2009
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT DATA
# Project Data

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Thoreau Center for Sustainability San Francisco</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>Master Tenant: Tides, Inc. (a nonprofit) Master Lessor: Presidio Trust (a U.S. government corporation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Use(s)</td>
<td>Office complex for sustainability-related nonprofit organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Size</td>
<td>150,000 square feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Development Cost</td>
<td>$15,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Initiated</td>
<td>September 11, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Completed by December 1, 2008</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Completion Date (if appropriate)</td>
<td>December 31, 1997 with program and building improvements on-going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application submitted by:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>China Brotsky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Managing Director, Tides Shared Spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Tides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>PO Box 29198 City/State/Zip San Francisco, CA 94129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>(415) 561-6337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td><a href="mailto:china@tides.org">china@tides.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend Contact Number</td>
<td>415-637-3370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Participants (Attach an additional sheet if needed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Participant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone/e-mail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Agencies</td>
<td>National Park Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architect/Designer</td>
<td>Leddy, Maytum Stacey Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developer</td>
<td>Equity Community Builders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Consultant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Lynn Simon, Simon + Associates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate how you learned of the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. (Check all that apply).

- [X] Direct Mailing
- Magazine Advertisement
- Previous RBA entrant
- Professional
- Newsletter
- Previous Selection Committee member
- Organization
- Magazine Calendar
- Online Notice
- Bruno/Loeb Forum
- Other (please specify)

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Signature: [Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]
2009 RUDY BRUNER AWARD ABSTRACT
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Project Name: Thoreau Center for Sustainability San Francisco

Address: 1014 Torney Avenue
City/State/ZIP: San Francisco, CA 94129

1. Give a brief overview of the project, including major project goals.

Dedicated to cultural, financial and environmental leadership, Thoreau Center for Sustainability is a 150,000 square foot green nonprofit center in the heart of San Francisco's Presidio National Park. The Center is named for writer and naturalist Henry David Thoreau who believed in the importance of democracy and advocated living in harmony with nature. The Center's historic green buildings bring Thoreau's ideas to life by creating a home for innovative civic engagement in a beautiful urban park visited by thousands of people each year.

The environmentally sustainable campus of twelve restored buildings houses over sixty organizations working for a healthy environment and a just world. By reclaiming an abandoned hospital to create quality workspace in a national park, Thoreau Center breaks down traditional barriers between office buildings and community spaces. Resident staff enjoy a healthy work environment and park visitors see a creative new use for old urban spaces when they visit the Center's Whole Earth Library, public art galleries, or cafe serving organic, locally-grown food.

Thoreau Center's project goals include the following:

1) To combine innovative green design with high standards of historic preservation
2) To convert an abandoned hospital into a thriving community space
3) To create quality, affordable, mission-enhancing space for social change and civic engagement organizations
4) To model the vision for a Presidio National Park focused on preserving its natural, cultural and historic resources for public use and enjoyment and sustainably operating its 800 commercial and residential buildings
5) To build a vibrant community with educational events, social gatherings and art exhibits.
6) To ensure a financially and operationally sustainable business model

2. Why does the project merit the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.)

1) The Thoreau Center was one of the first models of what is becoming a cutting edge trend in nonprofit and community capacity building - the nonprofit center. This green nonprofit center provides a range of diverse groups with healthy, efficient, quality, mission-enhancing workspace, saving them in excess of $13 million in rent over 10 years. More than just offices, this facility has become a sustainable center of strength for local communities to dream together, work together and grow together. Since it opened hundreds of visitors have traveled to Thoreau Center from around the world to learn how to replicate this model of environmentally, socially and financially sustainable urban development. These visitors prompted the Thoreau Center staff to create a learning community for nonprofit center projects that now boasts over 150 members across North America. As the growth of this model explodes, nonprofit centers take root in a variety of urban environments demonstrating its applicability in a wide range of cities and neighborhoods.
2) This National Trust for Historic Preservation Honor Award winner was one of the first buildings nationally combining green design with historic preservation. It continues to be on the cutting edge of green building operations.
3) This adaptive reuse of an old military hospital, while honoring its history, breaks down traditional barriers between office buildings and community spaces. Park visitors see a creative new use for old urban spaces when they visit the Center. Art has been fused into the project by converting old historic hallways into art galleries.
4) This project innovatively combined commercial and nonprofit financing sources to meet project goals. Thoreau Center represented, according to the NPS, the first time that historic tax credits had been utilized for a project within a National Park. In this way, the project was able to take advantage of both the tax credits available to the private sector and then tax exempt financing available to the non-profit sector, while the public sector (NPS) was relieved of expending funds on a deteriorating asset. This model is being utilized now in many locations throughout the Park Service. The financing structure has also provided a model for many other nonprofit workspace projects.
2009
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT DESCRIPTION
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1. Describe the underlying values and goals of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project?

