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AUGUST 2006

rethink twice

angela brooks, lawrence scarpa, and gwynne pugh
take nothing at face value



soleri power / all's well that starts well /
minority report / leftover overhauls /
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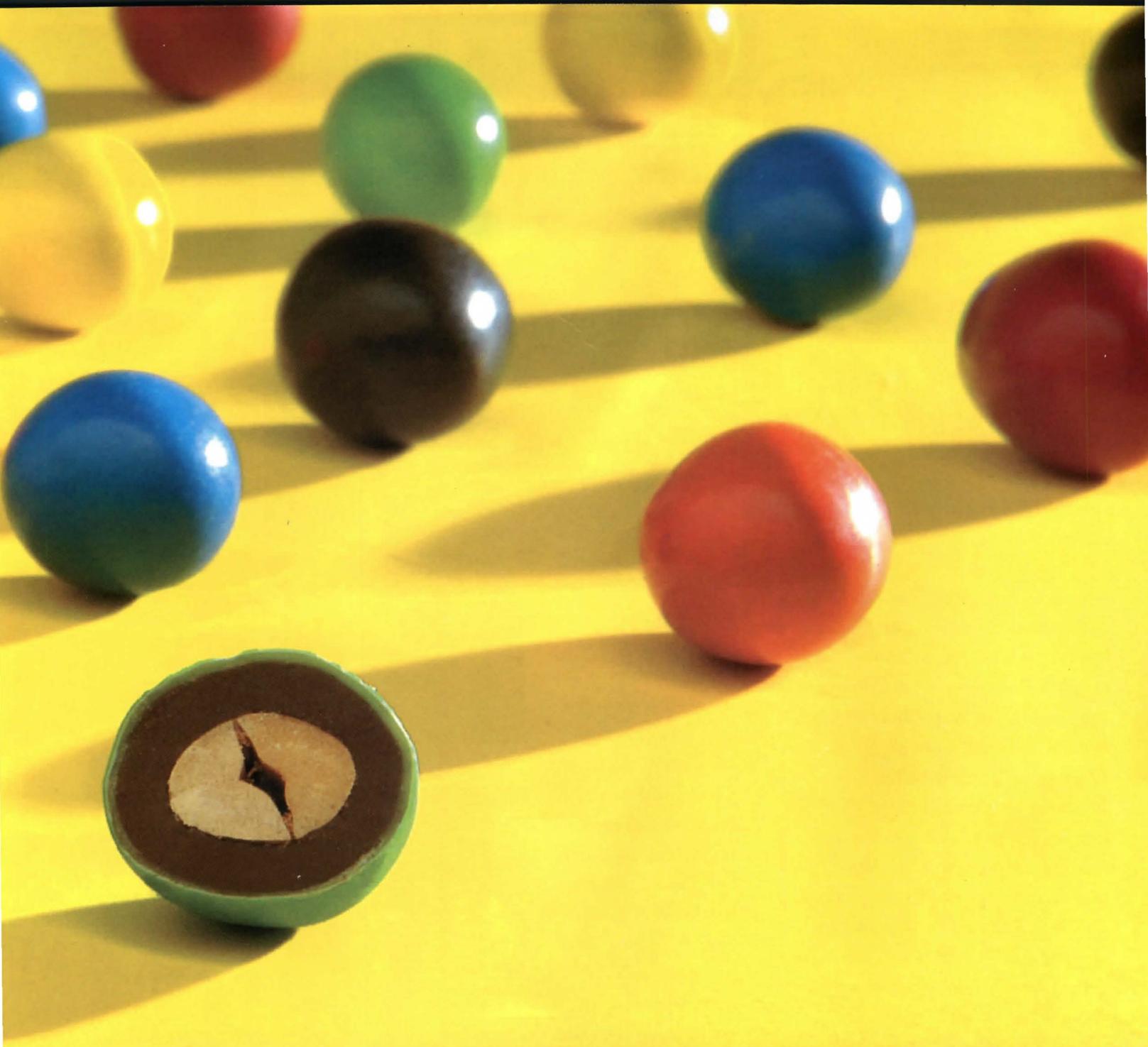
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COLLABORATION AT THE EDGE

Mark R. Johnson, FAIA, AIBD

In our effort to explore the cutting edge of residential design, KitchenAid brand has been working with two of America's most innovative young design firms—Lazor Office in Minneapolis and AvroKO in New York.

After graduating from Yale School of Architecture, Charlie Lazor cofounded Blu Dot, a Minneapolis based furniture design studio whose work has been exhibited in The Museum of Modern Art and garnered many design awards. When Charlie launched his own architectural practice, Lazor Office, his own residential project quickly followed. Based in part on the manufacturing principles that distinguish Blu Dot's furniture, he designed and built the first FlatPak house. Derivations of the prototype home are now available through The Dwell Homes by



Smart.space kitchen by AvroKO.

Empyrean as an interactive project where clients participate in the design of their own unique home. I was delighted when Charlie first called to say he had been researching appliances and wanted to specify KitchenAid® Architect Series® for his FlatPak homes. The clean, minimalist design aesthetic and superior quality of the products appeal to his sense of what is most appropriate for FlatPak clients.



FlatPak exterior by Lazor Office.



FlatPak interior by Lazor Office.

At about the same time, I was approached by Kristina O'Neal, one of four partners in AvroKO, a New York firm famous for their restaurant design work, as well as smart.space, an urban loft project. Their goal with smart.space is the creation of a prototype for a mass-produced, pre-packaged, design-forward residence that will suit urban dwellers all within

655 square feet. In doing so, AvroKO seeks to establish a template for urban, green living, which means sustainability is also an important consideration. After researching appliance options, AvroKO specified the KitchenAid® Architect Series® for its clean modernist design, integrated look across the entire appliance suite and ENERGY STAR® compliance.

In both these forward-thinking projects, we are pleased that KitchenAid® Architect Series® was the brand of choice sought out by architects and designers who care about the nuances of appliance design. To learn more about these projects and

the appliances they specified, visit www.flatpakhouse.com, www.avroko.com and www.kitchenaid.com.



Mark R. Johnson, FAIA, AIBD
Manager, Architecture and Design Marketing

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AGENDA AT-A-GLANCE

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House Tour

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Welcome Reception

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7

Keynote Address

No Limits

Panel Discussion

Inside, Outside, and In-Between

Learn how to integrate interior and landscape design into your practice

Panel Discussion

The Master Architect

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Awards Luncheon

Hall of Fame

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Roundtable Discussions

- 1) Teaching What You Do
- 2) Writing What You Know
- 3) Building What You Design

Panel Discussion

Practice Made Perfect

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Reception

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8

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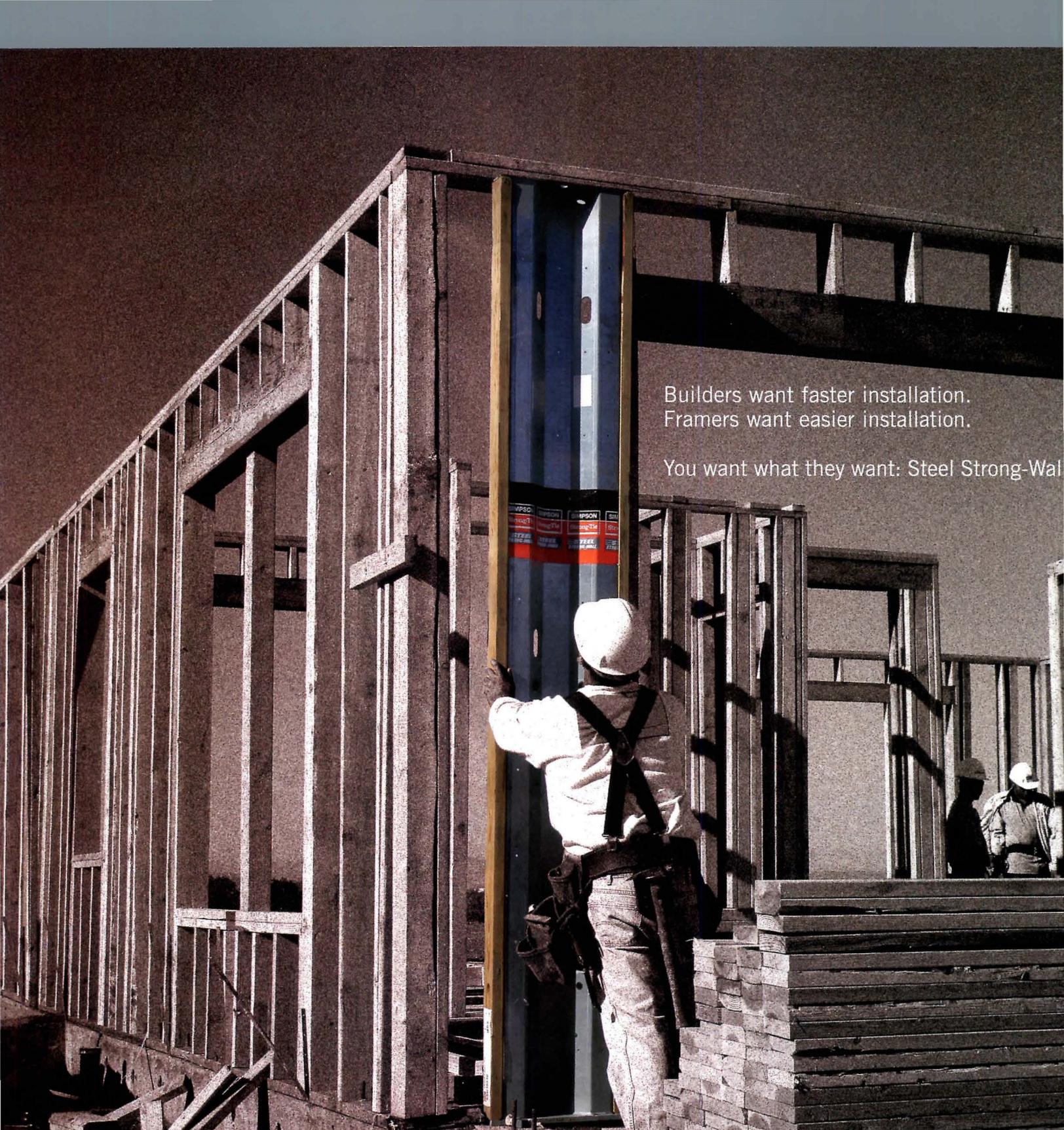
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Pugh + Scarpa Architects deftly balances design drama and domestic tranquility in its diverse portfolio. Photo: Marvin Rand. Cover photo: Danny Turner.



residential architect
design awards

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Enter your best projects in the 8th
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from the editor

the pitfalls of selling process, continued

avoiding the dangers of the best-friend client.

by s. claire conroy

Are you best friends with the people you work with? It can happen, and it can be just great. Sometimes a lifetime bond emerges from your shared experiences, your inherent compatibility, a common worldview. But sometimes, even people you like can turn into a burden in a work environment. They interrupt you when you're trying to focus on an important task, they overstay their welcome in your guest chair, they ask you for special favors that put you in a tough spot, they call you after hours when you'd rather spend time with your family. The needy friend who knows no bounds is a problem everyone has had to deal with. If you're an architect who pitches your services as "a process" rather than a necessary means to an end, you may also be cultivating the needy client.

Relationship selling is all the rage these days. But who wants a full-blown relationship with everyone we do business with? How many hours in the day do you have to hold the anxious hand of a client? The more you sell clients on the process of architectural

design rather than the product it can achieve, the tighter their grip will close. Certainly, you must treat your clients with respect and sensitivity, but you don't have to sign on as their bosom buddy.

Everything gets complicated when friendship is involved. Here's where architects often don't charge enough to make money on the job, or you overwork the project for the fee you're collecting. You spend time quelling the client instead of finishing the drawings and moving on to the next project. Maybe you discover you've created a monster client who won't allow delegation to anyone else in the firm. Even worse are the besotted clients who delay completion of the project with changes or additions because, consciously or not so consciously, they don't want this wonderful relationship to end. And alas, anything that slows down the work makes residential design even less lucrative than it already is.

There's really no reason to fall back on this rosy idea of process as a way to justify your expense or even your very existence on a residential project. And there's no need to seduce



Mark Robert Halper

clients so they'll sign whatever checks you put before them. It's so much simpler and more effective to maintain a collegial relationship with them—one based on mutual esteem. What they require from you is your expertise, your insight, and your understanding. They want you to get back to them in a timely fashion—during business hours—when they have a question. They want you to do the same for their builder. They expect regular communication from you even when you're juggling other projects and haven't finished the next step on theirs. They hate being the heavy who has to hunt you down for everything. They rely on you to budget your work

accurately and to stand up for the aesthetics of the job even when they waver. They want and need a good house from you.

In turn, what we all must do is champion the premise—through consistent behavior—that architects are professionals and their professional services have value. And when you've done your job right, you've added value to your clients' houses. That's when you'll have earned their friendship for life. **ra**

Comments? Call: 202.736.3312; write: S. Claire Conroy, *residential architect*, One Thomas Circle, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20005; or e-mail: cconroy@hanleywood.com.

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letters

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guild by association

Kudos to contributor Peter Pfeiffer, FAIA, for standing up for quality building ("Numbers Game," September/October 2005, page 39).

Here in Boston, we have created an alliance of high-quality builders called the Custom Builders Guild to educate local homeowners and the built community on the value of building homes exceptionally well. Our mission is to address the challenges that Mr. Pfeiffer outlines head-on. To help homeowners differentiate "high quality" from "high luxury." To help them recognize the inherent value and peace of mind they can expect from a home that will serve them well for years versus one that was built quickly and cheaply. To help them become more enlightened and empowered consumers of residential building services.

As professional builders, we will not succeed in our mission of changing the way homeowners are buying services without the support of the residential architect community. Thank you for printing Mr. Pfeiffer's article, and for helping us be a part of the change we would all like to see in

the world of residential building.

