The pigskin may be deflated for Gensler’s design for Los Angeles’ proposed football stadium, Farmer’s Field, but a venue for the other kind of football is alive and kicking. On May 18, Major League Soccer’s newest team, the Los Angeles Football Club, announced plans for a new soccer stadium and mixed-use complex in South Los Angeles.

Uber recently released renderings of its new Mission Bay campus in San Francisco. Designed by New York-based SHoP Architects and local Studio O+A, the glassy, two-building project reflects the company’s share-economy aspirations to engage with the general public. At 423,000 square feet divided between two addresses

HOK and Mark Cavagnero design a public safety building in SF

A PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING IN SF
SAFE AND SOUND

We are at a moment where the relationship between law enforcement agencies and communities is under increasing scrutiny. While nationwide news outlets report the tensions and conflicts, a new Public Safety Building campus quietly opened in San Francisco’s Mission Bay district this past April, just two blocks from AT&T Park. Jointly designed by HOK and Mark Cavagnero Associates, the project houses multiple law enforcement departments for the city: the police headquarters, a district police station,

Will a Major League soccer venue renew South LA?

FUTBOL FOR THE PEOPLE

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When I first arrived in Los Angeles eight and a half years ago I must admit I didn’t really get it. The city seemed to poke its finger at everyone I had grown to love about my former home, New York. What do you mean I couldn’t walk everywhere? Why was it seemingly more than 10 years after my move? And where was the grid? The order? The organization?

But over these years I’ve come to love and respect Los Angeles and the whole West Coast to an extent that I now think I could do. Sure, LA is not as walkable as New York. But its sweeping geographic scale is less restricted, open to cultural and economic diversity, and varied types of buildings and urban developments: It leaves room for strange and fascinating happenings in the margins. Yet, it doesn’t have the history of the East Coast (although it has more history than most understand). But it’s also historically unburdened by eastern rules and expectations, making it a fertile place for innovators. And yes, it’s chaotic and ad hoc urbanistically, but its the collision of people, culture, and buildings that makes it endlessly fascinating.

But even though LA has all of this, and one of the best climates in the world, the city should not get comfortable. Perhaps the most important lesson I’ve learned is that we’ve barely begun to tap the potential of not only Los Angeles, but also the entire West Coast.

For one, the West has one of the most talented design communities in the world. But very few build in the public realm. Much comes down to an antiquated procurement system favoring the big and well-connected: developers that are often isolated from architectural innovation; a dizzying political bureaucracy that is frequently fractured, self-interested, and not as progressive as it thinks; and a population that spends more time fighting new developments than distinguishing between the good and the bad. Meanwhile academically-focused research practices have neither the initiative to connect with the powers-that-be nor the knowhow to make a major impact outside of residential design and the ivory tower.

In LA, while preservation of landmark buildings has improved, the city’s hidden gems are often masks in ugly signage and other horribleness. Further unearthing this legacy will usher amazing dividends, as it did with the incredible movie palaces of Downtown LA’s Broadway. In San Francisco, on the other hand, we have one of the most advanced architecture communities in the country weighed down by a culture that wants to keep the city a museum.

Along much of the coast we have a lot of sunshine, yet relatively few buildings have solar panels. While in California it has virtually stopped raining, water-related innovations are almost nonexistent. Our public time incentives are a good start, and the West Coast has some of the most stringent environmental standards in the country, but we need to go further to force the adoption of more sustainable practices.

One of my goals as West Coast editor has been to help us enliven our potential, pointing out systemic flaws that hold us back and bursting the bubbles that stifle innovation. I’ve witnessed improvement in all realms, and seen public officials and citizens begin to embrace a progressive design agenda. Major steps include more inclusive public competitions, walkable streets, new transit lines and parks, more effective preservation measures, improved affordable and multi-family design, developments in technologies, and the rebirth of neighborhoods like Downtown LA, Hollywood, and San Francisco’s Transbay.

And I have unending faith that the architecture and planning communities here will continue to make astonishing progress. As I move forward in New York and Los Angeles I’ll be doing my best to get these issues— and the talented architecture firms here—onto a larger stage; to sidestep the bubble of architectural tomes, exhibits, videos, and print publications.

Taking my place will be Miimi Zeiger, who is more qualified than anyone I can think of to continue advocating for innovation and excellence. Miimi’s background in architecture, journalism, and criticism is second to none. Her judgment is superb, and she’s not afraid to tackle tough issues and to speak out when necessary. She’ll bring a fresh new angle to the paper in news coverage and critical content.

I’m honored to have served what I believe is the most talented group of architects in the world. I’ll still be serving you, even if I’m straddling both coasts in the process, and I’m thrilled to see where the road takes us next.

SAM LURELL

DONALD OLSEN, 1919-2015

I knew Donald Olsen for over 50 years. I first met him in 1958 when I came to teach at the Department of Architecture at UC Berkeley, where he was a professor for 35 years. As a new member of the faculty I was very fortunate to be assigned to teach with him.

As an architect and educator, Don’s ability to bring out the best in students was an inspiration. He was a remarkable thinker, and drew upon his personal experiences. He was considered a very challenging instructor, and there were many long nights of discussion. While the years that followed in the 1960s and 1970s were challenging, Don always had a level voice, which was considerate and reasoned. During that time I had the great privilege of working with Don on the design of Wurster Hall, the new home of the College of Environmental Design. The design team included Don, Joseph Esherick, and Vernon DeMars, all UC Berkeley professors of architecture.

An important event for me was when I was invited to dinner at Don and his wife Helen’s house, which he designed and built in the Berkeley hills in 1954. When I arrived I stood outside gazing in awe at this elegant glass and steel home on the hillside. Little did I know at the time how much I would enjoy the times spent with the couple in their magical house. Since then I’ve had the beautiful opportunity to visit many of his residential designs and cherish each and every one. For me, his work is modernism at its very best.

My last visit with Don and Helen was a book signing of the new publication Donald Olsen Architect of Habitable Abstractions, by Pietrucci Serrano. The publication beautifully captures Don’s work and amply displays his ideas and creations. At the event Don was signing my copy of his book and he looked up at me and smiled.

Then, he drew a small illustration of the Olsen House and above it he added a shining sun. I knew in my heart what that meant. I kissed his head to say, “Thank you and bless you my friend.” RICHARD PETERS
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NEWS

Eavesdrop > The Editors

SpaSh DOwN The river continued from front page of the Willamette Falls Legacy Project. When completed, visitors will have access to the site for the first time in more than 100 years.

A consortium of public and private partners—Oregon City, Clackamas County, Metro, the State of Oregon, and Falls Legacy LLC—selected the multi-disciplinary team from a three-team shortlist that also included James Corner Field Operations with Place Studio and Miller Hull Partnership as well as a team of Walker Macy with Thomas Balsley Associates.

The construction budget for the first phase of the Riverwalk is $10 million. The design team will receive $650,000 in public and private funding to take the proposal through schematic design, with an additional $200,000 coming from the private landowner of the former Blue Heron site and the remainder from Metro, Oregon City, Clackamas County, and the State of Oregon.

