

BART riders sound off to new general manager

PHIL MATIER



New BART General Manager **Robert Powers** is on listening tour of the embattled commuter system.

And, boy, is he getting an earful. "I was coming in on a Richmond train last week," rider **Bill Brown** told him the other day. "There was a homeless guy sprawled out on the seat who has s— himself. It was a wonderful odor and it cleared out everybody in the car," said Brown, who commutes into San Francisco daily from El Cerrito del Norte Station.

"We need cleaner trains and fewer fare jumpers," said another commuter standing in line with Brown at Civic Center Station.

Matier continues on B11

Dems must open doors to impeaching Trump

Democrats, beware. You could be impeaching your own credibility with these secret impeachment hearings into President Trump's dealings with Ukraine.

Americans inherently distrust any kind of government action that takes place out of public view, whether it's a city council closed session or a closed-door congressional hearing.

For years, Democrats have led the charge for transparency in government, be it foreign policy or investigations into police shootings. Now these same Democrats are going behind closed doors to get the goods on Trump.

They can point to Republicans' private interviews during their endless Benghazi investigations as just-

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WILLIE'S WORLD

By Willie Brown



Bay Area

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Obituary: **Mary Margaret 'Moo' Anderson**, modern art collector and benefactor **B12**

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE AND SFCHRONICLE.COM | Sunday, October 27, 2019 | Section B ★★★★★

Architect going far past twisting towers

By John King

To understand why Jeanne Gang is a deeply important architect, not just a spinner of eye-catching forms, check out her four Bay Area projects.

There's Mira, the shimmering condominium tower near the Embarcadero that swirls upward like a blunt corkscrew. At China Basin, a bayfront parking lot will be transformed into offices and housing by a team of architects that Gang helped assemble.

But the Chicago architect and her firm, Studio Gang, also have designed a new campus for California College of the Arts

"The shape has a lot to do with trying to be sustainable."

Jeanne Gang, architect and founder of Studio Gang

that will emphasize environmental sustainability. She's even tackling one of the least glamorous building types of all, a government office building for San Mateo County.

The eclectic mix of projects is a timely reminder that architecture should engage broader cultural needs. It also reflects the engaged curiosity of a designer whose work has earned her a spot on the Time 100 and a MacArthur Fellowship, as well as architectural awards and developer commissions.

"I'm lucky enough to work on projects I'm fascinated by," Gang, 55, said in a phone interview this month. "And I love my work, so I'm working all the time."

Studio Gang opened an office last year in San Francisco, a light-filled space in Dogpatch that

Gang continues on B10



Liz Hafalla / The Chronicle



Mira SF

Above: Mira, the first building on the West Coast designed by Chicago architect Jeanne Gang, is a 39-story residential tower near completion at Folsom and Spear streets.

Left: Gang, who opened an S.F. office in 2018, is working on several other Bay Area projects.

City seeks lifeline for meth users

Sobering center proposed to offer refuge, treatment

By Dominic Fracassa

There's a reason they call it "speed."

It can be smoked, snorted, swallowed or pushed through a needle into a waiting vein. And as methamphetamine saws its way into the bloodstream, flooding the brain's pleasure centers with dopamine, it induces a rush of euphoria, heightened energy and acute alertness.

The high can last for up to 16 hours and often comes with agitation, hallucinations and paranoia, sometimes causing users to become aggressive or violent. Then comes the crash as the sensation fades, leaving a hole that only more meth can fill. For people already suffering from mental illness, the effects can be all the more debilitating.

"In the beginning, everything seems super good. Things are falling apart, but you don't see it right away. It's a fantasy," said Isaac Jackson, who struggled with meth for years before getting clean and is now president of the San

Sobering continues on B3

Huge hurdle to bold plan for safe drug injection site

In Mayor London Breed's vision, a mobile trailer sits outside a health facility in San Francisco. Inside the safe injection site on wheels are case managers and health workers armed with clean syringes, cotton balls and tourniquets.

Users can walk inside with their own heroin or other illegal drug and inject with staffers on hand to help ensure they don't overdose. They can ride out their high in the adjacent health facility and learn about drug treatment services there, too.

A nonprofit created solely to run the trailer manages it and maintains no other assets. It owns no building. That way, if federal authorities seize the illegal enterprise, all they get are a trailer and drug paraphernalia.

The best part of this sensible idea? Fewer peo-

Knight continues on B2

HEATHER KNIGHT

On San Francisco



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BAY AREA

Architect goes beyond twisting towers

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now holds six architects. There are 89 staffers in Chicago and another 38 in New York. But unlike firms where branch offices operate with near-autonomy, or where headquarters calls the shots, Studio Gang draws on various staffers as needed.

“Things are pretty fluid,” said Steve Wiesenthal, who heads the San Francisco office. “We really do operate as a single design studio.”

