

inform

Architecture + Design
in the Mid-Atlantic

2005: number three

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*Inside: Design
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Greenwood Elementary School • Langston High School Continuation • School Portfolio • David Neuman on Changes at U.Va. • Rose Fellowships

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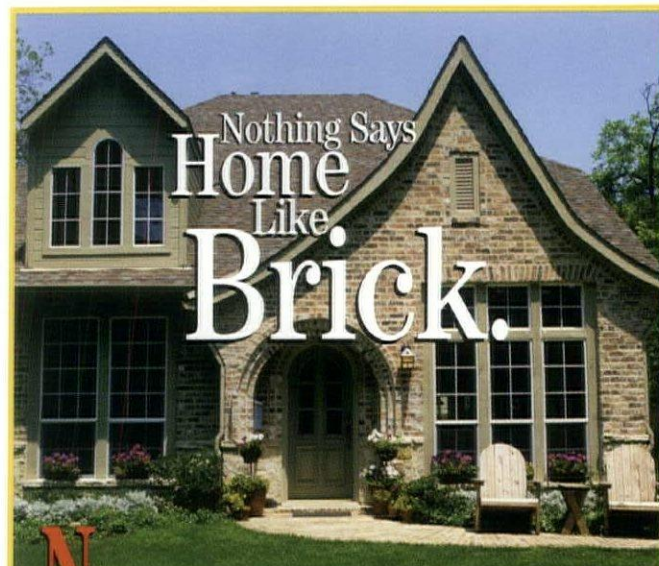
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FROM THE EDITOR

A Place for the Spirit

This summer Richmond architects, and legions of other Richmonders who overflowed the auditorium where a memorial service was held, mourned the passing of Jim Glavé, who participated for decades in the life of the city. Jim was a force in the creation of Glavé Newman Anderson, which became one of Richmond's preeminent architecture firms during the late 1960s and has kept its momentum running strong to the present day in the guise of Glavé & Holmes.

From the beginning, one of the firm's strong suits was the design of buildings for cultural institutions. It was a specialty to which Glavé devoted a great deal of his life. Yet I wasn't aware of the depth of his passion for the subject until he died, when the local newspaper reprinted an address he delivered to the Virginia Association of Museums in 1994. In his remarks, Glavé chose to talk about "spiritual space" and how it relates to the lasting health of our communities. Here's an excerpt.

Until this century, the defining aspect of the world's great cities has been what I call their "spiritual space," that is, space devoted not to commerce or habitat but to the elevation and celebration of the human spirit: parks, cathedrals, museums, monuments, concert halls.... Even in old drawings of the smaller cities and towns of Europe and America, the architectural focal point is the church, piazza, or village green. Indeed, the wealth and importance of cities was judged by the quality of these public or spiritual spaces. Therefore, citizens of high and low station sacrificed and contributed significant wealth and labor to erect structures that would rival those in other cities.

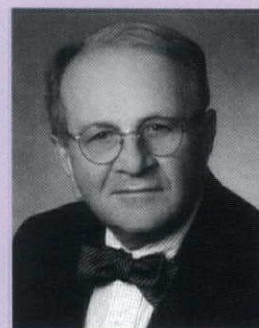
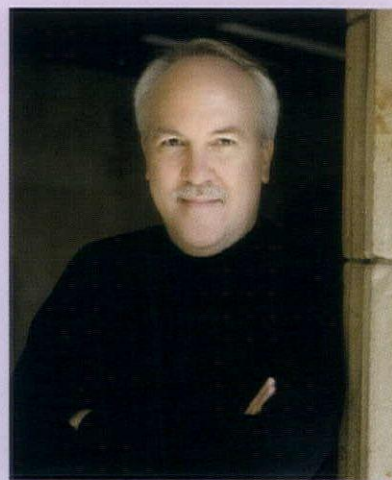
But these spaces were also an organizing principle. Around them coalesced diverse people into a community. The institutions that built these structures provided a framework for civility, virtue, beauty, morality, and self-restraint. In short, they were the civilizing forces within the community. Supporting these institutions was not only a matter of duty and pride, but was in one's self-interest because they provided the foundation for civil order.

But what do we find in our cities today? For the foreseeable future, no majestic new cathedrals will rise above the urban horizon anywhere in the United States. No great urban parks on the scale of Grant, Central, or Rock Creek will offer green refuge amidst concrete, steel, and glass. Museums that, in scale and grandeur, once formed the Parthenons of our cities now struggle to be seen amidst towering new development....

There can be no doubt that our spiritual space is shrinking in terms of relative size and importance with a resulting drop in influence and importance of our spiritual institutions and the loss of a higher framework to guide our pursuits. When material gain is sought without a spiritual framework, the social contract breaks down and (as our crime rate attests) wealth is more and more frequently simply appropriated from others, not earned. This then is our call to action: Spiritual institutions, such as museums, must project their utility in a way that is unapologetic and aggressive. Museums and other spiritual spaces are not the luxury of a wealthy society but the sine qua non of a healthy society.

I haven't encountered such eloquent words in a very long time, words that speak to the essence of an architect's concerns, words that are so infrequently verbalized – even less frequently with force in a public forum. As he continued, Jim argued that governments, corporations, and people of means must be made to see that, without the preeminence of spiritual space, social order breaks down at a price that the economic system cannot sustain. "Spiritual space for the community," he said, "must be pursued with the same zeal as commercial space for narrower interests." Those are powerful words. Sharing them is my tribute to Jim.

– Vernon Mays



James M. Glavé



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16

Sense & Sustainability

By carefully weighing their priorities, BCWH Architects of Richmond sets a positive example for environmental responsibility at Greenwood Elementary School. *By Rab McClure, AIA*

22

Bolstering the Community

Bridging past and future, a LEED-certified multipurpose facility by BeeryRio of Springfield helps to preserve the traditions of an African-American community in Arlington. *By Kim A. O'Connell*

26

Portfolio: Three New Schools

Inform rounds out its coverage of new educational facilities with a brief look at three exemplary public school projects in Henrico, Fairfax, and Appomattox counties.

6



Design Lines

new developments in design

44



Taking Note

doing the small thing well



p. 22

In this issue:
Design Industry Consultants
Directory, p. 32

In our next issue:
Emerging Firms

On the cover:
Greenwood Elementary School.
Photo by Chris Cunningham.

The opportunities for affordable housing in Virginia have taken a leap forward, thanks to the high-visibility work of two Rose Fellows – one in Charlottesville, the other in Christiansburg. Both Katie Swenson and Colin Arnold recently completed projects while they were receiving support from The Frederick P. Rose Architectural Fellowship. The program, established in 1999, provides promising young architects the opportunity to work on affordable housing projects that incorporate sustainable design techniques.

Both of these Rose Fellows were represented in the traveling exhibition *Postcards from the Field*, which appeared at the Virginia Center for Architecture in Richmond from May 10 through July 10. Swenson appeared at the Center in June to share her experiences in building low-cost housing and to tell how it led to greater things for the city of Charlottesville.

While she was a graduate student at the University of Virginia, Swenson was introduced to the Piedmont Housing Alliance, a community development organization providing financing, financial counseling, and property renovations to low-income households. She joined the alliance as it was gaining momentum, and together they submitted a proposal for her fellowship, along with a list of potential projects including a 30-house initiative that was much larger than the alliance's previous efforts. "Part of my role was to grow the alliance's capacity," says Swenson. "The fellowship also defined that role as bringing better design to affordable housing projects, meaning in large part more attention to energy efficiency and sustainable materials."

During the fellowship, Swenson worked with community groups, churches, schools, architects, and developers. That network building was important in the case of the Hope Community Center, which serves the needs of the church that donated the property and the nearby school and residents, in addition to providing a space for neighborhood gatherings. Swenson says she relishes the role of community advocate, working within the community to spot opportunities to help, while building something that will improve its surroundings.

Like many Rose Fellows, Swenson remains in the community that was the

Rose Fellows Inject New Energy into Cities



Katie Swenson



Colin Arnold



Arnold's fellowship project in Christiansburg focused on a new facility for teenage boys that features a range of warm-toned materials.

focus of her fellowship. While working in Charlottesville, she noticed a void – a need for an architecture center that could be a place for informed discussions on affordable housing and sustainable design (see story, facing page). "We need to get architects more involved in affordable housing, and housing in general," she insists. "We need architectural [examples] for high-density housing, and they need to come from the architects."

The story of Colin Arnold, AIA, has many similarities to Swenson's. Prior to his fellowship, Arnold worked for Community Housing Partners in Christiansburg. His interest in affordable housing drew him back to the organization after work in private practice when leaders suggested they pair up for the Rose Fellowship. The Christiansburg organization's mission is to acquire low-cost housing that is in disrepair and make it a safe and sturdy place to live.

Much of Arnold's energies were focused on the Tekoa Boys Residential Youth Campus in Christiansburg, a community for teenage boys. The facility provides education, counseling, and shelter. "We needed the facility to be durable, but inviting," says Arnold.

At the Tekoa campus, materials such as concrete block, colored concrete floors, and expanses of glass are affordable and effective ways to provide a warm environment. It's the first building he completed

as a licensed architect, so Arnold takes great pride in the results, which include its status as a LEED-certified project.

During his fellowship, Arnold also saw the need for a new affordable housing organization in his community. He launched the Community Design Studio under the umbrella of Community Housing Partners. Through the studio, Arnold provides design services to organizations that need design assistance on affordable housing that incorporates sustainable practices.

The most recent Rose Fellow to land in Virginia is Josh Galloway, Assoc. AIA, who works at the Better Housing Coalition in Richmond. As more people like Galloway participate in the program, the prospects for architects' role in affordable housing will only brighten. *– Rebecca Ivey*



Swenson's fellowship included the construction of new affordable houses in Charlottesville.

New Center Fills a Gap in Charlottesville

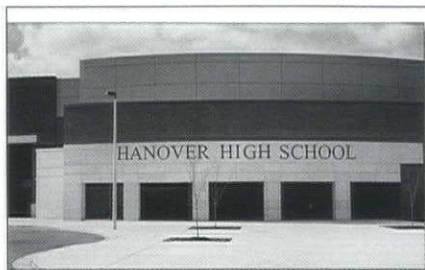
Since its opening a year ago on the city's downtown mall, the Charlottesville Community Design Center has run full tilt. The center, which offers technical assistance to low-income households and educational programming for the community at large, fills a gap that had existed in the city for many years. "Our exhibition program focuses on sustainable, affordable housing, but we also address transportation, history, and architectural significance," says Executive Director Katie Swenson.

One of the center's high-profile projects is "Urban Habitats," a national design competition conducted in collaboration with the local Habitat for Humanity affiliate. Charlottesville's lack of centrally located low- and middle-income housing has become a critical issue for working-class residents. With steadily increasing land prices, one particular site – Sunrise Trailer Court, a community of house trailers – was ripe for displacement. In fact, the trailer court's owner had sold the land to a developer who immediately stipulated that the residents would be relocated 120 days after rezoning.

In response, the area neighborhood association mobilized opposition. The development group withdrew its plan and turned over the purchase contract to Habitat. At that point, the design center stepped in to help create an affordable solution that would not displace residents.

The Urban Habitats competition called for the design of a community of 72 homes, half of which will be affordable to low-income families and the remainder to be market-rate housing for working families. The entire development was required to be contained on the same 2.4-acre site as the existing 15 residences. In July, a jury of nationally recognized designers and members of the community selected three finalists – design teams from New York, San Francisco, and Cambridge, Mass. The three top teams were awarded a share of the \$25,000 cash prize and each will have the opportunity to present their scheme to the Habitat board for consideration, says spokesman Kyle Copas.

The design center also is developing a community garden at the Abundant Life Ministry in downtown Charlottesville. More important, Swenson says, is the creation of architectural prototypes that will guide development of mid-density housing. "We need availability of housing and resources for everyone, particularly low-income people, if our ultimate goal is a vibrant urban setting."



