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SHoP Architects’ Gregg Pasquarelli presented plans for South Street Seaport’s Pier 17 to Community Board 1 on March 8. Not surprisingly, the reception was positive. The design is a huge departure from the desolate barn-like mall developed by the Rouse Company in the 1980s, where nachos and tropical cocktails remained de rigueur. The new owner, the Howard Hughes Corporation, hopes to bring New Yorkers back to one of the most spectacular sites in town, while welcoming tourists without continued on page 9

The team led by James Corner Field Operations has been selected to redesign the public spaces at Chicago’s Navy Pier. With a fine-grained proposal that mixes pragmatism with enough conceptual punch, the Corner team prevailed over competitors AECOM/BIG, Aedas, Xavier Vendrell Studio, and !melk. Visited by more than nine million people annually, Navy Pier is in many ways already highly successful. Nonprofit Navy Pier, Inc., organized the

Field Operations wins competition to make over Chicago’s Navy Pier

Pier into the Future

AECOM/BIG, Aedas, Xavier Vendrell Studio, and !melk. The team led by James Corner Field Operations has been selected to redesign the public spaces at Chicago’s Navy Pier. With a fine-grained proposal that mixes pragmatism with enough conceptual punch, the Corner team prevailed over competitors AECOM/BIG, Aedas, Xavier Vendrell Studio, and !melk. Visited by more than nine million people annually, Navy Pier is in many ways already highly successful. Nonprofit Navy Pier, Inc., organized the

Trouble stalks Coney Island

master glass

New director to revive social networking at fabled retreat

No planks?

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AIAANY Design Awards for 2012. See page 6
City plans show up to 1.65 million square feet of surface parking leftover from a Robert Moses-era towers in the park. The program also matches it in terms of education infrastructure in design and architecture. In 2010, New York City graduated 4,278 students in design and architecture, while the city with the second most, Los Angeles, graduated less than half as many (4,765). It also has two schools in the country's top ten by the number of degrees awarded: Columbia's Graduate School of Architecture Planning and Preservation (#1) and Pratt (#8).

In addition, enrollment at New York's design universities has been growing at a faster rate than at other universities in the city. Between 2001 and 2010, full-time student enrollment at the city's largest design and architecture schools increased by 34 percent, going from 18,002 students at the beginning of the decade to 24,065 students ten years later. During the same period, student enrollment at all institutions of higher education in New York grew by 27 percent.

These numbers however do not highlight the creative relationship the design institutions have with the profession, where junior designers have long supplemented their income with adjunct teaching assignments and faculty meet (and hire) the best design talents bringing them into the profession and community. It should be pointed out that this report studies only design schools and institutions with design departments. Here, New York City leads the country with more than twice the number of non-profit institutions in potential job generators than on our dynamic design industry. Quinn has proposed some sort of design festival for next year, but the Bloomberg administration seems more focused on Cornell's newly acquired sciences campus on Roosevelt Island and the five new sound stages at Brooklyn's Steiner Studios as potential job generators than on our dynamic design industry.
I started to explore a new property. It was really a true public forum. How? A giant air bag, she explained. “We like to think of the structure as inhaling the democratic air of the Mall.”

Then, a few years ago, Henry Urbach had become interested in the Glass House as a curator of modern architecture at the Museum of Modern Art. Curatorial practice in architecture lacks a sense of its own genealogy. Urbach became interested in the Glass House as a residence—in particular, the architecture, art, and people who collected and displayed there. So he went back to New Canaan for a visit last year and, while there, was given a tour by a staff member who explained what was in the Glass House. He had been asked to state his vision for the Glass House, and he submitted a 12-page document outlining the idea of the Glass House as a house/museum/cultural center, a kind of 21st-century laboratory, a complement to the Glass House as a curatorial project about the Glass House.

That’s an ambitious, not to mention lively, vision for a National Trust property. Are the powers that be supportive? Very much so. As part of a very thorough interview process, I was asked to state my “vision” for the Glass House, and I submitted a 12-page document outlining the idea of the Glass House as a house/museum/cultural center, a kind of 21st-century laboratory. I foresee a multidisciplinary approach to the projects I’m hoping to foster on-site. It’s an extension of something I’ve been working on for quite some time—an expanded notion of architecture as it reaches toward culture. When it opened in 2007, the first few seasons of tours at the site were sold out. But over the years that level of demand may prove impossible to sustain. In terms of fund raising, what do you see as the next chapter for the Glass House? There was a pent-up demand early on from people who hadn’t had the opportunity to visit. That demand has softened, and the challenge now is to give people a reason to come back and experience the site in new ways. There has been a recent change of leadership at the National Trust, and there’s genuine support for innovative approaches to historic preservation. It’s not just the physical elements and “look” of the site that we aim to preserve, but also the spirit of the place, its DNA. In my view, that means the Glass House should remain a site of cultural production, a place of innovation and discovery.
DOMINO FALLS DOWN

As the development story of Brooklyn’s Domino Sugar refinery continues to unfold, it appears to have all the flawed heroes, hubris, and possibly catharsis of a real urban drama. The project’s lead, Community Preservation Corporation (CPCR), has lost a top-level leader, defaulted on major loans, and now is being accused of betrayal by a former partner: The Katan Group, CPCR’s development collaborator at Domino, has filed a lawsuit amid reports that CPCR was looking to sell part or all of the 11-acre property without Katan’s knowledge.

CPCR is the for-profit arm of Community Preservation and Development Corporation (CPCR), a nonprofit consortium of banks established in 1974 to help fund affordable housing projects in the New York area. Its counterpart, CPCR, was founded in 1992 so that the group could act as a proactive developer as well as an investor. Other affordable housing developers, such as Enterprise Community Partners, operate simultaneously as both nonprofit and for-profit, however, one big difference, said sources familiar with the corporate structure, is that at CPC-CPCR, both its nonprofit and for-profit branches are directed by the same person. Until last November, that was Michael Lappin, who abruptly retired after 31 years with CPC.

