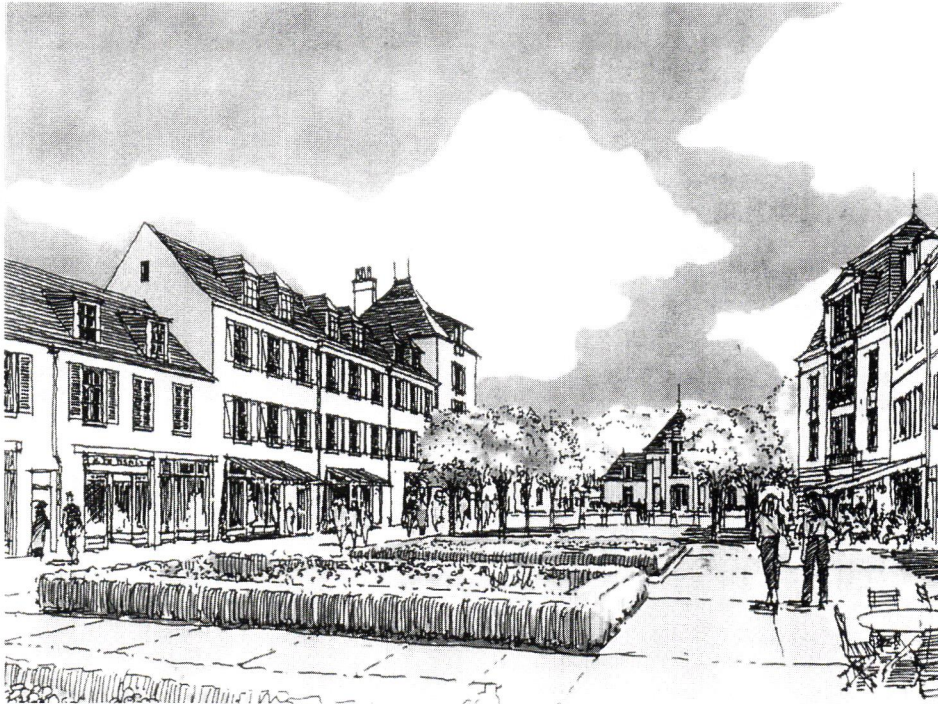


Illustration of Place Centrale, St. Mard, France by UDA Architects

What Pittsburgh has in abundance is people practicing creative work in any number of fields, and a myriad of other institutions which feed and reinforce this activity such as AIA, the Community Design Center, Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh.

pling of firms recently, and a look at other data reported below. He has also offered to look at our report and compare it to national trends, and we'll give you his feedback in a future issue. Best of all, he assured us that an impressionistic approach was acceptable, and that, in fact, a more scientific approach while desirable was more the undertaking of a PhD candidate's dissertation than an article for a monthly trade magazine.

First, some business indicators summarized from the 15 questionnaires returned and based upon the replies received. Comparisons were between the most current year for which figures exist and 1994.

- 11 firms report exporting more work from this region than in 1994.
- The average increase among those of you reporting more exported work was 19% and ranged up to 30%.
- One firm based outside the region opened an office here to do more work in the area.
- Four firms reported growth internationally, ranging from 1% - 18% with an average of 10%.
- 7 firms reported more growth outside of the Pittsburgh area but within Pennsylvania. Increases ranged from 2% to 15% and the average was 8%.
- 11 firms reported exporting more business to other areas of the United States, with increases ranging from 5% to a whopping 70%. The average increase was 23%.
- Of the 12 firms reporting billing amounts, 4 reported earnings that were flat, and one reported an 11% decrease. Gains for the rest were impressive, ranging from 25% to 300%.
- There were no clear indicators from personnel recruitment. Firms were evenly divided between those recruiting more new employees from outside of the region than in past years and those who were not. They were also evenly divided in opinion as to whether or not it has become easier to retain employees in the region.
- Student recruitment seems to center around top flight programs in the east and Midwest, CMU among them.

Numbers of employees paints a murkier picture. Lack of growth in numbers may simply reflect better use of technology that allows the same number of people to do more work. However, Zweig White & Associates, Inc. reported



The Intelligent Workplace, Carnegie Mellon University. Photo courtesy of Carnegie Mellon University.

in October that "Staff levels in U.S. architecture, engineering, planning, and environmental consulting firms grew in the second quarter of 1997, reflecting increased optimism among firm principals."

We asked what changes firms have made in services since 1994. Most reported "none". If you recall from the December issue, construction management, a hot growth area nationally, is not reflected in Pittsburgh market trends. Added services cited include international consulting, design/build, facility management, pre-design, feasibility studies, strategic planning, and interior design. Two firms noted that they have added more marketing activities, such as publications and graphics.

And what about AIA Pittsburgh? According to Anne Swager, executive director, the chapter has grown 16% from 1994 to 1997. The number of member firms and architects grew from 448 to 519.

There are stunning examples of the influence of local firms, such as L. D. Astorino and Associates, Ltd.'s design for The Chapel of the Holy Spirit at Vatican City and design for a \$75 million transplant center for UPMC in Palermo, Sicily; UDA Architects' work in France and Russia; Bohlin Cywinski Jackson's partnership with James Cutler Architects of Seattle to design the ultra high tech home of Bill and Melinda Gates and Ross Bianco Architects, P.C. in St.

Petersburg and Moscow, Russia.

But what is a "design center" and what makes it vital? It's certainly the creativity of architects. It's also the creative work coming out of the graphics, industrial arts, interiors, and software industries as well as the work of the region's many fine artists. It's the creativity of the folks at the Tissue Engineering Institute, and all those other burgeoning high tech industries. And that may well be the key to what really makes Pittsburgh a design hub of note, not just an increase in billings or a glamour job overseas. What Pittsburgh has in abundance is people practicing creative work in any number of fields, and many institutions that feed and reinforce this activity such as AIA, the Community Design Center, Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh.

