At a meeting downtown to unveil their plans for Chicago’s latest riverfront skyscraper, architect Jim Goettsch and developer John O’Donnell confronted a public somewhat skeptical of the building’s unusual shape. “It looks like a giant tuning fork,” said nearby resident John Middleton. Critic Lynn Becker compared it to a punch stamp. At 53 stories, the continued on page 5

Plants for an aging Ludwig Mies van der Rohe plaza in downtown Chicago are not so much an update as a transformation. In renderings from Wolff Landscape Architects and Goettsch Partners, amoeba-like forms wrap around Mies’ black steel columns, bearing lush berms three to five feet high. “We wanted to provide more circulation and programming,” said designer Ted Wolff. “But the main thing is the feeling. It should be more park than plaza.” When landlord Reit Management & Research acquired the building in 2010 and 2011, they recognized the need for renovations. Water damage threatened parts of the structure as well as the terrazzo plaza linking East Wacker Drive and North Michigan Avenue. Stairs connecting the Water Street entrance with the plaza overhead had been closed years ago due to water damage, further obscuring an already underused gateway between Michigan Avenue and North Stetson Avenue to the east.

Chicago’s northwest side is routinely inundated with floods that soak basements, shut down businesses, and slow down traffic. But a targeted green infrastructure program aims to chip away at that problem by swapping pavement for permeable surfaces.

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ANTUNOVICH ASSOCIATES building—that emerald art deco landmark—Michigan Avenue aims to stay true to that palette of dark steel and masonry that currently.

200 NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE

A new skyscraper proposed for 200 North Michigan Avenue aims to stay true to that celebrated Chicago corridor’s sleek frontage. At the same time the design breaks with the palette of dark steel and masonry that currently typifies the stretch of Michigan between the river and Millennium Park. Adjacent to the Daniel Burnham-designed Carbide and Carbon building—that emerald art deco landmark—200 North Michigan Avenue will create a facade to the east while pushing textual mullion patterns and balconies to the north and south. Most of the apartment building’s units—predominantly one-bedrooms, with a mix of studios and two-bedrooms—will have balconies with south-facing views of Millennium Park or to the north toward the Chicago River. Amenities include a rooftop pool and a small north-facing terrace on top of the building’s 5-story podium, which would include two floors of retail and three of parking.

The smooth glass facade continues to street-level, but KKL is investigating articulations that would reference the height of nearby buildings.

**Architect:** KKL Architecture
**Client:** John Buck Company
**Location:** Chicago
**Completion:** TBD
Carew Tower) while allowing filtered light surrounding buildings (specifically the Tim Jacobson. “It allows for views of the multiple purposes,” said Gensler architect. The skylight in the project serves all the way through,” said Todd Heiser, a that carve through the building bring light from at least 270 degrees. These canyons “We really wanted to think about daylight down to even the lowest occupied floor. Employees won’t have to sacrifice day- space. The circulation is meant to encour- age employees to use the stairs and facili- tate chance meetings. The design team used Grasshopper to optimize views and daylight, resulting in a rhythmic pattern of dark and light gray precast panels on the building’s Fifth Street and Race Street facades. Instead denote the two main entrances for the office building’s different tenants. cm

British data company dunnhumby says one of its goals is to “make the complex simple.” That’s just what Gensler hoped to do with its design for a new nine-story, $125 million dunnhumbyUSA headquarters in downtown Cincinnati, which is being developed by 3CDC and Cassidy Turley. Employees won’t have to sacrifice daylight light or views of downtown towers when they move in March 2015. A “boomerang” of open space creates light wells reaching down to even the lowest occupied floor. “We really wanted to think about daylight from at least 270 degrees. These canyons that carve through the building bring light all the way through,” said Todd Heiser, a design director with Gensler. “The sky lobby in the project serves multiple purposes,” said Gensler architect Tim Jacobson. “It allows for views of the surrounding buildings (specifically the Carew Tower) while allowing filtered light into the middle of the each floor.” Visitors enter at street level and take an elevator to the top floor, which features outdoor deck space and views of downtown. The ground floor has 30,000 square feet reserved for retail. The lower floors are organized around a series of shared spaces as opposed to the typical office atrium. Heiser calls them “piazzas stitched together.” Each floor has a piazza dedicated to a different use, including a café and conference space. The circulation is meant to encour- age employees to use the stairs and facilit- ate chance meetings. The design team used Grasshopper to optimize views and daylight, resulting in a rhythmic pattern of dark and light gray precast panels on the building’s Fifth Street and Race Street facades. Instead denote the two main entrances for the office building’s different tenants. cm

The Langham Hotel occupies the first 13 floors of Mies van der Rohe’s historic IBM building in downtown Chicago. Tucked away in the building’s southwestern corner is Travellle, a 24-hour restaurant designed by the Rockwell Group. David Zaccheo, lead project designer, focused on the structure’s original namesake tenant when designing the space. Entering the restaurant, diners are faced with a golden decorative wall whose pattern evokes a layered mass of computer chips. “This isn’t a preservation project,” said Zaccheo. A row of vertical glass tubes separates the dining area from the bar, where golden discs hover in a ceiling recess. As the bar seating sprawls to greet stunning riverfront views of downtown Chicago, wood and leather restore the mutable lounge vibe.

