

EDDIE **JONES**
ROBERT **SIEGEL**
JULIE **SNOW+**
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CHAPTER 4

LAND PORTS OF ENTRY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Due to the uniqueness of some federal services, GSA has been in a position to invent all-new building types to house those programs. The land port of entry exemplifies this privilege. Straddling the borders that the United States shares with Canada and Mexico, land ports are highly secure and often remotely located. The teams hired by GSA to create new border facilities have collaborated intensely to make them sustainable, too. The following interviews recount the most visible of these efforts. Collectively, they also illustrate that, to minimize a building's environmental footprint, sustainability strategies must be deployed on a highly individual and site-specific basis.



EDDIE JONES

SINCE RESETTLING FROM HIS NATIVE OKLAHOMA TO PHOENIX, ARCHITECT **EDDIE JONES** HAS BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST. HIS BUILDINGS ARE WIDELY PRAISED FOR THEIR DEFERENCE TO THE LANDSCAPE, THE INTRICACIES OF WHICH HE BECAME HIGHLY AWARE DURING HIS FIRST YEARS IN ARIZONA. HERE HE EXPLAINS THAT HIS SENSITIVE APPROACH TO SITE NOT ONLY AIMS FOR AN INTERESTING FORMAL COMPOSITION, BUT ALSO CELEBRATES HISTORICAL APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABILITY AS WELL AS MATERIALS THAT BEAUTIFY IN PUNISHING CLIMATES. JONES SERVED AS FACULTY AT TALIESIN EAST AND WEST SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, AND HE WAS THE BRUCE GOFF CHAIR OF CREATIVE ARCHITECTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA, COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE. HE RUNS JONES STUDIO WITH HIS BROTHER NEAL.

ANOTHER ACCOLADE FOR JONES STUDIO WAS THE SCOTTSDALE MUSEUM OF ART'S INVITATION TO THE FIRM TO RELOCATE TO ITS GALLERY AND OPERATE IN PUBLIC VIEW. IT WAS DURING THIS FOUR-MONTH PERIOD IN 2006 THAT THE COMPANY WON THE COMMISSION TO DESIGN THE EXPANSION AND MODERNIZATION OF THE MARIPOSA LAND PORT OF ENTRY IN NOGALES, ARIZONA, THROUGH GSA'S DESIGN EXCELLENCE PROGRAM. DURING THIS *VISION+VOICE* INTERVIEW, JONES EXPLAINS HOW THAT PROJECT ON THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER CULMINATES A CAREER OF THINKING DEEPLY ABOUT THE DESERT REGION.

EDDIE JONES: Back in 1973, when I first arrived in Arizona, I was one year out of college and not well traveled. I go to work for the oldest architectural firm in town, which had just been bought by a firm out of Omaha that specialized in Housing and Urban Development's program for Native American housing. This firm sent me to all four corners of Arizona taking photographs. I was in very remote places, very historic places. I saw how the pueblo was built. I saw how the Apaches built. Those fundamental lessons I still carry with me. Architects have remarkable technology available to us today, and that is wonderful and futuristic. But without the fundamentals of passive design, technology becomes diluted.

I'll never forget the first time I saw a ramada. The four columns are typically palo verde tree trunks. The shade structure that it supports is made of the skeleton of the saguaro cactus, with ocotillo branches running in the opposite direction to knit it all together. All natural materials. All biodegradable. Beautiful shade. Naturally ventilated. It had it all, and one could find refuge from the excessive desert temperatures there.

If you look at great buildings throughout history, they were responsible buildings. They knew about conservation, and about human comfort. They didn't have the benefit of technology. Because we occupy the same planet, those early lessons are still valid and applicable.

When I'm speaking with a client or a design committee or user group, I talk about where the sun comes up and where the sun goes down, where a view might be, where one side of a building might be windy and another side might be warm. Then I demonstrate how design decisions are a result of these natural forces. They're inarguable. Nobody is going to deny the obvious. And so I've been very successful in "selling" my designs, because I ground them in fundamentals. If you are building in the Sonoran Desert and forget that fact, then the desert will destroy you.

