Texas Architect

THE ADAPTATION ISSUE
SPRING 2026
VOL 76 ISSUE 1

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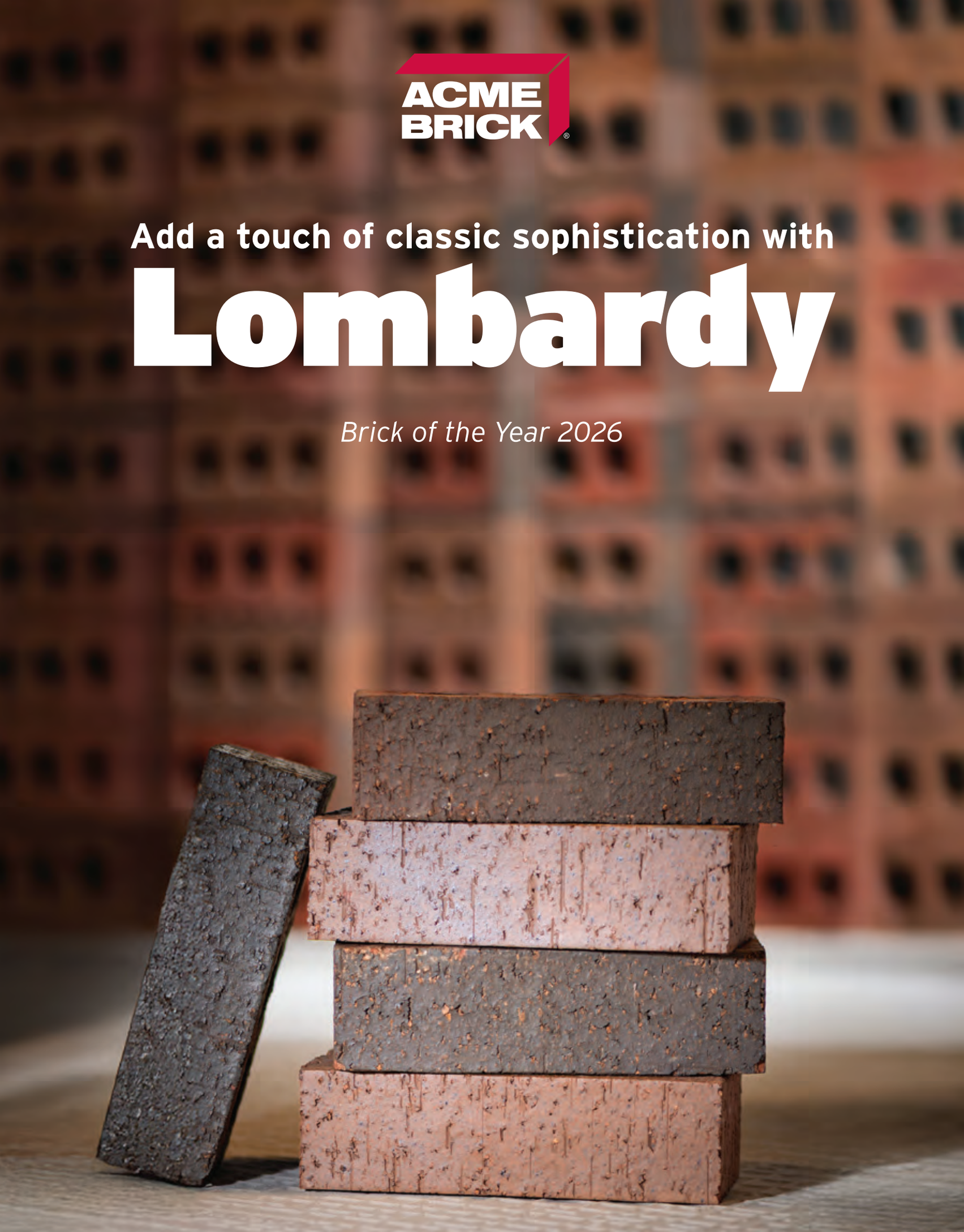

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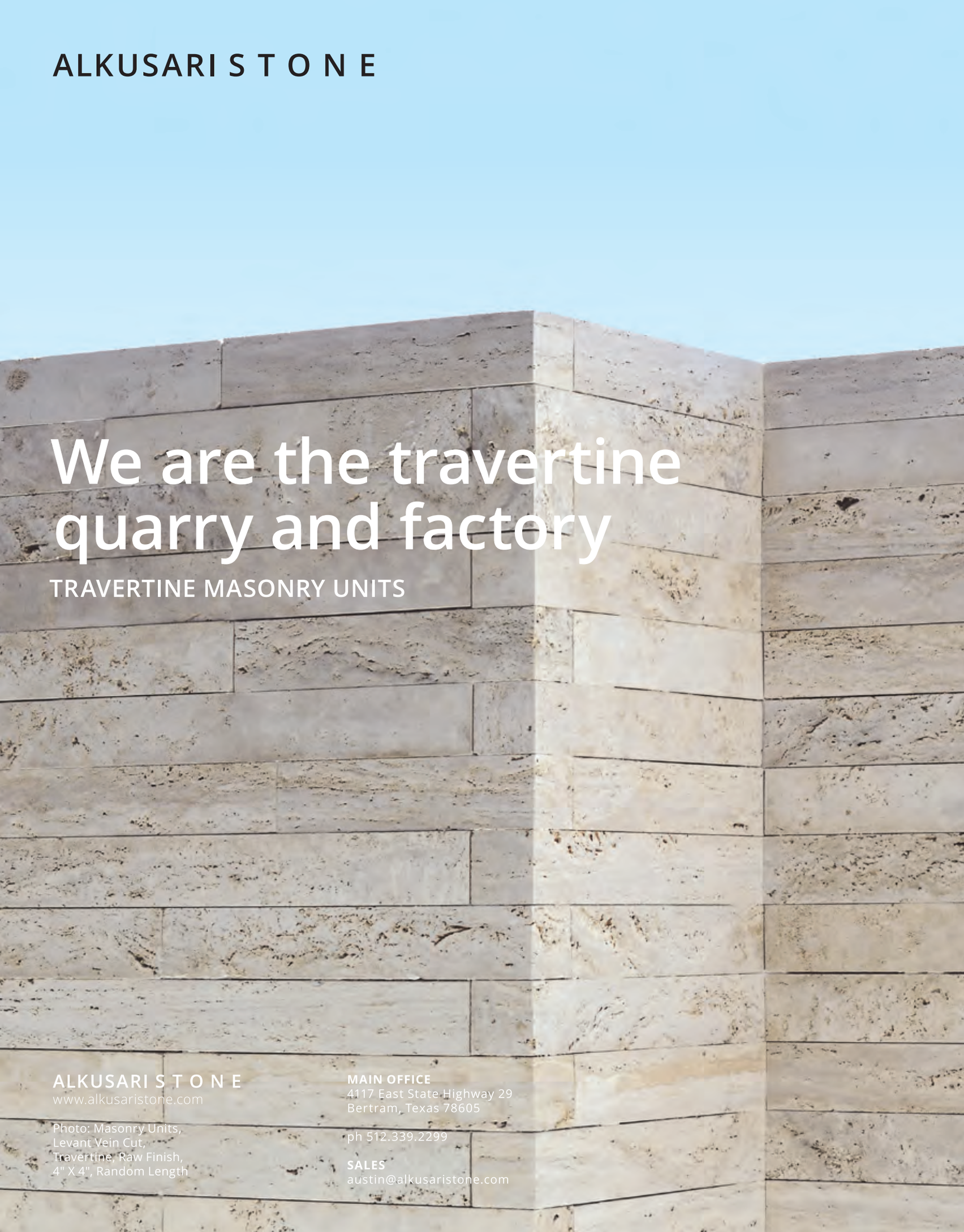

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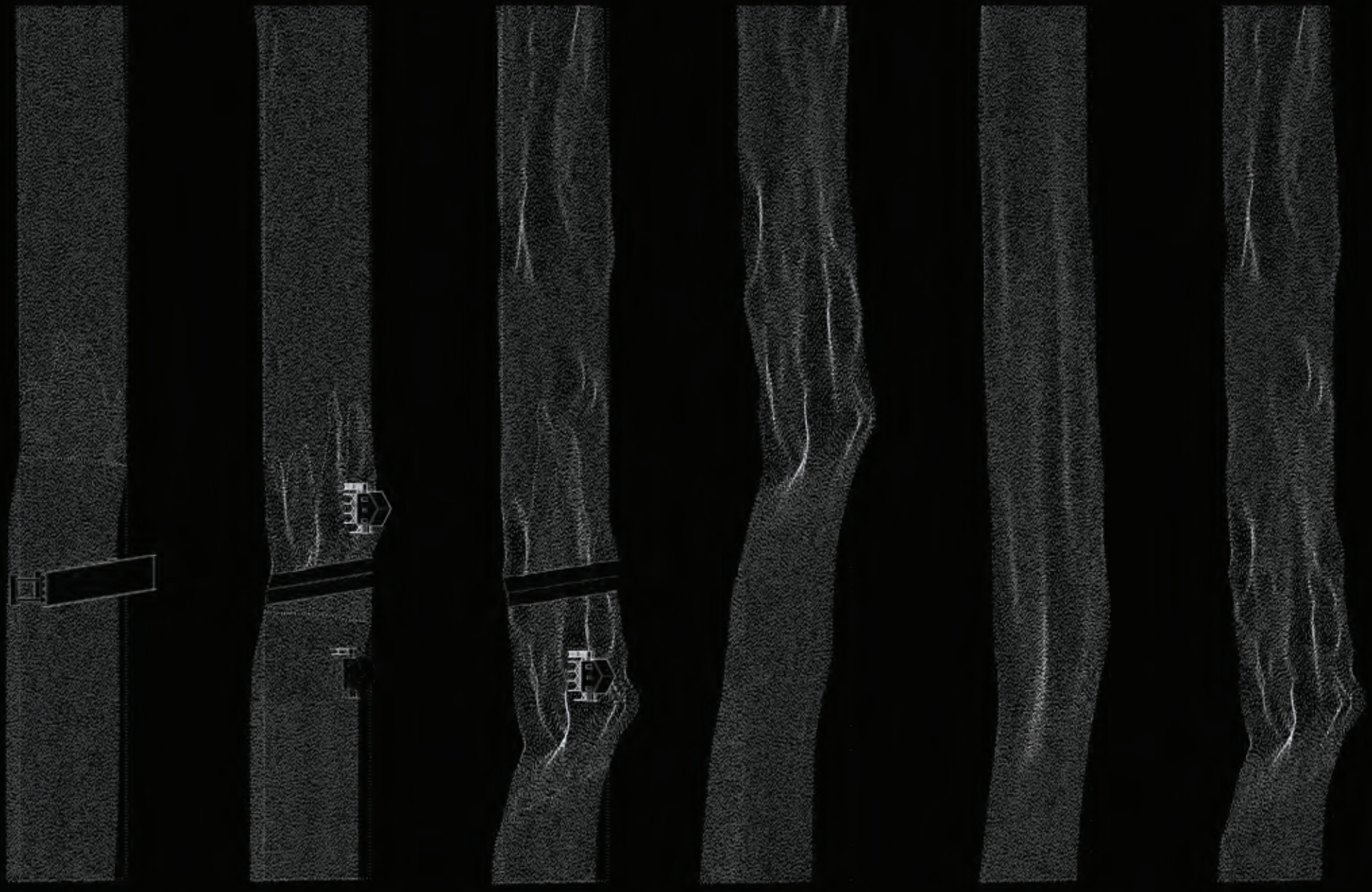
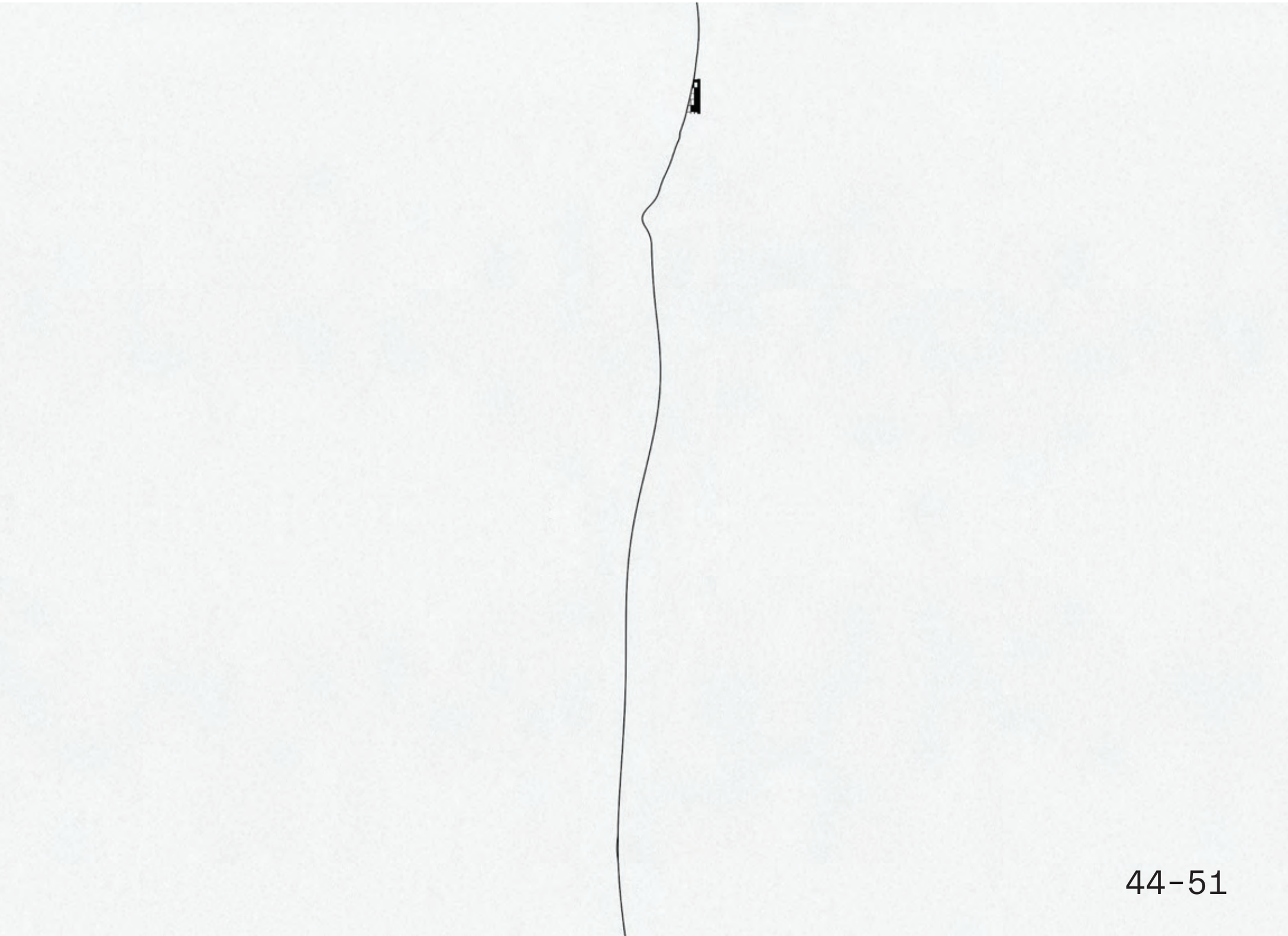


DRAWINGS BY ISAAC STEIN AND MAGGIE TSANG, DEPT.



52–57

PHOTO BY LEONID FURMANSKY

PHOTO BY CHASE DANIEL

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PHOTO BY LEONID FURMANSKY

ISAAC STEIN is cofounder and design principal of Dept., a landscape architecture and urban design studio based in Houston. His article on supporting ecological evolution rather than fighting against it ("The Big Fix") was co-written with MaggieTsang; it is found on page 36.

KEITH A. SIMON, FAIA is vice president of design phase services at Salas O'Brien and a lecturer at the UT Austin School of Architecture. In this issue, he writes about the benefits of adaptive reuse and assessing architecture through the lens of endurance rather than style (p. 52).

CANAN YETMEN, HON. TXA is a writer based in Austin. Read her article about Spectre Air Capital's new headquarters on "Old Sixth" in downtown Austin. The historic building was adapted by Chioco Design. See page 58.

MAGGIE TSANG is cofounder and managing principal of Dept. and an assistant professor at the Rice School of Architecture. For this issue, she co-authored the article "The Big Fix," about designing for ecological evolution, with Isaac Stein (p. 36).

MICHAEL MALONE, FAIA is the founder of Michael Malone Architects in Dallas and an adjunct assistant professor at the University of Texas at Arlington. This issue includes his remembrance of Al York, FAIA (p. 20), and an exploration of what the profession will look like in the year 2075 (p. 74).

STEPHANIE ARANDA, ASSOC. AIA is a designer and teaches architectural history at San Antonio College. In 2023, she received the Texas Society of Architects' Associate Member of the Year award. She writes about the design of Pullman Market in San Antonio's Pearl District (p. 88).

The following comments were posted on the *Texas Architect* magazine website in response to the listed articles from the Fall 2025 "Sanctuary" issue.

If you have comments, send to editor@texasarchitects.org.

KERCHUNK!: REFLECTIONS ON *FOR AN ARCHITECTURE OF REALITY*

Darwin, Michael would be happy to know that this first book continues to inspire and guide you. How I hope that *For an Architecture of Reality* will find another publisher and inspire a third generation of architects and designers. I believe that Michael's final book takes two of those qualities of realness even further. In *Architecture Beyond Experience*, I think Michael has explained both the empirical and ethical nature of what he once called Presence and Significance. Both his first and last books are now out of print, and many would love to see them published again. Especially me,

Michael's wife,
Amelie Benedikt

MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

Growing up in Chicago I've lived in brownstones, triple-decker flats, and various styles of houses that had separate entrances, and I think it would be interesting to see more modern takes on these from a consumer perspective. It is especially useful since many parents are ageing and it's not uncommon for multiple generations to live in the same household in this era. I think it is nice that they are working with local legislation to create opportunities for a "style" of multiunit housing options.

K. Tague

Excellent article and great work. I did sort of miss the mention of Houston's efforts to also modernize; perhaps in the sequel article, gentlemen, as the subject should remain front and center.

Palmer Brook Schooley, AIA

ANCHORED IN LIGHT

As a worshipper at Christ Church Anglican, I am often surprised by a new display of the colorful light on the walls, floor, and ceiling as the sun moves through the day and seasons. In many church sanctuaries one becomes accustomed to the unchanging beauty. This is different, exhilarating, and spiritually enhancing. The sun-borne variety of light is testament to God's creation.

Mike Grey

A truly beautiful sanctuary. Well conceived and crafted throughout. A modern design that addresses the rich traditions of sacred worship spaces. Jeff Smith's art glass brings story and light to life in all of his glass projects. Well done, Rhotenberry Wellen and the entire design team.

Paul M. Dennehy, FAIA

ON THE COVER

Model by UTSOA student Anna Rohn, from the Fall 2025 design studio Measure Twice, taught by Emerging Scholar in Design Andrew Bako.

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Where interior systems become architecture

Monna Italian Luxe

A space can be fully resolved on paper, program, proportion, detailing, and still feel incomplete in experience. Not because something is missing, but because the material narrative has not been carried through to its final discipline.

Architecture does not end at millwork.
It does not end at stone.
It does not end at alignment.
It culminates in light.

Monna was architect-founded around a specific observation: the final architectural mile is where intent is either preserved, or diluted. Our work begins with integrated interior systems: cabinetry, doors, closets, boiserie, developed not as decorative layers but as primary architectural elements. These systems establish rhythm, alignment, structural logic, and spatial continuity. They carry proportion across rooms. They define thresholds. They shape movement. But systems alone are not enough. Without calibrated light, material remains mute. Stone flattens. Wood cools. Metal loses depth. Volumes blur.

Lighting entered our collections not as expansion, but as completion. Because once you operate at a systemic level, you cannot treat light as an accessory. It must be engineered as part of the architectural framework.

We approach lighting as a compositional instrument, precisely integrated within cabinetry, shelving, vertical planes, and structural lines. Output is controlled. Temperature is calibrated. Shadows are intentional. Fixtures are concealed or aligned to maintain visual discipline. We prioritize certified LED specifications, accurate CRI performance, and controlled diffusion, not as technical ornament, but because material truth depends on it.

When light is engineered correctly, stone reads with clarity, wood retains warmth, metal maintains density, and glass preserves its silence. This is not styling. It is calibration.

Our role sits between conception and execution. We collaborate early with architects to align tolerances, integration points, recess depths, hardware coordination, and electrical logic. Metric manufacturing precision is translated into imperial site realities. Shop drawings meet field conditions. Sequencing protects the original line. Lighting systems are coordinated alongside cabinetry reinforcement, concealed structural supports, integrated stiffness hardware, and multi-layer compositions, so that performance and restraint coexist.

What distinguishes our process is continuity. From product expertise to specification, procurement, logistics, and white-glove installation, we carry the handoff. Design intent must survive contact with reality. That requires technical fluency and site presence, not catalog knowledge. This is a studio process by nature, coordinated among peers: architects, designers, builders, and installers, held to the level of responsibility this work demands.

Everything begins with the architect's eye: proportion, alignment, restraint. It holds only if the system holds through execution. That is where our collections live, inside the architecture itself, within composition and material dialogue, where wood, metal, stone, and glass are not finishes, but instruments. Where cabinetry carries structure. Where doors articulate threshold. Where lighting resolves the atmosphere.

This is how we carry a complete interior language—architecturally integrated, technically disciplined, and, finished with light.


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TOUGH AS IRON

The Texas Post Oak (Quercus Stellata) is renowned for its strength and colloquially called Iron Wood for its fierce toughness and durability. As a drought-resistant hardwood native to Texas, it has a rough, dark gray bark, which is highly valued for its density in architectural millwork and cabinetry, as well as its cultural significance in the region.

This hard, knotty wood has become a prized material for designers in recent decades. It can be the warming agent in any design environment, bringing a taste of nature inside.

Phillips Forest Products understands wood. The registered Texas Historic Business has become one of the oldest family-owned sawmills in the state. They have an onsite production facility that is known for the highest quality molding, flooring, kiln dried lumber and paneling. These products have been known and trusted for over 100 years and are used as essential building materials for many high-design projects.

"The Texas Post Oak stands apart for its resilience and character and its tonal range, but what makes it so unique from a design standpoint is its ability to exist in the most rustic of spaces as well as the most modern spaces," said Allen Phillips, whose family owns Phillips Forest Products. "All the knots and color variations create so many grain patterns and make this version of White Oak incredibly beautiful."

An innovative example of its use can be seen in the Tributary Ranch Lodge project in Lampasas, Texas, designed by Houston-based Robert Dame Designs. The Lodge is within the Tributary Sporting Club, which lies in the heart of the famous Texas Hill Country. The ranch sprawls through creek beds, river bottoms, oak patches, rocky terrain, and spans more than 21,000 acres of the most breathtaking scenery in Texas.

"The second largest Texas Post Oak, felled by a storm, came to us a few years ago," said Phillips. "From that tree, we got multiple slabs 5' wide and 16' long. That's a big tree."

From that log, the Phillips Forest Products team milled the Texas Post Oak tongue and groove surface material used throughout the lodge. To complement the warm tones of the Post Oak, Pecky Cypress surface material with a black paint finish was used on the ceilings.

SCAN ME

To learn more about Texas Post Oak and other **Phillips Forest Products** offerings, schedule a lunch and learn or product demo, contact:

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TOGETHER, FORWARD

by Krystyn Haecker, AIA

IN A PROFESSION defined by change, *gathering* is not optional—it is essential. It is how we learn from one another, how we adapt, and how we move forward together. Architecture is shaped through conversation and shared responsibility, and our strongest outcomes emerge when we make room for diverse voices at the table.

At a moment when our profession is navigating unprecedented complexity and accelerating change, our instinct can be to retreat or work in isolation. Yet the challenges before us require connection, shared understanding, and the resolve to move through uncertainty together.

Gathering, for me, is not a moment or an event, but a way of working and a way of leading.

My career has been shaped by teams and professional communities where the best ideas emerged through dialogue and shared accountability. Those experiences reinforced a belief I carry with me today: Architecture is better when it is practiced with others. I do not want to do this work alone, and I do not believe our profession is meant to move forward that way either.

This belief has also guided my involvement with AIA and the Texas Society of Architects. Much of that work has focused on creating more intentional space for voices that have not always been fully represented in our profession. Through my involvement in equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts as well as work supporting women in architecture, I have seen how meaningful it can be when people are invited not just to participate, but to lead. These experiences continue to shape how I think about *gathering*—as an active choice to listen, to share power, and to strengthen the profession through inclusion.

Architecture depends on trust, accountability, and a willingness to make space for others. When those conditions exist, the work becomes more thoughtful, more resilient, and better positioned to evolve over time.

These same conditions also allow our profession to adapt. Adaptation is a constant in our field. We are responding to shifting economic conditions, new technologies, environmental realities, and changing expectations from the communities we serve. We adapt more effectively when knowledge is shared and challenges are approached collectively rather than in isolation. When we design buildings and build our organizations with these intentions, they are more resilient because they anticipate change.

As president of the Texas Society of Architects, my role this year is to help create the conditions for connection and shared leadership across our organization. Over the year ahead, my focus will be on supporting the conversations, leadership pathways, and opportunities for engagement that allow our members to help shape our collective future. TxA has long served as a place where architects across Texas come together to exchange ideas, build relationships, and support one another. By making space for meaningful exchange, we strengthen not only our work, but our collective ability to adapt.

As we move through a year of continued change, I invite you to engage fully with this community—to *gather*, to listen, and to lead alongside one another. The strength of our profession has always come from our willingness to work together, and the year ahead is an opportunity to deepen that commitment. Together, we can continue to adapt, support one another, and shape a profession rooted in shared leadership and collective purpose. ☐

Krystyn Haecker, AIA, is a principal and partner at Mirador Group in Houston and the 2026 TxA president.

↖ PHOTO BY DIVYA PANDE

A NEW HOME FOR TxA

by Mahnoor Fatima

ON THE CORNER of East Cesar Chavez and Comal streets in East Austin sits a three-story neo-Brutalist office building, aptly referred to by its address: 1515 E. Cesar Chavez. Completed in 2024, the building is home to the new headquarters of the Texas Society of Architects. Other tenants include the popular coworking space The Malin and Chioco Design—the building's designers—both located on the ground floor.

Setback balconies punctuate large concrete slabs, the mass engaged in a tense dialogue with a central open space. The structure has a curious entrance: One must "enter" through an open lobby, where an irregular bench occupies the center of the front-facing courtyard, drawing the eye toward a dynamic communal green staircase. Christy Taylor, AIA, the project architect and a partner at Chioco Design, describes the intention behind the 75,000-sf project: "It's meant to be an Austin office building," she says. "Not one of those 'clicky-clacky' lobbies."

