
2007
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT DATA



PROJECT DATA

14-07

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name	L.A. Design Center	Location	South Los Angeles, CA
Owner	Francisco and Alba Pinedo		
Project Use(s)	Furniture Showrooms, Community Gallery, Public Event Spaces (interior and exterior)		
Project Size	80,000 sf interior; 20,000 sf exterior	Total Development Cost	\$3 million (including land)
Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate)	None at this time officially allocated		
Date Initiated	January 2002	Percent Completed by December 1, 2006	98%
Project Completion Date (if appropriate)	March 2003		
Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates	March 2003 (facility opens); March 2004 (lobby + reception completed); February 2005 (gallery opens)		
Application submitted by:	February 2005 (gallery opens)		
Name	Alice Kimm, AIA	Title	Principal
Organization	John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects		
Address	701 E. Third Street #300	City/State/Zip	Los Angeles, CA 90013
Telephone	(213) 253-4740	Fax	(213) 253-4760
E-mail	akimm@jfak.net	Weekend Contact Number (for notification):	(213) 700-4740

Key Participants (Attach an additional sheet if needed)

Organization	Key Participant	Telephone/e-mail
Public Agencies	City of L.A., Department of Cultural Affairs	Margie Reese (former General Manager) (213) 202-5500
Architect/Designer	John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects	Alice Kimm (213) 253-4740
Developer	Francisco and Alba Pinedo	Francisco Pinedo (323) 778-8612
Professional Consultant	Genesis L.A.	Renata Simril, Kelli Bernard (both are no longer with Genesis L.A. - see Perspectives for current contact information)
Community Group	City of L.A., Office of Councilmember Bernard Parks	David Roberts (213) 473-2378
Other	Frances Anderton, Journalist and Producer, KCRW 89.9 FM, New York Times, dwell (310) 314-4659	

Please indicate how you learned of the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. (Check all that apply).

- Direct Mailing Magazine Advertisement Previous RBA entrant
 Professional Organization Online Notice Previous Selection Committee member
 Bruner/Loeb Forum Other (please specify) _____

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, and to post on the Bruner Foundation web sites, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature _____

2007
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
ABSTRACT



ABSTRACT

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name L.A. Design Center

Address 5955 S. Western Avenue

City/State/Zip Los Angeles, California 90047

1. Give a brief overview of the project, including major project goals.

Francisco (Cisco) and Alba Pinedo, owners of the L.A. Design Center, immigrated to the U.S. as teenagers and settled in South Central Los Angeles (now called South L.A.) with their families. Like many from the neighborhood, Cisco soon took a job at a local furniture manufacturer. That early experience kindled a passion for furniture and design; his moonlighting became a garage-based business, and 14 years later is Cisco Brothers, a nationally recognized custom furniture shop employing 200 family members, friends, and members of the local community. Cisco Brothers' manufacturing plant is walking distance from Cisco's boyhood home.

When Cisco Brothers became ready to open a furniture design showroom in Los Angeles, the Pinedos' decision to remain close to their manufacturing base in South L.A. seemed a logical one for many reasons, not the least being that South L.A. was where their hearts lay. Yet, advisers told them otherwise: While South L.A. is home to the country's second largest furniture manufacturing district, it had no landmark "design district" or showroom district. Why? Simply put, South L.A. was considered dangerous, blighted, a no-man's land. Its main claim to fame was as the site of the 1994 civil disturbances sparked by the Rodney King beating. Manufacturers who could afford it therefore opted to export the fruits of their labor to tonier - read "safer" - parts of the city. Most of the local manufacturers, however, could not afford that, and so did not have any venue to display their wares at all.

But Cisco and Alba saw empty warehouses on every corner and knew they were looking at lost opportunity. They envisioned a major design center, housing showrooms for local manufacturers, as well as space for community activities - art galleries, performance and meeting spaces, restaurants - all amenities common to high income areas. The Pinedos felt they had a vision that was not only attainable but necessary if this part of the City were to truly succeed in the long term. Cisco and Alba knew from personal experience the transformative power of good design - for instance, how a low-wage production job could lead to award-winning industrial design skills - and knew that they owed it to their own past and to their community to celebrate design in the very neighborhood that produced it. The L.A. Design Center is the first step towards realizing this vision. The key goals? To create showroom space for local manufacturers; to spur investment and job growth in the community; and to positively change the identity of the neighborhood.

2. Why does the project merit the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.)

This project strongly merits the Rudy Bruner Award for several important reasons:

First, the L.A. Design Center is the result of a unique and unselfish vision that successfully revitalizes an area of Los Angeles' urban landscape traditionally considered dangerous, blighted, and uninviting. The Pinedos' vision, inspired by a genuine desire to give back to a community that they felt had nurtured them and helped shape them as individuals and business leaders, encompasses much more than the primary programmatic function of establishing a much-needed furniture district in a place that is home to the second largest furniture manufacturing hub in the United States. It includes their desire to provide a place where members of their extended community can dream, create, and flourish. This has taken the form of a flexible community facility that invites artists, activists, and even the curious passerby to make use of its spaces in any way they can but imagine. This is an invaluable gift: a place to call their own, that establishes an identity, that fosters a strong pride of place. On the other hand, this development has revitalized a downtrodden neighborhood, and is now spurring more investment and growth in the area. This will lead to more jobs, and an ever-strengthening sense of empowerment for those who live and work there. That a small development such as this can accomplish so much is remarkable.

Second, this project has created a new model for urban development that exposes the underlying beauty of existing run-down fabric, while allowing the creation of a rich new identity. It is the use of existing building stock in innovative, surprising, and fresh ways that allows the Center to embrace and become a part of the neighborhood without creating an intimidating, or alienating, environment. Whereas traditional developments would tear down existing fabric, or hide it under superficial material treatment, this design utilizes a palette of materials transparently layered on top of the existing ones, which serves to enhance the qualities of the existing. The new materials are there to reveal, not to hide, and it is this respectful attitude towards the neighboring community and urban context that renders the project so physically successful. Its design is handled skillfully, with beauty not just in the larger scale but also in the details, which celebrates the transformative power of good design and craftsmanship. It is important to note that the architects worked closely with Cisco's and Alba's own workers to build many elements of the project.

Finally, the Design Center is also unusual in its physical openness to the surrounding context, which is analogous to the Pinedos' desire to embrace the community. In an environment that values security above many other things, and especially in a tough urban neighborhood such as South L.A., it is very unusual, disconcerting even, to find a facility that is so open and welcoming. During business hours, even the so-called "security" gates are left wide open, so that pedestrians and the curious passerby, as well as those who are doing business at the Center, can wander in. This openness has had many positive effects, and renders the Design Center a strong role model for other developments. Proof of the success of this openness? It is illuminating that, in a neighborhood rife with vandalism, where almost every available surface is covered in graffiti, the Design Center remains untouched. By showing respect and trust for the neighborhood and its inhabitants, the Center and its inhabitants have, in turn, gained theirs. If further development is given its opportunity, then this effect will reach ever further into the surrounding neighborhood.

PROJECT DATA

14-07

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name	L.A. Design Center	Location	South Los Angeles, CA
Owner	Francisco and Alba Pinedo		
Project Use(s)	Furniture Showrooms, Community Gallery, Public Event Spaces (interior and exterior)		
Project Size	80,000 sf interior; 20,000 sf exterior	Total Development Cost	\$3 million (including land)
Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate)	None at this time officially allocated		
Date Initiated	January 2002	Percent Completed by December 1, 2006	98%
Project Completion Date (if appropriate)	March 2003		
Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates	March 2003 (facility opens); March 2004 (lobby + reception completed); February 2005 (gallery opens)		
Application submitted by:	February 2005 (gallery opens)		
Name	Alice Kimm, AIA	Title	Principal
Organization	John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects		
Address	701 E. Third Street #300	City/State/Zip	Los Angeles, CA 90013
Telephone (213)	253-4740	Fax (213)	253-4760
E-mail	akimm@jfak.net	Weekend Contact Number (for notification):	(213) 700-4740

Key Participants (Attach an additional sheet if needed)

Organization	Key Participant	Telephone/e-mail
Public Agencies	City of L.A., Department of Cultural Affairs	Margie Reese (former General Manager) (213) 202-5500
Architect/Designer	John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects	Alice Kimm (213) 253-4740
Developer	Francisco and Alba Pinedo	Francisco Pinedo (323) 778-8612
Professional Consultant	Genesis L.A.	Renata Simril, Kelli Bernard (both are no longer with Genesis L.A. - see Perspectives for current contact information)
Community Group	City of L.A., Office of Councilmember Bernard Parks	David Roberts (213) 473-2378
Other	Frances Anderton, Journalist and Producer, KCRW 89.9 FM, New York Times, dwell (310) 314-4659	

Please indicate how you learned of the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. (Check all that apply).

Direct Mailing Magazine Advertisement Previous RBA entrant
 Professional Online Notice Previous Selection Committee member
 Organization Bruner/Loeb Forum Other (please specify) _____

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, and to post on the Bruner Foundation web sites, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature _____

ABSTRACT

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name L.A. Design Center

Address 5955 S. Western Avenue

City/State/Zip Los Angeles, California 90047

1. Give a brief overview of the project, including major project goals.

Francisco (Cisco) and Alba Pinedo, owners of the L.A. Design Center, immigrated to the U.S. as teenagers and settled in South Central Los Angeles (now called South L.A.) with their families. Like many from the neighborhood, Cisco soon took a job at a local furniture manufacturer. That early experience kindled a passion for furniture and design; his moonlighting became a garage-based business, and 14 years later is Cisco Brothers, a nationally recognized custom furniture shop employing 200 family members, friends, and members of the local community. Cisco Brothers' manufacturing plant is walking distance from Cisco's boyhood home.

When Cisco Brothers became ready to open a furniture design showroom in Los Angeles, the Pinedos' decision to remain close to their manufacturing base in South L.A. seemed a logical one for many reasons, not the least being that South L.A. was where their hearts lay. Yet, advisers told them otherwise: While South L.A. is home to the country's second largest furniture manufacturing district, it had no landmark "design district" or showroom district. Why? Simply put, South L.A. was considered dangerous, blighted, a no-man's land. Its main claim to fame was as the site of the 1994 civil disturbances sparked by the Rodney King beating. Manufacturers who could afford it therefore opted to export the fruits of their labor to tonier - read "safer" - parts of the city. Most of the local manufacturers, however, could not afford that, and so did not have any venue to display their wares at all.

But Cisco and Alba saw empty warehouses on every corner and knew they were looking at lost opportunity. They envisioned a major design center, housing showrooms for local manufacturers, as well as space for community activities - art galleries, performance and meeting spaces, restaurants - all amenities common to high income areas. The Pinedos felt they had a vision that was not only attainable but necessary if this part of the City were to truly succeed in the long term. Cisco and Alba knew from personal experience the transformative power of good design - for instance, how a low-wage production job could lead to award-winning industrial design skills - and knew that they owed it to their own past and to their community to celebrate design in the very neighborhood that produced it. The L.A. Design Center is the first step towards realizing this vision. The key goals? To create showroom space for local manufacturers; to spur investment and job growth in the community; and to positively change the identity of the neighborhood.

Why does the project merit the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.)

This project strongly merits the Rudy Bruner Award for several important reasons:

First, the L.A. Design Center is the result of a unique and unselfish vision that successfully revitalizes an area of Los Angeles' urban landscape traditionally considered dangerous, blighted, and uninviting. The Pinedos' vision, inspired by a genuine desire to give back to a community that they felt had nurtured them and helped shape them as individuals and business leaders, encompasses much more than the primary programmatic function of establishing a much-needed furniture district in a place that is home to the second largest furniture manufacturing hub in the United States. It includes their desire to provide a place where members of their extended community can dream, create, and flourish. This has taken the form of a flexible community facility that invites artists, activists, and even the curious passerby to make use of its spaces in any way they can but imagine. This is an invaluable gift: a place to call their own, that establishes an identity, that fosters a strong pride of place. On the other hand, this development has revitalized a downtrodden neighborhood, and is now spurring more investment and growth in the area. This will lead to more jobs, and an ever-strengthening sense of empowerment for those who live and work there. That a small development such as this can accomplish so much is remarkable.

