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Right: Adalberto Libera’s 1940 Casa Malaparte. Photograph by Andrejs Grants.

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The New Online Journal of Ideas from Architectural Record
This month's features:
- Peter Wheelwright, the chair of architecture at Parsons School of Design, on the World Trade Center
- An interview with composer Philip Glass
- A discussion with Anthony Tung, author of Preserving the World's Great Cities
- New York City Fire Lieutenant Gregory Gargiso criticizes high-rise fire safety design
- A review of The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia? a new play by Edward Albee

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Think of where you feel most secure. Lying fully prone on a warm beach or snuggled in your own bed? Lost in swirling crowds during a lunchtime break or hiking in the high country? Few would answer, "Behind locked doors and high walls." As psychologist Richard Farson has observed, the term “security” is bound in paradox: Where security systems assert themselves most forcefully—in prisons, for example—fear, discomfort, and even danger often flourish; conversely, the absence of visible protection can promote the feeling of well-being.

In recent months, security by design has leaped from a single item on the architect’s programmatic checklist to the headlines. Architects and other design professionals are engaging in a national debate, spawning a mini-industry of consultants, Web sites, and AIA conferences in their wake, to discuss safety and security for the built environment. If you take Farson’s point, however, you quickly realize that security engages both fact (statistical reality) and perception, with design at the fulcrum, balancing the two.

When terrorism shattered our world, did facts dictate that all buildings become bunkers? Two building types illustrate the dilemma, with differing solutions. As Jane Loeffler, Ph.D., has written, embassies evolved, by policy, from projections of American culture (remember Edward D. Stone’s embassy in India) to thick-walled, heavily protected, interior-oriented structures with little room for architectural involvement. Despite the Nairobi bombings and contemporary realpolitik, critics decry these fortresses, with their unintended negative connotations of America’s image abroad.

By contrast, American courthouses, under the direction of the General Services Administration (GSA) and prompted by an ethos passionately articulated by former senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, had begun to open up. In buildings from Las Vegas to Boston, we began to see symbols of justice that democratically engaged the city, opening a transparent, public face to the community, while sequestering judges chambers, juries, law enforcement, and defendants in more protected, private areas. Courtrooms became the mediating space between the two exposures. Can this openness continue?

In this murky time, risk assessment can help provide direction for decision making by architects. By isolating the types of potential threats and addressing each as a design dilemma, imaginative solutions can produce buildings that enhance our feelings of well-being while simultaneously providing protection. Our plans may change: As in the new GSA courthouses, layered zones may progressively increase in wall thickness, in material strength, and in active protective systems from public to private realms. Buildings at high risk for blast damage can offer greater setbacks, wall hardening, minimized adjacency, and mitigation of projectile damage, none of which need affect the public’s appreciation of transparency or accessibility. It should be possible to appear open and be safe.

Make no mistake, the moment is dangerous. The list of potential security challenges can seem daunting—biohazard, theft, crowd control, arson, chemical attack. However, if we are able to determine which threats to address dispassionately, our solutions can become part of our overall design palette, much as we design for fire safety today. New products and systems may be invisible components of total building safety, similar to systems for fire suppression or thermal comfort. Speaking from his experience with airport design, architect Laurence Speck offered, “If it’s designed in, it should be as natural as a stove in a kitchen.”

ARCHITECTURAL RECORD wants to help. While this April issue includes the latest definition of “home,” our most sacrosanct environment, we wanted to address the notion of security in other types of buildings and structures. Together with our sister publication, Engineering News Record, we offer a special publication, Building for a Secure Future, that addresses the security paradox, encouraging us to design buildings that are simultaneously transparent, welcoming, and safe. Do you feel secure where you are today?
t isn't seeing shadows in the light, it's seeing light in the shadows.

Shoshi Caon, Associate Partner, Skidmore, Owens & Merrill
On light, skyscrapers and sustainability:

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Letters

A watchful eye

An architect living in New York and working throughout the East, and a proponent for ecological methods of design, production, and construction, I feel compelled to bring the following issue to my colleagues’ attention: recently watched an investigative show, Bill Moyers Reports: The輸 Democracy, that examined A and, specifically, the gross mismanagement of a Mexican town by the Port Beach, California, management company Metal-Clad.

In 1995, Metal-Clad purchased a hazardous waste-water plant in the Mexican state of San Luis Potosí. Metal-Clad intended to clean up the site and expand the plant to treat hazardous waste from the U.S. During the licensing process, an environmental impact study revealed that the plant was situated directly above a local aquifer. The local government declared the area an ecological preserve. Metal-Clad was then unable to obtain government permits for expansion and subsequently left the property in a polluted state, thus ruining the only source of fresh water in the area. (Metal-Clad later sued the Mexican government under NAFTA’s Chapter 11 and won $16.7 million.)

As members of arguably the world’s most honest profession, I believe architects have a moral obligation as progressive thinkers to exercise control, and even to dictate which materials and products we should specify on our jobs and which ones we should prohibit. Though cost is certainly a factor in selection, there are always alternate manufacturers, and it wouldn’t take that much extra research to determine if a company has participated in any unscrupulous behavior.

A smart consumer is an informed and powerful one. The ripple effect of exposing these types of ill-mannered companies will help to reinforce the positive and noble objectives that many of us in the field of architecture and the building industry aim to achieve.

— Peter Gaito, Jr.
New York, N.Y.

The silencing of the muse

Youngsters in the profession sure can’t draw. The computer drawings that are generally produced look terrible and lack line weight, care, and concern. In the past, the young aspiring designer of such drawings would have been relegated to the spec department or to doing details in the back room.

I fear the Muse has lost her influence. She no longer has the human material to inspire and move her creations directly from mind to hand to paper. She no longer has the eye to get the color just right or to contemplate the penumbra of the shadow as it falls against the stone wall. The computer has simply gotten in the way, and a fundamental link has been broken.

When Frank Lloyd Wright used to shake the sketch out of his sleeve in a few hours to solidify and firm up the incubations and fermentations of his mind, the result was a wonder. When Louis Sullivan cre-

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ated ornament as a germ seed of an idea, the result was earth moving. Of course, they were architects of the Beaux Arts age, when charrettes seeking inspiration mattered.

There is an inexplicable something about the sketch coming from the hand of the master, with its resulting authority, that cannot be replaced by the account-executive business model so prevalent in the modern corporation. No amount of packaging, rendering, and graphic design replaces the inspiration of the sketch and all that it conveys.

I suspect we have lost something as we embrace our new computer technology. It seems the creative spark is dimming in the profession. It seems cold-minded accounting, efficiency, and packaging presented by account executives focusing on the client relationship is becoming ascendant. While it is encouraging to see the National AIA Convention 2002 offer remedial drawing classes that integrate xerox, camera, and the computer—I fear they don’t get it, and the Muse is becoming silenced.

—Craig Purcell
Island Architecture
Bainbridge Island, Wash.

Rebirth with the arts
I would suggest that within considerations for development of the former site of the World Trade Center, strong thought be given to the inclusion of arts facilities as part of any rebuilding effort. The positive and meaningful expressions of dance, theater, music, visual arts, and the spoken word are reflective of the most hopeful aspirations of the human spirit and stand in stark contrast to the hateful destruction of life and property caused by the attacks on the twin towers.

The arts could serve an important function in revitalizing New York City’s devastated downtown, bringing life and business into the area even after business hours, making the landmark tip of Manhattan so much more than just the canyon of commerce. A facility on the model of the Barbican Center in London, housing theaters, galleries, shops, and restaurants, would be an appropriate living memorial to all that was lost in the attacks and could provide a centerpiece of creative energy at the very heart of downtown. It would bring with it not only the cultural excitement for which this city is known worldwide but ample employment opportunities, as well. Such a facility could house or be built around a permanent memorial to the victims and stand as powerful testimony to the many free and distinct voices that make up our great city. An interdenominational chapel for reflective prayer could be included, highlighting the importance of tolerance among people of all faiths—thus merging at the site the beneficent energies of religious faith and creative expression in the humanistic spirit of the Italian Renaissance.

The generous power of artistic endeavor has long been a vital strand in the fabric of our urban life, playing both an important economic role and contributing so much to the sense of what it means to be a New Yorker. The arts very much deserve recognition and inclusion in the effort to heal the psychic as well as the physical wounds of 9/11. There has been discussion of what to do with aging Lincoln Center. This is the time to bring it downtown, and to let every joyful note, song, and step prove our devotion to our common humanity, to mark all that has been lost, and to celebrate all that remains.

—Julian Jackson
Metaphor Contemporary Art
Via e-mail

Corrections
Photographer Derek Lepper’s name was misspelled in the March issue’s story on the Coal Harbour Community Center [page 124]. In the December 2001 issue’s Design Vanguard section [page 76], the Day Care/Youth Center in West Berlin was designed by Barkow Leibinger Architekten with Douglas Gauthier as a principal collaborator.

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Tunnel vision

Congratulations on raising and exploring the question of how architecture is judged ["Judging Architecture: The Dangers of Tunnel Vision," RECORD, January 1992, page 9]. I certainly support your view that none of the yardsticks you cite be elevated into the "dominant methodology."

