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professional practice issue   09.1   Entitlements

Content

Cover photo: courtesy of the San Diego Padres.

arcCA, the journal of the American Institute of Architects California Council, is dedicated to exploring ideas, issues, and projects relevant to the practice of architecture in California. arcCA focuses quarterly editions on professional practice, the architect in the community, the AIACC Design Awards, and works/sectors.

arcCA 09.1

Comment

A recent *AIArchitect* reported on the AIA New Hampshire design awards, among which was a project by the Massachusetts firm of Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects, Inc. I recognized "Tittmann"—John Tittmann, a graduate school classmate—and took a tour of their website. Good work, of a sort not much appreciated among my close colleagues: skillful, straightforward interpretations of non-modern styles.

One project particularly caught my eye. Its clear precursors are the vacation houses for the Trubeks and Wislockis, which I've always considered the very best of Robert Venturi's work, perhaps because they're more simply good-humored, less archly ironic, than much of his oeuvre. The main problem with thoughtful Postmodernism (don't get me started on the other kind) is its irony, which weathers less well than a well-made building (albeit the second biggest problem with that period—though not with Venturi, Scott-Brown and Izenour's work—was poor-quality construction).

This little building is in a mode that one sees from time to time on the East Coast and in Britain but rarely out here: it not only *has* character but also *is* a character. It recalls the kinship between *façade* and *face*. I may especially like this one because, as I mentioned in my e-mail to John, the Culvahouses have an hereditary ability to raise one eyebrow asymmetrically high, like Humphrey Bogart.

The house displays a willingness to *inflect,* as the Trubek and Wislocki houses inflect toward one another out there on the beach in Nantucket. Judith Wolin, with whom I taught at RISD, used to demonstrate the idea of inflection by pointing to a student in her class and then asking the students to note how their collective postures would compel another person entering the room to look in that direction, too. It's been interesting to follow the idea among some of Judith's students, including Office dA in Boston and Kuth Ranieri in San Francisco.

Of course, it appears elsewhere. I was recently back among the hills of Chattanooga, where I was pleasantly surprised by the graceful inflections of Randall Stout, FAIA's addition to the Hunter Museum of Art. I might be forgiven for suspecting the building of Swoops for Swoops' Sake—it is difficult to tell in photos—but it turns out these swoops do a lovely job of guiding both one's eyes and one's feet.

I—blessed as I am with the eyebrow-raising gene—favor the wink, but the flourish has its place.

The third picture at right is by way of an apology to Pamela Babey, whose firm's acronym we scrambled in 08.4, "Interiors + Architecture." It is correctly known as BAMO, not BOMA, which, as you know, is something completely different.

Here's lookin' at you,

Tim Culvahouse, FAIA
Editor

top to bottom: Family Camp, Maine, Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects, Inc., photography by Jim Righter; addition to the Hunter Museum of Art, Chattanooga, Randall Stout Architects, Inc., photography by Tim Griffith; BAMO, Grand Hotel a Villa Feltrinelli, Italy, photography by Oberto Gili.
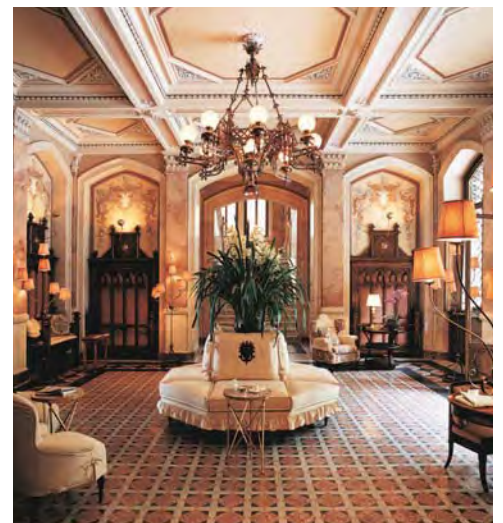
Contributors

Philip J. Bona, AIA, APA, ULI, LAI, Architect/Planner, is the former Assistant Vice President for Architecture and Planning at the Centre City Development Corporation under the jurisdiction of the San Diego Redevelopment Agency. While there, he oversaw a staff of ten responsible for managing the entitlement and permitting process for all projects in downtown San Diego as well as for maintaining and updating the Planned District Ordinance and the Downtown Community Plan.

Tom Marble, AIA, is principal of Marble Architecture in Los Angeles and teaches sporadically at SCI-Arc. He is author of *After the city, this (is how we live),* recently published by the Los Angeles Forum for Architecture and Urban Design. He may be reached at tom@tommarble.com.

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John Schlesinger continues to lead public advocacy efforts for AIA San Francisco in addition to being principal of John Schlesinger, AIA, Architect.

Stephen Slaughter, AIA, began his career in Thom Mayne's studio, Morphosis, and has since worked with respected architects throughout the world, including Gary Bates (Space Lab), Wes Jones (Jones, Partners: Architecture), and George Yu (Design Office/George Yu Architects). *PHAT*, his multi-disciplinary design collaborative co-founded with Nathaniel Belcher, has exhibited at the Studio Museum in Harlem, Archilab in Orleans, France, and the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia.

A member of the **arcCA** editorial board, he may be reached at stephenslaughter@mac.com.

Jimmy Stamp is a freelance writer and designer with Mark Horton / Architecture in San Francisco. He has been publishing his architecture blog, *Life Without Buildings* [lifewithoutbuildings. net], since 2004 and is a contributing editor at *Curbed San Francisco* [sf.curbed.com]. He may be reached at jimmy@lifewithoutbuildings.net.

Randy Stauffer is a professor and Chair of the Interior Architecture department at Woodbury University. He has practiced in the interior design profession for the past twenty years and is on the Executive Board for the Southern California Chapter of IIDA.

Blog

is in the details:
Expanding the Dialogue

Jimmy Stamp

Around the time of the recent Presidential election, I wrote a very brief post on my personal blog, *Life Without Buildings,* [lifewithoutbuildings.net] about Barack Obama's statement claiming that, if he weren't a politician, he would have liked to pursue a career in architecture. (Of course, the post had to include the Photoshopped image of Obama as architect—Corbu glasses and a black turtleneck, naturally.) Most blogs, mine included, allow readers to respond in a comments section, and in this instance the comments quickly—and passionately—spiraled into the realm of the political. Many were over twice the length of the original post, which culminated with the question, "Who can potentially do the most social good: politicians or architects?"

Commenting is the double-edged sword of the blogosphere—its greatest strength and its greatest weakness. Through reader comments, there exists the potential for enlightened discourse and expanded dialogue. Unfortunately, there also exists the potential for mean-spirited and less-than-constructive criticism. In the above post, for example, a commenter leaves an excellent suggestion that readers interested in the architect vs. politician issue should check out Kim Stanley Robinson's stunning *Mars Trilogy* about colonization on Mars. Others left opinions on how Barack Obama's politics might translate into design and an insightful quotation from Frank Lloyd Wright about the importance of morals and ethics in architecture.

Then there was the more aggressive reader (anonymous of course), who left a vaguely racist comment deriding Obama's proposed "redistribution of wealth." This, on an ostensibly architecture-related blog. Despite these occasionally disparaging remarks, I believe that the blog commenting system is a generally positive thing—especially when it comes to creative pursuits. The comments are a great reminder that we're not just shouting into the void anymore—the void is shouting back. And sometimes it doesn't like what you have to say.

Comments and discussion boards can also be a great way for architects to test ideas or get some outside input. Working on a research paper or a conceptual project, but the muse has abandoned you? Why not shout into the void? Among the best places to do this shouting are the discussion forums at *Archinect* [archinect.com]. With a wide range of coverage that includes School Blogs,* photo-essays, news reports, competition notices, and independent reporting, *Archinect* is one of the best online communities for architects. And, as you might guess, their discussion board [http://archinect.com/forum/indexed.php] is no exception. Topics range from professional practice to popular culture, so the next time you've designed yourself into a corner or need a fresh opinion or perhaps some inspiration, why not log-on and consult the perfectly anonymous architectural hive-mind? ◉

*Editor's note: Archinect's *School Blog Project currently includes blogs by students at the Academy of Art University (San Francisco), New School of Architecture and Design (San Diego), SCI-Arc, UC Berkeley, UCLA, and USC. Go to http://archinect.com/schoolblog/index.php and select "USA West."*
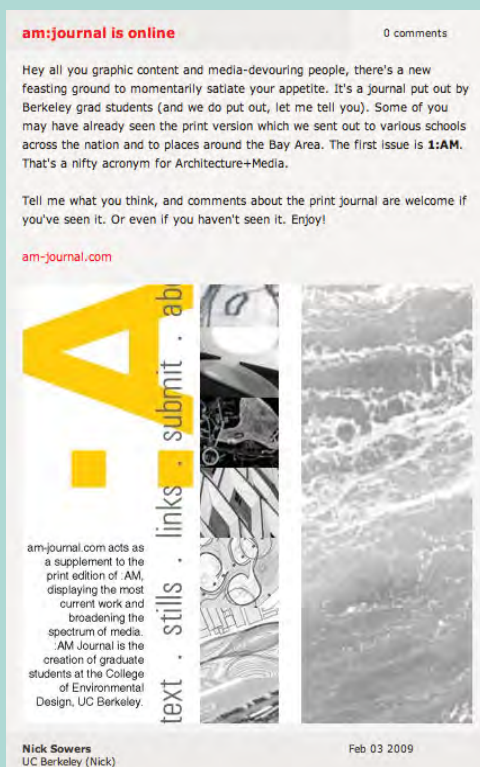
Thoughts from the

Entitlers

Background

Anita Williams
Planning Director
Lionakis
Sacramento

In land use, an *entitlement* is an approval granted by a local authority to develop property for a specific use in a specific way. Unlike a building permit—which is ministerial in nature, in that construction documents either meet code or they don't—entitlement approval is a discretionary process involving public input that can influence the outcome.

Entitlements come into play anytime a project is not allowed by right—when it is subject to public review and approval. The two most common forms of entitlements are *variances* and *conditional use permits*.

A *variance* is a limited waiver of development standards for a permitted use. Typically, variances are considered when the physical characteristics of the property make it difficult to develop. For instance, in a situation where the rear half of a lot is steep slope, a variance might allow a house to be built closer to the street than usually allowed. Variance requests require a public hearing, and neighbors are given the opportunity to testify.

A *conditional use permit* is needed when land uses do not fit precisely into existing zones. These might include community facilities (such as hospitals or private schools), public buildings or grounds (such as fire stations or parks), temporary or hard-to classify uses (such as Christmas tree sales or small engine repair shops), or land uses with potentially significant environmental impacts (hazardous chemical storage or a house in a floodplain). The local zoning ordinance

usually specifies those uses for which a conditional use permit may be requested, which zones they may be requested in, and the public hearing procedure.

Then there's environmental review, which is required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for any development activity with the potential for a direct physical change or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment and just about any activity that requires a discretionary approval. The level of review, and if it's required at all, depends on many factors; that's a whole article in itself. *[Editor's note: see "CEQA Best Practices for Architects," pp. 26-29.]*

Expertise

Steven Afriat
The Afriat Consulting Group, Inc.
Burbank

First and foremost, architects need to understand that decision-makers, who include Planning Department staff, planning commissioners, and elected officials, care about the rules. Architects need to collaborate with land use planners and other experts who understand what it takes to get projects approved, so that they are able to match their desire for superior design with their clients' desire to streamline the approval process.

John M. Sanger
Real estate attorney with a specialty in land use
Sanger & Olson
San Francisco

In view of the fact that entitlements involve an inherently political process, be wary of assuming that you are in a position to carry the political weight of the project. It is the project sponsor who should take responsibility and, where appropriate, a political consultant brought on board to assist. Designers (and lawyers) do

better for their clients by focusing on their areas of expertise. A design responsive to the particular environment, interests of neighbors, etc. will have a political impact, but the actual politicking should be left to those who make it a profession. Don't hold yourself out as the one who can get the entitlements because of your connections.

Second, be wary of reliance on advice from the regulating bureaucracy on what is or is not required and what are or are not the rules. All too many designers and engineers try to answer a question simply by calling someone in the bureaucracy and asking; they don't bother to verify what is actually found in written rules and regulations. Most competent architects would not approach the Building Code in that fashion, and they should not approach other rules and regulations that way, either.

Third, don't hog the show. Most designers assume that land use lawyers don't know much about building codes or zoning requirements in their technical detail. If that is the case, you have the wrong land use lawyer and, if you did not recommend the person, you can so inform the client. Competent land use counsel know a lot about those requirements, and there should be cooperation and exchange of interpretations and information in determining the potential for development, so that the entire team serves the client's interests.

Jeremy Paul
Quickdraw Permit Consulting
San Francisco

Architecture is sex; entitlement procurement is obstetrics. You may be the best lover in the world, but that's no indication that you'll have any skill delivering the results of your lovemaking.

My perspective may be skewed by my experience as a permit consultant—a fixer. I'm often called in by architects who have bungled a delivery, leaving the metaphorical baby breached, with the umbilicus wrapped around its neck.

