

Sheltering Goldman Sachs 48 Calatrava at the Hermitage 66
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ARCHITECT

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DAYS OF FUTURE SYSTEMS PAST JAN KAPLICKÝ'S LAST PROJECT



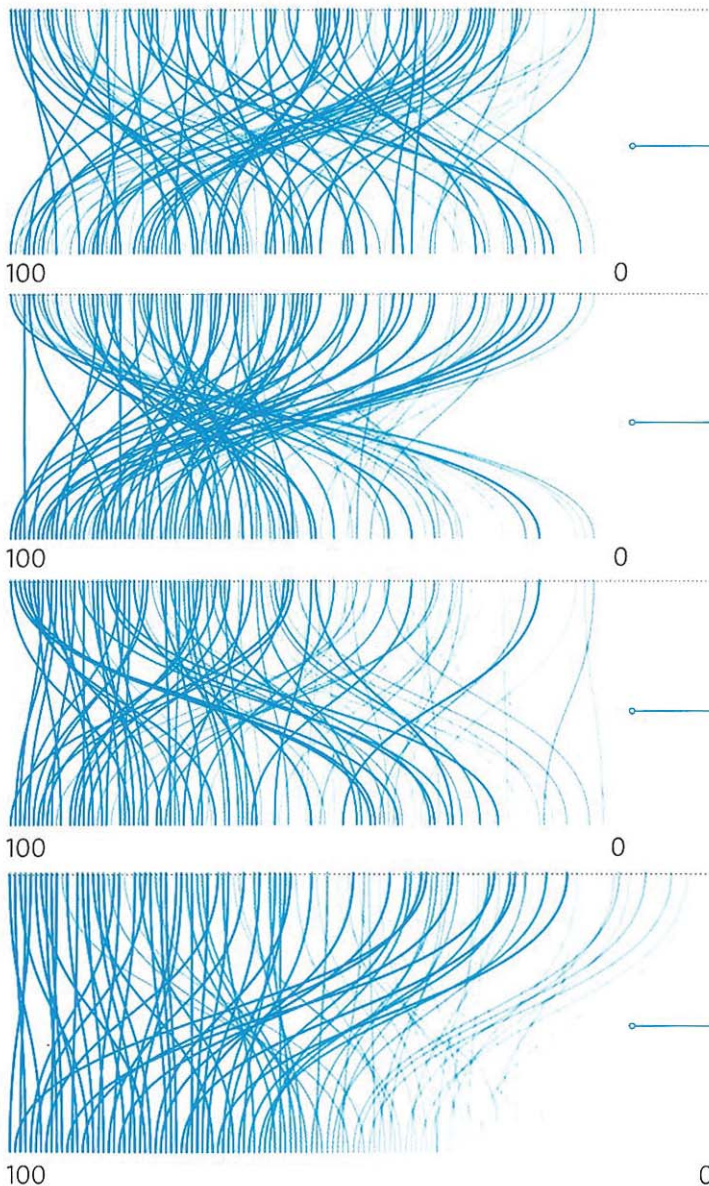
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THE ARCHITECT 50

THEY ARE THE POWERFUL AND THE PHILANTHROPIC, THE TALENTED AND THE PROFITABLE. OUR FOURTH ANNUAL RANKING OF U.S. ARCHITECTURE FIRMS ANSWERS THE QUESTION: WHO HAD THE BEST YEAR?

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Infographics by **Catalogtree**

THE METHODOLOGY ...



How do we determine who makes the list? Each year, ARCHITECT makes an open call for submissions and sends direct invitations to firms that have requested entries or participated in the past. This cycle, 134 firms submitted valid entries for the 46-question survey, providing data from the 2011 fiscal year. Because the data is self-reported, we check for consistency, identify outliers, and check the facts. Karlin Associates LLC, a third-party research firm based in New York City, compiled the ranking and assured the confidentiality of the data.

OVERALL SCORE

The overall ranking is based on scores in three separate categories: business, sustainability, and design excellence/pro bono. Questions in each category are formulated in consultation with industry experts and practitioners. Each question is assigned a weight based on its perceived importance and on the distribution of firm responses. Firms earn points per question based on how well they perform relative to their counterparts. The three categories are then scored separately. (A possible score of 100 is assigned to each category based on a firm achieving a perfect score in all of the component questions.) The scores from the three categories are then added up to produce a final tally for each firm. That number is then normalized, with the top firm scoring 100.

BUSINESS SCORE

The financial category straightforwardly measures a firm's net revenue per employee and change in net revenue from fiscal year 2010.

SUSTAINABILITY SCORE

The sustainability category measures the percentage of a firms' projects that are LEED certified or designed to LEED standards; that are certified in other design programs, such as Energy Star and Living Building Challenge; that pursued a potable water-use reduction target beyond what is mandated by code; and that incorporated energy modeling, with firms earning extra credit for collecting energy data and investigating discrepancies with the model. Other data points included the percentage of employees with LEED AP and GA credentials; a firm's commitment to sustainability in its own office, such as having a timeline for purchasing 100 percent green power; and participation in the AIA's 2030 program, including the percentage of overall gross square footage designed to 2030 standards.

