A tower designed in 2006 by French Pritzker Prize laureate Jean Nouvel is joining the high-flyer ranks of the New York City skyline. Dubbed 53 W 53 for its location next to the Museum of Modern Art, the 82-story, 1,050-foot-tall glass-and-steel tower tapers skyward, culminating in three staggered crowns, its irregular...
FALSE STARTS FAITHFUL

Longtime readers of The Architect’s Newspaper, or anybody who follows architecture and real estate development in New York City, may have experienced an acute case of déjà vu when perusing the cover of this issue. Three of the four front-page stories are about high-profile projects, the designs of which were released to the public years ago only to be put on hold for a variety of reasons that have, to varying extents, now been resolved.

The Steven Holl–designed Queens Library at Hunters Point (“We’ll do it Live,” p.1), which was first unveiled in 2010, broke ground in mid-May. The project originally hit the rocks due to a lack of monetary resources. Even a cost-cutting redesign that swapped the initially proposed aluminum paneled facade for “aluminum painted” concrete, setting the estimated overall price at around $90 million, didn’t bring the building within the budget. In spite of a $7 million shortfall, the Queens Library leadership decided to start construction anyway, figuring that somebody—namely Mayor Bill de Blasio—won’t let the much-needed public amenity (not to mention aesthetic relief from the glass high-rise monstrosity of the Long Island City waterfront) stand still once the cones and union labor are busy on site.

The Queens Library’s confidence in a deus ex machina ending, with the mayor swooping in to the rescue with a fist full of emergency allocations, isn’t without precedent. Off a DiMillo’s joystick controls, parked over several years, to restart the Fashion Institute of Technology’s SHoP-designed Cz building (“Re-stitched,” p.1). The allotment, which matched a 2009 appropriation by New York State, has put SHoP back to work finalizing the design. We’ll see if the high-tech, vertical circulation–animated facade comes out as advertised in the glitzy renderings the architects originally released. By SHoP’s reluctance to re-release those images to AN for this story, however, chances are we’ll see something a little more down to earth, a little more brutal in detail, little a little akin to the state school’s existing facilities.

Cash-strapped, publicly funded projects aren’t the only buildings where we’re seeing a dampering of design aspirations. Even in the supposedly no-limit world of super-luxury Manhattan condominiums, boasting Pritzker Prize–winning architects no less, dreams have been blunted. Such is the case with Jean Nouvel’s 53 W5 (“It’s Alive!”, p.1). First unveiled in 2006, it was brought to beal in 2009 during the depths of the recession by the NYC Planning Commission, which demanded that the tower be shortened 200 feet, from 1,250 to 1,050. As then-planning director Amanda Burden told The New York Times, “The development team had to show us that they were creating something as great or even greater than the Empire State Building and the design they showed us was unresolved.” How quickly things change. A few years after dealing this blow, the commission went on to approve a slew of supertall, super skinny residential towers on 57th Street, whose designs are certainly no more resolved to the standard of the Empire State than Nouvel’s. But that’s what you get for showing up early to the party.

Himes, 53 W 53’s developer, is taking it in stride. Now with $1 billion in financing in hand from Asian sources (“The Reverse Commute,” p.11), and no doubt eager to cash in on the seemingly endless font of real estate investment money coming from foreign billionaires before the next recession begins, it has called out the construction crews and work is underway on the shortened tower. (It’s worth noting that the project’s duplex penthouse is on the market for $70 million, almost the cost of two Steven Holl–designed Hunters Point libraries, but by no means high in the context of today’s Manhattan luxury market. There is reportedly a $74 million appropriation by New York State, has put SHoP back to work finalizing the design (“Re-stitched,” p.1). First unveiled in 2009, it was brought to beal in 2009 during the depths of the recession by the NYC Planning Commission, which demanded that the tower be shortened 200 feet, from 1,250 to 1,050. As then-planning director Amanda Burden told The New York Times, “The development team had to show us that they were creating something as great or even greater than the Empire State Building and the design they showed us was unresolved.” How quickly things change. A few years after dealing this blow, the commission went on to approve a slew of supertall, super skinny residential towers on 57th Street, whose designs are certainly no more resolved to the standard of the Empire State than Nouvel’s. But that’s what you get for showing up early to the party.

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WHATS YOUR RESIGN?

After just under two years at the helm, Philadelphia Center for Architecture director Hilary Jay has stepped down. The Center said in a statement that the departure was “mutual and amicable.” But after the recent abrupt, mysterious resignation of Rick Bell from AIA New York for undisclosed reasons, we are left wondering what really is going on behind the scenes. Jay’s legacy is the Design Philadelphia Festival, which she founded but will leave under direction of the Center. “I move forward knowing that the festival is in capable and creative hands with Nova Harris as DP’s program manager.” So the story goes...

DID FRANK GEHRY REALLY KILL CHRIST?

In a recent essay for the forthcoming book Getting There: A Book of Mentors by Gillian Zoe Segal, Frank Gehry reminisced about his childhood in Canada. “My family was one of approximately 30 Jewish families in our town-Timmins, Ontario—and for a while, I was the only Jewish kid at my school. I used to get beat up regularly for ‘killing Christ.’” Perhaps that’s why he has such a thick skin today when dealing with critics and Internet commenters. He also talks about how his shrink and mentor, Milton Wexler, helped him combat criticism from peers in his early career: “Screw them! There aren’t any rules. Just because they did it that way last week doesn’t mean you have to do it that way today.” So did his therapist also advise young Gehry, when in doubt, and if words won’t suffice, just flip the bird to a meddlesome critic?

BROKEN DREAMS?

At the 2015 AIA convention in May, former President Bill Clinton gave a keynote address to the unwashed masses. He praised collaboration among designers and other stakeholders, and even admitted that “If I had another life to live, I’d be an architect, especially in this age of climate change.” He is not the only president other stakeholders, and even admitted that “If I had another life to live, I’d be an architect, especially in this age of climate change.” He is not the only president to speak of a childhood dream of designing buildings. President Obama said in a 2008 campaign speech that he also had aspirations to be an architect as a youngin’. We’re just glad these heads of states didn’t opt for fireman.

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NEWS

EAVESDROP>> THE EDITORS

TOD WILLIAMS AND BILLIE TSIEEN RESPOND TO THE POTENTIAL REPLACEMENT OF THE MATTN CENTER

Layers of History

When we won the competition to design the Mattin Center at Johns Hopkins University in the late 1990s the City of Baltimore was a much tougher, more dangerous place. A student, a musician, had been recently killed at the University's Brutalist campus in In 2009 (FIT is part of the SUNY system), the administration was troubled by the MoMA issue where a cultural institution seemed to deny its mission as a protector of art, architecture, and design. If the administration elects to demolish the Mattin Center, it should not be without very serious debate. We are concerned, not so much because of our project or egos (though it would hurt since we believe in and are very proud of our work), but because to do so is unimaginative and unsustainable, and because it does not acknowledge the layers of history that are crucial to an understanding of our culture, our campuses, and our cities.

Today there is a desire to create a more direct connection to the city and for more socializing spaces for students. The site of the Mattin Center is an important one for the university and campus we believe it can accommodate additional density and change. While we would have very much welcomed being part of the discussion to rethink this area of campus, we can understand that the new administration and student body want a different approach. This is unlike the MoMA issue where a cultural institution seemed to deny its mission as a protector of art, architecture, and design. If the administration elects to demolish the Mattin Center, it should not be without very serious debate. We are concerned, not so much because of our project or egos (though it would hurt since we believe in and are very proud of our work), but because to do so is unimaginative and unsustainable, and because it does not acknowledge the layers of history that are crucial to an understanding of our culture, our campuses, and our cities.

