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UP FRONT

Little Miracles

IN THE RIGHT HANDS, A GARDEN SHED BECOMES A TEMPLE.

When most people outside of the profession think about residential architects, they conjure up images of beautiful, expensive custom homes. And truth be told, that’s also what many non-residential architects think our readers spend all day long designing. The conventional wisdom wiseacres really should peruse our annual design award winners for evidence to the contrary. Yes, high-end custom work is a compelling part of what many residential firms do, but it’s just one of the many design problems they are qualified and eager to solve. Given that, it’s no shock that this year’s Project of the Year (page 30) is an affordable housing project. And it’s not just affordable to those slightly below middle class, but to those on the bottom rung of the economic ladder and in need of full social services.

Bud Clark Commons is a big, complex project with lots of stakeholders to please. If that weren’t complicated enough, the developer, Home Forward, wanted the building to attain LEED Platinum. The design by Holst Architecture accomplished all of this while creating a building so beautiful it completely removes any stigma of “subsidized housing”—for the occupants, the neighborhood, and the city. The building, dedicated to serving the homeless population of Portland, Ore., is so well done that it stands up to the finest in market-rate work. That is what the best architects bring to virtually any design and construction problem—the ability to make a project transcend its program and budget to become better than the sum of its parts.

This power to transform the mundane into the near miraculous isn’t just for larger projects. Take a look at this year’s Outbuilding category (beginning on page 84), and you’ll find two garden sheds that will knock your Wellies off. The first, Garden Gateway by John Grable Architects, is a triumph of lowly industrial materials which, as an added bonus, creates a shady little respite from the Texas heat for the family dog. The second, by Huff Projects, is a moodier piece combining an oak-planked rainscreen shell and polycarbonate-clad end walls. Aglow at night, The Shed evokes a New-Age chapel steeped in mysticism and mystery. A third building, the Newton House pool pavilion by NADAAA, is a precious jewel box referencing the gardens and modern addition to an existing neo-Georgian house. It could have been simple, but it’s simply beautiful.

Similarly, Fougeron Architecture’s Flip House (page 66) takes the typical redo of an urban townhouse and reinvents the paradigm. The firm blew out the back of the house, “flipped” the floor plan of social and private spaces (to the rear and front, respectively), and ultimately blows our minds with the coup de grace: a dazzling, faceted fenestrated wall.

Olson Kundig reimagines what a live/work space can be and, more particularly, how a front door should serve these dual purposes in Studio Sitges (page 50). This project won a detail award last year, which made it eligible for review again in the whole house categories where it zoomed up to a Grand award. So, repeat entrants take heart!

There is much innovation and sheer chutzpah to admire in the pages ahead, whether affordable or high end, large or small. It’s all problem-solving by design.

S. O. O. C.

9

MAY/JUNE 2013
The American Institute of Architects recently announced the winners of its annual Housing Awards. The half dozen selected projects share some common traits: reverence for their sites and communities, abiding concern for environmental sustainability, and clever strategies to conserve resources.

Entries were submitted in four types of housing: One- and Two-Family Custom Housing, One- and Two-Family Production Housing, Multifamily Housing, and Specialized Housing. According to the AIA, the Specialized Housing category "recognizes outstanding design" that meets the particular needs of underserved populations. No award was given this year in the Production Housing category.

The jury consisted of Kathleen Dorgan, AIA, chair, Dorgan Architecture & Planning; John Isch, AIA, RWA Architects; R. Thomas Jones, AIA, California Polytechnic State University; Stephen Sharpe, Hon. AIA; and Charles L. Travis, AIA, the Housing Studio, PA.

Winners will be honored at a presentation during the AIA National Convention in Denver, held in conjunction with RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECT's annual design awards celebration. In addition to their AIA awards, both Via Verde by Dattner Architects and Grimshaw Architects (page 68) and West Campus Housing: Phase One by Mahlum Architects (page 78) have won Residential Architect Design Awards this year.

expanded coverage of these projects can be viewed at residentialarchitect.com and aia.org/practicing/awards/2013/housing-awards.

Six Soulful Projects Win AIA Housing Awards

BY S. CLAIRE CONROY

Multifamily Housing

Via Verde—The Green Way, Bronx, N.Y.
Dattner Architects and Grimshaw Architects

A big hit with several awards programs this year, this residential complex offers affordable housing for the low- and middle-income population of the South Bronx. The cutting-edge design incorporates the latest in social housing ideas, including community gardens and sustainable features to bolster the livability and durability of the building for years to come. Built on a brownfield site, the project comprises a 20-story tower, a mid-rise duplex apartment component, and townhouses—for a total of 222 dwelling units. The project is on track to achieve LEED NC Gold certification.

Specialized Housing

West Campus Housing—Phase One, Seattle
Mahlum Architects

It's a rare educational project that attends to the site and community plan as much as it considers the buildings themselves. Foremost, the program for this student housing complex sought an integrated relationship with its neighbors. Publicly accessible retail and communal outdoor spaces further the purpose, along with narrowed roads, widened sidewalks, and dedicated pathways to public transportation. The buildings employ straightforward materials chosen for durability and affordability, but apply them deftly.
Artists often make the best clients, bringing with them a rarefied sensibility that imbues projects with character and individuality. In this case, the creative client insisted on a close relationship with the nature and topography of the site, hoping to blur the line between the built and the indigenous. Other requirements were future flexibility of the floor plan and top-notch energy efficiency. A wide open living-dining-kitchen plan, SIPs construction, LEDs, and passive solar orientation help meet these goals. And a stripped-down art studio provides the blank canvas for ideas yet to come.

Although dubbed "House in the Mountains," this project really is "of the mountains," blending in seamlessly with the rolling hills of Colorado's piedmont. Sensitive to the intrusive nature of construction in this area, Gluck+ used every design trick in the book to minimize the building's visual and environmental impact. Long sweeps of green roof climb with graceful muscularity from the ground plane, insulating living areas below and concealing expanses of glass and solar panels embedded in the building façade. A Cor-Ten-clad retaining wall forms a private courtyard visible only from the mountain tops.

This guest house lures visitors to stay entirely too long, bewitched by the rich natural materials and stunning views of the San Clemente Mountains and Los Padres National Forest. As earthy as the view, the building incorporates stone, timber, glass, and zinc into a tightly orchestrated paean to place. It's a harbinger of great things to come. The first structure in a vacation compound within the Santa Lucia Preserve, it shields a pool that the owners can dip into now while waiting on the rest of their dream house to come true.

Texas's state capital is blessed with nearly year-round beautiful weather. The exception is summer, when damaging heat sets in and even the hill country and lakeside areas feel the burn. This 5,900-square-foot house dances between openness to views and ventilation while protecting from nature's worst. Additionally, geothermal HVAC systems, a photovoltaic array, reflective TPO roofing, cellular foam insulation, tankless water heaters, and FSC-certified woods mitigate the building's carbon footprint.
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Kirk Hamilton, FAIA, is a leading advocate for an evidence-based design process in architecture. For him, the most significant roadblock to adopting quantitative data is reticence among architects who believe that the creative design process is hindered, rather than enriched, by data. “Architects everywhere in the world use information in order to improve the quality of their design decisions,” he says. “Every architect is, at one level or another, doing this.” The only difference, Hamilton reports, is in the quality of the information available.

WHAT’S INTERESTING TO ME IS HOW THE TERM EVIDENCE-BASED design has become a buzzword. I use it because my editors and publishers want to take advantage of it in a Google search, so it serves a practical function. But evidence-based design is about a process by which one arrives at a product. It’s about credible research that’s relevant in the context of a unique project. And where I come in is to advocate for a higher level of rigor in doing that.

I see some residential architects starting to think in these terms, which makes sense. After all, research is an important element of working with residential clients—and architects who work with residential clients spend a lot of time trying to understand those clients at a very deep level. There’s a builder who has been interviewing me and working with psychiatrists and academic scholars in order to understand how to rigorously gather better client information and, as a result, the buildings he’s doing fit the client better than, perhaps, the ones he was doing before that research. And he has ended up with happier clients.

Evidence-based design represents a process that’s suitable for every building type. Period. My field happens to be healthcare, in which it makes an awful lot of sense—and a majority of firms in healthcare have become very good over the last decade in accepting and using legitimate research to design better environments.

Evidence can come in an infinite variety of forms, but one of the problems in using that evidence is how casually the idea of “design research” can be interpreted. It’s about much more than going to a catalog to find materials. It’s about seeking out reliable scholarship, having a design hypothesis, testing your ideas, and finding new information.

By and large, the field of architecture is becoming consistently more sustainable than it was even five years ago. Sustainable design processes, supported by scientific evidence, contribute to improving public health, improving where we live and how we work. But the intentionality of someone designing anything—anything at all—has to include interpretation of the best possible information. —As told to William Richards
Social entrepreneurship in a recovering economy.

ARCHITECTURE GRADUATES FACED BLEAK JOB PROSPECTS IN 2009. Some returned to school to wait out the recession; others found work in areas outside of architecture. Still others—like Shane Gring—took the chance to draw a clearer connection between design and its potential to change communities. As an AmeriCorps member for Flatirons Habitat for Humanity in Boulder, Colo., Gring headed up the organization's sustainability program, which aligned with the LEED for Homes criteria. Within a few months, Gring recognized two problems with one clear solution: Habitat needed financing and expertise to achieve LEED for Homes certification and people pursuing accreditation needed access to hands-on LEED project experience.

