

2005: number one

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# inform

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# From the Editor

## **Due Deliberation**

In case you haven't noticed the whopping hole in the ground in downtown Richmond, one of the Commonwealth's most important architectural projects of the past century is now underway. The restoration of the Virginia State Capitol, one of the most revered buildings in the state and a key artifact in the architectural



legacy of Thomas Jefferson, began soon after the 2004 General Assembly session. Included in the scope of the work is the repair of the original building, which was first occupied in 1788, construction of new visitor facilities and meeting rooms, and implementation of a new landscape plan (see story, p. 6).

It's a juicy project for any architect to tackle, with a broad range of restoration initiatives based on careful analysis of architectural evidence found throughout the building. It is fascinating work that combines reasoned judgment and established forensic techniques. What's not routine about this project is the new Capitol extension that will connect Jefferson's "Temple on the Hill" to a classically-styled entrance located at the bottom of the slope half a block away on Bank Street. The building that connects these two distant structures will be unseen to legislators and visitors alike, at least from the outside, because it will be entirely underground.

What seems, at first blush, to be an extreme solution to a demand for better visitor services and a shortage of space for legislative hearing rooms was the subject of much discussion and debate. The design team investigated four possible locations for the addition, each one abutting a different face of the Capitol. The proposals were evaluated using several guidelines, one of which prohibited cluttering Capitol Square with a new building. Under those rules, the only place to go was down. All of the options, except for one built to the south, were complicated by the probability of costly underpinning of the old Capitol in order to build an adjacent structure.

Last year, a blue ribbon panel of architects, preservation officials, and other parties was invited to hear presentations on the evolving plans. I attended two of these sessions, in April and July, during which many tough questions were asked. One architect, for instance, expressed concern about a lack of natural light in the underground spaces. Others raised questions about the decision to pattern the entrance in the Doric style of the Temperance Spring at Bremo, a 19th-century Virginia estate. Historians on the panel defended that choice as the appropriate way to render the new entrance to Jefferson's Capitol. Lengthy discussion focused on the functional difficulties created by the absence of a proposed underground link to the General Assembly Building, where legislators' offices are located. Without that tunnel, there appeared no sensible way to bring food and supplies into the kitchen that will serve the new underground café. In addition, schematic renderings of the addition's interior were challenged on the grounds that they appeared more like a slick commercial building than a dignified entrance to a venerable seat of government.

Construction crews will start pouring foundations for the addition this spring, but some of the concerns raised a year ago appear to have been overlooked or ignored. Efforts in the 2005 General Assembly failed to restore funding for the link to the legislators' office building, which is unfortunate. Equally troubling is the fact that the final design of the addition's interior remains something of a mystery, for the Department of General Services' website still displays images clearly labeled as "concepts" and Inform's requests for more current documents were unsuccessful.

In spite of verbal assurances from those involved in the project that the addition will be second to none, a civic commission of this magnitude demands the highest level of scrutiny in a public forum. Somewhere in the mix, it seems, is pressure to produce this building in haste – without adequate deliberation along the way. The complicating issue may be time or money or politics. But the citizens of the Commonwealth deserve better. So does Jefferson's Capitol. – Vernon Mays



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#### volume sixteen number one

#### **Medical Breakthrough**

With a major heart center addition to CJW Medical Center in Richmond, architects Gresham, Smith and Partners reconstitute a 30-year-old prototype hospital and position it for tough competition in the health care marketplace. *By Vernon Mays* 

#### A Legacy of Care

Suffolk's admiration for local philanthropist and Planters Peanut Co. baron Amedeo Obici and his wife Louise shines through in the multi-layered design of the Louise Obici Memorial Hospital designed by HKS, Inc. *By Jim Raper* 

#### **Function and Form**

Odell Associates approached the design of Hampton's Sentara CarePlex by focusing on patient care principles and practical requirements, which resulted in an attractive and eminently functional medical campus. *By Rebecca E. Ivey* 

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Design Lines

new developments in design

## V

Books a critic's view of Ground Zero

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Taking Note doing the small thing well



On the cover: CJW Levinson Heart Hospital. Photo by Joseph Lapeyra Photography. In our next issue: Center for Architecture Opening 14th Inform Awards Review of Virginia Buildings

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Design Lines

he Virginia State Capitol is getting more than a facelift it's getting an extreme makeover. From a complete restoration of the 90,000-square-foot Capitol building, to a 27,000-square-foot underground addition, this project aims to restore Thomas Jefferson's civic monument. This \$83 million project is the crown jewel of a \$130.9 million plan for the surrounding Capitol Square, which will restore the nearby Finance Building, Washington Building, and Old State Library and Archives Building. A comprehensive landscape plan for the square is also in the works.

The capitol suffers from accessibility problems, antiquated mechanical systems, poor ventilation, and moisture damage. The 1960s-era electrical, plumbing, and ventilation systems gravely needed replacement, and additional security, wireless communications, and environmental control systems were needed to meet modern requirements and fix old problems, according to spokesperson Susan Pollard of the state Department of General Services. However, no one really knew how much of the original fabric remained - thanks to many renovations and years of problematic maintenance.

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A campaign of archival research and strategically selected core samples of the Capitol walls – combined with a virtual portrait created with groundpenetrating radar, metal detection, thermography, and ultrasound – revealed that while damage was significant, more Jeffersonian-era fabric remained intact than expected. Original millwork and 18th-century nails were among the finds. Research of this sort is key to



# CAPITOL Improvements

the restoration of the 216-year-old building. "You have to understand the significant elements, the clinical history, each piece of the puzzle. Then you can proceed," says George C. Skarmeas, AIA, director of historic preservation for Hillier Architecture, of Philadelphia, which is at work on both the restoration and the addition. "The question is: What is the most significant moment in the history of the building?"

After examining the evidence, 1906 emerged as the time when the Capitol reached maturity, when the fabric was fully in place, including the two wings added in 1906, and the stairs that Jefferson originally designed were finally added along the full width of the front portico. Skarmeas says the goal is to return both the building and the landscape to that time period.



Stereoscope view of the Capitol prior to the addition of south steps and wings in 1906.





