WM | AIA

FALL
2025

NEWSLETTER

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT
AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS
MARIA CHAO AIA, CHAO DESIGNS PLLC

COVER STORY

MARIA CHAO AIA- CHAO DESIGNS PLLC

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT

This Amherst net-zero home is nestled on a sloped site landscaped with stone paths, terraced gardens and various rainwater collection features. The east facing screen porch coupled with the western exterior deck extend the living space of this 1,000-square-foot residence. The garage's south facing shed roof captures the sun's energy with a photovoltaic array; the house's north facing shed roof allows ample natural light to enter the main living spaces throughout the day.

A two-toned wood approach was the design concept for both the exterior and interior finishes: Yakisugi (shou sugi ban) siding was chosen for its inherent beauty and protection from the elements. Yaki means burnt or charred and sugi refers to the Japanese cedar that is traditionally used. The heat treatment improves the wood's resistance to rot, fire, insects, UV and dimensional changes.

The custom cabinetry was integrated with the plywood paneling to differentiate spaces and define storage zones. Black cabinetry and concrete countertops were chosen to echo the yakisugi siding.

General Contractor: Integrity Development & Construction, Inc.
All interior cabinetry: Boxco Studio
Photos: Jim Gipe / Pivot Media

DO YOU HAVE A COVER STORY?
EMAIL EDITOR@WMAIA.ORG

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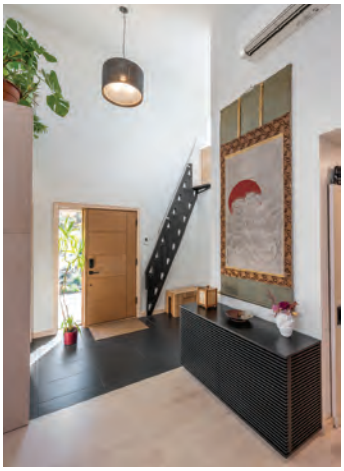
THE WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

The WMAIA Newsletter is published four times a year. It is circulated to all members, advertisers and subscribers. Please direct all newsletter correspondence to Rachael Chase, at editor@wmaia.org. Articles, photos, notices of events and other information are welcome. Opinions expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the WMAIA. The Editor reserves the right to reject or revise material as space and subjective opinion permit.

COVER STORY continued



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IN THE WORKS
KUTH RANIERI ARCHITECTS

Lobby - Marketing Rendering

Lobby - Photograph at the ribbon cutting

Building Exterior - Marketing Rendering

Building Exterior - Photograph at the ribbon cutting

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF FRANKLIN

Kuth Ranieri Architects, LLP recently completed construction administration of the 6,400 SF Children's Museum of Franklin in Franklin, MA, transforming a 1930s train-depot warehouse into a vibrant new home for the museum. Principal Elizabeth Ranieri FAIA, Project Manager Rob Marcalow AIA (WMAIA), and Project Architect Britt Lindberg FAIA collaborated with the museum, as well as with the property owner/contractor, Camford Property Group, to create a design honoring the building's past as a railside warehouse and former agricultural supply store. Bright colors and sculpted ceilings establish a color-coded wayfinding system for the museum's exhibits. Extensive insulation, air sealing, and new windows and doors enhance energy efficiency and reduce operating costs. The museum is now open to the public.

Rainbow wayfinding system (Photo: Kayla Jean Creative)

Train exhibit with views to the Franklin MBTA line (Photo: Kayla Jean Creative)

Museum founders test out a climber exhibit.

CONTACT US WITH YOUR "IN THE WORKS" PROJECTS
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AIA MASSACHUSETTS
LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY UPDATES

AIA Massachusetts (AIA MA) continues to advance advocacy and regulatory initiatives that strengthen the profession, protect the public, and support communities across the Commonwealth. Below is a summary of key issues we are engaged in this year.

INTERIOR DESIGN LICENSURE

In past legislative sessions AIA MA has opposed legislation aimed at elevating interior designers to a professional licensure status, with construction control of projects equivalent to that of architects. This session the Board's Government Affairs Committee (GAC) approached the Interior Design Associations of New England (IIDA) to address the language of their proposal, communicate our concerns, and help craft revisions. This effort produced revised language that is included in HB 4354 this session. The compromise language allows licensed interior designers to handle tenant fit-outs while reserving structural and core system authority to licensed architects. In July, AIA MA testified before the Joint Committee on Professional Licensure, emphasizing that a balanced licensure framework strengthens safety and collaboration.

