2ND ANNUAL
BEST OF DESIGN AWARDS

The jury's selections for the best fabrication project, facade, residential interior, non-residential interior, single family home, multi-family residential, landscape, student built work, and building of the year. See page 12. Get the latest on the rooms that sell the space in our Kitchen and Bath Special. See page 22.
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We begin 2015 by reflecting on and recognizing architectural excellence with the second annual Best of Design Awards. The Architect’s Newspaper would like to thank our jurors—Thomas Bauby, Kenneth Drucker, Winka Dubbeldam, Chris McVoy, Craig Schwitter, Annabelle Selldorf, and Erik Tietz—for their disciplined attention, engaged discussion, and great taste. We selected these jurors because of their recognized talents working in a variety of disciplines and scales, all of which we believe reflect the dynamic nature of the profession. We are thrilled with their choice of winners and believe these projects suggest a number of positive developments in American architecture. None more so than our Building of the Year, which balances social engagement, environmental and community responsibility, innovative programming, and great design—all delivered on a tight budget. It is a credit to its architect and its enlightened client, and should serve as a model for how schools can play a role in community redevelopment.

The awards program also reflects the depth of talent and diversity of practices of our readers, as well as the many facets of architecture, all of which are covered in the pages of AN as well as on our numerous digital platforms. With over 230 entries submitted, the projects tell us something about what our readers do and where the profession stands today.

After Building of the Year, the largest number of submissions was in the non-residential interior category, which ranged from hospitality projects, to offices, to cultural institutions. The winner was a surprising find, the kind of subtle project in an out-of-the-way location that deserves to be spotlighted. Multifamily housing continues to be a very strong sector for our readers and reflects the nationwide trend toward more urban living. The only tie this year was for single family houses, which are covered in the pages of AN as well as on our numerous digital platforms. With over 230 entries submitted, the projects tell us something about what our readers do and where the profession stands today.

Awards programs should evolve, and looking at the 3rd edition of the Best of Design Awards, we have decided to allow submissions of projects built outside the U.S. as long as they are designed by U.S. practitioners, to better reflect the global nature of architecture today. We selected these jurors because of their recognized talents and the two selected could not be more different, however both respect their enlightened client, and should serve as a model for how schools can play a role in community redevelopment.

We headphone about what our readers do and where the profession stands today.

AWARDS PROGRAMS SHOULD EVOLVE, AND LOOKING AT THE 3RD EDITION OF THE BEST OF DESIGN AWARDS, WE HAVE DECIDED TO ALLOW SUBMISSIONS OF PROJECTS BUILT OUTSIDE THE U.S. AS LONG AS THEY ARE DESIGNED BY U.S. PRACTITIONERS, TO BETTER REFLECT THE GLOBAL NATURE OF ARCHITECTURE TODAY.

We headphone about what our readers do and where the profession stands today.
**SOMETHING WICKED THIS MAYNE COMES**

While Thom Mayne of Morphosis is known for his space-aged architecture, it appears he might not be a big fan of science fiction. According to Curbed LA, Mayne and his wife Blythe have begun tearing down the yellow storybook Cheviot Hills home of legendary Sci-Fi author Ray Bradbury. Curbed reports that the couple bought the home last May and received a demolition permit last month. There are no permits for the new residence, but a source told Curbed that Mayne plans to build much of the home underground (possibly containing a swimming pool). Actually an underground pool sounds pretty space-aged to us, so maybe Mayne is into this stuff after all!

**CALIFORNIA’S OLYMPIC LETDOWN**

Alas, despite being hailed as the favorite to represent the United States in the race for the 2024 Olympics, Los Angeles has lost out to its much older competitor, Boston, LA had pitched what Mayor Eric Garcetti hailed as the “most affordable” proposal, using mostly existing facilities, including the LA Memorial Coliseum, the Staples Center, and even Disney Hall, Griffith Observatory, and the Queen Mary. Maybe the USOC isn’t as into a bargain as we thought? Or maybe after giving LA two games they’ve just not that into us anymore. San Francisco, by the way, lost out on its bid, which also banked on affordability. Damn, the Olympic Village could have been the only cheap place to live there outside of Oakland!

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**WARRIORS REVEAL NEW ARENA, AGAIN**

After scratching earlier concept designs for a new arena at San Francisco’s Pier 30-32, the Golden State Warriors released new renderings last month. They depict a slimmer, sleeker arena on a 12-acre site in Mission Bay, near the UC San Francisco campus and the Giants’ AT&T Park. The 18,000-seat facility will mark a major upgrade for the Warriors. They currently play in Oracle Arena, the oldest NBA home court, owned by the City of Oakland and the County of Alameda. The building will bring a much-needed high-capacity venue to San Francisco, with space to host concerts, conventions, and other large events.

MANICA Architecture is now lead architect with Snøhetta as senior design advisor. Former team member AECOM has been off the project for several months. The new renderings have removed the rectangular-shaped deck that some said gave the arena a toilet-seat shape resemblance when viewed from above. The terrace is now curved, blending with the rest of the facade. The arena tops out at 135 feet tall and has a grassy 5.5-acre waterfront park. There will also be 100,000 square feet of ground floor restaurants, retail, and 580,000 square feet of offices and lab spaces.

“The new arena will not only be the new home of the Golden State Warriors, but also an internationally recognized entertainment destination,” said David Manica, president of MANICA Architecture, who pledged that the building would offer “24/7 activity—365 days a year.”

The original pier-side site along the Embarcadero faced a potent mix of political opposition (including challenges from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), environmental concerns, and a little bit of NIMBYism from residents. The Warriors decided to sidestep these disagreements. Rather than leasing land from the Port of San Francisco, the Warriors chose a former rail yard site further south that only required approval from city officials. The approximately $1 billion arena will be privately financed and built on private land. The Warriors will buy the site from software company Salesforce, which once considered opening its offices there.

While a groundbreaking date has not yet been set, the expected opening for the arena is in the fall of 2018 for the 2018-2019 NBA season.
ANAHEIM’S NEW ARTIC STATION BRINGS HIGH-SPEED RAIL TO A CAR DOMINATED CITY

BACK ON TRACK

In early December the city of Anaheim cut the ribbon on ARTIC, the Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center. The building’s significance cannot be understated: It is California’s first major foray into high-speed rail, and if all goes according to plan, it will eventually be one of the southern anchors for the system. In addition to housing high-speed rail facilities, the building, designed by HOK, with structural and MEP engineering by BuroHappold, hosts regional rail, bus, automobile, and bicycles, not to mention shops and restaurants.

California High Speed Rail broke ground in Fresno a few weeks after ARTIC opened. The network is expected to eventually stretch 800 miles from Sacramento to San Diego and include 24 stations. Other major nodes are much further behind. Los Angeles is just beginning radical changes to Union Station, designed by Grimshaw and Gruen, and San Francisco is building Cesar Pelli’s Transbay Transit Center. Even Fresno is ramping up, hiring AECOM to study a station there. But car-dominated Anaheim insisted on being first. And ARTIC will likely set the tone for stations moving forward.

The wide-open, multi-level station, which looks out at Anaheim’s Honda Center and the surrounding mountains, is topped with a diamond-gridded, 3-layered ETFE roof, and fronted by two of the largest self-supporting curtain walls in the world, each measuring about 120 feet tall.