The new TxA office is located on the second floor, directly above Chioco's workspace. Natural light washes over the interior, complementing warm, tactile materials—craft-based rugs, tweed sofa covers, and leather furnishings. Private offices with glass walls, along with workstations defined by half-height partitions, line the perimeter, flanking multiple collaborative areas that include worktables and a lounge space. TxA executive vice president and CEO Jennifer Briggs reflects on the move from an older, larger building to a more intimate, collaborative environment.

"The (previous) space was too big, and there were a lot of deferred maintenance needs," says Briggs. "The company that chose [to buy] it gave a great offer and wanted to restore it instead of tearing it down." She notes how important it is to architects to care for older buildings, a sentiment she shares despite not having an architectural background. "The older building was spread over two floors, so sometimes entire days would go by, and we wouldn't run into each other. Now there are more impromptu conversations."

Taylor also emphasizes how the building was designed to foster this kind of social web. She describes the decision to reject a traditional switchback stair in favor of one that requires occupants to circulate around exposed steps, encouraging awareness of their surroundings and cultivating a neighborhood-like atmosphere among the various workspaces. A large green wall rises from the basement and runs alongside the stair to the top floor, with board-formed concrete planters gradually filling the vertical garden bed and making the journey between floors a pleasant one.

"We put a few green options in front of the developer, and they chose this one," says Taylor, elaborating on the aesthetic decisions behind this portion of the building. "The developer thought there needed to be communal spaces that pop—real 'wow' moments. The stairs are like a fun ribbon, and then there's a giant heavy wall that comes down. It's a nice place to throw a party."

Guided by a fluid, post-COVID approach to work, the balconies have become active spaces in their own right, all oriented toward the courtyard that anchors the building both socially and programmatically. Briggs notes how the layout has altered daily routines, encouraging energy in the office and casual connection. Even ahead of its formal open house in January, the building was already functioning as intended—less a static office and more a framework for community. ☐

Mahnoor Fatima is a writer and multidisciplinary designer from Austin. She currently runs her practice at Studio Mahfa.

→ Horizontal massing at play at 1515 E. Cesar Chavez
PHOTO BY LEONID FURMANSKY

REMEMBERING AL YORK

by Michael Malone, FAIA

CHARLES ALBERT "AL" YORK, FAIA, an accomplished architect and partner at Austin's powerhouse firm of McKinney York Architects, died on November 22, 2025. Al's untimely death is a profound loss for his family, friends, and colleagues. His passing will also be deeply felt in his adopted home of Austin and among the broader architectural community in Texas, of which he was an engaged and influential member. For architects throughout the state, the firm he co-led stands as a singular, exemplary practice—McKinney York is admired not only for its excellence in design and commitment to community, but, more importantly, for its dedication to a robust set of values that have allowed it to practice at the highest level while expanding access to thoughtful, capable design for groups historically excluded from working with design professionals.

Al was born in 1965 and grew up in Birmingham, Alabama, where he was both an athlete and an academic standout in high school. He attended Auburn University for his undergraduate degree and there met the lovely Sharon Fleming, who would become an accomplished architect in her own right and with whom he would start a family. Together they had three sons—Dylan, Anthony, and Ryan—and created an amazing family centered on shared experiences, adventures, and love. Al's family was the foundation upon which he built everything else in his life; it provided him with a framework and purpose and a base from which to exist as himself in the larger world. A treehouse Al designed and built with his family was among his many award-winning projects.

↑ Al York, FAIA, framed by one of the stone arches at the Inks Lake State Park Headquarters Building in Burnet County. Al was the principal in charge and lead designer for this beautiful Hill Country project completed in 2024.

PHOTO BY PATRICK WONG, ASSOC. AIA (ATELIER WONG PHOTOGRAPHY)

> "Inherent in all those projects is a sense of clarity, thoughtfulness, and beauty, often manifested in surprising ways through sensible but exquisite details and the skillful handling of natural light."

After Auburn, Al went on to Cornell University to obtain his master's degree, a requisite step toward his goal of teaching architecture at the university level. Upon graduation, Al accepted an assistant professorship at Texas Tech University, which brought him to Texas, where he would spend the rest of his life engaged in teaching and practice. While at Texas Tech, Al impressed his fellow faculty members and made an indelible impact on his students. Many of those he taught are now leaders in the field and remember him as a catalyst for their own engagement and success in the profession.

In 1995, Al and Sharon moved to Austin, where Al joined McKinney Architects, founded by Heather McKinney, FAIA. He quickly became an integral part of the firm, playing a critical role in shaping its vision for growth and expansion beyond its residential design roots. Heather and Al made a formidable team, with the firm emerging as a model of how to build an exceptional and inspiring architectural practice. In 2008, the firm was renamed McKinney York Architects in recognition of Al's significant contributions, including his growing reputation for thoughtful design and well-orchestrated projects.

Al had a keen sense of how to run a firm, understanding the processes and oversight needed to successfully manage a growing and diverse portfolio. But it would be wrong to define Al as a manager, despite how evident those skills were and how clearly he excelled at them. Al was first and foremost a designer. He drew beautifully, was an inspired architect, and, as a result, created beautiful buildings. The work completed by McKinney York under his leadership is astonishing in its depth and breadth.

With his team, Al designed a substantial body of work reflecting deep appreciation for the opportunities they were given and transcending their programs and budgets to create very special places for the people who use them. Perhaps this is how Al's leadership can best be understood: Nothing about the work of McKinney York is merely adequate. It is always remarkable. And this ethos springs not from good management alone. Over the years, McKinney York cultivated a team of younger leaders—firm president and principal Michelle Rossomando, AIA; principals Brian Carlson, AIA, and Will Wood, AIA; and associate principal Navvab Taylor, AIA—who assumed their roles in a deliberate, carefully paced transition. That leadership was in place before Al's illness, and the firm remains in capable hands thanks to an intentional plan that provided opportunities at the top many years ago. McKinney York's evolution into the exemplary firm it is today will support it into the future and will be a significant and ongoing part of Al's legacy.

Al held a belief that architecture starts with the individual and is characterized by responding to individuals in a way that provides meaning. He firmly believed that clients were not the only stakeholders in a project's outcome. For Al, a building's success lay in its ability to meet the needs of its users, no matter who they were or how engaged they were in the design process. This attitude continues to define McKinney York and is manifested in all their work. It is why their designs for the Austin Shelter for Women and Children, the Texas School for the Deaf Administration and Welcome Center, and the African American Cultural and Heritage Facility are so successful. Al recognized that the groups who would experience these buildings were often excluded from the design process yet deserved to feel connected to the spaces in visceral and immediate ways. A visit to McKinney York's website is a glimpse into architecture at its most generous—a profound statement on what our profession can achieve when caring, thoughtful people have the courage to create remarkable work for everyone to enjoy.

Al's AIA service included a stint as the Austin chapter president and participation in many committees at both the local and state level. He was instrumental in obtaining financing for the Texas Society of Architects' previous headquarters building on Chicon Street in East Austin and in its subsequent remodel. Though he did not seek out recognition, Al was often cited for his remarkable contributions. During his time at McKinney York, the firm earned 31 design awards from AIA and the Texas Society of Architects. In 2007, McKinney York received the AIA Austin Firm Achievement Award, and in 2013, they were recognized with the Texas Society of Architects Architecture Firm Award. In 2016, Al was elevated to Fellowship by the American Institute of Architects.

Al's absence will be keenly felt by all who knew him. His gift for seeing and helping those around him was one of his greatest strengths, and it extended to the institutions he supported and shared his time and talents with. Plato wrote—though the Cuban poet José Martí was later attributed with the aphorism—that in life, every man should build a house, plant a tree, write a book, and father a son. Al literally accomplished many of these things, but he also did far more: He aligned his passion for his family and friends and his skills as an architect with his goal of helping to create a better world for everyone he came in contact with, either directly or through his buildings. It is a legacy we will continue to live with and aspire to match for many years to come. ☐

Michael Malone, FAIA, is the founding principal of Michael Malone Architects and an adjunct assistant professor at the School of Architecture at the University of Texas at Arlington.

IPAL RECOGNIZES FIRST GRADUATE

by Gabriella Bermea, AIA, NOMA

THERE IS A MOMENT in every architect's career when preparation stops being theoretical and starts becoming real. It is not marked by a single class, exam, or job title, but by the accumulation of decisions made early, often before anyone is watching.

Emma Johnson, AIA, did not set out to be first. She set out to be prepared. As a working student Johnson pursued both her degree and shouldered a job at BRW Architects in College Station. Becoming the first graduate of Texas A&M University's Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure (IPAL) Program, was the result of steady momentum, clear intention, and a willingness to jump in before certainty arrived.

Johnson's interest in architecture began at the intersection of logic and creativity. Strong in math and passionate about art classes, she initially considered engineering. A visit to an engineering firm in Georgetown changed that trajectory when she noticed a landscape architect working just downstairs. "I remember thinking, this is different," Johnson recalls. "I liked the creative side, but I also liked the technical side. Architecture felt like the place where those two things could live together."

Once she committed to the field, licensure quickly became part of the picture. "I'm goal-oriented," she says simply. "If I was going to put in the time for school, I wanted to see it through."

DISCOVERING THE PATH

Johnson's introduction to IPAL was not formal. During her junior year at Texas A&M, the program launched while she was away on a study semester and working at BRW Architects. She heard about it in fragments, group chats, and passing conversations but had not attended any of the early information sessions. It was not until the beginning of her senior year that she walked into the office of Dr. Valerian Miranda, IPAL and AXP advisor and director emeritus at Texas A&M, seeking clarity.

"I asked him to explain what IPAL actually was," she says. "By the time I walked out, he told me I was eligible and that he was signing me up."

IPAL, administered nationally through the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), allows students to pursue licensure while enrolled in an accredited degree program. Education, experience, and examination requirements advance in parallel rather than sequence, a structure that demands early commitment and sustained focus. Johnson had already accumulated significant experience hours through her work at BRW Architects, positioning her to begin immediately.

She did not see IPAL as a guarantee of speed but as a framework—one that made expectations visible earlier and asked her to meet them head-on.

LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

Johnson approached the Architect Registration Examination (ARE) the same way she approached design: iteratively. She began with Project Development & Documentation, guided by Miranda's advice and her experience hours. Her first attempt did not result in a passing score, but it recalibrated her approach.

"I realized pretty quickly I couldn't rely on just one resource," she says. While Texas A&M initially provided the ARE preparatory course Black Spectacles, Johnson expanded her study methods, incorporating additional tools such as Amber Book to hear concepts explained from different angles. Testing early, she notes, requires repetition and context, especially without years of practice to lean on.

Her most practical advice to ARE candidates is straightforward: Schedule the exam. "Architects are deadline people," she says. "Once it's on the calendar, you show up."

PRACTICE IN REAL TIME

Johnson credits much of her growth to BRW Architects, where she interned throughout school and now practices full time. The firm's culture, she explains, emphasizes trust over hand-holding.

"They didn't wait until I was ready," she says. "They let me try, then checked my work. That was the learning."

Surrounded by peers navigating licensure themselves, Johnson found mentorship embedded into daily

↖ Dedicated to mentoring the next generation, Emma Johnson, AIA, is pictured with Leslie Lisuly Contreras, a second-year M.Arch student and intern on her project team.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LOUIS CAO, BRW ARCHITECTS

practice. Conversations about exams, experience hours, and study strategies were normal, not taboo.

Her experience aligned closely with NCARB's competency-based AXP model, particularly in how exposure, not checklists, shaped her development. Construction experience proved the most difficult to complete while in school, but Johnson found meaningful ways to document involvement through submittals, RFIs, and remote coordination.

THE COST OF MOMENTUM

When asked about the most challenging part of the process, Johnson answers without hesitation, "I was burned out."

To manage the workload, she reserved exam testing for summer and winter breaks. The summer between undergraduate and graduate school, she took three AREs in succession, four weeks of study per exam, without pause. "I didn't really acknowledge that I had just finished one degree," she reflects. "I went straight into studying again."

The result was creative fatigue. Studio work required focus, while testing demanded precision. Rest became secondary to deadlines.

Still, Johnson is candid about the trade-off. "I did the sacrifice early," she says. "Now I get to enjoy the space on the other side."

RECOGNITION AND RESPONSIBILITY

At the Texas Society of Architects' New Architect Convocation in Dallas last October, Johnson stood among peers who had all reached the same milestone through different timelines and paths. "It was the first time I felt fully understood," she says. "Everyone in that room knew what it took."

Being the first IPAL graduate from Texas A&M carries both pride and humility. "I didn't do this for attention," Johnson says. "It was timing. I happened to be in the position to finish first."

Still, she recognizes the impact of visibility. Teaching at Texas A&M's Camp ARCH the past two summers, Johnson has already seen how representation matters. "Students see it and think, maybe I can do that too," she notes.

LOOKING AHEAD

Johnson is clear about what licensure represents and what it does not. "I'm not stamping projects. I'm not running work yet," she says. "I just removed a barrier. Now I can grow without limits." Her advice to students and emerging professionals reflects that clarity: "You're never going to feel completely ready. Start anyway. If you don't pass, keep moving. A lot of people have walked this path before you, and more people are rooting for you than you realize."

In a profession often defined by endurance, Emma Johnson's story offers another model, shaped by intention, support, and the discipline to begin early and keep going. □

Gabriella Bermea, AIA, NOMA, is a senior associate and architect with Perkins Eastman. Bermea is the NCARB experience committee chair and a firm licensing advisor.

↗ Michelangelo Sabatino is the director of the School of Architecture + Planning at the University of Texas at San Antonio's Klesse College of Engineering and Integrated Design.
PHOTO BY JOSH HUSKIN

Q&A WITH UTSA'S MICHELANGELO SABATINO

by Stephen Fox

RECENTLY, architectural historian Stephen Fox spoke with Dr. Michelangelo Sabatino, Hon. FRAIC. Sabatino is the director of the School of Architecture + Planning at the University of Texas at San Antonio's Klesse College of Engineering and Integrated Design and the school's Roland K. Blumberg Endowed Professor in Architecture. He is a publicly engaged architectural historian, curator, and preservationist whose research and writing focuses on canonical as well as overlooked episodes of modern architecture and the built environment.

For over a decade, Sabatino was a professor of architectural history and preservation at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) College of Architecture, where he directed the PhD program and was the inaugural John Vinci Distinguished Research Fellow. Sabatino's first book, *Pride in Modesty: Modernist Architecture and the Vernacular Tradition in Italy* (2010), won multiple awards, including the Chicago-based Society of Architectural Historians' Alice Davis Hitchcock Award. Recent books include *The Edith Farnsworth House: Architecture, Preservation, Culture* (2024) and *The Global Turn: Six Journeys of Modern Architecture and the City, 1945–1989* (with Tom Avermaete, 2025).

Read Fox and Sabatino's conversation on the following spread.

Stephen Fox: What attracted you to the position of director of UT San Antonio's School of Architecture + Planning? What are your goals for the near future?

Michelangelo Sabatino: Having first trained as an architect, preservationist, and historian in Venice, Italy, I was attracted to San Antonio because it is among the oldest cities in the US and even has a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Twentieth-century architects in San Antonio—starting with O'Neil Ford, who moved here in the late 1930s to work on the restoration of La Villita—have a distinctive track record of engaging with the past in creative ways. Take the fact that many of our nationally recognized firms, such as Lake Flato, Overland Partners, and Michael G. Imber Architects, operate their studios in existing buildings. Some of San Antonio's most important destinations—the Pearl District and the San Antonio Museum of Art—are adaptive reuse projects. Our School of Architecture + Planning has recently relocated to a tower designed in the early 1980s by Marmon Mok. It's located on the River Walk, adjacent to the former Ursuline Academy and Ricardo Legorreta's iconic San Antonio Central Library. Our new location at One Riverwalk Place is part of an adaptive reuse tradition that makes this Texan city special. It's a manifesto building!

Our move to the heart of the city is part of a broader strategy of the University of Texas at San Antonio spearheaded in recent years by our visionary president, Taylor Eighmy, and senior vice president, Veronica Salazar. In addition to our building, which is part of a downtown campus anchored by the former Southwest School of Art, such new additions as San Pedro I and II [by Overland Partners] are part of UTSA's important contribution to the current and future economic prosperity of the city. It is worth noting that following a recent merger with UT Health, UT San Antonio is now Texas's third-largest public research university.

"Even as we can learn from the best buildings and sites around the globe, I believe in the importance of a place-based educational model that uses our own backyard to test ideas."

San Antonio has a penchant for adapting historic buildings to new uses. But it also looks to the future by commissioning ambitious projects, such as the Robert L. B. Tobin Land Bridge that connects both sides of the Phil Hardberger Park Conservancy. It's worth remembering that in recent years, the University of Texas at San Antonio, whose main campus on the North Side was designed by Ford, Powell & Carson and Bartlett Cocke and Associates in the late 1960s, has invested heavily in new buildings downtown. Additionally, several large-scale private/public developments, such as Project Marvel, centered around a new arena for the San Antonio Spurs and a new ballpark for the San Antonio Missions, stand to transform downtown even further in the next few years. At this juncture in time, when so much is at stake for the city, it is essential that the Klesse College of Engineering and Integrated Design's School of Architecture + Planning facilitates dialogue between different stakeholders while educating future graduates who will contribute their expertise to the process of transforming the city through design and research.

Having moved from the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago (known worldwide for its Mies van der Rohe–designed midcentury campus), what opportunities do you believe UT San Antonio and the city are currently facing? How might your school respond?

I am a first-generation student; my parents, who were immigrants, attended neither university nor high school. Illinois Tech opened in the fall of 1893 on Chicago's South Side to train first-generation students. I am aware of how education can transform underserved young people. Since its founding in 1969, UT San Antonio has promoted access, and it continues to do so as it became the third largest R1 research university in Texas after merging with UT Health. As part of the broader mission of the university, our School of Architecture + Planning seeks to train future architects and planners from a variety of backgrounds. For instance, we have historically admitted large numbers of Hispanic students from San Antonio, South Texas, and the Rio Grande Valley.

San Antonio is among the fastest-growing cities in the US. It requires leadership in formulating the built environment, especially in relation to housing and transportation. As you move farther south toward the border, you encounter other conditions that require architecture and planning professionals. One example: In recent years our urban and regional planning faculty have addressed the rise of "heat islands" on San Antonio's predominantly Hispanic West Side and have worked with city leaders to find ways to mitigate these health-related challenges. Since moving to our central urban location at One Riverwalk Place, our students experience firsthand the challenges of homelessness because San Antonio has a significant homeless population.

In addition to your time as interim dean of IIT's College of Architecture, you have focused for most of your academic career primarily on writing books about 20th-century architects in Europe and the Americas. What prompted you to take on this very different role of directing a school of architecture and planning?

I came to San Antonio with the hope of building a "school" in the most profound sense of what this type of project entails. Together with my faculty, we plan to hire a number of new faculty members who can help achieve this goal. The challenge of architectural education today is that there are plenty of schools of architecture but few "schools of thought"—that is, places where students and faculty make time to think and discuss so they can act resourcefully. The curriculum of many architecture schools today offers some of everything, so it ends up

being more of a "buffet-style" approach than a "sit-down" meal, so to speak. I am not suggesting everyone should be teaching the same thing, but it seems to me that coalescing around shared values about what the built environment could and should look like is a worthwhile proposition. Think about what Mies achieved at IIT in the 1950s, or Alvin Boyarsky at the Architectural Association in London in the 1970s and '80s, or John Hejduk at Cooper Union in the 1980s and '90s. While I'm not a neo-traditionalist, I do believe that students should have a deep knowledge of the histories of the global built environment in order to address the flaws of a certain type of object-driven modern architecture that tends to emphasize form and space over place. I am also interested in training future architects and planners whose work is contextual and who seek collaboration with landscape architects and urban designers. Even as we can learn from the best buildings and sites around the globe, I believe in the importance of a place-based educational model that uses our own backyard to test ideas. I also believe in working toward a greater integration of architecture with other arts. Not too long ago, architects and artists learned side by side—take, for example, Paul Rudolph's Art and Architecture Building at Yale University.

I have followed a place-based approach in my own scholarship. Over the years, I have lived in three different countries and six different cities, including Houston. The subject matters that I chose to address resulted from where I worked at the time. My first book, *Pride in Modesty: Modernist Architecture and the Vernacular Tradition in Italy* was my most autobiographical. It came directly out of my experience of growing up with Italian parents in Canada, and of subsequently living and studying in Italy. I have written other books about the Mediterranean and Italian architects. My co-authored books about different parts of the US, such as *Making Houston Modern: The Life and Architecture of Howard Barnstone* and *Modern in the Middle: Chicago Houses 1929-1975*, responded to the places I was inhabiting at the time. I'm now working on a collaborative book about the King William neighborhood, San Antonio's first city-designated historic district (forthcoming from Texas Tech University Press). My partner and I live in King William and do a very non-Texan thing: We walk to work. I am also planning to write a book directed primarily to students about why I believe that it's important to embrace a place-based educational model in an increasingly globalized world.

As one of the oldest cities in Texas, San Antonio is rich with buildings of all sorts. Who are your favorite architects? Which are your favorite buildings and neighborhoods so far? What buildings do you think your students should be most familiar with?

I admired O'Neil Ford long before I came to San Antonio. Revisiting Trinity University, I am still awed by how deftly he and his collaborators sited the buildings in a former quarry and how he united buildings on the campus with his use of siting, landscape, circulation, and materials. What I also admire about O'Neil Ford (whose professional studio was in King William for two decades) is his profile as a "generalist" architect. Ford moved from restoration projects to adaptive reuse to new construction while maintaining a remarkable degree of design sensitivity. Ford consistently collaborated with artisans and designers, such as his brother, Lynn, the ceramicists and fabric artists Martha and Beaumont Mood, landscape architects Marie and Arthur Berger and Stewart King, and urban planner Sam Zisman. I think students today can learn a lot from this kind of flexible, collaborative approach.

Additionally, I am a big admirer of Mission San José because of its powerful use of stone (the barrel vaults of the church and the granary, for example) and the way the church and *convento* are integrated with the land by the thick perimeter walls, which were also used as residences. Casa Navarro downtown is an important lesson in how vernacular architecture can be used to create domestic environments in which buildings and the land are integrated in beautiful, but also useful, ways. The River Walk is a truly remarkable combination of architecture, landscape, and infrastructure. I am amazed at how you can descend from the street level to the River Walk and feel like you're in another city. Finally, I find both Ricardo Legorreta's Central Library and David Adjaye's Ruby City to be remarkably sophisticated buildings with their complex sections and their lively embrace of different intensities of red. These two buildings are tangible proof that modern architecture in San Antonio doesn't have to be about steel and glass.

Texas has eight architecture schools (Texas A&M, UT Austin, UT Arlington, UT San Antonio, Rice, Texas Tech, University of Houston, and Prairie View A&M). What does UT San Antonio's School of Architecture + Planning share in common with its Texan peers? What sets it apart?

We are immensely lucky to have so many schools in Texas. What sets our School of Architecture + Planning apart is the fact that we are located right in the heart of San Antonio. Such major firms as Lake Flato, Gensler, and Ford, Powell & Carson are within walking distance, so we have an amazing opportunity to serve and interact with the professional community. We are a public university; we have an obligation to share and generate knowledge together. I would love to see more collaboration among the different schools. For example, my colleague at the University of Houston, Rafael Longoria, AIA, and I have edited a new issue of the *Journal of Architectural Education* entitled *Educating Civic Architects* (Winter 2025). We started by citing a study by Ernest L. Boyer and Lee D. Mitgang commissioned in the mid 1990s by the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture and the American Institute of Architects. Their recommendation is one that the School of Architecture + Planning, under my leadership, continues take to heart: *The world needs more scholars and practitioners not only educated to prosper in their own careers but also prepared to fulfill social and civic obligations through the genius of design.* ☐

Stephen Fox is an architectural historian and a Fellow of the Anchorage Foundation of Texas.

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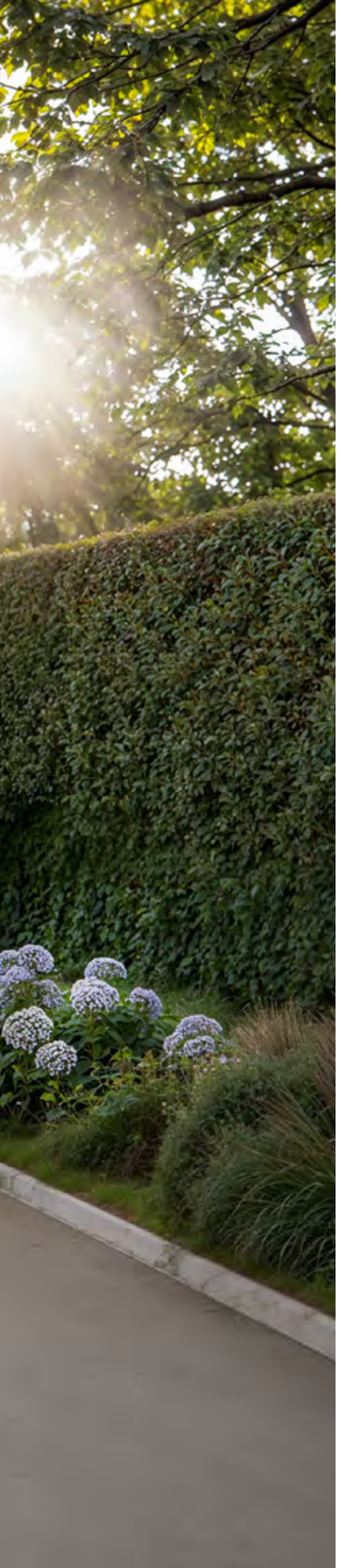

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ADAPTATION

"But in practice master plans fail because they create totalitarian order, not organic order. They are too rigid; they cannot easily adapt to the natural and unpredictable changes that inevitably arise in the life of a community."
—Christopher Alexander, *The Oregon Experiment*

Architecture has always been a discipline of response—to climate, to culture, to materials, to need. Yet adaptation today feels less like a quiet undercurrent and more like the defining condition of practice. Ecological instability, shifting demographics, technological acceleration, and evolving social expectations all demand that our buildings—and our profession—become more agile. This issue explores adaptation not as compromise, but as opportunity.

Though broadly as a society we tend to worship at the altar of innovation, what if we instead place value on continued use? Rather than freezing buildings at a single moment in time, adaptive approaches allow them to accumulate meaning and utility as needs and communities change. In this view, alteration is not erasure; it is evidence of life.

