

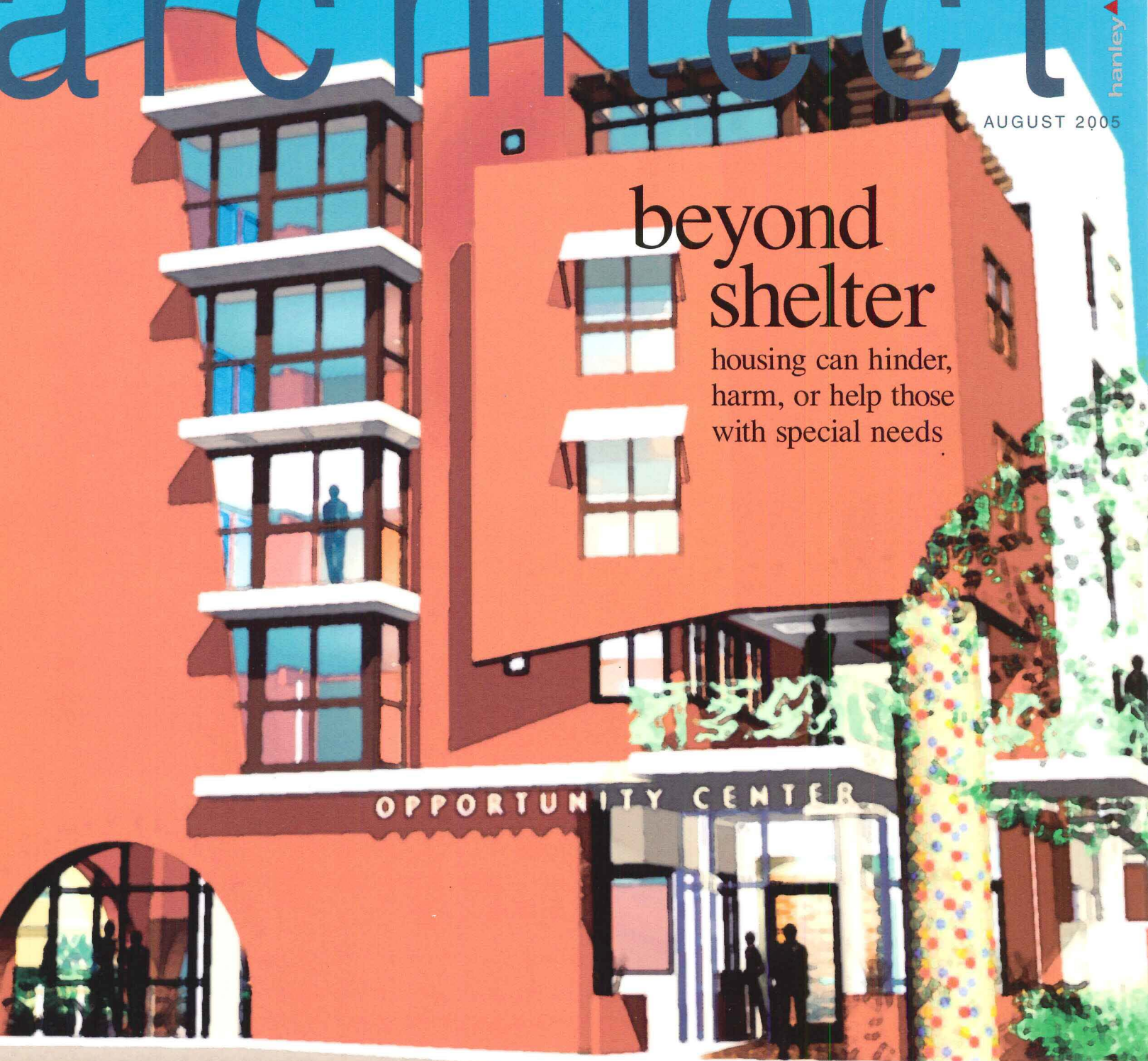
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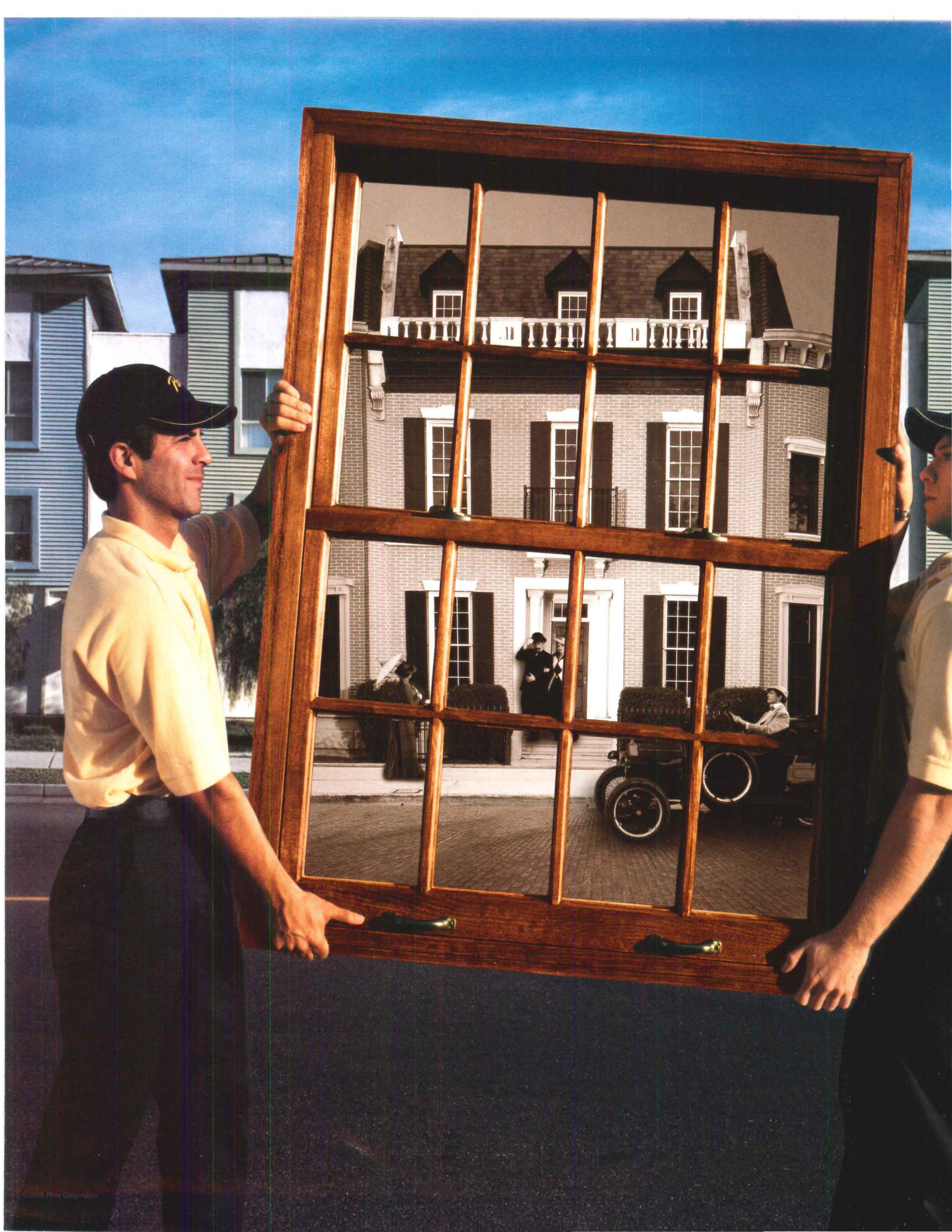
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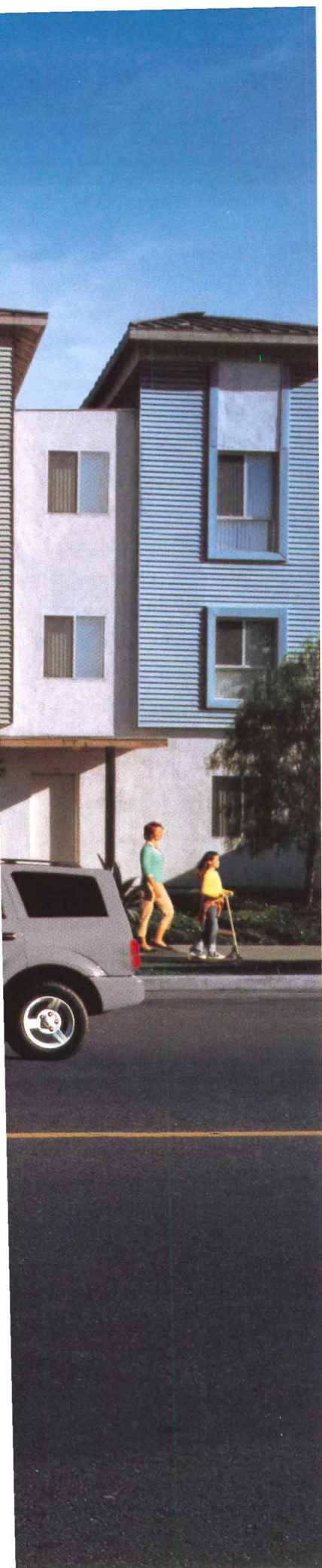
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Mark R. Johnson, FAIA, AIBD

Innovation is a major force behind the tremendous productivity gains in the U.S. I suggest that these gains are spilling over from the workplace into the home and creating new expectations. It follows that consumers are seeking to be “incredibly productive” in all areas of life. Whirlpool Corporation detected this pent-up demand through extensive consumer research and has responded with breakthrough products noted for their imaginative utility.

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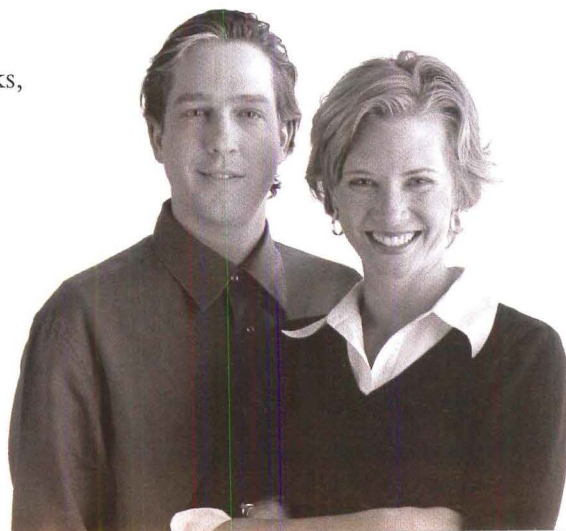
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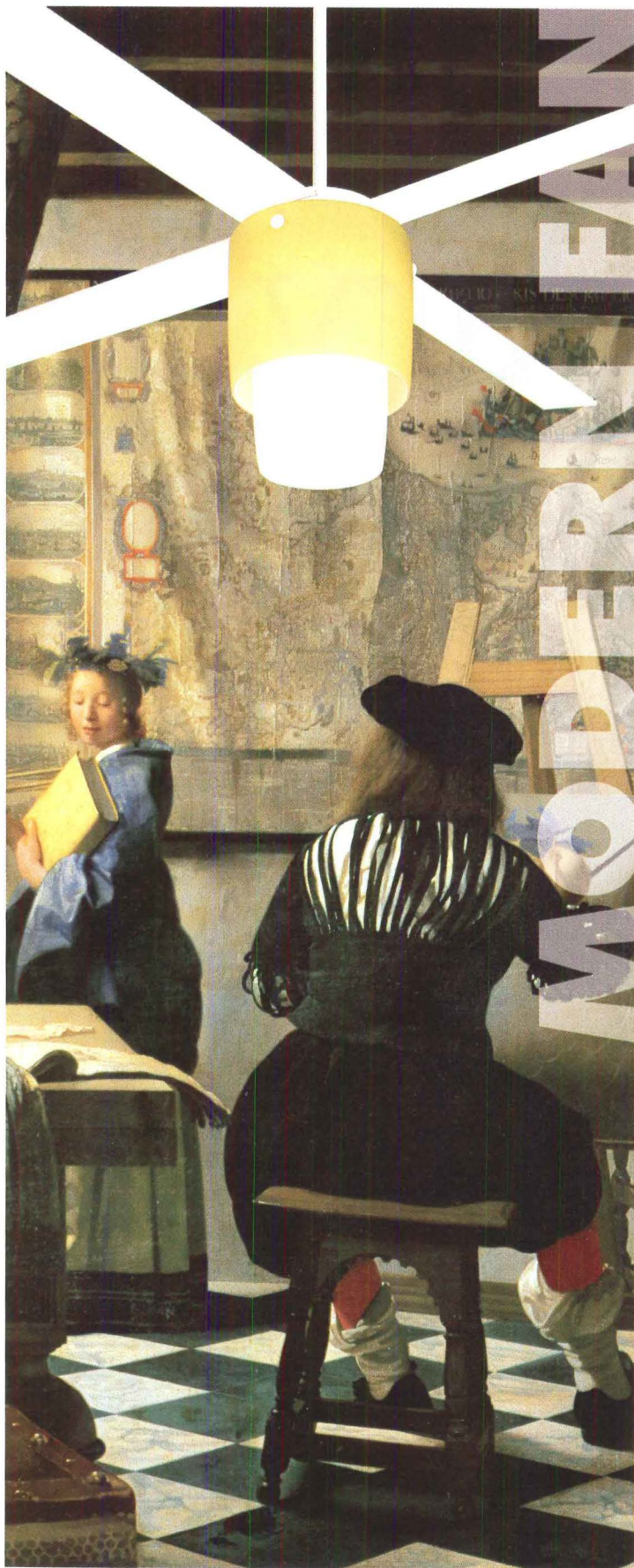
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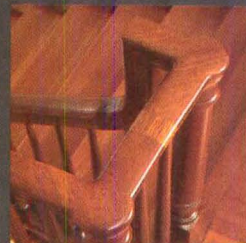
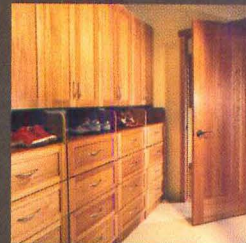
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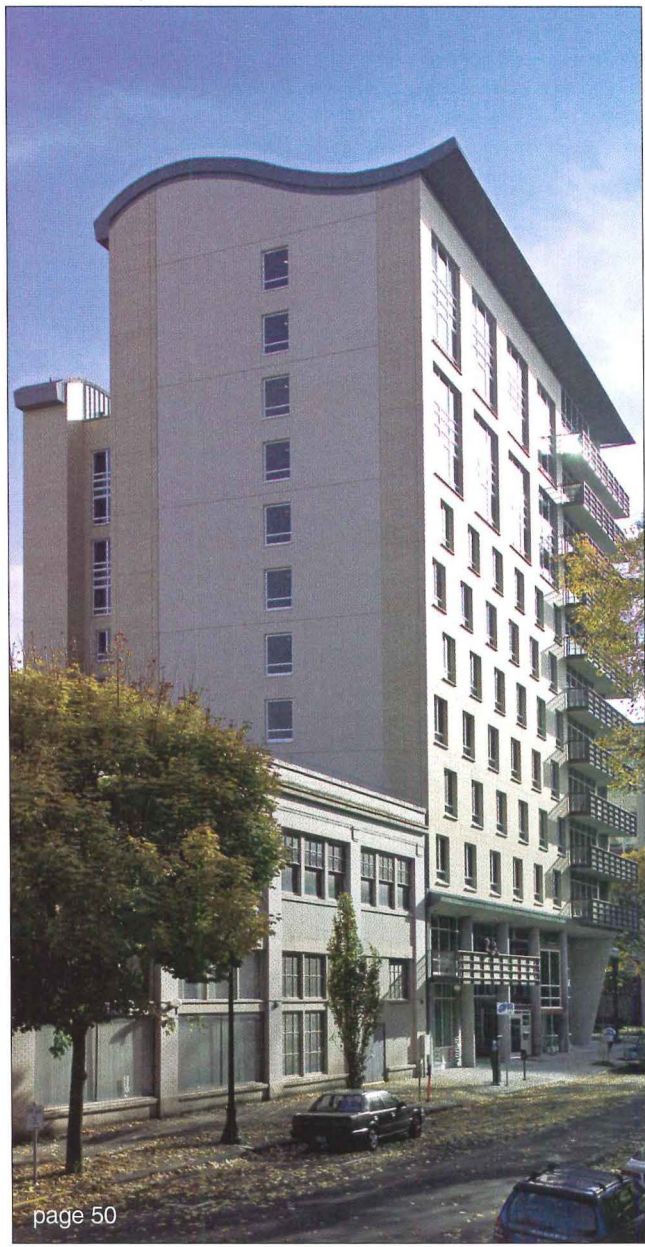


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contents



page 50

Sera Architects' 8NW8th shelters and rehabilitates low-income substance abusers in Portland, Ore. Photo: Michael Mathers. Cover illustration: Rob Wellington Quigley, FAIA.

from the editor...page 15

letters...page 19

home front...page 20
Denver's jet set / Calendar

k + b studio...page 24
Architect Ronnette Riley, FAIA, redoes an apartment on Manhattan's Upper East Side, removing barriers to mobility and natural light.

perspective...page 29
Kurt Lavenson, AIA, encourages architects to take their problem-solving skills beyond the drafting table and into the public arena.

practice...page 33
Condominiums are a compelling and potentially lucrative building type, but the risks for architects often outweigh the rewards. How some practitioners are improving the odds.



cover story...page 50
more than shelter

For our citizens with disabilities, substance addictions, or other serious life complications, mere shelter is not enough. Architect-designed supportive housing provides a helping hand toward a life of greater independence. *By Meghan Drueding; additional reporting by Nigel F. Maynard.*

doctor spec...page 68
For special-needs housing, better quality products are worth the premium.

off the shelf...page 70
Final flourishes for a photo-worthy finish.

new material...page 72
Piping-hot products for your next project.

end quote...page 80
The interstitial intelligence of Herman Hertzberger.



Greening the American House:
Register now for the 2nd annual Reinvention Symposium—page 43

Call for entries: Enter your best projects in the 7th annual residential architect design awards—page 78





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from the editor

railing about handrails

venturing forth where all of us fear to tread.

by s. claire conroy

twice a year or so, I receive letters to the editor about handrails. These letters gently or not so gently reproach us for the projects we run without rails where the codebook claims they should be. The pace of those letters just picked up with the publication of our July cover photo of David Salmela. He's pictured sitting on a staircase he designed that is—you guessed it—*sans* banister. I suppose it's lucky his shoes have good traction. To those letter writers, I have a confession: My house has a staircase without handrails too.

I didn't choose this fate for myself, my family, or my visitors, but I have lived with it since I bought the house a few years back. The staircase was part of the architect-owner's renovation about 18 years ago that opened up the bungalow to sightlines, light, and natural ventilation. It's a focal point—the first dramatic thing you see as you walk in the front door. Not only is it free of handrails, it's open on three of its four sides and curves as it climbs up to the second floor.

Guests in my house make it upstairs for the grand tour with few complaints, but they do pause and gasp before heading back down. From this spot, the stair bends open to the first floor in a vertiginous arabesque. My 77-year-old father asks me almost monthly when I'm going to "do something about that staircase."

