Building Sustainable Neighborhoods

2007 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence

Bruner Foundation, Inc.

Building Sustainable Neighborhoods

THE 2007 RUDY BRUNER AWARD FOR URBAN EXCELLENCE

BRUNER FOUNDATION, INC.

Richard Wener, PhD
with Emily Axelrod, MCP; Jay Farbstein, FAIA, PhD; and Robert Shibley, AIA, AICP

Library of Congress Control Number: 2002104398
ISBN: 1-890286-07-9

COVER PHOTOS: Olin Partnership, Jim Brozek, Seattle Housing Authority, Arrowstreet Inc., Alberto Vecerka/Estó

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Preface

2007 Selection Committee and staff salute 2007 Rudy Bruner Award winners.

This is the first round of the Rudy Bruner Award in which I have not been able to visit the finalists. Normally it is my privilege to spend three days at each site, photographing and asking questions the Selection Committee has posed. For personal reasons I had to sit this round out, and so – like you – must depend on this report to understand the reality of each place.

These 2007 winners engage our most challenging urban issues: how to implement sustainable design and environmental awareness; how to attract people back to our oft-challenged downtowns; how to reinforce our urban infrastructure; and how to stimulate investment in the places we all know and love the best, our neighborhoods.

At the new addition to the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, a local philanthropic community steps up to the plate. High Point is the vision of the Seattle Housing Authority, a clear-sighted public agency. At Columbus Circle and at the Crossroads public and private agencies are working together. At Columbus Circle, they are creating new public open space at one of NewYork City's busiest intersections; at the Crossroads they are creating complex new layers of urban infrastructure for the city of Milwaukee. Visionary citizens take responsibility for their own places at the LA Design Center and Artists for Humanity. In the public, philanthropic and private sectors, collaborators redefine what is possible. I am reminded once again

that partnership and creati ve thinking can often solv e problems that seem insurmountable.

I have been a fly on the w all of the Selection Committee for 20 years and have never learned to predict who will be a finalist. I salute the 2007 Selection Committee for their thoughtful, imaginative, and unexpected choices. It is with great pride that we at the Rudy Bruner Award present the 2007 RB A winners to y ou. We have enjoyed learning about them and hope you will too. We hope that you find ideas in each of them that you can use in your own community.

Simeon Bruner

Introduction: The 2007 Rudy Bruner Award

Gold Medal award presentation at the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh.

THE RUDY BRUNER AWARD FOR URBAN EXCELLENCE

The Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence (RBA) is a national award for urban places. Established in 1987, the award celebrates projects that are distinguished not only by quality design, but also by their social, economic, and environmental contributions to the built environment. The award seeks to promote fresh, innovative thinking about the kinds of projects that make our cities better places to live and work. RBA winners often transcend the boundaries between architecture, urban design, and planning, and they are frequently developed with such vision that they present creative solutions to some of our cities' most persistent problems.

The RBA is unique among national awards because of its emphasis on multiple aspects of place, and on the complex process involved with urban placemaking. The award is focused on the ways in which each winner impacts its city or neighborhood, while understanding that every urban place grows out of complex layers of social, economic, aesthetic, and personal interactions.

The Rudy Bruner Award asks some important questions. What kinds of places make our cities better places to live and work? How do these places enrich the urban landscape? Do they contribute to the

local economy? Do they create community pride? Do they build bridges among diverse populations or create beauty where none existed before? And perhaps most important, what can we learn from the creative thinking inherent in RBA winners, and how can that learning be applied in cities across the country?

The criteria for submitting an application for the RBA are intentionally broad, encouraging applications from a wide variety of projects. Many RBA winners represent new models of urban placemaking that have successfully challenged conventional wisdom about what is possible. Most are products of hard-won collaborations among diverse groups of people, often with differing agendas. And all RBA winners have contributed to the vitality of the cities and neighborhoods in which they are located. By celebrating their success, the RBA highlights the intricate and challenging process of urban placemaking, emphasizing the processes and values that produce significant urban places. By studying the stories of RBA winners, their histories, and their development, we can often discover creative ways to respond to some of our cities' most intractable problems.

THE SELECTION COMMITTEE

A new Selection Committee is named for each award cycle. To ensure lively and informed discussion, every selection committee is made up of an inter-disciplinary group of urban experts. Selection Committees always include the mayor of a major city as well as design professionals, developers, community organizers, philanthropists, and financiers. In their discussions, the Selection Committee members explore a wider range of urban issues and contribute to a broader understanding of the most critical challenges facing our cities today.

THE 2007 SELECTION COMMITTEE

- Mayor Manny Diaz, Miami, FL
- Reese Fayde, CEO, Living Cities: National Community Development Initiative, New York (Currently independent consultant)
- Reed Kroloff, Dean of Architecture, Tulane University, New Orleans (Currently Director of Cranbrook Academy of Art and Art Museum)
- David Perry, CEO, Great Cities Institute, Chicago
- Josephine Ramirez, Director of Planning, The Music Center, Los Angeles
- Robert Kroin, Chief Architect, Boston Redevelopment Authority, Boston

Reese Fayde, Bob Kroin, and David Perry review applications.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Since the RBA seeks excellence in places where it may not be expected, eligibility criteria are intentionally few. First, the project must be a real place, not a plan. It must be sufficiently complete to demonstrate its excellence to a team of site visitors from the Bruner Foundation, and it must be located in the continental United States.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

The Selection Committee meets twice - first to select the five finalists from a field of about 100 applicants. The Bruner Foundation then conducts site visits to each and reports back to the committee at their May meeting, when the committee elevates one finalist to Gold Medal status, a $50,000 award. The remaining finalists become Silver Medal winners and each receive $10,000.

Site visits are thorough and rigorous. Bruner Foundation staff visit each site for two to three days, exploring the projects and pursuing questions raised by the Selection Committee. The team members tour the projects, interview fifteen to twenty-five or more project participants (including community participants), take photographs, observe patterns of use, and collect secondary source documentation on the project.

This year's site visit team was led by Richard E. Wener, PhD, associate professor of environmental psychology and chairman of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Polytechnic University in Brooklyn. Other team members included Robert Shibley, Professor of Architecture and Planning at the State University of New York at Buffalo; Jay Farbstein, PhD, FAIA, president of Jay Farbstein & Associates; and Emily Axelrod, director of the Rudy Bruner Award.

2007 WINNERS

2007 Gold Medal

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF PITTSBURGH, Pittsburgh, PA

2007 Silver Medals

ARTISTS FOR HUMANITY EPICENTER, Boston, MA
CROSSROADS PROJECT AND MARSUPIAL BRIDGE, Milwaukee, WI
HIGH POINT REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT, Seattle, WA
LA DESIGN CENTER, Los Angeles, CA
COLUMBUS CIRCLE, PUBLIC PLAZA, New York, NY

Josephine Ramirez, Reed Kroloff and Mayor Manny Diaz review applications.

2007 AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Award presentations offer an important opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of each winning project and to raise awareness of the issues addressed by each of them. Past awards have been presented at the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and in many of the cities in which winning projects are located. At the presentations, planners, community organizers, architects, and developers speak about their projects, and mayors are often present to recognize the contributions these projects have made to their respective communities.

This year's Gold Medal award of $50,000 was presented to the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh at an event attended by a wide range of community representatives and public officials. Silver Medal winners were each awarded $10,000 at events in their respective cities, with local press and elected officials present to recognize their achievement.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

As part of an ongoing effort to facilitate a national dialogue on the meaning and nature of urban excellence and to promote important new ideas about urban placemaking, the Bruner Foundation publishes a book containing case studies of the winners. These books are published in hard copy and online at www.brunerfoundation.org. Each book recounts the story of the winning projects, and the related dialogue and debate among Selection Committee members. Case studies are prefaced by a "project at a glance" section that briefly summarizes the project and the Selection Committee discussion. This overview is followed by detailed accounts of the history, character, financing, and operation of each winning project. In addition to describing the five winners, a concluding chapter identifies the most important themes recognized by the Selection Committee.

BRUNER FOUNDATION PUBLICATIONS

Bruner Foundation books are currently in use in graduate and undergraduate programs in universities across the country. The work of the Rudy Bruner Award and its winners has been recognized by the Mayors' Institute on City Design, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Environmental Design Research Association. Recent articles on the RBA have appeared in *Foundation News, New Village Journal, Architectural Record, Design Book Review,* and *Architecture magazine.* See also the chapter on the RBA in Lynda Schneekloth and Robert Shibley's *Placemaking: The Art and Practice of Building Community* (John Wiley and Sons, 1995), and in the McGraw Hill compendium on the state of the art in urban design, *Time Saver*

Standards for Urban Design, published in 2003, edited b y Don Watson, Alan Plattus, and Robert Shibley.

Bruner Foundation books, some of w hich are a vailable from the foundation, include:

- Philip Langdon with Robert Shibley and Polly Welch, *Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1990).
- Neal Peirce and Robert Guskind, *Breakthroughs: Re-creating the American City* (New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers, State University of NJ, 1993).
- Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener, *Connections: Creating Urban Excellence; 1991 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1992).
- Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener, *Rebuilding Communities: Re-creating Urban Excellence; 1993 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1993).
- Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener, *Building Coalitions for Urban Excellence; 1995 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1996).
- Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener, *Visions of Urban Excellence; 1997 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc. 1998).
- Robert Shibley with Emily Axelrod, Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener, *Commitment to Place: Urban Excellence and Community* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1999).
- Richard Wener, PhD, with Emily Axelrod, MCP; Jay Farbstein FAIA, PhD; Robert Shibley, AIA, AICP; and Polly Welch, *Placemaking for Change: 2001 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 2002).
- Farbstein, Jay, FAIA, with Emily Axelrod, MCP, Richard Wener, PhD, and Robert Shibley, *Creative Community Building: 2003 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 2003).

Silver Medal award presentation at the LA Design Center.

- Shibley, Robert, AIA, AICP, with Jay Farbstein, PhD, FAIA, Richard Wener, PhD, and Emily Axelrod, MCP, *Reinventing Downtown: the 2005 Rudy Bruner award for Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 2005).

An earlier Bruner Foundation endeavor revisited the winners and finalists from the first four cycles of the RBA to learn how the projects have fared over time. The book asks which places have continued to thrive, which have struggled, and why. Partially funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, teams of Foundation staff and consultants, HUD regional staff, and past Selection Committee members revisited 21 projects. The conclusions these observers reached can be found in:

- Jay Farbstein, Robert Shibley, Polly Welch and Richard Wener, *Sustaining Urban Excellence: Learning from the Rudy Bruner Award, 1987-1993* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1998). This book is available through the Bruner Foundation or through the HUD User website.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Robert Shibley, AIA, AICP, is a professor at the School of Architecture and Planning at the State University of New York, Buffalo. He is also a founding partner of Caucus Partnership, a consulting practice on environmental and organizational change. At the University at Buffalo, he is a former chairman of the Department of Architecture and now serves as the director of The Urban Design Project, a center in the school devoted to the study and practice of urban design.

Emily Axelrod, MCP, is the director of the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. She holds a master's degree in city planning from the Harvard Graduate School of Design and has worked in urban planning in both the public and private sectors in San Francisco and Boston.

Jay Farbstein, PhD, FAIA, is an architect by training. He leads a consulting practice in Los Angeles and San Luis Obispo, CA, specializing in helping public sector and private clients develop and document their requirements for building projects as well as in evaluating the degree to which their completed buildings meet those requirements.

Richard Wener, PhD is associate professor of environmental psychology in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Polytechnic University in Brooklyn, New York. He has done extensive research on the effects of built environments on individuals and communities.

ACCESS TO OTHER RUDY BRUNER AWARD MATERIALS

Applications of award winners are also online. This archive of applications allows both perusal of original application material and the ability to select winner projects by keywords in seventeen categories including housing, historic preservation, art, land use controls, commercial development, and transportation etc. The University at Buffalo site is coordinated through The Urban Design Project, directed by Robert Shibley and developed by the staff at the University at Buffalo's Lockwood Memorial Library. It is a valuable tool for students and others interested various aspects of the urban built environment.

http://libweb.lib.buffalo.edu/bruner/

The Bruner Foundation also maintains a website for the RBA. The site contains an overview and history of the award, summary material and visual images of all winners, biographical material on Selection Committee members and online versions of every Bruner Foundation publication. The website also contains information on how to apply for the RBA. The website address is:

http://www.brunerfoundation.org

For more information, please contact:

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Email: **info@brunerfoundation.org**

Gold Medal Winner

Children's Museum of Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania


Northside
Herrs Island
28
65
279
Mattress Factory Museum
Children's Museum of Pittsburgh
National Aviary
Hazlett Theatre
Allegheny Center
Monongahela River
Liberty Avenue
16th St Bridge
Strip District
579
65
6th St Bridge
Andy Warhol Museum
PNC Park
Carnegie Science Center
10th St Bypass
Liberty Avenue
Downtown
Point State Park
Saw Mill Run Blvd
W Carson St
60
376
279
PITTSBURGH
Monongahela River
Penn Lincoln Pkwy
South Side
376

The Children's Museum At-A-Glance

WHAT IS THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF PITTSBURGH?

- A children's museum currently serving more than 230,000 visitors per year;
- An 80,000-square-foot facility that incorporates three centuries of architecture: a nineteenth century historic landmark post office; the early twentieth century Buhl Planetarium building; and a contemporary glass and steel connector whose facade is a kinetic wind sculpture;
- Incubator space and organizational support for six non-profit child-focused organizations that compliment the mission of the Children's Museum.
- An art gallery, café, and community meeting space;
- The driving force behind redevelopment of the North Side of Pittsburgh, a neighborhood devastated by 1960s urban renewal;
- Part of and a primary developer for the "Charm Bracelet Project" – a conceptual and physical connection among Northside cultural institutions.

PROJECT GOALS

- Provide an expanded, architecturally distinctive, and "green" home for the Children's Museum – a cultural center whose mission is to "provide innovative museum experiences that inspire joy, creativity, and curiosity."
- Leverage collaborations with other nearby cultural institutions to create a family district with improved connections between neighboring facilities, to spur redevelopment and to create a new town square;
- Provide incubator space for like-minded non-profit organizations;
- Provide the highest quality exhibits and programs for learning and play;
- Use green design to incorporate environmental awareness into the building and exhibits, and to foster a sense of environmental stewardship among Pittsburgh's children;
- Preserve historic architecture.

Project Chronology

1972 The Pittsburgh Children's Museum Project. A group of Pittsburgh community leaders, explore the idea of a children's museum, resulting in a mobile museum at Three Rivers Arts Festival, which travels throughout the community.

1983 Pittsburgh Children's Museum opens in basement of Old Post Office with $5,000 support from Hillman Foundation.

1987 Growing Pittsburgh Children's Museum moves from basement to occupy four floors of Old Post Office.

1991 Pittsburgh Children's Museum deeded Old Post Office by Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation. Planetarium program moves from neighboring Buhl building to new Carnegie Science Center.

1998 Collaboration with Fred Rogers supported by Grable Foundation – for development of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* Exhibit.

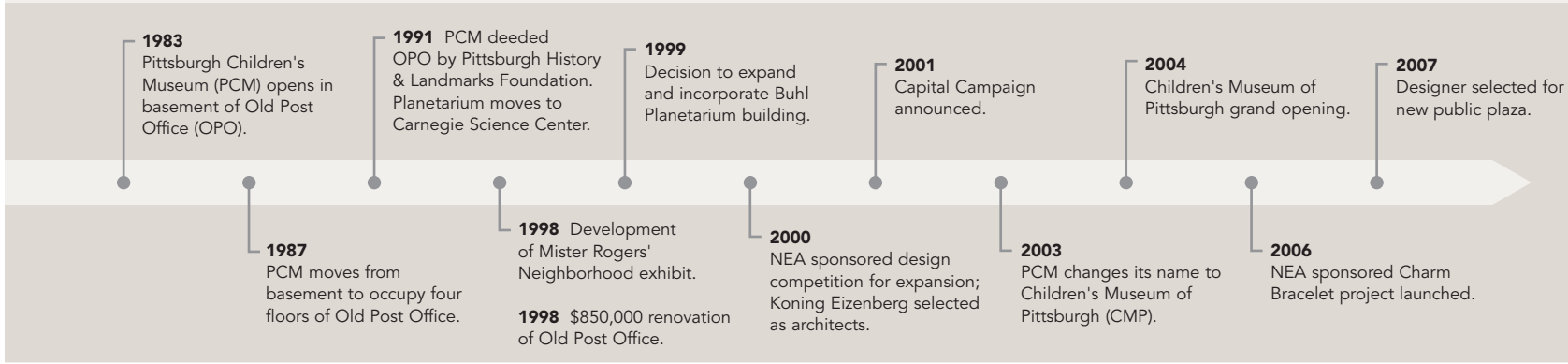
$850,000 renovation of Old Post Office is completed, providing space to increase accessibility, make setting more user-friendly, add café and space for traveling exhibits, theatre, classrooms and parking.

Dec 1999 Stakeholders gather to discuss shared vision as museum has outgrown Post Office site. They decide to expand but stay in current site by acquiring Buhl building.

Jan 2000 Design charette with stakeholders, community, and others to create vision for expansion project.

Summer 2000 Board conducts Capital Campaign feasibility study.

Fall 2000 NEA-sponsored Design Competition – six firms asked to compete.



Dec 2000 Koning Eizenberg chosen as architects for new facility.

Jan 2001 Hold design Charette on visitor experience.

May 2001 Partner Meeting on resources for new facility.

June 2001 Capital Campaign announced.

Aug 2003 Pittsburgh Children's Museum changes its name to Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, to emphasize mission over place.

Nov 2002 State funding secured.

Dec 2003 New Hazlett Theater study initiated.

Nov 2004 Grand opening.

Sept 2006 New Hazlett Theater opens.

Oct 2006 NEA sponsored Charm Bracelet Project convenes – four teams invited to submit ideas for district connections of cultural institutions.

Feb 2007 Charm Bracelet vision represented in lectures and an exhibition.

KEY PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEWED

Children's Museum:
Jane Werner, Executive Director
Chris Siefert, Deputy Director
Rebecca McNeil, Director of Finance

Board of Directors:
Tom Mole, Board President–VP for National Account Sales, CIGNA
Blaise V. Larkin - Partner, CEO – Madison Realty Group, Inc.

Architects:
Julie Eizenberg, Koning & Eizenberg Architecture
Dick Northway, Perkins Eastman Architects
Steve Quick, Perkins Eastman Architects

Community:
Mark Robbins, Dean of the School of Architecture at Syracuse University.
Louise Sturgiss, Education Director, Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation
Sara Radelet, Executive Director, Hazlett Theater
Charles Rosenblum, Carnegie Mellon University & Journalist/ Architectural Critic
Rebecca Flora, Green Building Alliance
Dayton Baker, Outgoing Director, National Aviary
Linda Dickerson, Incoming Director, National Aviary
Mark Fatla, Northside Leadership Conference

Foundations:
Chip Burke, Grable Foundation
Janet Sarbaugh, Heinz Endowments

Tenant:
Larry Berger, SLB Radio
JuWanda Thurmond, Youth Alive
Judy Horgan, Child Watch & former Board member
Joe Wos, ToonSeum
Headstart Program – Pittsburgh Public School District
Cynthia Krappweis, Reading Is FUNdamental

Project Description

Photo: Albert Vecerka/Esto

The Children's Museum is located on Pittsburgh's Northside, only a short walk over the Roberto Clemente Bridge from downtown. But while the distance is small, the physical and symbolic barriers are significant. The Northside has rarely been seen as an important destination by most city residents, and the area of the Children's Museum is separated from downtown by the Allegheny River, a dark interstate highway underpass, and the imposing concrete mass of the 1960s Allegheny Center mall.

There are several intersecting histories that created the physical and social context within which the Children's Museum operates– the demise of Allegheny City/Northside Pittsburgh; the mid-twentieth century attempts to revive this area as part of urban renewal efforts; and the late twentieth century collapse of the industrial economy of Pittsburgh.

Most outsiders, and many local citizens, are unaware that until the beginning of the twentieth century the neighborhoods on the Northside of the Allegheny River made up the independent municipality of Allegheny City, which was about one-third the size of Pittsburgh. For years, the citizens of Allegheny City resisted the incorporation of their city into Pittsburgh until, in 1907, against its will and with the help of legislative sleight of hand, Allegheny City was merged into Pittsburgh. In the transition, the area lost status,

identity, and power. Its official identify was largely erased as wards were renumbered, political lines redrawn and streets renamed, and it became known as the Northside. Allegheny Square, the heart of the old municipality, contained a number of significant public buildings including the Old Post Office, City Hall, a public marketplace, Diamond Park (town square), and the first Carnegie Free Library. Citizens in that area argue that the city's largess rarely came their way. As the twentieth century progressed, in spite of pockets of gentrification and development, the area increasingly became known as a low-income and crime-ridden set of ethnic neighborhoods.

In the 1960s the center of old Allegheny City was considered blighted and was thought to be in need of urban renewal. During this period the heart of old Allegheny City was altered when, in "one of the first Radiant City experiments,…(the Urban Renewal Authority) replaced 518 old buildings with apartments, homes, office buildings and a shopping mall known as Allegheny Center."[1] Allegheny Center, the commercial portion of which sits adjacent to the Children's Museum, between the museum and downtown, is now generally considered a failed project, and not just by those who mourn the loss of significant historic structures. The Allegheny Center commercial area has seen diminishing commercial traffic until, in recent years, it finally closed as a retail site. It is currently occupied by office workers with vast amounts of office space, sitting vacant.

The Northside was thus left without an active and thriving center. It is a loose conglomeration of fourteen communities many of which have neighborhood organizations, although these organizations have not been viewed as effective in representing the communities. The Northside developed a reputation for blight and crime, and most residents from other sections of Pittsburgh stayed away. With the depopulation of the city after the loss of the steel industry (see below), the Northside also lost businesses and buildings. One former city official lives in a lovely nineteenth century house on one of the hills surrounding downtown. He notes it used to be five houses from the corner, but now there is no house between him and the corner. The biggest employer in the area is Allegheny General Hospital, which is slowly recovering from its 1998 bankruptcy filing — the largest non-profit bankruptcy in U.S. history. "Now," a Children's Museum board member said, "we are the driver" of change in this neighborhood.

The other critical piece of history that sets the context for the Children's Museum is the steep economic decline of the city and region. Pittsburgh is in some ways the poster child for the urban impact of post war de-industrialization in the United States. For most of the late nineteenth and early to mid twentieth centuries,

[1] *The story of urban renewal In East Liberty and elsewhere, Pittsburgh's dominant public policy tool didn't work out as planned Sunday, May 21, 2000 By Dan Fitzpatrick, Post-Gazette Staff Writer*

Left: *Allegheny Center*
Right: *Northside neighborhood street.*

Pittsburgh was a vibrant and economically successful industrial city, relying first on its local veins of ore and later on its gigantic steel mills that employed hundreds of thousands of workers and kept its economy going. After World War II, however, and for a variety of local, national, and global reasons, the steel companies went into decline. In the 1980s, almost all of them closed, resulting in massive layoffs and devastation of the local economy.

The closing of steel mills and other related businesses led to loss of capital and population not just in the city proper but in the entire region, with the concomitant loss of tax base. The city's population dropped by almost half between 1960 and 2000, and population in the metropolitan area fell slightly during that same period. Unlike other older eastern cities that lost population, it was not just the result of people fleeing to the suburbs (although Pittsburgh saw its share of "white flight") but in many cases of people choosing to leave the area entirely.

YEAR	CITY POPULATION	CITY RANK [3]	POPULATION OF THE URBANIZED AREA [4]
1950	676,806	12	1,533,000
1960	604,332	16	1,804,000
1970	540,025	24	1,846,000
1980	423,938	30	1,810,000
1990	369,879	40	1,678,000
2000	334,563	51	1,753,000

The damage to the city was, of course, traumatic. With 300,000 fewer residents by the turn of the twenty-first century, many neighborhoods, especially in areas like the Northside, were littered with abandoned buildings and vacant lots, and suffered from the loss of local businesses. As the tax base eroded, the city lost its ability to respond to local problems and significantly downsized the government workforce. The entire staff of the community development agency, for example, was let go when the city fell into deep financial distress and, in 2004, entered a state-organized financial recovery plan.

THE MUSEUM SETTING

The story of the development of the Museum is impressive in part because it happened in a city where many of the structures that would normally support urban redevelopment were absent. First, the City of Pittsburgh could offer little help. It had little money to support development and had lost much of its expertise. As a result the action of urban agencies played a very small role in the story of the museum.

Second, there was no young and growing population in the immediate area and in the region, and, in spite of some signs of turnaround and growth, Pittsburgh's economy was not yet thriving. A board member noted that there was essentially no free market working in the Northside to support the beginnings of the Children's Museum Project. "The economy didn't play a role–nobody could have done this but us." Although many people in the city talk about positive trends, the loss of population has, at best, stabilized. In addition, Pittsburgh's population demographic is one of the oldest of any major city in United States. This demographic picture, however, is changing, and forecasts suggest that Pittsburgh will become noticeably younger in a few years.

The third missing element in the Children's Museum setting was the lack of effective vocal community organizations. While a number of Northside communities have their own organizations and CDCs, and there is even a coalition of organizations in the Northside Leadership Conference, none had taken the lead in organizing development and change in this central space or created an effective presence in the area.

In spite of these problems, Pittsburgh has many strengths and there are significant community assets available to the Children's Museum in addressing its future and the neighborhood's redevelopment. The first and foremost is a remnant of Pittsburgh's days as an industrial giant – the city is blessed with a number of nonprofit charitable

Photo: Albert Vecerka/Esto

organizations which have very large endowments and which make most of their grants within the Pittsburgh metropolitan area. Moreover, many of these organizations are civic-minded, aware that there is a critical role for them in Pittsburgh, and are willing to collaborate with each other to make change happen. For an organization like the Children's Museum, working with these foundations in lieu of government agencies has its advantages, particularly in the ability to move quickly in response to unexpected opportunities.

In addition, Pittsburgh is home to a number of excellent educational organizations, including the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University, which possess both expertise and interest in supporting the endeavors of the museum in exhibit design and research on use and outcomes.

Aerial view of Children's Museum of Pittsburgh.

There also appears to be a base for the emergence of a stronger and more involved community. Although fractionalized in the past, many of the separate communities in the Northside have solid, and in some cases, architecturally interesting building stock. They are also internally cohesive and have a history and stake in seeing the area revive. One local leader said that, in spite of all its problems, Northside communities have strong neighborhood identification and a solid history of volunteerism. Twenty-seven years ago, he recalled, they united to stop a hospital expansion plan and a community college proposal. The closing of the planetarium at the Buhl Building was traumatic for many Pittsburgh natives and neighborhood residents who remember using it as children and then taking their own kids there. It had served as "an emotional touch-stone" for the area. As such, Buhl represented an iconic site that served as a rallying point for community involvement. In addition, although it has not been assertive in the past, the Northside Leadership Conference is showing signs of claiming its place as representative of local residents in the development process.

MUSEUM FOUNDING AND GROWTH

In some ways it is odd that a very small, specialized cultural organization that started only a few decades ago has become the area's prime mover in addressing a very large set of urban issues on the Northside. The Pittsburgh Children's Museum (the named changed to the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh to emphasize its focus on the child over the place) was founded by the Junior League of Pittsburgh. It opened its doors in June 1983 in 5000 square feet of space in the basement of the Old Post Office (OPO), one of the few remaining historic buildings in Allegheny Center that survived urban renewal along with the Buhl Planetarium, and the first Carnegie Free Library and Theater.

The museum quickly expanded and grew to take over all four floors of the 20,000 square-foot Old Post Office building, which was given to them by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation in 1991. Even after a major renovation was completed in 1998, the growth in attendance outstripped the space available. A formative event in its history was the development of an exhibit relating to the children's television show *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. Fred Rogers, the star and producer of the TV show, was a Pittsburgh native and was very interested in working with the museum. Children's Museum Executive Director Jane Werner still connects some of the museum's success and basic philosophy to early discussions with Rogers.

Left: *Old Post Office.*
Right: *Buhl Planetarium.*

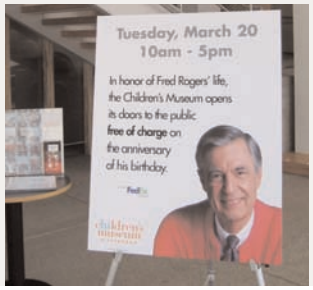
In 1998, the Children's Museum went to the Grable Foundation to ask for $80,000 to plan and create a prototype for the Rogers exhibit. In response, the foundation urged them to increase their request to $840,000, in order to create two traveling exhibits for the benefit of its audience and for publicity, but more importantly for the revenue the traveling exhibit would generate that could, in turn, support other museum activities.

The *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* exhibit was a great success. The museum had 86,000 visitors in six months, which exceeded attendance for the entire previous year. As a traveling exhibit, it generated almost $500,000 in revenue, which became the basis for an endowment. This success convinced the board and executive director that additional expansion was necessary and even higher attendance was possible. At this point, the Board of Directors met to discuss how expansion might go forward. Although there was discussion about moving out of the blighted area, once the decision was made to stay, grow, and build in that space, the commitment to support and help develop the neighborhood intensified.

It was clear that the long-term success of the museum would depend in part on being connected with a neighborhood that was itself an attraction, or least was not a negative factor in the decision of people from other parts of the city and suburbs to come and visit. In 1999 the Northside was clearly in decline, losing businesses while watching critical cultural institutions leave (such as the Public Theatre and planetarium). Thus, as plans developed for CMP to grow beyond the Old Post Office to the Buhl Planetarium and the space in between, the executive director and her board increasingly looked at ways to address problems in the neighboring blocks. Those who were part of the early discussions note that, for Jane Werner, the potential of using the Children's Museum as a linchpin for improvement in the broader area was always a consideration.

It should be noted that the planetarium building was not simply available for the taking. There were others looking at the building, including for-profit operations, and the city was initially noncommittal. Werner and the board were convinced that if they did not move quickly to take over the planetarium, it might well be used in another way or possibly even demolished[2].

In 1999 a $300,000 grant from the Heinz Endowment supported a feasibility study of fundraising and a market analysis, and helped



[2] *http://www.post-gazette.com/regionstate/20000906children6.asp*

the museum to create a professional business plan for an expanded institution. The business plan projected attendance that would peak at 180,000, declining and leveling off at about 150,000 per year (actual attendance has significantly exceeded these predictions and has surged past 210,000 per year).

The museum organized and hosted two charettes (in 2000 and 2001) about needs and possibilities for an expanded facility, followed by a design competition supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and Benedum Foundation. They ran a national search for an architect because "kids deserve the best." In seeking architecture firms for the competition, Werner noted that they wanted to avoid star architects and instead focused on small, mostly female and minority firms with reputations for creativity. They interviewed two dozen such firms and invited six to participate.

The NEA grant had added benefits in that, in somewhat provincial Pittsburgh, it provided the imprimatur of official approval for the process, which helped the museum to go forward and raise significant additional funds. The competition itself also served to generate local buzz.

As the museum expanded and looked to create a new building connecting the two historic properties its perspective broadened. It began to see its growth as a catalyst for change in the surrounding neighborhood — the old downtown of Allegheny City. Although the neighborhood, as described above, had been significantly damaged by neglect and ill-conceived renewal, and was widely viewed as poor and unattractive, it contained within a several-square-mile area some significant cultural resources. These included the Andy Warhol Museum, The Mattress Factory, The National Aviary, the Carnegie Library (CMP's next door neighbor), The New Hazlett Theatre, the Carnegie Science Center, and two new ballparks. The organizing concept was to find a way to connect these institutions conceptually and physically as a focal point of the revival of the Northside. This loose conglomeration of Northside cultural sites came to be called the Family District, and later the "Charm Bracelet Project." This idea became the basis of the second NEA-sponsored design competition, in which four designers were invited to generate ideas for the broader urban area (*see "Design"*).

Buhl Planetarium detail.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM PHILOSOPHY

The Museum's mission is "to nurture children's innate joy, creativity, and curiosity…provide developmentally appropriate exhibits, programs, and opportunities for play both inside and outside the museum... serve as a resource for families and build meaningful partnerships with schools and community groups." This involves creating an educational resource by using exhibits and programs to present learning opportunities in attractive, non-didactic, non-threatening ways. The Museum's goal is to provide opportunities for "imagination and discovery" while taking children and their families seriously ("we don't do cute"). They see the museum as an art and cultural institution as well as an educational one.

The Children's Museum core values are reflected throughout the facility, in its exhibits and its programs as well as in the design of the museum itself. The focus is on family and child centered development, collaboration, sustainability, good design, cost effective operation, and research as a basis for continuous improvement.

Werner, who has served as Executive Director throughout the design and expansion process, has worked in several large museums including, Philadelphia's Franklin Institute, as director of exhibits, and Carnegie Science Center, where she had experience with large-scale interactive exhibits. She began with the Children's Museum as Program and Exhibit Director, and had hands-on experience creating and assessing prototypes for new exhibits.

One of the key concepts of CMP is that kids should play with "real stuff." The museum therefore puts thirteen museum educators on the floor at all times to run the museum and supervise children's interaction with exhibits and materials. (Interaction between staff and visitors is very important to the museum experience.) The museum tries, as much as possible, to avoid exhibits that focus on computer and video screens in favor of "real" experiences. Kids may use real tools, and they have the opportunity to get messy with art material and water.

One of the few computer screen experiences available in the museum is a commissioned interactive art piece called "Text Rain," by Camille Utterback and Romy Achituv, in which visitors can use the video image of their hands to catch and move letters as they float down the screen, providing an alluring way for young children to directly interact with and manipulate letters and words.

Left: *Hands-on display.*
Right: *Museum Director, Jane Werner.*

An advantage of "real stuff," the museum staff points out, is that it is more attractive to older audiences and not just children. A goal of the museum (and the new design) was to create space and exhibits that involved families and children together in the experiences and exhibits. The "real stuff" theme is reflected in the titles and content of many of their spaces – the Studio (work with paint, papermaking, silk screening, etc.); the Workshop (bang away with hammer, nails, etc.); the Garage (work on a real car); the Theater (work with lighting, stage craft); the Attic (experience memorabilia such as old clothes, photos, etc., as history lessons); the Backyard (with plants, water, outdoor activities). Waterplay is unusual in encouraging what other museums would consider to be too messy — playing with and in large pools of water, such as building and sailing boats, creating fountains, etc. Children and parents are supplied with rain coats, boots, and a large bank of hot air dryers to minimize the mess.

PARTNERS & PROGRAMS

Organizations using the museum's "incubator" space were identified as partners in collaborative projects and include: Child Watch (an organization that works with kids who are in the court system), Head Start Pre-K Classrooms (Pittsburgh Public Schools), Reading is FUNdamental (RIF), the Saturday Light Brigade (a radio show that broadcasts from the facility), UPCLOSE (University of Pittsburgh Center for Learning in Out of School Environments), and ToonSeum (a new museum celebrating the art of cartooning). Collaborations outside the building include the New HazlettTheater, the Carnegie Libraries of Pittsburgh, Lydia's Place, Point Park University, Three Rivers Art Festival, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* sweater drive, and a variety of museum programs.

The idea of having partners in incubator space has a dual purpose. First it is meant to provide support for these fledgling organizations by offering affordable space and the opportunity for collaboration. At the same time the incubator space supports the Museum

Water Play exhibit.

Text Rain exhibit.

through rental income. More central to the mission, though, is the idea that through these partnerships, children can be better served. Many children's museums "try to do it all" on their own and in so doing stretch their own resources and get involved in areas beyond their core expertise. At the Children's Museum, they "play to their strength," and instead of putting on theatrical productions, they have partnered with the nearby New Hazlett Theater. Rather than engaging solely in child advocacy, they work with Child Watch, which specializes in that area. Instead of developing their own reading program, they support the work of Reading is FUNdamental, and instead of creating a school, they provide space and support to Head Start, which runs pre-kindergarten classes in the museum for the Pittsburgh Public School system. (The Children's Museum gives each parent of children in the program free annual memberships to the museum.) In that way, they touch on a broad variety of key developmental areas by supporting partners who have the same basic core missions (to serve kids and families) and, in the end, do a better and more effective job than if they had ventured out to create these programs alone.

The museum also believes in research, testing, and prototyping to improve the quality of exhibits and the learning they provide – in part as an outgrowth of Werner's own background and experience in prototyping and exhibit design. They work in partnership with researchers from the University of Pittsburgh to conduct research on learning in informal settings as feedback into the design process, and try out exhibits which may be altered depending upon their success.

Less discussed is the role of art in the design and operation of the museum. Art, however, does play an important role throughout the museum. First, art is quite literally an integral part of the facility, as the Ned Kahn sculpture "Articulated Cloud" encompasses much of the façade of the new structure (see "Design"). In addition, art is central to the exhibit philosophy – as something kids should see, touch, and learn from. This shows in two ways. First, newly commissioned art pieces are dispersed throughout the facility, usually moving, kinetic touchable, and implicitly or explicitly demonstrating a principle of physics. The facility budget, tight as it was, included $500,000 for art, not including the exterior wind sculpture. Finally, older art works also dot the space – there are 1,125 artifacts, including pieces by Warhol, Haring, an important puppet and doll collection, original puppets from the Fred Rogers' television show, and many others, as well as framed pieces of stained glass and giant clocks salvaged from demolished historic buildings and supplied by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. In many cases these are available to kids and are often touchable, not separated at a distance in glass cases as one might expect. They thus become an integral part of the museum experience.

