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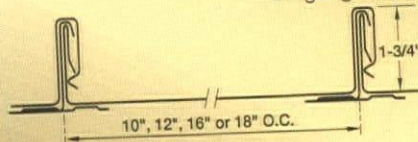
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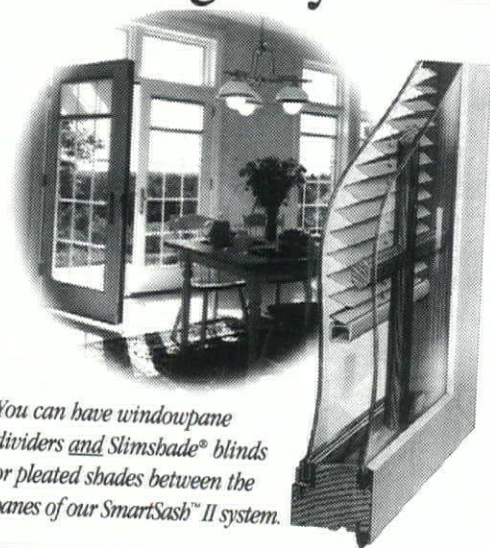


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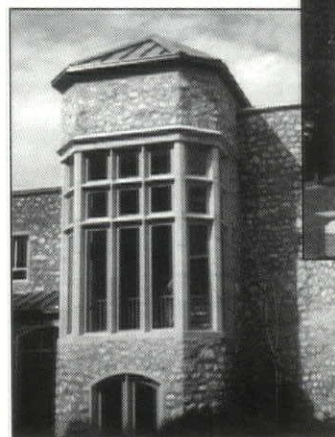
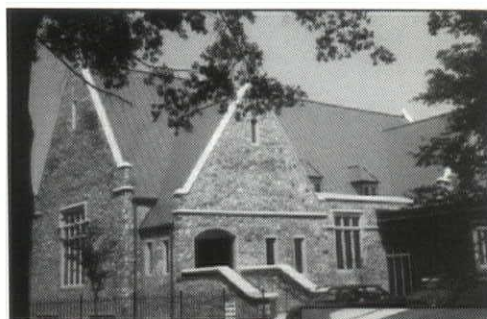
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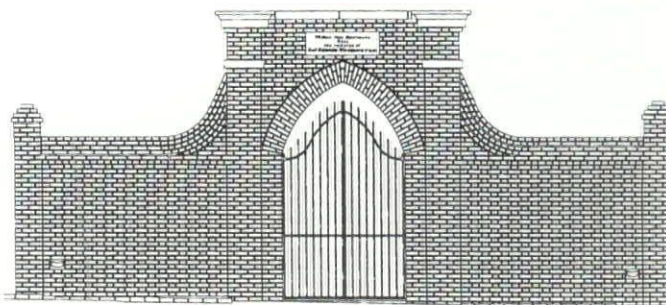
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volume nine number one

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## Finding Fulfillment in the Public Sector

Although they sometimes toil in relative obscurity, architects who choose to ply their trade in government agencies generate an astounding range of accomplishments – all in the name of the greater public good. *By Michael Pretzer*

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## Corporate Merger

When the rapidly expanding operations of Wheat First Union called for an addition to its suburban offices, SMBW Architects of Richmond arranged a fitting marriage between the existing building and its handsome new partner. *By Vernon Mays*

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## Taking Note

doing the small thing well



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Wheat Innsbrook Center II.  
Photo by Lee Brauer.

In our next issue:  
Residential Design



# if the Shoe Fits

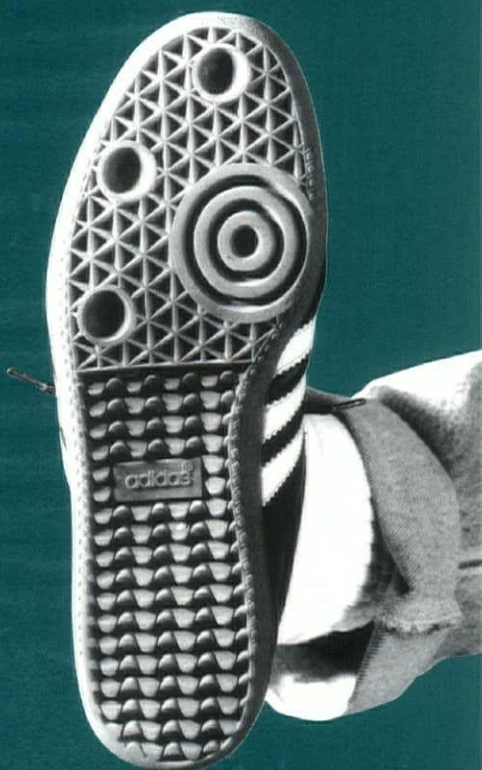
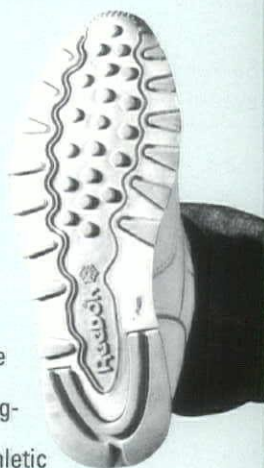


Dunay says overscaled photos of the soles of athletic shoes, seen here at Virginia Tech's Perspective Gallery, forced a new relationship between the viewer and the viewed.

Sometimes design can be discovered where you least expect it, if you only take the trouble to look. Robert Dunay, AIA, associate dean at Virginia Tech's College of Architecture and Urban Studies, followed the advice of painter Georges Braque, who said, "Look for points in common which are not points of similarity." Exploiting the abstracting power of photography, Dunay compiled a series of photographs of the soles of athletic shoes that appeared last fall in an exhibit titled "Ordinary" at Virginia Tech's Perspective Gallery.

"Athletic footwear is a product which markets both distinction and conformance," Dunay wrote in the introductory text.

"A simultaneous sign of belonging to one's group, it also stands as a symbol of leadership and singularity in the standards of street-wise fashion. Arguably the most pervasive product of mass culture, the sneaker has surpassed blue jeans in the transcendence of cultural boundaries. It is likely to be part of the apparel of almost anyone. The difference, seen from the common perspective of the top view, reveals conditions ranging from spiffy clean to worn and tattered. It is from this view that interpretations and meanings regarding the wearer are often conjectured. However, seen from below, the image of differentiating social values melts away to be reassembled as an alternative apparatus of perception. It is a world of hidden design that contacts the earth with each step. Here, on the bottom at neutral ground, beyond interpretation, in ethically safe territory, we find *diamonds on the soles of shoes*.





# Beantown Treasures of the Arts and Crafts Movement

In a poem about the art of poetry, Archibald Macleish wrote, "A poem should not mean, but be." This simple, eloquent statement seems an apt metaphor for the charming exhibition, "Inspiring Reform: Boston's Arts and Crafts Movement," which presents 145 objects – paintings, prints, pottery, textiles, photographs, jewelry, furniture, books, and silver among them – in the comfortable surroundings of the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C.

What's especially nice in these high-ceilinged rooms are the surprises each of the dozen sections provides – some homely, some exquisite, some merely astonishing. They include Arthur W. Dow's serene woodcut, "Bend of a River"; Frank Gardner Hale's stunning wirework necklace and pendant; Sarah Choate Sears's unforgettable platinum print photograph of her daughter, Helen; the Grueby Faience Company's Oxen cart mantelpiece of three stoneware tiles; Wallace Nutting's ornate Parmenter-Sudbury cupboard; and Arthur J. Stone and Herbert Taylor's exquisite paired silver altar pieces.

The works on display have been judiciously chosen to reflect the high standards of Boston's late-19th century forays into the Arts and Crafts Movement. Bostonians, of course, have long thought of themselves as something special. With bragging rights as "the Hub of the Universe," home to one of America's great natural harbors, and birthplace of such figures as Benjamin Franklin, Paul Revere, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edgar Allan Poe, and Winslow Homer, Boston has a long and distinguished place in American cultural history. Yet in the last three decades of the 19th century, with the country licking its wounds from the Civil War, New Englanders turned once again to Old England as a source of artistic inspiration.

Emerson had railed against America's reliance on Old World models half a century earlier – "We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe," he carped in his 1836 book *Nature*. – but Americans, like their English counterparts, were in the midst of massive cultural changes wrought in part by the Industrial Revolution. Like the English, they turned back to earlier/ancient models that accentuated aesthetic beauty and utilitarianism at the same time.

By 1888, some 40-odd years after the Arts and Crafts Movement had begun in England, a group of architects, artists, social reformers, and artisans established the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society in England to unite their efforts. These efforts reverberated across the Atlantic and found staunch supporters in Boston, whose close ties to England and support for education and the arts made it the epicenter for the movement in America. A literary city before the Civil War, Boston shifted its cultural focus toward increasingly visual forms of expression by the end of the century with the establishment of the Museum of Fine Arts and its affiliated art schools.

The movement took its own character in Boston. The city blended the spirit of the English movement with an interest in its own Colonial past that helped spark the Colonial revival in American architecture and design. The works in the exhibition also reflect influences from the Gothic revival, Celtic and Renaissance design, and a fascination with Japanese arts.

"Inspiring Reform" celebrates the centennial of The Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston, the nation's first and still-flourishing major Arts and Crafts organization. But don't be

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put off by the exhibition's title, which sounds a bit more pretentious than it really is. For at the time, serious ideas were in the air, and they were not solely the domain of professors at Harvard and MIT. Socialism, for example, which had vocal adherents in Europe and America, was widely debated as social justice, state's rights, and women's suffrage were seen as issues that democracy had not adequately addressed or resolved.

Reform was very much on the minds of the movers and shakers in the political arena and, as the exhibition demonstrates, of those who worked in studios and small shops. They included photographers, printers, sculptors, toymakers, cement workers, architects, and painters – many of whom plied a trade rather than a profession and, as such, were not attuned to the intellectual aspects of the movement.

This is not to suggest that there are not academic underpinnings to this modest exhibition. Indeed, the unusually handsome exhibition catalogue (distributed by Harry N. Abrams) quickly dispels that notion with scholarly essays, biographical sketches of the better-known

and unknown figures represented here, a plethora of illustrations printed on high-grade paper, and copious notes adorning the edges of the text. It is, in its own right, exemplary of the objects on display – thoughtfully designed and a genuine pleasure to behold.

In parallel fashion, there is something especially apt in housing this show

in the Renwick Gallery, which in its original incarnation was home to William Corcoran's art collection and became Washington's first art museum. Not only does "Inspiring Reform" wear well here, but the building is of a piece with what the exhibition strives to demonstrate – namely, that a democracy can produce objects which are both beautiful and useful.

As the Boston arts and crafts society's 1897 statement of purpose read, the Society "endeavors to stimulate in Workmen an appreciation of the dignity and value of good design ... [and to insist upon] the necessity of due regard for the relation between the form of an object and its use." Indeed, it's not too great a stretch to imagine Henry James walking arm-in-arm with Mrs. Wharton up the steps of Corcoran's splendid French Second Empire style townhouse to see just what their countrymen were up to artistically.

– Douglas McCreary Greenwood



Silver altar vases made in 1915  
by Arthur J. Stone and Herbert Taylor.

"Inspiring Reform: Boston's Arts and Crafts Movement" will be on view at the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C., through July 5. For information, call 202-633-8998.

