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Architecture + Design

in the Mid-Atlantic

2003: number four

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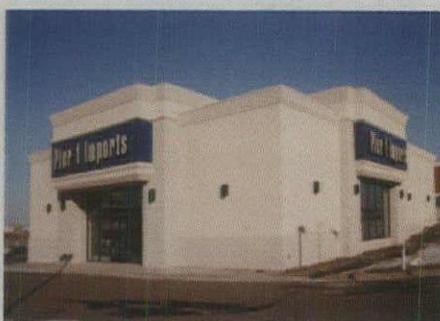
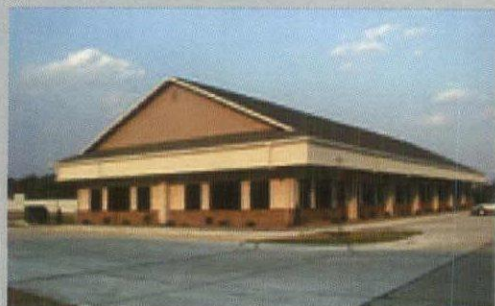
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Vernon Mays

Assistant Editor

Rebecca E. Ivey

Director of Sales

Porter F. Hulett

Sales Administrator

Charleen M. Pine

Graphic Design

Steven Longstaff

Distribution

Efa Adams

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Cindy O'Leary

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From the Editor

Preserving the Recent Past

It has not been very long since people began to speak the words "modern" and "preservation" in the same sentence. Up until about 20 years ago, preservation was an area of architectural practice that dealt with old and historic buildings. But times are changing. A growing number of organizations that chart the course for preservation policy and technology are struggling with the evolving definition of "historic" buildings, while searching for ways to adapt preservation philosophy to a palette of materials that includes aluminum, neon, and plastic.

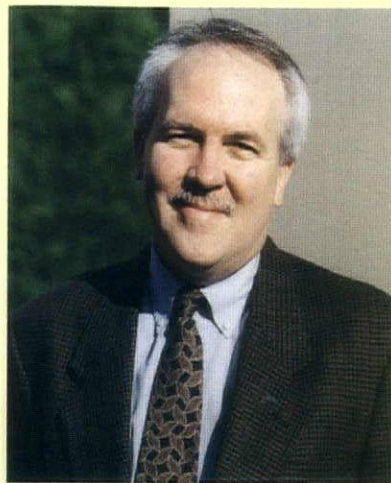
Since the establishment of the National Register of Historic Places in 1966, most buildings have been required to be at least 50 years old in order to qualify. About two percent of the listings are newer buildings that earned a place on the register because their "exceptional importance" could be demonstrated at the national, state, or local level. No one questioned the designation, for example, when it was given to Eero Saarinen's TWA Terminal at JFK Airport in New York, an icon of modern design. The importance of cultural factors even allowed less architecturally distinguished buildings such as Graceland, the home of Elvis Presley, to make the list.

But the story of the recent past is not only about icons. Other humble, less prominent buildings are important to their community's identity and shared tradition. So as vast numbers of buildings from the '30s, '40s, and '50s – everything from airports and schools to factories and funky coffee shops – are surveyed to determine if they are worth saving, a better method of evaluation needs to be developed. That effort is under way now under the auspices of organizations that include the American Institute of Architects, the National Park Service, the Los Angeles Conservancy, and DOCOMOMO, an international collective that advocates for the conservation of modern buildings and sites.

Determining what to save is only half the battle. The preservation of modern buildings is complicated further by issues of a technical nature. A point of pride for many 20th-century architects was that they were partners in the introduction of a new vocabulary of building materials and technologies. But many of these innovations were accompanied by unknown long-term characteristics. Now professionals in the preservation field are working to develop ways to repair materials ranging from porcelain enamel to plywood, which were once revolutionary. In addition, philosophical questions are raised by mass-produced components such as curtain walls and precast concrete panels. Do such products of industry have the same inherent value or historic importance as 18th- and 19th-century materials that were hand-made by artisans of the day? In other cases, the problem is the more pragmatic one of manufacturing: certain materials that were ubiquitous in the mid-20th century simply aren't made anymore. How do architects deal with that?

The point is that preservation is at a crossroads. The philosophy that has guided preservationists for 100 years must be reevaluated as the emphasis shifts from Jamestown to Levittown. Along with an adjustment in mindset, the preservation community must dedicate greater resources to the science of preservation, which no longer deals primarily with a narrow range of materials and manual technologies. The commitment must be to advance that science exponentially as an entire new generation of buildings moves within the defining embrace of "historic" architecture. What a relief that appreciation for the value of modern design is on the rise, because otherwise a reservoir of noteworthy building stock completed between 1930 and 1970 might easily be lost. Like the large number of 18th- and 19th-century buildings in the mid-Atlantic that warrant preservation, the distinctive places made in the 20th century are equally worthy of our attention. They are deserving for more than just their economic potential, high style, or fame. They are part of the fabric of our communities. They are our past, if only our recent past.

– Vernon Mays





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Shedding Tradition

A unique preservation project by Baskervill links two historic buildings in Richmond's Shockoe Bottom district, while converting an old tobacco shed into chic new offices for the multidisciplinary architecture practice. *By Mary Harding Sadler*

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Landmark Addition

A sensitive addition to the Thomas Balch Library in Leesburg doubles the size of the 1920s-era institution, occasioning a thorough restoration of the treasured building. *By Kim A. O'Connell*

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Keepsake Cabin

Reader & Swartz Architects' renovation of the original log cabin at Wheatland Farms makes a functional dwelling out of an old shell that was considered too important to discard. *By Vernon Mays*



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new developments in design



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Robin Miller: creating new possibilities for urban living



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Taking Note

doing the small thing well



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On the cover: Canal Crossing
Photo by John Hood

In our next issue:
Office Buildings

Architecture Foundation Receives Gift from Long-Time Friend

A crowd of nearly 400 jammed the Grand Ballroom of the Jefferson Hotel in Richmond on Nov. 7 for the sixth annual *Visions for Architecture* celebration, where they were served fine cuisine and the good news of ground gained in the campaign to establish the Virginia Center for Architecture. John W. Braymer, Hon. AIA, president of the Virginia Foundation for Architecture, greeted the audience with the announcement of a \$250,000 gift from Mary Clark Roane Downing, who for 21 years has shared the Barret House with the Foundation and the Virginia Society AIA as proprietor of the Collectors' Old Book Shop. Braymer called Downing a "true believer" in the Foundation's campaign to create Virginia's first architecture museum in the recently acquired Branch House on Monument Avenue.

Braymer offered more encouraging news with a second announcement, acknowledging the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation, of Richmond, which has pledged a \$150,000 matching grant to the architecture foundation. The Parsons Foundation pledge is an important step, both because it reflects the support of the Richmond philanthropic community for the project and because its matching requirement encourages additional leadership gifts to enable construction to begin on schedule for a fall opening of the Center.

The evening continued as Virginia Society AIA President Robert Magoon, AIA, introduced the honors and awards, including eleven awards for excellence in design. Twelve individuals and three organizations were recognized for exceptional contributions to the architecture profession and the community at large, receiving various honors from the Virginia Society AIA. The Scope and Chrysler Hall complex, an adventurous urban renewal project that replaced 17 blighted acres in Norfolk, was honored with the Test of Time Award, which recognizes enduring excellence in architectural design.

Included among Braymer's remarks was a public announcement that, in June, the Foundation had closed on the purchase of the Branch House, a 27,000-square-foot residence designed



VFA President John Braymer with book-seller Mary Clark Roane Downing, who blessed the campaign with a \$250,000 gift.

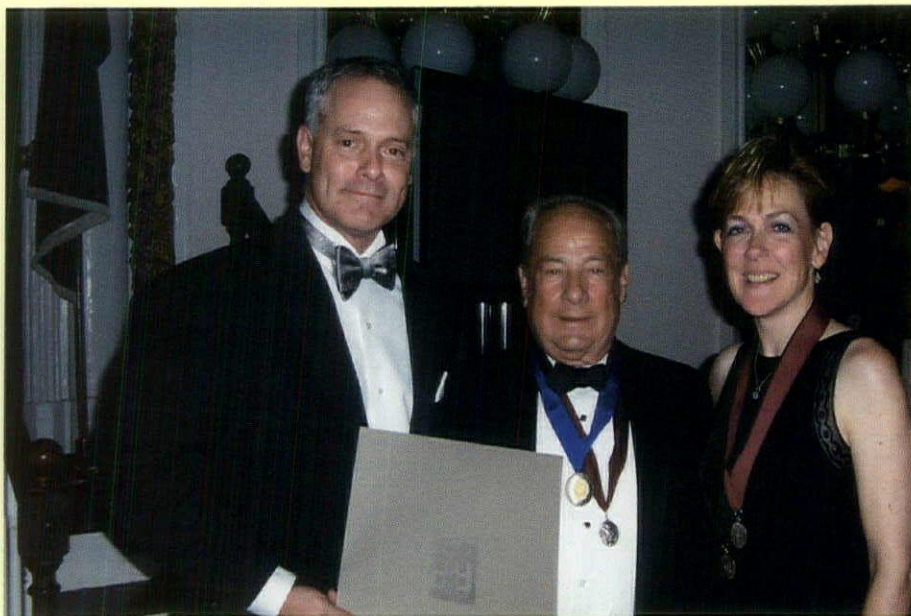
by John Russell Pope. Since that date, Hanbury Evans Wright Vlattas & Company, of Norfolk, has completed construction documents and acquired building permits. Construction to convert the building for use as a museum is slated to begin in the near future.

In 2004, the Foundation plans to mark its 50th anniversary with the opening of the Virginia Center for Architecture at the Branch House. A premiere exhibit, titled "Southern Architecture: Southern Architects," is being developed by museum curator Vernon Mays. A smaller permanent exhibit now under development will offer insight into the Branch family's interest in architecture and antiquities, the family's

role in the development of Monument Avenue, and the antecedents of the historic building. In addition, outgoing VFA Chairman Willard Scribner, AIA, is planning an inaugural symposium on community development issues, which will be co-sponsored by Capital One and Land America in collaboration with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC).

Reflecting on the future of the Virginia Center for Architecture at the Branch House, Braymer commented, "The Center aspires to be a place in this region where — through exhibition, education, and discussion — architecture will be better understood as a vital, central element in our culture."

— Rebecca E. Ivey



Noland Medalist Hugh Miller, center, is congratulated by Bob Steele, AIA, of AIA/James River and Helene Dreiling, FAIA, secretary of the Virginia Society AIA.



Betsy Brothers, center, enjoys her award with Ahmed Hassan, AIA, and Mike Ashe, AIA.