But my concern is more fundamental: that most of the profession’s award programs embrace few of the yardsticks you cite at any level of importance. Until that pattern changes, and work is judged on the broad criteria you’ve begun to identify, and the media publish and celebrate those results, we will continue to earn the criticism of being disconnected with clients’ and society’s realities.

Hostos Community College

The publication of the Allied Health Facility at Hostos Community College by Voorsanger, Hirsch/Danois Architects ["Street Life," RECORD, February 1992, pages 88-93] makes no reference to the overall master plan prepared by our office. It implies that Voorsanger & Associates linked the facility to the opposite buildings via a bridge spanning the Grand Concourse. It also implies that they alone created the Community College which earned an A+ for its contribution to the South Bronx.

For the record (pun intended): our office, in association with Sanchez & Figueroa Architects, were retained by the City University of New York to prepare a master plan for all improvements at Hostos. Fundamental to the master plan was to encourage extensive community use of the street-level facilities. Voorsanger/Hirsch/Danois received the commission to render services on the Allied Health Center within the context of our master plan. Our office was retained to develop the bridge and mixed-use facilities on the eastern side.

Robert Siegel

Gwathmey Siegel & Associates

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Eschewing Obfuscation: Ideas for Cleaning Up Our Language Act

Not long ago Peter Blake, architect, editor and teacher, told me a first-hand story about the philosopher Bertrand Russell, who is said to have complained that he was never taken seriously in this country because his writings were too easy to understand. I have been convinced for years that the architectural profession is doing everything it can to prove him right by being as obscure as possible. Oblivious in too many cases to their obligation to tell the facts plainly to the client, to the public, and to others who would love to learn more about architecture if they could only understand the jargon, architects invent new jargon every Monday morning, or borrow strange terms from such fields as literary criticism or high-tech computerspeak.

Just last month a press release arrived on my desk from Rice University announcing a memorial symposium in honor of the late architecture dean Paul Kennon. I quote this especially occult passage: “The themes ... include ... the role of contextualism versus disruption or critique; the relation between architecture and ‘event’; the notion of environmental determinism with regard to social practices; the possibility of oppositional urban space; and the emancipatory potential of architecture.” I hate to think what Paul would have made of this gobbledygook. Then came an invitation to the opening of an exhibit by the Austrian architect Gunther Domenig, which describes a house as “a fracturization of rocks into crystalline surfaces, as if the waves of lakes had given them both their openness and smoothness.” I don’t think I’ll go.

The magazines—RECORD no doubt among them—aren’t innocent. Last year I headed off at the pass the following gem—a reference to a project’s iconographic roots, which caused me to ask whether the writer was referring to some new species of radish. The barrier to clarity more often than not consists simply of needlessly long words and long sentences. To measure the clarity of a passage the late Robert Gunning invented the Fog Index. You select a 100-word passage, count the number of words of three syllables or more, the average number of words per sentence, add the two and multiply by 0.4. The resulting Fog Index of your passage corresponds to the number of years of schooling needed to get the meaning. The Fog Index of the Atlantic is said to be 12, of Time magazine 10.

It isn’t a sign of cleverness to be misunderstood. Every architect should be on the alert for signs of obfuscated communication. Any reader who comes across a gem is invited to send it to me at RECORD. I may share the best ones for a little light reading by all. Stephen A. Kliment

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Drawing by Stan Hunt, ©1992
The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.
They don't make theatres like this anymore. Which is why they

When it opened in 1921, the State Theatre in Minneapolis was hailed as the most luxurious showplace between New York and San Francisco. Sixty years later however, when planning began for a $130 million office/retail complex for the site, it appeared this grand old theatre would go the way of the silent films it once screened.

But in 1985, a determined group of preservationists succeeded in getting the State placed on the National Register of Historic Places. And one of the first companies to become involved in its restoration was Marvin Windows and Doors.

You see, the windows above the theatre's marquee posed a two-sided problem. Not only would they have to fit perfectly and look exactly like the originals, they'd also have to be durable and maintenance-free. And Marvin was the only manufacturer willing to make these unique windows and stand behind them.

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and flexibility are as much a part of every window and door they build as wood and glass.

Today, more than 70 years after it first opened its doors, the State Theatre has reopened as the glittering star of the Twin Cities' cultural scene. And those who've seen it agree that everyone involved in its restoration deserves to take a bow.

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Yerba Buena Gardens: Buildings in Search of a Plan

Perretti and Park Pictures

What is remarkable about plans for Yerba Buena Gardens, a 25-acre cultural and commercial project under development in downtown San Francisco (1), is that it gives absolutely no impression of having been planned. What was foreseen as an 800-acre “new city” rising out of the slums of the South of Market area has become a loose collection of arts and convention facilities surrounded by a few office buildings and hotels, the result of nearly 20 years of proposals and compromises. When asked to explain the rather understated forms of his new Center for the Arts, a 55,000-sq-ft exhibition and performance facility, architect Fumihiko Maki excused himself by pointing to the design process: “We didn’t have the Napoleon III of Paris, nor did we have the Michael Eisner of Los Angeles—we had to work with the city of San Francisco.”

Maki, James Stewart Polshek, who designed the Center for the Arts Theater next door, and Romaldo Giurgola, who is drawing up a sweeping lawn behind both buildings (2), all had to work on top of an extension to the giant Moscone Convention Center. That cavernous, but invisible, project is the real engine of this new “center for popular culture,” as Polshek called it. Mario Botta has designed a 200,000-sq-ft Museum of Modern Art (3) just across the street as part of this complex, and office towers have been designed by James Ingo Freed (4) and Cesar Pelli. The towers reinforce what Freed calls the “Chinese Wall” of Market Street.

Even at a small scale, the plan remains haphazard. Nonetheless, each of the buildings is well worked out and elegant in composition; Giurgola’s park forms a welcome oasis of green amid the density of downtown. The facilities will offer new venues for arts groups and give the cramped museum needed space. Someday, Yerba Buena Gardens might even rate up there with the Transamerica Tower as one of the great tourist attractions of San Francisco. Aaron Betsky
Barton Myers Unveils Newark Performing Arts Center

The tug-of-war between New York City and neighboring New Jersey has traditionally centered on industry and jobs. In late February, that focus shifted to cultural affairs when the city of Newark, drawing a bead on Manhattan’s Lincoln Center, unveiled architect Barton Myers’s design for the first phase of the $145-million New Jersey Performing Arts Center. The 12-acre site was masterplanned by SOM and James Stewart Polshek (left). The complex will surround Theater Square, a proposed public plaza that is key to the center’s expected role in revitalizing Newark’s central business district. The initial building in the Myers design contains a 2,700-seat theater and a 500-seat repertory/concert hall, two restaurants, banquet hall, and gift shop (right). Anchoring the hall is an 85-foot-high terra-cotta and glass rotunda, well-lit from within to project warmth and draw crowds from the square. Parking is just beyond the site in an underground lot below an existing park near Newark’s waterfront. Funds (and land) are still being collected for a hoped-for groundbreaking in late 1993.

United Kingdom

Development Rates “President’s Choice”

Things are simpler at the Royal Institute of British Architects. To award the association’s top design honor, president Richard MacCormac merely chose one building from a short list of six. The 1991 winner consists of the first four phases of the $3.5-billion Broadgate, a financial center under way on a nine-acre site near Liverpool Street Station in inner north London. Architects are Arup Associates. Offices, shops, and restaurants are arranged around a newly created public square (left), which is used in summer for concerts, exhibitions, and outdoor theater, and in winter for ice-skating. In the master plan the offices are broken up into four buildings, each organized around an atrium. The buildings are stepped back at the top, and contain landscaped terraces. Vehicles circulate underground to free up the newly created streets for pedestrian traffic.

Whitney scraps Graves plan
A 10-year effort to design a major expansion of Marcel Breuer’s 1966 building for the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City has been abandoned by the museum. A series of Postmodern schemes put forth by Michael Graves consistently met stiff opposition from the Upper East Side community and from champions of the purity of Breuer’s rugged composition (“Doing the Right Thing,” RECORD, January 1992, pages 86-89).

Practice makes (Post) perfect
The first issue of Practices, a publication of the Center for the Study of the Practice of Architecture at the University of Cincinnati, will feature what promises to be a tell-all interview with Peter Eisenman “concerning his approach to architectural practice.”

O. Jack Mitchell Dies at 60
O. Jack Mitchell, who taught at Rice University’s School of Architecture for a quarter-century and served as its dean and director, died at his Houston home in February.

Competitions
The American Society of Architectural Perspectivists (ASAP) is calling for entries in “Architecture in Perspective VII” (deadline, May 1), its seventh annual exhibition. ASAP, 320 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass. 02116; 617/484-4766.

