

Incorporated in 1894 to unite, represent, promote and enhance the profession and practice of architecture in the borough of Brooklyn.

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JUNE 2014

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## LITCHFIELD VILLA - PROSPECT PARK

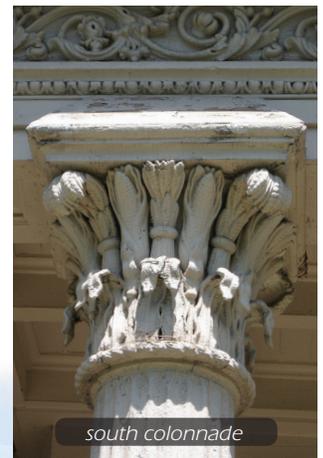
Edwin Clark Litchfield, (1815-1885), son of a U.S. Congressman, moved from upstate NY in 1848 to the City of Brooklyn. He made his fortune in railroad financing and real estate. He acquired many properties on the "slopes" - beginning at the Brooklyn shoreline, the slopes rise up in height to the east (present day Park Slope) attaining the greatest height in what later (1873) became Prospect Park. In 1853 as the site for his Villa he selected the high point of a tract with a view to the west towards Upper New York Bay, and to the east the Atlantic Ocean.

He chose architect Alexander Jackson Davis. Davis was known for his designs in the romantic and eclectic styles, and was one of the founders of the American Institute of Architects. One popular style at the time was an interpretation of a rural Italian Palace. Key features were asymmetrical massing, accented by a square central tower in the Tuscan Style, and round turrets as in the Ducal Palace in Urbino. The building was completed in 1857. Originally the building exterior walls were faced with stucco, as is typical of

this "Rural Palazzo" style.

At some later time and for some unknown reason the stucco was removed exposing the brick walls. Exposing the brick with out the protection of the stucco - is evidence that the brick is a high quality face brick and has been able to withstand the harsh New York weather all these years. It seems there was some underlying thought that in the future the building would reinvent itself into a different style and pay less homage to the foreign aesthetic.

The red brick transforms the building from an Italian Villa to an American country estate. A new identity recognized and reinforced in the Greek Revival treatment of the south facade with the colonnaded portico connecting to a 2 story annex built in 1911. The columns all have sculpted capitals of the most American of agricultural products, namely cornhusks and wheatstalks. [AIA](#)



south colonnade

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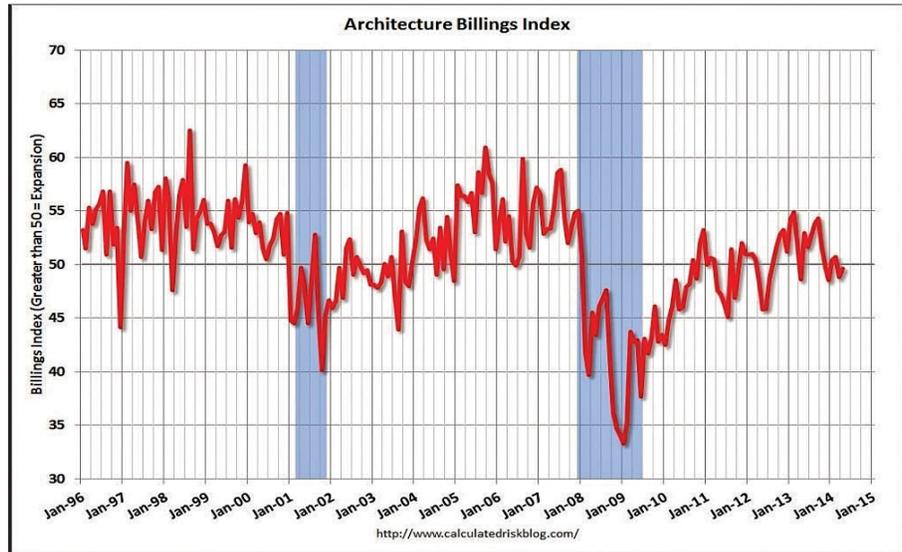
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# APRIL ABI REFLECTS CONTINUED DECREASE IN DESIGN SERVICES



April ABI. Image Courtesy of CalculatedRiskBlog.com

For the last two months, the U.S. Architecture Billings Index has remained in negative territory. Although the ABI rose slightly from the previous month's 48.8 mark to 49.6 in April, the score still reflects a decrease in design services. As the American Institute of Architects (AIA) reports, the new projects inquiry index also revealed a slight increase, rising from 57.9 to 59.1.

