While designs for the Barclays Center arena at Brooklyn’s Atlantic Yards have been public for a year, only on September 28 did SHoP Architects and Forest City Ratner Companies release their plans for the temporary plaza that will become the project’s initial public calling card. A nearly 39,000-square-foot triangular shape formed by the intersection of Atlantic and Flatbush avenues, the plaza consists of a wide swath of open space, punctuated by a green-roofed entrance to the Atlantic Terminal Transit Hub and two semicircles of planters inlaid with wooden benches at the plaza’s tip.

SHoP founding principal Gregg Pasquarelli explained that the space

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JAPANESE ARCHITECTS PICKED FOR GUGGENHEIM PAVILION

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What the world needs now may not be another branch of the Guggenheim. Instead, director Richard Armstrong announced on October 1 that the museum is launching a series of traveling pavilions that will host multidisciplinary events and installations in nine cities around the world. The first

continued on page 12

BOW WOW!

INTERNATIONAL ENGINEERING FIRM OVE ARUP & PARTNERS SAYS IT IS “DISAPPOINTED” OVER A LAWSUIT ALLEGING THAT FAULTY ENGINEERING WORK COST MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN REPAIRS TO THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO’S MODERN WING ADDITION BEFORE ITS OPENING IN MAY 2009. THE INSTITUTE FILED THE COMPLAINT IN U.S. DISTRICT COURT ON SEPTEMBER 21, OUTLINING A LIST

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GOING UP WITH FOSTER

CHINA’S EYE ON DESIGN

WRIGHT IN THE KITCHEN

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When Urban Center Books closed last January, architects lost more than the ability to shop for the latest design tomes. The dressing room–sized bookstore was meeting place, research incubator, perfect stopover

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VAN ALEN POP-UP BOOKSTORE REINVENTS URBAN CENTER BOOKS

NEW LEAF

broken wing?

International engineering firm Ove Arup & Partners says it is “disappointed” over a lawsuit alleging that faulty engineering work cost millions of dollars in repairs to the Art Institute of Chicago’s Modern Wing addition before its opening in May 2009. The Institute filed the complaint in U.S. District Court on September 21, outlining a list

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BROKEN WING?

SIX TEAMS COMPETE TO BUILD NEW V&A BRANCH

SCOTTISH SATELLITE

Dundee, Scotland is aiming to build a satellite of London’s Victoria & Albert Museum as part of a larger redevelopment strategy. The sponsors are holding an international competition, with two New York–based firms, REX and Steven Holl Architects, among the six finalists. The V&A Dundee is a joint project of the University of Dundee with Abertay University, the city of Dundee, the Scottish Government, and Scotland Enterprise, an economic development agency. It will host touring exhibitions while serving as an incubator for contemporary design practices in Scotland.

Under the current agreement, the London V&A will supply the Dundee facility with

continued on page 8

SCOTTISH SATELLITE

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continued on page 8
TUNNEL TROUBLE

New Jersey Governor Christopher J. Christie’s dumbfounding decision to cancel what is widely seen as the most important public works project in America should be a wake-up call for planners, politicians, and architects who care about salvaging the region’s future amid a climate of professed fiscal prudence and steadily shrinking public enterprise.

Christie’s move to halt construction of the ARC project—the $8.7 billion transit link between the New Jersey Meadowlands and Penn Station through two new single-track tunnels—shows how short-sighted political tactics threaten to sabotage decades of planning for the public good. While, at press time, the governor had given ARC a two-week reprieve, pending conversations with furious federal transportation officials, this month’s mind-bending scenario offers an urgent lesson for large-scale investments in the region’s fraying transit, energy, and ecological networks.

As we’ve noted here before, the future of architecture and planning in America lies in infrastructure—the sprawling, region-spanning systems that underpin sound design for a densifying planet. The ARC project, with funding from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the federal government, and the state of New Jersey, can be seen as a model of collaborative decision-making and shared vision for the existing 100-year-old trans-Hudson tunnel. Begun in 1995 with the study of 137 different alternatives, the project has involved input from across the spectrum of public leaders, transportation and environmental agencies, and community, business, and labor groups.

But that collaborative vision has been jeopardized by blinkered officials like Governor Christie, who claims that New Jersey can no longer afford its share of ARC costs. Instead, the governor has devised a plan to funnel New Jersey’s $2.7 billion tunnel contribution into the state’s debt-plagued Transportation Trust Fund, where it would presumably be available for road projects and repairs to existing rail lines—precisely the kind of small-bore infrastructural thinking that has kept New York and New Jersey public transit systems in a state of perpetual panic.

One key to reform lies in the way large-scale projects like ARC are administered. Darius Sollohub, director of the New Jersey School of Architecture at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, notes how one hotheaded politician can pull the plug on a multi-agency effort with $600 million already spent and construction under way for more than a year. “The overriding question that future infrastructure planners will ask is how many of projects significant scope can be executed in America today if one individual can stop decades of carefully laid plans,” Sollohub writes. “Whatever the outcome, future planners and legislators will consider whether a governor with the least money on the table should have so much unilateral power.”

That question is particularly acute for the architects, planners, and engineers who are perhaps the only ones with their shirts truly on the line in the ARC project—among them Parsons Brinckerhoff, STV, and DMJM Harris/AECOM, not to mention the construction management team of Tishman, Parsons, and Arup—who bear the brunt of capricious maneuvers like Christie’s, which trade our collective future for a bogus agenda of tough-love retrenchment.

JEFF BYLES

NEW LEAF continued from front page

between errands, and essential repository of the books, academic journals, and magazines that architects depended on to stay current.

It is not too much to say that its closure stymied the flow of intellectual discourse across the city. And so it is very good news that the Van Alen Institute has announced plans to reincarnate an equally generous go-to source in the shape of a pop-up bookshop and event space at its own storefront on 22nd Street in Chelsea. The six-month experiment, scheduled to open in November and perhaps take root in a permanent interactive bookstore, will be supported by $25,000 from the JMK Kaplan Fund, the very same foundation that launched the original Urban Center Books.

“It is vitally important that New York have a place where architectural books and journals can be seen, touched, perused, and purchased,” said Rick Bell, president of the AIA’s New York Chapter.

The effort to resuscitate Urban Center Books goes back to almost the day it closed, with many (including The Architect’s Newspaper) taking part in the discussion. The Municipal Art Society, which managed Urban Center Books in its three decades at the Van Alen House on Madison Avenue, will be offering some of the inventory of books it has held in storage, and will be offering consulting services on how to run the place. Publishers will be sought to supply their newest titles.

