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High aspirations

ZGF Architects LLP is an award-winning design firm with offices in Portland, Seattle, Los Angeles, Washington, DC, New York, and, as ZGF Cotter Architects Inc., in Vancouver, B.C.. With every project the firm takes on around the world, they strive for design excellence, stewardship of the natural and built environment, and exceptional client service. They believe that design excellence should be reflected in “each and every aspect of a building – its fit with the community, its function and relationship to its users, its building systems, and its cost.”

“We’re a firm focused on good design, sustainability, and performance,” says Ted Hyman, Managing Partner.

Originally, ZGF was founded in Portland, Oregon in 1942, and began expanding in the 80s. Ted himself joined the firm





roughly 25 years ago. He was attracted by the firm's design ethos, as well as its flat hierarchical structure. Despite employing about 550 people, he says the partners are all hands-on, which gives it a small company feel.

LOOKING FOR INNOVATION

Over time, ZGF Architects has developed an intentionally diverse portfolio, ranging from corporate and mixed-use developments to healthcare and research buildings, academic facilities, transportation terminals, libraries, and museums.

According to Ted, ZGF doesn't look at projects in terms of size, but rather in terms of clients. They want to work with people who have "high aspirations for both themselves and for us."

"We're always looking for projects that want to be innovative," he says. "Currently, we're doing a 3,000 square foot interior project for Craig Venter, who is known for being one of the first people to map the human genome. Getting to do a very small project with somebody who is doing really incredible things



is more important for us than doing a very large project where there are no aspirations.” At the same time, the firm has also taken on plenty of large projects. For example, they worked on the Lurie Children’s Hospital in Chicago, which is more than a million square feet.

“The type and scale of our projects are very diverse,” Ted explains. “For example, we’re doing Phase 3 of the California Science Centre in Los Angeles, which is the home of the space shuttle Endeavour. We’ve also designed a tremendous number of research laboratories across the country. Out of Port-

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land, we’re doing a significant amount of U.S. Department of State work, as well as a lot of the urban design work on the transit system.”


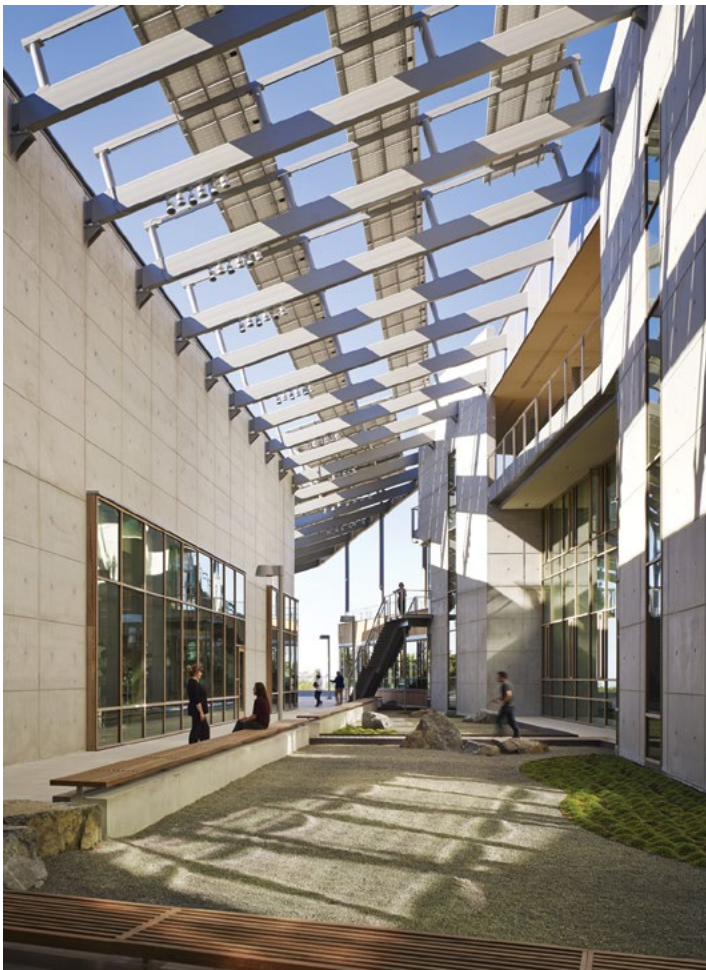
Ted says those innovative clients are attracted to ZGF because of the firm’s flexibility. ZGF has intentionally avoided a “house style” – their work is always unique, and tailored specifically to the needs of the client, and the location and function of the building.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE


Over the years, ZGF has been honored with more than 820 local, regional, and national

design awards. In 1991, the firm even won the highest honor that the American Institute of Architects can bestow – the Architecture Firm Award, recognizing ZGF for “creatively transforming client needs and aspirations into elegant, inventive architectural form, and establishing a standard of excellence and expectation of quality to which other firms aspire.”

According to Ted, those awards are always appreciated, but it’s especially rewarding to see how their projects are directly influencing or impacting the users.



DELIVERING AWARD-WINNING* SOLUTIONS



*Conrad N. Hilton Foundation has received a number of awards including AIA California Council, Sustainability Honor Award; U.S. Green Building Council—LA Chapter Sustainable Innovation Award, Energy+Atmosphere Winner, Project of the Year Winner; and ENR California, Best Projects Southern California, Green Project Winner, Project of the Year Winner.