This same ethos extends beyond walls. As climate patterns intensify and ecosystems shift, landscape architects are rethinking preservation models that attempt to hold environments in place. Instead, adaptable ecological strategies acknowledge the inherent dynamism of life. By designing landscapes that can migrate, regenerate, and absorb disturbance, practitioners are working with change rather than resisting it.

Adaptation also challenges the boundaries of the profession itself. As architects confront planetary-scale concerns—from housing inequity to extraterrestrial habitation—the definition of practice expands. Citizen architects, interdisciplinary collaborators, and speculative explorers all contribute to a more holistic model of agency. To adapt, the profession must remain permeable, willing to reconsider who participates and what constitutes architectural work.

Across these essays, a common thread emerges: Resilience is not rigidity. The most enduring designs are those that expect change. Adaptation asks architects to relinquish the illusion of permanence and instead design frameworks for evolution. In doing so, we move from defending the past or predicting the future toward shaping systems capable of absorbing both.

In a time defined by uncertainty, adaptation is not simply a strategy. It is an ethic—one that positions architecture as an active participant in continuous transformation.

Supporting Ecological Evolution
in the Anthropocene

THE BIG FIX

Words by ISAAC STEIN and MAGGIE TSANG

PERHAPS IT WAS THE LAUNCH of Rebuild by Design—a nonprofit initiative established in 2013 by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force—that marked the beginning of the latest era of comprehensive resilience planning; or perhaps it is because we are collectively experiencing, in real time, the effects of anthropogenic climate change. Either way, institutions, governments, and private actors have increasingly been asking a shared question: How do we, as a society, adapt? This existential inquiry has elicited a general consensus around best design practices. Across climate adaptation toolkits, resilience guidelines, and vision plans, recommendations recur—to employ blue and green infrastructure, enhance flood resilience through changes to building codes, establish sustainability metrics that prioritize local and low-carbon materials, and more.

"Adaptation," as it is commonly understood within design discourse, therefore encompasses a set of strategies intended to improve our capacity to adjust to environmental conditions altered by climate change. In this framing, certain aspects of the built environment are imagined to change: the materials of stormwater infrastructure (more green and blue, less grey); the base elevation of buildings (higher); and roadways, seawalls, and bridges (also higher). Yet this version of "adaptation" simultaneously insists on the stability of other conditions—namely, the highest and best use of private property, modes of living, and prevailing ideals regarding nature. To "adapt," then, we are not required to adjust our behaviors or social traits, as the word's definition might suggest; rather, we are asked only to modify the built environment in order to better control, combat, and fix the landscape.

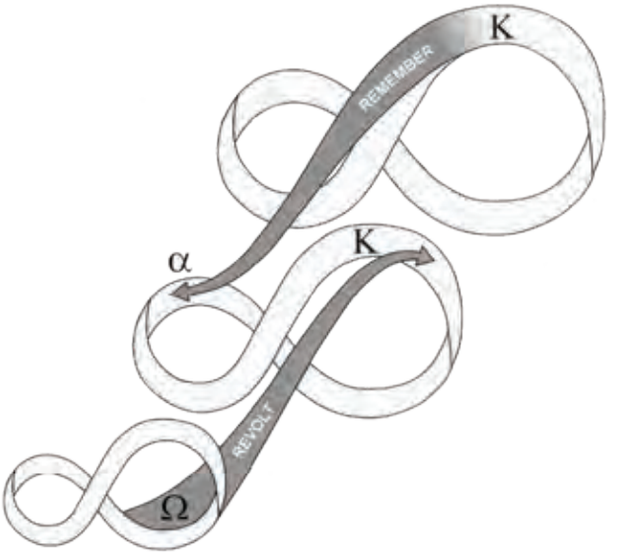
Ecosystems, however, are in a constant state of change. C. S. Holling's well-known panarchy diagram illustrates how organizational systems move through a continuous, open-ended "adaptive" cycle of phase change—from rapid growth and exploitation, to stabilization and conservation, to disturbance and release, and finally to reorganization and flux. This adaptive cycle operates simultaneously across multiple nested scales and time frames, a condition Holling termed "panarchy."

Consider Holling's example of the spruce budworm in a forest ecosystem. The budworm represents a fast cycle, with a life span of a few months to a year; a tree stand represents a medium cycle, changing over many years; and an entire landscape or biome represents a slow cycle, transforming over a century. And yet these scales are deeply intertwined: The budworm population can influence the broader landscape, just as landscape-scale conditions can, in turn, impact the budworm.

Beyond the specific example of budworms and spruce forests, panarchy demonstrates that systems are interconnected across multiple scales and timeframes, and that adaptation must therefore address more than a single aspect of a cycle. Ultimately, a limited approach to adaptation amounts to a form of mitigation. Such an approach not only prevents structural changes in the environment but also forecloses possibilities for design and for novel ways of working. Can we move beyond the framework of adaptation to design environments that fundamentally enable ecological processes to evolve?

↓ Panarchy connections. Linked adaptive cycles at multiple scales.

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN PANARCHY: UNDERSTANDING TRANSFORMATIONS IN HUMAN AND NATURAL SYSTEMS, EDITED BY LANCE H. GUNDERSON AND C.S. HOLLING 2002. CC BY-NC-ND 4.0



BIG FIXES

Sea level rise poses an existential threat to cities and coastal regions, and coastal resilience and climate adaptation offer the promise of protecting shorelines from a range of disasters, from chronic flooding to storm surge. Projects like Living Breakwaters on Staten Island, the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project, and the Galveston Bay Park Plan promise significant protection against major flooding events. Unlike traditional "hard" coastal defenses, such as concrete seawalls, these "adaptive" infrastructures incorporate "softer" strategies—such as wetlands, dunes, and other natural habitats—intended to enhance both social and ecological value.

"Rather than separating the city from the waterfront," architect Bjarke Ingels, founder of BIG, said of the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project in an article published on the website New York YIMBY, "we've designed a public realm that invites people in with new connections across the FDR, transforming flood protection into a tapestry of everyday experiences…. The result is infrastructure that not only strengthens but also enhances the city's coastline."

Despite their ambitious design intentions and ecological benefits, such coastal resilience projects reveal an underlying contradiction. Their primary purpose remains the stabilization and defense of the coastline, preserving existing neighborhoods, infrastructure, and patterns of development. While this line of defense is undeniably meaningful, it also frames phenomena such as erosion and flooding as problems to be fixed, rather than as inherent dynamics of coastal systems. Ironically, the resilience—or survival—of the coast is made dependent upon infrastructures that fix it in place, denying its natural tendency to move.

WORDS BY ISAAC STEIN
AND MAGGIE TSANG

← East Side Coastal Resiliency Project by Bjarke Ingels Group
PHOTO BY IWAN BAAN

↙ Historical aerial view of Everglades National Park, Florida, in November 2005
IMAGE COURTESY GOOGLE EARTH

BIG DREAMS

Adaptation often disguises our desire to preserve and conserve. We cling to an idealized image of nature as we attempt to restore what has been lost. As greenfield development, sprawl, and extractive industries continue to alter the landscape, we find ourselves dreaming of what was once wild.

Once a thriving wetland ecosystem in the Florida Everglades, a patch of abandoned farmland known as the Hole-in-the-Donut had been significantly altered by fertilizer use, tilling, and intensive agriculture. By the 1970s, when the land was ultimately acquired by the surrounding Everglades National Park, it had become overrun with nonnative species and was widely regarded as a haven for weeds. Yet it was also thriving in its own way: The landscape was lush and diverse, humming with a dense population of insects and raccoons, and even home to a number of Florida panthers.

Regardless, the park viewed this weedy site as a profound threat to the historic ecosystem and, in the 1990s, initiated a massive effort to restore the original wetland conditions. To do so, the project aimed to completely remove altered soils from 6,300 acres by scraping away the topsoil with heavy machinery. The undertaking cost more than $100 million, and over nearly three decades approximately four million cubic yards of biomass have been scraped and stockpiled.

In the 2006 article "Ecological Restoration and Global Climate Change," ecologist Richard Hobbs, a prominent critic of traditional restoration ecology, argues that "valuing the past when the past is not an accurate indicator for the future may fulfill a nostalgic need but may ultimately be counterproductive in terms of achieving realistic and lasting restoration outcomes." Restoring the Hole-in-the-Donut eliminated valuable existing ecosystem services and required the intensive use of machinery and fossil fuels. Meanwhile, the targeted "invasive" species persist. Even as we continue to dream of past wilderness, in environments that have been dramatically altered by humans, is it possible—or even practical—to rewind the clock and reverse so many entangled biological and geological processes?

Wilderness, as William Cronon reminds us in his essay "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," is itself an idea. "[It] hides its unnaturalness behind a mask that is all the more beguiling because it seems so natural. As we gaze into the mirror it holds up for us, we too easily imagine that what we behold is Nature when in fact we see the reflection of our own unexamined longings and desires." As we propose new solutions to the changing climate, we should continue to reflect on what adaptation is really revealing.

↙ Erosion and accretion are reciprocal processes of sediment transport.
DRAWINGS BY ISAAC STEIN AND MAGGIE TSANG

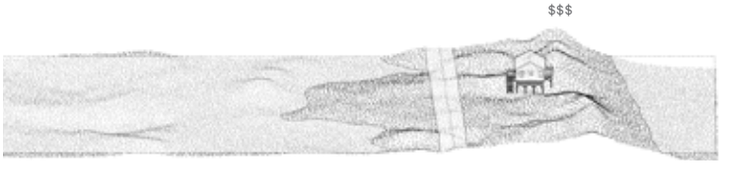
← Wave Action

← Longshore Drift

Typical barrier island section with dunes along the shore and marshes in the back bay

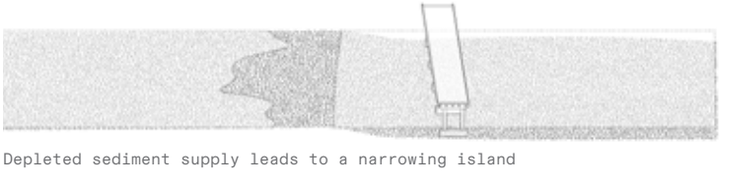
Storms create overwash and back bay growth

Continued wave action and longshore drift allow the island to migrate



Development and shoreline protection prevents erosion

Rebuilding prevents overwash and back bay growth



Depleted sediment supply leads to a narrowing island

A LESSON FROM THE LAND

Erosion is often understood simply as the loss of land. Nowhere is this perception more evident than on the barrier islands of the Eastern Seaboard, from Maine to Texas, where coastal property is constantly threatened by erosive forces. In these communities, the fixed metes and bounds of property lines defy a constantly shifting ground. Beach houses, roads, and bridges are reinforced and rebuilt in an effort to withstand erosion, while seawalls and bulkheads are constructed to fix the land in place. Yet, as coastal geologist Orrin Pilkey observed in the book *The Beaches Are Moving: The Drowning of America's Shoreline*, islands exist in perpetual motion, driven by the "endless interplay of the sea."

Barrier islands are highly mobile landforms, migrating at rates of up to 30 feet per year; in Texas, the average rate of shoreline retreat is approximately four to six feet annually. It is only when barrier islands are parcelized and fixed in place that erosion becomes framed as an adversary. New infrastructure is planned to defend the coast and stabilize the shoreline, but these interventions end up starving the island of sediment, ultimately leading to further land loss.

By relinquishing the shoreline and allowing it to move instead, the island can easily adapt. Through sediment transfer and land migration, erosion on one side of the island becomes accretion on the other. As storm waves and rising seas erode the beachfront, sediment overwashes the island and accumulates along its backside. This is redistribution, not loss. When coastal barriers are removed, we invite the island's slow, continuous migration—a natural process that enables the island to roll rather than drown. Coastal design, then, can move beyond resilience, defense, and preservation to work with the redistributive forces of sediment, harnessing the movement of land rather than resisting it.

WORDS BY ISAAC STEIN
AND MAGGIE TSANG

→ Present condition of Gravel Silos bulkhead, constructed circa 1960s
PHOTO BY ISAAC STEIN AND MAGGIE TSANG

↘ Proposed condition, Bayou Porch in 2025 (top) and 2050 (bottom)
DRAWINGS BY ISAAC STEIN AND MAGGIE TSANG

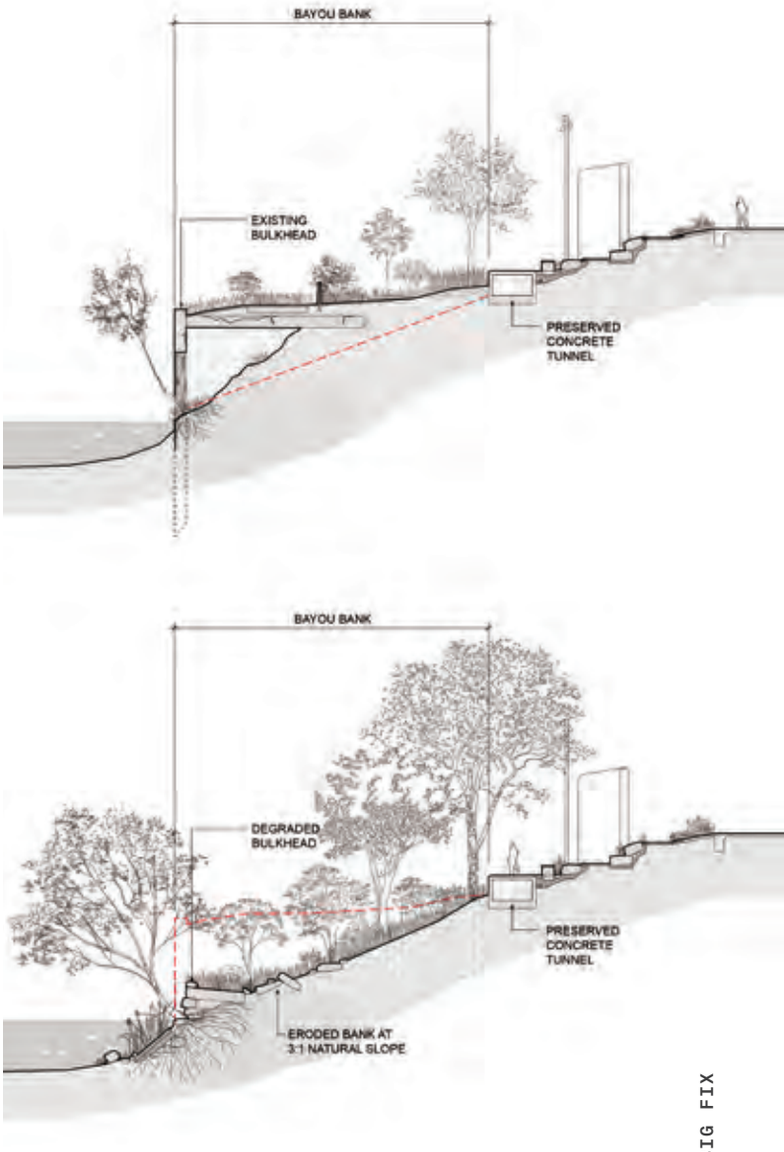
STEPPING BACK

Gravel Silos is a five-acre park that extends four miles of the Buffalo Bayou Partnership's extensive linear bike and pedestrian network along Buffalo Bayou in Houston's East End. The site was once used to store shell and aggregate dredged from Galveston Bay; barges would unload material at the bayou's edge, where it was stored in massive concrete silos. An existing trail runs atop a bulkhead wall constructed in the 1960s. Today, that wall is full of voids, and within them is a novel collection of willows and cypress trees, ferns and moss, oyster shells, gravel, and rusted sheet metal.

Even with ground penetrating radar (GPR) and detailed structural analysis, the exact condition of the wall remains a mystery. Its future is equally uncertain, as it is impossible to determine how long it will stand or what loads it was originally designed to bear. But it will fall, eventually—it is only a matter of time.

As a result of urban development upstream along the bayou, both the volume and flow of water moving through the channel have increased. With each storm, the banks shift and scour, flushing sediment downstream to Galveston Bay and leaving behind steep slopes that are gradually eroded and flattened by gravity. Through this ongoing cycle, the bayou continually carves a new form, transforming itself into a wider river with gentle banks where plants can take root.

Rather than spending millions of dollars and years navigating the permitting process to remove and replace the existing wall—only to face the same risks once again—the proposal deliberately chooses to do less, and to step back. The trail is relocated to the upper bank of Buffalo Bayou, beyond the floodplain. In doing so, the design allows the bayou to move. Land along the existing bulkhead wall is ceded, and rather than resisting the flow of water, the wall is left to remain and gradually degrade in place, creating space for willows, cottonwoods, and cypress to grow.



↙ A warming climate has enabled the expansion of black mangroves farther north.
PHOTO BY ISAAC STEIN AND MAGGIE TSANG

A LESSON FROM PLANTS

The salt marshes of the upper Texas coast are shrinking. Under natural conditions, salt marshes—like barrier islands—migrate inland as sea levels rise, relying on shallow, gradual slopes to move and shift over time. Coastal infrastructures intended to combat sea level rise, erosion, flooding, and storm surge, however, disrupt this process by introducing steep, uneven surfaces. In doing so, they constrict the marsh's territory. The marsh has nowhere to go, caught between a wall and a rising sea.

Atop the wall along the south jetty of Galveston Island's East Beach stands one of the northernmost established stands of black mangroves in Texas. Here, within a landscape that has been altered and disturbed, black mangroves (*Avicennia germinans*) are actively growing and adapting. Historically, black mangroves did not extend north of Matagorda Bay, constrained by frequent hard freezes. Today, however, a warming climate has enabled their expansion farther north—a process referred to as tropicalization—and they are now well established in Galveston.

Within the East Beach marsh, which is dominated by smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*), old granite blocks and riprap inhibit the marsh's inland migration while simultaneously creating ideal conditions for black mangroves. The steep, rocky mounds are exposed to salt spray that few other species can tolerate, allowing black mangroves to thrive with little competition.

The tropicalization of black mangroves combined with the shrinking native salt marsh challenges the notion of native ecologies. Though new mangrove forests along the Gulf of Mexico could significantly increase carbon sequestration, they would also establish different plant and animal assemblages causing dramatic shifts in the ecosystem. The strange colonization of mangroves on old rock jetties defies our understanding of historic ecology. Changes to the ecosystem cannot be stopped or controlled, as the adaptation of one species sets off multiple chain reactions. Some of these effects will threaten current conditions while simultaneously giving way to novel ones that we cannot yet assess.

WORDS BY ISAAC STEIN
AND MAGGIE TSANG

↙ Comparison of soils before (top) and after (bottom) from the Prairie Plots project
PHOTOS BY ISAAC STEIN AND MAGGIE TSANG

TAKING TIME

Where there was once a large academic lawn, next to the James Turrell Skyspace at Rice University, now sits an experimental patch of prairie grasses and wildflowers. The project, known as Prairie Plots, is not an attempt to restore a native ecology. Rather, it is a trial landscape that embraces novelty, messiness, and hybridity—part prairie, part weedy lawn, part garden.

Transforming this pristine academic lawn into a prairie landscape uses time as a primary design medium, slowly altering soils and cultivating plant diversity across many cycles and seasons. Over several years of cover-crop planting and monitoring, the site's soils—long shaped by agriculture, construction, and development—were transformed from dense "gumbo" clays into living, loamy soil. The resulting landscape does not replicate the region's historic Gulf Coast prairie; instead, it emerges as a hybrid landscape, composed of both intentional plantings and spontaneous species.

Still, the site showcases a wide range of ecosystem services. Compared with other open spaces on campus, it supports a greater number of species and a higher level of biodiversity, and its soils host a larger community of microorganisms. The site has also served as a testing ground for the university to conduct prescribed burns as a form of land management.

Prairie Plots opposes the static ideal of a native prairie ecology. Instead, it is an evolving landscape that relies on a community of people to steward, manage, and work with it. By using fewer material resources but more time, the plots respond to changing environmental conditions and to the people who care for them, adapting in tandem.

A narrow view of adaptation reveals our collective tendency to fix, stabilize, and preserve. This limited approach inhibits ecological evolution and places us on a path toward obsolescence, where, despite our best intentions, we continue to contribute to the destruction of our environment. Moving beyond this framework, however, demands a shift in perspective—from resisting dynamic forces to working with them. Of course, doing less to control the environment and more to allow for its transformation presents an inherent design challenge, one that will produce complex changes and unavoidable trade-offs, but that also invites the progression of ecological processes toward a novel future. ☐

Isaac Stein is a landscape architect and architect from the Gulf Coast. He is cofounder and design principal of Dept.

Maggie Tsang is a landscape architect and urbanist. She is cofounder and managing principal of Dept. and assistant professor at Rice School of Architecture.

EDGE CONDITION

A Home Designed for the Decades

Words by CAMERON KLEPAC, ASSOC. AIA

HIGH UP, a house by Low Design Office (LowDO) perches atop a rocky outcrop overlooking what is ostensibly a wolf-inhabited creek. One of LowDO's recent residential design-build projects, the house was completed in spring 2024 and sits near Lake Buchanan, close to Burnet, about 60 miles northwest of Austin. Getting there requires a drive that is both windy and winding. Cliff faces, studded with cacti, line the roads that climb the hills overlooking the lake and surrounding valleys. The neighborhood is made up of large, sloped lots—some complete with helipads, or so I am told. The home's site, approximately 22 acres, occupies the crest of a hill that just barely peeks over Lake Buchanan. The house itself, however, does not sit squarely on top of the hill; instead, it juts outward from it, floating into the valley beyond.

From the exterior, the home is stark and simple in appearance, echoing the unforgiving, arid landscape that surrounds it. The land is bare and rough, with scraggly oak trees twisting and crawling through the dry ground. This is not to say that either lacks beauty; there is a sincere serenity in the restrained nature of both the building and its setting. Although the building's material palette gives it an industrial character, it sits delicately at the edge of the hill, barely touching down—seemingly just enough to comply with gravity. Perforated steel articulates the exterior, marking the outdoor living spaces while providing shelter from sun, rain, and wind.

Made of steel and yellow pine, built on a budget, and designed to be self-sufficient in a harsh environment, the home carries a distinct industrial character—industrial in the sense that economy and efficiency informed every aspect of the design. The house is reminiscent of a mining shaft attached to the side of a mountain or hill in Appalachia or the Rockies; it seems to have landed on the site, almost like a ship entering a harbor. The concept sketch of the home encapsulates this idea as well. The premise is simple: a home that minimally impacts the surrounding environment while taking full advantage of it.

To meet that aspiration, the home harnesses the natural elements available to it. It is equipped with a rainwater collection system that holds approximately 30,000 gallons. Although located in a dry environment, the roof is designed to capture as much water as possible: It is gently sloped, with gutter systems that feed the cistern. For every inch of rain, the house can collect roughly 2,500 gallons of water.

↑ Set well below the highest point on the site, the home was positioned to capture views from this side while minimizing its impact on the surrounding vegetation.

WORDS BY CAMERON KLEPAC

↑ LowDO designed the house to minimize its impact on the land, lifting the structure so that only a small portion makes contact with the ground.

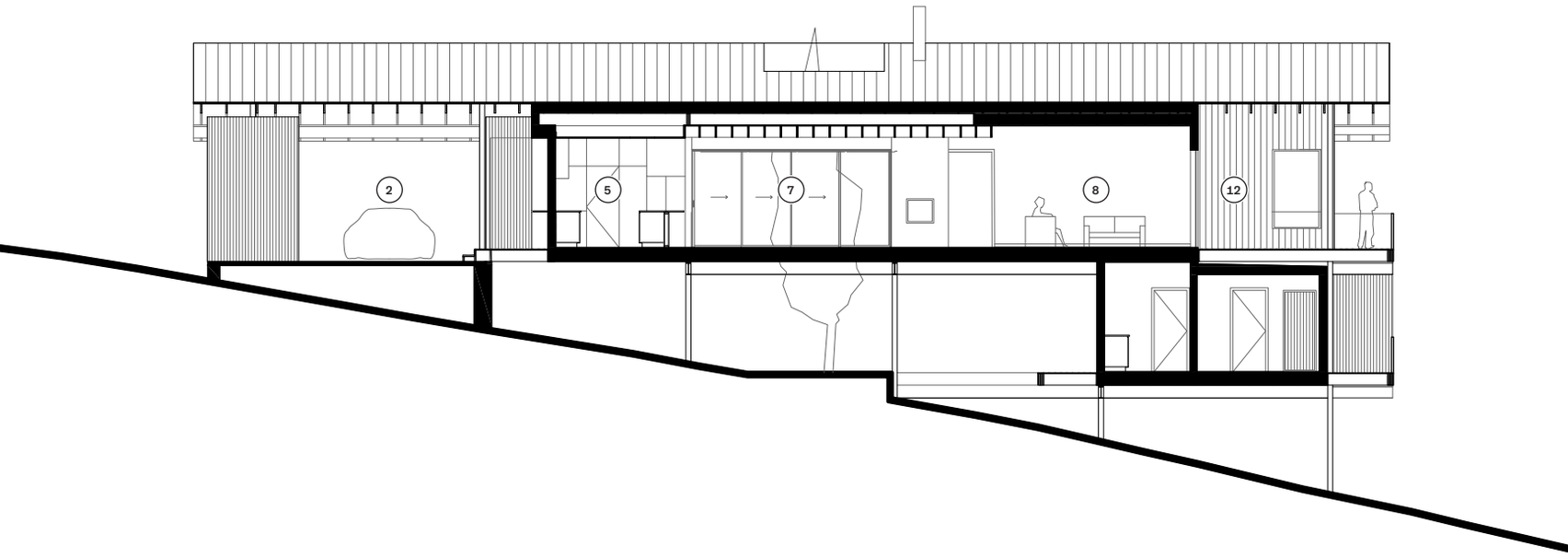
→ Perforated steel is used on the exterior, preventing views into the space while allowing views out from within. The steel also blocks harsh winds and rain, while letting light in.

→→ The concept sketch reveals a simple strategy, mimicking the form of a mine shaft, with the distinction that it sits atop the hill rather than carving into it.

↑ The central void, or “coreyard,” admits light and ventilation to the center of the house, leaving just enough room and illumination for potential landscaping below the main chassis of the home.

