Many American cities have swaths of land set aside for industries that once represented the town’s production power. But as industries become obsolete and others move abroad, continued on page 2

Crossing the street in Chicago is about to get a little easier. The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) plans to start trimming the excess off four-lane Lawrence Avenue on the North Side. It will be the first busy thoroughfare to be altered as a result of a complete streets policy adopted in 2007, in favor of a more balanced approach to road design that considers pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, as well as drivers. continued on page 4

Apart from stints at Harvard, the Bauhaus, and a few years in the office of Mies van der Rohe, Bertrand Goldberg was a Chicagoan all the way. Whether or not the city will return the architect’s dedication remains to be seen. Goldberg, who died in 1997, designed over a dozen buildings in a career spanning four decades. continued on page 7

Recent census figures show a rapidly growing population in Chicago’s South Loop. The burgeoning neighborhood will soon boast an architecturally ambitious new building for Williams Jones College Preparatory High School, one that replaces the existing concrete building on South State Street. Designed by Ralph Johnson of Perkins + Will, the project features a bold red, gray, and white modulated façade, breaking up the massing of the eight-story building.

In addition to classrooms and science labs, the 1200-student facility will include a college resource center, a large gym with a weight room, a six-lane pool, visual and performing arts studios, underground staff parking, and a professional quality auditorium with a scene shop, dressing and green rooms. The current Jones building accommodates approximately 850 students.

To get the job Perkins + Will responded to an RFQ, beating 27 other firms who submitted. “The submittals were evaluated by a team of Chicago Public Schools and Public Building... continued on page 5

Toxic to Trails

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The modest budget and short time frame faced by CDOT in trimming Lawrence Avenue are typical of the complete streets approach. The goal is to create a more balanced environment for all users of the road, not just drivers. The approach involves a range of strategies, from adding bike lanes to improving pedestrian facilities.

The South Loop neighborhood, where the new Williams Jones College Preparatory High School will be built, is a case in point. The area has experienced a surge in population in recent years, and the new school is designed to accommodate the growing student body.

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WASTING ENERGY ON A SMART GRID?

I was excited to read The Architect's Newspaper's optimistic feature on smart grid technologies by Ann Lok Lui (“Smart Grid City” AN 08_12.15.2010). The benefit of incorporating such technologies into our existing building stock to provide more reliable and sustainable energy sources is certainly something architects would do well to pay attention to. However, I was disappointed that the article failed to address a more pressing concern (and potential) for architects: the amount of energy used and abused in buildings.

Beyond securing more reliable, renewable, and cheaper energy supplies lies the need to ensure that our buildings are less energy hungry. This includes providing the ability for and assessing the effectiveness of how building occupants use their buildings to reduce unnecessary energy consumption. Shouldn’t architects go to greater lengths to evaluate the in-use effectiveness of their designs, including suggesting ways for building users to achieve greater efficiencies and cost-savings? Let’s stop washing our hands of this post-occupancy responsibility, while simultaneously reaching for the promise of new energy-providing technologies, however sustainable its spin.

KIRK WOOLLER
DIRECTOR
REMAKE ARCHITECTURE
CHICAGO

TOXIC TO TRAILS continued from front page

more cities have had to contend with rotting industrial infrastructure. While some communities struggle to turn these eyesores into parks, Chicagoans have come up with a unique way, environmentally and ecologically, to cope. On the far Southeast Side, the Department of Housing and Economic Development's Open Space Division has been compiling a portfolio of land parcels totaling more than 750 acres, all of which will be transferred to the Chicago Park District.

What makes the project so unique is that the land, most of it surrounding Lake Calumet, is not intended for recreation but for preservation, with an eye toward global warming. The city land is part of the Calumet Open Space Reserve Plan, an initiative that includes 3,900 acres of private, public, and commercial land. Once returned to industrial use, all parks will seek to preserve natural habitats for wildlife. Much of the land was manipulated and polluted over the course of the past hundred years. Simply returning land to nature could secure its future. “Let’s just say, it’s not virgin,” said Kathy Dickhut. Dickhut has been compiling parcels for the Department of Housing.

“There’s bad stuff out there, but it’s not the worst I’ve seen. And there are some areas that are in very good shape.”

It wasn’t until the city planned to plop yet another airport atop the land in the 1970s that a cry went up. Now that the city owns over 750 acres, it falls to the Department of Environment to determine what is possible. This requires understanding of the variable story. Aaron Durnbaugh, a deputy commissioner at the Department of Environment, said every site is unique. For instance, a parcel of land near Heron Pond has been used by a gun club for more than a century, which meant gun enthusiasts have been shooting lead into the ground.

While the challenges of cleaning up the land may prove difficult, finding the funding to maintain it will require creative thinking. “There is no city budget line out there that can take this some place,” Durnbaugh said. Instead, the city must work with the state and the federal governments to bring change. For Indian Ridge Marsh, which runs like a spine through the middle of the site, the Army Corps of Engineers has allocated $2 million to clean dumped dredge spoils that they have placed there over the years. In total, the Army Corps will spend about $5 million on the project. The USDA has also put up with a unique way, economically and environmentally. The resulting restoration is seen by local environmentalists as a way to bring a sense of justice into the site.