In January, Lappin’s post was filled by Rafael Cestero, former commissioner of New York’s Department of Housing Preservation and Development. Cestero will be responsible for addressing Domino’s future as well as the bigger question of whether, given its mission, CPC-CPCR should have been involved with such a project in the first place. Domino’s sheer scale—the plan includes 2,200 units, with 660 set aside for affordable housing—was unprecedented for CPC-CPCR and the aspect of the project that the local community objected to the most. A design by architect Rafael Viñoly and a mandate to work around newly landmarked factory buildings exponentially increased the price tag, and, following the financial crisis, the project simply ran out of cash. Katan Group is now suing CPC-CPCR, stating in a March 5 court filing that the lead developer “has effectively depleted all of the refinery’s available capital, while virtually no construction work has been performed.” But this drawn-out development saga could still have a happy ending, according to Williamsburg Independent People (WIP), a community group with an alternative vision for the site. WIP is seeking financial backing for a plan that creates a mixed-use arts development and promises affordable housing as well as new jobs. Meanwhile, every twist and turn of the development drama has been captured by a documentary team, Megan Sperry, one of the filmmakers of the forthcoming The Domino Effect, said “CPCR has been looking for investors for two years, and now they’re getting desperate.”

PROBLEMATIC

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WILLIAMSBURG SITE

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LAWSUIT MAY BE FINAL BLOW FOR PROBLEMATIC WILLIAMSBURG SITE

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UNVEILED

ROCKEFELLER ARTS CENTER EXPANSION

The campus of SUNY Fredonia in western New York boasts a collection of austere modern buildings designed by I. M. Pei in the late 1960s. Deborah Berke & Partners Architects has been engaged to expand the Rockefeller Arts Center, home to the visual and performing arts departments, in a manner sympathetic to, but not mimicking, Pei’s work. “If Pei’s buildings were primarily concrete with glass and steel appointments, in our addition we’ve inverted the formula, designing primarily in glass and steel with concrete appointments,” said Maitland Jones, a partner with the firm. The 60,000-square-foot addition includes three new dance studios, sculpture and ceramics facilities, new media labs, and a new public entrance. “The Pei building really privileged access from the campus, and didn’t anticipate the public role of the building,” he said. “We’re seeking to bring that into balance, creating an entrance for people who are less familiar with the place.”

As the original 160,000-square-foot building became overcrowded, many in-between spaces became overly programmed. The architects hope the expansion will allow the hallways, staircases, and lobbies to return to their more spontaneous, un-programmed condition, where creative interactions can happen organically.

AIA 2012
NATIONAL CONVENTION
AND DESIGN EXPOSITION
MAY 17–19
WALTER E. WASHINGTON
CONVENTION CENTER
WASHINGTON, D.C.

WE HONOR THOSE WHO HELPED HEAL A NATION

JOIN US IN WASHINGTON, D.C.
TO HONOR THE ARCHITECTS INVOLVED IN THE GROUND ZERO, PENTAGON AND SHANKSVILLE REBUILDING AND MEMORIALS:

- Daniel Libeskind, FAIA
- Craig Dykers, AIA
- David Childs, FAIA
- Michael Arad, AIA
- Steve Davis, FAIA
- Santiago Calatrava, FAIA

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

David McCullough — Thursday, May 17
Award-winning historian and author of The Greater Journey

Hon. Shaun Donovan — Friday, May 18
Architect and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Architects of Healing—Saturday, May 19
Join us in honoring the architects involved in the rebuilding and memorial at Ground Zero, the Pentagon, and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. They sought to help our nation when we all needed their unique gifts. Now, it’s your opportunity to say “thank you.”

In addition to the inspiring stories of the rebuilding and memorial at the Pentagon and the Flight 93 National Memorial, six architects who offered their experience to help rebuild and memorialize Ground Zero will share emotions and anecdotes, including Daniel Libeskind, FAIA; David Childs, FAIA; Michael Arad, AIA; Craig Dykers, AIA; Steve Davis, FAIA; and Santiago Calatrava, FAIA.

Add your applause as they receive a specially-cast medal and express your heartfelt thanks directly to the honorees at the reception immediately following.

REGISTER NOW www.aia.org/convention
Springtime is awards season at the New York Chapter of the AIA. The annual Design Awards are open to architects and firms from elsewhere who have completed projects in the city. The 2012 winners were announced at the AIANY headquarters at the Center for Architecture on Monday, March 5, and included New York–based architecture firms Interboro Partners, SO-IL, and Diller Scofidio + Renfro (whose Inflatable Pavilion for the Hirshhorn Museum won an Unbuilt Work Award, see page 1). After the ceremony, critic and journalist Alexandra Lange moderated a panel discussion among the 12 jurors. The competition received almost four hundred entries, across four categories, of which 36 projects were chosen for the awards. The Honor Award is the highest distinction from the AIA, followed by the Merit Award. A diverse array of projects were on display, from a completed Master Plan for the Central Delaware River in Philadelphia by Cooper, Robertson & Partners and Kieran Timberlake in collaboration with landscape architects OLIN to unbuilt conceptual explorations of domestic architecture in fiction such as Bernheimer Architecture, Leven Betts Studio, and Guy Nordenson Associates’ project, The House on Chicken Feet: Fairy Tale Architecture.

The expert juries for each category consisted of practitioners, scholars, and critics from across the field. They made their selections based on a combination of design quality, program resolution, innovation, thoughtfulness, and technique. All of the winners will be shown in the Design Awards Exhibition at the Center for Architecture opening April 19 and on view through May 31.

