

COLUMNS

DEC/10 The Design Awards Issue: Design Pittsburgh 2010 award winners
From Suburban Sprawl to a Sustainable Future: Solutions for the Route 51 Corridor |
Design Pittsburgh event photos | AIA Pittsburgh, a chapter of the American Institute of Architects

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HOMEFRONT

BY ANNE J. SWAGER, HON. AIA



I was deeply honored to receive a special citation from AIA President George Miller, FAIA recognizing my 20 years of service to AIA Pittsburgh at the Design Pittsburgh celebration. The icing on the cake was the faux cover of Pittsburgh Magazine with my photo and tributes on it which was presented to me by publisher Betsy Benson. My 14 year old daughter, Ellen, thought it was real and told her lunch table at school that my face would be appearing in their mailboxes soon. I know she is deeply embarrassed at her mistake but since 14 year olds don't even like to acknowledge that they have parents, I am deeply touched that she even mentioned me to her friends.

Since the award was a surprise, I did not have any prepared remarks to make and, in retrospect, this might explain why it was a surprise... nevertheless, I snuck a few words in. The gist of what I said was that the AIA was a "team sport." I have worked with a number of bright, thoughtful, motivated people whether they were on the Board of Directors, a volunteer, or on the staff. My most successful approach has been to get out of the way. If you put the right people in the right places, amazing things can happen. It is so gratifying to work for and with a profession that is forward thinking, creative, and mostly optimistic.

While that personal recognition was certainly a high note for me, I also had an equally rewarding experience participating in the recent Route 51 SDAT project. I have spent most of my 30 years in the South Hills avoiding Route 51. Driving it is hands down one of the most unpleasant experiences you can have behind the wheel of your car. The road winds, narrows, and is most often congested. Abandoned buildings, large billboards, retail big box, and a worn out mall are just a small part of

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the varying road conditions. Early in 2010, we learned that the Route 51 corridor from the Liberty Tubes to the Elizabeth Bridge had been chosen for study by a Sustainable Design Assistance Team. Jen Bee, AIA and an intrepid group of unemployed architects donated countless hours to preparing a map of current road conditions for the team. They also were present to help sketch the ideas that were generated during the team visit and to handle a myriad of other details that need attention when you bring a team of experts to town.

What was particularly gratifying was to see the sketches of how Route 51 could work. There were ideas for quick fixes, medium ones, and long term solutions. The team was able to grasp the importance of some of our biggest issues like sewage overflow and explain how changes to the road could positively impact runoff, saving the bordering townships many, many thousands of dollars. I can't possibly do justice to the outcome of the three day visit. To see for yourself go to <http://www.aia.org/aiaucmp/groups/aia/documents/pdf/aia086243.pdf>. I saw nods from many of the people who attended the final presentation. Maybe it was my imagination but I felt that there was a hopefulness in the room. Some of the solutions were relatively simple but powerful nonetheless.

The year has been challenging to all of you in the profession and to those of us who work to support you. Celebrations like Design Pittsburgh help to remind us what can be accomplished. In spite of these difficult times, I see reason to hope that the economy is turning around and that good design remains a vital part of the future of our region. If you aren't part of the team, join us. There are always opportunities for fresh thinking and energetic effort. 



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CARS, CARS, CARS

BY KEVIN WAGSTAFF, AIA

Cars get blamed for a lot in the design community, and much of it is well deserved. Our auto-centric built environments are often ugly and inhospitable, almost never beautiful. Nevertheless, cars are just too practical and convenient for most people to give up. Few of us could do business or raise a family without one. I believe personal transportation is here to stay, which makes efforts such as the Route 51 SDAT, spearheaded by Jen Bee, AIA, so important. We need to learn how to design good environments that include the car. Turning things around, perhaps we can even learn something from car design and engineering.




I actually like cars. I grew up in a small rural town where cars meant freedom, mobility, and independence – a car simply made your world much bigger. I read car magazines cover to cover since well before I could drive, and I have loved car design and engineering for as long as I have loved architecture. I suspect I am not alone. I have known more than one architect with a strong affection for a BMW 2002. Perhaps this is only to be expected, since car design is not so different from architecture. It combines function, form, and meaning. Like great cars, great buildings are objects of expression and desire. So despite all the negative impact that cars have on our environment, I would like to suggest three ways in which the field of architecture and building construction would be improved if it were more like the field of car design and engineering.

First, modern automobiles are a remarkable synthesis of performance, reliability, safety, comfort, aesthetics, and even value. Think about how much better a new car is today than

it was in 1980. Can we say the same for buildings? Cars still come in the same fundamental forms and variations, but the process of continuous incremental improvement within those constraints has made nearly everything much better. By contrast, the fragmented building industry advances very slowly and architecture expends tremendous energy trying to toss out the old and invent the radical new.

Second, the media outlets focused on cars do a much better job of testing, reviewing, and genuinely critiquing cars than our media does with buildings. Car magazines do a remarkably thorough job of evaluating car performance, comfort, and aesthetics (even though they accept ads from car manufacturers). They don't hesitate to give negative criticism and they provide a wealth of data ranging from handling, to gas mileage, to cabin acoustics, to carbon output. Contrast this with the typical architecture or "shelter" magazine article in which cost data is largely or completely absent, building performance claims are not substantiated, durability is generally ignored, and negative aesthetic criticism is usually withheld.

Third, car design, like much industrial design, is elevating the quality of design at even the lowest consumer level. Successful industrial design is wildly popular while transforming, not simply following, consumer tastes. Think of the contrast between the design of the luxury sedan parked in the driveway versus the design of the typical "McMansion." The same consumer bought both. The days of the fixed vinyl top car with the appliqué hinge on the C pillar are behind us. Can we do the same with the screw-on vinyl shutter? 

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

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Volume 24, No. 4



DESIGN PITTSBURGH 2010



David Roth, AIA and Hugh Watkins, and celebrating the award winning projects. To kick off the awards ceremony, executive director Anne Swager was presented with a surprise Presidential Citation to honor her 20 years of service at AIA Pittsburgh. After months of hard work and planning, another Design Pittsburgh was deemed a rousing success! 

ABOVE: Anne Swager, Hon. AIA is presented a Presidential Citation from AIA Pittsburgh president Kevin Wagstaff, AIA and AIA Regional Director Rich DeYoung, AIA. RIGHT: David Roth, AIA



LEFT: Checking out the design entries. RIGHT: Betsy Benson of Pittsburgh Magazine, the Design Pittsburgh Media Partner, MC's the design awards ceremony.



Design entries on display at the August Wilson Center



PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Drew Weinheimer receives an Honor Award for the Young Architects' Studio Competition. He is joined here by Design Pittsburgh 2010 committee chair Eric Osth, AIA, Kevin Wagstaff, AIA, Anne Swager, Hon. AIA, and juror Jose Gelabert-Navia, AIA.

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Attendees Abbey Mirkin, John Gurman, Sarah Ross, Brent Hugus

Matt Diersen, AIA, Melanie Buzgan Dower, Assoc. AIA, and Iliya Jordanoff

Photos by Renee Rosensteel



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design awards

2010

HOW IT WORKS

Each year, AIA Pittsburgh hosts the Design Awards, which are judged by an out of town jury and open to any member of AIA Pittsburgh, AIA Middle Pennsylvania, or any member of any AIA chapter across the country who has a project in the 22-county area represented by AIA Pittsburgh and AIA Middle Pennsylvania. The mission of these awards is to recognize and promote excellence in the craft of architecture, as created by the members of the AIA. This year AIA Pittsburgh revamped the Design Award submission categories, introducing three new categories – Design + Innovation, Historic Preservation, and the Young Architects' Studio Competition, which asks young professionals to address a specific regional design challenge. Awards were given in the categories of Architecture, Regional and Urban Design, Design + Innovation, Historic Preservation, and the Young Architects' Studio Competition.

WHAT DO THE AWARDS MEAN?