Jefferson's Capitol before renovation began (above) and as currently seen with the hillside excavated (facing page).

Two examples showcase the scope of the restoration. Stucco covering the entire existing structure trapped moisture, damaging interior wood and masonry and creating mold problems. This stucco will be removed, then replaced by visually identical stucco of the technicians' own formulation that will allow the building to breathe. The transition should be seamless, notes Richard Sliwoski, Director of Virginia's Division of Engineering and Buildings. Inside, the House of Delegates chamber walls have been stripped of paint in sections to show the decorative stenciling that previously covered the chamber's interior, which will be restored. Paint samples from various walls will allow for the identification of interior color schemes over the course of the building's history.

The location of the addition was a contentious issue. From its conception, Jefferson's design of the capitol was based on his idea for a "temple on the hill." Jefferson found his vision at Shockoe Hill, which at the time enjoyed an uninterrupted view of the James River as it flowed south of the city. *continued on page 8* 



This circa 1906 image shows decorative painting in the House chamber, which will be reproduced during the restoration.

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Jefferson designed the classically inspired southern façade to create a dramatic first impression, perhaps best captured in a famous 1797 Benjamin Henry Latrobe watercolor – a classic monumental vision rising over the city. Over time, the angle of approach has changed, and visitors now approach the western wing from the back.

Hillier proposed an addition that would engage visitors with an entrance on the south lawn, creating a first experience of the Capitol that would recall the view seen in Latrobe's painting. This entry, based on a miniature likeness of a columned Roman temple at Bremo, the Fluvanna County estate, will lead visitors into the subterranean addition.

While providing handicapped access to the Capitol, the addition will also contain a visitors center, multipurpose meeting space, legislative office space, and an exhibition gallery for art, artifacts, and exhibits on the Capitol's history and restoration. Although other possible locations were investigated, the southwestern entrance and underground addition is the alternative that disturbs the existing building the least. North-south corridors from both the House and Senate chambers will tie the Capitol to the addition.

Now a large gash awaiting for construction to commence on the addition, the south lawn will be restored, along with the entirety of Capitol Square. Landscape architect Elliot Rhodeside, of Rhodeside & Harwell in Alexandria, looks to Maximilian Godefroy's 1816 design for guidance. By banning all but temporary parking and thinning out more recent shrub and evergreen additions, Rhodeside & Harwell aims to open the square to the city. "This was a building that was designed by Jefferson to be open, to belong to the city, to be a place where people could come to use the square," says Skarmeas.

With plans to open the new Capitol and addition by the 400th anniversary of the Jamestown settlement in 2007, construction is moving at high speed. The 2006 Virginia General Assembly will meet not in the Capitol, but in the Old State Library, which is in final stages of renovation. With a combination of reverence for the past and careful consideration of future needs, the Capitol will emerge from its facelift with a renewed vigor and a greater usefulness to both the public and the General Assembly. – Rebecca E. Ivey

For additional information on the Capitol restoration project, go to www.virginiacapitol.gov.

# Virginia Center for Architecture Notes

# Pace Quickens on Center's Renovation

n preparation for the spring opening of the Virginia Center for Architecture, the pace of work quickened on the renovation of the landmark Tudor Revival mansion that will house the new Richmond museum. When completed in April, alterations to the 87-year-old building will have prepared it for new uses while saving much of the original building fabric, some of which was in dire need of repair.

Although the house was in sound overall condition when purchased, its transformation into a cultural institution required attention in several key areas. Accessibility is an important one. The existing elevator had proven to be unreliable, and needed to be replaced down to its cab, piston, and internal machinery. The new cab is slightly wider, accommodating broader threshholds in the walls that were carved out to meet clearance requirements for wheelchair access.

The main entrance to the original house also created a barrier to the disabled. Architects Hanbury Evans Wright Vlattas + Company, of Norfolk, which has provided architectural services, inserted a painted-aluminum ramp that wraps the west side of the building. It leads to the rear terrace, allowing for alternative entry into the Center's gallery level.

Beyond a widespread program of plaster repair, repainting of walls, and restaining of floors – all being conducted under the supervision of W.M. Jordan Company, the Newport News-based con-



Pungent green gel was sprayed on decorative stonework to strip layers of paint.



Workers cut new sections of limestone to fit into floor of the great hall's grand bay window, which was found to be infested with termites when renovations began last year.

tractor – work on the interior has involved upfitting the upper-level office space and preparing the first-floor rooms for their new museum functions. While the size of the main rooms are suitable for the Center's needs, their rich architectural expression in some cases defies their intended purposes. Typical ceiling-mounted lighting systems, for example, were out of the question in the long gallery and museum shop, both of which have elaborate plaster ceilings that were inviolable. Instead, lighting in the long gallery has been placed on wall-mounted tracks, and indirect lighting solutions were developed for the shop.

To avoid repeated patching and repainting of the house's original walls after each exhibition, a panel system complementing the scale of the galleries was installed. New mechanical systems – designed by H.C. Yu & Associates, which has provided comprehensive MEP engineering services – will serve the exhibition and exhibit storage areas so that temperature and humidity can be controlled in these areas, where fragile documents will be held or displayed.

Even to the casual observer, one of the most obvious issues with the existing house was the poor condition of the leaded, diamond-pane windows. Over decades, the soft lead support structure bowed dramatically in many of the windows and several individual panes were cracked. While this will be a long-term effort, the worst of the windows were removed for complete restoration. As the work began last year, termites were discovered nesting in the sleepers supporting the wood floor in the great hall's bay window. Most of the sleepers and a good bit of the flooring were damaged. The design team decided to replace the wood with limestone in the bay and reuse the salvaged flooring to repair other areas.

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Several roofing concerns have been addressed, as well. The greatest interior damage was to the plaster wall in the second-floor area slated to become the Adam Boardroom. Sections of the flat



Sections cut from brick walls clear the way for a wheelchair ramp to the rear terrace.

roof above that space were removed and replaced with a hot rubberized asphalt system, then topped with insulation and concrete pavers.

All these changes constitute just part of the stewardship of this important landmark building, which will soon become Virginia's home for exhibitions and discussions on architecture and design.



