In early November, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors approved the appropriation of $125 million in bond funds for LACMA's $600 million makeover. The plan, designed by Peter Zumthor, proposes to tear down most of the campus and erect a new building that snakes over Wilshire Boulevard. If approved, the new 410,000-square-foot facility could open by 2023, with the remaining funding coming from private donations.
WE MUST BUILD MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Now that the Great Recession is more or less over (for the time being) there seems to be a shift in what we’re all doing better. But if you’re someone who can’t afford the rent—and that number is growing as rents nationwide grow astronomically—that couldn’t be further from the truth. In California that issue is problematic not just in San Francisco, but also in Los Angeles.

According to a recent study by the state-funded California Housing Partnership Corporation, the financial crisis converted homeowners into renters and drove down salaries. In Los Angeles County, the study asserts, rents went up 25 percent from 2000 to 2012, but incomes fell 9 percent. They indicate that the county now needs at least 490,340 more affordable homes. Reinstating these findings, a recent study by the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs found that LA is now the most unaffordable rental market in the country, with lower incomes than those of cities like New York and San Francisco and only a small difference in rent.

The private market, which zeroes in on maximum profit, isn’t much help. In the Los Angeles Times, urbanist Joseph Masco pointed out that the market “works to serve only the affluent and double-income professionals, because the returns to the builder and the contractor are so much more promising than they are for building starter homes.”

Meanwhile government support has waned dramatically. The city has allowed its affordable housing trust fund to nosedive, using its resources to pay off deficits, while federal Housing and Urban Development funds have fallen off severely. According to the Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department, federal and city money for affordable housing has dropped from $30 million per year in 2008 to $26 million this year.

There are signs that the city and the affordable housing world are beginning to address the problem. Affordable housing developers, unable to rely on as many public funds, have gotten creative at financing projects through new grant sources and public-private partnerships, to name some strategies. And last month Mayor Eric Garcetti announced a goal of building 100,000 new housing units in Los Angeles by 2021 through restoring the Affordable Housing Trust Fund; subsidizing affordable housing on sites currently owned by METRO, the city’s transit agency; and cutting red tape on building in general through development streamlines and CEQA reform.

But much more needs to be done, and fast. For one, the city should take councilman Mitch O’Farrell’s advice and put at least 25 percent of its former Community Redevelopment Authority funds into affordable housing. The city should impel developers to include more affordable housing in their buildings, with such demands offset by allowing developers to build higher and denser.

Another good technique: other west coast cities like Seattle and San Francisco have effectively forced developers of non-housing projects to pay “linkage fees” to help support affordable housing.

Meanwhile Los Angeles should think more creatively with its models and codes. It can follow some cities in Europe by developing its own affordable housing on government-owned land (transit sites should be just the beginning) and by updating zoning restrictions to battle sprawl with affordable density and allow, for example, small prefabs and even shipping containers to be made into affordable housing.

None of these plans should badly burden businesses, or the city, but all will benefit from a healthy mix of income. Among other things, affordable housing means stable communities, more jobs (affordable housing encourages companies to move in), shorter commutes (and hence less traffic and pollution), and less (very costly) homelessness. We may think we’re getting more prosperous as our sources and public-private partnerships, to name some strategies. And last month Mayor Eric Garcetti announced a goal of building 100,000 new housing units in Los Angeles by 2021 through restoring the Affordable Housing Trust Fund; subsidizing affordable housing on sites currently owned by METRO, the city’s transit agency; and cutting red tape on building in general through development streamlines and CEQA reform.

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Meanwhile Los Angeles should think more creatively with its models and codes. It can follow some cities in Europe by developing its own affordable housing on government-owned land (transit sites should be just the beginning). And it can update zoning restrictions to battle sprawl with affordable density and allow, for example, for the development of much-needed, small-scale work spaces for media, tech, business-owned, neighborhood-oriented workspaces, restaurants, and entertainment. The project includes 15 buildings on over 46 acres with 210,000 square feet of office space and 13,500 square feet for retail and restaurants. Steven Ehrlich Architects is leading the design with Ware Malcomb as the executive architect. The indoor and outdoor work areas focus on bringing a more residential feel to the site, with flexible and adaptable work spaces. There are planned fire pits, atresco gardens, a t-shaped pedestrian zone, roll-up garage style doors, balconies, roof-top decks, and dog-friendly spaces. Each top deck, and dog-friendly spaces are developed Elevon, which is growing its footprint across the city.

LACMA SVP of External Affairs Terry Morello told LA that bringing the campus’ buildings up to code would cost over $350 million, so demolishing the existing built fabric and starting from scratch would be the most economic choice. “There’s been very little call for preservation of this building,” said Morello. “The original design was compromised within the first year of its being built.

William Pereira’s Ahmanson, Hammer, and Bing buildings, as well as Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer’s 1988 addition would all meet the wrecking ball. The plan does preserve some of the museum’s spaces, including Renzo Piano’s new BACM and Resnick buildings and Bruce Goff’s Japanese Pavilion.

“It’s another great day in Los Angeles,” said LA Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas at a November 6 press conference. “The new LACMA is about to come forward. It’s exciting, it’s inspiring. It will begin to move in, shorter commutes (and hence less traffic and pollution), and less homeless. We may think we’re getting more prosperous as our economy improves, but that will prove to be a dangerous, and expensive, mirage if we don’t manage our development the right way.”

