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Mark R. Johnson, FAIA, CKD, AIBD

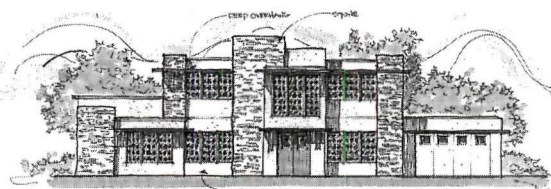
Whirlpool Corporation is always ready to take on the latest challenges. But recently, we created a challenge of our own for architects and designers to tackle. Together with AIBD, we introduced a novel twist to the Concept Awards Design Competition, a live event that takes place annually at the Southeast Building Conference (SEBC).

This unique venue invites tradeshow attendees to witness the design process in real time as designers showcase both their talent and ability to interact with an audience. In past years, hand drawing had been the norm at the competition. But this year, we created a second category for designs drawn in Google® SketchUp™.



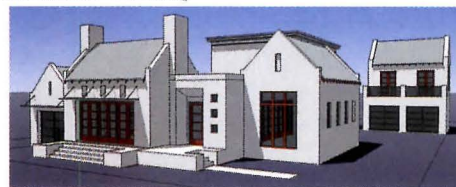
Allen Beaumont and David Pillsbury, winners of the 2008 SEBC Concept Awards Design Competition.

It was truly instructive to see low-tech and high-tech design processes side-by-side and to observe the differences



Concept Award winner, Hand Drawing category.

between the two winners, Allen Beaumont (hand drawing) and David Pillsbury (Google® SketchUp™). Of course, the reaction of show attendees was fun to watch as well. The entrants successfully completed their designs in just 16 hours over two days—and with lots of questions from the trade show floor.



Concept Award winner, Google® SketchUp™ category.

Each contestant created a preliminary design of a contemporary home for an imaginary dual-income couple (complete with two adolescent children, as well as aging in-laws who would move in within a couple of years). Additionally, each design needed to reflect environmental priorities by including sustainable building practices and products.

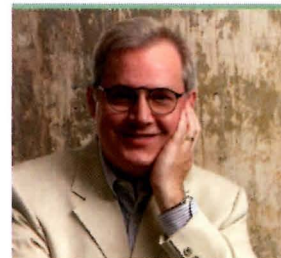
Several entries incorporated the passive solar design technique of using deep window and wall overhangs to assist with sunlight management and heat gain. Low-E glazing was specified for windows and doors to increase thermal performance and reduce the energy required to operate a home.

As for appliances, kitchens included ENERGY STAR® qualified products from the KitchenAid® Architect® Series II, plus other energy- and water-efficient models from the series. KitchenAid® outdoor appliances were also used to create outdoor kitchens, a design idea that can minimize the carbon footprint of a home by reducing the interior kitchen space. In the laundry rooms, designers included Whirlpool brand ENERGY STAR®

qualified washers and energy-efficient dryers.

At competition's end, the top finishers were

recognized at the Aurora Awards Gala, a celebration of excellence in residential design. To read more about the winners, and see the photo gallery, visit www.theauroras.com/conceptAwards.cfm.



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

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CONTINUING EDUCATION

Whirlpool Corporation invites you to view the latest video podcast of The SketchUp Show, Episode #47. You'll learn about using Google® SketchUp's™ Photo Match tool to create a 3D kitchen model that incorporates products and finishes used in the Sustainable Kitchen by Whirlpool Corporation. You'll also learn how SketchUp™ streamlines the design process and how to find building product models in the Google® 3D Warehouse. The free episode is available at go-2-school.com/podcasts/047.

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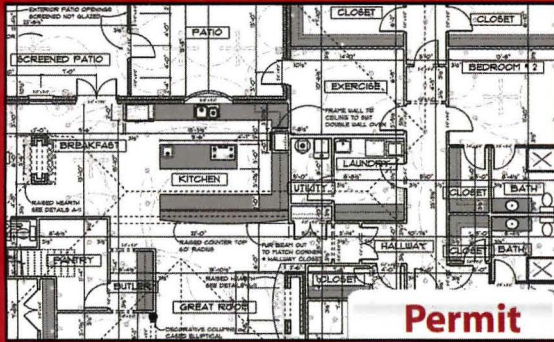


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Volume 12, number 8. *residential architect* (ISSN 1093-359X; USPS 016-871) is published nine times a year (January/February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September/October, November/December) in 2008 by Hanley Wood, LLC, One Thomas Circle, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, DC 20005. Copyright 2008 by Hanley Wood, LLC. Opinions expressed are those of the authors or persons quoted and not necessarily those of Hanley Wood. Reproductions in whole or in part prohibited without prior written authorization. *residential architect* is sent free of charge to qualified readers involved in the residential home design market. The publisher reserves the right to determine qualification criteria. Out-of-field subscription rates are: U.S., \$39.95; U.S. students, \$19.99; Canada and all other countries, U.S. \$49.95; airmail is additional. Single-copy price is \$10.00. For subscription information write to: *residential architect*, P.O. Box 3241, Northbrook, IL 60065-3241. **Subscription inquiries and back issue orders:** 888.269.8410 / Fax: 847.291.4816. **Reprints:** Wright's Reprints, 877.652.5295. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to: *residential architect*, P.O. Box 3241, Northbrook, IL 60065-3241. This issue is mailed in regional editions. Canada Publications #40612608. Canadian return address: BleuChip International, P.O. Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2.

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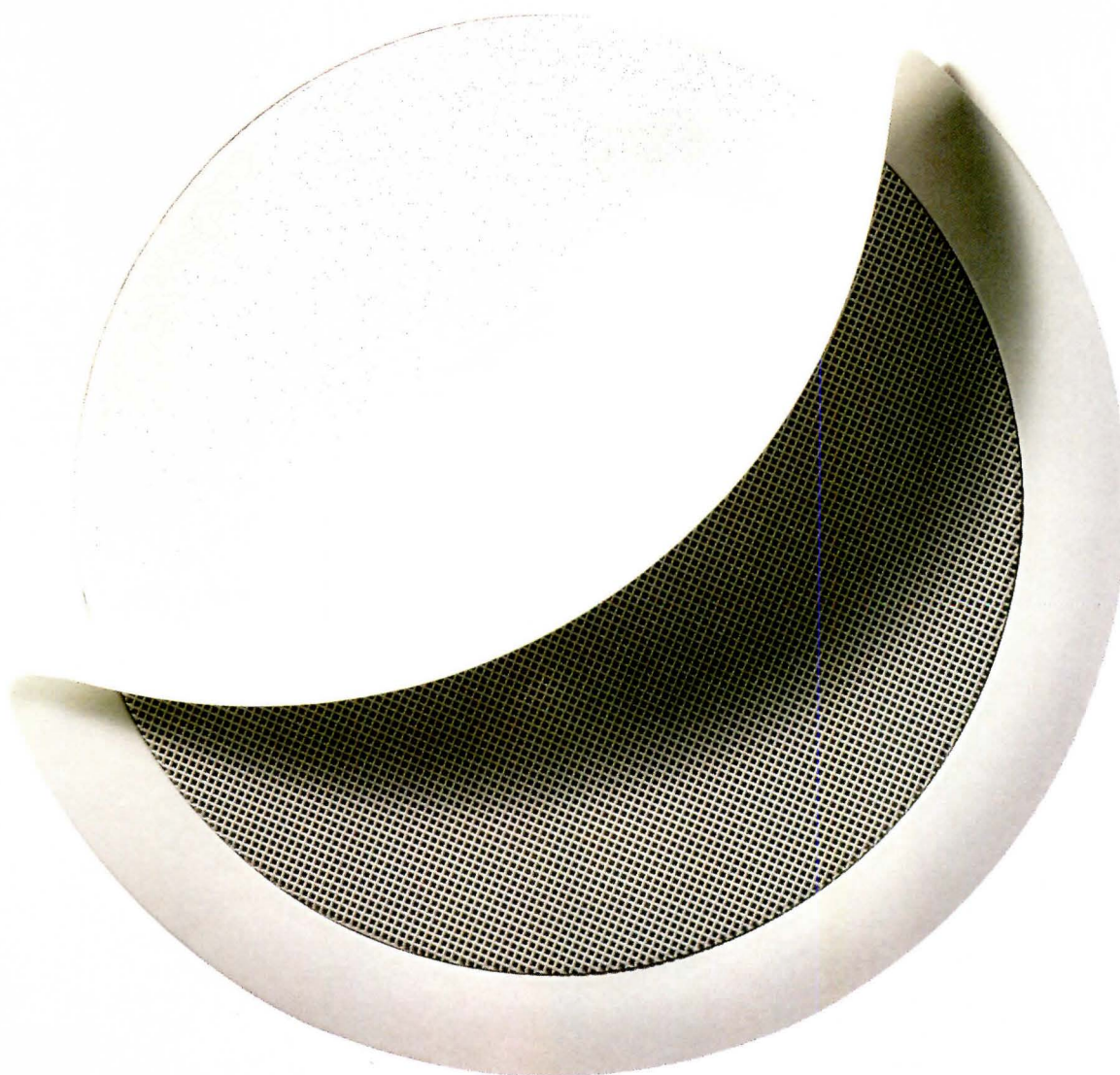
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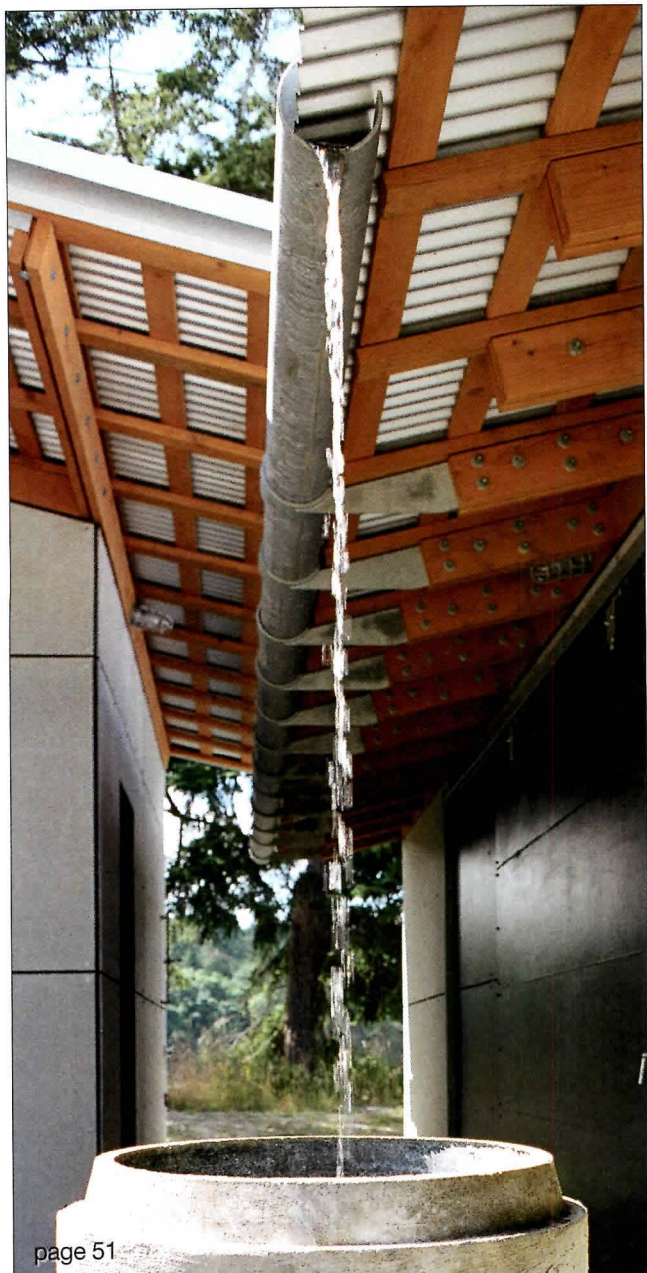
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contents



page 51

It could have been just a gutter. Photo: Jim Van Gundy/
www.photoboy.biz. Cover photo: Bill Timmerman.



Mind the Gap:

Focus on Affordability

Register now for the 5th annual

Reinvention Symposium—page 32

residential architect
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annual residential architect design
awards—page 65

from the editor... page 13

letters... page 15

home front... page 18

Sarah Susanka's milestone / Zaha Hadid's skyscrapers / Robert C. Lautman's lens

green piece... page 23

Rogers Marvel solves a big problem in Brooklyn, N.Y.

green pieces... page 24

Smarter choices for the future.

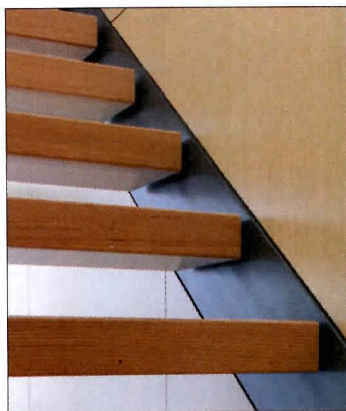
k + b studio... page 28

It's not an easy task for an architect to design spaces rich in detail but quiet and contemplative in overall effect. Nils C. Finne, of Finne Architects, does it all for a kitchen in Seattle and a bath in Redmond, Wash.



practice... page 35

It is the best of times, it is the worst of times. Talk to a dozen architects in a dozen different parts of the country and you'll hear a tale of a dozen very diverse experiences of the housing slowdown.



cover story... page 51

another solution

The best architects tread carefully over every point of invention in each project, parsing possibilities, plausibilities, and potential pitfalls. We've chosen some of our very favorite solutions to problems rarefied and mundane. Perhaps they'll inspire even more inventive solutions from you.

by Meghan Drueding, Cheryl Weber,
Shelley D. Hutchins, and Nigel F. Maynard

doctor spec... page 67

Turns out you don't need to design everything from the ground up, you just need the right selection of sources.

architects' choice... page 71

David B. Banducci's tried and true.

new material... page 72

All the new that's fit to print.

workspace... page 80

Daren Doss and Lisa Chadbourne's double Dutch hideaway.



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from the editor

a disservice to the house

the housing boom made us forget what our homes are really worth.

by s. claire conroy

everyone is lamenting the deflation of the housing bubble.

But there's at least one bright side to its departure. The housing boom did a major disservice to the house. It caused nearly everyone—owners, bankers, Realtors, builders, and even architects, in some cases—to think of houses as investments.

When you think of a house as an investment, you begin to expect a substantial return. Many people who bought prior to 2005 tracked the purported appreciation of their house like they would a promising stock in their portfolios. They took comfort in the idea that they wouldn't have to wait until they sold the house to realize the return. They could simply tap the extra with a home equity loan or line of credit and fund some other pleasures in life—maybe even a second home, or more.

What else that we love so dearly and that serves us so well do we think of in this way? We already accept that the fancy car we buy will likely be worth \$10,000 less than we paid for it the moment we drive it off the dealer's lot. And that special bottle of wine we shared with someone

last night? Well, unless we make a candlestick holder out of it, it also has sacrificed its value and potential for mere moments of sweet, ephemeral experience.

There are many things we spend lots of money on, and we don't expect anything more from the expenditure than pure enjoyment. True, there are collector automobiles and rare vintages of outstanding wine that may increase in value over time, but it's tough to predict. It's more magic than math—a witch's brew of popular taste, perceived quality, availability, and the state of the economy. And therefore, no one considers appreciation in these arenas a sure thing. It's a "nice-to-have" rather than a "must-have."

Now, in most cases, houses cost a great deal more than a car or a bottle of Bordeaux. They do represent the biggest purchase of ordinary folks' lives. Given that the stakes are so high, people are understandably anxious that the money they put toward their house doesn't appear to evaporate before their eyes—a concern their banker shares as well. Still, during the boom, we began to count on double-digit growth for this repository of our funds. Suddenly a new kitchen that in other times was a nice-to-have



Mark Robert Halper

became a must-have. You had to have a spanking new kitchen and baths to sell your house with multiple offers and big sums over the asking price.

All of that was a huge burden for the beleaguered house to bear. And it's a new burden. Back when people stayed put in one place longer, their houses needed only to show a small return over 30 years of care. If you put in a new kitchen, it was because you wanted one and would derive enjoyment from it. And likely you'd choose one in harmony with the house and comprising the elements important to you, rather than the bling of real estate brochures. Cynical, strategic choices squeeze

the soul out of a house.

These days, the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction. Because we still think of houses as our most important investment, we're frozen with fear about making changes we really want or need to make. We fear overspending and exceeding the quality and price of other houses in the neighborhood. Alas, what makes good financial sense doesn't always make a good and satisfying home. The rule for a house is like the rule for a bottle of wine: If you love it, that's what matters most, and therein lies its real worth. **ra**

Comments? E-mail: S. Claire Conroy at cconroy@hanleywood.com.

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letters

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architect/ developers speak up and out

Congratulations on the great issue about architects as developers (January/February 2008). This is an endeavor about which most architects dream. Of particular interest were the business aspects of the various projects profiled.

One thing I would like to know more about is whether other architects' errors and omissions (E&O) insurers have problems with them acting as developer/general contractors. Regardless of whether one forms separate entities, my experience is that most E&O insurance companies are concerned that they will get dragged into the fray—regardless of the separate entity—and are not enthusiastic about covering architects that have that kind of exposure.

