# COLUMNIS

## VISITOR'S GUIDE TO ODERN ARCHITECTURE

VOLUME 13, NO. 6 AIA PITTSBURGH, A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS JULY/AUGUST 1999

## DEKLEWA DEVELOPS A NEW DIMENSION

THE RECENT COMPLETION BY JOHN DEKLEWA & SONS, INC. OF THE NEW CENTER FOR ADVANCED LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT TECHNOLOGY SIGNALS ANOTHER MILESTONE IN THE CONSTRUCTION FIRM'S LONG HISTORY OF PROJECTS FOR HIGH PROFILE CLIENTS. DEKLEWA CONTRACTORS ERECTED THIS "STATE OF THE ART" FOUR STORY STEEL FRAME STRUCTURE WITH WHITE MASONRY EXTERIOR FINISH AND STAINLESS STEEL ACCENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT DIMENSIONS INTERNATIONAL OF BRIDGEVILLE, IN ONLY 13 MONTHS. DEKLEWA TRADESMENS' SKILLFUL INSTALLATION IN THE FRONT ENTRANCE LOBBY AND RESOURCE CENTER OF GRANITE FINISHES AND A UNIQUE HAND-ETCHED GLASS WALL MAP ARE EXAMLPES OF THE COMPANY'S DEDICATION TO CRAFTSMANSHIP. BESIDES THE TYPICAL UTILITY INSTALLATION MORE THAN 66 MILES OF SPECIAL CABLE AND FIXTURES WERE USED TO SUPPORT THIS BUILDINGS TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED AREAS FOR AUDIO AND VISUAL CONFERENCING, MULTI-MEDIA PRESENTATIONS, TRAINING AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS. A 175 FOOT TUNNEL CONNECTS THE CENTER TO THE ADJACENT DDI WORLD HEADQUARTERS BUILDING. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS PROJECT OR FOR A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF YOUR SPECIFIC NEEDS, CONTACT RICHARD DEKLEWA, PRESIDENT AT 257-9000.



Project Architect: Johnson/Schmidt & Associates

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GENERAL CONTRACTORS BUILDING

## dear readers,



"This issue is a part of Living Architecture: Alive in Pittsburgh, a promotional effort focusing on architectural tourism."

#### IN THIS ISSUE

News														2				5	5
Breaking Ground	1.							,										. 19	)
Calendar				•	k		5											. 21	
Dossier		5	5	Ŀ.		R.												23	3

**On the cover:** PPG Place designed by Philip Johnson and John Burgee, 1983.

*Columns* is a trade publication by and for architects and for those who have a professional interest in the built environment. We've decided to address a different audience in this issue in order to meet the need for a guide to modern and contemporary architecture in Pittsburgh. While our guide is by no means exhaustive, it will give you a flavor of what our city has to offer in complement with other guides to historical structures.

## ELIVING ARCHITECTURE

This issue is a part of Living Architecture: Alive in Pittsburgh, a promotional effort focusing on architectural tourism. *Columns* will be placed in the hotel rooms of visitors who have purchased special architectural tourism packages, and will also be available at the Pittsburgh Convention and Visitor's Bureau Visitors Center on Liberty Avenue in Gateway Center.

For those of you who regularly receive *Columns*, perhaps you will be inspired to take a fresh look at our modern buildings and to re-evaluate Pittsburgh's place as a home for modern architecture. At the very least, you now have a guide to give clients, colleagues, friends and relatives visiting the region who may have enjoyed reading about and viewing historical buildings, but who were without a reference for more recent work.

Whatever your inclination, we hope you enjoy your trip to Pittsburgh and that you'll come back again to see what else is new.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Towers

Cheryl Towers Editor

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. AlA membership is open to all registered architects, architectural interns, and a limited. number of professionals in supporting fields.

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Pittsburgh has re-invented itself in the modern era, changing from an economy driven by big steel to one governed by information and technology. Architecture reflects that change, both in design and patrons.

## dear visitor,

As a Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, we are pleased to have this opportunity to welcome you to Pittsburgh and to introduce you to the city's modern and contemporary architecture. In the last issue of *Columns*, I shared with our regular readers my own story of visiting a Louis Kahn building recently, and how struck I was by the experience. I had never been a big Kahn fan, but I had also never actually been *in* a Kahn building. As architects all know, there's no substitute for the real thing – photos can't do a building justice.

I've had a chance to speak with a number of people recently who've seen pictures of the "new" Pittsburgh, and been dazzled by our skyline. But once again, it didn't prepare them for the actual experience of driving through the Fort Pitt Tunnel and bursting upon the city and the rivers. So it is with our architecture - a photo may beat a 1,000 words, but "up close and personal" beats a photo any day!

Pittsburgh has re-invented itself in the modern era, changing from an economy driven by big steel to one governed by information and technology. Architecture reflects that change, both in design and patrons. As a visitor, I encourage you to look for the contrast in architecture between the old and the new, including the history of various sites. Market Square, for instance,was once the center of the city for both government and commerce. Now historical buildings are reflected in the ultra-modern glass of PPG Place, an office complex containing and abutting retail space. In some cases, nothing is left of a site but a plaque, such as the one in CNG Tower commemmorating the signing of the Pittsburgh Agreement in 1919 that led to the creation of Czechoslovakia.

A final word about our Chapter may give you a clue to the city's richness. AIA Pittsburgh is one of the most active in the country — I'm proud to say that our programs rival chapters in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. It reflects the involvement of our members who were attracted to Pittsburgh because it's a wonderful environment in which to design architecture. Our architect-members work all over the country and, indeed, all over the world. They stay here because we have a vibrant community on a livable scale with historical and modern architecture providing an inspirational context.