Four years and one declined acceptance to an esteemed graduate architecture program later, Gring is now the 26-year-old CEO of Bould, a nationally recognized social for-profit enterprise that pairs people pursuing LEED accreditation with Habitat projects that need volunteers. While Gring manages the day-to-day operations, his growing team is now a mix of four dynamic professionals whose range of expertise incorporates marketing, development, and finance.

Participants in Bould's program receive training (for a fee) on all aspects of the LEED certification process—from design to documentation to on-site construction, after being paired with a local Habitat project. By completing the program, participants receive the experience they need to qualify for LEED accreditation while supporting the design and construction of high-quality, energy-efficient homes for low-income families.

Bradley Buck, an IT systems engineer based in Charlotte, N.C., worked with Bould last year to earn his LEED accreditation. "After becoming a LEED Green Associate, options for attaining the LEED accreditation were slim, in general, and nil in Charlotte," he says. "I began networking in local green building circles to try and sign on to projects in some sort of volunteer capacity, and was not having much success—but Bould satisfied the experience program for any LEED exam. I finished my Bould program requirements in August and slowly studied for the LEED AP Operations + Maintenance exam, passing it on my first attempt in December 2012."

In the last two years, Bould partnered with nine Habitat affiliates in seven states, contributed to 27 homes that are now LEED-certified, and trained 225 professionals. Numberswise, this means low-income homeowners potentially save more than 40 percent on their utility bills, which Gring projects to equal about $50,000 over the term of a typical 30-year mortgage.
In addition to Bould’s tangible and foreseeable impact on the green-building, educational, and housing markets, Gring’s company is a key example of shifting values and priorities for young, entrepreneurially minded design professionals. The recession might have brought a high unemployment rate and difficult economic times, but its challenges also provided opportunities for young professionals to focus less on profit and more on how to leverage business to benefit the greater good. While Bould’s fees include a small percentage dedicated to operating expenses, people engaging in Bould programming are primarily helping pay for the materials, labor, and fees associated with building sustainable homes for low-income families.

While nonprofits such as Architecture for Humanity and Designs for Dignity leverage design thinking to seek solutions to local, global, and humanitarian issues both small and large, Bould’s emergence in the industry raises interesting questions about what role social entrepreneurship can play in the architecture and design, as well as the green-building, markets. Bould empowers both industry and related professionals to make historically “design-related” subjects such as sustainable home design accessible to a much broader audience.

“We had people that were changing careers and Bould was the avenue they picked.” — Joseph Rosenberg

Joseph Rosenberg, a Bould program graduate and an Americorps VISTA participant with Neighborhood Housing Services for New Haven (Conn.), points out that Bould’s appeal is much broader than the design profession’s. “We had people that were changing careers and interested in doing sustainable work, and Bould was the avenue they picked,” he says. “Some people were interested in the opportunity to get accredited for future job opportunities, while others were there to understand the sustainable movement and its impact on the future of [building] practice.”

Needless to say, it’s been a busy 18 months for Gring. Bould was recently selected as a winner of the Huffington Post IGNIITEGood Millennial Impact Challenge and the Hitachi Foundation Yoshiyama Young Entrepreneur Program. He also participated in Boulder’s Unreasonable Institute, an intensive summer camp for aspiring entrepreneurs, and pitched Bould at Greenbuild 2012 in San Francisco.

After seeing Gring speak at Greenbuild, Lauren Elasik, who coordinates the U.S. Green Building Council Emerging Professionals Program, noted, “Bould has been making huge strides for so many people, and is proof of the importance young people can play in being business-savvy while giving back to their community.”

When asked what the game-changing company expects to do in 2013, Gring replied that he hopes to continue to encourage the next generation of sustainable professionals, “with the tools they need to launch their green careers while building a sustainable, just future for us all.” — Beth R. Mosenthal, Assoc. AIA

Learn more about Bould at bebould.com.

Theodore Sunil Chacko

There’s a unique power in the word “home.” It’s where we grow, where we learn lifelong values, and where the generations come together in times of grief and joy. “Home” is both literally and figuratively the bedrock of civilization. As the poet Robert Frost wrote:

Home is where, when you have to go there, They have to take you in.

Given the importance of the home in society, one would expect single-family residential design to be the subject of intense academic research. Yes, government gathers a wealth of statistics and Realtors keep a close eye on market trends. But a quick Web search produces relatively meager information from objective third-party researchers. At a time when a host of issues, from affordability and resilience to the very idea of what constitutes a family, cries out for intense study, there has been a surprising lack of curiosity about a building type that historically has the longest lifespan of anything we design and build.

Whatever architecture schools bring to the university, these programs (unlike, say, medicine and engineering) typically do not bring in much in the way of research dollars. Where funds do flow in, the investment is likely to be targeted at a particular issue, such as health and accessibility. If one’s home is indeed one’s castle, few have navigated the moat to pursue research into the most elemental building type.

At the AIA National Convention, attendees will learn about the Institute’s commitment to making the case among clients, elected officials, and the public for the importance of design in a rapidly changing world. Advocating for rigorous academic investigation into the built environment in a way that demonstrates the value proposition of turning to architects will be critical to our being heard.

AIA initiatives such as the College of Fellows’ Latrobe Prize and the launch this year of the Building Research Information Knowledgebase, in partnership with the National Institute of Building Sciences, are important steps. But we need to go much further. Given the central role architects can play in shaping a more sustainable, productive, and healthy society, we need to back up architecture’s claim with credible research. What better place to make that case than in an evidence-based conversation about the future of the 21st-century home?

Mickey Jacob, FAIA, 2013 President
Implementing Universal Design and Meeting the Needs of an Aging Population

By: The IDeA Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access, University at Buffalo with contributions from Lisa Pierce, LEED AP BD+C

THE U.S. POPULATION SHIFT
It's in the news a lot. The Baby Boomers started to turn 65 in 2011. This is significant because this generation makes up approximately 26% of the U.S. population (approximately 78 million people). The Baby Boomer generation, those born between January 1, 1946 and December 31, 1964, are arguably the most studied generation in the U.S. They have and will continue to shape the U.S. economically and socially. The post WWII baby boom, longer life expectancy and a steady decline in birth rates have caused an unusual age wave. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the number of persons aged 65 will reach 71 million by 2030, and peak at 78 million by 2050. Advancements in healthcare and life styles have increased the U.S. life expectancy to 76 years. Because the Boomers are arguably the largest generation, over the next 20 years the majority of the U.S. population will be older than 55 for the first time in U.S. history. Low birth rates in the late 60s and 70s will leave a gap in the population behind the swell that is the Baby Boomers. We're quite literally at the beginning of the wave, and all of the implications that will follow. We can surely expect economic and social impacts of senior programming, new product development and further changes in the housing market.

THE BABY BOOMERS AND THE ECONOMY
Aside from their sheer numbers, the Boomers have greatly shaped the U.S. economically and socially. This group is unlike previous generations. They are active, health conscious, independent, financially secure and better educated than previous generations. They make well-informed choices and are proactive in managing their lives. Aged is no longer frail and incapable. When the Boomers aren't directly causing change, it happens indirectly. The development of the “gray market”, for example, is a direct response to the changing needs of this generation. They aren't necessarily creating products or services, but they are buying them. Consumers over the age of 65 have the highest discretionary income in the U.S. And while Baby Boomers' real median

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. Describe current and predicted demographic trends in aging and the effect aging has on health, behavior and everyday life.
2. Analyze the impact that the aging population is having on environments and products.
3. Identify the differences between Accessible Design and Universal Design.
4. List the Seven Principles of Universal Design.
5. List reasons why Universal Design is important to implement in today's housing market.
The home environment should provide continued enjoyment and stimulation, but should also accommodate changing needs and enhance the quality of life.

household income is higher than that of their parents, it is impossible to ignore how they are spending in the current economic climate.

The Boomers established themselves as dominant players in the housing industry and according to AARP surveys, will prefer to stay in their homes as they age. But the current state of the economy has many wondering. Property rentals are increasing, even among the elderly. Reverse mortgages are getting more attention. Pensions and Social Security are underfunded and often insufficient; 401k investments have suffered huge losses. Still, the boomer generation has at times accounted for half of all spending in the U.S. A February 2012 Gallup Poll reported that economic confidence has been improving over the previous five months and is at its highest point in a year. As Boomers decide where and how they want to age, the housing market will be directly affected.

A November 2011 report indicated that senior living housing starts were up 50 percent from 2010 to 2011, but still below the pre-recession level. Independent living units had the highest new construction starts, followed by assisted living and nursing centers, according to the Seniors Housing Construction Trends Report 2011, released by the National Investment Center for the Seniors Housing & Care Industry (NIC) and the American Seniors Housing Association (ASHA).