Second, this project has created a new model for urban development that exposes the underlying beauty of existing run-down fabric, while allowing the creation of a rich new identity. It is the use of existing building stock in innovative, surprising, and fresh ways that allows the Center to embrace and become a part of the neighborhood without creating an intimidating, or alienating, environment. Whereas traditional developments would tear down existing fabric, or hide it under superficial material treatment, this design utilizes a palette of materials transparently layered on top of the existing ones, which serves to enhance the qualities of the existing. The new materials are there to reveal, not to hide, and it is this respectful attitude towards the neighboring community and urban context that renders the project so physically successful. Its design is handled skillfully, with beauty not just in the larger scale but also in the details, which celebrates the transformative power of good design and craftsmanship. It is important to note that the architects worked closely with Cisco's and Alba's own workers to build many elements of the project.

Finally, the Design Center is also unusual in its physical openness to the surrounding context, which is analogous to the Pinedos' desire to embrace the community. In an environment that values security above many other things, and especially in a tough urban neighborhood such as South L.A., it is very unusual, disconcerting even, to find a facility that is so open and welcoming. During business hours, even the so-called "security" gates are left wide open, so that pedestrians and the curious passerby, as well as those who are doing business at the Center, can wander in. This openness has had many positive effects, and renders the Design Center a strong role model for other developments. Proof of the success of this openness? It is illuminating that, in a neighborhood rife with vandalism, where almost every available surface is covered in graffiti, the Design Center remains untouched. By showing respect and trust for the neighborhood and its inhabitants, the Center and its inhabitants have, in turn, gained theirs. If further development is given its opportunity, then this effect will reach ever further into the surrounding neighborhood.

2007
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT DESCRIPTION



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

1. How has the project impacted the local community?

South Central Los Angeles is nationally recognized – for crime, poverty, illiteracy, and a host of other social and economic ills. The stigma associated with the neighborhood is so powerful that the City recently voted to change its name to "South L.A.," hoping that a name change would motivate a sea change in the attitudes, behaviors, and wrenching downward spiral of its citizenry.

The L.A. Design Center is a surprise, an understated yet fiercely proud symbol of hope. Its unexpectedness and simultaneous *approachability* and *openness* literally stops drivers using its fronting Avenue as a thoroughfare to elsewhere. Neighbors wander in to examine the life breathed into the formerly derelict warehouses, marveling that one of their own was responsible for the resuscitation. Their pride is obvious, their attendance at art openings held in the Center's public gallery and at performances held in the Center's flexible event spaces a testament to their acceptance and love of this new environment, their sense of belonging to the space, and of the space belonging to them. This pride transcends generational lines: While local adults attend events and young professionals spontaneously propose future projects and additional resources, the neighborhood's youths abstain from one of their regular pastimes - vandalism. Most of the other buildings and surfaces surrounding the L.A. Design Center are covered with graffiti; the Design Center, by contrast, remains untagged. Because the L.A. Design Center is so clearly the manifestation of a great respect for the neighborhood and its inhabitants, the youths and all others who reside in South L.A. return that respect, and in very tangible ways.

More specifically: First, by opening the Center in this neighborhood, many jobs have been either preserved or created, and any future development will open the door to many hundreds more job opportunities. Second, by creating a forum for a multitude of private, public, and community activities to take place at all times, neighborhood safety has been increased. Third, the Design Center gives a voice to the under-recognized but crucial furniture industry whose *manufacturing* bases are located in South L.A., but who have never had an affordable venue in which to *showcase* their products, thereby increasing revenue for themselves and creating a growing tax base for the neighborhood at large.

2. Describe the underlying values of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project?

The values that the L.A. Design Center project have sought to illuminate and sustain are ones that grew out of the Pinedos' unselfish vision for this development. Because a desire to give back to the community that helped to shape them as individuals was the impetus for the project, and because the Pinedos have always believed that design is a powerful tool in shaping one's environment and therefore one's life, the values that underlie the project and that the project's success has nurtured include the following:

- respect for community;
- respect for craftsmanship;
- neighborhood pride of place;
- nurturing of the body of creative talent that resides locally but that does not possess a voice;
- belief in the value of design not only as a source of beauty but as a transformative and empowering tool.

The trade-offs required to implement the project include the following:

First, due to the need to make the site safe as a place of work and communal activity, the complete physical openness to the surrounding neighborhood that was desired by the Pinedos had to be re-interpreted through skillful design. The challenge, then, was to find a way to secure the site while simultaneously allowing it to welcome the community inside. The design achieves this through the use of a sliding gate that maintains complete transparency, and the simultaneous use of landscape elements - planting such as cactii, for instance - that are both beautiful and vandal-resistant. Both the form of the gate as well as its materiality contribute to its successful resolution of this challenge. The gate is composed of a perforated industrial-strength metal, and its halves come together much like two hands clasping. During business hours, the gates are left completely open.

Second, because of the understandable skepticism with which the Pinedos' vision was greeted by the City and other potential sources of aid, a "wait and see" attitude resulted by which the Pinedos were essentially asked to prove the success of their first phase, in order to assure future assistance in developing their proposed master plan in its entirety. This meant, as outlined on the following page, that funding came entirely from the Pinedos and their business. This resulted in several trade-offs:

-The completed scope of the L.A. Design Center is not as large as originally envisioned, because it was not possible to acquire the additional lands that would have made it possible to accomplish more. In addition, ironically because of the Center's success, surrounding property prices have risen, so land acquisition for any future development will be more difficult.

-Again, due to limited resources, some of the construction had to be executed by the Pinedos' own employees, who are not trained as construction workers. While this generated positive effects in terms of worker pride and enhanced skills training, the resultant time frame required to complete the project was longer than originally anticipated, resulting in cost overruns.

-There was no provision made - due to inavailability of funds - for advertising and marketing the project. While the Design Center has garnered a lot of publicity due to its success in reaching out to the local community, its actual potential is far greater and has yet to be tapped.

-Because of the multitude of pressures put on all involved parties with respect to completing Phase I, there was not the ability to take the time to fully examine the needs of the Design Center as an operational facility. Operating costs and staffing needs were not considered; rather, there was a "wing it" philosophy. There were no trained personnel or management consultant the Pinedos could turn to. The L.A. Design Center has been run almost entirely by Cisco Brothers employees, with the exception of eight new jobs that were created as a result of the project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.

The LA Design Center is an owner-driven vision. Scouting real estate, procuring funding, navigating city and state regulations and permits, hiring an architect, and leasing the resulting showroom space were accomplished by Cisco and Alba Pinedo.

Cisco's and Alba's knowledge of the community coupled with a strong faith in their vision, a faith in the power of design to transform lives, and their ability to leverage the resources of their own business contacts, enabled the Center to become a realized space.

The political and banking communities were hesitant to participate in the development of Phase I, as the stigmas attached to the neighborhood did not invite confidence in the project's potential. The community itself applauded the effort, lined up to work on the construction, and evinced great surprise that a "developer" would risk so much and would show such respect to the existing context, using design to reveal the warehouses' and the community's history and inner strengths.

However, as a traditionally powerless constituency, the community was not able to provide financial support or to actually affect the course of development of Phase I of the project.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.

The project was funded entirely with private monies – the owner's personal funds in the form of cash and personally guaranteed credit lines, as well as loans secured through existing financial relationships between the owner's core business (the furniture company) and the company's bank, Merrill Lynch. Excluding land acquisition, the project cost \$1.5 million. With 80,000 square feet of interior facilities and 20,000 square feet of courtyard and external use space, this works out to \$15.00 per square foot.

When Cisco and Alba envisioned a "design center" and determined to build it, they then looked to their existing business (Cisco Brothers) to be the Design Center's first tenant. As the anchor for the LA Design Center, Cisco Brothers both served as a model for subsequent tenants and provided the leverage that persuaded Merrill Lynch to alter their traditional investment model and help fund the Center's first phase of development.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings?

An extraordinary vision shaped the LA Design Center and brought it to life. Cisco and Alba Pinedo were motivated by a desire to revitalize and give back to the community in which they had come of age. Despite the potential pitfalls of investing in South LA, they committed themselves to realizing their vision. That they had to accomplish it with no external financial or labor investment is testament to the skepticism and distrust with which outsiders view South LA.

The Pinedos' unique vision has given rise to a unique development. It is unique in that there is nothing else like it in the entire City. It is unique in that it is located in a neighborhood traditionally felt to be beyond salvage. It is unique in that it reveals the underlying beauty and strength of existing structures and urban fabric; it does not cover it up or try to change it as many contemporary urban redevelopment projects do. It is unique in that, in the middle of one of the world's most dangerous neighborhoods, it is directly connected to the street and carves out an urban courtyard that is used in many different ways. Truly, it is unique in that it succeeds on all of these levels, and that it addresses multiple urban issues including revitalization of underutilized fabric; repair of blighted areas; the need for open spaces in our cities; neighborhood identity; street frontage that is porous rather than fortress-like; community pride; and safety. (To clarify the final issue, that of safety, the continual use of the Design Center for activities ranging from art openings to cultural performances to meetings between local community activists means that the facility is being used during day and night and on weekends, which increases neighborhood safety.) The development also recognizes the fundamental truth that, in order to truly succeed as an urban center, a facility must provide certain types of amenities, including but not limited to access to cultural venues, recreational spaces, and spaces of gathering and dialogue.

The project can serve as a powerful model for other urban developments in the following ways:

First, it can affect change in the traditionally self-protective attitude of those responsible for urban development. The LA Design Center development shows that optimism, and a respect for one's surroundings, will be rewarded in turn.

Second, the project can serve as a model of how existing building stock and urban fabric can be rejuvenated without destroying their underlying beauty and strength.

Third, the LA Design Center shows that openness is a desirable aspect of any urban development, and fosters trust.

Fourth, it shows that the notion of *flexibility* can be leveraged into a full utilization of space, thereby increasing revenue (both literal and metaphorical) and that urban developments such as the LA Design Center have the potential for creating a valuable - and viable - forum for community activism and activity.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

1. How has the project impacted the local community?

South Central Los Angeles is nationally recognized – for crime, poverty, illiteracy, and a host of other social and economic ills. The stigma associated with the neighborhood is so powerful that the City recently voted to change its name to “South L.A.,” hoping that a name change would motivate a sea change in the attitudes, behaviors, and wrenching downward spiral of its citizenry.

The L.A. Design Center is a surprise, an understated yet fiercely proud symbol of hope. Its unexpectedness and simultaneous *approachability* and *openness* literally stops drivers using its fronting Avenue as a thoroughfare to elsewhere. Neighbors wander in to examine the life breathed into the formerly derelict warehouses, marveling that one of their own was responsible for the resuscitation. Their pride is obvious, their attendance at art openings held in the Center’s public gallery and at performances held in the Center’s flexible event spaces a testament to their acceptance and love of this new environment, their sense of belonging to the space, and of the space belonging to them. This pride transcends generational lines: While local adults attend events and young professionals spontaneously propose future projects and additional resources, the neighborhood’s youths abstain from one of their regular pastimes - vandalism. Most of the other buildings and surfaces surrounding the L.A. Design Center are covered with graffiti; the Design Center, by contrast, remains untagged. Because the L.A. Design Center is so clearly the manifestation of a great respect for the neighborhood and its inhabitants, the youths and all others who reside in South L.A. return that respect, and in very tangible ways.

More specifically: First, by opening the Center in this neighborhood, many jobs have been either preserved or created, and any future development will open the door to many hundreds more job opportunities. Second, by creating a forum for a multitude of private, public, and community activities to take place at all times, neighborhood safety has been increased. Third, the Design Center gives a voice to the under-recognized but crucial furniture industry whose *manufacturing* bases are located in South L.A., but who have never had an affordable venue in which to *showcase* their products, thereby increasing revenue for themselves and creating a growing tax base for the neighborhood at large.

2. Describe the underlying values of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project?

The values that the L.A. Design Center project have sought to illuminate and sustain are ones that grew out of the Pinedos’ unselfish vision for this development. Because a desire to give back to the community that helped to shape them as individuals was the impetus for the project, and because the Pinedos have always believed that design is a powerful tool in shaping one’s environment and therefore one’s life, the values that underlie the project and that the project’s success has nurtured include the following:

- respect for community;
- respect for craftsmanship;
- neighborhood pride of place;
- nurturing of the body of creative talent that resides locally but that does not possess a voice;
- belief in the value of design not only as a source of beauty but as a transformative and empowering tool.