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# Finding Fulfillment

*Although they toil in relative obscurity, architects who choose to ply their trade in government agencies generate an astounding range of accomplishments – all in the name of the public good.*

10

By Michael Pretzer

**F**rank Gehry. Michael Graves. Cesar Pelli. Philip Johnson. I.M. Pei. Ed Feiner. Pick the name of the most famous contemporary architect employed full-time by government. It's not hard. The name is the one you probably don't recognize.

Edward Feiner, FAIA, is the chief architect of the General Services Administration, the federal agency often described as the government's landlord. He is arguably top dog among the architects who work in the public sector. Since joining GSA in 1981, Feiner has unrelentingly campaigned for better design in government buildings. He has initiated a grand program to build or expand 169 federal courthouses at a cost of \$8 billion. He has restructured the awarding of commissions – the Design Excellence Program, he calls the process – so that distinguished architects are more willing to submit proposals for federal projects. He is, according to one writer, "Uncle Sam's design conscience."

Yet Feiner isn't widely known, because he plies his trade in the least glamorous segment of the architecture profession. To work in the public sector, at any level of government, is to toil in relative obscurity.

To a large degree, the nature of public sector work hides the hand of government architects. More often than not, they are facilitators rather than designers; their role in the creative process is performed backstage. The signature on the award-winning federal courthouse in Phoenix, for example, belongs to Richard

Meier, not Ed Feiner. Likewise, new public buildings across the Commonwealth bear the stamp of the private-sector architects who design them, rather than the publicly employed architects who oversee the process.

As a general rule, government architects don't design. "If your thing is to design on the drafting board, you may find you're a fish out of water in the federal government," says Terrel Emmons, FAIA, who is chief architect and associate director for engineering at the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, chair of the American Institute of Architects' committee on Public Architects, and a 27-year veteran of the federal government. "I don't think I was ever a good designer, and I would have been miserable if I'd worked in a traditional design practice."

There was a time when most federal agencies had design staffs, Emmons recalls. But that time is fading – if not completely gone – as the government farms out more design work and lets agency staffs shrink. "Today, the opportunity to do in-house design is small," he says.

Design opportunities are more likely to be found at universities and colleges and in state and local governments, where the force of a personality can shape the dimensions of a job. When Lou Ann Purkins, AIA, assumed her position eight years ago as the architect for Prince William County's department of public works, designing was not in her job description. But Purkins was coming from the University of Virginia, where she'd been involved in the design of numerous projects. She wasn't ready to let go of design responsibility, so she gradually expanded her county duties. To date, she has designed and overseen construction of three structures – two homeless shelters and a group home for juveniles. More projects are in the works.

But if these civil servants don't design, what do they do? Public sector architects represent and advocate on behalf of clients, which may include government agencies and institutions,



# in the Public Sector

branches of the military, elected officials—even the public at large. “We are intermediaries for the ultimate customer,” says Emmons. “But the customer can have many faces. If we are to build a medical clinic on a military base, for example, the doctors who run the clinic are our customers. But so are the people who run the base’s operations, the people who maintain the base, and various levels of command that may carry all the way to Washington.”

For a public sector architect, the most likely tasks include jobs such as assessing needs, selecting sites, developing building programs, and estimating costs. Sometimes the duties involve making presentations to Congress, state review boards, city councils, or other elected bodies. The public architect’s role often includes selection of architecture and engineering firms and evaluation of building contractors. Invariably, the government architect also functions as project manager.

Other duties can be just plain quirky. Mary Buchanan, AIA, the director of facilities planning and development at John Tyler Community College in Chesterfield County, is busy these days planning the college’s second campus near Midlothian, which is to have 90,000 square feet of built space. She’s also responsible for the repair of leaky roofs, because the superintendent of buildings and grounds reports to her.

At any one time, Bill Smith, AIA, the deputy director of general services for Henrico County, has between \$30 million and \$40 million worth of construction in the works. Yet he also supervises a 23-person security force. Why? Because the guards monitor the county’s buildings and report structural and maintenance problems to Smith’s office. “It’s something of a strange interface,” he admits.

Ellen Harland, AIA, the architect for the U.S. Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division, Disabilities Rights Section, says her whole job is weird—and fascinating. “I work with a bunch of lawyers,” she explains. “We talk about civil rights legislation and buildings in the same sentence.”

Harland’s assignment for the past six years has been to explain the intricacies of the Americans with Disabilities Act. She routinely confers with lawyers and architects and frequently speaks at public meetings across the country. She’s not directly involved in design or construction, although for 32 of her 42 years in the profession she ran a traditional solo practice in Santa Fe, New Mexico. “If you’d told me 10 years ago that I’d be a bureau-

crat, I’d have laughed in your face,” she says. “But I don’t miss being a ‘designing woman.’ I’m much more satisfied now than in private practice, as good as it was.”

For those who choose this professional path, the rewards vary. Hard as it may be to believe, some architects derive satisfaction from the unraveling of red tape. “I’m able to guide architects through the labyrinthine bureaucracy,” says Al Cox, the City of Alexandria’s staff architect and a former partner in a traditional practice in Texas. “I enjoy it because I know what it’s like to be on the other side.”

More frequently, job satisfaction for these architects comes from the opportunity to work on a wide variety of projects. “I like the broad client base,” says Smith. “There are many agencies and people I help, and most of them wouldn’t otherwise think in architectural terms.”

Emmons, for one, has helped create new military bases, testified before Congress, and negotiated NATO facilities with high-ranking foreign officials. “When I tell people about some of the projects I’ve been involved with, their mouths drop,” he asserts.

The extrinsic rewards of public service are steady, but limited. No one is going to amass a fortune. On the other hand, lack of wealth doesn’t seem to be a source of dissatisfaction for those who were interviewed. At the federal level, starting architects are likely to earn more than their counterparts in private practice, according to Emmons. “As you advance, however, salaries even out. And in government, you’re going to top out at \$110,000, though there are few jobs over \$100,000. A principal in a medium or large firm makes more than that.”

Cox took a 15 to 20 percent cut in income when he quit traditional practice. “But per hour, I earn more,” he adds.

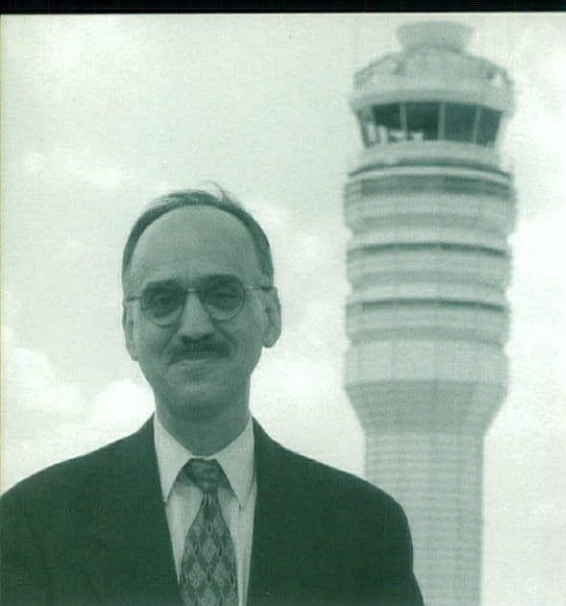
About a third of the architectural work in the United States is performed for federal, state, or local government clients, according to Emmons. Ten percent, or roughly \$50 billion annually, is done for federal agencies. It’s to the profession’s advantage to have public sector architects representing those government clients, argues Emmons. “You want someone at the negotiating table who understands what it takes to design and construct a building,” he says. “You don’t want a bean counter who doesn’t understand the nature of the work.”

Henrico County’s Smith looks at it from a slightly different perspective. Good public sector architects push the profession to higher achievement, he says, proudly driving home his point by recalling the time a consulting architect complained that Henrico County was the consultant’s toughest client. Because the county’s expectations are so high, explained the architect, he felt constantly challenged.

That seems to indicate that, in some way or another, Ed Feiner’s push for design excellence on the national stage can be applied with success at every level of government.

*Michael Pretzer is a freelance writer based in Washington, D.C.*

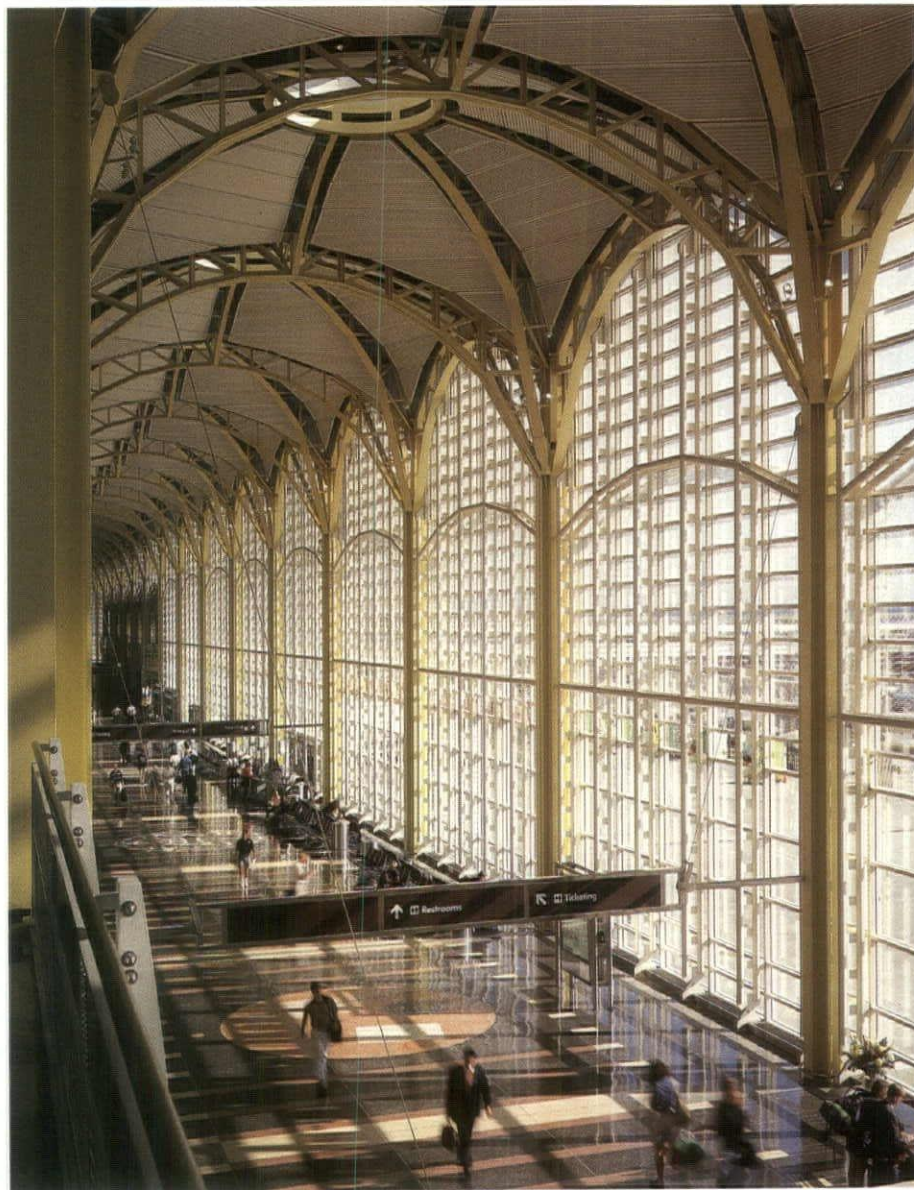




Karen deWysocki

**Feil was the point man on the National Airport expansion.**

# Take-Off and Landing



**Even the soaring windows that Pelli used to offer views of the runways and the monuments of Washington, D.C., incorporate colorful bands of art glass.**

12

**S**oon after Daniel Feil, FAIA, the senior staff architect for the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, received a degree in architecture, he left his native New York City for a career in the federal government. The road to Washington wasn't heavily traveled by architects in the 1970s, admits Feil. "The choice was not chic."