The extruded arch structure—whose form was reportedly inspired by the area’s huge blimp hangars—is full of complex systems, and is aiming for a LEED Platinum rating. At its heart, it is a simple building: A large translucent tent arched over a stepped edifice, climbing its way toward the tracks. It is this simplicity that calls attention to the most important elements—light, space, and circulation. Being inside feels much like being outside, and the temperature feels perfect, not too hot, but not overwhelmed by air conditioning. Even when full of people (which hopefully it will continue to be after the opening), it does not feel too loud or crowded.

The interior’s dramatic easiness is all the more important considering the concrete-dominated, shade-challenged landscape outside, which, while punctuated by rows of palm trees, is not as lush or welcoming as it could be. And because of alignment necessities, the station is far removed from its tracks, sucking some of the rail-inspired energy out of the project.

High Speed Rail has the potential to transform how Californians think about transportation, and to transform the state’s cities. But because ARTIC is located far from any notable urban center—the area is dominated by freeway interchanges and stadium parking lots—its significant architectural impact is more symbolic than practical. But one cannot underestimate that impact. Approaching the station from the tracks, despite their lack of proximity, opens up a breathtaking, multi-story expanse below you. High-tech materials suggest the future, but in a natural, breezy way, not in the cold, generic one that many new airports and train station evoke. You are no longer thinking of the car-based atmosphere around you. You are thinking of how you can catch a train down here again. Hopefully thousands more will agree.
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On a recent morning, sunlight baked the white concrete block of architect Rob Quigley’s new five-story live/work building in downtown San Diego. He and wife Kathleen, who served as contractor, have dubbed the building Torr Kaelan, Gaelic for rock outcropping or boulder. It includes a pair of penthouses on the fourth and fifth floors, as well as offices on the second and third floors, occupied by Quigley’s firm and a graphic design company. Nearby, the dome of San Diego’s new central library, also designed by Quigley, stands as a civic beacon. Together with Antoine Predock’s Petco Park baseball stadium, it is spurring a new wave of downtown development. A veteran of downtown, Quigley first staked his claim in the 1980s with a live/work building in Little Italy. Since then he has designed downtown SROs, multi-family housing, mixed-use buildings, and the New Children’s Museum in the urban core. The Quigleys bought the 42-by-100-foot lot five years ago. The building combines concrete block, concrete, steel, and a large variety of aluminum windows. The concrete block was assembled with what Quigley calls “juicy joints”—grouting that oozes from between the bricks. The pieces are finished with an inexpensive mix of lime and water, slopped on with brushes. It provides a flat finish that will patina over time. Filled with concrete and rebar, the five-story walls are mostly 8-inches thick, 12-inches where loads are greater. The front facade is energized by popouts: a third-level conference room and an angled penthouse balcony. From the sidewalk, a redwood door swings open to the chime of a sculpture of steel tines, made by a local artist. Redwood is used extensively inside and out, the architect’s nod to the redwood forests that produced lumber for many early California buildings. Access to upper levels is by elevator or stairs of thin folded steel, visible as they rise through the open spaces. Next to the pedestrian entrance, cars enter through a motorized steel gate that leads to a courtyard at the building’s open center, which rises to the 60-foot-tall building’s roof. Surrounding this space with lots of glass, interiors are flooded with natural light. Behind the courtyard is an underground garage with chargers for Quigley’s Tesla and Kathleen’s Leaf. Two other parking lots are tucked elsewhere under the building, accessible from side streets. Quigley’s penthouse has an open plan beneath an 11½-foot-high ceiling. Full-height bookshelves cover one wall. The kitchen has concrete counters and steel shelves. The centerpiece of the open living area is a tall, shallow Rumford fireplace—named for Sir Benjamin Thompson, a.k.a. Count Rumford, whose 18th-century invention is known to increase airflow and project heat deep into a room. Long a proponent of green design, Quigley said that Torr Kaelan is net zero. Passive solar and energy-efficient lighting contribute. Operable windows and a rooftop cupola skylight are adjusted through winter and summer to regulate air flow and temperature. Quigley would like to recycle gray water but current San Diego codes will not allow it. In case codes are revised, the building is plumbed for recycling. After 30 years downtown, Quigley said he plans to stay well into old age. He enjoys life in this bustling urban environment. Earlier this year, he and Kathleen attended the library’s first anniversary party, watching acrobats swing on a trapeze in an archway.
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LOS ANGELES PROPOSES NEW EARTHQUAKE RETROFIT PLAN

Shaking It Up

In the wake of damaging reports about Los Angeles’ unpreparedness for the next Big One, Mayor Eric Garcetti in December proposed an ambitious new earthquake plan that, if passed, would require owners to retrofit thousands of wood frame and concrete buildings.

The plan, led by the mayor’s Science Advisor for Seismic Safety, Dr. Lucy Jones, would specifically target “soft-first-story” buildings and “non-ductile reinforced concrete” buildings built before 1980. It also recommends shoring up the city’s water supply, developing an alternative firefighting water supply, facilitating stronger pipes and aqueducts, and upgrading the city’s telecommunications and power networks to prevent dangerous disruptions.

“It’s not being complacent and then jarred into action by a devastating earthquake, LA is moving forward proactively,” said Garcetti in a statement. The city’s last major earthquake legislation came in the 1980s, requiring retrofits of vulnerable brick buildings.

According to Ashley Atkinson, the Mayor’s planning and housing specialist, the plan, which would involve mayoral executive orders and ordinances passed by City Council, would impact about 19,000 soft story buildings and about 1,500 reinforced concrete ones. Much could change within five years, but the overall changes could take up to 25 years to carry out.

An essential part of the scheme would be a new voluntary rating system, similar to the USGBC’s LEED system, judging a building’s earthquake preparedness. Created by the non-profit U.S. Resiliency Council, the system would help officials determine action and encourage owners to improve safety.

Current codes, said Dr. Jones, are designed to protect occupants’ lives, not to ensure that buildings will be usable after an earthquake. That could lead to financial devastation if thousands of buildings are compromised, she said. “We could end up with half of our buildings not being able to be used right after an earthquake. How do we keep our economy going in that sort of situation?”

Outside of political questions, the biggest issue regarding implementation would be cost. According to the LA Times, the cost of retrofitting a modest wooden apartment building ranges from $60,000 to $130,000. According to the New York Times, the cost of retrofitting some buildings could easily exceed $1 million each.

The mayor has no formal plan to aid property owners with payment, but he offered the prospect of tax breaks (such as a 5-year business-tax exemption), access to private lenders, the waiving of permit fees, and CEQA exemptions as possible aids. As for improving public infrastructure, Garcetti has proposed a statewide “Seismic Resilience Bond Measure” that could be introduced in a future election.

According to insurer Swiss Re, Los Angeles faces greater risks of catastrophic loss from earthquakes than any other city in the world except Tokyo, Jakarta, and Manila. As California State Geologist John Parrish told AN, “This ain’t Kansas.”

Some business leaders have argued that the plan will be too expensive without substantial financial assistance, but Jones insisted that “the discussion seems to be about how to pay for it and not whether to do it.”