Many smart architects assume that they understand the design, they understand the code, *ergo:* the bureaucrats must hand them their permits. This is pure hubris. I have witnessed firsthand far too many brilliant architects driven mad with frustration by their inability to navigate permit processes. Sometimes they realize their limitations early enough in their careers to save them from the sirens of psychopharmacology—though not often enough. Architectural skill and experience provide no sound basis to assume that you can succeed in the entitlement process. There is a whole separate skill set at work. Getting buildings built should be about architecture, but it's not. It's about persuasion. Get over it.

The authorization of entitlements is in the hands of other human beings, some competent, some intelligent; others, not so much. Either way, the challenge is the same. There is a person on the other side of the counter who has something you need, who will not give it to you unless he wants to. If you cannot communicate with the person with the "Approved" stamp in his hand, if you cannot empathize with his motivations and struggles, if you cannot for a moment actually care, then you are delivering a baby with a limited chance for survival.

Be patient. Be humble. And, for God's sake, if your talent is lovemaking, not delivering babies, find yourself a competent obstetrician.

Process

Brad McCrea
Bay Design Analyst
San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

One of the most important things for developers to understand is the *mission* of the permitting authority. For example, BCDC is charged with minimizing unnecessary fill and maximizing public access to the Bay. The public's use and enjoyment of the shoreline are

paramount to us. People who understand and attend to these goals up front may find the regulatory process more streamlined. What we want to know is, "What is the public benefit?"

Public benefit can take various forms, because the way in which people enjoy the shoreline is subjective—it might be through beautiful architecture, generous open space, or a dense, lively mix of uses. We review proposals holistically, following the State's mandate that every development provide "maximum feasible public access, consistent with the project."

William Anderson, FAICP
Director of City Planning & Community Investment
City of San Diego

In those jurisdictions that have structured policies, work with those policies. In San Diego, policy for particular properties is set at the Community Plan level, and we have forty-two of them. It is important to understand those different areas. So, read the General Plan *and* the Community Plan. Show how the proposed project tries to implement the policies articulated in the plan regarding land use, historic resources, conservation, transportation, urban design, public utilities, and so on.

Talk to us and to a lot of people before putting pen to paper, to avoid having to revisit the design. Work closely with communities. Even if an application is successful, and we approve the project, neighbors can still bring lawsuits. San Diego has a structure for talking to community groups, which are officially sanctioned by the City Council. Once a proposal has been reviewed by the planning staff, it formally goes to the appropriate Community Planning Group for recommendation. Of course, you are free to meet with the Community Planning Groups before that, and it is advisable to do so.

Robert Lee Chase, AIA
Chief Building Official
City of Sacramento/Development Services

The City of Sacramento stresses working in a partnership with applicants. We don't want architects to come in anticipating conflict, because a good project is a win/win. We used to be the regulatory police; now we're more proactive. We all need each other these days. We in the public sector need the revenue, so we need to be sure we're helping architects and developers create good projects. If everyone looks at it that way, it's advantageous.

Not all public agencies operate this way, but given the current economic challenges— this is the first time in history that Sacramento's Development Services Department has laid off people—we should work with applicants to make sure good things are happening. So it's not a matter of the architect suiting up, putting on your armor, to "do battle" with the planning and building departments.

What can architects do? Keep an open mind and be respectful of opinions from people on the public side. Digest them, incorporate those that you believe make sense, and if you don't incorporate some of them, explain why. "We incorporated A, B & C, but not D & E, because...." There are codes to comply with, but we all know that you can question anything, if you do it in a respectful, intelligent way.

Stephanie Reich
Senior Urban Designer
City of Glendale

Style can be a challenge to architects and design review boards. Very often clients, particularly residential clients, desire a traditional exterior with a modern floor plan. The resulting project appears to be a collection of styles—pitched, red-tile roofs with large expanses of glass. We often recommend historic precedents for traditional styles and

encourage a consistent design treatment.

But a contemporary design may be more appropriate. In one case, a client wanted to remodel a relatively modern home built in the 1950s into a home that was double the size and "Mediterranean." The neighborhood was primarily composed of low-slung, ranch style homes. The design review board opposed it, as did the neighbors. Working with the architect, we were able to convince the client that a contemporary design would be more appropriate.

In each city in which I've worked, architects and the public believed the design review board favored traditional design, when in fact the opposite was true. Because architects on the board practiced modern architecture, they could appear more critical of contemporary work, while not knowing exactly how to critique a traditional design.

Most communities are interested in quality design and materials; high quality window and storefront systems are of particular interest. A response to these concerns may allow an architect to include features or systems that have been discouraged by their client due to cost. On my best days as Urban Designer for the City of Glendale, I work with the architect to encourage the client to approve a superior design.

Steven L. Vettel
Farella Braun + Martel LLP
San Francisco

As public policy, environmental sustainability, and economic reality converge to focus development within existing urban and suburban communities, historic preservation issues will increasingly come to the fore.

Our cities and suburbs are filled with structures that may be replaced or altered to accommodate new infill development. At the same time, they are reaching an age when many of their structures are over fifty years old and need to be evaluated for historic significance before demolition or alteration. The

reuse of existing structures is in some cases more sustainable than demolition and new construction, given the embedded materials and energy in existing buildings and the energy and resources associated with new construction. How these competing policy objectives—the need for denser infill development against the value of historic preservation and rehabilitation—are reconciled will shape many future land use battles.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is driving much of this debate. It includes within its broad definition of "historic resources" all structures listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources, all buildings listed in a local register or identified in historical resource surveys, and buildings that a local agency otherwise determines are historically significant. CEQA goes on to specify that the demolition of any such historic resource or its alteration in a manner inconsistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties is *always* deemed a significant impact on the environment, for which an environmental impact report (EIR) must be prepared, a process that typically takes up to two years.

Demolition or the inconsistent alteration of historic resources is not prohibited in California by the state or by most local jurisdictions (except in the case of some locally-designated landmarks, of which there are relatively few), but the public agency approving such an action must, in addition to certifying an EIR, make findings that preservation alternatives are infeasible and that the project has overriding public benefits. Local ordinances may specify other criteria that must also be met.

Accordingly, to avoid the delay inherent in preparation of an EIR and the risk of the approving agency not making defensible findings when a project involves a pre-1959 structure, a project sponsor typically must do one of three things: avoid demolition or inappropriate alterations altogether; establish that the structure is not an historic resource; or establish that the proposed alteration meets the Secretary's standards. For older buildings that are not already listed on the state or a local register, an analysis by an historic preservation expert will often be required. For projects that alter historic resources, an historic architect will often be needed to design alterations consistent with the Secretary's standards and to convince policy makers of their consistency.

Jeremy Paul
Always seek out the lowest level bureaucrat with the approval authority that you need.

Michael Westlake
Program Manager,
Development Services Department
City of San Diego

Understand the political realities and trends. Understand the decision-makers' special interests, hot points, or pet peeves. Prior to presenting your project for a final decision, observe several Community Planning Group, Planning Commission, and City Council hearings on projects similar to yours, to better understand what you are up against. Make an effort to understand the City's organization vis-à-vis the entitlement process.

Know and understand the regulations, and be aware of any upcoming changes to those regulations that could impact your project mid-stream.

Understand the time and money requirements inherent in the process. The entitlement process is complex and subject to politics, which inevitably adds time and money.

Have all technical consultants available and prepared at all important meetings and particularly at all decision-making public hearings.

Have the courage to challenge staff or community recommendations not based on adopted codes, land use policies, or good planning principles; challenge recommendations that are nexus-less and arbitrary.

Treat all stakeholders with dignity and respect at all times.

John M. Sanger
Make sure you are doing what your client wants (after having privately argued with your client about any fundamental issues on which you disagree, but which have not caused you to terminate your contract). Clients do not appreciate designers going off on their own mission to save the world or serve the community irrespective of their interests and budget. If you cannot really serve that client, it is not the client for whom you should be working.

Joe Nootbaar
Principal, Nootbaar Real Estate, LLC
San Francisco

In the entitlement process, successful architects speak to their audience about what is important to that audience, not what is important to the architect. Usually, the successful presentation or stakeholder discussion is not about how great the architecture is as an object, but how it addresses its context. The goal should always be approval, not the reinforcement of the architect's talent. A talented architect knows how and when to emphasize each.

The graphics, drawings, and renderings are perhaps the most important part of the successful presentation. They should reinforce the message of how the project adds to or complements the existing context, not reinforce the egocentric vision of the architect's work.

Participation

Brad McCrea
Design professionals can participate in a variety of ways; voluntary service on boards, such as our Design Review Board, is one. But I have found that building relationships with a variety of design professionals is a helpful way to regularly share information about public access and development. Such collegial relationships between bureaucrats and practitioners are healthy, because they allow everyone to better understand the constraints and opportunities.

Robert Lee Chase, AIA

I am the first architect in 150 years to be Chief Building Official in Sacramento. An engineer has typically filled that role. It took me months to get to the point to make that shift, and I'm glad I did. I had been a partner in the third largest firm in Sacramento and was involved hands-on in four or five significant projects each year. I've traded off the hands-on involvement for involvement in all projects citywide in a city of 500,000 people. If you enjoy the detail, it might not be so satisfying, but if you enjoy the vision, it is very challenging, very satisfying.

I had long been civically involved, on the Design Review Commission and the Capitol Area Development Authority board. My involvement, working closely with the mayor, planning commissioners, and staff from the city manager on down, made the move easier. Once you get involved, you become known, and council members and staff will seek input from an architect if one is available. So, do whatever you can, get involved in some small way.

We will come out of this economic downturn, as we always have. I encourage architects to consider shifting gears and taking positions in the public sector. They will be valued. I have found an outpouring of support not only from AIA colleagues but also from the entire development community. What we're trained to do as architects—coordination, consensus building, guidance—helps move projects forward.

Any jurisdiction can benefit by having an architect in any role in the city, but especially that of building official. We bring a broader vision. We're looking not just at structural beam sizes, but at how the city as a whole, the culture of the city, can benefit.

Prospect

Simon Pastucha
Urban Designer
Department of City Planning
City of Los Angeles

Architecture is created around an idea, and cities are created around a series of values. Entitlement processes and codes are not about creating the built environment we value but about controlling what we do not want. They leave what we want unanswered or tangled in the net of codes aimed at capturing what we do not want or what we fear. They capture what we don't want to catch.

We need to figure out what we want in the built environment and make sure it is maintained. There should be an emphasis on fast, simple processes for what we value. The goal is to move from reactive, fear-based codes and processes toward proactive thinking that creates codes that get out of the way of what we want and that are easy, efficient, and flexible.

Michael Stepner, FAIA, FAICP
Former City Architect and Acting
Planning Director
City of San Diego

Entitlements are the stuff that dreams are made of. For all parties, they represent the achievement of a goal. For the developer, it is permission to build a project and reap a financial reward. For the architect, it means his design can be built. For the government official, it means that the project will meet health, safety, and welfare standards and long-range goals. And, for the community, it means that new development will preserve and enhance the neighborhood's desired quality of life.

That is the ideal; but does it work that way? The community often uses the entitlement process to slow down or stop a project in its neighborhood. The developer sees the process as something to be overcome in order to achieve a desired return on investment. The architect sees it as the intrusion of non-designers dictating the design. Residents very often believe that the project ruins their quality of life.

We have built a system that, more and more, is erected on a lack of trust. Things get built; people react; and a new code provision is added to make sure what got built last time never happens again. Every word in every code has a constituency.

The financial system plays a role in this failure, as well. The need for a quick return on investment often results in formulaic development in which design, construction quality, and community fit are not primary concerns. Couple that with our unwillingness or inability to pay for the facilities and services we need as a community, and you have a lack of public trust across the board.

But it does not have to be this way. The process is changing. Architects are becoming involved at the front end, working with the community, helping to prepare codes and regulations, and participating in planning groups. Architects are trained to conceive and articulate a vision and to build consensus for it; and all this is being done with the "real" client, the community. Long after the architect and the builder are gone, the community lives with the results of the architect's and the builder's work.

In 1993, Thomas Fisher, dean of the University of Minnesota College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, wrote, "The profession of architecture was founded to guard the public. Not just the public's health and safety through building and zoning codes, but the public realm and the public interest broadly defined."

The entitlement process can no longer be about an individual building. It must be about how that building fits in the community. It is about an expanded public process that uses participatory tools like visual preference surveys and charrettes and new regulatory tools like form-based codes that describe what we do want rather than the opposite. It is always about building trust, and that is everyone's job, a job that is labor intensive. It requires a continuous effort. ◉

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Clay St
Sacramento St
California St
Pine St
Bush St
Sutter St
Jones St
Leavenworth St
Hyde St
Larkin St
Polk St
Van Ness Ave
Stockton St
Powell St
Mason St
Taylor St
Greenwich St
Huntington Park

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Broadway

Teaching the Entitlers:
an Interview with John Schlesinger

In **arcCA** *07.2, "Design Review," John Schlesinger, AIA, briefly described two programs of AIA San Francisco—the Advisory Design Review Panel of the early 1990s and a series of design workshops presented to the Planning Commission in recent years—both intended to better inform the entitlement process. Here,* **arcCA** *sits down with John to learn more about what led to the development of each of these programs and their challenges and successes.*

Part I: Advisory Design Review Panel

John Schlesinger: There's been a long, very gradual change in the last twenty-some-odd years in terms of how the entitlers—I'll use your term—perceive their role in reviewing proposals for development. Very often there is a self-described role as gatekeeper, that they're protecting something that is sacred. It's familiar to them or fellow citizens. As a result, there is an air of suspicion for something that is new or that is different. Very often, it is the result of a building boom or a change in development practices that occurred before and had upset a lot of people. "We need reform!" they would say. "We need to give greater scrutiny to these projects, because they're changing the character of the city; they're changing the transportation patterns."