Regionalism and sustainability work in tandem. There is the responsiveness to climate. There is the responsible use of materials—but they have to be beautiful materials, because beauty motivates stewardship. You know, we think buildings can be sustained all by themselves. But they have to inspire us. They have to enrich our lives. Otherwise, we'll throw them away, regardless of how much energy they're saving.

Our first public project was a tiny visitor's center north of Winslow on the edge of the Hopi reservation, in Homolovi State Park. I felt it necessary to celebrate the ancient stone ruins there; it seemed very appropriate that this building also be made of stone. The fact that it was a public building really meant a lot to me. I felt an even higher sense of responsibility to do a really good job. It was on the edge of a historical place, and it was in a landscape that had been protected and honored. So there was strong motivation to be very respectful and to create an architecture that was appropriate and sensitive. I want a community to be better because of the building we put there.

My first assignment as a member of the National Registry of Peer Professionals was to review a land port of entry in McAllen, Texas. We met in Dallas. There, I started to learn about land ports of entry, and I began to meet wonderful people like [GSA chief architect] Les Shepherd and other peers. You can't help but be better for having those experiences. The fact that we're there to collaborate with the participating architects, and to help projects get better, is a wonderful experience.

Later, when I read about the Mariposa land port of entry RFQ, I told my brother and business partner that we would go after this. It's great when you're naïve, because there's no fear. My brother says, "We have no experience in this. This is huge." I go, "You know, Neal, I think we do have a chance. This is our community, this is our home." So we submitted.

The most important consultant that we needed to identify, in order to have any credibility in competing for the Mariposa port, was a civil engineer. This is a 54-acre site, and obviously traffic patterns are very important. Although we had never worked with Stantec Engineering, we knew we needed them and GSA needed them. They were very, very qualified engineers. Their company founder was one of the first in line in the sustainability movement, and we hit it off.

The Mariposa port was originally built in 1973. On my first trip there, I could see it was completely inadequate for the commerce that had evolved in the intervening decades. And it was brutal. It was hot and it was dusty, there were exhaust fumes. I also was really impressed by the officers' professionalism. They care about law enforcement, but they care about people too. They deserved a safe and high-quality work environment.

Because it was such a harsh environment, it was easy to think, Wouldn't it be wonderful if the experience of crossing from Mexico into the United States were like passing through a garden? It's a little ironic that we also thought of a 19th-century railroad switching yard as a method of handling a linear transportation system in a 21st-century land port of entry. But there are a lot of similarities between the two. So we have that organizing scheme combined with treating people with respect by giving them a pleasant garden experience.

Maybe you've sensed a disparity between the shade and the sound of water with the fact that Customs and Border Protection is doing serious law enforcement. And it is the most contentious border in the United States. So you have these competing situations, and they have to be overlaid and balanced somehow. What a great and important challenge to be charged with resolving.

There needs to be leadership, especially early on. The Design Excellence Program made sure that happened. I

wasn't directed to collect a certain amount of rainwater on site; it was never that prescriptive. I had the encouragement of GSA's Public Buildings Service to not be intimidated by the scale of these decisions, and that was wonderful. The architecture is about recognizing forces that are at work on this site, both natural forces and the experience of crossing the border and being inspected.

Take the infrequency of rain. When it does rain, it should be captured and stored. The scale of this is huge. There is a 1-million-gallon underground storage tank to harvest all that rainwater and irrigate 54 acres of very harsh desert. In addition, we designed the inspection stations to have these huge cantilevered ramadas. With the ramadas we're metering down the light levels, and we're creating shade. And it's far more comfortable to sit under the shade of a sun-filtering device than it is to wait in the sun for your turn to be asked intimidating questions. There's a gentleness to that process, and you're also seeing this beautiful landscaping. I think that helps relieve anxiety, and extends a gesture of welcome to the United States.