**ELEVON AT CAMPUS EL SEGUNDO**

El Segundo, California, is second only to San Francisco in the state for its concentration of Fortune 500 companies—including DirecTV, Mattel, and several aerospace firms. The city’s latest business campus, Elevon at Campus El Segundo, will feature something unusual for Southern California: business-owned, neighborhood-scale work spaces for media, tech, and entertainment. The project includes 15 buildings on over 46 acres with 210,000 square feet of office space and 13,500 square feet for retail and restaurants. Steven Ehrlich Architects is leading the design with Ware Malcomb as the executive architect. The indoor and outdoor work areas focus on bringing a more residential feel to the site, with flexible and adaptable work spaces. There are planned fire pits, atresco gardens, a t-shaped pedestrian zone, roll-up garage style doors, balconies, roof-top decks, and dog-friendly spaces. Each top deck, and dog-friendly spaces

*Looking up at the tower (top); glassy entry at street level (bottom).*
EXPO LINE'S FIRST RIDERS?
There’s been a lot of sunny news revolving around the incoming Expo Line in Santa Monica, which is scheduled to open sometime in 2016. But with all the feverish construction, it appears some unwelcome guests are coming out of the shadows (or actually, the ground). Several businesses around the construction—including those of architects—are reporting increased numbers of cockroaches making their way into their offices. Some have even called it an infestation. Who knew mass transit would attract such a wide ridership?

AIA/LA GOES BIG
The AIA/LA held its annual awards last month, and they didn’t skimp on the architecture. Setting up shop in Downtown LA, they held a pre-party at the iconic Bradbury Building, the ceremony at the historic Million Dollar Theater, and reception at the revitalized (some might say gentrified) Grand Central Market.

If you were an architect getting married you couldn’t think of a better set of destinations. Meanwhile it appears the AIA/LA is about to break ground on their new architecture center, called CALA (Center for Architecture and Urban Design Los Angeles) in Downtown LA’s Arts District. The rumored site is inside the Legendary Development’s 950 East 3rd Street, right next to SCI-Arc. We’ll keep you posted as we find out more.

KATE MANTILINI, PART II
In a recent Eavesdrop we reported that the famous Morphosis-designed restaurant Kate Mantilini in Beverly Hills was chafing at city plans to landmark the premises. Well it appears the problem may have been resolved. Eavesdrop heard over cocktails that Morphosis itself has been tagged to do the restaurant’s renovation. No official word yet, but this seems like a natural fit, doesn’t it?

SEND ROACH MOTELS AND DINNER RESERVATIONS TO EAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM

CULTURE CLUB continued from front page: Portland, Oregon–based firm Boora Architects as executive architect. Named after an alumnus and his wife who donated $30 million toward the project, the Burton and Deedee McMurtry Building will bring the two departments under the same roof for the first time. The university is hoping that that the interdisciplinary space will help foster collaborative learning and teaching opportunities for students and faculty.

DS+R’s design is composed of three parts: a wing for art history, one for art, and an art and architecture library. Each section is defined by a different facade treatment. The art program has a custom zinc enclosure, the art history wing is finished with stucco—a material found throughout Stanford’s campus—and the library is enclosed by glass. Drawing inspiration from the arcaded courtyards of Stanford’s historic buildings, DS+R designed an upper courtyard around the oculus that tops a ground level courtyard, providing outdoor spaces for critiques, presentations, and relaxing.

Inside, the lower level accommodates facilities for film editing, computer labs, and photography dark-rooms. The ground floor houses screening rooms and a sculpture studio with a glass roll-up door on the east facade to let students bring their work outside. A flexible space on the second floor can be converted into a performance or gallery area, or a classroom with 120 retractable seats. The third floor houses faculty offices.

Ariel Rosenstock

THE FOUR FOOT NUTSHELL

LANDSCAPE CONTAINER

Designed and sculpted by Larry Kornegay

High-strength, 6000+ PSI concrete
Endless color options

2 sizes available

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URBAN REFLECTOR continued from front page: intersect. The developer published an Environmental Impact Report for the plan, known as “5M,” last month, and at press time was set to present it to the San Francisco Planning Commission on November 20.

The design team for the project includes New York–based architecture firm Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF), SITELAB urban studio, and historic resources consultant Architectural Resources Group.

If approved, the scheme—located near the city’s Powell Street Bart and MUNI stations—will contain 1.8 million square feet of development, including about 870,000 square feet of offices, 800,000 square feet of residences, 150,000 square feet of ground floor uses, and 34,000 square feet of open space. The plan would renovate two existing buildings (including the Chronicle Building and a modest brick and timber structure), build four new buildings (two office and two residential), and demolish seven existing buildings. The developer calls the buildings being torn down historically insignificant, including warehouses and a connector structure from the Chronicle.

The community process for the project has been ongoing since 2009. The developers have called for diverse and “sculpted, carved buildings” to add visual interest, a diverse mix of uses, and a pedestrian experience enhanced by active storefronts and art walls.

“We knew this part of the city would fail miserably if we tried to make each of the buildings look like they were all the same,” said KPF principal Trent Tesch, who stressed architecture “referencing the character and nature of the existing site.” The buildings reflect the diversity of architectural and planning styles that are characteristic of the area.

One of the new office buildings in the works has a rust-colored, metal mesh facade, the other is made of glass, faced partly with curving white metallic fins and inset red ones. The tallest residential tower, at 470 feet, is broken into two parts—one clad in reddish reclaimed brick and the other with an expressed concrete frame that undulates vertically and horizontally.

“We had an interest in creating design that was not just the glassy tall buildings that you see in the financial district,” said Forest City project director Audrey Tendell. “Retaining a certain amount of existing fabric is paramount to making sure the architecture and design feels like it’s not brand new.”

In addition to the built structures, the development includes the 12,000-square-foot “Mary Square,” and a 22,000-square-foot green space on the Chronicle Building Roof. Roughly 26 percent of the project’s residences are set to be affordable units.

“We did a pretty good job with the balancing act, taking into account all the stakeholder interests,” said Tendell. This balancing act continues to be a factor for new development in San Francisco, as an unprecedented influx of money continues to transform the city, and the neighboring Mid-Market area in particular. The once struggling spot has more than 30 new projects on the boards, making it one of the most sought-after development zones in the city.

The project is expected to get underway by 2016 or 2017 and take more than ten years to complete. Public comments will be heard until December 1.