*Gary Gallagher
Gallagher Home Builders
Maynard, Mass.*

modern musings

for years I've been lamenting that we need to be asking ourselves, What is modern now ("The Man in the Machine," September/October 2005, page 15)? It seems there should be a more inventive approach.

IKEA recently opened a store in a town just south of Boston. They have been greeted as if they are rock stars coming to town. It leads me, once again, to believe that there is a demand in the housing market that is not being met.

The concept of "brand" is interesting. I find myself drawn to "the big M," but that movement is 50 or 60 years old now. Construction and land costs in the area are extremely high, so modular, as a notion, seems appealing. It seems the market can appreciate light, space, materials, and connection to the outdoors. Sustainability seems to offer potential if it's really allowed to give form to site planning and design.

What is the modern yard? What is the modern

connection to the transit network? What is the response to an aging population? What is the modern connection to work? What meets people's needs for self-expression and personal growth and development? Can these concepts be articulated in a way that is marketable? Can a form be developed that is responsive to these concepts and also marketable?

*Greg Thompson, AIA
ICON architecture
Boston*

frank observation

your observations about Frank Harmon, FAIA, are on target ("In Plain Sight," November/December 2005, page 15). He is a very approachable man who takes the time to describe his work in terms I can understand. His success shows that others understand it as well.

*Perry Cox, AIA
Apex, N.C.*

collective consciousness

thank you for acknowledging the role of *conscious* architects in society ("Go Ahead and Break Some Rules," January/February

2006, page 15). I emphasize "conscious" because I have had many ... prospective clients pass on our services in favor of the guy who was "less expensive."

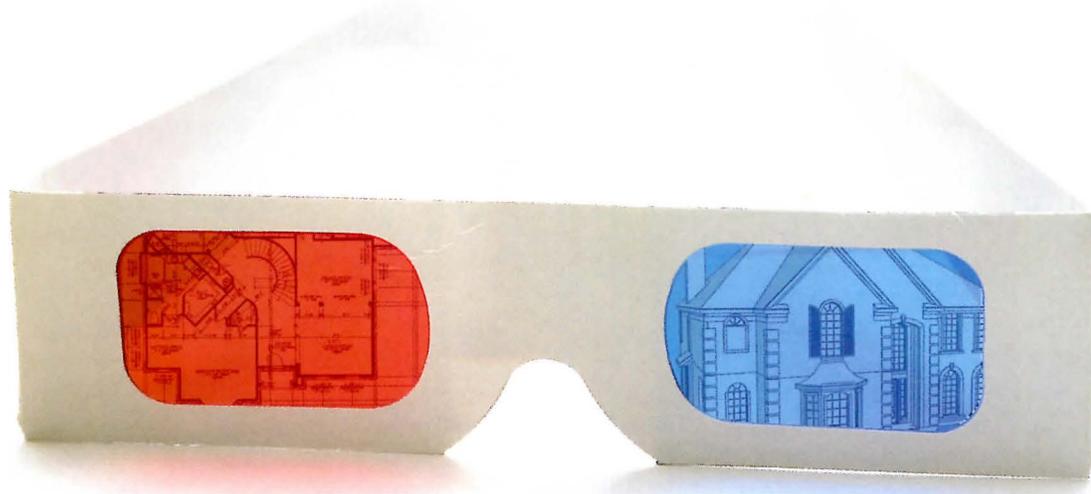
In our initial consultations, I take the time to educate clients on the value of good architectural service from a design standpoint. I also point out that they will actually save money with well-thought-out, thorough, comprehensive design and construction documents. Of course, it takes more time and expense to do the right job; they just don't go for it.

A few months later, when I pass by the prospective site, I see a horrific version of what might have otherwise been a successful project. The unfortunate thing is that when mediocrity is the rule, these poor saps don't even realize what they're missing, and we all suffer for the lack of conscious design.

Let's keep educating the world. Hopefully someday the masses will get it!

*Paul Pellicani, AIA
Paul Joseph Pellicani
Architecture & Design
Glen Head, N.Y.*

*Letters have been edited
for clarity and length.*



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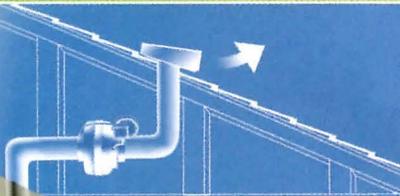
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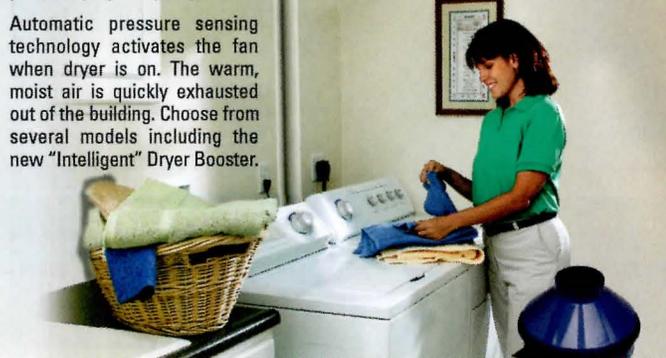
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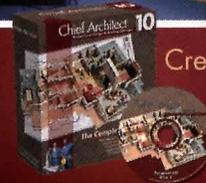
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Circle no. 64

home front

news from the leading edge of residential design.

green in the city

The Helena—FXFOWLE’s new apartment building on Manhattan’s West Side—is the first voluntarily sustainable high-rise residential building in the city and among the most efficient in the country, says Bruce Fowle, FAIA, LEED, senior principal of the New York City-based firm.

Like many swanky high-rises, the 37-story, 580-unit Helena is wrapped in a combination of slick metal and glass, but it’s not just another pretty façade. An on-site “blackwater”-treatment system converts waste into potable water, which can be recycled to flush low-flow toilets and to

irrigate recreational decks and green roofs. A photovoltaic system takes care of about 5 percent of the building’s energy needs, and an incremental heat-pump system delivers heating and cooling to individual units. “This system is more costly, but it’s efficient, so there’s a payback,” Fowle says.

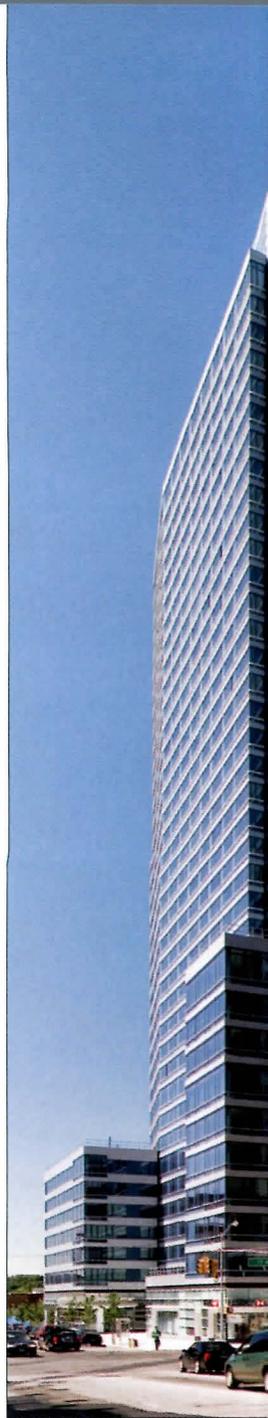
The rental property’s mix of studio, one-, and two-bedroom affordable and market-rate apartments are painted and carpeted with low-VOC materials, and the cabinets are wheatboard. Flooring consists of linoleum and engineered wood made from certified sources. Motion-sensing lights in the public areas and Energy Star appliances help conserve energy.

FXFOWLE is working on two more green projects in the city—both for different developers. “Everything is a balance between the market and environmental sustainability,” Fowle says. “We think there’s now a market, so you will see more sustainable design.”—*nigel f. maynard*



Photos: Jeff Goldberg/Esto

The Helena’s healthier interiors have low-VOC carpet, cabinets, and flooring (above). Its green roofs (top) provide much-appreciated outdoor spaces and help keep the entire building cool.





soleri power

paolo Soleri—the intrepid architect, urban planner, and visionary—has added another honor to his long list of accolades: a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum. The 87-year-old Soleri was recognized for his lifelong experiment in sustainable urban planning at Arcosanti (www.arcosanti.org), the prototype planned community under construction since 1970.



Courtesy Cosanti Foundation

“Soleri, in his own visionary way, took into account a lot of the considerations that architects are now finding make a lot of sense,” says Roger Mandle, president of the Rhode Island School of Design and chair of the Cooper-Hewitt’s 2006 National Design Awards jury. “The jury felt it was time to recognize Soleri for the very practical suggestions his work has made as we take greater account of the impact of urban design on ecology.”

For 40 years, Soleri has been tackling problems that architects and planners have only recently begun to take seriously. He coined the term arcology—architecture fused with ecology—to define a design

approach that allows cities to function as a complex living system to reduce waste and improve quality of life. Born and educated in Italy, Soleri came to the United States in 1947 and spent a year and a half working with Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin West. He returned to Italy in 1950, but six years later he settled in Scottsdale, Ariz., where he established Cosanti, a not-for-profit educational organization that funds research and construction on Arcosanti.

Soleri notes that Arcosanti is “a very modest endeavor” in its development pace. As a result of the award,

he hopes the project will begin to attract more financing. “I don’t have any doubt about the validity of what I’m proposing, and I’m hoping that Arcosanti might solicit some interest that goes beyond curiosity,” he says. “We’d like to see the project, on 860 acres, be purchased by a corporation or philanthropist and given to a university. The money we’d get from the purchase would be put back into the project.” Soleri will be honored at a gala on October 18, with First Lady Laura Bush serving as the honorary patron for this year’s National Design Awards.—*cheryl weber*

social success

the 2006 AIA/HUD Secretary’s Housing and Community Design Awards winnowed a pool of 80 entries to declare three winners. William Wilson Architects prevailed in the Mixed-Use/Mixed-Income Development category for Esther Short Commons (seen here), a 160-unit project in downtown Vancouver, Wash. Jurors applauded the project’s assimilation of low-income residents, its siting atop a regional farmers’ market, and its integration with adjacent commercial space. The location, said the jury, puts more “eyes on the street.”



Sally Painter

The Community Building by Design award went to Blake Street Flats, a Denver infill project from Humphries Poli Architects. The jury noted that the project’s brightly colored corrugated-metal-and-concrete design “takes back and energizes the neighborhood.”

Koning Eizenberg Architecture took the Housing Accessibility: Alan J. Rothman Award for Waterloo Heights Apartments, an 18-unit complex for disabled veterans, senior citizens, and HIV-positive residents in Los Angeles. The jury praised the “understated and sophisticated” design and “the safe community” it provides.—*marla misek*

“everything is a balance between the market and environmental sustainability.”

—bruce fowle, faia, leed

calendar



John Linden/www.johnlindenphotographs.com

2007 residential architect design awards: call for entries

entry deadline: november 10
binder deadline: january 8

Juried by an all-architect panel, *residential architect's* annual 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 2007 issue of *residential architect* and recognized at an awards dinner during the 2007 AIA National Convention in San Antonio. Shown: House on Beverly Ranch Road, Beverly Hills, Calif., by SPF:a, winner of a grand award in the Custom / More Than 3,500 Square Feet category in 2006. To register, visit www.radesignawards.com or www.residentialarchitect.com, or go to page 24 in this magazine. Call 202.736.3407 with questions.

custom home design awards 2007

entry deadline: november 15
binder deadline: january 17

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. A new category for outdoor spaces has been added to this year's competition. Winners will be featured in the May 2007 issue of *CUSTOM HOME* magazine and honored during the 2007 AIA National Convention in San Antonio. Go to www.chdesignawards.com or www.customhomeonline.com to register. Call 202.736.3407 with questions.



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moca focus: lecia dole-recio

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inside the sponge

through november 12
canadian centre for architecture, montreal



Dheera Venkatraman

Find out what it's like to live in Simmons Hall, the Steven Holl-designed undergraduate dormitory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, from the perspective of its 350 inhabitants. This investigative and participatory show explores the collaborative process through which the "spongelike" building was designed and examines how the residents are now using the space. For details, call 514.939.7026 or go to www.cca.qc.ca.

impact

september 20–23
jackson lake lodge, grand teton national park, wyo.