My entree into this realm was noticing that there was this adversarial relationship between a project sponsor with his or her architect and those who were going to be the decision-makers, both the city staff and those who were appointed or elected to commissions to review these projects. That level of friction, both on a professional basis and very often on a personal basis, made for pretty bad planning and some pretty bad architecture, as well, because when you come into a situation where you're presupposing that you're going to fight, then what you do is you ask for the world, and you know you're going to get cut back. And that's not the greatest way of designing a project.

Likewise, on the other side, it's going to be, "What do they want, and what can I get from them to do that?"

arcCA: Did your interest in this subject come from being an architect who ran up against these problems? Or was there something else that prompted you?

JS: It was not personal, because I didn't have any projects that were in the mix yet. What really prompted it was that, when I started my own practice, I all of a sudden had the time to be an advocate. What drove it more than anything else was that, when you drove around, and you looked at the lost opportunities—a development that was done that was poorly designed and you knew who the design professional was, and you knew they were perfectly qualified. You knew the history behind the project. You knew that something had been cut or changed against the better wishes of the architect or the developer because of some compromise. So: how could we change the dynamic, so that the premier professionals who really are at the top of their game can deliver a project without being encumbered by the nonsense that very

often occurs in the deliberations for entitlement?

If we could get some kind of communication with established neighborhood organizations, who are often driving the argument in a public forum, they wouldn't necessarily become our allies, but at least they would have a better appreciation of what we do, and we would have a better appreciation of the reasons why they are in opposition to certain approaches.

Similar to a mistreated child, they felt that they had been beaten up so much that they trusted nobody. The result was to think that, the more restrictions you have and the more limits you put on something, regardless of the virtue of what is being done, at least it won't be as big and terrible.

It'll be small and terrible. I was told time and again, "Just keep it as small as possible, so the burden will be less." So we went through a litany of proposals, trying to show why something small isn't necessarily better. A bold step in a project may protect more than something that is piecemeal.

arcCA: So how did you get the seat at the table?

JS: It was always under the auspices of AIA

San Francisco. We established an advisory design review program, something that I did not invent, but I was one of the three co-chairs. We tried to show that there are different ways to approach the design problem, that if you have mediators among these different sides, you can break down the friction and can reach some consensus and come up with a better design solution, rather than just making it smaller.

arcCA: Did the AIA go to the city and say, "We'd like to help," or did the city come to the AIA?

JS: We approached the city, because at the time the entitlement process was really, really problematic. There were two planning commissions per week. The planning commissioners were there until ten o'clock, eleven o'clock at night reviewing projects both large and small, and there were so many small projects. You'd have a deck review clogging up the works, so that somebody who had twenty units they wanted to develop was at the back of the line.

And nobody was getting careful attention, because it was like traffic court. It was just awful. So we approached the planning depart-

ment, and they were really, really resistant, because the feeling was that we were venturing on their turf—and that we, as architects, would have a prejudiced eye, because we worked for the people who were building these things. We would not be able to take a more objective view.
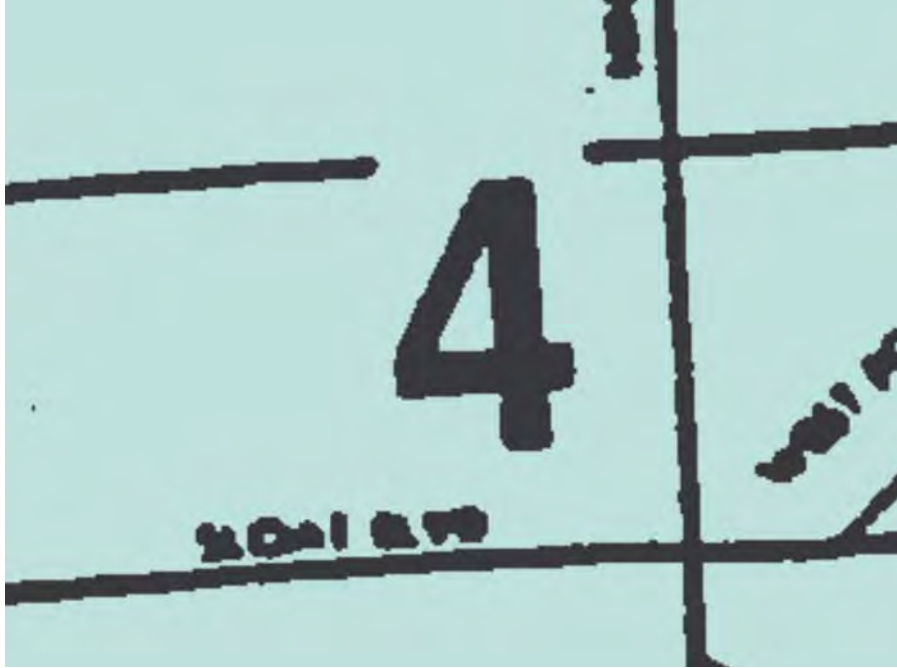
This was in 1987, which was before I came on the scene. Through some magic, they convinced the planning staff to at least do a series of trial sessions. The whole process was outlined as something voluntary. If we were going to have this mediation service, both sides would have to be willing to volunteer to do it, and the architects who were mediators would provide the service *pro bono*. It was not something that precluded them from appearing before a public body to plead their case. We were there in an advisory capacity and had no jurisdiction. We could not take over any of the responsibilities of the city staff.

I chaired the first case that came before us. You can see the very gradual change that occurred. There was originally an enormous amount of opposition toward us. But within two years, if people volunteered to participate in a mediation service, it was resolved in our offices and never went to the commission; or,

if it did, the commission almost always took our position.

And so the word on the street was, "Go to the AIA, because they will help you resolve this, and you have a better chance of getting a better product if you're a developer and a better chance, if you're a community person, to make sure that your voice is heard." That's the track record that we had. Unfortunately, after about three years, it was killed because of some political issues.

arcCA: In that period, I would imagine one thing you might run up against is some people who think of themselves as stakeholders feeling like they've been cut out, because a more immediate stakeholder had entered into this process with the AIA.

JS: Right. The people who had the most power, the most political power at the time, were left out of the process, because the more consensus-building we were able to do the less power they had at the table to fight for their principle, whatever that might be.

arcCA: Or to have a bargaining chip.

JS: Right. As you know, it is still as politically contentious as it could possibly be. It's not as though we solved the problem. But we at least introduced a different way of approaching the entitlement process. That was the first step.

It was a big learning experience in terms of how you both educate and learn from community groups in a much less pressure-ridden, controlled session and make something work. So, while our process died, it actually gave birth to a lot of changes in the way the department began to react.

Part II: Design Workshops
JS: When that activity ended, I thought that an opportunity to partner with the professional staff of a municipality might be another tack. Once we won over the city staff, and they realized that we were not stepping on their turf, we could help them in those areas that they would rather not deal with or didn't have the experience or the skill sets to deal with.

In 2004, former planning director Dean Macris was brought back into the San Francisco Planning Department on an interim basis by recently elected Mayor Newsom. We realized that we had somebody that we could

talk to, because we had dealt with him before. We were able to start from where we had left off the last time.

That was when we launched the education program for appointed officials. We recognized that the root of the problem very often wasn't just the chronic friction that occurred between community groups and project sponsors and city staff, but also that those people who are appointed are thrown into the deep end of the pool to start rendering opinions on projects, which they themselves confess they are not qualified to do.

We felt that it was incumbent upon us to take an objective approach and say, "There are different ways that you can analyze the design of a project." We did this with the Planning Commission, and we did it with select members of the board of supervisors who were willing to talk to us.

We had a solid catalogue of successful projects that our members had done, so we could say, "This is something that works in the neighborhood that otherwise would be rejected, because it's contemporary architecture, and it doesn't fit into what is considered a static and sacred context in San Francisco."

These were successful projects that people had grown accustomed to and actually liked and that had become icons in their neighborhoods. You can use these kinds of projects to ask a number of questions: Why is this successful? What are the features of this project—independent of the fact that it's contemporary—that make it work? So we entered into a two-year education program.

There was a group of us in the chapter who wrote the material together; I was the editor. Two of us did the first session; the subsequent two I did myself. Each time, we had a dry run with the senior staff of the Planning Department, using them as a sounding board to help us understand what the focus should be at that particular time.

For the fourth presentation, we went back to a group dynamic, in which several people gave their own presentations, because we were using their projects as examples. Rather than me using a whole panoply of international projects, we used local projects by local design professionals, addressing a particular problem within a specific district of San Francisco.

Just to show you what had happened over the twenty-year period, we were *asked* by the

Planning Commission to give the fourth presentation—whereas for the previous ones we pushed our way through the door. We had come from meeting an enormous amount of resistance to the point where the Planning Commission has asked the chapter to do this.

And just lately, towards the end of the year, there were some design guidelines being presented by the staff, having to do with how you make emerging neighborhoods in a city pedestrian-friendly. When this question was first being heard, one of the commissioners said, "I'm not ready to think about this. I want you to go to the AIA and have them provide some kind of formal response to what you're doing and to give you more examples from their realm, either to encourage what you are recommending, to enforce what you are recommending, or to take issue with those things." That's an interesting change of dynamic.

arcCA: So, what's the next chapter?

JS: With this downturn in the economy, in which projects are being postponed for a number of months or maybe a year, it's a good time to develop a library of successful local

examples. One of the most difficult things that we had was developing good examples of an emerging building type that is really going to take hold, probably for the next ten years, outside of the downtown district: high-density, sustainable, infill residential developments in the eastern part of the city. They are going to be scrutinized, particularly as preservation districts are being developed throughout the city. And other municipalities are going to look at San Francisco as a model, to show how projects can increase in density and be successful architecturally. So that's the next focus.

arcCA: When you're putting together a library of examples like that, how do you determine what has been successful?

JS: We quite candidly don't take into account the traditional neighborhood activist's or community group's perspective on what is successful. We do take into account the professional planner's and staff person's perspective, because they get the feedback.

But we also count on our own in-house scrutiny and what the design professionals we talk to consider a successful project—not personally successful, but as objectively as we possibly can: "This project weathered the entitlement process relatively unscathed and came out at the end being pretty successful." What we don't do is look for award winners.

We look for projects that push the envelope. We're not being shy. We actually want to challenge the commissioners, to say, "This may seem shocking, but these will become familiar icons."

arcCA: Do the planning commissioners listen politely and thank you and leave? Or is there discussion?

JS: It differs tremendously. Sometimes it's the pat-on-the-head syndrome: "Nice job. Thank you very much. See you next time." Other times, it has caused interesting conversations to occur. In the first session, there was a whole new vocabulary that they were not familiar with. Subsequent to that meeting, we noticed that they were beginning to use those words, which was great to see.

In the last session, in which there were more local projects that commissioners were familiar with, they would say, "I know this one, and I like that one. I didn't realize that the thought process was based on these strong design principles. Now I have a better understanding for scrutinizing a project."

So, being more specific and more local with premier projects that we were comfortable with from a staff point of view or a design professional's point of view developed a dialogue among commissioners about where policy stands on this kind of building, where the policy thwarts this kind of innovation, where it doesn't. It opened up a lot of conversation. And that was really satisfying. ◉

Home

CP&DR's SB 375 Resources Page
19 November 2008 - 11:17am

Senate Bill 375 – the 2008 law that links land use planning and greenhouse gas emissions reduction in California – is big news in the planning and development world nationwide.

Let *California Planning & Development Report* help you figure out what SB 375 means. As the leading planning publication in California, *CP&DR* has been watching SB 375 more closely than anybody else. You can find out more simply by clicking on the links below. Check back often because we will be updating this page frequently.

SB 375 Puts California In The Lead; Now What?
Love it or hate it, SB 375 shifted the ground underneath planners feet, and the true slipping and sliding is only now beginning. In a story for Planning magazine, we present to law to a national audience. Meanwhile, CP&DR's Joel Ellinwood explains the legal, policy and practical implementation to his attorney friends. Yes, there's more to learn.

Climate Change Mandates: No, We Can't Make Them Go Away
One Republican assemblyman has introduced legislation to repeal AB 32. Although eliminating AB 32 and related new laws and executive orders might make California planning simpler, we think the world has changed. Policy-makers and professionals are now focused on ways to implement the new laws.

SB 375 Continues To Dominate Planning Discussion
Senate Bill 375 dominated this year's UCLA Land Use Law and Planning Conference. If there was a common theme in commentators' numerous presentations, it was this: SB 375 has the potential to change dramatically both California's land use planning system and growth patterns, and the law is very much a work in progress.