In part because of this, I have kept my own developer/builder projects limited to properties that I could occupy myself for several years before selling them. This also takes care of the tax problem, as the gains are long-term capital versus ordinary income. The difference is big: +/- 25 percent versus 45 percent.

Rolling profits from one project to the next is also an

excellent way to minimize financing expenses. On my latest project, I was able to get halfway through the project self-financed, and then had a credit line in place to finish up. No dealing with inspections, no points and fees for a construction loan, and significantly reduced interest expense. I took out permanent financing once the project was completed. This improves the timeline and cuts financing costs considerably.

My projects have been rather modest. Nothing as grand in scale as many of those featured in the issue, but I am on my third project as architect/developer/GC. (I have a 'B' GC's license, as well as my architect's license.) My latest is a live/work project on a 3,500-square-foot CD-zoned infill lot one block from the central plaza in Healdsburg, Calif. The lot was not on the market, but I talked the owner into parting with the property. As was the case with one of the architect/developers you profiled [page 57], I can't tell you how many people have since told me that they, too, had contacted the owner about buying the property.

*Alan B. Cohen, AIA
Healdsburg, Calif.*

The January/February issue was very timely and resonates with some of the issues with which our firm has been dealing. We have been designing, building, and developing our own projects since 2002 and have experienced a fair amount of success during the past five years. The recent downturn has shown us that we may "catch our lunch"—an appropriate term that I heard another developer use. It's not good.

I am writing primarily to respond to a question in your editorial ("School of Hard Knocks," page 11). "In a slow housing market, will architect-designed and -developed properties do better than those with lesser pedigrees?" you ask. My answer is "only slightly," which means "financially worse," since we architects probably spent more to create the buildings, and the scared marketplace will not recognize that value with dollars.

We were a bit naive in thinking we could divorce real estate value from old-fashioned "square foot" logic and that people would routinely pay more for the certain values that architects cherish. A more harsh illustration may be the fact that we received two local AIA Honor Awards this year. As

of the night of the awards ceremony, the buildings receiving the awards were vacant, accruing interest at an alarming rate, and had no prospects.

One of the projects receiving an award was our development, which proceeded to lose all of the partners' initial investment and an additional, equal amount (200 percent loss). The other one was not ours but [was still empty in mid-February 2008], and I can look out my office window and see it as a reminder [of what's happening in the current market]. The point is really that architects and consumers do not think alike, especially when it comes to buying.

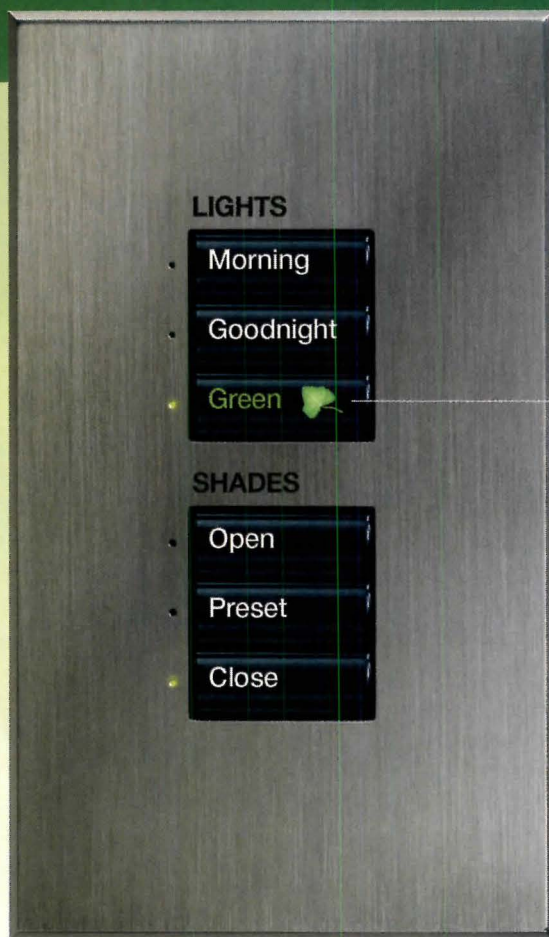
I'm not writing to discourage architect/developers, which is something that I strongly encourage, but rather to provide a word of caution and to reiterate how important it is to establish a safe budget and have the discipline to adhere to it. This is something that Jonathan Segal, FAIA, preaches, and it cannot be overstated.

*Bill Moore, AIA
Sprocket Design-Build
Denver*

*Letters may be edited for
clarity and length.*

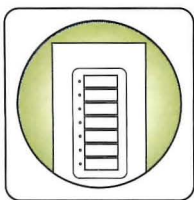
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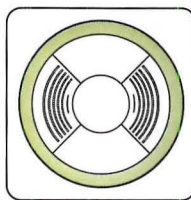
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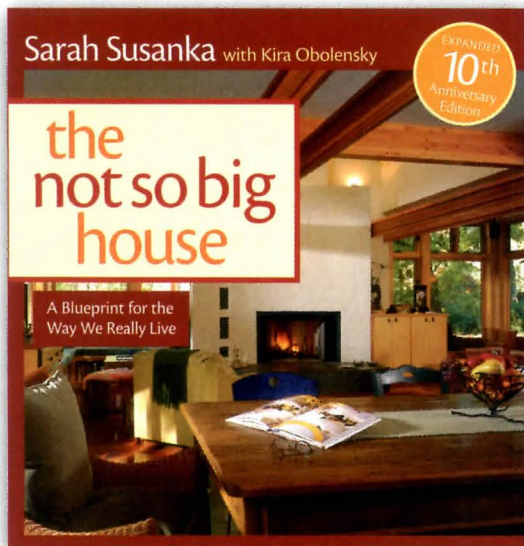
news from the leading edge of residential design.

a “not so big” anniversary

Few architecture books have had the staying power of Sarah Susanka, FAIA's *The Not So Big House: A Blueprint for the Way We Really Live*. Ten years (and several sequels) later, the book's core message about the value of thoughtful, personalized design continues to resonate with an ever-expanding range of homeowners, giving them the tools to recognize good design and the language to express their design needs. “What I wanted to do was create a much more

vivid language that allowed all of us to start talking together about the qualities and not quantities of home,” Susanka says.

That ideal is as relevant today as it was in 1998, so it's fitting that The Taunton Press is releasing a second edition of *The Not So Big House*. Debuting Sept. 23, the new edition includes a fresh introduction by Susanka, who reflects on the past decade, and an additional chapter that explores three “Not So Big” projects inspired by her books.



The 10th anniversary second edition of *The Not So Big House*, due in stores Sept. 23, offers a new foreword by author Sarah Susanka and a chapter that showcases “Not So Big” projects inspired by the books.



Cheryl Muhr/
Courtesy Susanka Studios

Many of Susanka's peers acknowledge that the “Not So Big” movement has had a profound impact on the way average homeowners perceive and



Benjamin Benschneider



Doug Smith

The uninterrupted ceiling in this contemporary Minnesota house—designed by Eric Odor, AIA, Susanka's former SALA Architects colleague—unites the rooms and creates a sense of openness.

understand the home. "Sarah's books and other related books from Taunton are part of a shift in our culture, in our society, to higher-quality, more intelligent, more resource-efficient, and more energy-efficient homes," says Ross Chapin, AIA, principal of Ross Chapin Architects in Langley, Wash. Undoubtedly, with the release of a 10th anniversary edition, *The Not So Big House* will continue to influence the American perception of "home."—stephani l. miller

flower power

The skyline in one of south central Singapore's prime residential districts will soon receive a makeover of dramatic proportions, courtesy of Zaha Hadid Architects of London and a four-member consortium of developers led by Singapore-based CapitaLand.

Conceived by Hadid, Hon. FAIA, and partner Patrik Schumacher, the radical design for a housing development at the Farrer Court site comprises seven towers of upscale apartments and 12 garden villas that collectively will accommodate about 1,500 individuals and families. It replaces a 618-unit condominium of the same name scheduled for demolition in September and, according to CapitaLand, will be the largest in the country's history (in site size and project value).

Given its siting on 19.25 acres surrounded by low-rise development, the \$2.1 billion project stands out not only for its height—each 36-story tower will ascend 492 feet—but for its flowerlike design. "The towers are subdivided into petals according to the number of residential units per floor," Hadid explained in a project brief. "The petals are expressed in three dimensions thanks to vertical cuts, which give definition to the building's façades."

Construction will begin by mid-2009 and end in 2013. Once complete, the yet-to-be-renamed development will offer residents unprecedented views of the nearby Singapore Botanic Gardens, among other attractions, and easy access to the Farrer Road MRT commuter station already under construction nearby.—marla misek clark



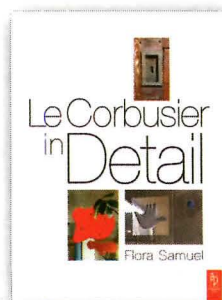
Courtesy Zaha Hadid Architects

Zaha Hadid's towers at Singapore's Farrer Court redevelopment site will appear to grow from sunken gardens in the landscape. They're oriented to optimize sun exposure and maximize views of the city.

corbu close-up

More often than not, the way an architect handles details holds clues to his overall design ethos. Modernist master Le Corbusier was no exception. *Le Corbusier in Detail* (Elsevier, \$39.95), by Flora Samuel, explores the ideas behind the smallest details of his architecture.

Backed by painstaking research, Samuel looks closely at Corbu's treatment of windows, doors, walls, stairways, and the like, pondering their relationship to his work as a whole. She quotes effectively and extensively

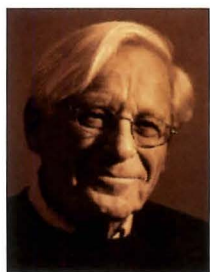


from his writings, particularly "The Poem of the Right Angle," his series of 19 paintings and related musings from 1947–1953. And she makes careful distinctions between her

own thoughtful opinions and the views of other critics. The book, she writes in the conclusion, "has been a journey through Le Corbusier's work seen close-up. I have swept away dust and felt my way into the ridges and cracks of his buildings."—meghan drueding

perspective *an eye for detail*

Robert C. Lautman's first photography job was as an Army shutterbug in World War II. After the war, he discovered architectural photography and over the subsequent decades became one of its top practitioners. The Washington, D.C.-based Lautman, Hon. AIA, spoke recently with *residential architect* about his career and his strategy for shooting details.



Christy Schlesinger

How do you capture the essence of an architectural detail in a photograph?

"The lighting is everything. Somebody (I'm not sure who; it wasn't me) once said, 'Architectural photography consists of two things: knowing where to stand and knowing what time to stand there.' That, of course, has to do with light. The rest is just technology."

What are the hardest details to photograph?

"Well, the easiest ones are the classical ones—Roman, Greek, Egyptian. The early classicists did wonderful details. In modern architecture, with the elimination of ornamentation, you have much simpler, less easily defined details. I like them both. When I've had it up to here with modernism, I can go shoot something classical. I was imbalanced toward modernism for a long time in my career. Then I visited places like Monticello, Mount Vernon, Greece, Italy, and Egypt, and I realized people all those years ago weren't so dumb after all."

How has digital photography influenced your business?

"I've gotten to be more and more digital. Film still has a higher



Robert C. Lautman

quality, but digital is catching up fast. It will equal the quality of film—if not this year, then next year. In five years there will be practically no film around, except in the fine arts. I give architects the choice of 4x5 film or digital. The only way digital affects the photo shoot is that it lets me move more quickly and take more pictures per day."

What is your favorite building?

"My favorite place in the United States is Monticello. It was Jefferson's workshop. He'd go to Europe and get ideas. Then he'd come back and tear something down and rebuild it. [A few years ago] I went down and tried to photograph Monticello the way he would have, had he lived a few years longer—with a big camera and contact prints and hand-coated platinum paper."—*meghan drueding*

Robert C. Lautman took this photo of Monticello's northwest portico as early photographers would have—with a large-format camera and platinum paper.

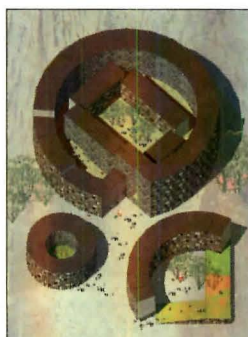
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solos: tulou/affordable housing for china

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cooper–hewitt, national design museum, new york city

Affordable housing is a global concern, no more so than in China—the world's most populous country. This exhibition showcases one way its leaders are addressing the growing crisis as more and more citizens migrate from villages to cities. Slated to be completed in late 2008 in Guangzhou, China's third largest city, Tulou (shown here in a rendering) is a dense housing community designed by Urbanus. The young firm's innovative plan demonstrates how to avoid sprawl by weaving several buildings—a dormitory, small hotel, library, gymnasium, and apartment building among them—into the existing city fabric. Apartments average about 355 square feet and accommodate up to six adults. The exhibit will also recreate two full-scale bedrooms typical of each unit and outline the entire floor plan in full scale to convey spatial realities. For details, visit www.cooperhewitt.org or call 212.849.8400.



Courtesy Urbanus

ongoing

2009 residential architect Design Awards, deadlines: November 4 (entry form and fee), December 23 (completed entry packets), www.radesignawards.com or shutchins@hanleywood.com; **Architecture Tour: Focus on John Lautner**, through October 12, MAK Center for Art and Architecture, www.makcenter.org; **"Progress,"** through November 30, Whitney Museum of American Art, www.whitney.org; **Cold War Modern: Design 1945–1970**, September 25–January 11, Victoria and Albert Museum, www.vam.ac.uk; **American Streamlined Design: The World of Tomorrow**, October 24–May 17, The Wolfsonian–Florida International University, www.wolfsonian.org.

For up-to-date, comprehensive calendar listings, go to www.residentialarchitect.com.—*shelley d. hutchins*

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swale tale

a brooklyn brownfield goes green.

The sewers of New York City are mythical, with tales of alligator men and giant rats lurking in their depths. But these days the horror stories involve heavy rains that regularly force stormwater runoff to push raw sewage into the city's waterways. Rogers Marvel Architects recently parlayed those overburdened sewers into a pivotal design for a mixed-income, mixed-use housing development on a brownfield site bordering Brooklyn, N.Y.'s Gowanus Canal.

The winning scheme, Gowanus Green, is the brainchild of Rogers Marvel, West 8 urban design and landscape architecture of the Netherlands, and New York City-based Starr Whitehouse Landscape Architects and Planners. Rogers Marvel project architect Shuji Suzumori believes their plan to improve neighborhood water sources helped the proposal stand out with the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development. "We focused a lot of energy on ways to clean up the canal and the site," he explains.

The 6-acre site—once home to a gas manufacturing plant—will soon comprise nine buildings containing 774 apartments (70 percent of which will be low-income or affordable senior



Renderings and site plan: Rogers Marvel Architects/West 8/Starr Whitehouse

Buildings are recessed on the ground floor to generate smaller footprints and deep overhangs that act as quiet outdoor transitions to abundant greenways and parks. Rogers Marvel tried to respect context, so business-like brick façades face the industrial edges of the site, while more organic patterns and domestic materials like glass and wood highlight park-side elevations.



housing), plus 65,000 square feet of ground-floor cultural, retail, and community facilities. Half of the site will be devoted to public greens. A rain garden, amphitheater, plant nursery, playground, and pedestrian mews are also interwoven with the buildings. The largest outdoor area is a 2-acre canal-front park with a landscaped swale trail running through it. Suzumori says 100 percent of the site's rainwater runoff will be collected and diverted to this trail, which will contain plants to naturally filter contaminants from the water. Any water not absorbed by parks or green roofs will flow cleanly into the canal.

The project team hopes the hefty proportion of green-to-build space will help earn Gowanus Green the new LEED for Neighborhood Development designation. The buildings "are just guests" within the park setting, says principal architect Jonathan Marvel, AIA, and were placed like "deferential chess pieces to frame the greens." The massive site clean-up offers ample time to hone those details until construction starts in 2010, with completion expected four years later. "This relationship of the buildings to the landscape is really the signature concept," Marvel says. "If we get this right, then the architecture and construction will fall in place."—*shelley d. hutchins*

smarter choices for the future.



for your amusement

Amuse is the latest addition to Waterfall's environmentally sensitive bath vanity line. Made from FSC-certified woods and low-VOC paints, the 24-inch-wide unit has two drawers and a tilt-out compartment. Shown here in Sunset—one of 13 available colors—it can be ordered with CaesarStone quartz or 3form eco-resin countertops. Waterfall Bathroom Furniture, 888.521.3141; www.waterfallbath.com.

great dane

Designed by architect Knud Kapper for Denmark-based Hansen Living, Living Kitchen Architecture is an eco-friendly collection of solid wood cabinets and islands. Each piece is made from plantation-grown Danish hardwoods with mortise and tenon joints and plant-based oil or soap finishes. Both the Series 200 and Series 100 (seen here) are distributed in the United States by Northport, N.Y.-based Susan Serra Associates. Hansen Living, 631.754.0464; www.hansenlivingusa.com.