AIA Wyoming's 2006 AIA–Western Mountain Region Conference will explore how architects impact the built environment at community and global levels. The speaker lineup includes Peter Bohlin, FAIA, principal of Bohlin Cywinski Jackson; Harvey H. Kaiser, AIA, a consultant and author of *Great Camps of the Adirondacks*; and 2006 AIA Gold Medal winner Antoine Predock, FAIA. For registration information and conference details, call 307.690.8148 or visit www.aia-wyoming.org/impact.

reinvention 2006

december 6–8
omni san diego hotel



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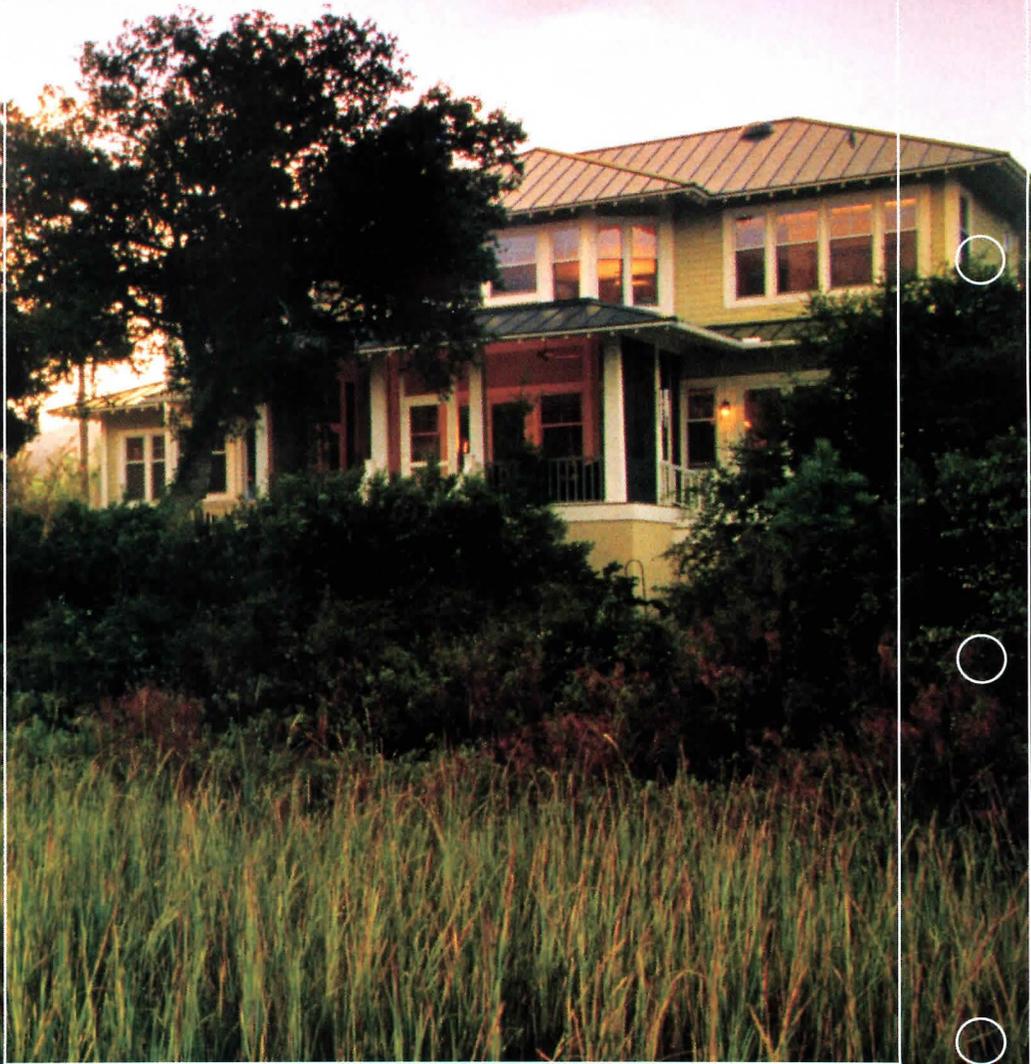
"No Limits: The Entrepreneurial Practice" goes beyond the boundaries of single-family house design to explore how residential architects are breaking into complementary disciplines. Join colleagues from across the country to debate the merits of integrating interior and landscape design into your practice, broadening into development and construction, implementing alternative practice models, or extending your influence into the public realm. The conference will also feature a housing tour, a design charrette, and a meeting of The Congress of Residential Architecture. For registration information, visit www.reinventionconf.com or e-mail reinvention@hanleywood.com. See a detailed conference program on page 8.

—shelley d. hutchins

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2007

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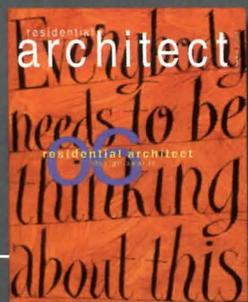
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- Custom Home, more than 3,500 square feet
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- Affordable Housing
- Adaptive Reuse
- Campus Housing
- Architectural Interiors

CATEGORIES (\$95)

- Outbuilding
- Kitchen
- Bath
- Architectural Design Detail
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deadlines

entry form and fee: november 10, 2006
completed binders: january 8, 2007

enter online

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Ceramic Tiles of Italy

Circle no. 21

k + b studio

kitchen: urbane infill

Nearly 1,500 square feet of storage space atop a bakery and parking garage was the starting point for this apartment by Robert M. Gurney, FAIA. Along the way he also had to contend with the historic Washington, D.C., neighborhood's building restrictions—no alterations to windows, exterior walls, or ceiling heights. Even muntin profiles are prescribed. "The owner likes modern architecture," Gurney explains, "but we had to work with the existing character of the building."

Other decisions were also dictated by existing conditions—a foot-thick wall and 30-inch difference in floor height, for example, determined the division between private and public space. On one side are the bedroom, bath, and office; on the other is the combination living/dining/kitchen area. Wanting the multipurpose room as open as possible, Gurney treated the kitchen like "a furniture element inserted into the overall bigger space." A floor-to-ceiling bank of maple cabinets serves as the backdrop for the public area while creating a vestibule for the entry. Opposite the cabinets, an island provides additional base storage and expanses of workspace flanking the sink. A mahogany column supports a ½-inch-thick plane of aluminum hovering above the island. A perforated metal panel hides the sink and echoes the stainless steel backsplash above the range. Stainless steel appliances continue the theme of exposed metal, but thick Burlington stone counters and Brazilian cherry floors add earthier elements to the light, bright palette.

"The kitchen is front line and center, so we used materials to enrich the space within the white brick walls," Gurney says. Because the ceiling couldn't be raised, Gurney decided to highlight its low, sloping lines as a composition. A skylight spanning the length of the kitchen is lined with mahogany. And Galvalume covers the kitchen volume to suggest the rawness of the original space. Dropped maple panels float away from the corrugated metal, indicating a change in function from kitchen to living area. The abundance of smooth, rich finishes counteracts the rough brick walls and transforms the former storeroom into an urbane dwelling. —*shelley d. hutchins*



Making the most of a little square footage, Gurney laid out the long, narrow kitchen at the end of the open space, leaving plenty of room for mingling between the island and living room furniture.



Three skylights guide the sun's rays into the apartment. Gurney says the shapes and sizes of the mahogany-clad lightboxes were well planned. "Two were set," he says, "and the form I felt worked best to balance them out was a pure square."

project designers: Robert M. Gurney, FAIA, and Hito Martinez

interior designer: Thérèse Baron Gurney, ASID, Baron Gurney Interiors, Washington, D.C.

general contractor: M.T. Puskar Construction Co., Flint Hill, Va.

resources: lighting fixtures: Lightolier; plumbing fittings: Vola; plumbing fixtures: Franke; refrigerator: Sub-Zero



Photos: Anice Hoachlander/HD Photo



An unusually thick 2-inch slab of Burlington stone was spec'd for the countertops as a counterweight to the thin plane of aluminum perched above it (top).

k + b studio

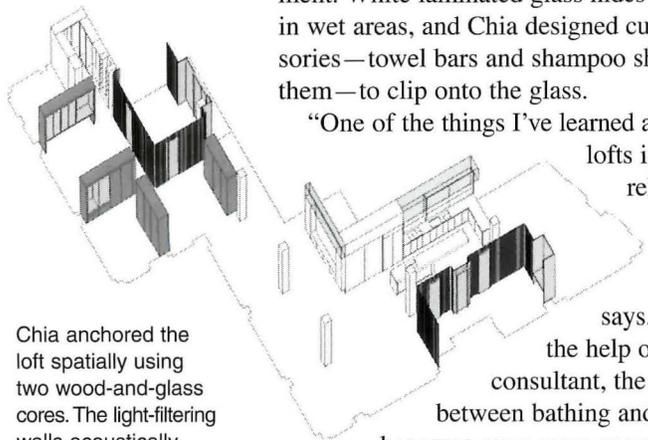
bath: bathed in light

Few New York City apartments enjoy the luxury of unobstructed views in three directions, but this 5,000-square-foot loft—a recent *residential architect* design award winner for architectural interiors—does. Katherine Chia, AIA, therefore wanted to ensure that every inch benefited from the “spectacular quality of light” flooding the space. She also “wanted to make sure it was maintained even as we carved out spaces that were fully enclosed, like bathrooms,” she says.

A screen system of offset wood planks and posts in lieu of solid walls transmits natural light from perimeter windows and lets it penetrate into those bathrooms. A subtle reveal at the ceiling line creates the illusion that the wood screens are freestanding, while glass lines the screens as a barrier for water and noise. A series of operable portholes improves ventilation and offers bathers a peek at what’s going on elsewhere in the apartment. White laminated glass hides the plumbing in wet areas, and Chia designed custom accessories—towel bars and shampoo shelves, among them—to clip onto the glass.

“One of the things I’ve learned about doing lofts is that the relationship between spaces is critical,” she says. Thanks to the help of a lighting consultant, the relationship between bathing and living spaces becomes even more compelling as night falls. “When the lights are on in the bathroom,” Chia explains, “light leaks out and the bathrooms become lanternlike objects within the apartment.”—*s.d.h.*

Chia anchored the loft spatially using two wood-and-glass cores. The light-filtering walls acoustically divide the apartment without stifling the airiness generated by its high ceilings and oversized windows.



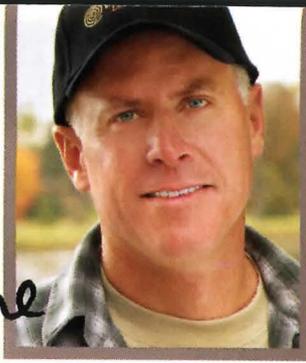
Photos: Paul Warchol Photography

Wood screens add warmth, texture, and natural light to the minimalist master bath. Polished concrete floors reflect light back up into the room.

architect: Desai/Chia Architecture, New York City

general contractor: Giovannitti Inc., Yonkers, N.Y.

resources: custom lavatories and accessories: Desai/Chia Architecture; plumbing fittings and fixtures: Agape, Dornbracht, Grohe, and Vola; wall tile: Ceramica Vogue (Linea Vetro)



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Circle no. 326

all's well that starts well

a new company concentrates on preserving the honeymoon phase of projects.

by anne troutman

■ remember being intrigued by a story one of my design teachers told me in the early 1980s, after a trip to Japan. He'd been meeting there with a potential client for more than two years when he finally realized no legal contract was forthcoming. It turned out this prolonged cross-continental conversation was the contract, establishing the trust and the protocol for a very large project now proceeding on just a handshake.

Of course, legal contracts are necessary in our fast-paced and litigious culture. But too often in the course of an American architecture practice, the pre-design phase is given short shrift by architects or their clients in the rush to an agreement.

The interviews, research, conceptual work, and just plain *time* looking at buildings or books or neighborhoods together—the getting to know each other—that comprises a *significant* part of this phase and is considered part of the education and “interview” process by client and architect alike is often unpaid, thus leading to its foreshortening. Yet it's the very foundation of our work, essential to responsible and appropriate projects

and potentially the basis of a mutually informed and lasting creative partnership between architect and client. During pre-design, we get to know our clients, decipher their aesthetic proclivities, listen to how they make decisions, establish ways of working together, and clarify the communication and documentation process that forms the basis of the contract.

We've all heard about or experienced firsthand the horror stories that transpire when this discovery phase is truncated. Working drawings are half done, but then the program suddenly changes and the building has to be re-designed; or a client's budget is exceeded because he or she didn't know how to calculate overall project costs and a lawsuit ensues. Sometimes unclear lines of communication result in surprising switchbacks deep into a project when the silent partner speaks up. Worst of all is when a lack of clear records regarding the design or a shifting scope of work necessitate



Courtesy Anne Troutman

The author runs her pre-design consulting business, DesignSmart, out of the home office she designed in Santa Monica, Calif. Demand for her services has remained strong since she started in 2005.

the abandonment of the project tens of thousands of dollars later, leaving large bills unpaid. Bruised egos are the least of it.

self-direction

In my 25 years of practice in residential architecture, I always insisted my clients spend whatever time was necessary in pre-design before they signed any contracts with me—or anyone else. It was my philosophy that if warning bells go off during this phase, or if this “up-front” work goes unpaid, then we'd best go our separate ways, ASAP.

Yes, I lost some potential clients, and that was hard when business was slow; and yes, the client sometimes spent a little more money than expected at the beginning of the project; but in the long run, we both saved a lot more time and money by avoiding misunderstanding and building trust.

Recently I decided to limit my practice substantially. I found myself focusing on the front work I have so long enjoyed: education, programming, research, master planning, conceptual *continued on page 32*

design, feasibility, and resource development. It turns out I've stumbled on an underserved niche in our field because the phone hasn't stopped ringing since.

Who are my clients? Contractors, realtors, developers, homeowners and home buyers, and a growing number of architects who are too busy to vet all their clients or provide full program-

ming or feasibility services in-house. I develop a package of materials outlining existing conditions, program, budget, timeline, aesthetics, and project goals and strategies they can refer to and use throughout their project. I charge either an hourly or a flat fee, depending on the required scope of work.

I familiarize clients with design methods and procedures so they know what to expect, what the project will cost, and what kinds of professionals may best suit their needs. I've been asked to attend interviews, troubleshoot work already in progress, and help clients navigate the design and building process. I'll even facilitate communication between clients and



Photos: Courtesy Anne Troutman

Troutman and her clients often gather at the dining table in her loft office (above). The curtained entrance to the master bedroom (right) lies just under her workspace.



their neighbors during construction. My consultancy is still defining itself and evolving with each referral, but the emphasis is on local community and personal contact.

personal reasons

Pre-design consulting would frustrate architects who are more object-oriented or who prefer to see a design through from beginning to end—the kind of architect I was for many years. It requires substantial design experience, sensitivity, and a light touch. And liking people is a must! But if you're communications-oriented, a good facilitator, enjoy teaching, and like the faster pace of project start-ups, then local consulting

can make very satisfying use of your accumulated knowledge to benefit both your colleagues and your community.

The pleasure (and challenge) of the work, for me, lies in its variety, its shorter time frame, and the idea that I can help people avoid costly mistakes and come away with a good experience of our profession.

Many of the homeowners I'm referred to come to me because either they've had a bad experience they don't want to repeat or they need help envisioning their next step and don't know where to begin. They may be novices who don't know how the design business works, or what they want, or what they can afford, or how to find or select the right professionals. They're eager for information. They're aware their house is possibly their largest single investment and they recognize that having a strategy for its development

and realization is both a lifestyle choice and a major financial decision in their lives.

