

Celebrating 25 Years

THIS ISSUE OF *BLUEPRINTS* GOES TO PRESS 25 years almost to the day after an act of the U.S. Congress formally established the National Building Museum in December 1980 (though at the time, the entity was still known as the Committee for a National Museum of the Building Arts). That milestone represented the end of a long campaign by an ambitious and intrepid group of individuals who worked tirelessly toward the creation of such an organization. At the same time, it was a momentous beginning, marking the birth of an entirely new kind of cultural institution.

As stated in the very first issue of *Blueprints*, published in the summer of 1981, “The ultimate goal of the Museum’s program is to encourage the public to take part in the ongoing debate over what relationship our society should establish between the built and natural environments.” Such a goal implied a vision for an organization that was simultaneously scholarly and accessible to a broad audience, serving as both an intellectual “home” for the design and building industries and a very public forum for discussion and exchange of information. It also suggested an unprecedented interdisciplinary approach to the institution’s organization, mission, and programming, since the examination of all aspects of the “built and natural environments” would inevitably involve an astonishingly broad spectrum of specific fields and topics. As I look back on the Museum’s history so far, I think the institution has done a remarkably good job of remaining true to these fundamental goals, and in the process, has greatly advanced the general level of understanding of, and appreciation for, the value of good design and planning.

In October 1985, after several years of renovations to the former Pension Building, which had been designated by Congress to house the new, private institution, the National Building Museum officially opened to the public. There were four inaugural exhibitions: one called *Building a National Image: Architectural Drawings for the American Democracy*, another about the Brooklyn Bridge, another about master metalworker Samuel Yellin, and finally one about the Museum’s own historic landmark structure. The diverse subject matter of these initial shows reflected very well the range of issues that the Museum was committed to addressing. Early education programs, including the first Construction Watch Tours, hands-on activities for children, and lectures by architectural photographers, historians, and others, augmented the breadth of the Museum’s offerings.

Since those auspicious beginnings, the Museum has presented nearly 170 exhibitions and thousands of education programs, and has welcomed more than four million visitors. And now, thanks to the Internet, each year more than one million people all over the world follow our activities by exploring online exhibitions, reading summaries of public programs, and even viewing video clips of important lectures. The National Building Museum has unquestionably become a vital, influential, and valuable institution. We proudly celebrate how far we have come in 25 years, and look forward to greater success in the future.



Chase W. Rynd

Executive Director
National Building Museum

Revealed

The National Building Museum's Collection



above / An original terra cotta rosette (Boston Terra Cotta Company, 1884) that was removed many years ago from the cornice of the Pension Building, now the National Building Museum. Gift in memory of John D. Fleetwood Jr.; Pension Building Collection; Collection of the National Building Museum.

opposite right / A copper acroterion (an ornamental element typically used to adorn the edge of a roof), from an unknown building, c. 1900. Museum purchase; Collection of the National Building Museum.

On December 3, the National Building Museum opened *Cityscapes Revealed: Highlights from the Collection*, the first exhibition in the institution's history dedicated solely to its own holdings, which comprise more than 110,000 items. Conceived as part of the celebration of the Museum's 25th anniversary, the exhibition presents a cross-section of two- and three-dimensional artifacts that shed light on the American urban landscape. The show will be on view for approximately two years in first floor galleries.

The exhibition was organized by curator Chrysanthe Broikos, who worked closely with registrar Cecelia Gibson. Following is an interview with Chrysanthe and Dana Twersky, the Museum's senior registrar, offering a behind-the-scenes glimpse of *Cityscapes Revealed* and the collection that inspired it.

Blueprints: The National Building Museum's collection actually predates the opening of the Museum. What were the first items in the collection and how did they come to be given to the Museum?

Dana Twersky: The first recorded items in the collection are papers given by Louise Mendelsohn [the widow of architect Erich Mendelsohn] documenting her efforts to organize a museum of architecture. The papers were donated and accessioned—meaning that they were formally accepted into the collection—in 1977, when the Museum existed as an organization called the Committee for a National Museum of the Building Arts. The second items accessioned were the elevator grilles from the Manhattan Building in Chicago, donated by Manhattan Associates in 1981. Two of the grilles are on display in *Cityscapes Revealed*.

Correspondence in the early accession files indicates that donations were actively solicited by Isabel and Bates Lowry [the Museum's first "documentation center head" and director, respectively, and also wife and husband] in order to build up the collection.

Since that time we have received 170 donations including photographic prints, architectural drawings, documents, assorted ephemera, and three-dimensional objects having to do with the building arts.

BP: How were the specific items in *Cityscapes Revealed* selected?

Chrysanthe Broikos: My goal was to let the objects select, and speak for, themselves. I started by focusing on the large architectural fragments that had been salvaged from significant buildings and donated to our collection. Given the size of our galleries and the scale of the pieces, I thought we could create dramatic vistas and showcase some of our most important artifacts. Once the team determined which of these pieces could be advantageously displayed, I had the beginnings of the exhibition's urban theme.

I also thought it was important to highlight some of the individual collections that have never been exhibited before. So, relatively speaking, I have included quite a few pieces from both the Ernest L. Brothers Interior Design Collection and the Northwestern Terra Cotta Collection, since neither has been the subject of a full exhibition here. The S.H. Kress & Co. Collection and the Wurts Brothers Photography Collection are not as widely represented since both have been featured previously.

Because the range of built structures represented in the collection is so vast, settling on an urban theme also helped narrow my research. You do have to draw the line somewhere. So I did not select items relating to farms, suburbia, or transportation networks, for example; I concentrated on built works typical in a city.

BP: What inspired the exhibition title?

CB: Even though the exhibition is a survey of the collection, I thought it was important to define the urban thread that I had teased out, especially because I had been envisioning the exhibition as a kind of walking tour of the city and our collections. Words such as "cityscapes," "streetscapes," and "downtown" seemed to touch on the idea I was hoping to evoke.

