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## Texas Architect

### Articles

- 5**  
Editor's Note
- 7**  
Final Draft
- 12**  
News
- 16**  
Calendar
- 18**  
Recognition
- 24**  
Paperwork
- 26**  
Recollections of a Lifelong Ham  
*Dave Braden, FAIA*

- 67**  
In the Light with Charles K. Thompson, FAIA
- 72**  
Portfolio  
*Interiors*
- 77**  
Marketplace
- 80**  
Backpage

### Featured Projects

- 32**  
Sunday House  
*John Grable Architects*  
*Dror Baldinger, AIA*
- 40**  
Water, Bridges, and Dreams  
*Bing Thom with Bennett Benner Pettit*  
*Joe Self, AIA*
- 48**  
Form Follows Market  
*Pickard Chilton with Kendall/Heaton Associates*  
*Filo Castore, AIA*

- 54**  
Live Large, Think Big  
*BOKA Powell with 5G Studio Collaborative*  
*Michael Friebele, Assoc. AIA*
- 60**  
Bungalo Modern  
*KRDB*  
*Canan Yetmen*

### More Online

- [texasarchitects.org](http://texasarchitects.org)
- Wilson Announces Candidacy
- Texas Firms among AIA COTE Award Winners

# 62 03

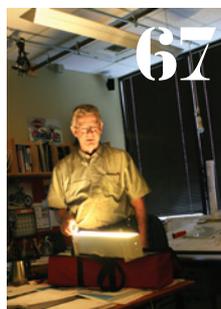
### Open House



### Urban Design



### In the Light



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## Design and Full Circles

Observations from a former *Texas Architect* editor who is back for a while as a guest

by Larry Paul Fuller

First things first. Regular readers of this magazine will notice that the name attached to this column is not the same as the one appearing here for almost 12 years now. Indeed, the tenure of Stephen Sharpe as editor of *Texas Architect* has come to an end — as even good things must do. But it is abundantly clear that his legacy will endure. No single individual deserves more credit than Stephen for the publication's ascendancy to its current stature as an illuminating record of architecture in Texas, and a compelling voice for the architectural profession.

As I assume the role of guest editor during the search for Stephen's replacement, I not only wish him well, but I thank him for his help in conceiving the content of this May/June edition on urban design. And I encourage readers to note his farewell remarks in "The Big Idea" on the following spread.

Meanwhile, it seems right to observe that the "Urban Design" label for this issue may imply a certain focus, a type of content, that — for the most part — is neither intended nor included here. Our primary features do not deal with urban design per se, as typified by comprehensive plans for large swaths of urban environment. Rather, we discuss the design of four different works of architecture that, by virtue of where they are, play important roles in a broader urban context. Fort Worth campus as gateway to downtown. Houston high-rise as CBD catalyst. Large Dallas hotel as civic anchor. And boutique Austin hotel as contextual gem.

All these projects make for interesting discussion in conventional architectural terms that capture how a building looks — its image. But they also underscore the potential for a richer design dialogue that goes beyond image. Ideally

*It is this richer form of design dialogue that the magazine aspires to embody more completely in future editions.*

such discussion would be based on the premise that design properly considers a wider range of issues — such as the impact of buildings on their communities and their users; effectiveness in meeting client goals; sustainability and energy efficiency; and the sheer appropriateness of a building's visual character. It is this richer form of design dialogue that the magazine aspires to embody more completely in future editions.

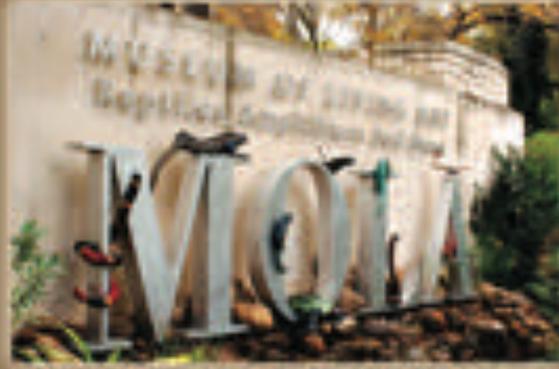
On a personal note, it was March of 1985 when — after a 12-year stint as editor of *Texas Architect* — my name last appeared on this editor's page. Even as I bade farewell to pursue other paths, I believed that elevating architecture to a more prominent level of public discussion was a worthy ambition. And after all those years, I still do.



*Larry Paul Fuller cradles a copy of the issue that marked his farewell as a 12-year editor of *Texas Architect* in 1985. His current engagement as guest editor of the magazine brings him back, not only to the present-day home of his first employer, but to the recent headquarters of *fd2s inc.* — the environmental graphic design firm in which he remains a founding principal.*



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## The Big Idea

Parting reflections and a fond farewell from TA's most recent long-term editor

by Stephen Sharpe, Hon. AIA

*Stephen Sharpe, Hon. AIA, has left the editorship of Texas Architect after an extended period of service that began in June, 2000.*



PHOTO BY PATRICK WONG

*“Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood.” – Daniel Burnham (1846-1912)*

After almost 12 years at the helm of *Texas Architect*, I see even more clearly the truth in Burnham’s oft-quoted assertion. Having worked so long with architects on articles about topics important to them, I understand the power of the big idea. That’s what drives the project, the impetus that transforms the concept into physical reality. Big ideas, I’ve learned, are essential to the architect. So for more than a decade I’ve seen my job as helping architects explain those big ideas, to make them accessible to a broad audience of design-savvy readers.

My big idea for *Texas Architect* throughout my tenure has been to create a forum for an open dialogue among design professionals. To accomplish that, I’ve reached out to architects and like-minded individuals around the state to take assignments rather than relying on the magazine’s limited editorial staff or hiring journalists to produce the articles. For each project or news story or essay, I’ve taken care in choosing writers based on their experience with a specific building type or knowledge of a certain topic. (Not infrequently, would-be writers proposed to submit an article about something that especially interested them. However, that submission often never materialized; but if they followed through, their article usually made it into print.) Part of the fun was finding the right place for all those separate pieces. The ideal edition of *Texas Architect*, in my opinion, provided a multi-dimensional portrait of the architecture profession as practiced in the state at that time.

Bringing together those various voices into harmony required a little editorial finesse, but the outcome typically yielded a successful issue. Of course, that success also depended on high-quality photography, the expertise of *TA*’s art director — three cheers for Julie Pizzo! — and all the daily staff support that makes a magazine possible. More often than not, the big idea worked out.

**For me, this edition** brings that work to an end. I’ve been lucky to have this extended opportunity to serve as the editor of *Texas Architect*, easily the most demanding of my career but at the same time the most gratifying. Now it’s time for someone else to grapple with the challenges that come with the position and to enjoy the many rewards of a job well done.

Looking back, I can’t help but feel immense pride in the success *Texas Architect* has achieved during my stint as its editor. *Texas Architect* has long been regarded as one of the best publications of its type. Ultimately, it’s the members of the Texas Society of Architects — you, dear reader — who deserve the accolades for supporting *Texas Architect* through their dues, which helps keep *TA* financially sound (with an assist from

*That’s what drives the project, the impetus that transforms the concept into physical reality. Big ideas, I’ve learned, are essential to the architect.*

its advertisers and non-member subscribers) and editorially independent to articulate those big ideas to as large an audience as possible.

**Before I sign off** for the last time, I’d like to express my deep appreciation to the many volunteers who have helped make *Texas Architect* much more than just an association magazine. Those include the members of the Publications Committee, *TA*’s contributing editors, and others who have written articles for nothing more in return than a byline. I’ve enjoyed having such a fount of knowledge and experience to draw from as I planned my 71 issues.

I also wish to thank Larry Paul Fuller, who was invited to serve as guest editor of this edition and to bridge the gap during the search for *Texas Architect*’s next editor. As the former editor of *TA* (1973 to 1985), Larry fully understands the magazine, its readership, and the magic necessary to convey the big idea.

# Contributors



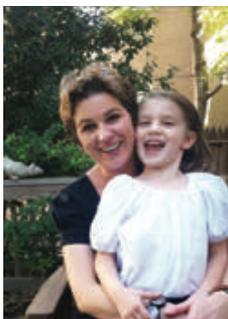
**Dror Baldinger, AIA** is a partner at the San Antonio firm Marmon Mok. When not contemplating the brickness of the brick, he may be found photographing great architecture and delicate flowers, serving as vice president of the Baldinger family, or anguishing over the brilliance of the Arsenal Football Club. Read his residential feature on page 32.



**Joe Self, AIA** and partner Tracy Self host “Design Talk,” a monthly program at the Fort Worth Center for Architecture, where professionals present and discuss design topics in laymen’s terms for the general public. They welcome speaker proposals to promote lively, face-to-face discussion about design with members of the community. See his article on the Tarrant County College East Campus, page 40.



**Bryce Weigand, FAIA** practices architecture in Dallas, cowboy-ing at the Zephyr Bar W at Buffalo Ranch outside of Oakwood, and drawing anytime, everywhere. He and his wife Trish will be drawing big, granite boulders on the coast of Maine this summer. Weigand helps lead the institutional work at Good Fulton & Farrell. See “Backpage,” page 80.



**Canan Yetmen** is an enthusiastic architectural marketer and nocturnal novelist, when she’s not writing about stellar buildings such as Austin’s new Heywood Hotel (page 60). Her first book of fiction is a World War II mystery that features art thieves, Nazis, and an architect, of course.



**Michael Friebele, Assoc. AIA** is a graduate of Kansas State University and practices with Merriman Associates Architects in Dallas. His passion for his hometown of St. Louis drives his architectural mandate for thorough conceptual thought and intervention in the urban context. He is currently working on an international competition for redeveloping the site of Pruitt Igoe. Friebele writes about the Omni Dallas Convention Center Hotel beginning on page 54.

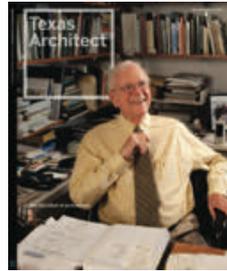
**Filo Castore, AIA** has roots that sprout from the hilly landscape of Tuscany, Italy, from which he hails. Although downtown Florence is devoid of innovative high-rises like the BG Group Place featured on page 48, the Renaissance Masters have made an indelible mark on his professional career. Since he moved to Houston 16 years ago, he has been striving to create an interdisciplinary and collaborative mindset to reaffirm the central role of the architect as a master builder and community leader to create effective places and sustainable communities. Nowadays, in lieu of the rolling Chianti landscape, Filo seeks inspiration in the vast majesty of the American West. ■



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**January/February, page 11:**

An account of an AIA Lower Rio Grande Valley tour of residential architecture in Brownsville incorrectly identified one of the homeowners of the restored Pitt House — Fernando R. Ballí — as an engineer. In reality, Ballí is an intern architect and contractor. In the same account, the Monterey-style Lightner House of 1936 on Palm Boulevard was attributed to the prolific Valley architect R. Newell Waters, although it was actually designed by Miami architect Russell T. Pancoast (1899-1972) and is his only known work in Texas.



**March/April, page 14:**

In a listing of the 2011 AIA San Antonio design award recipients, the "Sustainability Commendation" should have been attributed to The University of Pennsylvania Morris Arboretum Horticulture Center, by Overland Partners Architects. ■



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**Margaret Hunt Hill Opens to Traffic**

by Michael Malone, AIA

On March 29 the first cars rolled across the long-awaited Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge in Dallas. Designed by Spanish architect and engineer Santiago Calatrava, the bridge joins Reunion Tower and Pegasus as a standout on the icon-heavy Dallas skyline. It is named for the matriarch of the Hunt family which, through Hunt Petroleum, donated \$12 million to the Trinity River Corridor Project in 2005.

Setting a stake in the ground for the whole project — an ambitious plan for improvements throughout a 20-mile river corridor — the bridge is perhaps the most visible and tantalizing suggestion of just what the potential of the project is for the city. Calatrava's design is the most visible

*For those lacking opportunity to experience other Calatrava-designed bridges and buildings, the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge does not disappoint.*

component undertaken and realized to date within the overall plan for the reimagined and reclaimed river. Ultimately, the ambitious project seeks to combine recovery of the Trinity River with recreational access and cultural amenities.

First approved by Dallas voters in 1998, the effort has moved forward in a fitful manner marked by controversies over the project's programming, its overall cost, and a proposed toll road. With the bridge opening, the project should not only get a fresh look, but one that



*Images of Dallas' Calatrava-designed Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge. The bridge—a blend of art and engineering—is part of the Trinity River Corridor Project, which was approved by Dallas voters in 1998 and seeks to improve a 20-mile stretch of the river. A reported 40,000 people attended the opening weekend celebrations in March.*

sets the tone for the quality and thoughtfulness of all that comes after. Trinity Trust Director Gail Thomas, Honorary TSA, believes the bridge is the first real symbol of Dallas as a 21st century city. The reclamation of the Trinity as an amenity — and as the symbolic heart of Dallas through access to the river and its adjacent 6,000-acre Trinity Forest — positions the Metroplex as an exceptional environment for its citizens.

**The gala celebration** and ceremonial lighting of the bridge, which took place during the weekend of March 2-4 prior to the opening for traffic on the 29th, included a street fair on the bridge, a 5K run, fireworks, and parties. A reported 40,000 people attended and walked on the bridge during the celebrations.

Whatever the outcome of the rest of the Trinity Project, the bridge itself is stunning. For those lacking opportunity to experience other Calatrava-designed bridges and buildings, the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge does not disappoint. It is a tour de force blending of art and engineer-

ing. Despite the size of the bridge, it is slender and graceful, dramatic and assertive, sparsely elegant, yet not flashy. Calatrava shows he is an accomplished artist and gives the city a beautiful reminder of just how special the discipline of bridge design once was. Before reinforced concrete technology gave us the flat, featureless highway bridge that is little more than an extension of the road bed, engineers gave cities the likes of the Brooklyn Bridge and Golden Gate. These were civic monuments that served as infrastructure and a celebratory demarcation between places once separate, now formally joined. The original Trinity Project proposed three such signature bridges, ostensibly designed by Calatrava, but the other two are now either in question or envisioned at a reduced scale. The Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge will serve as a reminder of what dramatic entrances to Dallas these bridges could have provided. ■

Michael Malone, AIA, is the founding principal of Michael Malone Architects in Dallas.

PHOTOS COURTESY CRAIG D. BLACKMON, FAIA; MICHAEL LYON

## Nine Historic Places Selected for Annual “Most Endangered” List

by Texas Architect Staff

Preservation Texas, Inc., a statewide partner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, has released its ninth annual list of “Texas’ Most Endangered Historic Places.” Of the nine sites listed, three are discussed below as having the potential for becoming important catalysts for economic development in their communities if they can be saved.

### Magnolia Hotel

203 S. Crockett Street, Seguin, Guadalupe County  
Established in 1838 and considered one of Texas’ oldest cities, Seguin was once home to as many as 90 limecrete buildings constructed of local gravel. The Magnolia Hotel — which opened in Seguin as early as 1847 to serve stagecoach travelers en route to San Antonio — is one of about 20 of these early concrete structures to survive in Seguin.

The hotel, which also has a two-story frame addition constructed by 1876, was converted to small apartments for oil field workers during the oil boom of the 1930s. The Magnolia is currently vacant and susceptible to vandalism and arson. Recent efforts have restored Seguin’s historic Texas Theatre and have motivated private investment in historic downtown buildings, although a new purpose for the Magnolia remains a formidable challenge and financial burden for its owners.

### Panhandle Inn

301 Main Street, Panhandle, Carson County  
Designed by Amarillo architect E.F. Rittenberry and financed by General Ernest O. Thompson, an acknowledged leader in petroleum conservation, the Panhandle Inn served business travelers associated with the oil, gas, and cattle industries in the mid-1920s and 1930s. Its unique pueblo revival-style architecture added to the hotel’s prominence as a place to meet and do business during the oil boom. The 20,000 square foot hotel also housed businesses such as a drug store, café, and barbershop.

The venerable establishment closed in 1972 and has not been occupied since then despite efforts to reopen it. The hotel was donated in 2010 to the Panhandle Inn Foundation, which has completed an extensive clean-up and seeks to raise awareness and support for its preservation.



### Ritz Theatre

715 North Chaparral Street, Corpus Christi, Nueces County  
During its best years since opening in 1929, the Ritz Theatre was a rich source of culture, music,

*Of the nine sites listed, three are discussed as having the potential for becoming important catalysts for economic development in their communities if they can be saved.*

and entertainment for Corpus Christi, operating variously as a first-rate vaudeville house and movie theatre, a community theatre space with a luxurious interior, and a rock-concert venue for teenagers.

The Ritz has been closed for more than 20 years and has seriously deteriorated due to neglect and vandalism. The ceiling, once painted and illuminated like a night sky, is now crumbling with visible signs of mold, and water has destroyed several rows of seating. Supporters of the Ritz seek to ensure the preservation of



**Clockwise from top left**  
*Magnolia Hotel, Seguin;*  
*Ritz Theatre, Corpus Christi;*  
*Panhandle Inn, Panhandle.*

a significant example of 1920s classical movie palace architecture while helping to revitalize a struggling downtown.

The other sites selected for this year’s list are:

- **Kaufman County Poor Farm**  
Texas Highway 34 and FM 1388, Kaufman, Kaufman County
- **Lewis Railroad Hotel**  
500 W. Columbia Street, San Augustine, San Augustine County
- **Moveable Jail Cell**  
San Marcos Academy, 2801 Ranch Road 12, San Marcos, Hays County (temporary location)
- **William Pfluger House**  
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- **Spettel Riverside House**  
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## Conference Emphasizes Practice in the Hinterlands

By Stephen Sharpe, Hon. AIA

For two days in February, a group of designers gathered in Midland to consider the challenges of producing top-flight architecture in a place far removed from the state's larger urban areas. The event, dubbed "Architecture in the Hinterlands," included an address by acclaimed Canadian architect Brian MacKay-Lyons that featured his work in remote Nova Scotia.

**Organized by the Design Committee** of the Texas Society of Architects, the gathering also celebrated the residential design of Frank Welch, FAIA, who practiced in Midland through the 1960s until the early '80s.

Welch, still practicing at age 85, attended the "Hinterlands" conference and personally led tours of four houses he designed during his mid-career tenure in Midland before moving his practice to Dallas. During a panel discussion that centered on his work, Welch was joined by long-time client, John Dorn, who hired the architect in the late '60s to design a no-frills retreat for his family in the rugged hills of far West Texas. A restrained construction of timber and native stone, it became known as "The Birthday," a title derived from temporary shelters crudely assembled by local sheepherders that they named in honor of that day's patron saint. Although that specific building was not on the list of tour destinations, the conferees visited the Welch-designed

residence in Midland where Dorn and his family once lived.

**The conference attracted** 32 architects from Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico, as well as several emerging professionals working in Midland. Scheduled activities began in the early afternoon of Feb. 17 and continued through the following day, with AIA continuing education learning units earned for the various sessions. Thanks largely to the volunteer efforts of two Design Committee members – Michael Malone, AIA, of Dallas, and Mark T. Wellen, AIA, of Midland – the conference is seen as the initial offering of what may turn out to be an annual event.

On the first day, Edward Bosley, an architectural historian who serves as the director of the Gamble House in Pasadena, Calif., set an appropriate tone for the "hinterlands" theme with his presentation on the work of brothers Charles and Henry Greene. The firm of Greene & Greene faced numerous challenges at the turn of the 20th century in the cultural backwater of Pasadena, situated amid the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains and relatively isolated from the growing metropolis of Los Angeles located about 10 miles to the southwest. As detailed by Bosley, the Greenes' professional challenges – an unskilled labor force and little local precedent for extraordinary architecture, among others – mirror those overcome by some architects practicing in out-of-the-way places such as Midland.

Speaking on the second day, MacKay-Lyons led attendees on a virtual tour of his small firm's

architectural output in and around Halifax, the capital of Nova Scotia. Each summer, an influx of part-time residents swells the island population beyond its usual total of just over 400,000, and these warm-weather inhabitants form the

*Welch, still practicing at age 85, attended the conference and personally led tours of four houses he designed in Midland.*

bulk of the clientele of MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects. Showing images of the firm's residential design work, MacKay-Lyons described the material culture – embodied in regional archetypes of boat sheds and farm structures – in the maritime provinces as the "amniotic fluid" that surrounds him and his colleagues.

Later in the day, Brantley Hightower, AIA, of San Antonio, delighted attendees with his talk on the historic county courthouses of central Texas. Through his own renderings and photographs, Hightower illustrated the design metamorphosis of those public buildings from the late 19th century through the mid-20th century.

As a prologue to the afternoon tours of three Welch-designed houses, the audience was treated to an overview of Welch's work by his former employee, Mark Wellen, now a principal of Rhotenberry Wellen Architects in Midland. His presentation included photos and plans representing a broad swath of Welch's work over a long career that continues to this day. ■



### From left to right

*Rhonda and Lynn Durham outside their Midland home with Frank Welch, FAIA; the residence was originally designed for Lynn's parents. "Architecture in the Hinterlands" attendees tour the Durham residence with Welch as their guide.*

## Speakers Announced for Texas Society of Architects' 73rd Convention

by *Texas Architect Staff*

The Texas Society of Architects 2012 Annual Convention and Design Expo, October 18-20, in Austin, presents two distinguished keynote speakers who will examine the role of design in the context of the convention's theme, "Influence." One is an activist and innovator who helped create the High Line — a public park built atop an abandoned, elevated rail line in New York; the other is the award-winning host and radio producer of *99% Invisible*. Attend the convention to hear the unique perspectives of Robert Hammond and Roman Mars.

**The High Line**, a new public park atop an elevated freight rail structure on Manhattan's west side, is among the most innovative urban reclamation projects in memory. Robert Hammond will share the story of how two young citizens with no prior experience in planning and development collaborated with their neighbors, elected officials, artists, local business owners, and leaders of burgeoning movements in horticulture and landscape architecture to create a park celebrated worldwide as a model for creatively designed, socially vibrant, and ecologically sound public space.

Hammond is co-founder and co-executive director of Friends of the High Line, the non-profit conservancy that manages the High Line. He co-founded the conservancy with Joshua David in 1999, and together they worked with the City of New York to save the High Line from demolition. Friends of the High Line has raised over \$170 million in public and private funding and manages the park in partnership with New York City's Department of Parks & Recreation.