Preservation a Pervasive Theme at Visions Gala

Historic preservation took center stage at Visions for Architecture, as award after award honored individuals and organizations that have made great strides in protecting the Commonwealth's built heritage. Nine of the Honor Awards – and one of the Design Awards – grew out of efforts that touch the preservation arena. Most prominent among the honorees was Noland Medalist Hugh C. Miller, FAIA, who was honored for his influence on preservation practices at the state and national levels.

This year, the Virginia Society AIA also presented two Awards for Preservation – one to an organization and one to an individual. In the case of the former, the Historic Monument Avenue and Fan District Foundation was recognized for fostering the rebirth of Richmond's grand boulevard, Monument Avenue, and for returning countless homes to single-family status. The foundation's fundraising, events, publications, and hands-on renovation combined to elevate the Monument Avenue Historic District to National Historic Landmark status. In the case of the individual recipient, Elizabeth W. Brothers was honored for her advocacy on behalf of several properties in her native Suffolk, which she has transformed through her timely leadership and organization.

Honorary Membership was bestowed on W. Tayloe Murphy, Jr., the Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources, for his encouragement of planned development, adaptive reuse, and historic preservation. Debbie Burns, an architectural historian by trade – and executive director of AIA Northern Virginia – was named Honorary VSAIA for her work with the chapter. The citation also recognized the breadth of her preservation research and writings.

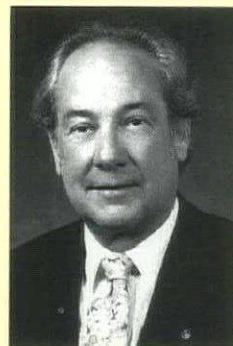
Four of five Society Honor recipients were honored for work with specific properties or localities – Evelyn Chandler for her documentation of Hampton's Aberdeen Gardens neighborhood; Peter Hunt for his fundraising and management work for Rosewell Plantation; K. Edward Lay for documentation of more than 1,000 vernacular structures in Charlottesville and Albemarle County; and Wiley Wheat for restoration of the Blandfield residence.

Miller Honored with William C. Noland Medal

The Virginia Society AIA presented its top honor, the William C. Noland Medal, to Hugh C. Miller, FAIA, a luminary in the field of historic preservation. Miller has influenced the direction of state and national historic resources over the course of five decades, providing leadership as the chief historical architect of the National Park Service, as the first director of the Virginia Department of Historical Resources, and as a preservation planner, teacher, and advisor working worldwide.

During his 28-year career with the National Park Service, Miller rose from project architect to chief historical architect, and was responsible for projects such as Independence Hall and the Statue of Liberty restoration. He served as an advisor for cultural tourism, the development of park systems, and the preservation of cultural property in Jordan and Turkey. As the first director of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Miller spearheaded new programs to identify the Commonwealth's heritage places, administered grants to enhance preservation activities, and encouraged compatible designs in the context of historic buildings. He expanded the survey and documentation of historic places for listing on the National Register and as Virginia Landmarks, initiated study of African-American and Native American sites, and urged developers and architects to use the federal rehabilitation tax credit program.

Miller fostered the relatively young field of landscape preservation through his activities at the National Park Service and the Department of Historic Resources. As an AIA member since 1974, he has served on the national and state Historic Resources Committees and the VSAIA Honors Committee. He currently sits on advisory boards for Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest, the University of Virginia's Academical Village, and Stratford Hall, among others, and teaches in Goucher College's Masters of Arts in Historic Preservation Program.



Hugh Miller

VMDO Architects receives Fitz-Gibbon Firm Award

The T. David Fitz-Gibbon Architecture Firm Award was presented to VMDO Architects of Charlottesville, which has produced cutting-edge architecture for education for more than a quarter-century. From a 1976 campus plan for Woodberry Forest School in Orange to the University of Virginia's baseball stadium completed in 2001, the firm has sought to broaden the region's architectural vocabulary through thoughtful design. With four dozen design awards to its credit, VMDO has shown educators that innovative educational settings can enhance learning.

VMDO was created by University of Virginia architecture professor Robert Vickery, FAIA, as Vickery & Associates. The firm's remaining founding principals, Robert Moje, AIA, and David Oakland, AIA, are joined by more recent principals Todd Bullard, AIA, and Joseph Celantano, AIA. Four associate principals join them at the helm in guiding a staff of 35 employees.

Last year, the firm recognized the significant relationship between architecture and landscape by establishing its own landscape architecture studio. All of VMDO's staff members participate actively in community service, including city task forces, proposal review committees, and the Board of Architectural Review. In his endorsement of VMDO's firm award, Thomas H. DeBolt, Manassas Park City Schools Division Superintendent and a long-time client of the firm, noted that VMDO employees are "passionate about the ability of architecture to enhance learning" and consistently advocate on behalf of children's best interests.

"VMDO was one of the best firms in Virginia within a few months of its organization," notes Samuel A. Anderson, III, FAIA, recently retired Architect for the University of Virginia. "Through the years, the firm has never lost sight of the importance of attracting, training, and retaining the brightest and the best."



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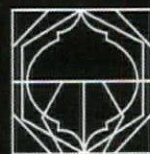
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A Banner Year for Architecture Foundation

By Willard M. Scribner, AIA

This has been another banner year for the Virginia Foundation for Architecture. As the proud new owner of the future Virginia Center for Architecture at the Branch House, the Foundation is eagerly preparing to open the doors to one of the country's few museums celebrating architecture and the building arts. The Foundation will continue to fulfill its mission from its new quarters by providing scholarships, sponsoring programs that cultivate architectural awareness, offering a strong exhibition series, and supporting related publications. Good news on the fundraising front includes major gifts from the Windsor Foundation, the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation, and VFA friend Mary Clark Roane Downing, totaling \$490,000. There is much to celebrate as the number of committed believers and investors in the Virginia Center for Architecture continues to grow.

While we ask for your support of that landmark project, today I am asking that you turn your attention to the Foundation's Annual Fund. While there is little glamour attached to the Annual Fund, it is the financial heart of the Foundation's funding efforts. Like a good workhorse, Annual Fund dollars keep the day-to-day operation moving. Last year, our Virginia family of architects and friends set yet another Annual Fund record – increasing donations more than 25 percent from the year before.

As it is late December – with not a moment to lose – I ask that when you finish reading this letter you act immediately by

investing in the organization that continues to work hard to raise society's awareness of the importance of architecture and the built environment. I consider my Annual Fund gift a wise investment that promotes my belief in the importance of the built environment. I hope you, too, will consider your investment as both practical and smart. Strong support from architects and our colleagues in allied professions sends a valuable message to our corporate friends that we believe in our mission and are committed to back it financially. Indeed, at this time of growth, change, and increasing architectural awareness, it is important for all of us to give – even if it is only a modest gift.

So right now, before the end of the year, please join me in 1) pulling out your checkbook or credit card, 2) making an Annual Fund donation to the VFA, 3) filling out the enclosed form and mailing your check or card info in the envelope provided, and 4) taking a much deserved tax deduction for your sensible investment. Please accept my heartfelt thanks for your contribution last year and for considering a generous investment in the Virginia Foundation for Architecture's 2003 Annual Fund.

Willard M. Scribner, AIA, is Chairman of the Virginia Foundation for Architecture.



Will Scribner, AIA

Amtrak Pulls into Richmond's Main Street Station

Richmond's 102-year-old Main Street Station, a historic French Renaissance-style building in the Shockoe Bottom area, reopened to the public on Dec. 5. The opening marked a key step forward in the city's efforts to create a multimodal transportation center, which will offer services from Amtrak, Greyhound, and city buses, along with airport shuttles, taxis, and tour buses. The inaugural train, the first in more than 28 years, was scheduled to arrive Dec. 17 as part of a ceremonial event held by the city. Amtrak's public train service was set to begin the following day, providing Richmond with viable downtown-to-downtown passenger rail service to the northeast.

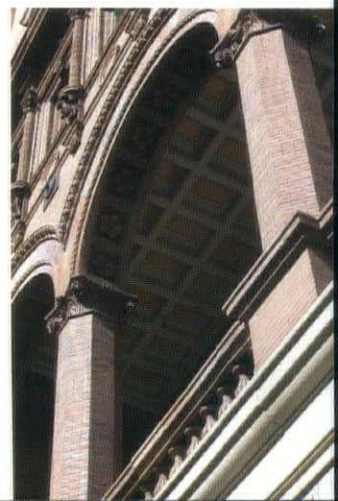
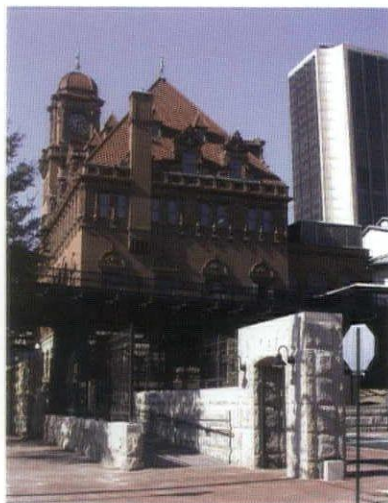
The completed work includes renovation of the head house, parking improvements, a new track platform, a mechanical plant, and a public art program. Future phases include work on the train shed and construction of facilities for the non-rail transportation components. Uriel Schlair, the lead preservation architect, says he believes the station

will be a catalyst for the revitalization of Shockoe Bottom. "To see the station's revival after its near demise is very gratifying," says Schlair, of Gensler, a San Francisco-based architecture firm. "It brings a strong sense of presence and importance to the area."

Work on the project dates back to 1996, when the city commissioned Harry Weese Associates, of Chicago, to perform the renovations. Analysis and photo documentation exposed the original color palette and provided clues to design elements such as lighting fixtures and ironwork. In 2002, Weese Associates merged with Gensler, which continued the project. Construction was delayed by numerous issues, including the collapse of the head house's second floor, says Viktoria Badger, principal planner for the city's transportation department.

The original station was designed by Wilson, Harris and Richards, of Philadelphia, and opened on Nov. 27, 1901. The 400-foot-long metal shed on the back of the head house is one of only a handful left in the country. Since the station closed in the 1970s, it has been adapted for use as a restaurant and a shopping center, suffering floods, fire, and neglect. Now Richmond officials are counting on the transportation center to galvanize redevelopment efforts in nearby areas of the city.

