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# The Piano (and History) Lesson

By Tracy Certo



*At its core, the play turns out to be a metaphor for historic preservation at its best: seeing the value of a structure rich in meaning and history and retaining it for good use that better serves the community.*

## August Wilson's Pulitzer-winning play,

The Piano Lesson, takes place in the culturally rich Hill District of the 1930's. If you saw the powerful performance during its recent run at the Pittsburgh Public Theater, you know the story revolves around a piano that was hand-carved by a family member. It is an object steeped in family history, imbued with symbolism of loss and want, and fought over relentlessly for decades. Years ago, blood was spilled over the piano and, as the play unfolds, an estranged brother and sister are at war over it. Sister Berniece wants to keep the piano and yet, she refuses to play the instrument anymore. Her brother wants to sell it, quickly, to make money and move on.

Every so often one of the characters actually played the piano, a soulful blues piece at one point, that hints of the lively era when the Hill gained a national reputation for its music and culture. As the other characters joined in—singing, stomping, clapping—it made for a magical theater moment.

The resolution of the piano's fate comes at the hands of divine intervention, when a ghostly presence that's protecting the piano scares the household into a new recognition—that yes, the piano has great worth but it needs to be used to attain its full value. In the end, the brother relents, content to leave the piano in Berniece's house, while she finally sits down to play and sing while the others join in.

At its core, the play turns out to be a metaphor for historic preservation at its best: seeing the value of a structure rich in meaning and history and retaining it for good use that better serves the community.

In this case, the community is one with a rich yet difficult and controversial history. Dr. Laurence Glasco of the University of Pittsburgh authored a piece about the history of the Hill District in the play's program. He writes that the arrival of the blacks in large numbers invigorated the social and cultural life of the Hill, as evident in the Wylie Avenue and Centre Avenue areas. People flocked to famous nightspots such as the Crawford Grill and some of the best jazz musicians in the country were nurtured there, including Billy Strayhorn, Earl "Fatha" Hines and Lena Horne. The

intersection of Wylie and Fullerton Avenues was then referred to as "Crossroads of the World".

It wasn't until 1917 that the number of blacks significantly increased, says Glasco. "The Hill during this era was by far the city's most diverse neighborhood, with black, Jewish and Italian residents living among more than 20 other ethnic groups—Germans, Poles, Greeks, Syrians, Irish, Chinese and others."

Correcting another myth, Glasco asserts that historically, the Hill was neither racially segregated nor characterized by racial tension. The community was, in fact, very mixed. Wilson's family, says the author, lived in the rear quarters of a home on Bedford Avenue, with an Italian and Jewish family in the front.

As the city's first suburb when it was founded in the 1800's, the Hill was "home to elite whites escaping the dirt and congestion of downtown." In the 1850's, it was transformed into a working-class area with the influx of German and Irish immigrants. The arrival of impoverished Jews and Italians in the 1890's and 1900's helped form the Hill's reputation as the city's "poorest, most unhealthy and overcrowded".

Two decades later, the Civic Arena was built amidst great controversy, displacing many residents and buildings in the lower Hill District and ultimately hastening the neighborhood's decline. Now known as Mellon Arena, this building is now on the list of the most endangered places in the city (page 10). Recently, the structure was denied historic designation status which would have saved it from demolition.

As August Wilson suggests, short of divine intervention, some historic preservation efforts are lost causes. Which makes the successful ones all the more worth savoring. Celebrating Historic Preservation Month, Columns takes a look at Pittsburgh's Endangered Spaces—some worth preserving, others more questionable—as well as historic preservation projects in this area and others such as Altoona.

## IN THIS ISSUE

*Raising Awareness in Altoona* . . . . . 6

*Cool Spaces in Urban Places* . . . . . 8

*Pittsburgh's 10 Most Endangered Places* . . . . . 10

*Historic Preservation* . . . . . 12  
Columns examines some regional successes

News . . . . . 5

Breaking Ground . . . . . 18, 19

Calendar . . . . . 21

Dossier . . . . . 25

**On the cover:** Mellon Bank 3 Building Lobby Restoration, IKM Architects. Ed Massery, photo.



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.

AIA Pittsburgh  
945 Liberty Avenue, Loft #3  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
Telephone: 412/471-9548  
FAX: 412/471-9501

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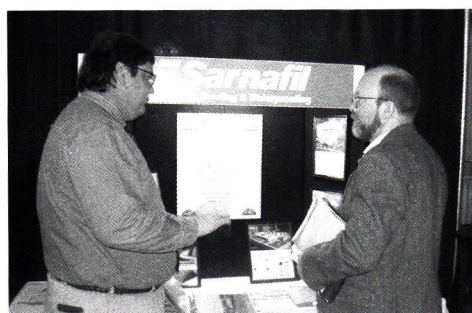
For information about AIA Pittsburgh, AIA Middle PA and the Northwest PA Chapter, call 1-888-308-9099.  
Online: [www.aiapgh.org](http://www.aiapgh.org)  
email: [info@aiapgh.org](mailto:info@aiapgh.org)

# TRI AIA 2003

"I loved this. Can we do it every week?" wrote Rebecca Henn, AIA in evaluating the recent TRI AIA. "It was excellent," said Alan Fishman, AIA who attended two of the three days. "It's a great way to gain most or all of your CES credits plus I really enjoyed the ability to network with other architects. I don't understand why even more AIA members don't participate."

More than 500 attended the Opening General Session on April 10th featuring David Orr, professor and chair of the environmental studies program at Oberlin College. The Warhol Museum's director, the always provocative Tom Sokolowski, closed TRI AIA, eliciting comments ranging from "witty, thought-provoking and entertaining" to "fascinating how he connected the concept of rhetoric in making strong visual statements."

Throughout the three-day event, hundreds of architects and landscape architects attended a wide variety of seminars and browsed more than 50 exhibits at the Omni William Penn in Pittsburgh. Topics ranged from Architectural Applications of Structural Steel to 2000 International Building Code vs. 1999 BOCA code. "The quality of the seminars was outstanding," said Fishman. "Kevin McGahey of Repco II was the greatest."



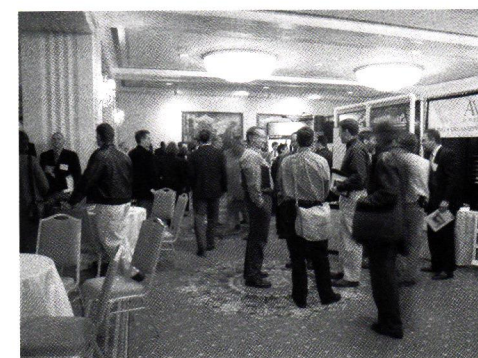
**Mike McGaughey, National Shelter Products and Dean Hess, AIA, RSSC Architects**



**Richard Glance, AIA, Glance & Associates, Gwen Dakis, AIA, Berryman & Associates, Eric French, Eisler Landscapes**



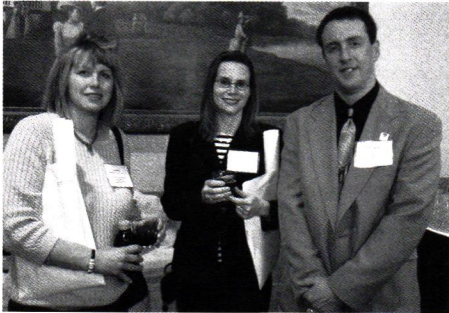
**Michael Bogdan, Technique Manufacturing**



**More than 150 architects and 270 landscape architects attended the Exhibit Hall Opening Gala on April 11th.**







*Heather O'Brien, ASLA and Tonya Quillin, ASLA, Kendall Landscape Architects, Gabe Hays, ASLA, Hays Landscape Architect Studio*



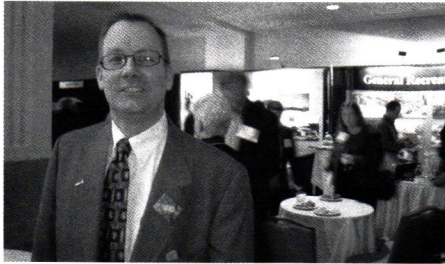
*Randy Romani and Bob Brown, Newcrete Products Division*



*More than 150 architects and building professionals attended seminars and panel discussions.*



*The Exhibit Hall provided exciting networking opportunities for architects, landscape architects and other design professionals.*



*AIA Pittsburgh's Director of Education and Programming, Michael Leigh, ASLA*



*Ralph Sterzinger, RSSC Architects, Steve Cupcheck, AIA, RSSC Architects and Brad Braun, Window Repair Systems*



*Conference attendees were able to choose from over 26 sessions throughout the three day event.*



*The sold out Exhibit Hall boasted 55 exhibitors displaying the latest in new technologies and design trends.*

## 2002 Preservation Awards

The Historic Review Commission of Pittsburgh announced the winners of the 2002 Preservation Awards. The following AIA members and member firms won:

### 900 Western Avenue

Allegheny West

ARCHITECT: John A. Martine, AIA

FIRM: Integrated Architectural Services, Inc.

