2009 Rudy Bruner Award For Urban Excellence

Submitted by Daniel A. Rosenfeld
Principal
Urban Partners, LLC
304 S. Broadway, Suite 400
Los Angeles, California 90013
(213) 437-0470 fx (213) 437-0474
2009 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROJECT DATA
# PROJECT DATA

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ABSTRACT

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Project Name: Wilshire Vermont Station

Address: 3183 Wilshire Boulevard
City/State/ZIP: Los Angeles, California 90010

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

Wilshire Vermont Station is a mixed-use, mixed-income, transit-oriented real estate development at a prominent intersection in the most diverse neighborhood, in the most diverse city, in the United States.

The surrounding community includes Asian-American, Latino, African-American and Caucasian residents, with generally lower income levels and a history of urban deterioration. Construction of the Los Angeles Red Line subway system created an opportunity for transit-oriented development above the station at Wilshire Boulevard and Vermont Avenue, including opportunities for addressing some of the fundamental issues facing Los Angeles: affordable housing, transportation, air quality, climate change, education and "community building".

The project, which was completed in 2007 by Urban Partners, LLC, responded with the following program:

- 449 rental apartments, with 20% of the units reserved for tenants earning 50% or less of the Area Median Income
- direct connection to the subway station under the project, and serving as a connection point for three Metro rail lines and an adjoining bus plaza
- a 730-seat public elementary school on the site
- 36,000 square feet of successful ground floor retail space, and a large public plaza hosting farmers' markets and other community events
- one of the most successful public art installations in the city

The project involved multiple private financing sources and the seamless cooperation of six government agencies.

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.)

Wilshire Vermont Station was a private real estate project developed by Urban Partners, LLC and its investors, including the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) (through MacFarlane Partners' California Urban Investment Program), and Real Estate Capital Partners, in a complex public/private partnership.

The design, by Miami-based Arquitectonica, a world renowned design firm, and the prominent art installation by April Greiman, create a simultaneously contextual, humble and visually identifiable architectural statement. In a psychological sense they provide an uplifting and optimistic tone for the community.

Most important, by far, has been the impact of the project on the local community. It has become a focal point among Korean-American neighbors and, through the high levels of traffic accessing the subway portal, a vehicle for "bringing people together" in a notoriously dispersed and sprawling metropolis. This project was the first major private investment in the neighborhood in almost 30 years. It has spawned additional investments at other subway stations and other private development activity through the surrounding neighborhood.

With regard to its over-arching public agendas, Wilshire Vermont Station has improved access and ridership on the city's expanding rail transit system, provided badly needed classroom seats for public education and high-quality housing at affordable price levels. It has been a public policy success for its public sector partners, an economic success for its investors and a community success for its residents, tenants and neighbors.
2009 RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT DESCRIPTION
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.

These extraordinary places enrich the quality of the urban experience, and serve as models for placemaking in cities across the country.

2009 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence

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 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

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 a 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, 2009.
- Applications received after December 15 will not be considered.
- 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.
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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 selection of Koreatown was for a major mixed-use, transit-oriented development was, at the time of the project's inception, a counter-intuitive choice. The area was experiencing declining levels of personal income, education, automobile ownership and other indices of economic health. No major development had occurred for 30 years. Only five firms responded to the Transit Authority's offering of the site (as opposed to eleven submittals for a high-end station site, also won by Urban Partners, in Pasadena, California). Local rental levels made development financially challenging, not to mention the perceived "red lining" of the neighborhood by traditional financial institutions.

Urban Partners saw multiple opportunities in this location: a central transit hub on the city's expanding rail system; relatively high savings rates and frustrated buying power in the local Korean, Latino and African-American communities; "leakage" of retail sales because of the lack of new premises; and a general perception that the Koreatown neighborhood was uniquely attractive, particularly for younger, ethnic, and creative residents seeking a truly mixed-use urban environment in a largely suburban metropolis.

Multiple community meetings were required, often in three languages, to solicit community involvement and a number of design compromises were made to preserve the visual character of the street. Other compromises were required to attach the project to the existing subway portal, and to promote intermodal (bus, auto, bicycle and pedestrian) connections.

2. How has the project impacted the local community?

At Urban Partners, we joke, more than half seriously, that we "do our market research at night." We try to create environments where people "want to be", and the success of a project like Wilshire Vermont Station is measured, in our terms, not just by its economic results, but by the number of people sitting at benches, dining under sidewalk umbrellas, and window shopping as they walk to and from the subway portal. We also monitor very carefully the economic backgrounds and commuting habits of the apartment residents in our buildings, in order to "fine tune" the delivery of "transit-oriented development" in Los Angeles, a city that is internationally known for its historical reliance on freeways and cars.