For me, it's something of a relief after years of nerve-racking salesmanship and self-promotion to concentrate on education. I truly enjoy providing perspective, time, information, and resources to help individuals envision their goals and begin to put them into action.

In a complex profession that can be mystifying even to its practitioners at times, I think informed clients make for a more successful project and can tap into the deep creativity and generosity possible in our field. Pre-design is an essential first step in that process—for everyone. **ra**

Anne Troutman is principal of DesignSmart (www.designsmartla.com), a pre-design and residential consulting firm in Santa Monica, Calif.

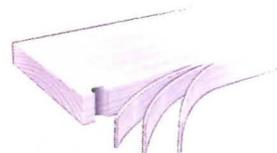
"i can help people ... come away with a good experience of our profession."



William Teresa

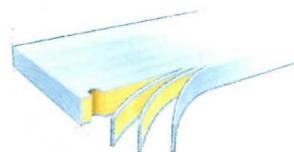


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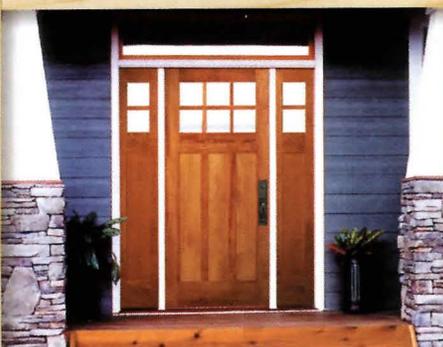


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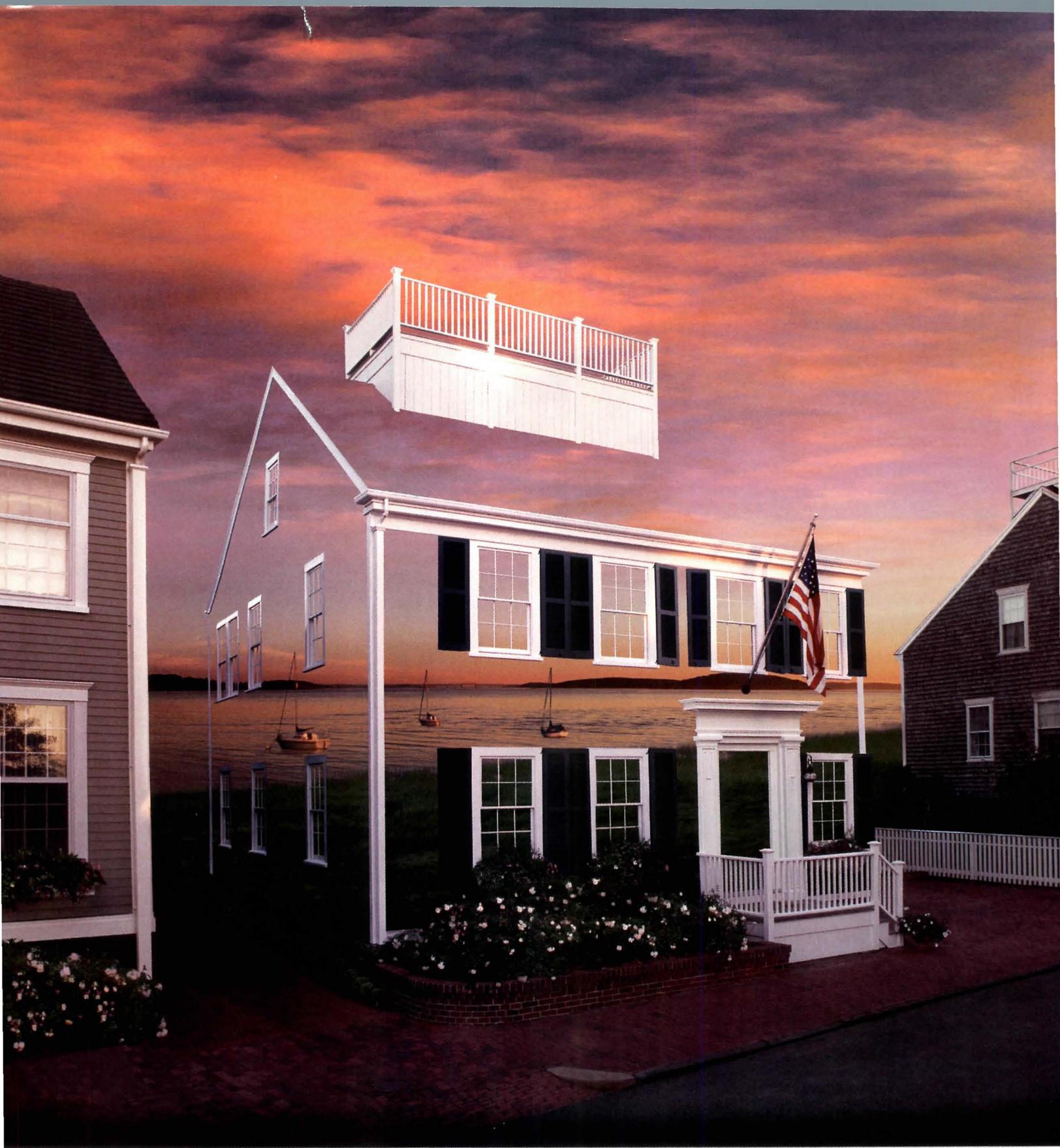


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diversity how?

are minority quotas helping or hindering architectural team building?

by cheryl weber

donald King, FAIA, a black architect in Seattle, founded his firm in 1989, but he never wanted it to carry the “minority-owned business” banner. Like everyone else, he wanted his work to speak for itself. But he soon discovered that the market reality was something different. As the firm began to establish itself, King certified it as a minority business with Washington state and with the federal government, using his status as another tool to build relationships with clients to whom he otherwise wouldn’t have had access. His reputation started to jell, and soon he was landing jobs as the primary architect on major projects. By the time the state banned affirmative action in 1996, his firm was on solid ground.

“Affirmative action introduced a lot of people who wouldn’t have otherwise been noticed, sometimes because they were a minority firm and in some cases because of unintentional racism,” says King, who heads DKA, a 15-member architecture and planning firm. “People work with people they know, who are friends of their friends, and who they know are competent.”



Peter Horvath

For both mainstream and minority firms, team quotas are a double-edged sword. Minority-owned businesses—those that are disadvantaged socially or economically or because of race or gender—have to put up with the public assumption that if they need incentives to get work, it must be because they’re second-rate. Being a token team member doesn’t guarantee a level playing field either. Often the prime

architect simply assumes that person isn’t up to the job, so he or she has to fight even harder for a meaningful role. It’s a good news/bad news scenario for majority architects, too. The search often turns up excellent firms with whom they partner again and again. On the other hand, quotas add complications and costs. It can be tough to find minority partners with the expertise they’re looking for. And

fees are set regardless of how a project is pieced together. A diversified team costs more to manage, and the fees rarely cover the added complexity.

Working with underrepresented professionals “is a good thing socially and in terms of getting out of your rut of using the same people each time, but there’s no denying that it’s less efficient,” says David Baker,

continued on page 36

practice

the details? If they are different, who's right?" he asks.

Landon and two other partners oversee a staff of nine, taking on projects as varied as affordable apartments, single-family homes, libraries, stores, and office buildings. For Landon Bone Baker, teaming up with minority architects goes fairly smoothly, mainly because the firm typically works on large projects (100 units or more) that offer plenty of work to go around. For instance, it's currently working with the minority-owned Johnson & Lee Architects/Planners to redevelop Robert Taylor Homes, a HOPE VI project on the South Side of Chi-

cago. For the 250-unit first phase, Johnson & Lee asked Landon Bone Baker to do the planning and 40 percent of the buildings. That job led to West Haven, another HOPE VI project on which Landon is working with Chicago-based Brook Architecture, owned by RaMona Westbrook, AIA, a black woman. Since Landon Bone Baker has more experience, it's coordinating the detailing and construction drawings, but the design work is split along agreed-upon stylistic lines, with Brook Architecture designing the project's more traditionally inspired pieces.

The relationship is symbiotic. "We have a reputa-

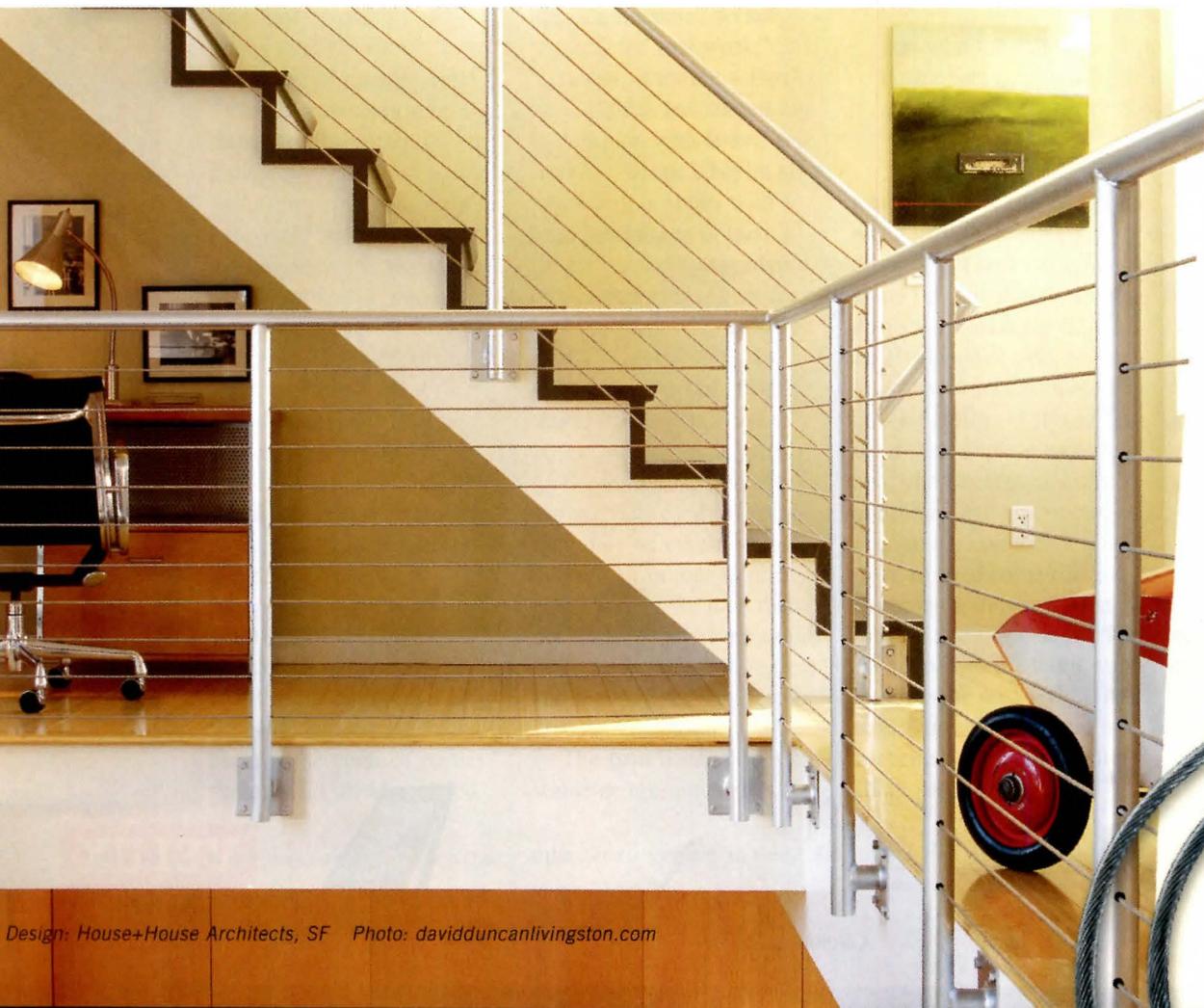
tion for doing good work, but sometimes we don't have the political connection that's important," Landon says, adding that he and Brook Architecture occasionally join up to go after work that neither one could get on their own.

stirred, not shaken

Underrepresented firms have made real progress by way of affirmative action, or some form of it. Half the work Westbrook has today is the result of having first worked as a minority vendor. In business for the past 11 years, she routinely gets called to work on projects that don't require minority

participation, from single-family homes to multifamily tenant and mixed-use projects. But the difficulties persist. Often there are unrealistic expectations about the role she will play. "Some clients expect that we don't know how to practice architecture, and we spend more time defending what we can do than we would if we were in a relationship where there was mutual understanding and respect," she says. "Those kinds of projects we have to pass on."

Like JH+P, Westbrook conducts due diligence on prospective partners, interviewing them, talking to others, and starting with a
continued on page 40



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small project. "You do have to have clearly defined responsibilities," she says. "We've had people request integration, but we generally don't do that. We can't run a business that way."

She learned that lesson the hard way. Recently, she says, a majority firm she was partnering with stole an employee who had been working off site for months on a dedicated design/build

team. "All the investment we put into hiring that person, we lost," she says. "So many issues we deal with are just business issues," she acknowledges. "But they're harder to deal with

because you're a minority, typically underfunded, and not respected." When Westbrook confronted the architects, they apologized and agreed to compensate her by offering her firm other business opportunities.

Roberta Washington, FAIA, who's also black, recounts similar stories in her 23 years at the helm of Roberta Washington Architects, a 10-person firm in New York City. When things go wrong, it's usually because her role isn't clear-cut. "To be successful, it's important to have people at the larger firm who, while they understand it's all about getting the job, also have some appreciation that they're hiring people because [those people] can do something," she says. Some years ago she sent two employees to another firm for an extended period of time for work on a residential project. When the project ended, one employee was hired by the prime architect and the other went elsewhere. "The lead architect said it would mess up the budget if I were there, so the people I sent got the experience instead," she says.