Architects and other design professionals are recognized nationally and internationally for their leadership, they are interviewed and profiled in important publications and they are players in the formation of public policy. CMU's Intelligent Workplace, featured on this month's cover, is a prime example. The architectural faculty have married design and technology to demonstrate the work environment of the future. They have attracted funding from international sources, and visitors from all over the world attended December's opening.

What are some of the other reinforcing institutions that make this a vital region for design?

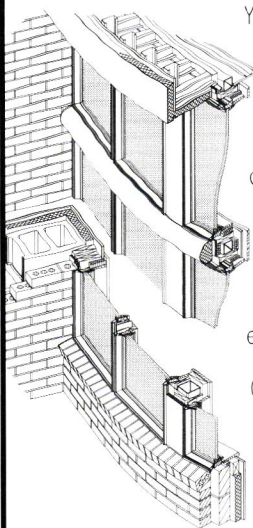
- CMU Department of Architecture. Not only does the department produce a new crop of highly skilled professionals each year, the faculty are influential worldwide. Department chair Vivian Loftness, AIA, for example, was instrumental in the "greening" of the U.S. Embassy under construction in Berlin.
- The Heinz Architectural Center at the Carnegie Museum of Art provides one of the few museum settings devoted to architectural studies. The Hall of Architecture is unique and has preserved through casts many important building facades lost or severely damaged in war.
- The Community Design Center elevates the use of design in our neighborhoods.
- Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation keeps historic preservation in front of the public.
- The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy owns and operates Fallingwater, arguably the most important work of art in Western Pennsylvania and a Wright masterpiece.
- The Green Building Alliance is evolving into a major educational force for a smarter approach to building practices.
- Specific programs such as the University of Pittsburgh's Green Construction Management in the School of Engineering are training a new generation of professionals who are bringing new energy and a new outlook to their practice.
- Arts organizations such as the Pittsburgh Trust for Cultural Resources has done wonders to revitalize a formerly seedy section of downtown.
- The City of Pittsburgh Planning Department through efforts like the development of the Downtown Plan and encouragement of neighborhood development is

strengthening the urban core that helps concentrate creative energies.

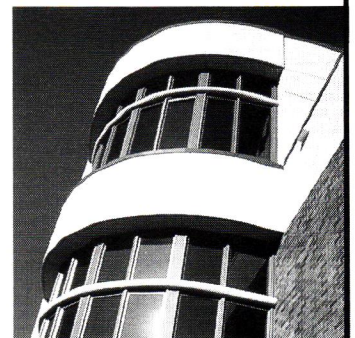
- Environmental groups such as the Environmental City Initiative and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council promote better public policies and more sustainable communities.
- The Software Engineering Institute and the Robotics Institute are on the cutting edge of designing new technologies.

Back in September, Sam Hazo wrote an article for the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* entitled "Writers Work Here". In it, he points out that Pittsburgh has nurtured—and harbors—an unusual amount of literary talent, and he thinks we "should get the word out." He had no trouble convincing me on either count. The same is true in the design arena. There is an abundance of talent here. We are beginning to export that talent using Pittsburgh as a base. Now, it's time to tell the rest of the world. ■

THE MARK OF A GREAT ARCHITECT IS IN THE DETAILS. AND WE CAN TAKE CARE OF THEM.



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Pittsburgh Adaptive Reuse Building Code Study

by Rob Pfaffmann, AIA and Maura Guttman, AIA

A Progress Report

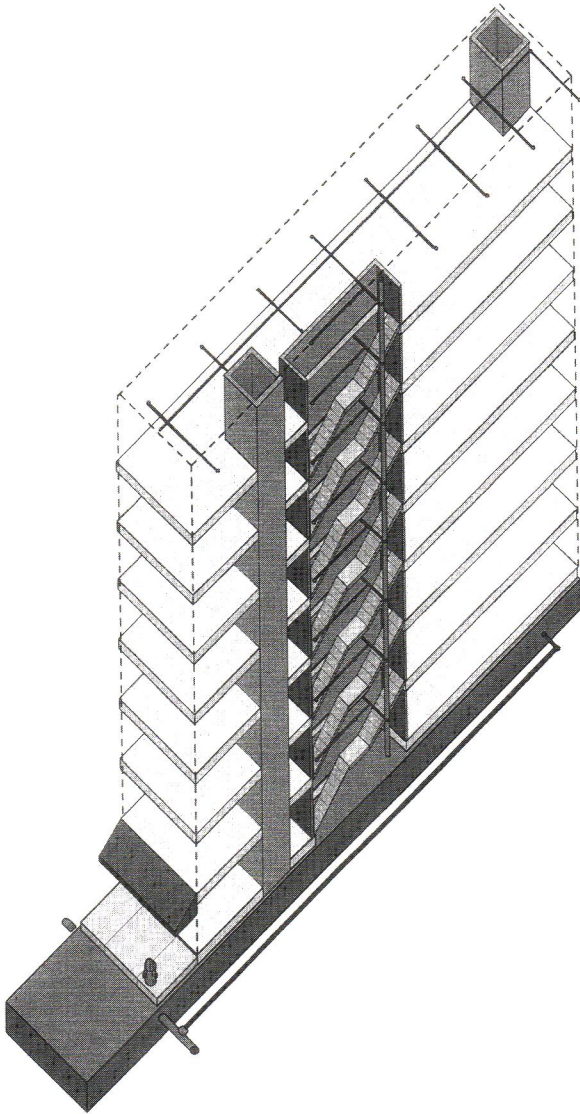
As part of the Pittsburgh Downtown Plan, the City of Pittsburgh is developing strategies for encouraging the reuse of older existing structures. Since building regulations are generally written for new construction, the need to find alternative cost effective methods of achieving life safety and accessibility is of critical importance to the success of conservation-oriented development. Pfaffmann + Associates has been charged with developing a code strategy as well as four case studies demonstrating alternative solutions to life safety problems that often prevent the full use of the upper floors of certain downtown structures.

