A proposal by Friends of the High Line for a special surtax on neighboring buildings to maintain the elevated park died quietly on August 21. The proposal, which surfaced earlier this year, became the first dud in a string of successful fundraising efforts. It would have assessed a surtax on properties around the park, one of the city’s most popular since its June 9 opening, to fund maintenance and upkeep. After many residents balked at the idea, cofounder Robert Hammond told AN that to do otherwise would have violated the group’s commitment to civic responsibility.

“Most of the objection was coming from residents, mainly east of 10th Avenue,” Hammond said. “I think people, even though the assessment was very small, felt they didn’t want to be assessed.” Hammond was tiptoeing around the fact that most special districts charge surtaxes on businesses, which can count on the extra revenue that a bustling park helps provide. By contrast, this tax would have fallen largely on residents who cannot draw short-term economic benefit from the park.

Joshua Mack and Maya Hess, two residents, started organizing a petition to reject the proposal in late July. They struck a nerve. One commenter on the Villager website wrote:
Your story continues...

CHAPTER II

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GGI
In a recent New York Times article, Nicolai Ouroussoff argues that the New York Five—Peter Eisenman, Charles Gwathmey, Michael Graves, Richard Meier, and John Hejduk—rose to prominence in the 1970s when New York “was beginning to close itself off to innovative architecture.” Though the critic allows that New York could then still claim to be the country’s center of architectural thought, he suggests that the Five created out of that era a vibrant culture “the last heroic period in New York architecture.”

In his story, titled “As Heroes Disappear, the City Needs More,” Ouroussoff goes on to reassert—with very little evidence—an often repeated claim. In the subsequent decade, he writes, “The country’s creativity shifted westward, to Los Angeles, whose vibrant mix of urban grit and nature, abundance of relatively cheap land and lack of confining historical traditions allowed architects to experiment with a freedom that had become virtually impossible in New York.” California’s supposed freedom produced architects like Michael Maltzan, Kevin Daly, and Chris Genik, a cadre of talent, Ouroussoff says, with “no real equivalent in New York.”

However important these architects may be—clearly, like many other LA architects of their generation, they do impressive work—to suggest that New York has no comparable talent is absurd. Ouroussoff, long an admirer of Southern California architecture, turns even an article on the New York Five into an exercise in promoting LA’s “creative energy” and decrying New York’s “dearth of innovative architecture.” His claim that the most important contemporary works to rise in New York over the past decade were designed not by New Yorkers but by Angelenos (Thom Mayne, Frank Gehry), a Japanese woman (Kazuyo Sejima of SANAA), and a Frenchman ( Nouvel) might actually be seen as a vote for the city’s strength, confidence, and openness—not something to be condemned.

But more consequential, using a discussion of the New York Five to argue that the city has closed itself off to innovative architecture is simply wrong-headed. For example, when the New York Five first appeared in 1967 at an Arthur Drexler–curated exhibition at MoMA, they had just emerged from East Coast universities and built only a few private houses. It was New York’s architecture media infrastructure (magazines, publishers, museums, galleries, and critics) that created the group, and it is frankly still without parallel in this country.

In addition, the educational institutions in New York’s East Coast orbit, from whence came the Five, were and are still the most important in the world. These institutions educate and support architects with teaching positions at the highest level—including nearly every LA architect of any importance. Due in part to this unrivaled critical mass, the level of discourse, critique, and even experimentation in New York can hardly be staid. The type of architectural thinking that produced plans for the High Line and Fresh Kills landfill, to name only two recent New York projects, could only have come out of the East Coast architecture hopper.

The Times article concludes that in New York, “Real change will first demand a radical shift in our cultural priorities. Politicians will have to embrace the cosmopolitanism that was once the city’s core identity.” Yet a recent trip to Los Angeles to look at the city’s new high schools, including Coop Himmelb(l)au’s [7 World Trade Center], received after the public hearing process was over, nor did it explain how the plan could result in the loss of manufacturing jobs. When addressing communities such as the South Bronx, please go into the same depth that other plans garner. Otherwise you are just parroting the official line, but that elucidates nothing for your readers.
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COMEUPPANCE IN SUBURBIA

A historic settlement may change population patterns in Westchester County, but probably will not favor its privileged patria intact.

The settlement, which Westchester lawmakers must accept by September 25, orders the county to pay a $30 million fee to HUD that then credits $21.6 million back for fair housing. The suit was brought by the Anti-Discrimination Center, accusing the county of dishonestly claiming to promote fair housing. The suit was brought by the Anti-Discrimination Center, accusing the county of dishonestly claiming to promote fair housing. The suit was brought by the Anti-Discrimination Center, accusing the county of dishonestly claiming to promote fair housing.

The judgment orders $30 units total to be situated in towns where African-American households are less than three percent and Latino households less than seven percent of the population. The units cannot be in places where these groups make up more than a fifth of a town’s population. Half must be rentals, with a provision for co-op or condominium conversion over time. The Anti-Discrimination Center’s website sums up things succinctly: “Westchester is no longer the burial ground for old money. Change in land-use patterns entailing the sprucing up of common rooms, creating “defensible space” with attractive landscaping, and upgrading windows and facades. But the order also allows for entrenching developers or towns to assure affordable housing in the elite reaches of Larchmont or Katonah. “No sites shall be excluded from consideration because of lack of public transportation access,” the order mandates.

In The New York Times last month, community leaders characterized the settlement as a chance to welcome teachers, police, and other social anchors to more rarefied communities. That attitude, at least, is finally in line with a 2007 affordable-housing policy from the American Institute of Architects of Westchester and the Mid-Hudson: “The creation of affordable housing will provide incentives for municipalities to recruit and retain volunteer emergency service responders, which is vital to the health and welfare of all communities. Currently, many young people, including volunteers, are leaving because they cannot afford to rent/purchase market rate homes.”