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PHOTO: ZGF ARCHITECTS PHOTOGRAPHY, NICK BLAIR/ICM

“Whether it’s a hospital where you can see kids in an environment where they actually heal better, or a laboratory building where researchers are working on finding cures for diseases – we want the building to be a catalyst,” he says. “To me, that’s much more gratifying than anything else.”

Recently, at the 2014 American Architecture Awards – hosted by the Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design, together with the European Center for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies and



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Metropolitan Arts Press – ZGF won two awards for their work on the J. Craig Venter Institute (JCVI) in La Jolla, California and the University of Oregon, Hatfield-Dowlin Complex in Eugene.

Ted reiterates that the award is a welcome “confirmation” that ZGF is doing a good job, but again, the real reward is potentially making a difference in peoples’ lives. The JCVI, for example, is a world leader in genomics research.

“The kinds of discoveries coming out of that

place are remarkable,” Ted says. “We worked with two Nobel Prize winners in addition to Craig Venter. Getting to work with people who are changing the world, and creating a building for them to support what they’re trying to do – that’s incredible.”

One of the JCVI’s quests is to help solve two of society’s most pressing issues – global climate change and dependence on hydrocarbons. To reflect that goal, they commissioned the first carbon-neutral laboratory facility in the world, located on the University of California, San Diego campus.





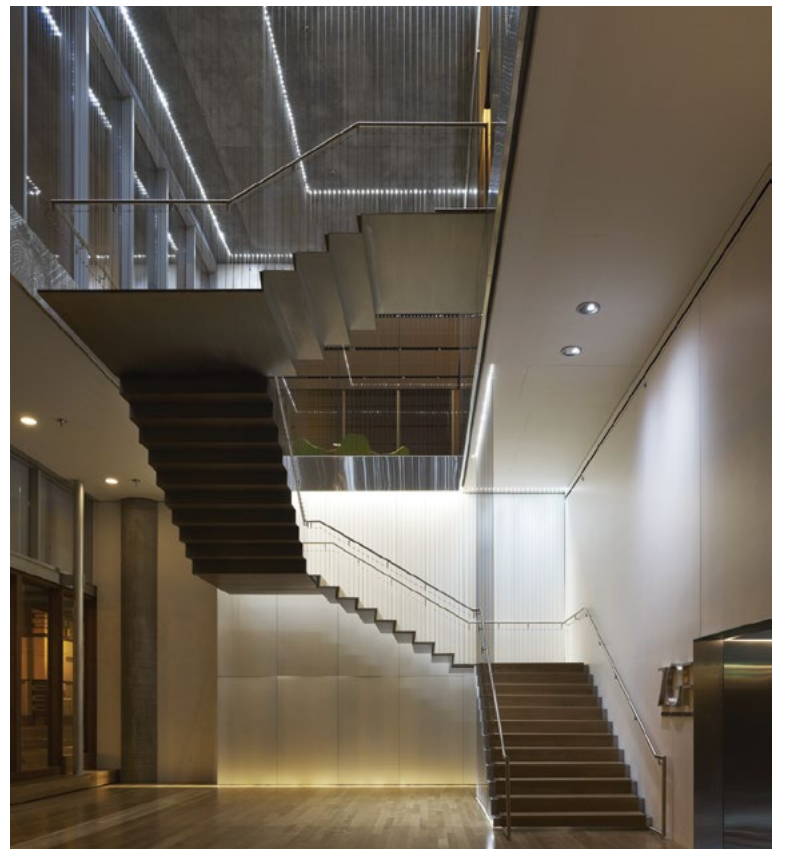
“From the very first meeting, the client said they weren’t going to build this facility unless it was the first net-zero laboratory building in the world,” Ted says. “That was very exciting to us.”

Traditionally, laboratories – particularly genomic-focused ones – consume large quantities of energy for heating and cooling, and also for running energy intensive scientific equipment. The new JCVI building was designed to defy that tradition, and features “all of the latest design and construction elements to ensure that it will exceed the

requirements for LEED Platinum certification.”

“The building is designed to have a ‘net-zero’ energy footprint, which means that it will produce as much electricity on-site as it consumes annually,” Ted explains. “This was possible by integrating numerous energy efficient measures throughout the building systems, incorporating operable windows, efficient lighting, and by reducing internal plug loads wherever possible. On-site electricity is generated through the sizeable photovoltaic (PV) arrays on the roof.”





The design team on that project also pursued strategies to minimize water consumption. For example, rainwater on that building will be collected and stored in a cistern, filtered, and then reused for non-potable uses such as PV washing, cooling tower make-up, and site irrigation. High-efficiency plumbing fixtures are used and the site is landscaped with native plants that require minimal irrigation.

According to Ted, ZGF has always been interested in incorporating sustainable features like those – both for social reasons, and also for operational-efficiency reasons.

“Building performance is something we’ve been focused on for a long time,” he says.

“The best way to push the envelope in terms of that is sustainability, and we’re able to take what we’ve learned from clients like Craig Venter, and bring that knowledge to clients who are less focused on sustainability or less willing to take chances.”

“Even the clients who aren’t interested in sustainability, when I tell them they can cut their operating costs by 30 or 40 percent, they become interested,” he says.

“We like the idea of designing buildings that are more than just shelter,” he reiterates. “Creating cool spaces that really change the way people live and work – that’s gratifying.”

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