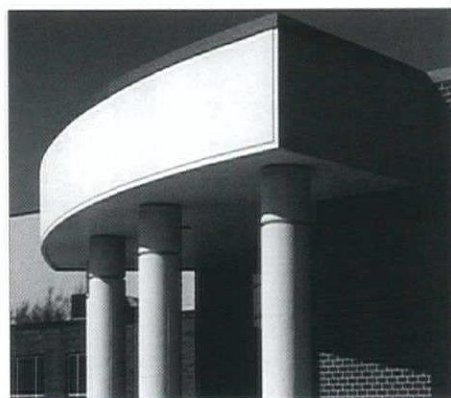
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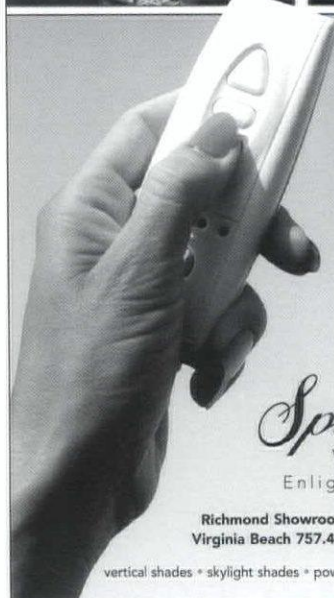
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They Take a Lickin'

Coming soon to a mailbox near you: Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum, I.M. Pei's National Gallery of Art, and a host of other icons of Modern architecture. On May 19, the United States Postal Service released a 12-stamp sheet of first-class postage stamps showcasing black-and-white photographic images of significant architectural works from the 20th century. At a dedication ceremony that took place as part of the American Institute of Architects annual convention in Las Vegas, AIA President Douglas L. Steidl noted, "Each building in the series embodies the creativity and commitment of architects to help create better places for people to live, work, and play."

Entitled *Masterworks of Modern American Architecture*, the twelve stamps feature buildings erected from 1930 to 2003 – starting with William Van Allen's signature Chrysler Building and concluding with Frank O. Gehry's gleaming Walt Disney Concert Hall. Stamp art director Derry Noyes and designer Margaret Bauer selected the photography. Noyes also created a first-day digital color postmark designed to complement the stamp sheet.

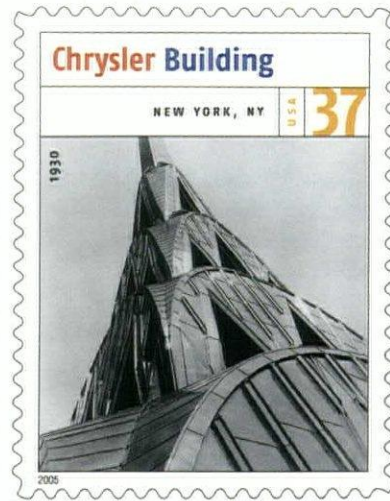
The stamps feature seminal works of Modern architecture such as Eero Saarinen's TWA Terminal at JFK Airport and Philip Johnson's Glass House, augmented by more recent additions to America's architectural inventory, such as Richard Meier's High Museum of Art and Bruce Graham and Fazlur Khan's Hancock Center. Paul Rudolph's Yale Art and Architecture Building, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's 860-880 Lake Shore Drive, Robert Venturi's Vanna Venturi House, and Louis I. Kahn's Exeter Academy Library round out the collection.

Stamp subject matter is selected from a list of public nominees by the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, a group of 15 people appointed by

the Postmaster General. About 50,000 suggestions are received each year. This committee recognized that the postal service's latest series of architectural stamps – including the Rotunda at U.Va. and Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater – hadn't been issued since 1982. So it was time to revisit the subject. The committee's goal was to recognize a mix of building types, ensure geographic diversity, and showcase the work of modern masters.

"It's an interesting cross-section," says Richard Guy Wilson, professor of architectural history at the University of Virginia. "And it's amazing that the Walt Disney Concert Hall even made the list, because it is so recent." Wilson also noted that the selections are, by and large, safe picks – except the Yale Art and Architecture Building, which has been controversial, both revered and reviled, since it was lambasted by architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner at the dedication ceremony in 1963.

It's just as interesting to take stock of who among the pantheon of architects missed the list as well as who made it, says Wilson. Noteworthy omissions: Cesar Pelli, Michael Graves, Edward Durell Stone, and Richard Neutra.



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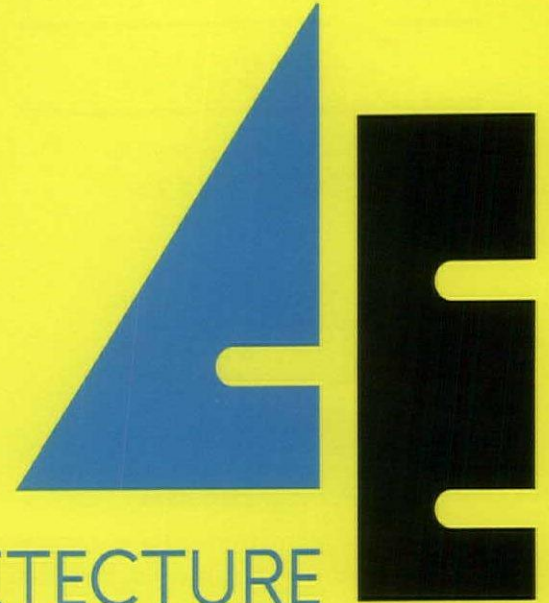
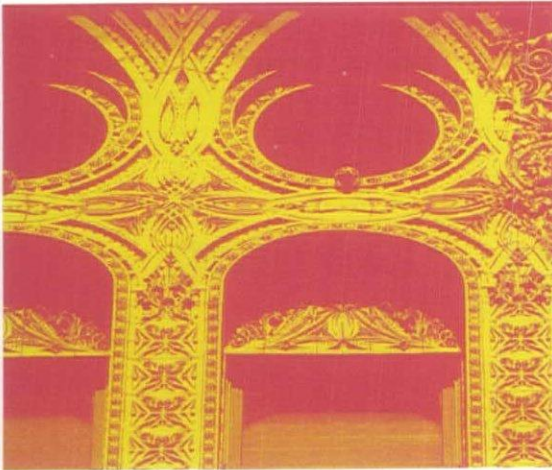
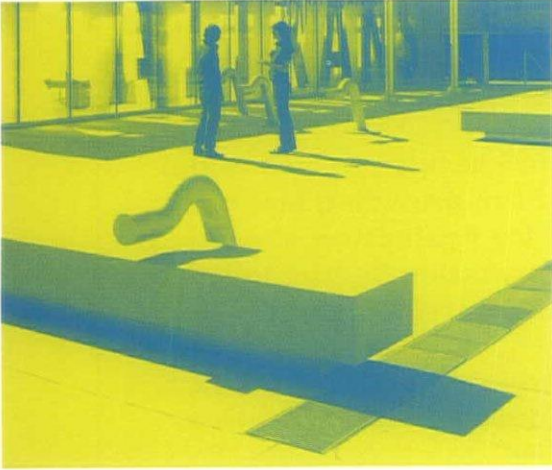
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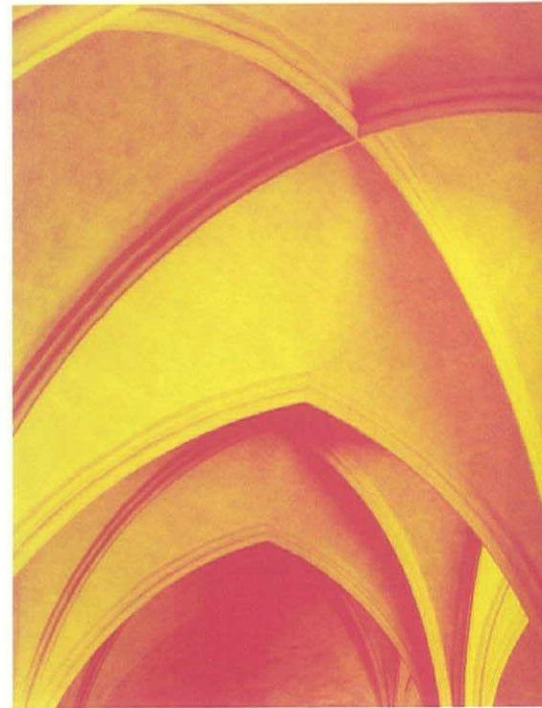
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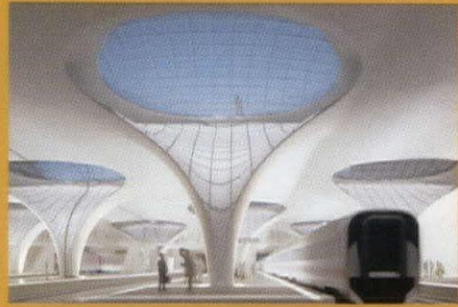
Best Bets What to See and Do

Starts as Liquid, Turns to Stone

Easily taken for granted as the stuff of sidewalks, roads, and utilitarian structures, concrete also stirs the imaginations of architects and engineers because of its versatility, strength, and potential to produce curvilinear forms and surfaces. A wide-ranging exhibition at the National Building Museum called "Liquid Stone: New Architecture in Concrete" encompasses some of the world's most innovative works

of contemporary architecture. Appearing at the Washington, D.C., museum through January 29, 2006, the exhibition presents nearly 30 architectural projects that use concrete in exciting ways.

A variety of stations complement the examination of these architectural achievements, describing the technology of concrete that makes them possible. Through a series of examples, visitors can learn about concrete's scientific properties, unusual



Main Station, Stuttgart, Germany. Unbuilt project.

finishing techniques, and advanced hybrid versions of the material. Projects are grouped according to their emphasis on structure, surface, or sculptural form, including the Torre Agbar skyscraper by French architect Jean Nouvel and a complex in Japan by Tadao Ando, in which the signature gesture is a shallow pool lined with an array of seashells. Concluding the exhibition is a section on "The Future of Concrete," which examines new technologies such as translucent concrete.

Longtime Friend of VSAIA and Virginia Center for Architecture Dies

One July day she was working quietly at her desk at the Collectors' Old Book Shop. The next day she died of heart failure. And just that suddenly Mary Clark Roane Downing, the grand dame of Richmond booksellers, ended a longstanding friendship with the Virginia Society AIA. She was 90 years old.

For more than 20 years, Downing had rented space for her shop in the English basement of the Barret House, which served as the headquarters of the Virginia Society AIA. But "Mary Clark," as everyone called her, was far more than a tenant. She was a fixture at informal staff gatherings such as birthday celebrations, and often the life of the party with her entertaining stories, clever wit, and strong opinions.

A native of Portsmouth, Downing grew up in Richmond at a time when most women chose to follow traditional roles. It was not her cup of tea. In 1937, she graduated from Randolph-Macon Woman's College with a bachelor's degree in English. As a graduation gift, her father offered her the choice of a trip to Europe or a new car. She accepted the trip. After she returned, she taught high school for a short time before taking a job in a shop that sold out-of-print books. "I happened to find a field I was crazy about," she told a reporter from the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. She opened her own shop in 1945 and operated it continuously for 60 years.

In 2003, Downing pledged \$250,000 of her personal funds to support the Virginia Center for Architecture capital campaign. When the Barret House was sold and the staffs of the Virginia Society AIA and the Virginia Center for Architecture Foundation moved to the former Branch House in 2004, she came along, reestablishing her shop for rare and out-of-print books on the Center's second floor. To the day she died, she took particular pride in her black 1967 Mustang, known fondly as "Black Beauty."



Taylor Dabney

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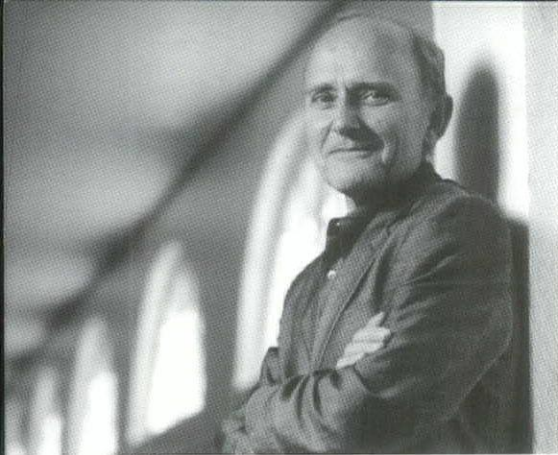
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A conversation with

David Neuman

Eighteen months into his tenure as Architect of the University at the University of Virginia, David J. Neuman shares his insights on planning, growth, and Thomas Jefferson's legacy.