Design decisions have to work on at least two levels. One level has to do with aesthetics; the other level has to do with function. If something functions and it's not beautiful, it's not good enough. If it's only beautiful and it doesn't function, it's not good enough. So you have to satisfy and balance the two extremes. Even better is a design that can do multiple things—a sun filter that becomes a security overlook and captures rainwater at the same time, for example. We try to make our design decisions do a lot of jobs.

Sustainability, in a sentence, is giving more than you take. It's as simple as that. It's an ethical position.



ROBERTSIEGEL

GSA HAS PLAYED AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF **ROBERT SIEGEL'S** NEW YORK-BASED PRACTICE, WHICH TODAY IS KNOWN FOR MODERN BUILDINGS AND INTERIORS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES AND ASIA. SIEGEL BEGAN APPLYING FOR COMMISSIONS THROUGH THE AGENCY'S DESIGN EXCELLENCE PROGRAM IN 1995, JUST FOUR YEARS AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ROBERT SIEGEL ARCHITECTS. FOR GSA, HE HAS SINCE COMPLETED A HIGH-PERFORMANCE FACADE RENOVATION IN PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA, AS WELL AS LAND PORTS OF ENTRY THAT INCLUDE THE LARGEST LEED GOLD-CERTIFIED BUILDING OF ITS TYPE ON THE NORTHERN BORDER, IN CALAIS, MAINE. PERHAPS MORE NOTEWORTHY, PRINCIPLES OF FEDERAL BUILDING INVESTMENT INFORM THE ENTIRE OUTLOOK OF ROBERT SIEGEL ARCHITECTS. THE FIRM'S PHILOSOPHY READS IN PART, "A PUBLIC BUILDING SHOULD SERVE AS A POTENT VISUAL AFFIRMATION OF AMERICA'S COMMITMENT TO CONSERVE RESOURCES TODAY AND TO LEAVE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE FOR OUR CHILDREN TOMORROW."

SIEGEL'S INVOLVEMENT WITH GSA BEGAN WITH WINNING A NATIONWIDE IDIQ CONTRACT FOR THE DESIGN OF LAND PORTS. FOR *VISION+VOICE* HE DESCRIBES THE INSIGHTS HE HAS GAINED INTO THIS NEW BUILDING TYPE OVER THE COURSE OF FIVE PROJECTS AND TWO COMPETITIONS. HE ALSO EXPLAINS THE SUSTAINABILITY APPLICATIONS UNIQUE TO THIS THRESHOLD CONDITION.

ROBERT SIEGEL: I started submitting my qualifications to GSA through the Design Excellence Program in 1995. In 2002 we won a project, and since then we've designed land ports of entry and other federal buildings. We've done a land port in Calais, Maine; public entrance courtyard for the Ribicoff Federal Building and Courthouse in Hartford; a program development study for another land port in Otay Mesa East, California; and we're executive architect for a land port in Van Buren, Maine, whose concept was led by Julie Snow Architects. We've completed feasibility studies, we just finished bridging documents for a CBP [U.S. Customs and Border Protection] housing project in Presidio, Texas, and we're almost finished with the replacement of existing building skin with a new, high-performance curtain wall on a federal building in Pierre, South Dakota.

We entered GSA at an interesting, transitional time, when the Public Buildings Service was refocusing its attention on both federal courthouses and land ports of entry. While the courthouse is an awesome building type for its history and for its important role in communities, the land port of entry is great, too, because there's almost no precedent for it. It's a new type. And with security constantly evolving, combine that with sustainability goals and we have very fertile ground for doing work that is innovative while serving the very, very important needs of CBP. I think one of the reasons that GSA shortlisted us when it did is because no one had experience; selection was all about how architects could reconceive a building perceived as uninteresting into a safe and secure work of architecture.

A land port of entry, more than anything, is a process. It's not a building or landscape—we build enclosed space and landscape around movement. It also must provide the first image of America to people crossing the border. It is a great opportunity to test ideas, and CBP is very open-minded about experimentation and about tweaking processes to improve efficiency and security.