TOD WILLIAMS AND BILLIE TSIEEN

RE-STITCHED continued from front page

Further playing into FIT’s fashion focus, ShoP said the building acts like a loom, “[building] form and structure simultaneously.” It was both an aggressive departure for FIT’s Brutalist concrete campus, and another addition to the city’s long list of unbuilt architecture.

Now, six years after ShoP won the competition, the project is being restarted thanks to an injection of city funds. In his 2015 executive budget, Mayor Bill de Blasio committed $74 million over multiple years to fully fund the new building. This matches the allocation made by New York State back in 2009 (FIT is part of the SUNY system). The project has already been unanimously approved by the local community board, but will not have a finalized design for another year.

The building, currently named “C2,” is sited on a narrow lot between 28th Street and the FIT campus’ midcentury C Building, which is clad in metallic panels. When ShoP’s building does rise it is expected to obscure its neighbor.

To achieve LEED Silver designation, the 100,000-square-foot building includes a green roof, and a solar array with lenses that can concentrate the sun’s energy. Inside, C2 includes classrooms, laboratories, studios, and exhibition spaces. ShoP Architects declined AV’s request to comment for this story.

Once the building’s design is finalized, construction will take three years. When completed in 2019, it will be the first new building on FIT’s campus in more than 40 years.
Sub Culture

Every day 300,000 subway riders stream through Manhattan’s Fulton Center, their underground trek now brightened by entertainment venues and daylight reflected from its skylit cable-net overhead. An integrated artwork by James Carpenter Design Associates, Grimshaw Architects, and Arup, this marvel of collaboration is a new bright spot beneath city streets. Read more about it in Metals in Construction online.

WE’LL DO IT LIVE continued from front page

ground in mid-May.

But while the building is now moving forward, funding is not fully secured. The library has a total cost just shy of $40 million, and a budget shortfall of $7 million. A Queens Library representative said that it made sense to break ground instead of letting the project languish as land prices continue to rise. With support from the mayor and other sources, the library system believes the money will ultimately appear.

In the finalized design, the building’s aluminum facade has been swapped with “aluminum painted” concrete that is intended to have the same shimmering effect. Amorphous windows cut across the boxy structure, giving it a distinctive profile against the glass curtain walls of the Queens waterfront. From inside, the library’s unique windows provide views to Roosevelt Island and Manhattan. “The program’s separation into children’s area, teen area, and adult area can be read in the sculpted cuts of the east face of the building, one facade opening for each area; yet the programmatic divisions are fluid,” said Steven Holl Architects in a statement. At night, the building is intended to glow from inside.

The library also includes a communal reading garden and a public art installation by Julianne Swartz. When completed at the end of 2017, the Hunters Point library will service the quickly growing residential community on the former industrial site. This project also incorporates the creation of a new 1,260-square-foot ranger station for the adjacent Gantry Plaza State Park.
New York City is brimming with stylish hotels, from boutique hangouts to luxury destinations, but few can boast the rich history of the Martha Washington, first opened in 1903 exclusively for women. According to a 2012 New York Times story, the hotel, in the now-dubbed NoMad area, became a refuge for single female professionals seeking a comfortable place to stay where they were not the subjects of sordid rumors suggesting improper deeds. The landmarked hotel, which later turned into “a center for suffrage events,” hosted notable women such as Jean H. Norris, the Tammany Hall official and first woman magistrate in New York, and actress Louise Brooks. More than a century later, Martha Washington has been given a much-needed face-lift. Selldorf Architects has revamped its public spaces, including the front entrance and Danny Meyer’s new Roman pizzeria, Marta. After assuming several identities in recent years (Hotel Lola and King & Grove New York, among others), the Martha Washington has returned to its roots, first reestablishing its name, and now welcoming guests at the original main entrance. Selldorf re-located the front entry position from 30th Street to 29th Street, and then worked with a preservationist to restore the Renaissance Revival facade by replacing some of the brownstone. To further implant the hotel in the fabric of the city and engage with the street, the firm demolished the stoop and lowered the floor to ground level by three feet. “We had to convince Landmarks that we were doing something unique. It was a dramatic change in the existing building which hadn’t really been touched,” explained Selldorf partner, Sara Lopergolo. The window openings were then extended and turned into glass doors with mahogany trim. Marta also benefited from lowering the floors, gaining 17-foot-high ceilings, thus letting more light into the 12,000-square-foot restaurant. A marble bar overlooks two impressive terracotta tile ovens, allowing patrons to watch the cooking in action. Quiet design components—including blue cement tiles, walnut millwork, and white fluted columns—endow the space with a crisp, contemporary aesthetic. A cluster of slender, lighting pendants suspended from the ceiling enlivens the muted interior.
NCARB TAKES STEPS TO ELIMINATE THE TERM “INTERN ARCHITECT”

THE NAME GAME

At the American Institute of Architect’s recent conference in Atlanta, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) announced that it will begin work on licensing boards to do away with the term “intern architect.” This decision to change the terminology comes from the idea that people with years of experience working in the field should not be labeled with a term many see as pejorative. “The new term?” asked NCARB in a press release. “There isn’t one. Just don’t use ‘intern.’”

To accommodate the change, NCARB said it will update its Model Law and guidelines, but for the word “intern” to officially be stricken from the record, the council’s proposal will have to be considered by the country’s 54 licensing boards and then receive a majority vote at a future NCARB Annual Business Meeting. And even then, the change would not go into effect without a jurisdiction actually adopting it.

Donna Kacmar, a licensed architect, designer, and associate professor at the University of Houston, told AN the proposed change is not all that significant, noting that the label of “intern” is not necessarily a negative one. “When I was an intern I did not think it was a bad thing,” she said. “I was learning and working my way to becoming an architect. I was not overly sensitive about it and I don’t think most students are.”

To Kacmar, there are much bigger issues that NCARB should be dealing with, specifically its complicated procedures, and how it manages oversight of licensure. “[NCARB] forces us to go through all of these hoops—experience categories, and IDP record keeping, and taking the ARE which changes all the time—so we can become a licensed architect.”

NCARB CEO Mike Strong explained to AN that a host of initiatives will further streamline the program over the next few years. “The last few years have seen NCARB substantially move to reduce the complexities of the IDP,” he said in a statement. “The solution, Kacmar added, is not just making the whole process shorter, but prioritizing the education of architectural craft over record keeping. For her, the term, intern architect, is beside the point. “It is about [the process] being made appropriate and I am not sure somebody who is not engaged in the practice of architecture is the best person to make this decision.”
places in which people of all socio-economic backgrounds can thrive. Two of the hotel-to-condo projects offer a blend of old Miami and new, ultra-modern building. The L’Atelier Residences will be slotted in behind the historic facade of the Golden Sands Hotel. The historically protected art deco facade and an interior lobby will be retained. Historic preservation required this restoration, but co-developer Meir Srebernik saw it more as an opportunity to “create a dialogue between the old and new construction.” Similarly, Richard Meier will update the iconic (and ultra-exclusive) Surf Club hotel, converting it to condos. The original 1930 building, a protected Mediterranean villa with a ballroom and bathing cabanas, will be restored with new 12-story residential and hotel towers looming behind it. The site of the old King Cole Hotel will be home to the Ritz Carlton Residences, a midrise waterfront residential project designed by Milanese architect Piero Lissoni. Because the hotel was repurposed as a hospital before closing permanently, a zoning quirk re-categorized the site as low-density residential to match the abutting sites. Thus, had the developers demolished the building, it would have meant rebuilding at a lower height restriction so they are adapting the existing structure. Real estate firm Terra Group asked Renzo Piano to redevelop the site of The Biltmore Terrace Hotel, a Morris Lapidus–designed postwar tower that had recently been a Howard Johnson. There was some controversy when plans to refurbish the building into a new hotel were scrapped abruptly after a height variance was given. However, the building was not landmarked, so a complete demolition began several weeks later. The developer opted instead to master plan the site with a 17-story condo tower and a large park space by landscape architects West 8 that aims to let passersby see the beach from Collins Avenue—a complement to Piano’s subtle architecture.

