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KUHN RIDDLE ARCHITECTS  
GAYLORD MANSION AT ELMS COLLEGE  
CHICOPEE MASSACHUSETTS

FALL  
2020



**ENCOURAGING FIRMS TO BANK SOME JEDI TIME: JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

Edward “Tony” Ransom, AIA, NOMA, CCM, LEED AP, BOC Lvl.1 joined the WMAIA Board at our September 23rd meeting and encouraged us all to “bank some time” towards JEDI – Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion. Tony is the “Deputy Director for Energy and Sustainability” at DCAMM (Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance). He is also President of BosNOMA (the Boston Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects).

DCAMM recently released a disparity study – which has helped to clarify the percentage of MBE and WBE firms performing public projects – both on the designer side as well as the contractor side. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dcamm-disparity-study-2017>

At BosNOMA, Tony is working to add diversity to the profession. Black licensed architects account for 2% of the profession. NOMA has a goal of doubling that by 2030. Tony has a personal goal of eventually reaching 13% - which would then mirror our population as a whole.

In a wide-ranging, and engaging talk, Tony discussed the challenges facing the profession, the political climate, and societal change over time – interspersed with memorable quotes. He strongly encouraged firms and institutions to have the necessary, though often uncomfortable, conversations around workplace diversity – and the importance of empathy.

**“Without empathy, equity and unity will rarely occur. Sometimes, when you are separated from others by any type of divide, you have to build a bridge to the other side, so that at least you can meet them halfway.”**

He encourages firms to bank some time towards Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI). To set some time aside, as though it was a project for a client, and to spend that time encouraging young people to pursue this profession.

When asked about supporting diversity in Western Massachusetts – which is not very diverse to begin with – Tony recommended reaching out to historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) for interns and graduates. He also repeated the need to have those difficult conversations – so that one can be sure that the environment truly is welcoming and affirming. Finally, Tony believes strongly in personal interactions – that to truly open the profession, we need to introduce more young people to Architecture. He encourages firms to volunteer in classrooms, attend career fairs and outreach to local schools with diverse student populations that are under-represented in the profession. To reach out even as early as 3rd grade, so that as these students mature, they can see being an Architect as an attainable option, and a future that they can embrace.

A big thank you to Tony for volunteering his time – and for introducing such thought-provoking discussion. I also want to thank Ludmilla Pavlova-Gillham AIA who facilitated the invitation. We hope that it encourages dialogue within the board and within the broader membership of WMAIA.

- Kristian Whitsett AIA

**NAOMI DARLING AIA WINS AIA NEW ENGLAND MERIT AWARD**



See more of the Takahashi Harb Loft and Library as a Before + After Project featured in our WMAIA Newsletter Winter 2020 Issue

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

- ONE** WMAIA COMMUNITY JEDI
- TWO** NAOMI DARLING AIA WINS AIANE MERIT AWARD
- THREE + FOUR** THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PUBLIC SPACES + THE PROMISE OF SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE
- FIVE + SIX** BEFORE + AFTER: C&H ARCHITECTS
- SEVEN TO NINE** THINGS TO DO + SEE IN WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS
- TEN** ON THE BOARDS: JONES WHITSETT ARCHITECTS
- TWELVE** COVER STORY: KUHN RIDDLE ARCHITECTS
- THIRTEEN + FOURTEEN** FEATURED ARTISAN: GRAIN OF THOUGHT
- FIFTEEN** WMAIA PROGRAMS

**THE WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS**

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COVER PHOTO: JIM GIPE OF PIVOT MEDIA

**AIANE DESIGN AWARDS 2020**

On September 25th, eighteen projects were recognized for design excellence at this year’s virtual AIANE Conference and Design Awards program hosted by AIA Vermont. The event offered a look into the jury’s deliberations and priorities valued when assessing over 160 entries from across the region. Notable this year was a focus on small projects and those with a social justice bent, enriching the definition of design excellence.

**MERIT: MORE WITH LESS PROJECT NAME: TAKAHASHI-HARB LOFT AND LIBRARY NAOMI DARLING ARCHITECTURE LLC**

The Takahashi Harb Loft and Library is an interior renovation and conversion of an existing ground floor walk-out basement and two-car garage into one-bedroom loft-style apartment and library workspace. To maintain the tight budget, we worked with almost all of the existing conditions which helped to organize the living space into three simple sections while maintaining the library as a separate space within the former garage.



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# TIME FOR CHANGE. OR BUSINESS AS USUAL?

