

SPORTS AND RECREATION SHOWCASE

JULY/AUGUST 2007

metalmag

hanley wood

EDUCATING BUILDING OWNERS, ARCHITECTS AND CONTRACTORS

A HOUSE FOR ALL SEASONS



COOL
SAFETY
GEAR

HVAC
SYSTEMS

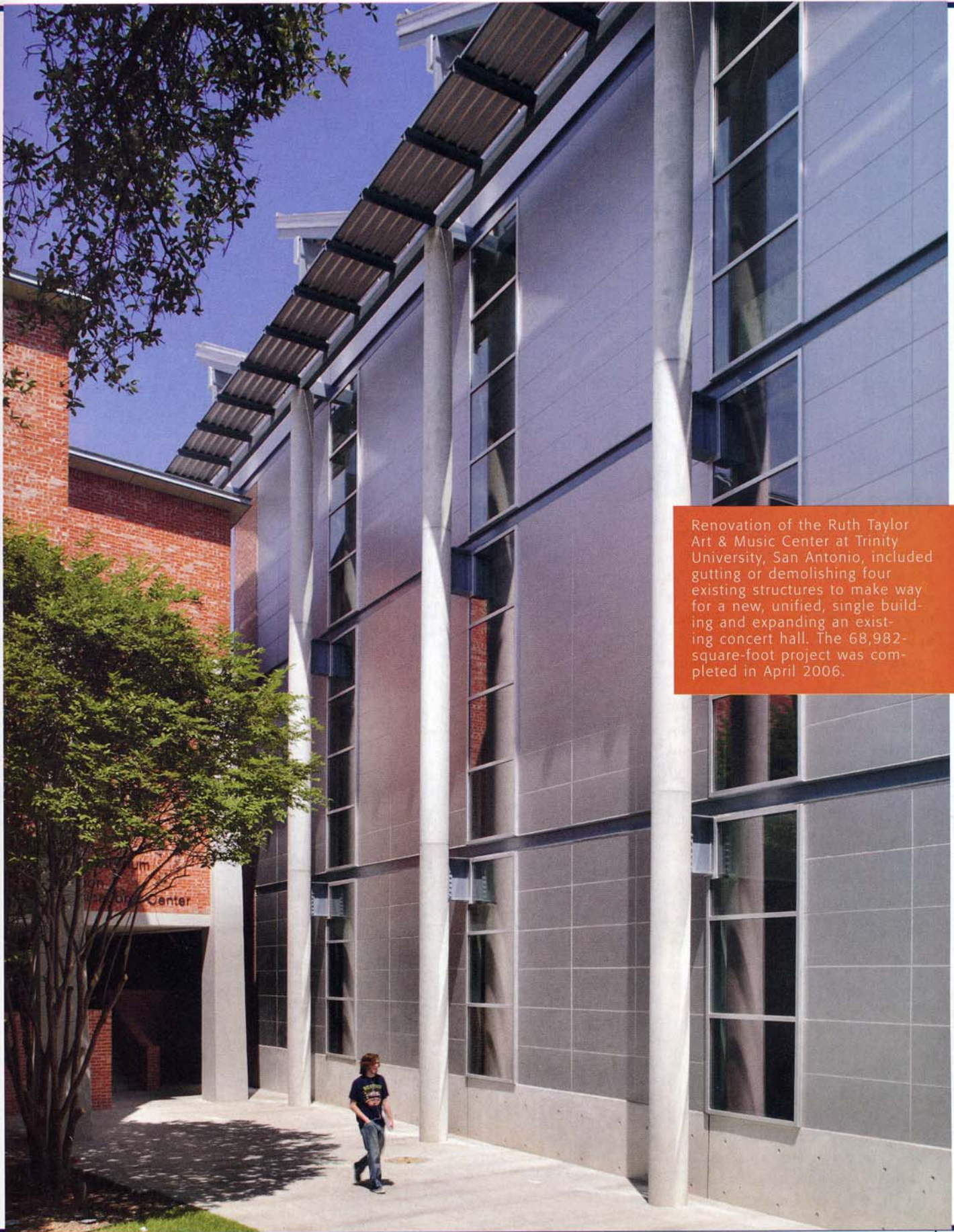


UPDATED
MBMA
MANUAL
LEASING
EQUIPMENT

NEW YORK
HOUSE 

www.metalmag.com
US \$5.95 INT \$7.95





Renovation of the Ruth Taylor Art & Music Center at Trinity University, San Antonio, included gutting or demolishing four existing structures to make way for a new, unified, single building and expanding an existing concert hall. The 68,982-square-foot project was completed in April 2006.