"You need to come to an understanding about how the two firms can work together before you get the job, because after you get it you have no leverage," Washington adds. "The contract that's checked is basically the one between the architect and the development agency; no one's

continued on page 42

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practice

paying that much attention after you leave the interview room.” (Two recent hospital projects went much more smoothly. On one, Washington’s firm designed the freestanding clinics, while the prime firm did the hospital.)

If choosing among jobs and joint ventures requires savvy jockeying even among the most mainstream firms, being a minority adds another layer of political maneuvering. Washington recalls being telephoned late one Friday evening by an architect in a large, out-of-state firm who urgently requested that she send her credentials. He wanted her help to land a large school project in a black school district in upstate New York. In subsequent discussions, however, it became clear that he didn’t want to share the design work. So Washington turned him down and decided to compete for the job with two other black-owned architect firms, each with 10 employees.

That joint venture was successful in getting work on eight schools. Washington designed a new school and four renovations, and has gone on to do more work for the school district. “Everyone is always trying to come up with the ‘A’ team,” she says. “But I first try to figure out a way to do it on my own terms.”

the melting pot

Although it complicates record-keeping, architects do attest to the benefits of having multiple designers,

“some clients expect that we don’t know how to practice architecture, and we spend more time defending what we can do than we would if we were in a relationship where there was mutual understanding and respect.” —ramona westbrook, aia

especially on community-revitalization projects. At Greenbridge, a HOPE VI community south of Seattle in King County, Wash., Seattle-based GGLO is working with Seattle-based subconsultant Arellano/Christofides Architects. Both firms are designing townhouses, and although GGLO is coordinating design and construction, Arellano/Christofides acts as architect of record on its own buildings. Team meetings are held at GGLO’s office, and the two firms go on site-observation visits together and separately.

“The contractor wants to rely on a common set of documents to build the project, so there’s a lot of commonality in the buildings we’ve designed,” says GGLO principal Jeff Foster, AIA. “But having a different design hand adds variety and diversity and helps to create an illusion of the happy accident of time in a large new neighborhood.”

Roger Goldstein, FAIA, a principal at Goody Clancy, Boston, agrees that the hardest aspect of partnering

is figuring out how to manage as a single design team. Even with e-mail and FTP sites for sharing drawings, he finds it’s often easier to trade staff for awhile. “We work with other architects all the time and complain about it, but it’s the world we’re in and we’re always trying to figure out how to do it better,” Goldstein explains. “Because there are fewer minority firms, it’s hard to find good ones to fill a need. I understand the reason for having these percentage targets,” he adds, “but I’m not sure it always leads to better buildings.”

If current demographic trends continue, some of these issues will likely fade. The U.S. Census Bureau recently reported that between 1997 and 2002, racial and ethnic minority groups launched their own ventures at rates two to four times faster than that of the general population. It’s possible that in the next decade, minority entrepreneurs will face the same growth challenges as any other fledging enterprise. ra



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for pugh + scarpa, beauty is much more than skin deep.

core values

by meghan drueding



Danny Turner

Angela Brooks, Lawrence Scarpa, and Gwynne Pugh have led Pugh + Scarpa through a successful string of diverse, challenging projects.

Anyone wanting to quickly sum up the principals of Pugh + Scarpa Architects could take a look at the parking lot of their office in Santa Monica, Calif. Lawrence Scarpa, AIA, drives a pickup truck, consistent with his *bold, unpretentious* personality. Angela Brooks, AIA, the mastermind behind the firm's stellar reputation for sustainable design, tools around in a Toyota Prius. And the philosophical Gwynne Pugh, AIA, rides a motorcycle to work. There you have it, Pugh + Scarpa in a nutshell: gutsy, environmentally friendly, and unconventional.

But defining this Santa Monica, Calif., firm isn't as simple as that. Pugh + Scarpa can't be wrapped up in an easy analogy or tagged by an obvious label, because its identity—and that of its principals—runs many layers deep. It designs million-dollar houses and condo buildings, affordable housing, commercial interiors, and mixed-use properties. It often teams with other firms to take on new kinds of projects, and it works with small boutique developers as well as big national ones. Scarpa works on the side as a sculptor, painter, and teacher; Pugh, an engineer as well as an architect, moonlights as a Santa Monica planning commissioner; and Brooks serves as president of the board of Livable Places, a nonprofit housing developer and policy advocate she and Scarpa helped found. At the heart of this complicated firm lies the leadership of three complex individuals.



Strategically placed slots in multifamily buildings such as Gordon Lofts (above) and Bronson Lofts (left), both in Hollywood, Calif., offer places for natural light to enter.

Renderings: Courtesy Pugh + Scarpa Architects

core values



The mixed-use, three-unit, live/work Bergamot Artist Lofts (top) and five-unit Orange Grove (above) uphold the Los Angeles area's longstanding tradition of modern residential architecture.

design-minded

Larry Scarpa grew up in Florida, the son of an Italian-born restaurant owner. After college at the University of Florida, the aspiring architect landed a job working for Paul Rudolph in New York—an experience that left an indelible impression on him. Among other things, he helped build the upstairs of Rudolph's iconic Beekman Place apartment. "Every project Rudolph ever worked on, that apartment had in it," he remembers. "It was a smorgasbord of stuff." Scarpa's biggest moment came when he found a set of drawings for one of his favorite Rudolph projects—the Milam house in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. "The first drawings he did of that house were horrible and nothing that was actually realized," Scarpa says. "I realized that he worked really hard at being an architect. I realized there was a way, even if your first idea isn't good, that you can get somewhere. It's not all God-given talent."

This useful bit of knowledge accompanied Scarpa to graduate school at Florida, where he met Brooks, then an undergrad. (They eventually married and now have a 6-year-old son, Calder.) Scarpa taught and worked in Italy and Florida for a few years, then took a job in San Francisco with Holt Hinshaw Pfau Jones. Soon, "I was ready to do my own thing," he says, so he started working for Pugh, who was running his own firm in Santa Monica. The pair became partners in 1991.

For years Pugh + Scarpa specialized in commercial interiors, with some houses and industrial buildings thrown in. Then it partnered with San Francisco architect Steven Kodama, FAIA, to form a separate entity called Pugh Scarpa Kodama—a shrewd move that allowed Pugh + Scarpa to access Kodama's extensive housing experience. PSK parlayed one of its first commissions into a 44-unit, LEED Gold-rated affordable housing community in Santa Monica called Colorado Court. Finished in 2002, the project won international attention for its sophisticated design and holistic approach to sustainability, and it put Pugh + Scarpa on the multifamily housing map for good.



Pugh + Scarpa often treats façades with a screen to give a building more dimension. It did so with solar panels at the much-acclaimed Colorado Court (left) and plans to use screens at Chandler Corners (below), an adaptive reuse project it's designing with David Baker + Partners, Architects.

Photos (above and opposite): Marvin Rand

Now Scarpa—the design leader on the majority of Pugh + Scarpa's projects—acts as its most public face. In addition to frequent guest-teaching stints, he lectures 12 to 15 times per year on campuses and at museums around the country. "One, you have to do it if you desire to do [projects in] anything more than your local community," he says of his outside commitments. "And two, there's a message to deliver to people."

That message could cover any of the many topics he and the rest of the firm feel strongly about: modern architecture, sustainability, density, and regional materials and methods. "The only way we in the United States think of historic preservation is restoration," he says. "If you look at Europe, there are so many wonderful buildings that have been enriched by modern interventions—look at Carlo Scarpa, at anything he's done." (The two Scarpas are not related.) The firm's yen to broaden its already wide range of project



Courtesy Pugh + Scarpa Architects / David Baker + Partners, Architects

"we feel a pent-up energy. we want to expand more into different project types." —larry scarpa, aia

core values



The canopy of solar panels on Brooks and Scarpa's own house not only shelters the structure from the strong Southern California sun, it also converts that sunlight into energy. Wide-open interiors allow for plenty of cross-ventilation and make the home feel larger than its 1,900 square feet.

types and to design projects outside Los Angeles is a strong one. "We feel a pent-up energy," Scarpa says. "We want to expand more into different project types. We're doing a lot of housing now, but we think we can do a whole lot more educational work and civic buildings."

big picture

Gwynne Pugh's opinion of Pugh + Scarpa seconds that notion. "I think we're a very versatile firm," he says. "We'll use whatever technique to make things happen. In our early projects, a lot

of times we'd get involved as engineers and then architects, or vice versa. It gave us a very fluid way of being." He knows that the 20-person company can't be everything to everyone, however—hence his enthusiasm for partnering with other architects. The firm currently has a handful of Pugh Scarpa Kodama projects under way. It's also joint-venturing with San Francisco's David Baker + Partners, Architects on adaptive reuse housing in Valley Village, Calif. "It's a perfect match," says Baker, FAIA. "I like to work with people who are better than me." Another Pugh + Scarpa collaboration, with fellow Santa Monica firms Moore Ruble Yudell Architects & Planners and Koning Eizenberg Architecture, recently won the commission for a large mixed-use community in the city's downtown area. Global powerhouse Perkins Eastman leases office space from Pugh + Scarpa, and the two firms teamed this year to design a proposed mixed-use project in East L.A.'s Boyle Heights neighborhood.

Born in Wales, Pugh earned his civil engineering degree from the University of Leeds in England in 1975, then moved to California to pursue an architecture degree at UCLA. In the ensuing years, he developed the generalist approach he maintains today. "I'm a jack-of-all-trades," he says. "I like the whole story." Pugh + Scarpa's organization is intentionally loose so the principals and their staff can be involved in different aspects of different projects. But they do tend to gravitate toward roles that play to their strengths, and so Pugh often handles urban design, technical issues, and office management.

As one of Santa Monica's planning commissioners, the LEED-certified Pugh spends a lot of time thinking about the critical need for sustainable workforce housing in American cities. He, Scarpa, and Brooks champion regionally appropriate design solutions as an intrinsic part of the overall sustainable picture. "I see sustainability as being the saving grace of architecture because it has to be local," Pugh says. "Otherwise it's not sustainable. It has to be particular to its location. Colorado Court would probably not work in Beverly Hills. If people are really serious about sustainability and get into it at a higher level, it will keep architecture fresh." He takes green design seriously in his own life, too. He and his wife, Linda Jassim, a former filmmaker who is now a landscape architect, reside in a solar-paneled house in Santa Monica.

hands-on

Brooks and Scarpa also live sustainably by design. Their ultra-green remodel of their own tiny bungalow in Venice, Calif., known as the Solar Umbrella house (in tribute to Rudolph's 1953 Umbrella House in Lido Shores, Fla.), won a 2006 AIA/COTE [Committee on the Environment] Top Ten Award. With typical Pugh + Scarpa aplomb, it combines a photovoltaic canopy and solar hot-water-heating system with innovative materials and striking good looks. It also serves as a laboratory for testing new ways of using familiar elements. OSB forms the flooring and some of the cabi-



"We do an interesting combination of high-end and real low-end stuff," Scarpa says. Cases in point: the luxurious Redelco Residence (left) in Studio City, Calif., and Broadway Housing (below), an affordable housing project in Santa Monica.

Photos (above and opposite): Marvin Rand



Courtesy Pugh Scarpa Kodama

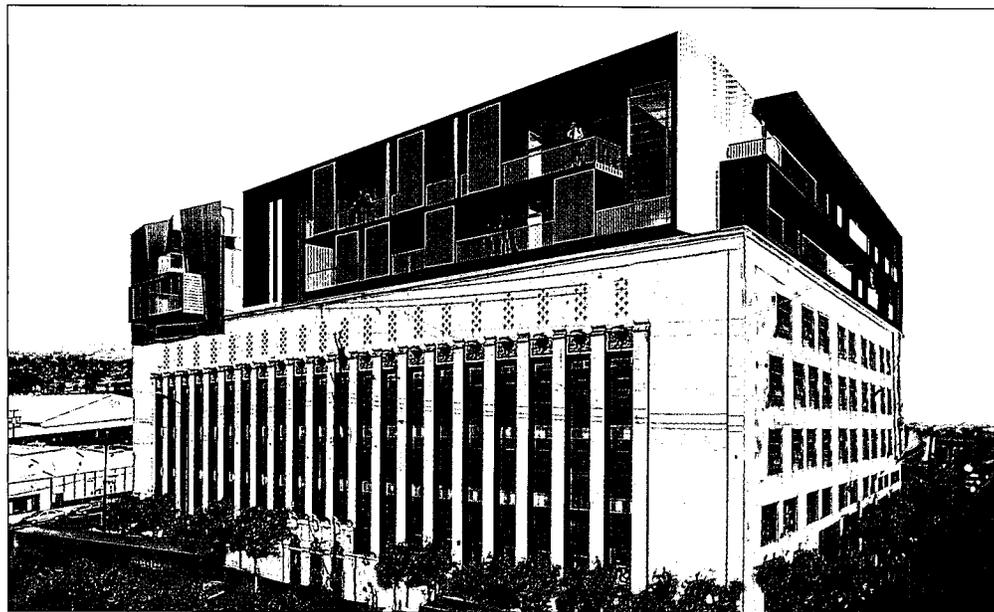
"i see sustainability as being the saving grace of architecture because it has to be local." — gwynne pugh, aia

core values

netry in the kitchen/dining room, light filters through a glass wall filled with transparent plastic balls, and louvers made of industrial broom brushes create an appealingly fuzzy exterior detail. Pugh + Scarpa devotes substantial time and energy—and a full-time employee, Vanessa Hardy—to researching materials at its in-house workshop. Hardy, Scarpa, and project manager Chris Ghatak are currently developing building blocks made of crushed, recycled aluminum cans to use at Broadway Housing, an under-construction affordable project in Santa Monica.