While the contrasts in the projects might tell a story about the importance of historic preservation, they also show a range of strategies for working within physical and legal restrictions to make places that are sensitive to their surroundings and can hopefully be enjoyed by communities while preserving the character of a place. Even if most people cannot afford to live in these ultra-exclusive residences, they still experience them in one way or another, from architectural appreciation to walking dogs in green space.
For Miami architect Rene Gonzalez, the best design solutions come from odd or interesting problems. When confronted with specific contexts and environmental conditions, he takes them as an opportunity to give life and energy to a project.

Context, weather, and native architectural types guide each project, such as with a series of houses that lie in flood planes. Gonzalez found that raising them on pilotis not only protects them from flooding and saves the clients enormous amounts of money on insurance, but it also becomes a way to create social areas on the ground while offering a respite in the private spaces above.

He is not concerned with novel forms or flashy projects, but with spatial experiences cultivated from materials, light, and the surroundings. “I am interested in capturing the essence and qualities of a place and representing them,” Gonzalez told AN. A Cuban-American and native Floridian, Gonzalez spent time in Los Angeles in the 1980s during the heyday of experimental California architecture. Those influences stuck with him and today his work is about testing new ideas with materials, such as bush-hammered marble, floating concrete planes, and laser-cut metal panels. As the firm begins to work at larger scales, such as community centers and condo towers, that experimental attitude will produce a new range of unexpected designs.

**Prairie Avenue Residence**

**Glass**

**Alchemist Boutique**

**Hamptons Residence**

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There is the old maxim that constraints fuel the creative process. And in the case of the Court Square Building at 2 Lafayette Street, it was the challenge of meeting the diverse needs and goals of two very critical, yet different New York City agencies that stoked the imagination of local firm BKSK Architects. This process yielded a lively and cohesive workplace for both occupants and the multi-generational New Yorkers the two departments serve. The project—which began during the Bloomberg administration and wrapped up under the office of Mayor Bill de Blasio—called for the renovation of seven floors in the historic municipal building in Downtown Manhattan to house the Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD) and the Department for the Aging (DFTA).

The design was guided by early conversations with the clients, addressing the specific objectives and requirements of each agency. While serving different subsets of the population, both needed dedicated public spaces for such programs as staff training and computer classes as well as clusters of open offices, conference rooms, and breakout areas for employees. The firm designed the interior spaces to be as comfortable and energy efficient as possible with the aim of LEED Gold certification. Such measures as reinsulating the envelope, insulating the windows with sprayfoam, and implementing new valves on the radiators enhanced the overall energy efficiency of the building. “Because it is a city-funded project, for city agencies, and working with the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, it has very clear requirements about the glass, size of desks, and so on,” explained Joan Krevlin, partner-in-charge at BKSK. “The real design task was to breathe life into these very specific requirements to feel unique to both agencies but have a really strong sense of place and to make the most out of the great bones of the building.”

The interiors, prior to renovation, showed years of use and poor design: natural light was not penetrating the space; the offices were “chopped up”; acoustic drop ceilings made the space feel cramped and small. But with the building’s views of Manhattan’s stately Civic Center and an interesting floor plan, the firm saw opportunity to transform the bleak interiors into a light-infused workspace that facilitated collaboration and connectivity.

When conceiving the 6th floor offices for the Department for the Aging (DFTA), BKSK had to take into consideration the older population who would be visiting the agency to access the many resources and amenities offered, such as technology training and employment services. Spec’d throughout the floor are areas for engagement with the senior visitors, including meeting spaces, practice interview rooms, and computer labs. “This was one of the only floors where they [the staff] are engaging with the public, whereas the other floors are about the people behind the people,” explained Jennifer Preston, BKSK’s sustainable design director. “There had to be a sensitivity, such as handrails to help people who are aging gracefully navigate the space.” Beyond the necessary functional design components, BKSK’s design serves the varied programmatic needs of two city agencies occupying 7 floors. Bright colors punctuate the communal spaces, and a more neutral palette is used for the open offices.

The interior features whimsical touches such as a super-sized photomural by agency staff photographer Richard Henry called Stylin’ Seniors, which weaves through the space. Floors 14 and 18 through 22 are dedicated to the NYC Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD) that oversees funding for community-based organizations such as immigration services and youth training. This called for a different approach since the agency interfaces less directly with the public, but has a far-reaching mission that touches many New Yorkers. Breakout areas are interspersed with open office plans with related departments clustered together. BKSK created informal sitting rooms out of leftover spaces along the perimeter of the angled floor plan. By juxtaposing a neutral palette in the quieter workspaces with what Krevlin called “intense pops of color” in more public, hangout spaces, they were able to “break down the scale.” Movement is encouraged throughout the space: A bright yellow staircase connects the 18th through 20th floors and then the 21st and 22nd. “We were trying to have these inviting stairs for easy circulation and fostering connectivity,” explained Krevlin. Recycled wood, from the city’s water towers, clads the wall behind the front desk area (same with the 6th floor) and adds a rustic warmth to the otherwise clean, bright interior.

RESOURCES:

Carpet: Milliken milliken.carpet.com
Reclaimed Water Tower Wood: Carpenters Reclaimed Resources: ReSourceS:
Alpolic Materials
Composite Panels at Stair Walls: Alpolic Americas.com

When conceiving the 6th floor offices for the Department for the Aging (DFTA), BKSK had to take into consideration the older population who would be visiting the agency to access the many resources and amenities offered, such as technology training and employment services. Spec’d throughout the floor are areas for engagement with the senior visitors, including meeting spaces, practice interview rooms, and computer labs. “This was one of the only floors where they [the staff] are engaging with the public, whereas the other floors are about the people behind the people,” explained Jennifer Preston, BKSK’s sustainable design director. “There had to be a sensitivity, such as handrails to help people who are aging gracefully navigate the space.” Beyond the necessary functional design components, 

BKSks design serves the varied programmatic needs of two city agencies occupying 7 floors. Bright colors punctuate the communal spaces, and a more neutral palette is used for the open offices. The interior features whimsical touches such as a super-sized photomural by agency staff photographer Richard Henry called Stylin’ Seniors, which weaves through the space. Floors 14 and 18 through 22 are dedicated to the NYC Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD) that oversees funding for community-based organizations such as immigration services and youth training. This called for a different approach since the agency interfaces less directly with the public, but has a far-reaching mission that touches many New Yorkers. Breakout areas are interspersed with open office plans with related departments clustered together. BKSK created informal sitting rooms out of leftover spaces along the perimeter of the angled floor plan. By juxtaposing a neutral palette in the quieter workspaces with what Krevlin called “intense pops of color” in more public, hangout spaces, they were able to “break down the scale.” Movement is encouraged throughout the space: A bright yellow staircase connects the 18th through 20th floors and then the 21st and 22nd. “We were trying to have these inviting stairs for easy circulation and fostering connectivity,” explained Krevlin. Recycled wood, from the city’s water towers, clads the wall behind the front desk area (same with the 6th floor) and adds a rustic warmth to the otherwise clean, bright interior.
Much has been written about United States architects and developers finding opportunities in China’s building boom, which is seemingly on perpetual fast forward. American architects are building small and large in the East—from corporate offices’ design of tall towers, such as KPF’s Shanghai World Financial Center, to the exhibition of boutique firms at Ordos 100, the new community in Inner Mongolia featuring houses designed by 100 architects from 27 countries. Yet, as the U.S. economy recovers from the recent recession, the trend is becoming paralleled by a flow in the other direction. Cities across the U.S., which once saw mostly outbound traffic of architectural design and real estate investment, are now brokering a two-way exchange. Metropolises from New York to Detroit have seen growing real estate interest from individual Chinese buyers as well as large developers. In parallel, Chinese architectural design practices—especially young and innovative ones—are seeking commissions in the U.S. and opening local offices to pursue new work. A fast-growing economy in China and decades-old bi-national relationships in architecture and development are resulting in new types of partnerships in the building industry, rooted in two deeply linked economies.