Before the High Line, Hammond helped start several businesses and consulted with non-profit organizations. In 2010, he was awarded a Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome, as well as the Rockefeller Foundation's Jane Jacobs Medal for New Ideas and Activism. He is a self-taught artist and served as an ex-officio member of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Board of Trustees. Hammond graduated from Princeton University in 1993.

**Roman Mars** is host and producer of *99% Invisible*, a radio show about design and architecture. With nearly two million downloads, the *99% Invisible* podcast recently reached number two in

the iTunes rankings for all podcasts, as well as number one in both the Arts and the Design categories. Mars' work has been heard on *Radiolab*, *Morning Edition*, *The Story*, *Weekend America*, and *Resound*. He is also the host, producer, and program director of *Public Radio Remix* from PRX, a 24-hour, experimental public radio story stream broadcast on XM 123 and public radio stations across the country.

"Awareness of design is at an all-time high," says Mars. "People are now encouraged to hold strong opinions about the font on a movie poster, or the feel of a smart phone, or the intuitiveness of an email program. Certain people even broadcast these opinions to define themselves to the outside world. This can clearly go too far, but tapping into this awareness of the built world is something that all designers and architects can use to convey the importance of what it is they do and the problems they are tasked to solve."

He continues, "Whereas consumers are invited to have opinions about the products of graphic and industrial design, discussions about architecture often rely heavily on unnecessary jargon that distances the average person from the art form where they literally live and breathe. It doesn't have to be so. I don't think the answer lies in educating the public about history and theory. I think it's up to the design professions to learn how to inspire mindfulness and wonder in all the things that surround us."

Join the Texas Society of Architects at the Austin Convention Center on October 19 to hear Roman Mars (2:15 to 3:30 pm) and Robert Hammond (9:30 to 10:45 am) give keynote addresses. Read more at [texasarchitects.org](http://texasarchitects.org). ■



**Above** Robert Hammond, co-founder of Friends of the High Line. An aerial view of the elevated park in New York.

**Right** Roman Mars, host and producer of radio show *99% Invisible*.



## Calendar

### Students' Museum Concepts at ARCH

Thru May 11

[www.aiahouston.org/mgmc](http://www.aiahouston.org/mgmc)

The Michael G. Meyers Student Design & Scholarship Competition is an annual event organized by AIA Houston. This year's contest invited area high school students to design a new museum for a site across from the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, with local architects meeting with students periodically over



the spring semester to critique their work. An awards ceremony was held on April 27 and the designs are on display at the Architecture Center Houston.

### Design Connects: AIA National Convention

May 17-19

[www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org)

The American Institute of Architects National Convention and Design Exposition, May 17-19, in Washington, D.C., looks to the architect's role in the past, present, and future in a stimulating line-up of general sessions. Among the speakers — a recipient of two Pulitzer Prizes, an architect who currently serves as a Cabinet Secretary, and a special tribute honoring the architects involved in the rebuilding and memorials following September 11.

### Deadlines for Texas Architects Awards Programs

June 1 & 8

[www.texasarchitects.org](http://www.texasarchitects.org)

June 1 is the deadline for the Texas Society of Architects 2012 Honor Awards program. The annual awards recognize exceptional members, firms, individuals, and organizations for their outstanding achievements in support of the profession of architecture, the built environment, and the quality of life in Texas.

June 8 is the deadline for entries into the 2012 Studio Awards program. Entries may be submitted by TBAE-registered architects, Texas Architects Associate/Intern members, and students and faculty of any accredited architectural program in Texas. Winners will be highlighted in the Nov/Dec edition of *Texas Architect* and recognized during an awards ceremony at the Texas Society of Architects Convention in Austin, Oct. 18-20. ■

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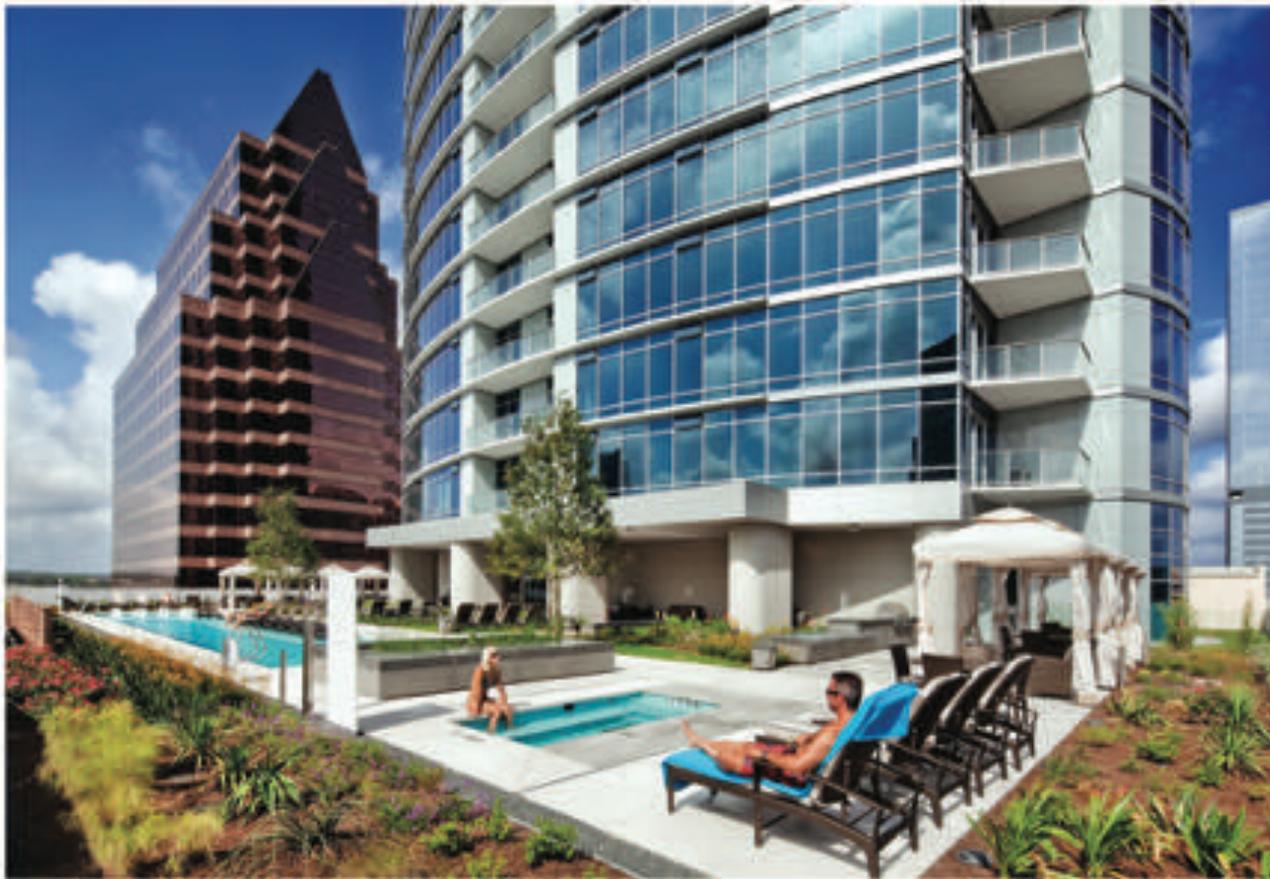
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# Recognition



## AIA Houston Design Awards

AIA Houston's 2012 design awards competition resulted in recognition for 21 projects in eight categories out of a total of 127 entries. Eligibility was limited to projects completed within the last five years and located within the Houston metropolitan area or designed by an architect working in the Houston metropolitan area.

Serving as this year's jurors were: Craig Scott, IwamotoScott, San Francisco; Susan S. Szenasy, Editor in Chief, *Metropolis* magazine, New York; and Jon Pickard, Pickard Chilton, New Haven, Connecticut. ■

### Architecture over 50,000 sf

#### 1 Houston Ballet Center for Dance

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#### 2 Brockman Hall for Physics, Rice University

KieranTimberlake with Jackson & Ryan Architects

To fit the site, the building was split into two parallel bars connected by glass-enclosed bridges, with outdoor gathering spaces below.

#### 3 Roy Kelly Multimodal Terminal and Parking Garage

Powers Brown Architecture

Located in Bryan, the new transit facility enlivens downtown with a mix of uses including transit, parking, retail, and offices.

### Architecture less than 50,000 sf

#### Houston Pavilion, 2011 Chongqing International Garden Exposition

Morris Architects + SWA Group

#### Fish Camp

Natalye Appel + Associates Architects

### Interior Architecture

#### Planning Design Research Office

Planning Design Research (PDR)

#### BG Group Houston Office

Planning Design Research (PDR)

See story page 48.

### Residential Architecture

#### Yoga Studio and Garden

Interloop — Architecture

### Renovation/Restoration

#### Julia Ideson Building

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#### 9° House

Interloop — Architecture

#### HISD Belfort Early Childhood Center

Kirksey Architecture

#### Trinity Restaurant

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#### Houston Food Bank

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### On the Boards

#### Hempstead Garden Research Center

Interloop — Architecture

#### Botanica

Logan and Johnson Architecture

#### Information Technology and Media Center

Morris Architects

#### The InHouse OutHouse

Rice Building Workshop, Rice School of Architecture Graduate Students: Andrew Daley, Jason Fleming, Peter Muessig

### Conceptual Projects

#### veloCity: Mapping Houston on the Diagonal

Peter Muessig, Student, Rice School of Architecture

See "Paperwork," page 24.

### Divine Detail

#### REPEAT: Minimal Complexity

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#### Ceiling of Julia Ideson Building

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#### Planning Design Research Office

Planning Design Research (PDR)

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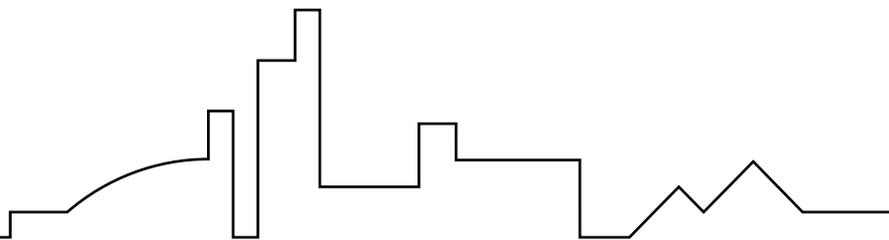
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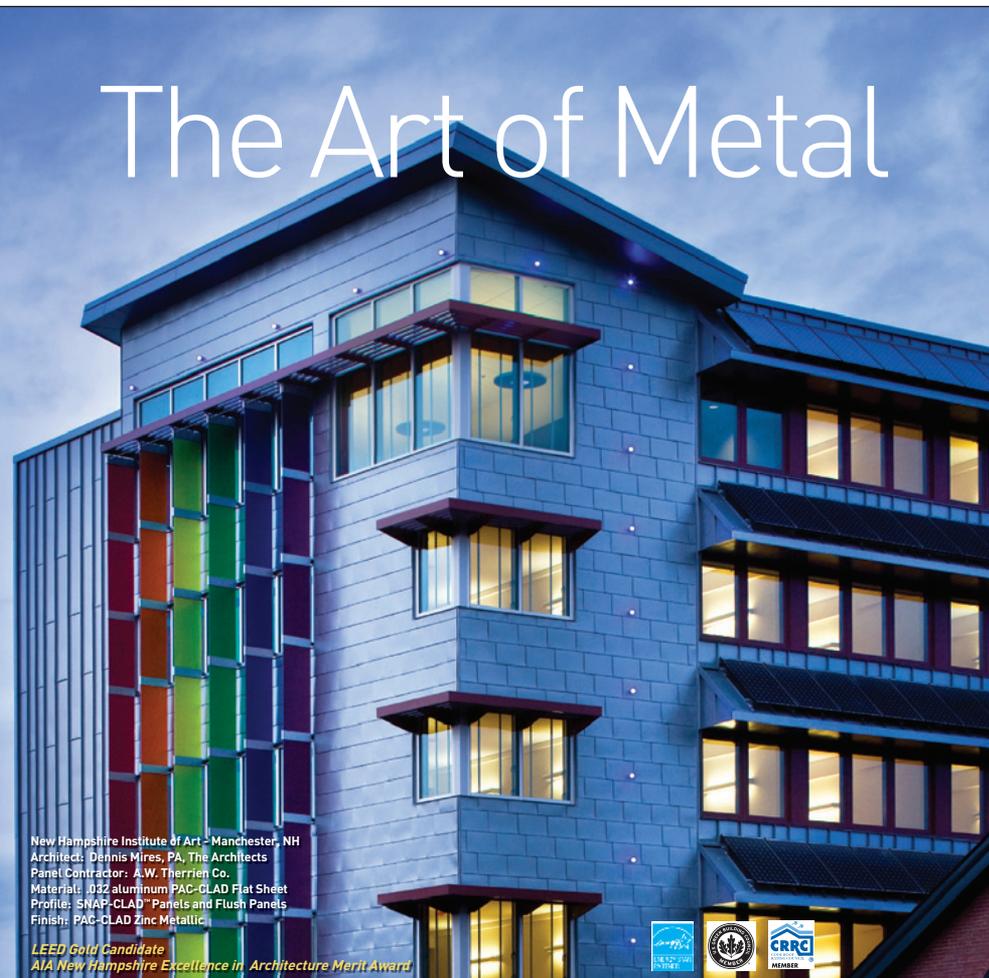


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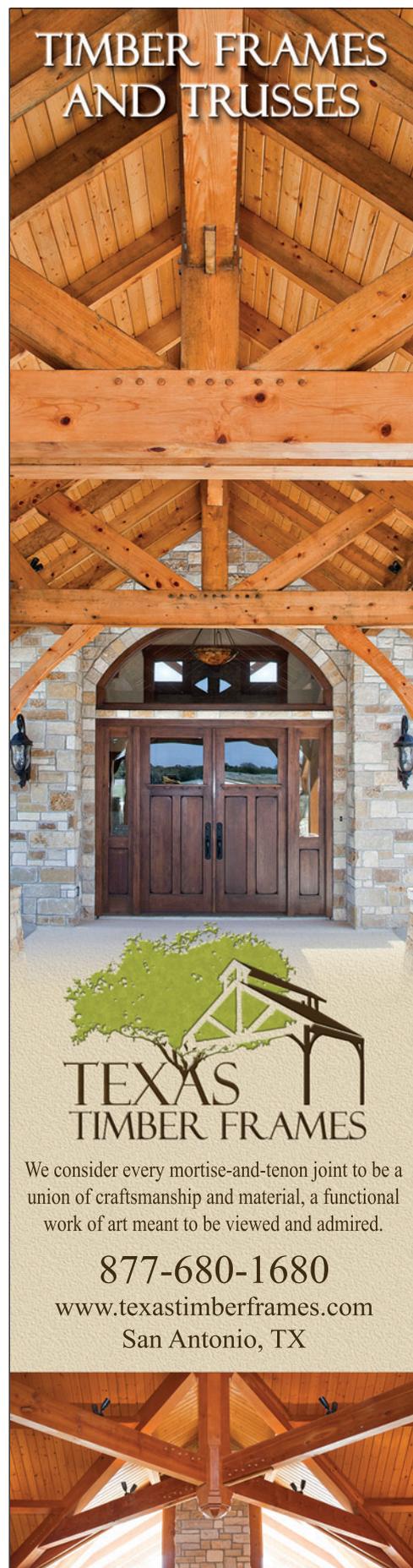


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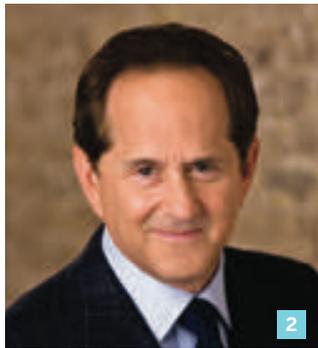


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# Recognition



## 2012 Honorary AIA Member Awards

Three Texas residents have been elected to honorary membership in the American Institute of Architects (AIA) — one of the highest honors bestowed by the Institute upon a person outside the profession of architecture. The designation is reserved for those otherwise ineligible for membership but who have rendered distinguished service to the profession of architecture or to the allied arts and sciences.

The three new honorary members from Texas, out of seven 2012 recipients nationwide, are: Carmen Pérez García, Executive Director of AIA Lower Rio Grande Valley; Gilbert Lang Mathews, founder of Lucifer Lighting in San Antonio; and Stephen Sharpe, recent editor of *Texas Architect* magazine. ■

### 1 Carmen Pérez García, Hon. AIA

Known as an ardent champion for architects and architecture, Carmen Pérez García is the first Executive Director of AIA Lower Rio Grande Valley and has served in that capacity for over 19 years. Among other achievements, García was recognized for her role in the success of her chapter's annual Building Communities Conference at South Padre Island, which brings together architects, landscape architects, urban planners, interior designers, contractors, and engineers from across Texas for three days of interdisciplinary dialogue and fellowship.

### 2 Gilbert Lang Mathews, Hon. AIA

An attorney by training, Gilbert Lang Mathews noted a need for improved display lighting for his family's long-time retail business, Frost Bros., over thirty years ago. His subsequent quest led him to found Lucifer Lighting, in San Antonio, now an international leader in the creation of elegant and technologically sophisticated lighting solutions. Mathews was cited as a generous benefactor and underwriter of design-related activities and a vital part of the community of design professionals.

### 3 Stephen Sharpe, Hon. AIA

After more than 11 years at the helm of *Texas Architect*, now-former editor Stephen Sharpe was credited with "raising awareness of the architecture profession as practiced in Texas and beyond its borders." Through Sharpe's involvement with the magazine, and also through his articles for other state and national publications, he is recognized for contributing to a greater public understanding of architecture and a wider appreciation for architects' work within their communities. (See farewell comments, page 7.)

## residential architect Award Winner

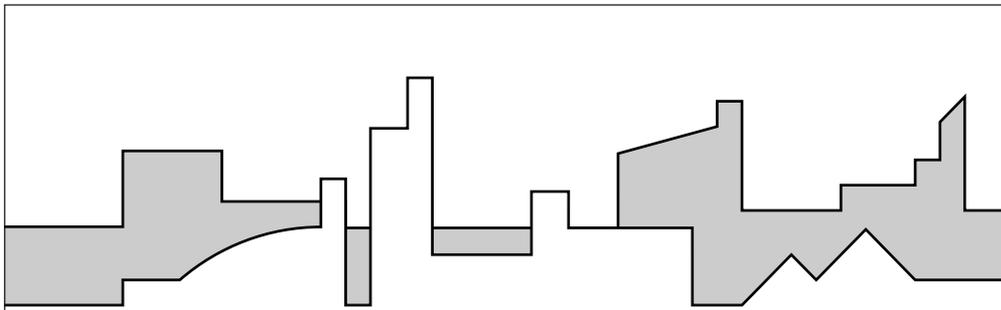
A Texas house is among 36 winning projects out of nearly 800 entries in the 2012 *residential architect* Design Awards program. Lake|Flato, of San Antonio, received one of three Merit Awards in the Single-Family Housing category for the Miller Ranch Porch House in Vanderpool.

The six jurors, who practice in various parts of the country and specialize in different types of residential projects, were John Brown, FRAIC, housebrand; Michelle Kaufmann, AIA, LEED AP, Michelle Kaufmann Studio; Alan Organschi, Gray Organschi Architecture; Robert Sponseller, AIA, Shalom Baranes Associates; Max Strang, AIA, Max Strang Architecture; and Wayne Troyer, AIA, Wayne Troyer Architects.

According to the architects, the Porch House emerged from the quest for a new way of thinking, designing, and building for residential clients. Based on an extensive review of the history of prefabricated housing, Lake|Flato drew on a library of factory-constructed, modular living and sleeping components that could be

*The Porch House emerged from the quest for a new way of thinking, designing, and building for residential clients.*

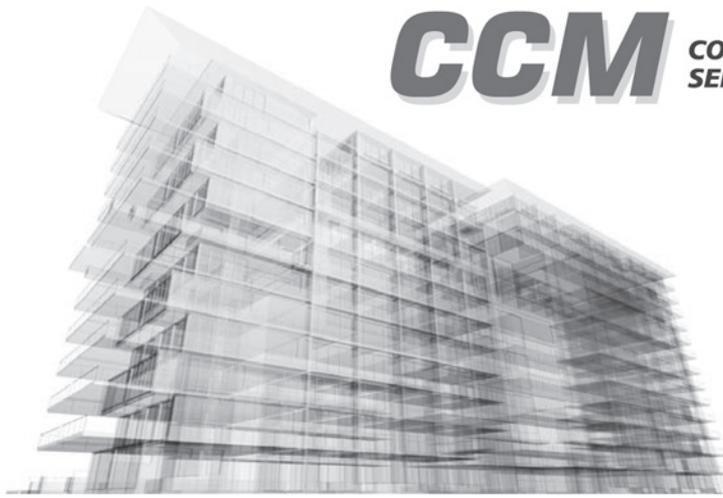
tied together by various site-built elements such as porches, breezeways, carports, and terraces. These elements constructed on site serve as connecting tissue to create exciting outdoor spaces and ensure each house is particular to its place. The Porch House concept enables a design-conscious owner to have a custom, site-specific, and LEED-certified house with a predictable outcome of quality, time, and cost. ■



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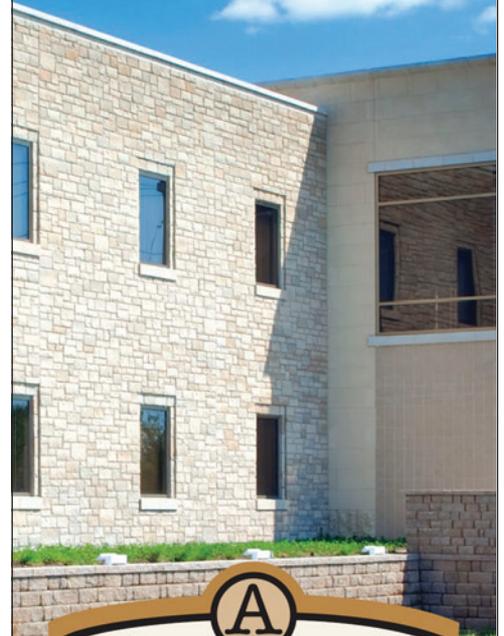
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# Paperwork



## veloCity

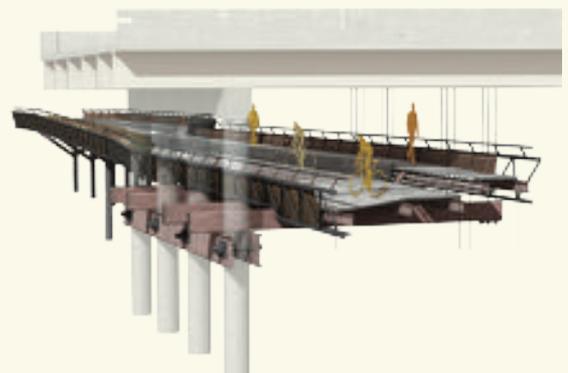
Peter Muessig, Rice School of Architecture

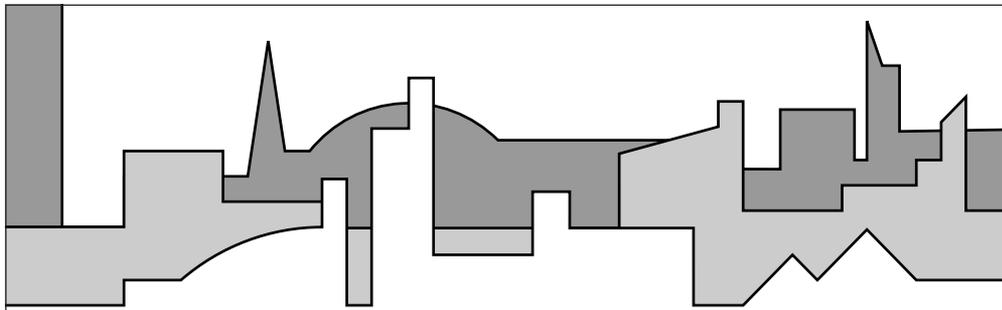
Rice School of Architecture student Peter Muessig has been recognized as a winner in the “Conceptual Projects” category of the 2012 AIA Houston design awards program for his entry entitled “veloCity: Mapping Houston on the Diagonal” (see full awards story on page 18).