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# WebWatch by Rebecca E. Ivey

# The Source on Green Technology www.greenerbuildings.com

What happens when two of the largest environmental design entities in the nation embark on a project together? They might just produce something like greenerbuildings.com, the result of a partnership between the U.S. Green Building Council and the Green Business Network. Both organizations have a web presence of their own, but each recognized that the web lacked a comprehensive resource on sustainable building. Time was ripe for the creation of an information gateway, a site that would gather a core of information while providing links to government, nonprofit, and corporate sites focusing on green building.

Greenerbuildings.com targets professionals not yet on the sustainability wagon, providing information that is clear, objective, and thorough. The site starts with a glowing green and white home page that offers navigation by eight topics, such as "architecture and design" or "energy use." Another method is browsing by information type, such as case studies, columns, tools and resources, books, or "backgrounders."

These backgrounders provide a down-to-earth summary of each of the main topics. For example, the land use backgrounder deals with brownfield redevelopment, urban planning, and the effect of development on local ecologies. Each backgrounder outlines a handful of real-world examples of green solutions, and catalogs links to sites that have more detailed information.

The case studies address projects in much greater depth. One such study puts the Assateague Island National Seashore interpretive center and park under the microscope. The National Park Service developed a series of lightweight cabana structures and prefab vault toilets, both of which can be moved in the case of a shore evacuation. Photovoltaic panels power showers, and crushed clamshells pave roads and parking areas. Overhead power lines have been removed, and roadside exhibits document the larger goals of the project, which are to use sustainable materials and practices.

A free monthly newsletter assures that readers get their fix without stopping through regularly. Of course, no site has everything. The case studies feature just one small photo per project, and there's a tendency toward information overload. Still, the site achieves its goal: nowhere else is the complexity of building green today laid out so methodically. At greenerbuildings.com, it becomes clear that being green isn't so hard after all. **Grade: B+** 



A feature article focuses on green roof technology.

# Cradle to Cradle Competition Puts Roanoke in Spotlight

The success of the Cradle to Cradle (C2C) competition, a Roanoke-based design competition judged in January, surprised many onlookers – but not Roanoke architects Gregg Lewis, AIA, and Jennifer Smith-Lewis, AIA. The two coordinators of the competition, which required entrants to design an affordable housing prototype based on sustainable concepts, knew all along just how compelling the challenge would be to designers.

On January 15, the winners in both student and professional categories were announced, chosen from 625 design submissions from 41 countries. Matthew Coates and Tim Meldrum of Seattle, Wash., took first place in the professional category for their "Photostack," followed by second place winner Patrick Freet of Minneapolis, Minn., third place Russell Ashdown of Leicester, U.K., and fourth place Douglas Oliver and Vincent Snyder of Houston, Tex. The student competition honored "pMod," by Sean Wheeler, of Powhatan, Va., with first place, followed by second place winner Damien Urain Linnen of Clemson, S.C., third place Jinyong Yum of Vancouver, B.C., and fourth place Robert Gay of Austin, Tex.

Lewis hopes to start construction on at least three of the winning schemes in May after a formal groundbreaking. The C2C website calls the construction process





Top professional design by Matthew Coates and Tim Meldrum of Seattle (above). Second place student entry by Damien Linnen, of Clemson (below left).

a modern-day equivalent to a traditional American barn-raising, including local builders, neighborhood groups, volunteers, and university students. "There's a tremendous amount of interest now, and I think once we have some houses, that interest will be magnified," says Lewis.

Sponsors BASF, Roanoke City, the Home Depot Foundation, James Hardie Siding Products, and MechoShade worked with various donors to fund the competition. In addition, the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority donated two infill sites; Building Specialists, Inc., and Old Southwest, Inc., each donated one site. Organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and the Roanoke Regional Housing Network, which had a hand in the competition's genesis, will continue to play a significant role in the construction phase.

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And what about next year? Several U.S. communities have contacted SmithLewis Architecture about using the C2C idea for their own competition. A Roanoke film production company is working on a documentary of the process. Lewis says the competition will repeat again next year, and he can hardly wait to see how large it grows.

The term "cradle to cradle" comes from the book *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*, a manifesto on ecologically intelligent design by William McDonough, FAIA, and chemist Michael Braungart. The concept is that rather than creating products, spaces, and systems that are spent at the end of their useful lives, designers can work towards a cycle that continually replenishes itself, using materials that can be recycled or reused without a loss in quality.

The high-profile C2C jury consisted of McDonough; Alexander Garvin, an urban planning professor at Yale; Sarah Susanka, FAIA, popular architect and author; Randall Stout, FAIA, architect of the new Art Museum of Western Virginia in Roanoke; and Yama Karim, of Studio Daniel Libeskind.

The idea for the competition germinated when Lewis and Smith-Lewis, principals of SmithLewis Architecture and fresh transplants to Roanoke, recognized a void in their new community. "We wanted the focus of our practice to be community-based sustainable design when we set our shingle out in 2003, but there was very little in the way of a public dialogue," says Lewis.

They thought: Who better to start that dialogue than McDonough? The couple invited him to Roanoke to give a lecture on the cradle-to-cradle idea in 2003. The response surprised them, drawing more than 750 students, architects, realtors, contractors, and government officials. The Roanoke Regional Housing Network, a sponsor of the lecture, offered Lewis a proposition: bring this excitement to the network's affordable housing competition, which had attracted little interest.

"I thought of this as an opportunity for architects to provide leadership on the topic of sustainable development," says Lewis. For a community like Roanoke, affordable housing is critical, but marrying the idea to sustainable design allowed competitors to play with cutting-edge concepts. And, Lewis adds, McDonough was thrilled that another architect was using the idea to further the conversation. – *Rebecca E. Ivey* 

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# Medical Breakthrough

G iven the fierce competition so typical of the health care industry these days, the tired look of the 30-year-old CJW Medical Center in suburban Richmond was sending the wrong message. But a plan to upgrade the hospital's cardiac care center with a new surgical wing provided just the impetus to accomplish several high-visibility improvements to the entire campus.