The client asked the team not to present a design, per se, but ideas that reflect an approach to materials and the “spirit of the place.” A full design will be fleshed out through a participatory process with the community led by Portland-based engagement specialist JLA Public Involvement.

“The ephemeral qualities of the site were as important to us as the experience of the materials: reflections off the water, the sound of the falls, and the feeling of mist on skin,” recalled Michelle Delk, Snøhetta’s director of landscape architecture.

Evocative imagery and sensitivity to the natural and cultural histories distinguished the Mayer/Reed, Snøhetta, and DIALOG proposal. Lightweight walkways skirt the riverbank and weave in and out of the former Blue Heron Paper Mill, allowing visitors to take in sublime views of the falls and the old structures. According to Delk, the team interpreted the brief for a master plan as a “master section,” a document that cuts, almost archeologically, through the layers of the site: the geology, ecology, Native American occupation, and the industrial remains.

Please send geometry lessons, construction paper, and glue to eavesdrop@archpaper.com

HOLiWOOD HiTS THE BEACH

Rumor has it that Michael Maltzan Architecture (MMA) is hard at work on a triangle-shaped Malibu home for one of Hollywood’s biggest names. The MMA crew is keeping mum on the client, but we’ve heard it’s not an actor. Geometric coastal living for a director or producer, perhaps?

Arts & Crafts with Gehry

Frank O. Gehry, soon to be feted at LACMA with a retrospective shipped in from France, was busy this month not flipping off the design world. He was downright beamed as he hosted eighth grade students from Hoopa Valley Elementary School at Gehry Partners (FGO). FGO helped the students as part of the Turnaround Arts program craft projects inspired by his fish lamps. “I started out as a truck driver in the Valley,” said Gehry as he shared his modest beginnings. “I attended community college and USC at night. A ceramics teacher saw a gleam in my eye when I visited the construction site for his house, by architect Raphael Soriano, and encouraged me to take an architecture class. During that architecture class, the floodgates opened. One could stop me.” Well, maybe not so modest after all.

Open> Public Park Facility

It’s rare that a restroom is worthy of mention, much less a public one. But fortunately for San Francisco, Paulett Taggart’s new facility for the city’s Washington Square Park in North Beach is a lovely exception.

The 700-square-foot structure, paid for by a 2012 bond to upgrade Recreation and Park facilities, is clad in shiplapped concrete that resembles the shingles of the neighborhood’s nearby houses. It is inserted with cedar soffits and topped with a perforated screen clerestory that allows natural ventilation during the day and daylight to filter in, making the building also glow at night. Inside, colorful tile contrasts with the cool concrete, as does the cedar, which is located high enough that it can not be damaged.

The building is modern and hospitable, and was warmly received by the community in a neighborhood usually wary of change. “We wanted a safe and welcoming structure that was attractive and sturdy, but didn’t call too much attention to itself,” said Taggart.

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McLaughlin

a dust-up between the architecture firm and the tech company, depicted a composition of two glass boxes connected on top by a third block—a seemingly larger massing than the scheme presented by SHoP and Studio O+A. Additionally, the earlier buildings’ street engagement at the ground floor was decidedly undeveloped. By contrast, the recent design is sensitive to pedestrians and the quickly developing neighborhood. New renderings show a ground level façade pulled back from the curb to create retail, dining, and landscaped areas. The project will also include street-level amenities on the pedestrian throughway Pierpoint Lane and the refurbishment of a small city park. There are plans for an adjoining daycare center.

In short, the design responds to research developed by SHoP investigating community needs, but it may also address wider skepticism: a belief that the share economy embodied by Uber only goes one way. San Francisco is a city that both reaps the benefits and suffers the consequences of tech-minded “disruption,” so perhaps this is a chance for the company to give back a little.

“It’s important for Uber to be in dialog with the community and the company is actively invested in the ground floor experience,” said Angelica Bacon, an associate principal at SHoP. “Even with a large footprint we are trying to create intimacy around the buildings.” Inside, the urban theme continues in the public spaces, which are aptly called the “Commons.” A multi-story arrangement of gathering spaces and circulation includes glass bridges connecting the two structures. The solarium, like, glass and wood Commons acts as a transition between the city and the private offices.

“The Commons allows a great buffer between the place where you might get focused work done and the place where you can interact with your work community at large,” explained Denise Cherry, principal of Studio O+A. “By creating a central boulevard of activity, you allow for a quieter work area.” According to the architects, the workplace design departs from the newfound tech tradition of open plan offices; instead it proposes smaller groupings of work and support stations, or “neighborhoods.” However, it is still chock-full of meeting and collaboration spaces as well as amenities like coffee bars, libraries, a cafeteria, and an on-site gym.

With a company like Uber, one might wonder: Where will they park the self-driving cars? The answer could be in the nearby parking structure constructed as part of the Mission Bay’s development. The company, however, only took a portion of its allocated parking, ceding the remainder to its eventual neighbor, the Golden State Warriors Arena. The location is served by light rail and other public transit. And, of course, Uber employees will take Uber.

Herb McLaughlin

Herb McLaughlin 1934–2015

I first met Herb McLaughlin to talk about money. Specifically, to discuss renewing the AIA San Francisco’s lease in the city’s historic Hallidie Building. I was executive director of the organization, and the office market was hot. We couldn’t afford much of a rent increase and Herb co-owned the building. I was duly nervous preparing for the meeting.

When I met the lanky guy with the twintling eyes and dressed in a threadbare crew neck sweater, he was sitting behind a desk strewn with Oaxacan figures decorated with artwork by his sons. It was then that I knew I was dealing with a true San Franciscan, despite his Ivy League pedigree and a birth certificate that indicated a birthplace of Chicago. Although a contrarian by nature, Herb McLaughlin spent a life well lived until his passing on February 25 in San Francisco. Following graduation from Yale, he joined the Air Force, convincing his superiors to transfer him to San Francisco. As he once recalled, “one of the first things I did was write up a job description of a job that could only be done in San Francisco and for which I was the only suitable candidate.” In 1959, he married the “Debutante of the Year” Eve Pell, cousin of Senator Claiborne Pell. After leaving the Air Force, he worked for less than a year for SOM before starting his own firm, KMD Architects, in 1963 with partner Ellis Kaplan. McLaughlin’s role, according to partner Jim Diaz, was “to be the prime mover, not the guy who put pencil to paper.” (The firm would become Kaplan, McLaughlin and Diaz in 1970.) “He moved the firm into new markets and

pushed everyone,” recalled Diaz. “He was prescient and could see the possibility of moving the firm into new directions.” In true San Francisco style, he approached architecture projects with an unexpected eye. In the 1960s he employed the then-radical notion of asking the future residents in the Martin Luther King housing projects what they wanted their new homes to be like. “This resulted in family units being placed on the ground floor, with porches so that parents could keep an eye on their kids,” said Diaz. “And Herb then placed units for singles on upper floors, away from the clamor of the kids.”