When Brooks joined Pugh + Scarpa in 1999, she brought an understanding of real estate development gained from years of working in nonprofit housing. (She also put in time at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and HOK.) “I really wanted to be a planner, not an architect,” she says. For her master’s thesis at SCI-Arc, she rewrote L.A.’s zoning codes to encourage higher density and mixed-use development. Those same ideas kept cropping up years later in her and Scarpa’s conversations with several like-minded planners, transportation experts, and other land use professionals. The group decided to incorporate, and in 2000 Livable Places was born. With Brooks as its board president and Scarpa as a board member, the nonprofit group now has a staff of six and an office in downtown Los Angeles. It’s developing one for-sale, mixed-income housing project designed by Pugh + Scarpa, one designed by Studio E Architects of San Diego, and another project by McCormick, Smith & Others, also of San Diego.

Though Brooks occasionally serves on juries or gives talks with Scarpa, she’s more interested in behind-the-scenes work. “I’m into policy and getting things built,” she explains. Accordingly, she takes charge of construction management on most of the firm’s projects. And since Colorado Court, which she shepherded through LBED accreditation, she’s accelerated Pugh + Scarpa’s



Courtesy Pugh + Scarpa Architects

At Fuller Lofts, developed by Livable Places, Pugh + Scarpa will add two levels atop a 1920s industrial building. The mixed-use project, in L.A.’s Lincoln Heights neighborhood, will hold 102 units of affordable and market-rate housing.

“i really wanted to be a planner, not an architect ... i’m into policy and getting things built.” —angela brooks, aia

commitment to sustainability and energy efficiency. Physicist John Ingersoll, Ph.D., now serves as the firm’s Director of Environmental Sustainability and oversees both the implementation of green technology into projects and the energy studies Pugh + Scarpa does for other architects.

While Scarpa appreciates all the acclaim the company has won for its sustainable efforts, he worries about being pigeonholed. “First we were the commercial interiors people, then we were the housing people, now we’re the sustainable people,” he says. He needn’t worry: The firm’s next claim to fame could be any number of exciting projects—restoring the long-gone canopy of the original Umbrella House using solar panels, which it just signed on for, or even its own development work, which it’s investigating doing out of its small Charlotte, N.C., satellite office. Or it could be something altogether different. You never know what Pugh + Scarpa will conquer next. **ra**

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hideaway village



McInturff Architects carefully transformed two historic buildings into six rental units while creating precious—and unexpected—outdoor spaces.

Tucked among the nearby storefronts, the bland entry door of 1247 Wisconsin Ave. in northwest Washington, D.C., shows no hint of the dramatic secret that lies on the other side. Bethesda, Md.-based McInturff Architects has deftly inserted six luxury rental apartments into two restored mid-19th century commercial buildings, creating what firm principal Mark McInturff, FAIA, calls a “rooftop village floating above the bustle of the city.”

It’s a bold project—one developer Eastbanc embraced, putting full faith and trust in McInturff’s firm. “They gave us the freedom to do what we wanted,” says McInturff, who has worked with the developer before. Freedom wasn’t easy to extract from Georgetown’s historic district, nor from the site itself, however. According to McInturff, the 46-foot-by-200-foot lot with 50-foot- and 80-foot-deep buildings imposed multiple constraints. “We knew we would have to preserve the existing historic buildings, but we also knew there was the potential for a hideaway village up top,” he says.

To build this village, the firm extended the rear of the existing structures and inserted a new volume that creates a bisected courtyard. Ultimately, this new piece and the original four-story buildings morphed into five two-level apartments and one three-level unit. All have open floor plans and large windows and doors to bring in light. “We opened up the top



Large glass openings, 10-foot-high ceilings, and exposed elements produce light-filled, relaxed interiors.



leftover overhauls



One of the architects' favorites, the middle unit (top) divides the courtyard to clear southern views toward Northern Virginia. A warm coat of zinc cladding protects the exteriors from the urban environment (above).

floors to give them generous space and removed walls that didn't make sense for an apartment," says Peter Noonan, AIA, project architect and a firm principal.

The luxurious yet understated units are appointed with high-quality products, including Douglas fir windows, German-made kitchen cabinets and bath fixtures, and vertical-seam zinc exterior cladding. Eastbanc, McInturff explains, has a European point of view about design, stressing quality and refinement in the materials it specs. The company also appreciates energy efficiency and sustainable design, so the units have low-VOC paint, bamboo flooring, and efficient mechanical systems.

These sleek, high-tech elements are all hidden behind the buildings' preserved façade. (The architects even managed to slip five parking spaces at the rear.) The result is so effortless you'd hardly guess the project is the firm's first foray into multifamily design. "I have been spoiled," McInturff says of the project. "It was a joy and pleasure, and we are happy with it." —*n.f.m.*

project:

1247 Wisconsin Ave., Washington, D.C.

architect:

McInturff Architects, Bethesda, Md.

general contractor:

Kadcon Corp., Washington, D.C.

project size:

1,000 square feet to 2,700 square feet per unit

site size:

0.21 acre

construction cost:

Withheld

rental price:

\$2,500 to \$7,000 per unit per month

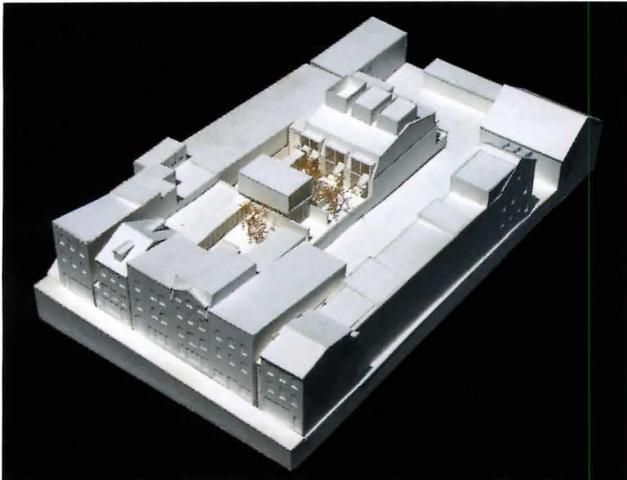
number of units:

6

photography:

Julia Heine





Rooftop volumes on the rear units enclose mechanicals and a cooling tower. The tower distributes chilled water to the six apartments and to the building's commercial and retail spaces (above and left).

"we knew we would have to preserve the existing historic buildings, but we also knew there was the potential for a hideaway village up top."—mark mcinturff, faia

working the system



William Adams Architects has made its name designing small, innovative multifamily infill. So when charged with creating a six-unit condo building for a tight site near its Venice, Calif., office, the firm knew just what to do. “We were dealing with a pretty small area,” says project architect Carl Smith, AIA. “With the unit

sizes we had to get, we didn’t have much choice [but] to maximize the building envelope.”

He and principal-in-charge Bill Adams, FAIA, dreaded the thought of dropping a boring box on the lot, though, so they instead concocted a plan that divides the project into two buildings—one with four loft-style units, the other with two. A central driveway squeezes between the structures, giving each unit owner access to a private garage. “The idea was to avoid a big cube,” Smith explains.

He and Adams developed a disciplined system to organize the project’s design elements. They set up the two-story condos like townhouses, with three facing forward and three facing back. The external structure acts as

a steel tube that holds a set of smaller, discrete containers for bedrooms and baths. These plywood and Cor-ten steel containers float within each unit and cantilever out over the glass-walled first floors, adding another layer of texture to the street elevations. By consolidating private spaces, the architects enabled the rest of the interiors to remain open and interconnected. Each piece follows a consistent logic: The windows in the steel tube, for example, are horizontal and placed in a staggered pattern, while the floating boxes have regular punched openings. The cumulative effect of all this rigor is an architecture that’s orderly, yet interesting—about as far away from a “big cube” as one can get.—*m.d.*

project:

Canal Lofts, Venice, Calif.

architect:

William Adams Architects, Venice

developer:

Richard Ehrman, Malibu, Calif.

general contractor:

Sanchez Brothers Construction, Culver City, Calif.

project size:

1,500 square feet to 1,800 square feet per unit

site size:

0.2 acre

construction cost:

\$250 per square foot

sales price:

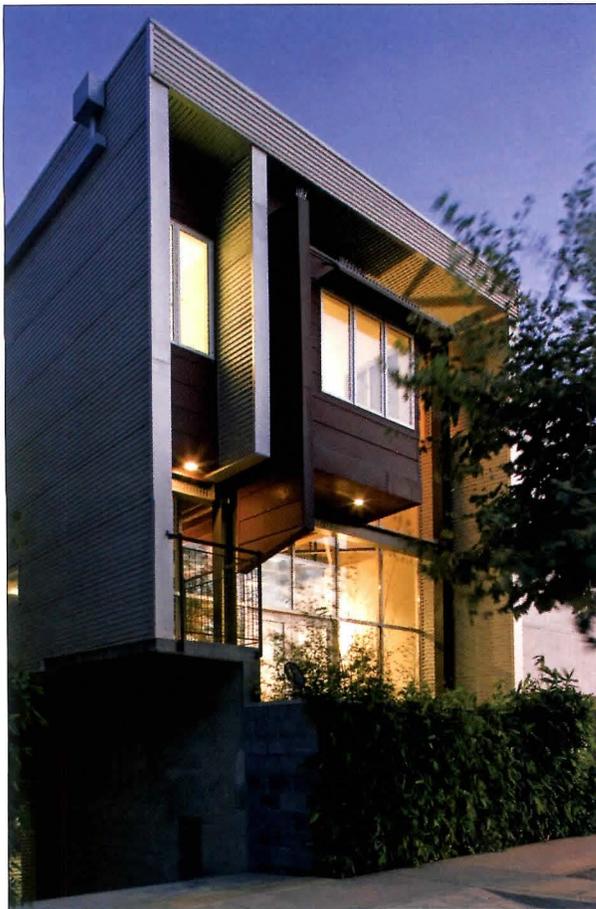
\$900,000 to \$1.3 million per unit

number of units:

6

photography:

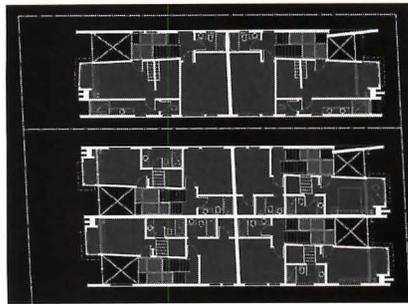
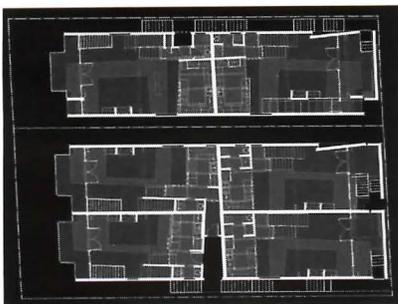
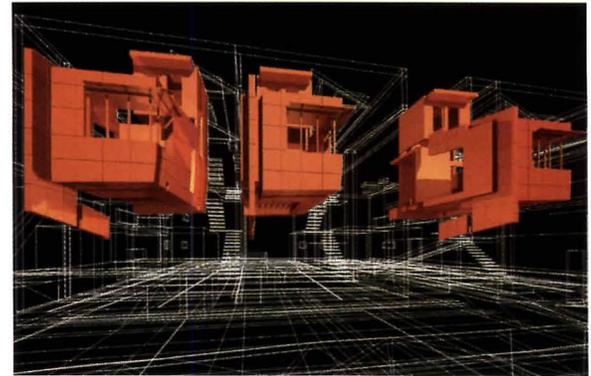
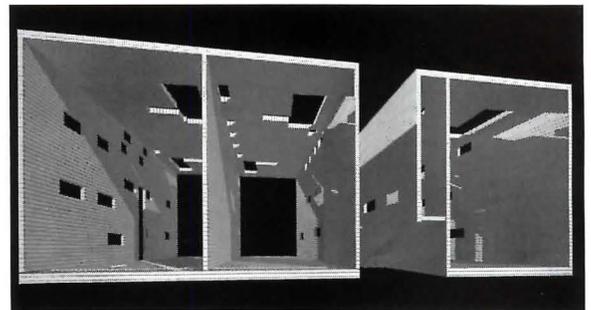
Tom Bonner



Leafy privacy walls in front of the units provide a visual and aural buffer against automobile and foot traffic. Owners enjoy roof decks and ground-floor terraces.



“the idea was to avoid a big cube.”—carl smith, aia



Adams and Smith selected steel for the industrial-style lofts' railings, landings, and exposed cross-bracing (top and above, left.) They inserted volumes for bedrooms and baths (above) into the project's shell (middle).

texas two-step

2 Architecture school can inspire fast friendships or fierce rivalries. Fortunately for Jim Poteet, AIA, and Patrick Ousey, AIA, shared studios at the University of Texas at Austin made them great pals. So when Poteet found his fledgling firm inundated with work too tempting to reject, he called on his comrade to help. “Because we had similar backgrounds and interests, we had this great easy shorthand,” Poteet says.

The tempting work in question evolved from an adaptive reuse project in San Antonio that Poteet had just completed for developer Steve Yndo: the conversion of a glass-manufacturing facility in a historic single-family residential neighborhood into loft-style condominiums. Neighbors weren’t keen on the project’s grit or its density, but Poteet and Yndo—both local residents—convinced them the brick-and-steel structures reflected the true story of the area. And the resulting critical mass of housing units would benefit everyone in other ways, they insisted. “We needed a grocery store,” Poteet says, “but we first needed higher density in order to sustain retail.”

Poteet felt strongly about keeping changes to the two buildings’ exteriors to a minimum. “We wanted to change



Poteet preserved most of the exteriors’ industrial personality but used steel balconies, garden enclosures, and entry canopies to generate a residential vibe (above).

the use radically but save the character,” he explains. His key goal was to bring more natural light into the former factory interiors, so he preserved “the rhythm of existing fenestration” but upped the amount of glazing. Oversized existing steel windows were cleaned and reused, and new windows and doors were made to match. The biggest intervention is the addition of a full-length dormer to introduce light to upstairs rooms.