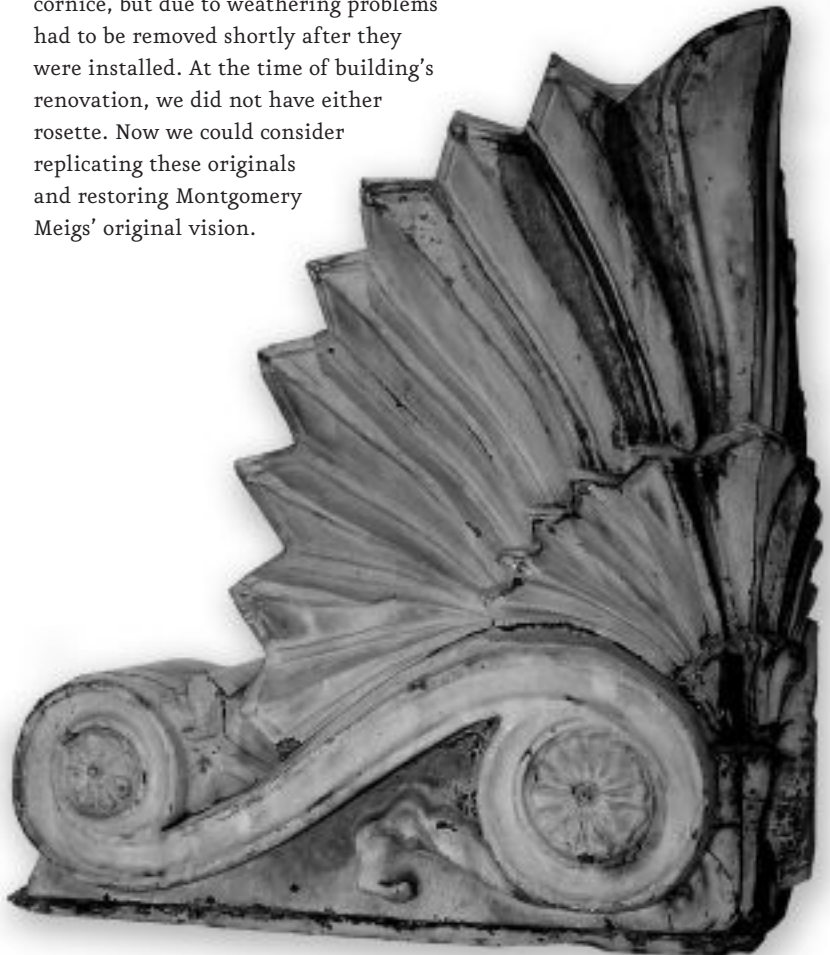
I hope even the keenest observers of the city—and I assume that encompasses a great many of our members—will learn or discover something new, so that's where the "revealed" comes in. I also like "revealed" because this is the first time many of these pieces will be on display.

BP: There are various sub-collections within the overall Museum collection. The Pension Building Collection, for instance, obviously helps to tell the story of the Museum's historic home. Does it also tell us anything broader about life in late 19th-century Washington?

CB: Yes, I think it does. For example, it includes information on topics as varied as the working conditions and rules of conduct for employees in the building to the Victorian decorations favored for the inaugural balls held here. In the future, as we move forward with new ways of interpreting the building, we hope to explore many of those rich avenues.

The items I selected for the exhibition, however, are strictly architectural. I used this as an opportunity to address some of the questions first-time visitors have about the building and to show the architectural fragments we have. For example, we have two of the original terra cotta rosettes that were designed for the cornice, but due to weathering problems had to be removed shortly after they were installed. At the time of building's renovation, we did not have either rosette. Now we could consider replicating these originals and restoring Montgomery Meigs' original vision.

Cityscapes Revealed: Highlights from the Collection is made possible by National Architectural Trust; Baltimore–Washington Brick Distributor Council; Lt. Col. and Mrs. William Karl Konze; Samuel H. Kress Foundation; Sheet Metal Workers' International Association; Gladding, McBean; Mrs. John W. Hechinger, Sr.; International Masonry Institute; International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers; Linda B. and Jonathan S. Lyons; Turner Construction Corporation; Honorable Robert W. and Louisa C. Duemling; Brick Industry Association; Marshall B. Coyne Foundation; Jessica and Henry Townsend; Sara Ann Bounds; Design Ways & Means-Perry Cofield, AIA; William L. Hopkins and Richard B. Anderson; F. Joseph Moravec; Restore Media, LLC; Karen and Langley Shook; and other generous contributors.





above / A sculptor working on a terra cotta acroterion in the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company shop, Chicago, 1914. Gift of Edward J. Mertes; Northwestern Terra Cotta Collection; Collection of the National Building Museum.

BP: Some of the Museum's most important and comprehensive collections are photographic archives. Can you describe the scope of these collections, and why they are so important?

DT: The Museum's photo archives comprise roughly 48,000 prints and negatives, not including the James Stewart & Company construction albums, which I will address in a moment.

The Wurts Brothers Photography Collection was donated in 1983 by Geraldine and Richard Wurts and consists of 20,000 prints and negatives. The Wurts Brothers Company was one of the first firms in New York to specialize in architectural photography, and the family developed a clientele of leading architects, including Cass Gilbert and John Russell Pope, plus developers, contractors, and manufacturers. Although this collection is particularly strong in documenting developments in New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey, it includes projects throughout the United States, as well as Canada and Bermuda. The collection covers a wide range of building types including offices, manufacturing facilities, lavish estates, housing developments (such as Levittown), civic buildings, and exhibits of the 1939-40 New York World's Fair.

The S.H. Kress & Co. collection of photographic prints, donated in 1989 by Genesco Inc., comprises some 7,000 prints. We also have the Woolworth Building collection of about 500 photographic prints of exteriors and interiors of the Woolworth stores. This was donated in 2000 by the Venator Group. The Stewart Brothers Photography collection was donated in 2001 by Lloyd S. Stewart and William P. Stewart. This collection includes about 20,000 negatives of aerial photos, construction progress shots, and views of completed buildings in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia from 1978 to 1990.

Then there are the James Stewart construction albums that I mentioned—108 leather-bound albums, each containing approximately 40 to 100 images of construction projects from ground-breaking to ribbon-cutting, dating from 1904 to 1949.

BP: Chrysanthe, are there elements of the collection that you, as a curator, believe to be especially significant?

CB: I think the two terra cotta rosettes I mentioned are quite important. They have opened up the possibility of accurately replicating the originals, something that was previously impossible.