For nearly 15 years, Feil worked for the U.S. Naval Facilities Engineering Command, where he was a project and program manager. In 1985, he decided to move to a federal job where he would be involved in architectural work at Dulles International Airport and what was then known as Washington National Airport—even though the job came with a warning. In the near future, Feil was told, the airports might be transferred out of the hands of the Federal Aviation Administration. He could wind up working outside the federal government.

Feil was delighted. Not that he was unhappy with his longtime employer, but he knew that the airports' budgets would be a mere line item in the federal budget and their potential would go unrealized so long as the FAA oversaw them.

A year after Feil went to work for the airports, a regional organization with only limited ties to the federal government was created and given operating responsibility. The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority soon issued bonds and embarked on a massive capital improvements plan that includes construction at both airports. The projects

are so large and varied that the architectural responsibilities had to be divided between Feil and a colleague. Feil was given the task of managing \$1 billion of restoration and new construction at National, which was rededicated in February as Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

By all accounts Feil has taken the role of staff architect to new heights. He's the design project manager for all terminal projects and has final design approval for

the architectural aspects of all other airport projects. He defines the airport's facility needs, then works with architecture and engineering firms to make sure those needs are satisfied. He officially represents the airports authority to Congress, to federal, state, and regional agencies, and to the public, the media, and professional organizations. He has established selection and review processes that have become models for federal agencies. Under Feil's oversight, more than 27



## Art for the Traveler

projects have been planned, designed, or constructed – the most notable being the new terminal unveiled at National. Among many things, Feil is credited with the creation of the detailed specifications and architects-of-record review procedure that guided the development of the highly praised terminal.

Designed by AIA Gold Medalist Cesar Pelli, the 35-gate terminal has a 54-foot tall glass wall that provides a panoramic view of planes arriving and departing against the backdrop of the federal city. Feil's responsibilities on the project were varied and complex. "Part of my job is to represent the client – in this case, that included the authority, the airlines, the airport workers, and the public – to the design team," says Feil. "And I related the thoughts of the design team back to the client."

Feil's work began long before Pelli's firm was selected. "One of my first jobs was to find out what level of design the authority wanted. You can't push design if no one above you wants it."

The airports authority wanted it. Feil recalls asking the agency's directors if they were looking for design with a big or a little D. "Big D," they replied. Then he asked where the level of design should fall on a scale of one to 10 – with 10 being represented by the National Gallery's East Building and the restored Union Station. The board said the design should rate an eight-and-a-half, though many would say the outcome scores higher.

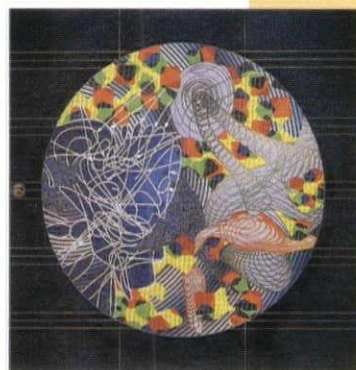
One aspect of the terminal that makes Feil particularly proud is the so-called "architectural enhancement program." The initiative, which involved a collaboration among Pelli and a bevy of artists and artisans, led to 30 art works being integrated into the terminal (see article at right). The program's structure, which Feil planned and initiated, has become a prototype for the procurement of art for federal buildings.

While the high-profile terminal is a milestone in Feil's career, it is hardly his final project. His never-ending job is "to bring a balanced and cohesive architectural approach to the entire 860-acre airport campus" and his next project is to restore the original 1941 terminal at National, which thanks to Feil is on the National Register of Historic Places. "The nice thing about airports," he quips, "is that they are never done."

—Michael Pretzer



**Art at the airport includes floor medallions by Joyce Kozloff (above) and Frank Stella (below); a trellis sculpture by Kent Bloomer (right); and mural by William Jacklin in the Metro bridge well (bottom).**



Collaboration between architects and other visual artists is as old as architecture itself, but the practice has almost been lost in recent years, says architect Cesar Pelli. "The ideology of Modernism made this collaboration difficult, if not impossible," he adds, which is why Pelli saw the merging of art in the National Airport terminal as a serious effort to reconnect the arts in today's terms.

Public art is political hot potato, so extreme care was taken in structuring the selection process to distinguish it from other public art programs, says Daniel Feil, FAIA, the airports authority's project manager. For starters, he insisted on calling it an "architectural enhancement program" to avoid confusion with other government "percent for art" programs. Feil studied historical alliances of painters, sculptors, artisans, and architects to gain more insight into collaborations that run across artistic disciplines. Successes at Rockefeller Center in New York City and Union Station in St. Louis were important points of reference. To avoid the problems experienced at other sites, Feil teamed some of the artists with artisan collaborators who understood architectural materials and methods. This ensured the work's budget compliance, durability, safety, and appropriateness for installation by a contractor. "Proposals were carefully reviewed during the earliest phases of design and these concepts were further explored in models and drawings," says Pelli.

Thirty works by renowned contemporary artists were commissioned, and "each piece is organic to the building," says Pelli. They have been executed in a variety of materials, including stained glass, marble, terrazzo, cast bronze, hammered aluminum and copper, painted steel, porcelain enamel, and painted board and canvas. By not assigning the selection of artists to a committee – a direction some perceive as the sure route to "safe" art – Feil and Pelli believe they were able to attract some of the best talent in the country. Feil relates that Al Held, one of the glass artists they selected, later came to him and said: "This is not airport art – and that's a compliment."

—Vernon Mays





# Writing the Book on Preservation

## 31 PRESERVATION BRIEFS

Minibuilding Historic Buildings  
Sharon C. Park, AIA



After nearly 20 years as a staff architect at the National Park Service, Sharon Collins Park, FAIA, still says enthusiastically: "I love what I do." And Park has good reason to be happy these days. In April she was promoted to chief of technical preservation services, making her the highest ranking woman architect in the park service. But when asked about her role in the Washington, D.C., offices of NPS's Heritage Preservation Services division, she hastens to point out that "we are broader than the national parks."



Prakash Patel

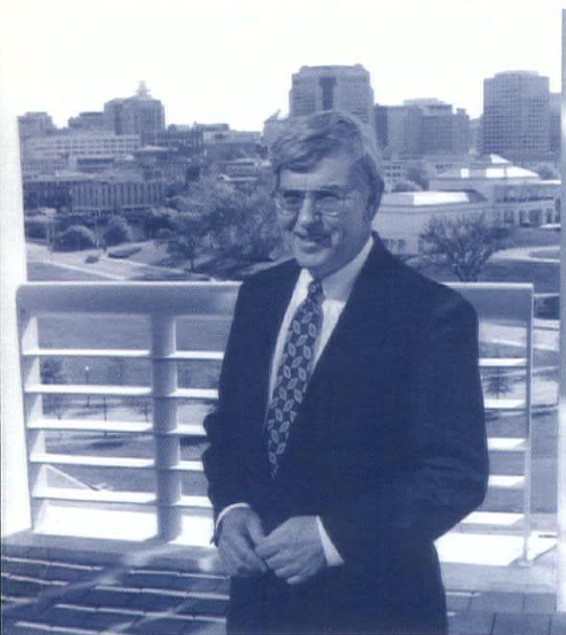
Park on the steps of the Tariff Building, soon to be a luxury hotel in Washington, D.C.

Park is primarily concerned with the care and protection of historic buildings, no matter who happens to own them. In addition to serving as an information resource for federal, state, and local governments, she is centrally involved in the generation of detailed reports on preservation technology and regularly reviews preservation projects for compliance with federal tax credit guidelines.

Over time, her role has evolved into being one of the park service's resident scribes. Park's office wrote the chapter on historic preservation in "Architectural Graphic Standards," one of the bibles of the profession. She has contributed to numerous books on historic materials. And she often takes the lead in the "Preservation Briefs" published by the park service; her writing has dealt with topics that range from reducing lead paint hazards to controlling unwanted moisture. She insists she won't cover a

## Housing the Many

### Across Virginia



Tom Kojcsich

Washington is passionate about VHDA's mission to provide affordable housing.

Growing up around Clemson University, where his father was dean of education, Robert E. Washington, AIA, found himself drawn to the tinkering and drawing that architecture students did. "I had an early fascination with architecture," he says, and he proved it by leaving high school a year early to enter Clemson's five-year program.

Today Washington is deputy executive director of the Virginia Housing Development Authority, the highest-rated housing finance authority in the nation with \$6 billion in assets. Its mission is to help low- and moderate-income Virginians obtain safe and decent housing they might otherwise be unable to afford. "I'm passionate about that mission," he says.

Though he has been at VHDA only since 1991, Washington has a history with

the authority that dates back to its roots. In his first campaign for the state House of Delegates in 1971, Washington underscored the need for such an authority. He won the election and VHDA – which is not officially a state agency, but a public mortgage finance company – was established during his first term. A survey done at the time showed one-third of state housing was substandard. "That was a time of great ferment," Washington says. "Great changes were accepted."

While it would be more than two decades before he was hired by VHDA, Washington became increasingly aware of its importance. He had moved into Norfolk's Ghent neighborhood in the 1960s when the now-fashionable district was declining dangerously and "urban renewal" meant cities were tearing down



subject unless she has gotten her hands dirty with it. When she wrote about slate roofs, for instance, she had just supervised replacement of the roof on the Custis-Lee Mansion in Arlington.

Park got her start in preservation as a young architect at J. Everett Fauber Associates. She worked on the Carlyle House and Gadsby's Tavern, both in Alexandria, and historic courthouses in Clarke and Shenandoah counties. Fauber, she says, "was a real mentor to me. This was at a time when universities didn't even offer a course in preservation. He gave me a chance at a time when women had a hard time getting construction experience." One summer, she took a leave from Fauber's office to work for the Historic American Buildings Survey, which is run by the park service. She applied for a permanent job at the end of the summer and has stayed with NPS ever since.

Many of the projects she touches receive little publicity, but she has had her share of high-profile jobs too. Washington's Union Station may have been the granddaddy of them all. The \$126 million project bore Park's scrutiny from start to finish. "We were concerned that the imagery was much like a festival marketplace. It was overdone," recalls Park. Her comments influenced the size and placement of the restaurants inserted in the lobby

and limited the shops in the concourse level to two levels instead of three (which would have obscured the grandeur of the original station's spectacular coffered ceilings).

Most recently she was charged with reviewing proposals in an invited competition for adaptive reuse of the Tariff Building, a National Historic Landmark across the street from the city's MCI Center. Recently it was announced that the building will become an upscale hotel. "It's a magnificent building, because it is all groin-vaulted spaces inside. It's going to be wonderful."