In the beginning of 2015, two noteworthy buildings made headlines in Chicago, capturing the breadth of new exchanges with China in the city’s architectural scene. In November, design publications headlined Beijing-based MAD Architects’ unveiling of a scheme for the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art on the city’s lakefront. Founding principal Ma Yansong proposed—in his own words—a “futuristic” mountainous building in partnership with two Chicago offices. In April, stakeholders watched in a hotel ballroom as final plans were unveiled for the Wanda Vista: Three towers in Lakeshore East by Studio Gang, the highest of which, at 1,200 feet, will be the third tallest in the city. Behind the scenes, these towers are bankrolled at a cost of $1 billion by the Beijing-based developer Dalian Wanda Group. Set to break ground in 2016, according to Mayor Rahm Emanuel, these Chinese-funded buildings are estimated to add 2,000 construction jobs to the city.

Bi-national exchanges between...
China and the U.S. in Chicago’s built environment are also simmering at a smaller scale. According to the National Realtors Association, in 2014 Chinese buyers purchased $22 billion dollars of United States real estate, more than any other foreign group. Chinese buyers represented 24 percent of all foreign sales nationally, up from 19 percent the previous year. According to Sam Van Horebeek, a director at East-West Property Advisors, a company that connects Chinese buyers to U.S. realtors, his clients are buying real estate in the United States to diversify assets, as investments, or for immigration purposes such as supporting a child enrolled in an American university. Increasingly, cities like Chicago are becoming of more interest. “In the past, it was only New York, Boston, or San Francisco,” said Van Horebeek. “Now there is more interest in second tier or third tier cities. We expect that to continue. There’s a higher demand than ever before and it will accelerate.”

More broadly, Chicago’s new relationships with Chinese real estate investors and architects serve as a microcosm for broader currents of interest from China in the U.S. building industry. Wang Jianlin, chairman of the Dalian Wanda Group and one of China’s richest men, announced his attention to further his real estate investment in the U.S. beyond the Windy City. “Investing in Chicago property is just Wanda’s first move into the U.S. real estate market,” he said in a press release. “Within a year, Wanda will invest in more five-star hotel projects in major U.S. cities like New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.”

Other Chinese developers have entered the U.S. real estate market, often in partnership with local companies. In 2013, the Shanghai-based Greenland Group purchased a 70 percent stake in Brooklyn’s Atlantic Yards project from Forest City Ratner Companies and is functioning as an “active partner” involved in construction as well as financing. Across the East River in Manhattan, China Vanke, the nation’s largest real estate developer, is building a glassy 61-story condo building on Lexington Avenue. In Los Angeles, Greenland invested $1 billion in residential towers and a hotel, in part of the city’s push to reactivate the Broadway corridor. Even smaller cities, like Tacoma, Washington, are benefiting from Chinese investment: Shanghai Mintong Real Estate is constructing a two-tower hotel and condo complex in downtown. Financially strapped Detroit has also attracted real estate interests: This year, Donglu International purchased three iconic buildings in the city’s downtown.

The increased forays by large developers are in part due to the availability of EB-5 visas, which allow financiers to acquire green cards for investment purposes, drawing more Chinese capital to U.S. cities. Other reasons for the uptick include broader economic changes in China, characterized by a stronger yuan and a marked decrease in the nation’s own real estate market, which just dropped to a five-year low, according to the country’s National Bureau of Statistics. “At an annual Chinese real estate convention,” said Van Horebeek, “one [developer] told me that in a two- or three-day convention during which there were a lot presentations on different topics—when typically most would be about the Chinese property market—that year, one third were about America. So you have Chinese developers, major ones, discussing their plans for expansion overseas.”

As Chinese developers increasingly look to the U.S., the country’s architects are also looking to enter the market. Two decades ago, most Chinese architectural designers would have been headed for state-run architectural practices. Yet beginning in 1993 with Atelier FCJZ, the firm often billed as the nation’s first private architectural practice, Chinese architects are establishing independent firms with international reach. Yung Ho Chang, who founded Atelier FCJZ, is a former head of the architecture department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He built his career in U.S. academia before establishing his now prolific practice in Beijing. Today, many Chinese architects are trained abroad and establish offices in the U.S. with an international scope. “For this generation of Chinese architects, I think it’s very natural for them to practice in any place,” said Ma Yansong, the designer of the Lucas Museum. “This generation feels already that they are in the global scene.”

Recently, young mainland Chinese architecture firms have garnered international accolades and are maintaining U.S. offices, paving the way for more commissions abroad. Wang Shu of Amateur Architecture Studio won the Pritzker Prize in 2012, the first time the accolade was awarded to a Chinese citizen. The firm OPEN Architecture was founded in New York City in 2011 by Li Hu and Huang Wenjing, closely followed by a Beijing branch. While the office’s projects are mostly in China, OPEN Architecture’s increasingly international practice was recognized for its design of “Garden in the Garden,” which spoke to both mass production and traditional Chinese landscape, at last year’s Venice Biennale. Studio Link-Arc, selected to design the 2015 China Pavilion at the Milan Expo, was founded by Yichen Lu and also operates out of New York.

This model of young cutting-edge
practices with bi-national roots is characterized by SO-IL, a firm founded by Jing Liu, a Chinese-born architect, with Florian Idenburg, who is from the Netherlands. The firm’s project “Pole Dance” was constructed for the P.S.1 Young Architects Program in 2010 and the office has since gone on to design commercial and cultural projects in the U.S. and internationally.

Ma Yansong argues for the positive potential of Chinese developers with both civic and investment interests in the U.S., especially when paired with design architects whose agendas focus on context and revitalization. “I don’t work with many commercial developers in China,” said Ma, “but I think that the Greenland Group, in the U.S., has a good vision. Many large developers come for the market, for financial reasons, and of course Greenland has financial targets too, but they really want Greenland to be a local office [in the U.S.]. Those are the same reasons we come to the United States. We want to bring new ideas to the American city and we want to find people who share the same vision. That’s why we have the office in Los Angeles, to try to blend into the community and understand what is going on.”

On one hand, China’s growing role in the U.S. architecture and real estate scene can be chalked up to the globalized economy, in which the borders of nations have become less significant in light of multinational corporations and fluid trade. On the other hand, the architectural exchange between the two nations deserves closer inspection. In early 2014, the Chicago Tribune ran a series of articles titled, “Designed in Chicago, Made in China,” which profiled the work of Chicago architects working in the East. Yet underlying the lucrative commissions for U.S. architects working abroad are the architectural and real estate currents going in both directions between the two nations, emerging from the complexity of two deeply linked economies. As the architectural exchange between China and the U.S. increasingly flows both ways, critics and professionals will continue to navigate a new iteration of an old encounter that brings both fresh competition and new opportunities.
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Reported by Leslie Clagett
MUTO – the new manual sliding door system for increased creative scope in interior design. Whether for glass or wood doors, it offers a space-saving, elegant, and quiet solution. Convenience features include a self-closing option, a door position status indicator, and DORMOTION damping mechanism. Available in single or double (Synchro) panel configurations, MUTO is easy to install and designed to impress.