In aiming to shed the trappings of a typical hotel bar, a little luxury goes a long way. While purists could not call it a harmless intervention, the update is flashy but not without a tasteful restraint. Rockwell also collaborated with the Art Production Fund to curate a collection of original artwork for the interior, which evokes the building’s mid-century modernist past. cm
As a logical link to Michigan Avenue, the restored plaza could serve as a new entryway to the neighborhood. Although they share a public space, 233 North Michigan Avenue (whose entrance actually sits just east of Michigan on Water Street) and 111 East Wacker Drive span three floors. At 30 and 35 stories tall, the towers cast shade on the plaza for much of the day, creating a sense of coldness on the flat expanse.

“We feel these buildings are so powerful,” said Wolff, “but there are design problems, and they’re not going to be solved by praying at the altar of Mies.”

The landscaping features shade-tolerant plants like wild ginger, common periwinkle, ward’s yew, and apple serviceberry. A fire pit, free wifi, and movable, brightly colored furniture are among the plaza’s enticements to linger in what has been largely a through-way for office commuters. The design’s varied amoeba-like forms adhere to a rigid geometry with radii of 4, 8, 16, or 32 feet. The landscaped forms rise three to five feet in the middle, high enough to obscure a seated person’s view and convey the coziness of a park. Movable furniture affords visitors a little control of where they sit and red pavers accent some portions of the concrete walkways.

The project announces its presence on Michigan Avenue with an LED-backlit “Illinois Center” sign placed where the building’s lower levels straddle Water Street. Renovations also include consolidating the Americans with Disabilities Act–compliant entrance with the building’s main vestibule on Water Street. Construction is underway. A partial opening is planned for this winter. A full opening is planned for spring.

The glassy tower is sausage-shaped in plan and 28 stories tall, its balconies staggered to create an entwined effect across the facade. “It’s a fairly extroverted design for Indianapolis,” said Keith Campbell, a vice president in RTKL’s Chicago office. “There is this basket-weave notion.” That pattern plays out at street level in a perforated brick screen wall that emits light onto the street at night. Retailers occupy nearly 44,000 square feet at street level, with an unnamed anchor tenant taking 25,000 to 40,000 square feet.

Some two-thirds of the 300 apartments will be one bedrooms. The rest will be two bedrooms. Residential amenities include a green roof on top of the podium, complete with an outdoor swimming pool and fire pits, as well as a roof deck atop the tower. The podium features 500 parking spaces, 200 of which are earmarked for customers of the retail tenants, leaving one space per unit. The foundation leftover from Market Square Arena’s demolition prevented underground parking, but architectural screening will help integrate the street-level parking garage with its urban condition.

The $81 million project needs $17.8 million in tax increment financing (TIF) funds from the city to proceed. City Council would have to expand a downtown TIF district to include the site. Positive words from council members and Mayor Greg Ballard bode well for the local developer. Four other proposals for the site requested subsidies as well, ranging from $17.2 million to $25.9 million.

With rents reportedly between $1,300 and $2,400 per month, which would be the highest in Indianapolis, the luxury apartment tower has drawn some criticism for its pursuit of financial incentives from the city.

Crossin, whose other downtown developments have seen occupancy rates rise above 95 percent in recent years, said roughly two-thirds of the people living in new luxury apartments downtown come from outside the county. “They’re high-income,” he said, “so they’re a net benefit to the county in income taxes.”

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structure planned for 150 North Riverside Plaza is among the largest developments in Chicago since the recession. But the high rise’s slender footprint and ample green space make it seem delicate next to its bulkier neighbors.

“In some ways it may look counter-intuitive,” said Goettsch, “but it’s an extremely well-designed structure.” With Magnusson Klemencic Associates and Thornton Tomasetti doing peer review, there’s little doubt about its solidity. In fact, Goettsch said during another interview that the concrete-steel composite is fairly conventional.

The form recalls Goettsch’s Sowwah Square, a complex in Abu Dhabi that took home the Council on Tall Buildings’ and Urban Habitat’s 2013 Best Tall Building Award for the Middle East & Africa region. With Sowwah, the clients asked for “iconic” design, said Goettsch, but not a super-tall structure. The end result is a series of towers that appear to have been lifted 10 stories off the ground, opening up to a shared plaza.

Goettsch reprised the solution in Chicago for entirely different reasons. Vacant for decades, the site is divided by railroad tracks. Amtrak owns the farthest west parcel, and has a permanent easement on the city-owned middle parcel. That leaves only a small riverside plot for O’Donnell’s 1.2 million-square-foot office building, especially since the law curtails development within 16 feet of the tracks’ centerline, and within 30 feet of the river. O’Donnell bought that parcel in December 2011 for $12.5 million and later negotiated for air rights over Amtrak’s property.

Earlier proposals called for two towers, sharing several stories of parking. Once a scaled-back development satisfied his calls for a riverwalk and park space, Alderman Brendan Reilly handed over the city-owned parcel. The alderman rejected requests for tax increment financing. “We’ve essentially capitulated to everything [Reilly] wanted,” said O’Donnell.

Out of that wrangling came a substantially leaner footprint, totaling one tower and just one story of parking with 81 spaces. The garage will be covered over with a park that gently slopes up to the west, ending with a glass railing roughly 13 feet above the adjacent alleyway.

