

## Architectural Record

### Street Smart: How to Create a City Within a City

*By Laura Raskin*

Cleveland's three largest employers—Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Clinic, and University Hospitals—sit just shy of East Cleveland, the most bombed-out part of town, where foreclosures and population decline have taken the highest toll. Also clustered around this section of Euclid Avenue, called Greater University Circle, are thriving cultural institutions. Severance Hall is home to the Cleveland Orchestra, arguably the country's best. Then there's the Cleveland Museum of Art, a 1916 Beaux-Arts building with additions by Marcel Breuer and, most recently, Rafael Viñoly. The Cleveland Institute of Art, a college of art and design, will undergo a \$5 million expansion to be completed by late 2014.

But a concentration of artistic and intellectual riches doesn't necessarily equal urbanity, especially if each institution exists on its own island. Over the last decade, the university and medical institutions, with help from the Cleveland Foundation and other local stakeholders, have been leveraging investments in and around the neighborhood to create a vibrant, connected center, with architecture and urban planning as the glue. One of the most recent projects is Uptown—San Francisco architect Stanley Saitowitz's mixed-use development, with 102 rental apartments, the area's only grocery store, a Barnes & Noble, restaurants, and other amenities on Case-owned land. Phase one was completed in August.

Saitowitz, in presenting Uptown to Case, the developer and owner MRN Ltd., neighbors, and entitlement authorities, showed photographs of London, Paris ... and Cleveland. His emphasis was on each city's 19th- and 20th-century building stock and its interaction with the street. In his mind, the challenge of Uptown was “making an urban place”: returning to the essence of what made these cities feel vital in their prime, but executing the idea in a 21st-century way.

Uptown's two buildings—172,000 square feet in total—sit across from each other on Euclid Avenue. The northern structure, called the Beach, makes a boomerang turn onto East 115th Street. The southern building, the Triangle, is shaped like a J and hooks around on East 116th Street. They could be monoliths, but they're deliberately not. Clad in white, custom-extruded ribbed aluminum panels, the facades of the concrete structures look to be varying shades of gray because the alternating vertical and horizontal ribs cast different shadows. The architect developed more than one Tetris pattern for the windows. The buildings relate but aren't identical. Alleyways slice through them to create casual shortcuts, aid circulation, and provide views. One immediate neighbor looks like a period at the southwestern end of the Uptown sentence: the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (MOCA), which opens this month in its new home designed by Farshid Moussavi, an armored hexagon clad in reflective steel panels—another strategic element in place-making.

“It was a single-destination place,” says Lillian Kuri, the Cleveland Foundation's program director for architecture, urban design, and sustainable development, of University Circle. “Uptown is already making a place where people come and do many things.” It helps that local developer wunderkind Ari Maron, 34, whose family firm MRN Ltd. owns Uptown, has been an uncynical champion of the city's transformation through new construction, renovation, and adaptive reuse. (He played the violin, which he studied at Rice University, during a presentation of Uptown to University Circle leadership.)

Saitowitz has clearly been affected by Maron's and the community's enthusiasm. “The most exciting part of the project is to see how the area has been totally transformed by these buildings. MRN and Case are incredibly can-do,” he says. “In San Francisco, everyone starts by saying no. In Cleveland, you can get a building permit in a

month.” The Beach was completed in May, the Triangle three months later; they are already 80 percent occupied, attracting the medical community, graduate students, and empty nesters. But the 20-foot-ceilinged amenities on the ground floors are meant for Case students. They've never had a Main Street.

For Saitowitz, who has focused on urban infill housing for years, the project was a chance to expand on an organizing strategy where services in each apartment line one wall in “a kind of 'flat' version of a loft,” he says. “It's a very clear service zone. The zone between that and the outer skin is less determined.” The units are similar in both the Beach and Triangle buildings: white solid surfacing in the kitchen, sliding walls that reveal bedrooms on one or both ends of the combined living/dining space. Exposed concrete floors and ceilings helped with cost savings and create an adult, but not austere, palette. Hallways are broken up by double-height common rooms, where window walls bring in daylight.