Regardless of the economy, many AARP reports have shown that upon retirement Boomers will prefer to grow old in their homes. This is referred to as Aging in Place. As we age, our needs and abilities change. Homes outfitted to suit your needs and abilities at age 45 could be significantly different than what you need at 65 and older. According to the Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Awareness (IDEA), successful aging in place requires careful planning; physical, mental and physiological changes that accompany aging often require that modifications be made to the home. The home environment should provide continued enjoyment and stimulation, but should also accommodate changing needs and enhance the quality of life.

RE-EVALUATING PHYSICAL NEEDS
There are many physical changes associated with aging and the age wave described above will have substantial and broad impacts on our healthcare system as Boomers seek care in the future. While certain conditions can impact any age, in general seniors are more likely to have chronic health issues. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) about 80 percent of older adults have one chronic condition, and 50 percent have at least two. Chronic conditions such as arthritis, cardiovascular disease and diabetes are all common among those aged 55 and older. Physical changes associated with aging often have a strong influence on how a person is able to interact with their living environment. They could encounter difficulties based on decreases in mobility, stamina, strength and dexterity. Reduced sensory acuity to touch, vision, hearing and smell are often experienced as well. As a result, we are more prone to accidents and injuries as we age.

Slip-and-fall accidents are common among seniors; they may misjudge distance and stumble, unable to catch themselves to stop the fall. Arthritis pain, swelling and stiffness can make simple daily tasks such as opening a window or climbing stairs a challenge. In 2008, the National Health Interview Survey indicated that persons over age 75 were approximately three times more likely than persons aged 65-74 years to report limitations in activities of daily living.

With all of that in mind, Boomers are still hopeful and intend to stay in their current homes as they age. The alternatives to Aging in Place are independent living facilities, assisted living facilities, moving in with family, or even a nursing facility. Declining physical capabilities, economic concerns, health issues, emotional or family needs, and spiritual beliefs may eventually send seniors to seek care from family or professional providers. AARP research indicated that over half recognize the need to make changes to their homes so that they can live safely and comfortably in their homes as they age.

Common home improvements include remodeling kitchens and bathrooms. But
re-evaluating space and physical needs goes much farther than a cosmetic update with some new features. Designers who work with Boomers choosing to remain in their homes should brush up on the idea of Universal Design, and be able to explain what it is, how to implement it, how it is different from accessible design, and that it can be done beautifully.

DEFINING UNIVERSAL DESIGN
In the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act (or ADA) is probably the most recognized accessibility law and the one architects and designers are likely to look to first when they have a project where accessibility is required. ADA guidelines are used in the design and evaluation of public buildings and facilities.

Other standards, such as the Fair Housing Act (FHA), American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) relate to housing and dwelling units. The purpose of these laws and standards is to create more usable buildings and environments for people with disabilities. As such, accessibility laws make a distinction between people with disabilities and people without disabilities.

Accessibility laws include standards that dictate the requirements for features such as space allowance and reach ranges, door and maneuvering clearances, ramps and stairs, toilet rooms and grab bars, controls and operating mechanisms, switch and outlet heights, and much more.

Accessibility is a finite concept so something is either within compliance or it is not. For example, if we look at grab bars, the ADA requires, among many other things, that there be a 42” long minimum grab bar mounted horizontally on the wall adjacent to a toilet not in a stall mounted between 33 and 36” above the finished floor. If we have a grab bar mounted at 34”, then it complies. If it is mounted at 36 1/2”, then it does not.

The same rules can be applied to controls and operating mechanisms. There are requirements for clear floor space for approach, mounting height and reach, and operation. If a control or mechanism requires tight grasping and a significant amount of force to activate then it is not compliant.

The limitation of accessibility standards is that they are minimum requirements, and even if a building or product is designed strictly to code, it doesn’t guarantee that it will be usable or be a good design. For example, the ADA requires that a ramp can have no more than a 1:12 slope. Although 1:12 is the standard, many manual wheelchair users cannot propel themselves up a ramp with a slope of 1:12. Additionally, a ramp could also be designed strictly to code and be considered compliant, but be unappealing and not integrated into the existing building design.

The formal definition of Universal Design is “Products and environments that can be used effectively by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.”

The term Universal Design was coined in the mid-1980s by Ron Mace, and is a strategy intended to be incorporated into all facets of product and environmental design, including housing.

Many people view Universal Design as a new term for accessible design but they are not to be used interchangeably. Accessibility codes are prescriptive and regulated by legislation. As such, they do not address the full range of user needs. Alternatively, Universal Design is not based on any legal mandate and therefore is not measured by compliance with the technical criteria of any particular standards.

With the goal of making products and environments usable to the greatest population of people, practicing Universal Design means a shift from designing for the “average” or “typical” person and moving toward a model that is more innovative and inclusive.

There are three key components to the success of Universal Design: aesthetics, affordability and availability.

Aesthetics play an important part in dispelling the myth that Universal Design features only help people with disabilities and older people. Design features should be appealing to a broader population.
Improved usability and safety should also be combined with affordability so that it is perceived as being available to everyone and not a luxury item available to only the wealthy. In fact, many Universal Design features cost nothing, while others have minor costs but have a value that exceeds their expense.

Lastly, universally designed products must be available and easily attainable without having to be a specially ordered item, e.g. you can find them on the store shelves at a local retailer or locate them for purchase online.

As previously stated, accessible design is primarily about compliance with regulations with the intention of eliminating barriers for people with disabilities. These regulations provide prescriptive design requirements but focus on functional issues with minimal solutions. For example, the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) address physical and sensory limitations but exclude people not formally classified as having a disability.

For example, a person who is extremely tall may have difficulty using the sink or a drinking fountain in a public building. The ADA has specific requirements that limit the mounting height of the fixture to accommodate a person who uses a wheelchair, but it does not address a situation such as this, where a person needs the fixture mounted higher to be used comfortably.

Additionally, many products are made to be used more effectively by a person who is right-handed, which may cause a left-handed person to exert unnecessary effort. In response to the need for more inclusiveness, a group of advocates of Universal Design developed the Seven Principles of Universal Design.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Principle 1 is Equitable Use, meaning the design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities. In other words, the design should be equally usable by everyone and usable in the same way by everyone, if possible. If not, there should be other options that would provide the same level of convenience and safety. An example of this principle is the door handle pictured in Image 1, above. The ergonomic design of the handle enables a person of any ability to unlock, open and close the door with one single motion.

Principle 2 is Flexibility in Use, whereas the design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

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TEXT BY CHERYL WEBER, LEED AP
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Not long ago, Mark McInturff, FAIA, received a phone call that led to an unusual commission. The wife of a couple he'd designed a house for 15 years ago asked him to come over to discuss some interior renovations. The husband had died recently, and during the visit she asked McInturff to design his tombstone. "She told me her husband had requested it," says McInturff, principal of McInturff Architects, in Bethesda, Md. "I knew them both pretty well and said we'd love to do it. Talk about closure."

He was touched by the request, but not surprised to hear from a former client. Last year, McInturff finished a retirement house in Rhode Island for another set of clients—his fourth project with them. At any given time, one-third of his clients are people he's already worked for. "I'd be very hurt if I found out they were doing a project with someone else," he says.

If anything, the recession has taught architects that relationships with past clients shouldn't be left to chance. Many, like McInturff, powered through on a small, but steady stream of repeat commissions. Intuitively, the likelihood of a residential client needing additional services in the near future seems slim. But, in fact, about 48 percent of residential architects' business comes from repeat clients, according to the 2012 AIA Firm Survey report. What's more, they represent a larger share of billings than in the past.
Groundwork

Repeat business starts with finessing the first commission—not only the design, but the daily drama. Architects share 10 tips for client etiquette.

1. “Always respond to a phone call or email the same day.” —FRANK HARMON
2. “Be deliberately inclusive in the design process. We use wish lists and character studies to get to know clients.” —MICHELLE LABOY
3. “Give them tough love. We go out of our way to do many things for clients, but you have to make a stand on certain design issues. We get through disagreements with humor.” —ZOLTAN PALI
4. “When you're honest, everything else follows. I'm obligated to speak up if I feel a decision is not in their best interests.” —EDDIE JONES
5. “Pay attention to client stress levels; a small off-hand comment at the wrong time can result in a big meeting days later.” —DAN MAGINN
6. “Check in with them every now and then to ask if you're serving them well: Is there something we could be doing differently or better?” —JOHN DUTTON
7. “It’s really important for people to know how excited you are about their project. Exceed their expectations so they keep coming back for more.” —MARK MCINTURFF
8. “Send a note from the principal in charge with the monthly bill, letting them know what's going on. Sometimes I'll talk about things that are bothering me, or things I'm happy about.” —FREDERICK STELLE
9. “For out-of-town clients, we become interpreters of the ethic that underlies the community here in Jackson, Wyo. Sometimes it's at odds; people want to live in very large, expensive houses that take a toll on the land and resources. The most successful client is the one who shares an environmental ethic with us.” —JOHN CARNEY
10. “Act as if you care about their lives, and mean it. It’s easy to forget about that when residential design becomes routine, but every person, every story, and every house is different. You have that to inspire you.” —RENA KLEIN

Rena Klein, FAIA, of RM Klein Consulting, in Seattle, speculates that during the recession, people became more conservative, and thus are now more inclined to hire people they know. They probably also have money to do another project, she says. Higher-end clients often build multiple homes or add another building to their estate. And residential remodeling is always a staple, even if the jobs get smaller in tough times.

