The MAK Center for Art & Architecture in late June unveiled the newest addition to the trio of Rudolph Schindler houses that the Vienna-based museum owns in LA. A second story has been added to the five-car garage at the back of the 1939 Mackey Apartments, one of Schindler’s most ingenious and playful compositions of solids and voids. The addition, designed by Michael Ferguson and Kirby Smith of Space International Architects, is a nod to the original landmark without being a slavish work of architectural ventriloquism. The $490,000 project, located on Miracle Mile, continued on page 6

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One of the most significant recent architectural commissions in the Bay Area has been decided: The Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive (BAM/PFA) has selected Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R) to create its new building. It is the New York–based firm’s first California project, continued on page 9

The most sweeping reforms of Los Angeles’ zoning codes in over half a century were reintroduced to the city planning commission late last month. The efforts, to streamline several code-related processes, had been sidetracked for over a year in favor of medical marijuana and signage ordinances, continued on page 10

Los Angeles Planning Director Gail Goldberg announced her resignation on June 30 in a letter addressed to LA Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. On July 26, Michael LoGrande, chief zoning, continued on page 3

The Los Angeles architectural community has been deprived of one of its kindest and strongest advocates. Stephen Kanner was sadly taken from us on July 2, at the very young age of 54. I had tremendous affection for Stephen, and considered him almost as another son. I was a colleague of his father, Chuck Kanner, who was another wonderful person and very fond of his mother, Judith, an interior designer and writer, continued on page 9
dune
Design: D. Paolucci

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STANDING UP FOR WATTS TOWERS

In 1969, the Los Angeles Times reported that the city was about to demolish the Watts Towers as being “dangerous and apt to fall of their own dead weight.” (“Watts Happening?”” AN/O6_30.1969). I had not heard of the Watts Towers, although I had been in Los Angeles for almost 10 years. The item led me to a nonprofit committee and to a meeting with the city engineers who had issued the demolition order for Rodia’s towers, and later to do my own 100-page stress analysis and a complicated—but successful—load test on the 99½-foot tower, which showed the sculptures were not dangerous. A superior court hearing but successful—load test on the 99½-foot Rodia’s towers, and later to do my own 100-foot tower, which showed the sculptures were not dangerous. In 1959, the Los Angeles Times reported that the city was about to demolish the Watts Towers as being “dangerous and apt to fall of their own dead weight.”

LET THEM EAT CALTRANS

Since when is it assumed that better results are achieved with public participation than by individual effort where design is concerned? Since when is it assumed that better results are achieved with public participation than by individual effort where design is concerned? The item led me to a nonprofit committee and to a meeting with the city engineers who had issued the demolition order for Rodia’s towers, and later to do my own 100-page stress analysis and a complicated—but successful—load test on the 99½-foot tower, which showed the sculptures were not dangerous. A superior court hearing but successful—load test on the 99½-foot Rodia’s towers, and later to do my own 100-foot tower, which showed the sculptures were not dangerous. In 1959, the Los Angeles Times reported that the city was about to demolish the Watts Towers as being “dangerous and apt to fall of their own dead weight.”

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Sam Lubell
Gulla Jonsdottir, who seems to be responsible for half of LA’s most popular hangouts, is at it again. Her firm Gulla Jonsdottir Design recently opened Red O, a Mexican Restaurant in West Hollywood that brings the traditional fiesta-style aesthetic of so many So Cal Mexican eateries up to date.

Outside, the restaurant has gigantic glass walls clad with a scrim composed of a series of shard-like steel pieces. Inside, the open space is a free-flowing combination of billowing white fabrics, dark woods, dark leather furniture, large chandeliers, brass bells, communal tables and banquets, curvilinear walls, and enough sculptural pieces to make your head spin. A 14-foot communal table made of solid walnut and bronze sits in the main dining room, alongside a bar surrounded by handmade leather swings.

“It’s kind of like a holiday for a day,” said Jonsdottir, who lived in Mexico for a couple of years and was able to draw from that experience and inspiration. “People feel like they’re on vacation,” she added.

CATCH OF THE DAY
Brooke Hodge, who was laid off about a year ago as LACMA’s curator of architecture and design, has just started work as director of exhibition management and publications at UCLA’s Hammer Museum, said Hodge, “but within the curatorial department—and a smart move for the Hammer, to say the least. Could it be that the Hammer, which has recently hosted blockbuster architecture and architecture-related programming featuring the likes of John Laufman, Greg Lynn, and Rachel Whiteread, is hoping to take the architecture mantle from the depleted MOCA? While MOCA, which has no architecture curator, is still holding onto its outpost at the Pacific Design Center, all signs point to yes. Meanwhile, Hodge has nothing but praise for the small museum, telling AN that it has “the most interesting programming in contemporary art in LA and maybe even in the country.”

SMOKE SIGNALS
Since medical marijuana dispensaries now seem to outnumber grocery stores in California, it was just a matter of time before architects got involved. Enter San Francisco-based Sand Studios, currently one of the city’s “it” firms, which is designing a new dispensary there. The project is said to be modeled after an old-fashioned apothecary, a surprisingly retro approach for a firm known for its modern design. Even if we were thinking something more Damien Hirst, we’re beyond excited to see their take. The news comes at a time when LA is cracking down on its pot palaces, closing hundreds at a time. Could this be the venue where San Francisco really takes the architectural baton from its southern rival?

OSLO-BASED FIRM SCORES $250 MILLION MUSEUM EXPANSION
Snøhetta Storms SFMOMA

Two months ahead of schedule, SFMOMA announced its selection of Snøhetta for the institution’s $250 million expansion, bringing to a finale the closely-watched competition for the landmark museum project. The New York- and Oslo-based firm, led by Craig Dykers and Kjetil Thorsen, won the commission over three equally accomplished contenders: Foster + Partners, Adjaye Associates, and Diller Scofidio + Renfro. The addition will be the museum’s first building on the West Coast.

Snøhetta is perhaps best known for its dramatic opera house in Oslo, which, by the museum officials’ own accounts, was the building that sealed the deal for them.

