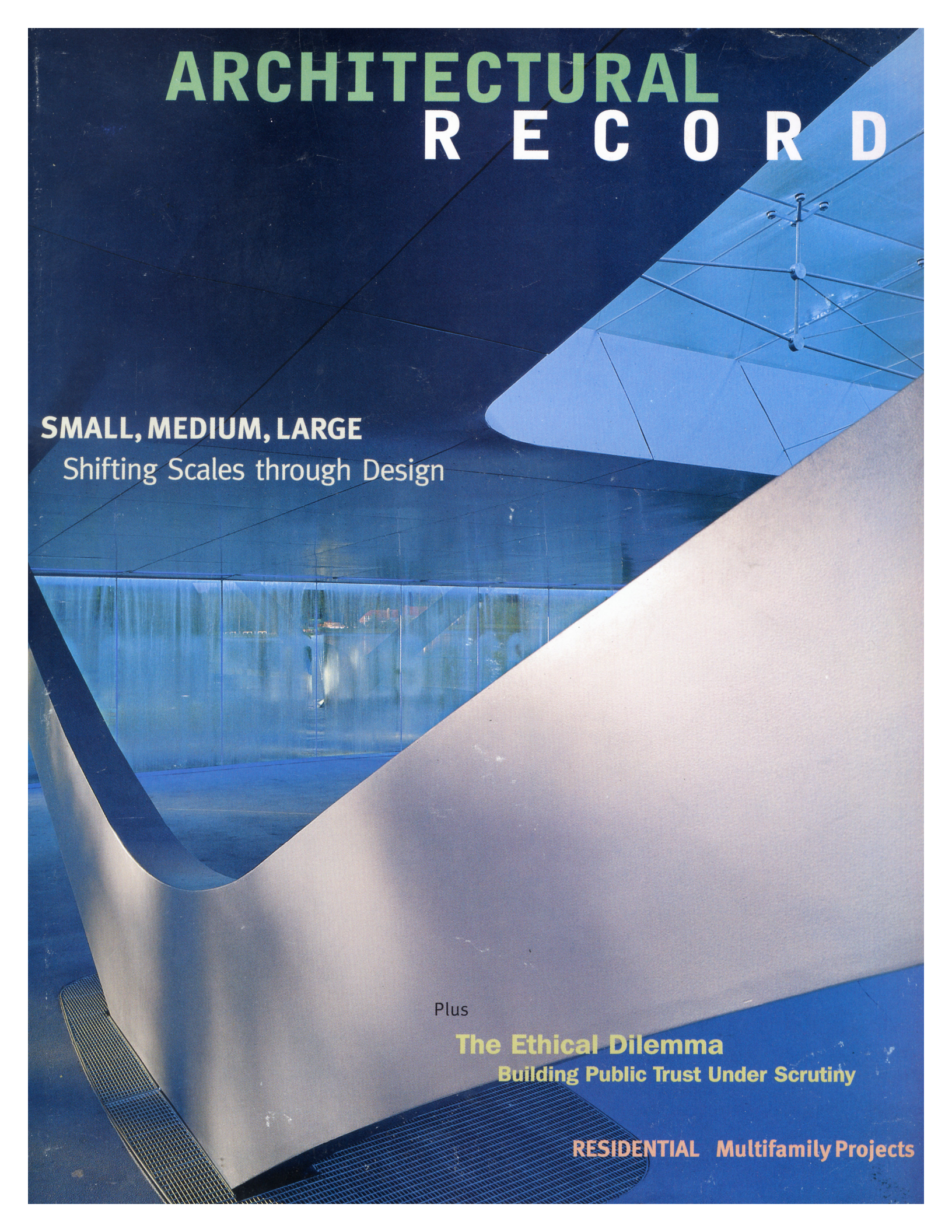


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Encouraging many different experiences of the site, the scheme includes roof decks (this page). Exploding the conventional confines of a barn, Rose literally lifted the roof of his stables (opposite).



