The Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA) in Newport Beach will be packing its bags and moving about eight miles north. The museum announced its plans in early June to build a brand new building in Costa Mesa’s Segerstrom Center for the Arts. The project will be designed by Morphosis, and will be that firm’s first-ever art museum.

The 12-acre Segerstrom Center, launched in 1976 with a donation of land by giant Costa Mesa retail center South Coast Plaza, is now home to an expanded South Coast Repertory Theater, the 2,000-seat Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, and a 46,000-square-foot community arts plaza. OCMA’s move will finally give the center a visual arts presence, while giving the museum itself a much higher profile.

“Culture in the area is really centered on that site. If the museum wasn’t there it would be on the periphery of culture in Orange County,” explained OCMA director Dennis Szakacs, who joined the museum in 2003. The Segerstrom Center is adjacent to the Orange County Performing Arts Center, which contains several other cultural institutions, including Segerstrom Hall, the Samueli Theater, and Founders Hall.

OCMA has been in its current building since 1974 and underwent an expansion in 1996. Its move to Segerstrom was planned in 1998 when South Coast Plaza, directed by Segerstrom lead benefactor Henry Segerstrom, donated six acres to the Orange County Performing Arts Center to hold for the Segerstrom Center’s expansion, including...
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Walking through the Dwell on Design expo at the Los Angeles convention center last month, I came across plenty of good ideas. But one struck me as particularly smart: the SolarLease program from a company called SolarCity. Under the plan, launched in April, homeowners pay a monthly fee (over a standard 15 years) to lease solar panels, therefore avoiding the upfront costs, paperwork, and maintenance of buying their own. The company installs the panels for free and guarantees that monthly charges will be less than what customers save in energy costs.

An idea like this makes particular sense in California, where it’s sunny much of the time. But according to the California Energy Commission, there have only been about 13,000 solar systems installed in the state. That’s out of over 35 million total households (according to the U.S. Census 2005 American Community Survey) and countless businesses and government agencies.

That’s pitiful, especially now that going solar has become easier and more affordable. Besides programs like SolarLease, there are plenty of providers. A list of registered California retailers is available at www.gosolarcalifornia.org, a site run by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and the California Energy Commission (a national list is available at findsolars.com).

According to the energy commission, prices for a typical photovoltaic (PV) solar system, with installation, average around $3,950 for government and non-profit organizations (updated rates can be found at www.csi-trigger.com), which works out to about a $75,000 rebate for installing the average 2.5 kilowatt home PV system. New Solar Homes Partnership is a similar rebate program offered through the Energy Commission.

Meanwhile, local and federal government initiatives provide further incentives and tax credits for going solar. Homeowners using solar energy can get up to a $2,000 credit on their federal income taxes and business owners can get up to 30 percent of the price of an installation. Also, the CPUC gives incentives for other solar systems besides PV, like solar thermal and solar hot water.

Other states like New Jersey and Colorado have had problems administrating their solar rebate programs and keeping up with residents’ demands. But because California has 3.5 billion over 10 years for its program (paid for by a senate bill, not by utility surcharges as in other states), and since California’s local utilities—as opposed to public administration—began overseeing programs in 2008, California’s program has gone fairly smoothly, pointed out Amy Morgan, a spokesperson for the California Energy Commission. Not to say that solar is completely painless. Installation can be pricey, and rebates and incentives only partially offset the cost; it can take years to recover the rest through savings on your energy bills. Moreover, the federal solar credit expires at the end of this year and has yet to be renewed, so that incentive is still up in the air, raising more questions about solar’s future (since SolarLease’s most significant savings relate to the federal credits, for example, its plan could be greatly hindered if the credits are not extended).

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Image courtesy of WMCRP Architects, Maryland
Seven strangers were picked to live in a house, yes, but a few episodes into MTV’s The Real World: Hollywood, fans have realized this is not your typical season. One housemate has already been to rehab and back, and two people have—spoil alert—moved out. But hey, at least the counters are made from recycled glass! Yes, folks, you can indulge in this altered reality with a clear conscience because this Real World house is sustainable. The house—which is located in the old CBS studios at Columbia Square—was designed by veteran MTV production designer Chuck Aubrey, who opted for such details as bamboo flooring, Bosch Energy Star appliances, energy-efficient lighting, and a solar-heated pool. It’s the perfect environmentally-responsible backdrop for rampant nudity, anti-gay screaming matches, racial slurs, and more multiple-partner sex than we’ve seen this side of Boogie Nights. Of course, while the Hollywood cast threw its sustainableorgies on a mostly-isolated property, a recent announcement came to us via Eavesdrop NY that next season’s The Real World: Brooklyn will be shot in the borough’s BellTel Lofts. The first Real World in a real high-rise. Find out what happens when real neighbors stop being polite and start getting real.

As gossip blogs breathlessly await photographic proof of Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie’s twins, the architecture world ponders another mystery: Which architect(s) will they name their kids after this time? Since two-year-old Shiloh Nouvel Jolie-Pitt is obviously named after Jean Nouvel (and a Neil Diamond song) we’re sure they’ll only be considering Pritzker-winning names this time around. Might we suggest our two favorites: Sweet Caroline Koolhaas Jolie-Pitt and Holly Holy Herzog & de Meuron Jolie-Pitt. While Jolie’s fulfilling her role as the world’s sexiest balloon, Pitt’s busy conceiving other projects on the opposite side of the world: He’ll be designing an 800-room sustainable hotel in Dubai for developers Zabeel Properties. No, he’s not AIA accredited, but his longtime collaborators at LA-based GRAFT, who steered his Make It Right program in New Orleans, will make sure it doesn’t fall down. While we’ve known of Pitt’s dalliances with design for quite some time now, a recent statement from Pitt makes it sound like he might step away from front of the camera for life. Said Pitt: “Whilst acting is my career, architecture is my passion.” Whilst? Whist? Spoken like a true architect.

