

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER

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NEW WATERFRONT ZONING PLAN RETHINKS THE EDGE



COURTESY FX FOWLE

IN THE SWIM

New York's waterfront building boom has been a bonanza for developers, but the resulting public space has often been a letdown: monotonous promenades, rigid bulkheads, ever-present guardrails, and nary a spot to quaff a beer.

And so after getting **continued on page 13**

COOK + FOX'S MEGAPROJECT WOULD REDEFINE THE SKYLINE



COURTESY RAYMOND PROPERTY COMPANY

Boston Digs Building Big

A major Boston developer has proposed replacing one of Boston's biggest eyesores with one of the largest, greenest developments in the city's history. On March 2, the Raymond Property Company filed a proposal with the city for One Congress Street,

a four-million-square-foot office, residential, and retail development. The project would redefine the skyline, with two towers reaching 42 and 52 stories that rise from a series of smaller buildings intended to mask their scale. The developer **continued on page 6**

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AUTHENTICITY OF EMPIRE STATE MODEL IN DOUBT



COURTESY WRIGHT

EMPIRE FAKE?

The December 11, 2008 auction of the drawings and materials by the architects of the Empire State Building at Wright in Chicago drew impressive bids. The highest seller was a 32.5-inch wooden massing model attributed to 1930, for \$72,000. The authenticity of the model's date attribution is now being disputed, however, as a former partner of the building's design firm, Shreve, Lamb & Harmon, claims he built the model in 1972.

"I know I made that model," said the former partner, Robert W. Jones, in a phone interview. Jones claims he made it as a part of a speculative study in 1972 that would have added floors to the building to compete with the World Trade Center and the Sears Tower. The schemes, which Jones admits were designed as much for publicity as for serious investigation, were given extensive **continued on page 11**

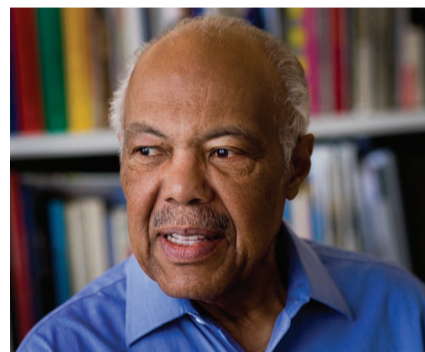
CHICAGO GOES FOR THE GOLD. SEE PAGE 10



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COURTESY DAVIS BRODY BOND AEDAS

MAX BOND, 1935–2009

On February 18, J. Max Bond, Jr., architect and educator, died of cancer at age 73. Bond, a partner at Davis Brody Bond Aedas, was a role model to generations of designers who strove to match his integrity and determination in the fight against discrimination.

Guided by a fierce sense of duty and with an irresistibly gentle demeanor, Bond showed that a personal commitment to social responsibility was never at odds with a devotion to excellence in architecture. These were lessons hard-learned over years that included a cross burning outside his college dorm and advice to change fields because "there have never been any famous, prominent, black architects" when he studied **continued on page 3**

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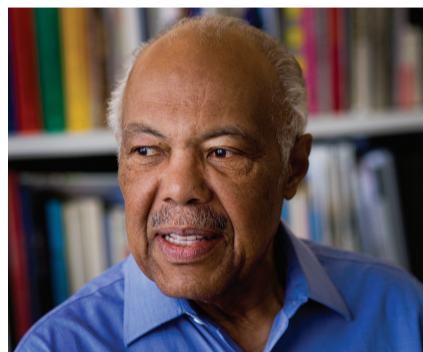
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PEDLOCKING BROADWAY

General gladness and near unanimous support greeted Mayor Bloomberg's February 27 announcement that he was malling Times and Herald squares by closing off portions of Broadway in the interest of easing traffic, widening sidewalks, and reclaiming some three acres for pedestrian use. The Regional Planning Association has been pitching the idea since 1974, and so the group's president, Robert Yaro, was triumphant: "This plan is a win-win-win strategy for New York's motorists, its residents, workers, visitors and property owners. All will benefit as the City's Broadway plan is brought quickly to reality." Streetsblog called it "a bold transformative new vision." And what's not to like? The \$1.5 million plan is supposed to reduce southbound motor vehicle travel times by 17 percent on 7th Avenue, and northbound travel times by 37 percent on 6th Avenue. And the Naked Cowboy will have someplace to sit down.

The notion of banning cars on Broadway has reared up every decade or so since the 1960s, when a malling craze seized the entire country from Kalamazoo (where the first downtown pedestrian zone opened in 1959) to Atlanta. Only 15 percent of 200 pedestrian malls survived, according to Sam Staley, director of urban and land use policy at the Reason Foundation; the ones that did not were absent two essential ingredients: plenty of pedestrians and a unique sense of place, with viable retail. Those two are resoundingly on hand in Times Square, and always have been, along with efforts to subtract the traffic. In 1977, a \$500,000 federal grant was paid to the city to create an "experimental pedestrian mall" with trees and potted plants that—just like the one announced by Bloomberg—would become permanent if it worked. And that was the last we heard of a plan that made local businesses fear they'd lose curbside traffic; annoyed taxi drivers for the inconvenience; and flew against the city's thinking at the time that only more and wider roads could make traffic flow faster.

This time around, things are different, not least because the plan seems motivated in part by the mayor's determination to have something highly visible go his way after congestion pricing went so wrong. The attitude of other stakeholders has also changed—except perhaps the taxi drivers—reflecting more enlightened thinking about public amenities and transportation. They get it now: Cars in the city are headed for extinction.

And yet as radical as the plan is, it was disappointing to see it quite so completely devoid of design. As Deborah Marton, executive director of the Design Trust for Public Space, pointed out, "No one thinks these plazas should look this way. Just claiming the ground was kind of heroic; they can always go back and rethink the detailing." That's true, but why doesn't the Department of Transportation, which is spearheading the plan, have a landscape design consultant on call to sketch up a vision that's a little less ad hoc, more layered, and not so isolated from side streets? The agency's so-called piazza islands—like the new pedestrian spaces at Madison Square and 14th Street—are risible for their smatterings of cafe tables and glued-in-place gravel. Transportation Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan deserves enormous credit for shaking the lead off this decades-old plan and making something happen that this time might stick. It's still a shame, however, that landscape designers seem to belong to the second wave of the solution, not the first. **JULIE V. IOVINE**

MAX BOND, 1935-2009 continued from front page at Harvard in the 1950s. He proceeded to get both his Bachelor's and Master's in architecture and to turn that assertion on its head. Here, a longtime colleague and friend recalls a man whom many considered their mentor.

Anthony W. Schuman, graduate program director, New Jersey School of Architecture, New Jersey Institute of Technology

It was my great pleasure and privilege to have known Max since the heady days of the late '60s when he came to Columbia to help guide our initial efforts at community engagement in Harlem. Over that period, he was a friend, mentor, and valued colleague through a variety of circumstances and efforts. Through it all he was remarkably consistent in his values, his demeanor, and his architecture.

Many of my earliest conversations with Max revolved around his work in Ghana, most notably the library in Bolgatanga in the northeast corner of the country. I was interested at the time in the intersection between indigenous and contemporary architecture, and Max's library provided one convincing strategy—a fundamentally modernist notion inflected toward and informed by local culture in the form of a broad, flat, concrete roof hovering over smaller pavilions that housed the library functions in an organization reminiscent of a tribal family compound.

In the years since, I had occasion to visit other works by Max, among them the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta; the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute; and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem. Max's architecture was, like his demeanor, utterly without bombast. He derived his designs from careful consideration of site, history, and culture, including the culture of the construction workforce. In Atlanta, his choice of materials (masonry) and structural forms (the vault) reflected the use of these materials and methods in traditional African building, but also the demographics of the local labor pool, where African Americans were skilled in masonry but absent from other trades because of racial discrimination. In Birmingham, his building, though substantial in size, defers in significant ways to the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, site of the horrific bomb attack by the Ku Klux Klan in 1963 that took the lives of four young girls. The Civil Rights Institute, located across the street from the church, is set back so that the main facade of the church is visible to pedestrians coming down the sidewalk. Inside the Institute, circulation is organized so that as visitors near the end of the route, they confront a window that focuses their gaze on the church outside.

The Schomburg Library employs African hardwoods and elements like a relief map of Africa in the lobby floor to convey a sense of origins, but the architecture itself is straightforwardly modern. When I asked Max about the evolution of his design vocabulary, notably the absence of an attempt to represent "black culture" through formal devices, his response was candid: "This is the idiom I am comfortable with."

My last sustained interaction with Max was at a charrette to develop a renewed planning effort for the city of Newark. At Mayor Cory Booker's invitation, Max was a key participant. In typical fashion he cut through the sectoral concerns to suggest that we focus on social equity as a core value, a recommendation very much taken to heart by those present.

LETTERS

ROADS TO NOWHERE?

Regarding your misinformed editorial ("Roads Not Chosen," AN03_02.18.2009), the New Deal was in economic terms a disaster. Unemployment was higher in 1939 than it was in 1931. In essence, government got forced labor to build these public works. The New New Deal will just put guns to our heads and demand the money rather than use forced labor. I don't see the difference. Wealth was not created in this country—or any free country—by the government and never will be.

We should have invested more in our infrastructure long ago, but using our economic crisis as an excuse to hijack the economy and bankrupt the country is no

better than Bush using 9/11 to justify the war in Iraq. Both were sold on fear. Both sought instant gratification. Both will spend billions of dollars without clear thinking about the larger costs and benefits.

MARK BAUGHMAN
SKB ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN
WASHINGTON, DC

IT'S THE SUSTAINABILITY, STUPID!

Since buildings today consume so much energy, architects might stop whining about what's in the stimulus package for them and instead present the case that architecture and planning can save the country vast sums of money in energy costs ("It's the TARP, Stupid," posted on archpaper.com,

02.20.2009). In this day of increasingly scarce resources, architecture's problems are symptomatic of a field that has failed to adapt, much like the American auto industry.

We should recession-proof our field by emphasizing architecture's sustainable side instead of battenning down the hatches while closely monitoring economist Kermit Baker's dismal economic EKG of billings and inquiries. The AIA should take a leadership role in presenting architecture as invaluable to our economic future through lobbying and advertising efforts. We've already made a good start with LEED and other programs, but we need to take it to the next level.

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EAVESDROP: SARA HART

THE POWER & THE APPETIZERS

Tone deafness has trickled down to those who create the illusion of taste. **Gawker** recently let Los Angeles interior designer **Michael Smith** have it between the armoires for throwing a lavish Fashion Week luncheon at the Four Seasons for magazine editors and **Barbara Walters**. Isn't lavishness the soul of Fashion Week? Yes, but by some (anyone breathing) it is also considered bad taste to flaunt wealth during an historic economic meltdown. In politics, as in fashion, perception is reality, and Smith would be wise to manage the public's view of him. After all, he's the decorator who realized Merrill Lynch CEO **John Thain's** dream of running his company into the ground from a \$1.22 million office, while hydrating from a \$960 **Michael Graves** cobalt-blue glass. The media would not have bothered to out Smith as the designer if it weren't for the fact that he's been retained by the Obamas to refreshen up the White House living quarters. The irony is that **President Obama** referred to Thain as a symbol of wretched excess in a speech last month, saying, "Taxpayer money should not go toward renovating offices." Of course, Smith's budget for the White House is a measly \$100,000 of taxpayer money, which we calculated to be less than the fee he collected for the Thain job. Remember, perception is reality. The lunch, by the way, was given in honor of **Desiree Rogers**, the new White House social secretary. Awkward.

EDITRIXES

...Speaking of magazine editors, we doubt that **Paige Rense** was among the guests at Smith's get-together. **Architectural Digest's** octogenarian editor was overheard at a Los Angeles party last month enthusiastically dissing Smith's decorating skills. Of course, the disrespect got back to him before you could say commode-on-legs.