LOS ANGELES PROPOSES NEW EARTHQUAKE RETROFIT PLAN

SHAKING IT UP

VOLUNTARY RATING SYSTEM

IN THE WAKE OF DAMAGING REPORTS ABOUT LOS ANGELES’ UNPREPAREDNESS FOR THE NEXT BIG ONE, MAYOR ERIC GARCETTI IN DECEMBER PROPOSED AN AMBITION NEW EARTHQUAKE PLAN THAT, IF PASSED, WOULD REQUIRE OWNERS TO RETROFIT THOUSANDS OF WOOD FRAME AND CONCRETE BUILDINGS.

THE PLAN, LED BY THE MAYOR’S SCIENCE ADVISOR FOR SEISMIC SAFETY, DR. LUCY JONES, WOULD SPECIFICALLY TARGET “SOFT-FIRST-STORY” BUILDINGS AND “NON-DUCTILE REINFORCED CONCRETE” BUILDINGS BUILT BEFORE 1980. IT ALSO RECOMMENDS SHORING UP THE CITY’S WATER SUPPLY, DEVELOPING AN ALTERNATIVE FIREFIGHTING WATER SUPPLY, FACILITATING STRONGERPIPES AND AQUEDUCTS, AND UpGRADING THE CITY’S TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND POWER NETWORKS TO PREVENT DANGEROUS DISRUPTIONS.

“I’M NOT BEING COMPLAINT AND THEN JARRD INTO ACTION BY A DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE, LA IS MOVING FORWARD PROACTIVELY,” SAID GARCETTI IN A STATEMENT. THE CITY’S LAST MAJOR EARTHQUAKE LEGISLATION CAME IN THE 1980S, REQUIRING RETROFFS OF VULNERABLE BRICK BUILDINGS.

ACCORDING TO ASHLEY ATKINSON, THE MAYOR’S PLANNING AND HOUSING SPECIALIST, THE PLAN, WHICH WOULD INVOLVE MAYORAL EXECUTIVE ORDERS AND ORDINANCES PASSED BY CITY COUNCIL, WOULD IMPACT ABOUT 19,000 SOFT STORY BUILDINGS AND ABOUT 1,500 REINFORCED CONCRETE ONES. MUCH COULD CHANGE WITHIN FIVE YEARS, BUT THE OVERALL CHANGES COULD TAKE UP TO 25 YEARS TO CARRY OUT.

AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE SCHEME WOULD BE A NEW VOLUNTARY RATING SYSTEM, SIMILAR TO THE USGBC’S LEED SYSTEM, JUDGING A BUILDING’S EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS. CREATED BY THE NON-PROFIT U.S. RESILIENCY COUNCIL, THE SYSTEM WOULD HELP OFFICIALS DETERMINE ACTION AND ENCOURAGE OWNERS TO IMPROVE SAFETY.

CURRENT CODES, SAID DR. JONES, ARE DESIGNED TO PROTECT OCCUPANTS’ LIVES, NOT TO ENSURE THAT BUILDINGS WILL BE USABLE AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE. THAT COULD LEAD TO FINANCIAL DEVASTATION IF THOUSANDS OF BUILDINGS ARE COMPROMISED, SHE SAID. “WE COULD END UP WITH HALF OF OUR BUILDINGS NOT BEINGABLE TO BE USED RIGHT AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE. HOW DO WE KEEP OUR ECONOMY GOING IN THAT SORT OF SITUATION?”

OUTSIDE OF POLITICAL QUESTIONS, THE BIGGEST ISSUE REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION WOULD BE COST. ACCORDING TO THE LA TIMES, THE COST OF RETROFITTING A MODEST WOODEN APARTMENT BUILDING RANGES FROM $60,000 TO $130,000. ACCORDING TO THE NEW YORK TIMES, THE COST OF RETROFITTING SOME BUILDINGS COULD EASILY EXCEED $1 MILLION EACH.

THE MAYOR HAS NO FORMAL PLAN TO AID PROPERTY OWNERS WITH PAYMENT, BUT HE OFFERED THE PROSPECT OF TAX BREAKS (SUCH AS A 5-YEAR BUSINESS-TAX EXEMPTION), ACCESS TO PRIVATE LENDERS, THE WAIVING OF PERMIT FEES, AND CEQA EXEMPTIONS AS POSSIBLE AIDS. AS FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, GARCETTI HAS PROPOSED A STATEWIDE “SEISMIC RESILIENCE BOND MEASURE” THAT COULD BE INTRODUCED IN A FUTURE ELECTION.

ACCORDING TO INSURER SWISS RE, LOS ANGELES FACES GREATER RISKS OF CATASTROPHIC LOSS FROM EARTHQUAKES THAN ANY OTHER CITY IN THE WORLD EXCEPT TOKYO, JAKARTA, AND MANILA. AS CALIFORNIA STATE GEOLOGIST JOHN PARRISH TOLD AN, “THIS Ain’T KANSAS.”

SOME BUSINESS LEADERS HAVE ARGUED THAT THE PLAN WILL BE TOO EXPENSIVE WITHOUT SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, BUT JONES INSISTED THAT “THE DISCUSSION SEEMS TO BE ABOUT HOW TO PAY FOR IT AND NOT WHETHER TO DO IT.”
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“WHAT WAS ACHIEVED HERE AT A VERY MODEST BUDGET WAS REALLY IMPRESSIVE. NOT JUST IN THE PLANNING, BUT IN THE USE OF MATERIALS, OF OPEN SPACES, OF THE ENTIRE WAY THAT THE SCHOOL OPERATES. THEY JUST NEVER LET UP ON THIS THING.” —CRAIG SCHWITTER
BEST OF:
SINGLE FAMILY HOUSE: TIE

BRILLHART HOUSE
MIAMI, FLORIDA
BRILLHART ARCHITECTURE


Brillhart Architecture’s elevated, 1,500-square-foot house provides a tropical refuge in the heart of Downtown Miami. It includes 100 feet of uninterrupted glass spanning the full length of both the front and rear facades and four sets of sliding glass doors that allow the house to be entirely open when desired. Front and back porches add 800 square feet of outdoor living space, and exterior shuttered doors provide privacy and protection against the elements. The architects organized their design around four questions that challenge the culture for building big: what is necessary, how can the impact on the earth be minimized, how to best respect the neighborhood, and what can actually be built? Some answers came from the Dog Trot style house, which has been a dominant typology of Florida vernacular architecture for more than a century. The glass pavilion typology and principles of Tropical Modernism also played influential roles in the final design.
“IF THIS HOUSE IS ABOUT THE SITE, THEN THE ARCHITECTURE IS WORKING WITH THE SITE.” —CHRIS MCVoy

This three-bedroom house in Big Sur is anchored in the natural beauty of the California coast. Fougeron Architecture embedded the building within the land, taking advantage of the site's dramatic views while creating a form more complex than a giant picture window. The main body of the house is composed of two rectangular boxes connected by an all-glass library/den. The main entry is located at the top of the upper volume with the living spaces unfolding from the most public to the most private. The living room, kitchen and dining room are an open plan with subtle changes in levels and roof planes to differentiate the various functions. The lower volume, a double-cantilevered master bedroom suite, acts as a promontory above the ocean, offering breathtaking views from its floor-to-ceiling windows. The link between these two volumes is the glass library/den, which unites the volumes inside and out.