The values of the Thoreau Center project are based on a commitment to environmental, social and economic sustainability. The environmentally sustainable campus, 150,000 square feet in twelve restored buildings, houses over sixty organizations working for a healthy environment and a just world. By reclaiming an abandoned hospital to create quality workspace in a national park, Thoreau Center breaks down traditional barriers between office buildings and community spaces. Resident staff enjoy a healthy work environment and park visitors see a creative new use for old urban spaces when they visit the Center's Whole Earth Library, public art galleries, or cafe serving organic, locally-grown food.

Thoreau Center's project goals are:
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The Thoreau Center, formerly the historic Letterman Hospital, is a model of historic preservation and green design. Throughout our community spaces we continue to tell the story of the Presidio's history and future through our public programming and building design. Maintaining a balance between green building principles and historic preservation has been a negotiation process at times, foregoing such things as energy-efficient windows in order to preserve the historic fabric. With only limited environment-friendly building materials available at the time of development, the Thoreau Center project required additional financing to maintain its commitment to a green renovation.

2. How has the project impacted the local community?

The Thoreau Center's prominent location in a former military base turned national park helps raise the visibility of the Presidio's preservation and sustainability mission. As the first project in the newly created Presidio park, Thoreau Center became an anchor for the park's revitalization, driving the infrastructure development and serving as a model for other projects to follow. This once abandoned military base has become a thriving urban park that contributes vast community-oriented green space to the surrounding densely populated neighborhoods.

Park visitors participate in the Center by joining building regular tours, eating in the healthy Acre Cafe, enjoying exhibitions of work by local artists and visiting the Whole Earth Library. Located on the western edge of the city, the Presidio previously lacked many options for food or gathering spaces for residents and visitors. Thoreau Center breaks that isolation by hosting a variety of well-attended educational workshops, art openings, speakers and book readings. With social events and educational opportunities provided in their neighborhood, Presidio residents do not have to travel to other parts of the city to enjoy the benefits of urban living.

Thoreau also provides tremendous benefits for its social change nonprofit tenants. Stable affordable rent in one of the hottest real estate markets in the US has saved these vital community institutions over $13 million in rent over the building's first ten years. Those funds go directly into nonprofit services, providing more benefits to the community. The collaborative environment at the Center leads to new coalitions working together to solve some of today's most important urban issues including job loss, access to quality education and healthcare, and climate change.

Finally, the Center works closely with the Presidio to reduce our carbon footprint by promoting alternative transportation such as the popular Presidigo shuttle and ongoing Bike-to-Work events. We have been recognized by the San Francisco Building Owners and Managers Association for a top recycling program in the city, and new educate the community on Zero Waste Management strategies. Our commitment to green building operations ensures that the impact of over 500 employees and thousands of visitors each year is as minimal as possible.
3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.

The development process yielded the first private/public partnership with the National Park Service in the Presidio and became a model for the park's future projects. The National Park Service issued a Request for Interest to restore 800 dilapidated buildings in this former military base. The Tides Foundation (Tides) conceived of the project and the development team's submission was selected as a finalist out of 300 initial responses. The development team then gathered comments from many extensive community meetings sponsored by the National Park Service to incorporate into their final project proposal. Thoreau Center for Sustainability was chosen as the winning proposal for the Letterman Hospital rehabilitation.

Once selected, Tides assembled a consortium of interested nonprofit tenants before construction even began to help shape the space design and community programming. Our development team worked closely with the State Historic Preservation Office to comply with their guidelines for adaptive reuse of the historic buildings.

To ensure that future developments in the Park preserve the Presidio's vision, Thoreau Center staff spearheaded the formation of the Presidio Alliance. This consortium included community members and organizations located in and around the Presidio and worked for over ten years to ensure continued commitment to sustainability at the Presidio.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.

The financing of the project was done in two phases. The first phase encompassed the rehabilitation of the building, tenanting of the building and its first nine years of operation. The entity that held title was a for profit general partnership with majority ownership of the general partner by the owner Tides. This was done to enable using historic tax credits which requires a for profit vehicle. Financing of the first phase was $8 million in senior bank debt, $2.5 million in historic tax credits and $3.5 million in program-related investments from supportive foundations including Tides. The mission of the building was supported by using the tax credits because it allowed us to charge affordable rents. The cost of the building rehabilitation was under under $100/sq ft.