MATT SHAW

1. ARCHITECTURE HONOR AWARD
Allied Works Architecture
Clyfford Still Museum
Denver, CO

2. INTERIORS HONOR AWARD
Formactiv and SO-IL
Logan
New York, NY

3. UNBUILT WORK HONOR AWARD
NADAA, Inc.
Dortoir Familial
Ramatuelle, France

4. URBAN DESIGN HONOR AWARD
Frederic SCHWARTZ Architects and Ken Smith Landscape Architect
Santa Fe Railyard and Plaza
Santa Fe, NM

In addition to the 10 Honor Award winners, there were 26 Merit Award winners, including the following (for a full list of recipients, please visit aiany.org):

ARCHITECTURE MERIT AWARD
Pencil Office and ARYA Architects
A Simple Factory Building
Singapore

INTERIORS MERIT AWARD
Brian Gillen and de-spec
Xocolatti
New York, NY

UNBUILT WORK MERIT AWARD
SLCE with BIG Bjarke Ingels Group
West 57th
New York, NY
COMPETITION SEEKS IDEAS FOR THE NEXT 100 YEARS OF PARKS

LAND UNLOCKED

The last century has seen our national population triple and suburbs sprawl. But one institution has remained true to its original creed to preserve the American landscape: the National Parks Service (NPS). Just four years shy of its centennial, the NPS has teamed up with eight diverse organizations devoted to reimagining the potential of design to sustain public parks. The result is Parks for the People, a national student competition that challenges nine academic studios to create a vision for the future of America’s national parks.

Presented by New York–based Van Alen Institute with the NPS, Parks for the People seeks to reveal and propose solutions to contemporary issues of preservation. In 1916 when President Woodrow Wilson created the agency, its goals were to conserve nature, beauty, wildlife, and recreation. However, after nearly a century and an acquisition of over 80 million acres of managed parkland, the additional challenge of scale has forced NPS to reshape its approach. Van Alen’s brief challenged teams “to creatively rethink our National Parks’ connections to people and their role as revered natural, social, and cultural destinations.”

In a statement following the announcement of the first-round competition winners, National Parks Service director Jonathan B. Jarvis promoted cooperation: “Now (the teams) must collaborate with the parks to find ways to promote sustainability, inspire stewardship, empower youth, and foster dynamic connections among parks, communities, and natural systems.” The nine schools have one semester to work toward their final submission on May 15.

The University of Washington team is focusing on the San Juan Island National Historical Park, just north of Seattle. The students are working to “re-frame the image, narratives, and processes of SJI-NHP.” The diverse site, which encompasses over 2,000 acres, requires a diverse approach. The group has isolated four integral focal points—site, structure, technology, and identity—and is working collaboratively toward an ecologically responsible response.

The City College of New York’s landscape architecture students have been researching the small settlement of Nicodemus, Kansas, the sole remaining all-African-American town west of the Mississippi River. In proposing solutions for this site, City College must take into consideration the social legacy that binds this historic community. One student acknowledged the challenge that Nicodemus has “a dwindling population of direct descendants, so we have to respect their sense of ownership.”

The second-round winners will be announced this summer.

TYLER R. SILVESTRO

NO PLANKS? continued from front page

But at a meeting on March 12, the chairs were filled, a raucous crowd overflowed the room, and at least a half-dozen television cameras rolled. The cause for concern was the Park Department’s $7.5 million plan to replace the wood on five blocks of the Coney Island Boardwalk with plastic planks and a 12-foot-wide concrete path.

The 2.5-mile boardwalk is in need of repair. Some sections long ago ceased to serve their traditional function of keeping the sand at bay. During the Giuliani administration, the phrase “under the boardwalk” became less associated with summertime lovers than with the homeless who took shelter there. Beach replenishment brought sand too close to boardwalk level and the area beneath was partly filled in. With separation between planks jammed, sand, snow, and rain do not always flow through the cracks. Many of the speakers at the public hearing said that the concrete section in particular would only exacerbate the problem and that plastic planks would become slippery.

Todd Dobrin, president of Friends of the Boardwalk, questioned the durability of concrete. “How much is it going to cost to replace after the snow?” he asked.

For many, the main issue was less function than aesthetics, with one speaker comparing the change to asking Central Park residents to look out onto concrete. Another speaker didn’t preclude the use of plastic and concrete, proposing it as the basis for a new understructure with wood planks fastened on top. But Blaze O’Brien, who spoke on behalf of several preservation groups, including the Historic Districts Council, said that changing any aspect of the materials could compromise the boardwalk’s eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. He also tied the boardwalk to two New York City historic landmarks, Child’s Restaurant and the Parachute Jump. “The proposed change in materials would alter the visual setting and the context for both iconic landmarks sited on the boardwalk,” he said. Though the boardwalk lies several blocks east of the historic amusement area at Coney Island Avenue in Brighton, the project is considered a pilot for repaving most of the boardwalk outside of the amusement area.

The area does not fall within an historic district, and the landmarking is for the structures, not the setting. As such, the Design Commission is the decider of the boardwalk’s aesthetic fate, and they decided in favor of the Parks’ plan—with conditions. The Commission urged Parks to explore reducing the concrete section from 12 feet to 10 feet. They also suggested that final design place the concrete path farther inland, away from the beach. Finally, they asked the agency to further explore domestic hardwoods, even though Parks officials said that the wood is hard to come by and is not cost-effective.

TOM STEOLKER
CONTROL GROUP

NEW BATH INTERFACES DIAL UP THE OPTIONS FOR CUSTOMIZATION. BY JENNIFER K. GORSCHE

1. AMBIANCE TUNING TECHNIQUE DORNBRACHT
The Horizontal Shower is the latest application for Dornbracht’s Ambience Tuning Technique (ATT). The control adjusts water flow with a Tool, a program that manages small electronic valves behind each of the shower’s six WaterBar sprays. 
www.dornbracht.com

2. AQUA SENSE GRAFF
Graff’s new Aqua Sense is a programmable digital touch-screen shower system with MP3 or iPod capability, ceiling-mounted speaker options, and Cascade and Rainfall showerheads with a concealed RGB LED light system. 
www.grafffaucets.com

3. RAINBRAIN HANSGROHE
RainBrain, an electronic computer system for the shower, is programmable for up to four users. The touch-screen system controls options for water cascade, water temperature, and music selection via Bluetooth, while protecting users from accidental scalding. 
www.hansgrohe-usa.com

