

# WM | AIA

# NEWSLETTER



JONES WHITSETT ARCHITECTS  
DIAL/SELF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

SPRING  
2020



# NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER

## WMAIA COMMUNITY

Dear WMAIA Community,

During these trying and bizarre times, it is wonderful to be able to reach out to you via our newsletter. Sharing information during this time of social distancing seems more important than ever. As you try to adjust to the new normal – both personally and professionally, we encourage you to utilize some of the resources that Lorin Starr has been disseminating via email. I know that most of our members are trying to work from home – in one form or another – and also trying to understand the financial and long-term implications of COVID-19. There are fantastic guides on both – from the BSA and others.

Long before COVID-19 was on our radars, the WMAIA Board met in the Berkshires for a retreat. It was a wonderful opportunity to get out of our typical environs, and think about some possible initiatives for WMAIA. A big thank you to Kerry Bartini, AIA for helping with food and logistics and encouraging us to drive west! Taking some of the prompts from previous Grassroots conferences, we asked ourselves, “How do we measure up? How can we expand our outreach and influence?” From a fruitful and engaging discussion, the board came up with numerous ideas and initiatives. From a culled list of eight initiatives, the Board found six that we would like to pursue – based on required volunteer effort, financial resources required, and the anticipated value / impact to our members.

Top three:

1. Social Media training for members. Offer a seminar on how to capitalize on these tools. This skill set seems even more critical as we look for ways to connect with each other and clients digitally.
2. A Google Map / Tour of work in Western Mass done by firms from WMAIA. Instead of offering an annual tour (which would take significant resources, and be quite difficult to manage in our geographically diverse part of the state), it might be more helpful to offer a resource via online maps. Want to see some examples of a firm’s work? Look it up on the map –and take a little bike ride or drive! This initiative will take some resources to develop (and may include some student involvement) – but seems like a great investment that could be both educational, and a financial benefit to our members.

3. Making sure that the architect is credited in news coverage of a project. A small initiative. But one that again could be important to our members. We envision a stock letter that can come from WMAIA (so that it is not coming from a specific firm) – to politely ask that news outlets credit the architect of a featured project whenever possible.

Three additional initiatives that individual Board members will try to champion:

1. Outreach to state representatives. We would like to build on the hugely successful event held last year at the offices of Kuhn Riddle. Also – the very successful booklet that was distributed to our state representatives in Washington D.C. at a recent Grassroots events – “Right Now in Massachusetts” that highlighted specific building projects and why they are important and/or ground-breaking. A “Right Now in Western Massachusetts” could be a fantastic resource and celebration of our members’ work.
  2. Networking of Citizen Architects. There are a number of “Citizen Architects” within our membership – from Planning Board members to Finance Committee members to those serving on School Committees. It would be great to capitalize on this shared experience – and be able to learn from one another.
  3. Getting architecture – and architects - into local schools. Whether it be volunteering at a local elementary school – or attending a job fair at a local High School – it would be great if WMAIA could help support members in this outreach.
- While many of these initiatives are taking a “back-burner” as we all try to adjust to our new normal – we are eager to champion as many of these as possible – and bring them to our members. If you have a specific interest in any of the topics covered – please do not hesitate to reach out – so that we can work on these together!

Thank you. And wishing you safety and good health,  
Kristian Whitsett  
kw@joneswhitsett.com

# OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

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THE WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

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COVER PHOTO: KATIE CRAIG

## CODE CORNER BY ANONYMOUS

### Duct Smoke Detectors

Like many code challenges, this one begs the question of what was done in every other similar situation. The project is the renovation of a dormitory, which includes new bathrooms. The building is four stories, with a stacked bathroom exhaust system that penetrates each floor, and exhausts through a roof exhaust fan. The duct passes through rated floor assemblies so it must be enclosed in a rated shaft; as the subducts penetrate the rated shaft, they must have fire/smoke dampers. Smoke dampers require an in-duct smoke detector within five feet of the damper.