The second phase of the project, to break ground in December adjacent to the Beach building, will provide student housing for the Cleveland Institute of Art as well as rental units. Phase three, to begin construction behind MOCA in mid-2013, will be 44 one-to-three-bedroom condos. The next phases will continue the language of Uptown but at a slightly taller scale. The entire project is on track for LEED Silver certification.

Uptown signals Case's continued dedication—along with that of other local institutions—to elevating design in Cleveland and catering to a sophisticated international population of students, teachers, and medical professionals. Case's campus includes Frank Gehry's 2002 Weatherhead School of Management. It is one of the architect's best buildings, with surreal brick walls that curl and melt as they're devoured by a swooping stainless-steel roof. In October 2011, the university announced that Ralph Johnson of Perkins+Will was designing its Tinkham Veale University Center, a wedge-shaped, green-roofed student center that broke ground this spring and is meant to be the much-needed “heart” of the campus.

Uptown reiterates an adamancy that architecture animate space and connect people, not simply advertise its creator. “It's not about objects,” says Saitowitz of his practice and what he's done in Cleveland. “It's about the way architecture continues the lives of cities.”

**Completion Date:** October 2012 (phase one)

**Size:** 172,000 square feet

**Cost:** withheld

**Architect:**

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<p><b>People</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Owner:</b> MRN, LTD</p> <p><b>Architect:</b> Stanley Saitowitz / Natoma Architects, Inc 1022 Natoma Street #3 San Francisco, CA 904103 Phone 415 626 8977 Fax 415 626 8978</p> <p><i>Personnel in architect's firm who should receive special credit:</i> Stanley Saitowitz, Principal Neil Kaye, Project Architect Markus Bischoff, Project Manager Daniel Germain, Job Captain</p> <p><b>Engineer(s):</b> <i>Civil:</i> The Riverstone Coompany</p> <p><i>Structural:</i> Ebersole Structural Engineers LTD</p> <p><i>Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing:</i> WHS Engineering</p> <p><i>Fire Protection:</i> Glen W. Buelow Inc.</p> <p><b>Consultant(s):</b> <i>Landscape:</i> Field Operations</p> <p><b>General contractor:</b> Rick Maron, MRN LTD</p> <p><b>Photographer(s):</b> Rien van Rijethoven Phone 415 810 0973</p> <p><b>CAD system, project management, or other software used:</b> AutoCad</p>	<p><b>Products</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Structural system</b> PT concrete</p> <p><b>Exterior cladding</b> <i>Metal Panels:</i> custom extruded aluminum panels MG McGrath Inc Architectural Sheet Metal <i>Metal/glass curtain wall:</i> All Metro Glass <i>Moisture barrier:</i> Henry Blueskin <i>Curtain wall:</i> All Metro Glass</p> <p><b>Roofing</b> <i>Built-up roofing:</i> BASF Silicone Coating Roofing System</p> <p><b>Windows</b> <i>Metal frame:</i> Aluminum Frame – All Metro Glass</p> <p><b>Glazing</b> <i>Glass:</i> Low E, Double Glazed – All Metro Glass</p> <p><b>Doors</b> <i>Entrances:</i> All Metro Glass <i>Metal doors:</i> Babin Building Solutions, LLC <i>Wood doors:</i> Babin Building Solutions, LLC <i>Sliding doors:</i> Babin Building Solutions, LLC</p> <p><b>Hardware</b> <i>Locksets:</i> SCHLAGE</p> <p><b>Interior finishes</b> <i>Cabinetwork and custom woodwork:</i> Royal Cabinet Design Co. <i>Paints and stains:</i> Sherwin Williams Paint <i>Solid surfacing:</i> Corian <i>Floor and wall tile:</i> Daltille</p> <p><b>Conveyance</b> <i>Elevators/Escalators:</i> Gable Elevators</p>
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<http://archrecord.construction.com/projects/portfolio/2012/10/Uptown-Cleveland-Stanley-Saitowitz.asp>