■ The Silver Medal is AIA Pittsburgh's highest award and is presented at the jury's discretion. It is only presented in the Architecture category. Only one Silver Medal can be awarded and the jury may choose not to award it. The last Silver Medal was awarded to Pfaffmann + Associates PC for the Meadowcroft Rockshelter in 2008.

■ Honor Awards are granted for overall excellence to projects in Architecture, Regional and Urban Design, Interior Architecture, and the Young Architects Studio Competition. Certificates of Merit recognize an outstanding aspect of a project in those categories, such as detailing or adaptive reuse. Architectural Detail/Craftsmanship, Design + Innovation, Historic Preservation, and Timeless projects are only eligible for Awards of Excellence.

■ The Green Design Citation, presented by SOTA Construction, recognizes projects that have integrated green building strategies and practices into the design to reduce environmental impact. This award also recognizes the growing impact that buildings have on human health, worker productivity, and environmental and regional prosperity. Projects in the Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Historic Preservation categories are eligible for Green Design Citations.

The jury may award as many or as few Honor Awards, Certificates of Merit, or Awards of Excellence as they like.



ARCHITECTURE – Honor Award and Green Design Citation

PROJECT: Science and Technology Center at Clarion University

CLIENT: Clarion University of Pennsylvania & Department of General Services DGS-PA

ARCHITECTURE FIRM: Bohlin Cywinski Jackson

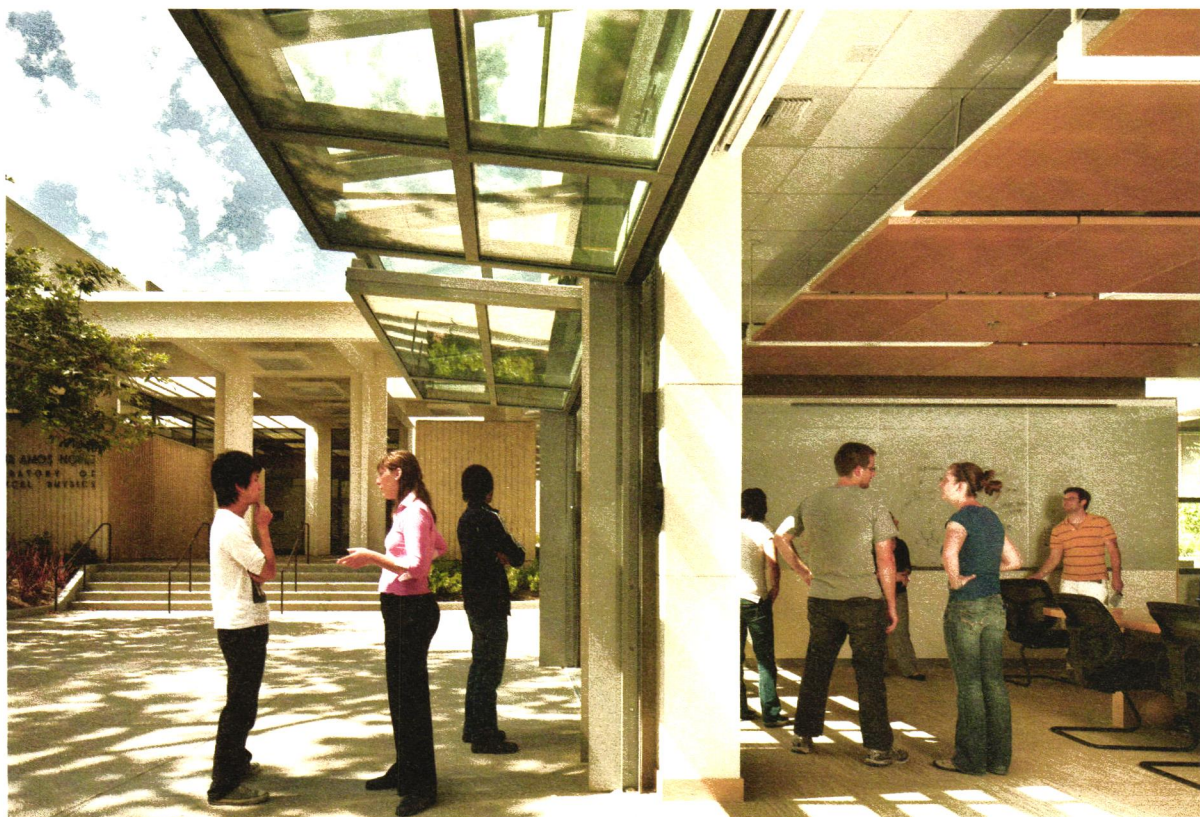
PROJECT TEAM: Jon Jackson, FAIA, Terence Alcorn, AIA, Charles Cwenar, AIA, Lucia Aguirre, Dana Stanik-Marinzel

CONTRACTOR: URS Construction Services

PHOTOGRAPHER: Massery Photography, Inc.

DESCRIPTION: The Science & Technology Center is a new, state-of-the-art, 5-story building on the Clarion University campus. The building provides better connections between the upper and lower parts of a growing campus, housing many of Clarion's core programs, as well as the renovated Pierce Planetarium, which has been incorporated in such a way as to become the "pearl" of the campus.

JURY COMMENTS: *This project turned a site that was previously a "no mans land" into a veritable connector between the upper and lower campus. The planning is great. The landscaping plan, which is implied in the drawings, will fully realize this project. LEED Gold is incredibly difficult to achieve in a lab building and the architects are to be commended for the extraordinary effort they put into greening this project.*



ARCHITECTURE – Honor Award

PROJECT: Warren and Katherine Schlinger Laboratory for Chemistry and Chemical Engineering

CLIENT: California Institute of Technology

ARCHITECTURE FIRM: Bohlin Cywinski Jackson

PROJECT TEAM: Jon Jackson, FAIA, Roxanne Sherbeck, AIA, Michael Maise, AIA, Michael Gwin, AIA, Patricia Culley, Kyle Hollick

CONTRACTOR: Rudolph and Sletten

PHOTOGRAPHER: David Hewitt /Anne Garrison
Architectural Photography

DESCRIPTION: Located on a tight site, the CCE Laboratory is comprised of two laboratory blocks with a tapered central circulation spine. Primary window walls open to afford an abundance of natural light. The labs are designed with an open floor plan for maximum flexibility and safety, and to foster interaction among researchers.

JURY COMMENTS: *The openness and direct access to natural light and the openness of meeting spaces is remarkable given that this building is a research and lab building. Because of its relationship to the outdoors, this is the most humane lab building the jury has ever seen. The building creates excellent outdoor spaces that did not exist before including the service dock area to the adjacent building. The best site plan of all the projects.*



ARCHITECTURE – Honor Award

PROJECT: Allegheny College, Vukovich Center for Communication Arts

CLIENT: Allegheny College

ARCHITECTURE FIRM: Ennead Architects LLP

PROJECT TEAM: Todd Schliemann, FAIA, Timothy Hartung, FAIA, Molly McGowan, AIA, Brian Masuda, AIA, Chris Andreacola, AIA, Madeline Sun, Charmian Place, Allison Reeves, AIA, Charles Brainerd, Matt Dionne, Amber Foo, Youngsun Ko, Ken Mito, Maura Rogers, James Sinks, Akari Takabayashi, Todd Van Varick

CONTRACTOR: Massaro Corporation

PHOTOGRAPHER: ESTO

DESCRIPTION: The Vukovich Center is designed to promote the communication arts, conceived as a teaching theatre for drama, television, and related arts. The facility includes rehearsal and instructional spaces, technologically-advanced video production facilities, a 250-seat theatre, related support spaces including scene and costume shops, dressing rooms, and faculty office spaces.