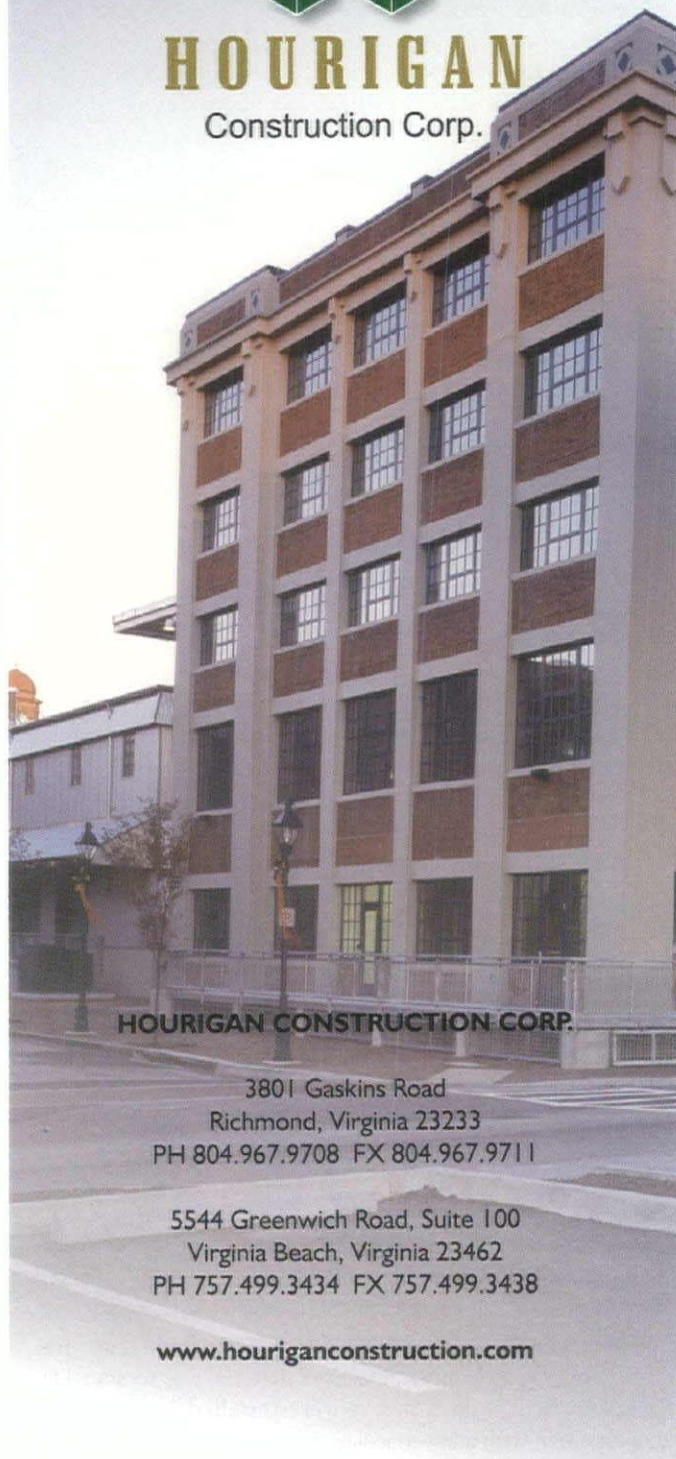
The landmark station presides over Shockoe Bottom (left). Work included restoration of the elaborate balcony (right).



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WebWatch by Rebecca E. Ivey

All Eyes on Main Street

www.mainstreet.org

The National Main Street Center is a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and while its website pales in comparison to the Trust's main site, it has a wholly different mission.

The center's purpose is to assist community leaders in creating a personalized main street program for their downtown or central business district, each scaled to the community's local resources and conditions. The site explores the main street concept in detail and suggests ways to tailor it to a particular community. Complex issues of utilizing tax credits and understanding legislation, such as the Community Reinvestment Act, are highlighted on the homepage and elucidated with detailed FAQs and in-depth articles. Also available are issues of the center's newsletter, a calendar of events, a sampling of revitalization projects, and details of center initiatives, such as its awards program, which recognizes efforts by communities and activists, and its annual conference, which focuses on developing resources and raising funds for revitalization programs.

People can join the center as a Network or Allied member to receive access to the password-protected part of the site, which houses a database containing articles, case studies, and records from the Main Street Census, an exhaustive compilation of statistics on programs nationwide. Also in the members-only section are a membership directory, template documents for those needing a little direction, and a ListServe feature, where members can network or seek advice.

Even without membership, visitors to the site can access the job board and business card resource, useful for finding professionals with experience in Main Street projects. Both of these seem a bit sparse, though. The site wraps up with a bookstore containing nearly 100 items, including books, CD-ROMs with PowerPoint presentations, and training kits with handbooks and presentation materials.

While the site isn't incredibly dynamic or flashy, its virtue is that it works. It's easy to navigate, and the information is simple to follow and valuable to those evaluating the main street approach to commercial revitalization. The center has created an online resource that reflects the organization and acts as a valuable tool to spread information and create an online network of Main Street believers.

Grade: B+



Articles cover subjects such as the
Community Reinvestment Act.



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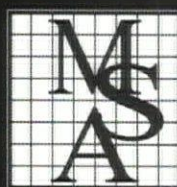
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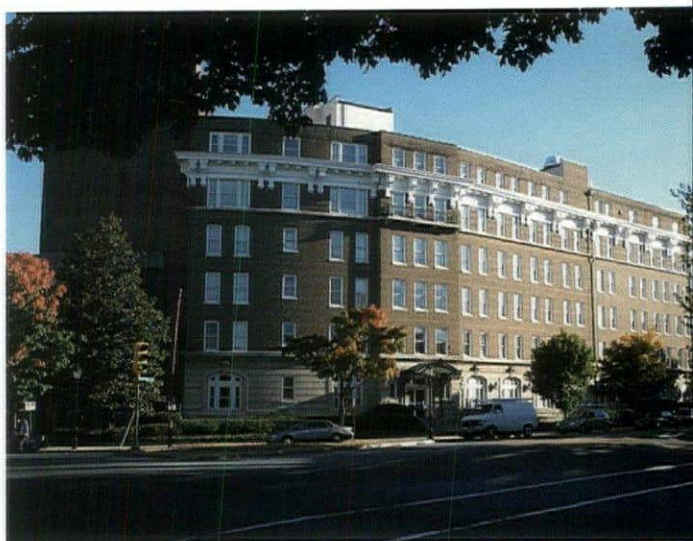
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Joe Mahoney

Creating New Possibilities for Urban Living



Miller (left) in front of the Lee School Lofts, an abandoned school converted into 40 apartments. More recent is his One Monument Avenue project, the former Stuart Circle Hospital (above).

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Robin Miller's Richmond decade has been focused on the preservation and rejuvenation, through sound but creative business practices and more than a little risk-taking, of great buildings in old and often deteriorating urban precincts. Since he came to town, "tagging along as the unemployed spouse" of his wife, Nan, who had been hired as executive director of the Children's Museum of Richmond, Miller has seized a position a step ahead of the growing migration from the monotony of suburbia to the pleasures of city living.

Earlier this year, Miller was presented the first Ukrops/First Market Award for Preservation Excellence by ACORN, the Alliance to Conserve Old Richmond Neighborhoods. The award recognized a body of work that has helped transform city neighborhoods including the Fan, the Museum District, Oregon Hill, downtown, and Shockoe Bottom. And now he has leapt south into Old Manchester.

"He's taken on some very large projects in tough parts of the city and he's put together the money and the users," says Jennie Knapp, ACORN's executive director. "He has come up with projects that are anchors for the revival of these neighborhoods. Robin eschews the popular wisdom all the time. He adapts and makes things financially viable."

In 2000, Miller took the 1930s Johnston-Willis Hospital, which he bought at foreclosure, and turned it into 117 high-end apartments. In 2001, he transformed the Robert E. Lee School, a classic 1918 elementary school with huge windows, high ceilings, and an auditorium, into 40 unique apartments that will be sold eventually as condominiums.

"He has a knack for picking the low-hanging fruit that nobody seems to want and then showing everyone else that this can work," says Don Charles, executive director of the Historic Richmond Foundation. "Somebody else might have done what Robin did, leveraging tax credits so successfully to the benefit of his company

By Rob Walker

and the community, but his spirit and attitude regarding preservation has been truly wonderful."

Miller holds a bachelor's degree from the United States Military Academy and a master's degree in public policy from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, to go with certification as a professional engineer. His first rehabilitation projects were in the late 1970s in Cambridge, Mass., and Tarrytown, N.Y.

Miller's easy manner and resonant twang are reminders of his roots in Kingsport, Tenn., where after he developed a planned community with 200 homes, he was instrumental in revitalization of the city's old downtown.

He brought this broad education and a lot of curiosity and energy when he and Nan and their two children came to Richmond a decade ago. (She has since moved into a new job at the Science Museum of Virginia.) Miller studied the market and found there were plenty of good builders working in new construction while there were just a few pursuing his-

toric tax credit work. "I looked around and fell in love with the architecture. I love the old buildings and I love the challenges that come with them," he says. Though "urban renewal" and neglect had done substantial harm in Richmond, Miller found that, thanks to a hearty preservation community and a little good fortune, the city was blessed with a substantial stock of old buildings spanning from antebellum to Art Deco. By 1995, he took on his first project in Richmond, transforming three pre-Civil War townhouses into apartments.

This year he was joined on a spectacular sunny day by beaming city leaders in front of a capstone conversion known as One Monument Avenue, a luxury apartment project overlooking the statue of General J.E.B. Stuart that will feature a doorman and rents starting at \$1,500 a month. In a few years, it will go condo.

The three critical redevelopment tools that he has used are federal and state historic tax credits, and the Richmond Real Estate Tax Abatement Program. "With a combination of those, we can make some deals work that would not ordinarily work," he says.

Another piece of his successful redevelopment puzzle is having two entities - Miller Associates and Monroe Properties, a development company and a property management company. "I want my tenants to have the quality of service when they move in that matches the quality of the work we did on the buildings. The way to ensure that is to do it ourselves. We keep the customers happy and we keep the vacancy rates low."

Miller offers high praise for Claude Cooper, the city's building commissioner. While city building codes are not designed for rehabilitating older buildings, Cooper "understands this and is excellent at working with an architect to help develop modifications" that will suit the code and the building. "Without Claude Cooper most of my deals wouldn't have worked," Miller asserts.

In addition to unfriendly building codes, Miller says many of his projects face severe challenges in requirements posed by the Americans with Disabilities Act. "Probably a third of the old buildings in Richmond cannot be reused if those requirements are strictly enforced," Miller says.

"We need some flexibility there."