Drawings in the Northwestern Terra Cotta Collection have that same potential. Not only can the collection be useful to scholars, it also can be a tremendous asset to practitioners seeking to restore or replace damaged terra cotta elements according to their original design specifications. Not every Museum can play that kind of role. That particular collection is also important because the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company was one of the nation's premier manufacturers of terra cotta, a very important building material in late 19th- and early 20th-century American architecture. That collection is also a sentimental favorite here since the National Building Museum's terra cotta ornamentation is one of the structure's most outstanding and memorable features.

As time passes, certain elements of the collection will become more valuable. That is certainly true of photographs that document buildings or structures that no longer exist, or will be torn down some day. Once the building is gone, an image of the building under construction or as it looked upon its completion can be invaluable.

BP: How does the Museum maintain its collection?

DT: The museum maintains the collection in a restricted storage space, which is alarmed and climate-controlled at the optimum temperature of 70 plus or minus 2 degrees Fahrenheit and 50 percent relative humidity plus or minus 5 percent. Objects of different materials are stored in different ways. Photographic prints are stored either flat in drop-front, acid-free boxes or upright in acid-free document boxes. Architectural drawings are stored in large acid-free folders in buffered boxes or in map cases. All archival materials,

prints, and drawings are interleaved with glassine or acid-free papers. Small objects are stored in gasket-sealed cabinets individually wrapped in acid-free tissue or cushioned with foam inside boxes. Large items such as models or building parts are stored on polyethylene foam-lined, enameled steel shelving units.

Every object is inventoried and tracked by its unique three-part number that includes the year it was donated, the donor, and the number of objects in the collection donated. Once the object is formally donated, it is cataloged in our data management program.

As a registrar who also manages the collection, I am responsible for processing donations, tracking objects in the Museum's care, and ensuring that the artifacts in the permanent collection are handled correctly, properly stored, and are secure from theft or damage.



above / Design for a canopy bed by Ernest L. Brothers, watercolor, c. 1950. Gift of Frances Griffin Brothers and Diane Brothers McGee; Ernest L. Brothers Interior Design Collection; Collection of the National Building Museum.



below left / Photograph of Cincinnati's Union Terminal Station (now the Cincinnati Museum Center), designed by Fellheimer & Wagner with Paul Cret and Roland Wank, under construction, 1931. Gift of John B. Mannes; James Stewart Construction Collection; Collection of the National Building Museum.



above / American Skyline, a construction set manufactured by Elgo Plastics of Chicago, 1956. Gift of William Henry Carr Griffith Jr.; Collection of the National Building Museum.

below right / A shop drawing by the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company detailing the griffin-adorned chimney of Pittsburgh's Allegheny County Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall (now the Soldiers & Sailors National Military Museum & Memorial), 1908. Gift of Edward J. Mertes; Northwestern Terra Cotta Collection; Collection of the National Building Museum.

BP: What are some of the most recent items added to the collection?

DT: This year we accepted into the collection the second terra cotta rosette from the Pension Building cornice—it came from the same person who donated the only other rosette in the collection.

The Department of Defense also signed over ownership of the plan of the fifth floor of the Pentagon that we've been storing for them on extended loan since it was featured in the exhibition *On the Job: Design and the American Office*.

The MacArthur Foundation donated two pieces of Northwestern Terra Cotta from the Marquette Building in Chicago that were removed during recent renovations, and one of these is on display in the exhibition.

BP: Did some of the items in the exhibition have to be conserved or restored? How was this accomplished?

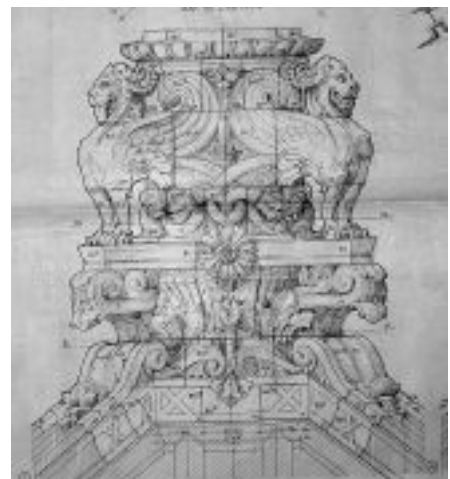
DT: Yes. Cathy Valentour, an object conservator, worked on the columns from the Z.C.M.I. department store in Salt Lake City,

the copper dormer window surround from the Carnegie mansion in New York, and the panel from the National Building Museum frieze. We used Holly Krueger, who is a paper conservator, to evaluate and treat the Northwestern Terra Cotta drawings and the Ernest L. Brothers interior design drawings. We used a leather conservator, Tom Albro, to evaluate the James Stewart construction albums, which are suffering from leather disease.

Typically, an object conservator's first task is to examine a given piece and photograph it. She explores treatment options with an eye toward our desired final result, and then submits a treatment proposal and cost estimate. Once the proposal is approved by the registrar and by the curator, she begins work.

In the case of the Z.C.M.I. façade, Cathy filled and molded some of the larger dents and breaks in the galvanized sheet metal with two-part epoxy putty and then painted it to match the rest of the column. In the case of the frieze, she cleaned the surface to remove loose dust and dirt and then filled the areas of loss with resin. The fills were then touched up with acrylic paints to match the painted surface.

Holly Krueger examined the works on paper that are going on display and determined that some of the Northwestern Terra Cotta drawings would need to be dry-cleaned and torn edges and holes mended and filled. For the Ernest L. Brothers interior design watercolors, she removed some of the drawings from their old and brittle card stock supports, removed tape remnants, and dry-cleaned them.



BP: Will the specific items in the exhibition be changed over the course of the exhibition's run?

CB: Yes, all of the objects that can be damaged by light—including original drawings, photographs, or publications—will be on a three-month rotation cycle. This means visitors should be able to return every few months and make new discoveries each time they visit. In some instances, when I thought the item was crucial to communicating a particular idea, or I couldn't find a comparable replacement, we decided to produce a facsimile of the original.

BP: What are some of the most interesting items in the collection that do not appear in *Cityscapes Revealed*?

