The boxy artist studio at the end of a dirt path in the town of Orient, Long Island is the first structure in the New York metropolitan region, and one of about a dozen in the United States, to meet the stringent environmental standards of the Passivhaus Institute, based in Darmstadt, Germany. 

Well aware that the areas of greatest density often have the least public space, James Ramsey, the principal of RAAD Studio, set out to tap into New York City’s infrastructure for an exciting alternative to the above ground park. Instead of looking skyward à la the High Line, Ramsey ventured down into what he calls “the historical bowels of the city.” On the site of a 1.5-acre...
In the United States we have developed a unique public/private model of organization that reaches into nearly every corner of how we construct our cities and practice architecture. Projects get built, but the terms and protocols—and therefore, the results—vary widely. Elsewhere, it’s done differently. For example, Vienna, Austria, which may have the most successful program of affordable housing of any city in the world, has a defined process known as the “four pillars,” a set of guidelines that every RFP in a competitive process and every submitted proposal must follow and be judged by if they are to be chosen by city officials.

With our myriad of overlapping municipal and governmental regulations, standards, and authorities, this country may never adapt a universal set of criteria for selecting memorials and major buildings. Given all the variables, it should be no surprise that even architectural competitions have become a mini-business in this country. This issue’s feature focuses on a growing industry of consultants who work almost exclusively on creating and staging competitions. Further, these consultants do more than simply stage competitions—they seem to hold the hands of the client(s) and sometimes even the architects to ensure the success of the process and the resulting design. It’s a valuable service for many clients, since “architecture” may be defined as being in excess of basic program requirements like toilets and a roof that does not leak.

Too often architects are guilty as charged of being elitists or unconcerned about the bottom-up input of the clients and the public. But one can see what Bill Lacey, former executive director of the Pritzker Prize means when he says, “I worry about the long-range effects of the public being involved in a matter that they’re not equipped to deal with.” We cannot help but think of the banal sculpture of fighting soldiers that was placed beside Maya Lin’s powerful Vietnam Veterans Memorial project or the input that September 11 victims’ families have had over the construction of the victims’ families’ have had over the construction of the complex surrounding Larry Silverstein’s towers. In fact, the most important role these competition specialists can perform is, as competition consultant Karen Stein says, “to establish a process that mirrors the core values of the institution” commissioning the project.

It is a worry that these competition insiders could become powerful architecture brokers, trading on their friendships and connections. But legitimately used, their knowledge of the process may allow them to be the orchestrators between the top-down excess that makes great architecture and the legitimate demand by the public to be part of the design process. WILLIAM MENKING

INDEX STILL IN NEGATIVE TERRITORY BUT BOUNCING BACK

The AIA’s monthly Architecture Billings Index (ABI) for July came in with a disappointing 48.7 (any score below 50 indicates a decline in billings for design activity). The news was not all bad though. The ABI was up significantly from last month’s score of 45.9. “Even though architecture firm billings nationally were down again in July, the downturn moderated substantially,” said AIA Chief Economist Kermit Baker. “As long as overall economic conditions continue to show improvement, modest declines should shift over to growth in design activity over the coming months.”

At the regional level, the South, a region battered by the Great Recession, was still in negative territory but bouncing back. The Midwest slipped a bit in 46.7, the West logged in 45.3, and the Northeast continued its steady decline to 44.3, the lowest score for that region since February 2010. By sector, multi-family residential (51.4) outpaced mixed-practice (49.1), commercial/industrial (48.4), and institutional (46.6). Inquiries rebounded to 56.3, up from last month’s 54.4. ALAN G. BRAKE
EAT MY DUST
Former New York Times architecture critic Nicolai Ouroussoff reemerged recently in an unexpected location: the pages of Smithsonian magazine, where Ouroussoff profiled Rem Koolhaas for the venerable publication. Those who read the piece online may not realize that Ouroussoff is one of the writers featured in Smithsonian’s September issue, which marks the debut of the magazine’s sleek redesign initiated by editor-in-chief Michael Caruso. “The main idea was to rev it up,” Caruso told Adweek of his changes to the style, cover, layout, and contributor’s list. Smithsonian’s monthly print circulation has already risen under Caruso—it currently sits at 2.1 million, giving Ouroussoff’s feature almost twice the reach that it would have had in the Sunday Times.

FINE FEATHERS?
Between glass curtain walls and art installations, birds just can’t catch a break. For their Venice Architecture Biennale project, Pigeven Safari Swiss artist Julian Charrière and German photographer Julius von Bismark captured, airbrushed, then released the pigeons of St. Mark’s Square. The resulting rainbow-colored flock has caused Biennale-goers and tourists alike to do a double take. Charrière told the Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera, “Pigeons make up part of our urban landscape, but we view them as though they are an unrecognizable mass, but enough to grow a wide variety of plants.”

IT’S HIGH TIME FOR THE LOW LINE
continued from front page

In March, Ramsey and the Lowline’s co-founder, Dan Barasch, launched a Kickstarter campaign that raised $155,000 to fund the development of the remote skylights, and construct a fully functional life-scapes ceiling-scape is so specialized, no two panels are exactly alike. Each have slight differences in length or width that allow Jacobs to capitalize on the elements that drew him to subterranean Delancey Street in the first place. “We’ve got this found archeological space that no one knows about. There’s this component of mystery to it that New York still does have all these secrets you can explore that you can’t find on Yelp. Going down into (the Lowline) invokes that sense of discovery and mystery as well as this element of archeological adventure, like you’re exploring a ruin. I want to capture the idea that you can explore not just horizontally but vertically. It should be a jungle gym for adults where you can do a little Rambling,” said Ramsey, brimming with Olmstedian spirit. If everything goes according to plan, Ramsey estimates that the earliest possible date of completion is 2016. “That’s a really ambitious date, but this project is really ambitious, and look how far we’ve come in a year.” PERRIN DRUHM

Drive down Main Street in Beacon, NY, away from the train station for exactly one mile, past the Shangi-La nail salon, BJ’s Chicken and Ribs and Augie’s Texas Lunch, to the unassuming location of The Roundhouse at Beacon Falls, a new hotel and restaurant designed by David Rockwell.

Developed by Robert A. McAlpine, The Roundhouse is located in one of the city’s few remaining historic industrial buildings, a renovated 200-year-old mill that once made industrial grade felt, fur hats, and lawn mowers. The site has prime views of the gentle falls on Fishkill Creek and Rockwell made sure to give diners an eyeful through the large windows in the restaurant, Swift. The hotel has 14 guest rooms in The Roundhouse and will be opening 42 more across the creek at The Mill in early 2013. Original bricks have been salvaged for the exterior walls and rough wooden beams still support The Mill’s roof. Look up in The Roundhouse and you’ll see raw cement beams bearing marks of the original journey, as well as panels of thick grey felt inset into the ceiling itself. Every interior design element—tables, chairs, lighting—is sourced from designers working no further than a mile or two around the site. McAlpine has even gone to the great trouble of restoring the turbine from the site’s former hydroelectric plant, which will supply around 60 percent of the hotel’s energy when it’s completed.

PD
ACTIVELY PASSIVE
continued from front page

With its rough-hewn dark brown wood cladding, the studio does not advertise its high tech features. However it uses 90 percent less heating energy than does a typical house in this country. Compare that with the average house built to the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED rating system: Studies show that LEED-certified homes generally save less than 25 percent in heating energy over typical U.S. construction.

Lower energy bills are only one of the selling points of Passivhaus, or Passive House, construction, which is becoming widespread in German speaking countries and in Scandinavia. “The principal reason that people get these houses in Europe is that they are so incredibly comfortable,” says the studio’s architect, William Ryall, principal in Ryall Porter Sheridan Architects. “You have fresh air and humidity control all of the time and because of all the insulation, they are extraordinarily quiet in urban settings,” says Ryall.

The fresh air in the artist studio comes from a compact energy recovery ventilator (ERV) made by Zehnder that is used in conjunction with a small split system unit for heating and cooling. The ventilator changes the studio’s air at the rate of 0.6 changes an hour by sucking outside air inside, filtering it and removing the humidity. In addition, the unit recovers heat from the interior air that is discharged in winter and it recovers cold from the air that is discharged in the summer.

The studio’s key energy saving features include a highly airtight building envelope and super thick walls, which help keep the building cool in the summer and reduce heat loads during winter. Ryall collaborated with building envelope consultant David White, of Right Environments, on the project. Orienting the building to maximize solar heat gain in the winter and reduce it in the summer is also a major part of the strategy. The adjacent house, which was gutted and rebuilt using the same Passive House methods, achieved an extremely high degree of energy efficiency, but it does not qualify for Passive House certification largely due to solar heat gain from the expansive windows on its northern exposure, which were installed to capitalize on the stunning views of the Long Island Sound.

The artist studio cost about $500 per square foot. Ryall says that much of the expense came from imported materials unavailable in the United States such as the insulated Pazen windows from Germany that come with an R-value, a measure of thermal resistance, close to 11.

It is challenging to attain Passive House certification, which evaluates a building holistically rather than on the basis of a point system such as the one used by LEED. “With LEED you could put in worse windows and make it up with a bicycle stand in the basement,” Ryall says, “Here there is no room for negotiation—this is about absolute standards—how much energy is needed for the building.”

ALEX ULAM

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Syracuse University, New York

Top to bottom: The building is oriented for maximum solar efficiency in all seasons; an energy recover ventilator (ERV) cools, heats and dehumidifies the interior; Passive House uses 90 percent less heating energy than the average U.S. house.
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Like many urban universities, The New School is without a campus in the traditional sense of the word. Rather, the school’s many colleges are sprinkled throughout Greenwich Village and further afield across Manhattan in multiple buildings that have little relation to one another. To bring a sense of cohesion, The New School recently hired SOM to design a new facility to serve as a university center. Currently under construction on Fifth Avenue and 14th Street, the 364,000-square-foot, 16-story multi-use project includes a 700-seat auditorium, the main university library, lecture halls, classrooms, a 600-bed dormitory, and other critical amenities.

