

# 40

## Things to know about Perkins Eastman

By Emily Bamford

In honor of our 40th anniversary, let's celebrate all that Perkins Eastman has become—and the projects, accolades, and memories that make it so special. Here's our roundup of the landmark projects that formed the firm, noteworthy awards we've won, favorite memories from our PEOple, and a few fun facts about Perkins Eastman.

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We had quite the welcoming when we first moved into our New York studio in December 1997. As **Principal Joanne Violanti** tells it, “As we were settling into our new offices, there was a massive water main break on Fifth Avenue at 19th Street. It flooded the neighborhood and resulted in a fire-spewing crater when a gas main subsequently ruptured. Lots of excitement, and luckily no one was hurt!”

Our **Hanoi Capital Construction Master Plan**—a 1,000-page document containing 700 maps—seeks to accommodate Hanoi's rapid growth by pushing development to five satellite cities separated from the city's historic core with a “greenbelt” of parks, lakes, and land reserved for agricultural use, establishing the capital of Vietnam as one of the most sustainable cities in the world by 2050.



02



Our first four public buildings—the **Clarendon branch of the Brooklyn Public Library**, the **107th New York Police Precinct**, the **Queens Civil Court**, and the **Ithaca, NY, Courthouse**—each received important design awards, and the last three were featured in *Architectural Record*. They all contributed to our emerging design reputation 30 years ago.

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“One of my fondest memories is a simple kindness,” **Principal Leslie Moldow** says. “When my colleagues found out before I did that I got my AIA Fellow, I arrived for a meeting, and they sang ‘For *she’s* a jolly good Fellow.’ We celebrated over dinner, and later at the AIA Convocation ceremony, Brad Perkins and David Hoglund hosted my family at a special dinner event.”

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We designed a riverfront mixed-use development (**Huishan North Bund**) that reunites Shanghai residents with their waterfront via a public plaza, esplanade, and marina.

Perkins Eastman is one of the last large architecture firms in the United States whose first-generation founders are still actively engaged in its leadership.

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Our first ground-up school, **Green Chimneys** in Brewster, NY, won an AIA award and was featured on the cover of our first book for Wiley, but the K-12 project that has garnered the most recognition—14 separate honors—was **Dunbar High School** in Washington, DC.

“One of my favorite memories is actually an annual one,” says **Senior Associate Emily Pope**. “The Pittsburgh studio has been ‘adopting’ local families in need of some assistance, holiday magic, and cheer for as long as I can remember. It’s a really special time in the office, as we all come together to ensure each of them have a memorable Christmas morning. The families provide a wish list with names, sizes, and preferences, and all are placed on paper ornaments on a paper tree in our reception area starting right after Thanksgiving. Incredibly, one by one, those ornaments find their way into the hands and hearts of our staff, and a few weeks later it culminates into one very merry wrapping party—complete with bright papers, bows, and of course pizza! From gift cards for groceries and donations for household necessities to clothing, games, and toys—we always seem to grant every wish on the list. And the gratitude from the families is simply the best—they send us thank-you cards and pictures of the little ones opening those special gifts from Santa.”



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Camden, NJ, has a new nexus in the form of **Rutgers University's Nursing and Science Building**, a triangle-shaped building that features a four-story glass façade along its diagonal, which engages the students and staff with the larger community around them.

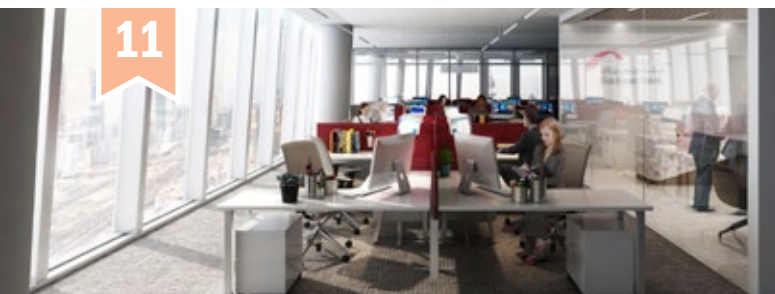
DC has a thriving new destination for residents and tourists alike at **The Wharf**, a mixed-use waterfront development that Perkins Eastman master-planned, in addition to designing two of the large buildings that anchor the development. At two million sf, this first phase represents the city's largest revitalization project in years. At 1.2 million sf, phase two is currently under construction.