At one time, McLaughlin was one of the largest renovation developers in the United States. His portfolio included the Cleveland Arcade, Chicago’s Dearborn Station, the Design Center, and the aforementioned Hallidie Building. He is credited with resolving a developer’s quandary of what to do with the posh Two Rodeo Drive site in Beverly Hills. Although it was prime real estate, there wasn’t enough street frontage to pay for the development of retail shops. McLaughlin resolved that by creating a pedestal street, which would double store frontage making the site doubly profitable. The firm undertook dozens of other projects over the years, including mental health facilities, hospitals, criminal justice, hospitality, mixed-use, and urban design. McLaughlin would lead efforts to stem the

“Manhattanization” of San Francisco and worked with U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Hass and sculptor Paul Kos to create “The Poetry Garden” in downtown San Francisco. He would claim to have coined the terms “programming is design” and “placemaking.” He was a “foodie” before that term was in vogue, authoring the book Good Eats in 1987. In the introduction to that book, he describes a particularly fantastic meal in France. “After a superb meal we managed to propel our gorged bodies up a hill behind the restaurant to a ruined castle and its graveyard,” he writes. “There we had the last bit of wondrous wine, admired the view, the perfectly silent day and then fell asleep on a Crusaders grave. Hopefully, something that good can happen to you (and still myself) in the Bay Area. I know of no Crusaders graves locally available, but Wyatt Earp is buried in Colma. Try it there. They may not only be eucumenical but understanding.”

And one final note, always the businessman, McLaughlin made AIA San Francisco a fair deal on that lease renewal. Herb is survived by his wife Susan, daughters Grace and Gwendolyn, and sons John, Daniel, and Peter.

www.archpaper.com
The partnership of Craig Hodgetts and Ming Fung has enjoyed a long and varied practice, but their firm had never designed a religious building until the Jesuit High School in Sacramento selected them to build a chapel. Inexplicably, the school had been using the gym for services since its modernist campus was constructed in the 1970s. Though Hodgetts is a non-believer and Fung a Buddhist, they had both explored modern churches on their travels, and they responded to the challenge of creating a spiritual journey. Sacred spaces liberate architects to focus on the basic elements of building and reach for the sublime.

“We developed three or four very different concepts and made about 27 small study models,” recalled Hodgetts. “The school has incredibly sophisticated students and they were involved in the review process, for the principal wanted this to be an educational experience for them. To our surprise, everyone preferred a single inchoate space.” One imagines that choice was influenced by their use of the gym, and the sense of openness and improvisation it had fostered. However, the first approved design included seven side chapels, and it was not until a new school president took over that these were eliminated from the plan.

As built, the Chapel of the North American Martyrs combines the drama of angular exterior geometries with gently curved interior walls that embrace the main sanctuary space, separating it from the peripheral areas. The architects sought to achieve a balance between masculine and feminine elements, creating a sculptural object in which the roof plane and the cement-board panels that clad the sidewalls are part of a single folded composition. The 10,800-square-foot building serves as a symbolic entrance to the campus; its roof profile tilts up to face a major boulevard before dropping down to the height of the adjacent existing classrooms. There are separate points of entry for students and the public, and the interior is conceived as a discrete structure sheltered within, like an egg in a nest.

The chapel opens up to the south through a glazed wall that is framed and partially shaded from the fierce summer sun by diagonal beams. To balance the conflicting demands of transparency and shade, the architects carefully calibrated a mix of colored, fritted, and clear glazing. The stained glass is set into boxes with a fritted outer layer that diffuses the sunlight and a saturated inner pane. “We chose colors that referred to the liturgical seasons, so that they carry symbolic meaning as well as animating and enriching the foyer,” explained Fung.

Acoustics are as crucial in a church as they are in a theater. In both, it is important to hear voices without amplification, but Hodgetts wanted this space to sound like a church so that choral music would reverberate and linger. The acoustic consultant wanted to make extensive use of baffles to distribute the sound evenly and eliminate hot spots produced by the curve of the walls. The architects pushed back, limiting the baffles to the upper level, and cladding the lower level with ribbed wood. As Hodgetts insisted, “sound should have highlights and shadows, just like light. That alternation gives the space a tactile feel.” Simple wood pews are grouped around the minimally furnished sanctuary, and the wall that divides it from the Lady Chapel behind is bathed in light from above.

“We wanted the space to work as well for an individual as a group,” said Fung, “but when there’s a congregation it feels very like theater in the round.” That experience may be realized quite literally, for the master plan that Hodgetts + Fung devised for the north tip of the campus extends the curving paths to define a hemi-circle on which the chapel may be joined by a theater when funds become available.

Michael Webb
FUTBOL FOR THE PEOPLE continued

from front page scheme replaces Welton Becket’s 1959 Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena, which was the subject of a 2010 environmental impact report ordered by the LA Coliseum Commission to study a replacement. Demolition of the existing venue is expected to take a year and will require a significant amount of infrastructure and environmental abatement.

The Coliseum Commission and the LA City Council are expected to sign off on the proposed design in July, giving a go-ahead for the estimated $250 million dollar project that includes a 22,000-seat stadium, as well as 100,000 square feet of new restaurants, office space, a conference center, and a world football museum. Plans feature outdoor site amenities, such as plazas that connect to the peristyle Coliseum and a wall of video screens ready to cater to MLS soccer and USC football fans alike.

Since this is LA’s first open-air professional sports arena built since Dodger Stadium opened in 1962, the design of the roof is critical. C-shaped and asymmetrical, the steel and ETFE structure extends over the bleachers all the way to the edge of the pitch to provide protection from the western sun. There’s an expectation that the curved roof will also help keep sound from spilling out into the surrounding neighborhood. The canopy’s sections are strategically positioned to frame views of Downtown Los Angeles.

Located in Exposition Park, the new stadium complex sits between the historic Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum and Figueroa Street. According to architect Ron Turner, director of sports and entertainment for Gensler, the design addresses both the street and the park. “From Dodgers Stadium at the north end, to the Staples Center, to our site in the south, the Figueroa Corridor is quickly becoming an important boulevard of the city,” he explained.

Although the wide boulevard, which boasts the occasional strip mall and a view of the 110 Freeway, seems an unlikely candidate for renewal, Turner references the MyFigueroa project, an initiative slated to transform three miles of the Figueroa Corridor into a “complete street” with a narrowed roadbed and protected bike lanes. As he describes a design that serves the South LA community, Exposition Park visitors, and event-goers, he envisions sidewalk cafes in the shadow of the stadium that are open to the public beyond game day.

Los Angeles Football Club hopes to have the stadium completed by the 2018 Major League Soccer season. Gensler was part of the team that designed Arena Corinthians for the 2014 FIFA World Cup, however this scheme takes inspiration from the English Premier soccer league. Even with 22,000 fans, it is meant to be an intimate experience: seats close to the pitch, steep raked bleachers, and separate entrances into the stands, so that each area feels like its own club. “It’s a stadium for the people,” said Turner. MZ

Gensler’s proposed soccer stadium for the Los Angeles Football Club ambitiously attempts to knit the 22,000-seat venue into the urban fabric and connect Exposition Park with the city-scale plan for the Figueroa Corridor.
While Peter Zumthor and Renzo Piano’s plans for Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences have hogged the attention on LA’s Miracle Mile, the third museum commission in the area—Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates’ (KPF) reimagining of the Petersen Automotive Museum—is cruising along, so to speak, with completion planned for December.

