Not even during the Great Depression did New York shut its state parks. But last month, an $8.2 billion state budget deficit prompted the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to recommend the indefinite closing of 41 parks and 14 historic sites across New York state, with reductions in hours and services at an additional 24 sites. In combination with last year’s budget cuts, the agency has seen an unprecedented 40 percent reduction in its budget over the last three years, from

continued on page 3

To anyone riding Amtrak from New York to Philadelphia, the demise of the former “workshop of the world” is evident in the crumbling brick stacks and punched-out windows of factory relics. But while other cities have all but given up

continued on page 8
IT’S THE PREMIERE OF SOMETHING PREMIER.

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In recent years, we’ve heard a drumbeat of support for density as the answer to urban ill: Build up, build big, build smart—and the future will follow. And as this issue’s feature shows, density is becoming an unlikely mantra even on Long Island as towns face the fact that if they don’t grow, they’re dead. This is surprising news for a place that long defined single-family sprawl. But thorny questions lie ahead as developers set about building up the suburbs.

To begin with, Long Island’s marquee project—the Lighthouse, a new community around the Nassau Coliseum—makes an odd beacon for smart growth, centering on a sports arena like Brooklyn’s Troubled Atlantic Yards and sited on a former airfield that’s bereft of a rail stop. While the project has been backed by planning groups who applaud its promise of walkable urban design, new housing, and jobs, renderings may make it look like a gated enclave for affluent hockey aficionados, and not part of an important effort to support the area’s changing population.

For Long Island is no longer a bastion of the privileged. Poverty there increased 22 percent between 2003 and 2007, like other suburbs across the nation that are now home to the fastest-growing populations of the poor. While many new developments include some portion of workforce housing, better coordination at both local and national levels is needed to reckon with the gulf between low-income residents and employment opportunities.

Fine-tuning the housing mix is no simple matter. The health industry, for example, is Long Island’s largest employer, but is hampered by high turnover because nursing staffs can’t afford to purchase homes in the area. Much attention has been focused on attracting the “echo boomer” generation of young professionals, but offering more rental options for middle-income residents should be another bedrock strategy. Stronger federal support for suburban infrastructure investments, whether it’s wastewater treatment plants or new light-rail lines, would also help the burbs cope with the growing burden of basic services.

Because counties can’t—or won’t—do it themselves. The new Nassau County executive, Edward Mangano, has been slashing spending in what is one of the highest-taxed counties in the nation, and one where voters are averse to redevelopment. “There is a big fear that any type of new housing development is going to increase school property taxes,” said Christopher Jones, vice president for research at the Regional Plan Association, who adds that most multifamily developments—especially those built around train stations—do the opposite. Clearly, officials must get the word out about density’s bottom line.

Long Island needs investment at all scales to survive, but politicians should think through the implications before hitching their suburbs to huge developments like the Lighthouse and its brethren. As much as megaprojects, we would do well to promote the more fine-grained retrofitting under way across the region, a sensible strategy of incremental urbanism focused on one infill building, one renovated library, one reviving hamlet at a time. **Jeff Byles**

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**CORRECTIONS**

Our feature on the Architectural League’s Emerging Voices ([AN04_03.03.2010](http://www.archpaper.com/)) misstated the status of a project designed by Slade Architecture. While the firm had worked on designs for the Shark Exhibit Building at Coney Island, the project has since been redesigned by other architects, and Slade’s scheme is not moving ahead.

DEBUT ON THE ROCKS

With a massive pile of lightweight rubble and a wilderness of boxwood hedge and ivy, architects Herzog & de Meuron made their Metropolitan Opera debut last month with set designs for Attila, Verdi’s tale of the 5th-century horde-master on a love rampage. Miuccia Prada designed the costumes.

Jacques Herzog said in a program video that the design concept was to capture a “hyper-real” sense of a destroyed world collapsing into an overgrown fairy-tale realm of mystery and foreboding. Nothing romantic intended, of course. And to drive the harsh reality home, the lighting throughout is purely artificial, akin to lighting found in hospitals, military barracks, and explosions—“a dangerous, steaming glow,” he said.

Herzog & de Meuron’s engagement with Attila was secured soon after Peter Gelb, the Met’s general manager, saw their set—a Mylar tube with dents—for Tristan und Isolde at the Berlin State Opera in 2006. It is unclear who brought in Prada, but surely it would have taken a cultural outsider of Attila-like ignorance to say no to that degree of knockout star wattage. —JULIE V. IOVINE
EAVESDROP> SARA HART

THROUGH THE GLASS MULLIONS
Eavesdrop has been admiring the crackling, crystallized facade at 100 11th Avenue in West Chelsea since the first “megapanel” was hoisted into place about a year ago. And finally on March 4, looking “at” led to looking “in,” which, once in, was all about looking “out.”

The occasion was agamma cocktail party to show off an 8th-floor apartment and Penthouse A of the not-nearly completed 23-story condo tower, designed by Frank Gehry’s snow globe for Barry Diller across 19th Street; others peered from behind thick mullions down on people behind bars at the Bayview Correctional Facility on 11th Avenue. Navigating our descent from the gusty roof terrace down a steep and narrow terrazzo stair, Eavesdrop wondered if it’s legal to have such a long run without a landing.

Finally in the elevator, a cameraman from CBS told us that a segment will air on CBS Sunday Morning in a couple of weeks. I hope Mo Rocca gives the place a new moniker: “Vision Machine” sounds like a prosthesis for the blind, or a device human-resources people use to weed out job applications.

The real shock and awe was in the penthouse, where the view was all bright lights, big city. (In fact, we spotted Jay McInerney.) Some guests gazed deep into Frank Gehry’s snow globe for Barry Diller across 19th Street; others indulged a stream of admirers in the 82nd-floor apartment.