We hope you'll agree and that we'll see you again on future visits. Meanwhile, let us be your guide to Pittsburgh — A Mecca for Moderns!

Sincerely,

! Sunge. Anne Swager

Executive Director, AIA Pittsburgh

### AIAPA Update by Gwen Williams, AIA

The AIA PA Board of Directors recently went to Philadelphia as part of our travelling "road show". It is our hope that by meeting some of the local chapter members we can improve the general communication between AIA PA and our components. We met the Philadelphia Board Wednesday evening, and participated in AIA Philadelphia's Legislative Breakfast the following morning. A tour of the Convention 2000 activity sites and our Board Meeting rounded out the day. This is the first year that the AIA PA Board has tried the road show approach. Philly was chosen because of the upcoming Convention — and just to mix it up a bit — we will be in Erie during July.

An exciting development of the Convention is AIA Philadelphia's Legacy Project — an ongoing project that each host city must do as part of their convention participation. AIA Philadelphia proposed, and had accepted, the first charter school for Architecture and Design in the country. They are currently creating curriculum and interviewing for teaching positions. This summer they will be accepting student applications. It is a very exciting project that is sure to create a lasting legacy. If nothing else, those students that graduate from the charter school may not become architects — but perhaps will become knowledgeable and appreciative clients!

During our Board Meeting, a review of the strategic plan showed us that we are fairly well on track (see the latest AIA PA news letter). We also discussed the State-wide Building Code (we will be meeting with Senator Waugh to try to push it out of committee and onto the floor), the fact that there is another resurgence of Interior Designers wanting registration, and the "cookie-cutter school" bill. This last bill seems to be coming to the forefront rather quickly. There are a few Pittsburgh folks who have become quite involved in this issue, lending their support to AIA PA's position, and it is our hope that we can "kill" it before it ever becomes a reality.

We have also been dealing with the "Growing Greener" Initiative. There are two bills currently in the House that address not only funding, but specific guidelines relative to new construction and renovation. All of these issues will be dealt with in greater detail in the next newsletter. However, get your Minuteman/woman/child hats at the ready. We will need letters and phone calls sometime in the near future.

Remember PHILLY 2000 - May 4-7, 2000!



## A MECCA IOP MODERNS A guide to modern and contemporary architecture in Pittsburgh

Itsburgh has long been regarded as a Mecca for 19th century architecture. Because of this region's importance as an industrial and commercial center, we have a rich heritage of historic buildings. Pittsburgh is also a city where the preservation movement for historical structures is strong. What is less well known is that the city is also a haven for modern and contemporary architecture as well, although we won't attempt to split hairs over what constitutes Modern, Post-Modern and Contemporary as categories — we'll broadly say that it's post World War II. We're offering a sampling of interesting buildings to visit, most of them Downtown. We urge you to turn to the next article and see what's on tap in the future, since you'll want to come back for more.

As with other cities, the history of Pittsburgh's architecture strongly reflects its business history. Older buildings carry the names of the captains of industry and financiers of yesteryear who were the patrons of their day – Westinghouse, Carnegie, Frick, Heinz, Mellon, Phipps to name a few. Some of that traditional patronage still exists. Three of our largest corporations, USX (formerly U.S. Steel), Alcoa, and PPG Industries, for instance, are headquartered in signature buildings that each commissioned to feature the materials they produce.

Most of our more recent buildings, though, reflect a new era of wealth and patronage derived from health care, technology, higher education, the information age, and tourism. Every era derives its own identity at least in part from what is driving the economy, and that is ever changing. So it is in Pittsburgh.





#### Downtown

#### ALCOA CORPORATE CENTER

(The Design Alliance, 1998)

This headquarters building makes extensive internal use of electronic technology and is designed around an open office format. Externally, it is framed by the 7th and 9th St. Bridges, and its curvilinear form echoes the Allegheny River. Aluminum is, naturally, a featured material, as is a specially made PPG glass. The Isabella Café is open to the public.

#### **CHATHAM CENTER**

(Chatham Center by William Lescaze, 1966; Chatham II by Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann, 1981)

These Lower Hill District buildings in the late International Style sit near the Civic Arena at the intersection of Fifth Ave. and Washington Place.

#### **CIVIC ARENA**

(Mitchell & Ritchey, 1962)

Located at the edge of Downtown and the Lower Hill District, the Civic Arena with its retractable, stainless steel dome serves as a sports and entertainment venue, as well as a notable landmark. As an urban renewal project, it was a forward looking effort that wiped out existing blocks of streets and homes.

#### CNG TOWER

(Kohn Pedersen Fox, 1987)

This stone-clad building on Liberty Ave. between 6th & 7th Sts. pays homage to its neighbors in its skin if not its size. The return to ornamentation provides a conservative example of Post-Modernism. The building is said to echo the bridges on the Allegheny River.

#### CRAWFORD SQUARE

(Urban Design Associates, Phase 1 - 1993)

Crawford Square is located in the Lower Hill District and represents a comeback for an area devastated by earlier urban renewal efforts. A new residential neighborhood has been created in an area of mixed economic and racial balance. In addition, Crawford Square has some of the best views of Downtown in the city!

#### DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY MELLON HALL OF SCIENCE

(Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1968)

The building is a typical example of the architect's style with its noble and rational curtain wall composition. Located on The Bluff just east of Downtown.





#### DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION

(Paul Schweikher, 1970)

The Student Union is a vivid composition of poured concrete, ground face block and glass, but its interior has been unsympathetically altered in more recent years. Located on The Bluff just east of Downtown.

#### FIFTH AVENUE PLACE

(The Stubbins Associates with WTW Architects, 1987)

The placement of the building on Stanwix St. facing Gateway Center provides a link to that complex and a corporate entrance to the City for those arriving from the Parkway West and the Airport. The distinctive top has a cluster of four pyramids and a tall steel mast.

#### GATEWAY CENTER

(1 - 3 Eggers & Higgins, 1950-53; 4 Harrison & Abramovitz, 1960)

A rare successful translation of modern towers in a park taken into reality. These buildings were considered cutting edge in the postwar World War II era, and are made of chromealloyed steel. Four Gateway was a repeat award winner and is the best of the group.

#### HEINZ HALL PLAZA

(MacLachlan & Fosner, now MacLachlan Cornelius & Filoni, 1982)

The Plaza, at the corner of 6th St. & Liberty Ave., complements the adjacent Heinz Hall and with trees, garden, fountain, and waterfall, provides a welcome respite from the urban pace.

#### HEINZ RESEARCH BUILDING, WAREHOUSE AND VINEGAR WORKS

(Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1950's)

Heinz pioneered the technology resulting in the glass curtain wall construction. Complex located in the East Ohio St., Allegheny North Shore area near the 16th St. Bridge.

#### LAZARUS DEPT. STORE

(Exterior shell - Cooper Carry; Interior - FRCH, Inc., 1998)

The first department store to open in a downtown location anywhere in the country in recent memory, the store is unique in retaining an open, airy feel with windows to the street. Located on Wood St. between Fifth and Oliver Aves.

#### LIBERTY CENTER

(Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates and UDA Architects, with The Architects Collaborative, 1987)

Liberty Center at 1000 Liberty Ave. at Grant St. houses a hotel, an office tower, restaurants, and retail space. It is an interesting solution to a difficult siting problem, since there are numerous viewpoints.





#### **MELLON SQUARE**

(Mitchell & Ritchey with Simmonds and Simmonds Landscape Architects, 1955) Perhaps the finest urban parking garage in America, the entire parking structure is concealed by a street space of small shops, hanging gardens, waterfall, and a large, landscaped rooftop public park.

#### **OLIVER PLAZA**

(One Oliver Plaza - William Lescaze, 1968; Pittsburgh National Bank Building, Welton Beckett Associates 1972; Two Oliver Plaza, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1976) One Oliver Plaza faces Wood St. near Liberty Ave. and is a late International Style building; the PNB Building is only three stories taller than the 1912 building that it replaced, but provides a totally column-free interior.

#### **ONE OXFORD CENTRE**

(Hellmuth, Obata, Kassabaum, 1983)

A strong geometrical statement in aluminum and glass that houses offices, shops, restaurants, an athletic club, and a parking garage. Located on Grant St. between Third & Fourth Aves.

#### **PITTSBURGH MUNICIPAL COURTS**

(L.D. Astorino & Associates, Ltd., 1995)

Public areas of the building are notable for their light and airy quality and elegant detailing, elements often missing from modern court facilities. The Courts are located on Second Ave. to the east of Liberty Bridge. The Eliza Furnace Trail terminates behind the building and links Downtown to Oakland.

#### **PPG PLACE**

#### (Johnson and Burgee, 1983)

This complex with its towering glass spires changed Pittsburgh's skyline dramatically. The use of glass honors the company's history (PPG was originally the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co.), and the neo-Gothic design pays homage to the Cathedral of Learning on the University of Pittsburgh campus in Oakland. The large piazza is reminiscent of those found in Europe and has become a meeting place as well as event site. When you visit, look for the obelisk that Pittsburghers call "The Tomb of the Unknown Bowler". The Wintergarden, accessible from the Stanwix Street entrance, is open to the public and often hosts exhibitions and other activities. A food court is located on the lower level of Two PPG Place. PPG is sited adjacent to Market Square with its European flavor and building scale, providing the City with an interesting mix of the old and new.

#### THE REGIONAL ENTERPRISE TOWER

(formerly Alcoa Corporate Headquarters, Harrison Abramovitz, with Altenhof & Brown and Mitchell & Ritchey, 1953)

Designed to showcase aluminum, the metal was used wherever possible inside and out, including pre-fabricated windows and aluminum furniture. The building is located on the corner of William Penn Place & Sixth Ave. across from Mellon Square.

#### **RIVERFRONT CENTER**

#### (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1983)

This hexagonal building on the SE corner of Stanwix St. and Fort Pitt Blvd. is covered in sunscreens of travertine marble. As Franklin Toker notes in his book, *Pittsburgh: An Urban Portrait*, "In the old Pittsburgh few people worried about overexposure from the sun." This is particularly ironic, given that Riverfront Center was originally built for National Intergroup, a steel company.

#### SMITHFIELD/SEVENTH PARKING GARAGE

(architect unknown, 1960s)

This structure's concrete spiral exit ramp adds leavening to the downtown streetscape.

#### **UNITED STEELWORKERS BUILDING**

#### (Curtis & Davis, 1964)

This building on the SW corner of Stanwix St. and the Boulevard of the Allies exhibits the kind of elegant structural gymnastic expression rarely seen today. The stainless steel exterior also made history as part of the bearing wall (the exterior walls of skyscrapers heretofore generally did not support the building).

