Architects should keep their fingers crossed, but it looks like the industry may finally be climbing out of the recession. According to the AIA Architecture Billings Index released on April 21, March brought the best billings in two years, and the first sustained growth since last summer. While billings are still in the red, the strong uptick suggests that the industry is headed toward positive territory. 

In 1811, the streets of Manhattan were laid down in an efficient grid, dissected by the old Broadway. In the two centuries since, the island has been ringed with bridges, tunnels, and freeways, but the grid remains largely intact, if far more congested than it once was. Hoping to bring some efficiency back to city streets, Transportation Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan has turned to public-private partnerships and incentives to encourage the construction of bike lanes, pedestrian plazas, and other innovations. The result is a city that is more accessible and more liveable. 

The shoreline around Baltimore’s Inner Harbor is well known for its bustling urban life, but just a mile away lies a body of water three times the area and none of the development. The Middle Branch waterfront, a shallow estuary south of the Inner Harbor, is an industrial-zoned brownfield dotted with old factories and power stations. The Baltimore Waterfront is one of the most polluted in the nation, with recurring problems of oil spills, hazardous waste, and toxic chemical dumping. 

The Fifth Street Farm Project has it all: It addresses childhood obesity, stormwater runoff, and climate change. By grassroots organization of teachers, parents, and green roof advocates, the project’s plan calls for a roof farm that provides fresh produce and green space. The project is the brainchild of landscape architect Walter Hood, who has designed a solar array for the University at Buffalo. The array will be a gateway to the southern side of the campus, providing a new entrance to the university and a functional work of land art. 

In many cities, the mix of retail, housing, and parking is a ho-hum development formula, but in South Beach, Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron have given it a tropical-modernist twist. Rising above Miami’s Art Deco Historic District, the five-story structure includes 300 parking spaces, retail and restaurant spaces, and a rooftop garden. 

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simply irrelevant). But still! Academics need to lionize academic discourse in the culture to others in the academy. I don’t appreciate this excellent piece is when, in a university writing (“Hasty Habits of Mind,” AN 04.26.2010). If that were really the case, psychologically it is difficult for the many unemployed architects to comprehend that the market is doing better while they can’t find a position for a whole year. As the president of an executive search firm, I get to see the effect this recession has on the unemployed. This recession is like no other that I have lived through. It has on the unemployed. This recession has been preceded by months of lower readings, suggesting its level of activity was some-what anomalous. The case could be made that last month’s billings are arguably the best performance since January 2008, the last time when billings were rising. It fell in February to 47.3, remaining below 50 ever since.

Another sign this could be the real thing is that not only billings and inquiries—up 6.5 points to 58.5 last month—are improving, but so, too, has every region and sector, a concerted movement that has not happened since the industry’s woes began two years ago. It appears the AIA’s predictions that the industry would emerge from its recession by the middle of the year may be spot-on. However, there has been no such recovery for the current slowdown, what do professionals have to lose by devoting 80 percent of their time to the future, and we don’t want to rely on anecdotes about the past six months it has risen above 50. The East reversed a one-month dip reaching 47.0 in March, up from 44.1. Meanwhile, the West continues its rebound from being the worst of all regions last summer, when it fell to an abyssmal 36. Last month it hit 46.6, up from 43.6 in February.

Within the sectors, institutional work saw the largest gains in March, rising 2.6 points to 46.8, an especially positive sign since institutions tend to be strong patrons during downturns. This has not been the case during the recent recession because many universities, foundations, and governments were especially hard hit and unable to take advantage of cheap construction costs as they suddenly those plans so close to hand (and already quite detailed) will look like the most cost-efficient way to go.

When disaster strikes, and everyone is casting about for solutions, blue-sky dreaming to the Corps and the powers that be today, what to do when water starts lapping the toes of the Statue of Liberty in our children’s lifetimes hasn’t landed on their plates yet. And there are still firms that are forced to cut staff even now. You may be getting your information from firms who are unable to take advantage of cheap construction costs as they prepare the ground for new thinking that will impact the production of architecture and the urban environment. It is difficult to prove that research done now will definitely lead to new thinking that will impact the production of architecture and the urban environment.
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Modular Furniture
At the well-heeled crossroads of the Garment District and Chelsea, a new hotel has opened its doors for traveling fashionistas. Aiming to capture the “simple, uncluttered spirit” of early 20th-century tailoring, designers at New York–based Glen & Company drew inspiration from the textures they found in labels like Ralph Lauren and Brooks Brothers. Past the entrance, a series of horizontal mirrors reflect vibrant 26th Street, while the wooden front desk is inspired by a cutting-room table (its legs recall old sewing machines) and floor tiles borrow weaves from classic couture. Continuing the fashion theme is artist Devorah Sperber’s tapestry, comprised of 1,652 spools of thread. Amid all this haberdashery, a modish accessory can be found in the ceiling lighting. Containing a series of LEDs that feature every color in the RGB spectrum, the fixtures are themed according to the changing moods of the day. The hotel’s 23-story glass-and-brick tower, designed by Peter Poon Architects, includes the sharp-dressed lobby and rooftop bar for upscale burger destination Rare.

COCKTAILS, CANAPÉS, AND CRASS
Eavesdrop sent a proxy to the Spring benefit and silent auction for the Storefront for Art and Architecture, which was held on May 5 at the Four Seasons Restaurant. Our observant agent had a lot to report. The crowd was more buttoned up, sartorially speaking, than the typical Storefront entourage. Many architects groused about the lack of work, but Tom Leeser told our agent that his firm’s expansion of the Museum of the Moving Image in Queens is on track to open next January.

Several veterans speculated that Kyong Park, who founded Storefront in 1982, might find it ironic that the benefit was being held in the iconic Philip Johnson–designed venue, because the late, great architect never gave the fledgling nonprofit a dime. But the dimes didn’t hit the fan until philanthropist and beneficent architect Phyllis Lambert introduced the honorees, MoMA Architecture and design curator Barry Bergdoll and sculptor Andrea Zittel. Lambert channelled Johnson by announcing that he always wanted a practicing architect to head the department he created at MoMA, rather than an academic. Bergdoll may be a professor of architectural history at Columbia University, but he also knows how to be Mr. Manners, as needed. Breezing past that slight, the versatile curatorial team exuded eloquently about how both the Storefront and the Seagram Building changed the relationship of inside to outside in New York, and then spoke of the Storefront’s long history. After the remarks, Lambert scrutinized a Louis Kahn charcoal sketch offered at the silent auction, then bought it for $18,000. Poor Lou couldn’t have been more grateful when he was alive. Anyway, congrats to the Storefront for a successful event.