SL
Architecture is porous—it blurs boundaries, extends margins, erases divisions, and fosters coherence.
Two new 350-foot-tall Palladium structures are unveiled as an exhibition space with a plan that opens up to the sweeping landscape beyond. The facility also houses an archive and design collection in its basement level. The design of the facility—with its sharp right angles, polished terrazzo floors, and floor to ceiling glass—represents a period of architecture that was sensitive to the user, offering a range of affordable housing to meet the post World War Two demands of growing families. The attractive houses, a favorite of retirees and seasonal residents, are now getting more expensive, as evidenced on a tour of select homes that accompanied a preview of the center. An estimated 45,000 devotees attended the city’s Modernism Week last February.

When Santa Fe Federal Savings & Loan went bankrupt in the 1980s, the building’s site was proposed for a 4-story retail center piece to 19 condos. The proposal galvanized an emerging preservation movement, spurred by the architect’s daughter-in-law, Sidney Williams, which stopped the project in its tracks, declared the building a historic monument, and, in time, launched the rehabilitation of the center. Sidney Williams is now the curator of the new center.

Marmol Radziner’s renovation is based in part on the photographs of Julius Shulman, who documented many of the mid-century modernist buildings in the area.

E. Stewart Williams will be honored in the opening exhibit, entitled An Eloquent Modernist, which is accompanied by an illustrated book of the same title.

**NOTHING BUT NET**

The famous Las Vegas Strip is about to get a major addition in the form of the Cunningham Group’s All Net Resort and Arena, a $1.4 billion mixed-use and entertainment project backed by former NBA player and first-time developer Jackie Robinson (not to be confused with the famous baseball player of the same name). The ambitious project includes an 860,000-square-foot multi-purpose arena, a 300,000-square-foot pedestrian plaza, and, crowning it all, a 44-story combo boutique and five-star hotel and spa.

The sphere-shaped, NBA-regulation arena, which Robinson hopes to use to lure an NBA team to Las Vegas, will feature a retractable roof and operable curtain walls to open to the desert climate. The venue was designed to accommodate open-air concerts and other large events. The arena’s skin will be animated by a matrix of programmable LED screens.

Victory Plaza, a 300,000-square-foot streetscape lined with retail and restaurants, is being billed as a Times Square-like experience with Las Vegas sensibilities. Planned to be the social heart of the urban-scaled project, it includes pedestrian walkways, event spaces, rooftop dining, and public balconies overlooking the street below.

At 44-stories, the All Net Resort Hotel will be one of the tallest hotels on the Strip. Part of the tower includes 500 specialty rooms, each with a private spa.

**VEGAS’ NEWEST ADDITION HOPES TO LURE NBA TEAM TO THE DESERT**

**PLANS CALL FOR A GLASSY ARENA, A LARGE PLAZA, AND A RESORT HOTEL.**

**UNVEILED**

**PALLADIUM RESIDENCES**

Two new 350-foot-tall residential towers are planned for the parking lots to the west and north of the Hollywood Palladium, the iconic theater on Sunset Boulevard that began hosting famous acts in the 1940s, starting with Frank Sinatra. Miami-based developer Crescent Heights has tapped San Francisco firm Natoma Architects to design the pair of high-rises, considering two options for the L-shaped, 28-story mixed-use towers. One includes a blend of 250 hotel rooms and 538 private residences, while the other includes 731 residential units. Both plans include 14,000 square feet of combined retail and restaurants on Argyle Avenue and North El Centro Avenue. Planning documents show the project will also incorporate courtyards, private balconies in the residences, a spa, and a pool. Elements of the towers, such as the rounded edges, echo the Hollywood Palladium, built in the Streamline Moderne style, a later phase of art deco known for aeronautical and nautical-inspired curves and heavy horizontal emphasis. Designed by LA architect Gordon B. Kaufmann, the theater underwent an interior renovation and exterior rehabilitation by Coe Architecture International in 2008. Crescent Heights wants to nominate the concert hall as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

While close to the Red Line/Hollywood Vine subway station, the Palladium Residences incorporates a below-grade garage with parking for just fewer than 2,000 cars and more than 800 bicycles. The plan is part of a push to bring transit-oriented development to the area.

Crescent Heights has not revealed a timeline and budget, but the project is expected to meet LEED Silver standards.

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Two years after winning the AIA/LA Gold Medal, Santa Monica firm Koning Eizenberg Architecture continues to do what they do best: marry a bold design aesthetic with a passionate urban agenda and a willingness to break tired rules. “We’re more interested in the social outcome than the physical outcome,” said firm principal Julie Eizenberg.

And it has paid off. The firm has a series of completed and upcoming projects that have profound influence not just as buildings, but also as transformers of sites and even neighborhoods. Not that it is always easy to explore beyond the building envelope. Old habits die hard, and clients and residents often fight such maneuvers before they embrace the finished products. “We try to challenge typologies that people are comfortable with,” said Eizenberg. “We’ve built up a lot of trust,” said Nathan Bishop, another of the firm’s principals. That, he explained, is how the practice is able to carry out its goals.

28th Street Apartments
Los Angeles, California
The firm renovated Paul R. Williams’ 1926 landmark YMCA in South Los Angeles with the goal of “restoring the dignity of the building.” The firm added new housing units inside and a large, contemporary affordable housing building (painted red, like the tile roof on Williams’ building) behind it. The integration of mechanical units into the new structure freed the rooftop for a garden. Perforated metal screens frame views of the city while creating a unique, lacelike facade on the north side. Vertical solar panels shade and add dimension to the south face, and also lower utility bills.