DT: Possibly the material sample kits. We have 17 general sample kits in the collection plus 18 Ernest L. Brothers Interior Design sample kits of mostly fabric samples (some of these are on display in *Cityscapes Revealed*). The general sample kits include stained wood trim (1954); several glass samples from The Paul Wissmach Glass Co., Inc. (c. 1940); samples of colored tile from Dallas Ceramic Company (1945); samples of aluminum from Reynolds Aluminum/Gauges (1950); samples of plywood-based siding from U.S. Plywood (1950); plus weather stripping, floor tiles, and so on.

BP: Is there a "story" about the built environment that you can weave based on the collection?

CB: This exhibition is a story and one of the themes or subplots is how truly complex and interdisciplinary the act of building is. I have tried to draw attention to as many facets of the building process as I can. That includes designers, craftspeople, laborers, contractors, building product manufacturers, and photographers. Each has an important role to play. You would be hard-pressed to look at a shop drawing from the Northwestern Terra Cotta Collection and not realize how many other people it takes to make an architect's vision or design come to fruition. I think the construction images are equally eloquent on that front. In a sense, this is one chord the Museum repeatedly tries to hit—whether it's through our exhibitions,



such as this one, or educational programs such as the construction watch tours.

And as a curator and architectural historian, I'd like to think there are hundreds of stories in the collection. One of the most exciting things to see was how many collections actually have information pertaining to the same building or project. I have also identified objects that would be great additions to the collection and would potentially round out certain stories and better contextualize various trends and developments. I have a tremendous amount of respect for the Museum's former staff members who took an active role in cultivating the donors who have made the collection what it is today. •

above / Photograph of the South Texas National Bank, Houston, designed by C.D. Hill & Co., under construction, 1909. Gift of John B. Mannes; James Stewart Construction Collection; Collection of the National Building Museum.

Birth of a Museum



by Herbert M. Franklin and
Cynthia R. Field

above / Conceptual design for a typical exhibition hall for the new National Building Museum. Drawing by Cooper-Lecky Partnership, from *Building the Building Museum*, an undated publication from the early 1980s.

The following article, written by two of the key players in the founding of the National Building Museum, traces the events that led up to the institution's formal establishment in December 1980. Cynthia Field holds master's and doctoral degrees from Columbia University and is an architectural historian with the Smithsonian Institution. Herb Franklin, a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School, is an attorney who specialized in real estate finance and development and also served as executive assistant to the Architect of the Capitol. Both remain active as founding trustees of the Museum.

TO WASHINGTONIANS AND VISITORS ALIKE, the National Building Museum seems like a well-established fixture in the landscape of the nation's capital. Many people, in fact, are surprised to learn that the institution is relatively young compared to other prominent local museums, having been established just 25 years ago. Many others, however, remember very well a time when there was no major museum in the United States dedicated to architecture, engineering, and construction, and when the historic Pension Building was a disused white elephant with an uncertain future.

The fortuitous convergence of two factors in the 1970s greatly aided the founding of the National Building Museum: the maturing of the historic preservation ethos and the impending vacancy of the Pension Building. Constructed in 1882–87 to house the office providing military pensions for Union veterans of the Civil War, the building had already been recognized with a listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Its future use was being debated as its temporary occupants, the District of Columbia courts and related administrative offices, were scheduled to vacate in 1976 upon the completion of the new D.C. courthouse.

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), which manages the vast majority of federally-owned civilian facilities, understandably believed that the building would be extraordinarily costly and inefficient to retrofit as an office building, and any such process could lead to the destruction of the grand, high-ceilinged rooms that had served adequately as courtrooms. Such a process would lead to a rabbit warren configuration that at best would yield little more than 110,000 square feet of office space, which could be provided by a much smaller new building. The Great Hall in the past had

been used for office purposes, requiring a sea of desks, file cabinets and strings of lighting, but this arrangement seriously degraded the elegant and awesome space.

The idea of using the historic structure as a museum had already been suggested to the GSA. In 1969, at another point of decision about the building's fate, the GSA had commissioned the distinguished modernist architect Chloethiel Woodard Smith to evaluate potential uses for the building. She reviewed the possibilities, including reuse as a shopping center, recreation space, office-display area, and others. She concluded that the most appropriate use would be a museum and exhibition space. Of all the possible museums that she considered, it seemed to her that it would be "most appropriate as a gallery dedicated to the Art of Building."

GSA was not, of course, in the business of creating or sustaining museums or galleries. No private sector partner yet existed to take on such a program as Smith had suggested. The building was subsequently made available for office space for tenants related to both museum and historic preservation purposes, including the Smithsonian Institution and the Office of Preservation and Archaeology (later the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation). When the building was about to lose the D.C. courts, the realistic fear arose among the building's admirers that this historic and extraordinary work of engineering and architecture might be demolished.

In December of 1974, at a dinner for Cynthia and Charles Field given by architectural historian Dora Wiebenson, Cynthia Field described her vision of a National Museum of the Building Arts. The discussion turned toward the possible disposition of the Pension Building once the courts had moved. In January 1975, inspired by the building, Field created an outline for such a museum, comprising an archives, education and exhibition divisions, a library, a state and regional division with a department of oral history, and a Center



for Scholarship. Throughout the spring Field met with colleagues and various organizations to refine the concept. Among those who contributed at this conceptual phase were architectural historians, preservationists, architects, planners, landscape architects, and representatives of Congressional offices, preservation organizations, and housing and planning agencies both governmental and private. Finally Field met with Smith, who readily agreed to support this effort to marry the idea of the museum use of the building with Field's program. The Museum was beginning to take shape in concept.

At the same time the next big step toward realization took place when Field met attorney Herb Franklin. Franklin was immediately interested in the idea. While he pointed out that the challenge facing any would-be founders of a museum devoted to the art of building was daunting, he saw the next steps clearly: to explain what the program of such a museum would be and how such a museum might use the building for its mission, what the approximate cost of restoration and annual operations might be, and how to structure the relationship of such a museum to the federal government. He thought ahead to the necessity of creating a formal entity to advocate for the building and the idea.

Franklin created a non-profit corporation in August 1975 called the Committee for a National Museum of the Building Arts (CNMBA) headed by Field, Franklin, and Smith. Taking advantage of Franklin's



top / Photograph showing the condition of a space on the fourth floor of the Pension Building before renovation. From a thesis project for a new museum of architecture in the Pension Building, by B. Christopher Bene, University of Virginia, 1975.

above / The Pension Commissioner's Suite before renovation, showing fluorescent lighting suspended from the decorated ceiling. From the thesis project by B. Christopher Bene, 1975.