BEST OF: SINGLE FAMILY HOUSE: TIE

FALL HOUSE
BIG SUR, CALIFORNIA
FOUGERON ARCHITECTURE
The Montee Karp Residence is an extensive remodeling of a mid-century post-and-beam house in the Castellammare neighborhood of Pacific Palisades. The minimal, gallery-like living space accommodates the client’s extensive contemporary art collection. Display niches, lighting, and the configuration of the spaces enhance the experience of viewing the art. A steel stair with a custom laser cut pattern cantilevers out from the wall. Light from the skylight above filters through the stair and projects a dynamic texture of shadow and light throughout the interior. A grand entry door marks the threshold into the relatively small house. The door is made of a 2-inch stainless steel tube frame. The 10-foot-high door is set on a hydraulic pivot and a concealed magnetic locking device. A slit window in one corner of the house frames a sweeping view of Santa Monica Bay.

“I THINK THERE’S A VERY DARING MOVE HERE AND IT’S DONE WITH UNAPOLOGETIC CONSISTENCY. IT REALLY STARTS TO WORK. IT’S MORE LIKE AN ARCHITECTURE INSIDE. I DON’T FEEL LIKE IT’S TRADITIONAL INTERIOR DESIGN. IT’S CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT, AN INTERIOR ENVIRONMENT—THE STAIR, THE FRONT DOOR, THE FAÇADE SLOTS, THE CEILING SLOTS—THE WHOLE THING STARTS TO COME TOGETHER TO CREATE A GAME OF LIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY AND PATTERNS THROUGH LIGHT.” —WINKA DUBBELDAM
"It’s a palimpsest project. Not only are they exposing the building that’s there, but they cut deeper to show the bones underneath. So there are several layers of time from the construction of the building, the rawness of the building before it was finished, elements of the original building, and then new insertions. Through strategic cutting and revealing, you get this through subtraction.” – Chris McVoy

The Oklahoma State University Postal Plaza Gallery was established for the display and safe storage of art, as well as to serve as an educational tool for students and the residents of Stillwater and the state at large. Elliott + Associates developed its design around the concept of turning the space inside out. The goal was to allow visitors to see how works of art are cared for, how an exhibit is organized and hung, and how the process of collection management plays out. The architecture reflects this behind the scenes approach. The architects carved into the former post office building, leaving portions of its underlying structure exposed, maintaining certain existing architectural elements, and making unobtrusive additions.
Russian Alexander Baron acquired 185 Plymouth Street in 2012 to convert it to residential apartments. The original building, built in 1900 as a stable for Arbuckle Brothers, was a 200-foot-deep, thru-block building. The deep floor plates were not ideal for residential living. Using the site constraints as an opportunity in a process of subtraction, Alloy carved a courtyard through the center of the building, bringing light and air to the middle of the lot. The excavated volume was reorganized on top of the resulting two buildings as contemporary penthouse additions. A new curtain wall facade surrounds the interior courtyard, where landscaped bridges and gardens create a tranquil, hidden inner space. The brick and timber structure was thoughtfully restored to expose its historic character, while new elements were carefully inserted.
The redesign of the Clark Art Institute’s 140-acre campus opened this summer following a 14-year collaboration to bring nature and art closer to everyday life. The design team worked to shape a publicly accessible landscape that unites diverse buildings and more fully situates the institution within the natural and cultural patterns of the Berkshires. New roads and two miles of walking trails expand access to underutilized landscape resources. The team reshaped meadows, protected streams, restored woodlands, and rebuilt the campus core, transforming parking lots into a tiered reflecting pool that unifies a new visitor education and exhibition center, the museum, and the research center. Reflecting the Berkshire landscape beyond and functionally marrying site drainage, groundwater management, and gray water systems, the pools articulate a stewardship agenda that unites the cultural and natural resources of the Clark.

“I THINK IT’S AN EXTRAORDINARY EXAMPLE OF THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE INTEGRATION OF ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE AND THEN NATURE BEYOND. THE LINES HAVE BEEN BLURRED WHEREVER YOU GO, WHEREVER THE EYE TRAVELS. WHAT IS PARTICULARLY IMPRESSIVE TO ME IS THE PERFORMATIVE NATURE OF THE LANDSCAPE. IT SEEMS TO BE SOMETHING THAT WAS FIRST AND FOREMOST ON THEIR MINDS AS THEY WERE DOING THE SITE PLANNING. IT’S QUITE AN IMPRESSIVE PIECE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE.”  -THOMAS BALSLEY
“IT SETS THE TONE FOR THE FUTURE REDEVELOPMENT OF ALL OF MANHATTANVILLE IN TERMS OF QUALITY OF CRAFT AND EXECUTION AND CRISPNESS. THE FACT THAT YOU CAN DO A BUILDING THAT CONFORMS TO THE ENERGY REQUIREMENTS OF NEW YORK CITY WITH THAT MUCH TRANSPARENCY IS A TECHNICAL FEAT.”
—KENNETH DRUCKER

The Jerome L. Greene Science Center is the first building at Columbia University’s Manhattanville Campus to break ground. The U.S. Green Building Council selected the campus expansion project for its LEED Neighborhood Design pilot program. The program aims to “integrate the principles of smart growth, urbanism, and green building for neighborhood design.” The 10-story building seeks to accomplish this in part through its facade design. The building envelope consists primarily of transparent floor-to-ceiling glass walls, including high-performance structural facades, double-skin walls, and a series of metal and glass canopies and vestibules. The project’s double-skin wall was designed to mitigate noise caused by an elevated train located just 60 feet from the building as well as to provide the performance targets necessary to meet the rating system’s tight energy usage requirements.
“IT’S NOT JUST SOMETHING TO LOOK AT. THE KIDS CAN USE IT AND PROBABLY HAVE FUN AND PEOPLE LOOKING AT IT FROM THE OUTSIDE ARE GOING TO BE INTRIGUED BY IT. THE PANELIZATION IS INTRICATE ENOUGH, BUT YOU GET THE UNDERSTANDING OF HOW IT COMES TOGETHER. YOU’RE USING THE FABRICATION TECHNIQUE TO ILLUSTRATE THE JOY OF THE STRUCTURE.” —ERIK TIETZ

Horizon House is located on Japan’s northern island of Hokkaido near the town of Taiki-cho. It was conceived as a process for embracing local and seasonal qualities of place. The project addresses the concept of “retreat in nature” by framing a seasonal dialogue between inhabitant and environment. The house incorporates locally harvested and salvaged wood, instead of high embodied-energy materials, such as concrete. Inside, a continuous band of windows provides a 360-degree view to the landscape. The activities of the user shape the indoor thermal comfort envelope through radiant and ground storage systems powered by the combustion of local forest by-products.

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Built for the San Antonio Botanical Gardens’ human-sized birdhouse competition, the Gourd offers a playful platform from which to contemplate the complex relationship between humans and the natural world. Overland Partners chose a shape inspired by the bottle gourd, first used in its hollowed-out form by Native Americans to attract Purple Martins as a nesting spot. The Gourd is built out of 70 plates of 12-gauge Corten steel wrapped around a robin’s egg blue internal octahedron structure, and perforated with more than 1,000 Ball Mason jars. Each steel plate, unique in shape and size, was fabricated using CNC laser cutting and assembled in house by the design team.