Pico Branch Library
Los Angeles, California
The library is located in the center of Santa Monica’s Virginia Avenue Park to merge vastly different cultural ends of the public space. The white folding structure is marked by a light and airy feel. Fabric canopies over the entrance shelter the local farmers market. Inside, large windows and sculpted skylights blur the distinction between indoor and outdoor space. Roof overhangs shade the glass facade and make the interior visible from the park. The small building feels much larger, maximizing space and light, and creating a warm and lively atmosphere. “We wanted to make it feel like you’re in the park inside the building,” said Bishop.

Temple Israel of Hollywood
Los Angeles, California
Designed as a “garden in the park” in Hollywood, this newly completed chapel provides a visual connection to the historic synagogue’s internal courtyard through massive windows, which are fronted by a concrete wall and a large arc, custom milled in an abstract pattern. The Tallit-inspired ceiling is made up of undulating wood slats, while angular metallic panels give the exterior facade a dynamic presence.

500 Broadway
Santa Monica, California
Located on the corner of 5th Street and Broadway in Santa Monica, this mixed-use project is made up of four groupings of apartments stacked atop ground-level retail. The rhythmic facade varies in configuration to provide all units with views to the ocean. The firm wove open spaces through the development, connecting it to the streetscape rather than sealing it off. “We’re leveraging public space in a densifying city, bringing in more sky, more light, more street access and more public life,” said Bishop.

Belmar Apartments
Santa Monica, California
Initiated as part of an ambitious affordability program set by the City of Santa Monica to revitalize its Civic Center, the 320-unit mixed income development—located on part of the site of the former RAND headquarters—includes equal amounts of affordable and market-rate units. A public pedestrian pathway and a large public art piece anchor the project, while additional courtyards open on both sides to provide views of the surroundings and connect to the street. Bar-shaped structures hover over the open space in a variety of formations.
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TEMPLE ISRAEL OF HOLLYWOOD
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With the rise of evidence-based design, comfortable spaces are eclipsing clinical environments in healthcare facilities. These new products satisfy both the aesthetic and performance demands of the medical community.

By Leslie Clagett
Even if it’s counter-intuitive, the best design is often the simplest. Officials at Art Center College of Design were first skeptical of architect Darin Johnstone’s plans to transform the school’s “Post Office” building in downtown Pasadena into a new home for the school’s fine art and illustration departments—particularly given the building’s unremarkable, suburban office design, a $5.2 million budget, and a miniscule seven-month start-to-finish timeframe. But through clear and calculated interventions, Johnstone was able to create a space that is practical, inspiring, and, yes, cool.

The 35,000-square-foot CMU and cement plaster building was originally built in 1979 for electronics manufacturer Digitran—which explains the large “D” cutouts on the corners—and was bought by the US Post office in 1995. Job number one, said Johnston, was to “strip away the layers of odd decisions that the post office had made.” To transform the unremarkable facade he decided to paint the building jet black, a color inspired in part by Art Center’s iconic Craig Ellwood–designed main campus building. Interior galleries are painted white, as are the insides of the Ds, which create a dramatic visual contrast, emphasizing the building’s unusual architectural details and making it stand out in the sea of light-colored edifices around it.

Replacing bulky loading docks and canopies that had become the building’s de facto entrance, Johnstone cut a large opening on the ground floor. Inside, he took advantage of the building’s sky-lit double height atrium, converting the space into galleries, and connecting it to the rest of the building via a new grand stair with a metal mesh landing. To bring light into the rest of the building, he cut into the atrium’s edges, and converted under-utilized circulation hallways into more galleries, bridging the gap to the structure’s existing corner light courts. It’s a process that Johnston calls “carving the space with light.” “The game really became how do you get access to light to all the spaces?” said Johnstone.

Student studios and classrooms located along the building’s edges take advantage of this humane connection to light and space, and have been treated with extraordinary attention to detail. “We wanted to create a gallery-like setting for the studios,” said Johnstone, who is currently working to retrofit another building down the street—a former office—for Art Center. Clean white gypsum board—lining learning rooms and partitioned studio spaces—is contrasted with exposed structural materials and mechanical systems. Thin hanging gallery lighting emphasizes the feeling of subtle refinement. Meanwhile, second floor administrative spaces, above the entry, are glassy and open, connecting the exterior to the internal galleries visually. In fact you can see through these from the parking lot into the internal atrium.

Overall it’s an approach that reduces architecture to its purest, most powerful elements: light, space, and volume. Without other distractions those qualities feel particularly strong here, and they vividly enhance the building’s purpose: viewing and creating art.

Johnstone developed an installation inside the atrium’s first floor, called Drawn Out / Light Mass. It converts the project’s plans, diagrams, and axonometrics into a three-dimensional experience, altering them into an angular scrim, printed with angled lines. Looking at the architect’s drawings on the wall of the gallery it gives you another chance to understand how he didn’t need to spend excess time, or money, to implement a clear, unified idea, which has transformed a once-unpleasant space from unordered cacophony to intelligent design. And it reminds you that simplicity can still be quite dramatic in itself.
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Over the last few years employees at Urban Chalet, a design company based in San Francisco and New York, have taken on more than 25 facilities for One Medical, a company dedicated to making the outpatient experience more humane, not to mention hip. The company’s slogan is “The doctor’s office. Reinvented.”

New offices have opened in San Francisco, New York, Washington D.C., Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles, all catered to a sensibility that, in the words of Urban Chalet senior design director Michelle Granelli, is “modern, clean, comfortable, and sometimes a little fun and unexpected.”

A great example is their office in San Francisco’s SoMa neighborhood, which at first glance looks like the headquarters of one of the city’s many creative tech offices, not a doctor’s office. And for good reason—the space once belonged to a graphic design firm, and that became an instant inspiration for the plan. “We wanted it to almost feel like the graphic design company moved out and the doctor’s office moved right in,” said Granelli.

The high-ceilinged space’s rawness and layered textures are especially rare in a medical field obsessed with sterility. Utilities and wood surfaces are exposed, colorful walls are covered with patterns, and a digital wallcovering gives the illusion of raw concrete. “If we had the opportunity to leave something exposed we did,” said Granelli.