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KUCHEN AT THE COOP?

When Eavesdrop first learned that the Seminary Coop Bookstore would be relocated—gasp!—above ground, our heart sank. No more hunched-over browsing. No more precariously low clearances (Eavesdrop is really tall!). Won’t all that sunlight fade the covers? The new space is in good hands though, with the firm Tigerman McCurry overseeing the design. The building itself, designed in the 1950’s by Holabird & Root, abuts Wright’s Robie House. If you’re embracing natural light and sharing the block with an architectural icon, you might as well throw in a top-notch café. Eavesdrop heard that a little Austrian fellow named Julius Meinl might run the café space. Soon UC students may be rolling over straight from class in their PJ’s and sandals (with socks, no doubt) to nosh on tiny biscuits, dark, dark coffee, and soft-boiled eggs.

CITYSCAPES OR BURBSCAPES?!?

Regular readers can probably guess that Eavesdrop is a devoted urbanite—better known as a “regular,” some might say. Besides, we want to see you downtown. Or at least in Ravenswood or something.

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PRESERVATIONISTS AND CELEBS FIGHT TO SAVE FAMED SCHOOL

SCHOOL’S OUT?

Closed in 2005, the old Cass Technical High School in Detroit is hanging around a bit worse for wear, but may soon graduate to the landfill. Next door, a 404,000-square-foot replacement designed by TMP Architecture serves students, and the City of Detroit is saying that its empty neighbor is a safety hazard. The old 831,000-square-foot building was not well secured when students stopped attending, and has been extensively vandalized. A group of preservationists and alumni—including some very famous ones—are hoping it’s not too late to find a developer to save the building before its scheduled June demolition.

In a January 13 interview with NPR, alum Lily Tomlin expressed her sadness about the old Cass Tech’s future. “It was a very special school,” she said. “You know, it could have been anything—housing or whatever. I don’t know why they demolish these places to make a parking lot.” Musician Jack White of the White Stripes and The Raconteurs told The Detroit Free Press, “If you’re not going to recognize its historical importance, then you shouldn’t have built a new school, but modernized the existing building.” The school boasts other famous graduates like John DeLorean, Ron Carter, Ellen Bursten, and Diana Ross.

Detroit city planner and preservationist Janese Chapman explained that part of the difficulty in saving the building is that the school board now owns it. “This branch of the local government has nearly equal standing with the city, and is exempt from many designations that might have protected the school from the wrecking ball. In a move to lessen the blow to outraged alumni, Robert Bobb, the Detroit Public Schools emergency financial manager, announced that the demo crew will save, package, and sell bricks and artifacts.

In a series of workshops with Detroit Schools in the few months that remain, Karen Nagher of Preservation Wayne, a local architectural preservation organization, intends to keep shopping for a developer that might buy the building. “A buyer for Cass would need to originate an offer, since the school does not advertise a price. In 2005, the city was asking $3 million, but at this point Nagher thinks the district would take less. Due to falling enrollment and growing budget problems, in March 2010 the Detroit Public Schools financial manager laid out a plan to close 44 schools in 2010 and another 13 by 2012. Detroit Public Schools is the largest property owner after the city itself. As of November 2010, 80 schools were for sale. Detroit has a reputation as a low-rise city of freestanding homes with few options for renters. Cass Tech’s eight stories might provide the rare opportunity for an apartment conversion. A precedent has been set at other closed schools, such as the Nellie Leland School, sold to a developer in 1981 and now home to the Hamtramck Leland Arts Center, which was listed on the National Register of Historic places in 2002.

For local advocates, Lawrence Avenue is a really nice start. Cars have been king of the road for too long, he said: “We’re moving in the other direction.” A mile-long stretch of Lawrence Avenue is exempt from many designations that might have protected the school from the wrecking ball. In a "road diet." Curb extensions with bioswales to capture rainwater runoff will narrow the street at crosswalks, along with pedestrian refugees in the central turning lane, that should further increase pedestrian safety. Including bioswales in the bumpouts actually saves money, Attarian explained. One cost typically overlooked when narrowing a street is relocating catch basins. The swales allow basins to remain in place inside new planters.

East of Ashland, Lawrence currently contains only two travel lanes, but will still undergo a similar slimming treatment. Sidewalks will be extended to accommodate 100 new shade trees and allow for al fresco dining.

The city is now completing the streetscape design for Lawrence Avenue, and the road diet will be realized in two phases over the next several years. Funds are being sought, and the final project is expected to cost between $14 and $20 million.