JURY COMMENTS: *Every space speaks of communication. The building is nicely detailed and restrained. The theater speaks of engagement with the audience. The green roof is delightful in part because of the view and in part because of how it integrates with the other outside space. The building has a disciplined yet eloquent palette of materials.*





ARCHITECTURE – Honor Award

PROJECT: The Pennsylvania State University Dickinson School of Law, Lewis Katz Building

CLIENT: The Pennsylvania State University Dickinson School of Law

ARCHITECTURE FIRM: Ennead Architects LLP

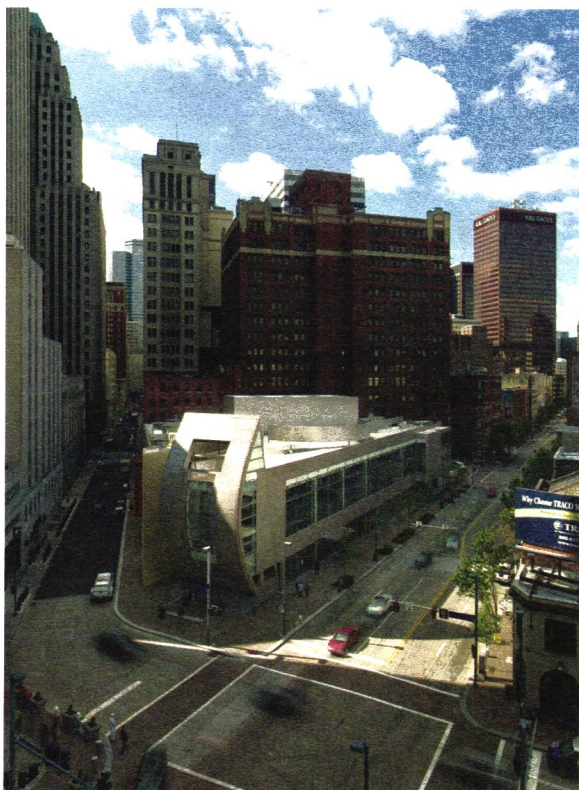
PROJECT TEAM: Richard Olcott, FAIA, Timothy Hartung, FAIA, Kevin McClurkan, AIA, Kate Mann, AIA, Felicia Berger, AIA, Mark Gregory Clawson, AIA, David Ooyevaar, Charmian Place, Sean Baumes, Andrew Burdick, Darla Elsbernd, Kyo-Young Jin, Douglas Kawano, Kathleen Kulpa, AIA, Anthony Buccellato, Nicholas Hunt, Youngsun Ko, Claudia Misi, Yekta Pakdaman-Hamedani, Margaret Reed (Gilbane), Ted Wagner, Henry Weintraub, Allison Reeves, AIA, Charles Brainerd, Matt Dionne, Amber Foo, Ken Mito, Maura Rogers, James Sinks, Akari Takabayashi, Todd Van Varick

CONTRACTOR: Gilbane Building Company

PHOTOGRAPHER: ESTO

DESCRIPTION: The Lewis Katz Building is a direct response to the agrarian site, the geology of the valley, and the presence of the surrounding mountains. The ground plane flows unimpeded, linking interior and exterior space while the library volume is a floating element above, sheltering the rest of the school's program beneath.

JURY COMMENTS: *The architects took a project with complex planning and completely wrestled it to the ground. Every floor is different and beautifully executed. The internal building orientation allows for maximum natural light in reading, meeting, and circulation spaces. The systems are beautifully detailed. If you have to study in a building in a northern state in the middle of winter, this is where you want to be. The next building built on this site will need to respond to this building in a creative way.*



ARCHITECTURE – Honor Award

PROJECT: August Wilson Center for African American Culture

CLIENT: August Wilson Center for African American Culture

ARCHITECTURE FIRM: Perkins + Will

PROJECT TEAM: Allison Williams, FAIA, Mayank Singh, AIA, Patrick Riddle, James Mallery, AIA, Hyuek Rhee, Assoc. AIA, The Perkins + Will Studio

CONTRACTOR: Turner Construction

PHOTOGRAPHER: Steinkamp Photography, Joshua Franzos Photography, VEKA Marketing

DESCRIPTION: This urban infill building is a first-voice cultural Center that celebrates the contributions of African Americans to American culture, art, music, and theatre in the region and globally. The 2-story, 64,500 sf facility includes a 486-seat theatre, exhibit galleries, flexible studio, music cafe, and an education center.

JURY COMMENTS: *This building is beautifully detailed and well resolved. The jury was particularly captivated by the stairs which are an enjoyable experience whether you are going up or down. The site provided a tough geometry to the project with the apex being the most difficult part. The architects handled these challenges admirably. Both the scale of the building on the street and the large windows up top help bring the activity out while inviting the neighborhood to look in. The public spaces are very eloquent. The building has beautiful circulation with many nice places to gather and it is a great compliment to the buildings across the street.*

ARCHITECTURE – Certificate of Merit

PROJECT: Uniontown Hospital

CLIENT: Uniontown Hospital

ARCHITECTURE FIRM: Burt Hill

PROJECT TEAM: John Brock, AIA, Tim Schmida, AIA, Jeff Heiskell, AIA, Jim Routh, Carrie Haines, Nikki Goodemote

CONTRACTOR: MBM Contracting, Inc.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Denmarsh Photography

DESCRIPTION: Uniontown Hospital undertook a facilities improvement project to enhance staff efficiencies and the delivery of patient services. The 75,000 sf new patient care addition features 56 private rooms, with an emphasis on patient comfort and staff convenience. Included in the design is an expanded emergency department, the consolidation of outpatient services, and a new chiller plant and electrical service entry.

JURY COMMENTS: *The architect succeeded in making the building not look institutional. In spite of the complexity and challenge of the hospital program, this project displays a sensitivity to scale and materials while giving a new identity to a previously undistinguished complex of buildings. The stair tower has become a beacon and recognizable entry point for the hospital.*



ARCHITECTURE – Certificate of Merit

PROJECT: West General Robinson Street Garage

CLIENT: Sports & Exhibition Authority

ARCHITECTURE FIRM: Perfidio Weiskopf Wagstaff + Goettel

PROJECT TEAM: Kevin Wagstaff, AIA, Richard Miller, AIA, Joseph Filar, AIA, Marc Ford, Drew Lengyel, AIA, Antonio Rella

CONTRACTOR: Mascaro Construction Company, L.P.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Massery Photography, Inc.

DESCRIPTION: The West General Robinson Street Garage is located in the center of Pittsburgh's North Shore urban redevelopment. The garage accommodates 1,233 cars on ten levels and was designed to serve both events and commuters. The garage ingress and egress has been coordinated with highway access and surface traffic patterns, and will become an intermodal facility when the underground light rail transit station is complete.

JURY COMMENTS: *The architects should get a special award for executing such a successful project on a very modest budget. They spent their client's money well. The sensitive handling of the retail circulation with the appropriate scaling of the elevations on this difficult site resulted in an eloquent solution. The retail space and lobby dignify the façade and create an essential sense of entry. This is the right building for this site and the building plays an important role in the redevelopment of the whole area.*



REGIONAL AND URBAN DESIGN – Honor Award

PROJECT: National Center for Youth Science Education

CLIENT: National Youth Science Foundation

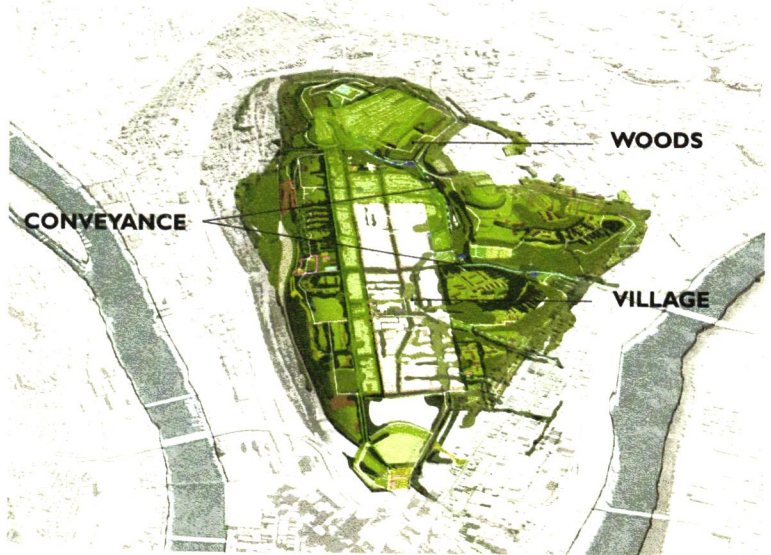
ARCHITECTURE FIRM: Perfidio Weiskopf Wagstaff + Goettel

AFFILIATED ARCHITECT: Brandstetter Carroll, Inc.

