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DesignIntelligence® Quarterly

DAVE GILMORE
President and CEO

MARY PEREBOOM
Principal, Research and Administration

MICHAEL LEFEVRE
Managing Editor

NICOLE PUCKETT
Graphic Design Lead

GRACE KELLEY
Graphic Designer

BECKIE HAWK
Webmaster

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CONTEXT: On Stewardship

As we consider this year's editorial theme of **INFLUENCE**, in Q1 we explore **STEWARDSHIP** – our duty to conserve the resources and values and exert leadership in caring for those things we hold closely. This year's first DI Quarterly sets the stage for leveraging our influence as design and construction professionals.

A myriad of objects emerges upon which to leverage said stewardship. Under **INFLUENCE**, one clear direction is stewardship of our profession as designers and builders. Other obvious focal areas are stewardship of our planet, its land and resources. A third vector is the requirement and duty to give back. To open the discussion on Stewardship we reach out to ten global experts.

Scott Simpson catalyzes the conversation with his essay called *Taking Care of Business: The Intersection of Stewardship and Design* in which he cites Elvis Presley's philanthropic philosophies. From Barcelona, Margarita Biboum Jover, Architect Urbanist from the Polytechnic University of Catalonia UPC-ETSAV, Barcelona and co-founder of aldayjover, makes the case for radical new approaches in her paper *Investing in Urban Reform for a Better Future*.

My exploration, *On Influence: A New Reality for the Profession* challenges us to leverage powerful sources of influence to overcome persistent problems. DI's Dave Gilmore speaks to internal and external forces in his essay, *What Does It Mean to Influence?* From the UK, Paul Finch begins a new series called Letters from London with his piece *Stewardship and the Case of London's Landed Estates*. He is supported by UK colleague and regular DesignIntelligence contributor Paul Hyett, in his article *Firm Stewardship and the Passing of Batons*. Our British invasion continues with a complementary article by CRTKL's European marketing leader, Katie Pattison, entitled *Through the Marketing Looking Glass* that shares UK-based case studies. A concluding European perspective, *On Stewardship - A Question of Opportunity*, is offered by Martha Thorne, Dean of the IE School of Architecture and Design in Segovia/Madrid, Spain, and former director of the Pritzker Prize. As endnotes to this discussion, Ana Pinto da Silva offers *Leading Relevance: Design, Innovation and The Future Possible* and our conversation with DI's recent Lifetime Achievement Award Winner Marianne McKenna gives insight into *Building Stewardship*.

2022 EDITORIAL ROADMAP



To continue the discussion about stewardship, please contact us at mlefevre@di.net

Michael LeFevre, FAIA Emeritus
Managing Editor, DI Media Publications



Q1 INFLUENCE: STEWARDSHIP

What Does It Mean to Influence?

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What Does it Mean to Influence?

Dave Gilmore

President and CEO, Designintelligence

What does it mean to influence? The ideas of changing and altering come to mind. When one influences another, the other's perspective is often altered, their mind changes or their way of behaving might be affected. Be it for better or worse, the other is changed.

The built environment industry is a significant long-term influencer of societies. The infrastructure, buildings, gathering places and dwellings it designs and constructs for humanity alter everything after they are realized.

To influence means "to flow into." When water flows into a space, it simultaneously fills and empties. It fills the emptiness and empties the space. It dislodges once-hardened attachments and dissolves solids, clarifying and magnifying what is to be seen. Influencing is a catalytic dynamic that triggers a chain of changes and alterations.

A few years ago, I was privileged to sit with the CEO of one of the world's largest companies. My firm was negotiating an acquisition his company was pursuing, and he wanted to meet face-to-face with the lead negotiator representing the seller. I was the guy.

I was keenly interested in how the target would change once acquired. How much would remain the same? How much would be altered? I was looking and thinking too myopically.

We enjoyed some coffee and afternoon snacks as we discussed the overall global economy, regional distinctions and speculative possibilities. Our conversation was relationally engaging and intellectually stimulating. Toward the end of the exchange, I asked my question regarding change.

My host smiled and crossed his legs while he rested his loosely-clasped hands in his lap. His response: “Dave, we are inclined to move very slowly. Our critics often liken us to glaciers, which move so slowly no one notices. But like a glacier, once we move, everything in our sphere is altered. We recreate markets by our intentional and planned influence.”

This genre of influence is from the outside-to-outside. Like waves splashing against shoreline stone, the influence reshapes the stone over time. Like a sculptor chiseling away at a piece of marble, the marble is newly shaped to resemble the image the artist envisioned from the beginning. One might label such influence as “forceful persistence” to achieve intended outcomes.

But there’s another, perhaps more powerful, manner of influence. It’s not always observable while it’s occurring, but it’s radically transformational because it moves from inside-to-outside.

Such influence begins when the thinking of the thinker alters. When this occurs, one’s entire point of view, and sometimes one’s worldview, changes to such a degree that those influenced are radically transformed. Such change manifests in external, observable behaviors. This is a powerful influence type because it emanates from the core of the person.

At DesignIntelligence, we often say, “If we can convince you of something, we can most likely unconvince you of it. But if the convincing becomes conviction, rarely can we alter your perspective.” Convictions are formed by time and experience.

We see both genres of influence at work in the development of convictions. The passage of time serves as a persistent force

altering just about everything. We observe it as an outside dynamic, though inside dimensions are equally altered.

Experiences also serve as powerful forces in altering views and forming convictions. Most humans have repeated experiences that have reinforced a point proffered into a conviction held. Many of us have experienced “defining moments” that deeply impacted us across multiple dimensions of being. These defining moments are usually sudden, unexpected and marked with awe. We are often speechless when they occur. Be it a deep sadness or an exhilarating gasp, we can be at a loss for words to express the depth of alteration we’re experiencing.

The combination of these two independent forces makes for an unexpected interdependent outcome. Time and experience do their work to form and fashion one’s deepest convictions and worldviews. They set the course for our observed and hidden behaviors.

As leaders whose lives lived set the course of influence for so many others, I wonder just how cognizant we might be of the power and stewardship of influence. Are we front-of-mind conscious how our decisions alter people’s lives? In some cases, the outcomes of our decision-making are imperceptible, not noticed or not directly connected to change when they occur. In those instances, our initial decision can be lost in the extended string of causes and effects we experience.

In many cases, our decisions can be directly identified as the catalytic cause of deep wide influence. Again: I wonder just how cognizant we might be of the power and stewardship of influence?

Stewardship connotes assigned responsibility to care for, protect, nurture, oversee, sustain and grow the object of the stewardship. As stewards of influence, leaders are assigned the responsibility to influence their organizations, clients and interfacing stakeholders with care. Leadership is called to seek win-win-win outcomes for those they influence.



The combination of these two independent forces makes for an unexpected interdependent outcome. Time and experience do their work to form and fashion one's deepest convictions and worldviews. They set the course for our observed and hidden behaviors.

Too often leaders aren't aware of their responsibility and act in absurd ways, generating wave after wave of negative destructive influence. Organizations are negatively impacted, clients are rightfully disappointed, all because leadership didn't understand the implications and ramifications of influence triggered through decision-making.

Another kind of influence results in even deeper damage than irresponsible decision-making: the negligence of indecision. Not deciding is making a decision with thoughtless, irresponsible consequences. For authentic leaders, this is a non-starter. For pretenders, this is common.

Delaying a decision to gather all the information necessary for an intended best outcome is important. But that's not the same as indecision. Indecision is usually rooted in fear, uncertainty and ignorance. Pretenders who haven't done the hard work of fact-gathering, applying intelligence and analyzing possible outcomes simply don't decide. They kick the can down the road. Most pretenders are people-pleasers and fear the displeasure of others that might expose them as pretenders.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed many pretenders who were frozen in fear. Their power to positively influence their organizations, clients and important stakeholders was replaced by indecisiveness that led to tremendous losses. We've been witness to much of these losses over the past two years.

Stewardship of influence begins with taking inventory of all the assets and responsibilities under your care. What are leaders charged with influencing? Most importantly, it's the people they are leading. It's the partners and suppliers empowering their go to market effectiveness. It's the clients they serve.

As a leader, what experiences are you creating and leveraging to positively influence the lives of others? What convictions are you optimistically expressing in the myriad places your presence is known and felt? What voice of influence are you using to speak into the think-spaces, workplaces and marketplaces in which you regularly interact?

As leaders of the most influential industry on earth, the built environment industry, how are you stewarding your role of the best for the most?

What kind of leader are you?

Dave Gilmore is president and CEO of DesignIntelligence



Q1 INFLUENCE: STEWARDSHIP

On Influence: A New Reality for the Profession

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On Influence: A New Reality for the Profession

Michael LeFevre

Managing Editor, DesignIntelligence

Despite its challenges over the past 150 years, architecture has largely been practiced in a state of *toujours perdrix* (French for “always partridge,” or too much of a good thing).

At its highest levels, (elevated status debatable), the profession has been the province of the rich, dilettantes who can afford the luxury of having the best, to rise above mere building and construction to create art. To a large extent, the profession has created its bed and now must lie in it or rise to get out.¹

How lucky for those rich patrons and for those practitioners fortunate enough to win these elite commissions. But what of the rest? Where do they live, work and practice?

This “artist against the world” belief is deeply rooted in architectural education. We are taught to be rebels, to seek the new, to have the courage to blaze new trails, even to the point of having to “educate” our clients (unknowing, architecturally ignorant heathens they are) and serve as the owner’s “conscience” against evil contractors (ill-intended pocket liners they are). Our inherent superiority bias and confrontational, isolationist mentality is expressed well by filmmaker Robert Altman:

The artist and the multitude are natural enemies. They always will be, both ways. The artist is an enemy of the multitude, and the multitude is the enemy of the artist. And when the disguise comes off and they’re both standing facing one another, they’re just there at odds end.

This must change. In school and in practice, we architects set out on a fool’s errand for too long. We swam in a sea of self-in

¹ For a detailed examination of how the profession created its own landscape of self-proclaimed elevated status while declining in profitability and social responsibility, see *Assembling the Architect: The History and Theory of Professional Practice* by George Barnett Johnston, Bloomsbury Press, 2020.

dulgent form making — to the neglect of our responsibilities to conserve resources and respect communities and clients. The question is: Can we learn to deal with all that will not be? To accept the fact that as architects we are neither all knowing, nor in full control? To accept the possible loss or changed understanding of the exotica and glamour? To puncture and punctuate it, intentionally, with the hard work of being better stewards? This doesn't mean we have to do ugly buildings. Hardly. But it does mean we have to work more broadly, systematically and inclusively — and care more about others.

Can we learn to do it? We can. Like athletes, scholars or musicians in training, if we go through the exercises slowly, we can rewire our thinking and motor skills. We practice, then we begin to do them more quickly. We get better. We evolve.

We are taught we have great power as realized through our work. But this alleged strength has, in many cases, become our greatest weakness. The litany of high visibility public projects that leak, grow wildly over budget and function poorly is long. Iconic as they are, buildings such as Fallingwater, the Edith Farnsworth House, Dulles Airport and the Air Force Academy Chapel have won the AIA's highest accolades, yet each has suffered a life bereft with leaks, budget issues and unhappy clients. Dubious notoriety. For years, I counted myself among their admirers and still do. But really? It's time for a broader view. We can be artists who embrace the multitudes and realities, not their enemies.

While our instructors fueled us with promises of powerful influential careers, and vast potential greatness through our designs, they were often wrong. A few achieve such stature — all those

mentioned above did. What the rest of us needed then and need now was education and motivation on how to ply real influence. Real influence comes through the ability to communicate, involve others and care about clients and communities, not to continue to support our own selfish, idiosyncratic, dysfunctional artistic indulgences to the neglect of all else. It seems we've misplaced our influence.

Influence Sources

What are the sources of our loss of influence? In general, a failure of actions, not words. Plenty continue to bemoan our lack of power and influence, but few are willing to change their behavior or do anything differently. Let's start by considering one of the basic principles of personal, business, life and planetary survival — living within one's means.²

Budget Boogeymen

When it comes to even simple first-cost budget compliance, it's not long after their opening scenes and the introduction of their characters that most projects become horror movies, complete with monstrous value analysis needs, jump scares, amputations, blood spatters and visceral screams. Then consider the broader scale, longer-term responsibilities to conserve resources and energy, tread lightly on the planet and act responsibly at community and urban and global scales. More monsters emerge from the darkness to dominate the screen. These predictable events are usually followed by dark periods of denial and rapprochement. If we believe the ethical foundations we learned in school, we accept great social responsibility. We must learn to be accountable for first, life-cycle and all related costs. We must

² In the 1980s, Dr. Eugene Odum, godfather of ecology, explained it to me over lunch: "The Greek root for house is Ekos. Knowledge of house is ecology; management of house is economy. Those concepts are not at odds with one another, they are integral. Particularly for those who want to survive."

slay the monster of accountable design and end the horror. If we believe our own hype, we can do those things and still produce art and architecture. It's time to drive a stake through the heart of fiscal irresponsibility.

Collaboration Lip Service

Directly opposed to the underlying culture of the design profession is the need to collaborate. At the core of what we were taught is the predominance of ego, singular genius — and artistic vision. Secondarily, we were offered platitudes about our roles to be leaders, conductors of the design team orchestra. But there's a problem. For decades, architects have been given little to no training in just how to collaborate. Too many of us lack the listening and leadership skills, the management and organization skills. The ability to be servant leaders. Despite the growing numbers of players, complex, diverse beliefs, disciplines and perspectives — now intertwined with new technologies and concerns — we were left with a trial and error/ learn on-the-job approach to becoming collaborators. I'm hopeful to see curricula and graduates outgrowing these challenges. To harness our influence, we must come to grips with our reliance on others. To become stewards of all we are now charged with protecting, we need our teammates and partners more than ever.

Disdaining Schedules and Long-Term Outlooks

It has become an expectation that designers and their documents will be late. "Client changes, over-budget rework and unforeseen complexities," they cry in defense. Horse hockey. We must learn to manage our work. Beyond learning to manage our work and meet schedules, we must change our design, planning

“

If you want to bring change, you better be prepared to do it over the long-term, because that's what it takes. It's not the circadian rhythm of Twitter.

— Jon Stewart

and thinking horizons to become long-term. Making project decisions on fee, staffing material or system selection without including long-term impacts will not serve our clients or the sustainability of the project. We must enlist newfound skills in communication, accounting and persuasion to communicate and convince our clients of the need for new longer-term perspectives in design construction and operation.³

Political Skills and the Power of Persuasion

If we are ever to escape from vicious vortex of self-fulfilling influence erosion, we must retool to automate and leverage our minds and processes. I have personally worked for several great firms who focused on "their" design for months, up until three in the morning before client presentations, then, foolishly spent

³ For a compelling argument on the need for us to reshape our next epoch, see *A New Reality: Human Evolution for a Sustainable Future* by Jonathan Salk, City Point Press, 2018.

no time at all considering the strategy or content of the design presentation. In our design hubris, we simply expected our clients to immediately gush with acceptance at our design genius, presentation or strategy be damned. Most often they didn't. Since the first primitive hunter encountered his first tiger in the savanna, humans have had and deftly deployed skills in strategy, intelligence, persuasion and politics. These skills translated to their tribes and villages. The most skilled and savvy were chosen for leadership and survival positions like hunters and leaders. They had wisdom. They could communicate and involve others. They embraced living within their means — not only for their village but for their children and future generations.

