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PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS
POLITICAL FIREFIGHT OVER
LA'S INDUSTRIAL LAND

LOFTY AMBITIONS

The ongoing clash over LA's controversial Industrial Land Use Policy has seen its most contentious firefight erupt over the AMP Lofts, a planned \$40 million mixed-use development at Sixth Street and Santa Fe Avenue, in the Arts District near the west bank of the LA River.

The 182-unit project, which would include 5,000 square feet of retail space and a half-acre of open space, would rise on the site of a building owned by truck parts supplier American Moving Parts (AMP). Designed by Santa Monica-based

[continued on page 3](#)

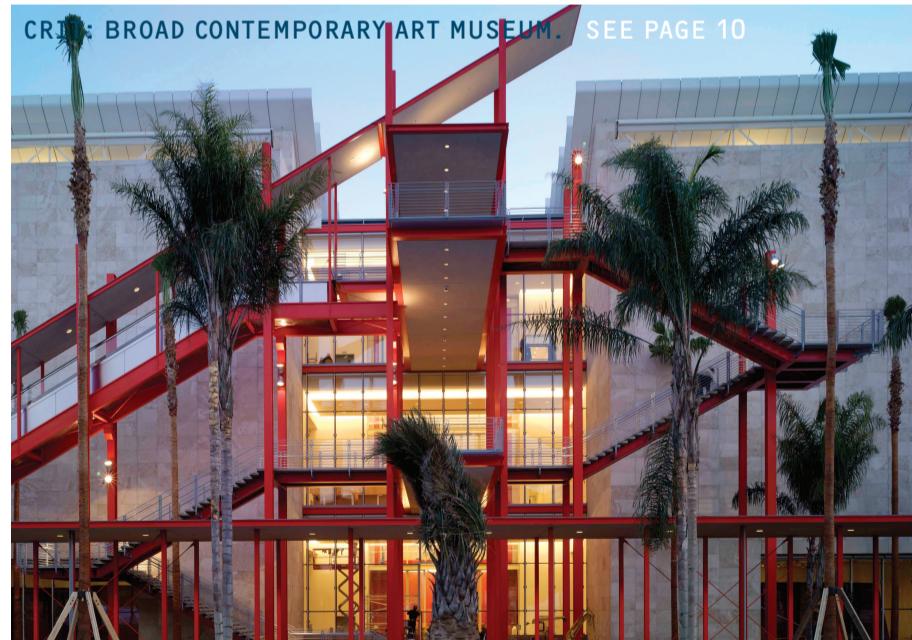
UNCERTAINTY LOOMS AS
LA PROJECTS STALL OR FAIL

DOWNTOWN DOWNTURN?

A fickle economy, rising construction costs, and skittish buyers are just a few of the factors that have slowed the frenzied development in downtown Los Angeles to a crawl. But as two of the area's largest planned projects—Frank Gehry and the Related Companies' \$3 billion Grand Avenue Project and the \$1 billion Park Fifth condo towers—failed to break ground as expected during the last few months, and as several smaller projects went under, hushed conversations between architects, developers, and real estate agents persist in the shadows of half-finished skyscrapers: Is downtown's rally over?

"I have the feeling that this is not a good time to be building skyscrapers, in LA or anywhere," said Peter Slatin of the real estate website TheSlatinReport.com (and *AN* contributor). "It's risky to start building into a market that's starting to decline without knowing how long the decline will last." According to the National Association of Realtors, U.S. condo sales were down by about 11 percent in 2007, while residential construction dropped by almost 17 percent. [continued on page 5](#)

CRC: BROAD CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM. SEE PAGE 10



COURTESY ATELIER JEAN NOUVEL

VERT ET VERTICAL

Irvine-based developer SunCal has unveiled plans for a 45-story luxury tower designed by French architect Jean Nouvel for Los Angeles' Century City.

Nouvel referred to the \$400 million tower at 10000 Santa Monica Boulevard as the "green blade." And for good reason: the "blade," which is expected to be submitted for entitlements next week, will have an extremely thin 50-foot depth with north and south glazing for all of its 177 units. Each unit will also be wrapped outside with plants resting on projecting podiums, giving the building an organic aesthetic and lending to living spaces a combination of light, calm, and privacy, rare attributes for this type of building.

"This is the idea of the green city," explained Nouvel, who noted that the building will reflect LA's context of "beautiful homes surrounded by greenness." "Nouvel says his firm is investigating two types of irrigation systems for plants: a hydroponic, soil-less [continued on page 10](#)

INTRODUCING A NEW
THEMED SUPPLEMENT:
HARDWARE

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COURTESY SOM

NEXT BIG THING

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) is designing San Francisco's largest new development, the 393-acre Treasure Island. As if that weren't enough, the firm's San Francisco office is now also working on a blockbuster on the other side of the city: a transformation [continued on page 7](#)

SCHEMES PROPOSED FOR SF'S JAPAN CENTER



COURTESY EDAW SAN FRANCISCO

OF TORII AND ROJI

San Francisco's Japan Center, the retail centerpiece of a controversial downtown redevelopment project that leveled most of Japantown nearly 50 years ago, is now

the subject of its own new development plans presented at a public meeting on February 12. EDAW's San Francisco office and Colorado-based retail archi-

tect Studio Taku Shimizu recently unveiled preliminary plans for a mixed-use center that reintroduces housing to these historically residential blocks. [continued on page 8](#)



Daedalus

Pendant designed by Audi Design Center California

A 5'-long pendant with a 17"-wide glass-and-aluminum helical sculpture suspended by aircraft cable from a 22"-wide disk. The sculpture is illuminated by eight MR11 low-voltage halogen lamps.



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LETTERS

"Green Detectives" (CAN 06_12.12.2007) misinformed your readers about PVC. The U.S. Green Building Council's Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee spent several years studying the life-cycle health and environmental impacts of PVC. The review showed that PVC products generally have no greater impact than the competition—

and in some cases have less impact. Whatever connection The Earth Institute reportedly "recognized" between PVC, dioxin, and cancer has not been persuasive to leading health and environmental authorities. PVC continues to be used.

It is too bad the article relied so extensively on pressure groups like Greenpeace and the

Healthy Building Network. We doubt many architects will want to follow suit and rely on products recommended by these extremists for their projects.

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EDITOR

Putting together our first annual California favorite sources list, an impressive lineup of your preferred contractors, engineers, consultants, material providers, and more (see pgs. 15-18), we've been blown away by the power of your voice. And it's in that spirit that we'd like to make this newspaper more interactive. To start, we'd like to ask you about the most pressing concerns, and possible solutions, for architects in California. We'll try to print your responses in the next few issues, and look to include stories about many of your ideas in the future as well.

For instance, most architects I know are concerned about a likely economic downturn. Has that already affected your firm? Is there any less work—or do you plan out to accommodate the cyclical nature of building? In the short term, how are you going to handle it? We are wondering of strategies for older firms who've been through it all differ significantly from younger firms. In other words, do layoffs work? Is now the ideal time to focus on new income brackets or project types?

As we head into a down cycle, the question inevitably rises about the usefulness of government intervention. This could mean tax deductions, health care bonuses, or more efficient or comprehensive job/commission listings. It appears that the downturn is hitting architects in developing areas like the Inland Empire and Sacramento region more than established markets like Los Angeles and San Francisco. Is this what you are seeing, too?

Regardless of the economic climate, it's clear that salary is an issue for most architects. Private businesses guard their salary scales and depend on open-market competition to set the bar. But what about an architect's union?

I've also heard architects mention that the day-to-day aspects of working here can be frustrating. Building permitting and approvals throughout the state take too long, and many building departments have yet to upgrade to computerized systems. I've also been told that overcautious planning departments often make it too difficult to pass ambitious designs. Do you have any good examples? Have you heard of improvements? It might also be good to hear more about your experiences with clients. What are the biggest problems you face with them? Payments? Creative control? Do developers have too much say in California?

Aside from practice-related concerns, we'd also like to hear your thoughts about other local issues like sustainability, sprawl, density, transportation, preservation, competitions, architectural education, and regional planning. California is known as a progressive state, but it's become clear to me that on some of these topics—particularly transportation, sprawl, and regional planning, are far behind the curve.

So that's a kitchen-sink load of topics and, naturally, you will consider some red-hot issues, while others leave you cold. Let us know what matters most to you.

Please email all responses to editorCA@archpaper.com. Once we've identified your issues, and your suggestions, we'll get our reporters out there to investigate. The more dialogue we get going, the more possibilities we'll come up with, so please contribute.



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LOFTY AMBITIONS continued from front page
Koning Eizenberg Architecture, the lofts have been the focus of a tug of war between the LA city council and supporters of residential development in industrial areas on one side, and the Planning Department and Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) on the other.

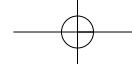
AMP submitted its proposal to develop the property, sandwiched between industrial warehouses, in 2005, receiving initial support from the Planning Department, the CRA, and several neighborhood groups. All praised the project's green design, which would utilize renewable materials and include storm water retention systems. Fifteen percent of the units would be set aside for low to moderate-income families.

But not long after the AMP proposal was submitted, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa directed the Planning Department and CRA to jointly evaluate preservation of the city's industrial land, effectively halting AMP's approval. Nearly two years in the making, the agencies released their "Industrial Land Use Policy Project" (ILUP) memorandum on January 3. It divides industrial-zoned land in the city into four categories. The largest of the four (where AMP falls), comprising about 80 percent of the city's industrial land, are designated as Employment Protection Districts, and would retain exclusively industrial uses.

Among the concerns voiced by planning director Gail Goldberg and CRA general manager Cecilia Estolano is that once industrially zoned land is converted, it cannot be reclaimed. They assert that the loss will prevent job growth in developing sectors. This is of particular concern to the CRA, given that Los Angeles has lost 57,000 jobs in the last 25 years, they said. Supporters of the ILUP report also claim it reinforces the city's General Plan and existing Community Plans. Skeptics contend that the report represents new policy that stifles residential growth downtown.

On January 8, despite the ILUP recommendations, and despite an April 2007 rejection of the AMP plan by the City Zoning Administration, City Councilman José Huizar received unanimous backing from the City Council to assert jurisdiction over the project. On January 18, the City Council allowed the project to move forward. Councilman Huizar said of the victory, "I believe this project will be a model for the future development of downtown, because it will help us continue to build a community in an area which is already largely converted to residential and mixed-uses."

The lengthy battle also highlights the struggle between parcel-by-parcel development, which enables officials to make flexible land-use policy in their districts, and the Planning Department's goal of a consistent strategy. Councilman Huizar's deputy chief of staff, Peter Hidalgo, said that as a result of Huizar's victory, the Planning Department is reconsidering the boundaries of the ILUP's Employment Protection Districts: "They've seen the handwriting on the wall." **MIKE SCHULTE**



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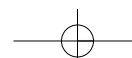
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EAVESDROP: ALISSA WALKER

FED UP IN FEBRUARY

As LA's Grand Avenue Watch reaches fever pitch, **Frank Gehry** called out developer Related for the project's mysterious disappearing groundbreaking date. As reported by Blogdowntown, Gehry was naming names: "Money is not available and the developer is in denial." Looks like he's finally reached breaking point: With his scheme completed, Gehry's said to have walked away as lead architect, deferring to the team at **HKS Architects**. Across town, **Renzo Piano** played nice with philanthropist **Eli Broad** and LACMA director **Michael Govan** at the opening of the Broad Contemporary Museum of Art. But things aren't going so swimmingly at his California Academy of Sciences project in San Francisco. Sources say **Hodgetts + Fung**, who were commissioned to design exhibitions, bolted because Piano bossed them around. He probably wanted everything in Renzo Red.

YOU WIN SOM, YOU LOSE SOM

Lose one Transbay Terminal competition and the whole world falls apart, huh? Word on the street is that **Skidmore Owings & Merrill's** San Francisco office is positioning itself for sale. The signs are obvious: The equity partners have declined to name new partners, and they've "downgraded" all non-equity partners to "directors." Firm principal **Craig Hartman** denies sale rumors and says the changes make the firm "less hierarchical" and give emerging talent more voice. But we hear the holiday party was boycotted by "directors" miffed about exclusion from the inner circle. They say it's all about the cash: The partners don't want to share their buyout payoffs. "It's typical of this generation of partners to feather their own nest at the expense of the firm," a source says. But can you blame them? They're following the lead of Lord **Norman Foster** who last year sold a minority share in his firm to private equity firm 3i. Worked great for him.

WON'T YOU BP MY NEIGHBOR

On February 11 the eco-aspirational gas company BP unveiled **Will Ferrell** as the latest to participate in its Solar Neighbors program, joining a lineup of hotties like **Edward Norton**, **Owen Wilson**, and **Don Cheadle**. The program brings solar energy to low-income neighborhoods by matching solar purchases that celebrities make for their own homes. Ferrell's donation benefits the multi-unit St. George housing project on LA's Skid Row, where residents are already said to be saving hundreds on their monthly utility bills. Perhaps this will balance out Ferrell's environmentally blasphemous "Green Team" parody he made for his website Funny or Die. Highlights included this advice from Ferrell: "A compost bin is a great place to store a baby when you're finished with him." We admit it, we laughed. Hard.

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DOWNTOWN DOWNTURN? continued from front page

According to most projections the numbers aren't expected to improve this year.

Although materials prepared last year for Grand Avenue (which would include 19- and 48-story towers and a 16-acre park) indicated that Phase I of the scheme was scheduled to begin construction last October, that date has now been pushed to this summer. Karen Diehl, a representative from Related, said that updates are being made to the design documents and, despite reports to the contrary, groundbreaking was never set to happen. "We've never set a groundbreaking date and at present it is expected sometime this summer," she said. According to Diehl, an existing parking structure on the site needs to be stripped of its lead paint first, then will be demolished in "the next few months" so construction can begin. Meanwhile, reports that Related had not yet secured a construction loan spurred rumors that the mixed-use project was short on financing.

Groundbreaking for the 76- and 41-story towers of Park Fifth, once scheduled for the first quarter of 2008, has been pushed back to the third quarter. After reported staffing and investor shakeups, spokesperson Stephanie Holbrook now blames bureaucracy. "Park Fifth does not expect to have final entitlements for the project until the end of May," she said. "Until these formalities are finalized, one would not start construction of a major project." While the project was also rumored to have major financing issues, Holbrook said that financing is in place to

move forward.

"Park Fifth was never a brilliantly-conceived project to begin with," Slatin said of what he thought was the building's inability to relate to its surrounding neighborhood near Pershing Square. But for Grand Avenue, he thinks the perceived inability to sell its 390 residential units is mostly due to Gehry himself. "They wholeheartedly bought into the idea that good architecture is added value but went with an architect who is not always the greatest fit for residential design," said Slatin. "You have to find a lot of people who are willing to take that perceived risk for an apartment that's kind of quirky."

