



MFA-HOUSTON UNVEILS STEVEN HOLL-DESIGNED EXPANSION PLAN

# TEXAS HOLL 'EM

On January 15, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), unveiled plans for the redevelopment of its 14-acre campus, which includes new buildings by Steven Holl Architects as well as Lake | Flato Architects of San Antonio. Holl is contributing a unifying master plan, a 164,000-square-foot gallery space for 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century art, and a new 80,000-square-foot facility for the Glassell School of Art. Lake | Flato is designing a state-of-the-art conservation center, which is still in the concept phase. "This is the most important commission of my career," said Holl at a press luncheon in New York where he presented the plans. "What you see here is the culmination of a

36-month design process." The master plan seeks to integrate the new structures with MFAH's current facilities, which represent nearly a century of building. They include a limestone Greek Revival edifice by Houston architect William Ward Watkin (1924, the oldest art museum in Texas), which is connected to a free-span steel and glass addition by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1958/74), his only museum work in the United States; a sculpture garden by Isamu Noguchi (1986); and a Rafael Moneo-designed building for the display of European art (2000). The plan also strives to improve the pedestrian experience across the campus, as well as **continued on page 4**

CONTROVERSIAL BUILDING BACKING PHILADELPHIA'S RODIN MUSEUM ADVANCES



A jewel box set within a leafy garden by architects Paul Cret and Jacques Gréber sets the stage for a dance of frozen human forms quietly watching over Philadelphia's Rodin Museum. The tranquil site's formal arrangement lavishes itself in greenery, only interrupted by the hubbub of traffic

along the monumental Benjamin Franklin Parkway. It is here that *The Thinker* wonders through winter cold and summer heat, and it is against this scene that a proposed 120-unit residential tower is likely to rise, responding to the design of the museum itself. **continued on page 2**

BRYANT PARK CORPORATION BUILDS MOMENTUM FOR 41<sup>ST</sup> STREET PLACEMAKING PROJECT

# BOULEVARD OF DREAMS

The congested stretch of 41<sup>st</sup> Street between Broadway and Sixth Avenue is less than a tenth of a mile long, but it could become a critical pedestrian link between Bryant Park, a privately owned public plaza, and the Broadway Boulevard if enough property owners chip in to spruce it up. The plan, called Boulevard 41, comes from the Bryant Park Corporation (BPC) and involves covering curbside lanes with moveable seating and planters. *Streetsblog* reported that the plan, which was first unveiled two years ago, has been approved by the Department of Transportation, FDNY, and Community Board 5, but needs **continued on page 8**

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The story of Dumbo's transformation from overlooked artist mecca to swanky loft-filled neighborhood is a familiar one, even in spite of crafty attempts years ago to slow down the tide of development. In the 1970s, artists moved into an industrial neighborhood

near the Brooklyn side of the Manhattan Bridge and called it Dumbo (Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass) in hopes of throwing developers off the scent. Walk around Dumbo a few decades later and it is clear that the **continued on page 7**



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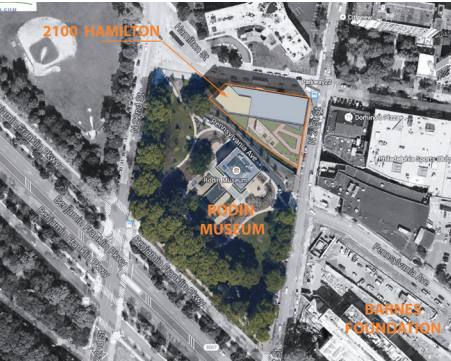
BRIDGING THE DIGITAL AND MATERIAL DIVIDE

The contemporary notion that what is called “research” should be an important component of every architectural practice is one that deserves further interrogation. If we think of research as something done by scholars, academics, and social scientists then what takes place in most architecture offices is most often little more than public relations or simply the instrumental steps in the creation of a design for a building. It is often the case that architecture offices are developing new ideas of building production (like BIM, digital fabrication, 3D printing, etc.) but even these tend to be aimed at specific design projects with clients and therefore not concerned with general professional or goals of the discipline. There is one area however where architects are doing primary research: the development of materials and how they impact design and are themselves changed through creative form making. In issue number seven of the architecture fanzine P.E.A.R. (Paper for Emerging Architectural Research), which comes from a London group of academics, architects, and the Royal Academy of Arts, they call this type of practice “material research” and investigate new models in its evolution. Architects, Adrian Forty argues in his P.E.A.R. essay, have always cared about construction materials, even as he quotes William Morris, who wrote that architects were falsifying their use and meaning—making one thing seem to be another.

This is true, Forty goes on, even if they “make a show of not caring, as Peter Eisenman famously did with his ‘house series.’” In fact, Forty’s concise yet thorough essay makes the point that there is no such thing as a “pure” material—all are the result of mixing human labor with substance “whether naturally-occurring or synthetic.” But his principle point and an important one for contemporary practice is that today digital fabrication has nearly eliminated human labor from the work of processing materials while making infinite variation possible. Architects now, he contends, can more fully concentrate on “what materials are used for—upon the end results.”

The leading edge in architecture ten to 15 years ago were those architects creating primarily in the digital field and staying there, as they were unable to build what they could imagine on the computer. But the students of these mostly academic practitioners have taken their ideas and are now slowly applying them to new and old materials to create a dizzyingly array of spaces, installations, and built forms. Some of these young architects have left the design studio and opened fabrication shops (most with their own CNC milling machines) where, applying the skills they learned in school, they work directly on and with materials. These practices are doing some of the most interesting work in the architectural field. Further, some of these workshops are in fact hybrid studio/machine shops, and thus are able to dig deep into the meaning and use of materials to create new forms and ideas for installation proposals and/or buildings when approached by other architects.

We are, it seems, only at the beginning of this design phenomena and for this reason *The Architect’s Newspaper* began three years ago its Facades+ conferences where we highlight the leading edge of new research and technological advancement in the field. The material that is most often considered in the Facades+ seminars is glass and its use in curtain walls. In fact, glass, both through industrial and professional research, is perhaps the single most developed material in the building world in the last 20 years, which may explain its ubiquity both in corporate and small scale design in every climatic condition from desert to alpine conditions. This week’s Facades+ conference in Los Angeles will feature James Carpenter, whose creative glass research, as a consultant to SOM, for the curtain wall of 7 World Trade Center in New York makes him one of the leading practitioners and glass researchers in the field. We will be reporting on Carpenter’s lecture in our next issue, along with other highlights from the conference and beyond. **WILLIAM MENKING**



COURTESY BARTON PARTNERS

Though the tower was moved farther away from the museum, it is now five stories taller.

TOWER ON THE PARK(WAY) continued from front page

Designed by local firm BartonPartners for development company Cross Properties, 2100 Hamilton (at the intersection of 21<sup>st</sup> and Hamilton streets) will dramatically change the backdrop to the museum and its art. The Philadelphia Art Commission has watched closely as the project evolved over the past year. That body unanimously issued a conceptual approval for the tower in early January when architects presented revised plans for the site aiming to better respect Cret’s museum.

Concerned over how development in the museum’s backyard might alter the site experience, the Commission previously sent architects back to the drawing board, and was pleased with new changes. Working with a Commission subcommittee, architects shrunk the building’s footprint, pushing it farther from the museum’s back door—from 60 feet to 87.5 feet. A landscape would “seamlessly” connect with OLIN’s recent revisions at the Rodin. The building in turn grew from six to 11 stories, with a single-story retail podium containing a restaurant and cafe facing the museum. Forty parking spaces are planned underground.

Overall massing shows a limestone podium beneath intersecting volumes clad in a patchwork of non-reflecting blue-tinted glass. Building entrances and the layout of a rooftop garden respond axially to the Rodin Museum. Barton principal Seth Shapiro told the Commission the limestone will relate to the materiality and color of the museum, “but be a more modern interpretation of it.” He said his team is still working on final material choices. “It’s a little oasis where you feel isolated from the city,” said Shapiro. “I don’t think this will change that. The new building is a neutral backdrop behind the museum. We’re doing everything we can to be as neutral as possible.”

The tower is built atop a disused rail trench that still maintains a SEPTA easement, and effectively caps what has long been an overgrown hole in the city grid. One day, commuter trains could again run through the channel below the structure.

Final approval is contingent on a refined plan that appeases not just the Art Commission and Parks & Rec, but also the Logan Square Neighborhood Association and the Rodin Museum itself. Once all four sign off, a rezoning process can proceed that is expected to take about six months followed by the city’s Civic Design Review process. The arts commission will discuss the project again at a February 4 meeting.

**BRANDEN KLAYKO**

LETTER

A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR THE FRICK

I am delighted with the recent Crit’s praise for the beautifully renovated Cooper Hewitt (AN 01\_01.14.2015), but I am puzzled by the inconsistency with regard to the Frick Collection’s expansion plans.

The piece says of the Cooper Hewitt, “working within the building’s constraint, they relocated offices to adjacent buildings”—which is precisely what the Frick proposes to do! It goes on to admire the Cooper Hewitt’s “better shop and lovely looking cafe,” but appears to deplore such amenities for the Frick!

As a longtime New Yorker and lover of the Frick, I want this revered museum to stay (it will) the same; and I also want it to keep renewing itself (it could) in fresh and

exciting ways, as every great institution must do or—over time—be diminished.

The Frick has challenges with space and visitor services that need to be met: for example, to replace the awkward and unappealing underground galleries with, say, a concert-lecture hall; to create modern, adequate new galleries; to provide a loading entrance and other essential facilities; to widen and make more cheerful and user friendly the too narrow and gloomy reception hall; to integrate the superb library into the museum to be more accessible to the public—and so much more.

And what opportunities to seize: open more fully to the public the historic Frick House; better accommodate the brilliant special exhibitions that now have to

scramble, if they can find display space at all; enhance publications, public programming, and art acquisitions. (Some say that no way should the Frick be bringing in new treasures! By what authority, one wonders? Would they be happier without the Rembrandt, Ingres, Piero, Houdon, Clodion, and Murillo recently added to the museum?).

The time is now; given the chance, the glorious Frick Collection could become even grander, even more beloved than it now is. I devoutly hope it will have that chance.

JOAN K. DAVIDSON  
PRESIDENT, FURTHERMORE  
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FORMER CHAIR, NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL  
ON THE ARTS



## TAKING A NAME IN VAIN

5 Pointz, the Long Island City graffiti mecca, might not have been lucrative enough for developer G&M Realty to keep on its property, but it sure makes for a nifty marketing ploy to attract potential renters to its soon-to-be constructed pair of residential towers. **Jerry and David Wolkoff**, the father-and-son owners of G&M, filed an application last spring to trademark the name for the new development. The application has been denied twice, but the Wolkoffs are still determined to figure out a way to capitalize on the 5 Pointz name. The artists whose work once covered the walls of the demolished warehouse are none too pleased. 5 Pointz curator and artist **Jonathan Cohen** (a.k.a. **MeresOne**), has launched a petition on MoveOn.org, seeking to fight the trademark. According to real estate blog, *6sqft*, the developers, who've pledged to dedicate 12,000 square feet to artist studios and exhibition space, are befuddled by the protests. Well, why would the artists take issue with the condo building using the beloved 5 Pointz name? All G&M did was surreptitiously whitewash the building in the middle of the night, erasing any trace of art.

## PORTZAMPARC'S SPLASHY RECORD-BREAKING PENTHOUSE

One57, the **Christian de Portzamparc**-designed 90-story skyscraper on 57<sup>th</sup> Street, has just closed its third blockbuster sale. A 6,240-square-foot unit on the 85<sup>th</sup> floor went for \$55.6 million, the city's ninth most expensive apartment sale in history reported *6sqft*. The sale came just a few weeks after a duplex in the building sold for a record-shattering \$100,471,452.77.

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## UNVEILED

## PERKINS BUILDING, RIVERDALE COUNTRY SCHOOL

Architecture Research Office (ARO) is bringing a modern addition to Riverdale Country School's historic river campus. The planned 22,000-square-foot academic building will replace the school's 1960s-era Perkins Building. The two-story structure attempts to negotiate a gradient change by tucking itself into a hillside while still allowing direct outdoor access for many of the classrooms. ARO worked with Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects to further connect the building to the landscape with appropriate plantings and paving materials.

The structure's base is clad in blue-toned,

lightweight concrete panels. A vertical zinc-paneled rain screen wraps around its second story. On the building's south side, the facade lifts up like a piece of fabric, revealing a curved expanse of glass that brings daylight into the cafeteria.