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Upon its completion, executives and employees of **Boubyan Bank Headquarters** will enjoy a light-filled, modern workplace in a dynamic new landmark in Kuwait City's oldest neighborhood, an historic waterfront district. The building's continuous, gradated façade responds both to the site's impressive views and to solar heat mitigation, two important drivers of the design.

In senior living, our first project—the **May Visitors Center at the Miami Jewish Home & Hospital**—was award-winning, but **Woodside Place** in Oakmont, PA, contributed the most to our rapidly growing national practice as a model for successful, residential-based dementia care. Later, our high-rise **Sun City Ginza East** in Tokyo established us in the international market for senior living.

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“There’s nothing better than when our PEOple come together, so my favorite memory is the roadshow that **Andrew Adelhardt, Nick Leahy**, and I did back in 2018,” says **Shawn Basler, co-CEO and executive director of Perkins Eastman**. “We consecutively visited every Perkins Eastman studio, walking around the offices, going out to dinner, and connecting with staff on a level that can’t be replicated online. It’s always a special moment when everyone is in the same room together, and I look forward to having that kind of in-person connection and interaction again soon.”



Producers of the apocalyptic 2007 movie “I Am Legend” starring Will Smith built a replica of our design for the **TKTS Booth** in Times Square before the celebrated all-glass amphitheater was completed. Moviegoers got a chance to see our 10-year labor of love before anyone could visit it in real life.



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While most of our large Residential practice is market-rate housing, all of our early awards came for our work in affordable housing: **Hommocks Park Public Housing** in Mamaroneck, NY; **Parkside Gables** in Stamford, CT; and also in Stamford, the mixed-income wings of **Canterbury Green**.

The historic **Dunbar High School**, just blocks from the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC, established a new standard for sustainable contemporary school design—and a milestone for Perkins Eastman’s K-12 practice in its pursuit of school architecture that also enhances student performance.



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Five women at Perkins Eastman have been elevated as Fellows in the American Institute of Architects and the American Society of Interior Designers. Co-Founder and Vice Chair **Mary-Jean Eastman**, far left, and (from left to right after her) principals **Deborah Lloyd Forrest, Betsey Olenick Dougherty, Leslie Moldow, and Hilary Kinder Bertsch** have all achieved their industries’ highest honor.

Our groundbreaking plan for the world’s largest bus terminal (**Port Authority Bus Terminal**) reimagines the current space as a prosperous mixed-use development in New York City.



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Our first national AIA award for Planning and Urban Design was given for our **Pittsburgh Hillsides** plan charting future development for the diverse and topographically challenging neighborhoods that comprise the city. More recently, we received an AIA award for the firm's most important planning and urban design assignment to date, **The Master Plan for Hanoi**.

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"One of the biggest memories I have at Perkins Eastman is when the Senior Living team surprised me with a 60th birthday celebration while we were away at the annual LeadingAge conference in 2018," says **Associate Principal Lori Miller**. "This conference has conflicted with my birthday almost every year for the 15-plus years I've attended. I was genuinely surprised."



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PHOTO BY ANDREW RUGGE / ©PERKINS EASTMAN

We salvaged the beautiful variegated brick from an old factory that once occupied this site for an adaptive reuse design that produced **The Hoxton, Williamsburg**, a nine-story boutique hotel in Brooklyn, NY, which also features corrugated metal on the façade as another reminder of its past life.

The national AIA award for **Target Field Station** in Minneapolis, MN, is the most significant award that we have received for our growing Transportation + Infrastructure practice.



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After 27 years of working with Memorial Sloan Kettering, the **David H. Koch Center for Cancer Care at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center** in New York City represents the latest milestone in our Healthcare practice with a patient-centered environment conceived to de-escalate the fear, anxiety, and uncertainty often associated with cancer care.

In less than a year, we designed and delivered three first-of-their-kind facilities to treat and care for patients suffering from long-term effects of COVID-19. Located in some of New York City's neighborhoods hardest-hit by the pandemic, our **COVID-19 Centers of Excellence** provide accessible and community-based healthcare services for both COVID long-haulers and the greater public.