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The remedy requires a shift, but no big change in land-use patterns. “Priority shall be given to sites...that are...in close proximity to public transportation,” the settlement reads, reflecting a broader priority at HUD to promote energy-efficient living. This suggests areas near the Metro-North railroad or Bee-Line bus system, where apartment complexes are already common. Changes in low-income housing usually entail the sprucing up of common rooms, creating “defensible space” with attractive landscaping, and upgrading windows and facades. But the order also allows for entrenching developers or towns to assure affordable housing in the elite reaches of Larchmont or Katonah. “No sites shall be excluded from consideration because of lack of public transportation access,” the order mandates.

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continued from front page

CHARLES GWATHMEY, 1938–2009

THE ARCHITECT’S NEWSPAPER SEPTEMBER 9, 2009

his West Village childhood. Early in his years at Music and Art, during a summer break, Charles’ parents took him on an extended trip through Europe, where he was encouraged to look carefully, to sketch, and to think about the things he was exposed to. Charles brought these lessons back with him, and during his senior year he selected a class in architecture. He went on to produce the most amazing architectural drawings. He somehow knew all the symbols, the way to hand-letter, how to arrange a technical drawing, and his documents became models that others would try to emulate. Charles was committed to becoming an architect at a very early age.

His passion for the arts and for architecture developed along with another personal aspect that was hard to ignore: Charles’ physical nature. Just as his mind craved a sense of formal order and attention to the smallest detail related to the creative process, it transferred to the smallest detail related to the physical body. He developed a perfectly sculpted physique. Charlie had muscles; I mean impressive, perfectly proportioned muscles. He was very strong, could lift enormous weights, climb a rope to the ceiling in a sitting position, do 1,300 sit-ups in 10 minutes. He dressed impeccably, never wanting to carry a cell phone or wallet that would disrupt the line of the garment. And he was very handsome and charming.

Robert Siegel, principal, Gwathmey Siegel & Associates

The High School of Music and Art, where Charles and I met in the 1950s, was a natural place for an aspiring architect, particularly one who was surrounded by artists—friends of his father Robert Gwathmey, a painter, and of his mother Rosalie, a photographer and textile designer—throughout his years at Music and Art, during the time that Ed was receiving wonderful commissions. Our work there ultimately resulted in our coming together as partners, initially with Richard Henderson, and subsequently as our own firm. For the past 41 years, Charles and I have collaborated, often sharing a desk, sitting face to face drawing and discussing design ideas.

We have completed over four hundred projects, but more than any other building type, it was the exploration of the single-family residence, initially summarized in the Amagansett home for his parents, which Charles and Richard completed in 1966, that set the foundation for and shaped many of the architectural principles around which the work of our firm revolved. The original, 1,200-square-foot residence, designed on a tight budget, began with primary geometrical forms and inventively carved them away, responding to the needs of site, program, and structure. The result, with a double-height living space on the second floor, was a great learning project and a groundbreaking work of rural house architecture.

Charles refined his residential work in projects like the Taft Residence in Cincinnati (1977), which consolidated his discoveries about program and volume in a sequence of open and unfolding exterior spaces and dramatic, frame-like devices. These projects led to the standout de Menil Residence in East Hampton (1983). A much larger and richer project, the house features skylit, cross-axial spaces and an ingenius brise soleil, which acts variously as frame, screen, and scale device, anchoring the house in the landscape.

Charlie had strong convictions, was passionate about certain things, and was not the type to walk away from confrontation. This characteristic followed him throughout his career with mixed results, but one always knew where he stood on important issues. At heart, Charles was a very kind and caring person. He detested prejudice of any type. He was a mentor for aspiring architects, and he extended financial help to those less fortunate, and who were trying to do something that he thought worthy. He was a friend you could count on.

Above all, Charles and I looked forward to and enjoyed being with each other every day, despite the complexities of life and the pressures inherent in the practice of architecture. Architecture was his life, and it was what he cared about until the last moment. I will miss him dearly.
PARKS ON PAR

Tucked into a bend of the East River, hard by the Bronx Whitestone Bridge, the desolate, 222-acre eastern section of Ferry Point Park is one of the largest undeveloped sites along New York City’s waterfront. Eleven years ago, the city and Ferry Point Partners, a group of private developers that included golf legend Jack Nicklaus, embarked on a plan to transform the old municipal landfill that occupied most of the site into a PGA tournament-level golf course. As part of the deal, Ferry Point Partners was supposed to build and maintain a seven-acre community park and a separate 20-acre waterfront park on the other side of the course.

The promise of the course and new public space touched off a development boom in Throgs Neck. Since 2000, hundreds of homes have been built near this dusty expanse, but the golf course devolved into a multimillion-dollar boondoggle, and the developers failed to do much beyond building a trench to vent methane from the former landfill. In 2008, several years after the contract with Ferry Point Partners was finally scuttled, the parks department took over the project. Now, Throgs Neck residents will finally see some green. This fall, the first phase of the community park designed by Thomas Balsley Associates is due for completion. Designs for the waterfront park are now finished, and that project is expected to be complete by 2013.

Both planned park spaces will be a major upgrade over what the city originally settled for under its public/private partnership with Ferry Point Partners. The new parks, which together are budgeted at $30 million, now include amenities such as a restroom facility in the community park that were not part of the original plan. In addition, under the previous design, Throgs Neck residents would have had to walk about three miles around the golf course and along a service road for the Hutchinson River Parkway to gain access to the waterfront park’s only entrance. Under the new plan, there will be additional entrances to the waterfront from both the adjacent residential neighborhood and from the community park.