Asking Hard Questions About SB 375
Senate Bill 375 needs to be fixed, and it needs to be fixed this year. So says Rick Bishop, executive director of the Western Riverside Council of Governments.

CARB Decision Places Even More Focus On SB 375 Process
Five million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. This is the target – at least for now – that is likely to drive "smart growth"-style land use planning in California over the next few years. It's the tentative reduction target that the California Air Resources Board has assigned to the land use sector in order to help meet the state's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction goals by 2020.

Greenhouse Gas Plan Defers To SB 375 Process
An AB 32 Scoping Plan that places a great deal of emphasis on the SB 375 process was approved on December 11 by the California Air Resources Board. Rather than adjusting the target one way or the other, CARB assigned the SB 375 Regional Targets Advisory Committee – or RTAC, which has yet to be appointed – the task of refining the land use target.

SB 375: It's An Incremental Change, Not A Revolution
Supporters and opponents alike are touting SB 375 as the most significant land use reform bill in recent California history. When he signed it in September, Gov. Schwarzenegger called it the biggest bill since the California Environmental Quality Act 38 as approved years ago. Meanwhile, the hilariously over-the-top Orange County Register has called the bill "one of the most authoritarian, far-reaching and elitist bills that has ever made it to the governor's desk." In fact, it is neither.

Regional Planning Bill Approved By Lawmakers
Senate Bill 375 is alternately being described as the most important land use legislation since the California Coastal Act of 1976, and a step in the right direction. Only time will tell whether the bill is a landmark or an incremental step, but there is no denying that SB 375 author Sen. Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) aimed high. "At the heart of this effort," Steinberg said, "is the need to integrate our housing and transportation plans to create sustainable communities."

SB 375 Is Now Law -- But What Will It Do?
SB 375, the anti-sprawl bill signed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger last night, is both more and less powerful than it's advertised to be, and whether it leads to sweeping change depends on how aggressively California's regional planning agencies implement it.

State Air Board Doubles SB 375 Emissions Target
The other shoe has dropped on the SB 375 front, as the California Air Resources Board has more than doubled the target for greenhouse gas emissions reductions to be obtained through regional planning.

The Disconnect Between SB 375 And Local Planning
Can California and its communities fit together regional plans, local plans, state housing requirements, and new state requirements on greenhouse gas emissions reductions? Probably not, according to panelists speaking this morning at the California Chapter, American Planning Association conference in Hollywood.

SB 375 Is Now Law – But What Will It Do?

William Fulton

William Fulton, founder of the monthly California Planning and Development Report, *publishes "Bill Fulton's blog" on the* CP&DR *website. In a posting dated 1 October 2008, he presented one of the clearest early interpretations of the likely impact of California Senate Bill 375, "Redesigning Communities to Reduce Greenhouse Gases." We excerpt from that posting here, with the author's permission. The original posting can be seen at http://www.cp-dr.com//node/2140.*

SB 375, the anti-sprawl bill signed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger [September 30, 2008], contains potentially revolutionary changes in California's arcane processes of regional planning for transportation and housing—largely by mandating the creation of "sustainable" regional growth plans. And those changes [became] more important [October 15], when the California Air Resources Board [doubled] the greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets that local governments must meet through land-use planning.

It also has the potential to significantly rearrange the Regional Housing Needs Assessment [RHNA] process, and provides significant breaks under the California Environmental Quality Act for certain types of transit-oriented projects.

But it's less than revolutionary on the land-use front, largely because it's incentive-based.

And no on-the-ground change is likely to be seen for at least three years—until the regional planning agencies actually adopt the "sustainable communities" growth scenarios called for in the law.

The bottom line is that the law won't be sweeping unless the state and the regional planning agencies take it seriously. After all, California has adopted potentially sweeping land-use reform before—for example, AB 857, which contains clear and broad-ranging anti-sprawl language—but that reform has simply not been implemented.

California Planning & Development Report's SB 375 Resources Page, http://www.cp-dr.com/node/2185.

SB 375 contains five important aspects that California planners should understand:

1. Creation of regional targets for greenhouse gas emissions reduction tied to land use.
2. A requirement that regional planning agencies create a plan to meet those targets, even if that plan is in conflict with local plans.
3. A requirement that regional transportation funding decisions be consistent with this new plan.
4. Tethering together regional transportation planning and housing efforts for the first time.
5. New CEQA exemptions and streamlining for projects that conform to the new regional plans, even if they conflict with local plans.

1. Regional Targets

Under the law, the California Air Resources Board [CARB] has two years—until September 30, 2010—to give each of California's metropolitan planning organizations [MPOs] a greenhouse-gas emissions reduction target for cars and light trucks—but only through changes in the development pattern.

As many commentators have observed, reducing emissions from cars and light trucks is a "three-legged stool." One leg involves greater fuel efficiency from new vehicles—a requirement called for under former Assemblymember Fran Pavley's AB 1493, which is currently in dispute between the state and federal governments. The second leg involves reducing the carbon content of fuels—a requirement called for under Schwarzenegger's low-carbon emissions standards. The third leg of the stool is changes in the growth pattern that reduce overall driving. The regional targets will cover only this third leg of the stool.

2. The Sustainable Communities Plan Requirement

Once the MPOs have received the regional targets in late 2010, they will be required to create a "Sustainable Communities Strategy" [SPS] that lays out how the emissions reduction will be met. Technically, this strategy becomes part of the Regional Transportation Plan [RTP]— an important point, because it tethers the sustainable strategy to federal transportation planning law.

But the way SB 375 came out of the Legislature, the Sustainable Communities Strategy isn't quite as bulletproof as you might think. It does incorporate the RHNA requirement to provide housing to accommodate all income groups—for the simple reason that, if housing targets weren't incorporated, the emissions reduction target could be met simply by cutting growth. But provisions requiring incorporation of resource and open space land considerations were watered down.

And because it's part of the RTP, the Sustainable Communities Strategy is subject to certain provisions of federal transportation law that could undercut the anti-sprawl efforts— especially a provision stating that the RTP must be based on "current planning assumptions" in the region that take general plans into account. "If a certain type of development pattern is unlikely to emerge from local decision-making," League of California Cities lobbyist Bill Higgins noted recently, "it will be difficult for the regional agency to say that it reflects current planning assumptions."

As is typically the case in planning, the Sustainable Communities Strategy can contain only "feasible" measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. If the end result doesn't hit the CARB target, the MPO must develop a second plan—the "Alternative Planning Strategy," which is technically separate from the RTP but nevertheless must lay out an alternative plan to meet the target. The alternative strategy becomes important in the CEQA exemptions below.

3. Transportation Funding Consistency

Here is where the rubber meets the road—sort of. From the beginning, SB 375 has been advertised as the law where, at last, state transportation funding decisions are tied to land use. This is technically true—but only technically. Under 375, there are no state bureaucrats in Sacramento doling out transportation money to cities and counties based on whether the local anti-sprawl efforts are sufficient. Instead, the bill uses the existing system—which gives most of the power to make transportation funding decisions to the regional MPOs.

So the only thing SB 375 says is that the Regional Transportation Plan has to be internally consistent—meaning the action items and financing decisions called for in the RTP must be consistent with the Sustainable Communities Strategy. This means SB 375 is subject to the same major structural issue as the RTP itself: Ultimately, the decisions at the

regional level are made by MPO board members, who are local elected officials. And, as we all know, it's unlikely that elected officials sitting as regional planning board members will pull the trigger on each other.

4. Connection to Regional Housing Needs Assessment

SB 375 also changes the state Housing Element law in important ways—and, for the first time, links regional planning efforts for transportation and housing. Under the bill, all transportation and housing planning processes are put on the same eight-year schedule—that is, the plans must be updated once every eight years. (There's a penalty for jurisdictions that don't meet the Housing Element schedule: They must prepare Housing Elements every four years instead.)

The law also strengthens the language on required rezonings: If a local jurisdiction must rezone property as a result of the Housing Element, it must do so within three years, and it must include minimum density and development standards for the site.

Most important, however, is the fact that the RHNA allocation numbers must conform to the Sustainable Communities Strategy. This has important consequences for the RHNA process and Housing Element implementation. The regional planning agencies are required to provide local governments with a housing allocation representing their "fair share" of regional growth. But the Sustainable Communities Strategy is likely to concentrate future development around transit stops. The end result of the RHNA process in the future

is likely to look something like what the Association of Bay Area Governments has recently done in this arena—cutting a deal among the local governments to allow more housing in transit-rich areas, and rearranging the RHNA numbers to accommodate that goal.

5. CEQA Exemptions and Streamlining

In terms of planning practice, the most powerful provisions of SB 375 have to do with CEQA Exemptions and Streamlining. Under the new law, certain types of development projects are exempt from CEQA—or qualify for streamlined review—if they conform to the Sustainable Communities Strategy. And these projects qualify for streamlined review even if they conflict with local plans.

But the list of caveats is long, meaning the eventual impact of the CEQA provisions may not be as significant as you might think.

Two types of projects qualify for CEQA breaks under SB 375—residential or mixed-use projects, and "transit priority projects" [TPPs].

Under the law, a residential or mixed-use project that conforms to the Sustainable Community Strategy qualifies for CEQA streamlining. Specifically, the CEQA review does not have to cover growth-inducing impacts; and it does not have to cover either project-specific or cumulative impacts dealing with climate change.

More significant are the "transit priority projects." These projects can qualify for either a full CEQA exemption or a streamlined environmental assessment if they meet certain criteria.

"Transit priority projects" are projects that

meet the following criteria:

1. Contain at least 50% residential use
2. Have a minimum net density of 20 units per acre
3. Have a floor-area ratio for the commercial portion of the project at 0.75
4. Be located within ½ mile of either a rail stop, a ferry terminal, or a bus line with 15-minute headways.

Under the law, projects can qualify for a full CEQA exemption if:

• They are no bigger than 8 acres or 200 units
• They can be served by existing utilities
• They will not have a significant effect on historic resources
• Their buildings exceed energy efficiency standards
• They provide ANY of the following:
    – 5 acres of open space
    – 20% moderate income housing
    – 10% low income housing
    – 5% very low income housing.

Under the law, "transit priority projects" that don't meet these criteria still qualify for a truncated environmental assessment similar to the truncated environmental assessment permitted for residential and mixed-use projects specified above. ◉

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Is it Time
for a Voluntary (Consumer-Oriented)
Building Code?

Dorit Fromm

Everyone should be able to live in a house that is accessible, that is affordable to heat and cool, that is safe and durable, and that can be easily modified for additions or for aging in place. California's building code is the legal document that sets the bar—at a basic and some would say minimal level—toward these housing goals. Yet California is challenged with depleting resources, high housing costs, large population growth, and a significant aging population. We need more than minimal standards. As professionals, we know that green and universal design (going beyond Title 24), thoughtful siting, the use of durable materials, and adaptability to readily accommodate additions make sense when considering housing as a decades-long investment. Yet the realities of the marketplace are not geared toward educating consumers on long-term value.

We are now at the low end of a housing cycle that will swing back up. The state is projected to add over 5 million households by 2020, according to California's Department of Housing and Community Development. Roughly 2.5 million housing units would need to be constructed to meet that demand. How can the next decade's housing be a mechanism for addressing California's problems, rather than aggravating the problem?

The path toward more stringent code requirements is not a wise one, especially in these tough economic times. What is needed is a carrot-perspective appeal that clearly shows consumers the value they purchase, rather than a punitive stick aimed at the building industry. Marketing, labeling, and informing consumers have proven to be effective strategies for sustainability— why not expand the idea?

In 1993, a group of architects, building manufacturers, contractors, and environmentalists wanted to promote green building and move an industry towards more sustainable thinking. They created the nonprofit U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), and, as a non-government organization run by volunteers, it began with small steps. They released a pilot certification program in 1998 called LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). A total of fourteen

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buildings were certified. They tinkered with it, making revisions, coordinating information from many sources, and now the voluntary LEED certification has become an industry standard, so much so that not only the building industry, but also retailers and other businesses are getting on board. LEED criteria have now been developed for homes, with inspectors contracted by the USGBC.

Last year, a study by CoStar Group found that green buildings outperform similar non-green buildings in sale and rental rates, as well as occupancy, sometimes by very wide margins. In addition to cost savings reaped over time by using sustainable design, the certification has created a strong economic reason for industry to develop green buildings. Much of the credit for this sea change goes to consumer pressure.

Yet sustainability is only one of a number of issues our housing should be addressing. The coming wave of aging Boomers brings with them their own sustainability needs—for accessible housing that is easily adapted as they age. With one out of five Californians

a senior by 2030 and well over 85% of them interested in staying in their homes, there will be large implications for the housing industry.

Some entrepreneurs have already stepped in to address the obvious design issues. "The swell of Baby Boomers nearing retirement age is upon us," notes Todd Murch, President and CEO of Eskaton, a leading area provider of senior residences and services. "We have a vision about how to serve seniors—and it requires partnership with builders." His organization has developed the Eskaton Certified Home Program, which specifies 140 design standards to create senior-friendly housing. Taking best practices from a number of sources and incorporating universal design components, they applied them to senior needs. The program allows homebuilders to use their own plans while integrating the Eskaton requirements. License and certification costs start at $1,200 to $1,500 a home, and builders can advertise their homes as meeting the special Eskaton requirements.