U. S.-Japan team wins competition
A joint-venture design by Kaplan/ McLaughlin/Diaz of San Francisco and the Japanese firm of Kaiken Sekkei of Nagoya has won a competition for a $350-million, 1-million-sq-ft International Design Center in the city of Nagoya. The complex includes a 14-story public tower with a theater and a 23-story office and retail tower joined by a 165-foot-tall atrium.
Tigerman McCurry Plans Superstore and Luxury Hotel

Americans may think the Japanese avoid discount stores for luxury haunts like Tiffany & Co. But Kanseki, or K-Zone, is a popular Japanese version of K-Mart. Starting with this flagship store by Tigerman McCurry Architects of Chicago, located across the street from its corporate headquarters on the outskirts of Utsonomiya City, the company is preparing a rapid expansion with departments offering housewares, pets and pet supplies, automotive and bicycle services, and fast food (1,2). Because of its conspicuous site on an elevated highway, ready access by car was a major factor in the program, as well as a layout that could be quickly read and understood by those driving by. Each of three segments of the poured-in-place concrete structure, overlaid with aluminum storefront grids, is given a distinguishing color that also acts as signage. The store can be expanded by adding to the shorter of two wings. Construction is to begin this fall. Tigerman McCurry is collaborating with Semba Architects of Tokyo. In addition to K-Zone, Tigerman McCurry acted as consultants in designing the facade of the proposed Park Lane Hotel, a 14-story, 220-room hotel in downtown Kyoto (3). The hotel’s glazed-tile elevations are a response not only to the context—an empty, L-shaped piece of a downtown “superblock”—but also to the previously established interior plan of the building, which was developed by the Japanese firm of Daiken. The facades, says Tigerman, “delineate the areas of focus” both within the hotel and on the exterior, such as a two-story teahouse, a health club, and commercial spaces.

Furniture

Table and Chair by Krier; Rearranged Pieces from Beyond Sears

Two distinct approaches to furniture design: Leon Krier (1,2) finds it useful to separate table and chair; New York-based Russian emigré architect Constantin Boym doesn’t (3,4). Krier found designing furniture to be “more like sculpture,” but was so taken aback to see his drawings for Italian furniture maker Giorgetti in three dimensions (1,2) that he asked the manufacturer to stop production. (It refused.) Others may make that request of Boym, who recently exhibited prototypes of what he calls “Searstyle” furniture, Sears catalog items that are dismantled and reassembled with other components. This union of mass production and individual quirk, says Boym, “could establish a design direction for the next century.” P.D.S.
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1992

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Karen D. Stein
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Every year in April my mother calls from Florida to comment on the current issue of RECORD HOUSES. Although she eagerly points out how much she likes the articles that her son wrote, she is just as quick to note that many of the chosen houses seem a bit odd if not downright eccentric. And of course, she has a point: to a layperson many of the houses featured each April do not conform to most Americans’ view of cozy domesticity. But if RECORD HOUSES has one overriding goal, it is less to document the middle ground of single-family residential architecture than to point out innovative solutions to the problems of structure, program, context, and style. With the exception of an exuberant Florida beach house that unabashedly celebrates artistic excess (page 102), this year’s eight houses share a certain seriousness—a pragmatism, perhaps driven by the current economy, that combines regional variations on a Modernist theme (pages 90, 110, 124, 132) with a welcome dose of concern for the environment (pages 82, 96, 118). Where luxury exists, it is in the form of grand, double-height living/dining/kitchen spaces that challenge architects and engineers to devise energy-efficient hvac systems. What is more, the nuts-and-bolts industrial esthetic of exposed structure and mechanics has crossed the threshold into the single-family house. It takes a bit of courage—for client and architect—to investigate the possibilities of uncloaked concrete block, corrugated metal, and other materials not often associated with residential design. As the houses featured on the following pages reveal, however, it can be a risk well worth taking. P. M. S.
A courtyard house by David Morton and Thomas Cordell is a protected oasis in a rugged Northern California landscape.
There are only two ways to get around the 667-acre ranch on which David Morton and Thomas Cordell placed this new house: on foot or in a four-wheel-drive vehicle. Enveloped by rugged hills and serviced by a gravel road that quickly turns into a dirt path, the house wisely respects its setting. "This terrain dictates that anything placed on it be as simple as possible, just to survive," explains Morton.

The two architects—who split their time between residences/offices in New York, Maine, and now California—let Mother Nature make many of the big decisions about siting and orientation. Nestled in a valley, the house occupies the most protected spot on the estate—not surprisingly, the same place where a previous owner had built a small metal shack. "We wanted the house to rest on the land, rather than perch on it," says Cordell. Comprising two 100-foot-long structures set against the prevailing winds, the house forms a courtyard oasis of order and right angles. Sharply pitched metal roofs (4/12 for the buildings and 2/12 for the walkways) allow the winter sun to hit the courtyard, while the corrugated, galvanized-steel roofing and siding provide a low-maintenance exterior that also resists the occasional brush fire.

Although responsive to its climate and topography, the house is a crisply defined object that draws clear lines between the protected sphere within its walls and the untamed environment beyond. To maintain this distinction, the architects kept the perimeter of the compound free of shrubs, plantings, or landscaping. Like Spanish missions built in the area since the 16th century, the house revolves around a courtyard whose covered redwood walkway is an architectural frame within which nature can be admired. Perfectly calm, the square courtyard is a place to relax in a chair or cultivate neat rows of grapes, roses, cactus, and lettuce. A poured-concrete pool rises two feet above the dirt-and-crushed-stone yard, while six olive trees offer shade. Straightforward in its design, the courtyard avoids symmetry, offering no axes between wall openings and repeating no two elevations. The result is a compound reminiscent of a Western frontier town, an effect the architects say they noticed only after the building was completed. Rather than being products of conscious imitation, any similarities with vernacular buildings are simply responses to the same climate and conditions that shaped earlier generations of structures.

A set of two 2-by-6 wood-frame structures with prefabricated roof trusses, the house sits on a concrete slab on grade. The north building contains the main living-dining space, a kitchen, master bedroom, a work studio, and a garage. The south building houses two guest rooms, another work studio, and a second garage large enough to be converted into an office should the need arise. Although the house is surrounded by spectacular scenery, the architects didn't want to dish out views at every turn. "The landscape is almost too compelling," explains Morton. So the architects saved the best views for the living-dining area and kept most other windows high so attention is directed up toward the mountains.

Simply defined with white sheetrock and pitched ceilings, the interiors are as efficient as the plan. Epoxy-varnished concrete floors and birch storage units provide subtle contrasts in color and texture, while sunlight offers animation. In the main public room, a free-standing fireplace with sliding steel panels divides living and dining areas. Off-the-shelf components such as wood doors and standard aluminum windows are supplemented with decorative tongue-and-groove birch grids and sliding exterior metal panels that protect all glazed surfaces when its residents are away. Clifford A. Pearson
The interiors feature simple materials such as epoxy-varnished concrete floors, sheetrock, and birch furniture. The living/dining room, located in the north building, is divided by a freestanding fireplace equipped with steel panels that slide up and down with the help of counterweights (top left and opposite). Metal panels also slide across to protect windows when the residents are away. Storage units in the kitchen (center left) and guest rooms (bottom left) are made of birch.

Credits
House on a Ranch
Petaluma, California

Architect: David Morton
Thomas Cordell Architects—
David Morton, Thomas Cordell, principals

Engineers: Edward B. Beattie
(structural); Struber-Stroeh Associates (mechanical)

General Contractor: R. V.
Stich Construction; Petro
Construction (roofing and siding)
On a small site in suburban Mexico City, Enrique Norten’s glass and steel box bursts through its concrete container.
"I'm a Mexican architect, so what I do is Mexican architecture," observes Enrique Norten. Although Norten's buildings may not sport the vividly colored surfaces that many Americans are quick to associate with south-of-the-border architecture, they are no less indigenous, combining, as they do, traditional construction techniques and Mexico's mixed cultural heritage.

For client Dr. Hugo Ortiz, Norten was able to further explore the union of local building methods and worldly design references that he had studied in earlier commercial projects [RECORD, February 1990, pages 84-87]. Ortiz commissioned Norten to design a house for his soon-to-be-married daughter and her future husband on a 1,500-square-foot leftover lot located at the base of the family's hilltop villa in the growing Mexico City suburb of Bosques de las Lomas. Although Ortiz's daughter announced an abrupt change in plans after the house was designed, Ortiz himself chose to proceed with construction of the honeymoon-cottage-turned-rental-apartment according to Norten's original scheme.

To maximize buildable area on the tiny parcel, Norten pushed his structure to the edges of the nine-foot setbacks required by the neighborhood zoning ordinance on three sides of the property. In the rear, the building incorporates an existing 36-foot-high retaining wall around the terraced garden to the main house above, which Norten replastered and painted light blue. Between the garden wall and a streetfront facade composed of layered planes of poured concrete and turquoise ceramic tile is the main living space—an arched double-height cage of steel and glass that rises above a masonry shell (previous pages and top left). Norten reinterpreted the transplanted Spanish Colonial tradition of entering a house through an enclosed courtyard by tucking the main entrance behind the front wall, creating a metal-gated, private allée that steps up the facade (bottom left). By contrast, the laundry room and maid's quarters are entered directly from the driveway.