The project, a new facade by KPF and a renovation of the interior galleries and administrative offices by House & Robertson and Scenic Route, was first announced in 2013. It is intended primarily to shine the spotlight on an institution that has long been overshadowed by its cultural neighbors. It wraps the existing building—a 1962 modernist department store by Welton Becket—in a veil of sinuous stainless steel ribbons whose liquid-like design echoes the speed of muscular automobiles. The ribbons are superimposed over a bright red custom corrugated metal rainscreen (“red is fast,” said KPF Principal Trent Tesch). That skin, anchored into the original building’s concrete columns, is made of 11-foot-by-4-foot panels.

The water-jet cut, angel hair stainless steel ribbons (their skins fastened to internal frames) are exposed in front and painted red on their edges and backs for depth and balance. Aluminum tubes inside help attach one piece to the next. The 26-foot, 6-inch-long ribbons, first designed in Rhino and adjusted with Grasshopper, were fabricated off-site. They are currently being hauled via truck to the site and being craned into place.

Workers for the project’s contractor, MATT Construction, needed a way to attach the ribbons to the building, so the project’s steel fabricator, Zahner, created a series of tubular steel and aluminum support structures, which KPF’s Tesch called “trees,” extending vertically from the roof and “shrubs,” outriggers projecting horizontally from the facade. (The veil wraps over the top of the building to create a dramatic, three-dimensional gesture and a rooftop outdoor space shaded by the ribbons.) The white trees and red shrubs are attached to the building’s existing columns and beams. In the few places where trees are not located directly over columns, the team installed a transfer beam to carry the load. When the ribbons extend to the ground they meet smaller steel square-foot, triangle-planned building a “groundscraper.” It contains student-centered programs such as academic and student affairs, with bill payments on the open first floor and administrative offices and other support spaces on the second and third levels. The ground floor features a central courtyard and a walkway connecting to the rest of the campus. The building’s undulating profile reflects the campus’s rolling topography. It was originally to be clad with a green roof, but that plan was scrapped for budgetary reasons. Instead, it will be covered with perforated aluminum panels, projecting from the side of the building to provide shade underneath for spaces to congregate and to provide cover for its inset, glazed frontages. North facing eyelet skylights will allow more natural light to pour inside.

“Well are we really conscious of where we are, and it’s pretty hot out there,” said Zajfen of the school’s inland California site. “The roof covers everything.”

The building is expected to be complete by 2018.

Cal Poly replacing Predock tower with “Earthscraper” HEAVY METAL

In 2010, officials at Cal Poly Pomona voted to replace Antoine Predock’s Classroom Laboratory Administration (CLA) Building (1992), a pointed, triangular tower with an open top that is arguably the most famous building on campus. The chief reasons for the move were the building’s seismic and structural deficiencies. But another rationale was that its tiny floor plates made it inconvenient, forcing students and faculty to scurry up and down its floors to carry out their tasks.

Now a three-story replacement is ready to go. A rippling spaceship of a structure by LA-based CO Architects will unify, on a single floor, the various programs from the Predock building, whose fate is still up in the air. The new building will be located just southeast of Predock’s CLA, less than 100 feet away. CO Architects Design Principal Paul Zajfen calls the firm’s 138,000-square-foot, triangle-planned building a “groundscraper.” It contains student-centered programs such as academic and student affairs, with bill payments on the open first floor and administrative offices and other support spaces on the second and third levels. The ground floor features a central courtyard and a walkway connecting to the rest of the campus. The building’s undulating profile reflects the campus’s rolling topography. It was originally to be clad with a green roof, but that plan was scrapped for budgetary reasons. Instead, it will be covered with perforated aluminum panels, projecting from the side of the building to provide shade underneath for spaces to congregate and to provide cover for its inset, glazed frontages. North facing eyelet skylights will allow more natural light to pour inside.

“Well are we really conscious of where we are, and it’s pretty hot out there,” said Zajfen of the school’s inland California site. “The roof covers everything.”

The building is expected to be complete by 2018.

**CA_05_01_10-ri.indd**
Architect: RCG Architects
Glazing Contractor: S. Albert Glass

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Russian Lounge, 5/8” tempered, low-iron glass, max size 98 1/2” x 147 1/8”, printed with Alice®, Washington, D.C.
FORMOSA SOUTH ON THE LOT AIDS FOR "URBAN VILLAGE"

The opening of Formosa South in December of last year represents the completion of phase one in a plan to create a unique district that connects to the surrounding city. The design complements The Lot's historic collection of early 20th century studio and office buildings with a contemporary approach to creative working. "We wanted a design that had the feel of a repurposed industrial building but with more promenades that would allow tenants to express their own identities," said Paul Pullman, Studio One Eleven's principal-in-charge and lead designer for the project. "It was important that it avoided any kind of corporate look," he added.

To achieve this, the architects drew inspiration from the image of Le Corbusier's Domino House and looked to Benjamin Thompson's Design Research Headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The later project proved an important precedent for its floor-to-floor glazing and flexible spaces. "We were going for expansive glazing rather than punched openings," recalled Pullman. Formosa South gives the appearance of a stacked "urban village," reflecting different uses and tenants on the exterior. It presents itself as the new front for The Lot along Formosa Avenue, framing a gateway into the campus. The design also enhances the street environment with its play of glass, color, and concrete, as well as a softened landscaped edge.

THE STUDIO AND THE CITY

Formosa South is the first new building on The Lot, Hollywood’s historic film studio campus, in over three decades. Long Beach-based Studio One Eleven has been working with The Lot to enhance an existing master plan, The Lot Movie Studio Comprehensive Development Plan, since 2011. The opening of Formosa South in December of last year represents the completion of phase one in a plan to create a unique district that connects to the surrounding city.

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Much has been written about United States architects and developers finding opportunities in China’s building boom, which is seemingly on perpetual fast forward. American architects are building small and large in the East—from corporate offices’ design of tall towers, such as KPF’s Shanghai World Financial Center, to the exhibition of boutique firms at Ordos 100, the new community in Inner Mongolia featuring houses designed by 100 architects from 27 countries. Yet, as the U.S. economy recovers from the recent recession, the trend is becoming paralleled by a flow in the other direction. Cities across the U.S., which once saw mostly outbound traffic of architectural design and real estate investment, are now brokering a two-way exchange. Metropolises from New York to Detroit have seen growing real estate interest from individual Chinese buyers as well as large developers. In parallel, Chinese architectural design practices—especially young and innovative ones—are seeking commissions in the U.S. and opening local offices to pursue new work. A fast-growing economy in China and decades-old bi-national relationships in architecture and development are resulting in new types of partnerships in the building industry, rooted in two deeply linked economies.