Charles Rose Architects echoes the vast landscapes of north-central Wyoming in **CAMP PAINTROCK**, a life-changing program for inner-city teens at risk

By Sarah Amelar

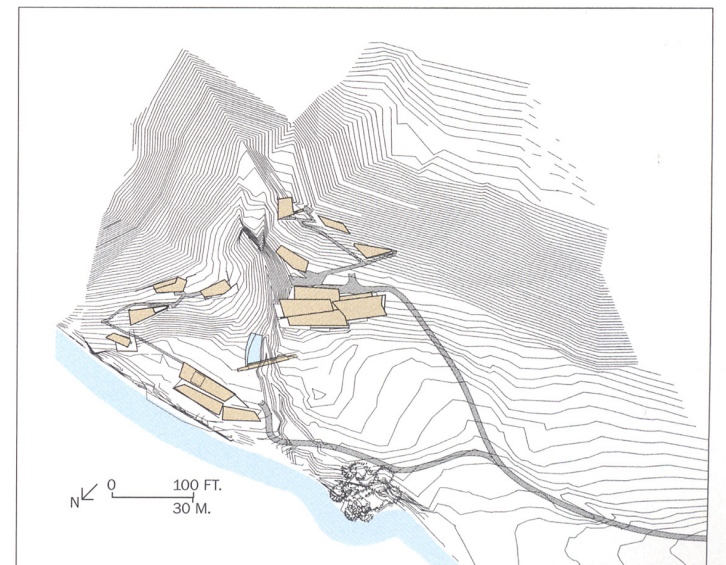
Hyattville, Wyoming: population 100. It's a place where cattle far outnumber people—a town, bordering the Big Horn Mountains, so remote you'd have to drive an hour each way just to pick up, say, a quart of milk. Yet it's where many teens from Los Angeles's inner city now vie to spend five weeks each summer.

At first glance, this scenario may seem improbable, but Hyattville has become home to Camp Paintrock, a program offering potentially life-transforming experiences to disadvantaged young Los Angelenos. Paintrock is the brainchild and philanthropic creation of John Alm, 56, president and chief operating officer of Coca-Cola Enterprises. His idea was to take motivated, high-performing minority students just as they're about to enter high school—teens from difficult family conditions and neighborhoods blighted with poverty, youth gangs, rampant crime, and soaring drop-out rates—and place them in a healthy but challenging setting, unlike anything they've ever known before.

With an intense back-to-basics program of riding and caring for horses, rappelling canyon faces, swimming, bow-and-arrow hunting, and whitewater rafting, the camp may resemble getaways for more privileged kids, except that here the activities are likely to be new, if not daunting, to the campers. A major goal is to build self-esteem, self-reliance, and positive ways of overcoming fear. But that's just the kickoff. After one five-week session, the participants can't return, except as counselors, but Paintrock stays in touch with them, providing counseling and financial aid, keeping peers in contact with one another, and helping them stay on track to later reenter society, Alm hopes, "as college-educated, make-a-difference adults."

This is the kind of dream one might plan to realize "in retirement," says Alm of Paintrock. But, after suffering a major heart attack at age 37 and later losing his first wife to cancer, he began to wonder: "Who knows how long any of us will be around? Why wait?" He'd seen how much his own two children had gained from camp—and had also witnessed tough childhood conditions firsthand. He "started from nothing," he says, weathered the "total disintegration" of his family, and then bounced from one inner city to another. A two-time college dropout, he joined the military, finally got on course, and completed his undergraduate degree at age 28. Alm emerged as a man who clearly values education.

To transform his vision into reality, this Coca-Cola C.O.O. and his second wife, Carol, joined forces with Greg Kovacs, an M.B.A. with extensive youth-development and nonprofit experience, who now directs Paintrock's program. But to give the concept physical form and character,



the team turned to the Boston firm of Charles Rose Architects. Rose had not designed a camp before, but his work had been consistently responsive to natural settings and included Thompson and Rose's award-winning artists' retreat in Florida [RECORD, June 1997, page 99].