We can say with some confidence that this is truly an ethnically diverse, mixed-income development, with a high, and increasing, percentage of residents, business employees and business customers are switching from automobiles to public transportation modes.

Another, incidental indicator of our success is the number of times that the prominent public art work at the corner of the project has been featured in the Los Angeles Times, in other publications and on local television. Incidentally, this has become the most effective advertising that we have ever obtained, and the advertising impact is essentially free and continuous. We are very proud of the fact that the public art agenda is not an appendage to this project, but an integral, successful and valuable part.
3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.

The site for Wilshire Vermont Station was acquired by METRO during the construction of the Los Angeles subway. Land around the completed station was offered through a public Request For Proposals in 2001. Urban Partners was selected from amongst five bidders, and entered into a negotiation process with METRO which resulted in a ground lease. During this process, almost 50% of the site was carved out for the construction of a public middle school, serving grades 5-8.

Urban Partners then confronted the challenge of financing a complex project on leased land in a lower income market. This challenge was overcome through the placement of the largest tax-exempt affordable housing bond allocation in California history (also awarded through a public competition based on social merit) and the involvement of CalPERS, Bank of America and Urban Partners' international investment pool.

The public approval process was complicated by a language and cultural challenges, and by certain inherent suspicions within and between local resident groups. A very patient, multi-lingual community outreach process was initiated to address these concerns. Construction was relatively uneventful, other than rapidly escalating construction costs. Marketing, leasing and operations have been a complete success.

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

Wilshire Vermont Station is constructed on land leased to an affiliate of Urban Partners by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Predevelopment capital was provided by Urban Partners from its' own sources.

Once the project had been “entitled” with conceptual approvals by the City of Los Angeles, Urban Partners pursued an ambitious public/private financing structure which included over $100 million dollars of affordable housing bonds, a very substantial letter of credit from Bank of America to “face the market” for bond holders during construction, and additional equity from CalPERS. Low-income Housing tax credits were also authorized for the project, but have not been sold in the current market.

This financing, with the letter of credit in place, served for both construction purposes and long term operations.

The project achieved "break even" rental levels rather quickly, and is cash flowing successfully even in the current economic recession.

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

We believe the project is unique in several regards, including:

1. The extreme diversity of ethnic backgrounds, income levels, language proficiencies and other characteristics of the surrounding community.

2. The number of social agendas that it considers, including affordable housing, transportation, environmentalism, education, urban revitalization, public culture and art.

3. The flawless cooperation of multiple government agencies, each performing its role in perfect synchronization with the others.

4. Given the status of Los Angeles as the "poster child" of auto dependency and urban sprawl, Wilshire Vermont Station makes a strong statement that a different transportation future, and therefore different land use patterns, and, ultimately, higher levels of social interaction among diverse communities, can be achieved.
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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 Haughton, 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

Perspective Sheets

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This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name Greg Angelo
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Signature

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).

LACMTA is responsible for developing and operating one of the largest public transportation systems in the nation. We manage multiple transit modes, including subway, light rail and bus. Two key elements of our transit system are the Metro Red and Purple Lines, which form a portion of our subway network. These lines extend from downtown Los Angeles to North Hollywood and the mid-Wilshire areas of Los Angeles, respectively. In particular, these lines run through our Wilshire/Vermont Metro station. Through its joint development program, LACMTA is actively pursuing transit oriented development ("TOD") at its subway and other fixed guideway stations. Our goal is to link housing and commercial development with our transportation network and thus increase transit ridership and reduce auto use. We also look to receive a fair value for the use of our real estate assets. The Wilshire/Vermont Metro station site is one of many LACMTA-owned sites where we have pursued such transit oriented development. We are the owners of the Wilshire/Vermont Metro station site. In 2001 we commenced an open and competitive process that ultimately resulted in the selection of Urban Partners to develop the site under a long-term ground lease. Thereafter, we negotiated the terms of the ground lease and other related documents that setting forth the specific scope of development and the business arrangement between the parties. We also reviewed developer design submittals and monitored construction to ensure that our TOD goals were being met and that our exiting transit operations were not disrupted during construction. We continue in close cooperation with the developer concerning ongoing station area operations to ensure compliance with the ground lease and, thus our TOD goals.

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?

By linking transit with housing and commercial development we hope to reduce auto use. If successful, we will not only reduce rush hour freeway congestion, but will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. One unintended benefit of our program, and with Wilshire Vermont Station, in particular, is the location of affordable housing immediately adjacent to public transit opportunities. Wilshire Vermont Station contains 90 affordable units (20% of the total).