There’s another reason why keeping in touch with patrons is important: According to the AIA survey, roughly 21 percent of new residential clients come through noncompetitive selection (they interview only one firm)—presumably through a referral. As a result, “your cost of getting a new job is about half as much as it would be to get a ‘cold’ client,” Klein says. “They know who you are.”

Touch Points

For small and midsize firms, which rarely have dedicated rainmakers, nurturing relationships with past clients can be one of the harder marketing challenges. “We’re not social media people,” McInturff says. “We don’t do newsletters or email, but I often run into them at social events.” In Portland, Maine, Rob Whitten of Whitten Architects, says that after the design phase is over, he tends to be more project-driven than client-driven. “It’s a big mistake; I’ve learned over the years that I need to maintain those relations,” says Whitten, who recently took his first vacation with a client, sailing in the British Virgin Islands.

One way Whitten maintains contact is to return in about a year for a professional photo shoot, after the house seasons and the landscape fills in. Then he puts together a book for the client that memorializes the project. “I’m really not very social, in terms of staying in touch,” Whitten says. “But clients respect our authorship, and if they want to make a change they usually call us.”

Whitten’s isn’t the only firm that is marketing by osmosis in this niche. San Francisco architect Cary Bernstein, AIA, LEED AP, stays in touch by constantly servicing projects one way or another. Clients ask for help with furniture, art, and landscaping after they’ve grown into the house; one even requested a tree house. She also sends yearly cards with images of recent work. “I’m not an aggressive marketer, and I don’t like to be marketed to, but given how busy everyone is, it helps to have some reminders in front of people,” she says.

Residential work is high touch, almost intimate. Doing an informal post-occupancy evaluation shows clients you’re thinking about them, and it’s one way to research how the design is holding up. Six months to a year after project completion, Wayne Turett, LEED AP, principal of Turett Collaborative Architects in New York City, sends an email asking how things are going. “I’m curious about whether everything is working well,” he says. “Sometimes contractors leave issues that are unresolved.”

Los Angeles architect John Dutton, AIA, LEED AP, also checks in periodically, especially if he’s concerned about something. After a year and a
couple of heavy rains, he called the owners of a house with a large atrium to make sure it didn’t leak. “It’s very important that clients don’t feel abandoned after their project is finished,” he says.

“Personally, I think the best way to market to former clients is to go see them,” Klein says. “Architects should routinely be doing this within a year of finishing the job.”

Raleigh, N.C., architect Frank Harmon, FAIA, likes to visit his projects at one-, three-, and five-year intervals, not only for design feedback but because “people like to know you care about them,” he says. He has experimented, too, with sending out a newsletter. One recent story described how to site and build a mountain house without spoiling the view, and another offered a design tutorial on restoring the light to an old church. Harmon also recently started a blog called Native Places (nativeplaces.tumblr.com).

Design leaders recognize that they can’t take their fans for granted, and they’re formalizing strategies to stay in touch. At El Dorado, in Kansas City, Mo., one of the firm’s four partners tracks their contact with former clients, prodding the other architects to reach out informally but consistently—at least once per year. El Dorado also maintains a twice-per-week blog commenting on developing projects. But it’s not just about the firm. “If we see clients doing something interesting through their business, we’ll write a story about it,” says partner Dan Maginn, FAIA, LEED AP. A Facebook fan page also prompts the architects about milestones such as a child’s graduation. “It helps us know when it’s appropriate to give a touch,” he says.

“Client development and maintenance strategies have to be designed like anything else,” Maginn adds. “You almost have to think like a journalist, about what would be interesting for clients to hear from you. And don’t be afraid to believe that your own work is interesting. It’s a mixture of active listening to what’s going on in their world and, at the right time, injecting things happening in your firm.”

Socializing happens face-to-face, too, often at parties held in El Dorado’s first-floor steel shop. “We have about three parties a year with the goal of relaxing after a stressful couple of months. And if it’s fun enough we can get clients to come,” Maginn says. The parties are “casual but designed” and include snazzy invitations. Recent events have included a German-themed party with an Oompah band, and a party to benefit the local animal shelter complete with puppies in the lobby.

It’s true that the best marketing comes naturally. Zoltan Pali, FAIA, and Judit Médá Fekete, Assoc. AIA, LEED AP, who run SPF:a in Culver City, Calif., have a small gallery in their office where they host shows for artists they know. It’s a cozy gathering where clients get exposed to work they might appreciate. “I don’t ever want to be a middleman between an artist and owner, but I’ll hook them up and then off we go,” Pali says. “Clients are looking for it, they stop by and chitchat, and it becomes a nice thing.” Although the firm hasn’t done this recently because the events are expensive to produce, Pali plans to resume them as the economy improves.
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Social Graces

Residential clients tend to be self-selecting. They're creative, intelligent people who gravitate toward others who share their values about culture, art, and architecture. So by the time the house is finished, architects often count them as friends. "I do socialize with former clients," says Roy McMakin, principal of Domestic Architecture, in Seattle and San Diego. "Some started as friends and stayed friends; some started as clients and ended as friends."

It helps to be rooted in a tight-knit community such as Cambridge, Mass. The staff at Maryann Thompson Architects makes a point to patronize the restaurants they've designed, and they often run into clients there. Thompson rubs shoulders with others during vacations on Martha's Vineyard. Michelle Laboy, a designer on staff, describes the firm's touch points as frequent and spontaneous. "A few times a year, we bring prospective clients through houses we've designed," she says. "Sometimes they go by themselves—clients on the way to see us from New York might stop at a house we've done in Connecticut. In talking to the owners, they get to know what it's like to work with us."

In the downturn, architects have grasped that all clients are to be treasured and nurtured. Working in a pristine vacation spot such as Jackson, Wyo., it's not unusual for John Carney, FAIA, to get calls from former clients during holidays and spring break. He says they arrive ready to celebrate and are looking for a way to plug in locally by snowboarding or floating on the river together, or having him over for a party. Often, too, the meetings are work-related. "I don't travel during holidays," he says. "My family has to come here."

The scenario is similar in Phoenix, where Jones Studio principal Eddie Jones, AIA, LEED AP, keeps tabs on a patron base that skews toward retirees. He, too, takes an unscripted approach. "It happens naturally, enthusiastically, and without effort; daily, I'm talking to somebody," he says. One widow calls while traveling to ask what significant buildings she should visit. Another, approaching 90 years old, asked him to fix a sagging art-glass installation. He removed the 30-year-old window, put it into the back of his car, and had it repaired. Such attentiveness leads to requests for remodels or expansions for live-in care.

Servicing past clients, even after the statute of limitations has run out, is just good business. But there's a time and place for social boundaries. Jones recalls the dinner party he and his wife hosted at their house for three former clients. "They were all very wealthy and extroverted, and were one-upping each other every 30 seconds," he says. "Lisa and I couldn't get a word in edgewise. After their drivers came to pick them up, we looked at each other and said, 'Was that a good idea or not?'"

"One thing we don't do is get my family personally involved," says Frederick Stelle, AIA, principal of Stelle Lomont Rouhani Architects in Bridgehampton, N.Y. "I never show people my house. And if a client
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is in town, the idea of us going out to dinner with them is torture for my wife.”

Socially, he's subtle, like getting a table at a benefit sponsored by the charity that a client champions. For example, one patron, a chef, was recently honored by City Harvest, a New York City–based group that provides food for the homeless. “It's probably the hardest part of what we do, because I'm always feeling torn between focusing on what I like to do, which is drawing and detailing, and my personal life,” Stelle says. In the pursuit of clients-for-life, sometimes you do have to spend time with them after-hours, he adds, which is why he tries to vet new ones carefully.

“This is not the most lucrative business; part of the reward is to work with clients we like,” Stelle says. “Whenever I do an initial interview, I say this is a bit like a marriage. If something about the relationship doesn't feel right, they shouldn't do the project with us. At the end of the day, it's not just about dollars or the aesthetic sense.”

This selectiveness isn't unique to Stelle. Mark DuBois, AIA, LEED AP, principal of Ohlhausen DuBois Architects, in New York, believes that good chemistry raises the level of work, particularly for houses. He spends a lot of time explaining what architecture can do. He asks prospective clients to look at specific books, houses, and buildings, and then come back in a month if they're excited about what they're learning. “An educated client makes the relationship much better,” he says. After the conceptual design comes another pause to consider whether they're a good fit.

Seasoned architects know that keeping up with past clients is important business, not only because it generates revenue, but because it’s the best way to know whether they did a good job the first time. “If someone likes you enough to use you again, they will probably talk to others about you,” John Dutton says. “So much about architecture is, in my mind, relationships. That's as important to me as the product.” △
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There's a reason why the Residential Architect Design Awards is one of the most prestigious design competitions that an architect can win. Most important, it's judged by an independent jury of true peers—accomplished architects with deep expertise in residential work. The magazine's editors provide only meals and encouragement to the panel as they slog through hundreds of entry packages. We also empower the jury to set the standard for winners and for the building types we honor. This year, they eliminated a number of categories we typically include, among them Kitchen, Bath, and Light Commercial. However, they did encounter one project they loved but which didn't quite fit its entered category, so they created one not on our list: Adaptive Reuse. Wide latitude to make the best decisions about the best work—that's the formula we believe makes for the best residential design competition in the business.