COMING SUMMER 2015. www.dorma.com

LIFETIME TV CASE STUDY, NEW YORK CITY
LIFETIME TV NETWORKS

ARCHITECT: HOK
ENGINEER: MSJ/PENNONI
CONTRACTOR: LEHR CONSTRUCTION

A survey of Lifetime Television’s programming—“Project Runway,” “Hoarders,” and “Devious Maids” are but a few of the network’s series—provides quick insight into the culture of the corporation, which is oriented to the flashy and the feminine. When HOK took on the job of transforming a 70,000-square-foot den of gloomy, high-paneled workstations into a vibrant interior for the media company, one of the specific directives it received was to make the office a fun and open environment.

The linchpin of the renovated space is a broad, sinuous central corridor that serves to organize the floor plan. The walls have been covered in Panelite’s Bonded Series of composite panels, which have been backlit by LED lights. HOK designed ten lighting programs for the system. (In what could be construed as a bit of subliminal branding, the colorful, glowing walls recall a television screen.)

The architects specified finished edges and split clear/satin faces for the panels to ensure maximum light diffusion. Between the panels, silicone joints create a seamless surface. The panels are highly resource efficient, consisting of approximately 70-to-85 percent air by volume. Weighing only 1.25 pounds per square foot, they can achieve greater spans than other sheet or panel materials, due to their honeycomb-core structure.

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WALL PANEL INSTALLER:
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Making Room

New interior door and wall systems encourage spatial efficiency and flexibility. By Leslie Clagett

Interior Walls

Beyond Frameless Glass Movable Wall
Allsteel

Glass panels arrive unitized with factory installed ceiling brackets and base channel for faster installation. An integrated leveling mechanism makes it quick and easy to level the walls. A privacy tile system that hangs directly on the glass panels is offered.

Raydoor

Offering an extensive selection of sliding wall and door systems—including sliding bypass, sliding wall, sliding pocket, and pivoting designs—this manufacturer specializes in creative solutions to spatial conditions in residential, hospitality, and commercial spaces.

Beyond Frameless Glass Moveable Wall
ClearConnect panel seams, double-walled Bonded Series panels provide a luminous, acoustic office partition system. Custom curved panels are available.

SST-II Bi-Fold System
Crown Incorporated

This door is hydraulically operated, eliminating the need for cables, straps, pulleys, and other bulky mechanicals, so the face panel remains clean and unobstructed. Panels are shipped with a red oxide primer allowing for field finishing; factory powder coating is offered. No floor track is required.

dorma.com

crowndoors.com

Bonded Series Panels
Panelite

With muted satin facings and nearly invisible ClearConnect panel seams, double-walled Bonded Series panels provide a luminous, acoustic office partition system. Custom curved panels are available.

Beyond Frameless Glass Moveable Wall

dirtt.net

Centur Mount Glass Wall
Dirtt

Not only are the design possibilities—side-lites, clerestories, transoms, and more—expansive, but the product sourcing for this butt joint wall system is customizable, too. The manufacturer can supply the glazing, and also offers the option of sourcing glass locally. The wall frames are assembled at the job site, and the glass panes are then slid into place.

dirtt.net

Frankford Panel System
Amuneal

Influenced by the mechanical age and the age of discovery, the Frankford Panel System draws inspiration from industrial and architectural artifacts. Informed by the manufacturer’s heritage in custom fabrication, this modular system can be fully customized in unusual, artisan-finished materials to create unique panel configurations.

allsteeloffice.com

raydoor.com

panelite.us

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Sliding, swinging, or pivoting, operable exterior walls blur the line between architecture and landscape. By Leslie Clagett

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sky-frame.ch

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ZOLA

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zolawindows.com

CERO SLIDING WINDOW
SOLARLUX

Concealed aluminum frames facilitate large openings while preserving architectural purity. Single glass panels can measure up to 19.5 feet tall and 13 feet wide. Available in manual and motorized versions, and for insulated and non-insulated glazing.
cero.de

ULTIMATE MULTI-SLIDE DOOR
MARVIN

Designed with narrow stiles and rails, this new door comes in a variety of configurations and large sizes with standard widths up to 50 feet wide and 12 feet tall, offering the ultimate in design flexibility and unbelievable, wide-open views.
marvin.com
**SL80/81 FOLDING SERIES**
**NANAWALL**

This aluminum-framed, thermally broken folding system allows for expansive glass walls and broad vistas when opened. The SL80 features a smooth rounded frame profile, compared to the angular profile of the SL81. Both are rated, certified, and labeled NFRC 100/200 and are Energy Star eligible. The system also excels at air and water resistance and offers superior sound insulation.

nanawall.com

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**W-4500 CLAD-WOOD FOLDING PATIO DOORS**
**JELD-WEN**

This door supplies plenty of design flexibility. It is available in a wide range of configurations and sizes, grille and glass treatments, and interior and exterior cladding options. Uses floor-supported hardware.

jeld-wen.com

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**MULTI SLIDE PANELS**
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A variety of sill options are offered, including a standard weather resistant sill, flush guide sill for smooth floor-to-floor transitions, and an ADA-compliant sill for both interior and exterior applications. Low-profile rolling hardware ensures smooth, quiet operation; stainless steel wheel options available for all doors and standard for larger systems. With both pocketing and non-pocketing applications, the multi-slide panels can stack flush against one another or slide into the wall, completely out of view.

lacantinadoors.com

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omniaindustries.com

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baldwinhardware.com

HANDWARE
Providing security and the all-important initial aesthetic impression, door handles are a key design detail.
By Leslie Clagett

CAYMAN LEVER
EMTEK
Adding a touch of color to a contemporary design, this set includes latch and strike plate. The inserts are available in seven colors.
emtek.com

SQUARE ONE
CONTEMPORARY PULL
Clean, simple, and modern, the industrial-grade aluminum pulls fit flush with the door surface when mounted. Available in six finishes.
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OPEN
OLIVARI
Open is the result of a design process that reduced the door handle to its primary functional components: the hub and the lever. Available in chrome, satin chrome, superinox satin, and superanthracite satin. Designed by OMA/Rem Koolhaas.
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rockymountainhardware.com

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hardwarerenaissance.com

WALLS
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DOOR INSTALLER: SUPERIOR DOOR & GATE SYSTEMS
In a perfect world, the construction of a municipal building would be highlighted by both form and function. Most times, because the budget is often determined by taxpayer dollars, the end result is to settle for function.

The Newmarket, Ontario, Municipal Operations Centre—which earned a LEED Silver rating—has achieved both goals. Designed by Rounthwaite, Dick & Hadley Architects & Engineers (RDH), it is an aesthetically pleasing, energy-efficient, and environmentally-friendly facility from the inside to the out, where the facade features 20 bi-fold lift-strap/auto-latch glass portals manufactured by Schweiss.

Research and design alone for this $20.2 million, 65,000-square-foot facility took about a year. Lead project architect Geoff Miller said, “We were looking for a door product that would have a number of functional aspects and be architecturally attractive as well.”

RDH worked closely with Schweiss to ensure the custom doors met the community’s aesthetic and energy goals. The bi-fold doors measure 19 feet wide by 21.3 feet high to accommodate storage, repair, and maintenance areas for trucks, snowplows, and other large equipment. The doors are clad entirely in a double-glazed curtain wall and installed flush with the primary building envelope. This allows for transparent and fully day-lit workspaces in the vehicle bays, while maintaining thermal continuity.