The thing is, I've gotten used to it. So have my two dogs; they simply hug the single wall as they scamper up and down. They love to spread out on the stairs, front paws dangling off the edge of the treads. I have a photo of them and my two cats, each occupying a different step, regally surveying their shared domain.

So, I'm not sure when, or if, I'm going to "do something" about the stair. And I'm not certain I should banish work from these pages that omits the code-compliant detail. As long as both architect and client are aware and accepting of the risks, I'm inclined to show the aesthetically felicitous results of this conspiracy. Our world is already so scrutinized and proscribed by those who wish to save us from ourselves and each other, I'll carve out a little



Mark Robert Halper

right to privacy in these pages. Hush, hush—just between us, here's what goes on in some very custom homes.

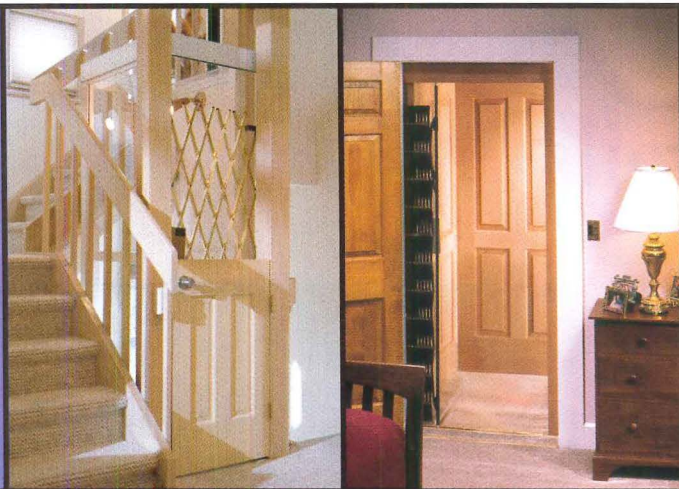
That said, accessibility is a serious matter. I certainly cannot age in place in my house, for reasons that are much more difficult and expensive to fix than installing a handrail. My bathrooms have tubs, not showers; the doorways to my kitchen aren't wide enough for a wheelchair; there's no entrance to my house that's free of steps.

As the baby boomers age, living longer and with more chronic illnesses than any generation before them, we'll find most of our sin-

gle-family housing stock woefully underdesigned. We're simply not facing the truth about the future. Just a few tweaks—a different decision here and there at the design stage—can mean the difference between a house for some and one for all. This kind of planning meets "special needs" right now, but within the next few decades we'll confront a truly universal need for accessible design. **ra**

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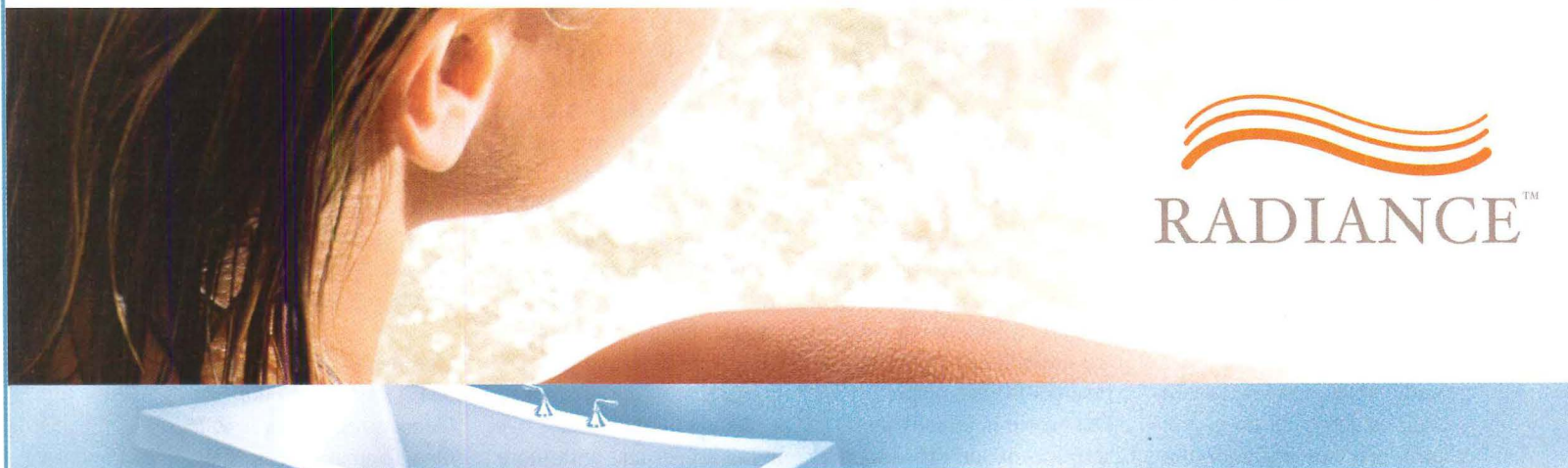
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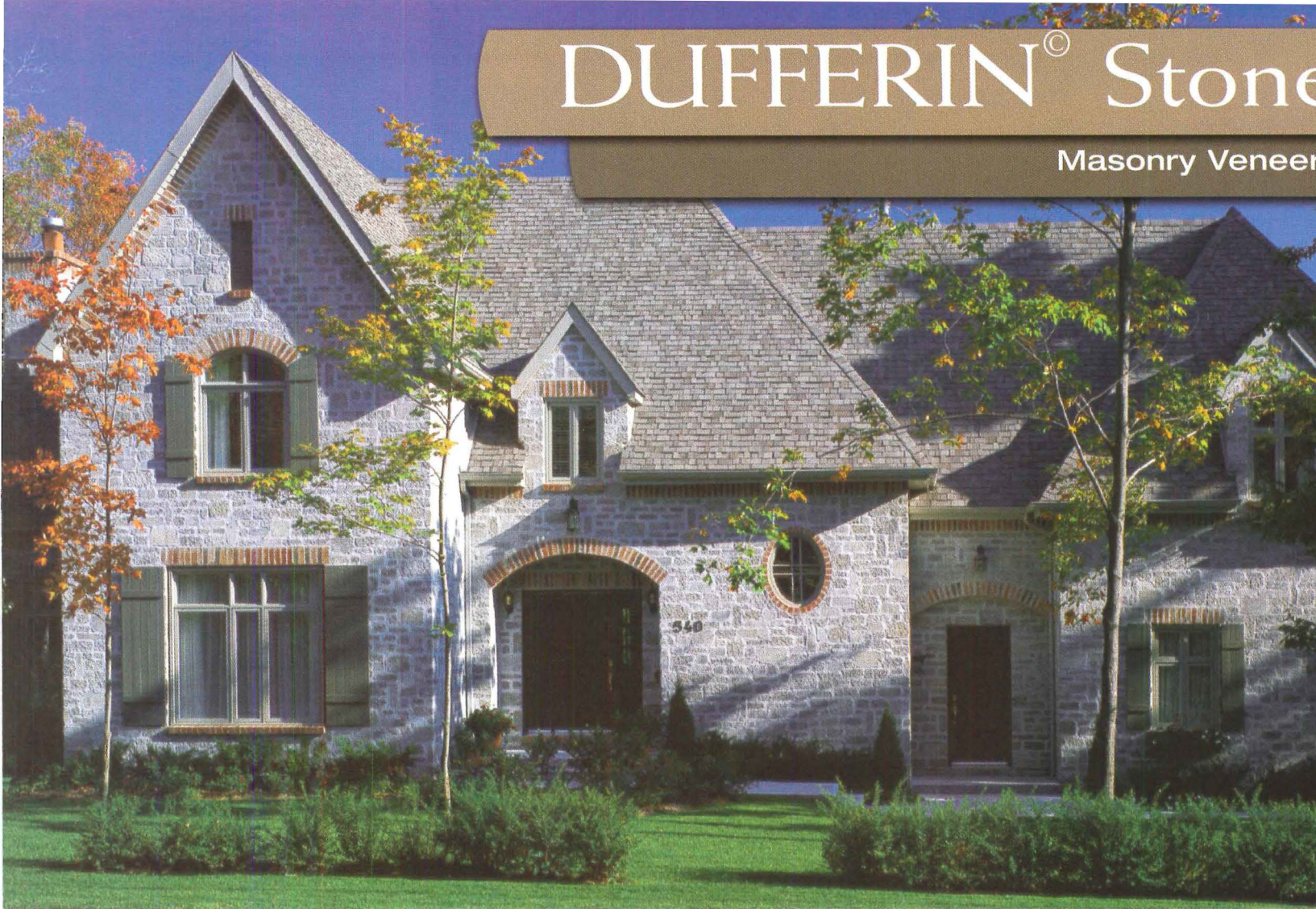
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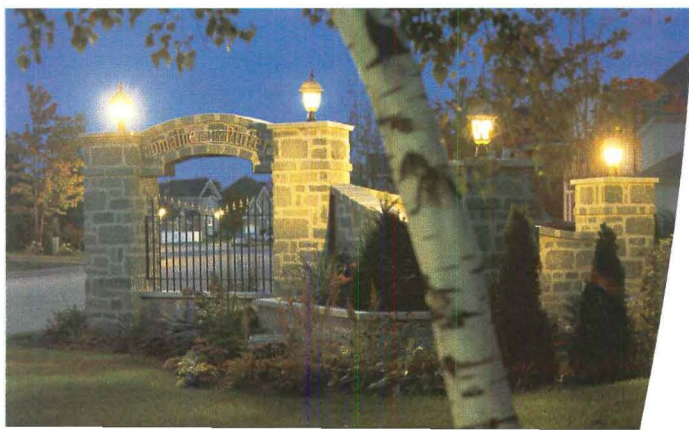
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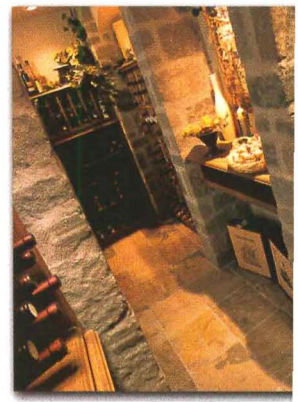
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letters

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your editorial ("The Enemy Within," Nov/Dec 2004, page 11) expressed very well a perspective presented to me by Barry Berkus, my first employer in the design/build business. Barry brought me to a more conscious understanding of what we all know: Space has a powerful impact on all of us, and home is our most important space.

It is not said enough, particularly to the AIA. You have done all residential architects a great service, even if their names are not Graves, Gehry, and Le Corbusier.

*Rebecca Hardin
Santa Barbara, Calif.*

you refer to the AIA's "stealth put down" and the "patronizing language of its call for entries" to the New Home on the Range competition. In fact, far more demeaning to the residential design community is that no school in America deigns to teach residential design. This appalling situation is apparently not well known.

At a small conference in Florida last year, this

problem was addressed and the ironies were exposed to me for the first time. Attendees were almost all members of the AIBD (American Institute of Building Designers) and two or three AIA members were present, besides me. An informal statistic is circulating that 98 percent of houses in America are designed by non-architects.

Considering that a great many registered architects do their first independent design commission for residential clients, it is worrisome that they have never been trained in this area. In the interior design profession it is also the case that few, if any, schools teach residential design, and yet this is obviously where most of us practice.

*Alvin Holm, AIA
Bryn Mawr, Pa.*

residential architects do tend to get less respect from the other professionals, but part of why I think it happens is that many of these practitioners feel inadequate—and get the respect they ask for.

There is a major twist: Residential architects get to know their clients much more intimately than do our commercial counterparts. We typically form close

relationships and friendships with these families. These clients often tend to be people of influence and own major corporations, office buildings, golf courses, and other developments. They often have many other commissions at their disposal. We have been able to capitalize on these relationships in commercial, retail, country clubs, and development opportunities. Our business continues to reinvent itself; however, the residential work is now our backbone and our favorite work.

If residential architects are savvy, they can control the market. Maybe it's OK if our counterparts don't fully respect us. I, for one, would rather have a successful business than the respect of the "real architects," although I think, if truth be told, they're jealous of the variety, the speed, the quality, and, yes, the fees we are able to generate.

*Wayne E. Visbeen
Visbeen Associates
Grand Rapids, Mich*

your editorial asked why architects aren't the leaders in residential housing. One of the reasons is on pages 20 and 21 of your issue ("Range Finders," Nov/Dec

2004): Ninety-nine percent of those residential clients don't even know what those things [winning projects from the "New Home on the Range" competition] are! Most of the homes that are being designed come from architects steeped in *Architectural Record* and long since dead "progressive" architecture magazines.

The way to stop the architects from moaning and groaning is to split architectural schools into two departments or two different insititutions, one for large, more complicated structures (think institutional—commercial, industrial, schools, hospitals, etc.) and the other, low-rise, residential, etc. Two degrees, two licenses. This would get the architects who can't do housing off of the backs of architects and designers who can!

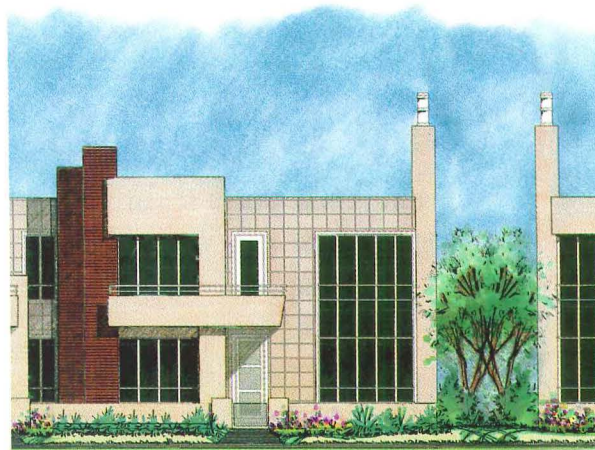
I've recently retired having managed architects and engineers for three Fortune 500 companies, all design/build. All the work we produced was done by large, acclaimed architectural firms.

Good work can be done, but you have to know what you are doing.

*Doug McKibben
Boise, Idaho*

home front

news from the leading edge of residential design



the jet set

Although most of the residences wear neotraditional garb in the New Urbanist town of Stapleton, Colo., the former airport site outside of Denver, two multistory housing projects now in the works have a decidedly contemporary edge. First to take shape: Moda Lofts, sited prominently on the fringe of Founders' Green, a public open space. "We're trying to bring a more contemporary urban loft feel to the center of Stapleton," says Kelly Davis, AIA, principal of OZ Architecture. The curved, four-story building incorporates masses of brick that relate to other parts of the community. "But our colors are more purple or gray/beige, not the orange/red brick common to Denver," says Davis.

Exterior details are streamlined; silver metal panels clad the columns. Units range in size from 840 to 1,250 square feet, with free-flowing plans and floor-to-ceiling glass. Geared toward singles and childless couples, each of the 64 studio and one-bedroom units includes an outdoor deck; parking is underground.

On an adjacent parcel along East 29th Avenue, Woodley Architectural Group has designed Sky Terrace. The project is targeted to buyers "a little more avant garde, a little more cool," says Michael Woodley, AIA. The two-story units draw their inspiration from the traditional row house type, but their form is abstract and the exterior is rendered graphically in

dorms to go

Applying mass-production methods to architecture, Garrison Architects, in New York City, and fabricator Kullman Industries, of Lebanon, N.J., are collaborating on a line of manufactured residence halls for college and university clients. Called SIMPLE (Scalable Innovative Modularly Produced Living Environments), their modular system promises to limit the variables of conventional construction while compressing the design/production cycle to as little as six months. "It's the beginning of an architectural product," says architect James Garrison, whose work on a modular residence hall at Bard College laid the groundwork for the new system. While not substantially cheaper than site-built alternatives, the prefab



Prototype designs for SIMPLE student housing offer the ability to customize unit types, layouts, and cladding materials on a tight schedule.

buildings offer institutions the ability to customize unit types, layouts, and cladding materials within a tight schedule. Garrison's emphasis on sustainability adds further incentive. "There's a lot of innovation—passive

solar, passive ventilation, and they can be fitted to a geothermal system." The design relies on a proprietary wall system, a formed metal wall that comprises both structure and interior finish. The system was introduced in a publicity blitz earlier this year; Garrison says five colleges responded with interest. "So I think we hit a nerve."—v.m.

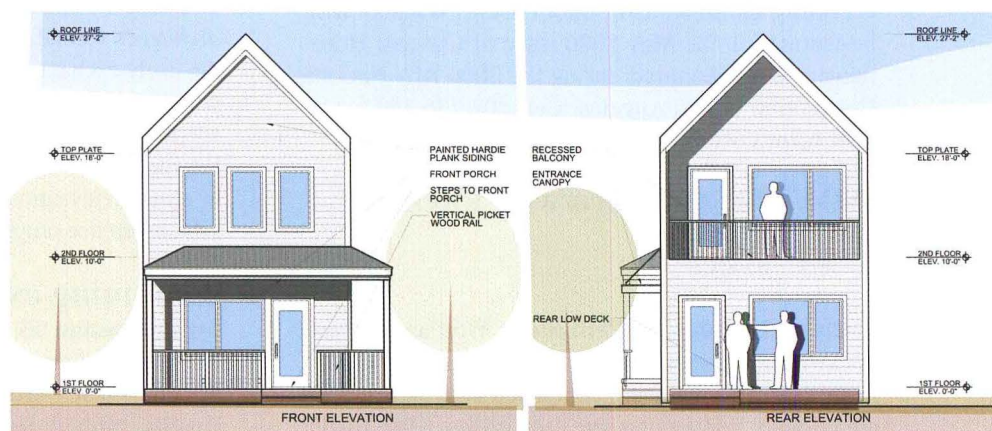


stucco and brick. Each townhouse has expansive windows and a double-height living room with a second-floor balcony inside. Interior walls intersect at odd angles and stairs flare dramatically away from the rooms, says Woodley. Unique to the project is the fact that each townhouse has an outdoor living area with a fireplace, says David Steinke, of Infinity Home Collection, the builder for both Stapleton projects. —*vern mays*

Sky Terrace townhomes (top) is a modern interpretation of a conventional row house, combining the use of stucco, brick, and glass. Nearby are Moda Lofts (above) a four-story condominium that nods to its context by incorporating brick.