"Despite an easing in demand for architecture services over the last couple of months, there is a pervading sense of optimism that business conditions are poised to improve as the year moves on," said AIA Chief Economist Kermit Baker, Hon. AIA, PhD. "With a healthy figure for design contracts this should translate into improved billings in the near future."

In response to the dip, the AIA has released a new indicator measuring the trends in new design contracts at architecture firms that can provide a strong signal of the direction of future architecture billings. The score for design contracts in April was 54.6, up from 48.2.

**REGIONAL AVERAGES:**

- South (57.5)
- West (48.9)
- Northeast (42.9)
- Midwest (47.0)

**SECTOR INDEX BREAKDOWN:**

- Multi-Family Residential (52.6)
- Commercial / Industrial (50.2)
- Institutional (47.1)
- Mixed practice (50.7)

**KEY MARCH ABI HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Project inquiries index: 59.1
- Design contracts index: 54.6

As a leading economic indicator of construction activity, the ABI reflects the approximate nine to twelve month lead time between architecture billings and construction spending. Regional and sector categories are calculated as a 3-month moving average, whereas the index and inquiries are monthly numbers. Any score above 50 reflects an increase in design services. **AIA**

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**May 2014**

Representing the DOB were Deputy Borough Commissioner John Gallagher, AIA; Chief Plan Examiner Neil Adler, P.E.; and Zoning / Building Code Specialist Lisa Amoia, R.A.

#### **JOBS INVOLVING THE FIRE DEPARTMENT**

The question was asked if self-certification is still permitted if a job that involves roof access is being filed at the Fire Department. Would that mean that NB Applications and vertical enlargements cannot be self-certified? Mr. Gallagher replied that jobs of that type are not filed with the Fire Department – they are filed with the DOB, and can be self-certified.

#### **BUILDER'S PAVING PLANS (BPPS)**

Mr. Gallagher stated that BPP plans are no longer limited to 3-foot wide strips beyond the curb. There is a new required plan format from the DOT, showing that new pavement in the street must extend five feet beyond each side property, and from the curb in front of the building to the center-line of the street. Architects should get copies of the new plan format requirements from DOT.

#### **ZONING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS FOR BALCONIES**

*"Why is DOB now requesting not only a ZD-1 be provided for the installation of a balcony, but that such work also go through two zoning reviews and not be as a same-day filing".*

Mr. Gallagher, Mr. Adler, and Ms. Amoia concurred that there are often zoning implications that aren't clear, and multiple zoning reviews reduce the possibility of a zoning error.

#### **ADDITIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO SUPERSEDING A PREVIOUS APPLICANT**

*"As a follow-up to the discussion above, what is the wording to use when superseding an applicant in which all of the construction work is completed, but the work does not match the approved plans. Revised plans will need to be filed for as-built conditions. This is a very common situation and a clear-cut procedure should be in place."*

Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Adler handed out and discussed the DOB's new "Superseding Post-Approval Amendment Rejection List." This handout provides various alternative wording based on the circum-

stances of the various jobs.

It was agreed that we do not need to provide two separate sets of (old and new) plans in order to supersede the original applicant. We can prepare the as-built plans with areas of the plan which differ from the originally-approved drawings shown within "bubbles" in order to clarify where there are differences. It is critical that the drawings clearly and unmistakably explain the changes.

#### **PROTOCOL FOR DISAPPROVED APPLICATIONS DUE TO ALLEGEDLY INCOMPLETE DRAWINGS**

*"Currently applications are being rejected and the applicant is not being informed or given specific reasons why the application was rejected. An email to the applicant, along with a detailed explanation of Why? (which can be left in the folder) would be appreciated."*

Mr. Gallagher stated that the DOB policy is to notify the building owner, and the applicant by email when drawings are rejected. This is not an issue that can be changed by the Borough offices. As to the question of exactly how this subject is handled procedurally, Mr. Gallagher stated that it is adequately discussed in the handout entitled "Service Update: Improved Plan Review Process + New Plan Review Guidebook," dated August 2012. Copies of this 1-page document were distributed at the meeting.

#### **DOB PRINTERS**

*"What is delaying the return of the printers to service? Why the printers are still not working. Many reviewers in areas, such as the Construction and Plan Examination Divisions insist on printouts knowing we cannot supply them, because the printers are down."*

This led to a long discussion that reflected the frustration of the attendees. The printers which are available to the public have been out-of-service for many months, despite endless entreaties that they be serviced. It was acknowledged that the reason they are out of service is because the toner cartridges have not been replaced.