It all seems simple and straight forward... until you get the call from Simplex (or JCI, or Tyco, or whatever the monopoly calls themselves now.) The individual bathroom exhaust air flow is too low, and the duct sizes are too small for sampling tube smoke detectors to work. The other option is using photoelectric detectors, but these will cause false alarms due to the high humidity in the bathroom exhaust. Ionization detectors are no longer available due to performance issues. There is an exception, but it doesn’t apply to the project because we don’t have 20” of vertical subduct since we’re working in an existing building with low ceilings. The code requires a condition that is very typical in this building type, but the industry cannot support the requirement due to lack of product.

We determined our best option was to propose to the AHJ (Authority Having Jurisdiction) that we use the smoke detectors throughout the building to control the operation of the smoke dampers (as already happens.) If smoke is detected in the egress areas or bedrooms, the fire alarm system will shut the dampers per the intent of the code.

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COVID-19 Information + Resources for the Architectural Community



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# AIA GRASSROOTS 2020

LUDMILLA PAVLOVA - GILLHAM AIA

The AIA Grassroots leadership event this year was held on February 18 – 20 in New Orleans during the week before Mardi Gras – a time of exuberant celebration of the city’s civic life. This year’s agenda emphasized component and community leadership with many workshops designed to help officers become more effective chapter and civic leaders. Keynote sessions introduced candidates for AIA leadership positions and featured a panel of Mayors who discussed how architects and civic leaders can partner in building healthy, sustainable and resilient communities.

The engine behind most of the discussions was the AIA’s Blueprint for Better campaign: <https://blueprintforbetter.org>. “AIA, the largest design organization in the world, is asking architects, design professionals, civic leaders, and the public in every community to join our efforts and transform the day-to-day practice of architecture to achieve a zero-carbon, equitable, resilient, and healthy built environment... That’s right, zero carbon.” Let me paraphrase that: we are all leaders in the AIA’s leadership pipeline; the Institute does not have a static blueprint for the future – we are its agents in developing that blueprint. It is on us to find a path toward climate resilience and share it with others.

I attended a Sharing Climate Story Panel #1: Energy workshop that was presented by Samuel Assefa, Director of the Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development. Originally from Ethiopia, he charted his course as a professional from his early days as an architecture student in Chicago, to his practice as a residential architect, his subsequent studies in regional planning at MIT, and later posts as an urban planner in San Francisco and Seattle.

As he focused more on his planning work, he emphasized some key points to encourage architects to work with their municipal partners and use their skills to improve their communities:

- + that zoning rules often privilege the wealthy and carry a legacy of racism
- + zoning laws need to be improved for equitable development by requiring mandatory affordable housing and eliminating restrictive covenants/ red lining in order to minimize the displacement of minority and low income residents
- + successful parcel development – particularly on neglected blocks of public land – depends equally on industrial / commercial investment and on community investment and engagement; involving those who live in the neighborhood is essential to an area’s long term success

+ the architect, speaking the language of the developer, can make a case to city leaders for investment in sustainable infrastructure within the public realm – on district level energy, water, and waste solutions, on open space/urban forests and public transportation – as a common good that brings prosperity to all

I participated in a Sharing Climate Story Panel #2: Energy discussion where the attendees shared stories of potential opportunities, successes, and failures (or as Thomas RC Hartman AIA chose to characterize them, seeds, buds and thorns) in being able to deliver net zero energy buildings. These stories were recorded and forwarded to AIA executive leadership as examples of action that we are currently taking to respond to the climate challenge.

As I reflect on this experience, I encourage you all to visit the Blueprint for Better campaign website <https://blueprintforbetter.org/>. It compiles some useful tools for training architects and firms for the marathon that we need to run to get to our goal of zero carbon buildings: there are links to the 2030 Commitment that our COTE has been advancing, to a document on how the AIA sees the role of the 21st-Century Architect, to the Framework for Design Excellence that will underpin our awards program, to the Safety Assessment Program that will help us build resilience and the capacity to be effective partners with our municipal and emergency response leaders, and to the Zero Code effort that will build a basis for future project performance requirements. But in addition to all that, the AIA is providing some useful support on how to communicate our value to our clients: visit the new Topic Architecture website <https://www.topicarchitecture.com/> where you will find some helpful resources for your clients on how to work with an architect and what architects do.

These resources and how you incorporate them into your practice will enable the AIA to define how we provide an attractive, worthwhile and achievable vision for our profession over the next 5 years that is widely shared with our clients and the public. As future leaders we are called to drive positive change through the power of design and focused activism. The AIA Climate Action campaign at [bit.ly/AIAClimateAction](https://bit.ly/AIAClimateAction) will be our platform for telling our story.