The trade-offs required to implement the project include the following:

First, due to the need to make the site safe as a place of work and communal activity, the complete physical openness to the surrounding neighborhood that was desired by the Pinedos had to be re-interpreted through skillful design. The challenge, then, was to find a way to secure the site while simultaneously allowing it to welcome the community inside. The design achieves this through the use of a sliding gate that maintains complete transparency, and the simultaneous use of landscape elements - planting such as cactii, for instance - that are both beautiful and vandal-resistant. Both the form of the gate as well as its materiality contribute to its successful resolution of this challenge. The gate is composed of a perforated industrial-strength metal, and its halves come together much like two hands clasping. During business hours, the gates are left completely open.

Second, because of the understandable skepticism with which the Pinedos’ vision was greeted by the City and other potential sources of aid, a “wait and see” attitude resulted by which the Pinedos were essentially asked to prove the success of their first phase, in order to assure future assistance in developing their proposed master plan in its entirety. This meant, as outlined on the following page, that funding came entirely from the Pinedos and their business. This resulted in several trade-offs:

-The completed scope of the L.A. Design Center is not as large as originally envisioned, because it was not possible to acquire the additional lands that would have made it possible to accomplish more. In addition, ironically because of the Center’s success, surrounding property prices have risen, so land acquisition for any future development will be more difficult.

-Again, due to limited resources, some of the construction had to be executed by the Pinedos’ own employees, who are not trained as construction workers. While this generated positive effects in terms of worker pride and enhanced skills training, the resultant time frame required to complete the project was longer than originally anticipated, resulting in cost overruns.

-There was no provision made - due to inavailability of funds - for advertising and marketing the project. While the Design Center has garnered a lot of publicity due to its success in reaching out to the local community, its actual potential is far greater and has yet to be tapped.

-Because of the multitude of pressures put on all involved parties with respect to completing Phase I, there was not the ability to take the time to fully examine the needs of the Design Center as an operational facility. Operating costs and staffing needs were not considered; rather, there was a “wing it” philosophy. There were no trained personnel or management consultant the Pinedos could turn to. The L.A. Design Center has been run almost entirely by Cisco Brothers employees, with the exception of eight new jobs that were created as a result of the project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.

The LA Design Center is an owner-driven vision. Scouting real estate, procuring funding, navigating city and state regulations and permits, hiring an architect, and leasing the resulting showroom space were accomplished by Cisco and Alba Pinedo.

Cisco's and Alba's knowledge of the community coupled with a strong faith in their vision, a faith in the power of design to transform lives, and their ability to leverage the resources of their own business contacts, enabled the Center to become a realized space.

The political and banking communities were hesitant to participate in the development of Phase I, as the stigmas attached to the neighborhood did not invite confidence in the project's potential. The community itself applauded the effort, lined up to work on the construction, and evinced great surprise that a "developer" would risk so much and would show such respect to the existing context, using design to reveal the warehouses' and the community's history and inner strengths.

However, as a traditionally powerless constituency, the community was not able to provide financial support or to actually affect the course of development of Phase I of the project.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.

The project was funded entirely with private monies – the owner's personal funds in the form of cash and personally guaranteed credit lines, as well as loans secured through existing financial relationships between the owner's core business (the furniture company) and the company's bank, Merrill Lynch. Excluding land acquisition, the project cost \$1.5 million. With 80,000 square feet of interior facilities and 20,000 square feet of courtyard and external use space, this works out to \$15.00 per square foot.

When Cisco and Alba envisioned a "design center" and determined to build it, they then looked to their existing business (Cisco Brothers) to be the Design Center's first tenant. As the anchor for the LA Design Center, Cisco Brothers both served as a model for subsequent tenants and provided the leverage that persuaded Merrill Lynch to alter their traditional investment model and help fund the Center's first phase of development.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings?

An extraordinary vision shaped the LA Design Center and brought it to life. Cisco and Alba Pinedo were motivated by a desire to revitalize and give back to the community in which they had come of age. Despite the potential pitfalls of investing in South LA, they committed themselves to realizing their vision. That they had to accomplish it with no external financial or labor investment is testament to the skepticism and distrust with which outsiders view South LA.

The Pinedos' unique vision has given rise to a unique development. It is unique in that there is nothing else like it in the entire City. It is unique in that it is located in a neighborhood traditionally felt to be beyond salvage. It is unique in that it reveals the underlying beauty and strength of existing structures and urban fabric; it does not cover it up or try to change it as many contemporary urban redevelopment projects do. It is unique in that, in the middle of one of the world's most dangerous neighborhoods, it is directly connected to the street and carves out an urban courtyard that is used in many different ways. Truly, it is unique in that it succeeds on all of these levels, and that it addresses multiple urban issues including revitalization of underutilized fabric; repair of blighted areas; the need for open spaces in our cities; neighborhood identity; street frontage that is porous rather than fortress-like; community pride; and safety. (To clarify the final issue, that of safety, the continual use of the Design Center for activities ranging from art openings to cultural performances to meetings between local community activists means that the facility is being used during day and night and on weekends, which increases neighborhood safety.) The development also recognizes the fundamental truth that, in order to truly succeed as an urban center, a facility must provide certain types of amenities, including but not limited to access to cultural venues, recreational spaces, and spaces of gathering and dialogue.

The project can serve as a powerful model for other urban developments in the following ways:

First, it can affect change in the traditionally self-protective attitude of those responsible for urban development. The LA Design Center development shows that optimism, and a respect for one's surroundings, will be rewarded in turn.

Second, the project can serve as a model of how existing building stock and urban fabric can be rejuvenated without destroying their underlying beauty and strength.

Third, the LA Design Center shows that openness is a desirable aspect of any urban development, and fosters trust.

Fourth, it shows that the notion of *flexibility* can be leveraged into a full utilization of space, thereby increasing revenue (both literal and metaphorical) and that urban developments such as the LA Design Center have the potential for creating a valuable - and viable - forum for community activism and activity.

2007
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
ARCHITECT
OR DESIGNER
PERSPECTIVE



ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services. Copies may be given to other design professionals if desired.

Name	Alice Kimm	Title	Principal
Organization	John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects	Telephone	213.253.4740
Address	701 E. Third Street, Suite 300	City/State/Zip	Los Angeles, California 90013
Fax	213.253.4760	E-mail	akimm@jfak.net

Signature

1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc.

In response to our client's vision, we created a four-phase Master Plan for the development of three city blocks on Western Avenue in South L.A. (formerly South Central L.A.). As envisioned by our plan, the larger structures of the Phase I, II, and III zones will be connected with a tissue of landscaped parking areas, exterior walkways, and interior passageways. The Phase IV development proposes turning Manhattan Place into a landscaped pedestrian spine linking together all of its smaller existing structures and leading directly into the new public event space that serves as the heart of the Phase I development. We designed Phase I to be able to stand alone. It will remain the focus of any future development.

In its completed state, Phase I involves the renovation of two large brick warehouses into 80,000 square feet of showrooms, community gallery, and flexible event spaces; and the transformation of an existing parking lot into an outdoor event space and motor court. This exterior space, which is the first impression a visitor will have of the new district, fronts onto Western Avenue and forms an urban courtyard with a strong link to the neighborhood and the city beyond.

It was our desire that the architecture serve to address the complex's role as a furniture *design* center, and that it also provide a strong *identity* for the project, but *without creating an unwelcome foreign presence* in the neighborhood.

In response, we created a light and heterogeneous architectural language that intensifies the *strength and integrity of the existing structures* on the site. At the same time, our varied palette of materials reflects our desire to promote *cultural inclusion* and establishes an environment that is multi-layered, flexible, and open-ended. Hence, the project's richly textured and colored "new clothes," which seem both permanent and impermanent at the same time. By turns hiding, revealing, and filtering aspects of the original buildings and the surrounding environment, they *animate the character of what is original to the site* while simultaneously enriching the exterior public event space as an outdoor foyer for the complex.

Concerning the exterior event space, we started by adding a screen of polycarbonate panels on which images can be projected or mounted to a row of existing steel columns introduced in the 1980's to seismically reinforce the building. The screen turns the corner onto Western Avenue and forms a colorful changeable billboard for the Design Center. Secondly, we designed the ground plane of the motor court with two tones of concrete and strips of grass in order to create a rhythmic pattern across the space. These elements give the space needed scale and enable its transformation into a vibrant and flexible public event space. Next, we added a new layer of wood 2x6 members onto portions of the existing facades. They refer to the exposed wood structure of the buildings' interiors and reveal the character and materiality of the inside spaces. Likewise, we transformed the façades along Western Avenue by adding cement board panels of various shades of green. The colors are derived from the palm trees lining the street, but also refer to the "greening" of Los Angeles. In addition, a new gate and fence along Western Avenue, composed of metal grates appropriate to the current and past uses of the warehouse structures, provide security while permitting visibility into the site from the sidewalk and street. Finally, a new fabric canopy hangs over the entire outdoor event space: It filters sunlight and creates an ever-changing pattern of shadows on the ground surface, further animating and defining the character of this public foyer.

Inside, we chose to respect the nature of the existing wood and masonry structures. Beyond adding new skylights and sandblasting the existing brick walls and wood floors and roofs, we inserted three major elements into the two story space: a steel stair set in a new opening we cut into the second floor; a group of three offices at the west end of the second-floor; and a raised display area reached by a series of floating planes and bounded by a wall of the same polycarbonate panels used on the screen just outside. At the ground floor, the main entrance from the outdoor foyer is marked by a door made of U-shaped plates of stainless steel woven together like fabric.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.

The most important social function of the project is to provide accessibility to the surrounding community. Given that this kind of attitude is rare in such a dense urban environment, and especially in a tough and hermetic neighborhood such as South L.A., it is important to note that complete strangers walk into the Design Center daily, and are welcomed. Local residents feel that the Design Center is a place they can go to gather, and the space fosters this, giving a voice and forum to community artists and activists, as well as other types of neighborhood groups. The design, with its flexible spaces detailed in such a way as to accommodate multiple scales of activity, fosters intimacy at the same time that it creates a powerful focal point for the neighborhood. In short, it fosters accessibility.

The long-term programmatic function of the Design Center's master plan is to: first, create a furniture district for the entire manufacturing community that resides in South L.A., complete with all of the amenities one might find in such a district; and second, to simultaneously create an open and welcoming community center. The first is still a dream; the second is well on its way to being a vibrant reality. Currently, the facility contains showrooms, a community gallery, flexible event spaces (both interior and exterior), and modular creative office spaces.

ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project.

The two biggest challenges we faced as designers of this project were: 1) how to create a strong identity for the Design Center in this neighborhood without intimidating or alienating the local community; and 2) how to achieve the desired sense of openness to the surrounding neighborhood given the necessity to secure the site.

Regarding the first, we were successful in meeting this challenge without having to compromise any design intentions or resort to any trade-offs. Conceiving of a strong solution to this challenge was, we felt, the central factor that would determine the project's success or failure. Our respect for the existing buildings and context, and the ways in which we layered on a new palette of materials, became the means by which we successfully met this challenge. These aspects of the project are described more fully on the previous page.

Regarding the second challenge, the compromise came in realizing that we could not ignore the need to provide a security fence and gate along Western Avenue to protect the facility. Ultimately, however, we were able to design a fence and gate that did *not* compromise the desired feeling of openness. Rather, the fence and gate have become a symbol of welcome, due to the way it is detailed (it is described further below), and further defines the urban courtyard beyond that serves as the facility's exterior public event space.

4. Describe the way in which the project relates to its urban context.

The L.A. Design Center was designed to relate to its urban context in several ways:

1. The industrial tract in which the Center is located is full of under-utilized or abandoned warehouse buildings. The project, rather than razing the existing buildings, re-uses them but renders them more contemporary by upgrading their programmatic functions (furniture showrooms, community art gallery, flexible interior and exterior public event spaces) and by creating a new identity through a sensitive layering on of a new palette of materials. It is the *lightness* of this layering process, important to the design concept, that allows the existing fabric to be regenerated and shine through, so that the new Center is *of* its context, rather than a foreign intrusive entity.

2. The outdoor foyer/public event space is transparent and open to the Avenue it fronts on. It forms a well-scaled urban courtyard that is directly connected to the life of the neighborhood and the city beyond. The design of the fabric canopy that hangs over this urban courtyard delineates the space even further, framing the sky and the horizon of the city in unexpected and ever-changing ways.