Aside from green and aging issues, a

number of organizations provide their own criteria for housing—security, for example. There is no shortage of criteria, but the result is an over-abundance of suggestions, and overall they hold little sway over the public.

The Netherlands faced this problem, and looking at their solution can help in articulating a comprehensive approach for California. The Dutch, as well as many other European countries, are facing a large aging demographic. About fifteen years ago, the growing needs of seniors were not receiving much attention by the building industry, so Dutch organizations for the elderly itemized the qualities that would help aging residents. "Several quality labels arose but, unfortunately, these overlapped or even opposed each other," explains Dr. Englebert, who is head of the WoonKeur Certificate program. Instead of a variety of requirements from interest groups, and to make it easier for the consumer, one "Label for Living" (WoonKeur in Dutch) was created that combines and simplifies a number of different needs. The certificate was developed

by involving consumer groups, housing organizations, elderly associations, for-profit and nonprofit developers, architects, and others, incorporating a wide number of criteria such as universal design and those of the police, in a clear, simple, and straightforward manner.

The beauty of this label is that it isn't just for the elderly or aimed at any one group. The goal is to create a truly functional house; the label describes functionality and then translates the requirements into technical criteria. "All functions must be accessible, adaptable, safe, and user-friendly," explains Dr. Englebert. WoonKeur is supported by the Dutch Ministry of Housing but is a voluntary "second" building code. The Dutch, of course, have a building code in place that sets minimum standards. The WoonKeur provides standards above the minimum for the safe, efficient, and comfortable use of the dwelling over time. When builders choose to incorporate these extra criteria, they receive a certification that consumers look for when purchasing housing. The builder's cost to meet the WoonKeur label

averages from 2000 to 2500 euros extra per new dwelling, or roughly 40 to 50 euros a year over the fifty-year lifetime of the building.

Clearly, the market for housing is not strong to begin with, and adding costs, even if it results in a better product, would not make sense at this time. But I would argue that this is exactly the moment when the housing industry is seeking new directions and recalcitrant consumers need greater assurances. Let's begin the discussion together of figuring out how to create greater value through adopting a voluntary label. Acceptance by the public is key, and education is important. This is an active way for consumers and the housing industry to work towards better housing and a better California. ◉

Editor's note: Dorit Fromm is also a contributor to the forthcoming, second quarter 2009 edition of **arcCA** *on "Design for Aging."*

CEQA Best Practices for Architects

from *CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT: Best Practices by Jurisdictions and Architects* (January 2009), commissioned by The AIACC Capitol Forum Housing and Hospitality Practice Group

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), enacted in 1970, was originally intended to apply only to public projects. Today, following numerous revisions and interpretations by the California Supreme Court, it applies to nearly all projects in California.

CEQA is a statute that requires state and local agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible. It applies to any projects undertaken by either a public agency or private activity which 1) must receive some discretionary approval from a government agency, and 2) which may cause either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect change in the environment.

Environmental impacts may be disclosed in Environmental Impact Reports (EIR) or Negative Declarations (no EIR required). Some projects may be exempt by operation or included in a list of Categorical Exemptions. The complexity of CEQA requirements often adds time and expense to proposed projects, and the lack of clear definitions may lead to litigation by special interest groups.

The [AIA California Council's] Capitol Forum Housing and Hospitality Group commissioned this 2008 report as a response to CEQA impacts on projects at member firms. The purpose of the study is to identify "best practices" employed by architects, planners and jurisdictions which, when implemented, facilitate the process and result in better outcomes. Content of the report is based on interviews with architects, planners, EIR consultants and various government officials involved with implementing CEQA.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that it is possible to realize faster turnaround times, reduce costs, improve community relationships and complete more projects. Success stories from five California jurisdictions, each employing different yet effective approaches, clearly illustrate the opportunities for improvement.

Additionally, interviews with AIACC members for this report demonstrate that architects can implement certain "best practices" internally to mitigate many of the CEQA challenges for themselves, and for their clients.

Architects can have a very positive influence on CEQA approval outcomes, reduce the need to go to full EIRs, and streamline the process by incorporating certain "best practices" into the design and preparation of submittal documents. Savvy architects, experienced with the CEQA process, begin to formulate their strategies for meeting CEQA requirements as soon as the commission is accepted.

The first step in a successful strategy is to clearly identify and understand the jurisdiction and the desirability of the project. Jurisdictions that are pro-growth and projects that generate revenue, such as retail development, are often a winning combination that makes it easier to obtain fast approvals. However, no matter how appealing or challenging the project might be, each jurisdiction has its own "corporate culture" that must be dealt with and a process that must be followed.

Mark Butler, National Park Service, adds, "When working within a jurisdiction, know the directives of the jurisdiction, such as general plans and community goals. Know the stipulations for the plan, the key requirements. And be familiar with the processes. An excellent resource is *The CEQA Deskbook* by Bass, Herson and Bogdan."

Art Balourdas, AIA, The Arcadia Group, offers a warning: "Try to anticipate what the jurisdiction wants. Don't assume they have told you everything; there are often hidden agendas." And also a tip:

• Identify special programs: Always ask about special programs similar to the San Diego Affordable Housing Expedite Program, because they can save significant time and money.

Before beginning design work, Andy Taylor, AIA, makes his first call on a new project to Jim Chugula, local planning consultant. Jim worked for the county in the past, and he knows the planning boards, the process, what the city feels is important, and the possible roadblocks. Jim offers the following tips:

• Hire a local expert: Hire someone local who has good relationships with city staff, understands the general plan and any EIRs, is familiar with the city/county politics, understands the procedures required, and can work directly with decision makers. If you choose the right person, the city will tell them what needs to be done to comply right from the beginning.

Linus Naujokaitis, AIA, LMA Consulting Group, agrees: "Hire someone with former planning and community connections. With insider information there is more opportunity to get the application right the first time, and to gain direct access to planners to resolve issues and gain critical information."

• Check for consistency in reports: One of the key functions Jim provides is checking and double checking all technical reports and plans. His job is to make sure the reports match in their findings and to spot inconsistencies that would raise "red flags" and must be rectified before a submittal package is delivered.

Jay Clark, AIA, RTKL, agrees with Andy and Jim that clearly understanding the requirements before going to design is critical. He suggests:

• Understand CEQA: Understanding CEQA first hand and any restrictions is critical. Always find out if any hearings are required first. Determine any impacts and exemptions. Different parts of the city will have different requirements.

• Communicate restrictions to the client: Clients need to understand the process, the restrictions, and any possible uncontrollable delays. Jay gives the example of an upcoming street-widening project by the city that would take precedence over outside development and would take ten feet off of the property.

Johanna Street, AIA, also believes in getting expert advice before designing, especially in environmentally sensitive or historical areas.

Her suggestions are:

• Hire an "expert" architect: Add a landscape architect or preservation architect for historical buildings and districts upfront to assess concerns and suggest mitigations.

• Research rehabs carefully: For buildings built more than fifty years ago, meet with the planning board before beginning any designs. Pull files, be aware of prior actions, and identify any historical ranking to avoid possible lawsuits and injunctions.

Robert Sabbatini, AIA, concurs. He also suggests hiring a landscape architect or planner before designing to site the building, and engaging with environmental consultants who can identify possible impacts and allow the architect to "self-mitigate" before the actual preparation of the EIS or EIR. The better informed you are about the requirements, the better the plan and the fewer the changes.

Other best practices include:

• Incorporate environmental work into design: To save significant time and reduce the need for changes, environmental impact modifications should be done at the same time as the project work.

• Early public involvement: Get the public involved as quickly as possible, and attend all public meetings to understand possible concerns and hear their ideas. "You may not agree with what they have to say, but you do need to understand what lies at the foundation of their issues or the ideas that they put forth. Your responses will be that much better informed."

Ron Lichau, Lichau & Associates, Auburn, CA suggests:

• Build relationships with the staff: Talk with the people involved so that you clearly understand the concerns that will help you negotiate acceptable solutions.

• Be flexible: Make yourself easy to work with, and work with the natural materials available to you.

Soften the designs, be aware of the issues, such as traffic, water impact, and vegetation, and work with them.

Hector Reyes, AIA, is a strong proponent of the architect taking the lead and coordinating the right team to streamline the process. In some ways, the architect needs to act as a "creative bureaucrat." Once the team is in place, he suggests:

• Adopt a can-do approach with environmental groups: Hector always meets personally with environmental groups on a new project. He does not bring drawings, just a project outline, and asks for the top five concerns and issues in order of priority. He believes in going to the source, i.e., Fish and Game, FEMA, Army Corps of Engineers, and finding out what affects them. Armed with their input, he can confer with his client and start his drawings. Clients need to understand the possible impact on their projects before technical studies are even begun.

• Customize reports: "If you just submit boiler-plate information, you get boilerplate back." Get technical studies done ahead, insist on thirty-day turnaround time, and offer the completed reports to the jurisdiction upfront. Make the information specific to your project. For example, traffic studies should reference specific streets. Use the data to make your project look favorable. Your goal should be to get a "comments" letter back, not just a response letter.

• Encourage a "holistic" approach with developers: Create a "flexible" vision with developers and encourage them to keep "an open mind" to make it easier to get project approval. Prepare them to work with the community.

• Insist on a preliminary project review: Hector elaborates: "Insist on a preliminary project review and meeting to go over the procedures and required documentation with all key city staff personnel and get their comments in writing. Bring your consultant team to the review meeting and be assured that their counterparts at the city attend as well."

The jurisdictions themselves and planners have more "best practices" they recommend for architects that will help streamline the process and result in more favorable outcomes.

John Conley from the City of Vista offers the following observations:

• Present a complete package: It is highly recommended that applicants complete the project design and plans, have all consultants on board, and anticipate technical studies.

• Take advantage of early review processes: If a Preliminary Review is available, participate; if not, ask for one. Preliminary reviews can substantially reduce turnaround time by eliminating roadblocks at the earliest stage and bring city staff together with stakeholders to improve communication, eliminate inconsistencies.

• Good attitude: It is very helpful if the applicants are prepared and willing to be responsive to the comments of city staff and act on their recommendations.

The Planning Center in Costa Mesa works with architects and jurisdictions to provide faster turnaround, reduce costs, and streamline the process. Their recommendations include:

• Whenever possible and advantageous, hire your own EIR consultant: This avoids RFP delays from the jurisdiction and provides open, direct communication. Make sure the consultant is familiar with the jurisdiction's requirements and general plans. It is recommended that you find someone who has worked successfully in that jurisdiction on other projects. Check references.

• Follow the mandatory CEQA checklist: Appendix G of the CEQA guidelines provides a "laundry list" to follow that insures the application is complete.

• Good land planning: A common roadblock is land planning. Make sure designs incorporate as much open space as possible. Mark Hornberger, FAIA, agrees. His tip is, "Put high density projects in urban areas and preserve the open spaces." A good

design will go through the process much quicker.

• Architect involvement: Architects need to be involved and provide detailed plans upfront that incorporate the following areas: texture, lighting, parking, net square footage, height, and variances, among others. The project description needs to include construction detail, air quality, and noise quality.

Jeff Harlan, Senior Planner with the Planning Center, emphasizes the importance of advance planning and public involvement from the very beginning. Once the plan is completed, good design within the guidelines insures getting through the process quickly. He adds that good jurisdictions are open to being educated and working with planners.

And finally, The Platinum Triangle website for the City of Anaheim points out the benefits of using Program EIRs in the Executive Summary to their current DSEIR: "The Program EIR still serves a valuable purpose as the first-tier environmental analysis. The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15168(h)) encourage the use of Program EIRs, citing five advantages:

1. Provide a more exhaustive consideration of impacts and alternatives than would be practical in an individual EIR;
2. Focus on cumulative impacts that might be slighted in a case-by-case analysis;
3. Avoid continual reconsideration of recurring policy issues;
4. Consider broad policy alternatives and programmatic mitigation measures at an early stage when the agency has greater flexibility to deal with them;
5. Reduce paperwork by encouraging the reuse of data (through tiering)." ◉

Planning Entitlement
& CEQA Compliance:
the Downtown San Diego Way

Philip J. Bona, AIA, APA, ULI, LAI

The special process and regulations undertaken by Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC) for the City of San Diego and its Redevelopment Agency have allowed the city over the past thirty years to create a distinctive, world-class downtown benefiting from its many built and natural assets. These include the renowned Horton Plaza Shopping Center, the Historic Gaslamp Quarter restaurant and shopping district, the Little Italy neighborhood, several magnificent marinas, a bountiful cruise ship Port, many successful hotels, a waterfront lined with luxury high-rise residences, Petco Park for the Padres baseball team, and dozens of well-preserved historic buildings.

What has been created is a predominately mixed use, entirely public transit oriented, densely built downtown—the sixteenth most walkable in the U.S., according to www.walkscore.com. In addition to the outstanding climate, many international developers have been drawn to the consistency, predictability, and expedience of the Centre City's entitlement process and have brought great architecture and economic benefit to downtown. This article discusses the distinctive components of the entitlement process that have facilitated this rich development.