Kim Yao, a principal at ARO, said the blue tones in the facade are intended to evoke the nearby Hudson River while the zinc panels were selected to complement the campus' older brick buildings. The new space includes a multi-purpose theater, student center with a full-service kitchen and cafeteria, and classrooms. **HENRY MELCHER**

**Architect:** Architecture Research Office  
**Client:** Riverdale Country School  
**Location:** Riverdale, NY  
**Completion Date:** Fall 2016



## &gt; LITTLE PARK

85 West Broadway, New York  
 Tel: 212-220-4110  
 Designer: Gachot Studios

Simple, clean ingredients are the focus of Chef Andrew Carmellini's new farm-to-table restaurant located in the recently revamped Smyth hotel in Tribeca. And like the menu, crisp and straightforward design brings a relaxed elegance to the 85-seat eatery, thanks to New York City-based Gachot Studios, who was also tapped to overhaul the entire 14-story hotel. While inspired by the Carmellini's "fresh and innovative" fare, said Christine Gachot, co-founder of Gachot Studios, the design needed to be in sync with the busy, day-to-day rhythm of the hotel. "When designing a restaurant that resides within a hotel we have to be mindful of the fact that it needs to be open from first thing in the morning until very late in the evening." To achieve this, the firm used a "versatile lighting scheme" and a muted color palette, including a ceiling clad in whitewashed wood and a white marble mosaic tiled floor arranged by hand into a fan pattern. The 2,000-square-foot, L-shaped space consists of a bar area and dining room, and is furnished with oak tables, Josef Hoffmann-designed chairs, and leather banquettes with custom-woven textiles. Large windows allow for ample daylight. A Simon Shubuck painting hangs on one wall of the dining room, adding a burst of color and playfulness to the gracefully restrained interior.

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Top: View of the new gallery building from the Glassell School of Art; Center: The new structure is clad in glass tubes with inset gardens and reflecting pools; Light filters into the interior.



COURTESY STEVEN HOLL ARCHITECTS

**TEXAS HOLL 'EM** continued from front page in Houston's Museum District neighborhood as a whole, by moving 190,000 square feet of parking into two underground garages, which will make room for a series of new public spaces in addition to the new buildings.

Holl's design for the Nancy and Rich Kinder Building for 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century art is sited on the location of an existing surface parking lot at the northeast edge of the campus, across Bissonnet Street from the Mies and Moneo structures. The building, clad in etched glass tubes that allow in filtered daylight and emit a glow at night, is three stories tall. Seven vertical gardens are cut into the building perimeter with exterior reflecting pools at the ground level. In these vegetation-shaded sanctuaries vision glass takes over from the translucent tubes. Inside, two levels of galleries—54,000 square feet in all—surround a top-lit, three-level rotunda. The upper level is sheltered under a "luminous canopy" roof, which has concave curves inspired by

the billowing clouds of the big Texas sky. All of the gallery spaces feature natural light. Holl is working with New York-based lighting design firm L'Observatoire International on the project. In addition to galleries, the building contains a 202-seat theater, restaurant and café, and meeting rooms.

The new Glassell School of Art will replace its existing 35-year-old facility, which was designed by Houston architect S.I. Morris, who had a hand in the Astrodome. At 80,000 square feet, the new building has an L-shaped plan wrapping around a public plaza that opens onto the Noguchi sculpture garden. Clad in sandblasted precast concrete panels, it has a green roof that slopes up from the ground, which visitors and students can climb to catch a view over the trees and rooftops of Houston.

The museum also announced that it will select a landscape architect to work with Holl on fleshing out the master plan. Construction will begin later this year and is slated for completion in 2019.

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## BROOKLYN REDEFINES THE WATERFRONT AS A PLACE FOR STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

### Rethinking the Waterfront

Earlier this month Brooklyn Borough president Eric Adams announced the release of Stormwater Infrastructure Design Guidelines, which have the potential to generate exemplary landscape design and benefit all of New York City. The Design Guidelines propose to integrate green infrastructure techniques with a 14-mile continuous corridor for bicycles and pedestrians along the Brooklyn waterfront. The new plan, titled *The Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway: An Agent for Green Infrastructure, Climate Change Adaptation and Resiliency*, illustrates how stormwater infrastructure would enhance the Greenway.

As a stand-alone project, the 14-mile Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway offers an exciting opportunity for pedestrians and cyclists to enjoy the waterfront. What is unique about the Borough President's announcement is that the Greenway is being recognized as a project that also can offer context-sensitive design solutions to water-related problems facing the City, such as

surges from powerful storms and stormwater runoff. "Here in Brooklyn, we don't just 'go with the flow' when something isn't working right. When it comes to our overflow problem with our sewers, which are leading to damaging coastal floods and the release of raw sewage into our marine ecosystem, major changes are needed to protect residents, business and wildlife alike," said Borough president Adams in a statement.

The plan for the Greenway contains a tool kit of green infrastructure, resiliency barrier typologies, and case studies on specific sites for design intervention, which are primed for implementation. The proposed green infrastructure techniques employ ecosystem services to help clean runoff and absorb storm surge. The forthcoming Greenway project is being used as an opportunity to make the waterfront function on many different levels. The Greenway is no longer seen as just a transportation infrastructure project, but it is also about environmental infrastructure.

"Because 14 miles of streets

will be reconstructed as the Greenway is built, this is an opportune time to install stormwater infrastructure on the most economical basis for the City," said Milton Puryear, Co-founder of Brooklyn Greenway Initiative.

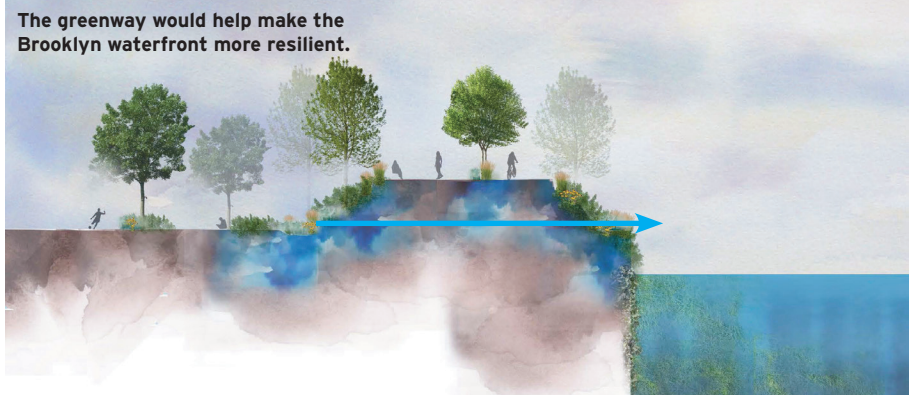
The Brooklyn Greenway Initiative (BGI) is the non-profit organization that is stewarding the development of the waterfront greenway. BGI developed the Design Guidelines in conjunction with a technical advisory committee comprised of city agencies, engineers, and landscape and urban designers.

The plan is abundant with diagrams, maps, and sections accented with flowing watercolor that show what stormwater infrastructure can look like along the greenway. All the designs and graphics were produced by WE Design, with eDesign Dynamics as the consulting environmental engineer. From a designers' perspective, these green infrastructure guidelines will enable projects along the Greenway to develop sustainable savvy design.

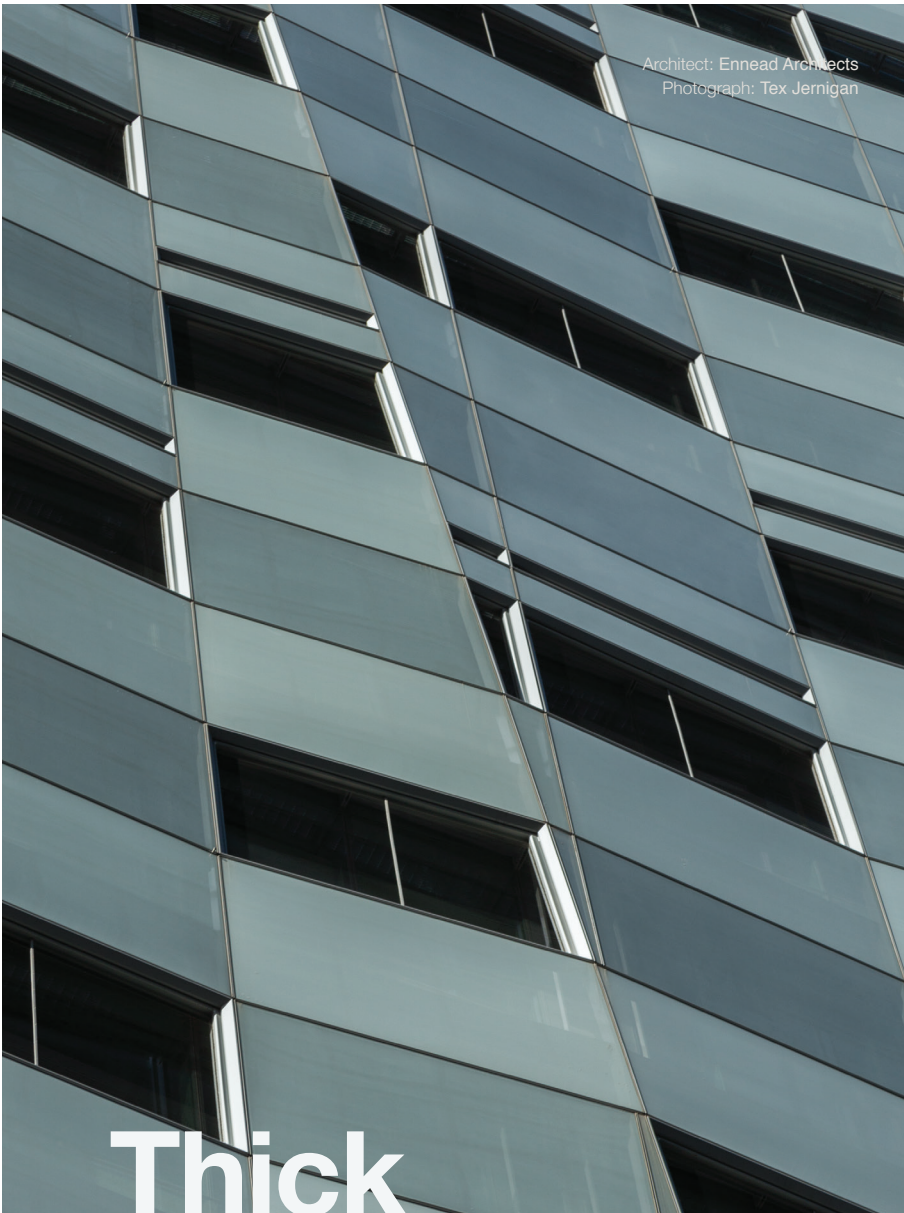
Tricia Martin, owner and principal at WE Design, believes that greenways are an effective mechanism for building climate change adaptation strategies into our cities. "Greenways provide open space and recreation, but this study shows that greenways can be so much more," Martin said. "Concerns about rising sea level, water quality and coastal habitat can and should be addressed when designing our greenways."

Lest we forget that the *water* is one of the most important features of a *waterfront* greenway, this plan is a reminder that landscape design can be functional and beautiful. Support for improving water quality in the waterways around New York City and building resiliency against storm surges needs to happen at many different levels in order for action to move forward, and Borough President Adams has just boosted this effort in the right direction.

ANNIE BERGELIN



COURTESY WE DESIGN



## Thick Skinned

**Weill Cornell Medical College** wants its buildings to last a century, but not feel like they were built last century. So **Ennead Architects** enclosed the **Belfer Research Building** with a double-skin curtain wall to better regulate lab environments—increasing their efficiency and the school's prestige within the research community. Read more about it in **Metals in Construction** online.

 **Ornamental Metal Institute of New York**

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER FEBRUARY 4, 2015

INSIDE THE CLOSURE OF  
ARCHITECTURE FOR HUMANITYGOOD INTENTIONS,  
BAD MANAGEMENT

The San Francisco-based nonprofit Architecture for Humanity (AFH), a 15-year-old organization dedicated to providing critical buildings in areas of need, shut down operations abruptly on January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. The official announcement from the board of directors, which came nearly three weeks later, said that the organization was filing for bankruptcy because of "serious funding challenges... the deficit combined with budget overruns and an overall decrease in donations finally became an insurmountable situation." Coming at a time when the economy is doing well and an interest in bettering the world through design is pervasive, the closure was all the more surprising. The specifics about how the organization got itself into financial straits are still outstanding. But the overall arc indicates that the organization had trouble with the challenge that so many small businesses face—how to scale up in a sustainable way.