#### **USX TOWER**

#### (Harrison & Abramovitz, 1971)

The USX Tower at 600 Grant St. between Sixth & Seventh Aves. is a no-nonsense monument to steel technology. Made of Cor-Ten, the steel was devised to rust and form a protective coating on the metal, which it does admirably. In the summer, enjoy the Tower's plaza which fills with area workers at lunchtime. At 64 stories, it is the tallest building between New York and Chicago.

#### WASHINGTON PLAZA APTS.

#### (I.M. Pei with Deeter & Ritchey, 1964)

Corner of Centre Ave. and Crawford St. This late International Style building was intended as one of three towers, but only the first was constructed due to financial difficulties of the developer. It still remains a fashionable address.

#### YWCA

(Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1963) International Style facility at 305 Wood St. between Third & Fourth Aves.









#### **Oakland**

#### CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY, THE INTELLIGENT WORKPLACE

(Bohlin Cywinski Jackson with The Center for Building Performance and Diagnostics and Pierre Zoelly, AIA, 1997).

The IW "living" laboratory is a unique research, development and demonstration project whose objectives are to improve the health, motivation and productivity of the U.S. workforce. The IW is only the second Pittsburgh building to win a national AIA Honor Award.

#### **CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY, PARKING GARAGE**

(Michael Dennis & Jeffrey Clark with TAMS Associates, 1990)

This parking garage on Forbes Ave. at Beeler St. is notable for not screaming its identity as a parking garage. The use of yellow brick and green trim as well as screening across the various levels cause it to blend successfully with other campus buildings.

#### **CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY CENTER**

(Michael Dennis & Associates and Urban Design Associates, 1996)

CMU lacked a true campus center, and this facility addresses that need well. The building blends in with existing campus architecture while adding its own distinctive features. Look for the whimsical tiles at eye level around the exterior of the building. Located facing Forbes Ave. between Morewood & Beeler Aves.

#### **CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF ART**

#### (Edward Larabee Barnes, 1974)

The Museum of Art at 4400 Forbes Ave. is part of The Carnegie Museums, which is composed of the Museums of Art and Natural History, the Carnegie Library Main Building, and the Music Hall (the Carnegie Science Center and the Andy Warhol Museum are located on the North Side). The Museum of Art's simple lines stand in elegant contrast to the huge Beaux Arts structure to which it's attached. The courtyard features a two story high glass wall with glass mullions.

#### SOFTWARE ENGINEERING INSTITUTE

(Joint venture between Bohlin Cywinski Jackson and Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann, Robert S. Pfaffmann, AIA, project architect, 1987)

SEI, located at Fifth Ave. and Dithridge St., is a collaboration between Carnegie Mellon University and the US Dept. of Defense. It was the first Pittsburgh building to win a national AIA Honor Award.

#### WQED STUDIOS

#### (Paul Schweikher, 1970)

4802 Fifth Ave. exhibits a lyrical use of poured concrete, glass and wood, and is one of only a few notable Brutalist style structures in Pittsburgh. Schweikher served as head of the Carnegie Mellon University School of Architecture.



#### Other

#### **TECHNOLOGY CENTER**

As you leave Downtown on the Parkway East, the Technology Center is visible on your right in the Oakland/ Hazelwood section of the City on 2nd Ave. The Center is home to a number of technology based companies including Aristech Polypropylene Technical Center (Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, 1995).

#### FORE SYSTEMS

(STUDIO Architects with Perfido Weiskopf Architects, 1997)

This ultra-contemporary corporate campus north of Pittsburgh in Warrendale, PA is a classic high tech hothouse, housing hundreds of employees working in the style of the modern information age. The canted and crooked lines make this an exercise in the Deconstructivist style. Look for the campus on the west side of I-79 south of the Turnpike exit as you head north. Thanks to Robert S. Pfaffmann, AIA, John R. Axtell, Robert Bailey, AIA, David Vater, AIA, Allyson Foerster, and Joan Kubancek for their assistance.

For more architectural information regarding these buildings, see *Pittsburgh: An Urban Portrait* by Franklin Toker, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986. Martin Aurand, Architecture Librarian and Archivist, Carnegie Mellon University Library and Architecture Archives, has compiled information on all of CMU's post-war buildings. The Archives also contain information on many other buildings and firms (412/268-8165).

We've chosen to skip residential architecture in this issue. While several excellent examples of contemporary work exist, all are in private hands and many are on private roads, limiting visitation to rare occasions.

Levin Furniture, Smithton PA

Architect: Lorenzi, Dodds & Gunnill

Dwner: Robert Levin

A million options, Ten thousand decisions,

## One Builder.



When Levin Furniture needed an office and warehouse, they knew what they wanted: a building designed to meet their specific needs. And, they wanted it built on-time and within their budget. There were a million options on how to approach the project and thousands of decisions to be made on design, materials, scheduling and construction.

That's why they turned to General Industries to handle their construction project at Westmoreland Industrial Park, Smithton. The architectural firm of Lorenzi, Dodds & Gunnill developed an office and warehouse design that encompassed 203,880 square feet, including 10,000 square feet for office space. The finished project was completed on-time and on-budget, with the exacting standards, attention to detail and professionalism that are General Industries hallmarks.

When you're facing millions of options and thousands of decisions, there's only one builder.