The Difference

The entitlement process is the common denominator among architects, developers, property owners, and regulatory agencies. While primarily administered by city planning departments, in a few cases it is administered through a city's local redevelopment agency. San Diego's CCDC is one of these cases.

The second largest city in California, San Diego is the eighth largest in the U.S. by population, with approximately 1,367,000 residents. The greater city is made up of over 100 named neighborhoods, one of which is Centre City or Downtown, home of Petco Park, the County Seat, City Hall, the Historic Gaslamp District, and dozens of residential and commercial high-rise buildings. San Diego International Airport, Balboa Park, and the San Diego Zoo are immediately

Photography by Ed Andrews for CCDC.

37

adjacent to Downtown. Throughout most of the 20th Century, Downtown primarily supported the adjacent Navy, Army, and Marine Corp bases. It evolved to become a fairly unsavory place to live or do business, and it began to deteriorate.

In the late 1970s, a Redevelopment Plan was put in place to reverse the downward trend, provide public improvements, rehabilitate buildings, preserve architecturally significant historic sites, provide for new low- and moderate-income housing, and attract new business enterprises. In 1992, the City Council gave CCDC direct authority over its two redevelopment areas.

Governed by a unique "Downtown Community Plan," which is separate from the greater city's General Plan, Downtown's development goals, objectives, and quality of urban form have been clearly identified on a block-by-block basis. Centre City's 1,455-acre footprint has boomed over the past decade as the fastest growing area in the county, with over 11,282 new residential units, 1,678 new hotel rooms, and over 1.6 million square feet of new commercial space. It is projected to reach its redevelopment build-out before 2040 while tripling its resident population, its hotel room count, and its commercial real estate to accommodate another 90,000 jobs.

CCDC is a quasi-public nonprofit corporation, created by the City Council, with its board members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council. Its purpose is to more expeditiously implement downtown redevel-

opment through entitlement. In addition, it is responsible for a wide range of activities affecting downtown, including planning, zoning administration, and property acquisition and disposition. CCDC works with qualified developers, property owners, and other public agencies on rehabilitation projects, new construction, and public improvements where tax increment dollars can be used to subsidize appropriate development.

Generally, the City's other neighborhoods are subject to a five-tiered process for review and approval. This process ranges from a simple staff review and approval to full Planning Commission and City Council approvals. The latter process can take 12 to 24 months.

Within Downtown, however, development projects that contain less than 50 dwelling units and/or 100,000 square feet of development are subject to review and approval by the CCDC President only. Larger projects are subject to review and approval by the CCDC Board of Directors through a three-tiered design review process that generally takes 3 to 4 months. Those projects requiring variances or deviations from the Planned District Ordinances (or PDOs, of which there are separate ones for each of the Centre City, Marina, and Gaslamp Districts) or that possess unique characteristics such as historical resources are subject to extended city review processes and can take 3 to 6 months longer.

Entitlement Process
CCDC's entitlement process is designed to

be more streamlined and supportive of the development process than the standard process, so as to better accommodate downtown's smart growth while removing older, blighted built improvements. Starting with at least two strategic preliminary design meetings with CCDC Planning Department staff, the applicant is walked through the PDO requirements pertinent to the proposed project to determine Floor Area Ratio (FAR), solar plane setbacks, bulk, building heights, ground floor heights, parking, average daily trips (ADT), and streetscape activation.

After the project applicant has addressed the required project criteria and a complete application is formally submitted, the project is processed for review, usually within 30 days, and a noticing of neighbors within 300 feet of the project is disseminated. CCDC staff manage the noticing process, prepare a Project Staff Report, and present the merits of the project to the Pre-Design Subcommittee of the Centre City Advisory Committee (CCAC) and the Real Estate Subcommittee of the CCDC Board of Directors for preliminary design review and comment.

CCAC is made up of 28 leaders of downtown's residential neighborhood and business community groups and acts as a traditional community planning group or architectural design review committee. CCDC staff will work with the applicants on refining the project before it is presented to the CCDC Board of Directors for final approval. If the applicant requests redevelopment funds, further approv-

Photography by Ed Andrews for CCDC

als must then be attained by the City Council and Redevelopment Agency.

Generally, a project receives an approved entitlement at the end of the architect's schematic design phase and does not come back to CCDC until routed through the City's building permit process. Legally, a Development Permit documents the entitlement terms and conditions. A Disposition and Development Agreement or Owner Participation Agreement is also used when Redevelopment Agency funds are a component of the project. Finally, the approved design is verified by CCDC during project construction against the approved entitlement drawings and color/materials board.

Unique benefits of proposing and processing a downtown project are the public relations and outreach done by CCDC Marketing and Communications staff. Notices, drawings, renderings, and project data are posted on the CCDC website and through press releases and interviews to the media. This service can be attractive to the developer, as the project's design, LEED goals, economic development attributes, and project statistics are clearly and accurately depicted to the public.

CEQA Review and Accountability

One of the most valuable aspects of Centre City's development process is a result of the 2006 Downtown Community Plan's Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), amended in 2008. This document, as a Program FEIR in accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, governs all future developments within the integrated network of neighborhoods and districts under the downtown's ultimate build-out plan, which has been evaluated for environmental consequences and cumulative impacts. Mitigation measures have been established for identified impacts in such areas as land use, transportation, parking, cultural resources, geology and seismicity, aesthetics, noise, air quality, hydrology/water quality, hazardous materials, population/housing, and paleontological resources.

All proposed projects in the Civic/Core, Columbia, Convention Center, Cortez, East Village, Gaslamp Quarter/Horton Plaza, Little Italy, and Marina districts are considered a part of the overall Redevelopment Project evaluated under the FEIR. Development projects may utilize the approved FEIR, and the responsible agencies rely on it when reviewing and acting on permit applications downtown. As a result, CEQA requirements can be met for the development through an administrative Environmental Secondary Study that confirms the applicability of the FEIR to the project. The benefit to developers and their architects is that projects are informed at the start by the project review of applicable mitigation measures, and additional CEQA review is not necessary—greatly reducing processing time and potential legal challenges.

Footnote

In 2009, CCDC's Advanced Planning Team will complete an in-depth analysis of sustainable best practice policies being considered or adopted by comparable U.S. cities. CCDC staff proposes to amend the Centre City entitlement requirements and process incrementally over time to make use of such strategic sustainable design criteria (based on LEED for Neighborhood Design and LEED for New Construction). Doing so will allow Downtown San Diego to approach entitlements in better alignment with the California "Green" Building Code, which becomes mandatory in 2010. It will also more proactively model the City's need to adopt measures to assure that future development in the region is designed for more sustainable site planning and higher environmental quality, water efficiency using grey and recycled water, renewable energy sources, and sustainable site and building materials and resources. Further, CCDC is considering development incentives for projects that demonstrate innovative approaches to these goals, in line with the City's 2050 Climate Initiative.

Resources

The CCDC regulatory documents, including the Community Plan, the FEIR, and the PDO, may be found at www.ccdc.com under Resources/Planning.

The City of San Diego's regulatory documents, including the General Plan, the Program EIR, and Land Use Code, may be found at www.sandiego.gov/planning.

The 1:50 Scale Model of the Centre City is located at the Downtown Information Center (DIC) at 193 Horton Plaza, San Diego.
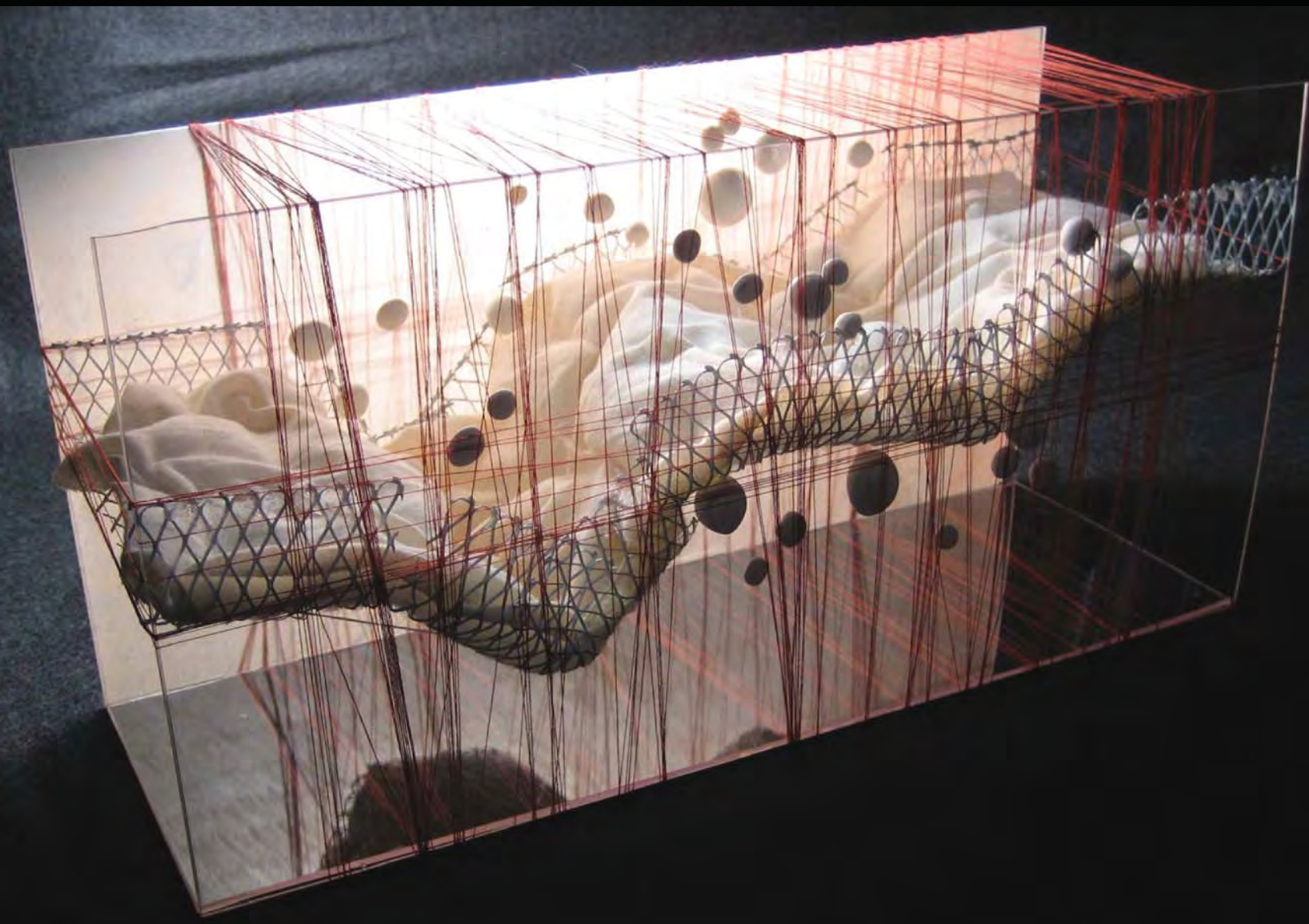
Intimacy of the
In-Between

Randall Stauffer

The practice of interior architecture is an act of design that reinforces intimate relationships among individuals, communities, and the cultural artifacts that articulate meanings in and among these relationships. It is an investigation into the critical articulation of space and its social conditions. Elizabeth Grosz, in *Architecture from the Outside* (2001), writes, "The space of the in-between is the locus of social, cultural, and natural transformations . . . where becoming, openness to futurity, outstrips the conservational impetus to retain cohesion and unity." In many ways, the idea she espouses echoes the importance of interior architecture, an importance whose main formal attribute is inherently about the in-between. It aspires to the design of space that is open to the possibilities of fluid interaction among multiple individuals and to the material world.

The notion of intimacy establishes a focused relationship between interior experience and the physical form of interior environments. Though all good design translates abstract ideas into physical form, intimate involvement with architecture provides a way of diminishing the abstract by embracing the specificity of meaning, feeling, and interaction that abstract ideas generate. The realm of interior architecture is filled with an intimate relationship between material artifacts and human behavior. The underlying desire of these relationships creates spaces where we house varied human interactions. It acknowledges that design requires a closeness that refuses to disassociate the human body and the varying states of human experience.

Affect

The connections between human behavior and spatial experience are better understood by investigating the notion of *affect*. In its common understanding in design, affect is often relegated to the list of secondary concerns. It generally refers to an interior mental state created by the manipulation of the senses and is closely aligned with affectation, which implies notions of trickery, pretext, and fiction.

Student project by Corina Apodaca, Woodbury University.

Images by Randall Stauffer

In fact, affect is better understood in its active meaning, as an ability to persuade. Though persuasion may enlist ideas of trickery, it is also an act of convincing. It opens the possibility that design becomes a communicative tool for breaking down preconceptions and establishing new ways of inhabiting space. As the complexity of human behavior and social dealings interacts with the designed environment, influence becomes a tool used to bring meaning to our interior environments. Material affect becomes a rhetorical wrapping of and exposure to sensuality in textures and colors that explore human conditions and translate them into performative qualities.