4. VEDANA BAINULTRA
BainUltra’s new Vedana system is a residential spa unit that incorporates light, heat, music, and an essential oil nebulizer to create a range of mix-and-match therapies that can be customized for each user. 
www.bainultra.com

5. SENSOWASH STARCK DURAVIT
Designed by Philippe Starck, the SensoWash shower-toilet wireless remote control has memory for two individual settings. Function keys automatically illuminate in low light and control wash type, water temperature and velocity, air drier functions, and lid and seat movement. 
www.sensowash.us

6. SIGNATURE SERIES THERMASOL
ThermaSol has introduced new control and steam head styles for the coming year. With all-metal construction and PVD plating, the control is designed to complement modern baths and increase a user’s control over steam functions. 
www.thermasol.com

7. LUXURY SHOWER SYSTEM WATERMARK DESIGNS
Brooklyn-based Watermark Designs has released a smart Luxury Shower System with a full-color digital touch screen. A thermostatic valve controls up to four shower outlets, lights, music, and nine individual shower programs. Its Green Statistics program can also track water usage. 
www.watermarkdesigns.com
ST. JOHN THE DIVINE UNVEILS LATEST DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL
BUILDING UP CLOSE
In the 120 years since its cornerstone was laid, the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine has gained repute for not only its exemplary Gothic Revival architecture but also its perpetual state of incompleteness. Now the development of the cathedral grounds, called the “close,” continues the cathedral’s association with construction. A deal with the Landmarks Preservation Commission in 2003, which led the City Council to overturn the cathedral’s landmark designation, allowed St. John to lease sites on the north and southeast perimeters of the close to developers. A 20-story residential building on the southeast site, at 110th Street and Morningside Drive, opened in 2008 amid criticism of its scale and aesthetic. Plans are progressing to break ground in 2013 on the north site, along 113th Street between Amsterdam Avenue and Morningside Drive, for a commercial and residential tower.

At a recent public forum, the cathedral unveiled initial massing studies to over 60 community members. Cathedral dean James Kowalski explained that, despite fundraising efforts to contain administrative costs, the cathedral operates at a 10 percent deficit. With ongoing financial obligations, including repairs to the church building, Kowalski asserted that development was necessary to “preserve the economic future of the cathedral.”

George Kruse from developer Equity Residential addressed community concerns about including subsidized housing, involving local businesses, and facilitating local residents’ labor union membership. In particular, he noted that of the 400 units in the planned building, 20 percent will be reserved for affordable housing.

Gary Handel of Handel Architects presented the firm’s massing studies; further details of the building’s design remain in progress.

Several attendees praised efforts to minimize the building’s bulk and use the site, which currently houses stonecutting sheds from the 1980s, to integrate the close with the surrounding community. Still, many residents of Morningside Heights expressed some concerns about the building’s potential to increase neighborhood crowds and the environmental impact on traffic, noise, and light. Michael Henry Adams spoke on behalf of state senator Bill Perkins, who opposes the construction proposal, and expressed his own conviction that the cathedral merits more respect as a world-class landmark. “If we were in Paris, at Notre Dame, would someone propose this?” he said. “The answer, of course, is no.”

At the time, Kowalski could not confirm whether the cathedral intends to hold additional community forums, as he expects a short time frame for the design process. “Could it be started in six months or a year? I would hope so,” he said.

SHOP’N THE SEAPORT continued from front page quarantining them to a thematic trap. Nevertheless, retail-centric programming remains. The new pier will contain four stories of shops leading up to a green roof with two pavilions, one for music and the remains. The new pier will contain four stories of shops leading up to a green roof with two pavilions, one for music and the other for a restaurant. The rooftop amenities are intended to lure shoppers through the retail shops, with two yet-to-be-determined anchor tenants taking over the top two floors. In an email, Community Board 1 chair Julie Menin told AN that the retail should respond to the reality that the area has the fastest-growing residential neighborhood in the city. “Currently, the retail is largely geared to tourists,” she said. “The anchor tenant should be a use that meets the needs of the residential population as well.”

Exposed steel frames the complex. The landscape, designed by James Corner Field Operations, includes the rooftop, a large deck to the north overlooking the Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges, and a renovated plaza to the south. The first two stories of the pier include two-story-high glass doors that will slide open vertically, overlapping the glass of the second and third stories. Shops on the first two stories are set in, creating a perimeter arcade that the architects are calling “The Village.”

The storefronts are composed of a series of shifting volumes clad in wood, textured aluminum, and zinc. A large east-west opening runs through the pier, forming an extension to the mainland grid, while two diagonal cuts also run through the space to open new corridors to the Brooklyn Bridge.

On the East River side of the building, two metal mesh gangplank stairs ascend to the glass-enclosed third floor. The glass wrapping the third and fourth floors plays with pixelated impressions. With support columns being 20 feet apart, five vertical sections, each 4 feet wide, set back a foot and half then return, set back then return—lapping to and fro like East River ripples. A combination of channel glass and vision glass heightens the effect. “We didn’t want it to be a taut glass box,” said Angelica Trevino, SHoP’s project manager with Thorsten Kiefer. “We wanted it to have some articulation, to break up the mass and resemble some of the waterfront tectonics.”

Inspired by the open-air concert hall at Tanglewood, a rooftop glass enclosure (60 feet by 120 feet) will hold an audience of up to six hundred. In warm months, the pavilion doors will open so that music can spill onto the rooftop lawn and toward the restaurant pavilion.

To the north of the pier, a plaza by Field Operations called the “North Porch” will provide an iconic view of New York: the Brooklyn Bridge and Manhattan Bridge in the very near foreground. More pixelated patterns will fall underfoot in wood, saw-cut cobblestone, and solar pavers that absorb light in the day and give off light at night. On the south side, Fulton Plaza will be transformed with wood reclaimed from the old pier.

Green roof as picnic lawn for music pavilion.