Foster + Partners/Courtesy Masdar

community building

Debuting October 23 and running for a year, *Green Community* explores the space between buildings. Past, present, and future community plans showing environmentally friendly design will range from small-town neighborhoods to large-scale urban centers. The show will also highlight ways to reduce the impact of our built environments through such sustainable strategies as brownfield redevelopment, transit-oriented communities, and renewable energy options. National Building Museum, 202.272.2448; www.nbm.org.

—nigel f. maynard and shelly d. hutchins



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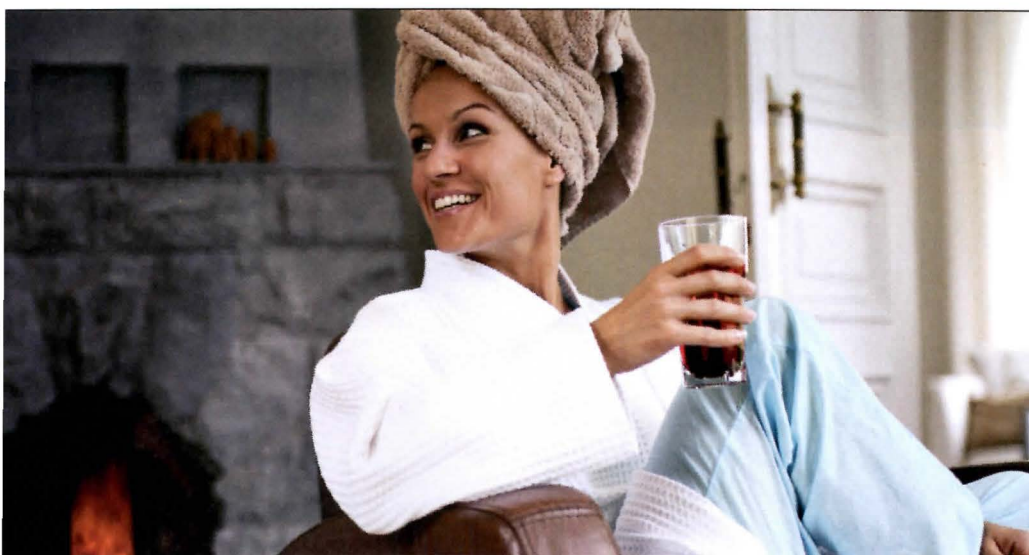
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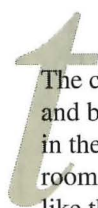
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k + b studio

kitchen: pattern play



The clients for this Seattle kitchen remodeling job wanted more space and better light. Nils C. Finne, AIA, suggested knocking down walls in the dining room and breakfast nook to create one contiguous room. But the owners were nervous, at least initially, “about feeling like they were eating in a kitchen,” he says. Those worries vanished once they saw Finne’s design for a light-filled space full of stunning details and textural contrasts.

A custom island embodies Finne’s “crafted modernism” concept for the 640-square-foot space. For the sake of continuity, fabricators

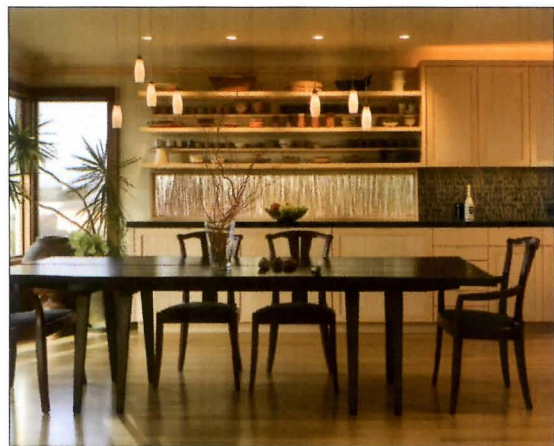
used planks from the same elm tree to make the island countertop and a custom dining table nearby. To add visual and tactile interest, they left the long outside edge of each piece raw and used sleek machine finishes on the remaining sides.

Fabricating the open island was especially tricky. Plumbing, wiring, and disposal installations had to be exact, Finne says, so everything would be in the right spot when the island was put in place. To make those exposed guts look good, the architect spec’d blackened copper piping and a stainless steel disposal shroud. He also concealed

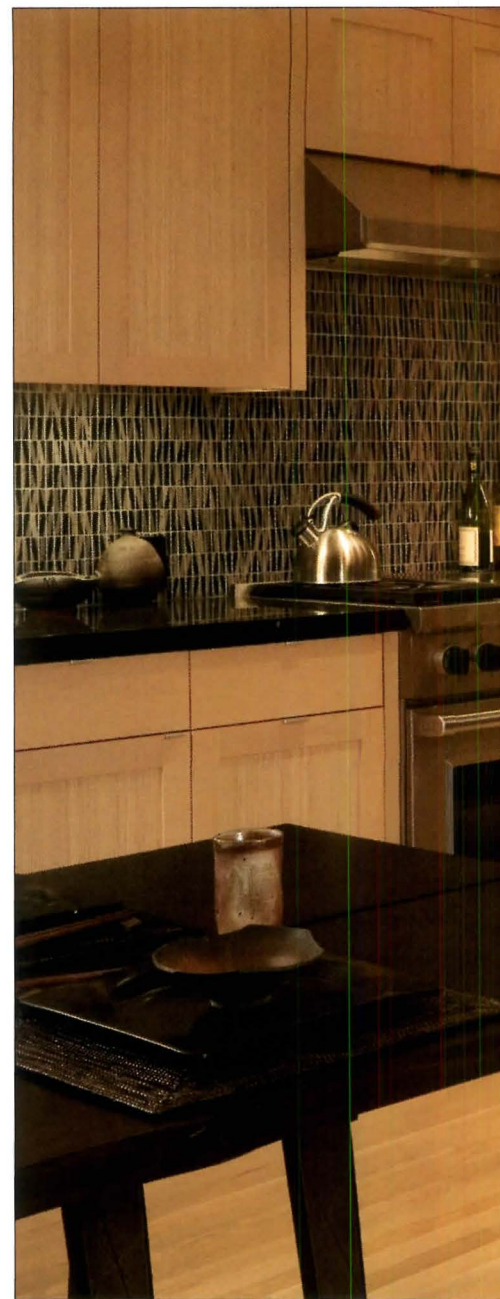
the electrical outlets beneath the island tabletop, because there are no vertical surfaces. It “was a huge challenge,” he acknowledges, “because the mechanics of an island are usually hidden, and in this case nothing was hidden.”

Finne’s choice of subtly opposing textures and materials in soothing hues communicates comfort while also conveying a contemporary edge. Panels of slender bamboo stalks are set in yellow cedar door frames. Sea grass embedded in a translucent resin panel filters daylight while screening undesirable views. And a variegated stone mosaic backsplash provides a colorful counterpoint to the polished limestone counters.

Despite the varied patterns, the overall space feels calm because “the color palette is simple and almost monochromatic,” Finne explains. And yet, he notes slyly, “on second and third looks, you discover this interplay of materials and details.”—*shelley d. hutchins*



In the dining area, upper cabinets segue into open shelves. The shelves’ contrapuntal dimensions and strong horizontality provide a striking contrast to the vertical patterns throughout the rest of the kitchen.



architect: Finne Architects, Seattle

general contractor: Schultz Miller, Seattle

cabinet fabricator: Seaboard Cabinet Co., Seattle

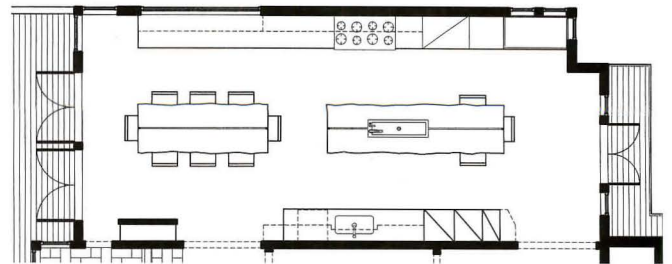
wood fabricator: Urban Hardwoods, Seattle

steel fabricator: Illume Inc., Seattle

resources: hardware: Sun Valley Bronze; plumbing fixtures: Elkay USA, Hansgrohe; range: Wolf Appliance; refrigerator: Sub-Zero



Photos: Benjamin Benschneider



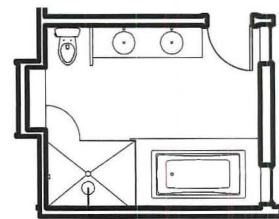
k + b studio

bath: space within space

Elegantly detailed materials culminate in lighthearted surprises in this master bath. Architect Nils C. Finne, AIA, chose cool stone and glass to balance a rich fir ceiling, for example, but specced cherry wood cabinets to highlight the use of that wood throughout the rest of the Redmond, Wash., house. Sand-colored limestone tiles cover the floor, but then extend 8 feet up the walls to “create a space within the space,” he says, adding that custom glass mosaics in irregular strips on the floor “break up that stone wrapper.”

Clever contradictions continue elsewhere in the space. Of note is the custom steam shower Finne designed with alternating clear and sandblasted glass panels to create a “play of translucency and transparency” within. A subtly canted glass ceiling in the shower keeps condensation from dropping onto its occupant. And a pivoting transom above the shower door vents the steam.

Another custom touch takes its cues from the alternating shower panels. The twin mirrors above the vanity are flanked by recessed fluorescent lights covered with sandblasted glass. A blackened steel frame and a strip of cherry wood along the top complete the composition. “The lamps are positioned behind two pieces of sandblasted glass,” Finne says of the detail, “for a greater diffusion of light.”—*s.d.h.*



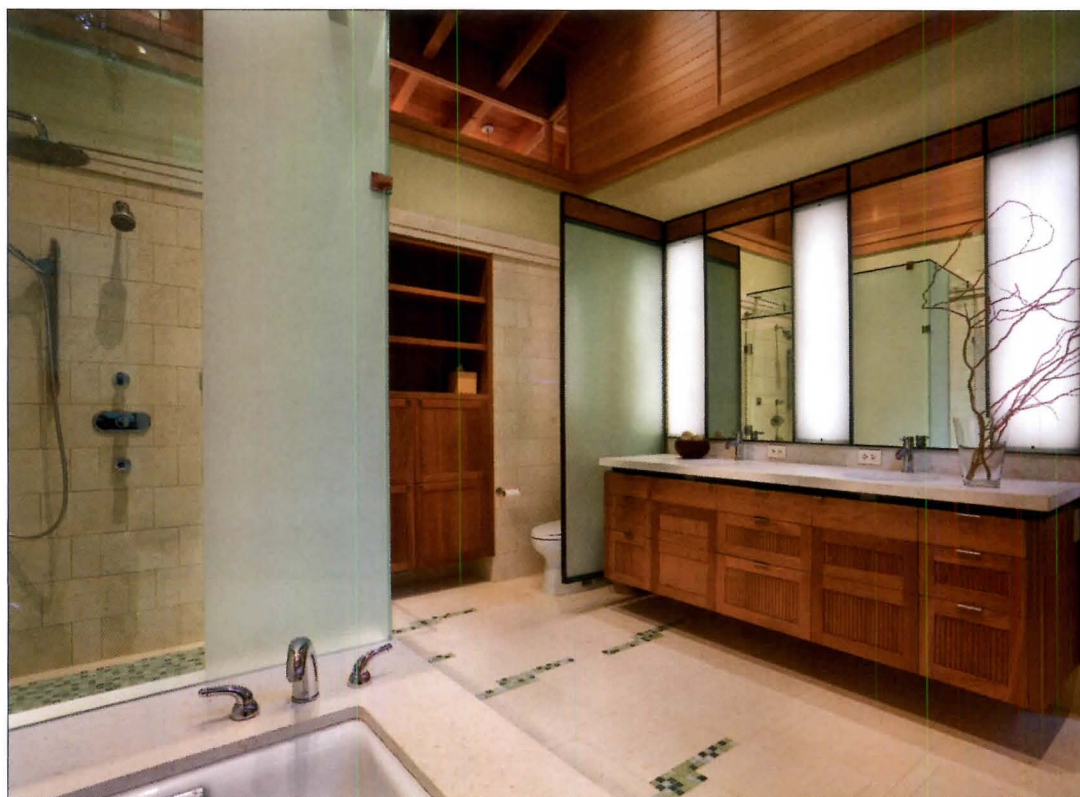
Black steel outlines the custom light and mirror panels above the vanity and accents the shower enclosure. A frosted glass panel at one end of the vanity conceals the toilet.



architect: Finne Architects, Seattle

general contractor: Schilperoort & Brooks, Mountlake Terrace, Wash.

resources: glass tile: Oceanside Glasstile; plumbing fittings and fixtures: California Faucets, Duravit USA, Elkay USA, Hansgrohe, Kohler Co., TOTO USA



Photos: Benjamin Benschneider

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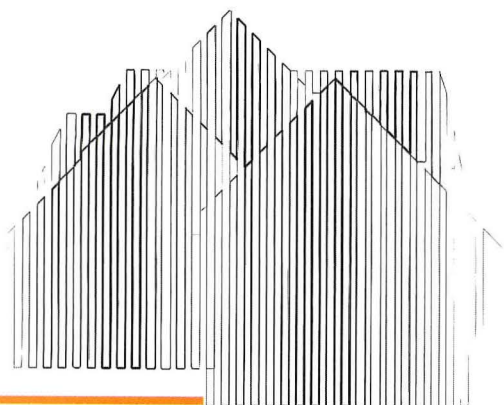
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waiting to exhale

architects look for the bright spots while enduring the downturn.

by cheryl weber

time has passed, and the news media are still wailing about the economy. Energy and food prices are high, job growth is sluggish, foreclosures abound in some areas, and the lending industry is in turmoil. It's *hard to tell* exactly how bad a shape we're in overall, and so far the National Bureau of Economic Research has avoided the R-word. But recession or not, there is real pain in many of the sectors architects serve. Even firms whose work continues to flow reassuringly must contend with the fallout of a malaise-filled market. Many architects report that business is just fine. But that doesn't stop them from worrying about what the next six months may bring.

This is an uncertain period for architects, but also an interesting one, as market trends shake out in response to production housing's spectacular fall and the new energy realities. While the economic effect on architects varies widely by region and project type, many are doing what good entrepreneurs everywhere do in turbulent times: sticking with what works while

tracking new opportunities, revisiting their business plans and networks, and providing stellar design service.

Let's start with the good news. Small firms in high-end markets and thriving urban areas seem to be faring the best in this

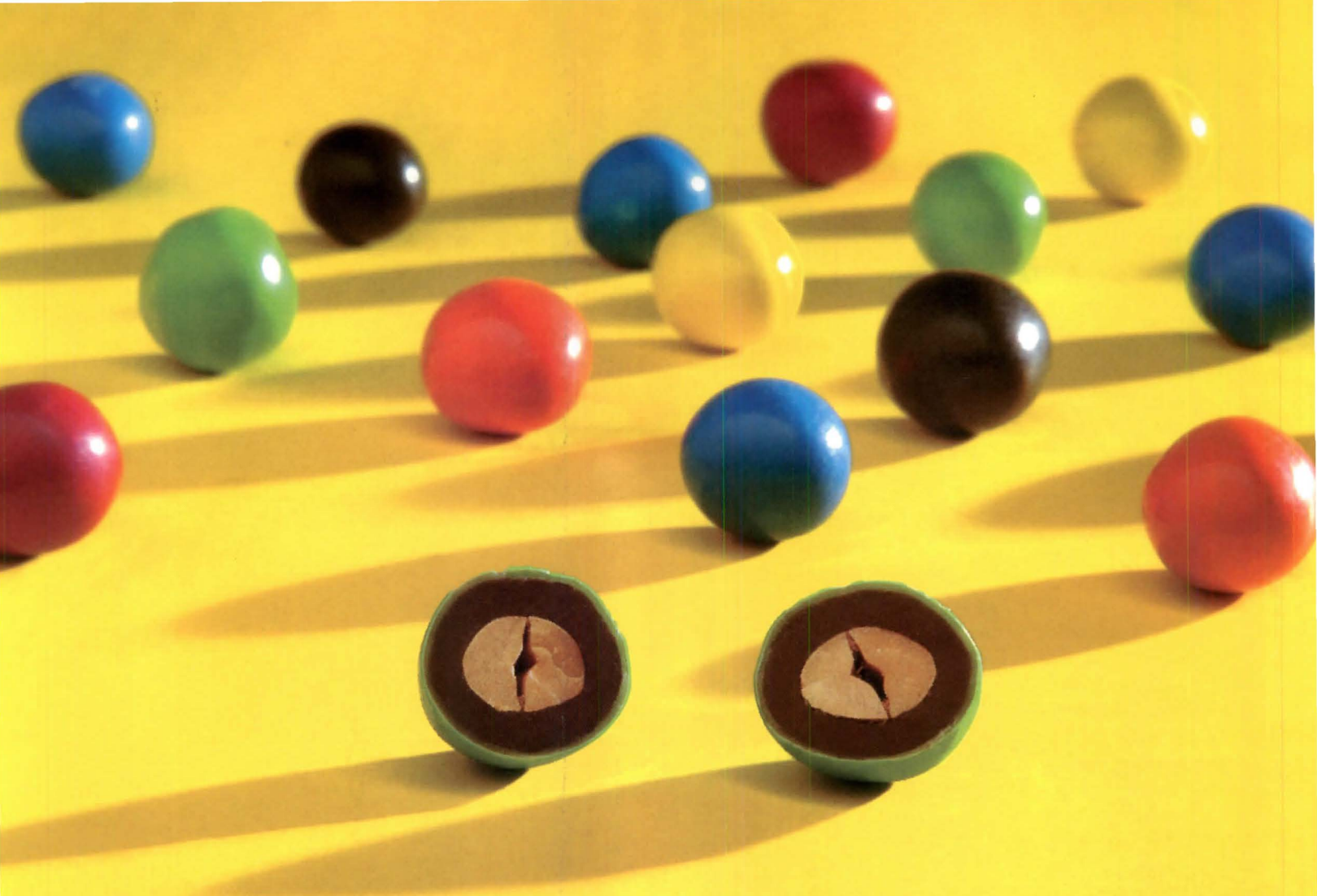
flagging economy. They're agile enough to get by on a couple of big-ticket jobs at a time, and their clients have enough ready cash to rise above the mortgage mess, selling an existing home at a discount, if necessary. In the booming Dallas area, for

example, Frank D. Welch, FAIA, says he's never had a strategy for downturns; work has always come. "I have three architects working for me, and we do large, expensive modern houses," he says. "I haven't

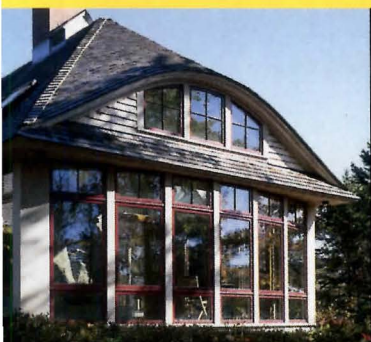
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seen anyone cancel a large residential project.”