The new design emphasizes a sustainable approach to landscape architecture that will require less fertilizer and more ecologically sensitive drainage systems, said Thomas Balsley, who did the original planning for both parks. “The Ferry Point Partners plan had a lot of mowed-lawn areas,” Balsley said. “But the parks department encouraged us to look at it in a more environmental way.”

The new plan for the waterfront calls for natural grasslands, wildlife habitat areas, and a tidal marsh. The community park, which will include a play area, basketball courts, and a baseball field, also features a more naturalistic treatment than it did under the previous plan. A stormwater detention area with an island accessed by a bridge will occupy about a third of that park. And the methane trench running around the edge of the community park will be concealed by tall plantings. Instead of the familiar redbrick park buildings that predominate throughout the city, comfort stations designed by Karen Bausman + Associates are streamlined and in harmony with the surrounding landscape. Designed under the city’s Design + Construction Excellence Program, the 800 square-foot restroom/maintenance facility planned for the community park is primarily made of corrugated stainless steel with cinderblock wall sections covered with Boston Ivy. A softly curving roof touches the sky plane in a more naturalistic manner than would a rectilinear one.

Bausman said that her comfort stations represent a more contemporary approach to integrating the disciplines of architecture and landscape architecture. “For previous generations of architects, it was figure and ground,” she said. “A building can be thought of as a vertical landscape, and a landscape can be thought of as a relation between a built form and a natural form.” Although public-private partnerships are often touted as a way to bring about better-designed public amenities, in this case the public sector fostered a more creative and financially viable approach. “Ferry Point Partners was never very upfront about how they were going to build these parks,” said Balsley. The city agency, he said, had a much more hands-on attitude: “The parks department staff knew what needed to be done.”

ALEX ULAM
UNVEILED

MAHANAKHON

It was only a matter of time, perhaps, before Bangkok boasted it was going to erect the tallest tower in the land. And where there’s bravado, there’s often the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). This fall, construction is to begin on MahaNakhon, a 77-story, 1.6 million-square-foot tower, designed by OMA partner Ole Scheeren.

The gleaming tower appears strategically gauzed in a spiral, rising from the seven-story retail base to a Sky Bar triplex and affording all kinds of terraces and mid-air living-room scenarios. In language very similar to that used to describe the once delirious, now-stalled 23 East 22nd tower similar to that used to describe the once controversial 23 East 22nd tower as avoiding slick angles in favor of living-room scenarios. In language very similar to that used to describe the once delirious, now-stalled 23 East 22nd tower as avoiding slick angles in favor of...
FRENEMIES OF THE HIGH LINE

continued from front page

"I’ll sign the petition, as will all my neighbors!!! A BID is meant to improve the entire district, not fund a project...This is wrong."

Since 2000, Friends of the High Line, the not-for-profit organization established by Josh David and Hammond, has excelled at attracting funds, friends, and celebrities to the cause of preserving the site as a landscaped park. All along, Friends of the High Line talked of creating a conservancy, knowing that they would need money beyond what the Parks Department could provide.

The city pays about $1 million per year for maintenance, while FHL estimates annual costs somewhat around $3.5 million.

In proposing to tax neighbors, FHL faced a shallower pool of sympathy than it previously considered. "I would have expected this to have come up when they were putting together the money," said one architect based in the area, who asked for anonymity to avoid seeming unsympathetic.

Unlike other assessment-funded spaces around town, the High Line cannot easily draw funds from gigantic office towers. Though its options may be limited, the organization has vowed to press on in search of needed cash. "Friends of the High Line will continue to work with the community to develop a diversified revenue stream," the group said after withdrawing the idea of a tax district in the future. Hammond said he and his colleagues would now try to capitalize on all the local goodwill they can find. "We’re going to do a corporate membership program, we’ve expanded our regular membership program, and we’re looking at how we cut costs," he told AN.

"I’ll sign the petition, as will all my neighbors!!! A BID is meant to improve the entire district, not fund a project...This is wrong."
The U.S.-Canadian border lost a bit of its luster last month after the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) pulled down a 180-foot-long supergraphic sign that had been affixed to the largest building at the recently completed Massena Land Port of Entry, in upstate New York southwest of Montreal.

The move left the project’s architects, Smith-Miller + Hawkinson, confused and somewhat dismayed, since the sign—which spelled out the words “United States” in bright, road-line yellow—had been approved by the General Services Administration (GSA), which owns the building, and officials at Customs and Border Protection, an agency of DHS and the facility’s tenant.

“It’s pretty unusual,” said principal Laurie Hawkinson. “I felt like we had a good relationship with them. You’re all working on the project together.”

But in spite of extensive vetting during the design process and following construction, the agency deemed the sign a threat on two counts. “The signage was removed based on two issues: security and building maintenance,” Gregory Bennett, public affairs liaison for the Customs and Border Patrol Buffalo Field Office, told AN. “That part of the design was not funded for maintenance,” Bennett added. He declined to elaborate on the nature of the agency’s security concerns.

The sign’s disappearance has disheartened the architects, who had wanted to convey a sense of optimism and energy at the border crossing. To that end, working with Pentagram on the graphics, they created twenty-foot-high letters that stretched across the width of the main building. The upper half of the massive letters were semi-obscured, alternating bands of transparent and translucent polycarbonate panels, creating a bar code–like effect. “They weren’t just large letters,” Hawkinson said. “They were much more nuanced.”

Nor was this the firm’s first brush with border agencies. Indeed, Smith-Miller + Hawkinson had previously employed supergraphics at a land port project in Champlain, New York, where they stretched the words “United States of America” in a mesh screen across the row of vehicle portals. Principal Henry Smith-Miller noted that at Massena, officials may have been put off by the slightly blurred effect of the polycarbonate banding, which presented a much different aesthetic than at Champlain. “It could have been a taste issue,” he said.