The New Hazlett Theater, located adjacent to the Children's Museum, shows how the museum has taken advantage of a potential crisis to create an opportunity to forward its agenda. The Carnegie Free Library and Music Hall facility (commissioned by Andrew Carnegie in 1889) is two buildings joined around a courtyard. It served as a home to the Allegheny Branch of the Carnegie Library and the Pittsburgh Public Theater. In 1999, the PPT moved to downtown Pittsburgh and the theater half of the building was left dark. The Children's Museum, working with the Andy Warhol Museum, began a fundraising project that saved and restored the site, and created a new non-profit to run the theater. Today the New Hazlett Theater presents a variety of theatrical productions and is home to a number of performing groups. An historic space that might have been vacant now functions as a central part of the plan for the Charm Bracelet Project and is directly connected, via a pedestrian pathway, to the museum.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning and design process for the Children's Museum has been a unique and imaginative one. First, it involved a highly participatory and collaborative process from the start, using charettes and community meetings at several points to integrate ideas of various players and stakeholders, generate excitement, and to familiarize the community with the ideas being considered. Design competitions

were also used to generate interest and buzz and to crystallize ideas and values surrounding museum growth and expansion. It is interesting to note that even though the primary focus of design was the Museum's "real stuff" program, sustainability and preservation also played an integral part of early discussions.

In 1998 CMP was renovated to include the entirety of the Old Post Office (then considered a stretch for the institution whose annual budget was about $1 million). The resulting rise in attendance, demonstrated to the museum's administration and board that the right setting could attract significant numbers of families. It also showed that fundraising for such endeavors could be successful. As the Children's Museum quickly filled and almost as quickly outgrew its renovated space, Werner began to look around for possibilities for more significant expansion. Proposals considered expanding out over the back parking lot of the Old Post Office, but Arthur Zeigler, the doyen of Pittsburgh preservationists, convinced them to look to the neighboring Buhl building, recently vacated when

Left: *Sculpture inside CMP.*
Right: *New Hazlett Theater.*

the planetarium exhibits moved to Carnegie Science Center. Buhl was not only immediately adjacent to the museum, but was also an icon of Pittsburgh history. Many area residents remember going to the planetarium as children, and the building was a beloved part of their childhood experience.

The Heinz Endowments provided a grant of $300,000 to conduct a market analysis, create an architectural feasibility study, develop a fund raising plan and produce a business plan for the proposed expansion. CMP used these funds to run charettes with varieties of stakeholder groups to discuss needs and options for the new space. The planning process and the resulting studies convinced the board that the expansion was feasible.

All in all, the expansion involved one year of planning, three years of design and fund raising, and one year of construction. The challenges of designing for a site made up of two historic buildings from different eras, separated by a city street led to submission for an NEA grant for funds to support a design competition to explore options for linkages. Werner identified 24 qualified firms, staying away from "star-architects" in favor of a small, creative, women and minority firms that would be more likely to attend to the Museum's values and needs. Phone discussion and subsequent requests for qualifications from each firm helped Ms. Werner and the local design committee select six firms who were invited to compete. Werner notes that this became a competition for ideas, based on compatibility of values and approaches to families and learning, and not specific design ideas. A national jury of 9 professionals recommended Koning Eizenberg as a firm that "really got us."

Werner noted that the NEA competition had other benefits besides allowing for an extended competition. The NEA competition "gave us a stamp of approval" and helped raise money. The federal grant provided credibility within the local community and created a buzz about what was going to happen at that site. The original concept as laid out in the NEA proposal included creating a greenway to serve as connector to the Carnegie Library and a community park in the sunken front plaza that was a product of the earlier urban renewal. These features, though, were put aside and have become a central part of the next design effort, which will have a more external focus.

Artifacts from Northside building, now located in CMP parking lot.

The design program that emerged from charettes and extended discussions called for a "warm and welcoming" facility that should be open to the community and provide opportunities for life long learning. The facility should emphasize shared family experience – encouraging the whole family group to be involved in the exhibit rather than parents watching children interact with a display. The program emphasized a setting and exhibits to encourage curiosity and open exploration – they wanted to limit the directiveness of the floorplan, in that there should be no wrong direction to walk and no prescribed order of exhibits. The museum experience should be an informal exploration, not prescriptive and didactic learning. Exhibits offer interaction with real cars, shop tools, water, and craft materials and tools. Throughout the exhibit design, quality (both aesthetic and function) is key since "kids deserve the best" and "we are only going to do one …and we want it to be the best."

Photo: Albert Vecerka/Esto

DESIGN

The architects represent the design of this facility with a metaphor from an old Chinese proverb of giving kids "roots and wings." The space is rooted in the historic setting and soars in the new modern addition. It also roots children in an open, visible, and safe space, but allows them independence to move through and interact with "real stuff" throughout the facility. The new contemporary steel and glass structure is sandwiched between (and serves as a counterpoint and connector to) the Old Post Office, with its late nineteenth century Italian Renaissance style and the Buhl Planetarium's early twentieth century "art deco design (that) mixes classical architectural form with allegorical sculpture in a forward-looking streamlined aesthetic." The three storey entry of the new building opens to a large, friendly public space which contains the entry and welcoming area, as well as exhibit and meeting space. The entry is approached through a covered porch with a swing, providing an intimate, almost residential feel.

The use of light, color, materials, and art create museum space that is open, warm, and interesting. Visual access across spaces is intended to entice and promote curiosity (and child safety) without being overwhelming in level of stimuli. The long entry hall allows children and parents to orient themselves to the facility and see where they want to go. Exhibits are intended to be used in both long and slow interactions.

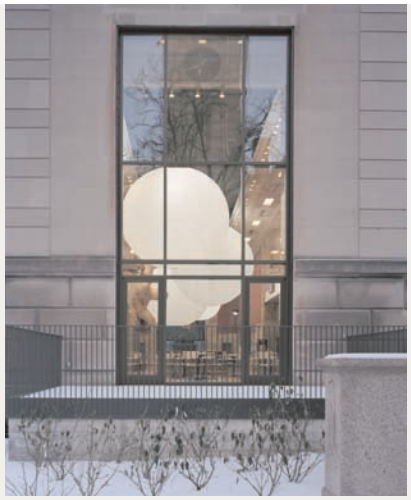


Photo: Albert Vecerka/Esto

The older buildings serve multiple uses – the Old Post Office holds offices and several exhibits, including a "kid climber" made up of ropes and nets that let kids safely and independently climb nearly to the dome (recently taken down to be replaced with a more accessible version). The Buhl building has a café, theatre, and display space. The historic integrity is generally maintained and some features are easily visible from the inside through the large openings. A large window was punched into the north wall of the Buhl building for interior light as well as a view of the Carnegie Library.

Preservation was always part of the museum's goals, and became integral in the design process. First, preservation represents sustainability in the recycling and reuse of previous structures. Second, the iconic buildings are important symbols of the past for this historic community and evoke positive memories in many residents, including those who grew up in other sections of the city. Finally, the Post Office and planetarium add variation of style, texture, and materials to the site.

Art is considered important and integral to the design, as demonstrated in several ways. First, and most obvious, is the signature sculpture "Articulated Cloud" by Ned Kahn (2003 MacArthur Foundation "Genius" award winner) that is integral to the building's façade. The original Koning Eizenberg design was for a polycarbonate "folded doubleskin translucent polygal structure" (a "white lantern folded like a Noguchi lamp"), but this design was dropped because it was too costly for the available budget.

The final design was the result of a close working relationship between architects and artist that resulted in a façade which is a kinetic sculpture. The surface is covered with thousands of five-inch acrylic flaps or squares, hinged at the top, that are attractive when still but mesmerizing on a windy day when they become a soft, wavy mass, visible from inside through windows, but also filtering moving light into the interior. It is "intended to suggest that the building has been enveloped by a digitized cloud."[3] The internal lighting and transparent/translucent skin allows the building to emit a bright but gentle lantern-like glow brightening Allegheny Square at night, and is intended to serve as an actual and metaphorical beacon in the Northside neighborhood.

Left: *Looking into CMP through new window.*
Right: *Play structure in Old Post Office lobby.*

[3] *http://nedkahn.com/wind.html*

GREEN ARCHITECTURE

"Green" design was not the prime design directive, but was rather a natural and basic part of the program evolving from the core value of supporting sustainability. The Children's Museum sought designers with interest and experience in green design and brought in an advisor – Rebecca Flora – from the Green Building Alliance. In the end CMP became the largest U.S. children's museum with a LEED Silver designation, although they emphasize that the rating was not the goal. Rather, Werner and Flora said the focus was on creating sustainable design where it made sense and fit the museum's mission. Rather than trying to maximize LEED points, "we looked for the right points," i.e., those that supported the museum's mission and setting.

In that sense, less emphasis was placed on using green design to save money – by reducing electrical costs, for instance — than providing a healthy environment for kids, by using non-toxic materials, and bringing large amounts of daylight into the facility. In addition, the museum purchases energy from renewable sources, has dual-flush toilets (which required a variance in Pittsburgh's plumbing code that will make it easier for other new spaces to adapt this water-saving feature), no-irrigation landscaping, and on-site photovoltaic panels. They also worked with contractors to recycle building materials and influenced the city to create a policy that now promotes recycling of all building materials. Flora notes that the green aspects of the design were not very expensive since they were integral to the design from the start, adding as little as 3% to building costs, with some compensating (though as yet uncalculated) return on operating expenses. Green design of the building became an exhibit, with many sustainable aspects of the facility on display for touching, viewing, and discussion.

The most salient green features of the Children's Museum:

1. The Museum developed an innovative program where "items of value" (things such as marble panels, doors, light fixtures etc.) were salvaged from the existing historic buildings (diverted from landfills) and made available to

Wind sculpture and detail of plastic flap.

the community at large through a third-party nonprofit organization. This promotes conservation through the reuse of building materials.

2. The Museum purchases 100% of its electrical power from renewable sources (wind, hydro electric) and owns a 3 kwh photo voltaic system.
3. The expansion was built within close proximity to public transportation. Provisions were made for bicycle parking and locker rooms with a shower for staff.
4. The expansion utilizes dual-flush toilets, low flow urinals and aerators at all faucets and no irrigation in the landscape, thus reducing water use.
5. The mechanical systems are fully commissioned — all systems are tested and synced up, monitored and controlled with a digital automatic system. The museum has no CFCs in the mechanical equipment. The building's energy is optimized to perform at approximately 15% better than a base case of similar characteristics.
6. The Museum has walk-off mats and special controls in the plumbing at janitor closets to control pollutants being tracked through the facility.
7. CMP has maintained 100% of the existing building shell and more than 50% of the non-shell (interior walls and ceilings). The museum diverted over 60% of construction waste to recycling companies.
8. CMP is using building materials that use high quantities of recycled products and are locally manufactured and/or locally harvested.
9. The Indoor Air Quality meets the industry standards for healthy environments, there is no smoking in the facility, and the Museum monitors carbon dioxide emissions. Also, the Museum can permanently monitor the thermal comfort levels to insure that they comply with industry standards for temperature and humidity levels.
10. Materials and Products: All adhesives, sealants, paints, carpets, and composite wood are certified low-emitting — that is, they are formaldehyde free and have low volatile organic compounds, thus reducing off-gassing to near-zero levels. A significant quantity of the wood used on the project is certified — that is, it came from forests that are managed in a sustainable fashion.
11. CMP has a white roof that minimizes "heat islands".
12. CMP has identified a specific area in the facility for the collection and storage of recyclables. The Museum has recycle programs for office materials, the cafe etc.
13. CMP collaborated with the Green Building Alliance of Pittsburgh and Conservation Consultants, Inc. to develop new educational programs for visitors based on the LEED process and building features.

14. As a result of the LEED effort, the CMP now uses cleaning products that utilize a variety of measures towards providing ecologically sound, environmentally preferable, non-toxic products, as well as a specially formulated and non-toxic ice melter.

FUTURE PLANS – CMP AS CHANGE AGENT

The original NEA proposal for the 2000 grant suggested that the expansion process would address exterior space surrounding the buildings, including the sunken plaza south of the Buhl Building and a greenway connecting the site to the Carnegie Library. The final scope of that effort, however, was limited to the two older buildings and the new construction. The vision of impacting the neighborhood around the museum, however, never changed, and in fact it has expanded. The successful museum expansion provided a model for "culturally led development within a distressed neighborhood". With the Museum firmly established, respected, and successful in its new expanded quarters, and with over 230,000 people passing through the turnstiles yearly, the Museum became a credible change agent for the ongoing revitalization of Allegheny Square and the Northside.

CMP's larger vision is focused on taking the existing cultural resources in the area and creating physical, programmatic, and symbolic connections so that they would function as a unified cultural district. This plan was at first called the "Family District" and later became the "Charm Bracelet Project," seen as a more inclusive term with the cultural sites being the "charms" and the connections providing the bracelet. The enhancement of pedestrian connections among nearby cultural institutions is made easier by the fact that several of them, including the Children's Museum, are located within or adjacent to The Commons, a long greensward with mature trees and meadows that connect many of the different cultural venues. The other local cultural attractions include, in addition to CMP, the National Aviary (currently undergoing a major expansion), the Mattress Factory (museum of contemporary installation art), the Carnegie Library (now emptied after a lightning strike and fire), the Carnegie Science Center, the New Hazlett Theater, the Andy Warhol Museum, Artists Image Resource, and the baseball and football stadia on the river, all within a few blocks of the Museum. The presumption is that a cultural district would have the critical mass of interest and opportunities to attract more visitors from further distances who would spend long periods of time, and presumably more disposable income, in the area. CMP is the creator, leader, and manager of this process.

Left: *Donor Wall in Main Lobby.*
Right: *Detail of Charm Bracelet exhibit.*

"(The Charm Bracelet) is a collective enterprise led by cultural institutions seeking to strengthen district connectivity, promote collaborative action among stakeholders and city agencies and the charms, and leverages the assets of its participating institutions to generate meaningful and innovative community change. It is organic and evolving. Ultimately the intent is to generate innovative solutions to the challenges created by local government devolution and neighborhood fragmentation."

A local community leader notes that he and his organization were initially skeptical of the museum's expansion and its pretensions toward leading a community development process. The community and the museum have, however, developed a strong working relationship and trust in each other, in part because the museum demonstrated that they "respected the emotional importance of the place" with their sensitive adaptive reuse of the older buildings. The community organization now sees itself as a "willing partner" working with the museum for the benefit of the community.

The latest NEA proposal, submitted in 2005 (awarded in 2006), requested funding for a design competition to generate ideas for strengthening the linkages among these institutions. Because only half the requested funding was available, the competition model was changed by eliminating the judging, making this, instead, an extended idea-generating process (Chris Siefert noted that "the more ideas, the merrier – it was a 'collab-etition.'"). It was unique in that the invited teams represented different but complimentary design disciplines (architecture, art, graphic design, and urban planning) who came together for a joint three-day meeting on site in October, 2006 for "an immersive introduction to the site" — touring the cultural venues and neighborhood and speaking to community representatives and other stakeholders, after which they went back to their studios to develop panels representing their ideas. They were free to present programmatic, streetscape, or marketing/branding solutions for connecting these "charms."

The proposal to develop the Charm Bracelet Project/Family District plan was in four phases:

1) Program – identify existing plans of other organizations (mid-2006);
2) Competition (late 2006);
3) Exhibition and public viewing/discussion of entries in the Children's Museum (late 2006, early 2007);
4) Implementation (early to mid-2007).

In spite of changes in funding (eliminating the jury for the competition), they were largely on time, and in spring 2007 were finishing the exhibition of ideas and readying a community process to develop implementation plans. In April they received $100,000 from the Grable Foundation to hire a Charm Bracelet Program Manager and implement a demonstration project.

The design ideas from the four teams – Colab Architecture, Ithaca; Muf Architecture Art, London; Pentagram Design, New York; and Suisman Urban Design, Santa Monica – were put on display in the Children's Museum on February 13, 2007 as "raw ideas" for perusal, comment, and review by the community. "This is not a master plan," Werner noted, "but a "bunch of ideas."

The most current project emerging from the Charm Bracelet effort has been the Allegheny Square Competition, to revitalize the barren plaza in front of the museum. Six design teams engaged in a community design charette followed by a series of community meetings, and the proposals they submitted were on display in the museum lobby in the fall of 2007. The winning design, by Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture of San Francisco, tries to reconnect the space to the city by allowing streets that had been cut off to run adjacent to the plaza, and emphasizing the relationship with the adjoining cultural institutions and neighborhoods, through design elements and views. Werner, though, sees this design as a beginning, "a baseline," to spark further conversations with the community that will lead to a final plan.

FINANCES

The Children's Museum could not rely on local government for funds for planning and design of the facility, other than basic infrastructure on the surrounding streets. State funds, however, did come from the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program and accounted for $9 million of the $29 million raised in total. The city also gave the museum the land between the Old Post Office and Buhl, and Buhl was leased for $1 per year for 29 years from the city. Other than funds from NEA grants for design competitions (which required 50/50 matches), remaining funding for the institution has come

The winning designer's conceptual plan from the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh's Allegheny Square Park Design Competition.

from local non-profit foundations, corporations, and individuals. The museum's relationship with the foundations goes back to its inception 25 years ago when it was helped by a $5,000 grant from the Hillman Foundation, and continued to the $29 million raised for construction of the expanded facility – $6 million of which was used to support the museum's endowment. The endowment helps programs remain sustainable and is an important part of early operating income. Construction was supported by a bridge loan of $12 million generated by six-year bonds. These were retired early — after only two years — saving the institution $350,000 in interest. There was 100% participation by the Children's Museum board in the fundraising campaign.

The Museum supports its operation from several primary sources. Approximately 60% to 70% of its income comes from ongoing revenue sources (entry fees, rental fees, café and shop sales). This is considered high for such institutions and is considerably better than income projections, which had estimated only 50% earned income at this point in time. Additional income comes from grants, annual giving, and interest on endowment.

One of the Children's Museum's core values is to be efficient and cost-effective in use of resources. It has received a four-star rating from the Charity Navigator, identifying it as a non-profit with low overhead expenses and efficient use of its revenues.

CMP PROJECT BUDGET

SOURCES		
	Board	$ 2,706,328
	Individual	804,093
	Corporations	794,080
	Foundations	15,527,836
	Government	9,012,750
Total Revenues		**$ 28,845,087**
Uses		
	Construction	$ 13,140,982
	Architects/Engineers/Consultants	2,458,000
	Exhibits	2,479,780
	Art	436,457
	Programming	117,000
	Administrative	1,674,218
	Development	602,800
	Marketing	623,000
	Endowments	5,500,000
	Reserve	1,812,850
Total Expenses		**$ 28,845,087**

CMP OPERATING ACTIVITY FISCAL 2006

REVENUE		
	Unearned Income	
	Annual Campaign	$ 347,802
	Program Grants	344,311
	Operating Grants	241,000
	Fund Raisers	175,040
	Sponsorships	45,000
	Contributed Services & Equipment	366,812
Total Unearned Income		**$ 1,519,965**
	Earned Income	
	Admissions	$ 689,880
	Memberships	303,044
	In-house Programs	20,567
	Outreach	127,554
	Classes	18,747
	Birthday Parties	78,523
	Building Rental	52,751
	Retail Sales	92,102
	Exhibit Rental	109,500
	Contracted Revenue	33,041
	Stuffee Sales	1,872
	Parking	116,380
	Café	367,022
	Interest income	16,058
	Miscellaneous Income	16,727
	Partner revenue	65,990
Total Earned Income		**$ 2,109,758**
Net assets released:		
For operations		**45,000**
Endowment draw		**248,170**
Total Revenue		**$ 3,922,893**

ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

The CMP has an active and involved Board of Directors, composed of civic and business leaders, which meets six times per year. Anne Lewis, President of the Board of Directors throughout the expansion process, led the successful fundraising and initial planning effort. She is the museum's first board emeritus and is credited with much of the museum's success. Ms. Lewis hired Jane Werner as Executive Director in 1999. Together they formed a dynamic team.

Ms. Werner is acknowledged by the board, staff, and community as not just a strong leader for the institution, but as a visionary with respect to the museum's role in the community as an organizer and catalyst for change. It is largely through Ms. Werner's focus that the museum has taken on the Charm Bracelet Project and the redevelopment of Allegheny Square. She has a great deal of credibility with a previously skeptical community as someone who follows through with promises for participation and involvement in planning.

All of the participants with whom we met credit Werner not only with the museum's successes, but also with pushing forward changes in the Northside, increasing collaboration among organizations, and creating a bright outlook for the future of the museum and the neighborhood. This is not, however, a one-person organization. Werner has given a great deal of thought to managing succession when she leaves the post – down to having written instructions in

CMP OPERATING ACTIVITY FISCAL 2006		
EXPENSES		
	Personnel	$ 1,439,880
	Benefits	133,024
	Payroll tax	137,415
	Administration	9,079
	Postage	25,702
	Staff Training	7,541
	Professional Memberships	11,381
	Contracted Services	141,847
	Rent and maintenance	351,376
	Exhibit Rental	101,875
	Utilities & Services	219,465
	Telephone	5,857
	Insurance	138,781
	Printing and Publications	55,619
	Legal/Accounting	53,874
	Service Contracts	365,713
	Supplies	200,604
	Interest Expense	116
	Travel	30,784
	Cost of goods sold	214,171
	Advertising	115,038
	Miscellaneous	42,615
	Cost of Direct Benefits to Donors	103,934
Total Expenses		**$ 3,905,691**

her desk drawer about which consultants to call "if I am hit by a bus." The museum staff appears to be competent and enthusiastic at all levels of the operation.

IMPACT

The museum has made a significant impact in the immediate Northside neighborhood and the Pittsburgh cultural community, and appears poised for a much larger impact as their ongoing plans develop. As a children's museum, they have completed a successful expansion and now have 30,000 square feet of exhibition space shared among two significant historic structures connected by a contemporary glass and steel structure. The Children's Museum is clearly on the map nationally as a museum that is well known and respected by its peer institutions. It has developed a model which includes its exhibition style ("real stuff"), its organizational approach (incubation and collaboration), and its civic place (change agent) that is generating interest in the museum community. The museum also appears to have become known among young

Pittsburgh metropolitan area families as a destination. Attendance is very high and growing – up 154% from 2004 to 2006. A large proportion of users come from outside the immediate neighborhood.

The role the Museum played in the reopening of the New Hazlett Theater as a separate non-profit institution has had a significant impact on the neighborhood. Collaborating with the Andy Warhol Museum, the city and the Northside Leadership Conference, the Museum led the fundraising efforts to renovate and hire an Executive Director for the theater. The theater is now booked through 2009.

The Children's Museum has already made a significant impact on the neighborhood(s) of the Northside, and as they continue to develop the Charm Bracelet Project, the impacts will become greater. The Museum has managed to bring together a coalition of neighborhood groups and cultural institutions, supported by civic organizations and funders. Other cultural institutions report improvement in their attendance and credit much of their success to the energy from the Children's Museum and development of the Charm Bracelet Project. The nearby National Aviary, for example, has seen a significant increase in public attendance and is undergoing a $22 million expansion after which they anticipate a doubling of their current attendance of 120,000 annual visitors. The Children's Museum is clearly and without dispute the leader of a process that has people envisioning change and development in this blighted area.

Assessing Project Success

SUCCESS IN MEETING PROJECT GOALS

1. *Provide a new, architecturally distinctive and green home for the Children's Museum – a cultural center whose mission is to "provide innovative museum experiences that inspire joy, creativity, and curiosity."*

The Children's Museum is very successful in having completed an expansion process that resulted in significantly expanded, high-quality space for its exhibition and organizational goals, with a strong presence of art and a design that serves its educational philosophy and provides space for partners, while preserving two locally meaningful buildings. It has been highly successful in increasing visibility nationally and attendance locally.

2. *Leverage collaborations with other nearby cultural institutions to create a family district with improved connections between neighboring facilities, spur redevelopment, and create a new town square.*

The CMP is the clear and acknowledged leader of redevelopment in the Northside. In addition to reopening the New Hazlett Theater, they have created a symbolic and marketing connection among cultural institutions in a family district as the Charm Bracelet Project

and are on the verge of a project that may add a physical dimension to the connection. Already institutions perceive themselves as part of a larger Northside group, and public perception may also be changing.

3. *Provide incubator space for like-minded non-profits.*
The Children's Museum provides space and other support for a number of successful and competent institutions with which they partner on a range of innovative programs. It is not clear how appropriate the term "incubator" is (vs. partnership space), as most organizations appear settled in for the long haul.

4. *Provide the highest quality exhibits and programs for learning and play. "We are a partner and a resource for people who work with or on behalf of children."*
Exhibits appear to be of very high quality–not gimmicky–and largely fit the "real stuff'" model. Exhibits are educational in a non didactic way and combine learning and art. The Museum has research from UPCLOSE that supports effectiveness of their approach.

5. *Use green design to incorporate environmental awareness into the building and exhibits to foster a sense of environmental stewardship among Pittsburgh's children.*
The Children's Museum has placed an emphasis on environmental stewardship both in its building and in its exhibits. They use the building's sustainable elements as learning tools. The focus is on

healthy environments for kids (safe materials, reduced outgassing, and efficiency of resource use).

OTHER MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Reputation and Perception

The CMP is nationally known and respected and appears regularly on the cover or in articles of magazines supporting preservation, sustainable design, and museum operations. Other institutions and neighborhood leaders recognize the Children's Museum's inclusive leadership style in their ongoing decision-making processes. Local foundations are eager to provide ongoing funding and see it as a success of their past funding policies. The museum has shown an ability to attract top talent and is providing a model for other local cultural institutions.

The Children's Museum has also been instrumental in changing the identity and perception of the Northside. Once an area to be avoided, the Northside is fast becoming a much-visited venue. The museum is unquestionably the major reason for this shift, but as

arts and cultural venues play an increasingly important role in urban revitalization, its neighbor cultural institutions and the networking they are doing is also a contributing factor.

Replicability

The CMP is reputedly being used as a model nationally, in particular by the planners for the National Children's Museum in Washington, D.C., as well as other children's museums across the country. They are respected for their approach to learning, for their exhibit design, the partners program, and as a model for serving as an agent of change in the local community.

As noted above, the Children's Museum seems to be viewed in the museum community as a replicable model – certainly on the educational front and in terms of being a catalyst for neighborhood change. The museum offers an interesting model for exhibition design, one that runs against the grain of many current museums (eschewing virtual displays for real stuff and producing the design in-house through a prototyping methodology), and is a model in terms of its use of art in a children's setting. The Children's Museum has demonstrated to other cultural institutions in Pittsburgh that dramatic growth is possible. It has also inspired the local neighborhood organizations to believe that change is possible in their community and to step up to take on their share of the role.

SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Selection Committee commended CMP for excellence in all aspects of project development. The Museum builds connections among diverse groups of people; makes a positive design contribution to the local urban landscape, and provides a new model for place-making using complex collaborations among culturally oriented institutions in the area. The Committee was impressed by the leadership role CMP has played within the community, and noted that this goes beyond the purview of a children's museum. They also noted, however, that it will be important to demonstrate how this role can be institutionalized as both the museum and neighborhood leadership undergo inevitable changes.

The museum's community building effort was viewed as especially powerful in the way various players and institutions are talking for the first time, and are using their adjacency and shared missions to grow individually and as a group. In this way the Committee felt that the Museum's effort has established momentum in the area, has been innovative and & transformative, and continues to contribute to the local economy.

The Committee noted that CMP's leadership role in the community makes it different from most other children's museums in the country. They observed that many cultural institutions tend to be inward

Photo: Albert Vecerka/Esto

looking and are not usually focused on their relationships to other cultural institutions in their cities. The Museum provides a model of a cultural institution stepping into the civic arena and being more effective by taking a leadership role in the larger environment. Its efforts helped to catalyze change in ways that have resonated through the Northside. The Museum's success takes on special importance, as Pittsburgh's Northside, and Pittsburgh in general are difficult places to work, given the enormous loss of jobs and population in the previous decades.

Finally, the Committee saluted the excellent design of the museum, incorporating historic preservation of a beloved local institution with and elegant new design that is also an environmental sculpture. In considering the excellence of the design, and the preservation of two historic landmarks on the Northside of Pittsburgh, the Committee felt that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. There is something about the place that is catalyzing change."

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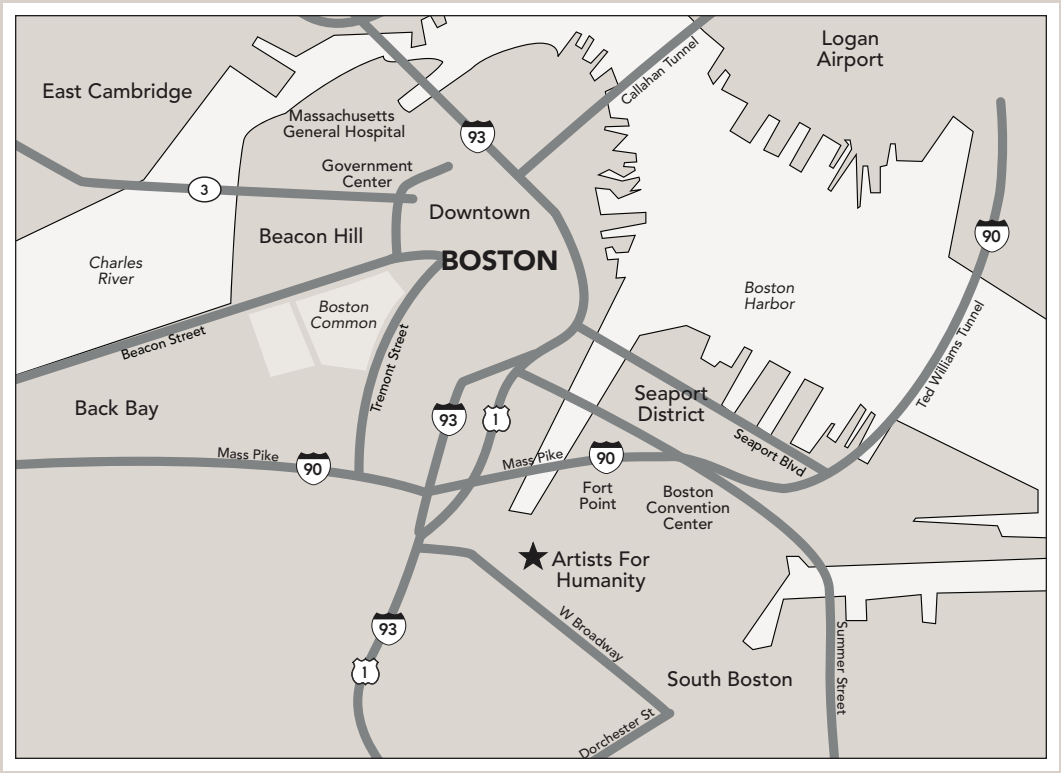
Silver Medal Winner

Artists for Humanity EpiCenter

Boston, Massachusetts


East Cambridge
Massachusetts General Hospital
Government Center
Downtown
BOSTON
Beacon Hill
Charles River
Boston Common
Beacon Street
Back Bay
Tremont Street
Mass Pike
Logan Airport
Callahan Tunnel
Boston Harbor
Ted Williams Tunnel
Seaport District
Seaport Blvd
Fort Point
Boston Convention Center
Artists For Humanity
W Broadway
South Boston
Summer Street
Dorchester St
93
3
90
1

AFH EpiCenter At-A-Glance

WHAT IS ARTISTS FOR HUMANITY (AFH) EPICENTER?

- A youth-run arts micro-enterprise dedicated to the "voice, vision and virtuosity" of urban teens;
- A program that tries to break the cycle of urban poverty through the fusing of art and enterprise;
- A 23,000-square-foot LEED Platinum building, located at the intersection of the Fort Point and South Boston neighborhoods in downtown Boston;
- A full-service art business, offering sculpture, painting, urban arts and media, silk-screening, photography, mural painting and web design;
- A 5,000-square-foot downtown gallery, available for lease for parties and events, and featuring a rotating exhibition of EpiCenter youth art.

PROJECT GOALS

- To provide art instruction with training in the marketing of art to inner-city teen artists;
- To create a learning environment characterized by respectful and supportive relationships;
- To bridge economic, racial, and social divisions by cultivating self-sufficiency through paid employment in the arts;
- To provide an employment environment characterized by high expectations and a commitment to helping teens reach their full potential;
- To give inner-city teens a voice through exhibitions, public presentations, and permanent installation of their art;
- To contribute to environmental quality and awareness by creating the first LEED Platinum building in downtown Boston;
- To make a commitment to the Fort Point artist community and to South Boston by building in this transitional area;
- To provide a safe and meaningful place where teens are respected for their contributions.

Project Chronology

October 1990 Susan Rodgerson, an established artist working in the South End area, develops the concept of a teen art program in the Boston public schools.

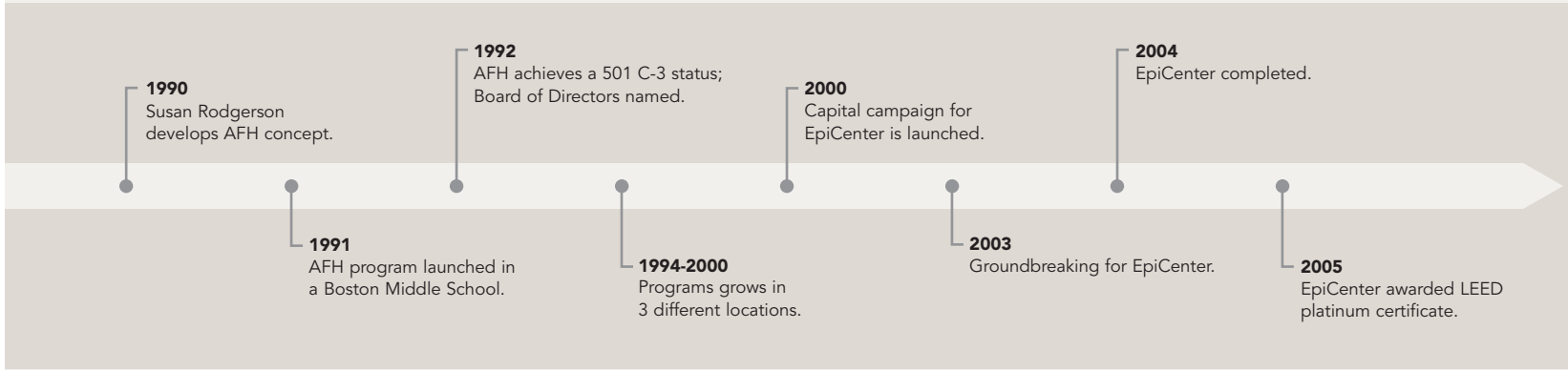
May 1991 Rodgerson initiates a teen art program at Martin Luther King Middle School (MLK) in Mattapan.

Summer 1991 Six young artists, several of whom had been in the MLK program, begin working on a large-scale collaborative painting at Rodgerson's studio.

1992 AFH is named and incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization, co-founded by Susan Rodgerson and a small group of teen artists.

1992 First AFH Board of Directors is named.

1994-2000 Program continues to grow and expands twice within the Fort Point area, into two different warehouse spaces.



2000 AFH is given notice at their third location and decides to acquire its own property.

2000 Anonymous $250,000 grant launches capital campaign.

2000-2001 AFH raises $1.3 million to acquire property and develop new building.

2001 Current site purchased.

2001 Arrowstreet selected as architect.

2002 Five planning/design workshops are held with the architect and AFH staff and students.

May 2003 Ground breaking for EpiCenter.

2003 AFH undertakes comprehensive business plan led by Community Partners Consultants, Inc.

2004 EpiCenter completed.

2005 EpiCenter awarded LEED Platinum certificate from U.S. Green Building Council.

2006 AFH completes $6.8 million capital campaign.

KEY PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEWED

AFH Staff and Board:

Susan Rodgerson, Executive/Artistic Director
Andrew Motta, Director of Operations
Jason Talbot, Co-Founder, Special Projects Director
Rob Gibbs, Co-Founder, Studio Director
David Walek, AFH Board Chair
Nick Rodrigues, Sculptor, mentor
Patrice Maye, Director of Development
Artist Mentors and young artists

Consultants:

Jim Batchelor, Architect, Arrowstreet
Mark Kelley, III, Sustainability Consultant (by phone)
John Dalzell, Boston Redevelopment Authority, Hickory Consortium
Adam Bickelman and Benny Wong, MassDevelopment (by phone)

Community:

Mayra Rodriguez Howard, South Boston Neighborhood Health Center
Dan McCole, South Boston Arts Association
Leah Bailey, Boston Globe Foundation (by phone)
Susan Silverberg, Community Partners Consultants, Inc.

Project Description

Portrait by AFH Artist Deanna Hillery.