JACOBIEN FRANCISCA KUIPER, PHD STUDENT & MICHAEL DI PASQUALE, AIA, AICP

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous impact on cities and towns across the world. Physical distancing requirements and limits placed on indoor gatherings have resulted in a range of planning and design responses. In many places, streets and asphalt have been repurposed to create space for outdoor dining, new bike lanes, and wider sidewalks. And people everywhere are rediscovering the value of parks and public spaces.

Our UMass research team spent much of summer 2020 collecting examples of the ways cities and towns deployed design interventions to address the pandemic. Our work includes a wide range of case studies that provide important lessons for planners, stakeholders, and the general public.

## Research in Real-Time

When the pandemic struck, our team had already been studying the role that “social infrastructure” (social gathering spaces including public spaces, libraries, and cafes) plays in building healthier, more equitable cities. The work is informed by “Third Places” research by Ray Oldenberg (The Great Good Place) and more recent work by Eric Klinenberg (Palaces for the People) linking the availability of social infrastructure with resilient communities. We were able to redirect our work with funding from UMass Extension/Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment, to focus on the pandemic and its impact on cities.

We paid particular attention to the effect COVID-19 is having on social infrastructure. The opportunity to study this in “real-time” was exciting. Each day brought new examples to study, new dimensions to our work.

We began by reviewing databases that had been created for hundreds of cities worldwide. By the end of the summer, we had gathered 60 examples from 51 different cities and towns, including 39 American cities. This group includes

Westfield, Holyoke, and Springfield in the western part of Massachusetts.

In contrast to most of the existing databases that mainly reported the “what and where” of design interventions, our team paid special attention to how projects were developed, for what reasons, and who benefitted from them. We looked at how information was conveyed to residents and stakeholders. And importantly, we looked for recurring themes and ways the projects could be the impetus for cities and towns to reimagine their streets, outdoor spaces, and vacant lots.

## This is what we found:

**1.** By far, most interventions were installed to benefit restaurants, and then businesses, more generally. More than half of the examples studied were motivated primarily as a way to allow businesses to meet physical distancing requirements in order to stay open. Boosting the local economy was deemed the main reason these cities were reducing vehicle traffic, converting parking lanes and allowing restaurants to expand their footprint.

**2.** Although less common, 41% of cities made changes to infrastructure that did not directly benefit businesses. For example, additional bike lanes were made for essential workers who did not want to use public transportation. Other cities appropriated street space to create more room for bicyclists and pedestrians on sidewalks and walking trails.

**3.** Lack of community engagement. Only one-third of the cities and towns we looked at engaged the community in some way. Of these cities, only a small number organized a process before they implemented changes to streets. Some cities took a “better late than never” approach, communicating with residents, but only after the changes had been made.

# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PUBLIC SPACES AND THE PROMISE OF SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**4.** The research shows that almost all interventions were planned as temporary measures at the time of our data collection. From all the cities in our database, only 3 cities planned to make changes permanent.

In general, COVID-19 has led to a reevaluation of public spaces and their importance for the future of cities. The temporary interventions have also called attention to the planning process, tactical urbanism, and how local decisions are made. Some cities and towns were criticized for pushing aside planning rules in the rush to respond to COVID-19. And while many projects are deemed successful, they might not be addressing the needs of a broader cross-section of the community. These messages resonate with our research findings. A combination of temporary measures enacted without a sound process of community engagement might lead to rapid change, but does it lead to the best outcome for everyone? Most interventions we studied are located in downtown districts. Pedestrian and bicycle-friendly efforts in residential neighborhoods that might reach a more diverse group of residents comprised a smaller portion of our database. Some of our data in combination with anecdotal evidence suggests this may be especially the case in Massachusetts Gateway Cities (the state’s former manufacturing centers) where some residents felt the changes made to the streets did not benefit them, were inconvenient, or even harmful.

## Lessons Learned as a Guide for the Future

As winter approaches, the question of permanency and how to turn temporary projects into long-lasting community benefits becomes more urgent. What will it take to keep these streets and spaces open? How can they continue to function as social infrastructure instead of reverting to parking lots (with or without snow piles), vacant lots, and traffic thoroughfares?

There are some promising signs. Mayor de Blasio of New York City recently announced that his city’s Open Restaurant program would become permanent. In September 2020, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker announced a doubling of the Shared Streets and Spaces grant program from \$5 million to \$10 million. The program is helping cities and towns rework curbs, sidewalks, streets, and parking spots to create areas for physically distanced walking, commerce, dining, and other outdoor activities. Proposals earn extra credit by showing the potential of making permanent improvements.

