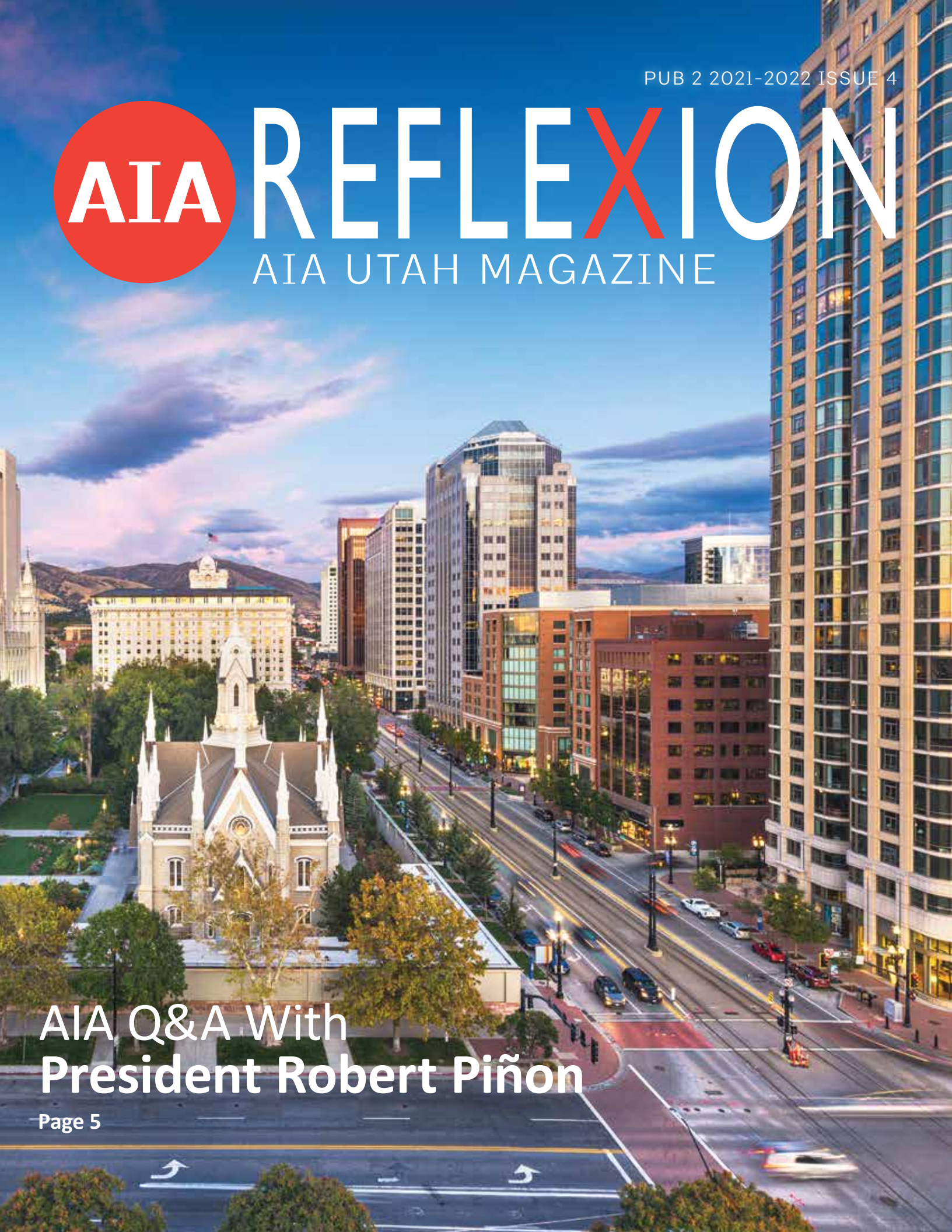




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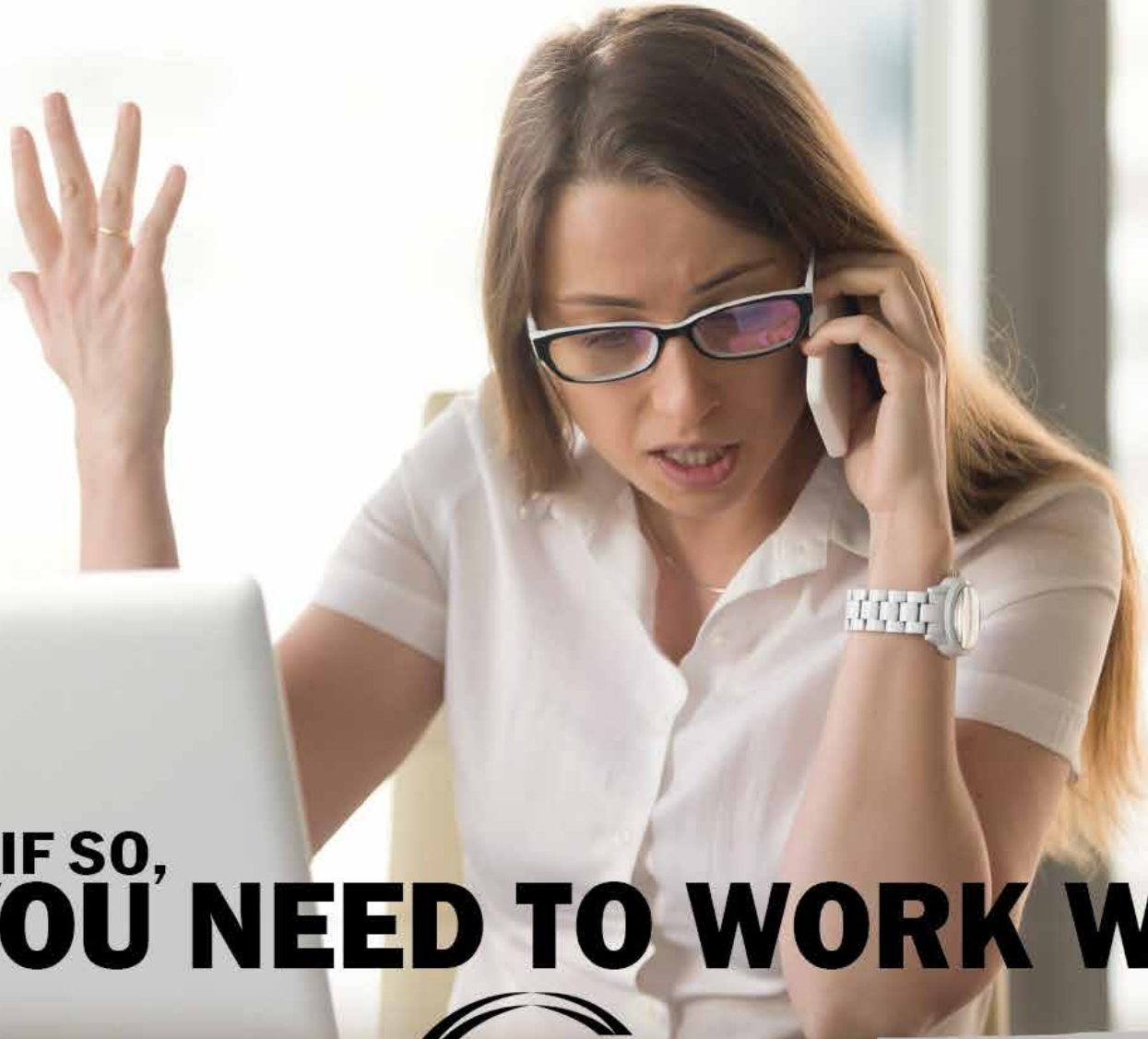
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AIA Q&A With  
**President Robert Piñon**



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## AIA Q&A With President Robert Piñon

Robert Piñon, AIA, LEED AP and MHTN Architects' Vice President over Commercial and Municipal Sectors, is the current AIA Utah president. MHTN was founded in 1923 by Ray Ashton and Ray Evans. The company has been involved in many important Utah projects, such as the University of Utah School of Business (2012), Utah Valley Convention Center (2012), and Salt Lake County District Attorney Office (2020). The firm is nationally recognized and currently employs 36 licensed architects.

**R**obert is a longtime member of AIA hired in 1996 at MHTN as a drafter. He graduated from the University of Utah in 2001, with a master's degree in architecture and has worked in every area of the company since he was hired.

Robert's father was a Texas-born embassy employee who married a Spanish woman he met while serving in the U.S. Air Force. As a result, the family moved from capital to capital in countries such as Chile, Honduras, Ireland and Portugal, and Robert attended international schools.

During Robert's childhood and youth, he never lived anywhere for more than two to four years. He played varsity basketball

and graduated from high school in Chile 30 years ago. His Eagle Scout project involved updating a children's playground at a local Chilean kindergarten. Robert also spent two years in Japan on a church mission. He is multilingual and speaks English, Spanish, Portuguese and Japanese.

He and his wife have two sons and enjoy traveling. Robert is preparing for Lotoja, a 206-mile bike ride from Logan to Jackson. He also coaches his sons' soccer team. He enjoys skiing at Alta and exploring southern Utah's deserts.

AIA Utah recently spoke with Robert about his life, work and AIA.

► — continued on page 6



► — continued from page 5

### **Why did you become an architect?**

I love airplanes and originally wanted to be a pilot, but I also loved Legos. When I was 14, I realized how perfect vision is temporary and crucial for pilots. I worried that I wouldn't always have perfect vision. So I switched career paths.

There is magic in creating space and changing environments. The profession of architecture combines design and art, and it is tactile. I enjoy all of that.

### **Please tell us about your studies at the University of Utah. What was the most important lesson you learned during your time there?**

My professors helped me think and explore. I gained the ability to critically think through problems, be confident in my thought process and find my ground. There were challenges and opportunities to test things I wouldn't have considered otherwise. I learned about important practical skills such as communication with teams and colleagues. While there, I took two business classes because I was looking for additional skill sets, and I worked within the Kajima Lab, a 3D software lab hosted by a Japanese construction company. The professors taught us mechanical concepts, building science, structure and design. I learned how to communicate with clients and set priorities and needs.

### **Who have your most important mentors been?**

I worked under Pat McLaughlin for six years, starting on day one. He taught me to always seek out options and to be open-minded. He encouraged me to get involved with AIA early in

my career. He moved to Portland before COVID to be closer to his daughter, but he continues to be a good influence. He also taught me how important it is to start saving for retirement early, time being your greatest asset.

Dennis Cecchini, our former CEO and AIA past president, also mentored me. He instilled confidence in making necessary decisions quickly so projects could move forward. His passion for architecture and securing a client's satisfaction has remained with me. And then there is golf – the etiquette and value of spending time with others; we've enjoyed many rounds on the greens!

### **It's rare to talk with someone who has focused on one company. Please tell us about how you arrived there and why you stayed.**

Until I came to Utah, I typically moved every two years; the longest I stayed anywhere was four years. Salt Lake City is welcoming, and we are very comfortable with Utah's outdoors and the culture. My wife and I have had amazing careers here. I connect with the firm's mission to create extraordinary environments, and there's never been a lack of work or challenge. We fit here.