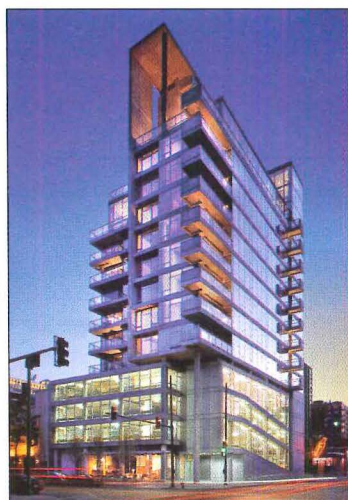
kids on the block

Architect Gregory Kearley, AIA, of Inscape Studio in Washington, D.C., planned a modern scheme for this Youth Build affordable house in the city's historic Anacostia neighborhood. That is, until he encountered the district's strict review board and reworked the three-bedroom home for a more traditional look. The 1,650-square-foot residence—developed by ARCH, the nonprofit Action to Rehabilitate Community Housing—“telescopes in a way that is consistent with other nearby buildings,” Kearley says. He located the main entrance at the side of the house to minimize circulation space, allowing more square footage for living area. Stairs, laundry area, and bathrooms are consolidated in the central core. Neighborhood youth will build this house, which features sustainable lumber inside, Hardiplank on the outside, and a small green roof above the central core. Says the architect, “Besides being a project for the kids, we hope it will be a learning device for the neighborhood in general.” —*v.m.*



An affordable house in a distressed Washington, D.C., neighborhood will involve youth in the construction.

calendar



Steinkamp/Ballogg Photography

2006 *residential architect* design awards: call for entries

entry form and fee due: november 15
completed binders due: january 5

The seventh annual *residential architect* Design Awards program honors outstanding architecture in 15 categories including custom, renovation, multifamily, production, architectural interiors, and on the boards. Winning projects will be published in the May 2006 issue of *residential architect* and honored during the 2006

AIA National Convention in Los

Angeles. Shown: 2005 Project of the Year by Perkins + Will, Chicago. For an entry form, call 202.736.3407, visit www.residentialarchitect.com, or go to page 78 in this magazine.

custom home design awards 2006

entry deadline: november 14

binder deadline: january 16

Houses designed for a specific client and site may be submitted by builders, architects, remodelers, designers, and other industry professionals. Categories include custom home (grouped by square footage), custom kitchen, custom bath, renovation, accessory building, and custom detail. Winners will be featured in the May 2006 issue of *CUSTOM HOME* magazine and honored during the 2006 AIA National Convention in Los Angeles. Call 202.736.3407, or visit www.customhomeonline.com.

2004/2005 sub-zero/wolf kitchen design contest

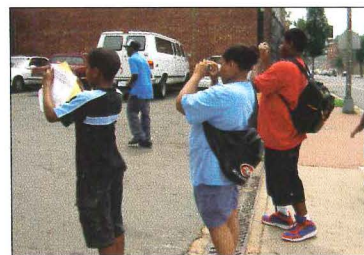
deadline: january 9

Kitchens featuring Sub-Zero and/or Wolf appliances are awarded regional and national prizes. Projects from anywhere that were completed after Jan. 1, 2004, are eligible. Winners receive cash prizes, a trip to the national awards celebration held March 16–20, and publication in the fifth edition of *Great American Kitchens*. To download rules and entry forms, visit www.subzero.com/contest or call your local Sub-Zero/Wolf distributor.

investigating where we live

august 13–october 2

national building museum, washington, d.c.



Courtesy National Building Museum

This exhibition showcases the results of an annual program that teaches young people to explore through photography the elements that make up neighborhoods. In the process, participants learn about city planning, architecture, photography, and exhibition design. Images, poems, stories, and narratives will be displayed. Call 202.272.2448 or go to www.nbm.org for more details.

jean prouvé: three nomadic structures

august 14–november 27

museum of contemporary art, los angeles



French designer and artist Jean Prouvé was fascinated with mass-produced modular buildings and the use of lightweight aluminum in architectural applications. This exhibition presents an array of furniture (shown: “Kangaroo” armchair, 1951), architectural elements, and photographs of modular buildings. For museum hours, call 213.621.1749 or visit www.moca.org.

reinvention 2005

december 5–7

the biltmore hotel, coral gables, fla.

Greening the American House is the theme of *residential architect*'s second annual Reinvention Symposium. Enjoy the lively exchange with your colleagues from across the country, while sharpening your skills in designing more site-responsive and environmentally-responsible houses. For registration details, visit www.reinventionconf.com or e-mail reinvention2005@hanleywood.com. See the full conference program on page 43.

continuing exhibits

Sydney Design 05, through Aug. 21, Powerhouse Museum of Science + Design, Sydney, www.sydneydesign.com.au; **Architectural Visions: Utopia and Reality**, through Sept. 4; Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Mich., 877.462.7262; **Going, Going, Gone? Mid-Century Modern Architecture in South Florida**, through Nov. 6, Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, 954.525.5500.

—shelley d. hutchins



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k + b studio

kitchen: universal appeal

Ronnette Riley, FAIA, was practicing universal design long before the term was coined, and while she admires the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), she takes issue with some of its content. As was the case for the owner of this apartment in New York City's Upper East Side, prescriptive standards aren't always the best solution. Handrail specs are one example, she says. "They are so big that a small person's hands can't comfortably grab them, but the rules are specific and can't be altered." Riley complied with ADA for this reconfigured kitchen and bathroom, but customized details throughout the apartment to serve both the husband's recent physical disability and the wife's diminutive stature. Updating the apartment and increasing natural light penetration were also high priorities for the owners. "The apartment hadn't been touched in 25 years," says Riley. "It was a rabbit warren of a lot of little rooms."



The primary workstation faces out across the adjacent dining room to its East River vista. Muted hues keep the quietly utilitarian space from competing for attention when sliding walls are pushed away. Pale cabinets take on ghostly forms when the translucent panels are closed (far right).

or reaching. Materials with a little give (Corian, Marmoleum) were selected for horizontal applications. "The owner was concerned about falling, so we wanted soft surfaces," says Riley, "but they also had to be smooth to ease walking."

Upper cabinets were eliminated except for a few near the stove; their elongated doors put lower shelves within daily reach. A long counter runs the length of a widened hallway, connecting kitchen to laundry room/pantry. The counter remains open underneath to park a wheelchair, but also helps steady the husband as he walks about the unit. Grab bars turn up in one form or another intermittently from the master bedroom at one end of the 2,500-square-foot plan to a desk overlooking the East River at the far end. The custom hand-holds were integrated into the architecture, says Riley, so the spaces wouldn't "look like hospital rooms."

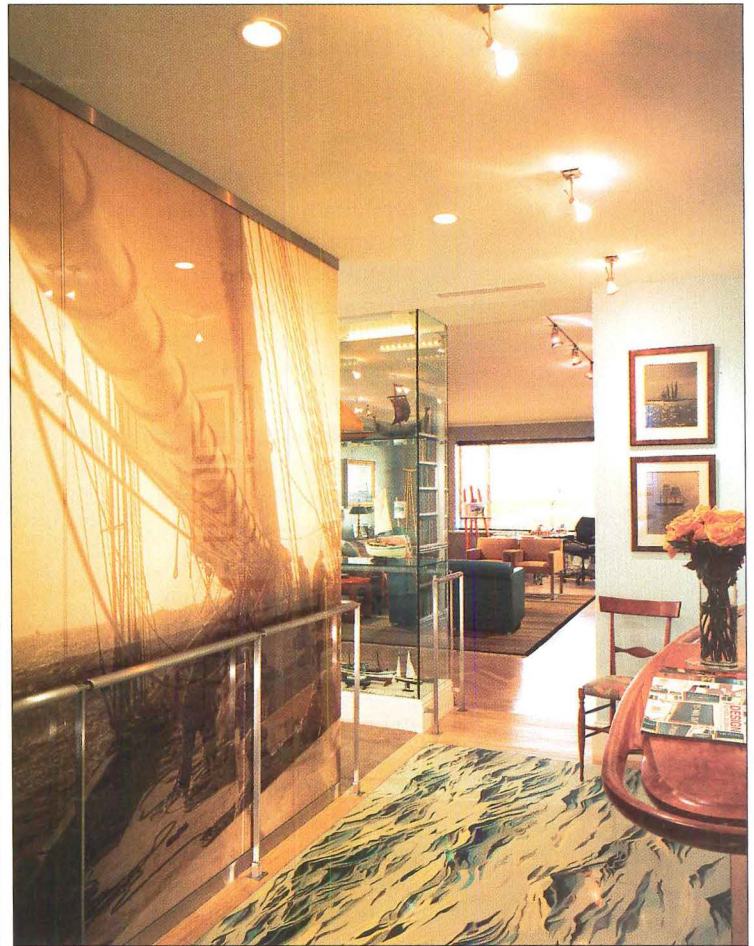
project continued on page 26



architect: Ronnette Riley Architect, New York City

general contractor: Fountainhead Construction, New York City

resources: countertops: Dupont Corian; flooring: Forbo and Amtico; lighting fixtures: Halo and Rega; paints: Benjamin Moore; plumbing fixtures and fittings: American Standard, Kohler, and Kroin; tile: B&B Sea Glass Tile



Photos: Dub Rogers



k + b studio

bath: attention grabber

Completing major structural renovations within the confines of an apartment building and under the watchful eyes of the owners' association multiplied Riley's headaches. The building only allows construction during summer months, and bathroom expansions are forbidden because wet areas must be directly above wet areas. Transforming this master bath into an ADA-compliant bathroom couldn't be done without more square footage, so Riley incorporated an existing powder room and took on the association to gain those precious few feet.

The room now does double duty as master and guest baths. "This long galley-type bath has an acid-etched glass and stainless sliding door that closes to create a powder room for guests or opens to employ



Photos: Frank Oudeman

Stainless steel grab bars sparkle in the bright master bath. Matching trim on the diaphanous dividers emphasizes the silver rails. A long layout, lack of interior walls, and vanishing pocket doors allow daylight to flow freely through the space.

the full master bath," says Riley. Because she had to use ADA grab rails Riley decided to emphasize them as an architectural detail. Standard stainless steel rails run the length of the counter and morph into towel racks for tub and shower. The toilet couldn't be moved, but rotating it 180 degrees generated a powder room layout on the side nearest the public spaces. Recessed vanities flank either side of a closet wall, but the white counter wraps around for continuity. The only break is a 1-inch groove allowing the translucent door to close.

A pale color palette of sea-foam-green tumbled marble and cut-glass tiles marks elements in the open plan. As with the kitchen, resilient materials (Corian and linoleum) were used for flooring and counters in case of a fall. Concealed storage opposite the toilet permits an open area under the vanities for wheelchair parking. And pocket doors finish off the 16-foot-by-8-foot room. "The doors not only satisfy ADA accessibility code," says Riley, "but they also give a clear view into the living room from the master bedroom." That was a client requirement: an unobstructed sightline from the master bedroom to the living room windows—three rooms and 67 feet away.—*shelley d. hutchins*



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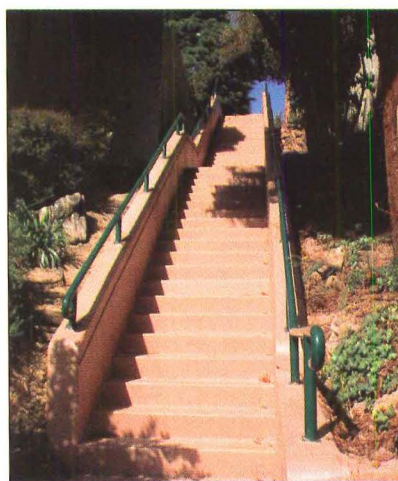
by kurt lavenson, aia

ately, I have become interested in the leadership roles architects can play within our communities. My interest was piqued when I observed the reactions of the New York City public to the first round of proposals for the rebuilding of the World Trade Center, which they found numbingly bureaucratic and unconscious. There was then a renewed call for inspired guidance from the design community. I believe this call was for more than just handsome buildings. Ultimately the emergence of Daniel Libeskind and his poetic schemes for the site were an indicator of the great power architects possess to solve difficult puzzles at all scales and to give tangible form to the needs of the community. Although his role in the final building construction might wane, it was this architect who pointed the way toward resolution of a quandary that spanned the physical and emotional realms. He galvanized the vision and confidence of a city and world needing exactly that. I suggest that his role as an enlightened public advocate and leader will ultimately prove more important than



the details of the buildings.

This makes me wonder why I do not see more architects involved in the public process. Is it that we do not consider ourselves "political"? How does the act of building not become political? We change cities and manipulate the natural environment. Our work affects the value of property and the daily experience of most people. We are actors in the political realm whether we like it or not. So why not be consciously engaged and proudly add our voice to the conversation? I would like to see more architects on planning commissions, at the helm of development projects, in mayor's offices and in higher elected positions. The public process of building a society needs skilled



Photos: Top: Alan Geller; above: Kurt Lavenson

The author donated his architectural expertise to the restoration of a public stairway in Oakland, Calif. He also designs private projects for his own practice, including this remodel of a 1960s house (above) in Alamo, Calif., and the on-the-boards residence shown on the next page.

problem solvers—designers of integrated solutions. I am dismayed by the number of architects I hear complaining about building codes, zoning, or design review. Too often these regulations have been implemented without participation from skilled designers who could have mapped the way

to better policy.

Yes, the process becomes political and it is messy and frustrating, but ultimately it can be very rewarding. It is better to get involved and take responsibility, at any scale, than to complain powerlessly from the sidelines.

continued on page 30

stair necessities

During the past year I have put this idea into practice by volunteering to serve on my local neighborhood association board. Our board had been working for several years with the public works agency here in Oakland, Calif., to restore four sets of staircases that run through the neighborhood. However, as construction loomed, the association was not able to communicate effectively with the public works agency. That is when my expertise became particularly valuable. I understood the issues and I could work with the public works people to resolve construction-related problems. I also found that I could deal with irate or alienated neighbors and draw them into the process. The stairs themselves were a great metaphor for the step-by-step process of uniting the community and completing the project. Negotiating the impacts of changes in the built environment was what I already do

because they represent pieces of a much larger urban fabric that makes the city valuable and livable. Similarly, on the grand scale of public advocacy this was a minor effort but it had a significant effect. I discovered that working with a small group of people willing to devote their time, and willing to risk disappointment, I was able to cross over and become “they”—the infamous “they” who “should” fix broken public structures or devise better solutions to the problems around us. The new stairs are hardly the World Trade Center, but when I traverse them it feels great to talk with neighbors and know that I made a lasting contribution to the community.

The stair renovation reminded me that architects are accomplished marketers. We are taught in university and through professional competition to present our ideas in a convincing manner. Architects know how to

the project to the local historical society, who honored it with one of their annual awards, and more press.

This exposure, in turn, provided support back to the agencies and to our city councilperson—people who struggle constantly for priority and funding of their efforts. Around that same time, I learned that a fourth flight of our stair railings, which had been deleted from the budget, was restored and funded. I am convinced that the public acknowledgement we generated was critical to securing the additional funding. Press coverage can be a very effective design and planning tool.

the vision thing

On a related note, I found it very interesting a few years ago when Microsoft founder Bill Gates chose to proclaim himself “Chief Software Architect.” Once I got over my frustration that he had claimed a professional title for which I am licensed and he is not, I realized that he had actually paid architects a very high compliment. Why did he not choose “Chief Software Engineer,” the more common description for his profession? I propose it is because he aspired to be thought of as a more visionary, artistic, and comprehensive designer. It appears to me that he realized the value of the architect “brand” more than our own profession

often does. This should serve as a reminder to architects who struggle with valuing their own services, whether billable or pro bono. Our profession has substantial relevance, beyond the making of buildings.

Architects straddle an abyss with one foot in the world of the conceptual artist and the other in the world of the pragmatic builder. We resolve conflicts between these worlds on a regular basis. We create beauty, value, and delight from chaos and conflict. Those who may not consider themselves great negotiators are probably designing clever compromises every day. Good design is the masterful resolution of desires and constraints. Our society needs these skills in generous proportions. The acknowledgment received in return benefits us as individuals and our profession. Let’s embrace this opportunity and responsibility for involvement throughout our communities. **ra**

Kurt Lavenson, AIA, is an architect and former builder. His firm, Lavenson Design, is based in Oakland, Calif.

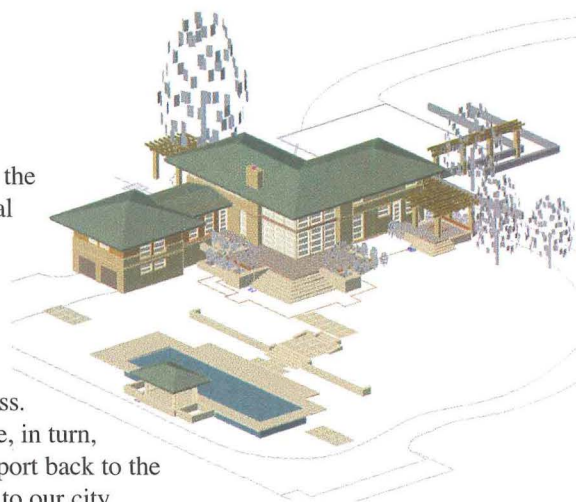
“our profession has substantial relevance, beyond the making of buildings.”



on a regular basis. When doing it for the local community, however, I experienced a surprisingly rewarding level of personal satisfaction and public recognition.

On the grand scale of the city this was a very small project. However, those public stairs remain important

communicate the end goal of a project and how to win support for it. Using those skills, I sought publicity for our private group and for the public agencies that worked on the stairs. I was able to garner a good bit of acknowledgement from the local press. I also submitted





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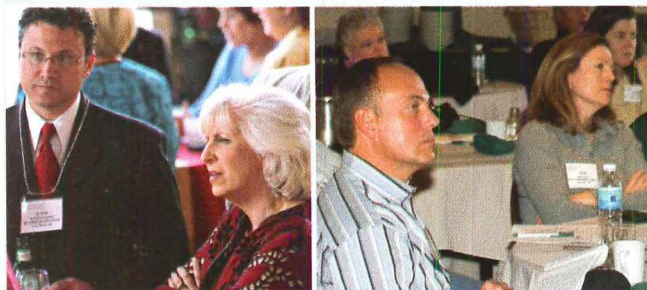
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searching for a safety net

how architects reduce risk and reap rewards in the condo market

by cheryl weber

throughout the recent economic downturn, residential construction has been a bright spot, a boom that overshot all predictions. As low interest rates fueled the speculative housing market, condominium projects have dominated the construction scene in thriving metropolitan areas. While the NAHB has no statistics on the proliferation of apartment-to-condo conversions, its numbers show that 120,000 new for-sale condos or cooperatives were built in 2004 alone.

The dark side to all this activity is that after every construction boom comes a rush of claims, with condos as the top target. Although California's court system is particularly notorious for its runaway construction-defect litigation, statistics show that condos are a problem everywhere. Chevy Chase, Md.-based Victor O. Schinnerer & Co., a leading insurer of design and engineering firms, reports that in the past five years, the multifamily billings of its clients represented less than 4.5 percent of their total revenues, yet lawsuits from those projects accounted for 20 percent of all claims. And as housing prices seem to defy gravity, the stakes



Brian Stauffer

are higher than ever. The average condo claim paid by the insurance company was about \$190,000, with the top 10 percent averaging more than \$820,000. Small architecture firms aren't immune, either. Of the top 25 paid claims, seven were on behalf of small firms, averaging \$670,000 apiece.