“There was a concern that what we were doing was very corporate,” O’Donnell said. So the design now vies to achieve an effect that O’Donnell called “Millennium Park light.” As the building tapers toward its base, it makes way for a glass cable net wall enclosed lobby that opens to the west. It also leaves room for a grassy hill, scalloped with curvilinear walkways.

“It’s like a ballerina,” said landscape architect Ted Wolff. “It’s a muscular building, but it’s on point.” Tree-lined walkways traverse the site north to south on either side of the building. The riverfront path jogs east as it passes beneath the structure’s elevated mass. Although the southeast corner features a small landscaped amphitheater meant to focus attention on the river itself, all interaction with the river is from street-level. Dock-level facilities like a fitness center and a white tablecloth restaurant enjoy views but no direct access. Still, including street crossings and stairs, there could be a continuous riverwalk from the building’s northern neighbor, the planned River Point development, south to the former Chicago Daily News building.

The building’s facade also draws inspiration from the river. Wavy of overly reflective glass towers, Goettsch Partners dialed back the exterior reflectivity to between 15 and 25 percent. Mullions project between 6 and 17 inches to form undulating fins that mimic the visual effect of wind on water. Amid that wave-like shape, columns spaced every 30 feet lend texture to the glassy expanse.

“There are relatively few sites downtown as visible as this,” said Goettsch, “and that visibility I think brings with it a certain obligation to do something that’s worthy of that kind of site.”

Still awaiting tenants, the building could break ground in mid-2014 and wrap up 28 months later. ce

Along with River Point to the north, the new project continues the Chicago riverwalk.
About 30 acres of brownfields and vacant lots into a 1.5-billion gallon experiment in green infrastructure recently won the approval of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. But where Cincinnati’s Lick Run converts a huge swath of land into green stormwater storage, Chicago’s Milwaukee Avenue Green Corridor is dealing with smaller interventions.

Environments Studio helped one resident retrofit his front and backyards with bioswales and a circular rain garden accenting the shape of his corner garden. Altogether they hope to capture 526 gallons of water per one inch of rainfall—a 46 percent reduction in runoff from his property.

Some projects are small-scale—rain barrels, native sedge plantings—while others upgrade an entire site. Several properties have applied for green roves and permeable driveways under the program. Larger still, one blighted cement island could become a neighborhood asset. Woodard Plaza is, in the words of local Alderman Rey Colon’s email to his constituents, a “triangular cement pork chop.” But under plans from the Chicago Department of Transportation and local landscape architects Terry Guen Design Associates, it could soak up 4,434 gallons of stormwater during every one-inch storm.

Instead of permeable precast pavers, the design features three steel runnels that shunt runoff from Kimball and Milwaukee avenues into five infiltration planters equipped with native plants. It will also revamp the pedestrian experience, thanks to a parklet funded in part through the Chicago Department of Transportation’s Make Way for People Initiative.

Plans for the square include closing off Woodard Avenue, which currently cuts the corner between Kimball and Milwaukee.

“The biggest thing we’re doing is opening up plaza space by actually taking out that section of Woodard Street, and taking that triangle—it’s not much of a location—and expanding it out,” said CDOT Project Manager Hannah Higgins. “It’s a unique way for us to pull space back from cars and give it to people.”

Tax increment financing dollars will pay for 95 percent of the project, with a boost from the green corridor funds enabling some more substantial green infrastructure. NQ Construction will build the project, which originally aimed to break ground this summer. Higgins said construction will begin this fall and finish in Spring 2014.

The pedestrian plaza will be ADA compliant and the street closure will not disrupt any bus routes. A spiral pattern organizes the 1,500-square-foot space, which centers on a slightly raised section that could serve as public event space. Steel runnels and seating round out the shape.

“The spiral concept really grew,” said Higgins. “We felt that we could show the motion of the water.”

CDOT reached out to local arts organizations, including Milwaukee Avenue Arts Festival organizers Aram Logan Square, to solicit ideas for public events and ways to use the new pedestrian space.

But maintenance could prove a challenge. CDOT seeks agreements with local groups and business to help maintain sites like this, yet so far has only signed up one: local arts alliance Voice of the City. The site currently abuts a bar. A spokeswoman for Alderman Colon said their office had not seen any permit applications that would indicate a new tenant.

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The Theatre School at DePaul University opened the doors of its new home in September, multiplying the number of performance spaces available to students and showing off its work to Lincoln Park through an open design that Dean John Culbert called “a portal” for the area’s creative community.

“Up until now we didn’t have the full range of theaters we’d want to prepare people for the theatrical entertainment professions,” said Culbert. DePaul’s downtown campus has a 1,300-seat proscenium stage theater in the South Loop, but its Lincoln Park campus was lacking. The new building—designed by Pelli Clarke Pelli and Cannon Design, with Schuler Shook on theater planning and acoustics consultants—features a 250-seat thrust stage theater and a 100-seat flexible theater.

The $72 million, 165,000-square-foot building replaces the school’s “temporary” home, which housed them for 30 years. Windows are staggered rhythmically across its limestone facade, while glazing and frit patterns lend an idiosyncratic asymmetry.

Schuler Shook’s Bob Shook is a Theatre School alumnus. The LEED-targeting theaters are designed to provide clean sightlines and allow students and faculty flexibility to adapt for future technology and style changes. The lobby for the larger 250-seat “Fullerton stage” reaches out to Fullerton Avenue through a giant glass wall. Theater equipment in the lobby means it could host shows, too. Likewise, the machine and paint shops—usually relegated to back of house—are visible from the street. Audience members enter a first-floor lounge not specific to guests, so they comingle with students and faculty who may be en route to class or rehearsal. A theater on the building’s fourth floor ensures visitors will interact with the school’s space and community before and after a show.

