



Best wishes for the holidays and the new year!

November 26, 2007 - Spotlights

It's hard for me to believe that an entire year has passed. In looking back, the AIA NY Chapter has accomplished a few things over the year that I have been a part of that I am most proud of. We have continued to take strong advocacy positions on many topics, some more controversial than others, such as the revision of 421-a, creating a landmarked district for Sunnyside Gardens, Columbia's expansion plans, plans for Moynihan Station, Governors Island, and Pier 40, the renovation of the NY Historical Society, and currently the Con Edison site and Coney Island plans. We have also weighed in on some internal issues such as the reform of the licensing exam, legislation concerning professional certification (the Padovan Bill) and continued support of the new building code, reform of the interior design sales tax, and Quality Based Selection for professional consultants. This year we also initiated a number of incremental zoning changes that will make designing quality buildings on small sites easier and more rational. We are continuing our many programs regarding PlaNYC as well, in a series of ongoing events at the Center for Architecture..

This was also the year of the 150th birthday of the AIA, and our legacy project celebrating that fact was a public/private partnership with New York City's Department of Housing, Preservation, and Development for a competition for 200 units of superbly designed sustainable affordable housing in the Bronx. Unlike previous "ideas competitions" this one is actually being built and will serve as a prototype for future projects. In an effort to make the AIA more transparent and accessible, we are about to launch our new website along with PIE, the Public Information Exchange, the equivalent of an interactive blog for architecture projects and topics. This was also the year for a very successful New York State Convention right here in Manhattan, something that has never happened before. We also had a Heritage Ball and a Design Awards Luncheon that were successful beyond our most hopeful expectations. For this reason we have put some money into a rainy day fund as well as contributed to scholarships.

This is in addition to all the wonderful programs and exhibits at the Center, including Berlin/NY Dialogues, the Governor's Island Exhibit, an expanded schools exhibit including schools of interior design as well as architecture, showcasing student work from 17 schools in the New York region, a second program on the relationship between design and physical health called Fit City, a non-juried exhibit of our member's work called New York Now, and of course, the exhibit for the theme of the year, Architecture Inside Out, focusing on creative, high quality interior architecture.

And finally, we made a presentation to the City's commissioners and project managers about instituting a design excellence program for interior design projects undertaken by the city. They are already revising their antiquated standards, and we will continue to work with them in the coming year to develop a protocol for incorporating design excellence into city projects.

It has also been a sad year for the AIA in many ways. We have lost a number of good friends, including Margaret Helfand, Denis Kuhn, David Mandl, Giorgio Cavaliere, Greg Clement, and

Marvin Raab. We will miss them all.

I am personally going to miss the excitement of the year, as my successor, James McCullar takes over as president for 2008, but will look forward to spending increasing time at my "day job" at Perkins + Will and with my lovely and somewhat neglected family. In the meanwhile, I would like to wish all of you a most happy holidays, and a wonderful New Year!

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