SOM worked diligently to arrange this varied program in a rational layout that would be intuitive to navigate, create spaces for random interaction between students and faculty, and comply with New York City’s stringent code requirements, while at the same time earning a Gold rating under LEED 2012. The architects began by dividing the academic program from the dormitory apartments, placing the former in the building’s first seven stories and basement and the latter in the upper eight stories. The two sections are joined in the middle by the library, which occupies floors six and seven at a setback that further divides the building into a podium and tower. The fourth and fifth stories are entirely occupied by classrooms, while the third down to the basement levels accommodate the massive volume of the auditorium around which is arranged additional classrooms, the lecture hall, the cafeteria and café, as well as a faculty lounge and the building’s lobby.

The trick to making a university center work in the middle of Manhattan, as more than one architect has learned in the past, is to develop a scheme for vertical circulation that creates a sense of community while still efficiently handling the deluge of traffic that occurs every time the bell rings and classrooms disgorge. SOM addressed this challenge deftly in the academic portion of the building by moving the stairs out from the core to the perimeter. On the building’s three street faces—14th Street, 5th Avenue, and 13th Street—glass-clad stairs slash diagonally through the otherwise orthogonal elevation. On the exterior, the stairs animate the building, broadcasting this hive of activity onto the grand stage of urban theater. On the interior, the stairs descend through a series of interlocking double-height spaces, visually orienting building users and furnishing large landings for congregation and serendipitous encounters.

Each of the stairs is actually two stairs, an open stair bundled with an enclosed fire stair running beneath. The fire stairs on the 14th Street and 13th Street faces link up with the traditional vertical fire stairs coming down from the dormitory, creating direct access to the street. The architects thought of this arrangement as analogous to a subway line, with the open stair acting as the local line and the fire stair providing express service out of the building. This solution allowed the stairs to flow through the interior without creating a sea of columns that would disrupt the double-height spaces. Lateral bracing was similarly moved to the perimeter, removing the need for concrete shear walls in the core and opening up more interior space for flexible programming. The other task handled by structural steel is transferring the load of the column grid 80 feet over the auditorium, a job done by four massive steel trusses, 9 feet, 8 inches in depth and built up of jumbo sections.

The center’s façade is only 30 percent glass, in keeping with LEED 2012 Gold rating requirements. In the classrooms, windows are arranged in two horizontal bands, one for vision, the other a clerestory with a light shelf that bounce daylight onto the ceiling. Limiting the amount of glass also allowed the architects to select a clear product with minimum low-e coating, creating an unfiltered experience of natural light uncommon in contemporary buildings. The rest of the façade is a rainscreen system made of Muntz metal—a sort of brass containing about 60 percent copper and 40 percent zinc. Cheaper than copper, Muntz is extremely corrosion resistant, and, pre-patinated, it has a mottled dark brown appearance that helps the building blend in with the brick that predominate in Greenwich Village.

AARON SEWARD

SOURCES:

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FRIENDS OF HUDSON RIVER PARK PUSHING FOR NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

HUDDSON CALLING

Over the summer, Friends of Hudson River Park (FOHRP) began community outreach to establish a Neighborhood Improvement District intended to help pay for maintenance at the beleaguered park. The FOHRP plan included a tax for nearby residences and businesses located from the waterfront to approximately two blocks inland, from Chambers Street to 59th Street. The proposed district is the latest of several attempts to secure new funding sources for the much-used park.

Of New York’s 23 Business Improvement Districts (BID) 13 include residential areas, but commercial businesses foot most of the bill. The proposed plan for the Neighborhood Improvement District would be the first improvement district that would require payments from residents as well. Residents would be charged about 7.5 cents per square foot, meaning that a snug West Village condo measuring 500 square feet will pay $37.50 per year.

The park’s financial troubles began rearing their head as another park, the High Line, also running parallel to the river, was stealing hearts and minds—and gathering the attention of donors—up and down the West Side. Hudson River Park Trust, the entity that runs the park, cast an envious eye on the High Line’s flush public/private model, so much so that they went to the State Legislature to loosen up the trust’s charter to make ends meet. As with so many of the city’s newer parks, Hudson River Park is required to be self-sustaining. But unlike most recent high-profile new parks, the trust’s charter strictly limits development. Meanwhile, the largest commercial operation intended to generate cash for the park, Chelsea Piers, is locked in legal battle with the state over maintenance and repair funding worth about $37.5 million.

The changes introduced in the legislature might have allowed a residential or hotel complex to rise on Pier 40, among other provisions, but it was defeated in the State Assembly in July. There is slim possibility that the measure may be taken up again in December, but administrators at FOHRP aren’t counting on any single silver bullet to save the day. The Neighborhood Improvement District is one of many efforts, including philanthropy.

Several other charter arrangements intended to generate funding are being contested. The state has also backed away from their responsibility of maintaining the median that runs down the middle of the West Side Highway. The once lush plantings are now choked with weeds. The state wants to hand maintenance of the medians over to the city. The city’s position is that the state must complete the road (Interstate 9A) before the city’s Department of Transportation can take over. In the past, FOHRP maintained the medians under contract from the state. The trust is prohibited from spending money outside park boundaries, so it falls to FOHRP to raise the cash to spruce up what is essentially their front lawn. “I’m sure the state would be happy for any private funding sources,” said A.J. Pietrantone, FOHRP’s executive director.

Another income source that never found its way to the park was the balance from a 15 percent fee once charged to every park improvement was supposed to go back to park maintenance. But most of that money went to maintaining the cruise ship piers and the portion for the park was never allocated. “There was nothing left over and that has to be clarified,” said David Gruber, chair of Community Board 2. Gruber said that the pier fees along the Hudson should also be reexamined as income for the park.

FOHRP continues to work with the trust to amend the act, attract donors, and will reach out to the three community boards that boarder the park throughout the fall to build support for the Neighborhood Improvement District. “The proposal can’t go forward if there isn’t any support,” Pietrantone said.

So far the reaction has been somewhat muted, though major commercial interests are lined up behind the proposal, with representatives from the Durst Organization, Tishman Speyer, REBNY, and Two Trees sitting on the FOHRP steering committee. Gruber thinks the tax can be justified easily. “It’s a dinner out,” he said of the cost.
in stitches

Outdoor furniture fashionably tailored to work outside and in.

By Perrin Drumm

1 NEST DE LA ESPADA

Made of high-density fiberboard (HDF), the unique slatted hood of this lounger highlights Autoban, an Istanbul-based design firm’s modern take on traditional Turkish weaving. Built by De La Espada, Nest can be used alone or in a group to make a statement without overstating.
delaespada.com

2 URCHIN POUF & FLAX OTTOMAN THOMAS EYCK

Sourcing raw and local materials is a major part of Christien Meindertsma’s practice—as well as the subject of her recent TED Talk. For these two casual seating options she went out of her way to use flax grown locally in the Netherlands.
thomaseyck.com

3 NESTREST DEDON

Sit it on the ground or hang it from a tree branch, Daniel Pouzet and Frad Frety’s Nestrest makes for an elegant perch. Woven with super-sized strands of an especially strong fiber that’s 4 centimeters wide, Nestrest can support a full brood.
dedon.de

4 DINING TABLE OD219 USONA

Shown here in tinted black oak, this open weave table base also comes in natural and birch. Like all of Usona’s products, it’s made to order and can be customized in a variety of sizes, finishes, and materials.
usonahome.com

5 CORACLE MATTER

Inspired by the small, woven half-shell coracle boats used in Wales since the Bronze Age, Benjamin Hubert updated the traditional vessel with a lounge chair made with a basket seat made from automotive suede and a steel frame wrapped in a suede tri-weave recalling bicycle handlebars.
mattermatters.com

6 SPOOL RODA

Rodolfo Dordoni’s Spool collection is, as the name suggests, inspired by weaving spools. The varnished stainless steel frame stands up to all weather conditions and the backrest is wrapped with double-polyester twisted thread to provide flexibility and durability.
rodaonline.com
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS continued from front page.

Beside the tracks, with the rail lines shored and the west of the station slopes down was built on landfill, the terrain to the east of D.C. neighborhoods and incorporating the Virginia, and the federal government generated a consensus that this is the vision as national significance, it breaks down into region's rails and stations to be completed as far north as Boston. The project is a key importance as a hub (D.C. train delays ripple in New York, Union sits literally within view unlike the oft-delayed Moynihan Station region released earlier this month. And as national highways to shuttle both sides). High-speed rail, and people on both sides of the able believe in that for the Northeast corridor, whether you’re from California or Florida,” said Akrigche vice president of development David Tuchmann.

As the southern anchor to the corridor, Union Station’s significance goes beyond its importance as a hub (D.C. train delays ripple as far north as Boston). The project is a key component of a $15 billion investment to region’s rails and stations to be completed over the next several decades. The proposed renovation was framed as a “Gateway Project” in an updated masterplan for the region released earlier this month. And unlike the oft-delayed Moynihan Station in New York, Union sits literally within view of the legislators on the Hill. “We like our prospects here,” said Bob LaCroix, Amtrak’s senior director for business and high-speed rail development. “Through this process, a bunch of players from the city, Maryland, Virginia, and the federal government generated a consensus that this is the vision that we all need to heed.”

While the project holds regional as well as national significance, it breaks down into a very urban plan, integrating long-divided D.C. neighborhoods and incorporating the capital’s bicycle network. As Union Station was built on landfill, the terrain to the east and the west of the station slopes down beside the tracks, with the rail lines shared up with a giant stone wall, affectionately referred to as the Burnham Wall, for architect Daniel Burnham, the station’s original architect.

The station’s new masterplan, engineered by Parsons Brinckerhoff and designed with HOK, maintains the integrity of the terrain and track levels while burrowing east-west passageways beneath the tracks and creating a north-south corridor above them. Side-street entryways will be cut into the Burnham Wall to allow pedestrians to cross between neighborhoods. Escalators from the passageways will take visitors up onto the developer’s new deck, where Akridge hopes to build a multiuse neighborhood. The H Street Bridge will meet the platform above the tracks, transforming the now-desolate overpass into a main street, as well as home to the station’s new north entrance.