All three offices are engaged in the Mission Rock project, where the San Francisco Giants and developer Tishman Speyer will start site work this winter to turn the team’s parking lot at China Basin into a compact realm of housing towers, office buildings and public space.

Gang conceived the centerpiece of the 10.5-acre first phase, a 23-story residential tower with floors stacked casually like books on their side. She also drew up the list of potential architects that the developer used to decide who to hire. Beside Studio Gang there is Workac of New York, MVRDV from the Netherlands and Henning Larsen of Denmark. Another New York firm, Scape, is landscape architect for the 5-acre waterside park.

It’s an ongoing collaboration of people who shared walking tours of San Francisco and fashioned a set of shared principles — “make podiums into ‘mesas’ that enliven their surroundings” is one — before design work started.

“The outcome has been really satisfying but I must admit, there was a deep pit in my stomach,” when Gang proposed the ongoing back-and-forth, said Carl Shannon, managing director of Tishman Speyer’s San Francisco office. “There are some great firms out there that would not collaborate (well) this way.”

The egalitarian approach by five firms — four of which are led by women — is one that the participants savor.

“There’s been a genuine philosophy of radical sharing, and that’s liberating,” said Kate Orff, the founder of Scape and, like Gang, the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, often called a “genius grant.” “It’s the anti-‘master planner’ master plan.”

The project for San Mateo County, in its own way, is equally adventurous.

It’s an administration building coupled with a remake of the county’s government campus on the edge of downtown Redwood City. Four stories of offices — shaped from above like an angled elongated doughnut — will sit atop six sculpted columns rising 32 feet to clear room for a free-standing, glass-enclosed Board of Supervisors’ chamber and a ground-floor plaza that flows into surrounding spaces.

The project, which breaks ground in December, is designed to generate as much energy on-site as the county needs to operate the building. As for the upper floors, which overlap one another, they’re laid out in part to reduce heat gain by deflecting direct sunlight during the day.

“The shape has a lot to do with trying to be sustainable — we’ve been working on the concept of solar carving in all our buildings,” including



Tishman Speyer



Studio Gang



Studio Gang

Top: A rendering of the proposed first phase of the Mission Rock project, in development by Tishman Speyer and the San Francisco Giants, with a residential tower designed by Studio Gang (right). **Middle:** A rendering of the expansion being designed by Studio Gang for the California College of the Arts in San Francisco set to begin construction in 2020. **Above:** A rendering of the sustainable energy administration building for San Mateo County in downtown Redwood City scheduled to start construction in December.



Liz Hafalia / The Chronicle

Mira, the head-turning residential tower created by Chicago architect Jeanne Gang, rises in San Francisco.

Mission Rock’s off-kilter tower, Gang said. “Tweaking and pinching can help optimize its performance.”

Another aspect of the project that attracted Gang is the idea of using architecture to showcase local government — to make it enticing to citizens who might be drawn to a new gathering space in Redwood City’s temperate climate. Or to potential hires who, in Silicon Valley, have no shortage of employment options around them.

“I like that San Mateo is thinking about how, in a democracy, you can make the best workers want to join government rather than a tech firm,” Gang said. “We want to honor that.”

That approach resonates with county officials, who selected the firm after a competition that began with 18 contenders.

“The creativity from Studio Gang fit with the vision of the county supervisors,” said Adam Ely, director of the coun-

“There’s been a genuine philosophy of radical sharing, and that’s liberating.”

Kate Orff, founder of Scape

ty’s Project Development Unit. “We want to be able to attract and retain high-quality employees and let them feel they’re working in a high-quality environment.”

What materializes in San Mateo won’t attract the attention generated by Aqua, Chicago’s enthralling 89-story cliff-like concrete slab from 2009 that put Gang on the architectural map. Or Mira, with its tightly twisted metal form that Gang likens to “migrating bays.”

The county building fits within what the firm calls “actionable idealism” — efforts that take in everything from small public and cultural buildings to research efforts on how inner-city police stations might be recast from symbols of official power by adding such community services as health facilities and basketball courts.

Then there’s the expansion of the California College of the Arts, which should begin construction next spring.

Studio Gang has fashioned a project that, as with San Mateo, aims to be carbon-neutral. But it also will pull all of the school’s craft spaces and industrial labs together. The classroom structures around them will be built of structural timber.

“Firms like Jeanne’s are few and far between,” said David Meckel, director of campus planning for the college. “She’s got these developer projects that are so inventive, and then these more public projects where they’re asking, ‘how do we do something that matters.’”

Gang puts it another way.

“I am motivated by the thrill of discovery, so I like thinking about difficult and complex issues,” she said this month. “But then I don’t just want to think about them. I want to do something.”

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