**The project envisions** a canopy structure — termed a “velo-duct” — that provides Houston cyclists with a traversable surface threading along Buffalo Bayou into Downtown Houston, ultimately terminating in the public plaza in front of City Hall. According to the entry description, the structure of the velo-duct can act as a standalone system or graft onto the structures of existing buildings and infrastructure.

The result is a landscape that regards the bicycle as the primary means of accessing and experiencing the city while creating new spatial experiences and recasting old ones from a new perspective astride a bicycle. Spatial interventions occupy the urban scraps discarded by a car-centric society. Drafting off the shadows cast by vehicular habitation, a social infrastructure emerges that elevates the presence of bicycle culture in Houston.

The velo-duct concept emerges from Muesig’s ardent support of cycling as a viable mode of current-day urban transportation: “Do not mistake the bicycle as a symbol of hardship or compromise. It is a liberation. An unacknowledged extension of our American ideals. The embodiment of individual will and imagination in a simple machine. The distinct mobility and perception experienced in motion differentiate the cyclist’s city from the institutionalized urban experiences of the driver or pedestrian. For the cyclist a new map of the city emerges. Constructed not of grids, but the improvisation and judgment required to inhabit the diagonal landscape. The diagonal cannot be fabricated or constructed. It emerges through the use and appropriation of space. A responsive architecture must both support the needs of cyclists and challenge their unique spatiality.” ■





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### Studio Awards

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2011 Studio Award Winner  
Project SEEPZ Mumbai, Houston  
Architect William Truitt

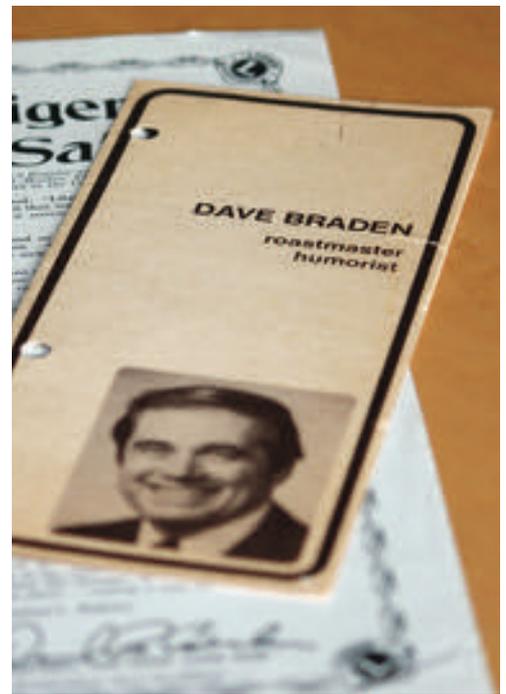
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Visit our website for more information about the 2012 Studio Awards program.

[texasarchitects.org/studioawards](http://texasarchitects.org/studioawards)

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## Recollections of a Lifelong Ham

by Dave Braden, FAIA

In 1949, when I went to work in the high-profile office of George Dahl, I met Harold (Hagie) Jones. We were both draftsmen working at adjacent tables on the back row, the only degreed architects in a room of 60 architectural draftsmen and a handful of engineers. Hagie was a graduate of Texas A&M and I had my Bachelor of Architecture from UT. While we had our differences, we shared some similarities. We were both 30 years old, and decorated veterans of the WW II Pacific Theater; Hagie as a Marine with five amphibious island landings to his credit, mine as a lead navigator of a B-29 Superfortress squadron with 35 completed missions over Japan. Both of us were also lucky to be among the living!

Hagie worked in Dahl's office for a little over a year before moving on to the four-man office of Hidell and Decker for a more rounded experience in a small office producing quality work. I stayed on with the Dahl firm for almost three years, working on a variety of large projects. I had received a super post-college education in working drawings, but lacked experience in the other aspects of practice. I then moved to the office of Howard Meyer hoping to get some experience in the operation of a small office and to observe the terrific quality of Howard's design work. After one year at Howard's small office, I left in a deliberately planned move to complete my five-year postgraduate apprenticeship. In order to gain some construction experience in

the field, I obtained employment as an on-site architectural inspector of a large government housing project. Although I was a licensed architect, I had absolutely no experience "on the job." It proved to be a good move. I learned a lot about construction and even more about contractors. When I called Hagie to ask if he was still interested in joining me, his resounding "Yes!" launched the founding of the fledgling enterprise of Braden and Jones Architects in 1954.

To grow a practice you have to know people who need buildings, or else find those people. Community involvement is a necessity. Both Hagie and I lived in the Oak Cliff area of Dallas, which was like living in a small town inside a large city. Along with being active in our church affiliations and in the local Chamber of Commerce, Hagie joined the Oak Cliff Rotary Club and I joined the Oak Cliff Lions Club (with 400 members, it was the largest Lions Club in the nation). Friends made through these memberships brought us most of our early business opportunities, with projects that gradually grew in scale and complexity. The Lions Club was also where I discovered what my wife Sara calls my funny bone.

Each year, the Lions produced a show patterned after the New York stage production called "Hellzapoppin'." Unbelievably, among my fellow Lions were professional musicians, singers, and entertainers. The show, held each fall with two performances a night for three nights, was

always a community hit. On invitation, I joined the show as a rank amateur.

It was at the Texas Theater where, for the first time in my life, I walked on a stage in character and uttered a line I had written. It was then that I first heard the most beautiful sound in the world — the laughter of over a thousand people. I was hooked! I wanted to hear it again, and again, and again. I had absolutely no idea as to what had happened, but I became a lifelong ham.

The following year, the Lion who had served as emcee for several years asked to be relieved, and I was asked to take his place. For the next 10 years, I served both as a performer and head scriptwriter of that wild and crazy show. Although even today I don't know where or how I acquired the ability, I began a newfound avocation as a topical and political humorist that lasted for the next 37 years.

**In 1963, Dallas and the nation** witnessed the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The entire force of the national media of every stripe, plus most of the nation's citizenry, nailed the blame for this heinous act of Lee Harvey Oswald directly on Dallas' door. Relief from the pall that fell over our city came only when Eric Jonsson, founder and CEO of Texas Instruments, was elected mayor of Dallas and created "Goals for Dallas," a program of community leadership in assessing goals for the city that eventually lifted us out of our blue funk.

Among many other Dallas architects who served in the Goals program was 1966 AIA Dallas President Pat Spillman. At the end of his year as chapter president, Pat decided to do something different than the usual annual dinner, dancing, and speechifying. Instead, he

asked me to produce a program called "The 21 AIA President Salute," which actually would be

*To grow a practice you have to know people who need buildings, or else find those people. Community involvement is a necessity.*

a roast of all past chapter presidents. At first, I was a little bit leery of the idea because I wasn't sure how some of the older "roastees" would take the kidding. (Frankly, AIA Dallas meetings were usually stuffy affairs with nary a shred of laughter.) But Pat prevailed and I agreed to do it. That night, everyone laughed, and even the past presidents and their spouses seemed to enjoy my jokes immensely.

In their continuing program of "Goals for Dallas" outreach, Mayor Jonsson and the entire City Council came to visit and speak at a regular Wednesday noon meeting of the Oak Cliff Lions Club. I was asked to introduce them. In lieu of the lavish praise given dignitaries on such an occasion, I elected to serve them "Roast a la Braden." An afternoon of hilarity ensued, enjoyed especially by the mayor. From that time forward, Mayor Jonsson became a lifelong friend and mentor. With his help I became an active participant in both his "Goals for Dallas" program and the civic and political affairs of Dallas city government.

In 1968, further tragedy struck, this time in California, when another madman assassinated Robert Kennedy, JFK's brother and a presidential candidate. The news media again drummed its message, saying America was a "sick society."

On a plane ride back from Lubbock shortly afterward, I began to ponder this kind of

**This spread, clockwise from top left Braden roasting Dallas City Council member Jerry Rucker in 1984. A copy of Braden's first promotional brochure as a humorist rests atop a reprint of his 1968 speech entitled "I'm Sick to Death of Being Told I'm Sick," a widely disseminated flyer that caused an avalanche of speaking engagement requests. Braden (second row, second from right) as a member of SPHINX, an architectural honor society at the University of Texas in 1949.**



IMAGES COURTESY DAVID BRADEN

negative thinking and its effect on our nation. I pulled out a legal pad and began writing a speech titled “I’m Sick to Death of Being Told I’m Sick.” I delivered that six-minute speech the next day before the Oak Cliff Lions Club. A standing ovation followed, and hats were passed to collect over \$3,000 to publish my speech as a full-page ad in the *Dallas Morning News*, which also ran an editorial about it. That same day, my speech was read aloud at the Dallas Convention Center during the convocation of thousands of delegates of Lions International who were visiting our city. Two printing firms donated 2,500 copies for the delegates to take or mail back home. Across the nation, it was picked up by local newspapers and broadcasters. U.S. Congressman Joe Pool read it into the Congressional Record! Letters enclosed with a dollar bill arrived from all over asking for copies. The American Association of Physicians and Surgeons printed it as a pamphlet and sent it to hospitals and doctors’ offices across the

country. Ultimately, 100,000 copies made their way into the public’s hands.

Requests poured in to speak to every kind of organization. I decided to select one place as a trial and wrote a new speech of a similar nature about 20 minutes in length, which I delivered to the Fort Worth Rotary Club on the occasion of their annual meeting with their wives. About

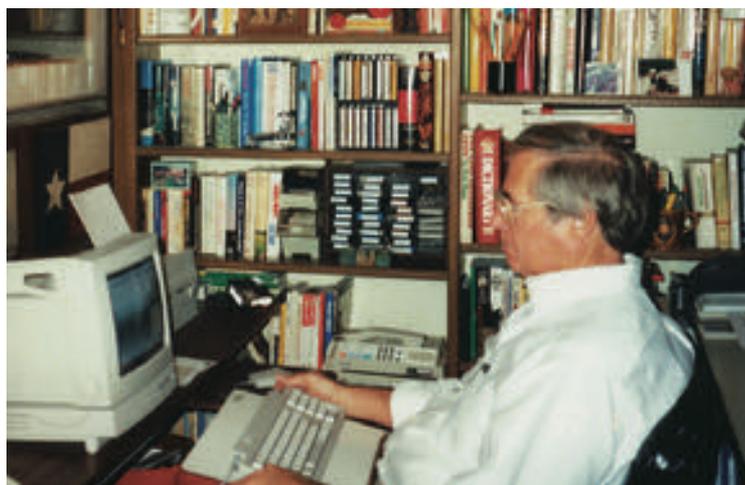
*Before I knew it, I had a new income stream and a national audience. What’s more, our firm had the media’s attention!*

halfway through my speech, I looked out at the audience and saw two women crying. Then and there I vowed to never do that again. I wanted to make people laugh, and from that day on that’s what I did.

As invitations to speak stacked up, I wasn’t sure how to balance my new avocation with my professional practice. I asked one of my Lion friends, who had spent his life in show business, what I should do. His answer was quick: “Dave, what you need is an agent.” He suggested Dick Leonard, who took a chance on me and had me print a brochure. Before I knew it, I had a new income stream and a national audience. What’s more, our firm had the media’s attention! To say the least, 1968 was a big year for me. I simultaneously served as the president of AIA Dallas, the Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce, the Oak Cliff Lions Club, and the Dallas City Charter Association. I also continued to practice architecture with Hagie, and we were very busy.

One day, not long after we lost out on landing two very significant public commissions, a lady walked into the office and asked to see me. I really didn’t want to see anyone about anything, but thinking I should at least be polite, I met her in our conference room where she gave me the shock of my life when she said she was George Dahl’s secretary and that he wanted to discuss the purchase of the Dahl firm and its assets. Multi-millionaire Dahl was retiring, leaving behind him a track record of success far beyond that of any architect in our state and most of the other states. Twenty-two years earlier, Hagie and I had sat on the back row of his drafting room observing his wisdom, his flair for organization, and his integrity.

Not long afterward, the firm of Dahl Braden Jones and Chapman, Architects and Planners,



**This page, from top** *At a 1980 AIA event, with Braden at the podium, Pat Y. Spillman, FAIA, of Dallas, enjoys a laugh at the head table. Braden at work in his office during the early ‘90s “cataloguing memories.”*

# DETAILS



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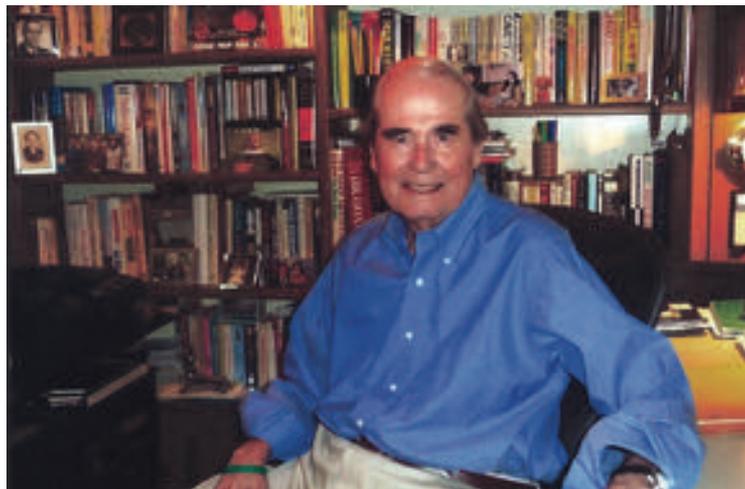
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was up and running. With clients and work of every kind that began to pour in, I slept about three hours a night during those first two months.

**As the new firm** settled into its first year of work, the Texas Society of Architects announced that Dallas would be the location for its 1972 convention. President Tom Bullock (CEO of CRS, one of the nation's largest architectural firms) traveled to Dallas with several members of the Society's Board of Directors to discuss plans for the event with AIA Dallas' convention chairman, Jack Craycroft. To meet more of the local architects, they attended our chapter's annual dinner where I, as the retiring president, presented incoming president James Pratt with a roast. The wine, laughter, and good cheer overflowed that evening. When Craycroft asked Bullock if he would like to conclude his presidential year with something similar, he agreed, and added, "Put Braden in charge of entertainment."



**This page, from top**  
*Braden's own caption for this photo: "At last Dave finds something he's really good at!" The current-day Dave Braden in his home office, still cataloguing memories, and ever the ham.*

I recall that program at the Society's convention as the best in all my years as a professional speaker, requiring the most work but resulting in the most fun I have ever experienced behind a microphone. National AIA President Max Urbahn, who was seated at the head table with his wife, Alyn, obviously had never witnessed a gathering where the architects were literally gasping from laughter.

I knew something special had happened. Over the following years, I delivered my stock speech, "The State of the Nation—According to Braden," revised daily for audiences at numerous AIA events in Washington, D.C., and at AIA state conventions across the nation.

In addition to the architect audiences, agent Dick Leonard's efforts landed me fee work as featured speaker at annual meetings of chambers of commerce, business associations, corporations, developers, and government and political entities of every stripe. Word of mouth brought even more. There was no PowerPoint in those days — just me, the mic, and loads of laughter at the foibles of our American society. I remember those years as a time of steady growth for our firm. Inevitably, some of these meetings as a speaker led to new friends and new commissions, such that the role of the Lifelong Ham became what law firms call "The Rainmaker." These were also years that offered lots of interesting travel for Sara and me, as well as steady income that allowed me to literally talk my three Pi Beta Phi daughters through the University of Texas.

After retirement of my two original partners, three young associates — David Patton, Mile Talley, and Steve McGregor — became partners in our firm, renamed as Dahl, Braden, PTM. After 42 years as a practicing architect, I too left the firm, which then became simply Dahl Architects.

**Retirement for me** was short-lived as I soon became chairman of the board of DFW International Airport while continuing as a platform humorist. Since that time I have been engaged (with much continuing education) as an arbitrator of design and construction disputes through the auspices of the American Arbitration Association.

At the Society's annual meeting in 1975, which closed out my tenure as president, a speaker at the podium told an audience of my revered colleagues and their spouses, "Dave Braden has been lucky all his life." Truer words have never been spoken.

Dave Braden, FAIA, is a retired Dallas architect and humorist, and served as 1975 Texas Architects President.



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# Sunday House

by Dror Baldinger, AIA

**Project** Sunday House, San Antonio

**Client** Jeff and Laurie Truax

**Architect** John Grable Architects

**Design team** John Grable, FAIA; Luis Vargas; Matthew Martinez

**Contractor** Truax Construction

**Consultants** Perspective Structural Engineer (structural); Robin Black, ASID/IIDA; Terry Cavazos-Errhalt (interiors)

**T**he Sunday House at Encino Ave. and St. Dennis in Alamo Heights is the sole survivor of a five-structure compound that once occupied this prominent corner lot. It is also believed to be one of the city's earliest houses — actually a two-story, 1920s duplex that was left standing at the corner of the parcel following construction of an adjacent new house on the large lot. Architect John Grable, FAIA, of John Grable Architects, was commissioned to restore the duplex — a rare example of the classic one-room-wide residences that predated air conditioning. The program also called for additional indoor living space to be added for both levels without compromising the views and natural light of the narrow, L-shaped floor plan situated among a stand of heritage oak trees.

The “Sunday House” designation harkens back to a common building type in the Alamo Heights of the 1920s and 1930s, a structure whose name referred to its purpose as a weekend residence for ranchers and farmers who came to worship, socialize, and shop in the city. Specifically, in the context of this project, the term applies to the second level of the duplex, which is used by the new owners as a convenient alternative to their permanent residence and acreage near Bulverde, west of New Braunfels.

To understand why the city of Alamo Heights and the structure's immediate neighbors were interested in saving and rebuilding the Sunday House, one must understand the city of Alamo Heights and its character. The city is located 4.5 miles north of downtown San Antonio and encompasses a total area of 2.1 square miles. Early settlement dates back to the mid-1800s and it was incorporated as a municipality in 1922. The desire to live in an environment of natural beauty and charm has informed the city's planning ever since its first recorded master plan in 1890. Since those formative years, the protection of vistas, preservation of trees, and moderation of the scale of structures have maintained the city's unique charm.



However, despite persistent conservation efforts, it has not been uncommon in recent years to see old houses in the neighborhood falling victim to the wrecking ball and being replaced with new houses that have not retained the scale and charm of their predecessors. The residents' growing anxiety about the perceived threat to the character of their residential streets focused significant attention and interest in the future of the dilapidated compound at 334 Encino Avenue.

**A longtime resident** of Alamo Heights, architect John Grable was well aware of the community's expectations. He approached the additions and renovations with respect, reverence, and discipline, modestly expressing the hope that his work would "not ruin the original house." Yet, despite this apprehension, he described the design process as, "totally intuitive; just knowing what works and when and where to hold back." The results of this restrained process are evident everywhere in the site planning, as well as in the addition to the original duplex, and in the interiors.

The challenges facing the architects in the renovation and expansion of an historic structure and the modification of predated mechanical ventilation were considerable, and further complicated by tree patterns on the site, and the desire not to alter the narrow and tall proportions of the original architecture.

City ordinance required that parking for the house be provided on-site, and under a structured cover. This challenge of adding another structure became an opportunity to recreate a courtyard enclosure that had once

existed when five structures occupied the site. The architects' sensitivity to the neighborhood's streetscape and spatial fabric is well-demonstrated in the placement of the garage in relation to the adjacent, previously existing

*The two independent structures are spatially linked to form a shared outdoor space that is richer than the individual parts.*

house on the site. Positioning the garage as an extension of one end of the adjacent house creates a figure/ground diagram in which the two houses form a continuous, tree-studded outdoor room defined by two stylistically different houses that are yet common in their rationale. With this singular gesture, the two independent and isolated structures in a conventional suburban context are spatially linked to form a shared outdoor space that, on aggregate, is richer than the individual parts.

The longitudinal sides of the garage are open, allowing it to become visually light and spatially linked to the courtyard. A typically enclosed garage would have uncomfortably enclosed and condensed the courtyard between it and the house, and would have disrupted the natural flow of tightly sequenced spaces. Keeping two sides open also transforms the appearance of the structure and allows for occasional use as an entertainment pavilion. One end of the two transverse walls is an opaque white wall; the other wall, street-side, is a layered and sculptural composition.