I have also had the great fortune of working on projects that have captured my imagination. I have even gotten to design airports and revisit my love of that building type.

When I was working on my master's project at the University of Utah, my project was the Provo City Airport, and twenty



Utah members want more emphasis and focus on good architecture; we hear that and are working on it with tours, awards, and celebrating the 100 Best Buildings in Utah. We also want to get people out of the office and into the same room more often now that it is safer. For instance, conferences can revitalize and reinvigorate our creativity – they can suggest methods and insulate ideas that find our way into our projects.

years later, we were able to design and stamp an airport for Provo. That was one of my favorite projects. It's been updated to be suitable for Provo's current need; it's now a four-gate terminal that opened in May this year. I've also been involved for 20 years with the work being done at the Salt Lake City International Airport, old and new.

#### **How has AIA been helpful to you as an architect? Why is membership important?**

AIA Utah puts architects first. The association allows architects to continue their education, share and network. Also, the advocacy part of any association is huge. Our voices are stronger when we are united.

The pandemic has been challenging for everyone. The last two years were very isolating, but now is the time for AIA Utah to support and enable architects and be a resource for them. We have completed some of our past promises, like adding signage to our AIA Utah office. Utah members want more emphasis and focus on good architecture; we hear that and are working on it with tours, awards, and celebrating the 100 Best Buildings in Utah. We also want to get people out of the office and into the same room more often now that it is safer. For instance, conferences can revitalize and reinvigorate our creativity – they can suggest methods and insulate ideas that find our way into our projects.

The National AIA Conference in Chicago was inspiring. President Obama gave the keynote and spoke to 10,000 architects on the value of good design, referencing the

amazing built environment of his hometown (Chicago). At the same conference, Studio Gang's Jeanne Gang talked about how buildings can create community, and she gave an example by talking about a police station's design. Police stations are traditionally isolated. You can feel the power and that can be off-putting. To change public perceptions about police work, Studio Gang designed the building differently, proposing that police stations become community centers and provide a safe place where people are welcome. Architects are putting their ideas into action in Chicago's North Lawndale neighborhood.

#### **How and why did you get involved in a leadership role at AIA?**

In the past, I've served as the treasurer and a board member. I've also been treasurer for the Utah Center for Architecture (UCFA). Now, it is my turn to step up and guide the association. Last year, as president-elect, I was in charge of the fall conference. Next year I will plan the golf tournament. I really enjoy working with my peers from other architectural firms on joint projects. Our design community has so much intelligence and talent, and we don't often get to collaborate. Involvement in AIA Utah can be stimulating.

#### **What do you plan to accomplish during the remainder of your term? What are the biggest problems currently facing AIA?**

Now that we have moved into an endemic mode, we want to serve members by providing them with a voice, education and advocacy. People are still struggling from the isolation the pandemic caused, but committees can provide purpose by promoting renewal. We held a strategic planning session in March and developed goals centered around "helping architects be better architects."

We are working with our members' firms and with allied professions in the A/E/C industry to encourage stronger involvement and participation in activities. Additionally, we are strengthening our ties with the University and revitalizing the Young Architects Forum. We want the younger generation to connect, and we want to help talent stay local.

For instance, in the fall, I will teach a graduate-level studio class at the AIA office. Its purpose is to connect students to the profession with a real project. The class will begin in mid-August when the semester starts. The class will give students a true experience of what it's like to be an architect. I will be bringing in guest speakers from the industry, including structural, civil, and MEP Engineers.

#### **What would you like to say in summary to the AIA members who will be reading your article?**

We decided that right now, it's all about connecting and reconnecting people. We also want to connect with students and help architects adjust to being back in the office. We want to provide networking opportunities. We want to help architects enjoy their jobs, be successful, and create community again. 🌟

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Learn more about the **Guest House at Graceland Resort** project at [aiacontracts.org/aiachapter](http://aiacontracts.org/aiachapter)

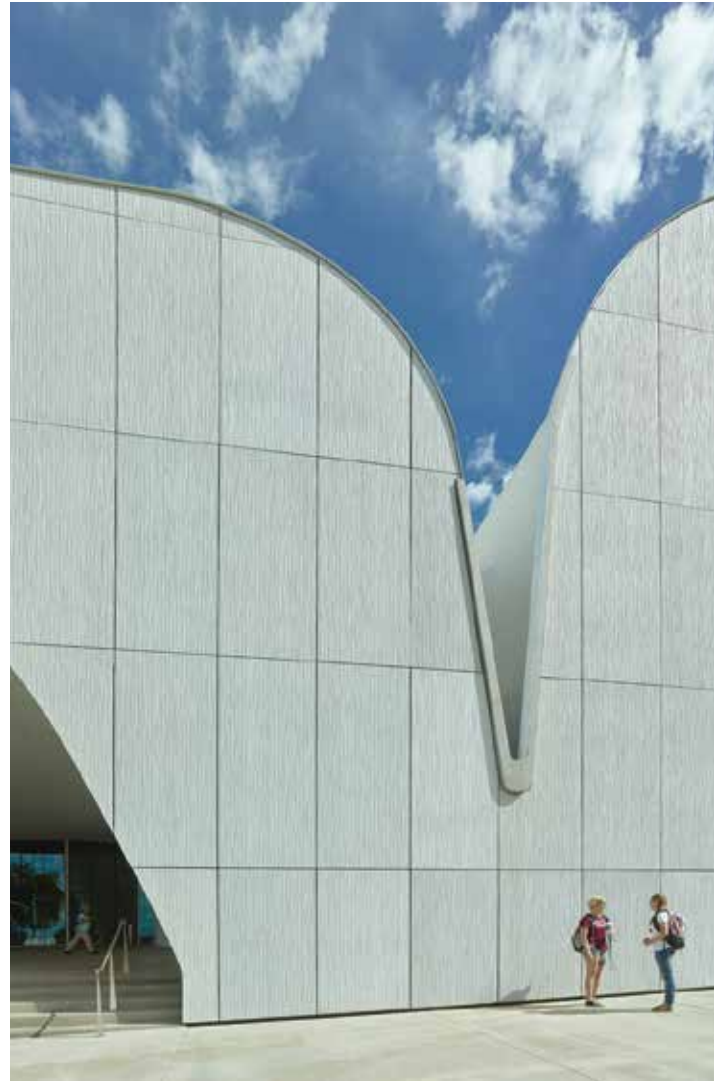
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Project \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_

AGREEMENT made as of the \_\_\_\_\_  
in the year \_\_\_\_\_  
(In words, indicate day, month and year.)

BETWEEN the Architect's client identified as the Owner:  
(Name, legal status, address, and other information)



# AIA Utah Fall Conference 2022 Keynote Speaker: Lawrence Scarpa



**T**he keynote speaker for the AIA Utah Fall Conference 2022 is Lawrence (Larry) Scarpa, FAIA. Larry has won over 200 major design awards for work that makes the “ordinary extraordinary.” His extremely creative work combines environmental sustainability with a strong and playful artistic sense while also honoring people’s need for livability.

Lawrence Scarpa has garnered international acclaim for the creative use of conventional materials in unique and unexpected ways. His firm Brooks + Scarpa is the recipient of multiple international awards including the Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum Award in Architecture and the AIA National Firm Award. He is also the recipient of lifetime achievement awards from Interior Design Magazine and the AIA California Council. Mr. Scarpa has taught at the university level for more than two decades and is currently on the faculty at the University of Southern California.

## **Presentation Title: Ordinary and Extraordinary**

**Presentation Abstract:** Why do we remember buildings, locations, and experiences? Even a place visited in our childhood can conjure emotions that make an impact on us through the memories they create. Lawrence Scarpa will explain the creative process that aspires to make a lasting impression out of even a brief encounter.

Scarpa’s work is deeply rooted in conditions of the everyday and works with our perceptions and preconceptions to allow us to see things in new ways. He does this, not by escaping the restrictions of practice, but by looking, questioning and reworking the very process of design and building, rethinking the way things normally get done — with material, form, construction, even financing — and to subsequently redefine it to cull out its latent potentials — making the “ordinary extraordinary.” The seminar will look at building materials innovation and applications, and how it relates to the architectural design process and sustainable design strategies.

The conference will be held Sept. 27-29, 2022. We hope to see you there! For more information please visit [www.aia.org/events/6522183-2022-aia-utah-annual-conference](http://www.aia.org/events/6522183-2022-aia-utah-annual-conference). 🌟

# AIA Utah's Kevin Miller:

## From Basic Design to Becoming a Fellow

Kevin Miller, FAIA, is the president and CEO of GSBS Architects and recently became a Fellow of AIA. Kevin started working at GSBS in 1988 after earning his master's degree in architecture at the University of Utah College of Architecture + Planning.

AIA Utah interviewed Kevin about his life, career, the importance of having a membership in AIA Utah, the award ceremony and some of his favorite projects.



Left-Right: Kevin Miller, FAIA (2022) and Michael J. Stransky, FAIA (1993)

**K**evin Miller is a Utah native who grew up in Olympus Cove. He left Utah after high school to attend a private liberal arts college in California that is now called Claremont McKenna College. Kevin spent two years in California. Although he thought he might become a lawyer, he had trouble deciding what to do professionally. “I know a lot of attorneys, especially those who focus on construction law,” he said. “The way their brains work is fascinating, but I am doing the right thing. My interest in the legal aspects of architecture is an outgrowth of my interest in the law, but I would not have enjoyed practicing law the way I enjoy architecture.” His parents suggested that he attend the University of Utah until he figured out his direction.

At that point, Kevin was a college junior. He wanted to take Introduction to Architecture as his Fine Arts prerequisite. The class was full, so he asked what else was available and signed up for a three-class series called Basic Design. The first class was about black and white, the second was about color, and the third was about 3D. “I thought the series sounded like a good idea even though it was a big commitment. It was a bit by chance that I took it, but it lit my fire and has given complete form to my life professionally,” said Kevin. “I wasn’t convinced I could be an architect until that series changed my mind.”

Kevin got involved in AIA Utah as a student, serving as AIAS President in his final year of graduate school. He was also a student member of the Salt Lake City R/UDAT (Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team) that occurred in the spring of 1988. R/UDAT is a public service program of the national AIA. It is “a results-driven community design program” based on the principles of interdisciplinary solutions, objectivity and public participation. The program combines local resources with the expertise of a multidisciplinary team of nationally recognized professionals who volunteer their time to identify ways to encourage desirable change in a community. The



recommendations of the 1988 Salt Lake City R/UDAT resulted in the policy changes that led to the development of Salt Lake's near-west side, including the establishment of an Arts and Entertainment District, what became the Gateway Mall, and ultimately the Granary District. Like everybody else in graduate school, he also took Pro Practice. Craig Coburn taught him (and sent him a note later to congratulate Kevin when he was elevated to Fellow).

When Kevin graduated, the U.S. was coming to the end of a recession, and jobs were difficult to come by. Kevin had interviewed and dropped off his resume at different companies but says he "could not find a gig." However, he knew Stephen Smith of GSBS "from a previous life," and participating in AIA Utah as a student allowed him to become acquainted with other GSBS principals: David Brems and Mike Stransky. They offered him a job when he was getting ready to graduate, and Kevin has been at GSBS ever since.