But the pop-up won’t be just about books. Olympia Kazi, executive director of the Van Alen Institute, has much bigger plans: “There’s an opportunity for a huge synergy, and I would be blind not to see it,” she said. The institute recently launched the Reading Room, a space within its offices where the public can go to read, research, attend lectures, and access some of the impressive design archive dating to 1894. Kazi plans to move these activities to the storefront pop-up to engage more of the public. In May, she also plans to sponsor an “architecture publishing summit” to discuss with all stakeholders—whether publishers, writers, editors, and book sellers—where architecture content is going and where best it will be found in the future.

“It’s not just about a store but an installation, a curated selection of volumes and other media, too,” Kazi said. “Just imagining the possible collaborations is very exciting.”

JULIE V. JOVINE

FRANTIC ATLANTIC YARDS

At a time when urban planning and the expression of how cities work in our changing environment is at the forefront of current conversations, I would expect that it is also at the forefront of current architectural projects. SHoP’s recent design of Atlantic Yards, as well as your article about it (“New Front Yard for Atlantic Yards,” archpaper.com, 09.30.2010; see page 1 of this issue) blatantly ignores the existing conditions and problems of the overall site.

The new building shown in the renderings is surrounded by a sea of pavement, with more than 6 blocks of asphalt on either side of the triangular plaza. The plaza itself is hardly anything more than another “swath of wide open space” that has to be crossed. Whether the building has an interesting expression of form is beside the point. The main problem—the convergence of these two enormous roads—has yet to be solved by the architects, or even addressed. It is another missed chance to make an urban improvement through thoughtful design.

The architects should reexamine the urban design problem, so that the project is not another example of architects (and developers) turning their back on the street. I fail to see how wooden benches amid 16 lanes of automobile traffic is at a destination that anyone would want to visit. The only change in height or scale within the plaza is off-limits to plaza users. The fact that there is little to no traffic represented in the renderings is yet again blatant ignorance of the existing conditions.

Whether The Architect’s Newspaper is simply reporting the news, or trying to gloss over the enormous blunders in the designs unveiled, there is still a responsibility on the part of the reporter to issues that are completely ignored—or possibly made worse—by an architectural response. New York City is better represented and better served by swaths of paint on streets rather than this swath of wide space. 

HILDA COHEN

BROOKLYN

CORRECTIONS

A report on science facilities at City College (“Science Experiment,” AN16_10.06.2010) misstated the name of the CUNY Advanced Science Research Campus, and omitted a credit for the project. While Flad and Associates served as architect of record and designed the labs, the complex was designed by Kohn Pedersen Fox. The article also incorrectly described the Marshak Science Building as the only laboratory on the campus in fact houses research labs at two other buildings.

A front-page photograph of the Israel Museum’s Crown Plaza (AN 15, 09.22.2010) carried an erroneous credit. The photographer was Tim Hursley.

An article about Harlem’s P.S. 80 (“Home Schooled,” AN14_09.08.2010) stated that C.B. Snyder patented the structure’s floor system. In fact, architects have been opined to suggest that Snyder sought such a patent on this or any other innovation.
City Hall was a fabulous fabric. “We thought Boston downtown Boston’s tight-knit a daunting interruption of have primarily served as acres of concrete and brick Instead, the plaza’s seven as a grand civic ensemble. 1960s, they were envisioned urban renewal in the mid-Kallmann, McKinnell & within it were built by the government building sites in state capitals. makeovers of dysfunctional agency has selected City Hall EPA has selected City Hall Plaza is finally poised for a makeover, courtesy of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The redesign will focus on defining the edges of the plaza, softening it with green-scape and trees, and incorpo-rating sustainable elements to generate energy and capture stormwater runoff. The EPA issued a request for qualifications, which closed on October 1, to select a firm with expertise in urban design and landscape archi-tecture. The winning firm will work with the agency and the City of Boston to lead a series of charrettes in November to settle on a pre-liminary plan for the plaza. The timing for Boston is also right to help integrate the plaza with the surround-ing city. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority is in the middle of a renova-tion of the Government Center subway station at City Hall. “This is a unique opportunity to integrate it with the pedestrian corridor that crosses the plaza,” said James Hunt, Mayor Thomas Menino’s chief of environment and energy. Additionally, the charrette will examine the possibility of extending one of the main arteries of the North End neighborhood, Hanover Street, which currently dead-ends at the plaza. “No one used to think about that because I-93 used to go through the city, but now that’s been depressed by the Big Dig. Making that connec-tion may or may not make sense, but we’ll take a look at it,” Monahan said. Although many have been hoping that the Brutalist City Hall building might one day be demolished, this project is a strong signal that the idea is off the table. “I think the mayor is committing to keep the seat of city government here,” Hunt said. However, some preservation-ists are optimistic that the unpopular building might acquire some revenue-geners fits of the plaza redesign. “It is an unfriendly and difficult-to-penetrate building,” said Sarah Kelly, executive director of the Boston Preservation Alliance, “but there might be some ways of dealing with the plaza that could start to create a context for the building itself that would make people understand and appreciate it more.” JUlia CAlep

EPA PROGRAM REVAMPS BOSTON PLAZA

After decades of loathing from public officials and the public alike, Boston’s City Hall Plaza is finally poised for a makeover, courtesy of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The agency has selected City Hall Plaza as one of five winners of its new Greening America’s Capitals program, which will annually award design assistance grants for green makeovers of dysfunctional sites in state capitals.

When City Hall Plaza and the government building within it were built by Kallmann, McKinnell & Knowles in the heyday of urban renewal in the mid-1960s, they were envisioned as a grand civic ensemble. Instead, the plaza’s seven acres of concrete and brick have primarily served as a daunting interruption of downtown Boston’s tight knit fabric. “We thought Boston City Hall was a fabulous candidate for the program,” said Rosemary Monahan, the EPA’s Region 1 smart growth coordinator. “It’s a barren, wind swept, desolate place. In the winter, it’s like trudging across Siberia.”

The redesign will focus on defining the edges of the plaza, softening it with green-scape and trees, and incorpo-rating sustainable elements to generate energy and capture stormwater runoff. The EPA issued a request for qualifications, which closed on October 1, to select a firm with expertise in urban design and landscape archi-tecture. The winning firm will work with the agency and the City of Boston to lead a series of charrettes in November to settle on a pre-liminary plan for the plaza.