Michael Bierut, a partner at Pentagram, noted that the gap between the intention of a design and its reception is not always predictable. “The idea that we were doing something controversial never even occurred to us,” he said.”Clearly the signage can be, and was, seen differently from what we intended.”

Despite the dustup over the signage, Hawkinson, Smith-Miller, and Bierut all commend the GSA’s Design Excellence Program, through which the project was initiated. The program helps to mediate and advocate for architects’ ideas, pushing ambitious design for everyday buildings. Though the GSA owns the buildings, they are built for tenant agencies that use, and must be comfortable in, the facilities.

In that spirit, the architects maintain they have created an efficient and highly functional land port. “I hope the facility makes the quality of life better for the people who work there,” Hawkinson said. Still, she added, the architecture stands diminished. “Public projects are tough,” she said. “It’s a 180-foot-long facade that’s now blank. The facade is no longer complete.”

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CITING SECURITY THREAT, FEDS REMOVE SUPERGRAPHICS AT NEW UPSTATE BORDER CROSSING

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CITING SECURITY THREAT, FEDS REMOVE SUPERGRAPHICS AT NEW UPSTATE BORDER CROSSING
CONTAINER-CENTRIC PLAN PREVAILS FOR LATEST HUDSON RIVERFRONT REVAMP

LOT-EK LANDS PIER 57

Developer YoungWoo & Associates and New York architects LOT-EK hailed in a big one on July 30 when their plan to transform Pier 57, the long-languishing stretch of Manhattan waterfront off of West 15th Street, was picked by the Hudson River Park Trust over competing proposals from Related Companies and the Durst Organization.

The team’s vision of a small city of local artisans working out of shipping containers, all tucked under an expansive rooftop park, hit just the right notes, said Ed Kirkland, head of the community working group that advised the board on its decision. Kirkland praised the plan’s light touch, its ample public park, and a second-floor marketplace.

“Above all,” he added, “they didn’t have anything that would bring in huge amounts of traffic.” Trust President Connie Fishman also cited the plan’s financial feasibility as a strong attraction for the board. YoungWoo’s estimated cost was $191 million, compared to Durst’s $330 million for a plan that included a children’s museum and street-level public space, and Related’s $363 million for a retail and entertainment destination (ANV07.04.15.2009).

Though the YoungWoo plan was widely viewed as the front-runner, approval was far from guaranteed, said LOT-EK principal Ada Tolla. The board spent months debating whether the shipping-container design would satisfy building codes and create a high-quality experience. They were won over in part by a visit to LOT-EK’s Puma City, a portable, mixed-use structure made from 24 shipping containers that was on view last spring in Boston.

The YoungWoo team includes Beyer Blinder Belle, which will serve as historic preservation architect and architect of record, and landscape architects West 8. The developer is also working with Urban Space Management (USM)—the company behind London’s Camden Lock—to rent work-space to local artisans, thus bringing in revenue and keeping the market active during off-hours.

USM already has a sizable pool of work-sale tenants lined up, reports Tolla, and the Tribeca Film Festival has committed to renting rooftop space. Yet the “educational space” planned inside the hollow, below-grade caissons still lacks a tenant, and auction-house Phillips de Pury has eased away from its commitment to rent ground-floor space.

Of course, YoungWoo will have time to search for tenants: Their plan still has to clear the ULURP and environmental review hurdles, and Fishman estimates it will still be at least another two years until Pier 57 sees new construction.

BLOOMBERG FINALLY FINAGLES DEAL FOR AMUSEMENT AREA PLAN

FAT LADY SINGS AT CONEY

It seems fitting that the rezoning of Coney Island should be full of colorful characters, flashy renderings, and shouting matches. Faced with an intransigent developer who owned much of the amusement park land within the city’s 47-acre rezoning area, and a City Council representative who backed him with veto power, the Bloomberg administration’s redevelopment push has been truly carnivalesque.

But having finally won City Council approval for the rezoning on July 29, the city appears to have converged on a deal with Thor Equities, the development firm run by Joe Sitt, to realize its vision of a revitalized Coney Island that is both an affordable neighborhood and year-round destination.

The outlines of the deal are this: The city would purchase about 8 acres from Sitt, who will still retain parcels along the south side of Surf Avenue where he could construct two hotel towers. The deal not only allowed for the passage of the rezoning—it now has the backing of local representative Dominic Recchia—but also frees up more land for open-air amusements, something the local operators complained were left out of the negotiations.

For too long, New York’s foremost playground has languished in the past,” Recchia said before the Council voted 44-2 in favor of the plan. “We are guaranteeing it will thrive every day of the year.”

Yet the city’s bid to offer indoor activities that could make Coney a full-time employment center for low-income residents was attacked by amusement operators as hopelessly ertsatz. “This is no better than Chuck E. Cheese,” said Juan Rivero, spokesperson for the group Save Coney Island.

Longtime Coney Island advocate Dick Zigun said the compromise was better than further decay. “It’s looking like attention was paid to the amusements after all,” Zigun said, referring to the incorporation of Sitt’s land, which increases from 9 acres to 15 the amusement area stretching from the Cyclone to Keyspan Park. The addition of traffic “will bring in huge amounts of traffic.”

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North and west of Keyspan Park, affordable housing would be built, with Sitt making 35 percent of the new units affordable, up from the city’s proposed 20 percent. Infrastructure improvements will also be made, along with a new school and a hospital. “The Council has helped us breathe new life into a city treasure that’s been in decline for decades,” Mayor Bloomberg said of the approval. “Thanks to the Council’s vote, we’ve brought the era of uncertainty to an end.”
DO THE TWIST

The University of Pennsylvania has landed a piece of trophy architecture with a definite twist: the new Weave Bridge, designed by structural engineer Cecil Balmond and his legendary Advanced Geometry Unit (AGU) research group at Arup. Now open to the public, the bridge will become part of a second phase of design work this fall with its integration into the surrounding campus masterplan, itself a hefty undertaking to remake the Philadelphia campus.