The 2013 Residential Architect Design Awards jury evaluated more than 600 entries. Ultimately, they premiated 34 projects: one Project of the Year, 10 Grand awards, and 23 Merit awards. Our 2013 jury members were E.B. Min, AIA, of Min/Day; Todd Hansen, AIA, of Albertsson Hansen; Robert M. Cain, FAIA, LEED AP; and Brian Messana, AIA, of Messana O'Rorke. Read on and see if you agree with their decisions. And don't miss our expanded coverage of each project at residentialarchitect.com, with more of the images, drawings, and floor plans we know you love.
Every type of architecture holds its own challenges, but affordable housing can prove particularly daunting. Just ask Holst Architecture, the Portland, Ore.-based firm that designed Bud Clark Commons. “It’s the hardest thing I’ve ever done,” says project manager Dave Otte, AIA, LEED AP, of the 107,000-square-foot housing, shelter, and day center for Portland’s homeless population. “It was a very intense process with a large stakeholder group. We needed the building to withstand a high level of use but still provide dignity and humanity.”

Named for former Portland Mayor Bud Clark, the project occupies a prominent site in between the city’s Pearl District and Chinatown neighborhoods. The design team (made up of Otte; design principal John T. Holmes, AIA; principal in charge Jeffrey Stuhr, AIA; and project architect Kim Wilson) chose a contextually appropriate brick for the exteriors, using white on the building’s western portion and a darker brown for the east side. “The two different tones of brick helped address the different neighborhoods,” Otte says.
Stained, board-formed concrete adds an organic texture to the second level, and laminated spandrel glass in eight shades of green enlivens the upper-level windows.

Plated-steel front gates laser-cut with inspirational messages lead to the entry courtyard for the day center. “One of the ideas of the public courtyard was to make it very welcoming and easy to get into,” Otte says. “We wanted it to be engaging and welcoming and gracious.” Likewise, laser-cut, custom-patterned Cor-Ten steel walls add security to the building’s ground level while avoiding a forbidding look.

In addition to the public courtyard, the sunlit day center includes a main common room, a community center, showers, counseling and administrative offices, an art studio, a community courtroom, and a garden balcony. Holmes, Stuhr, Otte, and Wilson took extra care to ensure that residents and visitors throughout the building would enjoy access to landscaped outdoor space. “These people are in these hardscapes all day long,” Otte explains. “We were trying to give them something different.” The 90-bed men’s shelter, part of which lies underground, contains its own private courtyard and a dedicated common area.

The project’s long-term housing component consists of 130 residential studios on the fourth through eighth floors. Inexpensive Douglas fir planks and oversized floor number graphics cover the hallway walls. The units themselves feature exposed concrete floors, ceilings, and walls, mixed with carpeted and drywalled portions. Green accents lend a pop of color. Holst placed each studio’s window as high as possible to let natural light and ventilation flow deep into the open plans. “If you look at our work over the years, we’ve tried to strike this balance between a rigorous architecture and some element of warmth, a sense of place, a humanity,” Holmes says. “It’s a delicate balance because both have a kind of merit. We try to hit that note, and this building is reflective of that.” The judges approved. “The use of color and daylighting create very dignified modern spaces,” said one juror.

The architects credit developer Home Forward for advocating strong design and energy efficiency. “There was a desire from the developers and us to make a 50- or 100-year building,” Stuhr says. “A lot of affordable housing is built as cheaply as possible, and you end up spending more money in the long run through maintenance and upkeep.” Home Forward wanted the building to achieve a LEED Platinum rating, and it did, with the help of city-provided financial assistance for sustainable measures. (Overall, Bud Clark Commons’ financing came from a mix of federal, state, and municipal sources.) The building’s holistic approach to resource conservation includes heat recovery ventilators, solar hot water, green roofs, bioswales, and a graywater system.

Our jury praised the project for its dynamic appearance, clear purpose, and inherently inclusive philosophy. “It’s a difficult site—and the amount of architecture they got out of it!” marveled one judge. “This is an incredibly smart, respectful design. It has a real commitment to sustainability.” Added another: “As a piece of architecture in a city, it functions beautifully. It achieves a level of design a lot of higher-rent places don’t achieve.” —M.D.
1. Inspirational quotes cut from plated steel welcome visitors to the day center. 2. A Douglas fir ceiling adds visual warmth to the shelter's common area, which opens onto a landscaped courtyard. 3. Color and natural light enrich the experience of living in the 300-square-foot residential studios. 4. Concrete half-walls and a filigreed Cor-Ten steel fence enclose the day center's courtyard without cutting off sightlines to the neighborhood.
Columbia Parc gives the Katrina-ravaged Gentilly neighborhood a new lease on life.

Encompassing 17 new city blocks on the footprint of the former St. Bernard housing project, the varied streetscapes attract residents with a wide range of incomes. “New Orleans’s different neighborhoods have a pride in their own architecture,” says JHP’s John Schrader, AIA, LEED AP. “They were very specific that this is not the French Quarter.”

The homes have a Garden District feel and loosely follow New Urbanist design principles. Mansionlike stacked flats are sprinkled among smaller-scale, two-story townhouses. All the units have covered front porches, stoops, or balconies and face the street, and each block provides private access to secure parking and courtyards. “It’s so appropriate for the town,” said one judge, noting the good proportions and appealing public spaces. —c.w.
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The judges admired the social nature of this 32-unit affordable housing community in San Francisco. “It looks wonderful to walk through these spaces to your unit and say hello to everyone,” one juror said. Architecture firm David Baker + Partners designed the project for first-time home buyers with an income of 70 to 100 percent of the local median family income.

The firm placed the project’s flats and townhouses around a main courtyard, enabling outdoor circulation and cross-ventilation for every unit. “It’s just a modest project, which we tried to make really nice,” says principal David Baker, FAIA, LEED AP. Crisp metal trim outlines the fiber-cement siding that clads the exterior walls, while touches of copper and ipe add depth and texture to prominent spots such as the main entry and a corner bay. The common areas, too, show creativity and flair: landscape architect David Fletcher modeled the courtyard’s curvy planter after the shape of Kurt Cobain’s Fender Mustang and Jaguar guitars. —M.D.
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The judges applauded the bold approach of this modern house woven into the historic fabric of Dublin, Ireland. The site backs up to an 1847 Georgian manor residence and faces an alley in the heart of the city. It once contained the manor's coach house, of which one wall remains standing. The local historic review board required that the wall be preserved and only minimally altered. "This was an opportunity to make it about the site and to stitch a building into a complex situation," says the project's architect, Lorcan O'Herlihy, FAIA.

O'Herlihy did so by creating two separate volumes connected by a glass bridge. The structure closest to the alley incorporates the Georgian-era wall into its rear façade, and contains a media room and two upstairs bedrooms. The bridge spans a central courtyard, leading to the glass-walled kitchen and living area of the main volume. By dividing the project into two pieces, O'Herlihy was able to give the preserved wall a place of prominence, while providing plenty of outdoor space on the tiny, 0.1-acre site.

Poured surfaces, such as board-formed concrete ceilings and terrazzo floors, lend the interiors a sculptural quality. O'Herlihy also chose these dense, heavy materials for their thermal capacity and their muscular presence. "We wanted to have both a strong voice and a respect for the context," he explains. The jury approved. "This one has an attitude," said a judge. "It's a livable piece of art." — M.D.
This modern interpretation of a traditional house in Tucson, Ariz., captivated the judges. Its modest proportions, all-white exterior, and courtyard plan evoke the vernacular buildings of its tightly woven neighborhood, Tucson's Barrio Historico. But by refining each design element to its most minimal state, architect HK Associates created a singular dwelling. "I loved the adaptation of vernacular motifs and the reduction of those motifs to what is essential," said a judge. "It doesn't hew to the standard kit of parts."

Principals Kathy Hancox and Michael Kothke wanted to make a house that would engage with the desert's ever-changing sky. "We tried to do things that would create an atmosphere," Kothke says. Adds Hancox: "The white is kind of like a canvas for the sky." The courtyard's lap pool shimmers in the sun, reflecting off a back-painted glass soffit. A corner skylight in the living room balances out the light coming from the courtyard without compromising privacy. And a low-tech periscope window above the kitchen cabinets brings in distant mountain views. These seemingly small moves create a constantly shifting interplay of light and shadow.

Solar orientation, strategic shading, and rooftop photovoltaic panels keep the owners' energy bills low. Insulating concrete forms (ICFs) ensure quiet interiors, despite the home's location on a fairly busy street. The soft gleam of poured concrete floors complements white interior walls and rift-sawn white oak built-ins. "This house really, truly seems to incorporate light as a material," one judge said. —M.D.

Location Tucson
Principals in charge Kathy Hancox and Michael Kothke
Project size 2,300 square feet
Construction cost $200 per square foot
Sliding House
MACKAY-LYONS SWEETAPPLE ARCHITECTS, HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

With its nearly irreducible geometry and minimal palette of materials—a corrugated metal exterior with a poplar “liner”—Sliding House embodies a simplicity that, in the words of architect Brian MacKay-Lyons, Hon. FAIA, “approaches the idea of zero.” The jury found both the formula and the result compelling. “It has an incredibly effective parti,” said one panel member, who called MacKay-Lyons’s approach “a study in reduction.”