Park says the Tariff Building project reflects how preservation can coexist with market forces. "Because we have to be responsible to people's marketing abilities, our challenge is to help them identify the primary character-defining aspects of a building that speak to its history while allowing the building to function," says Park, who co-chairs the Historic Resources Committee of AIA/Northern Virginia. "We don't want the building to be a shell for a new function, we want to integrate that function. It's challenging. It is about respecting what makes the building significant — whether it's craftsmanship, the quality of materials, the configuration of spaces, or how the building was originally used."

—Vernon Mays



Among recent projects backed financially by VHDA is Guardian Place, a 120-unit complex designed by Edward H. Winks Architecture, of Richmond.

rather than preserving old buildings that often housed the less affluent. "I became aware then of how important local and state government could be in setting parameters under which our built environment grows and prospers — or does not," Washington says. "My Ghent experience was very important. When I was elected to the General Assembly, among the measures I proposed and saw through were historical zoning statutes."

During his legislative career and in his Norfolk architecture practice, Washington also traveled the state learning how government affects the way people live. He also gained valuable exposure to the financial side of land development to go along with his architectural training. "There was a meshing of architecture, business, finance, and public affairs. It has

been perfect for this job," he says.

Washington, who functions as chief operating officer for VHDA, arrived at the authority during a lull. "Private industry was producing homes more quickly and bureaucratic processes here had been built up, as happens with maturing organizations," he says. When VHDA executive director John Ritchie hired Washington, the authority was striving to streamline operations, be friendlier to customers, and operate at the same quick pace as the private sector.

VHDA has worked to shorten processing time from nine months to 90 days for multifamily project loans. This year, the authority will finance more multifamily housing units — 5,400 — than at any time since 1986. Likewise, applications for single-family houses can be

cleared within two weeks under a system that allows agents to make loan decisions. In 1998, VHDA will place an average of 18 families a day into affordable single-family houses.

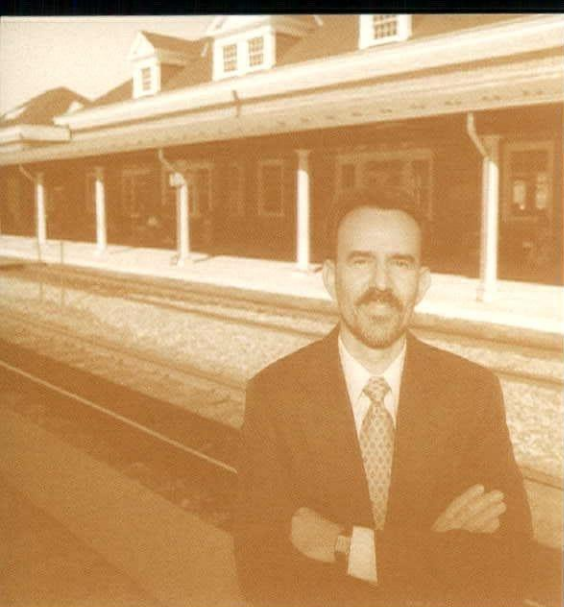
VHDA has developed another product that finally is enabling it to crack the Northern Virginia market, where there is little housing stock inexpensive enough to fit federal regulations that limit the maximum size of the authority's loans. "Many of our clients are people with good jobs and decent credit histories, but they've just never been able to save enough money to make a down payment on a home," Washington says. Now VHDA can get a family into a house for as little as \$500.

Still ahead, the authority will work to strengthen ties with local governments, which need to understand the importance of controlling growth and providing decent housing, Washington says. "We can assist them by developing products that meet the financial needs of their residents and by bringing capital to support them," he says.

VHDA will lend \$740 million this year for housing and has set a goal of \$1 billion a year by 2004, says Washington, who takes a philosophical view of the authority's successes. "We only have a given amount of time to do something with our lives. If I can make providing safe, decent shelter to hundreds of thousands of Virginia families part of my contribution, then I am privileged."

—Rob Walker





Prakash Patel

**Cox led the charge at Alexandria's station.**

**G**iven his love of historic preservation and walkable urban places, Texas was probably the wrong place for Al Cox, AIA, to launch his career. "In Dallas, nobody walks farther than their car in the parking lot – and that's only if there's no valet," says Cox. "When everyone is driving around in a car and talking on a cell phone, it's hard to have a sense of community."

Still, Cox found ways to pursue his passion. He successfully fought to preserve Dallas's State-Thomas neighborhood, where he, other architects, artists, and aging hippies lived. While working at two Dallas firms, Cox restored historic structures – the governor's mansion in Austin and the infamous Texas School Book Depository among them – and moved old farmhouses onto the ranches of rich oil men. But eventually, "we nearly ran out of old buildings," he says.

## Something Old Something New

These days, Cox need not worry. As the staff architect for the City of Alexandria, he works on more projects in a week than he did in a year of traditional practice. "The Board of Architectural Review alone gets 25 applications every two weeks," he explains. And because Alexandria has the nation's third largest historic district, many of the applications are for restorations.

Currently Cox is immersed in reviewing the program and schematic design of a pharmacy where George Washington once bought medicines and paint. The city is considering the purchase of the building and Cox is examining the drawings to estimate the cost of having it conform to the standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

During his seven years in Alexandria, the largest project that Cox has seen to completion is the city's Union Station, a building two years older and considerable smaller than the one in Washington with the same name. Six years ago, the building's owner, RF&P Corporation (now Commonwealth Atlantic), considered moving the station northward along the tracks to Potomac Yard, a planned 298-acre, mixed-use development on an abandoned railroad yard. Though the station was still in use by Amtrak and the Virginia Railway Express, it had become "dowdy," in Cox's words.

## Taking Command of Air Force Design



Action Photo Co.

**The Security Police Building at Offutt AFB in Nebraska was designed under the new command guidelines.**

**W**hen Paula Jane Loomis took over as chief architect for the U.S. Air Force's Combat Command, the command's nineteen bases worldwide weren't exactly a designer's delight. And one of the first things the commanding general wanted to know was how to win some design awards. "He got more than he bargained for," Loomis recalls with a mischievous smile nearly six years later.

It was no secret why the Air Force's largest command, headquartered at Langley Air Force Base, wasn't being honored. Loomis looked around at the bases and saw pink buildings next to green ones, clashing materials and window treatments, nothing but 90-degree angles, no skylights, and no clerestories. Very little coordination, even less detailing. "They allowed nothing imaginative," Loomis says.

Working with the architects of the individual bases, Loomis began putting together new design standards and initiating major design programs that stressed coordination, creativity, and greater freedom for each base to take into account local climates and building traditions.

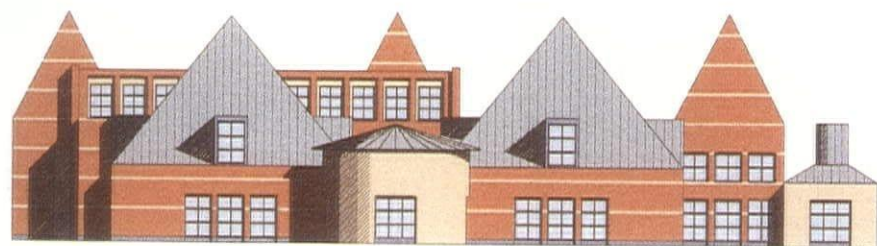


But the idea of moving the station didn't sit well with the city. "Union Station was at a prominent location on King Street," explains Cox. "Citizens have strong memories of it." The city countered RF&P's plan by renovating the station. Cox wrote the application that put the building on the National Register of Historic Places, in addition to fashioning part of the proposal for an ISTEA grant and compiling the historic structures report on the building. He presented the project for approval by the proper regulatory agencies and helped select the architecture firm, Vitetta Group, for the job. Then he counseled the architects on the ways of Alexandria's bureaucracy. He even did a little PR, touting the project to business groups, professional organizations, and Alexandria residents.

Now Cox has moved to phase two. He's trying to get grants for improvements around the station – including a better pedestrian link to the nearby Metrorail station and a new parking lot.

Not all of Cox's work is historic. Foremost among his new projects is a \$12.5 million city library designed by Michael Graves. The library – "a memorable building with wonderful spaces" – will be located on the city's west side, an area devoid of significant architecture. Nearby the city is creating a \$3.5 million park, a developer is building townhouses, and new retail space is being erected. In a few years, the west side will have its own sense of identity, asserts Cox, with Graves's library as the cornerstone.

From Cox's perspective, however, restoring the old and constructing the new is not the most important aspect of his job. Broad issues of urban planning are on top. "In architecture school, I was taught to go out and design my Frank Lloyd Wright house or my Le Corbusier building. But you can't design buildings in a vacuum, and restoring buildings out of context doesn't do anything for the fabric of a city," he says. "The key to good city architecture is urban design."  
–Michael Pretzer



Graves's new regional library will be the catalyst for growth in Alexandria's west side.

"I try to create comfortable, visually pleasing communities that fulfill the users' needs and are wonderful places to live. And I try to do that in myriad styles," she says. "You can't have a whole base look like a college campus, but you should have places where people can park and walk and do all the activities they have to get done. I'd like the bases to be pedestrian oriented, but we haven't gotten there yet."

Loomis, now a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force Reserve, has had short stints in the private sector as a site engineer for a construction company in St. Louis and as a project architect for a Virginia Beach firm. But most of her career has been with the military. Before coming to the Air Combat Command, she served briefly as architect for the Norfolk Naval Base.

At age 31, she was project manager in charge of all military construction at Homestead Air Force Base following the devastation in South Florida caused by Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Loomis says the government pretty much gave her carte blanche. "That was interesting – to be able essentially to lay out a new city."

Loomis' days are a balancing act

between career, reserve duty, motherhood, and community activities. She sings in her church choir, teaches Sunday school, and leads fitness classes at the YMCA in Norfolk, where she lives in historic Ghent. She also is a director of the Virginia Society AIA and is active in the Hampton Roads AIA chapter. Next year she will become the chapter president, succeeding her husband Steve, who served a few years ago.

It was Loomis who wrote the chapter's proposal for a \$3,000 grant for the American Architectural Foundation that helped initiate a regionalism project focusing on the area's proposed light-rail mass transit system. The chapter has organized an eclectic series of speakers to address local politicians, city planners, architects, students, and concerned citizens. A design charrette planned for November will study the impact of transit stations on three target neighborhoods.

You might call Paula Loomis a born architect/designer. She doesn't remember ever not liking buildings, distinctly recalling childhood visits to places such as Monticello and Fallingwater. "Instead of

reading regular books I picked up a book about Tom Jefferson and Monticello," she says. "I was kind of a boring child because I read house magazines." She earned a Girl Scout badge in architecture, played with Legos, and grew up to marry an architect. "When Steve and I got married, we put our Lego collections together."

Loomis was a ROTC undergraduate at Miami University of Ohio, then earned a double master's in architecture and construction management from Washington University. Several years ago she added a master's in business administration from Old Dominion University to her resume.

Having liberated Air Force architecture, Loomis wants young architects to know there is a place for design in the public sector. "It's important for people to know that in the government sector there is opportunity to do neat, interesting work," she says. "It's not just doing details for latrines and hangars."

–Joseph Cosco



Loomis has pushed good design for Air Combat Command buildings.