PROJECT TEAM: Kevin Wagstaff, AIA and Jan Irvin, AIA

DESCRIPTION: The National Center for Youth Science Education is proposed as a year-round residential educational center intended to become a focal point for an immersive, informal, science education experience to encourage and inspire youth to pursue scientific careers. The design provides settings for environmental observational research, informal science teaching, collaboration, and conversations through the grouping of buildings to shape outdoor gathering places.

JURY COMMENTS: *For a youth center this is a sensitive and appropriate solution to the programming and site. The language of the building is very promising. For an unbuilt project you get a good idea of how it will turn out. This project will be fully realized if the buildings are built as shown. Well suited to its setting. It is inspired by the vernacular language of the region without making a caricature of it.*



REGIONAL AND URBAN DESIGN – Certificate of Merit

PROJECT: Hill District Greenprint

CLIENT: Find the Rivers! & Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy

ARCHITECTURE FIRM: Studio for Spatial Practice

PROJECT TEAM: Christine Brill, AIA, Jonathan Kline, AIA, Safiya Hodari

DESCRIPTION: The Hill District Greenprint is both a landscape based urban design framework and a set of specific landscape interventions for this Pittsburgh neighborhood. The project proposes a series of public space interventions to organize and beautify the neighborhood's open space by reinforcing pedestrian connections, creating new plazas, gardens, and trails.

JURY COMMENTS: *The land is readily available and so the plan is implementable, practical, beautiful, and can be built in phases. The ability to phase is the key to this project. It makes it fully realizable. The project adds to the quality of the neighborhood, and the jury appreciates that the plan became a vehicle for community involvement and participation. A great deal of restoration of landscape. Sustainable and regenerative vision of the landscape.*

HISTORIC PRESERVATION – Award of Excellence

PROJECT: Century Building

CLIENT: Trek Development

ARCHITECTURE FIRM: Koning Eizenberg

ARCHITECT OF RECORD: Moshier Studio

PROJECT TEAM: Crystal Chan, Erica Chlad, Julie Eizenberg, AIA, Hank Koning, FAIA, Mohammed Sharif, Amy Wynne

CONTRACTOR: Guardian Construction Management Services, Inc.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Eric Staudenmaier Photography

DESCRIPTION: The adaptive reuse of the Century Building is intended to add to the ongoing sustainable revitalization of downtown Pittsburgh. The 12-story building is now included on the National Register of Historic Places (built 1907) and houses an existing restaurant, two floors of offices and 60 units of mixed income housing.

JURY COMMENTS: *The success of projects like this, that reuse old buildings, speak of the revitalization of American downtowns. This is a great example of an old building with a new life because of a mixed-use program including affordable housing. The plans for the residential and office space are equally well executed.*



PROJECT: Founders Hall

CLIENT: Juniata College

ARCHITECTURE FIRM: Street Dixon Rick Architecture, PLC

PROJECT TEAM: Baird Dixon, AIA and Carly Wansing, AIA

CONTRACTOR: Leonard S. Fiore

PHOTOGRAPHER: Massery Photography, Inc.



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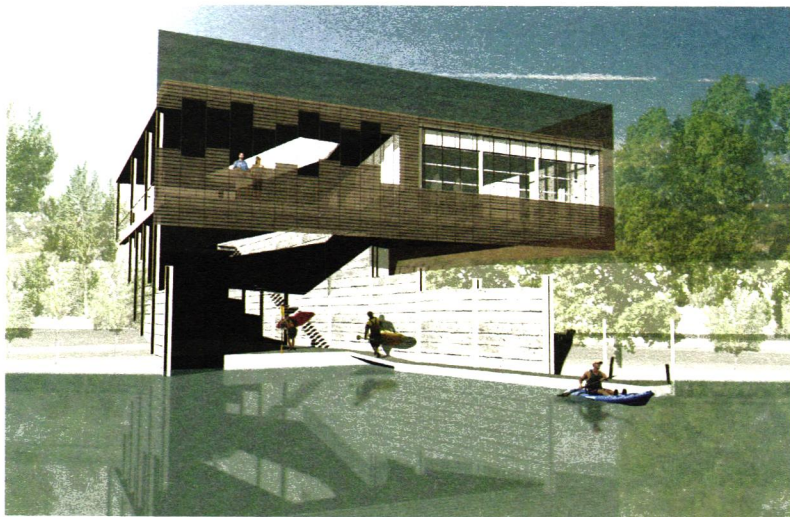


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DESIGN AND INNOVATION – Award of Excellence

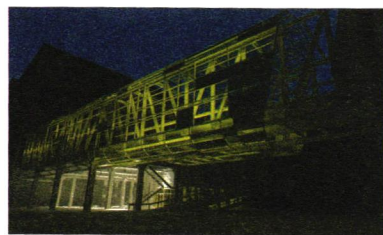
PROJECT: Boathouse/River Pavilion

CLIENT: Venture Outdoors

ARCHITECTURE FIRM: EDGE studio

DESCRIPTION: Located on the Lawrenceville side of the Allegheny River adjacent to the 40th Street Bridge, the Venture Outdoors Boathouse is sited on a steep and narrow hillside between existing rail tracks and the river. The project contains a public facility to store and launch kayaks at the lower river level, and an upper level containing locker rooms, bathrooms, and a large meeting and conference space.

JURY COMMENTS: *The building displays eloquent simplicity and restraint well suited to the modesty of its function. The jury was gratified to see such a beautiful project right on the river, as Pittsburgh has so many miles of underused waterfront. The initial site work promises to be attractive. The descent to the water promises to be a pleasant part of the user experience, and the building appears to capture views up and down the river from the enclosed space of the upper level.*



YOUNG ARCHITECTS' STUDIO COMPETITION – Honor Award

PROJECT: Organic Mechanic

ARCHITECT: Drew Weinheimer

DESCRIPTION: The Organic Mechanic is a design solution for the corner of Penn and Tenth downtown that not only addresses parking and screening the lots, but also provides a useful business for the 21st century – a mechanic to transition cars from gasoline to ethanol power while the owners are at work.

JURY COMMENTS: *This project forms an architectural gateway that temporarily frames the back of the David L. Lawrence Convention Center and it does this admirably. The jury awarded this concept based on the eloquence of the graphic but we wish the same type of care and discipline had been applied to the text. The immodesty of the program, which was largely invented, diminishes the chances that it would actually be built even temporarily.*



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BREAKING

FROM THE FIRMS

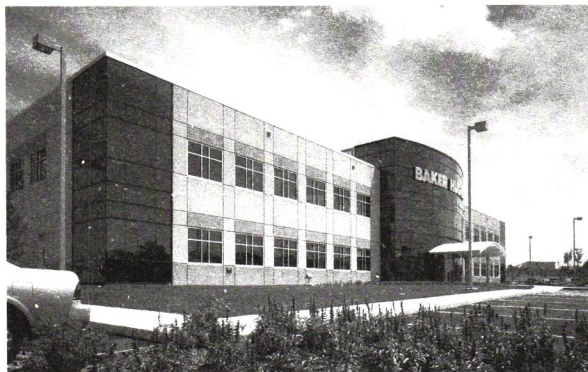
The Catholic Institute of Pittsburgh has selected **Astorino** to provide architectural and engineering services for the construction of the new co-educational Catholic high school in Cranberry Township being planned by the Diocese of Pittsburgh. In addition, fathom, a design, research and strategy firm and affiliate company of Astorino, will provide pre-design research and strategy work for the \$60 million project.