WISE MOVE continued from front page space for OCMA. After greatly growing its collection, budget, and endowment, and creating a master plan for its new facility, the well-respected OCMA was ready for the move. The Performing Arts Center transferred 1.64 acres next to the Henry and Renee Segerstrom Concert Hall to the museum on June 6. The new site will allow OCMA to expand from 38,000 square feet to a possible 72,000 square feet, though the final size of the new museum has not been determined. The land transfer agreement requires the museum to break ground on the new building no later than 2013 and to open the museum by 2016. OCMA’s Szakacs said he hopes the new museum will be finished before then. The selection of Morphosis came from an initial list of 15 firms that was then cut to four, including Tokyo-based Shigeru Ban, Madrid-based Abalos & Herreros, and Zurich-based Giger Guyer. In the end, said Szakacs, the museum was most impressed by Morphosis’ enthusiasm and its willingness “to rethink what a museum is, both spatially, conceptually, and programmatically.” Szakacs said the design for the new museum should be unveiled at the end of the summer, adding that there would be a focus on sustainability and on how people move through the museum both inside and outside. Morphosis had been shortlisted for a number of art museums, including LACMA’s recent expansion, the Denver Art Museum, and the Kunsthau Graz, but had never before been selected to design one. Henry Segerstrom said he was “delighted” about the Segerstrom Center’s addition of OCMA, which he called a “phenomenal institution.” He added that the Segerstrom Center will stop expanding for a while after the new museum is built. There is an entitlement for another 1,000-seat theater on the land, but “it wouldn’t happen for another ten years.”

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IT TAKES A VILLAGE

variances (the affordable component will be
of the project have decried its height, parking
"and "artist housing."
Eizenberg said will consist of "family hous-
units that Koning Eizenberg principal Julie
Community Corporation will team with
Santa Monica non-profit developer
formerly belonged to RAND—as a park. The
property on its northern border—land that
project will leave almost seven acres of city
by the city's redevelopment agency, the
oper. Located on multiple properties owned
of this street—were requested by the city.
Related California is the project's devel-
oper. Located on multiple properties owned
by the city's redevelopment agency, the
project will leave almost seven acres of city
property on its northern border—land that
formerly belonged to RAND—as a park. The
project will target LEED Silver certification.
Santa Monica non-profit developer
Community Corporation will team with
Related to develop the 164-affordable
units that Koning Eizenberg principal Julie
Eizenberg said will consist of "family hous-
and "artist housing."
Notwithstanding its utopian nature, critics
of the project have decried its height, parking
variances (the affordable component will be
absolved of Santa Monica's stringent park-
ning requirements), and density. Density also
served as a major design challenge. "The
hardest thing was actually fitting (164 units)
on the land available," noted Oonagh Ryan,
senior associate for Koning Eizenberg. One
Koning Eizenberg solution is for third floor
units of the arts blocks to cantilever out. By
hanging the units in the air, the firm left valu-
able open and community space at ground
level. To further break up massing, the firm
integrated established strategies such as
varied rooflines and rhythms of built and
open space with small design surprises that
fulfill multiple roles. A number of shading
deVICES will protect against the western
sun, and vertical louvers, sliding screens,
and fins that project outward add a play of
shadow and daylight on the walls.
In approaching the market-rate units that
align the new park and Ocean Avenue, MRY
created three bands of design, shifting scale
between the high ceilings of first floor retail,
mid-building residential, and a "top zone"
marked by colorful, two-story, townhouse-
like condos resting on rooflines.
As part of the development deal, Related
will contribute $592,000 for an off-site child-
care facility, $700,000 towards transit enti-
ties like Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus, and
$640,000 towards arts and culture funding.
Can a utopian village be built in today's
pessimistic financial environment? "It's
location, location, location," said Joan Ling,
who heads the Community Corporation of
Santa Monica. "If they can't get a construc-
tion loan for a project here, then we all have
more important things to be worried about
in this economy." TIBBY ROTHMAN

BERKELEY ART MUSEUM GETS
TOYO ITO'S FIRST
HIP TO BE SQUARE

On June 10, the University of California,
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film
Archive (BAM/PFA) unveiled designs for
its new building, the first in the U.S. by
Japanese architect Toyo Ito.
Plans for the project got underway after
a 1997 survey found that the museum's
existing structure—a 1970 concrete Brutalist
design by Mario Ciampi—did not meet
current seismic standards. The museum
selected Ito for the project in fall 2006. His
new building, about ten blocks northwest
of Ciampi's 103,000-square-foot museum, will
be 40 percent larger, with almost 20 percent
more exhibition space, an additional theater,
and expanded research facilities. The final
design is expected to be complete at the
end of 2009, and the museum plans to
open its new building in 2013. The fate of
the existing museum hasn't been decided,
although it will not be torn down.
Ito's design calls for a three-story building
made of a grid of 16 cubes on each floor,
an assemblage that resembles stacked ice
trays. Its fluid steel exterior will curve to
meet large windows, at times peeling away
from the envelope. Its 139,000-square-foot
interior, supported by five-inch-thick walls
(the grid design removing the need for
additional columns), will be composed of
interlocking spaces with gently curved walls. Gallery walls will part like curtains to allow
passage between exhibition areas.
The museum's first floor will house two
theaters, five exhibition galleries, the muse-
um store and café, and other visitor ameni-
ties. The second floor will include eight
galleries, a screening room, the Conceptual
Art Study Center, a learning center, and a
library. The top floor, with seven galleries,
will be dedicated to works on paper and to
BAM/PFA's Asian art collection, and will
include an Asian garden gallery.
Nods to the surrounding neighborhood
will include a plaza-like extension of adjacent Center Street, a largely transparent ground-
floor façade, and a large, multi-purpose
interior forum. All galleries and theaters will
be equipped with new technologies, and the
museum building is targeted to achieve at
minimum a LEED Silver certification.
The new building is projected to cost
$100 million to $120 million for construction.
Funding will come entirely from private
sources, with BAM/PFA now in the early
stages of a fundraising campaign. SL

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And like the German museum, the California museum resembles an iceberg come to rest in the midst of a metropolis. Beyond that formal resonance, though, Libeskind sees the two buildings as representing divergent aspects of the Jewish experience. If the German museum casts the tragic figure of the Holocaust on Berlin, the California museum, said the architect, “is all about celebration, about living history, about making connections.” In designing the 63,000-square-foot museum, Libeskind based the plan and massing on the forms of the two Hebrew letters—chet and yud—that make up the Hebrew word for life, chai.

Libeskind’s ode to life crams into a busy block of skyscraper hotels, just south of Market Street, and its cha-shape rises out of the remains of an electric power station designed by Willis Polk shortly after the great 1906 Earthquake. The result is a clash of old and new, of red brick and blue steel, of creamy terra cotta ornament and razor-sharp angles; a clash that is intended to comment on the life of architectural ideas. Not by accident, the one spot the restless yud touches ground is alongside the apse of adjacent St. Patrick’s Church, yet another earthquake survivor. Here Libeskind provokes a clash of shapes in order to evoke the loftiness of human aspiration. At the eastern end of the church, the apse rises as a gesture toward holiness. Libeskind’s precariously balanced polyhedron is also a spiritual probe of sorts, a metaphor for the museum’s mission of exploring the culture, art, and history of Jews in Northern California, as well as the meaning of Judaism in the contemporary era.