# Keeping Classrooms In Step with the Times



Tom Kojesich

**Boddy (left) did a study of school conditions that fueled political fires. His department's awards for school design recognized, among others, Jamestown High School, by HBA Architecture of Virginia Beach (below).**

**W**hen he makes presentations to community groups or government bodies, David L. Boddy, AIA, says he sometimes feels like "I need to leave the car running outside."

As director of facilities services for the Virginia Department of Education, Boddy often has controversial things to say. But his mission as the top architect in the state education system seems laudable enough: to demonstrate the relationships that exist between school programs and facilities, and to show how schools that are efficiently planned and built make sense from both an educational and financial angle.

"When you're dealing with kids and with campaign issues, it's sometimes hard to get people to be objective," Boddy says. "We look at form and function, we focus on the programs the schools need, and we try to help communities see efficiencies and understand what we've learned about how education works."

Boddy brought that no-nonsense perspective with him when he joined the department in 1986, but he started out following the private practice route. Born in Michigan, he graduated from Case-Western Reserve University in Cleveland in 1965. He worked first for a structural engineer, then joined an Ohio architecture firm and was offered the chance to buy in as a partner. "I was very much oriented toward putting buildings together. Then I found myself on the phone selling," Boddy recalls. "I am not a salesman."

He left the firm to become properties manager for Hiram House Camp, a settlement camp in Cleveland established in the 19th century as a refuge for Russian immigrants. When Boddy arrived, the bustling 200-acre campus – which still alternates as a temporary home for immigrants and a camp for kids – contained about 25 buildings. He designed several new ones, including an unusual 30-by-30-foot treehouse, a replica turn-of-the-century fire station, and log cabins and forts.

Boddy discovered Virginia when his son came to the College of William & Mary. "We really liked the area, so I started looking around," he says. When he landed at DOE, his office was charged

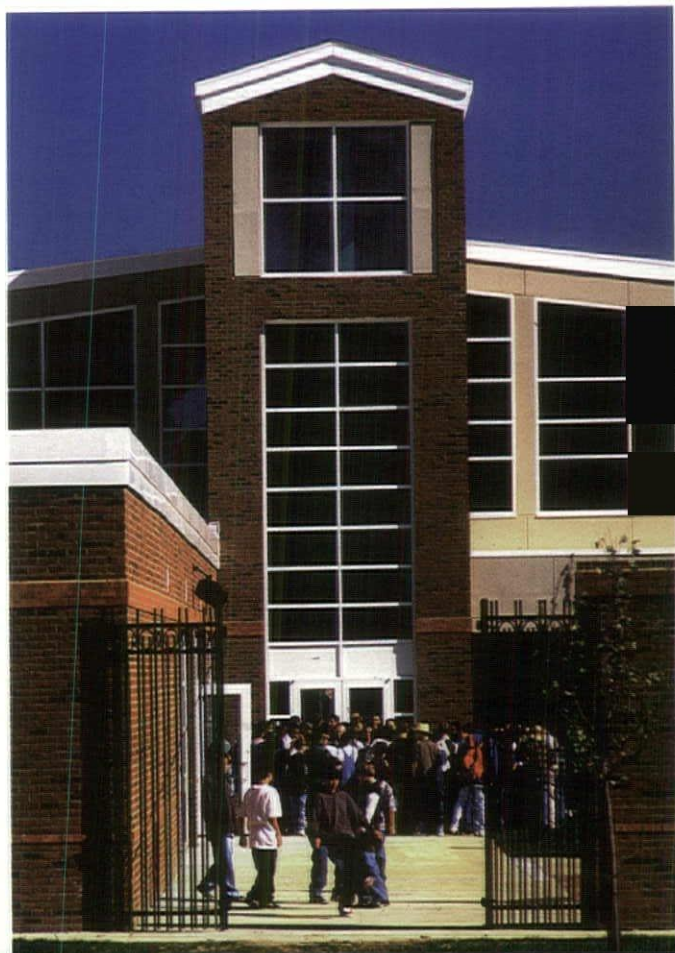
with reviewing and approving new schools for compliance with state standards. Boddy also became the point man for addressing asbestos problems in older schools.

In recent years, the job has changed. The asbestos problem has largely been resolved and the department no longer regulates school design. Instead, it serves an advisory function for school districts that want advice on how to maintain and manage their facilities. Upon request, Boddy assembles a team of architects, superintendents, and specialists in fields such as curriculum, transportation, or finance and visits the school division to diagnose its troubles. Since beginning these assessments, Boddy has visited some 60 of the state's 132 school divisions, primarily smaller districts with anywhere from five to 20 schools.

Boddy's recommendations typically stir controversy at the local level, but a recent report from his office flashed across the state like a political firestorm. Aware that there was an increasing possibility that federal funds might be made available to states for schools, Boddy recommended that the state conduct a capital needs assessment of every school division. Because the state provides no construction funds for schools – it is one of 10 in the nation that do not – no reliable current information on these needs was available. The resulting analysis showed the cost of upgrading Virginia's public schools at a staggering \$6.3 billion.

"It showed we have a crisis in facilities," he says. And because the report was delivered during last fall's statewide election campaigns, it also became intensely political. Still, the survey succeeded at putting the issue of state money for school construction before the public. Several bills were introduced during the 1998 General Assembly to authorize state funding for school construction and renovation. The proposals stalled when they became tied to Gov. Jim Gilmore's plan to eliminate the personal property tax on cars, but in April the legislature revisited the issue and made a historic \$110 million appropriation for schools.

—Rob Walker





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# C o r p o r a t e MER

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# GER

**When the expanding operations of Wheat First Union called for a large addition to its suburban office center, SMBW Architects of Richmond arranged a fitting marriage between the existing building and its handsome new partner.**

*By Vernon Mays*

When Will Scribner first met with representatives of the Richmond-based investment firm now known as Wheat First Union, the company's need for office space that could serve it both now and later quickly floated to the surface of the conversation.

Wheat was in dire need of space to accommodate its expanding operations center at the Innsbrook Corporate Center west of Richmond. But, being prudent financial managers, the company was inclined to build enough space for its future, rather than its present, needs—which meant a sizeable portion of the building had to function in the short term as a multitenant speculative office building until the company filled it with Wheat employees.

"Their intent was to take probably half the building at its

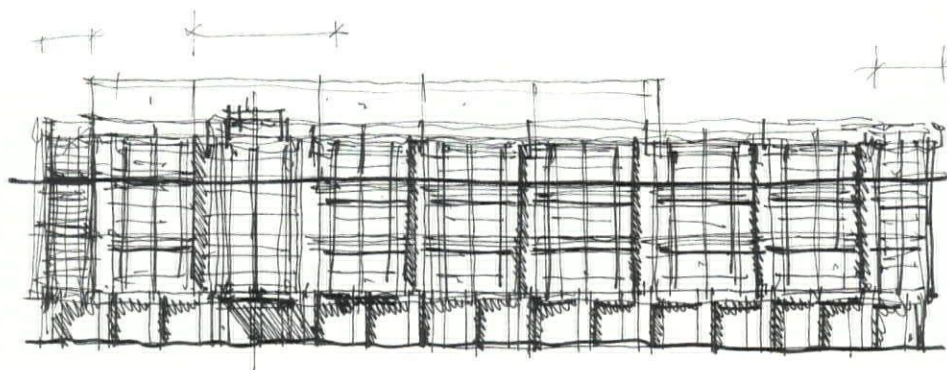


From the parking lot, the addition appears as a single volume with a skin of precast concrete and projecting glass bays (above). The dramatic stair tower and curved facade are seen when entering the site by car (facing page).

completion and the other half would be subleased to short-term tenants," recalls Scribner, a principal of SMBW Architects of Richmond. "As they grew and the tenants' leases expired, they would move in."

For an architect, that kind of ambiguity can be daunting, because it muddies clarity of thought on both a building's function and its image. Further complicating the program in this case was the fact that the new structure had to connect to an existing granite-clad office building completed in 1986.

"The problem was how, at the same time, to allow for the kind of flexibility you would want in both short-term and long-term use of the building and still create something that looks fixed and composed and complete," says Scribner. All these challenges



A developmental sketch of the addition's east facade is a study in rhythm and proportions.





Alan Karchmer

were overcome in the design of a four-story, 112,000-square-foot expansion that raises the level of architectural accomplishment in this sprawling village of anonymous glass boxes.

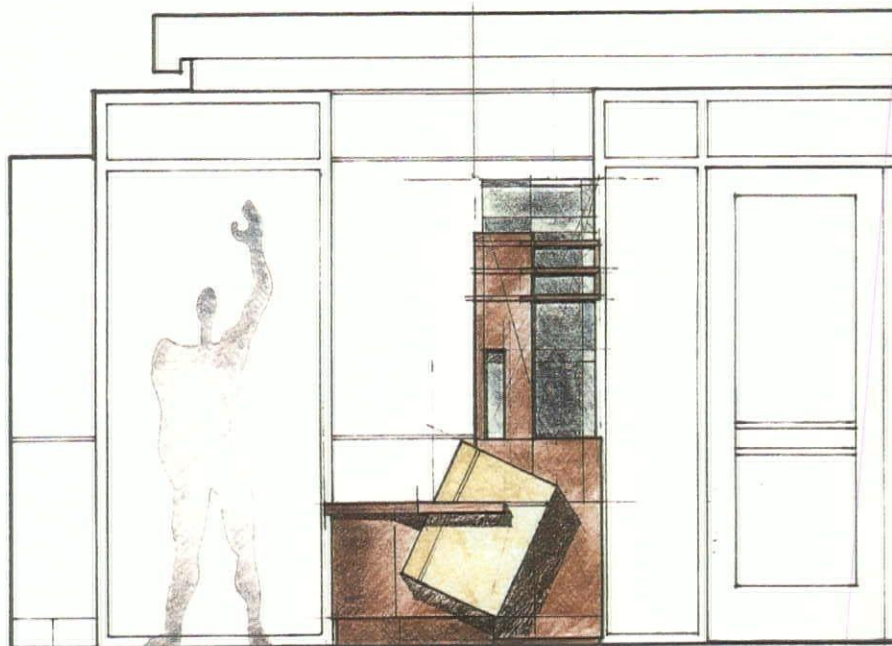
In working out the floor plan of the addition, Scribner found that the entrance presented its own set of problems. In common practice, an office building lobby owned by a single company will convey a single design statement. But a building containing several short-term users needs to allow for the visibility of each company's individual identities.

In the case of the Wheat building, the solution worked out neatly. The design team developed the idea of a regular rhythm of piers and panels, with consistent openings between the panels which are the same size as a pair of doors. "In the future, any one of these openings can be unplugged and turned into a threshold," Scribner observes. So each tenant is easily accommodated with its own lobby entrance.

