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## hearings begin on the proposed state house addition and renovation

steve clark, aia

aiaVT

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I received an email notice on Thursday afternoon, October 23<sup>rd</sup>. It was a message from Trish Harper of the Department of Buildings and General Services, asking if we could spread the word that hearings were going to be held to receive input on the proposed addition to the Vermont State House. I thought "All right. This can't be bad." The legislative committee charged with managing this sensitive project was looking for input from Vermont's architectural community on the design they had selected from their previous design competition.

I then noticed the hearing was set for the following Tuesday. I posted a notice of the meeting, asked Hanne to spam the membership and hoped for the best. As it turned out, the meeting was little different from an earlier one this year when the Boston firm of Finegold Alexander + Associates presented the competition-winning design and then listened to a dozen or so complaints about its "fake wall."

In case anyone does not know about the design concept, the majority of the addition will be to the east of the existing annex to the State House. A screening wall (my term) is used to visually balance the early State Library addition, since divided into the cramped, unconditioned committee offices in use today. This screening wall was used to re-establish a more symmetrical south façade to the complex. The architect uses the phrase "architecture of equality" in describing the original State House design and his scheme to restore symmetry to the façade. The screening wall has the same dimensions as the south wall of the early addition. It also conceals the glass curtain wall façade of the proposed addition and enclosed courtyard.

**cont.**

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**back to basics...origins of contemporary discourse on the vernacular**

**Kenneth Frampton**, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance." *Who knew the vernacular might have more to do with economics than style. Frampton's essay is perhaps the best summary, but not the only one, and possibly not the first; see also Alex Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre.*

# 12.03:1

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Reaction at the earlier meeting generally represented a local and NIMBY response to the contemporary design. There was one voice of support from Jeff Stetter, AIA of Gossens Bachman Architects, who hoped the fenestration of the screening wall would remain even more abstract than the competition scheme. Most at the meeting seemed to want the wall to look more like an accurate replication of the early State Library addition.



The October 28 meeting included one notable architectural protest. Robert Burley, FAIA presented why he believed the addition would damage the historic integrity and character of the State House, particularly the wooded hillside's relationship to the House and Senate chambers. The Burley Partnership was an entrant in the design competition. The firm has also done a great deal of work on this building and its neighbors. A new development in the design is the unfortunate attempt to make the screening wall look more like a chunk of building, by giving it a bit of roof and extending the addition behind it more to the east.

Early this year, AIA Vermont was asked to take a stance on this project. The position, arrived at after much discussion by the board, is AIA Vermont is extremely interested in the process and outcome of renovations and additions to the most important architectural artifact in Vermont. We also feel strongly that there are two opposite, and equally appropriate, approaches to dealing with additions to historic buildings. Our membership is far too diverse to be represented by one opinion on this project.



This requires our members to individually take part in the process. The State House committee intends to hold more hearings on this project around the State. This project is ready to go ahead as soon as money is available. There is no question the facilities and space are desperately needed.

Committee members stated that every time a new plan for renovating the State House is revealed, all they hear are complaints. I can't help wonder what they would hear if they chose to elicit comments before the design selection was made.

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## Client Response –

*through Andrea Murray, Assoc. AIA*

*It should be noted that I contacted Tricia Harper, Architect - State of Vermont, Buildings & General Services and asked her to comment on the proceedings of the October 28 public meeting. She forwarded to me the meeting minutes prepared by Feingold Alexander + Associates, project architect. Noteworthy in these minutes is the client's (State's) response to the invited discussion as follows:*

*The State of Vermont, Buildings & General Services notes that it has been working extremely hard over the past three years to develop the State House renovation program, select the architect and generate a schematic design.*

*The State did investigate developing suitable space in other locations in and around the State House. It simply does not work for the intended functions to be located off site.*

*Nothing inside the existing 1858 State House is proposed to be modified under this program.*

*Finally, the State does not currently have the funding to go forward with the expansion plans as the economy is still fragile and there are many other pressing needs throughout the State. However, the intention is to develop the architectural plans to completion, so that when funds do become available, the project can proceed.*