# AIA GRASSROOTS 2020

LUDMILLA PAVLOVA - GILLHAM AIA



Mayors Panel: Peter Exley, First Vice President AIA; Wade Nomura, Mayor of Carpinteria, CA; Quinton Lucas, Mayor of Kansas City, MO; Kathleen Ehley, Mayor of Wauwatosa, WI



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# COVER STORY

## JONES WHITSETT ARCHITECTS

Architects are natural fortune tellers. We always have our ear to the ground, listening for hoof beats. Our concern for the longevity of our projects has us thinking about resiliency as a natural part of every project. Of all people, we should have been least surprised to see how ill-prepared Massachusetts was for the organizational challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We regularly observe the impact of underfunding of telecommunications, infrastructure, housing, health care and education in our local communities. The sound of hoofbeats was loud and clear even if we did not know which direction they were coming from.

Ironically, a few days ago I was scheduled to present a panel at the NESEA conference in Boston about creative policy solutions to the affordable housing shortage here in Massachusetts. The goal of our panel was to bring attention to the role architects and builders could play in advocating for affordable housing. I was personally excited to highlight our firm's work on the Big Enough Housing Project with Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity and the recently completed DIAL/SELF Youth Housing homelessness prevention project in Northampton.

Our panel was to include local heroes who work to address housing issues from different perspectives, Carolyn Misch, Senior Planner in Northampton; Michael Broad, a skilled, even-keeled and dedicated construction supervisor with Wayfinders; and Meghan McDonough, the brilliant and forward thinking executive director of Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity. While mutually depressed about the state of affordable housing in the state we were all excited to brainstorm solutions with friends and allies in the design and construction field.

The facts that were important to us a week ago remain relevant today even while being re-written by the coronavirus. As of last week Massachusetts was the 3rd most expensive state in the country for housing. Here in the Valley 26% of residents spend more than 50% of their household income on rent or mortgage which means that a significant share of household earnings that would otherwise be invested in food, education, savings or personal purchases are tied up in keeping a roof over our heads, dragging down overall economic vitality.

Of course those facts are SO last week.

This week 150,000 people were added to the state unemployment roles with more added every day due to virus layoffs. Even as elected officials pass measures to support household incomes, it is hard to see how we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis without a significant loss in small business employment and rising rates of poverty,



# COVER STORY

## DIAL / SELF YOUTH + COMMUNITY SERVICES

all of which makes this "pre-existing" affordable housing shortage even more dire.

At NESEA my co-panelists and I wanted to share the good work being done in Northampton to innovate new affordable housing development at a variety of scales. We wanted to talk about Northampton's success revising zoning by-laws over the last 15 years to increase allowable densities by reducing setback requirements, allowing accessory dwelling units, reducing parking requirements and most recently by proposing the restoration of two-family residential construction by-right. We wanted to celebrate efforts to encourage supportive housing projects for critically at-risk populations, including homeless youth and adults and those seeking substance abuse recovery. We wanted to showcase the collaborative effort it took for Wayfinders and Valley CDC to work in Northampton to develop two major mixed-use projects that have added 73 affordable and 52 market rate housing units to City's inventory.

But what we wanted most was to raise the alarm that these valiant efforts are nowhere near enough when looked at through a regional lens. The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that the Pioneer Valley is in need of 72,000 units of affordable housing by 2040,... and that, my friends, was in B.C. time,... "Before Coronavirus." In so many areas of our safety net what the coronavirus has done is bring into stark relief the problems that were already going unsolved.