And a slew of projects on the way have endured similar delays or changes. The Parkside Tower, a 35-story mixed-use property downtown, has declared it has "no financing to move forward." The Mill Street Lofts by Linear City—developer of the successful Toy Factory and Biscuit Company Lofts—is delayed until at least the fall. The Old Union Bank Building and the Blossom Plaza in China Plaza both recently switched from condos to rentals. Last May, the New York hotelier Gansevoort yanked its plans for "Gansevoort West," leaving its developer, Chetrit Group, without a hotel partner.

"The capital and credit markets are extremely challenging right now," said Jim Atkins, a principal with The South Group, a Portland-based developer that has three residential projects in downtown LA: Elleven, Luma, Evo (still under construction), and South Figueroa (now on hold). "That's brought investment in new condo projects to a halt. You don't have **continued on page 7**

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Architect: Stephen F. Jones



WELDON BREWSTER

Architect Stephen F. Jones first worked with entertainment mogul-turned-restaurateur Michael Ovitz when he designed Spago, where CAA founder Ovitz was an investor. For Ovitz's newest endeavor, Jones was tapped to transform a space—formerly the famed Citrine—on a busy corner of Melrose into the power sushi spot, Kumo. Working with Ovitz was "difficult but rewarding," said Jones. "He had very high expectations."

Those expectations included a specific color scheme (all white, with a dark blue floor) to which Jones added glass tile walls and sleek curves inspired by sculptor Isamu Noguchi, including a rounded notch in the ceiling that gives the sense of staring up into a puffy thunder cloud. Jones actually wasn't told that *kumo* meant "cloud" in Japanese until he delivered preliminary designs to Ovitz, but it ended up informing details like the blown glass lamps that sink into the dining room like giant raindrops.

Minimal decor put the emphasis on the sole piece of art in the dining room, the animated piece *City Glow* by Japanese artist Chiho Aoshima. In it, blinking caterpillar-like buildings sway across five screens behind the sushi bar, giving diners something else to chew on as they nibble their albacore. **SAM LUBELL**

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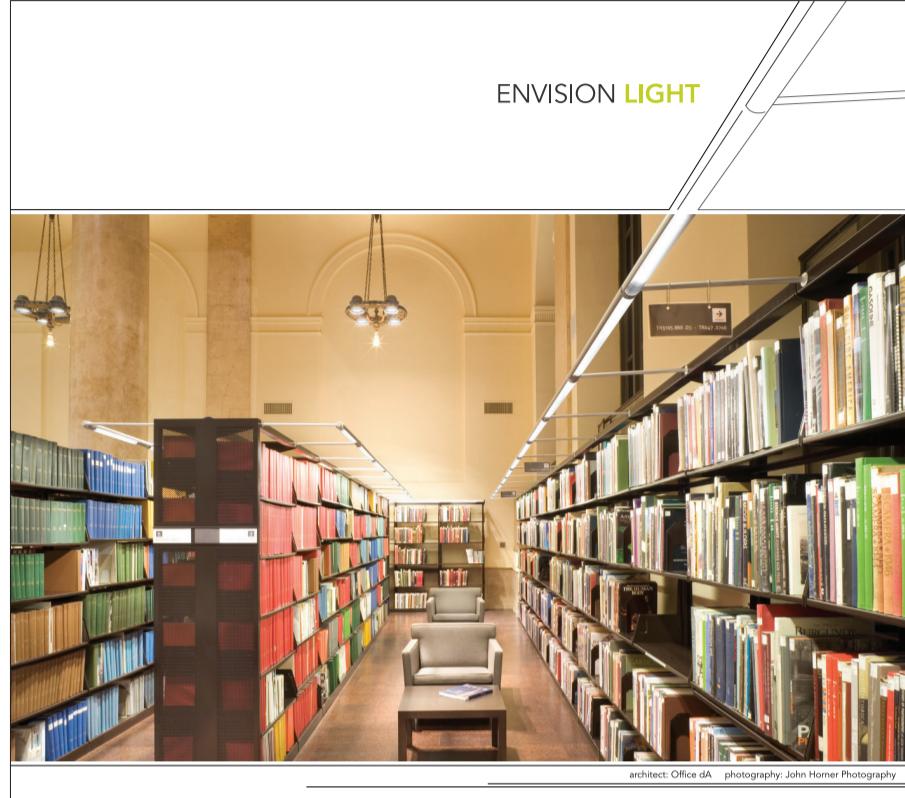
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CALIFORNIA FIRMS BEGIN WORK IN NEW ORLEANS



Two-and-a-half years after flooding devastated New Orleans, a home designed by Los Angeles firm Graft will break ground in the city's Lower Ninth Ward in March, marking the construction phase of Make It Right, a highly-publicized philanthropic effort to create new homes headed by actor Brad Pitt. Designs by LA firms Morphosis and Pugh + Scarpa are also among the 13 offered for over 150 houses to be built over the next two years. New Orleans-based John Williams is serving as executive architect, with designs contributed by an international cast including Adjaye Associates of England, Constructs of Ghana, MVRDV of the Netherlands, and Shigeru Ban Architects of Japan, along with several local firms. In addition, a core advisory team consists of Graft from Berlin, Germany, and William McDonough + Partners of Charlottesville, Virginia.

Make It Right was announced last September but given a huge financial boost when funds of \$5 million each were pledged by Pitt and producer Steve Bing. An even larger publicity boost came when Pitt, a huge architecture enthusiast, assumed a large creative role in the project, personally selecting firms to participate. The results, said Pugh + Scarpa principal Lawrence Scarpa, are houses that combine innovative modern design and an ability to address displaced residents' needs. He equates it to a modern-day Case Study House program. "There was an idea to give people an opportunity to have a new and different way to live. To provide normal people with quality design."

The firms were instructed to incorporate green building features into a 1,200-square-foot home to be built for about \$150,000. Residents can choose their design, which has made them incredibly curious about the process, said Graft associate Neiel Norheim. Many firms modernized elements of the traditional shotgun houses that existed in the area before the hurricane. Graft's design reinforces community, with wide stairs on the front porch that can be used for seating and a single hallway connecting the entry to the back porch, uniting the social areas. Pugh + Scarpa's unique spatial organization is inspired by patchwork quilting, with abstract geometric shapes defining large, family-oriented areas. The exterior is shaded with inexpensive recycled wood pallets and perforated cement board screens to maximize light, while deep roof overhangs

create wide porches to further insulate the interiors. Morphosis' design, which at first appears to be a bright yellow modernization of a shotgun house, actually feels more like a boat inside. Buoyed by polystyrene foam encased in glass fiber-reinforced concrete, the foundation will actually float in high water.

One concern from the architecture community was whether Pitt's celebrity would eclipse the work of the designers. But Alejandra Lillo, partner at Graft, whose firm has a longstanding relationship with Pitt and was brought on during the earliest brainstorming stages, said Pitt's commitment has actually been the driving force. "Brad is an incredible philanthropist with keen architectural vision and the determination to elevate the quality of design in this neighborhood," she said. Scarpa agreed. "Clearly he is more than the public face of the project," he said, noting that Pitt attended every meeting, sans entourage.

To further spur donations and to help visualize the magnitude of destruction in this neighborhood, Graft also spearheaded a large-scale art installation called the Pink Project, where a team gradually assembled and illuminated 150 structures in a 14-square-block area to represent the number of donations needed to restore the neighborhood. The structures, which looked like giant Monopoly houses when flipped upright, were covered in hot pink Earthtex fabric to be recycled into tote bags. Stefan Beese, executive associate of Graft and executive producer of the Pink Project, said the response to the architects' presence has been overwhelmingly positive in the community: "The residents of the Lower Ninth were very happy to see that the focus and attention was being brought back to an area that felt like it had been abandoned and was still in such need." ALISSA WALKER



DOWNTOWN DOWNTURN? continued from page 5 to be an expert to know that there's a lot of instability and that we're facing losses and problems."

Timing, he noted, is what seems to separate the sturdy from the worried. Those who offered presales and secured financing a year or two ago did so during a robust economy. The slowing means that potential buyers today aren't as likely to jump at a presale, which further impairs financing for any project with a residential component, said Atkins. For example, the 19-story Luma property had many buyers fall out of escrow before it opened in July. But they were able to resell those units as the property got closer to completion. "Buyers feel that if they buy today, the price might go down tomorrow," he said. "There's no incentive to buy six to nine months out anymore." Their Evo project will be one of 2008's largest debuts in a market many consider glutted. But Atkins says traffic to their sales office is good—relatively. "There's still quite a bit of demand," he said. "But there's not as much as there was a few years ago."

There is one glimmer of hope. The federal economic stimulus package which recently passed by President Bush will raise the conventional loan limit cap from \$417,000 to

\$625,000, meaning that buyers who usually had to find higher-interest, high-risk "jumbo loans" for amounts over \$417,000 can lock in to lower, more stable rates. "From our buyer's perspective, more of the downtown market is accessible at that price point," said Atkins. **ALISSA WALKER**



COURTESY KPF

NEXT BIG THING continued from front page of Park Merced. If approved, the scheme for the World War II-era housing development will add about 5,700 new units to the 115-acre site, now renamed Parkmerced, tripling the number of apartments there today. Like Treasure Island, the project's cost is estimated at \$1.2 billion. In January, Parkmerced's owners, Texas-based Stellar Management, filed an environmental evaluation application, effectively starting the planning process and giving rise to vocal opponents from the community and beyond.

The original Park Merced, composed of simple, modernist towers and town houses arranged around varied green spaces, was designed by Leonard Schultze and Associates and built by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, which also put up similar complexes like Park La Brea in Los Angeles and Stuyvesant Town in Manhattan. Completed in the early 1950s, it was intended for moderate-income families, many of them from the military. Most agree that its most notable feature was the relationship of its buildings to its landscaping, with its intricate internal courtyards and interrelated terraced patios largely designed by Thomas Dolliver Church, who also oversaw the master planning of UC Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz, and the Mayo Clinic.

Stellar Management bought Park Merced in 2005 and has already begun a \$130 million renovation. The development's four-phase plan will retain the largest towers and replace its two-story buildings with four-story units. The plan will also add retail and slightly reconfigure Park Merced's street grid, create more intimate green spaces, and stagger new buildings to minimize cold winds coming off the waterfront, said SOM partner Craig Hartman, who likens its current feel to a retirement home. He points out that the new buildings will be designed by several architecture firms (as yet, unselected) in a style "that reflects our contemporary culture."

Hartman also hopes to bring the entire development off the grid and reduce energy consumption by about 60 percent using wind power, solar power, high-efficiency

fixtures, water recycling, improved insulation, and co-generation (using existing power sources to generate energy on-site). The new plan will connect the park to public transportation by moving an existing MUNI stop, adding a new one, and providing low-emissions shuttles to BART.

But the intensive scheme, which would radically change this once-sleepy development, has its opponents. Aaron Goodman, an architect at San Francisco's Studios Architecture and vice president of the Park Merced Residents Organization, the area's recognized tenant group, complains that the new plans will be unaffordable and will disturb the area's neighborly atmosphere.

"The character of the site will be lost," said Goodman. "I wouldn't call it charming, but it's very effective." Goodman is one of the leaders in an effort to landmark the property, and has filed documents with the city's Landmark Preservation Advisory Board. Docomomo (International Working Party for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings Sites and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement) is working together with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the California Preservation Foundation, San Francisco Architectural Heritage, and the Cultural Landscape Foundation to get Park Merced placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

"It's highly significant," said Andrew Wolfram, president of Docomomo's Northern California chapter, who pointed out that Park Fairfax, also built by Metropolitan Life, is already on the National Register. "We're not saying it needs to be frozen in time, but its important elements should be preserved."

Stellar Management spokesperson P.J. Johnston points out that the scheme has been through 63 community meetings, and that many of the buildings on the property are too degraded to save: "It's a property that's well beyond its use-by date. It needs to be revitalized and rebuilt." **SAM LUBELL**