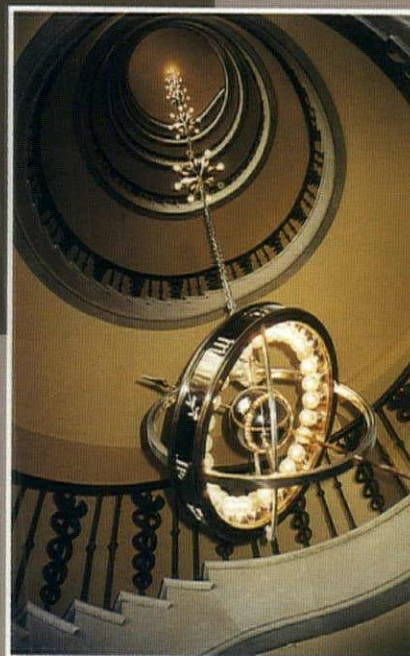
Miller acknowledges that he is something of a missionary for urban revitalization. He teaches a course on adaptive reuse in Virginia Commonwealth University's



Miller purchased the Parsons House (top) from the state in 2000 and converted it into eight apartments.

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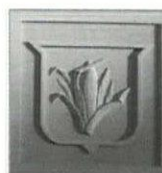
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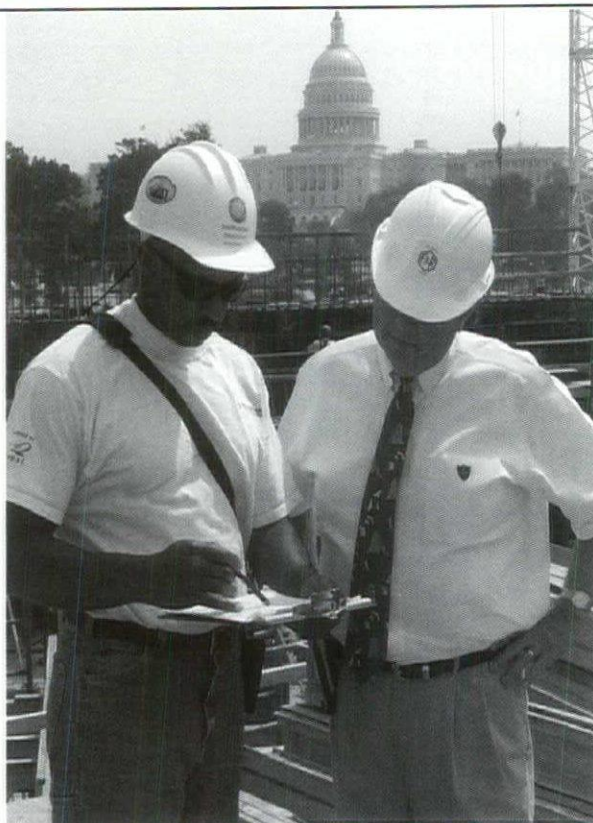
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Urban Planning Department. On a recent afternoon, he'd come from lunch with two of his students who were interested in buying one of the thousands of vacant houses in Richmond as a first step into historic preservation.

"Certainly my organization hasn't the time nor inclination to take on small projects like this," Miller says. "But if I can help them understand how to finance the project, how to get the tax credits they'll need to do a single-family house or two, then they'll begin turning some of these corners of the city around."

Miller is more optimistic about smaller projects than he is about huge proposals such as the \$100 million arts and theater complex proposed for Broad Street. "I'm hopeful; I'm cautiously optimistic," he says of the arts project. "But I believe the city will do better investing its redevelopment dollars in singles and doubles, rather than trying to hit a home run."

But residential development is Miller's forte, and he says Richmond's demand for urban housing has matured to the point at which he has begun two projects that will be completed without federal tax credits so they can immediately be owner occupied. Laurel Hill in the Fan and the Shockoe Valley Lofts will succeed, Miller says, "because demand for properties like this is extremely high right now." And while downtown will never likely recover as "Virginia's shopping center," Miller predicts the residential development there will create a lively retail environment. "We've got a grocery store in Shockoe Bottom after all these years. You're beginning to see boutique retail around – mom and pop businesses, coffee shops, and dry cleaners."

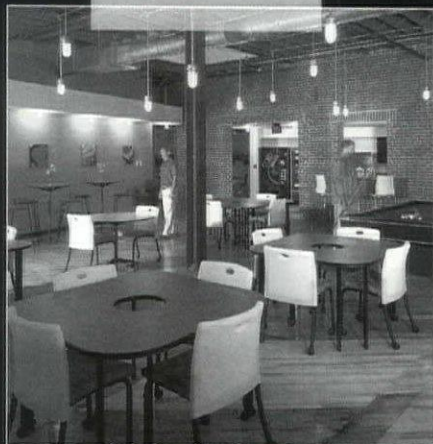
Miller looks 10 years into the future and sees downtown Richmond as a vibrant place 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with a cross-section of people spanning broad income ranges. "We've already moved beyond students and young singles to empty-nesters and some retired people. I see families coming back as the schools improve. I see a lot more ownership."

While Richmond is home, Miller acknowledges that he likes to visit other cities to investigate opportunities. He recently converted an old high school in Albuquerque, N.M., to residential, and he has other prospects in Norfolk, Staunton, Petersburg, and Fredericksburg. His focus in each involves historic tax credits and buildings in the downtown core. Soon he may be a fixture in your town, too.

Rob Walker is a Richmond freelance writer.

2003: number four **inform**

Baskervill



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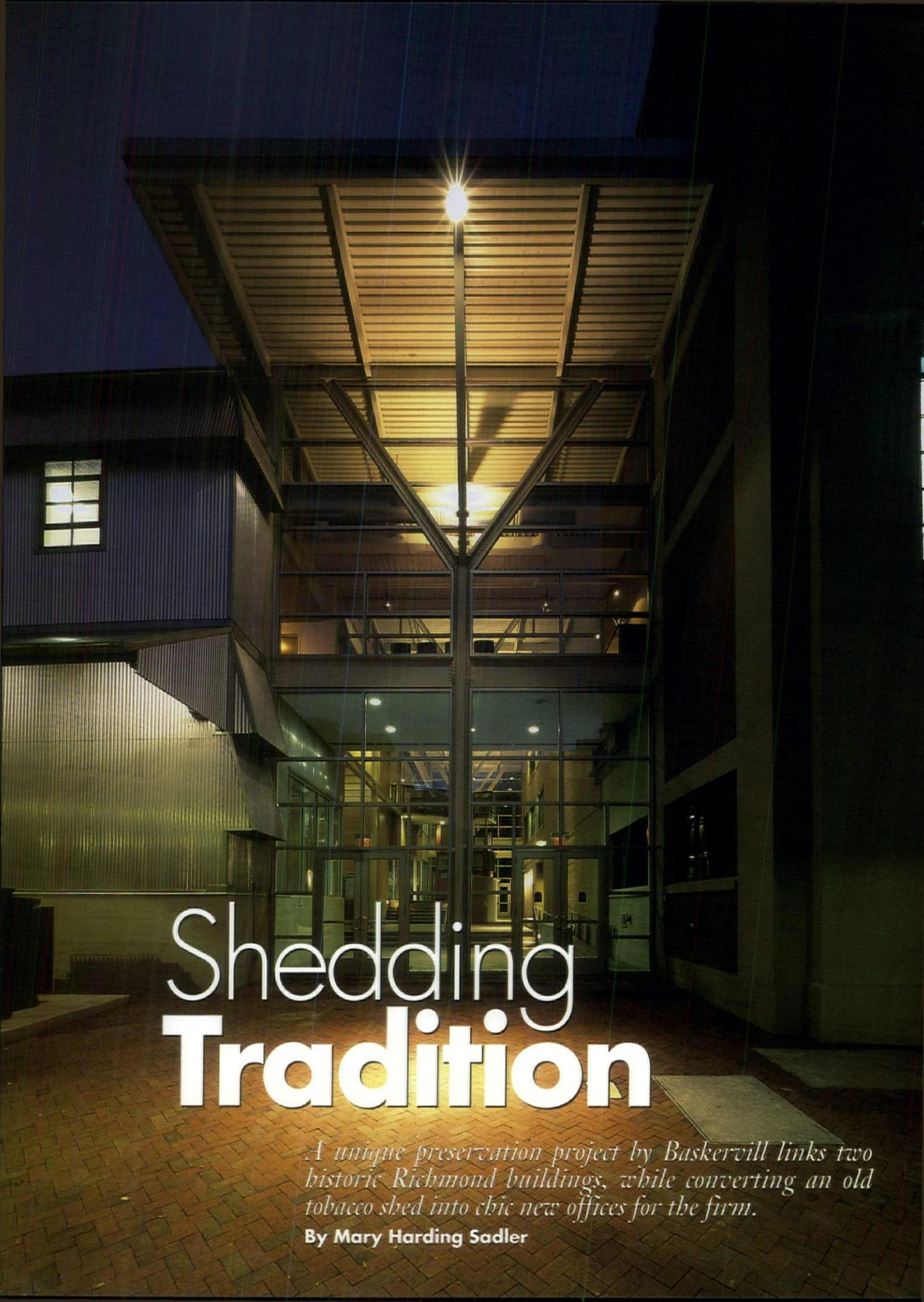
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Shedding Tradition

A unique preservation project by Baskervill links two historic Richmond buildings, while converting an old tobacco shed into chic new offices for the firm.

By Mary Harding Sadler

Historic preservation and good contemporary design embrace each other at Canal Crossing, a new mixed-use project in Richmond's emerging Shockoe Bottom area. By overcoming the preservationist's typical discomfort with modern architecture while bucking the trend in historic settings to create a modern infill that is so subservient as to be bland, Canal Crossing delivers the message that preservation can coexist with bold architecture.