In 2003, after the expiration of the tax credit holding period, the property was transferred to a nonprofit to secure the long-term mission of the buildings. TCS was transferred to Tides, Inc. (a 501 (c) 3) and an affiliate of Tides. We also refinanced all the debt with a tax-exempt bond of $9,510,000, a taxable bond of $2,230,000 and a fixed rate blended to 5.5%. The taxable bond allows us to fill 20% of the property with for profit entities who support the sustainability mission of the project as well as broadening our tenant base in potentially challenging economic times.

TCS has been at least 95% occupied since it opened. It is currently 100% occupied. All debt service, along with the programming of the Center, has been paid for through rental revenues. Our innovative financing structures which combined both for profit and nonprofit sources have provided a model for many other nonprofit workspace projects.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings?

The power to change the world lies in the ability of people to come together, share ideas and work to make their visions real. Yet too often community organizations are displaced by ricocheting rents and tight real estate markets or pushed into poor quality space, isolated from their peers and far from the communities who need them most. The Thoreau Center provides an internationally recognized model to solve this problem. This green nonprofit center provides a range of diverse groups with healthy, efficient, quality, mission-enhancing workspace. More than just offices, this facility has become a sustainable center of strength for local communities to dream together, work together and grow together.

Since it opened in 1996, hundreds of visitors have traveled to Thoreau Center from around the world to learn how to replicate this model of environmentally, socially and financially sustainable urban development. These visitors prompted the Thoreau Center development team to create a learning community for nonprofit center projects that now boasts over 150 members across North America. As the growth of this model explodes, nonprofit centers take root in a variety of urban environments demonstrating its applicability in a wide range of cities and neighborhoods. The Thoreau Center remains unique in its ideal marriage of urban park location and sustainability focus. It continues to embody Henry David Thoreau's passion for civic engagement and nature and helps the Presidio to serve as a true community commons dedicated to a healthier world.
2009
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
ARCHITECT
OR DESIGNER
PERSPECTIVE
American cities embody our nation's greatest triumphs and most daunting challenges. At their best they showcase the rich diversity, cultural achievement, and democratic values that characterize the American spirit. At their worst they reflect our country's most persistent social ills - economic disparity, hopelessness, neglect and abandonment. Yet there are those places that are developed with such vision and imagination that they transform urban problems into creative solutions. The Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence (RBA) seeks to discover those special places and to celebrate and publicize their achievements.

Excellence exists in every city. It can be found in downtowns, neighborhoods, and parks. The Rudy Bruner Award searches for urban places that embody excellence, and celebrates their contribution to the richness and diversity of the urban experience. These places often transcend the boundaries between architecture, urban design, and planning. They are born through processes of transformation – the renewal of something old, or the creation of something new that resonates in the history of community life.

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**Prizes and Presentation**

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**2007 Rudy Bruner Award Winners**

**Cold Medal:**

- Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

**Silver Medals:**

- Artists for Humanity Epicenter, Boston, MA
- Columbus Circle Public Plaza, New York, NY
- Crossroads Project and Marsupial Bridge, Milwaukee, WI
- High Point Redevelopment Project, Seattle, WA
- LA Design Center, Los Angeles, CA

**2009 Selection Committee**

- David N. Cicilline, Mayor, Providence, RI
- Michael Dobbins, Professor of Practice, Department of Architecture, City and Regional Planning, Georgia Tech, Atlanta, GA
- Mary Houghton, President and Co-founder, Shore Bank, Chicago, IL
- Grace La, Principal, La Dallman Architects, Associate Professor of Architecture, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI
- Jair Lynch, President, CEO, JAIR LYNCH Development Partners, Washington, DC
- Martha Welborne, Managing Director, Grand Avenue Committee, Los Angeles, CA

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This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services. Copies may be given to other design professionals if desired.

Name Marsha Maytum, FAIA
Title Principal
Organization Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects
Telephone (415) 495-1700, ext 302
Address 677 Harrison Street
City/State/ZIP San Francisco, CA 94107
Fax (415) 495-1717
E-mail mmaytum@lmsarch.com

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Signature

1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc.

The 150,000 square foot complex of historic structures was to be transformed into new offices, and public exhibition space for a nonprofit center of over 60 organizations working for social justice, community education and development, public health, and environmental stewardship. A primary project goal was for the Thoreau Center to become a national model for the successful integration of sustainable design practices and adaptive reuse for other military bases throughout the United States. Some sustainability features include:
- Reuse of existing historic structures with minimal intrusion, demolition and waste. Existing spaces were reused by matching client program to existing spaces. Contractor was required to report on amounts of waste removed and recycled.
- Photovoltaic panels
- Cotton insulation in walls
- Sustainably harvested wood paneling for workstations
- Recycled aluminum storefront at interior offices
- Bathroom tiles made from recycled windshields from cars
- Formaldehyde free paints and high efficiency hydronic heating
- High efficiency lighting and maximized day lighting through use of glass office partitions and open office space

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.