Modern furniture contributes to the clean aesthetic, including a modular felt sectional, black form chairs, and geometric copper-clad chairs. Hanging linear lights seem like a closer fit for Square’s or Airbnb’s offices. The front desk was custom milled and topped by a row of hanging, exposed pendant bulbs. On the wall behind the desk the firm had the “One Medical” logo hand painted in a stencil pattern reflective of the previous company’s aesthetic. Exam rooms are treated with the same finishes, and, since they are located on the window line, receive plenty of natural light.

“Making the space welcoming and comforting hasn’t always been a priority in this field, but that’s changing,” said Granelli. Each location is unique to its context, so the tech startup look in San Francisco is replaced, for example, by a space more similar to a high-end retail boutique in Beverly Hills. “We try to take into consideration not only the city and neighborhood, but the tenant space itself. That helps us keep the design elevated,” added Granelli. SAM LUBELL

ONE MEDICAL
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
DESIGNERS: URBAN CHALET
The sudden closure of St. Vincent’s hospital in Greenwich Village left lower Manhattan with a serious shortage of emergency room capacity. At the same time the Albert C. Ledner-designed O’Toole building, located in a New York City landmark district, stood empty; its quirky forms and layout (thankfully) resistant to easy condominium conversion. Following a national trend toward smaller, faster outpatient care centers, North Shore-LIJ purchased the building to create Manhattan’s first stand-alone emergency department, which opened late this summer.

The idea behind these stand-alone emergency centers is to improve care and lessen wait times by concentrating services for the vast majority of emergency room visits, including an X-ray, CT, and MRI imaging center, ultrasounds, and ambulatory surgery, all of which are for outpatient treatments. Patients requiring long-term care are transferred to a traditional hospital (EMTs make a determination in the ambulance about which facility is best suited to the patient’s needs, or the patient can request a specific hospital). “It’s a faster way to deliver care,” said Frank Gunther, a principal at Perkins Eastman, the firm that lead the adaptive reuse project.

The architects worked with the Landmarks Preservation Commission and New York’s State Historic Preservation Office to update the building’s distinctive top-heavy exterior. They removed white tiles that had been added to the exterior and tested the concrete underneath to determine the exact shade of white stain Ledner had used. They created a new glass entry pavilion with a cantilevered glass canopy that extends out to the sidewalk, which opens up the otherwise opaque building to the street. Once inside, visitors encounter unusually small waiting areas, which flank the entrance—the proof of the in-and-out, patient-centered approach. Twenty-six exam rooms are arranged around the perimeter with access to natural light through the translucent glass block walls. In the center, a “results waiting area” with semi-private cubicles is bounded by two nurses stations, putting patients and caregivers in immediate proximity. The interiors are bright and uncluttered, cheerful yet serene.

Responding to community demographics and needs, the facility also has a dedicated unit for treating victims of sexual assault and a decontamination unit for disaster preparedness, which are segregated from the walk-in areas. Staff offices and an ambulance reception area are located in the basement. The upper floors are being developed into medical offices.

The new facility serves a crucial role in the lower Manhattan community, and the efficient design helps make a trip to the emergency room both a shorter and more pleasant healing experience. ALAN G. BRAKE
At 260,000 square feet, the Austin VA Outpatient Clinic is the largest of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ freestanding outpatient centers. Built to replace a facility that was a quarter of its size, it provides greater capacity to serve the new generation of veterans from the nation’s recent foreign wars. It also consolidates all of the outpatient services that could conceivably be needed—from primary care to minor surgery—under one roof, so local patients do not have to travel to VA installations in other towns.

In addition to being larger than its predecessor, the new clinic is also more comfortable. The VA tasked Texas-based architecture firm Page with incorporating the principals of evidence based design into the facility, namely by giving users daylit environments, natural materials, and direct contact with the natural world. “One of the things that made this project challenging and interesting is that, because of the delivery structure, we had a very limited budget,” said Page design architect Peter Hoffman. “At the same time, the VA demanded that we incorporate the latest evidence based health-care design concepts into the workspaces for the care givers as well as within the healing environment.”

Sited in a suburban office park not far from Austin Bergstrom International Airport, the architects looked to nearby McKinney Falls State Park to find inspiration for the building’s formal language and materiality. VA design guidelines called for CMU on the exterior. Page instead recommended using split-face blocks of local limestone in four different colors arranged in a horizontal, strata-like pattern reminiscent of the rock escarpments of the Texas Hill Country. To keep within the budget, the architects only used the stone on the public areas of the exterior—lower on the elevation and around the entrances—while using similarly colored, split-face CMU on the building’s back ends and higher up on the elevation.

This sort of playing with the VA design guidelines characterized much of the rest of the project as well. The guidelines suggested terrazzo in the lobby, for example, but Page found that they could save a substantial amount of money by instead specifying a porcelain tile for the lobby, allowing the architects to spend that savings on more natural materials throughout the interior, such as limestone in the elevator lobby, which is interspersed with vertical glass tile sections evocative of waterfalls—a regular theme throughout the project.

Another challenge that Page faced was bringing as much daylight as possible into the building’s deep floor plates. The architects achieved this through two devices. One is a lofty, north facing, glass-encased lobby—hung with a wave-like sculpture by San Francisco artist Daniel Goldstein—that brings sunlight deep into the interior. The other is the placement of large windows at the end of each of the building’s long corridors, which set up views to the landscaped exterior from almost any point within the facility.