Eavesdrop saw a one-second shot of a tense scene in a penthouse on 19th Street; others indulged a stream of admirers in the 82nd-floor apartment.

WILL IT BE A MAKEOVER FOR CHICAGO’S GREAT HALL OR HELMUT JAHN ALTERNATIVE?
TALKING TRACKS
Chicago’s Union Station has a split personality. The Beaux Arts head house, which includes the Great Hall, is underused and often nearly empty. The below-ground concourse level, however, is overcrowded with passengers due to poor pedestrian circulation. Amtrak, which owns the station through a subsidiary, is seeking to remedy that situation with an RFP for the head house and an eventual redesign of the concourse level. Meanwhile, the architect Helmut Jahn has proposed an alternative station as the hub of a new high-speed rail network.

Designed by Burnham & Root and completed in 1927, Union Station was diminished by the 1969 demolition of its aboveground concourse building, leaving the head house somewhat orphaned. Amtrak has asked seven architecture and real estate teams to respond to the RFP to redesign and reprogram the head house, including the architects SOM Chicago, KlingStubbins and Wallace Roberts & Todd of Philadelphia, Goody Clancy of Boston, and Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn of New York, along with the real estate firms Jones Lang LaSalle and U.S. Equities Realty. “It’s very open-ended. The space is largely vacant,” said Marc Magliari, a spokesman for Amtrak.

The railroad is studying the below-ground concourse, which was most recently renovated in 1991 by the architect Lucien Lagrange. A first-class passenger lounge and offices may be relocated to make room for additional bathrooms and passenger waiting areas. “We have outgrown our capacity in the concourse,” Magliari added, saying that Lagrange will likely be retained for that job.

At the same time, architects Murphy/Jahn, working for Reuben Hedlund, former head of the Chicago Plan Commission, are calling for a new station nearby to accommodate high-speed rail trains to be built over existing north/south rail lines. By using these lines, the station could accommodate rapid trains from St. Louis that would continue on to points north, like Minneapolis or Detroit, while commuter rail would remain at Union Station. Magliari points out that there are two north/south lines at Union Station, but he declined to speculate if that would be enough to accommodate an expanded high-speed network.

ALAN G. BRACE
ANOTHER PENN

PROPOSED VORNADO TOWER WOULD TOPPLE HOTEL PENNSYLVANIA

Of the dozens of buildings designed by McKim, Mead & White in New York City, nearly every one has become a protected landmark. One of the few unprotected could soon be headed for the wrecking ball, replaced by an office tower designed by Pelli Clarke Pelli that would surpass every skyscraper in Midtown but the Empire State Building.

Completed on 7th Avenue in 1919, almost a decade after its namesake depot across the street, the Hotel Pennsylvania was the third piece in a McKim, Mead & White triptych that included Pennsylvania Station and the Farley Post Office. With one of those crown jewels already gone, and another set to be revamped (on February 16, Senator Charles Schumer announced $83 million in stimulus money for Moynihan Station), the Hotel Pennsylvania would be the last original piece of McKim, Mead & White’s work in the area.

Speculation about the hotel’s demise began in the late 1990s, when the Vornado Realty Trust took a controlling stake in the building. The latest plans, for a 1,190-foot-tall office tower, began in earnest two years ago, when Vornado began negotiations with Merill Lynch to move its headquarters to the tower. The company’s board was set to vote on the matter when the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008 effectively killed the deal. Meanwhile, little was heard from the same preservation groups who decried the destruction of Pennsylvania Station. The Municipal Art Society actually backed the Vornado project, because at the time the developer was working on Moynihan Station. In a statement, MAS President Vin Cipolla acknowledged that the hotel may have “cultural significance” for many New Yorkers. He added, “The Municipal Art Society is taking a comprehensive look at the Far West Side and weighing how any new developments work in conjunction with that new station.”

Ultimately, a group of computer hackers who hold their annual convention at the hotel fought hardest for the building. Among them was Gregory Jones, wholobbed numerous politicians and civic groups. “All of them have snubbed out efforts to preserve the hotel,” he said. The local community board did vote for landmark designation, but the Landmarks Preservation Commission declined to hold a public hearing, deeming the hotel a later work exemplary of neither the firm nor the period. Vornado is now moving ahead with two plans: one tower for an as-yet unknown anchor tenant, and an alternate design to accommodate multiple tenants, both of which were certified by the City Planning Commission on February 8 and will go through the seven-month public review process. Both buildings house roughly two million square feet, or 42.5 percent in excess of current zoning.

A Vornado spokesperson declined to comment except to say that the developer has determined that “now is a good time to go forward with this project.” The community does not think so, however, as the board’s land-use committee voted unanimously against the tower on February 24.

MATT CHABAN

Inside the box is a colorful felt chart for the tower. The company’s
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What Is Affordable Housing?

CUP FIELD-TESTS AFFORDABLE HOUSING KIT

Two years ago, the Brooklyn-based Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) asked housing advocates and community groups what educational tools they needed most. The topic of affordable housing was at the top of the list, and in response, CUP helped design a novel solution: a red plastic kit of parts called the Affordable Housing Toolkit. Inside the box is a colorful felt chart for workshops, a basic guidebook, and the coordinates of an online map that displays income demographics in different neighborhoods. Developed with graphic design studio MTWTF, the Pratt Center for Community and Economic Development, and the Brooklyn-based advocacy group Fifth Avenue Committee, the project aims to get New Yorkers to ask a fundamental question: “Affordable to whom?”