The undulating green rooftops of the entrance recall the individual tracks below and dispel the impression that the north entrance is a back door. “We wanted to design a train shed that supports movement and a vegetative roof that you can see from the street,” said Bill Hellmuth, president and design chief of HOK. Hellmuth noted that the overall design underscores the inherent sustainability of mass transit.

Clearly, the developers, architects, and planners kept a keen eye on recent developments in New York. The project’s expansive integration of public space recalls Hudson Yards, but without the developer’s massive floor-area payoff, the public space seems that much more generous. Instead of gobbling up every square foot, the north-south promenade becomes a symbolic, if not literal, extension of the L’Enfant plan, reclaiming for Delaware Avenue a bit of what the railways gobbled up a century ago. But perhaps the most generous aspect of the plan occurs on the west side of the site, where the new buildings atop the platform step back to make way for another promenade on the Burnham Wall. This High Line-esque gesture incorporates an existing city greenway, bike path, and pedestrian walkway. The gentle arc begins nearly a mile north of the project and culminates at the recently restored Columbus Circle in front of Daniel Burnham’s 1908 masterpiece.

Transforming design into reality

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AFTER HOURS, SOHO WEST

Community Board 2’s September 2 town hall meeting will focus on Hudson Square. The little-known moniker was bestowed on the old printing district by the site entryways will be cut into the Burnham Wall to allow pedestrians to cross between neighborhoods. Escalators from the passageways will take visitors up onto the developer’s new deck, where Akridge hopes to build a multiuse neighborhood. The H Street Bridge will meet the platform above the tracks, transforming the now-desolate overpass into a main street, as well as home to the station’s new north entrance.

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AFTER HOURS, SOHO WEST

Community Board 2’s September 2 town hall meeting will focus on Hudson Square. The little-known moniker was bestowed on the old printing district by Trinity Church, the neighborhood’s major landholder for the past three centuries. Situated south of Houston, north of Canal, east of the Hudson, and west of Sixth Avenue, the warehouse-filled area has always been thought of as the workaday offshoot of SoHo. Not anymore. On August 20 City Planning certified a rezoning proposal, pushed by Trinity’s real estate arm, that would allow for a multi-use residential complex designed by SHoP to rise at Sixth Avenue just north of Canal. Other major players in the area include Extell and Edison, with Edison already gearing up for 230-unit residential tower on Dominick Street. With a daytime workforce of 50,000 that dwindles to a mere 2,000 residents each weekend, the area’s rezoning could transform the area into a loft-lovers paradise.

SPURA’S MOMENT

On August 22 City Planning approved the planned 1.65 million-square-foot redevelopment of two blocks of the Lower East Side. The Seward Park Urban Renewal Area (SPURA) is a Moses-era slum clearance project that has stood vacant since the 1960s. The redevelopment would include 900 apartments, 500 of which would be designated as permanently affordable housing, as well as retail, community, and green spaces. The plan now needs approval from City Council to proceed.
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FIRST ROUND OF DATA ON BUILDING ENERGY CONSUMPTION IS IN NUMBERS CRUNCH

Last month, one of the major measuring devices of the master plan PlaNYC yielded its first set of data. The Local Law 84 benchmarking ordinance was pegged to a suite of laws operating under the catchy banner of the Greener, Greater Buildings Plan (GGBP). The ordinance required all New York City buildings over 50,000 square feet to report energy consumption. With more than 75 percent compliance, the first report was able to collate information from more than 1.7 billion square feet, making it the largest data collection of its kind for a single jurisdiction.

While a single year’s worth of information isn’t enough to track trends, it does provide a few surprising revelations. For example, one particular finding showed that early 20th-century buildings tend to be more efficient than later generations. The report gives the credit to smaller floor plates, efficient envelopes, and smaller ventilation systems. But the report was careful to make the proviso-development observation that the energy “measurement per square foot does not necessarily reflect efficiency in terms of energy per unit of economic activity happening in buildings.”

Despite the very positive participation numbers, there are a few kinks that have yet to be ironed out. The Environmental Protection Agency’s Portfolio Manager, the benchmarking tool used to collect the data, should be able to flag obvious mistakes, like a building square footage entry of zero, but it can’t. Also, building owners often entered square footage based on information they gave to the Department of Finance, meaning they entered square footage for space that had taxable revenue and left out the square footage for space that wasn’t rented.

Nevertheless, spotting mistakes will help fine tune the process for the years to come when the data becomes even richer, and not just because there will be several years of benchmarking under the city’s belt. Other laws in the suite mandate audits and require retrofits. Information from auditors will add detail, such as whether a building has punched windows or a curtain wall. “Within two to three years we’re going to have a really nuanced data set,” said Laurie Kerr, a senior policy advisor to the mayor. “We’ll be able to see if buildings are changing.”

The U.S. Department of Energy is also working with the city to incorporate the information into a national database. Austin, Seattle, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. have all recently adopted benchmarking laws. The data will allow decision makers to compare policy and results. Buildings that are less than 50,000 square feet may also find their way into the mix. Though Kerr acknowledged that smaller building owners might not have the resources to track data, the city is looking at a less demanding program, perhaps a point-of-sale ordinance rather than an annual requirement.

Though some of the GGBP laws dictate specific retrofits, the main thrust of the suite is to provide building owners with information—as well as tax incentives—to make their buildings more energy efficient, which in the long run will save money. “Information drives change,” Kerr said, repeating a Bloomberg mantra. “Providing building owners with information should cause them to make the right decisions.”
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THE GATEKEEPERS

Whether a high-profile memorial or small museum addition, institutions have become increasingly cautious when it comes time to identify the right architect for the job. Stepping in to guide and shape the process is an expanding corps of elite advisors. Jonathan Lerner profiles today’s top consultants and finds out what an architect needs to do to catch their eye—and get the job.
Choosing the design for a major commission is complicated under the best of circumstances: Emotions run high, costs can spiral, stakeholders proliferate, and that's all before the public weighs in.

When the curving walkway and wind-chime tower of Paul Murdoch Architects' plan for the Flight 93 Memorial in Pennsylvania was revealed in 2005 following a competition that attracted over 1,000 entries by both professionals and amateurs, it was raucously denounced as an Islamic crescent and minaret. In his current proposal for the Eisenhower Memorial in Washington, D.C., Frank Gehry's 80-foot-high metal tapestries, with imagery best viewed from passing cars, are provoking similarly intense outrage. Negative public response—here focusing on the opacity of the process that zeroed in on Gehry, arguably the world's most renowned architect, from an invitation-only list of just 44 contenders—is just one hazard a choice of design and designer can pose. No wonder those who commission architects often look for help to guide the selection process.

Increasingly, it is specialized consultants who help clients—and architects—navigate the selection process. These facilitators may be little known, and often keep themselves deliberately in the background, but they play a significant role in directing, and even shaping, many large commissions. What do these gatekeepers say about the choices that arise, the contributions they make, and what you have to do to be in the running?

Though many are trained architects, they tend to have pursued careers as academics, editors or writers instead and are among the usual suspects on prize and commission juries. Thus they gain familiarity with many practitioners. That's certainly true of Reed Kroloff, former editor-in-chief of Architecture magazine, principal of Jones/Kroloff Design Services and director of the Cranbrook Academy of Art. He sees his consultant role as helping "ensure that better architecture results," and helping clients "learn about architects, planners, landscape architects, and designers that they might not know about." His typical engagement with a client runs from program development to selection of the designer.

Karen Stein, whose primary experience is as a writer and editor, prefers to stay with a project longer. "It's not just about anointing someone, although who designs the project is a central decision. It's also about understanding what the client's responsibilities are and how the process will unfold." She defines herself as "an advocate that makes sure that dialogue is as constructive as possible."

A central issue consultants advise on is the type of search. Kroloff said, "Some clients are working on projects that are very much in the public arena, some very much not. There are different strategies for each type. An open competition is more appropriate for large-scale public projects." The openness can help elicit public buy-in, and raise a project's profile, becoming a marketing tool for the institution and its new building, explained Kroloff. "But you can have a competition between two or three people for a private commission. We would never urge one methodology over another without first assessing with the client their goals and intentions."

Stanley Collyer has a journalism background and has consulted on only a few competitions, but has edited Competitions since 1990. He favors open competitions especially for potentially touchy projects like memorials. Those for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Flight 93 Memorial, he said, were "very well run and came out with a good result," in contrast to the much-disdained selection process used for the Eisenhower Memorial. "Why wouldn't you do everything like that?"

But not all agree. "I worry about the long range effects of the public being too involved in a matter that they're not equipped to deal with," countered Bill Lacy, former executive director of the Pritzker Prize, who founded a selection consultancy in 1988 after having overseen many competitions as director of the National Endowment for the Art's architecture and environmental arts program. He argues that an invited competition with "a jury that's put together thoughtfully" runs less risk of ending up with a problematic winning design. And he goes further: "I prefer by far the process of going to see the work" with a client who is knowledgeable about design and empowered to make a choice, holding no
competition at all. Lacy has been doing just that with the CEO of pharmaceuticals giant Novartis for its campuses in Switzerland and New Jersey, tapping Gehry, Chipperfield, Ando, Koolhaas, and other architects, both famous and less so.

Whether open or invited, “having a design competition can enlighten the client, and present a series of options that might not otherwise have been considered,” Kroloff said. “We try and structure our competitions to help our client understand how the designers are thinking, not so much to find a specific solution for that project.”

Establishing a process that mirrors the core values of the institution is a growing trend. Stein is working with a foundation in Sao Paolo dedicated to showcasing Brazilian arts that need a museum building. There, the process itself illustrates the client’s mission. They decided to “do the architectural search in a way similar to how the foundation runs itself,” she said. “I spent a lot of time interviewing younger Brazilian architects and then we had an invited competition, and chose a firm that’s not well known.” Andrade Moretini Arquitetos had won numerous ideas and design competitions, but their built portfolio was small, mainly residential with a few institutional projects. Stein’s process also defused a legitimate fear clients can have, that less experienced firms might prove unable to deliver. “That was the advantage of me going in advance to all the offices. You had some confidence that the participants in the competition had the ability to actually do the project,” Stein said.