For land ports of entry, sustainability makes a lot of sense. These are remote facilities for which survivability is a criterion of CBP's. Achieving net-zero energy or going off the grid completely would make sense in locations where the power supply is not reliable.

Also, GSA, as a public agency responsible for a huge real estate portfolio, has a mandate to reduce these buildings' energy consumption. We need these buildings to be extremely efficient and high-performing. And that doesn't just mean following the LEED checklist, but also minimizing the energy to construct these buildings, recycling old buildings whenever possible, and making new buildings easily adaptable to other uses over time. I think GSA is stepping up in all those respects.

We also have to change the attitudes of the people who occupy these buildings; we have to do a little expectation management about what it means to work in a high-performing public building. If we want to walk around in T-shirts whether it's 0 or 100 degrees outside, if we have to have all the lights on, if we always want massive floor plates that prevent daylight penetration, then we're always going to use a ton of energy.

It always struck me as odd that many hybrid cars look like their regular selves, because the new technology should be an opportunity to invent a new form and new patterns of use. We're in a time where we're getting our heads around the technology first—but integrating technology into the spatial concept is really critical to pushing these fields forward. Sustainable buildings should look different. They should express their sustainable performance.

That standards of security and sustainability are always evolving makes for a very dynamic building type. No two buildings need to be the same, and there's great beauty in that. But these land ports do need to have some traits in common, such as incorporating lessons learned from prior

buildings. Ultimately, we can take those bits and pieces, those achievements and lessons learned, and combine them into an architecture that's exciting and highly functional. So what we're really talking about is experimentation within a constraint, innovation that's not necessarily prototypical. And that's a responsible approach to using public money.

We also conduct testing before rolling out new approaches. For the land port of entry in Calais, we wanted to install a shade screen around the building. It is an expanded aluminum mesh, and nothing like it had been done on a federal building before. Not surprisingly, there was huge concern that this mesh would fill with ice, becoming impossible to see through. We were able to mock it up on site in wintertime, and the CBP officers made sure that it was functioning properly from a visibility perspective.

No project is too small to not have a lot of thought put into it. No project is too small to not be crafted really well. There is no project that shouldn't function perfectly. Setting that as the standard of public building—making sure that good quality is actually referred to as the normative—is a real benefit to our society. Otherwise we're handicapping our future for short-term gains. Building and renovating in ways that are enduring is the mission that distinguishes public architecture from much of commercial architecture.

There's no one particular way to achieve that enduring quality. At the land port currently going up in Van Buren, Maine, we have all sorts of sustainable technology; similarly, at Otay Mesa East, we have microturbines on the building, we have photovoltaic arrays, geothermal fields. Yet in Calais we have none of that. The building is like the people who live in Maine; it's humble, it's resourceful. In Calais we have bioswales instead of hard drainage. Bioswales collect and filter rainwater naturally, and they also provide the building with a defense benefit, because you can't drive a truck into it. Instead of putting up a visible barrier, the landscape and the building are really working all together toward several goals.

FOR LAND PORTS OF ENTRY, SUSTAINABILITY MAKES A LOT OF SENSE. ACHIEVING NET-ZERO ENERGY OR GOING OFF THE GRID COMPLETELY WOULD MAKE SENSE IN LOCATIONS WHERE THE POWER SUPPLY IS NOT RELIABLE.

Something is unique about Calais: If you think about a land port of entry, it's a building in the middle of a highway, with all sorts of trucks and other vehicles going past it. Yet you have to get fresh air into a building, which we didn't want to channel from the roadway. Instead, the land port has a courtyard space designed into it, in order to provide cleaner air as well as a quiet space for contemplation.

I think a building can possess a high-tech concept, but that it can be made of low-tech parts that are easy to fix and maintain. Especially in a remote area this is important, because it makes it more likely for that building to be monitored and maintained to last for a long time. A building located in a major city in the United States has access to all kinds of facilities expertise that a land port may not. Also, a site like Calais has a lot of acreage on which we can pursue low-tech sustainability strategies. In a more constrained situation, we would have to resort to technology or gadgets to maximize our energy performance and overall sustainability. So I think deployment of an individual project's sustainable strategies is as driven by site as it is driven by the client and their expectations.