SING TO ME, O MUSE, OR NOT

If a tree falls in the woods, and nobody's there to hear it, does it make a noise? If a cable show has no viewers, does it exist? No and no. *Muse*, the virtually unknown show on the hardly watched Bloomberg Network is about to go from unknown to nonexistent, which we acknowledge is just a technicality. *Muse* was the network's gratuitous nod to arts and culture and aired at dawn on the weekends. Architectural luminaries such as **Thom Mayne**, **Frank Gehry**, **Steven Holl**, **Ben van Berkel**, **Zaha Hadid**, and **Richard Meier** were among those given air time. Now Bloomberg has decided that business news is more better. We say more is less.

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NONPROFIT VETERAN
TAKES OVER AT HPD

CASTING CESTERO

When Shaun Donovan, former commissioner of the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), headed for the White House to head up HUD, the mayor's office deliberated for more than two months on a successor. There was no obvious replacement: Mark Jahr, president of the Housing Development Corporation, had declined, and Holly Leicht, the department's deputy director for development, had been on the job less than a year. Ultimately, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced on February 13 the selection of Rafael Cestero, the senior vice-president for field operations at Enterprise Community Partners and Leicht's predecessor.

"This is a challenging time and Rafael has big shoes to fill," Bloomberg said at a press conference. "Shaun Donovan's success developing and implementing our housing plan led him to a spot in President Obama's Cabinet. But we are lucky to have found a successor who brings the same high level of innovative thinking, experience, and

commitment to affordable housing in New York City."

Cestero rejoins HPD after being away for two years. Cestero actually got his start in 1993 as an intern at Enterprise, the affordable housing group founded by James Rouse. Upon graduation from Cornell, he joined Enterprise full-time, helping the company found its New York City office, which he later ran, and also establishing an upstate office in Rochester.

In 2004, Cestero came to HPD along with Donovan. As deputy director for development, he helped craft the New Housing Marketplace, which seeks to build or preserve 165,000 affordable housing units in the city. He also crafted the inclusionary housing bonus that defined the Williamsburg-Greenpoint rezoning in 2005, now an integral part of most rezonings.

"I remember him from the negotiations for Williamsburg-Greenpoint," said Melinda Katz, a Queens councilmember and chair of the Land-Use Committee. "He was good. He's dealt with some difficult programs." Bill Frey, the executive vice-president for Enterprise, said his mix of public and non-profit experience, where he also dealt with raising private capital for affordable housing investment, gives him a unique perspective often missing from career bureaucrats.

Frey championed his efforts in publicizing the foreclosure crisis before it was popular to do so. "We're sorry to see him go," he said. "He came to Enterprise to create a foreclosure program to help bring some stability. Now he's prepared all the better to help New York at a really critical time." **MATT CHABAN**

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> GREEN DEPOT

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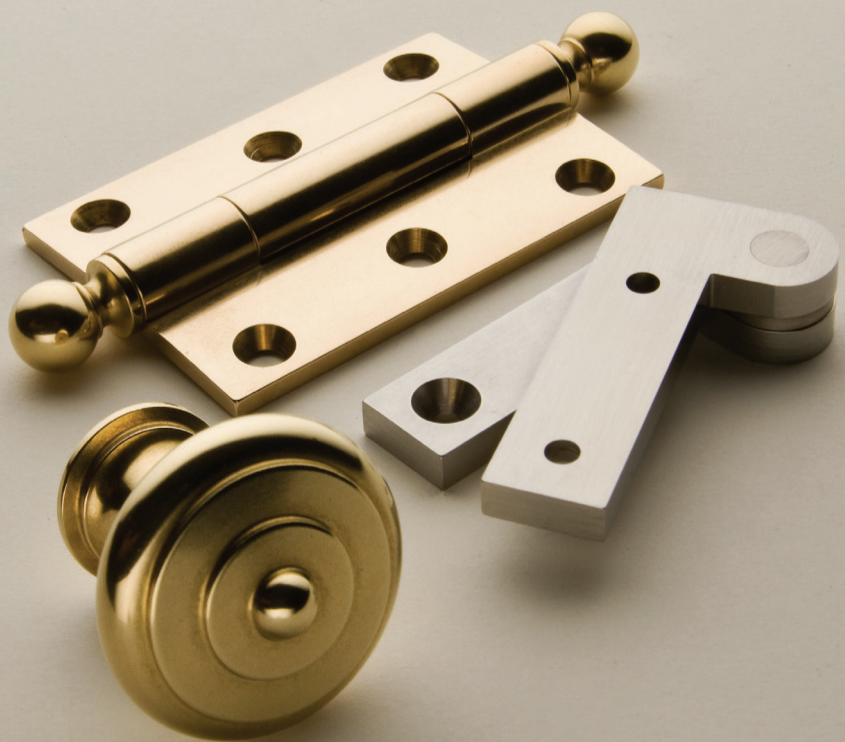
DAVE PINTER/PSFK.COM

The Brooklyn-based, eco-friendly building products supplier Green Depot recently opened its first flagship retail store in a landmarked Bowery building. New York-based firm Mapos collaborated with Green Depot on the 3,500-square-foot space, which is a hybrid retail outpost and interactive educational center geared toward informing customers about sustainable building products. According to principal Colin Brice, the design process was driven by the question of what it means to be green. The designers also drew inspiration from the work of artist Gordon Matta-Clark, whose cut-and-sliced building fragments showed the constructed layers around us. "The building slices, or sections [on display in the front of the store], reveal the inner workings of sustainable architecture," Brice said, "and expose the green materials used, as well as demonstrating the variety of products available here." Using this concept of legibility, the architects also uncovered remnants of the store's original YMCA building by exposing ceiling beams, a maple gymnasium floor, and tiles from the old natatorium. In addition to recycling materials, they used nearly 90 percent of Green Depot's in-house products. On track to win LEED Platinum certification, the store is proof that reusing old buildings can be the greenest choice of all. **DANIELLE RAGO**

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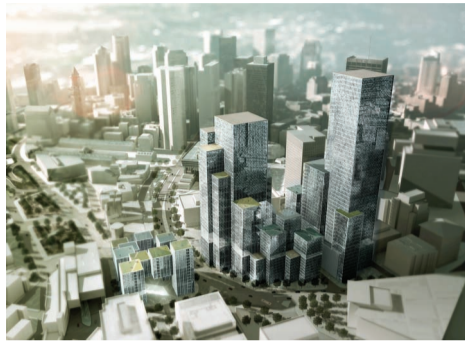
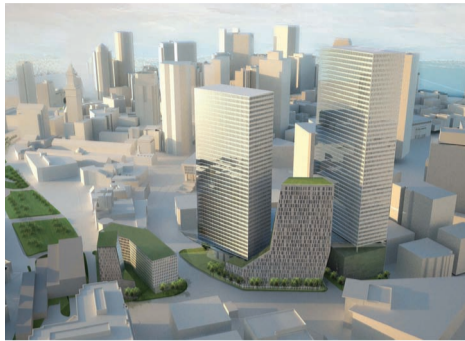
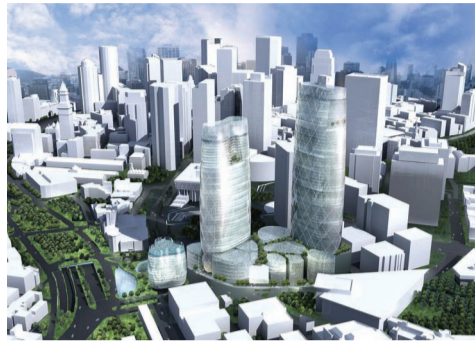
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COURTESY RAYMOND PROPERTY

BOSTON DIGS BUILDING BIG continued from front page selected Cook + Fox as the designers from a shortlist of five notable firms.

If realized, One Congress will replace the Government Center Garage, a 150-foot-tall, two-football-field-long concrete bunker that spans Congress Street and slices the Haymarket area in two. Like its Brutalist neighbor City Hall, the garage was designed by Kallmann, McKinnell & Knowles.

Rebecca Mattson, Raymond's chief operating officer, said that choosing a team of world-class architects was of paramount importance. "Boston doesn't build that often, and Boston doesn't build big that often, so we really wanted this to be something special." Raymond's invited competition, initiated in December, was very direct: two firms were selected for their high-rise expertise—SOM and Gensler—two for their iconic status—Foster + Partner and the Office for Metropolitan Architecture—and one for its "cutting-edge" environmental work—Cook + Fox, whose Platinum LEED-seeking One Bryant Park the developer especially admired.

Prior to the competition, Raymond spent months meeting with the community, seeking both public input and public favor. This led to a planning study with local firm Chan Krieger Sieniewicz that set rather strict guidelines for the five firms: two towers rising from a human-scale plinth, plus two smaller towers across Congress Street. Still, the results varied greatly, from Gensler's

cellular volumes to OMA's sardonically conventional boxes. "We wanted someone who could do green, iconic, and buildable," Mattson said. "The question is, who can do those three best?" The answer proved to be Cook + Fox.

Firm principal Rick Cook said their design casts an attentive eye toward its surroundings. The strands of each tower are arranged to avoid casting shadows to the Rose Kennedy Greenway, while the terra cotta cladding of the plinths, which are filled with active retail and civic uses, are gestures to the brick vocabulary of the city. One side of the 52-story tower is cut exactly perpendicular to the sun for maximum photovoltaic penetration. "That's basically how the buildings were formed, by the environment," Cook said. The towers' undulating elevations also create varying plans from floor to floor, allowing for unique configurations in what are tentatively planned to be a pair of office towers.

Cook said that for him, the true appeal of the project was the way it would repair a long-standing rift in Boston's urban fabric. When the garage was completed in 1961, it was one of many barriers in the downtown landscape. Following the recent transformational success of the Big Dig, however, which buried the Central Artery and the elevated subway tracks, the garage is all that is left, looming over the neighborhood. "It's the last super-damaging artifact left from the downtown urban renewal of the 1970s," said Tim Love,

a principal at UTILE, which is preparing a development study of the Greenway.

Raymond has set a tight deadline for the project. In January, the Environmental Protection Agency is set to move out of a two-story commercial addition atop the garage, the first vacancy in 20 years. Raymond has said that if it does not have most of its approvals in place, it will simply re-lease the space, since revenues from the parking spaces and office rents are considerable.

Love said that given the nature of Boston development, where every project is negotiated with the city on the basis of public benefit, it will be challenging but far from impossible for the project to get approved as proposed. "It's practically the perfect case study of Boston planning and development," Love said. "Basically, Raymond is asking, 'How much do you want this garage to go? What are you willing to give us to take it down?'"

But the developer has a powerful ally in the civic groups and other locals who loathe the garage. "It draws the line on downtown, which is fine—unless you're on the wrong side of the line," said Bob O'Brien, executive director of the Downtown North Alliance. "We've become terra incognita, the other side of the map." O'Brien, Love, and others said that in spite of the project's massive scale and scope, it has received generally favorable reviews from the public.

Assuming One Congress receives approval from the city, one thing the developer is

Left to right: Gensler, Foster + Partners, SOM, Office for Metropolitan Architecture.

not worried about is financing. Raymond has partnered with the Lewis Trust Group, a British real estate investment firm, and the National Electrical Benefit Fund, the pension fund of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, both of which have been thus far spared by the recession. "It's sheer dumb luck we picked them as partners, but thank God," Mattson said.

Despite such public and financial support, some politicians have objected, most notably Michael Flaherty, a city councilor running against four-term incumbent Mayor Thomas Menino. He has seized upon Raymond's proposal to include two adjacent parcels in the development, one occupied by a police station, which was recently refurbished for \$5 million, and an NStar substation. Raymond conferred with both the city and NStar about its intentions, though no formal deals have been struck. Still, Flaherty has called it a sweetheart deal for the developer.

Politics aside, Peter Smith, a co-chair of the Boston Society of Architects' Urban Planning Committee, said that while much work remains to be done, he believes Raymond is headed in the right direction. "They've got to work through it with all the stakeholders, dot all their 'i's' and cross all their 't's'," Smith said. "But in that respect, they're on the right track." **MC**



The Carlton Avenue Bridge at Vanderbilt Railyard.

added, but Ratner's needs match the stimulus priorities too weakly to sell it to an exasperated public. Marty Markowitz, the voluble Brooklyn borough president, has surfaced in press reports as a proponent of the idea. His alleged rationale is that Atlantic Yards can start work soon and trigger construction spending. That Markowitz declined to announce his thinking in public indicates how politically dubious this may be.

