

Architects win AIA awards

Cost-effective designs are cited

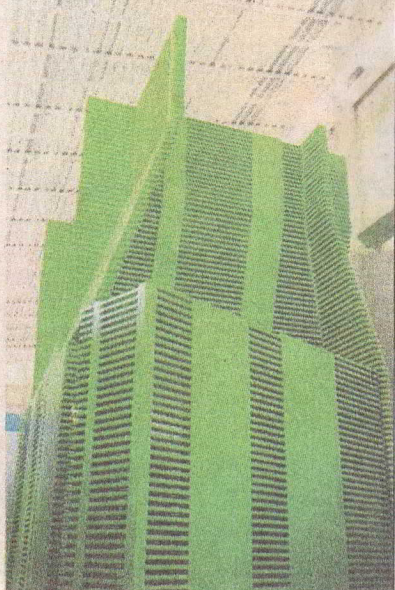
By Diane Heilenman
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The Courier-Journal

Louisville architects Roberto De Leon and Ross Primmer of De Leon & Primmer Architecture Workshop won three of nine awards given at this weekend's convention of the Kentucky chapter of the American Institute of Architects in Louisville.

"Louisville has become a good fit for us," said Primmer. The partners — both 1993 graduates of the Harvard Graduate School of Design — decided to make Louisville home after trying Charlotte, N.C., and Los Angeles.

"We were surprised to see we took home one-third of the state's

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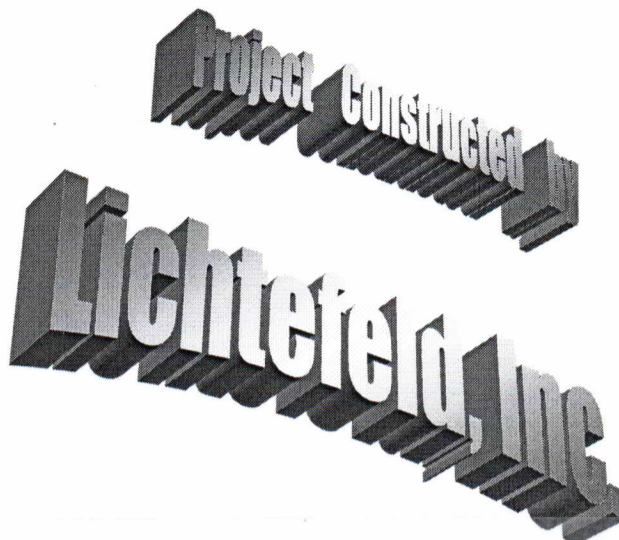
De Leon & Primmer Architectural Workshop

De Leon & Primmer won a merit award for its design of the United Mail corporate headquarters in Louisville.

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DESIGN | Architects honored at convention for high-concept, low-budget projects

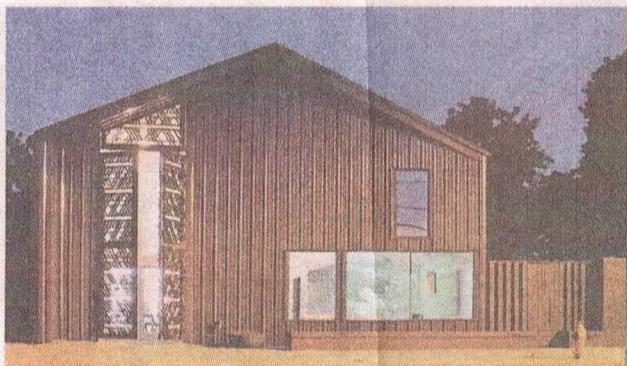
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AIA prizes this year," Primmer said. "Our heads barely fit in this big barn anymore. We may need to change up to an airplane hanger."

"This big barn" is their new live/work "Urban Barn," 117 S. Shelby St., which houses their design offices, personal condos and apartments for interns. It won a merit award. The office moved in December, said Primmer. "Roberto and I are finally in our condos, but things are still in boxes."

The jury called the dark building with its distinctive, lacy two-story doors "a superb example of an urban infill project mixing office and housing occupancies in a diverse neighborhood" and applauded the way economical materials were used to create design richness.

The workshop won an additional merit award for its United Mail corporate headquarters. Primmer noted he had done a renovation for the company in the late-1990s



De Leon & Primmer Architectural Workshop

De Leon & Primmer's "Urban Barn" on Shelby Street houses design offices, personal condos and apartments for interns.

when he was working at Bravura Corp. in Louisville. United Mail called him in for new interiors that doubled the office and plant space. The jury was, again, enthused about the De Leon & Primmer execution of "high-concept design on a low budget."

The interior, done in bold blues and greens, includes an eccentric, wooden, stacked structure, the TOT Box ("think outside the box") room. Primmer said it was created for the sales staff as a

"war strategy room" and thinking space and, also, "reflects their company's physical or mechanized Sisyphus-like work of stacking and restacking mail."

And the partners won a citation for Upland, a Prospect, Ky., residence on 25 acres done with what De Leon and Primmer call "regionally responsible design" that incorporates many elements of so-called green architecture, even as it focuses all views outside with extensive glaz-

ing and, in places, actually envelops the outdoors and brings it indoors.

The convention's top design designation, the Honor Award, went to Omni Architects of Lexington, Ky., for its University Health Service at the University of Kentucky. A massive sliver of a building shoehorned in between Limestone Avenue and existing buildings in the health segment of the UK campus, the health-services building provokes a new and exciting urban tension on this campus.

Omni also won a merit award for a cleverly worked expansion of the Veterans Administration pharmacy in Lexington that has a dynamic nighttime personality. The jury noted "the addition is true to itself and its time in its use of materials and, in spite of its very different vocabulary, works extremely well with the existing facility."

Lake/Flato Architects of San Antonio won a merit award for a new dining hall at Lexington's private Sayre

School. EOP Architects of Lexington won a citation for its design for Main & Rose residential lofts in Lexington.

Louisville's Bravura Corp. won a citation for its Waterfront Park Place high-rise condominiums with a view of the Ohio River. The jury called it "a sophisticated response to what could have been a mundane developer's project." They were especially impressed with effective planning that allows all units to have individuality inside a large-scale development. Bravura won another citation for its design for an adaptive re-use project in downtown Louisville, the Mercantile Gallery Loft Condominiums.

The jurors, all New York City architects, met in August and reviewed 44 entries. They could give as few or as many awards as they deemed fit. Jurors were Douglas A. Moss, Holzman Moss Architecture; Matthew Baird, Baird Architects; Ray H. Dovell, Platt Byard Dovell White Architects LLP.

Additionally, the AIA Kentucky made nine awards of recognition to individuals and companies, recognizing outstanding service to architecture in Kentucky.

The recipients were David R. Proffitt of Louisville, the C. Julian Oberwarth Award for an AIA member; Omni Architects of Lexington for the Distinguished Firm Award; Louis Ryan Hugg Jr. of Frankfort, Scott E. Kremer of Louisville and Martha R. Tarrant of Lexington, Distinguished Service Awards to AIA Kentucky members; John I. "Jack" Trawick of Louisville and Michael J. Hammons of Covington, the John Russell Groves Citizens Laureate Award; preservationist Bill Johnston of Lexington, an Honorary Membership; and hardware consultant William K. "Bill" Howard (1938-2008) of Nicholasville, the Allied Professional Award.

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