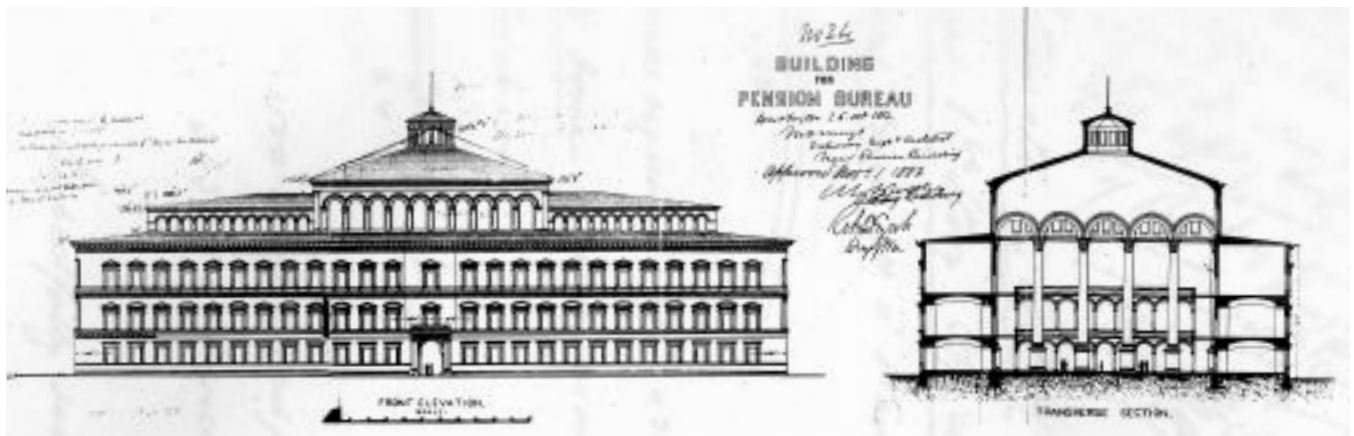
above / Sketch by Montgomery C. Meigs showing the revised design of the Great Hall of the Pension Building, 1883. As reproduced in a report by the U.S. General Services Administration on the condition of the building, 1980.

broad acquaintance in the area of urban affairs, the board was soon augmented by the prominent developer known for his urban revitalization projects, James Rouse, and the author and architecture critic of *The Washington Post*, Wolf von Eckardt, who lent both their prestige and their support. Having received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, Von Eckardt and Field worked with adherents from across the country, such as Beverly Willis, Edward Hall, and Nancy Stevenson, and with advisory sub-committees on education, exhibitions, architecture, landscape and urban planning, through which the thinking of the anticipated audiences was gathered and integrated.

In early 1978 the resultant study, handsomely packaged in a publication somewhat whimsically titled “The Building Building,” was distributed to all members of Congress and relevant executive branch officials, along with leaders in the worlds of design and development. An information campaign was launched, with committee members visiting members of Congress and their staffs, government officials and various professional and trade associations. These efforts resulted in the passage of a non-binding resolution of the Congress, introduced by Senator Charles “Mac” McC. Mathias, Jr., and signed by President

Jimmy Carter in November 1978. Senate Resolution 160 (S.J. Res. 160), stated the interest of Congress in establishing a museum of the building arts in the Pension Building, described in the document as “a national treasure.” It directed the GSA to prepare an existing conditions study with drawings and preliminary cost estimates for the restoration of the building for this purpose. The resolution further provided that such drawings “shall be consistent with and provide space for the functions and facilities proposed” in “The Building Building,” the illustrated program of action issued by the CNMBA. Significantly, the resolution also stated that “any occupants of the Pension Building shall be temporary pending establishment and occupancy of the building” by the museum. In other words, there could be no doubt that the museum would indeed be created in the building unless the studies revealed a significant impediment.

By December 1978 the studies mandated by S.J. Res 160 were being conducted by the Smithsonian Institution, the GSA, and the National Endowment for the Arts. The resolution gave significant status to the CNMBA, which operated from an outpost in the Pension Building throughout 1979 and 1980, providing small exhibitions and building fairs with a small staff to demonstrate what the museum could provide while continuing to build support for the more ambitious endeavor. Progress toward permanent establishment gained momentum through a chance meeting between Field and Loretta Newman, staff assistant to U.S. Representative John F. Seiberling, which resulted in the idea of combining the museum’s creation within the reauthorization of the National Historic Preservation Act. Newman wasted no time in calling on Franklin as the CNMBA’s legal counsel to provide binding language to establish the museum, but warned that draft legislation was needed within only a few days. Franklin drafted the document that became Title III of the National



Historic Preservation Act as Amended of 1980. The mission of the museum as drafted by Franklin reflected the ongoing discussions of CNMBA board members over the preceding years.

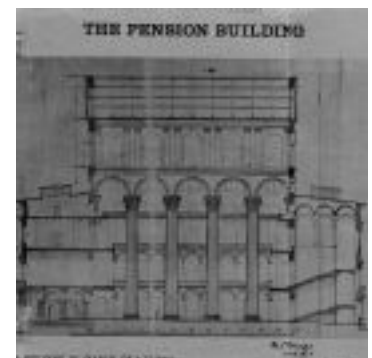
As directed by the legislation, a cooperative agreement was created between the GSA and the new entity. Under the terms of this agreement, the government would continue to be the owner and guardian of the historic Pension Building while the non-profit would operate a museum of the building arts within the facility. Passage of the legislation was the result of a cooperative effort involving many organizations. Congressional support came notably from Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Representatives Seiberling and Elliott H. Levitas, and the committees they represented.

Thus it was Public Law 96-515 (December 12, 1980) that marked the legal birth of the National Building Museum (the name of the institution was adopted in 1981, and in 1997, the Pension Building itself was formally renamed the National Building Museum, as well). The partnership created by this law between GSA and the Museum soon developed into a healthy and truly cooperative relationship, with the federal government, through the GSA, continuing to own the building and oversee its maintenance, and the Museum operating as an independent, private, non-profit organization.