A staircase creates a community in a building that needs one. That’s the philosophy behind the ornamental stair designed by Mitchell Giurola Architects for NYU’s newly renovated School of Continuing and Professional Studies. Rising through a triple-height space that links classrooms and lounges, the inviting series of elliptically shaped treads and landings promotes a collaborative environment that lets students looking to learn and grow connect with mentors. Coupled with its new high-performance curtain wall enclosure, it has helped East 12th Street become a light-filled vertical campus within this prestigious university, encouraging students to climb to new heights with each step.

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BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE COMING TO NYC

SPONGE CITY

In late March, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) reached an agreement that should improve water quality in New York Harbor and make the city greener overall. The agreement calls for $2.4 billion in "green infrastructure" investments to reduce stormwater runoff, and thus the amount of combined sewage overflows into New York’s waterways, including new green roofs, bioswales, and permeable pavement. The plan also calls for $1.4 billion in "gray infrastructure" construction, including storage tunnels and holding tanks.

Project investments will be targeted toward runoff corridors surrounding two of the city’s most polluted waterways, the Bronx River and Newtown Creek.

"The city projects that 1.5 billion gallons of runoff will be captured annually through green infrastructure. It is now an official green light for the groundbreaking NYC Green Infrastructure Plan,” said New York City DEP commissioner Carter Strickland in a statement. “This multi-pronged approach strikes the perfect balance to meeting the goal of improving the water quality of New York Harbor: gray infrastructure where it is still cost effective and cutting-edge green technologies that not only absorb the water where it lands, but enhance the local quality of life by providing shade and beautifying the city.” The city estimates that by substituting cheaper green infrastructure for gray, DEP will save $1.4 billion in construction costs. Pilot green infrastructure projects will be built around Newtown Creek and the Bronx River over the next three years and monitored for their effectiveness in capturing runoff. The total plan is expected to be built out by 2030.

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PRINCETON CALLING ZAERA-POLO

Just one year after closing the fifteen-year-old Foreign Office Architects and opening AZPA in London and Barcelona, Alejandro Zaera-Polo will be heading off to Princeton as the new dean at the School of Architecture. With his former partner in life and work, Farshid Moussavi, Zaera-Polo created some of his most celebrated works, including the Yokohama International Cruise Terminal in Japan and Madrid’s Bamboo Building. By merging architecture and urban design with his theoretical writing, he forged a place for himself in academia as dean at the Berlage Institute in Rotterdam, as a member of the London School of Economics Urban Age Project, and as a visiting professor at Yale and Princeton. Stan Allen is stepping down after ten years as dean.

WTC PERFORMING ARTS IN THE WINGS?

With the state-run Port Authority blaming the city-run September 11 Memorial and Museum for being responsible for more than $150 million in overruns, the World Trade Center’s Performing Arts Center got lost in the high stakes infighting. Add to that the tussle with families who don’t want human remains to be placed at the site, and the lively arts have understandably taken a back seat. But the recent announcement that Maggie Boepple, former president of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and a senior advisor to London’s Commissioner of Transport, would become Senior Adviser for the center’s board has ignited hopes that at least one component of the site will be set aside for activities that will bring street life to the WTC that are not related to memorializing, commuting, shopping, or working.

WATERFRONT MAKING WAVES

With plenty of fanfare and a mayoral ferry ride, the Vision 2020 plan for the city’s waterfront revitalization burst onto the scene last year and then quietly drifted off the horizon. With the exception of the City Planning announcement that Michael Marrella was promoted to the position of director of Waterfront and Open Space Planning, all seemed pretty quiet on the beachfront. Perhaps Planning was strategizing how to get the massive proposal through the public review process, which began on March 26.

AGB

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WEST SIDE, HO!

After years of politics and planning, community building, false starts, and new beginnings, the transformation of the far West Side in the 30s is underway, but details are only now coming into focus. AN examines three aspects of ongoing development that have the potential to make all the difference—the Jacob J. Javits Convention Center; Section 3 of the High Line; and the Hudson Park and Boulevard.

SECOND LIFE FOR THE JACOB K. JAVITS CONVENTION CENTER

Governor Andrew Cuomo’s January 4 State of the State message included welcome news for West Siders who dream of a day when the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center no longer dominates their neighborhood. A proposal to replace the 1986-vintage, 1.37-million-square-foot hall with a 3.8-million-square-foot facility in Queens wasn’t buried in the details of Cuomo’s address: It was front and center, the first item in his economic blueprint, promising jobs, tourist dollars, and, for the West Side, $2 billion in potential private-sector development along the Battery Park City model—minus the Javits.

It all sounded grand, except that it echoes the same expectations that gave rise to the far West Side. In the 1980s, the waterfront was in an apparently irreversible state of dereliction, a victim of bad timing in several respects. In the 1980s, the waterfront was in an apparently irreversible state of dereliction, prompting the architects to turn the building’s back on the river. It faced limited material and supply options, and the use of concrete within as excessively heavy. “It seems to call at once for a Boeing 747 and for a string quartet,” he wrote. Apart from political penny-pinching and neglected maintenance, Freed’s design was also a victim of bad timing in several respects. In the 1980s, the waterfront was in an apparently irreversible state of dereliction, prompting the architects to turn the building’s back on the river. 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While unveiling the latest High Line designs by James Corner Field Operations with Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R) to the community on March 13, principal James Corner plucked a phrase from Shakespeare’s The Tempest, calling the latest venture a “brave new world.” Unlike the last two sections, which are surrounded by multiple property owners, Section 3 wraps around one massive project, Related Properties’ Hudson Yards. With a hint of anticipation at the stakes of the public/private partnership, Prospero’s quote concludes, “Gentle breath of yours my sail must fill, or else my project fails.”

While plans for Section 3 keep operations, design, and ownership separate from Related’s project, the new section still resembles something of a public/private lovechild in that the private developer is ponying up about a third of the funds needed to develop the public park. “We never wanted High Line to become part of the Hudson Yards opens space,” admitted Friends of the High Line co-founder Robert Hammond. “We wanted it to maintain a separate identity.”