The Tides Foundation and Equity Community Builders LLC (ECB) responded to a public request for qualifications issued by the National Park Service in 1994 for rehabilitation of the historic Letterman Army Hospital building complex. These two organizations believed that there was an opportunity to create within these historic structures a new type of multi-tenant center with organizations that shared values of environmental stewardship and social justice.

The Thoreau Center’s design provides an excellent example of the important relationship between historic rehabilitation and sustainable development. By transforming older buildings into new uses, there is a net reduction in the use of resources and building materials, as well as the preservation of important architectural and cultural landmarks. Also, building rehabilitation reinforces the concept of using what already exists within the boundaries of our existing developed areas, thereby stopping the continued development, decentralization and sprawl of our urban and suburban areas.
The creation of this new center provides an opportunity to showcase sustainable design principles and sound environmental practices. It also presented a major challenge in transforming the historic hospital wards into new office space integrating new energy efficient building systems and "green" material while maintaining the historic integrity of the landmark structures. Besides the rehabilitation requirements of the National Park Service for historic landmark buildings and landscape, the project also had to conform to the rehabilitation requirement for the federal historic tax credit program which was critical to the financial viability of the Thoreau Center. Constructed by the U.S. Army between 1899 and 1933, the buildings were in bad repair and needed completely new electrical, mechanical, plumbing and life safety systems as well as basic building maintenance and accessibility upgrades. And, the hospital wards needed to be transformed and reconfigured into office and community space for a variety of uses. The most important environmental goal for this project was to prove that it is possible and economically viable to transform and recycle existing historic building resources into new uses for the next century. Historic rehabilitation is a fundamental act of sustainable development and practices.

As a historic landmark, the retention of the existing materials, configuration and character was very critical to the National Park Service. The original circulation and general plan configuration were maintained. New interior tenant space was recaptured by enclosing the original porte-cocheres of two of the ward buildings. New restrooms, elevators and handicapped access were discreetly incorporated into the original plan. The new architectural features needed to be designed in a way which could be "reversible" and not damaging to the original structure if the use of building changed again in the future. The balancing of energy performance and retention of historic fabric was an important part of the design dialogue on this project. The landscape features surrounding the Thoreau Center are also included in the landmark designation. The large open grass areas, significant historic plantings and exterior circulation patterns are all a part of the historic cultural landscape. As such, the design of the new landscape elements must also meet the requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Historic Rehabilitations. In addition to the restoration and maintenance of the existing features, many sustainable landscape practices were incorporated into the design.

The Thoreau Center for Sustainability, located in the historic wards of the Letterman Hospital, is the first public/private partnership project completed at the new Presidio National Park. The Thoreau Center opened in April 1996 as the new home for Tides Foundation, Tides Center, Energy Foundation and the Institute for Global Communications and sixteen other nonprofit organizations working on environmental and sustainable development issues. The 75,000 square foot complex is named after Henry David Thoreau, who introduced into American literature the central concept of human interrelatedness with nature, underpinning modern environmental thought. The Center provides a place for organizations committed to research and educational activities while promoting the Park's sustainability mission and helping preserve its history. Not only a model for sustainable development and innovative private/public partnerships, the Thoreau Center maintains and enhances the historic resources at the Presidio and beyond. The next decade will see more opportunities to restore and rehabilitate the available resources at closed military bases across America. Creative solutions will be required to fully realize the potential of these important architectural and cultural resources.

The transformation from hospital wards to new energy efficient offices is complete. The Thoreau Center is now a thriving community of non-profit organizations dedicated to community development and environmental stewardship. In today's political and economic context, the successful completion of the Thoreau Center, without need for government funds, will serve as a model for the future success of the Presidio and for all other base closures throughout America.
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DEVELOPER
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RUDY BRUNER AWARD
FOR URBAN EXCELLENCE
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This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

1. What role did you or your company play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.

Equity Community Builders LLC ("ECB") formed a limited partnership (Thoreau Center Partners) with the Tides Foundation ("Tides") to develop the Thoreau Center for Sustainability in the historic Letterman Hospital Complex at the Presidio in San Francisco. Serving as a minority General Partner of the ownership group as well as the development manager and long term property manager and leasing agent, ECB undertook the following tasks:

- Submitted the original response to the National Park Service's ("NPS") Request for Proposals and represented the partners in negotiations with the NPS on the terms of a 60 year master lease for 12 historic buildings to be developed in 2 phases;
- Managed the design team to fulfill the programmatic, historic, and green building objectives, as well as preparing all economic pro formas and budgets;
- Coordinated and secured bank loans and tax credit equity investment while also assisting Tides in securing Program Related Investment loans from other foundations;
- Managed oversight of the construction and tenant improvements for the ownership group;
- Continued to lease and manage the entire 160,000 square foot complex since opening.