"Ultimately the story of AFH is of an organization that grew too fast," said Eric Cesal, its last executive director, who started as a volunteer in 2006 and became the manager of its Haiti program in 2010. "Our programs and ambitions for doing good grew faster than our fundraising."

Launched in 1999, AFH was one of the largest and most high-profile organizations dedicated to humanitarian design, predating later efforts such as Make It Right and Public Architecture's 1%. The organization provided pro-bono design and construction management services, acting

as the developer in complex situations to build homes, schools, clinics, parks, and community centers. With disaster-relief projects in far-flung parts of the globe, they had the status of an architectural version of Doctors Without Borders. It was an ambitious agenda that attracted many supporters and young architects, offering the chance to "design like you give a damn"—also the title of co-founders Cameron Sinclair and Kate Stohr's 2006 book.

Sinclair and Stohr launched AFH as an international competition to design temporary housing for refugees of the war in Kosovo, and encouraged by the response, followed it with another to do mobile AIDS clinics in Africa. Sinclair, who trained as an architect, was a passionate and inspiring spokesperson; and Stohr, a former journalist, was in charge of its day-to-day management. For the first several years, the husband-and-wife team were the only full-time employees. Things started to rev up around 2006, when Sinclair won a \$100,000 TED Award, and AFH worked with Oprah's Angel Network on post-Katrina housing. By mid-2013, it had nearly \$12 million in contributions and grants, 32 employees at its San Francisco headquarters, and roughly 40 contractors at various field offices around the globe. It had also moved into its own office, which was purchased and renovated using a \$1.9 million loan from a board member.

However, the fundamentals were worrisome. In mid-2012, the organization reported a small gap of \$88,000 in unrestricted funds, which represents the bottom line for a nonprofit's financial health, since this general bucket of money is drawn upon for any shortfalls. It had nearly \$6 million in the bank, but those funds were earmarked for specific projects; unrestricted funds are used to pay operating expenses such

as salaries and rent. By mid-2013, the gap had leapt more than a tenfold to \$1.1 million, even as funding had doubled. Reviewing the information, AFH's auditors reported that "the Organization has suffered recurring losses in unrestricted activities and has a net deficit in unrestricted net assets that raise substantial doubt about its ability to continue as a going concern." According to Cesal, the deficit was at \$2.1 million by the end of 2013.

Sinclair attributes the change in fortunes to the funding landscape and project overruns. In an email, he wrote, "As the economy recovered in 2012, donors only wanted to fund restricted projects and not contribute to the organization... this shift in how funds were allocated coupled with project overruns created a large hurdle to climb for the current management team." He also wrote, "From 1999 to Oct 2013 I was Executive Director of AFH and the buck stops with me, so I take full responsibility in not forcing our studio directors in tightening their budgets and programs as well as not bringing more unrestricted funding on in the first and second quarters of 2013."

The organization had also invested in new initiatives, including the acquisition of Worldchanging in 2011, that didn't pan out. And according to multiple sources with intimate knowledge of the organization, there also were problems with management and significant turnover in key staff positions. "Kate really micromanaged everything—it was hard to make your own decisions," said Matt Miller, who volunteered with AFH in the summers of 2005 and 2006, and was an AFH design fellow in Uganda for six months in 2008. "Kate and Cameron are great visionaries but not business people."

In September 2013, the organization announced that the founders were moving on. Stohr returned to media production; Sinclair became the executive director for the Jolie-Pitt Foundation. After their departure, the organization took serious cost-cutting measures to try and get back on track. In the following months, it sold its office and moved into rented quarters; staff shrank by half through layoffs and attrition, according to Cesal, who took over as executive director in May 2014. "I went into this difficult situation with the thought that every month we were in operation was doing a lot of good, building schools and clinics, and that we owed it to our supporters to try and pull through."

Over the course of the organization's history, it raised some \$50 million dollars for projects in 48 countries. "AFH was designing and developing projects and put boots on the ground in third world countries. Trailblazing organizations like this take on real risk," says John Peterson, founder of San Francisco-based nonprofit Public Architecture.

In the aftermath, the *San Francisco Examiner* reported that that multiple (unnamed) organizations have offered to take over operations. Some of the 60 volunteer chapters, which functioned independently and raised money for local projects, including AFH London, have said they will continue on. Besides its projects, AFH's greatest legacy may be how it facilitated the participation of so many in socially conscious design. "They were mentors," said Emily Pilloton, who started the Berkeley-based Project H, a program that teaches design and construction skills to schoolchildren, in a borrowed corner of the AFH offices in 2008. "They cleared a path for a lot of other people to do humanitarian design and architecture." **LYDIA LEE**

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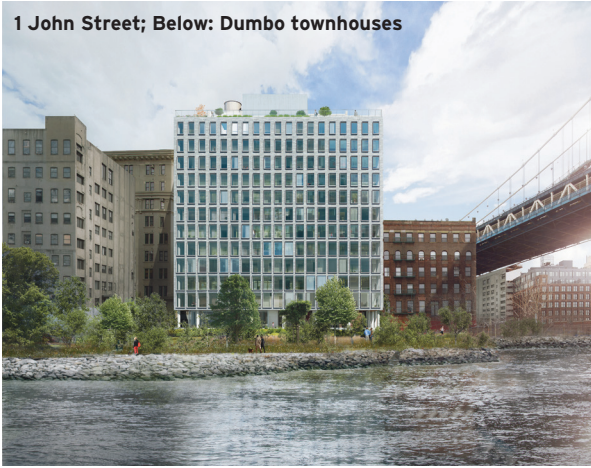
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1 John Street; Below: Dumbo townhouses



COURTESY ALLOY

**DUMBO IN DEMAND**

continued from front page

self-branding exercise did not go as planned. Like Tribeca across the river, Dumbo has morphed into a remarkably desirable area. The opening of Brooklyn Bridge Park in 2010 only increased its appeal.

Michael Van Valkenburgh's celebrated waterfront park fueled Dumbo development in two main ways. One, it provided 85-acres of new open space. Two, the park is directly impacting Dumbo because its self-sustaining funding model is based on leasing off adjacent development sites, two of which are in the neighborhood, and then absorbing revenue from whatever gets built.

Now, with more than 50 percent of the park completed, the development plan is in full swing and will deliver new retail, offices, restaurants, and apartments to Dumbo over the next two years. During the same time, Brooklyn Bridge Park will be reaching further into the neighborhood.

The most architecturally significant piece of the park-led development plan in Dumbo is the Empire Stores—a 19<sup>th</sup> century coffee warehouse that is being transformed into a 500,000-square-foot, mixed-use office space by the hand of STUDIO V. The firm has cut an open-air courtyard through the complex's old

schist walls, carved out space for trendy offices, and added a rooftop park. At ground level, just feet from the river, restaurants open out of the building's original arched masonry doors. The project will be leasable this fall and open to the public about a year after that.

Adjacent to the Empire Stores is the shell of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century tobacco warehouse that Marvel Architects is currently turning into the new home of St. Ann's Warehouse, a theater company based in the neighborhood. For the new space, Marvel is fitting a glass, steel, and brick structure within and about one story above the warehouse's brick walls. Next to the new addition, within the building's original footprint, Michael Van Valkenburgh is planting an open-air courtyard called the Triangle Garden.

Just steps from these two projects, right at the water's edge, is 1 John Street, another Brooklyn Bridge development site that is being filled in with a luxury condominium building. The boxy, 12-story structure, designed and developed by Alloy Development and Monadnock Development, is clad in grey brick and has rows of punched window-panes that decrease in size as they rise up the tower. By the time this building

is completed in 2016 it will be connected to Brooklyn Bridge Park's main lawn through John Street Park and Main Street Park, both Michael Van Valkenburgh-designed spaces slated to open this summer.

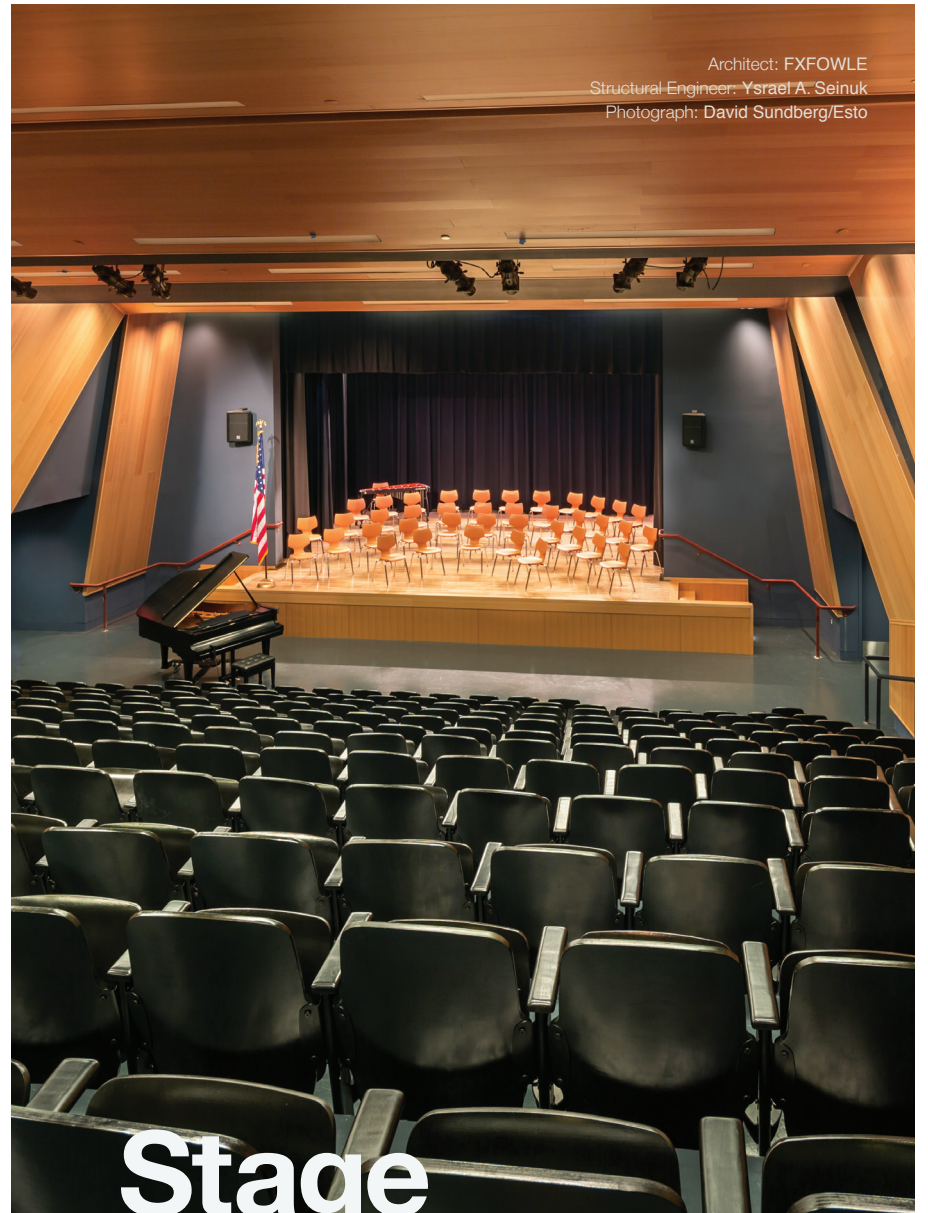
As foundation work continues at 1 John Street, Alloy is wrapping up construction on five striking, modern townhouses only a few blocks away. That project is unattached to Brooklyn Bridge Park's General Project Plan as is ODA's warehouse-to-condo conversion at 51 Jay Street and Leeser Architecture and Ismael Leyva's arrestingly glassy rental building at 60 Water Street.

On the other side of the Brooklyn Bridge, within Brooklyn Bridge Park itself, is the Pierhouse, a Marvel-designed condo and hotel complex, that will be another revenue generator for the park. The project was expected to reach no more than 100 feet, but recently topped out at 130 feet. This has angered local residents who have had some of their bridge views blocked. A petition called "Save the View Now" has been launched to stop construction and remove the additional height.

