

aiaVT



The aiaVT newsletter is published by AIA Vermont,
the Vermont Chapter of the
American Institute of Architects.

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reflecting and planning

*lauren davis, assoc. aia
2007 president aiaVT*

Each June, the aiaVT board gathers for a day-long retreat. As a group, we try to reflect on our day to day activities while outlining long-term goals. We take the time to discuss our strengths and weakness, opportunities and threats.

At the start of this year's term each board member was asked their reasons for serving on the board. The responses ranged from creating more of a public awareness of architects, a connection between education and practice, to community involvement, and policy and legislative issues. In retrospect, I think our programs thus far have been a successful integration of these goals and the hard work of various individuals.

Through panel discussions about 'why design matters', to open studios and building tours during AIA150 week, we have begun to engage our surrounding communities in the topics of design. A public policy committee has made great strides in rewriting the

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loud paper/Volume 4, Issue 2

Blowing into Bubbles: Geography of a Bust/
Beverly Choe-Harris

<http://www.loudpapermag.com/article.php?id=96>

Bubbles: small globules, typically hollow and light; things that lack firmness, solidity, or reality.

Ambling through San Francisco recently, this definition of bubbles surfaced as I surveyed the jagged post-boom landscape. Ecstatic office development led this city's building euphoria during the height of the dot-com era. Yet this surge came to an abrupt halt alongside the disappearance of the Webvans and Kozmo messengers. In the aftermath of the bubble's burst, many developers suspended their projects as

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Small Scale Hydro Power

Tuesday, May 29, 2007, 7:00 PM
Fletcher Free Library, Community Room
223 College Street, Burlington, VT 05401

Building for Social Responsibility presents an informational meeting on Small Scale Hydro Power. The evening will highlight the benefits of small-scale hydroelectric power generation; outline the measurement process for determining the feasibility of micro-hydro systems; discuss project design considerations, and provide information about the permitting process.

The presenter, Ben Gordesky, is a designer and installer of micro-hydro systems for Earthbound Services, LLC. The event is free for BSR members. \$5 suggested donation for others.

*For more information, contact Lee Wood, Executive Director Building for Social Responsibility
www.bsr-vt.org*

Efficiency Vermont Gets National Attention, Again

Once again, Efficiency Vermont has made [national news](#) as an example of how states can use innovative thinking to deliver real results. Of course, this is what Vermonters and Vermont businesses already know: efficiency measures are good for the environment, good for the economy, and a smart investment in the future of both.

Efficiency Vermont helped Green Mountain Coffee lower its energy use (and, hence, its electric bills and greenhouse-gas emissions). As [The New York Times](#) reports, "Cutting electric consumption at Green Mountain's coffee roasting plant and hundreds of other places will eliminate the need to build some additional power plants, string transmission lines and fuel the plants."

commercial building energy codes that was introduced earlier this year. And, through the traveling Awards Show (which is currently on display at the Southeastern Vermont Welcome Center in Guilford through the month of June), we have helped to create more of a public awareness about how we as Architects have helped to shape our communities.

Looking ahead we have several more exciting programs in the works. These include a green building tour at the residential scale, a design competition highlighting the goals of livable communities, and our annual Construction charity event. As we plan for these and future programs we will be thinking how they will relate to our immediate goals, as well as how they can help to shape the future of our organization. To find out more about our upcoming events please visit our website at www.aiavt.org.