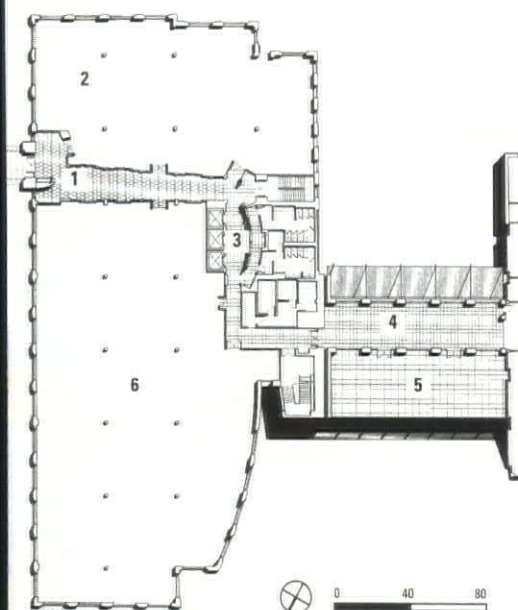
Factors on the outside of the building also exerted great influence on the development of the entrance corridor. "One of the things we struggled with early on was the existing loading dock and service yard right behind this building," Scribner recalls. "It could not be taken out of operation. And, in fact, when you looked at putting the two buildings together, it was



Workers enter the addition beneath a suspended steel-and-glass canopy (above). Detail of the canopy (above right). A design study for the reception desk shows the piece in the context of the interior space and human figure (right).

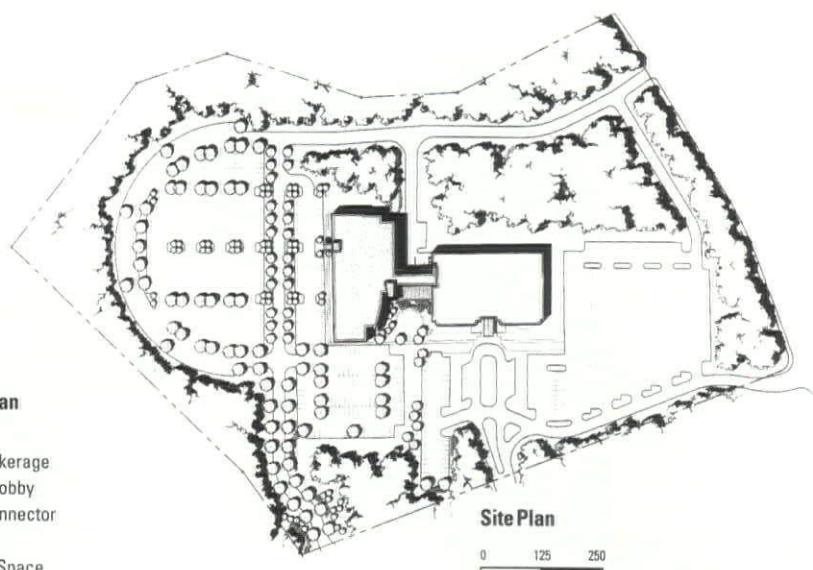






**First Floor Plan**

- 1 Entry
- 2 Retail Brokerage
- 3 Elevator Lobby
- 4 Atrium Connector
- 5 Terrace
- 6 Leasable Space



**Site Plan**

0 125 250

central to their function. So it made sense to leave it there. This company does a lot of monthly printing of statements in the lower level of the existing building, so there are certain times of the month when there are huge bulk mailings going out."

That being the case, the conventional suburban model of a rectangular building with a service/elevator core in the middle and office space at the edges wasn't desirable, in part because occupants in half of the building would have had views of nothing but the loading dock. Scribner sought an alternative, sliding the core to the edge of the building beside the loading dock, which resulted in a solid wall backing up to the loading area and large, open glass bays wrapping around the other three sides.

That single move created a long passageway inside the building that leads from the front door to the elevators. By the archi-

tect's reckoning, that considerable distance called for some kind of sign or object at the end of the corridor to draw visitors along its length and steer them toward the elevators, which are placed around a corner out of view. "It gives you something different from the typical ground floor tenant layout," Scribner says, and it also generated the idea of freestanding pieces of furniture/art that distinguish the building's interior (see page 25).

The trio of objects that provide points of reference in the interior landscape is first introduced via the reception desk, which picks up on the materials palette of the lobby. A vertical plane rising from the desk comprises what Scribner calls "a kind of totem" that is repeated as a visual theme throughout the building's public spaces. The series of freestanding objects along the circulation paths fit comfortably in the overall setting of Wheat First Union, which has set itself apart by amassing of an impressive collection of Modern art that is generously exhibited in the corridors and offices.

The motive to start the collection arose when Wheat moved to Innsbrook in the mid-1980s, says Bill Fields, managing director for corporate administration and self-taught curator. "It was pretty utilitarian space, and we felt we needed something to do something to give it a more human scale. We also feel that by moving the art around from place to place, it stimulates our people. We try to challenge our employees' imaginations, and we hope it translates back into the things they do for us."

One could interpret the stair tower that thrusts skyward on the outside of the building as the largest of the totems. The prominent stair grew from the architect's awareness that the building would someday house a single company. "In a typical multitenant building, people move from the lobby to their floor and back out," says Scribner. "Whereas here, with departments stacked on top of one another, people would be moving up and down a lot. We wanted to make that vertical movement a celebration of the life of the building." For those who enter the site by car, the tower also becomes the key image of the building.

On the interior, much of the space was left unfinished for future build out. But SMBW did design the offices for Wheat's use on the second floor, which is noteworthy because of the series of light beams that span across the ceiling. Scribner says he was

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Lee Brauer

The reception desk is the visitor's first taste of the custom objects in the corridors (left). Painting in background fills a niche that can be converted to a doorway.



looking for a way to lift the ceiling and provide both distinction and rhythm to what was otherwise going to be a pretty wide open floor of workstations. The alternative is far superior – a relatively dark ceiling plane punctuated by a steady pattern of openings that have the appearance of skylights.

The formal themes of the addition's exterior draw their inspiration from the existing structure. Inset glass bays on the existing building's facade are expressed on the new building as projecting bays crowned by an overhanging cornice. Similarly, three-part banding of the existing curtain wall is redefined on the addition as a triple-banded aluminum spandrel that separates floor-to-ceiling glass.

Due to budget limitations, granite panels on the exterior of the original building were reinterpreted as a pattern of etched and sandblasted rose/gray precast panels on the new addition. "We tried to pick up a materials palette that played off the original building but lightened it considerably," says Scribner. A narrow ribbon of black spandrel glass on the new building references a similarly proportioned band of polished granite on the original Wheat building.

The most distinctive aspect of the addition is the finlike detail that continues the sweep of the curved northwest corner of the building. "Originally the fins existed in a larger version that projected farther out. But as we studied them in three dimensions, we felt they were too dominant," Scribner says. In a building composed largely of tight geometries, this curved facade is a welcome expression of freedom, placed at the very point where the composition of building parts benefits most. "We always loved it," Scribner says of the spiked corner. "That was one of the things we always really wanted to do and fortunately the client agreed that it was important."

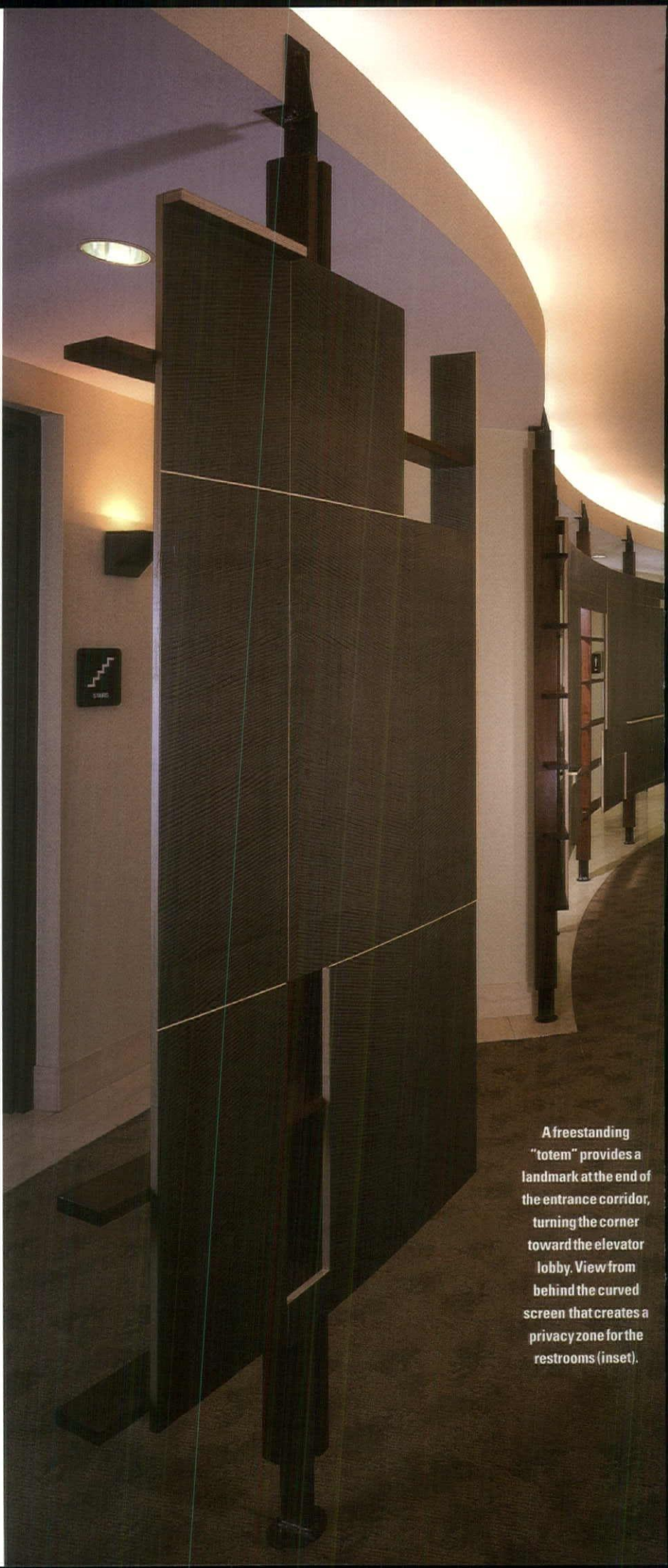
**Project:** Wheat Innsbrook Center II

**Architect:** SMBW Architects (Will Scribner, AIA, principal-in-charge; Blaine Paxton, AIA, Patrick Farley, AIA, Denise Chiafalo, Bryon Jefferson, Elizabeth Clifford, architectural project team; Shelli Brady, Carolyn Anderson, Brian Wingold, interior design team; Chris Fultz, AIA, Derek Johnson, specialty millwork design)

**Contractor:** Suitt General Construction

**Consultants:** J.K. Timmons (civil); Stroud Pence & Associates (structural); H.C. Yu and Associates (mechanical, electrical, plumbing/fire protection)

**Owner:** Wheat First Union

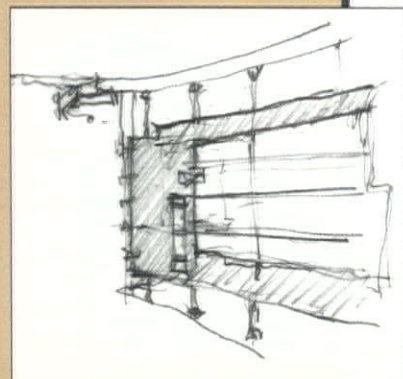


A freestanding "totem" provides a landmark at the end of the entrance corridor, turning the corner toward the elevator lobby. View from behind the curved screen that creates a privacy zone for the restrooms (inset).