**Previous spread** Floor-to-ceiling windows on the two-story addition result in a modern and airy tree-house effect.

**This spread, clockwise from left page** A formal, flagstone walkway leads to the duplex's ground floor apartment facing Encino Avenue. The restored house (on the right) and the garage addition (on the left) visually harmonize with similar details and forms. A cluster of oak trees filters light and shades a courtyard formed between the house and the garage. An open-air garage/pavilion doubles as a covered, entertainment space. A dark-stained, wooden bridge physically links the house and garage. Exterior stairs lead from the open garage/pavilion up to the second-floor apartment.



**This page, clockwise**

**from top left** View toward kitchen, rear-door entry, and bridge. The light-filled, third-floor room directs attention to the surrounding natural beauty and views of downtown San Antonio in the distance. A brushed-steel, spiral staircase leads from the second-floor to the third-floor addition. An open plan links the dining area and the living room, where white walls provide the background for the owners' art collection.



The garage's white plaster end wall — though just inside the property line and a few feet from the neighboring house's enclosed screened room — is not a visual annoyance. To the contrary, dappled light filters through the oak trees and falls on the wall, poetically transforming it into a kinetic display of light and shadows, and a quiet tribute to Kahn's inspired words, "The sun never knew how great it was until it struck the side of a building." Facing St. Dennis Avenue, the garage elevation is a dynamic, yet balanced, composition of three elements. A bent end wall acts as a background to a mass from which a set of steep stairs is carved out.

In the white monochromatic treatment of the walls, the composition is both strong and subtle, relying on shade and shadows for definition, rather than on change of materials or color. The two walls are then capped and balanced with an overhanging shed roof, providing the stairs with some protection from the elements. In the curved underside of the stairs' mass, the architects echo a similar carved and curved stair wall found in the original duplex, on an elevation that also faces St. Dennis Avenue.

The stairs lead to a black, stained, wooden bridge, which then connects to the second-floor apartment. As with the garage/pavilion elevations, the two longitudinal sides of the bridge take on two different characters. The side of the bridge facing the street is made of weighty wooden planks, laid horizontally to form the guardrail. From the street side, the opaque bridge forms a transom to an opening, and frames a window into the courtyard. Additionally, the bridge reinforces, by contrast of color and materials, that the garage and the house are two separate and distinct structures.

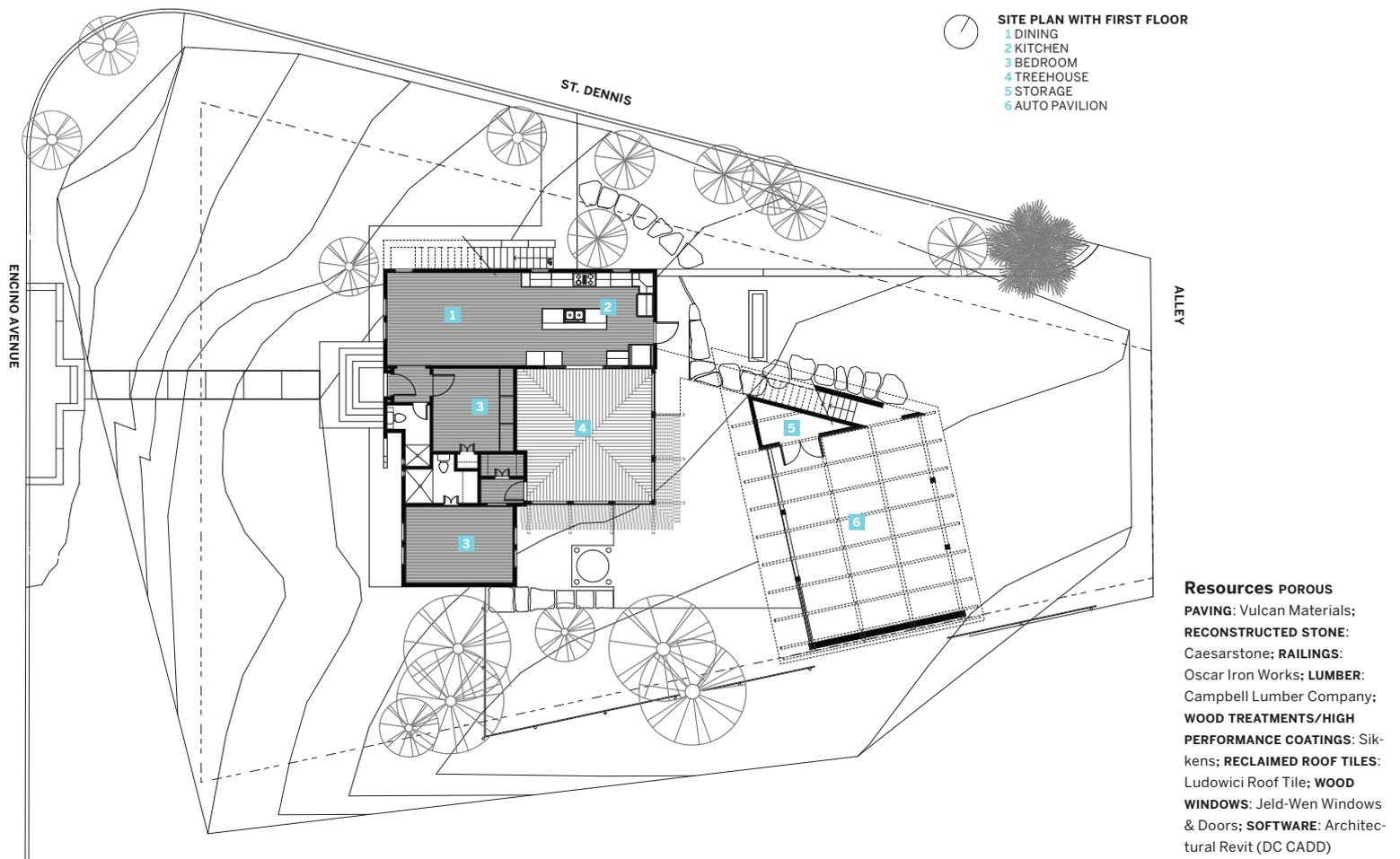
The courtyard side of the bridge has a nearly transparent guardrail, assembled with the minimum required number of horizontal steel pipes. The pipe rails are painted black, resulting in moderation of their visual impact. John Grable describes the bridge as, "a place of physical and mental transition."

**From the bridge** and the courtyard below, the addition to the house, though carefully blended into the original, becomes apparent. Placed in the inside corner of the 'L,' the addition is, proportionally, a cube. The two exterior sides are glazed with three floor-to-ceiling windows on each side, and at each of the two stories. The result is a modern and airy, tree-house-like addition.

The exterior window frames are painted black, as are all others in the house. It was common, at the time of the original house's construction, to paint exterior window frames in dark colors to give the impression of thick exterior walls, and also to give the appearance of picture frames. The architects revived this tradition in their renovation work and turned "black and white" into a theme that was carried out consistently throughout.

The abundance of windows in the addition dissolves the boundaries between the interior living spaces and the courtyard, bringing the courtyard's peaceful setting, speckled natural light, and breezes — through operable awning windows — deep into the interior.

Another feature of the addition is slotted sunshades above the floor-to-ceiling windows. Dark, stained wooden brackets, meant to recall tree limbs, support the sunshades.



Indoors, the architects approached the project as a renovation and modernization, rather than an historical restoration of what was once there. The spaces are consistent with the exterior's restrained approach to color and materials. While the floor plans of the original two-family residence were barely altered, the house might well be converted into a single-family residence in the future.

**All the interior walls** are white, and they reflect, bounce, and magnify daylight. The walls also provide the perfect backdrop to the owners' intensely colorful Southwestern art collection.

The floorboards in the new addition are reclaimed 1x6 white oak from another house in the neighborhood. The planks were first pre-wet, in order to open up the wood's grain, prior to stain application. It is worth noting that many of the materials used in the reconstruction of the house are either reclaimed materials, or are surplus materials from the owner's general contracting company.

A brushed-steel, spiral staircase leads from the second-floor apartment to a third-floor addition, which contains a single, square room. Against the white walls, washed in bright, natural light, streaming from the windows in the room above, the dark and spiraling form of the staircase adds an artistic dimension to an otherwise functional purpose.

As one ascends the stairs to the third-floor room, a growing sense of calm emerges. The room is very simple. Three large, awning windows occupy a large portion of each side, and have their frames painted white.

*Against the white walls, washed in bright, natural light, the dark and spiraling form of the staircase adds an artistic dimension to an otherwise functional purpose.*

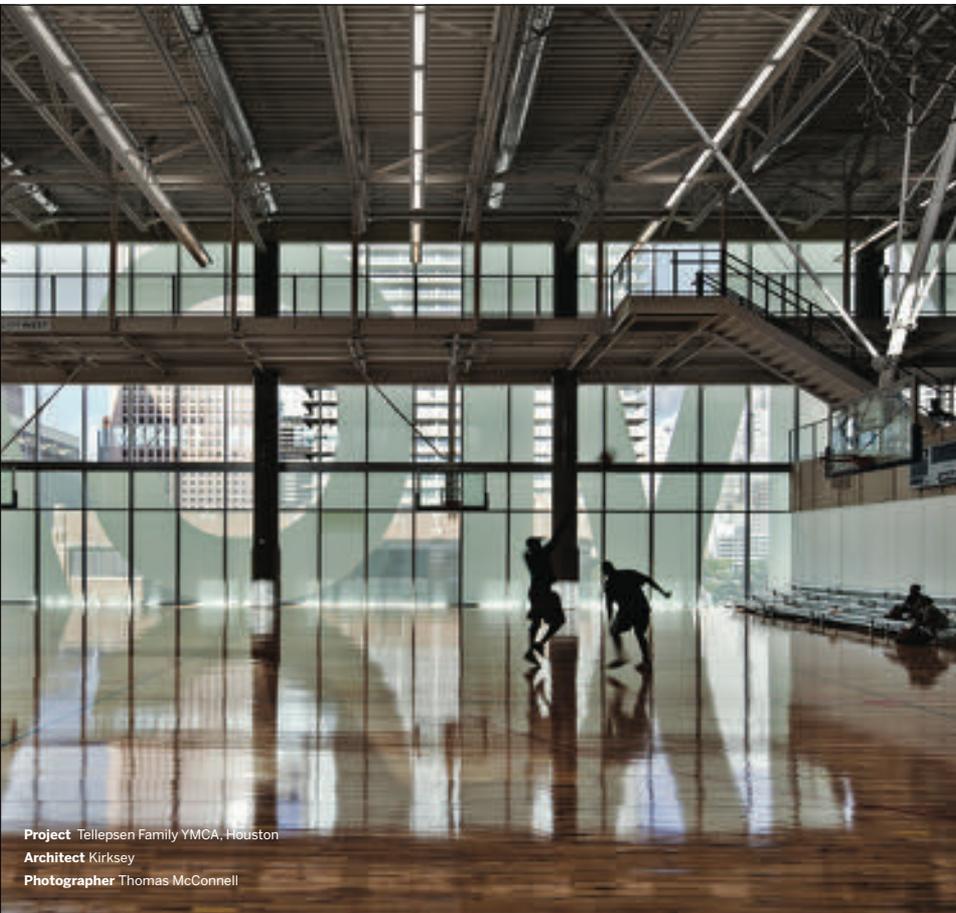
Below the windowsills are built-in bookcases, also painted white. The ceiling is low, but rises from four sides to form a higher ridge line in the center. Reflected light softly accentuates every ceiling surface.

This space is symbolic of the architects' philosophy, their approach to the project, and their project's accomplishments. Sparsely furnished, it is the kind of room that does not seek undue attention. Through its minimalist palette and details, it directs attention to the surrounding natural beauty, as if to establish a hierarchy of reverence and import.

Adjacent to this third-floor room, yet not seen from the street below, is a small and intimate roof deck. The views from the rooftop, especially toward downtown, are splendid.

In present times, when much of what grabs architectural headlines is the relentless and often mindless quest for "the new" and "the original," John Grable Architects has deftly demonstrated the power of restraint, reverence, and grace in producing timeless architecture.

Dror Baldinger, AIA, is Design Director at Marmon Mok Architecture in San Antonio.



Project Tellepsen Family YMCA, Houston  
 Architect Kirksey  
 Photographer Thomas McConnell



Coming Next Issue

**July/August: Healthcare and Wellness**

**Featured Projects**

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 Morris Architects

**Northwood Club, Dallas**  
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**Residential Feature**

**4818 Brookview Drive, Dallas**  
 David George

**Portfolio: Performance Space**

**Lila Cockrell Theater, San Antonio**  
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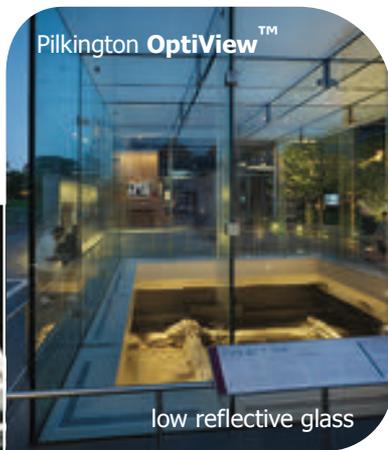
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The four main projects featured in this “Urban Design” edition fit that label loosely. That is, they represent the design of individual projects within an urban fabric — not the design of the larger fabric itself. But in each case, the surrounding context — and, specifically, deference to it — informs the specifics of the architecture.

In terms of footprint, the new downtown campus for Tarrant County College in Fort Worth is by far the largest of our four examples. Serving as an urban gateway, its five campus buildings descend on either side of an open plaza from downtown to the banks of the Trinity through a series of courtyards and walkways. At the other end of the spectrum, a 1200-sf bungalow on Austin’s East Side has been sensitively expanded as a seven-room boutique hotel. It succeeds, among other measures, by one of the most basic design standards of all: what do the neighbors think?

# Urban Design

## 40

### **Water, Bridges, and Dreams**

TCCD Trinity River East Campus (TREC), Fort Worth  
Bing Thom Architects with Bennett Benner Pettit  
*Joe Self, AIA*

## 48

### **Form Follows Market**

BG Group Place, Houston  
Pickard Chilton with Kendall/Heaton Associates  
*Filo Castore, AIA*

## 54

### **Live Large, Think Big**

Omni Dallas Convention Center Hotel, Dallas  
BOKA Powell with 5G Studio Collaborative  
*Michael Friebele, Assoc. AIA*

## 60

### **Bungalow Modern**

Heywood Hotel, Austin  
KRDB  
*Canan Yetmen*



# Water, Bridges, and Dreams

by Joe Self, AIA



**Project** TCCD Trinity River East Campus (TREC), Fort Worth

**Client** Tarrant County College District

**Architect** Bing Thom Architects with Bennett Benner Pettit (formerly GideonToal)

**Design team** Bing Thom, AIA; Michael Heeney; Francis Yan, Assoc. AIA; Amirali Javidan; Michael Bennett, AIA; Mark Dabney, AIA; R. Gannon Gries, AIA

**Contractor** Austin Commercial/Con-Real

**Consultants** The Project Group/Parsons (project manager); JQ (structural); Summit Consultants (MEP); INSPEC (specifications); SWA Group/MESA/Studio-Outside (landscape); URS Corporation (civil); Kleinfelder (geotech); AR Consultants (historic preservation/archaeology); Kimley-Horn and Associates (traffic/transportation); Brittain & Crawford (land surveying/topo/platting); Aon Fire Protection Corp. (code/fire); Jacobs Engineering (commissioning); William Lam (lighting); Talaske (acoustic); Heintges & Associates (curtainwall); CMS Collaborative (fountain); AppliedTech Group (AV/IT/security); Gallop/Varley (signage)

**Photographers** Nic Lehoux; Craig Kuhner

**T**he new Tarrant County College (TCC) campus, situated just north-east of the historic county courthouse, should be on any architect's Fort Worth visit list. However, some background is required to understand how the placement and form of the buildings were developed and, ultimately, why the project was abbreviated.

Water is a powerful element in the human experience. Because of this, cities often originate near water for sustenance, transportation, and security. The founding of Fort Worth in 1849 followed this pattern. Major Ripley Arnold and his cavalry unit were tasked with finding a secure location from which to protect local settlers from the understandably aggressive Native Americans. Camp Worth, named for General William J. Worth, was organized parallel to the Trinity River on a bluff overlooking the river and near a cool spring. The camp became a fort, the fort became a city, and the river was eventually lined with buildings along the bluff top. The site of the original camp is now the northern edge of downtown Fort Worth. With time,



bridges were built to connect the downtown district to the low-lying industrial area farther north across the river.

The Trinity, too shallow and mostly dependent on rainfall, was never a significant conduit for transportation. It might be possible to map Fort Worth as a string of water pearls, with the water element at the new TCC campus as the latest addition. But water was more than a metaphor for this project; the river and policies surrounding it deeply affected the final form of the campus.

Over time, the river faded into the background as an amenity when it wasn't a menace. In the mid-20th century, following devastating floods, the riverbanks were denuded of vegetation and channelized to control the water flow. While civil engineering projects distanced the population from the river, there were successful efforts by local groups to reestablish a connection with parks and trails along its banks.

The water theme, as an origin story, seems to emerge in several parks and gardens within Fort Worth. Projects that celebrate water include the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, a Works Progress Administration project from 1934 (with subsequent gardens featuring water elements); The Water Gardens, by Philip Johnson and John Burgee (1974); Heritage Park Plaza, by Lawrence Halprin (1980); and a handful of memorial fountains. Water is also incorporated as a significant element in Louis Kahn's Kimbell Art Museum (1972) and Tadao Ando's Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (2002).

Despite the pervasive water theme, it wasn't until the previous decade that a vision emerged to reconnect the urban fabric and the citizenry

directly to the Trinity River through urban design. A charrette, sponsored by the Tarrant Regional Water District and a non-profit group named Streams and Valleys, resulted in a master plan entitled *The Trinity Uplown*

*Water was more than a metaphor for this project; the river and policies surrounding it deeply affected the final form of the campus.*

*Plan.* Architect Bing Thom, of Vancouver, and local firm Bennett Benner Pettit (then GideonToal) were hired to develop a plan for the low-lying area north of the river.

The design team, working with the Corps of Engineers and other interested parties, proposed to redirect the water course using a set of dams and locks to ensure that the low-lying zone would never flood. Once this area was secure and abated from industrial waste, Thom wanted to create a pedestrian connection with the original site of Camp Worth on the bluff across the river and further into downtown. For Thom, securing the bluff and anchoring something there was very important, in fact key to the success of the master plan. He lobbied for an educational component to inject a vibrant culture into the downtown district. The educational component was also seen as a bridge connecting, programmatically and literally, the two parts of the city separated by the Trinity.

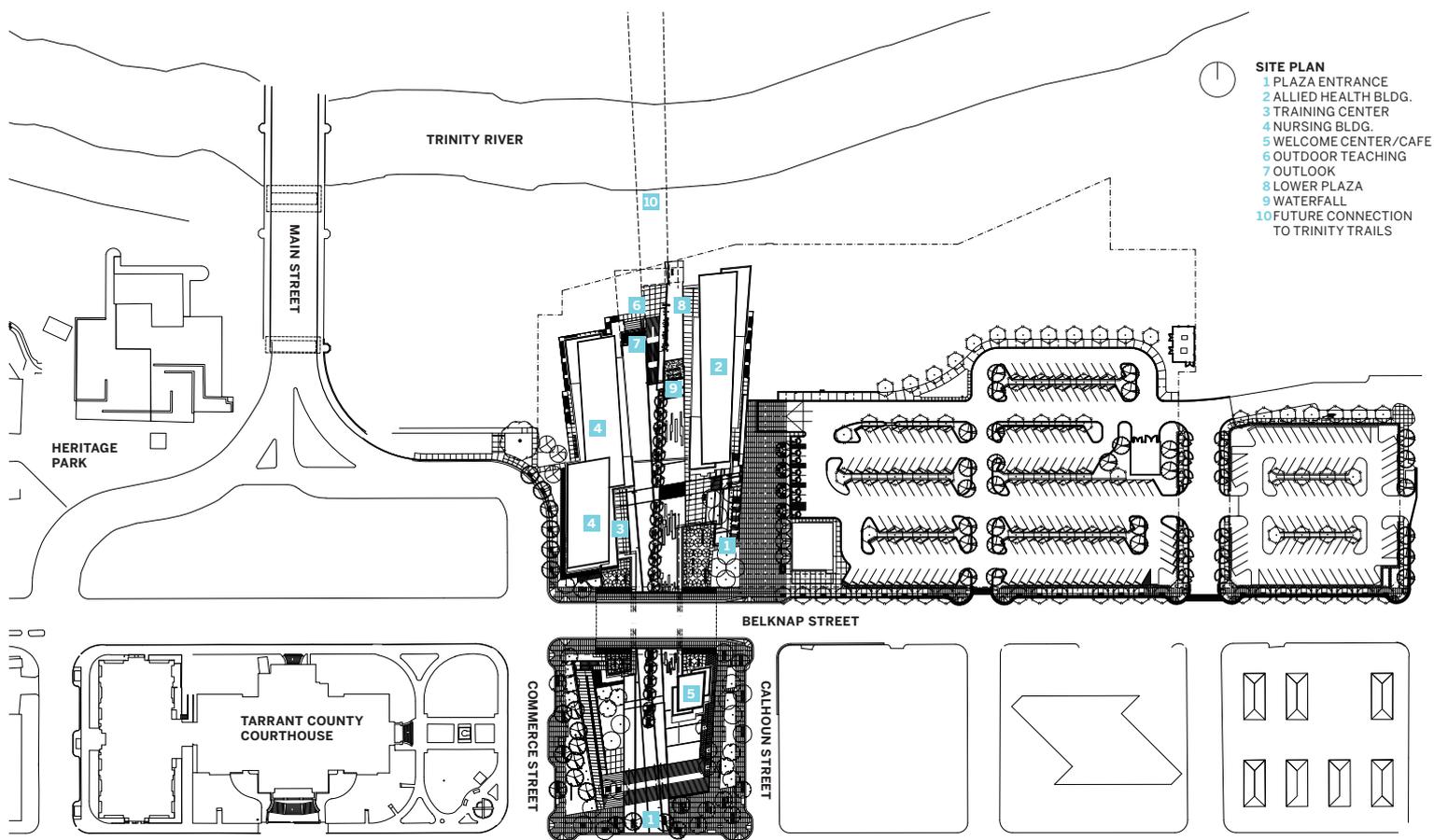


**Previous spread, left and right** *The view south connects the campus to downtown. The variegated creek and landscape animate the plaza.*

**Opposite page** *West Belknap passes over the plaza to create a shaded passage.*

**This page, clockwise from top** *The open form of the campus is an invitation to the city from the river's edge. Broad overhangs provide shaded walkways. Lowered screens protect the glass facade from direct sunlight.*





Thom identified Tarrant County College as a prime candidate for building on the bluff. And conversations with officials at TCC led to a commission for BTA (Bing Thom Architects) to design a new campus. The original campus design mirrored the master plan with buildings on the bluff, buildings in the low-lying land north of the river, and a connecting bridge. Thom promoted the idea that education was a kind of bridge to a realizable dream – a better life.