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Greening Beantown

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Any veteran of a certain kind of gallery opening knows the real show is in the elevator: crowded connoisseurs, mutu- 
ally observant in their haute-bohemian finest, bringing the polish and Shim- 
ming of wine and each other’s spirits. New York needs this to remain unrealized—sug- 
gest both the pleasures and the perils, as in much of Foster’s masterfully 
controlled work, of leaving nothing to chance. Apart from Midtown’s zippy Hearst Tower (compro- 
mised somewhat by its stubby height and borrowed base), and any echo of a brilliantly acute proposal for Ground Zero (still the readers’ choice of The New York Times!), the greatest city in the world remains lamentably 
unadorned by the work of the planet’s greatest large-scale architect firm. Foster + Partners’ long-planned 
renovations of the New York Public Library and Lincoln Center’s Avery Fisher Hall may someday alleviate our provincial vernacular of wan historicist pastiche and trivially grandiose formalism. Foster’s output consistently demonstrates that there need be no compromise between systems of techni- 
cal optimization and spaces of ardent proportion, light, and detail that reward our senses, expanding and light our spirits. New York needs this combination of mechanical candor and moving rooms. But perhaps, next time, not in quite so literal a combina- 
tion. THOMAS DE MONCHAUX

clockwise: The Norman Foster–designed gallery on the Bowery; inside the “moving gallery” part of the first floor rises to a 27-foot ceiling; the underside of the moving gallery.
On September 21, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) gave the preliminary go-ahead for Seaport Square, a 23-acre, $3 billion mixed-use development in the South Boston waterfront district. Officials describe the 6.3 million square-foot scheme as the largest single project in the city’s history.

The BRA approved Kohn Pedersen Fox’s masterplan for a 20-block, 22 building residential neighborhood with a mix of retail, office, hotel, civic, and cultural spaces and significant open space—almost 40 percent of the project—including several parks and linear green space. The pedestrian-oriented plan also includes connections to the waterfront and the downtown business district.

The former Penn Central railroad property, which has been used for parking since the 1970s, sits between the Boston Convention Center on Summer Street and Fan Pier, where Diller Scofidio + Renfro’s Institute of Contemporary Art opened in 2006. Seaport Square’s landscape will ultimately slope from the 25-foot deck of Summer Street to water level.

According to KPF principal and chief designer Jamie von Klemperer, the design draws on concepts explored in the firm’s masterplan for New Songdo, rising near Seoul, South Korea. While the scale and context are worlds apart, both projects combine the elements of a mature urban environment with a clean slate. “It’s this idea of creating a synergy of somewhat overlapping functions in a very tight space,” von Klemperer said.

Mayor Thomas Menino has designated the waterfront district an “innovation district,” and officials are hoping to lure companies in the high-tech, life sciences, and creative sectors. To that end, developers Boston Global Investors, Morgan Stanley, and W/S Development Associates recently added a high-tech business incubator and workforce housing to the project. Proponents of the plan note that it adds much-needed affordable and moderately priced housing.

“Decreasing the size of some of the housing units creates a denser and more livable pattern, and results in more affordable housing,” said Tom Piper, a research scientist in the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning. “That means more people, which makes the streets more active.”

Unfortunately, he added, the developers have to live with a tangle of access roads for the Central Artery, creating a challenge for walkable connections to other parts of the city.

The first phase, to get underway in 2011, includes several apartment buildings and the Innovation Center incubator. As of early October, architects for those projects had not been selected.

TED SMALLEY BOWDEN

Broken Wing continued from front page

Defects it says resulted from “woefully inadequate” engineering, and asking for $10 million in damages from the London-based firm, which collaborated with its Chicago offices on the Renzo Piano-designed project.

“We did attempt to come to an agreement with Arup before filing the lawsuit, but our attempts were unsuccessful,” said Art Institute spokesperson Erin Hogan.

The complaint says problems resulted from defective engineering documents and specifications by Arup. Among these are air-handling systems incorrectly sized to create the proper environment for artwork, cracked and curling concrete sub-flows that delayed installation of wooden gallery floors, and loud whistling along the museum’s roof of curved steel blades during windy weather.

Though most of the problems were remedied well before the museum’s opening, the Institute says designs allowing too much light into galleries required the museum to install film on some windows, and the curtain wall and skylights had to be redesigned to control condensation.

Trina Foster, Arup’s U.S. director of marketing and communication, emailed a statement to AN: “Arup are disappointed to note the recent filing by the Institute in response to the Modern Wing project. We are very proud of our contribution to the award-winning Modern Wing, and will continue to work with the Art Institute to find an amicable resolution to their concerns and ours. The issues under discussion are not unusual for a large and complex museum project, and we maintain our view that we have acted consistently with the high standards expected of our profession.”

Others involved in the Modern Wing project, including Piano’s firm, architect of record InterActive Design, and construction manager Turner, are not named in the suit.

Jennifer K. Gorsche
Completed in 1915, the Georgian Revival–style Gilman Hall was the first academic building to be constructed on Johns Hopkins University’s Homewood Campus in Baltimore. A gorgeous landmarked edifice purpose-built for the humanities department, it no longer fit the bill. Not only had the department expanded in size over the years, causing programs to scatter, but its methods had changed, rendering many of the building’s inherent architectural features obsolete—for instance, the cast iron book stacks that penetrated the full height of the four-story building in the north and south wings. Disused for years since the opening of a central library, the stacks were kept under lock and key, creating 30-by-60-foot voids in the midst of the floor plan. A central light well’s windows had been bricked over, relegating much of the interior to a permanent midnight. Into this mess waded New York City firm Kliment Halsband Architects, whom the university hired to conduct a gut renovation and modernization of the 146,000-square-foot structure. The institution wanted to reconsolidate the humanities under this one roof, but with more usable space. Also part of the program was a new exhibition area for the Ancient and Near-Eastern studies program; its impressive collection of 3,000-year-old artifacts had for years been stowed away in Tupperware containers for safe keeping. While preserving the landmarked exterior, the school wanted enough 21st-century infrastructure to qualify the old hall for at least a LEED Silver rating.

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5-foot, 1½-inch-thick glass panes at the four corners only. The entire assembly is less than 10 inches thick.

The lounge sits on the second floor, connecting Gilman’s main entry hall to the east with the preserved Hutzler Reading Room to the west. The architects salvaged the lounge’s gray marble floor from the demolished book stacks, re-cutting the two-inch-thick slabs and polishing them before installation. Moats on either side of the lounge reveal a lower level that houses a new exhibition space for the Ancient and Near-Eastern studies program.

One major concern when designing the light-well space was that all of the hard surfaces—glass skylight, marble floor, brick walls—would create an acoustical nightmare, a common problem with atriums. In the end, the walls of the well presented a solution. When opening them up for new windows, the architects found the original brick to be in bad shape. The eastern wall proved to be in the best condition, so it was preserved. The rest, however, were re-clad with 2-inch terra cotta tubes, spaced 2 inches apart and backed by acoustical panels. The result was a success. You can walk around in tap shoes, hold a banquet, or host a lecture without any noise echoing back, a boon even for academics in love with the sound of their own voices.

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AARON SEWARD

Internet companies are in a constant quest to find the next best thing, but Yahoo! Inc. has turned to an unlikely arena at its new facility in Lockport, New York: agricultural design. Last month, the company opened a state-of-the-art data center with an ultra-efficient model based on a chicken coop.