Christine Gaspar, CUP’s executive director, said she hopes the kit will help individuals understand how affordable housing works. “This means that they can advocate in their own community, talk to elected officials, and hold them accountable to the decisions they make,” said Powell, a tenant organizer, added that the pedagogic approach is necessary, since the finer points of housing policy are rarely conveyed to citizens. “CUP helps us deconstruct our environment in order to advocate for social justice,” he said, “which we are unable to do by reading through hundreds of tax pages from the planning department.”

At a time when a third of the city’s residents spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing, the toolkit might perhaps be better called a first-aid kit. Fortunately, this effort is just the first in CUP’s program called Envisioning Development Tools, which aims to demystify New York City’s endlessly confusing land-use review process.

TOOLED UP
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For Vittorio Giorgini, work was a mission of moral integrity, an obligation similar in content to the commitment made by intellectuals and architects of the modern movement following World War II reconstruction: Le Corbusier, Leonardo Ricci, and particularly Kenzo Tange and Kisho Kurokawa, both members of the Japanese avant-garde of the 1960s. Similarly, he shared a vision and, in some instances, long-lasting friendships with prominent artists like Andre Bloc, Frederick Kiesler, Jean Arp, Henry Moore, Isamu Noguchi, and his close friend, the Chilean Roberto Matta. He believed that knowledge, art, and architecture could and should contribute to the making of a freer society. Toward that end, he conceived superstructures lifted above the ground to minimize human environmental impact. He designed intelligent habitats that explored space through a complex triangulation of engineered parts in different scales and applications, an explicit negation of traditional methods of construction. And he devised projects based on tension structures that contain multifunctional suspended platforms, with residential and commercial facilities, bridges, elevators, and transportation hubs. Among these visions were his South Street Seaport Center, New York (1979); River Crane, Roosevelt Island, New York (1993); and the Messina Bridge Monorail in Italy (1998-99). These designs illustrated the principle that without physical boundaries, architecture becomes, at moments, pure, with a process associated with the biological constructions one can observe in nature.

Vittorio Giorgini worked in New York City since his arrival here in the early 1970s, both as a professor at Pratt Institute, where I met him in 1972, and as an architect. His residence-atelier in Soho became the meeting point for colleagues, artists, friends, and students attracted by his personality and generosity, all driven by the desire to be part of a unique personal and professional experience—an atmosphere of cultured humanity, Florentine refinement, and most of all, humor and irony.

GIULIANO FIORENZOLI IS AN ARCHITECT AND PROFESSOR AT PRATT INSTITUTE.

I met Vittorio Giorgini in 1972 when he began teaching at Pratt. He was there until 1996, when he returned to Florence. A few years later, we received the funding for the Center for Experimental Structures at the School of Architecture, of which he was co-founder, along with John Johansen, William Katavalos, and myself. At the center, we have some of his images, including River Crane and an image of the Liberty Center in upstate New York. The latter was a wire-mesh construction with compound curvatures that had the distinguishing topological feature of a continuous surface like the mobius strip, but here designed as a community center for the town of Parksville. This mesh structure, built in 1976 by Pratt students under Giorgini’s supervision, was going to be covered with concrete, but never was due to lack of funding. It is the first example of true topological architecture in the U.S.

The unfinished Liberty Center came on the heels of several topological and urban projects, including the Casa Saldarini, built in 1962 and conceived three years earlier. This house is the first contemporary topological building in architecture, and is rightfully in the process of being preserved as a historic landmark in Tuscany. Giorgini’s experiments in topology began with the vision of making buildings the way nature builds. When he met the Swiss cardiologist Hans Jenny in 1956, whose work was known from the pioneering images of vibrating powders and fluids under the term “Cymatics,” Giorgini envisioned building in that manner. This dream wasn’t realized, but the search for nature’s building methods lies at the heart of this approach.

Giorgini influenced generations of students through his teaching based on a rigorous design methodology that addressed urban problems mediated by structural morphology. At Pratt, he was like a school within a school, mustering a following that spilled into his professional work and contributed to the visualizations of some of his unique projects developed within his loft in Soho.

His work is in the permanent collection of two major institutions in France, the Pompidou Center and FRAC. He is the author of Spatiality: the morphology of the natural sciences in architecture and design (L’Arca, 1995). The book Vittorio Giorgini, La Natura come Modello by Marco Del Francia (Angelo Pontecorbi Editor, Firenze, 2000) is the most complete book on his work.

ARCHITECT: MORMPHOSIS
Associate Architect: Gruzen Samton
Structural Engineers: John A. Martin & Associates; Goldstein Associates
Photo © Joseph David

The Cooper Union’s new academic building by Morphosis architect Thom Mayne is not only rekindling the school’s ability to inspire new generations of art, architecture and engineering students, its dynamic, shimmering form is igniting the imaginations of all who pass through Cooper Square as well. Much of this energy is owed to the unique transparency of the building’s steel-and-glass double skin wall system, reducing solar gain while bringing to light the ability of architects, and of ornamental metal, to transform design aspirations into reality.

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ARCHITECT: MORPHOSIS
Associate Architect: Gruzen Samton
Structural Engineers: John A. Martin & Associates; Goldstein Associates
Photo © Joseph David
MAKING WAVES

PATRIOTIC GLITCH (continued from front page)

But within a day of the announcement, the two British jurors, architect Richard Rogers and developer/patron Peter Palumbo, both lords, allowed news to slip out that they strongly opposed the winning selection, calling it “unfit to represent the U.S. in Britain.” Of course, for 50 years, not many liked Eero Saarinen’s concrete-with-eagle U.S. embassy in Grosvenor Square, either.