Dorrie Brooks AIA





# SMART FACADES: UMASS AMHERST

WORKING FROM THE OUTSIDE IN TO MAKE BUILDINGS MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT

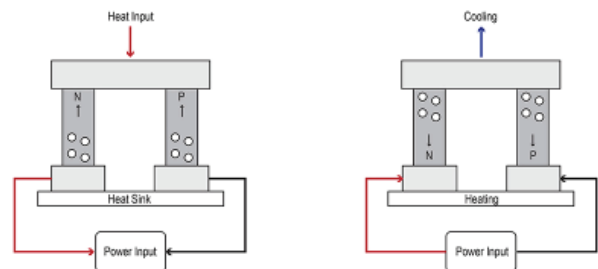
An interdisciplinary team of architecture and engineering researchers at the University of Massachusetts Amherst have designed and tested innovative building facade prototypes that can cool and heat, and produce electricity for building operation. Buildings consume some 40% of energy in the United States, and within those residential and commercial structures, heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems guzzle 46% of the power used, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

In an ongoing effort to reduce the carbon footprint of buildings, an interdisciplinary team of scientists and students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst is working to design and build more sustainable building façade systems – so-called smart façades. Led by Ajla Aksamija, associate professor of architecture, and Zlatan Aksamija, associate professor of electrical and computer engineering, the researchers created and tested two smart façade prototypes incorporating thermoelectric modules, which house semiconductors capable of heating, cooling and generating electricity.

Thermoelectric (TE) materials are not new, but using them in building façades is an innovative application. The military, aerospace equipment and electronic instruments have used TE materials for cooling and heating. TEs also are able to convert temperature differences into electric energy, recovering low-grade heat that otherwise would be wasted.

“Building facades are a perfect application for these smart materials, because we always have a temperature difference between the exterior and interior environments,” says Ajla Aksamija, whose research approach spans architecture, engineering, material and computer science as she specializes in advanced building technologies and sustainability, computational design and innovations in architecture.

In an “aha moment,” the Aksamijas wondered if they could marry their individual areas of expertise. “I work on thermoelectrics. Ajla works on facades. We said, wait! Can’t we just add these TEs to the facades? It was a very natural matching of these two research streams,” Zlatan says.



Thermoelectric materials produce electricity when exposed to thermal gradient, and cooling/heating when voltage is applied.

To test whether the thermoelectric module would operate efficiently when installed in a wall and to determine what size heat sink would be necessary, they designed and built two prototypes with different-size heat sinks. Coupled with the thermoelectric modules, the heat sinks are used to dissipate heat between the interior and exterior environment. The thermoelectric modules without a heat sink were not stable, as they had hypothesized, but the researchers found success when they added a large heat sink. “The study showed that the thermoelectric modules with heat sinks are effective and efficient in heating and cooling modes,” Ajla says. That means, Zlatan adds, “to get the same amount of heating, you’re using less electricity.”

The prototypes were tested within a thermal chamber, which represented four different exterior temperatures in the Fahrenheit scale: zero, 30 and 60 degrees for the heating mode, and 90 degrees for the cooling mode. The internal conditions were kept constant, while voltage supplied to the facade-integrated thermoelectric modules varied from one to eight volts. The temperature outputs of the modules were measured using thermal imaging.

Hidden inside a building’s façade, thermoelectric modules would be used to generate localized heating and cooling, the Aksamijas explain. “It could substitute a good part of heating and cooling, but there would still be a requirement for ventilation of interior spaces,” Ajla says.

Initially, the thermoelectric façades would be most applicable in renovations of older, less energy-efficient buildings, the couple says, adding that they expect the technology to be applied in building façades in five to ten years, following the required industry testing.