3. The cement-board cladding applied to the building facades that front the Avenue, colored in various shades of green and khaki, reference the palm trees along the boulevard and refer to the "greening" of this part of Los Angeles. More subtly, it also hints at the notion of "camouflage" - it was important not to deny the neighborhood's history as a center of conflict, but rather to illuminate it in a way that would transform its lessons into something positive.

4. Likewise, the use of industrial metal walkway grating for the security fence and gate along the Avenue is appropriate not only because it refers to the buildings' industrial past, but because it is tough and hard like the context. The detailing of the sliding gate (described below in our answer to the proceeding question) transforms the material's rawness into something refined and beautiful. This is a reference to the owners' and the architects' optimism with respect to the positive transformation and future development of South L.A.

5. The use of a wide array of colors and textures is a direct reflection of the vibrant cultures that have historically inhabited this part of the city and whose expression can be found in the surrounding urban fabric. As described on the previous page, the design promotes cultural inclusion and animates what is original to the context.

5. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the project's design and architecture.

One major strength of the architecture of the L.A. Design Center is the manner in which new materials are layered onto existing structures to reveal and celebrate their beauty, at the same time that they define a new and vibrant identity. This process is described in more specifically architectural terms on the preceding page. This melding of old and new is illustrative of the owners' and architects' respect for context, and their investment in a bright future for the residents of South L.A. The embodiment of a leap of faith, and a belief in the transformative power of architecture, the Center stands proudly, but not at the cost of what came before it. It is truly *of* its neighborhood. In this watchful community, such an attitude speaks volumes, and residents have responded in kind: with respect, love, and excitement. Most importantly, they respond by *using* the facility: for community events, performances, dialogues.

Another strength of the design of the L.A. Design Center is the way in which indoor and outdoor spaces are connected and form a series of flexible spaces where many kinds of activities can take place. The treatment of the ground plane, for instance, with its bands of textured and colored concrete, is banded in accordance with the structural bays found on the inside of the building. This ties the interior and exterior together. The exterior concrete treatment is also extended into the floor of the interior, so that the movement between interior and exterior is fluid and unbroken. Finally, just as the banding of the concrete matches the structural rhythm of the buildings, the fabric panels that hang above the exterior courtyard are likewise tied to the structural grid of the buildings. These fabric panels, as mentioned on the previous page, filter the natural light to create patterns that animate and define the character of the space. These elements together also create a multiplicity of scale present in all of these spaces, making even the largest appropriate for an intimate gathering.

The biggest weakness of the project stems from the need for security, which precludes it from being *completely* open to the neighborhood beyond. As described above, it was necessary to add a security gate fronting onto Western Avenue, but we made the best of this compromise. In its detailing, the gate is designed with two sliding leaves that are shaped like "L"s; they come together and interlock like two hands joining. Because of this particular formmaking, the gates have actually become a symbol of welcome; a hoped-for and happy side effect. The gate is left wide open during business hours from 8:30 to 5 p.m. on weekdays. Strangers are thus free to walk in and are, indeed, welcomed inside for conversation, relaxation, and dialogue.

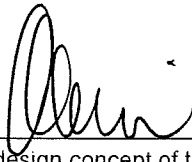
ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services. Copies may be given to other design professionals if desired.

Name	Alice Kimm	Title	Principal
Organization	John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects	Telephone	213.253.4740
Address	701 E. Third Street, Suite 300	City/State/Zip	Los Angeles, California 90013
Fax	213.253.4760	E-mail	akimm@jfak.net

Signature



1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc.

In response to our client's vision, we created a four-phase Master Plan for the development of three city blocks on Western Avenue in South L.A. (formerly South Central L.A.). As envisioned by our plan, the larger structures of the Phase I, II, and III zones will be connected with a tissue of landscaped parking areas, exterior walkways, and interior passageways. The Phase IV development proposes turning Manhattan Place into a landscaped pedestrian spine linking together all of its smaller existing structures and leading directly into the new public event space that serves as the heart of the Phase I development. We designed Phase I to be able to stand alone. It will remain the focus of any future development.

In its completed state, Phase I involves the renovation of two large brick warehouses into 80,000 square feet of showrooms, community gallery, and flexible event spaces; and the transformation of an existing parking lot into an outdoor event space and motor court. This exterior space, which is the first impression a visitor will have of the new district, fronts onto Western Avenue and forms an urban courtyard with a strong link to the neighborhood and the city beyond.

It was our desire that the architecture serve to address the complex's role as a furniture *design* center, and that it also provide a strong *identity* for the project, but *without creating an unwelcome foreign presence* in the neighborhood.

In response, we created a light and heterogeneous architectural language that intensifies the *strength and integrity of the existing structures* on the site. At the same time, our varied palette of materials reflects our desire to promote *cultural inclusion* and establishes an environment that is multi-layered, flexible, and open-ended. Hence, the project's richly textured and colored "new clothes," which seem both permanent and impermanent at the same time. By turns hiding, revealing, and filtering aspects of the original buildings and the surrounding environment, they *animate the character of what is original to the site* while simultaneously enriching the exterior public event space as an outdoor foyer for the complex.

Concerning the exterior event space, we started by adding a screen of polycarbonate panels on which images can be projected or mounted to a row of existing steel columns introduced in the 1980's to seismically reinforce the building. The screen turns the corner onto Western Avenue and forms a colorful changeable billboard for the Design Center. Secondly, we designed the ground plane of the motor court with two tones of concrete and strips of grass in order to create a rhythmic pattern across the space. These elements give the space needed scale and enable its transformation into a vibrant and flexible public event space. Next, we added a new layer of wood 2x6 members onto portions of the existing facades. They refer to the exposed wood structure of the buildings' interiors and reveal the character and materiality of the inside spaces. Likewise, we transformed the façades along Western Avenue by adding cement board panels of various shades of green. The colors are derived from the palm trees lining the street, but also refer to the "greening" of Los Angeles. In addition, a new gate and fence along Western Avenue, composed of metal grates appropriate to the current and past uses of the warehouse structures, provide security while permitting visibility into the site from the sidewalk and street. Finally, a new fabric canopy hangs over the entire outdoor event space: It filters sunlight and creates an ever-changing pattern of shadows on the ground surface, further animating and defining the character of this public foyer.

Inside, we chose to respect the nature of the existing wood and masonry structures. Beyond adding new skylights and sandblasting the existing brick walls and wood floors and roofs, we inserted three major elements into the two story space: a steel stair set in a new opening we cut into the second floor; a group of three offices at the west end of the second-floor; and a raised display area reached by a series of floating planes and bounded by a wall of the same polycarbonate panels used on the screen just outside. At the ground floor, the main entrance from the outdoor foyer is marked by a door made of U-shaped plates of stainless steel woven together like fabric.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.

The most important social function of the project is to provide accessibility to the surrounding community. Given that this kind of attitude is rare in such a dense urban environment, and especially in a tough and hermetic neighborhood such as South L.A., it is important to note that complete strangers walk into the Design Center daily, and are welcomed. Local residents feel that the Design Center is a place they can go to gather, and the space fosters this, giving a voice and forum to community artists and activists, as well as other types of neighborhood groups. The design, with its flexible spaces detailed in such a way as to accommodate multiple scales of activity, fosters intimacy at the same time that it creates a powerful focal point for the neighborhood. In short, it fosters accessibility.

The long-term programmatic function of the Design Center's master plan is to: first, create a furniture district for the entire manufacturing community that resides in South L.A., complete with all of the amenities one might find in such a district; and second, to simultaneously create an open and welcoming community center. The first is still a dream; the second is well on its way to being a vibrant reality. Currently, the facility contains showrooms, a community gallery, flexible event spaces (both interior and exterior), and modular creative office spaces.

ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project.

The two biggest challenges we faced as designers of this project were: 1) how to create a strong identity for the Design Center in this neighborhood without intimidating or alienating the local community; and 2) how to achieve the desired sense of openness to the surrounding neighborhood given the necessity to secure the site.

Regarding the first, we were successful in meeting this challenge without having to compromise any design intentions or resort to any trade-offs. Conceiving of a strong solution to this challenge was, we felt, the central factor that would determine the project's success or failure. Our respect for the existing buildings and context, and the ways in which we layered on a new palette of materials, became the means by which we successfully met this challenge. These aspects of the project are described more fully on the previous page.

Regarding the second challenge, the compromise came in realizing that we could not ignore the need to provide a security fence and gate along Western Avenue to protect the facility. Ultimately, however, we were able to design a fence and gate that did *not* compromise the desired feeling of openness. Rather, the fence and gate have become a symbol of welcome, due to the way it is detailed (it is described further below), and further defines the urban courtyard beyond that serves as the facility's exterior public event space.

4. Describe the way in which the project relates to its urban context.

The L.A. Design Center was designed to relate to its urban context in several ways:

1. The industrial tract in which the Center is located is full of under-utilized or abandoned warehouse buildings. The project, rather than razing the existing buildings, re-uses them but renders them more contemporary by upgrading their programmatic functions (furniture showrooms, community art gallery, flexible interior and exterior public event spaces) and by creating a new identity through a sensitive layering on of a new palette of materials. It is the *lightness* of this layering process, important to the design concept, that allows the existing fabric to be regenerated and shine through, so that the new Center is *of* its context, rather than a foreign intrusive entity.

2. The outdoor foyer/public event space is transparent and open to the Avenue it fronts on. It forms a well-scaled urban courtyard that is directly connected to the life of the neighborhood and the city beyond. The design of the fabric canopy that hangs over this urban courtyard delineates the space even further, framing the sky and the horizon of the city in unexpected and ever-changing ways.

3. The cement-board cladding applied to the building facades that front the Avenue, colored in various shades of green and khaki, reference the palm trees along the boulevard and refer to the "greening" of this part of Los Angeles. More subtly, it also hints at the notion of "camouflage" - it was important not to deny the neighborhood's history as a center of conflict, but rather to illuminate it in a way that would transform its lessons into something positive.

4. Likewise, the use of industrial metal walkway grating for the security fence and gate along the Avenue is appropriate not only because it refers to the buildings' industrial past, but because it is tough and hard like the context. The detailing of the sliding gate (described below in our answer to the preceding question) transforms the material's rawness into something refined and beautiful. This is a reference to the owners' and the architects' optimism with respect to the positive transformation and future development of South L.A.

5. The use of a wide array of colors and textures is a direct reflection of the vibrant cultures that have historically inhabited this part of the city and whose expression can be found in the surrounding urban fabric. As described on the previous page, the design promotes cultural inclusion and animates what is original to the context.

5. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the project's design and architecture.

One major strength of the architecture of the L.A. Design Center is the manner in which new materials are layered onto existing structures to reveal and celebrate their beauty, at the same time that they define a new and vibrant identity. This process is described in more specifically architectural terms on the preceding page. This melding of old and new is illustrative of the owners' and architects' respect for context, and their investment in a bright future for the residents of South L.A. The embodiment of a leap of faith, and a belief in the transformative power of architecture, the Center stands proudly, but not at the cost of what came before it. It is truly *of* its neighborhood. In this watchful community, such an attitude speaks volumes, and residents have responded in kind: with respect, love, and excitement. Most importantly, they respond by *using* the facility: for community events, performances, dialogues.

Another strength of the design of the L.A. Design Center is the way in which indoor and outdoor spaces are connected and form a series of flexible spaces where many kinds of activities can take place. The treatment of the ground plane, for instance, with its bands of textured and colored concrete, is banded in accordance with the structural bays found on the inside of the building. This ties the interior and exterior together. The exterior concrete treatment is also extended into the floor of the interior, so that the movement between interior and exterior is fluid and unbroken. Finally, just as the banding of the concrete matches the structural rhythm of the buildings, the fabric panels that hang above the exterior courtyard are likewise tied to the structural grid of the buildings. These fabric panels, as mentioned on the previous page, filter the natural light to create patterns that animate and define the character of the space. These elements together also create a multiplicity of scale present in all of these spaces, making even the largest appropriate for an intimate gathering.

The biggest weakness of the project stems from the need for security, which precludes it from being *completely* open to the neighborhood beyond. As described above, it was necessary to add a security gate fronting onto Western Avenue, but we made the best of this compromise. In its detailing, the gate is designed with two sliding leaves that are shaped like "L"s; they come together and interlock like two hands joining. Because of this particular formmaking, the gates have actually become a symbol of welcome; a hoped-for and happy side effect. The gate is left wide open during business hours from 8:30 to 5 p.m. on weekdays. Strangers are thus free to walk in and are, indeed, welcomed inside for conversation, relaxation, and dialogue.