Despite centuries of evolution, most architects didn't take public speaking, political science or strategic thinking in school. We didn't study the science of leadership or collaboration. We need these skills now. Our clients and constituents possess them and — if we are to lead the design of physical environments responsibly — they expect us to have them as well. When we continue to display ignorance in such matters by our words, designs and actions, we contribute to bad stewardship and our own eroding influence. When we cry helplessly that our clients are dictating the rules, we fall victim to the very abdication of influence we seek to avoid.

Communication

When it comes to talking to our clients and partners, we architects need to discover how to eschew ersatz intelligence and talk like human beings. Starting now, we need to speak in ways that hold up against the lingua franca of our owners and teams. As we relearn how to talk, we can be motivated by the joy that

comes from having tasted how great it was to truly connect with others. Our new mantra must be to be clear, direct and understood. We must banish the esoteric cadences of the past, such as this composite hypothetical design principal client presentation: The project's materiality is conflated with the contextuality of the site and its landforms and legacy. The juxtaposition of forms is the result or an overt attempt to compromise the plan parti's operational flexibility and functionality, while imbuing the project budget with a bespoke set of conditions to render them unachievable, unaffordable and unsustainable in the marketplace or within budget. We think it's our finest work.

And we wonder why we've lost influence and respect. No one cares how smart we are or how much jargon fills our diatribes. They do care about whether their buildings will last by functioning, offering inspiration and serving their needs. Let's engage the communication clutch and shift gears. Let's learn to listen and act upon what we hear. Down with the dodgy and the arcane. Up with plain speaking, listening, empathy and caring.

Other than these few recurrent flaws — lacking the basic abilities to stay in budget, be on time, communicate and work well with our clients and teams, we architects have plenty of influence and are great stewards. (Sarcasm intentional.)

A New Reality

Amid the design diaspora that now becomes stewardship of the planet and its people for prosperity, we must reengineer our approach. We must school ourselves in those capabilities we neglected in college and return to a condition of equipoise, graceful splendor and balance. As Jonathan Salk advises in "A

New Reality”, we must engage in an instrumental conversation to shape a new epoch. One that leaves acquisition, growth and competition behind to embrace preservation and collaboration. We need a new doctrine that includes real stewardship, a propulsive phase for the profession that transcends dutiful soldiership and abject civility to achieve the building of a new world. Down with discordant, self-serving projects and odd conjunctions of elitist architecture. Away with the absurdity of current project process. Let’s learn to create and use our newfound influence and become stewards of careers, resources and the return of resplendent practices.

New skills and processes must be our mantra as we finally learn to be stewards, influencing design in positive collective ways. Through our designs, leadership and influence, we are storytellers, readers of reality and worldbuilders. George Saunders says it best:

the part of the mind that reads a story is also the part that reads the world; it can deceive us, but it can also be trained to accuracy; it can fall into disuse and make us more susceptible to lazy, violent, materialistic forces, but it can also be urged back to life, transforming us into more active, curious, alert readers of reality.

We need a new reality for the profession — one driven by our actions. Let’s get started on our new story.

Michael LeFevre, FAIA emeritus, is managing editor of DesignIntelligence Media Group Publications and principal, DesignIntelligence Strategic Advisory. His book, Managing Design: Conversations, Project Controls and Best Practices for Commercial Design and Construction Projects (Wiley, 2019) was Amazon’s #1 best-selling new release in category.



Q1 INFLUENCE: STEWARDSHIP

Taking Care of Business: The Intersection of Stewardship and Design

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Taking Care of Business: The Intersection of Stewardship and Design

Scott Simpson

Senior Fellow, Design Futures Council

Stewardship can be viewed as the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. There is no better illustration of this principle than the Parable of the Talents. We all know the story: Before setting out on a long journey, a rich man entrusted different sums of money to three of his servants. When he returned, he was pleased to discover that two of them had invested their shares, doubling the value, but the third servant, fearful of his master's wrath, had hidden his allotment away, losing nothing but failing to produce any return. For this, he was roundly chastised. The message is clear: It is not enough simply to protect an asset; rather, it must be put to productive use and made to flourish.

This is a useful reminder for those engaged in the built environment industry. In the aggregate, design, engineering and construction account for trillions of dollars in gross domestic product each year. (Only government services and health care spend more.) The industry is both a huge consumer of natural resources and also profoundly dysfunctional. A third of all projects fail to meet budget or schedule goals and a third of construction materials are wasted. Even worse, the built environment is responsible for nearly half of all carbon emissions. Thus, while there are plenty of assets in play, there does not appear to be much stewardship going on.

Seeing design through the lens of stewardship is a relatively recent phenomenon. It could be said that the sustainable design movement had its origin in the first Earth Day, held in 1970. Things got off to a slow start, but around the turn of the century,



It is not enough simply to protect an asset; rather, it must be put to productive use and made to flourish.

certification systems such as LEED in the U.S. and BREEAM in the U.K. became fashionable. In a relatively short time, sustainable design became de rigueur, and now certain aspects of sustainability have been baked into many building codes. One key reason is that clients made the connection between the aspiration of sustainability (“protecting the planet”) and making money. Developers discovered they could charge more rent per square foot for a LEED-certified building, thus producing value in excess of cost: “Doing well by doing good.” Stewardship does not have to be purely altruistic to be effective; no vow of poverty is required.

Good stewardship can be found in some unexpected places. For example, Elvis Presley was one of the most iconic and successful recording artists of all time. To put his career in perspective, the Rolling Stones have sold over 240 million albums and the

Beatles have sold over 600 million, but Elvis has sold more than one billion. Despite his premature death at the age of 42, he continues to be the fifth highest earning entertainment celebrity on the planet, raking in over \$39 million in 2019.

Elvis’ ability to combine both artistic and financial success was summed up in his iconic motto: “TCB,” or “Taking Care of Business.” It was so central to his world view that it became the name of his backup band. To Elvis, “TCB” was shorthand for “stewardship.” He recognized that he had been given extraordinary gifts — and a huge dose of good luck, starting at birth (he was his mother’s sole surviving son; his twin brother was stillborn). As a young teenager, he had no obvious musical talent, but somehow, he found his way to Sun Records in Memphis, paying \$4.00 to record a song for his mother’s birthday. The skinny introvert made an impression, and after a lucky break, his career took off. Within a few years, he was an international star.

While Elvis may be best remembered for the glitz of his later years in Hollywood and Las Vegas, he had a strong philanthropic streak. Early in his career, he made a practice of donating at least \$100,000 per year to a wide variety of charities. He was a notoriously soft touch, paying off the debts and mortgages of many people in need, and it is said that he gave away over 200 Cadillacs during his lifetime. Elvis understood that giving back was a privilege rather than an obligation. To him, giving back was simply “taking care of business.”

Not everyone is as talented or as rich as Elvis, but it doesn't take money or fame to be generous — or a good steward. It's not the size of the gift that matters; true generosity is measured in proportion to the available resources. That is the essence of stewardship: making the most of what you have been given when all the opportunities and constraints are factored in. The best stewards do the most with the least.

In design and construction, architects and engineers are entrusted with huge amounts of client money. To be good stewards, they must learn to use it creatively and responsibly. It does little good to design a fabulous building that the owner simply cannot afford. It is equally unsatisfactory to create a project that may meet a tight budget but provides just the bare minimum in accommodations for its occupants.

Money is not the only dimension of good stewardship. Time is equally important. Schedule overruns can be extremely expensive, especially for projects designed to generate revenue, such as hotels, office buildings and hospitals. Delivery delays can cost clients millions of dollars in lost income. And speaking of time, perhaps the most effective way for design professionals to exercise good stewardship is to think long-term over the entire life cycle of the building.

It's a well-documented but underappreciated fact that the cost of operations and maintenance over the useful life of a building trumps the initial capital cost by an order of magnitude. The impact of design decisions made before a building is



Elvis understood that giving back was a privilege rather than an obligation. To him, giving was simply “taking care of business.”

constructed last for decades. Consider something as routine as the choice of a flooring system in a hospital corridor: Should it be carpet, tile or terrazzo? What is the true cost to procure, install and maintain the floor over time? The least expensive first cost option is usually the default choice, but that could very well be the most expensive decision in the long run, when the actual costs of maintenance and eventual replacement are factored in. Designers who are true stewards will understand the difference and present the information to their owners so they can make well-informed decisions given all the factors involved. That's stewardship in action.

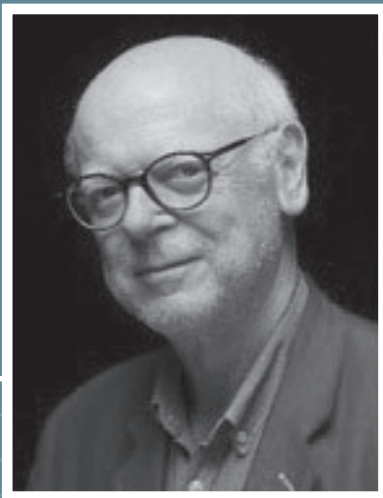
Another obvious intersection between design and stewardship has to do with occupant safety. Building code compliance is a legal obligation, of course, but codes are intended to set

minimum standards. These days, issues of building safety, particularly in schools, have become front-page news. Designers who think like good stewards will use their creativity to make sure that both interior and exterior spaces are designed as responsibly as possible to minimize the harm that may be caused by unexpected events.

Good stewardship is also part of materials selection. Where do specified products really come from? What are their actual components, and are those sources environmentally friendly and sustainable? How are the products sourced and manufactured? Is the labor involved compensated fairly, with working conditions that provide adequate precautions for safety and welfare? These are not questions that are usually pondered in design schools, but perhaps they should be, so that the next generation of design leaders will have a broader and deeper understanding of how their work will affect the built environment over the long term.

As climate change continues to dominate the headlines, the issue of how design can be an integral part of our collective response becomes increasingly relevant. Just like the three servants, human beings have been bestowed with resources that are both unexpected and unearned. It is up to us to figure out how to use them wisely and well.

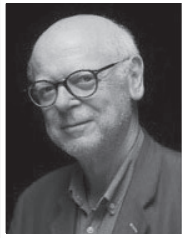
Scott Simpson, FAIA, is a senior fellow of the Design Futures Council and a regular contributor to DesignIntelligence.



Q1 INFLUENCE: STEWARDSHIP

On Stewardship

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On Stewardship

Paul Hyett

PPRIBA, Hon FAIA
Vickery Hyett Architects, Founder–Partner

Lots of curious mumbling around the room indicated the prevailing mood of surprised anticipation as the fifty or so Principals and Shareholders assembled for the ‘extraordinary shareholder meeting’ that Chief Executive Ralph Hawkins had called at such very short notice. What on earth was this about? The management systems of HKS, one of the USA’s most successful practices, normally ran like a well-oiled clock: HKS didn’t do *extraordinary shareholder meetings*...

With the session called to order Hawkins moved rapidly to the point: an offer had come in to buy the company.....

Offers had become increasingly common in recent years as predators eyed the astonishing growth and success of the company that Harwood K Smith had founded way back in 1939 but, hitherto, they been routinely, even summarily, dismissed by the Executive Board. This one was different: the proffered figure was eye-watering, and a simple and rapid calculation revealed the possibility of riches beyond the imagination. Some of those present would never need to work again.

Sitting in the front row at the Dallas HQ that day was Ron Skaggs, company chair, founder of the HKS healthcare sector, and a then recent president of the American Institute of Architects. A legend in his own lifetime, under his leadership the HKS healthcare sector had become the largest architectural operation of its kind in the States. No matter which criteria was adopted - number of beds, square footage, or construction value - Skaggs’ team came out on top. None of its competitors designed more, and very few designed as well: HKS informed its healthcare work through research, and its knowledge base and expertise were beyond prodigious.

Next to Skaggs sat Joe Sprague. Joe’s c.v. said it all: a past manager of the Health Facility Codes and Standards Programs as well as past president of the AIA Academy of Architecture for Health, the Facility Guidelines Institute, and the American

College of Healthcare Architects, he was also a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Architects, and a Fellow of the Health Facility Institute. As Chairman Emeritus he had played a pivotal role in developing the 'Guidelines for Design and Construction of Hospitals and Healthcare Facilities' annual publication. We have nothing like it in the UK, and it is invaluable to all involved in delivering this most complex of building genres.

Sprague's enormous contribution to his profession, to the construction industry, and to the wider community had, through the larger part of his distinguished career, been greatly supported and assisted through the aegis of HKS.

Likewise, the quality of contribution that thousands of first rank professionals around the globe make to their profession, their industry, and the wider community, is heavily dependent on the support of their companies. And this is the point: for every one of those professionals, it is critical that the corporate control of their company remains in enlightened hands. Their firms are the bedrocks of their careers; they are the platforms from which they operate, and from which they contribute. The importance of *stewardship* in this respect cannot be overstated.

Sprague and Skaggs had met as youngsters during military service. Legend had it that, back in those days, Skaggs had reported to Sprague. Ron liked to stand to attention and, with a mischievous grin, offer a mock salute when he relayed that story because, at HKS, Sprague reported to him. But either way, their careers had been inter-twined, their loyalty and commitment to service had remained absolute, and their friendship was unbreakable. And on Wednesdays, come rain or shine, they always had their \$5.99 enchilada lunch together at the El Fenix eatery just round the corner. And this was Wednesday; time was ticking!

Ralph was hardly into answering questions when Ron, in his typically polite but resolute manner, announced that he hadn't

put his life's work into the company to see it sold out. Ron went on to emphasise the contribution that HKS employees had made to the company's success and asserted quietly but firmly that it would not be right to "*sell them down the river*".

Others who spoke followed Ron's lead and, very quickly, the mood of the room had set: yet again, and despite the magnitude of the offer, HKS could not be bought. The CEO, sensing that the chicken enchiladas were calling (they take early lunch down south) thus brought the meeting to a close.

Hawkins had of course quite properly drawn the offer to the attention of his leadership team, but he nevertheless got the clear answer he had both expected and wanted: the company was not for sale. Money, however much, couldn't persuade its owners to cede control.

I tell this story because HKS has, through the decades, been an exemplar in terms of governance and stewardship. Like most great architectural practices, distinguished careers, generation after generation, are forged within its portals, but the deal is simple: the firm operates for clear purpose and against a set of well-defined principles. Furthermore, by traditionally picking its leadership from within, it protects its values, projects its culture, and preserves its character. And it makes its own future...it is privately owned so its accountable to no outside interests. Good stewardship has been critical both to its stability and to its success, and that stewardship has always lain in safe and trusted hands. Newcomers cannot expect to come in at the top, and it's a long road up at HKS. This brings us to the related issue of *succession*....

Let's back up a century and more to that great leader, Abraham Lincoln, speaking during his election campaign to the Wisconsin State Agricultural society way up north in Milwaukee. There, against the majestic setting of Lake Michigan, Lincoln told the story of a monarch who had once charged his wise men to invent him a sentence that would be '*ever in*

view, and which should be true and appropriate in all times, and situations’. After careful deliberations they presented the future president with the words:

‘And this, too, shall pass away’

As US theologian Tim Townsend says, these words express so much: how chastening they are in the hour of pride! How consoling in the depths of affliction.... But what precisely do they mean, and why is this so relevant a line in the context of stewardship? Well, as my father often remarked: nothing lasts for ever, change is inevitable.

