

## K-12 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES DESIGN AWARDS / 2005

### *Jurors' Comments*

The BSA inaugurated this K-12 design awards program in 2002 and received 57 submissions in that first year. This year marks the second edition of this program, which will now be administered biennially. This year the program, co-sponsored by the AIA New York Chapter, generated 55 submissions.

The body of work we had the privilege of examining this year was delightfully diverse and included a nice mix of public and private schools and of new facilities and renovations.

While we found a large percentage of the work submitted to be both interesting and competently designed, we were surprised to note how many submissions failed to provide adequate written and visual information on context. For example, many portfolios lacked the required site plans, north arrows, or other diagrams or related information that might have helped explain the logic that informed the design. In these cases, it was often difficult to determine if the design emerged from the site conditions or the program or was simply the result of arbitrary design decisions. Equally challenging was the frequent absence of written information on the client's educational philosophy or learning approach, which presumably helped shape the design of learning and meeting spaces.

With a roughly equal number of private and public facilities to examine, we noticed that clients and designers seemed to attend more closely to contextual or 'campus' issues in the private school facilities. Attention to detail seemed more pronounced in private schools as well. Our belief is that we are all seeking a contemporary style for large public schools. That we are in the midst of this search for a style may also explain in part the frequent disconnect between words and images in many of the portfolios we received this year. It was often difficult to find in the visual images any manifestation of the assertions or claims made in the narrative.

We offer the critiques above in the hope that all of us as design professionals might more effectively tell the stories of our projects in a thoughtful, consistent way that truly marries the narrative and the visual images.

In the end, we identified superior design as design that is authentic, elegantly crafted, often innovative, and is an honest, thoughtful response to the program, to the site, and to the characteristics and needs of the users. We believe that the 11 projects we have chosen to honor this year respond to — and often go beyond — these criteria. We believe it is important to note that our profession's increasingly thoughtful attention to sustainable-design issues — obviously critical in school design as in all other projects — is reflected in most of the submissions that we examined; that is very encouraging.

Serving as jurors was a delightful and educational experience and we wish to express our appreciation to the BSA, to the AIA New York Chapter, and to all those who submitted work to this program. We encourage all of our colleagues to continue to focus attention on appropriate design for educational facilities and to share those efforts through programs such as this.

*The Jurors*

David Finney AIA (Design Partnership of Cambridge, Charlestown MA)

Beth Greenberg AIA (Dattner Architects, New York City)

Michael Haverland AIA (Michael Haverland Architects, New York City)

Jim LaPosta Jr. AIA (Jeter Cook + Jepson, Hartford)

Michael Rosenfeld AIA (The Office of Michael Rosenfeld, West Acton MA)

## HONOR AWARDS FOR DESIGN EXCELLENCE

Artists' Studios and Gallery (South Boston MA)  
for Artists for Humanity  
designed by Arrowstreet (Somerville MA)...Building Science Engineering (sustainable-design consultant, Harvard MA); T.R. White Co. (general contractor, Boston); Rene Mugnier Associates (structural engineer, Cambridge MA); Zade Co. (mechanical/electrical engineer, Boston); Samiotes Consultants (civil engineer, Framingham MA); UTS (geotechnical engineer, Wyndham NH); US Lighting (lighting consultant, New York City); Shooshanian Engineering (commissioning consultant, Boston); Nick Rodrigues (artist, South Boston MA)

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This facility — known as the EpiCenter — includes 23,500 sf of fine art and commercial studio space, gallery and offices and is operated by a private, non-profit organization serving high-school-age urban students...With great attention to sustainable-design issues, the designer and the client have created a striking new facility on an urban infill parcel...The box has been expanded on the interior and the exterior and exemplifies the concept of renewal...The open plan with good closed spaces works well for the users ...The elegant simplicity of the design is just right contextually and seems to respond perfectly to its program...We also admire the skillful detailing — and we were taken particularly with the corrugated metal used diagonally on the exterior.