The Artists for Humanity EpiCenter is located in South Boston, adjacent to downtown. The project sits at the junction of three neighborhoods. To the immediate south of the project is an historic residential neighborhood locally known as Southie. It is a neighborhood of about 29,000, traditionally an Irish-Catholic enclave of three-decker residential buildings and local businesses. In the "old days," according to a Southie native, "each of these houses would be occupied by three Irish families with eight to ten kids." Densities were high and Southie has a long history of neighborhood pride and loyalty. It is infamous for racial tensions, which culminated in its opposition to court-mandated bussing at South Boston High School in the 1970s.

Bounded on its east side by Boston Harbor and on its south by a major highway, Southie is isolated from other parts of the city a fact which has contributed to its cohesiveness and sense of independent identity. But Southie is changing. Parts of the neighborhood are beginning to gentrify, though the predominant character of the neighborhood remains blue-collar. A casual drive around the area reveals a considerable amount of new infill housing and rehabilitated older structures, as well as several large-scale new developments and condominiums. Southie is, however, also home to three of the nation's oldest housing projects, run by the Boston Housing Authority. These projects, once mostly white, are now racially mixed, predominantly low-income

Asian and Latino, and have had a history of high crime. Community members report growing levels of addiction to oxycontin and heroin among their youth populations.

To the north and east of AFH lie the Fort Point and Seaport districts. The Seaport district is the site of major and ongoing urban redevelopment, including the new Boston Con vention and Exhibition Center, Seaport Hotel, several office buildings, and, the new Institute for Contemporary Art. The Seaport District is also the proposed location for the new "green" city hall, advocated by Boston Mayor Thomas Menino. The Fort Point area, which also abuts AFH, is home to many historic w harf buildings, handsome t hree to four story warehouse structures, formerly used for industry and manufacturing, which are currently being converted to loft-style housing and office use. There is a large population of artists i n the area, originally drawn by the warehouse spaces and affordable rents. Four buildings, including AFH, are now artist-owned in what has become one of the largest concentrations of artists in New England.

EARLY DAYS

In 1990 Susan Rodgerson, an artist w orking in the South End neighborhood, began to consider ho w to combine her art with teaching at-risk y outh. Her interest w as not just in pro viding art training, but in art as a vehicle for breaking the cycle of poverty by

SOUTH BOSTON DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE 2000

	BOSTON	SOUTH BOSTON
Population	589,141	29,965
White	54.5%	85%
African- American	25.3%	2%
Asian	7.5%	4%
Latino	14.4%	7%
Median Income	$39,629	$40,312
Unemployment	4.6%	5.6%
Homicides	39	8

Source: South Boston Data Profile, Dept. of Neighborhood Development, Boston Redevelopment Authority, 5/1/2006

Clockwise from top left: Channel Center in South Boston, typical homes in South Boston, new and old construction in the neighborhood.

teaching young people to develop entrepreneurial skills. Rodgerson believed that "young people can provide, through their creativity, tangible services to the commercial world." She focused on at-risk teens, most of whom were receiving little or no exposure to art in the public schools and were also dealing with the pressures endemic to low-income communities: gang violence, drugs, and violent crime.

The program began when Rodgerson connected with Dr. Steven Leonard, a creative and risk-taking principal of the Martin Luther King Middle School (MLK), located near Boston's Blue Hill Avenue in the heart of warring gang territory. Rodgerson proposed a program that would teach art and introduce entrepreneurial skills. Dr. Leonard readily agreed, and with a group of about 20 students she embarked on the pilot program that would eventually become Artists for Humanity.

In teaching at MLK, Susan found that many of the teens were seriously interested in the arts, and that the art they were doing gave voice to many of the most challenging issues in their lives. When the MLK school year ended, some of the students she had met at MLK and others who had heard about the program began dropping by her studio after school. Susan welcomed them and encouraged their work. By 1992 the teen artists were beginning to sell their work informally at school events and in their neighborhoods. Rodgerson decided to develop the program and expand it into a more entrepreneurial and formalized model.

In 1992, AFH was formally designated as a 501(c)(3) corporation. From 1992 until 2004 the program was forced to leapfrog to different studio spaces to stay one building ahead of the gentrification. Susan notes that she was extremely lucky that her landlord, the Boston Wharf Company, was supportive of the program, giving her increasingly large amounts of space for a very low price. For instance, they provided AFH 35,000 square feet for $1,600 per month, thus allowing her to offer studio space to local artists in exchange for providing art instruction to the AFH teens.

During these years, Rodgerson and her teen artists and co-founders helped the program grow by seeking various kinds of support and grants, and through fledgling entrepreneurial activity. The young artists began by selling silk-screened T-shirts at school and community events, expanded to running a kiosk in downtown Boston, and began to be recognized around Boston. Andrew Motta, AFH Director of Operations, first joined Susan in 1995 to direct the silk screen studio, and run the T-shirt operation. Andrew said he was attracted by the way AFH connected kids with sales and with the corporate world. Carlo Lewis, another of the first AFH teen artists, is now a professional architect, working in Atlanta. Several other young adults who met Susan at the MLK School still support or work with AFH today.

By 1999 AFH was well established, serving about 100 teens in the warehouse space, with a staff of nine to ten mentor artists. In 2000, a turning point came for the program when Boston Wharf Co. gave AFH notice at their Fort Point location, thus alerting Rodgerson to the possibility of multiple relocations and began to consider purchasing a building for AFH. By this time, local foundations and businesses were supporting AFH through grants, and/or through the exhibition and purchase of paintings, murals, and sculpture. Clients and supporters included such well-known entities as the CARLISLE Foundation; New England Biolabs; Grand Circle Travel; the Nielsen Gallery; the Boston Foundation, and the mayor's summer jobs program, which gave AFH $12,000.

Susan Rodgerson (at right) speaking with artist mentors.

A NEW HOME

At first, the AFH Board was unsure about the wisdom of owning or building. They agreed to conduct a survey to gauge the the level of support for acquiring a building. Since some of Boston's largest foundations, many prominent local businesses, and a series of individual donors were already supporting AFH, they were approached first, and were positive.

The survey showed that a successful campaign was possible. In late 2000, AFH secured an anonymous $250,000 grant to launch the capital campaign. Other major contributors included Grand Circle Travel ($1,000,000), the CARLISLE Foundation ($250,000), and the Fireman Charitable Foundation, run by Paul Fireman, founder of Reebok. The initial goal for the capital campaign was set at $3 million.

After considering various locations, AFH chose to stay in South Boston. First, it was close to the resources of the Fort Point arts district; second, it abutted South Boston, an area where many low- and middle-income teens lived; and third, it was close to several modes of public transportation. With the help of a board member active in real estate, the current site was quickly located. Although it was then occupied by a dilapidated nineteenth century livery stable and had some site contamination issues, it did meet several important AFH goals and was purchased in 2001.

The original plan was to rehabilitate the historic building, but this proved impossible because of structural problems and cost. The decision to build a green building was never at issue for Rodgerson, a long-term environmentalist, or the young AFH artists who were committed to the concept of sustainability. The challenge was to find an architect whose values matched those of the program and who was comfortable with the inclusive design process that Susan envisioned. After considering several architects, Arrowstreet was selected both because they presented an affordable design that met the needs of AFH, and because they had on their team Mark Kelley, an environmental engineer who had a history of success in designing sustainable systems.

BUILDING GREEN

The program for the facility included studio space for young artists, a gallery space in which their work could be shown to diverse audiences, and a venue for events that would provide revenue to the program. These concepts translated into a plan for a 5,000-square-foot central gallery for events and parties. The other spaces in the building would be devoted to studios for painting, silk screen, sculpture, photography, graphic arts, and the new urban media resources that AFH was developing, as well as AFH offices.

In 2003, AFH hired a local firm, Community Partners, to develop a business plan that would also inform the design process. The plan was to identify new clients from the Boston business community; to examine how well AFH was performing with their existing clients; and to help develop a strategy for using the new green building for marketing and programming. Community Partners identified potential new clients; laid out a series of program requirements to help make the building attractive for events; and suggested ideas for showcasing the green aspects of the building

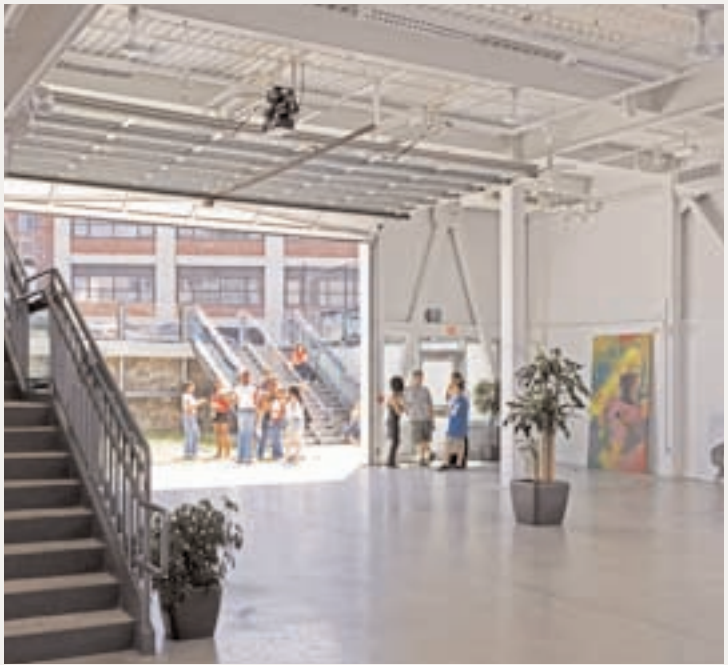


Photo: Richard MandelKorn

Gallery Interior of EpiCenter.

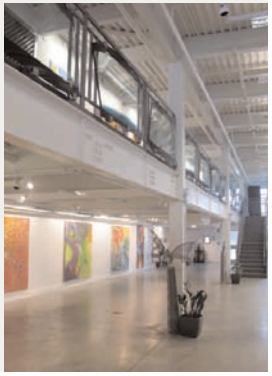
to the public at large. Many of the recommendations in the plan have already been implemented, and others are ongoing.

The site is an 11,000 square-foot-rectangle with an eight-foot height differential from the north to the south side. The program called for 23,500 square feet of building with an original budget of about $2 million, i.e. under $100/square foot. It became apparent that the initial budget was unrealistic given the relatively small size of the building and the difficulty of capturing any significant economies of scale. The budget ultimately grew to $4.3 million, ($183/square foot), still a good value, especially considering the addition of photovoltaic panels, valued at approximately $500,000.

Given the parameters of the program, architect James Batchelor, working with Rodgerson and her team, developed a participatory process whereby AFH artists and staff could be involved in the design process. As Batchelor states, "we knew the best ideas would come from users, not architects." The team, which then also included sustainability consultant Mark Kelley III, of the Hickory Consortium, organized five group meetings attended by AFH artists and staff. These meetings confirmed a strong commitment to sustainability on the part of the young artists, and also a desire to create a building which would stand out, giving AFH a visible and recognizable identity.

One of the key team players was Carlo Lewis, who started with AFH in its earliest days, first as a student, then as an artist mentor. Lewis had since completed architectural school and was hired by Arrowstreet to be on the project team. He is credited with several contributions to the design process relating to lighting design and the penetration of natural light into the building. Several other decisions involved teen input, most notably the choice to exclude air conditioning. The decision to build without air conditioning was a bold one—AFH is the first commercial building to be built in the U.S. in 25 years without air conditioning. Thoughtful siting, imaginative ventilation systems, and the sea breezes prevalent in the area have all contributed to the viability of this decision.

Given the long rectangular shape of the site, the building was designed to extend to the property lines on both the east and west, thereby precluding windows (as per the zoning code), on those



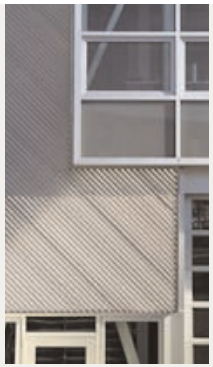
Left: *Bathroom details designed by Carlos Lewis, sculptor Nick Rodriguez and AFH artists.*
Right: *Windshield railing designed by Rodriguez; student gallery below.*

sides. Fortunately, a naturally cooled building works best with natural light on the north and south elev ations. The design, therefore, placed large expanses of glass on the north and south ends, to naturally cooling and heat the concrete slab, and to maximize the penetration of sunlight as muc h as 16 feet into the building. The floor-to-ceiling operable windows also optimized views to ward downtown, and the glass gar age door fully opens to a courty ard entry that is below-grade.

- Arrowstreet, and Mark Kelley all wanted to achieve as high a LEED rating as possible for AFH. They noted, however, that in designing a sustainable building it is essential to define sustainability in terms appropriate to the project. In this case, the green measures were designed to minimize cost and to make the green elements as visible as possible, thus showcasing the importance of sustainability to the community . (Through renewable technologies and conserv ation features, the EpiCenter has sa ved AFH $66,000 in oper ation costs eac h year, in comparison to a traditional building.) The green design is also seen as a central element in a healthier, more sustainable future for young people and their urban en vironment.

The EpiCenter is a 23,000-square-foot LEED Platinum building, which includes the following:

- A 49-volt large array of photovoltaic panels on the roof (once the largest array in Boston), generating a majority of the electricity used by the building;
- Sloping of the photovoltaic array to enhance snow runoff and sun capture;
- A heat recovery unit (HRU), which pulls fresh air into the gallery and studios;
- North/south siting of the building with no windo ws on the east and west sides, and full-height oper able, double-insulated glass doors for the north and south facades, allo wing cross-ventilation and minimizing heat gain from west facing windo ws;
- A modular gas heat system that allo ws individual modules to run separately;
- A fan-operated cooling tower which can be used for all or any combination of floors, drawing cool air in from outside and pulling warm air out of the building;
- A rainwater collection system, visible through a glass pipe in the gallery, used for on-site irrigation and storm-w ater management;
- Super-insulated walls (which can be viewed through a permanent cutout located in the gallery space);



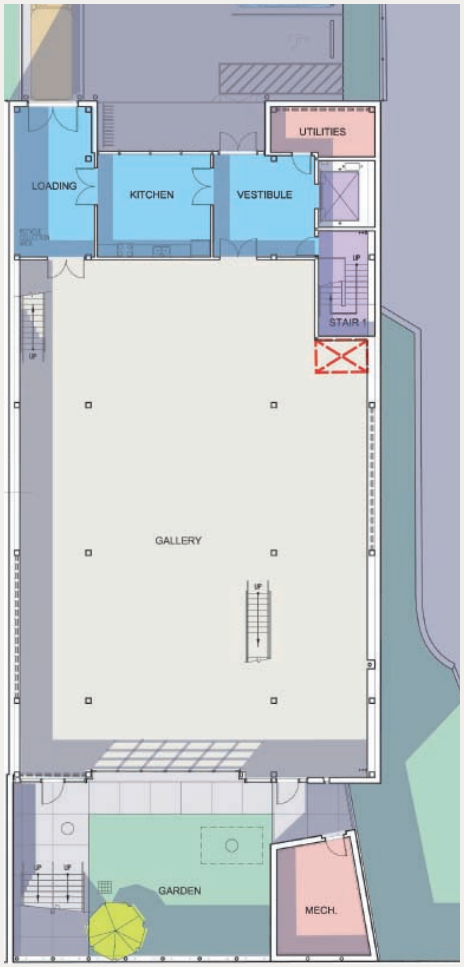
Photos: Arrowstreet

- A concrete gallery floor which that provides "thermal mass," providing passive solar heating in the winter and maintaining coolness in the summer;
- Incorporation of recycled materials in several key elements of the building, including insulation and concrete;
- Automated lighting systems that include low wattage T-8 bulbs, daylight dimming, and automatic shutoff;
- A corrugated stainless steel exterior that relates visually to surrounding industrial buildings but also provides a high degree of reflectivity and low heat gain;
- Low-flow sinks and toilets that require approximately half the standard amount of water per use;
- The use of recycled building materials.

DESIGN CONCEPT

The EpiCenter building reflects the architect's intent to relate the design to its industrial context. Consistent with its setting, the building has a straightforward form, utilizing semi-industrial materials such as concrete floors and exposed structure, in ways that enliven the space. Selected elements of the original historic building on the site were incorporated into the building, including the stone foundation, which forms the edge of the entry courtyard, and trolley rails that once crisscrossed the site and have been used in the donor wall sculpture and the structure for a future canopy over the main entrance. In the studios, the simple, transparent architecture of the building provides a light and airy space for the young artists. Architecturally, the EpiCenter is consistent with its industrial setting, but it stands out as something interesting and curious on the urban landscape. As board president David Walek states, "The new building put us on the map."

The building also incorporates the work of several young artists. Young sculptor Nick Rodrigues, who recently graduated from art school, was approached by Rodgerson to create handrails for the building. The result was the signature system of car windshields that form the entry and interior railing. Rodrigues also created the diagonal grills for the cooling fans, the donor sculpture made from trolley tracks that stands in the front courtyard, and the structure for a future overhang. The bathrooms feature sheets of corrugated metal siding integrated into sinks, and corrugated plastics used as stall doors. Toilet paper is housed in cut-off bottoms of five-gallon plastic water bottles and milled industrial parts found on site (see p.43). Nick continues his affiliation with AFH as a full-time artist mentor, leading the sculpture studio program.



Plan: Arrowstreet

The EpiCenter has received its fair share of attention from the architectural community. Some critics, like Robert Campbell, suggest that this building relates to the original intention of the modernist movement, i.e. the application of architectural skills "to solving the problems of ordinary society." The building has also received a joint award from the Boston Society and New York Society of Architects, commending the building for design excellence and sustainability. AFH also received an award from the AIA's Committee on the Environment as one of America's "Top Ten Sustainable Projects."

THEMES

The history and development of the AFH program reflects a consistent set of themes. AFH has remained committed to the idea of pairing art education and production with the sale and marketing of the work. This pairing is based on a commitment to seeing art as a viable tool for attaining financial self-sufficiency, breaking the cycle of poverty, and achieving a modicum of social justice. The parallel theme, which is reflected throughout the program and culture of AFH, is respect for each other and the environment. AFH works hard to create an environment of accountability—of young artists to each other and to their mentors; and of accountability in their relationship to the natural and built environment. This commitment is the organizing principle upon which the organization, its building, and its programs are based.

Left: *First floor plan, Arrowstreet.*
Top right: *Stair and rail designed by Nick Rodriguez.*
Top middle: *Young artist at work.*
Bottom right: *Architect James Batchelor of Arrowstreet.*

FINANCING THE EPICENTER

The financing of the EpiCenter was remarkably straightforward. AFH ran a capital campaign which raised a total of $6.8 million. The bridge funding for the building and construction process was secured through the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency, an organization that, among other things, works on behalf of non-profit entities to finance buildings that contribute to the state's economic development.

MassDevelopment issued a tax exempt bond of $2.8 million for AFH, with a fifteen-year term, which was purchased by TD Banknorth. (For bonds of this sort, the federal government forgoes tax on the interest income and it is therefore offered to the recipient at 1-2% below prime. In the case of AFH, this financing saves them about $50,000 per year in interest.)

Representatives of Mass Development stated that they had no problem supporting this particular bond issue. First, green building is a major priority for them; second, they see South Boston as an important area that would benefit from stabilization in the face of rapid gentrification; third, AFH was offering an important service to the youth of Boston. The MassDevelopment was so enthusiastic, in fact, that at the end of the process, they commissioned four major artistic works for their property at 100 Cambridge St.

EPICENTER COSTS

FEATURE/SERVICE	COST
Site purchase	$1,200,000
Construction	$4,125,930
Photovoltaic panels	$375,000
Architectural services	$260,000
Professional fees	$422,537
Pre-development testing	$81,093
Furnishings, equipment	$67,287
Studio build out	$63,977
LEED commissioning	$20,000
Financing expenses	$191,305
Total	**$6,807,129**

Source: Artists for Humanity

EPICENTER FUNDING SOURCES

SOURCE	
Foundations	$6,276,065
In Kind Support	$170,000
Individual Donors	$371,414
Total	**$6,817,479**

Source: Artists for Humanity

AFH PROGRAMS

Youth Run Micro-Enterprise Programs

Since moving into the EpiCenter building in 2005, AFH has continued using its original program model, employing inner-city teens and working with them in small groups to create and sell art. The program develops entrepreneurial skills in the young artists and requires them to participate in outreach and marketing of their products and artistic pieces. AFH now employs 120 teens in up to four-year apprenticeships, in a variety of artistic endeavors including painting, printmaking, silk-screening, sculpture, photography, graphic design, web design, and urban media.

The program is organized in a three-day-a-week schedule, with the teens coming Tuesday through Thursday from 3-6 p.m. after school. (The summer program runs five days a week, from noon until 5:30 p.m.) During those hours, teens are participating on one of two levels: as unpaid and/or drop-in participants and apprentices/employees, working on pieces for gallery exhibition, or on pieces that have been commissioned by local business and organizations. The evening hours are generally reserved for mentor artists to use the studio space for their own work.

Entering teens must go through a series of steps to demonstrate their commitment to the program. Before becoming a paid artist, each teen must take a tour of the EpiCenter and its programs—these are offered twice a month at no cost. If they are interested, teens must come back to the EpiCenter the following week at a designated time. Most kids that come for a second time are accepted into the program, unless they are either too old (over eighteen) or too young. (In general, AFH seeks to hire teens that are just beginning high school, at around fourteen years old, so they can continue with them for a full four years). Occasionally students are put on a wait list and are given the responsibility to check back about their status every 2 weeks.

Finally, before becoming a paid artist, each teen is required to work for 72 unpaid hours in the program, giving artist mentors a chance to gauge each student's degree of commitment and ability. Unpaid participants punch in and out at the office to verify their hours. The entering salary is minimum wage, and young artists get

Young artists at work.

annual raises based upon performance. In addition, older, more talented artists earn additional funds through commissions and receive 50%-80% of the sale price.

The painting studio is organized so that about 60 students are working at any given time, with five mentor artists, a ratio of about twelve teens per mentor. The mentor works both individually and with small groups to help develop the art, and to guide group projects such as large murals and paintings. In the silk screen studio, young graphic designers are creating silk-screened T-shirts that are regularly commissioned by outside clients (e.g. by the local bar Cheers), or for special events such as Earth Day. Youth receive base pay, with opportunities for earning commission on works sold. They have responsibility for the full business process: pricing a job, relating to the client, establishing and meeting deadlines, and staying on time and on budget – learning skills that will serve them in any future job setting. The sculpture studio and silk screen studio have both outgrown their spaces. Sculpture is growing rapidly, with increased interest from young artists and a growing list of clients. They have begun to design signs for the Fort Point area and are venturing into furniture design and larger-scale projects.

The teen artists represent a racial and ethnic mix, coming from many different neighborhoods around Boston. AFH staff estimated that over 90% are either low-income or very low-income; about 35% of the teens are African-American; 20% Asian; 20% Caucasian; and 20% Latino. Eight kids are in recovery programs during the day and come in the late afternoon hours. A fledgling hip-hop performance project practices there at night.

When a young artist becomes part of the AFH program, AFH offers a variety of supports and incentives for good performance in school. On-site tutoring is available when kids are having difficulty in school; if grades fall below a 2.5 average, tutoring is mandatory. In addition, young artists receive a $25 bonus for being on the honor roll and a free Mac laptop for getting straight As. Studio director and AFH co-founder Rob Gibbs notes the importance of the mentor relationship. Teens may fail to show up at AFH for a number of reasons, including problems at home or school. The mentor keeps track of how things are going at work and in their lives. AFH states that nearly 100% of their teens graduate from high school, compared with a 26% dropout rate in Boston. Eight-five percent pursue some sort of post-secondary education.

Art prepared for Staples Corp.

Saturday Blast/Teacher Training Program

AFH also runs a Saturday program for middle school students. This program is taught by three teen artists from the older group and is supervised by one adult mentor. It is also used as a teacher training program for AFH, mainly for their most dedicated teen artists. The goal for the teachers-in-training is that they learn to impart technical artistic methods, a lo ve of the creati ve process, and a vision of themselves as successful adults. Mentors-in-tr aining are all paid a special rate of $15/hour for their w ork at Saturday Blast.

The program now regularly enrolls about 30 students and runs in three eight-week cycles from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Focus in the Saturday program is on painting and dr awing only, and y oung students come from as far as Hyde P ark and Quinc y. To recruit additional students to this program, young artists are offered a free water color set if they bring a friend. F or this age group, ho wever, transportation is a bigger issue, and one that AFH continues to consider.

Cell Phone Environmental Tour

Created by the Boston Museum of Science, a series of signs posted around the EpiCenter show a number to call for an audio explanation of the green features at each location. The audio presentations are by AFH youth and staff, the architect, and the environmental engineer, and give clear, understandable explanations of the green features of the building visible from eac h station. The final station features

testimonials by teens about ho w learning to oper ate and be responsible for the EpiCenter has r aised their own environmental awareness, created an enhanced their sense of en vironmental responsibility, and created a personal commitment to sustainability in their lives outside of AFH.

Spiritus Solaris

Spiritus Solaris is the tour of the sustainability aspects of the building given upon request, typically twice each week. Occasionally tours are led by teen artists, but, as most occur during the sc hool day, they are usually led b y AFH staff. Ov er the last tw o years more than 2,000 people ha ve taken the tour . Requests for tours come from youth and school groups, universities, architectural firms, and many international groups (including Norw ay, Germany, Great Britain and Ireland).

Young at Arts

AFH makes studio space available to Southie kids who are creating artwork for community ev ents in South Boston, as part of a joint program with the South Boston Arts Association, South Boston

Saturday Blast program.

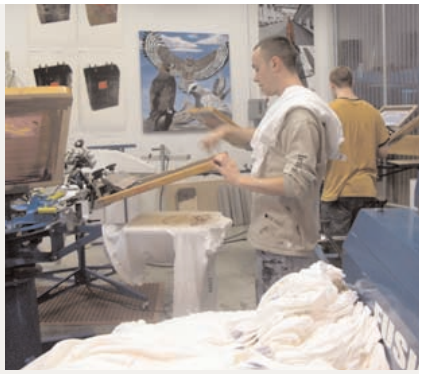
Association of Non-Profits, and the South Boston Community Health Center. The "Lighthouse Project" was one of their most successful projects. *(See "Community".)*

Inward Bound

Inward Bound is a leadership training program for businesses and corporations, where leaders in the business sector come to the EpiCenter for two- to five-hour sessions to receive instruction in painting at a cost of $200 per person. It has been tremendously successful with a number of corporations. Starwood Corporation has brought some staff for an initial session, and is planning to bring an additional 50 persons in the coming months. Other current clients include Social Venture Partners and Athena Health Group. Inward Bound is a significant source of exposure for the program.

Rental Events

Rental of the downstairs gallery is central to the AFH mission. In addition to providing a solid cash flow by serving as a venue for events from the business, retail, and philanthropic communities, it provides an opportunity to showcase the city's largest collection of youth-created art, where works from teen artists are exhibited on a rotating basis. AFH estimates that 16,000 people have passed through the gallery in the last two years, many of whom purchase art or at least gain exposure to services offered by AFH.



The event business has exceeded AFH's expectations. The first three years of the building has seen 202 events. The gallery, including the mezzanine, rents for $5,000, and the third floor raw painting space can be included for $9,000 inclusive. Projected income for the 2007 fiscal year from gallery rental is $300,000.

COMMUNITY

AFH has been strongly involved with neighborhood organizations that focus on arts and local youth. These include South Boston Artists Association (SBAA), an organization of about 35 artists working in Southie, who meet weekly at the famous L Street Bathhouse for discussions, critiques of each others' work, and presentations; and South Boston Neighborhood Health Center, which runs the Institute for a Healthier Community. Dan McCole, Director of SBAA, notes that AFH produces "more good artists than all of the art schools in Boston put together."

Left: *Sculpture Studio class in courtyard.*
Right: *Silkscreen Studio.*

Mayra Rodrigues Howard, who works at the Health Center, commented that many Southie kids are "just hanging out," and praises AFH as offering a place to go to learn responsibility and a serious work ethic. She feels that the beauty of the AFH program is that it engages kids in a positive way, and is not "deficit driven" like most programs offered to kids of this age. She notes that people in Southie are becoming more aware of AFH as a resource, and that it is being sought out by the kids themselves.

These two organizations partnered with AFH in 2006 on the *"Young at Arts Lighthouse Project,"* initiated by the SBAA. Local carpenters and metal workers unions volunteered to cut out about 80 boards, roughly five feet by three feet, shaped like lighthouses. Teens from Southie were then invited to come to AFH to create a lighthouse from the boards to be displayed at community events and around the community, attached (by the metal workers) to light posts in the neighborhood. The project was an enormous success. About 60 kids and several local artists worked with artist mentors to create the lighthouses, which were first posted on street lamps in Southie, then moved to the South Boston street festival and exhibited at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center.

ARTWORK AND CREATIVE SERVICES

AFH advertises services in sculpture, murals, graphic design, fine art, photography, large-scale banners, screen printing, exhibitions, and urban media. Young AFH artists have designed annual reports, provided artwork for publications, installed murals and photographic exhibitions in major public spaces, and continue to expand their market each year. At the time of the site, visit two projects were in the studio—a series of large paintings based on a Mandala theme for the upcoming annual AFH gala, to be held in the downstairs gallery, and a large painted mural for Project Hope in Dorchester, which has recently completed another LEED-rated building.

AFH has developed an impressive list of clients that includes some of Boston's most well known businesses and institutions. Cheers

Painting by AFH Artist Nestor Martino.

bar, for example, is the biggest client for silk-screened T-shirts, buying about $18,000 w orth each year. Other clients of the silkscreen studio combined bring silkscreen rev enues close to $100,000 per y ear (but AFH anticipates the studio will earn $300,000 in 2007). In addition to fundingAFH with a series of grants, the Boston Globe F oundation uses AFH to pro vide photographs and graphic design for the citywide teen newspaper they support, entitled *Teens in Print.* They also commissioned AFH to design a new website for the *Teens in Print* initiative.

In 2006, AFH was commissioned to provide cover art for both the *Catalogue of Philanthropy* and the Grantmakers in the Arts 2006 Conference program. Staples Corp. also commissioned AFH to do a series of large works and sculptures for their corporate headquarters. AFH works can be seen around Boston in prominent locations: the Saltonstall Building at 100 Cambridge St., Terminal E at Logan Airport, BU Medical Center , Children's Hospital in Boston, and many others. A current list of clients, from 2003-2006, includes over 100 local institutions and businesses. In addition to those mentioned above, AT&T, Boston College, Boston Latin Academy, Boston Public Housing, F our Directions at Harv ard University, Harvard Medical School, Harvard University Civil Rights Project, Mellon Bank, Northeastern Uni versity, Simmons College, and Trinity Church are among the most well kno wn.

Commissioned mural reaching completion.

Each year AFH organizes 20-30 off-site exhibitions, sho wcasing youth artwork at fourteen permanent sites, with others soon to open. A selected list of recent ev ents includes:

- **2004:** AFH commissioned by the City of Boston to design street pole banners for the Democr atic National Convention;
- **2004:** AFH commissioned by MassDevelopment to do three large-scale paintings for permanent exhibition at 100 Cambridge St.;
- **2006:** AFH installed an exhibit of long-exposure photos for the Boston Globe Foundation's *Neighbor-to-Neighbor* Program;
- **2006:** AFH participated in *Bloomin' Arts,* a showcase of Boston youth arts programs hosted by the Hunt Alternatives Fund and Graham and Anne Gund;
- **2006:** AFH collaborated with youth from South Boston's *Youth at Arts* on the design and creation of 60 lighthouse-shaped paintings, each six feet tall that were installed on light posts along Broadway;
- **2006:** Mt. Washington Bank commissioned AFH's sculpture studio to create a series of steel-fr amed, fabric, and paper-mache-piggy banks for the Dor chester Day parade;

- **2007:** AFH installs 44 paintings and sculptures at Nellie Mae Education Foundation;
- **February 2007:** graphic art and silk-screened work on wood panels exhibited at 29 Newbury St.

LEADERSHIP

Staff

The visionary leader of AFH is Susan Rodgerson. It was Rodgerson who conceived the basic concept sev enteen years ago, and w ho led the growth of the program from a fledgling group of kids coming to her studio after sc hool to the nationally-known art enterprise it has become. Susan shares credit with her y oung co-founders, several of whom now occupy leadership positions on the AFH staff and have been with AFH since they were fourteen y ears old. She remains both the Artistic Director and Executi ve Director. Co-founder Jason Talbot, who also met Rodgerson when he was a student at MLK Sc hool, is no w Special Projects Director . Co founder Rob Gibbs, no w the Studio Director for AFH also met Susan when she came to teac h at MLK Sc hool when he w as thirteen years old. Rob says that before his initial involvement with Rodgerson and the AFH program he had never had any exposure to the arts. Rob has no w been with AFH for seventeen years and plays a critical role in the organization.

With the opening of the EpiCenter and resulting program and staff expansion, the administrative staff now includes twelve positions with most employees having multiple responsibilities on the floor, in the studios, and around the building. As Jason, the Special Projects Director, puts it, "we all just do w hat needs to get done." In structuring the AFH administration, Rodgerson has kept the idea of succession firmly in mind. Although committed to AFH for the immediate future, she is working to build an organization that can run smoothly without her and is considering several former students as possible future Executive Directors.

Board

The Board of Directors has ev olved along with the AFH program and profile. At first, it consisted of artists and community members who could gi ve artistic ad vice to the progr am. Today it has broadened to include business people and professionals as well. The board chair is a partner at a corpor ate law firm; others come from the real estate, contracting, and education worlds. Two of the original art entrepreneurs on the board noted that "the board reflects the multicultural, urban youth it represents." Although the board was at first skeptical about Susan' s wish to build the new

Left: *Co-Founder and Special Projects Director, Jason Talbot; Director of Operations, Andrew Motta; Co-Founder and Studio Director, Rob Gibbs.*
Right: *Co-Founder Rob Gibbs.*

facility, they have become believers and are now enthusiastically guiding plans for future land acquisition and expansion.

FINANCES

The Organization

AFH is not a typical non-profit organization. Although it is a 501(c)(3), it considers itself a micro-enterprise and is working on a business model. The model involves both finding new clients to increase the market for artists' work, and expanding the role individual artists have in working with these with clients. At the same time, they work hard to secure outside funding to support the program. Development staff target foundations, corporations, and individuals and are charged with bringing in close to $1.1 million per year, to supplement the $500,000 per year in earned income (2006).

Although there has been relatively little regular public funding, AFH has been a recipient of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council for more than ten years. The CDBG grants range from $25,000 to $30,000 per year, and represent federal funds dispersed by the Jobs and Community Development arm of the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

As AFH gains in reputation both in Boston and around the country, funding from foundations becomes somewhat easier to secure.

AFH 2006 OPERATING BUDGET

REVENUES	
EARNED INCOME	
Sale of Student Products/Services	$297,630
Gallery Rental	$234,840
Total Earned Income	**$532,470**
CONTRIBUTED INCOME	
Foundations and Corporations	$747,836
Government Support	$41,700
Individual Donations	$338,904
Total Contributed Income	**$1,128,440**
IN-KIND SERVICES	**$60,758**
Total Revenue	**$1,721,668**
EXPENSES	
Youth Salaries	$282,124
Admin. Salaries (27 full- and part-time)	$801,234
Payroll Tax and Fringe Benefits	$159,368
Contract Labor	$44,143
In-Kind Volunteers	$25,000
Commission on Sales	$23,339
Supplies	$96,467
Printing and Repro	$38,297
Bond Interest	$51,070
Insurance	$103,318
Consultant Fees	$103,692
Artistic and Educational Equipment	$11,190
Total Expenses	**$1,739,242**

Source: Artists for Humanity

Several major foundations such as the Boston Globe Foundation, Surdna Foundation, Putnam Foundation, and others have offered multi-year grants and show every sign of continuing to fund AFH at increasingly high levels. A list of foundation proposals for 2007 included a list of more than 70 grant requests. Three are for $100,000 each, one is for $75,000, and five others are for $50,000. The remaining grants are for varying amounts under $50,000.

The Boston Globe Foundation, which gives away $1.3 million annually in Boston, considers AFH a model for community-based programs. The foundation has a long history with AFH and intends to grow that relationship. In past years the foundation has provided three $50,000 grants to AFH, one $60,000 grant, and is currently considering a $75,000 grant. The foundation director stated that the visionary quality of AFH leadership gives them total confidence in the organization. She notes that AFH is doing a fantastic job of serving an under-served population, based on a clearly articulated strategy that is working.

The fact that AFH has no endowment is consistent with the quasi-business model with which it is operating. The absence of an endowment does, however, force AFH to raise large amounts of money each year to cover the significant gap between earned income and expenses. An endowment would provide increased financial security for the organization and will be the focus of an upcoming capital campaign.

IMPACTS

Although their recent expansion is still fresh, AFH is fast becoming a mature organization with demonstrable impacts.

- AFH reinstates the value of art in a poor community and demonstates the way in which the arts can be a viable profession.
- More than 90% of AFH artists graduate from high school, though the drop out rate in Boston high schools is 26%.
- Eighty-five percent of the teens who started with AFH as young adolescents have gone on to higher education and professional training. Several have assumed positions of responsibility in the organization, and others have spent their teen years employed by AFH, learning about marketing, management, and responsibility.
- Several of the original teen artists have been full participants in the development of AFH, are considered co-founders of the organization, and now occupy full-time executive positions within the organization.