Desmone & Associates

Architects will lead a team of firms to conduct a Master Plan for the Iron City Brewing Company property, located on a stretch of land that runs through or borders the city neighborhoods of Lawrenceville, the Strip District, Bloomfield, and Polish Hill. The property was originally built in 1861 and consists of 19 buildings on nine acres. The firm has also completed a new 150-seat Grotto Chapel, following the completion of the new Saints John and Paul Roman Catholic Church, that is used for daily Mass, small weddings, children's Liturgy of the Word and Eucharistic adoration. **Desmone & Associates**, with A. Martini Company, has also recently completed a Design/Build project for Baker Hughes International – a global oilfield service company with operations in over 90 countries. The project required a new two-story, 17,000 sf office building, 37,000 sf operations warehouse, 6,500 sf support structure, and 160,000 sf tool storage yard. This project was completed on time and on budget.



Grotto Chapel at Saints John and Paul Roman Catholic Church. Photo by Massery Photography, Inc.

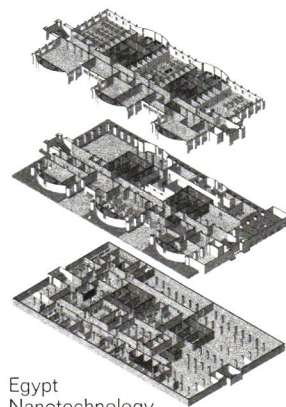


Baker Hughes International

IDC Architects is working with Bayer to renovate and reorganize 5 different buildings on their North American Headquarters campus in Robinson Township, PA. The project focuses on sustainability, showcasing Bayer products, improving productivity, and workspace quality. Demolition has begun and the work, which will be completed in phases to accommodate ongoing occupancy. The work includes 134,300 sf of interior space renovated with new open

plans, workstations, finishes, LED lighting and modified HVAC systems. This project will reduce Bayer's off-campus leased real estate and carbon footprint, improve day lighting, interior lighting, air quality, and provide a more collaborative working environment with a higher percentage of conference and collaborative space. The firm has also been awarded the design of the Egypt Nanotechnology Center, competing against an international field of

architects and engineers. The Egypt Nanotechnology Center is being sponsored by the Information Technology Industry Development Agency (ITIDA) and is located at



Egypt Nanotechnology Center

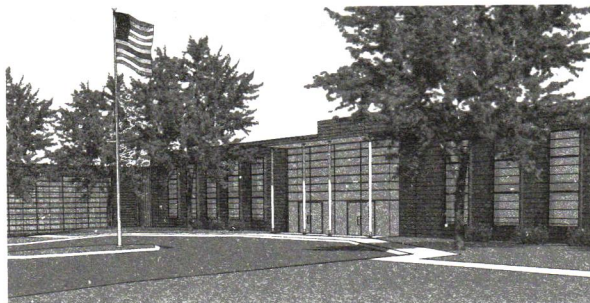
the Cairo University in the El Sheikh City area of Cairo, Egypt. It will be the first major nanotechnology research facility in Egypt and it will be used as a catalyst to spawn future research facilities in the region.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Desmone & Associates

Architects has announced that **Eric A. Booth, AIA**, and **Thea Manos Martin** have become shareholders and appointed associates in the firm.

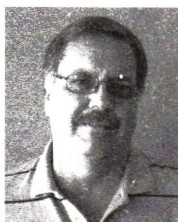
Jim Frye has joined Harchuck Construction, Inc. as a project manager. Frye has 16 years experience in commercial construction. Bob Swearingen has joined Harchuck as an estimator, with 32 years experience in commercial construction. He is a graduate of The Pennsylvania State University. Charles Minnich has been hired as a project superintendent. Minnich brings 29 years experience in commercial construction.



Bayer, Robinson Township, PA



Frye



Swearingen



Vandersluis

Marcel Vandersluis, AIA, joins **Hayes Large's** State College office as senior design architect for the firm. A LEED-accredited professional, he has experience in education and healthcare projects throughout the US, Canada and overseas.

Top international design and architecture firms **Perkins Eastman** and Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects (EEK) have announced that they have agreed to merge their practices. The merger will significantly strengthen both practices and is a natural outgrowth of their respective histories and long mutual respect. The combined international practice will total nearly 600 employees, adding expanded capabilities and client value. The firms will consolidate their New York, Washington, D.C., and China practices.

The AIA-MBA Joint Committee announced the appointment of Steven C. Bishop, senior project manager for

Landau Building Company, to the Joint Committee as a representative of the Master Builders' Association.

KUDOS

Astorino, as the first American architectural firm to design and build within the walls of Vatican City, has contributed materials from its artifact and archival collection to the Senator John Heinz History Center for a concurrent complementary exhibit to Vatican Splendors: A Journey Through Faith and Art, on display through January 9, 2011. The 10,000 sf exhibition presents unique objects illustrating 2,000 years of art, history, and culture.

The CONSOL Energy Center has been awarded LEED Gold certification, making it the first arena in the NHL to reach that standard of sustainability. **Astorino** served as the local presence for Ar-

chitect of Record, Populous of Kansas City. Additionally, the new John G. Rangos Sr. Research Center, which opened in October 2008, has recently been awarded LEED®-NC Silver certification. **Astorino** designed the new state-of-the-art 350,000 sf research laboratory building for the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Three PNC Plaza, also designed by **Astorino**, has achieved LEED Gold certification under the LEED for Core and Shell Rating System.

Blumling & Gusky, LLP has been named one of the top-listed law firms in construction law with Best Lawyers in America and a Pittsburgh Tier 1 firm in construction law with U.S. News & World Report.

The Gateway Engineers, Inc. was recently honored as a 2010 Hot Firm by Zweig-White. This prestigious national designation is given to successful A/E/C consulting firms that have outperformed the economy and competitors.

IDC Architects' design for the Mountbatten Complex, in Southampton UK, won a prestigious Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)



Mountbatten Complex, Southampton UK

Design Award. The project, a 150,000 sf nano technology research facility, houses some of the world's most advanced technology research entities: the Optoelectronics Research Centre (ORC) and the School of Electronics and Computer Science (ECS). The project includes highly technical cleanrooms and laboratories as well as innovative passive/radiant system design for the offices and conferencing facilities, and a green roof. Also, staff from **IDC Architects** won 2 of the 4 awards given for the Civic Minded ideas competition 'Minding the Future of the Civic Arena'. The team of Jeff Murray, **Tony Mustachio, AIA** and Laura Gebhard won 'Distinguished Urban Planning & Land Use Strategy', and Russell Guest won 'Co-distinguished Programming Strategy'.

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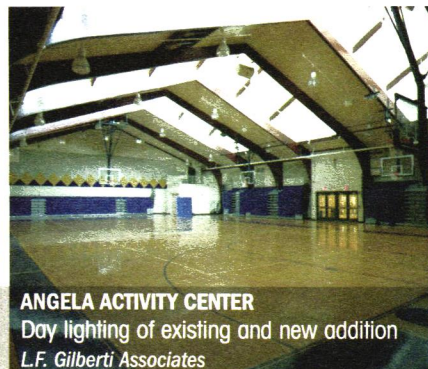




