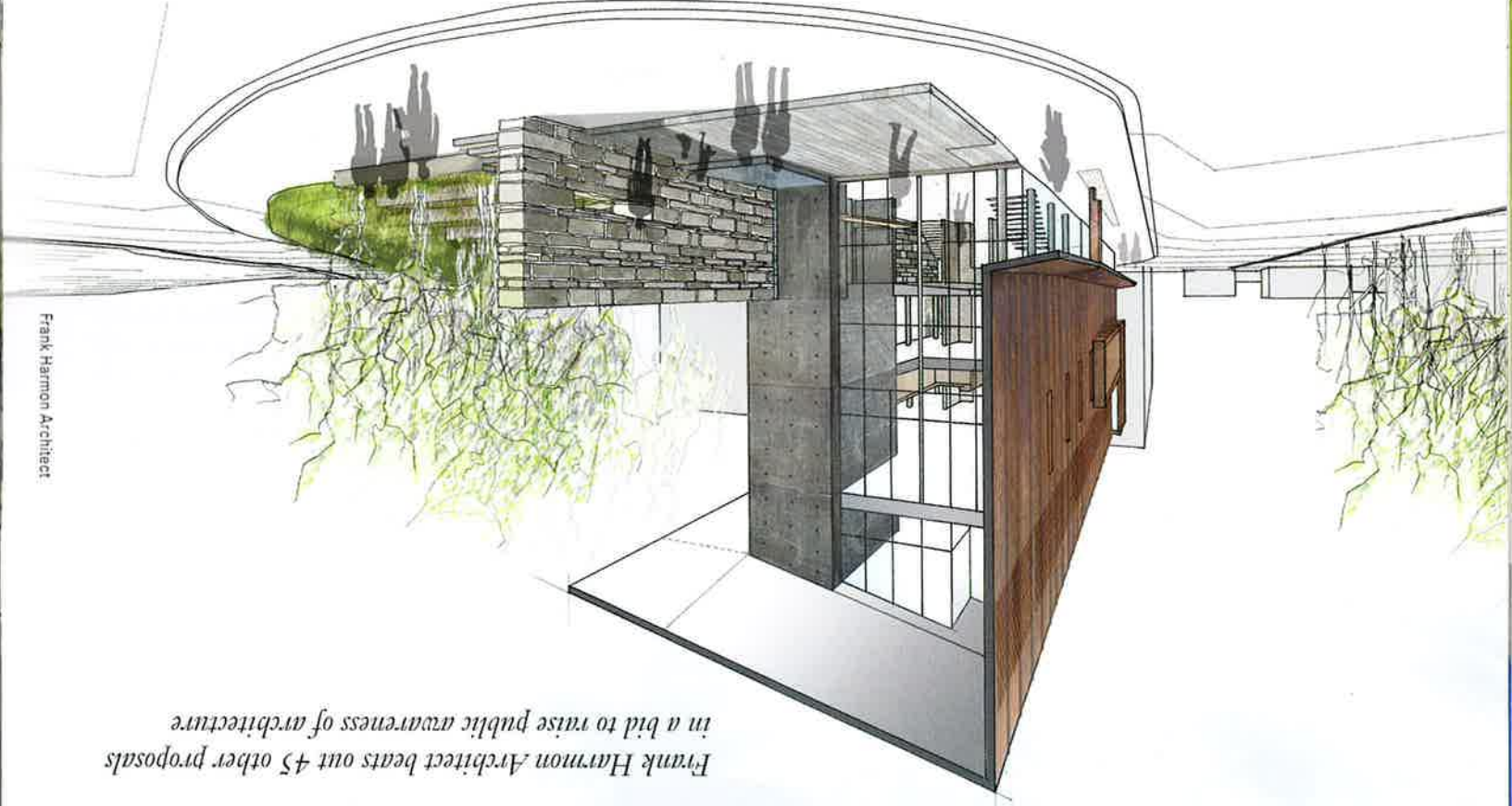


New NCAIA Headquarters Announced for Raleigh

Frank Harmon Architect beats out 45 other proposals in a bid to raise public awareness of architecture



Frank Harmon Architect

Want to make an impression on the public? The North Carolina AIA is well on its way to addressing this goal by locating its future headquarters building at a high visibility site in downtown Raleigh. Beginning in 2004, the North Carolina chapter realized that it was outgrowing its present offices in the Old Raleigh Water tower, a designated landmark in the city's downtown core. When expansion there turned out to be unrealistic, the AIA began to look at alternative sites. They finally settled on a triangular parcel at the junction of Peace and Wilmington streets, flanked by a 1970s high-rise to the south and mid-twentieth century Peace College buildings across the street to the opposite side. A local developer, Empire Properties, not only agreed to purchase the Raleigh Water tower building, but teamed with the AIA to facilitate the acquisition of the new site, with one of its advantages being that it was not included in the Historic Overlay District.