The Hudson Yard site stretches from 30th to 33rd streets and from 10th Avenue to the West Side Highway. Related will build a platform and lease the space above the MTA-owned yard where the LIRR runs. Eleventh Avenue divides the site into the Eastern Rail Yard (EYR) and the Western Rail Yard. The west yard was zoned with the High Line view corridors in mind, but EYR was zoned in pre-High Line 2005. On March 14, City Planning held a public hearing on 30th and 31st streets on the future of the Hudson Yards site.

As its neighborhood sprouts new attractions, the era of an isolated, pedestrian-unfriendly Javits may be ending; a reevaluation may be in order. “People still think it’s the old Darth Vader building,” Fowle said. “That’s a mindset that they have, and until people see it, it’s not going to change.”
For the northeast corner of 11th and 30th streets, DS+R are also designing an 800-foot-tall residential tower for Related. The firm is already working on a city-owned performance space called the Culture Shed next door. At the junction where the southern section of the High Line meets Section 3, steps will lead up to a large privately-owned public plaza (one of five large POPS) that will open onto the EYR. Related has yet to announce the plaza’s designer.

The High Line junction casts an offset fork a half a block farther to the east. There, the park will cut through the Kohn Pederson Fox-designed Coach building (named for its anchor tenant). A 60-foot-high opening in the building will span the High Line, due to a zoning amendment not available to new construction along the southern section. “It’s a careful act to allow the High Line to run through that building,” Corner said. “We worked quite hard to keep them separate; [the High Line] never bleeds seamlessly into any building.” While different from anything on the southern section, this stretch acts, Corner said, “almost like an edge or a balcony” to the Related project, rather “than a path cutting through fabric.”

The east-running branch dead ends in an oddly shaped platform floating above the intersection of 10th Avenue and 30th Street, called the 10th Avenue Spur. There, the designers have presented three options: a covered pavilion, a theater in the round, or hydraulic platforms/benches that can flatten to create a maneuverable event space. Likewise, the Coach tower overhang area features wheeled lounges that can be rolled out of the way for parties.

While the deal allows Related to fulfill its open-space obligations, the High Line remains city-owned, to be maintained by Friends of the High Line with financial support from Related. Related’s overall open space commitment to the EYR will be more than 331,000 square feet on the 510,000-square-foot site—with the section along the EYR fulfilling 11 percent of its total requirements. If Related chooses to kick in an additional $7.4 million toward the Spur, its open space percentage coverage bumps up to 14 percent. Related is already committed to paying $27.5 million toward rehabbing and landscaping the EYR section of the High Line.

The Friends of the High Line are in discussions with Related to purchase the northern part of the 570,000-square-foot site, where the Hudson Yards spur is planned, to develop a small park with walkways. Related has yet to announce a designer. The Friends are also in talks with the city-owned, Friends of the High Line, about adding public space near the section of 10th Avenue to be developed later.

Hearing for a text amendment to rezone the EYR, pegging financing and maintenance for the park to Related’s project and integrating their open-space bonus requirements traded for height increases in two towers ranging from 56 to 68 stories.

Related’s project component is described as “an active rail yard and woven into the urban fabric by subway, the High Line, bike paths, an urban park, and city streets, all flanked by projects that will invite a large influx of diverse visitors to the corridor.” Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates (KPF) has developed the master plan extending from 33rd Street at the north to 30th Street on the south and between 10th and 12th avenues, sloping up from the northern street level to an elevation over the Long Island Railroad tracks. FXFOWLE is currently renovating the four blocks holding the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center on 34th Street. And Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates (MVVA) are at work on the Hudson Park and Boulevard, an arm of snaking green space stretching from 36th to 33rd streets that will house the terminal station of the No. 7 subway line. And then there is the final phase of the High Line. The question is, how will commuters, residents, and convention goers navigate these new public spaces as they aim to dynamically activate the area?

The challenge of the Hudson Yards, Marianne Kwok, the project director working with Bill Pedersen at KPF, explained, is to knit the complex into the existing surroundings. “The main thing we tried to do was to make Hudson Yards as seamlessly connected to the rest of the city as possible—to stitch together the surrounding urban fabric: Chelsea to the south, Hell’s Kitchen and the new Hudson Boulevard neighborhood to the north, and midtown to the east,” Kwok said.

Citation of the design, and circulation flows were the most important aspect of the design,” said Urbanski, explaining that “desire lines” to neighboring destinations create diagonal paths through the landscape, linking the station to corners and sidewalks.

For cars, the site may prove even trickier to access. Carefully planned traffic circulation by Hudson Yards Development Corporation is intended to ensure low traffic levels and relative pedestrian safety. Due to the sloping design of Hudson Yards, cars will enter the complex from the north along 11th Avenue and a ramped driveway extending from the newly created Hudson Boulevard to reach 32nd and 31st streets, dead-ending in cul-de-sacs with access to street-level amenities. This will possibly reduce the speed of traffic along these streets, while through traffic to 12th Avenue will continue along 30th and 33rd streets.

From the south, 10th avenue will slope up to 33rd Street, while pedestrians arriving along 10th Avenue will climb to the High Line from intermittent street entrances. Thrown into the transit mêlée are the bike paths zipping up Hudson River Park, the bus routes scheduled along 10th and 11th avenues and 34th street, and the snarl of on-ramps to the Lincoln Tunnel.