In the beginning of 2015, two noteworthy buildings made headlines in Chicago, capturing the breadth of new exchanges with China in the city’s architectural scene. In November, design publications headlined Beijing-based MAD Architects’ unveiling of a scheme for the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art on the city’s lakefront. Founding principal Ma Yansong proposed—in his own words—a “futuristic” mountainous building in partnership with two Chicago offices. In April, stakeholders watched in a hotel ballroom as final plans were unveiled for the Wanda Vista: Three towers in Lakeshore East by Studio Gang, the highest of which, at 1,200 feet, will be the third tallest in the city. Behind the scenes, these towers are bankrolled at a cost of $1 billion by the Beijing-based developer Dalian Wanda Group. Set to break ground in 2016, according to Mayor Rahm Emanuel, these Chinese-funded buildings are estimated to add 2,000 construction jobs to the city. Bi-national exchanges between
China and the U.S. in Chicago’s built environment are also simmering at a smaller scale. According to the National Real Estate Association, in 2014 Chinese buyers purchased $22 billion dollars of United States real estate, more than any other foreign group. Chinese buyers represented 24 percent of all foreign sales nationally, up from 19 percent the previous year. According to Sam Van Horebeek, a director at East-West Property Advisors, a company that connects Chinese buyers to U.S. realtors, his clients are buying real estate in the United States to diversify assets, as investments, or for immigration purposes such as supporting a child enrolled in an American university. Increasingly, cities like Chicago are becoming of more interest. “In the past, it was only New York, Boston, or San Francisco,” said Van Horebeek. “Now there is more interest in second tier or third tier cities. We expect that to continue. There’s a higher demand than ever before and it will accelerate.”

More broadly, Chicago’s new relationships with Chinese real estate investors and architects serve as a microcosm for broader currents of interest from China in the U.S. building industry. Wang Jinlan, chairman of the Dalian Wanda Group and one of China’s richest men, announced his attention to further his real estate investment in the U.S. beyond the Windy City. “Investing in Chicago property is just Wanda’s first move into the U.S. real estate market,” he said in a press release. “Within a year, Wanda will invest in more five-star hotel projects in major U.S. cities, like New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.”

Other Chinese developers have entered the U.S. real estate market, often in partnership with local companies. In 2013, the Shanghai-based Greenland Group purchased a 70 percent stake in Brooklyn’s Atlantic Yards project from Forest City Ratner Companies and is functioning as an “active partner” involved in construction as well as financing. Across the East River in Manhattan, China Vanke, the nation’s largest real estate developer, is building a glassy 61-story condo building on Lexington Avenue. In Los Angeles, Greenland invested $1 billion in residential towers and a hotel, in part of the city’s push to reactivate the Broadway corridor. Even smaller cities, like Tacoma, Washington, are benefiting from Chinese investment: Shanghai Mintong Real Estate is constructing a two-tower hotel and condo complex in downtown. Financially strapped Detroit has also attracted foreign real estate interests: This year, Dongbu International purchased three iconic buildings in the city’s downtown. The increased forays by large developers are in part due to the availability of EB-5 visas, which allow financiers to acquire green cards for investment purposes, drawing more Chinese capital to U.S. cities. Other reasons for the uptick include broader economic changes in China, characterized by a stronger yuan and a marked decrease in the nation’s own real estate market, which just dropped to a five-year low, according to the country’s National Bureau of Statistics. “At an annual Chinese real estate convention,” said Van Horebeek, “one [developer] told me that in a two- or three-day convention during which there were a lot presentations on different topics—when typically most would be about the Chinese property market—(this year), one third were about America. So you have Chinese developers, major ones, discussing their plans for expansion overseas.”

As Chinese developers increasingly look to the U.S., the country’s architects are also looking to enter the market. Two decades ago, most Chinese architectural designers would have been headed for state-run architectural practices. Yet beginning in 1993 with Atelier FCJZ, the firm often billed as the nation’s first private architectural practice, Chinese architects are establishing independent firms with international reach. Yung Ho Chang, who founded Atelier FCJZ, is a former head of the architecture department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He built his career in U.S. academia before establishing his now prolific practice in Beijing. Today, many Chinese architects are trained abroad and establish offices in the U.S. with an international scope. “For this generation of Chinese architects, I think it’s very natural for them to practice in any place,” said Ma Yansong, the designer of the Lucas Museum. “This generation feels already that they are in the global scene.”

Recently, young Mainland Chinese architecture firms have garnered international accolades and are maintaining U.S. offices, paving the way for more commissions abroad. Wang Shu of Amateur Architecture Studio won the Pritzker Prize in 2012, the first time the accolade was awarded to a Chinese citizen. The firm OPEN Architecture was founded in New York City in 2011 by Li Hu and Huang Wenjing, closely followed by a Beijing branch. While the office’s projects are mostly in China, OPEN Architecture’s increasingly international practice was recognized for its design of “Garden in the Garden,” which spoke to both mass production and traditional Chinese landscape, at last year’s Venice Biennale. Studio Link-Arc, selected to design the 2015 China Pavilion at the Milan Expo, was founded by Yichen Lu and also operates out of New York. This model of young cutting-edge practices with bi-national roots
is characterized by SO-IL, a firm founded by Jing Liu, a Chinese-born architect, with Florian Idenburg, who is from the Netherlands. The firm’s project “Pole Dance” was constructed for the P.S.1 Young Architects Program in 2010 and the office has since gone on to design commercial and cultural projects in the U.S. and internationally.

Ma Yansong argues for the positive potential of Chinese developers with both civic and investment interests in the U.S., especially when paired with design architects whose agendas focus on context and revitalization. “I don’t work with many commercial developers in China,” said Ma, “but I think that the Greenland Group, in the U.S., has a good vision. Many large developers come for the market, for financial reasons, and of course Greenland has financial targets too, but they really want Greenland to be a local office [in the U.S.]. Those are the same reasons we come to the United States. We want to bring new ideas to the American city and we want to find people who share the same vision. That’s why we have the office in Los Angeles, to try to blend into the community and understand what is going on.”

On one hand, China’s growing role in the U.S. architecture and real estate scene can be chalked up to the globalized economy, in which the borders of nations have become less significant in light of multinational corporations and fluid trade. On the other hand, the architectural exchange between the two nations deserves closer inspection. In early 2014, the Chicago Tribune ran a series of articles titled, “Designed in Chicago, Made in China,” which profiled the work of Chicago architects working in the East. Yet undergirding the lucrative commissions for U.S. architects working abroad are the architectural and real estate currents going in both directions between the two nations, emerging from the complexity of two deeply linked economies. As the architectural exchange between China and the U.S. increasingly flows both ways, critics and professionals will continue to navigate a new iteration of an old encounter that brings both fresh competition and new opportunities.

Ann Lui is a Boston-based writer and designer.
Operable walls give users the ability to divide space on demand, a process that can be at once pragmatic and magical. The following selection of project case studies and products present a range of possibilities for architectural designers who want to deliver flexible, high-performance spaces without compromising artistic integrity. Also, find the best in contemporary hardware.

Reported by
Leslie Clagett
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A survey of Lifetime Television’s programming—“Project Runway,” “Hoarders,” and “Devious Maids”—are but a few of the network’s series—provides quick insight into the culture of the corporation, which is oriented to the flashy and the feminine. When HOK took on the job of transforming a 70,000-square-foot den of gloomy, high-paneled workstations into a vibrant interior for the media company, one of the specific directives it received was to make the office a fun and open environment.