Interior architecture becomes an emphatic questioning of the human condition, of social relations, and of our relationship with the material world. It questions how the building of form reinforces these relationships and interactions. The body of knowledge of interior architecture and its educational process enable participants to question the material world of interior space and the social relationships housed in these spaces—to question social norms and their spatial structures and transform them into notions of hidden desire and political action.

Hiddenness and the Sensual

The technique of questioning and polemic found in the process of design also becomes an important underlying function of the interior environment itself. The function of inquiry of interior spaces relies on their in-between-ness and their hidden-ness. Jane Hirschfield's essay, "Thoreau's Hound: On Hiddenness," eloquently articulates the human desire for knowledge by espousing the importance that concealment and the ungraspable play in the quest for knowledge. She writes, "Homo Sapiens: the name defines a species that wants to know. Yet an odd perversity equally present within us is thirsty for the opposite of knowledge.... A fidelity to the ungraspable lies at the very root of being.... Concealment does not presume conscious intention.... Hiddenness, then, is a sheltering enclosure—though one we stand sometimes outside of, at others within." The interior realm then becomes a space for both hiding *and* revealing in our quest for the development of just and ethical design.

Seen from this perspective, interior architecture investigates a long tradition of architectural concern that emphasizes the hidden and ephemeral qualities of space. Volumes become transformed and transformative as new inhabitants occupy and appropriate the physicality of architectural form, structure, and the artifacts of the built environment.
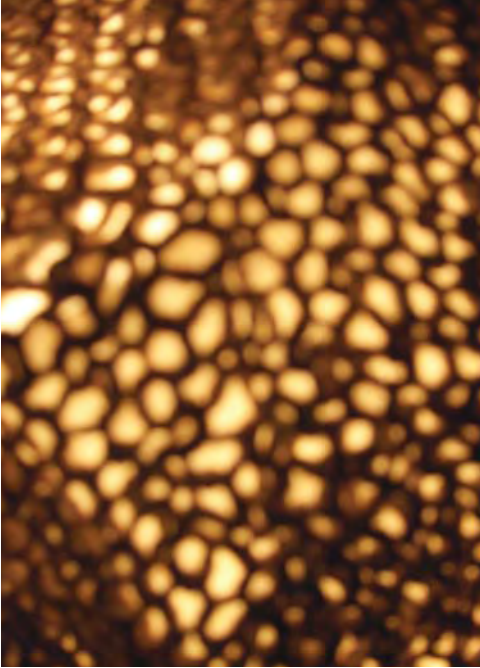
Images by Ragina Johnson

As a social phenomenon, interior spaces are hidden within the textures of architectural form. The social performance within the hidden or intermittently revealed becomes a process that individuals and communities rely upon to uncover how we live, develop social strategies, and integrate these strategies into a larger public world.

The integration of the individual into the public realm relies on the familiarity with the sensual. It is dependent on many forms of sensuality, overtly and covertly. It starts with the body as the generative force behind the development of spatial form. It addresses those issues of design traditionally seen as transgressive to architecture: the sensual, the decorative, the colorful, the thematic. Employing material as a strategy for structuring space, it acts upon the senses and structures social relationships. To affect then becomes a tool of persuasion that reinvestigates the value of normative spatial and social structures.

The Inside In the Outside

Looking at a building from the outside reveals only minimally the possibilities of the lives and social structures that inhabit it. The inquisitive designer stands before an opaque object of inquiry. The profound effects of this form on the supposed lives wandering through the interior spaces are only occasionally revealed, and then often through fantastical desires built upon subjective story telling. When these lives are brought to the street, they are subdued by public appropriateness.

And so the design of interior space must rely on the intimate knowledge of those who will inhabit it. It relies on the transformation of general opacity into the specifically transparent, only to fade back to the opaque upon completion of the project. Paradoxically, then, interior architecture becomes less about closing off a hidden realm and more about opening up the possibilities of how interior space responds to the contextual and social conditions of a site and those who inhabit it. ◉

Paul Williams in Toluca Lake?
a Debate

The Shock of the Old
Tom Marble, AIA

I am an impurist, a maximalist not a minimalist, a both/and rather than an either/ or kind of guy; I like complexity and contradiction, I embrace the ironies of the difficult whole. So when I chose to renovate an office building using an historical style I was not surprised to catch a little flack from my colleagues. But the question, "Is historicism appropriate today?" is not, for me, the interesting question; for me, the interesting question is: "Why does historicism bother us so much?"

In renovating the Toluca Lake Executive Building in Burbank, I chose to summon the ghost of Paul Williams for several reasons. Part of it was related to my ongoing investigation of urban mythology—the idea that a fundamental problem of our era is that the city in our heads has become more important than the actual city. The most radical move in this particular context was to resist the impulse to create a building at the scale of a fast-moving car and to instead offer something that a pedestrian could appreciate. Part of it also plays with cultural critic Norman Klein's concept of urban erasure: Sure, go ahead and knock down a couple Paul Williams treasures along Wilshire (Perino's, Cocoanut Grove); but don't be surprised when some misremembered knock-off appears suddenly across town.

But the bottom line is the effect the building has on passersby. I welcome the pleasantly unsettling quality that the new Toluca Lake Executive Building brings to this stretch of Riverside Drive, lined with classic coffee shops sandwiched between incredibly bland glass-and-stucco office buildings. When you stumble across the building, there's a cognitive dissonance that asks you to conjure up some sort of logical explanation for its presence when in fact there is none. In my estimation buildings should do this. They should disturb or delight—or both; and not just

Toluca Lake Executive Building, Marble Architecture, before (top) and after (bottom).

Toluca Lake Executive Building, Marble Architecture, before (left) and after (right).

architects: they should startle even layfolk on their way to grab a quick bite. Architecture, at its best, has the capacity to arouse feelings; at its worst—what we've got all over Los Angeles—it is an overarching drabness that induces nothing but indifference.

A hundred years ago, architecture was at a crossroads. Emerging from the ashes of the nineteenth century, two architects came to define the next. Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier both showed an incredible range of imagination as evidenced in the long evolution of each of their styles. They drew from everything around them for inspiration—art, philosophy, science—and were deeply aware of architectural history, both having practiced in traditional styles early in their careers.

I am convinced architecture is at a crossroads again. After Modernism seemed to fizzle in the '60s and '70s, we architects cast about looking for new directions. We've looked at linguistics (Peter Eisenman), semiotics (Agrest + Gandelsonas), mathematics (Christopher Alexander), movies (Bernard Tschumi), even

politics (Paolo Soleri); but mostly we've drawn our inspiration from art. There's Abstract Expressionism (Saarinen, Lautner, Gehry), Pop (Charles Moore, Robert Venturi), Surrealism (Hejduk, Diller+Scofidio), Minimalism (Meier, Ando, Escher GuneWardena), and Conceptualism (Koolhaas, Herzog + De Meuron). I think currently we might be in some sort of Post-Conceptualist phase, a combination of Light & Space, Finish Fetish, and Situationism combined with the unavoidable pull of Sustainability in all its manifestations.

But wherever architecture goes in the coming century, one thing is clear: we need a renewed agility in absorbing the world around us in order to synthesize a new direction. To do this we need to engage in a discourse that is as open and expansive as possible, taking in everything, EVERYTHING. Including history.

Shock. Really?
Stephen Slaughter, AIA

In a collage city with literally hundreds of collage architectural practices and thousands of monuments to these practice's fits and starts, for an architect both to define himself in opposition to terms that most architects go to pains to avoid, and to propose that designing something "old" in this context is both radical and shocking, is vexing.

I'll frame this assertion with a few questions. If our mind's city is more prominent than the city in which we dwell, is it appropriate to cater to nostalgia by faithfully reproducing the work of a deceased architect? If one purports to be a "both/and kinda guy," why limit the bandwidth of spatial or temporal experience to that of a pedestrian? And, although it's clear that the intent wasn't to produce a quasi-Classical façade to reinvigorate the discussion of Meaning in Architecture, the question still remains: Can the insertion of an historical copy into the city avoid the discourse

of postmodernism, just because the discussion ceased forty years ago?

Marble seems quite versed in historical references and presents a compelling argument. If I'm allowed to paraphrase: "Why not? Why not keep everything on the table?" So, if the polemic of this project is to question why historicism bothers us so much, the answer is, and has always been, because it is impossible to divorce the meaning embedded in the familiar from the familiar itself, and thereby impossible to present something new and shocking.

Architecture is a medium that allows for a multitude of contexts, influences, and trajectories; and in this era of change—during this, the most difficult time to practice architecture in generations—the onus is on us to not preach multiplicity and practice "past," but to embrace the new. For it has never been clearer than now that the practices of the past are bankrupt. Or, shall I say, past practices have led us to the brink of economic, social, and cultural collapse. "Business as usual," along with its ideology and icons, can be no more.

The new is the only relevant territory for the future. Historicism must, Mr. Marble, finally rest in peace.