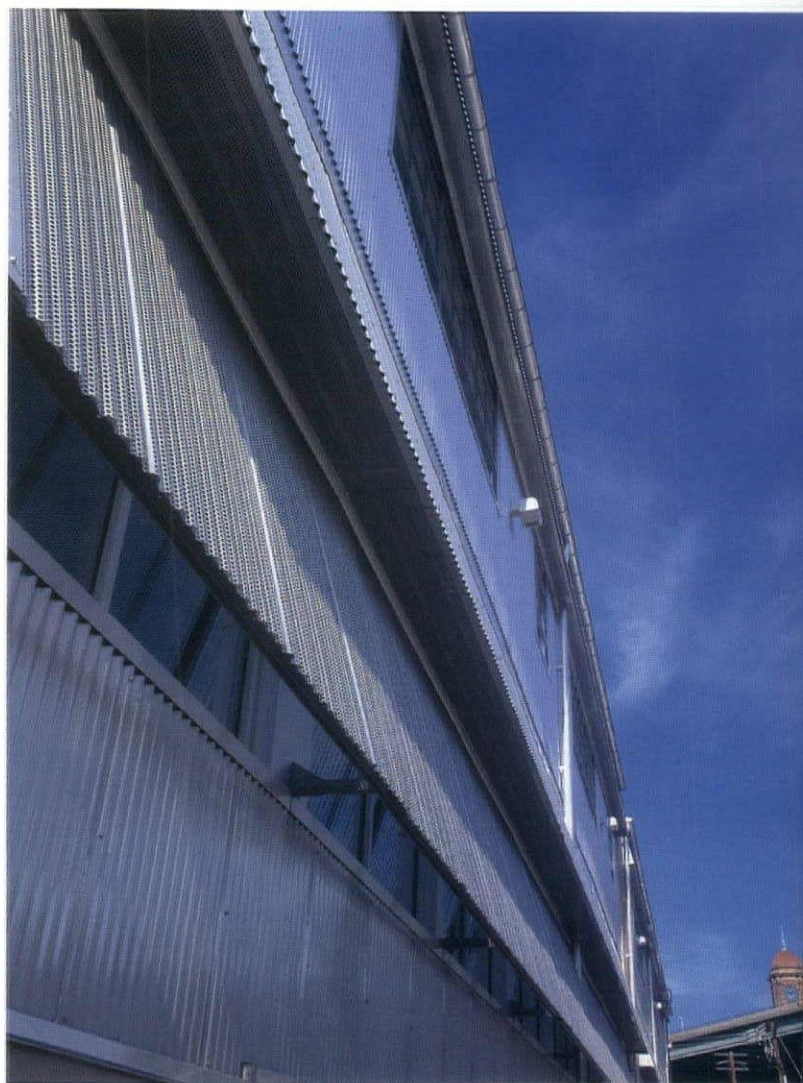
When Baskervill, a Richmond architecture firm, agreed to be both anchor tenant and architect for the project, the firm's partners had been looking for roughly 30,000 square feet of open space on a single floor near Richmond's financial district. They signed on as the sole second-floor tenant in the former tobacco shed not because designing historic space would advance their reputations as competent preservation architects, but because they wanted the building and their new offices to speak for the firm.

They also wanted to stay near the bustle of Shockoe Slip and the rejuvenated Main Street Station. They rejected the anonymity of life in a downtown high rise. Baskervill partner Brent Farmer, AIA, explains that a goal for the design was to reflect the firm's versatility. The project also demonstrates that preservation can be applied to a range of architectural specialties.

Architects, interior designers, and engineers teamed to realize the vision for the new space. As preliminary concepts evolved for the building's atrium, architect Robert Tierney, AIA, noticed that the spacious connector evoked river imagery: stairs suggested a waterfall and a curved wall at the elevator tower resembled the hull of a bateau, a narrow riverboat evoking Richmond's beginnings. Though never overtly expressed, the river imagery helped to refine design of the elements in the atrium. Arcing interior walls, which echo the curving elevated highways just east of the building, also serve to draw visitors into the office entries.

Treelike columns marching down the atrium's center line support the new roof. Braced on the north wall of the tower building and floating above the old tobacco shed, the atrium roof is positioned to allow natural light to pour in dramatically.

Inside Baskervill's offices, interior designer Shari Perago's varied palette of warm, saturated colors removes the chilliness from the building's industrial chic and makes it engaging. While deep yellow walls welcome visitors to the tower's vestibule, the walls in Baskervill's reception area vary from yellow to green to russet. Soffits make the large volumes more intimate and bring lighting closer to work surfaces. And a rhythm of closely spaced piers organizes a planned display area.



Baskervill replaced the lower band of the skirt with perforated panels that allow light inside the building (above).

A steel-and-glass atrium makes the link between the long, low shed and the taller warehouse building (facing page and drawing, right).

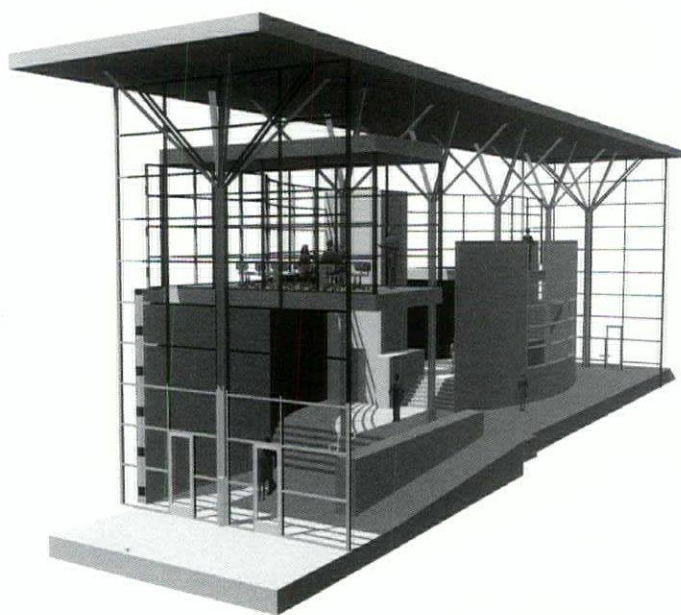




Baskervill's office space is layered, from the tightly controlled lobby to a zone that contains a resource room, presentation area, and large open lounge. The back portion of the office, which is reached by stepping through openings in the original brick fire wall, contains the design studios and offices for many of the principals. Historic materials such as brick, wood framing, and steel columns are left exposed and unpainted, so that they are easily discerned as original, and unaltered, elements.

Farmer recalls that some of the partners were at first skeptical that the building would be suitable for office use. A big problem was getting light into the building, especially on the east side. That concern was addressed by inserting additional windows on the second floor. On the floor below, where sunlight was blocked by the ventilating "skirts," windows were installed behind the skirts and the solid corrugated steel that angled outward was replaced with perforated panels that admit filtered light. Now the perforated metal allows for occupants to see out and the sun to come in, much like a screen. And the second floor offices achieve the desired outcome: an efficient, well-lit space that enhances communication within a large architectural firm.

The new quarters also presented an opportunity to spotlight Baskervill's talents. The conference room spanning the west end of the atrium, for example, has become a stage for architectural theater. Views from the space are unexpectedly dynamic. The western



The firm's conference room spans across the atrium on the second floor (right).



vista presents historic warehouses in the foreground, with a staggered backdrop of high-rise banks and offices, while the east end of the atrium frames fast-paced traffic on the curving highways and train tracks above Shockoe Bottom. At first, the firm's partners weren't sure about holding their most important meetings in what is essentially a fishbowl. As it turns out, the space has been great for meetings and there are many outside requests for use of the conference room.

The two buildings now joined as Canal Crossing were constructed in two phases. The original piece is a massive, five-story, concrete-frame tower designed by Carneal and Johnston and built in 1916 to warehouse groceries. Ornament on this symmetrical structure is limited to articulated corner bays, a paneled parapet, and a heavy rectangular cornice.

This mid-rise tower was converted from a warehouse to a cannery and then, in the early 1940s, to an annex for Philip Morris. In 1948, the cigarette manufacturing giant engaged Baskervill to design a two-story tobacco curing shed linked to the tower with a narrow hyphen. Facing 15th Street with a long, covered loading dock, the tobacco shed was an easily identifiable landmark with characteristic vents that fanned out from the building's face. Purely functional in origin, the vents allowed air to circulate in the shed without exposing the tobacco to harmful sunlight.

Entrepreneur Pete Lane acquired the property when Philip Morris began consolidating its operations in the 1990s. Developer Margaret Freund of Fulton Hill Properties recognized an interesting opportunity when she learned about Baskervill's search for new space on the edge of downtown. She and Lane teamed to form Elf LP, the building's current owner, to complete a rehabilitation that would both qualify for historic preservation tax credits and attract a mix of tenants.

Soon after Baskervill agreed to lease the space, Hourigan Construction joined the team and helped finance the demolition

The steel skeleton, enclosed with glass, allows views into and through the building (above). Rendering shows how atrium roof floats on treelike columns (left).



Use of perforated metal is carried through in the details of the atrium stair.



Reception area showcases custom desk and informal furnishings (left). Oval tables in studio provide workspace on top and book storage beneath (below left).

phase so the project could advance. The entire team collaborated to enhance design, accelerate construction of the architectural office, and resolve the myriad of unexpected conditions revealed in the course of any historic rehabilitation.

When asked how she happened to develop a historic tobacco shed as the headquarters for Richmond's oldest architecture firm, a normally feisty Freund demurs. "I don't really see myself as a classic preservationist," she says. "I listen to a building and respond to what it tells me it wants to be."

In the process, Baskervill, whose history is one of service to corporate clients, institutions, and healthcare companies, has designed an efficient and colorful office with an atrium that deftly bridges the dissimilar components of a historic industrial facility. Hourigan Construction, whose reputation was founded

on erecting new office buildings, has established enviable expertise with its first venture into historic tax credit renovation. And the handsome outcome announces that vivid, high-quality, contemporary design and historic preservation can be combined with admirable results.

Mary Harding Sadler, of Richmond, was the historic tax credit consultant for the Canal Crossing project.