The linchpin of the renovated space is a broad, sinuous central corridor that serves to organize the floor plan. The walls have been covered in Panelite’s Bonded Series of composite panels, which have been backlit by LED lights. HOK designed ten lighting programs for the system. (In what could be construed as a bit of subliminal branding, the colorful, glowing walls recall a television screen.)

The architects specified finished edges and split clear/satin faces for the panels to ensure maximum light diffusion. Between the panels, silicone joints create a seamless surface. The panels are highly resource efficient, consisting of approximately 70 to 85 percent air by volume. Weighing only 1.25 pounds per square foot, they can achieve greater spans than other sheet or panel materials, due to their honeycomb-core structure.
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New interior door and wall systems encourage spatial efficiency and flexibility. By Leslie Clagett

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Bonded Series Panels

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Panelite.us

Muto

This manual sliding door system features a self-closing mechanism, incorporating a proprietary damping device that slows panels and brings them to a gentle stop. The compact, modular profile eases the installation process and allows for integration into interiors of any architectural style.

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Not only are the design possibilities—side-lites, clerestories, transoms, and more—expansive, but the product sourcing for this butt-joint wall system is customizable, too. The manufacturer can supply the glazing, and also offers the option of sourcing glass locally. The wall frames are assembled at the job site, and the glass panes are then slid into place.
dirtt.net

Interior Walls

New interior door and wall systems encourage spatial efficiency and flexibility. By Leslie Clagett

Center Mount Glass Wall

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Frankford Panel System

Influenced by the mechanical age and the age of discovery, the Frankford Panel System draws inspiration from industrial and architectural artifacts. Informed by the manufacturer’s heritage in custom fabrication, this modular system can be fully customized in unusual, artisan-finished materials to create unique panel configurations.
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EMTEK

Adding a touch of color to a contemporary design, this set includes latch and strike plate. The inserts are available in seven colors.

emtek.com

HARDWARE

Providing security and the all-important initial aesthetic impression, door handles are a key design detail.

By Leslie Clagett

GOOD GRIPS

VERDURA
ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Hand-cast in CuVerro, a bactericidal copper from Olin Brass, this hardware collection is particularly suitable for healthcare and wellness institutions. The material is registered with the EPA to kill 99.9 percent of infectious bacteria within two hours, its properties never washing out or wearing away. CuVerro is highly sustainable, produced from 96 percent post-consumer materials, and is 100 percent recyclable. Designed by HOK Product Design.

rockymountainhardware.com

SCOTTSDALE ROYALE
HARDWARE RENAISSANCE

Semi-precious stone inlays add visual interest to this sand-cast, solid bronze hardware for entry doors. Offered in 15 hand-applied finishes.

hardwarerenaissance.com

PRODIGY COLLECTION
OMNIA

While streamlined at first glance, this hardware features unexpected details upon further inspection. A squared-off lever, inconspicuously curved on the reverse, is a perfect companion to a square rose that has been added to the line. The wedge-shaped lever features subtly rounded edges. Reminiscent of a puck, a circular knob is punctuated by a long shaft. Coordinated auxiliary deadbolt designs are also available.

omnaiandustries.com

POCKET DOOR LOCK
BALDWIN

Offering design flexibility and longevity with a patented limited lifetime finish warranty, this pocket door lock is available in four collections and 18 finishes.

baldwinhardware.com
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STAINLESS STEEL JEWELRY
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PROFILE

MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS CENTRE
ONTARIO, CANADA

ARCHITECT: ROUNTHWAITE, DICK & HADLEY
ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS
STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT: HALSALL ASSOCIATES
CIVIL CONSULTANT: A.M. CANDARAS ASSOCIATES

MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT:
JAIN AND ASSOCIATES
DOORS: SCHWEISS BIFOLD DOORS
DOOR INSTALLER: SUPERIOR DOOR & GATE SYSTEMS
In a perfect world, the construction of a municipal building would be highlighted by both form and function. Most times, because the budget is often determined by taxpayer dollars, the end result is to settle for function.

The Newmarket, Ontario, Municipal Operations Centre—which earned a LEED Silver rating—has achieved both goals. Designed by Rounthwaite, Dick & Hadley Architects & Engineers (RDH), it is an aesthetically pleasing, energy-efficient, and environmentally-friendly facility from the inside to the out, where the facade features 20 bi-fold lift-strap/auto-latch glass portals manufactured by Schweiss. Research and design alone for this $20.2 million, 65,000-square-foot facility took about a year. Lead project architect Geoff Miller said, “We were looking for a door product that would have a number of functional aspects and be architecturally attractive as well.”

RDH worked closely with Schweiss to ensure the custom doors met the community’s aesthetic and energy goals. The bi-fold doors measure 19 feet wide by 21.3 feet high to accommodate storage, repair, and maintenance areas for trucks, snowplows, and other large equipment. The doors are clad entirely in a double-glazed curtain wall and installed flush with the primary building envelope. This allows for transparent and fully day-lighted workspaces in the vehicle bays, while maintaining thermal continuity.

Ten doors on each side of the facility—all sporting super-graphic numbers for instant identification by visitors—allow for easy access and drive-through capabilities. They also provide passive ventilation and reduce the energy load. During the summer, the doors can be left open during the day to create a seamless indoor/outdoor workspace.

The doorframes are powder-coated to protect against the elements and prevent rust. They also include safety features such as warning lights and horns, a door base safety edge, and an emergency backup system.

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**FUNCTIONAL HARDWARE**

Hinges, rollers, and locksets are the unheralded—and often hidden—components of a door’s design. Here’s a sampling of what’s new in this hard-working, functional hardware. By Leslie Clagett

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**SPECTRUM COLOR BARN DOOR HARDWARE**

**REAL SLIDING HARDWARE**

Offering a change in palettes from stainless steel and hand-wrought iron, this barn door hardware is offered in seven bright colors. Available with flat-tracks from four to 18 feet in length for a variety of door thicknesses.

realslidinghardware.com

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**SLIDO DESIGN 80-M**

**HAFELE**

The Slido Design 80-M sliding door offers a subtle, sleek presence with concealed hardware so the door appears to float. Design 80-M is a wall-mounted system with the running gear integrated and concealed in the door leaf. On level hard floors, no bottom track is required, and an optional guide track is available for carpeted floors. Featuring a soft-closing mechanism, the hardware may be used with both wood and glass doors and can support up to 175 pounds.

hafele.com

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**ARGENTA**

**RENSON**

This line of invisible hinges promotes a concealed aesthetic while enabling a 180-degree door opening. It features a closed position that completely aligns with the surrounding interior wall. Available for both left- and right-sided doors, the fully adjustable hinges are easily installed, fire-rated, and UL-listed.

renson.us

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**SMARTCODE 915**

**KWIKSET**

This keyless deadbolt avoids problem of “smudge” attacks associated with touchscreen locks, where passcodes can potentially be detected from the oily residues left by fingers on the glass surface. Users are prompted to touch two random numbers in order to display the full screen and then enter the programmed access code. Powered by four AA batteries.

kwikset.com

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**HAWA-VARIOTEC 150**

**HAWA**

This hardware system for stackable, all-glass sliding walls has flexible track routing, allowing straight and curved sections to be seamlessly joined together; radii range from 15 to 90 degrees. It can accommodate both sliding pivot and sliding swing doors. Panels up to 330 pounds can be loaded on the trolley.

hawa.com

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**RITE TOUCH DIGITAL LOCK FOR INTERIOR GLASS DOORS**

**ASSA ABLOY / ADAMS RITE**

This digital glass door lock requires no holes or other modifications to the door, making installation quick and easy. The lock offers flexible access control with single or double glass door compatibility and dual credential access control via card reader or personal PIN code. Includes a fire detection sensor, break-in alarm, and an optional automatic locking feature.

assaabloy.com

adamsrite.com
Inside Outside Living.

