Universal Design Roundtable Discussion

Friday, February 4, 2011

The Burnham Room, Grand Hyatt Hotel

In attendance:

Gunnar Baldwin

Stefani Danes, FAIA, COTE

Ingrid Fraley, DFA

Bill Leddy, FAIA, COTE

Frank Pitts, FAIA, Board Member

Joyce Polhamus, AIA, DFA Co-chair

Anne Schopf, FAIA, COD

Sean Stadler, AIA, YAF

Glen Tipton, AIA, DFA

Jim Warner, FAIA, DFA Chair

Staff:

Bruce Bland

Kathleen Daileda, Hon. AIA

David Downey, Assoc. AIA

Zach Mortice

**Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting opened up with a welcome and introductions. Two recent articles on Universal Design were in AIA’s inaugural issue of *Architect Magazine* and Zach Mortice was attending our meeting to get more information for an article he’s writing for the May issue.

**State Government Network Meeting**

Earlier in the week, Gunnar Baldwin met with the State Government Network (SGN) for a discussion on what the individual states are doing regarding water efficiency and universal design. It was suggested that Gunnar attend the State Legislator’s Conference later this year in San Antonio to talk to them about a variety of issues including changes to codes with the hope that watersense becomes the basis of the model plumbing code.

**COD/YAF IDEAS Competition and Promotion**

The American Institute of Architects has invited designers to participate in a design competition intended to build upon the efforts of the past decade by proposing a vision for Tokyo’s bid for the 2020 Games that is guided not only by socially- and environmentally-sustainable principles, but also by the concept of Universal Design.

This year’s design problem, *to create a master plan for the Olympic Village and a design for a representative mixed-use building that includes athlete housing*, will provide entrants with the opportunity to explore these overlaps. Successful solutions will demonstrate a commitment to Universal Design, as well as social and environmental sustainability, throughout the Village during its Olympic, Paralympic, and Legacy modes by creating designs that will allow the Village to play a vital role in the ongoing development of the City of Tokyo – not only for the short-term as athletes’ housing during the Games, but also for the long-term as a catalyst for infrastructural revitalization once the Games have closed. Universal Design – the best universally designed bathroom - is one of the components of this competition.

Universal Design has been defined as “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.” This definition was developed by the architect Ron Mace, FAIA, an architect and the founder of the Center for Universal Design at N.C. State University. In recent years, architects and designers in the US and abroad have come to recognize significant and growing overlaps between Universal Design principles and emerging values of social and environmental sustainability.

Michael Graves will be chairing the jury. The competition entry deadline is March 14, 2011. The promotion of the 2011 Ideas Competition will result in promoting UD to a wider audience. Jurors may be able to serve as speakers at the 2012 convention. A session brief will be developed for this opportunity.

***What is the best, most efficient way to take this effort beyond the realm of a competition and keep the conversation going?***

**TOTO/DFA and the LeadingAge Conference – UD Initiative**

The DFA is seeking an exception to the ADA and changes to the code and ANSI regulations. There is a 12-person task force working on this.

Future of Aging Services Conference & Leadership Summit will be held in Washington, DC April 11-13, 2011. This conference is addressing today’s challenges including policy issues and health reform, emerging integrated care delivery models, and new partnerships and collaboration opportunities. DFA will be participating in this conference.

**Case Study – Ed Roberts Campus, Berkeley, California**

Bill Leddy presented a slide show on the Ed Roberts Campus in Berkeley, California. The Ed Roberts Campus (ERC) is a nonprofit corporation formed by seven organizations that share a common history in the Independent Living/Civil Rights Movement of People with Disabilities. In 1998 they joined together to plan and develop a universally designed, transit-oriented and environmentally sustainable campus located at the Ashby BART Station in South Berkeley. This segued nicely into our discussion on Universal Design.