Painting by AFH Artist Uro Nazy'at.

• As the first LEED-certified Platinum building in Boston, AFH has set an important precedent, and is having impacts well beyond the city. Having been a close observ er of AFH, Mayor Menino has recently required developers of new buildings (of 50,000 square feet or more) to install more energy-efficient systems and has declared that the new City Hall, w hich he hopes to build in the Seaport District, will be a green building.

• The Boston Redevelopment Authority gives the EpiCenter great credit for sparking interest in sustainable building practices in Boston.

• Through attending programs in a green building and learning to care for it and understand ho w it works, many young people are gaining exposure to the values associated with sustainability. This awareness among the y oung can be assumed to ha ve positive impacts on longer-term environmental issues facing the country.

• The AFH model is unique, and is being adapted in other cities and other countries. AFH graduates are currently pioneering similar organizations in Brooklyn, NY and Oakland, C A. My Arts in Kansas City, MO. has based their entire progr am on the AFH model. Other progr ams based on the AFH model also exist in Woonsocket, RI (Ri verzEdge Arts Project), Minneapolis, MN (Juxtaposition Arts), and Newport RI. Progr ams using the AFH model also exist in Ireland and England, and Haifa, Isr ael. AFH is now undertaking a feasibility stud y for establishing a replication project in Brockton, MA.

FUTURE PLANS

• Given the fact that they are already outgrowing their new space, AFH is hoping to acquire two vacant parcels adjacent to their site. These spaces would allow for expansion of the sculpture and silk-screen programs, as well as other uses.

• AFH would also like to increase its energy production by adding sixteen wind turbines on the east wall of the building. Seventy five percent of the cost of the windmills could be co vered by the Renewable Energy Trust of the Massac husetts Technology Collaborative; another 25% would have to be raised. A model for the wind turbines w as presented at the annual gala in April. The

windmills are expected to bring AFH energy production from its current 60% to close to 100% of its energy needs.

• An overhang using old trolley rails from the site was designed at the entrance, but was not completed at the time of construction, for budgetary reasons. The sculpture studio would like to complete it immediately, providing shading from summer sun. The estimated cost is about $100,000.

• AFH plans to place an LED display on the back of the building to communicate "real time" environmental and energy information to the public. The sign would post data about the amount of energy being generated at a particular time, and other related information.

• Through their connection with Grand Circle, AFH is currently developing a collaboration with a school in Tanzania, to produce images on posters and banners for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

• Retail plans include the addition of an AFH pushcart at the Boston Farmers' Market and a future store on South Street in downtown Boston, across from South Station. The space would allow for gallery and retail sales.

• An upcoming capital campaign would fund some of the projects mentioned above and would provide some kind of endowment for AFH. Although ideally the program is designed to be self-sustaining, earned income currently covers less than one-third of expenses, and there is still a need to raise considerable funds each year. An endowment would reduce the pressure for ongoing fundraising.

Assessing Project Success

SUCCESS IN MEETING PROJECT GOALS

1. *To provide art instruction with training in the marketing of art to inner-city teen artists.*

This is being accomplished very effectively by AFH. Programs are successful, and the numbers of teens enrolled in them is continuing to grow.

2. *To create a learning environment characterized by respectful and supportive relationships.*

The low mentor-to-student ratio and the commitment to teen success in school and at home are key elements of the supportive

teacher/student relationships at AFH. Young artists receive art instruction, job training, and mentoring in all aspects of their lives.

Within the walls of the EpiCenter, responsibility for the creation, marketing, and installation of art is shared among young artists, with support from their mentors. Similarly, responsibility for dealing with the day-to-day workings of the building and program, are, of course, assigned to administrative positions, but there is a notable fluidity of people "doing what needs to be done" within the organization.This sharing of responsibility and opportunity sets a tone of mutual respect.

3. *To bridge economic, racial, and social divisions by providing underserved youth with the keys to self-sufficiency through paid employment in the arts.*
The location of the EpiCenter and the mixed population from which it draws supports the goal of building bridges among diverse populations. This goal is furthered when young artists make connections with people in the business world at all levels, as they market and develop their art.

4. *To provide an employment environment characterized by high expectations, and a commitment to helping teens reach their full potential.*
The system of paying young artists for their work and connecting them with local businesses and institutions, which purchase and commission work, is not only an art training program, but also a job training program. Coupled with the small group mentor system, the AFH model offers optimum opportunity for personal growth to this at-risk population.

5. *To give inner-city teens a voice through exhibitions, public presentations, and permanent installation of their art.*
There is no doubt that AFH has been tremendously successful in this area. The number of exhibits and shows and the diversity of settings, including the AFH gallery, have provided a wide and diverse audience for teen art work. The audience continues to broaden.

6. *To contribute to environmental quality and awareness by creating the first LEED Platinum building in downtown Boston.*
This has been AFH's other major contribution to Boston and the larger community. The green design of the building and its ongoing use for environmental education have set several precedents. Not only is the EpiCenter the first LEED Platinum building in Boston, it is also the first commercial building in the country to be built without air conditioning in recent years. It has encouraged Boston's mayor to require more sustainable features in future development in the city, and it provides a model to other for-profit and non-profit developers about what can be done within the context of quality architectural design.

7. *To make a commitment to the Fort Point artist community and to South Boston by building the facility in this transitional area.*
There is no question that the location of this facility, as described above, makes an important contribution both to the Southie residential community and to the Fort Point artist community. It provides an important resource to both communities, and a new model of art training in the country.

8. *To provide a safe and meaningful place where teens are respected for their contributions.*
For the teen population at AFH, having a safe environment is a key aspect of personal and professional growth. Urban poverty is too often accompanied by both physical danger and emotional stress associated with drugs, crime, and challenges to families. AFH can provide a consistent, safe environment, where teens are given the opportunity to develop personal skills and qualities that are not likely to emerge in typical inner-city settings.

SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Selection Committee commended Artists for Humanity EpiCenter for being the first building in Boston to achieve a LEED Platinum rating, for setting a new standard for construction in the downtown, and for having direct impact on the Boston Building Code. The excellence of the design and the "transparency" of the green elements were applauded, as was the use of recycled materials in the building design.

All Committee members agreed on the excellence and innovative quality of the AFH program and felt it established a new direction for involvement of inner city youth in the arts. The concept of developing entrepreneurial skills through the arts was felt to bring fresh opportunity and thinking to a long-standing urban issue. Finally, the committee applauded AFH for its commitment to South Boston and to the Fort Point community.

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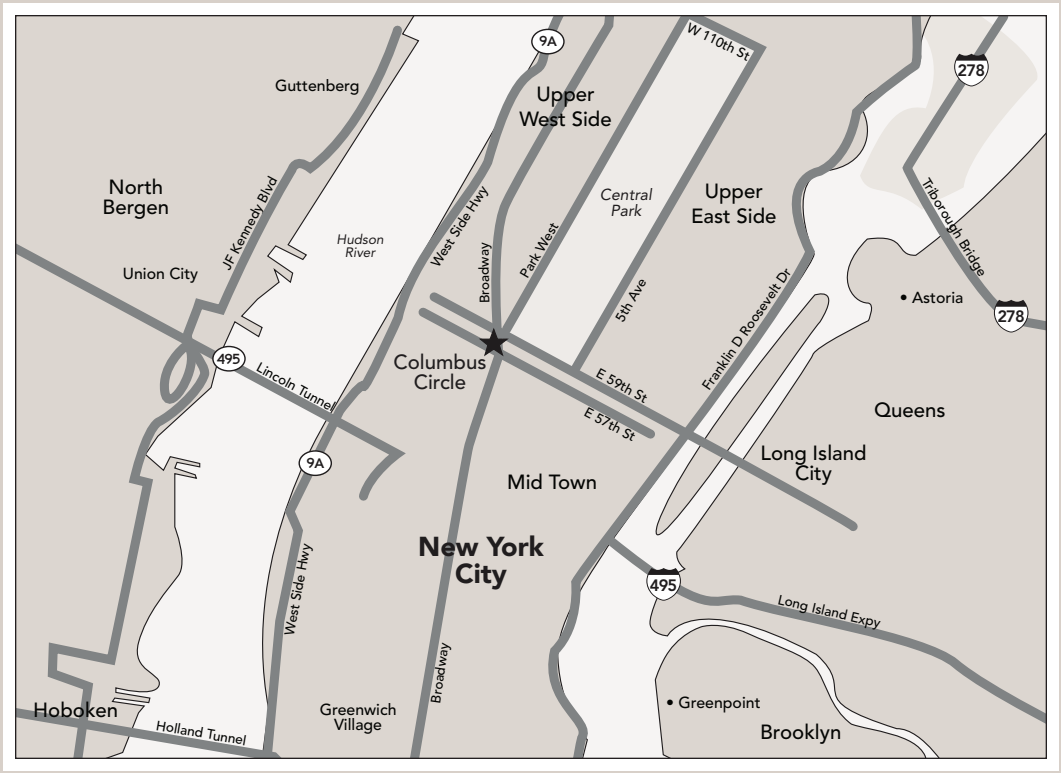
Silver Medal Winner

Columbus Circle

New York, New York

Photos: Olin Partnership


Guttenberg
North Bergen
Union City
JF Kennedy Blvd
Hudson River
West Side Hwy
Broadway
Upper West Side
Park West
Central Park
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Upper East Side
5th Ave
Franklin D Roosevelt Dr
Triborough Bridge
278
Astoria
9A
495
Lincoln Tunnel
Columbus Circle
E 59th St
E 57th St
Queens
Long Island City
Mid Town
New York City
Long Island Expy
Hoboken
Holland Tunnel
Greenwich Village
Greenpoint
Brooklyn

Columbus Circle At-A-Glance

WHAT IS COLUMBUS CIRCLE?

- The redesign of an historic traffic circle on the southwest corner of Frederick Law Olmsted's Central Park in New York City;
- An addition to the public realm of New York and a pedestrian destination in a busy and complex urban intersection;
- A new urban park connecting Central Park to pedestrian traffic on Eighth Avenue, Broadway, and 59th Street in New York;
- A 225,000-square-foot transportation hub designed to accommodate subway transit, automotive, and pedestrian needs. (Below ground, the IND and IRT subway lines criss-cross the site with related stations still under renovation in the adjacent Time Warner Center and between Time Warner Center and the Trump Hotel);
- The forecourt of the new Time Warner Center, the Central Park Merchants' Gate entrance, and the Two Columbus Circle structures to be occupied by the Museum of Art and Design;
- A new context for the 40-foot-high marble monument to Christopher Columbus sculpted by Gaetano Russon and dedicated on October 12, 1892;
- A reconfiguration of subterranean infrastructure involving a complex mix of public and private utilities.

PROJECT GOALS

- To establish the Circle as a significant and unique asset to the public realm of New York City;
- To reconstruct Columbus Circle as a transportation resource and maintain its ability to move 60,000 cars per day through a complex intersection during construction;
- To improve pedestrian circulation to the facilities and spaces that surround the Circle;
- To make a beautiful and eye-catching place that is easy to maintain and keep clean and safe;
- To integrate all of the above in a manner that respects the role of the Circle as a setting for the monument to Columbus, as the Merchants' Gate entrance to Central Park, and as a critical connector between Mid-town and Up-town Manhattan.

Project Chronology

THE FIRST 100 YEARS (1868 TO 1968)

1868 Land is cleared to develop a large circular entrance to Central Park consistent with the intent of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux.

1870 Circle at 8th Ave entrance to Central Park is approved. The actual traffic circle is designed by William P. Eno, a businessman responsible for much innovation in traffic control and road safety.

1892 The monument to Christopher Columbus, designed by Gaetano Russo, is dedicated and placed in the center of the Circle.

1900 A drive entrance to Central Park is added to the Circle.

1904 The IRT Subway is constructed.

1912 The Maine Memorial at Merchants' Gate is constructed, memorializing the loss of life when the Battleship Main was

1997
Olin Partnership enters Metropolitan Arts Society competition for Columbus Circle.

1998
City selects Vollmer Assoc with Mcobb and Assoc. for redesign.

2002
Community groups and Related Properties object to city sponsored design and return to Olin Partnership.

2003
Bids for Olin Partnership design received and accepted. Construction begins for current design.

2004
Time Warner Center opens.

2005
Columbus Circle Urban Plaza completed.

sunk. The Memorial is designed by H. Van Buren Magonigle with sculpture by Attilio Piccirilli.

1930s The IND Subway is constructed, completing the major IRT/IND transfer point at the Circle.

1941 240 Central Park South is constructed according to the architectural design of Mayer and Whittlesey.

1949 The Rotary is added to Columbus Circle.

1953 Forty-four buildings are demolished to make way for the Coliseum as part of New York's Urban Renewal Program.

1956 The Coliseum at 10 Columbus Circle is designed by the architectural team of Eggers and Higgins, John B. Peterkin, Leon and Lionel Levy, Aymar Embury Jr as a new convention center is constructed.

1964 The Edward Durrell Stone design, for what was then the Gallery of Modern Art at 2 Columbus Circle, is constructed. By 1973 the building is occupied by the city's Department of Cultural Affairs and the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

1965 A fountain surrounding the monument to Columbus, designed by Douglas Leigh, and a decorative fence surrounding the island supporting the monument were installed as a gift of the Delacorte Foundation.

CONTEMPORARY (1982-2005)

1982 The completion of a Midtown Zoning Study leads to the Coliseum site being "up-zoned." This, in turn, results in new traffic studies proposing a return to a rotary by Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill.

1985 RFP issued for Coliseum site and subway improvements. MTA selects Moshe Safdie and Boston Properties.

1987 Municipal Arts Society, New York City Parks Council and adjacent Community Boards file a lawsuit against the Coliseum Project claiming the MTA sold development rights in violation of the zoning regulations.

1988 Hanna/Olin prepares feasibility study for Central Park Conservancy to redesign and transform Columbus Circle.

1989 The lawsuit resulted in an agreement that included reducing the height and bulk of the proposed building.

1994 Boston Properties defaults on payment for the MTA site.

1995 Trump International Hotel and Tower conversion reconfigures office development into luxury apartments and hotel complex.

1996-97 Coliseum site RFP is issued by the MTA, with nine proposals received in 1997.

1996-97 2 Columbus Circle site RFP is issued by the NYC Economic Development Corporation, with seven proposals received in 1997.

1997 Merchants' Gate, Central Park is redesigned and reconstructed.

1997 Metropolitan Arts Society conducts a competition inviting six prominent designers to propose solutions for the Circle design. The Olin Partnership enters in collaboration with Machado and Silvetti.

1998 Metropolitan Transportation Authority awards site to The Related Companies for new Time Warner Headquarters, jazz hall, hotel, and apartments.

1998 New York City Department of Design and Construction selects Vollmer Associates as lead consultant for redesigning Columbus Circle with the design firm of McCobb and Associates.

2000 The Coliseum is demolished.

2002 Resistance to concepts by McCobb and Associates from community groups, civic organizations, and community boards leads to Related Properties offering resources to support the city engagement of the Olin Partnership working with Vollmer Associates continuing from their initial selection in 1998.

2003 Bids for construction of the Circle are accepted in February, and construction begins in July of the same year.

2004 2.8 million-square-foot Time Warner Center opens.

2005 Columbus Circle project completed.

KEY PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEWED

Design Practitioners:

Laurie Olin, Principal, The Olin Partnership
Brian O'Connell, Principal, Vollmer Associates
Claire Kahn Tuttle, Associate, WET Design
Phillip Habib, Phillip Habib & Associates and Adjunct Professor, Polytechnic University

Other members of the professional design and consulting team that were not interviewed include:

Tully Construction, General Contractor
Ammann & Whitney, Resident Engineer Inspector
L'Observatoire International, Lighting Design
Lynch & Associates, Irrigation Designer
Cosentini Associates, M-E-P Engineer

WDF, Plumbing Contractor
Hellman Electric, Electrical Contractor
Professional Pavers, Paving
Garden City Irrigation & Maintenance Services, Landscape Irrigation

Public Officials:
Gale A. Brewer, New York City Council Member, 6th District, Manhattan
Evans Doleyres, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, NYC Department of Design and Construction
Amanda Burden, Chair, NYC Planning Commission and Director of the Department of City Planning
Adrian Benepe, Commissioner, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
Assistant Commissioner Joshua Laird, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
Ethel Sheffer, Chair of the Tri-Community Board committee on Columbus Circle

Private/ Not For Profit Participants:
Monica Blum, President, Lincoln Square Business Improvement District
Kent Barwick, President, Municipal Arts Society
Bruce Warwick, Vice Chairman, The Related Companies
Doug Blonsky, President and Central Park Administrator, The Central Park Conservancy
Chris Nolan, Vice President for Capitol Projects and Chief Landscape Architect, The Central Park Conservancy

Photo: Olin Partnership

Project Description

Aerial view of plaza.

Columbus Circle is best understood as a project that fully integrates the complexity of planning, design, engineering, construction, and management in Manhattan. What is most telling is that no single actor controlled all the elements of the project. Rather, the project emerged from:

- the legacy of Olmsted and Vaux's aspirations for the Circle at the corner, dating back to 1868;
- years of controversy about the up-zoning of the Coliseum site into what is now the Time Warner Center;
- the practical necessity and creative designs for vehicular traffic control in a complex intersection at the southwest corner of Central Park;
- the legacy of William H. Whyte's understanding of what makes great urban public space;
- the strength of a well-regarded landscape architecture professional;
- clear and strongly stated public policy on the design development of the circle.

It would be easy to make heroes in the execution of the project, but that would oversimplify the reality of multiple actors engaged in thoughtful and creative ways. Design inquiry, municipal planning direction, and problem solving all converged in the project to redesign Columbus Circle.

DESIGN INQUIRY

Kent Barwick, as President of the Municipal Arts Society (MAS), created an environment supportive of design inquiry through a MAS-sponsored design competition on the Circle. In 1997 the MAS, with its design competition, presented a variety of alternatives to the controversial Circle design proposal that had been offered as part of plans to renovate the Merchants' Gate at Central Park. These new discussions about the future possibilities of the site allowed for consideration of a "stand-alone" circle and different ways to think about public access to the space. The Related Companies showed same spirit of inquiry as the developer of the Time Warner Center when they hired the Olin Partnership and contributed the Partnership fees to the project. They also hired Phillip Habib & Associates, who convinced the Department of Transportation to do full-scale tests of the rotary concepts at the Circle, to identify how many lanes were required to keep traffic moving. This assessment determined the remaining available space for the "island" that the Olin Partnership had to work with. Olin engaged WET Design as the fountain designer and employed a subtle approach to "fountain as background," in contrast to the "fountain as center attraction," an approach they had used successfully in the Fountains of Bellagio in Las Vegas.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING DIRECTION

This project was advanced by strong expressions of interest by both Mayors Giuliani and Bloomberg. To be sure, both leaders saw the site as a serious traffic problem that had plagued that corner of Central Park for decades. The level of investment surrounding the circle during the 1990s leading up to the construction of the Time Warner Center also drew their attention. These investments included The Trump International Hotel and Tower on the Circle between Broadway and Central Park West, The Merchants' Gate restoration at the southwest entrance to Central Park, and new office and hotel complex development between Central Park South and Broadway. All such development demanded a proper front or foyer to give them a better address. That interest was reinforced by Commissioner Adrian Benepe at the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (the landlord) and his Deputy Commissioner for Capital Projects, Amy Freitag. Many give Joseph Rose (Chair of the New York City

Photo: Olin Partnership

Lunch time plaza users.

Planning Commission under Mayor Giuliani) and Amanda Burden (appointed to that post by Mayor Bloomberg) kudos for municipal leadership on the project. Rose is often credited with advancing the concept of returning the space to a circle, and Burden pressed hard for the details that make public space successful, right down to the width of the benches. Benches were made wide enough to sit on both sides, "back to back," in a way that connects the user to the social interior or to the perimeter landscape and skyline. Places to sit throughout the Circle make it a great place to watch people passing through, have a good conversation, or view a music or puppet theatre performance against the backdrop of the monument to Columbus. Burden, formerly an intern under William Whyte at Projects for Public Spaces, is a strong advocate for a quality public realm and reinforced Laurie Olin on the importance of basic principles.

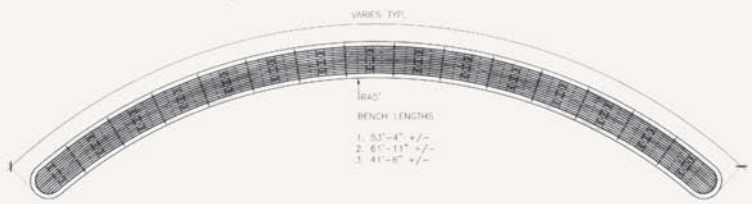
Photo: Olin Partnership

Use of plaza benches.

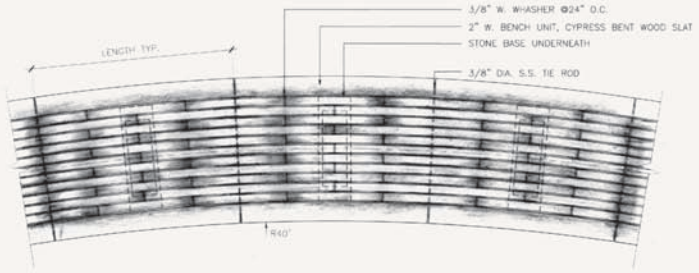
PROBLEM SOLVING AND CONSTRUCTION

Given the complexity of the traffic coming into the Circle from five directions and the range of new investments that sprang up throughout the 1990s, there was serious pressure to address the attendant traffic problems. By 1998 an interim solution was developed that realigned the Circle between Broadway and Central Park West all the way to Broadway west of Central Park. This work made a semicircular central island with five to six travel lanes and complex turn lanes. Pedestrian movement included a fair amount of jaywalking. As rezoning work related to the Coliseum began to look more promising, the New York City Department of Design and Construction (NYCDDC) did a "temporary" full-scale test of the rotary concept with Jersey barriers and minimal landscape that lasted from 1998 to 2003, with only minor variations. These years of investigating and experiencing the success of the interim solution led NYCDDC and the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT), as well as the city's Department of Parks and Recreation (NYCDPR), to conclude a full rotary solution could work. The installation proved to be so successful it provided the interim circulation around the Circle in advance of and during construction.

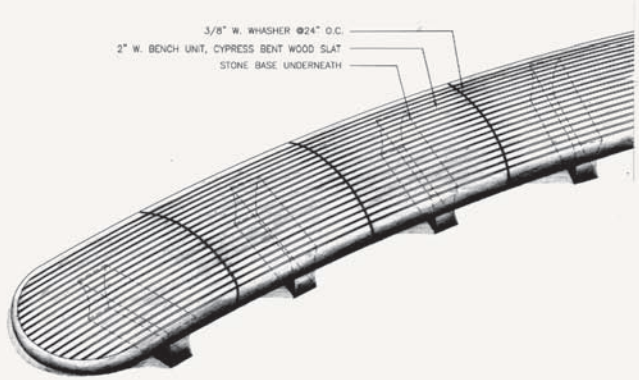
Other disciplined problem-solving on the project included the testing of landscape materials by the Central Park Conservancy, the



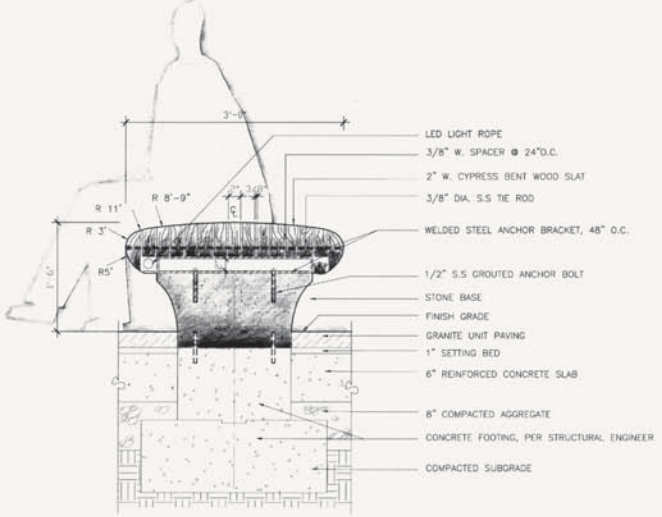
Bench Design - Overall Plan
Scale: 1/4" = 1' - 0"



Bench Design - Enlarged Plan
Scale: 1" = 1' - 0"



Bench Design - Isometric
Scale: 1/4" = 1' - 0"



Bench Design - Detail
Scale: 1 1/2" = 1' - 0"

Drawing: Olin Partnership

Details of plaza bench design.

integration of a number of construction trades involved in several different construction projects, and the management of high volumes of traffic throughout the construction of the new circle. Landscape materials testing led to the selection of low-maintenance planting material suited to the harshness of a site surrounded by such high traffic volumes. Benches of milled IPE wood and off-the-shelf lighting were integrated into the landscape The construction management approach had to deal with concurrent infrastructure relocations below grade including electric, telecommunications, sewer, gas, water, steam, and the renovation of subsurface transit facilities and road reconstruction. All this was occurring in the relatively small space under the Circle while the Circle itself was under construction and while multiple projects surrounding the site were also under construction. All of this was, of course, made more difficult by the fact that 60,000 vehicles a day moved through the Circle without interruption through out the eighteen months of construction. Finally, all of this problem-solving included phased completion of the work arranged to meet the needs of the 2004 opening of the Time Warner Center and addressed major events like the Macy's and Thanksgiving Day Parades.

LOCATION AND HISTORY

The First Circle

Columbus Circle has its roots in the Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux conception of a circle form for the southwest entrance to Central Park and in the initial land clearance driven by that intent in 1868. By 1870, the Circle as the 8th Avenue entrance to the park was approved and the original circle was designed, not by Olmsted or even by a design or engineering professional, but by an inventor and businessman, William P. Eno. It was Eno, some thirty years later, who would be credited with the origin, codification, and popularization of modern traffic control systems, including signage, hand signals, driving licenses, safety inspections for vehicles, and speed limits. In 1903 he authored New York City's first traffic code. It is fitting that William Eno was the first designer of the Circle, given the importance that traffic flows and pedestrian and vehicular safety came to occupy.

It was not until 1892 that Columbus Circle was officially named, with the dedication of Gaetano Russo's Christopher Columbus monument on the 400th anniversary of the explorer's landing in the new world. The complex intersection has, since its creation, struggled to achieve balance between traffic movement, pedestrian safety, access to the circle itself, and creation of a well-designed addition to the public realm of the city.

Historic postcards of Columbus Circle.

The Monument and the Circle

Soon after the dedication and placement of the monument to Christopher Columbus in 1892, the Circle began to be a reference point for measuring distances to NewYork City. For years Columbus Circle was called “ground zero” for NewYork City before that term took on another meeting on September 11, 2002. Ev en when the Circle was described as an a wful place of tr affic and motorcycle parking, a “black hole,” the monument itself w as a key vista seen on the axis along 8th Ave, Broadway, Central Park West, and Central Park South, in addition to the path systems in Central Park. While visible, ho wever, it has been surrounded b y traffic and unsafe to visit for most of its history.

In 1965, a fountain was placed around the monument, along with a decorative fence, again with no safe way across multiple lanes of traffic. Without pedestrian access the space around the monument was only useful as a place to be viewed from the sidew alks and from the surrounding buildings. It w as not a place to visit. Prior to the current design for Columbus Cir cle, the place w as never a successful public space.

Photo: Olin Partnership

URBAN CONTEXT

The current design of Columbus Circle is the product of multiple design explorations by several designers and engineers and is influenced by a number of contextual forces, leading to:

- the sizing of the island;
- its current section involving a four-foot berm surrounding, in concentric circles, a tiered fountain, plaza, and the monument in the center;
- the addition of key access points to the Circle cut through the berm in three locations.

The contextual forces include a long and storied controversy about the urban renewal of the land southwest of the site of the Circle, between W. 58th Street and W. 60th Street. It is here at 10 Columbus Circle that the Coliseum designed by Leon and Lionel Levy was completed in 1953 and demolished in 2000 to make room for much denser 2.8 million-square-foot development in what is now the Time Warner Center.

View of plaza fountain.

Columbus Circle is surrounded by other well known venues, including The Trump International Hotel and Tower at One Central Park West, the Merchant's Gate entry to Central Park, the renovated the former Gallery of Modern Art designed by Edward Durrell Stone, and, of course, the Time Warner Center.

Perhaps more important to the size and approach to the design of the Circle was the real estate below ground. A congested array of public and private utilities had to be relocated to position a large computer and pump vault supporting the fountain system. This was a complicated process, since the space below the surface is very

Photo: Olin Partnership

Aerial view of plaza.

tight, and the necessary utilities included electric wires, subway control systems, steam and water pipes, and, immediately below, the Columbus Circle subway station (at one point the space is so tight that the floor of the circle is also the ceiling of the station).

Columbus Circle plaza construction.

PLANNING

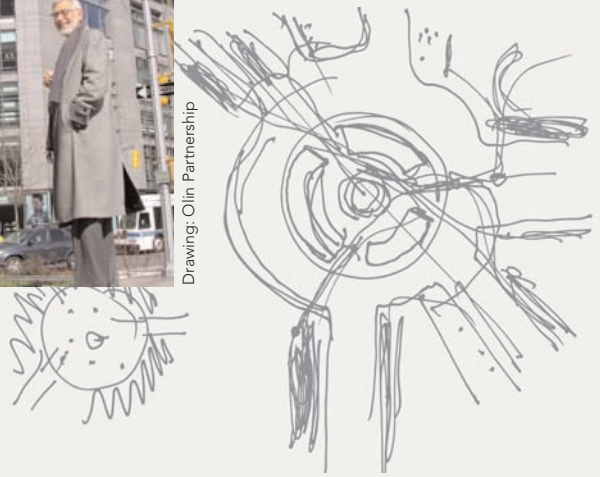
It is difficult to tell the story of the Circle without some discussion of the planning context that supported its redevelopment. For example, just days prior to September 11, 2001, the loans were negotiated for the $1.8 billion Time Warner Center. This occurs after almost twenty years of contentious efforts to replace the Coliseum and increase zoning density on site. The early work involved a lawsuit by the Municipal Arts Society, Parks Council, and adjacent Community Boards, with the central premise that the city was essentially selling development rights in violation of the zoning regulations. Parties to the suit, thus engaged, followed the progress over the full twenty years through multiple design iterations for the Coliseum site.

The lawsuit became a vehicle through which various stakeholders became aware of the potential in this space. Building a constituency willing to pursue the suit required a lot of discussion on the alternative vision for the area, the role of the Circle in this vision, and the complexity of achieving such a vision. In the variety of design explorations leading up to the construction of Time Warner Center, for example, there was public concern about the shadows any development would throw across the Merchant's Gate and into

Time Warner Center.

Central Park. One protest prior to the split to wer scheme of TWC involved a public demonstration of hundreds of people with black umbrellas arrayed in Central Park to illustrate the shadow that the single tall to wer would cast. Other groups of interested parties watched the development of the design for the Merchants' Gate at Central Park and a related sc heme for the Circle. This effort led to the restoration of the Mer chant's Gate but a rejection of a cir cle design that was seen to be inconsistent with the c haracter of the gate and the importance of this entr ance to Central Park.

The Related Companies, developer of Time Warner Center, saw it in their best interest to get the Cir cle completed and in use as the front yard to their very high-end development, so they hired what they described as "one of the leading landscape ar chitects in the world" (Laurie Olin) to complete the project. Olin had participated in the earlier competition on the circle managed by MAS. He had partnered with the firm of Mac hado and Silv etti to produce a scheme that introduced elements that were included in the final design. Primary among these are the berm and a new fountain that is separate from the monument. The scheme also sought to connect the plaza to the subw ay below to enliven the park still more. F or instance, current work on the subway station will turn the stairway to the platform 180 degrees so that exiting riders will directly face the circle. Even though the Olin Partnership was actually contracted by DDC, Related paid its fees.



Drawing: Olin Partnership

All of this work was facilitated by Mayors Giuliani and Bloomberg and their respecti ve Planning Commissioners, J oseph Rose and Amanda Burden. At the same time it was watched by three Community Boards in the form of Ethel Sheffer' s three-board Committee on Columbus Circle, a group that represented the interests of Board 7 on the Upper West Side, Board 5 in Midtown and Board 4 in Clinton and Hell's Kitchen. They followed all the iterations of development on and around the Cir cle for most of twenty y ears, heard dozens of presentations, and had a voice in the final circle design.

DESIGN

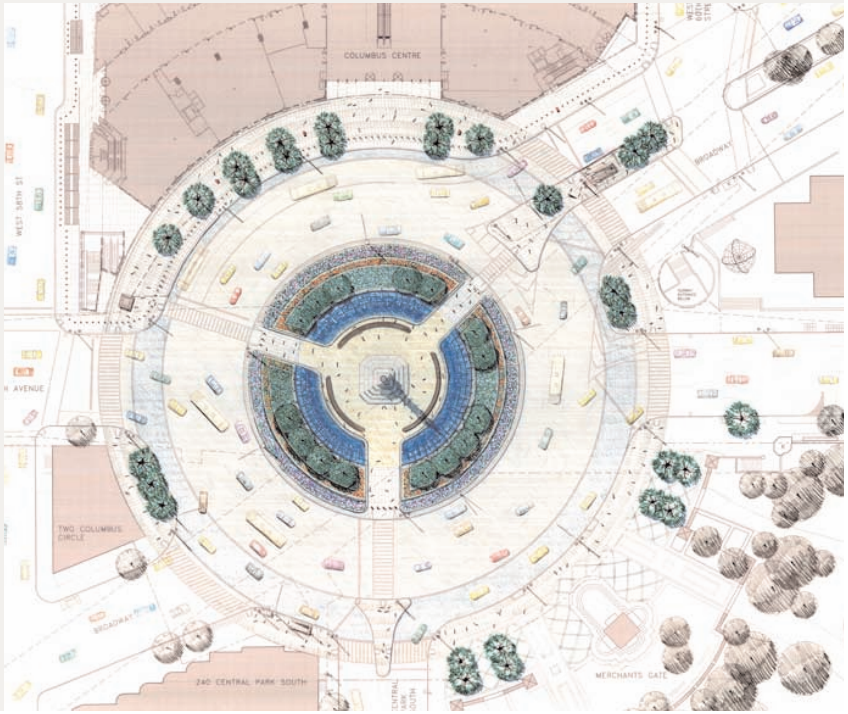
Like the original design b y Eno, the new Columbus Cir cle offers some innovations in traffic and pedestrian flow management. Unlike Eno, however, it uses signals in a cir cular form of tr affic control

Left: *Landscape architect Laurie Olin.*
Right: *Early sketch by Olin.*

Sketch: Olin Partnership

normally associated with the absence of tr affic signals. The wide street and high-speed traffic requires the design to bring pedestrians up to the Cir cle via intermediate islands, w here they can then enter into the Circle itself through the three entryways. The design thus provides a safe and well-protected public fountain and park in the middle of a very busy and complex traffic intersection.

The project scope in volved 225,000-square feet of construction. The streets continued to handle 60,000 v ehicles a day while the project relocated both pri vately and publicly o wned utilities, waterproofed subway tunnel roofs, constructed a new v ault for fountain electronics and pumps, reinforced the foundations of the monument to Columbus, built the plaza and fountain, landscaped the perimeter of the cir cle, and rebuilt the streets and curbs. This was done in coordination with work on the outer circle by others, and in coordination with nearby subway station renovations.



Plan: Olin Partnership

Section and Plan drawings by Olin Partnership.

Photos: Olin Partnership

The landscape design is a simple geometric system of concentric circles reinforced by curved paving patterns in the plaza, curved benches, ring lighting under the benches, a curved fountain surrounding the plaza, curved water spouts, and a four-foot high berm with thin, curved lighting and landscape plantings and hardy Buckeye trees. The benches are 36 inches wide, allowing people to sit back to back either facing the monument or the fountain. They curve in to support conversation and curve out to allow for more contemplative seating. People sit on the benches and watch people on or in the fountain or on the monument.There is a double row of honey locust trees in the outer edge of the traffic circle that further reinforces the "pebble-in-pond" (extending concentric circles) metaphor. This is repeated in the set of stainless steel bollards in front of the Time Warner Building itself, which are shaped and sized for sitting while also providing protection from surrounding traffic.

The fountains, created by WET Design, provide two levels of sound screen water features behind the four-foot berm that surrounds the public plaza. When the fountain is off there are three tiers of black granite steps suitable for sitting in amphitheater arrangement. When it is on the tiered fountain, water falls on the granite steps and drops two jets into the pool all the way around the Circle. The Lincoln Square Business Improvement District program's events in the square take full advantage of this geometry, turning off the water for presentations in the amphitheatre.

Laurie Olin describes the Circle as a unique public space. It is at the nexus of multiple street intersections tamed by the Circle and access points that reinforce its identity as a place for people to meet. It is small enough for people to easily find each other and pleasant enough to enjoy the wait. The Circle is a place that is on the way to jazz ("Jazz at Lincoln Center" in the Time Warner Building), or to the Whole Foods Store at Time Warner Center, to Central Park, to the new museum in the restored 2 Columbus Circle building, and many other points of interest in the immediate area.