“In the selection committee was particularly thrilled by the stunning spaces, sophisticated use of materials, and quality of light in Snøhetta’s Norwegian National Opera and Ballet in Oslo, which we feel is one of the great buildings worldwide to be designed and built in the last decade,” SFMOMA director Neal Benezra said in a July 22 statement. Snøhetta is also building the National September 11 Museum and Memorial at the World Trade Center. It’s an admiring pavilion that is currently under construction.

In an interview, Dykers gave AN a glimpse of what might be forthcoming in a design, speaking about the importance of opening up the museum to the street.

“We see museums requiring more space for connecting to communities, in addition to spaces where people have visceral connections to art.” Another aspiration for the firm, he added, is incorporating the landscape and natural light into the traditionally hermetic world of art museums. “We arbitrarily separate the urban context from the natural context,” Dykers said. “Part of our thinking is that those two need not be so clearly segregated, and that one can be aware of the surroundings even in a densely packed urban landscape. San Francisco is one place where you are always aware of the natural environment—there’s the shifting topography, the seismic qualities, and even the fog.”

The trick will be getting those elements into a densely packed infill lot, shadowed by the hotel towers of the W and the St. Regis. The city recently signed off on a swap where the museum will build a new firehouse to replace one on Howard Street, giving the building a little more frontage on a main thoroughfare. In terms of size, the new addition will be about two-thirds the size of the existing 225,000-square-foot brick edifice, designed by Mario Botta in 1995. The addition is anticipated to open in 2015.

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MAK MANSION continued
from front page was paid for by the Austrian government, which funds the MAK Vienna. The upstairs is a plain rectangle cantilevered 8 1/2 feet from the face of the garages below. The 750-square-foot room has blank white walls, a light-gray epoxy-coated floor, and 11-foot-high ceilings. A single wall attached to a lower projecting ceiling creates a proscenium frame within the otherwise blank box. The volume is essentially neutral, and can become just about anything, from a dining room to a gallery to a theater stage.

What makes this flexibility possible is a set of seven floor-to-ceiling sliding doors that, when moved to one side, create a 34-foot-wide opening. The doors are made of an oversized structural polycarbonate similar to Polycal, but with the insulating property of double-paned glass. With the shades raised, and the doors closed, natural light suffuses the space. With the doors open, the room becomes a terrace.

A gap of just 12 feet separates the addition from the rear of the 1939 structure. The connection between old and new is therefore intimate. Yet Ferguson, who oversaw a staged, seven-year restoration of the four-plex, was careful to craft a design that neither “competes nor fits in with the Schindler.” So while the garages below are white, the exterior of the addition is black; where the upstairs is almost completely flat, the main building is a dizzying complex of interlocking blocks.

Schindler’s spirit is very much alive here, especially in the use of light to create space. In one respect, however, Space International has been more literal in its interpretation. The exterior of the addition is coated in WetSuit, a self-flashing membrane that is sprayed on and dries almost instantly. While it is typically used as below-grade waterproofing, for the Mackey garage the architects used the product much the way Schindler used composition asphalt roofing to clad portions of his famous DeKeyser residence.

Now that it’s open, the new space will allow the MAK Center to inject a series of non-residential programs even further into the skein of residential Los Angeles. In a sense, the second story advances Schindler’s view of a house as a bohemian enclave, subverting conventional domesticity and design. GREG GOLDIN
September 24, 2010

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Downtown LA firm B+U specializes in fabric structures that transform everything from tiny residences to entire cities. Their latest, an addition to the Frank and Kim Residence in Pasadena, adds intricacy and complexity to what was a fairly ordinary midcentury home. It’s one of the most exciting residential projects in a usually much more historic-minded city.

The project, set at the end of a long driveway in the woods of Pasadena, was originally intended as just a bathroom renovation. Things changed when the owners got excited about the possibilities offered by this innovative firm—a dream scenario for most architects. Now the project includes new master and pool bathrooms, a new kitchen, new solar paneling, a dynamic new concrete and fabric garage, and the highlight: an amazing steel and fabric canopy structure that defines the home’s entry, becoming both social and event space while providing rain and sun protection.

The canopy’s angular, branching geometries, which resemble nearby trees and echo the angles of the house, are made from pre-cut steel pipes welded together on site. Attached to this system is a white fabric material made from silicon-dipped fiberglass. At night, carefully arranged LED lights make the structure glow from within and bounce the light around the project.

The canopy is set over a new pathway of landscaping, also overseen by the firm, that snakes under and around the canopy. The canopy is set over a new pathway of landscaping, also overseen by the firm, that snakes under and around the canopy. Just next to the canopy, the new garage with a green roof is made of an angular concrete skeleton with sliding gates also made of fabric, giving a sense of sculptural lightness and allowing it to glow at night.

The steel installer, Thomas Osinski, also worked on the Disney Hall, while the firm’s partners, Herwig Baumgartner and Scott Uriu, met while working at Gehry Partners. They do not shy away from the experimental lessons they learned there. Other firm projects utilize wave patterns, vector diagrams, bending steel and wood, and bright colors.

The interior renovation of the project is minimal, using elegant stone and wood surfaces and opening up the space with large new windows and sliders. But it’s the new entryway that will really put this firm on the map and make this house the talk of a town not usually known for contemporary architecture.
STEPHEN KANNER, 1955–2010 continued from front page

When Stephen graduated from Berkeley, he came to visit me at my office to show me his work from school. I was extremely impressed with his design ability, his personality, and self-confidence, and I knew that someday this young man would become a successful architect. He proved me correct in a very short time.

The Kanner Architects firm was founded by Stephen’s grandfather, Herman, in 1946. After he passed away, it continued under the leadership of Chuck Kanner. When Steve joined his father as partner, the firm grew exponentially. His work started popping up on Montana Avenue in Santa Monica and in Westwood Village, and began receiving design awards. By the time he was 43, he was named a Fellow of the National AIA. This was followed by his being chosen to become president of the Los Angeles Chapter of the AIA. As president, one of his goals was to bring more young architects into the chapter and to encourage architectural students to join the student chapter. He knew that the future of the architectural profession and the AIA depended upon its youth, and he was a wonderful role model.