If you've noticed colorful, culturally based buildings in San Antonio that feature metal, it's likely Kell Muñoz Architects Inc. had something to do with them. The San Antonio-

based architecture firm focuses on cultural expression and frequently uses metal to carry out its specialized designs.

HISTORY

Kell Muñoz Architects was established in 1927 as Bartlett Cocke and Associates. Founder Bartlett Cocke, FAIA, and his associate John Kell Sr. established the firm's design sensibilities that continue to be applied to the firm's work through ownership changes and an 80-year history of success.

When Henry Muñoz joined the firm in 1983, the name was Jones & Kell Inc. He became a principal in 1987, but the firm name did not change to Kell Muñoz Wigodsky Inc. until 1993. Dan Wigodsky, AIA, left in 2000, and the name changed to the current Kell Muñoz Architects. John H. Kell, Jr., the son of Cocke's first associate, now is semi-retired.

Muñoz and Geoffrey S. Edwards, AIA, now lead the firm, which serves a diversity of clients in corporate, institutional, government, education from kindergarten through 12th grade, and university sectors. Some of the firm's most significant work in its hometown includes the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center expansion, San Antonio Convention Center Hotel, AT&T Center, Trinity University, and Six Flags Fiesta Texas and Sea World theme parks.

The firm has grown primarily from client referrals and establishing relationships. It had been concentrated in San

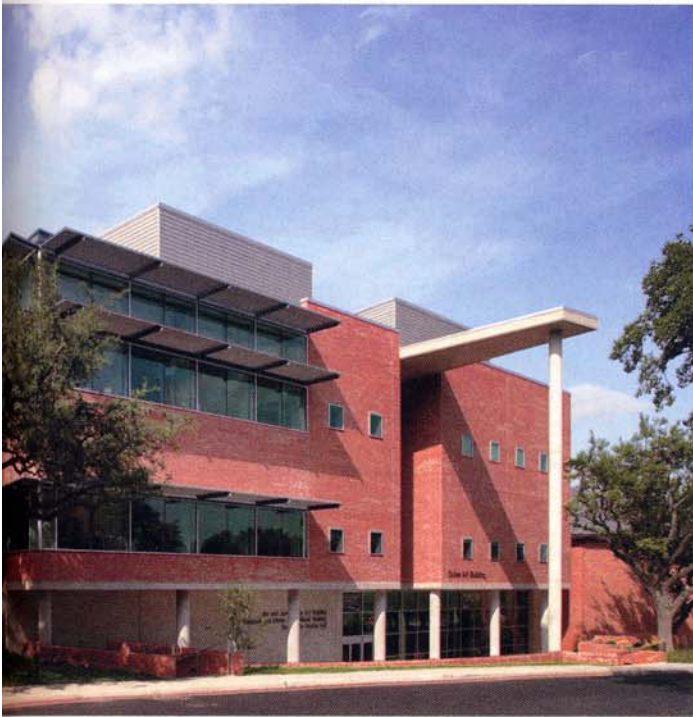
RUTH TAYLOR





[ARCHITECT'S ANGLE]





Antonio, but about 10 years ago the firm started targeting south Texas. Now it has projects all over Texas and is beginning to work in other states.

From the 1960s through the 1980s the firm collaborated on a series of important projects with prominent national design firms, such as New York-based Emilio Ambasz; Cambridge, Mass.-based Cambridge Seven Associates; Washington, D.C.-based Hartman-Cox Architects; and O'Neil Ford, the famous Texas architect. These efforts produced projects at the Lucille Halsell Botanical Conservatory in

San Antonio, San Antonio Museum of Art and University of Texas at San Antonio. During this time, Kell Muñoz Architects shifted its focus toward a distinctive, energetic regional architecture.

METAL

Throughout its growth, the firm's designers have approached each project with an open mind about how to use a variety of materials. "I came to the firm 26 years ago because I liked their attitude about using different materials and designs. They want to do something different rather than just follow tradition. It

means understanding that you can take a product and do a couple of simple things with color or shape or detail to change it. Carefully using that process has helped us achieve award-winning projects," says principal James G. Sterner, AIA, LEED AP. He joined the firm in 1981 and, for most of that time, has focused on university work, including science-related projects.