The history of building in the Golden Triangle gives some clues as to how a prevalent but unusual building type developed. This building type, originally built for mercantile and warehouse use around the turn of the century, is characterized by a deep but very narrow footprint, and is often up to eight stories in height. Typically, these structures were built on earlier settlement lots laid out at fifteen and twenty foot intervals.

After a major fire in 1845 that destroyed over half of the downtown area, building owners were very concerned with fire protection in the construction of their buildings. Many standards existed on fire-resistive construction methods. But while there was much concern about how to protect a structure, there was less attention to the safety of the building's occupants in the event of a fire. Research on how to make a building safe for egress was not a primary concern especially since many of the structures were for warehousing; typically only the first and second floor were occupied. In some cases the structures did not have more than an iron ship's ladder or winder to use when the freight elevator broke down.



ILLUSTRATION AND PHOTOS BY PFAFFMANN AND ASSOCIATES



Over the last 50 years or so many of these buildings have been abandoned or used only for storage on their upper floors. As modern office space was constructed, the use of the upper floors of these older buildings continued to decline, with only the ground floor holding much value for retail use.

With the rise of the preservation movement over the last two decades, many American cities have begun to look at these buildings as assets. Unfortunately, Pittsburgh has lagged behind other cities, such as New York and Chicago, in the reuse of these structures.

The City of Pittsburgh Bureau of Building Inspection and the Board of Standards and Appeals have identified several impediments to the redevelopment of the older downtown building stock, specifically the "sliver buildings" described above. An overwhelming detriment for this particular building type is that there is typically only one exit stair, where any use under the current building codes re-

quires two. Even using Article 34 of the BOCA code that allows for additional life safety features to compensate for an existing structure's deficiencies, it still does not address single stairs. In buildings of this particular configuration, the addition of a second stair is in most cases economically incompatible with feasible development. The accompanying illustration (left) shows this condition when a building has a single stair and an elevator, resulting in far too little leasable floor area if a second stair were to be provided. In other circumstances, the cost of an additional stair maybe so prohibitively high that the project is abandoned.

Since the late eighties, the Bureau of Building Standards has been informally encouraging architects and building owners to look at alternative life safety packages in these unique situations, and a handful of projects have been approved by the Board of Standards and Appeals for reuse of buildings with only the single stair.

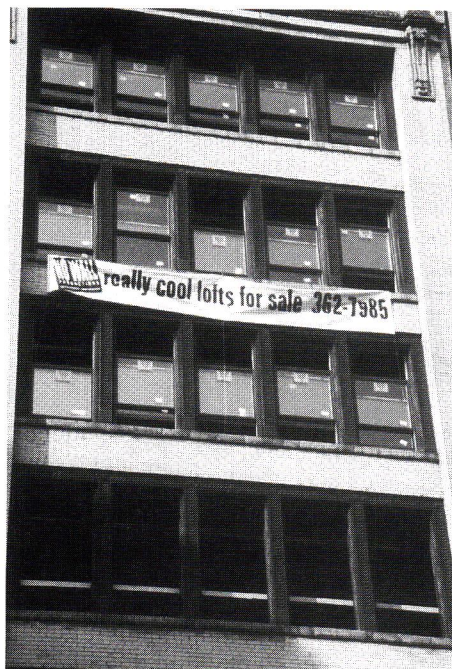
An objective in this study has been to identify and institutionalize some of the creative uses of the codes, so that the code review and approval process becomes less of an intimidating hurdle to prospective developers. While real and perceived obstacles to reuse of these buildings may exist, the City believes that a greater understanding of the underlying principles of the building codes can lead to an increased ability to conserve and reuse our beautiful downtown heritage, while safeguarding the health and welfare of the building occupants.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

We emphasize that the following recommendations are preliminary. We expect to be convening a series of focus groups with design professionals and building owners and real estate developers to obtain feedback on our proposals. We encourage your comments and criticisms. If you are interested in participating in a focus group please con-

"While real and perceived obstacles to reuse of these buildings may exist, the City believes that a greater understanding of the underlying principles of the building codes can lead to an increased ability to conserve and reuse our beautiful downtown heritage, while safeguarding the health and welfare of the building occupants."

— ROB PFAFFMANN, AIA



tact Rob Pfaffmann, AIA at 471-2470 (fax: 471-2472 or e-mail: rsparch@aol.com).

1. Develop guidelines for reviews at the administrative or board level.

One of the most significant questions is whether the BBI staff administrator or the Board of Standards and Appeals should be the final arbiter of alternative life safety solutions. It is proposed that the Board adopt an interim set of guidelines to provide a reasonable amount of consistency in philosophy from one project to the next until final decisions are made.

2. Stay abreast of state and national code developments

Promote adoption of the new national code for existing structures that is currently under development. This new code appears to provide a useful process for identifying the type of existing structure activity into categories (repair, renovation, alteration, reconstruction, change of occupancy).

In addition, a key issue will be coordinating with imminent adoption of BOCA as the statewide building code, which,

while a positive move for the state (L&I is much more restrictive and inflexible), will cause potential difficulties in adopting interpretations and changes at a municipal level.