Ditto in Minneapolis, where Jean Rehkamp Larson, AIA, a principal of Rehkamp Larson Architects, is trying hard to see the downturn. “It’s interesting to drive into work listening to NPR forecasts, get here, and have a full plate of things to do,” she says. On the boards are

“We’re small enough that the workload stays steady, but the downturn certainly affects us emotionally,” says Rehkamp Larson, who, with spouse/co-principal Mark Larson, AIA, oversees a staff of seven. “I keep wondering when we’re going to feel it.”

Others, too, are cautiously optimistic. It’s business as usual for Boston architect

“our people are working a ton of hours, so at some point they might be working less but still doing a 40-hour week. i’m seeing that people with money will still build.”

—julie hacker, aia

new houses, cabins, and remodeling projects ranging in budget from \$200,000 to \$2 million. Still, there are signs of unease. One project was put on hold when the husband’s employer announced layoffs, and clients doing homes in the \$1.5 million range are required by banks to come up with more cash than they’d like. Recently, a bank assessed a cabin’s value at 25 percent less than the construction cost, causing the client to simply downgrade some appliances. But though day-to-day workflow seems healthy, anxiety lurks beneath the surface.

Keith Moskow, AIA, a principal at the six-person office of Moskow Linn Architects. “Work was the slowest in the late 1990s, before the dot-com boom dropped off, and when the economy was slow in 1994, we were incredibly busy,” Moskow says. “It’s entirely contrarian, and I have no idea why.” But he admits that being small, efficient, and diversified hasn’t hurt. Seventy percent of his work is commercial and institutional, and Moskow has about 10 active projects. So when a couple of house commissions were halted on Martha’s Vineyard recently,

continued on page 38

recession-proofing a firm

It takes about three years to position a firm for surviving a dreary economy, according to business consultant Hugh Hochberg, principal of The Coxe Group, Seattle. “We’ve been telling clients for quite some time to expect a downturn in 2008 and 2009,” he says, while acknowledging that the depth of the current crisis has affected the residential market more than he and his colleagues had anticipated. “Certain firms are somewhat isolated from the weak economy,” he says. “Those specializing in high-end and resort homes haven’t lost commissions; they’re doing \$7 million homes instead of \$10 million homes. But most firms have been affected substantially more than that—mostly those in the condo market, which is dramatically overbuilt.” Hochberg, whose clients typically head design firms of fewer than 100 employees, offers these tips for tough times.

Operational. In many cities, building projects have started

continued on page 38



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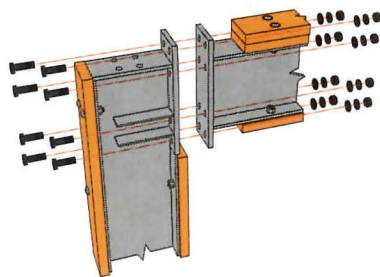
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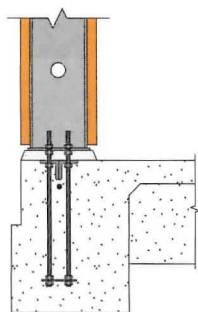


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and stopped, and the usual operational cautions are doubly important in a down market. Get payment up front, if possible, and stop work when the checks fall more than 30 days behind. It's nonproductive to think your clients are the exception. Hochberg also recommends having three months of operating expenses in reserve, though firms with a good client base don't need a lot of cash on hand, he says.

Watch financial indicators closely from month to month. Two key indicators are how long it takes to get paid and the direct labor multiplier, which is revenue received for direct labor paid. (The average firm takes in \$3 for every dollar it pays in direct labor.) Additionally, owners should keep compensation reasonable. Take the money out of profits rather than building in high fixed costs for salaries, and base bonuses on individual performance. This is also a good time to identify up-and-coming leaders and do what you can to keep them, rather than letting their entrepreneurial spirit compete

continued on page 40

it wasn't the end of the world. However, he isn't tempting fate. A vacancy created by an employee who moved out of state will go unfilled for a while.

While no one argues that this downturn was a surprise, it's been swifter and deeper than most people expected. Those for whom the center holds have time to plan for contingencies. In Chicago's North Shore suburbs, the pace of leads has slowed slightly for Julie Hacker, AIA, and Stuart Cohen, FAIA. They oversee a six-person firm whose additions and new homes range from \$250,000

catalysts for change

It's true that serious architecture patrons are often untouched by national downturns. But for the first time, perhaps, what people are building is a response to broader economic pressures. Demand for green design is rising as people at all income levels try to spend smarter, and what's good for the planet is also good for business. A case in point is Aspen, Colo., a rarefied resort environment with its own boom and bust cycles. The real estate market there has flattened but not

"there's an encouraging sign of people modifying their homes to be more energy-efficient. it wasn't visible before, but now they're thinking it will help sell the house."

—harry teague, aia

to \$4.5 million. If work falls off, they'll pay employees to work on the monograph they've been planning. The hourly, rather than salaried, pay structure offers some flexibility too. "Our people are working a ton of hours, so at some point they might be working less but still doing a 40-hour week," Hacker theorizes. "I'm seeing that people with money will still build."

plummeted, and Harry Teague, AIA, principal of Harry Teague Architects in nearby Basalt, is seeing more of the area's billionaires remodeling their homes for energy efficiency. Last year his firm gained some credibility on that score when it built an office that generates more electricity than it uses. To fund it, Teague sold three

continued on page 40



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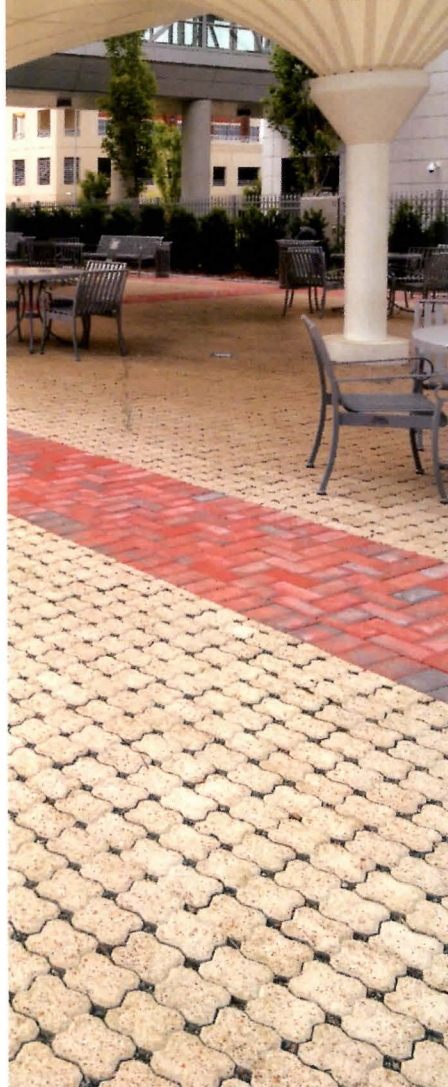
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with the firm. While many employees cling to job security in a nervous market, others may leave if they think the firm won't succeed.

Sometimes, downsizing is inevitable. Let economic forecasts, rather than wishful thinking, be the guide. "It makes sense to keep going on a line of credit if you expect a reasonable turnaround," Hochberg says. "But if you accommodate everyone in the firm who isn't fully occupied, you're under-accommodating those who can do the most, and you'll end up weakening the overall firm. It's better to be stronger and smaller than weaker and larger."

Strategic. Financial stability positions firms to move forward with new initiatives, and so does a deep understanding of potential clients' business models. Architects who provide more than architecture—confidence, connections, strategic planning—will be the first out of the block when things turn around, particularly in the multifamily and mixed-use sectors. "You're better off if you understand the implications of eco-

continued on page 42

apartments on the building's second floor for around \$600,000 apiece, reserving a fourth rental unit for employees.

"There's an encouraging sign of people modifying their homes to be more energy-efficient," Teague says. "It wasn't visible before, but now they're thinking it will help sell the house."

Sobering economic conditions have pushed

more people can afford. Modest, mid-20th-century tract house renovations are a growing part of her portfolio too. By leaving most of the structure intact, she gives clients more money to spend inside. These kinds of projects send a message that, even in a bleak economic period, they can do something transformative.

The story is similar in Phoenix, where homes are

"we've gained a reputation for doing exceptional work—the secret in any bad economy."

—e.j. meade, aia

both sustainability and affordability to the fore, and architects are riding that momentum. One example is San Diego, where home values have taken a beating due to the overheated condo market. "An advantage to the economy being down is that people are literally trying to save money," says Jennifer Luce, AIA, principal of Luce et Studio, "and that correlates to green design and downsizing." Two years ago she began experimenting with executing details at a lower cost. Rather than the usual \$400 per square foot for renovations, she has mastered designs for half that price to meet a budget

about 15 percent overpriced, estimates Peter M. Koliopoulos, AIA, principal of Scottsdale, Ariz.-based Circle West Architects. Though business has slowed for his 15-person firm, multifamily developers are asking for infill units that are practical and economical, yet memorable. They're spending money where it's most appreciated, because good design and planning got lost in the real estate rush. "The units don't need to be large in scale as much as well-designed," Koliopoulos says, with amenities like patios, efficient kitchens, rooftop gardens, and a welcoming building lobby.

continued on page 42

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conomic forecasts, return on investment, and the ins and outs of equity versus debt financing,” Hochberg says. Knowing players who can help potential clients strategize also puts architects a step ahead. “There’s money out there, and investors who are open to good opportunities,” he continues. “Even architects who have that capacity often don’t value it enough to do it. You can’t know too much about your client’s world. It’s a question of judgment and how much you capitalize on that knowledge and are part of organizations, like the Urban Land Institute, that provide that perspective.”

Of course, it’s easiest to leverage work from people you’ve already done business with—a client who’s shifting from multifamily to campus housing or building a private home, for example. Hochberg recommends that firms making a big push into new project types hire leaders who can land the commission, rather than people who can deliver the work. Affiliations with other firms may also provide the tactical link to new sectors and scales.—c.w.

“Projects are getting smaller,” agrees E.J. Meade, AIA, principal of arch 11 in Boulder, Colo. “I don’t know if it’s a reaction to the economy or energy issues, but the time of the 7,000-square-foot house is coming to an end.” His eight-person practice is busier than ever, however, with everything from small additions and pricey energy-independent homes to a 26-home LEED-certified development in the Roaring Fork Valley of western Colorado, where oil and gas exploration is creating a boomlet. “Our strategy is somewhat omnivorous—there are very few projects we turn

a completely different product,” Meade says. “We’ll see how that works.”

rethinking the suburbs

The ability to distinguish oneself is even more critical in the production home market, where the pain has been felt the worst. In the midst of too much supply and tumbling prices, only the fittest products will sell, and hitting the magic spot of perceived value is the challenge for architects in those sectors. Most of West Des Moines, Iowa-headquartered BSB Design’s clients were publicly traded home builders—a market that has virtually dried

“an advantage to the economy being down is that people are literally trying to save money, and that correlates to green design and downsizing.”

—jennifer luce, aia

away,” he says. “But we’ve also gained a reputation for doing exceptional work—the secret in any bad economy.”

There are many spec homes on the local market, and arch 11 avoids that kind of work, but the Roaring Fork developer has asked for modern architecture. “Everything here has a rustic flavor, and his strategy is to set himself apart with

up. With two-thirds of its employees laid off and the Boston and Denver offices being served out of West Des Moines, the firm is reaching out to the small, privately funded builders that once made up its client base, and identifying successes it can adapt in other parts of the country.

“Retooling” is a word we’re getting used to,”

continued on page 44



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says company president Stephen C. Moore. "We're looking at how we can change builders' financial payoff on a piece of land by increasing density or decreasing up-front costs." The focus is on smaller lots and simpler houses for first-time buyers, because anyone who doesn't need to sell a house right now is a good bet. A recent project in Sarasota, Fla., involved replatting a townhouse parcel with smaller, cottage-style detached homes, which lowered the price from the \$300,000 range to roughly \$150,000. "A fire storm of people were interested in buying because

they saw it as a great value," Moore says, adding that the biggest competition for builders is their own resales—the same houses in older, more established neighborhoods where prices are lower. In addition to doing high-density housing in foreign markets—East Asia, Mexico, and Russia—BSB is also staying afloat with mixed-use and light-commercial projects. "Everything we're trying is working, but when we think we're done, the housing market slips even further," Moore says.

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"retooling" is a word we're getting used to. we're looking at how we can change builders' financial payoff on a piece of land by increasing density or decreasing up-front costs."

—stephen c. moore

headquartered Looney Ricks Kiss (LRK) also sees pockets of opportunity. Million-dollar production homes are still selling apace in Houston, and Texas as a whole remains strong for planned communities targeting a mix of incomes, says Mark Jones, AIA, principal

in charge of LRK's Celebration, Fla., office. The firm's multifamily clients are also looking to develop high-density suburban villages with transit service—bus or light rail—30 miles from downtown Dallas in Richardson, Plano, and

continued on page 46



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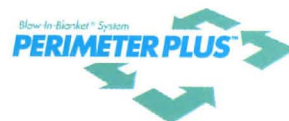
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McKinney, Texas. "DPZ's Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, FAIA, is using the term 'smart sprawl,' and that may be a trend we'll see

over the next five years," says Paige C. Close, AIA, principal in charge of LRK's multifamily group. With rising fuel costs, the firm's

clients are also discussing the need for more live/work spaces. Jones calls it urbanizing the suburbs. At Celebration, ground-floor

flats are being converted to offices and retail shops. "Affordability and sustainability are huge components, whether it's trying to replace housing from Hurricane Katrina or development here in Florida," he says.

Downsizing will be a core value for at least the next year or two, LRK believes, whether it's a one-bedroom rental, a move-up, or an empty nest. The firm is analyzing every square inch and branding some of its apartments as the Mini Cooper—"600-square-foot studios, cute as a button, with all the bells and whistles, but smaller, for absolute rental value," Close says. "People have just so many dollars in their pockets, but they still want great design and quality finishes. It's about understanding how people live and what's essential, but still remembering that there's a quality to proportion and scale that doesn't cost extra money."