The problem is the nature of the product itself. Many

condo associations don't have enough money set aside for maintenance. In California, condominium owners have a full 10 years from the date of completion to bring a lawsuit—plenty of time for deferred maintenance to take its toll. So defect litigation firms go knocking on doors, putting together a laundry list of things owners don't like about their units. Maybe it's noise, leaking windows,

or the way the fireplace vents. Often, the complaints are justified. Because real estate is so expensive, developers are spending more to buy land or old buildings to convert and less on quality materials and labor. It's common for developers to form a limited liability partnership, slap up the projects as cheaply as they can, and sell them for a lot of money.

continued

Sometimes, the developers have disappeared by the time they're called on the carpet. "A lot of people have a very strong emotional attachment to their condo," says Judy Mendoza, senior risk management consultant for Victor O. Schinnerer & Co., San Francisco. "In many cases it's their first home. They've spent a lot of money and it's not as perfect as they think it's going to be."

language arts

Indeed, it's both architects and homeowners who are caught in this dysfunctional system. David Baker, FAIA, San Francisco, says the cost of insurance to deal with litigation adds \$30,000 to \$50,000 to the price of a unit. He carries a \$100,000 deductible policy on condo projects, which represent a quarter of his work. "We've had 99 percent of our projects come through without a lawsuit," he says, "but it only takes one to make some part of your life unhappy." The single lawsuit Baker did face involved water leaks resulting from a poorly installed roof and windows that were value engineered to meet budget on an affordable-housing project. The subcontractor failed to test the windows, as Baker's firm requested, and the problems went undetected. "The vested interest of litigation attorneys is to increase the conflict," he says, pointing out that although the roof cost only \$30,000 to replace, the legal fees amounted to \$100,000.

Baker minimizes his exposure by working only

with repeat clients, ideally those who are large and professional enough to have a prevention strategy. Some of his developer clients set up separate maintenance companies with mandatory service agreements; others issue manuals that put upkeep requirements in writing. Baker has also had success

getting developers to write contracts that indemnify him from liability.

Lately, Torti Gallas & Partners, Silver Spring, Md., has also begun including a provision that indemnifies the firm for the amount of deductible on its liability insurance. "We ask the owner to hold us harmless

for the first \$100,000 of any claim resulting from a condo, the idea being that owners today are benefiting from the low interest rate as a method of inflating prices for condos," says Tom Gallas, CPA and executive vice president. "If we're doing a project and the fee is \$1 million, and the

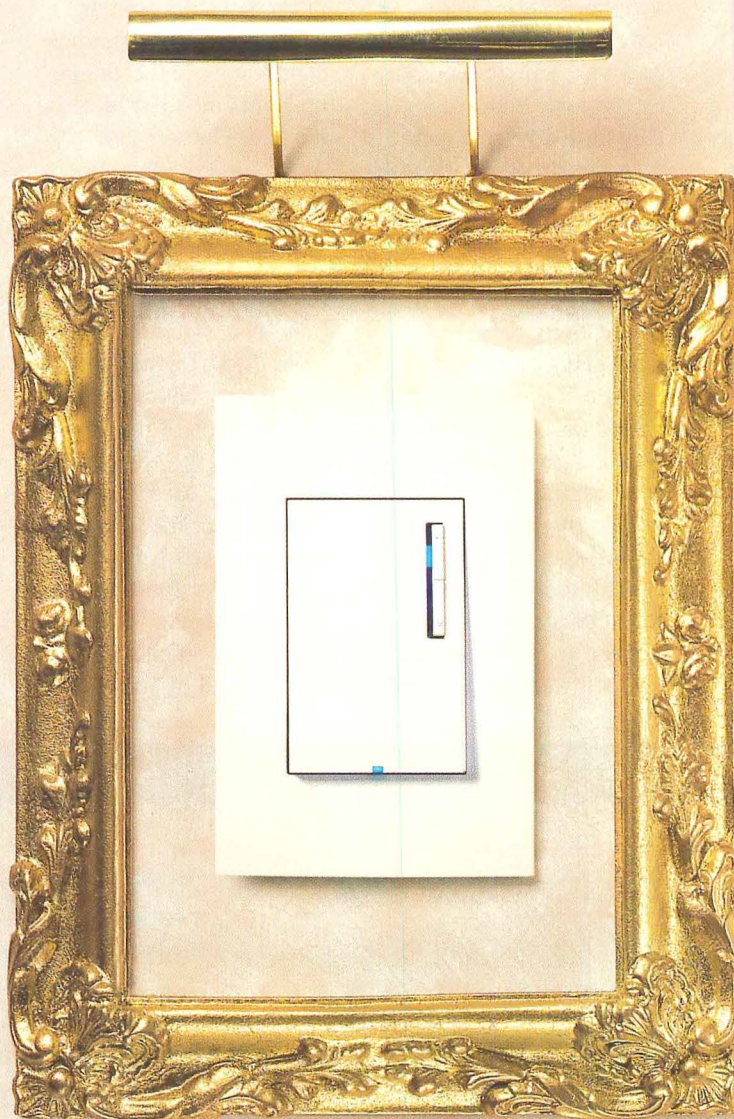
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protecting yourself

Judy Mendoza, senior risk management consultant at the insurance firm Victor O. Schinnerer & Co., recommends that architects take the following precautions to limit their exposure on condo projects:

1. Select clients and projects carefully. Look for developers with a solid track record and projects that have a realistic budget and time frame.
2. Insist on providing contract administration services. Be wary of limited agreements that may keep you from observing critical construction phases.
3. Ask to review the qualifications of consultants the developer hires. The fact that your client isn't the end user and wants to maximize profits can be a conflict of interest.
4. Specify materials and systems with cost and maintenance in mind. Homeowner associations may not be well-organized or have much money set aside for repairs, so design buildings that are as simple as possible to maintain.
5. Offer to prepare a maintenance manual as part of your services. It's a great defense on lawsuits, which often stem from deferred maintenance.
6. Ask the client to protect himself by retaining a water penetration specialist. Many condo claims arise from water problems; hiring a specialist will result in a better project.
7. Urge the developer to establish a 10-year contingency fund for testing, repairs, and maintenance. It's a way for the developer to show that he's serious about quality, and that money is set aside if things go wrong. Homeowners who are kept happy are less likely to sue.
8. Offer your professional services to the condo association, and charge for them. If there's a problem, you'll be the first person contacted, and the homeowners will be more likely to stay involved in upkeep.
9. Ask the developer to include a mandatory mediation clause and a list of maintenance requirements in the condo bylaws.
10. Agree to contracts that fairly allocate risk. Whether it's an adequate fee and time to do design and construction, or avoiding responsibility for warranties, make sure there are no clauses that hold you accountable for the impossible.
11. Document, document, document. If a developer makes a change to the specs, or tries to cut corners and you've tried to stop it, put it on record.
12. Work for legislative changes that benefit architects. Shorter statutes of repose—three to four years, versus 10—would reduce the number of lawsuits. Joint and several liability, which applies in some states, should also be abolished. Under that law, if you're found only 5 percent responsible for damages but the project's other players no longer legally exist, you could be held liable for all the damages.—c.w.

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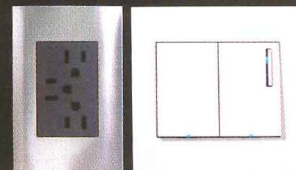


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deductible is \$100,000, that's probably our profit on the project. By getting them to indemnify us, they'd cover the first \$100,000 on any claim prior to our insurance company stepping in." He says the firm toyed with the idea of adding a \$100,000 line item in its fees to address risk, but clients resisted, saying they shouldn't have to pay for legal fees that never materialize. Alternatively, Torti Gallas sometimes limits its liability to no more than the project fee. "Developers often can identify with this approach because in essence it's what they do—match risk with return," Gallas says.

The success of architect-developer agreements varies by state and the nature of

the working relationship. In its literature, Victor O. Schinnerer notes that indemnification clauses have teeth in states in which architects can be sued only by the party with whom they have a written contract. But in others, such as California, architects are fair game in claims from intended beneficiaries, so disclaimers in the developer contract provide no protection against litigation brought by homeowners. Condo developers are often set up to go out of business once a project is complete, too, leaving the design professional as the only source of restitution for design and performance deficiencies.

Even so, architects are carefully vetting developer

agreements in hopes of deflecting litigation. Whether or not the language holds up in court, a carefully worded contract can establish expectations up front and nip trouble in the bud. Fletcher Farr Ayotte, in Portland, Ore., inspects the developer's sales contract with the homeowner. "We're looking for things like a certification of satisfaction—something the buyer signs that says they're satisfied with the condition of the unit and that all the work has been done," says CFO Paul Strassmaier. The firm also asks the developer to make clear to buyers that the sales agreement does not include the architect. And, most critical of all, its own

contracts specify that the developer must establish a maintenance fund for the project. After all, it's not unusual for new buildings to have problems. What's important is whether developers fix defects promptly and at no cost to buyers.

quality assurance

Even if contract language isn't always enforceable, there are aspects to this business that architects can control, such as being selective about who they work with and specifying high-quality materials. On its insurer's advice, Fletcher Farr Ayotte stays away from developers who are contractors, a setup that gives them inherent

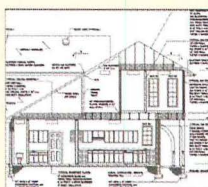
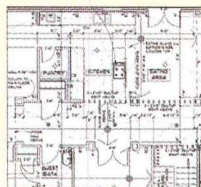
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power to make changes during construction. Another red flag is the developer who wants to reduce the construction administration fee. "When they want to do that, they're generally going to take shortcuts," Strassmaier says. When assessing the risks of working with new developers, the firm looks at who they're using for a contractor, how much money they're budgeting for the project, and whether they're willing to spend extra to hire an acoustical engineer or waterproofing consultant. Luxury high-rises are especially prone to noise problems. Surround-sound systems often co-exist unhappily with exposed steel ceilings, concrete floors, and

glass walls—contemporary design features that conduct sound between units. And mixed-use projects present another set of challenges. "If there's a restaurant on the ground floor, you have the potential for odors, or the sounds of nightlife going on until midnight," Strassmaier says. "Mixed-use is a difficult proposition; you have to protect yourself."

Torti Gallas, whose condo work runs to middle and upper markets, steers clear of the build/bid approach, knowing that a contentious relationship between the owner and contractor signals a rocky road. "If the owner is holding back money from the contractor because he's not

happy with something, the contractor can have a big impact on the attitude of buyers when the time comes to fix things here and there," Gallas says. "If you provide a quality assurance mentality all the way through the team, the attitude of the condo association tends to be more sympathetic."

In a project type with a discontinuous sense of ownership, quality is a huge issue. Gallas says that, compared with rental apartments maintained by a single owner, condos require a higher level of windows, better sound control, and epoxy steel framing, which creates a more solid bond than regular framing. "I think most condo developers are very good at putting in

the merchandizing aspect of a condo—the upgraded kitchen cabinets or appliances, the things buyers can see," Gallas says. "But the bigger risk lies in things they can't see."

If condos are so scary, why take the gamble? "With the right client, they can be very nice projects, and it's a lucrative market right now," says Steven Santucci, AIA, associate principal at Perkins+Will, Chicago. Among 16 offices from Seattle to Miami, the firm's condo projects represent roughly 1 percent of its revenues. "We happened to stumble onto some upscale luxury stuff that allows us to really have

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some control over what's being built," he says. "From a purely selfish architectural standpoint, we made a decision we don't want to do the high-volume work that's not going to add to our portfolio." Communication and a solid knowledge

of the risks are keys to limiting liability, Santucci says. In monthly conference calls, architects in five or six of its offices discuss legal, design, technical, and management issues that have come up in current projects. "Our understand-

ing is that it's hard to control third parties no matter what you put in contracts," Santucci says, "so we're trying to get things right from the start of a project."

New York City architect Louise Braverman, AIA, agrees. "I am extremely strict

on how I read city code, and I do everything exactly to the letter of the law," she says, adding that she's conscious of maintaining integrity not just in structural and mechanical systems but in details such as sliding door hardware, which people touch every day. "Being rigorous goes a long way, but it's not foolproof," Braverman says. "This is America—anybody can sue."

trade tricks

Architects who want to do urban design, while avoiding the perils of condos, have devised ways to play it safe. One California architecture firm (whose principal wishes to remain anonymous) formed a separate corporation for condo design that operates without liability insurance. Its underwriters have said that if condo work represents more than 10 percent of its portfolio, few agencies will even consider it for liability insurance. "We don't have to report condo work to our underwriters, because we don't carry insurance for that corporation," the architect says. "We don't want to jeopardize our institutional work, and it keeps condos off the books." Often, the firm further limits its exposure by designing condos for developers who hire a production architect to sign drawings and oversee construction.

Other firms position themselves to work with developers and homeowners to simply finish off raw space or upgrade the basic

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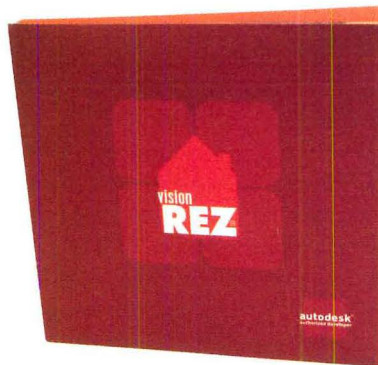
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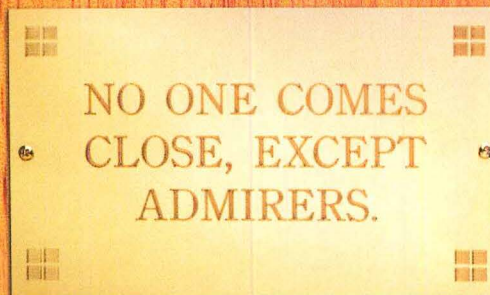
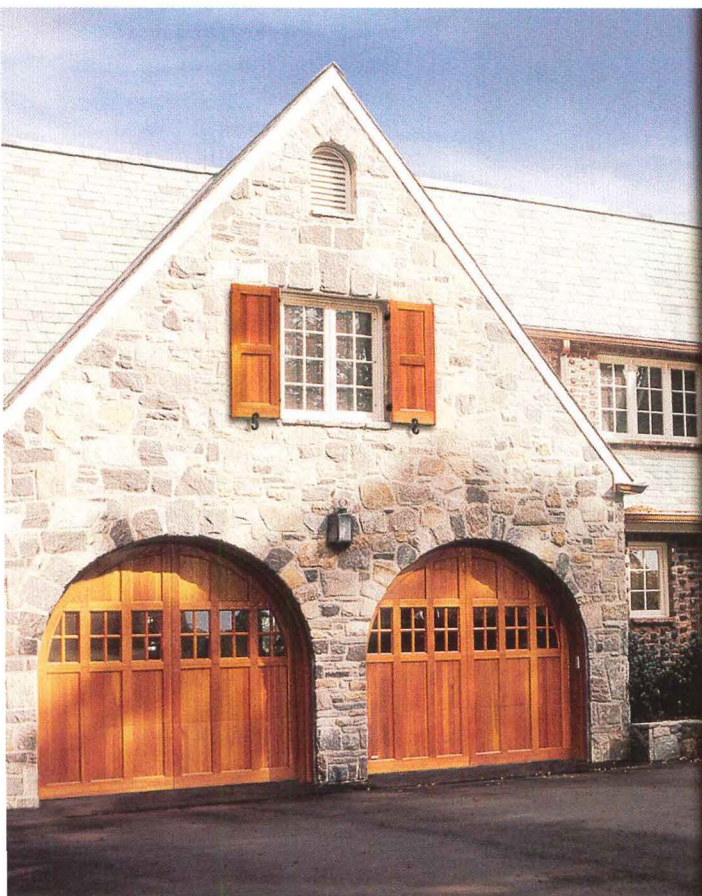


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package. Ruhl Walker Architects, a small Boston firm, is talking to developers about offering different levels of finish to potential buyers while the building is under construction. In most cases, however, the firm

customizes units for homeowners after the certificate of occupancy is issued, working with the original architects to make sure the changes jibe with surrounding systems such as plumbing stacks. "It's not that

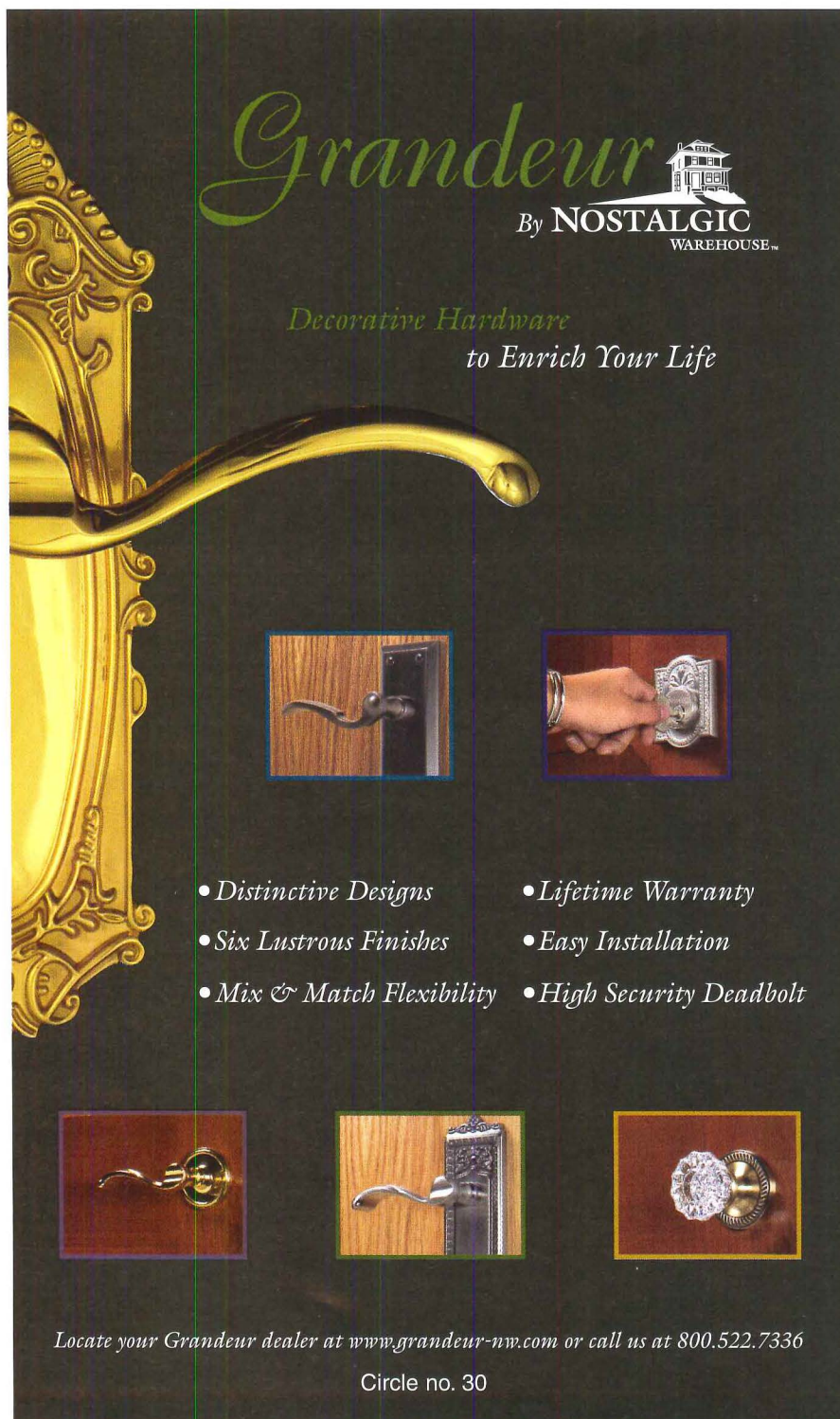
we're opposed to working on whole buildings," says principal Will Ruhl, AIA. "Partly, it hasn't come up, and we're cautious about who we work with."