Project: Canal Crossing, Richmond

Architect: Baskervill, Richmond (Mark Lindsey, AIA, principal-in-charge; Bob Tierney, AIA, Shari Perago, Eddie Breeden, AIA, Brad Richards, AIA, Sean Cantrell, PE, Chris Giles, Randy Lowry, Tamara Barnes, Susan Orange, Elizabeth Clifford, RIBA, Mark Larson, AIA, Brent Farmer, AIA, Mike Nash, AIA, Don Hostvedt, AIA, project team)

Consultants: Ronayne and Turner (structural); Draper Aden Associates (civil)

Contractor: Hourigan Construction

Owner: Elf LP

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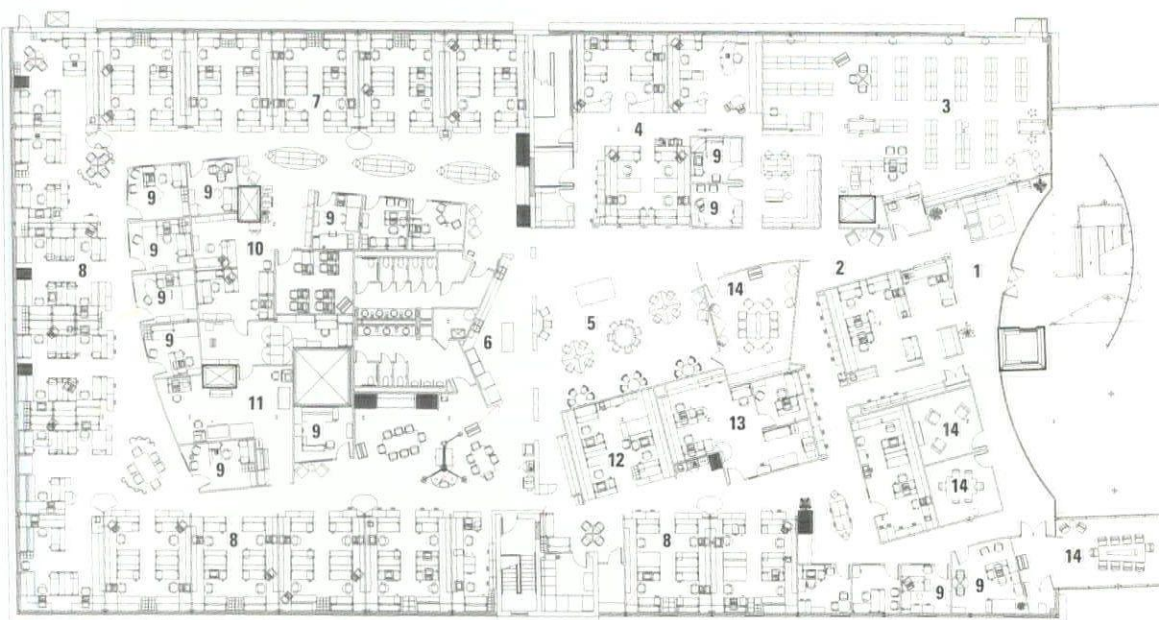
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The firm's break area occupies the heart of the office – and placed conveniently next to the kitchen, located behind the original fire wall.



- 1 Reception
- 2 Display Area
- 3 Resource Library
- 4 Hospitality Group
- 5 Break Area
- 6 Kitchen
- 7 Engineering Group
- 8 Architecture/Interiors
- 9 Principals' Offices
- 10 Information Technology
- 11 Plotters
- 12 Specifications Group
- 13 Business Development
- 14 Conference Room



Second Floor Plan



With original columns and windows restored and an access ramp removed, the Thomas Balch Library has regained its 1922 appearance.

Landmark Addition

A sensitive addition to the Thomas Balch Library in Leesburg doubles the size of the 1920s-era institution, while occasioning a thorough restoration of the treasured building.

By Kim A. O'Connell

In 1922, architect Waddy B. Wood traveled from Washington, D.C. – where he was famous for his neoclassical city landmarks – to the quiet Virginia town of Leesburg. There, on a slight hill near the center of town, Wood designed a compact Georgian Revival library named for local historian Thomas Balch. The appearance of the library, now devoted to genealogical and historical research, changed little over eight decades. Yet the surrounding town has been transformed dramatically into a crowded bedroom community for Washington, D.C.

Library officials and patrons shared several concerns: they wanted to expand the 3,400-square-foot structure, while updating technology, providing wheelchair access, and incorporating a community meeting space. Such upgrades had to preserve the appearance of the historic building, which had fallen into a state of disrepair.

The town gave Bowie Gridley Architects, of Washington, the dual tasks of restoring the old library and designing a sympathetic

addition that would double the available space. “Whenever you add on to a building like this, there’s the debate about ‘Do you make it exactly like the existing building or do you make it look different?’” says William Gridley, FAIA, principal-in-charge of the project. “We were looking at something that did a little bit of both.”

The original structure features a central high-ceilinged room capped by a cupola, with two wings that served as reading rooms on the main floor and a basement that had mechanical systems, offices, and storage. Four classic white columns frame the stately brick facade, with oculus windows beneath the eaves.

Located behind the historic building, the addition echoes the original structure in form and scale. The new central pavilion is sheathed in cast stone and crowned with a dramatic skylight – immediately distinguishing it from its historic counterpart. Two brick wings accommodate archival space and a reading room. The new rear entrance mimics the front entrance’s four columns,

but also incorporates an unobtrusive ramp for accessibility.

By moving the main entrance to the back, the designers preserved the front lawn and yew-lined walkway to the former main entrance, which is now used primarily by patrons who come by foot, rather than by car. The team also removed a clunky wooden access ramp that had been added to the front. "We were trying to preserve the Waddy Wood building so it appeared as it had for the past 80 or 90 years," says project manager Tim Lovett, AIA.

Although the Balch Library had suffered no major alterations, the building had been plagued by chronic water damage. Brickwork, columns, shutters, plaster molding, and other features desperately needed to be restored or replaced. In addition, the hinged glass beneath the cupola had been painted over, ostensibly to prevent glare in the reading rooms.

Bowie Gridley replaced the roof and the cupola glass, while also restoring the columns on the front portico, adding lightning rods to the roofline, and restoring exterior shutters. The design team also replaced copper gutters and downspouts, and collaborated with a local metalworker to create collection boxes based on Wood's original designs.

Inside, the team repaired or replaced much of the original plaster molding and conducted a paint analysis to closely match the original ecru color of the interior walls. To unite the old and new spaces, Bowie Gridley continued the traditional style of the molding and bookcases from the historic rooms into the addition and used the same carpeting in both areas. A small room connects the two central pavilions, anchored by two new columns that closely match an existing pair.

"The old building ended with these two great big columns," Gridley explains. "We intentionally mirrored that place with two new columns; then we created a pavilion with a volume that is similar to the historic structure. But it's clearly a contemporary piece, with the skylight."

Gridley notes that one of the hardest things to do in a building such as the Balch Library is to minimize the visibility of mechanical systems and communications technology, while at the same time bringing the building up to snuff in terms of humidity, temperature control, power, and data. "It's one of the real successes in this building," he adds.

Mechanical systems posed a particular challenge for the designers, who had to adequately heat and cool the library's



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New spaces include a reading room (above) overlooking a garden. Site plan (right) shows how the addition, at bottom, mirrors the original library.

Site Plan 0 20 40



A louvered skylight brings diffused light into the circulation area, whose Ionic columns nod to the old library. Mural added to the frieze (right) depicts the history of Loudoun County.

various rooms while staying true to their desire to conceal ducts and vents. Air supply vents were built into the custom cherry millwork beneath the windows, for example, while return air ducts were hidden in corners where bookcases abut. Working with furniture-makers Thomas Moser, the design team also outfitted the library with large tables that are wired for laptop computers. Although the tables are cloaked in traditional forms, their wiring is strictly of contemporary times.

In addition to updating offices and work stations in the basement, the design team accommodated a new kitchen and lounge, handicapped accessible restrooms, and a large conference room in the addition's basement. Steps from the lower level lead up to the outdoor terrace, allowing easy access to the outside.

One of the most striking aspects of the Balch Library addition is the mural painted on the frieze beneath the skylight. The mural depicts the history of Loudoun County from colonial times to the computer age – fitting images for a building that blends old and new. And it's a suitable touch of dignity for an institution that has stood the test of time as an icon for Leesburg.

Kim O'Connell is a freelance preservation writer based in Arlington.

Project: Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg

Architect: Bowie Gridley Architects, Washington, D.C. (William C. Gridley, FAIA, principal-in-charge; Tim Lovett, AIA, project manager; Natalie Morency, Chris Riordan, project team)

Consultants: McMullan & Associates (structural); Bansal & Associates (mechanical); Fitch Studio (landscape architecture); Paciulli, Simmons & Associates, Ltd. (civil); James Hollis Peacock (cost consultant)

General Contractor: ZEI, L.C.

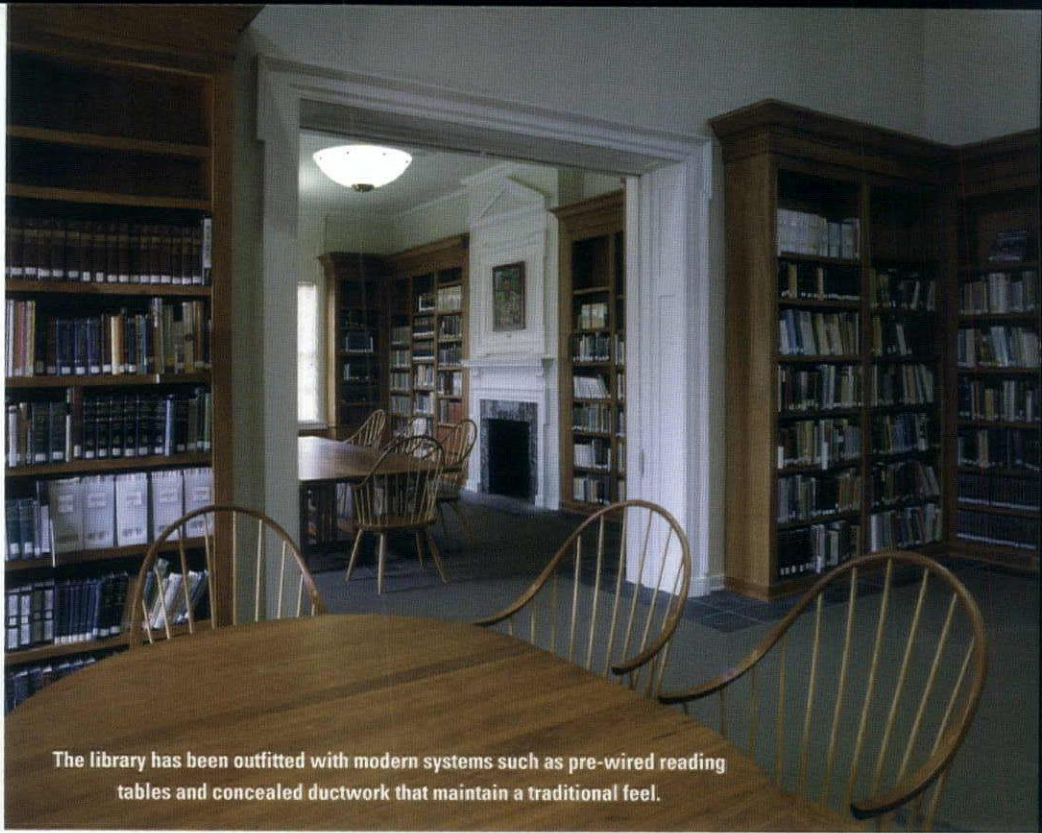
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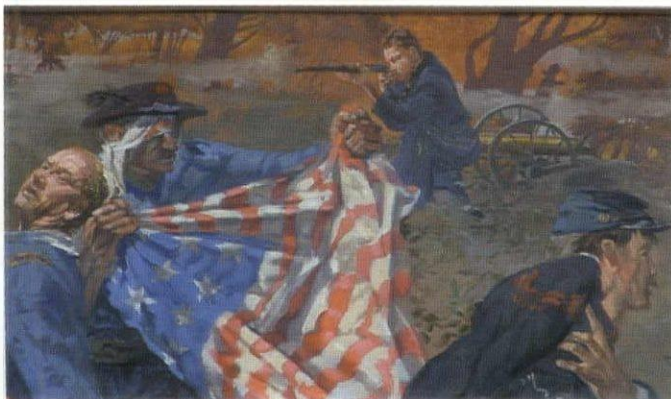
The library has been outfitted with modern systems such as pre-wired reading tables and concealed ductwork that maintain a traditional feel.