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

ECB, Tides and the architectural team worked closely with the National Park Service and the California State Office of Historic Preservation to meet the requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation, while also adapting the buildings that were formerly used as an army hospital into innovative, contemporary feeling office space. Throughout the design and construction process trade-offs and compromises were required to keep spatial configurations and historic fabric intact, while also opening up space to accommodate offices, meeting space, and support areas. Compounding the transition from army hospital to non-profit office space was the goal to incorporate at the time all of the new green building materials and practices possible. Often this goal conflicts with the goal of retaining certain historic fabric. However, overall the compromises and trade-offs produced a more interesting design—and one that retained its historic integrity, while also displaying the possibilities for the future. Other trade-offs were required due to the need to keep costs low in order to accommodate lower rents that are necessary to lease to non-profits, which was the project's primary objective.
DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used?

It should be noted that the Thoreau Center represented the largest and most complex ground lease transaction to a private entity in the entire NPS's portfolio of parks throughout the U.S. and since its inception in aggregate. In addition, according to the NPS, this project was the first time that historic tax credits had been utilized for a project within a National Park. Given the declining budgets of the NPS and the increasing costs of preserving historic and cultural assets, this was a very important model to test for the NPS, and had implications throughout the system. The Thoreau Center was also the first major rehabilitation in the Presidio in San Francisco; one of the first dedicated non-profit centers in the country; and also one of the early green building projects located within an existing historic structure. Therefore, Thoreau Center Partners was pioneering on a number of levels, presenting clearly a challenge for conventional financing. In order to finance the $14 million project (1997 dollars) in two phases, ECB and Tides put together a financing plan that included $8 million (57%) in conventional construction and permanent financing from a local bank (First Republic), underwritten on long term leases with Tides and other non-profits; $3.5 million (25%) in program related investment loans from friendly foundations; and $2.5 million (18%) in historic tax credit equity. After the 5 year period of recapture for the tax credits, the partnership decided to sell the project to a non-profit affiliate of the Tides Foundation, which utilized long term tax exempt financing to take out the loans and tax credit investor. In this way, the project was able to take advantage of both the tax credits available to the private sector and then tax exempt financing available to the non-profit sector, while the public sector (NPS) was relieved of expending funds on a deteriorating asset. This model is being utilized now in many locations throughout the Park Service.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of the project?

The Thoreau Center was developed in difficult economic times (there was a major commercial real estate slowdown in the mid-90's in San Francisco) with several ambitious objectives: (1) to rehabilitate a significant landmark and to demonstrate that such structures located in sensitive National Park locations could be adaptively re-used and financed by a partnership of the private, non-profit and public sectors, alleviating the public sector of responsibility for deteriorating buildings; (2) to create a center for non-profits that would benefit synergistically from proximity and shared commons and would be protected from escalating rents of the commercial market; (3) to design, construct and manage buildings in the most environmentally responsible way over time, but always in alignment with the goals of historic and cultural preservation as well as economic sustainability; (4) to create programs and a tenant mix that contribute both to the life of the center itself, but also the Presidio National Park and the broader community, including art galleries, lecture series, model recycling, friendly and welcoming public spaces. All of these objectives have successfully been met and the Center remains a model for each of them on a national scale.

The least successful aspects of the project tend to be ones that are not visible. To date, we have been unsuccessful in building long term reserves or an endowment that would protect the Center from unforeseen market fluctuations induced by increases in operating costs or downward pressure on our already low 'non-profit market rents'. This is a concern, but not one that is experienced when one walks into the Thoreau Center and realizes that they have entered a true "swords-to-ploughshares" transformation...where an army facility is now a major center for 60 non-profit organizations working on the issues related to the environment and broader community.
2009
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE
Response from:

Stephen G. Kasierski
U.S. National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area

What role did your agency play in the development of the project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency?

The National Park Service, a federal agency, was the fee owner and initial lessor/landlord for all real estate assets comprising the Thoreau Center for Sustainability. NPS executed a series of long-term leases with Thoreau Center Partners in 1995-1997 for the development and operation of the project. NPS also acted as the municipal “building department” for plan check and construction inspection purposes, and approved, through a separate administrative unit, the application of federal historic rehabilitation tax credits for the property.

How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?