But the availability of funding is no guarantee for success. The challenge to moving away from “business as usual” approaches was brought home in our own backyard. Although much of the “Picture Main Street” effort in Northampton predates COVID-19, the rollout and reaction to the recent tactical interventions/protected bike lanes on Upper Main Street (funded in part by the grant program) highlight many of the issues in our research. The Northampton situation, a combination of physical distancing and road diet, was a creative way to demonstrate a reimagined public realm. But businesses felt ignored. The project was suspended, with perhaps the worst outcome possible: more division and less trust.

What to do? The pandemic is an enormous public health disaster. But it’s also a call to action. Now would seem to be a good time to imagine new approaches for a post-COVID world. The pandemic provides us a chance to reconfigure cities with less asphalt and more space for pedestrians and bicyclists (and physical distancing). Architects, designers, and planners can play an important role here.

As precarious as the future may be, it could also be very exciting. The examples in our research help us remember that real change is possible and that the promise of better, more resilient cities embedded with social infrastructure can be fulfilled.





BEFORE + AFTER  
C & H ARCHITECTS



AFTER



BEFORE



BEFORE

BEFORE + AFTER  
C & H ARCHITECTS



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER

Local renovation in an historic district  
Builder - Keiter Builders, Inc.  
Photos - Jim Gipe / Pivot Media





The Coach House | Northampton, MA | Built in 1900



Historical Renovation | Completed in 2019

Design by Juster Pope Frazier Architects  
Photo by CHODOS, Inc.



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**NORTHERN BERKSHIRE ART OUTSIDE**

An initiative of the Clark Art Institute, MASS MoCA and the Williams College Museum of Art, Northern Berkshire Art Outside is an online walking and biking tour showcasing outdoor art in Williamstown and North Adams. The tour includes some 30 works of art stretching across 10 miles of country roads. In addition to Martin Puryear's Big Bling, the trail includes Walter Fähndrich's Music for a Quarry and Klaas Hübner and Andrew Schrock's Corrugarou in North Adams, Louise Bourgeois' Eyes and Thomas Schütte's Crystal in Williamstown.



**MASS MoCA**



**The Bus Stand:**  
Designed by artist Victoria Palermo, is a public artwork and permanent addition to the North Adams community, adding to the movement to bring more public art to the city through the efforts of DownStreet Art.



**Portrait of a Building:**  
Renowned watercolor artist Barbara Ernst Prey paints a monumental watercolor for MASS MoCA's expansion. Prey's work is 9 feet tall by 16 feet wide and depicts the interior of B6: The Robert W. Wilson Building just prior to the start of construction.



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In this render from Gardner Elementary, a proposed 1,000 student elementary school, we wanted to convey the rural hilltop setting of this very large educational facility while keeping the camera low to connect to the scale of people arriving and entering the school. The parti for the project is challenging. This "school in the woods" consists of three masses or "houses" - connected by two multistory bridges. Materially, the exterior is comprised of masonry and glass-fiber reinforced concrete planks. Interior finishes are robust and warm - linoleum, wood, and ground-faced block. The structure is left exposed whenever possible - providing additional height, visual interest, and improved daylighting throughout. The school is slated to open in the Fall of 2022.



Architect- Jones Whitsett Architects

Landscape Architect- Stimson





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The historic Gaylord Mansion sits at the gateway of the Elms College campus in Chicopee, Massachusetts. Originally built by mill owner Emerson Gaylord in the late 19th century, the building was showing its age of nearly 150 years and in dire need of restoration. An adaptive reuse project, the building now houses students on the upper floors and classroom/study spaces on the first floor. Much effort was put into maintaining the historic character and ornate detail of the building while modernizing life safety systems, HVAC and integrating the technologies of the modern campus. The building was also made accessible with the introduction of a wheel chairlift + ramp. Photos by Jim Gipe of Pivot Media.



# FEATURED ARTISAN JOHN GERAGHTY

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

Moving to the Pioneer Valley in 2014 after having a shop in Manhattan and Brooklyn for 18 years was a big change. While the foundation of using AAA material, investing in European machinery and mentoring apprentices has not changed, the flow of work and networking is different in this region than a city-based center. While my client base still stretches from Manhattan to Florida, to the Rockies and beyond, I have been networking within Central and Western MA to meet new people, connect, and create opportunities. I feel grateful to be able to work with local architects, designers and apprentices. Providing opportunity to others while creating beautiful woodwork for clients makes me feel like I'm helping stitch together a richer tapestry of artists in our state. This is home.