SAID THE LILLIPUTIAN TO THE BROBDINGNAGIAN, IN ARABIC
Follow if you can this tale of Dubai-based architect Oman Al-Owais, who lives in the land of the World’s Biggest everything. In an interview with _The National_, an English-language Abu Dhabi newspaper, the Emirati architect stood in the shadow of Burj Khalifa and proclaimed, “I don’t want to build anything taller than a tree.” His oddly named firm, CENTIMETERCUBE, is an architecture, design, and publishing company. It produces the equally oddly named Shufflegazine—a bilingual magazine for the Apple lifestyle in the Middle East, covering Mac, iPod, iPhone, and related technologies. Al-Owais designs lowrise apartments around courtyards that respond to the environment and the cultural traditions of the area with an aesthetic arguably more modern than New Urbanism, Middle-Eastern style.

While plenty of architects have been focused on surviving, Michael Graves and his colleagues have completed the 121-acre Resorts World Sentosa, a 3.5-million-square-foot complex with six hotels, numerous restaurants, casinos, a waterfront auditorium, marina, spa, maritime museum, play areas, and an underground 45,000-car garage on an island off the coast of Singapore. In the complex, which is loaded with sustainably green features—and a lot of other colors, too—they have designed every glowing column, mural, carpet, table, chair, even the flatware and napkin types, as well as all the things to be sold in a shop devoted solely to Michael Graves’ designs. The developer, Genting Singapore, approached Michael Graves & Associates after they save a still unbuilt eco-resort the firm had designed for Costa Rica that won the $4.32 million commission in a 2006 international developer’s competition for the site, vying against a team with Frank Gehry on board.

The Sentosa commission was complex because it needed to be designed energy-efficiently in a tropical climate for both daytime and nighttime activities. Eco-coolers blasting chilled air keep outside areas comfortable, while photovoltaic and green roofs shelter interiors. (The project won a Gold Plus award in the local Green Mark program.) Designers at Michael Graves & Associates and Michael Graves Design Group provide a variety of experiences enticing to both families and gamblers in a place where the government disapproves of “gaming” but developers wanted to compete with the thriving gambling business in nearby Macao. And so there is limited access to out-of-sight underground casinos and a very visible Universal Theme Park next door. The goal was to accommodate all of them festively and appropriately, along with the high-end travelers who will stay at the premier Hotel Michael. Yes, this could be a first. It is named after the architect. 

JAYNE MERRILL
The Berlin developer probably didn’t know what was in store when he decided to remove a few balconies and repaint his building pink. But once word got out, within two weeks 3,000 protesters from around the world, including some of the brightest stars in architecture, had signed a petition against defacing John Hejduk’s Kreuzberg Tower.

Then on April 19, after the Berlin Senate and the city’s building department weighed in against the alterations, developer BerlinHaus Verwaltung (which bought the building in a foreclosure) changed course and is now proceeding with a complete restoration of one of the very few structures built by the poet of architecture and very few structures built by the revered dean of Cooper Union from 1972 to 2000. “It’s a sweet little grassroots triumph, a little bit of David and Goliath, and very May ’68,” Renata Hejduk, an architectural historian and the architect’s daughter, said from Phoenix where she is a professor at Arizona State University’s School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture.

The happy ending is thanks not so much to a grassroots movement as to the lightning-speed dismay that had emails flying, bloggers buzzing, and Daniel Libeskind decrying the building’s fate in the local newspaper Berliner Morgenpost. The senate’s decision has repercussions that go beyond the rescue of one building. The Kreuzberg Tower was constructed as part of the citywide International BauAufstellung (IBA) program of 1987 that represented, along with many other IBA buildings, post-modernism at its inglorious height in the 1980s. “The senate understood that this wasn’t just about my father’s building, but the entire heritage of a movement that needs to be preserved,” Hejduk said. JULIE V. IOVINE

Building sites are set on an elevated rock outcropping along St. Nicholas Park, graciously accommodating the jagged environs. Though challenging to build on, the rock muffles vibrations that might disturb the labs’ sensitive equipment. With these two buildings and a third scheduled for phase two, the university hopes to attract scientists working in fields like biology, physics, and neurology, KPF tried to build so the buildings might transform easily from a wet lab into a physics lab. Glass-walled communal break rooms positioned just off the main stairway aim to catch the eye of passing scientists and spark interdisciplinary cross-pollination. Though the buildings mirror each other in size and shape, they’re not identical. “We’ve been talking about them like fraternal twins,” said KPF director Hana Kassem. One will include spaces for students and features bold colors for muted tones and textures. JULIA DALEY

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Architect: Bill Pedersen, Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates
Client: City University of New York
Location: 133rd Street and St. Nicholas Terrace
Completion: 2013

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Unveiled
ADVANCED SCIENCE RESEARCH CENTER
A new science research center on the City University of New York’s new South Campus at City College in Harlem pulls the existing campus gridlines across 135th Street and twists them into undulating curves. Designed by Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF), the two glass 200,000-square-foot research buildings are set on an elevated rock outcropping along St. Nicholas Park, graciously accommodating the jagged environs. Though challenging to build on, the rock muffles vibrations that might disturb the labs’ sensitive equipment. With these two buildings and a third scheduled for phase two, the university hopes to attract scientists working in fields like biology, physics, and neurology, KPF tried to build so the buildings might transform easily from a wet lab into a physics lab. Glass-walled communal break rooms positioned just off the main stairway aim to catch the eye of passing scientists and spark interdisciplinary cross-pollination. Though the buildings mirror each other in size and shape, they’re not identical. “We’ve been talking about them like fraternal twins,” said KPF director Hana Kassem. One will include spaces for students and features bold colors for muted tones and textures. JULIA DALEY

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Making Waves
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 façade at Greenwich and 8th as unique as its time-honored neighbors.

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Completion: 2013
a woman’s place is in the home

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constructing two thousand linear feet of walks and a link to the city's bike trail. The mixed-use parking structure includes retail, restaurants, and residences.

The story of this audacious programmatic mix started in 2004, when ex-Starwood developer Robert Wennett came across the SunTrust building, a 1970s office structure from Miami’s modern past. Wennett wanted to upgrade the building and add a civic-oriented space with a variety of retail. By including parking, he significantly increased his square footage, as the city does not count most indoor garages for zoning purposes. However, he wanted to avoid the look of a typical parking structure, and by commissioning the Pritzker Prize winners he was able to lure high-end tenants.