The project benefited our government agency by providing for the timely rehabilitation of approximately 160,000 square feet of National Historic Landmark buildings to historic preservation standards while incorporating pioneering elements of environmentally sustainable design. The occupants of the building provided important programmatic distinction consistent with our master plan for the Presidio of San Francisco, a “swords-to-plowshares” conversion of an historic military base into a premier urban national park. After selecting the Tides Foundation and Thoreau Center Partners after a national RFQ, our agency worked with their project team for five years on developing a strategy for building improvements and financing, while assisting the partnership in marketing the Presidio and the project as a place for program innovation. As the fee owner and landlord, NPS also had to approve all project financing, and we worked closely with the partnership on developing a long-term lease that provided for the utilization of historic rehab tax credits in a park environment.

Describe the project’s impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible.

The project has a profound impact on the Presidio. As our largest leasing effort, it attracted attention both because of its scale as well as its positive outcome. The first phase, completed in 1996, promptly won the National Preservation Honor Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation for demonstrating how to combine historic preservation, financial innovation, and programmatic vision in a real estate project (see the Trust’s published case study – I and my colleague NPS historic architect Robert Wallace attended the award ceremony in Chicago on behalf of my agency, along with other representatives of the project team). The lease transaction, with NPS as lessor and a private-sector lessee using historic rehab tax credits, became the template by which two significant and larger transactions were developed and
financed by NPS – the Argonaut Hotel in San Francisco and the Cavallo Point Lodge at Fort Baker in Sausalito (I am currently the park’s project manager for this NPS project, which opened in July 2008 after more than $120 million of private and public-sector investment).

Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

The project represented a new and successful launch of large-scale leasing projects by NPS and our successor federal agency at the Presidio of San Francisco, the Presidio Trust. It demonstrated that a transaction on federal park property could successfully utilize private-sector real estate financing techniques (such as the application of historic rehab tax credits), while also achieving programmatic distinction in the accommodation of a community of program-oriented tenancies appropriate for the unique park setting and goals. Particularly useful for our agency was the desirability of inviting fresh ideas and experienced partners and consultants who had professional experience with these projects in non-federal settings. The team had a history of working with nonprofit organizations that were willing to experiment with the notion that their physical office environment (the real estate) could supplement the program vision of their operations, and could for the first time be also located in an unparalleled national park.

What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspects of the project were 1) the successful application of historic rehab tax credits in a modern, national park setting, and; 2) a visionary approach to revitalizing historic hospital buildings while developing community space (such as a “gallery” concept in a former medical ward connecting corridor) in rather awkward and forlorn historic buildings originally constructed for a totally different use.

The least successful part of the project was the inability to continue the momentum gained from the successful completion of the project into a broader approach to the entire “neighborhood” of historic hospital buildings. Many of these buildings are vacant to this day, and it would have been preferable to develop and launch a real estate strategy that could have continued in modest but sustainable increments.
1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements).

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?
3. Describe the project's impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?
2009
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
OTHER PERSPECTIVE
2009 RUDY BRUNER AWARD FOR URBAN EXCELLENCE

American cities embody our nation's greatest triumphs and most daunting challenges. At their best they showcase the rich diversity, cultural achievements, and democratic values that characterize the American spirit. At their worst they reflect our country's most persistent social ills - economic disparity, hopelessness, neglect and abandonment. Yet there are those places that are developed with such vision and imagination that they transform urban problems into creative solutions. The Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence (RBA) seeks to discover those special places and to celebrate and publicize their achievements.

Excellence exists in every city. It can be found in downtowns, neighborhoods, and parks. The Rudy Bruner Award searches for urban places that embody excellence, and celebrates their contribution to the richness and diversity of the urban experience. These places often transcend the boundaries between architecture, urban design, and planning. They are born through processes of transformation - the renewal of something old, or the creation of something new that resonates in the history of community life. These extraordinary places enrich the quality of the urban experience, and serve as models for placemaking in cities across the country.

Prizes and Presentation
The Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence is given to five winning projects in each biennial award cycle.
- One Gold Medal Winner is awarded $50,000.
- Four Silver Medal Winners are each awarded $10,000.
- The winning project teams may use prize money in any way they choose to benefit the project.
- All winners are promoted by the Bruner Foundation and are included in books that are published by the Foundation.
- All finalists will be featured in award ceremonies, and a media outreach effort.