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

Sustainability is a key topic in the woodworking profession. In the past, we've had to walk the line between satisfying a client and using material that comes from rain forests. Part of my process with my clients includes letting them know about the fabulous domestics available in North America. I've spent 25 years building up a comprehensive inventory of North American hardwoods that represents the best of what is available. I have been able to connect with local forest owners in the Pioneer Valley, and find rare, unusual timbers and saw them up into boards. Clients who like to be involved in this process enjoy going out into the woods or visiting the lumberyards to select their material. If a client is insistent about using exotics I have good working relationships with companies that collect naturally fallen timbers and certified green outfits that monitor the logs' chain of custody. If we use the inventory of exotic woods I have on hand, I use them judiciously, often sawing a thick board down to make my own veneers.

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

Half of my business in NYC was architectural woodwork, doing everything from staircases to cabinets. My background as a timberframer/carpenter means I understand the structure that supports architectural woodwork. As a craftsman with a state of the art shop with few limitations, I can successfully execute the fabrication and finish of complex projects. I find architectural woodwork rewarding because it challenges me to do my best to understand the wood's richness and visual qualities, making sure it is cut, shaped and molded to display its natural beauty and uniqueness to fullest advantage.

## Can you describe your creative process?

More than anything else I feel my ability to see potential in each board guides me. A good day in the shop is when there is harmony between the maker and the material they use. Sometimes the wood tells me right away what it will become and other times it will reveal itself as the missing link in a design waiting to be fully realized. It's always different and I am always learning. I feel blessed to be able to do this and I hope that this can be seen in my work.



Bookmatched Crotch Walnut Cabinet

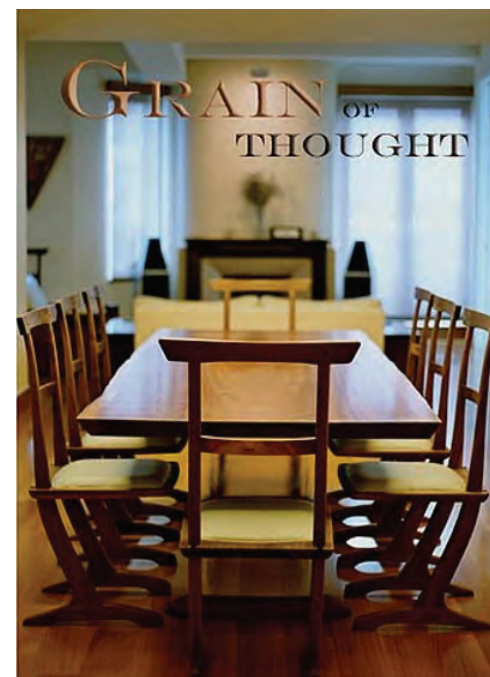
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# FEATURED ARTISAN GRAIN OF THOUGHT



Walnut Burl Coffee Table with Maple Legs



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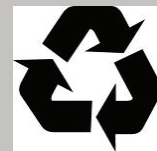




# AIA Western Massachusetts newsletter

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## WMAIA COMMUNITY FALL 2020

### WMAIA PROGRAMS FALL 2020

Monday, November 2 | 4:00-5:15 | Zoom | 1LU

#### **BCT Lecture:**

#### **A Better Way to Build in the 21st Century**

**Tedd Benson, Founder, and CEO of Bensonwood & Unity Homes**

Tuesday, November 10 | 4:00 PM | Zoom | LU TBD

#### **WMAIA COTE Committee presents:**

#### **Making the Case: Financial Benefits of Net Zero Building**

**Bill Maclay FAIA, Author of The New Net Zero: Leading-Edge Design and Construction of Homes and Buildings for a Renewable Energy Future**

Thursday, November 19 | 4:30 PM | Zoom

**Green Bite: Jesse Selman AIA on his work with the Amherst Energy and Climate Action Committee**

Wednesday, December 9 | 4:00-6:00 | Zoom

#### **WMAIA Annual Meeting & Design Awards Presentation**

The bi-annual Celebration of Architecture and Design Awards Program has long been a mainstay for WMAIA.

In partnership with the Western Massachusetts Section of the Boston Society of Landscape Architects, the program aims to encourage and recognize distinguished architectural and landscape design achievement.

We will also present our Hon WMAIA award, student scholarships and conduct our Annual Meeting, including election of officers.

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#### **A note about WMAIA's enews:**

Are you receiving our regular enews? The enews is sent several times a month and is used to communicate information about programs and other opportunities. If you are not receiving this information, please contact [director@wmaia.org](mailto:director@wmaia.org)

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



**RESOURCES FOR  
ARCHITECTS: COVID-19**

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**AIA Western  
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#### **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.