“Think of the role of theater today and you think of the role of a university,” said Culbert. “We can explore difficult issues through the world of theater, and the whole point is that we are engaging in a conversation.”

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Josephine Bellalta started her landscape architecture and urban design firm Altamanu nearly ten years ago out of her home in Chicago’s Uptown. Now, co-led by her partner John Mac Manus, Altamanu has developed a knack for creating and restoring public spaces that integrate pedestrians, bike, and public transit.

Both principals had experience with transportation design, and knew plans for parks inevitably had to incorporate additional infrastructure after the fact. “Transportation gets the funding, not parks,” said Mac Manus in the firm’s North Center studio. “We became interested in how we could control that, rather than being asked to put lipstick on the gorilla.”

Now Altamanu is involved with the rehabilitation of Lake Shore Drive’s northern branch, from Ohio Street to Hollywood Avenue. A slew of recently completed streetscape and urban design projects gives a sense of their work.

Mills Park was once a private estate with buildings designed by Prairie School progenitor George Washington Maher. His 1897 John Farson House remains on site and serves as the focal point of the park’s “historic” segment. To improve access to the once-private property, Altamanu needed new entrances, but could not discard the historic fencing. The firm moved pieces of the fence into the park as historical exhibits in some places, and bent it inward elsewhere, preserving the fence itself but not the barrier it once formed. Benches recall the fence’s zigzag pattern.

Scoville Park in Oak Park is on the site of the area’s first European settlement. It sits on a glacial ridge that bends through two other nearby parks—Mills and Taylor parks. Altamanu’s redesign includes winding walkways, whose curves are echoed in a series of benches, and improved sightlines to the historic buildings that surround the park. The architects also improved access to a Frank Lloyd Wright memorial to a large War Memorial, which was originally the focal point of the park. Altamanu also used root aeration matting to preserve an ancient oak tree.

Altamanu’s plan to reconfigure Lawrence Avenue between Western Avenue and Clark Street makes the thoroughfares more pedestrian and bike friendly. The design thins the avenue’s three- and sometimes four-lane cross section into one lane of traffic each way and a continuous turn lane. Pedestrian refuge plazas allow people crossing the street to ford one river of traffic at a time. Bike lanes exist to the project area’s east and west, so when completed the Lawrence Avenue rehab will link six miles of continuous bike lanes on the city’s north side.

To help revive Batavia’s historic River Street downtown area, Altamanu borrowed the Dutch concept of a woonerf: a “living street” where cars share the road on equal footing with pedestrians and bicyclists. Laying brickwork where an aging two-lane street and sporadic stretch of sidewalk once stood, the firm remedied handicap accessibility problems and gave the historic downtown what its residents said they wanted most—something different. Farmers markets and café seating fill the street now, while outdoor concerts make use of an entryway Altamanu designed that references the town’s history of millwork.

Sauganash Elementary hired Altamanu to redesign its grounds with an eye toward flood control. The defining feature of the landscape is a bioswale that, rather than being relegated to the corner of the property out of sight, is crisscrossed with bridges meant to bring the students and their parents into closer contact with nature. Originally Altamanu wanted the bioswale bridges to be free of railings. Since they only sit a few feet off the ground, the firm figured the bridges posed little risk. The school thought otherwise, however, and railings were added for safety.
A range of landscaping products to help with stormwater management.

By Emily Hooper
The Nuanced Approach

John Gendall crosses the country in search of landscape projects that seek to make cities more resilient to inundation by stormwater. He finds that designers from coast to coast are breaking through the old distinction between grey and green infrastructure to establish strategies that apply a mix of the two.

New York was still pumping Sandy’s surge-water out of its subway system when news headlines began to trumpet how best to ride out the next big storm—“NYC Sea Barrier: Its Time Has Come” or “Saving New York by Going Green”—leaving the impression that infrastructure could be neatly categorized into opposite kinds: grey vs. green or hard vs. soft. The thread that bound everything together was the promise of a more “resilient” New York. But the menacing irony here is that these kinds of easy dualisms have a lot to do with getting us to our present state of vulnerability in the first place. When the U.S. looks like a schoolroom map—blue for water, green for land, Mississippi River as a winding line, and barrier islands stretching out along the coast—it seems perfectly reasonable to build public housing on the Rockaways, industrial parks along the Gulf Coast, and cities in the Mississippi delta. In reality, though, coastlines are not lines at all, but zones of negotiation between land and sea, barrier islands are on the move (briskly so, on geological terms), and the delta is an impossible-to-distinguish mixture of water and land and everything in between. The climate-related risks we now face don’t hew to any dualisms. Floodwaters overwhelm dykes and dunes alike. Tornados and wildfires are blindly indiscriminate. And heat waves are just that: waves that lack clear boundary in space and time. It follows, then, that the strategies used to render our communities resilient from these risks must also emerge from this kind of nuance.

There are compelling guides in place. In On The Water: Palisade Bay, for example, pioneering research by structural engineer Guy Norden, with Catherine Seavitt, a landscape architect, and Adam Yarinsky, an architect, allowed the team to propose coastal planning strategies in the New York/New Jersey harbor that hybridized land and sea, hard and soft.