Together with Bernard Zimmerman, “the great inspiring idea person,” as mentor, Steve acted as facilitator, hosting meetings at his office of a group of other young architects to plan a series of exhibits that were held at the PDC during West Week. Beginning in 1994 with 100/700, followed by New Blood/101 and Millennium, these exhibits showcased the talented work of young Los Angeles architects. In 2001 the dynamic duo of Steve and his friend and colleague Joe Addo spearheaded the opening of the A+D Museum. It was Steve’s tenacity that kept the A+D going as it moved from location to location—from the Bradbury Building to Santa Monica, to the Sunset Strip, to the first Wilshire Boulevard location, and now to its permanent home on Wilshire, across from LACMA. He had the ability to find kind, generous, people who donated space, and whose time, expertise, and energy made it all possible. He was also somehow able to convince people of the importance of the A+D. This was accomplished because he provided the example of giving his own time and energy so generously and with such enthusiasm and grace.

I remember in 2003, when Steve and the A+D invited me to create a retrospective exhibit of my work from 1953 to 2003. He not only encouraged me, he put together a team willing to generously donate their services to make it happen. At the time, when I felt that with such an ambitious project we might not meet the deadline for the announced opening, Steve and I experienced a role reversal. He became the mentor, confidently saying, “we will make it, we will definitely make it.” And through the perseverance of Steve and his excellent team, we had an opening, on schedule, attended by some 300 people. He was a strong, positive thinker, and that, along with all his other wonderful traits, is what made Stephen Kanner so special. It is my hope that all the love and attention that Stephen poured into the A+D will ensure its continuing and becoming his greatest legacy.

Along with all these efforts, Steve also made time for other community involvement, including serving on numerous design review boards. He seemed to have endless energy, and he performed so effortlessly with his calm, confident, and pleasant demeanor. His practice continued to grow as well. He had a staff as large as 50 employees at times, and he maintained an excellent design level, continuing to win awards, publication in many magazines, several books, and two monographs.

Stephen had laid the groundwork in such a short number of years for all he did. With his great enthusiasm, intelligence, and love of architecture, we can only imagine what he might have accomplished in the next 30 years.

CALIFORNIA ARCHITECT RAY KAPPE IS THE FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF SCI-ARC.
GLASS WAVE

Funding has yet to be allocated to the Port of Los Angeles’ $6 million museum in San Pedro, designed by Hodgetts + Fung. The project will highlight a fireboat that served Los Angeles for 78 years, longer than any other “piece of apparatus” in the harbor, according to the LA Fire Department.

Old Fire Boat No. 2, a National Historic Landmark known as the Scutt to its crew, will be preserved within a 40-foot-tall curved frame and glass skin that will shield the 99-foot-long vessel. The firm will etch a life-sized copy of Old Fire Boat No. 2’s original blueprint on the glass. The reflective quality of the glass will create an opaque surface from a distance, pointed out principal Craig Hodgetts, providing “a two-stage experience.”

“Adding the museum inside out,” added fellow principal Ming Fung. “Once closer, visitors will see the boat as though it were floating on water: The ground will be excavated about 10 feet, and No. 2 will be propped up on a cradle structure. The powerful propellers and machinery of the boat’s underside will be visible, and patrons can scale the museum’s levels to see the rest of the boat.

Beyond the “billboard” facade, the rest of the project, with a 7,500-square-foot footprint, will be understated so as not to overpower the boat itself. The museum’s other three sides will be covered with aluminum rods and dotted with portholes. At an estimated $6 million, this design is a steal, according to its architects, who believe that a project of this magnitude would normally cost $10 million. The excavation itself will cost nearly $2 million, Hodgetts quoted.

In tune with the project’s aim for LEED certification, the firm plans to use chilled water beams limited to the areas occupied by visitors. The estimated completion date is uncertain because nothing can move forward until the state of California’s budget can furnish the promised funds for the project. ZEN VUONG

IT’S ABOUT TIME continued from front page

among other matters.

This marks the first overhaul of codes since their last revision in 1946, points out Senior City Planner Alan Bell, who is overseeing the process. All subsequent changes to the code have been incremental, he said.

The effort was a major initiative of former Los Angeles Planning Director Gail Goldberg, who resigned a few days after they were reintroduced. Bell will carry on efforts to reorganize the department into new geographic areas and new sub-departments, eliminating redundancies. “This will streamline things and also help produce better projects,” said Goldberg, who lauds the idea of project-tailored zoning.

These efforts are especially important now that the city planning staff has been reduced by 40 percent, said Bell. “We have to do things differently,” he explained. “Things have to be more effective and efficient.”

The amendments focus on simplifying the city’s zoning codes, rendering them clearer, more standardized, and up-to-date.

The amendments will be formally presented to the city planning commission this fall, and if things go as planned, voted on by Thanksgiving, according to Bell. SL
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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Photograph © Fred J. Maroon
The suburban office building is an exercise in formula. It’s built with standardized floor plates, hall sizes, and floor heights, and generally fits into a simple square or rectangular envelope that is manageable for any developer. Bland and predictable for those working or living nearby, the suburban office building is modernism co-opted by the corporation to deadening effect.

A new project designed by AECOM—not exactly a subversive firm with its thousands of employees and fairly typical corporate resume—works within that standardization, but makes subtle changes creating something intriguingly new. Here, a combination of interesting moves stand out all the more against its more generic elements, giving a boost to its location in a faceless office park in downtown Glendale that would make any lover of urban space cringe.

The exterior of the building has a cube-shaped envelope with a flat profile and a mullion-less mirrored glass curtain wall, much like offices we’ve seen from suburban Houston to Anaheim. But within this sheer envelope the firm carved holes into the typical scheme, both literally and figuratively. Raising the envelope above and over the entry, they created a sleek port cochere and supported it with dramatic chevron-shaped columns that give the heavy structure a feeling of lightness and minimize the sense of an imposing block. The glass facade also steps back from the exterior envelope (made of surprisingly thin, fiber-reinforced concrete), playing with expectations of weight and solidity and again making the typical form feel much lighter. It establishes that neat balance of different, but still familiar. In back, the firm carved out a roof deck with a floating canopy, all painted lime green to make it conspicuous and fun. At night the building stands out even more thanks to its thin, dramatic bands of greenish LED lighting; the thin strips further demarcate the strategic cuts in the facade. As the back of the building touches the ground, a loggia connects it to a new paved courtyard and to the complex’s other buildings, helping create a new urban space where there was basically nothing.