2007 Rudy Bruner Award Winners
Gold Medal:
Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

Silver Medals:
Artists for Humanity Epicenter, Boston, MA
Columbus Circle Public Plaza, New York, NY
Crossroads Project and Marsupial Bridge, Milwaukee, WI
High Point Redevelopment Project, Seattle, WA
LA Design Center, Los Angeles, CA

2009 Selection Committee
David N. Cicilline, Mayor, Providence, RI
Michael Dobbs, Professor of Practice, Department of Architecture, City and Regional Planning, Georgia Tech, Atlanta, GA
Mary Houghton, President and Co-founder, Shore Bank, Chicago, IL
Grace La, Principal, La Dallam Architects, Associate Professor of Architecture, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI
Jair Lynch, President, CEO, JAIR Lynch Development Partners, Washington, DC
Martha Welborne, Managing Director, Grand Avenue Committee, Los Angeles, CA

Perspective Sheets
You have been asked by the applicant to fill in a perspective sheet. Perspective sheets are designed to elicit individual or institutional perspectives on the applicant project. Emphasis should be placed on answering the questions in the space provided in as clear a manner as possible.

Although the application contains many other components, individual perspectives provide critical information about the project as it is reviewed by the Selection Committee. We thank you for your willingness to submit a perspective sheet, and for participating in the Rudy Bruner Award process.

NB: Perspective sheets can be filled out in writable pdf format online at: www.brunerfoundation.org. However, they must be submitted to the Foundation (together with other materials provided by the applicant) as hard copy, with your signature. No e-mail submissions will be accepted.

Key Dates:
- Submissions must be received at the Foundation no later than Monday, December 15, 2008.
- Applications received after December 15 will not be considered.
- Five finalists will be notified by January 26, 2009.
- Site visits to finalists will take place in February, March, and April 2009.
- The Gold and Silver Medal Winners will be selected and notified in May, 2009.
- Presentations of the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence will be made in May and June of 2009.

Notice:
Projects from the City of Providence, RI are not eligible for the 2009 Award due to the participation of Mayor David N. Cicilline on the 2009 Selection Committee. We look forward to receiving applications from Providence in future award cycles.
Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Name Lynn N. Simon, AIA, LEED AP
Address 200 Brannan Street, #204
Fax (415) 908-3766

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, for any purpose whatsoever, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature

1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

   S&A worked with the interdisciplinary team to help develop a strategy for identifying and implementing environmental goals for the project. In addition, we researched sustainable building materials and systems and reviewed specifications for environmental considerations.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on your community. Please be as specific as possible.

   This project transformed 75,000 sq. ft. of the Presidio's former Army hospital wards into a modern center for non-profit organizations. One of the first historic preservation projects in the country to fully incorporate green materials (preceding the development of the LEED rating system), it still serves as a national model for sustainable design.
3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

The client, developer, and project team were committed from the very beginning to incorporate sustainable design strategies. In 1996 when this project was completed, there were very few projects that had sustainability as one of their primary goals. There are always a few trade-offs and compromises when one adds new criteria (e.g. sustainable design goals) in the design and construction of the project. So not only are aesthetic and cost issues important but so are issues such as energy efficiency, indoor air quality, recycled content, and locally manufactured. When selecting materials we had to identify durable, beautiful, functional AND green characteristics when we evaluated and selected the products.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The project was successful on so any levels. It has one numerous awards and continues to be a vibrant place to work.
Thoreau Center at old Letterman Hospital in the Presidio blooms as a campus for all things sustainable.

Lunchtime: Every day, workers at the nonprofits that make up Thoreau Center get to spend their mid-day break in a national park, above. Walls in the longtime hospital now contain art and photography exhibits, left.
See San Francisco as only our residents can

Tours start from sales center, 511 Harrison Street at First Street. Open Monday-Friday 11 to 5, closed Wednesday, Saturday-Sunday 12 to 5.

Marketed by Pacific Marketing Associates. Broker cooperation welcomed.

Obtain the Property Report or its equivalent, required by Federal and State law and read it before signing anything. No Federal or State agency has judged the merits or value, if any, of this property.
Bruce Belsky, program director at the Thoreau Center, stands under solar cells in the lobby area.

Some Thoreau Center tenants

Art Seed
Bay Area Ridge Trail Council
Center for Resource Solutions
Community Clinics Initiative
Dog's Head Music Productions
Friends of the Urban Forest
Geographic Expeditions Inc.
Lawyers for Clean Water
Northern California Independent Bookers
Pottruck Family Foundation
Social Venture Network
World Wildlife Fund

> CENTER
From previous page

several years ago to make way for George Lucas' digital entertainment headquarters.

Thoreau tenants enjoy plenty of green and groovy perks. There are two art galleries, an organic cafe and a library. Lunchtime events range from yoga to a discussion on "traveling to despotic countries" to talks from visiting lamas. Needless to say, recycling here goes far beyond just paper and glass; there are bins for "techno trash," keys and telephones, and composting is de rigueur.