David Neuman, FAIA, is a fast talker, but that's because he has so much to say. Schooled in both planning and design, Neuman will oversee preservation of the 180-year-old Academical Village, develop a master plan for land use and future growth, and guide future design decisions at the University of Virginia. As University Architect and Associate Vice Provost for Planning at Stanford University, his restoration of the 1886 Frederick Law Olmsted plan won a 10-year National Trust for Historic Preservation Award. Before his 14 years at Stanford, Neuman spearheaded design and planning at the University of California-Irvine as campus architect and associate vice chancellor for 12 years. He approaches his new position with an intellectual enthusiasm that bodes well for U.Va.

Inform: How did your responsibilities at Stanford prepare you for your post at the University of Virginia?

DN: The obvious answer is that both positions require an emphasis on campus planning. The Stanford campus has a historic core from the late 1880 and 1890 era – it's 70 years newer than U.Va. It was not designed by the founders, although the founders played a significant role. That there is a historic core and a strong commitment on the part of the governing board and administration to have a cohesive campus is similar. Both universities are trying to recover a sense of place and not develop building by building, but instead trying to plan and control how landscape, architecture, circulation, and more make a place. It's how all these elements are integrated.

In what way did the preservation issues at U.Va. appeal to you?

In a sense, U.Va. has become the paradigm of the American campus. It is an American Heritage site. I appreciate the focus on preservation, and how it fosters a mindset of sustainability: doing well with what you have, which is an important characteristic we're having to learn about in American culture. There's something very attractive about becoming involved with conserving and adaptively reusing buildings in keeping with changes in the makeup and program of the school, looking at all these buildings that are growing older, and seeing the wealth of architecture and cultural landscapes in need of thoughtful recovery and care. Part of the appeal is that as Architect of the University I approach and grapple with these issues every day.

What have you focused on during these first 18 months?

My focus has been the three Ps: process, personnel, and projects. Every bureaucracy has a process that can work well or not. But that process constantly needs to be improved or updated over time. We need to look at the process of planning, in particular, and then design. We need to decide what to do, and then how. Concerning personnel, the office of the Architect of the University is up to 13 positions, not the five that were here when I started. We're organizing internally. This staff needs to collaborate well and understand the office's roles and responsibilities.

The emphasis on projects is concerned primarily with planning. We have started a series of area planning workshops around the U.Va. Grounds – workshops that are focused on student areas of campus. The goal is to bring people together to talk about planning issues as stakeholders, to draw out their ambitions and needs. Through this, people realize they're not the only ones noticing that circulation needs to improve. Jefferson had his ideas of circulation that were implemented in the form of the Colonnades. Unfortunately, we lost a lot of that sense of connectivity over time. These workshops bring up those issues. It all will lead to a new Grounds plan. Each workshop adds to our understanding, and now people see how the process of planning occurs. It's more open, but there's still leadership, movement, and progress.

How do you approach Jefferson's legacy? How do you reconcile it with the University's needs today?

Jefferson was an incredibly thoughtful person, in that he tried to adapt buildings to the site, as well as to the times. Jefferson is often called an inventor, but what he was best at was adapting other people's inventions to new uses. Collaboration was very important to him – he was collaborating with Benjamin Latrobe. He worked as part of a team, which was also part of his political philosophy. Those things are very important to remember. It's all a unit. The landscape, the buildings, and the views are all part of a larger picture.

U.Va. is a rich text with which to work. A lot of Jefferson's buildings are simple in terms of design, and then he adds details or functions, he integrates gardens and alleyways. He layers things. It's not a one-note statement, but instead a rich complex statement. And because of that it's easily adaptable to current use. He also used a rich palette of materials. Successful later buildings also used brick, stone, metal roofs, rich detailing – a vocabulary rich with variations on a theme.

You've primarily worked in California. What is your view of Virginia and its architectural history? How different are the two?

Virginia is very conscious of this in two eras: the Colonial and Revolutionary eras, and then the Civil War era – in particular, all the monuments and battlefields, the cultural landscape. There is a sensitivity to how the scenic setting is really part of the history. As an example, you can't have Monticello without preserving its view.

This is very different from California, whose early history consists of Native American and then Spanish Colonial influence. From that era very little, maybe some missions, has been preserved. There is the fact that California was wrested from Mexico, and in the past people didn't necessarily want to honor that history. There is a different sense now, and people are trying to celebrate and preserve that cultural heritage. As a general rule, though, it is only in the fairly recent past that Californians have become more aware of their heritage. I think California is more aware of its recent past and is trying to preserve it, in the form of some very sig-

Continued on page 14

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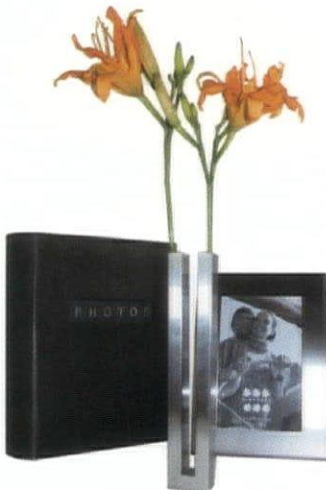
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14

Continued from page 12

nificant buildings, such as the Eames House and Frank Lloyd Wright's work. That architecture and that landscape are beginning to be appreciated and preserved.

University administrator Leonard Sandridge said he hoped to develop a clear vision of the University's physical design needs for the next 50 years. What challenges will the University face during this period?

Growth is an obvious challenge. It's the same at any campus with a strong sense of place. Both Stanford and U.Va. have central areas, such as The Lawn, and other areas that are less visible, less cohesive, such as U.Va.'s Darden Business School and the law school. They seem very separated, isolated from the core. We're often trying to reconnect things that haven't been well connected.

The issue of growth is all in how you manage it. How do you accommodate an additional 20,000 students, but still preserve the architecture and ambiance of the University of Virginia? It's fragile. If you increase density by using open space, do you lose character?

Growth, funding, and community relations are all linked. How big could the University get before it overwhelms Charlottesville? We need to manage growth in collaboration with the city. It's counter-intuitive, but as things change and grow, they become more dependent on one another. This includes areas such as transportation, housing, and social services. We want to look at things regionally, and make a point of working with the surrounding county and the city to plan overall land use.

We'll also examine the fine grain in The Grounds plan. We'll work up the smallest details, given the current projection, moving to the same proportions of graduates, undergraduates, faculty, and support, given the current ratios. We will then be able to say that we will need so many more student housing units, that we could put more housing on The Grounds. From there we can consider options for a 10-year scenario.

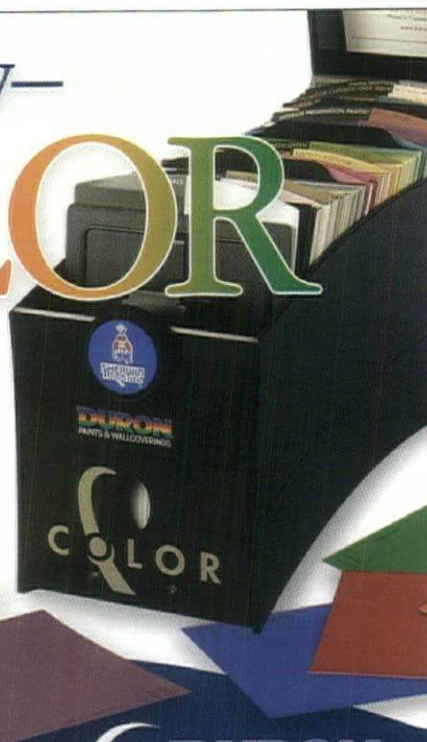
The 50-year scenario becomes much broader. We have to define alternative futures at that point. Say there is an increasing emphasis on research, or that the graduate schools expand as the undergraduate school stays the same. We'll vary these elements to construct different possibilities. Do we know that we have enough land? If we do, how do we want to use it? How do we want to use it in relation to the surrounding land? Do we want high or low density? Either one is a possibility. When we do these plans, it's fun to challenge any conventional wisdom, such as "Sprawl is bad." Well, no, low-density use can be good if you do it in the right way. ■

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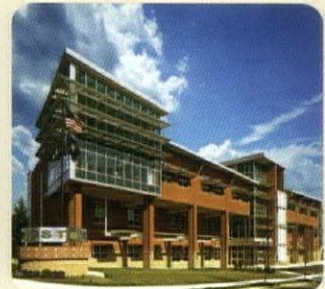
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Sense & Sustainability

By Rab McClure, AIA

By carefully weighing their priorities, BCWH Architects of Richmond sets a positive example for environmental responsibility at Greenwood Elementary School.

Approaching Greenwood Elementary School on a scorching summer day, Scott Kyle, AIA, is conspicuous as he tramps beside the woods along an access road. Kyle, of BCWH Architects in Richmond, is inspecting water-tolerant aquatic and wetlands grasses planted in storm water retention basins that ring the school site. Despite 100-degree heat, the South Florida native is not the type to linger inside the air-conditioned school. His passion for the project and its process is evidenced by his animated storytelling. “We convinced the county the bike path was a good idea,” he says, “even though, because of existing wetlands, it’s closer to the road than they’d usually allow.”

Throughout the project, this willingness to thoughtfully challenge convention pays off, with a pervasive, if subtle, environmental agenda infusing the process. “We try to treat sustainable design as simply a part of *good* design,” says Kyle. “It doesn’t necessarily have to cost more, it just takes more care and interest on the part of the design team.” That effort – characterized by sensitive planning, copious daylighting, careful detailing, innovative materials, and an attitude of environmental responsibility – is consistently evident and yields a solution specifically tailored to its site and function.

Natural bogs and ponds limited the school’s footprint and drove its two-story, courtyard layout. But the resulting compact strat-





allowed 50 percent of exit stairs to be open, provided that they connected just two floors. The team asked code reviewers for permission to take advantage of this development, generating the opportunity to flood daylight into hallways that would otherwise have been blank and obstructed.

Wherever possible, indirect lighting creates luminous ceilings and walls, reducing glare and creating an alternative to the ubiquitous 2-by-4-foot fluorescent fixture. In all public rooms, multiple-setting light switches offer flexibility and the opportunity to save energy through adaptable light levels. Most classrooms have high ceilings with a translucent band of clerestory windows, and three-lamped fixtures can be switched off entirely or turned on one lamp at a time. “Teachers find that adjusting the light levels helps control the mood in the classroom,” says Kyle. “Relying primarily on the clerestory daylight and keeping artificial levels more subdued has a calming effect on the students. And research indicates that natural light in classrooms increases retention, productivity, and even test scores.”

Nooks with wood benches and wool wall covering create unexpected moments of intimacy and color in the corridors. The self-healing wool surface serves as backrest and pinup surface and replaces vinyl wall covering. “When editing the specifications, we did a search



Furnishings in corridors, pin-up surfaces, and large glass-filled openings create bright, cheerful interiors (top and above).



Translucent glass provides diffuse daylight during school hours and glows at night (right).



Photos: Chris Cunningham Photography

for the word 'vinyl,' then performed research to see which of those products could be replaced with something healthier, more natural," Kyle explains. Despite this, the project largely utilizes vinyl composition tile, a product so durable and inexpensive that a price-competitive replacement is difficult to find.

Compromising on the inevitability of a school staple such as vinyl tile, however, made it possible to afford other features that make Greenwood unique. The benches, an amenity that is outside the basic instructional purview and thus unprogrammed, foster controlled queuing outside the cafeteria and quiet conversation among friends, giving individuals a place within the larger institution. On the exterior, custom 8" x 8" bricks add highlights of material warmth and texture, humanizing the building's scale.

Detailing of the no-maintenance metal skin produced clever mitered corners and stealthy mechanical louvers whose blades match the horizontal banding of adjacent siding for a streamlined, inte-

Flexible, multi-use spaces increase the building's efficiency (right).





Suspended lighting and a cozy storytelling area make the lofty media center more kid-friendly.

ted appearance. Canopies at bus drop-offs and the main
 ance are a standard, no-maintenance aluminum system,
 ng money in the budget for other priorities. Off-the-shelf
 or sunshades, compatible with the aluminum curtain wall,
 for the building's south-facing windows from summer heat
 dmitting lower-angled winter sunlight. By design, the build-
 terior will require no painting. The list of sustainability initiatives at Greenwood Elementary
 e one, and in the end it's intentionally difficult to distin-
 tween components of the design that were implement-
 e they make good design sense and those that make good
 ental sense. An open-cell concrete paver - filled with
 anted with grass seed - slows absorption of storm water
 olutants draining to the Chesapeake Bay, without inhibit-
 ny vehicle access. Carpet, adhesives, paint, and mill-
 ow VOC's (volatile organic compounds, the harmful
 iated with new construction) make the building
 limiting off-gassing. Other products were selected
 amount of recycled content they contain and the extent
 are recyclable.
 approach to sustainability is commendable for a
 ons, primarily for the same reason it is so unex-



Inexpensive, off-the-shelf canopies (above) leave extra money in the budget for higher priorities.

pected – because it happens in a public school project, where economic realities and standardized expectations are so firmly entrenched. Their design process yields a project that is sound, efficient, and attractive on its own merits, made even more appealing by the application of green initiatives. Bringing this agenda to a fairly low-cost suburban school poses a solution at the heart of the problem.