Olin also stresses the importance of creating an enclosure to protect people from the traffic, despite the need for access in three places – Central Park South, Broadway, and off-axis on 8th Avenue – to create access to and movement through the plaza. This open and closed set of gestures has, according to Olin and several other informants, put Columbus Circle back in the mental map of New Yorkers and tourists alike. "It is," Olin said ,"not the edge of Central Park; it is its own thing."

Views of Columbus Circle Plaza.

The design of the Circle has been recognized by a number of awards programs in addition to the Bruner Award, including:

- The American Society of Landscape Architects, with their 2006 General Design Award of Honor;
- The American Society of Landscape Architects, Pennsylvania/ Delaware Valley Chapter, 2006 Design/Build Award of Merit;
- New York Construction News, Project of the Year, 2005;
- The American Council of Engineering Companies of New York's 2006 Diamond Award.

Photo: Olin Partnership

Christopher Columbus monument.

When one listens to the wide variety of participants involved in the development of Columbus Circle, it is clear that the complexity of the project has been masked by the simplicity and clarity of the solution. The circle itself, the pedestrian access points in the middle of the street, the fountain surrounding and making space instead of being an object in the space, the backless benches, the efficiency and density of the underground utilities, the low mound enabling those sitting to mask the busy surrounding and those standing to be see and be seen, are all synthesized in what appears to be a virtually inevitable composition. The team made it look easy, but it clearly was not.

OPERATIONS: CENTRAL PARK CONSERVANCY

Funding to sustain adequate maintenance has been a point of contention. While the Central Park Conservancy (CPC) has accepted responsibility for the maintenance of Columbus Circle, their estimate of the operation and maintenance costs is $490,000 per year. It currently operates with modest supplemental resources from the Time Warner Center Condo Association which promises a larger contribution. The project was executed under the assumption that resources for operations and maintenance would emerge. Central Park Conservancy currently reports it is continuing discussions with the Department of Parks and with Related in its search for a sustainable source of support. The Conservancy's summary of

Photos: Olin Partnership

operations and maintenance costs (below) provides for staff coverage of the circle from 7 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., seven days a week.

Complaints have emerged about maintenance, but they are tempered with an understanding that the operations budget has not been given adequate resources. As a result, the planting program is not as rich and varied as some would like, and trash removal relies upon volunteers and sporadic help from the local business improvement district or Time Warner Center staff. The leadership of CPC believes it is just a matter of time before agreements are reached on the required support. CPC was clearly given responsibility for maintenance and operation of the Circle, but, in their view, this task came without sufficient funding.

While the park appears relatively clean and well-maintained, there were some concerns expressed by the Business Improvement District as well as by the CPC. The fixtures in the Circle, especially the ring lighting, are seen as vulnerable to damage and expensive to repair or replace. The park also appears to invite skateboarders. Some see it as a problem, while others believe it is just part of the urban mix.

TABLE 1 COLUMBUS CIRCLE OPERATIONS BUDGET

DECEMBER 6, 2006

Staffing		**$220,000**	
	Number		% Time
Zone Gardner:	1		100%
Grounds Technician:	2		100%
Seasonal Grounds Technician:	1		100%
Fountain Technician:	1		50%
Materials and Supply		**$32,000**	
Uniforms			
Garbage Bags			
Hand Tools and Disposables			
Site Materials Supply			
Contracted Services		**$245,500**	
Irrigation Service		$5,500	
Lighting Service		$120,000	
Fountain Service		$70,000	
Landscape Planting		$50,000	
Total:		**$497,500**	

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACTS

The Circle is back as "the center of Manhattan." It is now both a destination and a vista that organizes districts above and below it. Claims of it increasing property value while it sits in the shadow of the billion-dollar developments of the Time Warner Center, the Trump Hotel, and on the corner of Central Park would be difficult to quantify. Even so, it is clear that symbolically, socially, culturally, and programmatically Columbus Circle makes a difference in the urban landscape. Traffic moves more smoothly than in any time in recent history, and the circle itself provides a pleasant urban space that never existed at that site before.

TABLE 2 FINANCES

SOURCES	
City of New York	$ 21,300,000
NYC Transit Authority	$ 1,200,000
Related Companies and Apollo Real Estate*	$ 1,000,000
Total Development Costs	**$ 23,500,000**

* ($500,000 of the Related Companies and Apollo Real Estate were partial payment for design fees from the Olin Partnership, and the other $500,000 supported the design and construction of the fountains by WET Design.)

Photo: Olin Partnership

Assessing Project Success

SUCCESS IN MEETING PROJECT GOALS

1. *To establish the Circle as a significant and unique asset to the public realm of New York City.*

The Circle is a safe haven in a congested intersection and serves as a small park in the best traditions of places in New York, such as Paley Park. The fountain noise muffles the traffic noise without being the center of attention, and the berm provides visual enclosure and protection even while there is good visibility into and out of the park.

2. *To reconstruct Columbus Circle as a transportation resource and maintain its ability to move 60,000 cars per day through a complex intersection during construction.*

Children enjoying the fountain.

Full-scale modeling of the intersection and rotary prior to final construction revealed that it works very well. Video analysis of the traffic both during and after construction by Habib Associates has convinced the firm that the approach to traffic control addresses the initial concerns about safety expressed by the risk-averse NYC Department of Transportation.

3. *To improve pedestrian circulation to the facilities and spaces that surround the Circle.*

The same video analysis reveals the system of intermediate stations at two of the three entry points to the circle is successful en route to the circle center. They are easy to navigate.

4. *To make a beautiful and eye-catching place that is easy to maintain and keep clean, and safe.*

The circle is a dramatic form, understandable from all perspectives at eye level, and it is very dramatic from the floors above ground in the structures surrounding it. While the surface is easy to maintain, the lighting fixtures (especially the circular liquid crystal display lights that follow the circle of the benches and also the berm) are fragile and expensive to maintain. The general planting maintenance and trash pick-up is getting good, but not great, attention until the Central Park Conservancy can find a dedicated source of revenue to cover the maintenance and operations costs.

Photo: Olin Partnership

5. *To integrate all of the above in a manner that respects the role of the Circle as a setting for the monument to Columbus, as the Merchants' Gate entrance to Central Park, and as a critical connector between Mid-town and Up-town Manhattan.*

The monument has never had a better setting in its history. While it has been the key vista for the traffic on streets entering the intersection, it has never been really approachable as a good place to sit and enjoy the city. Now it is both looked at from afar and approached up close to be better understood and actually used.

Night view of Columbus Circle Plaza.

SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Selection Committee lauded the design of Columbus Circle for completing the redefinition of an important but failing New York City public space. The designers, they felt, did a great job of cleaning up and re-creating a space that had essentially no pedestrian function into an attractive and enticing place. They felt that the Columbus Circle redesign showed the appropriate governmental role and response to private development in creating the infrastructure and public spaces that helps the rest to be better. While the lack of focus on maintenance budgets is a problem, it is one that is easily addressable in the future. The committee was impressed by the design process through which this apparently simple space was the result of a complex set of needs and interactions between the below grade infrastructure, traffic circle design, and pedestrian requirements. The resulting design handles traffic better than ever before and provides a new and elegant pedestrian space.

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Silver Medal Winner

Crossroads Project and Marsupial Bridge

Milwaukee, Wisconsin


43
N Holton St
Beerline B
District
Milwaukee River
N Commerce St
Urban Plaza and
Marsupial Bridge
N Water St
Lakefront
Brewery
Crossroads
Bus Shelter
E Pleasant St
E Brady St
Riverwalk
N Water St
Downtown
MILWAUKEE
43
Lake
Michigan
794

The Crossroads Project At-A-Glance

WHAT IS THE CROSSROADS PROJECT?

- A new wood, glass, and steel bus shelter and plaza located on Brady Street, at the gateway to the Crossroads project.
- An urban plaza replacing an under-bridge space that attracted nuisance crimes.
- A pedestrian bridge linking the Brady Street neighborhood with other communities in the city.

PROJECT GOALS

- To provide an improved pedestrian connection between Brady Street and nearby neighborhoods.
- To enhance residents' connections with the Milwaukee River by providing a link to the River Walk and bike path networks.
- To enliven a space beneath existing viaduct infrastructure that was abandoned and replace it with a safe and attractive venue for gatherings, art installations, and public use.
- To promote economic development while reducing dependence on the automobile, and promote alternative modes of transportation.
- To elevate the quality of infrastructure design in Milwaukee.

Project Chronology

1993 Brady Street BID established.

1995 Brady Street streetscape enhancements implemented.

1998 Julilly Kohler, then President of the BID, first conceives of Marsupial Pedestrian Bridge.

1998-1999 Julilly Kohler lobbies city, state and federal government to fund the Marsupial Bridge.

1999 Brady Street BID hires La Dallman to design master plan encompassing the Brady Street bus shelter, urban plaza, and Marsupial Bridge.

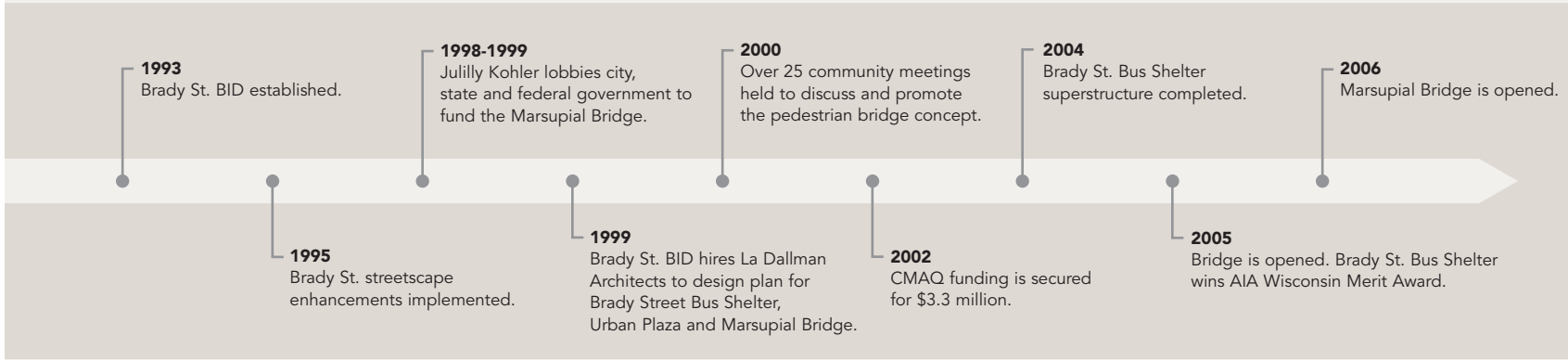
2000 Over 25 community meetings held to discuss and promote the pedestrian bridge concept.

2000 Design for bus shelter begins.

2002 Milwaukee DPW, with assistance from La Dallman, applies for federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds.

2002 CMAQ funding is secured for $3.3 million, requiring an 80/20 federal/local split.

2002 Brady Street bus shelter foundation is poured. La Dallman Architects and Bloom Consultants team together to compete for the project. Design work of Marsupial Bridge and urban plaza begins.



2003 First design is bid and comes in 20% o ver budget. Bus shelter wins an Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture Design Award.

2004 Brady Street bus shelter superstructure is installed; Marsupial Bridge is re-designed.

2004 Bridge construction begins.

2005 Bridge opens. Brady Street bus shelter wins AIA Wisconsin Merit Award.

2006 Marsupial Bridge opens. Marsupial Bridge and Urban Plaza wins an Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture Design Award.

KEY PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEWED

Architects and Consultants:
Grace La, La Dallman Architects, Inc.
James Dallman, La Dallman Architects, Inc.
Yan Nenaydykh, P.E., Bloom Consultants
Noele Stolmack, Lighting Design

Government:
Mayor Tom Barrett
Former Mayor John Norquist
Alderman Mike D'Amato
Jeff Polenske, P.E., City Engineer, City of Milwaukee, Department of Public Works
Michael Loughran, P.E., Chief Planning and Developments Engineer, City of Milwaukee, Transportation Section
Bob Greenstreet, RIBA, PhD, Director of Planning and Design, Department of City Development, Milwaukee, and Dean, School of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
Ann E. Beier, City Dept. of Environmental Sustainability (Green Team)

Neighborhood:
Gary Ahrens, Milwaukee Rowing Club
Lynn Broaddus, Friends of Milwaukee Rivers
Rai Chi, artist
Kae Donlevy, RiverPulse
Timothy Ehlinger, Asst. Professor, Aquatic Ecology, Conservation and Environmental Restoration, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
Mike Eitell, owner, Trocadero Restaurant
Steve Filmanowicz, resident and former press director for Mayor Norquist
Gary Grunau, GPD Gilbane, and Tandem Development (Phone)
Kimberly Gleffe, River Revitalization Foundation
Steven J. Jacquart, Intergovernmental Coordinator, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District
Julilly Kohler, Brady Street Business Improvement District and Brady Area Foundation for Arts and Education
Russ Klitsch, Lakefront Brewery
Deb Loewen, Wildspace Dance
Dan Pomeroy, Clear Channel
Shea Schachameyer, Bicycle Federation
Pat Suminski, Brady Street BID

Project Description

Milwaukee's history parallels that of other northern post-industrial cities. Originally Juneautown on the east side of the Milwaukee River and Kilbourntown on the west side, it was joined in 1846 and established as the City of Milwaukee, with a population of about 10,000. Over time, immigrants from Canada and Europe, particularly Germany, arrived. Many German immigrants were fleeing religious and intellectual persecution in Europe, and sought political freedom. By 1860, as the city became increasingly industrialized, the city had grown to 45,000, and by the 1880s German immigrants and their American-born children were a majority of Milwaukee's population.

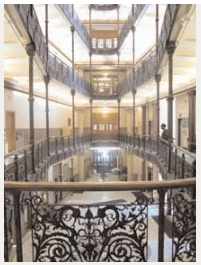
By the end of the nineteenth century, Milwaukee was a very diverse city, with British, Russian, Irish, Italian and Polish immigrants in addition to the large German population. Its economy developed as a port city, with steel and iron becoming the dominant industry, closely followed by meat production, tanning, brewing, and flour milling. Consistent with the German immigrant tradition of political liberalism, in 1910 the city elected Emil Seidel as its first Socialist mayor, establishing a progressive political tradition that continues to this day. Mayor Dan Hoen, elected on the Socialist ticket in 1916, is associated with the "golden age" in the city's government, one of "honesty and efficiency." In the mid-twentieth century, Milwaukee's land area doubled and the population grew from 587,000 in 1940 to 741,000 in 1960.

View from Marsupial Bridge toward Lakefront Brewery.

When America entered World War II, Milwaukee played a central role in the production of munitions and equipment. Known as the "machine shop of the world," many workers came to Milwaukee's thriving factories and stayed on after the war. With population growth came an increase in the African-American population, as well as growth in inner-city ghettos, and increased rates of urban poverty. Milwaukee, like Newark and Detroit, experienced civil disturbances in 1967, brought about by ongoing racial tensions.

As with other Rust Belt cities, industrial jobs eventually declined, second-generation Milwaukeeans began moving to the suburbs and by the 1960s the city was facing economic decline and urban blight. During those same decades the population declined from 700,000 to about 590,000. Over time, more positive forces emerged in the rebuilding of the city. The movement to preserve Milwaukee's historic infrastructure gained traction in the 1960s, and a remarkable number of handsome nineteenth century buildings were saved throughout the downtown.

After years of population loss, Milwaukee is now experiencing population growth in the downtown, mainly from empty nesters and young urban professionals seeking to move back into the city, or to live close to their jobs. Close to 3,000 new condominium units have been built in Milwaukee in recent years, and vacancy rates continue to be relatively low. The attractiveness of the city is



enhanced by an affordable cost of living, the relocation of at least one corporate headquarters (Manpower Inc.) into the city, and a rediscovery of the richness of Milwaukee's natural and cultural resources. The city offers many amenities—its expansive lakefront boasts large swaths of well-maintained and heavily-used public open space; it is 90 miles from Chicago, close enough for summer homes for boaters who dislike the cost and congestion of marinas in Chicago; and it is home to several international companies including Pabst, Bucyrus International, Harley Davidson, Miller SAB, and Quad Graphics to name a few.

Milwaukee is also home to Marquette University, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and several major charitable non-profits such as the Bradley, Bader, and Pabst foundations, which have been generous in support of their city for many years. The 2001 completion of the new Milwaukee Art Museum, designed on the lakefront by Santiago Calatrava, has also enhanced the city's attractiveness. (Milwaukee was recently ranked fifth in the country in per capita local donations to its art community.) These factors combined with the more recent commitments to pedestrian amenities such as the River Walk have made Milwaukee an increasingly attractive area to live and work.

Left: *Milwaukee Art Museum, designed by Santiago Calatrava.*
Right: *Recently restored Milwaukee City Hall.*

THE CROSSROADS NEIGHBORHOOD

The Crossroads Project was created with several goals in mind: to elevate the quality of public infrastructure design; to create new quality public space; and to connect several neighborhoods located just north of, and adjacent to, downtown with each other and with the river. The Marsupial Bridge spans the Milwaukee River at the west edge of the Brady Street Neighborhood, linking Brady Street with Brewer's Hill, Beerline B, and the Harambee neighborhoods. Brewers' Hill is characterized by single-family homes and "Polish flats," small wood bungalows that have been raised to add a second story. This area started to gentrify about twenty years ago that could once be purchased for $20,000 now cost over $200,000. The neighborhood is currently quite stable, with a diverse group of residents and some new commercial uses and high-end restaurants located close to the river. Prior to the Marsupial Bridge, residents of Brewer's Hill were cut off from the shops and restaurants on Brady Street which is the closest commercial district for their neighborhood.

Just below Brewer's Hill, along the river's edge, is the emerging Beerline B District. Formerly the site of large abandoned breweries, tanneries and other industrial uses, Beerline B was designated during the administration of former mayor John Norquist as a site for new residential development (see below). This part of town, along the Commercial Street side of the river, was the site of major civil disturbances in the 1970s, and had a reputation as a tough part of

town. It is, however, walking distance from downtown and accessible by the River Walk, a pedestrian pathway linking the downtown with nearby neighborhoods along the Milwaukee River. Through tax increment financing mechanisms, the city invested funds in cleaning up that bank of the river—removing brownfield contamination caused by tanneries and breweries, improving roads, and generally preparing the area for private development.

At this time, close to 300 new condominiums have been completed in Beerline B, and another 200 are "in the pipeline." These units are occupied by "empty nest" couples, many of whom are moving back into the city from the suburbs, and by young urban professionals working in the downtown. Beerline B is anchored by Lakefront Brewery, a locally-owned brewery and restaurant located at the foot of the Marsupial Bridge, and by several new major condominium developments already in place. A major development site, "The Edge" abuts the bridge on this side of the river and sits on the site of the former Schlitz brewery. Although it was purchased in 1983, the

New construction in Beerline B.

owner, Tandem Development, now feels the time is right to develop it. According to Gary Grunau, President of Tandem Development, the Marsupial Bridge is a strong selling point for his u nits because people buying these units w ant a pedestrian-friendly , urban environment, and do not want to be dependent on their cars.

The Brady Street neighborhood has long been a central commercial street for surrounding neighborhoods, and also forms the shortest connection—a "land bridge"— between Lake Mic higan and the Milwaukee River. Historically the west side of the neighborhood has been home to mixed ethnic populations, including Irish, Polish, and Italian residents, while the Brady Street terminus along the lake shore includes multi-million dollar homes, new condominiums, and major public institutions. Beginning in the '60s, as second-generation ethnic households mo ved to the suburbs, Brady Street began to be associated with the "hippie" community.

River Walk in downtown Milwaukee.

In 1979, two large public housing projects were built on the west end of Brady Street. These projects attracted nuisance crimes and, together with other economic and demographic factors, contributed to a period of significant decline w hich persisted through the 1980s. Together these neighborhoods constitute the densest cluster of residents in southeast Wisconsin.

EARLY DAYS

Julilly Kohler, then a Milw aukee gallery o wner, moved from the suburbs to the Brady Street district in the 1980s. Despite its history as a mixed ethnic neighborhood with a stable commer cial street, Brady Street w as at that time experiencing a period of serious decline. In fact, K ohler purchased her house for $23,000 and was considered b y many of her friends to be something of an urban pioneer. The characteristic pattern of residential lots in the neighborhood was narrow 27 foot frontages, deep enough to locate small ancillary "mother-in-law" houses at the rear of the lot.

In 1991, when Kohler moved her gallery to Brady Street, she realized the street was in such terrible condition that something had to be done to create a viable en vironment for local businesses. Vacant storefronts, drug tr afficking, vagrants, and deterior ating property were common on the street. Because Br ady Street had once been an active and healthy commercial center, however, there were still

some stalwart merchants with restaurants and various service establishments who had kept their doors open through the area's ups and downs. An activist by nature, Kohler bought two of the most derelict properties on the street and rehabilitated them, creating storefront space on the ground floor. She then began to organize merchants and others to clean up the street and return it to its former economic viability.

In 1993, Kohler's organizational efforts led to the creation of the Brady Street Business Improvement District (BID), through which merchants borrowed $500,000 from the city for street improvements of various kinds, and for strengthening neighborhood identity. The BID was able to have one of the public housing projects returned to elderly use, and to step up crime prevention and enforcement in the other. The BID also created a vocabulary of artistic paving of green concrete along a band between the sidewalk and the street. In front of each store and building, along Brady Street's ten-block core, a pictograph is etched into the concrete, telling of the building's history. The "Flow" installation provided a focal point for organizing the neighborhood, and helped create a strong visual identity for the street, re-establishing the reputation of Brady Street as a place that respected creativity, tolerated difference, and was committed to neighborhood stability.

Julilly Kohler (second from right) and members of the Brady Street community.

Today Brady Street continues as a thriving retail and neighborhood shopping street, housing over 100 businesses, including restaurants, shops and nightclubs. It hosts an annual artisan food festival and other art-based events, and has been enhanced and promoted as the shortest distance from nearby neighborhoods to the Lake. As Brady Street continued its comeback and gained in economic strength, Julilly Kohler pondered ways in which Brady Street might be better connected to nearby communities and to the river itself, which was largely cut off from pedestrians. After a conventional pedestrian bridge, separate from the Holden Street Viaduct, had been proposed by the city and rejected by the neighborhood, Kohler conceived of the Marsupial Bridge, one that could be integrated into the viaduct itself. The Brady Street BID then hired La Dallman Architects to devise a master plan strategy which provided the visual and graphic material to lobby the city, the state, and the federal government to find funding for the project. With the help of then Congressman Tom Barrett and the DPW, the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant was finally identified as a viable funding source.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Milwaukee's socialist background has led to a tradition of mayors heavily involved in community development, and four-term mayor John Norquist (1988-2003) considered himself a part of this progressive tradition. Norquist (now Director of the Congress for New Urbanism, headquartered in Chicago), also had a strong commitment to the urban built environment and a particular interest in reducing dependence on vehicles, celebrating the density of the downtown, promoting urban infill developments, and building pedestrian infrastructure. According to Norquist, "the greatest asset any city has is its density."

Norquist and planning director Peter Park have been credited with making a major contribution to restoring the physical and natural fabric of the city. It was in the Norquist administration that restoring the Milwaukee River was made a high priority as an essential element of "connective tissue" in the city. Restoration involved developing the $14 million River Walk and establishing the infrastructure and a planning framework for much of the river, including the pedestrian-oriented development that is continuing today. The River Walk currently extends into the Beerline B district from downtown and is scheduled to be linked in a continuous pathway that will include the upcoming Edge development, as well as properties already developed to the north.

Through a tax increment financing district (TIF), the city cleaned up the pollution created by the tanneries and other former industrial uses, installed necessary road improvements along Commercial Street and added infrastructure that would support housing development on the north side of the river, across from Brady Street. Within the last five years, a study by a UMW architecture studio resulted in the removal of the Park East Freeway Spur, creating a large swath of developable land adjacent to the downtown.

Support for these policies has carried over into the administration of Mayor Tom Barrett, who maintains a commitment to improving public access to the river, strengthening pedestrian connections, increasing the number of downtown residents, and introducing public transit in Milwaukee. Barrett was elected mayor in 2004 after serving five terms in the U.S. Congress, and has strengthened his planning efforts by appointing University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee (UWM) Dean of Architecture Bob Greenstreet as his Director of City Development. (Greenstreet had served as Chairman of the Planning Commission under Norquist.) Under Mayor Barrett, Greenstreet brings the expertise and resources of the university, (UWM is one of the top twenty schools of architecture in the country), to the urban planning effort, establishing a new model for interaction between an urban architecture school and city government. It was Barrett who, when still a Congressman, identified CMAQ funds as a viable source of funding for the bridge.

2007

Photo: La Dallman Architects

DEVELOPMENT CURRENTLY IN PROGRESS

NEW DEVELOPMENT

NEW CONNECTIVE PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS

Under Greenstreet and Barrett's leadership, the Department of City Development is currently working on a citywide plan for Milwaukee, and on plans for twelve different Milwaukee neighborhoods. Mayor Barrett has also appointed Milwaukee's first Office of Sustainability, or "Green Team," which includes representatives from a wide variety of environmental groups in the area and is responsible for coordinating ongoing efforts to improve water quality, reduce energy consumption, and stimulate economic development in the green technology sector. Greenstreet notes that the Crossroads Project and Marsupial Bridge contribute design excellence to the cityscape, serve to reconnect neighborhoods within the city, and show the power of grassroots efforts.

Mike D'Amato's aldermanic district of 42,000 is the most affluent in Milwaukee and includes multi-million dollar homes on the lakefront, Polish flats on Brewer's Hill, new condominiums in Beerline B, and the vibrant Brady Street neighborhood. D'Amato believes that the bridge, bus shelter, and urban plaza set an important

Recent development along Milwaukee River with Holden Viaduct at center.

New construction in Beerline B.

La Dallman Architects Inc.

Crossroads area development.

precedent for providing well-designed urban infrastructure. He notes that urban infrastructure was, in the early days of city building, a focus of design rather than an afterthought, and in that context the small cost increment for doing urban infrastructure at the highest level, as per Crossroads, is well worthwhile.

THEMES

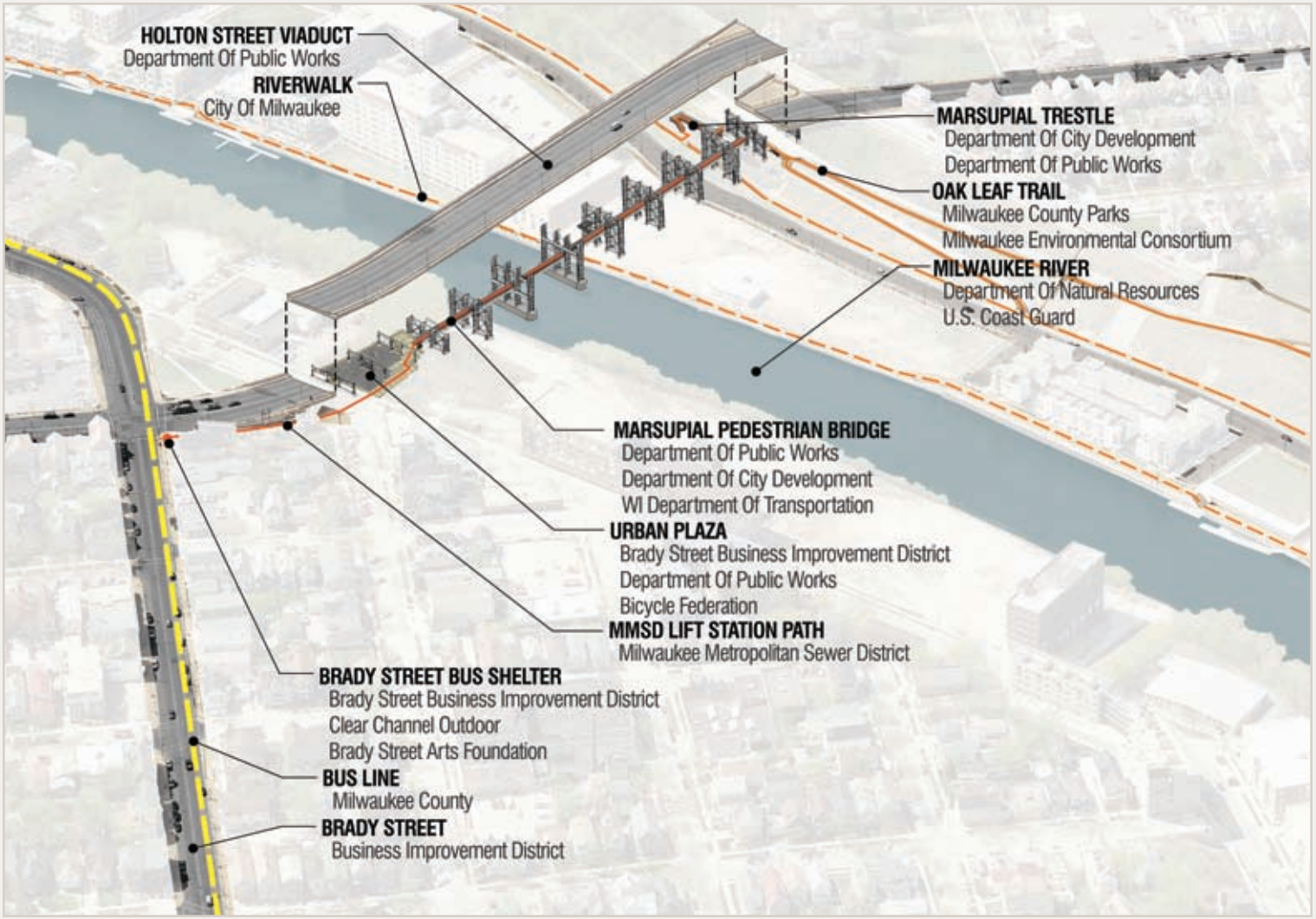
Everyone involved in Crossroads agrees that the driving force behind the project was Julilly Kohler, former president of the Brady Street BID. She, and others involved in the Crossroads believe the Marsupial Bridge to be part of an ongoing process of reknitting the fabric of the city and overcoming the separations caused by under-used industrial structures, vehicle-oriented viaducts, and vacant land. The Crossroads Project is centered on the concept of connection — between neighborhoods, among neighborhood residents, between the Brady Street commercial center and other parts of the city, between local residents and the river, and between local residents and their urban infrastructure. The previous infrastructure linking these neighborhoods had major limitations. While the existing 1925 Holton Street viaduct does have side-walks, they lie on either side of four lanes of fast-moving traffic, separated from oncoming traffic by jersey barriers. A pedestrian or cyclist crossing this bridge on the viaduct is well above the river, and is on a dangerous and unwelcoming path. The urban plaza and Marsupial Bridge are designed as a pedestrian alternative to this dangerous environment.

ARCHITECTURE

Design

When funding was finally secured for the Brady Street Bus Shelter, Julilly Kohler approached Bob Greenstreet for suggestions about architects. It was immediately obvious to Greenstreet that recently-hired Professor Grace La, whose private practice with husband James Dallman was considered one of the "hottest" architectural practices in Milwaukee, was the right firm for the job, in part because of La's interest in urban infrastructure and her expertise in construction technology. La Dallman as a firm also has a strong commitment to the importance of design in all aspects of urban life.

La and Dallman were intrigued by the project. Their architectural focus had long been to bring design "to the table" not only for high-end building design, but also in the design of even the most mundane infrastructure elements. La and Dallman understood the importance of the many connections the bridge and plaza would provide and were committed to designing something that had intrinsic beauty and would be an addition to the urban landscape, helping to establish a new sense of place, close to the river and intertwined with the dramatic structure of the viaduct itself.



La Dallman Architects Inc.

The Crossroads Project includes three elements: the Brady Street bus shelter, the urban plaza, and the Marsupial Bridge. As part of the design process, La Dallman and the Brady Street BID held 25 community meetings for potential stakeholders to solicit input of all kinds, and the resulting structures reflect that design input. The Brady Street bus shelter, which was built at a cost of $160,000, was the first element in the project to be completed. Funded by the Brady Street BID and the Brady Foundation for the Arts, with contributions from Clear Channel Communications and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, it is located at the western terminus of Brady Street adjacent to the Holton Viaduct, above and across the street from the urban plaza and Marsupial Bridge below. With its glass, mahogany, and steel modern structure, brightly-painted frame, outdoor plaza, and transparency, it announces clearly that something different is happening here. It contains a small sheltered seating area, with advertising panels oriented to public interest information, and a small outdoor seating space, landscaped with native prairie grasses and other indigenous plants. Water from the roof of the shelter is captured in a small culvert that provides irrigation for the shelter's natural landscaping.

The shelter takes on special significance in Milwaukee, where the bus system is the only form of public transportation available. The structure is intended to provide a precedent for imaginative design in the bus shelter system and to lead people down the slope to the street below, where the plaza and the Marsupial Bridge come into view. At the lower level, just opposite the plaza, the Trocadero Restaurant and a former Sewer District pump station structure (which has been decorated with sculpture by Brady Street artists) announce again the presence of the district.

Directly across Water Street is the urban plaza, a new public open space beneath the viaduct that also forms the approach to the Marsupial Bridge. Its open and well lighted design is a response to community concern about the former space, which had become a gathering place for drug transactions and the homeless. The plaza is now brightened by bench lights, also known as the "light slabs" that serve as concrete seats set in a bed of crushed, local stone. The overall visual impact when benches are lighted is luminous, creating a "moonscape" environment in a place where planting would be difficult due to low natural light levels. The original design also included a series of large boulders, interspersed among the bench

Photo: Jim Brozek

Left: *Urban Plaza.*
Right: *Detail of Brady Street bus shelter.*

lights, but these were eliminated to reduce cost as part of value engineering efforts.

The design is intended to introduce light and activity to a derelict space, and to create a kind of stage for uses of many different kinds. To date, the space has been used for informal gatherings, dance performance, and for outdoor movies in the summer months. At the time of the site visit, skate boarders were also making use of its concrete parapets, and families with children were enjoying the benches en route from Brady Street to neighborhoods located across the bridge.

It is the Marsupial Bridge, however, that is the clear centerpiece of the project. The design of the bridge is intended to enhance connectivity at as many levels as possible, though at the same time it stands alone as a handsome element of Milwaukee's urban infrastructure. Located between the natural river environment and the very industrial viaduct structure, the bridge had the challenging mandate of providing an intimate experience that connects to the river and movement of the water, while integrating itself into the forest of steel beams that form the underside of the viaduct.

The concept of intertwining the pedestrian bridge under and through the existing structure of the Holton Street viaduct was an unusual one that appealed to the imagination of the city residents,

and architects. That viaduct rises close to 60 feet above the river, and was built with extra strength because it was a bascule bridge that once opened for passing ships, and also because electric streetcars once traversed its span. It could therefore easily carry the weight of a pedestrian bridge, without additional structural support. The height of the viaduct also allowed for the required 26-foot clearance from the water surface, still allowing over 30 feet of space between head height and the underside of the viaduct.

On both sides of the river, the Marsupial Bridge terminates at transitional sites that are not yet developed. On the Brady Street side of the river is the urban plaza, located underneath the Holton Street viaduct, which creates transition from street to bridge. On either side of the urban plaza are handsome large brick industrial structures that were former tanneries—both are currently under

Marsupial Bridge from street level, and at grade.

agreement with developers for adaptation to mixed-use developments. Trocadero restaurant, popular among cyclists using the bike path, is immediately opposite the urban plaza and just below the bus shelter. On the other side of the river, the bridge terminates at a major Beerline B development site, "The Edge," anchored by a brewery, and a restaurant. The Edge is slated for development by civic leader Gary Grunau, whose company Tandem Development, has recently begun development of the site.

Materials for the pedestrian bridge were chosen to provide a counterpoint to the heavily industrial structure of the iron bridge. The architects were striving to create a more inviting and intimate environment, and chose Ipe, a very dense and durable wood, as the walking surface, to create a warmer feel and appearance. The architect took advantage of the large number of local builders and craftsmen who are expert in working with concrete and metals. As a result, they were able to use local vendors for much of the fabrication. Metal railings reference the industrial environment of the Marsupial Bridge but provide a light and contemporary design detail, which is echoed in the bus shelter. Post-tensioned concrete forms the base of the bridge, and echoes natural spinal forms on its sculpted underside. Because many users and neighbors look up at the bridge from the river banks below, particularly on the Lake Front and Beerline B side of the river, the bridge's sculpted concrete underside adds an attractive sculptural element to the bridge experience.

The design also places emphasis on creating an intimate experience through the 650-foot bridge crossing. The bridge undulates and curves somewhat, giving it a very interesting appearance, and the wood railings and walking surface, as well as the lighting, enhance the warmth of the bridge environment. Muffled sound from traffic above adds to the feeling of being suspended and in a separate environment as one traverses the length of the bridge. The bridge provides unique proximity to the river, and many people pause along the bridge to watch the water current, and to watch rowers from nearby boathouses. It also affords unique views south toward downtown, as well as up river along the Hank Aaron River Path and the Beerline B developments. The journey across the bridge also provides a dramatic visual connection with the well-maintained viaduct structure and the urban forest of girders and structural towers that enclose and support the bridge.