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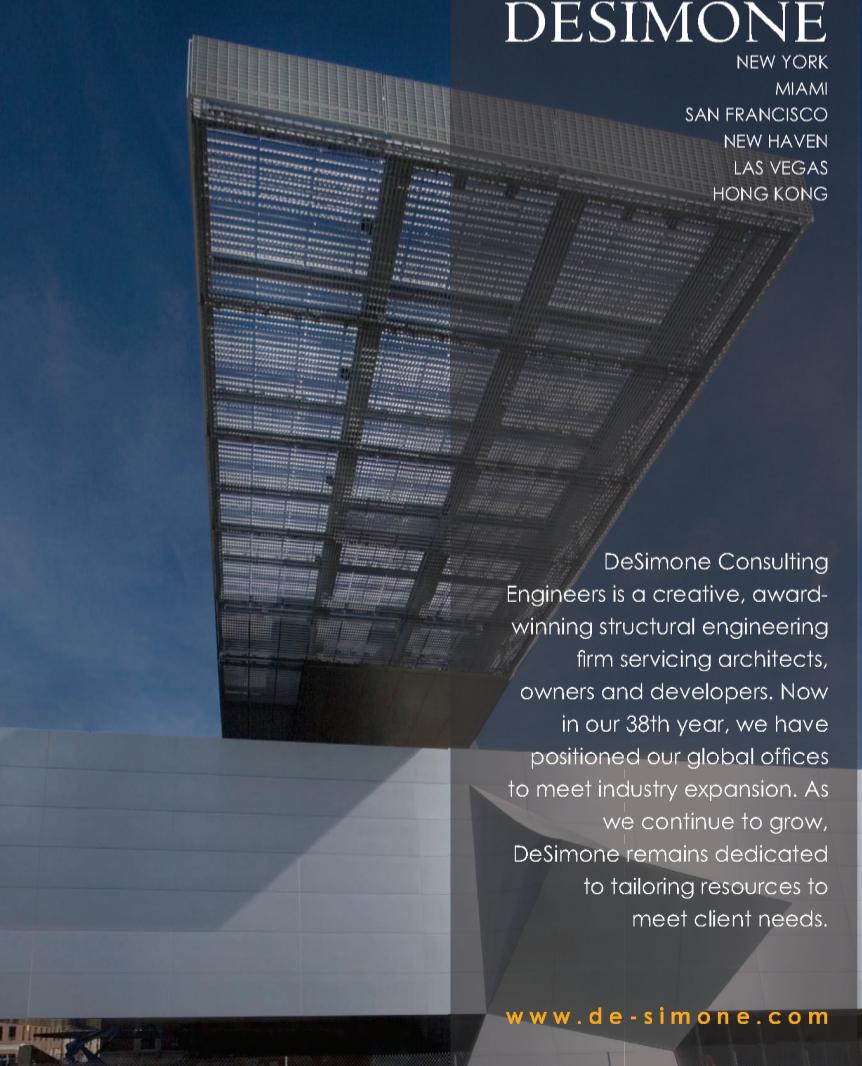
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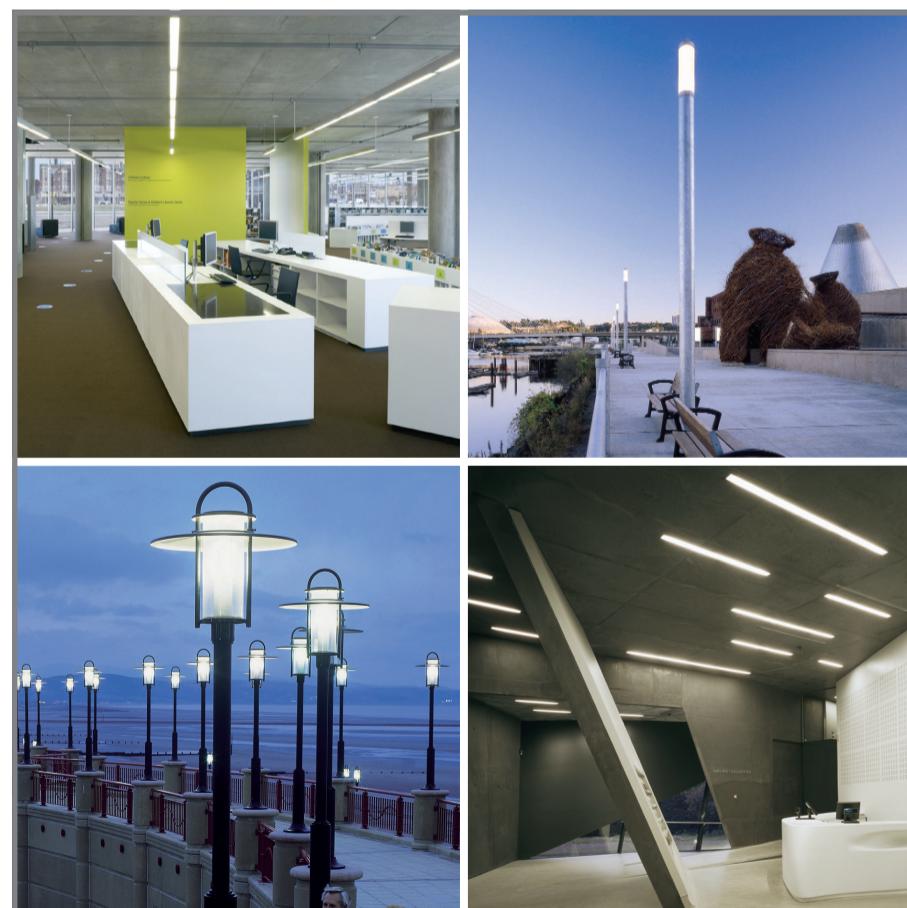
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OF TORII AND ROJI

continued from front page While the proposed housing enjoys broad community support, the project poses more complex questions about how best to preserve Japantown's cultural core when the Japanese-American population is diminishing and only three such districts remain in the United States.

This latest look at reinventing Japantown was set in motion, in part, by the 2006 sale of two malls and a hotel comprising two-thirds of Japan Center plus a nearby hotel to Los Angeles developer 3D Investments. Working with hotel group Joie de Vivre, 3D Investments moved quickly to reopen the hotels as the upscale Hotel Kabuki and anime-themed Hotel Tomo, but heeded the planning department's request to let the larger vision for Japan Center unfold as part of the city's community-focused Japantown "Better Neighborhoods Plan"

process, set to establish land use, urban design, preservation, economic development, and transportation strategies for the area.

The Japan Center development is seen by officials as a way to revitalize the district by restoring some of its historic density and reversing the malls' inward-facing stance. "Before redevelopment, an estimated 250 residences and 100,000 square feet of retail, mostly in three-story Victorian shop houses, filled these two blocks," said EDAW principal Stephen

Engblom. "What we have today—a one- to two-story blind box with roughly the same amount of retail plus the hotel, and none of the residential capacity—physically has much greater potential to contribute to the community's goals of creating an intergenerational environment with safe and friendly street fronts on Post and Geary."

The four schemes presented for input at a community meeting last December range from a "baseline scheme," which would add two stories of housing above the existing malls and open the malls to the streets, to comprehensive site reconfigurations that would more than double the leasable retail space to 200,000 square feet and add 73 to 210 residential units. The higher density of such schemes would require a 14-story tower comparable in scale to the existing hotel.

Public comment at the meeting and online has favored the "Roji" scheme (*roji* means "alley" in Japanese), which introduces more human-scaled, mid-block alleys that break up the retail and strengthen connections through the site.

The "Torii" (gate) scheme's gateway retail bridge and the "Hiroba" (plaza) scheme's open plazas linked by curving passageways have drawn criticism for imposing upon or eliminating the Peace Plaza, an important civic gathering space, which the Roji scheme preserves.

While higher density and

expanded retail promise more affordable housing, jobs, and tax revenues, the community is cautious about gentrification, said Bob Hamaguchi, executive director of the Japantown Task Force, which facilitates the neighborhood's planning and improvement projects. "This plan is very important to Japantown's future," he said. "Preserving the cultural institutions, community services, and small businesses that make Japantown what it is today is one of our objectives."

Paul Osaki, executive director of the nonprofit Japanese Cultural & Community Center of Northern California, echoed the concerns for small businesses that would be displaced during construction, yet acknowledged the need for Japantown to reach beyond its traditional community as low birth and immigration rates and higher rates of multi-ethnic marriages reduce the Japanese-American population. "The challenge will be to attract new, culturally relevant businesses that make Japan Center exciting and engaging to a broader multi-ethnic audience," he told AN.

Osaki, like Engblom, sees Japan's vibrant youth culture as an energizing element of a contemporary Japantown that is anchored by history and heritage.

After two more rounds of community input, the refined scheme will be presented in April.

YOSH ASATO



UNVEILED

TREE HOUSE

The tree house is undoubtedly an archetype of an idyllic childhood, providing a retreat from the world of the adults below. Still, this universally loved symbol of childhood

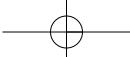
innocence has, for the most part, gone the way of the see saw in our world of fear and regulation.

SH_Arc of Venice, California, wants to change that. With construction under way in a private forested estate outside of Seattle for a retired couple and their grandchildren, the firm's tree house project is sure to strike a chord with adult-children everywhere. Conceived as a kind of tree house that doesn't require a tree, the system they have devised works in concert with the surrounding trees, but relies on steel columns set into cement for its support. The actual modules will be manufactured in a shop out of steel frame and SIT panels and hoisted into place with a crane. Though not much wider than a twin bed, the modules will be twenty and forty feet off the ground and will be used as additional guest houses by the client.

The project is set for completion late this summer. SH_Arc will also begin manufacturing their tree house system this year as a kind of modified pre-fab unit available by order. **JAKE TOWNSEND**

Architect: SH_Arc

Location: Seattle, Washington



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VERT ET VERTICAL continued from front page system using mineral-rich nutrient solutions (he may work with artist Patrick Blanc, with whom he recently collaborated on a green wall for his Musée du Quai Branly in Paris), or a more conventional soil system. Reflecting the landscapes of Southern California, the north side of the building will be planted with lush greenery and the south side will be planted with desert vegetation.

The concrete-framed building will sit close to Santa Monica Boulevard on its north, to engage with the street and to leave room for a 40,000-square-foot garden to its south, which is being designed by local firm Rios Clementi Hale. That firm recently completed a study for the Century City Chamber of Commerce called "Greening of Century City," which suggested more green spaces, a "better pedestrian experience," and more sustainable projects. Local councilman Jack Weiss pointed out at the press conference on February 8 that buildings like the new tower are aimed at undoing the original scheme for Century City, which focused on offices, cars, and concrete. The developers hope the building will achieve at least a LEED Silver rating.

This is definitely not affordable housing. Prices have not been determined, according to officials at SunCal, but units will range from about 3,400 square feet to 9,500 square feet, and penthouses will have two stories. The building marks SunCal's first foray into urban infill. The developer is known mostly for its gated communities and sprawling suburban developments throughout the state.

"We've decided to get in the urban business," explained Frank Faye, SunCal's chief operating officer. As for neighborhood concerns about increased traffic in the area, the developers point out that the building will actually be shorter than the office building that stood on the site earlier.

Nouvel's commission comes shortly after his unveiling of a new 75-story residential tower in Manhattan adjacent to the Museum of Modern Art, a development by Gerald Hines that will include new gallery space with luxury condominiums above.

The "green blade" will be Nouvel's first project in Los Angeles. The executive architect for the project will be local firm House & Robertson Architects, which has worked in a similar role with architects like OMA, Allied Works, Koning Eizenberg, and Philippe Starck. French architect Olivier Touraine, of Venice-based Touraine Richmond Architects, is also working with Nouvel on the project. Once the project is approved, construction is estimated to take 37 to 40 months, according to the developer. **SAM LUBELL**

PIANO OUT OF TUNE

It's been a rough few weeks for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. First they found out that philanthropist Eli Broad was loaning, not giving, his art to the museum addition he had largely paid for. Then the museum was raided by federal agents as part of an investigation over potentially looted art. Now they have opened a museum that has come under fire for falling short in its design.

Not to say that Renzo Piano's new Broad Contemporary Art Museum (BCAM) is a disaster. It has many of the architect's trademarks of elegance, craftsmanship, and tasteful deference to art. Spatially, it helps bring unity to a museum complex that has long been disjointed. But it falls short of expectations and of the quality of many of Piano's other works. This is watered down stuff, not Renzo Piano in top form.

The new addition, composed of two Italian travertine-clad, three-story wings to the west of the existing museum campus, adds 60,000 square feet of new gallery space, showing off works by some of the great masters of contemporary art. It also includes a new "Grand Entrance," a large covered pavilion connecting the new spaces to the old, a covered walkway linking east and west portions of the museum, a two-level underground parking garage, and a new "Grand Staircase" for LACMA's Ahmanson Building, which helps unite extreme grade changes between east and west sides of the campus and has been fitted with Tony Smith's *Smoke*, a daunting, somewhat menacing aluminum sculpture.

All these new links have done a fine job of uniting the campus, which has for years resembled an incoherent mishmash of styles and circulation plans (and unlike OMA's earlier scheme, this plan keeps the older buildings intact). Furthermore, the massing of the new building, whose two

wings, separated by a vertical wall of metal louvers, almost perfectly balances the grand scale of the existing buildings to the east and brings a well-thought-out symmetry to the complex (which also includes LACMA West inside the former May Company Department Store west of BCAM), particularly when viewed from Wilshire Boulevard. Their travertine cladding meshes well with the existing building's weighty surfaces.

But outside of this, most new elements disappoint. Perhaps most troubling is the new building's relationship to the street. Despite efforts to shift focus northward with an entrance facing 6th Street, LACMA's energy still points toward Wilshire Boulevard. BCAM's bulky frontage basically shuts out 6th Street with blank travertine facades that would be dead-ringers for a department store if the signage were changed from large (and admittedly striking) museum banners to a simple "Macy's". The blankness of these buildings is slightly offset by angled sunshades, a small and rather lonely-looking side stairways, and a large vertical louver system separating the wings, but, like the murals in front, these elements seem add-ons, not integral elements to the whole.

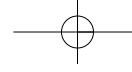
A north-facing stair system called the Spider made of concrete slabs and red I-beams on the north facade, is by far the most interesting and ambitious element. The canopy's incline continues upward even at the top level, perhaps a suggestion of the museum's limitless ambitions. Its exposed steel structural components are presumably meant to offset the heaviness of the new building, although they never mesh well with it, and, while quite lively, still appear unresolved. Their landings—physical and visual connections to the building—don't interact dramatically with the program, although they do provide a nice view of the nearby hills from the top floor. Either way, the Spider seems to face away from the action, minimizing its importance. It fronts no main plaza, like, for instance, at the Centre Pompidou, but instead faces a narrow walkway and (for now) a huge, ugly tent for activities that blocks vistas from the first and second floors. From there, 6th Street seems miles away. Perhaps someday, when new landscapes are made more magical, this back entrance will actually become the museum's new front. Not so now.

The new plaza, similarly built of a red steel frame with concrete cladding, also seems unresolved: a clunky, strange kit of parts recalling an outdoor high school cafeteria. It appears that the museum hasn't figured out exactly what it wants to do with this space. Chris Burden's *Urban Light*, a wonderful compilation of old lamp posts, further takes away from this spot's dominance in the area, making it more of a spillover space, not the museum's heart.

One would hope that with Piano's track record for creating magical museum interiors, as exemplified by the Menil Collection in Houston or the High Museum of Art extension in Atlanta, the interior spaces would justify and offset the exterior. They don't. Grand ceiling heights work well with the collection's large artworks, but Piano's customary flair for dramatic light scooping fails on the top floor, which felt dark, even muddy, on the brightest of California days. Lower floors are equally dim. And while some spaces need darkness to preserve fragile works, the firm does nothing to offset this. A space for Richard Serra's massive sculptures seems like another afterthought, with the architecture adding nothing in particular. The large south-facing louver system feels like a prison from the inside, or as if you're stuck inside an air conditioner.

Piano pointed out in his opening remarks that Broad wanted the space to be eminently practical, and that it is—no space is wasted. But this is a museum, not a factory. While it should defer to art, it needs to add its own statement, its own richness, its own magic. This extension does not appear to gather inspiration from its art or from its surroundings. It feels dated and familiar, not—like much of Piano's work—classic and original. As a Piano fan, I find this surprising and disappointing. But I got the feeling while walking through the spaces that Piano was hemmed in by the calculating demands of Broad (a builder of kit-of-part homes) and of the museum's board. One gets a glimpse of Piano's customary talent in his graceful new stairway for the Ahmanson Building, which receives dramatic light from far above and aggressively stakes its claim as the building's centerpiece. I have to wonder how the whole project would have looked if Piano had had free reign to work his magic.

SAM LUBELL



"It is always a challenge to build a project on a tiny budget," said François Perrin, the architect responsible for a semi-transparent polycarbonate-clad guesthouse recently completed in a Brentwood backyard. "When you are building in Brentwood where you are supposed to be rich, and most people commission million dollar extensions to existing homes, doing something under \$100,000

is even more of a challenge." Perrin, however, found freedom within the constraints of the small budget, and from that restriction, a radical structure was born.

The client, an anthropologist who divides his time between Taiwan, Sri Lanka, and Brentwood, wanted a backyard structure that would serve several purposes. According to Perrin, the guesthouse is both a live- and work-

space and a "cabinet of curiosities where the client can showcase his collection of objects." The client's intent is to use this guesthouse as a prototype for identical buildings to be constructed on his properties in Taiwan and Sri Lanka.