The result, 1111 Lincoln Road, is set atop a glass box housing retail and restaurants, with floors in varying heights for different programs—shorter spaces for cars and taller volumes for a fifth-floor retail store as well as spaces for special events. “The garage is an organism made up of a family of concrete slabs, deployed as floor plates, columns, and ramps,” said Christine Binswanger, senior partner at Herzog & de Meuron. Completely open to the elements, the building offers a flood of natural light and panoramic views of the city below.

Though it celebrates automobile culture, the complex extends the pedestrian realm with water gardens and a Dan Graham–designed pavilion adjacent to Lincoln Road, one of the few successful pedestrian streets in the U.S. “We were interested in the opportunity to do something in Miami Beach,” Binswanger explained, “even more since the project was located on a spot on the island where enhancement of public space was clearly a subject.” Configured to house parties, fashion shows, or markets, the building, Binswanger added, “is almost like a continuation of the streetscape.”

Dubbed Westport Waterfront, the project has a light rail stop at its center. Turner plans to use that station as the seed of a dense multimodal network, including wide sidewalks and a link to the city’s bike trail.

Currently, the development team is constructing two thousand linear feet of wetlands along the shoreline using federal stimulus money. By fall, they will be starting on Westport’s streets and public spaces by local design company Parameter and Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects, based on a multi-density masterplan by Field Operations. “Field Operations’ low-rise scheme yielded some interesting townhouses and lowrise condos, which we incorporated into the site,” said Chris Pfaffle of Parameter. “The high-density one had too much density, but we took its verticality and organization around a main boulevard.”

Perhaps the most unusual thing about Westport is its scant opposition. To help fund infrastructure on the site, Baltimore issued the largest Tax Increment Financing plan in the city’s history, in anticipation of a sharp rise in property taxes from the current $93,000 per year to the estimated $43 million they will take in once the site is fully developed. For their part, the adjacent Westport community is enjoying the attentions of Turner, who has been reaching out by planting trees and hiring locals to clean up the waterfront. The development will above all mean new access to the waterfront, which for 120 years has been privately owned and blocked by warehouses and factories. “They’ve lived in the shadows of smokestacks for many years,” Turner said.
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Taking a snapshot of New York’s past decade of development is no easy feat, as the Architectural League learned after setting out to capture the cumulative impact of sundry megaprojects and rezonings, name-brand condominiums and newly-seeded parks, and a real estate landscape reeling from the recession. In fact, it took nearly 100 photographers, six months, and more than 4,500 images to get a grip on the five boroughs. This visual inventory was amassed by volunteer architects and designers dubbed the New New York Photography Corps, who canvassed every corner of the city (including Staten Island’s Fresh Kills, pictured on front page) in an homage to Berenice Abbott’s Changing New York photo essay of the 1930s. Their group portrait, pared to 1,000 photographs, is on view through June 26 as the centerpiece of the League’s exhibition, The City We Imagined/The City We Made: New New York 2001–2010, installed in a pop-up space at 250 Hudson Street.

“They decided this would be a WPA-type project, offering architects who are underemployed a chance to stay involved, look at the city, look at the changes, and use a skill that probably everybody has—and that’s taking pictures,” said Erica Stoller, director of Esto, the architectural photo agency that advised on the project. After the League summoned interested participants, Esto photographers conferred with the corps, then took part in marathon review sessions to winnow the images down, a process Stoller acknowledges was somewhat unscientific. “A picture has to be full of information, it has to be clear, and it has to look good, too,” she said. “But what I found curious was that we could have sat down with the same group of people and chosen all different images.”

For their part, photographers were obliged to ruthlessly edit their submissions. “I shot more than I ever thought I would—hundreds of pictures,” said Sara Moss, an architectural designer at AECOM who devoted her after-work hours to exploring Lower Manhattan, Bay Ridge, Sunset Park, and the Far West Village. The project, she added, proved a refreshing counterpoint to her day job working on the Second Avenue subway: “It reminded me of the big picture.”

Along with the photographs, the show includes a timeline of development milestones since 2001 and video interviews with notable New York figures. “The third section of the exhibition is a bit more critical,” said Gregory Wessner, digital programs and exhibitions director at the League. “We asked 14 different New Yorkers, from a variety of community, civic, and preservation groups, the same eight questions.” The exhibit also offers opportunities for viewers to comment on all the development, making for an appropriately open-ended urban portrait.
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POUNDING THE PAVEMENT continued from front page has been closing off bits and pieces of the grid to cars and transforming them into plazas for pedestrians, most notably along Broadway between Times and Herald squares.

Coming off the success of that effort, the Department of Transportation announced in late April the initial designs for a major re-jiggering of 34th Street, including closing the entire block at the foot of the Empire State Building. The department also unveiled plans for reorganizing streets around Union Square, as well as reinventing a safer and saner Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn.

“I think when people conjure an image of what a 21st-century street is, they’d think of 34th Street,” said Paul Steely White, executive director of Transportation Alternatives. “This is what a high-performance arterial can and should look like.”

The so-called 34th Street Transitway goes well beyond adding bus bulbs, where riders prepay, and passenger islands. It is the latest phase in the department’s ambitious bus rapid transit plan, rethinking traffic patterns in the heart of the city. No longer will there be two-way traffic on this crowded causeway, prioritized through traffic over community concerns and character,” Steely White said.

Further south on Broadway, traffic lanes will also be reorganized to better accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. Eastbound lanes will be eliminated from the northern border of Union Square, with traffic down Broadway diverted east at 18th Street. Through traffic will be eliminated on Union Square West, as vehicles on Broadway will be forced to head west at 17th Street.

Still more plazas will be created from the leftover asphalt. Half a block north of 18th Street, the western side of Broadway will be given over to the usual benches and chairs, as will a “ribbon plaza” hugging Broadway and 17th Street to the east and south.

Improvements to the corner of Union Square West and 14th Street are also under consideration. Bike lanes will be re-routed, connecting up for the first time with 14th Street and 4th Avenue. The improvements are meant to make it easier to access and enjoy Union Square, particularly when the Greenmarket is in full swing.

A more complex reordering is taking place across the river at Grand Army Plaza, where the community has agitated for improvements to the plaza walled off by traffic. Lanes at the northern and southern end of the avenue will be simplified and regulated; pedestrian islands and crosswalks added and improved; a new bikeway will ring the plaza; and landscaping will be added throughout.

