

Architectural Feature Story

Buildings We Learn In

(taken from [Great Architecture of Michigan](#))

From the Cranbrook Educational Community in Bloomfield Hills, to Ketting Campus in Flint, to the University of Michigan campus, to the Lester K. Kirk Collegiate Center at Olivet College, Michigan is home to great architecture of many styles serving our educational communities.

This article features a small selection of the treasures photographed and documented in the publication *Great Architecture of Michigan*. Sales from this publication generate revenue to support the Michigan Architectural Foundations programs. ([Click here to purchase.](#))



Detroit School of Arts, Detroit

One of the flagship public schools in Detroit, this unique entity is as much performing arts center as classroom building. Production spaces include an 800-seat auditorium 200-seat recital hall, black box theater, television and radio studios, art studios and galleries, vocal and instrumental music rehearsal rooms, and top-floor media center and dining hall. Located just steps from Woodward Avenue and the Max M. Fisher Music Center, the Detroit Schools of Arts is sending its talented graduates out to enrich the cultural life of the city and beyond.



Lester K. Kirk Collegiate Center, Olivet College

A generation or two before, a student center might have been designed as a massive castle-like Romanesque building. But Harvard-trained modernist William Kessler shows his mastery of a lighter, more delicate, yet bracingly clean and efficient style. Notice how the building is slightly elevated, and how the thin support columns branch out to support the overhanging roof, both features that enhance the impression the center is almost floating in space. At night, the glass walls let the building glow from within. A focal point of campus life, the center houses dining rooms, bookstore, campus radio station, offices and lounges.



Kresge-Ford Building, College for Creative Studies, Detroit

A college devoted to teaching painters, sculptors, photographers, and other creative types their trade needs a building to inspire them. Architect William Kessler gave the school just that with this boldly new and different exploration of structure, form, and expression. The 32-foot modules were designed to be stacked and added to as more space was needed (although, once finished, the building did not grow beyond this initial phase). Derided by some as a mere Lego toy, the building for many others has become a modern icon and a lasting symbol of the school.

Other buildings featured in the publication include:

- *Cranbrook Educational Community, Bloomfield Hills*
- *Kettering Campus Center, Kettering University, Flint*
- *Law School Quadrangle, Horace H. Rackham Building, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Tower, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor*
- *Central Hall, Hillsdale College, Hillsdale*
- *Fordson High School, Dearborn*
- *Cass Technical High School, Detroit*

Citizen Architect Frank X. Arvan, AIA



Frank was born to be an architect. At 13 his artist father, thinking architecture was a respectable way to be an artist, gave him Frank Lloyd Wright's book "A Testament" and his fate was sealed. Frank grew up in St. Clair Shores, Michigan, graduated from Lawrence Technological University with a Bachelor of Science in Architecture in 1978, left for Columbia's Graduate School of Architecture in 1979 and graduated with a Masters in Architecture in 1982. He became a registered architect in 1984 and worked for several noted architectural firms in New York City. In 1987 he established his own architectural firm in the New York City metro area and taught architecture at New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark, New Jersey until 1997. In

1997 Frank moved back to Michigan to work for Allen & Laux Architects in Detroit. After three productive years there, in 2000, he again established an architectural firm, FX Architecture in Royal Oak, Michigan.

Architecture is not a job for Frank; it is his passion. "Architecture is so important. It affects the quality and beauty of where we live, and it affects how we live. Architects need to be part of the conversation influencing how we develop and redevelop our communities. We need to help people understand the value of beauty in the built environment."

Frank has accomplished this through his community involvement. He is the current President of the AIA Detroit Board, and was on the Royal Oak DDA Main Street Infrastructure Committee from 2002 to 2009 contributing a design voice for signage and aesthetic improvements in the Downtown. He is a member of the Detroit Creative Corridors Center Advisory Committee, assisting fledgling creative businesses in Detroit. He also gives public lectures on architecture, most recently as part of the Detroit Design festival

and at the Royal Oak High School, the Birmingham Unitarian Church where he is a member and the Adult Learning Institute. "Lecturing about the quality of our built environment and the work required to create that environment is a good way to spread the word that great architecture is not optional it is critical to the quality of our lives.

Architects that serve and lead impact how the profession of architecture is perceived and respected. They help improve the profession and the built world by teaching and showing others that we can make our communities better through great buildings, parks and streets.

Progressive Architecture Awards

Registration is now open for the 2012 P/A Awards, which celebrate design excellence and innovation of un-built projects. This is a great opportunity to showcase a project you worked on that, for whatever reason, was not constructed. Head to the [P/A website](#) for more information and to register (deadline is Fri, October 26th).

"Best Old House Neighborhoods" Seeks Nominations

This Old House magazine and [PreservationDirectory.com](#) are seeking nominations for the 6th annual "Best Old House Neighborhoods" feature. According to *This Old House* Associate Editor, Keith Pandolfi, "The point of this contest is—as it has always been—to familiarize TOH readers with outstanding, sometimes overlooked neighborhoods or towns that have exceptional older houses, and residents working hard to both restore them, and maintain them-for future generations."

TOH is looking for 64 (one in each state, one in Puerto Rico, and one in each of Canada's 10 provinces and three territories) to add to its list of Best Old House Neighborhoods. "As always," says Pandolfi, "we're especially interested in overlooked places known for affordable houses that are heavy on architectural details." **To suggest a historic district, town or city, please send the following information to bestoldhousenabes@thisoldhouse.com. The deadline is Friday, October 19th, 2012.**

Be sure to include:

- The name of the neighborhood, town or district you wish to nominate
- A brief history of the area
- A brief description of the types of houses available, including architectural styles, the period in which they were built; and the average price range.
- A short paragraph on why you think the area deserves to be included on the list.
- At least five high-resolution digital photographs (300 DPI, at about 8.5 by 6.5) of houses, streetscapes and, if possible, neighborhood events.

Again, please submit all information and direct all questions to bestoldhousenabes@thisoldhouse.com.

Who is the Michigan Architectural Foundation?

Our mission is to promote how architecture enriches life.

Michigan Architectural Foundation is dedicated to the promotion, perpetuation and preservation of architecture as a fine art. By serving as a visible resource for funding, information and educational programs, we increase the public's appreciation for architecture, which encourages cohesive, sustainable communities, increasing economic value, enriching experiences and adding beauty.

[Click here](#) to visit our website!

Upcoming Events

UPC DETROIT BY DESIGN COMPETITION

The competition will focus on the area between Cobo Hall and the Renaissance Center and between Jefferson Avenue and the Detroit River. This section of Riverfront which includes Hart Plaza is at the heart of the city. [Click here](#) for details!

NOMA

The 40th annual National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) conference is also coming up in October. The Detroit NOMA group is hosting the national NOMA conference this year Oct 18-20 at the Westin Book Cadillac Hotel. For more event details and registration, check out the NOMA website [here](#).