In fact, the state's stimulus prescription sprinkles relatively little water on big real estate projects. The package for New York, according to Governor David Paterson, will be allocated for education, Medicare, and transportation funding. Most of this will keep programs running, or help the Metropolitan Transportation Authority sustain projects like the Second Avenue Subway that are in the service of its capital-spending plan. The 17-building Atlantic Yards proposal, despite sitting over an MTA railyard and ostensibly advancing mass transit, is much farther

from fruition than other projects. It also would have less potential impact on the flow of commerce and on the state deficit.

Many other stalled projects, like the on-again, off-again effort to create a grand rail station in lieu of Penn Station, arouse more fatigue than opposition, but are likelier recipients of funds. On March 2, Senator Charles Schumer told a *Crain's New York* business breakfast that a chunk of stimulus money could revive efforts to bring Amtrak and commuter rail through a new Moynihan Station that could be done without siphoning money from the city or the MTA.

In light of Atlantic Yards' chances, the speed and depth of the stimulus-to-Ratner rumor indicates just how influential the developer remains, despite the idle pit near the Atlantic Avenue LIRR. Daniel Goldstein, spokesman for the coalition suing Forest City Ratner over his use of eminent domain, worries that the developer will prevail on the MTA or other state officials to help him cover his debts. "The MTA has said this project is not on their list [for federal relief], but

that doesn't mean it can't be put on their list," Goldstein told *AN*. "Any money to bail out Ratner enables him to move forward on his task list." Goldstein speaks for Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn, which has fought Atlantic Yards in state and federal court through many judicial setbacks. The suits have muddled public opinion about the project, making the idea of funding it with federal relief attractive only to politicians in the developer's circle.

"Marty Markowitz is calling both New York senators," Goldstein told *AN*. Whether Markowitz is continuing to plump for Atlantic Yards, though, is dwarfed by the question of how the governor or mayor could justify plugging stimulus money into an unbuilt, divisive project. "They say our lawsuit will stop them [from this politically unappetizing move]," Goldstein said. Still, he warned of a "political firestorm" from all corners if the state dedicates money to a billionaire developer while so many other projects and programs go wanting. Tacticians in the mayor's office have apparently decided to avoid the heat.

ALEC APPELBAUM

OUTRAGE OVER DEVELOPER'S STAB AT GETTING STIMULUS SMELLING A RATNER

Rumors spread furiously in weak economies, and the rumor that New York State's federal stimulus funding might find its way to Bruce Ratner's long-stalled Atlantic Yards project reached saturation a day after Congress passed the stimulus bill. That doesn't make the rumor worth believing, though.

"I don't think Atlantic Yards is getting stimulus money," said someone who talks daily with Mayor Michael Bloomberg about policy, who spoke with *AN* on condition of anonymity since the mayor has taken no official position on the subject. The city still wants to see the project succeed, this person

TRACY COLLINS

TIME TO SHARE

In this second in a series of conversations with architects about their experiences during recessions past, AN sat down with Rob Rogers, principal of Rogers Marvel Architects, to talk about entering architecture as a professional in the early '80s, just as the economy went into one of its periodic nosedives, then starting his own practice right as the next one hit.

***The Architect's Newspaper:* You took your degree from Rice School of Architecture in 1981, which included a year in Pei Cobb Freed's office. What was it like when you were back on the job market in 1983?**

Rob Rogers: Prospects were grim. I traveled around the country for four months, interviewing and just seeing the country. I had already had a year's experience at Pei's office, so they invited me back. I was lucky, because the early '80s were a very tough time for a lot of people. Houston was really down, and everyone was trying to go somewhere else to find jobs. It was a small class at Rice and everyone had to leave whether they wanted to or not. A lot of us went to New York, and some to California; the rest went kind of scattershot.

You were at Pei's office for about six years and then went out on your own during another downturn. What was that like?

They were definitely weird times. I rented a desk at John Carl Warnecke's office in '89. That office had essentially dissolved. And as it had downsized, they sublet space and I sublet a desk from someone who was subletting two desks. He was only using one and I took over the other one.

It got you someone to answer the phone; it got you access to some copiers, a coffee machine, and a conference room so you could function and not be operating out of your house.

The space was a classic, huge loft on Broadway. There must have been 40 to 50 desks and there were probably 15 to 20 entities, everything from people alone like me to people with four or five desks in a group. Bob Heintges was there, starting his curtain wall consulting business. There were some others: Michael Zenreich, David Mullman, and Patty Seidman.

It was a super-rich place and a great way to start up on your own. When you come out of a big office, you don't know anything about running a small practice. You've maybe done big, amazing things, but expeditors? How to fill out landmark forms? You need help.

Here, you could share people—"Hey, help me on these drawings," or, "How do I put this bridge wall together?"—and somebody would know the answer. There was a really great collegial attitude about the sharing of knowledge and resources. And it was cheap: about \$180 a month. Also, it wasn't some squirrel hole somewhere, it was a beautiful space, loaded with daylight.

Things were still tight when you started up a partnership with Jonathan Marvel. Did it feel risky?

I met Jonathan, who was renting a desk from a guy whose office he was designing, and we had a beer Christmas of '91 to talk about practicing together. Then I took over the second desk and we got started.

Everything was dead, and that forced us to do lots of everything: competitions, apartment renovations, small little institutional jobs, office renos for the friends of friends who knew people with a company that needed work. But we started to grow. Jonathan had won a competition for El Museo del Barrio for a little renovation, and that was publicly funded, so that gave us our first access to the public agency world and we began to pursue that, too.

Then Bob Heintges grew to four people and he took a master lease in the Bendheim Building on Hudson. Mullman & Seidman were expanding, too. So we sort of refigured the system into a three-firm deal and moved all together. We were there for almost three years and we all kept growing until we didn't fit, and then Rogers Marvel Architects moved across the street to our present location.

Sometimes I don't know how aware we were of the recession at all, because we were starting out and everything was fighting and scrambling to get work anywhere, any way. If you were completely paying attention to the economic situation, you probably wouldn't risk it. But we didn't have time to pay that kind of attention.

Would you ever consider renting desks now?

We've had a lot of staff leave to start their own practices. If someone needed a desk or two, we'd entertain the idea, sure. It was an inspiring way to work.

EERO DYNAMIC



Once an icon of air travel's future, Eero Saarinen's **Terminal 5 at John F. Kennedy International Airport** was in danger of becoming a relic—until JetBlue hired **Gensler** to bring the building into the 21st century. A structural steel design afforded JetBlue the flexibility to revive the historic Flight Center and keep pace with a rapidly changing airline industry. Easily adaptable to everything from the latest aircraft designs to new security regulations, the terminal is cleared for takeoff.

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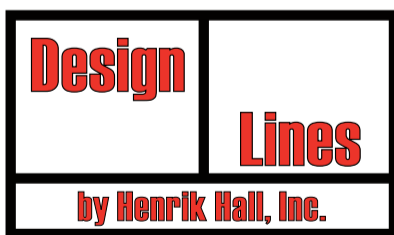
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CORNELL SPLIT IN BITTER BATTLE OVER OMA ARCH SCHOOL



Having just won final approval from Ithaca's Planning and Development Board, OMA-designed Milstein Hall, the planned expansion of Cornell's College of Art, Architecture, and Planning (AAP), has hit another roadblock, along with most other construction projects on campus. Due to university-wide financial constraints, President David Skorton has put all university building projects under review. In this context, a group of professors and alumni have called for Milstein to be shelved, while AAP faculty, students, and alumni are lobbying for its survival. Meanwhile, the school is facing a deadline from the National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB) to upgrade its facilities.

"We're not calling it a freeze. Most projects on campus are being evaluated, including Milstein," said Tommy Bruce, vice-president for university communications. "Projects must meet two criteria. They must be essential to the mission of the university, and they must have all funds aligned." Deans and department heads have been asked to submit detailed reports demonstrating how each project meets these criteria. Decisions are expected at the beginning of April.

In a January 30 letter to *The Cornell Daily Sun*, 25 faculty members and alumni questioned the project, given the estimated 27 percent decline in the university's endowment. "The financial crisis faced by our university renders the extraordinary expense of the chosen design (circa \$60 million, before it has even gone to bid) very difficult to justify," they wrote. "The extravagant expense of Milstein threatens more pressing financial needs for core functions of research and teaching, contributes to a greater financial burden on students and their families from projected tuition increases, and threatens more employee layoffs." In addition to the cost of the project, the let-

ter questioned its aesthetics and sustainability, as well as its high-profile design team.

On February 11, one of the signatories of the letter introduced a resolution to include Milstein in the university-wide "construction pause." The resolution was struck down, as the administration already considered the project on hold.

AAP students and faculty, however, defended the necessity for the project's going forward. Dean Kent Kleinman argued that the project is essential for the school to maintain its accreditation. A spokesperson for NAAB confirmed the dean's claim. "We have not gotten a satisfactory response from them in regards to their facilities, to date," said Cassandra Pair, an accreditation manager at NAAB. "This is something we can no longer ignore."

Though the project appears to meet Bruce's criteria of being "essential to the mission" of the school, the second measure, having "all funds aligned," is more complicated. Dean Kleinman, who declined to be interviewed for this article due to the pending decision, estimated the project will cost \$52 million, and told *The Cornell Chronicle* that AAP has raised nearly \$30 million for the project and plans to borrow \$12 million more, leaving the university to pick up the remaining \$10 million (or \$18 million, depending on which total cost estimate is used).

OMA is reticent about the situation. "All we can do is explain our intentions," said Shohei Shigematsu, director of OMA's New York office. Still, they acknowledge the present climate is difficult for their design. "Every project begins in a particular moment. If we started the project today, the design would turn out differently," he said. "It's an issue of bad timing, but the issue is not as black-and-white as some people seem to think."

ALAN G. BRAKE



DEAL STRUCK FOR CONTROVERSIAL LINCOLN CENTER CAMPUS EXPANSION



FORDHAM RISING

COURTESY COOPER, ROBERTSON & PARTNERS

Quelling some fears that an unfriendly forest of towers may rise on Fordham University's Manhattan campus, late last month, university officials struck a compromise with community groups, setting the stage for a major facelift for the school's eight-acre Lincoln Center quad.

The controversial expansion has been mired in debate since 2005, when Fordham first unveiled plans to add seven new buildings to the campus, located on the superblock that stretches from 60th to 62nd streets and from Amsterdam to Columbus avenues. The university maintains that new classrooms, libraries, and housing are needed for the campus' growing population of some 7,800 students, including more than 900 who live in university-operated housing.

But opponents have protested that tall buildings ranked along Fordham's periphery would tower over the area and wall the university off from its neighbors. Those concerns led Community Board 7 to cast a 31-0 vote against what many called the "Fordham fortress" in late January.

Since then, Fordham has relented somewhat on the scale of its proposal. The latest incarnation, announced by Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer on February 24, shaves 206,000 square feet off the original 3-million-square-foot plan. It reduces certain building heights, buries bulk underground, and scraps one proposed parking garage (cutting the plan's allotted parking by over 50 percent).

So far, the scheme has been met with a qualified thumbs-up. The community board was "very pleased" with the project's downscaled size and density, according to board chair Helen Rosenthal. But Sidney Goldfischer of Fordham Neighbors United, an organization formed to fight the expansion, still questioned the need for residential space. "Instead of putting up 2.8 million square feet, they could just put up the 800,000 square feet of academic space," he argued.

Though public debate has focused on total square footage and height, size is only part of the equation, according to Brian Cook, a senior planner at the Manhattan borough president's office who was instrumental in the negotiations. He emphasized that other factors also determine whether the new campus feels fortress-like or welcoming.

The proposed law school as seen from Lincoln Center; Below, the campus looking north on Amsterdam Avenue.