The dialectical pairings continue inside, where the spacious entrance lobby is framed by Polk’s brick wall and the chert part of Libeskind’s chai. Here the brick wall sheds ornament for structure, a gigantic frame of steel I-beams that supported it during construction and now provides seismic bracing. Along with other reconstructed remnants, such as steel catwalks and trusses, the wall conjures up the might of San Francisco’s industrial past. Across the lobby, Libeskind’s otherwise unassuming white drywall connotes a lengthier past. Illuminated Hebrew letters spell “Parades,” the word for a garden beyond that also speaks to the journeys into Judaism that await museum visitors.

On two levels, the museum’s principal spaces—the lobby, cafe and store, three galleries, a multi-purpose room, and educational wing—spill out of the circulation core, where the main staircase and elevator are located, and where the chef and yud embrace one another. Unlike Libeskind’s Denver Art Museum, where slanted walls intrude into practically every gallery, the two principal CJM galleries are relaxingly rectilinear. The third gallery, however, located on the second floor, comprises right angles at every turn. The overwrought space is further destabilized by 36 diamond-shaped windows that allude to a masterpiece of the Soviet avant garde—the house that Konstantin Melnikov designed in 1927 for himself in Moscow. In spite of the architect’s by-now familiar dissonant shapes, the Contemporary, Jewish Museum works. Because of its small size, its mix of old and new elements, and its rhythms that oscillate between the restless and restful, Libeskind’s CJM presents a nuanced and enlightened architectural experience. Visitors will doubtless require considerable education on the geometry and meaning of the chet.

But encouraging curiosity about a building to blossom alongside its exhibitions is certainly a positive tack to take in contemporary museum design. Given the museum’s mission to connect the millennial traditions of Judaism with the contemporary culture of California, what better place to start than in a word that’s imbued, to paraphrase German playwright and poet Friedrich Schiller, with the beautiful spark of God.
The Gehry building is not universally supported by neighbors, who have bemoaned excessive traffic and overcrowded parking lots. Oliver hopes to address the concerns of angry homeowners. “They are afraid of the Gehry building because they see it as Disney Hall on the hillside,” said Oliver, who once worked in Gehry’s office. “We are trying to assuage their fears and explain that the building isn’t designed yet.”

A past president of the Linda Vista-Annandale Association, Sharon Yonashiro, agreed that even the Ellwood building was difficult for neighbors to accept. “Here comes the next generation of people who want to leave an imprint, and suddenly there’s a 90-foot building in a single-family residential neighborhood,” said Yonashiro. “We feel it’s out-of-character and an extremely insensitive project.”

A longtime faculty member who agreed with the Gehry plan, among other projects, will be reevaluated and reprioritized by the facilities, future projects, and near-term international ideas and initiatives, said Koshalek in a separate statement. “Above all, I will continue to be unwavering in my support of and enthusiasm for the future of Art Center.”

On June 18, organizers of an online petition, Edith Flores, and the board of trustees, with a letter signed by over 1,400 students, faculty, and alumni demanding that work on the Gehry building be halted. The group called for funds to be devoted instead to the improvement of existing facilities, faculty support, rising tuition costs, schoolwork, and recruitment. Another petition, Honesty First, in support of the building and Koshalek, had only 400 signatures.

In Puerner’s statement, he acknowledged the students’ demands. “Significant concerns have also been expressed about the balance between investment in current facilities, future projects, and near-term educational needs,” he said, noting that the Gehry plan, among other projects, will be “reevaluated and reprioritized by the facilities and finance committees of the Board.” Gehry Partners chose not to comment on the statement when contacted by AN.

Koshalek is known as a charismatic leader who came to the school in 1999 after 17 years as director of MOCA. He immediately embarked on a fundraising mission for a new master plan that included Gehry’s Design Research Complex (DRC) as a centerpiece. (Alvaro Siza was also attached at one point, but was dismissed when the plan was scaled down.) According to Patricia Oliver, senior vice president of architecture and education planning, the DRC would contain a technology center, student meeting places, studios, and workshop space.

“The students seem to think we can solve these needs in this existing building,” said Oliver of Craig Ellwood’s 1975 black steel box. “We cannot solve their needs within the confines of this current structure.”

In 2003, when Koshalek arrived, as known as the Wind Tunnel was renovated by Daly Genik for $15 million as a center for graduate and public programs. A $35 million, privately-funded student housing building by Daly Genik will break ground this year.

One area of misconception, according to Puerner, was that the DRC has been approved by the school’s board. In fact, only an initial phase including cost analysis and fundraising efforts was approved. The DRC proposal is now on the agenda of the impact report stage, with a meeting scheduled for July 23 and could go before the Pasadena City Council as soon as August.
It's hot, dry, brown, and dusty—and for some, a personal paradise. Welcome to the California high desert, where a pair of Los Angeles-based architects, Linda Taalman and Alan Koch, have finished construction on their own 1,100-square-foot getaway.

An experiment in hands-on minimalism, the house sits on a remote five-acre site in Pioneertown—just beyond the northwestern boundary of Joshua Tree National Park—and two hours east of Los Angeles. A husband and wife team, Taalman and Koch bought the land in 2006, and with the help of friends and family, built much of the house themselves.

It's a project they had been contemplating since moving their design firm, Taalman Koch Architecture, to Los Angeles from New York five years ago. The couple, who met at Cornell and founded OpenOffice arts + architecture, relocated shortly after completing the design and renovation of the Dia:Beacon museum in Beacon, New York, in 2003. Their move west was precipitated by a desire to experiment with new building materials and construction techniques, and to have a more direct role in seeing buildings they had designed come to life.

The Off-grid iT house is the result of the couple’s latest experiment in mixing prefabricated and on-site construction techniques. The aluminum framing, steel roof, cabinets, and 3-form bathroom walls arrived ready to install, while the concrete foundation and electrical and plumbing systems were fabricated to meet site-specific needs.