That is of course why Lincoln’s phrase is so pertinent to any kind of ministry, whether it be to the sick or to those otherwise in trouble or distress. Essentially, however bad, bleak, or indeed terrible the suffering or situation, there *will be an end*. And of course, for those of faith and those of optimism, there will always be a new dawn and a new tomorrow: it is in this context of inevitable and ongoing change, and of better tomorrows, that the notion of stewardship, and succession, is so important in our institutional and corporate lives. For good stewardship is essential in preserving values, maintaining focus, embracing worthy opportunities, and shaping future agendas. And well laid succession plans are essential to preserving the values that will inform good stewardship.

The Royal Institute of British Architects has a simple charter which calls for the advancement and promotion of architecture – not, you will note, architects, or British architecture, just *architecture*. In that sense it is both timeless in terms of relevance, and universal in terms of application. But against that charter, the Institute must both respond to changing circumstances, and indeed shape change. The former demands enlightened, informed, and selfless stewardship if the Institute is to maintain its course through seas rough and smooth. The latter requires us to seize new opportunities and set new agendas and chart new courses through hitherto uncharted



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waters. Intelligent, informed, and selfless stewardship is, again, essential.

Back to that far off day when HKS Shareholders took the decision not to sell, but instead to maintain control of the company’s affairs and destiny. In so doing they acted selflessly and against a higher calling. As ‘stewards’ they were not prepared to allow the company’s defining purpose (service to clients, and latterly, through fine design, to the wider

community) to be corrupted. Instead, they held on to the baton, until it was time to pass it on to others, *from within*, to whom it could be safely entrusted.

Succession is thus so important because ultimately the 'baton' must be passed on to future generations of leaders. They must be worthy of the heritage and the challenge ahead.

Sadly, too many UK post World War II architectural practices within the private sector (that is, non-municipal) fared very badly in terms of succession planning, especially when compared to other professional disciplines within the construction industry, or indeed to architectural practices in the USA. So, whilst a series of great UK engineering practices such as Ove Arup, Mott MacDonald, and latterly Buro Happold, established very well-defined cultures with management structures that seemed to transition seamlessly and successfully through generations of leadership, all too many of our larger and better architectural practices either lost their way in terms of design direction and quality, or simply withered on the vine.

Happily, we are now seeing a growing number of success stories as a subsequent generation of firms have taken succession planning very seriously and are continuing to flourish in terms of both design quality and quality of service as they face new and challenging agendas and circumstances. Grimshaw Architects (formerly Nicholas Grimshaw and Partners) is one good example; others include Richard Roger's practice (now RRP Stirk Harbour + Partners), Hopkins Architects (formerly Michael Hopkins and Partners) and Zaha Hadid Architects who of course tragically lost its founder so early.

In commercial terms each of these practices is incredibly successful, but neither commercial success, nor survival, is the primary call. What matters most is that such firms continue to evolve in a manner that is worthy of their respective heritages, and that they continue to produce design work of distinction. That is a demanding challenge in the widest sense of the term. In this respect, *stewardship* is everything.

Paul Hyett is a founding principal of Vickery-Hyett in the U.K., past president of the Royal Institute of British Architects and a regular contributor to DesignIntelligence.



Q1 INFLUENCE: STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship and the Case of London's Landed Estates

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Stewardship and the Case of London's Landed Estates

Paul Finch
Programme Director, World Architecture Festival

Letters from London:

Paul Finch examines leadership's
privileges and responsibilities

London is unusual in terms of development and ownership of large areas in the middle of the capital. They are controlled by what started as aristocratic or royally owned agricultural estates but have transformed into huge trusts and associated subsidiary companies, mostly still controlled by family interests.

The names of these areas are redolent of historic families: Grosvenor, Cadogan, de Walden, Portman and Bedford, to which one might add quasi-public owners such as the City of London Corporation and the Crown Estate. The areas where they have substantial interests include large parts of Westminster (the West End, St James's, Soho and Belgravia), Marylebone, Bloomsbury and other generally wealthy parts of central London.

What distinguishes these owners is their attitude to stewardship of assets, their appreciation of the long-term benefits of high-quality development (including investment in design and construction), and their interest in generational succession plans. Each is usually responsible to trustees or commissioners, rather than boards of directors; beneficial ownership is based on freeholds rather than leaseholds; and they are not subject to the vagaries of the stock market or short-term banking policies.

You might say the economic transition from low-value farmland or rented small-scale properties to what we see today, where asset values are measured in billions of pounds, owes much to the 17th-century economist and property speculator Nicholas Barbon. Barbon believed in the benefits of low interest rates, free trade, mortgage finance and insurance, the last two factors triggered by the Great Fire of London in 1666. Barbon used unstable post-fire market conditions to promote fire insurance, but more importantly, to think about the potential benefits of exploiting existing real estate assets by raising mortgages on them to finance new development.

This idea was taken up with enthusiasm, not simply by speculators such as Barbon himself, but eventually by slower-moving aristocratic owners: Provided they could sell leasehold interests in property assets developed on low-value sites, they could not only repay the mortgages, but retain long-term ownership of the land on which the development stood, along with the buildings created.

While this is a simplification of a more variegated process, it is the underlying story of how London's landed estates became what they are today. Asset management is now more important than it was, but development — sometimes redevelopment — on estate land continues, with more adventurous activities on the part of some in overseas markets.

The most obvious example of this is the Grosvenor Estate, which is owned by the Grosvenor Group, a privately-owned international property company. As its website explains, "With a track record of over 340 years, we develop, manage and invest with a purpose of improving property and places to deliver lasting commercial and social benefit. We achieve our purpose by adopting a farsighted approach, being locally engaged and sharing and benefiting from our internal experience — we call this our Living Cities approach."



Asset management is now more important than it was, but development — sometimes redevelopment — on estate land continues, with more adventurous activities on the part of some in overseas markets.



While the language is modest, it represents the voice of an operation with assets worth more than \$60 billion, with assets in virtually every continent, including substantial holdings across the U.S. The ultimate overseer of this empire is the Duke of Westminster, whose family ancestry dates back to the invasion of England by the Normans in 1066. The family was given estates in the northwest of England, and for many generations, investment in their part of the country has taken place in addition to the far more important activities undertaken in London and overseas.

To give an example of the long-term attitude of Grosvenor and the family, one could look at the development of the Liverpool One project, which has transformed the middle of that city in the early part of this century with a retail-led mixed-use development. This included the commissioning of 30 good architects, working to an overall masterplan, which has breathed fresh life into what was an ailing city center. The decade-long project ran into financial and construction problems — at one stage it was conceivable that the completion phase would be canceled or reduced in quality to cut costs. In the end, the Grosvenor ethic of investing for the future, and out of respect of past family history and tradition, meant the project was completed as originally intended.

Grosvenor's association with London property began in 1677, when land to the west of the City of London came into the family after heiress Mary Davies married Sir Thomas Grosvenor. In the next century, development of pastures, swamps and orchards took place, creating Mayfair, with Belgravia following in the 19th century. It was another century before another major initiative took place: international investment beginning in the 1950s.

London development areas are controlled by estates, mostly still controlled by family interests. Top to bottom, Belgrave Square, one of the most prestigious addresses within the Grosvenor Estate, Bedford Square, Cadogan Estate and the intersection of Harley Street and Wigmore Street which is part of the Howard de Walden Estate.

A piquant connection between Grosvenor and the U.S. government concerns the former American embassy in London, which from 1938 until recently was based in Grosvenor Square, switching addresses to an imposing Saarinen-designed presence, survives to this day, in 1960. The embassy was always an oddity in the U.S. diplomatic real estate portfolio because of the lease arrangement with the Duke of Westminster. Almost all other major properties are owned outright by the U.S. The duke reportedly said he would only sell the freehold on the Grosvenor Square site if the U.S. government returned his family's land — confiscated during the American Revolution!

A different form of stewardship, again based on retail ownership, is evident in the way in which Marylebone High Street has been “curated” by the Howard de Walden estate over many decades, gradually upgrading what was once described as a “shabby” area into a gentrified mix of fashion, restaurants and other uses. In this instance, the long-term interests of the estate have allowed decisions to be made that increase overall value through choice of tenant and activity rather than immediate rental return, a general feature of the attitude of the landed estates.

The same is true of the Crown Estate, which, like many British institutions, is an oddity based on a long history. It sounds from its name as though it owns properties on behalf of the monarch, and indeed the concept of crown land stems largely from the same 11th-century Norman Conquest that involved the Grosvenor family. But for many decades, while in theory the estate properties belonged to the crown, in reality, the legislation which created the Crown Estate in the 1950s, means that the monarch has no control over management decisions. All net profits are returned to the UK Treasury each year. The quid pro

quo is that the taxpayer, via Parliament, funds many aspects of royal expenditure.

This does not mean that individual royals do not own land of their own. For example, the Duchy of Cornwall, which has extensive landholdings in that county in the southwest of England and elsewhere, “belongs” to Prince Charles. But again, his rights over the estate are at least partly dependent on government approval of development and disposal projects.

Why do the apparent anomalies of landed estates and complicated semi-public organizations like the Crown Estate continue? By and large, these estates have a higher reputation for responsible development than development companies in the private sector, and municipal attempts to echo the long-term attitudes of organizations based on hereditary principles rather than the ballot box. It is also the case that the philanthropic activities associated with the landed estates have built up a legacy of goodwill, as have their relationships with their institutional tenants. For example, the Howard de Walden estate is the freeholder of the Royal Institute of British Architects building in Portland Place; the Bedford Estate is the freeholder of the premises occupied by the Architectural Association in Bedford Square.

Long-term stewardship has also given the landed estates a sense of perspective about politics, economics, construction and the management of assets, coping with boom and bust and societal change over long periods largely unknown to private companies and public authorities.

An example of this is the response of these historic owners of buildings to the new requirements to conserve energy and reduce carbon generation.

This is not easy in a context where much of your estate may be subject to legislation, which makes alteration of listed historic buildings difficult territory. Balancing the requirements of environmental initiatives with duties to preserve heritage is no easy matter, but in the case of the landed estates, there will be precedent to draw on and the inevitable authority of real estate stewardship, which may date back centuries.

You might say that the failures associated with a moribund, class-based social structure have been addressed head-on by the family estates that have survived in London and elsewhere in Britain. Survival depends on looking forward while respecting heritage and tradition, bringing in external expertise rather than assuming that mere ownership confers skill and experience, and being alert to the direction the political and economic winds are blowing.

The current (seventh) Duke of Westminster, Hugh Grosvenor, is a graduate in countryside management and was named by the Sunday Times as the richest under-30 person in Britain, with net personal wealth of more than £10 billion. Like his predecessors, he is a philanthropist as well as the person ultimately responsible for the success of his extraordinary inheritance.

With privilege comes responsibility.

Paul Finch is Programme Director of the World Architecture Festival (WAF). He started professional life as a journalist in the early 1970s; he has edited Building Design, Architects' Journal and Architectural Review, where he launched WAF in 2008. He has been co-editor of Planning in London since 1994. He was a founder-commissioner and later chair at CABE (the UK government's Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment) where he also chaired its design review programme, subsequently chairing its London Olympics design panel from 2005 to 2012. He holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Westminster and honorary fellowships from University College London and the Royal Institute of British Architects. He is an honorary member of the British Council for Offices and the Architectural Association. He was awarded an OBE for services to architecture in 2002. With this essay he initiates a series entitled Letters From London.



Q1 INFLUENCE: STEWARDSHIP

On Stewardship: A Question of Opportunity

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On Stewardship: A Question of Opportunity

Martha Thorne

Former Executive Director of the Pritzker Prize and IE Dean

Stewardship is one of those words with a rich definition. Its intrigue lies in the fact that it means different things to different people. Its origins stem from the notion of one who cared for a house, the ward or guardian who took care of a place or a home. Environmental stewardship carries broader connotations. Originally understood as “conservation” by the populace, the implicit meaning was the goal to protect nature. The creation of national parks in the USA can be seen as an example of this consciousness and actions based on the idea of the fragility of our natural environment and humans as the guardians to care for it.

In 1962, Rachel Carson’s seminal book “Silent Spring” suggested a shift to the concept of proactive stewardship — a mind shift required to stop the use of pesticides that would cause harm to our environment.

In the decades since the 1960s, the thinking around stewardship has been expanded to a global level in response to concerns about global warming and climate change. A 2015 Newsweek article showed us the emerging culture of stewardship through obvious examples such as wind farming in Denmark, geothermal energy in Iceland or executives bicycling to work.¹ The “sharing economy” was to be an essential feature of stewardship according to this article, since “consumption is no longer a core value.” The author noted that the nemesis of stewardship is waste and went on to cite positive examples of architecture by Renzo Piano and Wang Shu. The former used sod to insulate a roof with geothermal energy solar panels. The latter recycled a million bricks and tiles in the Ningbo Museum.

¹ Barry Lord, “The ‘energy debate’ is really a revolution in what we think about everything,” Newsweek, July 9, 2015. <https://www.newsweek.com/energy-debate-really-revolution-what-we-think-about-everything-329965>.

Each day we are deluged with more news of serious threats and devastating disasters occurring due to climate change. This pan-global increased attention extends from scientists and policymakers to the public, and, of course, architects who are intimately involved in the creation of our constructed environments.

Hand in glove with climate change concerns, the field of architecture is increasing attention to architecture's social role of interpreting the word "social" in its broadest sense. In her 2011 DesignIntelligence Quarterly article, "The Social Responsibility of Architects," Helena Jubany shared her opinion about architecture and social responsibility thus:

The social responsibility of architects lies in part in believing that architecture can create better places, that architecture can affect society and that it can even have a role in making a place civilized by making a community more livable.

This all sounds wonderful, but where's the catch? Where are the friction points that impede our progress? The answers may lie in the very definition of the term architect. It seems that term — and our profession — are at a crossroads. In the days of old, most can agree that there was an accepted definition of what an architect was supposed to do. In his 1977 book, "The Architect: Chapters in the History of the Profession," Spiro Kostof outlined a clear definition of architects that was used throughout much of the 20th century and is still in use in some circles:



The social responsibility of architects lies in part in believing that architecture can create better places, that architecture can affect society and that it can even have a role in making a place civilized by making a community more livable.

– Helena Jubany

Architects are conceivers of buildings. What they do is to design, that is supply concrete images for a new structure so that it can be put up. The primary task of an of the architect, then as now, is to communicate what proposed buildings should be and look like.²

In many circles, the emphasis then was on the outcome of the architectural process and the relationship with the client as the initiator of buildings. But in recent decades, the challenges to this antiquated definition began to become more frequent.

In her 2010 open letter to architects, Amy Choi’s scathing criticism ridicules architects and points out the irrelevance of the profession.³ To reinforce this line of thinking, designer Bruce Mau argues that architects “spent so much time policing the fence that you forgot to open the door.”

In other words, we have constructed such an exclusive professional fortress of accreditation, institutes, awards and even our own discourse, that we have lost touch with other people and adjacent disciplines — and what we could learn from them.