For local advocates, Lawrence Avenue is just the beginning. “We’re pretty excited that there seems to be a more balanced approach to road design,” Hernandez said. “Lawrence Avenue is a really nice start.” Cars have been king of the road for too long, he said: “We’re moving in the other direction.”
Opponents say the move would designate coal byproducts as hazardous waste caused an industry outcry. According to the PBC’s Simon, “We have not yet received any substantive comments on the building design.” The architects were not free to speak, citing PBC rules. Like all new public buildings in Chicago, the new Jones Preparatory will meet at least LEED Silver standards and will include stormwater management systems, automatic and low-flow plumbing fixtures, lighting sensors and daylight harvesting, native and adaptive landscape species, and a green and reflective roof to mitigate the urban heat island effect.

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Located in Chicago’s western suburbs, the design of the new offices of Millward Brown, a market research and branding consultant, draws on the iconography of its highway-straddling location. “We wanted to convey a sense of speed and movement, but also a sense of connection to the firm’s downtown offices,” said Tom Polucci, director of interior design for HOK Chicago. The design takes elements of car culture and creates abstract allusions to automobiles, roads, and movement through the materials, color palette, and sense of circulation.

Visitors enter the space through a black-walled, rubber-floored elevator lobby with large black pendant lamps overhead. Opposite walls are on one side branded, the other glazed with the reception area visible through glass doors. A custom reception desk with white high-gloss paint, wood finish surfaces, and leather-like trim recalls an auto interior. A small reception area with Bernhardt lounge chairs feels “like a cockpit,” according to Polucci. White walls with reflective strips draw down the hallways with white glossy flooring. Inside, open offices with Herman Miller Ethospace workstations in white and matte metallic finishes line exterior walls to offer the most natural light to the greatest number of employees. The 71,000-square-foot office, which fills one and two-thirds floors, can accommodate over 350 employees. Five conference rooms are clustered around pantries, making entertaining clients or lunchtime presentations easy to carry off. They feature graphic Wolf Gordon wall coverings with a running line pattern. A handful of private offices and 12 small meeting rooms line the core. Informal gathering spaces are also an important aspect of firm culture. “It’s a young staff. It’s critical to the way they work,” Polucci said. The Community Meeting room, or Town Hall, which overlooks one of the large open office areas, is the most eye-catching of these spaces, with strips of light racing across the ceiling, and pops of color from red Panton chairs. The space also features small Nelson sofas from Herman Miller with Paul Smith striped fabric from Maharam. A carpet tile called Places and Spaces, designed by HOK for Lees Carpets, covers the floor. HOK has designed other spaces for Millward Brown, and is beginning work on a new project. In each project, the firm repeats functional elements and spatial relationships, but alters the design to suit the culture of each office and reflect the nature of the site. “They’re a fantastic client. They have their ducks in a row. You work with a core group throughout the process, so everyone has a sense of buy-in,” Polucci said. “The project really benefited.”

RESOURCES:

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www.maharam.com
Wolf-Gordon
www.wolf-gordon.com

Workstations
Herman Miller
www.hermanmiller.com
NOT SO FAST continued from front page
mid-century decades, among them the iconic "corncrib" apartment complex, Marina City (1959); the Raymond Hilliard Homes (1966); and River City (1980-86).
But none have been landmarked. And now, one of the most distinctive, Prentice Women’s Hospital (1975), its bulbular tower vacant since 2007, is in danger of demolition once the psychiatric service offices located in the base of building move out this summer, as planned. Landmarks Illinois has put the hospital for two years running on its Ten Most Endangered Places list.
The women’s hospital, now in the possession of Northwestern University, was once a progressive birthing center, its forward mission reflected in its design, inside and out, with a layout putting nurse stations at the center of a radial plan of wedge-shaped patient rooms. It featured in the 70s the kind of accessible social-networking plan that is now considered essential in a wide variety of medical research, and institutional buildings.
Structurally, it is just as dynamic. After working ten years on the design, Goldberg, who was one of the first to employ computer-modeling techniques adapted from the aeronautics industry, came up with its elegant shape. A quatrefoil mass in concrete cantilevered from a supportive core and free of interior columns, the tower meets the box-shaped base with a circle of interlocking sliced parabolic arches.”
"Goldberg’s finger was on the pulse of a lot of the same things that interest architects today,” said Alison Fisher, an assistant curator of architecture at the Art Institute of Chicago, where the first retrospective, Bertrand Goldberg: Architect of Invention, is in the works and due to open in September. “He was at the forefront of cross-pollination with his interests in engineering, materials research, pre-fabrication, and healthcare.
He was trying to push the boundaries of what architects could do.” Fisher also noted that interest in Goldberg is mounting as students and such au courant architects as Jeanne Gang are exploring his works anew. (The AIC holds Goldberg’s archives.)
Whether that renewed interest can save the Prentice Women’s Hospital is unclear. Landmarks Illinois recently launched a website to stir public awareness, and is working on a report, due in March, suggesting adaptive reuses for the building that are both medically-related (research labs, housing for doctors and nurses) and needed in the area (offices). According to James Peters, the group’s president, public support will be critical to rescuing the Prentice.
“Response from the architecture community has always been very positive; they know the building is a structural tour de force. The public reaction is more mixed. Some say it looks like a prison. People just love it or hate it,” he said.
With the “Save the Prentice” campaign winning friends on Facebook, and local 42nd ward alderman Brendan Reilly, a supporter of modern architecture in the past, lending an ear, hope is cautiously alive that the building can be saved. “One thing is for sure: It’s the most distinctive building in Streeterville,” Peters said. “But once it’s empty, it becomes vulnerable.”