One of those is building shape, he said. Negotiators settled on two possible fixes for what Cook called the "slab-like" appearance of buildings on Columbus Avenue: The first option would offset half of each building, creating the illusion of four buildings rather than two, and visually break up the street wall. The second option would narrow the upper stories, letting in more light and air. Fordham also agreed to lower street walls to make the structures feel human-scaled despite their overall height.

The university's options for building placement were more limited, since the open space at the interior of the campus is a two-story-high podium that does not allow building above it. Negotiations focused instead on making the campus more permeable. "There will be a lot more street-level transparency all the way around," said Fordham's communications director Rob Howe. "A lot more openings, glass, and street-level uses, like a bookstore and coffee shop."

To that end, the staircase leading down from the north side of the podium was widened to 77 feet, connecting Fordham to the heart of Lincoln Center. Plantings on the stairways will draw visitors up to the podium's gardens, which are currently hidden from view and little used by the public.

Rosenthal praised the hard work that had gone into the agreement, but said the board still had two concerns as the university moves to win formal approval from the city. The first is the height of the residential towers on Amsterdam Avenue, both over 50 stories. The board also wants to be consulted again once the buildings have actually been designed—and not just in an advisory capacity. "We're looking for something that will have teeth in it," she said. **JULIA GALEF**



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CHICAGO'S PRAGMATIC OLYMPIC BID GAMBLE



Volleyball and biking events will be held on Meigs Field island; Below, left and right, the stadium by Ben Wood Studio Shanghai, and the SOM-designed Olympic Village bordering Southside.

PLAYING IT SAFE?

On February 13, the civic group Chicago 2016 submitted its Olympic Bid candidate file, or bid book, without a Bird's Nest or Water Cube. There is no Calatrava stadium to scramble to finish before the opening ceremonies. The marquee names associated with the bid, Burnham and Olmsted, might seem a little dated, but Chicago's boosters believe that classics endure. "We're focused on the games, the athletes, and the spectators, less on iconic architecture," said Tom Kerwin, partner at SOM Chicago and coordinator of the firm's Olympic 2016 master planning services. SOM has done most of the bid's planning pro bono, though they are slated to design the Olympic Village should Chicago be named the host city.

In competition with finalist cities Madrid, Tokyo, and Rio de Janeiro, Chicago is emphasizing its existing facilities and its string of beautiful lakefront parks, first developed for the 1893

World's Fair and codified in the Plan for Chicago (the city is celebrating the plan's centennial this year). "Chicago is ideally suited to events like this," Kerwin said. Soldier Field, the McCormick Place convention center, the United Center, and the University of Illinois Chicago Pavilion will all be pressed into service. "Many of the recent Olympic venues, such as in Beijing, were located on the periphery," he said. "Our program is woven throughout the city for a much more urban experience."

Benjamin Wood, formerly of Wood + Zapata (the firm that modernized Soldier Field in 2006), now of Ben Wood Studio Shanghai, will design the 100,000-seat Olympic Stadium to be located in historic Washington Park. Following the games, most of the stadium seating will be disassembled, leaving behind a small bowl and the track.

The former Meigs Field, an island airfield controversially seized by the city in

2003 and shut down, will become a major venue, including facilities for beach volleyball, BMX biking, and track cycling.

The SOM-designed Olympic Village will be the most visible and lasting element of the Games. Sited on the grounds of a midcentury hospital, the Olympic Village will house 17,000 athletes and officials, and will later be converted into a mixed-use neighborhood. Planners claim more than 90 percent of the athletes will be within 15 minutes of their venues. After the games, the village will help to link the burgeoning South Loop, on the edge of downtown, with the sprawling Southside.

While the planners are taking a deliberately low-key approach to the bid, Kerwin emphasizes that the architecture will continue to evolve. "The designs are not very far along. It's really more of a technically-based bid," he said. The International Olympic Committee will make its decision on October 2. **AGB**



COURTESY CHICAGO 2016

EMPIRE FAKE? continued from front page coverage in the October 11, 1972 edition of *The New York Times*. A *Times* photo-illustration (below) shows a model that resembles the one auctioned in Chicago, with cardboard additions added to the top of the building. "We stayed late that night and built it before the *Times* photographer came in."

Jones, who learned of the auction through *AN*, said his model was 32.5 inches, the same dimensions as the piece sold at Wright. He claims the original model was closer to four feet tall. He also claims the 1930 model was extensively damaged.

William Plyer, one of the partners who brought the materials to Wright, disputes that claim. "It's totally false. The model that was sold was the original 1930 model," he said. Plyer added that he has no memory of any new massing model made in the 1970s and that the original was not used in the photo-illustration cited by Jones. "The original model was not used in any pipedream scheme," Plyer said.

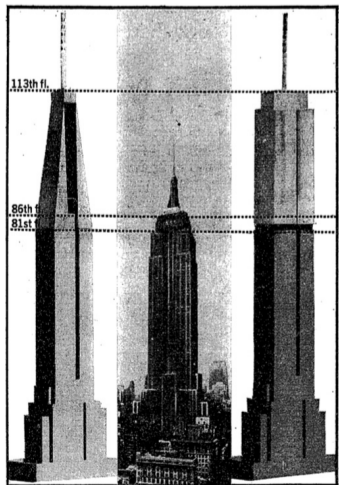
When told that Plyer seemed unfamiliar with the speculative study, Jones said, "Bill may not remember it. He wasn't involved in the study at all, so I don't find it surprising that he wouldn't know that we made a new model."

Richard Wright, founder and president of the auction house that sold the model, intends to investigate the claim. Wright supplied *AN* with a 1930 clipping from *The New York Post* that shows a model similar to the one that was auctioned. The 1930 photograph shows the model next to Governor Alfred E. Smith, a politician noted for his political stature but not his height, and does not appear to be four feet tall as Jones claimed. "Sounds like we have a 'he said, he said' on our hands," Wright observed.

"The auction house has a dedicated research team. We do our best, but mistakes do happen," Wright said. "If something emerges that would affect the value of an object, as this would, we would inform the buyer." The incident reflects the ambiguity around selling architectural materials such as models, which are often reproduced in multiple versions by many different hands. "The piece looked like it had nice age," Wright said. "I'm here to deal with it. Our business is based on our reputation."

Wright declined to name the buyer, an individual, but said that the buyer has been a longtime client of the auction house. **AGB**

From a 1972 *New York Times* article about adding 11 floors to the Empire State Building.



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2 ARTISAN SERIES AMSCO WINDOWS

Salt Lake City-based AMSCO Windows recently introduced The Artisan Series—a new line of well-designed, energy-efficient vinyl windows. Featuring a beveled-in frame, interlocking panels, high-performance weather stripping, CozE performance glass and SuperCapSR color technology by Mikron, these windows are available in a variety of options, styles, and colors including: white, almond, taupe, autumn red, evergreen, and bronze.

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IN THE SWIM continued from front page

an earful from landscape architects, developers, and environmental engineers, the City Planning Commission has drawn up its first waterfront public access zoning overhaul in 15 years, aiming for higher-quality public space that's more flexible and sustainable. The outlines of the plan, which was the subject of a March 4 public hearing, have been widely embraced as a badly needed update to the existing code.

"In super-broad stroke, it's a great step forward," said Roland Lewis, president of the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance. "In New Jersey, a lot of their esplanade functions as a front yard for luxury condominiums. This new addition to the zoning code is a step away from that. They're trying to make the waterfront a communal resource for all of us."

The main thrust of the 117-page amendment is to break down the uniform quality of many new waterfronts and allow for more creative uses of the edge. "In standard New York City zoning, there is one water's edge, and it has to have a 42-inch-high railing," said Donna Walcavage, principal at EDAW and landscape architect for Williamsburg's Northside Piers complex, designed by FXFowle. By contrast, the new code permits a variety of edge options such as boat launches, get-downs, and tidal areas. Other improvements include more meandering pathway configurations, moveable seating, and fewer visual barriers. The plan also dispenses with an unimaginative list of plants that had been deemed fit for waterfront use, and allows landscape architects to make their own more sustainable choices that include native plants. "It's much easier to create an ecosystem that responds to water," Walcavage said.

Under the new code, developers would have

the option to transfer public waterfront land to the Parks Department, and make annual payments to the city for site maintenance. The North 5th Street pier and esplanade at Northside Piers is the first transfer of this kind, which would seem appealing to developers, who also get to transfer the public space liability. In return, the Parks team is brought into the design process at an early stage. "To get our plan approval, we had to come to an agreement with the city about the transfer of the whole waterfront," said David Lee, project architect at FXFowle. The result is theoretically a public space more tightly woven into the open-space fabric of the city.

While many designers support the plan's goals, some wonder whether the amendment's fine-grained design standards are the best way to achieve them. "I think the biggest concern about these regulations is that they're incredibly prescriptive," said Elena Brescia, partner in the landscape architecture firm Scape, whose waterfront design for Williamsburg's 184 Kent Avenue, next door to Northside Piers, is now under construction. "It's design by calculation. A certain number of benches are required per square foot, a certain number of trees are required per square foot," she said, concerned that the result may not add up to the intended effect. "Even though there may be a boat launch thrown in, much of what is prescribed here is about having the same experience everywhere."

On the bright side, the new rules do encourage the holy grail for many waterfront boosters: more cafes. "They're allowing for more flexibility, and more commercial viability on the waterfront," Lewis said. "It's remarkable how few waterfront eateries there are in New York City. It's almost shocking."

JEFF BYLES

AT DEADLINE**WORLD STIMULUS CENTER**

It turns out that the years of infighting that got the reconstruction of Ground Zero off to a slow start may yet prove a boon, albeit a small one, for the local construction industry. On March 5, the Port Authority released a study stating that the rebuilding project will create 72,202 construction jobs over 10 years and \$16.4 billion in economic activity. Most importantly, the study notes that just as the building boom is tapering off, and due to end by 2010, according to the New York Building Congress, work will be picking up at the World Trade Center site. "The term stimulus may be overused right now, but at a time when our economy is hurting the most, the WTC project is providing a source of employment for many people," the report noted.

REDUNDANT ROGERS

In spite of the construction burst forecast for Ground Zero in 2010, delays are going to stall later phases of the project—and make an impact on architects now. While Tower 1, the memorial, and Fumihiko Maki's Tower 4 continue apace, the authority has already copped to delays in other parts of the project, most notably Foster + Partners' Tower 2, or 200 Greenwich Street. Then *Building Design* reported that among the 35 employees Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners recently laid off was the entire Tower 3 team, which brings that project to a halt for the time being, as well.

SHORT SHEETED AT NYPL

The New York Public Library's ambitions for a \$250 million Foster + Partners-designed overhaul of its Carrère & Hastings flagship on 5th Avenue have been jeopardized by the collapse of a deal to sell the Donnell Library on 53rd Street to a hotel chain for \$59 million. In a plan that made some uncomfortable with its marriage of commerce and culture, the Orient-Express Hotel had moved to buy and demolish the popular branch library and replace it with a 150-room luxury hotel with floor-through connections to the "21" Club and a ground-floor library. Now all bets are off as Orient-Express, having paid down only \$7 million, wants to revisit the rest of the deal.

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Katerina Panagiotakis, Aikaterini, former designer at Olson Lewis Dioli & Doktor Architects, Manchester, MA

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CITY OF NEW YORK/BERNARD JAMES

Completed in 2008, the STU-designed Engine Company 227 in Bushwick is one of the first built works of the city's Design and Construction Excellence Initiative. The project's design won an Art Commission award in 2004.

THE A-LISTS

Architects participating in New York City's Design and Construction Excellence Initiative become the go-to firms for a wide range of municipal jobs, from storage sheds and office renovations to libraries and museums. As the downturn renews interest in public works and the program proves its own merits, getting on the list has never been more competitive.

By Aaron Seward



COURTESY KISS + CATHCART

DCE projects now beginning construction include [Bushwick Inlet Park](#) (above) by Kiss + Cathcart, and the [Ocean Breeze Indoor Track Facility](#) (opposite, bottom) on Staten Island by Sage and Coombe. The Marble Fairbanks-designed [Glen Oaks Branch Library](#) (opposite, top) in Queens, also beginning construction, was commissioned by the DDC.