*The State special committees and staff will take under advisement the comments and suggestions of all who spoke at the October 28 meeting when determining how to proceed. The State Department of Buildings & General Services also anticipates holding another meeting outside Montpelier in hopes of eliciting comments from more State architects. aiaVT will notify members as to the date and location of such meeting when scheduled.*

*If you require additional information regarding the public meeting, please contact:*

*Trisha Harper, State Project Manager  
802-828-5646.*

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## the vermont green building network: the first year

*keith dewey,  
aia, leed ap; vice president, vermont green building network*

Last January, the Vermont Green Building Network (VGBN) held its first organizational meeting at Vermont College in Montpelier. Over sixty attendees from a wide variety of business, government, and non-profit organizations, as well as interested private citizens got together and outlined a list of goals for the newly-formed green building group. The “green building” discussions focused on design, construction and operation practices that improve the quality of buildings, their impact on the environment and on building occupants in five broad areas:

- 1) Land use and site planning;
- 2) Water quality and water efficiency;
- 3) Energy efficiency and renewable energy;
- 4) Material selection and the conservation, reuse and recycling of natural resources; and
- 5) Indoor air quality and occupant health and comfort.

The group then held a series of outreach organizational meetings throughout Vermont in an effort to enlist membership and engage additional organizational ideas. Since then, the VGBN has established itself as a new statewide organization whose mission is “to increase Vermont’s participation in green building and to promote the environmental, financial, community and health benefits of green design, construction and building operation practices.” The volunteer group’s primary focus is to promote collaboration among Vermonters who provide or use green building services and products and to educate the public and building professionals about green design and construction.

**cont.**

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**environmental design through the people...**

**Hester, Randolph T., Jr., *Community Design Primer*:** devoted to participative design methods, Hester clearly shows that environmentally sustainable development and design is not fully conceived without equally strong social mechanisms that support these concepts. This book explores how the design process can be enriched by client collaboration. Easy to use for any designer interested in public processes.

# 12.03:3

## *aiaVT welcomes*

carlotta fazzone, *assoc. aia of north ferrisburg*

john wilson, *aia of waterbury*

## Call for Artwork- An Open Exhibition

AiaVT invites all members to submit artwork for an upcoming show of 'Art by Architects'. This will be an open exhibition to be held in Spring 2004, and again in the fall in conjunction with the AIA New England Conference at Middlebury College.

Artwork of all media and themes is welcome.

If you are interested in submitting work, please send a brief description of the piece or pieces you would like to exhibit, including the medium and size of each piece. Send this with any digital images, photos and/or sketches to Lauren Davis at [lad@gvvarchitects.com](mailto:lad@gvvarchitects.com) by Wednesday January 16, 2004.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, or if you are interested in helping organize this show, please do not hesitate to drop Lauren an email.

After establishing the group's non-profit structure and a Board of Directors, Officers and Sub-committees to develop our mission, networking and fundraising efforts, all the statewide membership input was compiled and distilled into the following five major VGBN goals:

- 1) Promote collaboration among individuals and organizations that provide or use green building services, products and technologies;
- 2) Advocate for green design and building practices and sustainable development;
- 3) Educate the public and building professionals about green design, construction and building operations;
- 4) Increase the implementation of Vermont green building services, products and technologies; and
- 5) Increase the percentage of Vermont buildings that are green buildings.

VGBN is taking the preliminary steps to launch these initiatives with the help of a grant from the Vermont Department of Public Service.

To this end, VGBN has much work yet to do and is constantly looking for new members with fresh ideas and collateral energy to help us as we progress into our second year. The Second Annual VGBN Meeting in January will quickly look back at our progress to date and ahead to future opportunities and objectives for 2004. Our short-term goals include the continued development of the VGBN website, publications, task groups, fundraising, educational events, networking opportunities, a continuing affiliation with USGBC's LEED program and new Vermont green building infrastructure focusing on topics that are important to you.

The Vermont Green Building Network would like to invite all Vermont AIA members and interested friends to attend the Second Annual Meeting: January 2004 (date and location tba).

For further information, please contact: Keith Dewey at (802) 824-5612 or [deweyaia@sover.net](mailto:deweyaia@sover.net).