Inside, a structural grid of varnished steel I-beams and hollow columns supports the two-story living room and mezzanine study (following pages), while wire cross-bracing further enhances the drama of a barrel-vaulted concrete ceiling. An angled staircase screens the dining room from the entrance, and defines a narrow passageway to a small kitchen and a bedroom beyond (plans overleaf). Upstairs is the master bedroom, which like the downstairs bedroom is marked on the exterior by a rhomboid-shaped, cantilevered steel and concrete balcony.

Although the glass-and-steel esthetic seems linked to a building tradition of international Modernism, Norten has not turned his back entirely on the architectural roots of his native Mexico. He is wary, however, of what he considers a clichéd use of attention-getting, saturated “Mexican” colors by his generation of architects, and like better-known compatriots Luis Barragán and Ricardo Legorreta, has also manipulated color and the harsh Mexican sunlight, but to altogether different effect. Norten opts for more muted tones: the mossy green and yellow plaster of interior walls, chocolate brown of seemingly porous lava stone floors, and purple-iris paint of the fireplace. He saves his eye-catching drama for structural gymnastics like the metal cage bursting through its masonry container.

Karen D. Stein
Norten gauged an interior and exterior staircase along the front of the Ortiz house, buffering living spaces from the busy street. Slot windows on the ground floor block views of passing cars but frame trees in the distance. Varnished steel I-beams bracket the two-story living room and help support the curved poured-concrete ceiling (bottom left and opposite).

Credits
Ortiz House
Mexico City, Mexico
Owner: Dr. Hugo Ortiz Dietz
Architect: Taller de Enrique Norten y Asociados (TEN)—Enrique Norten, principal-in-charge; Bernardo Gómez-Pimienta, Juan Carlos Tello, Carlos Ruiz de Chávez, Sergio Juárez, Gustavo Espitia, Luis Muciño, project team
Engineers: Ismael Colmenares (structural); Javier Aguerebre (mechanical)
Consultants: Katherine Grimm (landscape)
General Contractor: Enrique Juárez
Large as Life
A little house in rural Vermont gains both stature and livability from urbane ideas.
Turner Brooks owns to a certain cheek in drawing connections between “my little stick-built New England houses” and the splendors of the Italian Baroque—which he came to know well on his 1985 sabbatical at the American Academy in Rome. But the connection is there if one focuses on the qualities of motion and emotion so common to both.

Not that Brooks is shy about metaphor: he habitually likens buildings to vehicles or vessels—trucks or trains or boats—and these to animals also poised for movement—anthropomorphism at one remove. The Dennison/Peek house brought to mind a tugboat, though coal tipples and crickets were also evoked.

A dot on the map of northwestern Vermont, the town of Monkton lies in the wooded foothills of the Green Mountains that rim the broad valley where picture-book farmland stretches alongside Lake Champlain. The house itself perches in a low meadow only 100 yards from a pond big enough to be called a lake anywhere but in New England—certainly big enough to sustain a marine allusion.

Like Brooks, the owners are year-round residents of exurban Vermont, too seasoned to romanticize rusticity. Both journalists, he for a local newspaper, she for a wire service, the couple wanted a simple affordable home for themselves and their three-year-old son, but one enlivened by the telltale quirks that differentiate other houses Brooks has built nearby. The result is a house both more livable and more interesting than its size or budget would suggest.

Brooks notes with satisfaction a construction cost of $85 per square foot, which he attributes to the sage use of a vernacular—conventional building methods, familiar details, off-the-shelf materials—more often seen as a design statement than as a means to contain costs. A domestic vocabulary of clapboard, gable, and porch also suits the structure’s diminutive size: 1,300 square feet in the main floor and master-bedroom “bridge,” brought to a potential 1,650 square feet by basement expansion space.

What sets the house apart (and hints at the Baroque) is its restlessness. Unlike neighboring farmhouses that bind themselves to the land with walls and orchards and outbuildings, the Dennison/Peek house seems to hover in its hayfield, which, cut but once a year, grows up to and obscures the foundation. In addition, its forms shift as the viewer moves around the structure, breaking down into tense and often awkward assemblages that regain repose when seen in elevation. Yet the facades too support only a tenuous relationship between the taut north side of the house and the generously curved and windowed bow facing the pond on the south. Porches add stature as their shed roofs converge on the gabled bedroom tower.

The sense of movement is carried inside by the upward thrust of the ceiling and the outward surge of the main living area. Door-sized on the east, the space swells to full house width on the west before contracting again at the stair and stacked bedrooms. Margaret Gaskie

Credits
Dennison/Peek House
Monkton, Vermont
Owner: Meg Dennison/Tim Peek
Consultant: Beth Humstone (color)
General Contractor: Millbridge Construction

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Among Brooks’s rules for the design of small houses is assembling into a single large space (overleaf) those areas—living, dining, kitchen—that would be both tiny and labyrinthine if separated. In the Dennison/Peek house they owe their ordering to the tile-clad inner wall of the kitchen. Bedrooms are stacked in the peak-roofed tower. Spatial continuity is reinforced by the big room’s upward and outward sweep as well as white-painted gypboard walls offset with natural wood finishes. Stepped windows in the bowed wall overlooking the pond (bottom opposite) open the space to daylight and views.
Fun House

An oceanside house near Daytona Beach celebrates the pleasures of life along the boardwalk.
Root Guest House
Ormond Beach, Florida
Steven Harris & Associates, Architect
Steven Harris is one of a group of American architects who combine Modernist impulses with an appreciation for vernacular regional precedents. In his residential work, Harris has been especially skillful adapting local building types, whether they are silos and barns for a house in Connecticut [RECORD, April 1991, pages 70-75] or motels, lifeguard towers, and boardwalk arcades for an oceanfront guest house recently completed near Daytona Beach, Florida.

For the Florida commission, Harris found a kindred spirit in client Chapman Root II. Root, a local entrepreneur, collector of vintage automobiles, and great-grandson of the man who designed and manufactured the first Coca-Cola bottle, had purchased an ordinary stucco-clad ranch on a rather extraordinary site—a 75- by 200-foot parcel wedged between Florida route A1A and the Atlantic. Although Root’s initial intent was to remodel the ranch and sell it, he chose in the end “to have some fun with the project” by commissioning Harris to design a new 3,500-square-foot guest house (Root’s “main” house, designed by William Morgan, is currently under construction a quarter-mile up the beach).

“I thought a lot about what a house on the beach in that town should be,” says Harris, “and how it might respond to the authentic culture of the area.” To Harris, that culture has less to do with Miami’s tile-roofed neoclassicism or Seaside’s cracker vernacular than with “the unpretentious, playful, funky, and even vulgar qualities of boardwalk life.” And so, each of the vividly hued interconnected pavilions of the Root house refers to some nearby seaside icon. In a few cases the allusion is obvious: a bright-red steel “lifeguard” tower, for example, or a terne-coated metal “pier” building perched atop 23-foot-high steel columns. Other references are subtler: a barrel-roofed living-room wing that echoes the fun houses of Daytona’s boardwalk, a two-story pool house whose loggia evokes the porches of the old Ormond Beach Hotel, a bulbous chimney stack that might conjure up the wooden milk bottles of an arcade baseball toss.

Beyond stylistic considerations, Harris had to deal with Daytona’s hot climate and its vulnerability to hurricanes. Although seven-foot-high ocean-facing windows in the living and dining rooms allow views of what Root calls “the world’s largest backyard,” the south facade, by contrast, is virtually windowless, reducing air-conditioning loads on the forced-air hvac system. What’s more, Harris placed the house along the site’s southern flank to shade the central pool and patio for much of the day. Since the house is separated from the beach only by a narrow strip of dunes, it was designed to resist hurricane-force winds with concrete-block walls reinforced by lateral steel bracing. Reinforcing steel was also used to tie together 18- by 30-inch footings and to connect the pool house to the patio slab. Finally, unlike its wood prototype, the red lifeguard tower here is made of cable-braced, hand-fabricated steel tees.