Once a peer-review architect for the General Services Administration's Design Excellence Program in Washington, D.C., Karen Bausman of Karen Bausman + Associates is enthusiastic about public work. "From my perspective, the barrier between public architecture and all other architecture is closing," she said. "Public architecture is now at the forefront of developing the design ideas that will fulfill our 21st-century needs." Bausman recently returned to New York City and plunged right into the public realm, designing two projects at Ferry Point Park in the South Bronx for the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Her views may sound

a little too optimistic to some. Over the past several decades, the legacy of public architecture has been such that municipally released Requests for Proposals have more likely caused design firms to hide their heads in despair than jump at the chance. Known primarily for modest budgets, Byzantine bureaucratic proceedings, and poor construction quality, the public realm has remained the domain of the ideologically dedicated—or of large firms looking to burnish their public image after profiting handsomely from private developer jobs.

But that trend, in New York City at least, is changing fast. The number of architects of all stripes competing for

public contracts (involving nearly 100 projects per year) has more than doubled in the last five years. With private developer work about as plentiful as the saber tooth tiger, billions of dollars are set to flow into the public realm. Part of this tectonic shift can also be attributed to Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's Design and Construction Excellence Initiative (DCE), which has turned what was once the ugly stepchild of the profession into a hot date.

Bloomberg first announced DCE in 2004, along with the 22nd annual Art Commission Awards for Excellence in Design, which recognized eight city projects that exemplified the highest design standards, including Polshek

Partnership's entrance pavilion at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. The purpose of DCE, the mayor stated, was "to expand our city's pre-eminence as the design capital of the world," by encouraging city agencies "to strive for the same level of excellence in design for all public works—large and small—that is recognized annually by the Art Commission's Awards." While DCE is a citywide initiative, the Department of Design and Construction (DDC), headed by Commissioner David J. Burney, was placed in charge of spearheading it. The Parks Department, which manages its own design and construction projects, also took an active role. The first step was

to revamp the city's method of procuring design services.

Since time out of mind, public architecture projects have been awarded based on one driving factor: the lowest bid. This has proven an effective method for politicians wishing to exhibit their thrifty application of taxpayer dollars, but for obvious reasons, hasn't always attracted the best architects or resulted in the finest work. DDC turned the tables on this method by removing price competition as the prime motivator in procurement, instituting a quality-based selection process. "I think that the perception, for better or worse, was that the city had a tendency to focus on schedule and budget. One measures those and defends the taxpayer's dollar, and quality takes a back seat," Burney told *AN*. "The idea was to reinstate quality in the minds of every project manager. We now have a series of initiatives to make that happen."

DDC developed two new methods of procurement, streamlining the RFP process to attract the right architect to the right project and to allow a greater range of firms the opportunity of winning public commissions. (Not all designers have marketing departments at the ready to fill out 90-page competition forms.) The first method is for large projects of \$25 million or more, such as the Brooklyn House of Detention or the new Police Academy to be built in Queens. In this method, two-stage RFPs are issued for each project. During the first stage, a committee that includes at least one outside professional peer evaluates respondents and ranks them based on their sub-consultants, the education and experience of their project team, and their design record. The top firms are then invited to submit detailed proposals during stage two. At the conclusion of the second stage, the city begins fee negotiations with the highest technically ranked firm. "The DDC's new selection process guarantees a level of attention to architecture," explained Todd Schliemann, a partner at Polshek Partnership Architects, which has completed countless projects for New York City. "It wasn't so

long ago that they insisted on practicality over design."

The second method, for projects of less than \$25 million, involves the selection of a panel of consultants who become the city's go-to architects for projects in this budget range. As with the first stage of the RFP process in method one, architects are invited to apply to be on the panel and are evaluated based on their relevant experience and the quality of their portfolio. Firms that are selected are awarded 24-month on-call contracts with the city and are given the option of submitting proposals to projects as they become available. To keep the submission process fair and distribute the work evenly to large and small firms, this category is further subdivided into projects of less than \$10 million and projects of \$10 to \$25 million. In the less-than-\$10 million range, which thus far has accounted for approximately 50 projects every year, the city selects a panel of 24 small firms (defined as having ten or fewer employees) for each contract period. These have included firms like Andrew Berman Architect, Lyn Rice Architects, and Toshiko Mori. The remainder of the work, in the \$10 to \$25 million range, is offered to a panel of eight larger firms, such as Polshek Partnership, Smith-Miller + Hawkinson Architects, and Grimshaw.

"For each project that becomes available, the DDC issues an RFP to the 24 firms," said Adam Marcus of Marble Fairbanks, which has been included in the DDC's \$10 million-and-under on-call list since 2005. "We usually submit proposals for each one, but it's not required." The firm's diligence has paid off, and it currently has four projects under DCE: a cultural center and a fire station on Staten Island, an arts center in the Bronx, and a library in Queens. "DDC is very involved throughout the process. Their input usually is helpful and they're right about a lot of things. There's definitely additional work dealing with the bureaucracy, but in general it's been pretty good and we've found their reviewers easy to work with."

This method of



COURTESY MARBLE FAIRBANKS



COURTESY SAGE AND COOMBE

THE LISTS

Here are the names of architects participating in programs within the Design and Construction Excellence Initiative. Their two-year contracts were awarded in 2007 by the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and by the Parks Department. The latest round of contracts for work with Parks was due in February, while the next round of RFPs for DDC goes out in August.

ON-CALL FOR THE PARKS DEPARTMENT: ARCHITECTS

Architecture Research Office
BKSK Architects
Kiss + Cathcart Architects
Rogers Marvel Architects
Sage and Coombe Architects
Smith-Miller + Hawkinson Architects

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Abel Bainnson Butz
EDAW
Mark K. Morrison Associates
Miceli Kulik Williams & Associates
Nancy Owens Studio
Quennell Rothschild & Partners
Stantec
Thomas Balsley Associates

ON-CALL FOR DDC PROJECTS: SMALL FIRMS

Andrew Berman Architect
Atelier Pagnamenta Torriani
Caples Jefferson Architects
Charles Rose Architects
Christoff:Finio Architecture
CR Studio Architects
Garrison Architects
LARC Studio
Locascio Architect
Lyn Rice Architects
Marble Fairbanks
Marpillero Pollak Architects
Michielli + Wyetzner Architects

Narchitects
OBRA Architects
PKSB Architects
Sage and Coombe Architects
Slade Architecture
Stephen Yablon Architect
Steven Harris Architects
Toshiko Mori Architect
W Architecture and Landscape Architecture
WORK Architecture Company
WXY Architecture

LARGER FIRMS

1100: Architect
Deborah Berke & Partners Architects
Grimshaw
Polshek Partnership Architects
Smith-Miller + Hawkinson Architects
Snøhetta
Steven Holl Architects
Urbahn Architects with
TEN Arquitectos



NORMAN MCGRATH

Designed by Arquitectonica, the Bronx Museum of the Arts won an Art Commission award in 2003 and became the model for the city's DCE program.

procurement, along with the completion of a string of high-profile public projects including the Bronx Museum of the Arts by Arquitectonica, the Brooklyn Children's Museum by Rafael Viñoly, and the Queens Botanical Garden by BKSK Architects, has had the effect that Bloomberg desired, and an increasing number of firms are showing interest in city work. In 2005, when the first round of contracts was issued, the DDC received applications from 178 firms. In 2007, the second round of contracts, DDC received 237 applications—a 33 percent increase. A similar increase in applications is expected when the next round of RFPs goes out late this summer, and the competition will be all the more fierce as the city expects to complete less work as a result of the faltering economy. "This round, we're only going to issue on-call contracts to 20 firms," said Burney. "We have less work now, due to budget cuts."

The news is not all bleak, and there is still ample hope for high-design architects to find satisfying work in a city that values design. The Parks Department, the only other city agency that issues its own series of on-call contracts using the same methods as the DDC, has a \$3 billion budget to spend on capital improvements over the next ten years. The first generation of Parks DCE projects is now going into construction, including the Bushwick Inlet Community Center by Kiss + Cathcart Architects, the McCarren Park Pool renovation by Rogers Marvel, and the Union Square Comfort Station by ARO. The agency is actually increasing the number of architects it will hire from six firms to eight. In addition, Parks also issues eight contracts to landscape architecture firms. RFPs for Parks' latest round of contracts were due at the end of February, and while official numbers were not released as of press time, the number of applications has nearly doubled from the last count of 115 submissions.

The fact that New York City values design and has implemented strategies to increase its weight as a factor in public works is

heartening, but the question that must be on the minds of many architects right now is whether pursuing these jobs can keep them afloat. While the city's process of finding architects has changed, its fee structure has not. The city has a sliding fee curve—based on percentage of overall construction cost—that is derived from a combination of previous contracts for the same services, adjusted for inflation, and information from a New York State analysis of contract fees. The lower the construction cost, the higher the percentage the fee accounts for. For example, a \$100,000 project offers a 15.13 percent design fee, or \$15,129. A \$25 million project, on the other hand, offers a 6.08 percent design fee, or \$1,520,375.

Without doing a detailed economic analysis of architecture firms, their fees, and their profit margins, it seems that this pay structure is more beneficial to the smaller fish in the architecture pool. Speaking about his firm's extensive public work for New York, Schliemann said, "I'm not going to tell you that we make a great deal of money, but it's a great contribution to the city." On the other hand, city commissions account for approximately one third of Marble Fairbanks' work.

DCE is an admirable addition to the administration of New York City, but it is just one part of a greater initiative to make this town a better designed, more egalitarian, and more sustainable place. The city's overall 2030 strategy also includes requirements for green design and a degree of diversity among those hired to complete public work. "What has been very satisfying to me," said Bausman, "is that my voice is listened to and I have an opportunity to help re-imagine the city. The city is celebrating its 400th anniversary this year. It's great to finally have a seat at the table."

AARON SEWARD



NORMAN MCGRATH

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AARON SEWARD IS ASSOCIATE EDITOR AT AN.

MARCH

WEDNESDAY 18
LECTURES

Jason Austin and Aleksandr Mergold
Austin + Mergold
6:00 p.m.
Temple University
1947 North 12th St.,
Philadelphia
www.temple.edu

Hillman Curtis
Design Remixed
6:30 p.m.
Apple Store Soho
103 Prince St.
www.aigany.org

FILM

Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House
(H.C. Potter, 1948), 94 min.
1:30 p.m.
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

EVENT

Urbanist Open House
6:30 p.m.
The Municipal Art Society of New York
457 Madison Ave.
www.mas.org

THURSDAY 19
LECTURE

Julio Amezcua, Francisco Pardo, Robert Hutchinson, Tom Maul
Emerging Voices: at103; Hutchison & Maul Architecture
7:00 p.m.
Urban Center
457 Madison Ave.
www.archleague.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Gordon Cheung

The Promised Land
Jack Shainman Gallery
513 West 20th St.
www.jackshainman.com

SATURDAY 21
WITH THE KIDS

Materials and Decorations
11:00 a.m.
Brooklyn Museum of Art
200 Eastern Parkway,
Brooklyn
www.brooklynmuseum.org

SUNDAY 22
LECTURE

Deborah Harris, Claire Oliver, et al.
The Market: Women Artists from Collection to Cultural Record
2:00 p.m.
Brooklyn Museum of Art
200 Eastern Parkway,
Brooklyn
www.brooklynmuseum.org

EVENT

Material World
2:00 p.m.
Museum of Arts and Design
2 Columbus Circle
www.madmuseum.org

MONDAY 23

EXHIBITION OPENING
New Soviet People will Conquer Cosmic Space
Columbia GSAPP
200 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

TUESDAY 24
LECTURE

Ashok Gupta, Greg Kiss, et al.
New York Infrastructure: Energy Alternatives
6:30 p.m.
Museum of the City of New York
1220 5th Ave.
www.mcny.org

WEDNESDAY 25
LECTURES

Shayne McQuade, Bill Becker, Samuel Cochran
The Role of Design in the Clean Energy Revolution
5:30 p.m.
NY Designs
45-50 30th St., Long Island City
www.nydesigns.org