The design team's willingness to compromise occasionally on one point in order to implement another doesn't sell the project short. Instead, by weighing their priorities, the architects set a positive example and sensitively create an attractive, cheerful, livable, elementary school. What better way to make a case for environmentally sensible design solutions than to equate them with design solutions that are simply sensible?

Rab McClure, AIA, is an assistant professor in the Department of Interior Design at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Project: Greenwood Elementary School

Architects: BCWH Architects, Richmond (Charles D. Piper, AIA, principal in charge; Scott Kyle, AIA, LEED AP, project manager; Aradhana Jajodia, project architect; Elena Epstein, interior designer)

Consultants: Timmons Group (civil); Stroud Pence & Associates (structural); Hurd & Obenchain, Inc. (mechanical/electrical); Food Service Consultants Studio (food service)

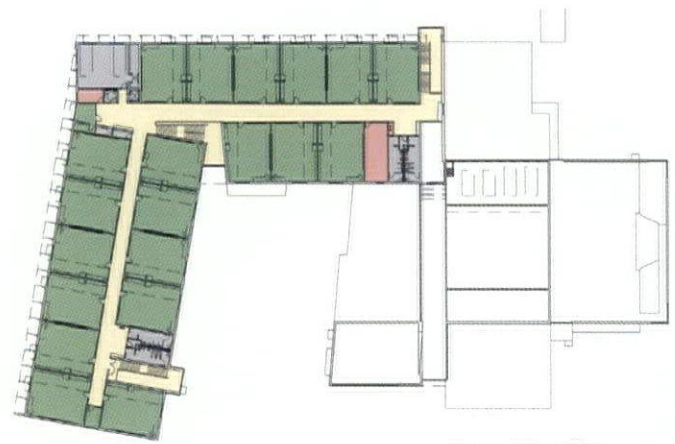
General Contractor: Haley Builders

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Second Floor Plan

- Core Academics
- Media Center
- Administration
- Teacher Areas, Conference
- Performing/Fine Arts
- Lobby, Circulation, Stairs
- Physical Education
- Food Service, Storage, Mech.
- Cafeteria, Platform



First Floor Plan



The open stairwells that lend the school distinction – and fill the hallways with daylight during school hours – are made possible by recent changes in the building code.



The center is a new point of pride in a neighborhood with deep historic roots.

Bolstering the Community

Bridging past and future, a LEED-certified multi-use facility by BeeryRio of Springfield helps to preserve the traditions of an African-American community in Arlington.

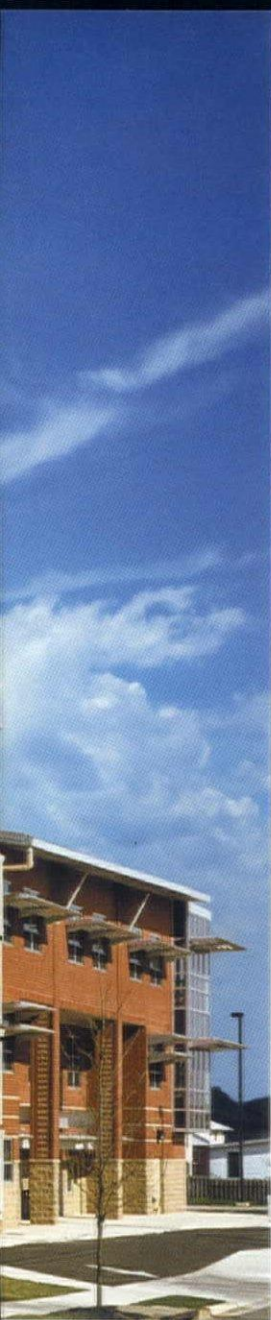
By Kim A. O'Connell

Decades ago, the Hall's Hill neighborhood of Arlington, Virginia – established by former slaves after the Civil War – was infamous for the seven-foot-high fence that wary white neighbors had built around it. Despite this, or maybe because of it, Hall's Hill residents forged a strong community, spawning Arlington's first black fire station and John M. Langston Elementary School, which anchored the neighborhood for more than 75 years.

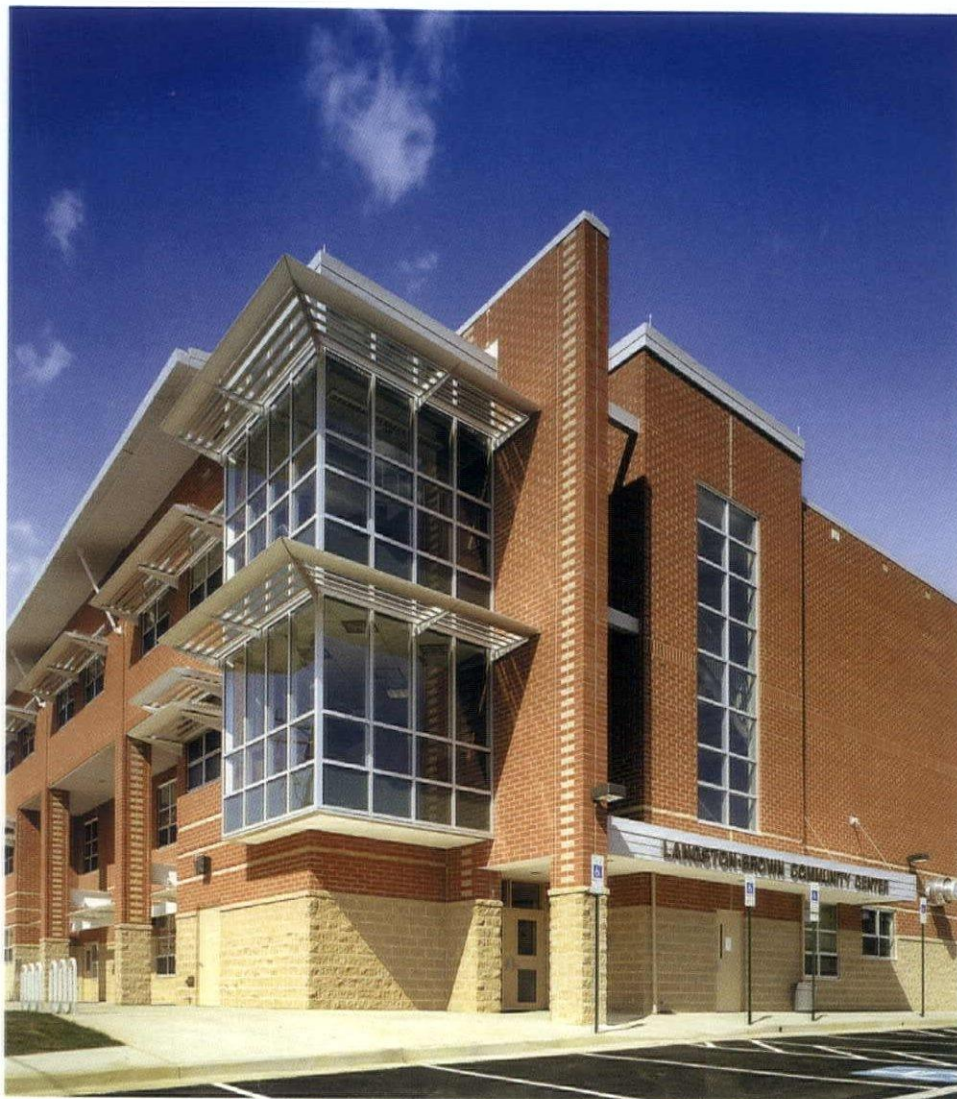
Today, the fence is long gone – and the school replaced by a sustainably designed, multi-use facility that is bringing this once-segregated community back together. Designed by BeeryRio Architecture + Interiors, of Springfield, the Langston High School Continuation/Langston-Brown Community Center is the first building in the state to receive a silver rating under the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED system, which gives a numeric

measurement of the environmentally friendly factors in construction. In addition to its sustainable features, the center offers distinct spaces for programs aimed at pre-schoolers, high school students, and senior citizens. On a recent July day, for example, kids enrolled in the Head Start program were napping in one part of the facility, as high-schoolers laughed together near the basketball court and seniors played cards in the library.

From the first, Arlington Public Schools wanted to make the center a model of environmental stewardship, as well as a landmark that would both symbolize and galvanize the surrounding community. Hall's Hill residents and other community representatives were consulted throughout the center's planning, design, and construction. "The extensive public process – known locally as 'the Arlington Way' – made sure we were doing the right thing for the community," says William T. Brown, AIA, who served as the



Photos: Duane Lempke/Sisson Studios

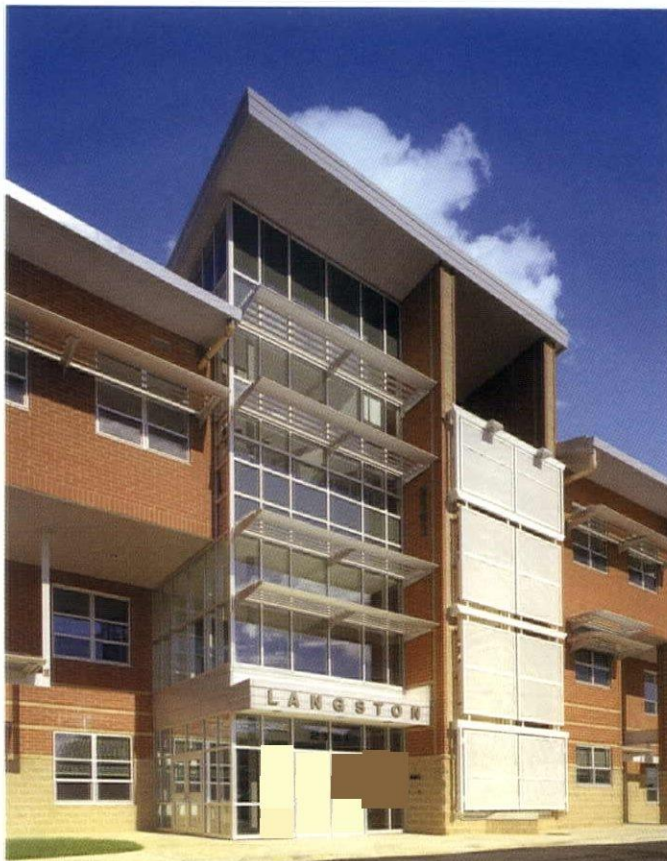


Sunshades on the large windows serve both aesthetic and functional purposes (above). Perforated screens to the right of the main entrance (below) conceal a massive tank where rainwater is collected from the roof.

chief architect on the team. “The county wanted us to think beyond the standard cookie-cutter school design.”

The resulting 50,000-square-foot structure shares the red brick – but little else – that people associate with schoolhouses. What could have been a multipurpose monolith, however, is instead a light-filled facility with a dynamic interplay of glass, steel, stone, and brick. Just as the building is designed for three primary functions – an alternative high school for returning students, the Head Start program, and a community recreation center – its façade is divided roughly into three sections, each with its own rooflines and design details. The building injects welcome civitas into the commercial strip that borders Hall’s Hill, a congested area punctuated by fast-food franchises.

At the outset of the process, Brown and his team convened all the key players, including engineers, contractors, and a sustainability consultant, to go through the LEED scorecard and determine which credits could most effectively be achieved. Although Brown was unable to convince county officials to embrace more challenging green-building features such as a vegetative roof, the ultimate design won points for its sustainable





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The building's most dramatic features are the two 24-foot-tall, 11,000-gallon tanks that capture rainwater from the roof for landscape irrigation, sidewalk washing, and other uses. The tank on the front side of the building is covered by perforated screens that allow light into the building's central lobby and stairwell, but appear opaque on the exterior, shielding the tank from view. The three-story building also makes the most of extensive daylighting, with eave-like exterior sunshades that control solar heat gain. Other exterior features include a 75-space parking lot made of porous asphalt, a bio-retention area, and charging stations for electric-powered vehicles.