After Kevin joined the firm, he found that everyone eligible was expected to join AIA. GSBS encouraged AIA involvement with time, money and moral support.

Three months after he arrived, GSBS laid off 12 people. "I hoped they kept me because I was intelligent, working hard and doing well," said Kevin, "but now I recognize that I was probably the cheapest guy in the room." However, the layoff created opportunities for those who remained. They had been a middling-sized firm before the layoff, and now they were small enough that everyone did much more of everything. Kevin found he was exposed to different aspects of the practice and had the opportunity to take on responsibility. The firm has grown since then, but Kevin still benefits from the understanding he gained of the company, its culture and everything that makes GSBS what it is.

Although Kevin was initially an associate, he could finally call himself an architect and put AIA after his name when he got his license. "That was a moment of arrival," said Kevin. "It's what you strive for. And now, being able to put FAIA after my name is humbling. I am pleased and proud about it."

For the first couple of years after Kevin was hired, he worked directly with all four primary principals and three or four other senior architects. This opportunity occurred because the company values mentoring and also because of GSBS's size. Abe Gillies, another principal, was an especially important mentor to Kevin because they saw the world the same way. Abe was a wise and knowledgeable man. He made time for Kevin, brought him along, counseled him, and put him in situations where he could grow. "I hope my actions live up to what Abe did when he was here," said Kevin. Mike Stransky and Stephen Smith also invested their time in Kevin. "Virtually everybody I interact with has influenced how I look at and practice architecture," said Kevin. "They helped shape the architect that I am now."

Kevin became a shareholder in 1998. Of the founders who hired him, David Brem is the only one who is still an active

practitioner, design principal and board member. The other three have retired.

Kevin thinks AIA membership is important for several reasons. The relationships he built as a student helped him secure a job after he graduated, but Kevin also sees AIA as the vehicle by which architects enhance their profession. "Even though we all compete daily, there is a big picture responsibility to make the world better and improve it for architects, too," he said. "Architects are not historically great at self-promotion, and the way we are valued is not commensurate with our contributions. AIA is an important vehicle to change that situation."

Kevin found his place in AIA on the national level. "I was engaged in my career and relatively introverted," said Kevin. "I didn't have much involvement because AIA didn't seem like my cup of tea. But agreements, and the underlying structure of how they were held together, interested me. My former boss and partner, Mike Stransky, got me on the documents committee in 2008. I didn't know he applied for me until I received a congratulatory email."

There are 24-34 members on the contract documents committee, depending on where the committee is on the cycle of document redrafts. "We have very similar interests, and we became friends," said Kevin. "There are usually a certain group of people in a practice who are interested in contracts. But when they are interested, they are really interested. Those are the ones who do well on the committee."

One of the committee leaders asked Kevin to speak at a New Orleans convention. "I thought it would be good for me, and it was, but it was also hard," said Kevin. "I've made presentations about risk management and contracts more than 30 times. I was more comfortable after 30 presentations, even though speaking was still tricky. Enthusiasm overcomes introversion. It is easy to talk when I am passionate about the subject, and I have a great deal of passion for helping practitioners practice in better ways and manage their risk."

There are six objects of nomination for AIA Fellows. Kevin was made a fellow because of Object Three, which has to do with leadership within the institute. "My contributions to the contract documents program influenced the construction industry," said Kevin. "The assignment is usually a 10-year hitch, but they held me over for 14 years. I was the chair in 2015 and 2016 while we were doing the run-up to the 2017 document release."

The pandemic made it impossible to have an FAIA ceremony for two years. Although some people were elevated to fellowship, they had no convention, ceremony or investiture. The medal came in the mail. When AIA was able to have a convention again, the FAIA awards ceremony was held in the historic Auditorium Theatre in downtown Chicago with

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its great acoustic space. “It’s a pageant,” said Kevin. “We had robes and medals and lots of handshaking. My wife and two of my three adult children made the trip out to see it. Mike Stransky and his wife also came to celebrate, as did current and former partners and their spouses. It was really something, and I am at a loss for words to describe it except to say it was fabulous and very humbling. You look around the room at the other people with their lists of accomplishments and wonder what on earth you are doing there. Compared to them, working on some contracts for 14 years doesn’t seem like that big a deal, but maybe they look at me and feel the same way about what I did.”

Kevin knows most of the 23 current practicing or emeritus AIA Fellows in Utah, including GSBS’s Mike Stransky, David Brems and Stephen Smith. “They set the standard for what AIA involvement at this firm ought to be,” said Kevin. “But my involvement is at the national level and has been for nearly 15 years. I found my niche working on documents. As a result, many of the Fellows I know are around the country. A lot are involved with the documents committee and ultimately become Fellows as well.”

As president of GSBS, Kevin does less architecture than he used to, but he is proud of the work he did on the speedskating oval for the Winter Olympics. He has also worked on many public safety buildings and done a lot of justice facility work, including the new state prison. “When you work on jails, courthouses and police work, the work is

As president of GSBS, Kevin does less architecture than he used to, but he is proud of the work he did on the speedskating oval for the Winter Olympics. He has also worked on many public safety buildings and done a lot of justice facility work, including the new state prison.

often focused on negatives: housing and punishment. The new prison has been an opportunity to move the needle on how justice works, and we think that project has a good chance of positively changing the lives of people who are there. We’ve designed it to encourage positive change. That is a big deal to me because our justice system is not working. The recidivism rate is more than 80%. We need to find a different way of impacting people so that breaking the law is not such common behavior.”

As Kevin finished the interview, he said, “I live by the philosophy that you are not allowed to complain unless you are willing to invest in changing the situation. The way we can solve problems is through the AIA. Our profession will only improve if we invest in it, our projects and our practices.” 🌟

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# President Barack Obama Appears at the AIA Conference on Architecture 2022

BY GREG MENTI

The 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama, headlined AIA's Conference on Architecture 2022 on Friday, June 24, in Chicago. He sat in conversation with AIA President Dan Hart, FAIA, where they discussed a wide variety of topics including his relationship to architecture, the issues facing the country, advice for architects and much more.

A longtime Chicago resident, President Obama reveled in the energy of his hometown by sharing anecdotes and wisdom gleaned from his eight years as President of the United States of America.

Much of the conversation revolved around President Obama's relationship with many of AIA's strategic priorities, including the link between environmental issues and social justice.

"Chicago is a case study of times architecture reinforced inequity," he said, citing lower-income housing in the city that wasn't energy efficient and didn't "give a lot of thought to how people live," particularly in the winter.

"Good planning and skilled architects are needed, but this is where government policy makes a difference. Sprawl in America isn't good for our climate, so we have to think about how we create a liveable density that allows us to take mass transit and allows us to take bicycles and foot traffic," he said. "It's not just lack of funding for affordable housing, frankly some very well-intentioned laws and regulations at the local level, often generated from the left and my own party, sometimes are inhibiting the creation of affordable housing and empowering NIMBY attitudes that make it very difficult to integrate communities."

He also looked inward at his experience with architecture and explained that at one point in his life the President wanted to be an architect. He also gave advice to architects that listening to the community can impact their work.

"The single most important thing I learned and carried through my entire career is listening to people. Turns out you don't learn that much talking, but you do learn a lot listening," President Obama said. "If people feel as if you're actively listening and care about their stories and lives, they will tell you what's important to them and who they are. That applies to every profession, including architecture."

"The gesture of interest that can then inform design is something that anyone can do," he added.

President Obama looked back on his time in the White House and discussed both the high points and low points of his presidency.

The passing of the Affordable Care Act was a highlight for President Obama, adding that he enjoyed a cold martini on the Truman Balcony at the White House with staff who worked on the legislation after it was codified into law.

The Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Connecticut was the lowest point of his time in office.

"That was a low point in waves. There was the shock of what had happened. There was me traveling to try to comfort parents to whom this had just happened," he said. "It was the only time I saw Secret Service members cry on the job," adding that he also felt fury at Congress for not doing anything to pass tighter gun control legislation.

He reflected on the state of the country and looked at some of the biggest challenges that the country faces, and why he thinks there's a need for the public to focus on facts again.

"Everyone used to be working off the same base of facts. Now if you read the New York Times you occupy a different world than if you watch Fox News," he said. "Think about what's happening with the January 6th Commission and hearings taking place in the House. If you're watching it, you're seeing one set of facts and if you're watching Tucker Carlson you are seeing a very different set of facts."

The President's appearance at A'22 coincides with ongoing work at The Obama Presidential Center, an architecture project in the city's Jackson Park neighborhood, a South Side neighborhood located mere miles from his speech at the McCormick Place Convention Center.

The project, which broke ground in September 2021, is designed by AIA Architecture Firm Award winners Tod Williams and Billie Tsien Architects. It will feature a museum that will emphasize "the fullness of the American story," ample public space designed as a community gathering area, a new branch of the Chicago Public Library, and much more.

President Obama's wife, First Lady Michelle Obama previously headlined the 2017 AIA Conference on Architecture in Orlando, Florida.

A more comprehensive report of President Obama's appearance at A'22 is forthcoming.🌍

# Getting to Know Cory Alder – President of Alder Sales Corporation

Cory Alder is president of Alder Sales Corporation, title sponsor – and valued friend – of AIA Utah. As title sponsor, Alder Sales Corporation enjoys supporting the community. Like AIA Utah, they also believe in the goal of a better-built environment. By partnering with the AIA, Alder’s unique conscientiousness assists the community in expanding the quality of life.

AIA Utah recently interviewed Cory about the company, its history and future direction.



## **Why did the company’s founding members decide to start the company?**

Alder’s started as a restaurant supply company during the Great Depression. George Alder had been working in that business, and the company he worked for failed. He and his four sons decided they would open their own business out of the necessity of needing a job. They were successful in the restaurant supply business until the early 1950s. However, in the late 1930s, they started a division selling architectural specialty products like accordion doors. The restaurant supply business began to slow down in the early 1950s, and the family focused their efforts on architectural products.

## **All the founding members were Alders. What was their family relationship with each other?**

G. Alfred Alder founded the company with his four sons, Lin, George, Don and Gerald. Each gave their attention to the business; however, other interests came along at different

times for Lin, Gerald and George. My grandpa Don was the one who ended up staying with the business.

## **Please tell us about the history of Alder Sales Corporation. In particular, what would you like to say about the three generations that came before you?**

Don was my grandfather. After the passing of his father, he started the process of buying out his three brothers. That buyout was completed in the 1960s. My father was the youngest of five children. His older siblings chose not to be in the family business. My dad started working at Alder’s at the age of 18. As my dad was the youngest sibling, his parents were aging out of the business, and my dad was asked to take over at a very young age. With the help of very good mentors in and out of the business, he took the company into steady 40-year growth. He acquired more product lines and expanded our footprint into the surrounding states of Nevada, southeastern Idaho and western Wyoming.





We know we are partnered with the very best manufacturers in the industry. Their ideals and goals align with ours, and we have long-term and successful partnerships with each one. This approach allows us to stand behind everything we do and gives architects the confidence that we will perform for their clients.