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“I WANT THESE GSD STUDENTS TO BUILD ME A HOUSE.” —CRAIG SCHWITTER

Maria Mulligan, Harvard GSD
As the housing market continues to strengthen, it’s important to keep current on the innovations in the rooms that sell the space: the kitchen and bath. Here’s the AN shortlist of products that can set your designs apart from the crowd.

**Design For Good Taste**

With the spring covered hose, the Planar 8 Flex Faucet from Franke is designed to let you feel free and have fun in the kitchen. Whether it’s washing up pans, filling up a pot for pasta, or just standing back and admiring, this faucet is the perfect balance of performance and design. Make it wonderful at Frankeksd.com
WONDERFULLY PLAYFUL

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Make it wonderful at Frankeksd.com
CABINETS

CHOICE CABINETS

Kitchen systems offer the best of both worlds: unlimited customization and efficient, modular-based installation. For multi-unit projects or single-family structures, open floor plans or enclosed rooms, these versatile cabinets are a designer’s dream. By Leslie Clagett

1 XTEND
LEICHT

Louvered panels rise and lower via remote control, eliminating concerns about door-swing clearance in tight spaces.

leichtny.com

2 PHOENIX
VARENNA

A serviceable mix of open and closed storage and a palette of natural materials characterize this forward-looking kitchen. Designed by CR&S Varenna.

poliform.it

3 CLOE
CESAR

Door and drawer edges sport a thirty-degree chamfer, facilitating easy access without the need for hardware. Designed by G.V. Piazzogna.

cesar.it

4 SALINAS
BOFFI

Cabinets and surfaces can be attached as needed to the metal frame of this innovative kitchen system. Designed by Patricia Urquiola.

boffi.com
Front panels are framed in a slim 6.5-mm band of aluminum, uniting the variety of finishes and materials. Available with or without handles.

The mitered vertical joints of the P'7350 are a striking visual departure from the horizontal lines of conventional kitchens. Designed by Porsche Design Studio.

A multi-function wall is at the core of this kitchen system, concealing utility lines and giving the cabinets a floating appearance. Designed by Roberto Pezzetta.

Monolithic in form and surface, this unit is seamlessly sheathed in a single material, whether solidsurfacing, stone, or ceramic panels.

Custom designed and fabricated in the United States, these contemporary kitchens feature hand-crafted carpentry and one-of-a-kind detailing.
The SieMatic SE 3003 R kitchen takes minimalism to a new level. Through meticulous detailing and a distinctive material palette, it achieves a singular stylistic identity; as Hans Henkes, president and CEO of SieMatic Möbelwerke USA, notes, the new design “strikes a chord between the traditional and ultra contemporary.”

The cabinet components are offered in an impressive spectrum of colors, materials, and finishes, allowing for extensive customization. The new elements are available in all shades of the SieMatic ColorSystem, which includes 1,950 special hues of the Natural Colour System. Popular metallics—gold bronze, nickel, and black matte—have been added to the portfolio. Front panels, edged in 6.5 mm aluminum frames, can be ordered in three new wood tones: sand oak, matte black oak, and walnut.

Completing the collection is a new door front comprising vertical glass slats.

Another recent introduction, the MultiMatic Aluminum organization system brings design uniformity to SieMatic’s kitchen cabinet interiors and exteriors. The in-cabinet system is versatile, flexible, and easy to use: Storage accessories can be added or repositioned for better, personalized storage. Aluminum trays and frames are suspended on tracks without visible attachments. The tracks accommodate a variety of newly developed accessory elements in light oak or dark smoked chestnut.
From food storage and prep to cooking and cleanup, a kitchen’s function is determined to a large extent by the quality of its equipment. Here are some new and notable products for the serious cook. By Leslie Clagett

1. **RANGE SERIES**
   **MIELE**
   The 48-inch dual-fuel model includes a speed oven, which combines microwave and convection functions. A wireless roast probe makes preparing the 100 pre-programmed menu items convenient.
   [miele.com](http://miele.com)

2. **METRIS FAUCET**
   **HANSgroHE**
   A signature “SoftCube” design coordinates with most sink shapes. Available in high arc, prep, and bar models. Designed in collaboration with Phoenix Design.
   [hansgrohe-usa.com](http://hansgrohe-usa.com)

3. **SF112U 24” LINEA OVEN**
   **SMEG**
   The 24-inch size makes this oven well suited for small and secondary kitchens, as well as a compact complement to a full-size wall oven.
   [smeg.com](http://smeg.com)

4. **PLANAR 8 FLEX FAUCET**
   **FRANKE**
   Semi-professional in style, the spout of this faucet rotates 360 degrees, ideal for island installations and allowing the handle to be specified on either the right- or left-hand side of the fitting.
   [franke.com](http://franke.com)

5. **ALL INDUCTION COOKTOP**
   **VIKING**
   A silvery surface sets this induction cooktop apart from the typical expanse of black glass. A grid of blue LED lighting illuminates active cooking zones. Available in 30- and 36-inch widths.
   [vikingrange.com](http://vikingrange.com)

6. **M SERIES OVENS**
   **WOLF APPLIANCE**
   A redesigned convection system features a pair of columnar, vertical fans that produce uniform heating and airflow across all rack levels. Available in three design formats.
   [subzero-wolf.com](http://subzero-wolf.com)
Fiandre is recognized throughout the world as being vastly experienced and acknowledged as the leader with their highly engineered porcelain tile ventilated façade system (VFS) that incorporates a price competitive, contractor friendly, fast-to-install, non-loadbearing porcelain tile façade system, suitable for both new build and refurbishment projects. This highly accepted VFS system (comprising of both anodized exposed anchors and/or concealed undercut mechanical anchors) provides the flexibility to install 24"x 48" porcelain tile slabs and/or 30"x60" porcelain tile slabs (8mm and/or 10mm thick) vertically and/or horizontally onto our engineered extruded aluminum sub-frame stud wall. Fiandre’s porcelain tile ventilated facade system is employed the world over, and contributes a number of advantages to building designs and at the same, provides a highly sustainable energy efficient building through its engineered porcelain tile 6mm open joint design and air cavity between porcelain tile and building envelope.