JULIE V. IOVINE

AT DEADLINE

GETTING ON TRACKS

What’s Red and Purple and bruised all over? The Red and Purple lines north of Belmont are in a state of serious decay, and now the Chicago Transportation Authority has decided, at the very least, to study the situation. The agency has come up with six proposals for addressing the sorry state of the tracks and train stations, though the funding for improvements remains far from concrete. The proposals range from taking no action, to two basic rehabilitation plans, to a few modernization alternatives. All the options come at a cost. No action requires $280 million, basic rehab comes in at $2.4 billion to $2.9 billion, and modernization alternatives would cost from $4 billion to $4.2 billion. End results vary, with the basic plans lasting only 20 years and modernization lasting from 60 to 80 years.

MONEY WHERE IT COUNTS

For Modernist pilgrims worshiping at the altar of Mies’ Chicago Federal Center, the $155 million recently allocated to the center from the federal stimulus package will make little difference. Behind the curtain wall, however, the money will help to upgrade energy systems within the aging masterpiece and bring it up to par with current standards. Cosmetically speaking, the plaza will also get a facelift, but the thrust of the allocation will go toward trashing obsolete heating and cooling units. Similarly, in Cleveland, another $12 million will go toward wrapping the General Services Administration building in a huge steel and glass envelope designed by Interactive Design partner Charles Young. The high-rise will reflect a stance away from the original structure while insulating the original building during the colder months, making it one of the largest storm windows in the nation.

FOUR SQUARE

The parking lot at the corner of Madison and Halsted in Chicago may soon sprout a luxury 514-unit apartment building with a multi-use base. At the moment three buildings anchor a corner of the intersection and the new tower would complete the composition. The fifty-story glass oval, called One South Halsted, was designed by FitzGerald Associates. The cyclical form sits beside a square volume that incorporates 30,000 square feet of retail, 520 parking spaces, banquet halls, a business center and a pool—all to be shared with the 400-room Crown Plaza next door. The total square footage comes to more than 822,000 square feet. The FitzGerald website touts the location next to Interstate 90 as a plus, virtually guaranteeing unobstructed views of downtown.
A LA MODULAR

NOT JUST FOR HOUSES, PREFAB DESIGNS THINK BEYOND THE BOX

BY JENNIFER K. GORSCHE

1 BOX KITCHEN
FLETCHER CAMERON

A new product from kitchen design firm Fletcher Cameron, founded by Frank Lloyd Wright’s great-granddaughter Christine Ingraham, the Box Kitchen is a prefabricated cabinet solution for kitchens, baths, and offices. Available in standard, legged, or wall-hung cabinet styles in 33 laminate colors and ten wood veneers, the cabinets come standard with soft-close, Euro-style hinges on solid maple or metal drawers. Components are fabricated in Connecticut and can be shipped nationwide.

www.boxkitchen.com

2 MODULAR STAIR
ASCENDINGS

Introduced at the 2010 Build Boston show, Ascendings is a modular stair system consisting of CNC-machined aluminum components that can be prefabricated for a variety of straight and curved stair designs, with wood (produced by the Indiana company’s Amish neighbors), metal, lightweight concrete, or glass treads. The system uses a patent-pending technology to replace stringers with individual aluminum pieces, making it ideal for remodel projects in which full-stair installation is difficult.

www.ascendings.com

3 SMART BUILDING KITS
PROJECT FROG

Founded in 2006, smart-building manufacturer Project Frog is testing its next generation of designs in the Hawaiian Islands; a sample building kit is shown here. Working with the Hawaii Natural Energy Institute, the company will install a series of buildings designed for energy efficiency and sustainability throughout the islands, evaluating a new energy-neutral test platform at two climatically different locations, and testing the structural system and building envelope performance in the two environments. Alternative-energy generation technologies will also be evaluated.

www.projectfrog.com

4 MODULAR HOMES
ASUL

An acronym for the Adaptable System for Universal Living, ASUL homes use a material management system to source, prefabricate, and package construction materials for assembly from anywhere in the world, should they be unavailable at the building site. Design options include ten modular sizes, two deck and awning options, and three ceiling-height variations, with raised or slab-on-grade foundations. Homes may be built by the owner or ASUL, alone or collaboratively.

www.asul.us

5 SYSTEM 10
ROSA GRES

A new prefabricated system for constructing concrete overflow swimming pools quickly, the new Rosa Gres System 10 uses interlocking precast panels, with an integrated pool-surround drainage channel, to ensure a precisely finished, high-strength tank structure. Once the pool tank is complete, the system is waterproofed with a Hidroelastic membrane system, and tiled using the company’s Ergo System range of porcelain pool tiles.