Inside, Brown sought to solve multiple design problems with a single solution. For example, the various departments agreed to stagger the schedule of their programs to share common spaces such as a lounge, media center, and workout room. Other interior features include clerestory windows on the upper level, reducing the need for artificial light; low-flow faucets and waterless urinals; and low-toxicity paints, adhesives, and carpeting. In the lobby and hallways, stained concrete was used instead of the more typical vinyl composition tile. This last feature, however, produced some unexpected results; in one area, the footprints of careless workers are forever captured in the floor.

Whenever possible, the contractors recycled construction waste, eventually diverting 83 percent of the project's waste from the landfill. The design team was also able to reuse some of the cabinetry from the old Langston school. But perhaps most important to the community, Brown included space in the building for a neighborhood archive and exhibit area – designed to teach younger generations about the history of Hall's Hill. The cornerstone of the old Langston school was also preserved, now ensconced next to the cornerstone for the new building.

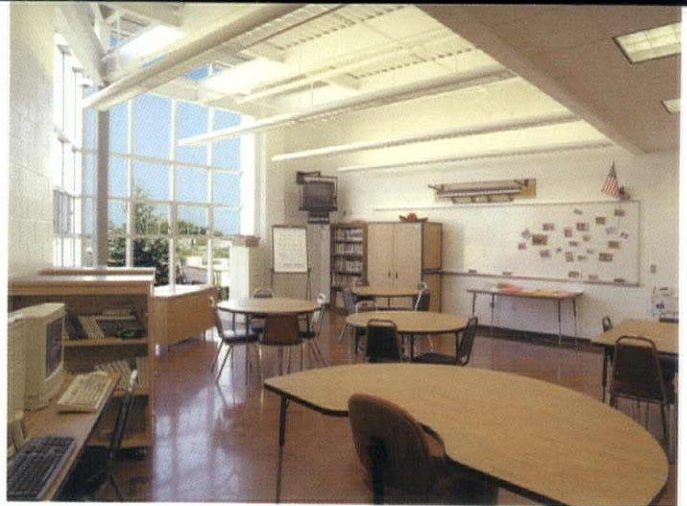
"The Langston-Brown facility has become a model for other jurisdictions," Brown says with justifiable pride. "We appreciate that Arlington had an innovative vision for the building. It takes a great client to allow great buildings to happen."

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

Project: Langston High School Continuation/Langston-Brown Community Center
Architects: BeeryRio Architecture + Interiors, Springfield (William Brown, AIA, REFP, LEED AP; Mark West, AIA, LEED AP; Richard Rutledge, AIA; Chuck Heath, AIA; Laura Middel, Trudy Shipp)
Consultants: Strickler Associates (MEP, fire protection); Ehler Bryan (structural); Adtek Engineering (civil); Downey Scott (cost estimating); Terra-Logos (LEED consultant)
Construction Management: Hess Construction
Contractor: J.C. Grimberg
Owner: Arlington County PRCR, Arlington Public Schools

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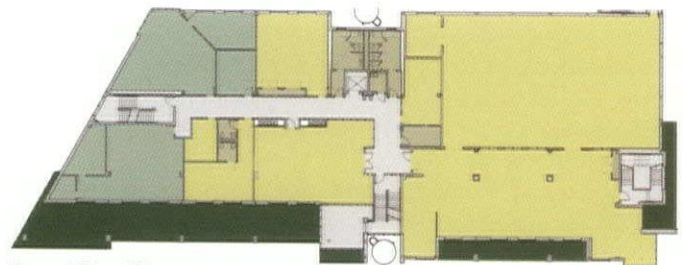
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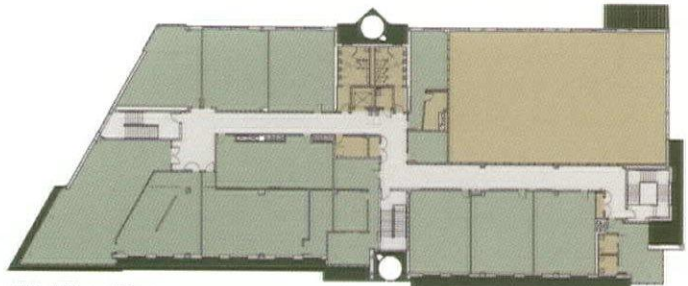
Ample daylighting reduces dependence on artificial lights (above). Much of the flooring is stained concrete (left).



First Floor Plan

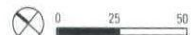


Second Floor Plan



Third Floor Plan

Overhang
 Head Start
 High School Continuation
 Utility
 Community Spaces
 Corridors



Like a Good Neighbor

In response to community concerns about a mammoth new school, Samaha Associates of Fairfax designed a complex that complements the scale of its surroundings.



In a quiet part of Fairfax County not yet overtaken by strip development, a winding tree-lined road reminds residents that the rolling Virginia Piedmont is only a few miles west. Not surprisingly, when the county announced plans to clear a nearly 80-acre site along the road for the new Liberty Middle School, many residents balked. Less than two miles away, a hulking high school was an eyesore and a traffic magnet – and no one wanted to repeat that scene.

In response, Fairfax County Public Schools ensured residents that the middle school would be shielded by a 100-foot tree buffer and that adjacent wooded areas would remain undeveloped. The architect, Samaha Associates of Fairfax, designed the school to complement the scale of the surrounding neighborhood, keeping single-story functions at the front and two-story areas toward the back. Separate bus and parent drop-off loops also help to ease traffic congestion. Today, Liberty Middle School serves about 1,200 students in grades 7 and 8 and is actively used by the community for sports, fitness, and other events.

“The idea was to have as much flexibility as possible and reinforce the middle school concept, which is to make this transition from elementary to high school,” says Sy Samaha, AIA, president of the firm. “We wanted to get the kids used to being in a bigger building, but put them in teams to make it easier.”

The school is organized along a central spine, which is divided into self-contained pods that facilitate the school’s team

approach to learning. To minimize confusion for the kids and foster collaboration among teachers, students are split into four teams per grade. Each team goes through the entire school year together. Samaha designed each pod to include classrooms, lockers, and storage, which helps administrators to control circulation and saves teachers from running across the building for supplies. Additional team space accommodates special education students.

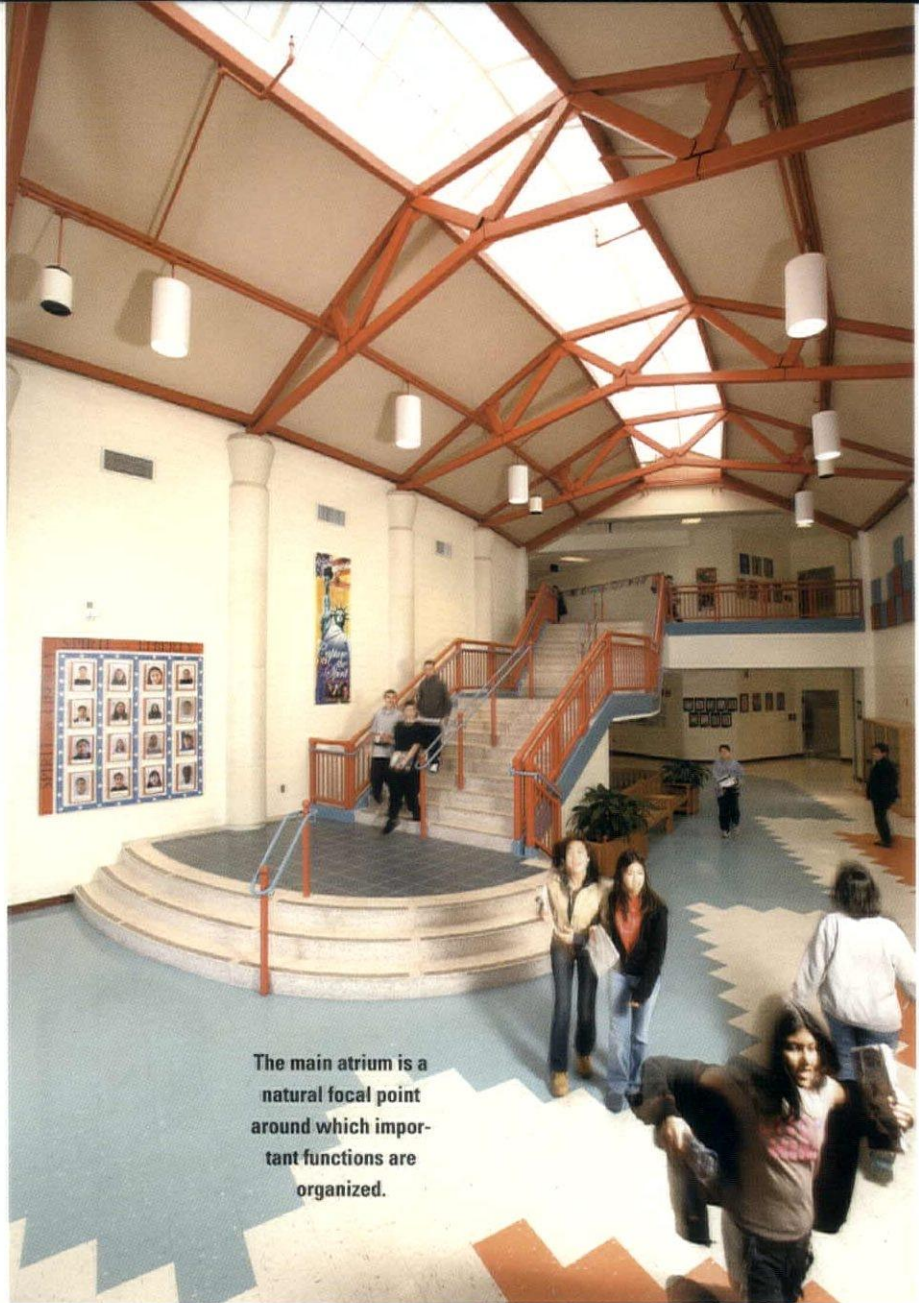
Rather than shunt elective departments into far-flung corners, however, Samaha made sure that computer labs, the art studio, and the music department were integrated into the design and easily accessible from core areas. The school features an array of advanced learning studios, including so-called “synergistic technology” labs and a demonstration kitchen worthy of the Food Network. “Lots of times schools become too small not because of a drastic change in population, but because of the changes in programs and curriculum,” Samaha says.

Throughout the building, the standard-issue concrete masonry walls are enlivened by students’ artwork and projects. “You see a real positive attitude about the school from the kids themselves,” says Pam Cunningham, Liberty’s director of student services. “They’re proud of what they have.”

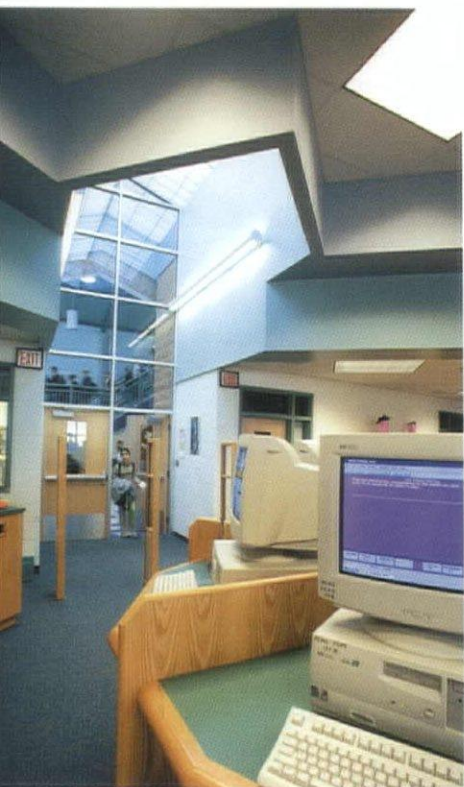
– Kim A. O’Connell



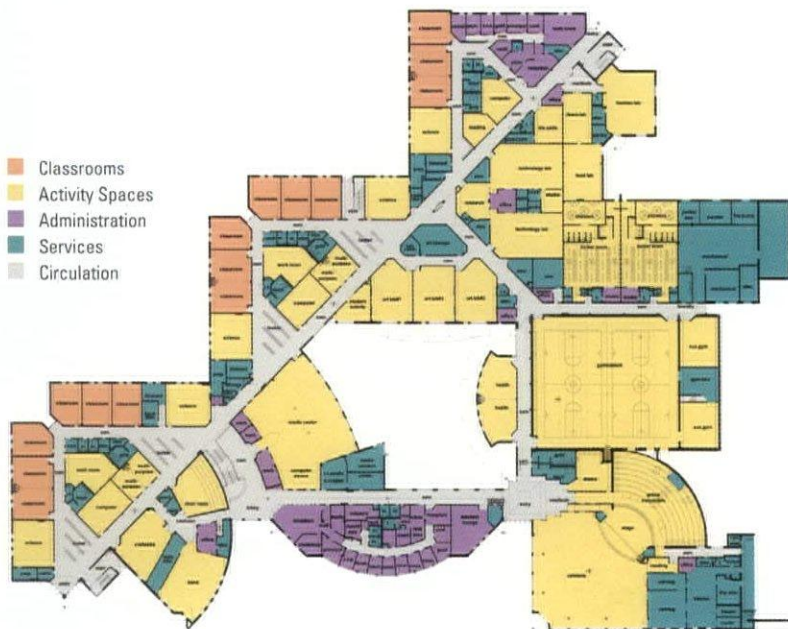
In addition to an airy media center (below), the school features places for informal gathering (left).