San Diego architect Kevin DeFreitas, AIA, usu-

ally rejects condos out of hand, but he's throwing caution to the wind to design a four-unit building on an infill site, believing it's too small to attract litigation attorneys. "My insurer will allow me to do condos as long as they're not more than 10 percent of my gross billings," DeFreitas says, "but there's no fee that's worth assuming that kind of liability for 10 years." Instead, he's pursuing products that look attached but have inches of airspace between thick concrete walls, qualifying them for single-family status. For his current project of 15 such homes, \$1 million worth of insurance is costing \$540,000, compared with the \$720,000 he would have shelled out for condo coverage. "It's a deal killer, because if I pay \$720,000 today, 10 years from now that \$1 million coverage will be worth only \$500,000," he says. "We'd be paying more than what we received in services if there was a maximum claim against the policy."

By contrast, large firms such as Torti Gallas proceed with caution, viewing condo design as an inevitable part of residential work. "Not doing a condo would be minimizing the amount of work that we can do for our clients," Gallas says. "It's one of the bevy of approaches we can take to practice residential design." **ra**

Cheryl Weber is a contributing writer in Severna Park, Md.



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MONDAY, DECEMBER 5

9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Housing Tour*

Visit South Florida's cutting-edge residential architecture.

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AQUA, Allison Island

Dubbed a "tropical urbanist neighborhood," AQUA is the brainchild of developer Craig Robins and town planners **Duany Plater-Zyberk** (DPZ). AQUA brings together luxury mid-rise multi-family buildings and town houses inspired by Miami's waterside locale and its history as a modernist's town. Anchored at the water's edge, AQUA's three condominium buildings were designed by and named after **Alison Spear**, **Walter Chatham**, and **Alexander Gorlin**. AQUA's 46 town houses, or "island homes," are the work of **Hariri and Hariri**, **DPZ**, **Allan T. Shulman Architect**, **Suzanne Martinson Architects**, **Brown Demandt Architects**, and **Albaisa Musumano Architects**.

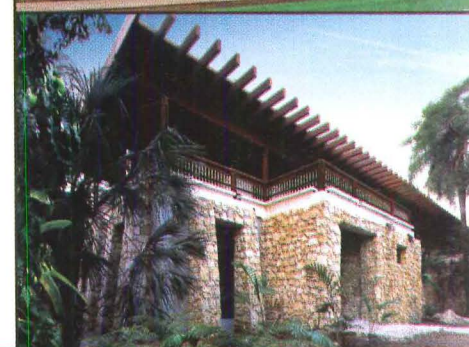
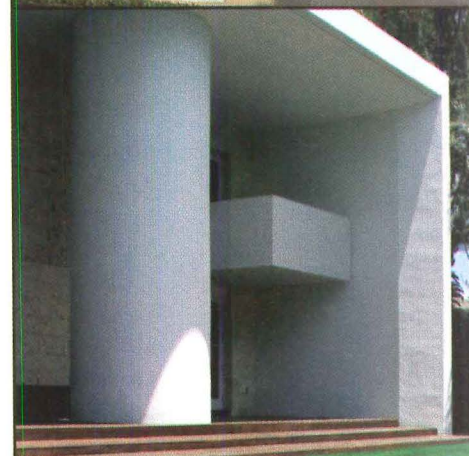
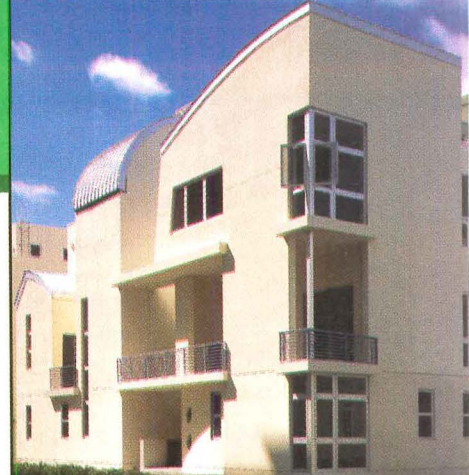
Villa Allegra, Sunset Island III

Architect **Chad Oppenheim** is changing the face of downtown Miami with his much-talked-about luxury high-rise condominium designs. Named by AIA Miami as Young Architect of the Year in 2001, he recently won an AIA Florida merit award for his own waterfront house in Miami Beach, Villa Allegra.

Strang Residence, Coconut Grove

Architect **Max Strang** is rapidly developing a name for himself in South Florida as an architect sensitive to site, place, and the environment. His own house, which he calls "tropical industrial," has recently won merit awards from both AIA Miami and AIA Florida. He was named AIA Miami's Young Architect of the Year in 2003.

A separate registration is required for the housing tour—\$35 per person.



6:30 to 8:30 pm

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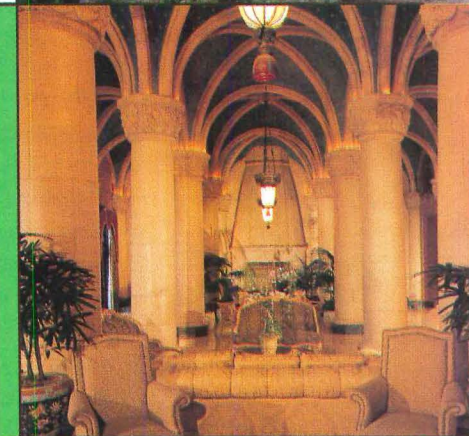
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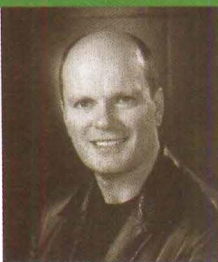
Keynote Breakfast

Resting Lightly on the Land* – 7:30 to 8:45 am

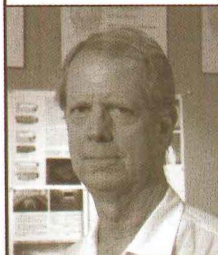
Presenter: **Brian MacKay-Lyons, Hon. FAIA, FRAIC, RCA, MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects, Halifax, Nova Scotia.** Internationally-known architect MacKay-Lyons excels in works of simple, quiet grandeur. His monograph, "Plain Modern", was recently published by the Princeton Architectural Press.

Building is an act of intrusion on our delicate and dwindling landscape. Yet architecture that learns from vernacular traditions, makes use of local materials, and responds carefully and sensitively to the site helps mitigate the incursions. MacKay-Lyons sheds the limitations of style to see more keenly the beauty and promise of the landscape and to preserve its power to delight. The best lessons in sustainable design are the inherent principles of great architecture.

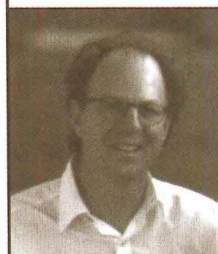
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General Sessions

Regionalism as Green Design* – 9:00 to 10:30 am

Are the key elements of sustainable design found in the wisdom of local building traditions? What can residential, industrial, and agricultural structures tell us about safe, sound, and satisfying shelter? Find the universal truths in specific solutions. Rediscover what regional architecture can teach us about climate-, material-, and site-sensitive design.

Panelist/Moderator: **Frank Harmon, FAIA, Frank Harmon Architect, Raleigh, NC.** Harmon is the recipient of many awards, including a Business Week/Architectural Record international honor award and this year's *residential architect* Leadership Award for Top Firm. Also a professor at the College of Design at North Carolina State University, Harmon leads a practice that specializes in regional and sustainable design.

Ted Flato, Lake/Flato Architect, San Antonio, TX. Flato has earned a national reputation for straight-forward regional design. His projects, which incorporate indigenous building forms and materials, are sensitive to site and climate and have won numerous national, state, and local awards, including *residential architect*'s Project of the Year in 2004.

Brian MacKay-Lyons, Hon. FAIA, FRAIC, RCA, MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects, Halifax, Nova Scotia.
See bio under "Resting Lightly on the Land."

Coffee Break – 10:30 to 10:45 am

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Paradigms of Place* – 10:45 am to 12:15 pm

Greening the one-off house is a first step on the long road to sustainability. We must also look beyond the house to neighborhoods and towns that weave sustainability into the fabric of the community. One irresponsibly designed dwelling is a problem for its occupants; multiples are a public threat. How can we design where we live to improve how we live?

Panelist/Moderator: **Allison Ewing, AIA, LEED AP, Hays + Ewing Design Studio, Charlottesville, VA.** Prior to starting her own firm, which focuses on integrating the principles of ecology and modern design, Ewing was a partner at William McDonough + Partners, where she led a range of award-winning institutional, residential, and mixed-use projects.

Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, FAIA, Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, Miami, FL. A founder and leader in the New Urbanism movement, Plater-Zyberk's groundbreaking work has profoundly influenced place-making both nationally and internationally. Also the dean of the University of Miami School of Architecture, she's co-author of "Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream."

Ross Chapin, AIA, Ross Chapin Architects, Langley, WA. Co-founder of The Cottage Company, Chapin spearheaded changes to local ordinances in his hometown to allow for smaller, denser housing organized around common greens. His developments have attracted national attention and applause and provided a template for sustainable pocket communities across the country.

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Registration Cancellation Policy: A cancellation must be made in writing and submitted to the Hanley Wood registration company via mail, fax, or email. Cancellation requests received 31 days prior to the first day of the conference will receive a full refund minus a \$75 handling fee. Cancellation requests received on or within 30-22 days of the first day of the conference will be subject to a loss of 50% of the entire registration fee. Cancellation requests received within 3 weeks of the first day of the conference will be subject to a loss of 100% of the total registration fee; attendees are also responsible for one night's lodging at the event hotel. A confirmation of our registration will be sent in writing within two weeks of registering. Name changes are permitted at any time.



Step 4. Attendee Profile

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to those who need it most.*

more than shelter

by meghan drueding;
additional reporting by nigel f. maynard

imagine

designing a home for a client who may be deaf, blind, or mobility-impaired—you're not

sure which. The residence has to fit into a tiny space, say 250 square feet, and must be easy to duplicate 10, 50, or 100 times over. Before the permitting process even starts, you know the project will elicit passionate community opposition. You might have to rely on an intermediary to communicate the client's preferences, and you'll need to search out durable, long-lasting materials that require little maintenance. Oh, and the budget is infinitesimal.

Welcome to the world of special-needs housing. A subset of standard affordable housing, special-needs encompasses users including the physically or mentally disabled, the homeless, battered women, recovering drug addicts or alcoholics, and people with HIV or AIDS. Some of these categories overlap; the homeless, for example, are three times more likely than other people to contract HIV. Many special-needs communities are designated for just one user type, while others, like those funded by HUD's Section 811 program, must accommodate multiple needs in each unit. The housing can be permanent or transitional, scattered-site or in one location, for single people or families, strictly residential or mixed-use. When a special-needs project also provides services such as counseling or medical care, it becomes known as supportive housing.

sensitive side

The architects designing special-needs housing are as varied a bunch as the residents themselves. Well-known California firms such as Pytaok Architects, Studio E Architects, and David Baker + Partners came to it from doing straight-up affordable housing. Seniors housing represents another closely related field, because elderly residents often suffer from physical or cognitive impairments. Some practitioners have more of a health-care background, including New York City architect Roberta Washington, AIA, who specialized in hospitals before designing several supportive housing projects. And others arrive at special-needs through their own personal situa-

The Opportunity Center of the Midpeninsula in Palo Alto, Calif., includes a ground-floor homeless services center and a mix of SRO and one- to two-bedroom housing units. Designed by the firm of Rob Wellington Quigley, FAIA, it's slated for completion next summer.





Rob Wellington Quigley, FAIA

more than shelter

tions. Erick Mikiten, AIA, of Berkeley, Calif., can relate to the physical and emotional needs of wheelchair users particularly well, because he's one himself. "A lot of the things I've learned are through seeing my own experience," he says. "Like washing dishes and having the water dripping down my arm because the sink is too high."

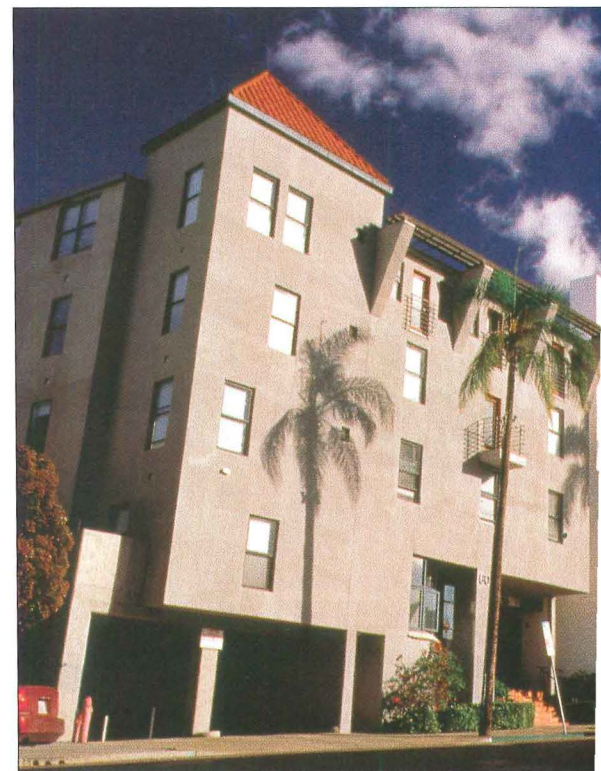
Whatever the firm's history, designing special-needs housing challenges its empathy for future residents. Often they're moving from an unstable or inhospitable living environment, and subtle design nuances can have a major impact on their well-being. Berkeley firm Jacobson Silverstein Winslow/Degenhardt incorporates porches and terraces for smokers into its housing for the mentally ill. "Smoking tends to be a big thing among the mentally disturbed," says partner Barbara Winslow. "It's a way of containing the pressure for a lot of people." John Dickinson, AIA, a deaf architect based in Boulder, Colo., emphasizes sightlines in his housing for the hearing impaired, in addition to the more typical lighting and vibrations that tell residents when a phone, doorbell, or alarm is ringing. "The housing is more open and airy than usual," he says. "There are no columns that will block the visual aesthetics." And at Inglis Gardens, housing for physically disabled adults in Philadelphia, architect Nancy Bastian of Cecil Baker & Associates added angled mirrors above all the cooktops so residents can see into pots on the stove.

Even basic, universally desirable features such as natural light, fresh air, and places to socialize take on new shades of meaning with special-needs residents, who tend to spend more time at home than the average person. Light and air combat the depression that often accompanies illness and homelessness. Welcoming public spaces give those who are down on their luck the opportunity to meet others who have been through similar experiences. "The social aim is to create places where people can develop relationships," says Richard Harris, executive director of Central City Concern in Portland, Ore., which owns and manages housing for recovering addicts and other special-needs populations. "In a recovery, one of the main things is getting rid of the bad friends and getting hooked up with solid people who will help you."

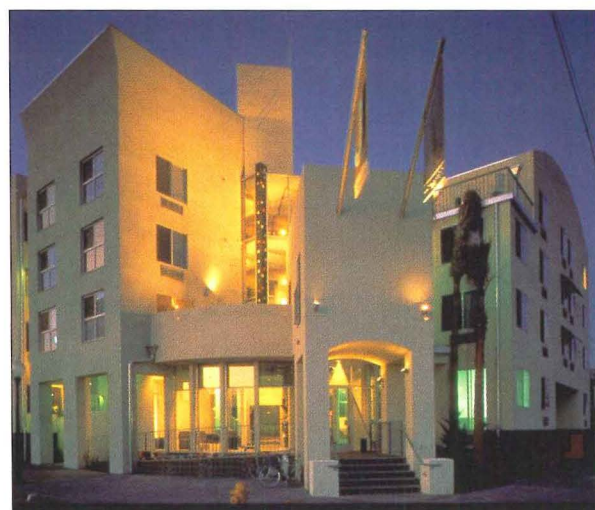
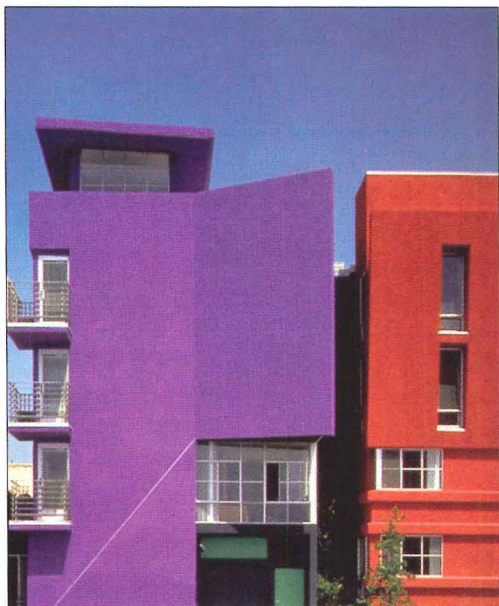
money talks

The list of clever, effective design elements architects have created for special-needs projects goes on and on. But, as with all affordable housing, the specter of a tight budget constantly looms. In order to eke out money for such worthwhile extras as well-landscaped courtyards or comfortable common room furniture, architects must think of ways to conserve funds somewhere else.

And they do. "Every dollar does count, but that doesn't mean you can't do certain things," says Dennis Langley, AIA, of Weese Langley Weese in Chicago. "You try to make a very efficient plan, and you use a lot of color and texture." His firm often varies the colors of brick on their buildings to provide architectural detail without adding cost. At the Lyon Building, a widely admired renovation in Seattle for homeless people with HIV/AIDS and other health problems, locally based architects MITHUN made the most of the existing building. "Under layers of carpet we found beautiful mosaic and hardwood floors," says Leslie Moldow, AIA, a principal at MITHUN. "They're very durable, and we didn't have to go to institutional vinyl." For the award-winning SRO Chelsea Court in New York City, architect Louise Braverman, AIA, took the initiative, driving to Costco to find



Rob Quigley's firm helped change the face of downtown San Diego in the late 1980s and early 1990s with bold designs for SRO hotels including La Pensione (above), Island Inn (top and opposite page, top), and J Street Inn (opposite page, right).

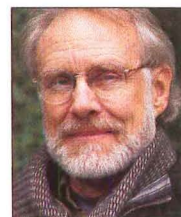


Photos: Above, top left, and top right: Hewitt/Garrison Photography; left and center: Brighton Nowing

spotlight

rob wellington quigley, faia: sro pioneer

The single-room occupancy hotel as a building type always intrigued Rob Quigley, FAIA. “Every city needs transitional housing,” he says. But in the mid-1980s, the trend was to tear down existing SROs, not build new ones. So when a bold young developer approached him around that time to design a new SRO for downtown San Diego, Quigley pounced on the opportunity. “San Diego’s urban core was being revitalized, and it was tearing down the old ‘fleabag’ hotels,” he recalls. “My client, Chris Mortenson, had bought one of these. He went into the building and saw it was this wonderful communal environment, and had the courage to propose building a brand-new SRO. It needed variances because the building codes were set up for either residential or hotels, not both. A city planner here, Mike Stepner, shepherded this thing through—it had to have a champion, or it wouldn’t have gotten built.”