Clearly, we were interested in using this opportunity to increase transit ridership, both for residents and commercial business patrons, and to generate an income stream for Metro from ground lease revenues and via the fare box. At the same time, we are proud of our role in supporting the broader land use planning and environmental agenda of the City of Los Angeles and the other communities that we serve.

One tradeoff that we faced was a request from the Los Angeles Unified School District to acquire almost one half of the development site for construction of a middle school. We worked with LAUSD to accommodate this important community asset, even though their use will likely not generate the same level of transit ridership as would have been generated by a more dense mixed-use development.

In all, we are proud of our role in cooperating, not just with LAUSD, but with the Community Redevelopment Agency, federal transportation agencies and the City of Los Angeles in this very complicated, multi-jurisdictional endeavor.
3. Describe the project's impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible.

We believe that Wilshire Vermont Station has accomplished all of our goals, and more. It is an example of public/private cooperation, multi-jurisdictional intergovernmental cooperation and the mobilization of private sector resources for multiple public benefits. With its 449 housing units and 36,000 square feet of retail directly above a key Metro subway station and immediately adjacent to the LACMTA's two highest ridership Metro Rapid bus lines, it has clearly met our TOD goals and has provided retail and mixed-income housing at an active transit hub. It has provided a signature example of the willingness of Los Angeles residents, historically dependent on automobile use, to embrace public transit, and it, along with other projects in the LACMTA's joint development program, may have been influential in encouraging the recent passage of a major local sales tax increase for public transportation improvements in Los Angeles.

Finally, as public art is an important part of our overall program, we are very pleased with the region-wide attention that the murals on this site have drawn, both to the project and to our transportation initiatives.

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?

This was one of the LACMTA's first joint development projects. The process and documents used for this project have been built upon and now form the basis of our joint development program. At present, we have over thirty projects that have either been completed, are under construction, are in negotiations or are under consideration.

Since the start of construction at Wilshire Vermont Station, we have been asked, as have the developers of the project, to advise on similar work in cities such as Seattle, Baltimore, Phoenix, Houston, Denver, Charlotte and even Amsterdam. Both the public/private and public/public relationships on this project are examples of the best that business and government can accomplish.

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

Many of the successes of Wilshire Vermont Station are described above: transit ridership, affordable housing, mixed-use retail, stores and restaurants under housing, and public education. The project has contributed significantly to the revival of the Koreatown/Wilshire Center neighborhood, and has served as a template for subsequent joint development projects on our system and on the transportation systems of other cities.

Given the complexity of this project, and the challenging neighborhood in which it is located, we have no regrets about its results, although we are working carefully with the developer to ensure that there is constant activity and programming in the plaza above the subway station, to maintain it as a vibrant "people place."
Prizes and Presentation

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Name: Ron Bagel  
Title: Director of Real Estate Development

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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).

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is the second largest public school system in America, with about 700,000 students. In addition to its size, the agency grapples with constantly changing urban demographics, language issues and changing public priorities. My division has the particularly challenging task of locating sites for new schools, primarily in dense, built-out urban areas. As you can imagine, the assembly of sites sufficiently large for elementary, middle and high schools often results in displacement of residents, businesses and community patterns. Further, we are required to project classroom needs years into the future, because of the long lead time required for land assembly design and construction of schools.

The area surrounding Wilshire Vermont Station had long been identified with a compelling shortage of classroom seats. Because of immigration and population growth, we needed classrooms at all levels. The site at Wilshire Vermont Station, controlled by Metro, was too small to allow for high school use, but it offered an opportunity to create a novel, transit-oriented middle school on a compact site. There are many, many standards which dictate the location and design of schools, including public safety, air quality and public access considerations, as well as demographic needs. Through discussions with Metro, we were able to obtain use of the northeast portion of the site, and have subsequently constructed a 730-seat middle school there.

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?

There is widespread consensus that education is our most important public need. Producing an educated citizenry, and a qualified workforce, is essential to our economic, social and political future. LAUSD found itself with a deficit of over 100,000 classroom seats, in an environment where sites and school funding were almost impossible to procure. Through the revitalization of my department, and voter approval of several school construction bonds, we were able to begin assembling sites in underserved locations for the construction of new schools. Very few of these sites are large enough to meet traditional (mostly suburban) school design standards, and we were often required to build taller, more compact schools, with smaller outdoor play areas. In the case of Wilshire Vermont Station, we have created one of the first schools in Los Angeles with a play area on the roof. These compromises required extensive negotiations with the State Architect and Department Education, and continuing dialogue with instructional experts.
3. Describe the project’s impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible.