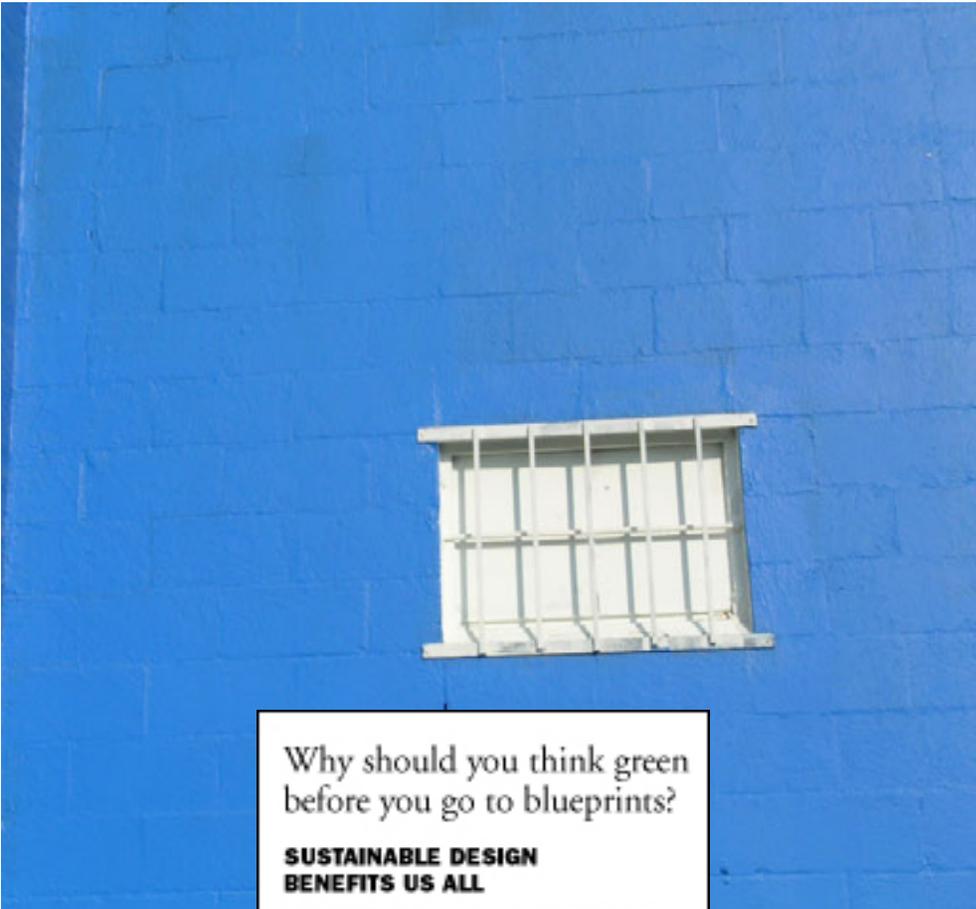
New and fresh ideas are always welcome. If you would like to help contribute to our planning don't hesitate to contact me at lad@gvvarchitects.com.

news of rising commercial vacancy rates were released. Within the course of a year and a half, office vacancy rates in San Francisco plummeted from 1% to 49%. These conditions wrinkled the urban terrain in the form of fissures, shells, and bubbles, revealing the geography of a bust. Empty office building shells stand still while tattered remnants of building paper flap in the wind, telling the story about a new economic and development culture.

One of the remarkable contradictions emerging from all this activity is the disjunction between the housing and office markets. While the office market melts, the housing market remains stable. Many "refugees" from the computer industry are leaving town (so many that it is difficult to reserve a U-Haul these days), but the majority of people are still here and exert the same need for shelter that existed during the boom. Why are there so many empty shells and bubbles,

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Why should you think green before you go to blueprints?

**SUSTAINABLE DESIGN
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139th AIA national convention in san antonio emphasizes importance of building green

Washington, D.C., May 14, 2007 —

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) 2007 National Convention and Design Exposition concluded with a keynote presentation by former Vice President Al Gore on the importance of architects taking all necessary steps to help curb climate change. Dr. David Suzuki, environmentalist and author also addressed the convention about steps people can take to help lead a more sustainable lifestyle with less negative impact on nature.

The convention attracted 21,640 registrants, and 844 exhibitors. In order to maintain a positive experience for attendees, the AIA made a concerted effort to keep the show size manageable and not overwhelming.