*Visiting the site today must be bittersweet for those who envisioned the grander scheme of a campus located on two sides of a river with a connecting bridge.*

The campus, in addition to connecting people to their dreams, would connect the city to the river and spur growth in the soon-to-be-abated low-lying real estate. The proposed bridge was paired with a cone of vision from Weatherford Street down to the river. This meant setting the buildings to either side and dropping the ground plane to create a sunken plaza below street level. The plaza was planned to extend from Weatherford Street, beneath West Belknap Street, and to the river's edge.

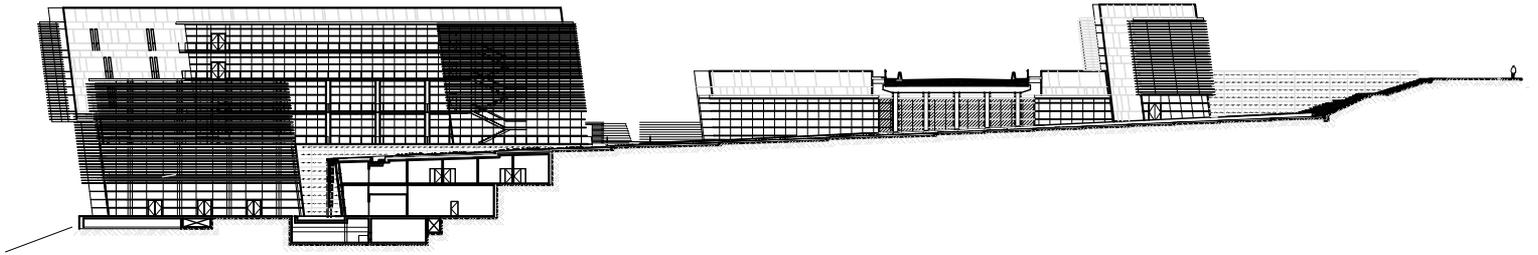
Public spaces that are not at street level are often very difficult to populate and energize. This plaza was not only planned to be below street level, but to actually pass below West Belknap. Resistance to the sunken plaza

came from several quarters, but Thom and TCC officials were resolute. Michael Heeney with BTA describes the plaza as a gateway to the river, whereas downtown's primary plaza will be the one being developed by Sundance Square several blocks to the south.

Changed flood control policies at the national level, following Hurricane Katrina, spurred a centralized federal review process that slowed the progress of the TCC campus. Since approvals for the locks and dams would take longer than TCC wanted to wait, the north portion of the campus in the low-lying area and the bridge spanning the river had to be postponed, although construction commenced on the southern portion of the campus atop the bluff. Concurrently, a nearby Radio Shack corporate campus came on the market, and TCC officials scuttled the bridge and the north portion of the campus in favor of existing space just four blocks to the west. Accordingly, the portion of the TCC campus on the bluff that was already under construction had to be reprogrammed after the fact to accommodate a medical training program. As it turns out, the most interesting interior space is perhaps the main lecture hall with seating that spills down with a view north to the river.

Visiting the site today must be bittersweet for those who envisioned the grander scheme of a campus located on two sides of a river with a connecting bridge. The only remnant of that vision is a bridgehead at the end of the main plaza and near the river bank. Officials with the Tarrant Regional Water District have plans for a pedestrian bridge there when the flood-prone zone to the north has been abated and secured with dams and locks.

SITE SECTION



**This page, above and below** *The well-lit plaza is an open space for staged events. The tilting forms suggest rock outcroppings at the bluff.*



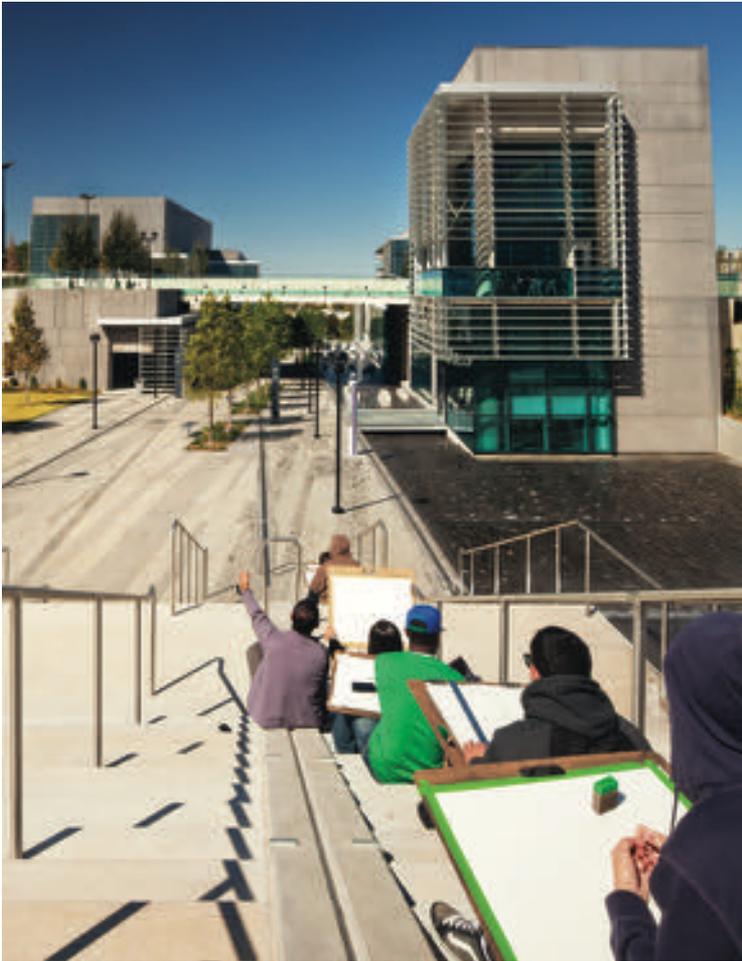
**This page, clockwise from top** *The buildings lean toward future development across the river and the bridgehead to the right anticipates a physical connection. The final drop of the water feature is adjacent to an elevator tower. The main lecture hall spills down with a view to the river.*

**Opposite page, clockwise from left** *Steps from street level down to the plaza serve as seating. A café at street level connects the program of the campus to the city. Classrooms have been fitted with the very latest technology.*



**Resources** UNIT PAVERS: Pavestone; **WATER FEATURES:** Greenscape Pump/GPSI; **OUTDOOR FURNISHINGS:** Landscape Forms; **CONCRETE STRUCTURE FORMWORK:** Capform; **PRECAST ARCHITECTURAL CONCRETE:** Gate Precast Company; **GLASS GUARDRAILS/STAINLESS STEEL/ELEVATOR GLASS:** Metalrite; **LAMINATES:** Wilsonart, Abet Laminati; **SOLID SURFACE:** Corian; **WATERPROOFING:** Polyguard Products; **MEMBRANE ROOFING:** Anchor Roofing Systems; **GLAZED CURTAINWALL/SUNSHADES:** Trainor Glass Company; **GYPSPUM/INSULATION/ACOUSTICAL CEILINGS/WALL PANELS/STUCCO:** Marek Brothers Systems; **TILE:** DalTile; **ACOUSTICAL CEILINGS:** Armstrong, Ceilings Plus; **INDOOR ATHLETIC SURFACING:** Mondo, Terranova; **ACOUSTICAL WALL TREATMENTS:** Rulon, Knoll

Textiles; **PAINT:** Benjamin Moore; **RESILIENT BASE:** Johnsonite; **WALK OFF MAT:** Balco; **CARPET TILE:** InterfaceFLOR; **METAL TRIM ACCESSORIES:** Schluter Systems; **SIGNAGE/GRAPHICS:** Morrison Architectural Sign Company; **PATIENT HEADWALL/LIGHTS/BED LOCATORS:** Amico Corporation; **CUBICLE CURTAINS:** Interspec; **LOCKERS:** Penco; **VISUAL DISPLAY:** Forbo, Claridge; **VERTICAL PATIENT LIFTS:** Liko; **ROLLERSHADES:** Timber Blind (Glasshouse); **DRAPERY/CURTAIN HARDWARE:** Lutron (AEC Corp.); **SOFTWARE:** DC CADD; **GLASS LIBRARY WALLS/GLASS HANDRAILS/ ELEVATOR GLASS ENCLOSURE:** M3 Glass Technologies; **MOBILE/STATIONARY SHELVING:** Intermetro Industries; **OFFICE FURNISHINGS:** Allsteel (Wilson Office Interiors)



The campus buildings are organized as elongated shapes flanking a plaza that leads to the now-future bridge. The language of the architecture, if not the orientation of the buildings, is consistent with the climate but this design created controversy among those who prefer architecture reminiscent of past styles.

**The TCC campus** is mostly attuned to its place and, equally important, to human sense experience. The building forms, clad in charcoal-gray pre-cast concrete panels, evoke geologic formations that tilt to the north as if yearning for the connection across the river. Louvered panels and cool-blue tinted glass acknowledge the need for sun protection in the humid subtropical climate. Paths in and around the buildings create a pleasant counterpoint to the powerful main plaza space. An outdoor amphitheater has been provided near the river's edge.

A large fountain (a structured creek, really) extends across a variegated surface from the edge of Weatherford Street, down several small drops in elevation between islands of concrete forms before plummeting to a basin near the river's edge. The sound of the water feature changes from place to place depending upon the configuration.

The broad rippling water element introduces pleasant sounds, a sparkle of light, and a coolness that is much needed in Texas. On the other hand, the glass guard rails may be a bit too vulnerable to breakage in their urban setting. More street furniture and plantings would help at the sidewalks near the street.

The TCC campus invites comparisons to the much-discussed High Line in Manhattan by James Corner and Diller Scofidio + Renfro. Both projects claimed underutilized space by introducing a landscape into the urban set-

*The broad rippling water element introduces pleasant sounds, a sparkle of light, and a coolness that is much needed in Texas.*

ting. The High Line is an elevated landscape and the TCC campus might be thought of as a quiet eddy along the Trinity. Both are welcoming and vibrant spaces. The TCC campus administrators would do well to visit the High Line to see how art projects and commercial ventures can animate urban landscapes. At minimum, the plaza will benefit greatly from additional tables, chairs, and benches — maybe even food carts.

Much of the discussion about the project focuses, rightly, on the descent to the water's edge. The campus is also a jumping-off point to what could be, what must be someday, a physical connection across the river. But there's another way of experiencing the campus. Even a modest connection from the river below the bluff — perhaps a small canoe dock — could well become the ideal entry point for downtown Fort Worth. The arrival could match what any newcomer might imagine, a welcoming ascent from the water's edge.

Joe Self, AIA, is the principal of FIRM817 in Fort Worth.





# Form Follows Market

by Filo Castore, AIA

**Project** BG Group Place, Houston

**Client** Hines

**Design architect** Pickard Chilton

**Architect of record** Kendall/Heaton Associates

**Design team** (PC) Jon Pickard, FAIA; William Chilton, FAIA; Brett Spearman; Yen Ming Lee; Justin Cochran; Jonathan Aprati; Russell Wilson, AIA; (KHA) Laurence Burns, Jr., AIA; Thomas Milholland, AIA; Luis Amador; Candy Feuer

**Contractor** D.E. Harvey Builders

**Consultants** Ingenium (structural); Wylie Consulting Engineers (mep); Walter P Moore (civil); Ulrich Engineers (geotechnical/foundation/tunneling); CDC (curtain-wall); Cerami & Associates (acoustical); Persohn/Hahn Associates (acoustical); HMA Consulting (building controls/security); Command Commissioning (commissioning); The Office of James Burnett (landscape); BVM Engineering (sustainability); Quentin Thomas Associates (lighting); DG Studio (graphic design)

**Photographers** Peter Aaron/OTTO; Aker Imaging; Scott McDonald/Hendrick-Blessing

**M**ore than 20 years after the last major high-rise building was completed in downtown Houston, the Bayou city skyline welcomes BG Group Place at 811 Main Street.

Developed by the Hines CalPERS Green Development Fund and designed by Pickard Chilton, the graceful tower, completed in 2011, stands 46 stories tall at the core of the Central Business District (CBD) along the METRO light rail transit line and is strategically connected to the six-mile underground pedestrian tunnel system.

Driven by Hines' office market wisdom and high-performance building experience, BG Group Place comprises 36 floors of office space above a ten-story podium that includes street-level retail and a nine-level parking garage with more than 1,100 spaces.

From the early stages of the project development in 2007, at a time when the economic downturn was still an unknown quantity for most, Hines felt strongly committed to pursuing, planning, and constructing a substantial



project that would become one of the main engines of recovery for the city and the region. And so it has been. The success of 811 Main is tangible in many ways; it is the result of a well-oiled team that has worked together for

*Only by drastically rethinking the tunnel system use and purpose will downtown Houston be able to sustain successful retail operations at the street level and plan for true mixed-use development.*

many years on projects with similar aspirations and measurable results. Focused on quality design, market knowledge, and innovative solutions, the design and development blend seamlessly. In a yin-yang of driving forces, the goal of full occupancy informed the design process, and the resulting design has facilitated leasing of the space. Form follows...market.

Developed as a speculative office building, BG Group Place entered the market in early 2011 with the CBD office vacancy rate around 15 percent, and was competing for tenants with at least one other recently completed 30-story high-rise a few blocks away. Led by Hines' leasing and management team, the building is currently more than 71 percent leased.

Following the success at 717 Main, Hines was ready to take the next step in their history of exemplary real estate development in Houston. The site at 811 Main was a terrific candidate on a block that included two main structures — the Montagu Hotel and the Stowers Building. After the

demolition of the dilapidated, bat-infested hotel, Hines and the architects worked around the Stowers Building to preserve the contextual and historical urban fabric. Accordingly, an L-shape footprint was developed at the base, which included a roof garden above the nine-level garage podium skillfully concealed by using the main tower cladding surfaces. The roof garden design acts as a collector of rainwater and its plants are irrigated by the collection of the building's air conditioning condensation. The office tower was articulated on the northern edge of the site with an east-west orientation that not only minimizes heat gain on the glazing, but also preserves (according to design massing studies) the most amount of daylight at the street level. Much of the ground level was intended for vital retail users (i.e., restaurants), and therefore was planned with generous floor-to-ceiling heights of up to 30 feet. Currently, however, a bank is scheduled to occupy much of the ground-level retail. The BG Group Place main lobby sits at the northwest corner of the site, under the main tower, and directly engages life on Main Street.

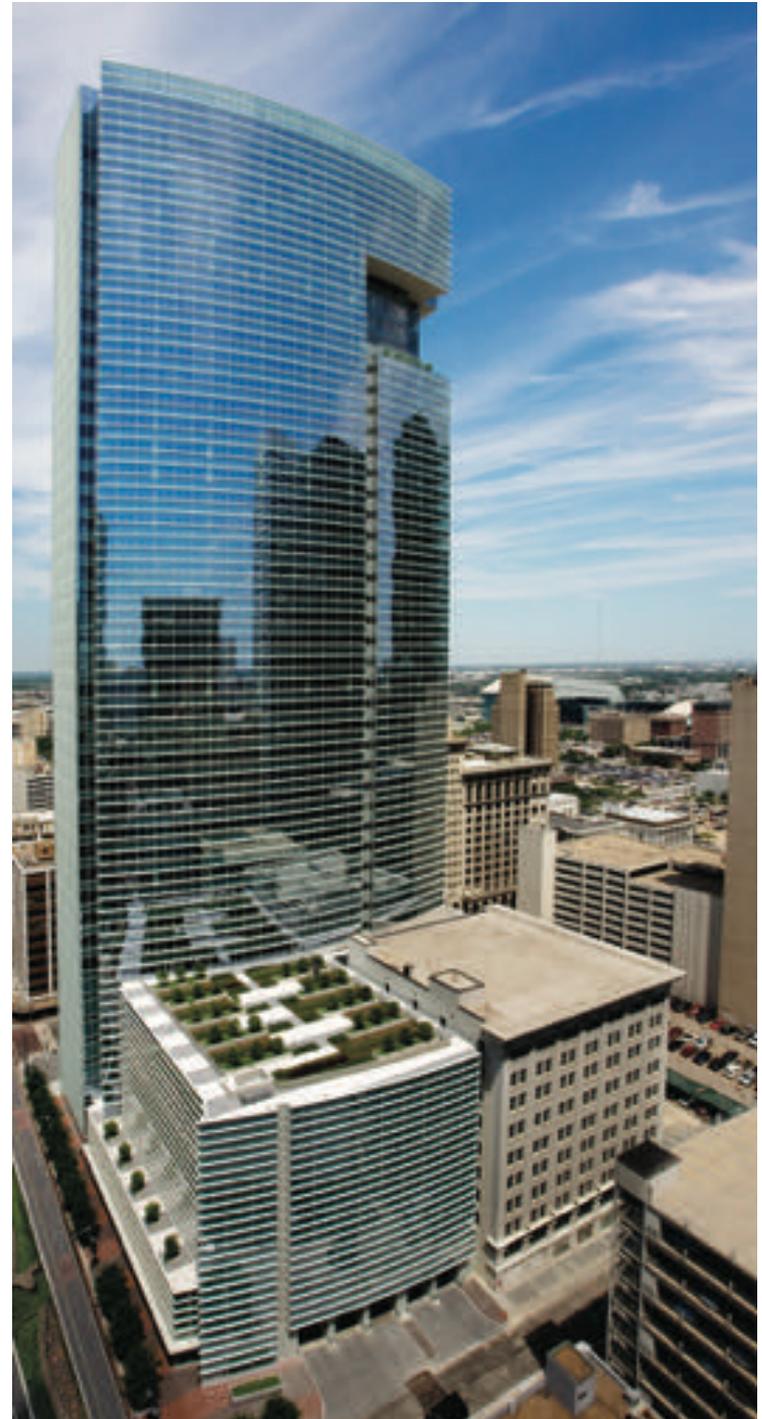
**BG Group Place** is of course connected to the downtown tunnel system, which is a necessary evil today in order to be a Class A office building in the Houston CBD market. The interaction with the tunnel by the majority of the daily downtown population of 80,000 is voiding life on the streets above, and will continue to affect the potential success of the CBD as a vital urban reality 24/7. Only by drastically rethinking the tunnel system use and purpose will downtown Houston be able to sustain



**Previous spread** *The front entrance on Main at Rusk sits a block away from a light rail station.*

**Opposite page** *The north elevation brings quality daylight into each floor.*

**Clockwise from top left** *The “bite” in the sky glows at night across the iconic skyline. The south elevation stands tall above the roof garden over the parking garage podium. The main entrance engages the north corner of the city block.*



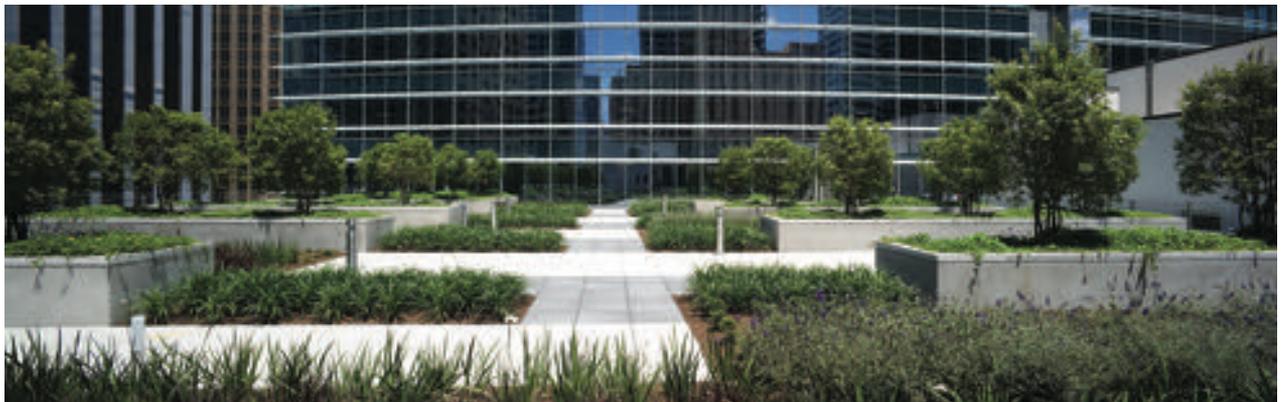
successful retail operations at the street level and plan for true mixed-use development.

BG Group Place was never intended to be “superlative” — the tallest or most visible tower on the skyline. With true discipline and deep understanding of commercial markets, its scale and height were driven by real estate considerations and overall market demand. One of the initial schemes developed by Jon Pickard and his team actually conceived an even smaller structure, with only two elevator banks. However, under Hines’ leadership and instinct, the 46-story tower emerged as the right solution to ride the recovery of the office market in 2011 and has thus become a true standout.

Several design strategies have been implemented to maximize the leasing appeal, the building systems performance, the human comfort, and the bottom line. In the early design stages, with the developer highly involved, economic forces suggested generous floor plates to increase efficiency and density. Even though a rectangular floor ratio was the obvious solution, the team opted for a gently curved profile along the longer sides to maximize access to daylight and city views, and ultimately to suggest a less massive structure.