Overall, we have now constructed more than 85 new schools and have expanded or improved over 100 more. The classroom shortage that threatened our educational system a decade ago has been largely alleviated, and the school at Wilshire Vermont Station is one example. This particular school has the additional potential of accessing the city’s bus and subway system, creating opportunities to transport students to performing arts venues, play areas, sports events and other activities at other schools which we hope will be connected on the system. This is a relatively untested frontier in our district: using public transportation as a means for connecting public schools.

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?

Yes. Middle School #3 at Wilshire Vermont Station, as noted above, has one of the smallest sites in our portfolio, resulting in a multi-story school with some athletic facilities on the roof. As our city densifies, and new school sites become more difficult to procure, we expect that this trend will continue.

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

We are pleased with the fact that this school was built on time and on schedule, and in cooperation with the other government agencies that were involved with the site. As always, we never have quite enough money to include every feature that we would like in the design of our schools, but this middle school will functioning well as an important part of the network of elementary, middle and high schools that will serve this ethnically and demographically evolving neighborhood.
2009
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
DEVELOPER 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 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.

These extraordinary places enrich the quality of the urban experience, and serve as models for placemaking in cities across the country.

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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.

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

Urban Partners, LLC served as developer for Wilshire Vermont Station. In this capacity, we won the competition to procure the site, retained the community outreach design, construction, marketing and operating personnel to develop the project, and raised all of the capital necessary to fund development.

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

This a sensitive and important question, and we answer as honestly as we can....

1. Construction cost increases required constant "value engineering" of the architectural design. The affected some project features, such as exterior treatments, finishes and amenities. Inflation in costs was a constant challenge during the construction period from 2005 to 2007.

2. We were, perhaps in retrospect, overly conservative in the amount of retail space that we provided, especially given the cultural history of the local community. This may be a unique situation where two retail levels could have been successful. Also, the market might support more density of housing then we were willing to build.

3. The provision of parking is an area of evolving debate in the transit-oriented development field. Although we expected substantial ridership of the subway and bus systems, we elected to provide slightly more than one parking stall per residential unit and retail parking per city code. It is our hope that, over time, the provision of expensive on-site parking can be reduced in similar transit-served developments.

4. The inclusion of a middle school, in the project site raised some questions about the suitability of this age group (grades 5-8) for a unique transit served site. Perhaps a high school would have been a better use, or some alternative program which capitalizes more successfully on the availability of public transportation.
3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used?

See answer to question 4 under Project Description

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

A local academic once said that "social contact creates the social contract". We believe that the level of human interaction on this site is its greatest measure of success. This is particularly true in Los Angeles, where the population is diverse and dispersed, and the community suffers socially and politically because of the physical separation of its neighborhoods. We are, of course, also pleased with the economic success of the project and surprised, and very pleased, at how effective our public art investment has been in promoting the project and inspiring the community.

On the downside, we lament that we were not able to afford higher levels of finishes, particularly in the public plaza and in the amenity areas for our residents. We are not particularly pleased with the quality of the design of the adjoining public school and question the synergies of placing a middle school at a strategic transit hub.
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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.

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Organization: Arquitectonica
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Signature: [Signature]

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

   The project represents a new generation of buildings generated by the evolution of mass transit in Los Angeles. It sits amidst a hub linking rail, bus and pedestrian flow. Its mix of residential and retail is telling of the new life being infused by transit in the urban core of the city. The project is comprised of a series of residential slabs that are shaped to define the urban block and create an urban space. The stucco clad buildings are articulated by a series of projecting window zones. These zones modulate a rhythm of verticals that contrast with the horizontality of the volumes.

   The neutral color scheme of light grey, white and charcoal is reversed from volume to volume as they interlock with each other forming a prismatic puzzle. Their subtlety is intended to provide a background for a monumental announcement of the entrance to the station court. Its warm, vivid colors contrast with the cool background. These colors reappear as guides to the station entrance. They function as urban markers.

   This is workforce housing for rent. Its economical construction dictates a maximum height that is coincidentally compatible with the neighborhood. The heights become a determinant for the proportions of the courtyard.

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

   The project is an exercise in urbanization. Its ground floor lines the adjacent city sidewalks with retail frontages that welcome pedestrian life. They also contribute to creating a neighborhood. Residential lobbies are at street level and engage the street life, avoiding the traditional drop off drive. The courtyard embraces the opportunity for restaurants and cafes to spill out into the contained space that happens along the path to the station.