Data centers are notorious energy-gobblers. They account for 23 percent of carbon emissions from global information and communications technology, according to research firm Gartner, and they claim about 1.5 percent of total electricity usage in the U.S. Much of this consumption comes from cooling the space used to house data servers, so the Yahoo Computing Coop, as the company calls it, mimics long, narrow industrial chicken coops designed to improve natural airflow.

“With the Yahoo chicken coop design, we are spending less than one cent for cooling for every dollar we spend on electricity,” said David Dibble, executive vice president of Yahoo’s service engineering and operations department, at the ribbon-cutting for the facility, which is located not far from Niagara Falls. Scott Noteboom, Yahoo’s director of data center engineering operations, worked with construction firm Structure Tone to design the $150 million facility. He visited old factories in the Buffalo area to learn how they had used air from the Great Lakes for cooling. Some, like smelting plants, were designed so that a central heat source would create a chimney effect that expelled air from the building.

At the Lockport center, each 120-by-60-foot server building has walls of metal louvers that allow fresh air to enter the server space, where it is drawn into a contained aisle of hot air that vents into a long, louvered cupola atop each building. Warm air can be recirculated in cool weather, and an evaporative cooling system, which uses significantly less water than a typical data center chiller, will switch on if the weather is too warm for convection cooling. Coupled with western New York’s cool climate, prevailing winds, and hydropower, the new 150,000-square-foot center uses 40 percent less energy and 95 percent less water than conventional data centers. In addition to housing more than 60,000 servers, it will eventually include an infrastructure monitoring center and a 24-hour employee help desk.

Yahoo’s move to Lockport came with heavy incentives from the state: 15 megawatts of hydropower from the New York Power Authority for Phase 1, which includes an administrative building and three data coops. The town’s Industrial Development Agency also provided a package that included a payment in lieu of taxes agreement. And earlier this year, the DOE awarded the design a $9.9 million sustainability grant, the largest given to date in its new Green IT program.

JKG

YAHOO PLAYS CHICKEN WITH DATA CENTER DESIGN

SERVER FARM

COURTESY YAHOO PETER MAUSS/ESTO

Steel Line
Harvard University Graduate School of Design

Architectural Design
One or more assistant or associate professor positions are available beginning in fall 2011 for persons qualified to offer graduate-level instruction in architectural design and who have a strong research interest in design technology (e.g., sustainable design, building construction, computation) or visual studies/sensory media (e.g., animation, video, representation).

Environmental Technologies/Sustainable Design
One or more assistant or associate professor positions are available beginning in fall 2011 for persons qualified to offer graduate-level instruction in environmental technologies in design in the department of architecture and across the school’s other professional, post-professional, and doctoral programs. Candidates should have an exemplary record of research and teaching and should be able to interact with related disciplines such as ecology, engineering, public health, and public policy.

Applications will be considered starting in October 2010 and will continue to be accepted well after that date. Full details on the above positions and on the application process can be found at www.gsd.harvard.edu/faculty_positions

Harvard University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. Women and minority applicants are particularly encouraged to apply.

Scottish Satellite continued from front page: exhibitions for 20 years. Located in Craig Harbor on the banks of the River Tay, the new museum will be the centerpiece of Dundee’s waterfront revitalization strategy. “The Dundee City Council and Scottish Enterprise are investing millions of pounds in the revitalization of the waterfront,” said Jill Farrell, a regional director for Scottish Enterprise. “Having the V&A there will take the redevelopment to an entirely new level.” Farrell believes the project will also help change perceptions of postindustrial Dundee. The other competing teams are Delugan Meissl Associated Architects of Vienna; Kengo Kuma & Associates of Tokyo; Snøhetta of Oslo and New York; and Sutherland Hussey Architects of Edinburgh, Scotland. “We're very impressed with the caliber of all the designs. It will be a catalytic project,” she said.

REX's project consists of an inverted five-point pyramid covered in reflective glass. The galleries are set on the skylit top floor, and a Scottish Design incubator is placed below on the third level. Civic space is on the second, and the ground floor handles circulation for staff, visitors, and handling art. The inverted form provides solar shading, and the reflective glass creates a dynamic, animated facade with glinting reflections from the water.

Steven Holl Architects designed a vertical museum clad in a curtain wall that is wrapped in a stainless-steel mesh screen. The mesh is pulled taught over the building with tensioned cables, requiring very little structure. Holl describes the mesh as acting like a veil. “Light is one of my most important materials,” Holl told AN. “If we win this competition, we’ll be using it in a way we’ve never used it before. I wouldn’t build this building anywhere else. I don’t like to repeat myself.”

Delugan Meissl’s plan, one of the most formally ambitious, resembles a somewhat flattened version of OMA’s opera house in Porto, Portugal, while Kengo Kuma calls for a horizontal, boat-like building. Snøhetta’s plan also calls for a shimmering, low-slung structure accessible by a broad bridge and plaza. Sutherland Hussey’s proposal is the most restrained, a box wrapped in channel glass that sits on a large plaza on stilts.

The six proposals are currently on view in an exhibition at the University of Dundee. A winner for the project, which has a strict budget of 45 million pounds, will be announced by the end of the year.

ALAN G. BRAKE

From top: Proposals by REX, Kengo Kuma, Snøhetta, and Sutherland Hussey.
LPC UNDER FIRE FOR SKIMPY MORNINGSIDE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Upper West Mess?

At a meeting on September 20 with local property owners in Morningside Heights, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) presented its long-awaited proposal for a historic district—only to be sent back to the drawing board by objections that the proposed boundaries were too narrow. That move followed another recent—and widely applauded—LPC proposal to expand five pre-existing historic districts to encompass 746 new buildings along West End Avenue.

By contrast, the Morningside Heights proposal is small, consisting of 65 buildings between Riverside Drive and Broadway from 110th to 119th streets. All residential, and mostly now owned by Columbia University, they were built largely between 1903 and 1911, and are notable for their Beaux Arts, Gothic, Renaissance, and Colonial ornamentation. But the district comprises a minority of the entire Morningside Heights neighborhood, which extends from Riverside Drive to Morningside Drive, between 110th and 125th streets.

“They released a miniscule footprint of a district,” said Assemblymember Daniel O’Donnell, who has made the issue a major focus since he took office in 2003. “The fact that you’re creating a historic district of Morningside Heights and not putting Morningside Drive in it is a little ridiculous.”

In O’Donnell’s opinion, the district should extend the entire width of the neighborhood, from Morningside to Riverside.

The LPC has argued that the architectural styles are not sufficiently cohesive across that width to merit a single historic district. “Broadway is this dividing line, in terms of architectural continuity and continuity of character,” said LPC spokesperson Lisi de Bourbon, citing the smaller scale of the row houses to the east of Broadway, in comparison with the taller buildings to the west. “For historic districts there needs to be a certain degree of cohesion,” she added. “Broadway disrupts that rhythm.” O’Donnell called that claim “just plain wrong,” saying, “I challenge anyone to stand on 111th and Amsterdam and look west, and tell me that street is not one coherent whole.”