By the time the Alms met Rose, they'd already obtained the land for Paintrock. The site, at the mouth of two small canyons, is part of a 110,000-acre ranch, where John now spends as much time as possible, and

Project: Camp Paintrock

Owner: The Alm Foundation—John and Carol Alm

Architect: Charles Rose Architects—Charles Rose, design principal; Eric Robinson, David Gabriel, David Martin, project architects; Franco

Ghilardi, Lori Sang, Takashi Yanai, Maryann Thompson, Marios Christodoulides, Patricia Chen, Chris Hoxi, Heidi Beebe, project team

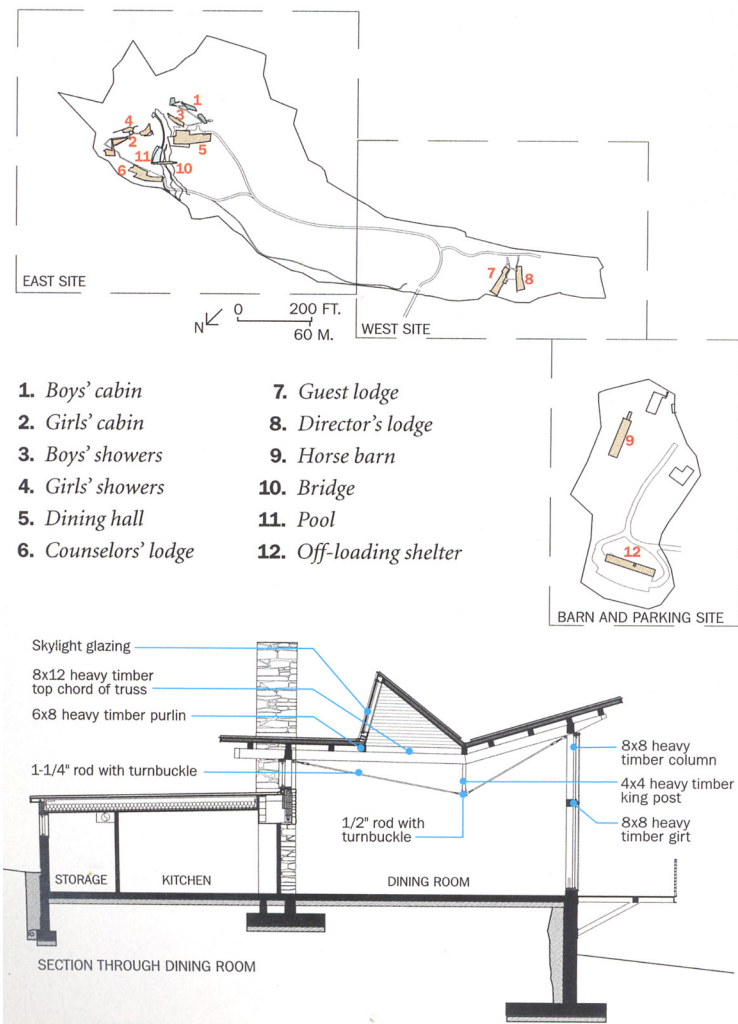
Engineers: Arup (structural); Weber (MEP); Steedley (civil); Wolz (surveyor)

General contractor: Groathouse

PHOTOGRAPHY: © CHUCK CHOI PHOTOGRAPHY



The low-lying, tilted, standing-seam roofs echo geologic features in the landscape—especially where rock formations resulted from sliding plates and induction processes.



Carol raises thousands of head of cattle. Like much of northern Wyoming, it is landscape with a big sky and multiple personalities—passing from mesas and rolling hills silvery with juniper and dry sage brush to vast meadows flecked with occasional wild deer or elk to billowy cottonwood trees bordering the Paintrock Creek to massive terra-cotta-colored rock formations, seemingly surging up in long horizontal striations.

The project brief included a horse barn, a dining hall, a counselors' lodge, a director's house, and cabins for the 36 campers at each summer's two sessions (a remarkably small group of students, drawn annually from a pool of 10,000 eighth graders in the Los Angeles Unified School District). Taking bold, but calculated, risks, the Almses stipulated that the camp would be co-ed "to teach boys and girls to live together"—though males are explicitly forbidden from the female cabin zone, and vice versa. To develop further responsible attitudes, the campers would sleep in bunks without a counselor present. And, according to Rose, his clients favored rugged and challenging over cushy conditions, separating bathrooms from sleeping cabins, offering no paved paths, and omitting handrails wherever possible.