Since the house is two miles away from the nearest electric tower, Taalman and Koch engineered an off-the-grid power system that includes eight solar panels, four of which are on the roof and provide electricity, while two additional panels serve as the house’s solar water heater. A sizable overhang shades rectilinear floor-to-ceiling windows, some of which are patterned with a vinyl decal grid that functions both as a shading device and a privacy screen. The strategy for enclosing the living quarters is equally low-tech: the bedroom area is nestled between a small hill and a cluster of acacia trees. A pair of outdoor courtyards completes the rectangular floor plan, creating the same sense of easy indoor/outdoor living popularized by modernist architects working in California during the 1950s and ’60s.

The house was designed as a kit around a modular floor plan, with open sections that can be shifted or mirrored to meet the client’s space and privacy needs. Taalman is unsentimental about the notion of site specificity, believing, as many modernists did, that architecture can become more accessible by way of being more generic and, in turn, more easily reproduced. The iT house may seem one-of-a-kind, but the firm has built three others just like it in Villa Park, Paso Robles, and Three Rivers, near Sequoia National Park.

“The idea of the house is that ‘iT’ can be whatever one wants it to be, it’s up to you to fill in the blanks,” explained Taalman. JULIE KIM
THE GAP CONTINUES TO CLOSE BETWEEN FURNITURE FOR PUBLIC AND FOR PRIVATE, FOR OFFICE AND FOR HOME. AS A SELECTION OF HIGHLIGHTS FROM LAST MONTH’S NEOCON EXHIBITION IN CHICAGO SHOWS, EVEN THE SOPHISTICATED CAN GET TOUGH.

THE SMART SET

1 ACUITY
At this point, topping the Aeron Chair is pure spectator sport, and while the new Acuity Chair from Allsteel is ergonomically almost identical, it can boast a more glamorous tailored silhouette thanks to European-level craft detailing. And top this: Not only are 90 percent of its materials recyclable, but Allsteel is using wind power for the chair’s assembly.

www.allsteeloffice.com

2 HERRINGBONE STRIPE BY PAUL SMITH
From fashion to furniture, from office to home, the lifelines become colorful when British fashion designer Paul Smith gets involved. Smith’s bespoke barcode stripe now adorns a sturdy Maharam wool in upholstery weight and contract-performance quality. Available in a brown, navy, and heathered gray herringbone, it will lend any corporate office unimpeachable sartorial flair.

www.maharam.com

3 TULIP-SIXTY
Designed by Jeffrey Bernett for B&B Italia, this chrome wire, sled-based armchair—also available with spoke legs—is a contract market edition of the popular swiveling Tulip first introduced in 1999. The new Tulip offers a more subtle take on the retro bucket, resulting in a family of compatible but diverse seating options for office or home.

www.bandbitalia.com

4 CH100 SERIES SOFA
The Danish chair master Hans Wegner was ahead of his time when he designed the CH100 Series Sofa in 1970 for both contract and residential markets, maintaining a luxury level in both materials and craftsmanship (even the undersides of cushions are stitched leather). With originals from the 12-piece collection selling up rarely at auction, Wegner Studio chose Carl Hansen & Son to reintroduce the flat stainless steel and full-down upholstery sofa, distributed by Coalesse, in 2008.

www.coalesse.com

5 COGNITA
With an eye to reigniting the glory days of its innovative past, Herman Miller commissioned four design firms to think hard about office space in the home. Minneapolis-based Blu Dot came up with a riff on the blanket chest-credenza-filing cabinet, called Cognita. With a top surface that’s part upholstered and part walnut veneer, storage below can swing between high-density hanging files or linens, while a hinged top conceals an office-supply tray. It’s clever enough to make even Charles and Ray jealous.

www.hermanmiller.com

6 TOGETHER BENCH
Coalesse is at the vanguard of mixing it up between home, hotel, office, and boardroom. A division of the office furniture giant Steelcase, the brand is focused on flexible lifestyle furnishings. Part corner banquet, part bench, and all sleekly upholstered, the Together Bench designed by Vienna-based EOOS is a prime example of this contemporary mindset.

www.coalesse.com
In late June, the Los Angeles Forum for Architecture and Design announced that LA firm Oyler Wu Collaborative had won its LINER competition, to outfit the Forum's newly acquired headquarters at 6520 Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles. The Forum's roughly 1,000-square-foot storefront space and gallery, which they will occupy by early fall, is located on the ground floor of Woodbury University’s Hollywood Center for Community Research and Design. Oyler Wu's $7,500 project, Pendulum Plane, which the firm describes as an “intricate ceiling system,” will consist of a series of sixteen 40 x 90-inch hinged and counterbalanced aluminum frames that can swivel into a variety of positions to accommodate different types of exhibitions, lectures, and other activities.

Seven months after a devastating wildfire gutted much of the famous Malibu Presbyterian Church, the congregation has selected Dominy + Associates Architects of San Diego to design a new building for the two-acre hillside site along Malibu Canyon Road near Pepperdine University. The architects have built several other churches in San Diego, Irvine, and Tarzana.

Michael Maltzan Architecture (MMA) announced two major commissions in June. The firm was selected by San Francisco State University to design its new Creative Arts Center, which will house SF State’s programs in broadcast and electronic communication arts, music, dance, and theater. The building will include a new 1,200-seat theater, little theater, black box theatre, music recital hall, and choral and orchestral rehearsal spaces. MMA was also selected to design The Nine Muses, a new riverfront amphitheater in New Orleans, as part of that city’s Reinventing The Crescent plan to restore life to the city’s waterfront. Other architects selected for the redevelopment scheme include David Adjaye, Hargreaves Associates, and Eskew+Dume+Ripple.

Santa Monica unveiled its brand new Ferris wheel in late May. The $1.5 million structure, manufactured by Chance Morgan in Wichita, Kansas, stands 130 feet above the Pacific Ocean. It features 20 gondolas with a maximum of six riders per car, accommodating up to 600 riders per hour.

On July 2, the LA City Council voted to veto a $190,000 renovation that would have added grass and exercise equipment to Pershing Square’s Palm Court. Located on the northeast corner of the park, Palm Court is home to the park’s collection of statues. The LA City Park commissioners had voted for the renovation earlier this year, but in June the city council asserted its jurisdiction over the park.

The Water + Life Museums in Hemet, CA were recently awarded Platinum LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), becoming California’s first LEED Platinum museums. The low-lying, rectilinear complex, designed by Lehrer + Gangi Design + Build, was inspired by the giant infrastructure works in the area, including a dam at adjacent Diamond Valley Lake. Green elements include multiple solar shielding techniques, a huge PV panel array, and radiant floor heating and cooling.