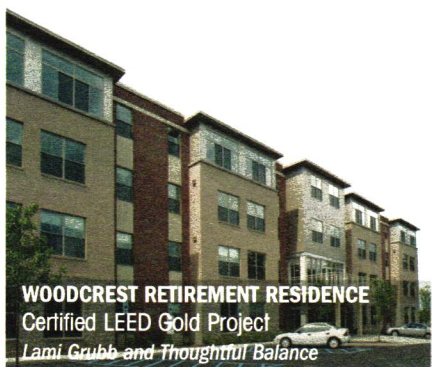
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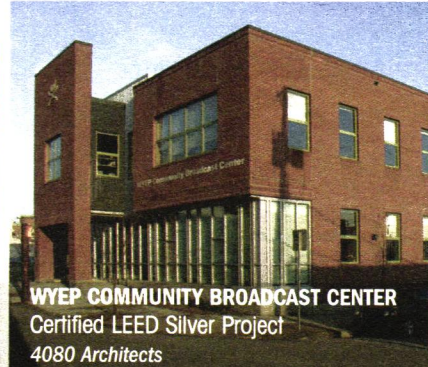
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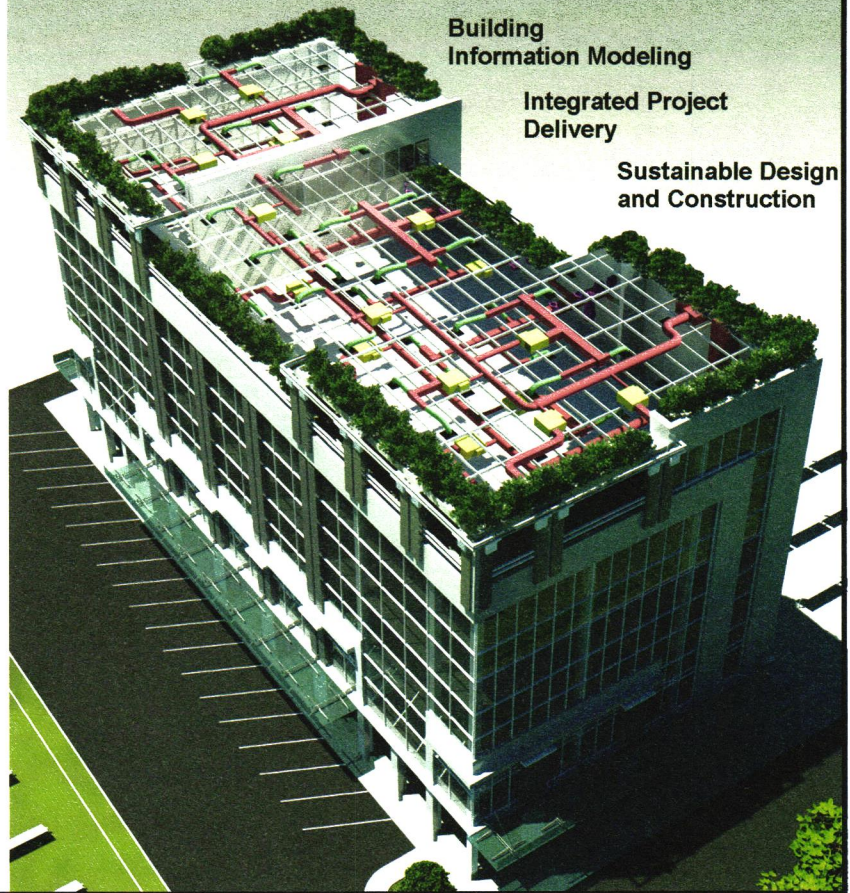


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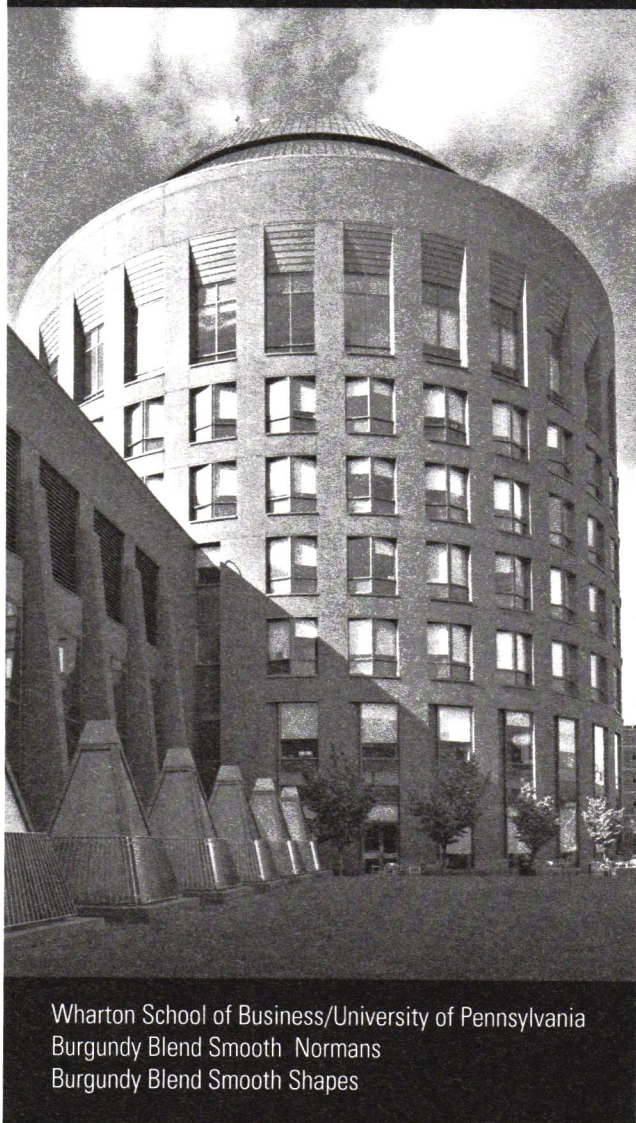
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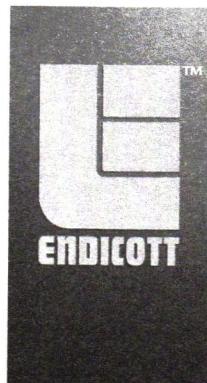
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FROM suburban sprawl TO A sustainable future

Volunteers come together to find solutions for the Route 51 corridor.

BY COURTNEY PATTERSON

On more than one occasion, my father has been known to have wandering eyes. On road trips, his gaze is tempted by the world outside the car – buildings, towns, and farmland stretching far into the distance. His swerving prompts my mother to clasp the car door and snap him back to interstate reality: “Steven, watch the road.” My parents are not from Pennsylvania, but I imagine that if my father were to drive along Route 51 he would find it fairly easy to heed my mother’s words of caution.



South of the Liberty Tunnels, Route 51 stretches about 16 miles from Pittsburgh to Elizabeth, intersecting 7 municipalities. Alternatively called Saw Mill Run Blvd., it is the main artery through the South Hills, shuffling thousands of commuters to and from the city each day. Lining the roadway are dilapidated buildings, car lots and contractor yards, strip malls and crumbling sidewalks. Cars speed along, slowing abruptly to turn into strip malls that sit dangerously close to the street. It is a road that raises your blood pressure and encourages you to hurry to your destination. Whether you want to call it a traffic nightmare, a concrete desert, or just another case of suburban sprawl, one thing is certain: Route 51 could use an intervention.

“We all recognize the problems, because we’ve been talking about them for so long,” said Natalia Rudiak, Pittsburgh City Council Representative for District 4. Those problems – traffic congestion, flooding, and blight – have prompted at least a dozen feasibility studies over the years to assess redevelopment opportunities. Ruthann Omer, president of The Gateway Engineers, Inc. who has been involved in efforts to improve the Route 51 corridor for over 20 years, said that the municipalities have been trying to tackle these issues for years, but plans have been too individualized to yield any concrete actions.

“For so long everyone just looked to PennDOT, who owns the roads, but the issues are greater than just traffic. There is also strength in numbers, and individually it is difficult to get funding. Combined we stand a much better chance,” she said.