Finally, Page incorporated nature into the project by the most direct means possible—by providing outdoor areas where patients can step out of the air conditioning and experience the weather. This being Texas, of course, the architects set up shaded tables and pavilions that offer some mediation of the powerful sun.
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PUBLIC WORK, Lines of Desire: PETER SHIRE
11.8.2014-1.31.2015

PUBLIC WORK is the first exhibition to focus exclusively on L.A. based artist Peter Shire’s public and private architectural commissions. Executed over the course of three decades, the architectural works demonstrate Shire’s understanding of the formal principles of twentieth century art and architecture colliding with his interrogations of popular culture and the vocabulary of visual design. Plying graphic forms and structural geometry with radically saturated colors, Shire’s architectural constructions are high-voltage improvisations of artistic legacy and traditional architectural platforms. The resulting works exuberantly transform space and environment.

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Monsters, madmen, and magicians play starring roles in Haunted Screens: German Cinema in the 1920s, an exhibition that runs through April 26 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. It’s a worthy successor to LACMA’s many explorations of that fertile era of experimentation. German studios churned out plenty of fluffy entertainments for mass consumption, but they also produced (as Hollywood rarely did) works of art that made few concessions to popular taste. The show has a strong emphasis throughout on architecture and urbanism. LACMA curator Britt Salvesen divided the 250 exhibits into four thematic sections and deftly wove them into a visual narrative, elucidated by succinct text panels. Within each section, one can review set and costume designs alongside production stills for a few features, and then step into a darkened space to watch excerpts of those films, back-projected onto suspended screens. Happily there was a rich trove to draw on, principally from the collection of the Cinémathèque Française in Paris. Hollywood studios squandered their treasures, treating talent as hired hands, and junking their archives. Most of their publicity stills were portraits of popular stars; at UFA, the leading German studio, up to 800 photos documented every aspect of a major production. Lotte Eisner and other dedicated archivists rescued prints and drawings that survived wartime devastation and carried them off to the Cinémathèque. In doing so, they preserved a legacy of art and history.

Like the painters and sculptors whom the Nazis would soon condemn as decadent, filmmakers—including Fritz Lang, F.W. Murnau, Georg Pabst, and Robert Wiene—mirrored the turmoil and creativity of the Weimar Republic. The distorted houses, oppressive city streets, and sinister laboratories they constructed on stages and back lots mirrored a society struggling to break free of the past, even as its economy and government foundered. Whereas the best German architecture of the 1920s—from the Weisenhofsiedlung to luxury villas and workers’ housing estates—is cool and rational, filmmakers exposed the contradictions of the times and the dark underside of material progress. Their subjects ranged from grinding poverty in the slums to the polarization of wealth, futuristic fantasies and folklore, surveillance and the threat of new technologies. The demons that haunt these films would soon achieve power: critic Siegfried Kracauer entitled his history of film, From Caligari to Hitler.

To articulate this multi-layered story and heighten its impact, Maltzan and Murphy have constructed a trio of wave-like forms to enclose projection screens, which are set at angles to each other, so one can watch one or several clips simultaneously. In the troughs between, small drawings and production stills continued on page 16
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Along those public thoroughfares, Los Angeles plays itself, not as a physical strip upon which we construct buildings. They are the armature of Los Angeles. “The city itself, its boulevards, are an anonymous and amorphous city, but as a vibrant and engaging tapestry of life. To see why and how this was so, Suisman did the unthinkable: He actually looked at the boulevards and avenues. On them he found geography, history, culture, and politics. He traced the physical layout of the boulevards, discovering motifs—hybrids that followed the old Spanish empire’s archo boundaries, then conformed to the new empire’s more Cartesian grid, imposed after the region was absorbed into the Union in 1849. Some boulevards acted as binding, knitting the little (and once independent) townships, like Hollywood and Colegrove that lay outside the original Spanish Pueblo, to the civic core. Other streets, like Wilshire Boulevard, were sequenced commercial centers, which, taken as a whole, constituted a “linear downtown,” in Reyner Banham’s famous coinage. These could be found throughout the region; upon them arose landmarks, like Bullocks Wilshire, an art deco masterpiece, and Desmond’s, a sleek moderne tower. The city projected its ambitions onto these stretches, envisioning motorways to the sea and thoroughfares dotted with Manhattan-like skyscrapers.

Movie studios, which might easily have erected their hangar-sized sound stages on farmland outside city limits, instead consciously plopped them—variants of the fantasy production within” and “spawning other fantastic architectural realms on them. They were sequenced commercial centers, which, taken as a whole, constituted a “linear downtown,” in Reyner Banham’s famous coinage. These could be found throughout the region; upon them arose landmarks, like Bullocks Wilshire, an art deco masterpiece, and Desmond’s, a sleek moderne tower. The city projected its ambitions onto these stretches, envisioning motorways to the sea and thoroughfares dotted with Manhattan-like skyscrapers.

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MIRRORS WEIMAR GERMANY continued from page 15 are displayed on the canted surfaces, shard-like columns, and a jagged, open-ended frame. Posters occupy the side walls of the gallery, and sound cones descend from the ceiling. The installation is easy to navigate, but it subtly conveys an air of menace, mystery, and insecurity. Within a confined gallery, one can examine the exhibits, absorb the febrile atmosphere of Weimar, and surrender to the timeless magic of the movies.

LACMA is an appropriate host. It frequently presents selections from its fine collection of German Expressionist art, and commissions leading architects (including Frank Gehry, Morphosis, and Frederick Fisher) to install exhibitions. And it is located in the city that lured the finest talents of Germany in the years between the two world wars. Writers, directors, producers, actors, and—most successfully—cinematographers and composers migrated to Hollywood, initially for the money, and later as refugees. They brought a new sophistication to an escapist industry, and they helped establish the genre of film noir. For a decade, LA became Weimar on the Pacific, and there's a faint echo of that era in the more interesting independent movies of recent years.

Haunted Screens takes us back to the source.

Michael Webb is a frequent contributor to an.

STREET SMARTS continued from page 15 passengers who filled the sidewalks and populated buildings that could have been air-lifted from any mid-sized Midwestern city. That all changed in the late 1930s. Voters turned down a massive subway building plan and, frustrated with both jammed streets and poor trolley service, the city began to build freeways. Rail, which put feet on the ground, had an affinity for architecture; cars did not. “Firmness gave way to flow,” as Suisman puts it.