Soaring 39 floors in the air, a graceful sky garden has been carved out of the building’s east elevation against the backdrop of a five-story glazed atrium that turns into a glowing beacon along the east edge of the CBD skyline. The size and scale of this “bite in the sky” were closely scrutinized by the developer to ensure the leasing appeal of the interior floor plates.

**Clockwise from top left** Exterior sun shading devices create 48 percent average shading from direct sunlight annually on typical office curtain wall. Break room area in BG Group offices, designed by PDR. Three elevator banks serve the main lobby. The roof garden amenity serves the 11th-floor tenant.



The structural system that allowed this result to be achieved at a reasonable premium cost was conceived by the team at Ingenium, led by Dr. Prabodh Banavalkar, who was able to forfeit a standard transfer girder of 120' long and 10' deep. Deployed in its place was a triangular truss at approximately 15 percent of the cost of the standard solution and less infringement upon the total real estate leasing space.

As a departure from conventional high-rise construction in Houston's largely clay-bearing soils, the BG Group Place main structural system of choice is not steel. At the time of design, steel cost was very high. Concrete became a less expensive option, but at 15 lbs/sf largely increased the required depth for the foundation system, thereby negating potential savings. The solution was use of a light-weight concrete (12 lbs/sf) to reduce the required foundation depth and remain within the budget guidelines.

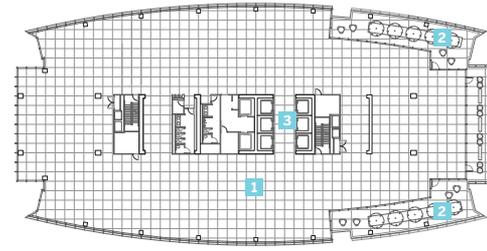
**In Houston's hot-humid climate**, where summer months have minimal temperature fluctuation between day and night, it is a challenge to design, build, and operate a largely glazed structure. Only by understanding the implications of such climatological factors, the interior systems loads, and the effects of building orientation was the team able to develop a protective layer of sun-shading devices that are an integral part of the building performance. Vertical frit-glass fins are positioned on the west façade along the entire 630-foot-high elevation to mitigate the setting low-angle sun while horizontal glass/aluminum angled shading devices run along the north and south façades. Properly installed across the entire elevations at windows'

*The roof garden design acts as a collector of rainwater and its plants are irrigated by the collection of the building's air conditioning condensation.*

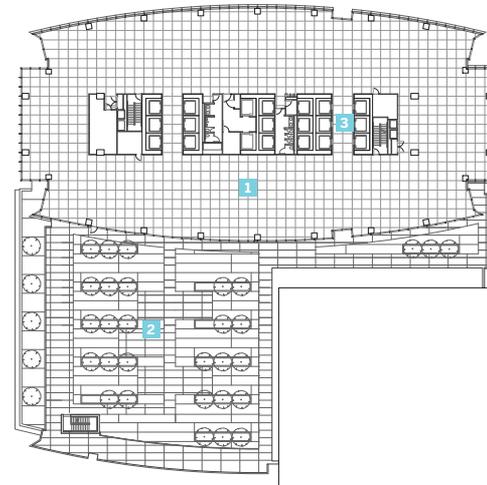
head and knee-height, they create 48 percent average shading from direct heat gain while allowing clear views to the outside and plenty of daylight into the floor plates (coupled with generous ten-foot-high ceilings).

These integrated design solutions served to both maximize real estate value and poise the project for exemplary certification. The project as designed was designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to earn the ENERGY STAR® rating of 96, and potentially will be 53 percent more energy-efficient than the national average office building. In the fall of 2011 BG Group Place also achieved LEED CS-Platinum certification — the first in Texas — which reinforces Hines' legacy of pioneering sustainable design and construction. This way of thinking permeates the Hines corporate culture, driven by the founder, Gerald Hines, who professes, in the words of Jon Pickard, that "you don't just build a building to get by, you build the right building."

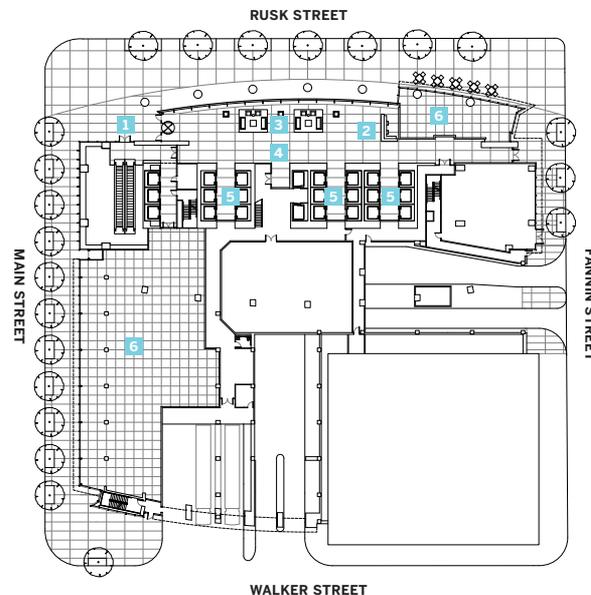
BG Group Place stands tall on the Houston skyline as the success story of an intimately collaborative process led by Hines and Pickard Chilton. Kendall/Heaton, as Architect of Record, brought deep knowledge, trustworthiness, and true, open communication. Harvey, as General Contractor, contributed an experienced and responsive team excelling in risk



**39TH FLOOR PLAN**  
 1 OFFICE SPACE  
 2 SKY GARDEN  
 3 ELEVATOR LOBBY



**21ST FLOOR PLAN**  
 1 OFFICE SPACE  
 2 ROOF GARDEN  
 3 ELEVATOR LOBBY



**SITE PLAN**  
 1 LOBBY ENTRANCE  
 2 RECEPTION DESK  
 3 SEATING  
 4 LOBBY  
 5 ELEVATOR LOBBY  
 6 RETAIL

management and always ready to suggest strategic saving solutions without compromising the final quality.

Hines' success hinges in part on a heavily front-loaded planning and design phase investigating all possible alternatives. Yet, when a solution and a direction are finalized, the team stays true to their decision, thus maximizing the project delivery efficiency. A process to emulate.

BG Group Place has moved the yardstick in the right direction with its catalyst role of urban transformation. As more projects are developed and strive to achieve similar results, they will recalibrate the marketplace. As real estate forces drive the viability of projects like this one, we shall hope for a greater understanding from all stakeholders of how private development can be optimized, how it can shape and enhance the public realm, and how that public realm can engage, guide, and stimulate development in the private sphere. From street frameworks, infrastructure systems, and open-space networks to building massing, block and lot configurations, density and land use — the Houston CBD tackles the difficult problems of urban growth. And properly conceived urban environments are the key to a future that is ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable.

Filo Castore, AIA, LEED AP is an Associate Principal at Perkins+Will – Houston, where he leads the Corporate+Commercial+Civic Sector.

**Resources** **CONCRETE PAVEMENT:** Southern Star Concrete; **PLANTING ACCESSORIES:** Ridge-wood Landscaping; **EXTERIOR GRANITE/RECEPTION DESK/INTERIOR FIRST FLOOR PAVING/GARAGE BASE:** Cold Spring Granite; **ROOF PAVERS:** Hanover Pavers; **ARCHITECTURAL METAL WORK:** Berger Ironworks; **ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORK:** Brochsteins; **LAMINATES:** CRC Mastercraft; **EXTERIOR SUNSHADES/WINDSCREEN:** Arrowall; **TERRAZZO:** American Stone; **TILE:** DalTile; **METAL DOORS:** Ceco Door; **WOOD DOORS:** Algoma; **GLASS:** Viracon; **DECORATIVE GLAZING:** Bendheim; **ACOUSTICAL CEILINGS:** Clunn Acoustical; **WALL COVERINGS:** Maharam; **PAINT:** Benjamin Moore; **SIGNAGE/GRAPHICS:** Ad Display; **BLINDS:** Bali



# Live Large, Think Big

by Michael Friebele, Assoc. AIA

**Project** Omni Dallas Convention Center Hotel, Dallas

**Client** City of Dallas

**Architect of record** BOKA Powell

**Design architect** 5G Studio Collaborative

**Design team** Donald Powell, AIA; Chris Barnes, AIA; Joseph Hilliard, AIA; Dennis Gulseth, AIA; Hoang Dang, AIA; Scott Lowe; Yen Ong, AIA; Hidajat Tjahjono, AIA

**Contractor** Balfour Beatty

**Consultants** Waldrop+Nichols (interiors); Brockette Davie Drake (structural); Blum Consulting Engineers (mep); URS Corporation (civil); TBG Partners (landscape); Omni Hotel (management); Worrell Design Group (kitchen/laundry); Persohn/Hahn Associates (elevator); Master Code (energy); SM&W (acoustical); BVM Engineering (sustainability/LEED); AppliedTech Group, Wai-Wize I (AV); Lang Lighting Design (lighting); CDC (waterproofing/roofing); AON Fire Protection Engineering Corp. (fire/life); Associated Time & Parking Controls (parking controls); Bray Whaler International (FF/E/OS/E)

**Photographers** Charles Davis Smith, AIA; Jacob Tindall

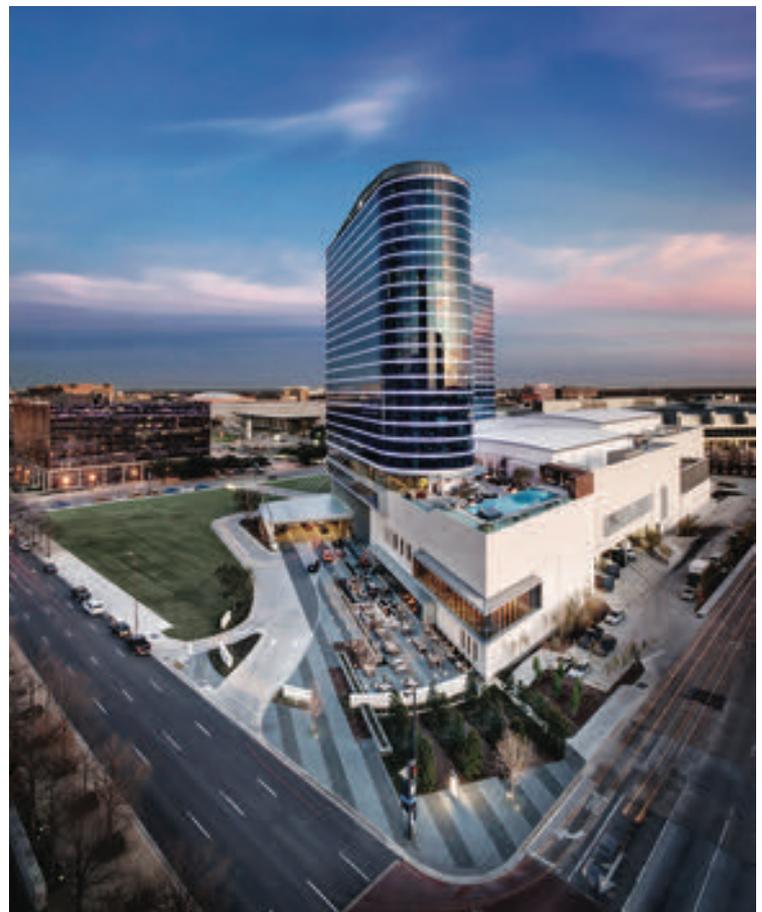


**W**hen it comes to the development of marque hotels, no city does it bigger and with more attention than Dallas. Downtown Dallas has a rich history of hotel development, from the Adolphus, built in the early 20th century to respond to Dallas' booming growth, to the roots of Conrad Hilton, to the mid-century hotel boom that saw the development of the Southland Life Sheraton and the Statler Hilton. The Omni Dallas Convention Center Hotel represents the most recent step toward putting Dallas back on top of the convention map, but with it comes high expectations toward the future vitality of downtown.

An idea nearly 30 years in the making, the Omni Dallas Convention Center Hotel is the center point for the Dallas Civic Center phase of the Downtown 360 Development plan. Although the debate has long been heated as to whether the hotel would even be conceived, its placement has been a constant for years. It is sited to provide a much-needed public anchor to the northwest end of the Dallas Convention Center, but in the

**Previous spread** *The Omni (far right) extends a tradition of aggressive architectural lighting on the Dallas skyline.*

**This page, clockwise from top** *The northeast-facing façade at dusk is a scene of dramatic contrasts. The bowed form of the tower and textures of the landscape mediate urban edge and hotel domain. Circulation paths are clearly defined by light shelves and balcony in the lobby.*





**This page** *The billboard effect of the Omni's architecturally integrated LED strands — with over a million infinitely variable lights — allows for an interesting play between light and darkness on the rooftop terrace and pool deck.*

broader context creating a visual transition from the verticality of the adjacent downtown skyline to the immediate Southside neighborhoods of Oak Cliff and the Cedars.

For **5G Studio Collaborative**, the form of the building came as a natural response to the surrounding context, an aspect that played a large part in the selection of the firm as the design architect. Acknowledging the north-south axis of Lamar Street — a critical cultural link and focus of the Downtown 360 Plan — as well as the east-west axis of Young Street, the Omni responds with a highly transparent podium that creates a welcome urban connection to the four stories of public space. The entry, sheltered

*The Omni Convention Center Hotel represents the most recent step toward putting Dallas back on top of the convention map.*

by a sculptural canopy, centers itself on the critical street intersection of Lamar and Young with an open view back to the downtown skyline.

Flanking the lobby on the ground level is a series of four cafés, retail space, and a hotel lounge opening directly to the street, and thereby blurring the boundary between the architecture and the urban edge. Directly above the public realm at the street is approximately 100,000 square feet of meeting space encapsulated in an open public gallery/atrium space with an open view of the downtown skyline through a cable-supported glass façade system. Circulation in plan plays off the streets along the glass façade, terminating within the main public realm of the adjacent convention center. The western end of the circulation path leads to a fourth-floor pool deck perched atop the podium. A main public gathering space for the hotel, the pool deck is where the response of the Omni to the greater downtown context is the most clear, providing an expansive view of the city.

**The 19-story tower** is the key scaling element in the composition. Set back from the base of the podium, the tower is manifested as a softer form, curved in order to provide the maximum amount of view for the occupant. The form also makes its impact on the surrounding context as a visual billboard for Dallas. Clad entirely in Dallas-blue custom glass, the tower provides a constant reflection of the skyline while in turn giving each room of the hotel a clear floor-to-ceiling view. The billboard effect continues at night through a series of architecturally integrated LED strands that are embedded into the seams of the curtain wall system. This system allows for an infinite number of display options that infuse a degree of life into the Dallas skyline.

Although the “live large, think big” tradition adorns the hotel throughout, it was not conceived without strong environmental consideration. Striving for LEED Silver certification, a mandate of the City of Dallas, the articulation of nearly every element of the hotel has sustainability in mind. Beginning with the overall form, the hotel's orientation responds to the street level, but to sun position as well, limiting the amount of solar gain. On the site level, the entire parking capacity for the hotel is sheltered to limit the heat island effect. The site also utilizes one of the first rain garden systems in Dallas, filtering rainwater runoff directly from the landscaping and improving its quality. The transparent tower utilizes the customized tint of the glazing system to limit solar heat gain while maintaining views from the inside and reflections on the outside. Throughout the interior of

the hotel, many of the materials used are made of recycled content or have been locally selected. A primary example is Texas Spice, where certified local wood finishes come together with recycled brick to create warmth and texture reminiscent of early Texas architecture. To ensure that the tower maintains a certain level of energy savings throughout the year, each room of the hotel is equipped with an energy management system that allows guests to regulate energy use beginning with the drop of the room key into the door. But when the room is not occupied, all systems revert back to a system standard.

**The completion of the Omni** — with results that saw a high-performance project completed over two months ahead of schedule — marks an important step toward bringing the Dallas architecture community back to the architectural forefront in their city. The project showcased the future of young Dallas architecture firms in the work of 5G Studio, who had only been an established firm for two years when chosen for the project. The

*The architecture of the hotel is not the most Dallas, or Texas for that matter, but it is highly international, forcefully exemplifying a style of architecture today that aims to transcend time.*

Omni also marks the importance of established firms in Dallas through the work of BOKA Powell as Architect of Record.

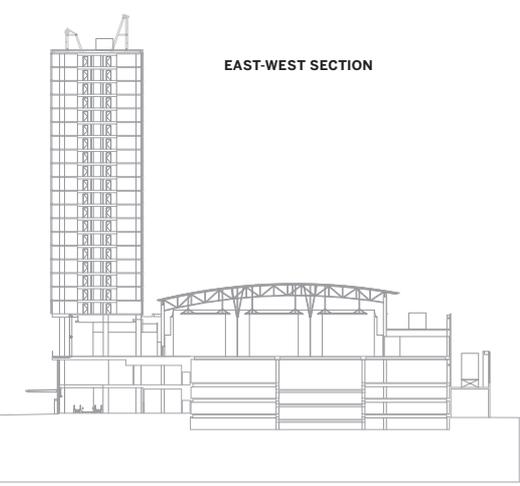
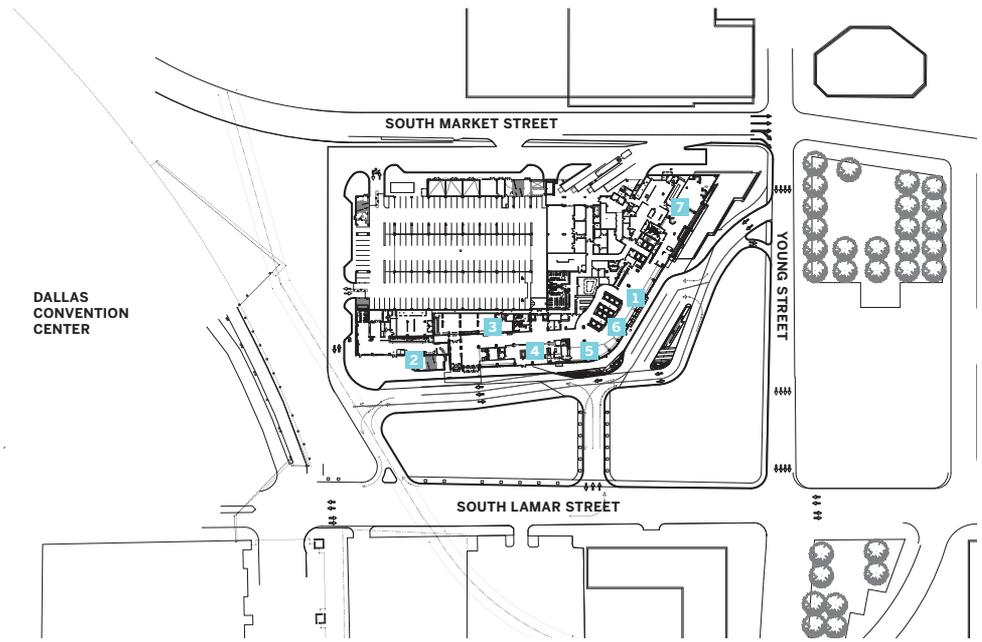
Despite this fundamental success, the architecture of the Omni has been the subject of debate ever since the first rendering was posted three years ago. The building speaks to Texas and the city of Dallas on multiple levels, from the deliberate moves made in the form to capture the dynamism behind the surrounding downtown context to the over 6,700 pieces of local artwork featured throughout the building. Yet the architecture is often criticized for not relating enough to the context. It has been accused of being “too simple” or having a “split personality.” No element has stirred critics more than the building’s lighting, which sparked a debate that came to a climax with a heated panel discussion at the Dallas Center for Architecture.

Compared with other marque hotels that tend to transition their style frequently (the Statler Hilton in Dallas being an extreme example), the Omni’s fundamental architecture alone begins to transcend those decorative moves through an immense transparency that allows the skyline itself to be the major interior finish throughout the hotel. Its architecture is not the most “Dallas,” or the most “Texas,” but it is highly international. As such, it forcefully exemplifies a style of architecture for today that aims to transcend time through meticulously simple, broad design moves that derive directly — and admirably — from their context.

Michael Friebele practices at Merriman Associates Architects in Dallas.