The unusually ambitious design was commissioned by the university in 2007, in reaction to a city announcement that the site's Northwest Rocky Hill would temporarily close an essential campus connection: the century-old South Street Bridge, which had long served as the sole passage over an Amtrak line that runs between Penn's athletic fields and its Hollenback building, home to athletic and ROTC facilities.

Although Penn officials originally intended to operate a shuttle while the city rebuilt the South Street Bridge, they realized their money could be better invested in something permanent, especially as they are now redeveloping the campus under a 30-year masterplan devised by Sasaki Associates to increase open space and connectivity.

"Because this was such a forward-looking opportunity for Penn," said Penn's Principal Planner Mark Kocent, "we wanted to raise the bar a little bit and not do a straightforward Warren truss bridge." So they turned to Balmond, famous for his innovative designs as deputy chairman of Arup, and currently on the faculty at Penn's school of architecture.

Balmond's design is composed of six steel strips woven around a square cross-section that flares from about ten feet wide at its midpoint to 16 feet wide at each end of the 165-foot span. "Structurally, it's like a rope," said Daniel Bosia, head of the AGU. "So you wouldn't be able to take the walls apart from the roof and floor." He called the design a reciprocal frame, one in which each element is supported by the next, resulting in a rigid, overall interlocked structure. The AGU group has been experimenting with the concept for a few years, notably in their Serpentine Gallery pavilion in 2005, which was composed of short interlocking pieces of timber (though not welded together as the components of the Weave Bridge are). Applying the reciprocal frame concept to a bridge in Philadelphia are both firsts.

Arup worked with engineer of record Ammann & Whitney on the structure, which was tempered by concessions to safety and a $2 million budget, said Bosia.

For the span, they switched to carbon steel instead of stainless steel, and for the cladding, they substituted a polymer blend instead of timber. "It's fairly poor material, but the power and the form of the bridge allow you to use simpler, cheaper materials," Bosia said.

Balmond had also wanted the bridge to provide an unobstructed view of campus, but Amtrak forbade the use of open sides above their electrified rail lines. AGU's compromise was to fill in the side panels with Plexiglas, but to leave the bridge open to the elements overhead, providing the additional benefit of making the bridge self-cleansing in the rain.

As the next stage of Penn's masterplanning begins this fall, AGU will begin to connect the Weave Bridge to a future 14-acre park being designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, a $46 million project scheduled to open in 2011. In lieu of the concrete retaining wall currently installed on its west end, the bridge will rest on a berm and will branch off into pathways winding their way through the site. "We're going to have (Balmond) work with Van Valkenburgh and the park team, to merge his vision with the park design so you get a sense of the weave unwinding and becoming part of the park," Kocent said.

The previous scheme for the museum.

PARRISH PARED continued from front page

however, "We had to kill one of our earlier projects," he said. "It's gone now, forever."

To get to that original $80 million budget, said Bosia, "we wanted to raise the bar a little bit and not do a straightforward Warren truss bridge." So they turned to Balmond, famous for his innovative designs as deputy chairman of Arup, and currently on the faculty at Penn's school of architecture.

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Even as the world gets greener, global power demand is growing, pushing renewable forms like solar energy into the mainstream. Meanwhile, buildings continue to top the list of power guzzlers, consuming 40 percent of world demand. As architecture moves forward, it will become increasingly important to not only use less energy, but to produce it. Aaron Seward investigates the promise and pitfalls of building-integrated photovoltaics, and the hurdles that remain in the way of architecture’s future.
When the global glass industry convened in Tamperella, Finland in June, the top item on the agenda was the coming wave of solar power—glassy arrays spanning the desert and crowning rooftops. But architects in the audience took note of one prophet in particular: Léon Glessen, the CEO of Scheuten, a leading electric glass producer based in Germany. Office buildings, he pointed out, are notoriously wasteful, being occupied only five days in a week, and just eight hours a day. Factor in lunch breaks, sick time, and vacation, and they’re used about 12 percent of the time. These are primarily glass-clad structures, often 800 feet tall or higher, standing vacant most of the time: a vast opportunity, in other words, to generate solar power.

Over the past decade, the architectural glass industry has made huge strides in improving the material’s thermal and sun-control performance. Its next step is the glaz that Glessen went on to promote: energy production. Up until this point, creating buildings with energy-producing solar cells integral to the design—known as building-integrated photovoltaics (BIPV)—has remained something of a chimera. On paper, BIPVs open the way to elegant, carbon-neutral architecture. In practice, however, they never seem to generate much electricity back to the power company. “We have one hand tied behind our back,” said Robert Heintges of facade consulting firm R.A. Heintges Associates. “In Europe you can sell the electricity back to the power company at four times the cost.”

As a result, the BIPV projects that do wind up getting built are generally those with long lead times and deep-pocketed, idealistic clients. And considering that BIPVs are generally not as efficient as the plain-vanilla roof systems, once they don’t always wind up in the optimum orientation to the sun, they typically are requested by clients who are looking for a very visible indicator of their dedication to sustainability—a green billboard.