Built as a rambling two-story addition in a heavily regulated Brentwood neighborhood, the building became a paean to the limits of the building code. "We

created the biggest volume possible to house the client's extensive collection of objects and art," said Perrin. A 20-foot-by-40-foot swath of the backyard was sacrificed to the structure, which makes the most of the minuscule footprint. Perhaps the most striking feature is the exposed framing and plywood, which has been, in a sense, preserved and displayed as one would an artifact. A translucent polycarbonate skin was affixed to the traditional Douglas Fir wood frame. The effect is at once unsettling and uplifting, as if an unfinished structure had been found by an anthropologist and been preserved for curiosity's sake.

The design was equally rooted in practicality, according to Perrin. There are no mechanical or electrical heating or cooling systems; the temperature is regulated through efficient cross-ventilation, taking advantage of the ocean breezes, and through the heat build-up that naturally occurs in a translucent-clad structure. A solar panel on the roof provides a great deal of the electricity.

"The idea was to use as little energy as is possible," Perrin says. He points out that a combination of wind turbines and solar panels should take the future projects in Taiwan and Sri Lanka completely off the grid.

At just 400 square feet, the build-



JOSHUA WHITE

ing maximizes the interior space with a small loft. The lower level, which is dominated by an oversized floor-to-ceiling bookshelf, is devoted to the client's work. A small tatami mat was placed in one corner for meetings and meditation and the second floor loft houses a small bed and bathroom.

Perrin sees the unfinished look of the building as a means of creating a link between the language of construction and the natural environment. "The choice to reveal the framing creates interconnection; that moment when a building is unfinished creates a more interesting condition between interior and exterior—and the building itself is a transitional moment," he says. "Sometimes a tiny budget makes for more interesting architecture."

JAKE TOWNSEND

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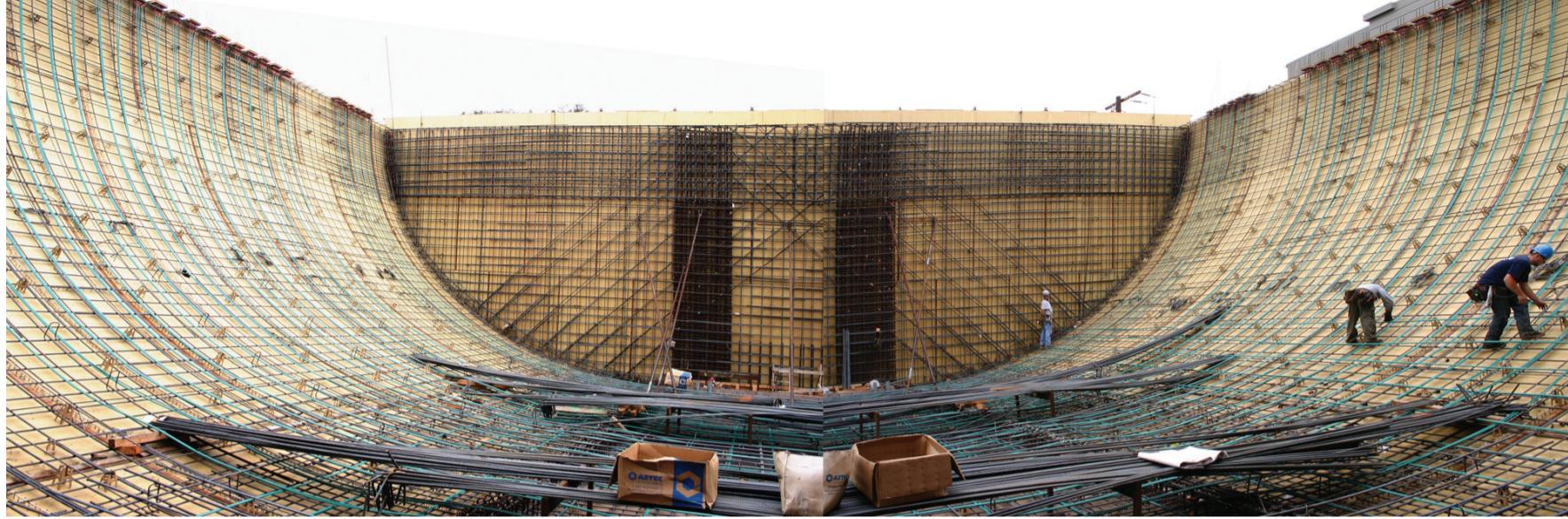
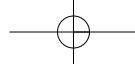
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CONTROL GROUP



COURTESY STANLEY SAITOWITZ/NATOMA ARCHITECTS

In San Francisco, where so many residents pride themselves for leading such a high quality of life, the bar for innovative architecture is embarrassingly low. By this standard, nearly anything Stanley Saitowitz manages to build here qualifies as a small coup. Whether or not you favor the stripped-down chic of his buildings—he has an obvious penchant for concrete structures and metal cladding—there's much to appreciate in his ability to push an aesthetic aim through to completion.

One of the latest projects for his firm, Stanley Saitowitz/Natoma Architects, is a 33,000-square-foot synagogue and Jewish community center for San Francisco's Congregation Beth Sholom, is almost there. The project is just months from completion. Even now, it looks nearly finished, save for a few rows of zinc panels that need to be applied to the surface of a 12-foot plinth. The metal cladding will rise up from street level to form the surface of a large rectangular box whose most prominent vertical edge punctuates the corner of the 14th Avenue and Clement Street intersection.

Although the design includes loose references to the ancient Masada synagogue in Israel, its inspiration does not stem from

any single source. "Hebraic architecture has a tendency to melt into what's going at the time," said Saitowitz. "Jewish culture is regulated, but its architecture is not."

The project has been more than five years in the making: Board members of Congregation Beth Sholom, Northern California's main Conservative congregation, hired Saitowitz in 2002 to design the \$10.5 million campus in the city's Richmond District.

To some, this neighborhood of quiet streets lined with three-story Victorians may seem an unlikely location for Saitowitz's minimalist aesthetic. Aside from the 30-foot height limit, the synagogue bears little resemblance to its wood and stucco neighbors. But to Saitowitz, the task of relating a building to its surroundings involves a level of thoughtfulness—in this case, about proportion, color, and massing—that is usually missing from simpler, more facade-focused efforts to make a building fit in.

At Beth Sholom, meaningful contextualism occurs by way of contrast, not mimicry. "They're not supposed to be contextual," Saitowitz said, referring to both the synagogue and the domed Christian Science

Church, located a few blocks away. "It's always been the nature of religious architecture to stand out."

The Congregation's activities are organized into two separate buildings: a glass "cube" and a concrete "bowl" joined by a split-level courtyard. An early rendering shows the box-like structure wrapped in channel glass—yet the zinc paneling maintains the lightness of the original design, especially in contrast to the heaviness of the concrete sanctuary.

The "cube" will house community functions, including a library, meeting rooms, a double-height event hall, and a kitchen. This building also includes the Congregation's daily prayer chapel, a rectangular room that will be finished in floor-to-ceiling walnut and lined with stained glass windows preserved from the Congregation's former sanctuary.

In a playful twist on the properties of building materials, the 700-seat sanctuary—a bowl-shaped mass made of a solid concrete shell—seemingly balances atop a lightweight podium. In fact, the sanctuary is rooted in the concrete foundation through three sets of concrete pylons visible in the office spaces below.

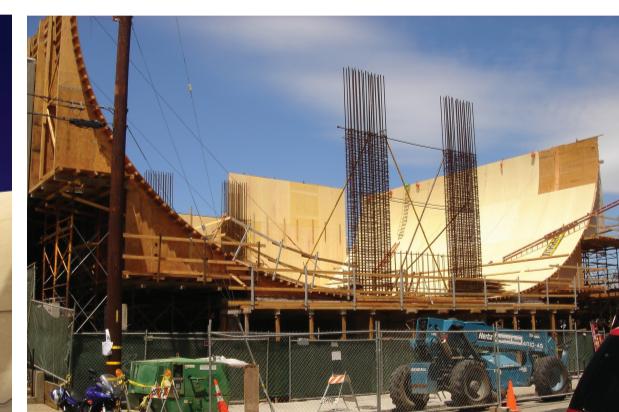
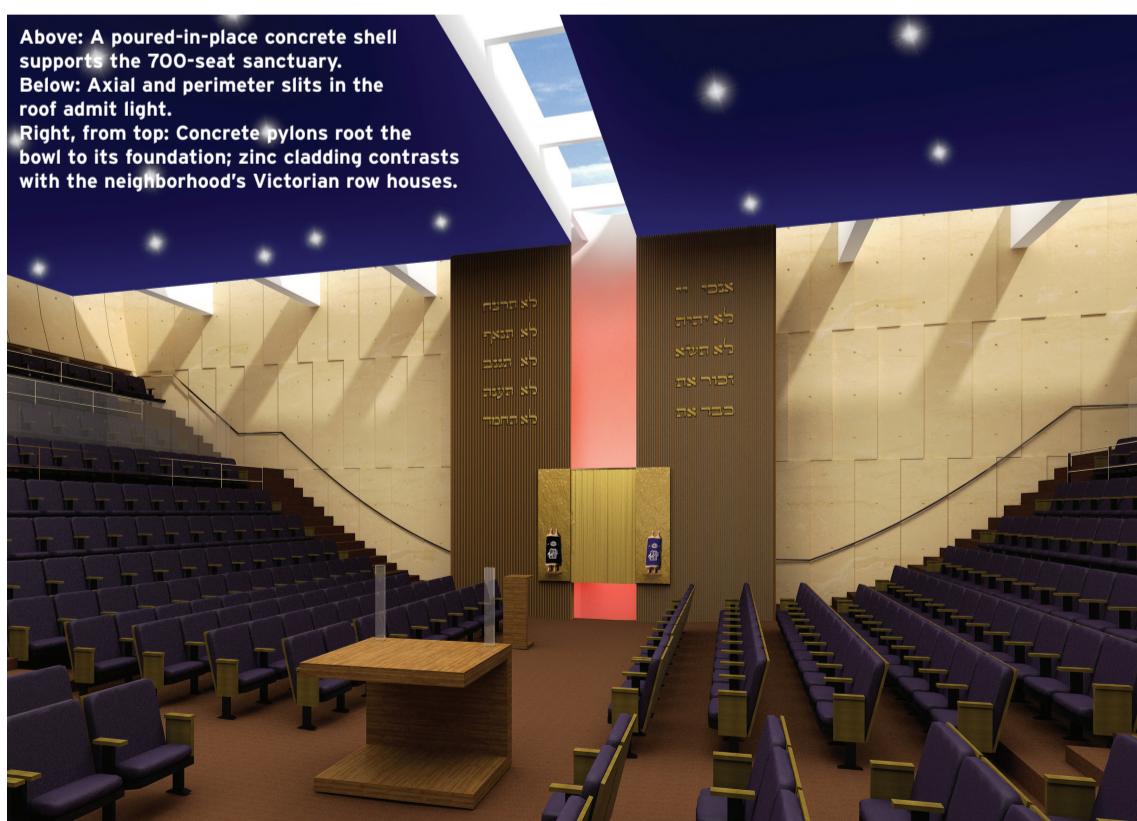
McClone Construction, the same contractors who created the de Young Museum's twisting tower, built the formwork in a warehouse before delivering it in pieces and assembling it in sections—each held in place by a staggered pattern of snap-ties. The concrete was then dyed a warm beige to contrast with the cool gray of the metal plinth, and poured into the formwork in twelve separate phases.

The primary aim of the bowl-shaped sanctuary is to emphasize union around shared rituals. It is also meant to encourage equal participation in the liturgy, thereby eliminating the Orthodox tradition of separating women and men during services. Saitowitz envisions the room "filling like a cup" when ceremonies begin, the experience only enhanced by daylight that enters through slits in both the center and around the perimeter of the roof.

Visitors will have to wait a few more months to experience this first-hand. In the meantime, we must rely on the poetry of Saitowitz's vision: "The walls are people; the roof floats over this cup; the connections are light."

JULIE KIM

Above: A poured-in-place concrete shell supports the 700-seat sanctuary.
Below: Axial and perimeter slits in the roof admit light.
Right, from top: Concrete pylons root the bowl to its foundation; zinc cladding contrasts with the neighborhood's Victorian row houses.



AIA HONOR AWARDS



The AIA Honor Awards are given annually to outstanding projects across the country. Of the 28 awards presented, nine went to projects or to firms located on the West Coast.

ARCHITECTURE

26th Street Low-Income Housing
Santa Monica, California

Kanner Architects

This low-income family housing project is the product of an exhaustive community outreach mission. The design incorporates the region's mild climate, historical precedents of Southern California modernist architecture, and the human scale of residents and pedestrians.

Delta Shelter

Mazama, Washington

Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects

This 1,000-square-foot weekend cabin is essentially a steel-clad box on stilts that can be completely shuttered when the owner is away. Raised above the ground to minimize potential flood damage and take in 360-degree views of the surrounding forest and mountains, the cabin was conceived as a low-tech, virtually indestructible weekend house.

Griffith Observatory
Los Angeles**Pfeiffer Partners Architects**

The renovation took the famous telescope into new dimensions, restoring its mix of Beaux Arts, Neoclassical and Art Deco features while more than doubling its size with the addition of new exhibition spaces, a theater, and a cafe. Griffith Observatory, one of Los Angeles' most visible and beloved landmarks, is an iconic presence in the Hollywood Hills.

Olympic Sculpture Park
Seattle**Weiss/Manfredi Architecture/
Landscape/Urbanism**

This project is located on Seattle's last undeveloped waterfront property, sliced by train tracks and an arterial road. The design connects three separate sites with an uninterrupted Z-shaped "green" platform, descending 40 feet from the city to the water, capitalizing on views of the skyline and Elliott Bay and rising over existing infrastructure to reconnect the urban core to the revitalized waterfront.



INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

Architects Office

Los Angeles

Lehrer Architects LA

Although the office would specifically house architects, the architects designed a multipurpose working space that simply and clearly honors the rudiments of work: vast work surfaces, a profusion of natural light, seamless connections to the landscape and fresh air, generous storage, and clearly individuated workstations that add up to a coherent, palpable group.

Novelty Hill Januik Winery

Woodinville, Washington

Mithun

The new 31,000-square-foot winery in suburban Seattle represents a time-honored tradition, but with a fresh interpretation that respects the client's love of modern architecture, advanced technology, and winemaking. This is a functional, efficient production facility and a welcoming gathering place that clearly establishes an identity distinct from other wineries in the area.