The 15-month competition for that building’s replacement in rough-but-ready Battersea winnowed the search from 37 to nine to four firms, a medley of the usual distinguished suspects (Richard Meier & Partners, Pei Cobb Freed & Partners), the radical chic ( Morphosis), and the new elite (KieranTimberlake). Apart from international prestige, patriotism, and the chance to be mentioned in the same breath as Saarinen for years to come, the project to build an American embassy in London was burdened with a no-win program: a Bunker of Freedom. With the selection of KieranTimberlake, a firm that is emerging as both clever and accommodating, especially when it comes to affordability and sustainable issues—thanks to the high-profile role of their Cellophone House in the MoMA prefab houses exhibition of 2008—the jury was being true to its innate conservative instincts while making a reach just far enough to embrace youth and environmentalism.

The cube is a shape of universal integrity. The moat, ramps, and greenswards are as elegant and sensual as the refined landscape architect Laurie Olin could get them, a triumph of bollard-free design. But whether or not the decision was really thought through the symbolic and structural potential of the EFTE plastic-wrapped but also bomb-proofed facades, and the moat-like quality of the water feature, is an open question.

It’s solid, it’s green, and it will draw people to a neighborhood in need of development. In Washington, D.C., the best that can be said of many a foreign embassy is that they blend in seamlessly. Conscious risk-taking and diplomacy generally do not mix, but perhaps KieranTimberlake’s design will impress us with its smarts.

FACTORY TOWN (continued from front page)

Philadelphia has embarked on conceptualizing a revitalized manufacturing future. Sponsored by the Philadelphia Community Design Collaborative with the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC), Infill Philadelphia: Industrial Sites kicked off its latest phase on February 16 at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, where a panel discussion (in which I participated) introduced the centerpiece of the project: the designation of three sites—along with three design teams—to serve as test cases for reinventing run-down factory buildings.

To an audience of over 200 people, Beth Miller, executive director of the Community Design Collaborative, outlined the context for the initiative, emphasizing ways that new industry types in Philadelphia—such as smaller green industries, furniture makers, or apparel manufacturers—could be incorporated by partnering with local stakeholders. The keynote speaker, William Struver, president of Baltimore-based developer Struver Bros. Ecoles & Rouse, offered lessons from his firm’s projects, showing how industrial buildings could be adaptively reused with real clients and local businesses who are committed to community revitalization.

Focusing on local initiatives, John Grady, vice president of the PIDC, discussed the group’s redevelopment of the 1,200-acre Philadelphia Navy Yard with light manufacturing and corporate offices for companies such as Urban Outfitters and Tasty Baking Company, while maintaining Navy-based research in the historic buildings. Together with the City Planning Commission, the group has launched a study to provide new data on industrial land-use, and to look at how rezoning sites for new, clean, high-tech, open-source, and flexible industries could provide jobs in local communities.

To test these ideas, design teams will investigate ways that old manufacturing sites can be reimagined to sustain industries. Three volunteer firms—SMP Architects, DIGSAU, and Charles Loomis Charriss McAfee Architects—have joined forces with community-based groups and manufacturers on specific sites with the owners’ consent. The initiative—funded by the William Penn Foundation, the Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development, and others—will be unveiled in May, as will the city’s zoning studies. The exhibit Retrofitting Industrial Sites, on display until March 26 at the Community Design Collaborative, featured renovations of former industrial buildings across the country, and suggested a multitude of strategies for transforming industrial sites.

NINA RAPPAPORT

GREENWICH VILLAGE

Greenwich Village has a current all its own, so architect Kohn Pedersen Fox wanted a free-spirited façade for new condo One Jackson Square. More than just eccentric expression, the undulating walls maximize the site’s allowable floor area in two separate zoning districts. Realizing a design this fluid demands an extraordinary level of precision. With no two window panels alike, high-tech computer modeling needed old world craftsmanship to produce the desired metal and glass waves—making the new facade at Greenwich and 8th as unique as its time-honored neighbors.

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Architect: Bill Pedersen, Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates
Photo: © Paul Rivera
but we always anticipated this would be a feels more immediate. “It’s taking longer, construction stalled, preservation suddenly developments. Keeping them affordable has already committed heavily to such us,” Leicht said. This is an especially enticing before, but now that pot of gold is gone, and Llama housing, may have seen a pot of gold tax credits and low-interest loans.ment has shifted its money to the other half created through this route, so the depart- still frozen, almost no units are now being in affordable units. With construction credit sees these changes as a virtue, not a failure. Commissioner for Development at HPD, pushed back to 2014. Holly Leicht, Deputy $1 billion, and the completion date has been it is not immune to the current economy: Keeping it afloat will cost the city an additional 100,000 units so far), but was now going to take a slightly different tack, emphasizing retrofits and preservation or construction. He was mak- ing a visit to New York University’s Furman Center to congratulate it on the launch of its new Institute for Affordable Housing.