www.rosagres.com

6 ART.RAINBOW
GUALENI DESIGN

A new conceptual model from Gualeni Design, ART.rainbow is a prefabricated, solar-powered pavilion composed of transparent composite sheets held together by a dome of modular elements fitted with solar panels. During the daytime, the structure is a light-filled space for gatherings; at night, LEDs within the ceiling use stored solar power to illuminate the interior. The “artificial rainbow” is available in any color scheme and can be customized to suit an event’s needs. Production is anticipated.

www.dxtroy.com
PERMANENT CHANGE
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MICHAEL BELL, PROFESSOR, GSAPP

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- Student
- Other

FIRM INCOME
- Under $500,000
- $500,000 to 1 million
- $1 to 5 million
- >5 million

EMPLOYEES
- 1-9
- 10-19
- 20-49
- 50-99
- 100-249
- 250-499
In early January, the University of Chicago announced that the long-empty Harper Theater and its neighboring office buildings will be ready for a Five Guys burger joint in the fall, along with other retail and commercial tenants. The Harper Theater, acquired by the university in 2003, is just one of many local properties it purchased that is slated to become part of a new commercial corridor along 53rd Street.

The adaptive re-use of Harper Theater is an example of the university’s plans to develop Hyde Park and expand into neighboring Woodlawn in unprecedented ways. Traditionally, the university has kept its dorms and facilities close to the chest; now, its real-estate purchasing record shows how the university is developing commercial properties in Hyde Park while expanding traditional projects like residence halls and classrooms to the north-edge of Woodlawn.

“Obviously, the University of Chicago’s primary mission is not real estate development,” said Steve Kloehn, the associate vice president for news and public affairs. “But it is crucial that we help create and sustain what will attract the very best students and faculty members and staff we can.”

The University of Chicago has never had a simple relationship with its neighbors in the hundred years since its founding. Today, university projects in Hyde Park and Woodlawn garner both local criticism and support.

“The neighborhood is always ambivalent about the university,” said Jane Comiskey, a member of the 53rd Street Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Advisory Council, which is responsible for advising on the use of TIF property tax money in the area where the university intends to develop a commercial corridor. “They do good things, and then they do other things.”

In late 2009, the university acquired the site of a Mobil gas station at 53rd Street and Kenwood Avenue, three blocks down from the Harper Court site. The Mobil location marks a mid-point in the 53rd Street retail corridor, which developers see as ripe for commercial or residential use. Efforts to build so far, however, have been countered with concerns from local residents about the height of the proposed schemes and the cost of the condominiums.

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The university is also using its purchasing power to bring nightlife to the area, acquiring the 5201 South Harper Avenue building where the Checkerboard Jazz Club reopened in 2005, and 53rd Street Hollywood Video rental store location in January 2009.

Debate surrounds the latter property as well: According to reporting by The Chicago Maroon, the district manager of Hollywood Video claimed that the branch shut down because the university...
but according to a university spokesman, it was always too detached from campus. The university eventually sold the building, opting to build new dormitories elsewhere. Studio Gang is now converting the building into some 350 rental apartments for Antheus Capital.

Parallel to the university’s move into commercial real estate, the focus for traditional development projects like libraries, dorms, and administrative centers has moved south below the Midway. Standing by a Civil Rights-era agreement with Woodlawn community leaders not to build below 61st Street, the University of Chicago is developing the thin strip of land below the park.

In the last few years, the university has built south of the Midway, a new residence hall, parking, and office facilities, renovated Eero Saarinen’s Law School, and planned on a new home for the Chicago Theological Seminary. It is in the process of constructing the Logan Center for the Arts by Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects. Extending the campus south below the Midway poses a few challenges, however, including questions of safety and the distance of new buildings from the main campus. Two years before the completion of the South Campus Residence Hall, a massive new dorm designed by Goody Clancy, a Senegalese chemistry student was shot on Ellis Avenue near 61st Street, prompting concerns about safety in the neighborhood.

“In terms of the relationship to the original quadrangles,” said Steve Wiesenthal, the university architect, “the center of gravity is north of the Midway, so the south campus schools are feeling quite isolated from each other—and from the rest of campus. We have this great challenge. How do we change the perception and the reality of distance to the land on the south end, so that the Midway itself can become this great intersection—the world’s largest college green?”

Architects working on the projects south of the Midway have developed different means of addressing the unique site, from a tower at the Logan Center for the Arts symbolizing a signal to the rest of campus, to visually accessible gardens at the residence halls that make the building feel less closed-off from the community. It is unclear how commercial development in Hyde Park juxtaposed with traditional building in Woodlawn will affect the existing contrast between the already divided north and south sides of the campus.

However, both the Harper Court development, with its adjacent commercial corridor, and the new projects south of the Midway promise to keep redefining the relationship between the University of Chicago and its neighbors. “We have a very lively debate on campus about architecture,” said Wiesenthal. “The way that we’ve looked at these new projects is less about style and more about guiding design principles, not just spatially, but creating places and spaces where people can interchange ideas.”