“For too long, the city and the department prioritized through traffic over community concerns and character,” Steely White said. “Fortunately, those days are over.”

Above: Aconci Studio envisioned a superstructure set atop a rolling terrain of mounds and pools. Below: Balmori Associates explored the array’s iconography within the landscape.

EDIC LANDSCAPE continued from front page university announced on April 22 that Hood prevailed over finalists Aconci Studio and Balmori Associates in an invited competition to design a 5,000 solar panel-studded landscape installation that will provide electricity at campus housing facilities for more than 700 students.

The Oakland, California-based Hood has proposed a fragmented grid, which is meant to recall DNA, supported on posts and suspended over stands of low-mainte-
LITTLE GREEN THUMBS
continued from front page

atop the Robert Simon Complex, a massive public school building on the Lower East Side that houses elementary schools P.S. 64 and the Earth School, as well as the Tompkins Square Middle School.
Construction is due to commence this fall, and by next spring, school children should be planting vegetables on a 3,000-square-foot roof deck with spectacular views of the surrounding neighborhood. This experiment in urban agriculture, led by the World Trade Center Memorial designer Michael Arad, will be integrated into existing school courses on science and nutrition. The children will also have the opportunity to eat the food grown on the roof in their school cafeteria.

There is a lot of discussion about roof farms taking place at public schools throughout Manhattan. At several schools, parent groups are developing proposals and hiring architects. In addition to the schools at the Robert Simon Complex, plans are moving forward for roof farms atop P.S. 6 on the Upper East Side and at P.S. 41 on West 11th Street in Greenwich Village.

People involved in roof farm advocacy say they are motivated by concerns about what children are eating at lunchtime. “We are hoping to get rid of all the crappy food in the cafeteria,” says Alison Hazut, principal of The Earth School. “There’s still a lot of fried stuff happening.” In spite of all the good intentions, there are formidable technical hurdles and political challenges to building a farm on top of a school. “There’s a lot of bureaucratic craziness,” said Susannah Vickers, director of Budget and Grants in the office of Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, which is contributing $500,000 toward the cost of the $750,000 project.

“The School Construction Authority (SCA) is bound by a lot of regulations having to do with construction and school kids,” she added. “Things as arcane as the warranty of the roof—they have to do boring samples and engineering reports—and oftentimes the roof substructure is not able to support the new use.” Indeed, parents and teachers at The Earth School, which already has a small agricultural program at ground level, have been talking about building a farmable green roof for years. However, the idea appeared to be going nowhere until Arad, whose child attends the school, got involved in the fall of 2008. “We needed a leader who really understood construction and architecture,” said Hazut, “and Michael had the language to speak to the SCA.” Arad’s first idea, a low-budget concept for filling hundreds of plastic wading pools with dirt and placing them on the roof, didn’t get off the ground. After another plan involving prefabricated planters failed to get funding, Arad went back to the drawing board and designed a workable solution for a smaller deck based on the way that heavy equipment such as HVAC is typically supported on roofs.

Stantec Architecture was hired by the SCA to develop that concept with input from Arad’s group. The final plan involves cutting through the roof slab and stubbing up columns from a hallway in the center of the school. On top of the stubbed columns, two long steel beams will be placed as a foundation for a 20-foot-wide deck that will rest about four feet above the actual 60-foot-wide roof slab.

The Fifth Street Roof Farm will grow only a very small portion of the food served in the cafeteria, but it should play an important role in educating young taste buds. “The challenge was doing a green roof at a school and marrying it to this idea of a farmable roof,” said Arad. “You could do an extensive green roof here quite easily and walk away. But it wouldn’t engage school children like a roof farm can.”

ALEX ULAM

RENDERINGS BY RACHAEL KANGAS
LITTLE GREEN THUMBS
continued from front page
Murphy Burnham and Buttrick (MBB) was formed 12 years ago from the union of three partners from different firms: Jeffrey Murphy, Mary Burnham, and Harold Buttrick. Murphy and Burnham were friends who had worked together years earlier and who liked to meet up regularly to talk shop; Buttrick was a sole practitioner whose firm had grown steadily over the years. The partnership offered an opportunity for Buttrick, who was looking to scale down from his large office; for Murphy and Burnham, it was a chance to scale up from their small firms and take on more complex projects. The group’s portfolio includes a strong roster of institutional and educational work, particularly of Eastern-influenced designs for institutions in New York with roots in Asia or the Middle East. A contemporary Tibetan library in the West Village blends the red and white palette and tiered shapes of Tibetan architecture into a minimalist background, and the American University in Beirut’s New York headquarters creates a clean modern design in Tibetan architecture.

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WHOLE HISTORY MAKING

MAKING HISTORY WHOLE

The Independence Mall in Philadelphia may seem like a perfect slice of history, with its brick buildings and emerald green ground. But the history of the site has been one of controversy—not unlike the history of the country itself—beginning with the creation of the mall through urban renewal in the 1960s that destroyed blocks of homes and businesses.

This October, the latest addition to the mall, The President's House, will be completed, following almost a decade of trouble. The memorial to the “first White House,” as well as to the slaves who worked there, was designed by local firm Kelly/Maiello, selected in a 2006 competition. The project exemplifies the extreme challenges that exist in the fields of preservation and history. And in May, the public was invited to contribute to the heated debate about how the story of the President’s House is told.

“We have to balance the content of the story,” Rosalyn McPherson, the project manager, said. “But there are plenty of places where people can learn about the Founding Fathers on the Independence Mall, including that huge building, the Constitution Center. One of the things that gets short shrift down there is the history of the slaves who also helped found this country.” McPherson also points out that the historians who had lobbied for the project for years never managed to get it off the ground until they had the support of the African American community, which successfully lobbied for much of its $85 million budget. In fact, landscape designer Laurie Olin withdrew from a masterplan he had devised for the site in 2003 in part over an outcry that the plan left out the servant’s quarters. Olin has said he was misinformed about the nature of the house.

The President’s House design recalls Venturi Scott Brown’s 1976 Ghost House, not only in its skeletal form but also approach. Emanuel Kelly, the principal-in-charge, said that the exact dimensions of the President’s House could never be known, and the aim was not to recreate it, but rather to invoke an impression of it centered around three fireplaces, a few doors, and a bay window added by Washington. Eight embedded videos will tell the story of the house and all its occupants, with more than half of them dedicated to the legacy of slavery.