Vetting candidate firms for the competence to fulfill the commissions is an essential part of the consultant’s job. Donald Stastny, author of the General Service Administration’s Design Excellence Program Guide, has managed major open competitions, including for the Flight 93 Memorial. “We put into the process that after the finalists were selected, if they didn’t have the capacity to complete the project, they would engage a team that did,” he said. Thus Paul Murdoch brought in experienced landscape architect Warren Byrd from Nelson Byrd Woltz for the memorial to develop the concept and give it a more coherent landscape presence. Stastny indicates that qualifications-based selection processes are more appropriate for “very complex projects. You have to have people who can take on that complexity.”

The cost to a client of a competition or a search can vary enormously. “There’s no set rate,” said Collyer. “If they’re helping out with the program and the jury and more or less coordinating the competition you’d probably have to start with around $20,000. But for some of these GSA competitions I’m sure it runs into maybe $50,000 or $100,000. Those programs tend to get pretty detailed because they’re so budget conscious.”

Can younger and smaller firms get considered for invited competitions or qualifications-based searches? Several consultants suggest that, when restricting searches to boldface-name firms, clients may shortchange themselves; the work may be handed off to second-tier teams while the principals handle dxfier projects.

David Resnicow, principal of Resnicow Schroeder, which consults mainly with arts institutions on strategic planning, is also noticing “greater concern on the part of institutions about hiring a starchitect. A lot of trustees feel that it means having added cost, and dealing with a prima donna. I do see interest in working with younger firms, and in urban context and planning” as opposed to heroic structures. This trend away from grandiosity may get a push forward by the recent University of Chicago report, Set in Stone, which found that many organizations had undertaken expensive, high-profile building projects only to find themselves unable to pay for and sustain them.

“We seek out emerging practices on a regular basis,” said Kroloff, “and bring those forward to clients” when the fit seems promising. “We seek out emerging practices on a regular basis,” said Kroloff, “and bring those forward to clients” when the fit seems promising. “We seek out emerging practices on a regular basis,” said Kroloff, “and bring those forward to clients” when the fit seems promising. “We seek out emerging practices on a regular basis,” said Kroloff, “and bring those forward to clients” when the fit seems promising.

Competition success can be a double-edged sword. “Competitions take a lot of thought and work,” said Stein. “Younger firms who haven’t done it before might not have had the chance to see what works well. But sometimes just experiencing going through the process can be a great advantage.”

Architect Ira Keer, of Minneapolis design collaborative what!worx would concur. They won a design competition for infill housing, along with first crack at negotiating to develop it. It was an open competition, but personal connection played a role: Keer wasn’t aware of it until urged to enter by its managing consultant, a former classmate. Recess— and a tornado that blasted the neighborhood—derailed the project. Still, it brought “quite a bit of notoriety,” including an exhibition and numerous articles.

So being known, or known about, by the gatekeepers is crucial. Although he is constantly on the lookout, Kroloff also urges younger firms to approach him cold. “Invite us for a site visit. Send a portfolio,” he suggested. ARQ has a high profile now, and “a lot of times we don’t know who puts us on a list,” said Cassell.

In the competition’s game, knowing the key players makes all the difference. Jonathan Lerner is a New York-based writer and communications consultant.
Project: Gansevoort Park Hotel

Quantity: (1) 32’0”W x 12’0”H

Series 2000 Custom - 1” Dual Pane insulated glass, motorized with custom vinyl flaps dipping into pool

Project Description:
Custom S-2000 Hingeway Door spanning indoor/outdoor swimming pool on the 19th floor of hotel. Matching adjacent swing door with panic hardware, closure and threshold.
THE ARCHITECT’S NEWSPAPER SEPTEMBER 5, 2012

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2012

WEDNESDAY 5

LECTURES
Big City Adventures in Building Science: Materials—What Works and What Doesn’t 8:00 a.m.
Center for Architecture 536 LaGuardia Pl.
cfa.aiany.org

FRIDAY 7

LECTURE
Johanna Drucker
Speaking Signs: Writing on the Urban Landscape 7:00 p.m.
Load of Fun 120 West North Ave.
Baltimore, MD
baltimore.aiaga.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Doris Duke’s Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape, and Islamic Art 7:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture 1218 Arch St.
Philadelphia, PA
aiaphiladelphi.org

SATURDAY 8

EXHIBITION OPENING
Doris Duke’s Shangri La: Architecture, Landscape, and Islamic Art 7:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture 1218 Arch St.
Philadelphia, PA
aiaphiladelphi.org

LECTURES
Donna Farugia
Creative Team of the Future 11:00 a.m.
Brooklyn Grange 942 Peck Street
Brooklyn, NY
donna.aiaga.org

Michael Bierut and Massimo Vignelli
Bierut Bierut: Designing with Vignelli 6:00 p.m.
New York Transit Museum 207 Varick St.
Brooklyn, NY
mta.info/museum

SYMPOSIUM
Breathing Freely: Natural Ventilation in Tall Buildings—Case Study of Manitoba Hydro Place 6:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture 536 LaGuardia Pl.
cfa.aiany.org

Sunday 9

EXHIBITION OPENING
The Drawing Lesson 6:00 p.m.
OSS 137 137 Orchard St.
ontokillalamys.com

LECTURE
Kristina Wilson
Josiah McElheny: Some Pictures of the Infinite 6:00 p.m.
The Institute of Contemporary Art 100 Northern Ave.
Boston, MA
icaboston.org

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EVENT
LEC

EVENT
AEC-NYC Professionals Circle Meeting 6:00 pm
IE Monogram Design Center A&D Building 160 East 58th St.
bbuilding.com

The Green-Wood Historic Fund Honors Nicholas Ounnell Award-Winning Landscape Architect 6:00 pm.
Green-Wood Cemetery 25th St. at 5th Ave.
brooklyn, NY
green-wood.com

FRIDAY 14

LECTURE
Chris O’Dea
The Evolution of Radiant Heating 12:30 p.m.
AIA Connecticut 370 James St.
New Haven, CT
aia-ct.org

EVENT
AlAi Presents Frank Costantino Sketching Workshop Through September 16th Location TBA
aii-e.com

SATURDAY 15

SYMPOSIUM
Wendy Ashmore, David Carrasco et. al.
The World Around Them: How Pre-Columbian Societies Created Their Cultural Landscapes 9:00 a.m.
U.S. Navy Memorial and Naval Heritage Center 701 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C.
pcwvc.org

TOUR
Livable Neighborhoods Series: Progressive-Era Public Schools on the Lower East Side 11:00 a.m.
Manhattan Specific location available upon purchase of ticket
cfa.aiany.org

TUESDAY 18

EXHIBITION OPENING
Foundation Faculty Exhibition 4:00 p.m.
Ruble & Norman Schafler Gallery Pratt University 200 Willoughby Ave.
Brooklyn, NY pratt.edu

TOUR
Gensler Atlanta 10:00 a.m.
189 Peachtree St. Atlanta, GA
aiatl.org

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A LONG-WAITED TRIBUTE: FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT’S USONIAN HOUSE AND PAVILION
Guggenheim Museum 1071 Fifth Avenue
Through February 13, 2012

In the years just before Frank Lloyd Wright’s Guggenheim Museum forever altered the face Fifth Avenue, the directors of the museum went on a charm offensive. In 1953, they presented the exhibition Sixty Years of Living Architecture: The Work of Frank Lloyd Wright. The show introduced Wright’s Usonian House to New Yorkers by building the Prairie-style home on the construction site of where the architect’s tour de force museum would soon rise. Now, through February 13 the museum presents a scaled-down version of the exhibition, which originally included the Usonian and a dramatic Wright-designed pavilion holding models, drawings, and watercolors by the master. This exhibition, A Long-Awaited Tribute: Frank Lloyd Wright’s Usonian House and Pavilion, celebrates the two structures that won over a somewhat skeptical New York audience to the work of America’s modern master.

FROM FARM TO CITY: STATEN ISLAND 1616–2012
Museum of the City of New York 1220 Fifth Avenue
September 19 to January 21

From Farm to City: Staten Island 1616–2012 explores the history, evolution, and future of New York’s often overlooked borough. The island has served as the city’s breadbasket, a pastoral escape for the city’s elite, an industrial center, an international port, and a toehold for new immigrant communities. Divided into four sections—Farms, Pleasure Grounds, Suburbs, and City—the exhibition examines the major forces that have shaped land use on the island, including the development of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. The exhibition includes historic photographs, maps, and other ephemera and objects, as well as an online mapping component tracing the chronology of major developments on the island.
1900–2000. Many of that country's
design through the
O'Connor, takes a sweeping view
exhibition, put on by architecture
in a nursery. MoMA's latest design
Bellmore, Wantagh, Massapequa,
like the Hamptons—where you
building style from tract mediocre
to white or blue collar, ranging in
Island Railroad, shading up or down
endless suburb, served by the Long
Coast era of the North Shore—the
New York, between the Gold
Architecturally many people assume

Andrea Rubino.

Child’s Power Play
The Century of the Child: Growing by Design 1900–2000

THE SUBURBAN AVANT-GARDES

Architecturally many people assume nothing happened on Long Island, New York, between the Gold Coast era of the North Shore—the Gatsbyesque mansions that strung the coast of Long Island Sound—and its current state of sprawl: the endless suburb, served by the Long Island Expressway and the Long Island Railroad, shading up or down to white or blue river, ranging in building style from tract mediocre to pretentious pastiche. There were the pretty, expensive parts—the beach communities on the South Fork, like the Hamptons—where you found architectural experimentation, or at least architects building for themselves, but the rest of Long Island was a punchline delivered in a commuter train conductor’s voice: “Freeport, Merrick, Bellmore, Wantagh, Massapequa, Massapequa Park!”