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Bronx Charter School for the Arts (New York City)  
for Civic Builders Inc.  
designed by Weisz + Yoes architecture + urban design (New York City)...Buro Happold Consulting Engineers (New York City); Jim Conti Lighting Design (Brooklyn); Adam Lubinsky (community outreach consultant, London UK); Kel-Mar Interiors (contractor, New York City)

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The designers planned and designed the conversion of an old factory building into a K-6 charter school with an emphasis on the arts; the site is an urban industrial neighborhood in the South Bronx...From the exquisitely bold and colorful exterior to the elegant and sensible furniture, this is an exceptional design achievement; the decorated shed strategy employed here was just right...The beautiful exterior is characterized by a clear attention to detail (we noticed especially the superb parapet cap and the subtly effective joint where the building connects to its neighbor)...The obviously thoughtful investment of time and intellectual energy by the designers has resulted in a politically, socially, and educationally successful and beautiful project and the use of brilliant colors expresses the vitality and sense of renewal the project embodies.

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Burr Street Elementary School (Fairfield CT)  
for the Town of Fairfield  
designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (New York City)...Turner Construction Co.  
(construction manager, New York City); DiBlasi Associates (structural engineer, Monroe  
CT); Altieri Sebor Wieber (M/E/P engineer, Norwalk CT)

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This is a new K-5 public school on a wooded site adjacent to a neighborhood of large, single-family homes...The designer's formal strategy is both elegant and successful...This is excellent space-making achieved in large part with off-the-shelf materials appropriately used...The plan is clever and inventive; rigorous work such as this serves both its very young and its adult users respectfully and delightfully.

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PreK-5 Elementary School (Woburn MA)  
for The Malcolm S. White Elementary School  
designed by Tappé Associates (Boston)...Jackson Construction (general contractor, Canton MA); Garcia, Galuska, DeSousa (M/E/P engineer, Dartmouth MA); LeMessurier Consultants (structural engineer, Cambridge MA); DeVellis Associates (civil engineer, Wellesley MA)

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This elementary school shares a large campus with the city's high school in a suburb of Boston...The portfolio began with a very clear, energetic description of the design rationale...The façade is impressively conceived with subtle brick recesses, delightful changes in color, thoughtful treatment of joints, and simple and appropriate composition — it feels contextual and modern and it works...Among the wonderful details was the handling of the corridors with superbly designed benches, cabinets and mosaics inviting children to enjoy the corridor as an informal space for socializing and interacting...The plan is clear, rigorous and excellent and the detailing is brilliant...This is a remarkably subtle and sophisticated project.

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Jackie Robinson School (New Haven)  
for New Haven Public Schools  
designed by Davis Brody Bond (New York City)...C & R Development Co.  
(construction manager, East Granby CT); Konover (construction manager, Farmington CT); URS Corp. (M/E/P/structural/fire protection/telecommunications engineer, Rocky Hill CT); Cardinal Engineering Associates (civil engineer, Merden CT); Joseph Simeone Architect (code/specifications consultant, New Haven); Ameche Architects (landscape architect, New Haven); Shen Milson & Wilke (a/v and acoustics consultant, New York City)

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This is a new preK-8 school located on the same site as the old school, which was to remain operational throughout the design and construction process...The new building was inserted into a hillside, which minimized the scale of the school facing the community and made it possible to develop park areas and playing fields shared by the school and the community...The site plan was a tremendous improvement and the reality seems to manifest the plan well...This is a project that addresses the challenge of a

huge program and addresses it effectively; it integrates all the building systems and special attention is paid to the lighting design...The composition of the building is just right...The clarity of the design was echoed in the clarity of the presentation, which told the story well.

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Upper School (Greenwich CT)

for Greenwich Academy

designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (New York City)...Atkinson Koven Feinberg Engineers (M/E/P engineer, New York City); DiBlasi Associates (structural engineer, Monroe CT); Redniss & Mead (civil engineer, Stamford CT); Haley & Aldrich (geotechnical engineer, Glastonbury CT); Brown Sardina (landscape architect, Boston); Fogarty Cohen Selby & Nemiroff (land-use consultant, Greenwich CT); James Turrell (artist, Tucson)

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This is a new, private upper school (grades 9-12) on a suburban site in Connecticut that also is home to existing facilities for lower- and middle-school students...The attention devoted to sustainable design is apparent and contributes significantly to the design success that characterizes this project (the green roof is extraordinary)...This is a large project and even the relentlessness of the façade, for some of us, actually seems to work well...This is an ambitious and successful project that holds the edge extremely well...This is powerful work.