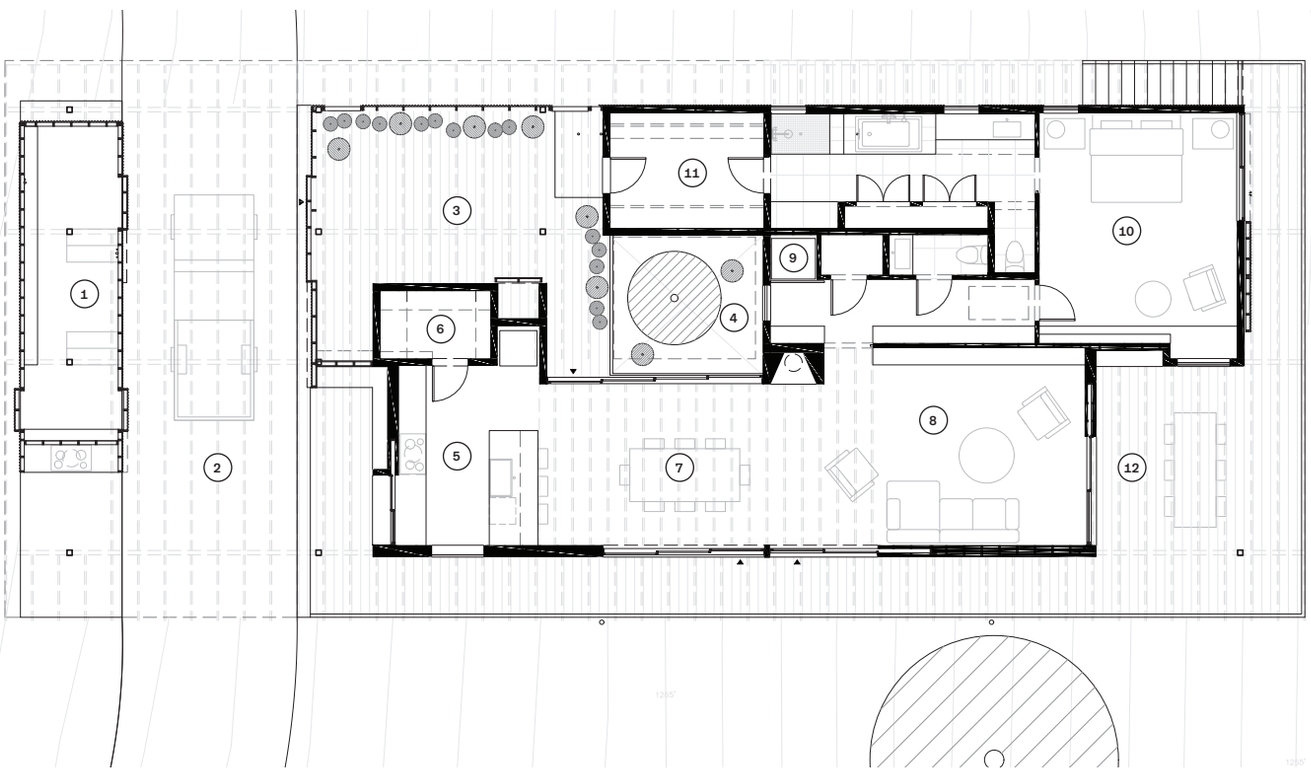
→ From the primary living space looking out, interior and exterior become blurred, creating a light-filled, layered view in which the landscape appears as a backdrop to the architecture.

WORDS BY CAMERON KLEPAC



↓ **ENTRY LEVEL PLAN & ↑ SECTION**

1	WORKSHOP/STORAGE	**7**	DINING
2	CARPORT	**8**	LIVING
3	OPEN AIR POTTING ROOM/ENTRY	**9**	LAUNDRY
4	COREYARD VOID	**10**	PRIMARY BEDROOM
5	KITCHEN	**11**	PRIMARY CLOSET
6	PANTRY	**12**	COVERED LIVING PORCH



EDGE CONDITION

The expansive roof was also designed to support future photovoltaic panels, to capitalize on the region's ample sun and clear skies. In addition, the home is designed to harness the site's prevailing winds for ventilation. Openings throughout the house, along with sliding glass doors, allow the interior to open almost entirely to the outdoors. A central void acts as a passive wind catcher, while the generous openings amplify the cooling effect it provides. The void cuts through the entirety of the building, touching down on a patch of gravel. Beneath the daylight pouring down the shaft rests a simple shrine with a stone crucifix planted in the ground, sitting about ten feet from a heavily used four-wheeler—making it one of the most Texan holy spaces I have seen to date.

In discussing their philosophy, LowDO emphasized the importance of passive cooling—not only for this project but as a necessary strategy for designing in Texas more broadly. Designing homes to be airtight may provide year-round comfort through HVAC-conditioned spaces, but such approaches can also lead to increased energy consumption and excessive moisture retention. Sometimes, one might say, less is more.

Nearly half of the house is unconditioned porch space. Still, the cover provided by the porches along with the natural breezes that move through the site make the home seem as though it would be quite pleasant even in a Texas summer. This generous use of outdoor space, coupled with LowDO's economy of materials and design-build approach, resulted in an exceptionally affordable project. Considering LowDO's track record, however, this is not surprising. As part of their commitment to innovation, the firm tends to leverage specific off-the-shelf materials and mass market products, as well as particular standard details and common techniques of construction, to create equitable and impactful architecture.

In addition to LowDO's signature use of clean, simple details, the firm is known for its penchant for iteration and modularity. Although complete in its current state, the home was designed with room to grow through a thoughtful structural strategy. The steel structure that cradles the house floats just enough above the cliffside to allow for future rooms and additional conditioned space.

From a macro perspective, the house reads almost like a small campus suspended above the cliff, with generous outdoor and porch spaces extending it well beyond the interior living areas. Natural light, expansive views of the valley, and a restrained material palette draw attention to the experience of the space itself, with the building paradoxically feeling secondary to its surroundings. Designed to be low-impact and integrated into the site, the house becomes part of the cliff rather than an object placed upon it.

Building on previous projects and remaining true to LowDO's body of work, the Wolf Creek Ranch residence is an elegant expression of everyday materials and construction. The design responds thoughtfully to its environment while taking the lightest possible touch in its state of repose. An impressive example of design-build in Texas's Hill Country, Wolf Creek demonstrates that it is often better to build *to* the hill rather than *on* it, leaving room for both the house and its landscape to grow and shift over time. ☐

Cameron Klepac, Assoc. AIA, holds degrees in civil engineering and architecture and serves on the TxA Publications Committee. They would like to become an architect one day (preferably sooner than later).

PROJECT	Wolf Creek Ranch Residence
LOCATION	Burnet
CLIENTS	Chris and Julie Kelley
ARCHITECT/CONTRACTOR	Low Design Office
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER	Persyn Engineering
DESIGN TEAM	Ryan Bollom, AIA, DK Osseo-Asare, NOMA, Maarten Janssens, Zeke Jones
PHOTOGRAPHY	Courtesy Low Design Office

↑ From the patio, the home offers sweeping views of the valley, with just a glimpse of Burton in the far-off distance. The house is firmly rooted in nature, yet it maintains a quiet reminder of society.

→ The large cut into the bottom deck mirrors the dimensions of the already constructed guest portion, leaving room for another “pod,” or section, to be slid beneath the house at a later date.

An Argument for Creative
Reuse Over Preservation

EMBRACING ADAPTATION

Words by KEITH A. SIMON, FAIA

"The greenest building is … one that is already built."
—Carl Elefante

"Every building is potentially immortal, but very few last half the life of a human."
—Stewart Brand

EMBRACING ADAPTATION is, without question, a critical piece of solving the sustainability puzzle. In fact, extending the life of buildings may be the single most impactful sustainability strategy available to the building industry. Choosing to adaptively reuse an existing building rather than raze it and build anew conserves a tremendous amount of embodied and operational energy, embodied carbon, and material resources. In their 2008 article "The Building Stock as a Research Object," authors Niklaus Kohler and Uta Hassler even go so far as to argue that developed countries should *cease* building new altogether and instead focus only on improving what already exists.

Illustrating the case for reuse, HOK's renovation of the historic Moss US Courthouse in Salt Lake City achieved 50 percent energy savings, 30 percent reduced water usage, 59 percent reduction in embodied carbon, and $6 million annual savings in lease costs by renovating the existing building rather than constructing a replacement. An extreme example, a 2015 study published in the journal *Environmental Science & Technology* found that buildings in China last, on average, only 23.2 years before demolition. Researchers calculated that extending the average building lifespan from 23.2 to 50 years would allow China to each year save energy, carbon, and material resources equivalent to the entire environmental footprints of Belgium, Mexico, and Italy combined. A 2005 study by Eduardo Peris Mora estimates that extending a building's lifespan from 50 to 500 years similarly reduces its overall environmental impact by a factor of ten.

Unfortunately, the building industry today operates much like fast fashion: Although Texas cities do not consistently track demolition dates or maintain comprehensive demolition data, anecdotal evidence suggests that most buildings in Texas are demolished after only 30 to 60 years and rarely survive to 100.

According to the 2025 study "Lifetimes of Demolished Buildings in US and European Cities," which assessed nearly 15,000 demolished buildings in the US and Europe, average building lifespans vary dramatically by region and building type. The study also concluded that the vast majority of demolished buildings were in average to excellent condition. In other words, buildings were not typically demolished because of failures in service life or durability; rather, demolition was more often driven by obsolescence—that is, they were perceived as old-fashioned or out of date.

Authors Appu Haapio and Pertti Viitaniemi, in their 2008 article published in the journal *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, define a building as obsolete if it no longer meets current requirements or expectations. This definition, however, invites a critical examination of what those requirements and expectations truly are. Demolishing a building solely for reasons of image or symbolism is an insufficient justification. Buildings often feel inseparable from our collective history, and their loss can be painful, as if a connection to the past has been severed. Adaptation offers an opportunity to breathe new life into existing structures and maintain cultural continuity.

Embracing adaptation of existing buildings also creates a richer lived experience for occupants. As a building's program changes—when, for example, a factory becomes housing and later a classroom—each transformation adds layers of meaning. The visible traces of original architecture foster a connection to the past, while thoughtfully integrated new interventions can elevate the whole, achieving a rich, enduring quality that new construction alone simply cannot match.

In the Neues Museum by David Chipperfield Architects, the architects repaired and modernized the 19th-century building, which had been damaged during the bombing of Berlin and left to decay during the years of East Germany. New architectural elements were carefully integrated with the historic fabric, neither replicating the original construction nor concealing it. As a result, visitors to the Neues Museum experience a simultaneous connection to past, present, and future. It is buildings like this—ones that adapt, change, grow, and improve over time—that endure for generations.

Embracing adaptation represents a fundamentally different approach than preservation. Preservation aims to turn architecture into museums of the past, freezing materials, assemblies, and finishes in time to the greatest extent possible—even when doing so produces uncomfortable spaces, perpetuates energy-intensive buildings, or institutionalizes historical mistakes. Adaptation, by contrast, looks to the future. It retains what remains valuable from the past while updating, repairing, maintaining, remediating, expanding, and critically *improving* buildings and spaces to infuse new life into existing structures.

Designing with future adaptation in mind is a key strategy for extending a building's lifespan. Principles outlined in the AIA document *Buildings That Last: Design for Adaptability, Deconstruction, and Reuse* include clear spans, flat floors, robust structural systems, durable materials, and the use of mechanical fasteners. Universal proportions and good daylighting are also essential in design when considering future adaptation. In contrast, highly bespoke design elements tied to a single, specific program limit future flexibility.

A quintessential misunderstanding of adaptability is exemplified by Richard Rogers's 1986 Lloyd's of London building. The project was won on promises of maximum flexibility, to be achieved by placing all services on the exterior and relying on custom components that could theoretically be plugged in and out over time. In practice, the building employs the opposite of universal proportions and strategies for adaptation, becoming instead a frozen monument to an idea that never worked. Placing distribution systems, such as ducts and lifts, on the exterior of a building does not save space and instead subjects them to the elements, creating ongoing maintenance challenges for building owners. By 1988, just two years after the Lloyd's tower opened, three-quarters of its occupants reported a preference for their former 1928 building across the street.

WORDS BY KEITH SIMON

↑ In the Neues Museum by David Chipperfield Architects, new architectural elements (2009) were carefully integrated with the historic fabric (1859).
PHOTO BY DAN FARRAR

↓ Richard Rogers revisits the Lloyds Building at its 25th anniversary. Completed in 1986, the building's exteriorized distribution systems promised flexibility but led to ongoing maintenance challenges.
PHOTO BY DAN KITWOOD

↑ Dallas City Hall, designed by I. M. Pei & Partners and completed in 1978, is a quintessential example of Brutalist architecture. Today, the building stands at the center of an ongoing debate over preservation versus demolition.
PHOTO BY LEONID FURMANSKY

↓ Quinta Monroy Incremental Housing Project in Iquique, Chile, by the architect Alejandro Aravena's firm ELEMENTAL. The initial framework (left) was completed in 2004, allowing residents to expand and adapt units over time.
PHOTOS BY TADEUZ JALOCHA AND CRISTOBAL PALMA

"The negative consequences of design decisions are often distant in both time and space."

—Corey Squire

It is relatively easy for architects and clients alike to judge whether the two-dimensional imagery of a building is visually compelling—a subjective assessment which all are qualified to give. Assessing longer-term consequences, however—comfort, energy use, health, durability, and overall building performance 10, 100, or even 1,000 years into the future—is far more difficult to evaluate and articulate. Yet it is precisely this long view that architects must strive to understand and responsibly address in design.

Every day, architects confront the tension between what appears good for us in the moment and what is advantageous for us over time. The true skill and value of the profession should lie, not in the production of striking imagery, but in the ability to anticipate, evaluate, and clearly communicate how design decisions will affect clients, communities, and humanity in the long term. Despite this, design awards programs—including those of the AIA and its chapters—continue to privilege stunning visual imagery over work that demonstrably advances people-centered performance, durability, and sustainability.

New approaches to building across scales—from detailing to structural assemblies to urban planning—can significantly extend buildings' lifespans. Mechanical systems, for example, typically last only 10 to 20 years, and future technologies are inherently uncertain. Designing buildings with sufficient space and capacity for upgrades allows systems to be replaced without wholesale disruption. Similarly, while sealant joints may last up to 25 years, a dual-line sealant strategy can protect the interior joint from damaging agents like ultraviolet exposure, moisture, and thermal cycling, potentially extending its service life indefinitely. Fully exposed roofing membranes typically last only 20 to 30 years, but an inverted roofing membrane assembly protects the membrane from UV exposure, thermal cycling, and exposure to water, allowing roof assemblies to perform for 100 years or more with minimal maintenance. Buildings can be designed for extraordinary longevity, but doing so requires a collective ability to understand and articulate the long-term value of these decisions.

Styles and fashions—which are driven by taste rather than performance—tend to last about 30 years. Buildings designed primarily around fashion are often perceived as outdated, underperforming, and ripe for demolition when they reach this critical 30-year mark. Yet when a building reaches 100 years, something magical happens. Its performance has proven durable, and cultural perception changes: What once seemed unfashionable becomes culturally valuable and is seen as worth keeping.

Dallas City Hall, designed by I.M. Pei and Partners and opened in 1978, perfectly embodies this tension. At the time, Brutalism—homogenously constructed of concrete with a distinctly sci-fi sensibility—was all the rage. It signaled progress and optimism for a city eager to reframe its image in the aftermath of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

It is difficult for us now, in 2026, to remember that Brutalism represented the height of architectural fashion from roughly 1950 to 1980. Like all styles, however, it eventually fell out of favor and came to be widely regarded as tacky. Today, preservationists argue for freezing Dallas City Hall in time as a museum of Brutalism, while others see it as foreboding, uncomfortable, poorly insulated, leaky, and therefore deserving of demolition. Neither position, however, offers a sustainable path forward.

The alternative is to embrace adaptation. Brutalist buildings almost universally have strong structural bones; what they lack is modernization. By wrapping them in fluid-applied water-resistive barriers, insulation, and cladding, these uncomfortable energy hogs can be transformed into high-performance buildings capable of lasting for generations. Yes, this approach would change the exterior appearance. That is a tradeoff worth accepting, because thermal comfort, healthy indoor air quality, durability, and energy efficiency matter more. The original Brutalist sensibility can still be experienced from within.

By around 2050, any surviving Brutalist buildings will be more than 100 years old and, as history suggests, widely beloved. It may be difficult to imagine Brutalism as timeless only 25 years from now, but the signs are already there. Stores now sell calendars filled with images of Brutalist buildings from around the world. Teenagers follow Brutalism-focused Instagram accounts. A recent hit film was titled *The Brutalist*. Nostalgia for the style has already arrived.

An example of embracing adaptation at the community level can be seen in vernacular Middle Eastern villages, where flat roofs allow homes to grow vertically as families expand. As a result, one can look at the landscape of the village and see its past, present, and future all at once. The vernacular architecture possesses a sense of layered history and continuity because of the way it grows organically over time.

A similar philosophy underpins Chilean low-income housing projects designed by architect Alejandro Aravena's firm ELEMENTAL. These projects provide only essential infrastructure, allowing residents to complete, modify, and expand their homes over time. They remind us that architecture is not a static object to be admired, but the framework for life.

Adaptation at the urban scale is evident in the City of Austin Water Department's 100-year plan, *Water Forward*, adopted in 2018. The integrated water resource plan anticipates population growth while shifting away from the wasteful practice of using potable water for non-potable needs. Instead, it emphasizes using decentralized reclaimed-water systems, rainwater harvesting, and condensate reuse for these purposes. *Water Forward* demonstrates that when long-term survival is at stake, planning 100 years into the future is not only possible but necessary.

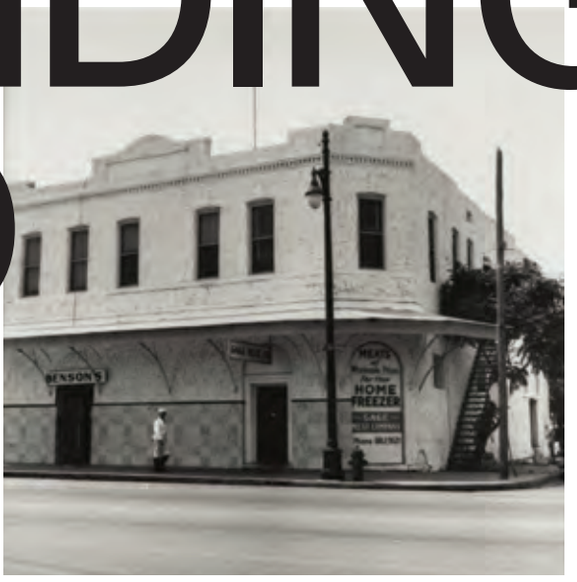
"A building is not something you finish. A building is something you start."

—Stewart Brand

How, then, can we learn to assess architecture through the lens of endurance rather than short-term faddishness? Are proposed changes driven by performance upgrades or merely by novelty? Style and fashion are inherently short-lived, which may be more acceptable for clothing, interior finishes, and other shorter-term investments. But for buildings, if we want them to make it to that magical 100-year mark, we must prioritize people, performance, and durability—allowing design excellence to emerge not from image, but from meaningful, adaptable use over time. ☐

Keith A. Simon, FAIA, is vice president of design phase services at Salas O'Brien, a lecturer at the UT School of Architecture, founder of the AIA Austin Building Enclosure Council, and chair of the National Institute of Building Sciences' Building Enclosure Technology and Environment Council. A leading expert in building enclosure performance, Simon combines technical rigor with a passion for sustainable design and interdisciplinary learning, having co-organized over 200 industry continuing education programs.

LANDING PAD



A Historic Structure
Updated for
Next-Gen Commerce

Words by CANAN YETMEN, HON. TXA

↓ Formerly home to the city's early Black and Mexican American owned businesses, 701 East Sixth Street is the only remaining freestanding historic building in the district.

↵ The exoskeleton-like stair leading to a new roof deck hints at the interior interventions that are organized around a transparent vertical spine.

NESTLED IN THE CANYONS of Austin's gleaming downtown is an amazing relic from another time. On the blocks stretching from Congress Avenue east to I-35, the Sixth Street Historic District contains the biggest cohesive collection of Victorian-era commercial buildings remaining in the city. Now undergoing a thoughtful revitalization

that preserves its historical context—and hopefully the stories that accompany it—Sixth Street has lived many lives. Long before it was a draw for college students, barflies, and music lovers, and before the highway bifurcated downtown, Sixth Street was the entry to Austin from the east and a hub of business and enterprise driven by the city's immigrant, Black, and Mexican American entrepreneurs. Its thriving mix of establishments—general goods shops, restaurants, barbers, tailors, doctors, dentists, notaries, a funeral home, and an informal economy of lenders and social services—catered to a community that was excluded from the city's formal systems.

In 2019, Spectre Air Capital took a leap of faith and purchased the building at 701 East Sixth with plans to move its international headquarters to this neglected

WORDS BY CANAN YETMEN

area in the heart of downtown Austin. Spectre's office provides both a landing pad and welcome mat for international clients visiting Austin. Transforming a historically significant building into Class A office space aligned with the company's business converting mid-life passenger planes to cargo transport around the globe.

Spectre hired Chioco Design to revive the limestone and brick building without compromising its historic character, a nod to the value of the street's contributions to the city's identity. While a renewed push to breathe new life into "Old Sixth" by Stream Realty Partners and Clayton Korte is now well underway, in 2019 that project had not yet taken hold.

"The fact that we had a client that was willing to pull everything together and create a singular building for a singular purpose was interesting to us," says Jamie Chioco, Assoc. AIA, principal and founder of Chioco Design. "The hope was that this part of Sixth Street comes back as something that's different. I think that's the point of old things—to bring them back to something that's much more useful for current needs."

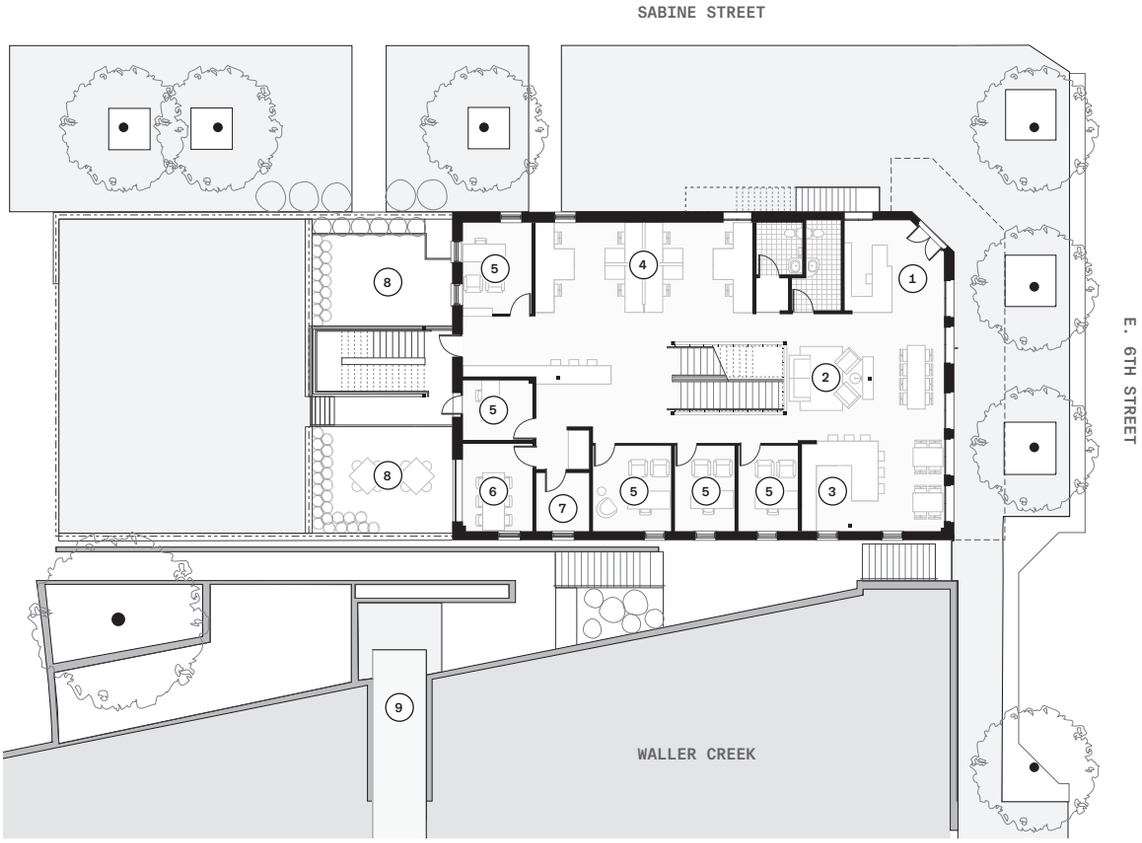
↓ A large new window brings light to the basement level and connects with the new below-grade courtyard. New openings express the thickness of the original walls.

Built in 1896, the building originally housed a feed store and wagon yard. The 700 block—where the street crossed Waller Creek and the flood-prone land was less expensive and less desirable to affluent whites—became the heart of the Mexican American community. In 1908, 19-year-old Ben Garza opened a meat market at 701 East Sixth. In 1910, a second floor was added to house overnight guests, and the building is believed to be the first in town to welcome Hispanic tenants. Now designated by the Texas Historical Commission as the Randerson-Lundell Building, it is the only freestanding building on East Sixth, according to the Austin Landmark Commission. Standing firm through Austin's growth and evolution, its long life has seen a series of incarnations and owners, including former Austin mayor Will Wynn. Over time, its interiors were divvied up into disconnected businesses of varying types (in the 1980s, the basement even housed a hot tub nightclub). Through it all, the essential qualities of the building thankfully remained intact.

To say the building was taken down to its bones might be an understatement. The condition of the limestone walls—30 inches thick in some places—was not sufficient to support the new floor structure. Thus, the Chioco design team, led by Jamie Chioco and Michael Chaveriat, along with DCI Engineers created an internal steel frame within the walls, inserting a tactile modernity into the historic shell. The new frame is connected to the walls in places, but the walls no longer provide the primary support for the floors and roof. The seven-foot ceiling in the subterranean space was excavated to add three feet of height and create a functional basement, and a rooftop deck was added on top of the third floor. These vertical expansions turned the building into four stories of usable space.

← Sleek, refined interiors are warmed by custom white oak floors and, in select locations, ceilings. The original perimeter limestone walls are a constant presence and reminder of the building's history.

↓ A steel structure organizes the interiors. Offices and shared spaces encircle a central vertical spine that introduces natural light from the rooftop deck.



← **1ST FLOOR PLAN**

1 RECEPTION
2 LOBBY
3 BREAK ROOM
4 OPEN WORK SPACE
5 OFFICE
6 CONFERENCE ROOM
7 STORAGE
8 COURTYARD
9 EXISTING WOOD BRIDGE

← The new rooftop deck provides near-360-degree views of the city. Access to the exterior stair can be limited for private events and functions separate from the offices.

↓ Placed unobtrusively atop the structure, the rooftop deck connects to the surrounding urban fabric without compromising the experience of the historic building at the street level.