ANN LOK LUI’S LAST FEATURE FOR AN EXPLORED PLANS FOR A SMART GRID SYSTEM IN THE LOOP.
FEBRUARY

FRIDAY 4
EXHIBITION OPENING
Chad Beck
Painting Survey, 1998-2010
Roy Boyd Gallery
739 North Wells St., Chicago
www.royboydgallery.com

SUNDAY 6
EXHIBITION OPENING
Beauty and Power:
Bronzes from the
Peter Marino Collection
Minneapolis Institute of Arts
2400 3rd Ave. South
Minneapolis
www.artsmia.org

WEDNESDAY 9
EXHIBITION OPENING
The Tragic Muse:
Art and Emotion, 1700-1900
Smart Museum of Art,
University of Chicago
5550 South Greenwood Ave.
Chicago
www.smartmuseum.uchicago.edu

EVENT
Rethinking Home: 2010 Competition Results
6:00 p.m.
AIA Chicago
35 East Wacker Dr., Chicago
www.aiachicago.org

LECTURES
Louis Sullivan's Banks:
The Jewel Boxes
12:15 p.m.
Chicago Architecture Foundation
224 South Michigan Ave.
Chicago
www.cafarchitecture.org

Kansas City Design Week
What is the Value of Design?
11:30 a.m.
AIA Kansas City
1801 McGee St.
Kansas City, MO
www.aiakc.org

THURSDAY 10
LECTURES
Building on the Past:
How European Architects Create in Context
12:00 p.m.
AIA Chicago
35 East Wacker Dr., Chicago
www.aiachicago.org

LECTURES
Milwaukee in Focus
12:00 p.m.
AIA Chicago
35 East Wacker Dr., Chicago
www.aiachicago.org

EVENT
Get Connected and Inspired
6:30 p.m.
Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts
Steinberg Auditorium
St. Louis
www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu

TUESDAY 15
LECTURES
Milwaukee in Focus
12:00 p.m.
AIA Chicago
35 East Wacker Dr., Chicago
www.aiachicago.org

EVENT
Electromediascope Winter 2011: InsideOut:
New Performance Videos
7:00 p.m.
The Nelson Atkins Museum of Art
4525 Oak St., Kansas City, MO
www.nelson-atkins.org

EVENT
Sound Specialists
6:30 p.m.
Halvorson & Partners
Design Exposed:
AVENUE PATRICE LAMUMBA
Indianapolis Museum of Art
7:00 p.m.
www.imamuseum.org

LECTURES
A New Look at Spiritual Space
3:00 p.m.
McCormick Tribune Campus Center
Illinois Institute of Technology
3201 South State St., Chicago
www.iit.edu

LECTURE
Wendell Burnett
6:00 p.m.
Steinberg Auditorium
Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts
Washington University
St. Louis
www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu

TUESDAY 17
LECTURES
Design Series:
Chair from 1963
7:00 p.m.
Indianapolis Museum of Art
4000 Michigan Rd.
Indianapolis
www.imamuseum.org

LECTURE
Halvorson & Partners
6:00 p.m.
Halvorson & Partners
West Chicago Ave.
Chicago
www.aiachicago.org

FRIDAY 18
LECTURE
Bob Sine
6:00 p.m.
Steinberg Auditorium
Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts
Washington University
St. Louis
www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu

LECTURE
Liza Bear
6:00 p.m.
Crannbrook Academy of Art
3921 Woodward Ave.
Bloomfield Hills, MI
www.cranbrook.edu

LECTURES
A New Look at Spiritual Space
3:00 p.m.
McCormick Tribune Campus Center
Illinois Institute of Technology
3201 South State St., Chicago
www.iit.edu

LECTURE
Wendell Burnett
6:00 p.m.
Steinberg Auditorium
Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts
Washington University
St. Louis
www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu

LECTURE
Ric Joy
6:00 p.m.
Steinberg Auditorium
Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts
Washington University
St. Louis
www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu

LECTURE
Bob Sine
6:00 p.m.
Steinberg Auditorium
Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts
Washington University
St. Louis
www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu

LECTURE
Liza Bear: Avalanche:
A Unique Media Phenomenon
and other projects
6:00 p.m.
Crannbrook Academy of Art
3921 Woodward Ave.
Bloomfield Hills, MI
www.cranbrook.edu

EVENT
Skeptus Architecture:
Insider and Out
2:00 p.m.
Chicago
www.skeptus.com

LECTURE
Howard Van Doren
Shaw's Ruggles House:
Rites of Passage
12:15 p.m.
Lecture Hall Gallery
224 South Michigan Ave.
Chicago
www.cafarchitecture.org

LECTURE
Frank Lloyd Wright's
SC Johnson Research Tower
12:15 p.m.
Lecture Hall Gallery
224 South Michigan Ave.
Chicago
www.cafarchitecture.org