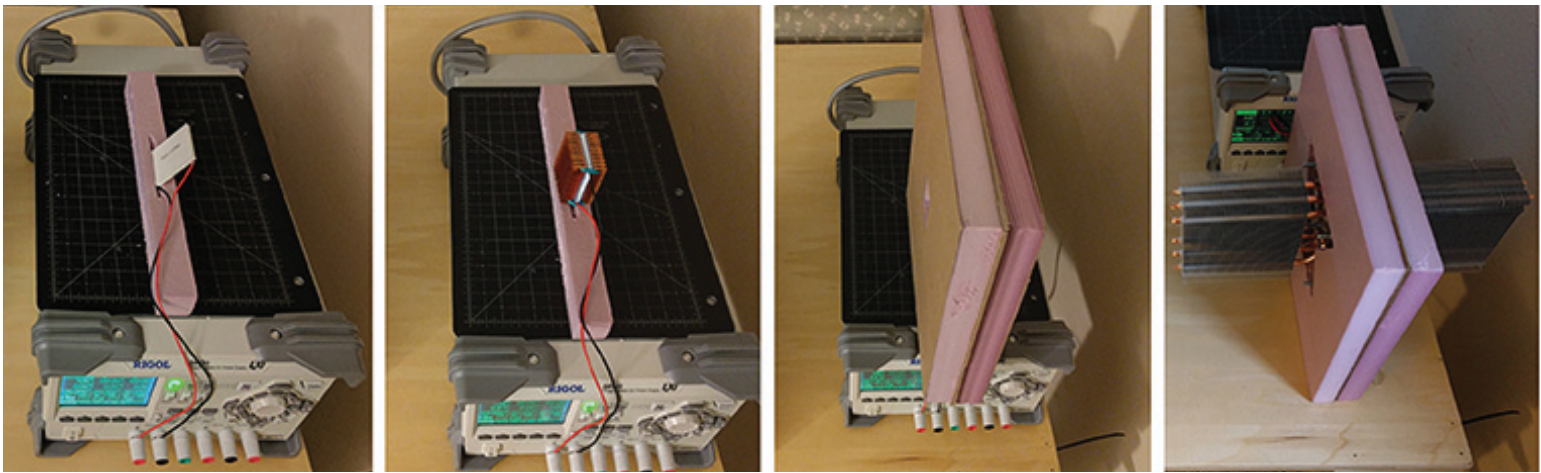
The Aksamijas, who are married, were joined by architecture graduate students, as well as PhD students in electrical and computer engineering, and environmental conservation (Chris Counihan, Dylan Brown, Meenaski Upadhyaya, Guy Vigneau and Mahsa Farid Mohajer). The research work was published as an invited article in *Frontiers in Energy Research*, and presented at the Facade World Congress conferences in 2016 and 2018. The ongoing research work was scheduled to be presented at the Facade World Congress 2020, which was moved to August.

With a focus on the architecture, Ajla and her students are turning to the task of designing larger, aesthetically pleasing smart façades. “Now we’re extending the study, designing different facade systems with thermoelectric components and looking into simulation tools, because we have solid proof that these emerging façade systems could be used for heating, cooling and electricity generation,” she says.

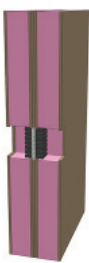
Text adapted from “Smart Façades: Working from the Outside In to Make Buildings More Energy Efficient”, UMass News Office

# UMASS AMHERST SMART FACADES:

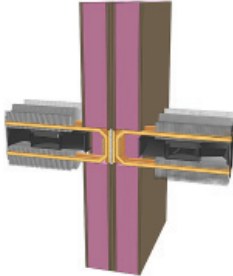
WORKING FROM THE OUTSIDE IN TO MAKE BUILDINGS MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT



Thermoelectric facade proof of concept mockups



Architectural proof of concept model section for thermoelectric facade (direct contact assembly).



Architectural proof of concept a model section for thermoelectric facade (sink transfer assembly).

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“Fruitful Facade: Research Duo Poised to Make Buildings Greener than Ever”, UMass Alumni Magazine  
Journal article in the *Frontiers in Energy Research*:  
“Experimental Study of Operating Conditions and Integration of Thermoelectric Materials in Facade Systems”





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## LOCAL WOOD DOES GOOD UMASS AMHERST BCT NEWS

Two tree species native to the Northeast have been found to be structurally sound for use in cross-laminated timber (CLT) – a revolutionary new type of building material with sought-after sustainability characteristics, according to research by a University of Massachusetts Amherst timber engineer.

The findings, published in the Journal of Materials in Civil Engineering, suggest that these trees – the eastern hemlock and eastern white pine – could support local markets for CLT. The manufacturing of CLT, a type of mass timber used for wall, floor and roof construction, could create jobs, improve rural and forestry economies and support better forestry management, which is a strategy to address climate change, the research says.