The main atrium is a natural focal point around which important functions are organized.



Photos: Nick Waring



First Floor Plan

Tapping into Technology

In the design for a new specialty high school in Henrico County, Moseley Architects of Richmond lets the unique character of the institution determine the physical decisions and the psychology behind them.



As any parent can attest, today's kids are more savvy, wired, and competitive than ever, and families begin planning much earlier for college and beyond. Deep Run High School, a new secondary school in Henrico County, acknowledges this reality by taking its cues not from the state's many traditional schoolhouses, but from the high-technology businesses that fill office parks nearby.

Serving 1,800 students in grades 9 through 12, Deep Run has the distinction of being designed specifically to house one of the county's ten academic specialty centers. Located in each county high school and one middle school, the centers augment the core curriculum by offering courses in a particular field – such as science, engineering, foreign languages, and communications. Students must apply to attend the center that best suits their interests. As the county's first new high school in 20 years, Deep

Run fittingly houses the most high-tech curriculum – the Specialty Center for Information Technology.

“This was the first opportunity to design a school around not only their basic needs, but also their specialty center,” says Jim McCalla, AIA, vice president of Richmond-based Moseley Architects and a veteran educational planner. “That became a driving force not just in a physical sense, but in the psychology of our decisions. We didn't want a red brick box. The school folks wanted the building to feel special, not like a traditional high school.”

To that end, the architects eschewed a heavy, all-masonry façade in favor of a lighter, glossier effect achieved through a combination of masonry, metal panels, sloping roofs, exposed structure, and ample glass. The asymmetrical floor plan is roughly divided into an academic wing and a public activity wing. On the two-story academic side, a U-shaped ring of classrooms encloses a central

Rather than mimic old schoolhouses, Deep Run (left) takes its design cues from nearby high-tech offices.



A strong expression of the building's structural components (above and below) serves both aesthetic and educational purposes at the school.

Photos: Hoachlander Davis Photography

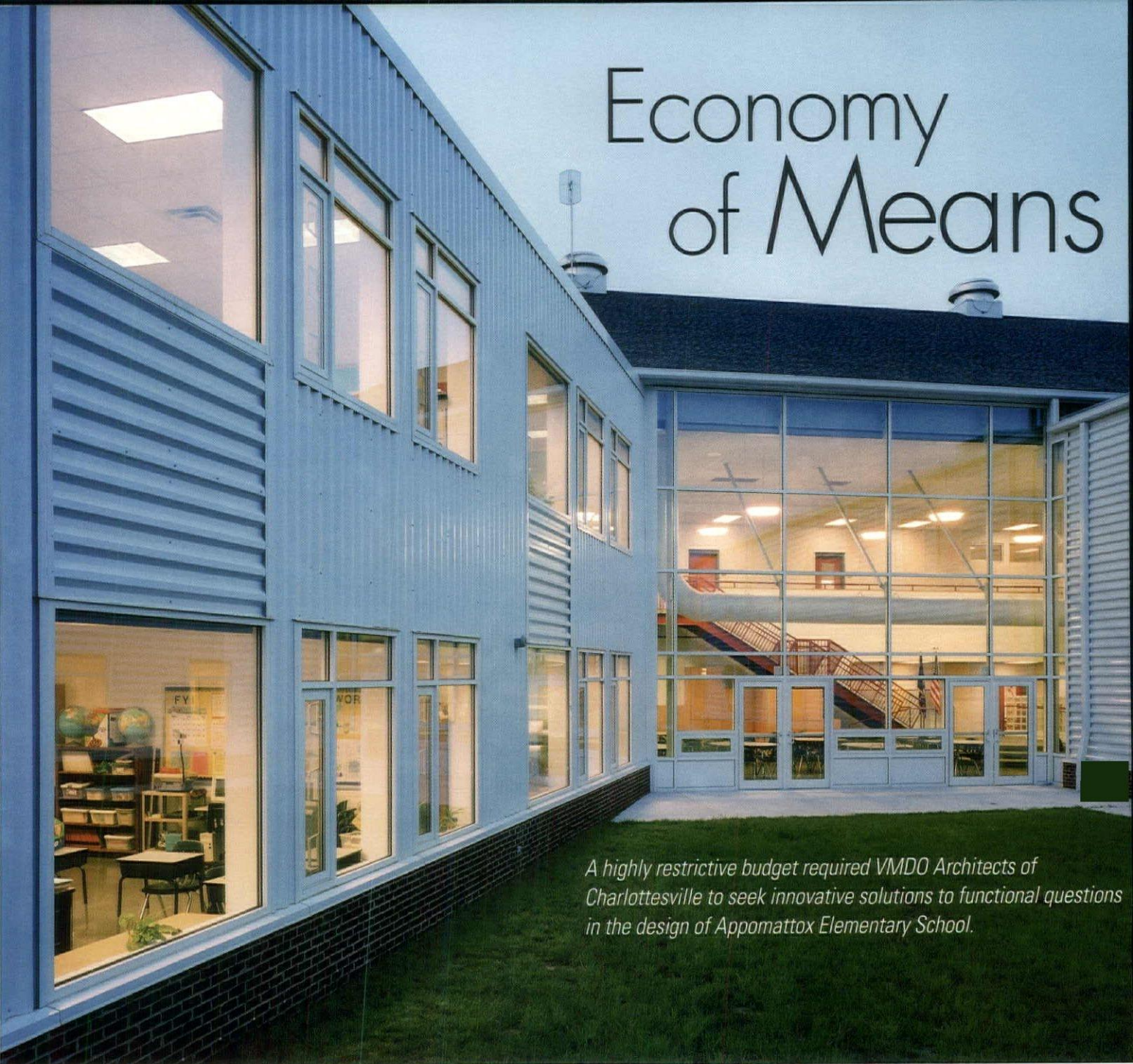
courtyard, with the specialty center tech labs grouped together on one floor. The public side, which contains an auditorium and gymnasium and has its own entry doors, can be used for after-hours community events. Common areas between the gym and auditorium are used as a lunchroom during the school day, but can be converted into one or two lobbies for events at other times.

In contrast to the compartmentalized schools of the past, the architects designed the classrooms so that science, art, and English teachers might all teach next to each other. "A current educational theory is to integrate the curriculum so that it makes more sense to kids, and so the same topic might be threaded through science, English, and other classes," McCalla says. "The building was designed with a lot of flexibility."

— Kim A. O'Connell



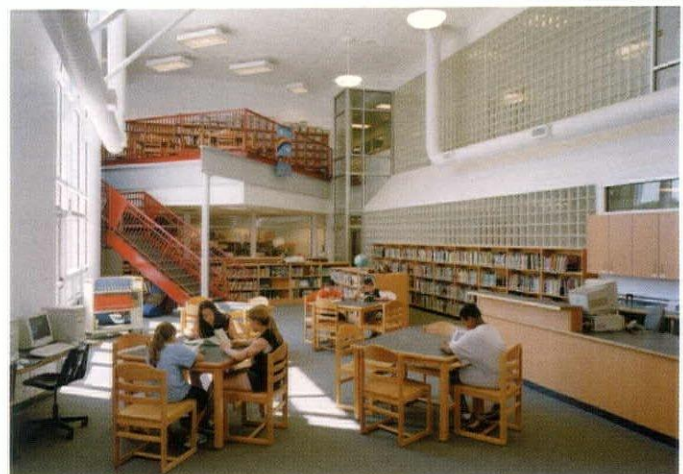
Economy of Means



A highly restrictive budget required VMDO Architects of Charlottesville to seek innovative solutions to functional questions in the design of Appomattox Elementary School.

Determined to replace an aging facility, the Appomattox County School Board initiated the design of a new school in 1999. A high value was placed on pragmatism, and the county's governing body – the Board of Supervisors – mandated a multiple-use but economical building. They limited the project's budget to \$8 million, an amount substantially less than originally envisioned by the school administration. But challenges are the stuff on which architecture thrives. So VMDO Architects, of Charlottesville, sought a sensible design for the common good of faculty, students, and the community. Three years later, Appomattox Elementary School was completed for \$84 per square foot, the least expensive school, based on square-footage costs, built in the state that year.

The new school hosts 600 students in grades three through five. Notions of economy and utility, as well as progression, led to a study of several "spine schemes" with standardized classroom wings attached to a long building containing administrative

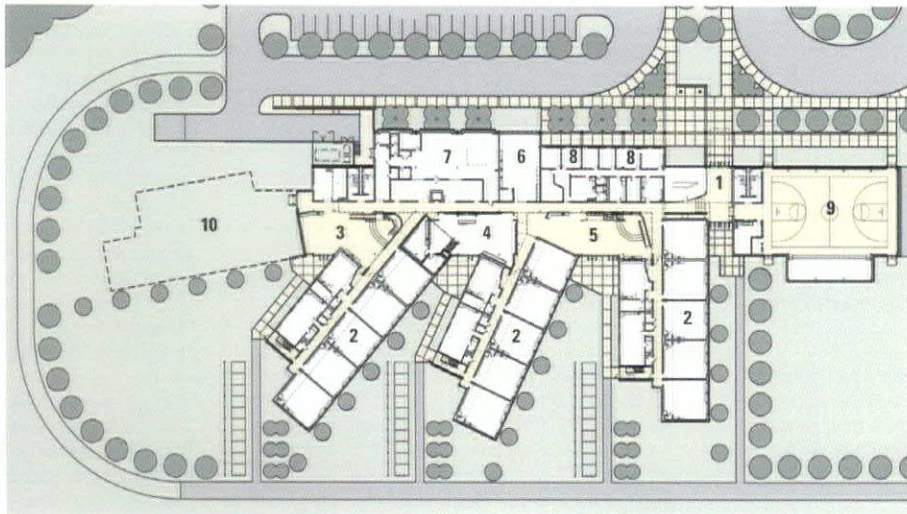


The school library (above) occupies one of the voids created between the classroom wings and the spine of shared services.



Photos: Philip Beaurline

Splayed wings (left) open the classrooms to daylight. Common spaces incorporate small-scale lunch-rooms (right).



- 1 Entrance
- 2 Classrooms
- 3 West Commons
- 4 Library
- 5 East Commons
- 6 Art
- 7 Kitchen
- 8 Offices
- 9 Gymnasium
- 10 Future Expansion

First Floor Plan 0 50 100

offices and resource classrooms. The spine created the basis for a clearly zoned site plan, restricting vehicles to the northern half of the site and ensuring abundant sunlight and unobstructed views to the south.

The three academic wings, each like the others, are angled to direct views to the countryside and to gather morning sunlight in the classrooms. "The classroom wings are identical for cost reasons, but by orienting them differently in relation to the bar or common space, we got unique voids in between," observes Ken Thacker, AIA, the project architect. Thacker says the opportunity in this project was to manipulate those voids to make places that the kids are able to recognize as their own.