Left: *View from Bridge terminus to Gallun Tannery.*
Right: *Jogging on the Bridge.*

LIGHTING

La Dallman considered quite a few lighting designers for the bridge and plaza. They wished to avoid the coldness and excessive "light spill" associated with the usual lighting solutions for urban locations. They therefore chose a theatrical lighting designer, Noele Stolmack, to work with them to create the warm, dramatic lighting environment they were seeking. The result is three levels of lighting: low lighting along the base of the bridge which illuminates its surface; overhead theatrical framing projectors (manufactured in Wisconsin) that provide a series of light hotspots and varying light intensity across the bridge, yet no light spill to the riparian landscape below; and the signature bench lighting of the urban plaza, which keeps the space illuminated in a creative and unique way during the evening hours. The spotlight system, chosen for its ability to provide true color rendition, and for its minimal light spill onto the river, shines down on the bridge from above, creating an interesting interplay with the undulation and subtle curves of the bridge. Together the three lighting systems create a dramatic effect and a high level of light on both bridge and plaza.

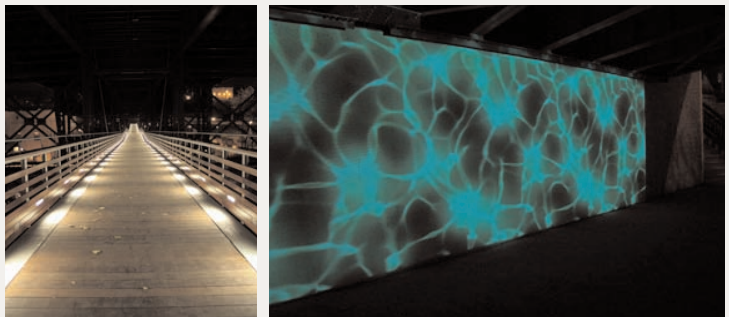


Photo: La Dallman Architects Inc.

Night lighting at Bridge and Urban Plaza.

Although DPW owns and operates the Marsupial Bridge, there is a minor dispute about replacement of the light bulbs on the bridge. The lower lighting system was experiencing the end of bulb life, and 40% were burned out, as well as some of the overhead lighting. The city was somewhat reluctant to undertake replacement of bulbs in a system that was non-standard and unfamiliar to them. Luckily, the lighting manufacturer, a local company, has offered to do the replacement themselves.

Structure

The development of the bridge's structural system is a fascinating story in itself. La Dallman originally designed the bridge so that steel cables would carry much of the load, with a steel support structure underneath. Although the cable design proved viable, city engineers declared the proposed steel structure underneath the bridge to be "fracture critical," i.e., the loss of a single steel girder could threaten the structural integrity of the bridge. This invoked a requirement for annual visual inspection by a person standing no more than 10 feet away, to look for potential faults. Such an inspection would require the use of barges and other heavy equipment, and would come at extraordinary costs. The designers chose to re-design the bridge and replace the steel girders with post-tensioned concrete.

The post-tensioned concrete system involves a system of cables which are embedded in the concrete and pulled to the required tension of 9,000 pounds per square inch by hydraulic equipment in each of the three concrete sections when the concrete is still "green." This concrete system created the opportunity to designthe very sculptural underside of the bridge, enhanced the structural capacity of the bridge, improved its appearance from below, and comes with a 100-year guarantee. The view from the underside has added an important element to the bridge's design identity.

The engineers also designed a series of cross-bracing elements under the concrete, at each of the tower locations, dubbing these the "Milwaukee and Illinois crabs." These X-shaped elements vary in their angular construction depending on the curve of the bridge plan in relation to the supporting towers. They were the subject of a friendly competition between the Milwaukee and Illinois offices of Bloom Consultants during the design charrette when they had to redesign the structural system in a four-month period. According to Yan Nenaydykh, the structural engineer in charge of the project, the degree of collaboration required between the architect, engineer, and the Department of Public Works was unprecedented and resulted in a combination of structural elements (not to mention 93 sheets of drawings) which he feels are absolutely unique.

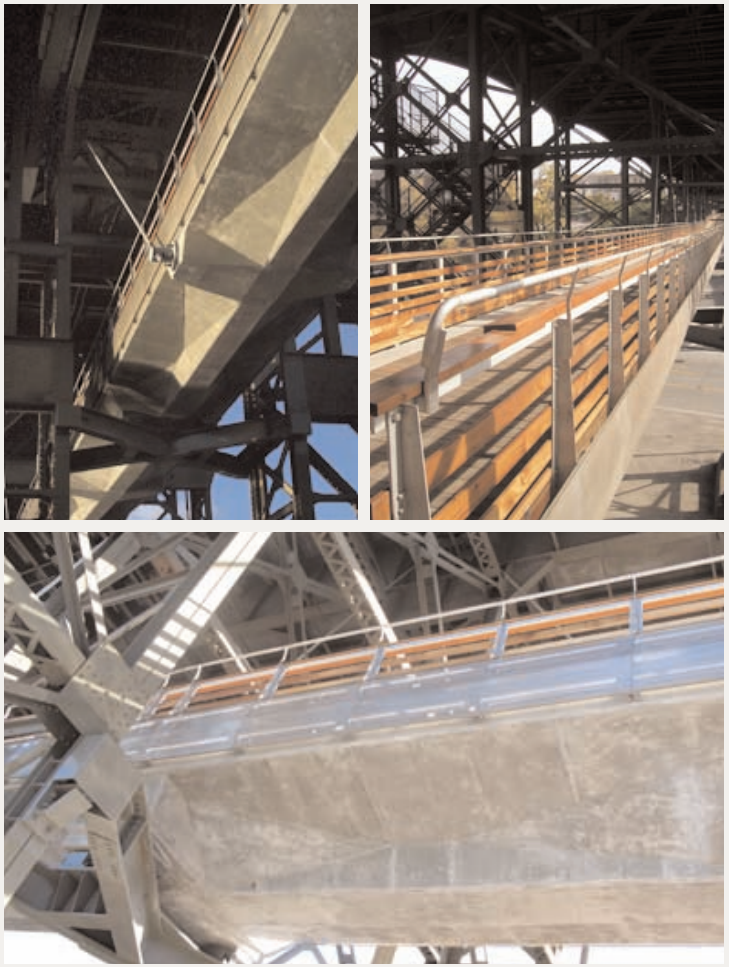


Photo: Jim Brozek

Photo: La Dallman Architects Inc.

Post-tensioned concrete work and Marsupial Bridge rail.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

As the design process proceeded and the need for redesigning the bridge's structural system became clear, the city, the architect, and the structural engineer participated in an intense collaboration to redesign it in a way that would meet the budget. The dialogue required balancing the city's safety and inspection requirements with the design intent of the architect and the structural needs of the project. In the end, the bridge became a project in which all parties felt a strong degree of ownership and pride. There are some who feel the collaborative design experience helped open up a new way of thinking about urban infrastructure at the city level; all agree that the DPW played an essential role in project development.

FINANCING

The Brady Street bus shelter was built before the bridge and urban plaza and was financed separately, at a cost of $160,000. It was financed by the Brady Area Foundation for Arts and Education, and the Brady Street BID. It was also supported by Clear Channel Outdoor, which provided partial funding for the shelter and donated the glass panels which are used for public service advertising.

The urban plaza and bridge were funded by a $2.7 million CMAQ grant, matched with a $650,000 grant from the City of Milwaukee. CMAQ funds are federal funds, administered through the state, then the city, and are available to areas designated as "non-attainment areas," i.e., they have not met the air quality standards established by the agency. The funds are available for projects intended to reduce automobile emissions and contribute to the air quality. Despite the fact that the architects had worked with construction estimates throughout the design process, initial bids were 20% over budget, and a value engineering effort was required.

The architects were very deliberate about their approach to keep the project within budget. They eliminated certain pieces of the plan altogether, rather than modify and compromise the entire design, expecting (correctly) that these pieces could be added back in at a later time. For example, the stairway at the west side of the bridge, providing a vertical connection to the riverbank below, was dropped. In addition, landscaping on both sides of the bridge was also eliminated, as was the creation of a bridge overlook and public space at the west side of the bridge, integral with the abandoned railroad trestle at that location. The stair and trestle overlook have been included in plans for use of earmarked federal funds during the coming year.

When the design was completed, DPW engineer Mike Loughran notes that, as part of the redesign process, the city was required to re-bid the job. He was impressed that La Dallman was willing to

draft most of the RFP, knowing that they themselves would have to enter an open bidding process, and might not be awarded the final contract. In the end, though both engineering teams on the short list asked La Dallman to partner with them, La Dallman elected to team exclusively with Bloom Consultants. The team of La Dallman and Bloom was ultimately awarded the contract.

USES AND USERS

Although the Marsupial Bridge is still relatively new and is lacking some planned project components, the bus shelter, plaza, and bridge appear to be fulfilling the goal of re-connecting Brady Street with nearby neighborhoods and with the river. The bridge is used during both daytime and evening hours by a wide variety of people. One group interviewed was in town from the suburbs for the evening and had crossed over the bridge from the Beerline B condominiums to a restaurant on Brady Street; another was a mother and son from the Harambee neighborhood who had come to shop on Brady Street, and were enjoying the urban plaza en route to the bridge; another was an "empty nest" couple taking their grandchildren for a walk along the bridge and river pathway; rowers from the nearby Milwaukee Rowing Club report taking pleasure in rowing beneath the sculptural underside of the bridge, and cyclists and bike commuters have adopted the bridge's bike path. Many joggers, bike riders, Beer Line, and Brady Street residents walk dogs across and along the bridge, and many kids cross over the bridge to get home from school. Even in the cool early spring weather, the bridge appears to be well-integrated into community life, even though it was not at the level of use that might be expected when the Beerline B development is complete.

The urban plaza, which has revitalized a derelict and abandoned space, has been used for a variety of events. The cycling club stages free movies there during the summer months; a local dance company, Wildspace, staged a performance there last summer, and people use it as an informal gathering space. Julilly Kohler states that it was their intention to "build it and get out of the way," allowing for uses of the space that would be spontaneous and largely unanticipated.

ART

The arts play a prominent role in the Brady Street neighborhood. The Brady Street BID has already enhanced its neighborhood identity through an extended art project involving creative green-tinted pavers and historical information presented as part of the paving system along the sidewalk. The interest in the arts on the part of Kohler and the Brady Street BID is now being further developed by *RiverPulse,* an artistic and environmental education collaborative designed to increase awareness of the Milwaukee River Basin and the water quality in the river itself. *RiverPulse* includes several components—a series of interactive video installations to be located at the urban plaza and at over twenty locations along the river, well beyond Milwaukee and throughout the Menomonee River Basin; a *RiverPulse* website that will provide interactive activities and lesson plans as well as a "virtual watershed" and other educational/environmental information; and the *RiverPulse* video art.

The basic image of *RiverPulse,* created by artist Ray Chi, is termed a "caustic," a depiction of the pattern formed when light hits water, much like the pattern gentle waves make on the bottom of a swimming pool. In the initial condition the image is a clear, light blue pattern that moves in response to movement in the river. As the river temperature rises, the image becomes redder. As the turbidity of the water increases, it the image looses focus and movement; as the electric field of the water changes, small star-shaped light points become more numerous. At a recent prototype test (attended by the site visit team), this image was projected against the supporting wall of the viaduct, at the level of the urban plaza, and created a very dramatic effect. It attracted a crowd of passersby, and lots of inquiries about what was being communicated. *River Pulse* holds considerable promise as a way of further animating both the Crossroads Project area and the length of the river's edge as it extends to different counties.

The first *RiverPulse* kiosk was installed along Brady Street in the summer of 2007. The project is supported by the Brady Area Foundation for Arts and Education, the Brady Street BID, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers, the Urban Ecology Center, and other philanthropic and environmentally oriented groups in the area.

IMPACTS

It is difficult to sort out impacts directly attributable to the Crossroads Project from changes in the area that are related to new residential building in Beerline B, improvements and revitalization of the Brady Street business district; further development of the River Walk to the Brady Street area; and the success of both the Lakefront

Brewery and Trocadero restaurant, both immediately adjacent to the bridge.

Merchants and developers from the Brady Street and Commerce Street sides of the river feel that by connecting Brewers Hill and Beerline B with the Brady Street neighborhoods, the bridge has helped create a walkable, pedestrian environment in the city, something that is important for people moving into these areas. This has benefited both residents who now walk to Brady Street for restaurants or services, and the merchants on Brady Street who gain additional customers. One of the city's leading real estate developers feels unequivocally that the bridge is "doing everything it was intended to do." The units planned for his project are already 40% sold, and he feels the pedestrian environment created by the River Walk and the Marsupial Bridge are factors in the healthy market.

Use of the Bridge appears to be still somewhat uneven— heavy in the summer when river-oriented events are held, but sparse in the winter months. For bikers and runners the use is more consistent throughout the seasons. Presumably, as time goes on and the bridge becomes better known, use patterns will increase in all seasons. Even at this early stage, however, it can be said about the bridge that:

- It enhances the connection between Brady St;, Brewer's Hill, Beerline B, and Harambee neighborhoods;
- It has brought new customers to businesses on the Brady Street side and the Commerce Street side;
- It creates a new link in the bike trail system within and around Milwaukee;
- It provides a close visual connection to the Milwaukee River;
- It provides a dramatic and uniquely urban connection with the historic iron structure of the Holden Street viaduct;
- It sets and important precedent for design quality in urban infrastructure in the City of Milwaukee;
- It is a model for use of left-over interstitial urban spaces.

FUTURE PLANS

The Crossroads project is still technically incomplete. Future plans include the addition (in the upcoming year), of the stair connecting the bridge to the river, adjacent to the Lakefront Brewery; a public overlook at the site of the old railroad; and additional landscaping. There is currently a discussion underway about whether an elevator should be included with the stair in order to meet ADA requirements. In addition, at some time in the future, the project will benefit from additional landscaping on both sides of the bridge. The addition of the River Pulse art installations will further animate the urban

plaza. Finally, the project could also benefit from additional signage, indicating its presence from both the Brady Street and Beerline B sides of the river. As it now stands, it is hidden from view from the street level above the river, and from the Brady Street bus shelter, and signs indicating the pedestrian pathway would likely increase use to some degree.

Assessing Project Success

SUCCESS IN MEETING PROJECT GOALS

The goals for this project were straightforward. In summary, it was intended and designed to enhance connection. In this context, connection has meaning at many different physical and social levels.

Left: *View from Bridge toward downtown.*
Right: *Urban Plaza view.*

1. *To provide an improved pedestrian connection between the Brady Street neighborhood and other nearby communities.*
The Marsupial Bridge provides a physical connection between the Brady Street district and emerging and existing neighborhoods on the other side of the river. Many of the users interviewed lived near the bridge on the west side and used it to access services and restaurants on the Brady Street side of the river. In the absence of hard data on this topic, we have relied on anecdotal information from merchants and residents who affirm its importance in this regard.

2. *To enhance residents' connections with the Milwaukee River by providing a link in the River Walk and bike path networks.*
This is one of the clearest outcomes of the bridge. It is heavily used by cyclists, both those using the larger regional bike path and those commuting to work. It is wide enough that pedestrians and cyclists do not seem to interfere with each other. The Trocadero restaurant, at the foot of Brady Street as well as the Roots restaurant and Lakefront Brewery on the Commerce Street side, have become something of a destination for cyclists along the path.

3. *To enhance access to the Brady Street commercial area.*
See above.

4. *To enliven a space that was a neighborhood nuisance and replace it with a safe and attractive venue for gatherings, art installations, and public use.*

This has been a clear outcome of the bridge and urban plaza. Although not heavily used in the winter months, the plaza is well-lighted throughout the year, with the sculptural light benches acting as an integral piece of art as well as providing seating elements for events such a dance and film screenings.

5. *To promote economic development while reducing dependence on the automobile, and promoting alternative modes of transportation.*

An important intent of the bridge w as to connect new and established neighborhoods with merchants and businesses on both sides of the river. At the time of the site visit it w as difficult to measure this, but various community members felt that this had in fact been a positive outcome of the bridge.

SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Selection Committee commended the design of the Marsupial Bridge for its playfulness and beauty; for strengthening the pedestrian connection among nearby neighborhoods; and for enhancing pedestrian connections to the Milw aukee River. The fact that the original idea for a pedestrian bridge came from citizen groups, and was implemented through a model process and public/pri vate partnership, made the project even more exemplary.

The Selection Committee also felt the Crossroads project provided dynamic and viable new models for unused space beneath a viaduct or bridge, and for urban bus shelters—two infrastructure elements common to cities across the country. They emphasized the importance of elevating the level of design in urban infrastructure and felt that the Crossroads Project sent an important message to cities about the need for quality design in all aspects of the cityscape.

Sources

http://www.ci.mil.wi.us
www.milwaukeecountyhistsoc.org
www.wikipedia.org

Gallen tannery site with rowers.

Silver Medal Winner

High Point Redevelopment Project

West Seattle, Washington


5
Discovery Park
• University of Washington
Union Bay
520
Puget Sound
Lake Union
Queen Anne
Madison Park •
520
5
Capitol Hill
Clyde Hill
405
Downtown
• Pike Place Market
SEATTLE
Bellevue
90
90
99
Harbor Island
• Beacon Hill
Mercer Island
5
South Seattle
West Seattle
• Georgetown
High Point
99

High Point Redevelopment At-A-Glance

WHAT IS HIGH POINT?

- Replacement of a 716-unit low-income housing project from the 1940s with a phased development consisting of 1,600 units of mixed-income housing, amenities, and services in a 120-acre planned community including:
  - 600 subsidized rental units *(344 completed in Phase 1)*
  - 100 market-rate rental units
  - 665 market-rate houses for sale *(237 completed in Phase 1)*
  - 235 senior units
  - substantial open space – parks, trails, etc.
  - amenities including a community center, library and health clinic;
- A Hope VI project developed by the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) using a variety of financing sources, including sale of land to private developers;
- A project reflecting a multi-layered public agenda and a clear set of core values that include social equity, economic justice, and environmental stewardship;
- A public/private partnership built around concern for an engaged community, a healthy environment, and quality design *(see Figure 1)*;
- An exemplary application of green or sustainable design to a building type – and at a scale – where it has had only limited exposure.

PROJECT GOALS

- To replace a decrepit public housing project, plagued by social and economic problems, with a healthy, ecologically-sound, and economically-balanced community.
- To provide one-for-one replacement for low-income, public housing units (though not all will be on site), offering the opportunity to live in the new development to as many original residents as possible.
- To integrate market-rate and low-income units and make them virtually indistinguishable from each other.
- To provide a full array of services addressing resident needs.
- To implement a state-of-the-art "natural drainage system" in order to capture rainwater runoff and improve the water quality in an adjacent watershed and salmon spawning stream.
- To engage the community (both prior residents and broader constituencies) in planning, design and management.
- To physically integrate the redevelopment project with its broader community, including drawing neighboring residents onto the site.

Project Chronology

1942 High Point built as affordable public housing for wartime workers at Boeing and other defense plants. Over many years, the project experienced physical deterioration and considerable social disintegration.

1950s Converted to SHA public housing.

1997-2006 Redevelopment of Rainier Vista and New Holly, two other Hope VI housing projects in Seattle, which provided valuable experience for High Point.

2000 Initiation of planning and design.

2001–2003 Tenants move out of Phase I.

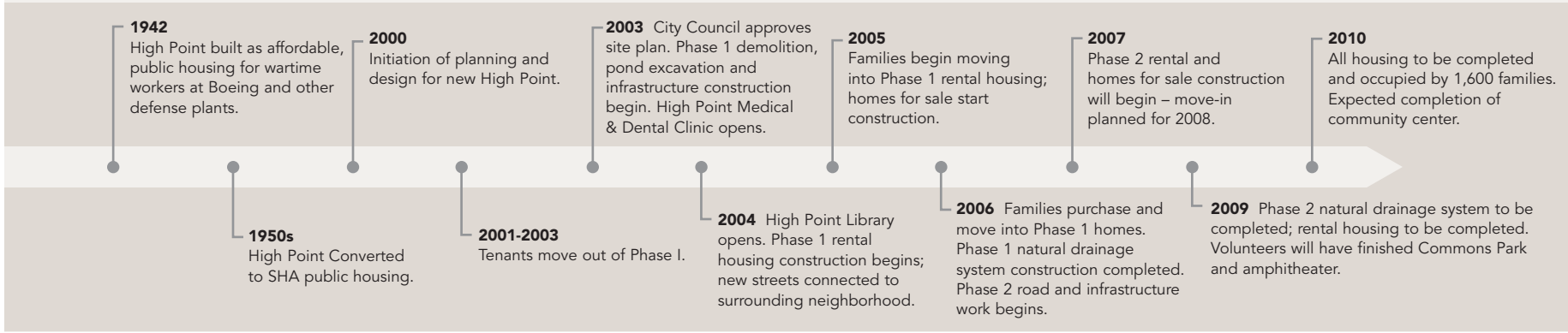
2001 Preliminary Master Plan; environmental review process begins.

2002 Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements released. Library and health clinic sites cleared.

2003 City Council approves site plan. Phase 1 demolition, detention pond excavation, and infrastructure construction begin. High Point Medical & Dental Clinic opens.

2004 High Point Library opens. Phase 1 rental housing construction begins; new streets connected to surrounding neighborhood.

2005 Families begin moving into Phase 1 rental housing; homes for sale start construction.



2006 Elizabeth House *(senior housing)* opens under the auspices of Providence Senior and Community Services. Families purchase and move into Phase 1 homes. Phase 1 natural drainage system construction completed. Phase 2 road and infrastructure work begins.

2007 Phase 2 rental and homes for sale construction begin – move-in planned for 2008.

2009 All of High Point to be reconnected to West Seattle; Phase 2 natural drainage system to be completed; rental housing to be completed. Volunteers will have finished Commons Park and amphitheater.

2010 All housing to be completed and occupied by 1,600 families. Expected completion of community center.

KEY PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEWED

Seattle Housing Authority:
Tom Phillips, Senior Development Program Manager
Tom Tierney, Executive Director
Al Levine, Deputy Executive Director
Ann-Marie Lindboe, Director of Housing Finance
Willard Brown, Property Management Administrator
Brian Sullivan, Architect and Development Program Manager (formerly with Mithun, the lead design firm for the project)
George Nemeth, Housing Developer

Government, Designers and Community:
Hon. Norman Rice, former Mayor of Seattle and consultant to the SHA
Diane Sugimura, Director, Seattle Department of Planning and Design
Peg Staeheli, principal of SvR Design, site design
Kollin Min, Enterprise Foundation, Senior Program Director, Western Region
Dana Bourland, Enterprise Foundation, Director, Green Communities
Michael Alford, Partner, Saltaire Homes, LLP (private builder)
John Fox, Director, Seattle Displacement Coalition

Program Providers:
Mark Okazaki, ED, Neighborhood House
Ray Li, Development Consultant, Neighborhood House
Milenko Matanovic, ED, Pomegranate Center; contract provider of community art programs
James Krieger, MD, MPH, Seattle and King County Public Health
Steve Daschle, ED, Southwest Youth & Family Services
Therese Jensen, Housing Director, Providence/Elizabeth House (senior housing)

Residents:
Residents of Elizabeth House (seniors) – and other renters:
Sandy Trent, Joyce Williams, Jackie Houston, Charlotte Hank and Presalynn, and Khatsini Simani
Roger and Sandy Milnes and Fred Choi, homeowners

Project Description

High Point is located in West Seattle, relatively close to downtown (ten to fifteen minutes by car). West Seattle forms a peninsula running north-south, separated from the mainland by water at the northerly end (closer to downtown) and reached from there by a bridge. The west edge faces the Puget Sound, and the views make it more desirable and costly than other parts of the neighborhood. The main north-south artery, 35th Ave SW, serves as a kind of social divider between the more upscale west and the more working-class east. The project site is close to the bridge but faces east generally in the direction of Boeing Field and the industrial lowlands – which are not visible from the site; High Point, one of the highest points in Seattle, at an elevation of about 500 feet above sea level, enjoys spectacular views of downtown and Elliot Bay.

In the early 1940s, the hundred-acre-plus site was developed as public housing by the government. The buildings were simple, one- and two-story apartment dwellings and were rented mainly to Boeing and other defense industry workers. It was developed at a low density (about seven units per acre), with substantial green space and many trees (of which quite a few mature specimens have been preserved and integrated into the new site plan).

In the 1950s, project stewardship shifted to the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA). According to tenants who had lived there over a

West Seattle street near High Point.

long period, while the resident families may have been low-income, it was still a "decent" place to live and raise a family into the 1960s and 1970s. This was reported to have changed greatly in the 1980s with the advent of crack cocaine and the high level of gang activity and drug dealing, with its attendant violence, including shootings and murders. People were afraid to go out at night, and non-residents were afraid to drive into the complex, in part because the street pattern was confusing and discontinuous with the surrounding neighborhood. The disconnection and discontinuity heightened High Point's identity as a "project."

It was also reported that High Point had been substantially cleaned up, through more aggressive management, prior to its redevelopment. Even so, it was still isolated and stigmatized relative to the surrounding neighborhood. Children would ask their friends to drop them off on the periphery rather than having them see where they lived. By the time families were being relocated from High Point to make way for the redevelopment, a survey by researchers from the University of Washington (Kleit, et al., 2004) found that residents perceived that "drug activity and people being attacked or robbed were problems," as well as "cars parked inappropriately and trash in the streets and on lawns." Despite these problems, "Overall, residents were moderately satisfied with High Point as a place to live."

URBAN AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The typical economic profile for SHA tenants, which holds for High Point residents both before and after redevelopment, shows a median income of $11,300 and a median income of $8,300, well below 30% of the area median, with many as low as 17% of median income.

High Point is very diverse, racially and ethnically. In 2002, the racial profile for High Point tenants (head of household) was about 13% white, 34% African or African-American, 37% Asian or Asian-American, 6% Hispanic, and 4% Native American. At High Point, a very high percentage of residents are also non-English speakers. Languages include Vietnamese, Cambodian, Spanish, and East African languages such Somali, Tigrinya, and Amharic (it is important to note that the SHA has hired on-site staff who speak these languages). Table 1, shows High Point's pre-redevelopment demographics.

Left: *High Point resident.*
Right: *High Point children at play.*

TABLE 1 HIGH POINT DEMOGRAPHICS - 2002

Population sample:	**665**
Gender: Female	**72%**
Family Composition	
Single women with children	43%
Two adults with children	24%
Single adult	16%
Senior with no children	8%
Multiple adults	5%
Single male with children	4%
Race and ethnicity	
Black	19%
Mixed race/ethnicity	6%
American Indian	4%
Caucasian	13%
Asian/Pacific Islander	37%
African	15%
Hispanic	6%
Poverty status – % of median income	
At or below 30%	85%
At or below 50%	99%
Mean Age, years	**45**

Source: Kleit and Manzo, 2002

PLANNING AND DESIGN

Planning and Development Process – Participation and Community-Building

In undertaking this Hope VI project, the SHA and its consultant team conducted what was, by all accounts, an extensive program of community and tenant involvement. The process relied on "mutual education" of the designers and residents, rather than simply presenting proposed plans or designs for resident review and approval. Thus, the agency and its architects and planners discussed issues and options with residents, showing many types of open spaces, street patterns, housing designs, and possible locations for community facilities. A "visual preference survey" showed images of houses or streets (or particular features) to participants so that they could express their preferences. About 300 surveys were returned from a mailing of 3,000. Perhaps not surprisingly, more traditional house forms were preferred by residents over "avant-garde" designs, though we were told this is not always the case for other groups of respondents (see section on design, below).

They also ran a series of workshops with the residents, who were able to take the graphic examples home for further consideration and discussion at subsequent workshops. A resident design committee met with the architects and planners every two weeks for

about four months, and there were many other larger meetings, for a total of more than 50. Reportedly, there was much effective discussion about what residents liked and why. The residents participated actively, and the meetings also served as a source of community-building. As a result, there was substantial "buy-in" and no organized resistance to the redevelopment. A resident said, "they listened to what we had to say" (from *The Diaries of High Point* DVD). A local social service provider who took part in these meetings described them as "culturally competent," employing translators as needed to ensure that the many non-English speakers could participate. He also felt that the SHA and design team effectively responded to resident and neighbor concerns.

Involvement in the planning process was supplemented by a program of participatory, community-based art projects supported and directed by the Pomegranate Center, under contract to the SHA. Under executive director Milenko Matanovic, the center's art projects at High Point included a decorative fence around the community garden, painted by residents, and a pavilion in the garden with carved and painted columns using vegetable themes; a small shelter near the garden with an interesting roof design, utilizing the trunks of trees that had to be cut from the site; and a number of sculptures mostly based on a twisted, columnar theme – all designed and made with resident input and labor. Sculptural cast concrete splash-blocks under the downspouts of homes, and decorative patterns in the sidewalk, were led by artist Bruce Myers. In addition to their aesthetic function, these projects were intended to contribute to building a sense of community among residents.

Left to right: *Communtity garden entrance; Detail of community garden entrance; Community garden fence.*

Site Planning

Key goals for the site master plan included safety, reintegration with the surrounding neighborhood, reconnection with the natural environment (including the adjacent watershed), and dealing effectively with the site's topography (which falls substantially from south to north and also across the site from west to east). As the lead designer, Brian Sullivan, put it, they wanted to "reconnect to the Zen of the site" – to harmonize with its essence and spirit – not simply to address the obvious technical planning challenges. Examples of this would be optimizing the views and retaining and respecting as many mature trees as possible.

The existing circulation pattern, with many curving and discontinuous streets, was confusing, resulting in difficulties with orientation and wayfinding; it was also largely disconnected from the street pattern of the surrounding neighborhood. The new plan, while keeping some of the original streets, links much more closely to the surrounding streets. In addition, services and attractions, such as Commons Park and the planned community center, are located close to the edge of the site in order to be very accessible to the neighborhood. The new library and health clinic are on 35th Street and form a link between old and new. The strategy of attracting people from the area seems already to be working, at least to some extent, as demonstrated by a group of residents from both areas who meet regularly for exercise walks. It is likely that the connections will grow when Commons Park and the community center are complete, as they are likely to draw more people from the surrounding neighborhoods. A senior housing project (Elizabeth House), operated by a local faith-based group, is also located near Commons Park and the other services.

There was significant attention to **open space** planning, with more than twenty acres dedicated to parks, playgrounds, and other landscaped areas (such as parkway strips and swales – see the description below of the natural drainage system). There is a carefully-planned hierarchy of open spaces with more major parks (three spread through the entire development, including Commons Park and the areas above and close to the retention pond), neighborhood parks (every two blocks – with some play equipment and/or seating), and pocket parks (every block but without equipment). Every dwelling also has some private open space such as a small yard, typically at

Left to right: *Brian Sullivan, SHA; New Public Library at edge of project; Art carving near pond.*

the back of the house and always visible from the kitchen, so that children can be observed. View corridors were retained, especially toward the north where one sees Elliot Bay and downtown, mostly from common spaces (though some houses also have panoramic views).

Designers described how the site plan follows New Urbanism principles in that the streets are conceived of as "livable" and intended for cars and people to coexist. Except for the more major thoroughfares, streets are quite narrow and have parking on one side only – often restricting vehicles to the equivalent of a single lane (so that oncoming cars must wait and allow each other to pass). There are also alleys behind some of the houses with outdoor parking, and relatively few garages. Traffic circles at many intersections reduce speeds and provide traffic calming, and the water-collecting swales along sidewalks also serve to buffer pedestrian areas from vehicular traffic.

Left: *High Point pedestrian street.*
Right: *Retention pond with housing at edge.*

Concept Plan: Seattle Housing Authority.

Design

Housing design was also informed by the principles of New Urbanism. Most houses have porches – to support interaction and help build community – and they show signs of this kind of activity, such as in the way many have chairs or sofas on them as well as other items that indicate their use (places to leave shoes; bicycles, etc.). The houses' scale and materials contribute to them "looking like houses." They are two to three stories tall, have pitched roofs, siding that looks like clapboards (and can be vinyl or Hardee board), and incorporate trim (usually white) and wood fences. The color palette was controlled, but there is quite a broad range of colors, many of which are quite intense or saturated.

The units were designed to provide adequate, livable spaces. Townhouses are 18 feet wide, and all rooms were tested by the designers for "furnishability." For example, although there are varied bedroom sizes, even the smallest can accommodate a bunk bed and not require it to be placed against a window. There is usually at least some separation between living and dining areas.

Strategies were employed to achieve variety in the visual design. There is a mix of types of dwellings, including free-standing houses, duplexes, and quads, and a variety of roof treatments. The three-dimensional volumes are somewhat varied, and the forms move in and out in plan. Most units are designed to accommodate families and range from one to five bedrooms, with three being the most common. Though there are 27 designs, there is still a certain uniformity of appearance, which could either be praised for achieving a consistent and unified look or criticized for being somewhat repetitive, depending on how one feels about it.

A great deal of attention was also paid to **landscape** design. Use of grass is rather limited (though it grows with little irrigation in this region) and tends to be located mostly where children could be expected to play. The first half of the intended 2,500 new trees have been planted and about 150 mature trees were retained.They represent a wide variety of species and many have signs identifying them. Some signs even indicate their very high appraised replacement values (e.g., "Sitka Spruce – value $15,000"). There is very substantial planting in the swales, much of it in native species, but often in

Left: *High Point single family home.*
Right: *Low income rentals.*

"patches" rather than naturalized (see the section on the natural drainage system, below). The quality of street furniture and lighting is also very high.

Energy Efficiency/Green Building Initiatives

Another key driver of the design is a strong commitment to energy efficiency and green building practices. These issues permeate both building and site design (for the site, the natural drainage system is the main feature). This is one of the nation's largest "green" public housing projects, with the greatest number of Energy-Star certified houses in the country. This level of sustainability in low-income housing is unusual and should provide savings to residents in lower utility bills. Additional incentives are in place to encourage tenants to practice energy saving behaviors and further lower their expenses.

The houses are constructed to "Built Green" standards. Built Green is a local environmentally-friendly residential building program developed in partnership with King County and other agencies. Based on a builder's submission, Built Green will certify that the home has received a 1- through 5-star rating. The structures in High Point typically received at least a 3.5-star rating and some are higher (anything above 1 star exceeds mandatory requirements). Typical features are added insulation, tankless water heaters, non-off-gassing and/or recycled materials, special ventilation, and energy-efficient appliances, lighting and heating systems.

Natural Drainage System

In addition to a general commitment to environmentally-friendly design, this site raised special concerns about drainage. It borders and drains into the Longfellow Creek watershed, Seattle's most significant salmon-spawning stream. High Point has a substantial impact on the creek, accounting for about 10% of the runoff into it. There was also a general interest in natural drainage systems on the part of the city, making this site an obvious candidate for their first trial application.

The components of the system work together to maximize the percolation into the ground of rainfall and other runoff. The water

Clockwise from top left: *Stormwater retention pond; For Sale housing; Typical swale; Mature tree at High Point: typical swale.*

is also naturally filtered through gravel and earth, then retained prior to being released off the site. One component of the system is porous surfaces – which may be landscaped or paved with materials that allow the water to percolate rather than run off. Several types of porous paving are used, including an asphalt-based system applied on certain streets and sidewalks (the first public street to use such a system in Seattle), as well as gravel beds and pavers set in gravel with spaces between them.

Water that does run off the remaining impervious surfaces mostly finds its way into a series of drainage swales which line one side of every street. The swales are six or more feet wide and a foot or two deep and are "constructed" to both allow percolation into the soil beneath them (via a gravel substrate and soil which does not over-compact) and also to slow the rate at which water runs down them due to their gradual slope and small "dams," which hold back some of the water. The swales are landscaped with low vegetation and are designed to be able to be crossed frequently to and from the street. To make them easier to traverse, the SHA had to negotiate (with the transportation authority) permission to use non-standard curb heights (5 inches rather than 6 inches), to help reduce their depth and steepness. Runoff eventually finds its way to a large retention pond, which is treated as an open space amenity for the northern part of the site, and only after a final settling and natural filtration is it released into the watershed.

Based on one winter's experience, the system is reported to be working well. November 2006 was said to have been the wettest month on record — and yet no surface water left the site. The pavement and absorption systems were said to have performed as intended, meeting the objective of filtering and absorbing rain water as well as a natural pasture would.

For-Sale Housing

The lead design firm for the SHA (Mithun) also worked for some of the private developers. They conducted focus groups with real estate agents and prospective buyers to better understand customer needs for market-rate housing. By and large, buyers tend to be young couples and families or empty-nesters. Many are from West Seattle or are people from more distant suburbs who want to be closer to downtown. Some consciously choose to be "pioneers" and find the mixed income levels and ethnic groups – as well as the green features – to be attractive aspects of the development. One of the most striking features of the end result is that it is very difficult to tell the difference between the rental and owner-occupied housing – and this was appreciated by both groups.

Left: *Porous pavement detail.*
Right: *Swale adjacent to sidewalk.*

Even in a softening market, sales seem to be strong. About 75% of Phase 1 had been sold at the time of the site visit, and some of the builders plan to participate in Phase 2. The marketing and graphic design for the project was coordinated by the SHA, and there are many tastefully-designed signs on and off of the site. They are visually coordinated, thoughtfully placed, and offer substantive facts about amenities as well as sales information. The marketing budget appears to have been substantial.