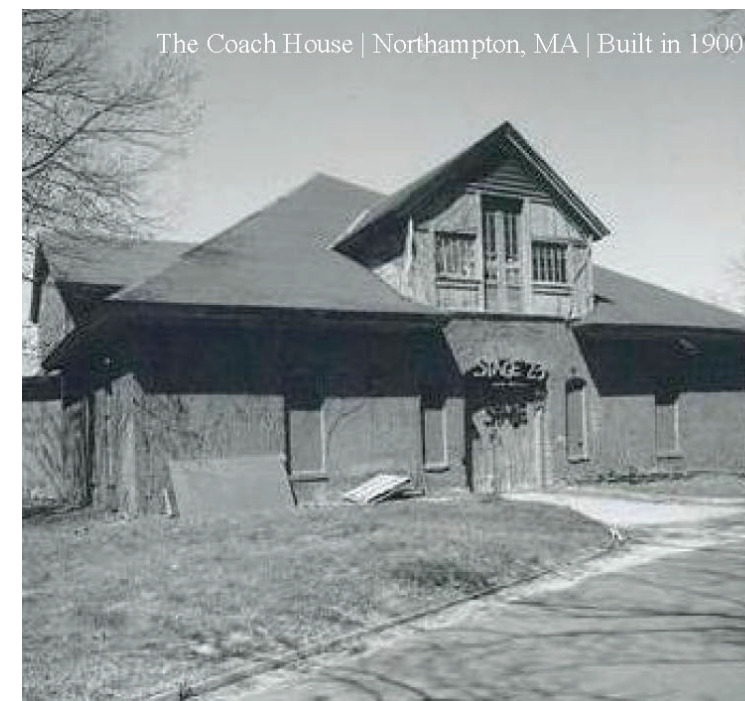
“This is the future – prefabricated, panelized wood,” says lead author Peggi Clouston, professor of wood mechanics and timber engineering in the School of Earth and Sustainability. “It’s far more efficient and there’s far less waste than site construction. It’s less time- and labor-intensive than building with cast-in-place concrete” and has a much lower carbon footprint.

Clouston’s leadership in state-of-the-art wood construction technology was instrumental in the creation of UMass Amherst’s John W. Olver Design Building, a showcase for best practices in sustainability.



The post ‘Two NE Tree Species Can Be Used in New Sustainable Building Material’ appeared first in UMass Building and Construction Technology Website.’

For more information: <https://wp.me/P8mFgs-NHG>



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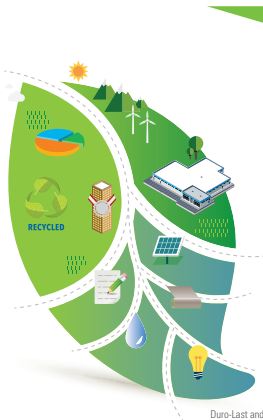
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PEDIATRIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER ADDITION

The Pediatric Development Center in Pittsfield is currently under construction. The organization is expanding its footprint to accommodate its already bustling programs by adding additional offices, a staff room and a handicap ramp with entry. The PDC provides early intervention services to the Berkshires for kids up to age three. The contractor is R&B Custom Homes.



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CONGRATULATIONS ON 30 YEARS!  
C&H ARCHITECTS

C&H Architects is celebrating 30 years of designing sustainable architecture. Their work serves as an example of how, in a time of critical climate challenges, we can add to the built environment in a way that improves the sustainability of future generations, rather than threatening it. “We have an ethical duty to understand the impact of our work – both socially and environmentally,” says partner Jesse Selman AIA. “It is a challenge that forms the basis of our work -- and is what gets us up in the morning.”

Wherever we sleep, cook, eat, work or play, buildings provide the backdrop to our lives. At the most basic level, they protect us from the elements. Beyond that, they shape our environment and provide texture to our lives. Buildings, however, are also one of the largest contributors to global warming, accounting for nearly 40% of all CO2 emissions worldwide from a building stock that is expected to double in the next forty years\*. In an effort to mitigate these impacts, there has been a steady increase in sustainable architecture – the design of buildings that work in harmony with the environment.

C&H Architects has been at the forefront of this effort for the past 30 years. They designed the 5th ever certified Living Building Challenge project in the world (and the first in New England) for Smith College's MacLeish Field Station; the most rigorous performance standard available for buildings. They have designed over ten net-zero homes, the most recent of which won the top honor from American Institute of Architects' Rhode Island chapter in 2018, and includes a solar array that powers both the house and the car of its occupants.

Founded in 1989 by Bruce Coldham AIA to create architecture that responds to our rapidly changing climate and resources, the Amherst-based firm has worked with hundreds of clients on projects at every scale – from small residential renovations to large institutional construction. Today, the firm's four partners carry on the tradition Coldham started, while constantly incorporating advances in building technology, materials and practices. The forward-thinking mindset is embodied by their mission to Design for the Next Hundred Years™.