Edward Lawler, the amateur historian who first publicized the house’s location and existence of the slaves therein, believes the project could have been more exacting about the spaces occupied by the slaves. But Kelly maintains that that is not the point. “The house is more or less a scaffolding for this story, which then comes alive on this site,” he said. “As with the best architecture, the space should create meaning, not be the meaning.” MC

SOM LANDS LAGUARDIA

In late April, Port Authority executive director Chris Ward caught a good deal of flack for off-handedly mentioning at a Crain’s breakfast that LaGuardia “should fundamentally be torn down and rebuilt.” It turns out that was not idle chatter. The Observer reports that SOM has won a contract to do almost just that. The Port Authority board has approved a plan to have the firm create conceptual studies for how the airport might be better organized, including a new central terminal. Where the money comes from is another matter entirely.

THE WRIGHT INGREDIENTS

Burning his restaurant design chops, Andre Kikoski won the James Beard Award on May 5 for his flashy new restaurant inside the Guggenheim Museum. It replaced the once dowdy cafeteria designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and a vestigial space tucked under the museum’s sweeping rotunda. Kikoski’s design is all curves and color. The Wright beat out another local spot, Brooklyn’s Choice Kitchens & Bakery by Evan Dougis Studio, and Greensboro, Alabama’s PieLab, designed by Project M. Kikoski joins a string of New York-based designers and restaurants that have won the coveted Beard Award in recent years, no doubt helping the local food scene thrive.

BURSTING BUBBLES

There will be no winter tennis in Central Park, a victory or defeat depending on one’s love of tennis or preservation. A coalition including Friends of the Upper East Side Historic District and the Sierra Club came out against a Parks Department proposal to erect four tennis bubbles in the winter months, arguing that it would destroy the sanctity and possibly even the safety of the park, as the bubbles could damage the sometimes-fragile habitat. But ultimately, it was the higher rates and subsequent accusations of elitism that may have been the thorn that popped the bubbles.

BLOOMBERG BENCHES CITY BUILDINGS

One of the main complaints against green buildings is that there is no way to know if they are performing as promised. As part of P3NYC, the Bloomberg administration has put its energy where its mouth is and recently completed the benchmarking of all 2,790 publicly-owned buildings with more than 10,000 square feet. Private buildings with more than 50,000 square feet will be required to do the same by this time next year. While it takes months to identify inefficiencies and years to fix them, benchmarking is aimed at pushing the city toward a 30 percent reduction in local government’s energy consumption by 2017.

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For many years, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) in Richmond was known as Fort Art, a name that referred to the institution's closed-off aspect. At one time, a wall hemmed in the 13.5-acre campus, blocking views of the state-owned establishment from passersby on the boulevard. Even once this was removed, subsequent additions blunted the civic character of the 1936 Georgian-style foundation building with its grand stair and marbled foyer. Contextual south and north wings designed by local firms were added in 1954 and 1970. In 1985, the addition of a west wing designed by Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer moved the main entrance to the back of the site, hardly an inviting face to the city. Inside, the situation was equally daunting to the uninitiated. While the expansions had increased square footage, they had done little to realize a cohesive circulation plan. As a result, the museum became a confusing labyrinth of galleries full of dead ends that had museum visitors retracing their steps and referring constantly to their floor plans. In 2000, VMFA was ready to expand again. Programmatically, the museum wanted to add a dedicated changing exhibition space, up-to-date conservation facilities, an outdoor sculpture garden, extra room for its permanent collections, education center, and library, and more space for hosting private events in order to provide that all-important income stream so essential to today’s cultural institutions. VMFA also saw this as a chance to address its twin problems of internal circulation and external public relations. It hosted an international competition and selected a proposal by Rick Mather Architects of London. American-born but based in the U.K. since the 1960s, Mather had done little work in the U.S. He has, however, done quite a bit of work on museums in Europe, including the recent renovation and expansion of the revered Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. The VMFA leadership knew that he could deliver a quiet and refined building, contemporary in expression but complementary in material and form. Mather and his team looked at the museum’s problem as chiefly one of masterplanning, and took the entire site into consideration when designing its 165,000-square-foot expansion. They located the addition adjacent to the north wing, setting it back respectfully from the street face made by the Georgian buildings, and cladding the long, low, rectangular mass chiefly in limestone, a material picked up from the pediment of the historic structures. The main entrance was moved to this new northern exposure, where a glass-clad stair tower and a jutting stainless steel canopy make the entry clearly visible from the street. The architects moved the parking lot displaced by the addition into a three-level, 600-car parking deck buried under a landscaped hill. Now part of the outdoor sculpture garden, this sloping grassy knoll will be open to the public free-of-charge 24 hours a day.

Inside, Mather established a new connective heart for the complex in the form of a three-story-high atrium that separates the addition from the existing buildings. Full-height glass walls bookend this vast chamber, opening views to the city to the east and to the sculpture garden to the west. Two rows of skylights frame the ceiling, flooding the interior with the right amount of natural light. Bridges crisscross the atrium, linking the new galleries with the old. Welded-plate steel stairs connect the levels, allowing a meandering flow. Glass elevators ferry visitors throughout the three floors. Everything is open, visible, and immediately intelligible.

This clarity of circulation was extended into the existing buildings as well. The architects opened up long, straight corridors that run unobstructed through the museum’s various structures, crossing the atrium at the bridge points. At the end of each corridor they placed a window, creating bright beacons that function better than any signage as way-finding devices—you can always see your way to light. Within the addition, the galleries, of course, are basic windowless boxes appropriate for hanging paintings. However, Mather built flexibility into the plan by laying out a mixture of both large and small rooms, saving the museum the expense of erecting and demolishing walls every time an exhibition changes. Perhaps because it was begun ten years ago before the prestige of sustainability certification was fully institutionalized, VMFA did not elect to pursue a LEED rating.

The project, however, was designed to meet extremely high performance standards—a choice that Mather takes as a matter of course. The air conditioning is provided by a low-velocity displacement ventilation system designed by Atelier Ten. The building is well insulated, the glass treated with UV and low-e coatings. The building may not be getting a green sticker on its window, but it quietly and confidently will be doing its part. And a large, golden Barry Flanagan rabbit sculpture placed in the large east window announces to all Richmond that this is in fact an art museum.