Such was the case at the Lillis Business Center at the University of Oregon in Eugene, completed in 2003. Designed by SRG Partnership, the project features a 60-foot-high, south-facing glass wall outfitted with crystalline wafers. The architects adjusted the density of the wafer grid so that it is more tightly packed at the top, reducing glare on the interior, and more loosely filled toward the bottom, maintaining a good degree of transparency. The wall generates only about 6 kWh, but it is tied to a sky-light system of the same make and to standard PV arrays mounted on the mechanical penthouse, for a total of 45 kWh. All told, the project’s PVs make up 10 percent of the building’s energy usage. This makes the highest-profiling project to date the Renzo Piano–designed California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. According to Michael Wilson of Stantec Architecture, the architect of record on the project, a photovoltaic canopy was not part of the original concept, as Piano did not think the cells would complement his design. But in 2003, after looking at the quality of the solar glass available, he changed his mind. More than 700 four-by-six foot glass panels embedded with crystalline photovoltaic cells ring the academy’s 187,000-square-foot roof—the largest such installation in the U.S. The system was expected to generate 213,000 kWh per year, providing up to 10 percent of the academy’s electricity need. During September 2008, its first full month of operation, the canopy generated 850 kWh of energy per day, putting it well on target to meet its annual goal.

BIPV is still kicking in the U.S. residential market as well. The National Association of Home Builders’ 2009 New American Home, its annual show-case of construction technology, features a 10.64-kWh photovoltaic system integrated into a trellis and awning structure that shelters a poolside cabana. The BIPV system features Sanyo solar cells that use a hybrid crystalline film technology to generate electricity from both the front and back of the panel, turning the company’s standard 200–watt panel into a 260–watt panel. It is expected to generate the home’s estimated annual consumption, powering the lights and electrical appliances, and even heating the pool. The harsh realities of working with BIPVs in the U.S. have not stopped the architecture profession from dreaming big. While current technologies account for only small portions of buildings’ electricity demands, increasing efficiencies in both photovoltaic output and building energy usage is expected to eventually close that gap. Kiss + Cathcart’s design for the hypothetical 2020 Tower gives a glimpse of what this future might resemble. Project engineer Arup found that a tall building in 2020 would consume an average of 60 kWh per square meter per year, significantly less than the 100 kWh that the most efficient buildings of this type use today. Since tall buildings do not have much roof area, the architects had to work with the vertical surfaces. They increased the ratio of facade area to floor area, determining that a 60-foot deep building could generate all its energy on an annual basis from a BIPV facade independent of orientation.

The consensus is that in most countries solar will reach grid parity—meaning that BIPV is competitive as conventional sources—within five years. But even with the status quo, there is little doubt that BIPV will continue to find its way into buildings.” I’d like to say BIPV is that if you are already putting up a glass structure, you’ve already paid for the hardware. All you would need to support a solar cell,” said Paul Stoller of environmental consultant Atelier Ten. One way or another, solar will soon hit the mainstream, and those who have turned their backs on the technology might look rather like the Luddites of industrializing England. Surely architects will know better.
One of the world’s largest thin-film PV glazing projects to date, the Kanazawa Municipal Bus Terminal by Taiyo Architects was completed in 2005, with 3,000 panels customized to meet Japan’s heavy snow-load requirements. The canopy glazing has five percent transparency, producing 112 kWh and cutting the structure’s carbon footprint by 686 tons over a 20-year period.

Berlin-based solar-module manufacturer Solon opened its new corporate and production headquarters earlier this year. The design, by German firm Schulte-Frohlinde Architekten, features approximately 1,000 BIPV glass panels that encircle and sit atop the building’s green roof, producing 210 kWh in addition to providing solar shading for administrative spaces.
A 65-foot curtain wall with BIPVs arrayed in a varying density marks the entrance to the Lillis Business Center at the University of Oregon, designed by SRG Partnership and completed in 2003. The building was awarded a LEED Silver designation in 2005, in part due to four separate PV systems that produce a combined total of 45 kWh.

Renzo Piano is said to have conceived his original design for the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco without a solar canopy, but after seeing the PV technology available, the architect ringed the building with 720 PV-embedded panels that produce 172 kWh and helped the academy gain its LEED Platinum certification following its completion in 2008.
Kiss + Cathcart’s 2020 Tower concept is a study of what a New York net-zero skyscraper could look like. The tower’s slender profile increases the amount of sunlight hitting its BIPV glass facade, which with today’s technology could produce two-thirds of the building’s energy demands—about 100 kWh per square meter each year—with the remainder met by integrated wind turbines.

The National Association of Home Builders’ 2009 New American Home show house in Las Vegas, designed by California-based Danielian Associates, integrates a new type of PV technology into its poolside trellis and awning structures. The bifacial panels manufactured by Sanyo produce power from both sides, resulting in a previously unattainable 23 percent energy-conversion efficiency.
CRYSTALLINE WASHBASIN
DESIGNED BY YORGO LYKOURIA
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The Museum of the City of New York pairs old and new photographs to capture the dramatic transformation of the city’s shoreline over the last century. Images from the 1930s and ’40s by photographers such as Berenice Abbott, Andreas Feininger, and David Robbins show a port humming with manufactur- ing and commercial activity, with longshoremen going about their daily business amid a tangle of masts, ropes, warehouses, and cranes. Seventy years later, New York’s is a solidly postindustrial economy, and the waterfront that used to be the heart of the metropolis now seems little but a vestigial organ. In contemporary work by Diane Cook and Mike Kelley and Michael Smith, an America that was once the epicenter of the world’s manufacturing now seems little more than crumbling relics, as in Arlington Marsh, a diluvian beast. Counterbalancing the themes of decline are the nostalgically hazy paintings of Perez. His rendering of the swooshes around headquarters for Swiss Re in London and Oscar Niemeyer’s futurism and sharp lines of the buildings themselves, for the vernacular. His rendering of the swooshes around.