Ten doors on each side of the facility—all sporting super-graphic numbers for instant identification by visitors—allow for easy access and drive-through capabilities. They also provide passive ventilation and reduce the energy load. During the summer, the doors can be left open during the day to create a seamless indoor/outdoor workspace.

The doorframes are powder-coated to protect against the elements and prevent rust. They also include safety features such as warning lights and horns, a door base safety edge, and an emergency backup system.

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FUNCTIONAL HARDWARE

Hinges, rollers, and locksets are the unheralded—and often hidden—components of a door’s design. Here’s a sampling of what’s new in this hard-working, functional hardware. By Leslie Clagett

SMARTCODE 915
Kwikset

This keyless deadbolt avoids problem of “smudge” attacks associated with touchscreen locks, where passcodes can potentially be detected from the oily residues left by fingers on the glass surface. Users are prompted to touch two random numbers in order to display the full screen and then enter the programmed access code. Powered by four AA batteries.
kwikset.com

SLIDO DESIGN 80-M
Hafele

The Slido Design 80-M sliding door offers a subtle, sleek presence with concealed hardware so the door appears to float. Design 80-M is a wall-mounted system with the running gear integrated and concealed in the door leaf. On level hard floors, no bottom track is required, and an optional guide track is available for carpeted floors. Featuring a soft-closing mechanism, the hardware may be used with both wood and glass doors and can support up to 175 pounds.
hafele.com

HAWA-VARIOTEC 150
Hawa

This hardware system for stackable, all-glass sliding walls has flexible track routing, allowing straight and curved sections to be seamlessly joined together; radii range from 15 to 90 degrees. It can accommodate both sliding pivot and sliding swing doors. Panels up to 330 pounds can be loaded on the trolley.
hawa.com

RITE TOUCH DIGITAL LOCK FOR INTERIOR GLASS DOORS
ASSA ABLOY / ADAMS RITE

This digital glass door lock requires no holes or other modifications to the door, making installation quick and easy. The lock offers flexible access control with single or double glass door compatibility and dual credential access control via card reader or personal PIN code. Includes a fire detection sensor, break-in alarm, and an optional automatic locking feature.
assaabloy.com
adamsrite.com

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renson.us

INTELLIGENT ACCESS

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Offering a change in palette from stainless steel and handwrought iron, this barn door hardware is offered in seven bright colors. Available with flat-tracks from four to 18 feet in length for a variety of door thicknesses.
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COMING SUMMER 2015. www.dorma.com

LIFETIME TV CASE STUDY, NEW YORK CITY
LIFETIME TV NETWORKS

ARCHITECT: HOK
ENGINEER: MSJ/PENNONI
CONTRACTOR: LEHR CONSTRUCTION

A survey of Lifetime Television’s programming—“Project Runway,” “Hoarders,” and “Devious Maids” are but a few of the network’s series—provides quick insight into the culture of the corporation, which is oriented to the flashy and the feminine. When HOK took on the job of transforming a 70,000-square-foot den of gloomy, high-paneled workstations into a vibrant interior for the media company, one of the specific directives it received was to make the office a fun and open environment.

The linchpin of the renovated space is a broad, sinuous central corridor that serves to organize the floor plan. The walls have been covered in Panelite’s

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PANEL INSTALLER: LEHR CONSTRUCTION

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INTERIOR WALLS

New interior door and wall systems encourage spatial efficiency and flexibility. By Leslie Clagett

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CROWN INCORPORATED

This door is hydraulically operated, eliminating the need for cables, straps, pulleys, and other bulky mechanicals, so the face panel remains clean and unobstructed. Panels are shipped with a red-oxide primer allowing for field finishing; factory powder coating is offered. No floor track is required.

crowndoors.com

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panelite.us

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DORMA

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dorma.com

CENTER MOUNT GLASS WALL
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dirtt.net

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INTERIOR WALLS

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Sliding, swinging, or pivoting, operable exterior walls blur the line between architecture and landscape. By Leslie Clagett

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vitrocsausa.com

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sky-frame.ch

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marvin.com

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zolawindows.com

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cero.de
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WALLS

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nanawall.com

MINIMAL FRAME WINDOW
PANORAMA

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jeld-wen.com

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lacantinadoors.com

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Open is the result of a design process that reduced the door handle to its primary functional components: the hub and the lever. Available in chrome, satin chrome, superinox satin, and superanthracite satin. Designed by OMA/Rem Koolhaas.

Clean, simple, and modern, the industrial-grade aluminum pulls fit flush with the door surface when mounted. Available in six finishes.

Adding a touch of color to a contemporary design, this set includes latch and strike plate. The inserts are available in seven colors.

Hand-cast in CuVerro, a bactericidal copper from Olin Brass, this hardware collection is particularly suitable for healthcare and wellness institutions. The material is registered with the EPA to kill 99.9 percent of infectious bacteria within two hours, its properties never washing out or wearing away. CuVerro is highly sustainable, produced from 95 percent post-consumer materials, and is 100 percent recyclable. Designed by HOK Product Design.

Semi-precious stone inlays add visual interest to this sand-cast, solid bronze hardware for entry doors. Offered in 15 hand-applied finishes.

While streamlined at first glance, this hardware features unexpected details upon further inspection. A squared-off lever, inconspicuously curved on the reverse, is a perfect companion to a square rose that has been added to the line. The wedge-shaped lever features subtly rounded edges. Reminiscent of a puck, a circular knob is punctuated by a long shaft. Coordinated auxiliary deadbolt designs are also available.

Offering design flexibility and longevity with a patented limited lifetime finish warranty, this pocket door lock is available in four collections and 18 finishes.

Verdura Rocky Mountain

Scottdale Royale Hardware Renaissance

Prodigy Collection Omnia

Pocket Door Lock Baldwin

Hardware

Providing security and the all-important initial aesthetic impression, door handles are a key design detail. By Leslie Clagett
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In a perfect world, the construction of a municipal building would be highlighted by both form and function. Most times, because the budget is often determined by taxpayer dollars, the end result is to settle for function.

The Newmarket, Ontario, Municipal Operations Centre—which earned a LEED Silver rating—has achieved both goals. Designed by Rounthwaite, Dick & Hadley Architects & Engineers (RDH), it is an aesthetically pleasing, energy-efficient, and environmentally-friendly facility from the inside to the out, where the facade features 20 bi-fold liftstrap/auto-latch glass portals manufactured by Schweiss.

Research and design alone for this $20.2 million, 65,000-square-foot facility took about a year. Lead project architect Geoff Miller said, “We were looking for a door product that would have a number of functional aspects and be architecturally attractive as well.”

RDH worked closely with Schweiss to ensure the custom doors met the community’s aesthetic and energy goals. The bi-fold doors measure 19 feet wide by 21.3 feet high to accommodate storage, repair, and maintenance areas for trucks, snowplows, and other large equipment. The doors are clad entirely in a double-glazed curtain wall and installed flush with the primary building envelope. This allows for transparent and fully day-lighted workspaces in the vehicle bays, while maintaining thermal continuity.

Ten doors on each side of the facility—all sporting super-graphic numbers for instant identification by visitors—allow for easy access and drive-through capabilities. They also provide passive ventilation and reduce the energy load. During the summer, the doors can be left open during the day to create a seamless indoor/outdoor workspace.

The doorframes are powder-coated to protect against the elements and prevent rust. They also include safety features such as warning lights and horns, a door base safety edge, and an emergency backup system.