**What has each job you've held contributed to your understanding of your company?**

The requirement my dad gave me was to work my way up and prove myself. When I was in high school, I worked part-time in the warehouse. During college, I spent an entire summer on our service crews. After graduating from BYU, I worked on job sites and installed products. These experiences gave me a true appreciation for how the process works. I learned how our installation crews dealt with issues on job sites that aren't on the shop drawings. I also learned how important job site safety is. We have always taken that very seriously, and after spending a couple of years on job sites, I will continue that tradition always.

**The company website lists your products as daylighting solutions, space management solutions, fire and smoke containment, and commercial openings. What would you like architects to know about each of these products other than what is on the website?**

We know we are partnered with the very best manufacturers in the industry. Their ideals and goals align with ours, and we have long-term and successful partnerships with each one. This approach allows us to stand behind everything we do and gives architects the confidence that we will perform for their clients.

**Why did the company choose to focus on these products?**

We found that these products go to market in the same fashion; we help architects detail and specify each product. All these products require factory-trained technicians to ensure proper installation and function. In addition, our company services and maintains all our products for the life of the building. We have two full-time service technicians who only focus on ensuring that our products operate to the highest standards. For example, our technicians still service operable walls my grandfather installed in the 1950s!

**What are the advantages of working with commercial organizations?**

We have found our products lead us in that direction.

**Did you always intend to join the family company? Please tell us about your decision.**

I knew from the time I was little that I wanted to be a part of this company. I always enjoyed working alongside my dad, and I knew it was something I would want to do for my career. I also saw how much my dad loved doing this for a living, and I knew I would want to find that same joy.

**How has your perspective about the company changed as you have grown up, held positions within the company, and become president?**

As a child, I only saw the benefits of a family business. I didn't see the long hours and sacrifices my parents put into it. As I have grown inside the company, I have seen those long days and hours and what this company means to so many other people. We have such a great core of employees that make this company go. I now also see the time and efforts put in by everybody in our company. As I started shadowing my dad around the office, I also learned of the great joy he got from watching everyone around him succeed. He loved seeing people grow and better their lives, personally or financially. He just loved seeing those in our company thrive.

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**Working on the new Salt Lake International Airport must have been an important project. Please tell us about it.**

This project was not only an important one for us, but the largest scale daylighting project our company has ever handled. The sheer size and scale of the skylights and canopies led to our being tasked with supplying and installing all the daylighting panels and other scopes, such as proper air venting in the parking garage atrium space. We also ensured our systems complied with seismic movements required by code.

**What are a few other projects the company is particularly proud of? You have some pictures on your website about some of them. What would you like to say about these projects?**

We are, of course, proud of all projects we have been a part of. One project that sticks out is the original construction of the Salt Palace in 1983 and the subsequent additions. All those phases have played a big role in where we are currently in the operable wall market because of our expertise in dividing convention space.

**Your website highlights Bob Holbrook, Scott Lewis and Reuben Payzant. Is there anything else you would like to add to that information about them?**

Bob Holbrook and Reuben Payzant were two great mentors for my dad when he took over the business at a young age. Scott Lewis is our business consultant who has helped my father and me deal with changing business climates.

One project that sticks out is the original construction of the Salt Palace in 1983 and the subsequent additions. All those phases have played a big role in where we are currently in the operable wall market because of our expertise in dividing convention space.

**And finally, please tell us about your plans for the company.**

Our goal is to handle the highest quality products and provide a place where we can help people and families in our community grow and better their lives. I plan to continue that legacy. We have grown our company's footprint in the last few years into different markets. In 2004 we expanded into the Las Vegas market, and in 2020, we opened an office in the Boise market. We always look to add quality and reliable products that align with our ideals and the architects' ideals. Our ultimate goal is to direct the client to what meets their needs in our markets. 🌱



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# Why Awards Are Important for Architects



**A**wards naturally create memorable, defining moments. Recognizing the achievements of others inspires and spurs us to create and contribute in meaningful ways to the conversation and ongoing work in our field. It's refreshing to step outside your experiences to see what others have been doing; it allows you to see your efforts from a new perspective.

Awards are an effective way for peers and outside organizations to recognize the best design work and confirm that projects have been handled effectively and to high standards. Since architecture is a visual art, it is well-suited to an award process. Celebrating wins is gratifying, and it

gives architects the motivation to reach for new goals. Those with an established reputation have a chance to continue contributing to the profession, and mentoring the up-and-coming architects. Those who are new have a chance to gain credibility and introduce new ideas. And sometimes, it's the other way around: the new ideas may come from recognized voices, while younger architects may be the ones to teach everyone else about what is possible.

Great architectural firms are collaborative. Most architectural projects are created as a team, and architectural awards are a way to recognize team members.

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Global and regional awards often highlight broad architectural trends. They can celebrate a body of work, specific achievements, and sometimes the work of people who are not architects.

Each year, AIA Utah recognizes outstanding architects in our community with the following awards:

- Special Design Recognition Award
- Merit Award
- Honor Awards

There are also several highly prestigious awards familiar in architectural circles. For example, AIA has more than 30 award programs. The top award is the **Gold Medal**, awarded to an individual or pair of architects who have created a practical and theoretical legacy. It is an international award and has been awarded to architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Frank Gehry.

Since 1984, the **UIA** has been awarded by the International Union of Architects to living architects. It's the only lifetime achievement award bestowed upon architects by their peers, presented at an awards ceremony at the end of the UIA Triennial World Congress.

The **Pritzker Architecture Prize** is probably the best-known award. People compare it with the Oscars, and others call it the Nobel of Architecture. The Pritzker was founded in 1979 by Jay and Cindy Pritzker, who wanted to encourage public attention to buildings.

The **Architecture MasterPrize**, established in 2016, is a global competition with two categories, professional and student. The award recognizes innovative thinking, new ideas and outstanding design.

The **Aga Khan Award for Architecture** is awarded every three years, which started in 1977, and is an international award recognizing Islamic-oriented projects and preferences.

The Royal Institute of British Architects first recognized notable architecture in 1848 with the **Royal Gold Medal**. RIBA also sponsors other awards, including an International Prize, International Emerging Architect Prize, International Awards for Excellence and the President's Medal for students and

Awards matter and the chance to network with other professionals at awards ceremonies is a plus. Winning an award increases team morale, which is great because architecture depends heavily on teams. Awards can also affect relationships with clients and partners by forging stronger bonds. They create a culture of achievement at firms and nurture pride in projects. They showcase the results of a lot of hard work, increase awareness of where the bar is located and how it can be raised, and provide third-party validation.

recent graduates. The Royal Gold Medal recognizes a body of work, not an individual building.

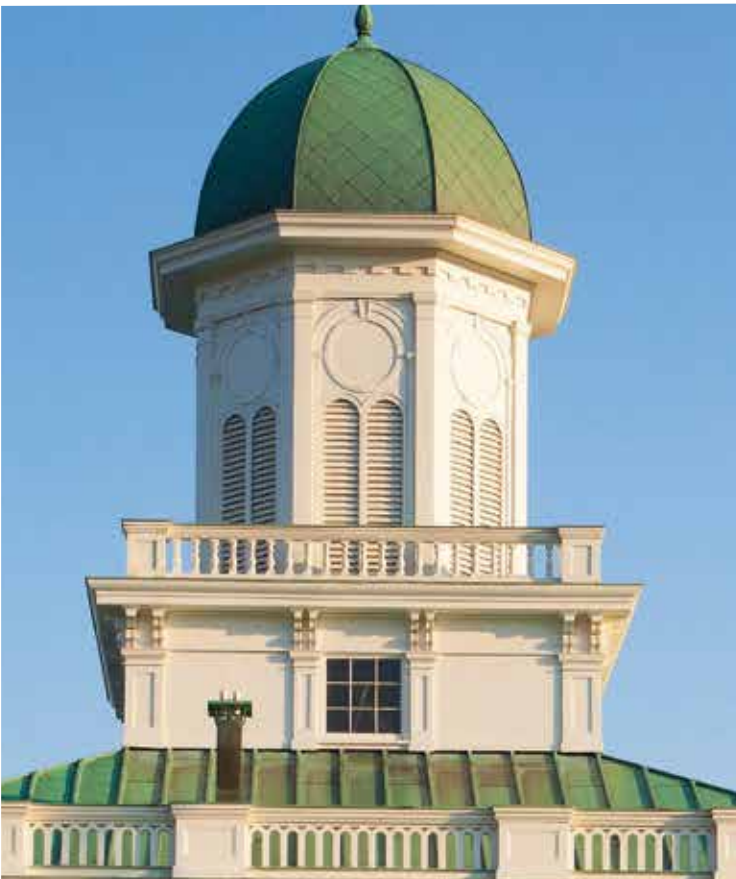
The **Prix Versailles** is a newer award. It started in 2015 and is handed out annually at UNESCO's headquarters. There are seven categories and hundreds of winners. Submitted projects come from many nations.

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To learn more about the awards offered by AIA Utah and AIA, please scan this QR Code:  
<https://www.aia.org/utah>







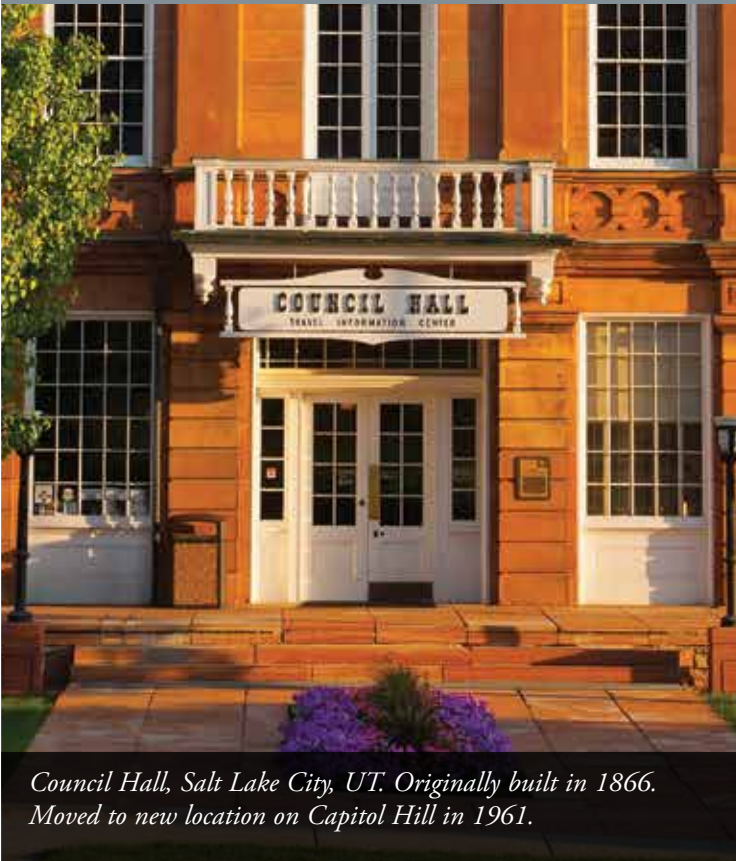
### **Council Hall, Salt Lake City, UT.**

Crafted from beautiful sandstone from Red Butte Canyon under the direction of William H. Folsom in 1866. Originally Salt Lake City Hall and home to the Mayor's offices and the seat of Salt Lake City Government and meeting place for the Utah Territorial legislature. The Rose Room on the second floor served both as a general courtroom and the legislative floor.