The frameless insulated sliding doors by Sky-Frame blend naturally into their surroundings. So it is hard to say where the living room ends and where the view starts: Sky-Frame.net
CALENDAR
JUNE/JULY 2015

TUESDAY 30
EXHIBITION CLOSING
Griffith’s Gift: Cityscapes from Griffith Park
AIA/LA Gallery
3780 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
aialosangeles.org

JULY
THURSDAY 2
LECTURE
Climate Change and California’s Water Supply
12:30 p.m.
SPUR San Jose
76 South First St.
San Jose, CA
spur.org

SATURDAY 4
EXHIBITION CLOSING
Lens Work: Celebrating LACMA’s Experimental Photography at 50
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
lacma.org

TUESDAY 7
LECTURE
The Legacy of Experiments in Art and Technology
7:00 p.m.
SPUR Urban Center
654 Mission St., San Francisco
spur.org

WEDNESDAY 8
LECTURE
Architecture’s New Edges
6:00 p.m.
SPUR Urban Center
654 Mission St., San Francisco
spur.org

THURSDAY 9
LECTURE
Building Community, Chinatown Style
12:30 p.m.
SPUR San Jose
76 South First St.
San Jose, CA
spur.org

TUESDAY 14
LECTURE
What Will It Take To Achieve Vision Zero?
6:00 p.m.
SPUR Urban Center
654 Mission St., San Francisco
spur.org

WEDNESDAY 15
LECTURES
Classroom to Market, 20 Years of Innovation
6:00 p.m.
Art Center College of Design
1700 Lida St., Pasadena, CA
artcenter.edu
Transportation For The Other 9-5
12:30 p.m.
SPUR Urban Center
654 Mission St., San Francisco
spur.org

THURSDAY 23
EVENT
Pecha Kucha Night: Agriculture and the Built Environment
7:00 p.m.
Ecke Ranch
441 Saxony Rd., Encinitas, CA
sdarchitecture.org

FOREGROUND: THE LANDSCAPE OF GOLF IN AMERICA
Center for Land Use Interpretation
9331 Venice Boulevard, Culver City, CA
Through September 21
As one of few sports determined entirely by terrain, golf’s field of play is an irregular form defined by outdoor features: grass, trees, sands, mounds, and water. Most sports are played on rectangles of consistent dimension, but the thrill of golf is engendered by the undulating hillocks and flora that surround it, distilling scenic qualities of its locale. The exhibition explores the symbiosis between the landscape and the outdoor sport, assuming the position of golf as an assertion that nature and landscape can be thoroughly tamed, sculpted, and placed under control so long as we can maintain it.

SUBSCRIBE AT WWW.ARCHPAPER.COM/SUBSCRIBE
A long time ago, in the wake of World War II, Los Angeles appeared as a welcoming paradise for returning veterans and footloose others in search of new beginnings. Jobs beckoned and commuting by car or transit was manageable. There was not yet heavy traffic or smog; there was only sunny days and the promise of suburbia—the good life. The only thing missing was affordable housing. People slept in makeshift Quonset huts and tents in city parks, while lines to purchase new makeshift houses formed over night and snaked for blocks. Then, as now, city government expressed concern and did little.

Cory Buckner’s new book tells the story of an optimistic approach to housing from the period, when four returning veterans who bonded as studio musicians decided to build a cluster of neighboring homes for themselves, sharing some common play space and a swimming pool. Other musicians became interested, and the group, christened as the Mutual Housing Association (MHA), grew to 25, then 100, and after some publicity, to 500. People eagerly signed up, and by the end of 1946, with some bickering and conservative diatribes, Los Angeles had its first large-scale cooperative housing development. As author—and not incidentally architect—Buckner astutely writes, the goal of the MHA was not to build tacky houses, but rather “innovative structures that could be erected simply and cheaply and that reflected the politically progressive visions of the founding members.”

A design team consisting of Whitney R. Smith, A. Quincy Jones, and Edgardo Contini was selected, and plans grew to include—in addition to the community swimming pool—tennis courts, nursery schools, and a cooperative market. In time, other architects became involved, retained by individual cooperative members with designated sites. A hilly, raw 1,800-acre tract above then-rural Brentwood was purchased, and 350 lots were selected for housing cooperatives. A large-scale housing co-op.

The way I read, every book is a self-help book. I am a mercenary, hunting ruthlessly for the stuff I can use. I recently found An Eames Anthology, a collection of Charles and Ray Eames’ texts—articles, film scripts, interviews, letters, notes, and speeches—edited by Daniel Ostroff. The first thing I did was with turn to the index to look for writings credited to Ray alone. I wanted to read those first. There are about ten in a book with more than 120 entries. It’s not a contest, of course, but Ray ray (her childhood nickname—and mine) remains a bit of a mystery. She and Charles were business partners and domestic partners and this relationship is complicated beyond measure. But while their friend, director Billy Wilder, may have said “They are one,” my gut says not exactly. I persist in the search for more information about her as an individual, and a more nuanced understanding of their collaboration.

Charles described their working process in an AIA seminar transcript found in the anthology. In 1952 he wrote, “Things began to get shuffled, and pretty soon you didn’t know where one started and the other ended, and anything that we’ve looked at or talked about here, I say that I’m doing it, but actually, she’s doing it just as much as I am, only she sort of goes under the same corporate type name.” Charles exhibits both self and brand awareness in identifying his own as the “corporate type name.” Pretternaturally savvy about images of themselves, perhaps they both knew that his name was their shared clown makeup. But even after claiming his name was an umbrella, in speech after speech, and in nearly every interview, Charles shares credit with Ray unbidden, beginning in the early 1940s. The anthology is arranged strictly chronologically and as one pushes through the years, there are scattered clues about their creative partnership; it’s like following breadcrumbs.

The first drafts of two letters—a 1949 letter to Richard Neutra and a 1954 letter to Henry Ford, II—are presented in facsimile in Ray’s handwriting, with the final, delivered versions signed by Charles alone. Who knows if she initiated these or if he dictated to her? We have to be very careful not to make assumptions about husband-and-wife relations: him hogging the mic and her long-suffering. Charles was already aware of how they might be perceived, as he reveals in a PBS television interview from 1968: “The result of being asked questions... is a kind of metamorphosis which turns me from a sort of simple, unassuming guy into a monster full of great bits of wisdom, Mr. Know-it-all of the century,” said Charles. “With Ray it’s no less violent, but it’s simpler. It’s pure paralysis.”

