

# aiaVT

architecture in the green mountains



## 12.02

### calendar

#### December 5:

Horizontal Surfaces – Products-Applications Advances-History-Future, Steve Benjamin, CSI, 11:00am-2:00pm at the Burlington Sheraton.

Annual Meeting and Design Award Presentations. College Hall, Vermont College Campus, Montpelier. 6:00 p.m.

#### December 6:

2002 Vermont Urban Forestry Technical Workshop, Judd Hall/Gymnasium, Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center, VT 9:00 am-3:30 pm.

#### January 16:

Design-Build - Sandy Fead & Panel Discussion, CSI, 11:00am-2:00pm at the Burlington Sheraton.

#### February 12-13:

Better Buildings By Design, CSI, at the Burlington Sheraton.

### congratulations

Freeman-French-Freeman, Inc. was named "Architect of The Year" by The Vermont Subcontractors Association. This is the second consecutive year the firm has won the award.

### a new aia web site?!

AIA.org is currently scheduled for a mid-November launch. The new site will provide more accessible content.

### web sites

The California Integrated Waste Management Board's (CIWMB) Green Building Design and Construction Web site features a Sustainable Toolkit to help building project managers, offering case studies, product directories, and sample construction documents. Other highlights of the Web site include training programs for state and local governments and numerous green buildings publications.

<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/GreenBuilding>

### national associates committee

One exciting development over the past two years has been the quarterly email newsletter nac-q. Writers from all facets of our profession have contributed their time and effort to authoring articles relating to issues currently facing our profession. Back issues can be viewed on-line through the AIA website, [www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org) <<http://www.aia.org>>. Just login and enter "nac-q" in the search box.

### aiaVT welcomes back

Harald Aksdal, AIA of South Burlington

### job bank

IIDA Interior Designer available on contract or possible part time (depending on commuting distance), primarily in commercial, health care and institutional work. Residential too. Relocated Flatlander with 20 years of award winning experience and passion for the trade. Please contact Carol Currotto, IIDA, 802-885-6996 or email [hon@vermontel.net](mailto:hon@vermontel.net).

### job opportunities

Architectural Draftsperson/Designer with CAD experience sought for full time position. Black River Design Architects, 73 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602. Telephone 802-223-2044

## an oval of hope for middlebury donald maurice kreis

Here, we now know, is how architecture works at Middlebury College at the turn of the new century.

First, in the context of planning a major new arts building, the College invites Robert Venturi to campus for an interview. He sets one foot on campus, looks around at the historic early 19th Century granite buildings and their imitators, and proclaims: "You have what everyone thinks an American campus looks like but almost never does. It would be very easy to mess this up."

Glenn Andres, Middlebury's Christian A. Johnson Professor of Art, remembers this pronouncement and quotes it often. But Venturi doesn't get the job; the commission goes instead to Hardy Holtzmann Pfeiffer.

Hugh Hardy sets one foot on the site of the building and falls in love with the turrets and roof line of the College's historic maison francaise, Le Chateau, which is next door. Hardy designs the Center for the Performing Arts as an homage to Le Chateau, but the College decides to move the whole project across campus to a more spacious site next to the athletic complex. This balkanizes Middlebury's arts facilities - the visual arts and proscenium theatre stay behind in existing facilities - and nobody gets the allusion to French castles.

Out of this muddle grows a sense that the College needs a master plan - not a rigid architectural concept but, rather, an organized set of guidelines about how the campus should grow and change in the future. So the College commissions a distinguished alumnus, David Wallace '50, of Wallace Floyd Associates in Boston, to prepare such a document. It is an impressive blueprint (available on the web at [www.wallacefloyd.com/edu/middlebury/fmp4.htm](http://www.wallacefloyd.com/edu/middlebury/fmp4.htm)) that talks about minimizing impacts, maintaining the campus's unique qualities, nurturing a close working relationship with the town, and preserving viewsheds - the latter a particular imperative for a campus with rapture-inducing views of famous mountain ranges to both the east and west.

Then the College gets busy violating the master plan, proving Venturi right. Middlebury has no trouble messing things up.

On the other hand, Venturi famously hailed "messy vitality over obvious unity" and proclaimed that he would "include the non sequitur and proclaim the duality" in his Complexity and Contradiction in Modern Architecture. So, too, there is intrigue, innovation and even reason for hope in this story of major initiatives by Vermont's biggest architectural client.