To complement Fiandre’s already highly accepted porcelain tile VFS, Fiandre employed the same stringent VFS engineering solutions when introducing their new contemporary, stunning natural stone aesthetics 5’x10’x6mm thick Maximum porcelain slabs. Incorporating structural silicone as the new engineered anchoring system, Maximum’s 5’x10’x6mm thick slabs are affixed to our proprietary prefabricated modular extruded aluminum frame (or rails) without the need of mechanical anchors. This proven engineered anchoring system for Fiandre’s 5’x10’x6mm thick porcelain slabs offers low inherent weight on building facades in comparison to stone slabs. This is a monumental breakthrough in the building façade industry…
Clean Room

The bathroom continues to incorporate health as well as hygiene features; steam showers are the ascendant accessory. Aesthetically, bright and white contemporary fixtures still rule; as for fittings, anything goes. By Leslie Clagett
Elegant, versatile, unique. **Happy D.2** in linen. The bathroom series exudes a feminine chic through a distinctive language - sleek design and soft curves are topped off by the utmost in functionality. The Duravit bathroom - synonymous with beauty, quality, and technology. There is nothing quite like a Duravit original. To find out more: info@us.duravit.com, pro.duravit.us, www.duravit.us
In the kitchen, countertops need to be both durable and design-wise. Here are four high performance surfaces. By Leslie Clagett

**Counters, Cultured**

1. **AURA**
   - DEKTON
   - A new addition to Cosentino’s ultra-compact surfacing offerings, the light veining is a subtle accent to the white field.
   - dekton.com

2. **180 fX RED DRAGON**
   - FORMICA
   - This large-scale laminate has a special finish that intensifies the color and the crystalline structure of the pattern.
   - formica.com

3. **PULPIS**
   - THESIZE SURFACES
   - Neolith’s Classtone collection of sintered compact surfaces expands to include seven designs, available in matte or polished finishes.
   - thesize.us

4. **NEXT COLLECTION COLORS**
   - CORIAN
   - Part of the Deep color family, Deep Nocturne is classic jet black rendered in solid surfacing material.
   - dupont.com
WHY ISN’T THE 1947 NEUTRA KAUFMANN HOUSE ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER?

Sunday, February 15, 11:30 a.m.
Hilton Palm Springs
$12 per person

This working panel hosted by the California State Historic Resources Commission’s (SHRC) Modernism Committee will look at this and other case studies to begin to address integrity standards and interpretations that stand between many midcentury modern resources and the coveted National Historic Register designation.
**JANUARY 2015**

**FRIDAY 30**

**LECTURE**
What’s a Guggenheim? Symposium
Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation
7:00 p.m.
W. M. Keck Lecture Hall
960 East Third St, Los Angeles
guggenheim.org

**SATURDAY 31**

**EVENT**
Fort Mason Historic District Walking Tour
1:00 p.m.
Fort Mason Center
2 Marina Blvd., San Francisco
fortmason.org

**EXHIBITION CLOSING**
50 Years Beyond Point and Shoot Photographs by Ward Thompson AIA
AIA|LA Offices
3780 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
aialosangeles.org

**FEBRUARY 2015**

**SATURDAY 7**

**EXHIBITION OPENINGS**
The Life of Art: Context, Collecting and Display
J. Paul Getty Museum
1200 Getty Center Dr.
Los Angeles
getty.edu

**TUESDAY 10**

**EVENT**
The Future of Affordable Housing
6:00 p.m.
SPUR Urban Center
654 Mission St.
San Francisco
spur.org

**WEDNESDAY 11**

**EXHIBITION OPENING**
Designing People
UC Berkeley: College of Environmental Design
210 Wurster Hall
Berkeley, CA
ced.berkeley.edu

**TUESDAY 17**

**LECTURE Series 2015: BMW Designworks USA**
7:30 p.m.
UCLA Architecture & Urban Design
5865 South Campus Center Dr.
Los Angeles
aud.ucla.edu

**THURSDAY 19**

**LECTURE**
Kevin Ratner: High-Rise Modular
7:00 p.m.
Southern California Institute of Architecture
W.M. Keck Lecture Hall
960 East Third St.
Los Angeles
sciarc.edu

**SATURDAY 28**

**EXHIBITION CLOSING**
Black Earth: Andreas Fogarasi/Oscar Tuazon
MAK Center for Art and Architecture
Macleay Garage Top
1137 South Cochran Ave.
Los Angeles
makcenter.org

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Despite the stubborn disregard of a few, most of us are aware of the imminent, and awesome, threats of climate change. But the warnings, charts, and speeches headlining this debate rarely hit home the way that the new exhibition, Sink or Swim: Designing For a Sea Change at the Annenberg Space for Photography, does.

The show, curated by prominent radio host Frances Anderton, employs the visceral power of photography—including the exceptional, and in some cases, groundbreaking, work of Iwan Baan, Stephen Wilkes, Paula Bronstein, Jonas Bendiksen, George Steinmetz, and Monica Nour—”to pull our emotions into the conversation, painting a grim, astonishing picture of our water-dominated future while also taking us on a vivid, personal tour of both initial coping strategies and long-term solutions.”

The most dominant warning—change is coming soon, and rich and poor alike will be greatly impacted whether they believe so or not—is emphasized in the first grouping of photographs, depicting familiar, even peaceful scenes, shockingly transformed by increasingly severe climate phenomena like hurricanes, tsunamis, and rising tides. We see an aerial picture of a New Jersey roller coaster, but it’s floating in the ocean; the Statue of Liberty, as majestic as ever, with a dock outside twisted on its side; the Manhattan skyline, half in light and half in darkness; rickshaws being pulled somewhat casually through waist-high water in Dhaka, Bangladesh; and a sandy beach in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, empty save for a television thrown onto its side.

Life as we know it is about to get very strange, these images suggest. And while the topic is familiar, the images’ ability to compellingly tilt our expectations—expectations that are literally being upended by climate change—gives the show a needed dose of surprise in a time when we regularly gloss over beautifully crafted images of devastation and human suffering due to our visual saturation. Ironically the images of chaotic disaster on the Lower Ninth Ward in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina or in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan have less impact. They’re stirring, of course, just more familiar.

The sense of surprise of the first grouping is also prevalent in the show’s architectural photographs, which we usually take for granted as glossy, immaculate shots of polished new buildings. The structures featured in the show are beautiful too, but in the case of disaster constructs and homemade shelters, they’re makeshift and unconventional, and with permanent homes, stocked with engineering to withstand future storms. Their everyday utility, spontaneous ingenuity, and visual poetry in this harsh new reality augers a change in how we will all think about construction in the future. Design feels essential in this troubling context, not superfluous.

Baan’s aerial photo of Arata Isozaki and Anish Kapoor’s inflatable concert hall for Matsushima Japan (an idea that can be transported quickly to other disaster zones) depicts anauburn-colored, radiant structure puckering within the landscape in a gracefully liquid stance: a striking, practical symbol of rebirth. A floating school by Nigerian architect Kunle Adeyemi in the floating slum of Makoko in Lagos, Nigeria, adopts the energetic, even manic DIY ethos of the area, but elevates it into a modern monument to perseverance. Baan’s aerial views of similar floating villages—conglomerations of huge populations pieced together with simple materials—depict the haphazard but logical formation of a completely new type of city. On another wall images of Toyo Ito’s play center in Tsunami ravaged Higashimatsushima, Japan, depict simple shapes and materials transformed into a building of levity and joy. Projects by Shigeru Ban, Sou Fujimoto, and others share a similar combination of experimentation, lightness, and humanism.

Steinmetz’s dynamic images of floating homes in Ulsburg, the Netherlands, deliver a particular fascination as we unconsciously prepare for what’s next. More familiar are images of Brad Pitt’s Make It Right Homes. But it’s worth pointing out that while often mocked as being non-contextual, the residents here seem happy to just have a home, and if it’s built higher and safer, all the better.