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Download the new STC Sound Experience App to hear the difference only Modernfold products can make in your space.
Hinges, rollers, and locksets are the unheralded—and often hidden—components of a door’s design. Here’s a sampling of what’s new in this hard-working, functional hardware. By Leslie Clagett

**SPECTRUM COLOR BARN DOOR HARDWARE**

**REAL SLIDING HARDWARE**

Offering a change in palette from stainless steel and hand-wrought iron, this barn door hardware is offered in seven bright colors. Available with flat-tracks from four to 18 feet in length for a variety of door thicknesses.

realslidinghardware.com

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This line of invisible hinges promotes a concealed aesthetic while enabling a 180-degree door opening. It features a closed position that completely aligns with the surrounding interior wall. Available for both left- and right-sided doors, the fully adjustable hinges are easily installed, fire-rated, and UL-listed.

renson.us

**SLIDO DESIGN 80-M**

Hafele

The Slido Design 80-M sliding door offers a subtle, sleek presence with concealed hardware so the door appears to float. Design 80-M is a wall-mounted system with the running gear integrated and concealed in the door leaf. On level hard floors, no bottom track is required, and an optional guide track is available for carpeted floors. Featuring a soft-closing mechanism, the hardware may be used with both wood and glass doors and can support up to 175 pounds.

hafele.com

**HAWA-VARIOTEC 150**

Hawa

This hardware system for stackable, all-glass sliding walls has flexible track routing, allowing straight and curved sections to be seamlessly joined together; radii range from 15 to 90 degrees. It can accommodate both sliding pivot and sliding swing doors. Panels up to 330 pounds can be loaded on the trolley.

hawa.com

**RITE TOUCH DIGITAL LOCK FOR INTERIOR GLASS DOORS**

Assa Abloy / Adams Rite

This digital glass door lock requires no holes or other modifications to the door, making installation quick and easy. The lock offers flexible access control with single or double glass door compatibility and dual credential access control via card reader or personal PIN code. Includes a fire detection sensor, break-in alarm, and an optional automatic locking feature.

assaabloy.com
adamsrite.com

**SMARCODE 915**

Kwikset

This keyless deadbolt avoids problem of “smudge” attacks associated with touchscreen locks, where passcodes can potentially be detected from the oily residues left by fingers on the glass surface. Users are prompted to touch two random numbers in order to display the full screen and then enter the programmed access code. Powered by four AA batteries.

kwikset.com

**ASSA ABLOY / ADAMS RITE**

This digital glass door lock requires no holes or other modifications to the door, making installation quick and easy. The lock offers flexible access control with single or double glass door compatibility and dual credential access control via card reader or personal PIN code. Includes a fire detection sensor, break-in alarm, and an optional automatic locking feature.

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Performance venues have constantly morphed with the times, from the amphitheaters of old to the digitally enabled entertainment centers of today. During the 18th and 19th centuries, theaters presented a special challenge to architects because of the demand to reconcile excellent acoustics with a design emblematic of a city’s cultural patrimony. Expected to be at once modern and a showcase of traditional arts and culture, theaters of the day demanded a particular brand of architectural prowess. This exhibition at the National Gallery of Art recounts the comedy and drama of this important era in theater architecture and set design as told through the collection of nearly two-dozen rare books.
VOICES ON SPACES FOR TORTURE AND KILLING

In connection with our recent “Voices of Architecture” feature [IAN 05, 04.01.2015], in which we asked architects to answer 11 questions about contemporary practice, we also conducted a survey of architecture critics. The resulting “Voices of Architectural Criticism” ran on archpaper.com and featured five provocative questions about the state of architecture with answers from Eva Franck I Gilabert, Chip Lord, James S. Russell, and Sanford Kwinter.

One question asked: “Do you support the death penalty? And if so, what is the role of architecture in execution, torture, and confinement?”

Eva Franck I Gilabert
There are ethical questions intrinsic to architecture and architectural practice and this one is not one of them. If we truly care about effectively changing the world and not just washing our hands and consciousness with rhetoric, we need to bring architects into the discussion table not away from it. The truth is that prisons, torture chambers, and execution rooms will be built with or without architects. As architects we can design the politics of space to a certain degree, but there are limits that if we need to recognize otherwise the act in itself will devalue our role within the construction of society and participation in the collective debate. If petitions prove to be effective, I would encourage the ADPSR to continue with hotels and sexual exploitation, office design, and labor practices, factories, and so on. As the petition is not an end in itself but an instrument to open the conversation to a broader public about the ethics behind incarceration, torture, or violence within our self-proclaimed democratic systems, then we should try to find the respect and-design limits to which architecture can influence this debate.

Chip Lord
I am convinced by the ADPSR response and endorse bringing this issue to the AIA for debate and discussion.

James Russell
I suggested AIA had an obligation to convene key stakeholders in discussing the architect’s role in execution, torture, confinement (like Guantanamo) and labor rights that violate international human-rights norms. I don’t think AIA must take a position on capital punishment, but that is probably some of the source of the organization’s squeamishness. However, if execution is a reality, a thorough examination of conditions under which it is done would not only identify tactics and conditions that are unquestionably cruel, but help the public understand what is at stake.

Another reason to look at techniques is to see the degree to which architects would even need to be involved. In most cases specialist contractors and engineers could draw up plans for execution chambers without the use of architects at all. That’s not to expiate, but to point out the limits to which architecture can influence this debate.

Prison design is an issue in which architects are more directly involved. Again, AIA can be helpful in convening expertise so that cruel tactics and design elements that are used in the way—say, with torture or confinement—are used, for example. Are there aspects of design that tend to increase/decrease violence against the prisoners or guards (like Rikers Island)? Obviously these issues are not only about architecture, but design may be part of a broader migration strategy and architects—with or without AIA—can advocate for positive change, both doing good and reinforcing the reputation of architecture as a socially useful, helping profession.

Sanford Kwinter
The craven look that all too often marks the architecture critic and which no amount of bombast ever obscures is the ugly certainty that, given the opportunity, he/she shall opt in—like a destiny—to the great shrill that has molded the profession’s ethos from time immemorial: to wit, the knowledge that the spoils of the “commission” shall finesse and defeat all the burdens of principle, and will dodge the inconvenience, dilemmas, and shaping forces of our time.

Even in our own minuscule sample here, the appeal to the vulgar doctrine of “intrinsics” reveals the profession’s familiar libertarian abdication of its, or any, social contract, which is namely to reap the advantages of community by agreeing to respect and defend the rights of others. Interesting, yet not surprising, is the generational spread across which the same disavowal of onus was expressed in these pages last month. The positions declared were no more malignant or self-serving than they have been at any other time, although they bear today the perverseness of party and mass as the governments—"the conversation.”

1 Climate change deniers and creationists accuse scientists of intellectual arrogance precisely for losing "the conversation."  #1 In 30 Americans is being held in correctional control.
THIRD AGE
Young-Old, Urban Utopias of an Aging Society
By Deane Simpson
Lisa Müller Publishers, $50

Next year the oldest members of the post-World War II Baby Boomer generation turn 70. With the youngest in their early 50s, the Boomers now encompass what is referred to as the "Fourth Age" or "Old Old-Age," which coincides with retirement and the personal fulfillment that comes when the places catering to the Young-Old exhibit tendencies that deserve explication and critique.

Simpson, who began the research in 2005 with his doctoral dissertation at ETH Zürich, focuses on four places in the book: The Villages, an age-segregated retirement community in central Florida that is home to over 100,000 residents over 55, making it the largest of its kind in the world; the "Urbanizaciones" of the Costa del Sol, a naturally occurring retirement community (NORC) of at least a quarter-million foreign residents (mainly from the UK) along Spain’s Mediterranean coast; the relatively tiny Huis Ten Bosch of Kyushu, Japan, a cultural theme park that faithfully recalls a Dutch townscape—canals and all—and is home to about 500 retirees; and the 2-million-strong senior recreational vehicle (RV) community of the United States.