PROJECT	Spectre Office
LOCATION	Austin
CLIENT	Spectre Air Capital
ARCHITECT	Chioco Design
DESIGN TEAM	Jamie Chioco, Assoc. AIA, Michael Chaveriat, Vanessa Francis
CONTRACTOR	Beckworth Design Build
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER	DCI Engineers
MEP ENGINEER	Bay & Associates
CIVIL ENGINEER	LOC Consultants Civil Division
LIGHTING DESIGN	Mathews Lighting Group
LANDSCAPE DESIGN	Spencer Landscape Company
PHOTOGRAPHER	Chase Daniel

The interior design is a combination of muscular structural and architectural steel elements combined with sleek white oak flooring and paneling, glass partitions, and added windows. An open central stair is the organizing sculptural element that draws natural light from the rooftop all the way down to the basement. A strong vertical spine, its floating stairs ascend skyward, giving expression to the company's aerial operations. The limestone walls are left uncovered as a constant reminder of the building's place and time, allowing, in Chioco's words, the history to come through.

The structural steel framework was carefully crafted to support the added roof deck without interfering with the open interiors, and special attention was given to craftsmanship to align with the quality construction of the original building. The frame creates a grid-based organization to the interiors that gives the open space a comfortable geometry. New openings are used as opportunities to express the walls' thickness, adding an enduring heft to the experience of the interiors. On the ground floor, sightlines from glass-partitioned offices along the east wall and open common areas on the west wall move through the open stairwell, whose treads are reclaimed longleaf pine. The program mixes private offices, conference rooms, and shared workspaces for collaboration, while also offering opportunities for spontaneous interaction and room to grow for the 15-person team.

The break room's counter/bar and café seating along the Sixth Street facade engage with street activity and soften any perception of corporate stiffness; the renovated original wood doors are operable, to create a seamless indoor-outdoor experience when desired. Sleek model airplanes, large-scale photography, and other artistic elements, including the tail wing of a plane displayed on a prominent wall, add a creative energy that encourages use beyond nine-to-five. The office frequently hosts company events, with an eye toward joining in citywide happenings like SXSW and Formula 1.

The basement, now a working office space, receives natural light from new windows. Walls underpinned by board-formed concrete combine with remnants of plaster on the old limestone wall to add an elemental textural variety to the exposed historic walls. Outside, an intimate courtyard provides a counterpoint to the expansive roof deck and its 360-degree bird's-eye views atop the building. Here, an exterior stair leads to the street level and then extends up to the roof, mirroring the interior stairwell. The exterior access to the deck makes it possible to host events entirely separate from the office interiors, if desired.

In a way, the project is the first piece of the puzzle in redeveloping "Old Sixth" in preparation for a more pedestrian- and family-friendly daytime experience. Chioco says it felt strange to be working on a luxury building in the area when the project began. Now that Clayton Korte is completing the renovation and stabilization of 29 Victorian-era buildings in the area, "it doesn't feel strange," he says. As more retail and restaurants move in, the spirit of one of Austin's most beloved and enduring thoroughfares will be revived and a new chapter in its history well written. ☐

Canan Yetmen, Hon. TxA, is a writer based in Austin.

COOTIE CATCHER

Expanding a 1930s Bungalow for a Modern Family

Words by NOEL KUWABARA

↓ The quiet addition is set back, respecting the historic streetscape while denoting the entry through a new walk and carport.

→ The glazed entry welcomes visitors into the light-filled living space, beneath the cedar shade structure and past the historic east facade.

JUST ONE BLOCK OVER from San Antonio's trendy Pine Street in Dignowity Hill sits a recently renovated 1930s pattern book home fondly called the Cootie Catcher. The name refers to a folded fortune teller, the paper equivalent of a child's Magic 8 Ball, and is an apt description of the expansion of the historic residence. The 650-sf addition mimics its playful origami namesake, discreetly tucked behind the original home.

Dignowity Hill is a popular locale among architects, designers, and young families due to its historic character, proximity to the downtown, and intimate neighborhood scale. As a living archive of San Antonio's growth, the eclectic neighborhood is valued as "a living archive of San Antonio's growth—honoring its past while embracing its future," according to the Dignowity Hill Neighborhood Association's website. The Cootie Catcher holds up here, respecting the historic fabric of the neighborhood while accommodating a growing family's needs with a sense of humor and grace.

The clients, Hannah and Pryce Ancona, sought a home that would enhance their laid-back, kid-centric lifestyle and support their passions for cooking and gardening. Architect Cotton Estes, AIA, understood that the house needed to do more with less and be easy to live in.

The Cootie Catcher inspires immediate curiosity upon approach. The original front porch now serves as an ensuite, plant-filled patio adjacent to the primary bedroom. The new entry sequence is framed by the historic east facade of the original home and a new carport. An elegant shade structure and limestone path welcome the owners and visitors alike through the lot, where the light-filled spaces unfold.

The glazed entry leads with a glimpse of the awe-inspiring skylight in the main living area. Its unexpected pyramid-like oculus blankets the interiors with warmth soaked up by white oak millwork. Stepping inside seems like an embrace. In fact, it was this surreal comfort that led the owners to choose this very spot for a home birth under the picture-framed sky. It is here in the cocoon-like room where daily life occurs. Spaces flow back to the street from the main kitchen, dining, and living area to the more private spaces in the original structure. A transparent bridge acts as threshold, connecting the addition to the older portion of the home, which has been renovated to accommodate three bedrooms, two baths, and a smaller family room. Marking a clear divide between new and old, the bridge also provides a direct connection to the outdoors, a theme carried throughout the home.

Pryce confides that the calm of the space has positively influenced his lifestyle. "I have always been someone who wants to go out, plan the next thing," he says. "But since this was built, I actually find a lot of comfort in being at home." Hannah enjoys how the home is well suited for family life and the fact that play can happen anywhere, remarking on how the kids quickly adopted the

WORDS BY NOEL KUWABARA

WORDS BY NOEL KUWABARA

← The two-foot-by-two-foot square oculus provides natural light to the family's featured artwork and the subdued living area.

↓ The transparent bridge between the addition and existing structure creates a pause between the public and private spaces of the home.

↓↓ The sheltered pyramidal space transitions seamlessly to the back patio through a custom white oak-clad entry system.

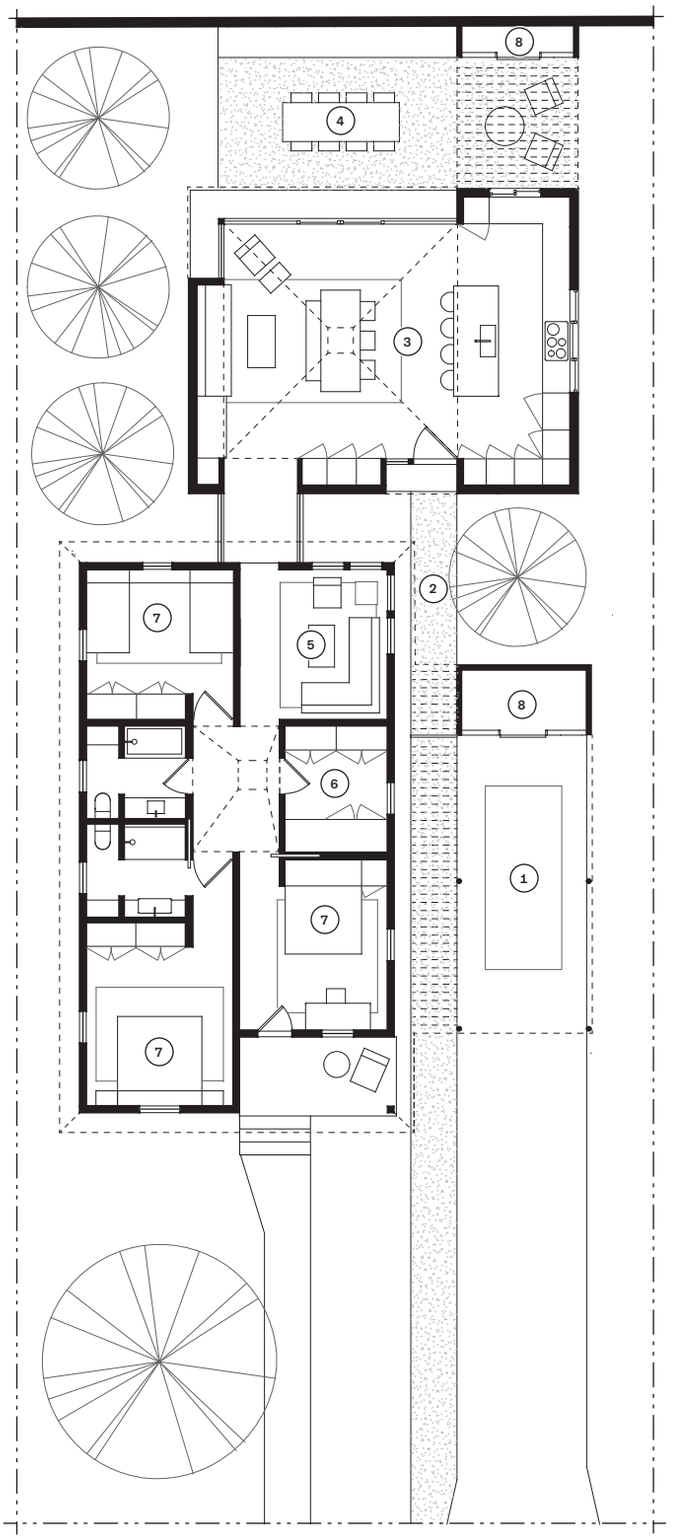
bridge as the best spot in the house for block building. “It just felt nice,” she says, “and now the blocks stay there.”

The feeling of spaciousness provided by the home was intentional in the design. “The property feels way bigger because you walk all the way back to come inside, and then walk all the way back up front to the private spaces,” explains Pryce. He observes that their three children, ages seven, five, and one, “flow in and out.” The ever-present connection to the outdoors is tangible. Hannah contrasts life in the original bungalow as “a little dark” compared with their experience in the addition, the new space receiving so much light that “we can still feel connected without the kids begging to leave the house.” Estes wittingly posits projects that utilize outdoor space as her example of “living larger.”

I was welcomed to the home on a sunny afternoon in early December. The Anconas were opening boxes of ornaments and had arranged a fir tree in the northwest corner of the space, backlit by a stunning sunset. Sitting in the addition, I wondered how this young couple landed in a space that could be both a setting for fine art and the stuff of greeting cards.

Hannah explains: “I grew up in San Antonio, so I know and love San Antonio very much. When I came back, I wanted a different part of the city; I didn’t want to have my exact childhood. We heard whispers of this neighborhood. We knew there were some young families here, so we just went for it.” After committing to downtown, the young couple hit a crossroads. “A few years in, we felt like

WORDS BY NOEL KUWABARA



↑ **FLOOR PLAN**

1	CARPORT	**5**	STUDY
2	ENTRY COURT	**6**	W/D & UTILITIES
3	MAIN LIVING	**7**	BEDROOMS
4	DINING COURT	**8**	STORAGE

↖ The addition complements the scale of the existing structure, as the bridge between old and new folds gently beneath the pattern book home’s original eave.

↗ Cotton Estes Architect’s concept of “living larger” is expressed in the outdoor dining room and its connection to the interior spaces.

we needed more space," says Hannah. "We looked and looked and realized, we really love this neighborhood."

The family's predicament is not unique to millennials' post-COVID experience. The generation's desire for urban life and proximity to amenities is increasingly outweighed by a need for more affordable housing and space as their families grow. Many research institutes, like Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies, point to the trend of millennials migrating to larger suburban homes outside city centers.

An anomaly to this trend, Hannah and Pryce took an alternate road. With a total budget of $415,000, the couple reached out to Estes on a friend's recommendation. Pryce expressed his original skepticism about working with an architect. "When we reached out to Cotton, our attitude was somewhat like, if you don't email us back, it won't hurt our feelings," he says. "We know we have a 900-sf home in a sort-of rough neighborhood."

A few blocks down the road, Estes's studio exceeded Hannah and Pryce's expectations for the property with a commitment to the couple's needs and aspirations for their home, regardless of budget. Their original assumptions about the property were dispelled through the programming stage. Pryce likens the process to his work in consulting; when interfacing with clients, he often takes three steps back to ask larger questions. Hannah appreciated that Estes listened carefully and that her questions were similarly big and broad.

The Cootie Catcher's pointed, hipped roof amid the landscape of early 20th-century bungalows is both contextual and set apart. This unique gem tells the one-of-a-kind story of Hannah and Pryce. They created a home that can serve as a model for ambitious young couples aiming to steward their property investments instead of hedging their bets in the burbs. In a real estate landscape where it is easy to conflate an abundance of square footage with quality of life, Hannah notes, "I know that money can't buy happiness, but maybe good architecture can." ☐

Noel Kuwabara is a registered architect in Texas and serves as faculty at San Antonio College. She holds a Bachelor of Architecture from Syracuse University and a Master of Science in Urban Design from the University of Texas at Austin.

PROJECT	The Cootie Catcher
LOCATION	San Antonio
CLIENT	Pryce & Hannah Ancona
ARCHITECT	Cotton Estes Architect
DESIGN TEAM	Cotton Estes, AIA
CONTRACTOR	Long House Builders
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER	Spaulding Structural Engineering
MEP ENGINEER	Mr. Erwin
PHOTOGRAPHER	Korta Photography

THE ARCHITECT OF THE FUTURE

Words by MICHAEL MALONE, FAIA

I ENTERED THE ARCHITECTURE PROFESSION inspired by the idea that I could design and make buildings. My father was an engineer who became a contractor, and he had a surprisingly positive idea of architects, believing them to be gifted, intelligent people who made wonderful things happen. As a younger person, I never thought of architects as doing anything beyond creating building designs, nor did I imagine a broader social or humanitarian agenda. I cannot remember any time in school when anything other than design was presented as what we did, except for the preponderance of discussion about energy conservation and what we would now call solar design. It was the 1970s, and we were all working through the trauma of the Arab oil embargo and the fall of the Shah, and the way those events significantly impacted the American economy.

Not long after I left Auburn, the great Samuel Mockbee, FAIA, an AIA Gold Medal recipient, founded the Rural Studio and became the first widely recognized architect to do projects for folks who were not traditionally our clients—in other words, those who could not afford architectural services. The Rural Studio remains a recognized leader in social responsibility and a powerful example of how our profession can make significant strides toward improving the world. Programs like it, in many different forms and guises, have proliferated and are seemingly everywhere.

In my role as an adjunct professor at the University of Texas at Arlington, I see and understand the students around me and their interests and concerns. The belief that architecture should be engaged in helping the larger community is integral to how students envision using their skills. Many express a desire for a greater sense of purpose than simply designing and building for private or government clients. That set of beliefs—and the understanding of how architects can bring value beyond traditional practice—is the future.

This past summer, I (and I imagine many others) received an email from Angela Brooks, FAIA, president of the AIA Gold Medal–winning firm Brooks + Scarpa, sharing a series of videos developed by the AIA Strategic Council as part of its initiative investigating the idea of an "Architect of the Future." The initiative proposes a new set of paradigms that speculate on how we as architects might be practicing in 2075. As I watched the videos, I was aware that I will be long gone by then—but many of you, including my own children, will be in your later careers and will be the vanguard of our future profession.

The videos provide an abundance of material to absorb, ponder, and understand. They present narratives by several fictional personas, each participating in the architecture profession in roles very different from my own or that of my peers. To fully appreciate them, I had to set aside my own opinions and consider the optimism and excitement of those who developed these ideas.

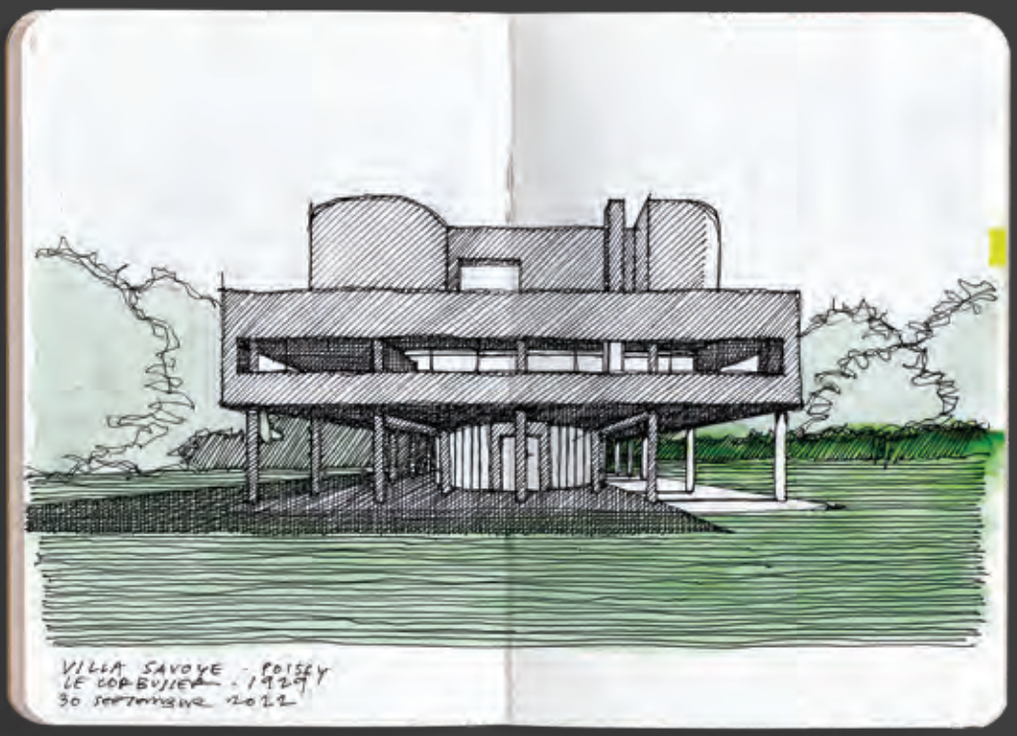
In total, seven personas present and discuss their roles as architects in the future. They are introduced as prompts to spark conversation and to suggest possible ways that architects might engage in practice. In the order in which they appear, they introduce themselves as: a public architect, designing with a community rather than for it; an extraterrestrial architect, designing for extreme places where no human has lived before; an architect-builder, part of a team working across traditional boundaries with a focus on equity and collaboration; an autonomous studio architect, creating spaces of clarity and care focused on what it means to be human; a traditional architect, shaping architecture and cities for people rather than cars and reclaiming highway corridors; an architect-educator, testing and iterating ideas across ecosystems and planets; and a digital-places architect, creating immersive environments for people recovering from trauma, grounded in evidence-based approaches to healing.

These personas are smart, attractive, well-spoken, and diverse; they posit a world where everyone is welcome, valued, and committed to prioritizing the common good. It's a veritable *Star Trek* episode of optimistic humans making the universe right. These sentiments are noble and appreciated as a future suggested by AIA. Their short video introductions, spoken directly to the viewer, emphasize that their work is supported by a broad group of collaborators and prioritizes the use of data, circularity, architecture as a civic act, the promotion of well-being, and opportunities for pro bono efforts. The messages are cheerful and upbeat, suggesting a more inclusive and supportive future in which people of goodwill work together to undo the problems they inherit from those who came before them, including outdated attitudes about the profession. They see practice as directly addressing pollution, environmental degradation, and displacement caused by environmental and digital forces, with a realignment of values in which healing and equity are of primary concern.

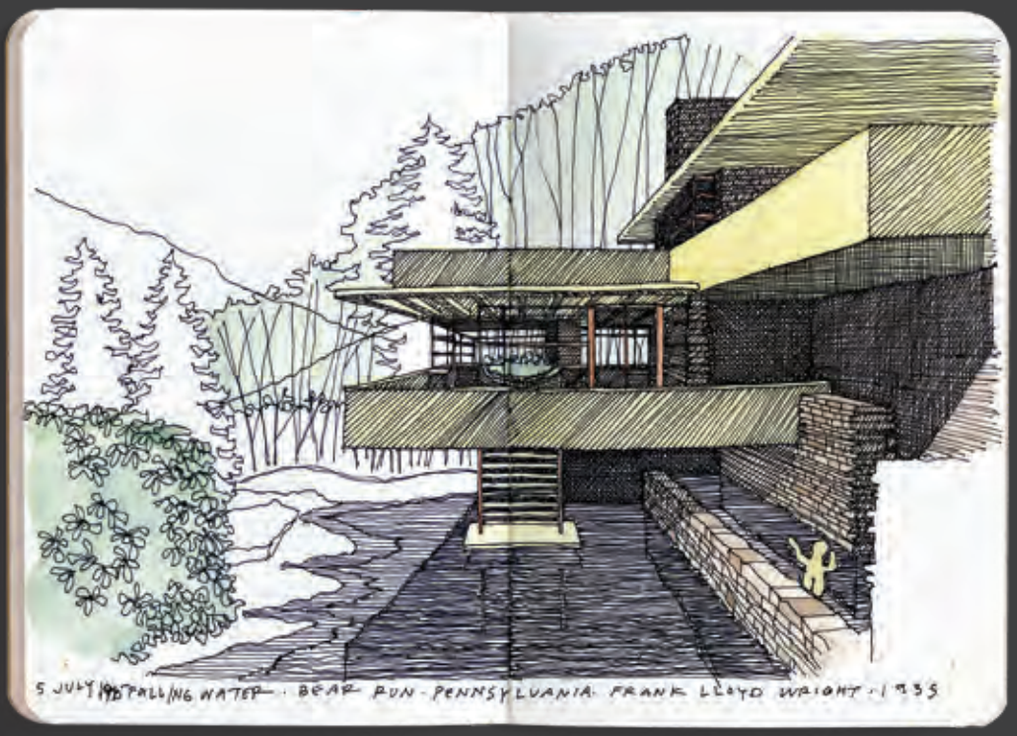
"Many express a desire for a greater sense of purpose.... That set of beliefs—and the understanding of how architects can bring value beyond traditional practice—is the future."

Taken together, these videos have a "New Frontier" vibe that reminds me of the optimism so characteristic of the late 1950s and early '60s—the belief in what the future could hold and how it might feel. That spirit is perhaps best captured by Donald Fagen's album *The Nightfly*. It was the upbeat, positive world of my childhood, filled with rockets to the moon, cities below the sea, the benefits of the Green Revolution (in food, not energy), an expanding economy, and advancements in Civil Rights. That future was largely sidetracked by the Cold War, Vietnam, and the subsequent economic havoc caused by the energy crisis, and the post-Reagan future looked—and became—much different.

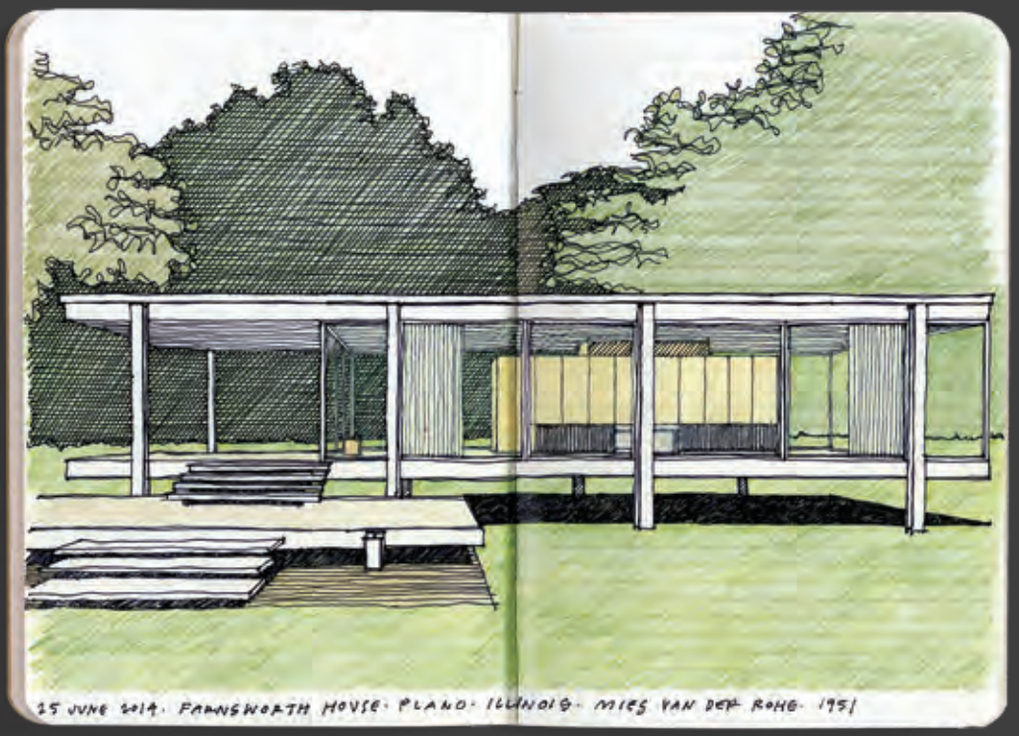
WORDS BY MICHAEL MALONE



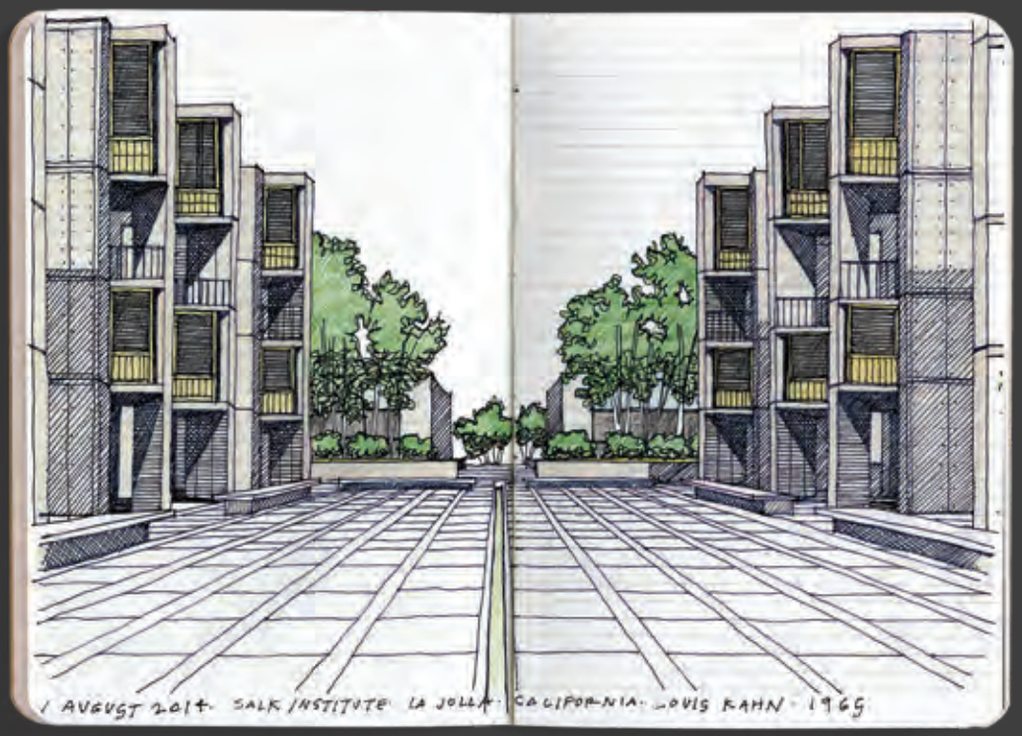
The built manifestation of Le Corbusier's statement that a house is a machine for living, the Villa Savoye was seen as the modernist domestic ideal when it was completed in 1929. The house suggested a residential future in which open planning, light, easily maintained materials, and mankind elevated above the landscape would prevail over the social ills of the time. Now, almost one hundred years old, the house remains an inspiring anachronism, but it is hardly a precursor of the way we would live in the future.