The main-level floor plan consists of a linear living-and-dining room bracketed by covered porches. A kitchen, fireplace recess, powder room, and twin stairways (up to a sleeping loft and down to a lower-level bedroom) fill the thickened north wall. At the south wall, a band of windows takes in a broad sweep of Atlantic horizon. A move the judges termed “that little tweak”—end walls that are square to the roof’s slope rather than plumb—“makes the building dynamic, but still keeps it very simple and direct.” —B.D.S.

Location Upper Kingsburg, Nova Scotia
Principal in charge Brian MacKay-Lyons, Hon. FAIA
Project size 1,700 square feet
Construction cost Withheld
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Skyline Residence

BOHLIN CYWINSKI JACKSON, SEATTLE

Skyline Residence was designed as a guest house, but its first job was to provide a temporary living space on the owners’ remote property while their main house was under construction. The arrangement has had multiple benefits, says architect Robert Miller, FAIA, “because the owners are learning more and more about the site. The project is also kind of a mock-up for the main house.”

The building describes an east-west axis at the edge of a wooded escarpment, signaling visitors with a brilliant green landscape wall that leads to an equally bright red front door. Other “events,” including three projecting bays and a recessed porch with a translucent roof, enliven the building’s simple, barlike plan. Off-the-shelf components—exposed open-web rafters, standard window modules, ACX plywood roof decking—support a casual, cabinlike feeling. The jury members admired the house’s “economy of materials and repetition of structural systems,” calling the result “a lot of bang for the budget.” —B.D.S.

Location Bend, Ore.
Principal in charge Robert Miller, FAIA, LEED AP
Project size 2,084 square feet
Construction cost Withheld
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Rooted in ledge rock and floating beyond its old footprint, this house evokes Italian hill town construction. “We’re building on top of the ruins of the previous culture, magnifying the things they built that could be kept permanent,” says David Salmela, FAIA. In fact, Italian immigrants once lived on this land, part of an urban development project overlooking Duluth and the shipping harbor. Salmela saved the existing 1888 house’s foundation, retaining walls, and site stairs (all stained white), adding simple masonry piers to support the addition.

Glass walls, slatted pergolas, and diagonal bracing read as faceted layers in the open-plan house, which is clad in maintenance-free Richlite and cedar, like the surrounding homes. “It’s a raggedy Modernism, almost like an improvisation on a structure,” a judge said. “It’s rambling but pure in plan.” —c.w.
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<td>More efficient panel installation</td>
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<td>Eliminates blocking at horizontal panel seams</td>
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<td>Less panel cutting and waste</td>
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The RADA judges were unanimous in their regard for this live/work residence on Spain’s Mediterranean coast, which they called both “muscular” and “poetic.” They might have been even more impressed had they known the project’s backstory. “The client was a Norwegian photographer who lived in Paris,” says architect Tom Kundig, FAIA. “He contacted me in Seattle from Paris to build a house in Spain—on the recommendation of a friend in South Africa.”

In keeping with that multipolar introduction, Kundig transformed the project’s compact site into a private realm with a distinctly split personality. Above grade, interlocking forms in steel and cast concrete present a largely mute façade. Massive center-pivot doors—Cor-Ten steel at the front, glass at the rear—open the core of the house from the entry courtyard to the rear garden, where the building shell dissolves largely to glass. Below grade, the building spreads beyond its visible footprint, encompassing a two-level complex of photography studios and support spaces. “It virtually fills the site underground,” Kundig says.

“There’s a very strict line between the nature of the studio and the nature of the house above,” says Kundig, who softened the studio’s industrial palette for the living spaces without severing the connection entirely. Stateside artisans produced some “highly crafted parts and pieces,” including custom lighting fixtures. But local tradespeople carried most of the load. Building at a distance isn’t so hard, Kundig says, “if you embrace the local craft. And in Spain, they clearly know how to do concrete.” —B.D.S.
Location: Sitges, Spain
Principal in charge: Tom Kundig, FAIA
Project size: 4,972 square feet (living space and garage), 4,865 square feet (below-grade studio space)
Construction cost: Withheld

Expanded coverage at residentialarchitect.com
Kicking Horse Residence

BOHLIN CYWINSKI JACKSON, SEATTLE

Kicking Horse Residence is a purpose-built base for alpine adventures that balances rugged practicality with casual elegance. Inspired by the owners’ interest in traditional Scandinavian ski cottages, the building comprises a long kitchen-and-bedroom wing, a flared volume that funnels mountain views into the living and dining areas, and a central circulation “knuckle” that serves as a staging area for outdoor forays. “You can actually ski in from the east side of the house,” says architect Ray Calabro, AIA.

Calabro configured the house to accommodate large groups while maintaining an intimate scale. With children's bedrooms designed on the bunkhouse model and window seats that double as beds, “it can actually sleep 14 people comfortably,” he says. The jury praised Calabro's choice of “simple, durable materials,” calling the effect “modern and rustic—without being too cute.” Said one judge: “You could walk in and immediately feel comfortable.” —B.D.S.

Location Golden, British Columbia, Canada
Principal in charge Ray Calabro, AIA
Project size 3,500 square feet
Construction cost Withheld
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Jon Hensley, Sunny Carroll
Jon Hensley Architects

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Inspired by a wood-covered bridge spanning the nearby falls, this house springs from a rolling hill. Joeb Moore, AIA, organized it as two L-shaped pieces that lock together to form a living/dining bridge over an open meadow, and then turn to contain a master suite that floats 15 feet in the air. “Look to the right on the bridge, and the hill under you is landscaped with flowers,” Moore says. “To the left is a much more distant view to the Housatonic River and Kent Falls.” That “viewing chamber” idea repeats in cross-section. Where the two volumes lock, they produce a skylit gap on each side of the chimney masses, creating a clear view through the house. Our judges praised the building as a sculptural object that “engages beautifully with the site and topography.” —c.w.
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Sagaponack

BATES MASI ARCHITECTS, SAG HARBOR, N.Y.

Presented with a dense program and pristine setting, Paul Masi, AIA, LEED AP, practiced the art of subtraction in this house, sandwiched between a pond and the Atlantic Ocean. Sections of the long, barnlike building are pared away, establishing a clear formal plan and visual bridges from one side of the site to the other. "As the big idea trickled down, we used CNC and waterjet fabrication to further simplify the design," Masi says. Corian in the kitchen and baths was CNC-milled, and a Cor-Ten retaining wall at the entrance cantilevers upward to become a waterjet-cut handrail.

The jury was impressed with the plan clarity, the geothermal heating and cooling, and the vegetated roofs. One praised it for achieving "simplicity in a very large diagram. It could have gotten out of control, but didn't." —c.w.

Location Sagaponack, N.Y.
Principal in charge Paul Masi, AIA, LEED AP
Project size 8,965 square feet
Construction cost Withheld
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The judges called this preservation of a 1975 Hugh Newell Jacobsen, FAIA, house “the restoration of an icon.” Architects have long revered the 1,990-square-foot residence in Washington, D.C., for its ingenious siting and the simple elegance of its four gabled forms. “Before I even knew I wanted to be an architect, I loved this house,” says Richard Williams, FAIA, whom the current owners hired to preserve the aging building.

The clients asked Williams and project architect Timothy Abrams, AIA, to honor the spirit of the original and to make improvements where needed. Building science has come a long way since the 1970s, so the project team redid the insulation and flashing, and added a rainscreen. The HVAC and electrical systems received a thorough makeover, and the home’s signature triangular windows were upgraded with new high-efficiency glass.

Jacobsen’s staggered floor plan saved the best of the landscape for views, and Williams wasn’t about to tamper with it. But he did want to create more of a relationship between house and site, in line with modern-day preferences. Working with landscape architect Gregg Bleam, Williams and Abrams raised the sloped grade at the master bedroom end of the house using a cast concrete retaining wall. They added a sliding shutter door and a small deck for access to this newly elevated lawn. And Bleam shortened and reconfigured the existing driveway to give more space to the garden.

During the design and construction process, Williams gained even more respect for the original building than before. “This house is the best of what modern architecture can be,” he says. — M.D.
Cutsogeorge Tooman & Allen Architects took great pains to restore the exterior of this stately townhouse on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. "It's incredibly well done," a juror said. "I respect the depth of detailing in it."