Tehama Grasshopper

San Francisco

Fougeron Architecture

This project transforms a warehouse in San Francisco into an office and residence with a rooftop penthouse. Glass panels separate the rooms, deconstructing traditional notions of public and private space, while an industrial palette of materials keeps the design consistent with the surrounding neighborhood. A surprising integration of old and new elements and of competing urban forces brings the remodeled warehouse alive.

URBAN DESIGN

Los Angeles River Rehabilitation Master Plan

Los Angeles

CIVITAS INC.

The 32-mile-long concrete channel of the Los Angeles River cuts through the city with restrictive abandon. A team of engineers, urban designers, and landscape architects led the urban design and river planning efforts to create a master plan that will rehabilitate the river into a green amenity and an economic engine.

1.BENJAMIN BENSCHNEIDER/TOM BIES; 2.PFEIFFER PARTNERS ARCHITECTS; 3.PETER AARON/ESTO; 4.JOHN EDWARD LINDEN

AT DEADLINE

C. DAVID ROBINSON DIES

Influential San Francisco architect C. David Robinson died on February 2 at age 72 from complications of ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Robinson is responsible for such major Bay Area buildings as the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, the Charles M. Schulz Museum, a major renovation of Temple Emanuel, and his famous Cliff House. He founded Robinson, Mills & Williams in 1970, which grew to be one of the city's largest firms, and later headed James Stewart Polshek's local office, before founding his own firm in 1998.

AMBASSADOR EMBARRASSED

As if the Ambassador Hotel school project had not caused enough headaches already, LA Unified School District officials admitted on February 10 that construction costs had skyrocketed from \$235 million to \$380 million, an increase of 67 percent. The total cost of the project, which demolished the famed hotel where Robert Kennedy was assassinated, has now reached \$566 million. Still, officials insist that at \$555 per square foot, the 684,944-square-foot campus is a deal.

MICKEY'S FUTURE DIGS

More than half a century ago, Disneyland opened an attraction called House of the Future, a bulbous, white plastic and glass house (think Niemeyer) in the theme park's Tomorrowland. It quietly closed a decade later in 1967, when cordless telephones and big-screen TVs shift-

ed from science fiction to reality, but Disney announced on February 13 that it will open the Innovations Dream Home in May. The architecture is said to be a demure tract home, but the interior will be stocked with (sponsored) cutting-edge tech from Microsoft, HP, LifeWare software, and others, creating the sort of "smart home" we'll be seeing more of in the next decade.

SF'S NEW CENTURY

Not to be outdone by Disney, the History Channel's City of the Future Challenge, which has already battled its way through New York, LA, Chicago, and Washington, crowned its San Francisco futurists on January 20. IwamotoScott Architecture's vision of the city in a century was selected over those by Anderson Anderson Architecture; Fougeron Architecture; Gelfand Partners Architects; IF Architecture; Kuth/Ranieri Architects; Pfau Architecture; and SLOMobility. With only a week to conceive and design SF 2108, the four-person firm created Hydro-Net, an "occupiable infrastructure" that integrates housing, work, transportation, energy generation, and water generation into a network of towers and tunnels that sweep out from the city into the surrounding water.

NEUTRA HOUSE FOR SALE

Richard Neutra's renowned Kaufmann Desert House will be auctioned off in New York on May 13 by Christie's Realty International. The auction house expects a \$15 million to \$25 million final bid for the 62-year-old five-

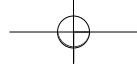
bedroom home in Palm Springs. This is the latest in a long line of iconic midcentury modern houses that have been auctioned off in the last few years, and certainly the most high-profile, which proves that at least this tiny sector of the housing market is still thriving.

FUEL FOR DESIGN SCHOOL EXPANSION

Born four years apart, the Art Center College of Design (founded in 1930) and the Glenarm Power Plant (opened 1927) joined forces when the school capped an agreement with the City of Pasadena on February 5 to develop its Graduate Research Campus on the 10-acre site of the decommissioned coal-fired power plant. This is the second adaptive project for the Pasadena design school, which opened its South Campus in Douglas Aircraft's former wind tunnel facilities.

LA'S MAGNETIC PLANS

Will Angelinos ever give up their cars? As traffic continues to worsen, the City Council hopes so, and to entice them to do so, the council has chosen a racy package: maglev. On February 6, the council gave initial approval to a \$26 billion public-private venture that would link downtown with the ports of LA and Long Beach and the Ontario Airport. This unusual arrangement is because the high-speed train will not only carry passengers but also freight, thereby taking not only passenger cars but also delivery trucks and tractor-trailers off the road.



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YOU'RE THE TOPS

For the past four years, our New York editors have asked our readers to do the unthinkable and reveal their favorite consultants, contractors, and suppliers. Hundreds of architects have responded, and each year we've been able to publish a directory of the best sources for the profession

out there, from saintly contractors to mom-and-pop cabinet-making shops. Now we're continuing the tradition in California. So without further ado, we present our first annual California Favorite Sources issue.

Produced by Sam Lubell and Izabel Gass.

All images courtesy firms, unless otherwise noted.

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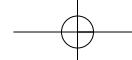
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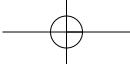
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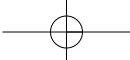
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PROFILE

Index-d



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PROFILE

Index-d

BY AUDREY JAYNES

With the range of locks, hinges, and handles ever widening in terms of technological complexity and far-flung sourcing, Nils Wiesenmüller and Matthew Preston of Index-d saw an opportunity and created a new niche—hardware consultants.



FROM LEFT: COURTESY INDEX-D; KVON; INDEX-D; KVON

LEFT: The Gropius-designed Bisschop window handle. ABOVE, FROM LEFT: The MWE Duplex sliding door at the Progressive Medical Center; Astec System 700 sliding door mechanism at Harvard (also on previous page); a custom rail at Progressive Medical Center.

For architects, hardware can be a sleeping giant that rears its expensive head when a contractor can't figure out a custom-designed sliding door or when an offset pivot hinge needs more than a little modifying. And when European manufactured products enter the mix, a lack of familiarity can have architects up to their necks in foreign installation requirements and instructions.

Recognizing this, architect Nils Wiesenmüller and civil engineer Matthew Preston combined their exasperation and design sensibility to offer a solution: Index-d. A distributor of around 20 European and American manufacturers, the Connecticut-based firm also offers services—from hardware customization to installation support—that make the specification process a walk in the park.

After only a year of full-fledged operation, their resume includes co-designing a modified sliding panel system for Harvard University and providing Simonswerk concealed hinges for the new Prada store in Las Vegas.

It might have been fate

that brought the two together, when Preston answered a roommate ad in a Berlin newspaper in 1991. Originally from Connecticut, Preston had gone to Germany to travel but ended up spending four years studying and working there while his German-born roommate studied architecture. In 1998, after returning to America and attending graduate school, Preston encouraged Wiesenmüller to come to Connecticut to form the Bridgeport Design Group, an architecture firm specializing in high-end professional office and boutique retail spaces.

In 2002, the group began work on the design for the Progressive Medicine Center in Kent, Connecticut, whose complex foreign hardware specifications gave birth to Index-d. Since its founding, the company has grown from two to five employees and from providing products solely for their own architecture firm to filling a niche that benefits architects and contractors all over the world.

"In my early days, I naively assumed when I did a hardware spec that the contractor would do his home-work, find the hardware, and get it installed," said Preston. "We saw a need not only for the hardware itself but also to provide services for finding the products and for specifying them without architects killing themselves."

The recent project for Harvard University highlights one of the company's specialties: customization. Last month, it modified an Astec exposed sliding door system to support a set of glass marker boards and framed Forbo panels that would glide over each other for the entire length of a 27-foot conference room wall; the modified carriage wheels have an integrated panel stop, which, unlike a rail stop, allows the system a full range of movement.

"Customization is just a huge issue for architects who are trying to stretch the design dollar," said Humberto Cordero, marketing director at Index-d.

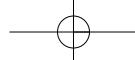
The firm also helped design several customized hardware products and generated the entire hardware schedule for an addition to a home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, that will be completed this year. "They effectively worked as a hardware consultant," said Catherine Truman, an associate at AnnBeha Architects.

"But what really sets them apart from other companies is their background in design," said Truman, who envisioned a minimalist hinge for a set of large overlay china cabinet doors that was not available through any manufacturer. It had to be custom designed through a collaboration between Index-d and Thoughtforms, their contractor.

"Coming from a design background, Preston understood what I was talking about," said Graham Grallert, the shop supervisor of the millwork department at Thoughtforms. He sent a few sketches to Index-d and Preston offered a solution. Accurate Lock & Hardware, based in Connecticut, fabricated a similar hinge that could be altered to be more inconspicuous.

"With our expertise and design sensibility, we can help in the specification process so the architect can hand over the drawings and the schedule and we can provide a detailed spec that offers not only the architect but the contractor a very simple and straightforward solution," said Cordero.

Last year, Preston chose to devote himself entirely to Index-d, and Wiesenmüller took over Bridgeport Design Group. They currently have about 40 open projects, including another contemporary residential project with Thoughtforms and the new Prada store in Las Vegas. The age of the hardware consultant has arrived.

HARDWARE
21

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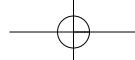
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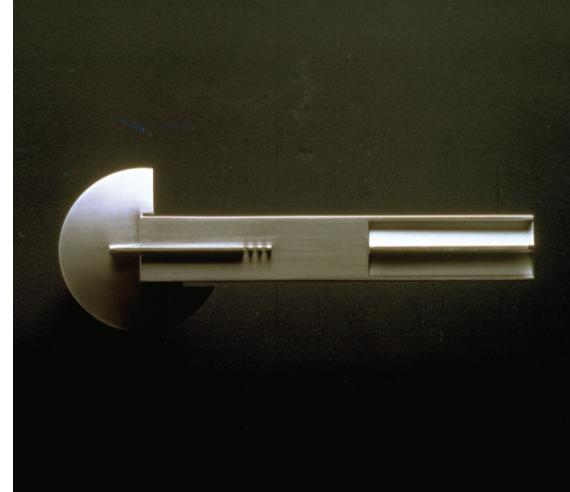
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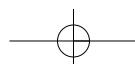
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AIA NATIONAL CONVENTION AND DESIGN EXPOSITION

May 15–17 www.aiaconvention.com

BOSTON CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTER, 415 SUMMER ST., BOSTON

A DROP RING PULL NANZ	B METRO THUMB-LATCH ENTRY SET ROCKY MOUNTAIN HARDWARE	C TRAK-KIT SHADI + COMPANY	D NO. 443 OMNIA INDUSTRIES	E DOOR GEMS GEORGE RANALLI DESIGNS	F A 2029 CABINET PULL VALLI & VALLI	G TECTUS 3D SIMONSWERK
Designed to operate a mortise latchset, this pull combines Georgian simplicity with Baroque compound curves. On its lip, the three-inch-diameter ring sports a plain astragal, also available with beaded or roped detailing. A back-to-back application can be used with doors thicker than two inches. With its refined look and hidden fasteners, this new pull is appropriate for a variety of interiors. Pick from more than 100 plated and patinated finishes from Nanz's Brooklyn factory, including light pewter, dark oxidized bronze, and stately antique gold.	Hand-rubbed bronze gets squeaky clean with this new brushed-finish collection from Rocky Mountain Hardware. Melding old-world casting techniques with precise CNC machining, the Idaho-made, solid bronze hardware is finished by hand, giving each piece its own panache. Serving applications from knob entry and multipoint sets to sliding doors, the Metro line runs from pristine white bronze (pictured) to a rusty-hued silicon bronze that looks impeccably ravaged. As a bonus, Rocky Mountain's wares are certified to contain 72 percent minimum recycled content, of which 50 percent is post-consumer.	Is that luscious 50-inch plasma TV bolted to the living room floor just when you want to watch movies in bed? Architect and videophile Shadi Shahrokh, who trained at SCI-Arc and Columbia University's GSAPP, devised a mobile media solution for flat-screen TVs and computer monitors ranging up to 80 inches wide and weighing up to 600 pounds. Available in robotic and nonrobotic versions, Trak-kit's ceiling-mounted, anodized-aluminum rail assembly whisks screens any linear distance and rotates them 359 degrees. Choose custom cables, speaker mounts, and optional finishes, plus soffits with spot lights for kicks. You can even slide the sucker out of sight into a pre-designed cabinet.	For clients with a conservative bent, Omnia's new Traditions line offers classic looks in 14 knobs and levers, including a mix of new and existing designs. Doorknob No. 443 (pictured, in the polished nickel finish) features subtle scalloped details. Traditional round, beaded round, and rectangular rose options are available in two sizes. Finishes include a mix of traditional and contemporary looks, ranging from antique bronze to polished chrome.	These Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired door handles were originally commissioned by a Japanese manufacturer and have only recently become available in the United States. Known for his snazzy Italian modernist designs, New York architect George Ranalli riffs on geometric form while highlighting modern functionality. Radiating tactility and warmth, the Lock-it (pictured) and Charm levers are said to be more ergonomic than a plain doorknob. Made of three cast aluminum pieces, the Lock-it comes in an electro-coated matte clear finish; as does the Charm, made of cast brass; and the larger Pendant, a push plate/pull bar in brass and brushed nickel.	The angled grip on this rectilinear cabinet pull is enticingly grabable. It comes with a single satin chrome finish or a split satin-and-polished-chrome (pictured), which provides a bit of visual and tactile pizzazz. Made of zinc alloy and brass, the pull comes in three sizes, 6½ inches, 8½ inches, and 12½ inches from center to center; the largest can even be used on your refrigerator.	This adjustable concealed hinge makes it possible to get a completely flush surface on the hinge side of a door. It's three-dimensionally adjustable to move the door a few millimeters horizontally, vertically, and depth-wise, keeping it even and level with the wall. At 8.2 inches, the largest of three available sizes of the stainless-steel hinge can support a door weighing almost 400 pounds.
www.nanz.com	www.rockymountainhardware.com	www.trak-kit.com	www.omniaindustries.com	www.georgeranallidesigns.com	www.vallievalli.com	www.simonswerk.co.uk



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HARDWARE

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From James Bond-ish Biometric Scanners to Vanishing Doors, Today's Advanced Hardware Does Double Duty

LOCKED AND LOADED



The last 30 years have brought an explosion of options in hardware. There are products to suit nearly every use and aesthetic—even niche novelties such as doorknobs that smell good or light up in the dark. But, said experts in the field, several overarching trends are shaping today's market. For architectural hardware, moving parts are gaining popularity. In the world of locks, security concerns have made high-tech hot. And when it comes to items that make a design statement, clients are willing to shell out more for the perfect look to punctuate their space.