Leaving aside the question about whether it is caused by humans, there can be no doubt that sea levels are rising and that extreme climate events are happening more intensively and more regularly, so cities around the U.S. are planning for these events. For Houston, which trails only New Orleans as the city with the most repetitive flood claims in the U.S., developing a resilient urban design is of paramount concern. There, the SWA Group designed a 23-acre park along what had been the neglected banks of Buffalo Bayou, and, in the process, created a zone where green and grey become indistinguishable. Built to withstand flooding and engineered to mitigate the collateral damage incurred by those natural events, its planted slopes weave the waterway back into the urban experience as a strip of recreational space at the center of Houston. Important though these measures are, rivers can’t be understood as isolated strips of water. As SWA Group CEO Kevin Shanley put it, “you don’t solve flooding issues by fixing the river.” Floods, after all, are the result of actions across entire watersheds. With this in mind, Shanley and SWA are working with regional agencies and municipalities to advocate for low-impact development as a way to increase permeability across the entire watershed. Since climate events don’t follow jurisdictional boundaries, resilience measures need to transcend those borders, too, knowing that cities in a region are linked to a similar set of risks. Urban design policies by each municipality in a watershed—even those that are politically and materially distinct—effect the others. “If a watershed is not yet urbanized, it could take days or weeks for water to reach the river,” explained Shanley. “But if you have a situation like Houston, where a lot of it is urbanized, that process takes hours or minutes.”

This was a lesson learned the hard way by Cedar Rapids, Iowa, when, in 2008, the Cedar River flooded, causing extensive damage across the city from floodwaters that crested over 30 feet. The Boston-based planning and design firm Sasaki developed a multi-phase redevelopment plan aimed not only at recovery, but also at preventing the kind of devastation seen in 2008. “Our focus was on understanding the relationship of the community with the natural environment,” explained Sasaki principal Jason Hellendrung, which meant treating the site not as a defined, physical entity, but rather...
as a diverse community of people within a watershed region. “By now, it’s pretty clearly understood that hard systems can fail,” said Hellendrung, so by calling for a 220-acre greenway along the river that incorporates infrastructure ranging from hard to soft, Sasaki designed the kind of overlapping systems that resilience demands. The project also highlights the need to consider interventions beyond the material. For months, Sasaki worked closely with community members and organizations to tailor its response to Cedar Rapids. And part of the redevelopment plan that ensued includes communication networks for flood warnings and plans to cooperate more closely with municipalities across the watershed region.

“Resiliency needs to be nuanced,” said Lisa Switkin, Managing Director of James Corner Field Operations. “On one hand, it is robust and persistent, and on the other, it’s yielding and adaptive. It’s all about finding the right balance for this mix.”

She is setting out to strike this balance in Brooklyn’s Greenpoint neighborhood, where the firm is currently at work on a 22-acre waterfront site. Though the park will serve as a front-line defense against storm surges, it is a task it will carry out cohetively, as it functions primarily as a place for Greenpoint residents to do the things people do in a park. “After Sandy, ‘resilience’ has become a buzzword,” she warned. “But it’s completely embedded into the concept of landscape architecture, since we look at both soft systems and hard systems, and since we always have a long view in considering time.”

The design includes plenty of grey. On the edge closest to the river, a concrete armor wall provides a hard barrier against pre-Sandy 100-year flood projections, while ribbons of precast concrete retaining walls offer second-, third-, and fourth-line defenses within the park itself, and concrete-paved walkways are fastened to the site. But the park’s section could double as a diagram for the so-called grey- and green-infrastructure integration. The broad promenade is divided into linear bands, a marbling of concrete walkways and planted strips. The retaining walls double as seating and also act to hem in raised planters. Not only do these bands allow the designers to hybridize green and grey into a cohesive system, they also make it possible to terrace the waterfront, leaving the edge along the adjacent community—and the vaults for the park’s electrical systems—well above the new 100-year flood levels.

Rather than thinking of this as a singular bulkhead—as a strict edge where water and land meet—we are proposing a series of terraces that can be inundated and flooded,” said Switkin.

For its Crane Cove Park design in San Francisco, AECOM faced a similar challenge, complicated by the fact that the site included historic buildings protected by preservation registers. This delicate arrangement highlights the fact that resiliency measures can’t be considered singularly and need to become integrated into the full range of design considerations—historic preservations, yes, but also livability, real estate, and environment. In this case, to raise the site would be to compromise the historicity of these structures, but to leave the grading in place would leave the entire site vulnerable to high waters. AECOM found a third way by modifying the topography through a series of cuts-and-fills. This way, the designers opened up areas in the site for floodwaters to fill. “We are embracing the fact that the park will flood during certain events,” said

Above and facing page: SWA Group’s Buffalo Bayou Promenade created recreational areas along the waterway and incorporated flood mitigation infrastructure.

Below: In addition to material infrastructure, Sasaki Associates’ plan for Cedar Rapids includes communication networks across the watershed region.
AECOM principal Alma du Solier. This will largely happen along the former ship-building slipways, where historic keel blocks will be repurposed as park amenities, but designed to be easily forklifted to higher ground as sea levels rise. “In essence,” said du Solier, “the project itself becomes a kind of levee for these historic buildings.”