PROJECT: Facade restoration

### Brewer's Row and 1106 & 1108 Voskamp

(two awards)

ARCHITECTS: Luke Desmone, AIA, Nathan Hart, AIA and Charles L. Desmone, AIA

FIRM: Desmone & Associates

PROJECT: Interior renovation and facade

### 5625 Baum Boulevard-Baum Blvd. Dodge

ARCHITECT: Val Zarro, Ph.D., AIA

FIRM: Zarro & Associates Architects

PROJECT: Renovation of an Albert Kahn 1930's Art Deco facade

### 382 Lincoln Ave - Lincoln Elementary School

PROJECT ARCHITECT: Daryl R. Saunders

ARCHITECTURE FIRM: Graves Architects, Inc.

PROJECT: 12,000 sf addition to Deco style school

## PHLF Homestead Grants

Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation announced a new program of recoverable grants for building owners and merchants in the Homestead Eighth Avenue Commercial Historic District. The grants are to be used for facade restoration improvements on historic buildings and are available for facade painting, signage, awnings and other external improvements.

Landmarks has a total of \$35,000 available for this program through September 30, 2003. The recoverable grants with a \$5,000 maximum may be used in conjunction with the existing Landmarks' low-interest loan program and with Homestead Economic Revitalization Corporation's mini-grant facade programs. For more information contact Cathy McCollom at 412-471-5808.

## HEALTHCARE TRENDS

For an upcoming issue, *Columns* is looking for examples of healthcare trends that affect architecture. If you have a healthcare project you would like to have featured, contact the editor at [tcerto@adelphia.net](mailto:tcerto@adelphia.net)



## Raising Awareness in Altoona

By Tracy Certo

One day back in 1997, architect Judy Coutts, AIA, of Altoona was watching a television news report about Blair County's Sesquicentennial celebration. As she watched the story unfold, she noticed something missing: namely, architects. "Where are the architects?" she asked. "Why aren't we out there celebrating our county's historic architecture? How did we miss this milestone?"

By the time the report ended, Coutts had vowed to have architect representation for Altoona's upcoming Sesquicentennial two years later.

First she consulted with the executive committee of the AIA Middle PA Chapter, who gave her financial support for the project. Then she teamed up with Jane Sheffield of the Allegheny Corporation (ARC), Noel Feeley of the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art (SAMA) and Deborah Lamborn of Partnrs (sic) in Neighborhood Revitalization.

The group effort resulted in an exhibit about Altoona's historic neighborhoods that was a hit with the community, remaining on display at SAMA for seven weeks.

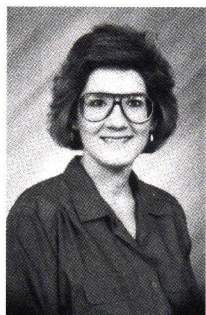
In conjunction with the exhibit, Coutts developed a six-night lecture series that alternated architectural issues with

topics on Altoona's social history. Three of the lectures were developed by AIA Middle PA Chapter members who also staffed the event. They also held a 'Favorite Building Contest' that asked residents to nominate their favorite old buildings in town with the results making front-page news.

The exhibit raised awareness of the town's architecture, inspiring media coverage and adding fuel to the fire of the preservation movement in Altoona. The movement, said Coutts, began a few decades ago with the saving of the Mishler Theater by the Blair County Arts Foundation. Efforts were sporadic. In the 90's a small nonprofit group by the name of A.R.C.H.I.T.E.C.T.U.R., Inc. (The Altoona Renaissance Coalition for Historical Integrity in Time-honored Urban Renewal) created a publication, *Places of Distinction*, that found its way into a surprising number of Altoona homes.

Then in 2002, another coup. The City of Altoona added three new historic districts—Broad Avenue, the Knickerbocker Rowhouse and Llyswn—in addition to the existing Downtown Altoona Historic District.

"The 1999 Sesquicentennial exhibition brought things to a head," said Coutts, adding that the city planning office



*The neighborhoods are "our legacy for future generations whether they're developed poorly or whether they're developed well."*

—JUDY COUTTS, AIA



**The Knickerbocker area features 150 properties, half rented, half owner occupied. Forty percent are in decent shape, says Coutts who just finished drafting design guidelines.**





***The Knickerbocker Hotel was completed in 1906. The construction of the Pennsylvania Railroad's South Altoona Foundry Works in 1903 spurred development of the Knickerbocker neighborhood nearby. The Philadelphia-style row houses were named after the construction company which built them.***

was charged by the mayor and city council to proceed with the historical designation process. The City hired a consultant who surveyed and identified 12 neighborhoods that might be worthy of historic distinction. After discussion with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, they edited them down to four neighborhoods. Then a historian took over, writing and submitting nominations, several of which were adopted in January of this year. For a small town that lacks a historic review board, it was a high-five feat.

Coutts is encouraged yet remains realistic. "We're still far from where we could be. This signals a change in attitude toward our historic buildings, that it's important to preserve old buildings. There's a recognition that they contribute to the quality of life in our town. And the message I get out to people is we need to have these historic buildings so we can attract the kind of businesses and the kind

of brains we need to compete with other towns. Historic preservation isn't just an elitist activity," she concluded. "This is vital. This is important to our city's future."

For Coutts, who has volunteered many hours, it also underlines "the importance of architects to go beyond their drawing boards." Other area architects, such as A. Raymond Goodman, AIA and Patrick Baechle, AIA have volunteered their time to advance the cause of preservation.

It's time well spent, from the architects' perspective. The neighborhoods in her town, Coutts said, are "our legacy for future generations whether they're developed poorly or whether they're developed well." She cites the AIA Pittsburgh Chapter as a role model. "Anne Swager and staff have done a great job of advocating for good design and for the role of architects in urban design in Pittsburgh. That's what we need to do here."



***Artist Steven Gilbert holds up his painting that is being used on a T-shirt promoting the Knickerbocker neighborhood.***



## Cool Spaces in Urban Places

By Tracy Certo

**W**hen Paul Rosenblatt, AIA was looking for office space for his new firm, he knew what he wanted: great daylight, high ceilings, open space in an interesting building and an exciting location.

"I fell in love with this one mess of a place," Rosenblatt says. "We developed design for the space, they built it to our specifications and it's completely transformed."

He found the space through Cool Space Locator, a firm started in 2001 with a mission to revitalize neighborhood development by filling the upper floors of buildings in urban business districts. Rosenblatt's architectural firm, Springboard, is now located in the Terminal Buildings on the South Side in a space with a floor-to-ceiling wall of windows, exposed brick walls and coffered ceiling. There's even an old stamped metal door with counterweights on a rolling track. "It's pretty much everything we wanted," says Rosenblatt who admits to pinching himself every day when he walks through the door.

With testimonials like this, it's understandable that the nonprofit firm Cool Space Locator has yet to advertise or market its services. The two-person firm is headed by CEO Deborah Baron, a commercial real estate broker who has "never ever lived in a suburb", and her partner, President Kyra Straussman. Their ultimate goal? "No more empty buildings in the urban core," says Baron with confidence.

"More broadly," she clarifies, "we exist to reenergize urban development in urban neighborhoods by bringing non-retail businesses to utilize upper floors in buildings that are on and off the main street."