The nostalgic haziness of Perez’s paintings offers a foil for Perez’s style is actually more of a painting-printmaking hybrid, combining thickly applied oil paint with layers of different pigments trans- ferred via an intermediary sheet of paper. That laborious approach—like a homespun version of a mechanical, four- color-process printer—flattens his subjects and blurs their edges, lending them the faded charm of old postcards. The nostalgic haze of Perez’s paintings offers a foil for the futurism and sharp lines of the buildings themselves, which include icons such as Norman Foster’s bullet-shaped headquarters for Swiss Re in London and Oscar Niemeyer’s Palace of Justice in Brasilia. Though his oeuvre is stubbed with modernist stars, Perez also has an eye, and a soft spot, for the vernacular. His rendering of the swooshes around a bank designed by an unidentified architect, in Alma Bant, Georgia (2009, above), is a love letter to modernism’s forgotten pioneers—and to the glossy space-age architec- ture of midcentury American motels, coffee shops, and bowling alleys.

Puerto Rican painter Enoc Perez is known for his dreamy portraits of modernist buildings, a theme he develops and refines in his second solo show at Mitchell-Innes & Nash. Though trained as a painter, Perez’s style is actually more of a painting-printmaking hybrid, combining thickly applied oil paint with layers of different pigments transferred via an intermediary sheet of paper. That laborious approach—like a homespun version of a mechanical, four-color-process printer—flattens his subjects and blurs their edges, lending them the faded charm of old postcards. The nostalgic haze of Perez’s paintings offers a foil for the futurism and sharp lines of the buildings themselves, which include icons such as Norman Foster’s bullet-shaped headquarters for Swiss Re in London and Oscar Niemeyer’s Palace of Justice in Brasilia. Though his oeuvre is stubbed with modernist stars, Perez also has an eye, and a soft spot, for the vernacular. His rendering of the swooshes around a bank designed by an unidentified architect, in Alma Bant, Georgia (2009, above), is a love letter to modernism’s forgotten pioneers—and to the glossy space-age architecture of midcentury American motels, coffee shops, and bowling alleys.
PARK PROJECT (1991–2004) AT GRAHAM’S ROOFTOP URBAN TO CONTEMPLATE THE CITY, DAN GRAHAM TRANSFORMING AN INDUSTRIAL ROOFTOP IN CHELSEA INTO A TEMPORARY CITY. Generally, the gap between the physical and the virtual is what mass media presents, and Graham’s interest in the interdependence of leisure and commerce as it connects the dots of Chelsea’s rampant gentrification, Graham’s rooftop project combined amusement with perceptual experiment, provoking viewers’ self-awareness in a manner largely absent from the public space as entertainment experience of the contemporary city. Generally more visible in Europe than in America, the artist is currently the subject of a retrospective at the Whitney Museum. Encompassing four decades of text pieces, performance, film and video, music, architectural models, and pavilions, this exhibition offers a chance for a broader understanding of the associative nature of Graham’s art, as well as its significance within the context of architecture. Graham’s interest in architecture can be traced to Donald Judd’s article on the city plan of Kansas City as well as the novels of Michel Butor, who addressed the disorientating nature of the modern urban environment. Originally produced as a slide show and then as a magazine layout, Homes for America engaged both the built environment and mass media, presenting photographs of repetitive suburban construction while rejecting the art gallery in favor of periodicals. The gap between the physical space represented in the Judd-like photographs and the less tangible form of “disposable” art would lead to investigations of the body and its perceptual double where performance, mirrors, video, and film would identify schisms between the physical and mediated self, as well as the effect of the body’s representation on one’s self-consciousness. These “experiments” would have significant implications in work that addressed the psychological charged context of urban settings, as well as the “partitioned” reality of suburban environments where public and private space are more clearly delineated. Two related pieces in the Whitney exhibition address the objectifying nature of the social gaze and the tension between public and private experience. In Public Space/Two Audiences, a room bisected by glass with a mirrored wall on one end sets up both an interaction and isolation of viewers on either side of the glass, with mirrored legs of a dog called mannequin. Dan Graham: Skateboard Pavilion (1989).
Eric Mumford’s new book Defining Urban Design: CIAM Architects and the Formation of a Disciplin...
Spaces arrives at a propitious moment. Though Arad calls Blown Out of Proportion Arp, and the curvaceous aluminum casts curved bookshelves that suggest Jean Man Ray and Calder, in the elegantly Surrealists. You see it in the coils that sug-

In projects like the Fundación Cristiana de la Vivienda (1963-1971) and the towering Residencias el Parque (1965-1970), Salmona merged masterful brick facades with terraces and impluvium roofs to solve the paradox of massive size and human scale. Salmona approaches Louis Kahn in his ability to blend monumentality and humanism. He used broad skirts of brick patios and tree-shaded walkways to tie projects into the city. None of his work has the imposing anonymity of the Corbusian Lego blocks that sprouted from Chicago to Jakarta.

Noteworthy in all Salmona’s work, but partic-

ularly in later public institutions like his Centro Cultural Jorge Eliécer Gaitán (1980-1989), is a preference for surprise over statement, with a rich vocabulary of displaced axes, labyrinthine passageways, sunken courtyards within court-

yards, and hidden vistas.

For an American audience likely unfamiliar with Salmona’s work, this show offers an effec-
tive overview. Yet it fails to provide an explana-
tion of the urban and architectural context in which Salmona’s work evolved. Salmona medi-
tated deeply on the world in which he was building, and while the exhibit effectively pres-

ents his work, it does frustratingly little to illumi-
nate the complexly layered landscape around it.

Salmona’s early projects were primarily housing and new-neighborhood planning around Bogotá, part of the government’s efforts to accommodate hordes of countryside immi-
grants. Stark housing towers proved cost-effect-
ive but dehumanizing. In response, Salmona

turned to bricks. Easily produced in quantity and useful in almost every context, they fit

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What lessons have we learned? Join us Thursday, November 5, 2009 as we bring together our community of professionals to discuss the issues affecting us now, and learn what the future holds for the A/E/C industry and our profession; you can’t afford to miss it.