With so few of Ray’s words available, we must turn to biographical details for clues. An Eames Anthology is dedicated to Lucia (1930-2014), who was born in St. Louis to Charles Eames and his first wife, Catherine Woermann, Fellow LA based practitioner Linda Taalman and I were once talking about being women architects with children and I remember reminding her that Ray was Lucia’s step, not biological mom. This detail seemed crucial to me; I had a collection of Case Study Mothers.

The material in An Eames Anthology ranges from their most ambitious intellectual efforts to such prosaic details as these, and every page is compelling. The collection continued on page 32
In late May, Cameron Sinclair, best known as the co-founder of the non-profit disaster relief organization Architecture for Humanity (AFH) announced his latest venture, the Department of Small Works, a decidedly for-profit social impact practice.

Before Sinclair stepped down as executive director of AFH in 2014 (the organization filed for bankruptcy under new leadership in early 2015), he was on the ground in Haiti, Pakistan, and Kosovo. A leader in the field of social impact design and a recipient of numerous awards, including the TED Prize, he’s already at work on schools for Syrian refugees and rethinking water utility systems in slums. Mimi Zeiger spoke to him by phone from her Sausalito, California office.

Mimi Zeiger: In describing the Department of Small Works, the website mentions that it is “for-purpose” as well as for-profit. Is this move to the more conventional for-profit sector a suggestion that the non-profit model doesn’t work?

Cameron Sinclair: When we began Architecture for Humanity there was no such word as social entrepreneurship. There was no conversation around collaborative design studios that were truly globally collaborative—we didn’t have the technology. We started the same month as Google started. So, in a way, we only understood the non-profit model that if you’re an architect and you want to help people you have to volunteer.

Socially responsible design is not seen as something that makes a liveliness. So, I always wondered why couldn’t we have a social impact, for-profit company.

One idea behind the Department of Small Works is that architects should have a career in this type of work. Part of the reasons that AFH got into such difficulties toward the end is that we paid our people pretty well. There wasn’t much difference between a small design firm and a large non-profit. The philanthropic world is a $16 billion industry—a lot of people who are working for international NGOs have high five- and low six-figure salaries.

Why is it that people who are developing, leading, and implementing projects are expected to work for nothing?

How would you describe a small work?

Everyone is looking for that one silver bullet that will help everyone. We need millions of silver bullets. Our methodology is to develop highly adaptable, replicable projects that are much more likely to be adopted for communities. The idea of “small works” is figuring out the mechanism of ownership so that community becomes the owners of the solution rather than the purchasers.

Who funds these projects?

It’s a consortium of large NGOs and private donors who are looking for projects that can start a business. Every project that we are working on is geared toward job creation, equity, and ownership so that after the pilot it can be spun out into a business for the community. So rather than making a donation, people are making an investment.

Activism is listed among the Department of Small Works’ interests. Given some high profile architects’ dismissals of architecture as a political act, why is it important for them to take an activist stance?

I believe there’s a difference between architecture as a political act and political architecture. It comes down to ethics. I believe that people working on job sites shouldn’t have their passports taken away or reside in inhumane living conditions.

I’m not at war with the idea of big architecture. We will always have it. Our clientele is different. When we design safe spaces for women who are victims of sexual assault, for instance, we are looking for design solutions that are far removed from the global aesthetics of architecture.
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A AFTER THE FREEWAY

San Francisco is known for removing urban freeways. Most famous is the waterfront Embarcadero Freeway, damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. A few miles up Market Street, however, the 1992 removal of a portion of the earthquake damaged, elevated Central Freeway spurred an even more remarkable transformation.

The Central Freeway was a stub that connected several arterial streets and San Francisco’s Civic Center neighborhood to Interstate 80 and Highway 101. An unsightly overhead structure, it cut through the middle of Hayes Valley, shadowing a dense urban neighborhood not far from San Francisco City Hall.

In 2005, the portion of the Central Freeway north of Market Street was replaced with Octavia Boulevard—four lanes of through traffic with planted medians and slower lanes for local traffic and bicycles. In 2007 the San Francisco Planning Department’s Market-Octavia Plan was enacted to preserve existing neighborhood character, ensure increased density in a mixture of housing types, set standards for ground floor uses, and plan for amenities like street improvements and recreational facilities.

Patricia’s Green, a small park located where Octavia Boulevard meets the neighborhood’s main commercial strip, Hayes Street, is the center of the neighborhood. Children fill the playground and the green space hosts events such as craft fairs and evening film festivals that would have been unthinkable when a freeway ran overhead.

Adjacent to the Green is Proxy, a gathering of temporary modular buildings that house a host of food vendors. It is an interim project developed, designed, and financed by local architecture firm Envelope A+D. Proxy originally held a three-year lease with the City of San Francisco, but the Board of Supervisors gave it an eight-year extension until the site is developed as affordable housing. The project includes rotating public programming and temporary facilities that range from a mini golf course to a movie screen, currently under construction.

Many other parts of San Francisco have seen contentious battles waged over nearly every new proposed construction project, including a recent fight to enact a housing moratorium in the Mission District. However, the Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association has been supportive of housing development and eager to see good design from some of the Bay Area’s best architects. The neighborhood has been well served by this collaborative attitude from a design perspective. The guidelines set in the neighborhood plan resulted in active ground floors and a lively streetscape.

The most recent addition to the neighborhood is Stanley Saitowitz’s concrete and glass 8 Octavia at the intersection of Octavia Boulevard and Market Street. Saitowitz describes the form as responsive to the context by mirroring the cornice line of the Free Baptist Church across the street. The 47-unit, mixed-use building developed by DOG and DM Development opened in 2014 and promptly sold out.

Located on Oak Street between Octavia Boulevard and Laguna Street, a site that was once a freeway ramp is the nearly complete Avalon Hayes Valley. Developed by Avalon Communities and designed by Pyatok Architects with associate architects Owen Kennerly and Jon Worden, the 182-unit, block-long building abuts a new alley on the north. The design picks up on the rhythm of the surrounding neighborhood. Units are advertised for non high-rise new construction.

Across the street from Richardson Apartments, condo units at 300 Ivy (developed by Pocket Development and also designed by David Baker) sold for over $1,000-per-square-foot in late 2013, a city record at the time for non high-rise new construction. The ground floor features a high-end restaurant. Sitting over a plate prepared by the James Beard award-winning chef, San Francisco will be a luxury enclave with little of the diversity that makes it so attractive in the first place.

Yet with the demand for new housing fueled by both a tech boom and a revitalized neighborhood, it is hard for affordable housing to keep up. The city desperately needs a housing strategy that allows more units to be built in larger areas of the city at a lower cost. If the city continues down the path it is on today, San Francisco will be a luxury enclave with little of the diversity that makes it so attractive in the first place.
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