Inside the building is not avant-garde, but subtle touches make it feel quite modern. A lime green surface over the elevator bank, for instance, shimmers and provides texture and depth, an effect created by covering a gradient pattern with translucent glass over a mirrored surface. Stainless steel panels wrap around the entry desk, while frameless, linear LED lights shoot through the ceiling. Floor-to-ceiling glass makes the space an extension of its exterior. A similar palette is repeated on the roof deck, where lines of LEDs and lime green metallic panels work together with an extraordinary view. The office spaces, meanwhile, are open and unencumbered, at least for now. But while the building is effective and progressive, it hasn’t struck a chord in Glendale. It was completed late last year, but as of our printing the developer, Bob Goodwin, has yet to lease any space. The firm is now trying to sell the building. This fine project is among several recent architecturally successful LA buildings to be left out in the cold by the market. Big name architecture firms built luxury offices, condos, and retail centers at the height of the real estate boom only to run into a dead market once they were complete. The culprit, stresses Goodwin, is not that people are scared of good architecture. They’re scared of the prices that come with such architecture. Clearly it’s time for developers and architects to figure out a way to produce great architecture at prices that make more sense.

SL
California Science Center Phase II

Constructed utilizing a BIM model created by Morley, the 170,000 sf Phase II Expansion of the California Science Center features science museum exhibits, administrative office space and back-of-house support spaces. The exhibits include living habitats, interactive museum elements and Ecosystems, featuring a 188,000 gallon kelp forest tank.

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www.webertusa.com
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www.neo-metro.com

Duravit’s classic Vero collection has been reinvented in a high-gloss black ceramic, giving the angular forms of washbasins, toilets, and bidets a more sleek appearance. Meant to complement black-and-white color schemes, the collection is part of several new high-gloss and black pieces from the manufacturer.

www.duravit.com

The new Plié toilet features a seamless form that sits flush to the wall, making it ideal for contemporary interiors and easy cleaning. The high-efficiency design is WaterSense certified, with a top-mounted solid brass flushing mechanism offering 1 or 1.6 gallons per flush.

www.kallista.com

TOTO’s Luminist vessel sinks are as eye-catching as they are durable. Made of proprietary hybrid epoxy resin that doesn’t release VOCs during production, the translucent vessels are heat-, impact-, and stain-resistant. Available in round and rectangular shapes, the sinks have an integrated energy efficient LED lighting system.

www.totousa.com

Stone Forest’s Siena collection is hand-carved from Siena Silver-Grey marble, allowing the stone’s characteristics to come through without embellishment. The 700-lb. Adagio Chaise curves with the contours of the body while absorbing ambient room temperature or warmth from the sun.

www.stoneforest.com
The latest evolution in Vola’s line of freestanding shower fixtures, the FS3 offers a slender silhouette ideal for a minimalist, or any modern, bathroom. The fixture integrates high-tech features including thermostatic and pressure controls. Like the FS1, the fixture was designed by Aarhus Arkitekterne A/S and is available in polished or brushed chrome or brushed stainless steel.

www.vola.dk

Graff is expanding its Trends line of bath faucets with the Sade, a curved flat-edge spout and complimentary handles. Lavatory faucets come in two finishes with single-handle, widespread, wall-mount, and floor-mount models. Coordinating sets for tub and thermostatic showers are also available.

www.graff-faucets.com
www.dornbracht.com

Dornbracht’s new line of hot water dispensers aims to eliminate the clinical look in the kitchen with styles to complement the Tara and LOT collections created by Sieger Design. Both faucets are available in hot water or hot-and-cold models, which are designed for use with the InSinkErator water filter and tank set.

www.reflectshower.com
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Using a cavity of water to heat its reflective surface, the Reflect showerhead prevents condensation from forming even in a steamy room. The result is a patent-pending showerhead and non-fogging shower and shaving mirror suitable for residential and commercial use and made in the U.S.

www.reflectshower.com

The Nova Podium lavatory faucet is a lead-free, all-brass design that can withstand more high-traffic use than faucets that use plastic components. Competitively priced for residential and commercial bathrooms, the single-handle faucet can be specified with a low-flow aerator to earn points toward LEED certification.

www.reflectshower.com

www.vismaravetro.it

Designed by Idelfonso Colombo and Daniele Di Vito for manufacturer Vismaravetro, the Twin creates space in which to store bathroom items and appliances, transforming the shower stall into a useful piece of furniture. Made of tempered safety glass, anodized aluminum, and a mirrored silver finish, the cabinet is 160 by 80 by 195 centimeters.
SECOND TIME IS A CHARM

These days, the adaptive reuse of old offices, factories, and warehouses is simply the right thing to do. Tearing down and starting over is so 2007. More to the point, adaptive reuse is greener than any new sustainable building; and with the public clamoring for authenticity and governments handing out tax breaks and plan expediting, it makes significant financial sense, too. Not surprisingly, developers are embracing the reuse option, which has been a rare boon for architects.

So while new building is still on life support, building from what already exists is having a heyday.

For this year’s Developer’s Issue, AN turns a spotlight on eight inspired re-adaptions that extend good designs into designs to last even longer.

FOURTH AND LINDEN

Architect: Studio One Eleven
Developer: East Village Partners
Location: Long Beach

The project, funded in part by a $350,000 facade-improvement grant from the city of Long Beach, subdivided a single derelict warehouse into three distinct buildings for office and condominium uses. With a beautiful frieze and other art deco highlights still intact, the trio complement each other while retaining their gritty, industrial character. Interiors are raw shells featuring exposed brick and block walls, concrete floors and wood truss ceilings with skylights.