It was observed by several members that this is not a problem in Queens or Manhattan, where printers are all in service. It was suggested the Architects donate toner cartridges to the DOB- but this is not permitted. Nor can we bring along our own toner cartridges for our own personal use.

- Gerald Goldstein, AIA



# 2014 CANDIDATES FOR AIA VICE PRESIDENT 2015



**Russell A. Davidson, FAIA,  
Running for AIA 2015 First Vice Pres. 2016 President-elect**

**R**ussell A. Davidson, FAIA has declared his candidacy for the office of AIA 2015 First Vice President/2016 President-elect. Elections will be held at the AIA 2014 National Convention and Expo in Chicago June 26-28.

I feel strongly that over my 15 years as an AIA leader I have accumulated a great deal of knowledge about what members truly value and how best to deliver it.

Equally important to me is the feeling that the very core obligation of our professional association is only just beginning to be appropriately addressed. I am passionate about the issue now defined as, "Elevating Public Awareness."

This is the very reason I first got involved in my local AIA component and continues to motivate me to get the AIA to focus on this critical initiative. I feel that I have made meaningful contributions to real progress on the public awareness front and have developed a strong voice that is listened to by staff and other members of leadership.

A sense of urgency permeates my participation with the AIA. I feel that our membership deserves more value for their dues dollars - now! Many of our practitioners and firms, including my own, are fighting real battles every day to maintain and build value in the services we deliver and are at constant risk of being overrun by competing "allied" professions and predatory and unfair procurement or bidding processes.

I believe that the AIA at all levels, especially National, does not pay enough attention to the magnitude and seriousness of the threats outside the door each day for all practicing architects.

I feel that my continuing insistence that the AIA focus on effectively communicating the value of an Architect to the full range of "client" publics will propel the AIA closer to fulfilling its primary role as the complete advocate for the profession.

The president of the AIA sets the agenda and I am committed to finding the issues that benefit all constituencies within our diverse membership including emerging professionals, minority architects, sole practitioners, small firms and large firms. I am committed to advancing the AIA's leadership role in sustainability and as the profession on the leading edge of the Nation's design and construction industry.

For more information on my views forward, please visit my website: <http://russarchitect.com/>.

**Francis Murdock Pitts, FAIA,  
Declares Candidacy for AIA 2015 Vice President**

**F**rancis Murdock Pitts, FAIA, member of AIA Eastern NY and former AIANYS President, has declared his candidacy for the office of AIA 2015 Vice President. Elections will be held at the AIA 2014 National Convention and Expo in Chicago June 26-28.

Frank has served the profession in leadership positions at the Chapter, State and National level since the mid-1980's. His services have included a stint as President of the AIA's Academy of Architecture for Health and service on the Professional Interest Area Executive Committee.

As a practicing professional operating a firm, Frank has come to deeply understand that aligning resources with mission are critical to achieving value in service delivery. He is convinced that this is a truism for both our practices and our AIA. Frank has been a leader in responsible budgeting and program prioritization focused on delivering beneficial services to members at a reasonable cost.

We have a habit of celebrating the great at the expense of the good. Our focus on the most beautiful buildings and those that design them comes with the risk that this signature work is seen as the thing that we value most....and at the expense of knowing and communicating the many and other ways that we provide services with significant value.

We need to understand deeply the many ways that architects practice successfully and profitably and the diverse ways that we make a difference for our clients and communities. We will change the value equation and the prosperity of our profession if we understand and celebrate what we all do, instead of focusing on the work of the famous few.

From our first days in studio in school right through retirement, most architects struggle to find a balance between work and family or self. Our professional commitment is extraordinary, but it comes at costs that make it difficult to sustain our profession. Fewer and fewer graduates are seeking licensure. While women make up half of the classes in architecture school, women are woefully under-represented in firm leadership and only 18% of licensed architects are women.

Our ability to develop a diverse profession founders unnecessarily on artificially high barriers to diverse participation. We would benefit, collectively, from a conversation about successful practice models that foster a better life work balance and that encourage greater diversity in practice.

# ARCHITECTS IN ALBANY - LOBBY DAY

On April 29th, 2014, AIA Brooklyn joined members of the other AIA New York State chapters to unify efforts in addressing important issues with legislators on bills that affect the architectural profession. AIA Brooklyn had meetings scheduled with thirteen assembly members and senators of Kings county. All of our meetings were productive and informative as we discussed the bills with each legislator emphasizing important points as most legislators were not aware of the ramifications some of these bills had on our profession.