Facing growing criticism, in late January, the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation asked the Department of Buildings to confirm that the Pierhouse complies with the Brooklyn Heights Scenic View District. A partial stop work order was subsequently issued at the site. A park official told the website *New York YIMBY* that "the alteration of bulkheads or parapets are among the type of alterations that may be necessary to bring the structure into full compliance."

As Dumbo, like so many parts of Brooklyn, continues to absorb new development, some older neighborhood standbys are being pushed out. At the end of last year, as construction hummed along in the neighborhood, Galapagos Art Space, a quirky performance venue that had been operating in the borough for nearly 20 years, seven in Dumbo, announced it was closing. The rent was too high, said the owners.

But Galapagos will not be disappearing entirely. It is leaving Dumbo and moving to Detroit, where it will renovate a vacant high school in a deserted part of town. **HM**



Architect: FXFOWLE  
Structural Engineer: Ysrael A. Seinuk  
Photograph: David Sundberg/Esto

# Stage Right

**FXFOWLE's design for the Hunter's Point**

**Campus** embodies a new academics, one rooted in preparing students for the professional world. Needing theater-like space for those aspiring to careers in television and film, they used long-span steel to make it column-free—giving students clear sight lines into life on a grand stage. Read more about it in **Metals in Construction** online.

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COURTESY BRYANT PARK CORPORATION

**BOULEVARD OF DREAMS** continued from front page private funding to move forward. Industrial designer Ignacio Ciocchini, who has created some of New York City's more interesting street furniture, designed the project

in-house. "We really concentrated on very simple urban solutions that make a difference," said Ciocchini. The goal, he explained, was to create an inviting environment that was not tied to any particular business. The result is a stretched-

A proposal from the Bryant Park Corporation would turn a block of 41<sup>st</sup> Street into a linear plaza.

out version of the city's popular public plaza. Boulevard 41 includes 20 red chairs and silver planters made from Ciocchini's signature laser-cut horizontal slats. Seating platforms are set between the planters and completed with railings, bistro tables, and lpe decking. Each platform also has a hatch for cleaning and access to utilities. To try to boost support with local property owners, the platforms and planters are spaced out to not block any useful freight entrances.

Two years after Boulevard 41 was first proposed, the BPC is sticking with its original plan to fund the \$1.5 million project entirely with private money. But securing the necessary funds from adjacent buildings has proved difficult as those buildings keep changing hands.

While Ciocchini currently puts the chance of Boulevard 41 being realized just under 50 percent, he is not giving up on it just yet. He is going back to the property owners, new and old, in hopes of convincing them that investing in the public realm is good both for the city and their own bottom line.

HM

AT DEADLINE

## CUOMO PROPOSES LAGUARDIA AIRTRAIN

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo wants to make it easier and quicker for people to get to and from LaGuardia Airport. He has proposed giving LaGuardia Airport its own AirTrain service, similar to what already exists at John F. Kennedy Airport and Newark Liberty. The elevated rail line would run from LaGuardia Airport, along the Grand Central Parkway to a new station near Citi Field, placed between an existing Long Island Rail Road station and a 7 line subway stop. While New Yorkers have been calling for better transportation to LaGuardia for decades, this plan was quickly criticized because it could possibly offer an even less reliable and slower ride to the airport than the existing public transit options. Transportation blog *The Transport Politic* crunched the numbers and confirmed this suspicion, finding that the trip to LaGuardia would indeed bump up travel time from nearly every borough, including downtown, Brooklyn; Midtown, Manhattan; Jamaica, Queens; and the South Bronx.

## DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION UNVEILS EAST NEW YORK REZONING

The de Blasio Administration has unveiled new details for one of the most significant pieces of its ambitious affordable housing plan: the rezoning of Brooklyn's East New York neighborhood. As *New York YIMBY* reported, the administration announced that it would "upzone" a stretch of Atlantic Avenue to create what it calls a "growth corridor" that could accommodate residential development up to 12 stories. Moderate density development for surrounding blocks is proposed to support "affordable and mixed-income housing, retail, businesses, and community facilities near transit." On smaller-scale side streets, the administration hopes to preserve the neighborhood's existing character by continuing to allow "low scale duplexes, single-family homes and rowhouses."

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COURTESY HOK

HOK ACQUIRES NEW SPORTS PRACTICE 360 ARCHITECTURE AFTER UNLOADING ITS OWN IN 2008

# THE SPORTS DESIGN SHUFFLE

This January, international design firm HOK finalized its acquisition of 360 Architecture, a leader in the design of sports and mixed-use entertainment facilities worldwide. Now with Missouri's largest architecture firm consisting of 2,000 employees and offices on three continents, HOK has added a Sports + Recreation + Entertainment practice to its mammoth portfolio of architectural projects spanning aviation, healthcare, hospitality, and residential, among other areas.

A believer in the power of sporting facilities to gentrify urban areas, HOK's president Bill Hellmuth sees the merger with 360 as a cross-fertilization of specialized expertise. He also believes it will be instrumental in extending the firm's reach in Kansas City, San Francisco, and around the world. Aside from 360's "demonstrated ability and reputation," HOK had long eyeballed the 200-employee firm for a merger because of compatibility in both firms' corporate culture and strategic vision. "Their desire aligned with our desire

to become part of a larger entity and not be a standalone over in the corner, but to really leverage what HOK can bring to 360 as well as what 360 can bring to HOK, and really fully integrate these practices," Hellmuth told *A/N*. The two companies have gelled with respect to leadership (360's co-founder and director, Brad Schrock, is now one of the directors of HOK's new sports division) and the sharing of ongoing and upcoming design projects.

On the firm's plate, among numerous still-baking projects, is a feasibility study undertaken with the governor's task force for a riverside football stadium in St. Louis, Missouri, for NFL franchise the Rams. "It's obviously a big desire of the city to keep the team in St. Louis and this proposal hopefully will do that," explained Schrock. "There's no determination yet in terms of who would construct it, but the goal is to produce a really compelling vision for the St. Louis Rams." Costing between \$860 and \$900

million, the project will bridge I-44 and connect the expanding Great Rivers Greenway network of forested walkways and the CityArchRiver development along the Mississippi River.

Other sporting facilities currently on the board include the Atlanta Falcons Stadium, opening in March 2017, and the new Roger's Place arena for the NHL's Edmonton Oilers, slated for completion in Fall 2016. HOK's re-entry into the sports firmament coincides with its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The firm previously unloaded its sports division in 2008 due to differences of opinion and diverging cultures between corporate and the division's leadership. The former HOK division is now the unaffiliated sports architecture practice Populous.

HOK's leadership team now occupies 360's former offices in Kansas City, where the local professional sporting facilities are not well connected to the urban hub, said Schrock. "The Royals and the Chiefs are out off of I-70,

Above left: San Jose Earthquakes Avaya Stadium; Center: Basrah Sports City in Iraq; Right: Wellness Center at Auburn.

not near the core," he said. "I think the thing that we would still like to see and that people are starting to propose is that the Royals at some point build an urban ballpark downtown in Kansas City."

As frequent collaborators prior to the merger, HOK and 360 joined hands in the design of the Sprint Center, a groundbreaking sports and entertainment venue with a transparent glass exterior that opened in 2007. Hosting concerts, live theater and family events in addition to sporting events, the mixed-use arena revamped the face of Kansas City's downtown district. The new Avaya Stadium opening this March in San Jose, California, hopes to achieve the same. "There are a lot of things to work on together and we've already formed new teams and worked to collaborate with a bunch of folks not only in the sports world but also across other disciplines," said Schrock.

KINDRA COOPER

Q&amp;A&gt; AARON BETSKY

## Betsky Takes On Taliesin

In January the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation tapped **Aaron Betsky** to head its school of architecture, which is split between two campuses: Taliesin in Spring Green, Wisconsin, and Taliesin West in Scottsdale, Arizona. Betsky, the former director of the Cincinnati Art Museum will move to Scottsdale in April. Though he assumes the role immediately, Betsky said his specific plans for the curriculum are still in progress.

As dean, Betsky faces a challenge beyond academic leadership. Last year the Higher Learning Commission changed its rules governing for-profit universities and schools that, like the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, are part of institutions whose "missions extend beyond academics." To retain the school's accreditation, the Foundation will spin off its academic entity. But to do so it said it must raise \$2 million before the end of 2015, or it will lose its standing once the new rules take effect in 2017.

**Chris Bentley:** Why did you decide to take this position?

**Aaron Betsky:** I've been involved with architectural education for literally decades and I've always been a strong believer in the notion of experimental architecture, and an architectural education that doesn't perpetuate the myth that architects just go out there and make the dumbest buildings

possible. Architecture is a way you can come to an understanding of the human-made environment we've all created together and how you can make that better in a social sense, an environmental sense, and in a physical sense. So a chance to do that with a school that has such a great tradition of experimental architecture, that comes out of Frank Lloyd Wright's engagement with everything from the notions of what makes a home, to what makes a workplace, to the nature of American suburbia and beyond.

**What's been your experience with or impression of the Frank Lloyd Wright School's academic character? What would you like to change and what would you like to keep the same?**

It's not a big school where people are doing fairly standard building design. It's a place where people are really trying to figure out what architecture is. They do it not just on the drafting table and the computer but out in the desert itself, especially in Scottsdale building their own shelters. I think a lot of people still think about Taliesin as a place that might continue the forms of Frank Lloyd Wright. But if you look at the student work you can see that Victor [Sidy] and the people who have been there have really begun to think more about how he thought of architecture as very

important for what he called democracy—how he saw it in the arts and crafts tradition and the tradition of American pragmatism.

**What is Wright's relevance to contemporary practice?**

He addressed issues that are central to the American problem and the world problem, that include: How do you make a home, what is a home? How do you shelter it and yet make it open to its community? What is that community when it is no longer just a center city or out in the farm? What is suburbia and what kind of forms can we develop for suburbia? How can we make an architecture that works with the land instead of being built on it? How can you create work environments that are open and conducive to the kind of creativity and sharing that we now understand is central to work? How can you create places of leisure and play that are again open and that celebrate our achievements and allow us in a playful way to reimagine the American and the world environment?

**Are you charged with separating the school from the foundation, the fundraising, or purely focused on the academics?**

Yes we need to raise money and I am already working with the school on that. We have a couple of galas. We're working on some other ways that we'll need to continue as an independent entity. It's obviously a very big part of the job.



COURTESY AARON BETSKY

**What is the fundraising situation so far? Are you on track to meet the goal?**

Yes I am confident we'll meet it. Some funds have already been raised. I can't tell you what the percentage is but there are substantial pledges as well as hard cash in the door. Look, I've spent the last 15 years of my life—if not longer—raising money. In Cincinnati I was able to raise about \$80 million over the last eight years. Schools are more difficult in some ways than museums, but I'm confident we'll be able to raise the money for this school with its great traditions and name recognition for an even better future.

CHRIS BENTLEY





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DS+R worked with Italian manufacturer Goppion to design a flexible array of casework for the Cooper Hewitt. Meant to serve the museum for at least the next 10 years, the design team delivered a sturdy, minimally detailed product with concealed hardware that does not distract from the objects on display or the resplendent interiors of the former Carnegie Mansion.

The recently reopened Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum in New York represents the combined work of no less than 13 design firms that came together to update the old Carnegie Mansion—which underwent renovations by Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates in 1977 and Polshek Partnership in 2001—for 21<sup>st</sup> century visitors. Integral to that goal is a collection of site-specific, flexible, and modular display systems designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R) and produced in collaboration with Italian case-work manufacturer Goppion.

“The primary goal for this project was longevity,” said Andreas Buettner, DS+R’s project leader on the casework. “We were told these cases are

planned to accommodate rotating exhibitions for the next 10 years.” In addition to longevity, the display cases had to be flexible enough to accommodate the museum’s wide range of design artifacts—everything from textiles to silverware—as well as to look at home in the erstwhile mansion’s mix of traditional interiors and modern gallery spaces.