DESIGN EXCELLENCE/PRO BONO SCORE

The design excellence and pro bono category measures the awards won by firms, including AIA and ARCHITECT magazine awards, as well as their commitment to pro bono work, measured by participation in Public Architecture's 1% program as well as the percentage of billable hours that were dedicated to pro bono work. Other data points include the percentage of repeat clients, employee benefits such as a defined pension plan and paid family leave, and the scope and range of employees' civic engagement as university professors and board and commission members.

Practice Makes Perfect

Let's be clear: Ranking architecture firms is equal parts art and science. We refine our methodology every year. But the goal of the ARCHITECT 50 remains the same: to reward accomplishment according to the broadest possible criteria.

The list is designed to celebrate practices of all kinds—practices that are as adept with building technology as they are in business, that can win design awards and also give back

to their communities. Indeed, for the first time, this year we included pro bono work and water modeling in the survey. Given the impact that the economy, natural disasters, and drought are having around the country, how firms stack up in those categories seems especially relevant.

The overall winner? A big hand for DLR Group, which drew raves in 2011 for its Joplin Interim High School in tornado-ravaged Kansas.

Other firms that excelled: RBB Architects topped the business category; Westlake Reed

Leskosky ranked first in sustainability; and perennial list-maker Skidmore, Owings & Merrill led the design/pro bono category. Pei Cobb Freed & Partners, meanwhile, was the biggest mover, finishing 5th after missing the top 50 last year. And Frank Harmon Architect showed that firms with only a handful of employees can compete with big multinationals.

We hope this year's list will inspire energetic debates. Dig into the numbers. And don't be afraid to tell us what you think.

THE LIST ...

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES AND GROSS REVENUE SCALE

1–10

11–99

100–499

500–999

1,000+

\$ <999,999

\$\$ 1–9.9 million

\$\$\$ 10–99.9 million

\$\$\$\$ 100–999.9 million

\$\$\$\$\$ 1 billion+

1. DLR GROUP

Omaha, Neb.

OVERALL SCORE **100.00**

RANK IN EACH CATEGORY

Business: 41st**Sustainability: 11th****Design/Pro Bono: 5th**

DLR Group's Marysville Getchell High School in Washington state won a James D. MacConnell Award, which honors leading educational design. The firm worked pro bono on an education and Olympic training facility in Kenya.

2. WILLIAM RAWN ASSOCIATES

Boston

OVERALL SCORE **99.98**

RANK IN EACH CATEGORY

Business: 4th**Sustainability: 4th****Design/Pro Bono: 81st**

One of the list's smaller firms, William Rawn boasted strong financials and won an AIA Housing Award for Northeastern University's Building F.

3. HOK

St. Louis

OVERALL SCORE **99.21**

RANK IN EACH CATEGORY

Business: 25th**Sustainability: 25th****Design/Pro Bono: 4th**

HOK has partnered with the USGBC to build a LEED-certified orphanage and children's center. The firm's King Abdullah University of Science and Technology building in Saudi Arabia won multiple awards.

4. ZIMMER GUNSUL FRASCA ARCHITECTS (ZGF)

Portland, Ore.

OVERALL SCORE **99.12**

RANK IN EACH CATEGORY

Business: 49th**Sustainability: 10th****Design/Pro Bono: 2nd**

ZGF excelled in the design/pro bono category, winning an AIA Interior Design award for the John E. Jaqua Center for Student Athletes at the University of Oregon.

5. PEI COBB FREED & PARTNERS ARCHITECTS

New York

OVERALL SCORE **96.22**

RANK IN EACH CATEGORY

Business: 20th**Sustainability: 13th****Design/Pro Bono: 21st**

Pei Cobb Freed was honored with the AIA's 25-Year-Award for the Hancock Tower, Henry Cobb's profoundly influential contribution to Boston's skyline.

6. WESTLAKE REED LESKOSKY

Cleveland

OVERALL SCORE **95.39**

RANK IN EACH CATEGORY

Business: 59th**Sustainability: 1st****Design/Pro Bono: 27th**

Westlake Reed Leskosky is collaborating with Farshid Moussavi on the Museum of Contemporary Art in Cleveland, and is also developing a public website to showcase its projects' predicted versus actual energy usage.

7. SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL

New York

OVERALL SCORE **93.13**

RANK IN EACH CATEGORY

Business: 16th**Sustainability: 62nd****Design/Pro Bono: 1st**

SOM was awarded the Gold Medal in Architecture by the National Arts Club, honoring the firm's 75-year portfolio of iconic buildings.

8. PAYETTE

Boston

OVERALL SCORE **92.61**

RANK IN EACH CATEGORY

Business: 24th**Sustainability: 6th****Design/Pro Bono: 41st**

Payette won a SCUP/AIA-CAE award for Brandeis University's Carl J. Shapiro Science Center, and did pro bono work for the Sustainable Healthcare for Haiti project.

9. SMITHGROUPJJR

Detroit

OVERALL SCORE **91.52**

RANK IN EACH CATEGORY

Business: 64th**Sustainability: 15th****Design/Pro Bono: 10th**

SmithGroupJJR, AIA Arizona's Sustainable Firm of the Year, was lauded by the Urban Land Institute for its design of Chandler City Hall in Arizona.

10. CANNON DESIGN

Grand Island, N.Y.

OVERALL SCORE **90.93**

RANK IN EACH CATEGORY

Business: 42nd**Sustainability: 30th****Design/Pro Bono: 8th**

Cannon Design converted the Power House, a historic St. Louis building, into the firm's own award-winning LEED Gold-certified office space.