Not the least of these good things arises out of the story being told in the first place. At the behest of Andres, the College welcomed more than 100 of Vermont's architects and architecture students to campus on November 9 for an in-depth discussion and site visit. The day began with an incisive, detailed and highly organized slide lecture by Andres, as long and entertaining as a feature-length movie. It progressed through lunchtime discussions. Then there were afternoon tours of the Hardy Holtzmann building, recently completed projects by Payette Associates (the Bicentennial Hall science building) and Tai Soo Kim (the Ross Commons residential and dining complex) plus virtual tours of two big projects under construction: the new library by Gwathmey Siegel and Associates and Kieran Timberlake's Atwater Commons, similar in program to the Tai Soo Kim project. When Andres' counterpart at a rival academic institution got wind of all this, she enviously hailed Middlebury's "institutional maturity and confidence."

There's also a good deal of savvy in casting Andres as a kind of public curator of Middlebury's collection of recent buildings. Most schools do not involve their professors of architectural history in the design process, but at Middlebury Andres now works part-time in the school's facilities planning department. Cast in the role of spokesperson, Andres could only hail the good choices and leave the visiting architects to draw the correct inferences about the bad ones.

The best of Middlebury's recent choices is the Kieran Timberlake commission. The site is in harmony with, rather than in flight from, the master plan, which identified the area north of the Chateau as an appropriate place for expansion. Two residence halls will frame the back of the Chateau, but abandon the symmetry of Versailles for a subtler dance with the landscape. While Bicentennial Hall offers a steroidal parody of the College's iconic Old Chapel Building, the Kieran Timberlake dorms are a respectful tribute to the oldest building on campus, Painter Hall, with its granite austerity, its carefully proportioned fenestration and its stately chimneys.

Andres calls it a "riff" on Painter, and the musical metaphor is apt. The dorms have a varied but rhythmic window pattern that offers visual pleasures similar to those of the new city hall that Rafael Moneo added to the medieval town square in Murcia, Spain. More significantly, juxtaposed with these restrained residences is an oval dining facility that promises to be the wildest thing added to Middlebury since the Greek Revival. According to Andres, the architects drew an oval to mark the spot at a design charette, and the shape simply stuck.

The dining hall will have a sod roof, a curtain wall of what Andres calls "corrugated" glass, and a punctuating stair and ventilation tower that will read as a sculpture in brick. Building in brick rather than granite at Middlebury is that institution's equivalent of breaking the box. The objective, according to Andres, is to "relate the buildings to their almost Aalto-esque wooded site." And, with luck, there might be a breath of Aalto-esque inspiration here.

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AIA Vermont reserves the right to edit articles for available space and determine appropriate content prior to inclusion. Submissions must be received by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.

cont.

Elsewhere, one finds errata. Andres' colleague from the chemistry department, Jim Larrabee, defends the gargantuan presence of Bicentennial Hall on the school's western ridge by noting that the building has worked splendidly from a teaching and learning standpoint since opening in 2000. But nobody explains why the college overrode the recommendations of their architects and insisted on such a huge intervention in such a prominent location.

The new Tai Soo Kim development is also somewhat disappointing. The master plan identifies the panorama westward from the hilltop Pearsons Hall as a precious viewshed. Kim's complex fills it right in, with an opaque glass walkway connecting the new buildings to the existing dorms of Ross Commons. Inside, the place seems to run out of architecture once one gets past the curviciously sumptuous dining hall.

And there remains this inexplicable gesture: tearing down the old Science Center, a grand piece of 1960s brutalism that stood as a fortress guarding Old Stone Row from downtown, and then having Gwathmey Siegel design a new library in exactly this same spot. Andres can only say that the project went through eight iterations by way of migrating from the site of the existing library, where it would have been fully consistent with the master plan. One is left to wonder what led to this troubling choice on the part of the trustees of the institution.

As the destruction of (and recycling of 98 percent of the materials from) the old Science Center testifies, architectural mistakes are ultimately amenable to correction. In that sense, the discourse may be more valuable than the buildings discussed because the conversations at Middlebury revealed an institution committed to thinking about the built world of Vermont and the college's decisive impact on it. Alas, the executive and trustee-level decisionmakers from Middlebury were not in attendance. But the precedent has been set, and those folks can be coaxed to attend the next such gathering.