## CITATIONS FOR DESIGN

Visual and Performing Arts Center (Chestnut Hill MA)

for Beaver Country Day School

designed by HMFH Architects (Cambridge MA)...Foley & Buhl Engineering (structural engineer, Watertown MA); TMP Consulting Engineers (M/E/P engineer, Boston); Carol R. Johnson Associates (landscape architect, Boston); Erland Construction Co. (construction manager, Burlington MA)

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This is a new facility for a private school on an “intensely used” 16-acre campus with little room for expansion...This well-conceived and well-executed design emerges from a very clear plan manifested at just the right scale as the designer has broken up the mass of the new elements superbly...The new building is integrated extremely well with the existing buildings on the campus; the continuity from building to building — enabled by an interior bridge and a catwalk — is enriched by a beautiful façade/elevation facing the bridge, which leads to a public arts center; the juxtaposition of materials is thoughtful and effective...The designer has made the masonry development from the existing buildings to the new appear to be a simple progression — but it is clearly not a simple feat...This building is a nice mix of the contextual and the contemporary...We also wish to

commend the designer for the portfolio's effective integration of graphics and text that told a very clear story.

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Library and Classroom Addition (Rye NY)  
for the School of the Holy Child  
designed by Murphy Burnham & Buttrick (New York City)...The Whiting-Turner Contracting Co. (general contractor, White Plains NY); Robert Silman Associates (structural engineer, New York City); John Meyer Consulting (civil engineer, Armonk NY); Landmark Facilities Group (mechanical engineer, Norwalk CT); Tillett Lighting Design (lighting consultant, New York City)

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This an addition to an all-girls middle school and high school on a suburban campus...Of all the Modernist designs we had the opportunity to review, this seemed the most restrained and that restraint is evident in the new entryway...This same restraint also provides a sense of expansiveness...The designer's successful strategy has resulted in a lovely and elegant project exquisitely done.

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New Visions Headstart (Newport RI)  
for Church Community Housing  
designed by Newport Collaborative Architects (Newport RI)...Pascack Building Co. (North Kingstown RI); R.K. Baker and Associates (mechanical engineer, Providence); Odeh Engineers (structural engineer, North Providence RI); Robert W. McClanaghan P.E. (electrical engineer, Warwick RI); Fuss and O'Neill (civil engineer, Providence)

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This is a private early-childhood development center on a site formerly used by the U.S. Navy in the North End of Newport; the project is adjacent to new and existing public housing...The appealing composition of the façade, the nice mix of materials and the uncommon form of the exterior sunshades contribute to the success of this design...In addition, a good plan lends an authenticity and honest joy to this good 'temporary' architecture...We also appreciated the clear presentation of this project characterized by the effective integration of photos and drawings.

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Thompson Middle School (Newport RI)  
for Newport Pubic Schools  
designed by HMFH Architects (Cambridge MA)...Foley & Buhl Engineering (structural engineer, Watertown MA); TMP Consulting Engineers (M/E/P engineer, Boston); Carol R. Johnson Associates (landscape architect, Boston); A. F. Lusi Construction (general contractor, Greenville RI)

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This is the restoration of a century-old school and the addition of new construction on a tight urban main-street site between an historic city hall and a church...The designer seems to have approached this project with sensitivity and with a clear understanding of the context...The result is a very graceful restoration and insertion of a new structure in a very constrained site...The very well-done context plan and sections included in the

portfolio were particularly helpful in understanding this project...This is very thoughtful work on every level.

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PreK-8 Day School (New York City)  
for St. Hilda's & St. Hugh's School  
designed by Murphy Burnham & Buttrick (New York City)...Home Interiors (general contractor, New York City); Hage Engineering (structural engineer, New York City); Landmark Facilities Group (mechanical engineer, Norwalk CT); Melanie Freundlich Lighting Design (lighting consultant, New York City)

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This is the renovation of an independent day school housed in a nine-storey 1968 building on Manhattan's Upper West Side...The designers prepared the masterplan and designed a new glass and metal entry vestibule that extends into the *porte-cochere*, renovated the basement level, and designed a modern library computer center...The use of large sliding glass and wood doors defining separate spaces for different age groups and uses is effective and carefully thought through...The prominent and nicely detailed vitrines seem to foster a sense of pride in the children's creations...This is elegantly simple work that resulted in a small, comfortable, beautiful space.