More recently, accreditation boards, schools and society in general are questioning the relevance of the traditional definition of the roles of those who design buildings. As evidence, we can witness the rise of architecture prizes for issues, sustainability, innovation, underrepresented parts of the profession, etc. that indirectly express disagreement with a narrow definition of the “design architect” (starchitect, if you will) as the best or only path to follow.

David Chipperfield provoked a response in his November 2020 DOMUS editorial.⁴ With his usual candor, he asked us:

What, then, is the role of the architect when the challenges of our time require us to tackle issues of a far larger scale, that require a more complex engagement of social representation, environmental consideration, and political mandate? Only in confronting these can we broach new levels of our professional potential.

The Question Remains

But the question remains, can and should architects move into social architecture, activism, climate change mitigation? Should they diverge from their traditional path, pushing the transformation of what is effectively a service industry into advocacy? And, if so, what are the paths to stewardship and how might they be cleared for others to follow?

Understanding the social (and perhaps even political nature) of architecture and adopting a model of stewardship is a matter of survival — for the profession and the planet. Never before in the history of our world have we been faced with such major challenges as rapid urbanization, the devastating effects of climate change, inequality, the need for decent housing, migration, the recent pandemic and its effects. Architecture deals with our built environment. By association, that means our natural and digital ones, as well.

² Spiro Kostof, *The Architect: Chapters in the History of the Profession* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), Preface, page XVIII

³ Annie Choi, “Dear Architects, I am sick of your shit,” Build LLC blog, September 3, 2010. <https://blog.buildllc.com/2010/09/dear-architects-i-am-sick-of-your-shit-%E2%80%93-an-open-letter-by-annie-choi/>.

⁴ David Chipperfield, “A che punto siamo ora? [editoriale] (Where do we stand now? [editorial]),” DOMUS 1051 (November 2020), 2–3.

A Profession at a Crossroads: Challenges Ahead

We are at a crossroads. Clearly, the old models of practice will not lead us all into a long-term future. Stewardship is caring for what we have and *taking action* for the future — with responsibility. This responsibility means understanding the impacts — direct and indirect, short- and long-term — of one's actions. Who better to undertake this challenge than those trained in architecture? Architects are educated and encultured in both the understanding and creation of the built environment. We are skilled at dealing with complex matters and imagining scenarios for new futures and evaluating the potential of proposals from multiple perspectives.

An inflection point like the one we face compels us to enlarge the definition of the profession of architect. We must realize that we are dealing not only with architecture and design (or the creation of buildings and spaces), but that we are also operating within a broader context. This context includes our natural environment, policy and political components, and the economic framework. The design of our built environment is no longer just the resulting object, it is being able to respond to the questions of why and how. Answering those questions demands that we redefine and reevaluate the processes involved in making those constructions and that we work with many other disciplines to be able to ask and answer the questions responsibly.

Our second challenge has to do with the changing relationship we must learn to forge between the natural and constructed environments. It is time that we shift our approach. Moving



- If we can see ourselves as part of our environment instead of being managers of it ...
- If we can accept that there is no distinction between waste and supply, and that it is all part of our ecosystem and must be treated in a circular fashion ...
- If we can place our focus on processes as well as the product outcome ...

from simply reducing consumption patterns, resource usage and recycling when easy and possible requires reinterpreting our relationship with resources in a completely new way. We cannot be content to think we can “handle” the problem of climate change by responding through our current policies and conventional actions. Such radical change requires a deeper understanding of our relationship with our world and a critical analysis of the cultural constructs of our actions — the things that have led us to the current predicament in the first place.

If

An opportunity stands before us ...

- *If we can see ourselves as part of our environment instead of being managers of it ...*
- *If we can accept that there is no distinction between waste and supply, and that it is all part of our ecosystem and must be treated in a circular fashion ...*
- *If we can place our focus on processes as well as the product outcome ...*

then, maybe we have a chance.

Martha Thorne is dean of the IE School of Architecture and Design, part of the innovative IE University in Segovia/Madrid, Spain, educating students to face the important challenges of the 21st century as reflected in our built, natural and digital environments. In March 2021, she stepped down from the position of executive director of the Pritzker Architecture Prize, a role she held since 2005.

Throughout her career, she has observed architects and architecture seeking to communicate the importance of design, in the broadest sense, through exhibitions, writings and teaching through interests centering on two broad themes: the contemporary city and how architecture, design, and urbanism contribute to sustainability and resilience; and how architecture and design education can evolve in both content and pedagogy to be more relevant for today's challenges. From 1995 to 2005, she worked as curator in Department of Architecture at the Art Institute of Chicago. She has written numerous articles for books and journals on contemporary architecture and the city.

She served on the Board of Directors of the International Archive of Women in Architecture and the Graham Foundation for Fine Arts. She has participated on many international juries, including the new National Museum of Chinese Art, Zaryadye Park in Moscow, and the international jury for ArcVision — Women and Architecture Prize. Thorne received a Master of City Planning degree from the University of Pennsylvania, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Urban Affairs from the State University of New York at Buffalo, and additional studies at the London School of Economics.



Q1 INFLUENCE: STEWARDSHIP

Investing in Urban Reform for a Better Future

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Investing in Urban Reform for a Better Future

Margarita Jover

Associate Professor of Architecture, Tulane University

Tulane's Margarita Jover urges for creation of the Federal Agency for the Built Environment (FABE) to fund Climate Adaptation Plans (CAP) drafted by urban labs that already exist in universities. American society can benefit from investing in them.

We have reached a critical point in our stewardship of the built environment. The United Nations has guidelines to meet climate change global targets after the 2015 Paris Agreement. Global experts know that collective intelligence, shared data, new systems and models are required. But how do we integrate them? American metropolises urgently need Climate Adaptation Plans (CAP). Yet, as we look for research support from leading federal agencies to elaborate these plans as in other western countries, we find little help.

Since 1950, none of the agencies of the National Science Foundation (NSF) cover the built environment as a field of research.¹ As far back as its founding in 1887, the National

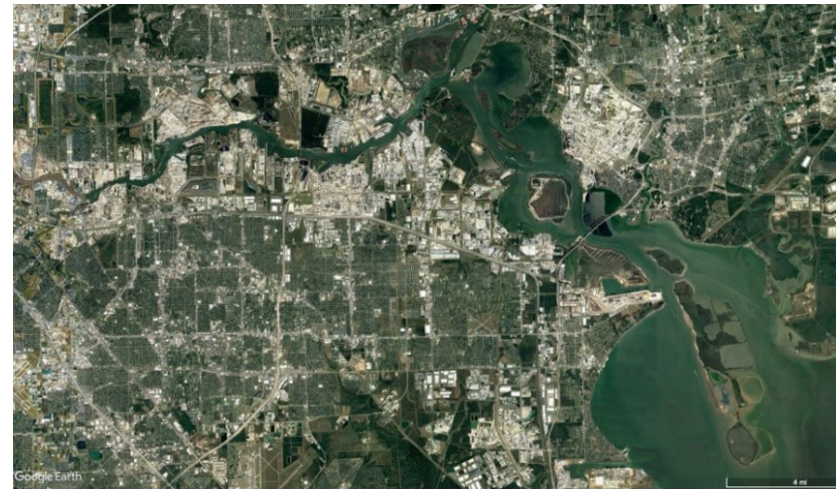
¹ National Science Foundation (NSF) has several areas of research that includes Biological Sciences (BIO), Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE), Education and Human Resources (HER), Engineering (ENG), Environmental Research and Education (ERE), Geosciences (GEO), Integrative Activities (OIA), International Science and Engineering (OISE); Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS), and Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE).

Institute of Health (NIH) covers biomedical and public health fields. The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), founded in 1965, covers the arts and humanities but continues to strain under economic pressure. Several agencies outside federal funding, operating under the guidance of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, cover research in these most profitable fields. In the 1950s, investments in these fields of study had the national mission to strengthen the U.S. economy.² But times have changed. We have a larger, more important mission. In 2022 and beyond, we must invest in urban reform to generate a better position for the future.

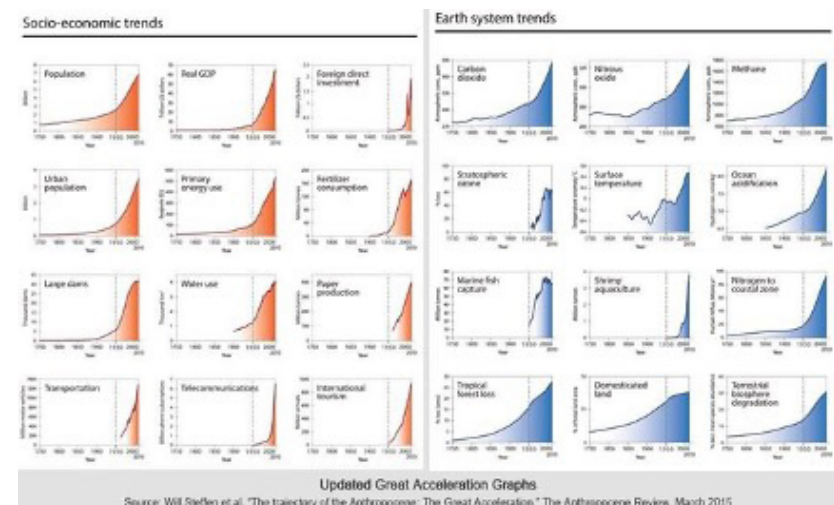
In Search of Support: Fund Climate Adaptation Plans (CAP)

The discipline of architecture can do more than be a service provider for clients' needs, mainly at a building-scale. In the United States, the discipline can recover its urbanistic competencies and collaborate in multidisciplinary teams to lead urban and architectural reforms that are formal, spatial and performative. Going beyond the building-scale on one side and urban policy on the other are critically important.

²In July 1945, Vannevar Bush gave a report named "Science, the Endless Frontier" to President Franklin Roosevelt. In that report, the development of science was depicted as essential for the progress of the nation. War against disease, national security (space and defense), and public welfare were important end goals in that report. Some years later, around 1970s, President's Kennedy's address to the National Academy of Sciences said: "Scientists alone can establish the objectives of their research, but society, in extending support to science, must take account of its own needs." In 1969, the NSF established a modest applied research program, named Interdisciplinary Research Relevant to Problems of Our Society (IRRPOS), to which Congress appropriated \$6 million in fiscal year 1970. IRRPOS, however, reflected the traditional approach of the agency by responding to proposals from the scientific community rather than the agency stimulating specific research proposals. The emphasis of the awarded grants was in the areas of environmental quality and urban growth and management. IRRPOS operated for two fiscal years and expanded to RANN (Research Applied to National Needs) until 1977 when it faded. Retrieved from: <https://www.nsf.gov/about/history/nsf50/nsf8816.jsp>.



Houston, Texas. Twenty miles altitude. Morphological expression of the industrial urban model. Photo survey from Google Earth by the author.



The Great Acceleration's graphs. "The Great Acceleration" (Steffen et al., 2015b).

“Urban labs” are working groups of researchers in universities consisting of different disciplines. In their work, some are proposing metropolitan reforms to meet climate change targets. American society would benefit from research funds invested in universities’ urban labs, where different disciplines test spatial, material and performative reforms to the built environment.

The Industrial Urban Model

From long before the Roman Empire to the present, societies inhabited the planet in vastly different ways. Each used specific urbanization models to govern ownership and of territory and resources. Today’s primary approach is still the industrial model, also called the single-use model. It emulates a factory assembly line, where efficient production and movement of goods are essential. In the industrial model, separation of functions and connection and movement via automobiles is the spatial paradigm. Strip malls, office parks, housing for different incomes and densities, hospitals and business districts are zones from which to move with gas-fueled engines.

As far back as the fourth International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM)³, several prominent architects proposed urban plans featuring this industrial model. At that time (the 1930s and before), architects were less specialized or bound to individual building design and scale than we are today. A great lineage of architects, urbanists and engineers proposed city models and built pieces of cities quite successfully in the past.⁴

The *zeitgeist* of modernism boldly took on urban design and proposed radical new city models that included social agendas. Epitomized in the Athens Charter of (1933)⁵ the urban industrial model was criticized in subsequent modern architecture and urbanism congresses but was massively used and misused after World War Two, first in the United States, and then globally. In hindsight, we might ask: Why? One apparent reason might be the industrial urban model’s biases toward production, consumption and capital accumulation. Unfortunately, there is a clear correlation between this still-current urban industrial model and the planet’s deterioration, as visible in the Great Acceleration’s graphs.⁶

A Reformed Urban Model

Having reached a tipping point, the climate crisis now prompts designers of the built environment to retrofit urbanized territories to meet climate change targets. The United Nations has produced Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)⁷ guidelines for metropolitan entities to follow. Funding initiatives such as urban labs could promote comprehensive research inquiries in energy savings, energy transition, biodiversity increase, zero waste strategies, environmental health and the promotion of regenerative economies. These research lines can give structure to metropolitan reforms. The key to the success of initiatives such as *urban labs* is their threefold holistic, multidisciplinary and in-depth, site-specific approach.

³ Fourth CIAM (Congress International d’Architecture Moderne). Le Corbusier, Cornelis Van Eesteren, Walter Gropius, Siegfried Giedion, Josep Lluís Sert and others participated in this conference.

⁴ The lineage of architects, urbanists and engineers of the 18th and 19th centuries include, amongst others: Otto Wagner, Ildefons Cerda, Tony Garnier, Baron Haussman, Daniel Burnham, Edward H. Bennett and Eugene Henard.

⁵ The Athens Charter of 1933 is the output of the fourth CIAM conference on board the S.S. *Patris*, an ocean-going liner journeying from Marseilles to Athens in July 1933. Le Corbusier synthesized in the Athens Charter several observations and resolutions discussed during the congress about the functional city.

⁶ “The Great Acceleration” (Steffen et al., 2015b).

⁷ SDG Guidelines, United Nations. <https://sdgs.un.org>.

But there are challenges. Most work in universities has a specialized focus. Concerns consistently emerge regarding the deified sciences trying to solve complex planetary issues alone. This exclusive scientific mindset is especially problematic when singularly motivated by short-term profits that naturally arise from capital investments. One example is geoengineering research.⁸ This research field is naturally more interested in keeping fast and high capital returns to solutions for the few than changing the problematic “modus operandi” that nourished that capital growth in the first place. These solutions aspire to maximize profits by scaling up in size, resulting in high visual and environmental impacts, especially if they fail. The opposite mindset argues for smaller infrastructures redundantly integrated into their territories. A second alternative example would be incorporating and spatially integrating solar energy in metropolitan areas instead of deploying it in large-scale fields in national or international environmental sacrifice zones.

A Horizon of Optimism

There are reasons for optimism. Reforms of this hegemonic industrial urban model seem increasingly possible. Hope exists with this new political leadership that encourages new generations desperate to reverse the dark destiny ahead. Many countries have already started — decades ago — to pursue and achieve climate change targets determined by the global community but ignored by the U.S. until now.

Prevalence and pervasiveness characterize hegemony. This

hegemonic urban model is challenging to see from the inside, let alone imagine an alternative. Those who wish to do so must contrast it with prior models of inhabiting the territory or compare it with other non-western cultures studying urban history, anthropology, ethnology, and archeology. Historians are critically crucial in urban labs. Economists with a particular mindset geared towards circularity are critically important too.⁹ Other significant contributors to such reform strategies come from urban ecology, whose experts study territories as urban ecosystems. The science of cities has evolved to understand urbanized environments as coupled human and natural systems.¹⁰ The good news is that there are alternatives to inhabit the planet with better quality of life. Multidisciplinary teams of urban designers can synthesize knowledge in different fields in CAP for specific metropolises. Research funding is needed for metropolises to draft their 50-year CAP. Such long-term thinking and planning could ensure alternative economies, establish rules for social equality in accessing resources for life and ecological recovery.