First Floor Plan



- 1 Lobby
- 2 Circulation
- 3 Reserve Stacks
- 4 Reading Room
- 5 Catalogue
- 6 Collections/Reading
- 7 Steps Down



Keepsake Cabin

Reader & Swartz Architects' renovation of the original log cabin at Wheatland Farms in Waterford makes a functional dwelling out of an old shell that was considered too important to discard.

By Vernon Mays



The cross-gable addition on the rear of the cabin provides a porch with broad steps that make a gracious setting for informal gatherings.



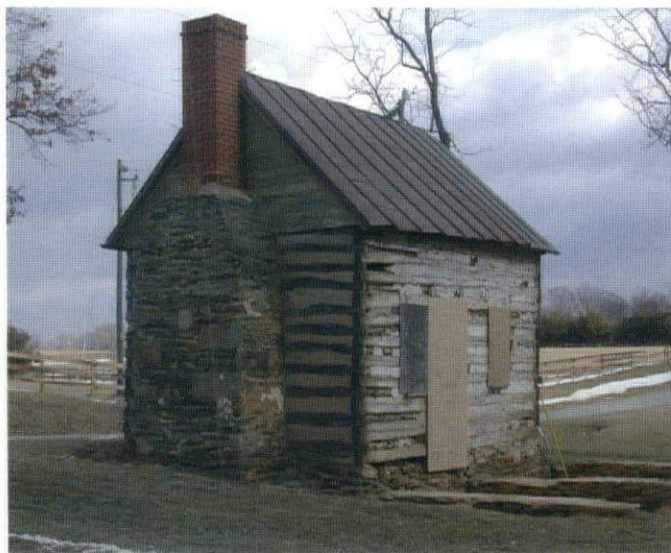
The main space in the old cabin now makes for a cozy sitting room, with an adjacent kitchen in the addition (above). The owners got a good sense of the original dwelling's dimensions (below) after a ramshackle shed addition was torn down.

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Sometime in the early 1800s, the erection of an unpretentious one-and-a-half-story log cabin marked the start of Wheatland Farms in the rolling hills near Waterford. Some 200 years later, the vagaries of nature had taken their toll on the tiny wood structure. But Ava Abramowitz – who owns the farm and cabin with her husband, Neil Rackham – regarded the cabin as too important to discard. “Ava thought the cabin was an icon for the farm,” says architect Beth Reader, AIA. “She felt a responsibility toward it, even though some people told her she was crazy not to tear it down because it was in such bad shape.”

But Abramowitz was not to be deterred. She hired Reader & Swartz Architects, of Winchester, to restore the original log cabin, remove a ramshackle shed addition, and rebuild a sympathetic addition to make the dwelling more functional. Stripped down to its basic form, the cabin had a footprint measuring less than 15 by 19 feet. Its front door was barely five feet high. “It was so little that you couldn’t overwhelm it,” says Reader, referring to the kid-gloves approach she adopted in the process of adding to it.

Reader imagined the addition as a cross-gable piece whose roof would defer to the original cabin’s diminutive scale, yet provide enough space to comfortably house needed conveniences. The addition contains what the log portion didn’t – a kitchen, laundry room, bathrooms, and plenty of natural light. “We wanted to give it a sense of height and some daylight, because the old cabin was so dark,” Reader explains. The two-story kitchen gives the house an openness it lacked, and the new glass-floored catwalk spanning above the kitchen helps to bring in sunlight.



Innovative construction techniques were put to work in repairing the logs and building an entirely new roof structure that covers the old roof. In the case of the logs, the original chinking and daubing was stripped from between them. Each log was evaluated, and those in good condition were saved. The ones in poor shape were split open. Decayed material was removed from them, and then walnut blocks were installed to hold the log faces together, with a low-viscosity epoxy poured into the remaining cavity. Where the ends of logs had rotted away, segments of salvaged logs were spliced in and distressed so they’d blend.



The airy kitchen receives daylight from above, thanks to the glass-floored catwalk overhead.

The cabin's existing roof structure was kept in place, but a new ridge beam, rafters, and insulation were placed over the original material. This new "redundant" roof system provided a structurally sound, insulated covering, while allowing the old round pole rafters, skip sheathing boards, and metal roof to be exposed inside on the cabin's second floor.

Modern technology is tightly packed into both the old and new sections of the cabin, which is equipped with a sophisticated sound system, speakers concealed behind the drywall, and high-speed internet access. Rotted chinking was replaced and new wire lath was installed between the logs on both the interior and exterior faces, creating a cavity in which new wiring and insulation could be installed.

For entertaining purposes, the small rooms inside the cabin almost begged for something on the outside to supplement them. Reader & Swartz saw an opportunity on the front of the addition to create a porch with steps that stretch across the full width, making it more spacious and easy to use. "It's a little space, so we just decided if you have a party it would be nice for people to be able to step up onto it easily," Reader explains. "The steps helped to make it more gracious."

With these changes, the life of the Wheatland Farms log cabin has been extended indefinitely. The renovation and addition were designed to make the cabin usable as a small rental house, but for now it serves as Rackham's writing studio. Given the outcome of the renovation, it's little wonder he couldn't give it up.



Pole rafters, skip sheathing, and metal roofing from the old cabin give a rustic feel to the second-floor study.

Project: Wheatland Farms Log Cabin, Waterford
Architect: Reader & Swartz Architects, Winchester (Beth Reader, AIA, Chuck Swartz, AIA, Dan Zimmerman, AIA, project team)
Consultants: Painter-Lewis (structural); Comfort Design (mechanical)
Builder: Preservation Associates, Inc.
Owner: Wheatland Farms, LLC. (Ava Abramowitz and Neil Rackham, managers)

RESOURCES

ROOF AND WALL INSULATION: Air Krete; **ADDITION WINDOWS:** Marvin Windows; **MILLWORK, FLOORING, SPECIALTY WOODWORK:** Preservation Associates, Inc.; **COUNTERTOPS:** Corian; **PLUMBING FITTINGS:** Herbeau; **PAINTS:** Benjamin Moore; **TOILETS:** Toto



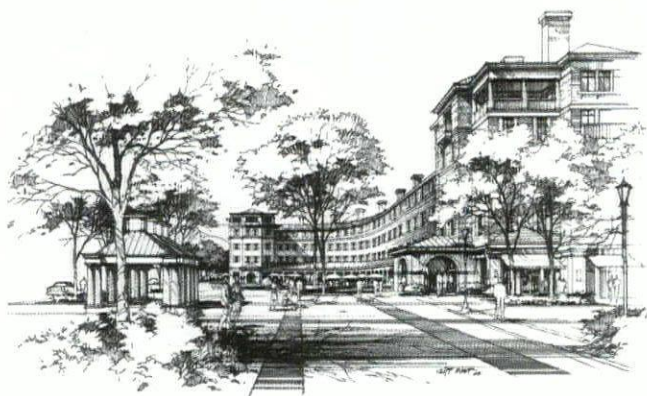
First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

- 1 Front Entrance
- 2 Living Room
- 3 Kitchen/Dining
- 4 Rear Porch
- 5 Bedroom/Study
- 6 Catwalk
- 7 Bath

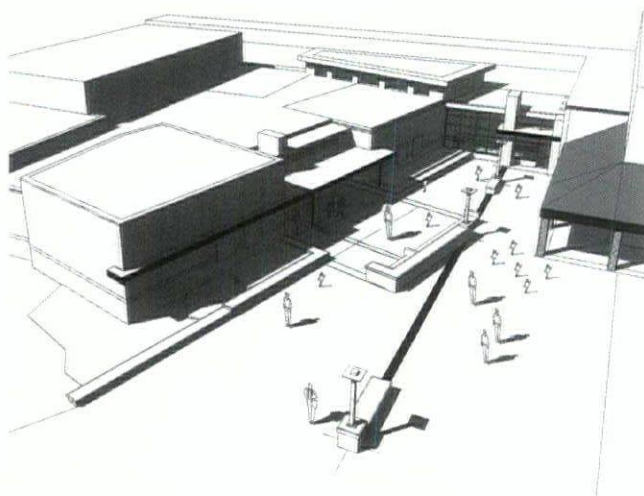




Architect: Mitchell/Matthews Architects and Urban Planners, Charlottesville
Project: Multi-Family Residential, U.Va. Research Park at North Fork

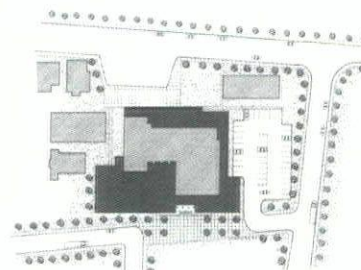
Shown is Faulkner Square, the hub of a 400-800 unit multi-family development being proposed with Neighborhood Development LLC, of Charlottesville, for a new residential district at North Fork. This scheme suggests relocating the soon-to-be-demolished Observatory Hill dining pavilion. Tel: 434-979-7550

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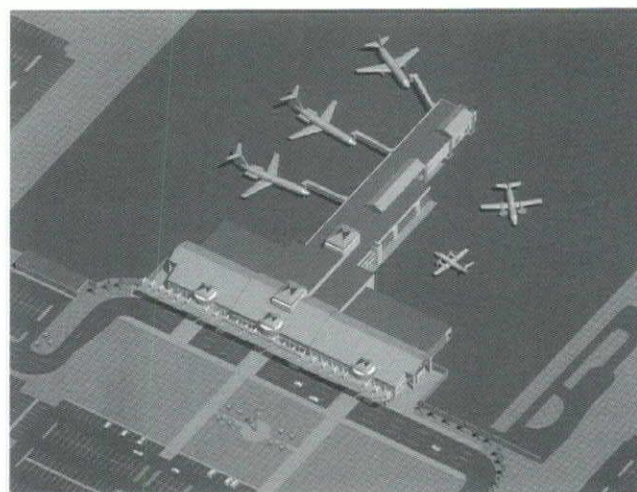
Architect: BCWH, Richmond
Project: Manchester H.S. Communications & Spanish Immersion Center