Frank Gehry will be awarded the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement in architecture at the 11th International Architecture Biennale in Venice, opening on September 14. Architect Tom Kundig, a partner at Seattle-based Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen, was awarded the 2008 Cooper Hewitt Design Award for Architecture. Other finalists for the award were firms LOT-EK and Weiss/Manfredi.

The Myron Hunt–designed Huntington Gallery recently reopened after a two-year, $20 million restoration by Irwindale-based Earl Corp. and San Francisco preservation firm Architectural Resources Group. The gallery is housed in a Beaux Arts mansion, completed in 1911 for Henry Huntington to display his art treasures. The restoration includes new lighting, mechanical systems, and surface treatments as well as new entrances, slightly re-ordered spaces, and two new upstairs galleries.

Dan Meis of Meis Architects announced that he will merge his practice with international architecture firm Aedas. Meis is best known as the designer of Los Angeles’ Staples Center, Seattle’s Safeco Field, and Cincinnati’s Paul Brown Stadium. Aedas has offices in over 15 countries.
The modern dream of the readymade has carried prefab far since it was first imagined over 100 years ago, but now with the pressure to be all things to all people—green, luxurious, and even one-of-a-kind, Kimberly Stevens wonders if prefab can ever live up to its own potential.
There’s nothing new about prefab—in fact, it’s often referred to as modern architecture’s “oldest new idea.” But in its current trendiness—widespread glossy press coverage and the benediction of a major new exhibit scheduled to open at MoMA in New York on July 20—a handful of architects, investors, large firms, and real estate brokers are still trying to prove that the concept can live up to its hype.

Historically, the idea of prefabricated building systems has always seemed fresh and of-the-moment. In 1892, Ernest Franklin Hodgson developed a prefabricated building system to sell chicken coops, dog houses, tool sheds, and small summer cottages. Eventually, he introduced larger homes and garages, a concept met with intense scrutiny and skepticism surrounding prefab, or modular or factory housing, as it’s otherwise called. Some argue that while prefab is touted for its ability to be mass-produced, it’s delivered to relatively few. Others note that while it promises affordability, modern prefab is often expensive. For example, California developer Steve Glenn’s much-publicized Living Homes, with designs by Ray Kappe and Kieran Timberlake, generally average well over $200 per square foot.

More questions remain about the viability of the prefab homes and their durability. For the architect entrepreneur looking to sell prefab as a business, it remains unclear if it’s possible to turn a profit. For the time being, as prefab units rise in cost, developments remain small because few houses have been widespread sellers.

“I just think the whole thing is a false promise,” said Los Angeles realtor Brian Linder. “They’re very difficult to sell. There’s nothing low-cost about them. Until someone like Honda or Toyota gets involved, I don’t think it’s going anywhere.”

Allison Arieff, author of Prefab (2003), said that people designing 7,000-square-foot prefab might as well do stick-built. “Prefab for the sake of prefab isn’t going anywhere, and that would just continue what some have called ‘the curse of the prototype,’ whereby a great one-off house is built, but no others follow.”

Still, Arieff predicts that architects who can master the practical side of prefab—factories, mass production, shipping, and, of course, marketing—will thrive in the future. And architects, while committed to proving critics wrong about prefab, are also trying their hardest to make the system work for their clients.

One California firm that stands out in the quest to effectively exploit the rise in consumer interest toward prefab is Marmol Radziner Prefab, a division of Los Angeles-based Marmol Radziner Associates. The firm has a local factory to manufacture and package high-end, modern steel-frame houses and has even established a blog on prefab. The advantage, said firm principal Leo Marmol, is that prefab allows the firm to “tackle the inefficiencies involved with site-built construction, including weather and subcontractor delays, runway costs, and excessive material waste.”

After the success of their first prototype, the 2005 Desert House, and having built over 20 custom prefab homes in all possible configurations and situations, the firm has now taken their work to the “next level” with standardized models: the multi-module Skyline and single module Rincon series, both of which begin at about $180,000 (although Marmol notes that all prefab homes are notoriously hard to price accurately because of the varied costs involved). It has large decks to maximize outdoor living (although these can be enclosed for colder climates), and use natural cooling, solar panels, and steel frame construction. Extra materials, say the firm, are recycled in their factory. The firm is also hoping to take on the next frontier of prefab: mass production. Marmol, who calls mass-produced prefab “the holy grail of prefab,” claimed that it would offer similar benefits to developers and homebuilders as it does to consumers, like the ability to fix the price of the construction process and deliver homes with shorter schedules, reducing carrying costs.

Only time will tell whether Marmol’s pitch to the homebuilder industry works. One architect, Oakland-based Michelle Kaufmann, is already having success in prefab mass production. Her firm Michelle Kaufmann Design (MKD), which had established itself with individual prefab models like the mLoft and mSolare, is now working with home builders to create prefab communities like mTerra, a 24-unit multifamily project in San Leandro, California, set to be completed this fall; and Denver Townhomes, an 80-unit townhouse development outside of Denver with a mix of two- and three-bedroom multi-family housing that will be completed next year. The project features contemporary-style units built with eco-friendly materials, and includes shared parks and green systems like geothermal energy. Prices for these homes, which Kaufmann describes as “healthy, beautiful, and cost-effective,” range from about $100 to $200 per square foot.

Architects and designers are also coming up with ways to make the prefab building process more seamless. Brian Adolph, an architect
Office of Mobile Design has ventured into prefab school production with its Country School in Valley Village, California (top). Marmol Radziner Prefab's Desert House prototype (2005, below) is an example of how upscale the movement has gone.
with the LA-based KAA Design Group, said his company looked to combine unique design with not-so-unique prefab production methods in developing its HOM units, which are simple, high-quality units meant to merge indoor and outdoor living. Instead of developing its own factory, KAA teamed with a long-established prefab building company (KAA is in final negotiations with the company, so they would not reveal its name) that already has outlets across the country. Their models average about $200 per square foot. “We wanted to come up with a system that could truly deliver in mass. To marry these two industries (architecture and manufacturing) and get over the stigma of the manufactured model,” he said.