“When we bought the building it was drywall, carpet, gypsum, and drop ceilings,” said Studio One Eleven principal Mark Bohn. “We peeled all this away and discovered a beautiful patina.”

To encourage interaction between tenants, a variety of landscaped outdoor spaces are incorporated into the project, including a shared courtyard with meeting space, a lushly landscaped passo, and a parking court.
FEATURE

NATIONAL TYPEWRITER COMPANY STUDIOS

Architect: Shimoda Design Group with Andy Waissler
Developer: Undisclosed
Location: Santa Monica

The project consisted of knitting together two mid-century, light industrial buildings in Santa Monica to create a production studio for one of the most high-profile clients in the city. The firm blew a hole through the center of both structures and united them through a large kitchen. Open and informally divided, the space is designed to encourage interaction and creativity, a goal furthered by two exterior courtyards on the ground, a roof deck, and a green roof. The architects took the buildings down to their bricks and rebuilt everything “in a flavor that was vernacular,” said Joey Shimoda of Shimoda Design Group. New elements hide in plain sight: “Whatever our interventions were, it wasn’t apparent that it was an alteration,” he said. New large steel windows with wire glass front the work areas; steel frame doors divide spaces; existing concrete floors were redone; wood floors were installed upstairs; industrial planking flanks exterior stairs, guard rails, and an exterior bridge; and walls consist mostly of brick, concrete block, and recycled lumber. Light fixtures are mostly wall mounted on the perimeter to be less conspicuous. In total, the project includes an art studio, a recording studio, video editing rooms, a screening room, and offices.

MALIBU LUMBER YARD

Architect: Phillip Trigas with RTK Architects
Developer: Richard Weintraub and Richard Sperber
Location: Malibu

Architect Phillip Trigas masterminded the transformation of the former Malibu Lumber Yard—a faceless collection of drywall and glulam sheds—into a vibrant and elegant 30,000-square-foot shopping center. The design retains the perimeter walls of the existing main structure, but Trigas clad the space with dark ipe wood slats, supplemental steel beams, and wood framing. Inside that shell, the project centers around an ellipse-shaped courtyard with an upper-level mezzanine notable for its rounded corners, which, said Trigas, make the second floor “breathe more” and open to more views. The project maintains all stormwater runoff through bioswales under its wooden deck. Other contributors include Marmol Radziner, who re-purposed two sheds on the site into new stores. “It’s not a singular strip mall, but a collection of buildings that engage you from outside and draw you in,” said Trigas.
Thanks largely to its generous financial incentives for adaptive reuse, downtown Los Angeles has become a hotbed for conversion development. One of the newest such projects is Rockefeller Partners’ El Dorado Lofts, the transformation of an historic Gothic/Art Nouveau hotel in LA’s Old Bank district into residential units. With a green-glazed brick facade, extravagant iron cornice, and floral terra cotta detailing, the El Dorado is highlighted with a Gloria Swanson lobby, complete with grand staircase ascending up a lofty double-height space. Tiles from the Pasadena-based Batchelder Tile Factory were found on the walls and lobby columns, the most intact example of early 1900s Batchelder work in the world. Offsetting the nostalgia, rooms and hallways include exposed concrete beams and walls combined with new, but hefty, steel windows and doors.

Located at one of Portland's busiest intersections, a curvy 1950s building has been released from jail. Hennebery Eddy Architects removed the heavy iron bars on the windows and added a new glass penthouse when they transformed the former Federal Reserve Bank, designed by local modernist champion Pietro Belluschi in 1950, into a five-story office space. Although the structure was not a historic landmark, it was impressive enough that the architects followed the Secretary of the Interior’s standards for rehabilitation, repeating the white marble and curved lines of the exterior in the new lobby that had been subject to a “bad ‘80s” renovation. They also moved the main entrance to the more accessible west side, giving it an updated visual identity with a long mural of fritted glass displaying a blown-up detail from a dollar bill. One of the bank’s original functions—taking old money out of circulation and shredding it—also gets a wink: The elevators’ back walls are glass panels embedded with shredded bills. “With the security barriers gone, what was a dead zone is now a very animated area,” said principal David Wark. “The building is part of the energy of that neighborhood—it produces energy now.”

Woodbury University’s San Diego satellite facility serving 150 students. The program included an architecture library, a metal/wood shop, CAD/CAM milling facilities, computing rooms, and, of course, architecture studios.

With a tight three-month timeline and a very small budget, minimal interventions were all that was possible, and so the architects left the building’s industrial frame intact but did replace electrical, lighting, and mechanical systems, including a displaced air system that principal Todd Rinehart calls “a glorified swamp cooler.” They also installed modern components like polycarbonate glazing and some new skylights to bring in more daylight. A new facade is composed of mylar- and-aluminum mesh as a shading device to keep out excess heat. A bold paint scheme helps to bring the whole project up to date.
THE STATION

Architect: Lloyd Russell
Developer: Sam Chammas
Location: San Diego

The Station Tavern and Burgers in San Diego’s South Park neighborhood is sited on a block where once the 30th Street trolley passed through. Russell responded to that in his design, from the building’s triangular shape that resembles a train station to the pieces of original track that trim the property. Roll up doors neatly pocket into the ceiling, and a redwood lath adds texture and sound-proofing to the ceiling, evoking the old plaster-and-lath technique that was discovered during demo. Elements of the original building were salvaged and incorporated into the design: The outdoor space includes an old-school tower articulated with solar panels, while an outdoor patio evokes a train platform “in case the trolley ever does come by again,” Russell said.