In this example, a 93 year old former manor house has been greatly enlarged and converted into a 90 suite, assisted living facility. The residents enjoy refined surroundings while the community retains part of its architectural fabric. Field constructed 22' high columns and installation of high end finishes contributed to the project being named as a 1998 Excellence in Craftsmanship Finalist by the Master Builders' Association.



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## **Tomorrow's Stars**



**Convention Center (Rafael Viñoly and Associates)** 



PNC Park (HOK Sports, Inc. and L.D. Astorino & Associates, Ltd.)

The cranes are up and a flurry of construction is taking place. In fact, Pittsburgh is experiencing more building than at any time since the early 1980's as we enter our third Renaissance. Four new facilities that will merit another trip to Pittsburgh will open after the turn of the Millennium, and here's our sneak preview!

#### **Convention Center**

#### (Rafael Viñoly and Associates)

Vinoly's design incorporates, expands and completely transforms the current David L. Lawrence Convention Center which is located on Penn Avenue between the Doubletree Hotel and the Allegheny River. The architect was transfixed by the City's rivers and bridges and took inspiration from them, designing a facility that not only relates to the waterfront, but also reflects the arch of its bridges and the River itself. The design utilizies "green" building practices. Once completed, it should serve as a signature piece for the City. Opens mid-2002.

#### **PNC Park**

(HOK Sports, Inc. with L.D. Astorino & Associates, Ltd., Prinicipal Christopher Haupt, AIA, architects of record.) PNC Park will be the new home of the Pittsburgh Pirates. The design incorporates the best of "old time" ballpark style while opening dramatically from the outfield toward Downtown in this baseball only stadium located on the North Side. Fans will have the best view in baseball and sluggers won't be able to resist attempting to lob one into the River! Opens April 2001.



Steelers' Stadium (HOK Sports Inc. with WTW Architects)



Pittsburgh Public Theater (Michael Graves and Associates)

#### **Steelers' Stadium**

(HOK Sports, Inc. design architects in conjunction with WTW Architects, Richard deYoung, AIA, Principal) Pittsburgh is a sports town, and especially a football town, so it's only fitting that the Steelers will have a new home in a stadium designed to highlight the game. The stadium will also accommodate other events and host University of Pittsburgh Panthers football. Like PNC Park, it will open at one end to offer a dramatic view of the Pittsburgh skyline. Opens August 2001.

#### **Pittsburgh Public Theater**

(Michael Graves and Associates, Inc.)

The Public Theater moves in late 1999 from its long-time home on the North Side to this stunning addition to the Cultural District. Located on Penn Avenue between 6th and 7th Streets, and directly across from the stage entrance to Heinz Hall, the Theater will join Heinz Hall, the Benedum, the Harris and the Byham as one of Pittsburgh's premier cultural facilities.

In addition to these four spectacular and high profile new additions to the skyline, a number of office buildings are also coming online, including Mellon Bank's Client Service Center adjacent to One Mellon Center on Grant St. (Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Architects), and PNC Bank's Firstside Center (L.D. Astorino & Associates, Ltd.) at the foot of Grant Street near the Monongahela River. Both of these facilities are notable not only for their designs but also for the banks' decisions to locate them Downtown, reinforcing the value of a center city location for its ability to attract employees and provide convenience for back office functions. Both open late 2000.

Additional views of plans for the stadia and the Convention Center are available on the realpittsburgh Website:

- http://www.realpittsburgh.com/news/theplan/convention/1999/02/vinoly.html
- http://www.realpittsburgh.com/news/theplan/planb/ gallerystadium.html

• http://www.realpittsburgh.com/news/theplan/planb/ pncslide\_07.html

### Mending the Moderns By Robert S. Pfaffmann, AIA, and John R. Axtell

A Case for Preserving the Recent Past



"...you don't know what you've got 'till its gone..." (to quote the noted architectural critic, Joni Mitchell).

**Civic Arena by Mitchell & Ritchey** 

or more than half a century, from the rise of the Beaux Arts and Colonial revival styles at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until the late 1960s, Victorian architecture was considered at worst vulgar and at best functionally and esthetically obsolete. As a result, Pittsburgh along with other communities lost many architectural resources, among them the old Post Office and Federal building on Smithfield Street (demolished 1966), and the Allegheny Market House (also demolished 1966). As those earlier judgements of taste have been reevaluated since the 1960s, many Victorian buildings have been preserved, most notably commercial buildings in retail corridors such as Carson Street and Butler Street.

A similar period of eclipse and reevaluation took place for Beaux-Arts buildings at mid-century. Witness the recladding of Alden & Harlow's now demolished Farmers Bank Building on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Wood Street in a 1967 modernization and recently reversed decorative screening of the building at the corner of Seventh Avenue and William Penn Place. Is a similar process of neglect and loss now occurring with regard to once fashionable buildings of the post World War II period? Our examples are not intended to be comprehensive, or a ten-best list, but rather a cross section of building types. Since fifty years is the threshold for National Register of Historic Places designation, we decided to limit our look to non-residential buildings of the post-World War II era. Buildings are listed in order of least- to most-threatened.

#### **Good Stewardship**

The owners of these buildings demonstrate their understanding of their significance through good maintenance practices and sympathetic additions and alterations.

- One, Two and Three Gateway Center. Eggers & Higgins; Irwin Clavan. 1950-1953. Lobby additions: The Design Alliance, c. 1990. A rare successful translation of Corbusier's "towers in a park" into reality.
- United Steelworkers Building, corner Stanwix St. and the Boulevard of the Allies. Curtis & Davis. 1964.

The kind of elegant structural gymnastic expression we rarely see today. The building has aged well, just like its management-side counterpart, the USX Building.