Other prefab architects are venturing into new building types to try to find their own “holy grail.” Jennifer Siegal, principal at Office of Mobile Design (OMDi), has worked on numerous modern prefab homes, including a project that she parked along Abbot Kinney Boulevard in Venice, California that she uses as her showroom. Siegel recently shifted gears and started working on modern prefab schools, which she thinks might be another wave of the future. She was awarded a grant from Southern California Edison in 1998 to help rethink the portable classrooms built in LA. Working with her students at Woodbury University, she developed Sustainable Portables, classrooms based on prefab modules that used less energy, were built with more sustainable materials, and had a more contemporary aesthetic. Since then, her firm has completed its own school projects including the Country School Prefab Expansion in Valley Village, California; the mobile ECOLAB; and the Portable Construction Training Center in Venice. Like all of her projects, the classrooms are designed to “be easily described visually and intellectually to new clients,” Siegal said, and to “help clients make choices more quickly, since we’ve limited their options due to the building systems and pre-selected material finishes.”

Yet limited options are not a plus for all clients. If prefab really does reach its factory-model potential, the balance between standardization and customization is destined to become an important issue. Empyrean International, which manufactured Dwell Homes, a collection of ultra-modern prefab units in 2005, is now working on a 50-unit prefab project in the U.K. along with a program to collaborate with specific architects to create customized prefab homes. The company’s CEO, Patrick Gilhane, said the firm offers nine standard plans with the potential of 32 different outcomes. “The homeowner wants something more unique and specialized,” he said. “The most promising thing I’m seeing in prefab is the sheer number of new projects that bring new and innovative ideas to the table. That’s why I think this is going to be a long-term trend.”

Barry Bergdoll, MoMA’s architecture and design curator, chose the subject of prefabricated design as his first show, called Home Delivery. In the empty lot next to the museum, five houses by architects including Kieran Timberlake; Douglas Gauthier and Jeremy Edminston; and Horden Cherry Lee Architects will be built and ready to tour. “I am most interested in the people that are pushing the design envelope,” he said. But he admitted to thinking that the firms taking a more pragmatic approach to prefab and going with the tried-and-true technology will probably succeed more quickly. One of his favorite designs in the show is Kieran Timberlake’s aluminum-framed Cellophane House, which is being constructed from reusable materials. “They span the pragmatic, but are also theorizing the entire framework of prefab design,” he said. And that combination of the prosaic and the poetic may well be the ultimate promise of prefab.

KIMBERLY STEVENS IS A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.

Philadelphia architects Kieran Timberlake Associates joined with Santa Monica-based LivingHomes to create prefab multi-housing units (top) and a single family residence that can expand from 900 to 2,000 square feet (below).
**JULY 16, 2008**

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Far From Equilibrium: Essays on Technology and Design Culture
Sanford Kwinter
Actar Press, $33.00

Architecture critic and professor Sanford Kwinter's new book Far From Equilibrium is a collection of new and previously published writings dating from the mid-90s, most of them first printed in the journal ANY, covering topics as far-ranging as Buckminster Fuller’s legacy and Peter Eisenman's Holocaust memorial in Berlin. Kwinter, who has written several books and teaches design at Rice University's School of Architecture, claims that the compilation illuminates what has always been his own stated approach to architectural criticism: “audacity without irony.”

Kwinter's audacity as a critic has never been in doubt. His central argument has always been that true architecture lies in the social, physical, and temporal organization of the city and the landscape—not in discrete buildings. And Kwinter has always defended his stance aggressively by launching proclamations like missiles that soar swiftly to the heart of the matter. The new book is saturated with lines characteristic of his rhetorical force. Of his refusal to attend the opening of Frank Gehry’s Bilbao Museum and his decision to instead journey to the desert with architect Jesse Reiser to commemorate the 50-year anniversary of Chuck Yeager’s breaking of the sound barrier, Kwinter writes: “We came because we believe in shock waves, we believe them to be part of the music of modernity; not something to watch a ribbon be cut, but from something to feel with our diaphragms, eardrums, genitals, and the soles of our feet... We came out there somewhere where we knew the zero-degree and the future, and that in Bilbao was the past.”

Kwinter and his editors at Actar have put his propensity for audacious manifestos to task using the format of a “mini-essay”-insert: fold-out pages wedged between the book’s primary essays containing full-bleed images alongside short textual blurs that maintain the force of the longer pieces. In his mini-essay “The Mechanical Bride Stripped Bare of her Bachelors,” Kwinter lauds Diller + Scofidio (now Diller, Scofidio + Renfro) for defining architecture as “the logic that determines our routines of inhabiting the world,” and therefore finding it to “exist at the level of buildings only in the most secondary of ways.” Kwinter here claims that the design team has long understood that technology, in its social deployment, serves to cultivate the desires and regulate the behavior of its users.

This mini-essay intimates in two paragraphs the same admonition that runs throughout the book: Kwinter sees technology as a tool for conditioning the modern citizen—a mechanism for making routine our desires and habits while subjecting us to a regime of surveillance. He warns us that we are too often led to see technological development as an alluring and satisfying sign of an ever-ambiguous “progress.” In a longer essay, “The Wiring and Waning of the World,” written in 1994 before the author even had an email address, Kwinter forebodingly characterizes the then-upcoming digital revolution as “an unbridled invasion and seizure of power of the public sphere, of the modalities of the human perceptual apparatus, of human energy, and of the independent historical ecologies that together these three entail.”

But it is just the effrontery of these mini-essays that leads the reader to ask if there isn’t a kind of irony in Kwinter’s “audacity” after all—an absurdity in the bombastic rhetoric, the book’s flashy red cover, the sexy images and so many seemingly flippant manifestos. The reader may ask, can architecture take Sanford Kwinter seriously?

With essays like “The Avant-Garde in America,” Kwinter dispels such skepticism. Adeptly drawing on references as diverse as philosopher Alfred North Whitehead and Max Weber, Kwinter sketches a history of how the organizing principles of bureaucratic control informed the American architectural mindset in the 20th century. He posits that in the 1930s, when American architects first attempted to bring the International Style to the American architectural landscape, they mistakenly overlooked the ideological program driving European modernism. American architecture, Kwinter writes, instead assimilated “the progressive modernist research that was inseparable from Europe’s struggle to emancipate itself from traditional forms of social domination to the pragmatic but predatory logic of the emerging international corporate order.” In this view, American architecture has yet to see a true socially avant-garde movement.

Kwinter’s compilation is summed up succinctly in his essay, “Formal, Informal, and the Jewish Question,” when he responds to Peter Eisenman’s inquiry, “Can form be defined politically?” with the quip, “When has it not been?” Kwinter repeatedly establishes that architectural and technological developments are intertwined with the mechanisms of social control, much to the obliviousness of their users—and even their designers. The first image in the book, a striking color photograph of former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, places an unquestionably real dimension on the bold manifestos negating techno-nano and globally marketable iconic buildings like Gehry’s in Bilbao, suggesting that these retired writings from the 90s raging against the machine and the institution are all the more pertinent in the post-2001 political climate. Far From Equilibrium is an invaluable reminder of what avant-gardism is, published for a generation that risks growing too cynical for it.