The original hospital was constructed in 1972, at a time when hospital design was just beginning to break from a pattern of treating forms and surfaces in an institutional manner. Known then as Chippenham Hospital, the buff-colored brick building was based on a prototype design replicated in at least a half-dozen cities across America. The original architect, Nashville-based Gresham, Smith and Partners (GS&P), who had added to the building several times over the years, later opened a Richmond office. So they were the obvious choice to design the latest makeover.

The existing building – fitted with functional canopies and lightly embellished with powder-blue glazed-brick panels – was an appropriate and unassuming response to the requirements of the program. But it was built for an earlier time. Since then, the expectations for both health care service and the design to support it have evolved significantly. The impact of environment on the physical and the mental health of patients has been well established. But now image counts too, especially as patients have many choices available to them. New center (at left, above) opened the door for refacing original buildings. Steel canopies freshen up former entrances (right).



With a major heart center addition to CJW Medical Center in Richmond, architects Gresham, Smith and Partners reconstitute a 30-year-old prototype hospital and position it for tough competition in the health care marketplace.

By Vernon Mays

1 100

al Center



In 1972, original Chippenham Hospital complex was one of several hospitals built across the country using the same prototype design.



Aerial photo shows how nearby cloverleaf influenced site design. New heart center appears in red (above).

Chris Cunningham Photography

The bright lobby and comfy chairs are more evocative of a three-star hotel than the institutional feeling once associated with hospital interiors. The gently curved partitions and patterned glass lend interest to the ICU waiting area (right).



Cross-section at main entrance shows double-height lobby and cantilevered canopy (left). GS&P's Richmond office worked hand-in-hand with its counterpart in Nashville on the 156,000-square-foot project, with the health care specialists in Tennessee handling much of the programming, clinical planning, and engineering – and the Virginia team handling the exterior design and construction administration. In its initial concept, the new building was intended only to provide a new front door to the hospital complex and showcase a new cardiac care center established in memory of cardiologist Harold J. Levinson. "This new center provides dedicated open heart operating rooms – bigger rooms to accommodate a wider range of equipment," says Wilson Rayfield, AIA, of GS&P's Richmond office.

The other part of the project was a major expansion of the emergency department, which more than doubled in size. In addition, the project encompassed the addition of two levels of parking on top of an existing two-level parking garage.

The hospital occupies a prominent place on high ground above the intersection of two busy thoroughfares. With such high visibility, the new building needed to promote the renewed aspirations of the hospital – a desire made all the more urgent by the construction of a competing hospital just a few miles away in the same end of Chesterfield County. "The new hospital nearby was in its infancy, and that's what promoted this site and the emphasis by HCA [Hospital Corporation of America] to come up with an image that would redefine the campus," says Stephen Halsey, AIA, the project manager for GS&P in Richmond.

Halsey says the form of the new addition was strongly influenced by site constraints – the nearby cloverleaf, the tight boundaries of the site, and the main vehicular entrance. "It was a gelling of all of those considerations," he adds.

The program requirements for a drive-through generated the concave curve on the front of the new wing. Its sweeping curve announces itself proudly, particularly at night when it shines like a beacon along Chippenham Parkway. The similarity of its suspended canopy to a hotel entrance is not entirely unintentional – for first-class hospitals now include valet parking as one of the amenities used to beat the competition. This one is no exception. "They want people to come in and instantly feel comfortable, like it's a place they want to be," says Rayfield. The canopy's construction of translucent polycarbonate panels also makes for a bright sunny space beneath.



Visitors and patients enter a new lobby in the heart center for routine admissions. Directly behind the lobby is the emergency department, which can also be accessed directly from the outside. The second floor contains medical offices; on the third is an intensive-care recovery unit. The spacious surgical suites of the heart center occupy the fourth floor, along with rooms for surgical preparation and post-operative care. More medical offices and clinical areas are located on the fifth floor.

Bright, comfortable waiting areas help to make a difficult situation more tolerable for families and friends. "This is the last place you want to be – waiting for someone who is in ICU, which means they've come out of surgery or they've had a bad accident, maybe a heart attack," says Rayfield, as he gives a tour through the third-floor waiting area. "They're sitting here waiting for good news. So we tried to provide a nice space and good views."

As the heart center's exterior design was moving along, the scope of the project suddenly expanded. "When the client saw the blue-glass curtain wall and the crown on top, that made them realize how different the heart center would be from the rest of the hospital," Rayfield recalls. "That's when the discussion began about reskinning the other parts of the building."

Glazed-brick panels that remained from the 1970s yielded to planes of glass and brows of aluminum. New windows allowed the natural light on the west side of the building to be more effectively controlled inside the patient rooms. "The neat thing is that in the original reskin package, they also were just going to cover the old post-and-beam canopies," says Halsey. But the hospital reconsidered its options, choosing instead to remove the dated canopies, which had created dark, shadowy spaces across the front of the hospital, and replace them with new steel canopies that unify the whole façade. In that sense, says Halsey, HCA was a patron of architecture by choosing a purely aesthetic improvement over bottom-line concerns.

While the project elicited good will from the client, it also provided the opportunity for new strides for GS&P, which has made a new commitment to design quality to go along with is reputation for technical and functional excellence. Says Halsey: "This was a good test for us internally."

## Project: Levinson Heart Hospital at CJW Medical Center, Richmond

Architects: Gresham, Smith and Partners, Richmond and Nashville, Tenn. (Kenneth Priest, AIA; Stephen Halsey, AIA; David King, AIA; Paul Battaglia, AIA; Paul Braun, AIA; Wilson Rayfield, AIA; Kevin Kim, AIA; Byron Smith, AIA; Jim Major, AIA; Brian Tuttle, AIA; Chris Rea, Associate AIA; Derek Mott, Associate AIA; Julia Rayfield, CID, IIDA; Eric Sweet, CID, IIDA; Erika Egner, project team)

**Consultants:** Gresham, Smith and Partners (civil, structural, MEP engineering, FP engineering, and environmental graphics)

General Contractor: Skanska

New open heart surgical suites (right) were the project's driving force.