The show introduces another, less familiar subject for sweeping architectural shots: infrastructure. Large levees, seawalls, and dams are especially prevalent in the Netherlands, where water has been a dire issue for hundreds of years. Again Baan uses his aerial expertise in capturing the scale of the coastal barrier of Scheveningen Boulevard near the Hague, which has been made into an attractive, active...

**MANAGING DISASTER**

Groundswell: Guerilla Architecture in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake

MAK Center for Art and Architecture
Closed January 4

Groundswell, then, had the added task of reawakening public perception of that loss. Part of that work was to evoke recognition and empathy in the viewers who came to Schindler’s North Kings Road house. Wall text in the entry foyer highlighted Los Angeles’ own precarious geology. It read, “Seismically active Japan and California lie on opposite sides of the Pacific Plate, connected by the same ocean.” Indeed, last month LA Mayor Eric Garcetti presented the document Resilience by Design, a report of the Mayoral Seismic Safety Task Force, calling out the city’s vulnerability to a similar disaster.

Groundswell featured artists and architects involved with ArchAlb, a network of designers, partnered with Architecture as Grief Work, Architecture as Process, Architecture as Cultural Move, Architecture as Not Torture—guided the visitor through a select series of works that, although nuanced, came off as a little thin, given both the sensitivity of the framing and the enormity of the topic. For instance, that last title,...
MANAGING DISASTER continued from page 37

Heavy in its implications, was the heading for a series of housing projects by architects Hitoshi Abe, Manabu Chiba, and Riken Yamamoto. The designs were lovely iterations of Japanese house typologies updated with flexible and public spaces, yet they came off as somewhat generic schematic exercises, not revelatory counter positions.

Architecture as Grief Work was the strongest and most evocative of the four rooms. It contained photographs by Hiroyasu Yamauchi of Kesennuma in the weeks after the tsunami and a model recreation of the fallen city. The model, the product of a workshop conducted by the Lost Homes Project Committee and Osamu Tsukihashi Laboratory at Kobe University, was filled with little flags, each representing a memory of one of the inhabitants. A selection of translated texts recalled the horrors of the event, the missing, and, in some cases, the urban histories such as signs of past tsunami susceptibility, that were ignored by city leadership and developers leading to increased damage and deaths.

Susan Sontag famously wrote, “To collect photographs is to collect the world.” And in Yamauchi’s small-scale documentary compositions, the fragility of the global quotidien came rushing in: a car wedged high between a fence and a telephone pole, a fishing boat in the middle of the street. Translations of the photographer’s notes accompanied each image. Most were straightforward records of the conditions, but one stood out: March 29, 2011, Situation at Shishiori district, Hama-cho, Kesennuma City. “While walking in the tsunami disaster site, my brain stops as I face the scenes and images of the abnormalities,” he wrote. “For a brief second a strangely infatilite thought comes upon my mind and I cannot think logically. I feel like this is a trick by a giant. In fact, the absolutely messed up scene continues endlessly.”

In other rooms, the framing of participatory projects such as ArchiAid’s Pattern Book for Reconstruction Planning or the Ishinomaki Bicycle Tour as “Guerrilla Architecture” is tricky. The terminology suggests an oppositional, tactical, or covert intervention, whereas the pattern book grew out of a series of community-based workshops, and the bike tour was a way to raise awareness of a remote region and promote tourism.

Gallery text drew parallels between these community-based projects and the art world’s equivalent, social practice. But there’s a catch: How to make visible these participatory processes? This question gives many curators pause. Current attempts at wrangling include the exhibition Uneven Growth, Tactical Urbanisms for Expanding Megacities, now on view at MoMA, and the Santa Monica Museum of Art’s Citizen Culture: Artists and Architects Shape Policy. The power of these images comes not just from their stunning, abstracted compositions—it’s the creeping knowledge that these great constructs could very well be the last gatekeepers against serious threats to our civilization.

If the show has one weakness it’s that there isn’t enough depth, particularly in the investigation of structures, where I would have liked more detail about how the projects are created and used, and in what other ways they are proliferating. But the overall effect is right on the mark. We can pretend that climate change has no impact. But if we stare it in the face, feel it with our emotions, and question what we can do to cope, we can no longer hide from it. Good thing, because it’s already here.

SAM LUBELL IS AN ‘S WEST EDITOR.
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It’s been more than four years since popular West Hollywood Urban Designer John Chase passed away. His successor, Stephanie Reich, has been actively promoting an agenda stressing design and practicality, working with her staff and city leaders to cope with the demands of a rapidly densifying city. She’s also known as a tough cookie, sending anything less than the best back to the drawing board. All West editor Sam Lubell sat down with Reich to discuss her agenda, the city’s tradition of collaborative design, and what’s coming next.

Sam Lubell: Tell us about how your role in West Hollywood, and about taking over the torch for John.

Stephanie Reich: I am very proud and very honored to have my dear friend John Chase’s job. We were very close friends, and we had a really strong connection. The city waited two years before advertising his position. We were all pretty traumatized by his sudden death. I’ve been here for over two years. Our styles are very different, and this is a very different time in West Hollywood. We were all pretty traumatized by his sudden death. I’ve been here for over two years. Our styles are very different, and this is a very different time in West Hollywood.

We actually seem to be in the middle of quite a boom. As the city gets denser there’s even more demand for excellence in design. I feel very fortunate to have talent like Craig Hodgetts, Lorcan O’Herlihy, Patrick Tighe, Rios Clementi Hale, Johnson Favaro, and Christian Robert all designing projects here. Because John created a great tradition and expectation of design, I think that may be why developers understand that they need to play their best game here. We also have a great deal of support of design from the city council. That public support is essential to the partnerships we make with architects. The structure sets the expectation for good design.

What makes West Hollywood different?

We’re called the creative city, and that’s reflected everywhere. The process for design review is actually quite different. It seems more fully integrated into the process because the planning commissioners review design as part of their design review sub-committee. There’s not a separate architectural review board. The decision makers for the overall entitlements are actually reviewing the design and influencing the design.

We try to give city commissioners coaching and feedback. I do memos for the commissioners with full design analysis of projects. But design review is based not on my opinion of a project, but on sound architectural principles. We try to find out what the applicant teams are striving for and help them strengthen whatever they’re trying to do. Sometimes there’s not a clear architectural idea. We help guide them to a clearer architectural idea that can be informed with other materials, concepts, and so forth.

How do you attract architectural talent? Developers come to us. I’m an architect, my husband is an architect, and all my friends are architects. I can’t recommend this or that architect. If someone asks for a recommendation, I send them to the AIA, I have a good relationship with the AIA, having chaired their urban design commission from 2001 to 2011. They will develop a list of award-winning architects for any of our clients who go to them. I’ve asked them to do that and they will do a special list based on the project and client. I think they should do that for everyone.

So you’re an architect?

Yes, I’m a registered architect. I worked for about 20 years as an architect with Morphosis, Coop Himmelblau, Daniel Libeskind, and larger, more corporate firms like DLA and NBBJ.

I was the Urban Designer for Santa Monica from 2003-2005, Long Beach until 2007, then Glendale until 2012, and I’ve been here since. I studied architecture at Cornell then got my masters at SCI-Arc.