Even the Dutch, who are routinely touted as the “grey infrastructuralists” par excellence, are beginning to break down their own status quo. “Pumping out water and building higher dykes just isn’t feasible in the long run,” said Tracy Metz, author of Sweet & Salt: Water and the Dutch. Citing a regulation that mandates any new housing to set aside 10 percent of the site to water, she said “now, the priority is to incorporate water into already dense urban conditions.”

“People love water, so the challenge is to create these spaces that work as a safety measure, but also as places for people to enjoy,” she said, pointing to the de Urbanisten-designed Watersquare project, in Rotterdam, which creates a sunken urban plaza doubling as a catchment system to manage excess water in the event of flooding. Any design for resilience needs to carefully manage public perceptions of safety. Levees are often faulted for creating a false sense of security (and justifying risky real estate development) while the promises made by soft systems in urban contexts needs to be more fully studied. “This is a discussion that needs nuance—and a lot of rigorous scientific research,” said Shanley. “If you’re talking about adding dunes as surge protection, and you’re looking at a surge of 10, 15, 20 feet, plus the wave action on top of that, dunes are like seaweed.”

All of the energy in this water is in the upper zones, so it’s going to just flow right over;” he said, citing research at Houston’s Center for Severe Storm Prediction, Education, and Evacuation from Disasters. Rather than building the drums for a seawall or promising to save New York by going green, designers with organizations like these ought to be doubling down, with justified urgency, to understand exactly what those systems mean across given regions.

This kind of research-intensive design work is now being undertaken with Rebuild By Design, a competition sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Design (HUD), in collaboration with the Rockefeller Foundation, that aims, first, to undertake analyses of the entire Sandy-affected region, then to propose a range of design concepts on various scales that can be implemented by municipalities as needed. By organizing it in this way, HUD managed to cut across the types of partitions that would otherwise hamper resilience strategies. Teams, for example, include designers, planners, engineers, scientists, geographers, hydrologists, and policy experts. The scale of inquiry ranges from the building detail to entire ecosystems, sites can include dense urban areas and small communities, and, in an important step, it creates a jurisdictional venue that crosses state and city lines to treat the risk of storm surges as the regional issue that it is.

It also brings world-class, site-specific research to vulnerable communities that might otherwise lack the resources to carry out that type of work. “You can never get 100 percent protection from every risk, but we can first understand the risks and tailor solutions to particular risks at specific locations,” said Dan Zarrilli, New York City’s Director of Resiliency. “There is a false dichotomy between hard and soft. Obviously, you wouldn’t build dunes off Lower Manhattan because of the geology and ecology of that place, but in the Rockaways, yes, absolutely.”

The big objective for resilience design, regardless of risk, is to short-circuit the entire list of false dichotomies, beginning with hard and soft, but including river and watershed, shore and sea, urban and rural, and natural and built. This will require a radical reorientation in the way projects are designed and carried out. Disciplines will need to collaborate in unprecedented ways—not by making vapid claims to “interdisciplinarity,” but by assembling committed teams of scientists, engineers, economists, planners and designers. And political borders need to be understood not as boundaries, but as sites of sharing and exchange.

There is a worrisome historical precedent to be found in the sustainability challenge popularized over the last decade. Though significant strides have been taken toward increasing energy efficiency in buildings and cities, many of the real possibilities for fundamental change have been hampered by the lure of a buzzword. Now is the time to imagine just what resilience can be, before it risks devolving into the kind prescribed solutions that can have such a stifling effect on design. Before someone goes out to coin an acronym for resilience—LEED is taken, SEED, too, so REED seems a likely choice—let’s agree that the scope of resilience transcends any checklist, and it ought to be approached differently, in manner with the projects above.

Left: James Corner Field Operations’ Greenpoint Waterfront Park acts as a frontline of defense against storm surge and as a public outdoor space.

Left and above: AECOM’s Crane Cove Park in San Francisco is designed to flood, absorbing the brunt of a storm surge and protecting the populated area beyond.
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THURSDAY 19
LECTURE
Glass Block – Boring? Not Any More!
12:00 p.m.
AIA Kansas City Office
1801 McGee St., Suite 100
Kansas City
aiaok.org

TUESDAY 17
LECTURE
The Architecture of Barry Byrne
12:00 p.m.
Unity Temple
875 Lake St., Oak Park, IL
illinois.edu

WEDNESDAY 18
EXHIBITION OPENING
Environments and Counter-Environments – Italy
The New Domestic Landscape
6:00 p.m.
Graham Foundation
4 West Burton Pl., Chicago
grahamfoundation.org

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THURSDAY 26
LECTURE
Municipal Design Review Network Fall Event: Placemaking
5:00 p.m.
DePaul University
1 East Jackson, Chicago
las.depaul.edu

SATURDAY 28
EVENT
Masters of Modern Landscape Design
8:00 a.m.
Indianapolis Museum of Art
4000 Michigan Rd.
Indiana
imamuseum.org

SUNDAY 29
LECTURE
Henry Hobson Richardson and his Chicago Legacy
2:00 p.m.
Glessner House Museum—
Coach House
1800 South Prairie Ave.
Chicago
glessnerhouse.org

THURSDAY 26
EXHIBITION CLOSING
Michigan Modern: Design that shaped America
9:00 a.m.
Museum of Art
2000 Bonisteel Blvd.
St. Louis
casmat.org