FORD ASSEMBLY PLANT

Architect: Marcy Wong Donn Logan
Developer: Orton Development
Location: Richmond, CA

Designed by Albert Kahn in 1931, the behemoth quarter-mile-long, half-a-million-square-foot building, with massive sawtooth skylights, not only made cars, but also tanks during WWII. The second time around, the architects made as few visual interventions as possible. Major new moves include a white, sculptural steel stair that cuts from the first floor to the roof; new glass and casements in the spirit of the original; and a grid of colored “streets and alleyways” to organize the space without walls. “We tried to put our stamp on the building without covering up the historic beauty of it,” said Marcy Wong, principal at Marcy Wong Donn Logan Architects. “It’s pretty hard to cover up anyway, because it’s 525,000 square feet.” Salvageable portions from Kahn’s day were consolidated to read as intended, with steel casements and wire-fortified glass. The building is now used by a number of companies including Sunpower Corp, a solar company, and Mount Hardware, a mountain gear retailer. Other areas of the building are available for retail use and public events.
Los Angeles Cleantech Corridor & Green District Competition

An open ideas competition sponsored by SCI-Arc and The Architect’s Newspaper

Entries due September 30, 2010

Competition Launch: August 1, 2010
Registration Deadline: August 15, 2010
Submission Deadline: September 30, 2010

Organized by SCI-Arc and The Architect’s Newspaper and presented in partnership with the Office of the Mayor of Los Angeles and the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles, the Cleantech Urban Solutions competition encourages architects, landscape architects, designers, engineers, urban planners, and environmental professionals to create an innovative urban vision for Los Angeles’ Cleantech Corridor, a corridor established on the eastern edge of downtown LA.

For further information please visit: www.sciarc.edu or www.archpaper.com
The 2010 California Design Biennial tackles the themes of transformative design, surveying new strategies and technologies that respond to current economic, geopolitical, and environmental challenges. Giving the recycled transport container a new twist, for example, is David Herr's 747 Wing House, made out of parts of a decommissioned Boeing 747 and perched on 55 acres in the Malibu hills. Another 22 buildings are on view in the architecture category, including for the first time alongside industrial design, fashion, graphic design, and transportation. Instead of the usual juried competition, this year each category was overseen by a different curator, and Los Angeles design doyenne Frances Anderton took on architecture. Among her final picks was the Sava Pool in San Francisco by Mark Cavagnero Associates and Paulett Taggart Architects (2008, above), a sustainably designed public swimming pool composed of interlocking forms of exposed cast-in-place concrete, an aluminum curtain wall system, and hand-crafted tiles. Other featured architects include Daily Garnk, Troy Long Design, Rob Wellington Quigley, and Michael Maltzan.

Wellington Quigley, and Michael Maltzan. architect, artist, and designer Gaetano Pesce continues to brighten the world with his playful designs. From misshapen rubber beach house in Bahia and collaborations with high-end furniture manufacturers B&B Italia and Knoll. Many of his boldly colored objects are products of experiments with industrial materials, as in the sculptural Dalia TV Chair (1980, above), made of molded polyurethane with epoxy resin. For this retrospective—the first such survey of the Italian-born, New York–based creator are characterized by an interdisciplinary approach and a deliberate incoherence. As Pesce's motto goes: “It’s stupid to repeat the same experience.” Pesce’s rich puzzle of work includes a sculpted rubber beach house in Bahia and collaborations with high-end furniture manufacturers B&B Italia and Knoll. Many of his boldly colored objects are products of experiments with industrial materials, as in the sculptural Dalia TV Chair (1980, above), made of molded polyurethane with epoxy resin. For this retrospective—the first such survey of the Italian-born, New York–based creator are characterized by an interdisciplinary approach and a deliberate incoherence. As Pesce’s motto goes: “It’s stupid to repeat the same experience.”
It is probably fair to say that most of the nation’s best-known architects have been educated east of the Mississippi. Likewise, the cultural elite on the East Coast probably perceive Berkeley to be a group of lunatics teetering on the edge of the Pacific. But it is that very condition that has generated a clamor of loud and important voices. As Montgomery points out in his posthumous essay (completed by his son Peter), the heroes of the book and the college remain William Wurster and his wife, the social housing expert Catherine Bauer Wurster. For better or worse, they set the school on the path of multiplicity—it is the book’s unifying theme.

No book about architecture at Cal is complete without some space dedicated to the most controversial character in Wurster Hall, Christopher Alexander, the primary author of A Pattern Language. He inspired committed devotees and adversaries, and there are three essays that serve as a testament to his significance. Every graduate of the school that I have ever met holds a strong opinion about Alexander. He was an academic who didn’t give an inch. In this way, he serves as an antidote to the courtly Kostof. Perhaps that is what Wurster was trying to achieve—a great range of characters who would push students and each other. The editors successfully connect many voices—some polite, a few funny, and several honest. And they have found a way to capture history, share the personalities of the key characters, and most importantly, reveal how architectural education evolves.

A major problem with the book may be its premise. The book celebrates the first 100 years of UC Berkeley’s Department of Architecture, from 1903 to 2003. But the foundations for the College of Environmental Design (CED), which brought several disciplines together and remains UC Berkeley’s great contribution to architectural education, didn’t come into being until William Wurster took over in 1953, 50 years after the school’s founding. Wisely, the editors divided the 100 years into two sections. Historical essays by Kenneth Cardwell, Joan Draper, Inge Horton, and William Littman cover the first 50 years. Essays on Wurster, Charles Moore, Joe Escherick, and others cover the second half-century. Subsequent sections address topics for which the school ultimately became best known: researching the environment; teaching history, communities, and cultures; systematic approaches; ecology and building science; and the buildings themselves. These areas are laid out in the essay “Architecture on the Cutting Edge” by former CED Dean Roger Montgomery, who sadly passed away before the volume was released.

In her preface, the new dean, Jennifer Wolch, says the school’s greatest contribution may have been its philosophy of addressing the larger fabric of urban life, and not just iconographic objects. The theme of student resistance—another hallmark at Berkeley—appears repeatedly and helps prevent the book from being a self-congratulatory commemorative volume. Littman brings to light the resistance to the outmoded Beaux Arts pedagogy of Warren Perry (and that of his predecessor and school founder, John Galen Howard) and chronicles the transition to Wurster’s more modernist approach. Other resistance moments include Sim van der Ryn’s splendid personal tale of People’s Park and Inez Brooks-McCoy’s remembrance of Gorilla Graphics.