2007
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
COMMUNITY
REPRESENTATIVE
PERSPECTIVE



COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name	David Roberts	Title	Deputy, Economic Development
Organization	City of L.A. Office of Councilmember Bernard C. Parks	Telephone	(213) 473-2378
Address	200 N. Spring Street, Room 460	City/State/ZIP	Los Angeles, CA 90012
Fax	(213) 485-7683	E-mail	droberts@lacity.org

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, for any purpose whatsoever, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature 

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

The City of Los Angeles Council District 8 objectives include: ensuring our constituents have a suitable living environment through improvement of safety in our neighborhoods, increased access to quality facilities and public services, expansion of economic opportunities through job creation, credit for development activities accessible to low-income residents, technical assistance to businesses, affordable housing for at-risk homeless persons, increased availability of permanent housing, and mortgage financing at reasonable rates. We are proud to boast that the L.A. Design Center has provided over 200 jobs and if it expands in coming years could provide potentially 200 more jobs. Additionally, our Council District worked with and will continue to work with the L.A. Design Center and Cisco Brothers Furniture to utilize the services of one or more local federally funded WorkSource Career Centers to meet their hiring and training needs. Furthermore, our Council Office was available and assisted to ensure that all planning processes, permits, and incentives were readily available to the L.A. Design Center team.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

Before describing the community's point of view, I would first like to describe the community surrounding the L.A. Design Center. The poverty within the service area from the 2000 census is 27.5%, which is more than twice the national average of 12.38% and well above the City average of 22.1%. Additionally, the unemployment is estimated at 17.6%, which is THREE times the national average of 5.77% and well above the City average of 9.3%. The L.A. Design Center is located in City-designated redevelopment project area, which indicates the physical blight challenges demonstrated by the age and condition of the buildings not suited to modern manufacturing uses. There is also a lack of off-street parking, curbs, gutters and sidewalks throughout the area, as well as economic blight, demonstrated by vacant manufacturing buildings and reduced property and sales taxes. The community also exhibits other poor demographics when compared to those citywide; for example, the per capital income in the service area was \$11,233 compared to the citywide level of \$20,671; the median income was \$26,911 when compared to the citywide average of \$36,687. Eleven percent of the households are on public assistance compared to a citywide level of 6%, and 44.4% of residents 18 years of age and older never graduated from high school, as opposed to 33.4% citywide.

With these statistics in mind, the major community issues concerning this project were that the community would have an opportunity to participate in the employment opportunities that this new development would provide, from construction to permanent employment, and that local contractors would be utilized to complete the work.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

N/A

4. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how?

The community supported the idea of having one of their own local Latino families invest a decade of successful work to construct Cisco Brothers Furniture Showroom and the renowned L.A. Design Center furniture showroom. The L.A. Design Center earned the attention and the admiration of the community; local residents frequently visit to marvel at the changes they reminisce about the buildings' previous "lives." Both the architectural community as well as the local community recognize the underlying message - that this Center respects its history and its surroundings - as buildings were not razed and rebuilt; rather, the owners and architects chose to take what was valuable and take care with it. In an article in the Los Angeles Times dated February 26, 2003, it states, "South Central Los Angeles has never been considered a hotbed for flashy architecture. A decade after the L.A. riots, few of the businesses that fled the area have returned. The city's promise that it would work hard to encourage new development has largely been an empty one. And when businesses do invest in new construction there, they are not apt to spend the extra money and time needed to create meaningful design." Nevertheless, with its shimmering facade, it is a striking contrast to its decrepit surroundings; the L.A. Design Center demonstrates how architecture can help shape social perceptions even under the harshest of circumstances.

5. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through?

There are no significant changes I would recommend regarding this project, mainly because this project has become an impetus for bringing tremendous benefits to the community. This project has catapulted other revitalization efforts and will assist in bringing about the elimination of about 10.2 acres of environmentally challenged parcels, the renovation of 130,000 square feet of virtually vacant buildings, the construction of 180,000 square feet of new buildings, the investment of about \$27,000,000 in the community, the creation of 200 new jobs, the generation of about \$180,500 in annual sales and utility taxes and business license fees to the City, AND \$108,000 in property tax increment to the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency. Other tangible benefits accrue from the great architecture, the continued investment that expands upon the nearby Chesterfield Square and the pride by the community in the dramatic changes to an area that was once extremely blighted, however, thanks to the L.A. Design Center, that has changed!


COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name	David Roberts	Title	Deputy, Economic Development
Organization	City of L.A. Office of Councilmember Bernard C. Parks	Telephone	(213) 473-2378
Address	200 N. Spring Street, Room 460	City/State/ZIP	Los Angeles, CA 90012
Fax	(213) 485-7683	E-mail	droberts@lacity.org

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, for any purpose whatsoever, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature 

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

The City of Los Angeles Council District 8 objectives include: ensuring our constituents have a suitable living environment through improvement of safety in our neighborhoods, increased access to quality facilities and public services, expansion of economic opportunities through job creation, credit for development activities accessible to low-income residents, technical assistance to businesses, affordable housing for at-risk homeless persons, increased availability of permanent housing, and mortgage financing at reasonable rates. We are proud to boast that the L.A. Design Center has provided over 200 jobs and if it expands in coming years could provide potentially 200 more jobs. Additionally, our Council District worked with and will continue to work with the L.A. Design Center and Cisco Brothers Furniture to utilize the services of one or more local federally funded WorkSource Career Centers to meet their hiring and training needs. Furthermore, our Council Office was available and assisted to ensure that all planning processes, permits, and incentives were readily available to the L.A. Design Center team.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

Before describing the community's point of view, I would first like to describe the community surrounding the L.A. Design Center. The poverty within the service area from the 2000 census is 27.5%, which is more than twice the national average of 12.38% and well above the City average of 22.1%. Additionally, the unemployment is estimated at 17.6%, which is THREE times the national average of 5.77% and well above the City average of 9.3%. The L.A. Design Center is located in City-designated redevelopment project area, which indicates the physical blight challenges demonstrated by the age and condition of the buildings not suited to modern manufacturing uses. There is also a lack of off-street parking, curbs, gutters and sidewalks throughout the area, as well as economic blight, demonstrated by vacant manufacturing buildings and reduced property and sales taxes. The community also exhibits other poor demographics when compared to those citywide; for example, the per capita income in the service area was \$11,233 compared to the citywide level of \$20,671; the median income was \$26,911 when compared to the citywide average of \$36,687. Eleven percent of the households are on public assistance compared to a citywide level of 6%, and 44.4% of residents 18 years of age and older never graduated from high school, as opposed to 33.4% citywide.

With these statistics in mind, the major community issues concerning this project were that the community would have an opportunity to participate in the employment opportunities that this new development would provide, from construction to permanent employment, and that local contractors would be utilized to complete the work.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

N/A

4. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how?

The community supported the idea of having one of their own local Latino families invest a decade of successful work to construct Cisco Brothers Furniture Showroom and the renowned L.A. Design Center furniture showroom. The L.A. Design Center earned the attention and the admiration of the community; local residents frequently visit to marvel at the changes they reminisce about the buildings' previous "lives." Both the architectural community as well as the local community recognize the underlying message - that this Center respects its history and its surroundings - as buildings were not razed and rebuilt; rather, the owners and architects chose to take what was valuable and take care with it. In an article in the Los Angeles Times dated February 26, 2003, it states, "South Central Los Angeles has never been considered a hotbed for flashy architecture. A decade after the L.A. riots, few of the businesses that fled the area have returned. The city's promise that it would work hard to encourage new development has largely been an empty one. And when businesses do invest in new construction there, they are not apt to spend the extra money and time needed to create meaningful design." Nevertheless, with its shimmering facade, it is a striking contrast to its decrepit surroundings; the L.A. Design Center demonstrates how architecture can help shape social perceptions even under the harshest of circumstances.

5. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through?

There are no significant changes I would recommend regarding this project, mainly because this project has become an impetus for bringing tremendous benefits to the community. This project has catapulted other revitalization efforts and will assist in bringing about the elimination of about 10.2 acres of environmentally challenged parcels, the renovation of 130,000 square feet of virtually vacant buildings, the construction of 180,000 square feet of new buildings, the investment of about \$27,000,000 in the community, the creation of 200 new jobs, the generation of about \$180,500 in annual sales and utility taxes and business license fees to the City, AND \$108,000 in property tax increment to the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency. Other tangible benefits accrue from the great architecture, the continued investment that expands upon the nearby Chesterfield Square and the pride by the community in the dramatic changes to an area that was once extremely blighted, however, thanks to the L.A. Design Center, that has changed!

2007
PUBLIC AGENCY
PERPSECTIVE

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name	Renata Simril	Title	Senior Vice President for Development
Organization	Forest City Development	Telephone	213.488.0010
Address	949 S. Hope Street, Suite 100	City/State/Zip	Los Angeles, CA 90015
Fax	213.622.7623	E-mail	renatasimril@forestcity.net

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, for any purpose whatsoever, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature

1. What role did you or your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g. zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements).

In 2005, when this project was first submitted for consideration for the Rudy Bruner Award, I was the City of Los Angeles' Deputy Mayor for Development in the office of then Mayor James Hahn. Generally, the long-term economic health and vitality of the City of Los Angeles is an essential responsibility of the City government. However, economic development and job creation happen in the private sector, through the efforts of individuals such as Francisco and Alba Pinedo with respect to their vision and implementation of the LA Design Center. Therefore, actions taken by government must foster private development, rather than replace or impede it. Actions such as creating a competitive business environment, streamlining the development entitlement process, and providing financial assistance through grant and/or loan programs are but a few examples. However, in this case there was minimal assistance offered from our office for the creation of the LA Design Center. The Pinedos were able to demonstrate that they could deliver on their vision, and the City is and will be highly involved throughout any future phases that are developed as an expansion to the Design Center.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs or compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?

There are many ways in which this project was intended to, and does, benefit the City of Los Angeles, but I will focus on three:

- 1) Located in one of Los Angeles' most blighted communities, the project transformed a dilapidated, underutilized pair of buildings into a vibrant high-end Furniture Design showcase that has created day-time and evening private, public, and community activities that have led to greater public safety in the area.
- 2) The Center stabilizes the economic base of the area by maintaining hundreds of career opportunities and provides for future jobs opportunities to a community that has had the highest job loss of any part of the City during the past 10 years.
- 3) It creates a growing tax base for the City of Los Angeles and creates a place/destination for the city's and county's thriving, yet under-recognized furniture manufacturing industry. In summary, it gives the City a greater opportunity to continue to market itself as the creative capital of the world.

While the City was not involved in the initial implementation of the L.A. Design Center project, I can say that the inability to purchase the lots directly to the north and south, for future expansion, constitutes a major trade-off in the overall development of the Pinedos' vision to develop the area further. In the past 36 months, ironically due to the success of the Design Center, the prices of real estate in the neighborhood have risen dramatically. It will be more expensive to develop any future expansions of the project as a result.

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the project's impact on your community. Please be as specific as possible.

My answer to the previous question specifically outlines several results that this development has had on the community. However, more generally, this project demonstrates to everyone that great urban design and development is not only reserved for affluent neighborhoods. This project has helped to change how an entire community views itself and, equally importantly, how visitors view this community. The results are truly transformative for anyone who visits: The LA Design Center is much more than just an economic development project or award winning display of great urban design and architecture; rather, it is a model of what is right.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

It goes without saying that the lessons of Phase I of the LA Design Center are very instructive on many different levels - to developers, to government, and to residents of the neighborhood in which it resides. I believe that development of the future phases of this project, given that they happen and that they succeed, will be very instructive to government agencies in other cities. This project demonstrates the great things that can be produced when government and the private sector work in partnership. Government often struggles with balancing the need to provide living wage jobs while revitalizing or beautifying blighted communities. The two are often framed as mutually exclusive goals: jobs vs. environmental justice, jobs vs. historic preservation, jobs vs. art, etc. However, the vision of Mr. and Mrs. Pinedo as embodied in the completed Phase I of the LA Design Center proves that the two goals can be complementary and that businesses can thrive in underserved areas and at the same time add to the urban environment by developing highly "designed" and architecturally significant places.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspect of this project is that it was completed and has significantly changed in a positive manner the perceptions - both internally and externally - that people have of this place. Additionally, the success of Phase I has given life to the future phases of which the City of Los Angeles is an active partner.