The organization, which is unique as far as they know, was started as a collaboration by the community development corporations from East Liberty, Oakland, and the South Side. Funded initially through an innovation grant from Pittsburgh Partnerships for Neighborhood Development, the group now receives funding from other sources as well, including R.K. Mellon Foundation, the Heinz Endowments, Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, the Mayor's office and Councilman Bill Peduto.

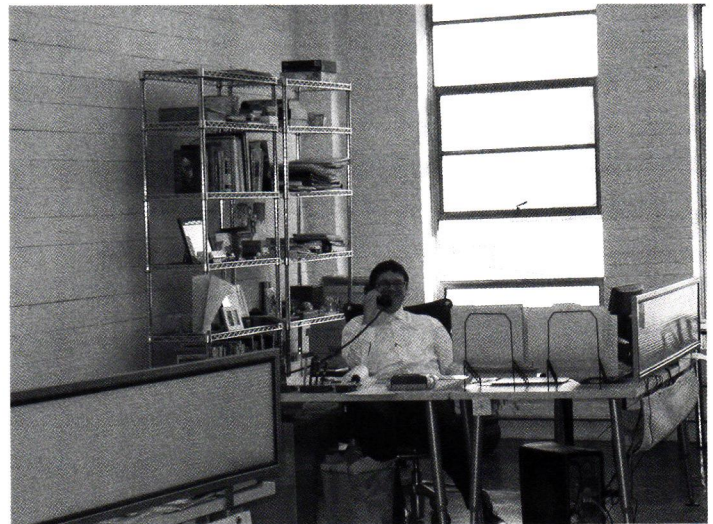
Not only are the spaces for businesses very appealing, Baron says, but they're also cheap, ranging from a low of \$8 to a high of \$18 a square foot. Acting as real estate brokers, Baron and Straussman take clients through every step of the process as they help them evaluate options and expose them to nontraditional office buildings. It's a way for clients to get the chance to contribute to the community and in turn, get more than a parking lot outside the front door.

From all indications, it's proving successful. "In two and a half years we've had as many clients as we can handle," says Baron. "We never advertised, never did any market-

*"We exist to reenergize urban development in urban neighborhoods by bringing non-retail businesses to utilize upper floors in buildings that are on and off the main street."*



Garfield Street. Clients want to be in a great building in a great neighborhood.



Paul Rosenblatt, AIA, fell for a "mess of a place" that was completely transformed to everything he wanted.



ing and we don't even have a listing in the phone book." Since they rent space from the SSLDC, a group that helped incubate the organization, they also use their phones.

In a span of a few years, Cool Space has assisted approximately 140 companies, ranging from a helpful phone call to thorough involvement, placing 21 into new spaces.

Clients—such as design firms, tech firms and nonprofits—have located to the Pink Building in Lawrenceville and the Terminal Buildings on the South Side, as well as downtown, Allentown, East Liberty, and the North Side.

Baron is paid like a typical broker, by the building owner when a tenant signs a lease. They don't charge a commission to the client.

The size of the company, whether it's one person or one hundred, doesn't matter, says Baron. "If they are committed to being in an urban area and recognize that they can have an impact by where they locate—sprawl or urban revitalization—then we'll take them as a client."

Finding clients is one thing; finding spaces is another matter. Most of the buildings the organization was interested in were not being tracked by the national database called Costar. In most cases, says Baron, you can enter search criterion such as "5,000 square feet at \$20 a square foot or less" and it spits out options. But not in most of her cases. So Baron struck a deal with the database firm: Cool Space Locator would help populate the properties if the database company would maintain the listings for them.

"We hired interns and sent them out the first summer in East Liberty, Oakland and South Side and identified every building. As we've continued, we worked with other communities which lacked this intensive update. Now the North Side buildings are in there and Friendship and Garfield." Currently they're working in Homestead where they have shown space but haven't had much success in leasing.

"What's hot is the product *type*. People want space that looks good and is authentic to the building. They like to see a building that's been restored with respect to that building," says Baron.

"This was a real revelation to us. We thought they were going to say, I want to be in Lawrenceville. Instead they say, I want to be in a great building in a great neighborhood. Show me what's out there."

In demand: Open spaces and lots of light, for starters. Historically appropriate space, authentic details such as exposed brick walls and a sense of action outdoors. "They want to be able to walk out the door and have things there—places for lunch, people around," Baron explains.

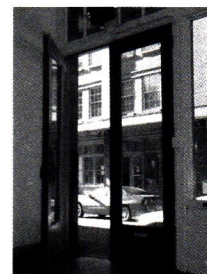
What clients don't want are dropped ceilings and garbage on the floor. "It's a turn off and we see that all the time," laments Baron of the latter. Baron says she sees potential everywhere but unfortunately many of her clients do not. Their experience led them to the URA to pitch an idea for a new program. "Commercial building owners don't clean up buildings like residential owners," says Baron. Now through the URA, business owners can take out a no-interest loan and use the money to fix up the property to make it more appealing to potential tenants. The owners can pay back the loan when they get a tenant. "This is something the banks won't do," says Baron. "We're hoping that can have an impact."

She admits they are always looking at ways to have a bigger impact. "We aren't going to transform the urban environment one transaction at a time." At the same time, she realizes their potential to create change in the process. "This was a new realization for us. We know what businesses are looking for and we can provide that info to CDCs and property owners. If you want to provide space for businesses, this is what you need to do. We hope to grow that toolbox so we have more impact."

Although they have found their niche in the market, the volatile economy makes it more challenging. It's hard to measure the impact, says Baron who adds, "According to Grubb and Ellis, there's a ten-year supply of office space on the market right now."

For Baron, the question is: "How can we create a tipping point in the market that redirects the typical consumer of office space toward urban spaces?"

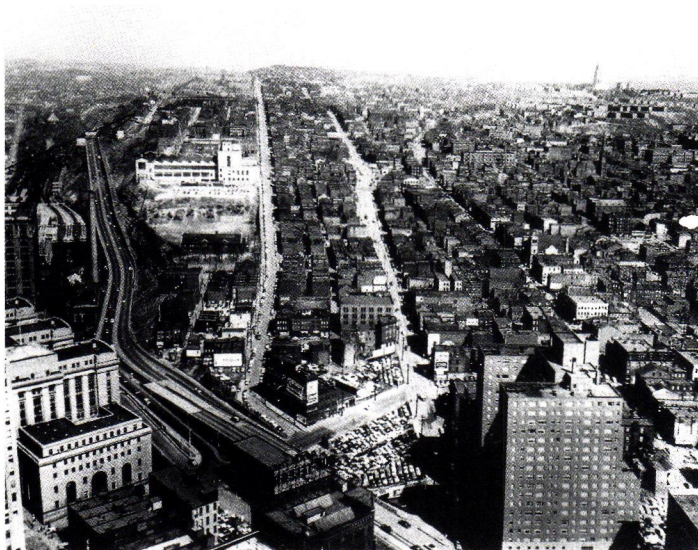
To the self-described frustrated painter, it's a goal worth pursuing. She is full-steam ahead, and grateful for the opportunity to make a difference in urban neighborhoods. "Talk about being able to live your passion," she exclaims. "How much better can it get?"



*What's in demand?  
Open space, lots of  
light, historically  
appropriate space  
and a sense of  
action outdoors.*



## PITTSBURGH'S 10 Most Endangered Places



*In the mid 1950s the lower Hill was a closely built-up place, as this view northeast along Bedford Avenue indicates. Ten years later, the lower Hill is dominated by the Civic Arena.*

We asked architects, historians, Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation and others to help us identify 10 places in Pittsburgh that are most endangered—that is, threatened by demolition by outside forces. Along the way, we discovered some general concerns. Cathy McCollum at Landmarks suggested that any church is now “pre-endangered” since only the owner of record can nominate a church for the City of Pittsburgh Review Commission. “In eliminating the citizens’ nominating role, the religious properties located in the city have lost their greatest protection,” she says. She also mentioned the new Mon Fayette Expressway that threatens structures in its proposed path, and the Route 28 expansion plan which calls for an 80-foot retaining wall—“you’ll see concrete wall from 28 instead of greenery and houses,” she said.

Others cited whole neighborhoods, such as the Bluff, as well as a Highland Park Bridge and of course, Mellon Arena. David Vater, AIA mentioned the proposed Maglev route that, if built, might require demolition of existing structures.