Principal Daniel Allen, AIA, and project manager Takushi Yoshida worked from archival photos and sketches gathered by the project's primary architect, Timothy D. Haynes, AIA. The 1901 Beaux-Arts-style house had received an unfortunate top-floor brick addition before its designation as part of a historic district in 1977. Allen and Yoshida returned the top level to its original, flat limestone façade, with a curved balustrade and a sheet-metal cornice. They reclad a four-story bay in raised-panel, zinc-coated copper. And they worked with Haynes to bring the building's envelope up to modern energy efficiency and durability standards without compromising its design integrity. "This was a very faithful restoration," Allen says. — M.D.
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Mark DuBois’s work on this 1950s rancher consisted of recasting the landscape connection and pairing the quiet, closed home with new, open public space. He clad the existing structure, now a bedroom wing, in clear cedar and extended it into the large, lush backyard with a perpendicular glass living pavilion. The material palette of soft grays, greens, and silvers carries from inside to out: aluminum window systems, stone floors and patios, and zinc roof fascia. There’s warmth and texture here, too. In addition to the ipe-topped trellis and deck, the kitchen’s monolithic wood-block wall is handmade with strips of American walnut. Our jury applauded the effort, calling it “an amazing transformation, one that does nice things in a kind of plain way, and stays in the motif of the existing house.” —c.w.
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“Architects often think of buildings as an independent sculptural object that sits in landscape,” says Joel Sanders, AIA. “Our intention was to have the house recede, and what would catch your eye is this white lining that begins inside and goes down the hill.” Built on the solid foundation of a structurally unsound mid-century home, the remodel’s open-plan public zone has a dark shell with folded graphic elements—white concrete floors and countertops and a suspended drywall ceiling—that link the house, landscape, and pool house. Landscape architect Diana Balmori extended the concrete flooring outside as irregular pavers that interlace the landscape and wrap up over the pool house. Landscape architect Diana Balmori extended the concrete flooring outside as irregular pavers that interlace the landscape and wrap up over the pool house. “The stones in the swimming pool were set in the same way as the stone around the living-room fireplace,” she says. Our judges appreciated the “thoughtful way the materials go through the house” and its “appealing complexity and richness.” —c.w.
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Via Verde—The Green Way

DATTNER ARCHITECTS AND GRIMSHAW ARCHITECTS, NEW YORK

Located on a brownfield site in the South Bronx, N.Y., Via Verde bested more than 30 rival proposals in a sustainable public housing design competition sponsored by the AIA New York Chapter and the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development. "In some ways, it was a challenging site, because it's so long and narrow," says Dattner's William Stein, FAIA. He and his design team responded with a long, narrow structure that folds like a paper clip. "The project is organized around a central courtyard, with green roofs stepping up from there," Stein says.

The stepped building shell presents south-facing mounting surfaces for photovoltaic panels, which generate enough electricity to supply the common areas and outside lighting. To promote daylighting and natural ventilation and minimize air conditioning use, most of the 222 units have two exposures, and all have operable windows. An energy-efficient shell, mechanical systems, and lighting—plus rainwater collection and other sustainable features—earned the building a LEED Gold certification. "But we were also interested in social sustainability," says Stein, who notes that the development's 40,000 square feet of open space includes vegetable gardens, the courtyard's playground and amphitheater, and other community gathering places.

The jury admired the "huge project with all this landscape and social space," praising in particular the building's many green features and "dynamic façades." One juror remarked that "the engagement is infectious. I feel like people will grow to love this place." —B.D.S.

Location
Bronx, N.Y.

Principal in charge
William Stein, FAIA

Unit size
795 to 1,376 square feet

Construction cost
$330 per square foot

Sales price
$78,894 to $192,750

Units
222

[Expanded coverage at residentialarchitect.com]
Lake|Flato's task was to find the best use for 19 concrete superstructures spanning three city blocks that were built 15 years ago and then abandoned. “The trend in San Antonio is big, blocky buildings without sequestered space for community,” says David Lake, FAIA, who likened the puzzle to a Rubik’s Cube. “We wanted to make a place with a strong sense of purpose and identity.”

Part of a 350-acre master plan to reinvigorate the downtown and river area, the new compound is a standalone destination for urban living. Concrete, metal, and stucco-clad buildings with varied balcony types give the sense that it was built over time, and big projecting arbors and patios help the buildings meet the street gracefully. They’re ringed with five courtyards, each with its own color and character, for swimming, grilling, and outdoor theater. The multilevel outdoor bridges connecting the units with the garages also supply a bit of theater. “Some people are walking two city blocks from the garage to their unit, so it has to be fun,” Lake says. “There are incredible views of downtown, and people meet and talk on bridges.”

The judges applauded the “smart, strategic regeneration” and the way the landscape is woven in. “The interiors are great, and there’s something modest about it,” said one judge. “They knew exactly how much to do.” —c.w.
The Modules

INTERFACE STUDIO ARCHITECTS, PHILADELPHIA

In designing Temple University student housing for a private developer, Interface Studio found the sweet spot between one-off design and the strengths of modular protocol. “We saw modular construction as a way of navigating the cost structure and making the building greener,” says Brian Phillips, AIA, LEED AP. Stacking the boxes in back-to-back “E” shapes yielded the most square footage and natural light on the perimeter. The building—which achieved LEED for Homes Midrise Gold certification—incorporates ground-floor parking for 38 cars and 100 bicycles and a green roof terrace, part of a stormwater system that reduces runoff by 50 percent. The factory-built model was speedy, too: Construction began in January and students were in by August. “It’s sustainable, and it’s where construction is heading,” one judge said. —c.w.

Location Philadelphia
Principal in charge Brian Phillips, AIA, LEED AP
Project size 0.5 acre
Construction cost $130 per square foot
Rental price $700 per bed
Units 72
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An antidote to the bigger-is-better culture, the 100K Houses take affordability seriously. “Our suspicion is that with environmental awareness, the changing economy, and the return of young people to cities, there’s a need for alternatives to what is typically built,” says Brian Phillips, AIA, LEED AP. Simplicity, redundancy, and creativity were key to making the numbers work. The three models—the 100K/120K House, the Passive House, and the Skinny, all built within a two-block radius—feature flush façades and simple materials such as fiber-cement siding, some of it silk-screened. Interior finishes include plywood, OSB, exposed concrete, and bamboo hardwood.

Operating costs are essential to affordability, too. The design team focused on creating a tight, super-insulated building envelope—using SIPs or double-stud framing—rather than on elaborate mechanical systems. That, plus items such as photovoltaics, solar thermal hot water, and ductless mini-split heating and cooling helped the 100K homes achieve LEED Platinum certification.

“There are so many sustainable features, and it looks really livable,” a judge commented. “It’s a modern prototype that’s aiming to be affordable.” The concept is ideal for Philadelphia, which has thousands of vacant lots. But it’s also being exported to other cities such as Chicago and Miami. “We’re experimenting with wood and metal exteriors and more diverse floor plans,” Phillips says. —c.w.
In designing this test house, which is also his family home, architect Jörg Rügemer, Assoc. AIA, set the bar extremely high—and moderately low. "We wanted to achieve the highest possible energy-efficiency goals at market-rate cost," he explains. Rügemer, who teaches sustainable architecture at the University of Utah, was on familiar ground. Combining Passive House guidelines, exhaustive performance modeling, and creative detailing, he produced an extraordinary house on the most ordinary of budgets.

R-values of 45, 60, and 80 (for the floor slab, walls, and roof, respectively) and a full wrap of rigid foam insulation to eliminate thermal bridging keep the house warm in winter, with minimal energy inputs beyond passive solar gain. Located in ski country at 7,000 feet above sea level, the house costs less than $300 per year to heat and cool. Spare interior detailing furthers both economic and aesthetic programs. "Cool," is how one juror responded. "I'd live there." —B.D.S.
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Phase one of this Seattle campus housing project by Mahlum entailed an unusually complex program. Not only was the firm charged with supplying shelter and amenities for 1,650 University of Washington students, it also had to establish a strong connection between the project and its surrounding neighborhood. "The site is removed from the rest of the campus; it's more in the city," says principal Anne Schopf, FAIA. Additionally, Mahlum needed to consider how students would travel to the main campus and how to ensure their security throughout the day and night. And it had to save a massive elm tree on the site.

Ultimately, that tree served as the heart of the project, which includes three residence halls and two apartment buildings. "The tree creates the 'there' there," Schopf says. "It's the center of gravity for the whole precinct." It occupies a park that ties together the five structures and can be easily accessed by local residents. Ground-level retail spaces—a restaurant, grocery store, and café—provide another overlap of public and private, and add "eyes on the street" to enhance pedestrian safety.

For the buildings themselves, Mahlum made the most of inexpensive materials like vinyl windows, oversized brick, and perforated metal. "We came up with the idea of shifting windows, so each room is slightly different even though there are only three or four window types," Schopf says. Tight envelopes limit energy use. "A great materials palette and interesting fenestration," said one judge. "It's a handsome project." — M.D.
When the Kansas City, Mo., firm El Dorado designed this 48-bed bunkhouse project for a local Girl Scout camp, they faced an especially tight budget. So they tried to use as many existing resources as possible, placing the two bunkhouses close to a main road to tap into city utilities. The site also adjoins the camp’s longtime dining hall, where many of the girls’ activities take place. “We tried to create a little community of buildings,” says principal Douglas Stockman, AIA, whose own daughter is a Girl Scout.

Inexpensive materials, deployed cleverly, dress up the project’s basic forms. “I love it because of the simplicity and color,” said one judge. Alternating shades of corrugated metal siding contrast with cement-board panels painted the bright hues of Girl Scout cookie boxes. Interior light fixtures came from a designer (and former Girl Scout) found on Etsy.com. And the bunk beds were designed and built by students in a Kansas State University studio, taught by Stockman and fellow El Dorado principal David Dowell, AIA. — M.D.
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Building on the momentum generated by its inaugural year, ECOHOME's Vision 2020 initiative continues in 2013 to explore sustainability metrics, milestones and opportunities that strengthen the foundation of our industry and move it forward.