**First Floor Plan** 

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inform 2005: number one

# A Legacy of Care

The memory and ideals of a local philanthropist infuse a Suffolk community hospital, designed by HKS, Inc., with a sense of pride and place.

By Jim Raper

The overall look of the new Obici Hospital conveys the client's pledge of competence and delivery of current technology.

hen the architects at HKS, Inc. began the process of creating a new Louise Obici Memorial Hospital in Suffolk, they quickly came to understand that the city's history and its hopes were intertwined with the project. In a word, the new hospital would be a memorial to a perfectionist and philanthropist named Amedeo Obici, and to the affection this Italian immigrant and founder of Planters Peanut Co. had for his adopted city.

Chuck Means, AIA, the project director located in HKS's Richmond office, and Dan Noble, FAIA, the design director based in the firm's Dallas headquarters, took one central inspiration from their conversations with the hospital's board and administration, numerous focus groups, and trust documents executed by the late Mr. Obici. As Noble explains it, the client wanted a building that would whisper "rich heritage" while boldly proclaiming "competence and cutting-edge technology."

The \$100-million facility that opened in 2002 is about a mile away from the original Obici Hospital campus, and its predominantly brick construction is an appropriate segue from the old to the new. Nevertheless, the new structure is a half-century advanced in terms of health care design.

"The old facility had been added onto so many times, I couldn't begin to count them," says Chet Hart, the hospital's chief

operating officer. "The cost to upgrade would have amounted to about 80 percent of the cost of the new facility." Also, a larger campus with a more developed landscape was possible at the new site.

Motorists on the four-lane boulevard that leads north out of downtown Suffolk toward Smithfield are treated to an arresting view of the new building. To some it looks futuristic, like a space station. Others are reminded of a modern maritime setting that is both industrial and tranquil. One person seeing the facility for the first time thought of lyrics to an old gospel song: "If it wasn't for the lighthouse, where would this ship be?"

To Means, the look of the 150-bed complex is a pledge of quality – the quality of its materials and construction, quality of health care provided, and, moreover, quality of the community. "People see the building and say, 'I'd like to go there for my health care," says Hart. "Our key thrust is compassionate patient care, and we believe the building reflects those feelings."

Inside, the hospital is configured to emphasize easy navigation and outpatient services, to be adaptable, and to allow expansion with as little disruption as possible. The scheme keeps noise and clutter to a minimum. There are no long, harsh hallways to act as echo chambers and become cluttered with carts, wheelchairs, and other portables. Alcoves are spaced here and there for temporary storage. The bed tower is separated from diagnostic and treatment services to allow views from patient rooms of green spaces, a garden, and nearby wetlands. A three-story entrance atrium has abundant natural lighting and finishes so rich it could be mistaken for the lobby of a swank hotel.

"We wanted to create a park-like setting, warm and welcoming, in the rotunda lobby," says Patricia Damiri, a member of the interior design team from Mitchell Associates, of Wilmington, Del. This is accomplished with prominent cherry benches, live plants, and a colorful terrazzo floor pattern.

Hart said the hospital staff suggested the interiors "emphasize the healing factor," and he praised Mitchell Associates' liberal use of carpet, soft colors, indirect lighting, and natural maple for doors and handrails.

Means, whose 30-year career has been in health care architecture, says HKS is a firm that understands the difference between trends and fads in hospital construction, and has a good grasp of technology and patient needs. "We're well equipped," William C. Giermak, former CEO of Obici Health Systems, told the media when the hospital opened. He cited advances in diagnostic technology, handling of electronic records, and creation of a complete healing environment that transcend the stereotype of a small-town hospital.

Amedeo Obici would have approved. He put a total of \$8 million into the Obici Charitable Trust in the 1930s and 1940s to fund the construction of a hospital in Suffolk. He was born near Venice and immigrated first to Pennsylvania. He became a peanut vendor, and turned an obsession for quality roasted peanuts and sanitary packaging into one of the nation's first branded snacks. He came to Suffolk in the early 1900s to be near some of the world's best peanut fields and used \$25,000 in borrowed money to build a Planters Peanut factory.

The original Louise Obici Memorial Hospital, named for Amedeo's wife, opened in 1951, four years after his death. Obici's will directed his trustees to use first-rate building materials such as brick and stone in the hospital's construction. He wanted artwork to be on display. And he put up enough money to ensure a quality of care that would make Suffolkians proud. As if to watch over his handiwork. Obici arranged for his wife and himself to be interred within the walls of the old hospital. This was to bring up unusual challenges for hospital administrators, the Suffolk courts and coroner's office, HKS, and various contractors, when time came to move the remains to a vault at the new facility.



The new hospital's central tower recalls the form of a lighthouse, heightening the effect of the nautical metaphors the architects imbedded in the design.



The bowed façade and strong lines of the south-facing exterior evoke images of a ship at sea.

HEALTH CARE

Natural light, wood benches, and live plants give a park-like feel to the rotunda lobby.

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Fifty years ago, hospitals tended to rely upon a sober, institutional look to convey competence, and that describes the old facility to a tee. Before the end of the 1950s, it had become a trusted place for health care for people in Suffolk and outlying communities. Today, Suffolk has 75,000 people and has grown through mergers to 400-square miles. It is one of the fastest growing localities in the state – expected to reach 125,000 in population by 2030 – and has brisk economic development in technology and merchandise distribution.

Hart acknowledges that the new hospital needed to be a clear hit in order to maintain its prominence. In fact, the building has become a place for socializing, not simply for medical care. "My friends come by in the morning to get coffee at our Starbucks kiosk," he says, and the cafeteria is a popular place for lunch. Other folks drop by to relax on the benches in the lobby or in the statuary-studded garden, or to attend a function in the community meeting room.

"The new hospital has meant a lot to Suffolk," Hart says, "and our market share for outpatient services is up." That is just what HKS and its partners in the project want to hear.