3. Alternatives to BOCA article 34

Clarify the uses of the Property Maintenance Code (formerly known as the Existing Structures Code) and develop a simple decision process as a specifically limited alternative to Article 34 of BOCA. This provision will provide for administrative approvals or board approvals in instances where the building cannot achieve requirements of Article 34 or the Property Maintenance Code within a specific set of circumstances. A model will be proposed as part of the final study document.

4. Approval process guide

Publish guide for building owners and managers that assists in an understanding of the process: when a project would need to be reviewed by the Board and when it would be approved administratively.

5. Program of technical assistance

Provide a program of technical assistance possibly funded through foundation grants as has been done in Philadel-

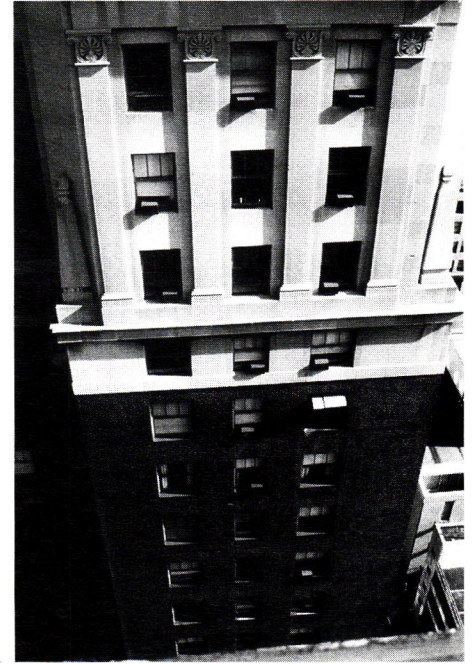
phia through the Pew Charitable Trust. Provide funding sources as incentives for creative reuse by building owners hesitant to invest due to the complexity of the process.

6. Professional assessment skills & advocacy

Improve professional assessment skills in a coordinated effort with BBI, engineers and architects. Professional organizations (AIA, BOCA, NFPA etc.) need to be actively involved in communicating specific Pittsburgh policies to their members, and must provide additional advocacy for change as the proposed national codes progress towards adoption in the next few years.

7. Clarify zoning issues for downtown housing conversions

Although there are no specific exclusions, a clearer guide is needed for appropriate conversions that anticipate the need for balance of business and residential uses within a single structure. It is recommended that San Diego's Live/Work code (33% maximum residential use within existing business or warehouse structures; minimum floor area per unit 750sf) or accessory uses be allowed.



8. Historic building exceptions

Exceptions for stair enclosures of historically significant interiors. Qualifications: approval by Planning Department; Preservation Planner and review of technical alternatives for approval by the board.

9. Flow test database

Two hydrants in the vicinity are usually tested when a project is planned. The city could maintain a database of test results to allow owners to quickly assess compliance with the 250 gpm requirement. This is helpful to avoid the cost impact of a fire pump and the associated back-up systems.

10. Clarify the use of fire escapes as alternatives

Since many of the structures in the downtown area have long narrow plan footprints, fire escapes are beneficial when there is only a single occupant on the floor. Multiple occupants require passageways to get to the fire escape and therefore render the plan highly inefficient or unusable. An expanded policy for use in tall structures is needed. 🏠

CASE STUDIES:

The final component of this study is to develop a series of case studies that demonstrate how more flexible concepts could be applied. The primary building type is the sliver building; a small foot plate high rise located typically in the Cultural District, in the First Side district, and to a lesser extent along Smithfield and Fifth. Most are under-utilized or abandoned on their upper floors. The selected structures include: 711 Penn Avenue, the Investment Building and a Cultural District Survey update.

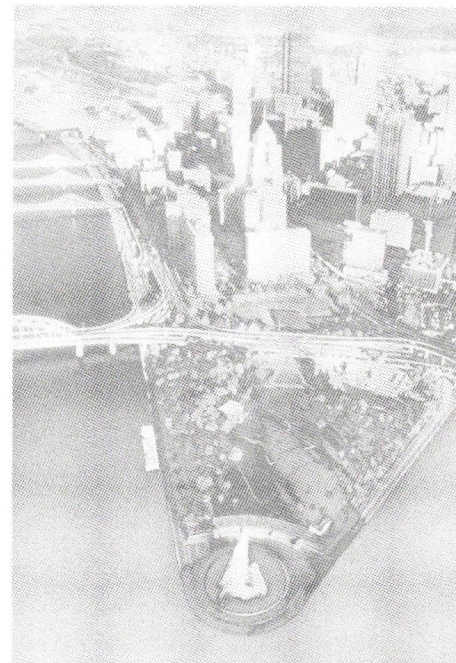
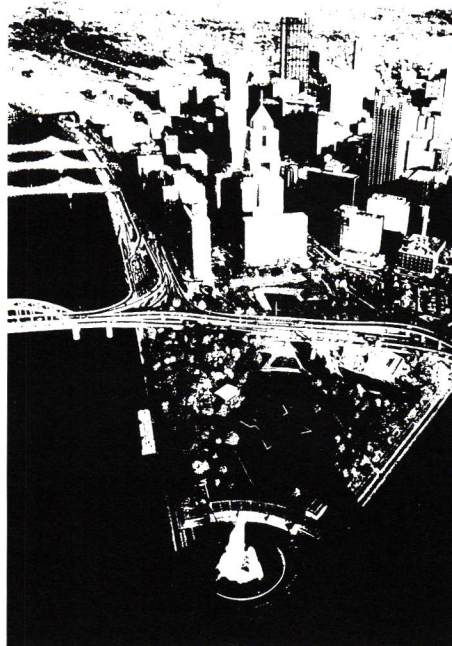
Most of these structures are impacted by requirements related to:

- Occupancy: density of use, mixed uses
- Height: high rise (7-8 stories) defined by the reach of a fire department ladder and fire fighting practices.
- Egress system: adequate exit stairs located to provide useable space

- Fire protection: standpipes, sprinklers, and alarms
- Narrow width (15'-30')
- Small floor plate (typically 1,000-4,000 SF)
- Single stair
- Undefined occupancy that is currently vacant or vague use of space.