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Research, analysis, and insights across eight key topic areas chaired by some of the industry's leading innovators, experts, and thought leaders!

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Three hundred and twenty square feet isn’t much of a footprint, even for a New York City apartment. But this Upper West Side walk-up offered other compensations. “It had this great, vertical sense of space,” says architect Scott Specht, AIA. Stripping out an “unusable, odd” interior, Specht and partner Louise Harpman shaped the resulting volume into a bright, super-efficient pied-à-terre.

Tansu-inspired staircases rise from the living area to a cantilevered sleeping loft, and then to a green roof terrace, which spills daylight into the spaces below. “It has a mini-Guggenheim-ish thing going on,” Specht says. “It sort of spirals.” To save space, he says, “there are no closets. All the storage is under the stairs and in built-in cabinets.” The jury deemed the project not only “elegantly done,” but also a harbinger of things to come. Said one juror, “We’re all headed toward smaller urban living spaces.” —B.D.S.
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**Garden Gateway**

JOHN GRABLE ARCHITECTS, SAN ANTONIO

Garden Gateway straddles a fence line on the grounds of a 273-acre family ranch compound, occupying its liminal position with a graceful authority that belies its 96-square-foot size. Both a gateway to the family's garden and a tool shed, the building combines materials from the farm and oil patch to produce what architect John Grable, FAIA, calls “an industrial version of Mother Earth.” One juror said, “I love that the architect paid so much attention to something that ‘unimportant.’ It’s a lesson that there’s nothing too small to be detailed attentively.” —B.D.S.

**Location** Sisterdale, Texas  
**Principal in charge** John Grable, FAIA  
**Project size** 96 square feet  
**Construction cost** $50 per square foot

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**The Shed**

HUFFT PROJECTS, KANSAS CITY, MO.

“Simple.” “Direct.” “Minimal.” “Beautifully proportioned.” The jury’s enthusiasm for The Shed was as clear and straightforward as the building itself, which serves as a landscape barn for Curved House (see page 88). To speed construction, architect Matthew Hufft’s bolt-together steel framing system consists of sections small enough for a single person to handle. “We made it in our shop in Kansas City, put it on a truck, and assembled it in about a week’s time,” Hufft says. An oak-planked rainscreen shell and polycarbonate-clad end walls yield a structure one judge called “evocative of an agricultural building, without being imitative.” —B.D.S.

**Location** Springfield, Mo.  
**Principal in charge** Matthew Hufft, AIA, LEED AP  
**Project size** 640 square feet  
**Construction cost** Withheld
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Newton House
NADAAA, BOSTON

This pool house knows its place. Positioned along the property's edge, the glassy western façade frames a viewing garden. But seen from the main house, the building is still and quiet, its thin cedar rainscreen slung like curtains. Nader Tehrani designed it as a series of filters and frames through which to enjoy the landscape.

The materials are about transparency and modernity, he says. “The wood graining is a contrast to the neo-Georgian main house and references the palette of flora in the garden.” The wall facing the house contains a simple routed cutout with a window behind it, so swimmers can see who's coming, but those approaching can't look in. Stainless steel cabling in front of the glass wall will eventually support a planted screen that also filters views from outside in. The judges applauded, calling the building simply beautiful. —c.w.

Location Newton, Mass.
Principal in charge Nader Tehrani
Project size 940 square feet
Construction cost $390 per square foot
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**Curved House**

**HUFFT PROJECTS, KANSAS CITY, MO.**

Curved House isn't curved, per se, explains architect Matthew Hufft, AIA, LEED AP. “It’s really this modern box,” he says. But subtle radii appear throughout, most prominently in the brick walls that mark the building's south and west façades. The gray/black brick waves slip behind ipe-sided walls, cupping the entrances to the main house and cabana on their inside curves and building undulant shadows on their outer surfaces. The jury praised the house as a whole for “how it explores the manipulation of forms,” calling this detail in particular “really lovely.” —B.D.S.

**Location** Springfield, Mo.
**Principal in charge** Matthew Hufft, AIA, LEED AP
**Project size** 7,800 square feet
**Construction cost** Withheld

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**235 Van Buren**

**PERKINS+WILL, CHICAGO**

This residential tower turns a box into three-dimensional sculpture. The freeway-facing southern façade features staccato balconies protruding from a concrete frame, a response to the adjacent taller buildings and the highway’s energy. “It makes a kinetic billboard, a Mondrian-like façade that picks up the movement of traffic,” says Ralph Johnson, FAIA. The northern side, viewed from a shorter distance, is more intimate in scale, and its flush grid of inset balconies reflects the skeleton-expressed buildings of the Chicago school of architecture. To save on exterior wall costs, the units are deep, with rear bedrooms borrowing light from the loftlike living spaces.

“The building changes from different angles,” a judge said appreciatively. “It’s a big gesture, something Chicago is good at.” —c.w.

**Location** Chicago
**Principal in charge** Ralph Johnson, FAIA
**Project size** 522 to 2,272 square feet
**Construction cost** Withheld
**Sales price** $199,999 to $439,900
**Units** 714

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How do you transfer the social sensibility of an African village to urban hillside development? Architecture students at the University of Arkansas teamed up with the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology to deliver a convivial scheme that features diagonal pedestrian roads, flexible building types, agricultural fields, and energy generation from waste management.

The site was specific. But the proposal, presented to the Ministry of Infrastructure in Kigali, is replicable and addresses Rwanda's hilly topography, limited resources, and rapid urbanization. "They're amazing farmers, with co-ops and handicraft skills," says Stephen Luoni, Assoc. AIA, director of the University of Arkansas Community Design Center. "The people writing the checks for housing are mostly western developers and NGOs, and their vision of prosperity is the American suburban house. This is really a policy document for Rwandans so they'll know what to ask for."

The 4-meter planning modules can be stacked three stories for one extended family or divided into living and working flats. Open stairways, balconies, and plazas create the social and spatial porosity that defines the village aesthetic. And with no mechanical systems to moderate the hot climate, it is important that the units breathe.

This complex project "generated a pattern for the community in response to the landscape and other forces," a judge said. "It speaks to the interests of a lot of people coming out of school right now." —c.w.

Location
Kigali, Rwanda

Principals in charge
Stephen Luoni, Assoc. AIA, University of Arkansas Community Design Center; Peter Rich, FAIA, Peter Rich Architects, Johannesburg, South Africa; Timothy Hall, Kigali Institute of Science and Technology, Kigali, Rwanda

Unit size 650 to 1,000 square feet

Construction cost N/A

Units 1,600

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Four Eyes House
EDWARD OGOSTA ARCHITECTURE, CULVER CITY, CALIF.

This proposed weekend retreat responds to an extraordinary setting—California's Coachella Desert—by isolating views in space and time. Each of the four bedrooms caps a three-story tower which is oriented, periscopelike, toward a prospect: the sunrise, mountains in the afternoon, distant city lights, the night sky. "The main floor," says architect Edward Ogosta, AIA, LEED AP, "becomes this field that connects the towers." The jury noted the concept's clarity and power. "I like the composition of very simple forms," said one judge. "It engages the landscape in a nice, sculptural way. You want to be there." —B.D.S.

Location Coachella Valley, Calif.
Principal in charge Edward Ogosta, AIA, LEED AP
Project size 3,400 square feet
Construction cost N/A

MERIT ON THE BOARDS

Make It Right
BROOKS + SCARPA ARCHITECTS, LOS ANGELES

Brooks + Scarpa Architects designed this single-family house as well as a duplex (see our online slideshow) as prototypes for the Make It Right foundation's rebuilding project in the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans. The judges admired the buildings' commonsense handling of local climate and flooding issues. "It's a response to how to stay cool in the summer in New Orleans," one juror said. Principal Lawrence Scarpa, FAIA, says the homes' dual skins, made from recycled wood pallets and cement board, "provide a little bit of protection for the building and also regulate the temperature that hits it." —M.D.

Location New Orleans
Principal in charge Lawrence Scarpa, FAIA
Project size 1,250 square feet (single-family)
Construction cost $120 per square foot (est.)
Sales price $150,000
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*Issue Mailed in Regional Editions
With this 99-unit adaptive reuse project, David Hacin, FAIA, set out to announce the rebirth of an entire neighborhood. Located in Boston's historic Fort Point district, the building combines two turn-of-the-century woolen warehouse façades, a compatible, contemporary infill façade, and three new boldly modern floors that step back from the roof's cornice line. “It was necessary to add square footage to make it [economically] viable, but we also wanted you to recognize that something had changed here,” explains Hacin, who designed the copper-clad upper floors to be more visible from a distance than from nearby.

“The new section fits with the restored buildings, but it doesn’t copy them,” said one judge. “It’s respectful, and super skillful.” The jury was equally impressed with the building's interiors, calling them “clean, and really consistent with the rest of the project. The architects solved a complicated problem really, really well.” —B.D.S.

Location Boston
Principal in charge David Hacin, FAIA
Unit size 580 to 2,300 square feet
Construction cost $250 per square foot
Sales price $450 to $800 per square foot
Units 99