To make way for the new courthouse, the building's exterior was dismantled into 325 sandstone slabs. They were numbered and reassembling around all-new woodwork on Capitol Hill. Restoration was done under the direction of Edward O. Anderson and renamed "Council Hall."

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*Council Hall, Salt Lake City, UT. Originally built in 1866.  
Moved to new location on Capitol Hill in 1961.*



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# Interviews with Local Legends

BY FRAN PRUYN

Tony Wegener is an Australian native. When he came to Logan, Utah, in the 1960s to marry his fiancé, the plan was to stay here for five years, get to know her people, and then return home to Australia. He joined a seventy-year-old firm, Schaub Haycock & Associates, in 1966. When the owner retired, Tony and his partners reorganized the firm and renamed it Architectural Design West. The firm is still thriving, and so is Tony. After fifty years in the industry, he is retired and still lives in Logan, but visits Hawaii three weeks out of every year to surf – an addiction he acquired early in Australia.



## Tony Wegener, AIA

### How did you decide to become an architect?

My mother was working in a medical clinic in Perth, Western Australia. I wanted to be a doctor because of being around them. My art teacher took me to one side and said, “You have talent, kid. You need to be an architect.” The doctors I lived with said, “Look, apply yourself to where your talent is.”

I went to school at Perth Technical College. It was a five-year course: three years full-time and two years part-time. I worked

four days a week, and went to school one day a week and two nights a week. So, I had the practical experience at the same time we were doing the professional experience.

My design teacher was a woman, the first licensed architect in Western Australia. She was licensed in the 1920s, and she was fabulous. The first three years, we feared her, and the last two years, we loved her. We feared her because she dumped one design assignment on top of another design assignment, and we had no idea what we were doing until we learned by doing it. Sort of like riding a bicycle; you can't tell someone how to ride a bicycle. You can coach them if they trust you. And we trusted her.

The state paid for my education. I got a scholarship, but I had to work for the state for four years after I graduated. Turns out I only worked one year for the state. I joined the LDS Church [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints] when I was 20, and I got called on a mission as an architect for the church, so I worked in Sydney for almost two years with the worldwide program building one-and-a-half chapels a day. We did about 15 meeting houses, and I got to travel all over Australia to construction sites.

### How did you move from Perth to Logan, Utah?

The short story is I met a girl from Logan, Utah, in Sydney and followed her home.

I was engaged to my wife before she left Australia. She worked in the hospital as a dietitian, then she left and went around the world with her mother. In 1965, when my fiancée got back to the States, I got a tourist visa, and we got married six weeks later. I thought I owed it to my wife to spend a little time in her community, so I applied for a job at Schaub and Haycock. It was a family business that had been in business since 1892. We think it's the longest continuously operating architectural firm west of the Mississippi.



Gene Haycock liked my experience with off-form concrete (there's not a lot of lumber in Australia). He had just received the commission to design the USU football stadium, and they wanted to do that in off-form concrete. He asked me, "Have you ever done anything with off-form concrete?" "Matter of fact, my last job in Sydney was doing a beautiful office building for the Reader's Digest Association." He hired me on the spot.

### **What did it take to get licensed in the U.S.? Were you licensed in Australia?**

I was. Well, I approached somebody on the licensing board about the process, and he said, "I would like you to hold off for a while." And I said, "Why?" And he said, "We are working on a reciprocity agreement between the AIA and the RAIA (Royal Australian Institute of Architects). I would like to use you as a test for this process." I think I was the fifth Australian architect licensed in the United States. I didn't have to take any tests. I just got reciprocity.

### **So, you're working on the USU Football Stadium. Are you thinking, "Now I'm an American," or "I'm going back to Australia?"**

The plan was to work here and get professional experience for about five years. I had no intention of staying, but one thing led to another in terms of work experience.

My only serious attempt to leave was in 1970 when things were bad in Utah. I thought, "I ought to look around." Caudill Rowlett Scott [CRS] in Houston, Texas, was a firm of about 350 people specializing in architecture for education. I wrote them a letter. They invited me to come for an interview. I met Bill Caudill, probably the premier architect in the United States, and he interviewed me.

He said, "I see that you're from Utah. Are you a Mormon?" I said, "Uh, yes, sir. Is that going to be an impediment?" He said, "Not at all. We've got some Mormons working here, and they're good employees, but let me tell you something. I can hire any architect I want in the United States. I can get the best and brightest students from any college, but some aren't worth a damn." Then he went into a litany of all the human problems that people have, "I've got some guys who can't hold their liquor, play around with other guys' wives," he went on and on and on — all the human failings — he said, "Let me tell you something, son. I'm looking for good guys who know their stuff. In that order." And that's been my mantra for years. You might be a great architect, but if you're not a good human being, you are not going to fit in here. That was a lesson learned as a young architect.

### **Did you go to work for them?**

No. They really didn't offer me a job either. I did meet a young architect, Michael Henderson, who was working for CRS in their hospital design division. He had worked for Schaub Haycock in 1961 when he was a student at USU. He went to Rice [University] and got a degree in architecture and was hired by Bill Caudill. He and I decided we would try to make a health care design firm work on Utah.

### **How did the firm evolve from a small family-owned firm to a multi-office concern?**

We were doing K-12 design in Utah and Idaho. I talked to Gene Haycock and said, "When you send me out to meet a school board, the first thing they ask me is 'Where's Haycock?' What we need is a company that doesn't have a personal name in it, so that people don't ask me where the boss is." So we became Design West in 1971, and in 1973 when Michael Henderson returned to Logan, we formed Design West Health Facilities. One of Michael Henderson's associates became the healthcare design leader at HKS Architects in Dallas. When we got our first hospital, they sent us two employees for three months to help us produce that hospital. We had a relationship with them that lasted for at least 30 years.

Gene Haycock, like other older architects, couldn't stand the change and the legalities. We never had contracts when I started. In fact, when I presented a contract to the superintendent of the Cache County School District for the first time, he said, "Tony, if I have to sign that, we will never do business again." All business was done on a handshake. Gene couldn't stand the litigation, the whole "having to have insurance." In 1976, he accepted the job to be the District Architect for the Cache Valley School District and retired from Design West. So, we reorganized.

My partner, Richard Clyde, led the firm toward energy conservation design in the 1970s, which he applied to K-12 design. That led the firm into a twenty-five-year period of innovation through the western states. At one point, we had seven offices located in Utah, Idaho, California, and Washington. We won multiple state and national awards for energy conservation and energy innovation in public architecture.

Many of our healthcare clients were hiring design-build companies. So, we made the business decision to form our own design-build company that did hospitals until 1985, when we lost three partners in a plane crash. One of the guys who died was the president of that company. The three partners we lost in that plane crash were Michael Henderson, Joe Oyler, President of PM-CM, and Richard Clyde, who was our number one education facility designer, and my best friend.

That was tragic. We say in this company that we are survivors. Our founder, K.C. Schaub, was a survivor. I've traced all the ups and downs; even in the 1890s, there were downturns. He survived. There's been lots of ups and downs, but 1985 was really hard, followed by 1987, which was another downer in the economy. In 1985, on the day after we lost our partners, Ron Skaggs, the president of HKS, flew up to Logan, put his arm around me and said, "Don't make any fast moves. The entire resources of HKS are behind you," and that was a wonderful professional thing.

### **And what did you learn through that process?**

To keep going. I spent about two years after that in a funk; just, I couldn't see any point in the struggle. I was just going through the motions, but I was the president of the company. Then one day I had been trying to get an appointment with a

► — continued on page 22

developer. I'd call his secretary and she'd say, "Give me a few weeks and I'll call you back."

Finally, she said, "He will see you, but go to the University of Utah Medical Center to see him," because he had an accident on a trampoline and broke his neck. I went to see him not knowing really what I was going to say. I didn't know that he was paralyzed until they wheeled him up in a wheelchair. And he looked at me and said, "Mr. Wegener, you can begin."

So, I just talked to him about what I wanted to talk to him about, and he said, "Thank you very much." And I left. I've never seen him again. And yet he's my hero because I realized, here's a guy who's still working. Work is important. From that point on, I got my mojo back and decided to give it my very best.

### **What happened?**

We made it. It was hard. We let half our people go. We had formed several affiliated companies, including the design-build firm, and they were dissolved. We focused on architecture. We continued to do schools in California and the west, and we did lots of hospital work for Intermountain Healthcare.

Then I got into student housing and positioned us to do the 2002 Winter Olympic Village, which then was the biggest project ever awarded by the State. After that, we got into military housing. We did half a billion dollars of military housing with a local contractor with whom we won design-build contracts for the Air Force. One day we were invited to Colorado Mesa University. We made a presentation and were selected. We worked for them for 11 years, until my retirement. We did a lot of student housing and classroom buildings for university work. It was wonderful.

### **Tell us about your design philosophies, and changes you have seen in architecture since you began in the sixties.**

One of my clients' employees gave him an article about design thinking. The article was about Stanford's design school, which had started in 1969, the same year HKS came out with their "Problem Seeking Problem Solving Techniques and Design by Team" which we adopted. 1969 was a formative year in architecture for me.

My client said, "Tell me about this design thinking." And I said, "Okay," but first I flew to Stanford and spent the day in the Design Thinking Lab, which was fascinating. There was not a single computer there. It was all about learning to collaborate and cooperate and communicate, verbally and graphically. I was blown away. I mean, that's how I learned architecture. I learned by doing and communicating.

When I started in 1958, I did all my drafting in ink on linen, using ruling pens. The founder of our firm began in 1892, and nothing had changed in the way he practiced or prepared drawings, construction documents in 1958, when he died. Since then, everything has changed.

Rapidographs replaced ruling pens and then overlay drafting became the forerunner of computer drafting and design. Then the computers came online. I tried to learn CADD, but I was the marketing manager, not in production. And so I got left behind. When I would pull out a drafting board and start doing some things, people would come and watch me. I've kind of regretted that I didn't take the time, but there were plenty of others who had that capability.

### **What do you think is a good building?**

We've done a lot of good designs that our clients are very happy with. But that was never our objective, our objective was to have a firm that served our needs first, made us feel good, but also made our clients feel good.

Richard Clyde did a wonderful elementary school in St George. It was a marvelous school. His clients loved it. They did a middle school, and they didn't even invite him to propose for it. He came to me almost in tears saying, "Why do we do this? I've just busted buns for a school that's got all kinds of awards, national energy awards, and they didn't even invite me."

It was an epiphany. I said, "Richard, you do your best for your own self-respect. You do your best for your client. If you do your best for your own self-respect, your client will be well-served. But don't do your best hoping to get rewards from a corporate client or a school board because they're fickle. So do your best for yourself." That's our firm approach. We created a company people want to join and, if we do our best, then our clients will be well-served.

### **Do you have any advice for people starting in the business today.**

I have loved being an architect, just loved getting up in the morning to go to work, even when I was 75. I loved getting up to work on a proposal for a project that we didn't win.