JULIE SNOW+ SHANE COEN

JULIE SNOW LEADS A DESIGN PRACTICE IN MINNEAPOLIS WHOSE APPROACH TO THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT EXPLORES MATERIAL AND DETAILING. SINCE FIRST SPECIALIZING IN INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES, JULIE SNOW ARCHITECTS HAS GRADUATED TO LARGER AND MORE COMPLEX COMMISSIONS, INCLUDING PUBLIC WORK. IN THIS INTERVIEW, SNOW TRACES THE EVOLUTION OF HER FIRM, AND THE ROLE OF SEVERAL GSA PROJECTS IN THAT GROWTH. SHE IS JOINED BY **SHANE COEN**, PRINCIPAL-IN-CHARGE AND FOUNDER OF THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE STUDIO COEN+PARTNERS: SNOW PARTNERED WITH COEN TO COMPLETE A LAND PORT OF ENTRY IN WARROAD, MINNESOTA. THEY WERE ALSO COMMISSIONED BY GSA TO CONCEIVE A LAND PORT IN VAN BUREN, MAINE, THAT HAS SINCE BEEN COMPLETED BY A DESIGN-BUILD TEAM THAT INCLUDES ROBERT SIEGEL ARCHITECTS. FOR *VISION+VOICE*, THE COLLABORATORS DISCUSS THIS PAIR OF HIGHLY ACCLAIMED LAND PORTS, UNDERSCORING HOW ARCHITECTURAL AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN CAN SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER TO MAXIMIZE A PROJECT'S SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE.

JULIE SNOW ARCHITECTS' MANY ACCOLADES INCLUDE THE AIA HONOR AWARD, PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE AWARD, AND HOLCIM NORTH AMERICAN BRONZE AWARD. COEN+PARTNERS HAS EARNED MORE THAN 25 INDUSTRY AWARDS SINCE ITS INCEPTION. OF NOTE IS ITS 2003 PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE CITATION FOR THE REDESIGN OF THE MAYO PLAN #1 COMMUNITY IN ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA, WHICH WAS ONLY THE SECOND TIME A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE FIRM WON AN AWARD IN THE PROGRAM'S HISTORY.

JULIE SNOW: Our architecture is frequently described as elegant and simple, but I think our buildings also have distinctive personalities. This evolves through our critical investigation of detail and material to understand the building as both a tactile and visual experience.

Our studio often takes on projects that are a bit unusual, maybe a little bit outside the boundaries of architecture. We've done projects like a dog collar and "telematic" table. So the idea of doing the temporary courthouse for the Warren E. Burger Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse project was an intriguing opportunity. Due to its temporary nature, our courts architect Dick Gilyard suggested that we might conceive of the project as a stage set. With this and the project's aggressive schedule in mind, we developed a design strategy that used panels of blue glazing along the corridor to bring natural light into the courtroom, combined with plate steel folded to form the bench, jury box, witness stand, and attorney tables.

With minimal fabrication, this single material provided the structure, the finish, and the required bullet resistance. Fortunately, we were working with very open-minded judges who allowed us the latitude to put them behind steel plate.

JS: We begin our projects by doing a fair amount of research of economic, cultural, and landscape contexts. During this research, we're peeling away various layers of a project—we're not really designing anything yet.

Our work is often about conveying a sense of place through architecture, which requires studying physical landscape as well as the political, cultural, and economic contexts. Another absolutely critical piece of this research is to get a very vivid understanding of how a building will be used—to really comprehend our clients' operations. In our land port in Warroad, we developed a deep understanding of how the officers work and think about their work.

In a certain sense, the experience of passing through a land port is very orchestrated, but for the visitor it involves a bit of anxiety. Meeting an officer is coming face to face with authority. Yet from the officer's point of view, he should always be within eyesight of his fellow officers, to have backup in case of an incident. By understanding these motivations and processes, we can give our clients a building that performs well for them.