Root had few demands aside from a request that the house be casual, “like a good beach house should be.” The house comprises two L-shaped structures—the guest living quarters and a pool house—which together define a courtyard and insulate the complex from adjacent houses and A1A. Five discrete zones—two first-floor bedrooms, a second-floor master bedroom, the pier room, and a small studio in the pool house—all share a stainless-steel kitchen and double-height living room, allowing unrelated guests to use the house at the same time. Several friends and family members have already visited, and their comments, recorded in a log book that Root keeps in the atrium, have ranged from “wow!” to “fantastic!”—just the reaction he and Harris were seeking. Paul M. Sachner

Whether seen from route A1A (previous pages) or from the beach (above), the Root guest house stands out from its beige and white neighbors. Although residents of Ormond Beach at first objected to its strong color and idiosyncratic form, they have come to accept, and even admire, the house as a local landmark. A loggia shades south-facing bedrooms from the hot Florida sun (opposite), while billboard fluorescent tubes set into the ground along the perimeter illuminate the house at night. The house is built of steel-reinforced concrete block, clad in synthetic stucco.
A long narrow site, the closeness of neighboring houses, and the logic of exploiting ocean views all helped determine a plan comprising two L-shaped buildings around a courtyard. Many of the house's most distinctive features are custom-designed. Harris, for example, designed the unusual guitar-shaped pool (opposite). His associate, Lucien Rees-Roberts, produced the pool's glass-mosaic-tile pattern, which separates a deep, 50-foot-long lap lane from a shallow lounging area where bright-yellow cylinders may be used as seating or as cocktail tables. Custom work also marks the atrium (bottom left), which has an African slate floor and a hand-fabricated stainless-steel curtain wall. All terrace rails, including one on the second floor off the master bedroom (top left), are made of laminated heart redwood, rasped finished for an irregular whalebone-like profile.
If the interior plan is relatively straightforward, custom and off-the-shelf furnishings create something of an Antonio-Gaudi-meets-Iamu-Noguchi fantasy world. A 32-foot-long double-height living room enjoys Atlantic views through seven-foot-tall windows (top left), while a suspended lighting “cloud” dominates the adjoining dining room (opposite). Imaginative tilework by Rees-Roberts shows up in the downstairs powder room (middle left) and in other bathrooms (not pictured). Other unusual interior features include a zebrawood circular stair and flamed French limestone flooring. But perhaps the most ingenious device in the house is a counterweighted round mirror in one of the downstairs bedrooms (bottom). Supported by two diagonal tracks, the mirror can be raised or lowered to open or close a 3.5-foot-diameter hole in the wall between the living room and bedroom (middle right). When the hole is open, one can see the Atlantic through the living-room windows; when it is closed, one has total privacy.

Credits
Root Guest House
Ormond Beach, Florida
Owner: Chapman J. Root II
Architect: Steven Harris & Associates—Steven Harris, principal-in-charge; Lucien Rees-Roberts, senior associate; Stephen Brockman, Robert Schultz, Tommy Lee White, project team
Structural Engineer:
Ross Dalland, P. E.
Consultants: Glenn Herbert (landscape architect); R. A. Heintges (curtain wall); Catherine Rahn (art glass)
General Contractor:
Foley & Associates
Modern Over Modern
A film producer’s house in the Hollywood hills converts the world into pictures.
This house is a machine for viewing. It is a place where you can get lost in the view and hold on to it at the same time. “I feel like I have all the technology of living in the city, but am living halfway up Mount Fuji,” is how the client’s wife describes it. “It’s a house for a filmmaker,” says architect Henry Smith-Miller, “and that means it’s about controlling the view. It’s about how you convert the world into pictures.” Everything in this renovation of and addition to a small house in the Hollywood hills has been stripped down to create that sense of control. Starting from a 1950s Modernist structure, New York-based Smith-Miller and partner Laurie Hawkinson have taken the floating planes of Modernism a step further, turbo-boosting them with an array of visual devices and gadgets that turn Modernism’s refined and static vision into a shifting cinematic machine for savoring and living in the view.

Smith-Miller and Hawkinson began with a classic Modernist condition. The 1956 design, by Richard Neutra associate Donald Poisky, boasted all of the wall-to-ceiling glass, overlapping horizontal planes, and flowing spaces of a high-style Modernist house, but it was also, says the architect, “just a little frame thing, with an open plan and a real sense of economy.”

The architects quickly realized that the house was divided into symmetrical compositions in plan and section that gave the house a rather static sense of formality, but also acknowledged the majestic scale of the hills and sea. Both the entrance and the pool axis deviated from that formula, giving the designers a chance to slip in some of their own moves. These were changes and inventions that they believe allow more active links with the world beyond the structure. The most prominent of them is a ship’s ladder leading up to a new master bedroom—“a mechanical penthouse placed on top of a Case Study house,” as Smith-Miller describes it. The architects then opened up spaces to each other with sliding plywood panels and “captured the spirit of the Case Study houses” with a series of cantilevered roof decks.

Other additions were essentially cosmetic, aimed at making the house work the way it looked. Gray-painted surfaces and soffits are complemented by metallic pieces like a fireplace hood and a custom gray carpet. New low-E glass allows the house to conform to energy codes, and scissor-hinged jalousies extend, when needed, the shade provided by existing eaves. A pivoting door of police-surveillance glass opens up the central east-west axis, mixing views of the eastern hills with reflections from the west. The garage door became a frame for sandblasted plastic glazing that scissors up and out of the way. Gadgets proliferate, from the folding media-center wall to a custom-made rolled-steel trashcan in the kitchen and a motorized skylight cover in the master bedroom. “I don’t see them as toys,” says the client’s wife, “but as necessary additions that allow the house to function.”

Smith-Miller agrees, arguing that each of the mechanical additions adds to the interpenetration of inside and outside, and of various interior spaces to each other. He notes the sliding shaving mirror placed in front of the bathroom window that lets you look at yourself and the landscape at the same time, and compares it to the former clerestories that are now at the base of that bathroom, making you sense the continuity of spaces throughout. The house itself fades into gray, until you see only the axes along which the static forms of the building disappear. You are left with an array of frames, pergolas, and planes that serve to control orders of an architecture as it dissolves into the landscape. Aaron Betsky
A desert garden filled with olfactory plants, designed by landscape architect Akva Stein, confronts the street (middle left). Stein designed the gardens to extend the palette of the renovation into the landscape, shunning geometry and vertical elements in favor of low desert planting. The front yard is framed by a sandblasted-stone wall and a new pergola that is, says the architect, “a rhetorical device” that opens up the basic framework of the house for public inspection (top left).

The rectangular forms of the front, which buffer the house from the street, slowly give way as one moves through the house to the serenity of a living area (below left) that opens out to a view of hills and the distant ocean. Sliding panels allow the client to close off the media room (in the background beyond the aluminum fireplace hood), while a similar device also can make the kitchen into a separate room. Sunshades and sliding glass doors then increase the protected, but seemingly limitless boundaries of the house. Only the steel staircase to the master bedroom interrupts this movement (opposite).
The main floor of the original house had a three-part garden facade juxtaposed with a series of closed bedroom forms and intersected by the off-center axis of the entry. An added pool and decks send the old design spinning off in new directions. It sounds like mind games, but the result, says the client "is a world where everything is open. Light comes in, but I still feel as if the house is filled with comfortable nooks."

**Credits**
House for a Film Producer
Los Angeles, California

**Architects** Smith-Miller + Hawkinson Architects—Henry Smith-Miller and Laurie Hawkinson, partners-in-charge; Knut Hansen, Ruri Yampolsky, Starling Keene, Charles Benfro, Kit Yan, Eric Cobb, Jennifer Stearns, Annette Fierro, and Rob Rothblatt, project team

**Engineers:** Steven Mezey (structural); Carlo Marsot (mechanical); Claude Engle (lighting)

**Landscape Architect:** Achva Benzinberg Stein

**General Contractor:** Mounir Boctor, Monet Contracting
Hooked on Nature

Wright House
Lew Beach, New York
James Cutler Architects
An architect from the Pacific Northwest combines old stone and fresh pine to craft a Catskill Mountain cottage for a transplanted Seattle fly fisherman and his family.
From the low, rustic stone wall that frames its wraparound terrace to a host of built-in features ranging from night tables to a Murphy bed, the 1,750-square-foot house architect James Cutler designed for Bing and Migs Wright is a lesson in concealment. The stone wall, a leftover fragment from a previous settlement that appears to enclose a slight rise, instead holds the new concrete foundation on which the house rests. The house is further supported by sturdy, steel-bracketed timber piers that sit atop the bluestone-paved concrete rather than actually thrusting deep into the earth. The stone- and wood-relationships appear throughout the house, beginning with an exterior pine frame that seems to rest on a stone base. But the stone is simply cladding to make the house look as if it were “almost there forever,” says Cutler, who strives to inject a strong sense of the passage of time into his work. “One senses time by decay,” he explains. “Different materials show the effects of time differently. Wood is a very ephemeral material that rots and disappears, but stone endures.”

Cutler, a Pennsylvania native who now practices in Bainbridge Island, Washington, designed the weekend house for a transplanted Seattle family, using Adirondack hunting lodges as models. The client is an avid fly fisherman who chose the Catskill mountain location for its proximity to the Beaverkill River, a favored East Coast trout stream. The site, about three miles from the crossroads town of Lew Beach, is part of a vast area in upstate New York being developed by Laurance Rockefeller, who has bought thousands of acres and set strict development guidelines for the parcels he sells to individuals. The Wrights’ 12-acre lot is one of 20 in the area, and Cutler had to design the house so it isn’t seen from the other lots. “We set up the base on a north-south orthogonal grid,” says Cutler, describing the placement of the house. “The building wanted to be twisted toward the view, so we twisted it off that grid.” While Rockefeller’s code is geared toward environmental preservation through judicious development, its insistence on nonreflective roofing forced Cutler to specify high-quality old-growth cedar shingles rather than the metal roof he preferred.

Several factors combine to bring the surrounding wilderness inside. Says Cutler: “We wanted the building to open up like a pavilion, so we built a big screened-in porch and detailed the bluestone paving throughout the front of the house” (see plan, bottom right). The roof’s deep overhang admits ample daylight through the floor-to-ceiling windows, but deflects much direct sunlight, as does the heatreflecting film suspended between the double glazing. (Except for the handcrafted cherry kitchen, pine is used throughout the house, even in the window frames, which were manufactured on the West Coast.) Screens are installed in summer, allowing ample cooling for a house that has no air-conditioners. Steam heat is dispensed not only through tubing that rises to the second floor, but also through coils that warm the stone floor on the main level. The living room also contains a wood-burning stove next to an artful pile of stones, once again revealing Cutler’s fascination with time and materials.