DS+R developed several case-work systems for the museum. One is a modular table with a kit of parts that can be locked together in a variety of configurations. Some of the parts have glass bonnets that can be sealed air-tightly to accommodate the preservation requirements of certain artifacts. The bonnets are set on hydraulic

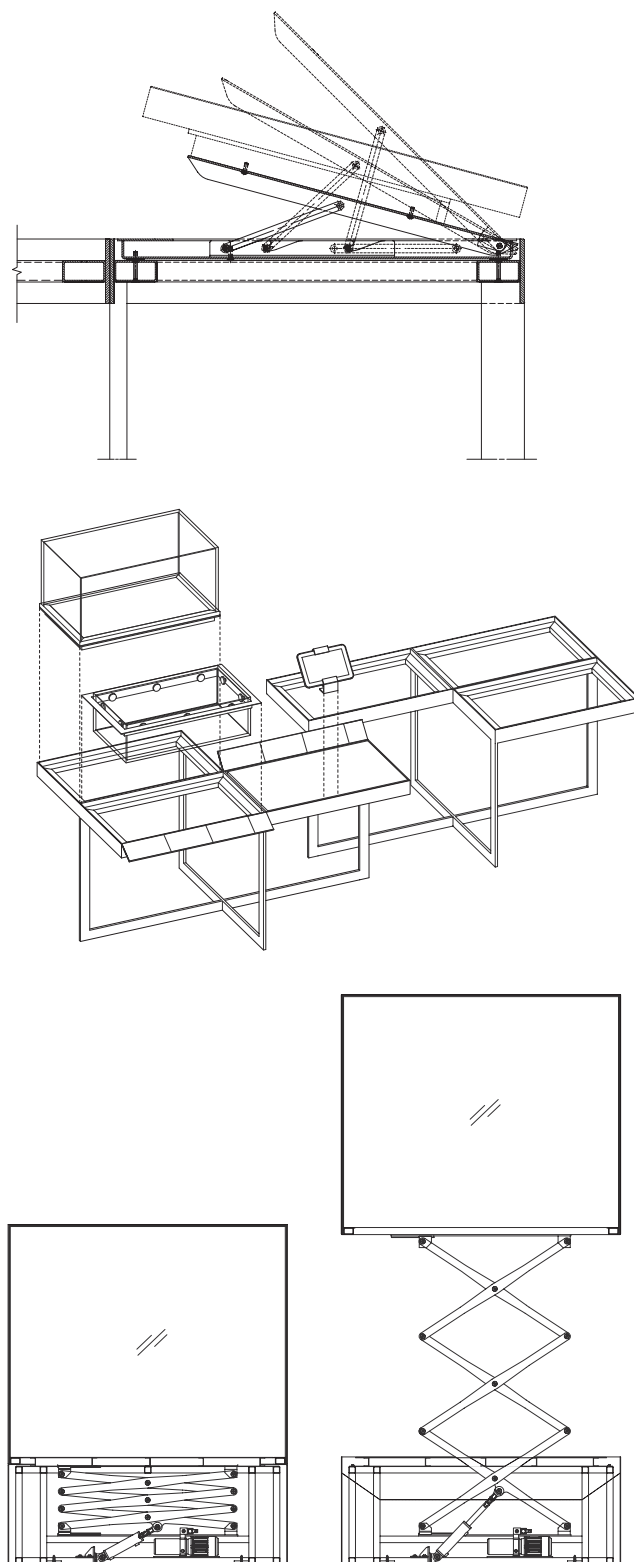
activators for easy opening. In some cases the glass is laminated with a PVB interlayer for security and a coating was added to reduce reflections. Other bonnets are made from acrylic as a cost saving measure. Some table parts cantilever off of the main frame, such as in the case of interpretive signage. The legs are made from flat bar stainless steel and are very heavy to keep the tables from tipping over when the bonnets are lifted or in case a visitor decides to use one as a seat. Even still, certain tables had to be equipped with wheels that swing down to transfer loads to the floor when the bonnets are open. The stainless steel legs are finished with a No. 4 grit sanding process done in a

circular pattern to give it a soft appearance.

While the weight of the casework was important from a safety point of view—some cases are as much as 2,000 pounds—it had to be carefully managed to stay within the allowable live loads of the building’s floors. The Carnegie Mansion has a steel-framed structure, but it was not built as a museum. The larger cases have frames made from aluminum instead of steel to cut down on weight. One such case is found in the former billiards room. Throughout, DS+R worked with Goppion to minimize the detailing and to conceal the hardware as much as possible, but this was especially successful in this

large case. Here, a five-sided glass bonnet rests in a black cuboid base of powder-coated steel panels. The base hides two scissor jacks connected to electric motors that lift the bonnet up for accessing and changing exhibition objects. When closed, it is almost impossible to tell how exhibitors work on the display. “It was important to make this case as elegant as possible, even when we have to support a great amount of glass and steel,” said Buettner. “We designed it to almost sit there effortlessly. Instead of a door, the whole top of case can lift up, close to ceiling, to access the objects in the case to clean, or rotate, or change them.”

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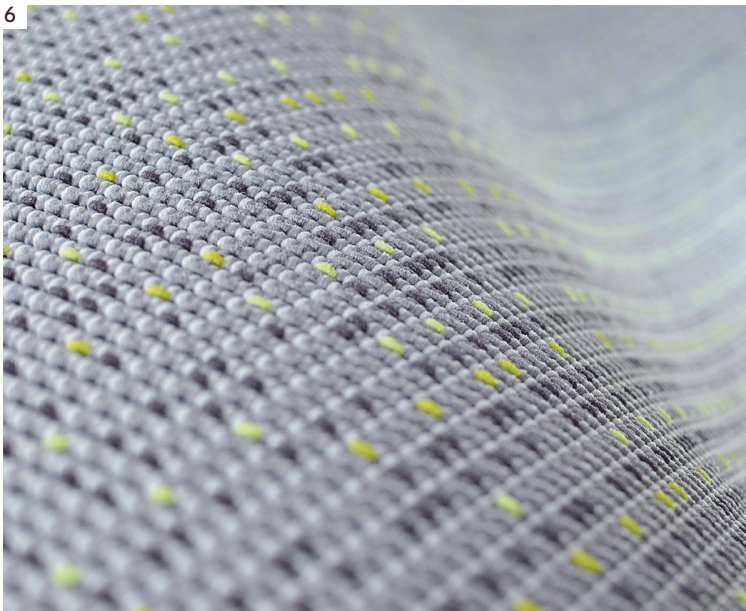
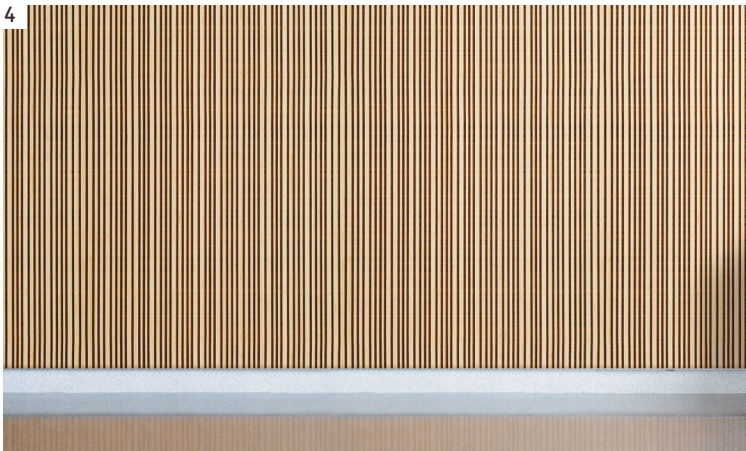


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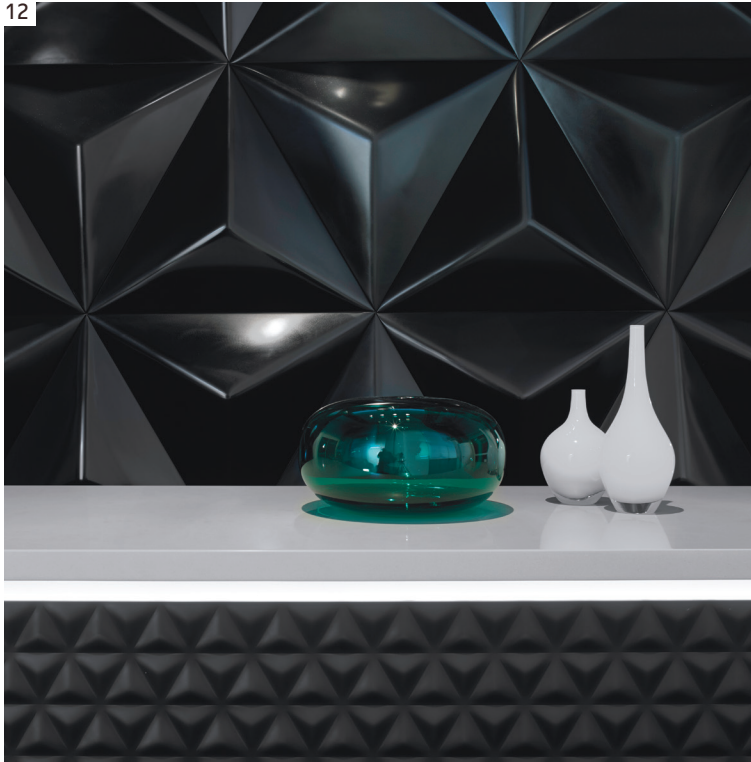




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COURTESY RESPECTIVE MANUFACTURERS



VISUAL GRACE NOTES TO ARCHITECTURAL COMPOSITIONS, SURFACE MATERIALS CAN BRING TACTILITY, COLOR, AND PATTERN INTO A SPACE. FROM FLOOR TO CEILING, HERE'S OUR PICK OF THE PALETTE. **BY LESLIE CLAGETT**

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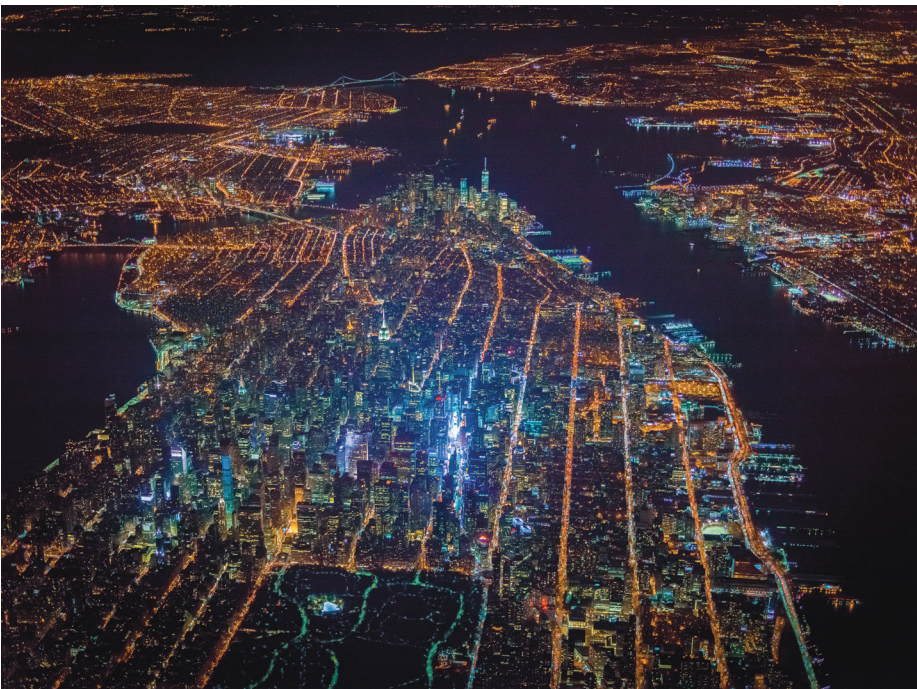
luminous-carpets.com





# AS THE CAMERA FLIES

Photographer Vincent Laforet's immersive aerials of New York City







VINCENT LAFORET/FINESTLAFORETVISUALS.COM

**Laforet took these aerial photographs on a clear winter's night from a helicopter hovering at 7,500 feet. With the exception of some added saturation and highlights, the images are untouched.**



New York City has been photographed from nearly every vantage point: sweeping panoramas, up close in detail, and from high above. But few images have captured the city's density and sprawl, its tightly packed grid, its constellation of yellow and neon colored lights, and its changing skyline quite like Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Vincent Laforet's recent aerial series, *Night Over New York*.

Commissioned by *Men's Health* magazine for a piece on psychology, Laforet proposed

chartering a helicopter and shooting the city from high altitude. "I always thought the streets of New York look like brain synapses," said Laforet. As a native New Yorker, who grew up enthralled by the cityscape, this assignment also presented a unique opportunity to photograph his home from a different perspective, one that is "between a satellite view and street view." Laforet, however, is not new to aerial photography. He has shot wildfires in California, the devastation of Hurricane

Katrina, and beach scenes at Coney Island from high above.