The resulting, award-winning building, finished in 1987 and known as the Baltic Inn, showed communities across the country that the much-maligned SRO could fill vital urban affordable housing needs. Quigley went on to design several more during the 1990s in San Diego, Phoenix, Palo Alto, Calif., and Las Vegas, mostly for-profit ventures such as the Baltic Inn. “This is workforce housing,” he says. “It’s for cooks, bartenders, cab drivers, nurses’ helpers.” He used bright color schemes and careful space planning to make up for small room sizes and add visual appeal, and he did post-occupancy surveys to see how he could better serve residents. The strategy worked so well at one 1991 project, La Pensione in San Diego’s Little Italy, that the owners turned it into a boutique hotel.

SROs still make up part of the 14-person firm’s workload. For a nonprofit project it’s currently designing, which includes an SRO component (see previous pages), it teamed with Stanford students to research the needs and desires of the community’s future occupants. That’s typical Quigley—even though he pioneered the modern-day SRO, he hasn’t stopped looking for ways to improve it. —*m.d.*

Cities all over the Western United States sport Quigley-designed SROs. Alma Place (1997, center) is located in Palo Alto, Calif.

more than shelter

folding tables for each unit and coaxing a friend to donate artwork.

The best special-needs architects don't just think about the immediate cost of the building. They also keep its long-term operating costs in mind, and the most innovative service providers in the country are doing likewise. If a nonprofit plans to spend the next century running a building, it's going to want passive solar design and daylighting that will minimize energy use—hardly a revelation to the firms in the trenches of special-needs housing. "We've been doing energy-efficient buildings for years," says Langley. "Not because it's cool to be sustainable. We do it because it helps the long-term viability of the project."

What is new, though, is developers' openness to more high-tech green options. Common Ground, a well-respected New York City-based nonprofit, recently commissioned a building by Kiss + Cathcart, a local firm experienced in green design rather than affordable housing. Slated to start construction next year or in 2007, the building will contain photovoltaic panels, a rainwater collection system, and possibly geothermal heat. An on-the-boards project in Chicago, designed by Murphy/Jahn for the nonprofit developer Lakefront Supportive Housing, features rooftop photovoltaics and wind turbines. "There's a growing interest in energy efficiency," says Maureen Friar, executive director of the advocacy group Supportive Housing Network of New York. "People are spending more money up front to get better long-term operating costs."

They're also spending money on high-quality materials that don't need to be replaced every five or 10 years. "Interestingly enough, the nonprofit environment is where people are most concerned about using long-lasting materials that will be low-maintenance," says Cliff Boehmer, AIA, a principal at Mostue & Associates in Boston. "A lot of the market-rate developers, generally speaking, are less interested in making the investment upfront." Special-needs communities take a lot of physical abuse, especially transitional housing, which faces frequent move-ins and move-outs. "Particularly in the common areas, you have to build really tough stuff," says Harris. "We try to use a lot of stainless steel and Corian." If a well-made floor tile or light fixture can go in at the beginning and hold up for decades, to many developers it's well worth the initial investment. And if it can stop a project from seeming institutional, so much the better. "You have to spend a little bit of money to make it feel like a home," says Los Angeles seniors housing guru John Mutlow, FAIA, who's now designing his first special-needs project. "We use a real wood door, not veneer."

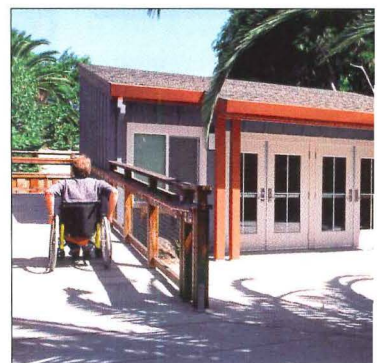
changes afoot

The special-needs category includes so many varied models and populations, it's hard to discern overall design trends. One apparent across-the-board development, though, is an increase in private kitchens and bathrooms. "The new SROs are calling for individual cooking facilities and baths," says Perry Winston, architectural director of the New York City nonprofit Pratt Planning and Architectural Collaborative. "It promotes more stable living and less fighting over shared space." Most communities still have a central kitchen, but even a two-burner stove in the units gives residents the option to cook or eat independently. "People seem to do better in a nicer unit," says Dan Sawislak, executive director of Berkeley-based Resources for Community Development. "Problems seem to crop up more when people have smaller units, no private bath, no kitchen in the unit."

Affordable housing developers have also grown more enthusiastic about combining uses and unit types. "There is a real interest in having a mix of general affordable



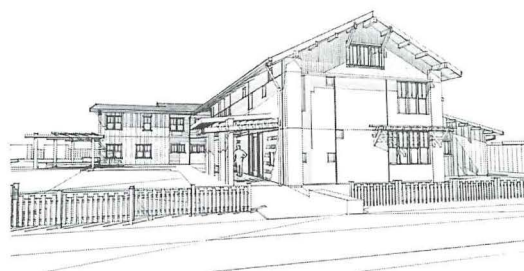
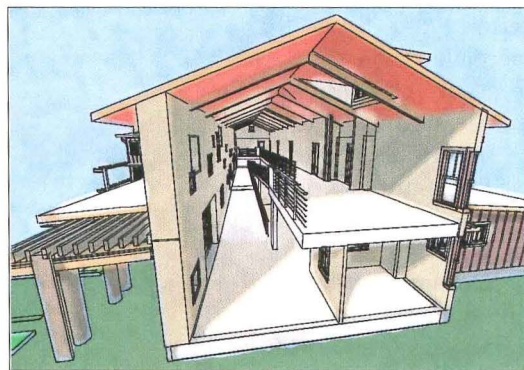
The ramp from the ground to the second floor at Caldera Place apartments (right) in Concord, Calif., allows wheelchair users an alternative to elevators. The project's Craftsman-style details (above and opposite) suit the neighborhood context.



Photos: Center and above: Mark Luthringer; all others: Mikiten Architecture



Mikiten's firm won praise for the Adeline apartments (left, and opposite page, left), in Berkeley, Calif. This housing for the physically disabled uses exterior walkways (above) to let more natural light into the units.



At the Lincoln Street apartments (above) in Fremont, Calif., Mikiten designed a two-story interior ramp to ease accessibility for the community's physically and developmentally disabled residents.



spotlight

erick mikiten, aia: the insider

Architects designing special-needs housing work hard to understand their clients' particular situations. But Erick Mikiten, AIA, has something most don't: a lifetime of experience using a wheelchair. He puts his first-hand knowledge of living with a disability to good use, designing beautiful multifamily housing that also happens to be eminently accessible.

In addition to his architecture, the Berkeley-based Mikiten has written tour guides for wheelchair users and consulted on accessibility for public and private clients. Not surprisingly, he's formed strong views about the general state of universal design. He worries about the tendency to create environments that are adaptable, but not necessarily universal. "If you have a removable cabinet under a countertop, the manager of your building has to come and change it for you," he says. "I hear of this happening a lot. Another example is not putting in grab bars unless the resident asks for them. This puts the onus on the person with the disability to make a special request. It goes against the spirit of the ADA, which is that people should feel like they can operate as a 'regular' person." He recommends items occupants can change themselves, like cabinets on rolling casters and adjustable-height counters.



Mikiten also feels sustainable design is an integral part of special-needs housing. Not just because of the long-term cost savings provided by energy-efficient systems and durable materials, though he does take those into account. "For me the main issue is healthy environments," he says. "People who live in affordable housing tend to spend more time in the units than others, and special-needs people more than other affordable housing residents. They're less likely to open windows and get fresh air, and more likely to have environmental sensitivities—especially people with developmental disabilities." He specifies no- or low-VOC materials and finishes whenever possible.

His cleverest innovations apply to mundane, everyday tasks, like throwing away a trash bag. At three recent projects, his firm designed a ramp leading up to a raised platform next to the backyard Dumpster so residents in wheelchairs can easily dispose of their garbage. "The simple things of daily living are often the biggest challenges," he says. —m.d.

more than shelter

and supportive housing,” says Carla Javits, executive director of the national community development resource Corporation for Supportive Housing. “Not necessarily market-rate too—the one place where you can think about doing that is in markets where the rents are very high. But certainly we’re seeing mixed populations—families with singles, commercial with residential.” Mixed-use projects can generate rental income from retail or office space. They can also make skittish neighbors more accepting of special-needs housing. The award-winning Santa Monica, Calif., firm Pugh Scarpa Kodama recently averted a burgeoning conflict when it designed retail into the ground floor of a community for the mentally disabled. “People were concerned the residents were going to hang out in front of the building,” says principal Lawrence Scarpa, AIA. “But we put retail on the first floor and a big private courtyard garden on the second floor, so they’ll have no reason to.”

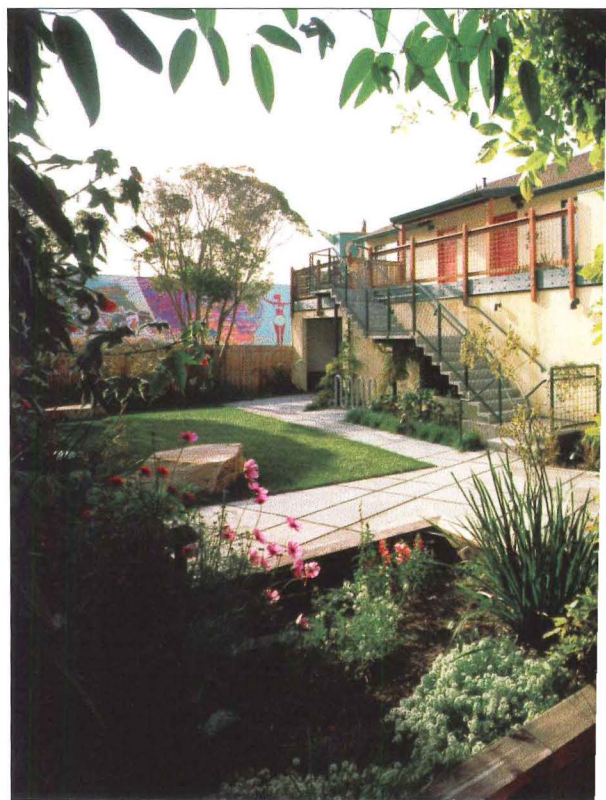
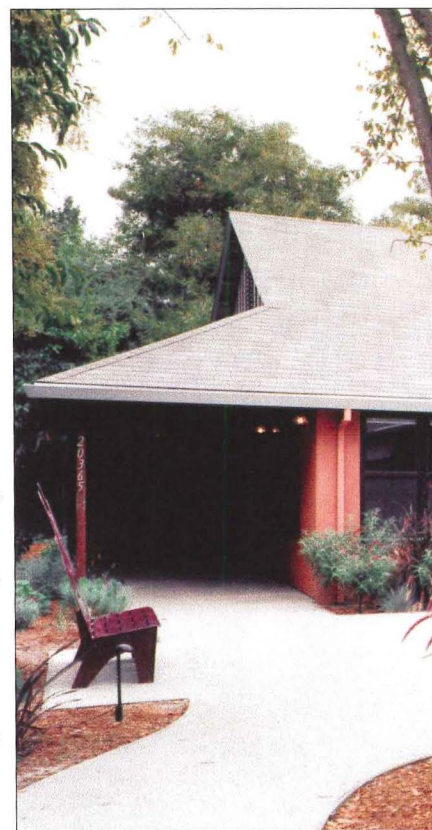
Architects’ abilities to diffuse such volatile situations rate just as highly with developers as their design skills do. “It’s not just about drawing the pictures or making the design,” says Harris. “It’s about being able to verbalize them to the community.” Special-needs veteran Pyatok Architects of Berkeley, Calif., and Seattle holds pre-design workshops with the community and, if possible, the building’s future residents. “We use foam core models with nonstick glue so people can disassemble and reassemble them,” says Michael Pyatok, FAIA. “Sometimes we create teams—each team gets a modeling kit and a configuration of the site. They take the project requirements and come up with solutions. Then they present their models, and eventually we come to a consensus. You might do two or three of these workshops before you get a final site plan.” The process ensures the final product will be something both the users and the neighbors can embrace.

the feel-good factor

Given all the pressure points special-needs housing hits—testy community relations, difficult design questions, and undernourished budgets—why do architects get involved? It’s not for the money. Although different firms report varying financial rewards, the conventional wisdom is that no one gets rich designing affordable housing, special-needs or otherwise. “It’s not that it’s not a decent fee,” says Langley. “But the reality is there’s less money available for everyone.” Los Angeles architect Michael Lehrer, FAIA, realizes the intangible pluses of his work on two projects for SRO residents, the Downtown Drop-In Center and the James M. Wood Community Center. “Both were major money-losers,” he says bluntly. “But we got a lot of recognition for them. You say, okay, well, there’s \$100,000 into marketing for that year. Those are two of the most important projects in my repertoire. Our own mania for them reinforced the mania we have for other projects.”

Rob Steinberg, FAIA, of San Jose, Calif., says fees on his special-needs projects don’t differ dramatically from the fees he gets for market-rate multifamily work. For him, though, the advantage of special-needs comes from its extreme focus on the end user. “When a designer looks at market-rate multifamily housing, the parameters are often set out in geometrical and numerical terms,” he says. “It’s possible to get lost in all that and lose sight of the user. That’s where special-needs housing provides a very valuable lesson.” Most of the architects who do it enjoy the challenge of designing for very specific populations. And it underlines for them the transformative power of their chosen profession—their ability to drastically improve people’s daily lives. “Architects can be advocates,” says Louise Braverman of her experience at Chelsea Court. “I’d do it again in a heartbeat.” —*m.d.*

Jacobson Silverstein Winslow/Degenhardt weaves outdoor spaces into its special-needs housing. Concord House (right) shelters homeless people with HIV/AIDS; Dwight Way apartments (below and opposite page, center) houses individuals with physical disabilities; Laurel gardens (opposite page, bottom) will accommodate both the physically and the mentally disabled.



Photos: Top: Jacobson Silverstein Winslow/Degenhardt Architects; above and opposite page, center: William Helsel



spotlight

barbara winslow: voice of experience

Berkeley, Calif., architect Barbara Winslow practiced as a social worker before becoming an architect. So for her, using design to meet residents' psychological as well as physical needs comes naturally. "I've always been interested in the impact of places on how people experience them," she says. "Special-needs is at the extreme end of that." In addition to co-authoring the book *Design for Independent Living* with Ray Lifchez in 1979, Winslow has designed many special-needs housing projects as a partner at Jacobson Silverstein Winslow/Degenhardt Architects.

Her background and experience inform her perceptive views on such topics as creating calming environments for the mentally ill. "They need to be in a supportive, secure situation that offers a sense of reprieve," she says. "We try to create a psychological home. There's a fireplace in the living room and window seats or bay windows. We try to make zones on the fringe of activity, nooks so people can have different degrees of social involvement. It lets them observe and control their entry into a situation." Over the years she's learned that gardens and well-landscaped outdoor spaces have a healing effect on those with physical and mental ailments. And at housing for residents with AIDS, she feels that a balance of private bedrooms and baths and communal kitchens and living spaces usually works best. "It means people are not isolated from one another," she says. "You know there are other people there if you need them."

For the physically disabled, Winslow likes to incorporate easily adaptable or universally appealing features. "There are some simple things, like making windows low enough so people in a wheelchair can see outside," she says. "Lever door handles are probably easier for everyone. A wider hall for a wheelchair can be used later for something else, like bookcases or storage." In addition to overseeing most of JSW/D's special-needs housing, Winslow also applies her expertise to custom homes for private clients with disabilities. —m.d.



case studies begin next page

more than shelter

case study

8nw8th, portland, ore.

Portland-based Central City Concern believes housing must provide much more than shelter for low-income individuals undergoing substance abuse rehabilitation. It must help ease them back into society, safely and effectively. So to practice what it preaches, the group commissioned SERA Architects to design 8NW8th, a project that provides transitional housing and rehab assistance.

"[Central City] had a specific program," says John Echlin, AIA, principal with SERA. It wanted a warm non-institutional building that had a strong residential feel to it, he says. To that end, the firm located private units in the wings of the L-shaped building and supplied each of them with a small refrigerator, sink, and hot plate. But they placed the shared kitchen, showers, and balconies at the corners overlooking the park. "They encourage the residents to use the communal spaces to foster interaction," says Echlin.

Clad in brick for residential appeal and quality, the project consists of 180 units in two sizes—120 SRO units with support services and case management, and 60 larger studio apartments for long-term residents. Residents on the first two floors share space with support services and a conference room, television room, and library.—*nigel f. maynard*

architect:

SERA Architects, Portland

developer:

Central City Concern, Portland

general contractor:

Walsh Construction, Portland

project size:

81,000 square feet

site size:

0.2 acre

number of units:

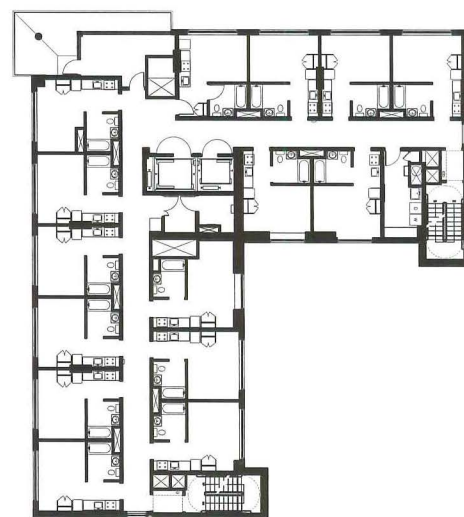
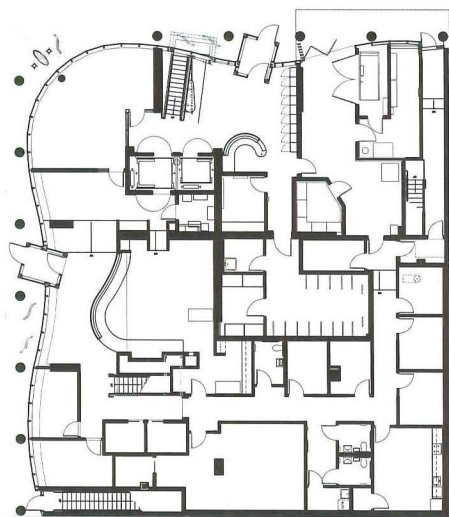
180

construction cost:

\$160 per square foot



Photos: Michael Mathers





The 12-story 8NW8th building incorporates residential units and a 10,000-square-foot alternative health clinic, as well as meeting rooms and community facilities that promote interaction among residents.



more than shelter

case study

los vecinos sro chicago

This low-income housing project was designed in consultation with its potential residents, and the project is that much stronger because of it, says architect Jeff Bone, AIA, principal at Chicago-based Landon Bone Baker Architects. Turns out their needs were not so special after all, but what all of us want in our housing: healthy, bright, and cheerful surroundings.

The client, Heartland Housing, had a simple request: design high-quality housing with support services and social areas for 62 people. "They left the aesthetics and layout up to us," Bone says.