John Risch, business and showroom manager of Häfele, has found droves of architects streaming into Manhattan's 26th Street showroom seeking hardware for sliding doors. The reason is simple, he said: The high price of Manhattan real estate means that clients from loft residents to corporations are looking for ways to make their spaces do double duty.

With New York City's population set to rise by nearly a million by 2030, the space crunch will only increase, so New Yorkers will have much to learn from Europeans, who are used to making do with smaller spaces. In New York, "we're seeing signs of having to become more European in terms of efficiency and functionality," said Risch, who noted Häfele's German pedigree.

In a project for one company, for example, Ted Moudis Associates project designer Kimberly Sharpe recently faced the challenge of helping to create a conference room that could be transformed into a café area when meetings weren't in session. Through Häfele, her firm speced the Hawa Super 250, a hardware system for top-hung sliding doors. Surrounding three sides of the pentagon-shaped conference space, several glass panels slide behind a stationary panel or into pockets to the side, out of the way. "Now we have a

conference room that can suddenly—presto change-o—become something else. It's sort of James Bond-like," Sharpe said. Her firm's own office has a Hawa Cornertec sliding door system in its elevator lobby area, which closes to provide security at night.

Versatility is the name of the game in locks, too, leading to the rise of electronic access control (EAC) systems in office buildings, hotels, and residential towers, among other places. EACs come in many varieties, including ones that scan fingertips or read chips embedded in access cards. These smart locks not only secure doors and cabinets, they can be programmed to do so selectively—only during certain hours and for specific people. They also gather information about who has used the lock when. Thus a business could use the electronic records to figure out who was present at the time of a theft, which is helpful for insurance

purposes, said Joey Dalessio, director of business development for Marks USA.

Another advantage is the heightened security such locks offer. Manhattan's Bellevue Hospital switched from Simplex locks—a mechanical push-button type that accepts one code from everyone—to Marks USA's IQ Access Control system. Some locks in the new system can accept more than 3,000 users, each with a unique electronic access card or code to enter on a keypad. As a result, the hospital's security is now much tighter, said Martin Murphy, the hospital's supervisor for the locksmith's shop. But the fastest-growing area of EACs—and those with the highest potential for security—are biometric: systems that read body parts such as retinas or fingerprints.

Of course, you probably don't want the spaces you design to end up looking like high-tech fortresses straight out of the sci-fi film *Gattaca*.

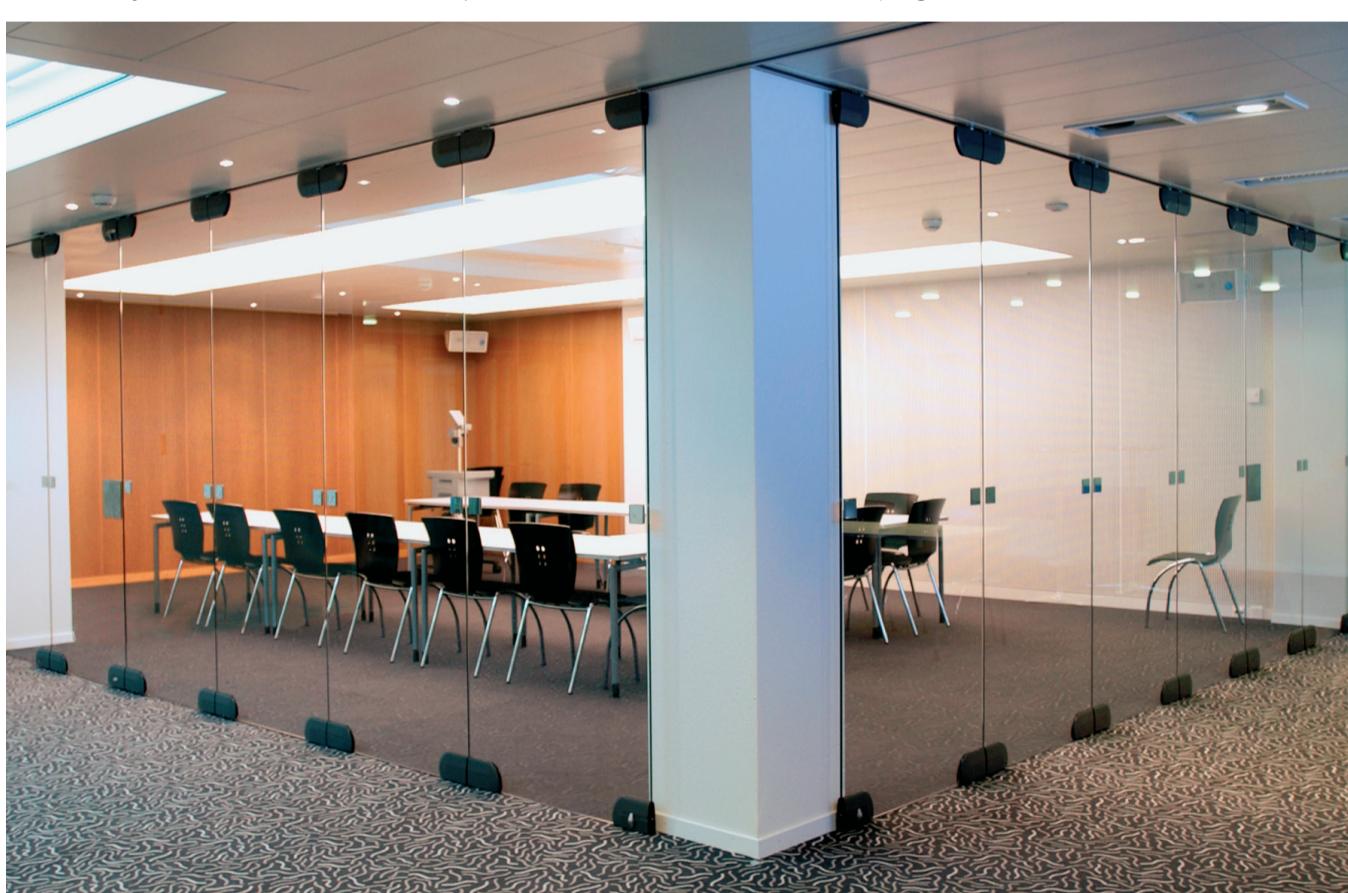
Luckily, some EAC locks come in architectural finishes to blend with their surroundings. Or architects might choose to hide card-reading EACs behind flat surfaces, their locations known only to those who need to use them.

For hardware that's designed to be on display—doorknobs, handles, cabinet pulls, and the like—there is enormous variety on the market, and with the rising popularity of home-design TV shows, many clients are increasingly savvy and willing to pay more than before for just the right look. "It's changed a lot over the last ten years: With HGTV and Extreme Makeover, you see all these crazy things," said Steve Hertzberg, national account manager for Topex Hardware. When clients see hardware, paint, or moldings they like on a design show, they often ask architects to emulate it, he added.

Fortunately, there's also been an explosion of products to match the demand (though some firms still favor of their own custom designs). For many years, brass was the default finish, then occasionally chrome in the 1970s and '80s, Hertzberg added, but now, the options are numerous: stainless steel, satin nickel, and distressed finishes, to name just a few. For years, Valli & Valli has offered door levers by top designers and architects that, naturally, cost top dollar.

"There's a stratification going on in the market," remarked Matthew Preston, managing director of Index-d. While builders may be inclined to go for the cheap stuff, architects tend to be pickier and to spend more—and high-end hardware companies such as Nanz, E.R. Butler & Co., FSB, and d line are reaping the benefits, he said. However, "not all the projects that an architect gets involved with have the budgets to pay for that kind of stuff. In those situations I think it's pretty difficult for the architect to get what he wants these days. You have to make compromises and do your best."

LISA DELGADO
WITH ADDITIONAL RESEARCH
BY AUDREY JAYNES



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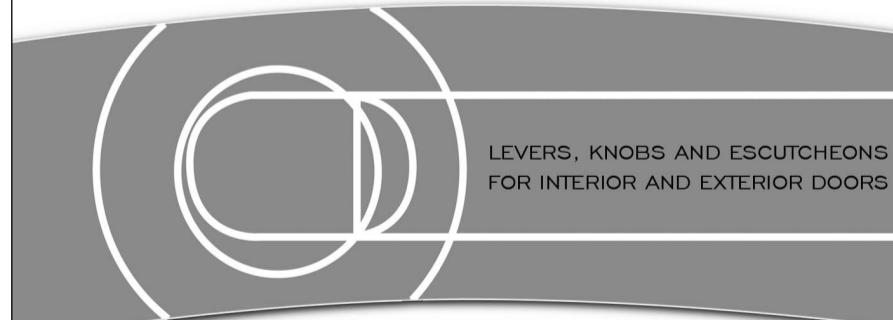
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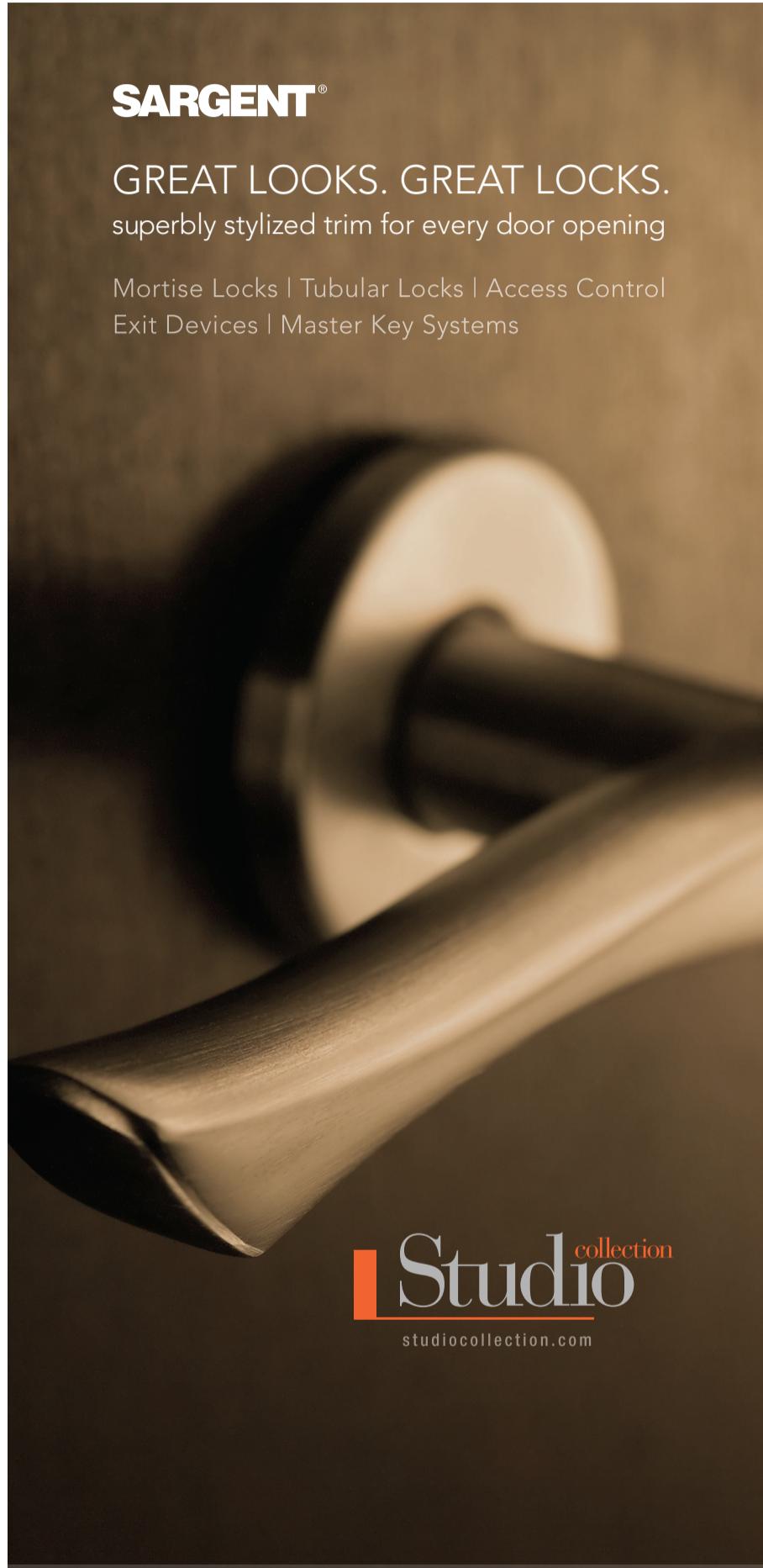
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER FEBRUARY 27, 2008

FEBRUARY/MARCH

FEBRUARY

WEDNESDAY 27
LECTURE
Slate in Green Architecture
6:30 p.m.
Assistance League of Pasadena
820 East California Blvd., Pasadena
www.aiapf.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
The Austrian Winery Boom—A Wine and Architecture Miracle
COPIA: The American Center for Wine, Food & the Arts
500 1st St., Napa
www.copia.org

THURSDAY 28
LECTURE
Architecture & Beyond
6:30 p.m.
Los Feliz Library
1874 Hillhurst Ave., Los Angeles
www.lapl.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Michael Moon
Inner Spaces
Artamo Gallery
11 West Anapamu St., Santa Barbara
www.artamogallery.com

FRIDAY 29
LECTURES
Ramiro Diaz Grandados, Heather Flood
1:00 p.m.
SCI-Arc
960 East 3rd St., Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

The 2030 Challenge—San Francisco Firms and Their Approach
6:00 p.m.
AIA San Francisco
130 Sutter St., San Francisco
www.aiASF.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Mitzi Pederson
Hammer Projects
Armand Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

MARCH

SATURDAY 1
LECTURE
Erika Naginski, Louis Marchesano, Marcia Reed
The Magnificent Piranesi
3:00 p.m.
The J. Paul Getty Villa
17985 Pacific Coast Hwy., Pacific Palisades
www.getty.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
Ed Ruscha
Honor Fraser
1337 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice
www.honorfraser.com

SUNDAY 2
EXHIBITION OPENING
Kara Walker
My Complement, My Enemy, My Oppressor, My Love
Armand Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

WEDNESDAY 5

LECTURE
Mark Johnson
Re-Building Civitas: the Re-Generation of Place in Urban Design
7:00 p.m.
W. M. Keck Lecture Hall
SCI-Arc
960 East 3rd St., Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Enrique Chagoya
Borderlandia
Gallery Paule Anglim
14 Geary St., San Francisco
www.gallerypauleanglim.com

Martin Schoeller
Bodybuilders
ACE Gallery
Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art
5514 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
www.acegallery.net

Judy Fox
ACE Gallery
Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art
5514 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
www.acegallery.net

THURSDAY 6
LECTURE
Douglas Crimp
Action Around the Edges
7:00 p.m.
Fowler Museum of Art
308 Charles East Young Dr., Los Angeles
www.fowler.ucla.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
The Color of Life
The J. Paul Getty Villa
17985 Pacific Coast Hwy., Pacific Palisades
www.getty.edu