In response to community sentiment, the LPC will table the plan until it has surveyed a sufficient number of buildings east of Broadway to determine whether the boundaries need to be redrawn. One possible compromise on the table: two historic districts.

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In response to community sentiment, the LPC will table the plan until it has surveyed a sufficient number of buildings east of Broadway to determine whether the boundaries need to be redrawn. One possible compromise on the table: two historic districts. "That could be an option," de Bourbon said. "You could have a Morningside Heights West and a Morningside Heights East. That is something we’ve done in the past."

Seeking to punch up the Manhattan Cruise Terminal’s presence along the West Side Highway, the New York City Economic Development Corporation and NY Cruise recently completed two new portals at Piers 88 and 90 that add a dose of kinetic lighting to the structure’s drab concrete frontage.

Set on steel I-beams that wrap the elevated roadbed are a series of corrugated, perforated panels grazed by linear LED strip lights and washed by flood fixtures that offer a soft luminescence from behind. Front and center on each 50-foot-wide marquee are channel letters that identify the piers, with 2-inch grids of RGB LED nodes backlighting the white acrylic characters. "That essentially creates a low-resolution video screen, allowing us to run video content across the faces of those letters," said Mike Cummings, senior designer at Focus Lighting, which created the portals in concert with multidisciplinary design firm Bermello Ajamil & Partners, engineers WSP Flack + Kurtz, and graphic designers Two Twelve.

The LEDs, from Philips Color Kinetics, display a nightly series of programs, including a dusk-hour sunset, a rotating lighthouse beacon, and a rippling, watery effect. At the push of a button, the pier manager can also call up custom hues for holidays or special events—and, of course, the colors of the Norwegian and Carnival Cruise Lines when their ships sail into port. JEFF BYLES
The new Discera 4 LED from Se’lux delivers 3,464 lumens with 30 high-flux LEDs and highly precise lens optics that produce low glare and low backlight, which contributes to the Discera’s International Dark-Sky Association approval. With a die-cast housing, sealed optic chamber, and polyester powder-coated finish, the lamps are appropriate for street, pedestrian, and parking area applications. www.selux.com/usa

LEDtronics has developed a new energy-efficient, vibration-resistant T8 and T12/2-pin fluorescent-replacement LED tube light for public transit buses and railcars. The tubes are designed to easily replace the conventional fluorescent tubes found in most public transportation without any retrofitting, using polycarbonate tubing that is safer than glass and can withstand harsher environments. www.ledtronics.com

Winner of the Landscape, Pool, and Fountain Lighting category at this year’s Lightfair International show, the Luca Bollard is a solid finished or unfinished glulam wood casing made with CNC machining and rated for wet or dry exposure. LED emitters inside are configured in a rectangular array in a range of wattages and lumen outputs. Concealed hardware is accessible through the top aluminum plate. www.structura.com

Using lithium iron phosphate batteries like those in hybrid cars, Meteor’s new solar bollards eliminate the need for underground wiring and produce up to 12 hours of light with four hours of direct sunlight charge. An anti-corrosive fluorocarbon coating allows the bollards to withstand harsh environments, and the 360-degree glass lens allows solar LEDs to be visible at 1,000 feet. www.meteor-lighting.com

Ewo’s flexible T-System consists of LED modules configured to a site’s specific lighting plan. Designed for large-area lighting, the system uses refractive optics to precisely distribute light over streets (the DS31 and DS321 LED modules) and public spaces (the DP31 module). The modular design and power supplies customized for each project allow lamps to be illuminated incrementally, saving power. www.ewo.com

Hess has added a square architectural light column to the Sierra line of illuminated columns. Appropriate for a range of outdoor spaces, the 13-foot-tall extruded aluminum and matte translucent acrylic columns enclose a ceramic metal halide light source or customized color LEDs to provide uniformly distributed light at night. Matching bollards are also available. www.hessamerica.com

Erco’s new Powercast range of outdoor floodlights and projectors is available with LED technology in warm- and daylight-white colors and different lenses, ideal for the illumination of facade details, signs, or landscaping applications. The multilayer powder-coated surfaces, lockable brackets, and double-cable entry allow for efficient installation and durability in the elements. www.erco.com
FRONT YARD FOR ATLANTIC YARDS continued from front page is designed to accommodate three primary types of circulation patterns: Commuters coming from the surrounding neighborhood to the transit center entrance, fans headed into the arena, and pedestrians cutting across the plaza between Atlantic and Flatbush avenues.

“We tried to make the patterning of the pavement reflect circulation patterns,” Pasquarelli said, with the tightness of the concrete pavers reflecting the heaviness of expected foot traffic. Clusters of lights embedded in the paving will allow the plaza to be unobstructed by floodlights, which would also have affected the surrounding neighborhood, Pasquarelli said.

Toward the center of the plaza, the pavement extends upward to form a roof for the entrance to the transit hub. The roof will be planted with sedum, a hardy genus of flowering succulents, which SHoP predicts will complement the weathered steel on the arena’s facade. Unlike the Lincoln Center lawn, this one is strictly ornamental: A railing keeps visitors from climbing onto the roof. The innermost part of the plaza will be shaded by a canopy cantilevered over the arena entrance, punctuated by a 117-by-56-foot oculus that allows light down into the plaza and frames views upward toward the structure. On the inside edge of the oculus, a programmable screen will be customized for games, events, and other activities. The current design is intended to serve as a placeholder until economic conditions allow for the construction of the Atlantic Yards’ first office building. At that time, the portion of the plaza from the transit hub entrance to the arena will be enclosed in 80-foot-high glass walls, creating what the developers refer to as an “urban room,” with the office tower sitting on top. The team has not yet decided how the plaza will change when the office tower is added, but indicated that they hope to preserve many of its original design elements. 

NEXT STOP, DESIGN

Inspired by the success of London’s annual design week that ended on September 26, Beijing Design Week (BJDW) will follow suit next September 28 with its own six-day design fest. In fact, the event is being co-sponsored by the British event organizers, London Design Festival.

That’s about all that will be the same. Beijing’s design scene is still in its formative stages, whereas London has been home to some of the world’s most creative talent in contemporary design for at least a decade. But where there’s a will there’s a way, and China wants to play catch-up. “As Beijing works toward becoming a more environmentally-friendly, high-tech, and culturally-enriched city,” said Beijing’s vice mayor Gou Zhongwen, “it is clear that design must play a crucial role.”