The landscape and its geologic formations provided immediate inspiration for Rose. At the same time, a tight budget, the remote location, and a mandate for a fast-track schedule (ultimately lasting 15 months from start to finish) persuaded him to enlist materials—steel, corrugated galvanized aluminum, concrete, regional river rock, and cedar siding—that matched the experience of local builders. The resulting scheme responds in scale, color, and texture to the site's existing farm structures, as it disperses 30,000 square feet of space among 16 new buildings over a 10-acre parcel. The largest of Rose's structures are a horse barn and a dining hall that doubles as a great room.

"We were trying to do something that'd be fun for the kids, but not cutesy—sophisticated instead of playing down to them," says Rose. The horse barn echoes the low-lying quality of a large lambing shed on



Perched on a canyon wall, the boys' cabins (opposite, top) rest on columns, allowing the structures to hover. The stable roof (above) establishes a visual dialogue with the mesa behind it. The dining hall's glazed elevations yield an exceptionally open quality (right, far right, and bottom). Apparently light wooden mullions play against the solidity of a river-stone chimney.





Instead of a conventional, dimly lit barn, the luminous stable (opposite) has skylights and clerestories. The visually floating boys' cabins, with their radically acute corners, have a subtle presence in the landscape (left and bottom left). All cabins feature rolling doors and screens that can open to the outdoors (below).



the site, while, at the same time, bursting open the traditional barn form. Hardly a conventionally boxy volume with a dark interior, Rose's stable is light and airy, clad in pale galvanized aluminum, with translucent polycarbonate-paned skylights and clerestories. The building's dogtrot, linking the stables to a storage room, frames views of Paintrock Canyon. At this juncture, the roof folds and jauntily tilts upward, following the silhouette of a mesa to the south and evoking the sliding plates and induction processes of nearby geologic formations.

Across the pastures, the dining hall, the prime indoor communal space, also rises to a playfully folding, liting, and overlapping standing-seam roof. The roof's exposed heavy-timber structure forms inverted king-post trusses with steel-rod tension chords. A glazed south-facing wall with wood Mondrianesque mullions opens the room to spectacular views (as well as extreme heat when summer temperatures soar into the 100s).

Just as the campers use the site—its rock faces, streams, meadows, and trails—in varied ways, so too has the architect shaped and sited his buildings in response to a range of landscape conditions. The three boys' cabins, hovering over a canyon wall, are raised on columns, carefully placed to minimize site disturbance. Meanwhile, the three girls' cabins, across a gully, nestle into the land, and the shower buildings, with deep-set retaining walls, are further embedded into the hillside. Large rolling screen doors and outer wooden panels open the cabins to the outside. Through roof decks, lookouts, and elevated, interconnecting walkways, the scheme

offers lots of views and overviews, encouraging different ways of seeing the landscape, as well as the complex array of roof configurations.

And the campers really seem to get it. A Paintrock teen named Michelle recently commented on "how you can see the night sky from every single bunk." Her fellow camper Betty chimed in: "And all the cabins are unique—some have roof decks, some don't but are close to the stream (which can help hot nights feel a lot cooler), some are near the bathrooms (which can be a very good thing), and one has this great boulder coming up through the floor." By design, there's no best or worst cabin: They all have carefully calculated trade-offs.

Of course, inner cities have many more deserving teens than Paintrock alone can accommodate. But its influence is spreading. Camp Coca-Cola (with a strong corporate backer, rather than the hands-on presence and personal touch of the Almses) opened this summer in St. Louis. "I may scare people," says John Alm exuberantly, "but other corporations and The Alm Foundation [which supports Paintrock] need to do a whole lot more—we should build at least 500 of these camps, all across the nation." ■

Sources

Windows : *Dynamic Windows*

Plumbing: *Basin Mechanica* (toilets, sinks, faucets, showerheads)

Kitchen appliances: *General Electric*

www For more information on the people and products involved in this project, go to Projects at architecturalrecord.com.