New chair of the Historic Review Commission, Mike Eversmeyer, AIA, cited some older neighborhoods: “Sometimes the patience of neighbors and public officials wears thin for the everyday older buildings in our historic neighborhoods and business districts. Often these buildings are neglected; sometimes they are vacant and deteriorated, sometimes they are the sites of criminal activity and mischief. The typical response, to demand that the buildings be torn down, is understandable but shortsighted. It uses a sledgehammer to do the kind of surgery needed to revitalize our neighborhoods. We need to find a way to conserve and return to use the buildings that make up the basic fabric of our older neighborhoods. To continue to tear down older buildings, leaving gaps in the streetscape that may or may not be filled—and if filled, usually with an incompatible infill building—will cause the continuing unraveling of that community fabric that makes Pittsburgh what it is.”

The following are considered by these experts to be among the most significant endangered places:

### **HETH’S RUN BRIDGE, 1914**

*Butler St. at the western border of Highland Park*

ARCHITECT: Stanley Roush

ENGINEER: Thomas J. Wilkerson

OWNER: PennDOT

The Heth’s (or Haight’s) Run Bridge, designed early in Roush’s career, has impressive classical detailing and architectural features. Unfortunately the City is now using the ravine as a trash dump and the bridge is now partly buried.

### **TROY HILL FIREHOUSE, 1901**

ARCHITECT: Joseph Stillburg

Troy Hill is one of nine city firehouses that could be closed under plans from the Murphy administration to save \$7.5 million this year and \$15 million annually by merging and/or eliminating facilities. Other neighborhoods that could close or face cutbacks are: the Hill District, the Strip District, Bloomfield, Oakland, Allentown, South Side, Brighton Heights, Greenfield, Lawrenceville, Homewood and Overbrook.



**MELLON ARENA** (originally Civic Arena) 1961  
ARCHITECT: Dahlen K. Ritchey, FAIA

At the time, the striking modern building that upended most of the lower Hill District was the largest retractable dome in the world, spanning 415 feet. At 40 years old, the arena has the lowest seating capacity in the National Hockey League.

THREAT: The Pittsburgh Penguins want to tear down the facility in favor of constructing a new hockey arena nearby.

**REED BUILDING** of the former Dixmont State Hospital, 1862, Kilbuck Township  
ARCHITECT: Joseph W. Kerr

The first mental institution in western Pennsylvania. "The state abandoned the outdated facility nearly 10 years ago and it was left open to vandalism. It is now in such a poor state of repair that preservation doesn't seem like an option," says David Vater.

THREAT: An Emsworth development company plans to demolish the complex to build a new Wal-Mart Super Center.

**ST. NICHOLAS CATHOLIC CHURCH**, 1900  
Route 28, North Side  
ARCHITECT: Frederick Sauer

"This was the second building of the Church of the First Croatian-Catholic Parish in the United States," says Vater. Located on a steep hillside, the church features three copper-clad onion dome spires. The grounds include a unique terraced hillside shrine.

THREAT: PennDOT plans to expand Route 28 so the Church must be moved or relocated.

#### UPTOWN / BLUFF / SOHO NEIGHBORHOOD

"This enclave of residential buildings is caught between the vise of institutions at both ends: Duquesne University and Mercy Hospital at one end and the institutions of Oakland at the other," says Mike Eversmeyer. "It could be a tremendous resource, providing the kind of in-town living that is being rediscovered on the North and South Sides and the Hill.

Instead, it has been allowed to deteriorate, mined for parking, and land-banked for future development."

**WESTERN STATE PENITENTIARY**, 1876-82  
(Now State Correctional Institution)  
Along Ohio River at Woods Run  
ARCHITECT: Edward M. Butz

THREAT: The State of Pennsylvania wants to close the Victorian era prison and build a new one. "The notorious escape of 1997 brought the future of the building into serious doubt," writes Walter Kidney.

**958 AND 962 LIBERTY AVENUE**  
ARCHITECT: unknown

Two commercial buildings, one an Italianate survivor from 1876 and the other designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, may be in danger of demolition along with the rest of the triangular block for future development of an African American cultural center. "These are the kinds of buildings that provide character to the streetscape, whose loss we can ill afford, but which can be saved and incorporated in the design of future development on the site," says Eversmeyer.

THREAT: future development



*St Nicholas Church, Route 28, Northside*



*Armstrong Cork Building*

**ARMSTRONG CORK BUILDING** 1901-2 and 1913  
23<sup>rd</sup> and Railroad Street, the Strip District  
ARCHITECT: Frederick J. Osterling

Three massive industrial brick buildings, unused for decades, still await their fate. Will new owner Chuck Hammel restore or tear down? "This landmark of the Strip District has broken a whole series of developers and renovation schemes over the past two decades. If the design and financing problems aren't solved in the relatively near future, we may see a repeat of the Lawrence Paint Building: deliberate demolition to prevent inadvertent collapse," notes Eversmeyer.

**THE WESTINGHOUSE ATOM SMASHER**, 1937-38  
Forest Hills

This decommissioned facility was the first industrial facility for nuclear physics in the United States. A two-story brick building is surmounted by a massive steel domed cone. The total structure is 112 feet tall and 30 feet in diameter.

THREAT: Without ownership or maintenance of this facility, and developers eyeing the property for commercial redevelopment, "we may lose this site of national importance," reports Vater.



# Historic Preservation

*COLUMNS examines a series of regional successes*

## Administration Building Renovation, Seton Hill University

ARCHITECT: CelliFlynnBrennan

At Seton Hill's Administrative Building, affectionately known as "Admin", CelliFlynnBrennan just completed renovations to include additional classrooms and offices for the National Education Center for Women in Business (NECWB) and the National Catholic Center for Holocaust Education (NCCHE) as well as a complete historic restoration of the interiors.

This effort, a result of a Master Plan completed by CFB for Seton Hill's entire campus, included the elimination of current dormitory functions in the upper floors of Admin and a return to the building as the academic and administrative functions of the institution.

Erected in 1888 of heavy timber and brick masonry construction with interior plaster walls, the building features custom woodwork, decorative parlor paintings and other unusual finishes. The work involved new electrical power panels and communications closets to each floor, installation of an elevator and completely modern computer classroom and teaching facilities.

Now this 1888 gem is as modern as any contemporary teaching facility, yet still harks back to the architectural traditions of the past. The building was officially dedicated in the spring of 2001.

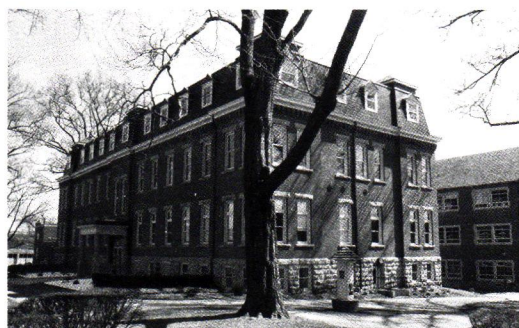
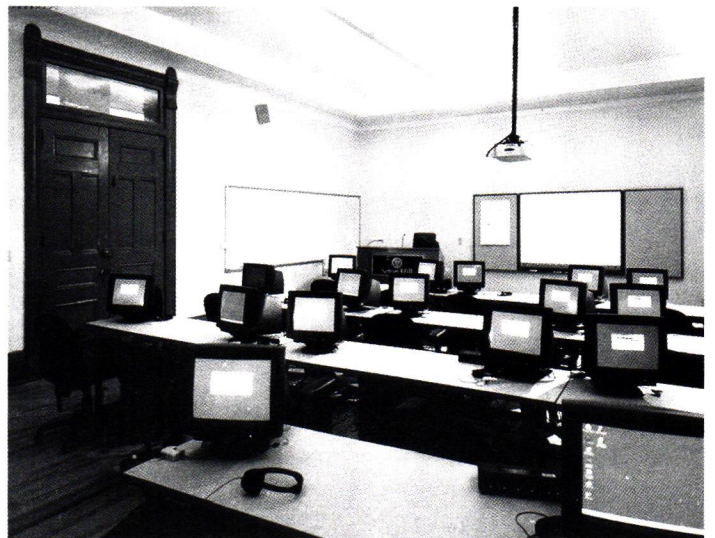
## Thompson Clark Hall Renovation, Westminster College

ARCHITECT: CelliFlynnBrennan

Construction of the 66-by-50 foot, four-story brick building began in the summer of 1893 hosting its first class on January 10, 1894. Originally used as a science building, the building fell into disrepair over the last 20 years. CFB was hired to re-design the interior for modern classrooms, offices and mechanical systems, while maintaining the building's overall historic appearance and meeting modern life safety requirements.