American cities are no longer the 19th century, gridded, mixed-use cities with medium-high density we saw in cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, New York or San Francisco. The 20th-century suburban phenomenon of the industrial single-use model has transformed these territories into large metropolitan areas that agglomerate suburbs, office parks, strip malls, schools, hospitals, gated communities and slums and connect them with a maze of roads and highways. In some cases, these metroscares

⁸ Geoengineering research from Naomi Klein, “Chapter 8: Dimming the Sun,” *This Changes Everything: Capitalism Versus the Climate* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015).

⁹ Kate Raworth, *Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like A 21st-Century Economist* (Hartford, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2017). *The book is an invitation to consider the economy in circular terms and tightly related to the finitude of the planet.*

¹⁰ Marina Alberti, *Cities That Think Like Planets: Complexity, Resilience, and Innovation in Hybrid Ecosystems* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016). “As human activity and environmental change come to be increasingly recognized as intertwined phenomena on a rapidly urbanizing planet, the field of urban ecology has risen to offer useful ways of thinking about coupled human and natural systems.” back cover.



Our challenges are not associated with the precision of climate change prediction models or the opening of new fields of technological knowledge capable of postponing our current devouring dynamics. Instead, our challenges are linked to the capacity of society to implement, on a large scale, what we already know and understand how it contributes to climate adaptation in the short-term and climate recovery in the long run.

have spread over agricultural fields of high value and engulfed small towns and cities in a continuum, resulting in a conglomerate of minor separately governed entities. While each metropolis is spatially continuous, its governance is fragmented. Current metropolitan areas are politically uncoordinated continua with no funds to think and organize social and ecological adaptation to climate change on a broad basis. Unfortunately, metropolises are the perfect targets. They set the divide and win strategy stage, an optimum place for economic pillage. Regulations are needed to ensure wise redevelopment.

Issues: Historical, Political and Cultural

The issues related to climate change are not as scientific as they are political, cultural and urbanistic. Our challenges are not associated with the precision of climate change prediction models or the opening of new fields of technological knowledge capable of postponing our current devouring dynamics. Instead, our challenges are linked to the capacity of society to implement, on a large scale, what we already know and understand how it contributes to climate adaptation in the short-term and climate recovery in the long run.

Solutions

Solutions exist within the fields of ecology and society, and we must tackle them simultaneously because they are intertwined. Ecological solutions exist in two categories: green-blue infrastructures (forests, water cycle, soils, biodiversity increase and food systems) and energy and materials consumption's reduction (mobility, mixed-use, circular economies, regional scale and energy transition). Societal solutions boil down to recovering the governance structures at the metropolitan scale to make possible the reforms to achieve isotropy in the distribution of resources for life.

The primary problem is that a significant part of society has lost its political voice. Political elites are economic elites. As such, they are focused on accumulating capital. It is increasingly difficult to believe this dynamic will coincide with that of urban reform, the objective of which is to cut off the indiscriminate supply of monetary wealth to those whom promote those same urbanization dynamics singularly driven by maximization of capital. The economic equation does not include ecological and social impacts, and economic activity should realign to a collective mission.

A History of Delaying Solutions

Times of crisis require reform. Empires have always preferred to manage the supply of “panis et circus” to citizens to avoid social conflict and mass rebellion. In the western culture, the unstable 1930s with working-class upheavals against early industrialist-capitalists led to successive wars and fascism in Europe. Social conflicts reemerged with a request for civil rights and universal suffrage in the domestic scene after World War Two. In the United States, the war industry migrated into multiple civil sectors. The massive application of the suburban model and the city understood as a factory meant hitting three targets with one shot, granting social peace and economic growth. Unfortunately, these three political targets combined to accelerate our habitat’s deterioration.

The first of three political targets is economic growth with massive production of suburbanization. While building the suburbs certainly benefited the economy, it consumed valuable fertile soil and more significant quantities of energy. The second target: the spatial separation of citizens in suburbia

afforded the cultural illusion of cohesive suburban society but denied the possibility of associationism at the domestic level. The third target: the spectacular growth of the entertainment industry, with an exuberant Hollywood that in turn promoted the tobacco and the armament’s industries and anesthetized people increasingly ready to consume. These threefold political maneuvers of economic growth, isolation in the suburbs and entertainment have downfalls. Specifically, these are ecological deterioration, societal depoliticization and tribalization, and the social annihilation of citizen’s conditions under social media’s anesthetic power.

We must recover and rediscover the central questions of political coexistence that are inescapable today due to climate change. Metropolitan plans can be the political framework and platforms for reversing these trends. Founding and funding urban labs at universities can be the means.

Alternative political maneuvers can be the following. First, regenerative economies at intermediate local-regional scales can be promoted and protected by these plans. Capitalistic logics can operate within this framework with social and ecological constraints. Second, recovering collective spaces and mixed-use environments can leverage the civism and associationism necessary to take command of energy and food systems at metropolitan scales. Collective enterprises and increased social interaction accelerate innovation and productivity.¹¹ Third, regulating and keeping the social media and entertainment industries at bay, increasingly becoming the softly armed wing of consumerism, seems necessary.

¹¹Richard Florida, *The Flight of The Creative Class: New Global Competition for Talent* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007). Conditions for attracting talent in cities seem to be related to the spatial conditions for unplanned interactions, often possible thanks to a high quality of public space.

A Wakeup: Three Challenges and a Corporate Reality

The primary challenge of design research — often described as “research through design” — is reforming the way we inhabit the planet today. In architecture and urbanism, reform means spatial, material, and performative transformations of urban habitats. This reform aims to decrease material and energy consumption, transition to renewables, boost biodiversity and recover democratic practices and equitable distribution of resources for life. All this is technically doable. It has already been done partially in some countries. But, unfortunately, here in the United States, three challenging realities are keeping most of us in a state of paralysis, with a feeling of guilt that impedes us from even thinking about large-scale collective plans to address climate change.

Challenge 1:

The first challenge is neoliberalism’s hegemony, a cultural and economic system that prioritizes short-term profit for capitalists and glorifies individual endeavors that allow the powerful to get away with as much as possible. At the same time, the powerless masses, without capital, stay isolated and uncared for. In this context, “Blame the poor and glorify the wealthy” is the motto of today’s justification system¹² that talks about the value of hard and efficient work, but disregards structural inequality written in the territory.

¹² Thomas Piketty, *Capital et idéologie* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2019). The term “justification system” is described and used as main framework for social organization in different societies over time.

¹³ Odd Arne Westad, “Chapter 1: The Empire of Liberty: American Ideology and Foreign Interventions,” *The Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005). This chapter describes the role of the state in early America as to police and protect the interests of capitalists operating in domestic and international territories.

¹⁴ IABR: 2050–An Energetic Odyssey. <https://vimeo.com/199825983>. Several corporations and European countries collaborate in this mega project of wind farms in the North Sea to respond to the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Challenge 2:

The second challenge is the suspicion of government action, so-called top-down actions. This suspicion is an American cultural trait and the natural consequence of a long unilateral state action history. It favors empowered groups while often leaving behind or going against the minorities or the masses.¹³ It is trendy to install and implement small neighborhood consultations to validate the process. This is often structurally unfair but is shockingly accepted as a good practice.

Challenge 3:

The third challenge is the absence of stable, well-funded, qualified public servants at the metropolitan scale operating under the leadership of elected officials. Astonishingly, such a rich country is poorly invested in this area of research on built-environment reforms. Without public funding clearing the path to lead the way, there is no vision of how we can step away from climate deterioration. Investing federal funds in a movement such as urban labs is essential.

In this adverse threefold context, only corporate consortiums are interested in opening future economies or taking on research by design. This is especially true when governments have created legal constraints, as in the case of Europe, for energy transitions to renewables in the North Sea.¹⁴ Although positive, these corporations favor profit and have dangerous technocratic, single-use global mindsets driven by economic efficiency. Although laudable, critical examination of these

initiatives is necessary. Design research by corporations opens new markets and gives them a competitive advantage over their peers. But their findings — technological or methodological — will not typically be shared among the larger community unless a true paradigm shift makes them aware of the benefits. In addition to economics, such benefits could be for survival — through collaboration and leveling the field.

A Better Future: Investing in the Built Environment

In this context of these three societal challenges and the maneuvers of global corporations investing in new economies and technologies, academia — as the last remaining domain for free speculation — can invest time and resources to plan metropolitan reforms. Urbanism is a field that has historically been the competence of architects before the hyper-specialization of the 20th century. Architecture is one of the few remaining generalist fields. It can become the cresol of knowledge of different disciplines — in the humanities and the sciences — to respond to how to inhabit the planet. Academia has the advantage of being capable of focusing on the common good.

Some urban labs already exist embedded in universities, and despite their lack of funding, they operate with exciting findings. Broadening their scope, including more disciplines and taking responsibility for studying specific metroscares to propose a CAP can be the requisites for funding. The University of Washington Seattle (Urban Ecology Research Lab)¹⁵; Leuven University, Belgium (International Center of Urbanism — Settlements and Environments)¹⁶; Delft University



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¹⁵ Urban Ecology Research Lab, College of the Built Environment, University of Washington, <https://urbaneco.uw.edu/resources/publications/>.

¹⁶ ICoU (International Center of Urbanism-settlement and environment), <https://set.kuleuven.be/icou>.

of Technology (Global Urban Lab)¹⁷; and Tulane University-University of Virginia, Urban Lab-YRP (Yamuna River Project)¹⁸ among others, are relevant as catalysts for change in the real world. But funding for this kind of work is inconsistent because universities are becoming increasingly pressured for funding by corporatization. Funding distribution seeks immediacy in profits, and so it invests in sciences, engineering and the health industry.

Despite the current lack of funding, the design-research questions remain essential. They are concerned with the variety of investment needed for metropolitan regions to reverse climate change in the long run while adapting and bringing about new regenerative economies. Since it operates free from the lenses of immediate economic profit, academia can advance research by design unconstrained. Investing in initiatives such as urban labs is an easy way to start. A Federal Agency for the Built Environment (FABE) can be the means.

Conformism assumes that the only option for city production is the unrestrained market dynamic without well-funded scenario planning at the metropolitan scale, where significant challenges reside. Such conformism can exacerbate the critical social and ecological crises we face today. Private investments — with deserved profits — must follow, not lead the CAP drafted by urban labs at universities looking after the common good and agreed upon by society-at-large. American society should be investing CAPs designed for specific metropolises. CAPs can be new platforms for alternative regenerative economies for a better future.

¹⁷ Delft University of Technology, Global Urban Lab, <https://www.tudelft.nl/global/research/global-urban-lab>.

¹⁸ Urban Lab YRP (Yamuna River Project), directed by I. Alday & P. vir Gupta. Actar Publisher. <https://actar.com/product/yamuna-river-project/>; <https://yamunariverproject.wp.tulane.edu>.

Margarita Jover is a registered architect urbanist from the Polytechnic University of Catalonia in Barcelona, Spain. She is an associate professor of Architecture at Tulane University and the co-founder of aldayjover architecture & landscape. Before joining Tulane University, Margarita taught at the University of Virginia. She is the co-editor of the book “Ecologies of Prosperity” (ORO Editors, 2019), and “The Water Park” (ACTAR, 2008). Margarita has served as juror for honor awards in architecture such as the FAD, the Mies van der Rohe European Union Prize for Architecture, and international competitions such as the Glories Square in Barcelona and the Hainan Eco-Island in China

Founded in 1996 and based in Barcelona (Spain) and New Orleans (USA), aldayjover is a multidisciplinary research-based practice focused on innovation. The firm’s work is particularly renowned for its leadership in a new approach to the relation between cities and rivers, as well as for the integration of infrastructures into the urban and civic realm, generating “hybrid-architecture” and “hybrid-landscapes.”

aldayjover has designed the most significant recent public spaces in Barcelona (Sagrera Park — Green Diagonal), Zaragoza (Water Park, Tramway), Pamplona (Aranzadi Park) and Ibiza (Vara de Rei), together with a cultural center, theater, sports hall, infrastructural building and housing. The firm has received the European Urban Public Space Prize (2002), the FAD Prize for City and Landscape (2009), the prize for International Urban Integration ATP (2011), finalist of the International and European Landscape Architecture Biennales Prizes (2008 and 2013), the Ibero-American Architecture Biennale (2004) and has been nominated for the European Union Architecture Prize-Mies van der Rohe Award (2009).

www.aldayjover.com



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Through The Marketing Looking Glass

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Through the Marketing Looking Glass

Katie Pattison, CRTKL

Influence begins with the stewardship and shepherding of resources.

CRTKL's Katie Pattison offers a 25-year international perspective.

I have to level with you, I am not an architect! But if we are seeking to grow our influence and become better stewards as design professionals, perhaps that offers an advantage. To find out, let me take you on my personal journey through the lens of a “seasoned marketer” to explore some of what my perspective of good stewardship and influence of the built environment has included over the past 25 years.

Broadgate: Influence and Stewardship — A Case Study

As I started to contemplate the meaning of influence, it struck me how many political, economic and now, sadly, environmental landscapes I have experienced over the years in my quest to “make meaning.” I have worked on the client side for many influential and well-respected developers over the years. I first cut my teeth in real estate back in the heady days of the early 1990s at Broadgate, the 32-acre office-and-retail labyrinth nestled in London beside Liverpool Street Station. It has long been considered the architectural embodiment of the late-1980s economic “Big Bang” that followed Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s deregulation of financial markets.

To catalyze its momentum, Thatcher famously launched construction work on-site from the seat of a mechanical digger. The masterplan and initial phase of the development were designed by ARUP Associates, with the Chicago-based architects Skidmore, Owings & Merrill responsible for later additions. The result was a collage of large-scale, high-tech and postmodernist projects centered around Broadgate Circle, a travertine amphitheater overlooked by shops, restaurants and trading floors. At the time, it was seen as progress, exerting much political and economic influence. The ambitious scheme pushed the city's boundaries north and east, and as it revealed itself, did much to influence the market. Stanhope, under the visionary leadership of Sir Stuart Lipman, settled for nothing less than excellence in every aspect. He worked diligently to convene a wonderful example of public- and private-sector partnership. In its time, Broadgate was THE best place to rent space in London if you were a global bank or law firm. Its marketing suite was opulent and generous with huge scale models and glossy full-bleed brochures. The majority of the space was pre-leased through site tours and lavish cocktail parties. But the scheme also offered other, more subtle outcomes, which have further influenced current design thinking:

- The interconnectivity of the public spaces.
- The use of public art and landscaping, including sustainable living walls.
- Engaging focal points to gather “people in place.” Through its cache and innovative connective features, Broadgate made its mark, has stood the test of time and is still replicated today.