The least successful aspect of this project is the business model by which Phase I of this project was undertaken. Understanding the limitations faced by Mr. and Mrs. Pinedo, who run a large company and are involved in other civic and charitable activities, it is easy for me to understand why they proceeded solely with the purchase of the two adjoining buildings that became Phase I. However, in retrospect, and as stated on the previous page, it would have been advisable to have purchased the adjacent north and south parcels, which figure into the future phases of development, earlier on. In the short span of eighteen months, due to the great success of Phase I, real estate prices have risen sharply causing a more expensive future Phase II, III, and IV. Clearly, however, funding Phase I was difficult enough without having to worry about additional purchases at that time, and the Pinedos knew that their undertaking was a risk, and that all eyes would be on them to see if they succeeded.

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name	Margie J. Reese	Title	Former General Manager (at time of 2005 cycle)
Organization	City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs	Telephone	213.202.5500 (contact number for DAC)
Address	201 N. Figueroa, Suite 1400	City/State/Zip	Los Angeles, California 90012
Fax		E-mail	not currently available

Signature signature on file with 2005 application

1. What role did you or your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g. zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements).

Realizing the growing need to establish public/private partnerships with corporations and local businesses in Los Angeles, the Cultural Affairs Department created the corporate pARTners program, a collaborative initiative to ensure that underserved youth are exposed to professional artists, art exhibits, and creative performances. The goal of the program is to help youth learn about different cultures and their own traditions and heritage to create a shared sense of community identity and to build an appreciation for the arts.

Our first pARTner of this program was the Los Angeles-based furniture showroom and community facility, the LA DESIGN CENTER, founded by Cisco and Alba Pinedo. When Cisco moved to South Los Angeles from Jalisco, Mexico, he dreamed of architecture and opportunity. His dreams were fulfilled with the construction of the LA DESIGN CENTER that he and his wife, Alba, built together. While deciding to develop an industrial center only blocks away from where each grew up, the couple chose to reverse the neglect evident in their neighborhood, revitalize their own community, and revive its identity as a formidable business center. Part of their mission is to create new opportunities for their neighborhood's largely African American and Latino community.

When we felt the need to revitalize corporate and private business participation in the arts, the Cultural Affairs Department found a willing pARTner in the LA DESIGN CENTER. Cisco and Alba Pinedo's philanthropic dedication helped establish the program with a commitment of financial support and use of the Center's gallery and open space to host special events and exhibits throughout our City's cultural heritage months.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs or compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?

The generous support of the LA DESIGN CENTER for arts and cultural programming exposes youth to essential artistic performances, workshops, classes, and exhibits. These programs greatly benefit the South Los Angeles area by providing exposure and access to high quality arts and cultural experiences to young people in their neighborhoods.

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the project's impact on your community. Please be as specific as possible.

During African American Heritage Month in February 2004, the LA DESIGN CENTER hosted Les Ballets Africains, the national ensemble of the Republic of Guinea, to provide free performances for residents of the neighborhood. These performances encouraged parents to bring their children for an evening of African music, dance, and culture. By opening the LA DESIGN CENTER's space to the neighborhood for cultural programming, residents were able to enjoy a cultural experience in their own community.

During October 2004, the LA DESIGN CENTER hosted the Imágenes photography project, which was specifically created to celebrate Latino Heritage Month, encourage community involvement in the arts, motivate students about photography, and expose our youth to accomplished photographers. Imágenes uses professional photographers to mentor Los Angeles students in the art of telling a story with a picture. Using cultural heritage as a theme, the participating youth document their everyday lives. By incorporating the involvement of prominent photographers, the students learn about photography as an art form and a profession.

The resulting photographs taken by the students were exhibited in the gallery areas of the LA DESIGN CENTER. A community reception accompanied the exhibition and the students were recognized for their artistic expressions.

Through these programs for the city's heritage months, the LA DESIGN CENTER is viewed as a community hub for cultural events and activities. Neighborhood residents can enjoy the LA DESIGN CENTER as an accessible center for community gatherings. Beautifully designed, the LA DESIGN CENTER offers a respite from the urban blight found in the South Los Angeles area.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

The Cultural Affairs Department's pARTners program now includes other public/private partnerships, including those with Target Corporation, Garza Group Communications, and Lawry's. These relationships have resulted in other arts programming such as a Youth Village and Essay Contest sponsorship, printing services, and special dance performances for children and hearing-impaired youth and adults during African American Heritage Month, and exhibition sponsorship during Latino Heritage Month.

We believe these collaborations strengthen the overall fabric of the city by promoting the arts in our local neighborhoods. These partnerships open the doors to arts experiences and opportunities in neighborhoods that often lack cultural programming.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

We are grateful for the LA DESIGN CENTER's dedication to providing access to the arts for its neighborhood residents through exhibitions, performances, and community receptions. We believe the LA DESIGN CENTER is exemplary in its efforts to be a true community partner to the arts and to the surrounding community.

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name	Margie J. Reese	Title	Former General Manager (at time of 2005 cycle)
Organization	City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs	Telephone	213.202.5500 (contact number for DAC)
Address	201 N. Figueroa, Suite 1400	City/State/Zip	Los Angeles, California 90012
Fax		E-mail	not currently available

Signature signature on file with 2005 application

1. What role did you or your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g. zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements).

Realizing the growing need to establish public/private partnerships with corporations and local businesses in Los Angeles, the Cultural Affairs Department created the corporate pARTners program, a collaborative initiative to ensure that underserved youth are exposed to professional artists, art exhibits, and creative performances. The goal of the program is to help youth learn about different cultures and their own traditions and heritage to create a shared sense of community identity and to build an appreciation for the arts.

Our first pARTner of this program was the Los Angeles-based furniture showroom and community facility, the LA DESIGN CENTER, founded by Cisco and Alba Pinedo. When Cisco moved to South Los Angeles from Jalisco, Mexico, he dreamed of architecture and opportunity. His dreams were fulfilled with the construction of the LA DESIGN CENTER that he and his wife, Alba, built together. While deciding to develop an industrial center only blocks away from where each grew up, the couple chose to reverse the neglect evident in their neighborhood, revitalize their own community, and revive its identity as a formidable business center. Part of their mission is to create new opportunities for their neighborhood's largely African American and Latino community.

When we felt the need to revitalize corporate and private business participation in the arts, the Cultural Affairs Department found a willing pARTner in the LA DESIGN CENTER. Cisco and Alba Pinedo's philanthropic dedication helped establish the program with a commitment of financial support and use of the Center's gallery and open space to host special events and exhibits throughout our City's cultural heritage months.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs or compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?

The generous support of the LA DESIGN CENTER for arts and cultural programming exposes youth to essential artistic performances, workshops, classes, and exhibits. These programs greatly benefit the South Los Angeles area by providing exposure and access to high quality arts and cultural experiences to young people in their neighborhoods.

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the project's impact on your community. Please be as specific as possible.

During African American Heritage Month in February 2004, the LA DESIGN CENTER hosted Les Ballets Africains, the national ensemble of the Republic of Guinea, to provide free performances for residents of the neighborhood. These performances encouraged parents to bring their children for an evening of African music, dance, and culture. By opening the LA DESIGN CENTER's space to the neighborhood for cultural programming, residents were able to enjoy a cultural experience in their own community.

During October 2004, the LA DESIGN CENTER hosted the Imágenes photography project, which was specifically created to celebrate Latino Heritage Month, encourage community involvement in the arts, motivate students about photography, and expose our youth to accomplished photographers. Imágenes uses professional photographers to mentor Los Angeles students in the art of telling a story with a picture. Using cultural heritage as a theme, the participating youth document their everyday lives. By incorporating the involvement of prominent photographers, the students learn about photography as an art form and a profession.

The resulting photographs taken by the students were exhibited in the gallery areas of the LA DESIGN CENTER. A community reception accompanied the exhibition and the students were recognized for their artistic expressions.

Through these programs for the city's heritage months, the LA DESIGN CENTER is viewed as a community hub for cultural events and activities. Neighborhood residents can enjoy the LA DESIGN CENTER as an accessible center for community gatherings. Beautifully designed, the LA DESIGN CENTER offers a respite from the urban blight found in the South Los Angeles area.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

The Cultural Affairs Department's pARTners program now includes other public/private partnerships, including those with Target Corporation, Garza Group Communications, and Lawry's. These relationships have resulted in other arts programming such as a Youth Village and Essay Contest sponsorship, printing services, and special dance performances for children and hearing-impaired youth and adults during African American Heritage Month, and exhibition sponsorship during Latino Heritage Month.

We believe these collaborations strengthen the overall fabric of the city by promoting the arts in our local neighborhoods. These partnerships open the doors to arts experiences and opportunities in neighborhoods that often lack cultural programming.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

We are grateful for the LA DESIGN CENTER's dedication to providing access to the arts for its neighborhood residents through exhibitions, performances, and community receptions. We believe the LA DESIGN CENTER is exemplary in its efforts to be a true community partner to the arts and to the surrounding community.

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name	Renata Simril	Title	Senior Vice President for Development
Organization	Forest City Development	Telephone	213.488.0010
Address	949 S. Hope Street, Suite 100	City/State/Zip	Los Angeles, CA 90015
Fax	213.622.7623	E-mail	renatasimril@forestcity.net

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, for any purpose whatsoever, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature

1. What role did you or your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g. zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements).

In 2005, when this project was first submitted for consideration for the Rudy Bruner Award, I was the City of Los Angeles' Deputy Mayor for Development in the office of then Mayor James Hahn. Generally, the long-term economic health and vitality of the City of Los Angeles is an essential responsibility of the City government. However, economic development and job creation happen in the private sector, through the efforts of individuals such as Francisco and Alba Pinedo with respect to their vision and implementation of the LA Design Center. Therefore, actions taken by government must foster private development, rather than replace or impede it. Actions such as creating a competitive business environment, streamlining the development entitlement process, and providing financial assistance through grant and/or loan programs are but a few examples. However, in this case there was minimal assistance offered from our office for the creation of the LA Design Center. The Pinedos were able to demonstrate that they could deliver on their vision, and the City is and will be highly involved throughout any future phases that are developed as an expansion to the Design Center.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs or compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?

There are many ways in which this project was intended to, and does, benefit the City of Los Angeles, but I will focus on three:

- 1) Located in one of Los Angeles' most blighted communities, the project transformed a dilapidated, underutilized pair of buildings into a vibrant high-end Furniture Design showcase that has created day-time and evening private, public, and community activities that have led to greater public safety in the area.
- 2) The Center stabilizes the economic base of the area by maintaining hundreds of career opportunities and provides for future jobs opportunities to a community that has had the highest job loss of any part of the City during the past 10 years.
- 3) It creates a growing tax base for the City of Los Angeles and creates a place/destination for the city's and county's thriving, yet under-recognized furniture manufacturing industry. In summary, it gives the City a greater opportunity to continue to market itself as the creative capital of the world.

While the City was not involved in the initial implementation of the L.A. Design Center project, I can say that the inability to purchase the lots directly to the north and south, for future expansion, constitutes a major trade-off in the overall development of the Pinedos' vision to develop the area further. In the past 36 months, ironically due to the success of the Design Center, the prices of real estate in the neighborhood have risen dramatically. It will be more expensive to develop any future expansions of the project as a result.

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the project's impact on your community. Please be as specific as possible.

My answer to the previous question specifically outlines several results that this development has had on the community. However, more generally, this project demonstrates to everyone that great urban design and development is not only reserved for affluent neighborhoods. This project has helped to change how an entire community views itself and, equally importantly, how visitors view this community. The results are truly transformative for anyone who visits: The LA Design Center is much more than just an economic development project or award winning display of great urban design and architecture; rather, it is a model of what is right.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

It goes without saying that the lessons of Phase I of the LA Design Center are very instructive on many different levels - to developers, to government, and to residents of the neighborhood in which it resides. I believe that development of the future phases of this project, given that they happen and that they succeed, will be very instructive to government agencies in other cities. This project demonstrates the great things that can be produced when government and the private sector work in partnership. Government often struggles with balancing the need to provide living wage jobs while revitalizing or beautifying blighted communities. The two are often framed as mutually exclusive goals: jobs vs. environmental justice, jobs vs. historic preservation, jobs vs. art, etc. However, the vision of Mr. and Mrs. Pinedo as embodied in the completed Phase I of the LA Design Center proves that the two goals can be complementary and that businesses can thrive in underserved areas and at the same time add to the urban environment by developing highly "designed" and architecturally significant places.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspect of this project is that it was completed and has significantly changed in a positive manner the perceptions - both internally and externally - that people have of this place. Additionally, the success of Phase I has given life to the future phases of which the City of Los Angeles is an active partner.