On October 25, 1985, following a comprehensive and sensitive renovation of the historic structure, the National Building Museum opened its doors to the public, bringing years of hard work to full fruition. Thanks to the powerful combina-



tion of a compelling mission, an exceptional building, and a monumental effort on the part of many dedicated people, the Museum has grown into the leading cultural organization devoted to the built environment. Now, looking back on the Museum's genesis, it is hard not to believe that it was all pre-destined—this unique, vital institution and the glorious architectural landmark it occupies surely represent a “marriage made in Heaven.” •



top / Elevation and transverse section of one of Meigs's early schemes for the Pension Building, 1882, incorporating a cupola atop the center of the roof. As reproduced in a report by the U.S. General Services Administration on the condition of the building, 1980.

above / Cover of *The Pension Building: A Building in Search of a Client*. Report by Chloethiel Woodard Smith and Associated Architects, 1967.

left / Cover of *The Building Building: Proposal for a National Museum of the Building Arts*. Report prepared by the Committee for a National Museum of the Building Arts, Inc., 1978.

Festive Bash

Marks Museum's 25th Anniversary

by Erika Hemphill



pages 12–13 / Shown on these pages are photographs of some of the many happy guests at the Museum's 25th Anniversary Bash. Photography by Danny Fowler

MORE THAN 700 REVELERS, many of them in shimmering, silver-colored attire, flocked to the National Building Museum on October 29 for the much-anticipated Silver Anniversary Bash. The crowd was diverse in almost every respect, and ranged from several people who were instrumental in the Museum's founding to a number of guests who were mere toddlers when the institution was established by an act of Congress in 1980. All, however, shared an enthusiasm for this unique cultural treasure, and enjoyed a fun-filled evening of great conversation, live music, dancing, a silent auction—and even a birthday serenade from “Marilyn Monroe.”

While primarily conceived as a festive celebration to honor this important milestone in the Museum's history, the bash was also a successful fundraiser. Special thanks go to lead sponsors Lafarge North America and Turner Construction Company, but we are also grateful to everyone who bought tickets, bid on auction items, or contributed items for the auction and raffle.

Additional thanks go to our gracious guest speakers, Bob Peck and Ed Feiner, and to Norman Koonce, CEO of the American Institute of Architects, who presented an official proclamation from the AIA president congratulating the Museum on its achievements. All in all, it was a great way to conclude the Museum's first quarter-century!

Proceeds from the event directly benefit the National Building Museum's acclaimed exhibitions and education programs. We thank all of the evening's sponsors for their support:



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Goldman, Sachs
Phyllis Lambert
McGraw-Hill Construction
Melissa Moss and Jonathan Silver
Perkins & Will
Rippeteau Architects
John F.W. Rogers
David M. Schwarz/
Architectural Services
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
Emily and Antoine van Agtmael
Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership

Domes

Mark G. Anderson Consultants
Bender Foundation/Sondra D.
& Howard M. Bender, Julie &
David Silver, Nan & David Bender,
Barbara Bender, Eileen &
Richard Greenberg
The Catholic University of America
School of Architecture
and Planning
Centex Construction Company
James G. Davis Construction
Corporation
Fentress Bradburn Architects
Forest City Enterprises
Hodgson Architects
A. Eugene Kohn/
Kohn Pedersen Fox
Lehman-Smith McLeish
Linda B. and Jonathan S. Lyons
Sid Stolz and David Hatfield
International Masonry Institute
SmithGroup
Tishman Construction Corporation
Sharon and Jim Todd
Tompkins Builders
Toucan Capital Corp.
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William B. and Sunny Jung Alsop
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Mrs. Mahlon Apgar, IV
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BDO Seidman
Suzanne and Richard Bissell
Heather Willson Cass
CB Richard Ellis
CORE Architecture + Design
Christopher Dorval,
Dorval Strategies
EHT Traceries
Lois and Richard England
Rae and David Evans
Cynthia and Charles Field
Barbara and Herb Franklin
Nancy McElroy Folger
Gallagher & Associates
Mike Goodrich
Vicki and Michael Herson
Thomas Hesselbrock
Robert W. Holleyman II
HSMM
Susan and Dudley Ives
Keane Enterprises
Thomas Kearns/Shepley Bulfinch
Richardson and Abbott
Nancy W. King and
Thomas H. Loy, Jr.
Norman L. Koonce
Louis Dreyfus Property Group
Katherine McHugh
David and Carole Metzger
Iris and Larry Miller
Janet Rankin
Rice Restaurant
Studio 27 Architecture
Susan J. Thomas



design stores, galleries, and restaurants Support Museum

by Erika Hemphill



top / Patrons at Apartment Zero, which hosted a special shopping night for Museum members on September 27.

Photo courtesy of Apartment Zero

above / Architect Keith Scott inspects the merchandise at Home Rule, one of several retail establishments that participated in the Museum's 14th Street Stroll. Photo by National Building Museum

THE GRAND PARTY ON OCTOBER 29 was just one of a series of events that helped to mark the Museum's 25th anniversary.

The previous month, on September 27, local design store Apartment Zero, on 7th Street, NW, hosted a special shopping night for Museum members, with 10 percent of the sales that evening donated to the Museum. Then, on October 23, a number of shops, galleries, and a restaurant participated in the "14th Street Stroll," celebrating the revitalization of what was once a major Washington commercial thoroughfare and is now the city's newest design Mecca. Again, the participating businesses generously agreed to donate 10 percent of their sales during the stroll to the Museum. In addition, Darrel Rippeteau of Rippeteau Architects hosted informal talks about the neighborhood's revitalization, while providing refreshments for members participating in the walk.

These events helped to establish and strengthen relationships between the Museum and the local business community, while introducing Museum members to some exciting new retail, cultural, and dining opportunities. This support will help us to continue to offer compelling programming as we enter our 26th year. •

Big thanks to the participating businesses:

- Apartment Zero 406 7th Street, NW
- Candida's World of Books
1541 14th Street NW
- gallery plan b 1530 14th Street NW
- G Fine Art 1515 14th Street NW
- Garden District 1801 14th Street NW
- Go Mama Go! 1809 14th Street NW
- Home Rule 1807 14th Street NW
- Rice Restaurant 1608 14th Street NW
- Rippeteau Architects 1530 14th Street NW
- Storehouse Furniture 1525 14th Street NW
- Vastu 1829 14th Street NW

GREEN DAY

at the National Building Museum



DURING REMARKS before large audiences at two events on October 24, 2005, executive director Chase Rynd declared the date to be unofficial “Green Design Day” at the National Building Museum. That afternoon the Museum cosponsored with the Turner Construction Company a conference about the sustainable design of schools. In the evening, the Museum celebrated green design and construction practices when it presented the 2005 Henry C. Turner Prize for Innovation in Construction Technology to the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).