CAITLIN BLANCHFIELD IS A BROOKLYN-BASED WRITER AND EDITOR INTERESTED IN CULTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.
For the fourth exhibition in its Rawsthorn series displaying the work of budding Brooklyn artists, the Brooklyn Museum presents an installation by Heather Hart. Occupying the museum’s fifth-floor rotunda, the installation will consist of a single rooftop that lies flat on the ground, without walls and outside of its original context. As Hart describes it: “A rooftop can refer to home, stability, or shelter, but in this context, it is also an action of reclaiming power.” The roof makes specific reference to the oldest architecture in the museum’s period room collection—the Jan Martense Schenck House, built in 1676, the second-oldest Dutch-American building in Brooklyn. Visitors are encouraged to physically interact with the structure, fulfilling Hart’s intention to create a place of self-reflection and self-empowerment.
BACKING INTO THE FUTURE

The Future of Architecture since 1889: A Worldwide History
Jean-Louis Cohen, Phaidon, 1975

Given the provocative ambiguity of the title, one is tempted to see the author as standing in for Walter Benjamin's angel of history, who, driven backwards into the future by the storm of progress, sees the wreckage of the past pile up ever higher at his feet. Unlike many other accounts of modern architecture culture in the late 19th and 20th centuries, Cohen regards the ever-escalating process of modernization as a techno-economic apocalypse that transforms everything in its wake. Against this never-ending surge of creation and destruction, the practice and theory of contemporary architecture is seen as a series of quixotic episodes of varying intensity and effect; at times individually based and highly aesthetic; at other times collectively committed to social reform and political revolution. In his re-reading of this messianic trajectory, Cohen assumes the role of the materialist historian who here, as elsewhere, has been able to eschew the various tendentious accounts of modern architecture to which we have been subjected in the past. Since he was directly touched by the violent political turmoil that Europe suffered between 1914 and 1945, the author's knowing demeanor carries the narrative forward, like the Jeffrey Head's No Nails, No Lumber: The Bubble Houses of Wallace Neff

No Nails, No Lumber: The Bubble Houses of Wallace Neff
Jeffrey Head, Princeton Architectural Press, 2015

One of the most fascinating things about Jeffrey Head's No Nails, No Lumber is that it posits a future that never happened. Imagine bubble suburbs and people filling up at bubble gas stations, shopping at bubble stores, attending bubble schools. Rather than viewing these as curious blips in architectural history, we could all be living in a gunicle bubble world and not thinking twice about it.

Wallace Neff died in 1982, having never realized his ultimate dream of the world embracing his prototypical and efficient design. He is certainly not the only architect to occupy this position, and he will not be the last. This is partly the game of architecture, often at odds with the way things are and trying to bend forces to achieve something different. In this regard, it is amazing that Neff got any of his bubbles built at all. Even more amazing that a few of them are still standing and being lived in. In the midst of Head's admittedly incomplete catalog of Neff's bubble houses—including a few that Neff himself did not know had been built—is the phantom of disappointment and a romanticism for this lost corner of modernism. The author is not the only one with this feeling; I sensed it in myself almost immediately. This nostalgia for what never was. It is all the more poignant because now our landscapes are, for the most part, dominated by the monotonous expanses of stick dwellings. Here, embodied in Neff's bubbles, was the possibility of difference, perhaps a sort of spatial playfulness that is largely lost in the uniformity of our cities and neighborhoods.

The bubble, or “airform construction” as Neff called it, never caught on. In Head's telling, this was largely the result of poor business dealings and Neff's overconfidence in his partners. What ultimately sunk Neff's Airform International Construction Corporation was one Adolf Waterval, the European regional director of the company that was supposed to take bubble construction global.

Waterval's questionable business dealings make him an appealing scapegoat, but what is most apparent in Head's recounting of this failure is the cultural gulf between architecture and the general public. We simply weren't ready to embrace airform construction on a large-enough scale to make it anything but a novelty. The story that Head does not tell Neff is that his ambition to create a form of architecture that could have utterly changed the game of housing on a global scale may have arisen from his childhood. Head alludes to Neff's early childhood as the foundation of his desire to become an architect, but this is the standard archetype of architectural pre-determinism. What seems to have influenced Neff's direction had less to do with drawing buildings at a young age than with his exposure to the family business. His mother was the daughter of Andrew McNally, founder of the Rand McNally publishing empire.

Wallace Neff grew up in a Queen Anne Victorian mansion in a tony part of Altadena, California, known as “Millionaire's Row.” Head suggests this house and the surrounding mansions of various styles were instrumental in forming Neff's ambitions and aesthetics. After all, Neff was well-known for his Spanish Revivalist homes—he designed the estates of Judy Garland, Groucho Marx, and Douglas Fairbanks Jr., to name a few. But this in no way explains why he was so passionate about the potential of the bubble form. Clients interested in estates were not keen to live in modest bubble dwellings.

What No Nails, No Lumber unintentionally lays out, then, is a story of an
to sell his overall achievement rather short. Jeanneret—his Société des Nations of 1927, his Palais des Soviets of 1931—seems understated in this account is unquestionably the Centrosoyuz, realized in Moscow in 1936, his finest civic work of his Purist period, namely, Le Corbusier, to whom the book displays his Centrosoyuz, realized in Moscow in 1936. The Franco-Suisse genius that is somewhat underplayed in this account is unquestionably Le Corbusier’s later-day communal dwelling realized as the Unité d’Habitation Marseille in 1952.

Written in French, translated into English, and impeccably edited by Joan Ockman, this is an exceptional, erudite text, wherein the learning, worn lightly but richly detailed, conjures up for the reader the poignancy and vitality of the various creative moments, irrespective of their fleeting duration. Thus one learns that the short-lived Austrian Jugendstil movement of 1898, known as Ver Sacrum, took its title from a poem by Ludwig Uhland, or that Theo van Doesburg’s ineffable Sacrum, took its title from a poem by Ludwig Uhland, or that Theo van Doesburg’s ineffable Sacrum, took its title from a poem by Ludwig Uhland, or that Theo van Doesburg’s ineffable Sacrum, took its title from a poem by Ludwig Uhland, or that Theo van Doesburg’s ineffable Sacrum, took its title from a poem by Ludwig Uhland, or that Theo van Doesburg’s ineffable Sacrum, took its title from a poem by Ludwig Uhland, or that Theo van Doesburg’s ineffable Sacrum, took its title from a poem by Ludwig Uhland, or that Theo van Doesburg’s ineffable Sacrum, took its title from a poem by Ludwig Uhland, or that Theo van Doesburg’s ineffable Sacrum, took its title from a poem by Ludwig Uhland, or that Theo van Doesburg’s ineffable Sacrum, took its title from a poem by Ludwig Uhland, or that Theo van Doesburg’s ineffable Sacrum, took its title from a poem by Ludwig Uhland, or that Theo van Doesburg’s ineffable "skyscraper" housing scheme, known as the Villeurbannbe, built to the designs of Môrice Leroux in 1934. The Franco-Suisse genius that is somewhat underplayed in this account is unquestionably Le Corbusier’s later-day communal dwelling realized as the Unité d’Habitation Marseille in 1952.