The least successful aspect of this project is the business model by which Phase I of this project was undertaken. Understanding the limitations faced by Mr. and Mrs. Pinedo, who run a large company and are involved in other civic and charitable activities, it is easy for me to understand why they proceeded solely with the purchase of the two adjoining buildings that became Phase I. However, in retrospect, and as stated on the previous page, it would have been advisable to have purchased the adjacent north and south parcels, which figure into the future phases of development, earlier on. In the short span of eighteen months, due to the great success of Phase I, real estate prices have risen sharply causing a more expensive future Phase II, III, and IV. Clearly, however, funding Phase I was difficult enough without having to worry about additional purchases at that time, and the Pinedos knew that their undertaking was a risk, and that all eyes would be on them to see if they succeeded.

2007
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
DEVELOPER
PERSPECTIVE



DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

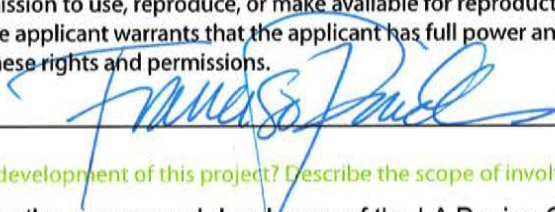
Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Name	Francisco Pinedo	Title	Owner, L.A. Design Center; CEO, Cisco Brothers
Organization	Cisco Brothers	Telephone	(323) 778-8612
Address	1933 W. 60th Street	City/State/ZIP	Los Angeles, CA 90047
Fax	(323) 778-9073	E-mail	cisco@ciscobrothers.com

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, for any purpose whatsoever, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature



1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.

My wife Alba and I (Cisco Pinedo) are the owners and developers of the LA Design Center. We both grew up and met in this neighborhood and located our furniture manufacturing business here, within walking distance of our childhood homes. We believe that family and community is the fiber that binds us together. As we succeeded in our business it was critical to us that we honor our past and create a legacy for our own children. We believe that only by showing others what is possible can a person instill hope and create lasting change. Therefore, when we decided to open an LA-based showroom, we made a deliberate decision to locate that showroom in the same South LA neighborhood that provided the labor that made our growth possible. We found the space, got the funding from our existing business and some loans, hired an architect, and recruited most of the workforce.

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

Our furniture company, Cisco Brothers, was 100% responsible for financing Phase I of the LA Design Center – procuring the real estate, the architectural plans, the construction costs, and leasing the space when the project was completed. Because this was a “side” project and a labor of love for the us, a sacrifice of some of our original vision was required: a bridge spanning the courtyard’s two main structures was delayed, no interior improvements were made to the entire south wing until nearly 18 months later, and we could only develop the project in phases due to lack of funding and lack of others’ confidence in our vision. We knew that our ability to procure financing for the future phases was contingent upon the success of Phase I.

In addition, we had to compromise our desire for complete physical openness to the community by erecting a security gate. Acknowledging that security was a serious issue, we had to find a way, through design, to both secure the site and maintain a connection to the street. For us, the project would have been meaningless if we could not have that sense of openness to our community. We do leave the security gate wide open during business hours; it is only closed on weekends and at night.

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used?

We financed the LA Design Center with our own monies and loans, using Cisco Brothers as collateral. We believe that we were able to trade on our personal relationships and the genuineness of our convictions to make this project come to life. We knew that if we succeeded, other people, in particular the city government, would take notice and participate in the subsequent phases. As a result of our success with the first phase, the city has applied for federal government assistance to clean up neighboring environmental hazards and to fund land acquisition. Our banking partner Merrill Lynch has been so pleased with our success that they are looking into how they can use our development model with other clients.

DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

4. How did the economic impacts of this project on the community compare with or differ from other projects you have been involved in?

Because neither Cisco Brothers, nor Alba and I, are developers, we have no similar experiences to use for comparison. As a business owner, we have some experience with moving our factory, and the resulting effects that even such minor moves have on an immediate community and its job seekers. This project, however, enabled us to have far broader impact – not only through bringing back to life an existing pair of buildings, but by creating a place of pride for the community, and also – very importantly – by drawing other Los Angelenos, from the more affluent parts of town, into the “inner city” to experience (and buy) good design. This is something they probably never dreamed of existed in the heart of South LA.

There are other experiences; they vary. The people who visit us at the LA Design Center range from neighbors to designers to artists to activists to tourists. I could go on and on. I will say this: The night the City of LA's Cultural Affairs Department hosted a performance for the neighborhood, and we saw the multitudes of parents walking over here with their children, we knew we had accomplished something wonderful.

With respect to economics: We'd like to see further expansion ideas come to fruition, so that we can create an even more compelling destination – which will lead to more and better jobs, greater land value, and improved services from the increased tax base and revenues. Already we are seeing some of these things happen, but the potential is far, far greater. In the meantime, we do require funds to advertise and operate the Center so that it may better serve the Community.

5. How might this project be instructive to other developers?

Persistence. Community. Doing the right thing. We did it, but it was hard. To go further, it is absolutely critical to have connections not only with city agencies but also with major cultural institutions that share a desire to improve city life, to bring jobs and services and good design to industrial, low-income neighborhoods. Our struggles included everything from lobbying the city to relocate a much needed but inappropriately placed animal shelter outside of the boundaries of our fully phased plan, to launching a guerrilla campaign to stop the removal of several totemic palm trees that act as gatekeepers to the LA Design Center. It was difficult to convey our vision of space to our City Councilman and the City in general; furthermore, elections and staff changes within these government entities created multiple disconnects that had to be bridged, and re-bridged. Once we educated the new teams, and persuaded them of the potential and also the urgency of our plan, we were able to get support. They recognized the potential far-reaching economic impact of this development and have been supporting us ever since Phase I was completed.

6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

To us, the very complexity of our city of Los Angeles meant that anything was possible – so to us, it was not unthinkable that we could create a thriving design community in the midst of what others kept referring to as “urban blight.” While it may have been naive, what we accomplished attests to the resounding power and respect afforded to individual commitment. We focused on our goals: to serve the underserved furniture manufacturing community whose members are our colleagues and our friends; and to serve the neighborhood, whose residents we grew up amongst and who molded us into the people we are today.

We are proud of the community response. We get walk-in traffic from locals who rode their skateboards in the empty parking lot as children. Person after person, standing in the community gallery or courtyard during an event, tells stories of growing up within walking distance of the Design Center, or living here still, but always having to drive elsewhere for an art show, or a musical performance, or to see examples of beautiful architecture and strong industrial design. We have become a role model for these people and their offspring.

We wish we could have been enabled to do more, faster. Growth comes at a cost: time. We would like to expand the Center's current 80,000 square foot footprint with more design showrooms to the north and south. In addition, we still need funding for improvements to the Design Center's facilities. We also still require a permanent operating plan in place for advertising and marketing, and we need funds to finance a full time directorship of the facility. We need to hire a leasing agent. Right now, staff from the entire Cisco Brothers business trade duties to keep the LA Design Center fully operational. This has been true since it became fully operational in 2004.

DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

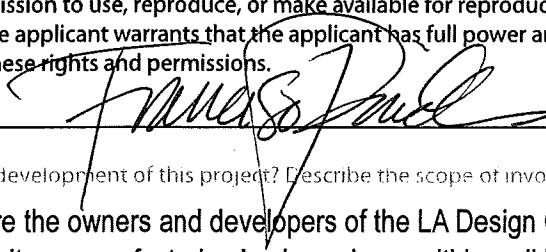
Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Name	Francisco Pinedo	Title	Owner, L.A. Design Center; CEO, Cisco Brothers
Organization	Cisco Brothers	Telephone	(323) 778-8612
Address	1933 W. 60th Street	City/State/ZIP	Los Angeles, CA 90047
Fax	(323) 778-9073	E-mail	cisco@ciscobrothers.com

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, for any purpose whatsoever, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature



1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.

My wife Alba and I (Cisco Pinedo) are the owners and developers of the LA Design Center. We both grew up and met in this neighborhood and located our furniture manufacturing business here, within walking distance of our childhood homes. We believe that family and community is the fiber that binds us together. As we succeeded in our business it was critical to us that we honor our past and create a legacy for our own children. We believe that only by showing others what is possible can a person instill hope and create lasting change. Therefore, when we decided to open an LA-based showroom, we made a deliberate decision to locate that showroom in the same South LA neighborhood that provided the labor that made our growth possible. We found the space, got the funding from our existing business and some loans, hired an architect, and recruited most of the workforce.

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

Our furniture company, Cisco Brothers, was 100% responsible for financing Phase I of the LA Design Center – procuring the real estate, the architectural plans, the construction costs, and leasing the space when the project was completed. Because this was a "side" project and a labor of love for the us, a sacrifice of some of our original vision was required: a bridge spanning the courtyard's two main structures was delayed, no interior improvements were made to the entire south wing until nearly 18 months later, and we could only develop the project in phases due to lack of funding and lack of others' confidence in our vision. We knew that our ability to procure financing for the future phases was contingent upon the success of Phase I.

In addition, we had to compromise our desire for complete physical openness to the community by erecting a security gate. Acknowledging that security was a serious issue, we had to find a way, through design, to both secure the site and maintain a connection to the street. For us, the project would have been meaningless if we could not have that sense of openness to our community. We do leave the security gate wide open during business hours; it is only closed on weekends and at night.

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used?

We financed the LA Design Center with our own monies and loans, using Cisco Brothers as collateral. We believe that we were able to trade on our personal relationships and the genuineness of our convictions to make this project come to life. We knew that if we succeeded, other people, in particular the city government, would take notice and participate in the subsequent phases. As a result of our success with the first phase, the city has applied for federal government assistance to clean up neighboring environmental hazards and to fund land acquisition. Our banking partner Merrill Lynch has been so pleased with our success that they are looking into how they can use our development model with other clients.

DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

4. How did the economic impacts of this project on the community compare with or differ from other projects you have been involved in?

Because neither Cisco Brothers, nor Alba and I, are developers, we have no similar experiences to use for comparison. As a business owner, we have some experience with moving our factory, and the resulting effects that even such minor moves have on an immediate community and its job seekers. This project, however, enabled us to have far broader impact – not only through bringing back to life an existing pair of buildings, but by creating a place of pride for the community, and also – very importantly – by drawing other Los Angelenos, from the more affluent parts of town, into the “inner city” to experience (and buy) good design. This is something they probably never dreamed of existed in the heart of South LA.

There are other experiences; they vary. The people who visit us at the LA Design Center range from neighbors to designers to artists to activists to tourists. I could go on and on. I will say this: The night the City of LA's Cultural Affairs Department hosted a performance for the neighborhood, and we saw the multitudes of parents walking over here with their children, we knew we had accomplished something wonderful.

With respect to economics: We'd like to see further expansion ideas come to fruition, so that we can create an even more compelling destination – which will lead to more and better jobs, greater land value, and improved services from the increased tax base and revenues. Already we are seeing some of these things happen, but the potential is far, far greater. In the meantime, we do require funds to advertise and operate the Center so that it may better serve the Community.

5. How might this project be instructive to other developers?

Persistence. Community. Doing the right thing. We did it, but it was hard. To go further, it is absolutely critical to have connections not only with city agencies but also with major cultural institutions that share a desire to improve city life, to bring jobs and services and good design to industrial, low-income neighborhoods. Our struggles included everything from lobbying the city to relocate a much needed but inappropriately placed animal shelter outside of the boundaries of our fully phased plan, to launching a guerrilla campaign to stop the removal of several totemic palm trees that act as gatekeepers to the LA Design Center. It was difficult to convey our vision of space to our City Councilman and the City in general; furthermore, elections and staff changes within these government entities created multiple disconnects that had to be bridged, and re-bridged. Once we educated the new teams, and persuaded them of the potential and also the urgency of our plan, we were able to get support. They recognized the potential far-reaching economic impact of this development and have been supporting us ever since Phase I was completed.