The book also reveals new information and introduces us to the leading lights of the school. I was unaware of Charles Eames’ brief but important time at Berkeley until I read this book. Other figures like systems guru Ezra Ehrenpreis and social scientist Clare Cooper Marcus gave the school its reputation for innovative thinking. During much of this era, Escherick was a wizard, bringing the perspective of practice to the whole circus. Another great influence, according to Dan Solomon’s essay, was historian Sprio Kostof. This was a scholar who could speak about complex ideas in ways that civilians could grasp. In some ways, what he promoted—that history and theory were part and parcel of practice—became CED’s core concern.

Clare Cooper Marcus writes about the school’s controversial social factors curriculum. Aesthetes resisted it, while others must have understood it as a logical outgrowth of the Bauhaus interest in social change and decent housing. I would argue that the Bay Area became a leader in contemporary affordable housing, disabled rights, and community participation in part due to the social factors faculty and their influence.

Of course, architects are not usually writers, and the quality of the writing varies. Some are three essays that serve as a testament to his significance. Every graduate of the school that I have ever met holds a strong opinion about Alexander. He was an academic who didn’t give an inch. In this way, he serves as an antidote to the courtly Kostof. Perhaps that is what Wurster was trying to achieve—a great range of characters who would push students and each other. The editors successfully connect many voices—some polite, a few funny, and several honest. And they have found an essential truth. A plurality of viewpoints creates a stronger education, if a somewhat muddled legacy.

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UC Berkeley’s great contribution to architectural education, didn’t come into being until William Wurster took over in 1953, 50 years after the school’s founding. The book celebrates the first 100 years of UC Berkeley’s Department of Architecture, from 1903 to 2003. But the foundations for the College of Environmental Design (CED), which brought several disciplines together and remains
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eastern designs” developed by Rodchenko. Here the optimism of Vladimir Mayakovksy, the Russian Futurist poet, further expresses the new government’s aim to give its utopian technological vision a monumental form, which Tatlin expands as a governmental building program with moving parts. Across the chapters, Lynton concisely depicts Tatlin’s motivation to work with others. This aspect of Tatlin’s character is consistent with his desire to move beyond the aesthetic confines of what he termed “synthetic-static compositions” and into the larger three-dimensional space of the theater and public realm. Furthermore, Lynton’s careful review of Tatlin’s academic roles suggests that his subject was clearly gravitating toward a social mission. This mission, primarily one of art education reform, builds on Tatlin’s successes as an artist, as well as his recognition of the value of an icon for the new government. Tatlin’s appointment as head of the art department within the Ministry of Education under Lenin, for instance, led him to administer Lenin’s campaign to eliminate the obsolete monuments of the past and replace them with monuments in support of the Socialist Revolution.

Chapter 5, “Concept and Design of the Tower,” describes how the conceptual model for the tower evolves from this central role. Here, Lynton is sensitive to the magnitude of Tatlin’s project, whose actual design exists only in written descriptions, front and side elevations, and two models of different scales with variable levels of material complexity. But he is also diplomatic in his discussion of the tower’s inadequacies and inconsistencies. Lynton’s discourse on the elements of the tower’s inadequacies and inconsistencies. Lynton’s discourse on the elements of the tower’s inadequacies and inconsistencies.

Right: Tatlin (center) and assistants in 1920. T.A. HORTON IS A DESIGNER AT KOHN PEDERSEN FOR ASSOCIATES.

Norbert Lynton’s “circumstantial” approach to the work of Vladimir Tatlin combines an art-historical analysis of Russia’s Socialist Revolution with a symbolic reading of The Monument to the Third International, the visionary Russian designer’s unrealized monument and headquarters for the Communist

Internation in Petrograd. Considering the sources and significance of that 1920 project, Lynton moves on to discuss Letatlin, the artist’s proposed organic flying machine, in the context of Tatlin’s utopian vision of society. While Lynton sometimes complicates a clear understanding of Tatlin’s aesthetic trajectory by analyzing it through concurrent movements in painting, political alliances, and a miscellany of tangents, the author illuminates the artist’s role in a momentous social program.

Lynton, a professor of art history at Sussex University who died in 2007, opens the book with informative chapters on Tatlin’s contributions to the Russian avant-garde. The reader is acquainted with the young artist’s interests, including drawing, folk art, and Russian religious icon paintings. Tatlin’s pre-occupation with the theories of K. Danilevsky concerning dirigibles is also discussed and shown to complement the artist’s love for utilitarian objects and the simple life he led as a cadet sailor. For Lynton, his subject’s ability to synthesize these influences through painting predicts the emergence of Constructivism.

The author asserts that Tatlin’s nautical experiences and fascination with flight provided him with a lifetime of symbols. This is not only suggested in his designs for the tower and Letatlin, but also in his early work as a painter, scene builder, and student at the Moscow College of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture. According to Lynton, Tatlin began to exhibit his work regularly by 1910, and was increasingly engaged in an anti-traditional mode of painting concerned with material relationships and movement as opposed to pictorial representation. In his chapter on Constructivism, Lynton continues to highlight Tatlin’s evolving techniques of production. This provides the reader with a point of departure for the author’s deconstruction of the tower’s multiple layers of meaning.