#### Project: Louise Obici Memorial Hospital

Architects: HKS, Inc. (Ralph Hawkins, FAIA, FACHA, principal in charge; W. Chuck Means, AIA, project director; Dan Noble, FAIA, FACHA, design director; Craig Rader, AIA, construction administrator) Consultants: CCRD Partners (MEP engineering); Kimley-Horn & Associates (civil); HKS Structural, Inc. (structural); Mitchell Associates (interiors); Kimley-Horn & Associates (landscape architecture); The Lighting Practice (lighting)

General Contractor: W.M. Jordan Company Owner: Obici Health System

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Modern detailing blends with traditional masonry (left). Inside, patients encounter curved hallways and open views (above).

# Function and Form

Odell Associates allowed patient care principles to drive the design program for the Sentara CarePlex, resulting in an arresting architectural form.

By Rebecca E. Ivey



he Sentara Hampton General Hospital, with a history that stretched back into the 19th century, had stood on Victoria Boulevard in Hampton since 1959. As the millennium approached, Sentara Healthcare management realized that time was ripe for a rehaul. Sentara purchased 50 acres near the Hampton Coliseum, imagining a medical campus that would replace the old hospital with a series of high-tech facilities – the Sentara CarePlex.

First on their agenda was creation of a phased master plan that would allow the complex to grow slowly, accommodating hightech equipment and reflecting new principles in health care. Odell Associates of Richmond emerged from a nationwide search for a multi-faceted architecture firm with planning expertise. Managing principal James Snyder believes this is a result of the firm's tradition of institutional work in the Hampton area. Odell's continued involvement, providing master planning, programming, architecture, and engineering, has streamlined the often disjointed process of developing health care spaces.

Odell designed the first phase of the master plan, which included a 62,000-square-foot, two-story ambulatory care and surgery center and a 45,000-square-foot medical office building, functioning as a full-fledged emergency and surgical center when completed in 1995. These elements would also form the foundation for phase two, which when complete would fully replace the old hospital.

Phase two added a 75,000-square-foot medical office building and expanded the ambulatory surgical center by 330,000 square feet to meet the goal of comfortably handling 750,000 annual visits. Sentara required that the phase-one facilities remain open even as the expansion was underway.

Sentara wanted the hospital to set the bar for technical innovation, and to be flexible enough to accommodate advances in medical technology. "We had to look ahead in terms of infrastructure: proper cabling and space, large-sized rooms that can hold unknown future technology, and proper ceiling heights in the building," says Sandy Shield, AIA, a member of Odell's project design team. The team also included Rohn Price, AIA, Mark Attwood, Jeff Woosley, AIA, and Snyder. Current high-tech elements range from the eICU, a highly advanced electronic monitoring system for intensive care patients, to the "smart" operating rooms, complete with robotics to facilitate surgery.

A campus-wide fiber optic backbone connects the complex to the healthcare network across the region. "Hospitals no longer stand alone. They are networked to the entire health care system, including private offices," explains Shield. "Everyone can view



The reflective sweep of exterior windows is one water-like element (left); the meandering shape of the visitor entry area, winding along a twostory mall lobby, is another (right).

Photos: Photo Reflect



Two oblong floors of private rooms rise over the ambulatory care/surgery center and two medical office buildings in the sketch below.





Each nurse's station, located at the end of a "ribbon" of nursing support on patient floors, supports 12 private rooms (above). A nurse's station in the critical care unit (above right).





digital diagnostic images or an operating procedure in progress from anywhere."

The overarching design aspires to something else. Sentara demanded architecture with an innovative feel, says Snyder. "They wanted a design that would be a reflection of where health care is going, a building that didn't look like a hospital, something contemporary that represented state-of-the-art technologies."

Sentara insisted that a patient-focused approach drive the organization of spaces. "Patient-focused care is about changing the way care is delivered to be oriented around patients, rather than staff or physicians," explains Snyder. "It's about moving work areas and supplies closer to the patient, putting all these enablers in place to allow staff to focus more of their time with the patient rather than retrieving supplies or going to a station." Patient floors on the third through fifth levels are a case in point, featuring 48-bed nursing units. Each unit is comprised of two oblong shapes with a ribbon of nursing support running along the middle of corridors. Lined with private patient rooms, each corridor contains two stations supporting 12 rooms each.

Windows wrap the patient rooms and entry areas. Not only does natural light help orient visitors and patients, it also has a positive effect on the recovery process. From the outside, the large elliptical expanse of reflective glass catches the eye. Odell used water as an aesthetic theme, emphasizing its importance to the Hampton area.

With the closing of Hampton General Hospital in December 2002, the CarePlex has taken center stage in the Hampton medical scene. Snyder believes Sentara's vision has paid off. "They were pursuing the creation of the hospital of the future," he says. By following their clients' belief in patient-focused care as a primary design objective, Odell produced a cohesive and effective facility with both the room and flexibility to grow.



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Sixteen Acres: Architecture and the Outrageous Struggle for the Future of Ground Zero. By Philip Nobel. 289 pp. New York: Metropolitan Books. \$25.00 cloth.

#### Review by Mark Alden Branch

s architects began to feel more and more marginalized and invisible in the 1990s, surely more than one dreamed of a time when lively debates about buildings and planning would lead off the evening news, and competing architects would appear on Oprah to describe their plans. But when this time indeed came, it was the result of a gruesome, unimaginable act - the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center. Almost before the dust had settled, developers, politicians, victims' families, and citizens across the country joined in a complicated, emotional effort to determine what would come next at Ground Zero. As Philip Nobel tells it in Sixteen Acres, a clear-eyed, unsentimental look at the struggle over the site, "The public - edgy, engaged, clamoring for answers - was for once, God help and bless them, knocking on architecture's front door.'

But as is so often the case, architecture's hands were tied. The World Trade Center site might be a national symbol, but it is also a transportation hub and a piece of real estate on which developer Larry Silverstein had the contractual right to rebuild ten million square feet of office space and a shopping mall. This reality, combined with Gov. George Pataki's election-year pledge not to build on the footprints of the twin towers, shaped the future of the site more than any architect could: the

# Clamoring for Architecture to Offer Meaning at Ground Zero



This view of the permanent memorial at the World Trade Center site was released on the third anniversary of 9/11. It includes the Freedom Tower and sunken footprints of the lost skyscrapers.

scheme would have to be an L-shaped set of office buildings clustered around a memorial on the site of the towers.