**Peter D. Slavin**

**Credits**

**Wright House**

**Lew Beach, New York**

**Owners** Bing and Migs Wright

**Architects** James Cutler Architects—Bruce Anderson, project architect

**Landscape Architect** Barbara Restaino

**General Contractor** Rockledge Builders, Inc.

120  Architectural Record  April 1992
Industrial Arts

Celebrating the beauty of rugged materials well connected, Richard Stacy has designed a slender structure that provides living and work space for two artists.
rserted on a narrow lot in San Francisco’s gritty industrial district south of Market Street, the Corson-Heinser Live/Work Building doesn’t pull any punches. It’s a straightforward expression of a Modern industrial esthetic, relying on rugged materials and careful assembly to carry the day. No structural pyrotechnics or exaggerated forms here. No expensive finishes or fabulous site to distract attention from the building itself.

Although sleek and new, the 3,700-square-foot structure maintains the no-nonsense approach found in most of the older warehouse and industrial buildings in the area. Vertical circulation and core facilities such as bathrooms and a dumbwaiter hug the long southern edge of the 20- by 75-foot lot, while the living and work spaces take advantage of views to downtown San Francisco on the north side of the property. Architect Richard Stacy, of Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy, clearly marks this separation of functions on the east and west elevations, splitting the building into two narrow blocks that seem to slide past each other. Holding the two slices together is a sophisticated composition of inexpensive, low-maintenance materials: light-gauge galvanized sheet metal, steel frame, quarter-inch-thick cement boards, metal-mesh panels, stained marine plywood, and aluminum windows (opposite). How these materials are joined became a passion not only for Stacy, but for his husband-and-wife clients, a photographer and a graphic artist, who often talked screws and washers with him. From the start, the three agreed that materials and joints would be frankly exposed. The result is an architectural collage in which stainless-steel screws and neoprene washers are as important as the interplay of opaque and transparent surfaces.

Structurally, the building is standard wood-frame construction with steel braces at the east and west ends for seismic support. Because the soil is marshy, the house sits on six 40-foot-deep piles and a concrete slab (axonometric right). While metal and glass dominate the exterior elevations, the building’s underlying wood frame is exposed in much of the interior. Leaving wall studs and beams open in the stair hall and specifying open risers and metal-grate landings, Stacy was able to bring more light into the space while showing off the raw materials of construction.

Built in less than seven months for about $95 per square foot, the house maintains its raw esthetic in the living and work areas. “It’s basically a shell building,” says Stacy, “with few fancy finishes.” The first floor, which includes a garage and graphics studio, dispenses with a sheetrock ceiling in favor of exposed pipes and floor joists. To open up the graphics studio and bring in the morning sun, the architect used a commercial-grade garage door with glass panels as the eastern wall. The second floor contains the living areas and makes the most of simple materials: composition-board flooring, frosted-acrylic-plastic sliding panels separating the kitchen from the bedroom, and a wall of standard aluminum windows. A photographer’s studio occupies the third floor and mezzanine level, taking advantage of a 16-foot-high space and sunlight coming from four directions (five, if you count the series of long narrow skylights neatly tucked between the rafters).

Already known for its Diamond and Jewelry Mart on Brannan Street in the mid-1980s, Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects was one of four San Francisco firms featured in an exhibit entitled “In the Spirit of Modernism” at the city’s Museum of Modern Art earlier this year. Included in that show, the Corson-Heinser Live-Work Building reveals the firm’s skill at breathing new life into 20th-century residential design. Clifford A. Pearson
The photography studio (preceding pages) occupies the third floor and mezzanine level, offering 16-foot clearance in the main shooting area. Although backed up against a two-story wall with only a band of clerestory windows, this area can receive sunlight from vertical windows on the north and south ends, the window wall on the western elevation, and narrow lights inserted between the rafters. Because the building is in a downtown fire zone, it is sprinklered. With a footprint of 20 by 55 feet, each floor measures 1,100 square feet. The mezzanine occupies about 350 square feet. To make the building's vertical circulation block feel as open as possible and to show how the structure is put together, the architect exposed wood studs in the stair hall and used open risers (above)
left). The second floor serves as the common living area, with the kitchen (opposite right) separating the living room (above) from the bedroom (not shown). The photo studio (above right) occupies two levels.

**Credits**
Corson-Heinser
Live/Work Building
San Francisco, California

**Owners:** Madeleine Corson and Thomas Heinser
**Architect:** Tanner Leddy
Maytum Stacy Architects—Richard Stacy, Nick Noyes, design team
**Engineers:** Tennebaum-Manheim Engineers (structural); Design Engineering Services (mechanical)
**General Contractor:** Fine European Construction
Bayou Country Seat
Though it comes from the unique vision of its architects, the Barton house is steeped in the traditions of the Deep South.
Clients are scarce in and around Madison County, Mississippi, which seems to have missed the economic boom that transformed other parts of the South. And it takes a special client to seek out the particular vision of Samuel Mockbee and Coleman Coker, whose design approach is hard to categorize. They cannot be labeled regionalists in the standard sense of reworking themes derived from historical forms. Rather, Mockbee’s and Coker’s accomplishment lies in the way they collage high design with the “vernacular” components of commercial construction. (Take, for example, the Canton Fire Station, an artfully gussied-up metal shed—RECORD, March 1988, pages 116-117.) The firm’s growing reputation in and beyond Mississippi led Ken Barton to Mockbee in search of “someone willing to do something different” from the neo-Williamsburg taste that typifies the area and seems as foreign here as a New England saltbox.

The Mississippi delta landscape of barely swelling hills and tupelo- and bald cypress-dotted bottomland is not the sort of dramatic geography that demands a bold response; what’s more, there isn’t a regionalist tradition to draw upon—unless one views the artifacts of antebellum culture as an appropriate source. The delta has a palpable sense of place, but it is social, the passed-along legacy of close-knit communities that comes when few outsiders move in. As Coker puts it, “The South does not have a strong visual culture. It has always had a much stronger verbal tradition, in literature, in music.” The architects’ response likewise has a narrative quality. The client, an attorney with a taste for Rolling Stones music and Andy Warhol prints, sought a contemporary house where he could gracefully display a growing art collection. What Coker and Mockbee designed are two 2,200-square-foot pavilions carefully set among mature moss-draped water oaks and nestled into the brow of a hill. The north, entrance side of the house is closed, wall-like, and abstract in form, revealing little of what lies beyond (opposite bottom). This sense of mystery is amplified in the entry, which is a tall masonry block lit only by a high window over the entrance. Two narrow, identical openings lead to either bedroom or living wings. Only as the visitor descends to the living spaces does the house open out to expansive views of tree-covered ridges punctuated by farm fields.

The house is unpredictable in its forms, materials, and details. The aluminized-steel cladding panels, concrete-block walls, and a fretwork of structural-steel supports evoke the agricultural-industrial structures that are the primary “architectural” context of the area. These materials visually peel off at the pavilion’s extremities, revealing the ’50s highway-strip ambiance of the swooping floating roofs and random-ashlar grid of the living-room storefront glazing. The notions that formed the house are not merely esthetic, however. Roof overhangs are calibrated to protect living spaces from the strongest sun while the orientation of the pavilions takes advantage of views. Abundant groundwater serves a heat pump which further lowers both cooling and heating costs.  

James S. Russell
Over the living wing, the roof soars to the east (left and pages 132-133) and is supported by a row of steel columns on high concrete piers. The roof slopes to the south over the bedroom wing and is propped up by a fretwork of tubular steel struts. (You could call the color primrose purple.) A narrow stair rises to a screened porch suspended within the carport, suitably placed for sunset viewing (opposite). The apparent simplicity of the plan (below) belies the rich itinerary by which the house is experienced. (A triangular metal framework at the entrance was not built.) The visitor enters a vertical mass enclosed by split-faced block and lit only by a high window (page 138). From here, movement is to the right through a narrow, dark passage opening to a long gallery and bedrooms. To the left, a similar corridor gradually widens and opens upward (the ceiling sweeps up, the corridor steps down) to the light-filled, glazed dining and living areas, revealing views across the landscape.
The straightforward enclosure of the Barton house only suggests the variety in the handling of light within. The entrance (bottom left) and living-room inglenook (top left) are intimate, even cozy. Steel roof supports add an outer light-filtering layer to the screened porch (middle). A patterned-grid window wall casts ever-changing shadows on living-room walls (opposite).