How do you support development teams? The system is designed to support really good, really progressive work in a lot of ways. We’re a very progressive city, and design, affordable housing, etc. are embedded in our general plan and codes. It’s also in the ethos of the city. I have a great title, but I’m just a small part of a system that fosters this kind of innovation.

West Hollywood is known for having an outspoken community. Is that challenging? Members of the community are not always so comfortable with change. In a community as dense as ours we have serious issues, for instance, with traffic congestion. As we continue to grow I think we have to make sure that the environment and quality of life also continues to grow. Design is a part of that and I think the community recognizes that. We have a very smart, sophisticated, involved community. Also being a small city we have the ability to be very responsive to them.

What are some of your other challenges?

Do you have design guidelines for the city? We’ve developed new zoning code standards in the West Hollywood West Overlay District, with thorough design guidelines. They’re really progressive work in a lot of ways.

West Hollywood is focused on that neighborhood (I don’t know if we’ll continue to develop those for other neighborhoods), but they deal with quintessential issues. As we make projects larger than the neighborhoods around them, how do we make sure they fit in? Even if they’re the largest thing on the block. The design piece is about scale and proportion, and managing those fundamentals of architecture to make sure it’s responding properly to its neighborhood.

Having that as a tool, especially for that neighborhood, will enable folks to understand the demands so there’s a greater level of predictability. It doesn’t tell you what the answer is. Sketches can be misinterpreted, as this is what we want you to design. We have pictures. It’s very important to give broad guidance to an architect development team to allow them to bring their best designs to the city. If it looks like I designed it, the whole city would become very boring. We’re in an exciting place to be because you see there’s an exciting and diverse population here and that’s what the architecture reflects.

Are you more rigorous in your expectations than other cities?

I hope people feel that way. I think that you can see by the results. We have some excellent projects moving through the process. I think that’s a credit to the development teams that come here, and to the city process and to our commission and elected officials that all support high quality development.
It’s been more than four years since popular West Hollywood Urban Designer John Chase passed away. His successor, Stephanie Reich, has been actively promoting an agenda stressing design and practicality, working with her staff and city leaders to cope with the demands of a rapidly densifying city. She’s also known as a tough cookie, sending anything less than the best back to the drawing board. All West editor Sam Lubell sat down with Reich to discuss her agenda, the city’s tradition of collaborative design, and what’s coming next.

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Stephanie Reich: I am very proud and very honored to have my dear friend John Chase’s job. We were very close friends, and we had a really strong connection. The city waited two years before advertising his position. We were all pretty traumatized by his sudden death. I’ve been here for over two years. Our styles are very different, and this is a very different time in West Hollywood. We were all pretty traumatized by his sudden death. I’ve been here for over two years. Our styles are very different, and this is a very different time in West Hollywood.

We actually seem to be in the middle of quite a boom. As the city gets denser there’s even more demand for excellence in design. I feel very fortunate to have talent like Craig Hodgetts, Lorcan O’Herlihy, Patrick Tighe, Rios Clementi Hale, Johnson Favaro, and Christian Robert all designing projects here.

Because John created a great tradition and expectation of design, I think that may be why developers understand that they need to play their best game here. We also have a great deal of support of design from the city council. That public support is essential to the partnerships we make with architects. The structure sets the expectation for good design.

What makes West Hollywood different?

We’re called the creative city, and that’s reflected everywhere. The process for design review is actually quite different. It seems more fully integrated into the process because the planning commissioners review design as part of their design review sub-committee. There’s not a separate architectural review board. The decision makers for the overall entitlements are actually reviewing the design and influencing the design.

We try to give city commissioners coaching and feedback. I do memos for the commissioners with full design analysis of projects. But design review is based not on my opinion of a project, but on sound architectural principles. We try to find out what the applicant teams are striving for and help them strengthen whatever they’re trying to do. Sometimes there’s not a clear architectural idea. We help guide them to a clearer architectural idea that can be informed with other materials, concepts, and so forth.

How do you attract architectural talent? Developers come to us. I’m an architect, my husband is an architect, and all my friends are architects. I can’t recommend this or that architect. If someone asks for a recommendation, I send them to the AIA/LA. I have a good relationship with the AIA/LA, having chaired their urban design committee from 2001 to 2010. They will develop a list of award-winning architects for any of our clients who go to them. I’ve asked them to do that and they will do a special list based on the project and client. I think they should do that for everyone.

So you’re an architect?

Yes, I’m a registered architect. I worked for about 20 years as an architect with Morphosis, Coop Himmelblau, Daniel Libeskind, and larger, more corporate firms like DLAUM and NBBJ.

I was the Urban Designer for Santa Monica from 2003-2005, Long Beach until 2007, then Glendale until 2012, and I’ve been here since. I studied architecture at Cornell then got my masters at SCI-Arc.

How do you support development teams?

The system is designed to support really good, really progressive work in a lot of ways. We’re a very progressive city, and design, affordable housing, etc. are embedded in our general plan and codes. It’s also in the ethos of the city. I have a great title, but I’m just a small part of a system that fosters this kind of innovation.

West Hollywood is known for having an outspoken community. Is that challenging?

Members of the community are not always so comfortable with change. In a community as dense as ours we have serious issues, for instance, with traffic congestion. As we continue to grow I think we have to make sure that the environment and quality of life also continues to grow. Design is a part of that and I think the community recognizes that. We have a very smart, sophisticated, involved community. Also being a small city we have the ability to be very responsive to them.

What are some of your other challenges?

As we continue to get denser, the balance to continue to provide affordable housing is something that is an ongoing challenge for all cities. There’s also a challenge for open space in a city that is so dense, and we’re taking that on at WeHo Park. We take our streetscapes very seriously, and you can see that on Santa Monica Boulevard, and in our new streetscape master plan for the design district on Beverly and Melrose and Robertson. I think we’re, in a very progressive way, trying to meet the demand of a very dense city.

Tell me more about the city’s solutions for affordable housing?

We’re very focused on making sure affordable units included are equal and spread throughout each project, not sliced within a project or substandard. We also have a very active community housing corps, the West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation. For instance we’ve just completed a beautiful new affordable project by Patrick Tighe and John Mulloy.

Do you have design guidelines for the city?

We’ve developed new zoning code standards in the West Hollywood West Overlay District, with thorough design guidelines. They’re focused on that neighborhood (I don’t know if we’ll continue to develop those for other neighborhoods), but they deal with quintessential issues. As we make projects larger than the neighborhoods around them, how do we make sure they fit in? Even if they’re the largest thing on the block. The design piece is not about style. It’s about scale and proportion, and managing those fundamentals of architecture to make sure it’s responding properly to its neighborhood.

Having that as a tool, especially for that neighborhood, will enable folks to understand the demands so there’s a greater level of predictability. It doesn’t tell you what the answer is. Sketches can be misinterpreted, as this is what we want you to design. We have pictures. It’s very important to give broad guidance to an architect development team to allow them to bring their best designs to the city. If it looks like I designed it, the whole city would become very boring. We’re in an exciting place to be because you see there’s an exciting and diverse population here and that’s what the architecture reflects.

Are you more rigorous in your expectations than other cities?

I hope people feel that way. I think that you can see by the results. We have some excellent projects moving through the process. I think that’s a credit to the development teams that come here, and to the city process and to our commission and elected officials that all support high quality development.
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