For LRK and similar firms, this is one way out of housing's perfect storm. He's hopeful that by January 2009, with the presidential election behind us, people will be tired of the negative news and ready to move on. "Business has been soft; it's the strangest time we've ever seen," Close says. "We're the most nervous from now to March of next year. We're trying to hang onto our folks—and watching the economy closely." ra



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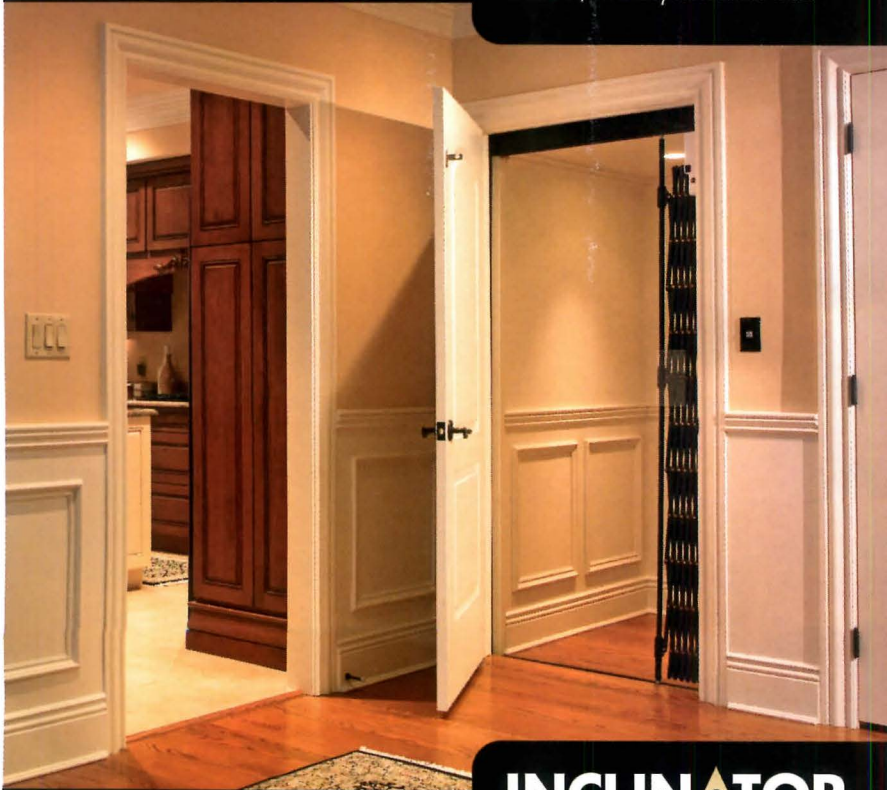
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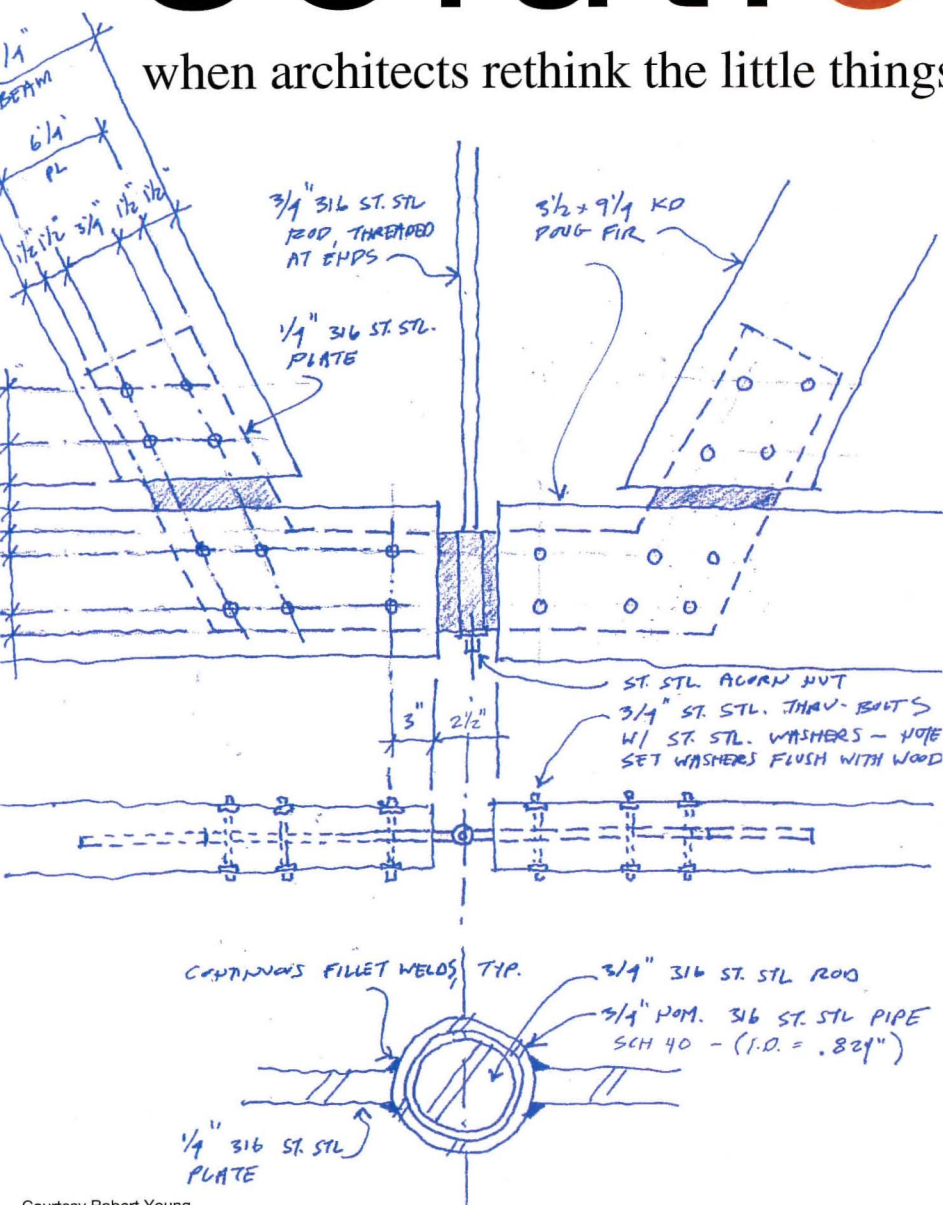
Shaping the future

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by meghan drueding,
cheryl weber,
shelley d. hutchins,
and nigel f. maynard

another solution

when architects rethink the little things, big achievements result.



Courtesy Robert Young

details, details. Beautiful, creative, well-executed details can mean the difference between a pleasant project and a showstopper. They hold the power to make a houseguest forever remember the room where she slept, or a car slow down as it drives by a building, or a design awards judge develop instant respect for an architect he's never met.

Not every exceptional detail calls out for attention—in fact, many of the best ones are so subtle, few people consciously register them. But their effects on a space are profound. We at *residential architect* think the details on the following pages deserve a close look—and perhaps the ultimate compliment of emulation or adaptation. They're clever, practical, finely crafted, and, in some cases, even gorgeous. They elevate each project they inhabit. They put the heart and art in architecture.—*m.d.*

Visit www.residentialarchitect.com to view enlarged versions of drawings and photographs shown in this article.

under the lotus

architect: Carter + Burton Architecture, Berryville, Va.

project: Yoga Studio, Clarke County, Va.

detail: In-floor beds

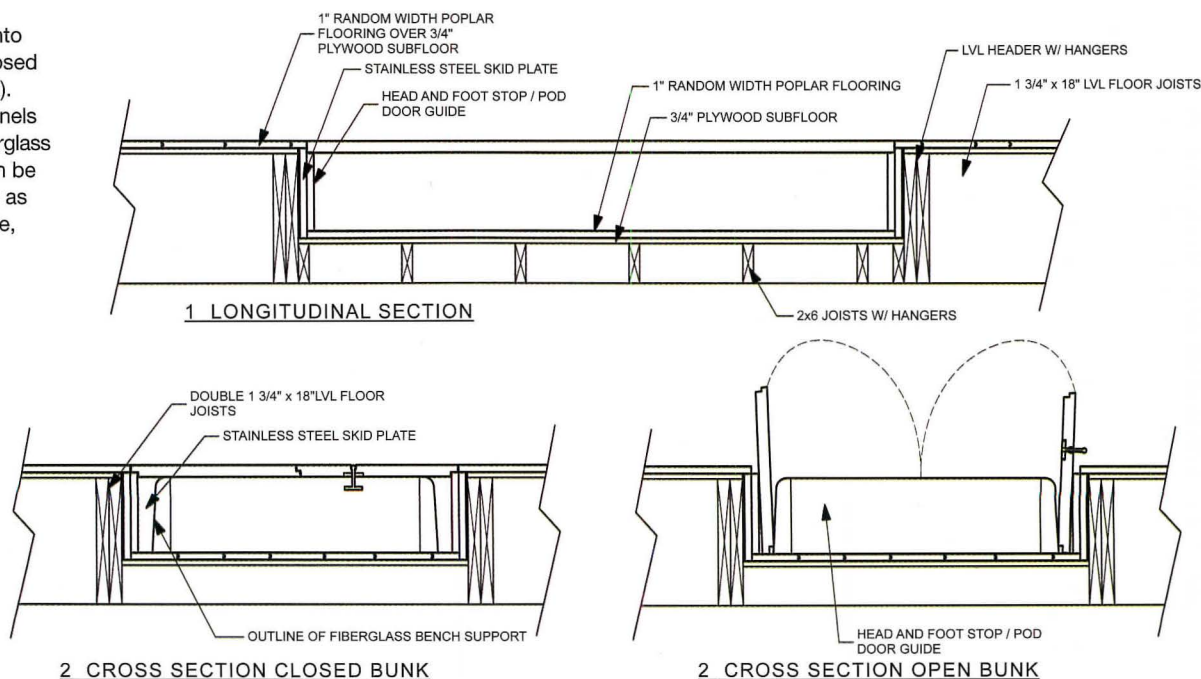
Architect Jim Burton's clients for this home yoga studio in Clarke County, Va., wanted more room for overnight guests. They'd bought their 1,300-square-foot residence from Burton, AIA, who had designed it as his own first house. County zoning laws didn't allow them to add more bedrooms, but the rules did permit an outbuilding of up to 600 square feet. So they and Burton decided to create a yoga space. Inspired by the main house's ultraefficient plan, the clients came up with the idea of embedding sleeping berths into the studio's floor.

Burton designed three boxes just over 6 feet, 8 inches in length to fit beneath the recycled poplar floorboards, above the plywood subfloor. He slipped them between

the floor joists, fanning them out in a radial pattern to mirror the slight curve of the studio's wall of windows. Custom mattresses fill the boxes and are each concealed by a pair of interlocking floor panels, which the owners open by pulling up on stainless steel handles. Controlled by a low-tech wood track, the panels slip down into slots flanking each bed.

Strong, custom-made carbon fiber bands wrap over the mattresses when the berths are closed, providing necessary support and stability to the floor above them. "To do yoga, you can't have flexibility in the floor," Burton says. "This way, you can do headstands with no problem."—*m.d.*

The beds blend into the floor when closed (opposite, top left). When the floor panels are open, the fiberglass support bands can be removed to serve as benches (opposite, bottom).



Courtesy Carter + Burton Architecture

**general contractor/
woodworker:** Charles H.
Snead Co., Boyce, Va.
materials: Recycled poplar,
LVL floor joists, plywood,
stainless steel, carbon fiber
photography: Daniel Afzal

Sustainable materials—
such as poplar boards
used to form the concrete
foundation and then
recycled as flooring—
helped the studio achieve
a LEED Gold rating.



mind the gap

architect: Murdock Young Architects,
New York City

project: Lake House, Montauk, N.Y.

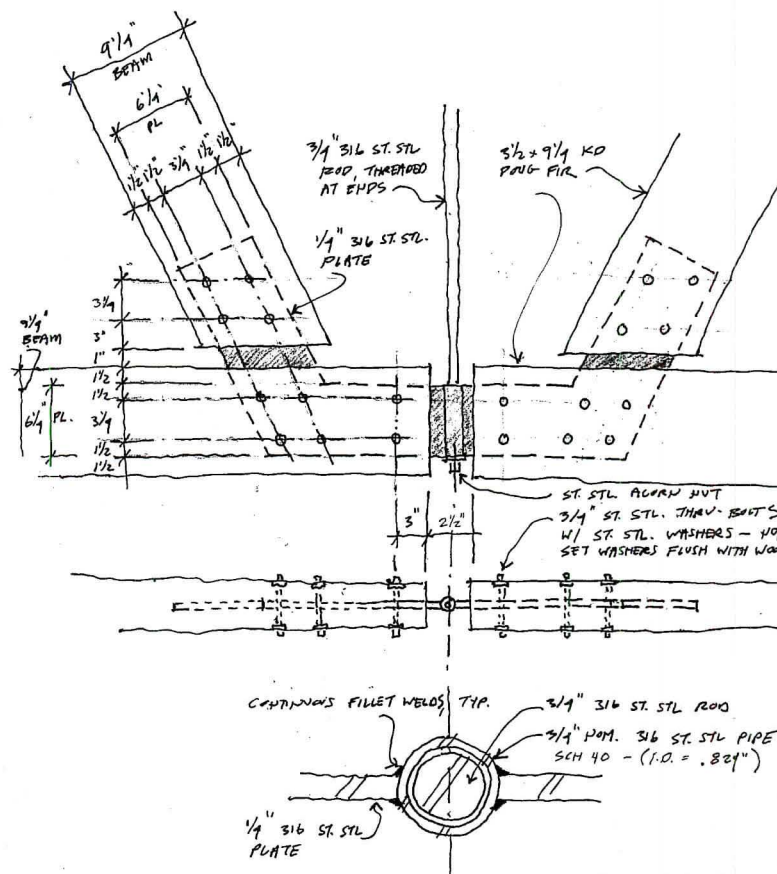
detail: Trusses

When summer residences are closed in with drywall, they lose the casual charm of the old uninsulated beach houses, says architect Robert Young, AIA. The task of exposing the rafters of this lakeside home got him thinking about using materials in ways that express their strengths. "We were talking about doing a knife-blade connection between the trusses," he says. "It's usually concealed except for the bolt heads on the surface. What I found interesting is that the wood elements are doing the work in the middle of the span, but at the moment of connection, it's all about the steel. That led to the idea to leave a 1-inch gap to show what's going on."

All intersecting timbers are held apart to expose a sliver of the embedded stainless steel knife plates. Of course, this more artful solution required the expertise of builder Rick Shumway, who used a plunge chain saw to chisel a thin, deep slot into the Douglas fir trusses to accept the plates at predetermined angles. At center span, the plates receive a stainless steel rod that slips through a sleeve and is tethered to the ridge.

"Elements in compression—the solid wood—need to be heavy and strong," Young says. "But a rod in tension can be very thin. The materials express what's going on structurally."—c.w.

Highly insulating, 6-inch-thick SIPs on the roof allowed Robert Young to expose the rafters. To reduce echo, he laid white-painted wood ceiling boards over an absorbent mat. A small gap between the boards traps sound.



Courtesy Robert Young





Each truss consists of two rafters, two diagonals, and two bottom timbers. The horizontal span is joined by two knife plates welded onto a stainless steel rod. Young arranged the acorn nuts as a decorative element.

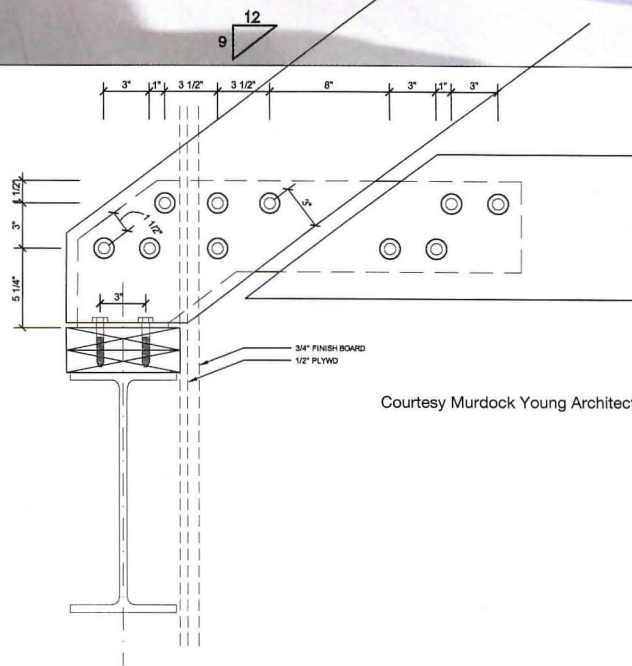
general contractor: Atlantic Collaborative Construction Co., Bridgehampton, N.Y.

steel fabricator: Peconic Ironworks, Southampton, N.Y.

structural engineer: Robert Silman Associates, New York City

materials: Painted 4x10 kiln-dried Douglas fir, stainless steel rods, knife plates, bolts, washers, decorative nuts

photography: Michael Moran



Courtesy Murdock Young Architects

the wind up

architect: Brininstool + Lynch, Chicago

project: Claremont House, Chicago

detail: Staircase

At its simplest, a stairway is an element that moves people vertically through space, but in architect Brad Lynch's house, it's also a means of passive heating and cooling. Oriented east-west on a narrow urban lot, the house is 63 feet deep on the first floor. Employing the firm's trademark reductive logic, Lynch organized the interiors around a three-story millwork core. It separates the stairway, which runs along the south-facing outer wall, from the

open spaces on each floor. People move in and out of the first-floor public zones through openings in those 3½-foot-thick wood volumes. "You enter on the side of the house at grade, walk into the landing, and circulate up or down from there," Lynch explains.

Because the slab-concrete first floor is partly below grade (the second floor sits about 4 feet above ground), it acts as a thermal mass to keep the house cool in the summer and warm in the winter. On the east and west ends of the house, Lynch positioned operable awning windows near the stair run. When they're open, the stair acts as a wind chimney, gently drawing air up through the house and dispersing it into the living areas.

The staircase appears to float effortlessly from floor to floor. A steel channel stringer was recessed into the exterior gypsum-board wall on one side and the millwork on the other. Treads are composed of quartersawn red oak on ½-inch plywood that wraps around the steel plate running between the stringers, leaving a ¾-inch metal reveal on each end.—c.w.