Chapter 4, “Monument to Revolution,” outlines the events that placed Tatlin in Petrograd, the intended site for his tower, and provides an account of how his ideas for a monument to the Revolution made their way to the public. It also supplies a brief history of Russia’s tendency to memorialize great events by errecting commemorative buildings. Lynton appropriately introduces the subject of architecture here and analyzes the “aspirations of the moment” in terms of the work of Walter Gropius and the “experimental designs” developed by Rodchenko. Here the optimism of Vladimir Mayakovksy, the Russian Futurist poet, further expresses the new government’s aim to give its utopian technological vision a monumental form, which Tatlin expands as a governmental building program with moving parts. Across the chapters, Lynton concisely depicts Tatlin’s motivation to work with others. This aspect of Tatlin’s character is consistent with his desire to move beyond the aesthetic confines of what he termed “synthetic-static compositions” and into the larger three-dimensional space of the theater and public realm. Furthermore, Lynton’s careful review of Tatlin’s academic roles suggests that his subject was clearly gravitating toward a social mission. This mission, primarily one of art education reform, builds on Tatlin’s successes as an artist, as well as his recognition of the value of an icon for the new government. Tatlin’s appointment as head of the art department within the Ministry of Education under Lenin, for instance, led him to administer Lenin’s campaign to eliminate the obsolete monuments of the past and replace them with monuments in support of the Socialist Revolution. Chapter 5, “Concept and Design of the Tower,” describes how the conceptual model for the tower evolves from this central role. Here, Lynton is sensitive to the magnitude of Tatlin’s project, whose actual design exists only in written descriptions, front and side elevations, and two models of different scales with variable levels of material complexity. But he is also diplomatic in his discussion of the tower’s inadequacies and inconsistencies. Lynton’s discourse on the elements of the tower’s inadequacies and inconsistencies. Lynton’s discourse on the elements of the tower’s inadequacies and inconsistencies.

UTOPIA’S GHOST
Tatlin’s Tower: Monument to Revolution
Norbert Lynton
Yale University Press, $50.00

Elevation of the Monument (1920).

Fox Associates.

T.A. Horton is a designer at Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates.

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Rail is back in fashion. For Californians, high-speed rail is the hail Mary pass to escape the daily stress of sitting in traffic without options. The challenges to make rail work in California are substantial. Utilizing fast trains effectively will require significant changes to our communities. Enter railLA.

A joint effort between the Los Angeles Chapters of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the American Planning Association (APA), railLA was created with the specific purpose of integrating high-speed rail into our cities, most notably, at first, LA. Our mission is to effect a paradigm shift that will transform planning policy away from creating a traffic-choked suburbia toward a human, pedestrian-friendly, efficient, fluid, and sustainable city.

Europe has been developing high-speed rail systems that are the envy of the world. Recently, Asian countries have accelerated rail projects as affordable, efficient mass transportation. For example, China’s $300 billion high-speed rail network will connect most first- and second-tier cities; India is constructing several high-speed rail lines to enhance an already dense railroad network leftover from colonial days; and several other countries are following suit. Even in car-infatuated America, we are finally pursuing high-speed rail projects.

Our obstacles are many. Urban planners and engineers know that rail is much harder to integrate into communities that were designed mostly for automobiles. The question with California’s high-speed system is that with projected ridership of tens of thousands of people per station per day, how are they all going to get to and from those stations? Do they drive and park their cars in monstrosous multi-thousand-space parking garages? Can you imagine adding thousands of peak-hour car trips to any of our hyper-congested downtowns? To address these issues, railLA launched an international Call for Ideas to illustrate the increased quality of life in cities with high-speed rail. Submissions will be published online, as well as in an exhibition series—the first opened on July 29—at the City National Plaza’s “jewelry box” in downtown Los Angeles. Additionally, railLA is producing an interactive discussion and a series of community design charrettes led by architect James Rojas.

Successful high-speed rail lines need to be the pinnacle of a larger hierarchical transit feeder system. Let’s say, for example, someone lives in Marina Del Rey. They walk one or two blocks to a bus, which then feeds a trolley/light rail system in Santa Monica, which then feeds into commuter rail lines, which then connects with inter-city high-speed trains. No huge parking garages needed. If we try to connect to the thousands, and not via the automobile. Recognizing this need for integrated hierarchical transit systems, several U.S. cities are now investing in light rail, including in LA, where the Expo Line will be the first light rail line connecting downtown to the West Side.

But more needs to be done to make transit systems function efficiently. Our car-based suburb city does not have the density to generate enough transit ridership within the magical quarter-mile walk-shading distance to a station. If we built enough transit to serve suburbia, the system could not generate adequate revenues to pay for itself. If we built a reduced system with longer walking distances or less frequent trains, then the system would become inconvenient and never be used. In the suburban context, transit is set up to fail. If we want better transit, we need to build different communities. This will benefit us in at least two ways: less time in traffic means more time for things we like; and we will also have money left in our pockets. In the ‘40s, when LA had great public transit, an average household spent approximately 3 cents of every disposable dollar on transit. Today, this figure is 19 cents on each dollar we spend on our cars. Imagine if we could recapture even a minimal amount of these savings.

Unfortunately, the path forward is arduous and challenging. We have created a legal framework that heavily favors “normal” planning for the automobile and makes planning for transit a boutique effort we call TODs (Transit Oriented Developments). Today, the public feels hopelessly tied to or from the station, and the size of the parking garages would wipe out all the benefits a train station usually has in a city. Great train stations are the pulsating hubs of dense, transit and pedestrian activity. Therefore, some believe that the best we can hope for is to slow the rate of change, or even not grow at all, as in their mind any new project will inevitably create more congestion. Devoid of a dream to pursue, we have perfected being afraid to change anything at all.

As a society, we’ve been at a similar impasse before. Just after the Great Depression in the ‘30s, life in cities was dreary and difficult, and our future looked bleak. But a group of visionaries and industrialists invented a better way for everyone and presented it to the public in the 1939 World’s Fair. There were no suburbs until then, no interstate highways, no shopping malls, and no arterial collector roads. The exhibits in Queens, NY changed our world. The fair generated such demand that, after the war, we remade the entire nation in the exhibits’ image—a car-based society. In the process we created “the American Dream” and one of the most productive, wealthy, and ultimately wasteful societies ever.

This once great dream has since degenerated into a nightmare that has us stuck. Our promised freedom of mobility has turned into an obligation to waste away in traffic jams. The industries that once made us wealthy are now picking the last cents out of our pockets. We need a new dream one that healthy, super-fast trains provide an opportunity to reimagine and rebuild Los Angeles. The public/private partnership opportunities are vast, and the potential to rehabilitate out of date and decapitated areas is great. railLA aims to generate and broadcast a new vision for a new America, attractive to all, modern and sustainable, based on livable cities with public transit, super fast trains and people liberated from the burdens of an oil-guzzling, car-congested life. With this vision we can once again return to the forefront of all nations in the world because this is where we belong: We are still Americans.

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