The afternoon conference, “Greening the Schools,” explored the movement toward environmentally responsible design and construction in primary, secondary, and post-secondary schools. More than 175 school administrators, architects, and builders from the mid-Atlantic region

heard major presentations and panel discussions by experts from across the country. In the keynote address, the sustainable design pioneer Randolph Croxton, FAIA, principal of Croxton Collaborative Architects, shared his far-reaching vision for sustainability in educational facilities.

During the evening program, which drew an audience of 250 people, USGBC became the fourth recipient of the Turner Prize. The prize jury selected USGBC because of its catalytic role in promoting sustainable design, especially through the development of the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system. Richard Federizzi, USGBC president, CEO, and founding chairman, accepted the award and then moderated a panel discussion about the Genzyme Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the largest structure in the world to receive the LEED platinum level rating for new construction to date. Project architect Stefan Behnisch, a partner in the German firm Behnisch, Behnisch, & Partner, began by explaining the principles underlying the design. Other panelists included Rick Matilla, Genzyme’s director of environmental affairs, and Phillip Coleman and Brett Kass, Turner Construction Company’s managers of the project.

The previous recipients of the Henry C. Turner Prize are structural engineer Leslie E. Robertson (2002), architect I.M. Pei (2003), and engineer-builder Charles A. DeBenedittis (2004). The prize was generously endowed by the Turner Construction Company and was named after the company’s founder. •

by Ed Worthy



left / Interior of the Genzyme Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts, by Behnisch, Behnisch & Partner. Photo by Anton Grassl

above / Richard Federizzi, president, CEO, and founding chairman of the U.S. Green Building Council. Photo by Sam Holden

Prince of Wales

Accepts the Sixth Scully Prize

NOVEMBER 3, 2005 WAS AN ESPECIALLY CEREMONIOUS DAY AT THE NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM, which, of course, is no stranger to magnificent events. On that day, Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall visited the Museum as part of their first official overseas trip as husband and wife. The royal couple began by touring two new exhibitions based on the work of The Prince's architecture- and design-related charities [see article on page 17]. The culmination of the visit was The Prince's acceptance of the sixth Vincent Scully Prize, awarded in recognition of his active role in encouraging discussion and debate about the quality of the built environment in Great Britain and around the world. More than 1,200 Museum members and invited guests were on hand for the presentation of the prize. After testimonial remarks by past Scully Prize recipient Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and by Vincent Scully himself, The Prince delivered an acceptance speech outlining his views on the relationships between the natural and built environments, and between tradition and modernity.

His Royal Highness began by acknowledging, in self-deprecatory fashion, that his views on architecture and planning are not universally shared, saying, "I seem to be a dangerous commodity in certain circles and receiving such awards is a novel experience for me." He went on to articulate his vision of an integrated approach to design and planning, in which considerations of local building traditions, environmentally responsible practices, and modern needs are integrated. The Prince also announced his plans to donate the cash prize that accompanies the Scully Prize to his Foundation for the Built Environment, in support of its efforts to help rebuild New Orleans and the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Both a transcript of The Prince's speech and a video of the event are available on the Museum's website at www.nbm.org. •



top / His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales and Hank Dittmar, chief executive of The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment, visit the exhibition *Civitas: Traditional Urbanism in Contemporary Practice*. The Duchess of Cornwall is visible in the background of this photo. Photo by Vivian Ronay



above / David Schwarz, chair of the Vincent Scully Prize jury, and Carolyn Brody, chair of the National Building Museum, with the Duchess of Cornwall. Photo by Vivian Ronay

above right / The Prince of Wales shakes hands with Vincent Scully upon acceptance of the award named for Professor Scully. Photo by Vivian Ronay



below right / The Prince of Wales during his speech accepting the Vincent Scully Prize. Photo by Vivian Ronay

Two Exhibitions

Present Work of Prince's Charities



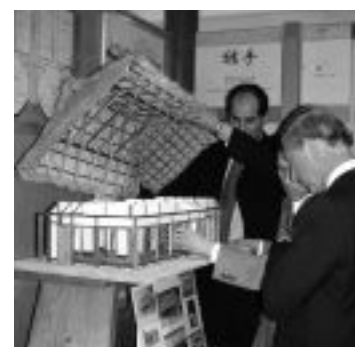
ON NOVEMBER 3, 2005, THE NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM OPENED TWO EXHIBITIONS in conjunction with the presentation of the Vincent Scully Prize to His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales. Organized by two of The Prince's sixteen official charities, the exhibitions, titled *A Building Tradition: The Work of the Prince's School of Traditional Arts* and *Civitas: Traditional Urbanism in Contemporary Practice*, are on view until January 8, 2006.

Civitas reflects the mission of The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment, which seeks to improve the quality of people's lives by promoting traditional urban design and planning practices. Through sixteen examples of development projects from around the world, the exhibition explores the principles that underpin the traditional urbanism movement. The projects included in the exhibition, which range from small works of urban infill to entire new towns, all challenge prevailing assumptions about contemporary communities and offer insights into the political and social frameworks necessary to support such design and planning strategies.

Organized by the staff and faculty of The Prince's School of Traditional Arts, *A Building Tradition* is a new exhibition that features exemplary works by the students, alumni, and staff of the school. Built on a core education program known as "The Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts," the school offers grounding in the philosophy and practical craft skills of the arts and architecture of Islam, as well as the traditional arts of other civilizations. One of the principal aims of the school is to encourage appreciation of the universal values that are fundamental to the arts of the great traditions of the world. Graduate courses combine theory and practice and include classes in geometry, Islamic architecture, icon painting, tile-making, Islimi/Arabesque, stained glass, and mosaic craft. This exhibition presents work from these classes as along with fine examples of porcelain, carved plaster, and marquetry. •

Civitas is sponsored by DHL freight and Contract Logistics (UK) Limited.