In spite of the plan’s continued success, it is not immune to the current economy: Keeping it afloat will cost the city an additional $1 billion, and the completion date has been pushed back to 2014. Holly Leicht, Deputy Commissioner for Development at HPD, sees these changes as a virtue, not a failure. The city initially capitalized on new construction, leveraging inclusionary zoning and tax credits to entice developers to build in affordable units. With construction credit still frozen, almost no units are now being created through this route, so the depart- ment has shifted its money to the other half of the equation, preserving units through tax credits and low-interest loans. “A lot of owners, particularly in Mitchell Llama housing, may have seen a pot of gold before, but now that pot of gold is gone, and they are much more interested in talking to us,” Leicht said. This is an especially enticing approach for the department because it has already committed heavily to such developments. Keeping them affordable now extends that investment. And with new construction stalled, preservation suddenly feels more immediate. “It’s taking longer, but we always anticipated this would be a long-term strategy,” she said. There are other new programs in support of affordable housing, though they are experiencing only varying degrees of success. The city has received two rounds of Neighborhood Stabilization Program funding from the federal government, which uses innovative data-tracking to fund small-scale projects, from homeownership to foreclosure purchasing, to head off the sort of disinvestment that plagued the city in the 1970s and ’80s. One program that has yet to bear fruit, however, is one of the most celebrated, at least by the politicians who created it. With upwards of 600 stalled construction projects in the city, last summer, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn proposed the Housing Asset Renewal Program, or HARP. The program would use city money to provide bridge loans to stalled projects, with $25,000 in $50,000 provided for each unit, backing developers who converted to affordable housing. The goal was to create about 400 affordable units but so far, no projects have gone ahead. A deadline was originally set for December, but it was pushed back to April for lack of quality bids. Leicht said there are better offers coming in now, with more variety—not just small projects in the outer boroughs. The problem remains that few lenders, even with foreclosures in the offing, will take the necessary discounts to meet the program demands. “It’s a great idea,” said Jerilyn Perine, executive director of the Citizens Housing and Planning Council, a local nonprofit research organization. “Ironically, because people are optimistic about our future here in New York, they aren’t willing to take a hit yet on their investment.” On the upside, Habitat for Humanity is prospering. It has recently partnered with New York State to develop super low-interest mortgages for homeowners. With the pro- ceeds, they are now able for the first time to take out construction loans expanding their building program. The group has also been negotiating short sales to keep buildings occupied and using its volunteers to clean up community centers and parks, making distressed neighborhoods less so. “Now’s the time to get creative,” Lockwood said.

BILLINGS BOMB

While economists keep insisting the recession is over, that may not be the case for architects. The AIA Architecture Billings Index had a steep decline in January following months of relative stability. The index, released on February 24, fell 2.9 points to 42.5 from 45.4 in December, the first negative shift of more than a point in seven months. Compounders concerns, inquiries for new work dropped 7.2 points to 52.5 from 59.7 in January, the steepest decline since October 2008. (A reading above 50 means interest is rising, below that, it’s falling.) The AIA blames the major lending institutions and the inability of clients to find financing for their projects. Keep an eye out for February billings, which will give a better sense as to whether the latest numbers are simply another fluctuation in uncertain times or a new deterioration in the market.

SCARANO STRIKES OUT

Loose-cannon architect Robert Scarano of Brooklyn may not be in practice much longer. On March 1, an administrative judge ruled that Scarano had lied to the Department of Buildings about two of his projects. Three days later, the city barred the architect from filing any building documents, including permit applications and construction plans. Scarano, who designed dozens of buildings citywide during the real estate boom, was criticized for abusing the city’s self-certification program. In 2008, his right to self-certify was revoked and a detailed investigation was begun. Scarano was not punished for flouting the city’s zoning laws—which he did brazenly at the Finger Building, Williamsburg, in 2004—so much as lying about his misfiling to the city. The Department of Buildings has requested New York State, which regulates architecture licenses, to revoke the architect’s license.
The space now known as the Jerome Robbins Theater was once simply Theater C, the subordinate of its companion theaters A and B at 37 Arts—a 50,000-square-foot complex of off-Broadway theaters and studio spaces on Manhattan’s Far West Side. Designed as a rental house, Theater C was an austere concrete box with poor sightlines and lackluster acoustics. In 2008, the Baryshnikov Arts Center (BAC), which occupied the upper floors of the building, acquired the space and, teaming with The Wooster Group, set out to transform this so-so black box into a top-of-the-line, 238-seat performing arts facility for dance, music, and theater. To see this through, BAC hired the integrated theater and acoustical consultant group at Arup and the architecture and engineering firm WASA/Studio A. The limitations of the existing space presented many challenges to the design, and the team worked closely together through the entire process, as no decision by one discipline could be made without coordinating with all of the rest.

Architecturally, Theater C did possess some charms. The team wanted to preserve and emphasize the timeless materiality of its concrete walls and the dramatic proportions of its tall, narrow volume. In order to do this, they concentrated the seating in the center of the space, disconnecting it from the walls and creating the impression of floating within the theater’s vertical dimensions. This arrangement also solved another problem, which was that the existing space had a convoluted ingress/egress scheme that created a different axis of symmetry for the stage and house. By moving the circulation passageways to the walls, replacing the existing balcony, and adding interconnecting stairs, the team was able to center the relationship between the spectators and the performers, immediately improving sightlines and intensifying the experience. The move also had an acoustical payoff: It created space around the audience, allowing them to be completely enveloped in sound. The seating design itself is something of an anomaly in New York City. Rather than individual chairs, the team specified bench seats that fold down in twos and threes—a trend that is somewhat more common in Europe. The thinking behind this was to squeeze people together and give them a sense of sitting in a crowd. This sensation was reinforced by the rake of the deck, which causes sightlines—based on average ergonomics—to just skim the heads of the other spectators. Much of dance relies on minute movements that may be difficult to read by those sitting far from the stage. By packing people together and making them aware of each other, the team hoped to create an amplification effect in which reactions from those sitting in the front row will travel like an electrical current through the audience to the last row, simply because each individual is aware of, if not touching, everyone else.