INDEMNIFICATION REFORM

A recent Supreme Judicial Court decision has upended longstanding liability protections, exposing architects to potential claims long after projects are completed. This change could significantly increase risk and insurance costs, particularly for small, mid-sized, and minority- or women-owned firms. AIA MA, working with ACEC Massachusetts, is developing corrective legislation for the 2027–28 session. Firms are encouraged to closely review indemnity clauses and reinforce record-retention practices.

GREEN & HEALTHY SCHOOLS

The Green & Healthy Schools initiative—championed by WMAIA Board representative Dorrie Brooks AIA—has resulted in a 378-page report recommending improvements to air quality, sustainability, and health in K-12 facilities. Senator Joanne Comerford has asked AIA Massachusetts to help prioritize actionable steps. The AIA MA GAC is reviewing the report and will provide guidance on next steps. In parallel, a companion higher education bill recently received a hearing, with AIA MA testifying in support.

MSBA MASTER PLANNING RFP

At the request of the Massachusetts School Building Authority, AIA MA is developing a model Master Planning RFP to help municipalities assess their full portfolio of public buildings. Led by AIA MA Board member Kate Bubriski AIA, the architectural firm Arrowstreet is drafting the framework. While focused on schools, the tool will also apply to libraries, town halls, and other civic facilities, helping communities plan long-term investments.

HISTORIC DISTRICT LEGISLATION

AIA MA authored HD 4331/SB 1428 to update historic district statutes. We testified before the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government, distributed detailed supporting materials, and have met with Preservation Massachusetts to address concerns. This effort is long-term, focused on building understanding and refining the bill in collaboration with preservation partners and legislative sponsors.

ACCESSIBILITY: REVISING THE 30% RULE

The Massachusetts Architectural Access Board's Subcommittee on Regulations is reviewing the 30% accessibility rule. With input from an AIA MA-led working group, draft revisions raise financial triggers to reflect inflation, clarify exemptions, and establish a 120% building value cap to ensure significant projects trigger compliance. While public feedback has highlighted concerns, AIA MA remains confident that consensus reforms are achievable.

ARB MODERNIZATION

The Architectural Registration Board has proposed updates to licensure regulations, expanding pathways, aligning with NCARB standards, and streamlining reciprocity. AIA MA offered a letter of support for these changes.

CONCLUSION

AIA MA is committed to ensuring that architects' voices remain central to shaping policy and regulations. If are interested in participating in AIA MA's legislative advocacy work, you are encouraged to call in to the monthly GAC meetings or reach out to Lorin Starr to learn more about ways you can become more engaged.

For more AIA Massachusetts information, visit aiama.org or contact Executive Director John Nunnari at jnunnari@architects.org.

We are often called upon to nominate candidates for state boards and commissions. If you are interested in serving or would like to be more involved with AIA at the state or national level, let us know.

MOHAMED IBRAHIM AIA, PhD - ROME

These images were taken during a visit to Rome, Italy, in the spring of 2025.

They capture the exquisite level of artistry in geometric design, construction, decoration, and painting of the interior ceiling work that bears the signature of Roman Renaissance, Baroque, and Neoclassical artists between the 16th and 19th centuries.

Sant'Agnese Church in Piazza Navona
Richly adorned dome, top lantern, perimeter windows, and elaborate colorful fresco, mounted on grand arches with detailed carvings and gilded mouldings.
Ceiling art by Ciro Ferri and Sebastiano Corbellini – 17th Century.

Galleria delle carte geografiche (Gallery of Maps), Papal Palaces / Vatican Museums
Barrel-vaulted ceiling, fresco art panels within protruding gilded mouldings. The art depicts religious scenes, historical events, and miracles.
Ceiling art by Italian and Flemish artists under the direction of Ignazio Danti – 16th Century

Sala di Costantino (Hall of Constantine), Raphael Rooms, Papal Palaces / Vatican Museums
Intersected vaulted ceiling with a central rectangular focus, golden illuminations of accent mouldings, and fresco art, describing the triumph of Christianity under Emperor Constantine the Great.
Ceiling art composed by Raphael and painted by succeeding artists from the School of Raphael including Giulio Romano and Gianfrancesco Penni – 16th Century.