A retired couple indicated that they were drawn by the mix of cultures and the liveliness of having kids in the neighborhood. A younger couple said that they had been living in West Seattle and their previous knowledge of High Point was of a place you wouldn't go to "unless you were looking for something that had been stolen from you." Even so, they visited High Point at the suggestion of a real estate agent and, while they viewed the "social experiment" as a bit of a risk, they decided it would work well for them. Both parties noted that the purchase price offered great value for the money compared to a new house in another, probably not as well-located, community, or a much smaller unit closer to downtown. They reported that resale values had risen about 25% over what they had paid a year before – which reinforced for them that the experiment was showing signs of success.

There seem to be social connections developing between owners and renters. The older couple reported that they are meeting their neighbors through common interests, like pets, involvement in the neighborhood and open space associations, as well as at a neighborhood party. They know and socialize with the renters who border their backyard and report that you can't tell who lives where or earns what – and can't assume that you could tell who rents by race or ethnicity. They find that "everyone is 'over the top' friendly." Tom Phillips, the SHA project manager for High Point, has "voted with his feet" and purchased a house there.

Clockwise from top left: *High Point walking group; High Point playground user; Typical High Point street; Tom Phillips, SHA Project Manager and High Point resident.*

One of the private developers, Michael Alford of Saltaire Homes, is close to completion on 27 townhouse units. Of these, 14 were finished and 10 sold at the time of our interview. Homes were selling for $425,000, compared to an anticipated price of $370,000. For this price, one gets a three-story, three-bedroom plus bonus room, 1,800-square-foot house with detached single garage. The rising prices and good absorption rates suggested to him that the market was still strong and that High Point was very attractive to private buyers, reinforcing what we had heard from homeowners. His buyers are mostly singles or younger couples (largely without children) who don't want a condo and don't mind stairs. In terms of design, he was comfortable with the New Urbanist and energy-efficiency requirements and hired the master plan architect (Mithun) to design his project. His overall experience was very positive and he will be participating in Phase 2.

Left: *Mature tree at High Point.*
Right: *Tom Tierney, SHA Executive Director.*

THE SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Core Values

The agency and its leaders were motivated by a set of core values which provided the context for the project. These values were initially articulated by former Mayor Norm Rice, who served as a consultant to the agency. They include social equity, economic justice, and environmental quality. As played out in the redevelopment of High Point, these values generated respect for the original residents and their needs, a participatory process that engaged them and the surrounding community, and a sensitivity to environmental and ecological issues. The social goal was nothing less than the transformation of a distressed area into a "neighborhood of choice" where anyone might choose to live – not an isolated place of last resort.

Organization and Leadership

This project clearly benefited from strong leadership and the overall soundness of the SHA. Unlike many other large urban housing authorities, the SHA is financially and managerially viable, which may explain why it has been so successful in obtaining four Hope VI grants. Director Tom Tierney had a considerable history with the city, having directed the planning and budget office under former Mayor Norm Rice. He has assembled a competent, experienced management team who spoke impressively about the guiding principles and their execution in practice.

The agency also had the benefit of learning a great deal from two prior Hope VI projects, Holly Park and Rainier Vista. Even though these projects were not completed before High Point began, they gave the agency experience with the planning, financing, and management of mixed-income, mixed rental and for sale housing development at a scale similar to High Point.

Management and Services

Willard Brown, SHA's property management administrator for this and all their Hope VI projects noted the special challenges that these projects face, including tenant selection, provision of social services, staffing of the management team, and maintenance procedures.

There was a one-and-a-half year preparation process for tenant transition into the Phase 1 homes. One aspect of the change involved moving from HUD rules to those that govern IRS tax credit projects regarding tenant qualification (for instance, students and transient households were no longer permitted). While it was understood that there would not be enough units to accommodate all qualified residents in the new project, priority was given, in order, to seniors, families with children under six, the disabled, and working families. The priorities were set by the tenants themselves. Those not able to be accommodated in Phase 1 will have another chance in Phase 2 if they want to move back. Residents not placed at High Point were said to have been offered other locations or Section 8 vouchers. According to the SHA, 505 of the original 716 households chose to continue living in some form of publicly-subsidized housing – and of those 505, about 180 households live at the new High Point. (See the discussion below about the displacement question.)

One of the main social service goals at High Point is to encourage tenant self-sufficiency, by providing an "opportunity to succeed." In fact, it is a requirement that tenants participate in a program to advance them in this direction, including developing a "life plan." For this particular mix of residents, key issues are employment and mastering English as a second language. Services offered on site at High Point include ESL and citizenship classes, which are reported to be continuously full. Job referrals are also provided. Assistance and advice are offered for managing income and avoiding expenditures that will be overly burdensome (such as buying a high-maintenance, older car). For tenants with health-related issues or disabilities,

expectations are reduced and help is offered for getting needed services and support. There are extensive health-assistance and monitoring programs, including walking groups, a community clinic, and others (see next section). The SHA will also adjust a tenant's rent if they unexpectedly lose a job.

In addition, SHA has hired several staff who are residents of High Point public housing, which helps them meet HUD Section 3 requirements to offer employment opportunities to tenants. They have structured their hiring to include speakers of each of the main languages represented at High Point. Current on-site staff include a property manager, a lead maintenance person (two more will be added with Phase 2), and a community builder (who organizes activities, meetings and newsletters for High Point and performs outreach to the surrounding community, strengthening those links). Residents were also hired for construction jobs, which required extensive negotiations with local unions and the creation of specially-defined job categories.

Maintenance at High Point poses certain new challenges, including keeping the site green (both visually and ecologically), managing the natural drainage system, and repairing new types of energy-efficient appliances. These services are subject to bidding, and SHA (or its maintenance arm) must compete and win in order to become the provider for the site.

The thoughtfulness and comprehensiveness of the SHA management program and services was impressive to HUD, which has encouraged many visits to SHA's Hope VI projects from other housing authorities – such as Chicago and Portland. SHA offers technical assistance to these agencies.

Other non-profits, including some with long histories at the site, offer services at High Point. The High Point community center was founded to work with new immigrants, though it is now a large and diversified social service provider. It does or will offer grant-supported safety net services, self-sufficiency, community-building, and health-related services. It is also the lead agency for the planned neighborhood center, where services will be focused. The 18,500-square-foot neighborhood center has received commitments for about 70% of its almost $10 million budget from sources including the SHA and the Gates Foundation. In keeping with the rest of the development, it will be environmentally friendly, so that the building itself can form the basis for environmental awareness classes and

Resident gardener at community garden.

activities. The park, known as the Commons, will include a small amphitheatre for performances, and is expected to be completed in 2008. The neighborhood center is scheduled to open in 2010.

Another provider with a history at the site is Southwest Youth & Family Services, which offers mental health and educational services to High Point residents. The director had taken part in the project's advisory committee and commented that the redeveloped High Point would have a very beneficial impact on West Seattle, predicting that the surrounding community will "welcome back High Point as a source of pride."

HEALTH PROGRAMS AND RESEARCH

A number of leading-edge public health initiatives are under way at High Point. A great deal of attention has been paid to the health needs of residents and the provision of a healthy environment. In addition to the projects described below, a new health clinic was built on the cusp between High Point and the rest of the neighborhood.

Dr. Jim Krieger, a public health physician and epidemiologist with Seattle Public Health and the University of Washington, who is responsible for services and studies at High Point, pointed out two major foci for their work related to local health problems–an epidemic of obesity and a significant increase in the number of asthma cases.

The issue of obesity is being addressed as part of a "Healthy Community" plan, which permeates both the design of the neighborhood environment and its social or activity patterns. The idea is to encourage people to walk more – both as part of their normal daily transportation and as a structured activity. Thus, High Point is laid out to encourage walking by creating both dedicated and shared paths that connect to walking trails through the adjacent watershed. They publish a walking map and provide strategically placed kiosks along the way. There are also walking programs organized by Neighborhood House. In addition to providing exercise, these groups give people the opportunity to meet their neighbors and help to establish a sense of community. Finally, NIH has provided funding to evaluate the program's impacts, which will focus on perceptions of the built environment (including perceived safety) and health outcomes.

The other major health initiative relates to combating asthma, which occurs as the result of a combination of genetic predisposition and environmental triggers – such as molds, dust mites, cockroaches, rats, and cigarette smoke. Many residents at the old High Point experienced an environment that included some or many of these irritants, exacerbated by dampness, old carpeting, and the like. Again, the approach to this issue addressed both environmental and operational facets and went well beyond the generally-improved conditions provided by any new construction in its 35

new "Breathe Easy" homes. The approximately $6,000-per-unit added cost of construction for these special units provides hardwood floors, low-VOC products, extra insulation at the foundations, special kitchen appliances, and an upgraded HVAC system that provides one-half air change per hour.

These homes were created and are being evaluated with the support of a partnership among the SHA, HUD (healthy homes program), NIH (environmental justice program), Seattle Public Health, the University of Washington, and Neighborhood House. Twenty-five more Breathe Easy homes will be built in Phase 2 with the added support of the Enterprise Foundation. The tenant selection process and evaluation research design was based on a set of criteria including low-income, a child with moderately severe asthma, and willingness to make a commitment to refrain from smoking in the house, to not have furry pets, and to perform or allow regular cleaning and maintenance. The children will be (or have been) tracked for a year prior to move-in and then monitored afterwards. There is a waiting list for the Breathe Easy houses that are being built in Phase 2.

OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

There is an elementary school adjacent to the site, but it has a rather poor reputation. Many High Point parents choose to have their children attend other public schools, in spite of long bus rides. Whether the school will improve or not is unknown, but it is unfortunate (and beyond the SHA's control) that this important service is less than outstanding, since a good school on site would undoubtedly make High Point that much more attractive to families with young children.

There was also a great deal of concern, particularly on the part of some of the older tenants, about the need for a closer supermarket. There is a convenience market within a block of the site, but the nearest supermarket requires a car or bus ride. The SHA wanted to attract a supermarket and offered a site on 35th Ave SW. But the fact that there is already a market a short drive away, together with the overall high density of markets in the area, has precluded the economic viability of having one closer.

Left: *Location of future ampitheater and Park.*
Right: *Looking toward downtown.*

THE DISPLACEMENT QUESTION

Because Hope VI projects replace dilapidated public housing with mixed-income units, some residents are inevitably "displaced" – that is, forced to move out of the units they have occupied – at least temporarily. Key questions include: What happens to displaced residents? What choices are they presented? Are they allowed or encouraged to move into the newly-created replacement units, if they wish to? Are low-income units removed from the housing stock? There is wide a variety of opinions on this subject, including those of the SHA, housing researchers from the University of Washington, and the local Displacement Coalition.

The SHA notes that one-for-one replacement of lost housing units is their goal, even though it is not required by Hope VI. Replacements, they add, might not be within the project where units are lost, but could be handled system-wide, with new units or Section 8 housing vouchers. Since High Point is being done in two phases, about half the tenants were allowed to remain on site and were then given the highest priority to move into Phase 1, if desired, before their units were demolished. As mentioned above, 180 original tenants took advantage of this option. Tenants who had to move out of the first phase were also given a high priority and opportunity to move back to High Point, but by then (several years later) they had lost track of some, and many others were either settled into new and satisfactory housing or did not want to move again. SHA offered substantial relocation assistance, and a total of 505 of the original 716 households have been accommodated in some form of publicly-assisted housing.

Kleit and Manzo (2002), housing researchers from the University of Washington, interviewed about 200 households at High Point prior to any relocations. They wanted to understand the issues, choices, and experiences of these tenants. Among their findings were that "concerns about residents' relocation experiences are as important to the program's success as how the redeveloped site works when it is complete," and "those who eventually left High Point were more likely to have smaller families, be younger, and have had an initial desire to move." In other words, it's harder for older and larger households to move. In addition, the authors point out, because SHA was redeveloping three Hope VI sites simultaneously, the supply of affordable housing was affected – at least temporarily – and this impacted options for relocation, especially for larger households.

A divergent perspective is held by John Fox of the Seattle Displacement Coalition. He argues that High Point and the other Hope VI projects have resulted in a net loss of about 1,000 affordable housing units, with High Point accounting for roughly one third of the loss. He feels that the redevelopment could have been done very differently, retaining and refurbishing many of the pre-existing units, keeping

more of the mature trees (he claims that only about one in six was kept), and infilling with some new, market-rate housing. He prepared a photo presentation showing Cabrini Green in Chicago as an "appropriate" candidate for Hope VI redevelopment and contrasting it with the relatively attractive, low density of other Seattle projects that Fox likened to High Point. He also maintains that SHA claims units as replacement housing that would have been built anyway, and that the very substantial resources these projects absorbed were taken away from other potential projects that would have added low-cost housing.

The SHA strongly disagrees with Fox's assertions. First, they report that not only were all units replaced one-for-one with actual built units with street addresses (425 of these are on-site and the rest off-site), but also an additional 307 Section 8 vouchers were obtained directly as a result of the project, resulting in a net gain of 43% in low-income housing opportunities. They also argue about the loss of trees, pointing out that there was a very substantial effort to save "significant" trees (about 110 of 200 were saved) and that there will be a net gain of about 1,800 trees after Phase 2 is completed.

FINANCES

Project Development

Project finances are complex and sophisticated and utilized many sources. The finance director for the SHA described the effort needed to put the package together as being like forcing "a basketball through a garden hose." The level of competence and sophistication of the financing is demonstrated by the fact that a number of other housing authorities and non-profits have sought Seattle's advice and assistance.

Contributing greatly to their efforts was the fact that SHA has a good record of financial stability and is experienced with Hope VI requirements – lowering the perceived risks for investor participation. Seattle also has a history of passing levies for affordable housing, which it has done four times in the past 25 years. In terms of attracting private financing, the principal draw is the offer of bonds with a 4% tax credit as well as depreciation and other write-offs.

Among the sources of development capital were $32 million in variable-interest bonds, of which about one third were converted to a fixed-rate loan. Hope VI provided funding of about $6 million, and there was a federal contribution to the SHA for capital projects at High Point.

TABLE 2 USES OF FUNDS – PHASE 1 PUBLICLY DEVELOPED UNITS	
PREDEVELOPMENT	
Staff & Overhead	$645,985
Contract Services	$389,286
Total Predevelopment	$1,035,271
HARD CONSTRUCTION COST	
Off-Site	$1,291,931
Building Structure	$27,793,806
General Contractor Fees	$1,095,138
Construction Contingency	$1,679,789
Bond Requirements	$144,935
Tenant Improvements	$2,341,680
Plaza Improvements	$1,800,000
Public Art	$24,185
Total Hard Construction Costs	$36,171,464
SOFT COST	
Acquisition Cost	$1,764
Architecture and Engineering	$2,819,787
Permits, Fees & Taxes	$773,218
Development Staff/Operating	$2,840,686
Developer Fee	$2,555,299
Utility Hookups	$600,000
Environmental Remediation	$188,680
Legal, Insurance & Other	$744,031
Contingency	$630,144
Bike Facility Soft Cost	$262,968
Total Soft Costs	$11,416,577

TABLE 2 USES OF FUNDS – *continued*	
INTEREST AND FEES	
Construction Interest	$2,671,049
City Section 108	$150,000
NCBDC	$76,285
Unity Council	$172,868
Bond Issuance Cost	$790,490
Reserves and Lease-up	$323,600
Total Interest and Fees	$4,184,292
BRIDGE LOANS	
Unity Council Bridge Loan	$911,830
NCBDC	$750,000
Total Bridge Loans	$1,661,830
TOTAL USES OF FUNDS	**$54,469,434**
Cost per unit	$158,341
SURPLUS	**$1,942,738**

The open feeling of High Point, combined with desirability of the location near downtown, and the buoyant local housing market gave the SHA an unusual opportunity to garner income for the project by creating and selling valuable building sites to the private sector. These sales provided a significant portion of the funding needed for infrastructure and helped to pay for the construction of subsidized units (over $14 million was received in Phase 1). In Phase 1, single-family lots were sold to private developers for about $130,000 each (townhouse lots went for about $75,000); in Phase 2, prices will be closer to $140,000 for single family lots and $85,000 for townhouses.

TABLE 3 PERMANENT FINANCING

Tax Exempt First Mortgage	$ 10,600,000
HOPE VI funds (SHA Loan #1)	$ 8,500,000
WA Trust Fund	$ 2,000,000
Healthy Homes (part of SHA Loan #2)	$ 185,000
Seattle Public Utilities (part of SHA Loan #2)	$ 742,500
Proceeds from For-Sale (part of SHA Loan #2)	$ 14,284,113
Interest Income	$ 135,586
Deferred Developer Fee	$ 2,963,736
GP Capital	$ 100
LP Capital	$ 27,181,493
Total	**$ 66,592,528**

The SHA is also building in mechanisms for splitting any windfall profits if prices rise above expected levels. By contrast, lots were provided to non-profits like Habitat for Humanity for only $45,000.

The capital costs for the project are shown below in Table 2. Uses of funds for the first 344 publicly-developed units (in Phase 1) are illustrated in the table, while the sources totaled $56,412,172. A separate table (Table 3) shows the permanent financing that was put into place.

IMPACTS

The redevelopment of High Point is already having significant impacts in a number of ways:

- The old public housing project has been bulldozed and half rebuilt, with the second half underway.
- The site is being treated as a “green” zone, with great attention to the environmental impacts of the buildings and landscape.
- Many former tenants are already living in new homes, all of which are energy-efficient and some of which provide improved air quality for asthma sufferers.

- It has already succeeded, at least to some extent, as a mixed-income community where low-income tenants mix socially with middle-income owners. Likely, as more people move in and there are more community activities, there will be a higher level of social interaction.
- The project may be considered a model for Hope VI – in its "greenness," its lack of displacement and loss of low-income housing, its effective management and maintenance program, and its financing (a number of other housing authorities have visited and received technical assistance from the SHA).
- High Point also provided the occasion for diverse governmental agencies to push their own envelopes in terms of cooperating and being flexible to achieve important goals, such as the natural drainage system, which involved the housing authority, the city Departments of Planning & Development and Transportation, as well as Seattle Public Works. Participants described their working together as a "new model for cooperation among agencies."
- One special feature of High Point that will not be replicable everywhere is the ability to sell off surplus land (without sacrificing project densities), which results from a combination of the low density of the original project, the desirability of the location, and the high value of land in Seattle's strong housing market.

Assessing Project Success

SUCCESS IN MEETING PROJECT GOALS

1. *To replace a decrepit public housing project, plagued by social and economic problems, with a healthy, ecologically-sound and economically-balanced community.*

The new development emphasizes both physical and social health, is very ecological, and effectively integrates people from a variety of social/ethnic backgrounds and economic levels.

2. *To provide one-for-one replacement for low-income, public housing units (though not all will be on site), offering the opportunity to live in the new development to as many original residents as possible.*

While some local housing activists question their performance in this area, the SHA makes a convincing case for having achieved this goal.

3. *To integrate market-rate and low-income units and make them indistinguishable from each other.*

Renters, owners, and outsiders have difficulty telling which units are market-rate and which low-income.

4. *To provide a full array of services addressing resident needs.*
Some services are in place (health clinic, library, senior programs, walking groups, community newsletters and activities, other social service supports), and some will be expanded or more convenient when the community center opens in Phase 2.

5. *To implement a state-of-the-art "natural drainage system" in order to improve the water quality in an adjacent watershed and salmon spawning stream.*
The natural drainage system is in place and is reported to be functioning effectively. It worked very well in the extremely wet winter of 2006.

6. *To engage the community (both prior residents and broader constituencies) in planning, design, and management.*
The project planning entailed an exemplary process of community involvement, which appears to continue into the operations and management phases.

7. *To physically integrate the redevelopment project with its broader community, including drawing neighboring residents onto the site.*
The street pattern is reintegrated with the surrounding neighborhood, and key community facilities are located on or near the edge of the site (existing library and health clinic; planned community center and Commons Park), making them convenient both to High Point and its neighbors. Other amenities, including walking paths (and the organized groups that use them), draw and unite both groups.

SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Selection Committee was impressed by the participatory process and level of civic engagement undertaken by the Seattle Housing Authority in creating High Point. This process assumed particular importance since a central goal for High Point was to connect it to the surrounding neighborhood by continuing the local street pattern through the project, and creating new public open spaces which were open to neighborhood residents. The dialogue with neighboring residents helped establish these priorities, and ultimately helped reverse the former isolation of the project.

In recreating High Point as a mixed income neighborhood of market and subsidized housing, the SHA went farther than required (by Hope VI rules) in providing 1:1 replacement of low-income units while also providing a good mix of racial and ethnic groups.

The Selection Committee also commended the project for combining Hope VI goals with major environmental goals including reclamation of rain water through its extensive system of porous paving, swales and a catchment pond, which also serves as an amenity for High Point Residents. They noted, as well, the use of environmentally

friendly materials in the building and operation of High Point, and the High Point organic gardening project which involves people from throughout High Point in the production and nurturing of their own food.

The Committee raised some questions about whether the densities achieved at High Point were adequate for an urban area, although the importance of lower densities for the long-term success of mixed-income housing was noted. Similarly, although outside the purview of the project, it was felt that interventions to strengthen the adjacent school would have strengthened the attractiveness of the project to families with young children.

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Silver Medal Winner

Los Angeles Design Center

Los Angeles, California


Griffith Park
Pasadena
Los Feliz Blvd
West Hollywood
Park La Brea
Wilshire Blvd
Downtown
LOS ANGELES
To Santa Monica
Monterey Park
Rosa Parks Fwy
East Los Angeles
South Central Los Angeles
S Western Ave
Harbor Fwy
S Alameda St
Santa Ana Fwy
LA Design Center
W Slauson Ave
E Slauson Ave
Huntington Park
101
2
110
5
10
710

LA Design Center At-A-Glance

WHAT IS THE LA DESIGN CENTER?

- An 80,000-square-foot complex with furniture showrooms, gallery and meeting/event space in South Los Angeles;
- A well-designed conversion of two derelict warehouses that introduces quality design into an economically challenged area;
- The first phase of a master plan intended to create a furniture showroom district in an area historically dedicated to manufacturing;
- A project created and financed by local, self-made entrepreneurs in part as a way of giving back to and revitalizing the community.

PROJECT GOALS

- To contribute to the revitalization of the area by instigating the development of a furniture and design showroom district, drawing customers who would otherwise be unlikely to visit this part of the city;
- To provide a place for community gatherings and events;
- To house the sales headquarters for the Cisco Brothers furniture business;
- To use good design to transform the area – reaffirming beauty and openness to the community, fostering positive and life-enhancing values, optimism, and a sense of what can be possible.

Project Chronology

1992 Rodney King riots (the fifteen-year anniversary was being remembered at the time of the site visit);

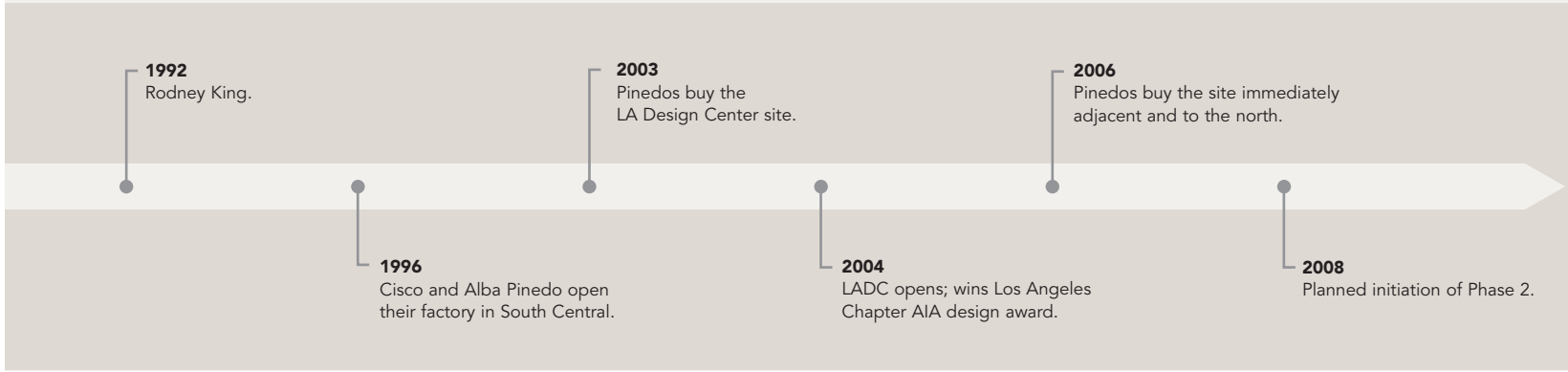
1996 Cisco and Alba Pinedo open their factory in the neighborhood, two blocks from the site of the LADC;

2003 Pinedos buy the L.A. Design Center site;

2004 LADC opens; wins AIA National Institute Honor Award;

2006 Pinedos buy the site immediately adjacent and to the north.

2008 Planned initiation of Phase 2.



KEY PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEWED

LADC Developers/Owners:
Francisco (Cisco) and Alba Pinedo

Consultants and Contractors:
John Friedman and Alice Kimm, Architects
Steve Forbes, Brunswick Builders, General Contractor
Chris Sitcat: organizes arts events at the LADC UpSpace Gallery

Community:
Bernard Parks, L.A. City Councilmember
David Roberts and Mike Hernandez, staff for
Councilmember Parks
Frances Anderton, KCRW Public Radio
Ines Broussard, Ed.D., Chesterfield Project
Renata Simril, Forest City Development
Nicci Solomons, Executive Director, AIA/L.A
Paulette Dimetriu, South Cone (furniture retailer)
Reverend Reggie Jones, potential tenant

Project Description

South Los Angeles is a vast area stretching from the edges of downtown for many miles toward the port cities. It has been so strongly associated with po verty, crime and other social ills that it w as recently renamed – it used to be called South Central Los Angeles – though one could question whether this will actually improve its image. Notwithstanding a number of important improvements in the area, signs of the destruction wrought during civil disturbances following Rodney King's arrest and beating fifteen years ago are still visible in abandoned buildings and tr ash-filled empty lots. The area, largely African American, also has a substantial Latino population, though not nearly to the same degree as the city overall (see demographic profile, below). It is also poorer and has lower levels of employment than the rest of L.A.

The project fronts on Western Avenue, a major north-south arterial that runs for man y miles and gi ves access mainly to commer cial and industrial businesses. The project site is in a mostly industrial area consisting of structures of man y vintages – from older bric k warehouses like the ones LADC acquired and con verted, to more recent concrete tilt-up buildings. Most are one or tw o stories tall. While some appear well-maintained, many are in a state of disrepair. Next door to LADC is an empty lot that is part of a contested redevelopment project. Nearb y abandoned buildings are occupied by homeless people. Gi ven the nature of its surroundings,

South Los Angeles street near LADC.

LADC stands out as, by far, the most attractive property in the immediate area.

There are, however, many other signs of renewal in the area. Residential zones consist of small, well-kept houses mostly owned by African Americans and Latinos. There is a new, high-design library some blocks to the south. And a few doors to the north is a very large, recently-constructed shopping center, Chesterfield Square, financed in part by city redevelopment money. It accommodates a wide variety of local and chain retail establishments, including a bank, Starbucks, several fast food outlets, a supermarket, and a drug store. Reportedly, this center has greatly expanded the retail opportunities in the neighborhood. Typical of most shopping centers, it faces inward, has little relationship to the street, and does little to support pedestrian traffic.

SOUTH LOS ANGELES DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE 2000

	LOS ANGELES	SO. LOS ANGELES*
Population	3,731,437	47,105
White	49.1	8%
African American	9.9	74%
Asian	11.1	0.9%
Latino	48.9	23%
Median Income	$42,667	$35,142
Individuals Below Poverty Level	20.1%	23.3%
In Labor Force	66.2%	55.1%

Note: %s by race exceed 100% since Latinos can also be counted as African-American or White
Source: American FactFinder (http://factfinder.census.gov/) for Zip Code 90047
- Fact Sheet - Census 2000 Demographic Profile Highlights

THE PROJECT DEVELOPERS – CISCO AND ALBA PINEDO

The LADC has a highly personal quality that is impossible to understand without grasping the story of its developers, Francisco (Cisco) and Alba Pinedo. They immigrated to Los Angeles from Mexico as children and their families settled in South L.A. Alba worked in a local and Cisco lived a little further to the east. During high school, they met at a local church; both were active in the community. After a few years, and with a very small capital investment, they founded Cisco Brothers to manufacture furniture, a skill Cisco had developed working after school in an upholstery shop.

Left: *Lumber yard adjacent to the Design Center.*
Right: *New public library mural.*

They began to experience success and purchased a building for their manufacturing operation in another area of South L.A. During the disturbance and destruction that followed the Rodney King beating in 1992, theirs was one of two buildings in their block that was not burned, a measure of their continuing commitment to the community and hiring of local workers. Needing to grow again, they considered many options. In the post-Rodney King era, the city offered a variety of incentives through Rebuild LA and the local empowerment zone – though the Pinedos claim they did not need the financial inducements. As they considered investing in the area near Western and Slauson, they were aware of the risk and yet also felt a desire to return to the neighborhood where they had grown up and to make a contribution to the community. In any event, they bought a building in the area two blocks from the LADC site that is still their main factory. It is clean, renovated to modern standards, and equipped with a variety of machinery, some of which is quite high-tech.

The Cisco Brothers furniture business presents a striking success story. Their business model is designed to allow them to compete in a world dominated by cheaper imports from Asia. It calls for them to make high-end customized furniture which can be produced and delivered quickly and which can be tailored to needed dimensions and finished in one's choice of fabrics. Most of their products are wood and/or upholstery – and many are "green," using natural, healthy, or recycled products – such as non-out-gassing foams, natural fibers, and non-VOC finishes.

Cisco's flexibility in adapting to changing conditions is also striking. He lost seventeen of his twenty largest accounts, mostly because they were forced out of business by large national retailers like IKEA, Crate and Barrel, Ethan Allen, buying their stock from China where the labor input to a piece of furniture is perhaps $5, compared to $300 in the U.S. He recognized that he could not compete on price, but had to focus on quality and customer service. It is impressive to hear Cisco, who did not go to college, speak cogently about changing global business conditions and strategies, including his shift from straight retail, where he could not compete with Chinese imports, to the higher-margin, custom production niche where he is able to carve out a market share.

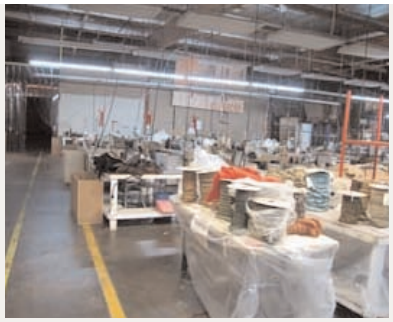
Cisco Brothers employs 300 people, many of whom live in the neighborhood, and the company pays them above-market wages

Alba and Cisco Pinedo.

and benefits. Cisco has five direct sales or commercial showrooms in addition to the L.A. Design Center, including some in more upscale areas of Los Angeles (La Brea Boulevard, Pasadena) as well as in Laguna Beach, New York, and North Carolina.

The decision to locate a major showroom in South Los Angeles is central to a plan to attract commercial buyers, designers, and retail shoppers to a part of the city where they otherwise might not come. Because of the investment risk involved, this decision can only be understood in light of how committed the Pinedos are to the community. They are highly involved in charitable and non-profit activities; for example, Cisco serves on the boards of the metropolitan area's largest public radio station (KCRW; where Cisco Brothers advertise) and also of Genesis LA, a non-profit that offers economic development consulting assistance to businesses and developers. This level of community involvement helps to explain their goals for the LADC, their choice of location, and their inclusion of community space and community-based functions. While they realize they customers do not come from the community, they still wanted a way to include community space in the project.

The Pinedos' working relationship appears to entail a certain tension, with Cisco's more visionary and expansive energy pulling outward and Alba's sensible financial constraints pulling back. This dynamic seems to work quite effectively. Alba points out that, while their



business is successful, their entire nest egg is invested in this community, the risks are real, and the projects like LADC tend to run over budget and are not self-sustaining. Cisco counters that, while the cash flow is not there now, the development is working as a capital investment. Clearly, though, if LADC had been seen they primarily in financial terms, they might have invested elsewhere to get higher or safer returns.

DESIGN PROCESS AND CONCEPTS

In 2003 the Pinedos bought the property that is now the LADC. It consists of two brick warehouse buildings totaling 80,000 square feet, connected by an outdoor courtyard. They then hired John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects to design the renovation.

It is interesting to chart the path through which the Pinedos came to select an avant-garde design firm – perhaps best known for highly-styled bars and nightclubs with names like "The Brig" and "Club Sugar" – for this project. This is another area in which their

Cisco Brothers manufacturing facility.

PHASE 1 – Original Condition

PHASE 1 – Design Rendering of LA Design Center

PHASE 1 – Completed LA Design Center

savvy and sophistication should not be underrated. They had met John Friedman through mutual friends, been impressed with his work, and commissioned him to redo their local factory offices as well as their showroom in North Carolina. Cisco had enjoyed their initial collaborations, commenting that it is "hard to find an architect who can sense what the client really wants." Cisco's projects require an economy of means, since they are low-budget conversions of industrial space where a high-design impact is desired. Friedman spoke of his approach to using the "right moves in the right place" to get the maximum effect – and described Cisco as a client who was constantly looking for more and better results. Apparently, the work evolves as a dialogue between the two of them.

The concepts that generated design decisions began with a deep respect for the existing building and site and a desire to retain the qualities of the materials and spaces – together with a recognition that the budget was very limited, so that each "intervention" or action had to count for a lot (that is, produce a high ratio of effort-to-effect). The architects are very much in the current mainstream of Los Angeles architecture, interested in ideas of materiality, transparency, translucency, layering, wrapping, skins, adding surfaces that can be conceived of as "clothing" or "dressing" the building, and the like. In Cisco's view, Friedman and Kimm, more than some design-oriented architects, are serious about meeting their clients' needs and helping them maximize the potential of their buildings.

LADC before and after: Kimm Friedman Architects.




The site offered an existing open space, really just a parking lot, facing the street, framed by buildings on two sides and partially on the third. This parking lot was transformed into a plaza, outdoor event space, and "motor court". They did this by paving the court in two tones of concrete with strips of grass between the sections "in order to create a rhythmic pattern across the space." They also added a screen of translucent polycarbonate panels, a portion of which faces the street (and which can show images projected from behind), which then turn into the courtyard and cover part of one of the buildings on the upper level. The brick buildings are also partly wrapped in a green cement board on the first floor; these, too, turn into the courtyard. Wooden screens cover other parts of the brick and are intended to recall the wood structure on the interior. A sliding gate – needed for security – was created from perforated steel sheets which join like interlocking fingers with an aesthetic that significantly softens the security image. Plantings at the street are of cacti and other succulents – attractive but vandal-resistant – while inside the courtyard, there are palms that echo the street trees. There is also a fabric canopy over portions of the courtyard, filtering sunlight and creating a changing shadow pattern on the ground.

At the interior, the means were again very economical. The wood and brick structural elements were sandblasted and left exposed. New skylights were cut in the roof and an opening cut into the second floor over the new lobby where a sculptural steel stair was inserted. A small grouping of offices was created at one end, using polycarbonate panels to glaze the walls (again, repeating a material from the exterior). There is also a specially fabricated steel entry door and some floating platforms within the showroom which highlight featured products.

The result is highly effective. The courtyard and portions of the exterior visible from the street are very attractive; modern, while respectful of the original materials and forms. The showroom spaces work very well, providing open and flexible interiors. The

Design details of LA Design Center.

newly inserted elements are easily recognizable as such, yet are harmonious in their coexistence with the older materials.

Following renovation, the Cisco Brothers furniture showroom occupies 30,000 square feet, along with another rather large furniture showroom, owned by South Cone Furniture. The balance of the buildings provide space for a coffee shop or restaurant, a large events venue, and a gallery.

CONSTRUCTION

The buildings were apparently in quite bad shape when the project started, with broken windows that had allowed pigeons to roost. They were full of trash and had the remnants of a drug den, so significant clean-up was necessary.

The project was constructed by a mix of professional builders and the Pinedos' own staff, which did much of the finish carpentry (using skills they bring from the furniture trade). The architects prepared drawings in stages, with demolition and structural phases first, followed by finishes. They worked with a sympathetic and flexible builder who was willing to submit multiple bids as the project progressed. In all, there were five separate permits and over twenty sub-bids.

There was, apparently, no fixed budget for the conversion, just a desire to get the most "bang" for the limited "bucks" available – and much work was done by volunteers and was either non-compensated or highly discounted. As reported by the contractor, he was able to convince some of his subcontractors and suppliers to lower their prices for the benefit of the project.

COSTS AND FINANCING

Acquisition and construction financing was provided entirely by the Pinedos through private sources. The acquisition costs were not disclosed, but the renovation was said to have cost $1.5 million, including site development and seismic reinforcement (or about $15 per square foot), remarkably inexpensive for what was achieved.

According to Renata Simril, who worked for the prior city council member from that district, the Pinedos were somewhat reluctant to pursue or even accept financial assistance – they wanted to give back to the community and felt they did not need help. While no city money went into the first phase, Simril feels that the city is now

LADC reception desk.

in a better position to provide assistance, given the Pinedos' proven track record and clear commitment (see the discussion under Future Plans).