The government-sponsored Beijing Design Week will open with a bang, commissioning an installation for Tiananmen Square that will be featured on October 1, when China celebrates National Day. The theme of the festival is “Design Landing,” and is meant to hint at a move away from cheap production to high-quality design. "These are early days for design in China,” said BJDW’s creative director Aric Chen at a press event in London last month. “Beijing Design Week is an opportunity to support and perhaps even help guide this process.”
North America in the late summer of 2011. "It's the most exciting event space the Guggenheim has ever undertaken," Armstrong said at a press event. It also has enough backing from car manufacturer BMW, at least for six years, that the whole thing is called the BMW Guggenheim Lab. Assistant Curator of Architecture and Design David van der Leer described the rather complex initiative as a kind of mobile think tank-cum-community center addressing urban themes with which a wider public—possibly distracted and just strolling past—will want to engage. Each pop-up pavilion comes with a team of facilitator-doers drawn from Guggenheim curators, local artists, and interesting random intellectuals (tinker? tailor? neuroscientist?). The artists will work on installations or performances, the curators will provoke conversations, and the rest will give talks and participate on panels. The plan is for three pavilions—each by a different architect paired with a graphic designer—to travel to three cities in six years addressing three themes. The first theme is “Confronting Comfort: the City and You.” In 2017, there will be an exhibition at the Guggenheim in New York wrapping it all up. Yoshiharu Tsukamoto and Momoyo Kajima of Atelier Bow Wow are no strangers to complicated programming. In Linz, Austria, they collaborated on a system of roof bridges connecting across several rooftops to a Ferris wheel. For the 2008 Liverpool Biennial, the team created Rockscape, a red wooden amphitheater for rock musicians. In a phone interview, Tsukamoto said that neither the city nor the location had been selected at this point, making it difficult to finalize a design. “I like the idea of a courtyard, partially enclosed and also open to the sky, a sort of caravansary idea where people can hang out outside the building,” he said, noting that events will be mostly held over two months in the fall when weather is mild. “The structure has to be much lighter than a building because it will travel. We’re still trying to figure it out.” The design will be unveiled in March.

The destination cities, the two other architect-designer teams, and the next two themes will be announced in the next few months. At the press conversation, Robert Kloos from the Consulate General of the Netherlands was asked if he hoped a Dutch team would be selected to design the next BMW Guggenheim Lab. “You bet!” he said. 
When the Las Vegas Sands Corporation purchased the old Bethlehem Steel works in Pennsylvania to build a casino resort, the company decided to preserve the old blast furnace, whose spindly spires, twisting pipes, and hulking tanks had defined the city’s skyline for the past century. In order to do full honor to this symbol of America’s industrial might, Sands hired UK firm Speirs + Major to outfit the old workhorse with a lighting scheme that would bring it to life at night.

“We had a generously open brief from the client to come back with something special,” said Jonathan Speirs. One caveat, however, was that budgetary considerations excluded LEDs. But after Sands analyzed the higher capital costs of LEDs against the longer-term running and maintenance costs of more traditional sources, they decided to go with the LED option. This was good news for Speirs + Major, who found themselves equipped with the ability to control both the intensity and hue of light, allowing for the creation of a narrative scheme.

The designers outfitted the blast furnace with ColorKinetics ColorBlast fixtures with a variety of lenses. The fixtures intensify to a peak of color before fading to black, representing the heating and cooling of the steel forging process. The conveyor belts light up in blue first, echoing the journey of ore to the top of the furnaces. Then the furnaces themselves begin to “heat up,” starting with a blue hue that warms to a strong, hot red. This heat permeates through the adjacent structures and chimneys and the heat—or red color—spreads out. The process takes three to four minutes. The red appearance stays for 12 to 15 minutes, and then everything slowly fades to black, remaining dark for four minutes before the cycle repeats. “We felt that the respect and dignity of the edifice for the local population was important, and allowing the edifice to go dark was an integral part of that,” said Speirs.
Once one of the most glamorous movie palaces in Boston, the Paramount Theater has been abandoned since 1976. As part of an effort to revitalize the city’s theater district and its own arts and communications curricula, owner Emerson College hired Elkus Manfredi Architects to undertake the redevelopment of the theater and adjacent Arcade Building on Washington Street, in addition to designing a nine-story student performance and dormitory space on an adjacent lot.

The new Paramount Center, which debuted last month, brings back many of the original theater’s art deco details, but adds a new dimension to the structure’s street presence. While the architects restored the Arcade’s 1860 granite facade, they also added an LED screen that would project multistory images behind its 21 arched windows at night. Once the screens—composed of Philips Color Kinetics Flex nodes in a 4-inch-square grid—were in place, Elkus Manfredi commissioned experiential design firm Tim Hunter Design to create the facade imagery.

“IT’s a difficult situation, because you’ve got limited areas where LEDs are present, and a lot of architecture around it,” said Tim Hunter president Bill Groener. “But even with a fragmented image, the eye will fill in the blank areas if you give it the right information.” The firm developed a series of tests to learn what fonts and images would read well, and at what speed. They converted films and images supplied by Emerson into vividly colored animations that can be changed according to the event or season: Charlie Chaplin dancing; a red curtain rising on a proscenium stage; a sunny sky. Though nearly invisible during the daytime, the facade brings an air of old vaudeville to the street at night, and next to the Paramount marquee and 7,000-bulb upright sign next door, a vision of theater’s golden age in Boston. Jennifer K. Gorsche
Seating pods on land send radio signals to the floating pods, encouraging people to interact with the river.

LIGHT DRIFT  
SCHUYLKILL RIVER, PHILADELPHIA  
HÖWELER + YOON/MY STUDIO

Philadelphians are getting reacquainted with their waterfront through large-scale redevelopment projects and community-based events. For Boston-based Höweler + Yoon/MY Studio and their sponsors, the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, a temporary, interactive installation became a way for the community to reconnect with the river as well as explore new lighting and technology applications, all timed to coincide with the city’s burgeoning Design Philadelphia festival.

With ten colored seating pods onshore and 90 floating in the dark river, Light Drift becomes a changing and responsive light show on the banks and in the waters of the Schuylkill. Using radio frequency identification (RFID) technology, the land-based pods glow with green LED light in their “off” mode, but when approached blink a purple blue. “We refer to that as the seduction mode,” said principal Eric Höweler. Once seduced to sit on the molded PETG plastic pods, they turn blue, extending in a line from the shore out onto the water. “You have a sense that the Schuylkill is not currently that present in the lives of the people of Philadelphia, so we wanted to attract them to the water’s edge with something that goes from being static to dynamic,” he said.