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“On the evening of December 19, 2017, everyone in the Mumbai office was getting ready for our end-of-the-year party—and I was dying with nervous energy,” **Principal Supriya Thyagarajan** recalls. “In October 2017, we had submitted proposals for three large academic medical campuses for the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), and the results of the three bids were to be revealed in Delhi this very night. I was torn between flying to Delhi for the announcement, thereby missing the party, or staying in Mumbai and attending. One of my colleagues suggested I stay: If we won, I could celebrate with the team here, and if we lost, I wouldn’t have to sit in sorrow alone on a flight home. I was one of the last ones to get ready for the party as I anxiously awaited the results. Most of the staff had already left, barring a few who shared my nerves. Not wanting to delay them further, I finally got up to change into my party outfit. When I returned to my desk, my phone was flooded with congratulatory messages from our competitors: Perkins Eastman had won all three AIIMS projects. I couldn’t believe it, but after a few confirmatory phone calls, I was sure of the results. I immediately called Brad and announced we had won the projects. He was shocked and said, ‘Are you sure we won all three?’ The taxi ride from the office to the venue was 40 minutes, but felt like forever. I finally arrived, made sure everyone had a drink in their hand, and said, ‘Please enjoy the rest of the year, because next year we are going to be working on the projects of our lifetime. We have just won all three AIIMS!’ I can never forget the faces of my colleagues. The memory is still so vivid even after five years!!”

Our most honored project is the **TKTS Booth** in Times Square, which has received more than 30 design awards including a national AIA award.



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The new **MarinHealth Medical Center: Oak Pavilion** hospital in Greenbrae, CA, utilizes biophilic design and the extraordinary site to create a soothing indoor/outdoor environment where patients heal in nature and remain connected to the beauty of Marin County.

**Senior Associate Bonnie Likens** shares her favorite memory: “Asked to submit an entry to the annual Herman Miller Magis Puppy Design Challenge in 2017, our office rallied to win the prize! But the process and outcome were worth more than a trophy; we won camaraderie and connection with the Charlotte community that remain with us four years later. The execution involved crafting and reflection, both quite literally, because it’s inspired by the iconic mirrored Firebird sculpture by Niki de Saint Phalle that illuminates Charlotte’s uptown streetscape. After the jury reviewed it, we hauled ‘Firedog’ up to the museum to get some contextual photos—and this is where the community came in. As soon as we unloaded him, pedestrians started to visit, wanting to get their own photo ops, pet the dog, and even take a ride. We wound up making many new Firedog friends and staying an extra hour before we got a chance to break away. Today, the Firedog guards the vestibule and welcomes employees to Perkins Eastman’s Charlotte lobby. He also acted as a doorstep for hands-free access during the COVID-19 pandemic!”



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**The Quin**, a boutique hotel in Midtown Manhattan that we renovated, garnered widespread recognition when it was completed, adding to our ever-growing Hospitality portfolio.

We transformed a Brutalist mid-century astro-physics and space research building at the University of Chicago into the technologically advanced **Albert A. Michelson Center for Physics**—all while preserving and maintaining a landmark dark-matter research project in the basement that's been in continuous operation since the original building opened in 1964.



PHOTO BY SARAH MECHLING / ©PERKINS EASTMAN

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Our Senior Living practice launched a 26-episode podcast this year called **“Shaping Dementia Environments.”** Members of our Senior Living practice interviewed experts across the country and abroad to explore the patterns of innovation that are empowering older adults “to live authentically, regardless of where they are on their cognitive journey.” The podcast has reached listeners on every continent except Antarctica.

Our new studio in Chicago looks both backwards and forwards: It's located in the Rookery building, where Co-Founder and Chairman Brad Perkins' grandfather, Dwight Heald Perkins, started his career with Burnham and Root, the architects who designed the building in 1888 and then located their offices there. More than 120 years later, **Perkins Eastman's Chicago studio** is the first project in Illinois, the fourth in the United States, and 25th worldwide to become Platinum WELL v2 Pilot-certified, the best-in-class rating in healthy and sustainable design. Artifacts from the original building hang on the walls of this modern, light-filled space.