Financially, Thoreau offers rents about 10 to 25 percent below Class B commercial full-service leases and eschews market-driven rent hikes. Although it is self-supporting through rents, the center says it has saved tenants about $13 million over the past dozen years compared with what they would have paid for comparable space elsewhere.

Shared amenities

Thoreau is like a utopian community for its tenants, who get synergies with similar enterprises, below-market rate rents in a beautiful setting, and access to shared amenities, such as the conference rooms and educational programs, plus utilities, janitorial, maintenance, free parking, bike lockers and showers.

But more importantly, the Thoreau Center is an exemplar for other nonprofits that want to replicate its shared-space model to create their own stable homes.

"We've been riding the tip of the trend to enable people to carry out social change by providing infrastructure," said China Brodsky, Tides senior vice president.

"Whenever there is a commercial real estate boom, nonprofits lose space. They're in church basements, low-rent places and can't be close to their constituency. Space is their second-biggest expense after staff."

Nonprofit centers

Tides, whose philanthropic work focuses on economic justice, democratic practices and environmental sustainability, operates the Thoreau Center through its real estate arm, Tides Shared Spaces.

Besides running the Thoreau Center, Tides Shared Spaces manages the Nonprofit Centers Network, a program to help nonprofits strengthen their access to real estate by creating multitenant centers. It now numbers 150 centers as members, including existing nonprofit centers, groups that are just starting nonprofit centers, real estate partners, financial institutions and others.

About 10 percent of members are international.

In the Bay Area, some include the Ninth Street Film Center in San Francisco, Presentation Park in Oakland, the Schurz Center for Nonprofits in Mill Valley, and the Marin Community Foundation in Novato. Two centers now under construction, both in Berkeley, are the David Brower Center and the Ed Roberts Campus.
Tides’ tentacles push for change in many directions

Tides and its affiliated network organizations are the major tenants at San Francisco’s Thoreau Center with about 120 employees, as well as running the space through its Tides Shared Spaces organization.

- Tides, www.tides.org, is a network of three organizations — Tides Foundation, Tides Center and Tides Shared Spaces — that collaborate as partners in a shared mission of supporting social change. In 2007, Tides managed projects and grant-making of $185 million and had assets of about $270 million.

- Tides Shared Spaces, www.tidessharedspaces.org, creates, operates and promotes sustainable work spaces for nonprofits, such as the Tho­reau Centers in New York and San Francisco. Sponsors the NonprofitCenters Network.

- NonprofitCenters Network, www.nonprofitcenters.org, helps nonprofits complete multi­tenant centers and other programs, providing peer networking, education, online resources, regional workshops and national conferences.

- Tides Foundation, www.tidesfoundation.org, a grant-making institution that partners with donors to help them direct resources for positive social change.

- Tides Center, www.tidescenter.org, provides fiscal sponsorship for nonprofits, handling financial and legal activities for them. It has over 200 fiscally sponsored projects across the country.

Former San Francisco Women’s Building executive director, Roxanne Hanson, assoc­iate director of the NonprofitCenters Network

Confuses for nonprofits

The nonprofit-center idea is as so popular with foundations, which want to do more for them, that they actually help nonprofits.

Tides, in collaboration with the Thoreau Center in New York and San Francisco, supports about 50 nonprofits.

“Foundations take a real interest here as social investments to benefit multiple organizations with single investment,” Hanson said.

Last year, Tides Shared Spaces created the Thoreau Center in New York in the former JP Morgan headquarters on Wall Street. Un­like the San Francisco center, it uses an ownership model, “essentially center for nonprofits,” Brody said.

“From stock exchange to social change” is how the characterized the JP Morgan transformation, a variation of the Presidio’s swords­into-plowshares leitmotif,

Brody was instrumental in helping Tides start the Thoreau Center in 1996 — just as the dot­com boom was causing nonprofits to get evicted to make way for well-capitalized startups.

Preserving Lottman

Creating the space itself was a challenge. At the time services and infrastructure at the Presidio were minimal. Preserving Lottman’s historic integrity was a key goal.

Tides worked hard to do a green renovation even before standards for such existed, said Bruce DeMar­tinis, the center’s new director, pointing out such features as an energy-generating photovoltaic solar panel in the entrance way, natural-linen floors and formaldehyde­free counters.

“It’s wonderful being here,” said Barbara Hartford from Unit­ed Religious Initiative, whose space at Thoreau — formerly a hospital wing — became a med­itation room. “It’s nourishing and you get the sensibility of sustain­ability in all aspects.”

E-mail Carolyn Sald at csald@sfgate.com.