The important bill that we support and was also received very favorably by legislators is the Good Samaritan Act. This legislation would provide liability protection for architects who provide essential services (voluntarily and without compensation) during natural or man-made disasters and emergencies to help the public. The need for this legislation was evident in the days following Hurricane Sandy, and this bill has drawn the support of legislators in both the Senate and the Assembly.

Another bill we support is Due Process for Design Professionals. This bill would repeal the law passed in 2007 and restore the state's authority over proceedings in cases of professional misconduct. Chapter 542 of the Laws of 2007 granted the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) sole discretion to revoke or suspend an architect's or engineer's filing privileges based on allegations of making a false statement. This law is in direct conflict with the State Education Department's (SED) explicit authority to investigate, prosecute, and levy punishment for misconduct involving licensed design professionals. Every licensed professional in this state is afforded the right to defend him or herself against alleged misconduct before a hearing held by a panel of their peers, which is then subject to review by the Board of Regents. This law circumvents the State's authority to conduct an investigation and denies a licensee's right to due process.

We also discussed the issues with respect to the Prohibition of Professional Self-Certification. We emphasized the need for the self certification program in NYC as there would be a tremendous backlog in the already overburdened Department of Buildings. We also suggested that professional self-certification should be limited to small projects and should not include any projects that would affect any zoning criteria of a property.

Other issues included Design Liability Reform. This legislation would strengthen the existing statute by enacting a ten-year statute of repose, plus a one-year limit for any suit brought against a licensed design professional. This legislation recognizes that the design professional has no control over the structure long after construction is complete.

- Ida Galea, AIA



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(left to right) Giuseppe Anzalone, AIA, Ida Galea, AIA, Assemblyman Alec Brook-Krasny, Sebastian M. D'Alessandro, AIA, Pamela Weston, Assoc. AIA, Don Weston, FAIA and Robert Scarano Jr., AIA

# SEEKING TO BLOCK NEW CONCRETE SECTIONS OF PROMENADE

Two Southern Brooklyn councilmen are calling for the Parks Department to abandon its plans to replace the wooden planks of the Coney Island Boardwalk with a strip of concrete.

Freshman councilmen Chaim Deutsch (D-Brighton Beach) and Mark Treyger (D-Coney Island) have penned a letter to the city, arguing that Hurricane Sandy demonstrated the protective superiority of a wooden walkway — and demanding the city stop using a string of so-called “pilot projects” to turn sections of the promenade into concrete and faux-wood decking.

“What we learned from Sandy is that the Boardwalk is a part of our infrastructure, and if you look at the areas where the city has installed concrete, the impact of the storm was magnified,” said Treyger.

nearby neighborhoods have been assessed. “We have to listen to what the community is telling us. They have experience living on the waterfront, and they saw what happened during the storm,” said Deutsch. “We’re asking for a moratorium on concrete until the studies have been done. At the end of the day, the safety of the residents is the most important.”

“The Boardwalk is called the Boardwalk and that’s what it’s always been. If you use concrete, it’s not the Boardwalk that people come to the waterfront communities to enjoy,” said Deutsch.

Longtime lumber advocates applauded the pols’ move, and were hopeful that Mayor DeBlasio’s Parks Department would take a different position on the Boardwalk than Bloomberg’s.



In recent years, the Parks Department has been replacing damaged parts of the Boardwalk with concrete and synthetic boards

In recent years, the Parks Department has been replacing damaged parts of the Boardwalk with concrete and synthetic boards, referring to sections of new materials as “pilot projects” — which critics complained allowed the agency to avoid having to do studies on the potential consequences of the change.

In 2011, the city proposed a plan that would turn all but the four blocks of the promenade bordering the amusement district into a concrete sidewalk, and argued that no studies were necessary since the structure of the Boardwalk would remain the same, even if its substance changed.

But after Hurricane Sandy, this paper reported that areas of the beach beneath the wood suffered only minimal erosion, while the shorefront along an experimental stretch of concrete near Sea Breeze Avenue had tons of its sand washed up onto Ocean Parkway.

Councilman Deutsch argues that the concrete conversion must be called off until the potential dangers to

“I think with the new administration, we’re hopeful that this moratorium will be put in place,” said Robb Burstein, president of the Coney-Brighton Boardwalk Alliance, which filed an unsuccessful lawsuit to block the concrete in 2012. “The materials they are planning to use have not been fully tested, and in terms of safety, there are better alternatives.”