The four “case study probes,” as Simpson calls them, follow shorter investigations of three mid-20th-century developments for the then burgeoning Young-Old: Youngstown and Sun City, Arizona, and Laguna Woods Village, California. Given the historical backgrounds these planned communities afford, and the sheer size and rapid growth of The Villages since its founding in 1989, The Villages is explored the most. A one-hour drive north of Orlando, it is also the community that my parents moved to from Chicago after they retired, lending me some firsthand experience of the place and piquing my interest in Simpson’s thoroughly researched and sharply illustrated book.

Like Sun City a few decades before it, The Villages attempts to reconcile two opposed conditions: the low-scale fabric of small-town or suburban America and the density of amenities found in urban centers. The former takes the form of gated residential “villages” (70 and counting with names like Village of Silver Lake and Village of Hunningway) that are interspersed among nearly 50 golf courses, while the latter is found in three “town squares” that roughly follow New Urbanist principles with shops and restaurants fronting pedestrian-oriented streets and central squares for musical performances and other events nightly.

Golf courses are a common feature of retirement communities, but The Villages goes one step further by making connections between the residential and commercial realms through a golf cart infrastructure that prioritizes this alternative mode of transportation over cars and gives the development one of its most distinctive traits. The Villages are slave to CC&Rs (covenants, conditions, and restrictions), giving the enclaves a homogenous “greigeness” that is lifted briefly during the holidays when lawn decorations can be displayed; the three town squares, on the other hand, borrow heavily from Disney’s Main Street USA in their incorporation of distinct thematic identities (a Spanish settlement, a beachside resort, a cowboy/cattle town) that are expressed in the facades and “scenic aging” of the architecture but also plaques that tell stories of the Spanish settlement’s “fountain of youth” and other fake histories.

Simpson analyzes the four contemporary case studies through observations, interviews and research, accompanied by maps and some impressive data visualizations. But he goes much further than their physical characteristics, delving into the health and psychological benefits of the theme park–like designs of The Villages, Costa del Sol, and Huis Ten Bosch, for example, as well as the legal and political frameworks that make The Villages, in particular, so troubling as a model for retirement communities in the United States.

Will Baby Boomers, the generation of anti-war protests and social experimentation in the 1960s, be satisfied with the CDD (community development district) laws that exclude residents from democratic decision-making in The Villages but give the developer more power and profits? The Villages’ boom is predicated on expectations of Third-Age leisure and a massive retirement industry, but the environmentally unsustainable means of laying out sprawling and (golf-)car-centric residential enclaves on greenfield sites is another indication that it is hardly the ideal form for Young-Old urbanism. Simpson does not offer alternatives outside of the four probes, but he is able to show how the decisions and desires of an aging population have shaped private developments catered to them, thereby providing ammunition for the design of future alternatives.

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I bring up Rikers and LaGuardia because they are within 200 feet of each other, but otherwise a world apart. The abuses at Rikers show New York at its worst, but an expanded LaGuardia could be the world’s leading airport.

LaGuardia is the smallest of the tri-state area’s three airports and very difficult to get to via mass transit. Its short runways cause safety problems and frequent delays and limit its destinations, and it is in a flood zone. These problems can be solved by expanding the airport onto Rikers Island and adding a new terminal across the East River in Port Morris, the Bronx. By adding this infrastructure and increasing airport capacity, we would gain a significant opportunity to expand New York City’s economy beyond Manhattan.

The Rikers Island Jail complex is the world’s largest penal colony, housing between 12,000 to 15,000 prisoners. While other cities closed their jail-islands decades ago, New York has doubled down. Ten of the city’s 15 jails are now on Rikers. Eighty-five-to-92 percent of the inmates are awaiting trial, but cannot afford bail. Mayor Bill de Blasio is trying to reduce the Rikers population and has described the culture there as part of the problem. However, any jail on an island will be toxic.

The best way to fix it is to close it. A Swedish architect asked, “If the guards could go out to lunch, how would that change the culture?” If the new facilities were smaller, decentralized, and easily accessible by subway, more could be done to engage the families and the community. And by doing so, recidivism would be reduced.

The closing of Rikers would allow LaGuardia to expand its flight capacity and add long haul flights to global destinations to meet a growing regional demand.

In 2011, the Regional Plan Association estimated that in order to keep pace with future growth projections, New York City needs 78 more flights per hour during peak times. This plan creates the additional capacity.

But for LaGuardia to be a modern airport, it must also have strong subway and regional rail connectivity. All over the world, short haul traffic is being redirected to high-speed rail. For example, France’s TGV has decimated the domestic air market. China and Japan are even more ambitious.

Many passengers already choose Amtrak’s Boston and Washington service over air travel. But much more can be done.

The Northeast Corridor runs through Port Morris, the Bronx. This neighborhood is across the East River from Rikers Island and the airport. LaGuardia’s proximity to this rail line makes it the most attractive of the three airports for expansion. By creating a terminal at Port Morris, we’re able to connect every New Jersey Transit, Metro-North, and Amtrak line in the region. A Second Avenue Subway extension and a new branch of the A train would provide additional connectivity. Passengers arriving at this station would check in, drop off their bags, travel by AirTrain under the East River to concourses on Rikers.

This would mean a single-seat ride to LaGuardia for millions and provide the foundation for moving many more short haul flights to the rails. This can be done cost-effectively by bringing Penn Station’s problems into the equation. Penn Station is overcrowded and has no capacity for much needed additional trains. This is in part due to the inefficient manner in which the station is used. For example, even at rush hour, New Jersey Transit and Amtrak trains often sit on platforms for 20 minutes before continuing to Sunnyside Yard. This is necessary because the station is being used as a terminal. Conductors must check to make sure everyone is off the train and Amtrak trains must be cleaned and have their cafe cars restocked. We solve this problem by making the last stop on these trains the new Bronx-LaGuardia rail station. This would greatly improve the efficiency of Penn Station and save money by removing the need for the proposed Penn Station South.

This increased capacity at Penn Station makes it possible to host Metro-North’s Harlem, Hudson, and New Haven trains. To do this, we re-use an abandoned rail line and build a short tunnel to connect the Harlem and Hudson lines to the Northeast Corridor. This would give millions of Metro-North customers a single-seat ride to LaGuardia and Penn Station.

This new Metro-North connection would bring every rail line in the region through Sunnyside, Queens, making it an ideal place for a station. At Sunnyside Yard, we are proposing a new major transportation center that would include a 20-track rail station, a light rail and bus station, and connections to seven existing subway lines (E/M/R/7/N/Q/G).

Jim Venturi’s ReThinkNYC plan calls for the closure of Rikers Island and the expansion of LaGuardia Airport, as well as the unification of the regional transit systems (E/M/R/7/N/Q/G).

To accommodate growth, we propose rezoning much of the area around the station to accommodate greater density, which would provide millions of square feet of rail-connected office space and plenty of housing. We would convert the rest of the Sunnyside Yard site to a 300-acre park, which would include restaurants, green space, and cultural facilities.

The combination of this new transportation complex, which would be a single-seat ride away from every commuter station in the region, and the park, would provide a foundation for tremendous growth in Queens.

In the Bronx, adjoining the LaGuardia Airport Rail Station, we propose a 3.8 million-square-foot convention center (replacing Javits), hotel, restaurant, and shopping mall complex. This new infrastructure would offer pedestrian connections to the adjacent neighborhoods.

New York City was unified in 1898, but more than a century later many still think of New York as Manhattan. We can no longer afford this mindset. If we are to compete with other global cities, such as London or Shanghai, we cannot do it with one hand tied behind our back. In order to meet this challenge, we need to be unified as a city and a region—socially, infrastructurally, and economically. We are calling our plan ReThinkNYC.
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