AARON SEWARD
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YKK AP’s ThermaShade is a pre-engineered system with integral outrigger hooks designed to simplify installation and reduce field labor. The shades have a patent-pending thermally broken curtain wall anchor system, with 35 standard combinations of louvers and fasciae, and 24-, 30-, and 36-inch projections. The Georgia-based company also offers custom designs for high-performance green buildings.

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**Palazzo Lombardia**

**MILAN, ITALY**

**PEI COBB FREED & PARTNERS**

Double-skin curtain walls, sometimes referred to as climate walls, come in many shapes and sizes these days. What can be said about all of them is that they inevitably cost more to fabricate and install than your basic single-skin, insulated glass curtain wall. The payout may be recouped in time with cheaper energy bills through increased thermal performance, and there’s satisfaction in doing one’s part for the environment, but the initial cost is enough to put the system out of range for many projects seeking sustainability. This is especially true in the United States, where such measures are value-engineered out quicker than you can say Global Climate Change. But the Palazzo Lombardia, a municipal building currently under construction in Milan, proves these systems can be completed at a reasonable price. Pei Cobb Freed’s competition-winning design for this 1 million-square-foot, 225 million-Euro, regional government headquarters provides a refined climate wall that matches manufacturing efficiency with energy efficiency.

The secret behind Pei Cobb Freed’s cost-cutting wall is its repetitive, modular design. In plan, the building fills out an awkward site with four snaking 7- to 9-foot-high slabs that meet in several places to define semi-elliptical public courtyards. At merely 46 feet wide, these office blocks allow ample daylight into the interior. The curves in the plan are all of equal radius. This allowed the architects to spec only two different curtain wall modules, one for the convex curves that are 6 feet wide and one for the concave curves that are 5 feet 10 inches wide. The module widths were also calibrated to match the structural bays, which boast 36-foot spans. There are seven modules per bay on the convex curves, and six modules per bay on the concave curves. At over 11 feet high, all of the exterior modules, which are insulated glass units, run floor to floor with an 11-inch aluminum spandrel unit. The interior layer is a laminated glass unit that runs from floor to ceiling. “The systems themselves are very flexible,” said Jose Brugera, Pei Cobb Freed partner-in-charge of the project. “The interior was also meant to be flexible to meet the needs of each new government, as after every election there is some change.”

The 3-foot air space between the two layers of glass is wide enough to access for maintenance and cleaning purposes. It also houses a shading system of micro-perforated vertical aluminum vanes. Controlled by a building management system, the vanes rotate throughout the day to reflect direct sunlight. The perforations maintain a degree of transparency even when the shades are completely closed, allowing dappled light to flow into the interior and views to pass out. The cavity also acts as a return air duct. “In the competition, we didn’t have the slab continue all the way to the outer layer,” said Brugera. “There was a grating for walking, so that air could travel up through the multiple floors. However, local fire code required separation in the cavity, so we brought the floor slab all the way through and designed the return air to flow from floor to floor.” This also permitted the exterior wall to be hung directly from the slab, another cost-saving opportunity that sidestepped the need to design a dedicated truss system for support. A 550-foot-tall, 41-story tower sprouts at the intersection of two of Palazzo Lombardia’s sinuous office blocks. The double-wall system continues all the way to the top of this new distinctive element on the Milan skyline, except on the south face, where building-integrated photovoltaic panels were used. Pei Cobb Freed designed the tower’s concave east and west faces as a formal response to the nearby Pirelli Tower’s convex profile, but the project also bears a kinship to that modern masterpiece’s forward-thinking spirit.
Designing the new towers now rising at the World Trade Center site was a daunting task. On the one hand, you have the relatively straightforward program of an office building with a retail component in the podium. On the other, the weight of a site that holds a powerful emotional charge in the national psyche. Fulfilling the former while honoring the latter creates a dichotomy of purpose prickly enough to befuddle the most sensitive of architectural talents. This is doubly true of Tower 4, which sits directly across Greenwich Street from the center's memorial, Reflecting Absence. To respond to this conundrum, Maki and Associates set their sights on refining the building’s envelope to a point of ethereality, removing it from the appearance of any association with making and spending money.

“We had a moral responsibility to the public to deliver a spiritual design,” said Gary Kamemoto, Maki’s director on the project. “We decided to use a very minimal vocabulary, to create something very abstract that would allow the tower to have a quiet presence of dignity and serenity.”

The architects did not stop at minimalism. “As we travel back and forth to New York, we are always struck by three towers on the skyline—the Empire State, the Chrysler, and Citicorp,” continued Kamemoto. “They have a sparkling metallic materiality that shines in the otherwise drab mass of buildings. They make us feel a certain optimism that we thought would be appropriate for the World Trade Center site.”

Maki began by creating a very simple, sculptural form for the 65-story, 550,000-square-foot building—in plan, a parallelogram chiseled away at the top to form a trapezoidal crown with two cutout corners running the entire height. To achieve a Brancusi-like abstraction on the surface of this volume, the architects, along with facade consultant R. A. Heintges and Associates and wall manufacturer Benson, designed an extremely reflective curtain wall module with no spandrel. Structurally glazed, the assembly of 5-foot-wide by 13-foot-6-inch-high unitized panels creates an abstract grid that completely hides the building’s floor plates and confuses any reading of scale. Pulling this off involved a few unusual details. For one, the team worked with Dow Corning to develop a coating for the glass that would deliver the right metallic sheen. At 40 percent reflectivity—an anomaly in this day of super-transparent glass envelopes—the insulated glass units deliver impressive energy performance by casting off heat loading from the sun. Secondly, the lack of spandrel required the use of a touch mullion, which is a horizontal mullion that extends between the floor plate and the back of the glass. Though it plays no structural role, it does satisfy local fire code, which demands that both the top and bottom of a slab reach the exterior wall. Finally, Leslie E. Robertson Associates’ structural design puts only four massive columns at the perimeter, leaving the corners cantilevered and a jaw-dropping 80-foot clear span across the face of the building. While this was good for opening up a lot of free wall space, it also created significant differential movement that the skin had to be able to absorb. The team responded with a 1.75-inch horizontal joint in the curtain wall that can open to as much as three inches.

At the building’s podium, which houses the office lobby and retail space, Maki switched to a different skin. While unearthly abstraction worked for the tower, at the ground he wanted something more tactile and architectonic. There, transparent laminated glass modules are supported by a stick-built system of 3-inch-by-12-inch solid steel mullions. The system is robust enough to meet the World Trade Center’s stringent blast requirements, but its Miesian detailing keeps it elegant and provides a satisfying foundation for the luminous tower.