GETTING AIA ON BOARD

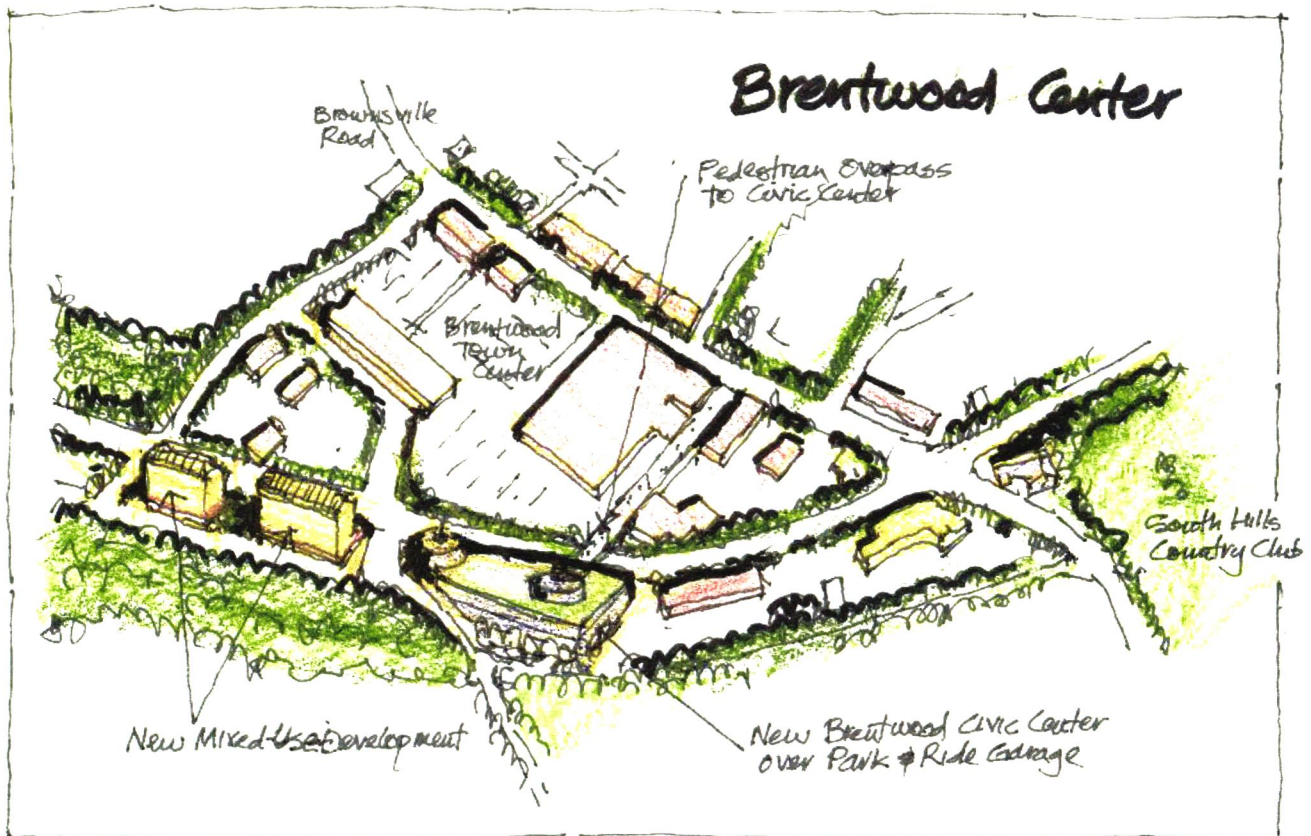
Realizing they would need to treat the corridor as one whole instead of individual pieces, the municipalities formed a steering committee, comprised of representatives from each community, to develop a multi-municipal plan to guide future planning. Taking their collaboration a step further, they applied to receive assistance from AIA's Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) a year ago.

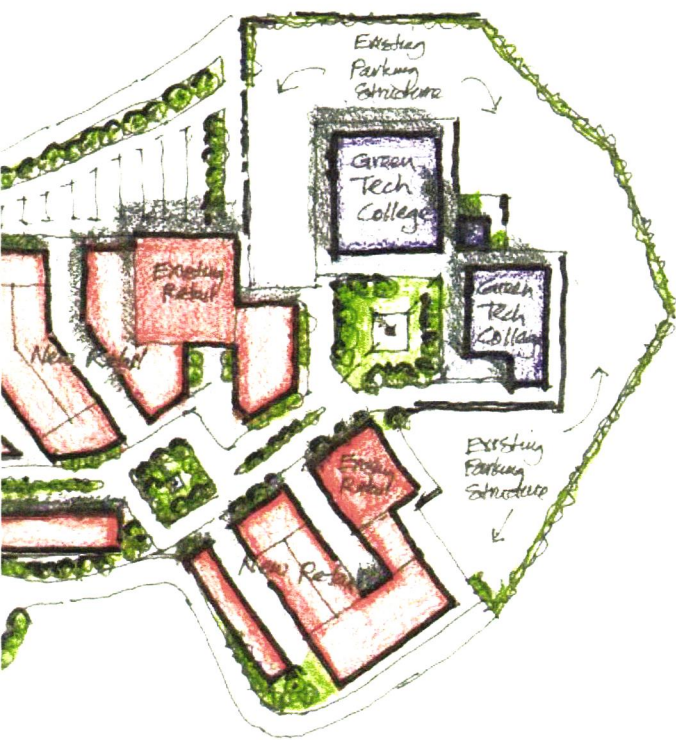
Omer pitched Route 51's laundry list of challenges to AIA Pittsburgh's Anne Swager, Hon. AIA. She said she was interested in receiving input from "people who have no connection to the municipalities, who could create an overall plan to start to make a difference along Route 51." Coincidentally, only a few weeks before Omer's pitch, Swager had received a call from a local architect, Jen Bee, AIA, LEED AP, who had learned about the SDAT and wanted to find a community in Pittsburgh that could benefit from the program. Swager connected Omer and Bee, and the two collaborated with John Slater, chair of Economic Development South, to submit a formal application to AIA.

Since 2005, AIA's Center for Communities by Design has assisted communities with planning for long-term sustainability through its SDAT program. The AIA funds over 80 percent of the costs of each project, making the program accessible for any community, said Joel Mills, director of the Center for Communities by Design. Communities are selected by a jury and assigned a team of experts, including planners, architects, transportation experts, environmental specialists, and engineers who volunteer their time and expertise. Since 2005, 46 communities across the country have participated in the program.

Mills said, "The Route 51 Corridor was selected for 2010 because the municipalities along the corridor demonstrated a genuine interest in working together to realize a common vision for the future of the corridor, and we felt the AIA's team could assist in providing tangible direction and recommendations for the future."

Wayne Feiden, who served as the SDAT Leader on this project and previously volunteered on 12 teams, agrees that a commitment to work together is an important first step to





ward re-envisioning the corridor. “The risk in places like this is that SDAT comes in seeing it as one project but residents see it as 7 different projects, because they’re from 7 different towns. That’s not what we saw here. We saw that the Route 51 communities were looking at overall solutions. Obviously, they were most interested in their backyard but we heard people from every single town talking about what the entire corridor needed.”

THE TEAM COMES TO TOWN

Feiden and the other five SDAT members visited Pittsburgh for three days in early October to tour the corridor, meet with local stakeholders, and present their recommendations for revitalizing Route 51. For several months leading up to the visit, the team had been working with local architects from the Unemployed Architects group, who helped familiarize the outsiders with the corridor by gathering photos, creating a digital informational map of the area, preparing summaries of previous studies on the individual municipalities, and pointing out primary points that needed attention. The architects continued to work closely with the team during their visit, preparing sketches for the final presentation.

On the first night of their visit, the SDAT held a town hall meeting at Baldwin-Whitehall

High School with approximately 50 attendees, including property owners, town officials, and residents representing each of the communities. Pointing to a map, the team guided people through a virtual tour of the corridor, starting at the Liberty Tunnel. Feiden recalls, “We asked people to consider where the character of the area changes, and how does it change? What has been accomplished, and what would you like to see for that area? What are your hopes and dreams for the corridor?”

“In many cases, residents just didn’t know what they could do,” said Bee. “There were a couple communities that would love to have a town center like Brentwood and more access to public transit. They want to have an identity along the corridor. They pride themselves on having a walkable community, but that ends at the corridor.”

The team also met in small groups with representatives from PennDOT, Port Authority, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC), Economic Development South, elected officials from the seven municipalities, and the City of Pittsburgh Planning Department. Their conversations culminated in a final presentation to stakeholders on October 7th, where they shared their findings and recommendations, which focused on creating green infrastructure, improving transit, concentrating development at “nodes”, and facilitating partnerships.