TOP: Broadgate Circle – The art of placemaking, photo by British Land Company plc
BOTTOM: 99 Bishopsgate following the IRA bombing on April 24, 1993, Broadgate Circle British Land, [BBC image](#)



Attack at The Heart of The City of London

In April 1993, the Irish Republican Party (IRA) planted a bomb in a stolen truck and detonated it outside 99 Bishopsgate in the heart of the City of London. The explosion killed one person and injured 44 more. This politically motivated attack brought genuine fear to government and office workers alike. I was approached by the developer-owner of the devastated building, Hammerson plc, to deliver a marketing and communications strategy to “change perceptions” as they salvaged the existing 26-story tower. I left Broadgate, which was now nearing successful completion, and I set to work with a striking campaign to enact a rebirth of the building and all its new technological offerings, such as Category A raised flooring, CCTV and security access systems. We ran a “Business as Usual” campaign to win back hearts and minds. Beyond the financial and commercial aspects of this project, the emotional narrative was a key component in influencing the project’s resurrection. Leading by example in their stewardship and leadership, Hammerson plc sought — in the rebuilding of 99 Bishopsgate — to have it become the metaphor of the city’s ability to “keep calm and carry on.”

Early Exposure

By the mid-’90s, I found myself in the midst of marketing the development of several mega shopping malls across the UK and Europe (some simultaneously!). The consumer-led demand for shopping, and the insatiable need for “consumption” had led to the proliferation of shopping centers in most regional towns. My campaigns had to influence from the outset, with grassroots storytelling to local councils to convince them why this was the best solution and how we, the developer, would

engage communities, stimulate the job market and be there for the long-term prosperity of the town. This was stewardship and influence in action, with authentic active engagement and celebration of the local history and ambition past, present and future.

Perspective Broadened

When I reflect through the looking glass of my career, I see that I have been fortunate to work with responsible and visionary publicly listed company landlords, people who genuinely strive to leave lasting legacies in the towns and cities they touch, and, in many cases, still own to this day. They were responding to the markets presented at the time.

In 2006, Al Gore entered my conscience with his dramatic documentary “An Inconvenient Truth.”¹ This was a pivotal moment for me. Here was global influence in action, and his words proved to be prophetic some 15 years later. My understanding of the importance of good stewardship and what that meant for individuals and institutions alike became more meaningful and urgent. I began to see developers wake up to this and look to make changes in small ways to their construction programs, with the use of photovoltaics, green roofs and even beekeeping.

But influence has become more complex in the last 10 years. The dawn of social media has been a game changer as a marketing professional. News travels faster than ever before. Citizens’ opinions matter. The people have spoken! And people have power. Multichannel voices and marketing media are now essential to those who wish to exert influence. Now, working at CRTKL, my perspective of “influence” has grown further

¹ View the trailer for the documentary, “An Inconvenient Truth”, here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CH-qO9RRchc>

with my purview across Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) and how we reach to meet and translate some of our clients most complex challenges with resilient and sustainable solutions. At countrywide or regional levels, I see different developmental and economic stages affecting the AEC industry. For example, the pace and ambition of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is seen in its Vision 2030 manifesto, in which it sets out its stewardship of the country in a post-oil era to attract tourists and embrace and support the next generations of Saudi Arabian citizens (a next generation who on average own at least three mobile phones each and where 70% of the population is under 40). The country seeks to reinvent itself in creating self-sustaining, environmentally resilient advanced communities. And I have no doubt the adoption of digital technology and their deep financial resources will fast-track their ability and get them there.

And what about the further influencing effects of the pandemic and the climate crisis to highlight and shape the future of cities? As providers and stewards of the built environment, we have an enormous role to play. Although the economic value of the real estate sector is high, its contribution to environmental and social value creation is more mixed and can lead to negative impacts. Buildings and construction account for 36% of global energy use and 39% of energy-related carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions.

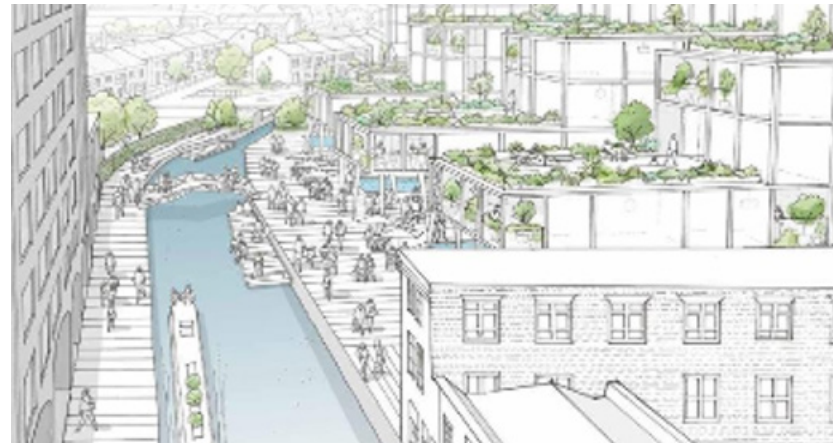
An Industry Comes Full Circle

It seems to me that NOW is the moment when it all comes together. We have come full circle. In my career to date, I have not seen a moment like this before. I have seen influence applied to drive commercial value on most projects and in

some instances, societal or environmental values also played an important part, but rarely both together. Now that the industry has finally developed a social conscience, we must be diligent and disciplined in our pursuit of upholding it. This is the opportunity.

A Call to Action

Now, we need to build external influence to inspire the industry to make informed decisions about how to invest and deliver lasting, transformative positive impact for communities worldwide. We need a road map to enhance the AEC's contribution to Environmental Sustainability Goals (ESG) value creation. Perhaps it is time to refuse to work with developers and who do not uphold those values and ambitions. Good design should yield meaningful economic AND environmental and societal outcomes. Perhaps we should never construct another building again. Instead, we should always look first to



The Transformative Power of a Mixed-Use Regeneration Scheme on a Distressed Neighborhood involving multiple stakeholders - image by CRTKL

embrace the embodied carbon in the existing structure and explore the feasibility to repurpose it in our pursuit of doing the right thing. Perhaps this is the way to influence, through our staunch defense and refusal to “tow the client’s commercial value line.”

A recent Urban Land Institute survey in Europe stated that organizational leadership is regarded as the most important driver of true ESG value creation, with 50% of those surveyed saying it was their top priority. This is where design professionals need to step in. How can we challenge and advise, support and influence these decisions at leadership level within the real estate market?

In what ways can we demonstrate that “good design” is more than “good design”? What do high quality buildings and spaces give back, in hard financial and utilitarian terms, to those who fund and use them? And how can that value be meaningfully captured so clients, investors and developers are persuaded that good design adds to the bottom line and gives their product a competitive edge?

My most significant and memorable experiences around successful stewardship and influence always happened when the time was taken to agree upon a collective strategy, when stakeholders came together and aligned in a positive way and pooled their resources. Such an integrated positive approach in my view is always the best way to influence and effect change: Multiple voices sharing the same collective and aligned message is powerful stuff indeed!

Simply put, climate neutrality, digital leadership and the built environment are inexorably intertwined. Efficient stewardship of the built environment in concert with all three factors must



“It makes no sense to think of people – and development – as somehow separate from the planet. We are embedded in nature. Neglecting this not only threatens future generations with catastrophic risks but is already blighting the lives of many today.

– JPedro Conceição, director of the Human Development Report Office at UNDP

be the future. It will be an exciting time for marketers across the industry to harness this purposeful, important and complex combination of technology, people and planet to win hearts and minds. To make a difference, surely this is the kind of global campaign we must all embrace.

“It makes no sense to think of people — and development — as somehow separate from the planet. We are embedded in nature. Neglecting this not only threatens future generations with catastrophic risks but is already blighting the lives of many today.”

— Pedro Conceição, director of the Human Development Report Office at UNDP

[Link to full article here](#)

Katie Pattison is associate principal, marketing lead EMEA and urban strategist at CRTKL. As strategic marketer with over 25 years' experience in B2B and B2C marketing and communications of real estate, Pattison's extensive knowledge has been gained from working for companies including Stanhope PLC, BP Pensions Funds and Hammerson plc and CRTKL, a global design firm. With a comprehensive understanding of construction, architecture and placemaking for retail, residential and offices, she focuses on creating a collaborative environment and passionately believes in delivering strategies and projects that have relevance for their audience and leave a legacy for the communities that live and work in them.



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Leading Relevance: Design, Innovation and the Future Possible

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Leading Relevance: Design, Innovation and the Future Possible

Ana Pinto da Silva

Co-Founder and CEO, Minka

Ana Pinto da Silva examines leadership responsibilities and meanings

Covid has forced a reckoning. The pandemic has placed a klieg-light on the intense challenges presented by climate change, health and equity, rewriting our shared global trajectory.

Since the 1st COVID-19 case was detected, we have traveled around the sun together as a global community, more closely bound than ever before. With each solar circumnavigation, we have born witness to personal and collective struggles large and small, seeking to find balance as the intensity of work, family, community and care continue their almost imperceptible yet unrelenting accretion. And while Omicron's epidemiological curves are finally – after a long, hard winter – bending towards a new, (hopefully) sweeter season, the impact of COVID, now amplified by the unconscionable war in Ukraine, continues to re-write our lives, challenging us to reconsider our choices and actions. Not just as design leaders and innovators, but as parents, partners, siblings, friends and members of our broader global human community.

Although the weight and composition of our individual challenges may differ, we have – each of us have shown up. Day after day, moment after moment – picking ourselves up, to lend a hand to others, to re-center ourselves, our families, our

colleagues and our communities, to recalibrate, to succeed, to fail and try again. In essence, to lead.

The need to reconsider design, leadership and personal responsibility in light of a rapidly changing world has become ever more urgent.

Leading

Across design disciplines, generations and geographies, we are each other's teachers. Each of us—regardless of our age, creative discipline, geography, or practice area—is a critical part of our design innovation ecosystem. A reconsideration of leadership within the unique context of design is essential as we prepare to face the challenges ahead, seeking to create the reimagined infrastructure of innovation the world requires to bring forth the full promise of the 21st century.

The subject of leadership is vast.

An Amazon search for leadership books returns over 70,000 entries on subjects as varied as “Savage Leadership” and “Servant Leadership”. In contrast, a Google image search on the same topic results in a homogeneity of male-oriented corporate imagery that immediately invite challenge and debate, inviting re-evaluation of fundamental questions:

- What is leadership?
- How is leadership defined?
- Who leads?
- What is the unique responsibility of leaders in a rapidly changing world?

Opinions abound. According to management guru Peter Drucker, *“The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers.”*

Leadership expert John C. Maxwell agrees. *“Remove for a moment the moral issues behind it, and there is only one definition: Leadership is the ability to obtain followers. To paraphrase a proverb...If you think you are leading, and no one is following, you are only taking a walk.”*

Tom Robbins offers a contrasting view.

“Everyone can be a leader. Leadership is not a zero-sum equation. When one person harnesses their powers to lead, it strengthens the leadership opportunities of others, rather than diminishing them. That’s because the ultimate definition of leadership is empowering others to become effective leaders as well.”

Who is right? Which definition prevails? Is leadership exceptional or common? Does leadership require followers, or can one person lead alone?

Is there a shared definition? [Warren Bennis](#) and [Robert J. Thomas](#), authors of HBR’s seminal paper [“The Crucibles of Leadership”](#) suggest these:

- The ability to engage others in shared meaning.
- A distinctive and compelling voice.
- A sense of integrity (including a strong set of values).
- And finally, “adaptive capacity” — “an almost magical ability to transcend adversity, with all its attendant stresses, and to emerge stronger than before.”



A powerful alchemy occurs when we connect leadership to relevance to responsibility. We travel. We go. We illuminate. We clarify. We reveal. We built bonds forged on trust. We face challenges. We learn. We change. We grow. We become something anew. Stronger. Together.

As varied as these definitions are, almost all are predicated on the notion of leader first, with followers behind. We often think of leaders and the act of leadership as grand moments performed by almost super-human individuals, captured and codified in a series of magnificent, courageous gestures.

Examples? General Washington crossing the Delaware. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the March on Washington. Neil Armstrong and his first steps on the Moon. Or even as Michael Douglas as Gordon Gekko in the movie *Wall Street*, exemplifying the power of charismatic, positional leadership even at its most amoral.

Personal Leadership

What is less understood are the quieter, more personal – and perhaps more powerful – aspects of leadership. Moments likely not captured in a photo or memorialized in a painting. Leadership often happens within moments of profound privacy, moments unseen and unsung by others. Moments of care and courage. Of tenderness in the face of hard lessons. Of humility and the often painful arc of true learning.

Moments alone when we confront the chasms of misunderstanding we have not yet addressed, and making the often difficult choice to confront ourselves and our fears -- and for once -- to face what we do not know, opening and decentering ourselves as we move towards learning and growth, finding new awareness and new sources of strength that invite us into vulnerability and towards courage, as we emerge forward into new landscapes of meaning and opportunity.

Leadership can be most powerfully expressed in the unsung moments of our lives. A parent struggling to learn how to calm a toddler in full meltdown, leaning in with compassion to

understand the fundamental heartbreak of a broken cookie or a lost toy and easing tears towards solution and relief. A sister bringing family together in a moment of crisis to map a path forward to help an older parent in need. A friend or colleague showing up to care, to advocate or even to confront as bias makes its all too often unchecked journey across lives, families and communities, undermining the power we all possess to contribute and lead. In its quietest, most fundamental moments, leadership is personal.

To better understand the connection between our personal growth as people and our ability to lead, especially within the context of future-forward design, I reached out to my design community via LinkedIn. Leaders across design disciplines, backgrounds and experiences shared their heartfelt views:

- + *“I’ve found that leadership is about focus, attention and service. Focus is how we can get things done. Without focus, there’s no progress. Attention is the rarest and most precious resource, and giving attention, paying attention is what makes or breaks teams, communities, products, customers and cultures. Attention is a building block of love. Service is always knowing that you’re there to serve the greater purpose, enable, clear the path, engage in the most meaningful way.”* – **Seda Evis, VP Strategy, Adjunct Professor at USD, Designer-in-Residence at UCSD Design Lab.**
- + *“Leadership isn’t about who’s the loudest in the room (unfortunately I’ve seen this), it’s about who facilitating the best in people to come out. A leader is a facilitator in many ways!”* – **Isha Hans, Research Driven Designer focused on Privacy for IoT environments at CMU.**
- + *“The leaders I admire most have a love of truth, focus and*

compassion. They are truth seekers and truth sayers, who others trust to do both. They have a focus that helps sift through to what matters most and keep visions alive. And, they value and motivate people which makes them lead with compassion.” – **Susan Motte, Principal Director, Product Planner at Chewy, Ex-Amazon Head of Research for Amazon Glow**

- + *“Leadership is the act of inspiring and guiding others to achieve more than they thought possible.”* – **Rob Haitani, Sr UX Design Manager, Alexa Experiences at Amazon**
- + *“A leader is a strategist with clarity of the mission, a storyteller who can capture the imagination of each individual team member, is invisible to enable others to become great, holds truth to overcome divisiveness, looks for the goodness before judgment, and finds beautiful mistakes to learn from.”* – **Joseph Laurino, Lead Creative Technologist, Lowe’s Innovation Labs**
- + and finally, according to **Michael Huang, Founder and Managing Director at Milli** *“Leadership is recognizing my own position of power and learning how to move through every moment without an ego or a playbook. Leadership has simply become integrated with who I am and how to treat others - especially in the context of power and privilege.”*

Where does this leave us? Understanding where we sit within this rich sea of meaning provides a first step towards purposeful navigation. An exploration of first principles feels germane.