IZABEL GASS IS THE FOUNDING EDITOR OF MANIFOLD, A JOURNAL OF AESTHETIC PHILOSOPHY.

DESIGN, ITALIAN STYLE

Roberto Sambonet
Palazzo Madama, Torino www.palazzomadama.it

This year, Turin, Italy has been designated the World Capital of Design. From June 29 through July 3, leading international architects, critics, and designers converged on this northern Italian city to speak at Transmitting Architecture: XXIII World Congress of the International Union of Architects. The themes for the congress high-light culture, democracy, and hope, and the list of participants was international, including Barry Bergdoll, Mario Bellini, Will Alsop, Kengo Kuma, Aaron Betsky, Winy Maas, Dominique Perrault, Paolo Soleri, Peter Eisenman, Massimiliano Fuksas, and Hani Rashid. Already on display at the Palazzo Madama, a 13th-century castle in the city center, is a thoughtful retrospective of an artist-designer whose diverse achievements engage some of the themes of the congress at a particularly high level. One of Piemonte’s own, Roberto Sambonet was most notable for his painting, graphic arts, packaging, and cookware produced for the Sambonet family factory. Sambonet was born in 1924 in Vercelli, a town between Milan and Turin. Although he began his career in 1956 in Vercelli, a town of straw hats, walking sticks, and masks, portraits of friends and fellow architects, including Alvar Aalto and Louis Kahn. According to designer Lella Vignelli, Sambonet was an excellent draftsman who took portrait-making seriously. After completing a portrait of her husband Massimo Vignelli during a visit to New York, Sambonet returned a year later to rework it. No elitist, Sambonet took care to channel his creative spirit into products that could be mass-produced. His obsession with elementary geometry, the paintings of Sonia Delaunay, and ancient-inspired forms are showcased in his designs for crystal glassware for Baccarat and metal cutlery and cookware for his family’s company, Sambonet. The designer’s Pesciera, a pod-like container, is, published for a generation that risks growing too cynical for it.

Continue on page 19
If there is a moral to the story of the (Millennium) bridge," writes Andrew Saint, "it is that the strands of art and engineering run parallel, often intertwine, and that whatever the field and versatilities."

Anthony Hunt referring to "the engineer in me," a role, not the whole. One of the pleasures of contemporary culture is the versatile vigor of some of its protean characters. Think Clint Eastwood, George Clooney, Miles Davis, or David Byrne. We may lack equivalent figures in architecture and engineering, at least since Charles and Ray Eames, but that doesn't mean versatilities is not possible.

Saint divides his book into distinct topical chapters: Imperial Works and Worthy Kings; Iron; Concrete; Bridges; Reconciliation; and A Question of Upbringing. Each section is a beautifully illustrated article on the history of approaches to practice, material, or type as far back as the 17th century. There are many wonderful surprises, from the works and ideas of the French bridge engineer Emlidh-Marie Gauthery and Paul Séjourné to Le Corbusier's under-appreciated collaborator, Vladimir Bodiansky. In the section Reconciliation, Saint gives an excellent historical account of the post-war British and American structural engineering scene, but says little about the contribution of mechanical engineers as of the mid-1960s. Tom Barker, the partner and collaborator to Peter Rice and Renzo Piano, goes unmentioned, as does the natural ventilation and other building services developments that are detailed in Reyner Banham's The Architecture of the Well Tempered Environment (1989), which have only become more relevant since then. 

The "engineer" of this book is the structural engineer of bridges and buildings, and his or her contribution is to the visual arts of architecture and engineering. But also, as Saint freely acknowledges, there is only a modest attempt at a theoretical or philosophical overview.

There are a few tantalizing suggestions. Quoting some by Saint:

"What mattered was an architect's ability to open eyes and raise the game by articulating a technical challenge in the language of art." 

"The architect harnesses known techniques to perfectionist ends, while the engineer forwards technology, often leaving the details of his work rough." 

"The further a structure departs from logic and economy, the less reasonable, objective and truly dialectical becomes the relationship between the architect and engineer."

Not to mention other gems, such as this one from Mies van der Rohe: "Wherever technology reaches its real fulfillment, it transcends into architecture." 

And Guy de Maupassant: "When you see an engineer, take a gun and shoot him," and "The engineer instinctively goes for the ugly, as the duck makes for water." Perhaps the reason that Saint chose the "sibling" analogy is to resist the obvious dualism of many of these suggestions: body/mind, matter/spirit, art/science, architect/engineer. The family connection runs counter to that absolute dialectic. My preference is to look elsewhere for analogies, to music or film, where there are tribal connections that are neither dualistic nor kin-based. The architect-engineer builder-user-client tribe in which we operate has, in its best moments, mobilized all parties to come together for the best works—Crown Hall, Beinecke Library, Kimbell Art Museum, and the de Menil Collection are great examples of what Ezra Pound would call tribal "vortices." In this way, making architecture can be as richly muddled and networked as making movies and making music.

Describing the way the tapered windows under the ends of the Kimbell's cycloid shells were shaped by the aquavit-fueled standoff between Louis Kahn and August Komendant, Saint concludes, "It was a simple touch; but the feature has come to be revered for its galvanic power and candor." This book is similarly refreshing and stimulating for its frank candor. By example, it nudges us to consider lifting grace and candor over cause and effect as we expand our field and versatilities.

**GUY NORDRENSON IS A PROFESSOR OF STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURE AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY. HE IS ALSO THE FOUNDOING PARTNER OF GUY NORDRENSON AND ASSOCIATES, STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS IN NEW YORK.**
Ahrentzen suggests that 'hybrid housing:' planner Penny Gurstein's live-work typology focusing on wage work related to electronic communication; and architect Tom Dolan’s "Flexhouse," which can accommodate changes in the lives of the occupants and their work.