Bernard Tschumi
Acropolis Transcripts

6:30 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

Karim Rashid

6:30 p.m.
Museum of Arts and Design
2 Columbus Circle
www.madmuseum.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Living Line: Selected Indian Drawings from the Subhash Kapoor Gift
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

Jean Marc Gady

French Cancan
The Gallery R'Pure
3 East 19th St.
www.galleryrpure.com

THURSDAY 26
LECTURES

Mario Hugo
Stories & Soliloquy
6:30 p.m.
Bumble and Bumble Auditorium
415 West 13th St., 3rd Fl.
www.aigany.org

Andrew Berman, David Leven, Stella Betts
Emerging Voices: Andrew Berman Architect; LevenBetts Studio
7:00 p.m.
Urban Center
457 Madison Ave.
www.archleague.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Louise Fishman
Cheim & Read
547 West 25th St.
www.cheimread.com

Mickalene Thomas
Lehmann Maupin
540 West 26th St.
www.lehmannmaupin.com

TRADE SHOW

Architectural Digest Home Design Show
Through March 29
Pier 94
12th Ave. at 55th St.
www.archdigesthomeshow.com

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CONFERENCE

The Greening of New York: Case Studies in Sustainable Urban Planning
Through March 28
Pier 94
12th Ave. at 55th St.
www.greeneastexpo.com

FRIDAY 27

EXHIBITION OPENING

Sun K. Kwak
Enfolding 280 Hours
Brooklyn Museum of Art
200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn
www.brooklynmuseum.org

SYMPOSIUM

Spatial Illiteracies
Through March 28
Yale School of Architecture
180 York St., New Haven
www.architecture.yale.edu

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Gavin Turk
Jazzz
Sean Kelly Gallery
528 West 29th St.
www.skny.com

Simryn Gill

Tracy Williams Ltd.
313 West 4th St.
www.tracywilliamsLtd.com

CONFERENCE

Ambiguous Territories: Articulating New Geographies in Latin American Modern Architecture and Urbanism
Through March 28
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

SATURDAY 28

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

I am Art
apexart
291 Church St.
www.apexart.org

Momoyo Torimitsu

Thrust Projects
114 Bowery
www.thrustprojects.com

SMFA Traveling Scholars

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Avenue of the Arts, Boston
www.mfa.org

SUNDAY 29

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Into the Sunset: Photography's Image of the American West
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

Lichtenstein In Process

Katonah Museum of Art
134 Jay St., Katonah
www.katonahmuseum.org

CONFERENCE

Environments for Aging 2009
Boston Copley Marriot
110 Huntington Ave., Boston
www.efa09.com

MONDAY 30

LECTURE

Jorge Otero-Pailos
Abstraction in Experimental Preservation
6:30 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

TUESDAY 31
LECTURE

Andrew Rumbach
Only by the Grace of God: The Political Ecology of Urban Disasters
6:00 p.m.
School of Visual Arts
136 West 21st St.
www.schoolofvisualarts.edu

APRIL

WEDNESDAY 1
LECTURE

Julie Beckman and Keith Kaseman
KBAS Studio
6:00 p.m.
Temple University
1947 North 12th St.,
Philadelphia
www.temple.edu

THURSDAY 2

EXHIBITION OPENING

R.C. Baker
"...and Nixon's coming"
Zone: Chelsea
601 West 26th St.
www.zonechelsea.org

FRIDAY 3

CONFERENCE

The Ecologies of Inequality and the Future of Design in Race + Space + Politics
Through April 4
University of Pennsylvania
School of Design
B1 Meyerson Hall,
Philadelphia
www.design.upenn.edu/arch/index.htm

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Adel Abdessemed
RIO
David Zwirner Gallery
525 West 19th St.
www.davidzwirner.com

Jennifer Dalton

The Re-Appraisal, 1999-2009
Winkleman Gallery
637 West 27th St.
www.winkleman.com

Shahzia Sikander

Stalemate
Sikkema Jenkins & Co.
530 West 22nd St.
www.sikkemajenkinsco.com

SATURDAY 4

EXHIBITION OPENING

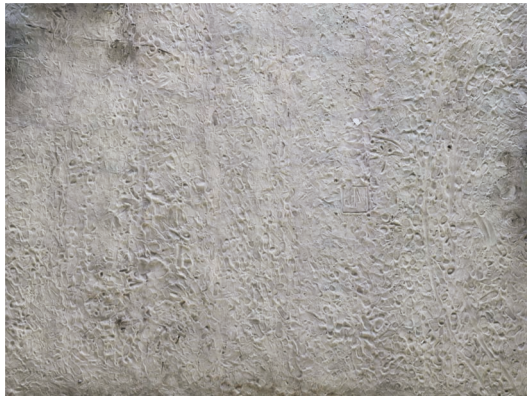
Amsterdam/ New Amsterdam: The Worlds of Henry Hudson
Museum of the City of New York
1220 5th Ave.
www.mcny.org

WEDNESDAY 8
LECTURE

Robert Neuwirth, Saskia Sassen, Smita Srinivas
The extroverted City of System D
6:30 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING

The Generational: Younger Than Jesus
New Museum of Contemporary Art
235 Bowery
www.newmuseum.org

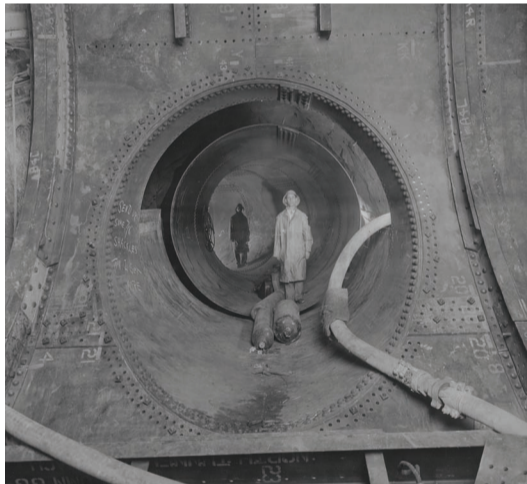


COURTESY HASTED HUNT

ANDREAS GEFELLER

Hasted Hunt
529 West 20th Street
Through April 25

Offering an intensely detailed view of mundane objects and landscapes, German photographer Andreas Gefeller's large color photographs from his ongoing series *Supervisions* depict a whole world of architecture hidden in plain sight. Comprised of a variety of exaggerated, close-up views of urban spaces—graffiti-clad city walls, drop ceilings, sandy beaches, swimming pools, and parking lots in Dusseldorf, Tokyo, New York, and Miami—Gefeller redefines our perception of commonplace scenes and settings through his methodical scans. His topographic representations seem unreal, yet retain a documentary-like feel, transporting the viewer to a new dimension through his "bird's-eye" perspective. *"Untitled" (Sand Tracks), Miami, 2008*, (above), is one such image, demonstrating the artist's ability to transform straightforward landscapes, in this case, a vision of traces in the sand, and heighten them into scenes at once abstract and startlingly revealing.



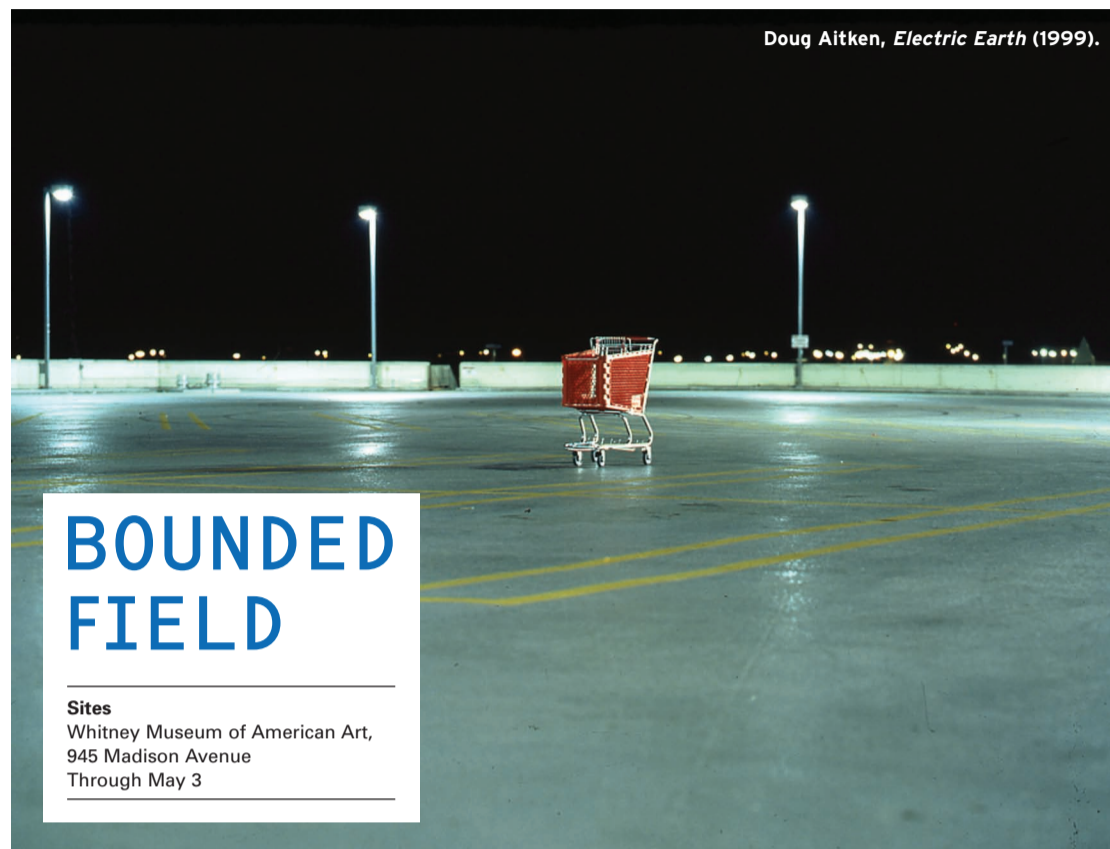
COURTESY NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

THE FUTURE BENEATH US:
8 GREAT PROJECTS UNDER NEW YORK

The Science, Industry and Business Library
Healy Hall, 188 Madison Avenue
and the New York Transit Museum Gallery
Grand Central Terminal
Through July 5

New York City's transit and transportation infrastructure is the focus of the double exhibition *The Future Beneath Us: 8 Great Projects Under New York*, on view both at the Science, Industry and Business Library and at the New York Transit Museum's Grand Central gallery. A collaboration between the New York Public Library and the New York Transit Museum, the show explores the design and progress of eight massive underground transportation and water projects currently in development in New York State. Featuring historical photographs of past infrastructure projects such as the Number 1 and 9 subway lines and City Tunnel #2 (above), as well as current renderings of Santiago Calatrava's oculus design for the entrance to the World Trade Center Hub and the extension to the Number 7 subway line, the exhibited works illustrate visionary projects at their most nitty-gritty. The largest capital construction project in the city's history to date is among the projects on view: Spanning a 60-mile distance from the Catskills to New York City, Water Tunnel #3 will connect the city to its upstate water supply and is among the most complex engineering projects in the world. Gigantic in scope, these slow-moving projects, all but invisible to most New Yorkers, nonetheless stand to make the most far-reaching impact on our daily lives.

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER MARCH 18, 2009

Doug Aitken, *Electric Earth* (1999).

BOUNDED FIELD

Sites

Whitney Museum of American Art,
945 Madison Avenue
Through May 3

The title of the Whitney Museum's new exhibition *Sites* immediately evokes the fertile period from the mid-1960s through the '70s, in which American artists shifted the focus of their practice from the circumscribed, supposedly autonomous space of the painted canvas to the potentialities of what Rosalind Krauss famously termed the "expanded field." During this period, artists such as Robert Morris, Michael Heizer, and Agnes Denes used the concept of site not only to explode traditional notions of the art object, but also to reorient art toward the external, politicized arenas of geography, ecology, land use, and the built environment. As Robert Smithson discerned very early on, the presentation of this expanded approach gives rise to numerous challenges in the museum context, which remains largely

centered around self-sufficient objects. The Whitney, however, has recently done admirable work in this regard, mounting illuminating, highly contextualized retrospectives of Smithson (2005) and Gordon Matta-Clark (2007). Thus it is surprising that the curators of the present exhibition have largely eschewed history and context in favor of pastiche, organizing the selected works around a nebulous, inconsistent, and seemingly unexamined idea of "site" in contemporary art.