The Jerome Robbins Theater’s varied program asked conflicting things of the acoustical design. Drama and dance usually use amplified sound, in which case reverberation within the room must be minimized. Live music, however, requires reverberation to enhance the richness of the sound. To create a variable acoustic solution for the space, the team bolted a steel grid to the theater’s concrete walls, on which sound-absorbing panels can be attached. The panels can be added or taken away as needed, tuning the room anywhere on the reverberation spectrum from 0.8 seconds to 1.2 seconds. Arup used their sound lab to complete this part of the process—a room with acoustics that can be manipulated through a computer model to create an aural mapping of a proposed space, much like the visualization created by an architectural rendering. Sound isolation was also difficult to achieve in Theater C. The team was able to insert a floating floor, but similar tactics could not be put in place along the walls without eating up valuable real estate. Heavy-duty doors were installed to block noise from the lobby and a custom-designed sound attenuator was placed within a fire duct to keep out street sounds. The mechanical systems, in a room just a corridor away, were replaced with low-noise units and threaded into the room in large ducts that keep the velocity of the air low but the volume high. In keeping with the Wooster Group’s advanced requirements, the theater systems themselves push the envelope for such a small space. The lighting system can accommodate as many as 264 dimmers, which, combined with the two dedicated follow spots, creates a lush spectrum of possibilities. The rigging system is fully motorized, capable of lifting 1,750 pounds at 20 feet per minute. Such refinements are balanced by the simplicity of the architectural finishes, which play the line between raw and refined: Cor-Ten steel and polished wood, white carpet and concrete walls.
Vondom’s Vases series, designed by JM Ferrero, are made of recycled plastic doing double duty as a pot-and-bench combination. The collection includes self-watering pots with bench seating that can be lacquered or illuminated with LEDs in a range of colors. www.vondom.com

The Olivio Bollard accommodates two lamp-head sizes with a 180-degree rotation that can be adjusted on site. Supplied with LEDs, the fixtures can be customized with surveillance and multimedia technology and are certified by the International Dark-Sky Association for reduced light pollution. www.selux.com

Landscape Forms and BMW Group DesignworksUSA collaborated to create the Metro40 line of furnishings. The Mobius strip-shaped Lo-Glo lamp is a 3-foot-tall LED pathway light (a 12-foot-tall Hi-Glo model is also available) with replaceable diode cartridges. www.landscapeforms.com

The Bike Garden’s organic bike racks provide multiple locking points with “stems” that can be installed individually or in pre-configured layouts. The corrosion-resistant metal components contain up to 76 percent recycled content and can be surface-mounted or cast-in-place. www.forms-surfaces.com

The Lace Fence from Dutch design house Demakersvan is available in galvanized iron or white PVC-coated wire, both suitable for indoor or outdoor use. Patterns are customizable, and frameless panels can be designed to hide or embellish a space, prevent climbing, or withstand extreme weather. www.droogusa.com

The Branch outdoor collection of seven complementary pieces includes a sunshade inspired by a tree. Atop a three-branched epoxy-coated steel frame, the fixed shade is a solid disk made of heatstop material that blocks UV rays. www.coroitalia.it

Arik Levy’s honeycomb-inspired trellis comes in three sizes, allowing the system to be configured in a range of shapes. The powder-coated, zinc-plated steel metal adds a modern graphic pattern to walls while plant growth matures. www.flora-online.de

Belgian firm Vyvey & Partners designed the Romeo & Juliet bench with large and small spaces in mind. The 16.5-foot-long, iatoba wood seats can be installed end-to-end to create a line of evenly spaced seating and trees, which are planted within fiberglass pots. www.extremis.be

Designed by Naoto Fukasawa, the Titikaka outdoor bench has a curvilinear form that is sculptural as well as ergonomic. Eight-foot-long teak lathes over an aluminum frame reach the ground in the front and back, but the sides are open, creating a wave when used in multiples. www.bebitalia.it

With these options in fencing, seating, shades, and more, boring streetscapes and sidewalks are no longer an alternative.

BY JENNIFER K. GORSCHE

SITE SPECIFICATIONS

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3 LO-GLO LANDSCAPE FORMS
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5 LACE FENCE DROOG
6 BRANCH PARASOL CORO ITALIA
7 COMB-INATION TRELLIS FLORA
8 ROMEO&JULIET BENCH EXTREMIS
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In the early 1950s, Long Island was the testing ground for some of the nation's first savvy suburbs, with Levittown a resonant symbol of postwar American values. Today, Nassau and Suffolk counties are once again trying to set a new standard with smart-growth projects underway from Mineola to Patchogue.

By Jeff Byles

Late last year, Tom Suozzi, the progressive Nassau County Executive, took stock of the surrounding landscape of aging suburbs and derelict downtowns. This bastion of single-family homes, he found, had reached a terminal state.

“Nassau County has stopped growing,” he declared in an appeal to civic and business leaders. “We are suburban sprawled.” In response, Suozzi put forth a plan he called New Suburbia: 90 percent of the land would be left as is, while the remaining 10 percent would be rebuilt to bolster needed growth. Long Island, it seemed, was on the verge of a smart-growth revolution.

Suozzi was soon tossed out of office amid a taxpayer revolt, but make no mistake: New Suburbia is coming to Long Island—and to downtowns across the nation. “Long Island has encountered problems that newer suburbs are going to encounter in the next five or six years,” said Lawrence Levy, executive director of Hofstra University’s National Center
for Suburban Studies. “What happens here is going to be the canary in the coal mine.”
Against a backdrop of eroding salaries, vanishing jobs, and a plummeting youth population—almost 70 percent of residents aged 18 to 34 say they’re itching to move out within the next five years—Long Island’s two suburban counties have become a test case for reverse-engineering sprawl. Suozzi may be gone, but in his wake town officials, citizens’ groups, architects, and planners are creating an eye-opening preview of suburbia’s next act. Throw in a new ideas competition sponsored by the Long Island Development to Grow, which shows how density and impact.