GREENING THE CORRIDOR

Before the SDAT got involved, the WPC had been working with the Route 51 communities to develop a scope of work for greening the corridor. Judy Wagner, Senior Director of Community Gardens and Greenspace at the WPC said they would take their cue from the SDAT and help move the process along, for instance, by developing sample cost packages for planting trees along the corridor, and helping to promote the idea of green infrastructure in the communities.

“One thing that struck me by having watched this process,” Wagner said, “is that the team looked at the corridor as a braided together system with all of its components instead of looking at it town-by-town or even road versus

transit versus creek versus hillside. That's different from doing a transportation study of the corridor, or a storm water study, or a parking or land use study, or a business marketing study. It's really pushing people to see the system differently. That's helpful to people who need to see the whole in order to figure out which piece they want to take on and move with. It helps people be a little more patient if they can see the whole big benefit."

Examining the site through a whole systems lens, the SDAT explained how design could address one of the corridor's major issues: flooding. Route 51 cuts through a floodplain that should naturally capture and retain water, said Wagner. However, a substantial area of that floodplain has been paved, forcing water to run off and overflow the storm drain system. The team encouraged Route 51 stakeholders to consider how the road could be redesigned to fulfill the dual purpose of improving storm water retention and water quality. For instance, planting rain gardens alongside the road is one cost-effective strategy they suggested for managing storm water runoff and filtering the water.

CHOOSING LOW HANGING FRUIT

Solutions are an easy sell if people know they can experience the benefits immediately instead of 20 years out, said Feiden. The SDAT encouraged the Route 51 communities to prioritize projects, first implementing "low hanging fruit" - projects they can move along quickly, such as planting trees, painting building facades, and changing the zoning ordinances - projects that will in effect build momentum for bigger apples like reconfiguring the roads.

At least two communities, Brentwood and Jefferson Hills, plan to modify their zoning ordinances as a result of the SDAT. Upon examining the zoning regulations, the team noticed discrepancies; for instance, the zoning ordinance permits multi-story units and businesses yet limits the amount of square feet per business, thus making single-story buildings the most feasible option. Because

each of the 7 municipalities has a different zoning ordinance, the SDAT suggested the creation of a single overlay zone to streamline the corridor and attract more diverse development.

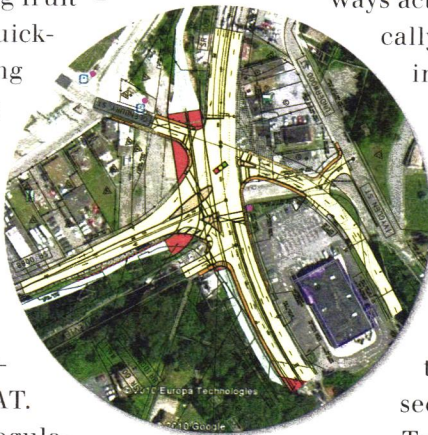
As another quick fix, the SDAT recommended that the Port Authority lower bus fares for riders who use the Park and Ride lots in outlying boroughs, such as Jefferson Hills and Elizabeth. Allen Cohen, Planning and Zoning Officer for Jefferson Hills, explained that the parking lot is underutilized, because riders would rather save \$.75 per ride by catching a bus at a Zone 1 stop closer to the city instead of paying the Zone 2 fare in Jefferson Hills. Enacting a single-zone fare for those who use the Park & Rides could increase ridership and ease some of the traffic congestion.

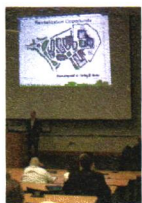
CONNECTING PEOPLE TO PUBLIC TRANSIT

Transit improvements were, not surprisingly, a big focus of the study. Feiden illustrated the inefficiency of Route 51: "Imagine a fire hose. A fire hose can carry an unbelievable amount of water, but as soon as you start putting a few pin pricks in it, the water starts pouring out of the hose, and the hose's capacity to carry water drops dramatically. In the same way, when cars are flowing and none are turning, a one lane road can carry probably 30,000 or 35,000 cars in one direction each day. But turns and driveways act like leaks in the hose, dramatically reducing the road's capacity, increasing the likelihood for accidents and making the travel experience less enjoyable."

The SDAT recommended closing some of the curb cuts and entrance roads that interrupt the traffic flow and creating roundabouts to improve the safety and efficiency of intersections.

To encourage greater use of mass transit, the SDAT recommended transit-oriented development (TOD), building up density around the busway and light rail stops. For instance, at the interchange between Routes 51 and 88, a TOD might include a Park and Ride





lot, a main street with mixed-use development, a roundabout on 88, and an extended busway.

EMPHASIZING THE CHARACTER OF EACH COMMUNITY

The TOD at 51 and 88 is one example of a “node” that would concentrate development at a strategic point, helping to counteract the homogenous strip development that runs the length of the corridor. Many stakeholders observed the visual divide between Route 51 and the adjacent communities; tucked behind the corridor’s degraded landscape are more attractive neighborhood streets. Route 51 would better reflect the character of each community with new streetscapes, featuring elements like planting strips along the curb, sidewalks, bicycle parking, and crossing islands for pedestrians. Additional signage and decorative gateways could signify to commuters when they are leaving one community and entering the next.


“A lot of people said they like Brentwood Center. It’s the strongest node in the corridor now,” remarked Feiden. “Even though they didn’t use the term “node”, we’ve heard a lot of people saying that what they’ve wanted is to mimic the most successful node that is already there.”

The SDAT suggested that Brentwood create a pedestrian bridge over 51, linking Brentwood Town Square with a new civic center, so resi-

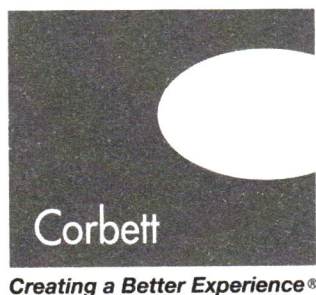
dents would have better access to businesses and housing on the other side of 51. Greening strategies might be used to draw attention to the pathway.

WORKING TOWARD CONSENSUS AND MOVING FORWARD

The SDAT said they would share a full report summarizing their recommendations for the corridor by the end of the year. According to Omer, the steering committee intends to review the report, form committees, and plan additional meetings with the Port Authority, PennDOT, the municipalities, and the public to work toward consensus. John Slater, Chairman of Economic Development South, said the organization is looking to hire a full-time executive director, who will help identify funding sources for the project.

As the past 50 years demonstrate, Pittsburgh has a good track record for reinventing itself, Feiden pointed out. “A strong sense of identity is part of what makes Pittsburgh a great city. So the question is ‘why do we give our cities a strong sense of identity but not do it for our suburbs and not do it for our highway strips?’ It’s the same basic principle.” If the SDAT’s recommendations are realized, the transformed landscape may entice passersby to do more than rush through the corridor; Route 51 may become a destination. 

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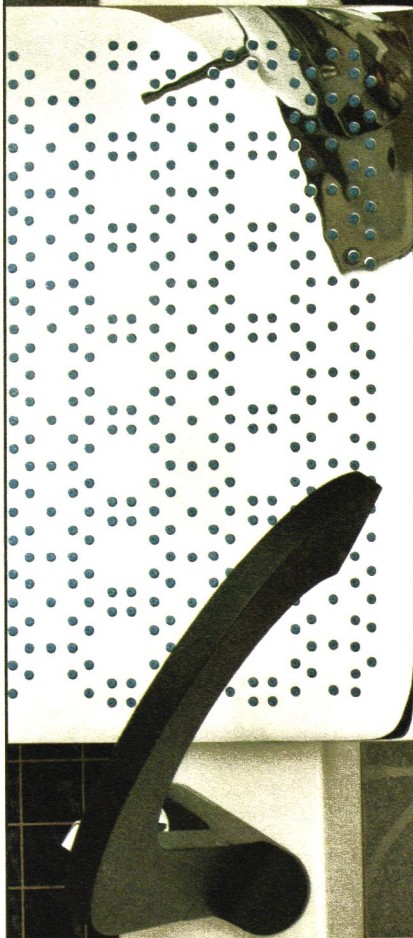
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