   The upper levels are residential. The apartments are sized to address the needs of urban dwellers. There are resident amenities on the second level including fitness and meeting areas. The amenities extend to a recreational pool deck that can also be used as a social gathering space for residents. The garage is discreetly accessed from the side street and largely concealed below grade.
ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project.

The project began with the given position of the transit entrance and the necessary links to the public realm. The challenge was to design the residential component to meet daylight and air standards and create a livable and desirable residential environment, and incorporate viable retail to take advantage of the transit-oriented traffic flow. Compromises were turned into positives. The corner entrance forced a diagonal path to the station, and it forced two buildings which befit the urban scale. The blank walls at their cut-off ends became an opportunity for art in an urban scale seldom seen. Finally, art was able to take center stage and compete favorably with Los Angeles' famous billboards. The architectural angles and folds give the canvases a third dimension that separates them from the flat billboard vernacular.

As in all workforce housing, budget is the biggest challenge and the task was to use the budget where there was the most impact in the quality of life. We believe we accomplished this with an overall design aesthetic that is both pleasing to the residents of the project as well as the community at large.

4. Describe the ways in which the design relates to its urban context.

The content and form are intended to transform the pre-existing parking lot vernacular into an urban block. The building contributes to establish the streetwall along Wilshire and Vermont. It addresses an important corner decisively with a bold statement about art and architecture. It creates an urban gathering space within its confines, offering users a protected setting away from the traffic, noise and fumes from one of the busiest intersections in the city of Los Angeles. The plaza also becomes an outdoor living room for the new residents of the project and the community. The project is about place making in the city and we believe it accomplishes this objective.
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Fax: (213) 629 1396
E-mail: greiman@madeinspace.la

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Signature:

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

   First to create a welcoming, colorful, artful entrance to the plaza and Arquitectonica building. To further integrate into the architecture, the site, and the corner of Wilshire Vermont, a seamless art image, related to the local culture. There was significant consideration of a design with a symbolically meaningful image to both the predominant Korean population and visitors on the public transportation system.

   The scale of the oil-painted video image was designed to be part of the whole building complex, rather than a separate piece of art. Color was very important to the overall impact on the corner and on the unique 'folds' of the building complex.

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

   The artwork is of a hand holding a bowl of rice. Rice is universally symbolic of abundance. It is the most popular staple eaten every day, in over half the world, and one that has many rich meanings, implications, traditions associated with it.
3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project.

The challenges were to represent a digital video image via handpainting in oil. As the material that is perfectly suited for printing a digital image, namely digital printing on plastic mesh, was not acceptable for the building, fire and safety department, we had to compromise the digital artwork by handpainting this artwork. Two talented muralists were hired to perform this task, and although a very fine job was done, the replication of the digital video quality (over 16 million colors) was difficult to do by handpainting and with a limited oil paint palette. As well, the image, shot in digital video, was painted in someone else’s hands, therefore subject to their subjectivity. I was present every day, however, of the 28 days, to critique, discuss, alter slightly, join them up in their lift and to assure the finest quality. Overall it came out quite beautifully and has been exceedingly well received by the public and the art community.

4. Describe the ways in which the design relates to its urban context.

The image was one of many still shots from video taken over a week long period of surveying and familiarizing myself with Koreatown in downtown Los Angeles. Video was shot from my car, on foot, bicycle, subway, day and night, on the streets, and in eating establishments. The one image that was chosen was chosen for its universal symbolism, a bowl of rice, and feels like it very much reflects the urban context. The human hand, the implied basic staple of the planet, rice, and the contemporary feel of video and electronic art image, the speed and development of this part of town.
In July 2002 Urban Partners was selected from among five bidders by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority of Los Angeles County (Metro) to develop seven acres of land at the Wilshire Vermont Metro Red Line subway portal.

Urban Partners developed a complex mixed-income multi-family rental apartment and retail program with subterranean parking and a Los Angeles Unified School District middle school. Twenty percent of the housing units are designated as “affordable” at 50% of Area Median Income.

Project financing was arranged through MacFarlane Partners (on behalf of CalPERS), Bank of America and a $135 million tax-exempt “low-floater” affordable housing bond issue which, at the time, was the largest in California history.

A public art installation at the prominent corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Vermont Avenue was prepared by April Greiman.