The spine forms a spacious, internal "learning street" along one edge of the common spaces and offers access to critical school functions, such as computer labs, the library, administrative

offices, and other services. The learning street connects each academic wing and is energized by activity in the adjacent commons. Now, instead of managing a large, boxy cafeteria, the school has its students eat lunch in one of the commons areas, which are more comfortably scaled and far easier to supervise. "That idea came from an owner request to try to improve on the typical large, institutional cafeteria," Thacker says. "Their thinking about it was primarily in terms of the behavioral challenges faced when you put so many kids in a big box, and we were thinking about it for its spatial qualities."

In the end, the design team at VMDO managed to deliver a bright, modern school – one that was more than \$10 per square foot less than the statewide average. And they did so without overlooking the fact that the school should be, ultimately, an inspirational place for students.

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Continued on page 37

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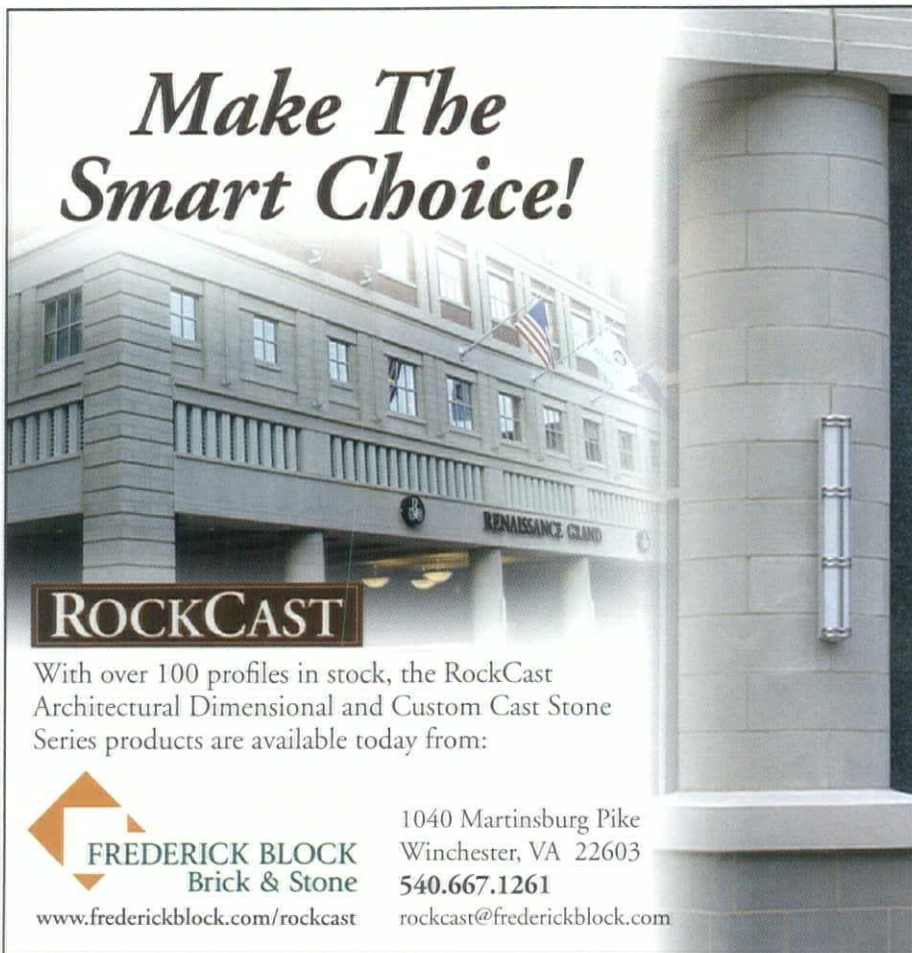
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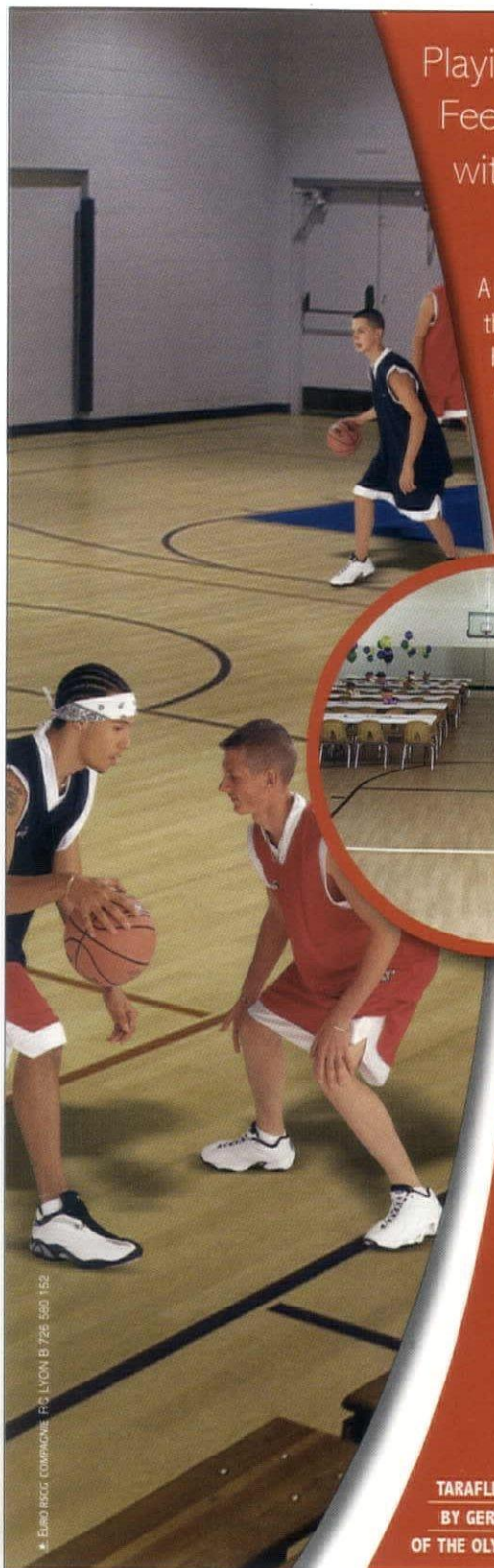
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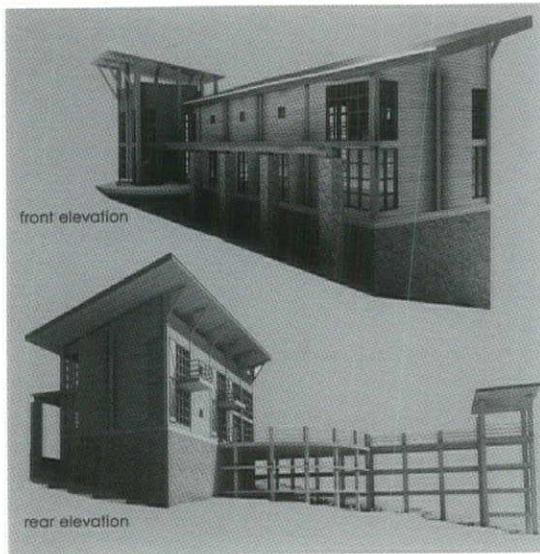
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On the Boards



Architect: Arc Studio, Newport News
Project: Cabin Retreat

This 3,500-s.f. cabin retreat is submerged in the woods of Bath County. The exterior is accented with cedar siding and aluminum storefront windows, as well as a single-pitch, standing-seam metal roof. The interior features exposed elements with dynamic geometries and double-height spaces. Tel: 757-873-9644



Architect: Baskervill, Richmond
Project: Dupont Fibers Federal Credit Union

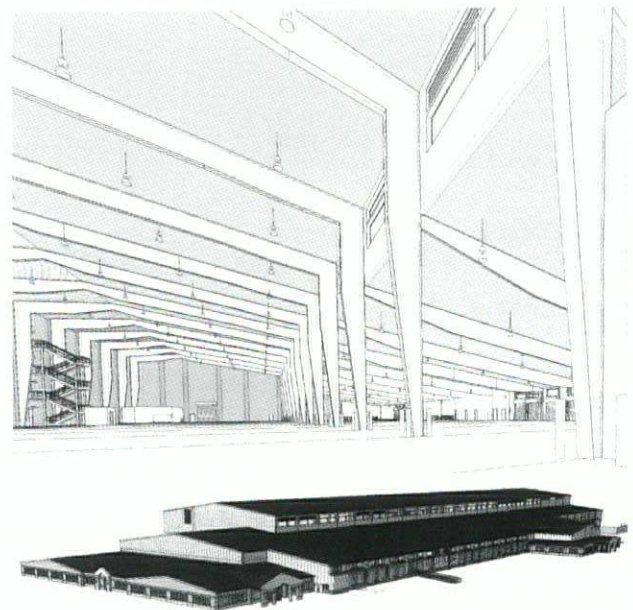
The design of this 5,000-s.f. member services center in Richmond features a retail-oriented interior with a product display space in the lobby, along with a concierge, coffee bar, and Kids Corner. The Mission-style interior gives the space warmth and a timeless look. Tel: 804-343-1010 / www.baskervill.com

38



Architect: BCWH Architects, Richmond
Project: Rockbridge County Courthouse

The Rockbridge County Courthouse project consists of a new building and parking deck structure constructed on the corner of Nelson and Randolph streets in downtown Lexington. This project will combine all three courts, clerks, and associated court functions in one facility. Tel: 804-788-4774



Architect: DMJM Design, Washington D.C.
Project: Air Freight Terminal, Dover Air Force Base

This new 350,000-s.f. mixed-use facility will house the largest aerial port operation in the Department of Defense and features a state-of-the-art pallet conveying system. The integrated center will facilitate non-stop operation and provide for large meeting and training spaces. Tel: 703-682-4900



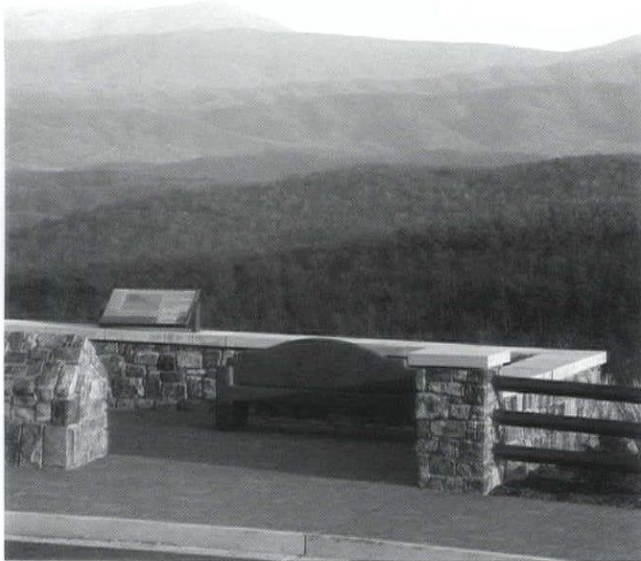
Firm: DMJM Design (Justice Group), Arlington
Project: Maryland District Court

DMJM Design is developing a six-story, 160,000-s.f. courthouse that will anchor the southern edge of downtown Rockville, Md. This facility will provide the community with a civic icon that balances the traditional solemnity of the courts with a societal transparency. Tel: 703-682-4900



Architect: Gresham Smith & Partners, Richmond
Project: Hackerman-Patz Patient and Family Pavilion

This Johns Hopkins University facility will provide lodging for patients and families who receive treatment at the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center. With its home-like environment, the pavilion will serve as the focal point for a wide range of programming and support. Tel: 804-788-0710 / www.gspnet.com



Landscape Architect: Land Planning and Design Associates, Charlottesville
Project: Dan Ingals Overlook

This scenic overlook is located along Route 39 in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Bath County. The overlook is both historically and culturally significant, and serves as a major wayside for interpretive signs for the region. Native stone is used for walls, columns, and entry signage. Tel: 434-296-2108 / www.lpda.net