What we acknowledge and what we do not acknowledge throughout the design process reflects our broader values – good, bad and indifferent. A recognized value is expressed. An unrecognized value is suppressed.

Defining Leadership

What is leadership? Despite the explosive interest in leadership and leadership principles in our modern world, our understanding of the term leadership is very recent.

Emerging at the advent of the industrial revolution in the early 1820's, the idea of a leader as the brilliant and courageous person (ok, man...) astride an organizational pyramid, commanding troops/workers/followers, emerges in lock step with the rapidly evolving technological infrastructure of the 19th and 20th centuries, giving shape to the resulting world of work that has defined our lives ever since.

The connection between change, innovation, opportunity and leadership belies a deeper etymological intent. If we swim upstream just a little bit further to unpack this genealogical etymology, a generative set of understandings begins to emerge.

The word leadership is rooted in the word “to lead”, which stems from the Old English *lēad* (“lead”), and the Proto-Germanic **laudan* (“lead”). Across its rich Northern European etymology – whether in Irish, Swedish, Lithuanian or Dutch, the word lead is connected to the concept of a sounding line or plum-line.

But as we continue our etymological journey further towards the Proto-Indo-European root word, to lead means “to flow”. Chasing upstream to find the source of this rich etymological stream, the word lead emerges from the simplest of concepts: to go, to travel.

If we consider these intertwined etymologies as an invitation to first principles, then to lead is to be guided forth by the inherent trueness of a sounding line, it is the moment of release as we give in to the truth of our internal “flow”, it is the moment we step forward, taking the first uncertain, yet determined steps in a journey away from the known towards the emergence of a new reality. This meaning is not predicated on having people follow. Nor is it anchored in the notion of being “first”. It simply means to be urged forward, “To Go”. To travel. To grow.

The words Relevance and Responsibility are similarly fascinating.

Relevance. The English word “relevant” comes from the Latin word “levo”, which means to lighten, to mitigate, to elevate, to lift up, to ease, to lessen, to comfort. And for those of you who took ballet in your youth, is beautifully expressed in the French ballet position relevé.

Responsibility. The English word responsible comes from the Latin word “spondeo”, meaning with reference to. It means to guarantee, to promise for another, to become security for a person, to marry, to pledge, contract or vow. In essence, “spondeo” means to become bound through trust and trust worthiness. And like the Proto-European Root word of Lead, it also means to re-sound, to re-echo, to plumb an unknown depth and report back accurately, even in the face of a difficult truth.

What can we make of all this? A powerful alchemy occurs when we connect leadership to relevance to responsibility. We travel. We go. We illuminate. We clarify. We reveal. We built bonds forged on trust. We face challenges. We learn. We change. We grow. We become something anew. Stronger. Together.

Given all this, how then do we ground leadership in the rough and tumble of our very real lives as designers today?

The Power of Design

Designers are a critical part of the world’s imaginative engine, marking and celebrating even the most mundane moments of the human endeavor. The task of design is to imagine the future, being both parent and mid-wife to ideas and visions large and small. Designers help frame lenses through which we understand and communicate who we are and how we relate



We have tremendous access. We have remarkable privilege. Our individual and collective choices matter.

to each other and our world – as individuals, as tribes, and as communities.

As designers, we work at the invitation of our clients. In partnership with them, our work channels the hopes, dreams and aspirations of our society writ large, translating them into built forms, tangible objects, digital tools and experiences. What we acknowledge and what we do not acknowledge throughout the design process reflects our broader values — good, bad and indifferent. A recognized value is expressed. An unrecognized value is suppressed. It is within this imperfect vision that we give shape to our aspirations, creating landscapes of opportunity that are accessible to some, yet out of reach for others.

The Coronavirus Pandemic puts us on a direct collision course with our very notion of design, forcing a reflective stillness upon

us while accelerating longstanding trends with a whiplash akin to a car wreck. The pandemic demands a reckoning, inviting us to reassess our accomplishments as a collective design innovation community, shining light on what we have achieved, but also making plain what we have missed and who we have failed to serve.

In this moment of generative reckoning, we are challenged to re-imagine new, hybrid places of living, learning and becoming, reconnecting more vividly with each other and the natural world around us, posing new questions:

- How will we reframe community in the post-pandemic era?
- How will we address the ongoing challenges presented by climate change?
- How will we reconnect people to each other and to the natural world that surrounds us?
- How might we make access to the power of design universal, reimaging our spaces and places to create more equitable, accessible and inclusive communities for all?

The most powerful questions are simple. They are direct. Try as we might, we cannot turn away from the challenges they pose. At its most fundamental level, a question does more than demand an answer. A question defines a journey. One from which we cannot return. In the act of seeking the answer, we are changed.

Our quest to find the answers to these questions will not be simple. To pursue them with honesty and valor will require the full strength of our vulnerability, the full power of our courage,

the full force of our collaboration and our true willingness to lead and learn, compelling us to ask one further question.

How Will We Lead?

Our collective design community punches far above its weight, shaping the experiences of billions of people across the globe. And yet, in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, *“Through our scientific and technological genius, we have made of this world a neighborhood and yet we have not had the ethical commitment to make of it a brotherhood.”*

We have tremendous access. We have remarkable privilege. Our individual and collective choices matter.

We are often more comfortable thinking about the built environment as a product of design, and less comfortable thinking about design as a cultural outcome – a series of decisions and actions that, intentionally or no, reflect the mores and values of our times.

- We must ask ourselves, who is in the room and who is missing?
- Who does our work privilege and who is left behind?
- Do we have the courage to decolonize design, radically expanding access to the tools and economic ecosystems of invention and creativity?
- Can we work from the premise that every life has equal value, extending this frame to include all life, not just human life, imagining technological pathways that will deliver our planet 7 generations forward to the next generation and beyond?

- Instead of seeking salvation from a singular leader, can we become instead a community of leaders, bound by the deep belief that together we stand stronger than we do apart?

Bringing this new future forward will require grit, determination and resolve.

It will require empathy.

It will require care.

It will require true leadership, in all its diversity.

It will require that where we have a wishbone, the backbone of our dreams is stronger still.

Can we bring this future forward?

If we can dream it, we can deliver it.

By Leading. **Together.**

Minka co-founder and CEO Ana Pinto da Silva drives transformational change at the intersection of housing, community and technology, leading with purpose, meaning & connection to create products that matter, defining new landscapes of opportunity for people world-wide with a special focus low/ mid-income older adults and the creation of the intergenerational communities that help them thrive.

Ana is deeply committed to building equitable, diverse and inclusive communities of practice dedicated to courageous, future-forward innovation. She currently serves as Innovator in Residence at Iowa State University, is the founding co-chair of the Harvard GSD Impact Global Speaker Series and is the founder of the Seattle Pecha Kucha speaker series, one of the longest running PK city series in the world. She currently serves on the board of directors for the Harvard GSD Masters in Design Engineering program, the Harvard GSD Alumni Council, and Leadership Tomorrow. Ana has served on the Board of Directors for 4Culture and Artist Trust, was past board Vice-President for Design In Public and has been an adviser to the Seattle Waterfront Design Oversight Committee.



Q1 INFLUENCE: STEWARDSHIP

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Building Stewardship

Marianne McKenna

Founding Partner, KPMB Architects

Winner of the DI Lifetime Achievement Award, KPMB's Marianne McKenna discusses the stewardship of architecture

DesignIntelligence (DI): Your firm's work visibly connects to the idea of stewardship. How did that idea become integral to KPMB's work?

Marianne McKenna (MM): The connection between stewardship and architecture was in the zeitgeist of my experience, as well as my partners', well before we founded KPMB. My first encounter with the concept of stewardship came from a meeting early in my career with Phyllis Lambert, architect, patron of architecture and founder of the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA). In her inimitable straightforward style, Phyllis was protesting the destruction of heritage architecture across Canada.¹ She challenged the modernist-era belief that progress was hindered by history, that preservation guidelines limited the imaginative reuse of heritage buildings and were too costly. For her, the concept of stewardship was focused on the retention of heritage buildings, and she deplored the practice of demolishing them to accommodate expedient replacements — inferior to the ones they replaced. Her engagement in the Seagrams Building, for example, highlighted the obligation of the corporation to the citizens of a city beyond the workplace.

¹ National Trust of Canada reports: Over the past 30 years, Canada has lost 23% of its historic building stock in urban areas and 21% in rural areas. This rate of destruction is disturbing both in terms of lost heritage and increased environmental waste.

While Canada's architectural heritage was being erased in the grip of the feverish modernist agenda of "urban renewal" in the name of progress, Jack Diamond and Barton Myers arrived from Philadelphia and formed a practice in Toronto. They were the first architects in Toronto to use contemporary architecture to strategically protest the demolition of heritage by marrying old and new architecture. Their seminal project was York Square (1969). Around the same time, Jane Jacobs, author of "The Death and Life of Great American Cities" (1961), also made Toronto her new home. This critical collection of new urban thinkers and designers fleeing the U.S. political climate launched an inspirational movement to revalue and preserve heritage buildings and places. It was a call to the profession to wake up and show up as stewards and good ancestors of the future, and it was what drew me to work for Barton. This is where I met my future partners, Bruce Kuwabara, Thomas Payne and Shirley Blumberg, and where the concept of stewardship and architecture took root.

One could say every project with Barton was a project of stewardship: retaining and adding to the original brick barrel house of the Seagram Distillery created the Seagram Museum, infill at the Dundas/Sherbourne project allowed retention of old housing stock while adding new units, and the reimagining of a cast-iron building on 23rd Street in New York City as the Hasbro Showrooms created a wonderfully unique venue.

When Barton decided to move his practice to Los Angeles, we formed what is now KPMB Architects. Barton entrusted us with the stewardship of two major projects: the Art Gallery of Ontario Stage III Expansion and Woodsworth College at the University of Toronto. Both involved the restoration and adaptive reuse of existing buildings of different eras.



Our work in this space of restoration and adaptive reuse was unusual for the time and it led to our first signature KPMB projects, an office building for Tudhope Associates (1989), King James Place (1992), and the Design Exchange (1994). In our youthful enthusiasm, we spoke of “building for all time,” carrying over many of the values of stewardship from our work with Barton.

DI: What does the term “stewardship” mean in your practice at KPMB? How might that manifest itself in firm systems such as design, process, recruiting, policies, culture, rewards and incentives? Do your clarity of purpose and vision differentiate your firm and its processes?

MM: From the start, we established personal and long-range goals to guide the evolution of our practice. We set our standards very high to challenge and motivate other architects, not just the people in our practice. Looking back, without articulating it, we did understand that we were stewards of the future of architecture, that the past and present inform the future and that it is not just about buildings, but it is about people.

Our form of stewardship has continued over 35 years — from our training with Barton Myers, who himself had trained with Louis Kahn, to our own practice, through mentoring in design excellence. We have always been thoughtful about the people we invite to join us in collaborative adventures to create meaningful architecture. There are roughly 50 people who have been with the firm for at least two decades and a core group from the early years. Their design intelligence and mastery of the medium of architecture is a great source of knowledge and wisdom from which we continuously draw and literally build on. We work hard to cultivate the next generation and carry on the ethos of stewardship. In fact, many of the young architects who worked

with us in the early years have gone on to become part of the next generation of Toronto’s best firms.

In 2020, we expanded the leadership of KPMB with seven new partners as an extension of our legacy practice. The pandemic created the opportunity to pause and review our values with our new partners and senior leadership and to share these publicly. We felt this was critical, especially in a fast-track market where most buildings go from BIM to built. We advocate for the time to pay attention to detail, create mockups to understand the impact of scale and proportion, and insist on providing on-site presence of the design team during construction — all factors in our ability to deliver excellence.

Manifesting Stewardship: Design and Process

DI: Can you share some examples?

MM: Value is embedded in many places in a building: in the logic of strong plans, in creating handsome gathering spaces that engage community, in the importance of choreographing movement within a building and positioning staircases to act as social interlocutors, in using quality materials thoughtfully to assure durability and, above all, in rich and often quirky details that make buildings beloved.



It’s time for architecture to become a movement towards something again.



Projects like the Royal Conservatory (2009) or, most recently, the revitalization of Massey Hall (2021), align perfectly with stewardship. Both projects preserve beloved heritage buildings in our city and include strategic and discrete contemporary additions that animate the public realm and enrich the offering of live music, making it possible to touch more lives.

Cielo at 300 Bloor Street West is an example of a creative development that involves a dramatic reimagining of a heritage property. The project — supported by the Bloor Street United Church community and local developer Collecdev — offers a new model for reimagining beautiful but underutilized churches and reinvigorating a community with new energy. The sanctuary of the heritage church is retained and additional space is added for community outreach programs. New office space is built as part of the redevelopment and, importantly, owned by the church to ensure a revenue stream in perpetuity. A condominium tower is built on the site with parking below-grade.

This is a unique proposal and one that other churches are looking to adopt. So many congregations are looking to their next chapter, and the evolution of their values, as they transition from an emphasis on worship towards social responsibility in the face of social, economic, and environmental issues in their communities.

Stewardship of architectural ideas, from the translation and interpretation of the client's original vision into a narrative or generative sketch, is carried forward by a talented project team through every stage of the architectural process, iterated and reiterated, and then put into the layering of construction that begins with foundations and structure through to final materials. We begin at the interview and (reluctantly) step off when a building is turned over for use.

We also like to stay in touch with our former clients, checking back with them to see how the building is functioning, always looking for ways to learn and improve.

Aligning Values

DI: How are you aligning these values with new generations of staff and clients?

MM: Our people are our greatest resource. Historically, it was the quality of the work that attracted talent to our firm, but increasingly it is our purpose-driven work — projects that focus on social issues and environmental sustainability. As the next generation challenges the profession, the old ways of doing and designing are crumbling by default. The younger generations are saying that architecture is at risk of becoming mechanistic — too much about time, speed, efficiency, money, profit. It's time for architecture to become a movement towards something again. This is where KPMB is and where we can lead.

We are committed to working with clients who share our values, on residential projects that integrate affordable units, to extending accessibility in all its forms — not only to meet code requirements — and to making sustainable projects. True sustainability includes not only environmental factors but also social and economic ones. We respond to clients who articulate 'purpose' and have developed pro-formas that ensure long-term viability.

Our practice is differentiated by the culture it embodies, even as we actively evolve it. We are a culture of individuals with deep capability, experience and commitment to the art of architecture and its potential to advance a better world. It is all about stewardship — of ideas and of people who cherish working at the level to which we hold ourselves individually and collectively accountable.

DI: To be good stewards seems integral with the idea of choice and decision-making — what you say yes to and, perhaps more importantly, what you say no to. For example, you shared a recent RFP you declined because it felt like a cattle call — some 35 well-known firms were invited to propose. To be able to be selective in the work you take on demands success in other areas.

MM: We have always respected and treated every project and client as unique and part of a larger ecosystem of society. Saying no is challenging, but we work in many different sectors, so if one sector experiences a downturn, we look to others to sustain the practice. Adaptation to climate change has created a need to redesign and retrofit older buildings to reduce energy consumption. As Einstein said, you can't solve the problem with the same thinking that created it. Ultimately, when choosing what work to pursue, we always return to our core values and look for projects that provide opportunities for sustainability and equity. We have amazing, forward-thinking clients who are asking us to shift paradigms for their institutions, and we are inspired to help them realize these aspirations.