THURSDAY 5
EXHIBITION CLOSING
Matisse, Life in Color:
EXHIBITION OPENING
3 in 1 Contemporary Explorations in Architecture
and Design
7:00 p.m.
Indiana University Museum of Art
4000 Michigan Rd.
Indianapolis
imamuseum.org

SEPTEMBER 11, 2013
THE ARCHITECT’S NEWSPAPER
THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTIONS
OF MODERNISM
By Peter Eisenman

LOOK FOR BEAUTY:
THE SHEDDEN MUSEUM OF ART
Sheldon Museum of Art
12th and R Streets, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE
Through October 13, 2013

The Sheldon Museum of Art in Lincoln, Nebraska, is currently celebrating the works of Phillip Johnson, the influential American architect who promoted the International Style and, later, defined postmodernist architecture. One of his most iconic projects was the design of the Saagam building in Manhattan, a project undertaken in partnership with Mies Van Der Rohe. This particular project marked a decisive shift in Johnson’s career. Look for Beauty examines the design journey of Philip Johnson through the examination of three of his earlier museum buildings: Musum-Williams-Practor Arts Institute, the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, and the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery (now the Sheldon Museum of Art). These three projects form a coherent study of Johnson’s developing personal style in the early years of his career. The exhibition includes models, plans, furniture, photographic murals, and archival materials such as correspondence, exhibition photographs, and catalogs.

3 IN 1: CONTEMPORARY EXPLORATIONS
IN ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN
The Art Institute of Chicago
111 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL
September 28, 2013 to January 5, 2014

3 in 1 Contemporary Explorations in Architecture and Design is broken down into three small separate exhibitions each revealing different categories: architecture, product design, and fashion. In Reality Lab, the Japanese designer Issey Miyake, head of Reality Lab Studio, reveals a spectrum of diverse and innovative products resulting from his experiments with material, structure, and form. The exhibition includes Miyake’s two products lines: 152 S and IN EI, which are based on origami-folding techniques that create two-dimensional geometric patterns and unfold into remarkable 3D forms. Los Angeles architect Greg Lynn’s ‘Stranded Sears Tower explores how computer programming can act as a mode of creative expression. Lynn re-visions and reconstitutes Chicago’s Sears Tower in order to develop a new kind of flexible and fluid type of architecture. Lastly, the Dutch designers Scholten & Baijings combine craft and industrial practices in order to re-invent everyday objects. Through the use of different colors, forms, and materials, their Colour reveals the numerous amounts of projects that the designers have accumulated over the past 13 years.
The transatlantic accomplishment
MCA Curator Naomi Beckwith acknowledges
that, while the theme of Homebodies—which
explores how artists make art about home
and working from home—isn’t completely
original, most exhibitions of this kind focus
on the home as a commodity. Here, it’s
her intention for observers to look at home
as a concept. And if there’s anything that’s
abundant in Homebodies, it’s concept: the
show includes any number of conceptual
works that astutely reflect the contemporary
show's concerns. The Architecture of Barry
Prairie School efforts, angled through high
modernism, and then settled on a
string of innovative commissions in
ecclesiastical architecture that stand outside of easy characteriza-
tion in either category.
Born in a lower middle class
Irish Catholic family, Byrne
developed an early enthusiasm
for architecture. His enthusiasm
secured him an early office boy
spot in Frank Lloyd Wright's
Oak Park headquarters, where
William Drummond and Walter
Burley Griffin served as his effective
drawing instructors. Soon he was
preparing drawings and supervising
construction for several of the great
architect's commissions. After
leaving Wright's office, Byrne
bounced about between Seattle
and Los Angeles designing several
prairie-styled homes as well as a
series of terra-cotta–covered brick
work. The observer doesn't know what to
make of it until he learns that it's a casting
of floor tiles from a German synagogue
decimated during World War II. It is all valid
enough, but it really raises the issue of what
it is worth if it requires accompanying text
to explain it.
Contrast that with Do Ho Suh's beautiful
and haunting Wieldandstrut, 12, 1559 Berlin,
which delineates in diaphanous green fabric
stretched on a wire frame an apartment
where the artist once lived in Berlin. While
knowing that fact helps you to identify it,
even without that knowledge it is easy
to intuit that this is the re-creation of a real
space. But its presentation offers layers of
meaning, both obvious and subtle. It is
about the wandering life of the nomad, the
ironic impermanence of the built environment,
and the peculiar conundrum of installation
art itself, which is so often site-specific—yet
here, this is a "place" that is easily collapsed
and re-erected in another venue. It is a fitting
centrepiece to a rich, provocative show.

PHILIP BERGER IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.

The Architecture of Barry Byrne: Taking the Prairie School to Europe
By Vincent Michael
University of Illinois Press, $60

"It is as if all the buttresses and
spires of Christ the King in Tulsa,
which Byrne described as his "best
building," abandons serrated
ornaments in favor of a serrated
mass in an aggressive rise of
concrete terraces to a bell tower.
The near-oval interior abandons
traditional nave illuminations
for light almost exclusively from
the front and rear—as well as
a skylight. It's a culmination of
Byrne's quest for bold conceptual
rearrangement while retaining the
form of the church.