Stanza dell'Incendio del Borgo (Room of the Fire in the Borgo), Raphael Rooms, Papal Palaces / Vatican Museums
Intersected vaulted ceiling with a central node and four sectional panels with ornately detailed framing borders. The four sections host oval medallions of fresco, representing figures and personifications symbolizing Cardinal theological virtues.
Ceiling art by Pietro Vannucci - 16th Century

CARYN BRAUSE FAIA - IRELAND

I was fortunate to travel to Ireland this past June, with support from the Marion and Jasper Whiting Foundation. I visited five campuses in Dublin, Cork, and Limerick, each of which feature signature projects by internationally acclaimed architecture firms. I was impressed by the ways that projects integrated with these campuses' historical and cultural settings, in sometimes surprising ways. I especially marveled at the way that Irish architects handle mass. I was also struck by the efforts to bring people into contact with nature, from the re-wilding of campuses through interstitial biodiversity zones, to bridges that cross the many waterways.

Travel tip - since all of the Irish campuses are registered as Failte Ireland accommodation during the summer, you can try out a basic stay in the residence halls, and get a full Irish breakfast at the dining hall to fuel your archi-touring.

The Living Bridge over the River Shannon
University of Limerick, 2007, Wilkinson Eyre Architects

UL Medical School
University of Limerick, 2013, Grafton Architects

UCC Student Hub
Cork, 2021, O'Donnell + Tuomey

Berkeley Library
Trinity College, 1967, Ahrends, Burton, and Koralek

Re-wilding at the Front Gate
Trinity College Dublin

ARCHI-TRAVEL

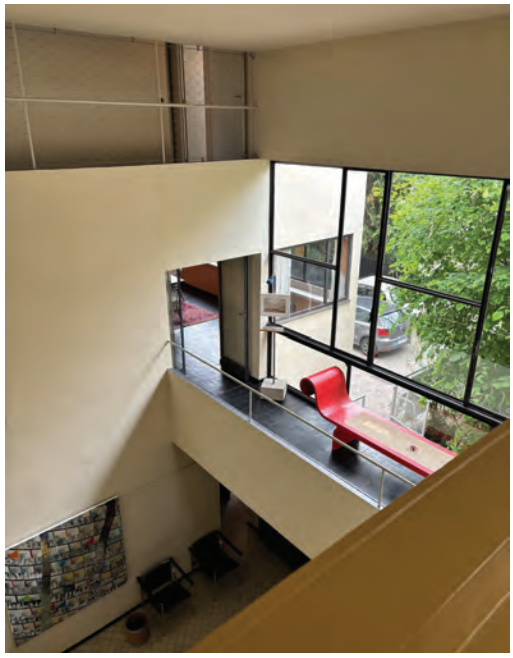
LORIN STARR - PARIS

When in Paris I highly recommend a visit to Le Corbusier's apartment and studio. Located near the Bois de Boulogne and the Stade Roland Garrous, the studio flat occupies the top two floors of a building designed between 1931 and 1934 by Le Corbusier and his cousin Pierre Jeanneret. It was the first residential building with a glass façade and is now listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Also, not too far, is Corbusier's Maison La Roche, also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Both sites are run by the Le Corbusier Foundation: www.fondationlecorbusier.fr

Travel tip - If you go, consider getting there via the 72 bus, which winds its way through many of Paris' monuments and neighborhoods, providing an excellent tour of the city for the price of a bus ticket!

Top three photos: Le Corbusier's Apartment & Studio

Bottom two photos: Le Corbusier's Maison la Roche



DO YOU HAVE NEWS OR ARCHITECTURAL TRAVEL PHOTOS TO SHARE WITH THE WMAIA COMMUNITY?
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SPOTLIGHT: EMERGING PROFESSIONAL

FREYA JOHNSEN AIA

Freya Johnsen AIA is the first UMass Amherst student to successfully complete **all** requirements for licensure while earning her Master of Architecture degree through UMass's Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure (IPAL) program. A huge undertaking!

Freya was recognized at the Department of Architecture's graduation celebration by Aelan Tierney AIA, Chair of the Massachusetts Board of Registration of Architects.

She was only 23 years old when she received her license from the board, making her one of the youngest architects in the United States.

Freya was president of the Women in Architecture group at UMass, and was Director of UMass's Freedom by Design initiative.

She is currently an architect with the Dennis Group (primarily focussing on food safe, sanitary, and industrial design).

Photo: Freya Johnsen AIA with Steve Schreiber FAIA, chair of Department of Architecture (credit: Johnsen family)

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ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS AND LAND USE

I am a practicing architect working for Kuhn Riddle Architects and Designers. Land use policy has been a longstanding interest of mine since my undergraduate coursework in Landscape Architecture at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. I have been an elected member of the South Hadley Planning Board since 2016, serving as Chair from 2021 through 2023.