Purpose and Placekeeping

DI: The idea that we become what we do has always been an interesting notion in architecture, since without clients who need help, we have no work. How purposeful have you been in this?

MM: From day one we committed to cultivating a strong sense of community in all our projects, as well as to the art of architecture. In this context, it resonates at the level of stewardship, and I believe this is who we are today. It is more relevant than ever, with some updates to be more articulate about attitudes to advancing EDI through design and reducing harm to the earth.

We have always believed in a people-centric response to the urban context, with the use of infill to increase density, enriching the fabric of the city through new/old juxtapositions, creating flexible envelopes to open up architecture in our too-short summers (and now to offer fresh air year-round), and creating great rooms within buildings to gather in a sense of community during long winters. These architectural roots represent who we are, even as we evolve to adapt to the forces of change.

Prior to the pandemic, we were addressing the issues of decolonization, EDI and climate justice, but the social and economic inequities that were further exposed during these last two years have accelerated our learning curve towards greater literacy in these spaces. EDI is now being woven into all aspects of our practice and will be manifest in the built work.

In Canada, we are all engaged in the process of learning, working closely with Indigenous architects and consultants as integrated members of our design teams. For example, KPMB, in association with Hindle Architects and Tawaw was recently awarded the commission to design and revitalize Arts Commons in Calgary, the third largest performing arts center in North America and Canada's largest. The client has made breaking down barriers and reaching out to the diversity of all cultures part of its core mandate and the RFP asked us to incorporate "Indigenous ways of knowing." We teamed up with Tawaw Partner Wanda Dalla Costa, Canada's first Indigenous female architect, who inspired us with concepts of "place-keeping," concerned with keeping memories of the local alive and connecting to local understanding, and "place-knowing," a practice in which traditional knowledge informs communities and gives meaning to the cultural landscape. Both of these principles are fully aligned with stewardship. Earth-centric design, valuing and honoring all living things, is fundamental to sustainabili-

ty in its broadest definition, and we are actively incorporating these shared values into the Arts Commons Transformation (ACT Calgary) project, now in concept design.

Caring

DI: Caring for buildings over time is an aspect of stewardship. You mentioned building into your contract the requirement of the client coming back to you for any building modifications over five years after its completion. What compels that idea?

MM: Contractually we limit our service as architects to the completed building, but, in fact, extending beyond the warranty period, with appropriate fees, should be essential to the stewardship of a successful project. Many of our clients do come back to us to continue to work with them as their world changes, to add to the original vision with new program elements and landscape.

At the beginning of our practice, we won the international design competition for Kitchener City Hall and were able to negotiate into the contract that our firm would be guaranteed any modifications to the fabric of the building for a five-year period. (I had heard that Moshe Safdie had done this and was impressed by it.) We were so young, and this was such an important project for us — to represent the ideal of democracy and to extend outreach to people to participate in the most prominent building in the fast-growing Kitchener community. I was concerned that we be allowed to follow the project through its break-in period. Right off the bat, we were asked to change the use of a small, visible element on the ground floor. Who better to do this work than the original architects?

The other part of this question relates to the stewardship of iconic or signature works of architecture by late master architects, particularly of beloved, cherished buildings. In past decades, KPMB has been selected to not only add to but also to upgrade and improve the performance of many modernist-era buildings while respecting their original vision. Paul Hawken in his new book “Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation” calls for a “massive worldwide building upgrade” to net-zero emissions. This would be wonderful, and to do so with beautiful results would be even better, particularly for architecturally distinctive buildings exemplary of a specific period in history.

Robertson Hall (1965) at Princeton University, led by my partners, is an example of a full update of the work of a signature architect. In that instance, our team got completely into the Minoru Yamasaki mindset. We did not build over it or “mark” it with a new style or expression but aligned the essence of KPMB’s style to respect, respond to and prioritize quality compatibly with the original building.

Our assignment at Orchestra Hall in downtown Minneapolis was to add patron amenities to the signature hall by architects Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer (1974). The expansion of the lobbies included a transformation from opacity to transparency, with expanded use and animation of the precinct. Driven by the expanded facilities, revenue increased by 75%. The new pavilion, or City Room, is an extension of the new lobbies that and it creates an ensemble within the public realm, blurring the demarcation of the Hall and the newly restored Peavey Plaza.

Narrative

DI: How do you leverage the idea of narrative — the passage of time and the telling of stories in your buildings?

MM: We always begin with a narrative, imagining how the vision of a client can be realized in the building form. We start with stories about strengthening institutions, reimagining how a building can become more transparent and magnetic within its context, and how it might reach out to the community through gestures that welcome diverse communities.

We tell stories of past projects to show how architecture is in the service of a broader vision. We were awarded a commission to create a master plan and double the size of the Brearley School in New York, retaining its heritage building on Manhattan’s East River and designing a new building up the block. This coincided with a moment of global awakening with Malala Yousafzai being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and Malala and Emma Watson speaking to the United Nations advocating for women and girls. Brearley’s vision and purpose were clearly stated: “to challenge girls of adventurous intellect and diverse backgrounds to think critically and creatively and prepare them for principled engagement in the world.” My dream assignment. Now complete, the new building has been praised by the school for exceeding the expectations of every challenge: accommodating an expanded program, fitting into a constrained urban site and creating a campus that allows girls to attend K-12 with updated facilities that support the school’s academic, social and sports programs.

Our narratives describe breaking down the barriers to inclusivity no matter what the program. We do this with architecture that is welcoming, through its spatial quality and inclusive programming. Our clients, the leaders of publicly accessible cultural and academic institutions, ask us to do this. Stewardship of ideas is critical. Our clients tell us that we deliver what we promise in our original interview — an all too rare outcome.

Economics

DI: How can we redirect the economics of design fees and profitability to allow focus on stewardship?

MM: We need to advocate for respectful fees. The demands of the project process have grown exponentially. Practice is stretched thin to provide the service levels that support design excellence. Add to this the continuous upgrades to software and systems and the time to think through the complex challenges of delivering high-quality architecture with adaptable, durable, inspired spaces, to last “for all time” and you have many dimensions.

As architects we must speak to the accumulated value of the design, beyond the fee, of experience and wisdom over time. Architecture has the longest timeline of all art forms. There is a famous anecdotal story about a woman meeting Picasso in a café. She asks him for a drawing, and he creates one right there on a napkin. When she asks him how much, he tells her 40,000 francs. She protests, “But it only took you 30 seconds to draw that!” He says, “Madam, it took me a lifetime.”

DI: Being better stewards of our buildings is a higher objective, but it has multiple objects or motives. For example, doing it for self-interest (to ensure no one comes after and messes up “our” design); doing it to ensure follow-on services and fees over time to lock in continuing revenue (“our ongoing revenues”); or doing it for our client’s best interest (updating their facility as people, work and the world change over time); for society at large; and other reasons.



MM: We are emerging from the pandemic into a world with a new reality: Some will resist it, some will embrace it. In the last two years, we faced a reckoning with systemic racism in the form of the George Floyd tragedy in 2020 and the discovery a year later of the unmarked graves of children in Residential Schools across Canada. The restrictions and social isolation exposed the disparity between the poor and wealthy, and the other pandemic, the challenges in mental health.

KPMB's motivation expanded to use architecture to advance social and environmental causes. This touches on all dimensions of the practice. We realized we are responsible for the well-being of the 120+ people who work at KPMB, but also for all the people they are responsible for — as well as the specialists who collaborate with us on contracts. That's more than 500 people. A priority was to sustain the economy of the studio and keep everyone employed. We reached out to every person, from student to leadership, and made sure they were supported emotionally and technically. Videoconferencing tools allowed us to “see” ourselves and our community as an ecosystem. We are all connected and can nourish each other through empowerment, kindness, compassion and appreciation.

Serving our clients' best interests and aligning design with the forces of change has always been our main motivation, along with providing a supportive culture of work for all the people on our team at KPMB. I go back to the Brearley School in New York as an example, it has it all: empowering women, responding to climate change and urban restoration. We were highly motivated when we were invited to compete for the project back in 2014, at a time when the voices of young women were rising, and because this project was really about the stewardship of young women to become future leaders. As the project evolved,

we were also able to influence the sustainable design agenda and help them think about planning for a net-zero campus in the future.

As it happened, the design was also eerily prescient, as Brearley was one of the few schools in its network of peer schools that remained open and functional during the pandemic, with 800 people attending daily and staying healthy. The well-proportioned classrooms, fresh air, efficient filtration systems, operable windows, wide hallways and interconnecting stairs facilitated COVID-19 protocols.

Our core objective and motivation are the sheer love of architecture and being part of something better and bigger than ourselves. Since every client is different, we have the opportunity to constantly rethink everything and find ways to put architecture into the service of making a better and more beautiful, sustainable world. Every new opportunity is exciting.

Legacy

DI: Look into the future to imagine the benefits of stewardship to your firm in 10 years. What key forces contributed to your success?

MM: In 10 years, I am optimistic we will look back at this incredible and fast-paced time of early 21st century culture and be grateful for the changes we made. KPMB will be recognized as allies of building a new kind of society through the vehicle of architecture. The KPMB brand, as a legacy practice, will be recognized and sought after for design excellence, innovation and our commitment to act as stewards of the future. I am optimistic because we are planting the seeds for change now and many things are already taking root:

- For the past few years, we have been collaborating with more Indigenous architects and consultants to indigenize our institutions. This group currently includes Wanda Dalla Costa, TAWAW (ACT); Georgina Riel, Riel Cultural Consulting (Agnes Etherington Art Gallery); Lorraine Whitman, Elder and President of the Native Women's Association of Canada, and Mi'kmaq Artist Jordan Bennett (Art Gallery of Nova Scotia); and Brian Porter and Matthew Hickey from Two Row Architect on a series of projects. We are also mentored by distinguished Elders that include John Beaucage, Gerald McMaster, and others. It's happening, and fast. Wanda Dalla Costa recently told me, "There is no culture in the world that has undergone more change in such a short time than in the Indigenous people of North America."
- The isolation, fear and uncertainty of the pandemic years have taken a toll on mental health. This year, we are advancing projects such as the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) Research Centre. Ten years from now, the center will be revolutionizing the understanding of the brain and implementing new treatments for mental illness.
- The Revitalization of Massey Hall in Toronto and the Jenny Belzberg Theatre at Banff Centre for Arts & Creativity, which both opened in 2021, are precisely designed for the future. In 10 years, I am sure they will be the sites of creative innovation that bring inspiration to diverse audiences and communities, as well as supporting new artistic expression.
- The work we are doing right now to advance equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), particularly in race literacy and understanding the crucial role our profession plays in anti-racism, will have an impact on moving the needle toward inclusivity. In 2032, there will be a healthy balance of women and people of color leading practices and projects.

DI: Recently, RFPs have put a five-year limit on project experience. How does this support an ethos of stewardship if deep experience and the performance of buildings older than five years are considered irrelevant?

MM: The five-year window is deeply concerning because it perpetuates short-term thinking and prioritizes efficiency over innovation and creativity. On average, it takes five years for a building, or a major interiors project, to be born into the world, from design to completion of construction, and one to two years to "tune" the building to perform as envisioned.

Our ACT Calgary project was the first and only recent RFP that asked for an example of a 20-year project. Luckily, we had the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, which opened in 2000. It was amazing to share that the theater was thriving (until the pandemic), and the spaces that were designed to prioritize flexibility were supporting entirely new and previously unimagined programs to advance equity among Chicago's diverse communities.



Architecture is more than a
professional pursuit or a business.
Architecture is a gift to the future.

We are fortunate to have been selected for the ACT project — for a client who, along with their partners, including the city of Calgary, are committed to putting architecture, urban conservation and planning into the service of ensuring a vibrant future for the city.

The Long View

DI: Any final perspectives?

MM: Almost 60 years ago, Eric Arthur wrote “Toronto, No Mean City.” It was a call to honor architectural history to shape a better future. I am proud of the work KPMB has contributed to the art of architecture in our city, and now, in many cities across Canada and in the USA. Yet, when it comes to architecture and urban planning in our time, I would like to see the concept of stewardship highlighted as a methodology to achieve EDI and solve climate change. We need to think beyond a 25-year lifespan for buildings, which is the current mindset, and start designing for 100+ years.

Jonas Salk, the inventor of the polio vaccine and co-founder of the DFC, summed up his philosophy of life in one question: “Are we being good ancestors?” Roman Kraznic cites him on the cover of his book, “The Good Ancestor” and proceeds to share six practical ways to retrain our brains to think of the long view.

The wisdom of Indigenous people who consider everything in deep time — seven generations past and seven generations future—is the medicine to treat the short-term gains and unlimited-growth virus threatening our planet and the future. We need to inject this thinking into how we think about the stewardship of architecture.

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Architecture is a gift to the future.

Marianne McKenna is a founding partner at KPMB Architects and the recent winner of the Design Futures Council’s Lifetime Achievement Award. Born in Montreal and educated at Swarthmore College and Yale University, she is an officer of the Order of Canada for designing “architecture that enriches the public experience.” She sits on the International Advisory Board for the McEwen School of Architecture at Laurentian University.

OBSERVATIONS

“

Stewardship is leaving a system better than you found it.”

- Michael Barber

“

Give what you have. To someone, it may be better than you dare to think.”

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“

The greatest lesson you might ever learn in this life is this: It is not about you.”

- Shannon L. Alder

“

We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give.”

- Winston Churchill

“

The earth will not continue to offer its harvest, except with faithful stewardship. We cannot say we love the land and then take steps to destroy it for use by future generations.”

- Pope John Paul II

“

No settled family or community has ever called its home place an “environment”... “biocentric” or “anthropocentric.” None has ever thought of its connection to its home place as “ecological,” deep or shallow... the real name of our connection to this everywhere different and differently named earth is “work.” We are connected by work even to the places where we don’t work, for all places are connected ...we cannot exempt one place from our ruin of another.”

- Wendell Berry

“

We have become, by the power of a glorious evolutionary accident called intelligence, the stewards of life’s continuity on earth. We did not ask for this role, but we cannot abjure it. We may not be suited to it, but here we are.”

- Stephen Jay Gould, *The Flamingo’s Smile: Reflections in Natural History*



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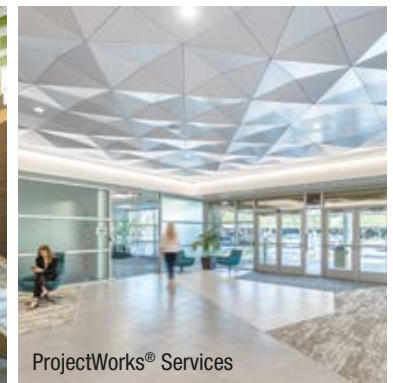
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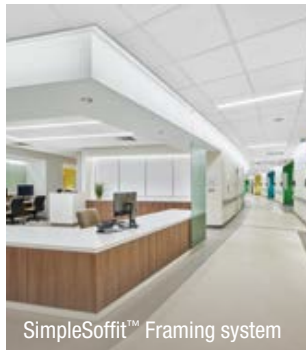
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