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## president's column

donna j. leban, aia, lc, iesna; 2004 president aiaVT

*A two dimensional surface without any articulation is a dead experience. The basis of every living process is an inner contradiction. The living quality of an image is generated by the tension between the spatial forces; that is, by the struggle between the attraction and repulsion of the fields of these forces.*

*The experience of space, as we have already seen, is based upon the virtual movement of the different optical units from the picture-plane. These movements can be perceived only if the frame of reference, the two-dimensional picture-plan, is evident; one cannot see moving things without a background. Considered singly, each optical force automatically interrupts the two-dimensional quality of the picture-surface and completes its virtual movement by inducing its own field. It becomes impossible, therefore, to perceive the dynamic factor of this movement. Here is an important point. Just as any force can be manifested only through resistance to an opposite force, so spatial forces may be perceived only as they meet opposing spatial forces. A random placing of spatial forces, point, line, area, will open the picture-plane, but because these forces are so haphazardly arranged, they will not reach a balanced constellation in which they are equal in strength and opposite in direction. The picture surface is made hollow; the two-dimensional background, the frame of reference in which the spatial movements can be measured, is missing. The spatial vitality cannot reach full maturity.*

gyorgy kepes  
language of vision (1949)

As an introduction to those of you who do not know me, I am a licensed architect and a lighting designer, and owner of Light/Space/Design of South Burlington, Vermont.

Light/Space/Design is a sustainable architecture and lighting design consulting firm established in 1998 with a mission to incorporate appropriate technology and sustainable design and construction practices into the built environment. Working mainly through architecture and engineering firms, but also with individual commercial and residential clientele, I specialize in integrating technology and design to achieve high performance buildings with aesthetic integrity.

Interior and exterior lighting and daylighting design has been a major focus of my work since 1991, although my background in climate-sensitive design and human factors date back to the late 70's. I sharpened my environmental focus while doing building science research for the US Dept of Energy at Carnegie-Mellon University. As an architect with large and small firms in Pittsburgh, PA and Princeton, NJ, I have designed and managed a very diverse range of architectural design projects over the years. These include new multi-family residential, commercial and academic buildings throughout the Northeastern US as well as adaptive reuse and historic rehabilitation on college campuses. I have also spent 10 years working with electric utility customers in New England, trying to bring about a better mutual understanding between utility program planners and architects/engineers.

Not being a workaholic, I enjoy many social outdoor sports such as bicycling, hiking, and cross country skiing, as well as the cultural scene in and around Burlington. I have traveled extensively, and still try to combine work with fun travel/photography as much as possible.

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**cont.**

# 12.03:5

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I currently live in a cozy, not-so-big home/office that I designed in South Burlington.

Currently, in addition to managing my practice and trying to help make aiavT a dynamic organization for our profession, I was also recently selected as one of three architects to represent AIA National in efforts by US Dept of Energy and ASHRAE to develop energy standards exceeding current ASHRAE 90.1-99 standards by 30% and 50%. This is referred to by AIA as Special Project 102.

Those clients and architects who have gone through the process of achieving a LEED rating know that achieving 30% energy savings is not difficult if you have the right consultants. However, it does require significantly more coordination and analysis than is done by most architects and engineering firms (rules of thumb won't cut it) and is rarely achieved through a design/build or fast track process. This was evident in discussions held at our recent program at Northern Power Systems in Waitsfield. Commendable in many ways as a "green" design with a very efficient skin, there were also lessons to be learned about the process of achieving a high performance building.

Achieving 50%+ savings, therefore requires significant knowledge and leadership by the architectural team, the consultants, and the owner. The process itself becomes a critical factor, with integration of site/architectural/lighting/mechanical/electrical systems occurring much sooner in the process and in greater detail than is typical. Rather than take a back seat to the engineers, it is critical that architects create and sustain the concept, not only aesthetically, but also in how form and system integration affects overall building performance. I hope to work with more firms to achieve just this goal.

That said, I wish you all a very productive, efficient and Happy New Year.

Note: Architects who need a few extra continuing education credits, and are interested in improving their understanding of lighting design, can find a recent course created by Donna Leban on RedVector.com. The course is title: Essential Lighting - the Language, Metrics, and Process of Lighting Design (3 Health Education Welfare CEU credits).

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**12.03:6**