LECTURE
Frank Lloyd Wright's
SC Johnson Research Tower
12:15 p.m.
Lecture Hall Gallery
224 South Michigan Ave.
Chicago
www.cafarchitecture.org

LECTURE
Loma Anderson
7:00 p.m.
Detroit Institute of the Arts
5200 Woodward Ave.
Detroit
www.dia.org

LECTURE
Korean Contemporary Artists
from the 386 Generation
6:30 p.m.
The Cleveland Museum of Art
11150 East Blvd., Cleveland
www.clevelandart.org

LECTURE
New Performance Videos
7:00 p.m.
The Nelson Atkins Museum of Art
4525 Oak St., Kansas City, MO
www.nelson-atkins.org

LECTURE
Electromediascope Winter 2011: InsideOut:
New Performance Videos
7:00 p.m.
www.aiachicago.org

LECTURE
Susan Philipsz:
We Shall Be All
Museum of Contemporary Art
220 East Chicago Ave.
Chicago
www.musicaearchicago.org

LECTURE
Cannon Design Lecture:
Rafael Moneo
6:00 p.m.
Steinberg Auditorium
Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts
Washington University
St. Louis
www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
MODERN IN THE MAKING
The Speed Art Museum
2035 South 3rd St., Louisville, KY
Through March 20

Showcasing recent acquisitions of 20th-century design by the museum, Modern in the Making explores how the definition of modern design has changed over time and across national boundaries. The exhibition also demonstrates how, beginning in the 1920s, new materials, especially plastics and aluminum, could instantly signal the modernity of a product or object to the consumer. Designers working in a variety of styles including art deco, Bauhaus, mid-century modern to postmodern are represented, signaling an inclusive definition of modernism, or at least of modernity, on the part of the Speed. Bruno Mathsson’s Model 36 Lounge Chair from 1938, Adolf Hegener’s glass-and-enameled vase from 1925 (top), Michael Gravis’s Big Dipper Coffee Pot from 1983, Russell Wright’s table from 1935 (above), and Genser Berlitz’s Floris Chair from 1963 are among the objects on display.
A biographer of an important cultural producer accommodates two things: First, he or she explains for the reader the subject’s motivations and shows how that person was able to climb to the heights of his or her field; second, the author provides the reader with a sense of the whole project. Created by architect Keichi Matsuda, the film suggests a reality where the distance between the virtual and the real is nonexistent. These two projects, like others in the exhibit, seem to complementarily accept our inundation with globalization and media, instead of grappling with their head undercurrents.

On display until July 20, Hyperlinks looks at the future of architecture and design as marked by the collaborative efforts of designers in disciplines. Despite the exhibit’s approach, its projects still feel isolated from one another. Though the curators seem interested in a statement about how one form of design inflects other design disciplines.

As refreshing as it is to see the work of international architects and designers address issues of technology and interactivity, the fluidity between these disciplines that Hyperlinks aims to express is difficult to grasp without the aid of weighty wall texts. Many of the projects are worth seeing on their own, but the show fails to establish those connections so loudly, if vaguely, tout. Further, it ignores many of the social and environmental issues one might expect from an exhibit of this kind.

Hyperlinks: Architecture and Design explores the interconnectedness of various design disciplines, including architecture, industrial design, and multimedia. Curated by Zoe Ryan, the Art Institute of Chicago’s first curator of design, and Joe Rosa, the former curatorial chair of architecture and design, the exhibition aims to foster conversations on the changing role of designers as a result of new technologies. Focusing primarily on how the internet has changed our access to culture and to each other, Hyperlinks is a lofty undertaking, given the scope of its subject matter.Boasting more than 30 projects in a relatively small space in the Modern Wing’s second floor, Hyperlinks seems to struggle for cohesion. Cohesion, however, may not be the show’s main goal.

Hyperlinks does not attempt to collapse the different design disciplines it contains, so much as to mete out some of the layered connections between them. Like clicking on links on a webpage, the exhibit offers several departures in an overarching dialogue on contemporary architecture and design. Looking at one of the chairs in the gallery, for instance, viewers are urged to consider the space the chair occupies and its relationship to the other projects in the room. A large wall text with slanted graphics at the entrance to the gallery explains how the different disciplines represented in Hyperlinks engage and interact with each other in the Internet Age. Additional wall texts accompany each of the many projects represented in the exhibit. Though they elaborate the relationship between each project, the paragraphs of text take away from the show’s effect, seeming instead to invite more attention to the disconnectedness of each piece rather than their inherent correlation. The large, busy wall graphics feel distracting and gimmicky, as the show strives to embellish the curators’ vision for the show. Without all of the unsightly wall words, however, viewers may struggle to make sense of the relationship between projects like Evan Gant and Alex Tee’s Lightline and Simon Heijdens’ ambient LED installation. While Lightline depicts a product that bikers can use to project their own bike lane onto the street as they ride their bikes, Heijdens’ installation uses technology to track wind patterns outside the museum that effectively animates LED panels on an east-facing window in the gallery. Both projects are undoubtedly interesting in form, but their correlation feels trivial, if nonexistent.