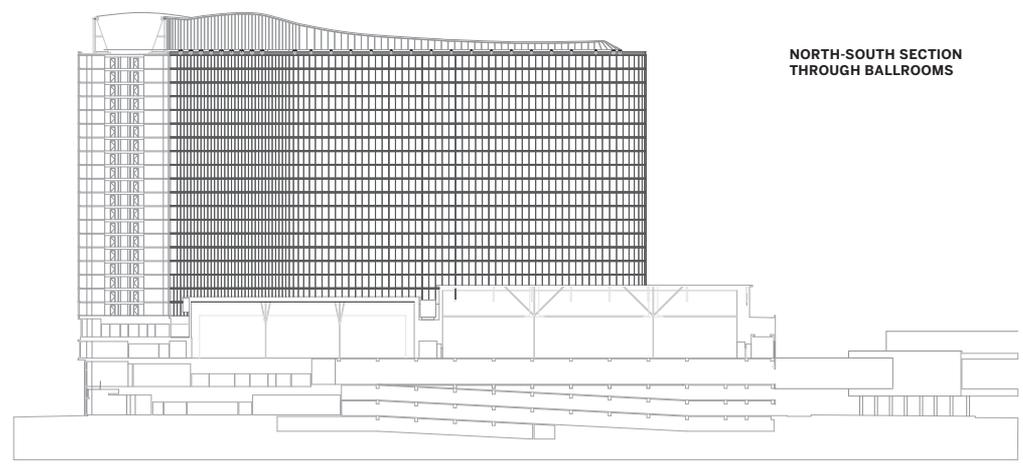


**Opposite page, from top** *Hotel interiors consultant Waldrop+Nichols brought recycled and local materials together in Texas Spice restaurant to create a modern connection to traditional Texas architecture. A typical Omni guestroom. Connection between the architecture and the urban fabric is most evident on the pool deck, which provides expansive views of downtown Dallas.*



- SITE PLAN**
- 1 RECEPTION
  - 2 OWNER'S BOX SPORT'S BAR
  - 3 BOB'S STEAK & CHOP HOUSE
  - 4 COLLECTIONS GIFT SHOP
  - 5 LOUNGE
  - 6 CIRCULATION
  - 7 TEXAS SPICE RESTAURANT

**Resources** **CONCRETE PAVEMENT:** Arreguin Group; **FENCES/GATES/HARDWARE/RAILINGS:** Milestone Metals; **RETAINING WALLS:** Serco; **SPA:** Spa Resources; **POOL:** Fun N Sun Pools; **PLANTERS:** Kornegay Design; **PRECAST ARCHITECTURAL CONCRETE:** Gate Precast Company; **CONCRETE MATERIALS:** Southern Star Concrete; **STONE COUNTERTOPS:** IL Granito; **POST TENSION REINFORCING STEEL:** Suncoast Post-Tension; **REBAR:** CMC Rebar; **ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORK:** Glenn Reider, Faubion, FCS, Woodhaus; **BUILDING INSULATION/GYPSUM BOARD/ACOUSTICAL CEILINGS:** Baker Triangle; **MEMBRANE ROOFING/ROOF ACCESSORIES:** KPost Company; **AIR/VAPOR BARRIERS:** Grace Construction Products; **ENTRANCES/ GLAZED CURTAINWALL/STRUCTURAL GLASS CURTAINWALL:** Trainor Glass; **GLASS:** M3 Glass Technologies (Trainor Glass); **DECORATIVE GLAZING:** DGB Glass; **GLASS HANDRAILS:** M3 Glass Technologies (Metalrite); **SHOWER DOORS:** M3 Glass Technologies (DGB Glass); **HORIZONTAL SLIDING DOORS:** Goldbrecht USA.; **DOOR HARDWARE:** VingCard; **TILE/STONE/WOOD FLOORING/CARPET/RESILIENT FLOORING/ARTWORK INSTALLATION:** Wilson Office Interiors; **HIGH-PERFORMANCE COATINGS:** Stonhard; **PLASTER:** KHS&S; **OPERABLE PARTITIONS:** Modernfold; **INTERIOR/EXTERIOR SIGNAGE:** David Carter Design Associates, Boyd Sign Systems; **WINDOW WASHING SYSTEM:** Tractel; **FOOD SERVICE EQUIPMENT:** Texas Metal Equipment; **LINEN CHUTES:** Golden Quality Services; **WATER FEATURES:** Greenscape Pump/GPSI; **PARKING EQUIPMENT:** Associated Time & Parking; **ELEVATORS:** Kone; **MECHANICAL/PLUMBING SYSTEMS:** Brandt; **FIRE PROTECTION:** GFS; **ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS:** Walker Engineering; **EXTERIOR LED LIGHTING FAÇADE:** Innovative Lighting; **SOFTWARE:** AutoCAD





# Bungalow Modern

by Canan Yetmen

**Project** Heywood Hotel, Austin

**Client** Kathy Setzer and George Reynolds

**Architect** KRDB

**Design Team** Chris Krager, AIA; Brad Deal; Dan Fields

**Contractor** iON Constructors

**Consultants** Kasey McCarty Interior Design Studio (interiors); Carolyn Kelley Landscape Architect (landscape); Waterstreet Engineering (civil); LaMette Consulting (mep); GreenEarth Engineering (structural)

**Photographer** Casey Dunn



In Austin's richly diverse and energetic East Side neighborhoods, a rebirth is taking place. The addition of the Heywood Hotel on East Cesar Chavez Street represents the latest addition to a burgeoning and thriving East Side culture. Nestled comfortably among the barbecue joints, tacquerias and local shops that have so far eluded big-box homogenization, the hotel builds respectfully on the neighborhood's considerable charms.

The Heywood was not content to swoop in and plant a modernist statement on its admittedly little piece of prime real estate, a 1200-sf arts and crafts bungalow located conveniently close to downtown but tucked comfortably into its unassuming, small-scale context. Instead, owners Kathy Setzer and George Reynolds wanted to join the East Austin community they loved for its unique qualities and contribute to its entrepreneurial spirit. They commissioned Austin's KRDB to transform the little house into a fine boutique hotel that is an invigorating yet responsible and respectful member of its established community.

For the team of client and architect, integration was a key driver for the project — integration into the existing fabric of the neighborhood, integration of the house's existing craftsman architecture with a modern sensibility, and integration of interior and exterior to create a memorable spatial experience.

In addition, Setzer and Reynolds wanted to achieve a "Palm Springs" mid-century aesthetic, which — given the bungalow's immediate proximity to its neighbors on either side, and its typical 50x150 urban lot — would require considerable imagination. KRDB Principal Chris Krager recalls, "We had to find a way to integrate a modern aesthetic organically into the existing framework, rather than imposing a new style onto it." Not to mention finding a way to carve seven guest rooms, a public lobby, an outdoor gathering area, and sufficient parking out of the space available.

To establish the project's feasibility as well as its potential, Krager prepared a plan, which was carted around to countless planning commis-

sion meetings and presented to the East Cesar Chavez planning team for input. “Every inch of the site is used in some way,” he says. “We had to begin with the multiple, competing requirements such as parking, ADA, Subchapter E, and IBC, which were often in conflict on this small site, and come up with a scheme that didn’t just meet requirements, but created a special environment.” Meanwhile Setzer and Reynolds worked on the economics of the development and conducted a door-to-door public relations campaign in the community. “We wanted to make sure that our neighbors supported the project,” says Setzer. “It was important to us that we set an example of how to accomplish this kind of project the right way. And as longtime East Austin residents, we wanted to make sure our neighbors understood our intention to run a neighborhood-oriented business.”

Achieving consensus among the neighborhood and approvals from the City of Austin was challenging. But Krager, who has built a reputation for innovative and progressive approaches to development and building, was undeterred. The project ultimately required twelve administrative vari-

*Krager drew from his experiences at boutique hotels in places like Istanbul and London, where small existing structures are woven into historic fabric.*

ances and conditional use approval from the planning commission. “There were overlays on overlays,” Krager says. Architects and owners presented the project’s unique ambitions and qualities and successfully showed how it complied with the neighborhood association’s voluntary design standards. Once approvals and financing were in place, attention turned to the design of the spaces.

**Achieving a mid-century aesthetic** within the skeleton of an arts and crafts bungalow required a thoughtful touch. Krager drew from his experiences at boutique hotels in places like Istanbul and London, where small existing structures are woven into historic fabric and make the most of the available resources. “For me, those kinds of hotels are the essence of travel,” he says. They provide a powerful connection to the place you are visiting, allow you to meet other travelers as well as locals, and give you an intimate, personal experience.”

The design solution is organized around three public spaces that consider the rhythms and needs of visitors and help create connections among people as well as place. The first of these spaces begins as guests approach the hotel through a landscaped forecourt that sets the tone for the architecture. From the street, the hotel maintains its bungalow appearance; only the signage clues passersby to its function as a hotel. The lobby’s double-height ceilings create a bright and airy centerpiece, and custom casework gives the relatively small space a comfortable efficiency. Long-leaf pine flooring and the original eight-inch baseboards warm the space, which is furnished with easy mid-century pieces and rich textures. Two guestrooms are located off this lobby, the only ones to be incorporated into the original footprint of the house.

A staircase opposite the front entrance draws the eye upward, reinforcing the verticality of the space and rewarding guests with the unexpected revelation of a second-floor courtyard terrace. This is the second floor of the new addition, which is mostly obscured by the original house and connected to it by a small bridge and green roof. The addition’s ground floor provides covered parking. The remaining five guestrooms are gathered





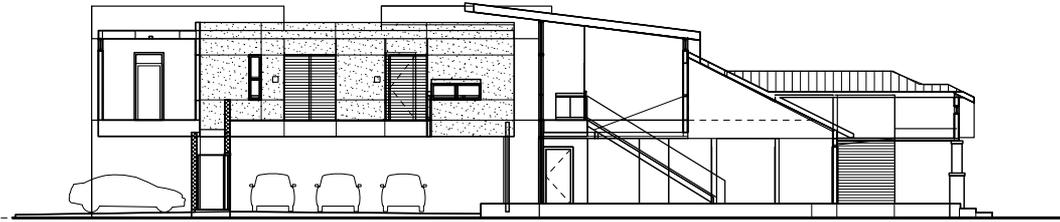
**Previous spread, left and right** *The forecourt only hints at life as a hotel. Interiors, with furniture built by owner George Reynolds, are both modern and warm.*

**Clockwise from top left** *Lobby with built-in millwork and original long leaf pine flooring. One of two guestrooms within the original footprint. Each room is uniquely furnished with local finds, including vintage Heywood Wakefield pieces. The balcony overlooking the entry drive quietly signals the addition. Access to second-floor terrace from lobby.*

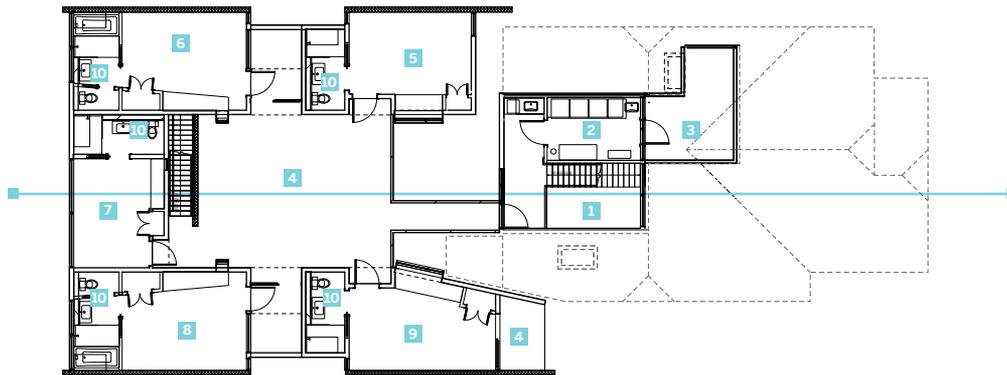


**Resources** FIRE PROTECTION/COMMUNICATIONS/  
**VACUUM:** Allsafe Security; **DRYWALL:** Builders Gypsum  
 Supply; **GUTTERS:** Capital City Gutters; **HVAC:**  
 Coolmasters HVAC; **METAL ROOF:** Custom Metal Roof  
 Systems; **TILE:** DalTile; **PLUMBING SUPPLIES:** Ferguson  
 Enterprises; **PAINT:** PPG; **TESTING/INSPECTIONS:**  
 InTEC of Austin; **SITE UTILITIES:** JM Utilities; **MASONRY:**  
 Materials Products International; **WINDOWS:** Rhino  
 Austin; **ELECTRICAL:** Sable Electric; **FRAMING MATERI-  
 ALS:** Stock Building Supply; **COUNTERTOPS:** Silestone  
 (Stone Systems of Central Texas); **IRRIGATION  
 SYSTEM:** Taurus Irrigation & Landscape Design; **METAL  
 MATERIALS:** Triple-S Steel Supply Co.; **CONCRETE/  
 LANDSCAPING:** WR Landscaping & Concrete

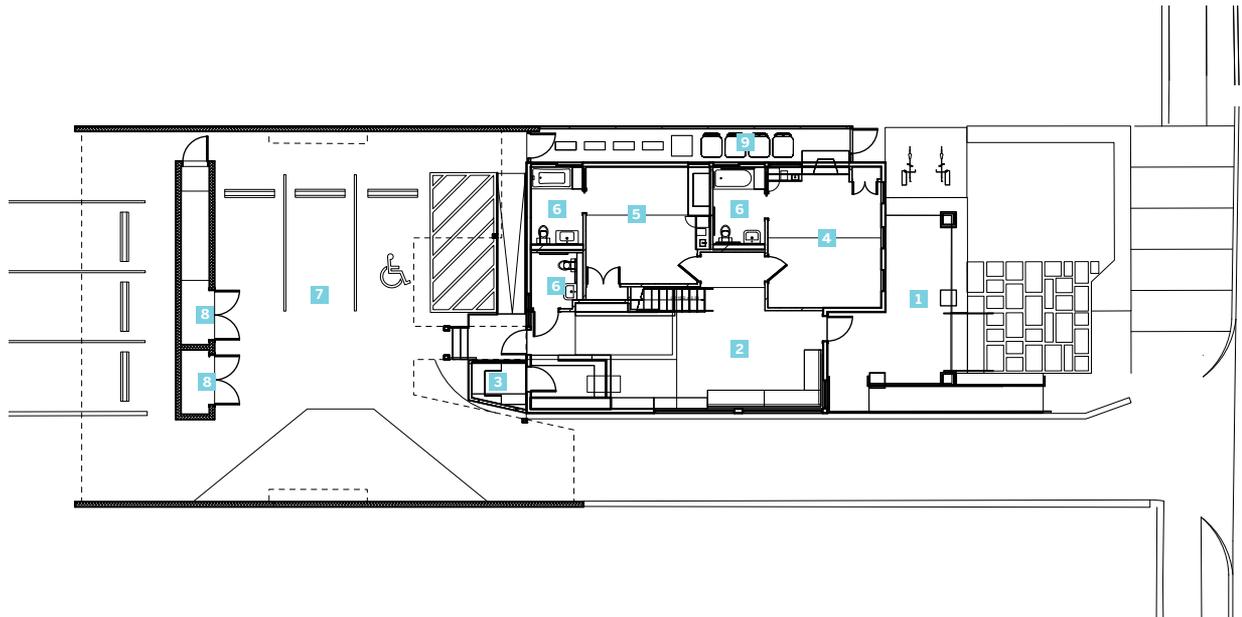
**SECTION  
 WEST THROUGH COURTYARD**



- SITE PLAN**
- 1 OPEN TO BELOW
  - 2 LAUNDRY
  - 3 STORAGE
  - 4 DECK
  - 5 UNIT 3
  - 6 UNIT 4
  - 7 UNIT 5
  - 8 UNIT 6
  - 9 UNIT 7
  - 10 BATHROOM



- SITE PLAN**
- 1 PORCH
  - 2 LOBBY/RECEPTION
  - 3 OFFICE
  - 4 UNIT 1
  - 5 UNIT 2
  - 6 BATHROOM
  - 7 GARAGE
  - 8 UTILITY
  - 9 TRASH



**This page, from top** *The five rooms in the new addition center around a shared second-story terrace that can accommodate small events. Two rooms also have small private outdoor seating areas, partitioned by sliding panels. The terrace is connected to the main bungalow by a small bridge.*



around this second-floor courtyard. From the street, the only suggestion of this addition is provided by the front-most guestroom's small balcony, which overlooks the driveway and street beyond. "KRDB made such clever use of space," Setzer says. "The property as a whole feels easily two or three times its actual size. Our customers love that the space is organized really well."

**Each room is unique** in both décor and plan, responding to allotted space with a creative use of its roughly 260 square feet (the largest room is 300 square feet, the smallest 230). To provide desired privacy, Krager placed windows to frame small views or steal glimpses of the cityscape as well as the sky to connect guests to the larger city beyond. East- and west-facing walls are burnished CMU, which is left exposed on the interior. Very few walls are shared between rooms and even the two downstairs rooms (in the original house) have no rooms above them. Reynolds fabricated the built-in

*"Everything about the business — from the design of the building to the way we operate the hotel — is focused on providing a special and handcrafted experience."*

beds and desks himself, customizing each to the room's size and needs. Long-leaf pine flooring ties the new construction back to the original house.

Skylights enliven the quality of interior light and even within the limited-space bathroom are given special attention. Custom vanities and cabinets (also built by Reynolds) are wall-mounted to use the space well, and floor-to-ceiling tile and skylights create a luxurious atmosphere. Setzer and Reynolds, along with interior designer Kasey McCarthy, selected the mixed-period, minimalist vintage furniture that was unearthed at flea markets, thrift shops, and Craigslist. "The result is a fresh combination of vintage and modern," McCarthy says. "The goal was to be homey and welcoming, and not at all intimidating." They carefully restored and reupholstered the pieces, adding rich textiles and colors to warm the spaces and provide a sense of whimsy and casual comfort. "Our theme was warm minimalism, and a focus on incorporating local handmade items, like pillows, vases and ceramics from neighborhood artists. Everything about the business — from the design of the building to the way we operate the hotel — is focused on providing a special and handcrafted experience."

**The success of the Heywood**, open since December 2011 and enjoying high occupancy rates, extends beyond the walls of the building. As an urban infill and adaptive reuse project, its seamless integration into the fabric of its existing neighborhood was not simply a by-product of its establishment. From the outset, it was one of its goals. For Krager it is successful on multiple levels — an example of architecture interwoven seamlessly with its function and the community in which it resides, as well as the creative reuse of existing building stock. Krager sums up the project well: "Creating an architecture/urbanism that respects the history of the community, while providing the kind of fabric we will want and need in a fast-growing Austin, is one of our primary challenges as designers," he says. "I feel we were successful with this at the Heywood."

Formerly Assoc. Publisher of *TA*, Canan Yetmen is principal of CYMK Group in Austin.

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test_date	4/10/09
efflorescence	no
dimensions	"3-5/8" x 2-1/4" x 7-5/8"
min_thickness_of_face_shells	"> 3/4"
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color_family	"bold,brown"
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qty_per_sf	6.75
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equivalent_web_thickness	"> 1/4"
lead_distance	www.brick.com/cgi-bin/LeadDistance.pl?brand=Acme
astm_type	FBS
recommended_cleaning	www.prosoco.com
color_catalog	www.brick.com/pdf/catalog/accp
manufacturer_phone	(817) 332-4101 or (800) 792
texture	Heritage
size	Modular Size
plant	Acme-Ochs Plant
astm_grade	SW
company	Acme Brick
max_water_absorption	Boil < 17% Avg. Boil < 20 Ind.
astm_specification	C-216
weight_pounds	0
plant_longitude	-94.9625
plant_latitude	44.2447
compressive_strength_psi	"> 2500 psi each unit, > 3000 psi average of 5 units"
specifications	www.brick.com/guidespec
manufacturer	Acme Brick
percent_void	< 25%
master_format_2010	www.masterformat.com
manufacturer_address	"3024 Acme Brick Plaza, Fort Worth, TX 76109"
product_name	Autumn Antiqu

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**Valley Rose (Modular Size)**

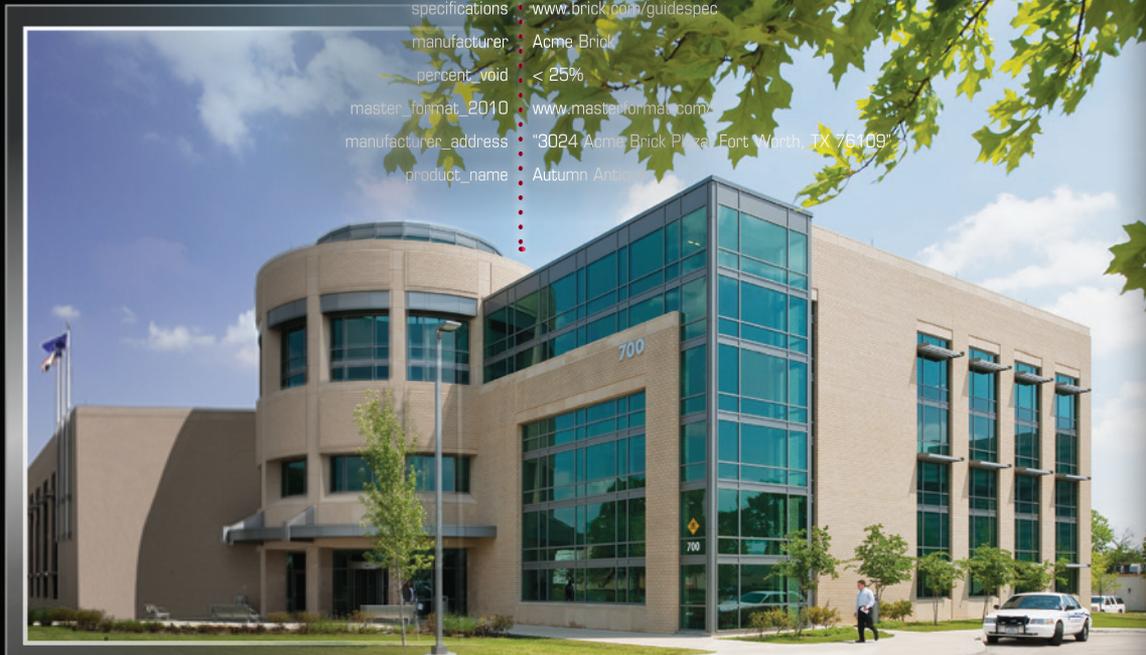
BIM Data Wall View Building View

Building 1 Building 2 Building 3 House 4

Mortar color:

Roof color: Gray

Trim color: White



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## ... with Charles K. Thompson, FAIA

article by Larry Paul Fuller

photography by Julie Pizzo

It's a Monday morning at Archillum Lighting Design in Austin. Founder Charles Thompson, FAIA, is just now back from a four-day road trip on his 2009 Harley Davidson Ultra Classic. His time on the open road to Big Bend and back has helped to recharge his energy and clear his mind. So he's ready for whatever awaits him.

One thing awaiting him — along with meetings to attend, deadlines to meet, documents to issue — is a voice mail from a residential client who is surprised that the exterior lighting holes have already been cut into the high-end wood soffits. She thinks the plan was to wait until Thompson was available to field-verify the positioning. And, in fact, she is right. As it turns out, through a phone call to the client, Thompson finds out that “she isn't angry; she's just surprised.”

The innate affability that helps Thompson navigate a potentially difficult client conversation seems somehow related to the laid-back, slightly quirky, aura of his office. Picture a suite of five smallish contiguous zones he shares with the three other members of his firm, all of whom happen to be female. Stepping through the front door of the space, one encounters a reception

desk sporting color-changing LED accents (programmable to millions of colors) and eight rare lava lamps. Then there's the “ego wall” of photos that show projects ranging from small residential to large commercial (not yet pictured is Austin's Formula 1 racetrack project, now under way). And hanging all around are various types of lighting fixtures suspended from a wired pipe grid system. “You can't very well view a ceiling fixture when it's lying on a table,” Thompson says.

On exhibit in his personal office is a casual array of lighting toys and gizmos acquired over the years. A classic “Lite-Brite” toy with a supply of colored pegs to arrange creatively into a matrix of lighted holes. A few mechanical toys that light up and spin around. And from his mom, an illuminated pink flamingo. The toys all set a fun tone for the office. “There are lots of people who gulp down some coffee and toast each morning and head to a job they hate,” he says, “but I'm glad to say that's not me.”