Modernism Is Not a Style
Tom Marble, AIA

Okay, okay: I know that my renovation of the Toluca Lake Executive Building in Burbank is not a particularly radical gesture. But it's not a literal copy of any building I am aware of, and, strictly speaking, it's not even classical; and when you consider that the birth of Hollywood Regency came after the birth of Modernism, I'm not sure calling it historical is even that interesting. I suppose you could call it post-modernist, but, really, is it any more post-modern than anything else that's going on around us, especially when two recent high-profile buildings in Los Angeles —Disney Hall and the CalTrans building—are simply decorated sheds? And isn't nostalgia for the future—a future we once owned—just as
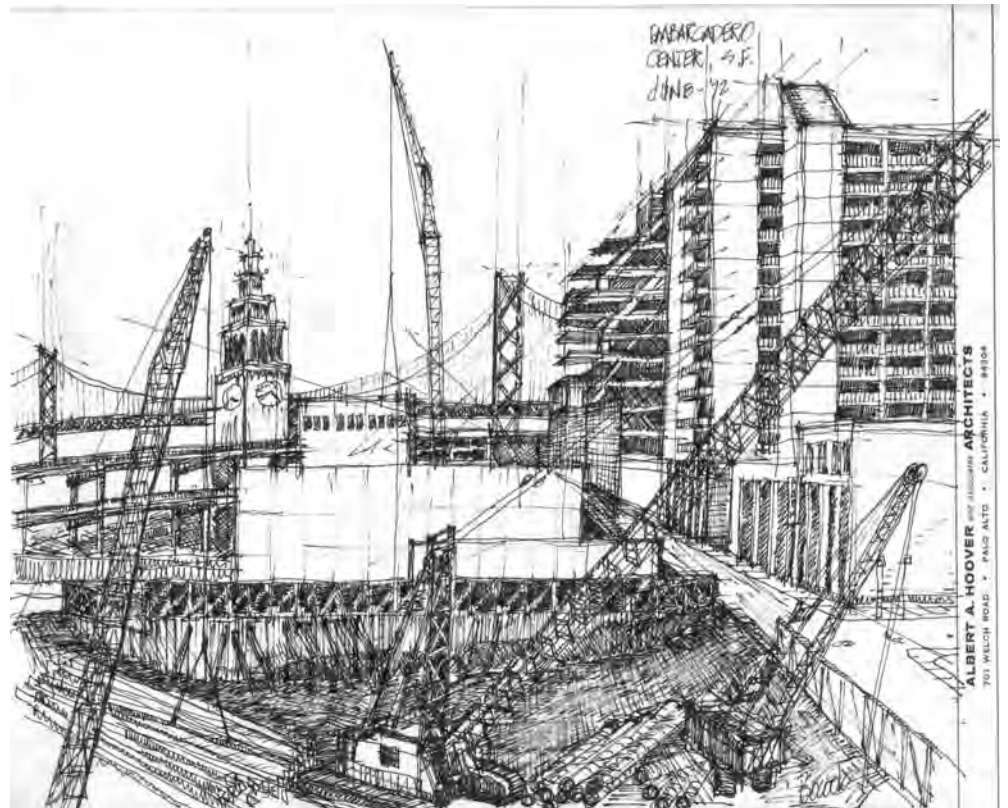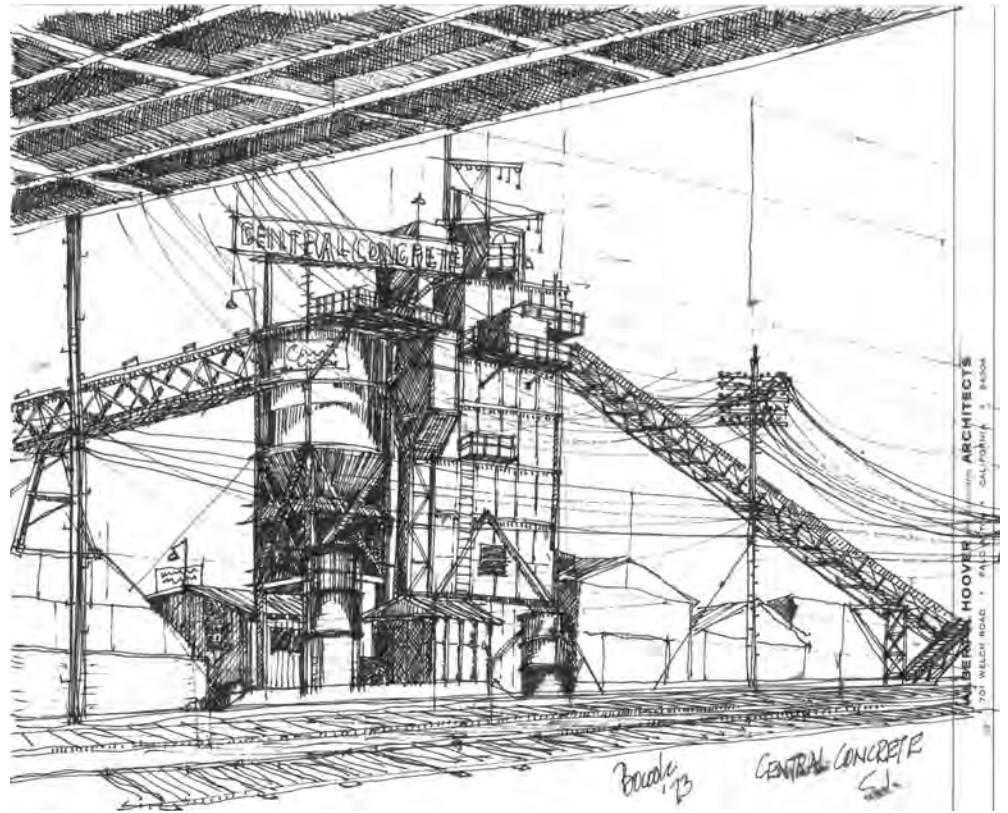
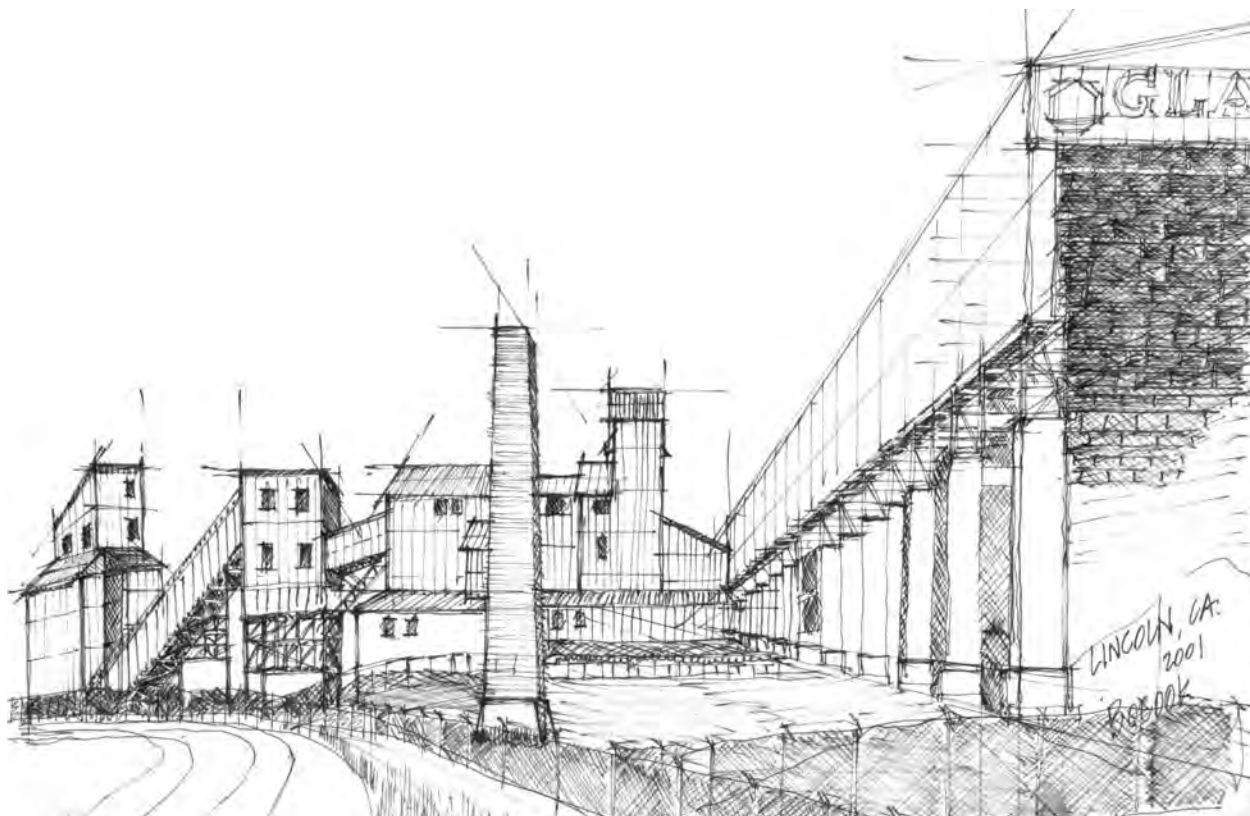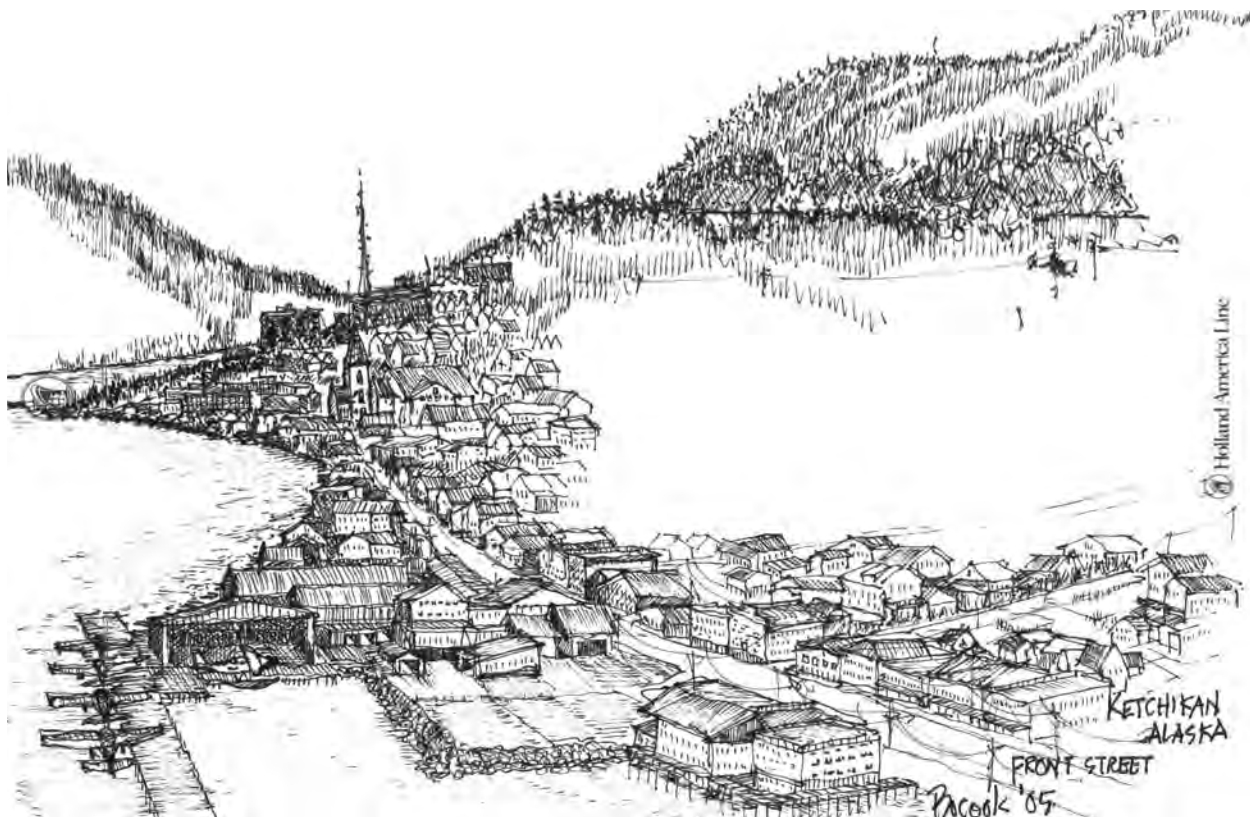corrosive as any sort of bourgeois longing for a misremembered past?

That said, would I design a Hollywood Regency building again? I doubt it. Not unless the client and the context called for it. Like many of my colleagues, my practice is primarily contemporary in approach; but I'm still open to looking to the past. I mean, why is it that all other arts—painting, sculpture, film, music—can have a more promiscuous relationship to history and absolutely thrive for it, while architecture seems to cling compulsively to a sort of modernist fundamentalism? It's almost like we're priests: we've taken a vow of celibacy that prevents us from really participating in the world yet compels us to impose our will on it. Let's face it, we're anal and we're arrogant—not a particularly charming combination. Maybe it's time for a little humility.◉

BACK ALLEY
DIXON, MO.
Bocook '06

Bill Bocook of B.H. Bocook, AIA, Architect in Palo Alto, has been making travel sketches for over thirty-five years, always with fine tip black pens, usually on 8½" x 11" white tracing paper pads—though occasionally on hotel stationery or other paper that comes to hand. Responding to the editor's encouragement of sketching in **arcCA** 08.2, "Landscape + Architecture," Bill showed us his drawings, a selection from which we offer here.

KETCHIKAN
ALASKA

FRONT STREET

Bacook '05

Ⓒ Holland America Line

GLA

LINCOLN, CA.
2001

Bacook

SIENA, ITALY
Roccela
'98

David Meckel, FAIA

AB 32	The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006
ABAG	Association of Bay Area Governments
APS	Alternative Planning Strategy
ARB	Architecture Review Board
BD	Building Department
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CCC	California Coastal Commission
CDE	California Department of Education
CDF	California Department of Forestry
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
COG	Council of Governments
CSAC	California State Association of Counties
CTC	California Transportation Commission
DFG	Department of Fish and Game
DOJ	Department of Justice
DPW	Department of Public Works
DSA	Division of the State Architect
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
ER	Environmental Review
FM	Fire Marshal
FWS	Fish and Wildlife Service

GhG	Greenhouse Gas
HCD	California Department of Housing and Community Development
IWMB	Integrated Waste Management Board
LAFCO	Local Agency Formation Commission
League	League of California Cities
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NegDec	Negative Declaration
NPC	Neighborhood Planning Council
OPSC	Office of Public School Construction
OSHPD	Office of Statewide Hospital Planning & Development
PD	Planning Department
RHNA	Regional Housing Needs Assessment
RTAC	Regional Targets Advisory Committee
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SAB	State Allocation Board
SANDAG	San Diego Association of Governments
SCEA	Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment
SCS	Sustainable Communities Strategy
SFBCDC	San Francisco Bay Conservation & Development Commission

SFM	State Fire Marshall
SLC	State Lands Commission
Title 24	Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings
TPP	Transit Priority Project
TRPA	Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
USACE	Army Corps of Engineers

Hangar One at Moffett Field

Hangar One at Moffett Field in Silicon Valley is among the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. Here is the latest from www.preservationnation.org. Click on "Issues" then "11 Most Endangered."

January 15, 2009—Hangar One, with its exceptional character, innovative design and technical virtuosity, has long been one of the most recognizable landmarks of California's Silicon Valley. This cavernous, dome-shaped structure, built in 1932 to house U.S. Navy dirigibles, measures 200 feet tall and covers more than 8 acres of land. Despite its historical and architectural significance, Hangar One's future now hangs in the balance.

A 2003 inspection revealed PCBs are leaking from Hangar One's metallic exterior. Although the Navy transferred Hangar One to NASA in 1994, it remains responsible for environmental remediation. In early 2009, after a long and contentious public review process, the Navy formally decided to remove the contamination by stripping the Hangar of its exterior siding, doors, and windows, but leaving its large steel frame. The Navy passed on the difficult reconstruction task to NASA, Hangar One's current owner. While NASA has pledged that it is committed to reconstruct the Hangar, public support is critical to ensure this work occurs concurrently with the environmental cleanup. Such coordination will minimize the risk of damage to the Hangar's steel frame, save

money, and ensure that work is historically appropriate.

The preservation commitment by NASA is noteworthy considering that the Navy originally proposed to demolish Hangar One outright. That proposal caused an outcry from local residents, preservation groups and elected officials. In response to this public opposition, the Navy agreed to prepare a revised Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis report to assess other viable solutions. This revised proposal, though hotly contested, has now been adopted. It is now the responsibility of NASA to ensure that the skeletal frame the Navy leaves behind will quickly be returned to a useable form. Without quick action, the frame will be exposed to the elements and could lead to the slow deterioration and eventual loss of Hangar One.

A group of local citizens have formed the grass roots organization Save Hangar One. They continue to wage an effective campaign, coordinating information for the community and others on the status of the Navy's remediation plan and meeting notices. The group is also mobilizing efforts to have NASA consider rehabilitating Hangar One for adaptive reuse or educational purposes . . . . ◉

What you can do: write to Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer and Representative Anna Eschoo and request that they encourage NASA to act quickly to secure funds and create a preservation plan for Hangar One that will be closely coordinated with the Navy's remediation action.