“It’s a simple move,” explained Kamemoto. “You use a different modulation from the tower and it makes the base look special, makes it stand out.”

WORLD TRADE CENTER TOWER 4
NEW YORK
MAKI AND ASSOCIATES
WITH R.A. HEINTGES & ASSOCIATES
Clockwise from top, left: A stick-built system will differentiate the podium; the tower’s curtain wall panels will be 40 percent reflective; the podium’s laminated glass modules with steel mullions; the tower’s touch mullions close the space between the floor slab and the glass, a fire code requirement.

Facing page: The tower as seen from each elevation.
The five undulating ribbons of the soon-to-be constructed Lincoln Square Synagogue facade are inspired by the ancient scrolls of the Torah, but the historic form is being interpreted with the most advanced BIM and parametric modeling systems around. Principal John Cetra and project manager Theresa Genovese of CetraRuddy designed the 70-foot-square curtain wall in collaboration with facade consultant Front’s co-founder Marc Simmons. Beginning with hand-drawn curves, the design was translated into BIM to create five spline curves in multiples of 16.5 inches—the optimal panel width, taking into account ease of fabrication and the appearance of the curves. Though glass panels and joints are identical, each of the 250 aluminum frames contains a customized suite of extrusions and transoms, many of which are being fabricated using CATIA by Brooklyn-based Roxy Lab, a facade research and development facility and sister company of Front. Simmons described the curtain wall glass fabrication as the one analog process in the project’s hyper-digital execution. The architects envisioned using a real fabric interlayer to evoke the Torah’s parchment scrolls, and after extensive testing chose a synthetic fabric called Trevira, hand-placed to create delicate striations. The wall’s external lite contains the fabric laminated between SGP interlayers, while the interior lite is laminated white ceramic fritted glass. Placing the frit on the innermost surface will diffuse light from a 12-inch linear LED component in the base and head of each unit, causing the facade to glow. The extent of Front and Roxy Lab’s involvement with the project grew in part out of larger contractors’ lack of interest in a highly complex yet small-scale project. For Simmons, though, the synagogue is a pilot for larger endeavors, like the Barclays Center at Atlantic Yards: “Essentially, we are taking the Lincoln Square, design-to-fabrication model and scaling it up to deliver the building for Forest City Ratner.”

The work will change the building completely. With an articulated curtain wall at the base and sleeker panels over the tower, it will look as new as nearby 100 Park Avenue, for which MdeAS was a finalist in this year’s Zerofootprint re-cladding prize. Though the new windows at 330 Madison will be nearly 20 inches larger than the original 7-foot-high vision panels, the reflective insulating glass units will help the wall assembly be one-third more energy efficient. Behind the glass, aluminum shadow boxes will cover the dated brown brick piers. “This tired old lady comes out a brand new building,” said Shannon. As much as the building will change from the outside, perhaps the design team’s best trick will be doing the work while offices are completely occupied. Once the new skin has been attached, workers will remove the old windows at night, pulling them inside and installing aluminum trim kits to finish the frames. When employees return in the morning, they’ll hardly know it’s the same building; at least, according to the plan. JKG
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The poigniant moment of perfection—between the comple-
sion of a space and the arrival of its first users—is what
attracts German photographer Julian Faulhaber. In his
examination of these architectural twilight zones, he uses
large-format exposures of up to 20 seconds, which results
in saturated colors and a nearly abstract sense of space.
Adding to the clinical impression is the available light at
such sites, typically fluorescent, and the photographer’s
disorienting perspectives. Of the various basketball courts,
supermarkets, and gas stations on view, the only clue to the
nature of these spaces is often the title, as with Lot (2009,
above). In contrast to many of his contemporaries, most of
Faulhaber’s images are not digitally processed. But as with
the work of Andreas Gursky and Thomas Demand, these
views of utilitarian structures can be read as a kind of social
commentary: They reveal the exotic, oily-slick surface of
reality, waiting to be despoiled.
MAXIMUM MIAMI

Miami Modern Metropolis
Edited by Allan T. Shulman
Bass Museum of Art/Balcony Press, $85.00

Exhibition catalogues should ideally survive the show that purports to document, serving as long-term sources of useful information and, in the best cases, becoming catalysts for ongoing dialogue about critical issues of the day. Unfortunately, many are little more than over-produced and under-edited monuments to academic style. With its weighty (and lengthy) title, four principal essays, 27 contributors, 40 case studies, and 400-plus pages, Miami Modern Metropolis: Paradise and Paradox in Midcentury Architecture and Planning could seem at first glance to be just such a monument. Happily, this is not the case. Under Allan T. Shulman’s excellent editorship, the book is conceived and designed exceptionally well. The illustrations are integrated with and complement the texts, as well as serving as an arguably complete visual archive of Miami’s development over the past 65 years. Despite being Biblical in number, the 40 case studies are well chosen and make very worthwhile reading. Together, they represent a comprehensive treatment of a complex topic, and individually they offer single-source information on an incredible array of timely topics, from Raymond A. Mohr’s “Leaving Overtown: Housing, Segregation, and Postwar Black Migration” to Shulman’s “Port and Passenger Terminals: Infrastructure as Spectacle” and Robert Gonzalez’s “Interama: Visions of a Pan-American City.” In the treatment of these topics and many others, the book’s contributors cast a very wide net—far beyond the familiar territory of tropical glamour that has spawned a virtual cottage industry of glossy revisionism vis-à-vis Miami Beach’s hotel heyday. (Don’t worry, there’s that, too.) In his introductory essay, Shulman sets forth with great intelligence and insight the four paradoxes that are used to structure the assemblage of case studies: “The Working City and the City of Leisure,” “Civic Ideals in the Vernacular City,” “Modernity and Fantasy,” and “Construction of Authenticity.” In expanding upon the book’s alluringly alliterative title, Shulman’s paradoxes of modern Miami are an essential framework for understanding the fascinatingly diverse hybrid that the “Magic City” represents. Unlike many older cities and a good number of younger ones, Miami has no single creation myth (no Romulus or Remus), no single founding charter (no Mayflower Compact), and no single visionary manifesto (no Radiant City) within its urban DNA. Without the benefits (or, it could be argued, the constraints) of such foundational ideologies, Miami has developed the same sort of hybrid cultural mechanisms that Rem Koolhaas saw in Manhattan: “a promiscuous capacity to absorb objects, people, iconographies, [and] symbolisms.” Miami Modern Metropolis is a field guide to this exotically artificial architectural hothouse and the entirely new cultural ecosystem that supports it.

