

1st Annual P/A Awards for Architectural Research



Jay
Farbstein

Randolph
Croxtton

Roberta
Feldman

Donald
Watson

Sharon E.
Sutton

Mahadev
Raman

Julia
Robinson

Architectural research continues to gain influence in the profession, as the need to build architecture's knowledge base increases. In response, this year we chose to separate the awards competition for research from the annual P/A Awards program to give it more prominence. We also joined forces with the AIA/ACSA Council on Architectural Research to encourage submissions, to jury the entries, and to disseminate the results. The jury was composed of board members of the Research Council and invited experts.

We received 67 submissions, a 56 percent increase over the 43 research entries in the 1993 P/A Awards program. Of the submissions, 34 were in the behavioral and social science category, 18 were in energy and sustainable design, and 19 were in technology and materials (some projects were submitted under two categories). Submissions came from academicians and practitioners. Abstracts of all submissions are available from P/A (see page 108).

After discussion of the judging criteria, the jury concluded that two questions would govern its selection. First, does the project qualify as research – is it new knowledge in the sense that it builds on or extends what's known about the world, are there clear conclusions, are the research methods sound and defensible? Second, if it is research, then what are its special qualities – the project's overall excellence, innovation, relevance, rigor, design usability, its multidisciplinary quality? Winning projects, of course, would not have to possess all of these attributes, but would be outstanding in one or more areas. The deliberations produced six winners. Michael J. Crosbie □

Architectural Research Jury

Sharon E. Sutton, Ph.D., AIA
(Jury Chair)
Associate Professor, College of
Architecture & Urban Planning
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor

Randolph Croxtton, AIA
Chair, AIA/ACSA
Council on Architectural Research
Principal, Croxtton Collaborative,
New York

Jay Farbstein, Ph.D., AIA
Principal, Jay Farbstein Associates
San Luis Obispo, California

Roberta Feldman, Ph.D.
Associate Professor,
Department of Architecture
University of Illinois
Chicago

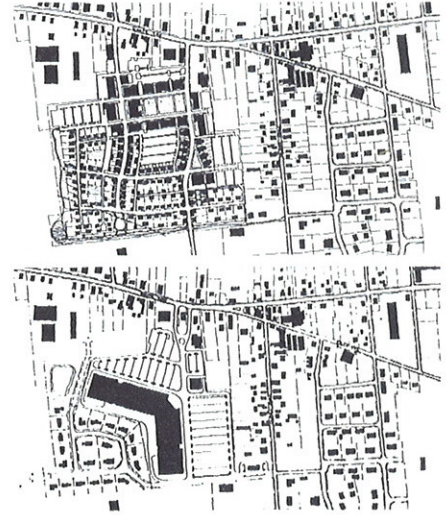
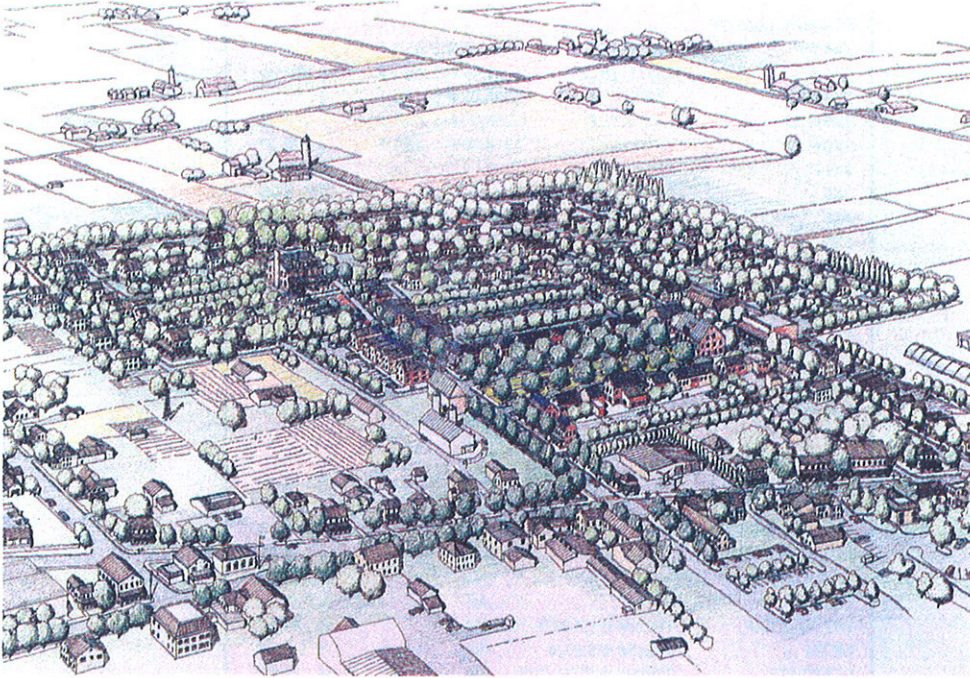
Mahadev Raman
Principal, Ove Arup & Partners
New York