The building renovation included complete removal of the deteriorated wood framed third floor and its replacement with an identical metal-framed mansard. Also included were waterproofing, plaster wall and ceiling repairs, historic refinishing of woodwork and selected room restorations. New metal stud and drywall construction and structural changes were completed to remove several columns and install a new stairwell and elevator. Following the complete removal of existing M/E systems, new HVAC, plumbing, fire protection and electrical systems were installed, including two new air-handling units in the existing basement with limited ceiling height.

Thompson Clark Hall was re-dedicated in January 2001 and has received the Award of Merit from the Associated Builders and Contractors of Western Pennsylvania and the Award of Excellence from the Associated Builders and Contractors of Western Pennsylvania.



**IMAGES ABOVE:**  
Seton Hill  
University

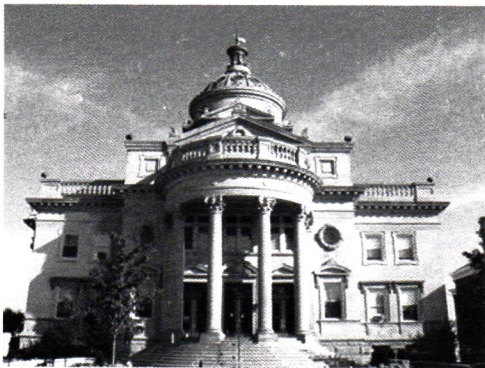
**LEFT:**  
Westminster  
College



## Historic Restoration Somerset County Courthouse, Somerset, PA

ARCHITECT: CelliFlynnBrennan

The 1906 Somerset Courthouse contains a central open stair surmounted by a large dome with top lighting. With two courtrooms on the second floor, the county was in need of a third. CFB designed a courtroom in place of several offices that were moved off premise. Great care was taken to maintain the landmark status of the building while respecting its architecture and, at the same time, meeting a public budget. Construction is nearing completion.



## The Transformation of Brewer's Row

ARCHITECT: Desmone & Associates

Six turn-of-the-century houses on the Northside were in great disrepair not so long ago. Now, due to a collaborative restoration and renovation project, they're the pride of the neighborhood.

Located in the neighborhood of Spring Garden, the town houses of Brewer's Row are one block from the historic Penn Brewery. Prior to recent restoration, many had been divided into two or three rental units. In some cases, original architectural details such as mantles, stair rails, and fixtures had been damaged or destroyed. Originally clad in wood, the houses had been carelessly covered over in aluminum siding and insul-brick, and most had lost significant decorative exterior woodwork. Some suffered structural damage while others had evidence of water, termite and fire damage.

Tenants took off—leaving garbage behind—and pigeons took over, enjoying the convenience of broken windows.

Instead of tearing down the dilapidated buildings, Spring Garden and the Northside Leadership Conference saw the potential and opted to restore them. Teaming up with Desmone & Associates, they produced a unique design for each house that was sensitive to the historic nature as well as the budget.

The interiors of the houses were completely renovated, taking care to repair and preserve original woodwork, mantles, and ceramic tile. To attain an open floor plan, first floor walls were removed and original hardwood floors were repaired and refinished.

Inappropriate siding on the facades was removed to reveal the original wood siding which was in good condition. Missing trim, brackets, and molding were recreated based on the wood details of neighboring houses while crumbling stoops and sidewalks were replaced with new ones, along with planting strips. New paneled front doors and a palette of paint colors complement the historic style.

The 4-story, 3500 square foot, houses of Brewer's Row are for sale for \$120,000. To a prospective buyer, that's a great bargain. To the neighborhood of Spring Garden? Priceless.





## Penn Liberty Neighborhood

ARCHITECT: Integrated Architectural Services, Inc.

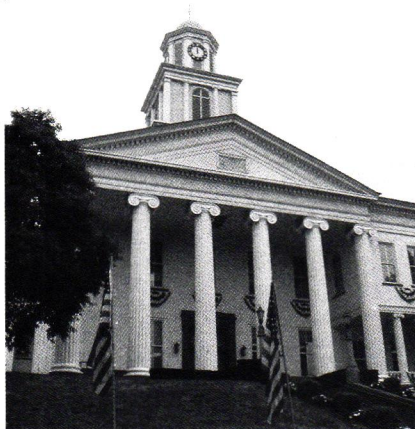
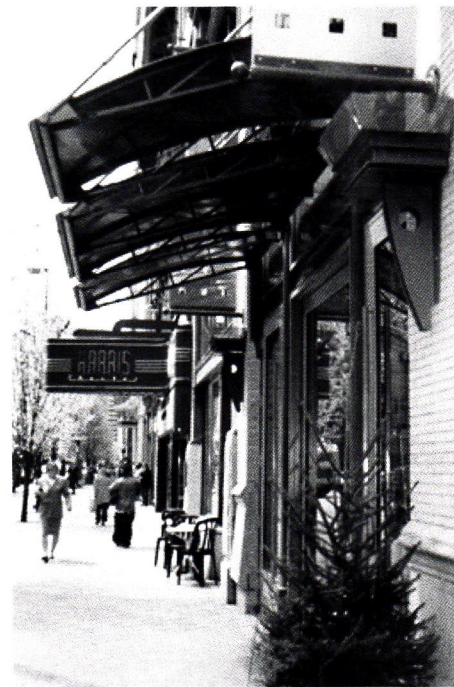
PRINCIPAL DESIGNER: John Martine, AIA

The Penn Liberty neighborhood downtown is one of the largest groups of contiguous historic buildings in the country with 51 designated structures, says Al Cuteri, AIA. As chair of the Penn Liberty Local Review Committee, Cuteri reports that twenty-one buildings in the district have already undergone façade restorations. With the opening of the convention center, interest in the area has spiked, resulting in the purchase of other buildings. "Over the next two to three years, you'll see a lot of work in this area," he says. More lofts, perhaps, speculates Cuteri, and very likely more buildings being restored to their original character.

As chair of the committee, which hears applications for renovations of facades or the exterior of the buildings in the historic district, Cuteri, a principal with STRADA, is partial to the area. His firm is located at 925 Liberty. "We made a special effort to stay in this area which is surrounded by and part of the Cultural District with entertainment, dining and offices. It's a great part of town," says the architect. "It's got a rich fabric and it's people-scaled. It's not like you're in the middle of high rises like Grant St. or Gateway Center."

The rich variety of architecture in the district dates back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century with mostly stone and brick buildings featuring first floor storefronts. Now many of those storefronts, that have been done and redone in the past, are being restored to their original state.

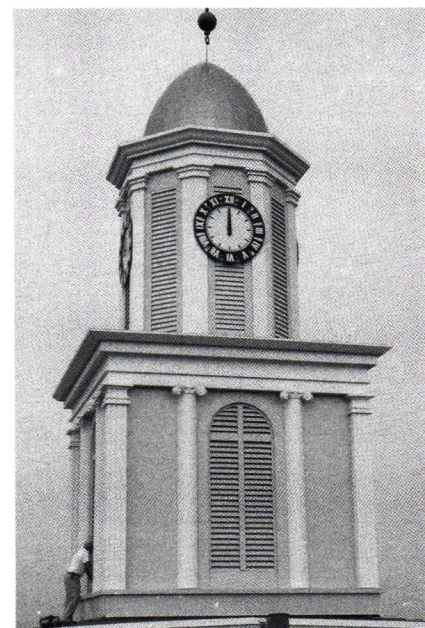
The oddly shaped district extends between Liberty and Penn Avenues from 7<sup>th</sup> St. up to 10<sup>th</sup>. It was established as a historic district in 1987.