This is such a wonderful profession. It's so broad – there are so many pieces to it that anyone can find a niche in which they can be successful and happy. Not every architect has to be a wonderful designer. There's room for everybody. I tell people I loved it all: from marketing to design to construction documents to working in the field.

It's been a privilege and a pleasure to work in Utah. Because at least I never ran into graft and corruption ever. No one ever offered me a bribe; I never accepted one. Someone told me, "You were just too dumb to notice," but I think it's been refreshing. ☺

To watch the full interview, please scan this QR code:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zc3yq63Chy8>







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# Interviews with Local Legends

BY FRAN PRUYN



## Burke Cartwright, AIA

### When did you decide to become an architect?

I was 14 years old in Northern California. I had a paper route [and] I made enough money to buy a '56 Chevy, but it needed work. So, I got this job with a speed shop, to work on this car. But my mother stopped me as I went out the door and said, "Burke, I always thought of you as being an architect." Well, this was new to me. "So, I got you a job with a friend of mine, an architect, and I want you to go try that." I wasn't sure that's what I want to do but I figured I could always work part-time at the speed shop. So, I go to work for this architect, and I had to do whatever needed to be done. I ran a lot of blueprints, but what I found was they were a creative bunch of people, and they were very accepting of me.

It was so damn much fun that I thought, "There is something to this." After I got to high school, I started to move around. I worked for three or four architects in the area. I was looking at the blueprints and I saw: this is a plan, this is a section, this is an elevation. And I thought, "I think I could do that." And so, I asked, "Is it okay if I draw some of these?" I was kind of good at that, and, and I found a certain joy in it. I've only had two jobs. I delivered a paper and I worked for architects.

I was accepted to Berkeley, but the school was so packed that you had to take all these other classes before you could get into the architectural program. I didn't have time for

that. And they said, "They've got a pretty good school at the University of Utah." So, I came out here.

### What is your undergraduate degree in?

In journalism. Let me tell you how difficult that was. I don't know how to spell. So here I am, in journalism, and I can't spell, but when I got to the graduate program, I was in my element, and I enjoyed it very much. In fact, I almost didn't want to leave, but I needed to get out there, get a job and stuff.

In the summers and even during the early years, I worked for some of the firms here in town. I worked for MHTN, and Brixen and Christopher for a while, and for Frank Ferguson with Ray Kingston. And the summer of my last year before I graduated, I went to San Francisco and worked for Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons. It's kind of a prestigious firm.

I lived in Sausalito but needed to go to San Francisco to work. I would ride my bike down to the ferry at Sausalito, take the ferry to San Francisco and walk to their office. This was a very civilized way to go to work. They told me to be at work by 8:30. I got there the first day at 8:15. They had an all-open environment. When you walk in, everybody sees that you've shown up. And they were already there working. I thought I was on time. On the second day of work, I was late, and I thought, maybe I should walk through the back door because it was almost nine. And sure enough, I walk in with these boots on this wooden floor, and everybody turns around, and here's the new kid. "Who does he think he is?" It took us a while to sort that out. By the time the summer was over, we had come to an agreement that I would try the best I could to get to work on time and it never quite worked out, but they said, "We want you to come back when you finish school."

I said, "Yeah, maybe I'll come back." So, I go back to school and graduated, but in 1972 there was no work in California. In Salt Lake, everything was booming. Edwards and Daniels had work at the time, and Ralph and Judd were very nice. They brought me in. I explained to them that I was only here for a year, and when things picked up, I was going back to California. As it turned out, I never made it back. I stayed. I enjoyed working here.

I hadn't worked there for three weeks and I got a call from Frank Ferguson. They had just got the Symphony Hall project. Frank said, "Come on over, we want you to help on Symphony Hall." I said, "It's a great project. I'll be there." So, I have to go back to EDA and say, "Ralph, I'm sorry but this is an opportunity, and I'm not going to be here forever anyway, and this is a project that might be fun to work on." He said, "Burke, you can't go chasing around every single great job. You can't go bouncing around. We're going to take good care of you. We want you here." I had to go tell Frank, "Thank you but, I'm going to have to pass."





Jud Daniels and Burke Cartwright

Frank Ferguson is a no-nonsense sort of designer. He is simple. Simple is powerful when it comes to design; simple is enduring. So simple is just basically better. And he understood that very, very well. It's hard to do things simple. If you can do it, you have more enduring building. We do a lot of buildings, but are they architecture? We do a building: the roof doesn't leak; we can find the front door and all the exit signs work. You know, those things must happen. And they are important things to have to happen. But are they brought to the level of a piece of architecture? Sometimes; sometimes not. There are a thousand buildings before you get to one piece of architecture. Abravanel Hall is a piece of architecture.

### How did your career evolve? Why did you stay in Salt Lake City?

I tell you why: I was given some nice projects to work on.

I was given the responsibility to design the initial '81 expansion of the Salt Palace on South Temple. I was excited. It was a big project. I'm a young guy; 25 or 26 years old and I've got to go in and make this first initial presentation to the client. This is what is so wonderful, magic, about this work. It is what keeps you coming back. You've got all the drawings, you've got the design, and it's the first time the client sees it. There's this certain joy that takes place when you reveal this project. They've been waiting for it. You're wanting to be sanctioned, that you've done the right thing. And when they see it, they get excited about it. I tell you, it's compelling, and then you get to do this again and again on every project.

Then as Judd and the firm got older, we were making way for a new generation to take over. I was offered the position of principal in the firm a year and a half after I was there. That might have been a ploy to keep me from wandering off, and it worked, so I stayed. Those guys were moving on. My responsibilities got larger. Good people came in. We had

The buildings I like best that I've done are simple. I don't do a lot of fussy details. It is going to be a relevant building for a long time.

Peter Emerson involved; Peter's a wonderful leader. John Shuttleworth ... So, the firm kind of evolved from Ralph and Judd to Peter and me and John and others.

With that evolution comes the fact that all this joyous work, like designing buildings got throttled back because now you've got to go out and get work. You've got to prepare. Preparing for interviews is half the thing now that architects do. I didn't like preparing interviews. I didn't like to take the time.

And then the last seven or eight years, I could back off and enjoy myself a little bit more – to pick the projects and spend as much time as I could mentoring people. My mentoring role was very fulfilling. I felt like we contributed to the community. I feel good about my body of work; I felt like we had a lot of good people come on up to keep the big story going.

### What are you particularly proud of?

The one that stands out is the 2002 Olympic ski jump, bobsled, luge and interpretive buildings. The project had a cast of thousands. I think it is a pretty good building. It's not really a building. It's a built environment. It was an opportunity to work on a building type that there are only a few of in the whole world; so, you can work on a unique building type and put it in a context of a unique spot in Utah. The ski jumps were cut into the hill instead of these ski jumps like in Europe where they're sitting on top of the hill and are on stilts. By doing that, it didn't seem too much in your face. It also allowed the prevailing winds to come around and blow up the jump so that these jumpers could go for further on the building.

Programmatically the building was simple. There's one front door and there's only really one way out – down the hill. Otherwise, you must walk back up. It was an appropriate building. It was laid out well on the hill. The buildings I like best that I've done are simple. I don't do a lot of fussy details. It is going to be a relevant building for a long time.

I still like Governors Plaza. There are a lot of things that went wrong because developers took money out of it. It could have been a better building, but it was an appropriate building on South Temple. A developer tore down a historic building on that site, in the middle of the night because the city was going to file an injunction preventing it from being torn down the next day. Before they did it, he bulldozed the building so he could build an office building where this old house was.

There was no way after that bad behavior that he was going to get approval from the Historic Landmarks Commission to build anything, so he sold it to another developer. That

► — continued on page 26

developer came to us. They said, “We want a couple of office buildings here.”

“Well, okay, we're on South Temple. This has a lot of history. What's an appropriate building? Are we going to put up some pretend brick and some pretend carriage lights on it and stick it on the street?” That didn't seem right. So, I called my future partner, Peter Emerson, who did a thesis on South Temple. “Peter, what is your thesis telling you about South Temple?” Peter says, “All those mansions were modern buildings at the time: modern materials, good materials. One of the most important things is that they had open space around it.” So, we designed a building that had open space in the front.

“Let's make a plaza there. Let's step the building from a little building on the left. We can go a little higher to the building on the right. Let's get the massing right. Let's make it out of modern materials.”

Ralph Edwards wasn't sure that was going to fly, but we took it to the Historic Landmarks Commission and explained it that way. They said, “We totally agree with you. We don't want to see pretend old-fashioned buildings.” I like that building, it probably wasn't well-received. A lot of money was taken out of it. It could have been a little bit better, but it was a no-frills thing.

### Disappointments?

The Salt Palace we did in '81. The lobby was right next door to Symphony Hall, just 20 feet apart. We designed this slick white, form-conscious thing that was a kind of a signature building. It won some AIA awards. But if you look at it in context, there is this white shiny step building, right next to this very elegant symphony hall. Now, what was going on there? Who was showing off there? As time went on, it bothered me that the building was next to that building I really love so much.

So fast forward 25 years. Now the county wants to expand the Salt Palace. It was a design-build competition. The contractor brought us on board because of our experience with the building. We find out that the county wants to expand that section I had done in '81. They also needed about 90,000 square feet of meeting rooms, a big chunk.

They turned it over to four or five teams to come up with a cost estimate and a design for the interview. Looking at the plan for the Salt Palace, there wasn't a lot of room for 90,000 square feet of meeting rooms – which are very important, very lucrative. We're at a design meeting, and I say, “You know where those meeting rooms ought to go?” The contractor says, “Yeah, they have to go right where your lobby is, that big lobby that has been intrusive, has been offending Symphony Hall.”

I figured there might be other teams that came up with that same thing. But at the end of the day, it probably got us the job. So here I had an opportunity to take a disappointment

– that building, which at the time seemed like a good idea. If you're in this business long enough, you finally get to go back and fix these problems. Now, that building we replaced there is just a building, not a piece of architecture. We calmed it down. We simplified it. It matches Symphony Hall.

### Changes in the industry from the time you started?

A lot more women for one thing. It is good for the culture, it's good for creativity, it is good at so many levels. There used to be no women in the offices; now there are a lot of them. I think that the stuffy thing of being this “cape guy up here and the community is down there – the little people” has changed. These buildings are for the community they serve. It's important for us to listen to them and not get so damn full of ourselves.

And then we found out we could use these computers. These computers are very, very powerful. They can be seductive. And with computers, we can understand buildings so well. It makes you wonder, “How did we ever draw these buildings by hand and anticipate all these conditions in the building?” Computers, we know every little inch of it. With creative hands, they can do these structural acrobatics and we can do these visual images that get so seductive we think this is a good thing. We're not stopping to ask ourselves, just because we can draw it and it is beautiful, should we build it? We can go overboard; we cannot keep it simple. So, I think there's a lot of that going on.

Technology has changed everything and now I think we do a better job of engaging with the people who use the building. It's not a good building if the activities that take place in it don't evoke feelings of goodness and meaningfulness. That's more important than how the building looks.