**Getting to the Mainstream of Good Design**

* Don’t make universal design another hoop to jump through like LEED, rather how do we fold it into the culture of design?
* Create a group that sustains and promotes
* Capitalize on trigger events – “Bill Clinton retires”
* Don’t ignore the essential or initial basic design problem
* Evidenced based design yields economic benefits
* Don’t wait for the research but look at trajectory of EBD, patient safety and therapeutic environments/human centered care
* Latrobe – work with COF, Ron Skaggs with HKS
* Invite National Associates Committee to take part in the discussion
* Catch attention of emerging professionals and early adopters to give them a path to influence and a diversity of roles within their own community. Build a buzz. Find a cheerleader who has energy and influence with no obvious self-interest
* Sell architects on the practice, knowledge, and knowledge incentives
* Don’t ignore underlying design problems or related problems.
* Change attitudes and aspirations
* Get out of your own tent and bring in those related
* Sell providers and architects on advantages in their marketplace
* Make Universal Design a NAAB curriculum requirement
* Camp Hill Movement
* Design for Health Symposium. Daniel Friedman and Ray Pentecost are organizing for the fall.
* Shape the debate
* Architects need to be at their client’s conferences talking about the issues
* Centralized systems shaping the debate
* When products become more mainstream, they become more affordable
* Sustainability is the key
* Need to sell Universal Design as a profession
* Should be voluntary; making it a requirement becomes a design challenge. How creative can we get?
* Opportunities to inspire architects rather than restrain or limit
* 47% of funding for non profits goes to health care
* Get information to AARP, Patient Center Care facilities
* Who could be a leader for us in a related field?
* Social Sustainability has a life beyond LEED
* Work with AIA Legacy and the Octagon (need something more specific)
* We need lifelong communities, community integrated retirement living; reach out to AARP
* LEED checklist to have a socially sustainable element which is scheduled for adoption in 2013

**What/Who Helps Us Form the Next Steps?**

* Form a leadership platform with educators, young professionals, practitioners, legislative, planning, product manufacturing, public - Vivian Loftness could lead this group?
* Look at the NC State, Buffalo – talk to Valerie Fletcher of the Institute for Human Centered Design
* Bring to a leadership group with a public forum/ needs to be formalized
* Assume leadership position in key organizations
* Piggy back on other efforts, we don’t always need to invent
* PLEASE don’t let this be something that we give to someone else like USGBC
* KnowledgeNet Platform – Community link
* Rothschild Foundation, NC State, Institute for Human Centered Design
* Research on reducing cost of health care – Latrobe?
* Social sustainability – needs to be shaped and defined
* Robert Wood, Stefani Danes, Jonathan Taylor

**Calendar of Opportunities**

* Coverage of the YAF/COD IDEAS Competition in Architect Magazine
* Winning Bathroom from this competition will be on display at the TOTO booth at Convention
* UD Tours at Convention
* Universal Design Workshop at 2011 Convention
* Competition Exhibition
* COD/YAF Reception
* Session from winners of 2011 competition
* CACE Annual Meeting
* 2012 Grassroots
* Latrobe Prize
* Presentation on Universal Design at an AIA Board Meeting
* Planning for 2012 Convention

People to connect with

* Chris Downey – blind architect
* George Beasley, Georgia State
* Jerry Wiesman ??
* Frances Bronet, University of Oregon

**Taking One Thing Away**

* Multiple avenues, put a face on this issue – what it means to engage community with disability
* Keep leveraging IDEAS competition. How can we get and keep this issue on the forefront with a broader conversation for the winners?
* Find good examples of broad design, appropriate to everyone with good solutions that grab everyone’s attention
* Operation research and moving the agenda; need to change public perception, take ownership and vigorously pursue research
* Incorporate research into design ; research the industrial side
* Talk about UD in terms of good design/socially sustainable – take it out of the realm of senior living
* Develop proposals/gather research/ move it to something transformative
* Self sufficiency – be conscious of community
* Take ownership
* Make universal design something to aspire to, not prescriptive