Frank Lloyd Wright, whose groundbreaking early work set the stage for so much of modern architecture, had been left behind with the rise of European Modernism, particularly the work of Mies, Le Corbusier, and Gropius. His Kaufmann House of 1935 brought him roaring back into the architectural mainstream and produced what is probably the most recognized piece of modern architecture in the world. As a distillation of Wright's ideas of organic architecture, and as a proposition for the way man could live in nature, it stands as a masterpiece of nature art at the highest level. Yet as a prototype for the future, it is no more relevant than any house designed for a wealthy owner in a remote setting far removed from the realities of dense urban life.



Twenty years after the Villa Savoye, Mies van der Rohe designed a similar architectural statement, using a different set of design concepts and construction techniques, in his Farnsworth House of 1951. Like the Villa Savoye, the house sits in an Arcadian landscape, surrounded by nature and removed from the realities of urban (and suburban) America. It is pristine and best understood as sculpture. Widely copied and revered by architects in the 75 years since its completion, it has nevertheless had little impact on the way most people in the world live.



As a second-wave modernist, Louis Kahn altered the visual language of architecture with his emphasis on materiality and monumentality. Revered for his seminal humanistic pronouncements, his buildings required enormous resources in materials and labor to fully express his ideas, as in La Jolla with the Salk Institute. Few clients could undertake projects using Kahn's design vocabulary and material richness, and his career concluded at the same time as the energy crises of the mid-1970s and a shifting paradigm in how buildings were designed and executed. His work, like that of Marcel Breuer and I. M. Pei, remains a reminder of a more optimistic time in architecture, when labor and material costs allowed for significant investment in monumental concrete buildings.

As a child of those times, who is often nostalgic for the "can-do" spirit of postwar America, the videos are thrilling to watch. The ideas presented for the profession, and for how it might emerge as a more collaborative and community-focused way of working, are exciting. I was not threatened at all by them, as I imagine some of my peers might be, perhaps because I know that future is not mine to inhabit or shape. Sadly, the videos do not look like my world, nor are they entirely comprehensible as a model for the next 25 years I may still have on earth—hopefully many of those years still spent in practice.

When I was a student in the 1970s, architecture was in a period of transition, and in school I had a front-row seat to all the debate (and acrimony). My professors were an intriguing cross section of people shaped by—and inspired by—the immediate postwar era and its embrace of the heroic architecture championed by the four "Masters" (Wright, Le Corbusier, Mies, and Gropius). They were loosely followed by second-wave modernist adherents (disciples of Kahn and Rudolph), as well as by the completely apostate younger faculty who stood at the vanguard of Postmodernism. It was a heady and often conflicting mix of ideas—and, though they would have hated to suggest it, styles.

> "The work of the 'Masters' was meant as a guide for the future of architecture. These projects were presented as polemical solutions to many of the ills of modern man."

One thing drilled into us was that the work of the "Masters" was meant as a guide for the future of architecture. These projects were presented as polemical solutions to many of the ills of modern man, made manifest in the built environment. The ideas those great men espoused and articulated—and that were later boiled down to simple concepts, often artlessly copied by lesser architects—were framed as the key to an architectural future. The notion that the Villa Savoye or the Farnsworth House might serve as templates for the housing of the future was central to the thinking of Le Corbusier and Mies, even though it seems ridiculous now.

Until the energy crises and the economic turmoil they created, I believe most of the profession regarded the work of those architects as a blueprint for the future. That it was elitist proved to be a major factor in its downfall. Elitist is clearly not what the AIA is going for in the "Architect of the Future" personas and videos.

One thing nagged at me while watching the videos: Who will be the clients? This question is paired with another: Who will pay the architects doing this work? Today, we work primarily for private clients, institutions, or governments, and they usually have specific needs and narrowly defined programs. While we occasionally encounter exceptional ambitious clients, most do not prioritize broader community or environmental agendas. It falls to folks like us— concerned architects and firms—to assimilate and advocate for those more expansive agendas within our projects.

I reached out to Angela Brooks to ask whether she envisions a time when these humanistic and environmental issues are more fully integrated into our work—and whether they become necessities or mandates. I felt certain her committee's discussions addressed these questions, but I was curious how they imagined these aspirational futures unfolding and who might drive us toward them.

She responded: "Yes, I see a future where our client might be expanded…. We have been hired by both small cities, non-profit art galleries, schools (both private and public), and one of us architects may run for a political office … or be hired by a council member or mayor (i.e., not the 'city'). Many times it is our firm that proposes the 'project' which may be a zoning study rather than a building….I really wanted to work on contracts and fees, but it seems like it is all related."

When I speculate on the future and what it might hold for our profession, I can only interrogate my past. Did I ever imagine that the world I would inhabit as an architect would be so different from the one I knew in school in the 1970s? At that time, I simply wanted to design and be part of the process of making buildings. It was an era of economic retrenchment in the United States, the first since World War II, and the institutions around me were in flux, engendering challenges that affected the mood and optimism of daily life. Graduating in 1981, I came to Texas primarily because it was the only place I could find a job. It worked out well for me, and I have no regrets, but Texas became my home because of opportunity, not because of any sense of destiny or desirability of its geography.

I have lived my life in a place where resource extraction has fueled the economy and provided opportunity for me—and for my clients. The politics of the state acknowledge, and in some ways demand, a future where this will always be true. Was I a coward to come here, espouse a liberal set of social values, and express a preference for sustainability in a place where my financial well-being is tied to a very carbon-present economy?

I do know that the current political environment in our country trends toward selfishness and denial. Anything ambitious—ending poverty, improving educational outcomes, or supporting environmental remediation—is, for the most part, not a present priority. We do not value a future in which going into space or undertaking significant scientific endeavors is anything more than a topic of discussion, and we deny the resources required for the research and exploration needed to make meaningful leaps in almost any area of human concern.

It seems to me that the science of computer and digital technology—certainly the growing importance of AI—is fundamentally different from that of the life sciences focused on health and well-being, which seemed to power discovery in my youth. I am hopeful that somewhere there is a young (and financially secure and supported) Jonas Salk striving to help humanity adapt to climate change and a carbon-intense atmosphere. Maybe that will change. I believe we all know, at least privately, that it must.

That the AIA has articulated a vision of who we, as architects, might become in the future gives me comfort and hope. If the AIA's speculations are correct, my peers who are in practice now, as well as those whose careers are already well underway, will find themselves addressing these future possibilities and broadening their scope of work to include a range of concerns not normally considered our responsibility. The younger architects among us need to get to it; there is a lot of work to be done. □

Michael Malone, FAIA, is the founding principal of Michael Malone Architects and an adjunct assistant professor at the School of Architecture at the University of Texas at Arlington.

RIFFING ON THE PAST

A Houston Garage Remade as a Culinary Destination

Words by ROSS WIENERT


camaraderie

THE TERM *MAKESHIFT*—sometimes implied in adaptive reuse projects—carries the unfortunate connotation of being merely sufficient and likely thrown together haphazardly rather than truly satisfactory or aspirational. However, if one can look beyond that stigma, the word also conveys a desire to provide something essential despite not having the ideal conditions, a willingness to work with what is available even when doing so isn't easy. Architecturally, the word makeshift suggests a need to be resourceful and opportunistic, especially when it pertains to exploring the potentials inherent in what already exists. In working with Chef Shawn Gawle on the design of his new restaurant, Camaraderie, SCHAUM Architects demonstrate just this—an ability to improvise and create opportunity while working within the constraints provided by an existing building and site.

The chef-owned restaurant resides within the shell of a former residential garage and woodshop along 11th Street in Houston Heights. The existing building sits at the innermost edges of a corner lot, opposite a fenced-off bungalow at the street corner. The garage presses tightly against an alley to the west and the fence of an apartment building to the south, leaving just enough space for a drive aisle to connect the gravel parking lots north and east of the restaurant. The limited space tapers to the point that the drive actually informs the inflected angle of the restaurant's covered patio (the lone addition to the garage). The constraints imposed by the site and the existing structure required a sense of resourcefulness and invention from the design team.

The project retains as much of the existing building as possible and largely accepts it as is. The design preserves the existing corrugated metal panels that wrap the roof and walls, extending the material onto the new covered patio. The space feels as if it was carved from the shell of the existing garage. Other than of a series of illuminated acrylic panels that serve as a subtle beacon in the evenings, the building does little to draw attention to itself. The lack of adornment and the building's location at the back of the lot enable it to remain relatively anonymous from the street.

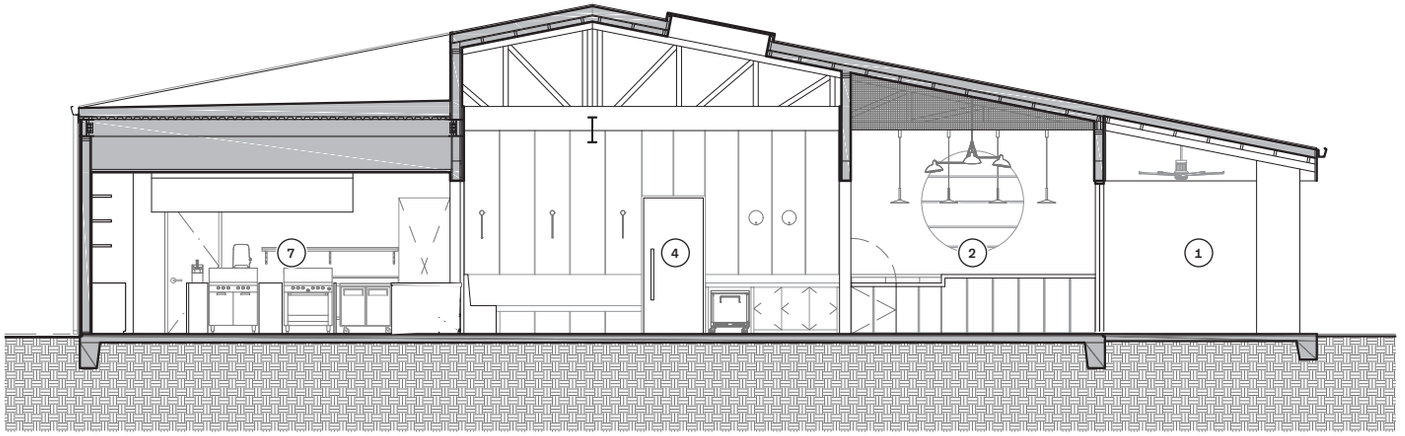
The exterior relies primarily on color to define its character. A white base layer, which reduces the building's presence, replaces the original green. At the building's broad side, carefully composed blue rectangles flank the entrance and mitigate the scale of the facade. Clean sky-blue sculptural canopies cantilever slightly above the entrances for both the guests and the staff, and the restaurant's logo playfully animates the surface adjacent to the main entrance. The warm wood tone of the door stands out against the rest of the facade and foreshadows what lies within.

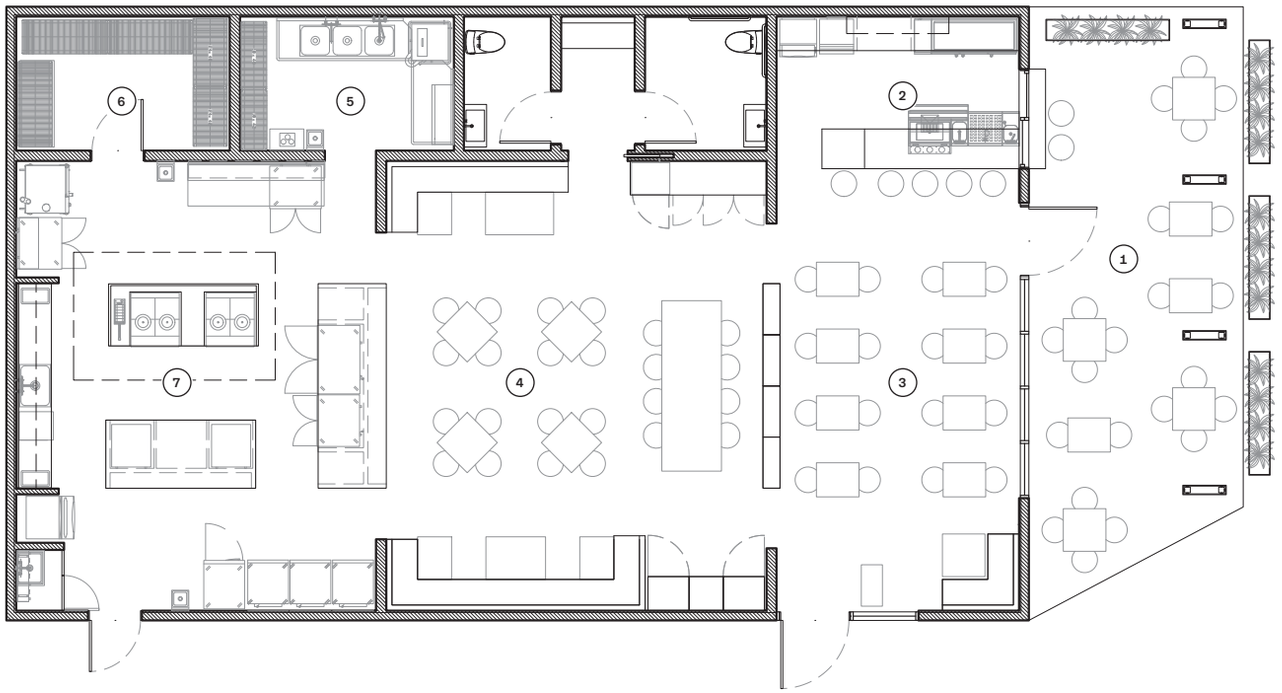
With limited square footage available, the floor plan neatly organizes spaces within the existing shell. Primary walls define consecutive spaces for cooking, dining, lounging, and a covered patio. Along the western edge of the building, a secondary wall conceals pockets of space for dish washing, storage, restrooms, and the back bar, keeping them out of sight. While each of the primary spaces feel distinct, generous openings in the

WORDS BY ROSS WIENERT

← A carefully composed facade mitigates the scale of the building.

↵ The warm wood of the door hints at the atmosphere within.





↑ **FLOOR PLAN & SECTION**

1 PATIO
2 BAR
3 LOUNGE
4 DINING
5 DISHWASHING
6 STORAGE
7 KITCHEN

← A deep blue wash above the bar distinguishes the entry from the adjacent dining space.

↓ Illuminated panels light the street-facing patio.

↓ Birch volumes above shape the light as it falls into the dining space.

↘ The garage's interior before the renovation.

interior walls and floor-to-ceiling glass at the patio provide connections that extend from the open kitchen all the way to the street.

The proximity of the kitchen and dining spaces offers visitors a full view into the working space where chefs prepare each dish. This transparency was a critical part of the experience for Chef Gawle. Troy Schaum, AIA, explains, "It's important to him that you see the dishes you're being served and that they're not hidden away." Despite the openness and visual connection, the spaces feel distinct. The cool gray of the kitchen's interior contrasts with the warm tones that wrap the dining space in a way that implies a boundary without physically imposing one.

Throughout the interior, clever details conserve space and offer flexibility. The banquette that wraps the perimeter of the dining area conceals boxes of storage that lie beneath. A small ledge behind the backrest of that banquette provides enough depth for servers to place open bottles for each table. The SCHAUM team also designed the rolling millwork planters that provide storage for wine below, allowing the dining room and lounge to be connected or distinguished from each other depending on the occasion. By allowing elements to serve multiple roles, these details enable a tight space to still feel ample if not quite expansive.

Faced with the question of where to place a new, substantial HVAC system required a more significant effort. In a move Schaum likens to the body of a Chevrolet El Camino, a mechanical loft recessed into the volume of the existing building keeps the equipment off the ground and out of sight. The flat bed of the loft rests above the kitchen, where the noise presents less of an issue. Quarantining the equipment here preserves the generous ceiling heights in the dining and lounge spaces.

Of all the existing conditions that the garage offered, Schaum sought to maintain the height as well as the soft light that filters downward from the restored skylights. Birch panels clad alternating pairs of trusses and divide the ceiling above into evenly spaced bands of wood. Those bands conceal the ducts and conduits that pass overhead, while allowing natural light from the skylights to spill between them during the day. In the evenings, fixtures bounce light off of the roof back down into the space. In both cases, it was critical to Schaum that guests experience the light itself instead of its source.

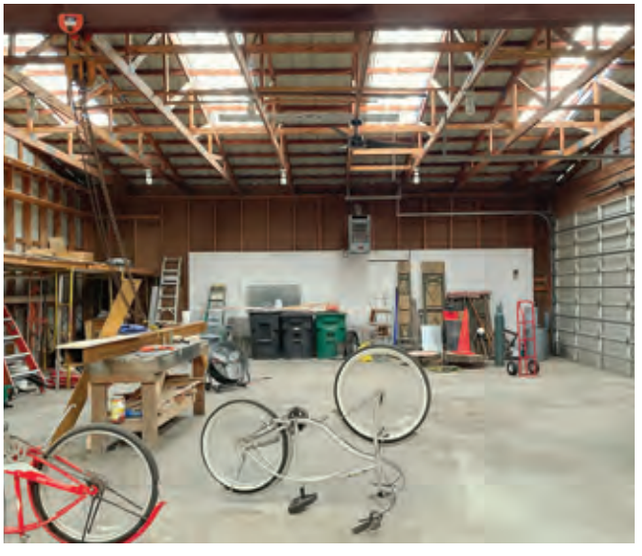
The birch panels wrapping the trusses provide the ceiling with an apparent thickness and depth. That depth conceals the source of the light and projects it downward, allowing it to fade away in a soft gradient as it washes the interior. That light falls onto warm wood walls clad in birch panels that extend the rhythm of the ceiling downward, creating soft striations of light and shadow. While born out of necessity, it is the kind of move that transcends utility and amplifies the presence of something that the existing building already provides.

The warmth and depth offered by the restaurant's interior belies the thinness implied by the building's metal wrapper in a contradictory way that seems fitting. This paradoxical pairing of a high-end restaurant within a more utilitarian shell is one of many contradictions that challenge assumptions and thwart expectations of what fine dining can or should be. Among those contradictions is the relaxed atmosphere within the restaurant. Despite the rave reviews and recognition the restaurant has received for both its architectural and culinary qualities, it still manages to feel humble, modest, and unpretentious.

Houston holds its restaurant culture in high regard. It is just as likely to recognize a mom-and-pop staple in a strip mall or an upstart chef working out of a gas station as it is to laud a shiny new Michelin star. The food takes precedence over everything else. The design for Camaraderie seems to recognize this, and Schaum remarks, "We really wanted a space that doesn't try too hard to grab your attention and just feels comfortable."

Rather than attempting to be novel or unique, the space seems intent on supporting the restaurant in its effort to provide a special experience. The design offers the elements that are essential and necessary, focusing more on solving problems and creating an atmosphere than making a statement. The project demonstrates that architects can strive to create something special without vying for attention. □

Ross Wienert teaches at the University of Houston College of Architecture and Design and practices at CONTENT Architecture in Houston.



PROJECT	Camaraderie Restaurant
LOCATION	Houston
CLIENTS	Chef Shawn Gawle, ReVive Development
ARCHITECT	Schaum Architects
DESIGN TEAM	Troy Schaum, AIA, Andrea Brennan, AIA, Pouya Khadem, Mai Okimoto, AIA, Nathan Ehrlich
CONTRACTOR	Course Construction Group
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER	H2B Engineering
MEP ENGINEER	GK Engineers
KITCHEN DESIGNER	C&T Design and Equipment
LIGHTING CONSULTANT	LAI Lighting Associates
PHOTOGRAPHER	Leonid Furmansky

FROM HEAT TO HUB

Adaptive Reuse at Pullman Market

Words by STEPHANIE ARANDA, ASSOC. AIA


PULLMAN Market
Food
TX
Texas
PULLMAN MARKET

DESPITE BEING TUCKED INTO A CORNER of the Pearl Historic District, Pullman Market invites you into a place full of motion. It's part grocer, part food hall, part civic living room. People buzz between vibrant stalls beneath a steady industrial structure. The dialogue between preservation and movement is the point.

Housed in the Samuels Glass building, a former glass factory, the structure still holds the logic of its industrial past: long spans, utilitarian proportions, and a form shaped by its proximity to the rail line. The curve along one edge of the building responds directly to that rail—a reminder that this site has long been defined by movement and distribution. The project adapts the existing industrial shell to support a large-scale farm-to-table market, reinforcing the Pearl's role as a cultural hub. Preservation here is not about freezing history, but about continuity. Pullman Market functions as infrastructure supporting how people gather, eat, shop, and linger.

Clayton Korte, the architect of the market, approaches adaptive reuse with poised restraint. Rather than reworking the shell beyond recognition, they preserved much of the existing structure, including many of its original openings. These openings establish the cadence of the industrial envelope and serve as abundant opportunities for daylighting and passive comfort.

Infrastructure is carefully consolidated, freeing the primary space to function as a social field. The market anchors the center of the building, while vendors, restaurants, and seating areas line the perimeter, allowing the scale of the original structure to remain perceptible. The interior spatial experience, crafted by Joel Mozersky Design, layers texture, material, and color without overwhelming the industrial framework that holds them.

Like most markets, Pullman is not static. The interior has already shifted in response to use, including changes prompted by visibility and security concerns. These adjustments are apparent, and they underscore a key truth of adaptive reuse: Buildings designed for public life continue to adapt long after opening day. This evolution reinforces the building's role as a living system that is responsive to daily rhythms. Even as the project evolves through refined circulation, enhanced sightlines, and operational adjustments, the core idea remains intact: Let the building speak, and allow contemporary life to layer itself onto that conversation.

Pullman Market's architectural approach aligns closely with the Pearl's broader philosophy of placekeeping and environmental responsibility. Across the district, historic structures have been preserved not as artifacts but as frameworks for contemporary life. Pullman extends that lineage, demonstrating that preservation is most effective when it supports daily use and performance.

This ethos extends into the market's food system. During a walk through the market, Kevin Fink, chief executive officer of Emmer & Rye and Pullman Market, spoke about the group's sustainability philosophy as a structural commitment grounded in transparency and traceability. The focus, he explained, is on understanding where our food comes from, how it's produced, and who is responsible for it at every step.

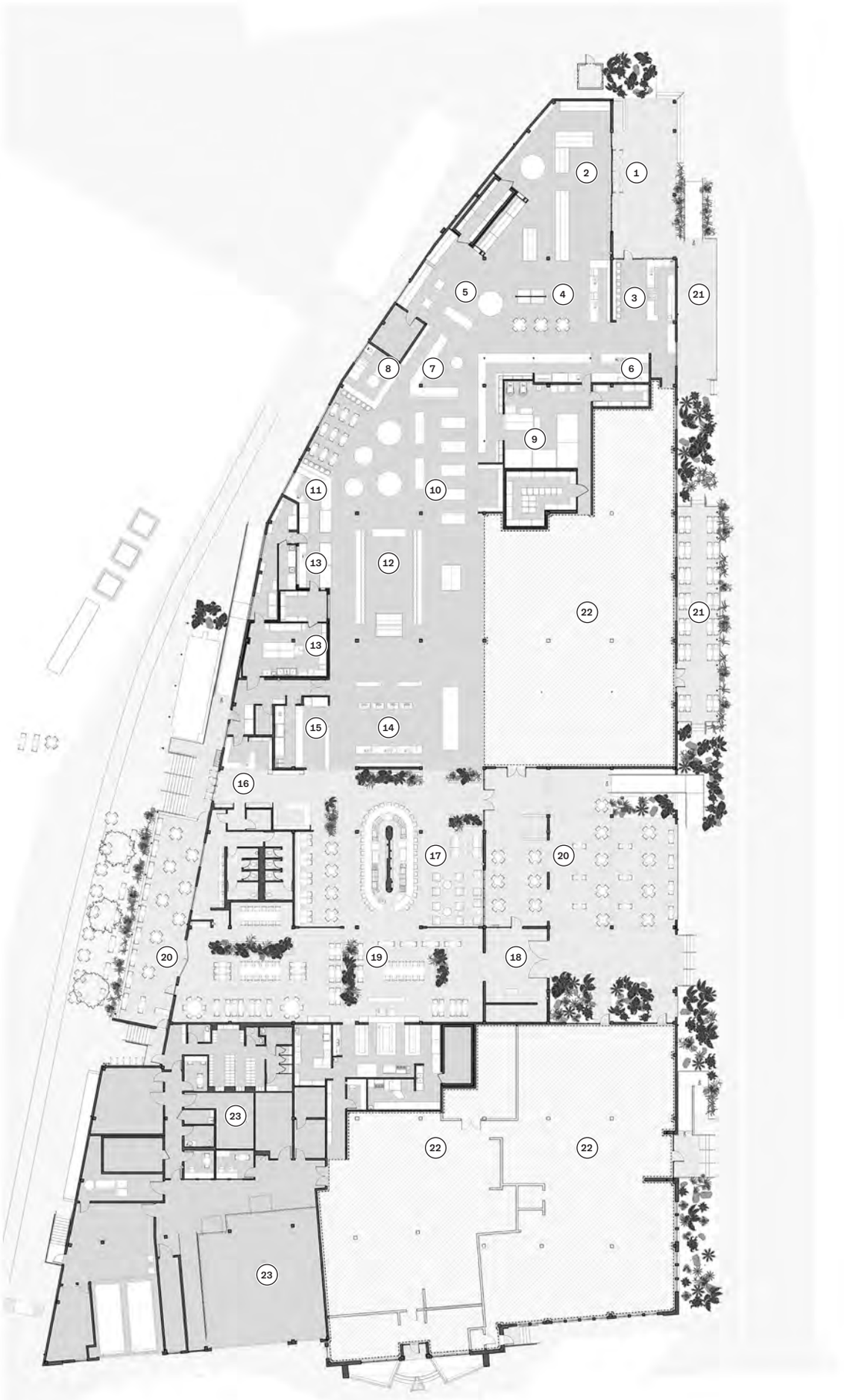
WORDS BY STEPHANIE ARANDA

↤ **SITE PLAN**

1 PULLMAN MARKET
2 PEARL BREWERY
3 HOTEL EMMA
4 SAN ANTONIO RIVER
5 281/I-17 HIGHWAY
6 I-35 HIGHWAY
7 SAN ANTONIO MUSEUM OF ART

↑ The east-facing elevation of Pullman Market opens onto a covered courtyard, drawing pedestrians into the site. Above, the restored “Samuel Glass Co.” sign remains visible, while the Pearl Brewery tower serves as a visual anchor within the district.