PHOTO BY ANDREW RUGGE / ©PERKINS EASTMAN

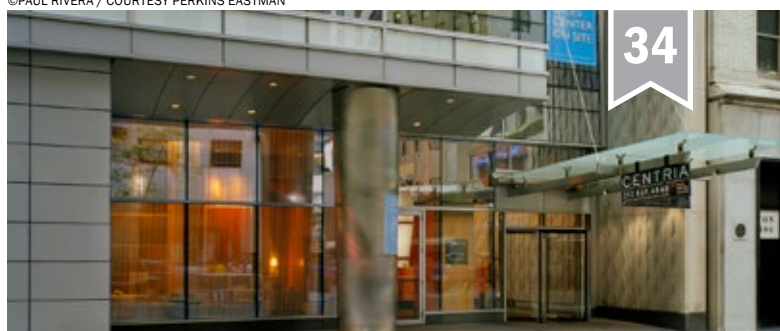
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“My career at Perkins Eastman has been filled with many, many memorable moments,” says **Principal Omar Calderón Santiago.** “Often, those moments involve a bottle of tempranillo or garnacha, a late Friday afternoon, and Brad Perkins' office, as I'm sure others can relate. That said, I share one of my fondest memories with Nick Leahy. We were on location in Guangzhou tending to a project by and for the Guangzhou Metro Authority. Our contact and counterpart there was a diminutive man who simply went by *Mr. He*. So perfect. Long were the hours we worked in the windowless office at the Metro Group headquarters, only coming out to gasp for air and make the trek back to the hotel. I recall arriving in Guangzhou late at night on one of our many trips there, being whisked from the airport by a speeding private car and deposited in a local restaurant where a bowl of fried pigeons was ceremonially placed under my nose. I remember asking if the unsuspecting birds on my plate—a Cantonese delicacy, I am sure—had been flying earlier that day. I was assured that they had.”

Hotels can get old for international business executives who are in New York for extended periods. That's why we were commissioned to design **Centria** near Rockefeller Center, a striking 33-story development that offers luxury living for these VIPs.

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We have won many awards for our work in healthcare, but some of the most significant are the ones we received this year for the **David H. Koch Center for Cancer Care at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center**, including a national AIA honor.

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“In November/December 2019, I traveled to our Shanghai studio to work on the Whittle school project in China for a few weeks,” architect **Savin Fernandes** recalls. “The project work went well and afterwards, I stayed back to travel; my husband joined me, and together we spent a week in China before returning home to Mumbai. The world had no idea then of COVID-19, but that’s when it began—during the exact period we were there. In January, when I was back in the office, I had a bad cold, body aches, and felt drowsy and weak. A colleague I was working closely with, Devna—who was an intern then—kept insisting that I might have gotten COVID during my time in Shanghai. In March, we all started working from home, and I continued to work with Devna until her internship ended. Turns out, the prolonged illness wasn’t COVID-19, but actually symptoms of my early pregnancy, which had hit quite hard. I revealed the good news to my colleagues during the lockdown while we were all at home. Meanwhile, Devna completed her dissertation and later joined Perkins Eastman as an architect. She was astounded to know that I had a baby during lockdown. When we all met in person after a year and a half, Devna introduced me to another colleague of hers. She said, “Savin was like my mother during my internship.” And here I was thinking I was a young mother; I didn’t expect to give motherly vibes to a fresh graduate! It totally cracked me up and embarrassed me at the same time, and is easily one of my most memorable moments at Perkins Eastman.”

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Our Healthcare practice had to do some serious future-casting with the resiliency-focused **Stanford Hospital**, equipping it with spaces that are flexible enough to accommodate yet-unknown medical advances throughout the next century and creating an overall modular design that’s primed for multiple additions along the way.

**Canterbury Green**, a mixed-income housing project in Stamford, CT, was our first completed major building, and it received several design awards that strengthened our reputation as a promising new face in mixed-use design. More recently, **The Wharf** in Washington, DC, has been widely recognized and is the poster child for our Large Scale Mixed-Use practice. **Huishan North Bund** has done the same for us in China.

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Our comprehensive **Parnassus Heights Master Plan** for the **University of California San Francisco** incorporates inventive design solutions for a global healthcare sciences and education campus.



“At the end of the first day of working from home, back when COVID-19 was going to last two weeks, I sent an email to everyone,” writes **DC Managing Principal Barbara Mullenex**. “I did it the next day and the next. I needed it more than the readers. I needed to connect, assure, calm myself, reach out to people who were part of my daily life. After a week or so of sending these daily messages, I decided that was enough ... but I got so many personal notes of thanks, appreciation, even ones that said the messages were a port in the storm for them. So I kept writing them, and then enlisted the rest of the principals, and then everyone in our office, to write a daily message. They were personal, funny, cathartic, and life-saving. And through the efforts of Teresa Skubel, who kept the writing schedule, of Kefan Zhuo, who had compiled all the messages for me as a Christmas present in 2020, and Trish Donnally and her team, we were able to publish *The Daily* as an artifact, a reminder, and a personal tribute to our journey through this time. On October 18, 2021, our official back-to-work day, we distributed copies of *The Daily* to everyone. It is hard to say how deeply honored I was to recognize what we had done for each other since March 13, 2020.”



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