Our survey reviewed three basic types in addition to projects already approved and developed

- single exit low rise
- single exit high rise
- previously approved projects (under property maintenance code)



Location, Location, Location

Thoughts about integrating place and green buildings for better results.

Location, location, location. The mantra of the real estate industry. Suffix phrase to a litany of cocktail comments about why something is or isn't working. Yet, the whole idea of location, wrapped up in the guise of region, community and neighborhood, has been swirling around rather intensely of late. Recent events have given me reason to ponder some connections and ask here if any of this makes sense to you.

If we buy into the concept that good design springs from the site, and we stretch it a bit, we can begin to suggest that singular buildings may be influenced by the larger attributes and inspirations found in the neighborhoods and communities within which our projects reside. This is most typically found in our homage to historic context, lifting visual cues from existing neighborhoods and trying generally to make our buildings fit in.

Most codes, regulations and governing boards that have jurisdiction over the design process are limited to state and local municipalities or similar governing bodies. It would be possible to have a happy ending here except we

have hundreds of separate municipalities governing in the same bioregions. Hence, there is little hope at this time for a coherent regional or larger order of influence to our community planning process, or the architecture that resides there. It would be easy to dismiss this mess—the temptation lies in sheer frustration—but I have been inspired by several events recently that have cemented my belief that the relationship between a singular work of architecture and the larger region and host community is indeed reciprocal and, in the best case, mutually beneficial.

In late October, I attended the Green Building Conference in Austin with a small but enthusiastic contingent from the 'burg. As a Steeler fan, I've always considered anything near Dallas undesirable territory, but Austin was a delightful exception. The theme of the conference was "Linking Practice to Place". Pliny Fisk, Director of the Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems, set the tone for the event in his introduction when he stated:

"Linking practice to place is a fundamental element of green building. Implicit in the understanding and responding to

the context in which we work are multiple direct and indirect benefits, with the beneficiaries being the ecosystem, the people, and future generations. Place becomes the defining frame work for practice, and practice stretches to reflect the entire life cycle of a product. By understanding practice as part of every step of the life cycle, our concept of production extends to the regional level and brings into focus the importance of resource planning. The pedagogy of green building is knowing a place as a system of plants, animals, people and businesses, respecting what is special about the place, and ensuring through practice that it is sustained."

Pliny has dedicated much of his life to mapping the bioregions of Texas and other areas, and making the connection between environmental stewardship, economics and architecture. His innovative research on building materials regionally derived from the earth, native plant materials and local industrial waste streams is internationally known. His irascible personality and dry wit only thinly conceal the dumbfounding common sense that forms his case for building with what's around you. Yet very few of us can identify with his kind of dedication and interest in regional influences and the attendant opportunities for innovative building that an intimate knowledge of our surroundings can create. Fewer still understand what his approach to construction could mean to our regional economy.

Pliny's approach was echoed in the overall interest in green neighborhoods and ecologically planned communities at the Austin conference. I was pleased with how enthusiastic the conversation concerning green neighborhood development was among attendees from around the country. It seems that much of the country is taking the logical step of greening communities because of the desire to improve their quality of life, reduce the cost of living, create new green industries and, generally speaking, take control of their own destiny. Woven through all the speeches was a sense of self reliance, common sense and a dignified feeling of self worth and community involvement.

The role of the architect was discussed throughout in ways that were at once self deprecating and inspirational. It seems that many architects are beginning to realize that they can no longer practice in isolation because of the rising awareness of the larger role and impact of architec-

tural commissions on the community and regional infrastructure. Some, like Sim Van der Ryn, both inspired and cajoled the architects, planners and municipal officials in attendance to recapture the opportunities lost when the larger issues of industrial ecology, sustainable land use planning and community consensus building are ignored. Much of Sim's lecture was taken from his book *Ecological Design* and reflected an interesting concept that we have not yet grasped in Western Pennsylvania:

"Architects are still designing the 'it', and seldom the edge, even though it is at the edges, or ecotones, where the richest exchanges and interactions take place. The result is that modern cities and buildings have hard edges, and they tend to discourage ecotones. Planning and development still favor clear separation between land uses, and of course the automobile eats ecotones like a video-game Pac-Man. Thus we are left with the sterile empty plazas, parking lots, and highway edges of much new development."

Like any good speaker, however, Sim and the others typically concluded their talks with several great case studies, inspirational words of wisdom and well wishes. So, fully charged and raring to go, we returned to Pittsburgh to learn that the Regional Renaissance Tax Initiative had been soundly defeated. Maybe if my head hadn't just been so thoroughly packed with all the good things going on in the sustainable design and development movement in other cities around the country, I wouldn't be so concerned about this. Instead I started thinking:

What if the same millions that were spent on promoting the Regional Renaissance Tax were spent on listening to

"It's going to take a concerted effort to turn Pittsburgh into a sustainable community, yet in many very important ways, Sustainaissance One has begun."

—ROBERT J. KOBET, AIA



Austin, Texas Convention Center

what the people want to have happen in their neighborhoods and home towns? Imagine open debate and consensus building in the municipal halls and high school auditoriums across the region. It's the same process Seattle, Chattanooga, Sarasota, Austin and others are doing across the country to assess what they *collectively* want to do in their regions.

What can be gained by looking at our regional assets a little differently?