Everything else that happened, Nobel explains as he walks us through an elaborate set of hearings, touchy-feely town meetings, and scrappy design competitions, was simply the "necessary kabuki" to reassure the public that the symbolism of the site, and the memories of those who died there, was being taken seriously. Popular proposals to leave the site completely free of buildings – or to rebuild the twin towers just as they were – went nowhere, as did anything else that conflicted with Silverstein's iron-clad lease.

But before all the parameters became clear, there was a wealth of ideas for Ground Zero. In the months after the attack, thousands of people proposed their own solutions to the various authorities that shared responsibility for the rebuilding. Nobel writes with humor, but not cruelty, of these earnest amateur efforts, many of which came from people who had never been moved to design anything before, "as if a sixth stage – design – had been tucked into Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's five stages of grief." The designs ranged from a field of angels representing every life lost to a set of five towers arranged to look like a hand with its middle finger extended – a message to the terrorists that was e-mailed around the country with great zeal in the fall of 2001.

The professionals had more trouble articulating an architectural message. Modern architecture, Nobel argues, has rarely been effective at conveying monumentality, and the elite architects who

ought to lead the discipline in doing so were unusually ill-equipped for the task at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Two events during the public debate helped confirm this: an exhibition in New York at the Max Protetch Gallery, in which big-name and cuttingedge architects were invited to show off their brainstorms for the site, and the assembly of a dream team in The New York Times Magazine by the newspaper's architecture critic, Herbert Muschamp. Both venues showcased the tendency of architects to pursue highly personal, esoteric forms that cannot be decoded without lengthy verbal explanations. The designs they showcased also pushed the limits of taste in a situation where sensitivity was crucial. At the Protetch gallery, Greg Lynn cited German bunkers in calling for an architecture that evoked (but did not discernibly provide) greater security in an age of terrorism. In the Times, Peter Eisenman's contribution to a crazy guilt of signature buildings was one of his trademark fragmented forms, which he said tried to capture "a certain beauty coming ... a moment before a disaster." Writes Nobel: "Muschamp had unwittingly succeeded in reminding the development powers that contemporary architects of the genius type, when left to their own devices, played stylish, self-serving games."

The design by Daniel Libeskind that won a messy, political design competition was no exception. Bound by the rough plan determined by Silverstein's lease and Pataki's campaign promise, Libeskind did his best to make the office and retail complex look like architecture with a capital A. But the fashionable angles and abstract language that he brought to the project offered nothing in itself that was legible to the layperson.

Unexpectedly, though, Libeskind emerged from his academic cocoon an unlikely populist, selling his design to the public in unabashedly patriotic talks in which he invoked his immigrant childhood. His focal point was a tower – it came to be called the Freedom Tower – that was 1,776 feet tall and, he said, mimicked the Statue of Liberty's pose in nearby New York Harbor. Hungry for symbolism, the public took Libeskind's word for it.

Even Libeskind, though, became more and more marginal to the process. Although Libeskind had won the competition sponsored by the Lower Mancontinued on page 34



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# **On the Boards**



Architect: Arc Design Group, Newport News Project: First Baptist Church East End Newport News

This church will be a "beacon of light" in an area in need of a facelift. The 30,000-s.f. structure will house a sanctuary, which will seat a 700-member congregation and include administrative spaces, classrooms, nursery, toddler's room, medical facility, small chapel, and family life center. Tel: 757-873-9644





The VCU Foundation is developing this 28,400-s.f., four-story office in Richmond as the new Administrative Technology Center. The facility incorporates historic patterns, a brick veneer exterior, punched openings, cast stone trim, and cornice profiles reflective of surrounding structures. Tel: 804-343-1010



Architect: BCWH, Richmond Project: Northwest Elementary School #8

Henrico County Public Schools will be treating children to a second two-story school designed by BCWH. The school uses controlled natural and artificial lighting, carefully composed spaces, and environmentally preferable materials to enhance the learning and health of young Virginians. Tel: 804-788-4774



Architect: Daggett & Grigg Architects, Charlottesville Project: Fontaine Clinical Office Building

One of the last two planned sites within the University of Virginia Foundation's Fontaine Research Park, this project incorporates a number of "green design" elements. It is also the University's first project with a geothermally driven water source heat pump system. Tel: 434-971-8848

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Architect: DMJM Design, Washington, D.C. Project: **Building 170 Adaptive Reuse** 

This adaptive reuse project is part of the public plaza for the new 11-acre U.S. Dept. of Transportation Headquarters in the Southeast Federal Center. The 8,300-s.f. industrial building will incorporate retail and restaurant space on two levels and provide a view of the Anacostia River. Tel: 703-682-4900





This new public garage, made of cast-in-place concrete with precast spandrel panels, will provide over 800 parking spaces. The design includes an overhead canopy of translucent polycarbonate providing protected access between the garage and terminal building. Tel: 804-788-0710 / www.gspnet.com



Architect: William Henry Harris & Associates, Inc., Richmond Project: St. Matthews Episcopal Church

This new Episcopal Church includes a multipurpose parish center and a 350-seat sanctuary connected by an entry bell tower. A product of the Architect's Planning Workshop, the Carpenter Gothic church will be board-and-batten clad with a fieldstone base. Tel: 800-473-0070 / www.harrisarchitects.org



Landscape Architect: Land Planning and Design Associates, Charlottesville Project: Lynchburg General Hospital

With Centra Health and HKS Architects, LPDA is responsible for planning and construction documentation of entry gardens, courtyards, and parking on the 31-acre property. Paving treatments, water features, and colorful, unique plants provide year-round interest. Tel: 434-296-2108 / www.lpda.net

# **On the Boards**



Architect: Lavigne Associates Architects, Alexandria Project: Arlington County Fire Training Academy

The design of the Arlington County Fire Department campus focuses on developing a "campus quality" comprised of a classroom building, physical training facility, and seven-story fire training tower. The 19,000-s.f. project will qualify for a LEED Silver Award. Tel: 703-739-3206 / www.laarchitects.com



Architect: Meditch Murphey Architects, Chevy Chase, Md. Project: Addition to a Brick Colonial