Keller CMS provided design and construction management services.
WILSHIRE VERMONT STATION
"한인타운 밴문화 실켓 줄기세요"

LA한인타운에서 건설중인 여러 프로젝트 중 유독 돋보이는 것이 월성와 바울로 동북쪽 코너에 진행되고 있는 프로젝트다. 이 프로젝트는 LA한인타운 프로젝트들 어린이들의 문화 및 건축에 관심을 둔 한국인들에 의해 월성과 바울로에 위치한 MTB랑사에 의해 지어진다. 이 건물은 다운 타운이 아파트로 수요에 비해 공급이 부족한 LA한인타운 지역에 있어 용실이 필요할 것으로 기대되고 있다.

유명 개발사인 '일러라 파트너스'가 1억 5천만달러를 투자해 건설하는 이 아파트는 지상 7층으로, 1층에는 상가가 들어서는 주상복합형이다.

일러라는 모두 449야단으로 3만 6천000제곱미터의 부지에 25% 늘어난 상가가 들어서게 된다. 아파트는 스타트, 1개단지, 2층도는 각각 3층짜리로 총 4층에서 10층까지 점 차로 나뉘게 된다.

월 성바울로는 1449미터에서 9.68미터로, LA한인타운과 접하고 있는 월성우동 지역에 다운타운의 코너와 비슷한 수준에 따른 건축물로는 이번 프로젝트의 실정이다. 특히 MTA와의 보조를 받고 있어 월성우동 다른 건물들보다 MTB랑사가 설계한 건물에 가깝게 만들 수 있는 특성이다.

이번 프로젝트의 지식된 체크인 개발 메이징은 "LA한인타운은 밴문화를 살고 있는 곳이기 때문에 인한 도심생활을 즐길 수 있는 좋은 경우를 할 수 있다.

월성바울로 아파트는 3층, 4층, 5층, 6층, 7층까지, 아파트의 보조를 받고 있는 복층에 따른 실패를 목표로 하여 개발자, 이아파트의 뿌리부분으로는 신규 중학교가 들어간다.

학교는 1층에 인근의 지하철역을 찾고 있어 상가도 불구하고 월성우동 중 7층까지의 건물로

지상 7층차모 주상 임대아파트
지하철 역사위 건립 '교통편리'
총 449유닛...1층상가 75% 분양

지하철역 위 건립의 월성바울로 아파트는 주상복합형 아파트로 지상 7층, 지하 1층을 차지하고 있으며, 30%까지는 임대아파트로 활용할 계획이다.

프로젝트는 1449미터의 부지에 25% 고용률로, 월성우동의 아파트와 같은 분양률이 적용된다.

월성바울로 아파트는 3층, 4층, 5층, 6층, 7층까지, 아파트의 보조를 받고 있는 복층에 따른 실패를 목표로 하여 개발자, 이아파트의 뿌리부분으로는 신규 중학교가 들어간다.

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우리신문

코리아타운은 ‘지금 공사중’

주상복합·콘도·상가 등 프로젝트 20여곳 진행
2-3년내 한인티운 상가·콘도 부족난 완화될 듯

합께 일할 기자 찾습니다

우리신문(The KOREATOWN News)이 합께 일할 기자를 찾습니다. 지난 4월 25일 기자 사무소 상가 중국에 새롭게 설립한 우리신문은 분공이 있는 취재와 같이 있는 취재, 인턴, 좋은 소식으로 신생의 기자에게 머침이 넘는 상황과 거리가 있습니다.

우리신문은 한 단계 더 도약하기 원하는 커뮤니티와 관심있고 언론에 대한 열정이 넘치는 기자를 찾습니다.

LA 한인회 “흡수피해 모금합시다”

집행부·작무단체장 회견

LA 한인회와 각종 단체는 모금活動 시민연대가 있는 한인들의 11월 총선 참여를 적극 권고하기로 하였다. LA 한인회는 남한 기관과 한국 30명의 단체 협의회에서 11가 지자단체 단체장들이 참석한 가운데 단체장 협의회를 갖고 공동 기자회견을 열어 이같이 밝혔다.

비자와 경주전 총통 기획은 물론, 외교부합의 유급평가, OIC 등 자본 배제로도 제한된다.

모집 불이 가까운 아아 멤 회신: job@koreatownnews

구간 자동차 보유대수
April Greiman's large-scale mural at entrance to Wilshire Vermont Subway Station, Los Angeles

IN MYX 1|07

Breaking the Grid

The large-scale mural "hand holding a bowl of rice" that was designed by the artist April Greiman is a vibrant example of intervention into urban landscaping by public art in the heart of Koreatown, Los Angeles.