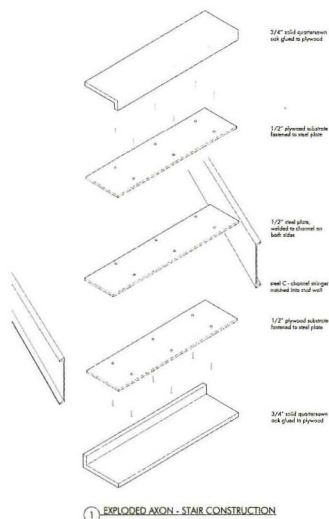
The stair's steel stringers are recessed into the millwork and exterior wall. Brad Lynch's floating, open risers create an effect that's at once transparent and opaque.

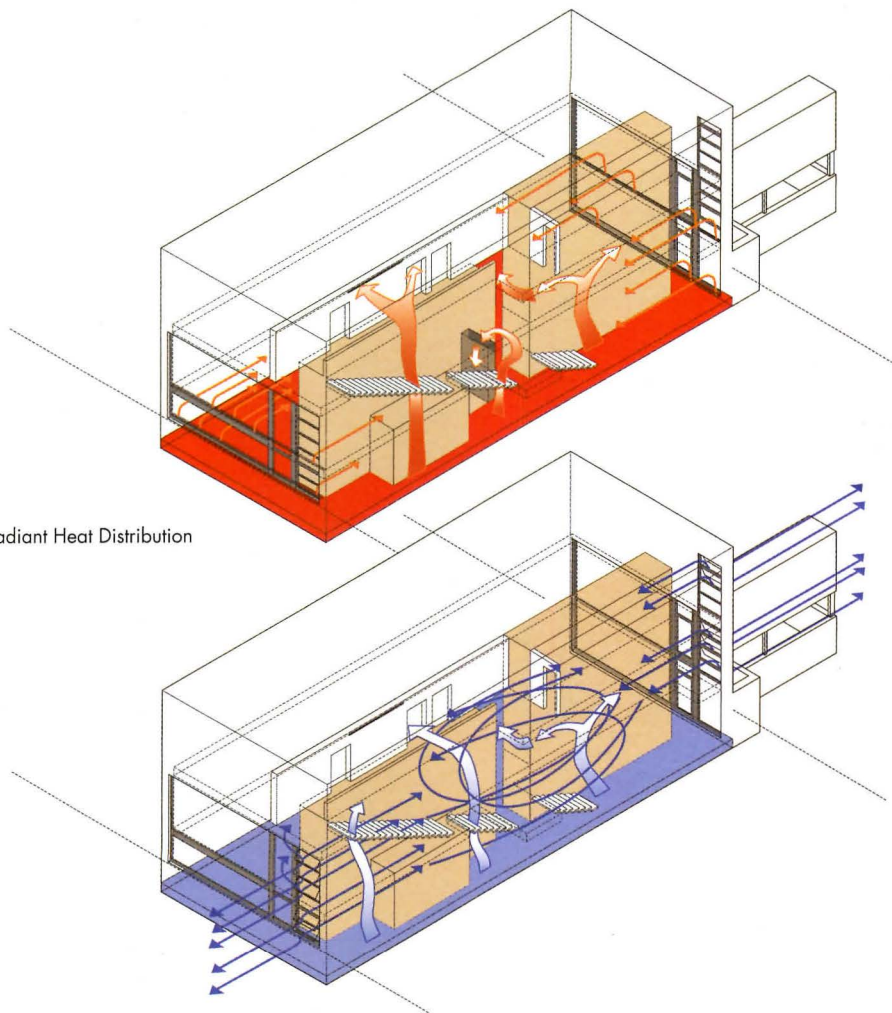
general contractor: Goldberg General Contracting, Chicago

millwork: Village Woodsmiths, Oak Park, Ill.

materials: ¾-inch quartersawn red oak, custom-fabricated steel channel stringer, steel plate, Panelite and custom aluminum railing, steel grate landing

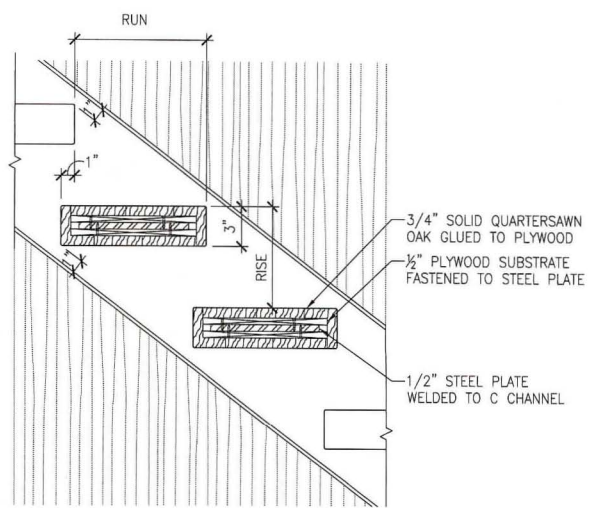
photography: Christopher Barrett/Hedrich Blessing





Radiant Heat Distribution

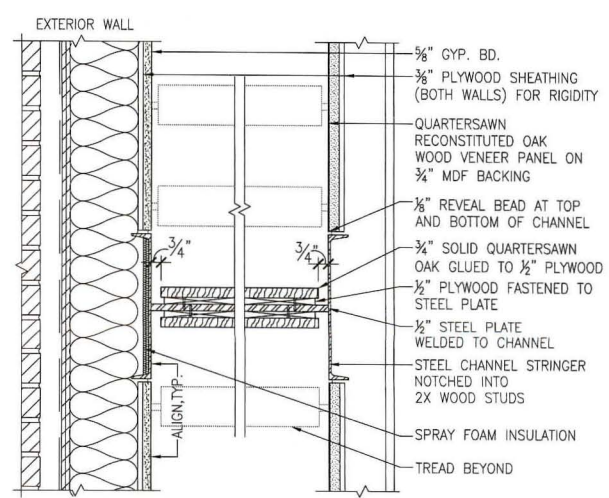
Natural Ventilation/Cooling



2 SECTION DETAIL- STAIR
TYP. TREAD DETAIL



Fresh air is funneled throughout the house from operable windows at either end of the stair run. The two main millwork volumes hold items such as kitchen appliances, a bookcase, a vanity, and closets.



1 SECTION DETAIL- STAIR
TYP. TREAD DTL.

Drawings: Courtesy Brininstool + Lynch



desert gate

architect: Ibarra Rosano Design Architects, Tucson, Ariz.

project: Six, Tucson

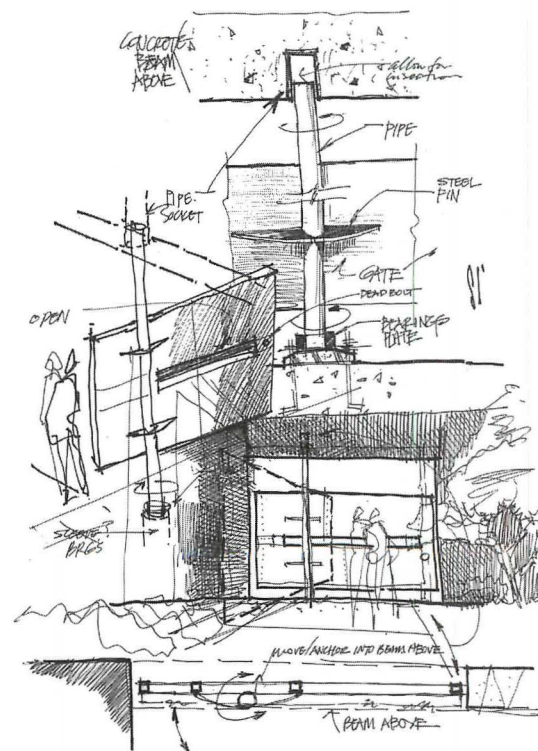
detail: Entry gates

The courtyards' generous 2,800 square footage outsizes each home's interior spaces (garage included). Luis Ibarra and Teresa Rosano wanted to emphasize that point by creating entry gates that feel like grand doors.

Luis Ibarra says courtyards are the best “technique for living in the desert climate.” In fact, his latest development project with partner (and wife) Teresa Rosano, RA, LEED AP, counts on the appeal of courtyard living to sell six spec houses. The L-shaped houses are grouped in pairs, with side-by-side courtyards serving as one big buffer between house and street. A continuous stucco wall punctuated by pre-rusted garage doors and twin steel entry gates encloses the courtyards.

“The first impression of each house is this dramatic gate,” Ibarra says. “A big horizontal gate was an obvious choice for aesthetics as well as function.” Enclosing the courtyards allows owners to open up their house to cool nights without feeling exposed. But when they want a view of the neighborhood, the 9-foot-wide gate pivots open with a gentle push, thanks to Ibarra’s design intuition and metal fabricator Don Murphy’s expertise. Each gate’s hollow structure keeps it light and easy to operate. Blackened steel panels are fastened to a welded tube steel frame with hex head screws. Ibarra likens the look to an old plane with exposed rivets.

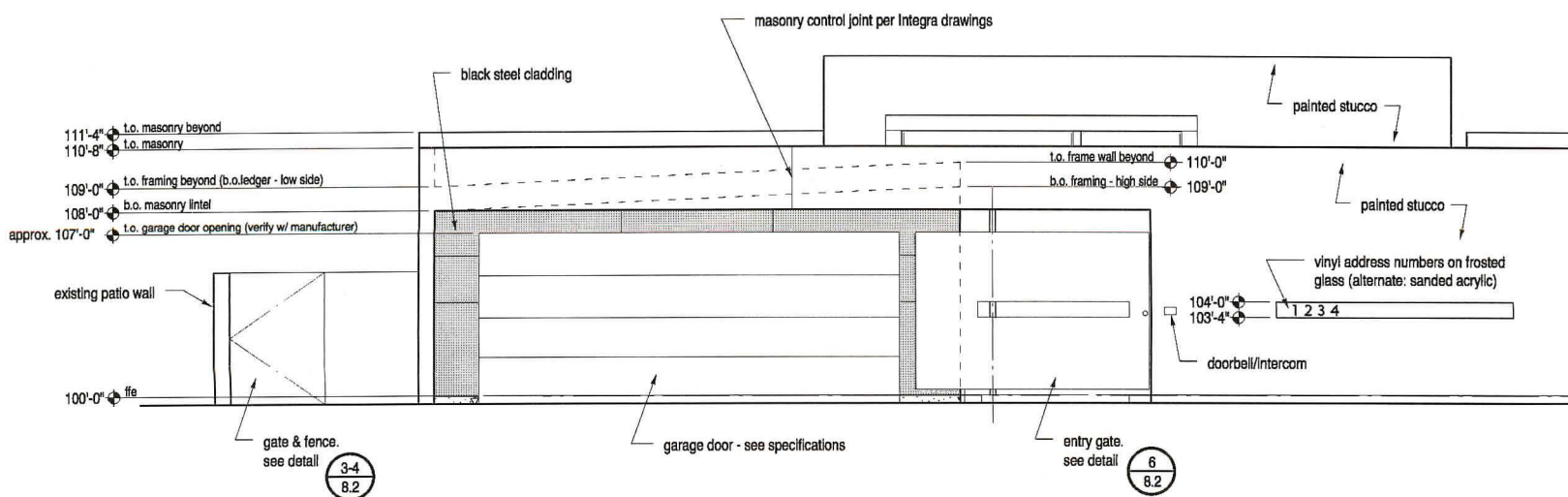
Owners are given the option of allowing the steel to patina and rust over time, or they can have their gate sealed so the steel will retain its blue-black luster. Each gate hangs a scant 4 inches off the ground, but an 18-inch gap between the top of the 6-foot-tall steel panels and the stucco wall offers glimpses of trees and sky. A narrow strip of translucent polycarbonate breaks up the expanse of steel and provides shadowy notice if someone approaches.—s.d.h.



general contractor: Repp Design
+ Construction, Tucson, Ariz.
metal fabricator: Graphic Iron, Tucson
materials: Blackened steel, steel piping,
Polygal, hex head self-tapping screws
photography: Bill Timmerman



The gate pivots around a steel pipe attached to the frame by U-bolts. "We wanted it to pivot so it would counterbalance itself," Ibarra explains. "By moving the pivot farther into the mass, we found a natural balance point."



Drawings: Courtesy Ibarra Rosano Design Architects

rain, go away

architect: Eggleston Farkas Architects, Seattle

project: Port Hadlock Cabin, Port Hadlock, Wash.

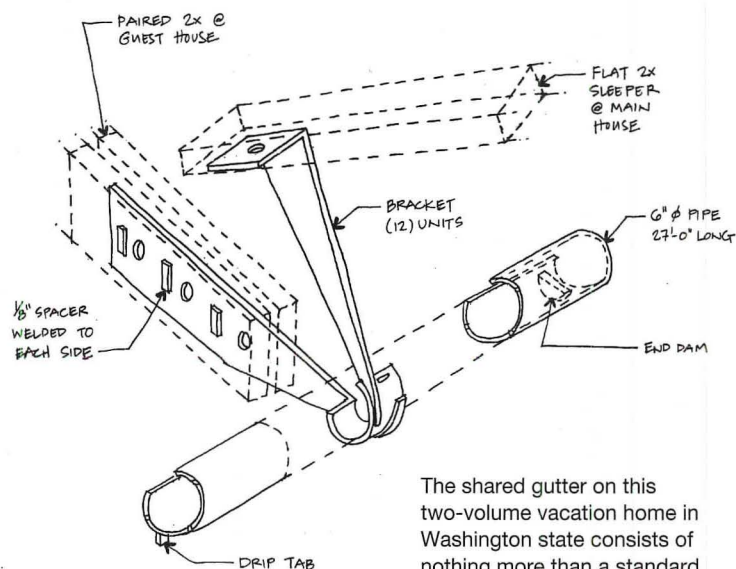
detail: Gutter

Eggleston Farkas Architects practices in the Pacific Northwest, where precipitation is a constant companion, so the firm is continually exploring ways to celebrate water and its conveyance. “We like to look at how gutters and downspouts can work with the architecture,” says Allan Farkas, AIA.

The Port Hadlock Cabin is a perfect example of the firm’s objective. Located on a sloping site with a wetlands area, the 1,965-square-foot retreat consists of two volumes: a main house with a bedroom, living area, and screen porch and a guest wing with a bedroom, loft, and playroom. Each volume is topped by a corrugated metal shed roof that slopes to a shared gutter. The firm rejected a conventional water-collection system, however, in favor of a creative design inspired by one firm co-principal John Eggleston, AIA, saw while traveling in the Caribbean.

First, the architects designed the roof of the smaller volume to hang over the larger building by roughly 12 inches, creating a covered exterior walkway between the two buildings. They then cut away about 1/8 of the circumference of a large pipe and attached it to the main house with 12 brackets. Each strap is sandwiched between the 2x6 rafter tails of the main house and attaches to the underside of the guest wing’s roof framing. “It’s a simple hot-dipped galvanized steel pipe, but the straps were custom-designed and the general contractor found a fabricator,” Farkas explains.

A 1-inch-by-1-inch drip tab at the end of the pipe gets the water started. “Otherwise, it has a tendency to run backwards,” Farkas says. The water falls into a concrete receptacle that channels it away from the house into a holding cistern, where it slowly releases to the wetlands.—*n.f.m.*



The shared gutter on this two-volume vacation home in Washington state consists of nothing more than a standard pipe and 12 custom brackets. “It was a relatively inexpensive solution” that was upgraded from a Caribbean version, says architect Allan Farkas.

shelve it

architect: IStudio,
Washington, D.C.

project: Blue-Green House,
Washington, D.C.

detail: Movable shelves

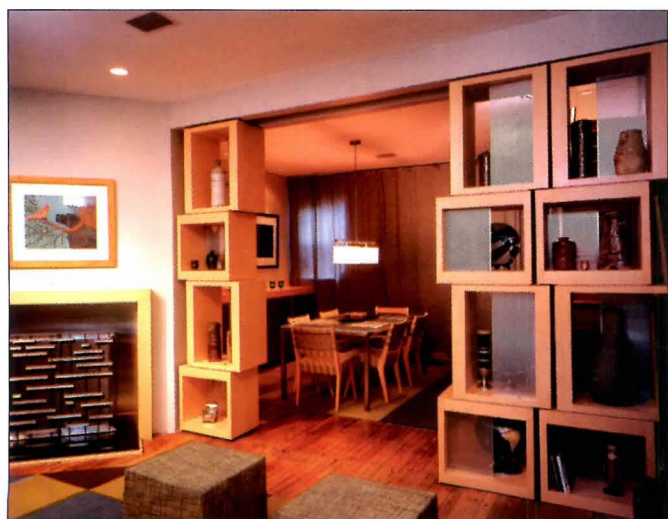
Renovations to this 100-year-old row house in downtown Washington, D.C., focused on better flow and flexible spaces. Rick Harlan Schneider,

AIA, LEED AP, wanted to open up the narrow footprint by eliminating walls in the public spaces, but the owner didn't want to sacrifice privacy or storage space. One morning during his daily bus commute, the architect sketched a design for movable bookshelves to divide living and dining spaces without closing them off.

