

COLUMBUS BUSINESS FIRST

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AIA annual awards land honors from trade group

Business First of Columbus - by [Brian R. Ball](#) Business First

Architects from three Columbus design firms have won top honors from the area chapter of the **American Institute of Architects**, while a fourth conceptual design also won recognition in the trade association's annual design competition.

The winning projects reflect a growing reputation of the Columbus design community, with the chairman of the Omaha, Neb., jury calling the three award-winning designs worthy of national recognition.

"We felt those winning projects were three of the best projects done in the entire country in the last year," said Randy Brown of **Randy Brown Architects**. "It's quality work that's very impressive."

Projects designed by **Moody-Nolan Inc.**, **Schooley Caldwell Architects Inc.** and **Meyers & Associates** received Honor Awards in the competition. **NBBJ Design LLC** also won a Merit Award in a competition that attracted 40 entries.

The awards program chairman noted only one of the winning projects is set in Central Ohio.

"That reflects the nature of architecture professionals in Columbus," said John Kelleher of NBBJ. "People in Columbus are practicing all over the place."

Meyers & Associates won for its design of a 950,000-square-foot distribution center and 50,000-square-foot office building for **Abercrombie & Fitch Co.** in New Albany. On the other extreme, architects at NBBJ won recognition for a conceptual design of a 200,000-square-meter commercial and residential complex planned for the Republic of Kazakhstan, the former Soviet state in central Asia.

Closer to home, Moody-Nolan won for its design of an addition to a student recreation and fitness center at the **University of Illinois at Chicago**.

Schooley Caldwell was recognized for the restoration and adaptive reuse of a historic house in Springfield, Ohio. The Westcott House was originally designed by architecture icon Frank Lloyd Wright.

The range of projects, Kelleher said, "are as diverse as always."

The Westcott House renovation was called "an amazing transformation" of a 99-year-old building to its origins. Interior design work included the selection of authentic period furniture.

"(P)articular attention was paid to the details," the jurors wrote. "This exercise is a lesson in restraint ... that only comes from understanding the original architect's intent."

The three-jury panel recognized the Abercrombie & Fitch project for bringing the building "down to a human scale" through architectural details, including a focus on identifying the entry into the office portion of the complex.

"It's hard to do big projects well," the jurors wrote, "and this one is truly a success."

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