• The Regional Enterprise Tower (formerly the Alcoa Building), 425 Sixth Ave. Harrison & Abramovitz; Altendorf & Brown; Mitchell & Ritchey. 1953. This building both celebrates its materials and, at the same time, fits into its street-level context as a good neighbor.

• Heinz Research Building, Warehouse and Vinegar Works, North Side. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. 1950s. Varied use of glass curtain wall construction by a firm that pioneered this technology. It would be good to see the glazing restored in this complex.

• WQED Studios, Oakland. Paul Schweikher. 1970. Lyrical use of poured concrete, glass and wood. One of only a few decent Brutalist style structures in Pittsburgh.

#### **Integrity at Risk**

• Duquesne Student Union.1967, Uptown. Paul Schweikher; This structure has been unsympathetically altered. It illustrates a basic problem of rejecting an architectural style too quickly and replacing it with the often flimsy ornament of Post-Modernism.

 Duquesne University, Mellon Hall of Science, Uptown.
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. 1968. This typical Miesian essay in curtain wall composition demonstrates that even minimalism requires an aesthetic eye when maintenance time comes.

• Smithfield/Seventh Parking Garage. Architect unknown. @1960. This structure's concrete spiral exit ramp adds leavening to the downtown streetscape. The pedestrian entrance beneath the ramp is perhaps Pittsburgh's most unappreciated great architectural space, and a great opportunity for the Cultural Trust and Grant Street power brokers to support the connective development of pedestrian oriented Strawberry Way.

• Medical Office Building, 3515 Fifth Avenue, Oakland. Tasso Katselas Associates, about 1958. This overlooked grungy period piece sports an aluminum "V" canopy piercing a translucent "bondi blue" glazed cantilevered stair...it would look great restored and right up to date with the iMac!



Gateway Center by Eggers & Higgins; Irwin Clavan.



United Steelworkers Building by Curtis & Davis

#### Endangered

• Civic Arena. Mitchell & Ritchey, with Ammann & Whitney and Robert Zern, engineers. 1962. A Modern landmark in every sense of the word. Planning for new sports facilities in Pittsburgh must take this building's irreplaceable character into account. Assuming that the Penguins go to a



Regional Enterprise Tower by Harrison & Abramovitz; Altendorf & Brown; Mitchell & Ritchey



3515 Fifth Avenue, Tasso Katselas Associates

new arena here or elsewhere, this community needs to begin looking *now* for a new arctic species (or other programmatic activity) that this igloo can house.

#### Lost

• Former Pittsburgh International Airport Terminal, Business Route 60, Moon Township. Theodore Eicholz. 1948.

This building wonderfully melded form and function, even if it was never a cutting edge work of Modernism. Its unnecessary loss diminishes the character of a part of the County badly in need of a sense of place. A lost opportunity to recycle a building for new uses.

#### **Recent Remuddling**

On Forbes Avenue at McKee Place is a classic aluminum screened bank that would be a great illustration of Robert Venturi's concepts of "Duck vs. Decorated Shed." The original funky gold sunscreen was neutered and painted and adorned with a forlorn plywood pediment tacked on the parapet. In Santa Monica this building would be a hip new bank or restaurant celebrating its cool Modern past.

#### What can we learn?

This brief survey of Pittsburgh's landmarks of the Modern style suggests that the following issues must be addressed by architects and owners when making choices regarding the current and future use of post-World War II buildings.

 Good stewardship practices by owners are critical to the survival of these buildings. Modern buildings require architects well versed in the positive attributes of these structures.

• Failure of original materials is a common problem in buildings from this era. It has been often said by preservation technologists that 20<sup>th</sup> century structures are much more challenging to repair than older low-tech buildings. The recent replacement of the old glazing systems on SOM's Lever House in New York is a great example. Local examples include Gateway Four (sensitively reglazed with high performance glass) and the Pittsburgh State Office Building.

 Proactive preservation must be a priority in master planning for these buildings. Often traditional preservationists have no love lost for these structures, but time marches on.... We may be more selective, but we should strive for a diverse architecture; that is one of the marks of a healthy city, not just the precious preservation that is associated with traditional preservation projects in Pittsburgh

• Not all modern style buildings are worthy of preservation. Certain functional and aesthetic characteristics prevail for good architecture of any era — urban

and natural context, scale, color, pattern, integrity of materials, elegant solutions for technical needs. A good "background building" of the 1950s can and should contribute to a healthy architectural landscape.

#### Conclusion

As designers and planners, we must be aware of what we are working with. The lobby additions at Gateway Plaza are an excellent example of such consciousness. The failure to identify a new use for the former Airport Terminal would appear to indicate an absence of such vision. We must consider carefully before making a judgement that an existing building or building feature is expendable, especially for stylistic reasons. We need to show our clients that these buildings can provide unique identities that "look back to the future." The appropriate understanding and maintenance of Modern era materials, such as expression of structure, curtain wall and "modern" materials, is a critical element of a responsible approach to the stewardship of these buildings.

With understanding and a reasonable commitment to good maintenance and building performance practices, Pittsburgh can preserve its stock of exceptional Modern era buildings. If we start now, future residents and visitors will not look at Pittsburgh as a city which achieved architectural glory in the era of Richardson and Carnegie, but built nothing worthy of preservation in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Robert S. Pfaffmann, AIA, and John R. Axtell are with the firm Pfaffmann + Associates and also provided photographs for this article. They can be reached at 412/471-2470. Resources:

Association for Preservation Technology. *APT Bulletin*. APT, P.O Box 3511, Williamsburg, VA 23187. Telephone: 540-373-1621.

