



**The American
Institute
of Architects**

Committee on Design

an **AIA** Knowledge Community

2019 Conference Theme: “The innovators and maintainers”

Innovation in Architecture, Infrastructure, & Technology

January 8, 2019

Letter from the Chair

It is my great pleasure to serve as the 51st chair of the American Institute of Architects Committee on Design for 2019. In addition to the ongoing work of the Committee including a focus on Firm Award and Gold Medal recommendations, as well as recommendations for Honorary Fellows, we have been busy planning two conferences for this upcoming year.

There are so many wonderful places and works of architecture to visit in this world. So how do we decide where to go that is meaningful to our work and practice? To help filter these possibilities, we have adopted a theme that will explore innovation, disruption, and maintenance. Unfortunately, these terms have become so overused in the marketplace, they have seemingly lost their impact. This makes it all the more important to study benchmark projects first hand to see how new programming, design iterations, and technological advancement affect our lives.

What is your definition of “innovation”?

“Very simply put, innovation is about staying relevant. We are in a time of unprecedented change. As a result, what may have helped an organization be successful in the past could potentially be the cause of their failure in the future. Companies need to adapt and evolve to meet the ever-changing needs of their constituents.” Stephen Shapiro

“Creativity is thinking of something new. Innovation is the implementation of something new.” Paul Sloane

“Anything that is new, useful, and surprising. That last criteria, surprising, tends to ‘surprise’ people because they usually don’t hear many people talk about it. For me, a great innovation are the simple ones that make you slap your forehead and say, ‘Gee, why didn’t I think of that?’” Drew Boyd

“Innovation is a dominant ideology of our era, embraced in America by Silicon Valley, Wall Street, and the Washington DC political elite. As the pursuit of innovation has inspired technologists and capitalists, it has also provoked critics who suspect that the peddlers of innovation radically overvalue innovation. What happens after innovation, they argue, is more important. Maintenance and repair, the building of infrastructures, the mundane labor that goes into sustaining functioning and efficient infrastructures, simply has more impact on people’s daily lives than the vast majority of technological innovations.”
Andrew Russell and Lee Vinsel.

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I have selected two contrasting hubs of innovation to visit this year. We will visit San Francisco and Silicon Valley for the Spring Domestic Conference and Switzerland for the Fall International Conference. During these visits, we will examine innovation and infrastructure from multiple perspectives, including digital design, urban design and architecture, and human-centered design.

There is great concern that innovation in the United States is waning, and that the country has entered a period of prolonged secular stagnation. While innovation across America has increased at a relatively slow pace since the mid-1970s, it has seen spectacular growth in the San Francisco Bay Area. Silicon Valley, situated in the San Francisco Bay Area, is renowned for its world class high-tech companies and thousands of growing startup companies. It is known as an “Innovation Hub,” a social community that fosters technological trends, innovation, and industry-specific insights. In comparison, Switzerland is regularly ranked as the world’s most innovative economy and leads much of the world’s significant new technological development, principally in building tech, life sciences, robotics, and infrastructure.

Our Bay Area tour will take us to the center of where it is all happening. We, of course, will have special access to numerous locations. We will witness the radical transformation of the city’s urban core and its new focus on the Mission Bay and Dogpatch areas. Lodging at the Portman Hyatt hotel in Embarcadero Center, our stay will be an homage to an area that was at the edge of innovation in its day.

This year we celebrate 50 years of COD Leadership, recognizing the past chairs of COD at The Exploratorium. This celebration will also feature the Member Slide Show where we get a peek into the exceptional work that our members are creating.

Spring Conference; Preliminary agenda: April 4-7th 2019

Preconference Symposium on Innovation: The Academy of Art University, San Francisco

San Francisco-The Embarcadero: Portman, EDDD, SWWM

San Francisco, Downtown: Pelli, Snohetta, Botta, Gang, Autodesk, Swiss Consul General, Pier 17

The Peninsula, aka Silicon Valley: Gehry, Foster, BIG, Aidlin Darling, ZGF

San Francisco, Mission Bay/Dog Patch: David Baker, LSM, Marcy Wong Donn Logan, SHOP

Switzerland is known for its superb infrastructure and richness of architectural gems. Innovative works by Le Corbusier, Herzog, and De Meuron peppering the country will be toured during our visit. We will also see work on the Novartis and Vitra Design Museum and École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne campuses. At the end of the week will be the opportunity to extend the tour to visit Peter Zumthor’s mystifying Therme Vals spa and other select gems of the Swiss Alps.