This project is a modern addition and complete makeover to a traditional colonial house in Washington, D.C. Here the architects blend old with new. Exterior materials include a cedar rain screen, three-coat stucco, and a zinc/tin-coated stainless steel roof. Tel: 301-657-9400



## Architect: Mitchell/Matthews Architects and Planners, Charlottesville Project: Wertland Square

Located near the Rotunda at U.Va., this project transforms a parking lot into a home for 150 students. The design returns trees, shade, and pedestrian walks to the site via a garden promenade, achieving a residential sense consistent with the character of the neighborhood. Tel: 434-979-7550



Architect: Morgan Gick McBeath & Associates, Falls Church Project: Saint John the Apostle Catholic Church

This project is located in Virginia's historic town of Leesburg at Oakcrest Manor Drive. This church will have more than 1,000 seats and feature a separate day chapel and fellowship hall. This facility will enhance the existing parish's campus. Completion is anticipated in 2007. Tel: 703-538-7100



Architect: PSA - Dewberry, Fairfax Project: Wellness Center

This 38,080-s.f. wellness center, commissioned by Culpeper regional hospital, will include fitness and rehabilitation programs and a T.U.R.R.T.L.E. pool, the latest in physical therapy water technology. A spine organizes the building into quadrants. Tel: 703-849-0100





This 9,300-s.f. center will serve as a portal to the ornamental display gardens of the 128-acre property. The facility will include educational spaces such as an information center, class-rooms, library, and gallery, while a café and gift shop will meet visitors' needs. Tel: 202-298-6700 / www.quinnevans.com



Architect: SFCS, Inc., Roanoke Project: Carilion Medical Office Building

This new 60,000-s.f. building has first-floor parking for 60 vehicles and cardiology consulting offices on the upper two floors. Its brick-and-glass exteriors reflect the design vocabulary of other Carilion structures. Tel: 540-344-6664 / dhk@sfcs.com



Architect:	Wiley & Wilson, Lynchburg
Project:	<b>Campbell County Master Plan</b>

The site development for Campbell County's governmental and judicial facilities is a five-phase process spanning the next 50 years, consisting of additions, renovations, and new construction. All aspects will complement the historic courthouse. Tel: 434-947-1901 / www.wileywilson.com







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hattan Development Corporation, Larry Silverstein had already begun working with the corporate firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. And in the ensuing attempt at collaboration, Libeskind emerged with only token pieces of his design intact.

Aside from showing how the fix was in on this process from the beginning - a point he makes relentlessly throughout the book - Nobel's main subject is the questionable ability of modern architecture to express meaning and emotion in bricks and mortar. But were the site not required to be a shopping center and office complex, surely architecture could have done better. Mava Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial the work that sparked the current public demand for physical manifestations of collective emotion - is a good example of abstract language employed to an affecting end. That work is powerful not just because of its design, but because of what people bring to it, both literally - in the form of wreaths, flowers, notes, and photographs - and emotionally. When all is said and done, the memorial on the World Trade Center site by Michael Arad and Peter Walker will likely have a similar power (although Nobel has his doubts).

Buildings or memorials can't mean anything by themselves. Such meaning is always culturally constructed, and the meaning can change as a result of events far outside the designer's control. (Witness the posthumous reverence for the Twin Towers themselves, which during their lifetime were often derided as inhumane behemoths.) At most, the architect does half the job, providing a place or an object that can readily accept the meaning people are eager to ascribe to it.

Nobel has a skeptical point of view and, in his telling of the story, no one comes off as entirely reasonable and blameless in what he regards as a hopelessly compromised outcome at Ground Zero. But, however improbable it is that out-of-touch architects and greedy politicians and developers can create an effective response to the nation's grief, shock, anger, and pride in the wake of Sept. 11, the public clamor over the site suggests that it is possible. Whatever rises on the site is virtually guaranteed a symbolic role in our national narrative, and public consensus about what the site should mean will trump whatever architects and critics - have to say.

Mark Alden Branch is Executive Editor of the Yale Alumni Magazine and has written frequently on architecture for national publications.

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### **A Family Affair**

Taking Note

hen Kirby McClure took a job managing pharmaceutical studies in 2002, she realized that she needed a home office. The three-bedroom bungalow she shared with with her husband and their two boys was already jam-packed. The husband, Rab McClure, AIA, of SMBW Architects in Richmond, decided right then that their detached garage was ripe for a redesign.

The minimal budget required a thoughtful design. Rab created the basic plan around Kirby's needs, using a Zshaped wall to create a corner alcove with a dropped ceiling, a built-in plywood desk, and cantilevered shelving. The desk extends out of the alcove, becoming a children's homework station. The remaining space serves as an informal meeting area. Rab located utility and storage areas behind the Z-shaped wall, eliminating one garage door and reconfiguring the other as a sliding barn door.

Rab wanted the ceiling trusses left exposed, but they were supported by ugly one-by-six-inch beams. After ripping them out, he fabricated a brace from stock rolled aluminum angles. The brace is triangulated against the existing wall, pinned to the Z-shaped wall, and bolted into the bottom chord of the trusses.

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Rab rescued three industrial steelframe windows from a construction site across town. After he repaired, sandblasted, and painted them, he decided the largest window needed a graphic insert. Jeanne Leavel, AIA, of BCWH Architects in Richmond, designed a stained glass panel to fit the frame.

The second steel window hangs on a vertical axis to take advantage of its pivoting sash. Rab framed the third salvaged window with wood to create a door that pivots around a pipe in a weighty, deliberate manner.

At twilight the windows and door throw light along the backyard, porch, and pool. French doors allow views into the house, connecting all three spaces visually. The garden becomes the central living space.

Rab loves that this project gave him opportunity to work with his father, Donald McClure. "It was somewhat the antithesis of firm practice," he muses. "Instead of discussion, modeling, drawing, we spent most of the time building it and responding to things along the way." – *Rebecca E. Ivey* 



The cozy work nook (above) opens up into a tall, open space with exposed trusswork (below right).





A custom structural brace (above left) and stained glass (right) lend personality while solving practical dilemmas.



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