 Carnegie Mellon University Library and Architecture Archives, Martin Aurand, Architecture Librarian and Archivist. Telephone: 412-268-8165.

Cunningham, Allen, ed. Modern Movement Heritage. London, New York: E & FN Spon, 1998.

DOCOMOMO Website: http://www.ooo.nl/docomomo/home.htm.

• Jester, Thomas C. *Twentieth-century Building Materials: History and Conservation*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995.

 Preserving the Recent Past Task Force web site: http://www.apti.org/ cmte.html1#recent\_past

Society for Commercial Archeology. SCA Journal. SCA, P.O. Box 2423. Atlanta. GA 30301.

• Stratton, Michael. *Structure and Style: Conserving Twentieth Century Buildings*. London, New York: E & FN Spon, 1997.

 Toker, Franklin. *Pittsburgh: An Urban Portrait*. University Park: Pennsylvania Statue University Press, 1986.

#### **From the Firms**

Perkins Eastman Architects PC have opened an office in Stamford, CT as a result of joining forces over a year ago with SMS Architects of New Canaan, CT. This new office will allow for continued expansion of services and resources in the New England region.

**WTW Architects** is completing the interior design for the new Dick's Clothing & Sporting Goods Inc. headquarters building in RIDC Park West in Findlay Township. The facility is expected to be operational in July.

**Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates** has five new Pennsylvania school projects underway, including district-wide feasibility studies for Big Beaver Falls, Canon-McMillan, and Uniontown School Districs; and design of renovations and additions to buildings in the Avonworth School District as well as the design of a Montessori School as part of the Adelphia Cable Communications development project in Coudersport.

#### **Business Briefs**

 Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates hired architect Gretchen H. Kurzawa in the Butler office and graduate architect Christian A. Pegher in the Pittsburgh office. In addition, the Butler office added Renz A. Weinmann as a graduate architect, William J. Briggs and Jay Hoogerbrugge

as technical specialists and CADD operators.

#### Kudos

► Congratulations to Sylvester Damianos, FAIA who was chosen by The American Architectural Foundation to design the Keystone Award sculpture which will be awarded annually to non-architects. The first recipient of this award was Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago.



KEYSTONE AWARD DESIGNED BY SYLVESTER DAMIANOS, FAIA.

**IKM, Inc., Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates**, and **The Design Alliance** were all featured in "Targeting Technology: Opinions Split on Pushing Suburban Campuses or Downtown Rehab," an article in the May issue of *Pittsburgh T.E.Q.*, a publication of the Pittsburgh Technology Council.

John E. Kosar, AIA, president of Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates, is the new president of the Design Professionals Risk Control Group.

Terry Oden, AIA won first place in a photography contest sponsored by AIA St. Louis. The photo was *The Guggenheim*.

The Interior Design Departemnt at La Roche College received notification from the Foundation for Interior Design Education Research (FIDER) that their accreditation has been renewed for six years, the highest level of accreditation that is granted. The program has been continuously accredited by FIDER since 1985.

Dan Willis, AIA, a CMU grad now living in State College and a Middle PA Chapter member, has just published his first book, *The Emerald City and Other Essays on the Architectural Imagination* (Princeton Architectural Press). Willis also teaches in the Architecture Department at Penn State University.



THE GUGGENHEIM. PHOTO BY TERRY ODEN, AIA.



"THE WEIGHT OF ARCHITECTURE" FROM THE EMERALD CITY AND OTHER ESSAYS ON THE ARCHITECTURAL IMAGINATION BY DAN WILLIS, AIA.

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#### (6 L.U.'s including H/S/W.)

#### November 4, 1999 First Ever AIA Middle Chapter Symposium,

at the Ramada Inn in Altoona. Recheck and remark your calendars! This will be an all day event of sharing knowledge, ideas and methods including two seminars which will offer L.U.'s. This event is in the planning and shaping stages. Please send any comments and/or suggestions to Tom Columbus Jr., AIA at 814-445-2470.

In order to make it easier for architects to identify opportunities to earn continuing education credits, we will list appropriate events in this space in future issues. If you intend to offer such an event, please send your information to the attention of Joan Kubancek, AIA Pittsburgh, 211 Ninth Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15222, or fax it to Joan at 412/471-9501.

The deadline for inclusion is normally six weeks prior to publication.

If you would like information describing qualified continuing education programs, please call the AIA office at 412-471-9548.

#### AIA ACTIVITIES

#### July 9, Friday

**Committee on the Environment**, noon at the Chapter office, Gary Moshier, AIA, 252-1500.

#### July 15, Thursday

Legislative Committee Meeting, noon at the Chapter office, Chuck Coltharp, AIA, 252-1500.

#### July 20, Tuesday

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

August 6, Friday

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

#### August 13, Friday

**Committee on the Environment**, noon at the Chapter office, Gary Moshier, AIA, 252-1500.

#### August 19, Thursday

Legislative Committee Meeting, noon at the Chapter office, Chuck Coltharp, AIA, 252-1500

### <sup>1</sup> C<sup>1</sup> A<sup>1</sup> L<sup>1</sup> E N D A R

#### AROUND TOWN

#### July 6 – 30

PERSPECTIVES: The Photography of Nicholas Traub. A variety of photographic mediums and topics including documentary and architectural photography, fine art, color and B/W landscapes, and the latest in digital imagery. Reception July 11, 1:30 – 4:00 p.m. at the AIA Gallery

#### July 14, Wednesday

Society of Design Administrators, Monthly meeting at the Engineer's Club. Program: Carole Steadham, SDA National President, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Lunch \$15 members, \$17.50 non-members. Reservations call Ellen Lockhart, 561-7117.

