



PERSPECTIVE NEW YORK

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IBA

...Thinking Outside of the Box

By Jan Wilson

With owners and developers increasingly conscious of how a property performs as well as how it looks, making sure that a building has the right kind of envelope is more important than ever. In the past, the architect alone might have made recommendations on a specific type of curtain wall or façade, but increasingly developers are turning to consultants such as Israel Berger & Associates, LLC for an added level of expertise about this complex and vital element in building design, operations and maintenance.

"The value of our work is narrowing down building envelope options to the ones most suitable to achieve the architect's and owner's aspirations," says Israel Berger, AIA, Principal.

IBA is enjoying new opportunities as clients focus on the 'green' aspects of building design. A building's envelope needs to fulfill the aesthetic vision of the client and the architect while expanding to the ever increasing demand for energy efficiency, durability and maintainability.

"The building envelope can be 15 to 20 percent of the project's total cost, yet it is one of the most important elements of the building," says Marc Weissbach, AIA, Principal. "Construction has gotten so complicated that it's hard to deliver this crucial component without the input and expertise of the right people in the right job."



Israel Berger, AIA, Principal

performance—this is especially driven by energy costs," says Logan. "New innovative products increasingly affect how buildings perform." Berger adds that developers rely on IBA's expertise in working with these products. "We assure them that the new technologies and materials that they are considering are not an undue risk for their projects," he says.

"They have proven to have been spectacular in helping us achieve the most cost efficient and energy efficient façade systems. We set really high goals for ourselves and with IBA's help, we are able to reach them."

**Hal Fetner, President
Durst Fetner Residential**

A NATURAL PROGRESSION

Founded in 1984, IBA (formerly TCB) now has over 50 professionals working in a culture known for employee retention. "There are at least five people here who have been here since the beginning," says Logan, who was one of the first professionals hired. Weissbach adds that what sets IBA apart is its professionals' strong architectural backgrounds. "This makes us very supportive of the architects' intent and design concept," he says. "We help architects achieve their architectural expression."

Part of that goal is always energy efficiency. "Building skins are evolving in response to energy, light and thermal

"Whenever we encounter a problem, Israel Berger is the first person that we call for a straight answer. His office has the depth, professionalism and expertise to help us resolve any issues. IBA is second to none."

**Harry Olson, Project Executive
New Yankee Stadium, Tishman Speyer**

CONTINUITY IS KEY

IBA executives note that the firm has survived through several construction down-market cycles due to the strength of its relationships with clients and the unique expertise it has. "We are proud to say that over 80 percent of our projects are for repeat clients or clients who may have worked for another client," says Weissbach. Adds Logan, "vendors welcome us into the project—they know that we have no agenda—we are only there to render an impartial opinion about a building's envelope."

Right now, Weissbach says, the firm is "running at full speed," and he is confident that it will maintain its position especially because of its experience with LEED-certified projects such as **7 World Trade Center, The Helena** and the **Bank of America Tower**, which is nearing completion and is in the process of obtaining its certification. Even one of its earliest signature projects, the **Petronas Towers** in Kuala Lumpur, was deflecting solar energy due to stainless steel sunshades—more than a decade before such technology became mainstream.

PHOTO BY PAUL BERNSTEIN PHOTOGRAPHY INC.



100 Park Avenue



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: 99 Church St, WTC T3, T2, 7 WTC, Freedom Tower

“IBA was instrumental in working with the architects and curtain wall contractor to create the curvature of the unique IAC Building, designed by Frank Gehry. The IBA team takes an architect’s concept and makes it into a workable exterior.”

**Chris Christensen, Project Executive
Turner Construction Co.**

A WORLDWIDE PRACTICE

Although much of Israel Berger Associates’ work is based in Manhattan, it always worked on projects all over the world, including **Canary Wharf** in London, **Repsol Tower** in Buenos Aires, **Tower 151** in South Korea and many other projects worldwide.

Right now, the firm is working on the **Transbay Center** in San Francisco, designed by Pelli Clark Pelli Architects. It is an intermodal transportation hub which will help modernize and redefine the urban life of the city. “This is a new building type and it will incorporate many features emphasizing state-of-the-art sustainable architecture. It will include a 5-acre rooftop park, which

goes well beyond a typical ‘green roof’. It will be designed to reduce the impact of the transportation noise and pollution, use an innovative system of glass light-wells penetrating the structure vertically and will introduce native flora and fauna amidst pastoral rooftop paths, as well as educational and recreational assets,” says Logan.

The firm is also working on the **MGM City Center** in Las Vegas, which will include apartment buildings, a casino, a hotel and convention center. “The hotel, which was designed by Pelli Clark Pelli and is nearing completion, is shaded with deep external light colored aluminum sunshades,” says Logan. “These shades, functional as they are, also become a dominant architectural expression of the building.”

The introduction of a new Building Code in New York City, which is based on the International Code Council model code, will impact the way building envelopes are designed, built and inspected. While Berger notes that standardization under the IBC promotes efficiency, there are still areas of the code that are unclear. “It is fairly vague in some crucial areas and leaves either gaps or room for interpretation. Mitigating and resolving ambiguities in the IBC is unstructured and difficult.”



Marc Weissbach, AIA, Principal

THE LOCAL MARKET

IBA is working on many local projects, including both the new home for the Mets, **Citi Field**, and the new **Yankee Stadium**, as well as all buildings in the World Trade Center area including the **Freedom Tower** and **Towers 2, 3 and 4**. "These downtown buildings in particular will go well beyond code in terms of energy efficiency and serve as a model for leadership in 'signature building' design," says Logan.

"Our experience with Israel Berger & Associates has been extremely positive, they have brought a tremendous amount of experience and knowledge to an area that is not well understood and we will continue to use them for complicated issues and projects."

**Jody Durst, Co-President
Durst Organization**

Berger notes that there is a need locally for a forum of interested parties in planning development and construction to exchange information to make building more affordable and socially responsible.



William Logan, AIA, Principal

"The cost of construction is an obstacle to economic development and to solving the housing crisis that does exist, particularly in urban areas. Energy is used much more efficiently in urban areas as compared with sprawling suburban areas, and is well justified in spite of the barrier to development in high

density areas due to the cost of land, high construction costs and limitations of the infrastructure."

"Our specialty is young in historical terms... we have only an upside potential."

Israel Berger, AIA, Principal



Hearst Tower

ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

Weissbach sees the demand for exterior curtain wall consultants to continue to grow "as new materials are constantly being brought into the marketplace and new techniques are implemented and vetted across the industry by firms like IBA. The long term benefits of going green are just now being felt and we are proud to be a part of this growing trend."

Israel Berger says he has every reason to be upbeat about the profession that is only in its infancy. "Some 30 years ago, building envelope consulting was just beginning. We have only an upside in that this profession and specialty will continue to evolve to provide a more holistic service for architects, developers and property managers. Serviceability, durability, energy efficiency and safety features in a building envelope can be achieved only when it is comprehensively analyzed by experts. ■