In developing a program, the NCAIA looked at two other AIA headquarters, that of the neighboring Virginia AIA in Richmond and New York's new LaGuardia Place domicile in lower Manhattan. Besides functionality, North Carolina was also interested in the mission the new headquarters building should play an important role in selecting a design. The new location was ideal in terms of public exposure; but the site's triangular configuration was going to present an interesting design challenge, as it had to accommodate 35 parking spaces in addition to the new building. With that in mind, the NCAIA decided on a design competition as an ideal strategy to select a project architect. Although the competition was open, participation was limited to North Carolina AIA members. Of 69 members who registered for the competition, 46 submitted entries.

The competition was administered by William McMinn, P.A., who assembled an out-of-state, high profile jury. It included Daniel Bennett, F.AIA, Dean of the University of Auburn School of Architecture, Allison Ewing, AIA, Charlottesville, M. David Lee, F.AIA, Stull and Lee, Boston, Massachusetts, and Susan Maxman, F.AIA, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, former national president of the AIA.

From the start, the jury agreed that an east-west orientation of the building — both the first and second place entries chose this option — was the preferred approach to the site. At the end of a day-long session on January 23rd, the jury finally selected Frank Harmon Architect of Raleigh, as the winner. Second and third places also went to Raleigh firms, Pearce Brinkley Case + Lee, P.A., and Kenneth E. Hobgood, Architects, respectively. The jury not only praised the Harmon entry for its architectural expression, they liked its site plan, openness to community activities, local reference in use of materials, and emphasis on sustainability, which is a current AIA priority. Several entries would have been buildable, but the jury felt the Harmon entry best captured the spirit of the design challenge. Moreover, it looked to be buildable within the budget — something which could not be said of many of the other entries.

— Stanley Collyer

Contributors to Inform Issue 1, 2008

G. Stanley Collyer, Ph.D., Hon. AIA, editor of *Competitions* magazine, was a founding member of The Competition Project, a non-profit clearing house for information on design competitions in the U.S. and abroad. He frequently serves on competition juries, consults for competition sponsors, and has lectured widely. Collyer is the author/editor of *Competing Globally in Architecture Competitions*, published by John Wiley & Sons.

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Louis Nelson is an Associate Professor at the University of Virginia, specializing in American architecture, particularly colonial and early national architecture, vernacular architecture, and theories and methods of sacred space. The majority of his work focuses on the early American South and the Greater Caribbean. Nelson is also the senior co-editor of *Buildings and Landscapes: the Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum*.

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Correction

Our feature on the American Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar (Issue 4, 2007) incorrectly identified 3North as 3North (note the space) in the text of the article. We regret the error.

In "Expanding the Narrative," (Issue 4, 2007) the name of 3North architect Jason Dufflho was incorrectly spelled "Dufflo." We regret the error.

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Letters to the Editor

Kudos to William Morgan for his comments on the restoration of the Rotunda at the University of Virginia, and his suggestion that it is time to expand our idea of the Jeffersonian legacy ("Facelift or Folly," Issue 4, 2007).

During my student days I recall one of my professors lamenting the 1976 renovation, when they had "pulled out real Stanford White and put in fake Thomas Jefferson." I also remember listening—first with pride, later with amusement, finally with impatience—as we of the University congratulated ourselves for "preserving Mr. Jefferson's heritage." Here is a man whose great contributions include racial hatred and passionate arguments for radical change, and we seem more inclined to memorialize than to apply his example.

Jefferson was constantly experimenting, trying new things, tearing down and rebuilding—consider Monticello, another "preserved" Jeffersonian landmark, which looks as it does today because that was its state when Jefferson died. I agree that an authentic renovation of the Rotunda would take into account everything that has happened since the walls originally went up. The building itself, however, is only part of the story.

My fondest memories of the Lawn are of casual interactions—walking in the fog, studying under trees, playing music on the Rotunda steps. It is of such things—unrestricted access by students, teachers, and the general public to an unquestioned architectural treasure—that an authentic Jeffersonian legacy is made.

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