In the Spring of 2023, the South Hadley Planning Board sent an ADU bylaw to Town Meeting where it was approved. At the time, the ADU bylaw we crafted was relatively progressive from a housing policy standpoint in that it allowed ADUs - both attached and detached – to be permitted by site plan approval without a Special Permit. However, the Affordable Homes Act (AHA), when it went into effect earlier this year, went a step further by establishing ADUs as a protected use in the Dover Amendment, allowing for by-right use in all single-family residential zones and, critically, allowing ADUs without owner-occupancy requirements.

The lack of an owner occupancy requirement creates a pathway for speculative development of ADUs in a way that was not previously available. In essence, every single-family lot is now a two-family lot, regardless of lot size and frontage.

Given the relatively recent passage of the Affordable Homes Act, our Planning Board is only just beginning to see ADU applications for site plan approval. However, even with the limited data set we have, we can see that site design and layout will play a critical role in how the very welcome new housing will be integrated into existing single-family residential neighborhoods.

Further, the "on-the-ground" implementation of the AHA highlights the **policy challenges associated with responding to the need for new housing in way that is sustainable and sensitive to context.**

Potential site plan showing primary residences with accessory dwelling units in rear

NORTH ADAMS PARTNERSHIP IN NORTH ADAMS MA IS SPONSORING AN ADU DESIGN CHALLENGE

This design challenge asks local students, architects, and builders to imagine ADUs that would benefit North Adams residents, specifically seniors, making it possible for them to downsize without having to leave their community.

Submissions will be judged based on: Universal Design, Sustainability & Resilience, Innovation & Aesthetics, and Cost Effectiveness.The top three entries will each receive $2500.

For more information and for a call for entries visit **northadamsadu.org** **Submissions due October 15**

Join AIA New Hampshire as the host of the 2025 New England Architecture Awards

Friday, October 24, 2025
5:30 PM 9:00 PM
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DETAILED INFORMATION ON PROGRAMS CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE wmaia.org

EMERGING PROFESSIONALS SERIES: ARCHITECTS' OFFICE HOURS

All are Noon – 1 pm | Zoom

Friday October 17 – Public Bidding

Friday November 21 – Sustainability & Earth Friendly Materials

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WMAIA COTE PRESENTS

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) – Impact, Opportunities and Constraints

Wednesday October 8| 4:00-5:30PM| ZOOM |1.5 HSW

The WMAIA COTE Committee is sponsored by:

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UMASS BCT PROGRAMS

ALL are Hybrid – ZOOM / in person, 170 Design Building, UMass

Sustainable Mass Timber Construction

Monday October 6| 4:00-5:15PM |*1 HSW*

Building Resilience: A Woman's Perspective on Building Pretty Good Homes

Monday November 3| 4:00-5:15PM|*1 HSW*

The Fundamentals and Future of Panelized Construction

Monday November 24| 4:00-5:15PM |*1 HSW*

WMAIA FILM SERIES

Inventing Cornell Tech: The Vision

Wednesday October 15| 6:30 | ZOOM |1 LU

Cornell Tech: Sustainability - The Architecture and Art of Cornell Tech

Wednesday October 29| 6:30 | ZOOM |1 LU

Cornell Tech: The Realization

Wednesday November 12| 6:30 | ZOOM |1 LU

Save the Date for this year's **ANNUAL MEETING** to be held Wednesday, December 10th 5PM at 33 Hawley Street, Northampton (Northampton Community Arts Trust)

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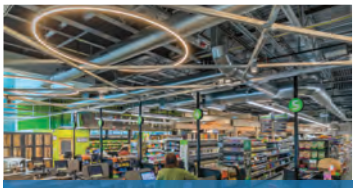

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— *Paul Lewandowski,*
Architect, Paul Designs Project

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IN MEMORIAM
LYNN POSNER RICE

Lynn Rice passed away at her home, surrounded by family, on August 20, 2025. Here is a personal remembrance from her friend and colleague, Mary Yun.

We say farewell to our colleague, Lynn Rice, whose fight with cancer ended on her own terms, quietly and peacefully with dignity, alongside her beloved family.