Donald Maurice Kreis, a lawyer who writes frequently about architecture, graduated from Middlebury College in 1980.

## aiaVT.org steven clark, aia

AIA Vermont is finally launching its website, [www.aiavt.org](http://www.aiavt.org). This has been talked and dreamed about for years. Whenever our board had or heard of an event or issue demanding immediate response we said, if only we had a web site... Email has helped reduce the costs of our communications efforts (remember when you used to get a letter or perhaps phone call to announce upcoming events?). This new public and member communication tool has been designed and engineered by Dana Adams of Studiowerks.

The home page will initially feature the Annual AIA Vermont Design Awards winners and will include the lead article and contents of the current newsletter as well as the most current **Events** calendar listings.

The Navigation Bar includes a **Public Resources** page with **aiaVT Architects**(AIA Vermont firm directory), an article on why you need an architect and links we think would be useful to the public. The directory will include, for a reasonable additional charge, a small image. This image is intended to allow firms without a web site to include a graphic identifier (logo, sketch or photo) with their listing. There also is a page with our newly created **Mission Statement** and a list of **Board Members**.

**aiaVT Awards** will have the AIA VT Excellence in Design Awards along with the jury commentary.

We will keep the **Events** calendar more current than the newsletter version.

**Member Resources** will have a **Member Roster** including **aiaVT Architects**(as described above), members requesting inclusion and **Professional Affiliates** with contacts and a graphic tool for locating them by region. This firm listing was designed for the public but members should find it useful for contact as well. This version of the list will include contacts for **AIA Associate** members and affiliated intern organizations as they become available. You will also find a growing library of **Newsletter** issues, in color, in Adobe PDF file format for download and a **Job Bank** for both employers and prospective staff. We will have a **Web Resources** page with categorized web sites we hope will be useful to members. This will start with a few recommended sites and will grow, with your help, into an extensive list of all kinds of resources. Please send in your favorite useful resources for inclusion. This can include recommended products and tools but we have a **Sponsors** page for advertising and promotional purposes.

**Feedback** will be a common, email contact to AIA Vermont through Hanne Williams, AIA Vermont's most valuable resource.

AIA Vermont board members Michael Hoffman, AIA and Steven Clark, AIA representing a Committee also including Stewart L. Sutcliffe, AIA and David Epstein, AIA guided Studiowerks in designing this web site.

## efficiency vermont announces better buildings by design conference 2003

Building upon the success of five conferences on high-performance design and construction, Efficiency Vermont will partner with AIA Vermont to present Better Buildings By Design on February 12-13, in Burlington, Vermont. This annual event will feature 30+ presentations on commercial and residential construction approaches that will reduce energy use, maximize occupant comfort, increase building longevity and lower operating and maintenance costs.

Among the conference's nationally renowned workshop leaders will be Sarah Susanka, author of "The Not So Big House", who will present the keynote address. Susanka's best-selling books challenge designers, builders and buyers to emphasize quality and occupant experience over size.

Efficiency Vermont encourages AIA Vermont members to take advantage of this opportunity to learn about the latest developments in energy-efficient design and earn AIA continuing education credits. Members can also showcase their energy efficient designs at the conference Design Competition. The competition will feature the best innovative energy efficient designs in Vermont. Award categories include: Best Architectural Solution for Energy Efficiency; Best Mechanical Solution for Energy Efficiency; Best Lighting Solution for Energy Efficiency; and Best Integrated Design Solution for Energy Efficiency. All entries will be showcased, in poster format, at the conference. Look for entry forms in the mail.

"We're particularly pleased to be presenting this conference at this time," says Blair Hamilton, Managing Director of Efficiency Vermont. "We're proud to offer Vermont's designers and builders the latest information on cost-effective ways to build exceptional structures that lower owners' costs and save energy. And we're proud to host some of the best names in the business."

With workshops, special events, and more than 40 exhibitors of cutting-edge products and services, this conference is expected to draw 500+ design and construction professionals from throughout the northeast. A highlight of the conference will be an evening reception for attendees. The reception will feature demonstrations, a book signing by Susan Susanka, and an award ceremony where the area's top designers of innovative buildings will be recognized for exceptional achievements in energy-efficient construction.

For information about registration and tradeshow booths, call 1-802-655-7769. For more information about Better Building By Design 2003, visit [www.efficiencyvermont.com](http://www.efficiencyvermont.com).




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