Once Poteet subdivided the buildings into units, Yndo sold the condos commercial style—by square footage. Interiors were bare bones with just party walls, plumbing, and HVAC equipment. Yndo reserved 4,000 square feet for his own family and hired Poteet to flesh it out. Poteet assumed other buyers might approach him as well, but he didn’t expect to hear from nearly every owner. “They all seemed fun and different, and I didn’t want to turn anyone away,” he says. Here Poteet turned to former schoolmate Ousey;



The developer purchased an adjacent empty lot and had it converted into a common lawn for the owners. Semiprivate terraces flow into the grassy expanse, which draws shade from mature pecan trees (left).



"we wanted to change the use radically but save the character."

—jim poteet, aia

leftover overhauls



A cozy media room with enclosed and open custom built-ins provides a secluded spot for family time (top). Poteet's clever reuse of a steel beam as support for a marble vanity brings a hint of the building's origins into the master bath (above).

the two started with Yndo's loft. A family with three young kids doesn't exactly fit the "loft-liver" profile, but the architects balanced industrial details with homey touches. A black-and-white color palette, with dirt-concealing black floors, generates a clean look both aesthetically and literally. An open floor plan on the ground level facilitates large gatherings, and the upper level offers zones of privacy and escape from the crowds.

For the UT alums, each step of the design process was a meeting of the minds. No formal arrangement or division of labor existed. Homeowners benefited from the double dose of talent, while Poteet and Ousey discovered their easygoing compatibility in everything from concept to details. "They foster individualism in school," Poteet says, "but architecture at its best is a collaborative effort."—*s.d.h.*

project:

King William Lofts

architect (exteriors)/construction supervisor:

Poteet Architects, San Antonio

architect (for most interiors):

Poteet Architects, San Antonio, and FAB Architecture, Austin, Texas

developer:

Steve Yndo, King William Lofts LP, San Antonio

project size:

2,000 square feet to 4,000 square feet per unit

site size:

0.8 acre

construction cost:

\$60 per square foot (exteriors only)

sales price:

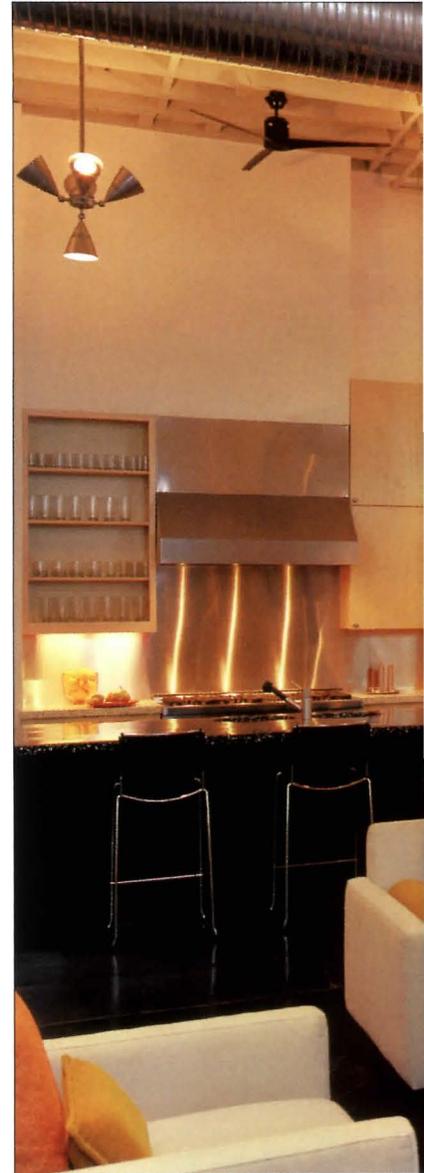
Started at \$90 per square foot (for shells only)

number of units:

11

photography:

Paul Bardagjy

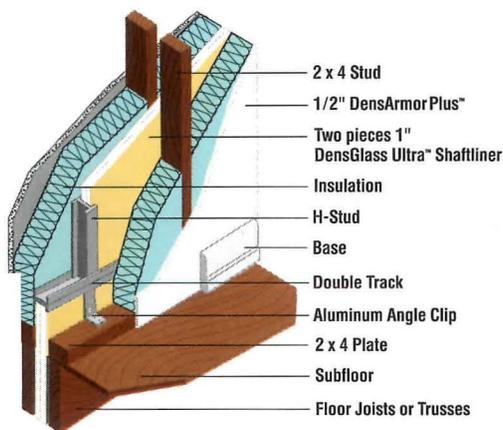




The stairs widen to nearly 14 feet as they reach the ground floor (above, left), offering casual seating in the public zone. Another steel beam remnant frames the raised hearth fireplace, and a surround composed of white laminated glass (above, right) "gives the eyes a place to rest," Poteet says. Exposed concrete walls give texture and depth to the monochromatic master bedroom (left).

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Circle no. 233

the softer side of steel

one of the strongest building materials is also a tremendously flexible, decorative spec.

by nigel f. maynard

The Miller/Hull Partnership knows the architectural power of metal. When designing 1310 East Union, a live/work lofts project in Seattle, the architects incorporated an exposed structural steel frame, exposed red-painted steel cross-braces on the façade, aluminum garage doors as windows, and corrugated metal in the ceilings. Miller/Hull describes the project as “structural architecture” that conveys “a sense of economy, efficiency, discipline, and order”—characteristics the firm considers essential to urban loft living.

Prized for its strength, metal has long been a popular spec for commercial and residential applications. Unlike engineered wood joists, steel beams allow architects to achieve large structural spans, including uninterrupted floor planes, with thinner framing members. “We do lots of cantilevers and overhangs,” says Ali R. Honarkar, principal of Division1 Architects, a Silver Spring, Md.-based design firm. In most cases, he adds, “there’s no other way to do them.”

But metal has become more acceptable—even valued—for its decorative qualities as well. “Most of

the work we do incorporates metal in some way,” says William Moore, AIA, president of Sprocket Design-Build, Denver. “We use folded sheet metal with a factory finish to clad certain exterior volumes, or we may use raw metal with a natural finish for fireplaces and other elements.”

Other designers who rely heavily on the material are quick to acknowledge its versatility. “We use metal as an exterior finish, corrugated metal for inexpensive [applications], and flat metal panels for higher-end projects,” says John Brown, principal of housebrand, a design/build firm in Calgary, Alberta. “I think it’s more about seeing the raw features,” adds Honarkar, whose firm uses exposed steel in nearly every residential project. “Usually all the framing is hidden behind the walls, so I think it’s interesting to people to see the structure of the building exposed.” Honarkar says Division1 specs metal in other unexpected places, too, using it to enliven fireplace surrounds and doors, stair treads, flooring, and even custom furniture.

Multifamily projects—especially those in cities—are particularly ripe for experimentation. After all, apartment buildings aren’t necessarily bound by the



Photos: Debi Fox (above); Christie Goss (below)

Steel factors prominently in Division1 Architects’ projects, including the catwalk in this Washington, D.C., residence (above). Carney Architects uses the material internally and as an external shading device (right).

whims of the resale market, and people are much more willing to accept expressive, contemporary design in a loft or condo project. “Metal and steel are a good fit for urban projects because you bring other industrial buildings into the process,” Moore explains. “The project draws inspiration from them.”

You don’t have to work in an urban market to fully appreciate steel’s versatility, however. Jackson, Wyo.-based Carney Architects uses an abundance of the material for projects in rural Wyoming and other mountain states—and not just out



of necessity. “Because of the snow, our structural systems get hammered, so we use steel to support the loads,” says associate Eric Logan, AIA, adding that the region’s tough weather conditions sometimes expose the framing for what it is. Nonetheless, the firm clearly *continued on page 64*

values metal's aesthetic qualities: Logan says it's not unusual to see a Carney project clad in oxidized steel or equipped with a rusted-steel door or steel interior wall paneling.

proven mettle

Metal can be found in various forms, including steel I-beams, iron, Cor-ten, mild steel (also known as "poor man's Cor-ten"), corrugated panels, and as stainless steel mesh, cable, and paneling. Most metalwork requires a skilled craftsman or the assistance of specialized contractors, but some products are easier to spec.

Cambridge Architectural manufactures woven metal products for industrial and architectural interior and exterior applications. The Cambridge, Md.-based company's architectural mesh façade products use metal fabric panels as parking garage covers, window protection, and general building cladding. Its space-sculpting systems help define interior areas, and its metal fabric solar systems are designed to offer shading from harsh sunlight or flood-lighting at night.

The Tampa, Fla.-based McNichols Co. is a favorite among architects looking for perforated metal panels, grating, and flooring or for wire mesh, stair treads, and handrail components. For a dramatic look, incorporate the sheets into sliding doors or shoji screens, or use the flooring to reflect light penetration from a skylight. Other suppliers of similar

products include BarnettBates Corp. in Joliet, Ill., and Wyoming, Pa.-based Perforated Metals Plus.

For something slightly different, architects might turn to Brooklyn, N.Y.-based Aswoon/Susan Woods Studio, a design and fabrication outfit that offers a line of room dividers and screens in various materials, including metal. The studio is also working on a highly unusual and avant-garde prototype partition made from steel tubing and stained glass.

chemistry lesson

As is the case with any material, architects must be mindful of several issues when specing metal. It's important, for instance, that overall interior detailing be well thought-out; otherwise the room may feel cold and sterile. Division1 usually paints exposed structural steel members in a rich gray or plain black color to create a dramatic effect, though it sometimes allows the steel to rust naturally. Other architects use it in conjunction with heavy timber, colorful walls, wood flooring, or veneer wall panels to warm the space. Logan says Carney's metal countertops and wall panels "are treated with a patina solution and a wax for a rich finish." The detailing itself, he adds, "depends on the vibe the owner wants to achieve."



Ron Pollard



Courtesy Division1 Architects

Sprocket Design-Build chose steel for this home's fireplace surround and chimney (left). Division1's Lacey project (above) will have cantilevered steel framing, stairs, and privacy screens.

Although some clients have a high tolerance for contemporary elements such as exposed-steel detailing, many do not. Some architects warn that it's important to have discussions about materials early to avoid headaches down the road. "We try to drag everybody through a rigorous process instead of ramming it down their throats," Logan explains. The firm also asks clients to bring in pictures of interiors they like to help inform the architects during the design process.

Others have an easier time gaining acceptance. "We haven't had any negative reaction from clients," Honarkar says, adding that they often seek his firm's services because of its reputation for edgy, contemporary design. In fact, Division1 clients don't just tolerate contemporary elements like exposed I-beams and stainless steel mesh—they desire them. "When we started doing it here [in the Washington, D.C., area], people thought we were nuts," he says. "But now people have become more exposed to it. Now it's cool."

One of the main benefits

of using structural steel systems, of course, is that they're fabricated off site and can easily be bolted on site with a crane. Such convenience comes with a high price tag, however. According to Logan, architects must generally buy steel by the pound and then pay separately for services such as cutting, drilling, and soldering. It may not be cheap up front, he adds, but at least it assembles quickly. Exterior steel applications such as cladding and detailed work can blow a budget, too. Says Moore: "We use it sparingly because it's more expensive than alternatives."

Custom fabrication also demands a long lead time, so architects would do well to design with those considerations in mind. (Of course, some firms control the problem by handling metal fabrication in-house.) And contractors aren't always happy to work with metal because it requires a whole new set of tools and blades. In those cases, it's a good idea to inform subs up front that a job will involve some metalwork so they can, well, steel themselves for the job. **ra**



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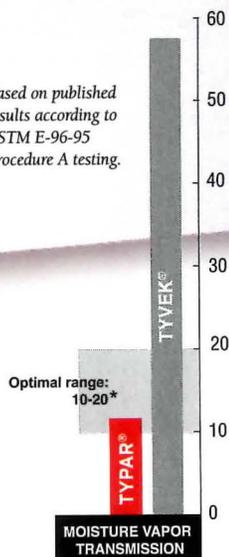
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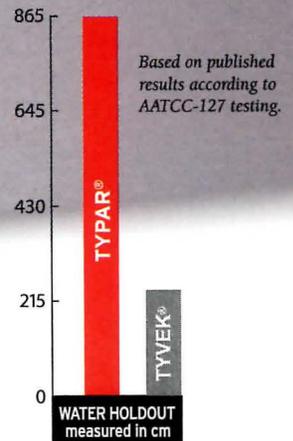
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inside sliders

When designing, deFreitas will often “kick it up a notch” by incorporating sliding doors in the bedroom. He’s partial to products from The Sliding Door Co. of Van Nuys, Calif. Each door features an aluminum frame with a maintenance-free hot-treatment finish, 5-millimeter-thick tempered glass, and a

locking system that keeps it on track. Doors can be ordered in standard and custom sizes with one to six panels. The Sliding Door Co., 888.433.1333; www.slidingdoorco.com.



tangentially speaking

DeFreitas likes to devote 2 percent of his multifamily units to “subtly” luxurious products. One of his favorites is the 5¾-inch-long Tangent lever designed by architect Robert Watson for Lockwood, a flagship brand of lock company Assa Abloy Australia. Tangent’s aluminum body and stainless steel components can be specced in satin-anodized or powder-coat finishes. “It’s sublimely beautiful and thoughtful,” deFreitas raves, and “it feels good in your hand every time you use it.” Assa Abloy Australia, 61.03.8574.3888; www.lockweb.com.au.



character studies

Even the signage on a deFreitas project is well thought-out. The architect especially likes the 4-inch Ribbon font from Gemini Signs. “They cost a bit more than off-the-shelf varieties,” deFreitas says of the Marlborough, Mass.-based company’s cast-metal letters and numbers, “but they have a depth and solidity that’s easily recognizable and will last a lifetime.” Cast in aluminum or bronze, the characters can be customized in 40-plus font styles and more than a dozen anodized aluminum and bronze finishes. Gemini Signs Co., 800.270.3343; www.geminisigns.com.