FRIDAY 7
LECTURE
Marc Frohn
so FAR so good
1:00 p.m.
W. M. Keck Lecture Hall
SCI-Arc
960 East 3rd St., Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

SATURDAY 8
EXHIBITION OPENING
Carlos Estevez
New Works
Couturier Gallery
166 North La Brea Ave., Los Angeles
www.couturiergallery.com

SUNDAY 9
EXHIBITION OPENING
Inside Architecture: Selections from the Permanent Collection
Museum of Contemporary Art Pacific Design Center
8687 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood
www.moca-la.org

TUESDAY 11
EXHIBITION OPENING
Lessons from Bernard Rudofsky
The J. Paul Getty Center
1200 Getty Center Dr., Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

THURSDAY 13

LECTURE
Wangechi Mutu
7:00 p.m.
Armand Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

FRIDAY 14
LECTURE
Hiromi Nakamura
Sweet and Bitter: Contemporary "Girl"
1:00 p.m.
Armand Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

EVENT
CA Boom V
Annual California Design Show
11:00 a.m.
Barker Hangar
Santa Monica Airport
3021 Airport Ave., Santa Monica
www.caboomshow.com

SATURDAY 15
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Ana Bagayan
Yoko Tanaka
Judith Schaechter
Billy Shire Fine Arts
5790 Washington Blvd., Culver City
www.billyshirefinearts.com

ANNE LAURE SACRISTE
Chung King Project
936 Chung King Rd., Los Angeles
www.chungkingproject.com

California Video
The J. Paul Getty Center
1200 Getty Center Dr., Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

Katy Crowe
Gina Borg
Jancar Gallery
3875 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
www.jancargallery.com

SUNDAY 16
EXHIBITION OPENING
Russel Olson
A Studio Gallery
4260 Lankershim Blvd., Studio City
www.astudiogallery.com

THURSDAY 20
LECTURE
Ronald E. Steen
Plein Air: From Giverny to the Arroyo
7:30 p.m.
The Neighborhood Church
Sanctuary
2 Westmoreland Pl., Pasadena
www.gamblehouse.org

FILM
Fighting for Life & A Time Out of War
(Terry Sanders, 2008), 89 min.
7:00 p.m.
Armand Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd.
www.hammer.ucla.edu

SATURDAY 22

EXHIBITION OPENING
In Collaboration:
Early Works from the Media Arts Collection
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St., San Francisco
www.sfmoma.org

SUNDAY 23
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Allan Kaprow
Art As Life
The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA
152 North Central Ave., Los Angeles
www.moca-la.org

David Wetzel
Carbon/Silicone Hybrid Zone: New Work
Marta Edmisten
Lol
Another Year in LA
2121 North San Fernando Rd., Los Angeles
www.anotheryearinla.com

...And Then Again Printed Series, 1500–2007
Armand Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

TUESDAY 25
LECTURE
Slav Hermanowicz
and Gordon Feller
Cities Addressing their Urban Sustainability Challenges: A Roundtable Discussion
2:00 p.m.
University of California/Berkeley Dept. of Civil Engineering
www.ce.berkeley.edu

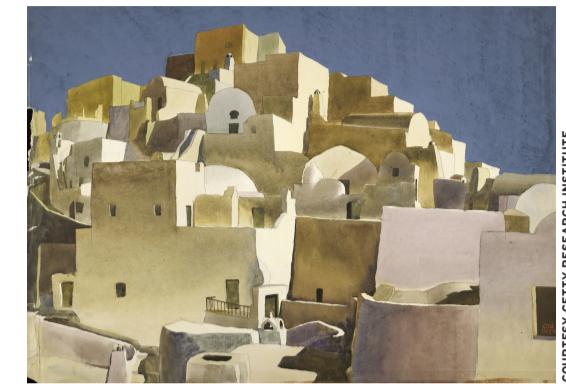
THURSDAY 27
LECTURES
Peter Aicher
Watering an Empire
The J. Paul Getty Villa
17985 Pacific Coast Hwy., Pacific Palisades
www.getty.edu

The Short Road to Net Zero Energy
6:00 p.m.
Pacific Energy Center
851 Howard Street, San Francisco
www.aiASF.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
LA Art in New York
Acuna-Hansen Gallery
427 Bernard St., Los Angeles
www.ahgallery.com

FRIDAY 28
EXHIBITION OPENING
Paul Sietsema
New Work
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St., San Francisco
www.sfmoma.org

SATURDAY 29
EXHIBITION OPENING
Eve Arnold
All About Eve
David Gallery
5792 West Washington Blvd., Culver City
www.davidgallery.net



COURTESY GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

LESSONS FROM BERNARD RUDOFSKY

J. Paul Getty Museum
1200 Getty Center Dr., Los Angeles
March 11 to June 8

From Rudofsky's love of vernacular architecture to his belief that people should eat lying down (imagine robed Romans being fed grapes), the Austrian-born architect, critic, and fashion designer extolled the spontaneity and celebration of sensual pleasures he discovered during his extensive global travels. The exhibit's 140-odd pieces—watercolors, drawings, photographs, architectural models, and more—explore the relationship between his various philosophies on eating, sleeping, designing, and even bathing habits, and include a series of colored slides documenting the foreign places and customs that brought him to reconsider the Western routine. In his 1929 artwork *View of Oia, Santorini Island, Greece* (above), watercolor and pencil depict a dense, sun-scorched mound of vernacular box dwellings, thick walls punctured by tiny windows in shades of sand-yellow and purple-tinted white. A photograph taken by Rudofsky, *Casa Oro (Naples, Italy): View of Three Terraces*, shows lounging women on the protruding terraces and ledges of one of his own works of architecture, which responds to the topography of a cliff overlooking the Bay of Naples. The displayed appreciation of unrestricted life pleasures could have some museumgoers enjoying a supine supper.



COURTESY MOCA, LA

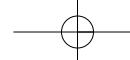
INSIDE ARCHITECTURE: SELECTIONS FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

Museum of Contemporary Art Pacific Design Center
8687 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood
March 9 to June 1

This show explores the many ways that painters and photographers have portrayed interior spaces, whether private or public, austere or grandiose. Photographer Candida Höfer is known for capturing arrays of similar objects; in *Deutsche Bücherei Leipzig IV* (pictured), the repetitive, orthogonal forms of library tables and books conjure imaginings of a crowd immersed in study. Painter Kirsten Everberg drew inspiration from Alfred Hitchcock films' highly stylized decors in a series of paintings of the White House; in *The State Dining Room*, the stiffly ornamented carpet, flower-adorned table, and ornate golden chandelier makes one wonder what sorts of fussy or foreboding affairs might have been conducted there. More mysterious, Luisa Lambi's photos of the Oscar Niemeyer-designed Banco Boavista in Rio de Janeiro depicts the gentle curve of a white tiled wall, leading the eye to follow its undulation and to wonder what, and who, might lie around the bend.

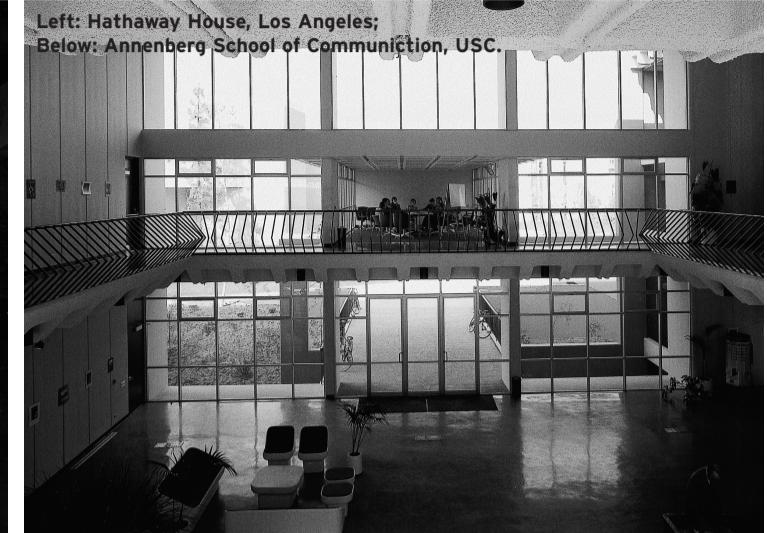
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A. Quincy Jones
Cory Buckner
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Left: Hathaway House, Los Angeles;
Below: Annenberg School of Communication, USC.

WAYNE THOM

In his new book, *A. Quincy Jones*, author Cory Buckner says that the architect worked with "economy and simplicity, beauty and quiet reserve." The epitaph is fitting. Quincy Jones, the Los Angeles-based modernist, was committed to the notion that design was more than an aesthetic exercise. He believed that what he sketched out on vellum had to reflect a set of social ambitions. He called for luxury living on a tight budget and a tiny plot of land. He thought that the

layout and volumes in homes ought to ease the burden of homemaking and family life. He believed that architecture had to work in tandem with city planning—by building large tracts centered around public spaces like parks and schools, doctor's offices, and supermarkets.

Jones practiced what he preached. With his partner, Frederick E. Emmons, Jones helped design the seminal Eichler Homes for northern California developer Joseph L. Eichler. Eleven thousand Eichlers

were built according to Jones' conception of a small, open floor plan, with nearly every room exiting to the exterior and flooded with light. Triumphs of compression, the post-and-beam houses shaped the idea of postwar, subdivision American life.

He was a student of Lionel H. Pries at the University of Washington, who taught that architecture was not about the manipulation of historical styles, but was involved in "problem-solving." In postwar America, as Levittown initiated the

era of mass-produced suburbs, Jones rightly perceived that the rise of cheap, cookie-cutter housing was the demise of community.

Rarely were architects given a chance to unite their social commitment to large-scale projects. As Buckner demonstrates, Jones was lucky twice. His first chance, before he signed on with Eichler, was as the architect for an enormous, overly-ambitious project of 500 homes for the Cooperative Housing Group—a communal development initiated by four musicians in 1951 in the then-blank Crestwood Hills, above Brentwood. Jones shrank lot sizes to make room for a nursery school, park, and a recreation center. Contrary to the customary practice of lining up the houses in a straight row, Jones placed them off-kilter to the streets, to capture the hillside views and offer privacy in a crowded development. "The houses were finished in their natural state," Buckner writes, "concrete

block, redwood siding, exposed Douglas fir plywood and tongue-and-groove ceiling planks, with no applied plaster or paint." Glass walls, sliding doors, and plywood clerestories extended spaciousness to the modest, 1,200-square-foot homes.

Jones' own Steel House #2, which he built in 1954, is a model of his conception that luxury can be coaxed from a small footprint and simple materials. The one-story, steel frame house was partially prefabricated off-site and trucked in. Completed in just three months, the house consisted of a super-thin flat roof floating above glass walls. Dead simple, but then Jones took the interior space, and rather than carve it up, he left it truly open. Curtains closed off the living spaces from public areas. The living room doubled as a library, with a bed that converted to a couch. The kitchen was kitchen, family room, and dining room, all in one. *continued on page 28*

WALKING THROUGH WALLS

Michael Asher
Santa Monica Museum of Art
2525 Michigan Avenue, Santa Monica
Through April 12

LA conceptual artist Michael Asher is presenting a unique new site-specific installation at the Santa Monica Museum of Art. He has reconstructed the structure (steel stud walls) of the 44 exhibition designs that have taken place at the museum since 1998, when the museum relocated to its current location: Bergamot Station (a large art

gallery complex, formerly a trolley station).

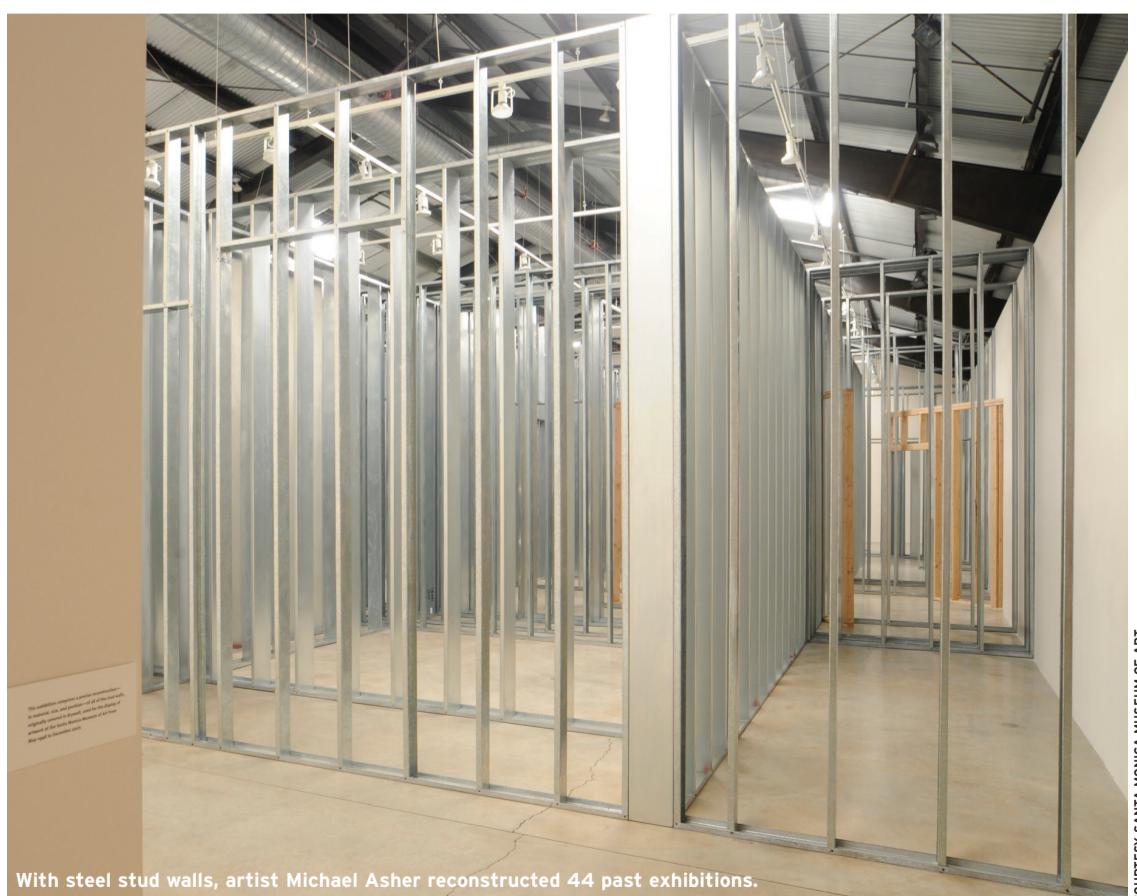
As you enter the main gallery, you feel like the exhibition has yet to open; several stud walls awaiting their final layer occupy the space intersecting each other in all directions. The result is an open labyrinth you can see and walk through that creates a mesmerizing visual experience,

as well as a time travel

into the recent history of the museum. You can look at this piece in many different ways: a kinetic sculpture that you can navigate, an architectural space in (de)construction, or maybe just the ghosts of exhibitions past.