Thompson knew early on that he wanted to be an architect, and ended up defining his career for himself. Early drafting experience during

both high school and college gave Thompson a thorough familiarity with technical plans for lighting, electrical, and air conditioning. As a

*There are lots of people who gulp down some coffee and toast each morning and head to a job they hate, but I'm glad to say that's not me.*

1981 high-honors graduate from the UT Austin School of Architecture, he focused on a career in architectural lighting — although he has been registered as an architect since 1984.

**On this particular day** following his return from Big Bend, a jobsite tour and meeting of Austin's Custom Residential Architects Network (CRAN) is being staged at a rambling, several-million-dollar residence under construction in the Mirador Escala neighborhood on a hilltop ridge above Barton Creek. Thompson is serving as lighting consultant for the hill country contemporary house designed by Austin architect James D. LaRue.

Moving informally through the series of spaces, random commentary becomes a forum for Thompson's ideas — true convictions — about lighting. “We want to do our part in creating spaces that people want to use and inhabit because they feel comfortable there,” he says. For Thompson, those ideal results emerge from a close collaboration with the architect. “We try to understand the architect's vision and pursue it as our own,” he says. “If there's no passion from the architect, no clear articulation of a vision, that's a bad place to start.”

Nestled into a ridge with dramatic views, the house being toured has an elaborate outdoor terrace and pool area, complete with a bocce ball court. Proceeding through the dining room, Thompson reveals the Archillumme scheme for a chandelier of sorts comprising 22 lighted globes hanging in a seemingly random pattern at varying heights. “That's an allusion to the bocce balls,” he says, “and viewed through the wall of glass that is part of the entry sequence, they become a signature element for the house.”

He points out, in this same room, the “layers of light” that he often uses in a space to achieve pleasing contrast: uniform lighting for floors and walls, punctuated by a source of crisp light (the chandelier), and additional “punched up” areas as warranted (special lighting for art on the wall). “All too often,” he laments, “designers consider the ceiling as the only mounting surface, so they

treat the lighting plan as just an exercise for the reflected ceiling plan — rather than drawing on options such as wall sconces and lighted coves, or fixtures in the floor, in furniture, or in millwork.”

Inevitably, the conversation turns to the widespread current use of LED lighting in the interest of energy conservation and low life-cycle costs. He endorses LED lighting as a resource, but stops short of accepting it as a panacea. “We're still proving up some of the long-life claims, and you have to watch out for inconsistency in color, low light output, and the sometimes prohibitive cost of fixtures.” Thompson also cautions against “sledgehammer measures” to achieve low consumption such as mandating that all walls be white or establishing unreasonable limits on watts per square foot. “There's a whole generation out there that will be needing higher levels of light — not lower — in order to function well,” he says. “The best way to reduce lighting-related energy consumption in buildings is to reduce the burn time.” And of course the way to do that is through lighting controls, which is why Thompson, in this large house project, found himself negotiating with the architect for more technology space to accommodate ten 18-inch-wide dimming panels.

**Back in the office** after the jobsite tour, Thompson discusses his missionary role as one committed to “spreading knowledge” to design professionals — illuminating them — on the discipline of lighting. He does so through his lighting design course at the UT School of Architecture and through numerous lectures for professional groups. He also is launching a for-profit venture called LUX-ed Education Services, which is based on the idea of offering intensive one- or two-day lighting design courses for professionals in smaller cities who don't have ready access to such continuing education resources.

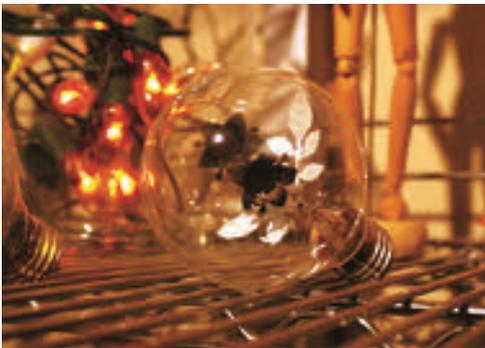
Thompson looks at it like this: “Through our firm, we can have a direct impact on the lighting quality of maybe 20-plus projects a year. And in the U.S. alone, architects outnumber the world population of professional lighting designers by maybe 70 or 80 to one. So if I can teach future architects and fellow professionals how to create better lighting in buildings, I can have a positive effect on every job they will ever do throughout their careers. That to me is gratifying. It's a very exciting thing.”

Not unlike straddling a high-speed Harley on the open road. □

Guest Editor Larry Paul Fuller is a principal in fd2s inc.

**Previous page** Thompson demonstrates the fractured light pattern from an LED fixture.

**Below, top to bottom** Lighted gizmos from Thompson's office display case. A lava lamp assortment is the focal point of a reception desk built by Thompson and his dad.





**Far left and left** *Thompson and Archillum designer Maria Morrissey discuss drawing notes. Documentation for a dining room "chandelier" with suspended globes that allude to the bocce ball court.*



**Immediate right and surrounding images** *Thompson with Austin architect James D. LaRue, designer of the custom house on tour now under construction in the Mirador Escala neighborhood by Elegant Estate Homes. The jobsite tour attracts a crowd of design and building industry professionals.*





ARCHITECT - CRAIG STITELER DESIGN  
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This house was designed by Craig Stiteler Design for the Memorial Park area of Houston, Texas.

The homeowners wanted a classical Mediterranean style home that took advantage of the views of a wooded ravine at the rear of the property. A high priority was placed on energy efficiency as well as aesthetics.

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home was simple. Eagle's clad exterior windows and doors, with a rich mahogany wood interior, added the finishing touches to the mahogany details throughout the home. The extruded aluminum brick mold, sill nosing and drip cap flashing matched seamlessly to further enhance the beauty of this home.

This home was built by K & C Classic Homes and completed in December of 2011.

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# Portfolio: Interiors

## Clean Line Energy Partners

**Project** Clean Line Energy, Houston

**Client** Clean Line Energy

**Architect** Kirksey Architecture

**Design team** Brian Malarkey, FAIA; Lisa Alfonso, AIA; Jeff Chapman, AIA; Stacy Odom

**Contractor** D.E. Harvey Builders

**Consultants** T&D Engineers (mep); Ttweak (graphics/marketing/brand imaging/iconography); Telios (commissioning)

**Photographer** Aker/Zvonkovic Photography

Designed by Kirksey Architecture, Clean Line Energy Partners in downtown Houston is a 6,700-sf space housing an electricity transmission company that develops electrical transmission lines connecting wind farms to urban areas. Several factors guided the design, including a limited budget of \$350,000. The client desired a sustainable, historic headquarters building with a design that would reflect the company's fresh, hip brand.

To accomplish these goals, Kirksey renovated space in the City National Bank building (1947) and transferred Clean Line's marketing collateral concepts to the building's interior via color and imagery. Interior building columns are covered with manipulated photographic images of power lines and transformers, complementing the client's black and white, rock and roll photography collection. Backsplashes and walls reinterpret Clean Line's logo and color scheme. Finishes, lighting, and corporate branding continue into the common-area corridor. Due to the small budget, pre-owned filing units, workstations, and demountable partitions were selected without compromising the quality of the interior design.

Sustainable features include low-flow aerators for sinks and showers; low-flow toilets; shower facilities and bike storage to encourage employees to take non-automobile transportation; efficient lighting that reduces the lighting power density by 44%; and on-site recycling of glass, plastic, aluminum, cardboard, and paper. Ninety percent of construction debris was diverted from a landfill. The project is LEED Gold certified.

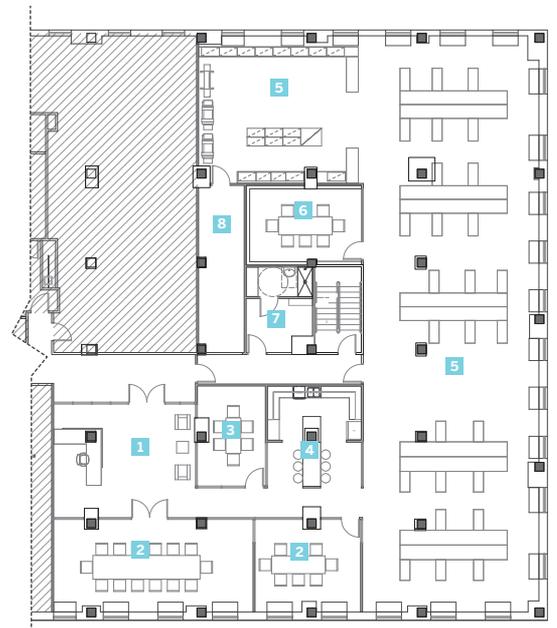
**Noelle Heinze**



**Resources** GYPSUM: Owens Corning; **TILE:** DalTile; **PAINT:** Sherwin Williams; **CARPET:** InterfaceFLOR; **WRITEABLE WALL COVERINGS:** Wall Talkers (Wallcoverings International); **OPERABLE PARTITIONS/ DESKS/CONFERENCE TABLES:** Teknion; **RUBBER BASE:** Roppe; **SOLID SURFACING:** Eco by Constantino; **TASK CHAIRS:** SitOnIt (JMC Associates)



**FLOOR PLAN**  
1 RECEPTION  
2 CONFERENCE  
3 INTERVIEW ROOM  
4 BREAK ROOM  
5 WORK AREA  
6 WAR ROOM  
7 BIKE STORAGE  
8 SERVER ROOM



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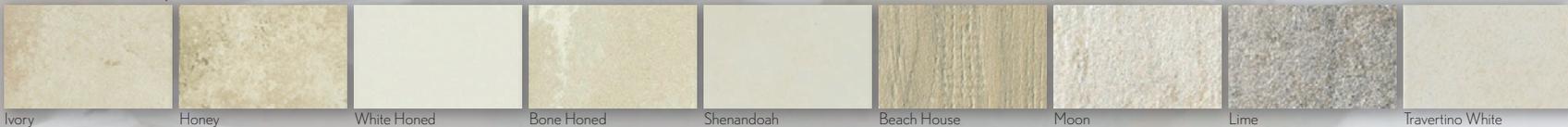
pictured: polished white honed



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**Propaganda Hair Group**

**Project** Propaganda Hair Group Salon, Austin

**Client** Propaganda Hair Group

**Architect** Dick Clark Architecture

**Design team** Dick Clark, AIA; Kevin Gallaugher; Becky Jeanes

**Contractor** River Rock Builders

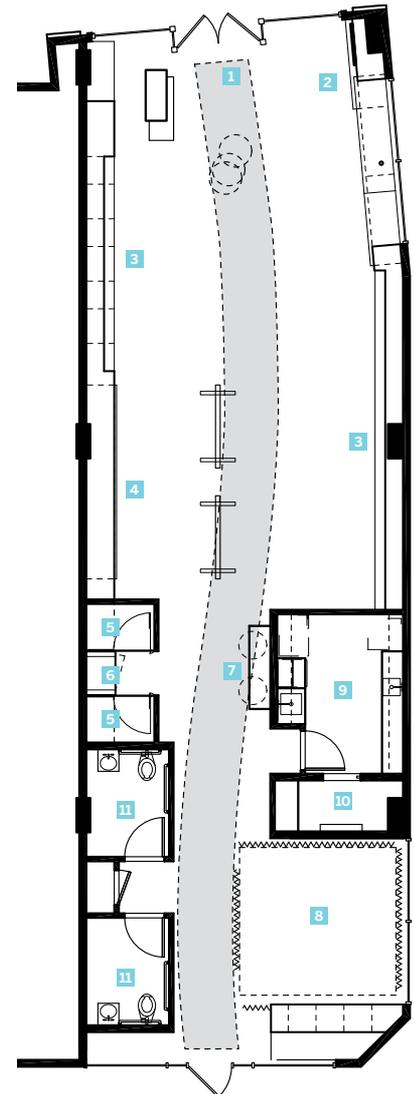
**Consultants** Bay & Associates (mep); Legacy Lighting (lighting)

**Photographer** Paul Bardagjy

Dick Clark Architecture designed Propaganda Hair Group’s leased, 1,700-sf shell space within the Gables 5th Street Commons building in downtown Austin. The client requested a loft-like space with an open plan, minimal furnishings, and wood and concrete textures. The design focuses on ways to differentiate program areas within a single space, while offering an open atmosphere.

Attention was given to day-to-day salon operations so that design details could complement function and eliminate supplemental furnishings and clutter. Walnut cabinets along the outer walls create a continuous design element and delineate individual spaces, such as retail display, reception, stylist stations, color-technician areas, dressing rooms, and a smock closet. A shampoo area with a dropped wood ceiling and sheer curtains provides a quiet environment remote from the activity of the stylist area. Auxiliary spaces — break room, restrooms, and an office — appear as tall white volumes to create gallery-like walls for photographic display. Below an open ceiling and exposed building systems, a sculptural, glossy white textured spine made of CNC-routed MDF panels connects a rear parking garage entrance and a front entrance. LED lighting was selected to offset the environmental impact of the salon.

**Noelle Heinze**



- FLOOR PLAN**
- 1 ENTRY/RECEPTION
  - 2 MAKE-UP STATION
  - 3 STYLIST STATIONS
  - 4 COLORISTS
  - 5 DRESSING ROOM
  - 6 SMOCK CLOSET
  - 7 HAIR DRYER STATION
  - 8 SHAMPOO ROOM
  - 9 BREAK ROOM
  - 10 OFFICE
  - 11 RESTROOM

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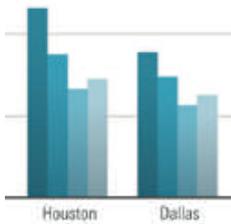
## Trends of the Trade



### Two Texas Design Firms among Four Waller Creek Competition Finalists

Two Texas design firms are among four design teams that have been chosen as finalists in an international competition to revitalize Austin's downtown Waller Creek. More than 30 teams entered the competition late last year, and nine semifinalists were chosen in January. The four team finalists are CMG and Public Architecture, San Francisco; Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates and Thomas Phifer & Partners, New York; Turenscape, Beijing, and Lake|Flato Architects, San Antonio; and Workshop:Ken Smith Landscape Architect, New York and Irvine, Calif., with Ten Eyck Landscape Architects, Austin, and Rogers Marvel Architects, New York. The finalists were announced April 16 by the Waller Creek Conservancy, which is overseeing efforts to turn the blighted waterway into an engaging public space for culture, relaxation, and education. In mid-September, the teams will submit their conceptual designs to the jury who will then release them to the public for input. The final winning design and team to oversee the revitalization of Waller Creek will be announced no later than Oct. 18.

*The final winning design and team to oversee the revitalization of Waller Creek will be announced no later than Oct. 18.*



*A chart on the Energy Star website compares growth in the number of Energy Star certified buildings over a four year period.*

### EPA's Annual Energy Star Buildings List Includes Three Texas Cities

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has released its annual listing of U.S. metropolitan areas featuring the most Energy Star certified buildings for 2011, and three Texas cities — Dallas, Fort Worth, and Houston — have made the list. Energy use in commercial buildings accounts for nearly 20 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions at a cost of more than \$100 billion per year. Commercial buildings that earn the EPA's Energy Star must perform in the top 25 percent of similar buildings nationwide and must be independently verified by a licensed professional engineer or a registered architect. Energy Star certified buildings use an average of 35 percent less energy and are responsible for 35 percent less carbon dioxide emissions than typical buildings. Fifteen types of commercial buildings can earn the Energy Star, including office buildings, K-12 schools, and retail stores. A full listing of the top Energy Star cities can be found at [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).



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## Trends of the Trade



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### Free Mobile App for Design Professionals

McGraw-Hill Construction Sweets has developed and launched a free mobile app that enables design professionals to search and download building product information on iPhones and Android devices. Users can search, compare, and select from thousands of product catalogs, computer-aided design (CAD) details, three-part specifications, and building information modeling (BIM) objects. The Sweets mobile app can be downloaded at the iTunes Store, Android Market, and at [www.construction.com](http://www.construction.com). For more information, visit [www.sweets.com](http://www.sweets.com).



### Library is San Antonio's First City-Owned LEED Gold Project

The Parman Library at Stone Oak in San Antonio, designed by Marmon Mok, is the first city-owned project to be awarded LEED Gold Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council. The library's design features natural light, overhangs, screens, high-performance glazing, and nature trails to address environmental stewardship issues, building performance, and occupant comfort.



### AIA Convention and Design Expo, May 17-19, Washington, D.C.

The American Institute of Architects' 2012 Convention Guide and Daily Schedule are now available online. Both publications offer information on more than 400 convention programs—from pre-convention workshops and expo show floor education to educational tours and networking events. The convention is being held at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. The theme is "Design Connects." Visit [www.convention.aia.org](http://www.convention.aia.org).

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### Positive Conditions Persist for Architecture Billings Index

The commercial sector continues to lead the Architecture Billings Index (ABI), which has remained in positive territory for the fifth consecutive month. As a leading economic indicator of construction activity, the ABI reflects the approximate nine- to twelve-month lag time between architecture billings and construction spending. The AIA reported the March ABI score was 50.4, following a mark of 51.0 in February. This score reflects a slight increase in demand for design services (any score above 50 indicates an increase in billings). The new projects inquiry index was 56.6, down from a mark of 63.4 the previous month. "We are starting to hear more about improving conditions in the marketplace, with a greater sense of optimism that there will be greater demand for design services," says AIA Chief Economist Kermit Baker, PhD, Hon. AIA. "But that is not across the board, and there are still a number of architecture firms struggling, so progress is likely to be measured in inches rather than miles for the next few months." More information is available at [www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org).



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## Is Drawing Dead?

A Symposium at Yale poses, and answers, the question

by Bryce A. Weigand, FAIA

To explore the future of drawing in this digital age, the Yale School of Architecture hosted a symposium February 9-11 entitled “Is Drawing Dead?” Approximately 450 architects, students, historians, theorists, neurologists, digital gurus, and professors gathered in Hastings Hall in the Paul Rudolph-designed School of Architecture building to discuss and debate the question — an issue accentuated by the ready availability of digital drawing resources.

The Symposium opened Thursday evening with a lecture and exhibit of some 160 drawings, paintings, and models by Massimo Scolari entitled “The Representation of Architecture.” Friday’s sessions included five presenters focusing on “The Voice of Drawing: History, Meaning, and Resistance.” Among them was Juhani Pallasmaa, architect and educator from Helsinki, who presented “Drawing with the Mind, Pen, Hand, Eye, and Brain.” Pallasmaa called for “slowness” in the face of digital design capabilities, proposing that “The brain speaks to the hand; the hand speaks to the brain.” Sir Peter Cook, of the Royal Academy of Arts, London — and of Archigram fame in the 60s and 70s — delivered the Friday evening keynote address entitled “Real is only Halfway There.” He featured the identifying creative moment of artists and architects — from Eric Owen Moss, to Hugh Ferriss’ City Scapes, to Daniel Libeskind. And from Zaha Hadid’s looping sketches, to Steven

Holl watercolors, to Erich Mendelsohn’s quick pen sketches — and on into the night.

Saturday’s morning discussion — “Burning Bridges: Questioning Practice” — led to a final Saturday afternoon session entitled “The Critical Act” and the assertion that after six centuries, “Drawing is not going to die.” Michael Graves spoke of “The Necessity for Drawing: Tangible Speculation” and posed the question: “With all

*Michael Graves posed the question: “With all the computers available, why would you ever want to draw?”*

the computers available, why would you ever want to draw?” He proposed as a counter to this question the inspired drawings of Massimo Scolari and observed that by sketching, we remember. He shared his drawings from school days through travels and those familiar lyrical colored pencil elevations of his 80s buildings.

Mario Carpo of Yale closed the formal session with an address entitled “On the Opacity of Architectural Notations” and referenced technical notations from examples as ancient as the Pantheon in Rome. The presenters were all passionate, energized, and never lacking for an explanation. I departed New Haven and Yale with a sense of the value of image-making with whatever medium one chooses, and with the realization that the ideas from the wellspring of imagination have both a deep and rich history and a promising, exciting future. The act of eye to brain to pencil to paper still has a seminal place in our creative quest.

Bryce A. Weigand, FAIA, helps lead the institutional work of Good Fulton & Farrell in Dallas.



*Weigand’s sketchbooks, kept for over 40 years, are created as a visual diary and catalogue of inspiring places in hopes of someday sparking a real painting or tangible project ... and also as an informal record of his boys’ scribbles when they were two or three years old. Book XIX illustrating scenes of New Haven and Yale is flanked by a whole herd of smaller Moleskines.*

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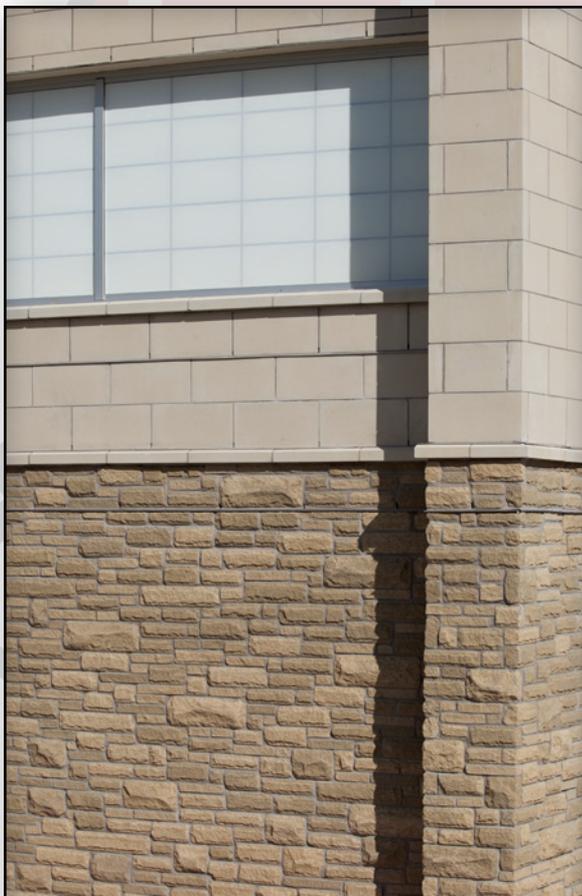
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