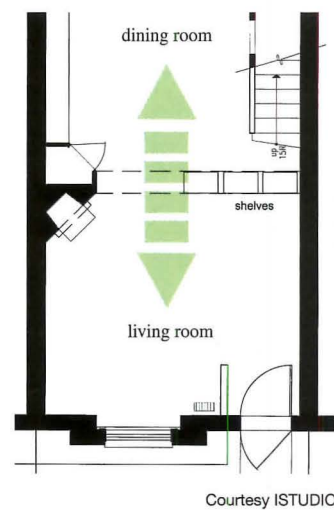
"The shelves provide some measure of screening between rooms," Schneider explains, "and they hold the owner's pottery collection." The shelves move independently of each other to manipulate circulation and views within the space. Three units consist of matching boxes stacked in an offset pattern. Perforated metal screens randomly divide each box into "little display pockets" so that multiple items can be placed

on each shelf. A slight reveal between each box prevents the shelves from scraping against each other when they are pushed together.

Century-old floors in the house were too uneven for shelves on wheels, so Schneider worked with builder Noah Blumberg to design a double-track hanging system. "I quickly realized that the ceiling plane was the most stable way to support them," Schneider says. "And I thought it would be fun to let them float just off the floor."—*s.d.h.*



Rick Harlan Schneider's design for the shelves (as well as the metal fireplace screen) was inspired by the homeowner's attraction to bold graphic designs from the 1960s.



Courtesy IStudio

general contractor: Ark Contracting,
Chevy Chase, Md.

fabricator: Juan Beck, Washington, D.C.

materials: MDF, birch veneer, low-VOC
glues and sealants, perforated metal,
Häfele America Co. hanging track system
photography: Dan Redmond

one step up

architect: Turnbull Griffin Haesloop Architects, San Francisco

project: Sea Ranch Residence, The Sea Ranch, Calif.

detail: Breakfast nook

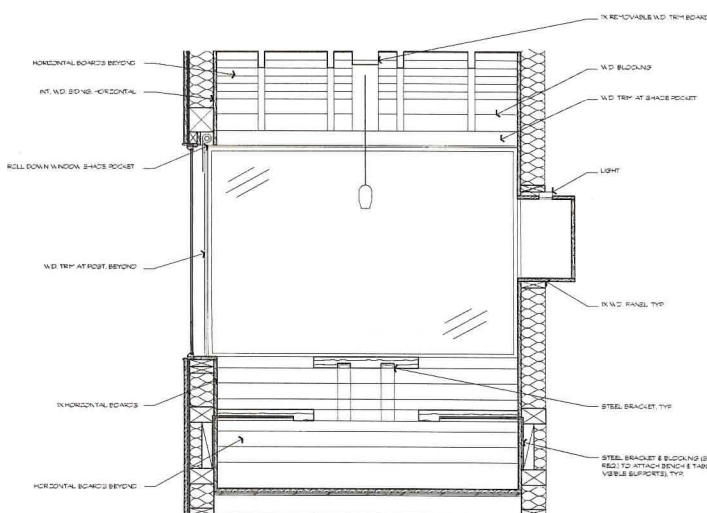
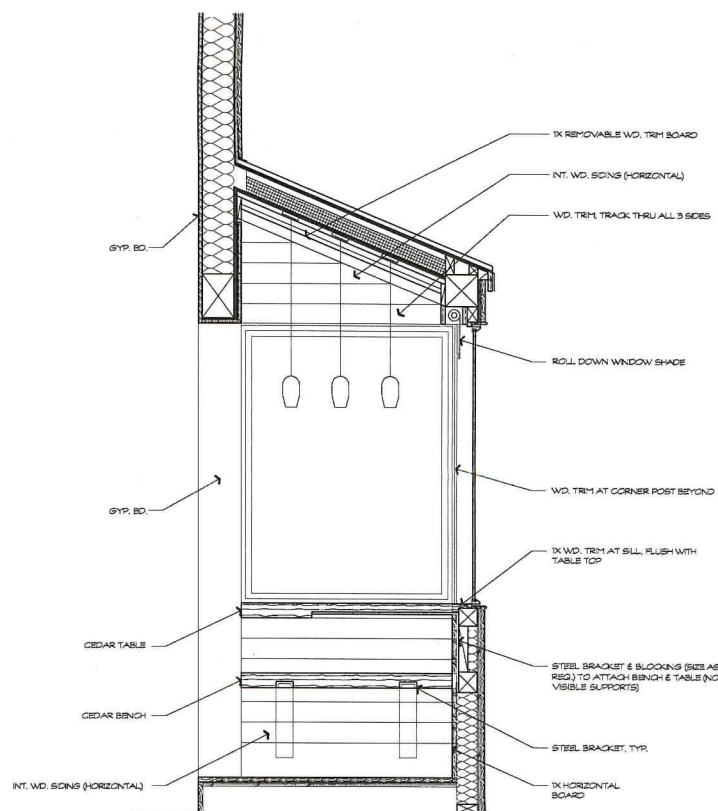
"In much of our work, we spend a lot of time detailing to make things look really minimal," says Eric Haesloop, AIA, LEED AP, a principal at the San Francisco firm Turnbull Griffin Haesloop Architects. He, co-principals Mary Griffin, FAIA, and Stefan Hastrup, AIA, LEED AP, and their staff design many projects in scenic areas of Northern California.

They want their details to emphasize these sites' natural beauty, rather than distract from it.

The breakfast nook at a house in The Sea Ranch, Calif., provides a perfect example of this approach. The 21-square-foot space sits just off the kitchen, up a 6-inch-tall step. "The step makes all the difference," Haesloop says. "It lifts the nook apart from the main space completely." Cedar benches appear to float without support, as does a cedar tabletop. Both are held up by flat, L-shaped pieces of steel embedded in the walls. Builder Don Matheny carved out slots on the undersides of the tabletop and benches, then screwed the steel into them. "He did a beautiful job," Haesloop adds. "That's really key for most details."

A downlit wall niche forms a cedar-lined display shelf. Cedar boards placed in a pinwheel pattern frame the niche—a move that gently highlights the wood's warm hues and fine grain. And big,

aluminum-framed windows turn the nook's north and northeast walls into lenses for the windswept landscape.—*m.d.*



Drawings: Courtesy Turnbull Griffin Haesloop Architects

To conceal the window shades and a junction box for the nook's light fixtures, the architects designed discreet cedar casings. Hidden pieces of steel stabilize the benches and tabletop.

general contractor: Matheny Construction, Nevada City, Calif.

woodworkers: Martin Maul Construction, Gualala, Calif., and David Hanson Woodworking, Santa Rosa, Calif.

materials: Cedar, steel, gypsum board

photography: David Wakely

steel sky

architect: Fougeron Architecture, San Francisco

project: Tehama Grasshopper, San Francisco

detail: Windows

With its access to the sky and spectacular views of downtown San Francisco, this bedroom penthouse addition is the crown jewel of a loft renovation in an abandoned-warehouse district. In creating the master suite, Anne Fougerson, AIA, envisioned something gloriously light and airy, with shapes that break free of the rigid geometry of the building below.

Those ideas are expressed in a grasshopperlike volume created by rooflines that shoot up toward the views. The glass wall on the northwest-facing side reinforces the sense of a flitting creature at rest. One section folds horizontally along the 8-foot-wide seat at the top of the stairs, creating a magical perch with a bird's-eye view of the city. Its glass was siliconed into a frame made from flat steel plates and steel rods screwed together. In fact, the frame is part of the light steel system supporting the penthouse on top of the concrete building.

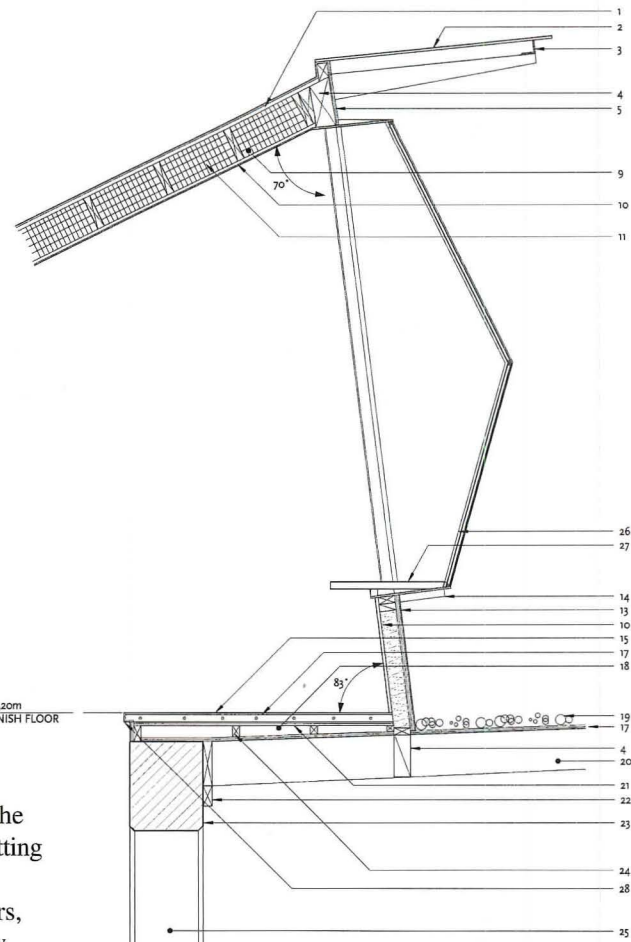
"The reason we did this custom system was to keep the profiles as thin as possible so as not to interrupt the views," says project designer Todd Aranaz. "Part of the inspiration came from the windows below in the existing 1940s building, which are light steel frames also." The glass wall continuing beyond the window seat is canted slightly along a single plane. Part of the same steel system, it's fitted with custom-made aluminum frames with a thermal barrier. The aluminum frames were chosen for their insulating value and because they're rated for high winds, which can reach 80 mph up on the roof, Aranaz says. (For more on this project, a 2008 *residential architect* Design Award winner, see pages 52–53 in the May 2008 issue.)—c.w.

general contractor: Johnstone McAuliffe Construction, Pacifica, Calif.

custom steel window fabricator: Dennis Luedeman, Emeryville, Calif.

materials: Insulated glass, custom steel frames, aluminum frames, threaded rods

photography: Richard Barnes



wall section @ penthouse stair
0 1 2 3 4 5 10

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 built-up roof | 15 10mm resin floor |
| 2 6mm safety glass | 16 38mm concrete slab with radiant heat |
| 3 76/76mm steel angle | 17 19mm plywood |
| 4 2 header | 18 batt insulation |
| 5 sheet metal fascia | 19 loose river rock |
| 6 steel frame (6,35/254mm steel plate) | 20 50/254mm existing joist |
| 7 steel window | 21 38mm concrete slab with radiant heat |
| 8 roller shade | 22 50/102mm existing ledger |
| 9 50/203mm wood joist | 23 existing concrete beam |
| 10 16mm painted gypsum board ceiling | 24 2 sleeper |
| 11 rigid insulation | 25 existing concrete column beyond |
| 12 composite steel column beyond (2x 76/76mm steel angles between 13/102mm steel plate) | 26 13/25mm continuous steel stop |
| 13 25/6mm steel support | 27 wood seat |
| 14 corten steel siding | 28 50mm angle |

Courtesy Fougerson Architecture

The creased window is an extension of the stair volume, which slopes up and folds back down to become an 8-foot-wide bench (mirroring the stair width). The windows' light steel frame is part of the penthouse's framing structure.



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3 ☐ 101 - 250
4 ☐ 51 - 100
5 ☐ 26 - 50
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7 ☐ 5 - 10
9 ☐ 1 - 4

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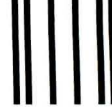
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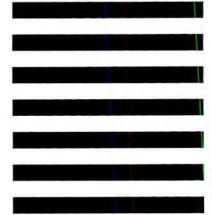
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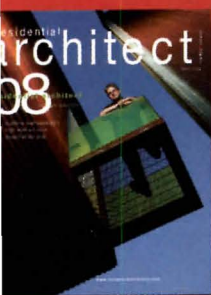
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Circle no. 359

the new standard

sometimes, stock parts can yield cleverly custom details.

by nigel f. maynard

If you're lucky enough to be blessed with big-budget commissions, executing custom details is probably not that difficult, assuming you have access to skilled craftsmen and fabricators. But high-end and even modest projects need problem solving—especially when custom fabrication is either impractical or simply not an option. Material connections are especially tricky, says architect Todd Walker, AIA, principal of Archimania in Memphis, Tenn. "There are a lot of different ways architects want to transition things," he says, and finding a solution can be difficult at best, impossible at worst.

Thankfully, there are plenty of off-the-shelf products on the market that can help resolve transition issues and a host of other problems. In the process, they can create details that are every bit as elegant as a skilled artisan's, but not nearly as costly.

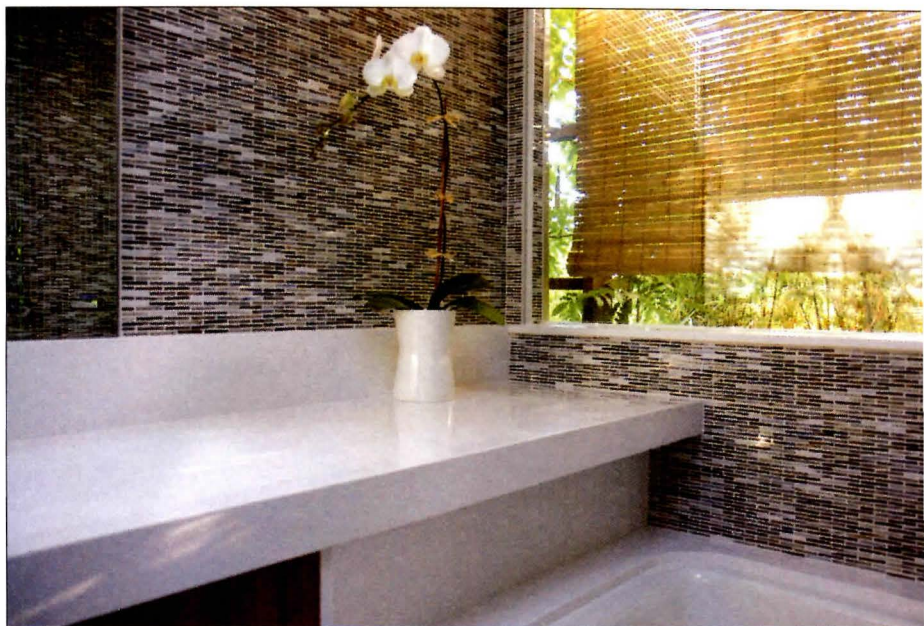
source decoders

One company popular with architects looking for stock solutions to such challenges is Alpharetta, Ga.-based Fry Reglet Corp. John Hubert, AIA, of Wyncote, Pa., often uses Fry when he wants to

create a simple reveal around windows or doors. "We build our own work now, so we're the installer," he explains. "Sometimes we create our own reveals using a piece of lattice trim, but other times we use Fry's 'F' reveal molding."

Fry offers a wide variety of interior wall trim pieces that create vertical or horizontal transitions between ceilings and walls or between walls and other building materials. Charles Alexander, AIA, uses the company's J-channels as termination trim when fiber-cement siding meets door and window openings. "We detail all of our siding with it," says the principal of Alexander Design Studio in Ellicott City, Md. "We can get a higher-quality finish with it, and we don't need molding around windows."

But Fry isn't the only game in town for such items. The Interior Specialties Division of Bossier City, La.-based Gordon offers aluminum plaster and drywall reveals and trim in a multitude of profiles



Courtesy Slant Studio

Fry Reglet Corp. produces a plentiful supply of channels and trim pieces that help solve transition problems. For this bath, Slant Studio used Fry reveals at the corners of the window and between the tile and mirror.

and sizes. And Trim-Tex in Lincolnwood, Ill., produces a range of vinyl drywall accessory products that includes shadow and reveal beads, "J" beads, bullnose beads, and Magic Corner expansion beads.

For architects and designers, the question of detailing is largely about availability, says Ivor Brown, principal of Berkeley, Calif.-based Slant Studio, a firm that stresses "an economy of means" in its work. "It's a matter of what kind of configuration you need," Brown explains. "We start by asking ourselves if an off-the-shelf material will work or if we can build [a detail] out of a kit of parts." He says the

firm's investigations have led to a short list of reliable suppliers that offer products which work well in most situations.

Slant, for example, is a fan of Oakland, Calif.-based Feeney's CableRail assemblies for railing infill options. Made from Type 316 stainless steel, the pieces come with an assortment of attachment hardware and cables in a variety of thicknesses. Unfortunately, local code changes forcing architects to create smaller railing openings have left Slant exploring options other than cable railings. "We're moving away from it," Brown acknowledges, "but cost-wise it's still

continued on page 68

pretty good.” He says the firm also uses Tampa, Fla.-based McNichols Co. for metal mesh and Julius Blum & Co. for a variety of solutions. (The Carlstadt, N.J.-based company supplies ornamental iron, bronze, and aluminum elements such as handrail brackets, glass rail mounting, pipe railings, traditional railing components, and metal tubing bars and shapes.) Alexander also relies heavily on Julius Blum, specing the company’s specialized metal pieces “so that they require minimal fabrication in the field,” he says.