Elsewhere, text accompanying Nacho Carbonell’s Lover’s Bench explains how the chair consists of simple materials, including old newspapers, to create a space where two people may have intimacy despite being surrounded by media. Further back in the gallery, Augmented (Hyper) Reality: Domestic RoboCop, a two-minute film played on a loop, depicts a person interacting with objects in a kitchen in the same way that one drops and drops icons on a computer screen. Created by architect Keichi Matsuda, the film suggests a reality where the distance between the virtual and the real is nonexistent. These two projects, like others in the exhibit, seem to complementarily accept our inundation with globalization and media, instead of grappling with their head undercurrents.

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Hyperlinks does witness, however, the extent to which technology has inserted itself into our daily experience—a question too complex for the show’s eclectic projects and utopianism to answer...
In conjunction with Committee on Architecture for Education

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For info on exhibits and sponsorships, please contact Linda Keller at 631.725.8645 or linda@jdevents.com
It Pays to Be Civic-Minded

For years, I have watched in frustration as architects have been regularly sidelined by politics. Whether in the context of our desire for changes to public policy, or in pursuit of work for public agencies, as a profession we typically show up for battle completely unprepared. When we do “get involved,” it is usually confined to earnest conferences and clientless urban speculations, the political equivalent of howling at the moon. If instead we remember the example of our successes in the movement of sustainable design and accessibility at turning good ideas into law, we can change how we and our fellow citizens view the proper role of architects in the public arena. We can translate our intentions into meaningful changes. Political action is a part of the job, something critical to our effectiveness whether as professionals or academics. This kind of change requires patience, determination, and the recognition that often, as the saying goes, the perfect is the enemy of the good.

Architecture is an inherently political act. All new construction, even highly context-driven design, is inescapably indexed in relation to, and therefore an explicit comment on, those around it or those of its type. It is also therefore an assertion of the owner’s societal status. The modern movement tried to ignore or deny these connotations, but that was both a sham and impossible. We are the only profession that is trained to see a world that doesn’t exist yet, but we are maddeningly unwilling to get involved in establishing the policies that set the parameters for programming and design. Decisions are made by those who show up, but architects have largely been absent from the political decision-making whose implications affect their work most. Compare the verdant parkways of urban Long Island with the expressways of Chicago or LA and realize that the deciding factor in the quality of those environments was political will. For the latter, beauty and the natural environment were just not enough of a priority for the people making the budget decisions—and no one made them see otherwise.

Politics has always been something with which some of the most important and talented architects engaged. Berenson, for example, played papal politics to the hilt; his Four Rivers Fountain in Piazza Navona is well known as part of his lengthy rivalry with Borromini. His skill in that area led to such prestigious commissions as the elliptical colonnades at St. Peter’s. More recently, Thomas Jefferson, America’s only architect president (so far), knew and understood the role politics does and should play in relation to architecture. He clearly was making a political argument with the sophisticated urbanism of his University of Virginia, making it a template for the civil society of the new republic he had helped to create. As Steven Hurtle pointed out in an article in Threshold, even the Constitution itself, as a diagram and as a field for political activity, is directly related to the American continental grid. It established the way we were intended to locate and structure our urban centers across the landscape. Here in Chicago, the “White City” of the World’s Columbian Exposition (Wright and Sullivan’s aesthetic disdain notwithstanding) required all of Daniel Burnham’s political skills to deal with both local elected officials and national architectural politics. Absent this political tenacity, his efforts to use design to show that a better future was possible would have been limited to beautiful, unbuilt watercolors. The architecture and urbanism of the capitals of many states and nations, including our own, would have been significantly different. Yet when confronted with an RFQ to design a significant public building (perhaps excepting the GSA’s Design Excellence projects), many if not most architects shrug their shoulders and say, “Well, that’s really just about politics.” Indeed, and that is not automatically a bad thing.

Since the days of Andrew Jackson, the spoils system has meant that elected policy makers should and do have the right to decide who executes policy. Since architecture is the most visible and often the most enduring translation of such policies, this includes designing the buildings for them. It is therefore not only necessary for architects to engage the electoral process; it is proper. If you want to see your body politic move in a particular direction—say, toward even more complete sustainable design—you need to set aside your anxieties and get involved.

So, how? Former Vermont Governor Howard Dean says that in terms of participating in our civil society, just voting earns you a “D.” You pass, but only just barely. To make a difference, you need to volunteer to support a candidate with whose positions you agree, you need to help them raise money, and at some point (deep breath) you yourself need to run for office.

I’m chair of the Empowerment/Advocacy Committee of AIA Illinois. As much as we work to advocate to the legislature for bills that support our profession’s activities, we recognize that our efforts would be exponentially magnified by having an architect as a member of the legislature. The same is true for your local town, city, or county council, your school board, even your representation in Washington. If architects are going to get the political influence our profession deserves and bring the maximum benefits of good design to our communities, we need to see taking this plunge as part of what we do.
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