It amazes me that we have a major recycling center in Lawrenceville that in the recent past had to landfill newspapers, much to our civic dismay, because of fluctuations in the market and a resultant glut of newsprint, cardboard, etc. Could we rejuvenate a nearby abandoned warehouse and, perhaps, a small part of the local economy, by constructing a cellulose insulation plant, using the cellulose to make a Pittsburgh based insulation product, and in turn, insulate a few thousand low income homes?

Instead of building on slag, can we build with slag, fly ash, and recycled steel? Can you imagine a regional investment initiative that targets automobile junk yards specifically as sources for building steel to clean up the landscape and stop ground water pollution? Agriculture is Pennsylvania's largest industry, yet building with agricultural waste products is in its infancy, and none are manufactured in Pennsylvania. Pliny, where are you?

All of these things and more were mulling around in my head while several of us attended the Green Building Alliance retreat in Hidden Valley a few weeks ago. It seemed that the well mixed group in attendance, had many of these same questions on their minds. Several things were clear. It's going to take a concerted effort to turn Pittsburgh into a sustainable community, yet in many very important ways, Sustainaissance One has begun. The Environmental City Initiative is evolving. The Green Neighborhood movement is growing, and several green buildings are up or in the planning stages. There are several political and technical challenges to achieving the kinds of initiatives listed above. Still, I think collective wisdom indicates that if we expend as much energy solving these issues as we do politicizing them, we can achieve a great deal. The overall recognition of the importance of the region to what we do individually as architects and visa versa was encouraging.



Public housing that ignores sustainable practices.

These same sentiments were expressed at the AIA Design Awards in November by keynote speaker, U.S. Congressman Earl Blumenauer, (D) Oregon, when he related his experiences and involvement with making Portland a more livable community, all the while making continuing reference and comparisons to Pittsburgh. While he joked about car choked communities where people are stranded in rush hour traffic on their way to the gym to ride exercise bikes, my thoughts drifted back to Austin. I really enjoyed the ecologically sensitive, allergy free nontoxic Habitat Suites Hotel I stayed in. It seems many of the conference attendees and speakers stayed there, too, so maybe it was the company.

At the same time, I realized that not a word was mentioned in the Jury comments about any of the award winning projects being green or sustainable. I remembered how proud our hosts were about their new green Austin Convention Center. And I wondered, what came first, an awareness of the need for a new convention center, or the intuitive sense that the city and its neighborhoods needed to be a better place in order to be a dignified host to the new array of buildings being constructed there. As architects we have as much responsibility to the quality of our communities as we do the buildings in them.

In terms of a sustainable city, we can be next or we can be last. The choice is ours.

Robert J. Kobet, AIA is Director of Green Building Services for Conservation Consultants, Inc. and is an adjunct faculty member in CMU's Department of Architecture.

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Preparing Tomorrow's Clients and Architects

by Cheryl Towers

Architectural programs for young people are fun and educational

The title of this compendium of architectural programs for young people says it all. When the story idea first surfaced at a Communications Committee meeting in the fall and someone asked "why are we doing this?", the inimitable Art Ruprecht, AIA, immediately gave us most of our title. And he's right. The single biggest challenge facing the profession is that architectural services are not fully understood by the general public and therefore not fully valued. What better way to change this than to teach the young? Not only are they tomorrow's clients, they are powerful influences in their own households today. How many households recycle thanks to environmental education efforts in the schools? It may be a stretch to think that a parent will hire an architect solely because of what their child learns in one of these programs, but it may at least get them thinking.

Many of these programs are aimed at teachers who are gaining their own new respect for architecture and who are in a position to influence thousands of students. According to Margaret J. Starkes-Ross, a first grade teacher at Sunnyside Elementary Public School in Stanton Heights who participated in the Gateway to Music Teacher inservice taught by Louise Sturgess from Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation, "This project has given me a whole new insight into architecture. It has taught me to appreciate building structure and design and not to overlook the creativity, effort, and beauty that is very obvious in the art of building." (as quoted in the June 1997 PHLF News)

There is another purpose to many of these programs that is equally as important as preparing future clients, and that is preparing future architects. In some cases, the goal is simply to offer the possibility of architecture as a career option. In other cases, exposure to architecture and related trades addresses the challenges of workforce readiness among at risk students who may have little or no exposure to the world of work. Who knows what architec-

tural talent rests dormant inside of a teen on the verge of a troubled life who might be channeled instead into a productive career?

There's plenty for you to do. Volunteer to be a part of one of these programs. Suggest new programs to the organizations and schools that you're involved in. Be a mentor to a young person.

In other words, think of this as an opportunity to insure your own future!

Carnegie Museum of Art

The MOA offers a number of architectural programs ranging from hands-on exploration of architecture for kids to teacher training. Contact them at 412/622-3288 for specific courses and details.

Carnegie Museum of Science

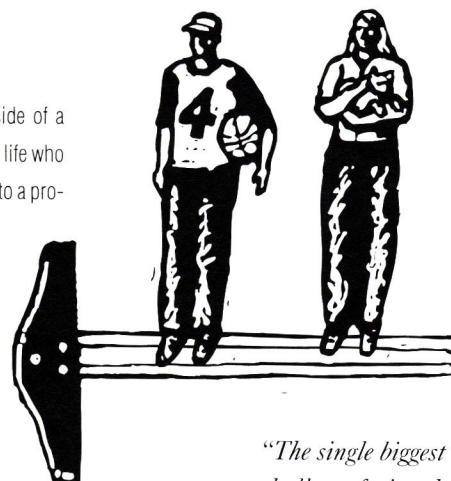
The MOS offers summer camps and classes as well as classes during the school year. Contact Mary Bertsch, 412/237-3387. The Museum is also the sponsor of the Math and Science Collaborative (see below).

Carnegie Mellon University

Architecture for Children for 3rd through 12th graders on Saturday mornings. Contact: 412/268-2355.