Before soaring thousands of feet in the air, he needed clearance from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and air traffic control towers. Once he received the green light, he flew up in an open-door helicopter, 7,500 feet above the city, balancing 20 pounds of camera equipment. The images, explained Laforet, are the culmination of a perfect storm: a perfectly clear winter night, today's advanced technology, and an intuitive sense

for a visually compelling picture.

"They are just photographs of the city but from a unique angle and it seems like the city takes on a different importance and you can almost feel the energy of the city," said Laforet.

The 50-plus images provide a myriad of views that at once convey the expansive breadth of the city and the concentration and individual character of the buildings that populate Manhattan's intricate network of streets and avenues. One of the more salient aspects of this series, from an architectural standpoint, is the shifting scale of the city, marked by new construction in the last few years. In one picture, as we look down from above Central Park toward downtown, we glimpse a cluster of new and old skyscrapers jutting up toward the sky between 57<sup>th</sup> Street and Herald Square; from there, the landscape flattens as the buildings and the streets get smaller and more compact, branching off from the grid in Lower Manhattan, and then narrowing at the very tip, punctuated by SOM's towering One World Trade Center. Revealed in these photos is the tension between the transience of the city and our own illusive fixed image of the iconic skyline. Some new additions posed a challenge for Laforet, specifically Rafael Vinoly's recently erected monolithic 432 Park Avenue. "It ruins the skyline and almost every aerial I shoot," said Laforet.

This entire project was completed and posted in a short period, which didn't allow time for retouching. Aside from sensors that pick up light, and adding some saturation and highlights, little was done to the photographs.

Working off the momentum of this series, Laforet is embarking on a multi-city tour from San Francisco to Tokyo, to capture these metropolises at night. "These pictures speak to how big the city is, how massive it is, and how connected and small we are," said Laforet.

**NICOLE ANDERSON**



# HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PLAN

LONG NOTORIOUS FOR ITS LACK OF ZONING AND SPRAWLING, DEVELOPER-DRIVEN, LEAPFROG GROWTH PATTERNS, AMERICA'S FOURTH LARGEST CITY IS ON THE CUSP OF ADOPTING ITS FIRST GENERAL PLAN. FLORENCE TANG SPEAKS WITH THE ADVOCATES, PLANNERS, AND POLITICIANS WHO ARE SEEKING TO MAKE HOUSTON A SUSTAINABLE METROPOLIS WHERE ANYONE CAN PROSPER AND FEEL AT HOME.

Houston is famously, or notoriously, known as the largest city in America without zoning. It covers roughly 630 square miles. To put that in perspective, Houston could accommodate within its limits Washington, DC, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Boston, Baltimore, Cleveland, Denver, Miami, and San Francisco combined. As of the 2010 census, the city had a population of about 2.1 million with a metro area totaling 5.95 million. In the next 20 years, a million more residents are expected to call the Bayou City home.

In the past, Houston has managed such projected growth by expanding its hub-and-spoke freeway system and sprawling out across the vast coastal plain on which it sits. Now, however, a convergence of political forces, an urban planner from Harvard, a newly installed city planning

director, the united voices of citizens, leaders, and groups across jurisdictional lines, and a tenacious campaign lasting more than a decade from one non-profit board is producing a road map for sustainable growth and development.

In September 2014, Mayor Annise Parker directed the planning commission to create Houston's first General Plan. "Houston is constantly changing and growing. We have to have a better way to plan for that growth," said Parker in a statement. "A general plan will allow us to better coordinate our resources, create opportunities for innovative partnerships, and provide a path to achieving our goals."

## BLUEPRINT HOUSTON AND THE GENERAL PLAN

Mayor Parker's announcement

marked a major milestone in the decade-long journey that Blueprint Houston, a nonprofit organization formed in 2002, has spent advocating for a plan. "We have tried to be the squeaky wheel in the face of mayors," said Joe Webb, an architect and chairman of Blueprint since 2010.

Among other efforts, Blueprint raised \$120,000 to hire an experienced planner to advise the city in how to develop the plan, scopes, budgets, and timelines. "The city, having never done this before, had no concept of resources," said Webb. The City of Houston pitched in \$10,000 to hire the consultant.

Blueprint hired Peter Park—the urban planner, professor, former Loeb Fellow, and visiting critic at Harvard's GSD, former planning director of Milwaukee and Denver, and director of his own planning

practice—to work as a consultant to the City of Houston's Mayor's Office and the Planning Department.

Park's track record includes innovative planning in urban land use and regeneration, transit-oriented development, and zoning code reform. His research and work focuses on the link between leading innovation for quality design and practical implementation strategies for communities.

Blueprint also held three citizens' congresses over the years to collect visions of what citizens wanted their city to be. "We compiled all that and gave it to Peter Park," said Martha Murphree, Blueprint's executive director.

## THE URBAN PLANNER

Park initiated the exploratory steps for the plan to spur the discussion about viable strategies critical to the growth of a major metropolitan

area. He worked with city staff to define the scope of the plan and what it should accomplish.

"It's a big change from what Houston has been in the past, and while Houston does not have zoning, there are a lot of regulations. They have regulations that cities with zoning are getting rid of," said Park. "Houston has been going along without a plan, and people ask, 'Why do you need a plan?' but the past approaches of building highways and annexing is not a growth pattern and won't serve the city in the long run."

This historic approach of meeting challenges as they come has created a reactive state and Park believes it is not a viable approach. "How can you have a broader conversation of coordinating growth and policy and vision so that you can optimize the development of the city over time? There are a lot of project plans, and services, and MUDs, and mechanisms, but no overall vision about what's the big idea," continued Park.

Park explained that there are myriad reasons to have plans and, for Houston, the relationship between development and transportation needs to be addressed—not just cars and future traffic, but also the relationships between development and various types of transportation beyond the automobile.

"Too much development, too much traffic—that comes with growth and change," said Park. "There are changing patterns of Americans moving back into





the city and wanting a walkable urban city. It hasn't been a priority. [Walkable areas are] not going to be everywhere, but it ought to be easier to do in Houston and the next generation of people who inherit the city are interested in these urban walkable places. Where people go and want to be there is a high priority on the human scale and activities for people. American cities prioritize the automobile at the expense of other things: freeways cut through underrepresented neighborhoods or high parking requirements result in objects in a big surface parking lot. High parking requirements and wider roads have not made it easy to create walkable urban areas but I think that is changing."

Park cited Houston's Complete Streets policy (a plan to make streets safer and more accessible, that Mayor Parker issued an executive order for in 2013) as one of the major initiatives that would fall under this broader umbrella vision for the city to grow, protect established neighborhoods, and find ways to direct growth and investment where it is most beneficial.

He also spoke about Houston's light rail system, MetroRail. The system opened its first line in 2004 and has five new lines in different stages of planning and construction. "I have heard people criticize the light rail and it's ridiculous," said Park. "The corridors are going to become enormously successful and will be able to demonstrate to other cities what capitalized transit investment looks like."

Park also addressed the city's tradition of freewheeling, speculative development. With good planning in place, he said, the risks associated with this type of unrestrained urban growth can be mitigated. "More clarity can be broadcast from the city as a signal to the investment community," he said. "[Planning can] coordinate major tax breaks, increase jobs, and distribute density in a smart way to concentrate it on the transit corridors." He added that smart planning is also about adding density, more affordability, and greater mobility without more and more cars on the road.

"It's the nature of success that brings people together," said Park. "If you aspire to make great places, people will want to experience them."

#### THE PLANNING DIRECTOR

In March 2014, Mayor Parker and City Council installed Pat Walsh as Houston's top planning and development official. Walsh is a trained civil engineer from Carnegie Mellon and the University of Texas, Austin, and former director of transportation and long-range planning for the City of Sugar Land. "We have made great progress in developing the plan,"



**Facing top:** This NASA satellite image captures, roughly, Houston's Inner Loop, merely the inner ring of the city's 630 square miles. **The rest:** These photos by Houston-area artist Partick Feller show some of the odd juxtapositions of the city, including what remains of Freedman's Town, which was settled by freed slaves in the wake of the Civil War.

said Walsh. "We are wrapping up the vision and goal statement and then we will add more meat to the bone."

He also pointed to a planning and coordination tool, an interactive map available online, with layers of project information on it from various groups such as Buffalo Bayou Partnership, METRO, TxDOT, management districts, TIRZ (a Texas version of tax-increment financing), and the parks department. The city has been asking for voluntary participation from these organizations. The map will be on the city website and powered by its geographic information system.

The plan, as Walsh described it, is being created in a compressed timeline of 10 months. It will be at a higher level as a planning document and is an opportunity to assess whether or not the city

has the right tools and if it is using them in an efficient and right way. "We have to do a better job of coordinating with the amazing numbers of entities who do planning in the city, and we have got to work in a more strategic way to work with our development community to utilize our land in the most effective way possible," said Walsh. "We want our development community to be successful and we want to support them. And we know there are ways we can work together to mutually benefit. Houston is very successful in many ways without zoning. But we regulate development with subdivisions, landscape ordinances, dedication of right of way, drainage, and parking. We do have a lot of deed restriction-like zoning protections. We do not expect zoning to be an outcome of this. This is about making sure we are

effective as possible at creating and enhancing the city."

One of the ordinances to be examined relates to parking. Walsh said the city would revisit its parking policies to encourage vibrant walkable areas where people can visit their local restaurants and shops by foot, on a bike, or using transit. "Or it could be thinking more systematically about parking," he said. "There are opposing interests with parking, there is a balance to be struck."

One of Walsh's goals is to gain a maximum degree of community support for the plan by being transparent and soliciting community input so that any future mayor will also have interest in supporting the needs of the people. "I am cautiously optimistic that this plan is going to offer valuable insight into how Houston can achieve good governance," said Walsh.

That is a sentiment echoed by Park. "If a plan reflects what people wanted then it's more likely to be adopted and taken," he said.

#### IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

On January 8, Jennifer Ostlind, division manager of Houston's planning commission presented the draft vision statement for the General Plan. "Houston offers opportunity for all. We celebrate our diversity of people, ideas, economy, culture, and place. We promote healthy and resilient communities through smart civic investments, dynamic partnerships, education, and innovation. Houston

is the place where anyone can prosper and feel at home."

The plan is uniting major stakeholders from METRO, the Texas Medical Center, Greater Houston Partnership, Greater Houston Builders Association, Urban Land Institute, Houston Independent School District, The Kinder Foundation, TxDOT, and Harris County to churches, neighborhoods, management groups, and professional groups to coordinate, collaborate, and focus their efforts on strategies to deal with a host of future growth and investment issues: infrastructure maintenance, growing the tax base, efficient spending of tax dollars by City Council decisions, and streamlining the planning and permitting procedures.

"It's a business plan," said Webb, "A set of guiding principles and strategies based on what the citizens said about goals and priorities."