The 75 foot mural, marking the entrance to the Wilshire Vermont subway station and residences, intelligently creates ties between the pedestrian community and drivers in the car-based city. The bold and intense colors, as well as the sheer size of the artwork, attract attention from passers-by in an otherwise bland and non-descript area. In a city that is virtually void of open public places, the mural forms a physical and mental focal point for those traveling the endless grid of Los Angeles' streets.

The mural is in fact an oil painting, depicting a highly pixelated hand that holds a bowl of rice. The image that presents itself to the viewer changes once you approach it, due to its unusual scale and its playful application of color and light. This gigantic project took 29 days to be completed by two commissioned artists working under the supervision of April Greiman. Greiman is known to experiment with new technologies in image-making and "blends technology and science with symbol and myth, words and images with texture and space."

Taking art to the street, this mural with its clear symbology speaks not only to the largely Asian residents of its immediate environment but also engages the general public's eye by creating a spacious atmosphere and upbeat emotions.

Links:
www.wvstation.com
www.aprilgreiman.com

The 75 foot mural spans across two walls that mark the entrance of the Wilshire Vermont subway station and residences © Photo Romy Petrick

http://www.xymara.com/inmyx/index/inmyx408/act-200804-index/act-200804-mural.htm
April Greiman's large-scale mural at entrance to Wilshire Vermont Subway Station, Los Angeles

Bold colors and bright lights make the mural a new landmark that is hard to miss © Photo Romy Petrick

Photo Romy Petrick
COMING FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5TH

WILSHIRE CENTER
FARMERS’ MARKET
AT WILSHIRE VERMONT STATION

WE’RE FINALLY BACK!
The Wilshire Center Farmers’ Market in Koreatown has finally returned...
bringing back to the community locally grown fresh produce, eclectic prepared foods, bakery goods and crafts!

ON-SITE RETAILERS
- Coffee Bean
- Coldstone Creamery
- Nine West
- T-Mobile
- UPS Store
- Washington Mutual
- Great Steak & Potato
- Samurai Sam’s Teriyaki Grill
- Nail Salon
- 90010 Fashions
- Shiloh Shoes and Accessories
- metrofresh Convenience Store & Deli
- Palace Beauty Supplies
- LA Optometric Center
- Juice It Up
- Gamestop
- Wasabi Japanese Cuisine

MORE THAN A TRIP TO THE MARKET
IT’S AN EXPERIENCE

COME FOR THE PRODUCE
STAY FOR EVERYTHING ELSE

Stop by for your morning cup of coffee at Coffee Bean

Come back for a Hawaiian chicken lunch and a manicure

Pick up your fruits and vegetables for the weekend and peruse the Nine West shoe selection during your afternoon break

Complete your day with a hot tamale, some kettle corn, and a tour of Wilshire Vermont Station’s luxury apartment homes.

COMMENCING
Friday December 5, 2008
11:30am – 7pm
Continuing each Friday

BY CAR Parking accessible off of Vermont and Shatto, 1-hour free parking with validation
BY FOOT Northeast Corner of Wilshire and Vermont
BY TRAIN Accessible off of the Metro Red Line at Wilshire/Vermont Station

The Wilshire Vermont Station Courtyard
3183 Wilshire Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90010
(northeast corner of Wilshire and Vermont)

Brought to you by Wilshire Vermont Station and Raw Inspiration
For Immediate Release December 1, 2008

Wilshire Vermont Station Apartments is pleased to announce it will host the return of the Wilshire Center Farmers' Market to the Wilshire Center/Koreatown community effective December 5, 2008. The market will be operated by non-profit Raw Inspiration and held within the Wilshire Vermont Station Apartments' public plaza space located at the northeast corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Vermont Avenue in the Wilshire Center Koreatown District.

Raw Inspiration plans to deliver an eclectic mix of prepared food, fresh produce and arts and crafts each week to the market. Furthermore, market vendors will be surrounded by the existing Wilshire Vermont Station retail shops, which will provide a multitude of shopping and dining options for visitors. The market will run from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. -- extended hours to capture both lunch and after-work crowds -- and will continue each Friday during those same hours for the foreseeable future.

Early in 2008, the Wilshire Center Business Improvement Corporation ("WCBIC") began discussions with Wilshire Vermont Station Apartments to reintroduce the market to the neighborhood. The market, a long-standing community tradition, was discontinued in April 2007.

By hosting the market entirely on its premises, Wilshire Vermont Station Apartments will enable the market to be held without any street closures, while providing convenient access via Metro's Red and Purple Lines and its local and Rapid Bus service. Visit the Metro Trip Planner at www.Metro.net to plan your trip. A limited amount of on-site parking will also be provided within the property by Wilshire Vermont Station Apartments.