"Integrated design process" typically refers to building information modeling. We think of integrated design more as a methodology than a tool. Our office really began as a space in which we would convene all of our engineers and other consultants to collaborate on a project. For us, the key to engaging many voices on a project is to withhold your own design voice: to lead by really listening and starting the creative process, not by setting forth a particular agenda. It's very important to defer your presence, in order to hear every voice at the table.

Sustainability for us begins with the integrated project team. We don't want a laundry list of sustainability tactics to layer onto the design. We want the pieces of the project to work together so that each sustainable tactic is related to another. These do not perform in a singular way but are multifunctioning.

Take the land port in Van Buren, for instance. Interestingly, it is such a large site that the drive to the port was quite long before entering the secure portion. Our intent was to make that experience into something. We incorporated berms that provide not only visual variety, but also play a part in the port's security strategy—appearing like moguls, the landscape elements prevent people from leaving the road and bypassing the inspection process. They also slow stormwater as it washes across the site toward the St. John River. This kind of integrated design requires having everybody at the table, discussing how the design will perform across many measures.

At Warroad we were very interested in investigating ground source heat pumps. We inherited a very wet site, so a good amount of the construction dollars were needed for the foundation system. But we found that, through ground source heat pumps, we could turn that poor soil into an advantage. Geothermal heating performs well in those soil conditions and is often used in residences in that area, so it was something that could be locally maintained.

Perhaps the strongest link between Shane's office and ours is that we both emphasize the broader context of a project before we dive in. When we're working with colleagues, we want to be able to engage them before the form of the building is set, while we're still posing questions about what this place is about.

SHANE COEN: Preparing for our second-round interview for the Warroad project, we had an amazing story to tell about the history of the region and what it's like to drive through it. Going back and forth between quick sketches and ideas, we uncovered things. So it wasn't like one studio did all the research and the other did all the drawing. It was way more interactive. Research, idea, sketch, drawing. That's how we wound up presenting in the interview, and it was a very dynamic presentation.

JS: It was great. To mine those possibilities is essential. To have a colleague that's willing to go through that evolutionary thinking process with you is essential.

The northern border at Warroad has this incredible vastness. Giving the land port and its immediate site presence in this dramatic, flat, expansive landscape was key. Van Buren was a completely different question. The site is much more topographic, located within the St. John River valley. It is heavily identified with Acadian culture. The design team came together for awhile, and then we let everybody go off and do their own thing. We lost our landscape colleagues for about a day: they were in the library—

SC:—reading about the original plat lines, the potato farming, and Acadian culture. When you get two offices like ours together, where there's not a lot of ego flying around and everybody is searching for the right idea, good things happen.

The vastness that Julie was speaking about at Warroad was really fascinating, because she always talked about the building as being quiet but symbolic and integrated into the site. Our diagrams from the very beginning reached back for miles. We were like, We'll start an ecological process three miles down the road, as a kind of buildup of anticipation.

With a highway that goes on and on forever, you can't help but think at that scale.

JS: I think, in addition to landscape architects, we have an equal collaboration with all of our engineers and other specialists. With land ports, that's honestly wonderful, because we're literally inventing a new building typology.

SC: You can't talk to anyone who's done a new land port of entry who doesn't speak incredibly enthusiastically about the process and the outcome. We're creating the first thing people get to see as they come into our country; of course, the land port also is a symbol for anyone who's leaving. These are dynamic opportunities. Just the transportation functions that happen around these buildings are incredible. The traffic engineering alone is enormous. So take the idea of creating a symbolic, contextual project; of creating a seamless solution between engineering, architecture, and landscape architecture; of weaving the best security through all of it. The potentials are enormous. There's no way a project team is not going to be wildly enthusiastic about designing a land port.