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when a simultaneous demand for housing exists? The reason is that Zoning restrictions conventionally separate residential from commercial uses. The master plan diagrams initially developed for the city cannot keep pace with the volatile building markets or the developers who act quickly on those market demands. This delay leads to an uneven pattern of development as can be seen now, the ultimate result being a wasteful use of urban space. This new situation calls for a new approach to zoning, one which increases the availability of low and middle income housing in particular.

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aiaVT welcomes

william fead, *esq.*, professional affiliate, burlington
christopher nielson, *assoc. aia*, middlebury
david pill, *aia*, shelburne



aiaVT is edited by Andrea Murray, AIA. Published views are the author's and not necessarily the views of AIA Vermont or any other organization.

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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 15th of the month prior to publication.

"Our theme of 'Growing Beyond Green' was chosen before the general public came to its new understanding of the threat climate change poses to our future," AIA President RK Stewart, FAIA said. "Our timing could not have been better and our goal moving forward is to further the momentum around sustainable design principles within the architectural profession as part of our obligation to pass to future generations a planet that will sustain their lives."

For additional news and insight on the AIA 2007 National Convention and Design Expo, visit <http://www.aia.org/aiarchitect/tw070504.cfm>. The AIA 2008 National Convention and Design Expo themed "We the People" will be held May 15-17, 2008, in Boston. For more information about next year's exhibition contact AIA Infocentral at 1.800.242.3837.

Housing and empowerment

Economic mixture is a phenomenon which gives cities their juice, their life. However, an equal mixture of class and economies was threatened in the post-Fordist city. The resultant "dual city", as explained by Manuel Castells in his book (title tk), produced polarizing spatial patterns that were characterized specifically by the absence of the majority of the middle tiers of society. This middle was largely replaced by a diptych of the laborerwhite collar professionals and service-oriented laborer, increasing both tension and separation within the city.

Housing is one of the urban tools that can build power and presence for the lower and middle classes. Home ownership has now been folded into ideas of empowerment and legitimacy, and this is important when discussing urban territories. Encouraged by government-subsidized mortgage programs, home ownership has been a vehicle for economic mobility since WWII, and there is no reason to think that this

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building design leaders unite on energy reduction targets

Washington, D.C., May 4, 2007 —

To reduce the building design industry's impact on the environment, key leaders in that sector are collaborating to establish carbon-neutral buildings by the year 2030. The American Institute of Architects (AIA), the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), Architecture 2030, the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA), and the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), supported by representatives of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), finalized an agreement of understanding this week, establishing a common starting point and a goal of net zero energy buildings.

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trend will stop. Home values have risen steadily since the post war boom, when federal policies increased home production and ownership in America.

Rethinking the bubble

Overdevelopment is inevitable in the quickening boom-bust cycles of the market. The erratic market produces a lumpy urban landscape, and new strategies must be forged to deal with these changing conditions. By seeing shells and bubbles as a byproduct of this new economic rhythm, housing advocates and planners should also see an opportunity to increase housing and mixture in the city. This approach of appropriation will improve the urban landscape and increase mixture amongst its population. Blowing into bubbles does not signify surrendering to a market; on the contrary, it capitalizes on the excesses created by a hyper marketplace.

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“This agreement allows the building design sector to move forward with designing buildings that use substantially less energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create spaces that are healthy and comfortable,” according to the groups.

While focused on designing net zero energy buildings, the ultimate goal is carbon-neutral buildings by 2030. In joining together, the groups recognize that “the building sector accounts for almost half of all greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. annually.”