The essay from Belgian-born architect and urban historian Jean-François Lejeune, “City Without Memory: Planning the Spectacle of Greater Miami,” is one of several that give the book significance to a much wider audience than those interested in Miami alone. Like Koolhaas’s Delicious New York, Umberto Eco’s Travels in Hyperreality, and even Alexis de Tocqueville’s Democracy in America, Lejeune opens up the subject to a broader discussion of how America has created its culture, both urbanistically and architecturally, with the same acuity of his fellow visitors in this new world. While the words of each of these authors will find a reflection in Miami, it is interesting to note the observations of a native-born writer as well. In her slim but extremely erudite volume Cities on a Hill, Frances FitzGerald sees Americans as able and willing to “shuck off” their pasts and begin anew; FitzGerald sees the same impulse in the creation of Arizona’s Sun City as a community of older citizens, of San Francisco’s Castro as a district inhabited by lesbians and gays, of Oregon’s Rajneeshpuram as a town for the followers of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh’s Human Potential Movement, and of Liberty University, the evangelical fundamentalist university founded by Jerry Falwell. In the same way as Lejeune, FitzGerald sees Americans as essentially “careless” with their histories, or at least unbound by them. Yet Miami differs from the rest of these places in that it has become, if only reluctantly, a metropolis that somehow incorporates all the visions of the various “pioneers” that came to Southern Florida to “shuck off” their pasts and create something wholly without precedent. They would perhaps be surprised, judging by the evidence in Miami Modern Metropolis, how much history they created in the process of trying to escape their own.

TERENCE RILEY IS A PRINCIPAL AT KEENEN/RILEY ARCHITECTS AND THE FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE MIAMI ART MUSEUM.
Double-wide Democracy

Growing Urban Habitats: Seeking a New Housing Development Model catalogues “participatory” design approaches in response to a competition brief for rethinking the American paradigm of the trailer park. With the input of residents at Sunrise Trailer Court in Charlottesville, VA, a community endangered by gentrification, competition sponsor Urban Habitats—a coalition of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Charlottesville (HHGC) and the Charlottesville Community Design Center—aimed to reinvent the 2.3-acre trailer park as a new model for affordable housing. The most compelling design strategies among the 41 student and 123 professional entries will inform the Sunrise Master Plan, developed by HHGC and its design team.

The redevelopment of Sunrise is driven by the goals of affordability, density, compactness, and sustainability. These catalyze inclusionary urban redevelopment and help reframe our notions of that zone between gentrified city neighborhoods and areas of disinvestment. The project’s paradox is the way to go.

With these development principles neatly in place, however, at least one question arises: Does the transformation of Sunrise require semblance to an autonomous urban neighborhood in order to achieve equitability? The alternatives proposed in the text suggest that making the trailer park a better place to live means making it more urban. There is no question that when it comes to displacing the Sunrise community altogether, rethinking land use to make it more efficient and sustainable, with more open space, is the way to go. But once the model of the trailer park is redefined by increasing its population significantly and by providing integrated commercial space, doesn’t it begin to resemble what we think of as a gentrified first-ring neighborhood that has lost its fundamental sense of identity? Therein lies the project’s paradox.

Still, Growing Urban Habitats offers alternatives that could make a positive impact on site planning, building envelope, and waste management. Paul Tebben’s Tit-for-Tat proposes a gradual development of Sunrise through the strategic addition of standardized elements. This sensible solution results in “mutually beneficial,” incremental changes that build upon the existing community. Less sensitive to the trailer park’s idiom, Watershed Architects’ Slip Stitch seems to fully accommodate the program brief, though at the expense of creating a neighborhood that has the potential to grow. The sectional diagram of Slip Stitch presents a persuasive family of affordable and market-rate condos and two-story, three-bedroom homes, with cuts through the site that allow for community gardens, a park, and upper and lower public plazas. Damon Pearson’s “pods,” included in the book but only related to the competition in philosophy, appear to offer more appropriate, less intrusive solutions. Tradeoffs seem imperative to Sunrise’s survival.

What is essential to take from this book is that the search for an alternative to low-income community displacement is advanced. Urban Habitats provides the framework for an institutional model capable of realizing the goals of the competition and program for Sunrise and other communities like it. The integrated planning, design, and development approach, with resident input, is the project’s finest point. In the end, what must be determined is how far Urban Habitats wants to take the trailer park toward a new urban trope at Sunrise.

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When the architectural photographer Robert Damora died last year at the age of 97, we lost another link to modern architecture’s generation of post–World War II image-makers. Like Julius Shulman, Marvin Rand, and Ezra Stoller, he was a dedicated modernist who as a practicing architect worked diligently to frame buildings as their designers intended them to be viewed and experienced.

But Damora was also an activist for modernism, and it is here that he may have left his most important legacy. In the early 1960s, for example, he created and developed a campaign for both consumer and architecture magazines that he called Better Houses at Lower Cost. He meant this program to serve as a model for mass-produced houses using prefabricated components that could be adapted to varying sites and programs, yet avoid the conformity of most commercial housing developments. Damora built six houses for the program, and one for a proposed development on Cape Cod won him Architectural Record’s House of the Year award for 1962.

Perhaps his most influential initiative, however, was Seeds for Architecture, developed for Universal Atlas Cement. According to Damora’s widow Sirkka, United States Steel had acquired the cement company, turning to ad agency BBDO to create a public campaign promoting the creative use of concrete. The agency asked Damora to curate the program, and he selected 21 architects and engineers to work on 14 exploratory projects. Advertorials featuring the projects were published in Time, Fortune, and The Saturday Evening Post between 1956 and 1958. Seeds for Architecture was also published as a feature story in Architectural Forum in the magazine’s section on structural innovation.

Damora’s curatorial vision promoted a remarkably high level of projects in Forum designed by the likes of Louis Kahn, I.M. Pei, John Johansen, Walter Gropius, and Marcel Breuer. Among the most original of these designs were a tubular concrete bridge by Paolo Soleri (top), based on the notion of a split straw, and an airport by Victor Gruen and Edgardo Continii (above) that allowed airplanes directly into a terminal facility to bring them closer to passengers. The popular and professional success of the campaign led to its inclusion in MoMA’s Visionary Architecture exhibition of 1960, and it stands as a model for how creative architecture can be used to sell a vision of the future.

WILLIAM MENKING IS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AT AN.
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