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THE 1959 AMS HEADQUARTERS IN OHIO INCLUDES AN EXTRAORDINARY DOUBLE-DOME BY BUCKMINSTER FULLER. RECENTLY RENOVATED BY THE CHESLER GROUP, THE PROJECT HAS BEEN PHOTOGRAPHED BY JEFF GOLDBERG.
A few hours before he was officially announced the 2012 Pritzker Architecture Prize laureate and the first China-based architect to be so acknowledged, Wang Shu, 48, was just another architect professor on the schedule to give a lecture to the department of architecture and urban design at UCLA. Describing himself as an artist as well as an architect, Shu sat down with AN contributor Jonathan Louie to discuss his "way" of design.

Wang Shu lives and practices in Hangzhou, China, where he established Amateur Architecture Studio with his wife Lu Wenyu in 1997. In contrast to the globe-trotting Chinese "avant-garde," Wang Shu explores the rich legacy of China’s intellectual, sculptural, and architectural history, and tyes his research closely to a simple formal language that emphasizes regional culture and astonishingly beautiful but imperfect craftsmanship.

The Architect’s Newspaper: As an architect you’ve cast yourself as someone who prefers to practice in the region in which you live. Was there a turning point or event in your career that influenced that decision and your perception of architecture?

Wang Shu: For Chinese architects, the question is, how can we make a Chinese modern architecture? Not just a modern architecture, but China’s modern architecture. It’s an interesting question, because we do have a Chinese architecture. It’s a learned and copied modern architecture from the Western world, and there is no relation to our local life.

In school, I did some independent work very early on. For example, as a student, I worked on my first building, which was finished in 1985, and I designed my first independent project in 1989 (a youth center for a small town in Hainang). In this way, I received professional architectural experience. Although I could do good architecture, it wasn’t really what I wanted. I realized that it’s not just about good architecture but about the best way to design and to construct. It was a more basic question.

So the 1980s were very important time. It was a turning point. I completely took myself out of the professional system and took time with workers, questioning materials together with them. I did a lot of renovation work for old buildings. It was a rich experience, because any time you design something in this field, it’s important to see that there are some things that have existed before you. It’s not just designing on an empty piece of paper or on an empty site. You have to wonder how you can create something that takes the past and turns it into the future.

When you do a renovation for a building you have to touch the materials. It’s not just the materials, but it’s the way the materials change with time, the weather, or with people’s lives. You have to design new things that can coexist. So now when I design a new building, even on an empty site, my way is very similar to a renovation.

An important aspect of your work is the emphasis on authenticity, recycled materials, and craft. Can you talk about those interests of yours in relationship to the slick mass-produced high-rise construction in China today?

Usually I like to talk about real things and realities. I prefer to talk about natural materials that aren’t artificial. It’s not just about an interest in recycled materials. But if you think you are a modern architect or a contemporary architect, you should be critiquing reality. Maybe in the next ten years I’ll use other kinds of materials. But in the past ten years, I felt there was too much demolition and I wanted to propose an answer to that. Of course, this is about attitude. On the other side, using this material has led to an architectural way—the craftsman’s skills.

Is this a critique of the state of architecture in China?

Yes. In China I think architecture is important because in modern times it plays a big role. Architects design so many buildings at such a large scale. The size means that it can totally change people’s lifestyles. Who gave you this power? How do you think about how you can control and handle this power? What is the meaning to you? Those are very important things. If you just think that you are an engineer and you’re going to create a surface for people without thinking about how the surface can change people’s lives, it could really destroy their lives.

Only once did I design a high-rise building. I wanted to approach the design as a high-rise building that used many small buildings collected together.

You’re talking about the Vertical Courtyard Project in Hangzhou?

Yes. It’s a simple idea. I wanted even those people living 100 feet high to still feel as if they were living in a small house where they could live around a small courtyard and plant their own trees. From below they can tell people on the ground that “those are my trees and that’s my house.” It provides an identity for people to feel as if it’s their own house. It’s more than just blank windows in apartment buildings that can’t separate neighborhoods. It’s a basic right for people.

Your design process seems similar to Chinese landscape painting. For example, when you drew the Xiangshan Campus in Hangzhou, you drew the project all at once. Is this a typical approach?

It’s not just an abstract concept to talk about the countryside. In fact the countryside includes many things for me. I spent a long time researching traditional landscape painting. It meant that you can control a large-scale landscape in a spatial way. The Hangzhou campus was my test project. It was very successful, but for another project, there may be another way to do it. Every time I like performing different experiments.

It’s not enough to say that I have a good education and I know how to design. You should talk about it not as designing something, but instead asking, “How should I design?” It’s a more basic question. How do you ask the question? The way is more important than the design itself. It’s my way, and it’s very simple.

What does the Pritzker Prize mean for you and for architects in China?

Especially for young architects, this prize encourages them to do more experimental work—because the fact is, it’s not easy. In China we have many projects, but only a few good projects.

Good architecture is not just design, but I think it’s closer to a struggle. I’ll give them more self-confidence.

For me, it has another importance. Originally, I wanted to stop for two years, to have time with my wife and time to raise our son together. I worked too much over the past ten years. My son is 10 years old now, but now with the prize, maybe this means I have to do more things and more design. But I still want to spend more time with my son.

If you keep the feeling in your heart pure, people will like your building. If you really do good design, you will find that your building will smile. Because the building comes from your heart, and it really gets a good feeling from life, and people can feel it. If you just work hard, and worry because you want a good building, people can feel that the building is a little nervous. So it’s very important to keep your heart in the right way.

Jonathan Louie is an architect and Curator in Los Angeles.
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