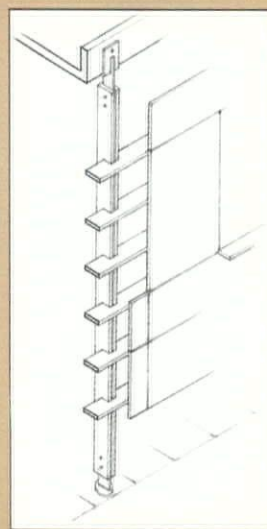
## Furniture That Functions Like Art

**H**aving a client as interested in art as Bill Fields at Wheat First Union was a real advantage when it came to proposing new approaches. So when SMBW Architects floated the idea of transforming a simple screen wall into a piece of art, Fields gave the green light. "Bill is a remarkable client," says Chris Fultz, the project architect who worked most closely on the screen design. "He championed the notion of a three-dimensional painting at the conclusion of the entrance gallery."



Conceptual sketch of screen.

Fields' basic criterion for the screen was a functional one – that it obscure the doors leading into the restrooms. Beyond that, he simply wanted it to look good. Fultz started with an abstract concept and was allowed to run with it. "The work is an experiment in phenomenal transparency," Fultz explains. Inspired by theorist Colin Rowe's writings on the relationship between figure and field (or transparent and opaque), Fultz began to investigate a series of formal designs that blended the painter's compositional devices and the mathematician's ordering of space.



Framing/connection details.

In its final form, the screen is, on the one hand, a simple lesson in construction, with a legible armature of framework, connections, and surface panels. "On the other hand it is a sophisticated expression of spatial layering via the frontal plane or facade. It is an attempt to present furniture as art – a canvas that activates the elevator lobby rather than simply occupying it," says Fultz. The structural framework for the piece is fashioned from 1"x 4" mahogany stock, detailed with oblique scarf joints and maple keys – and supported by thin steel members that connect to the ceiling and floor. Attached to the frame is a screen of bent, laminated birch plywood with an outer surface of figured Anigre colored with an aniline dye. Installation of the piece was pure pleasure, says Fultz, who praises craftsman Rick Farinholt, of Franko LaFratta & Farinholt in Richmond, for being up to the challenge. "Rick was trained as a boat builder, so he was comfortable with the design of the mahogany framework because of its similarity to the structure of a boat hull."

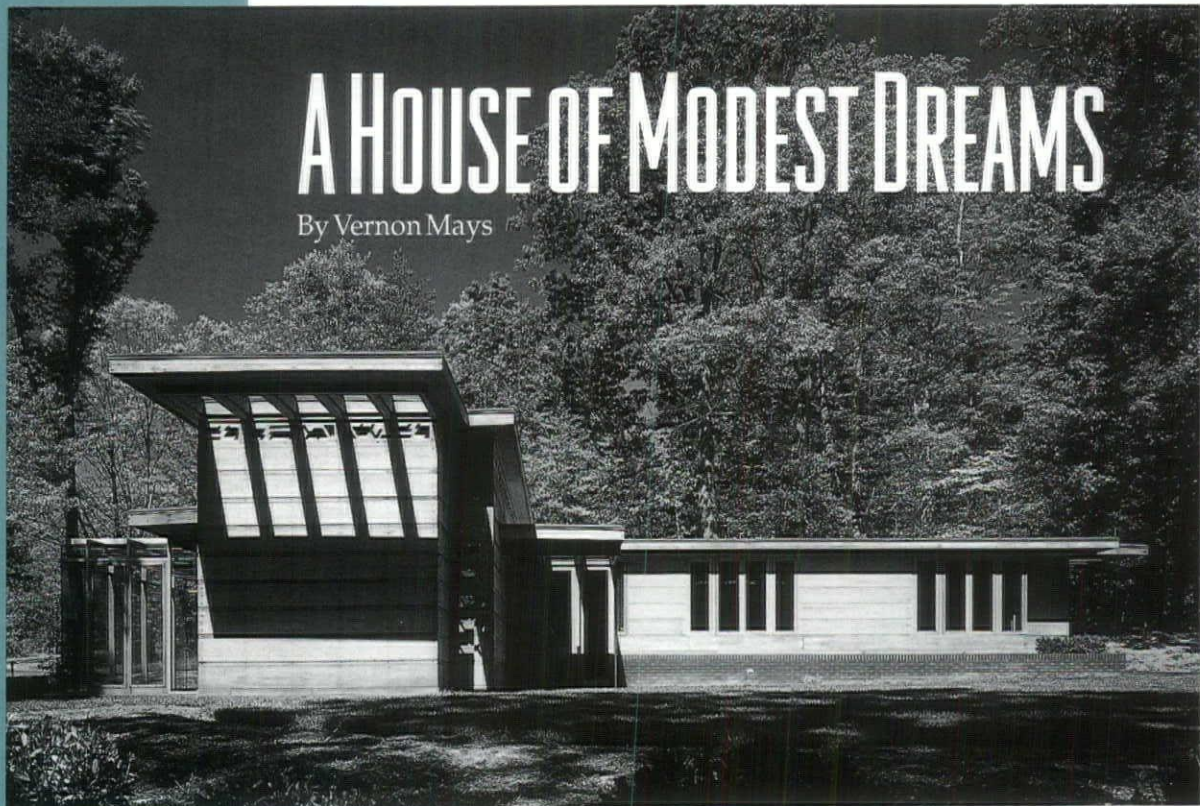
Joinery detail employs maple key (right).





# A HOUSE OF MODEST DREAMS

By Vernon Mays



The crisp lines of the Pope-Leighey House should stay that way after its recent reconstruction.

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In its first life, the house that Pope built was displaced by the undeniable will of highway planners. The second time around, errors in construction and poor site selection led to its demise. But officials at the National Trust for Historic Preservation are hoping the third time is a charm when it comes to longevity for Loren Pope's house of modest dreams.

The house, an experiment in affordable residential construction by Frank Lloyd Wright, was dismantled and rebuilt by the Trust in 1996 after a lengthy examination of preservation alternatives. Commissioned in 1939 by Loren Pope—a \$50-a-week copy editor at the *Washington Evening Star* whose heartfelt letter to Wright asked for “a house created by you”—the 1,200-square foot residence is an important example of the “Usonian” house. Wright appropriated the word to represent his utopian vision of affordable, beautiful housing for the common man in America. And although a limited number of these houses were built, their influence was profound. Some historians call the Usonian the precursor to the single-story ranch house that dominated America's suburbs in the years following World War II.

“The period from the mid-30s to the mid-40s was Wright's most important,” asserts Michael Quinn, FAIA, principal of Quinn Evans/Architects, the Washington, D.C., firm that was charged with the restoration. “These small houses represented a lot of his philosophical thinking about how to create a house. He redefined the norms of residential architecture.”

Pope had bought a site in Falls Church and, in 1941, moved into the house featuring radiant-slab heating, load-bearing wood composite walls, and a cantilevered flat roof. But apparently Pope was as restless as he was daring. By 1946, he decided to move his family to Loudoun County to raise hogs and write freelance articles. He placed a small ad in the local paper which was answered by more than 100 potential buyers. From that group, he selected Robert and Marjorie Leighey to have the house, believing they “would love it the most.”

In 1963 Mrs. Leighey, who was by then widowed, received notice that the house was being condemned to make way for the construction of I-66. After failing to get the highway relocated, she scaled many obstacles in order to donate the house to the National Trust with the provision that it would be dismantled and moved to Woodlawn Plantation, a Trust property near Mount Vernon.

During the house's reconstruction in the mid-'60s, a key aspect of the original construction was overlooked; specifically, the design of the original slab-on-grade construction was changed to a conventional concrete footing with masonry foundation walls filled in with a concrete slab. That decision would have later repercussions.

Once the house was completed, it was available for tours on a part-time basis. “It was open as a museum while Mrs. Leighey was living in it,” says Craig Tuminaro, the property's resident historian. “Imagine every weekend having to get up, make your house presentable, and get out for two days so that people could tour through and look at all your stuff.”

Mrs. Leighey died in 1983 and, over the next decade, cracks in the concrete floors and stressing of the cypress boards on the walls began to cause alarm. Some of the building failures appeared to be typical of other Wright homes with similar structural details, Quinn reports. Other failures seemed to stem from the masonry and concrete work done in 1965, in conjunction with the siting of the house on unstable marine clay deposits.

Quinn Evans evaluated the building and considered two approaches for its rehabilitation: the first was an *in situ* restoration and the second involved total



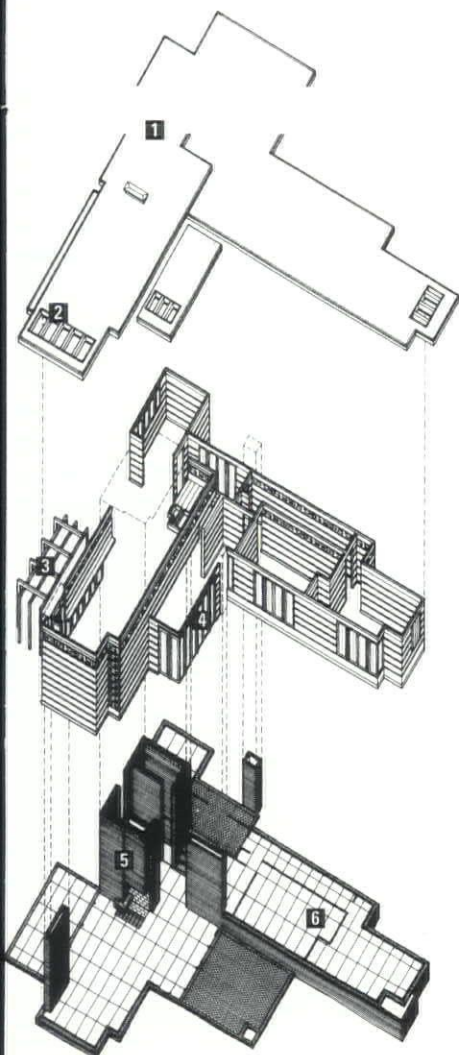
reconstruction. Based on their analysis, the architects determined the only way to save the deteriorating building was to systematically dismantle and rebuild it on a good foundation. In doing so, they moved the house 30 feet, which allowed for the re-creation of the original landscaping, including a hemicycle lawn.

The current foundation is not as Wright originally specified – it's better. New concrete footings were added under the entire perimeter and a new reinforced slab was poured, again incorporating a radiant heat system in the floor as well as a new forced-air ventilation, air-conditioning, and humidity-control system for the building's long-term conservation.

One of Wright's innovations on the house was the load-bearing sandwich walls that consisted of a center panel of fiberboard covered with horizontal cypress siding on the inside and out. The total wall thickness was only 2 1/2 inches. "It was this aspect of Wright's early Usonian work that forced us to look at the whole issue of dismantling board-by-board and then rebuilding," says Quinn. Walls were refabricated with cores of marine-grade plywood. To stop shifting and deformation of the walls, their weak points were reinforced with steel rods. Steel angles were added to the corners of the building to prevent their separating again.

Among the most critical problems with the house were the sagging cantilevers and pools of water that formed on the flat roof. Quinn Evans had the entire roof reframed with new engineered wood beams that are concealed in the ceiling. They also resloped the roof and added internal rain leaders to divert runoff water from damaging the exterior cypress walls.