## Lawrence County Courthouse Clock Tower, New Castle, PA

ARCHITECT: Glance & Associates, Inc.

The original clock tower of the Lawrence County Courthouse was removed in the 1950's. Working from historic photographs, Glance & Associates prepared a design that matched the original. To decrease the costs, on-site construction time, and the weight of the structure, the tower was made of aluminum instead of wood. Fabricated off-site then lifted into place in two days, the project was on time and below budget. It was dedicated at a public lighting ceremony in October of 2002.







## Pittsburgh Renaissance Hotel

ARCHITECT: J. G. Johnson Architects, Denver

CelliFlynnBrennan acted as project managers in the \$44 million renovation/transformation of a vintage 1906 13-story, 240,000 SF building into a 301-key Marriott Renaissance Hotel. The project included extensive environmental remediation along with creation of hotel rooms and a complete refurbishment of the stunning marble lobby. Its location across from the two new stadiums provide riverfront views.

The Renaissance featured the largest copper restoration project in the United States since the restoration of the Statue of Liberty. The magnificent copper dome in the three-story lobby highlights the craftsmanship and detail of years gone by.

## Stephen Foster Auditorium

ARCHITECT: WTW Architects

Many challenges awaited WTW Architects as they restored the Stephen Foster auditorium, including making safe a building that had numerous code violations. WTW installed new life safety systems along with better handicapped accessibility while refurbishing the interior and lobby and providing new sound systems, control booth and stage equipment. The space has been renamed as the Charity Randall Theater. The 1935 building was designed by architect Charles Z. Klauder, who was also the architect for the Cathedral of Learning.

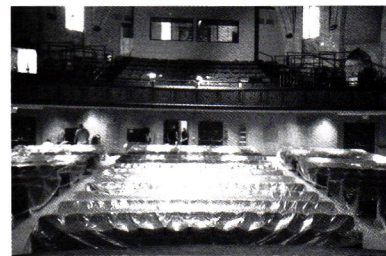


PHOTO BY JIM BURKE

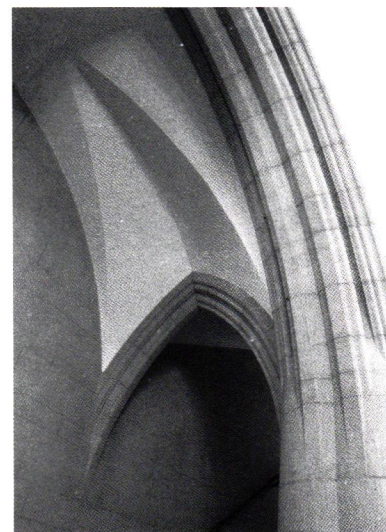


PHOTO BY JIM BURKE

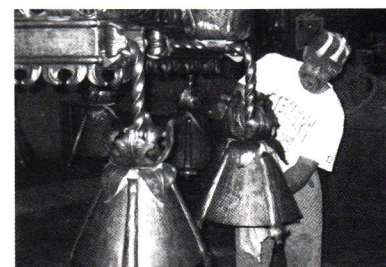


PHOTO BY YVONNE HUDSON



## Franklin, PA Restoration

ARCHITECT: Ligo Architects

If you happen to be passing through downtown Franklin you might notice something mysterious. There are few if any empty storefronts. The last time Brett Ligo, AIA went through he didn't see any. At a time when many downtowns are struggling, this main street area is thriving due in large part to a "wonderful working atmosphere", says Ligo.

In 1980, The Urban Redevelopment Authority of the City of Franklin, PA started the program that funds, through tax credits, the restoration of building facades in the downtown area. It was designed specifically to attract and keep the small shop owners and professional businesses. Anderson Furniture Store, restored two years ago, is one of dozens of buildings restored by Ligo Architects under this program.

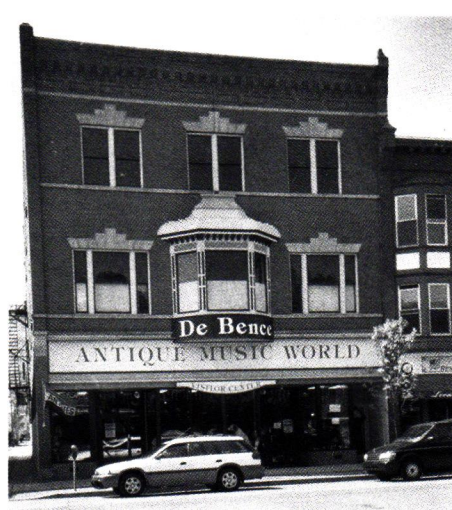
Another is the Debence Music Museum, which houses a local but world-class collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century music machines that attracts bus tours. Five years ago, Ligo Architects created quality museum space on the first floor; currently they're working on the upper floor.



**BEFORE AND AFTER: Anderson Furniture Store**



**BEFORE AND AFTER: Debence Music Museum**



## First National Bank of Slippery Rock, Harrison Branch

ARCHITECT: Ligo Architects

Ligo Architects urged their client to strip the 1950's façade of the bank building when drive-through facilities were recently added. The result: the entire second floor façade was intact and is now restored, transforming the early 20<sup>th</sup> century building back to its original grandeur. The project was just completed.



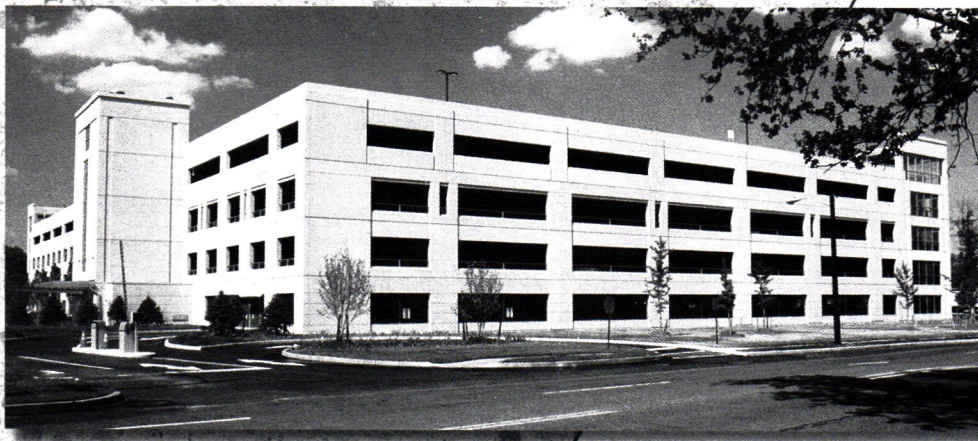
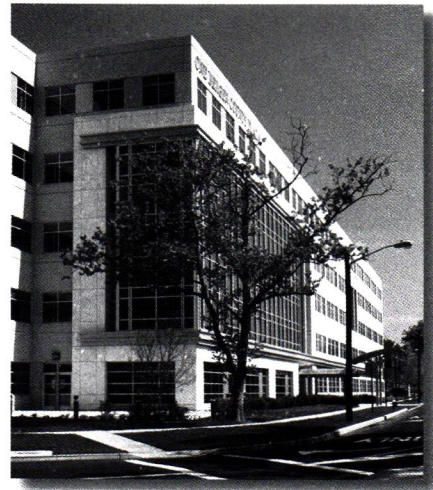
**BEFORE AND AFTER: First National Bank of Slippery Rock**





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## From the Firms

► **KSBA Architects** completed the design of two call centers with RTKL which is under term contract with Verizon. The 105,000 sf former Calgon Carbon building in Robinson Township is now a 660-seat call center. The second center, in Hamilton, NJ, is 100,000 sf and 600 seats. Both centers feature underfloor HVAC, modular cabling, indirect light and sound masking.

**KSBA Architects** also designed the Sustainable Technology Business Center (STBC) built in McAllen, TX for CentraTek. Now the firm is designing the 75,000 sf interior of STBC as a call center which T-Mobile plans to occupy in June '03.

**Renaissance 3 Architects, P.C.** designed a 100,000 sf renovation of an existing motherhouse complex for the Sisters of St. Joseph in Baden, PA. Designed in an environmentally friendly manner, the motherhouse provides living suites for 85 sisters and incorporates administrative offices, food service, dining, laundry, chapel, library, fine arts, and daycare spaces. Construction begins this fall.