I think we're seeing a lot of interesting buildings, but there needs to be some throttling back. Somebody needs to be in the room saying, “That's wonderful, but let's think about this.” You got to calm that thing down a little bit.

### Advice to a new generation of architects?

Commit to the profession and commit to the work you're doing. The more you commit to it, the more you are going to enjoy it. It has so much to offer. Understand the value of it and the contribution you're making to the community. You're doing a meaningful thing here. It's not a frivolous thing, so don't take it for granted. I feel very good about my career and the ways it's defined my life and the quality of the life it brought me. I have absolutely no regrets. And you shouldn't. 🌟

To watch the full interview, please scan this QR code:  
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# What Mechanical Engineers Want Architects to Know

BY JED LYMAN, P.E.

I recently attended a conference hosted by ACEC of Utah (American Council of Engineering Companies). The keynote speaker for the event was Michael Leavitt, former Governor of Utah, presidential cabinet member, and founder of Leavitt Partners. His emphasis was on collaborative leadership, which for him emerged in the build-up to the 2002 Winter Olympics and the urgency to develop infrastructure that could support the Nations of the Earth for a few weeks.

As governor, he realized the “shared pain” caused by the specter of hosting an event that would place Utah center stage, before the cameras of every major international news outlet, could provide a “provoking moment”. And it did. The collaborative network that unified in response to this urgent need quickly brought projects initially forecast to greatly exceed available budgets and schedules into alignment with these limitations.

While we may not typically deal in projects of this scale or exposure, there is no shortage of shared pain in our industry. Few professions provide stresses commensurate with ours: deadlines set to pacify owners anxious to bid on projects before the next price escalation, and cold facts that impose real costs when designs fail to conform with hard-edged physical realities. And at the center of all of this is the architect: giving form to a client’s dreams, within the constraints of an energy-efficient, code-compliant design, that also provides a safe, comfortable, and quiet interior environment.

It is in that shared pain, that we, as mechanical engineers, can provide some collaborative synergy. And to undergird the collaboration in which we hope to engage, here are some ways an architect can better understand the enigmatic mind of their mechanical engineering consultant.

## Strategic Partnering

As consultants, we seek to understand project goals and capture opportunities to innovate ways to integrate needed systems that support the function of the design without dominating its form. And, contrary to what you might think, mechanical engineers are not trying to negotiate to have the building’s occupied space exist only to serve the needs of our palatial mechanical rooms. In fact, most engineers in architectural consulting, share an appreciation for the process and craft of architecture. We prefer the creativity of this profession to the widget design some of our nerdier classmates pursued. Furthermore, we seek to become more



than commodities by becoming trusted advisors. By forming strategic partnerships that add value to the design, we want to help provide a finished product that thrills our client and our client’s client.

## Mechanical Space Coordination

Within the candor of those strategic relationships, we want to negotiate reasonable space allocation for the systems that provide for the comfort and health of the occupants but are, nonetheless, best unheard and unseen. Mechanical equipment and systems tend to require the most coordination with the architecture of the building: Structure gets placed where it is needed to prevent the building from tipping over; Civil happens outside the envelope where other consultants are vying for space; and, in comparison, electrical systems require much less of the floor plate and the ceiling cavity (transporting electrons at the speed of light has its advantages).



## As consultants, we seek to understand project goals and capture opportunities to innovate ways to integrate needed systems that support the function of the design without dominating its form.

While it would be very economical, and impact building architecture far less, to size ducts and piping like electrical conduits, there are trade-offs:

- Smaller pipes and ducts mean increased resistance to the movement of the air or water they transport ... which means larger pumps and fans and higher energy costs for the fixed amount of heating and cooling needed for the building.
- Increased velocity through smaller ducts and pipes also means potential noise complaints from building occupants (most engineers would rather hear from their doctor that the biopsy was positive than a report of noise on a project).

And, while I'm impressed with the innovative designs seen on YouTube for Van Life Conversions and Ultra-Modern Tiny Houses that pack maximum function into a minimalist form, most facility maintenance personnel do not share that interest when it comes to their mechanical rooms. Here too, trade-offs should be considered.

- The cost of constructing interior mechanical space and subtracting this from the fixed square footage of the building program is a tough sell. But not providing adequate space for maintenance, or a path for the future removal/replacement of equipment causes downstream frustrations for the owner.
- The same is true for equipment and devices located above ceilings. Investing in increased floor-to-floor height and closely coordinating ceiling elevations improve constructability and provide long-term benefits for equipment access and maintenance.
- Also, extremely dense, and congested ceiling cavities reduce the flexibility desired for subsequent remodels.

When coordinating the placement of mechanical shafts, consider the following:

- Having the ability to exit the shaft from multiple sides, reduces the size of the ducts entering the ceiling cavity. For example, if three of the sides are blocked by an electrical room, an elevator shaft, and an outside wall; the ductwork exiting the one remaining side will be much larger than if the airflow could have been distributed from two or more sides. This becomes a more difficult problem when routing ducts for various air types (supply, return and exhaust) and several types of piping out of the shaft.

- Centrally locating shafts results in smaller ducts than shafts placed near the far ends of the floor plate (all the air for the floor originating from one side versus dividing the total airflow near the middle of the floor and sending approximately half each way).

### Early Consulting and Coordination

With our focus on building partnerships, early requests for input on mechanical requirements are always welcome, at any time of day and whether we are under contract or not. Helping set reasonable expectations for the owner upfront is preferred over making requests for additional space later in the design.

Our first requests for coordination are likely familiar to all our clients:

1. Window, wall, and roof values
2. Number of building occupants
3. Equipment and lighting heat loads

This information forms the basis of our heating and cooling load calculations and the sizing of all the equipment and distribution systems that follow. Other important coordination has the architect acting as an intermediary with third parties to acquire criteria for equipment or systems needed for our scope. Some of the most painful construction issues we have faced have been when we have "best guessed" these requirements in the rush to complete documents, instead of more effectively communicating to the architect the impact not having this information might have on the project. Here, communication is always more effective with a strategic partner and in the context of a personal relationship. And to facilitate this, we seek to be proactive, available, and quick to respond.

Being asked to address the title of this article is not without its risks, given the intended audience is our primary client base. Much like responding to a spouse asking "so...what could I do better?" the conversation that ensues might greatly improve the relationship or end with a night spent on the sofa. However, it is hoped that the thoughts offered here might be an opening for further dialogue and an invitation for feedback on how we can be a better part of the design team. 🌀

*Jed Lyman is a Principal at VBFA, where he has worked for the past 24 years. Over its 50-year history, VBFA has provided mechanical, plumbing, fire protection and commissioning services to clients in the intermountain region and around the world. You can contact Jed at [jlyman@vbfa.com](mailto:jlyman@vbfa.com) or 801.530.3148.*

# Total Recall:

## Cognitive Biophilia and the Restorative Impact of Perceived Open Space, Part 2

BY DAVID A. NAVARRETE AND BILL WITHERSPOON

This paper has been divided into two parts, the second part of which appears below. The first part was printed in the last issue of this magazine. The paper describes how growing evidence and research on the multidisciplinary realm of illusions of nature is giving weight to a new field of Cognitive Biophilia and Neuroaesthetics.

**C**an our understanding of cognitive function, as it relates to our sense of space, and the malleability of our body schema, as it relates to our surroundings, give rise to a new technology of cognitive design? Could these fundamental insights into the effects of spatial polarity on cognitive perception shed light on a new design framework? It is believed so.

If we account for how our neurophysiology responds to perceived open space, then we can also, to an extent, modulate the occupant's subjective relationship with time, which, in turn, affects his or her productivity, work satisfaction and health. However, considering the inexorable trend toward large-scale, commercial architecture with their enclosed spaces – particularly in larger cities, where higher population density makes wide-open spaces a scarce resource – architects and designers are challenged to offer occupants the restorative benefits of vast, natural spaces without the physical space to do so.

Where will the architect and designer find the space needed to foster ideal cognitive function? To answer this, we must change the lens through which we frame the problem of space or lack thereof. Rather than search outward, this new design framework must be found where spatial cognition emerges: within the brain.

### Cognitive Biophilia and the Impact of Perceived Open Space

In any environment – natural or artificial, exterior or interior – the zenith, the point in the celestial sphere directly above the observer, and the horizon line, the apparent junction of earth and sky, serve as environmental anchors that shape our experience of space. We must not underestimate the importance of these anchors as visual inputs that structure the spatial awareness essential to our well-being.

To read the first part, please scan the QR code:  
<https://reflexion.thenewslinkgroup.org/total-recall-cognitive-biophilia-and-the-restorative-impact-of-perceived-open-space-part-1/>



*Multisensory Open Sky Compositions engage spatial cognition. © 2018 Sky Factory.*

Architectural scholar Harry Francis Mallgrave notes that our experience of space is immediate and visceral, born of an emotional engagement that is precognitive and largely nonconscious. In his essay, “What designers can learn from the contemporary biological sciences” (included in the book, *Mind in Architecture*), he underscores that newer emotional models recognize that “our emotional responses are strongly integrated with our peripheral autonomic nervous system – that is, the working of our sympathetic and parasympathetic subsystems.”<sup>9</sup>

He goes on to explain that “these subsystems, in turn, are separately wired into the insular cortices in each hemisphere of the brain (a cortical region behind each ear, yet tucked towards the center of the brain). The sympathetic subsystem terminates in the right insula, which is associated with energy expenditure and arousal, while the parasympathetic subsystem terminates in the left insula and is responsive to energy nourishment, relaxation and affiliative emotions.”



## We must not underestimate the importance of these anchors as visual inputs that structure the spatial awareness essential to our well-being.

This neurobiological insight reveals the pre-eminence of our “gut response” to space. Our emotional response is directly wired not just to focused vision, which accounts for a mere 5% of our entire visual field, but also to our peripheral vision, which encompasses 95% of our field of view. In other words, we perceive the general ambiance of any environment through the impact it has on our peripheral vision, which is also tied to our ingrained sense of safety or peril.

When we sit at our desks, for example, we remain aware of the space around us. We can sense when someone enters the room or leaves the door ajar. We’re aware of the ceiling and whether the ceiling fan suddenly spins faster or slower. We’re even aware, at the edge of our peripheral vision, when a spider crawls down the wall.



*Peripheral vision builds our emotional connection to place. Photo by Hans Solcer, Getty Images.*

Furthermore, the emotional imprint that a given space creates is converted from chemical and electrical signals into a three-dimensional map etched into our neural networks as a spatial reference frame. Architects and designers should note that these spatial reference frames, which make up our sense of space, can be evoked by recreating the contextual or environmental cues that gave rise to the original memory map or experience.

According to Dr. Groh, it turns out that “not only is memory an integral part of building a sense of space but space, in turn, serves as a kind of filing system for storing and accessing memories. And the brain’s memory-space connection relies on shared neural infrastructure.”<sup>10</sup>

This insight provides one of the clues that may answer the mystery behind why optical illusions differ from standard imagery. Unlike representational imagery, illusions are multisensory. They’re not only visual, but they also include

spatial information – the spatial reference frame – that, when woven into the architectural context of an isolated interior, allows the cues to create a credible illusion of volume and depth. In fact, illusions of nature™ give rise to perceived open space because they engage a more sophisticated cognitive process than decorative, symbolic imagery.