The boulevards became the exclusive province of traffic engineers and their mercantile allies, concerned solely with arterial movement. The result was places like Lincoln Boulevard, a dull, elongated strip of low-lying, undistinguished commercial enterprises, dotted with surface parking lots, whose main architectural feature is the telephone poles lining the roadway. This “killing chaos,” said Suisman, was a “civic inadventure,” allowing the boulevards to suffocate beneath traffic and blight.

X-ray this surface, as Suisman suggested, and you might see the great potential that lay hidden there. In the ensuing 25 years since Boulevard was published, Los Angeles has caught up to Suisman. The city has experienced a renaissance of its boulevards, in part due to the arrival of Mexican, Central American, Korean, and Middle-Eastern immigrants who depend on the proximity of neighborhood shops and public transportation, and in part to a growing realization among Angelenos that the freeways don’t actually lead to anything in particular—you must get off of them to take advantage of all the city has to offer, which is right there, on the boulevards.

Suisman got there first, one might say, and he uses the second half of this book to review several key projects he’s taken on since 1989—many in Los Angeles, many scattered across the nation and across the globe, from Pittsburgh to Palestine—to show how his original insights informed this work. This feels like the very long way around. What one longs for, at the end of this indispensable book, is Suisman himself at the scene of the crime, X-raying the boulevards as they are today, telling us how far we’ve come, and how far we must go. Still, Los Angeles Boulevard remains a guide, even if the road ahead is unclear. Greg Goldin is a frequent contributor to an.
This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Free Speech Movement, an important catalyst for social change on campuses in the 1960s. This fall, an exhibit entitled Design Radicals: Creativity and Protest at Wurster Hall is on view in the Wurster Hall library at UC Berkeley. It examines the legacy of design activism within the university’s College of Environmental Design and its connections to the Bay Area counterculture. An contributor Kenneth Caldwell sat down with the show’s curator, UC Berkeley associate professor of architecture Greg Castillo, to discuss the provocative show, its influences, and its potential impact.

Kenneth Caldwell: What is the focus of Design Radicals?

Greg Castillo: While most of us know the outlines of the story of the Free Speech Movement, we are not so clear on the impact that it had on visual arts and design. Was there any crossover? How could that have informed people’s work in design? I started to investigate that. This is a first pass at some of those findings.

A large part of the show is dedicated to posters that were made in Wurster Hall in 1970. At that time, Nixon’s Cambodian incursion, the Kent State shootings, and the shootings at Jackson State in Mississippi had started a campus conflation felt across the United States. Administrators at UC Berkeley, and also within Wurster Hall, decided that they would allow students to use their time productively to create antiwar committees, to mobilize Berkeley neighborhoods in terms of antiwar activities, and to essentially turn the first floor of Wurster into something very much like a propaganda factory. Instead of Andy Warhol’s pop factory, this was Wurster Hall’s political poster factory.

What did they do?

During that period, it’s estimated that 50,000 posters were printed. Students sold the posters for a penny apiece. Or you could pay more to have a silkscreen image put on the back of a shirt, but you had to bring your own garment. And we know that on a good day, they were able to raise about $500, which adjusted for inflation would be about $3,000 today. This was a broad-based, popular “graphic arts insurgency.”

Where did you find this information?

The reason we know so much about the finances was that these activities, and especially the fact that the campus administrators sanctioned them, California’s governor. Acting through the University of California Regents, he hired an accounting firm from San Francisco. They did a very careful audit to see whether materials and equipment that were supplied by the State of California expressly for the purpose of educational use were being used to make protest materials. I think it’s pretty clear that, having the accounting firm found evidence of misuse or misappropriation of that material, there would have been a purge of student activists, and probably more to the point, a purge of faculty and administrative staff who had been their accomplices.

We know from looking at the documents that, in fact, there weren’t any grounds for the assertion of misuse of state funds. Almost all of the paper for the posters came from the refuse bins in back of the campus computer center. This was an early example of recycling and radical repurposing of materials. The report is on display in the exhibit.

What else does the project cover?

The other part of the exhibition tracks the work of a pivotal figure in countercultural design pedagogy, at least here at UC Berkeley, and that’s Sim Van der Ryn. Before being appointed California’s first state architect under Jerry Brown in the late 1970s, Sim sponsored a series of experimental studio courses.

His collaborators called him the “Pathfinder,” because he would chart a path, find a new thing, ride that wave, and pull people behind him. While his colleagues were doing the project, Sim had been looking for the next big idea.

Where does this story begin?

The first big idea was an intervention in elementary school education here in Berkeley by a cohort of young professors and lecturers, some with young children. Sim’s main counterpart in this project was a young lecturer named Jim Campe, whose wife was an elementary school teacher. They found the conventional setup of children in ranks at desks facing a blackboard absolutely antiquated. They believed in craft and in the notion that doing and making with your hands and doing things as collaborative activities would develop important skills in children—manual, intellectual, and social.

They had children assemble geodesic domes and cover them with army surplus parachutes to play and hide in. They built inflatable structures in classrooms and had kids running in and out of structures, and benches like an Ant Farm dream. They had kids build their own “carrels,” little two-story nooks where children could claim their own place in the classroom to cool out. They were creating an informal urbanism within the classroom with these favela-like, self-built structures.

What happened next?

Jim Campe spearheaded an initiative to buy an old U.S. Mail services surplus van and rehabilitate it. They painted it up, called it the Eagle, and went around doing mobile interventions at local schools. They would have all of the stuff they needed, much of it acquired for free from castoff materials. Their motto was “Trash can do it.” They were very conscious that they were taking what a rich consumer society threw away as trash, reusing it with very low environmental impact—they were early environmentalists—and using it creatively to teach students how to do things.