Deutsch’s and Treyger’s stance is a complete turnaround from the position of the previous local leadership. Former Coney councilman Domenic Recchia was an avid advocate of transforming almost the entire walkway into concrete and plastic planking. Community Board 13, on the other hand, voted against the artificial materials last year.

“We’re really pleased that we finally have local representatives as well who are representing the expressed needs of the people in the community,” Burstein said. The Parks Department declined to comment.

- Will Bredderman

# “GOOD SAM” LEGISLATION

Dear Mr. Marchese,

I am writing in response to your correspondence concerning the Good Samaritan Act, (A4380b Englebright).

You will be pleased to learn that I am a sponsor of this bill. Professional engineers, architects, landscape architects and land surveyors dedicate their services to public health, safety, and welfare. They also voluntarily assist their communities, states and the nation in times of crisis. However, these same individuals may face substantial liability exposure when performing services on a voluntary basis during times of natural disaster or other catastrophic events. This legislation will provide immunity from liability for those providing these volunteer services during times of crisis & emergencies.

This legislation is currently in the Assembly Higher Education Committee. The primary sponsor is Assemblyman Steve En-

glebright (englebrights@assembly.state.ny.us). I have included his email address should you wish to register your support.

When this bill comes to the Assembly floor for a vote I will be voting yes. Please do not hesitate to contact me again on matters of mutual concern.

Sincerely,  
Joan L. Millman  
Member of Assembly



**Don Weston** receiving **The Daniels Patrick Moynihan Award** and at his side is daughter **Pamela, Assoc AIA**. Obviously she is very proud of her dad.



# LOOKING AHEAD

## REGULARLY SCHEDULED CHAPTER MEETINGS

Unless otherwise noted,  
all meetings are scheduled at:

Committee Meetings: 5:30 PM  
Cocktails: 5:30 PM  
Dinner: 6:00 PM  
Program: 7:00 PM

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General Meeting  
**Wednesday,**  
June 18, 2014

Speaker: *TBA*

**Location:**  
US Army Garrison  
(Fort Hamilton Army Base)  
Building #207

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Executive Meeting  
**Wednesday,**  
June 4, 2014

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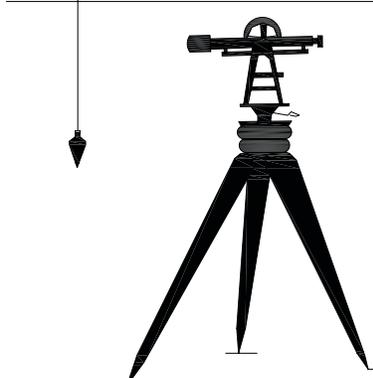
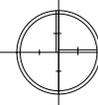
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## AIA Brooklyn

Chapter of the American  
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Brooklyn Architects  
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## P Y L O N NEWSLETTER



### UPCOMING CHAPTER MEETINGS

June 18, 2014  
July 16, 2014

## EVENTS CALENDAR ACTIVITIES

### ICESTONE FACTORY TOUR

*Spring 2014*

*Date TBD for architects*

*Building 92 at Brooklyn Navy Yard Center  
@ Building 92*

*63 Flushing Avenue, Brooklyn, NY  
Building #92*

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### THE FUTURE OF NYC GARBAGE

*Center for Architecture  
536 LaGuardia Place  
New York, NY 10012  
[info@aiany.org](mailto:info@aiany.org)*

*Wednesday, June 18  
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM*

AIA CES 1.5 LU | HSW  
Free for AIA members;  
\$10 for non-members

This session will explore issues  
surrounding waste management in New  
York City and opportunities to render the

process more sustainable, cost effective,  
and better integrated within the urban  
infrastructure. Speakers will present  
an overview of the history of New York  
City's waste stream, socio-economic  
implications, logistics, and environmental  
perspectives. Panelists will discuss the  
current impact of waste on urban and  
infrastructure systems

### SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHITECTS SARA NATIONAL DESIGN AWARDS DESIGN COMPETITION 2014

[www.sara-national.org/awards.  
professional.design.html](http://www.sara-national.org/awards.<br/>professional.design.html)

All built, unbuilt and in-progress works  
from the past 7 years are eligible.

### AIA CONVENTION 2014: JUNE 26–28, CHICAGO

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