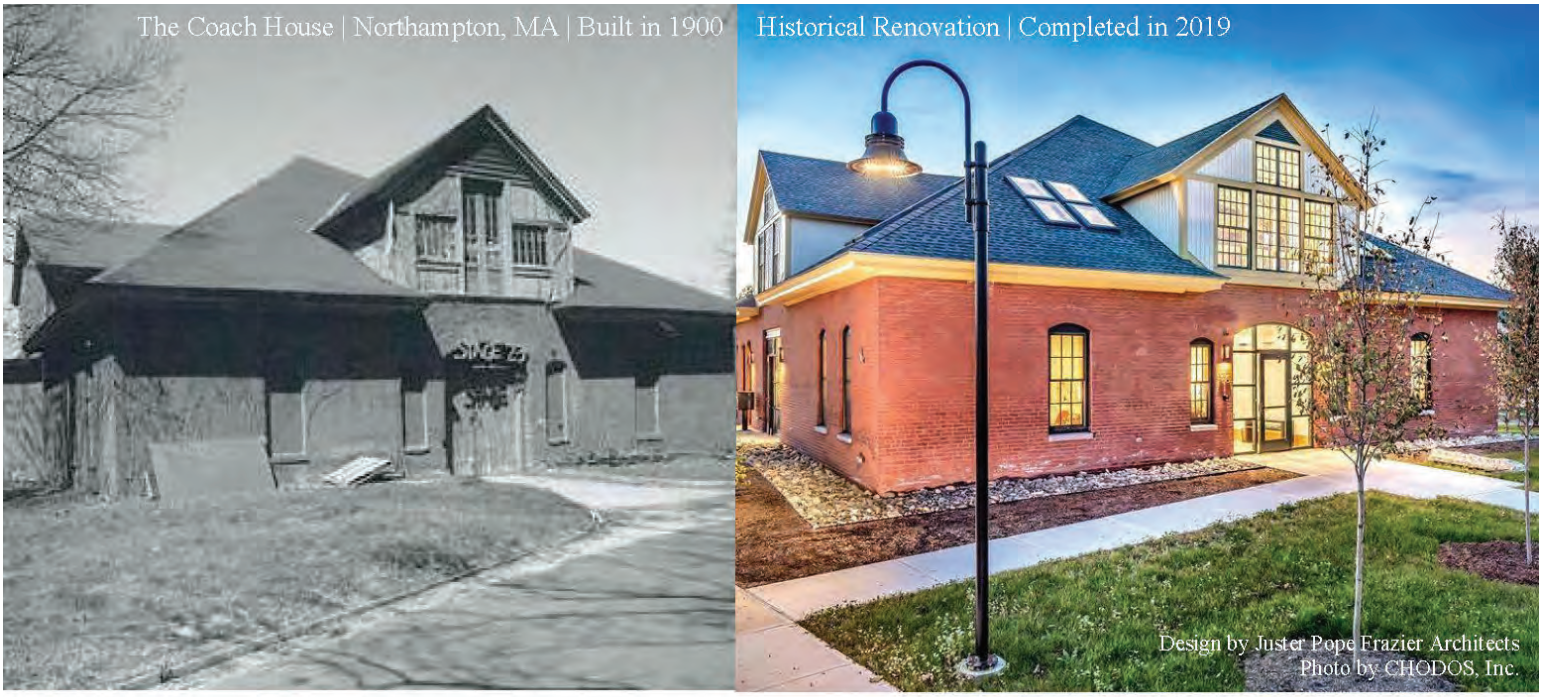
I say farewell to my architectural partner of 10 years and a friend for many more. Lynn's love of architecture and her practice was an extension of her love of art and people.

Steadfast and constant, always patient and kind, always willing to listen, Lynn easily garnered positive relationships with her clients and colleagues alike. Those relationships fueled her craft and letting go of her practice was difficult. She sustained herself with the love of family and friends, always with grace.

Lynn, we will miss you.

– Mary Yun

Lynn's full obituary is available on legacy.com



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WMAIA COMMUNITY FALL 2025

YOUR AIA MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Your 2026 Renewal Notice will be sent shortly and you will see a change in the way your dues are presented.

Starting this year, your AIA Massachusetts dues will be listed separately—a positive change that aligns with standard practices across other AIA chapters (previously we made these payments internally between the chapters).

This update offers greater transparency and helps highlight how your dues directly support impactful advocacy and professional programming at the state level.

We have reduced our local dues accordingly ensuring that your overall cost remains virtually the same.

A note for Emeritus members…beginning this year we are asking our Emeritus members to help support the chapter with an annual $50 newsletter subscription fee.

Check **WMAIA enews** to see more information about upcoming WMAIA programming!

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. Be sure we have your correct email address! If you are not receiving this information, please contact director@wmaia.org