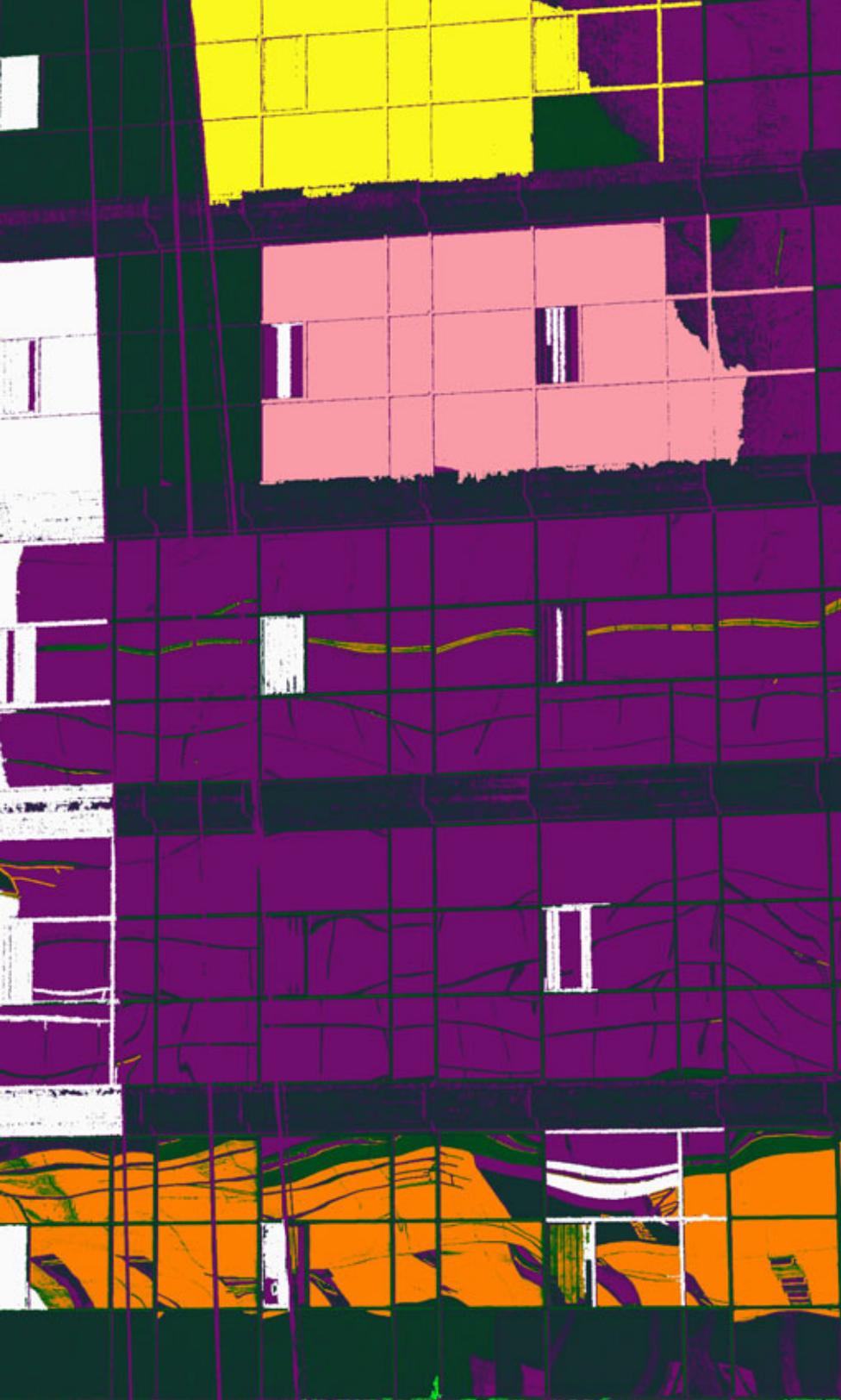
To reach that goal, AIA, ASHRAE, Architecture 2030, IESNA and USGBC agreed to define the baseline starting point for their common target goals as the national average energy consumption of existing U.S. commercial buildings as reported by the 2003 Commercial Building Energy Consumption Survey (CBECS). CBECS data is a set of whole-building energy use measurements gathered by the DOE’s Energy Information Administration, which can be used to determine a national energy use intensity using kBtu/sqft-yr as the metric.