JS: At the same time I think it's a frustration for some architects who are very excited about doing public work, because land ports defy the notion of public space that one

learns from courthouses. It's a different typology. We're really talking about an experience that begins in a car surrounded by a ton of signage, which is re-released into the landscape after inspection. We believe that the land-port building and the landscape design must evolve together to create this different kind of public space. The relationship between place, the inspection process, and port security, as well as the experience of passing through the port, come up continually through the design process.

sc: It's subtle. If the architect and landscape architect were to have a truly back-and-forth process, you're inspiring each other to play off each other's ideas. And that started so early in Warroad that it's difficult to pin down who was responsible for what.

The same goes for Van Buren. Our understanding of the site and of the architecture evolved with every site visit and research effort. So it's hard to define a single idea of the context and the architecture as belonging to one group or another. Our perspective has been pretty unified since the start of the project, of wanting to create a sequence that takes you to and through the building. The experience is a little more dynamic in Van Buren, because of the cultural history of the region, but you're still setting up an interaction between the traveler and the built environment. You're setting up a rhythm, in order to present the building to the traveler.

js: A lot of it had to do with pattern making—looking at patterns in the landscape and relating them to patterns on the building.

I have to give GSA an enormous amount of credit for leveraging our studio's capabilities and in leading large project teams. It's given us the ability to demonstrate that a small, intense, focused look at a design can be applied to a project that is much larger and more complex. And for us one of the greatest opportunities is the breadth of voices that

GSA brings to a project. Now, we have assembled very large, very specialized teams because we know that on the other side of the table, GSA has a very large and very specialized team of people reviewing our work. And fundamentally I think that speaks to the leadership that GSA has assumed to raise the level of architectural quality in its portfolio. In fact, I would say that when you look at GSA leadership, you immediately think design leadership, you think sustainable leadership. I think there is an emphasis on design across the board at GSA.

It's been a great honor to work for GSA and with GSA. I've been able to learn so much from everybody. As a designer of GSA work, the agency allows us to have a voice: Before we started working with GSA, our clients tended to have very discreet functional objectives. They also had aspirations for architecture that were very challenging. When we began to work with GSA, it was a time when the agency's combined goals of high functionality and inspiring architecture were expanded to incorporate sustainable strategies for 100-year buildings and public spaces. That really allowed our practice to operate in a much broader dimension.

You're looking at building a 100-year building. You're looking at the regional context. You're looking at conveying very lofty aspirations as well as making very practical and streamlined workplaces. So for me the fact that GSA has raised the bar consistently is incredibly important. Though we were very excited to win significant recognition for the Warroad and Van Buren land ports, this insistence on quality isn't just design in terms of winning design awards. It's design across all measures of performance.

U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION AND THE DESIGN EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

Public buildings are a part of a nation's legacy. They are symbolic of what Government is about, not just places where public business is conducted.

Since its establishment in 1949, the U.S. General Services Administration has been responsible for creating federal workplaces, and for providing all the products and services necessary to make these environments healthy and productive for federal employees and cost-effective for American taxpayers. As builder for the federal civilian government and steward of many of our nation's most valued architectural treasures, GSA is committed to preserving and adding to America's architectural and artistic legacy.

GSA established the Design Excellence Program in 1994 to better achieve these mandates of public architecture. Under this program, administered by the Office of the Chief Architect, GSA has engaged many of the finest architects, designers, engineers, and artists working in America today to design the future landmarks of our nation. Through collaborative partnerships, GSA is implementing the goals of the 1962 *Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture*: producing facilities that reflect the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability of the federal government, emphasizing designs that embody the finest contemporary and architectural thought; avoiding an official style; and incorporating the work of living American artists in public buildings. In this effort, each building is to be both an individual expression of excellence and part of a larger body of work representing the best that America's designers and artists can leave to later generations.

To find the best, most creative talent, the Design Excellence Program has simplified the way GSA selects architects and engineers for construction and major renovation projects and opened up opportunities for emerging talent, small, small disadvantaged, and women-owned businesses. The program recognizes and celebrates the creativity and diversity of the American people.

The Design Excellence Program is the recipient of a 2003 National Design Award from the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, and of the 2004 Keystone Award from the American Architectural Foundation.



U.S. General Services Administration