Long Island Modernism 1930–1980, by Caroline Rob Zaleski, has arrived to prove that notion impressively wrong. The 25 architects under discussion are not names you would readily associate with Long Island—Frank Lloyd Wright, Richard Neutra, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Some of the names, like William Lescaze, Wallace Harrison, and Edward Durell Stone are only slightly less prominent. And some, like Jane Yu and A. Lawrence Kocher, deserve more attention.

The book is a result of a field study of modern buildings being conducted for the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities. Zaleski, an architectural preservationist and historian, is the director of that survey and an important advocate for Long Island’s modernist heritage. Many of the projects detailed here were responses to the two great showcases of modern ideas in Flushing Meadows, Queens: the World’s Fair of 1933 with its theme of the World of Tomorrow and the World’s Fair of 1964 built in reflection of our nascent Space Age.

The A. Conger Goodyear House, designed in 1939 by Edward Durell Stone, is an important transition piece from the European mansion mentality of the North Shore.

“Newport on the Sound,” to European modernism. IZaleski fought successfully to save it from demolition in 2002. Goodyear, heir to a timber and railroad fortune, left his wife and four children back in Buffalo in 1938, moved to New York, and made his entrance into North Shore society by buying 110 acres on the property. He built a clinic and putting up a generously fertilized, white brick house there. An art collector, patron of the avant-garde, and a master of the game, Goodyear was also the first president of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. His architecture, Stone, making his entrance into modernism, had lately worked on the art deco
decoration of the Waldorf Astoria, and Radio City Music Hall. Stone had a long affluent run on Long Island, which paralleled his public career as the architect of note on commissions like embassies and performing arts centers. His Lloyd Harbor house for Gabriele Lagerlager is a less known, but very important, house. In 1929, in New Delhi and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Zaleski rises to the occasion, as architectural writers so often don’t, when pressed into play to give social context to builders and their buildings. The book is a fascinating history as well as field study. Gabriele Lagerlager, later to become “the Baroness,” is, in Zaleski’s description, “the sometime companion of numerous very rich men.” (And you thought people moved to Long Island because the schools were good.) In 1961, she buys 32 acres from the Colgates, and hires Stone, himself a member of her own international set, to design the perfect house: “a gilded getaway for a high

toned, insouciant crowd.” He does. The Villa Riede, as it is known, has a central atrium with a large reflecting pool, where Miss Lagerlager entertains guests during the cocktail hour by taking a swim with them, the Holly Golightly of Long Island.

Smaller, adventurous architectural outings are also important chapters that are essential to any survey of Long Island’s modernist heritage. A. Lawrence Kocher’s Aluminaire House, which Wallace Harrison and his wife Ellen purchased to live in while they put up their own house in Huntington in 1932. Frey had worked in Le Corbusier’s studio. Kocher was the managing editor of Architectural Record. The Aluminaire House, sleek on paper, was difficult to construct, leaked, and the Harrisons, after eight years in it, dubbed it the “Tin House,” for its quintessential ramshackle quality. Kocher, personally, was interested in starting an “American Bauhaus,” on Long Island, and corresponded pleadingly with Gropius about it, introducing him to deans continued on page 18

Below: The Levitt and Sons office building in Valley Stream, NY., designed by Edward Durell Stone.
absence of postmodern giants like Barbie and the "edutainment" industry. Similarly, the prospect to the now multi-million dollar industry often displaying the utopic visions of social education, it can be seen to have ended active exploration of the world through objects on display. Pee-wee's Playhouse—noteworthy for its exclusions than for the now circumscribed by commercialism. conveys the extent to which childhood is experienced. "Power Play," Andreas Gursky's monumental color print "Toys R Us" compellingly conveys the extent to which childhood is now circumscribed by commercialism. However, this section's curation seems more noteworthy for its exclusions than for the objects on display. Pee-wee's Playhouse—whose video projection and original set properties dominate the room—draws attention to the absence of Sesame Street, a noteworthy preface to the now multi-million dollar "edutainment" industry. Similarly, the absence of postmodern giants like Barbie and McDonald's, the second of which thankfully receives attention in the catalog, seem oddly conspicuous oversights. The ultimate section, "Designing Better Education," uncharacteristically abandons the exhibition's heretofore chronological progression. As with "Power Play," this exploration is fraught by its exclusions, often displaying the utopic visions of social design without any apparent discussion of their dystopic dangers. To wit, the featured One Laptop per Child, Nicholas Negroponte's $100 laptop project of 2005, projected to serve two billion children around the world and change education as we know it, is now widely acknowledged as a failure, though no mention of this is made within the gallery. The complexities of the impact of technological toys also receives short shrift, given the implications that it has on the ways in which children play, interact, and imagine. Indeed it could be presented as a much more thought-provoking endnote than the seemingly misplaced playground examination. If the century of the child began with a newly active exploration of the world through objects and a hands-on approach to education, it can be seen to have ended with a shift from a manual involvement with objects to a symbolic relationship with information, images, and amusement. In July of 2010 a Newsweek feature story entitled "The Creativity Crisis" revealed that American creativity scores have been in steady decline since 1980, with the trend most pronounced for children in kindergarten through sixth grade. "The development of the child," reads the manifesto The Century of the Child, from which the exhibition draws its name, "answers in miniature to the development of mankind as a whole." MoMA's exhibition, a monumental and—by and large—masterful undertaking, raises fundamental questions about how we are designing our present and defining our future.

KIMBERLIE BIRKS IS A NEW YORK-BASED WRITER.

THE SUBURBAN AVANT-GARDENS continued from page 17

stateside until he inadvertently landed him a job at Harvard, not Columbia. The Fort Salonga Colony, 20 acres Kocher purchased near Northport, became the site for his own weekend house, the Canvas Weekend House (this time, cotton duck for walls, not aluminum), and in lieu of a school, he talked three other families into purchasing lots and putting up "experimental" houses. The Canvas House, one room on stilts, got lots of press understanding—it looked like a toy-train version of the Villa Savoye—but without electricity, it was basically a modernist lean-to.

David L. Leavitt's Box Kite House was a more successful adventure. Designed for an advertising executive, Bill Miller, on Fire Island in 1956, Leavitt (who was the architect on Russell and Mary Wright's Dragon Rock; the self-promoting Wrights cut him out of the credits as the years went by) engineered a stacked structure of unfolding balconies which doubled as protective shutters off-season and Mylar walls braced in a lattice of outrigger cables that made it look like a box kite. The defiant little house—which looked like it might take off—stood bravely until it burned down from a stove fire.

And Jane Yü's house for Bert and Phyllis Geller III in Lawrence, designed in 1978, was not only a model of innovation, but a telling architectural world morality tale. The Gellers had already built two houses on Long Island and a showroom for their shoe company in Manhattan with Marcel Breuer. Yü, who worked in Breuer's office as an interior designer, oversaw the showroom. When the Gellers decided they needed a new house, something smaller as they were closing in on retirement, they asked Yu, not the Great Man, to give them something simple, and quickly. Perhaps the Gellers suspected, like many who have worked with famous architects, that Breuer couldn't do simple and quick. Yu came up with an elegant off-the-rack house: stock cedar siding, concrete blocks to suggest passages of stonework, factory-made windows. And she specified solar panels on the roof for the hot-water heater. It is a very sweet, economical, livable design. Yu got no attention for it. The Gellers encouraged her to keep quiet about it, so as not to offend Breuer. When the mayor of Lawrence admired the house and suggested she submit it for an AIA Long Island award, Herbert Beckhard, who was responsible for the house commissions in Breuer's office, and who was a member of the AIA award committee, refused to consider it.

Zalenski has acknowledged that her book is a kind of sequel to Long Island Country Houses and eir Architects, 1860–1940 by Robert B. Mackay, Anthony Baker, Carol A. Traynor, and Brendan Gill. Mackay is the director of the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, which sponsored Zalenski’s initial study.

One doubts there will be a sequel to Zalenski’s book. Most of Long Island—if not the rest of suburban America—has become a postmodern mash-up now. We could easily have been learning from Long Island, as well as Las Vegas, when modernism failed at home. Zalenski’s examples are like ruins in a park. It’s sad, but heartening, to see them restored to freshness in these pages.

WILLIAM L. HAMILTON WRITES FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS.

CHILD’S POWER PLAY continued from page 17

where the exhibition’s lid suddenly seems to pop open with Jack-in-the-Box force. In “Power Play,” Andreas Gursky’s monumental color print “Toys R Us” compellingly conveys the extent to which childhood is now circumscribed by commercialism.
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Build Your Business at Build Expo
The Architect's Newspaper September 5, 2012

At the end of the 1970s, art theorist and critic Rosalind Krauss wrote a seminal text entitled "Sculpture in the Expanded Field." It was an attempt to both locate and analyze vanguard sculptural practices of the time, such as the work of Richard Serra, Robert Smithson, Mary Miss, and Donald Judd whose artistic output had moved beyond the limits of traditional sculpture and entered the realms of architecture and landscape. She classified these works as site constructions, marked sites, and axiomatic structures. Krauss developed a new classification strategy that recognized the expansive terrain that sculpture was beginning to occupy and its malleability as a medium, while also appreciating the difficulty of defining contemporary artistic practices whose most innovative moments seemingly demanded the transgression of traditional disciplinary boundaries.

Over the past three decades, the boundaries between art and architecture have continued to blur, giving rise to a series of works known as installations whose conceptual, spatial, and material trajectories have generated a new and expanding network of relations between the domains of architecture, interiors, sculpture, and landscape. At the same time, the range of institutional venues advancing architectural installation practices, such as the PS1 program spawned by MoMA in New York and the Serpentine Gallery’s annual architectural pavilion in London, for example, have provided platforms to intensify the production and reach of contemporary installations. By contextually bracketing out architecture’s typical economic, functional, and scalar constraints, they have also enabled installation practices to occur within an experimental laboratory that has provided fertile ground in support of architecture’s own evolution. Operating at the margins of normative practice, installations have contributed to the redefinition and progressive development of architecture’s disciplinary territory allowing architects to explore spatial and tectonic ideas, experiment with emerging technological strategies, and distill perceptual and experiential conditions without the limitations traditionally imposed by the permanence and utility of building.