Walker’s detailing decisions largely depend on the look he’s trying to achieve. “A lot has to do with the philosophy of the design,” he explains. “Is it minimal? Industrial? Is it going to be elegant?” Once these issues are resolved, the architect explores his



Courtesy California Faucets

options. He often uses Fry Reglet for reveals, but he also looks to Plattsburgh, N.Y.-based Schluter Systems for transitions between flooring materials, such as wood to tile.

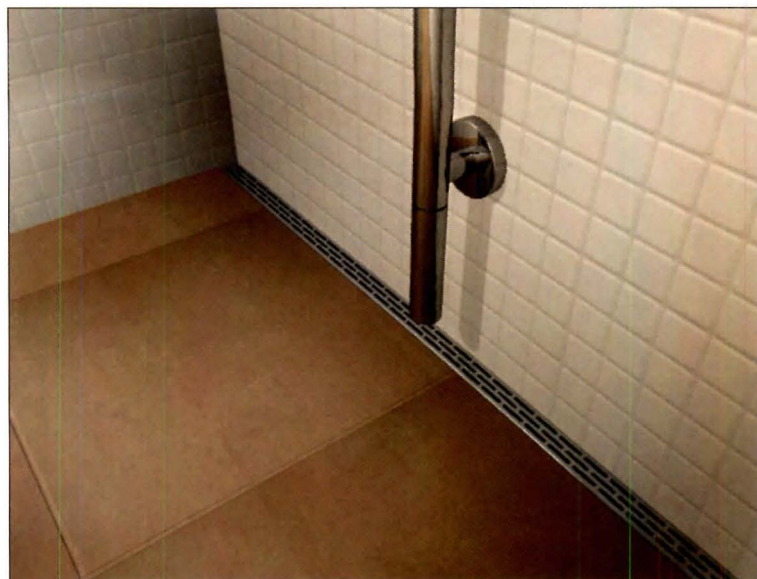
Not every architect approaches detailing in the

same way. Christine L. Albertsson, AIA, a co-principal of Minneapolis-based Albertsson Hansen Architecture, uses custom cabinetry and millwork for her detailed expressions. Sometimes she’ll focus her attention on items that her clients will interact with on a daily basis, like door handles (for which she uses Rocky Mountain Hardware of Hailey, Idaho). “A lot of clients respond to [the hardware], so we use it over and over,” she says of the company’s creations. Another favorite strategy is to infuse the work with tactile elements such as textured tile. “We like to spec tiles that are a pleasure to clean,” she jokes.

subtlety gets you noticed

In recent years, manufacturers have been designing (and redesigning) a slew of products that are particularly appealing to the architectural community—either because of the look they create or the problems they solve. For example, Seiho International in Pasadena, Calif., has developed a following with its unique collection of round AC registers and diffusers that break the standard monotony. Made from aluminum with hidden brackets, the pieces truly stand out in a residential project.

Recently, Huntington Beach, Calif.-based California Faucets introduced



Courtesy Quick Drain USA

StyleDrain, a square-shaped residential drain that’s designed with hidden screws. “Consumers are frustrated with the limited selection of lackluster, industrial-style drains available,” Jeff Silverstein, the company’s president, said in a release announcing the product. “A gorgeous, richly designed shower with an unattractive and clunky commercial drain didn’t sit well with us.” Available in 30 finishes, the drain’s shape creates a cleaner look and makes tiling easier. The company also claims that the design makes water flow more efficiently.

Not to be outdone, Quick Drain USA of Frisco, Colo., has developed a linear shower drain with a crisp design and a subtle presence in the bath. Available as a door or wall drain, the product is available in seven lengths ranging from 24 inches to 48 inches and can be used with any tile size.

design on a dime?

Specing any or all of these exciting new products

Originally developed in Belgium, this linear drain from Quick Drain USA is almost invisible in the bathroom. California Faucets’ square-shaped StyleDrain, on the other hand, has a design that’s out and proud (below).

doesn’t require much—except maybe a quick check for code compliance. When it comes to details, proper installation makes all the difference. Having skilled contractors execute your instructions separates brilliant touches from mediocre measures; it also prevents inexpensive details from becoming costly distractions.

Of course, some details will be simple and cheap to install, whereas others (reveals around doors, for example) can add up fast. “Sometimes you think [a detail] should cost less,” Walker says, “but nine times out of 10, it costs more.” There are reasons why that’s so, however. “Compared to casing out a door with trim, [a reveal] isn’t necessarily cheaper, because it takes more work,” Brown explains. And yet, it’s a small price to pay for perfection. **ra**



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door score

Banducci eschews conventional garage doors in favor of Clopay's Avante Collection. The aluminum-framed glass panel doors "make the garage an architectural feature instead of something we'd normally try to hide," he explains. Shown here on one of the firm's houses, Avante doors are made with 2 1/8-inch frames in custom sizes. Multiple frame color and window style options—including frosted glass, Banducci's preference—can be spec'd. Clopay Building Products, 800.225.6729; www.clopaydoor.com.



Photos: Courtesy Banducci Associates Architects



good cover

For the exteriors of his houses

(including the one above), Banducci relies on Western red cedar siding. He says he likes the dimensionally stable material because it "naturally resists shrinkage, decay, and insect damage" and because it "complements the landscape and clean lines of contemporary residential projects." Available in a variety of grades, cedar also cuts and installs easily. Western Red Cedar Lumber Association, 866.778.9096; www.wrcla.org.

all that glass

Banducci looks to Oceanside Glasstile's Tessera mosaics when he wants to add pizzazz to his baths, including the one shown here. The tiles are made from silica sand and, in some cases, post-consumer recycled bottle glass. A fan of the products' durability, the architect also appreciates how "light seems to dance across their surface." The line comes in four sizes and dozens of iridescent and non-iridescent colors. Oceanside Glasstile, 760.929.4000; www.glasstile.com.



© John Sutton (2008)

—nigel f. maynard

new material

by nigel f. maynard and shelley d. hutchins



discriminating taste

To say architects love details is an understatement. Perhaps that's why they flock to brands that share the same mania for minutiae. One such brand is Henrybuilt. The young, Seattle-based company's hand-built custom kitchen systems—HB20, HB40, and the M Series—are fabricated with highly refined materials such as FSC-certified hardwoods, laminate, wood veneers, bamboo, solid surface, glass, and stainless steel. A variety of cabinet units, countertops, and backsplash components are available. The contemporary HB20 system is shown here in bamboo with a Durat work surface. Henrybuilt, 206.624.9270; www.henrybuilt.com.

aqua recliner

Rich wood gives the Agata a stylish furniture look, and integrated neck pillows and a generous depth make it feel like a comfy recliner. Already great for a simple soak, the two-person, stand-alone tub can be customized with maxi and/or micro massage jets, chromotherapy lights, and an iPod docking station for luxurious, high-end relaxation. Available in biscuit, bone, sterling silver, and white. Neptune, 888.366.7058; www.bainsneptune.com.



cover art

Clear or frosted weather- and UV-resistant acrylic snaps to a stainless steel frame in this sleek Lightline canopy from Feeney. A built-in aluminum gutter elegantly keeps rain from dripping on porches or steps, and a concealed rubber joint directs water away from the house wall. Choose from curve, arch, or gable styles in sizes ranging from approximately 5 feet to 9 feet wide and 3 feet to 5 feet deep.

Feeney, 800.888.2418; www.lightlinecanopies.com.



occidental tourist

Ornamentation is welcomed in certain applications. This Eastlake interior door knob—a popular late 1800s design that was a fixture of the 1897 Sears catalog—proves it. Named for British architect Charles Locke Eastlake and resurrected by Portland, Ore.-based Rejuvenation, the style is a hybrid of English Gothic and Japanese designs. The 1½-inch-by-5½-inch set is constructed of forged brass in six finishes. Rejuvenation, 888.401.1900; www.rejuvenation.com.

heaven-sent

Glass artisan Steve Weinstock, of Alchemy Glass & Light, found inspiration for his Celestial Series of sinks in the iconic work of artist Jasper Johns. The colorful Mosaic model, shown here, is created by fusing reclaimed shards of glass into a ¾-inch-thick glass sheet. Each handcrafted bowl has a 15-inch or 18-inch diameter with a depth of approximately 5 inches or 6 inches, respectively. Alchemy Glass & Light, 877.552.5243; www.alchemyglass.com.



disappearing acts

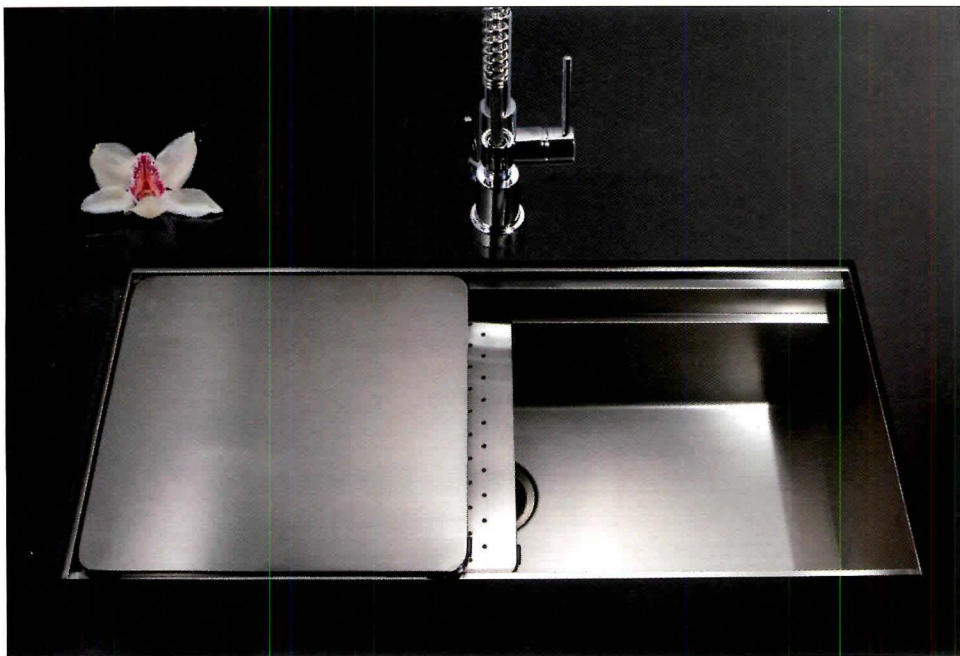
NanaWall's new HSW50 individual panel sliding system makes traditional walls virtually unnecessary. The thermally broken aluminum-framed system lets architects create walls of glass with no visual track on the floor and, according to the manufacturer, offers the same security and wind load capabilities as a track-based system. The panels can be installed anywhere a regular wall would stand and can even be outfitted with swinging doors. NanaWall Systems, 800.873.5673; www.nanawall.com.



continued on page 74

wowzer, houzer

HOUZER's Novus Series offers everything *plus* the kitchen sink, fusing good looks with great function. Two inset panels slide into various configurations across the sink's 30-inch opening to create extra work-space; one features tiny perforations to double as a drain board. Made from superior-grade T-304 stainless steel, which the company says is highly corrosion- and stain-resistant, the $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch-radius undermount sink fits a 36-inch base. HOUZER, 800.880.3639; www.houzersink.com.

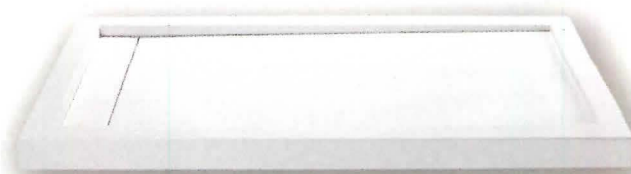


desk job

Brooklyn, N.Y.-based Atlas Industries says its ad6 desk is ideal for an architect's office. A companion piece to the firm's as4 modular shelving and storage system, the desk is made from solid hardwood with cold-rolled steel pulls, desk supports, and leveling base. Standard specs are 76¼ inches long, 28 inches deep, and 29½ inches high, in white oak, maple, walnut, or cherry, but custom sizes and woods are available. Atlas Industries, 718.596.5045; www.atlaseast.com.

the down low

If the thought of a homely shower drain keeps you up at night, Sugar Hill, Ga.-based MTI Whirlpools has a solution: the Concealed Drain shower base. Made from an engineered solid-surface material, the base has a cover that hides the traditional drain underneath. Nonporous and stain-resistant, it comes in matte white or matte biscuit. MTI Whirlpools, 800.783.8827; www.mtiwhirlpools.com.




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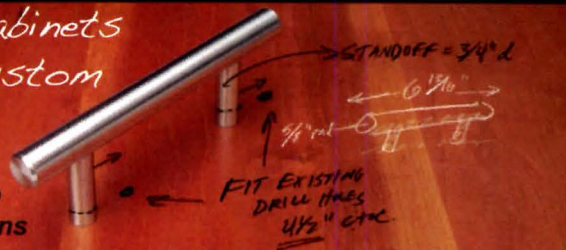
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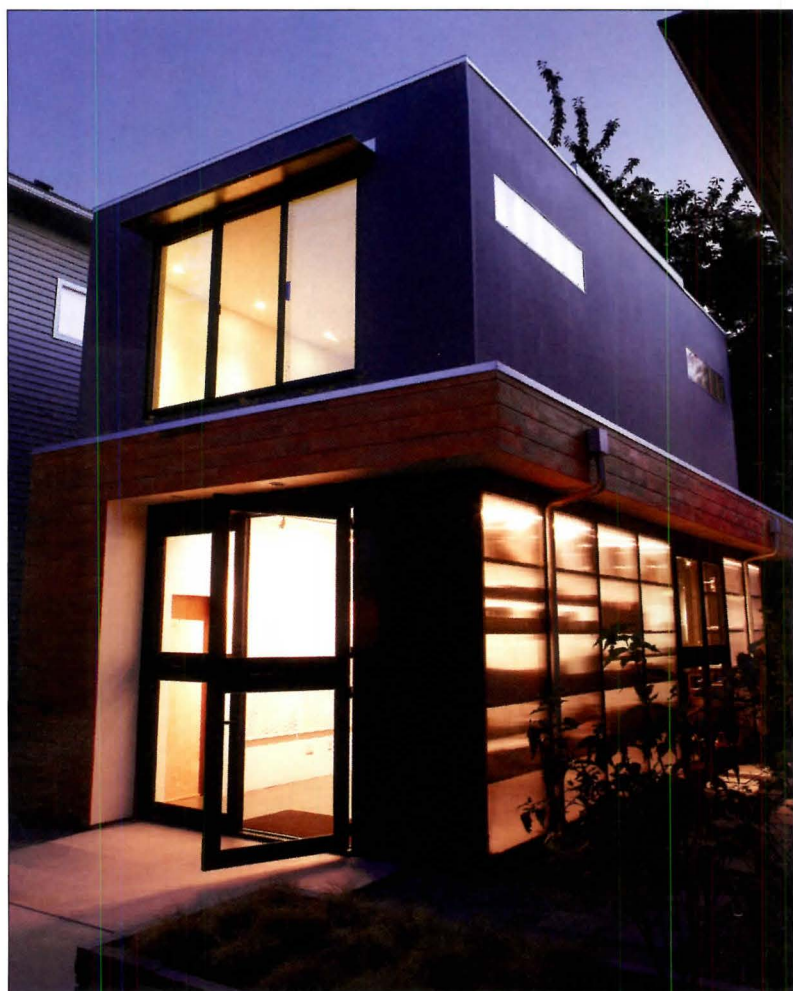
Working from their 1910 Craftsman home suited Daren Doss, AIA, and Lisa Chadbourne just fine—until their daughter was born. With space at a premium, the husband-and-wife architects turned to the outbuilding typology they'd always admired. "We wanted to bring a traditionally agrarian idea into an urban setting," Doss explains.

Local zoning codes forced creative work-arounds, resulting in a decidedly modern structure that can function as a garage, a studio, and eventually, perhaps, a residence. It's a bold experiment in unconventional materials, clever detailing, translucency, and openness, to be sure. Three sides open via 8-foot-square double Dutch doors acquired from a Kentucky door supplier that specializes in horse



bookshelf-lined polycarbonate wall on the house-facing north elevation draws in additional light without sacrificing

stables. "You can actually drive through the building," Chadbourne says of the garage space, which is used for meetings and parties. A



Photos: Thomas M. Barwick

privacy. And a "bay window" three-quarter bath "literally hangs off the cantilevered floor joist above," Doss says, "satisfying zoning requirements for projecting into the setback." The architects' one-room studio—complete with custom desks and skylight—occupies the second floor.

Finger-jointed cedar—stained to pick up the orange hues of a neighboring brick-enclosed substation—wraps the façade, along with steel plate siding that morphs into a fence. Asphalt plank flooring upstairs and a green roof deck around the building's midsection add textural and visual interest.—marla misek clark