The appeal of the Lighthouse lies partly in the way it would knit together with a larger vision for the Nassau Hub spanning the coliseum along with the Roosevelt Field mall, Hofstra University, and parts of Mineola and Hempstead that could become a showcase for Long Island’s smart-growth aspirations. Connected by new light-rail lines linking to the Long Island Rail Road, it would be hands down the most game-changing Long Island development since Levittown itself. “What makes this project unique for Long Island is that it has the opportunity to become a true place, destination, and essentially a new town center redeveloped out of a sea of asphalt and unworkable sprawl,” the smart-growth advocacy group Vision Long Island wrote in a strong endorsement.

The Nassau Veterans Coliseum as the centerpiece of a 150-acre, mixed-use community. A joint venture headed up by software entrepreneur Charles Wang and developer RXR, the project would encompass some 30 buildings—many of which would stand between 10 and 20 stories tall, a shocking sight in an area of two-story homes on cookie-cutter cul-de-sacs—and refurbish the coliseum for the New York Islanders hockey team, which Wang also owns. Though supported by Nassau County officials, the project has been roadblocked by the town of Hempstead, and is currently on hold pending further review of its scale and impact. The Nassau Coliseum would be transformed into 5.5 million square feet of mixed-use development.

Previous page: Arrayed around a “grand canal,” the Lighthouse would transform 150 acres in Hempstead into 5.5 million square feet of mixed-use development.

Above: The Nassau Coliseum would be renovated for the New York Islanders, fronting on a central, landscaped park.

Facing page, top: Artspace Patchogue, an $18 million project under construction near Patchogue’s main street, will offer 46 units of affordable live/work space for artists, with ground-floor commercial space.

Facing page, middle: On a former brownfield in Glen Cove, the 56-acre Glen Isle will offer 860 residences in a mix of condo, rental, and affordable units, as well as office space, hotel, and retail. Lower-scale massing on the waterfront steps up to structures reaching 12 stories.

Facing page, bottom: Hempstead’s Baldwin Commons is a 250,000-square-foot development by the Albanese Organization, planned to contain 140 units with a base of retail and below-ground parking.
projects, however, have come out of small villages, where mayors directly control more of the land-use machinery. In Patchogue, for instance, several projects are reviving a downtown that had fallen on hard times. “One of the things Patchogue is blessed to have is quite a bit of blighted property,” said Mayor Paul Pontieri. Several acres near the train station were transformed into two projects with a total of 80 condominiums and 48 apartments. “That’s 22 or 23 per acre, but you’d never know it,” Pontieri said. “I’m a believer that density is a product of design. If you design it properly, density will follow.” Meanwhile, developer Tritec is now building a $100 million, mixed-use project at the core of the business district that will house 240 apartments. Also under way is the Artspace Patchogue Lofts, containing ground-floor commercial space and 45 units of affordable live/work housing for artists and their families. The building is one of the few new downtown designs that departs from its historic context. “Because it’s a creative-class type of setting, we encouraged them to do something that reflects on the past, but more important, looks to the future,” said Matthew Meier, partner of Buffalo-based Hamilton Houston Lowrie Architects, which worked in collaboration with Gary Cannella Associates of Patchogue. Projects like these can often be hamstrung by outmoded local ordinances. “A lot of the zoning on Long Island ends up coming down to parking,” said Salvatore Coco, partner at Beatty, Harvey, Coco Architects, which is working on a 140-unit, sustainably designed development in Hempstead. Current zoning requires two parking spaces for every one-bedroom apartment, hardly a transit-oriented approach. “We’ve proposed a one-to-one ratio, and the fact that we’re a half-mile away from the Baldwin train station actually makes this achievable,” Coco said. While still dominated by the car, Long Island’s low-density downtowns are well poised for transit-oriented development (TOD). John Loughran, senior associate at FXFowle and project manager for an update of the village of Hempstead’s comprehensive plan, pointed out that beneath the omnipresent sprawl is a layer of transit infrastructure and density that simply needs to be reinforced. “Places like Hempstead, Garden City, and Rockville Centre were the original TOD,” he said. “They all have transit at their core.” And that has helped the region hang on with its core assets intact. “Long Island hasn’t had the cascade of failure and the abandonment of malls and strip centers—yet,” said June Williamson, professor of architecture at City College and co-author of Retrofitting Suburbia. To help look toward the future, the Long Island Index is launching an ideas competition on March 31 called Build a Better Burb, with a $10,000 top prize going to the most imaginative design visions for how Long Island’s downtowns can be reinvigorated and sustainable. “Places like Stamford, Connecticut or in New Jersey have dramatically reimagined what they might be, but Long Island has fought these ideas tooth and nail,” said Ann Golob, director of the Index. “We’re really trying to push the edge of the envelope,” she added. “It’s going to take some people thinking pretty boldly about what might be possible.”

JEFF BYLES IS MANAGING EDITOR AT AN.
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LECTURE

6:00 p.m.
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Philadelphia Museum of Art

(Nina and Klaus Stoelt, 2009),
Bruce Nauman at the 53rd
World Fair, exploring the past and future of Philip Johnson’s
pavilion and its large-scale terrazzo map of New York State.