Fall Conference; Preliminary agenda: September 21-29th 2019, continuing September 29th- October 2nd

Basel: Vitra Museum, Novartis, Roche; Herzog and De Mueron, Piano, Hadid, Gehry, Christ & Gantenbein

Lausanne: EPFL, Jura Valley; Sanaa, Kuma, Le Corbusier, Jean and Bernard Tschumi, BIG, Perrault, RDR

Lucerne: Swiss Museum of Transport. Mt. Pilatus; Nouvel, Graber and Steiger, Gigon/Guyer, AFGH

Add on tour-

The Swiss Alps: Andermatt, Chur and Vals; Zumthor, Morphosis

We plan to start each conference with a symposium on innovation and maintenance to understand the key differences and the relevance to our constantly evolving world of design. As there is so much to see during our regional tours, these conferences will be primed by cross discipline symposiums examining context and the extent of innovation and maintenance.

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We are lining up several notable speakers to help provoke thought and provide insight. The tours will be led by architects and engineers familiar with the design aspirations and innovative achievements with each building. Each conference will also include presentations by planners involved with the developments.

I am fortunate to have worked with such wonderful and devoted team of conference chairs and team leaders during this past year. We started planning in January 2017 and I hope you can enjoy the tireless efforts of the terrific group.

San Francisco/Silicon Valley Conference planning team

Heather Young, AIA (Conference Chair)

Daniel Garber, FAIA

Karl Backus, FAIA

Cathy Simon, FAIA

Switzerland Conference planning team

Tiffany Melancon SIA Int’l Assoc. AIA (Co-Conference Chair)

Stefan Beiri Dipl. Architekt FH Int’l Assoc. AIA (Co-Conference Chair)

Jean-Luc Briguet, AIA

Brian Mandrier, Hauck and Associates- (Destination Management)

Deane Madsen, Associate AIA, is a writer and architectural photographer. He will capture the conferences to help convey the lessons learned to our knowledge community.

AIA National Conference 2019, Las Vegas. Awards Reception and Dinner Advisor

Windom Kimsey, FAIA

Our Committee on Design Advisory Group has been most supportive and generous in counsel. We always welcome new members to step up into leadership positions for this vital AIA Knowledge Community. <https://network.aia.org/committeedesign/home/advisorygroup>

As always, Susan Parrish and Lori Feinman from AIA have been invaluable in planning and keeping things on the rails. Brian Mandrier of Hauck and Associates is our international destination manager.

Cordially,



David B. Greenbaum, FAIA 2019 COD Chair
Vice President, SMITHGROUP

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Below are some relevant links to help begin to explore issues surrounding the debate explorations of innovation and maintenance.

<https://www.ideatovalue.com/inno/nickskillicorn/2016/03/innovation-15-experts-share-innovation-definition/>

<https://www.wiley.com/enus/Integrating+Innovation+in+Architecture%3A+Design%2C+Methods+and+Technology+for+Progressive+Practice+and+Research-p-9781119164821>

<https://www.doblin.com/ten-types>

https://books.google.com/books/about/Integrating_Innovation_in_Architecture.html?id=JlezDQAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=kp_read_button#v=onepage&q&f=false

<https://www.autodesk.com/redshift/most-innovative-architecture/>

<https://www.archdaily.com/773232/9-entrepreneurial-architects-who-developed-innovative-products-and-services>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/22/opinion/sunday/lets-get-excited-about-maintenance.html>

<http://themaintainers.org/>

<https://aeon.co/essays/innovation-is-overvalued-maintenance-often-matters-more>

https://placesjournal.org/article/maintenance-and-care/#.W_17PDWNzBY.mailto