**WTW Architects** was selected to design the new Peters Township Community Center in Peterswood Park. The 38,000 sf building will house both recreational facilities and meeting rooms. The \$5 million building project starts this spring.

**CelliFlynnBrennan** completed construction of Mercy SmartHealth Bethel, an outpatient center and fitness center.

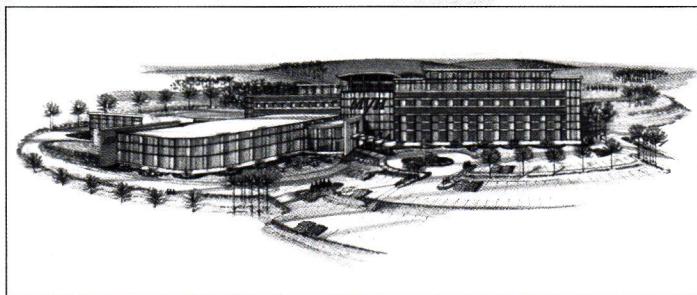
**CFB** also began design work on an addition to The Commons at Washington & Jefferson College, the Schacht Theatre Renovation at the Sage Colleges and a new science building at Lebanon Valley College. **CFB's** historic preservation work continues with the restoration of Cochran Hall at Allegheny College.

Monongahela Valley Hospital unveiled the expanded Charles L. and Rose M. Sweeney Melenzyer Regional Cancer Center (pictured here). A two-story vertical expansion of the building, designed by **Valentour English Bodnar & Howell** created more space for the hospital's chemotherapy services.



**Hayes Large Architects** was awarded the contract to complete renovation and additions to the Potomac College Library, a branch of West Virginia University, in Keyser. The firm recently completed extensive renovations to the Wise Library at the University's Morgantown campus and is currently developing designs for the WVU Health Sciences Library and Classroom building in Morgantown.

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held at the new Willow Pointe Plaza on Rt. 51 in Rostraver, Westmoreland County to celebrate construction of the Mon-Vale HealthPlex Medical Fitness Center (pictured below). General Industries, Prof. Affiliate, is the general contractor for the four-story, 128,000 sf project. The architect is **Gerard-Nagar Associates**.



**JSA Architecture Planning Engineering Interior Design** was selected by the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to design a regional training facility at the entrance to the Allegheny Mountain Tunnels in Stony Creek, PA. The 5,600 sf building will be used to train employees to operate heavy equipment along the turnpike. The facility will incorporate many sustainable design features to achieve LEED certification. Project architect is **Dawn Cindric, AIA**. Director of Design is **Richard Oziemblowsky, AIA**.

Construction has begun on the new 8,000 sf Clayton Community Youth Center at Memorial Park Presbyterian Church in McCandless (pictured below), designed by **Ross Schonder Sterzinger Cupcheck**. The new facility will accommodate the church's youth ministries and community groups by providing expanded classroom, office, and recreation space. Bridges PBT is the general contractor.





Landau Building Company, Prof. Affiliate, was awarded a construction contract from CAPIV Holdings LLC for construction of a new medical office building in Robinson Twp as well as tenant fitout work for the McDonald's Corporation headquarters in Pittsburgh.

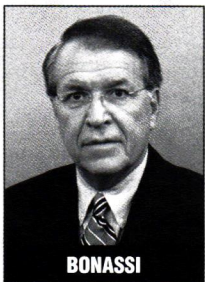
St. Clair Hospital has opened its new nursing unit designed by **Valentour English Bodnar & Howell** in a one-story, vertical addition to the hospital's 'E' Wing.

**VEBH** is also moving forward with the design phases of an additions and alterations project that will significantly improve Trinity Area High School. The building's physical condition will be updated to current construction standards while spatial and environmental improvements will allow the District to better implement its educational program.

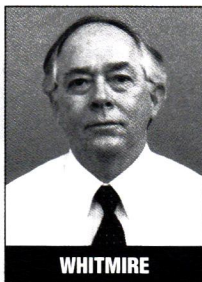
### Business Briefs

► **JSA Architecture Planning Engineering Interior Design** hired Mark Bowers as an intern engineer. He graduated from Grove City College in 1998 with a degree in electrical engineering.

**Astorino** announces the addition of John Bonassi, Prof. Affiliate as principal and vice president of business development, **John Whitmire, AIA** as project manager in the architectural division's research projects group, and Alyssa Ilov as director of marketing.



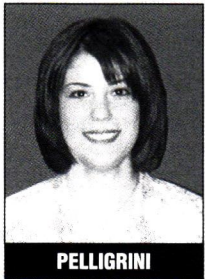
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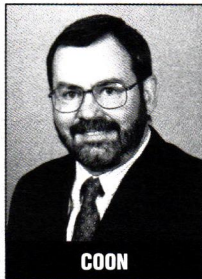
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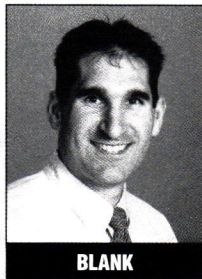
ILLOV



PELLIGRINI



COON



BLANK

Massaro Company hired Heather L. Pelligrini in the business development department.

General Industries appointed Chuck Coon to project manager/safety director and hired Ed Blank as senior estimator.

**Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann** hired Jacqueline McFarland to the administrative staff in the Butler office.

**Brian R. Greene, AIA** was recently named an associate of **KSBA Architects**.

**WTW Architects** hired **Gretchen H. Kurzawa, AIA** who started her career as an intern with the firm in 1992. A resident of Oakmont, she is currently assisting the **WTW** team designing the new Hazmat and Blue Band buildings at Penn State's main campus.

### Kudos

► **Hayes Large Architects** partner **John A. Missell, AIA** presented a session on educational facility planning at the European Council of International Schools' (ECIS) annual conference in Portugal in April. Missell will also author a chapter in the upcoming ECIS *Effective International School Series* publication on facilities. He is partner in charge of the firm's current work in China.

**Renaissance 3 Architects, P.C.** announced that two project architects, **Gina M. Vary, Assoc. AIA**, and **Rebecca L. Leet, Assoc. AIA**, have earned the Leader in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) 2.0 Accreditation from the U.S. Green Building Council. Both were extensively involved in the LEED Certification process for the Siemens Westinghouse Fuel Cell Facility at the Waterfront.

The Pittsburgh Chapter of International Facility Management Association (IFMA) named **Gary P. Moshier, AIA**, an associate of **KSBA Architects**, as the IFMA Chapter Member of the Year. Moshier has been involved with IFMA locally for sixteen years during which time he started the local Christmas in April program and helped found the national-level IFMA Call Center Council.

**Paul Knell, AIA**, senior principal of **WTW Architects** was honored by The Association of College Union International (ACUI) for his "valued services and long-time commitment to the profession and ACUI". **WTW** has achieved national recognition for its design of student unions across the country. They are now at work on their 50th student union project. Knell joined the firm in 1980.

**Baker and Associates** was awarded the 2002 "Award of Excellence" by the Baltimore Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) for Building 211 at National Business Park in Anne Arundel County, MD. The building also won the "Best Exterior-Public/Common Area" award from the Maryland chapter of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties earlier this year.



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## AIA ACTIVITIES

**June 6, Friday**

**AIA Communications Committee Meeting** Noon at Chapter office  
412-471-9548

**June 10, Tuesday**

**AIA Pittsburgh Board Meeting** 5:00 p.m. at the Chapter office. All members are welcome 412-471-9548

**June 19, Thursday**

**Legislative Committee Meeting** Noon at the Chapter Office, Chuck Coltharp, AIA  
724-452-9690

**June 25, Wednesday**

**AIA Pittsburgh's Foundation for Architecture** 5:00 pm at Strada LLC office, 925 Liberty Avenue. Contact Ed Shriver, AIA  
412-263-3800

## 2 C O L U M N S

## AROUND TOWN

**June 7, Saturday**

**CSI Meeting.** Kennywood park at 2 p.m. Cost is \$10. For reservations call Deborah Merges at 412-855-0928 or 724-375-2113 or e-mail her at dmerg@attbi.com

**June 11, Wednesday**

**Society of Design Administrators Meeting.** Topic: Preventing Carpal Tunnel. To be held at the offices of Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, 307 Fourth Avenue, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. \$17 members, \$19.50 non-members. Reservations call Cheryl Marlatt at 412-281-1337.