Epitomizing the misguided methodology of *Sites* is the salon-style hanging of 20 or so drawings and prints by preeminent Land, Process, Conceptual, and Site-Specific artists such as Smithson, Robert Irwin, Richard Serra, and Vito Acconci. The majority of these sheets appear to be working drawings for sculptural, architectural,

and environmental projects. Yet except in the case of a Barry Le Va sketch paired with its realization as a small geometric sculpture, there is no indication of whether these particular projects were ever attempted or completed. In the absence of further documentation, the viewer might easily assume that these drawings are self-contained works of speculative or visionary art rather than fragments of a radically expanded practice that extends far beyond the confines of the exhibition space. Such an assumption would push the achievements of these artists back into the very framework that they sought to destroy: that of the autonomous, museum-friendly artwork. Meanwhile, the crowded, homogenous presentation of framed drawings by artists as diverse as Claes Oldenburg, Bruce Nauman, and Sol Le Witt

tends to elide their very different, often incommensurable practices and perspectives into a unified field. A smaller group of drawings, presented with adequate documentation of the projects to which they belonged, might have allowed for a more substantive engagement with the theme of the show.

The selection of larger works on display only serves to heighten the idea of a museum-friendly, housebroken version of expanded art. Matta-Clark, best known for his aggressive engagements with architectural space, such as sawing buildings in half and shooting out the windows of the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies (to the extreme chagrin of Peter Eisenman), is inexplicably represented here with a small stack of gessoed paper, sawed through and mounted on cardboard (and, yes, framed). Meanwhile, Alice Aycock's small, wooden shanty construction of 1978 gives the impression, in this context, of architecture shrunk down to the point where it can safely function as indoor sculpture. Even a photographic or video presentation of Matta-Clark's and Aycock's outdoor architectural interventions would have spoken more directly and powerfully to the problem of site. The documentary approach is applied instead to postwar sculptor David Smith, an important forebear of site-specific art. Three photographs depict twisted metal sculptures positioned in the landscape around Smith's upstate New York studio; the sculptures appear to frame particular views of the natural environment. However, the actual presence in the exhibition of one of these works totally overwhelms the idea of environmental context, and refocuses attention on the raw materiality of the object itself.

In a number of more recent works, the concept of site takes a metaphysical turn. David Simmons' *Ghoster* (1997), a monumental painting in chalk of a spectral

rollercoaster, seems to vaguely posit memory or fantasy as a place. Sharon Lockhart's untitled photograph of pines swallowed up in a snowstorm evokes total disorientation—a sublime erasure of site. Finally, Huma Bhabha's worm's-eye-view drawing of feet moving into an apocalyptic landscape updates the popular modernist theme of wasteland. The inclusion of these rather romantic works stretches the supposedly contemporary concept of "site" to the point where it might embrace, say, Caspar David Friedrich.

In contrast, a 1996 sculpture by Rachel Harrison appears to pick up where Smithson and his experimentalist compatriots left off in the 1970s. The piece is a three-sided structure in wood paneling with a photograph on each surface that depicts a woman with a shopping cart on London's Wordsworth Road. The strange conflation of sculpture and photography in this work, as well as the opacity of the images, points up the epistemological difficulties of making an exterior site present in the exhibition context. Also complicating the problem of site is a recent multi-screened video piece by Doug Aitken, which layers together fragmented sounds and images of a solitary figure walking, and sometimes dancing, through deserted, phantasmagorical urban spaces. By turning the exhibition space into a series of screens, Aitken is able to recast the cinema itself as a physical site in which notions of place, time, and narrative are unraveled, scrambled, and uncannily reassembled. These two pieces suggest that the idea of site in contemporary art has not hardened into an art-historical cliché or an abstract concept, but rather continues to provide an impetus for philosophical questioning and formal innovation.

MICHAEL PAULSON IS A NEW YORK-BASED CRITIC AND FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.

PARSING PLAZAS

Designs on the Public: The Private Lives of New York's Public Spaces

Kristine F. Miller

University of Minnesota Press, \$25.00

As Kristine F. Miller's fascinating and timely book *Designs on the Public: The Private Lives of New York's Public Spaces* shows, in New York City, the term *public space* carries especially strong, if complicated, meanings that belie the distinction between the phrase and its apparent opposite. One thinks of streets, plazas, parks, and other publicly owned places, but in the city, many legal mechanisms blur traditional notions of the public realm, such as business improvement districts (BIDs) arising from public/private partnerships, and privately owned public spaces (POPS), products of incentive zoning.

Miller, associate professor of landscape

architecture at the University of Minnesota, analyzes six such spaces in Manhattan: the steps of City Hall, Jacob Javits Plaza, Times Square, and three Midtown skyscrapers (the IBM Atrium, Sony Plaza, and Trump Tower), a few of the city's 500-plus POPS.

At City Hall, the public's right to assemble is presented as a reflection of the city's political interests: The government decides *which* public may gather and how that may be done. At Jacob Javits Plaza just north of City Hall, the redesign of an open space formerly occupied by Richard Serra's arc of rusty steel is viewed as a continuation of those restrictions, this time via design rather than regulation. In Times Square, graphic design is a means of manipulation, of skewing the demographic of the place from actual to desired, as a component of the transformation from its seedy past. In the three Midtown office buildings, a well-designed public space (IBM) is ruined when private interests take precedence and ignore the provisions of POPS; another (Sony, formerly AT&T) is

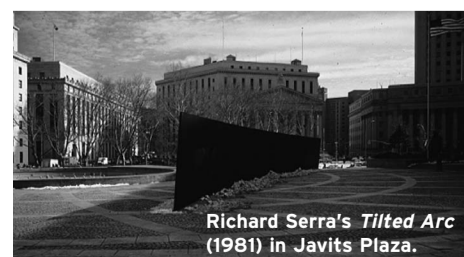
transformed by design and legal gray areas into a semi-private commercial zone; and bad planning and design at Trump Tower demonstrate a POPS system that values quantity over quality.

Miller's well-researched if disheartening analyses illustrate how public space extends from the urban design to the public body by enforcing use of space beyond its physical boundaries. At Times Square, the public realm is transformed by BIDs, to the delight of tourists but the dismay of many locals. But the last three places that Miller examines are most telling. They illustrate the roles of corporations in the shaping of urban spaces: how corporate interests are elevated above those of the general public through positions of ownership, power, and finance.

If design, as Miller contends, is complicit in excluding, restricting, and privileging certain groups in public spaces, how can designers reverse this trend? One might argue that this problem should not be addressed by design or other means, given that public spaces in

the post-9/11 urban condition are increasingly utilized as security buffers to the arguably more valuable building sites of governments and corporations. A more hopeful and egalitarian response is that design can be an antidote to this exclusion, restriction, and privilege through the careful crafting of parks, plazas, and streets. Miller does not give the reader prescriptions. Instead, she presents snapshots of how public spaces are shaped today, inciting those who care to demand higher, more inclusive standards.

JOHN HILL WRITES THE BLOG A DAILY DOSE OF ARCHITECTURE.



Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* (1981) in Javits Plaza.

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The Great Exchange

Architecture and the 'Special Relationship': The American Influence on Post-War British Architecture
Murray Fraser and Joe Kerr
Routledge, \$100.00

This mind-expanding book, like a demanding college course or an exotic voyage, will substantially broaden your perspective. Its scope, far wider than the title implies, ranges from the American Revolution to the present, encompassing the histories of technology, politics, economics, art, city planning, philosophy, education, engineering, and architectural theory. Fraser is particularly adept at summing up theory.

Despite its sweep, this is not an impersonal, broad-brush study. People who made history are made to come alive in vivid detail. Briton Henry Bessemer patented a means for mass-producing steel in 1856, but it wasn't widely used until the exigencies of the American

Civil War. Soon afterward, the Scottish-born Andrew Carnegie "spotted the potential of Bessemer's invention on a visit to England, then exploited the method on an industrial scale" in the U.S.A., where it could be produced much more cheaply. Later, he restored an historic castle in Scotland, cladding steel-framed additions in stone, and spent summers hunting and fishing like a lord. Steel would, of course, make possible the skyscrapers that rose in Chicago and New York.

The give-and-take between the two countries was advanced by trade and by outposts of American companies in the U.K., which introduced new ways of building and working. The first, Samuel Colt's gun factory in Pimlico of 1853, closed within a few years because "Britain's population wasn't in the habit of shooting each other." But in 1863, Singer Sewing Machine opened an assembly plant in Glasgow, and 20 years later, using an early type of reinforced concrete, built the largest sewing-machine factory in the world in Clydebank. In 1911, the Ford Motor Company opened its first overseas factory in an existing building in Manchester, then built multi-story, steel-framed additions. Ford then became the biggest car company in Britain and introduced similar multi-story, concrete-framed plants with gravity-fed assembly lines. The Heinz

Headquarters of 1965 by Gordon Bunshaft was the first suburban office park in the U.K.; Roche Dinkeloo's 1981 Cummins Engine combined offices and manufacturing in a campus setting, innovations possible then because the British were adopting American patterns of automobile ownership.

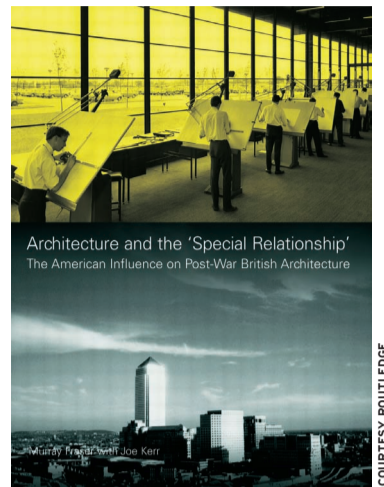
The authors argue that ties between the two countries "were never so much political as economic and cultural." Britain was "the single largest recipient of loans and grants under the Marshall Plan" after World War II, and later, of private American investment abroad. Even more important, perhaps, were the cultural ties reinforced by a shared language and foreign study programs. They note that the American Ezra Ehrenkrantz studied at the University of Liverpool, which had longstanding ties with the U.S., and then stayed on to study modular prefabricated systems. Back in the States at Stanford University, he developed the School Construction System Development (SCSD) in 1962, a long-span steel structure with light demountable interior partitions, integrated lighting systems, and roof-mounted heating and air conditioning (innovations similar to those Eero Saarinen had developed a decade earlier at the General Motors Technical Center outside Detroit). The SCSD structure influenced a whole series of British

and American architects, including Richard Rogers and Norman Foster, who had studied at Yale and traveled through the U.S. (and later set up a practice together in London with their first wives)—adventures recounted with just enough personal detail to make history fun.

The book highlights the impact that Buckminster Fuller, Cedric Price, Archigram, and James Stirling had on the "Special Relationship," as well as the less desirable mutual influence of the New Urbanism and of Prince Charles on design and planning policy on both sides of the Atlantic. (It even cites the founding of *The Architect's Newspaper*, which was modeled after the British publication *BD*, as a product of cultural exchange.)

Toward the end, the authors take real pleasure in the fact that despite a parade of big American corporate firms setting up shop in London and showing the Brits how to be efficient, Foster, Rogers, Grimshaw, and Hopkins are now getting significant amounts of work in the States. They attribute this in part to the U.S. backslide during postmodernism and to the creative work of British engineers, especially Tony Hunt and Arup, over the years.

"Whereas for most of the 20th century... the main British influence on the U.S.A. lay in the sphere of town planning, and in return, Britain



COURTESY ROUTLEDGE

looked to American for technological advances. Now," they argue, "the exact reverse is the case."