The show that we designed and co-curated, Architecture in the Expanded Field, the third installment in The Way Beyond Art series put on by the Wattis Institute of Contemporary Art at the California College of the Arts, is simultaneously an immersive and a didactic exhibition. It is a response to the question of how to exhibit architecture within the space of contemporary art, while also revealing a territory within architectural practice that, despite its exuberance and proliferation, has been historically defined as a negativity: the progeny of which is both not-architecture and not-art. Following the legacy of Krauss, we therefore set out to explore the realm of art and architecture across a broad terrain of installation practices while mapping these as constellations within a newly expanded field suspended between Architecture, Interiors, Sculpture, and Landscape. Within the exhibition, these terms become the initial reference points that are used to elaborate a more extensive taxonomical framework defining twelve distinct zones where the analytical drawings and photographic indexes of seventy-five installation projects are situated. As one moves within the exhibition along the trajectory from interiors to sculpture, for example, one finds the immersive chromatic environments of Carlos Cruz-Diez and Olafur Eliasson, the thermal and radiant atmospheres of Philippe Rahm, the intensely graphic patterned surfaces of Jürgen Mayer and Yayoi Kusama, and the interactive mediated light landscapes of Ryoji Ikeda and Julio Le Parc. These installations foreground immersive atmospheric spaces rather than sculptural objects, collectively they define Chromatic/Graphic Immersion, one of the twelve installation typologies organizing this exhibition. In a slight shift of direction, located along the trajectory from interiors toward landscape, are a different series of installation projects including the undulating orange strata of Barnscape and the pink spongial expanse of Mute Room, two works by Thom Foulds both of which redefine ground as a programmed surface and occupiable topography. Here, the concept of landscape enables new continuities to exist between architecture and the body eliminating the need for furniture while imbuing space with thickened geological attributes that reassess the conditions of inhabitation.

The expanded field diagram is a conceptual framework that operates on many levels. It acts as a lens through which to theorize and classify the trajectories of current installation practices. It serves as an infrastructure to organize the didactic surface content of the exhibition. And, it forms the invisible structural matrix that is physically realized in the configuration of the installation itself. The four vertices marking the peripheral points of the expanded field are therefore mapped directly onto four of the eight corners of the gallery, literally inscribing the new expanded field diagram within the space. These points define the virtual surface of a tetrahedral envelope within which the actual frame of the architectural installation is embedded. The curatorial diagram is thus projected into space and stretched like a suspended landscape across the gallery. Physically inscribing the expanded field within the space ensures that the visitor concurrently experiences the architecture of the installation and navigates the exhibition content by literally occupying the space of the three-dimensional diagram, whereby the map of the expanded field and the plan of the construct within the gallery are conflated into one thickened projective surface.

Operating simultaneously as an architectural frame, interior space, sculptural object, and topological surface, this floating translucent installation negotiates between these four distinct disciplinary domains while enfoldng them within a singular spatial and material manifestation. It is a full-scale immersive environment constructed of 96 unique yet continuous interlocking acrylic bands that snake through the space of the gallery, guiding bodies to haptically follow their undulating surfaces. Within this highly interiorized and suspended architectural labyrinth, made up of aggregated cells each no larger than the dimensions of a single body, space is compressed and filled to establish an equivalence between body, space, and object so that the serpentine movements of acrylic strands and visitors, and the pixelated fields of occupants and data, might generate a new thickened atmosphere within the space of viewing.

The surface of the panels themselves, a series of drawings generated for this exhibition which expose the techniques through which architects describe and analyze spatial production, are indices of the architectural oscillate between material texture, graphic description, and diagrammatic information, their translucency highlighting the challenge that matter and its immateriality, opacity, and vice versa. Perhaps we have now come full circle, where the proliferation of data, image, and text and the impermanence of cultural construction, is no longer the threat to architecture that Victor Hugo had once claimed in his famous proclamation: “ceci n’est pas une célébration,” or “this will kill that.” Rather, as in this installation and in those attempts to collect and categorically re-situate, we might imagine that this work not only constitutes the new expanded field of contemporary architectural practice, but is also the matter out of which our architectural future will be built.

ILA BERMAN AND DOUGLAS BURNHAM CURATED AND DESIGNED THE INSTALLATION, ARCHITECTURE IN THE EXPANDED FIELD, FOR AN EXHIBITION AT CCA’S WATTIS INSTITUTE FROM MARCH 5 THROUGH APRIL 7. ILA BERMAN IS THE DIRECTOR OF ARCHITECTURE AT CCA. ARCHITECT DOUGLAS BURNHAM IS ON THE FACULTY AND PRINCIPAL OF ENVELOPE A+D.
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The boxy artist studio at the end of a dirt path in the town of Orient, Long Island is the first structure in the New York metropolitan region, and one of about a dozen in the United States, to meet the stringent environmental standards of the Passivhaus Institute, based in Darmstadt, Germany.

Active Passive

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In the United States we have developed a unique public/private model of organization that reaches into nearly every corner of how we construct our cities and practice architecture. Projects get built, but the terms and protocols—and therefore, the results—vary widely. Elsewhere, it’s done differently. For example, Vienna, Austria, which may have the most successful program of affordable housing of any city in the world, has a defined process known as the “the four pillars,” a set of guidelines that every RFP in a competitive process and every submitted proposal must follow and be judged by if they are to be chosen by city officials.

With our myriad of overlapping municipal and governmental regulations, standards, and authorities, this country may never adapt a universal set of criteria for selecting memorials and major buildings. Given all the variables, it should be no surprise that even architectural competitions have become a multifaceted business in this country. This issue’s feature focuses on a growing industry of consultants who work almost exclusively on creating and staging competitions. Further, these consultants do more than simply stage competitions—they seem to hold the hands of the client(s) and sometimes even the architects to ensure the success of the process and the resulting design. It’s a valuable service for many clients, since “architecture” may be defined as everything in excess of basic program requirements like toilets and a roof that does not leak.

Too often architects are guilty of being elitists or unconcerned about the bottom-up input of the clients and the public. But one can see what Bill Lacey, former executive director of the Pritzker Prize means when he says, “I worry about the long-range effects of the public being involved in a matter that they’re not equipped to deal with.”

We cannot help but think of the banal sculpture of fighting soldiers that was placed beside Maya Lin’s powerful Vietnam Veterans Memorial project or the input that September 11 victims’ families have had over the construction of the complex surrounding Larry Silverstein’s towers. In fact, the most important role these competition specialists can perform is, as competition consultant Karen Stein says, to “establish a process that mirrors the core values of the institution” commissioning the project.

It is a worry that these competition insiders could become powerful architecture brokers, trading on their friendships and connections. But legitimately used, their knowledge of the process may allow them to be the only arbiters between the top-down excess that makes great architecture and the legitimate demand by the public to be part of the design process.

**WILLIAM MENKING**

**INDEX STILL IN NEGATIVE TERRITORY BUT BOUNCING BACK**

BILLINGS BEGINNING REBOUND?

The AIA’s monthly Architecture Billings Index (ABI) for July came in with a disappointing 48.7 (any score below 50 indicates a decline in billings for design activity). The news was not all bad though. The ABI, which was up significantly from last month’s score of 45.9. “Even though architecture firm billings nationally were down again in July, the downturn moderated substantially,” said AIA Chief Economist Kermit Baker. “As long as overall economic conditions continue to show improvement, modest declines should shift over to growth in design activity over the coming months.”

At the regional level, the South, a region pattered by the Great Recession, was the only area in positive territory, skyrocketing up to a score of 52.7 from the previous month’s 47.6. The Midwest clocked in at 46.7, the West lagged with 46.3, and the Northeast continued its steady decline to 44.3, the lowest score for that region since February 2010. By sector, multi-family residential (61.4) outpaced mixed-practice (49.1), commercial/industrial (48.4), and institutional (46.6). Revenues rebounded to 56.3, up from last month’s 54.4.

**ALAN G. BRAKE**
IT'S HIGH TIME FOR THE LOW LINE continued from page 20

an abandoned trolley terminal that lies under Delancey Street on the Lower East Side, the Lowline is poised to be New York's most radical park project yet. Here, remote skylights will not only transmit enough sunlight underground to see by, but enough to grow a wide variety of plants. “It was almost a philosophy on how you could get light down into places that wouldn’t normally get it,” said Ramsey. “When you start thinking about that you realize how much potential there would be for something that could bring natural daylight into dark spaces.”

In March, Ramsey and the Lowline’s co-founder, Dan Barasch, launched a Kickstarter campaign that raised $155,000 to fund the development of the remote skylights and construct a fully functional life-size installation to show to the community and prove to the MTA that not only is their size installation to show to the community that lies under Delancey Street on the Lower East Side, the Lowline is poised to be New York's most radical park project yet. Here, remote skylights will not only transmit enough sunlight underground to see by, but enough to grow a wide variety of plants. “It was almost a philosophy on how you could get light down into places that wouldn’t normally get it,” said Ramsey. “When you start thinking about that you realize how much potential there would be for something that could bring natural daylight into dark spaces.”

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With its rough-hewn dark brown wood cladding, the studio does not advertise its high tech features. However it uses 90 percent less heating energy than does a typical house in this country. Compare that with the average house built to the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED rating system: Studies show that LEED-certified homes generally save less than 25 percent in heating energy over typical U.S. construction.

Lower energy bills are only one of the selling points of Passivhaus, or Passive House, construction, which is becoming widespread in German speaking countries and in Scandinavia. “The principal reason that people get these houses in Europe is that they are so incredibly comfortable,” says the studio’s architect, William Ryall, principal in Ryall Porter Sheridan Architects. “You have fresh air and humidity control all of the time and because of all the insulation, they are extraordinarily quiet in urban settings,” says Ryall.