→ Light filters through the preserved industrial structure of the courtyard, creating a layered space for gathering and exchange.



↙ **1ST FLOOR PLAN**

1 MARKET ENTRY
2 PRODUCE
3 ICE CREAM STATION
4 GRAB & GO
5 DAIRY AND RETAIL
6 COFFEE STATION
7 FLORAL
8 TORTILLERIA
9 BACKERY
10 GROCERY
11 CEVICHE
12 WINE & BEER
13 BUTCHER & FISHMONGER
14 CHECKOUT
15 BURGER STATION
16 MERCHANDISE
17 MEZCALERIA
18 MEZQUITE VESTIBULE (PRIVATE DINING ROOM)
19 MEZQUITE SEATING
20 RESTAURANT PATIO
21 MARKET PATIO
22 RESTAURANTS BY OTHERS
23 BOH/LOADING DOCK

↗ Open bakery displays activate the interior, where the aroma and visibility of freshly baked goods engage visitors upon entry.

→ Produce stands at the market's entry introduce the farm-to-market concept, reinforcing the project's emphasis on regional sourcing.


BAKERY
BAKERY


Clean Green
Vegetables


PIZZA
PASTA

In this way, Pullman Market operates as adaptive reuse not only at the scale of architecture, but at the scale of commerce. Just as the building has been reused rather than replaced, the existing supply chain is being reworked to be shorter, clearer, and more visible. The architecture also provides a stable, year-round home for producers whose work is often seasonal or fragmented, allowing regional food systems to function with greater consistency.

Everything made or sold in the market bears the imprint of human effort and intention and reflects a labor of love. The market reveals the often-invisible work done to prepare the food alongside its consumption, transforming everyday transactions into quiet acknowledgements of care, craft, and continuity.

Inside the restaurant Mezquite, also by Clayton Korte with Joel Mozersky Design, the interiors draw inspiration from the Sonoran Desert. Earth-toned surfaces, metallic accents, and a palette that feels sun-warmed evoke a landscape that resonates with San Antonio's borderland identity. The reference is a sensorial interpretation of place translated into material and atmosphere, demonstrating that adaptive reuse is also about reinterpretation. An industrial shell can hold new narratives and cultural references without losing its integrity. At Mezquite, desert imagery becomes a bridge between regional ecology, culinary tradition, and architectural mood.

Pullman Market ultimately succeeds because it understands its role within a larger whole. It reinforces the Pearl's identity as a cultural food hub while preserving the physical evidence of its working past, and it participates actively in district-wide sustainability ambitions. The former glass factory has not been erased but rather given a second life that feels grounded.

What stays with one after a visit is more about the feeling of the Pullman than its direct form. The way daylight slips through preserved openings. The ease of drifting from stall to table, from conversation to pause. The low hum of activity that never quite overwhelms the space, even at its busiest. The building doesn't ask to be noticed; it simply holds you while you move through it, allowing daily rituals to unfold within its generous frame.

With this essence, the Pullman Market becomes more than a destination; it becomes part of a rhythm. You come for bread or produce, for lunch or company, and leave with the sense that present activities overlap with something older and ongoing. Sustainable architecture should not perform but support. Sustainability here is embedded not announced. History is not frozen but continuously being written.

In a city where food is inseparable from culture and gathering is inseparable from place, Pullman Market offers a model of continuity where adaptive reuse is less about preservation as an act of restraint and more about stewardship as an act of care. It is a space designed to be returned to again and again as part of the everyday life of San Antonio. ☐

Stephanie Aranda, Assoc. AIA, is a designer, educator, and writer whose work explores architecture as both built form and cultural artifact. She was named the Texas Society of Architects 2023 Associate Member of the Year.

↖ The existing industrial shell is adapted to accommodate contemporary programmatic needs while preserving its structural character.

← A custom-designed wine cave creates an intimate setting for selection and tasting.

↗ The Mezquite restaurant references Sonoran landscapes through materiality and light.

PROJECT	Pullman Market
LOCATION	San Antonio
CLIENTS	Pullman Market, The Historic Pearl
ARCHITECT	Clayton Korte
DESIGN TEAM	Paul Clayton, AIA, Sam Manning, AIA
CONTRACTOR	Joeris
OPERATOR	Emmer & Rye Hospitality Group
MANAGEMENT	Oxbow Development, Pearl, Potluck Hospitality
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER	Lundy & Franke Engineering
MEP ENGINEER	Glumac
CIVIL ENGINEER	Pape-Dawson
INTERIOR DESIGNER	Joel Mozersky Design
LIGHTING DESIGN	Glumac Lighting Studio
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT	Word + Carr Design Group
PHOTOGRAPHER	Casey Dunn

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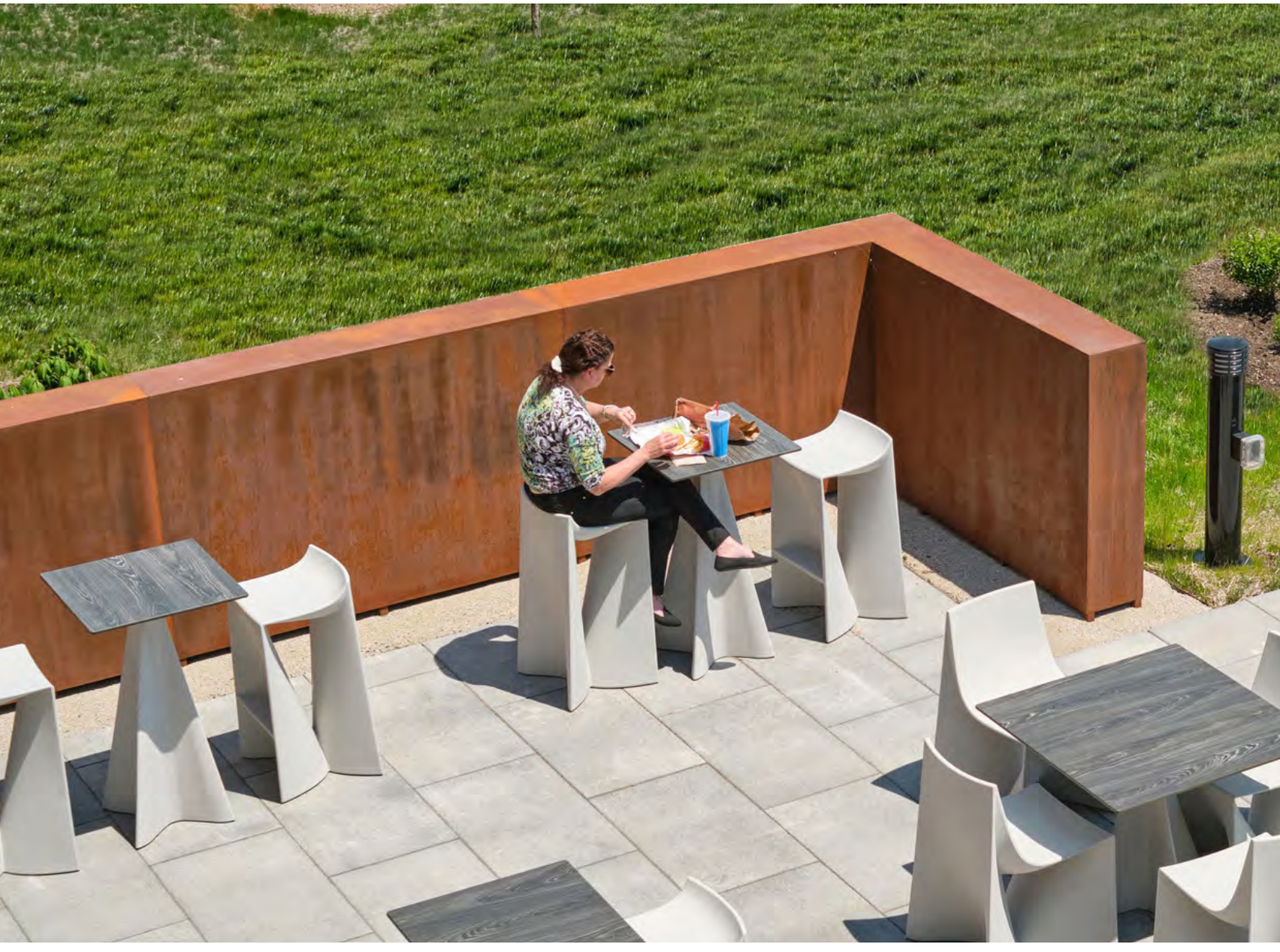

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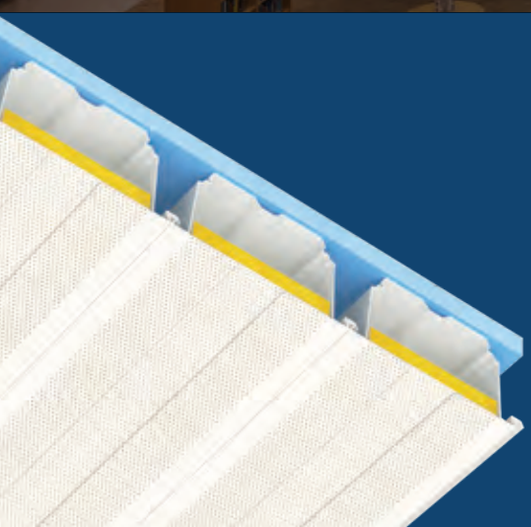

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East Quarter Residences, Dallas, TX
Photographer: David Lloyde

DEPARTMENTS

105–120

← A washed avocado seed reveals vascular layering as the husk is peeled away.

SECOND HARVEST

Building With Fruit Waste Matter

by Catherine Söderberg Esper

I AM A SISTER to Mother Earth. I foster her fruit remnants, awakening them into a second life. In my humble kitchen, I have adopted the role of second mother to these nonhuman discards. Through my work, this matter becomes the ingredients of a new material recipe for architecture.

Our impact as inhabitants of this world has driven the extraction of sand, the cutting down of trees, the mining of stone, the contamination of soils, the production of VOCs, the spilling of chemicals, and the accumulation of microplastics in our water streams. Yet Mother Earth continues growing, continues giving, continues gifting.

Fruit plants are intrinsically designed with a propensity to grow and produce—gifts for us. What, then, is our act of reciprocity toward the Earth? Indigenous cultures carry close to their hearts the Honorable Harvest guidelines: Take only what you need and use everything you take. In her book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, author and Potawatomi Native Robin Wall Kimmerer writes, "By using materials as if they were a gift, and returning that gift through worthy use, we find balance."

So I ask: How might the Honorable Harvest way of life introduce a new material framework for architecture? What does an indigenously inspired architecture look like—one that transforms culinary waste streams into a material culture? Can we create an architecture of gratitude by working with remnant food waste? By consuming and then repurposing the inedible, could tectonic matter be sourced from scraps?

Food waste is a global issue. Approximately one-third of all food produced globally is wasted, and nearly 50 percent of harvested fruit is discarded due to their short shelf life and susceptibility to bruising. The fruit waste we generate post-consumption, however, is largely unintentional and unavoidable. In my binational city of El Paso, a single Mexican restaurant can go through eight 84-count boxes of avocados in a single weekend. Each discarded avocado seed—weighing between 10 and 60 grams—often ends up in landfills, where it decomposes anaerobically and releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

← Head chefs from Taconeta gather boxes of discarded avocado seeds from the restaurant.

↙ Grated and dehydrated avocado seed material.

↓ Avocado seed material packed into 3D-printed molds with binder.

PROCESS

The avocado seed brick project began in my humble kitchen after making guacamole. The sheer number and size of the discarded seeds sparked a question: How can we repurpose this waste? It was a combination of curiosity and the guilt of throwing away such a substantial volume of material that set the project in motion.

After a conversation with a close friend and co-owner of the popular El Paso restaurant Taconeta, we agreed to collaborate on this research endeavor. Their kitchen staff collected the extracted avocado seeds in boxes, which I then retrieved and processed in the lab. By sourcing seeds from this local restaurant, I found a way to work with a readily available, no-cost resource that would otherwise contribute to landfill waste.

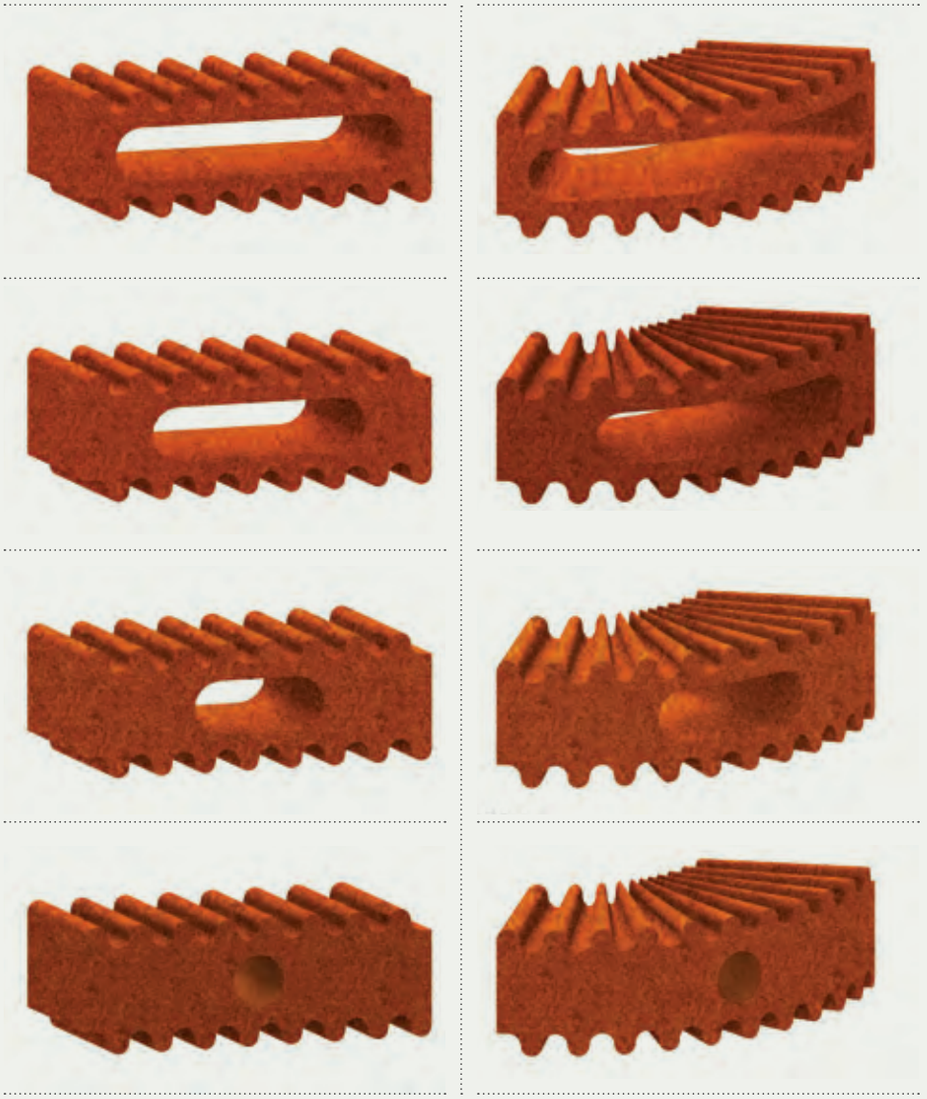
What, then, is possible with this abundance of avocado waste? Over the past year and a half, I have dissected, analyzed, and fabricated with avocado seeds. The process of transforming these seeds was both intuitive and experimental. After carefully cleaning each seed, I began examining the material's friability through various forms of manipulation. Carbohydrates make up approximately 65 percent of an avocado seed's mass, giving it a molecular makeup similar to that of a potato. Anyone who has grated a peeled potato knows the effortlessness of that action. Using a low-tech, manual kitchen box grater, I processed each seed. The material was then sun-dried, becoming lightweight, starchy particles that could be compacted and shaped within molds when mixed with an adhesive.

The avocado bricks were designed as linear and curved elements that could be arranged into a variety of wall configurations. Ridges at the top and bottom of each brick were calculated to allow modular stacking without the use of mortar. The bricks also incorporate apertures of varying sizes, ranging from smaller perforations to larger central openings. The molds used to cast the avocado particles were 3D printed in in various segments with polylactic acid (PLA) material to allow for easy removal.

→ Catalogue of avocado seed brick types with various aperture conditions.

↘ Singular avocado seed brick extracted from mold and ready for assembly.

↦ Rendering of modular wall system made with avocado seed bricks.



CONCLUSION

The avocado seed brick project is rooted in reciprocity, respect, regeneration, and mutual flourishing between the built environment and the natural world. What ignites my creativity is the urge to manifest an architecture that does not extract from the Earth, but instead returns to the soil—decomposing, restoring, and replenishing Mother Earth. It is a material system that gives back. Architecture as a ceremonial offering: from Earth, for Earth.

As designers and shapers of the physical world, we bear a profound responsibility to question the material life of every element we build with. The construction industry, as it stands, continues to extract from the Earth, building for linear permanence on a planet defined by cyclical renewal.

Indigenous cultures, by contrast, have long understood how to live in harmony with nature. Their wisdom invites us to reimagine architecture not as a monument to endurance, but as a temporal, responsive gesture—something that lives out its natural span and then returns to the Earth in a way that nourishes rather than depletes. What if buildings, like leaves, were designed to decompose, enrich soil, and close the loop?

At Matter Matters, we explore this vision—an architecture that does not impose, but nurtures. For every project, we aim to create materials that embody cycles of reciprocity. Currently, we are continuing to investigate how avocado seeds might be adapted for a range of applications, from hybrid composites paired with PLA-printed modular frames to architectural elements such as sheathing, cladding, panels, tiles, and flooring. This approach redefines material life cycles, moving away from extractive supply chains toward a model of reuse and regeneration—shaped by love, consciousness, and deep respect for the living systems of which we are a part. ☐

Catherine Söderberg Esper is an architectural materials researcher and founder of Matter Matters, a design lab focused on exploring the potential of discarded waste and natural materials in construction.

LIFE IN THE OBLIQUE

Oblique Experiments

Igor Siddiqui

Applied Research & Design, 2025

by Maya Shamir

OBLIQUE EXPERIMENTS follows French architect Claude Parent on a multiyear tour during which he engaged the public with a provocation to imagine life on sloped surfaces. In this carefully researched book, Igor Siddiqui, an architect and professor at the University of Texas at Austin, draws on extensive archival material to examine a pivotal but lesser-known aspect of Parent's work: a series of temporary installations known as *practicables*, constructed between 1969 and 1975. Siddiqui examines the *practicables* with a focus on their relationship to interiority and advocates for understanding obliqueness as a model for practice. *Oblique Experiments* ultimately resonates beyond its archival content as a contemporary meditation on obliqueness as a mode of architectural practice.

The roots of "la fonction oblique" trace back to Parent's partnership with theorist and urban planner Paul Virilio. Together they formed Architecture Principe, a think tank and architecture office, in 1963. Virilio's research into German World War II bunkers along the French coast influenced the firm's most significant built work, the Church of St. Bernadette in Nevers, whose concrete exterior evoked bunkers. Its interior rejected orthogonality, replacing level floors with sloped slabs. Siddiqui includes photos from Parent's other built work, such as a strip mall in Sens which stands out as a reminder that commercial typologies can also be sites of spatial experimentation.

The oblique was conceived as a means of intensifying engagement with the built environment, and Parent pursued this ambition earnestly. Architecture Principe launched a magazine in anticipation of the church's completion, an early example of Parent's multidisciplinary output. Siddiqui recounts the duo's proposal to inhabit experimental sloped apartments while undergoing psychological evaluation to study the effects of oblique living. The intended site for this experiment, a university campus, however proved untenable. The student protests of May 1968 ultimately fractured Parent's partnership with Virilio as Parent, dismissing the protests as mob mentality, insisted that the oblique was not a political project. He later self-published "Vivre à l'oblique" in 1970, articulating his belief that sloped surfaces cultivate user agency through an "architecture of effort." While the political unrest ended the partnership, it also opened new avenues: New public arts funding enabled Parent's traveling installations.

The heart of this book, demarcated by pink pages, documents the tour of the *practicables*, oblique installations sited in existing buildings. These temporary oblique installations were typically inserted into *maisons de la culture*, France's decentralized cultural centers intended to distribute arts programming beyond major cities. Between 1969 and 1975, the tour brought Parent's work to small cities across France, with an additional appearance at the 1970 Venice Biennale. Siddiqui's careful curation of archival drawings, photographs, posters, and newly produced plans provides a vivid account of each installation and its context. We follow, through text and visuals, Parent and his merry band of collaborators through *practicables* at various scales and settings, each with different programming documented in detail. Siddiqui carefully contextualizes the venues, processes, and context for each town visited.

Siddiqui's comparison of the plans of the *practicables* shows the differences between them, most designed to fit in existing interiors, with an exception in the entirely outdoor *practicable* in Douai. Parent also formally solicited feedback through workshops, but ambulation on a sloped surface

↓ The Church of St. Bernadette in Nevers, which was completed in 1966, had sloping landscaping as well as interiors.
PHOTO BY IGOR SIDDIQUI

↓ Claude Parent's *practicable* at the Maison de la culture d'Amiens (1972-1973) featured paintings by Roberto Matta.

was the principal way the tour fostered subjective experiences. In the exhibition text for the tour's first stop at the Nouveau Musée du Havre, Parent identified movement as the fourth dimension of architecture, beyond the three orthogonal axes of space. Parent's *practicables* hosted mime shows, paintings, gymnastic routines, and screenings, each attempting to blur the line between life and art (or architecture). Rather than treating this programming as ancillary, Siddiqui convincingly frames it as integral to Parent's experiments.

Interiority is a central analytical thread throughout Siddiqui's book. The *practicables* were interior in a literal sense, designed for enclosed spaces, but they were also methods for exploring interior states of perception and subjectivity. Parent imagined these installations as prototypes for domestic life, a vision that led him to critique the furniture industry for perpetuating 19th-century material cultures incompatible with oblique living. His own apartment contained two oblique objects, designed for dining and living. For frequent Parent collaborator and artist Andree Bellaguet's non-orthogonal apartment, Parent produced a certificate of authenticity designating it as the first oblique dwelling, calling back to his earlier desire to put oblique life to scientific study.

For many readers, Parent will likely be a familiar figure; his work has been much discussed by architects such as Rem Koolhaas, Zaha Hadid, Frank Gehry, and Jean Nouvel, who once worked in Parent's office. Siddiqui observes that although experimental installations are far more common in architectural practice today than they were in the 1970s, Parent's own experimental installations, and his socially engaged strategies, were influential and perhaps prescient. Certainly, Parent's workshops for soliciting feedback through participants' direct engagement with the *practicables* and their programming stand out as an inspiring method.

In the book's final chapter, Siddiqui identifies three enduring strands of influence from Parent's work: the ground as a composite construct, the performance of the architect, and obliqueness as a mode of practice. Siddiqui pulls compelling contemporary examples such as Olafur Eliasson's Riverbed at the Louisiana Museum Of Modern Art, Alex Schweder's performance architecture, and the author's own use of participatory methods during public lectures. Through careful archival research and close analysis, *Oblique Experiments* offers a clear account of the significance of the *practicables* within Parent's oeuvre. Siddiqui's analysis, as well as his delightful curation of drawings, photographs, and ephemera from Parent and others, inspires designers to think critically about obliqueness, interiority, and the body. The book takes installations, exhibitions, events, and publications seriously as sites for architectural thought. In doing so, Siddiqui extends Parent's legacy beyond the literal proposition of life on an incline, offering obliqueness as a durable and generative stance toward practice, one that remains relevant amid contemporary architectural discourse. ☐

Maya Shamir is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, where she majored in architecture and minored in history. She is currently pursuing her master of design studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

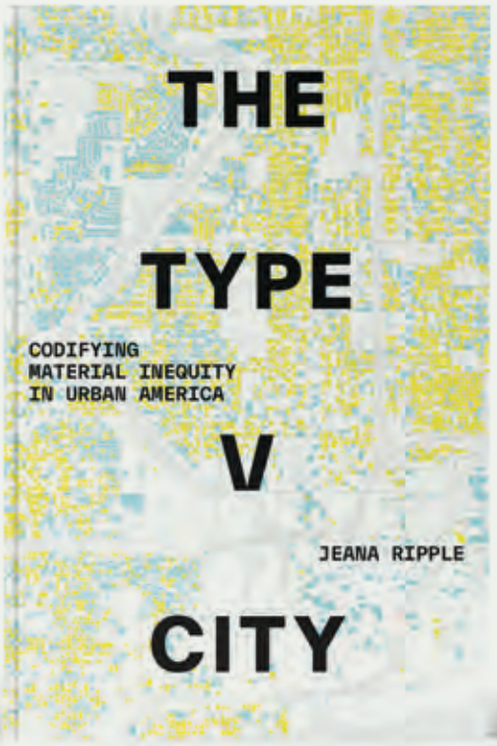
REFRAMING WOOD FRAMING

The Type V City: Codifying Material Inequity in Urban America

Jeana Ripple

University of Texas Press, 2025

by Ben Parker, AIA



WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS of America's love affair with wood construction? *The Type V City*, a neatly organized collection of essays by architect and professor Jeana Ripple, AIA, circles around that question and layers onto it concerns about resilience, ecology, and equity.

Each of the book's five chapters deals with one city and two themes, starting with "Type V Chicago: Durability and Disinvestment," and ending with "Type V Seattle: Adaptive Capacity and Lifespan." New York, Philadelphia, and Tampa make up the intervening chapters. As the term "Type V" is approaching its 100th anniversary, it is appropriate that the book invokes the need for "retrospective analysis of the last century's regulatory impact." However, because most of the action in the book takes place before 1927—when the five types of construction were introduced in the first edition of the Uniform Building Code—the frequent use of the term "Type V" can feel anachronistic. Also, "Type V" is used by the author to refer to all wood buildings, even though technically Types III and IV may also be built of dimensional lumber when made sufficiently fire-resistive. Simplifications like this help clarify the narrative for non-expert audiences, though they may serve as speed bumps for the professional reader.