This addition will be used for immersing students in Spanish language and culture, as well as providing a state-of-the-art graphics and video studio. The initial response reflects the need to create a more recognizable entry. It is the intent of the addition to create a school within a school. Tel: 804-788-4774



Architect: Wiley & Wilson, Lynchburg
Project: Petersburg District Courts Building

Wiley & Wilson recently completed a planning/design study to renovate and enlarge the Petersburg District Courts Building. The study included concepts, recommendations, and estimates. The renovated façade will compliment the adjacent historic district. Tel: 434-947-1901 / info@wileywilson.com



Architect: Gresham, Smith and Partners, Richmond
Project: Okaloosa Regional Airport

A new seven-gate, 105,000 s.f. replacement terminal will include ticketing, baggage claim, concessions, and airport administration spaces, as well as a conference center. First- and second-level holdrooms will allow passenger travel aboard regional aircraft and larger jet aircraft. Tel: 804-788-0710



Architect: Meditch Murphey Architects, Chevy Chase, Md.
Project: House in Zhujiatiao, Shanghai, China

This house is part of a development bound together by an extensive network of canals circling the old town of Zhujiatiao near Shanghai. The house design is based on a series of connected spiraling usable roofs, each one slightly higher than the other. Tel: 301-657-9400



Architect: Thomas Hamilton & Associates, Richmond
Project: Linden Row Inn

Richmond's historic Linden Row Inn has selected Thomas Hamilton & Associates to design an extensive interiors refurbishment. The final result will maintain period charm, while meeting 21st-century guest expectations. Tel: 804-266-4853 / www.thomashamiltonassociates.com

Architect: DMJMdesign, Washington, D.C.
Project: Al-Warsan International Village

This project is an 800-hectare masterplan for a township of 70,000 residents in Dubai, UAE, comprising multiple neighborhoods themed to different regions of the world, a CBD, schools, mosques, retail, hotels, and a world class merchandise mart. Tel: 703-807-2500



Architect: Quinn Evans Architects, Washington, D.C.
Project: National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution

The \$15 million rehabilitation of the Central Halls will restore the historic appearance of the principal exhibition gallery and circulation pathway for the more than 10 million annual visitors. A new exhibit devoted to the sea and ocean life will occupy the space. Tel: 202-298-6700 / www.quinnevans.com

On the Boards



Architect: Huff-Morris Architects, P.C., Richmond

Project: Victory Nissan

This new 35,700 s.f. automobile dealership will be located in Richmond on West Broad Street near Short Pump. The facility will include a two-story showroom area and administrative space, as well as a 23-bay service department with two floors of parts storage. Tel. 804-343-1505 / www.huffmorris.com

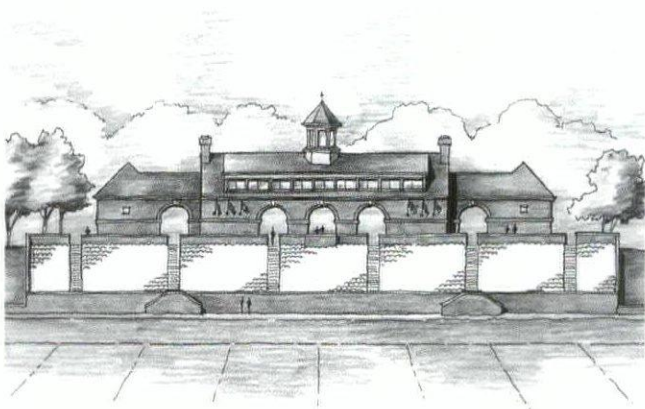


Architect: Phillips Swager Associates, McLean

Project: Frederick Work Release/Substance Abuse Center

PSA recently designed and bid a stand-alone, 128-bed, two-story work release/substance abuse community corrections center in Frederick County, Md. The building incorporates a central core, counseling rooms, a library, classroom space, and other programmed activity areas. Tel: 703-748-1804

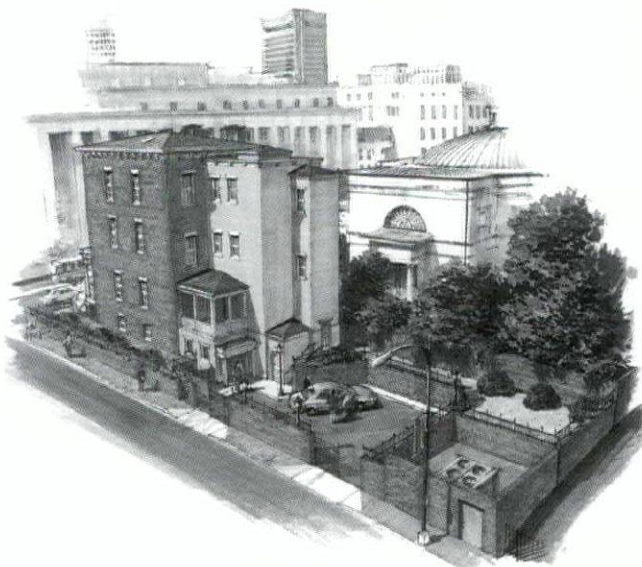
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Architect: Marcellus Wright Cox Architects, Richmond

Project: Hampden-Sydney College Stadium

Situated near the entrance to the Hampden-Sydney campus, the new sports stadium reflects the simple Federal design of the college. The stadium, which seats 1,900 spectators, has a 1,420 s.f. press box on the top floor. Tel: 804-780-9067



Architect: Baskerville, Richmond

Project: Beers House Preservation

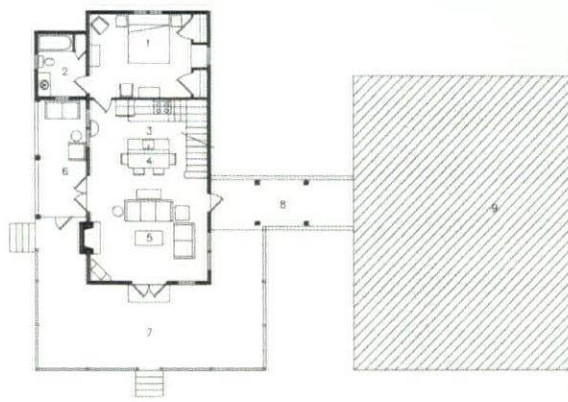
This 1839 house, owned by the MCV Foundation, is the sole reminder of the former character of this portion of Richmond's Broad Street. The existing 5,100 s.f. facility and a new 2,000 s.f. addition will serve as the organization's new home. It has qualified for Historic Tax Credits. Tel: 804-343-1010



Architect: Gresham, Smith and Partners, Richmond

Project: Greater Baltimore Medical Center

This is the first phase of a new campus master plan. A new six-story, 120,000 s.f. medical office building will provide office and support space for the hospital and future tenants. A six-level, 1,070-space parking garage will serve the new medical office building and the hospital campus. Tel: 804-788-0710



- LEGEND**
- 1 BEDROOM
 - 2 BATHROOM
 - 3 KITCHEN
 - 4 DINING
 - 5 FAMILY ROOM
 - 6 SCREENED PORCH
 - 7 DECK
 - 8 BREEZEWAY
 - 9 FUTURE HOUSE

Architect: Smith + McClane Architects, Richmond

Project: Private Cottage

This 800 s.f. cottage is the first of several buildings planned for a wooded lot overlooking the Potomac River. Intended for eventual use as a guest cottage, it takes advantage of the water views and includes a screened porch and large open deck area. A loft space provides a second bedroom. Tel: 804-648-8533

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Architect: Hanbury Evans Wright Vlattas & Company, Norfolk

Project: Lentek Alumni Center, University of Central Florida

The center will be a 24,500 s.f. facility used to nurture relationships with alumni. It includes a great hall for meetings, dinners, and indoor/outdoor social gatherings; multimedia conference space, an alumni library, guest business facilities, staff offices, and meeting and service spaces. Tel: 757-321-9600



Architect: HSMM, Charlotte with Centerbrook

Project: Studio Arts Center, UNC at Greensboro

This 100,000 s.f. concrete frame building houses the Departments of Art and Interior Architecture. It features drawing, sculpture, and digital studios, a foundry, wood shop, and classrooms. High ceilings, natural finishes, and expansive windows create an open and dynamic learning environment. Tel: 540-857-3257

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David Salmela, of Duluth, Minn., a self-trained modernist whose work draws on the varied influences of Minnesota's immigrant communities.

Frank Harmon, of Raleigh, N.C., whose simple galleries and utility buildings elevate vernacular architecture to high art.

Program fee:

\$160 including Saturday meals

To register, see the Virginia Design Forum page at aiava.org, or call the Virginia Society AIA at 804-644-3041.

! Taking Note

Athletics are going big-time at Virginia Tech. But the appearance inside of Cassell Coliseum, the university's basketball stadium, wasn't conveying the same message. The public spaces were drab, at best. Vinyl tile floors, concrete block walls with plain white paint, and acoustical tile ceilings gave the spaces all the currency of last week's news. Maybe last year's.

Tech's athletic department wanted to enliven the space, so they brought in Train & Partners Architects, of Charlottesville, to perform the makeover. With a design team led by principal Kirk Train, AIA, and project architect H. Adams Sutphin, the architects produced a scheme that would open up the ceiling of the ambulatory space, reconfigure the concessions areas, and dress up the portals leading into the stands.

Concession booths were relocated to the east and west lobbies, which concentrated the activity in larger open spaces and moved food areas away from restrooms. Dropped ceilings were taken away to expose the stepped underside of the arena's concrete bowl. "We thought, wouldn't it be great if we could take out the flat ceiling and open up the space?" says Sutphin. "We got the job because we were thinking differently about the space. But then we looked up in the ceiling and found a mess of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, which were obviously never meant to be exposed." To produce a cleaner look, they removed existing mechanical and electrical systems or reorganized them in a series of conduit trays, which also support uplights that brighten the space.

To increase space inside the cramped concessions areas, the architects brought the front wall forward. Paneled walls of maroon and clear-finished birch plywood create a tilted façade over the concession areas and other lobby walls. Portals leading into the arena are clad in the signature "Hokie stone," a locally mined limestone.

Train & Partners' transformation is only the first phase of renovation. The north and south lobbies will receive similar treatment. Though many changes are practical necessities, the firm has upgraded the overall experience of the ambulatory space from institutional to invigorating.

From Institutional to Invigorating



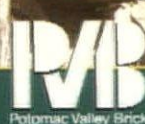
From the custom carpet and maroon-stained panels to the bright orange lintels above the "Hokie stone" portals, the ambulatory space now boasts its school pride.



Before renovation, the space was boxy and sterile, with little natural light and institutional white walls.

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