The fresh air in the artist studio comes from a compact energy recovery ventilator (ERV) made by Zehnder that is used in conjunction with a small split-system unit for heating and cooling. The ventilator changes the studio’s air at the rate of 0.6 changes an hour by sucking outside air inside, filtering it and removing the humidity. In addition, the unit recovers heat from the interior air that is discharged in winter and it recovers cold from the air that is discharged in the summer. The studio’s key energy saving features include a highly airtight building envelope and superior thick walls, which help keep the building cool in the summer and reduce heat loads during winter. Ryall collaborated with building envelope consultant David White, of Right Environments, on the project. Orienting the building to maximize solar heat gain in the winter and reduce it in the summer is also a major part of the strategy.

The adjacent house, which was gutted and rebuilt using the same Passive House methods, achieved an extremely high degree of energy efficiency, but it does not qualify for Passive House certification largely due to solar heat gain from the expansive windows on its northern exposure, which were installed to capitalize on the stunning views of the Long Island Sound.

The artist studio cost about $500 per square foot. Ryall says that much of the expense came from imported materials unavailable in the United States such as the insulated Pazen windows from Germany that come with an R-value, a measure of thermal resistance, close to 11. It is challenging to attain Passive House certification, which evaluates a building holistically rather than on the basis of a point system such as the one used by LEED. “With LEED you could put in worse windows and make it up with a bicycle stand in the basement,” Ryall says, “Here there is no room for negotiation—this is about absolute standards—how much energy is needed for the building.”

**ACTIVELY PASSIVE** continued from front page

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Alex Ulam
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Like many urban universities, The New School is without a campus in the traditional sense of the word. Rather, the school’s many colleges are sprinkled throughout Greenwich Village and further afield across Manhattan in multiple buildings that have little relation to one another. To bring a sense of cohesion, The New School recently hired SOM to design a new facility to serve as a university center. Currently under construction on Fifth Avenue and 14th Street, the 364,000-square-foot project includes a 700-seat auditorium, the main university library, lecture halls, classrooms, a 600-bed dormitory, and other critical amenities.

SOM worked diligently to arrange this varied program in a rational layout that would be intuitive to navigate, create spaces for random interaction between students and faculty, and comply with New York City’s stringent code requirements, while at the same time earning a Gold rating under LEED 2012. The architects began by dividing the academic program from the dormitory apartments, placing the former in the building’s first seven stories and basement and the latter in the upper eight stories. The two sections are joined in the middle by the library, which occupies floors six and seven at a setback that further divides the building into a podium and tower. The fourth and fifth stories are entirely occupied by classrooms, while the third down to the basement levels accommodate the massive volume of the auditorium around which is arranged additional classrooms, the lecture hall, the cafeteria and café, as well as a faculty lounge and the building’s lobby.

The trick to making a university center work in the middle of Manhattan, as more than one architect has learned in the past, is to develop a scheme for vertical circulation that creates a sense of community while still efficiently handling the deluge of traffic that occurs every time the bell rings and classrooms disgorg. SOM addressed this challenge deftly in the academic portion of the building by moving the stairs out from the core to the perimeter. On the building’s three street faces—14th Street, 5th Avenue, and 13th Street—glass-clad stairs slash diagonally through the otherwise orthogonal elevation. On the exterior, the stairs animate the building, broadcasting this hive of activity onto the grand stage of urban theater. On the interior, the stairs descend through a series of interlocking double-height spaces, visually orienting building users and furnishing large landings for congregation and serendipitous encounters.

Each of the stairs is actually two stairs, an open stair bundled with an enclosed fire stair running beneath. The fire stairs on the 14th Street and 13th Street faces link up with the traditional vertical fire stairs coming down from the dormitory, creating direct access to the street. The architects thought of this arrangement as analogous to a subway line, with the open stair acting as the local line and the fire stair providing express service out of the building. They also made ample use of fire-rated glass—120-minute walls and 90-minute doors—making the fire stairs visually display-worthy and reminding students that they are there to be used.

Moving the stairs to the perimeter gave rise to an innovative structural solution that informed the design of the rest of the building. Working closely with construction company Tishman and engineers at DeSimone, SOM used a composite structural system of primarily poured-in-place concrete, with structural steel handling select tasks, including supporting the stairs. The team designed three diagonal perimeter trusses, built up of 12-inch-by-8-inch-by-5/8-inch horizontal HSS steel tubing and 8-inch-by-8-inch-by-3/8-inch vertical HSS steel tubing, from which the stairs are cantilevered into the building. This solution allowed the stairs to flow through the interior without creating a sea of columns that would disrupt the double-height spaces. Lateral bracing was similarly moved to the perimeter, removing the need for concrete shear walls in the core and opening up more interior space for flexible programming. The other task handled by structural steel is transferring the load of the column grid 80 feet over the auditorium, a job done by four massive steel trusses, 9 feet, 8 inches in depth and built up of jumbo sections.

The center’s façade is only 30 percent glass, in keeping with LEED 2012 Gold rating requirements. In the classrooms, windows are arranged in two horizontal bands, one for vision, the other a clerestory with a light shelf that bounces daylight onto the ceiling. Limiting the amount of glass also allowed the architects to select a clear product with minimum low-e coating, creating an unfiltered experience of natural light uncommon in contemporary buildings. The rest of the facade is a rain screen system made of Muntz metal—a sort of brass containing about 60 percent copper and 40 percent zinc. Cheaper than copper, Muntz is extremely corrosion resistant, and, pre-patinated, it has a mottled dark brown appearance that helps the building blend in with the brick that predominates in Greenwich Village.

SOM located tandem pairs of processional and fire stairs on the University Center’s street faces. Clad in glass, they slash diagonally through the Muntz metal curtain wall, animating the building on the exterior and providing intuitive vertical circulation on the interior.

**Sources:**
- **Curtain Wall**
  - Gamma International
  - gammainternational.org
- **LEED Consultants**
  - Buro Happold
  - burohappold.com
- **Glass**
  - Viracon
  - viracon.com
Over the summer, Friends of Hudson River Park (FOHRP) began community outreach to establish a Neighborhood Improvement District intended to help pay for maintenance at the beleaguered park. The FOHRP plan initiates a tax for nearby residences and businesses located from the waterfront to approximately two blocks inland, from Chambers Street to 59th Street. The proposed district is the latest of several attempts to secure new funding sources for the much-needed park.

Of New York’s 33 Business Improvement Districts (BID) 13 include residential areas, but commercial businesses foot most of the bill. The proposed plan for the Neighborhood Improvement District would be the first improvement district that would require payments from residents as well. Residents would be charged about 7.5 cents per square foot, meaning that a snug West Village condo measuring 500 square feet will pay $37.50 per year.

The park’s financial troubles began rearing their head as another park, the High Line, also running parallel to the river, was stealing hearts and minds—and gathering the attention of donors—up and down the West Side. Hudson River Park Trust, the entity that runs the park, cast an envious eye on the High Line’s flush public-private model, so much so that they went to the State Legislature to loosen up the trust’s charter to make ends meet. As with so many of the city’s newer parks, Hudson River Park is required to be self-sustaining. But unlike most recent high-profile new parks, the trust’s charter strictly limits development. Meanwhile, the largest commercial operation intended to generate cash for the park, Chelsea Piers, is locked in legal battle with the state over maintenance and repair funding worth about $37.5 million.

The changes introduced in the legislature might have allowed a residential or hotel complex to rise on Pier 40, among other provisions, but it was defeated in the State Assembly in July. There is slim possibility that the measure may be taken up again in December, but administrators at FOHRP aren’t counting on any single silver bullet to save the day. The Neighborhood Improvement District is one of many efforts, including philanthropy.

Several other charter arrangements intended to generate funding are being contested. The state has also backed away from their responsibility of maintaining the median that runs down the middle of the West Side Highway. The once lush plantings are now choked with weeds. The state wants to hand maintenance of the medians over to the city. The city’s position is that the state must complete the road (Interstate 9A) before the city’s Department of Transportation can take over. In the past, FOHRP maintained the medians under contract from the state. The trust is prohibited from spending money outside park boundaries, so it falls to FOHRP to raise the cash to spruce up what is essentially their front lawn. “I’m sure the state would be happy for any private funding sources,” said A.J. Pietrantone, FOHRP’s executive director.

Another income source that never found its way to the park was the balance from a 15 percent fee once charged to incoming cruise ships. Whatever leftover money not used for pier improvements was supposed to go back to park maintenance. But most of that money went to maintain the cruise ship piers and the portion for the park was never allocated. “There was nothing left over and that has to be clarified,” said David Gruber, chair of Community Board 2. Gruber said that the pier fees alone the Hudson should also be reexamined as income for the park.

FOHRP continues to work with the trust to amend the act, attract donors, and will reach out to the three community boards that boarder the park throughout the fall to build support for the Neighborhood Improvement District. “The proposal can’t go forward if there isn’t any support,” Pietrantone said.

So far the reaction has been somewhat muted, though major commercial interests are lined up behind the proposal, with representatives from the Durst Organization, Tishman Speyer, REBNY, and Two Trees sitting on the FOHRP steering committee. Gruber thinks the tax can be justified easily. “It’s a dinner out,” he said of the cost.
in stitches

Outdoor furniture fashionably tailored to work outside and in.