The city will inform and engage the public in the coming months by conducting a series of outreach strategies before the framework plan is presented publicly to City Council for adoption in late summer/early fall 2015. If successful, the General Plan could transform Houston from a model of automobile-enabled urban sprawl into a paradigm for how post-war American cities might reinvent themselves in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**FLORENCE TANG IS A DESIGN PROFESSIONAL AND JOURNALIST BASED IN HOUSTON.**



FACING TOP: COURTESY NASA; REST: PATRICK FELLER



  
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FEBRUARY

WEDNESDAY 4  
EVENT

**Fulton Center... A Vision Realized**  
6:00 p.m.  
The Center for Architecture  
536 LaGuardia Pl.  
cfa.aiany.org

LECTURE

**The High Line as an Urban Accelerator: A Conversation**  
6:30 p.m.  
Museum of the City of New York  
1220 Fifth Ave.  
mcny.org

SATURDAY 7  
EVENTS

**The Cloisters: Medieval Manhattan**  
9:30 a.m.  
South Dillon Ripley Center  
1100 Jefferson Drive, SW  
Washington, D.C.  
si.edu

**The Five Thousand Pound Life: Water**  
1:00 p.m.  
The Cooper Union  
41 Cooper Sq.  
archleague.org

**EXHIBITION CLOSING**  
**Dust, Dialogue and Uncertainty: Slow Knowledge in Design Thinking and Practice**  
Pratt Manhattan Gallery  
144 West 14th St.  
pratt.edu

SUNDAY 8  
EVENT

**Weekend Tour: This is Brooklyn**  
Brooklyn Historical Society  
1:00 p.m.  
128 Pierrepont St., Brooklyn  
brooklynhistory.org

MONDAY 9  
EVENT

**Collections Connection Tour: The Architectural Toy Collection**  
5:30 p.m.  
National Building Museum  
401 F St. NW  
Washington, D.C.  
nbm.org

LECTURE

**Transforming Arch Practice 2015 #1 TECHNOLOGY**  
6:00 p.m.  
The Center for Architecture  
536 LaGuardia Pl.  
cfa.aiany.org

TUESDAY 10  
LECTURE

**Alan Karchmer: Photographs of Château La Coste**  
6:00 p.m.  
District Architecture Center  
421 Seventh St. NW  
Washington, D.C.  
aiadc.com

**Panel Discussion: New Decisions in Making and Knowing**  
5:30 p.m.  
The Bard Graduate Center  
38 West 86th St.  
bgbc.bard.edu

WEDNESDAY 11  
LECTURE

**The Inaugural Detlef Mertins Lecture on the Histories of Modernity**  
6:30 p.m.  
Graduate School of Architecture, Preservation and Planning  
1172 Amsterdam Ave.  
arch.columbia.edu

THURSDAY 12  
EVENT

**Architecture for Humanity Boston**  
6:30 p.m.  
Boston Society of Architects  
290 Congress St., Boston, MA  
architects.org

EXHIBITION OPENING  
Prague Functionalism

The Center for Architecture  
536 LaGuardia Pl.  
cfa.aiany.org

FRIDAY 13  
LECTURE

**Kolkata Metro East-West Corridor: Linking Transportation and Culture**  
8:00 a.m.  
The Center for Architecture  
536 LaGuardia Pl.  
cfa.aiany.org

SATURDAY 14  
EXHIBITION OPENING

**This is for Everyone: Design Experiments for the Common Good**  
Modern Museum of Art  
11 West 53rd St.  
moma.org

THURSDAY 19  
EXHIBITION OPENING

**New York's Underground Art Museum: MTA's Arts & Design**  
6:30 p.m.  
Museum of the City of New York  
1220 Fifth Ave.  
mcny.org

TUESDAY 24  
EVENT

**Boston App/Lab: Art in Public Places**  
Boston Society of Architects  
290 Congress St.  
Boston, MA  
architects.org

THURSDAY 26  
LECTURE

**Brutal! Paul Rudolph's Post-war New York Interiors: A Conversation with Timothy M. Rohan and Donald Albrecht**  
6:30 p.m.  
Museum of the City of New York  
1220 Fifth Ave.  
mcny.org

WEDNESDAY 25  
EVENT

**Tour: Mount Vernon Triangle's Brilliant Facades**  
10:00 am.  
650 Massachusetts Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C.  
aiadc.com

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COURTESY THE SKYSCRAPER MUSEUM

**TIMES SQUARE, 1984: THE POSTMODERN MOMENT**  
The Skyscraper Museum  
39 Battery Place, New York  
Through February 15

Once a seedy, crime-ridden corridor, Times Square has since been transformed into a vibrant and safe, neon-lit entertainment hub for theatergoers. But in 1984, the future of The Great White Way was uncertain. A proposal to erect a set of four skyscrapers and demolish the 1904 Times Tower jumpstarted a debate between urban renewal advocates and preservation-minded urbanists, and gave way to an "ideas competition" for the site, organized by the Municipal Art Society and National Endowment for the Arts. The Skyscraper Museum's *Times Square, 1984: The Postmodern Moment* highlights 20 drawings from the juried competition, showcasing a real assortment of ideas, ranging from passionate declarations to more eccentric architectural proposals.

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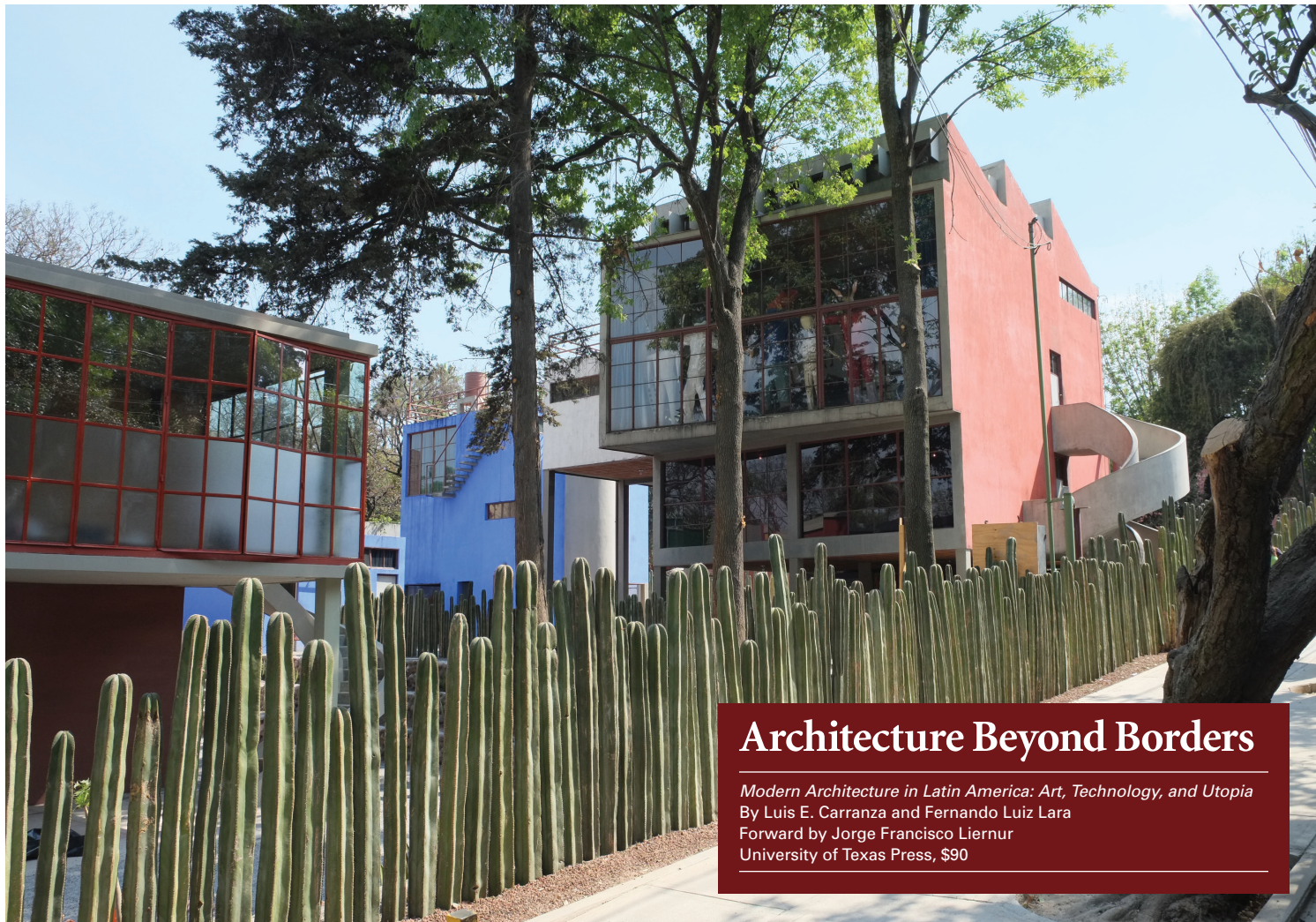
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## Architecture Beyond Borders

*Modern Architecture in Latin America: Art, Technology, and Utopia*  
By Luis E. Carranza and Fernando Luiz Lara  
Forward by Jorge Francisco Liernur  
University of Texas Press, \$90

Juan O'Gorman, Cecil O'Gorman House, Frida Kahlo House and Studio, and Diego Rivera House and Studio (from left to right), Mexico City, 1929-1932.

architecture very well throughout the world. The texts are concise and informative even as the chapter headings are long and explicative such as, "1922: In an attempt to create a building expressive of the "cosmic race" Jose Vasconcelos inaugurates in Mexico City the headquarters of the secretaria of *educacion publica* and formalizes the muralist project."

In the last chapter, "Provocations for a conclusion: Islands no more," the authors write "a history from a Latin American perspective... regions that have always been islands (of Solitude)." I would argue that a Latin American perspective can only exist from the outside and not within its territory that was transformed by the 19<sup>th</sup> century independence wars and today is rapidly evolving, such as the current normalization of Cuba-U.S.A. relations. We return to geography and maybe now we can see the world made up of many oceans and four large islands: Antarctica, Australia, Euro-Asia-Africa, and America.

In the chapter 1976, the authors write while the "hypochromatism of Barragan was the prominent style, a more North American type of postmodernism did emerge in Mexico... that was equally devoid of any theoretical armature."

Could (Mexican) post-modern architecture ever be a historical system that criticizes the limits of the

**continued on page 23**

Can we look forward to the era when architecture in "Latin America" will begin to disappear? I hope so, and also other colonialist constructions, such as "the seven continents" or Henry-Russell Hitchcock's "two continents of this

hemisphere" (only the canals dug in Panama or Egypt make semi-true). I agree with Jorge Francisco Liernur in his forward that geography is good place to start for a discussion on architecture in "Latin America." He argues for a "building that

expresses the region" and gives a brief outline of the necessity of a chronological system that serves as a sub-structure for a diverse group of works that tell diverse narratives. He cites a brief historiography that goes from Francisco Bullrich (1) to

Roberto Segre (2) and Edward Said (3) toward a view that denies any cultural unity.

This book is a didactic textbook with glossy and colorful pictures in a standard format that will serve English speaking students of



COURTESY PETER KAINZ/MAK

## ORNAMENT AND CRIME, OR NOT

Ways to Modernism: Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos, and Their Impact  
MAK  
Studenring 5, 1010 Vienna  
Vienna, Austria  
Through April 4

The exhibition, *Ways to Modernism: Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos, and their Impact* at the MAK brings together the work of these two architects and places them in a historical context of the rise of mass production in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, work of Otto Wagner as their predecessor, and the urban transformation of Vienna. The exhibition also situates the works of Loos and Hoffmann as trajectories within modern and contemporary architecture culture, tracing their design strategies to the present in the works of artists, architects, and designers. In this respect, the exhibition treats history as a living process, making connections throughout two centuries. This year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the MAK and of the Ringstrasse, an important institution and an important urban artifact in the history of modern architecture, design, and urbanism.

The exhibition places the work of these designers within a milieu of things, goods, and objects, which were designed for mass production and consumption. Hence viewers can see the new materials that came about, such as plastics and meerscham, furniture and fabric catalogues, and manufactured porcelain and textile products. With these artifacts the story of the rise of mass production is placed within the context of Austria and Central Europe. The work of Otto Wagner, from his urban plan for Vienna to his furniture designs for the Postal Savings Bank, is placed within this culture of things as the predecessor of the two figures. Loos

and Hoffman, then, become the figures who both worked within and against that culture, looking for ways to redirect it.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is two bedrooms: one by Adolf Loos for his wife, Lina (1903) and one by Hoffmann for the Salzer family (1902). Where Loos provided a structure and rails along the walls both holding different kinds of fabric, Hoffmann designed every item in the bedroom with the same geometric pattern. Here are two different ideas of surface, ornament, and materiality. Loos' bedroom is an all-over surface, a cladding with the furry fabric covering over horizontal surfaces (floor, bed frame) and the curtains along the rails covering the vertical surfaces. Hoffmann's bedroom on the other hand consists of scaling and playing with the same geometric pattern in different materials, on different objects, from the carpet and the bedsheets to the night table and the bed. The contrast of the sensuous fabric of Loos to the abstract geometric pattern of Hoffmann also corresponded to contrasting views on the designer's role: minimal intervention versus total control.

There are other one-to-one scale reconstructions of rooms and spaces in the exhibition: Margarete Schutte-Lihotzky's design for an apartment for a working single woman (1928) and Hoffmann's design for a boudoir of a movie star (designed for an exhibition in Paris in 1937). These one-to-one reconstructions well

**continued on page 23**





Oscar Niemeyer, Casa do Baile, Belo Horizonte, 1942.