Commendably, the book connects the rules we make to their actual outcomes, rather than to their intentions, which is a perspective that architects, engineers, and planners need consistently to be reminded of. The book shines when it points out ways that the current regulatory matrix is preventing us from building sustainably—for example, through occupancy-based egress requirements that make adaptive reuse difficult. Also, the scope of the book is ambitious, even exhilarating at times. While one could wish for coverage of even more places—where are the cities affected by wildfires, and what about rapidly expanding sunbelt cities like Dallas or Phoenix?—the narrative's shifts in scale from wood fibers to regional ecosystems and the neighborhoods in between make for a dynamic and engaging structure.

The already broad selection of cities further enriches the book. While the tale of Chicago's Great Fire and the subsequent reconstruction will be known to many readers, the chapters on the other four cities provide less familiar accounts. New York's deals primarily not with Manhattan but with the marshy plains of the outer boroughs and the impact of Superstorm Sandy. Philadelphia, a curious choice as it has conspicuously little wood construction, forms the backdrop for a story about labor unions and racial exclusion. Although the narrative of redlining and urban renewal has been told many times before, the setting of Tampa provides fresh specificity, with the deft use of Sanborn maps proving particularly informative. Finally, the chapter on Seattle is perhaps the richest, as the city's location in the great forests of the Pacific Northwest entwines its history most intimately with wood.

The book's most admirable quality may be its willingness to traverse the difficult and necessary territory between academia and practice. At a time when we need more research into the social impacts of our discipline's technical dimensions, this book stands as an important contribution. Hopefully, it will encourage other scholars to take up this subject matter as well.

By the end of the book, readers may be left feeling ambivalent about the role of wood construction in our building culture. Ripple's critiques rest on a presumed hierarchy of quality, where Types I-IV are "better" than Type V, rather than simply more fire-resistive. Her conclusions imply that wood buildings are themselves evidence of inequity . This framing is difficult to reconcile with the fact that many desirable addresses across the country are, in fact, Type V buildings. Much of the lowest quality housing in America—manufactured homes and old,

↓ Back cover of the Tampa Housing Authority's "Good and Bad Housing," promoting more fire-resistive housing.

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↓ A Sanborn map of Tampa, Florida, illustrating the prevalence of wood-frame construction. The 1931 Sanborn maps document building materials and water-supply line locations in the Ybor neighborhood.

COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, GEOGRAPHY AND MAP DIVISION, SANBORN MAPS COLLECTION. GRAPHIC HIGHLIGHTS OF TYPES I-III BUILDINGS AND WATER-SUPPLY LINE SIZES ADDED BY BOOK AUTHOR.

unimproved public housing—is not Type V at all, while many mansions and high-rent luxury apartments are. Two of America's most recent natural disasters, the Maui wildfires of 2023 and the Los Angeles wildfires of 2025, devastated high- and low-income neighborhoods alike. It is difficult to articulate the specificities of inequity when wood construction is so pervasive nationwide.

Early in the book, the author does acknowledge the ubiquity of wood construction, quoting Carol Shammas that it "conquered all classes." Rich or poor, Americans tend to live in wood houses and wood buildings to a much greater extent than in many other countries, developed or developing. But Ripple does not carry this insight forward, choosing instead to admonish building and zoning codes for what they get wrong when they allow—or, in the case of Philadelphia, don't allow—wood construction.

Unproven disadvantages of wood feel overplayed, while its beneficial aspects are given only scant consideration. Ripple recognizes that it is difficult to "pinpoint specific attributes that determine a building's longevity" and that we lack data on reasons for building demolition. Yet she then characterizes wood as the least desirable option in terms of longevity and renovation ability, emphasizing its drawbacks—susceptibility to fire and moisture, short spans that result in more structural walls—while not mentioning its advantages, such as ease of workability and modification for ducts and wiring. Anecdotally, I would suggest that proper detailing and the real estate market both have a greater influence on building lifespan than the structural system. A well-detailed wood building will last longer than a poorly detailed concrete one. And, if market dynamics pressure an old building to be torn down and replaced with a new one, demolishing a wood structure will have less environmental impact than demolishing a concrete structure. Ripple would have us assume that, in a preponderance of instances, the concrete building would be adaptively reused while the wood building would be demolished, but there is not evidence to support this position. In the quest to find a wrongdoer in our building culture, it feels that wood has been unjustly… framed .

The book's critique of wood is closely tied to a broader examination of our city-making practices across the ten sub-themes of durability, disinvestment, saturation, etc. However, if the book's conclusions are not specific to wood, they start becoming too general to contest. It's true that building codes offer a "unique lens to view the social impact of American urban architecture," but what that lens actually reveals is less clear. Yes, there is inequity in the built environment, and the built environment is made of materials—including wood. But a direct connection between our specific codes and our broader social problems feels tenuous. The argument relies on a speculative approach to history, inherently unverifiable, that imagines that alternative building codes would result in significantly improved social outcomes. Perhaps materiality is being asked to bear too much responsibility here for multidimensional urban problems. For one thing, focusing on the agency of building codes lets humans off the hook. Code officials, city planners, architects, engineers, contractors, and developers will find much thought-provoking material in this book, even as it brushes over the intricate calculus of tradeoffs that daily inform their choices and shape the process of city-making. □

Ben Parker, AIA, is principal of OBP Design and an assistant professor at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

These new LED lighting fixtures for spaces from tabletops to stairwells offer flexible illumination for residential and commercial spaces.

by Rita Catinella Orrell

↓ SCULPT HANGING LIGHTED MIRROR
Robern
robern.com

The Sculpt Hanging Lighted Mirror delivers warm white light along its perimeter while creating a bold focal point for the room. The interplay of premium LED task lighting and museum-inspired frames it a standout for primary bathrooms, walk-in closets, and powder rooms. Available in Matte Black, Polished Stainless Steel, and Brass finishes, the mirror is constructed and polished by hand in the US in two structural forms—a traditional Arch and an oblong Pill shape.

↑ LINEAR
Sabin
sabin.design

Fourteen quick-snap connectors allow designers to transform Linear's individual baffles into expansive architectural compositions to meet a spectrum of acoustic, LED lighting, and spatial design needs. Linear includes curved and straight-lined ceiling baffles that can be combined with motion sensors, speakers, and Wi-Fi. The system offers an NRC rating of .95+, lumen outputs reaching up to 1250, and dimming down to 10%. It can be mounted direct to strut, direct to grid, with threaded rod or straps, or by aircraft cable.

↓ LITTLETWOS NXT
USAI Lighting
usailighting.com

USAI Lighting's LittleTwos NXT—available in Singles, Multiples, and Pinhole options—are the next generation of the manufacturer's 2-inch recessed fixtures. Delivering up to 1875 lumens (singles), 1400 lumens per head (doubles), and 1100 lumens (Pinhole), the family of compact LED designs offers powerful optics, advanced glare control, and full flexibility for hospitality, residential, office, and healthcare environments. The fixtures provide beam options from 10° up to 75° with deep regress and pinhole trim options.

↑ **VOSCO**
Ambientec
ambientec.co.jp

Inspired by handheld tools that have been worn by time, the Vosco rechargeable, portable lamp by New York-based designer Nao Tamura delivers soft, even LED illumination through a specially developed Fresnel lens. A touch sensor controls five brightness levels ranging from the warm glow of a candle to 2400 K—perfect for dining, reading, or moments of relaxation. The lamp's central wooden section comes in walnut, maple, or oak and can be adjusted to three different sizes and eventually replaced if needed.

↓ **ILLUMINATION AND POWER KIT**
Landscape Forms
landscapeforms.com

The Illumination and Power Kit integrates power, mobile charging, and lighting into three of Landscape Forms' most widely specified outdoor public furnishing solutions—MultipliCITY, Bancal, and Parallel 42. Featuring options for 120 V GFCI receptacles, USB-A and USB-C charging ports, and warm under-bench lighting, the kit addresses the modern needs of outdoor users while enhancing ambience and extending the usability of public spaces. The kit comes in three configurations to tailor its functionality: Lighting only, GFCI/USB only, and combined Lighting and GFCI/USB.

↑ **RHYTHM**
Vibia
vibia.com

Designed by Arik Levy, this minimalist pendant features slender LED light modules that can be arranged into intricate configurations. Offered in natural white oak and American walnut finishes, Rhythm's rotation system allows the light sticks to move along a vertical or horizontal axis. Rhythm Vertical (shown) was designed for stairwells or entry halls with high ceilings, while Rhythm Horizontal is ideal for meeting rooms, restaurants, and hotel lobbies.

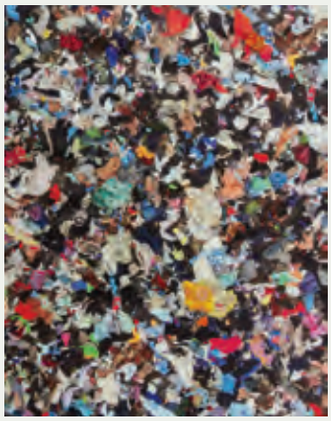
MARCH

FRIDAY 6

LECTURE
Rice Architecture Lecture Series—Claire Zimmerman: "Control and Communication: Architecture, Industry, and Spatial Autarchy"
Farish Gallery, MD Anderson Hall
Loop Rd.
Houston
arch.rice.edu

SATURDAY 7

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Soledad Salamé: Camouflage



Blaffer Art Museum
120 Fine Arts Bldg.
University of Houston
Houston
blafferartmuseum.org

As big business and industry continue to churn through natural resources with little regard, Chilean American artist Soledad Salamé proposes a poetic form of intervention marrying art, research, and re-invention. For this exhibit, aerial photographs of the Atacama Desert, where millions of pounds of "fast fashion" are dumped and piled, are translated into dizzying camouflage fields traced with needle and thread.

FAST FASHION ATACAMA II (DETAIL). 2025 ARCHIVAL PRINT ON CANVAS WITH HAND WORK AND EMBROIDERY. COURTESY SUE PAYNE.

EVENT
AIA FW Awards Ceremony
The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth
3200 Darnell St.
Fort Worth
aiafw.org

SUNDAY 8

EXHIBITION OPENING
Rashid Johnson: A Poem for Deep Thinkers
Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth
3200 Darnell St.
Fort Worth
themodern.org

MONDAY 9

LECTURE
Texas Tech HCOA Lecture Series—Robert E. Gay and Lucy Begg: "Laws of Locality"
1800 Flint Ave.
Lubbock
depts.ttu.edu/architecture

FRIDAY 13

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Simulating Democracy: Housing and Computation in Modern Latin America
UTSOA
Goldsmith Hall
310 Inner Campus Dr.
Austin
soa.utexas.edu

SATURDAY 21

EVENT
Beaux Arts Ball: One Riverwalk Renaissance
One Riverwalk Place
700 N. St. Mary's St., 16th Fl.
San Antonio
aiasa.org

SUNDAY 22

EXHIBITION CLOSING
International Surrealism
Dallas Museum of Art
1717 N. Harwood
Dallas
dma.org

MONDAY 23

LECTURE
Texas A&M Rowlett Lecture—Jose Palacios, Eric Long, and Shonda Odea: "The Integration of Art & Science in Architecture | Cross-Pollination and Innovation"
Walter and Lenore Annenberg Presidential Conference Center
1002 George Bush Dr. W.
College Station
arch.tamu.edu

TUESDAY 24

EVENT
Texas A&M Rowlett Workshop—Cross-Pollinating Art & Science: An Industry/Academia Collaboration and Exploration of Integrated Design

Langford Architectural Complex
Langford A, 2nd Fl., Harold and Janice Adams Review Space
College Station
arch.tamu.edu

Using hands-on learning, environmental analysis, digital fabrication, and AI tools, this program invites students and professionals to collaborate with SOM and other national experts to create resilient, efficient, low-carbon design strategies shaping the future of integrated practice. Registration is required; contact *crscenter@arch.tamu.edu*.

IMAGE COURTESY TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE

WEDNESDAY 25

LECTURE
Rice Architecture Lecture Series—Kersten Geers and David Van Severen: "The Large City"
Farish Gallery, MD Anderson Hall
Loop Rd.
Houston
arch.rice.edu

LECTURE
UH Hines College of Architecture & Design Lecture Series—Matthias Hoffman and Tim Pazner
UH Architecture Building Theater
Houston
uh.edu/architecture

THURSDAY 26

EVENT
The Gala for Architecture
Union Station
400 S. Houston St.
Dallas
aiadallas.org

FRIDAY 27

EXHIBITION OPENING
The Gift of Drawing: Cy Twombly

The Menil Drawing Institute
1412 W. Main St.
Houston
menil.org

Presenting works from a gift to the museum by the Cy Twombly Foundation, this exhibition covers 30 years of the artist's activity, from the 1950s to the 1980s, featuring themes, like classical antiquity and nature, that were fundamental to his practice.

CY TWOMBLY, *UNTITLED*, 1970. OIL AND WAX CRAYON ON PAPER, 27 1/2 × 34 1/2 IN. (69.9 × 87.6 CM). THE MENIL COLLECTION, HOUSTON, GIFT OF THE CY TWOMBLY FOUNDATION. © CY TWOMBLY FOUNDATION

MONDAY 30

LECTURE
Rice Architecture Lecture Series—Raha Talebi and Paul Vantieghem: "Restraint and Abandon"
Farish Gallery, MD Anderson Hall
Loop Rd.
Houston
arch.rice.edu

LECTURE
UTSOA Lecture Series—Virginia San Fratello: "From Code to Craft"
Goldsmith Lecture Hall
310 Inner Campus Dr.
Room 3.120
Austin
soa.utexas.edu

EVENT
Clays for College
Greater Houston Sports Club
6700 McHard Rd.
Houston
architecturehouston.org

APRIL

WEDNESDAY 1

LECTURE
UTSOA Lecture Series—Luis E. Carranza: "The Echo Chamber: Luis Barragán and the Avant-Garde"
Goldsmith Lecture Hall
310 Inner Campus Dr.
Room 3.120
Austin
soa.utexas.edu

FRIDAY 3

EXHIBITION OPENING
UTSOA Emerging Scholar in Design: BUNDLE UP!
Goldsmith Hall
310 Inner Campus Dr.
Austin
soa.utexas.edu

MONDAY 6

LECTURE
UTSOA Lecture Series—Emiliano López Matas: "How We Choose to Live"
Goldsmith Lecture Hall
310 Inner Campus Dr.
Room 3.120
Austin
soa.utexas.edu

EVENT
AIA Dallas Golf Tournament
Trophy Club Country Club
500 Trophy Club Dr.
Trophy Club
aiadallas.org

FRIDAY 10

AIA LRGV Annual Fundraising Golf Tournament
Los Lagos Golf Club
1720 S. Raul Longoria Rd.
Edinburg
lrgvaia.org

SATURDAY 11

EVENT
Rice Design Chats: Reflecting on the Past
Rice Architecture
Cannady Hall, MD Anderson Hall
Loop Rd.
Houston
arch.rice.edu

SUNDAY 12

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Ferias, Parques y Plazas: A Celebration of Public Space
McNay Art Museum
6000 N. New Braunfels Ave.
San Antonio
mcnayart.org

SUNDAY 19

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Paper Trails: Latin American Art in Print (1950-1995)
Blanton Museum of Art
200 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Austin
blantonmuseum.org

MONDAY 20

LECTURE
AIA Dallas Architecture Matters Lecture Series—Mitchell Garman Architects
Architecture and Design Exchange
325 N. St. Paul St., Ste. 150
Dallas
aiadallas.org

THURSDAY 23

EXHIBITION OPENING
HOST: Laura Lit
The Contemporary Austin – Jones Center
700 Congress Ave.
Austin
thecontemporaryaustin.org

EVENT
AIA/CSI FW Acme Brick Golf Tournament
Waterchase Gold Club
8951 Creek Run Rd.
Fort Worth
aiafw.org

FRIDAY 24

EVENT
Gulf Coast Green—CYCLE: Where Ends Become Beginnings
The Ismaili Center | Houston
2323 Allen Pkwy.
Houston
architecturehouston.org

MAY

SUNDAY 3

EXHIBITION CLOSING
In Nature's Studio: Two Centuries of American Landscape Painting
Art Museum of South Texas
1902 N. Shoreline Blvd.
Corpus Christi
artmuseumofsouthtexas.org

MONDAY 4

EVENT
Scholarship Golf Classic
SilverHorn Golf Club of Texas
1100 W. Bitters Rd.
San Antonio
aiasa.org

SATURDAY 9

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Imaging After Photography

Moody Center for the Arts
Rice University
6100 Main St., MS-480
Houston
moody.rice.edu

Imaging after Photography explores the mercurial nature of images, the evolving dialogue between photographs and reality, and humanity's ever-changing relationship to technological advancements

TREVOR PAGLEN, *BLOOM SERIES*, INSTALLATION VIEW, PHOTO: ALEX MARKS. *IMAGING AFTER PHOTOGRAPHY*, JANUARY 23–MAY 9, 2026. MOODY CENTER FOR THE ARTS, RICE UNIVERSITY.

MAY 17

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Frida Kahlo – Sus Fotos
El Paso Museum of Art
One Arts Festival Plz.
El Paso
epma.art

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Frida: The Making of an Icon
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
1001 Bissonnet St.
Houston
mfah.org

MAY 24

EXHIBITION CLOSING
New Horizons: The Western Landscape
Amon Carter Museum of American Art
3501 Camp Bowie Blvd.
Fort Worth
cartermuseum.org

MAY 31

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Peter Bradley and "The De Luxe Show"

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
1001 Bissonnet St.
Houston
mfah.org

View historic and contemporary works from artists included in Peter Bradley's landmark 1971 exhibition in Houston's Fifth Ward. *The De Luxe Show* was one of the first racially integrated exhibitions of contemporary art in the US, promoting abstraction and committing to crossing racial lines in an era defined by sweeping social upheaval.

UNTITLED. 2022. PETER BRADLEY. COURTESY MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON.

CAMARADERIE RESTAURANT

SEE PAGE 80

LOCATION

Houston

CLIENTS

Chef Shawn Gawle, ReVive Development

ARCHITECT

Schaum Architects

CONTRACTOR

Course Construction Group

CONSULTANTS

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: H2B Engineering
MEP ENGINEER: GK Engineers
KITCHEN DESIGNER: C&T Design and Equipment
LIGHTING CONSULTANT: LAI Lighting Associates

RESOURCES

METAL FACADE PANEL (R-PANEL TO MATCH EXISTING): Universal Sheet Metal
ACRYLIC CLADDING & CUSTOM ALUMINUM CANOPIES: Flite Signs
PERFORATED METAL PANELS (BAR FRONT): McNICHOLS
CUSTOM ROUND METAL SHELVING: Alex Larsen, Fulcrum
CUSTOM BUILT-IN WOOD BANQUETTES, CASEWORK, AND WALL PANELING: 2R Millwork
COUNTERTOP: Silestone
STOREFRONT: Kawneer
CUSTOM VENEER PLASTER: Carissa Marx, Republic Finishes
TILE: Senio Laccati
DINING SCONCES: Mini Potence Pivotante and Kuta Wall (Nemo Lighting)
EXTERIOR SCONCES: AJ Eklipta Surface Fixture (Louis Poulsen)
BATHROOM SCONCES: Aura (Marset)
PENDANTS (BAR & KITCHEN): Milana (Marset)
SINKS: Bocchi
TOILETS: Toto
BAR STOOLS, DINING TABLES & CHAIRS, OUTDOOR TABLES & CHAIRS: Williams Sonoma and West Elm

THE COOTIE CATCHER

SEE PAGE 66

LOCATION

San Antonio

CLIENTS

Pryce & Hannah Ancona

ARCHITECT

Cotton Estes Architect

CONTRACTOR

Long House Builders

CONSULTANTS

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Spaulding Structural Engineering
MEP ENGINEER: Mr. Erwin

RESOURCES

ZIP SYSTEMS WALL SHEATHING: Huber Engineered Woods (MG Building Materials)
WATER RESISTANT BARRIER & DRAINAGE MAT: Sto
CEDAR LUMBER & SOFFIT: Braundera Yard & Hardware
HYDRAULIC LIME PLASTER EXTERIOR FINISH: Vasari Plaster
KITCHEN BASE CABINET CARCASSES (WITH CUSTOM DOORS): IKEA (IKEA San Antonio)
AMERICAN WHITE OAK PLYWOOD CABINET FACES & BUILT-INS: Long House Builders (Roddis Lumber & Veneer)
AMERICAN WHITE OAK ISLAND: Greenwood Milling
MEMBRANE ROOF: Carlisle Syn Tec Systems (CSL Materials)
METAL ROOF: Western Metal States Metal Roofing
DOOR HARDWARE: Emtek (Alexander Marchant)
WINDOWS & DOORS: Weathershield Windows & Doors (Presidio Steel Doors & Windows)
SHOWER FLOOR DRAIN & TRIM: Schluter Systems (Ferguson Home)
EXTERIOR WOOD STAIN AND INTERIOR PAINT: Benjamin Moore & Co. (San Antonio Paints)
COUNTERTOPS: Daltile (Daltile Sales Service Center San Antonio)
BATHROOM TILE: Cle
FRIDGE/FREEZER: Fisher & Paykel (Ferguson Home)
COOKTOP & HOOD: Bosch (Ferguson Home)
DISHWASHER: ZLine (Ferguson Home)
KITCHEN TAP: Francone Bespoke Taps
SHOWERHEAD: Axor (Ferguson Home)
BATHROOM FIXTURES: Duravit (Ferguson Home)
HEAT PUMP HIGH-EFFICIENCY HVAC: Mitsubishi Electric/American Standard
HISTORIC RECLAIMED WINDOWS: Circular Economy San Antonio

PULLMAN MARKET

SEE PAGE 88

LOCATION

San Antonio

CLIENTS

Pullman Market, The Historic Pearl

ARCHITECT

Clayton Korte

CONTRACTOR

Joeris

OPERATOR

Emmer & Rye Hospitality Group

MANAGEMENT

Oxbow Development, Pearl, Potluck Hospitality

CONSULTANTS

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Lundy & Franke Engineering
MEP ENGINEER: Glumac
CIVIL ENGINEER: Pape-Dawson
INTERIOR DESIGNER: Joel Mozersky Design
LIGHTING DESIGN: Glumac Lighting Studio
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Word + Carr Design Group

RESOURCES

CONCRETE COUNTERTOPS: Newbold Stone
STRUCTURAL CLAY TILE: Sandkuhl Clay Works
CUSTOM STAINLESS STEEL: Restaurant Services
ARCHITECTURAL STEEL: Myrex Industries
MILLWORK: Millenia Cabinetry
PLASTER (MEZQUITE): New Orleans Decorative Finishes
PLASTER (MESCALERIA BAR): T.E. Construction Specialties

SPECTRE OFFICE

SEE PAGE 58

LOCATION

Austin

CLIENT

Spectre Air Capital

ARCHITECT

Chioco Design

CONTRACTOR

Beckworth Design Build - Bryan Beckworth and Grant Gray (Project Manager)

CONSULTANTS

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: DCI Engineers
MEP ENGINEER: Bay & Associates
CIVIL ENGINEER: LOC Consultants Civil Division
LIGHTING DESIGN: Mathews Lighting Group
LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Spencer Landscape Company

RESOURCES

IPE DECKING, SIDING, AND SOFFITS: US Lumber Brokers
TILE: Heath Ceramics, Ann Sacks
METAL CLADDING: CTMRS
BLACKENED STEEL: Custom
OFFICE FRONTS: Tranquil (SKG)
WHITE OAK MILLWORK: Custom, E.mc Interiors
WOOD FLOORING: Ingrained by Nature
MARBLE COUNTERS: Custom
FAUCETS: Watermark Brooklyn, Newport Brass, Splash Lab
WATER CLOSET: Toto
SINK: Stone Forest
TRACK LIGHTING: XAL
DECORATIVE LIGHTING: RBW, Juniper, David Weeks Studio, Allied Maker, Santa & Cole

WOLF CREEK RANCH RESIDENCE

SEE PAGE 44

LOCATION

Burnet

CLIENTS

Chris and Julie Kelley

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTOR

Low Design Office

CONSULTANT

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Persyn Engineering

RESOURCES

STRUCTURAL STEEL: Longhorn Welding
SLIDING DOOR: Metal-Craft
CEDAR SIDING AND DECKING: Timbertown
INTERIOR STEEL FABRICATION: Drophouse Design
METAL PANELING: Western States Metal Roofing
KITCHEN CABINETS: Reform
CUSTOM CABINET: Trim-Ron
INTERIOR WOOD CEILING: #1 Grade Yellow Pine
BATHROOM TILE: Tilebar
WOOD FLOORING: Engineered Oak (Castlewood), ProSource
CEILING AND WALL SCONCES: WAC Lighting

2026 EDITORIAL CALENDAR

SPRING 2026

FEATURE	Adaptation
PRODUCTS	Lighting
EDITORIAL	Closed
EST. RELEASE	March 2026

EARLY SUMMER 2026

FEATURE	Delight
PRODUCTS	Hospitality
EDITORIAL	Dec. 12, 2025
EST. RELEASE	May 2026

LATE SUMMER 2026

FEATURE	Water
PRODUCTS	Kitchen & Bath
EDITORIAL	Feb. 20, 2026
EST. RELEASE	July 2026

FALL 2026 (AWARDS)

FEATURE	The Awards Issue
PRODUCTS	Best of Show
SPECIAL INSERT	TxA26 Design Expo Exhibitor Guide
EDITORIAL	May 1, 2026
EST. RELEASE	October 2026

WINTER 2026

FEATURE	Identity
PRODUCTS	Contract Furnishings
EDITORIAL	Jul. 17, 2026
EST. RELEASE	December 2026

Have a compelling story or new project that would be a great fit for one of our upcoming issues?

Submit pitches online at:
magazine.texasarchitects.org/submitting-materials

AD INDEX

BACKPAGE

Measure Twice was an undergraduate design studio taught by Emerging Scholar in Design Andrew Bako in the Fall 2025 semester at the University of Texas at Austin. The studio positioned slowness as both an ethical stance and a design imperative in a resource-depleted world. Rather than rushing toward demolition and new construction, students approached measuring, marking, and cutting as consequential design acts that balance care with control. They began by documenting Austin homes slated for demolition, producing precise as-built drawings, scaled miniatures, and surgical-style “pre-op” plans to guide deconstruction. In the second phase, students designed a civic material repository—part warehouse, part archive, part public interface—that supports reuse. Ultimately, the studio argued that careful documentation and deliberate cuts conserve embodied energy, transform waste into shared resources, and position the archive as an active instrument of repair and future-making. The model shown here is by UTSOA architecture student Anna Rohn.

THE HISTORIC

PHILLIPS FOREST PRODUCTS

TEXAS POST OAK

FLOORING - PANELING

PROJECT: WERNERFIELD ARCHITECTS / CASA CAMPO

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