**Credits**

**Barton House**  
Madison County, Mississippi

**Owner:** Ken Barton

**Architect:** Mockbee-Coker-Howorth Architects—Samuel Mockbee, partner-in-charge; Coleman Coker, project architect; Patrick Alexander, Eric Commarota, Farrol D. Hollemon, Jr., Spence Kellum, Daniel Woolridge, project team

**Engineer:** Cameron Till (structural)

**Consultant:** Richard Chandler Griffin & Associates (landscape)

**Contractors:** Benson & Benson Builders; Fletcher Cox (interior woodwork)
Technology Focus: Building a Temple Drawn from Nature

The small city of Independence, Missouri, has never seen anything like the temple under construction for the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. "They asked us to look for a new form," explains Gyo Obata of Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum. "That is a wonderful objective for an architect."

What Obata proposed is actually a very old form, based on the elegant geometry of a nautilus shell. The client responded to the universality of the image. "They have missionaries all over the world," explains Obata, "and they didn't want any reference back to other kinds of Christian churches." To have such an idea is one thing, though. "We relied very heavily upon our 3-D computer capabilities to develop and communicate the design," says Robert Stockdale, a senior associate who led the design process for HOK. "Without the computer, I suspect this building would not have been possible, especially given the constraints of time and budget."

Though the temple's form is mathematically rational and instantly comprehensible, it is not made of repetitive assemblies of identical units. Instead, it is described by a single mathematical formula. Beginning at the top of the spire (the zero point), the formula spins the form out and down, determining the radius at any desired location. No element falls on a conventional orthogonal grid and every dimension varies (see detail page 144), even on the vertical surfaces clad in glass and stone. (Photos this page and opposite show progress prior to installation of a shop-fabricated steeple [drawing].) Conventional strings of dimensions were useless. The architect's challenge, then, was not only to generate the form, but to support it and communicate the configuration and location of elements to the general contractor and subcontractors.

The design did not itself suggest a structural solution. James Atkins, HOK's director of structural engineering, compared several schemes (in consultation with William LeMessurier, of Cambridge, Massachusetts), including one in concrete, which was rejected due to the cost of formwork. Recognizing that the curving form would have to be achieved with facets, the team devised a system of vertical steel bents at each facet, most of which run continuously from the foundation to a 208-ft-high service platform at the base of the steeple. "This is the most difficult-to-analyze building we have ever done," concludes Atkins. Since the structure was not self-supporting during erection (it's tied together at the service platform), the team worked closely with subcontractors to select from erection schemes that included cantilevering beams, internal or external shoring-tower arrangements, and—the alternative chosen—a central shoring tower that saved money because it doubled as a scaffolding for completing the interior.

The project required a different means of working with subcontractors. The A. Zahner Sheet Metal Company, which fabricated the standing-seam stainless-steel roof, was involved early. "We'd rather be involved before bidding to make sure the details work," comments president William Zahner. The company installed CAD capability for the project and used DXF-format files to generate cutting patterns for each panel from elevations "uncoiled" by the A/E's CAD software. With liability concerns always looming, many architects are reluctant to share such detailed information for fear that fabricators will make improper assumptions about the completeness of the design and blame the architect if the parts don't fit. In this case, though, Zahner checked CAD-generated control points against field conditions and found a close match.

The architect's approach, explains Stockdale, "was to give [contractors] the methodology. They would have to go in and derive the particulars." Zahner adds, "We couldn't have built the pieces from the level of detail the architects provided. But our work would have taken much longer if we hadn't had access to HOK's CAD files. And there would have been a level of accuracy lost." James S. Russell

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A structure that could only be designed using 3-D analysis changed the way designers and builders work together.
The nautilus in nature is a spiraling, chambered shell—a shape not innately suited to worship. By changing the variables in the mathematical formula that generated the shape, HOK created an architectural form that was generous in volume at the base, with a soaring, attenuated steeple (elevation below). Within the steeple the architects designed a hoist and trolley from the service platform to change a navigation warning lamp at the 300-ft top (details left).
A computer generated the roof plan (left) but contractors also worked from a matrix of exterior work points and a series of diagrams (one example, bottom left) to determine actual piece dimensions. The A/E sliced the three-dimensional computer model of the design into 24 building cross-sections, one for each 15 deg of rotation. Into this they fit structural members, mechanical systems, finishes, and a service catwalk that spirals up from the sanctuary (section below).
CAD software developed a three-dimensional external shell, locating points (instead of dimensions, all of which vary) at any position on the exterior (top drawing). From the shell, the design team worked inward, accounting for the depth of roofing, insulation, and metal deck, thereby defining the envelope within which the structural supports were positioned (bottom drawing). The steeple presented an unusual challenge since the surface spirals to only a 2-ft diameter at its apex. To assure the precision necessary, the architects provided computer-generated plans at every 2-ft height, which A. Zahner translated into metal discs and mounted on a tubular-pipe spline for support of the skin (photo below and shop drawing page 141).
Credits
Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Temple Independence, Missouri
Owner: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
Architect: Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum—Gyo Obata, design principal; Robert Stockdale, project designer; Charles Hook, project manager; Richard Tell, project architect
Engineers: HOK (structural); Smith & Boucher (mechanical)
Consultants: Code Consultants, Inc. (codes); LeMessurier Consultants (structural); Heitmann and Associates (exterior skin); Kirkegaard and Associates (acoustical)
General Contractors: J. E. Dunn Construction Company
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A5

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410. Workstation HVAC
A brochure discusses Crystal-Aire Clean Air System product options for desktop, wall-mount, ceiling, and hidden installation in office space. Modular design permits electrostatic, HEPA, mechanical, or charcoal filtration; air cleaners can be adapted to any room configuration. United Air Specialists, Inc., Cincinnati.

411. Filter selection
A 40-page report, written for system designers, provides an engineering basis for selecting filters for air-quality control in all types of buildings. Correct filtration permits greater use of recirculation air to achieve quality at 100 percent of outdoor air levels. Farr Co., El Segundo, Calif.

412. Energy analysis
TRACE PC-based programs permit a wide variety of design what-ifs, examining the energy impact of decisions from geographically sited to the thickness of insulating glass. New software integrates AutoCAD with load-design and energy-analysis programs. The Trane Co., La Crosse, Wis.

413. Air distribution
An easy-reference catalog consolidates data on all of this maker's air-distribution products, and offers an overview of current research in airside applications, including acoustic and energy information. Titus, Richardson, Tex.

414. Attic ventilation
A 30-page illustrated booklet analyzes the natural forces affecting attic ventilation, and compares the performance of different venting techniques in reducing condensation, heat buildup, and ice dams. Describes different ridge-vent installations for various types of roof constructions. Air Vent, Inc., Peoria Heights, Ill.

415. Residential HVAC
Clearly written 20-page brochure explains the operating principles, energy costs, and air-quality values of heat pumps, air cleaners, humidifiers, programmable thermostats, and other iNvironment System home heating and ventilating equipment. Carrier Corp., Syracuse, N. Y.

416. Multi-port fans
CVS Series centrifugal exhaust units come in four sizes and up to four venting points to provide energy-efficient air circulation for homes and commercial spaces. Permits complete home ventilation with one fan. Funtech, Inc., Sarasota, Fla.

417. HVAC research

418. Ductless systems
New equipment designs allow for flexible system configuration, especially in the placement of indoor units, and permit the use of ductless mini split air conditioners and heat-pumps for both commercial and residential buildings, particularly in remodeling. EMI, Rome, N. Y.

419. In-line duct fan
A compact air mover, the Powerfan combines the benefits of axial-flow units with the pressure characteristics of radial fans. Brochure describes low-noise and easy-installation features of fans for home and commercial ventilation. APV Vent-Axia, Inc., Wilmington, Mass.

420. Ice storage
Brochure explains the advantages claimed for the Reaction Ice encapsulated ice storage system, such as simple installation techniques and superior heat transfer. This air-conditioning technology shifts major electrical consumption to lower-cost evening hours. Carrier Corp., Liverpool, N. Y.

421. Split system
A data sheet on through-the-wall air conditioners and heat pumps gives full unit dimensions, capacity ratings, and electrical requirements for three lines, and lists the equipment brands they can replace. National Comfort Products, King of Prussia, Pa.
Fineline Suspension Systems offer more colors, reveal widths and appealing choices! Whether you select regular Fineline for a clean, tailored appearance; the unique Fineline "Inside Color" Suspension with bold primary colors in the reveal, or the Fineline 1/8 Suspension with its slender reveal and dramatic look, you're choosing the high quality systems that meet your needs! The systems that come in two reveal widths so they're more appealing and in 24 colors that are always revealing! Fineline™ Suspensions, from USG Interiors, Inc. For more information call 1-800-950-3859.

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USG Interiors, Inc.
422. Efficient windows
Concise design catalog highlights wood-frame residential windows with glazing options that include InSol-8. This configuration uses two sheets of Heat Mirror film to achieve a total-unit R value of 5.5. CAD window program and architectural tracing file available. Hurd Millwork Co., Inc., Medford, Wis.

423. Euro-style faucets
Illusions bath fittings shown in a color brochure come in a deep gold-colored Eurobrass finish, as well as offering chrome and white-enamel options. Line is characterized by a high-profile spout and rounded faucet handles. The Chicago Faucet Co., Des Plaines, Ill.

424. Roofing tile
Flat, “S”, and Mission-style tiles come in 12 standard russet colors and blends as well as dramatic blues and celadons. Technical catalog includes drawings of flashing, hip, eave, and other installation details. United States Tile Co., Corona, Calif.