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The nearly 200 designers invited to propose interventions for the Guggenheim Museum on its 50th anniversary take literally the museum’s invitation to “leave practicality or even reality behind.” In Contemplating the Void: Interventions in the Guggenheim Museum, the void at the building’s center gets filled with water, outfitted with a flight simulator, and re-cast in chocolate by designers as varied as Rachel Whiteread, Greg Lynn FORM, and Toyo Ito. Some entries at least leave the museum standing, like Nari Ward’s vision of building a belt-like foyer (Untitled, 2006, above) whose shape would echo that of the ramp around it. Whether they’re impossible or merely impractical, the entries in Contemplating the Void tend to take the form of doodles, scribbles, collage, and even typod notes, such that browsing the exhibition feels like peering into someone’s sketchbook.
**Review**

**Vicarious Living**

The Houses of Greenwich Village

By Kevin D. Murphy, photography by Paul Rocheleau

Abrams, $45.00

New York is a city of neighborhoods. Many appear in fiction, but very few get architectural coverage. Greenwich Village is the exception. As the most storied place in Gotham, the Village has been well researched, has its own historical society, and its streets have been photographed by everyone from Edward Steichen to Annie Liebowitz. Nearly every New Yorker has her favorite haunt, a bistro, bar, or street corner with an indelible memory attached.

One might then, be nonplussed to find another book on the quaint row houses that make up most of this intimate place of twisted streets and artsy cafes. Kevin Murphy’s new treatment has an advantage that no previous book can boast: beautiful photographs of the interiors of many houses not normally open to the public. As in his previous book on the American town house, the author gets right to the heart of his subject and provides fascinating stories on both the houses and the people who built them. Paul Rocheleau provides the splendid photographs.

The two have chosen 20 of the most interesting houses in the Village and devoted a substantial photo essay to each, with accompanying text. Their book is nicely designed and produced by Abrams, the noted art book publisher. This book would make an excellent gift for your friends with an interest in New York and its architecture.

Murphy’s short essay on the history of the Village covers no new ground, and might well have been more specific about the kinds of houses that were chosen for case studies. It has the advantage of presenting street scenes in historic photos from the collection of the Historic American Buildings Survey in the 1930s, a nice contrast to the vivid color photos by Rocheleau. But most of the interesting narrative is reserved for the individual houses, and there is a lot more behind these brick facades than meets the eye.

Unlike most coffee table art books, this one marries probing, insightful photography with equally analytical text. Since Murphy is a noted art historian with expertise in American architecture, he seldom misses a chance to educate the reader about the subtleties of Federal and Greek Revival details, or the impact of economic development on New York in the 1830s, when the Village had the hottest real estate market in Manhattan. He points out that the John Grindley house (1827) owes some of its remarkable elegance to the fact that it was built by John Jacob Astor as a means of converting a former country estate, “Richmond Hill,” into a real estate development that presaged the eventual expansion of housing northward on the island. As each house is presented chronologically, beginning in 1827, Murphy is able to relate the social history of the eras to the features and styles of each example. Modest dwellings such as the David Christie house (1824), built for the middle class, are contrasted with lavish houses for “swells” such as Ira Clow, president of the Pennsylvania Coal Company, whose Fifth Avenue mansion (1852–53) is home to the Salmagundi Club. The lives of original owners are not the only ones examined, for many houses became significant after the Village was a mecca for artists and intellectuals during the 20th century. An 1827 house was renovated in 1893 to become the studio of Robert Blum, an artist associated with Whistler and early Japonisme.

For those who waited for a design vision undivided from social and political content, *Self-Sufficient Housing* comes to present an old problem resurfacing from the 1970s: the belief in the possibility of systematizing the house into a self-sufficient, autonomous, and regenerative unit capable of harnessing its waste and providing its own energy. According to the directors of the Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia (IAAC), who organized an international competition featured in the pages of the book, this emergent position is timely, not only as a technological problem but as a sociopolitical statement against ruthless urban sprawl, critical exploitation of natural resources, and the generic demise of the free market. As a symptom of a new reality inundated with environmental catastrophes, sudden climatic changes, garbage-packed metropolises, and para-economies of non-recyclable e-waste, environmental consciousness reemerges as an inevitable cultural armature for architects. Immersed in oblivion through postmodernism, deconstruction, and “blobism,” we find ourselves faced again with a sense of urgency to not only “be green,” therefore ethical, sensible, and politically correct, but to assemble the pieces of an inevitable design imagination for an ill-managed planet.

There is nothing new to the theme of the first Advanced Architecture Contest offered by the IAAC, showcased in the book. “Self-sufficiency” does not arrive in the break of the 21st century to replace or enhance Le Corbusier’s “machine”...
VICARIOUS LIVING continued from page 17 America. The design, by Carrère & Hastings, reminds us of the bohemian atmosphere that existed in New York around 1900, when modern art was in a period of gestation on both sides of the Atlantic. The building later served as the studio of the noted architectural painter, Jules Guérin. At the end of the book are two patently modernist interventions into the fabric of this charming corner of New York, and both seem very much at home. One, designed in 2003, is a clever insertion into an 1801 row house. The other, from 2005, is a new house occupying a small slice in the streetcape.

One quibble with this necessarily abbreviated story is that little is said about the period of the “Brown Decades.” From the 1860s until 1900, when many sandstone-fronted Italianate and Richardsonian houses were built in Manhattan. Though the Village was by this time a mature neighborhood, there are significant examples from this period, such as the twin houses designed by Robert Mook at 74 and 76 Perry Street in 1866. Perhaps we’ll see a second volume.

One of the best things about The Houses of Greenwich Village is its intimate, insider’s point of view. Both Murphy and Rocheleau bring us as close as possible to the artifacts and lives of the people who made these domestic environments. My favorite is the restoration/conversion by contemporary photographer John Dougall of the 1828 Cornelius Oakley house. The contrast between the Greek Revival décor and his wonderful collection of the bohemian atmosphere that existed in New York, and both seem very much at home. One, designed in 2003, is a clever insertion into an 1801 row house. The other, from 2005, is a new house occupying a small slice in the streetcape.

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