AIA Pittsburgh is using e-mail to keep our members informed of the chapter's activities. If you would like to be included and are a member, please send your address to [info@aiapgh.org](mailto:info@aiapgh.org)



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CONTACT: Bernard J. Kobosky  
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## ■ DYNAMIC BUILDING CORPORATION

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PHONE: 724-772-9020 FAX: 724-772-5770  
CONTACT: Judith Nadeau  
E-MAIL: jnadeau@dynamicbuilding.com  
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VISIT: www.genindustries.com  
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PHONE: 782-2112 FAX: 782-0271  
CONTACT: George Kusevich, Jr.  
E-MAIL: gkjr@kusevich.com  
VISIT: www.kusevich.com  
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VISIT: www.nello.net  
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E-MAIL: esota@sotaconstruction.com  
VISIT: www.sotaconstruction.com  
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CONTACT: Gino Torriero  
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VISIT: www.torrieroconstruction.com  
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Renovations*

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E-MAIL: BHP@barberhoffman.com  
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PHONE: 367-7700 FAX: 367-8177  
CONTACT: Frank C. Brace  
*Structural*

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CONTACT: Gregory P. Quatchak, P.E.  
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Environmental / Construction Consulting  
Testing & Inspection*

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Herbert J. Brankley, P.E., Jeffrey A. Carney, P.E.  
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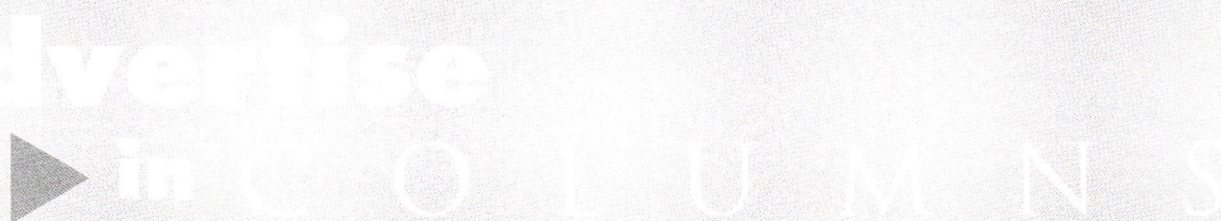
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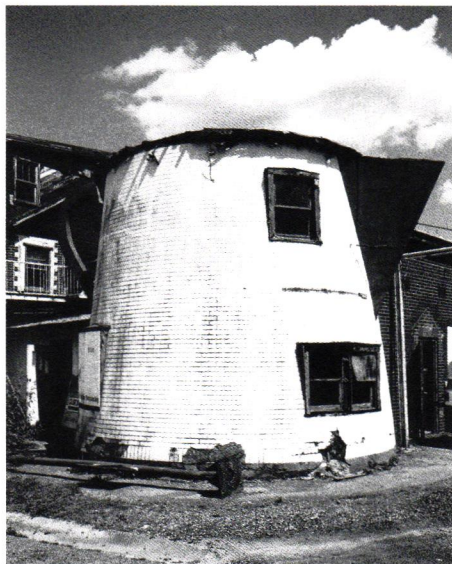
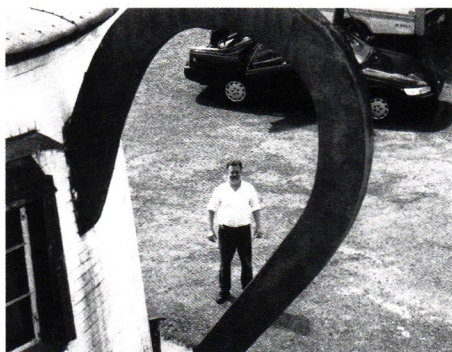


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# Mike Eversmeyer, AIA

*Sole practitioner / Architect / Chair Historic Review Commission, City of Pittsburgh*



*Mike Eversmeyer on location in Bedford, PA with the Bedford Coffee Pot project he designed.*

*RIGHT: Renovation and construction of an addition to a house on Lockhart Street, North Side.*

**PERSONAL:** Janna Smith and I were married right out of college, after meeting in ninth grade (though we were not high school sweethearts). We have two sons, one at the University of Michigan, the other a high school junior. Besides being a baseball fan, I collect old postcards (mostly county courthouses and historic scenes of Pittsburgh).

**YEARS IN PRACTICE:** 22 (with 15 of those in public service in New Orleans and Pittsburgh).

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor of Arts from the University of Chicago (history major), Bachelor of Architecture from Tulane University (New Orleans).

**PROJECT YOU'RE PROUDEST OF AND WHY:** The Graf residence on the North Side is my favorite project, because I was able to do most of the things that I think are important in architecture: work closely with my clients to design a house in which they can live comfortably; adapt a 110-year-old institutional building to a new use as a single-family residence; return a wreck of a building to productive use; restore an important façade in the historic streetscape and design an addition to be compatible with the established visual character of the street.

**BUILDING YOU WISH YOU HAD DESIGNED AND WHY:** Monticello – the finest house in the United States.

**IF YOU HADN'T BEEN AN ARCHITECT, YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN:** After my wife got her Master's degree, and it was my turn to go back to school, I had a choice: law or business school for the money, or architecture school out of love—even though I had no previous educational background in architecture. I could have been very comfortable and unfulfilled in the other professions, but I would always have wondered: what would have happened if I had gone to architecture school? I decided not to live with the probability of future regret, and here I am—living on an architect's income, but doing what I love.

**FAVORITE CITY:** I have enjoyed every city in which I have lived – Washington, DC, for its Neoclassical beauty and order; Chicago, for its energy and Frank Lloyd Wright; New Orleans, for its *laissez faire* attitude and whole neighborhoods of Greek Revival houses; and Pittsburgh too, for its topography, its historic neighborhoods and Downtown, and its ability to reinvent itself.

**FAVORITE ARCHITECT:** Stanford White—a meteoric career as one of the finest designers in our history, and a spectacular demise.

**SOME DAY, I'D LIKE TO...:** My dream commission would be to design a major public building in the Classical style, connecting with and extending the thousands of years of architectural thought and skill embodied in that living tradition.





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E-MAIL: TC@zoominternet.net  
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E-MAIL: diac@erie.net  
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### ■ KENDALL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

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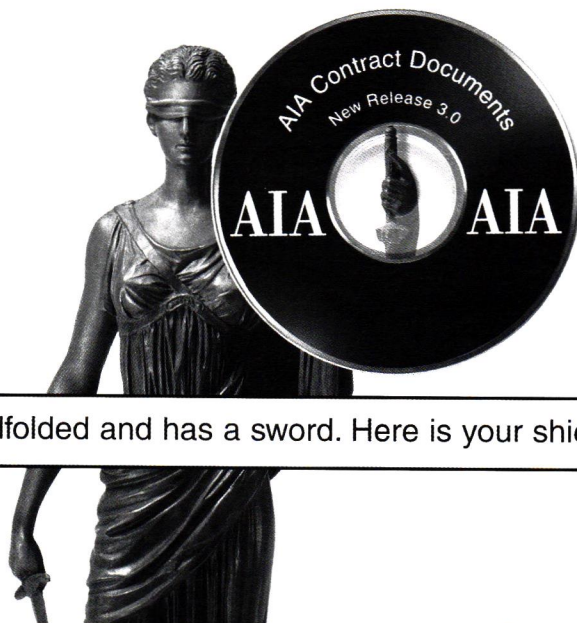
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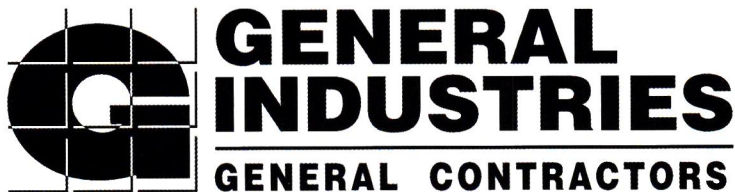


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