When we provide a visual stimulus that mimics a spatial relationship with which we’re familiar, the brain’s sensory and motor regions react as if the original memory itself is being re-experienced. This is consistent with a facet of illusions; they’re capable of conjuring an experience when key cognitive cues emulate a genuine past experience.

### **Spatial reference frames: what you see, you become**

Turning to environmental psychology, one of the most researched spatial relationships is prospect and refuge – a panoramic view of nature from a secure vantage point. Such a spatial reference frame is so ingrained in our neurobiology that the experience of deep relaxation it elicits can even be credibly simulated in isolated, enclosed spaces.



*A multisensory Open Sky Composition is framed within a Luminous SkyCeiling. © 2018 Sky Factory.*

In deep-plan buildings, occupants lose the two most biologically meaningful spatial relationships architecture can provide: a visual connection to the zenith (the sky) and the horizon line, both of which extend for miles in natural environments. Compressed spatial footprints without direct access to nature lead to cognitive drain. Occupants lose access to panoramic views of open sky or nature, and thereby lose meaningful mental restoration and physiological relaxation.

Dr. Groh notes that “some studies have shown that mentally picturing a visual stimulus elicits activity in the primary visual cortex and, furthermore, that the extent of this activity varies with the size of the object being imagined – tying it to the visual cortex map of space.”<sup>11</sup> Her assertions provide a neurological basis to understand why natural environments have played such a fundamental role in the development of our neural circuitry and why, when our daily urban experience is one of limited built space, rather than interconnected open

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space, the negative consequences to our cognitive functions cannot be stressed enough.

Dr. Groh goes further, remarking that “such studies suggest that mental representations for space are not merely co-opted from the sensory and motor domains, but that those domains may, in turn, shape thinking in the abstract domain.”

She adds: “The implication of this is that perhaps many aspects of our ability to think and reason may be shaped by the nature of the neural “wetware” (pathways) that originally evolved in the context of sensory and motor processing.”<sup>12</sup>



Visual stimulus also engages the spatial maps in the visual cortex.  
Photo by Joshua Parle, Unsplash.

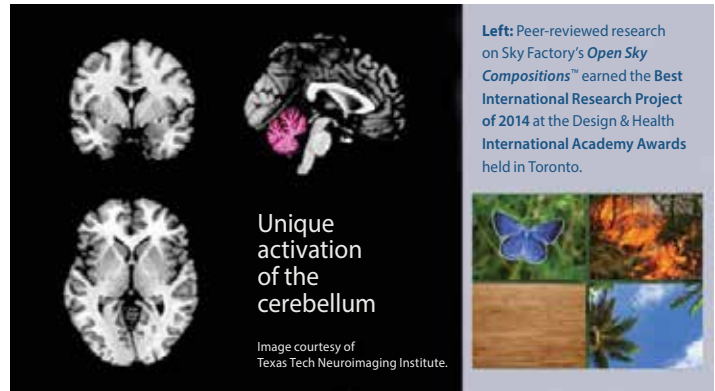
Therefore, if our brain acquired its neural complexity in direct response to the natural environment that enveloped our earlier psycho-physiological experience on Earth, it's no wonder that our sense of time has a direct correspondence to the space we occupy.

### Restoring the deep floor plate

Given the long life of our commercial building stock, multisensory illusions represent an economically viable and research-verified approach to mitigate the deleterious impact of enclosed interiors.

Multisensory illusions make it possible to simulate a perceived zenith and horizon line within limited structural space. These two fundamental biophilic spatial relationships can extend the interior zenith from the ceiling plane to a much more distant perceived zenith beyond the building's roof while, at the same time, extend the interior horizon line from interior walls to a much more distant perceived horizon line beyond the building's urban footprint.

Perhaps, using perceived spatial components inherent in optical illusions, we can capitalize on the cognitive malleability of our body schema to restore the wide-open, natural space that our psycho-physiology requires for optimal performance and health, despite the general spatial compression that our urban centers forecast in the next few decades.



Published research on Open Sky Compositions found evidence of multisensory neural engagement.

The multidisciplinary realm of illusions of nature represents a new cognitive Biophilia. An architectural design framework based at the root of human perception would represent an advanced, research-based approach that gives weight to the restorative impact of perceived open space to mitigate the deleterious impact of buildings that will be in operation in the mid-21st century. The first signs of a rising awareness are emerging.

Among design creatives, informed clients, and commercial real estate managers, cognitive Biophilia is being used to redress the single biggest harm that deep-plan buildings affect captive populations: an absence of nature and self. In an era where staff burnout is rampant, particularly in healthcare, the urgent call to enhance occupant wellness in highly artificial and isolated interiors requires research-verified, biophilic design solutions. 🌿

*David A Navarrete is the director of research initiatives and accredited education at Sky Factory. He's a member of The Center for Education (ACE) at the Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture (ANFA) and a fellow at The Centre for Conscious Design. He and Bill have co-authored articles on Cognitive Biophilia to diverse publications, including Conscious Cities Journal and Conscious Cities Anthology (2018, 2020), Radiology Today, Salus Global Journal, and Work/Design magazine.*

*Bill Witherspoon is the founder and Chief Designer at Sky Factory, Inc. Sky Factory's published, peer-reviewed research has earned multiple awards, including the International Academy of Design & Health, Planetree International, and the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA).*

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# AIA CEO Lakisha Woods says “her success is tied to their success” at A’22 kickoff

BY KATHERINE FLYNN



**M**adame Architect’s Julia Gamolina interviewed AIA’s Executive Vice President and CEO Lakisha Woods on Wednesday, June 22, on the main stage at AIA’s Conference on Architecture 2022 in Chicago. This is Woods’ first conference as AIA’s EVP/CEO, but not, as she noted, her first Conference on Architecture.

Woods assumed her leadership role at the beginning of 2022 and has spent the first five months of her tenure working to position the profession for success in a shifting global landscape.

Woods said that in her first several months in office, she’s been busy asking members what they think AIA’s number one priority should be. “In finding the consistency around where people think our number one priority is, that’s where we’re going to find the greatest opportunity for change and advancement moving forward,” she said.

“I’ve always been seen as a change agent,” she continued. “A change agent is required if we’re trying to make those steps to move the organization forward.”

Woods highlighted AIA’s Strategic Plan as one of the main reasons why she was excited to tackle this leadership opportunity.

“I think my background as an association management professional properly aligns with what’s needed for that next step for AIA,” she said. She cited her previous roles at the

National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, the National Association of Home Builders, and the National Institute of Building Sciences.

“Those big, key issues that are facing one group are facing all of them,” she said. “So I’m excited to be at AIA, where they put in writing what needs to happen next to impact and change this industry and this profession.”

As Gamolina noted, Woods has a proven track record of strengthening the bottom line of the associations she has led in the past – and asked how she was planning to bring that focus to the AIA. Woods cited business acumen gleaned from her father, saying that while many associations don’t currently view themselves as businesses, those times have changed.

“In order for us to achieve our mission, we have to be flexible. We have to operate as a business,” she said, highlighting the products and services that AIA currently offers as potential areas for growth.

“So often, we do it because we’ve always done it that way,” she said of entrenched ways of thinking that can rule an organization’s processes. “I like to ask the question: do we still need to continue to do it? Is it helping the greater number of our members?”

“There are a lot of companies out there that are producing services that compete with associations,” she continued. “So if we don’t learn how to drive the value of why you should pay



your dues and become a member of this organization and see it as the best investment you've ever made –when you get that invoice, [we want you to say], 'Deal of the century.' And if you're not saying that, we've got some work to do."

When talking about what drew Woods to the AIA, she acknowledged that it was a dream job for her – as well as an exciting opportunity to strengthen both sustainability and equity in the built environment.

"I think about what AIA's real goal is, and that is being a convener," she said. "We need all of those [industry] groups to come together and utilize all of our skill sets – for equity, for sustainability – for our designs to truly impact society."

When it comes to the business case for sustainability and equity, Woods emphasized that there is data-supported evidence that greater diversity and equity in a company's culture can impact the bottom line – and that sharing success stories from national components and chapters is going to be key to the organization's messaging going forward.

"For me, that's where I am focused, and I want to make sure our team is sharing all the great stories that exist across the country," she said. As the leader of the AIA, Woods is unique in two ways – she is not an architect, and she's also a member of what Gamolina called a "vastly underrepresented group" in the profession.

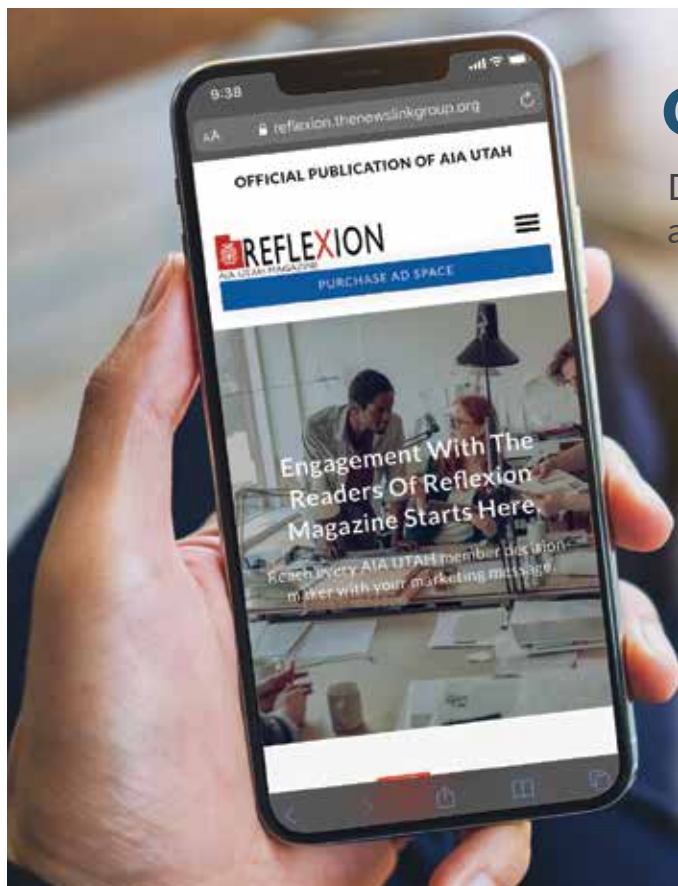
"How will those qualities help you help the profession thrive?" Gamolina asked. Woods says she's asking questions that someone from a more traditional architecture background might not ask, and in the process, identifying a "bell curve" where members need help, tools, and resources.

"We have to focus on the solutions that are for the greater good," she said. "I'm always focused on, what is going to make our members successful? What is going to make them profitable?"

Ultimately, she said, her success is tied to the success of AIA's members, and that's where she's focused as a leader.

"Getting buy-in, finding out what people need, making changes based on what they need – that's where I am, and that's where I stay focused," she said. 🌱

To watch this interview in its entirety, please scan this QR code: <https://youtu.be/AklUqRxMZ34>



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