The firm gutted the entire 1920s building, taking care to leave its strong architectural character intact, and concentrated on providing residents with natural light and sightlines to the outdoors. Floor-to-ceiling storefront openings on the ground floor accomplish those tasks in the common areas, while large existing windows flood each 15-by-9½-foot unit with abundant daylight. A ground-floor greenhouse located adjacent to public spaces on the west side of the lobby provides a peaceful relaxation area.

Because the budget was tight, the architects "tried to manipulate the design with simple materials like ceramic tile and details like chair rails that double as places for pictures," says Bone. The firm—which has a furniture division—designed and built tables, chairs, and other pieces to add even more architectural cheer. —*n.f.m.*

architect:

Landon Bone Baker Architects, Chicago

developer:

Heartland Housing, Chicago

general contractor:

Humboldt Construction Co., Chicago

landscape architect:

McKay Landscape Architects, Chicago

project size:

20,700 square feet

site size:

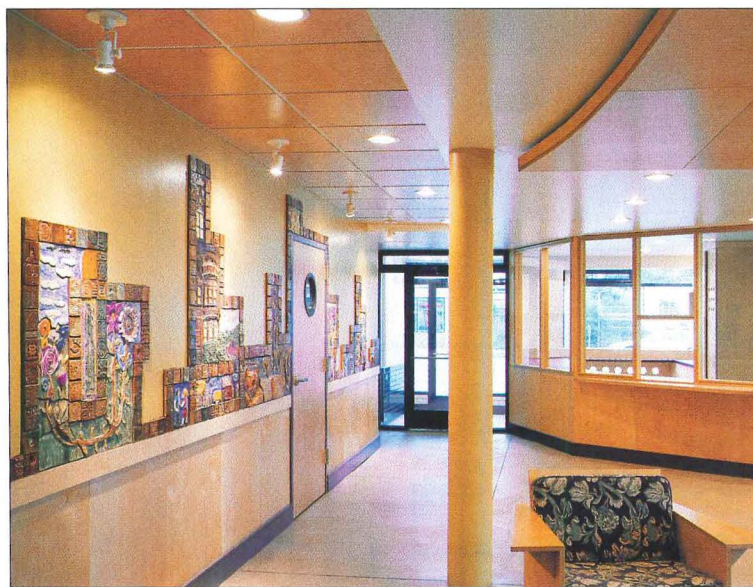
0.28 acre

number of units:

62

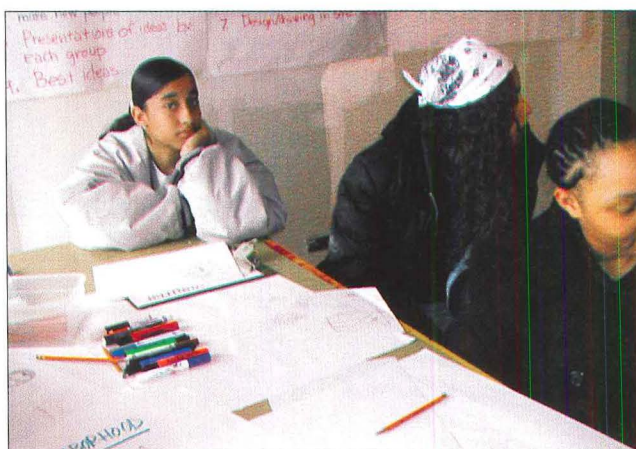
construction cost:

\$177 per square foot

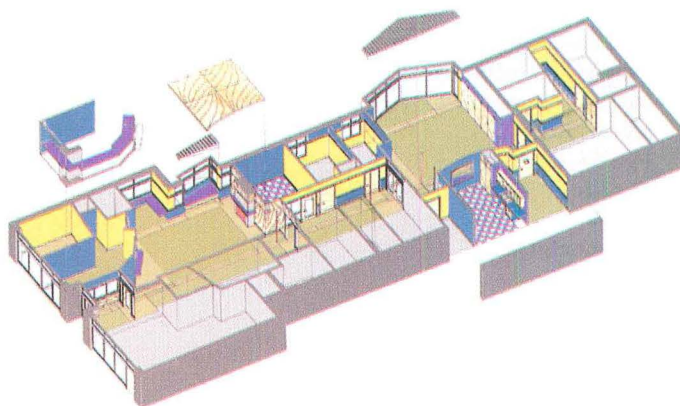


Photos: Mark Ballogg

Landon Bone Baker gutted this former hotel but kept the handsome facade and exploited the large existing openings to brighten the interiors (top). Floor-to-ceiling aluminum storefront systems help the lobby feel spacious (above).



Each unit (above) has a modest kitchenette to bolster the tenants' self-sufficiency; the architects used a palette of simple materials to enliven the private bathrooms.



Archi-Treasures created the mosaic tile artwork in the lobby, with input from local youths and artists (opposite page, left; above and right, center). The architects designed the lobby furniture and fold-down tables in the units.

more than shelter

case study

avalon mutual housing seattle, wash.

When the Seattle office of Pyatok Architects began designing a community of transitional housing for mentally ill residents, it knew it might face a neighborhood outcry against the project. So it pre-empted complaints with a contextually sensitive design. The L-shaped building's short arm faces the street, so passers-by can't tell how large the project really is. And its Craftsman detailing, rendered in wood trim and fiber-cement paneling, fits right into the primarily residential West Seattle streetscape. According to firm principal Michael Pyatok, FAIA, the strategy worked. "There was no opposition from the neighbors there," he says.

He and project manager Tom Eanes, AIA, nestled the project into a hillside site, with parking, offices for the nonprofit developer, and a multipurpose room taking up the ground floor. The upper two stories contain fifteen 300- to 400-square-foot studios, almost all of which open onto a continuous rear porch. Many of the building's residents are smokers, and the porch offers them a convenient way to go outside for a cigarette. It also supplies the opportunity for social interaction that's crucial to most special-needs housing. And it faces an amenity that luxury homeowners would covet: a certified organic vegetable garden. The vegetables are tended and harvested by the residents, who have ready-made customers among Seattle's high-end restaurants. —*m.d.*

project:

Avalon Mutual Housing, Seattle, Wash.

architect:

Pyatok Architects, Seattle

developer:

Transitional Resources, Seattle

general contractor:

Rafn Co., Bellevue, Wash.

project size:

10,000 square feet

site size:

0.2 acre

number of units:

15

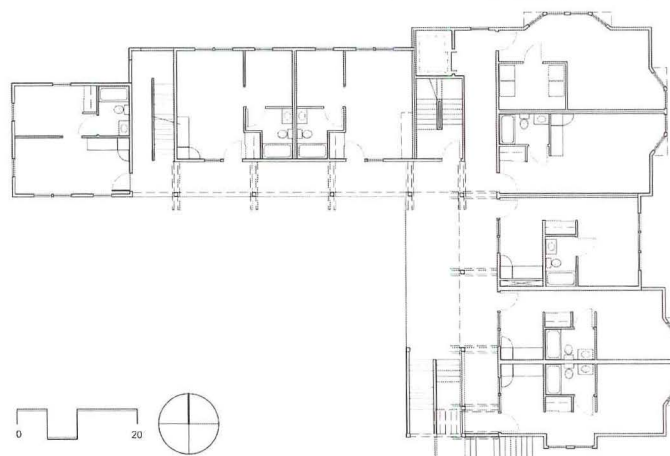
construction cost:

\$140 per square foot



The scale, massing, and detailing of Pyatok Architects' sympathetic design for Avalon Mutual Housing takes cues from the project's neighbors.





The community's porch-lined rear elevation wraps around an organic garden maintained by the mentally ill residents.



Photos: Pyatok Architects

more than shelter

case study

homesafe san jose, calif.

The developer of HomeSafe, a community for battered women and their children, approached Studio E Architects with an interesting challenge. In addition to the usual affordable housing request—good design on a shoestring budget—they also wanted the project to fit into a co-housing format. “The developers felt it was part of the healing process to put these women who had shared this horrible experience together,” says architect John Sheehan of Studio E.

The San Diego-based firm approached the co-housing concept with gusto. It divided the development’s 25 units into three main residential buildings, layering common kitchen, dining, and living areas with private bedroom suites for each resident. “[The suites] are a place the women can retreat to and be alone if they want,” says Sheehan. Double sinks, refrigerators, stoves, and ranges in each kitchen help avoid the conflicts the client had experienced in earlier projects with shared cooking spaces.

As with most battered women’s housing, security plays a major role. In addition to locked gates and cameras, the courtyard site plan provides natural surveillance in an “eyes on the street” fashion. And the daycare and community center at the entrance acts as a buffer between the street and the residential buildings. —*m.d.*

architect:

Studio E Architects, San Diego, Calif.

developer:

Charities Housing Development Corp. / InVision / HomeSafe Collaborative, San Jose, Calif.

general contractor:

F/D Ouelette and Sons, San Jose

landscape architect:

Spurlock Poirier Landscape Architects, San Diego

project size:

25,000 square feet

site size:

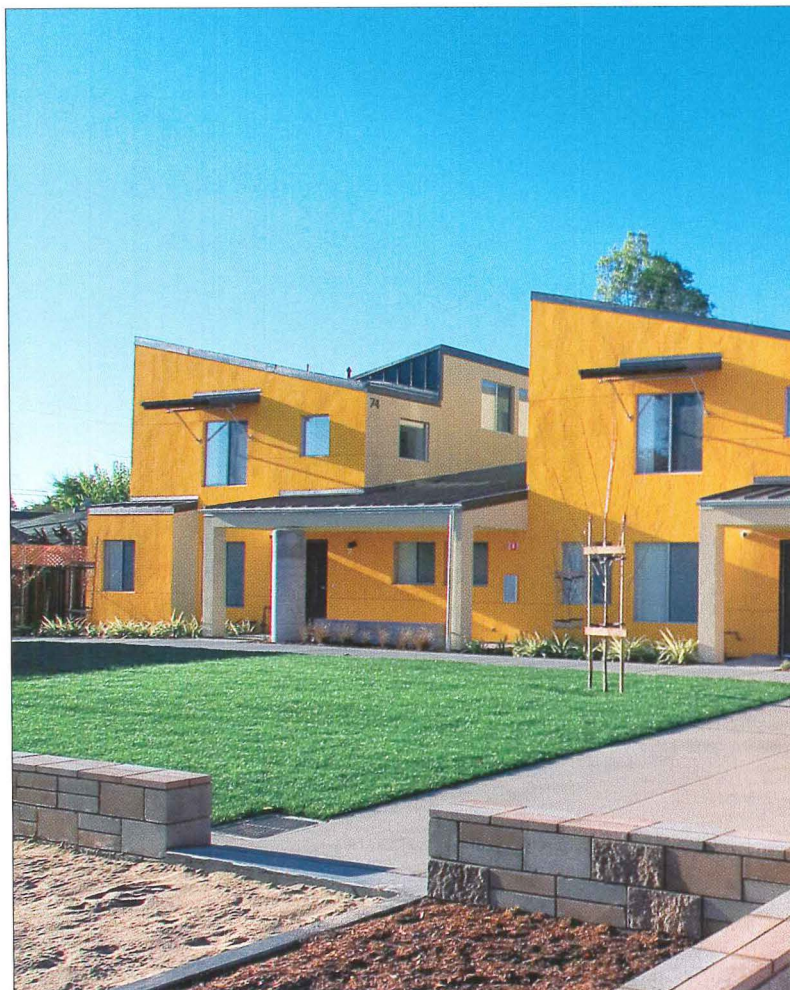
1.1 acre

number of units:

25

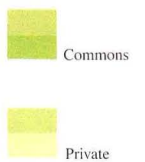
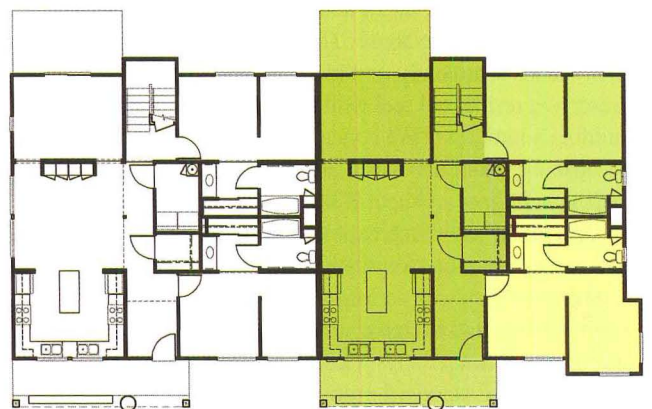
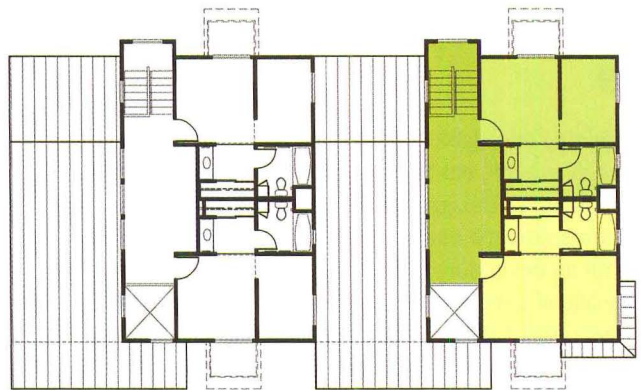
construction cost:

\$185 per square foot

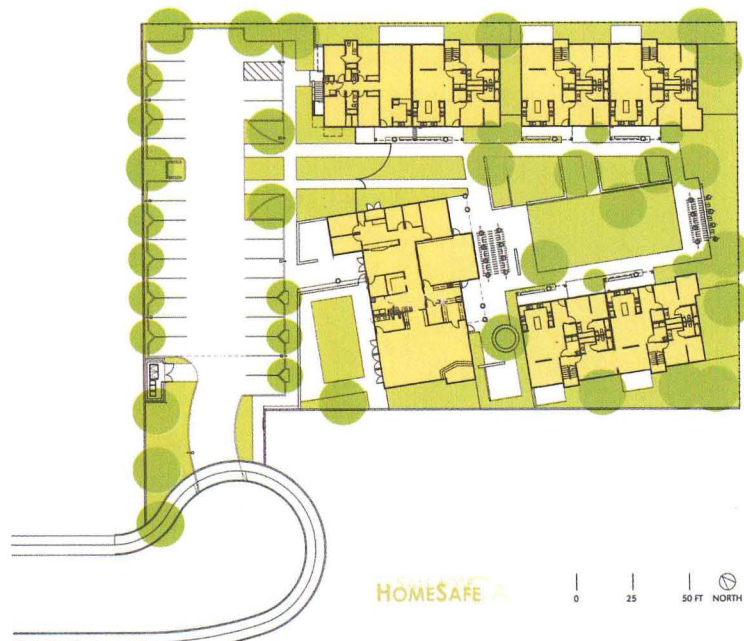


Photos: Jeff Peters/Vantage Point Photography

Bright exterior colors supply a cheerful environment for the battered women who live at HomeSafe with their children. Sawtooth roofs allowed Studio E to squeeze more vertical volume into the units.



A landscaped courtyard at the center of the project makes a great play area or place to stroll. The front office and many of the units overlook the courtyard, providing increased security.



more than shelter

case study

traugott terrace seattle

Designing affordable housing under normal constraints is tough enough, but Seattle-based Environmental Works Community Design Center deserves special kudos for overcoming the hurdles of Traugott Terrace. Working with an unyielding budget, a tight lot, and a sustainability agenda, the nonprofit architectural firm also deftly interweaved the five-story building over the Matt Talbott alcoholic rehabilitation center and into its adjacent parking lot.

Traugott is a “very low” income project that provides transitional and permanent housing for individuals recovering from substance abuse. The building’s metal-clad shell blends seamlessly into its urban context, but bays preserve a residential feel while filtering light into the building’s interiors. “We concentrated on bringing in light because the client believes it helps in the recovery process,” says project architect Bill Singer. Each unit is simply appointed with birch cabinets and a kitchenette; a continuously running ventilation fan keeps the air fresh.

Sustainability was an important element of the program, so “we had to make sure the materials were appropriate,” Singer says. Green products had to compare in price to standard products or offer superior durability. The firm chose materials that contained high recycled content and that were produced within 500 miles of the project, rapidly renewable, and certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. The extra effort paid off, Singer says. Not only has the project won a number of awards, it was the first affordable housing building to earn LEED certification. —*n.f.m.*

architect:

Environmental Works Community Design Center, Seattle

developer:

Traugott Terrace, LLC

general contractor:

Rafn Co., Bellevue, Wash.

project size:

6,277 square feet (existing building); 32,206 square feet (new construction)

site size:

0.22 acre

number of units:

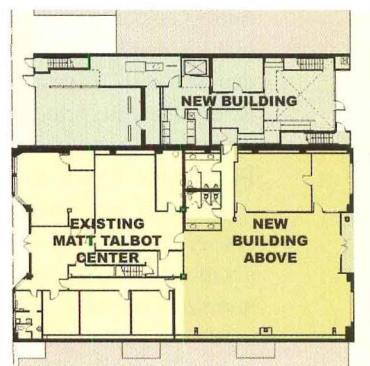
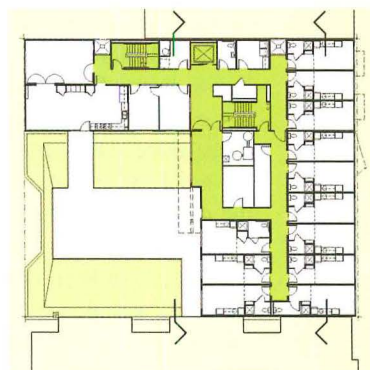
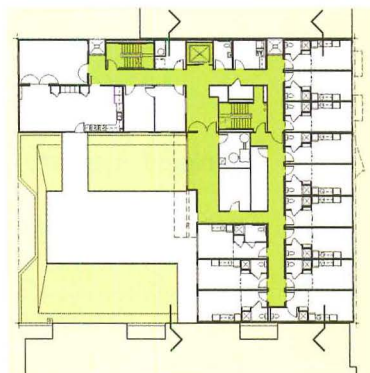
38 permanent, 12 transitional

construction cost:

\$106 per square foot



Photos: Greg Kroger



Traugott Terrace's green features save approximately \$18,000 in energy costs each year. The "clean and sober" housing project provides residents with common kitchens, dining and lounge areas, a large outdoor deck, and access to programs to help prevent substance abuse.

handle with care

special-needs residents need specially chosen products.

by nigel f. maynard

Residential architects know only too well the challenges that arise when designing a custom home for a demanding client. Architects who toil in the realm of special-needs multifamily housing, however, face a different set of obstacles and obligations. Instead of satisfying the needs of just one client, the design pro must meet the severe budgetary constraints of the hiring organization as well as the highly individual needs of multiple future residents. "It's [certainly] easier to meet a client's needs when they can afford it," says architect Kathy Dorgan, principal of Dorgan Architecture and Planning in Storrs, Conn.

In addition to satisfying conservative clients and antagonistic NIMBYs, these architects must design buildings that support greater independence for the physically challenged, environments that brighten the spirits of children with AIDS, and spaces that help reintegrate homeless citizens into society. Good architecture is essential, but careful product details and durable material selections play vital roles in making this type of housing feel special for everyone who dwells there.

less for more

"There are certain requirements the hiring agency will have," says New York City architect Beth Cooper Lawrence, who has been designing affordable and special-needs housing in the New York metropolitan area since 1979. "Knowing the potential occupants is also a key factor." The more specifically a project meets the needs of its residents, the more creativity and architectural ingenuity it can show. Everything, however, is dictated by dollars.