The book, which came out before the recent financial crisis, ends by posing two potential scenarios for U.S.-U.K. relations: The two long-aligned countries will work together on the global stage, or the U.S. will align with China where cheap goods are made and new technologies will be invented—the way they were in the U.S. when it connected with the U.K. Both scenarios could come into play, creating even more complex special relationships.

JAYNE MERKEL IS THE AUTHOR OF *EERO SAARINEN* (PHAIDON, 2005) AND A CONTRIBUTING EDITOR OF *ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN* IN LONDON.

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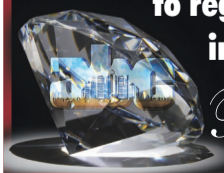
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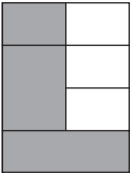
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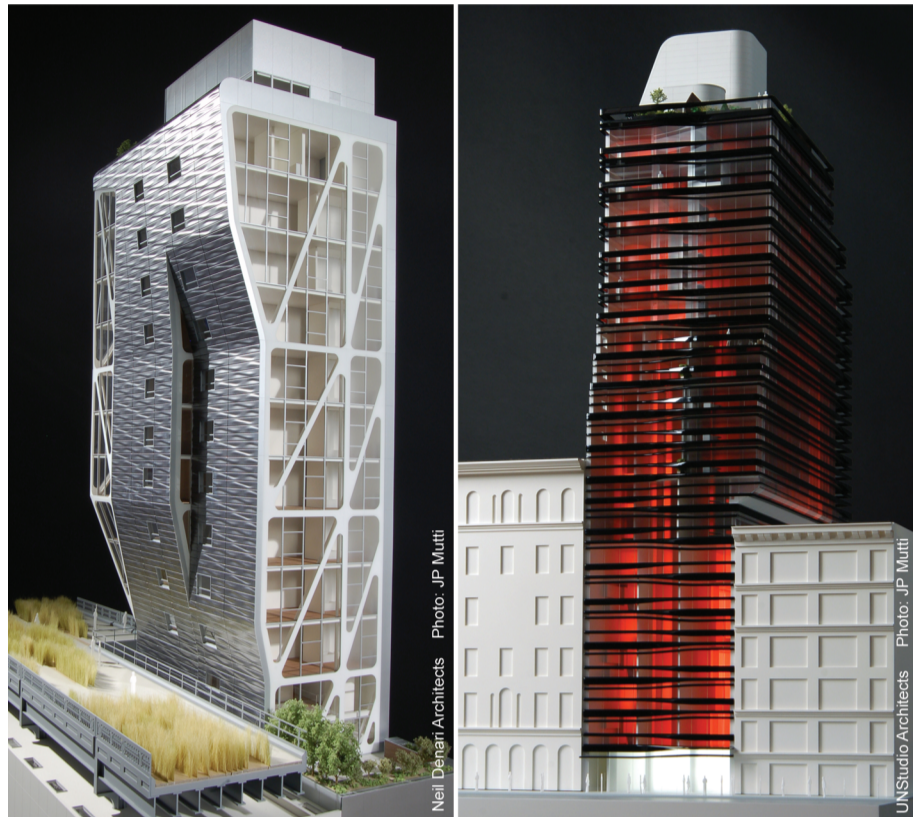
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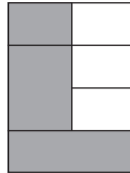
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MICHAEL LIGHT/COURTESY HOSFELT GALLERY

Farewell to all that: Photographer Michael Light's *Interchange of Highways 60 and 202 Looking West, Mesa, AZ* (2007), from the series *Salt River/Deadman Wash/Paradise Valley*.

Infrastructure: A Hacker's Manifesto

In December, when President Elect Barack Obama called his economic stimulus plan “the single largest new investment in our national infrastructure since President Eisenhower established the Interstate Highway System in the 1950s,” the media was abuzz with hopes that cities strained by decades of underinvestment would become better places to live. There were even suggestions that building high-design infrastructure would serve as an inspiration to a gloomy nation. Calatrava everywhere! OMA-designed windmills! The possibilities were delirious.

So there has been much hand-wringing that as signed into law, the plan allocates only \$48 billion to highways, rail, and mass transit. That's a mere 6 percent of the plan's budget. Sure, architects and the building sector will stand to benefit from more money allocated for improving public housing, federal agency buildings, and the like, but the point is clear: Instead of a vigorously rebuilt future, we are treading water at best.

We should view this not as another professional snub, but as a major opportunity to get our priorities straight. We all know that infrastructural investment is necessary. But the way architects were talking about their hopes for a bailout made them sound as bad as the banks. So let me make a modest proposal. To paraphrase another president, think not what infrastructure spending can do for you; think what you can do to reinvent infrastructure.

Here's the real problem: Our models for supporting cities have grown as decrepit as the bridges and highways around us.

This I learned between 2004 and 2008, when I led a team of researchers investigating the changing conditions of infrastructure in Los Angeles, and producing the book *The Infrastructural City: Networked Ecologies in Los Angeles*. For us, Los Angeles was a case study: A particularly interesting city, but one that proved the rule regarding infrastructure, rather than the exception.

Our conclusions were, first and foremost, that a WPA-style infrastructural push is impossible today. In part, this is because infrastructure tends to conform to an S-curve during its growth. As money is invested in infrastructure, its efficiency leaps ahead, but due to rising complexity, the S-curve eventually flattens and returns-per-dollar invested diminish greatly. Most of our systems are now at this stage: highly complex and very expensive to invest in. Moreover, costs for infrastructural improvements are vastly greater today than in the past. Thus, even if economist Paul Krugman observes that infrastructure funding generates a greater benefit for the economy than tax cuts, the improvement to urban life we would see from even \$200 billion in infrastructure spending would be minor. As the American Society of Civil Engineers has suggested in its appraisal of our failing infrastructure, we don't need \$200 billion—we need \$2.2 trillion.

And that's just to shore up the existing hardware. If we're talking about rolling out new rail lines and green power grids, there are still other problems at hand. The public building boom of the 1960s and

'70s—which was mainly a vast expansion of highways—devastated many communities and drove down their property values. Since then, homeowners have defended their back yards like medieval barons defending their castles, effectively mobilizing to question, forestall, and generally thwart the construction of new infrastructural systems that would theoretically benefit everyone. To think that opposition to vast new projects will evaporate at a time when home values are in free fall is ludicrous.

As society has become more complex and interconnected, so should our ideas about how we build and service cities. As a case in point, new “soft” technologies are already transforming hard infrastructure. Commuter train ridership, for instance, is more attractive when you can log onto a laptop and get in two more hours of work while you ride. Similarly, mobile phones have made hours stuck in traffic more palatable (even as they've made traffic more dangerous by distracting drivers). We could build on such practices, subsidizing fiber-optic communications lines to Main Street to encourage the growth of offices in downtowns that languish half-empty while peripheral suburbs boom. Or we could add wi-fi to all forms of public transit, encouraging commuters to get out of their cars and into existing buses and trains. But this is only a start, and we need to be daring. We need to reinvent infrastructure with new technologies.

I'd like to suggest that we embrace a cultural practice that is about as far from

Congress and the White House as can be imagined: hacking. In the post-9/11 culture of government paranoia, hacking is tantamount to terrorism, but in the best sense of the word, hacking sets out not to harm other people but to expand our horizons, using systems in ways they were not intended as a means to free information.

This is amply shown by the internet's rapid growth, which stems from its status as an ideal environment for hackers. Anyone with a small investment in access can build new applications and interfaces. Why not open up infrastructure in a similar way? Legislating open access to data in new and existing infrastructure would allow developers to build applications—many of them as yet unforeseen—that would exploit that data to expand our infrastructural possibilities.

Take Google Maps on the iPhone. This service delivers up-to-date information about traffic speeds. Granted, it's not perfect. Not all routes are covered, the data is too coarse, and sometimes it is unavailable, making real-time routing tricky. Still, I have a good sense of whether I should take the George Washington Bridge or the Holland Tunnel on the odd occasion when I have to drive into the city. With technology like this, there's no reason why New York's subway riders can't be equally enlightened. If the MTA knows where its trains are, we should know too. It's preposterous to wait forever to get on a local train only to find out—once the doors have closed—that the train is inexplicably going express, right past your stop. Government agencies have such information at their disposal, yet we, the users, don't. Incredibly, forms of data as basic as subway schedules can still be hard to obtain, often requiring either Google's muscle or a canny lawyer and a Freedom of Information Act request.

As last year's *Design and the Elastic Mind* show at MoMA demonstrated, user interface designers and software engineers in urban informatics are already working on these challenges, but should the architectural profession cede the city to them? Leaving such work in the hands of individuals whose primary site of experience is the computer display shortchanges the city. Architects need to find ways to engage with such technology, to make it part of the lived experience of the city, and not just something that happens on a screen.

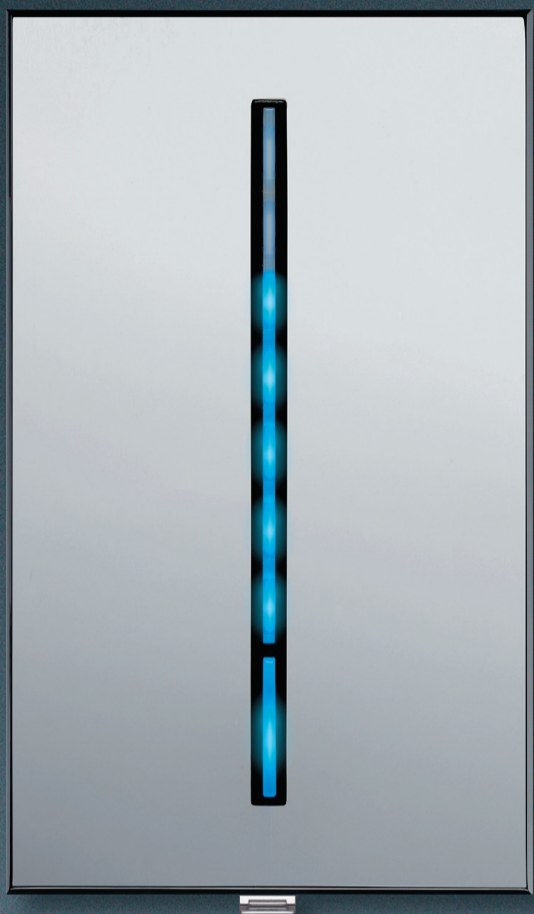
This may not be what architects who long for construction want to hear about, but it's the sort of thinking that led to the transformations in everyday life that digital technology has enabled over the last generation. The result was a major economic stimulus from the resulting rise in productivity. Architects should not feel left out. Their imaginations are second to none. It's time to use them again, and to truly rethink what architecture and infrastructure might be.

KAZYS VARNELIS DIRECTS THE NETWORK ARCHITECTURE LAB AT COLUMBIA'S GSAPP.

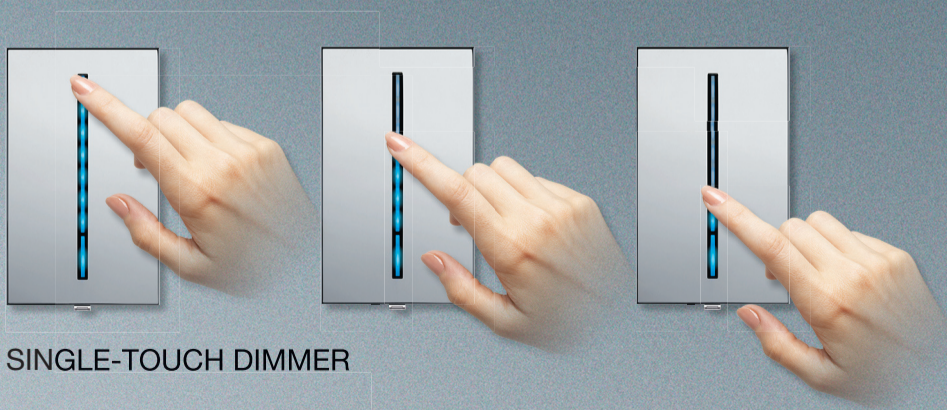
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