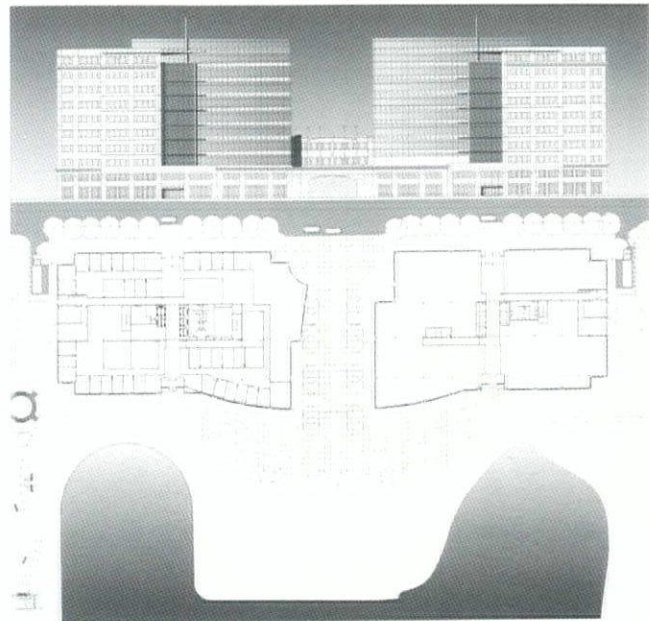
Architect: Meditch Murphey Architects, Chevy Chase, Md.
Project: Residence in McLean

Primarily an interior renovation, this last of four phases of an ongoing house remodeling will update neglected spaces and link previous work into one complete whole. Mottled plaster, steel, and beech transform the flat brick fireplace into a multi-functional wall. www.meditchmurphey.com



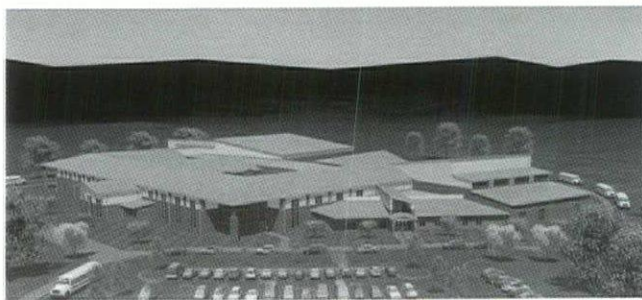
Architect: Mitchell/ Matthews Architects, Charlottesville
Project: Park Street Condominiums

This high-end, 50,000-s.f. condominium project is located on Park Street in one of Charlottesville's most attractive neighborhoods. Only blocks from the town center, this project incorporates the renovation of the historic home of one of Charlottesville's notable early mayors. Tel: 434-979-7550



Architect: Morgan Gick McBeath & Associates, Falls Church
Project: Trinity Centre

This Class A office, residential, and retail park is located in Centreville. MGMA and Lewis Scully Gionet designed the last phase with twin towers set above the lake. Each building contains more than 220,000 s.f., anticipating the next generation of park architecture. Tel: 703-538-7100 / www.morgangick.com



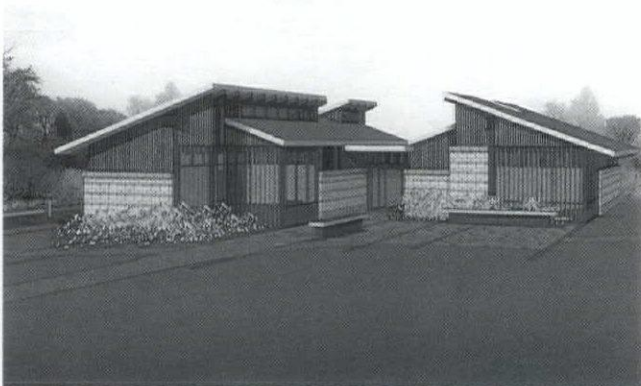
Architect: Moseley Architects, Harrisonburg
Project: New Fauquier County High School #3

This high school's consensus-driven design was inspired by a community group made up of administrators, teachers, parents, and local citizens. The 230,000-s.f. building will accommodate 1,200 students, with core spaces sized for 1,500 students. Tel: 540-434-1346 / www.moseleyarchitects.com



Architect: PSA-Dewberry, Inc., Fairfax
Project: Shenandoah University Business School

This business school in Winchester incorporates the latest in instructional facilities and interactive technologies. The 40,000-s.f. building incorporates an existing facility into a multi-use center with classrooms, conference areas, student gathering spaces, and a 300-seat auditorium. Call Sarah Montezon, 703-698-9050



Architect: Quinn Evans Architects, Washington, D.C.

Project: Ivy Point Interpretive Center

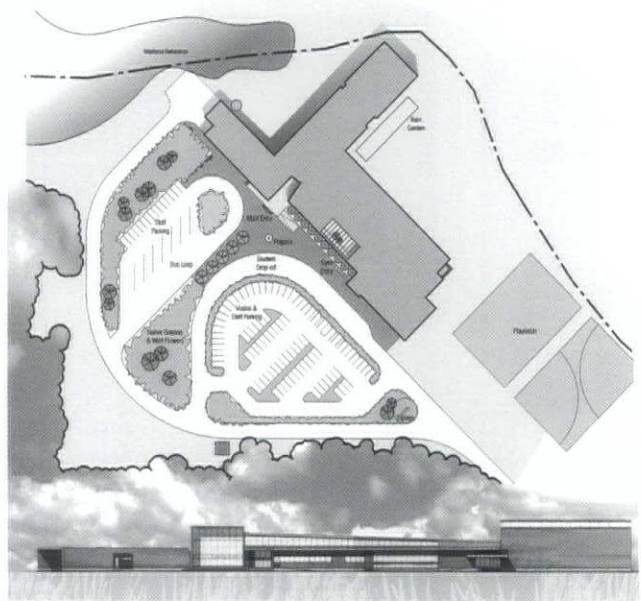
As part of the conversion of a former brownfield site into a publicly accessible waterfront park, Quinn Evans Architects has designed a new community history and nature center in Salem, N.J. The 3,300-s.f. facility is designed for LEED certification. Tel: 202-298-6700 / www.quinnevans.com



Architect: SFCS Inc., Roanoke

Project: Pennybyrn at Maryfield Renovation

SFCS is converting this traditional nursing facility in High Point, N.C. to family-style households for elders. Home-like common areas and private individual spaces enable flexibility, independence, and freedom of choice. This kitchen includes zones for staff, residents, and visitors. Tel: 540-344-6664 / vlf@sfcs.com



Architect: SHW Group LLP, Reston

Project: Somerset Intermediate School

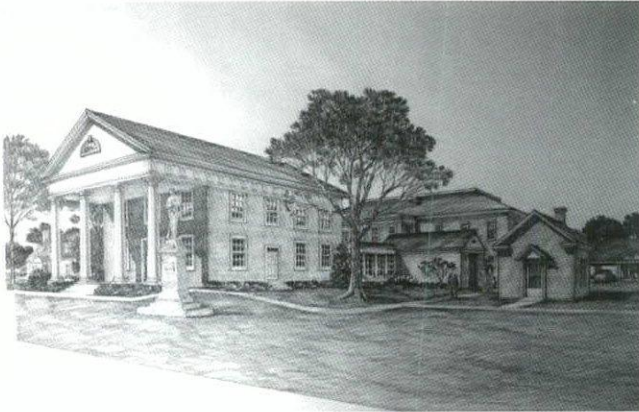
Sited in a soybean field bounded by a Chesapeake Bay tributary, this 77,000-s.f., technology-driven intermediate school is located on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Sustainable design concepts, vernacular materials, and indigenous landscaping are key program elements. Tel: 703-648-1740 / www.shwgroup.com.



Architect: Watershed, P.C., Richmond

Project: Private Residence

Located near the James River, this Richmond home will fulfill the clients' desire for simple contemporary living and privacy. Tree preservation and passive air-conditioning drive the building form, and living roofs reinforce its ecological sensibilities. Tel: 804-254-8001




Architect: Wiley & Wilson, Lynchburg
Project: Lunenburg County Courthouse

These additions to Dabney Cosby's 1827 Lunenburg County Courthouse present a sympathetic way of maintaining the historic fabric of the original structure, while adding approximately 22,000 s.f. of new judicial space. The old courthouse will be restored later. Tel: 434-947-1901 / www.wileywilson.com



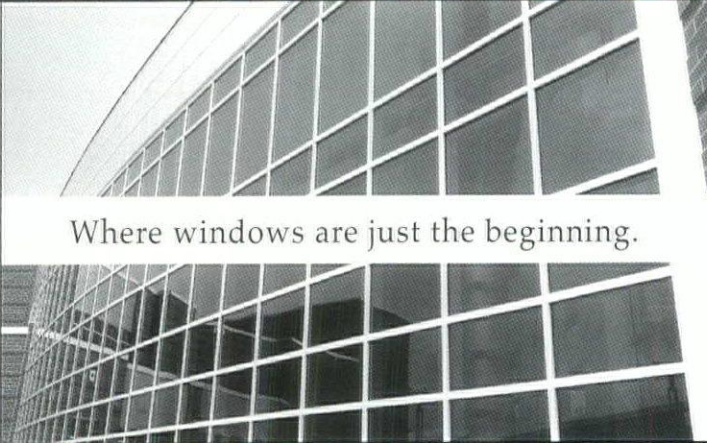
Architect: William Henry Harris & Associates, Inc., Richmond
Project: Salem Baptist Church

This new worship center for an existing church includes a 56,000-s.f. multipurpose center and a 1,000-seat sanctuary connected by an entry commons. A result of the architect's master plan workshop, the transitional style church will be clad in brick and siding. Tel: 800-473-0070 / www.harrisarchitects.org



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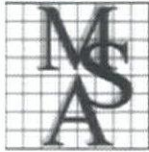
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! Taking Note

Few localities have a love-hate relationship with the James River quite like the town of Scottsville, located midway between Lynchburg and Richmond. Scottsville's history tells the tale of riverfront commerce, but the trade-friendly locale has left the town vulnerable to devastating floods, many of which took place during the mid-20th century, driving the town's population into a decline.

But Scottsville has its share of devoted citizens. Volunteers John Bowers and Tim Small envisioned a parcel of land by the levee as a public space celebrating Scottsville's history, a place they called Canal Basin Square. Bowers and Small contacted landscape architect Nancy Takahashi, ASLA, of Charlottesville to provide direction. Her site design consisted of a grassy plain with troughs of river stone in which reproductions of a bateau, a freighter, and a packet boat are placed.

Takahashi, in turn, sought out VMDO Architects, of Charlottesville, to design the park's architectural components, which include a series of brick pylons, a pavilion, two storage sheds, and a naturally ventilated restroom. "We tried to design the buildings to be as stripped down as possible, using simple techniques to reveal the form," notes project architect Rob Winstead, AIA. The park's central architectural feature, the pavilion, takes the form of an inverted boat, with a smooth roof, or hull, and an expressed frame on the inside. Rafters and beams extend beyond the roof, much like the rudder and oars of a boat. Inside the pavilion and extending along the pylons are interpretive signs, a working model of a canal lock, and a flood record marker.

And then there is the levee itself. "We created a walkway running through the park from Main Street up the levee, where visitors can walk along the top, connect to other areas of town, and see some nice views of the river," says Takahashi. A well-lighted area, the park and levee can be explored at midday or dusk, as tourists and school groups take in the exhibits and residents walk dogs, jog, and picnic.

The site has generated a renewed interest in redevelopment, Winstead says. "There's a growing momentum, a renaissance of sorts in Scottsville," Takahashi adds. "It's a new era for the town in terms of celebrating its history. People are feeling really good about Scottsville."

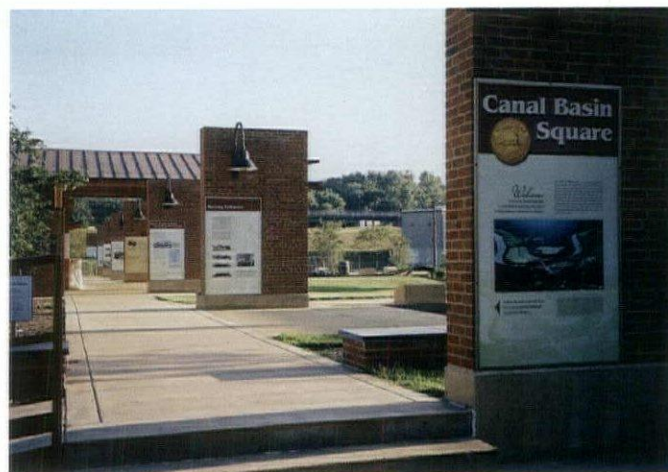
— Rebecca E. Ivey

Reviving the Riverside



Photos: Dave Sagarin

Exhibits on the site include the Edward Scott bateau (above), an example of the shallow-hulled shipping vessels that were capable of navigating the James River rapids.



Pylons that carry interpretive signs create a rhythm across the site (left). The overall project (below) was designed with an open lawn to host civic events.