Through September 29 (Wednesdays)

**Downtown Walking Tours.** June and August, Grant Street Tour. July and September, Wood Street Walk. 12 noon – 12:50 p.m., Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. Information Call Mary Lu Denny at 412-471-5808.

#### Through July 24

A Taliesin Legacy in the Allied Arts: The Work of Val M. Cox, Heloise Christa and Susan Jacobs Lockhart. An exhibition of oil on sculptured canvas, cast and sculpted metal, glass and multi-media decorative design featuring the work of Taliesin Fellows trained in arts media other than architecture. LaFond Galleries

#### Through October 3

Merchant Prince and MAster Builder, Edgar J. Kaufmann and Frank Lloyd

Wright. Come see Frank Lloyd Wright's plans for Pittsburgh, Fallingwater and other Kaufmann haunts. Heinz Architectural Center in the Carnegie Museum of Art. For information call 412-622-3131.

#### August 11, Wednesday

Society of Design Administrators, Monthly meeting at the Engineer's Club. Program: John Martine, AIA will lead a walking tour of Pittsburgh, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Lunch \$15 members, \$17 50 non-members

\$15 members, \$17.50 non-members. Reservations call Ellen Lockhart, 561-7117.

## CONTRACTORS' DIRECTORY

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### Rebecca Henn, Associate AIA



Firm: Celento Design. Family: One partner in work and life. Years in practice: 5. Education: BArch, Carnegie Mellon University. First job: Dairy Queen, Delmont, PA. Project I'm proudest of: The Pittsburgh Children's Museum. Most embarrassing moment: Telling my project manager that the contractor asked me out on a date. Building I wish I had designed: Most of Frank Lloyd Wright's homes. Building I'd like to tear down: The Jail, without hesitation. If you hadn't been an architect, I would have been: A Tibetan Yogi. If someone made a movie of your life, who would play you? Audrey Hepburn. If I could live anywhere in the world, it would be: I can live anywhere - I chose Pittsburgh! The best part of my job is: Learning everything quickly. The thing I would change about my job is: I'd hire a secretary. What have you always wanted to tell your boss? I'm leaving the office to go home now. What have you always wanted to tell your clients? Your taste exceeds your budget. What's the most annoying thing architects do? Pretend that a good architect makes a good manager. Advice to young architects: Love what you do...all of it. Favorite interior: The Union Trust Building. Favorite building: Vienna Post Office by Otto Wagner. Favorite city: New York. Favorite Pittsburgh neighborhood: The Strip District. Favorite architect: Santiago Calatrava. Favorite architecture book: The Architecture of Benno Janssen by Donald Miller. Best gift to give an architect is: Time. What's the next big architectural trend? More sustainable, environmentally friendly design. Wish list for Downtown Pittsburgh: Less money for sports stadia, more for adaptive reuse in the City limits. Some day, I'd like to: Be as good to my employees as I always wanted my bosses to be to me. I want to be remembered for: Being kind. The secret to my success is: Believing in the people around me.

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### **Membership Committee**

New member **Kathryn R. Barnett, AIA** is with DRS Interiors, Inc. and married to Mark Barnett who hangs his hat at Perkins Eastman Architects. Some of her past projects include the Ronald Reagan National Airport, USAirways Clubs in San Francisco and Boston, and miscellaneous facilities for Delta Airlines (we sense a trend here!). A Penn State grad, Kathryn is a dog lover who likes ceramic and stone design and installation projects. She tells us that, "I'm striving to maximize the integration of the design process between base building and interior architecture. "She adds," As a recent transferee to Pittsburgh, I'm very happy to be here and I've found Pittsburgh to be a diverse and dynamic place." She's interested in either the Design Awards or the Programs/Exhibits Committee, so chairs, take note.

William J.E. Curran, AIA is another recent transplant to the Steel City. He's with Perkins Eastman Architects and trained at the University of Waterloo, Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, and the Prince of Wales' Institute of Architecture. Bill has an eclectic background, having worked on diverse projects such as restaurants, retail space, office interiors, educational facilities, high rise condominiums, TV and radio broadcast facilities, urban housing and urban design. Busy though he is, he's interested in the Design Awards, Interns & Young Architects, and Urban Design Committees.

**Joseph M. Kostuch** is also a new professional affiliate and is with Chicago Metallic Corp./Interfinish. A CCAC grad, he's married to Joanne and the father of Joe and Jon. When he isn't working on projects such as EPA – Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Hospital, Erie Correctional in Ashtabula, and the Roman L. Hruska Courthouse in Omaha, he's active as an AIA education provider, and as a Pittsburgh CSI board member and membership chair. Somehow, Joe finds time to play golf and practice martial arts, and is interested in AIA's Membership Committee.

Welcome, Kathryn, Bill and Joe!





Kostuch



Curran

Barnett

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To contribute to an issue or submit a story idea, please contact the editor at 412-362-1844 or email: cheryltowers@mizeraktowers.com.

#### SEPTEMBER

Reshaping the Region II: Erie and NW PA (Deadline for submission is July 19.)

OCTOBER Reshaping the Region III: Middle PA

**NOVEMBER** Building a Rural Practice

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