Julia Robinson, AIA
Associate Professor,
Department of Architecture
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis

Donald Watson, FAIA
Dean, School of Architecture
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Troy, New York

Urban-Rural Interface

Timothy W. Smith
University of Pennsylvania



Project: Sustainable Communities in the Urban-Rural Interface

This research project identified concepts, principles, and strategies for creating sustainable communities in suburbanizing farming regions. The project focused on existing towns and villages and their surrounding farmland in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The ideas were applied to a real development project to illustrate the benefits of a sustainable community approach to county and township planners, farmers, the local business community, and the public.

The approach taken by the team was to treat the town and surrounding farmland as a "human ecosystem, animated by the flow of energy, nutrients, resources, money, and information" between them. Farmers would benefit by having a local market for their products, a local source for organic soil input, and a community focus for their commercial, social, educational, and recreational needs. Town residents benefit by having an in-community food market, a local source for domestic energy, and a potential user for their recycled wastes. The community as a whole benefits from the reduced traffic and parking congestion that this pedestrian-oriented development would encourage, and by having a more stable, locally based, self-reliant economy. Reactions from the local Amish and Mennonite communities indicated that these strategies are consistent with

their traditional ways of life.

The project has led to the creation of a number of innovative planning and design tools. These include a Village Overlay Zone for Strasburg, Pennsylvania, the Lancaster County Livable Communities Handbook, and the Village Extension Ordinance for Intercourse village, Pennsylvania's first zoning ordinance based on principles of ecological planning and traditional town design.

Principal Researchers/Authors: Timothy W. Smith, project director; William W. Braham, director, Center for Environmental Design and Planning; Robert M. Wirtshafter, associate director, Center for Energy and the Environment; Ann L. Strong, John C. Keene, Robert E. Coughlin, participating faculty; Iain Low, Wen Wei Peng, Sibel Sandi-Zayak, Alan B. Buchan, David Jones, David Harper, Sally Townsend, Greg Andall, John Maneval, Ellen Bryson, Lauren Archibald, student researchers; Meriam Rahali, Erika Rush, Sheri Sanzone, David Wang, Susan Huffman, researchers; Anthony Smith, Kim Kroll, Janet Hammer, The Rodale Institute Research Center; Edward P. Drogaris, Doris Meyers, Concord Construction and Development Corp.

Client and funding source: Pennsylvania Energy Office, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, with funds from the Energy Conservation and Assistance Fund.

A comparison of the proposed plan (1, 2) with the existing town (3) reveals design strategies such as mixed use development to reduce distances between activities. This also decreases dependence on cars, and increased urban density with

narrower streets and mid-block alleys. The scheme also results in lower infrastructure costs. The plan establishes a well-defined edge around the urban center (beyond which building is discouraged) to eliminate sprawl and leapfrog development.

Jury Comments

Sharon Sutton noted that this project set a hypothesis, "and what is admirable about it is the range of things considered, from agriculture and community reeducation, to zoning reformation and the local markets that sustain the community." Julia Robinson and Jay Farbstein, however, would have preferred the presentation of more detailed information.

Randolph Croxton noted that "the collision of two unusual forces make it a unique story. It's an innovative model for sustainable thinking. The multidisciplinary nature of the team was a high priority in terms of addressing the problem."

Contact: Timothy W. Smith, 7737 Devon St., Philadelphia, PA 19118. Phone: 215-561-1050.