For Höweler and co-principal Meejin Yoon, the project is a way to explore new technologies and new ways of thinking about intelligent architecture and urban space. “We’re less interested in specific artifacts than we are in building information infrastructures. We treat media as a material,” he said. “You have to assume fairly rapid obsolescence. That’s why temporary projects have a lot of appeal.” He added, “For us, a project like this is only the beginning. It’s modest, but it points to new potentials.” — ALAN G. BRAKE
The 20th century produced vivid dreams and nightmares about the kitchen, along with a rapid-fire sequence of household objects that promised to modernize it. Architects and designers envisioned an epicenter of rational efficiency that would transform everyone’s aesthetic tastes and everyday habits. Industrial designers promised to heat up consumer desires for the latest kitchen gadgets and appliances. Social conservatives wanted a bastion to protect traditional values and gender roles, while feminists proposed design reforms that would, they hoped, liberate women from the lonesome, repetitive, and relentless labor that tied them to the kitchen.

New York’s Museum of Modern Art has mounted an exhibition, Counter Space: Design and the Modern Kitchen, that reveals these diverse cultural currents through a history of iconic kitchen objects by well-known designers and interpretive frameworks by major artists. MoMA’s own history is a subtext here, for everything on display—some 300 objects—is drawn from the museum’s own collection. There are paintings, posters, photographs, videos, and all kinds of publications, but things take pride of place, a testimony to the Good Design program MoMA initiated in 1949 “to guide the American public toward good taste in objects available for purchase.”

A large acrylic cabinet presents a timeline of handsome, helpful utensils for the home kitchen, many of which will take some view- ers back in time. Food is a potent catalyst for memory, according to Prout and so are the kitchenwares on display here. I remember savoring good coffee with a tempered glass Chemex and my first homemade espresso from a Bialetti Moka Express; sharpening Henckels poultry shears and weighing ingredients on a Terrailon plastic scale to make an elaborate dish from Julia Child’s Mastering the Art of French Cooking; and storing the leftovers in colorful Tupperware containers. The display culminates with things you might find in your drawer today, such as the ergonomic Good Grips peeler that hit the market in 1989.

Curated by Juliet Kinchin and Aidan O’Connor of MoMA’s department of architecture and design, Counter Space divided the panoply of work and themes into three sections. “The New Kitchen” shows enthusiastic early efforts to update and upgrade every aspect of household work. Here is Charles Stillwell’s 1883 brown paper bag for Philadelphia’s Union Paper Bag Machine Company, every bit as radical as Peter Behrens’ 1909 electric tea kettle and lamp. American domestic science books, notably Christine Frederick’s Household Engineering: Scientific Management in the Home (1915), proclaimed the kitchen as a laboratory and the housewife as a trained professional whose every move had been carefully calibrated. The higher standards offset any reductions in the average time spent on housework.

“The Visions of Plenty” presents the bounty of colorful lightweight products that appeared after World War II, many of them in plastics that had been developed for defense industries. A photo of the 1959 Nixon-Khrushchev Kitchen Debate reminds us that all these objects still had geopolitical significance. Cheery advertisements tout the ease and joy of a more informal domesticity as “The Good Life” that all Americans supposedly enjoyed. The third section, “Kitchen Sink Dramas,” challenges such commercial fervor. (The title comes from post-World War II British artists and architects who focused on the daily lives of working-class women and their families.) Pop Art paintings by James Rosenquist and Andy Warhol celebrated the visual intensity of household brands. Feminists like Martha Rosler and Cindy Sherman invoked the isolation, drudgery, and...
In June, contemplating the depressed state of architectural publishing, I compiled a short list of architects, designers, and photographers who were without a monograph. My recent encounters with publishers had convinced me that no one who wasn’t an Eames or Eames adjacent was likely to get a book. Then I saw on Amazon that Chicago architectural historian Robert Bruegmann, editor of an excellent book on SOM’s United States Air Force Academy, had beaten me to one of these underappreciated greats: Harry Weese was getting his book, and a bigger one than I had imagined.

Today Weese is probably best known for his elegant design for the Washington Metro, with its concrete-coffered tunnels, hexagonal tile floors, and clever marriage of neo-classicism and 1970s modernism. An image of the L’Enfant Plaza Metro station is on the front cover, setting the stage for an argument for Weese as a major contributor to the design of contemporary cities. And yet we never get that argument, or any other one of great length or commitment. The Architecture of Harry Weese begins instead with an extensive biographical essay on Weese by Bruegmann. The bulk of the text is four-page entries by art historian Kathleen Murphy Skolnik of 30-plus projects designed by Chicago-based Harry Weese & Associates from 1936 to 1984. There are approximately four pages by Bruegmann devoted to interpretation, pages that check all the appropriate boxes: Was Weese an alternative to the Mies school of Chicago modernism? Was he a traditionalist? Was his work special for its materials? Its Scandinavian influence? Its vernacular qualities? Or will his legacy be as the “science” of Chicago architecture? (If so, it is perplexing that the book quotes so little from Weese’s writings and interviews. We get no sense of his voice, which in the 1980s became increasingly shrill. Bruegmann reports he once called Helmut Jahn “Genghis Jahn.” This is a letter I would like to read in full.)

Bruegmann refuses to come down on the side of any of these possible interpretations, or to highlight what he thinks is Weese’s best work. A whole section could have been devoted to Weese’s many buildings in Columbus, Indiana, which include the sublime First Baptist Church (1962–65) and a branch of the Irwin Union Bank (not pictured in the book), both of which stand up in comparison to the better-known Columbus church and bank of Weese’s longtime friend Eero Saarinen. The church, in particular, is an essay in thoughtful use of materials, sympathetic siting, and sanctuary without fuss. When I first encountered it appearing to sail across the grass, I suddenly wondered where on earth I was. The building illustrates how modernism, as evidenced at a SCI-Arc panel based on this text, was an effort to create a new architecture, a new form of the city. Modernism sought to transcend the “big white abstractions” of modernism; it understood that the kitchen should force us to accommodate all sorts of activities within an open plan—a trend that began just after World War II. Contemporary family life and social space supposedly revolved around cooking and enjoying meals together, although this is surely more true in principle and design than in practice. It’s not a new concept, nor is it dependent on square footage. Volume 2 of Michel de Certeau’s The Practice of Everyday Life (1996, subtitled “Living and Cooking”) acclaimed those who convert the routines of domestic life into personal creativity to be shared with others. That satisfaction is principally a matter of making do with what exists.

In my review of that same panel, Certeau’s The Practice of Everyday Life (1988) is another, better book on Weese that needs to be written. But I fear, in today’s market, architects such as Weese may only get one shot—chunks like the Crown Center Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri (1968–73). There, the connection to Saarinen and Roche is clear, if unexplored: Landscape architect Dan Kiley consulted on the landscape, as he had for the Ford Foundation. The book’s silence on these connections leads one to wonder: Which direction did the influence run? But Weese a facile marge or an under-innovator? Should we judge him by the First Baptist Church or the soon-to-be-demolished Sawyer Library at Williams College (1978)? Judge him for his heroic restoration of Louis Sullivan’s Auditorium Theater (1966–67) or his failed urban planning ideas (islands off the coast of Lake Shore Drive)?