Byrne's career suffered with the
great depression, and didn't quite
recover until after World War II. This
period happily saw a series of
bold new works, often reflecting
a comfort with the once scorned
style. One is Saint Francis
Xavier Church in Kansas City,
a propulsive ellipse that focuses
attention irresistibly on the forward
bell tower in the exterior and on
the altar inside.

Byrne's innovative attention to
sacred architecture receives lively
exposition in Michael's volume.
The architect's experiments, which
lead him far from the prairie style,
did not quite propel him to standard
modernism. Despite his friendship
with Mies and Mendelsohn, his
discomfort with their emerging
style was repeatedly palpable. By-
ne's quest for structural "honesty,"
with the test to "temporarily
eliminate obvious and identifiable
symbols like the cross, and then
to judge whether the design is
religious in character," is a model
for any sort of building, however,
and, given the results, all the more
justification for continued study.

ANTHONY PALETTA WRITES THE
"SPACES" COLUMN FOR THE
WALL STREET JOURNAL. HE ALSO
CONTRIBUTES TO THE DAILY BEAST,
METROPOLIS, THE AWF, AND A VARIETY
OF OTHER PUBLICATIONS.

HOMECOMING

Homebodies
Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago
220 East Chicago Avenue
Through October 13


Imperial Nail Salon

15

PRAIRIE WORSHIP

The Architecture of Barry Byrne: Taking the Prairie School to Europe
By Vincent Michael
University of Illinois Press, $60

The transatlantic accomplishment
proclaimed in the title of Vincent
Michael's The Architecture of Barry
Byrne: Taking the Prairie School to
Europe concerns the commission
of the Church of Christ the King
in Ireland, the only European structure
designed by a Prairie School
architect.

Given a start in Frank Lloyd
Wright's Oak Park office, Byrne
struck out on a career that began
with relatively conventional Prairie
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Grand ballroom at navy pier
5:30 cocktails
7:00 dinner and awards ceremony

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Clyde Baker
Senior Principal Engineer, AECOM
“Geotechnics for the World’s Tallest”

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Founder and Principal, Studio Gang Architects
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Chicago’s Christy Webber Landscapes is a local giant that prospered in the 1980s when Mayor Richard Daley invested heavily in transforming the city’s public parks. The firm worked on Millennium Park, the United Center, and O’Hare Airport. Christy Webber told Susan Du how she has turned her focus to neighborhood projects in Chicago’s underserved communities in recent years, building urban farms and gardens out of her own pocket, on her own time.

Susan Du: How do you see the landscape industry developing in Chicago now, and where do you fit in?
Christy Webber: For the last couple of years, I’ve really managed to develop a team of players who are really carrying the weight. We’re doing acquisitions, we’re growing, we’re picking up a lot more. There’s a big change in the landscape industry in Chicago of moving away from just landscape architecture firms to firms that are all-inclusive of design, build, and maintenance. It’s really sad, to be honest.

Why is this transition sad?

The landscape industry’s just gone. I think it’s gone across the country. I think our industry really blew it. When “green” came around, we didn’t have a message. What part of this movement were we a part of? It’s sort of like we were just the greenies that came in and did the work. We’re doing acquisitions, we’re growing, we’re picking up a lot more. There’s a big change in the landscape industry in Chicago of moving away from just landscape architecture firms to firms that are all-inclusive of design, build, and maintenance. It’s really sad, to be honest.

Is it too late for the industry to rebrand?

I think they’re too broke. It has to be all of us. Everyone’s struggling across the country. Many of them closed. You know it’s the age of acquisitions and mergers, so you’re seeing all these architectural firms teaming, and though they used to have a great landscape architecture section to them, now it’s, “Hey, we don’t need you. We got a few of these in New York.”

If other firms are weeding themselves out, doesn’t that create less competition for you? Has the decline of the industry made you feel like our industry didn’t do its fair share?

I just feel like our industry didn’t do its fair share. It’s sort of like we were just the laborer. Nobody even knows when you go to beautiful landscapes—that you know are so unbelievable, a landscape architect could have a practice act. Across the country, we have some really famous hotspots out there in the landscape architecture industry, but us local guys, we’re just a piece of the puzzle.

Do you see urban farms as a viable solution to reducing food deserts and violence in Chicago’s neighborhoods?

Oh yeah, I’m all about it. I make a ton of them. I call it guerilla gardening. I can’t even tell you how many vacant lots that the city owns that we’ve just taken over. We don’t ask anyone permission, no. We just take our equipment, I take anything I need to make it happen in a day because I need to make it happen before anyone catches me. If I can do it, and I can make it beautiful, what alderman is gonna tear it down? I mean you’ve gotta be an idiot. I don’t give a damn. This was a desolate corner where dogs were shifting and needles were being thrown. And what do you want me to do? Do you want me to take the trees out now?

We’re working with a lot of great organizations, the Kitchen Community, the United Center is here. The United Center is here. The Wirtzes were very great to us. I do now. The Wirtzes were very great to us. I called it guerilla gardening. I can’t even tell you how many vacant lots that the city owns that we’ve just taken over. We don’t ask anyone permission, no. We just take our equipment, I take anything I need to make it happen in a day because I need to make it happen before anyone catches me. If I can do it, and I can make it beautiful, what alderman is gonna tear it down? I mean you’ve gotta be an idiot. I don’t give a damn. This was a desolate corner where dogs were shifting and needles were being thrown. And what do you want me to do? Do you want me to take the trees out now?

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