By Perrin Drumm

1. **NEST**

   **DE LA ESPADA**

   Made of high-density fiberboard (HDF), the unique slatted hood of this lounger highlights Autoban, an Istanbul-based design firm’s modern take on traditional Turkish weaving. Built by De La Espada, Nest can be used alone or in a group to make a statement without overstating. delaespada.com

2. **URCHIN POUF & FLAX OTTOMAN**

   **THOMAS EYCK**

   Sourcing raw and local materials is a major part of Christien Meindertsma’s practice—as well as the subject of her recent TED Talk. For these two casual seating options she went out of her way to use flax grown locally in the Netherlands. thomaseyck.com

3. **NESTREST**

   **DEDON**

   Sit it on the ground or hang it from a tree branch, Daniel Pouzet and Frad Frety’s Nestrest makes for an elegant perch. Woven with supersized strands of an especially strong fiber that’s 4 centimeters wide, Nestrest can support a full brood. dedon.de

4. **DINING TABLE 00219**

   **USONA**

   Shown here in tinted black oak, this open weave table base also comes in natural and birch. Like all of Usona’s products, it’s made to order and can be customized in a variety of sizes, finishes, and materials. usonahome.com

5. **CORACLE**

   **MATTER**

   Inspired by the small, woven half-shell coracle boats used in Wales since the Bronze Age, Benjamin Hubert updated the traditional vessel with a lounge chair made with a basket seat made from automotive suede and a steel frame wrapped in a suede tri-weave recalling bicycle handlebars. mattermatters.com

6. **SPOOL**

   **RODA**

   Rodolfo Dordoni’s Spool collection is, as the name suggests, inspired by weaving spools. The varnished stainless steel frame stands up to all weather conditions and the backrest is wrapped with double-polyester twisted thread to provide flexibility and durability. rodaonline.com
and the west of the station slopes down capital’s bicycle network. As Union Station generated a consensus that this is the vision senior director for business and high-speed prospects here,” said Bob LaCroix, Amtrak’s of the legislators on the Hill. “We like our in New York, Union sits literally within view region released earlier this month. And “Project” in an updated masterplan for the over the next several decades. The proposed component of a $151 billion investment to as far north as Boston). The project is a key importance as a hub (D.C. train delays ripple in states like Florida, Ohio, and Wisconsin— and operated by the United States govern- Yards project, can muster the political will CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS continued from ing, and planners kept a keen eye on recent developments in New York. The project’s updating integration of public space recalls Hudson Yards, but without the developer’s massive floor-area payoff hovering some 40 stories above the site. The buildings maintain D.C.’s 1910 height limit, making the public space seem that much more generous. Instead of gobbling up every square foot, the north-south promenade becomes a symbolic, if not literal, extension of the L’Enfant plan, reclaiming for Delaware Avenue a bit of what the railways gobbled up a century ago. But perhaps the most generous aspect of the plan occurs on the west side of the site, where the new buildings atop the platform step back to make way for another promenade on the Burnham Wall. This High Line-esque gesture incorporates an existing city greenway, bike path, and pedestrian walkway. The gentle arc begins nearly a mile north of the project and culminates at the recently restored Columbus Circle in front of Daniel Burnham’s 1908 masterpiece. 15

Since its construction in 1982, the Jacob K. Javits Center has been one of the world’s leading examples of space-frame design. But the I.M. Pei & Partners-designed exhibit space needed updating to put its best face forward for the 3.5 million visitors it receives each year. So owners engaged Epstein Global and FPAowlie Architects, who developed the recladding program that is dramatically increasing the building’s transparency and energy efficiency. Targeting LEED Silver with a glazing system that will enable the building to exceed energy code requirements by 25 percent, the new face of Javits proves that being old doesn’t have to mean retiring.

Transforming design into reality

For help achieving the goals of your next project, contact the Ornamental Metal Institute of New York.

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ARCHITECT: Epstein Global; FPAowlie Architects
Photographer: Invista

AFTER HOURS, SOHO WEST
Community Board 2’s September 6 town hall meeting will focus on Hudson Square. The little-known moniker was bestowed on the old printing district by Trinity Church, the neighborhood’s major landholder for the past three centuries. Situated south of Houston, west of Sixth Avenue, the warehouse-filled area has always thought of as the workaday offshoot of SoHo. Not anymore. On August 20 City Planning certified a rezoning proposal, pushed by Trinity’s real estate arm, that would allow for a multi-use residential complex designed by SHoP to rise at Sixth Avenue just north of Canal. Other major players in the area include Extell and Edision, with Edision already gearing up for 230-unit residential tower on Dominick Street. With a daytime workforce of 50,000 that dwindles to a mere 2,000 residents each weekend, the area’s rezoning could transform the area into a loft-lovers paradise.

SPURA’S MOMENT
On August 22 City Planning approved the planned 1.65 million-square-foot redevelopment of two blocks of the Lower East Side. The Seward Park Urban Renewal Area (SPURA) is a Moses-era slum clearance project that has stood vacant since the 1960s. The redevelopment would include 900 apartments—500 of which would be designated as permanently affordable housing, as well as retail, community, and green spaces. The plan now needs approval from City Council to proceed.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS continued from front page scale, to New York City’s Hudson Yards project, can must the political will at the federal level. Union Station is owned and operated by the United States govern- ment. But despite high-speed trains and mass transit becoming a political football in states like Florida, Ohio, and Wisconsin— and even New Jersey—most agree that the Northeast corridor is at capacity and needs expansion. “It serves as the only existing high-speed rail, and people on both sides of the aisle believe in that for the Northeast corridor, whether you’re from California or Florida,” said Akridge vice president of development David Tuchmann. As the southern anchor to the corridor, Union Station’s significance goes beyond its importance as a hub (D.C. train delays ripple as far north as Boston). The project is a key component of a $151 billion investment to region’s rails and stations to be completed over the next several decades. The proposed renovation was framed as a “Gateway Project” in an updated masterplan for the region released earlier this month. And unlike the oft-delayed Moynihan Station in New York, Union sits literally within view of the legislators on the Hill. “We like our prospects here,” said Bob LaCroix, Amtrak’s senior director for business and high-speed rail development. “Through this process, a bunch of players from the city, Maryland, Virginia, and the federal government generated a consensus that this is the vision that we all need to heed.”

While the project holds regional as well as national significance, it breaks down into a very urban plan, integrating long-divided D.C. neighborhoods and incorporating the capital’s bicycle network. As Union Station was built on landfill, the terrain to the east and the west of the station slopes down beside the tracks, with the rail lines shared up with a giant stone wall, affectionately referred to as the Burnham Wall, for architect Daniel Burnham, the station’s original architect. The station’s new masterplan, engineered by Parsons Brinkerhoff and designed with HOK, maintains the integrity of the terrain and track levels while burrowing east-west passageways beneath the tracks and creating a north-south corridor above them. Side-street entryways will be cut into the Burnham Wall to allow pedestrians to cross between neighborhoods. Escalators from the passageways will take visitors up onto the developer’s new deck, where Akridge hopes to build a multiuse neighborhood. The H Street Bridge will meet the platform above the tracks, transforming the now-desolate overpass into a main street, as well as home to the station’s new north entrance.

The undulating green rooftops of the entrance recall the individual tracks below and dispel the impression that the north entrance is a back door. “We wanted to design a train shed that supports movement and a vegetative roof that you can see from the street,” said Bill Hellmuth, president and design chief of HOK. Hellmuth noted that the overall design underscores the inherent sustainability of mass transit.

Clearly, the developers, architects, and planners kept a keen eye on recent developments in New York. The project’s expansive integration of public space recalls Hudson Yards, but without the developer’s massive floor-area payoff hovering some 40 stories above the site. The buildings maintain D.C.’s 1910 height limit, making the public space seem that much more generous. Instead of gobbling up every square foot, the north-south promenade becomes a symbolic, if not literal, extension of the L’Enfant plan, reclaiming for Delaware Avenue a bit of what the railways gobbled up a century ago. But perhaps the most generous aspect of the plan occurs on the west side of the site, where the new buildings atop the platform step back to make way for another promenade on the Burnham Wall. This High Line-esque gesture incorporates an existing city greenway, bike path, and pedestrian walkway. The gentle arc begins nearly a mile north of the project and culminates at the recently restored Columbus Circle in front of Daniel Burnham’s 1908 masterpiece. 15

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Sculpture: Gyu, Thomas H. Sayre, N.C. Museum of Art

FIRST ROUND OF DATA ON BUILDING ENERGY CONSUMPTION IS IN NUMBERS CRUNCH

Last month, one of the major measuring devices of the master plan PlaNYC yielded its first set of data. The Local Law 84 benchmarking ordinance was pegged to a suite of laws operating under the catchy banner of the Greener, Greater Buildings Plan (GGBP). The ordinance required all New York City buildings over 50,000 square feet to report energy consumption. With more than 75 percent compliance, the first report was able to cull information from more than 1.7 billion square feet, making it the largest data collection of its kind for a single jurisdiction.

While a single year’s worth of information isn’t enough to track trends, it does provide a few surprising revelations. For example, one particular finding showed that early 20th-century buildings tend to be more efficient than later generations. The report gives the credit to smaller floor plates, efficient envelopes, and smaller ventilation systems. But the report was careful to make the pro-development observation that the energy “measurement per square foot does not necessarily reflect efficiency in terms of energy per unit of economic activity happening in buildings.”

Despite the very positive participation numbers, there are a few kinks that have yet to be ironed out. The Environmental Protection Agency’s Portfolio Manager, the benchmarking tool used to collect the data, should be able to flag obvious mistakes, like a building square footage entry of zero, but it can’t. Also, building owners often entered square footage based on information they gave to the Department of Finance, meaning they entered square footage for space that had taxable revenue and left out the square footage for space that wasn’t rented.

Nevertheless, spotting mistakes will help fine tune the process for the years to come when the data becomes even richer, and not just because there will be several years of benchmarking under the city’s belt. Other laws in the suite mandate audits and require retrofits. Information from auditors will add detail, such as whether a building has punched windows or a curtain wall. “Within two to three years we’re going to have a really nuanced data set,” said Laurie Kerr, a senior policy advisor to the mayor. “We’ll be able to see if buildings are changing.”

The U.S. Department of Energy is also working with the city to incorporate the information into a national database. Austin, Seattle, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. have all recently adopted benchmarking laws. The data will allow decision makers to compare policy and results.

Buildings that are less than 50,000 square feet may also find their way into the mix. Though Kerr acknowledged that smaller building owners might not have the resources to track data, the city is looking at a less demanding program, perhaps a point-of-sale ordinance rather than an annual requirement.

Though some of the GGBP laws dictate specific retrofits, the main thrust of the suite is to provide building owners with information—as well as tax incentives—to make their buildings more energy efficient, which in the long run will save money. “Information drives change,” Kerr said, repeating a Bloomberg mantra. “Providing building owners with information should cause them to make the right decisions.”
FACADES + INNOVATION will include diverse voices in the creation of high-performance building enclosures, imparting new perspectives on the opportunities for innovation in the delivery of the building skin.