Two short essays, one by business professors Patricia Harris and Joseph Astrachan and the second by Sherry Ahrentzen are also provocative. Harris and Astrachan refer to the home-based or kitchen-table economy as the "hidden economic engine for millions of U.S. families." Ahrentzen suggests that hybrid houses should be acknowledged as part of community economic development that links housing to ways in which people "employ their homes as economic tools." In light of corporate downsizing, wages not keeping pace with housing costs, and minimal government subsidies like unemployment insurance, earning an income within the home offers relief, both monetary and psychologically. A residential structure is a prerequisite for supplementing incomes and sometimes is the only means of making a living. From this perspective, housing is a place of production where owners and renters might "go to work," shifting from domestic to workspace and where work does not spill into residential areas. The book is both provocative and creative, anticipating hurdles to implementation and asserting benefits. Yet nagging questions remain about who can afford so-called enterprise housing. For the system to be broadly available to the working poor, subsidies are required. The housing affordability crisis is eased by bringing paid work into the house or renting out workspace, but may be out of reach for those who cannot afford the housing plus workplace to begin with. To be fair, financial feasibility was included but not the primary aim of the Enterprise Housing charrette. A useful next step in charrettes of this sort might allocate enough time to develop financial plans and subsidy proposals and answer one of San Francisco planner Dean Macris’ five questions in his concluding essay, "Will public financial assistance be required to ensure that Enterprise Housing is part of the mix of uses?" The answers to an expanded design/financial brief could buttress arguments for national, state, and local housing policies that would benefit all members of the working class, not only higher-income entrepreneurs.

JACQUELINE LEAVITT IS A PROFESSOR OF URBAN PLANNING AT UCLA.

DESIGN ITALIAN STYLE

continued from page 17 steel fish poacher he designed in 1954, not only won Italy’s prestigious Compasso d’Oro design award but is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Among his many other talents, Sambonet worked as a design consultant for the Italian department store Rinascente and was art director of the magazine Zodiac, founded by Adriano Olivetti in the 1950s.

A modern-day Renaissance Man, Sambonet embraced a multi-disciplinary approach while leaving what he called hyperspecialization to others. In sync with fellow Italian Gio Ponti’s "global view," Sambonet’s integration of various art and design disciplines mirrored the models of the Viennese Jugendstil and Arts & Crafts movements. Sambonet was once quoted as saying that he was "against consumerism," although "he approved of the people buying objects and trivialities." His legacy will certainly be remembered by his mass-produced objects, carefully crafted yet utilitarian. The Italian phrase dal cucchio alla città ("from the spoon to the city") certainly holds true for Sambonet’s life and work.

MELISSA FELDMAN IS A FREELANCE WRITER IN NEW YORK CITY.

Sambonet’s sketch portrait of Eltore Settossi.
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UPS AND DOWNS IN DODGER TOWN

The recent announcement that the Los Angeles Dodgers plan not to raze their revered stadium overlooking downtown but instead revitalize it with a park-like themed mall has been greeted with guarded optimism by both fans and a faithless public.

No one but the most imprudent publicist wants to lend the ambitious $500 million proposal his blessing just yet—certainly not in this hype-happy city, annually promised new architectural icons, fanciful ephemeral attractions, and a championship baseball team.

Then there is the down-and-dirty concern of how people are supposed to get to the new, improved, and pricey stadium, if not by private car. There already are hints of an attendance fall-off not by private car. There already is supposed to get to the new, improved, and pricey stadium, if not by private car. There already were hints of an attendance fall-off.

Indeed, I remember fondly in the 1940s in that beloved borough of my birth paying three cents to ride the Coney Island Trolley to the Parade Grounds and the bandbox of a ballpark beyond, to sit in a 25-cent bleacher seat. The ticket was courtesy of The Brooklyn Eagle where I worked as a newsboy.

Both the Dodger management and Mayor Villaraigosa heartily agree that a transit connection is needed, and at the press conference announcing the stadium plans, pledged to actively explore possibilities. However, given the present melt-down of the municipal budget along with federal aid to the city, no one is holding his breath.

Whether a real hope or hype, the plans for “Dodgerland” read well, taking advantage of the stadium’s dramatic hilltop site. Featured is a welcoming entry marked by a tree-lined promenade and grand plaza, conveniently connected to a relaxed landscaped pedestrian street encircling the ballpark.

Christened Dodger Way and lined with eateries and an array of stores, the street is designed to entice fans to come early and stay late, to shop and dine, and not incidentally to reduce the crush of traffic around the stadium immediately before and after the games.

Also in the offering is something labeled The Dodger Experience, described as a museum “showcasing the history of the Dodgers in an interactive setting.” Welcome to Dodgerland, but don’t forget your Visa card. Playing to LA’s benign climate, the team’s culture, and the Southland’s consumerism, the plans were fashioned with appropriate flair by the design team of the locally based firms of HKS and Rios Clementi Hale Studios for architecture and landscape, together with the HKS Sports and Entertainment Group.

To their credit, the plans also respect the local concerns, especially among fans, that the landmark stadium not be compromised. Hailed as the epitome of the modern major league ballpark when it opened in 1962, the stadium now is the second oldest in the National League, and when Yankee Stadium is demolished this year, will be third oldest in the majors, ranking behind Chicago’s Wrigley Field and Boston’s Fenway Park.

Given its potentially valuable site for housing on the edge of the central city, the stadium over the years has been subject to various threats. These have included its wholesale relocation downtown, to be gift-wrapped in a nostalgic urban design in the mode of the recent ballpark redos in San Francisco and San Diego. These proposals have been bemoaned by the Dodger faithful and the city’s landmark police. Also roundly razzed and promptly dismissed was a pie-in-the-sky proposal by Pritzker-award-winning architect Thom Mayne to demolish the stadium for a residential and recreational development and rebuild it a few miles away on recently dedicated city parkland. The plan alienated almost everyone, from park advocates to Dodger fans and community groups.

In addition, there’s an inherent distrust of the team’s ownership among fans. Baseball being a sport of traditions, fans have long memories, particularly Dodger fans who have not seen a World Championship in 20 years as the team passed through the hands of the miserly O’Malley family and the otherwise engaged media mogul Rupert Murdoch from chilly Boston where their nouveau ways were not less faithful in the then-diminishing outer borough, mine included, until of course I moved to Los Angeles (like so many other New Yorkers). It will be interesting to see how much of history will be handled in The Dodger Experience museum, that is, if the team can find the financing for its plans while still looking for a center fielder who can hit.

Not forgotten by some is the team’s relocation from Brooklyn a half-century ago. That broke the collective hearts of the hapless faithful in the then-diminishing borough, mine included, and of course I moved to Los Angeles (like so many other New Yorkers). It will be interesting to see how much of history will be handled in The Dodger Experience museum, that is, if the team can find the financing for its plans while still looking for a center fielder who can hit.

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