CONGRATULATIONS, C&H ARCHITECTS!



# Supporting the Architectural Community

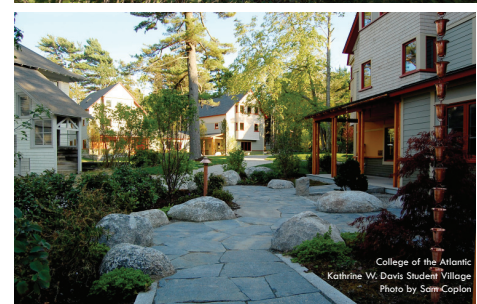
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## FEATURED ARTISAN DARRELL PETIT SCULPTOR



### How do you work on your craft within the Western Massachusetts community?

I am still relatively new to the community but I am making good friends, and putting down roots. I am currently looking for land so that I can create a place in Western Massachusetts where I can physically work with the stone. My primary work is large-scale granite sculptures integrated into urban and rural landscapes.

### How does sustainability play a role in your business?

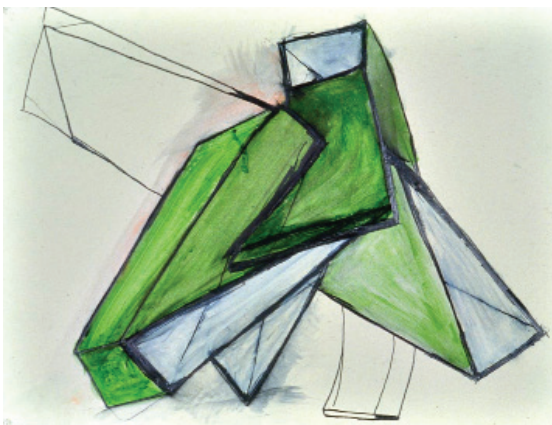
I have been working within the stone world for 30 years. Together with other subcommittee leaders within the North American stone industry we helped create a new standard: ANSI/NSC 373 Sustainable Production of Natural Stone. Stone is one of the most sustainable materials we can work with - it is a natural material that lives through the ages. I always try to consider local materials and I look forward to working with the native 400 million years old black and silver Ashfield Galaxy Schist.

### Is there a way in which you would like to work with local architects and designers that hasn't happened yet?

With the scale of my work, the most successful collaborations are those that start at the beginning of a project. Over the last 30 years I have successfully worked with many architects and landscape architects including Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates, Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects, Balmori Associates, Roche Dinkeloo, and most recently with Cambridge Seven and Pei Cobb Freed & Partners on a sculpture for the new Four Seasons, One Dalton Boston project. I work very closely with my wife, architect Naomi Darling AIA and we have collaborated on several art and architectural projects.

### What's your favorite part of your creative process? Can you describe your process?

I start the process by descending into the earth, into geological time and into the raw sublime quarry environment. The process involves the exploration, the discovery, the slowness and the physicality of the work. I truly love stone, in all of its aspects: as part of nature, as blocks in a quarry, as elements within the built environment and as sculptures taking form with my hands.



## FEATURED ARTISAN DARRELL PETIT SCULPTOR







# AIA Western Massachusetts newsletter

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## WMAIA COMMUNITY SPRING 2020

**Now more than ever  
we want to be sure we keep in touch with our members  
to help you navigate these difficult times!**

Please note – email is our primary means of communication with our members.  
If you do not receive our enews updates, please contact [director@wmaia.org](mailto:director@wmaia.org) and  
**make sure we have your current email address.**

Please also make sure you have added [bsa@architects.org](mailto:bsa@architects.org) to your “safe list.”  
Because of our relationship with the BSA, if your provider blocks BSA emails,  
you may be dropped from our list as well.

### **We want to hear from you!**

WMAIA is working with local legislators to gather data on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on small and medium sized businesses of creative professionals (architecture, engineering, landscape design, graphic design, etc.). Please watch for a link in an upcoming enews to a shared resource where we will be gathering data from Western Massachusetts firms.

### **COVID-19 Information + Resources for the Architectural Community**

BSA

**RESOURCES FOR  
ARCHITECTS: COVID-19**



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