WCBIC's leadership is enthusiastic about the return of the market. "The Wilshire Center Farmers' Market has always provided a valuable service within the community and we are happy to see that it's returning," said Executive Director Gary Russell. "The public plaza at Wilshire Vermont Station Apartments provides a great venue that serves the community well."

Wilshire Vermont Station Apartments is a privately owned property developed jointly with Metro at the Wilshire/Vermont subway station located at 3183 Wilshire Boulevard. The property consists of 449 apartments and 36,000 square feet of community retail. Further information regarding the property can be found at www.wystation.com.

Raw Inspiration is a non-profit organization whose mission is to educate children and adults on the importance of a healthy diet, especially on the importance of eating fresh fruits and vegetables daily. To accompany that mission, it has established a program where growers can distribute their produce at neighborhood farmers' markets. Further information regarding Raw Inspiration can be found at www.rawinspiration.org.

The Wilshire Center Business Improvement Corporation is an assessment district created by the Los Angeles City Council in 1995. Its mission is to help Wilshire Center become a more livable and workable area, to provide for a better overall social and economic environment, to work towards constructive change and improvement for Wilshire Center, and to advocate on behalf of its members' best interests in the areas of public safety, beautification, promotion, maintenance, and economic development within the community. Further information regarding WCBIC can be found at www.wilshirecenter.com.
Building a measure of momentum

Was 2007 a mediocre year for new buildings? A nascent consensus in certain parts of the architecture world says so, and it's not hard to understand why:

With the exception of Steven Holl's extension to the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, Mo., which opened to raves in the spring, no building by a prominent architect to debut this year escaped critical complaint or public ambivalence altogether. Renzo Piano's New York Times headquarters (too heavy and gray on the skyline) and Brad Cloepfil's Seattle Art Museum extension (too corporate) had their detractors. So did SANAA's teetering New Museum in Manhattan, where the fluorescent lighting and other less-than-healthy features had certain art critics complaining. (In New York magazine, Jerry Saltz used the word "icky" to describe its ground-floor gallery.)

But of those projects, though, showed signs of real architectural intelligence. Truth be told, if they all stood erect, it would mean in failing to meet invention expectations. Cloepfil was asked to rescue Seattle from its egregious architectural reputation while also pleasing a museum board determined to retain galleries and bank offices in the same downtown area. Piano was bound the task of synthesizing newspaper transition from the utility of the print-ruling jess up to the other of the digital age — and making a statement that the skyline in Manhattan, six years after 9/11, was fully basic. SANAA's scheme, as a partly nodest budget, was to redefine the novelty changing Lower East Side of Manhattan and vicariously the New Museum at the same time.

Ten years after the Guggenheim Bilbao and the Getty Center opened, it seems we're aware of our high-design buildings more than ever. Or perhaps the cynicism that greeted this year's crop just means we're getting tired of the icon-building model.

"If we see it, it's about time, isn't it?" In Southern California, the year was short on big news, leg-lobbed projects, a lot before Piano's recycled L.A. County Museum of Art and Cloepfil's Seattle's downtown performing arts high school open in 2008. But there were some beams of light in an otherwise dim annum, among them:

School architecture. The Los Angeles Unified School District's gargantuan construction project continues to produce more light than highlights. As luminous but dark, clear and private schools are in the middle of a building boom of their own. And many are making a strong case for architecture matters, both as a way to compete with other schools and as a way to produce distinctive places for learning on tight budgets. On the walls of Daily News' Impressive Career Center and a new high school in Silver Lake, still in the early stages of its wildly shaped site near its Freeway. Jennifer Hilegion produced a set of striking, sun-filled classrooms for the Country School in Valley Village.

Progress at the Orange County Great Park. Led by Ron Street, the team of designers turning the old El Toro Marine Corps Air Station into a 1,200-acre park convened this year to make impressive stories. The emerging design by Street, Alla Lerner and others is clean, smart, inventive about sustainability and conservation but still "naturalistic." The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles has joined the group as an artist consultant; LACMA, among other design engineers, is a rich design designed by urban and a range of architect-also-attractors. Enrique Norten, he teams lead architect, has done wonders with small buildings terms such as glass and vegetation, blur between and pedestrian bridges. If he ever gets a collection of actual park buildings in its bite back into, wait out.

A corner turned on Bunker Hill. Frank Gehry and the Related Cos., spent plenty of time this year honing their design for the site's central role. Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao, at which scale the Grand Avenue project, on which a building on this year began this year. But the design turned a significant corner architecturally as it was being finalized.