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Without regret, the bubbles and shells should be seen as a way to create housing in a city where the housing market didn’t soften like the office market. These abandoned developments have created a surge of pre-housing bubbles which can be an asset to housing advocates/developers. Their abandonment should not mark the death of a building, but it should be seen as an opportunity to realign urban development with the demand for low and middle income housing. At their most basic, bubbles and shells supply a type of urban infrastructure which can be converted to housing. This would lead to a more fluid and progressive use of the city, one tailored to today’s marketplace.

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“Establishing a baseline for reducing energy consumption is a critical step in the goal of curbing the emissions generated by the built environment,” said AIA President RK Stewart, FAIA. “From this baseline, the design and construction industry can use this reference point to ensure that new or renovated buildings are designed to operate in a smart, healthy and efficient manner.”

“ASHRAE is excited to work with the various organizations that have participated in developing this agreement,” Terry Townsend, ASHRAE president, said. “Collectively, our programs, initiatives and goals now have an agreed-upon baseline to operate from in our common quest to achieve a sustainable future. The challenge is now upon each organization to make good on their commitments.”

“The task we face is daunting,” Edward Mazria, founder and executive director of Architecture 2030, said. “Working separately, we could accomplish something significant in each of our respective spheres. But by working together, we actually have a chance to influence the course of history - and we will.”

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New Urban Paradigm

Adaptive reuse is a common urban practice: loft living came from artists converting warehouses into housing. There are new, generative opportunities in formation now. The concrete column grids visible South of Market represent the bones to future housing developments. This vision is applicable not only to office spaces, but live-work lofts as well. By changing the packaging of the shell, a more appropriate use can be made. A model of this reaction to a market can be seen in the San Francisco restaurant scene in the past couple of years: several high-end restaurants opened, closed during the bust, and have subsequently reopened with humbler

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“This agreement is a significant demonstration of the importance of an ongoing alliance among the key organizations responsible for building design,” Kevin Flynn, IESNA president, said.

“Careful deliberations have resulted in agreed upon goals for addressing substantial reduction in energy use. IESNA looks forward to pursuing these goals in collaboration with the partnering organizations.”

“By working together on this important initiative, we will make a difference in the built environment,” said Rick Fedrizzi, President, CEO & founding chair. “Buildings are a big piece of the climate change puzzle but the good news is they are also part of the solution, and together we will make an impact.”

**FEATURED ENERGY-EFFICIENT PROJECT:
UPPER VALLEY HAVEN
WHITE RIVER JUNCTION, VERMONT**



Photo Credit: Carolyn U. Ballin

"The Haven was a great opportunity to provide the owner and community with a building that promotes sustainable and energy-efficient design while reducing operating costs."

*Mr. M. Hunter Ulf, AIA
Principal, UK Architects, P.C.*

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menus and humbler prices. One recently opened under the name “Home”.

The realization of this strategy within the housing market would depend on enlightened zoning strategies and market savvy housing advocates. I recently had the opportunity to witness a grant proposal before the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency in which a non-profit housing developer purchased a partially complete project from a developer at a fire sale price. They received the grant to convert originally high end units into low-income housing. The resourceful housing agency saw the value of the bubble and shaped it into housing. However, in this example, zoning was not a challenge. The next step would be to apply the same approach in converting commercially-zoned shells to housing.

We live in an urban climate in which flux is the operative paradigm. The current spatial contradiction between empty offices and full houses embodies a sludgy mixture of dissolved hopes, crusty zoning regulations, and the hot and sour laws of supply and demand. The built presence of these shells and bubbles should be a wake-up call for housing advocates. These bubbles are waiting to become part of the urban flow, and it can be executed in a way which realigns development with the basic need for low and middle income housing.

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