Pre-College Architecture Program

This CMU program is an opportunity for students to explore architecture and to determine their level of interest for further study at the college level. It is a six week experience offered in the summer. Contact: David L. Unruh, 412/268-2082 or email to precollege@andrew.cmu.edu.



"The single biggest challenge facing the profession is that architectural services are not fully understood by the general public and therefore not fully valued."

Exploring, the Young Adult Division of the Boy Scouts of America

Architecture Post #920 is a partnership between AIA Pittsburgh and Westinghouse Electric Corporation to provide adult leaders, program resources, and meeting facilities to help students explore a career interest in architecture. Contact: Greater Pittsburgh Council, BSA, 412/471-2927.

Gateway to Music

Gateway's Institutes for Teachers offers a 30 hour intensive course called "Understanding the Arts: Integrating the Arts into the Curriculum", and is available to teachers in all disciplines. Parents and administrators are encouraged to participate along with teachers. Courses will be offered in January and June. Call 412/261-9221 for details.

Pittsburgh Center for the Arts

PCA offers several classes for budding architects ages 7 - 14 during the school year and during its Summer Camp

program. Contact Lourdes Karas, 412/361-0455.

The Pittsburgh Children's Museum

"If I Had a Hammer" was named "One of the top new educational programs in the country" by the *New York Times* when the program was introduced in 1996. This and other museum activities about the built environment will keep kids, parents and teachers busy thinking and exploring. Contact the Museum at 412/322-5059.


Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation

PHLF wants people to care for the architectural landmarks that contribute to the region's unique character, be able to wisely evaluate the appropriateness of new development, and be committed to improving the quality of life in the region. To that end, the Foundation offers a number of programs at various grade levels for children and teachers. Contact Mary Ann Eubanks at 412/471-5808.

Regional Math/Science Collaborative

Sponsored by the Carnegie Science Center, the Collaborative is southwestern Pennsylvania's endeavor to coordinate and focus its efforts to strengthen math and science education for all students. For more information and to obtain a copy of the Collaborative's Annual Journal, contact the Science Center at 412/237-1607.

The Urban Youth Talent Pool: Putting Pittsburgh Youth on the Road to High-Performance Work

Sponsored by Carnegie Mellon Center for University Outreach and the Community Literacy Center, the goal of the program is to create a learning community of experienced adults and aspiring teens on the road to work and formed around writing and community dialogue, collaborative problem-solving projects, computer literacy teams, and hands-on work experience. Contact: Dr. Linda Flower, Director, Carnegie Mellon Center for University Outreach, 412/268-6444. 

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From the Firms

► **WTW Architects** are pleased to announce Richard P. Brzowski, Michael J. Bliss, Theresa M. Duffy, and Mary E. Salamon as the newest additions to the professional staff in Pittsburgh.

Kudos to **WTW Architects** for winning an Honorable Mention Design Award from Metal Architecture Magazine for the firm's design for Bayer Corporation's Building 16 on the Bayer Campus in Robinson Township. According to **Richard De Young, AIA**, WTW Senior Principal and Chief Operating Officer, "We are thrilled to be among the firms honored in Metal Architecture's first-ever design awards. This honor is shared equally with our staff, the construction team and our colleagues at Bayer Corporation."

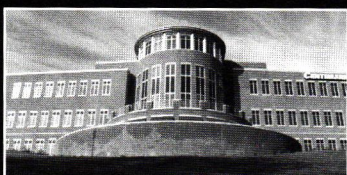
David J. McLean, AIA has moved his office to 1121 Boyce Road, Suite 1200-A, Pittsburgh, PA 15241. The phone number remains the same: 412/942-1242.

Business Briefs

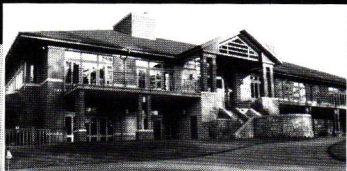
► Pashek Associates, P.C. announces that Nancy Lonnett Roman and John O. Buerkle, Jr. have become partners in the landscape architectural firm.

Landau Building Company announced the appointment of **Traci L. McGavitt, Professional Affiliate**, as Marketing Director.

SAI Consulting Engineers, Inc. have moved their operation to the Strip District and are now located at Penn Liberty Plaza II, 1400 Penn Avenue, Suite 101, Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4332.



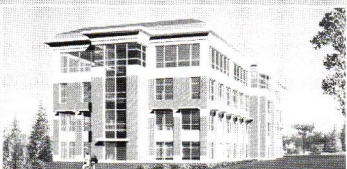
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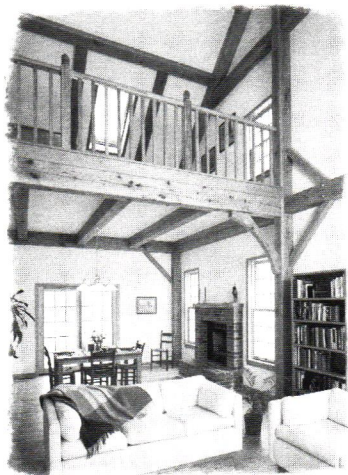
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AIA ACTIVITIES

January 9, Friday

Committee on the Environment, noon
at the Chapter office, Gary Moshier, AIA,
231-1500.

January 13, Tuesday

AIA Pittsburgh Board Meeting
5 p.m. at the Chapter office. All members are
welcome, 471-9548.

January 14, Wednesday

**Professional Development Committee
Meeting**, noon at the Chapter office, Chuck
Coltharp, AIA, 231-1500.

January 26-February 12

Dymon Nelson's 10th Anniversary exhibit. A
visual history of this respected Pittsburgh ad
agency's work.