425. Wood-floor design
The Architectural Folder III has hardwood samples and color installation photography of all Kentucky floor patterns, such as Custom Classics, Plank, and Parquet. Includes data on relative hardness and fire-resistance of wood species, millwork accessories, and layout services. Kentucky Wood Floors, Louisville.

426. Cedar-like siding
Full-scale siding sections are included in a specifier’s kit demonstrating new Lake Forest Exteriors, a Kynar-finished vinyl product said to replicate the texture, grain appearance, and subtle colorations of natural cedar siding. Alcoa Building Products, Sidney, Ohio.

427. Openings
A color Made To Order catalog features 96 pages of wood windows and patio doors in a wide range of shapes to illustrate this maker’s custom capabilities. Installation details, frame components, and cladding options are included. Marvin Windows, Warroad, Minn.

428. Decorative tile
Walls, floors, and counters are shown covered with colorful tiles and terra cottas from France, Portugal, Italy, Holland, Mexico, and other countries, as well as handpainted American-made Culinarios, panels, and border treatments. Country Floors, New York City.

429. Dual-component
An eight-page catalog highlights the WoodClad window frame, which has vertical-grain Douglas fir on the interior, and an exterior structural aluminum frame. Locking hardware on all units meets stringent forced-entry standards. Milgard Windows, Tacoma, Wash.

430. Architectural
Tischler’s newest application brochure illustrates how custom windows work with residential design in a wide range of idioms, from Baroque through Art Nouveau to Post Modern; from Colonial and Tudor to Frank O. Gehry. Tischler und Sohn (USA) Ltd., Greenwich, Conn.

431. Floral fabrics
The versatility of the English Country look is exemplified in wallcoverings, draperies, borders, and furnishings illustrated in a 56-page spring 1992 catalog, which inaugurates this manufacturer’s to-the-trade discount sales program. Laura Ashley, Inc., Mahwah, N.J.

432. Rotating window
Brochure describes some of the functional and energy-efficient features of the wood-framed H-Window, a Norwegian design now manufactured in this country. Any rectangular window can flip 180 deg.—inside out—for easier cleaning; push-bar operating hardware is available. The H Window Co., Monticello, Minn.

433. Window selection
Window dressing, a 34-page product guide, uses photos, cutaway drawings, and charts to demonstrate the appearance and design features of wood windows, entrance doors, sliding and French doors, sunrooms, skylights, and folding partitions. Pella/Rolscreen Co., Pella, Iowa.
Continued on page 152
312. Open and shut. At NAHB, Marvin offered a look at the world’s first two-way remote for windows. The hand-held unit can open, close, and lock motorized-crank casement windows; windows can also be operated by a push-button on the crank housing or from a wall panel. Any equipped window in a home can be worked from one spot; the location and mode (how much the window is open, locked, etc.) is displayed on a screen. The system should be widely available next year, and will have special value for disabled persons. Marvin Windows, Warroad, Minn.

313. In charge. Another NAHB introduction was the TotalHome system from Honeywell, equipment described as an economical and easy-to-use alternative to complicated home-automation technologies. Through a single control panel, pictured, the system can secure and monitor doors and windows, warn of fire and smoke, control temperature, operate lights, and start electric appliances. These functions are combined in a preset mode (wake up or at work, for example), and can operate remotely by telephone. Combining wired and cordless devices, TotalHome can be installed unobtrusively into an existing home at about $4,000 for a basic system. Honeywell, Inc., Minneapolis.

314. Entrance security. The makers of the Video Sentry unit describe it as a doorbell with eyes and ears—and its CCD camera has better-than-human vision. The basic home system consists of a master station, pictured, that can be wall-mounted or placed level on a counter, with a flat-screen display of images from the low-profile entry monitor. Installation requires only two non-coaxial wires. An optional pan-and-tilt feature permits wide-angle viewing through the infrared LED-illuminated camera. Aiphone, Bellevue, Wash.

Continued on page 154

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Roofing guide
A 16-page specification guide gives selection data for asphalt roofing shingles, and includes full-color photos that show the texture and a typical application of each product. CertainTeed Corp. 434

Fiberglass roofing
Product descriptions and installation photographs supplement specification data for fiberglass residential shingles and underlayment roll roofing. Color chart highlights 19 shingle colors. Tamco. 435

Compact luminaires
Four-color folder gives selection information for Eurolux decorative indoor-outdoor light fixtures for home use. The compact round or elliptical designs come in a choice of seven colors. Hubbell Lighting. 436

Agglomerate tile
An architectural binder offers specification, installation, and maintenance data for tiles and slabs of agglomerate quartzites and marbles. A full set of samples includes 18 colors and three finish options. Granirex. 437

Vinyl floor tile

This was metal building design.

Times have changed.
Cabinet hardware
An eight-page brochure provides details on solid-brass cabinet hardware in traditional and contemporary styles. Finish options include black and satin chrome as well as brass shades. Omnia Industries. 439

Kitchen sinks
The full line of Elkay stainless steel and Decostone sinks and accessories—from utility to gourmet—for kitchens, bars, and utility areas is covered in a 28-page catalog. Elkay Manufacturing Co. 442

Garage doors
A 12-page brochure describes the Decade series of rough-sawn, finish-painted raised-panel garage doors of 24-gauge steel. Glass-light styles and decorative inserts are also covered. Raynor Garage Doors. 443

Brick pavement
A comprehensive 26-page guide details the structural design and installation of flexible (sand-jointed) brick paving systems. An interactive computer program is also available ($49.95). Brick Institute of America. 444

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Continued on page 156
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New Products
continued from page 151

315. Site seating. The Fern Leaf bench and chair are part of a collection of garden furniture reproduced in cast aluminum from 19th century originals at the Smithsonian Institute. Brown Jordan, El Monte, Calif.

316. Anyplace fireplace. The decorative GPV-5000 gas fireplace has a self-contained 3-in. diameter powered-vent system that can be installed in any direction, including around obstructions, over a distance of up to 40 ft, a feature that recommends it for remodeling applications. Superior Fireplace Co., Fullerton, Calif.

317. Replica roofing. A new roof tile is made of an A-label composite plastic, formed in molds taken directly from natural slate and cedar shakes that produce a distinct, realistic texture. Molds and colorations vary from tile to tile, giving a random effect to the installed roof. Individual tiles interlock for added wind resistance, and take foot traffic without damage. Everest Roofing Products, Walnut, Calif.
318. Formal cabinets. New Regency style creates a traditional look with a raised-panel, one-piece door. Shown in a glossy polyester finish, the kitchen can be ordered in any of 50 colors to match Formica laminate. Wood-Mode, Inc., Kreamer, Pa.

319. Discreet refrigerator. A new customizing feature of the Monogram built-in, 36-in.-wide refrigerator, a door-trim kit lets the unit virtually disappear: even European-thickness panels can be installed perfectly flush with surrounding cabinets without routing, and an adjustable cover conceals the top grille. The standard metal handles may be replaced with custom pulls, such as the twisted iron designs pictured. GE Appliances, Lexington, Ky.

continued on page 158
THE PELLA ARCHITECT SERIES.
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320. Cedar-framed conservatory. The Sun Crescent is a new design from a maker of wood-framed sun spaces offered in factory-numbered kits. Made up of wedge-shaped bays and roof segments attached to the house from a central hub, the one-story structure fits well on the gable end of a house. The room comes in different bay dimensions and roof slopes, with framing Mullions capped in aluminum. Options include a range of energy-efficient glazing, operable windows, and knee walls. Lindal Cedar Homes, Seattle.

321. Commercial sink. Set on stainless steel tubular legs and bullet-shaped feet, the Sturdibilt scullery sink is for the serious cook with serious cleanup jobs. Square corners and a channel rim prevents spillover; drainboards and sink compartments are pitched to facilitate draining. Elkay Mfg. Co., Oak Brook, Ill.

322. High/low kitchen faucet. The Riser spout lifts 10 in. above the sink to fill or rinse large pots or vases; while staying out of the way during normal use. Part of the Legend kitchen line, it comes in chrome as well as colors such as Glacier White. Moen, Inc., Elyria, Ohio.

New Products


325. Wood-burning stove. Heartland makes traditional wood- or coal-burning ranges that can cook, bake, hold warm food and hot water, and heat up to 1800 sq ft of space. Shown is the circa-1906 Oval, with 6 sq ft of cast-iron cook-top. Also available in the same wood-burning, country look are natural gas, propane, or electric stoves in sizes from 30- to 48-in. wide. Stoves come in white or almond porcelain enamel, or all black; prices range from $2,400 to $3,900. Heartland Appliances, Inc., Kitchener, Ont.

For more information, circle item numbers on Reader Service Cards.

326. Marble-pattern floor. Whitney Place, a large-scale pattern with a realistic tile look, is a new design in the Silverado line of sheet-vinyl residential flooring. The pattern comes in slate gray, light jade, a goldtone shell, and tan colorways, with a 36-in. repeat. Mannington Resilient Floors, Salem, N. J.

Continued on page 160

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