The use of steel stud walls spaced 16 inches on center (the required spacing distance by the building code) makes the space navigable as you walk through each wall. This experience of moving through a memory of a space transforms the museum into a lively experience.

In the small room at the entrance of the museum, you can find the drawings of the 44 floor plans of previous exhibitions, making for an interesting visual



With steel stud walls, artist Michael Asher reconstructed 44 past exhibitions.

COURTESY SANTA MONICA MUSEUM OF ART



Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas (2006). Massive black and white scrim panels compose a labyrinth. The visitor is invited to enter this ephemeral world, weaving between them. In the formation of distinct volume and space, undefined boundaries created by translucency and light make the experience magical.

Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue is a series of panels, some hovering just above ground, some suspended in mid-air. These panels are so perfectly crafted that upon initial encounter, one feels Irwin has taken the act of creating to new heights. On close inspection, the panels make infinite space: reflections double upon themselves, and architecture becomes infinite, color the tool for creating a dynamic stage for phenomenal sensation.

Finally, *Light and Space* is an installation of precisely mounted fluorescent tubes composed on a huge wall. The light emanating from the tubes creates an aura both sensual and ominous; carefully calculated spacing between tubes takes a white backdrop wall and makes it shades of gray, something Irwin said he initially was not sure would happen.

Irwin's work embodies courage and bravery, a confidence that his sense of light and space will carry his work to uncharted territory. If each of us as architects could take these chances, could make magic happen, this world would be a truly fascinating place. **JENNIFER LUCE IS AN ARCHITECT IN SAN DIEGO.**

COURTESY MCASD

Irwin's Light and Spaces, 2007.

The recent exhibit *Primaries and Secondaries*, a survey of the career and work of artist Robert Irwin, speaks volumes to an architect, especially one practicing in Southern California. Irwin is an architect of space, light, and perception. This new exhibit curated by Hugh Davies, director of the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD), focuses on the fascinating way that Irwin touches our perceptions, bringing to light tactile sensations, spatial relationships, and the sensual reactions that make everyday life in the space of architecture meaningful. Irwin does with ease what architects strive to achieve in the span of careers. He points to and marks our physical and psychological relationship with the world around us.

Davies' exhibit follows the full spectrum of Irwin's artistic life and formal language. Included are the early abstract expressionist dot

paintings, compelling acrylic discs pieces, his scrim environments (*Squaring the Room*), and more recent site-specific installations (*Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue*) and the light wall *Five x Five*. Once again, Irwin uses his work to observe, analyze, and respond to surrounding architecture, questioning its meaning and revealing its essence. Works in the exhibit, old and new, identify Irwin as a philosopher of space and alchemist of light, setting him

apart from other artists of his time.

Primaries and Secondaries is housed in the new MCASD annex in the Santa Fe Baggage Depot, San Diego. The annex, an urban gift to the city, has been carefully and thoughtfully renovated by New York architect Richard Gluckman and is fertile ground for Irwin. In recent years, Irwin has played the role of interpreter of architecture, designer of landscapes, and architect in his own

right. For him, it is like being home in an environment that allows him to play with the dappled light, intensify form in space, and alter volumes with the insertion of the ephemeral.

A quick survey of his early works on the second floor reminds us of Irwin's journey, and sets the stage for his phenomenological approach to space. On the ground floor, *Five x Five* is a scrim-filled room that picks up where he left off with his installation at the

EXHIBITIONS REDUX

continued from page 27
reference as you notice how the space has evolved through time. Often the space was given a new configuration for a few exhibitions before returning to a void without walls.

Besides the familiar experience that architects or builders can encounter in the dynamic environment of a construction site, the installation recalls some of the early works of Frank Gehry (an architect with whom the artist once collaborated), such as his nearby iconic house where some of the wall structures were left exposed, or the works of Gordon Matta-Clark, another artist interested in architectural space and its deconstruction.

The work is also reminiscent of Asher's earlier proj-

ects. The artist has been exploring the institutional spaces of exhibition (museums, galleries, and public spaces) since the late 1960s, when he started to reconstruct the spaces that were proposed to him. Some of his most striking interventions include the removal of the bottom of the walls of the Lisson Gallery in London, giving its boundaries a sense of levitation. At another gallery in Milan he sandblasted the walls, turning the iconic white cube into a rough space recalling nearby Roman ruins. At LA's Claire Copley Gallery, he removed the partition wall that separates the office from the exhibition space, giving a clear perspective of what an art gallery really is.

All these projects and many others are worth checking out in Asher's collection,

Writings 1973-1983 on Works 1969-1979. This contains not just aesthetic proposals, but responses to a specific context and situation that were studied at length by the artist before submitting his project. This installation's concept could be reproduced in a number of museums or other art institutions around the world, and while some artists would make a lifelong career of this, Asher will stop with this installation.

Asher is a native of Los Angeles but rarely shows in his city, so it would be wise to take advantage of this event, as no one knows when it will happen again. The artist can spend years working on just one piece; this one has been seven years in the making.

FRANCOIS PERRIN IS AN LA-BASED ARCHITECT.

ESSENTIAL LUXURY

continued from page 27
Looking at the dozens of images Buckner has assembled, it becomes clear that Jones had an innate instinct for how to imbue feeling and mood through the concise use of things like exposed beams, concrete blocks, and clerestory windows. The Griffith Park Girls Camp, completed in 1949, is a primer on using a tongue-and-groove ceiling and brick and glass walls to create intimacy, warmth, and raucous freedom under a single roof. In the dining rooms, the ceiling is aloft, floating away on a sea of glass; in the bedrooms it tips down, seeming almost to kiss the pillows on the girls' beds. Jones placed the posts that hold the roof up along the inside of the dorm walls—interior flying buttresses, in effect, that tie rooms together with warmth and a height appropriate to children thrown together in a camp setting. As Buckner notes, "The low part of the roof shelters the dormitories, which establish a human scale in a vast, rugged area where a more domestic, comforting environment was needed...." Such perfect pitch is everywhere in Jones' work, from a church such as St. Michael and All Angels Church in Studio City (1962) or a supermarket like the

King Cole Market in Whittier (1951, since demolished).

Along with Buckner's introduction and well-researched notes, photographs by Julius Shulman, Marvin Rand, and Ernest Braun remind us that there is still a need for something that might be called architecture in the trenches. Jones' deft touch, his care not only for materials but for the rooms they shaped, needs its acolytes in a time of desperate shortage of affordable housing and faltering public spaces. Buckner shows that architecture—committed, engaged, insightful—is not a luxury, it's a necessity.

GREG GOLDIN WRITES FREQUENTLY FOR AN.



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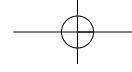
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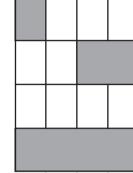
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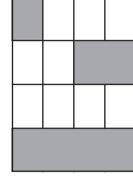
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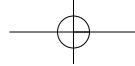
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NOHO: HOPE OR HYPE?



COURTESY AC MARTIN

You would expect that the boldest urban gesture heralding mixed use in Los Angeles would be happening downtown, where the much anticipated \$3 billion Grand Avenue plan is being gilded by Frank Gehry and work continues on the \$2.5 billion L.A. Live extravaganza produced by RTKL and a host of other firms.

In contrast, what is perhaps more impressive and significant for Los Angeles is an ambitious transit-oriented development in North Hollywood, the NoHo Art Wave, developed by Lowe Enterprises, which recently won a competition hosted by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA).

The winning scheme may not twist, turn, and sizzle in the Southland sun as the structural indulgences of our star architects do, but judging from the submitted plans, the project appears to be potentially much more friendly to those who will actually live, work, and visit there.

Now there is a divertissement in one's critical matrix.

Master-planned by the local firm AC Martin Partners, with a challenging mix of uses and a refreshing site plan, the \$1 billion proposal lends to the sprawling suburban San Fernando Valley the hope of a welcomed urbane density and a desirable focal point.

Well, maybe not that welcomed in the valley, where in recent years, fear that development of any heft and substance might heighten the growing gridlock and lower municipal services has cast a pall over real planning and urban design.

And the project definitely has the heft

and substance to unnerve the NIMBYs, no doubt prompting charges of Manhattanization, while conversely, perversely, making starry-eyed architects ache with envy. Lowe Enterprises proposes the transformation of 16 acres of now mostly surface parking lots around the major intersection of Chandler and Lankershim boulevards into a conglomeration of nearly one million square feet of office space, 220,000 square feet of retail, restaurants, and entertainment, and 560-plus units of various housing types, including nearly 100 affordable. Then there is the ubiquitous parking and various community facilities.

Add the public garages and open space located at the convergence of the Redline subway and Orangeline busway routes linking the valley to Hollywood and downtown, and you have the makings of a true satellite city center. That indeed was the hope of the MTA when it sponsored the competition for the site last year in its heretofore praiseworthy but problematical program to sponsor joint developments adjacent to transit nodes.

Several such sites have been developed adjoining stations along the expanding MTA lines, on Wilshire Boulevard, and in Pasadena. But they have been relatively modest, if not uninspired, mostly housing with a smattering of convenience retail. Unfortunately, mass transit in LA has yet to be recognized as an amenity.

Then there have been the earlier major satellite centers marking scattered large tracts in what had been low-rise neighborhoods, most notably the pre-

dominantly commercial Century City on LA's Westside, and Universal City and the Warner Center at opposite ends of the valley. They generally were designed as isolated mega-projects, in the mold of highrise office parks of a quarter century ago, set off and shadowing the adjacent lowrise neighborhoods.

No doubt they never would have been approved in today's parochial political climate, located as they are far from mass transit and severely impacting local traffic. To the MTA's credit, it established criteria for the NoHo competition that took into consideration the circulation patterns of the area that will now have the increased burden of being a park-and-ride transfer point. Recommended street widening and a few well-placed signals will be traffic band-aids at best.

Indeed, whatever mitigation is eventu-

ally proposed, it is questionable whether they will lessen the expected opposition by recalcitrant communities in the valley worried about increased traffic and the march of highrises.

Nevertheless, the design addressing the interaction on the pedestrian level is noteworthy and praiseworthy. There will be no "Grove Two" mooning the public streets in NoHo as the infamous Grove project does in the city's distant Fairfax District.

Judging from the plans, the most discernible architectural problem will be the large park-and-ride structures to serve the commuters using the transit lines. They squat like oversized pillboxes at the opposite ends of the site and beg to be wrapped with retail at the street level and above with vertical landscaping. I'd even settle for some advertising. That may make the garages perhaps more appealing, though may not lessen the crunch on the connecting streets and the concerns of neighboring communities.

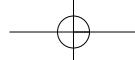
The project interestingly intensifies the mix of offices, retail, and residential, and instead of isolating the project on dead-end plazas, attempts to reach out to the surrounding community. What we have in the master plan so far is less an emphasis on soaring sculptural forms (although those exist) and more on the need for streetscaping. It may not be the sexiest of schemes, but it sure makes for more "collegial public places," and the hope through its "connectivity" for more amenable neighbors, according to the firm's principal designer David Martin. Nice thoughts, but it is going to take a lot of convincing and urban design smarts to overcome the valley's suburban mindsets, where front lawns are still valued more than streetscaping. Both the client and its consultants have had limited experience with the proposed scale and the needed sensibilities, and will be challenged.

That the project is also sustainable is a given, added Martin. That, of course, is what is expected in these green-conscious, climate-conscious days. That we also can expect a concern for context and the actual users is nice to anticipate, and in the NoHo project even nicer to witness. Of course, once the entitlements are secured, how the projects will be phased and what other design firms might be selected for which buildings and public spaces could turn this hope into just another LA hype.

SAM HALL KAPLAN IS A CRITIC, AUTHOR, AND URBAN DESIGNER LIVING IN LOS ANGELES.

Rendering (above) and exploded axonometric of AC Martin's NoHo plan.





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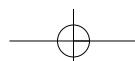


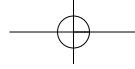
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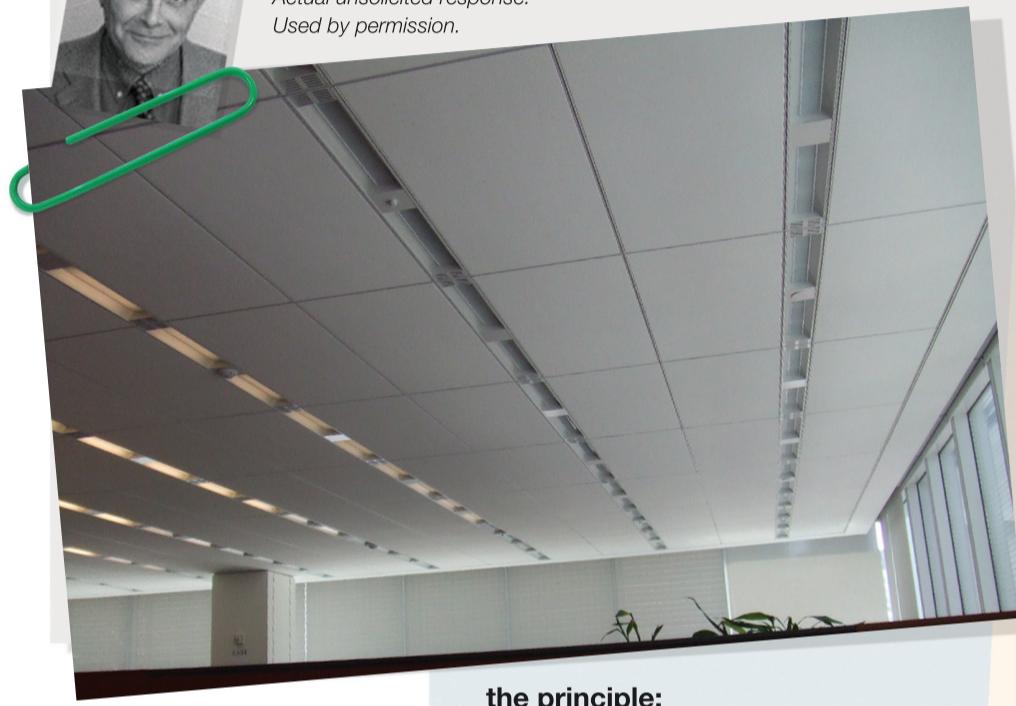




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