"Price is usually the first consideration for me," says Cooper Lawrence, whose portfolio includes housing for the homeless and mentally ill. "I spend less in the rooms and more in the common spaces, where wear and aesthetics are a concern." Some of the specs she favors for lobbies and hallways are durable, heavy vinyl wall coverings and laminate flooring, which doesn't fade and is easily replaced when damaged. She also likes commercial-grade vinyl floor



Russell Abraham

Sam Davis, who designed this assisted-care project in San Francisco, prefers to spend more money up front on low-maintenance materials.

tile for public spaces and long-wearing vinyl composite tile for the private rooms.

James E. Andrews, AIA, is a strong believer in going to the source for both inspiration and design rigor. "I try to understand the particular needs and requirements of the group that will live in the residences," says the principal of Andrews Architects in Portland, Ore. Field work is his study tool. "If

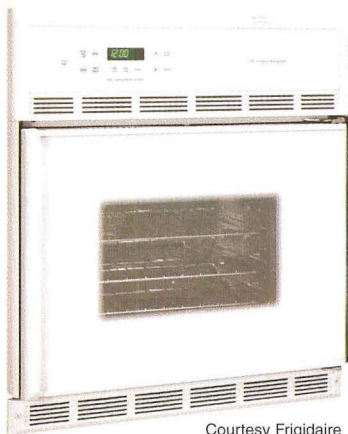
you have a population of that group in your area, make a visit and look at what they do, see how they live, and ask questions," he says. First-hand knowledge gives him the insight he needs when it comes time to detail the project and select materials. "It's your best chance for a winning project."

Some of Andrews' solutions are fairly straightforward. For instance, when

designing kitchen facilities for residents in wheelchairs he'll choose wall ovens with side-hinged doors and pull-out bread boards directly underneath. "The side hinges give them easier access, and they can use the board for hot items." Other projects require greater depth of research and understanding of the disability. "One project I did for brain injured residents had doorless closets and cabinets," he explains. "They don't remember where things are, so having everything open helps with memory."

true colors

Color is a simple yet powerful tool in architecture, and it's even more important to people with special needs. For them, it can help or harm, depending on how and where it's applied. Used with discernment, it can provide essential assistance in orientation and differentiation to the elderly and the vision-impaired, or it can lead them dangerously astray.



Courtesy Frigidaire

Side-hinged wall ovens, says architect James E. Andrews, provide easy and comfortable access from wheelchairs.

That's why architect Kathy Dorgan is vigilant in selecting and placing color. Color changes on the floor, near steps, and in hallways require particular precision. "I am careful not to do a dark border on the front of steps because it makes the elderly think there is a void to step down," she says. Cooper Lawrence concurs, "For the elderly, color is a big deal. It shouldn't be too bright or too dark."

Other groups, such as children with AIDS or cancer, are encouraged by bright, cheerful colors. Some organizations believe that certain colors can affect the moods of individuals undergoing rehabilitation for substance abuse and those with mental disability. While not everyone believes in such a direct, specific link between color and behavior, no one disputes that natural light is a significant mood enhancer. "Light is important for all people, but it might be more important for people who are stuck indoors," says Andrews. As a result, creating light-filled interior spaces is among the most important goals for architects doing supportive housing.

illuminating choices

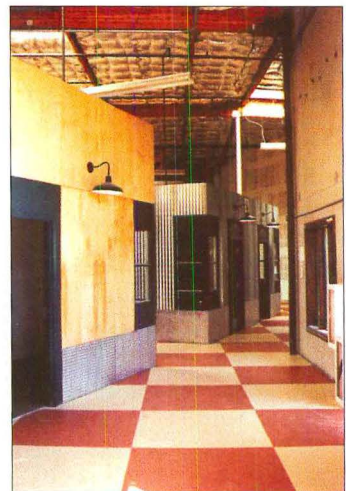
Dorgan is equally attentive to the artificial lighting she uses in special-needs projects. "A lot of people with AIDS or other [health problems] are often light-sensitive," she says, and they do better with indirect lighting. "No one wants a view of a light bulb." Even with

groups who require more light, such as the elderly, indirect sources are often more effective and comfortable, she adds.

"[Specifying materials] for special-needs housing is not all that different from other types of housing," says Berkeley, Calif.-based Sam Davis, architecture professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and principal of Sam Davis Architecture. "It often comes down to cost and longevity of the materials."

According to Davis, organizations are often more pinched on the back end of the project than on the front. Spending more money initially for longer-lasting and low-maintenance products may help them adhere to small operational budgets. "I try to spec materials that stand up to abuse or those that don't show it very easily," says Davis, who also wrote *Designing for the Homeless: Architecture That Works* (University of California Press, 2004). For his Larkin Street Youth Services project in San Francisco, for example, he compromised with painted gypsum walls in the lobby. "If I had my druthers, I would have used something else," he says, such as durable aluminum diamond plate or Hardiplank fiber cement panels.

This highly specialized category may share similarities with other housing types in some ways, but the successful architect is mindful of its greater obligations.



Courtesy Sam Davis Architecture

For the Contra Costa County adult shelter, Sam Davis used aluminum diamond plate, corrugated metal, and fiber cement panels to create lively yet durable interiors.

"Do not just meet minimum code requirements," Dorgan advises. "Understand the needs of the users by visiting other projects, but then go above what the requirements are." The project will be even stronger from everyone's point of view, she promises.

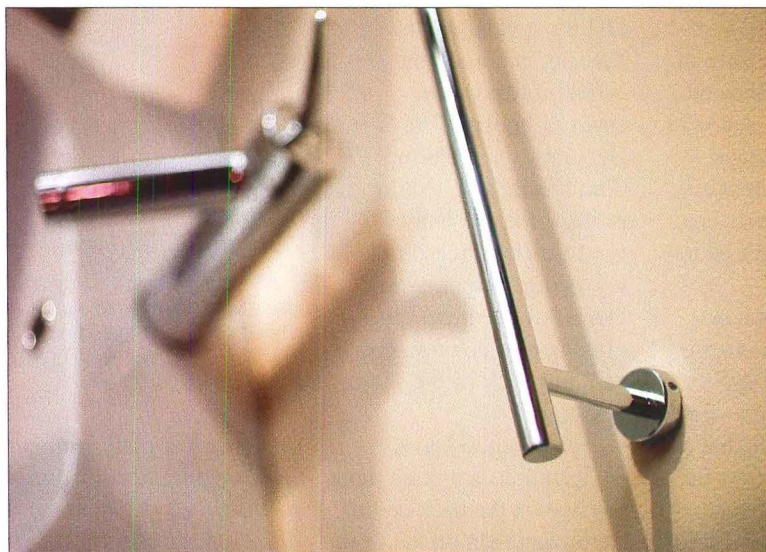
Cooper Lawrence recommends a methodical, collaborative approach with the client. "There is a certain way to work with them," she says. "You can't go into the project with a big ego, and you must understand that you are not working in a vacuum."

Sam Davis agrees. Special-needs organizations are understandably careful with their money and their architecture, but there's plenty of room left for invention. "The clients are really interested in doing something interesting," he says. "They don't want the usual." Indeed, they want and deserve something special in every way. **ra**

off the shelf

big finish

polish off single or multiple habitats with these final flourishes.

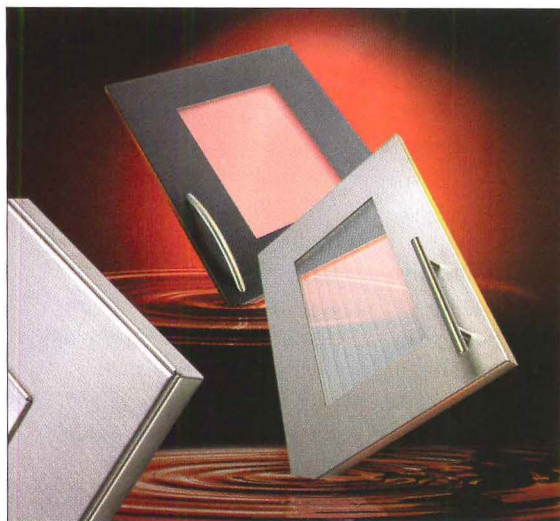


fine lines

Sleek simplicity distinguishes the Linea line of decorative hardware for the bath. Towel bars and rings, toothbrush holders, hooks, shelves, pulls, and soap dishes are available in polished chrome or brushed nickel. Atlas Homewares, 800.799.6755; www.atlashomewares.com.

corner lot

Laser welding yields smooth corners and seamless texturing on Lasertron stainless steel cabinet doors. Internal construction means the back of each door is as pretty as the front. A lightweight rigid foam core prevents warping and gives the steel a solid feel. Etched textures add pizzazz to slab doors; framed glass fronts come in numerous styles. Or supply your own glass and the company will install. Lasertron, 954.846.8600; www.lasertrondirect.com.



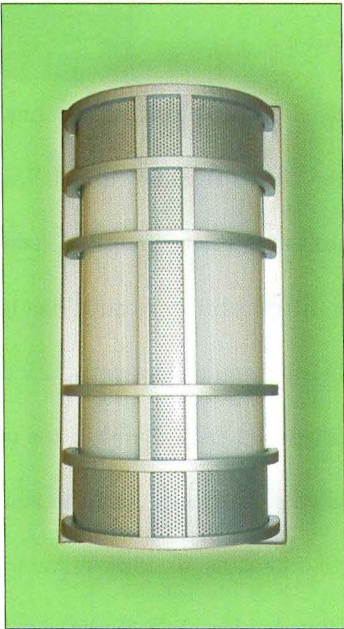
double click

All-natural Marmoleum flooring now comes in click-together panels and squares for quick and easy glueless installation. The cork-backed tiles are available in 12-by-12-inch squares or panels measuring 12 inches wide by 36 inches long. Choose from 18 colors to create stripes, borders, checkerboards, or random patterns. Forbo Flooring, 570.459.0771; www.themarmoleumstore.com.

star light

Libra and Cancer

Series sconces feature customized design options suggested by customers. Part of the Galileo line, these fixtures work as indoor and outdoor illumination. Choose energy-efficient compact

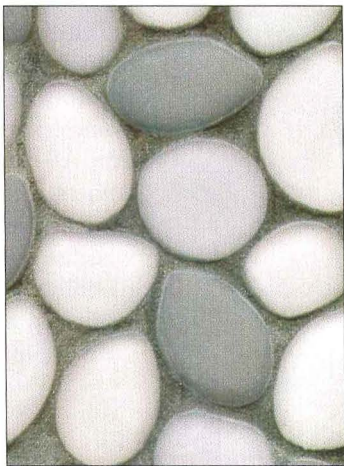


fluorescent, HID (High Intensity Discharge), or induction light sources. The Libra series (shown) uses Perfex perforated brightness control panels to focus direct light and up the dazzle quotient. Eclipse Lighting, 847.260.0333; www.eclipselightinginc.com.



brass ensemble

The new Tube Collection from Turnstyle Designs unites classic solid-brass construction with updated designs and a clean, uniform finish. The simple forms blend with traditional or contemporary architecture and anything in between. Satin nickel, bright chrome, polished brass, or dark bronze coatings add further versatility to the collection, which includes door, cabinet, and window hardware with coordinating fittings such as switches and hinges. Turnstyle Designs, 011.44.127.132.5325; www.turnstyle-designs.com.



polished presentation

Add the aesthetic of wet river rocks or weathered beach pebbles to bathroom counters or balcony floors with Cobblestone Series tiles. For an organic look, no molds are used to create the glass tiles. Mesh-backed sheets are curved on the sides, allowing for seamless applications on either vertical or horizontal surfaces. Gray or white stones come in either polished or tumbled finishes. Hakatai Enterprises, 541.552.0855; www.hakatai.com.

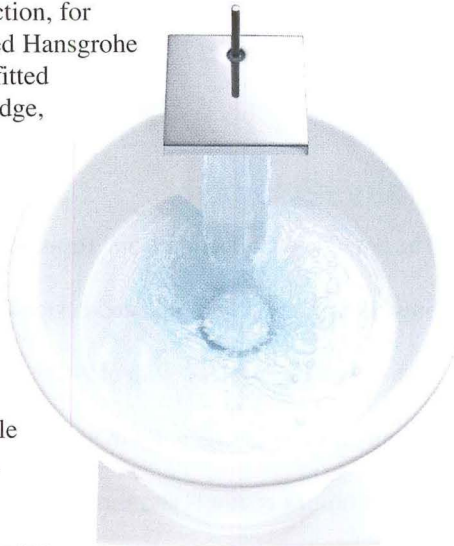
—shelley d. hutchins

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Designer Philippe Starck is known for his rather idiosyncratic and radically modern faucets and fixtures. His latest, Axor Starck X collection, for Alpharetta, Ga.-based Hansgrohe is no exception. Outfitted with a joystick cartridge, the chrome faucet comprises a stem with an attached flat plane and a hidden spray insert, which can be adjusted to control the direction of the falling water. The single-hole product is offered in four heights: 4, 8, 12, and 22 inches. Hansgrohe, 800.719.1000; www.hansgroheusa.com.



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—nigel f. maynard



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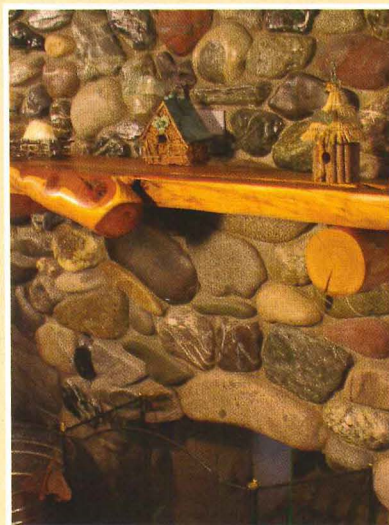
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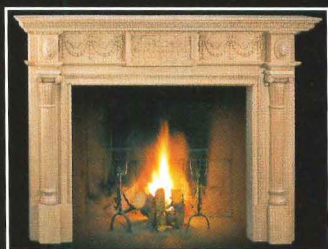


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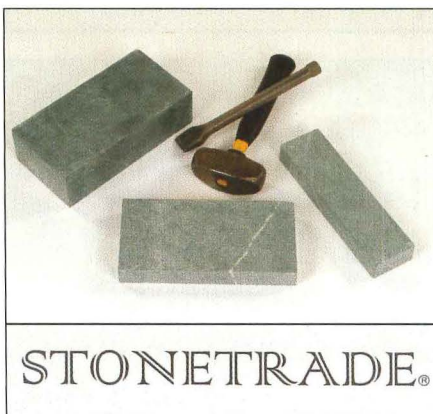
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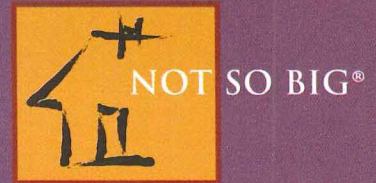
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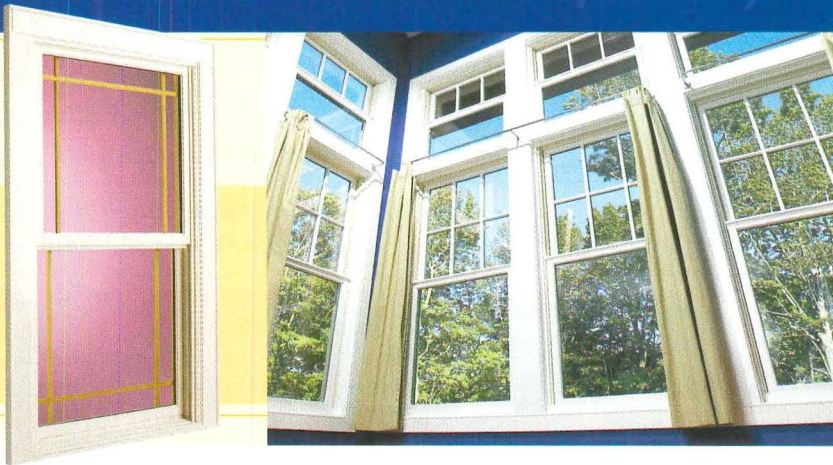
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when?

Entry forms and fees are due no later than November 15, 2005. Completed binders are due January 5, 2006.

where?

Winning projects will be published in the May 2006 issue of *residential architect* magazine. Winners will also be honored at an awards dinner in Los Angeles on June 9, 2006.

how?

A panel of respected architects will independently select winners in 15 categories, based on design excellence. Judges may withhold awards in any category at their discretion.

entry form

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☐ Payment for _____ standard entries at \$125 each and/or _____ on the boards, kitchen, bath, outbuilding or design detail entries at \$95 each is enclosed.

☐ Check for \$_____ (payable to *residential architect*) is enclosed

☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Card Number

Expiration Date

Name on Card

Signature

number of entries categories

1. Custom Home, 3,500 square feet or less
2. Custom Home, more than 3,500 square feet
3. Renovation (residential remodeling and additions)
4. Multifamily Housing
5. Single-Family Production Housing, detached
6. Single-Family Production Housing, attached
7. Affordable Housing (At least 20 percent of the units must be affordable to families earning 80 percent to 120 percent of the local Median Family Income. Consult your area HUD office or local government office for the MFI.)
8. Adaptive Re-Use (end use must include residential)
9. Campus Housing
10. Architectural Interiors* (residential)
11. Outbuildings*
12. Kitchen*
13. Bath*
14. Architectural Design Detail*
15. On the Boards*

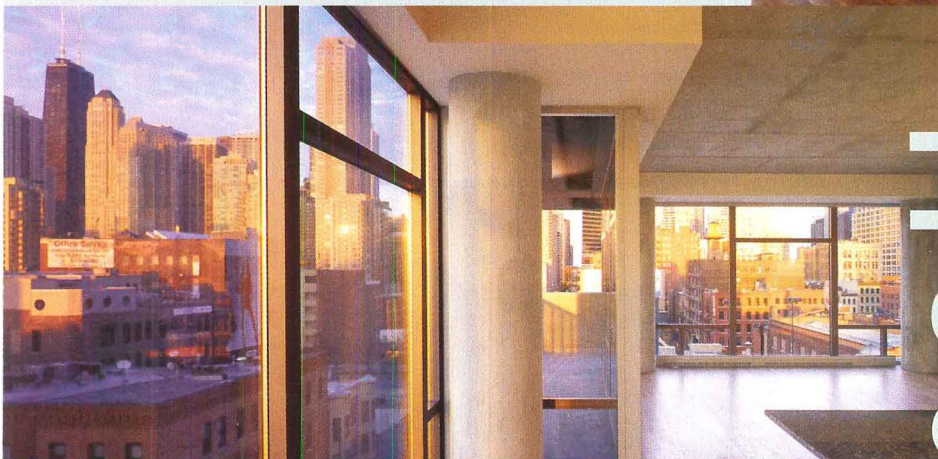
*Not eligible for Project of the Year

deadlines:

entry form and fee: november 15, 2005
completed binders: january 5, 2006

eligibility

details



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