LUIS E. CARRANZA/UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS

**ARCHITECTURE BEYOND BORDERS**  
continued from page 22 modern movement? Two books lay the theoretical foundation for the post-modern in architecture *Complexity and Contradiction* by Robert Venturi (1966) and *L'Architettura della citta* (1966) by Aldo Rossi. The authors also cite Learning from Las Vegas by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steve Izenour as a source of the theory of the post-modern in architecture. I would say that none of these three books had a historical system in mind and that they are very different kinds of texts. The first a chronology of mannerist architecture

with some works by the author as a post-script, the second an important attempt at establishing a theory of architecture through the analysis of the history of a few European examples, and the third a studio project at Yale University. I highly recommend *Modern Architecture in Latin America*, which will likely open up "a can of worms" or Pandora's box, in a discussion that is a little less superficial about the complexities and contradictions inherent in a trialogue that goes East, West, and South. **CARLOS BRILLEMBOURG IS THE ARCHITECTURE EDITOR FOR BOMB MAGAZINE.**



Josef Hoffmann's Boudoir d'une grande vedette for the Paris World Exhibition, 1937.

COURTESY MAK/GEORG MAYER

**ORNAMENT AND CRIME, OR NOT** continued from page 22 display the sense of the relationship between things and objects of modernism and the spaces and the lives that had to be crafted, designed, and accommodated at the same time. In an attempt to recreate the intimacy of these worlds, the exhibition also presents some of the different forms and spaces of privacy in modernism. One of the goals of modern design, as the exhibition reminds us, was to organize, protect, or enhance that world. Yet there is also information on how these private lives would become public, in the example of

several public statements by architects, public housing projects in and around Vienna as well as the history of urbanism in Vienna. The exhibition concludes by tracing Hoffmann and Loos' positions into the contemporary world of architecture. Following figures like Hans Hollein and Donald Judd, Lacaton & Vassal, Werner Neuwirth and Anna Heringer are presented as employing Loos' different design strategies of ready-made, raumplan, and Do-It-Yourself. In this respect, the exhibition has a bias toward Loos, and this is Loos read as an architect who developed different strategies in different

contexts. Yet one thing the exhibition and the history it portrays shows is that so much of Loos and Hoffmann's work have something to do with carving out a space for privacy and finding ways of public appearance, where Loos presents clear cut boundaries between public and private. Perhaps in tracing the trajectory of these two figures, the question that remains is what are the new private worlds, and how does architecture articulate these worlds? Perhaps this question could also expand the final positions presented in the exhibition. In presenting a historical context through things and objects and placing architecture within that context, the exhibition brings forth a fresh history of an important moment in the history of modernism. In further emphasizing the role of design in the society, in positing that there are different ways that design can be social, the exhibition puts forward important questions. **TULAY ATAK TEACHES ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY AT PRATT.**

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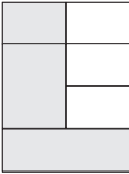
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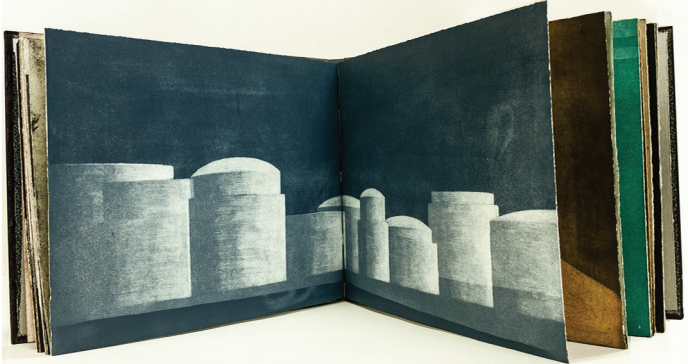
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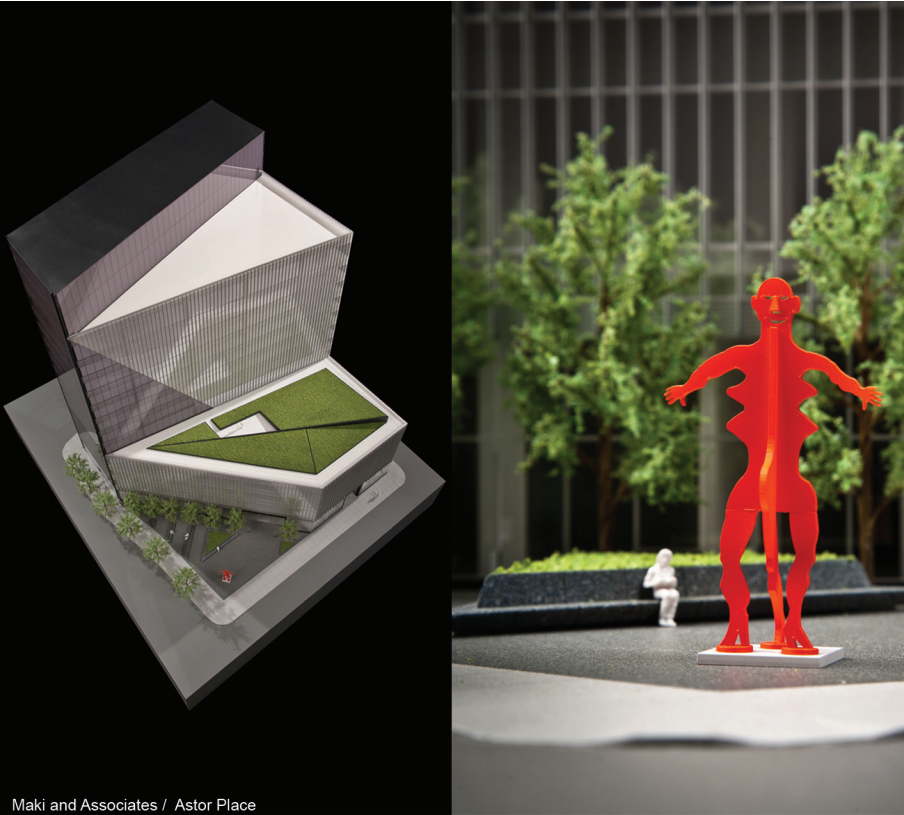
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER







## The National Significance of the Frick's Page Garden

This decade has seen numerous museum expansions and expansion plans, most of them program-driven justifications for more space, some have been sensitively executed, others not. Nearly five years ago *The Architect's Newspaper* asked me to write an opinion piece that ultimately ran with the provocative title: "Museum Stomping Grounds: Charles Birnbaum believes there is no reason our cultural landmarks cannot also protect our historic landscapes."

That piece asserted that stewardship solutions in 21<sup>st</sup>-century museum design recognize that there is "an opportunity for expansion-minded institutions to engage in a more holistic reevaluation of their proposed building and site expansion programs, one that would result in built work in which curatorial values previously placed solely on architecture and collections would be extended to include landscape, and both the physical and historical context for the museum would be given weight in planning and design decision making." It focused on Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (which destroyed its rare villa landscape that included an Italianate carriage house), its neighbor the Museum of Fine Arts (which successfully reestablished its historic relationship with the Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.-designed park system called the Emerald Necklace), and the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, (which destroyed a Modernist landscape design by George Patton and Harriet Pattison), and posed several questions: What do we value? What is the context for guiding change? How do we measure success?

Those questions are circulating again, prompted in June 2014 when officials at the venerable Frick Collection in New York City announced their intent to add about 60,000 square feet of space to the institution, including about 40,000 square feet of new construction. In doing so, they would destroy their exquisite Russell Page-designed viewing garden on East 70<sup>th</sup> Street, which, according to a Frick press release in 1977, was created as a "permanent garden." Today the garden has become a focal point of opposition, which is probably a great surprise to Frick officials because it was barely mentioned (and treated dismissively) when the expansion plans were first announced.

Since then, they've spent months auditioning variously flawed talking points, including a museological Manifest Destiny,

in hopes of tamping down the opprobrium, only to see opposition grow (aided by the efforts of advocacy organization *Unite to Save the Frick*). Surprisingly, in a December 2014 article *Wall Street Journal* critic Julie Iovine advocated for the expansion, went so far as to suggest that the garden—a permanent, site-specific work of art—be "transplanted to a site in nearby Harlem—where gardens are truly scarce and people might actually be allowed to sit in it" (the Frick praised the article on Twitter, so I guess they support the idea.)

The good news is that today there is a higher degree of critical understanding of the designed landscape's value that was all but absent even a few years ago. Robert A.M. Stern, influential architect and dean of the Yale School of Architecture, recently stated, "Gardens are works of art"; and Michael Kimmelman, the *New York Times* architecture critic weighed in, writing "Great public places and works of landscape architecture deserve to be treated like great buildings."

In 2015 all eyes will be on the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, which will decide whether or not the Frick can proceed. Referencing the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the law that created the Commission, the New York Landmarks Conservancy recently wrote:

"Since [its creation], the Landmarks Preservation Commission has granted landmark protection status to almost 1,400 individual landmarks, 117 interior landmarks, 10 scenic landmarks, 112 historic districts, and 20 historic district extensions located throughout all five boroughs."

"The Landmarks Law is one of the strongest in the nation, and has served as a model for cities and towns across the country and around the world."

In the past 50 years we have seen an expansion and professionalization of the landscape preservation movement, and with this maturation we have seen a valuation for holistic stewardship—one that no longer excludes the historic designed landscape. Will these advances factor into the Commission's decisions about the Frick?

Discussing preservation is tricky and can get into mind-numbing minutiae, so let's deal with some of the highlights.

Overarching standards and guidelines, which help inform state and local statutes, are issued by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, and are part of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. A significant change occurred in 1995 when the title—the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings—was updated and renamed Historic Properties, putting "buildings, structures, sites, objects, districts, and landscapes" on equal footing. This subtlety of changes has great consequences and implications for all sites on the National Register of Historic Places, which includes the Frick.

Regarding the Standards, another thing to consider is the period of significance, which identifies the "span of time during which significant events and activities occurred. Events and associations with historic properties are finite; most properties have a clearly definable period of significance." This is treated as a cut-off point for deciding what is and is not subject to protection and preservation, and it's a significant talking point for Frick officials. The mansion was built between 1912 and 1914 as a private home designed by Carrère and Hastings, expanded upon by John Russell Pope, and opened to the public as a museum in 1935. Frick officials assert that, because the Page garden was constructed in 1977, it lies outside the period of significance. However, part of the 1995 update to the Standards noted above includes the following: "Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved."

Significantly, in 1996 a document was published that provided technical guidance on how to apply the Standards to landscapes. *The Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, which I authored during my tenure at the helm of the National Park Service's Historic Landscape Initiative, note that "assessing a landscape as a continuum through history is critical in assessing cultural and historic value."

The museum was designated an Individual Landmark by the Commission in 1973—a local designation. That was updated in 1974 to include an additional three lots owned by the museum on East 70<sup>th</sup> Street specifically stipulating, "a garden will be developed on these lots." Those lots had originally been acquired for a possible expansion, but those plans

were abandoned, hence the language of the 1974 update.

In 2008, the Frick was designated a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior—a national appointment that places the institution among an elite group of sites. While the period of significance is listed as 1912–1935, the language of the designation describes the 1970s architectural additions made by John Barrington Bayley and mentions the Page garden. The narrative also states:

"Mark Alan Hewitt [an architect, preservationist and architectural historian] commented on the stringent stewardship of the building by the institution, in particular Bayley's addition:

"The trustees...have guarded Hastings' design contribution zealously through the decades, preventing the defacement by modernist additions that have beset other institutions in the city. John Barrington Bayley's 1977 entry vestibule and [the Russell Page] garden were well matched to the Hastings and Pope building ..."

Best practices suggest that the Landmarks Preservation Commission re-examine the 1973–74 designations. Back then, the Page garden had not yet been realized and Page was still alive and in active practice. With Page's death in 1985 his career can now be assessed and the import of his extant work, such as his garden at the Frick—which the *New York Times* called one of his "most important projects"—can be determined. The Commission should examine whether the garden has "acquired historic significance" in its own right, as the updated Secretary's Standards have outlined and the National Historic Landmark designation suggests.

If the Commission re-examines the designation and if they find that the garden is significant, then it would follow that the physical and historical context would be given equal weight in design decision-making, and holistic expansion plans would acknowledge the invaluable and irreplaceable landscape that is at stake.

**CHARLES BIRNBAUM IS THE FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE FOUNDATION.**





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