What were Van der Ryn’s teaching initiatives?

Van der Ryn and Campe created an architecture course called “Making a Place in the Country,” also known as the “Outlaw Builders Studio.” The students who were selected would have to agree to leave campus for three full days every week. They would go up to a remote forested area in Inverness, in Marin County. First they would learn how to forage for food in the forest and dig up mussels at Point Reyes, for example. They would then proceed to plan and build their own communal setting, with sleeping shelters, a drafting studio, a mess hall, an outdoor oven, composting toilets, and a chicken coop.

Was this a utopian escape?

At this moment in time for the counterculture, people were trying to figure out whether they should stay in cities or move back onto the land. This was after the confrontation at People’s Park, when Alameda County Sheriff’s deputies fired shotguns at protesters, sending dozens to the hospital and killing a bystander; this was after the National Guard sprayed tear gas indiscriminately over the campus using the same kind of helicopters deployed in Vietnam. Sim’s studio was geared to provide students with a set of skills that they would need if they decided to go out in the country and start new communities. Construction materials included old virgin redwood chicken coops from Petaluma that were being removed.

The project yielded a report that was called Outlaw Builder News, sold on Telegraph Avenue as a 75-cent underground journal. They were able to sell as many as they could print. And that provided money for a final project that we look at in this exhibition: an experimental structure called the Energy Pavilion that came out of a studio called Natural Energy Systems.

What year is this?

1973. The students were trying to understand and put into practice ecological and solar architecture. There were so few articles and journals on that topic that the first quarter of the course was dedicated to simply finding enough materials to put together a course reader. The course reader was picked up by Random House, titled Natural Energy Systems, and became one of the very first mainstream handbooks on solar architecture.

Students started by trying to formulate an alternative to what they called a “techno-fantasy house,” an alternative to a house that sucked up water and external energy resources and generated wastes that just disappeared down sewage lines, never to be thought about again. They were trying to understand and build a communal infrastructure for an autonomous house. And they built autonomous house service cores as an outgrowth in front of Wurster Hall in the spring of 1973. That structure was called the Energy Pavilion. Students manufactured very early solar panels, hot water solar panels, right here in the Wurster Hall shop. They manufactured parabolic solar reflectors and rainwater collection devices; they had a little wind-driven generator that generated electricity. When the wind wasn’t blowing, they had a bicycle device which would either power a generator or believe it or not, a grain-grinding mill.

They created a closed-loop system for food production with beds of snow peas and lettuce, which according to their proposal, would be fertilized by a composting toilet. I’m told by Sim that this thing was picked up as a prototype by a local television station, and within days they had lines of people wanting to visit. They called it a “techno-fantasy house,” and it captured attention from the Campus Aesthetics Committee, which did not like the idea of an “outlaw building,” especially on campus. So they told Sim, “Okay, great, you’ve done it. That thing has to be torn down before commencement exercises. We don’t want to expose these poor students’ parents, who are coming from all over, to this bizarre-looking figure with a composting toilet in front of one of the buildings.” Sim was disconsolate, but the Energy Pavilion came down.

That October, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries decided to punish the West’s support for wars by creating an artificial spike in oil prices. The result was the world’s first energy crisis. But by then the Energy Pavilion was gone.

Note: A longer version of this interview can be found at www.designfaith.blogspot.com
Greg Castillo discusses the intersection of modern design and 1960s radicalism.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Free Speech Movement, an important catalyst for social change on campuses in the 1960s. This fall, an exhibit entitled "Design Radicals: Creativity and Protest at Wurster Hall" is on view in the Wurster Hall library at UC Berkeley. It examines the legacy of design activism within the university’s College of Environmental Design and its connections to the Bay Area counterculture. An contributor Kenneth Caldwell sat down with the show's curator, UC Berkeley associate professor of architecture Greg Castillo, to discuss the provocative show, its influences, and its potential impact.

Kenneth Caldwell: What is the focus of Design Radicals? Greg Castillo: While most of us know the outlines of the story of the Free Speech Movement, we are not so clear on the impact that it had on visual arts and design. Was there any crossover? How could that have informed pedagogy, at least here at UC Berkeley, and that’s Sim Van der Ryn?

Where did you find this information? The reason we know so much about the finances was that these activities, and especially the fact that the campus administrators sanctioned them, outraged Ronald Reagan, then California’s governor. Acting through the University of California Regents, he hired an accounting firm from San Francisco. They did a very careful audit to see whether materials and equipment that were supplied by the State of California expressly for the purpose of educational use were being used to make protest materials. I think it’s pretty clear that, had the accounting firm found evidence of misuse or misappropriation of that material, there would have been a purge of student activists, and probably more to the point, a purge of faculty and administrative staff who had been their accomplices. We know from looking at the documents that, in fact, there weren’t any grounds for the assertion of misuse of state funds. Almost all of the paper for the purpose of educational use that were put in the back of the campus computer center. This was an early example of recycling and radical repurposing of materials. The report is on display in the exhibit.

What does this story begin? The first big idea was an experimental school education here in Berkeley by a cohort of young professors and students, some with young children. Sim’s main counterpart in this project was a young lecturer named Jim Campe, whose wife was an elementary school teacher. They found the conventional setup of children in ranks at desks facing a blackboard absolutely antiquated. They believed in craft and the notion that doing and making would have things to do. This is a first idea for the purpose of educational use, by the State of California expressly for the purpose of educational use, that was being used to make protest materials. I think it’s pretty clear that, had the accounting firm found evidence of misuse or misappropriation of that material, there would have been a purge of student activists, and probably more to the point, a purge of faculty and administrative staff who had been their accomplices. We know from looking at the documents that, in fact, there weren’t any grounds for the assertion of misuse of state funds. Almost all of the paper for the purpose of educational use that were put in the back of the campus computer center. This was an early example of recycling and radical repurposing of materials. The report is on display in the exhibit.

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