Questions? Contact Deborah Raw, CPSM, Director of Professional Development, SMPS-NY, at 631.392.1400 or visit www.smpsny.org.

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Carroll 110
Ceramic Tiles of Italy 126
Cityproof 129
DGA Security Systems Inc. 145
Design Insurance Agency 142
DeSimone Consulting Engineers, PLLC 143
Durathrim 308
Galaxy Glass & Stone 157
General Glass, Inc. 275

Class Film Enterprises, Inc. 159
Index-D 175
Jakub, Inc. 307
Kim Wendell Design 186
Lightning Workshop 270
Patterson 217
Pilkington Fire Protection 215
Railco, Inc. 226
Raumplus North America 281
Service Point USA 237
The Steel Institute of New York 252
Viracon 263
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Zumtobel Staff Lighting 271

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As America mulls its urgent energy predicament, we’re being seduced yet again by splashy, pseudo-energy solutions—scores of new nuclear power plants, expensive carbon capture and sequestration technology at coal plants, and “drill baby drill” for more offshore oil—while a truly effective answer to our energy and emissions problems is already on the table.

Buried deep within the 1,428-page Waxman-Markey climate bill passed by the House and now on the Senate floor is a demonstrably sane solution to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Yet this simple idea is being largely ignored, even as its principles have been championed by architects around the country who are serious about making a difference in the nation’s energy future.

That real solution is Section 201 of the Waxman-Markey climate bill, which covers building energy codes—that’s right, building codes. The measures set out in Section 201 are so powerful they can single-handedly transform the entire built environment in the U.S. by 2050, achieving over six times the emissions reductions of the 100 new nuclear power plants recently pushed by a handful of senators, at a fraction of the $750 billion cost. Simply putting those codes into practice would reduce building emissions by 48.8 percent below 2005 levels by 2050, eliminating the need for a gargantuan leap down the wrong energy path.

As architects and urban planners are aware by now, buildings consume 75 percent of all the electricity produced in the U.S. and are responsible for about half of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Section 201 accomplishes its significant emissions reductions by going straight to the source, requiring national building energy codes to be updated to gradually meet reduction targets—30 percent below recent energy codes by 2010, 50 percent by 2015, plus another 5 percent each additional year out to 2030.

These code updates are derived from the energy reduction targets of the widely adopted 2030 Challenge, a measured and achievable strategy developed by Architecture 2030 to dramatically reduce global GHG emissions and fossil-fuel consumption by the year 2030. Specifically, the Challenge contains three major targets. First, all new buildings and developments are to be designed to use half the fossil-fuel energy they would typically consume—that is, half the regional or country average for that building type. Second, at a minimum, an equal amount of existing building area is to be renovated annually to use half the amount of fossil-fuel energy it is currently consuming. And third, the fossil-fuel reduction standard is to be increased to 60 percent in 2010, 70 percent in 2015, 80 percent in 2020, 90 percent in 2025, and carbon neutral by 2030, meaning that no fossil-fuel, GHG-emitting energy is used.

The targets should be achieved first through appropriate planning and building design—density, party walls, building shape and orientation, glazing location and properties, passive solar heating, cooling and natural ventilation strategies, daylighting, shading, and site landscaping, to name a few—and then by generating on-site renewable power or purchasing (up to a 20 percent maximum) renewable energy.

Architecture 2030 issued the 2030 Challenge in 2006, with the AIA being the first organization to adopt it. It has made a significant national impact, having now been adopted across the nation with complete bipartisan support, including the U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Association of Governors, U.S. Green Building Council, Congress for the New Urbanism, and numerous professional and industry organizations. In addition, California, Oregon, and Washington have passed legislation adopting the Challenge targets and are currently crafting new energy codes to implement them. Also, in 2007 Congress passed, and the president signed, the Energy Independence and Security Act, requiring that all new and renovated federal buildings meet the 2030 Challenge targets.

Having seen the writing on the wall with regard to where building design must go to address climate change, hundreds of firms in the United States, including the top five multinational architecture/engineering/planning firms—Gensler, HOK, HKS, Perkins + Will and HDR—have already pledged to design all of their buildings, whether in China, India, Europe, or the United States, to meet the 2030 Challenge targets. These firms are now designing much-needed examples of buildings that meet the Challenge targets, from Perkins + Will’s Great River Energy Headquarters and Synergy at Dockside Green, to the San Mateo County Forensics Lab and Winrock International Global Headquarters by HOK. Since June 2006, over 60,000 new homes have been designed, built, and certified in the U.S. to meet a minimum 50 percent energy reduction for heating and cooling. Also, studies by the Department of Energy’s National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) show that meeting the 30 percent new home energy reduction target will save households in every region of the U.S. between $403 and $612 per year, after the cost of efficiency measures is factored in. In fact, at current energy prices and mortgage interest rates, NREL estimates that the average cost-neutral point for home efficiency upgrades is a 45 percent energy reduction below code.

We are at a defining moment. As we move our built environment into the 21st century, we will heavily influence the direction of global events. China and India will not sit idly by as the United States transforms its building sector; they will act, too. As more and more U.S.-based multinational design firms take the 2030 Challenge, our work here will help set off powerful changes abroad.

We cannot let society’s current, almost hypnotic attraction to big, high-tech ventures overshadow the fact that simple, inexpensive, and hands-on solutions are already in our grasp. It is not an overstatement to say that our environmental and economic future may depend on passing this obscure section in the climate bill, Section 201. It’s time for our elected leaders to buckle down and make the right decision.

Edward Mazria is the founder of Architecture 2030.
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