Sterner believes in developing a strategy based on what space should be the focal point and what budget is available. He puts resources into this key element and works with the budget for the rest,



paying close attention to the way materials are put together.

The person helping to find the right materials for projects is Howard “Buddy” Smith, CSI, senior construction manager and specifications manager for the firm. He researches the materials to fulfill the designs, writes the specs and follows a project through construction.

“I’ve been with the firm for six years and have seen an increase in the use of metal since then. We really look for vendors who have the flexibility to provide us with a

a combo of the two,” Smith says.

The firm’s philosophy in designing schools is to make them appealing to students. In its design for the new headquarters of the Applied Physics Division of the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio, Kell Muñoz Architects used metal on the exterior for several reasons.

“We designed it to attract the type of people who want to get in the field. Metal has excitement, which reflects what’s going on with the work in the building and at the school. We also chose metal for economy. To

We use a lot of custom colors and try to use metal in more unique profiles.

contour or profile when we’re trying to get a particular look. We probably do more custom work with metal in color, profile or

maximize light in the lab and offices, we used strip windows. For this type of design, metal panels were a more economical choice than

The Robert C. Zamora Middle School is a 113,000-square-foot facility designed by Kell Muñoz Architects for the South San Antonio Independent School District. Completed in June 2006, the pre-engineered metal building features an exterior of concrete masonry units and metal panels over metal framing.

stucco, brick or masonry,” Sterner notes.

This new 105,879-square-foot (9836-m²) building was completed in 2006 and has space for four of the division’s five departments. About two-thirds of the building holds laboratories with the balance used for offices.

The firm also applies its creativity in using metal panels in public facilities. “We use a lot of custom colors and try to use metal in more unique profiles, not the





standard v-crimp panels. The area on the [Henry B. Gonzalez] convention center where we placed panels is where the new expansion will go. Because we used a metal panel system it will be easier to just take down the panels than destroying walls for the expansion,” Sterner notes, adding that the convention center panels are finished in a custom color named “KMA blue” for the firm.

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE

Sustainable design also is a growing option at Kell Muñoz Architects. “A lot of clients want to build green, and we track how many LEED points might apply to a design but don’t always submit a building for certification. We just adopt LEED’s approach and encourage clients to do so. Most of them want to know they’re doing something healthy but don’t

want to deal with the details of certification,” Sterner says.

Twenty percent of the staff are LEED Accredited Professionals. The firm encourages and supports staff to become LEED accredited by hosting classes at its location and paying for testing.

TECHNOLOGY

As the firm grew, it also became recognized for its management and technical expertise. Today most of its designs are computer generated, but each staff member has a drafting table to enable hand drawing. “The computer only allows you to see the design in pieces. By hand you see the overall design, and that gives you a better sense

We track how many LEED points might apply to a design but don't always submit a building for certification.

[ARCHITECT'S ANGLE]

The 105,879-square-foot Southwest Research Institute was completed in 2006 and has space for four of the division's five departments. About two-thirds of the building holds laboratories with the balance used for offices.

of scale. That's not to say technology isn't helpful. The computer can be quicker and easier for some things, such as downloading panel shapes from manufacturers and getting answers sooner. We can incorporate their CAD drawings into our plans and send drawings to a subcontractor or a manufacturer's rep who can recommend a panel or product design. On custom work, it allows us to send design details for review before doing shop drawings," Sterner says.

COLORFUL FUTURE

The long-term success of the firm is a testament to its willingness to try new ideas and find the resources to make them work.



"One thing I tell the younger designers is that you don't have to know everything, but you need to know who does and go to them," Sterner says. Continuing this phi-

losophy and the use of colorful, adaptable metal in its designs will lead Kell Muñoz Architects into another near-century of success. ■■



OUR CEILING SYSTEMS ARE A HEAD ABOVE ALL OTHERS.

The best choice for unsurpassed energy efficiency for your facilities. The High-R rigid board insulation system insulating the world one square foot at a time



**INSULATED
CEILING AND
WALL SYSTEMS**

2335 230TH STREET AMES / IOWA 50014
FAX: 515-292-0440 / WWW.HIGH-R.COM / INFO@HIGH-R.COM
TOLL FREE: 888-292-2382

R-45