6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

To us, the very complexity of our city of Los Angeles meant that anything was possible – so to us, it was not unthinkable that we could create a thriving design community in the midst of what others kept referring to as “urban blight.” While it may have been naive, what we accomplished attests to the resounding power and respect afforded to individual commitment. We focused on our goals: to serve the underserved furniture manufacturing community whose members are our colleagues and our friends; and to serve the neighborhood, whose residents we grew up amongst and who molded us into the people we are today.

We are proud of the community response. We get walk-in traffic from locals who rode their skateboards in the empty parking lot as children. Person after person, standing in the community gallery or courtyard during an event, tells stories of growing up within walking distance of the Design Center, or living here still, but always having to drive elsewhere for an art show, or a musical performance, or to see examples of beautiful architecture and strong industrial design. We have become a role model for these people and their offspring.

We wish we could have been enabled to do more, faster. Growth comes at a cost: time. We would like to expand the Center's current 80,000 square foot footprint with more design showrooms to the north and south. In addition, we still need funding for improvements to the Design Center's facilities. We also still require a permanent operating plan in place for advertising and marketing, and we need funds to finance a full time directorship of the facility. We need to hire a leasing agent. Right now, staff from the entire Cisco Brothers business trade duties to keep the LA Design Center fully operational. This has been true since it became fully operational in 2004.

2007
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROFESSIONAL
CONSULTANT
PERSPECTIVE



PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other design professionals if desired.

Name	Kelli Bernard	Title	Real Estate Development Consultant
Organization	Kelli Bernard	Telephone	213.280.0880
Address	PO Box 352168	City/State/Zip	Los Angeles, California 90035
Fax		E-mail	kellibernard@sbcglobal.net

Signature



1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

At the time that we submitted an application for the Rudy Bruner Award in 2005, I was Vice President of Real Estate at Genesis LA. Genesis LA Economic Growth Corporation works to revitalize the underserved communities of Los Angeles through economic development and strategic planning. Its non-profit status allows it to provide services at low or no cost, and to support its efforts in innovative ways.

Genesis LA's Development Services Team offers innovative predevelopment solutions for complex real estate projects in difficult to develop communities in Los Angeles. Based on the long term goals and objectives of the project stakeholders, Genesis LA works to assist its clients in three distinct areas: Master Planning: Identifying required structures, open spaces, amenities and parking for a project area, then locating those elements within the site; Economic Development Strategy: Crafting the economic development vision for specified sites based on market needs and economic and real estate development feasibility. Deal Packaging: Establishing, communicating and executing realistic plans for real estate projects.

Genesis LA assisted Francisco Pinedo in determining project feasibility, preparing potential deal structures, securing public funding, and negotiating with various stakeholders, including elected officials and city departments, to reach consensus.

2. From your perspective, how was the project intended to benefit the urban environment?

Located in one of Los Angeles' most blighted communities, the project not only transformed a dilapidated, under-utilized building into a vibrant Furniture Design showcase center, it provided a sense of place/destination for the city's thriving yet under-recognized furniture manufacturing industry.

3. Describe the project's impact on the community. Please be as specific as possible.

In a community which often lacks hope and is home to dreams deferred, the LA Design Center is a shining beacon, an example of place making, economic revitalization and dreams fulfilled. It has provided jobs for local residents, served as a catalyst for private sector investment, helping to create an increase in land values by more than 100% since its opening. The Design Center serves not only as a center for commerce it has become a community center, hosting cultural and art exhibits for community groups, city agencies and local artists.

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

Due to a lack of complete site control and initial resistance or lack of shared vision from local stakeholders, the LA Design Center has had to create a phased development plan. The Design Center will be completely built out over a period of years instead of at one time. Genesis LA has helped develop a strategic phased development plan.

5. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

Economic Development practitioners often struggle with balancing the need to provide family wage jobs while revitalizing or beautifying blighted communities. The two are often framed as mutually exclusive goals, jobs vs. environmental justice, jobs vs. historic preservation, jobs vs. art, etc... yet the LA Design Center proves that the two goals can be complementary, that businesses can thrive in the inner city and add to the urban environment by developing highly "designed" and beautiful buildings and places.

The Design Center provides a sense of pride to community members. Whereas many unimagined facilities are plagued by graffiti and vandalism, the Design Center is left untagged, proving that inner cities or "poor communities" appreciate and will support highly designed urban environments.

6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The LA Design Center is by far one of the city of Los Angeles' best examples of urban renewal. Its success led to the growth and expansion of furniture manufacturing in Los Angeles and provided high-skilled manufacturing jobs as the city struggles to maintain its industrial base. In addition, the physical transformation of the site is miraculous. It has become an oasis in the midst of urban blight.

A victim of its own success, the LA Design Center has played a role in the exponential increase in adjacent land values, thus raising the cost of future development and community revitalization.

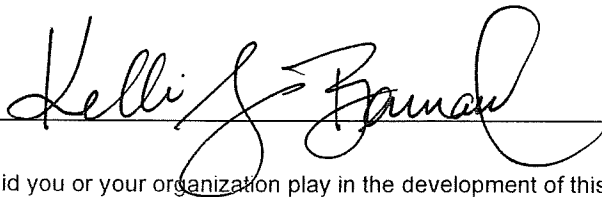
PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other design professionals if desired.

Name	Kelli Bernard	Title	Real Estate Development Consultant
Organization	Kelli Bernard	Telephone	213.280.0880
Address	PO Box 352168	City/State/Zip	Los Angeles, California 90035
Fax		E-mail	kellibernard@sbcglobal.net

Signature



1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

At the time that we submitted an application for the Rudy Bruner Award in 2005, I was Vice President of Real Estate at Genesis LA. Genesis LA Economic Growth Corporation works to revitalize the underserved communities of Los Angeles through economic development and strategic planning. Its non-profit status allows it to provide services at low or no cost, and to support its efforts in innovative ways.

Genesis LA's Development Services Team offers innovative predevelopment solutions for complex real estate projects in difficult to develop communities in Los Angeles. Based on the long term goals and objectives of the project stakeholders, Genesis LA works to assist its clients in three distinct areas: Master Planning: Identifying required structures, open spaces, amenities and parking for a project area, then locating those elements within the site; Economic Development Strategy: Crafting the economic development vision for specified sites based on market needs and economic and real estate development feasibility. Deal Packaging: Establishing, communicating and executing realistic plans for real estate projects.

Genesis LA assisted Francisco Pinedo in determining project feasibility, preparing potential deal structures, securing public funding, and negotiating with various stakeholders, including elected officials and city departments, to reach consensus.

2. From your perspective, how was the project intended to benefit the urban environment?

Located in one of Los Angeles' most blighted communities, the project not only transformed a dilapidated, under-utilized building into a vibrant Furniture Design showcase center, it provided a sense of place/destination for the city's thriving yet under-recognized furniture manufacturing industry.

3. Describe the project's impact on the community. Please be as specific as possible.

In a community which often lacks hope and is home to dreams deferred, the LA Design Center is a shining beacon, an example of place making, economic revitalization and dreams fulfilled. It has provided jobs for local residents, served as a catalyst for private sector investment, helping to create an increase in land values by more than 100% since its opening. The Design Center serves not only as a center for commerce it has become a community center, hosting cultural and art exhibits for community groups, city agencies and local artists.

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

Due to a lack of complete site control and initial resistance or lack of shared vision from local stakeholders, the LA Design Center has had to create a phased development plan. The Design Center will be completely built out over a period of years instead of at one time. Genesis LA has helped develop a strategic phased development plan.

5. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

Economic Development practitioners often struggle with balancing the need to provide family wage jobs while revitalizing or beautifying blighted communities. The two are often framed as mutually exclusive goals, jobs vs. environmental justice, jobs vs. historic preservation, jobs vs. art, etc...yet the LA Design Center proves that the two goals can be complementary, that businesses can thrive in the inner city and add to the urban environment by developing highly "designed" and beautiful buildings and places.

The Design Center provides a sense of pride to community members. Whereas many unimagined facilities are plagued by graffiti and vandalism, the Design Center is left untagged, proving that inner cities or "poor communities" appreciate and will support highly designed urban environments.

6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The LA Design Center is by far one of the city of Los Angeles' best examples of urban renewal. Its success led to the growth and expansion of furniture manufacturing in Los Angeles and provided high-skilled manufacturing jobs as the city struggles to maintain its industrial base. In addition, the physical transformation of the site is miraculous. It has become an oasis in the midst of urban blight.

A victim of its own success, the LA Design Center has played a role in the exponential increase in adjacent land values, thus raising the cost of future development and community revitalization.

2007
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
OTHER
PERSPECTIVE



OTHER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Host and Creator: DnA, KCRW Public Radio
Producer: "Which Way LA?", KCRW Public Radio
Journalist: New York Times, dwell

Name Frances Anderton Title
Organization KCRW 89.9 FM Public Radio Telephone (310) 314.4659
Address 2807 Highland Avenue, #4 City/State/ZIP Santa Monica, CA 90405
Fax (310) 314-2266 E-mail frances.anderton@kcrw.org

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, for any purpose whatsoever, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature



1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

I had no role in the development of this project but after completion I did assist in bringing it to public attention, through my work as a journalist. I reported on it when it opened in the New York Times and on my radio show, DnA: Design and Architecture, because I believed it was an important project that warranted attention from the public at large.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on the your community. Please be as specific as possible.

The design has had an impact both on its immediate neighborhood and on the wider community of designers in Los Angeles. It has illustrated how good design can be used as an engine of urban renewal in two ways: through a well-designed showroom complex that provides new uses for abandoned buildings in a way that brings pride to user and visitor; and through design in the sense of the contemporary furnishings that are on display in the showroom complex. The building not only serves as an exemplar of outstanding contemporary architecture, but also as a nexus for the furniture manufacturing industry that resides in South Los Angeles.

OTHER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

N/A

4. What do you consider to be the the most and least successful aspects of this project?

I think the project is extremely successful in welding old and new in a way that blends the excitement of modern design with the warmth and solidity of the old brick buildings. The architects have added some great touches like a sweeping staircase in the showroom, giving visitors a sense of occasion, and the detailing throughout demonstrates great pride and sense of beauty. In addition, they have created a plaza area between the different buildings in the complex, bringing a space for public functions in a neighborhood bereft of such spaces. The Design Center is a beacon of optimism, confidence and modernity in a neighborhood that had felt left behind.

OTHER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Host and Creator: DnA, KCRW Public Radio
Producer: "Which Way LA?", KCRW Public Radio
Journalist: New York Times, dwell

Name	Frances Anderton	Title	
Organization	KCRW 89.9 FM Public Radio	Telephone	(310) 314.4659
Address	2807 Highland Avenue, #4	City/State/ZIP	Santa Monica, CA 90405
Fax	(310) 314-2266	E-mail	frances.anderton@kcrw.org

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, for any purpose whatsoever, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature



1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

I had no role in the development of this project but after completion I did assist in bringing it to public attention, through my work as a journalist. I reported on it when it opened in the New York Times and on my radio show, DnA: Design and Architecture, because I believed it was an important project that warranted attention from the public at large.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on the your community. Please be as specific as possible.

The design has had an impact both on its immediate neighborhood and on the wider community of designers in Los Angeles. It has illustrated how good design can be used as an engine of urban renewal in two ways: through a well-designed showroom complex that provides new uses for abandoned buildings in a way that brings pride to user and visitor; and through design in the sense of the contemporary furnishings that are on display in the showroom complex. The building not only serves as an exemplar of outstanding contemporary architecture, but also as a nexus for the furniture manufacturing industry that resides in South Los Angeles.

OTHER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

N/A

4. What do you consider to be the the most and least successful aspects of this project?

I think the project is extremely successful in welding old and new in a way that blends the excitement of modern design with the warmth and solidity of the old brick buildings. The architects have added some great touches like a sweeping staircase in the showroom, giving visitors a sense of occasion, and the detailing throughout demonstrates great pride and sense of beauty. In addition, they have created a plaza area between the different buildings in the complex, bringing a space for public functions in a neighborhood bereft of such spaces. The Design Center is a beacon of optimism, confidence and modernity in a neighborhood that had felt left behind.

2007
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
VISUAL
REPRESENTATION



26 June 2005 Supersonic Art Show (local university art programs group show)



26 June 2005 Supersonic Art Show (local university art programs group show)



26 June 2005 Supersonic Art Show (local university art programs group show)



gallery opening



Cultural Affairs event



community event