All these questions mean there is another, better book on Weese that needs to be written. But I fear, in today’s market, architects such as Weese may only get one shot.
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A WALK IN THE DARK

Savor the word “light” and the interior landscape of language evokes images of atmospheric effects—mysterious, picturesque, sublime.

NightSeeing is a program rooted in my multi-year class for Parsons The New School for Design that started in 2003: “Designing Urban Nighttime Environments.” It was an interdisciplinary curriculum for lighting design, architecture, and interior design students. The final class presentation was a NightSeeing Map of Manhattan, including imaginary schemes for several key districts.

Conceptually, NightSeeing is an itinerary of group exploration and discovery, a curriculum designed for the general public and those in the architectural and planning professions. Presenting the nocturnal city of light, NightSeeing is a real-time tour through the culture of urban lighting in public spaces to convey recognition of one’s own environment of the shadowed vistas that define our surroundings literally half the time, and yet are so familiar they are almost unseen.

The program can stand alone, or be presented by a conference, festival, or as an event for urban planners to enhance their public outreach efforts. It provides a context to examine and decode the shadows, emna- tions, and reflections that define our cities’ darkened hours. NightSeeing consists of several events: the LightTalk, a LightWalk, and a Light Planning Workshop. The talk and walk are approximately one hour long.

The workshop is two to four hours, depending on the composition of participants, and is held in parallel with other masterplanning community involvement activities.

The talk conveys a basic understanding of the sys- tems that light our cities, and endeavors to impart new and creative opportuni- ties in the public lighting arena. There is also a section on site-specific lighting history. This lecture offers architects and planners insight into the after-dark experience, as well as ways to create a welcoming public realm through light.

General audiences also appreciate behind-the-scenes discussions of the methods and strategies that bring vibrancy to their night city.

The LightWalk route is developed with each host organization. Each LightWalk is unique: a custom NightSeeing Map is created by my company, Light Projects, for each location. In 2005, co-teaching with urban designer Brian McGrath, the class expand- ed to include a summer session for deeper research funded by the New York chapter of the Illuminating Engineering Society. We initiated a public lighting theory, based on ownership of lighting—public and private—and a layer of incidental illumination that Brian and I called “found” lighting. We also gave a name, “Shades of Night,” to the framework I was developing about zones of nighttime activity, a futuristic vision of changing illumination relative to street life and open/closed hours of commerce, shops, restaurants, and institutions in a given neighborhood.

At that time, Brian and I conceptualized a profes- sional map that would offer a glimpse into the cultural stories, legacies, and idio- syncrasies of the nocturnal New York cityscape through its illumination.

After many impromptu LightWalks with Parsons students, I was offered the opportunity in November 2009 to join the Professional Lighting Design Association’s global Lightmapping program in New York City. Our team was led by Brian McGrath, Light Projects’ architectural designer Ute Besenecker, and me. This LightWalk was formulated to explore the Shades of Night framework in the environs of Old St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Manhattan’s Little Italy district. Light changes and social activity from dusk to dawn were documented by photography and light level readings.

A further exploration of nighttime Manhattan took place in Bryant Park on a cold night in the late winter of 2009. Starting in the northeast corner of the block-square park, some 60 curious and warmly dressed light-walkers of many persuasions joined me in the freezing weather. The view from Bryant Park looking toward the edge of Times Square is breathtaking in its vista of buildings outlining the view corridor with dark hulks, illuminated by a Mondrianesque grid of windows and a silver sky in-between.

I pointed out the multiple bright floodlights mounted on the Verizon building, which cast a moonlight effect and, with the interven- tion of the famed London plane trees, create a caryoph- ony of layered shadows. The group observed how the southern and southeastern side of the park is typified by warm-toned light, punctu- ated by post-top lanterns, the Bryant Park Grill win- dows, and then, dusky dark.

Wow, within which is set a tiny charming illuminated carousel.

It was an immersion in Bryant Park’s collection of lighting effects—planned and “found”—within a classic park design, enveloped by an urban landscape. Unmistakably, it is illumination which makes Bryant Park an outstanding case study of public space which supports a wide diversi- fication of activity after dark.

More recently, for the American Society of Landscape Architects’ Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. on a warm September 11 evening, I began a LightWalk tour with a quote from the artist/ engineer/planner Pierre Charles L’Enfant from September 11, 1798. On that date he wrote to President George Washington “to solicit the favor of being Employed in the Business of designing the new capital city. His became a Baroque plan featuring open ceremo- nial spaces and oversized radial avenues with respect for the natural contours of the land. With my intrepid group including landscape architects, designers, and manufacturers from all over the country, we explored L’Enfant’s plan, hoping for lighting detail and filigree, but found a soft, unfi- nished layer of light.

Our journey started at the Historical Society’s floodlit, colonnaded edifice. A tradi- tional, up-lighting method of frontal illumination, this approach results in soft ambient glow, is appropriate for classical buildings, and is inexpensive and easy to maintain. Onward we went past rows of historical streetlight lanterns. Here, an effort could be made to differentiate street types and districts with varied types of poles. Finally, relief was at the Chinatown lanterns with their red posts and lantern tops.

We went through the Technicolor world and surpris- ingly found the same “highly decorative” luminaires, rather than lighting fixtures forming reference- forward-thinking technologies. Although the one difference: induction lamps are being used, a source of white light that has a long lamp life, requir- ing less maintenance. Some of the endearing details that we did find included counted-down Walk/Don’t Walk signals, bracketed facade downlights (cheap and easy), LED media signs, and the colorful floodlit Chinatown gate.

The most exciting part of the tour was the people on and the interest of the D.C. residents and tourists milling about. The sidewalks were packed on 7th Street NW that evening. A small group of loungers on the National Museum of American Art grand stairs was a NightLight and we, in turn, discovered them using the steps for the appropriate evening purpose of sitting on the combined stairs and classical colonnade flood- lights, a staple of illuminated architecture in our nation’s capital.

The shifting interplay of nighttime dark and light makes every city a unique destination. For London’s Architecture Retail and Commercial Lighting Show on January 12, 2012, I look forward to mapping the Angel Islington district with the International Association of Lighting Designers to find the perfect route through preserved and chic-modern alleyways and unusual paved topographies. I spent the time here in the 1970s exploring Sadler Wells Theatre, the Angel’s Chapel Road second-hand market, and a particular pub with my crowd from the East End. For me, the LightWalk will be eye-opening to the pleasures of the crowds dining, walking from bus to subway to home, window shopping the antique shops, and experiencing evocations of Dickens’ darkened muddy passageways which have existed since the dawn of public lighting.

The issues and substance of public illumination are increasingly influence the global language of urban design and a new experi- ence. Through initiatives like NightSeeing, we can learn to see shadows in a whole different light.

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