—nigel f. maynard

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—shelley d. hutchins

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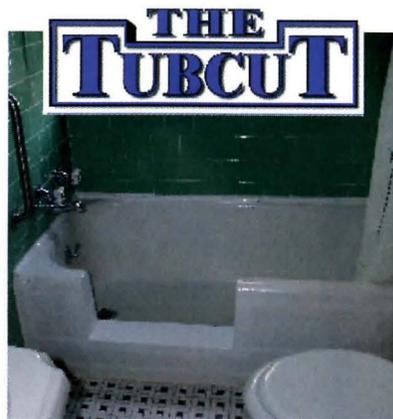
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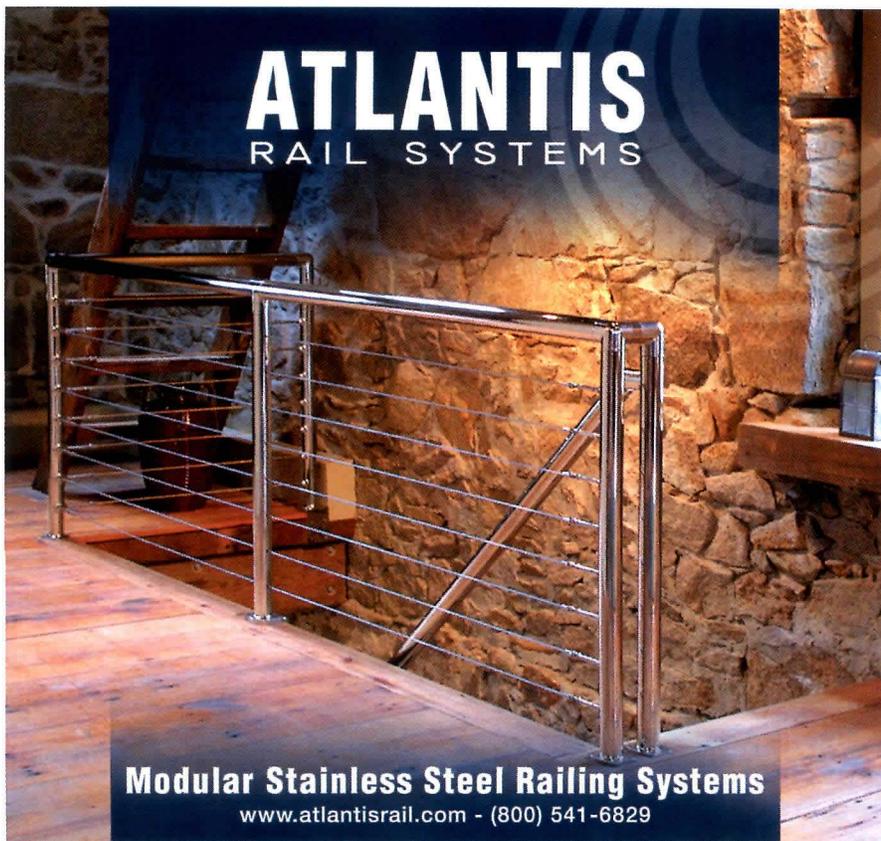
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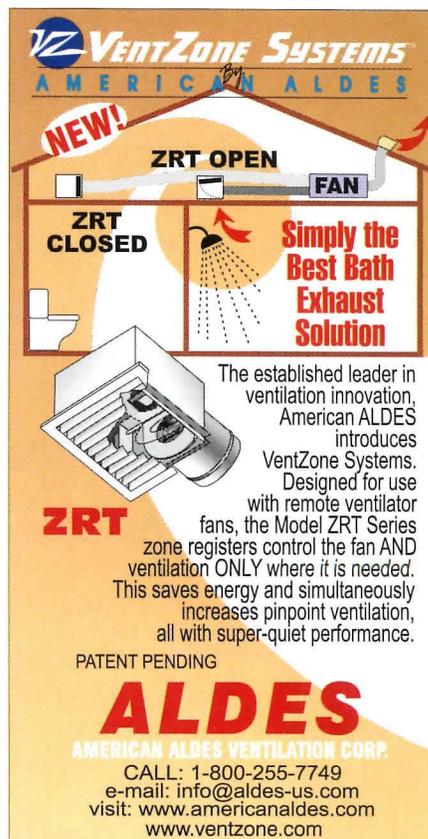
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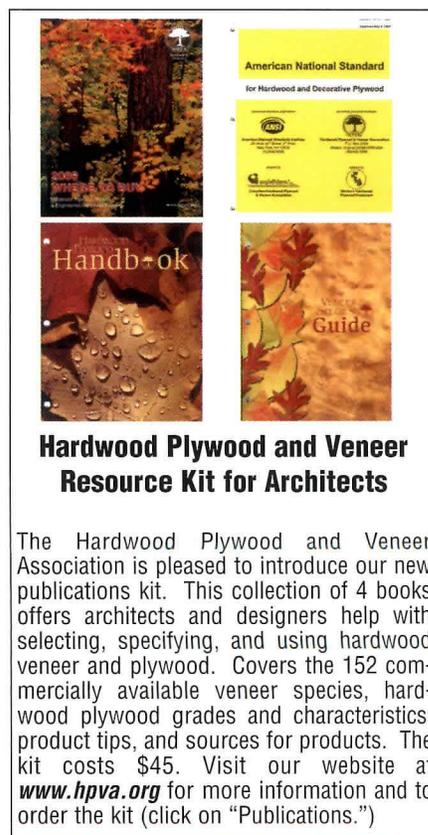
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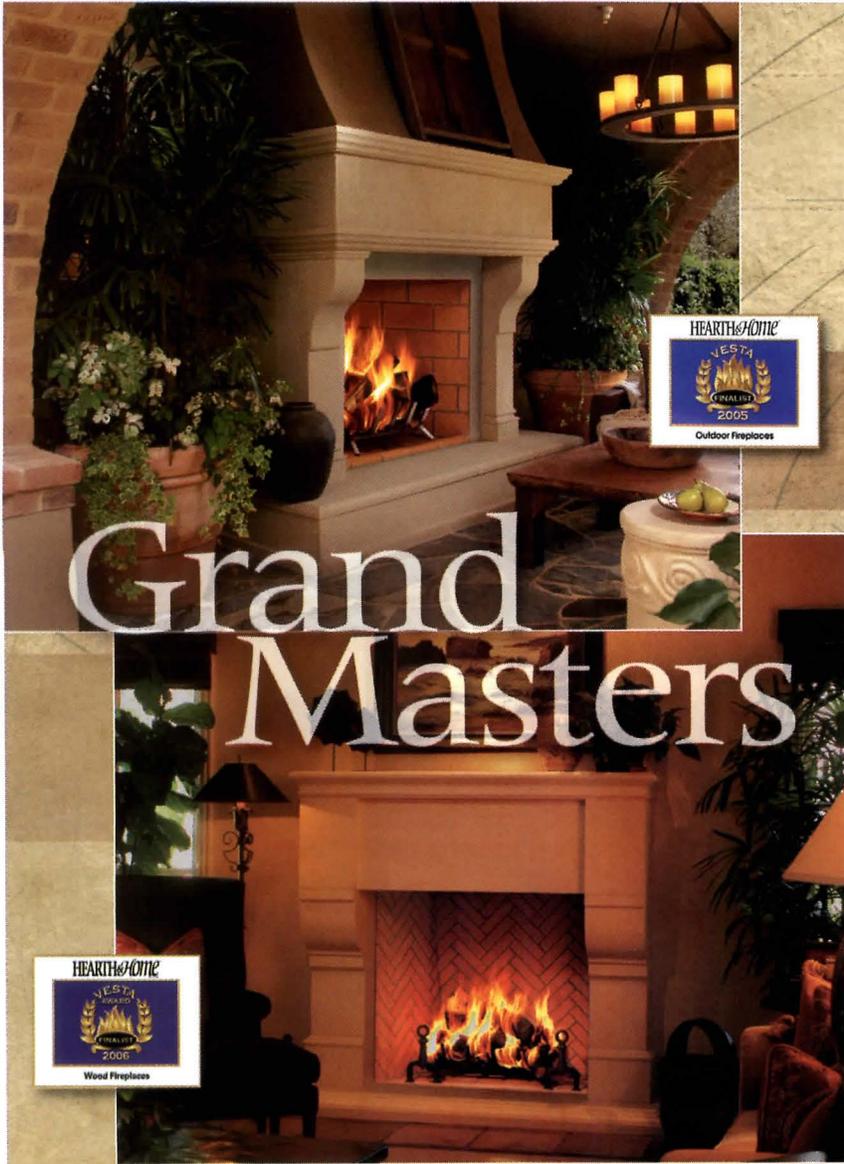
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end quotes

how do you design privacy and society into multifamily housing?

“We filter people through layers, from exposed public areas to more closed, private spaces. In a courtyard, we loosely define semiprivate areas with planters, hardscape, or low walls. We increase these dividers until you reach private exterior spaces connecting to individual units. To make our projects feel alive, we allow light and movement to filter out of units with frosted glass, louvers, perforated metal, or wood screens and tall, sparse planting materials.”

—Carl Smith, AIA, William Adams Architects, Venice, Calif.

“Apply the same design sense you would to a single-family home. Each unit should have a public porch and entry space, and interior living space facing the street where possible. Scale and a single-story entry are most important in creating identity in each unit. Even in condominiums, common hallways and doorways can be thought of as interior streets.”

—William Moore, AIA, Sprocket Design-Build, Denver



“Design for chance instances of sociability, but don’t force it. We try to give tenants their own exterior front door (no double-loaded corridors if you can help it) and a variety of exterior courtyard spaces for a variety of activities. Passing through the courtyards encourages social interaction.”

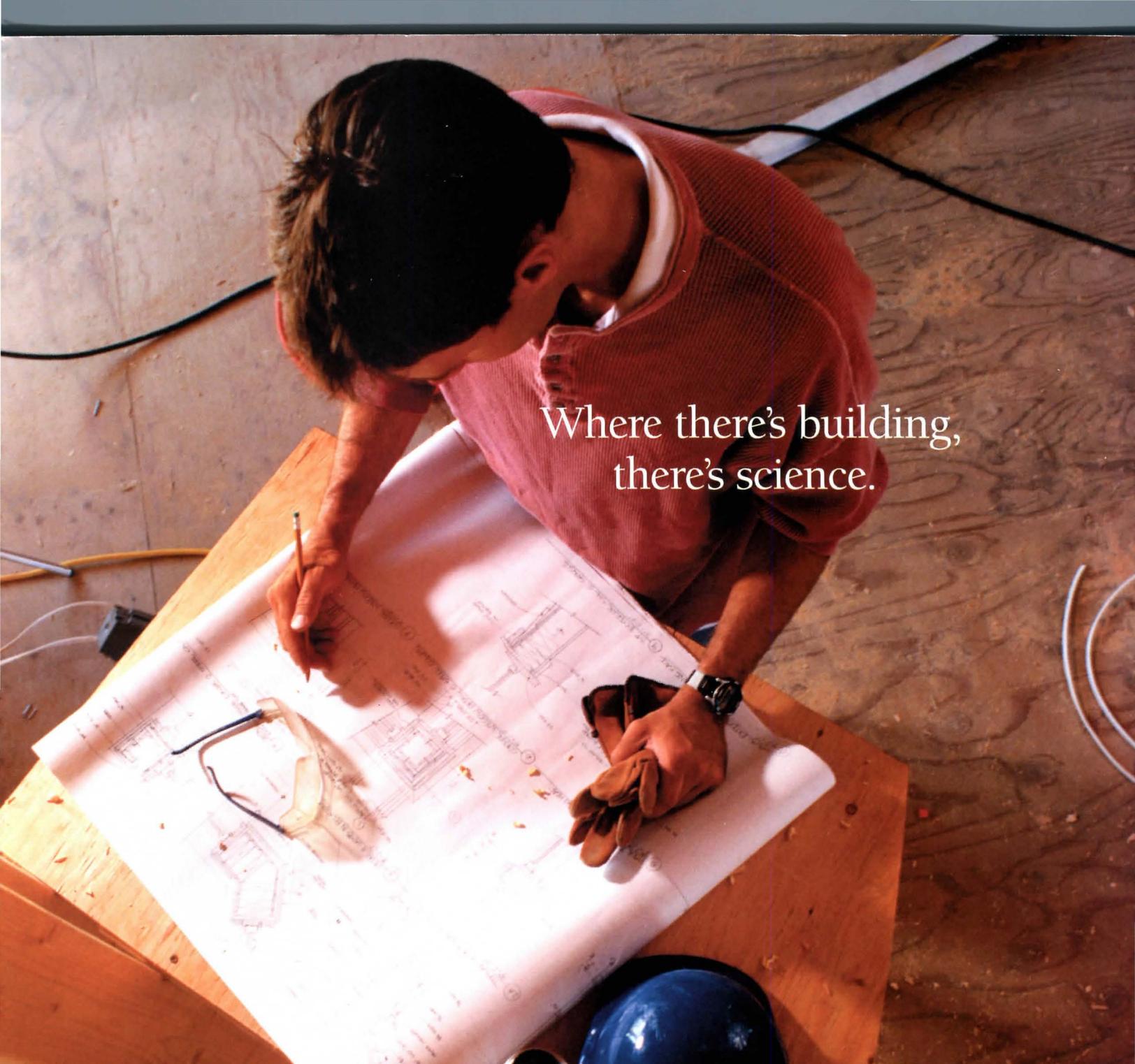
—Angela Brooks, AIA, Pugh + Scarpa Architects, Santa Monica, Calif.

“First, we don’t skimp on acoustic insulation or wall construction on the interiors. Second, we try to create public and semiprivate spaces on the exterior—communal lawns and stoops, walled gardens, and elevated decks.”

—Jim Poteet, AIA, Poteet Architects, San Antonio

—edited by shelley d. hutchins

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