A Building Tradition is sponsored by Goldman, Sachs & Co. and DHL Freight and Contract Logistics Limited.



top left / View of Poundbury, a community in Britain featured in the *Civitas* exhibition.
Copyright The Prince's Foundation

top / Dr. Khaled Azzam, director of The Prince's School of Traditional Arts, watches as Bankoku Sasagawa discusses the techniques in traditional Japanese joinery and architecture with His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales at the school's Degree Show 2004. PSTA archive

above / Handmade ceramic tile fountain designed and built by student David Fauerstein in his final year at the PSTA. PSTA archive

Four Join Museum Board

The National Building Museum's Board of Trustees recently elected the following new members:



Donald A. Capoccia

BILL BRENNAN is the executive vice president of the Mid-Atlantic Region for Turner Construction Company, with responsibility for projects in a broad geographical region ranging from Pennsylvania to Florida, and including Texas. After receiving a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Penn State University and a master's from Pace University, Brennan joined Turner in 1972 as a field engineer. He ran his own construction management company from 1986 to 1996 before returning to Turner, where he assumed a series of increasingly senior management roles.

GARY P. HANEY, AIA, is a design partner with the architecture firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Major projects under his leadership include the new headquarters of the U.S. Census Bureau and several U.S. embassies around the world. He has served as a critic at several architecture schools and is a member of the U.S. General Services Administration's Design Excellence Program National Register of Peer Professionals. Haney is a graduate of Miami University and received a master's degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.



Gary P. Haney, AIA

DONALD A. CAPOCCIA is managing principal of BFC Partners, a multi-faceted real estate development and management concern based in New York. He also serves as president of BFC Construction and as president of Doncap Management Corp., a consulting company and brokerage firm he established in 1986. A graduate of the University of Buffalo with a master's degree in urban planning from Hunter College, Capoccia is active in the New York State Association for Affordable Housing and is a presidential appointee to the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts.

MERCY JIMÉNEZ has held several senior positions with Fannie Mae, and is now senior vice president for the company's National Business Center, managing business relationships with nearly 2,000 lenders. Prior to joining Fannie Mae in 1996, she was vice president for corporate development at Chase Manhattan Mortgage Corporation. Jiménez holds a bachelor's degree from Northwestern University and an M.B.A. from Harvard's Graduate School of Business. She serves on the boards of the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals and the Atlantic Council, and is a member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus's Housing Initiatives Committee.



Mercy Jiménez

Thank You!

The Museum thanks the following individuals, companies, associations, and agencies for gifts of \$250 or more received from September–November 2005. These generous gifts provide essential support for the Museum’s exhibitions, education programs, and endowment funds. Some of the contributions listed below are in partial fulfillment of larger pledges.

\$100,000 and above

National Endowment
for the Humanities

\$50,000 – \$99,000

Anonymous
D.C. Office of Planning

\$25,000 – \$49,999

The Prince’s School of
Traditional Arts
National Architectural Trust
Diana and Mallory Walker

\$10,000 – \$24,999

Baltimore-Washington Brick
Distributor Council
The Beech Street Foundation
Brick Industry Association
Chevy Chase Bank
Christie’s America
International Masonry Institute
Lafarge North America
Lt. Col and Mrs. William Karl Konze
Will Miller and Lynne Maguire
David C. Evans/Reed Smith LLP
Sheet Metal Workers’
International Association
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP
Sharon and Jim Todd
Turner Construction Company

\$5,000 – \$9,999

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The Max and Victoria Dreyfus
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Wayne S. Quin/Holland & Knight

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Cynthia R. and Charles G. Field
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Greater Washington
Matt Lauer
McGraw-Hill Construction
Melissa Moss and Jonathan Silver
David M. Schwarz/
Architectural Services, Inc.
St Marys Cement Inc.
Michael K. Wilkinson/
Windsor Consulting
Leonard A. Zax

\$1,000 – \$2,499

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Centex Construction
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Design Ways & Means -
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DPR Construction
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Neal Evan Hodgson
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Kishimoto.Gordon.Dalaya PC
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Katherine McHugh
The Honorable Henry Meigs II

National Electrical Contractors
Association
National Trust for Historic
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Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Parsons Brinckerhoff
James M. Scarpace
S.H. and Helen R. Scheuer
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SmithGroup, Inc.
Sid Stolz and David Hatfield
Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback
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United Arts Organization of
Greater Washington, Inc.
Wagner Roofing Company
Robert M. Wulff

\$250 – \$999

Theo Adamstein and
Olvia Demetriou
The American Institute of Architects
Frank and Georgine Anton
The Honorable and
Mrs. Mahlon Apgar, IV
Agnes Artemel
The Associated General
Contractors of America
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Dorval Strategies
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Erin J. Flanigan
Whit Fletcher
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Barbara and Herbert Franklin
Emily Freeland
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Mike Goodrich
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Heller & Metzger
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Lily and Bob McLean
Louis Dreyfus Property Group
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Angela Steever-Diba
Studio 27
Neal Sumner
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Jack Taylor
Susan Thomas
Mary Meigs Thorne
Tishman Construction Corporation
Edward J. Trenn
John C. von Senden
Patty and Robert Webb
Kerie R. Wilson
Christine Wirkkala
Zeigler Builders, Inc.

Mystery Building



above / Lafayette Park, Detroit, Michigan, by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

THE MYSTERY BUILDING from the Fall 2005 issue was one of the townhouse structures at Lafayette Park, a surprisingly pastoral residential development near downtown Detroit. Designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in cooperation with city planner Ludwig Hilberseimer, landscape architect Alfred Caldwell, and developer Herbert Greenwald, the 46-acre complex was built during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The largest grouping of Mies-designed buildings in the world, Lafayette Park includes apartment towers, a shopping center, a school, and recreational spaces.

Beth L. Savage, of Bethesda, Maryland, correctly (and thoroughly) identified Lafayette Park, as did Ned McGrath of Detroit, and Barbara and Isaac Green of Washington, DC. The Greens were residents of Lafayette Park in the 1960s and Mr. Green declared it “a great place to live.”



The name of this issue’s Mystery Building seems out of synch with the city in which it is located. Can you name the building, its architect/engineer, and its location? Send responses to:

Mystery Building
National Building Museum
401 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

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My check payable to the National Building Museum is enclosed.

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