

AIA honors area architects

Victor Saroki & Associates of Birmingham and Harley Ellington Pierce Yoo Associates of Southfield recently received a pair of design and recognition awards from AIA Detroit, a chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Saroki won in the low budget/small project category for renovating its own offices and an interior architecture award for the Shelter, an alternative nightclub in Detroit.

Harley Ellington won a 25-year award for the south wing addition to the Detroit Institute of Arts and an honor award for the mausoleum and chapel at Resurrection Cemetery in Clinton Township.

AIA Detroit provided the following descriptions of the award winners:

■ Saroki offices — Generous spreads of clear glass throw light into the window display spaces where images of projects and models invite the close inspection of passersby.

■ Delicate wood-panel, steel-frame partitions, a glass-block conference room wall extending upward to a skylight and exposed metal mechanical system ducts celebrate their function and presence.

■ The Shelter — One of the hottest alternative nightclubs in town and the starting point for many of the newest members of the music industry . . . is located in the basement of St. Andrew's Hall near Greentown.

■ Its mission is to clarify new ways to care for the planet. Furnishings allude to the strata of the earth's surface and forms and shapes are reminiscent of bubbles and waves of water.

■ Mausoleum and chapel — Three mausoleum buildings containing 5,000 crypts, a covered circulation gallery incorporating 1,000 wall niches and a high-image chapel are linked by a common roof.

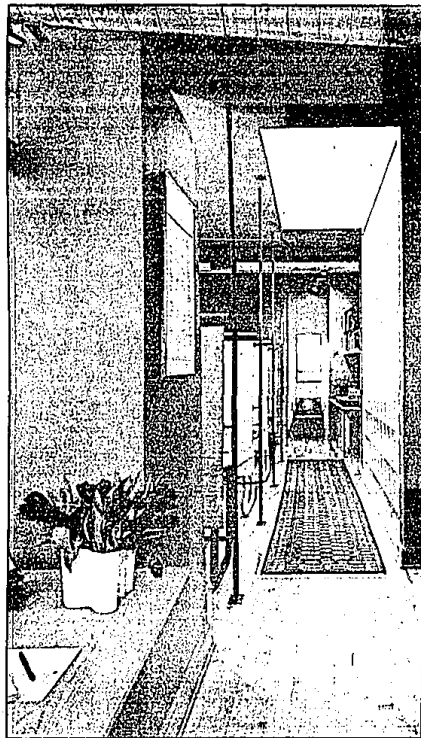
■ The granite veneer exterior features skylights and a lead-coated copper roof.

■ Institute of arts addition — Highly respectful of the original 1922 neo-classical Paul Cret-designed structure, the design form doesn't touch the existing; its only connection is made with a sheet of glass.

■ The interior features a skylit atrium and sculpture court. The new structure is clad in highly-polished dark grey granite in dark contrast to and reflecting the existing faceted white marble.

■ Gunnar Birkerts and Associates of Birmingham collaborated with Harley Ellington on the south wing addition and shared in the 25-year award.

■ Giffels Associates of Southfield won an honor award for an Amoco research and development facility in Alpharetta, Ga.



Award winner: Renovated offices of Victor Saroki in Birmingham were honored as a low budget/small project award winner by AIA Detroit. The architectural firm used glass blocks, skylights and wood-panel, steel frame partitions in its renovation.

Safety is universal design's focus

AP — Universal design is more an attitude about convenience and safety than about products specially designed for the physically disabled.

A lot can be achieved in kitchen and bath simply by changing cabinet heights and choosing drawers instead of shelves. For hardware, opt for levers instead of knobs and hinges that allow doors to swing wide, says Kathryn George, co-editor of Decorating Remodeling magazine.

George says almost everyone can benefit from universal design: "Children and anyone who is or will be pregnant, injured or old."

To make any home more accessible for everyone, George offers these tips:

■ Make sure all rooms, especially kitchens and baths, are well lit. Lower light switches so wheelchair-bound individuals and children can reach them.

■ Eliminate thresholds, ledges and door sills or lower to no higher than three quarters of an inch so a wheelchair can negotiate the rise. Bevel the edges to minimize chances of tripping.

■ When remodeling a kitchen, make sure aisles are at least 36 inches wide. Design counters so there are several heights ranging from 30 inches to 36 inches. Continuous countertops, smooth-top ranges and eliminating the ridge between sink and counter allow someone of limited strength to move heavy pots and pans by sliding them.

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