"To make this possible, a lot of the labor on the house was donated by local contractors, masons, and others who gave their



#### Rebuilding the Pope-Leighey House

- 1 Eave drainage system removed; interior drain installed
- 2 Cypress panels restored
- 3 Screened porch rebuilt
- 4 Wood doors and windows restored
- 5 Masonry piers and fireplace replaced
- 6 New boiler and in-floor radiant heat installed

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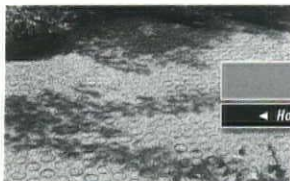
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Natural light fills the interior, where modular furniture allows flexibility of use.

time," says Tuminaro. Even so, the final bill for the reconstruction came to about \$750,000. Pope had paid \$7,000 in 1940.

Even so, it didn't come easy for him. "It took a lot of doing to get the house financed, and eventually he secured the financing through his employer," says Tuminaro. "The banks were leery of a flat-roofed house - everybody else was building Cape Cod colonials, not Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian houses."

Today a visit to the L-shaped house is a reminder of the intelligence of Wright's designs. The bedrooms are purposely small - the tradeoff being a living space that is tall and open and full of glass that allows the natural environment in. Adds Tuminaro: "The use of modular furniture helped make the house more flexible. It enabled the Papes the freedom to have a small intimate dining area or, if they were having guests, to assemble the desks and end tables into a large dining table."

Quinn says the Pope-Leighey house could be more significant in Wright's career than many people realize because of the relationship it kindled between the architect and client. In 1948, *House Beautiful* published an article by Pope that told the story of his affection for the house and his collaboration with "the world's greatest architect." Wright by then had been famous worldwide for nearly 40 years, but was still largely ignored by his peers in the United States. Pope's widely read article, notes Quinn, gave Wright's career a boost at the very moment it was needed. Which is thanks enough for building the house of Pope's dreams.

#### Getting There

The Pope-Leighey House occupies a corner of Woodlawn Plantation, located in Fairfax County at the corner of U.S. 1 and Route 235. The house is open Monday-Saturday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sunday from 12-4. Admission is \$6 for adults; \$4 for students and seniors. Members of the National Trust are admitted free, except for special events. For information, call 703-780-4000.



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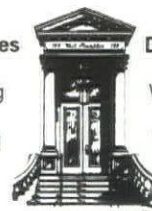
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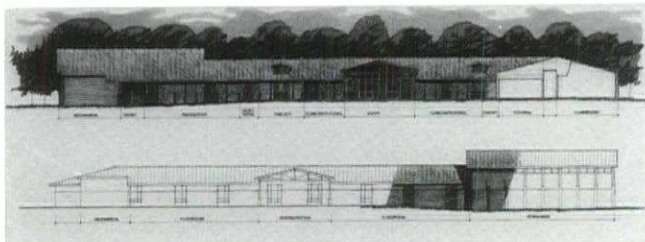
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**Architect:** Bond Comet Westmoreland + Hiner Architects, Richmond  
**Project:** Piedmont Regional Education Program Education Center/Offices

Nestled in the Albemarle County foothills, this 20,400-square-foot facility houses offices and a regional center for students with exceptional needs. In addition to PREP offices and resource space, the facility contains classrooms, a multipurpose room, recreation areas, and administrative space. 804-788-4774.



**Architect:** LeMay Erickson Architects, Reston  
**Project:** Warrenton Presbyterian Church Addition

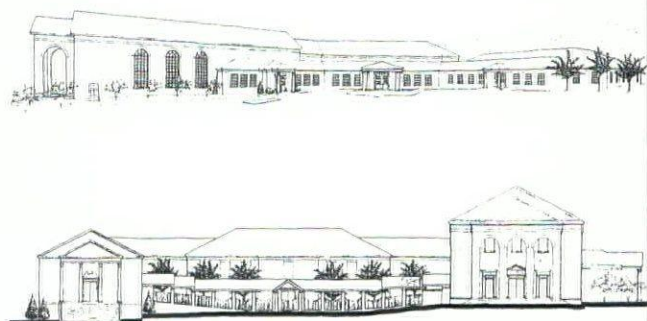
This 11,000-square-foot sanctuary/fellowship hall fills a void along historic Main Street in Warrenton while preserving existing church buildings. The new structure reinterprets rhythms in the facade of the original 1855 Greek Revival chapel to create a contemporary, light-filled sanctuary. 703-471-7555.

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**Architect:** Fauber Architects, P.C., Forest  
**Project:** Bedford County Courthouse Complex

Bedford County's rapid growth rate is reflected in a mushrooming number of court cases. Renovations to the 1930s Courthouse, plus a five-story addition and two-level parking deck, will provide updated space for five courtrooms and the services associated with them. 804-385-0495.



**Architect:** Huff-Morris Architects, P.C., Richmond  
**Project:** Ridge Baptist Church

Phase II and III of the master plan for this church comprises renovations of the administration building, an elevator and new corridors for the physically challenged, and a 10,000-square-foot office/education addition. Phase I converted the existing education building into a child-care facility. 804-343-1505.





**Architect:** Rose Architects, P.C., Richmond

**Project:** Bensley Commons

Promoting tenets of New Urbanism, this community master plan includes pedestrian-friendly streets, squares, and parks and a mixture of building types and uses. Rose Architects is also designing the townhouses, apartments, daycare facilities, elderly housing, commercial offices, and retail space. 804-780-1801.

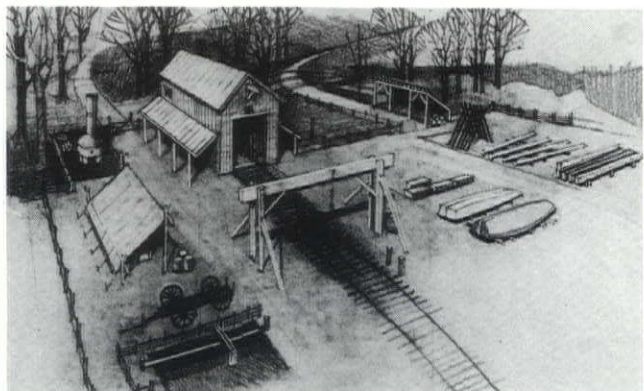


**Architect:** Clark Nexsen, Architecture & Engineering, Norfolk

**Project:** Collocated Club, Aviano Air Base, Italy

This 1,803-square-meter facility, recipient of a USAF European Design Award, contains meeting/dining space for 360 people and two bars for officers and enlisted personnel. The building, which reflects the architectural traditions of northern Italy, occupies a new campus designed by Clark Nexsen. 757-455-5800.

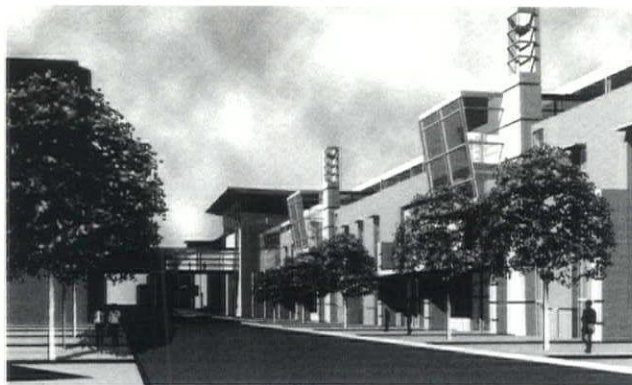
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**Architect:** Carlton Abbott & Partners, P.C., Williamsburg

**Project:** Boat Yard, Woodruff Civil War Naval History Museum

The reconstructed boat yard in Columbus, Georgia, will be a hands-on educational element of the new museum to be built adjacent to the Olympic softball site on the Chattahoochee River near Atlanta. The boat yard will feature woodworking, turpentine making, a saw pit, and other small boat crafts. 757-220-1095.



**Architect:** TVS & Associates, Atlanta / SMBW Architects, Richmond

**Project:** Richmond Convention Center Expansion

The Richmond Centre will be quadrupled in size to approximately 650,000 square feet, including an exhibit hall and ballroom at Fifth and Broad streets. The project, to be completed in 2002, is jointly funded by the City of Richmond and counties of Henrico, Chesterfield, and Hanover. 804-782-2115.



In incorporating "a really modern contraption" into the surroundings of the late 18th century residence at the University of Virginia known as Monroe Hill, architects Mitchell, Matthews & Associates of Charlottesville developed a jewel that bears silent testimony to the energy and constraint of the designers.

After studying a series of options involving ramps and steps, the architects

decided only an elevator could successfully negotiate the elevation change from the historic house down to the surrounding dormitories and classroom buildings. The tower, completed in 1994, shared top honors earlier this year in AIA/Central

Virginia's inaugural design awards program. "It's only an elevator," says John Matthews, AIA, expressing surprise at the attention such a modest project would receive. But the small structure is serenely suited for its site.

The tower's formal cues, taken from the simple buildings along the Range at U.Va. rather than from the adjacent historic residence, allow the structure a gentle grace. Working within the historic grounds, the architects had to bear the scrutiny of many committees and boards. "Some thought it should be more ornate; some thought it should be cleaner," says Matthews. Details from the Range – such as dentils along the cornice – were used as a model because of their simplicity. The tower's louvers are literal takeoffs on those of the support buildings located behind the pavilions on the Lawn. "We wanted a response that was unique and appropriate. It's really a modern contraption."

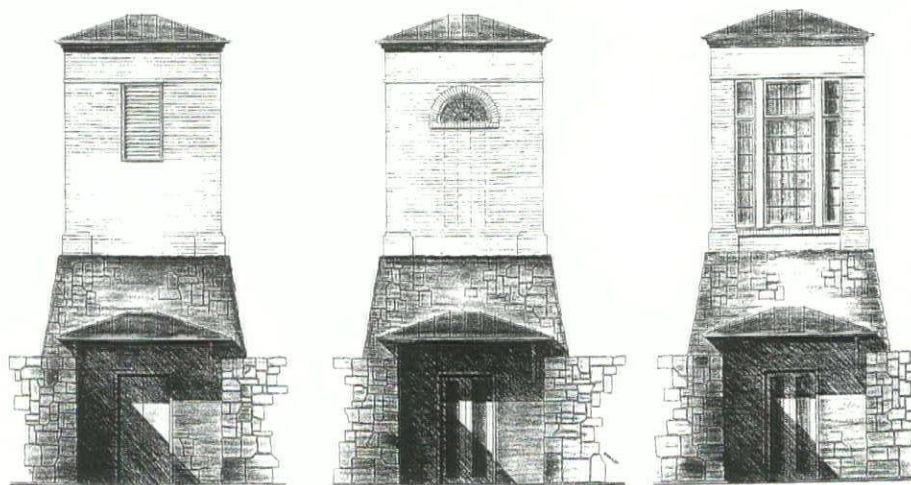
Matthews based the horizontal dimensions on the requirements for wheelchairs; he worked out the vertical proportions of the battered stone base by trial and error. The needed equipment for the elevator was placed in the basement of a nearby building, a solution that tested the limits of the hydraulic fluid's viscosity but has proved successful.

– T. Duncan Abernathy, AIA

## Toward a Barrier-Free Campus



By blending with a stone retaining wall and looking to university tradition for design cues, Mitchell, Matthews produced a sensitive solution for wheelchair access.



Matthews studied several schemes in detail before selecting the final one (left).



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