January 27, Tuesday

Architrave Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m. at
the Chapter office. Information: John
Martine, AIA, 227-6100. (The Architrave
Auction has been postponed until October
1998. Information: Traci McGavitt,
935-8800.)

January 28, Wednesday

AIA/MBA Committee Meeting, 6 p.m. at
Building & Industry Center, 922-3912.

January 29, Thursday

**Pre-Fab Vs. Customized Legal and
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tural Firm**, Centre City Tower, 650
Smithfield Street, Executive Conference
Room, 776B, from 8-11 a.m. Earn 6 LU's.
Cost: \$45 for members, \$55 for non-
members includes breakfast. Information/
registration: 471-9548.

February 6, Friday

Communications Committee Meeting,
noon at the Chapter office, 471-9548.

February 10, Tuesday

AIA Pittsburgh Board Meeting
5 p.m. at the Chapter office. All members are
welcome, 471-9548.

February 11, Wednesday

**Professional Development Committee
Meeting**, noon at the Chapter office, Chuck
Coltharp, AIA, 231-1500.

1 C 9 A 9 L 8 E N D A R

February 13, Friday

Committee on the Environment, noon
at the Chapter office, Gary Moshier, AIA,
231-1500.

February 23, Monday

Town Meeting, 6 p.m., at Society for
Contemporary Crafts, 2100 Smallman Street.
See page 25.

February 25, Wednesday

AIA/MBA Committee Meeting, 6 p.m. at
Building & Industry enter, 922-3912.

AROUND TOWN

January 13, Tuesday

CSI Meeting. Information: Sheila Cartiff,
823-5063

January 21, Wednesday

SMPS Meeting at 11:30 a.m. Information:
Paul Messineo, 823-2020.

February 6, Friday

**Lecture by Architectural Historian Franz
Schulze**, 6 p.m., Carnegie Museum of Art
Theater. Subject is the architecture and exhibition
design of A. James Speyer. The accompanying
exhibition of Speyer's work will be on view
through March 22.

February 7, Saturday

**Tour of A. James Speyer's two Pittsburgh
houses**, 10:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., includes lunch at
the Museum Café. Tour is led by Franz Schulze.
Cost \$30 for tour and lunch. Call 622-5551 for
reservations.

February 10, Tuesday

CSI Meeting. Information: Sheila Cartiff,
823-5063.

February 18, Wednesday

SMPS Meeting at 11:30 a.m. Information:
Paul Messineo, 823-2020.

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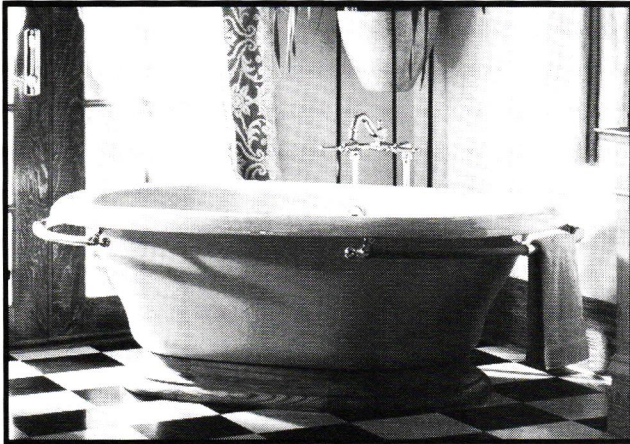
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CONTACT: Frank C. Brace

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CONTACT: David R. Linamen, P.E.

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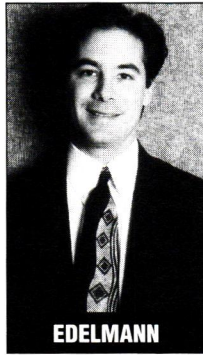
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CONTACT: Sandra Sabo

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Membership Committee

Welcome new member **Mark M. Edelmann, AIA** with the firm of **Weber Murphy Fox, Inc.** Mark is a Penn State grad and also studied at Darmstadt University in Germany. He's married to Kristen and looks forward to getting involved with the public relations, program, and design awards committees. Don't worry, Mark, we can keep you busy!



Upcoming Issues

- MARCH: Pittsburgh As A Design Hub Part II:
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- APRIL: Pittsburgh As A Design Hub Part III:
What's Missing?
- MAY: Interns and Young Architects Explore the
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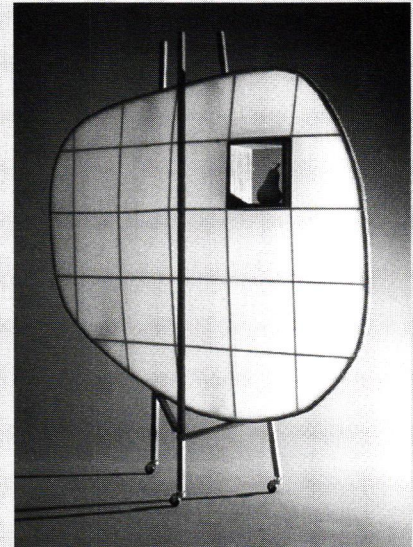
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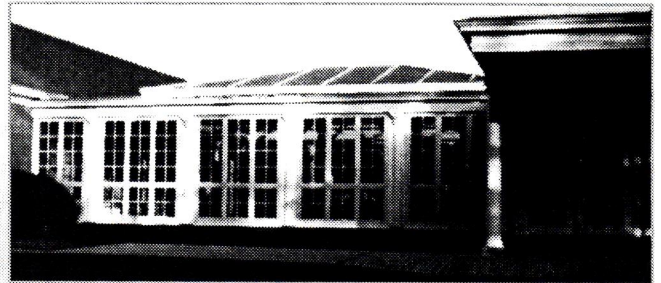
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