This is not to say that the Pinedos did not receive any support from governmental programs. There were, for example, tax benefits from their nearby factory site and, according to the councilmember's office, there are Housing and Urban Development BEDI (Brownfields Economic Development Initiative) funds earmarked for the purchase or development of the next site. These BEDI funds are intended to support the project, but there is no guarantee they will be awarded to the Pinedos, who may have to compete with other developers.

In terms of operations, the LADC is running a net loss, in that the revenue (mostly from rent) it generates does not support the costs of running the complex. This may be because not all leasable space has tenants, the rental rates are low, or the overhead of the community space may simply be more than can be supported. In any case, the center is losing about $90,000 per year, made up by the Pinedos or one of their businesses. However, this views the project only as a real estate investment (ignoring its possible value as a merchandising tool for the furniture business), and even then fails to take into account tax write-offs, possible capital appreciation, and other information that was not available to the site visit team. An annual operating statement is included in Table 1.

L.A. DESIGN CENTER OPERATING STATEMENT
For Period 1/1/06 to 12/31/06

TABLE 1 – REVENUE & EXPENSES

Revenue (rents)	$241,263.05
Total Revenue	$241,263.05
Expenses	
Mortgage	$240,270.25
Trash	$4,164.62
Gas/Electric	$39,326.50
Pest Control	$1,188.00
Insurance	$18,000.00
Gardener	$4,200.00
Total Expenses	$307,149.37
Net Op. Profit (loss)	($65,886.32)
Property Tax	$24,930.98
Net Profit (loss)	($90,817.30)

Left: *LADC furniture showroom.*
Right: *Stair to furniture showroom.*

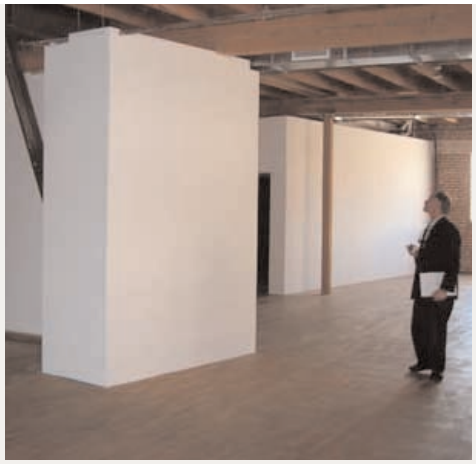
TENANTS AND PROGRAMS

There is a broad range of commercial and non-profit functions at the Design Center. Paulette Dimetriu of South Cone Furniture, the other major tenant at LADC, noted that they have been there since the center opened and pay rent at the market rate. Although the location seems to be working well for South Cone, it has been difficult for LADC to attract additional design and furniture operations.

For two years until the winter of 2007, there was a café in the complex, operated by an artist. It closed – apparently for other than financial reasons – but there is a non-profit organization interested in reopening it. This potential tenant, a minister with his church and related non-profit businesses, would use the meeting space for church services (he was setting the space up for one during the site visit) and also take office space for, among other operations, a finance company.

Church event setting up in rental space.

Cisco has lent the courtyard, large meeting space, and galleries for community uses free or at a nominal charge to non-profits, while renting out the space to those who can afford to pay. Among the events that have taken place there is the annual awards banquet and gala of the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), which attracted almost 700 people. For this event, the AIA looks for a newly-built venue by a strong designer – and were very drawn to the LADC, which had won a design award the prior year (in the past they've had events at the Getty and at a Morphosis-designed Science Center). There was an interesting dialogue with their board about whether to go to South Los Angeles, with concerns that members might be reluctant to travel to South L.A. Having decided to go ahead, they planned buses from downtown, but almost no one signed up for them.They provided valet parking and security guards, but there were no problems. They utilized almost the entire complex, including the courtyard and gallery, with a reception at the Cisco showroom. Younger AIA members attended and stayed later than usual at such events. There is also some evidence of a longer-term impact of this event – one noted architect (Michael Palladino from Richard Meier's office) was reported to have started an outreach program to the local schools. The event was held in October 2005 for an agreed-upon fee of $3,000, but they never got a bill from LADC, suggesting that the Pinedos viewed the event as providing them with beneficial PR. There have also been



more local and personal events, including church services, weddings, and Quinceañeras (Latina fifteen-year-old coming-of-age parties).

The UpSpace Gallery, on the second floor, is the main site for art-related events and shows. Chris Sitcat, an artist who is also employed at the L.A. County Museum of Art, organizes events and shows. He uses his contacts in the art world, while Cisco provides the space, printing, and publicity. Chris expressed excitement about working with Cisco and having the use of such a "vibrant" and "restorative" set of spaces. He explained that he funded his work at the LADC, in part, through occasional commissions on works of art sold during exhibitions. Other of his efforts seemed more like volunteer, community contributions. The following is a partial list of UpSpace events; one of them was a show of the works of local kids (note that during 2006 another organization was running the gallery; we do not have a list of their events):

"Supersonic" – Graduate Show for Southern California Art Schools, Summer 2005
"Drive-by and Relax" – Group Art exhibition, September 2005
"Speakeasy" – Group Art Exhibition, November 2005
"Study in C" – Musical Performance, November 2005
"Gobble Gobble" – Special Event, December 2005
"The Stream" – Earth Day Exhibition, March 2007

COMMUNITY

Clearly South Los Angeles, though mixed in terms of its qualities, is an area where any improvement in conditions is a substantial contribution. Blight, crime, economic underdevelopment, and lack of jobs are critical issues. There are abandoned buildings, some occupied by the homeless. Some of the buildings have burned. There are problems with gangs and drugs; a local park serves as a hang-out. In the industrial zone surrounding the LADC, illegal dumping of trash, toxics, and even dead animals has been a problem; because they could get away with it, dumpers would come from outside the area. In this context, just the presence of the LADC is seen by local leaders as important – a beacon of hope, an image of investment and caring, and an important source of jobs that pay a living wage.

Left: *LA Design Center rental gallery.*
Right: *Alley behind the Design Center.*

Ines Broussard of the Chesterfield project, who is on the Safety Council for the district (appointed by the city councilmember), has worked with the Pinedos on a number of projects, including a clean-up day where they provided T-shirts and other support, including staff participation. She encourages local organizations to make use of LADC's community space and sees Cisco as a partner in working to make things better for the area.

Renata Simril, now a private development executive, said that this area has the highest dropout and unemployment rates in the city. She sees the Design Center, which could have easily located in a much more upscale area, as confidence-building, countering the low expectations of a community that feels disenfranchised. This psychological impact is because, in part, the community feels welcome by the open gates and accessible events. To her, the very fact that there are no graffiti on the walls confirms the local sense of ownership or at least acceptance.

From the point of view of city Councilmember Parks and his staff, LADC is an important contribution to the community and can serve as the catalyst for physical and economic transformation of the area. They express a strong commitment to supporting its next phase (see next section).

FUTURE PLANS

The project's architects have prepared an expansion and redevelopment plan that shows the design center and related functions growing along an alley (Manhattan Avenue) parallel to Western Avenue and running to the south. This is a "big concept" that would require considerable investment of money and time, as well as the cooperation of many unrelated property owners. However, a number of parcels affected by the plan are owned or controlled by the city, which is now expressing interest in fostering the plan, even though they have also taken actions which are threatening its feasibility.

City-owned parcels include a several-acre empty lot to the immediate south of LADC, which was condemned by the city for an animal control facility. Although such a facility is needed in the area, many in the city and neighborhood, including Councilmember Parks, do

Vacant lot adjacent to LADC.

not feel that it is the highest and best use of this property. This group feels that there are other sites in the area that would be more appropriate, including one formerly used as a police station. One substantial stumbling block in the way of freeing up the site is the fact that the eminent domain condemnation proceeding identified the animal control facility as the purpose for the taking, making it harder to justify another use. In addition, the city has expended millions of dollars on acquisition, relocation, design, and other costs using bond money, which further constrains changes of direction. Questions have been raised about how these funds, reportedly about $6 million, have actually been spent, and city management overhead has been charged, mostly in advance, raising total expenses to about $8 million. Some of the key decisions and actions took place during a power vacuum, when the district was essentially unrepresented because of a gap between the prior councilmember leaving and Mr. Parks taking office. Now, the council and six city departments must sign off on any change in direction. Nonetheless, Councilmember Parks expressed his belief that this change will happen in the near future and the property will become available for expansion of the Design Center in some form. The site would have to be sold on the market and could there is no guarantee it would go to the Pinedos.

Another large parcel to the immediate west of the animal control site is also in public hands and awaits redevelopment. This, too, could be coordinated with the Design Center expansion as could the site of the former police station, just south of the animal control site, which sits along the path of proposed expansion for the Design Center.

However, all plans for expansion of the Design Center need to be tested against the probable level of demand that may exist for this type of space, given that the center has not yet attracted more directly related uses. Cisco recognized that any expansion would have to evolve, possibly towards more mixed use. On the other hand, it could be argued that a larger critical mass is needed to make the concept viable – and city backing for the plan as well as help with acquiring more of the sites could contribute toward this goal. This is consistent with the thoughts expressed by Renata Simril, who felt that the Design Center needs a quarter million square feet (compared to the current 80,000). She also indicated that the city is now more likely to participate than it was earlier, and offer support including Community Development Block Grants and Community Redevelopment Authority funding.

The evolving nature of demand could lead to some friction with the city over how the parcels should be developed. While the city finally seems to have bought in to the idea of a furniture showroom district (the Pinedos' original concept), the Pinedos (and the market) may now see other uses as making more sense.

Meanwhile, since they were unable to buy the parcel to the south, the Pinedos bought a property immediately to the north of the center, as well as a brick warehouse they are using for their business. While not as easy to connect to the expansion, it can contribute to increasing the critical mass of the project, if it does develop in that manner.

IMPACTS

The nearby Chesterfield Square shopping center, described at the beginning of this chapter, would appear to be a much greater economic engine than the LADC (because of the scale of development, number of stores, and jobs), making it more difficult to determine what effects might be directly attributable to LADC. The recent real estate boom also makes it difficult to assess the project's impact on surrounding property values. While it clearly represents a major investment that may have raised the area's profile and alerted owners and investors to potentials, it is hard to attribute the rising prices of surrounding properties solely to the LADC, which is a small project within a very large community. Nonetheless, LADC has:

- Created jobs in an area that badly needs them.
- Provided a venue for community activities and brought activities and participants to the community who otherwise never would have been there.
- Created a beautiful, inviting public place that has raised the level of quality in the area, contributed to improving its image, and provided a symbol of hope and possibility.
- Ignited city council interest in supporting the long-term master plan.
- Introduced a model of grouping at least two similar manufacturers to create synergy in showroom facilities.

LADC serves as a **model** for design and community support in this neighborhood and elsewhere because:

- It opens itself to the street and neighborhood, rather than creating a closed-off fortress – and this approach has, perhaps paradoxically, increased security by increasing both visibility and a sense of inclusion and accessibility.
- It shows how much can be done with economical means in rejuvenating deteriorated building stock while respecting its underlying strength and beauty.
- It demonstrates that optimism and reinvestment will be rewarded with success and attract more investment.

Beyond these measures and the question of replicability, the project is remarkable precisely because it is the personal and private commitment of a local, successful couple who strongly desire to "give back" and improve the community where they grew up.

Assessing Project Success

SUCCESS IN MEETING PROJECT GOALS

1. *To contribute to the revitalization of the area by instigating the development of a furniture and design showroom district, drawing customers who would otherwise be limited to other parts of the city.*

The LADC should be viewed as a seed. It has not yet blossomed into the intended district, although the city has expressed interest in supporting the next phases. Whether this will turn out to be a showroom district or some hybrid including many other functions is not clear. One argument is that the initial development is too small, that a greater scale is needed to make the concept work. Currently, there is only one other furniture showroom at the design center. At the time of the site visit, it appeared that the demand for available space within the LADC was tending more toward non-profits and community-oriented functions, which may not be a bad thing, but certainly represents a change in original intent.

2. *To provide a place for community gatherings and events.*

There have been a number of big and small events, ranging from city-wide draws for art shows and organization galas, to smaller, more local and even personal events (weddings, children's coming-of-age parties). The frequency of such events is not known.

3. *To house the sales headquarters for the Cisco Brothers furniture business.*

This is a clear area of success, as the showroom is operating effectively.

4. *To use good design to transform the area – reaffirming beauty and openness to the community, fostering positive and life-enhancing values, optimism and a sense of what can be possible.*

The project is very attractive and is spoken of positively by all interviewees in terms of its importance and impact (especially on the psyche of the community).

Left: *Bollards in LADC courtyard.*
Right: *LADC entrance.*

SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

What was most impressive was the effort by these two private citizens to try to add to and improve their local community, especially given the level of risk involved in this project. The Pinhedos are private people who see their project as a public amenity – a rare enough event. It is, the Selection Committee noted, "every mayors dream" to have citizens like this providing so much investment of time and money, although they worried about the ability of two people working alone to have an impact in a city the scale of Los Angeles. The Pinhedos set very high goals and, in spite of the short time span and lack of help from the city, have achieved some of them.

The design of this space was inexpensive and used simple materials to powerful effects. It makes a strong impact and provides a strong sense of place in courtyard, with its play of light and shadow, and nice interior space. One lesson from LADC is that local governments need to recognize and support these kinds of citizen efforts.

Sources

Project website: http://www.ladesigncenter.com

LADC sign at entry.

The 2007 Rudy Bruner Award

Building Sustainable Neighborhoods






What We Learned

With each award cycle, the Rudy Bruner Award (RBA) starts anew. New projects are submitted (more than 90 this year), to be reviewed by a new Selection Committee, working with no pre-established criteria for what constitutes an excellent urban place. Each Selection Committee is asked to derive their own criteria as they consider the applications and winnow them down to a handful of finalists. Each finalist is the subject of a site visit by a Bruner Foundation team, and the results of their visits are presented to the Selection Committee at their spring meeting. At this second meeting, the committee again discusses the merits of each project, eventually elevating one to Gold Medal status. In identifying the winners, the Selection Committee explicitly and implicitly identifies the issues, themes, and challenges facing our cities, and comments on the kinds of urban places that address them in meaningful ways.

In 2007 our Selection Committee chose a typically diverse mixture of fascinating, quirky, brilliant, thoughtful places, united by their common desire to contribute to their respective neighborhoods and cities, and to develop urban places that are both successful in their own right and responsive to the needs of their communities. These places address a wide variety of issues, including public space and public infrastructure (as seen in Columbus Circle and Crossroads); low income housing and mixed-income communities

(High Point); art, culture, and learning (Children's Museum of Pittsburgh and Artists for Humanity); and urban manufacturing, showroom, and community space (Los Angeles Design Center). Since these are real places in real communities they are all complex, in process and product, with aspects of their story that bring new layers of meaning to the completed projects. However striking the space, it is often these "back stories" of struggle and perseverance, leadership and cooperation, tension and resolution that provide real insights into the hard work of urban placemaking. These winning projects are never simple, and without exception, they came to fruition despite limited budgets, competing agendas, political complications, and regulatory challenges.

One of the common traits of great urban places is that they have found ways to overcome these challenges, and in fact make use of them to create something better, more exciting, and more widely shared by the community than an easier and more straightforward project could possibly provide. These places seek to make connections between communities where none existed before or where some have long been severed. The Children's Museum of Pittsburgh tries to weave together a fractured community, and Crossroads built bridges physically and metaphorically between communities that had been isolated from each other. Columbus Circle serves as a meeting place in midtown Manhattan, and High Point Redevelopment weaves a fractured street pattern back together, offering new amenities and promoting interaction between the project and neighboring communities. L.A. Design Center provides a new, attractive destination in the South Central area, inviting buyers from Los Angeles into this otherwise beleaguered and often ignored neighborhood.

While all of these winners are fully operational, they still remain works-in-progress. Difficult projects in times of strained budgets take time – Crossroads will be adding pieces to finish the original concept for years – and bold concepts based in broad participatory frameworks are always ongoing. High Point continues to add housing, parks, and support facilities, and the North Side of Pittsburgh may never be "finished," as it continues to evolve and change in ways that make it a more livable and stronger community.

Rudy Bruner Award winners have never been presented as models to be replicated or as formulas to be transplanted to other urban settings. Because they are so deeply embedded in their own contexts, their value to other places is often in presenting innovative strategies that can be adapted to fit the unique qualities of each city, each neighborhood. Their stories often reveal strategic visions that can be adapted to different urban settings, building upon the strengths that are unique to the history and character of every city.

SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

In many ways, the conversation among Selection Committee members as they deliberate about the gold and silver medals is as important as the result itself, because of what it tells us about critical urban issues of the day. Selection Committee members are chosen for their expertise, experience, and perspective on urban placemaking, and the award process becomes a forum within which they enter into an informed dialogue about the concerns and challenges that surround cities in any given year. Their conversation illuminates the state of city-building around the country, and provides a unique perspective on the process of creating excellent urban places.

The Children's Museum of Pittsburgh won the gold medal for what it built, what it is trying to create, and the process it used.The Selection Committee commended CMOP for building connections among diverse groups of people; making a positive design contribution to the local urban landscape; and providing a new model for placemaking using complex collaborations among culturally-oriented institutions in the area. The committee was impressed by the leadership role Children's Museum of Pittsburgh has played within the community, and noted that this goes well beyond the usual purview of a children's museum, creating a new model for the role of a cultural institution in the city.

Photo: Albert Vecerka/Esto

Children's Museum of Pittsburgh

They noted that many cultural institutions tend to be inward-looking and are not usually focused on their relationships to other cultural centers in their cities. The museum's success takes on additional importance because Pittsburgh and its North Side are seen as difficult places to work, given the enormous loss of jobs and population in previous decades. Finally, the committee saluted the excellent design of the museum, a plan that incorporates the historic preservation of two beloved local institutions with an elegant new facility that is also an environmental sculpture.

The Selection Committee applauded the redesign of the **Columbus Circle Urban Plaza** for completing the redefinition of a space that has played such a pivotal role in New York's history. They felt it did an outstanding job of transforming a desolate urban traffic island into an inviting, animated, and beautiful public open space, which has become a new destination in its own right. The committee was enthusiastic about the placement of fountains on the plaza, and about the use of berms and water sounds to mitigate traffic noise. They also noted the complexity of achieving the design goals in such an intensely used and constricted space.

The committee also felt the public/private partnership between developers, the landscape designer, two major non-profit organizations – the Central Park Conservancy and the Municipal Arts Society– and the City of New York was exemplary, and demonstrates the quality of place that can be produced by this kind of high-level collaboration. Members of the committee did express concern, however, about responsibility for ongoing maintenance, but felt that, on balance, the redesign of this important urban space provides lessons and a model which will be useful to other cities.

The Selection Committee was also impressed by the participatory process and level of civic engagement undertaken by the Seattle Housing Authority in creating **High Point.** This process assumed particular importance because a central goal for High Point was to connect it to the surrounding neighborhood by continuing the local street pattern through the project. This created new public open spaces and community facilities open to residents of nearby neighborhoods. The dialogue with neighboring residents helped establish these priorities and ultimately helped reverse the isolation that had become so problematic in the predecessor project.

In recreating High Point as a mixed-income neighborhood of market and subsidized housing, the Seattle Housing Authority went farther than required (by Hope VI rules) in providing one-to-one replacement of low-income units. It created a setting that has an exemplary

Photo: Olin Partnership

racial and ethnic mix that responds to the diverse populations in the Seattle area. Early in the planning process, public meetings to help make design decisions were translated into five languages (include Vietnamese, Cambodian, Spanish, and East African languages such Somali, Tigrinya, and Amharic). A range of rental and purchase-price points for the various kinds of housing units were created to provide a true and ongoing economic mix of tenants, from well-below the median income level to market rate. In an unusual move, the Seattle Housing Authority has also created a program for tenants, and a sliding rent scale that allows them to be responsive to changing employment circumstances. The committee also noted the ongoing professionalism and excellence of the Seattle Housing Authority which was described as an outstanding organization doing its job exceptionally well.

High Point was also unique in combining Hope VI goals with a major environmental focus that included reclamation of rain water through its extensive system of porous paving, swales, and a catchment pond, which also serve as amenities for High Point Residents. They

Columbus Circle Urban Plaza

also noted the use of environmentally-friendly materials in the building and operation of High Point and an organic gardening project which involves High Point residents in the production and nurturing of their own food.

The **Crossroads/Marsupial Bridge** project was seen as significant for the quality and inventiveness of its design, and for the fact that it addressed a much neglected issue – the state of repair and functionality of urban infrastructure. In the eyes of the committee, the Crossroads project provides a dynamic and viable new model for infrastructure improvements that are badly needed and poorly addressed in the country's older cities. The committee was enthusiastic about the project's playfulness and beauty; its strengthening of the pedestrian connection among nearby neighborhoods; and the way it enhanced pedestrian connections to the Milwaukee River. The importance of supporting river reclamation was also noted as an important national trend, and the fact that the original idea for a pedestrian bridge came from citizen groups, and was implemented through a model process and public/private partnership made the project even more exemplary.

What was most impressive to the Selection Committee about **L.A. Design Center** was the effort by two private citizens to give back to their local community through a major private investment, especially given the level of risk involved in this project. Francisco and Alba Pinedos are private citizens who in developing the L.A. Design Center showroom, have contributed a significant public amenity to their neighborhood – a rare enough event in private commercial development. Committee members noted that it is every mayor's dream to have citizens like this, and the committee expressed dismay about the absence of city support for related infrastructure improvements that could have made success more likely. The Pinedos set very high goals and, in spite of the short time span and lack of help from the city, have created a place of beauty and renewed economic activity in a beleaguered neighborhood. The committee also felt that investment in a particular industrial sector of the local economy, in this case furniture manufacturing, had potential as an economic development tool for other cities. The design of this space was inexpensive and used simple materials to powerful effect. LADC makes a strong impact and provides a marked sense of place in both its courtyard, with its play of light and shadow, and its handsome interior space. One lesson from L.A. Design Center is that local governments need to identify, recognize, and support these kinds of citizen efforts.

Photo: Jim Brozek

Crossroads/Marsupial bridge

Photo: Richard MandelKorn

The Selection Committee recognized **Artists for Humanity EpiCenter** for being the first building in Boston to achieve a LEED Platinum rating, for setting a new standard for construction in the downtown, and for having direct impact on the Boston Building Code. The excellence of the design and the transparency of the green elements were applauded, as was the use of recycled materials in the building design.

The innovation and effectiveness of the Artists for Humanity program was discussed and applauded at great length. Members felt it established a new direction for involving inner-city youth in the arts, and at the same time offered tools for breaking the cycle of poverty so ubiquitous in inner-city populations. The concept of developing entrepreneurial skills through the arts was felt to bring fresh opportunity and thinking to a long-standing urban issue. Finally, the committee applauded Artists for Humanity for its commitment to South Boston and for continuing to be active players in the Fort Point artist community as well as in South Boston.

2007 THEMES

One could hardly imagine six projects more different from one another in scale, scope, approach, and intention. Even so, there are a number of issues common to all of the 2007 winners and which provide insight into important problems facing many cities.

(Re)connecting Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are in many ways the central building blocks, and the vital core of strong and successful cities. Much of the focus of the 2007 RBA was on developing and supporting sustainable neighborhoods. Urban neighborhoods are, however, only as strong as the physical, environmental, and social connections to their larger cities, and so much of the work of the 2007 winners involves establishing new connections between neighborhoods or remaking connections that once existed. In two cases (High Point and CMOP), this process involved finding ways to repair, work around, and overcome the damage done by past attempts at urban renewal. In other instances, neighborhoods had become isolated over time, and new thinking was required to forge new connections between new use and settlement patterns.

The need to reconnect areas of cities separated by past plans gone awry was central to the efforts of several of the 2007 winners. In some ways they are attempting to fix mistakes of ambitious urban

Artists for Humanity EpiCenter

redevelopment efforts of earlier periods. This may be most explicit in the efforts of Children's Museum of Pittsburgh. The museum sits in the middle of a neighborhood that was damaged first by forced annexation and then benign neglect in the early twentieth century, and 60 years later by an urban renewal plan that tore down hundreds of buildings in the center of downtown. The original buildings were replaced with steel and glass or concrete structures that were not only charmless and out of scale, but also cut off the neighborhood from the urban core just across the river. The museum has been instrumental in organizing efforts to re-establish and reconnect elements of the community with new public space and organizing key players in the area to work together.

With High Point, the Seattle Housing Authority was also attempting to fix problems of the past and create, almost from scratch, a safe, livable, and ecologically sustainable neighborhood. Among the problems they faced were perceived and real issues with crime and drug use in the old development and a design that separated it from surrounding neighborhoods by a discontinuous street pattern that turned the project into a dangerous cul-de-sac. The program for High Point Redevelopment was to create a mixed-income neighborhood for residents significantly below median income as well as for those who could afford market rate housing. There is evidence that the new street pattern, which connected existing streets to and through the new development, is effective in reintegrating the project with the community. Hopefully, the connections created by new street alignments and new public facilities will continue to strengthen as locals come into the High Point Redevelopment area to use the array of amenities built into the project.

Crossroads serves as a bridge B both literally and figuratively B connecting neighborhoods that were never part of a single community. In part, this was because there was no existing community to speak of (formerly, the Beer Line B area was entirely industrial). Older neighborhoods had always been separated by the river, and connections between them were not well served by the existing viaduct. The Marsupial Bridge provides new options. It creates an important (and marketable) link for those coming into the new condominium developments and also provides an easy opportunity for the communities beyond the river to use the Brady Street area for shopping, social connections, transport (bike), etc.

The redesign and revitalization of Columbus Circle was also part of a reconnection effort, though in a very different context. At the prosperous southwest corner of Central Park, this neglected space (once called Aground zero" as the point from which all distances to New York City were measured) had been cut off for pedestrian uses. As part of the redesign of Columbus Circle, the beleaguered traffic island was transformed into an attractive public space. The new design draws large numbers of pedestrians to and through it.

It serves as a front door to both the Columbus Circle project and to Central Park, as well as an appealing public amenity in its own right.

Sustainable Development

Given the growth of interest in urban and global ecology, it is not surprising that sustainability and green design are important elements of several of the 2007 winners, and that sustainability is a more prominent theme in 2007 than in any previous RBA award cycle. No previous RBA winners had LEED-certified buildings — two of this year's finalists do. CMOP created a new structure that received a LEED Silver rating in support of its goal of providing a cleaner, more efficient, and sustainable setting for children's learning and development. Artists for Humanity, impressively, is one of only several dozen facilities in the country to boast a LEED Platinum rating achieved by its siting, the use of recycled materials, and its energy efficiency. It is the only recent large-scale commercial building in the U.S. designed without air conditioning. Both Children's Museum of Pittsburgh and Artists for Humanity use solar collectors, among the many features designed to lower the environmental impact of the structures. Instead of an air conditioning system, Artists for Humanity's designers developed a system that draws in cooler air throughout the night and maximizes natural air circulation during the day.

Photo: Seattle Housing Authority

High Point Redevelopment also has green design at its heart. The package of efforts at High Point that fall under the aegis of sustainability include energy-efficient design, broad swaths of green space, a significant effort to save old trees on the property, and a water reclamation system that resulted in permeable pavement, deep swales along neighborhood sidewalks, and a water retention pond. The High Point reclamation system virtually eliminated pollution-laden water run-off and contributes fresh, filtered water to a local salmon stream.

In addition, a special program addresses issues of environmental justice through the creation of "breathe easy" environments which were designed to reduce the presence of allergens and irritants in 35 subsidized homes in order to create a healthier living environment for children with asthma. Asthma is particularly widespread in low-income families and among African-American and Hispanic families.[1] The second phase of "breathe easy" homes are being constructed and a careful evaluation of their impact is underway.

High Point Redevelopment Project

What these three 2007 winners have in common, in addition to some specific environmentally-friendly features, is that the "green" aspects of the design were not add-ons to a standard design, but rather a reflection of the core values of the projects. The decisions to build "green" were principled ones, not determined by current headlines or cost-return analyses. While costs were carefully considered, the rate of return on investment alone (even with government incentives) would not have convinced most auditors to support many of these features. Rather, they were included because they fit the mission and goals of the organizations for the benefit of the immediate users and, in longer terms, for the sake of the local and global ecology.

Historic preservation can also be considered in the context of sustainability. In 2007, as in most other RBA cycles, historic preservation plays an important role in creating and sustaining urban excellence. Maintaining and reusing older structures is "green" in several important respects. Adaptive reuse keeps vast quantities of materials out of landfills, it preserves the energy embodied in the original creation and installation of materials, and it reduces the energy and environmental costs of construction. Restored and/or adaptively reused buildings frequently support a scale of the built environment that more appropriately fits the neighborhood and urban context.[2] Often, too, older buildings provide a quality of materials and detail unavailable in new structures.

Historic preservation also supports social sustainability because of the psychological effect it has on residents, as older buildings provide social and emotional continuity with the place and the past. This may be best illustrated in CMOP's reuse of the Old Post Office, the Buhl Planetarium building, and later the Carnegie Library. Keeping these buildings as a central piece of the project was critical to creating a powerful sense of connection between residents and the museum and helped generate public support and recognition of the museum as a legitimate player in the neighborhood.

New approaches to the public/private/non-profit partnerships

RBA finalists are typically projects of sufficient social and organizational complexity that integration of efforts from a variety of sources and sectors is required to bring them to fruition. A perusal of the 2007 winners makes it clear that there is no one right way to go about creating new urban places. Rather, there is a mix of players and partners in all of these projects.What is interesting and instructive is how each project responded to its unique local conditions to create partnerships that were effective in their respective contexts. While governmental agencies and officials are necessarily involved in all six, in some cases the city's role was insignificant. In Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, Artists for Humanity, and L.A. Design Center, governmental organizations play very small roles. In Pittsburgh this is due to years of hard financial realities that have left the city with little in the way of professional or financial

[1] *http://www.neahin.org/programs/environmental/ejbrochure.html*
http://www.asthma.partners.org/NewFiles/BoFAChapter15.html
Gottlieb, D. J. (1995). Poverty, race, and medication use are correlates of asthma hospitalization rates. A small area analysis in Boston. Chest, 108(1), 28-35.

[2] *Buddenborg, J. (2006). Changing Mindsets: Sustainable Design in Historic Preservation. Bruce Throckmorton, H. (1981). A bibliographical note on energy conservation and historic preservation. Journal of Cultural Economics, 5(2), 91-94. Sedovic, W., & Gotthelf, J. H. What Replacement Windows Can't Replace: The Real Cost of Removing Historic Windows.*

resources to offer. Non-profits are forced to step up and take over some of what are traditionally seen as city roles. In the case of CMOP, the non-profit sector played a dominant role in the formation and development of CMOP, while the museum itself, along with other local cultural organizations, has become the driving force for community change on the North Side.

L.A. Design Center is the work of two local entrepreneurs who worked to see if small-scale furniture showrooms could be grouped in such a way as to harness and direct the local, small-scale furniture manufacturing industry. This project has also gone forward largely without governmental support. At first, city agencies were not involved because they weren't asked B the Pinedos had drive and a plan that they pursued on their own. Later on, when city support was solicited, its mechanisms were slow in responding to changing conditions. In this case, as opposed to Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, the lack of city support has been a serious problem, hampering the successful development of the original concept to its fullest. The accomplishments of these two local entrepreneurs are impressive, but the fact that the Afurniture district@ as originally conceived has not yet come together may illustrate the difficulty or impossibility of going it alone in such efforts. Earlier and more aggressive municipal support could have made an important difference.

City government also played a supportive but indirect role at AFH. This unique model evolved slowly and developed organically from the initial efforts of an individual artist working with local public schools to provide art programs, but it was otherwise largely under the radar of Boston city government. AFC exhibited the benefits of small, personalized non-profit organizations in that it was able to change and evolve in response to shifting real estate markets and economic opportunities, but continued to adhere to its initial goals of bringing economic opportunity and the production of art together for inner-city teens. AFH continues to provide art services to the corporate world as a way of funding its educational work and training its students to be self-supporting artists. This exciting combination of an imaginative and effective arts-based program, set within a fully sustainable building, is unique in the history of the RBA.

Though government agencies took backseat roles in Pittsburgh, L.A. and Boston, they were critical partners and leaders in New York, Milwaukee, and Seattle. Both Crossroads in Milwaukee and Columbus Circle in New York showed that, in spite of the complexity, the effort, and potential landmines involved in negotiating through the maze of agencies and programs to get to approvals and action, city agencies could work together in creative and supportive ways to achieve success. In New York, the difficulty of working within the city system is legendary. Here, though, for Columbus Circle, the variety of agencies (Parks, Transportation,

Transit, Sanitation) worked well together, probably helped along in no small measure by the personal interest taken by two mayors. In Milwaukee, the level of collaboration between the neighborhood, architects, engineers, and local university (whose dean is the Chairman of the Department of Community Development), may have created new models for elevating the level of design in urban infrastructure. In each case agencies provided support and creative help, rather than serving as roadblocks (as stereotypes of city agencies might suggest), and each project was better for the partnership.

Rebuilding Excellence in Post-Industrial Cities

Another theme that emerges in the study of these projects is the need to create new economies in post-industrial cities. While this is certainly not a new subject, this group of projects embodies several innovative approaches to doing so. Pittsburgh was, for much of the twentieth century, a classic industrial success story, as its steel mills produced huge quantities of material and well-paying blue-collar jobs. Its economy was in fact so tied to steel manufacturing that it suffered immensely when that industry all but disappeared in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The decline of the industry meant the loss not only of well paying jobs, but also of population and the economic base that supported government and commerce. Pittsburgh lost so much population that in many areas (such as the North Side) there is now an oversupply of affordable housing.

CMOP represents an approach to reviving an economy in the absence of large-scale industry through the development of cultural assets. The museum was praised by the Selection Committee not just for developing an outstanding cultural institution of its own, with excellent new design and thoughtful preservation/adaptive reuse, but also for building on existing cultural resources in order to shape a new destination family district. By taking advantage of these existing and new cultural assets and linking them physically and symbolically, CMOP hopes to attract residents and tourists, who will spend money in their visits to the area, reinvigorating not just the cultural institutions but the economy of the neighborhood.

Though Milwaukee's industrial economy was somewhat less one-dimensional than that of Pittsburgh, it had similar problems. Milwaukee has also seen economic decline and population loss with the disappearance of tanneries and breweries along the Milwaukee River, near the Crossroads project. The city's response has been an active one, redefining the role of the Milwaukee River

LA Design Center

from a source of industrial power and waste disposal to a site for recreation and housing. Where factories once stood there are now nature paths and, near Crossroads in particular, many new condominium units. The Crossroads project, with the Marsupial Bridge and urban plaza, has provided additional recreation options and support for this new housing, and for the reclamation of the river as an important benefit to urban life. The Crossroads project complements this effort by providing a significant pedestrian amenity to the new housing, linking it with the Brady Street district and bringing walkers closer to the natural environment of the river.

The L.A. Design Center offers yet another unique approach. Los Angeles has a diverse economy but it has nevertheless felt the crunch of change and movement "off-shore" of the manufacturing sector. L.A. Design Center purports to extend the economic success of two local entrepreneurs more deeply into a troubled neighborhood. Instead of converting manufacturing infrastructure to other uses, as is common in many cities, they are trying to redevelop manufacturing as a basis for neighborhood employment. Their model stresses competitiveness based on small-scale local production that is responsive to market needs in speed, quality, and customization of production, rather than on price.

CONCLUSION

With each Rudy Bruner Award cycle we learn new lessons about urban placemaking. While the importance of vision and cooperation among sectors never changes, urban leaders committed to their projects and their cities continue to find ever-changing approaches to the creation of place. Some new issues come to the fore – sustainability, for example – but the basics remain the same: broad dialogue and participation within the community, good design, and attention to the needs of the neighborhood to create places that work. These winners make a difference—to their cities, to their neighborhoods, and to their residents. They are replete with ideas and strategies that can be viewed, discussed, and adapted in cities and neighborhoods across the country, and which offer fresh approaches to the art of creating excellent urban places.

Building Sustainable Neighborhoods

2007 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence

Bruner Foundation, Inc.

2007 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence

The *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* is dedicated to discovering and celebrating urban places that integrate effective process, meaningful values, and good design. These special places are also distinguished by their social, economic and contextual contributions to the urban built environment. Rudy Bruner Award winners transcend the boundaries between architecture, urban design and planning, and are often developed with such vision and imagination that they transform urban problems into creative solutions that can be adapted to cities across the country.

This book presents six outstanding projects which comprise the 2007 Rudy Bruner award winners. They offer creative approaches to urban placemaking in a variety of settings. Each of the projects reflects a deep commitment by groups of citizens, public agencies and individuals who dedicated themselves to making their cities better places to live and work. We salute their efforts.

The winners include:

Gold Medal Winner:
Children's Museum of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA

Silver Medal Winners:
Artist For Humanity EpiCenter
Boston, MA

Columbus Circle
New York, NY

Crossroads Project & Marsupial Bridge
Milwaukee, WI

High Point Redevelopment Project
Seattle, WA

LA Design Center
Los Angeles, CA

The *Rudy Bruner Award* is biennial. The Gold Medal Winner receives $50,000, and each Silver Medal winner receives $10,000. This book and other publications are available from:

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