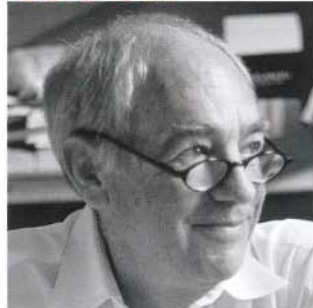


## PETER L. GLUCK



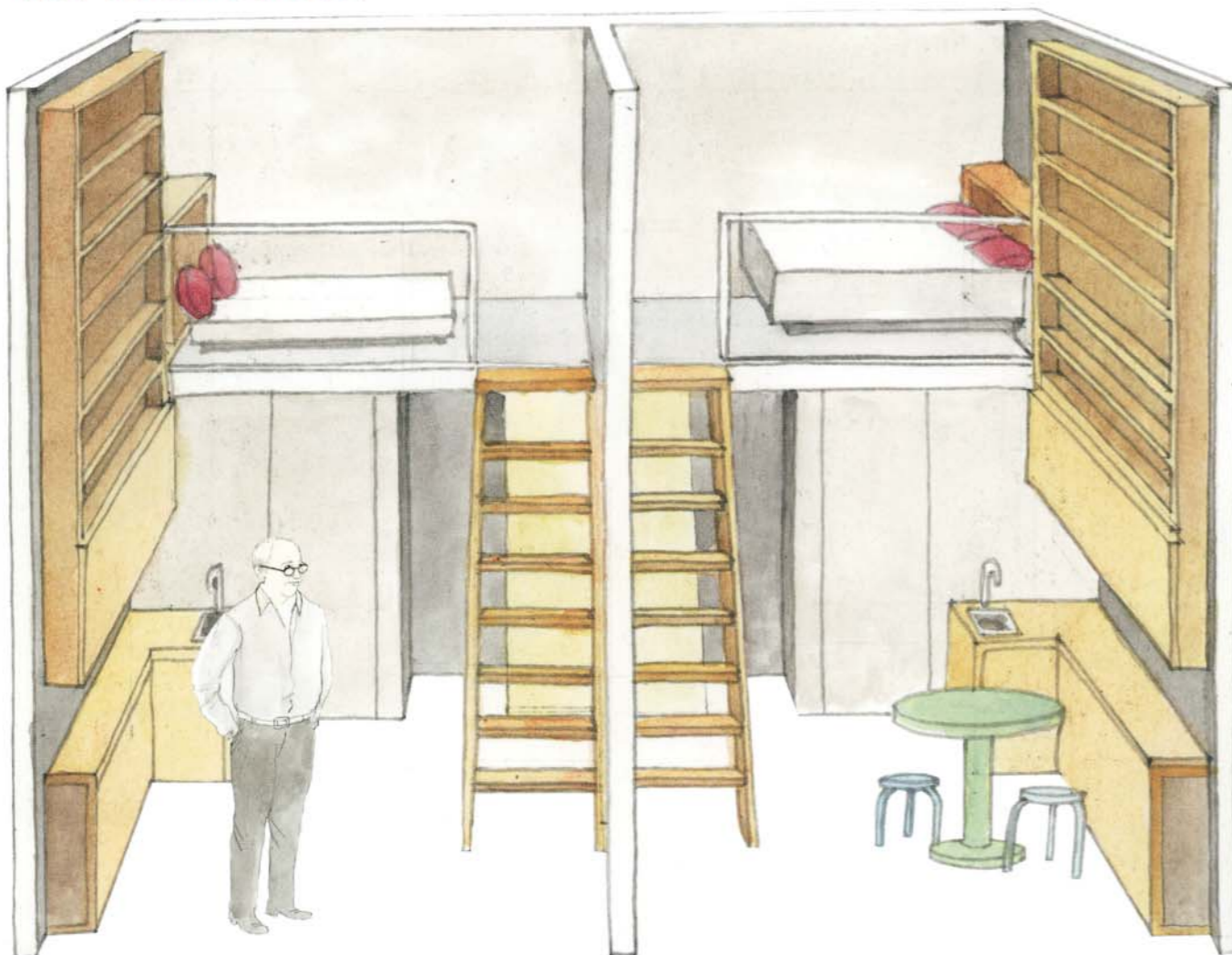
Peter Gluck is founder and principal of **GLUCK+** in New York. Most work is constructed by the firm through its unique approach to Architect-Led Design-Build. In 2014, *Fast Company's* "World's Top 10 Most Innovative Companies in Architecture" list included GLUCK+ "for taking control of the entire building process."

## INGA SAFFRON



As architecture critic for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* since 1999, Inga Saffron has written a weekly column called "Changing Skyline," which offers an insightful look at the urban design issues facing Philadelphia. She is the winner of the 2014 Pulitzer Prize in Criticism, and has been a finalist three times since 2004.

## IN THE FRAY



PLG: The architectural world tends to focus on the really high cost of buildings, the zip-a-dee-doo-dah buildings—music halls, museums, luxury condos, corporate centers. No one talks about how much these buildings cost while, simultaneously, the whole city is being silently rebuilt under our noses with a different set of criteria, different budgets. As part of our practice, although we do those zip-a-dee buildings, we seek projects that are not high-profile buildings with generous budgets, but more ordinary projects with ordinary budgets. One of the problems that developers and the real world face is a kind of fear of ambitious architects. When we're trying to do these kinds of projects, we're faced with the assumption that architects cause problems rather than adding value to their tightly budgeted project. The rap on architects in the real world is really not so great.

Architecture, in this context, is seen as an unaffordable kind of a luxury or worse. A path for many architects is to make problematic, costly buildings. I think, as architects, we really need to turn that vision around. The question for our profession is simply how do we, how can we add value in this context, and what is the framework within which we must operate.



## WEST HARLEM

By Eben Klemm

2 oz. Bourbon or rye

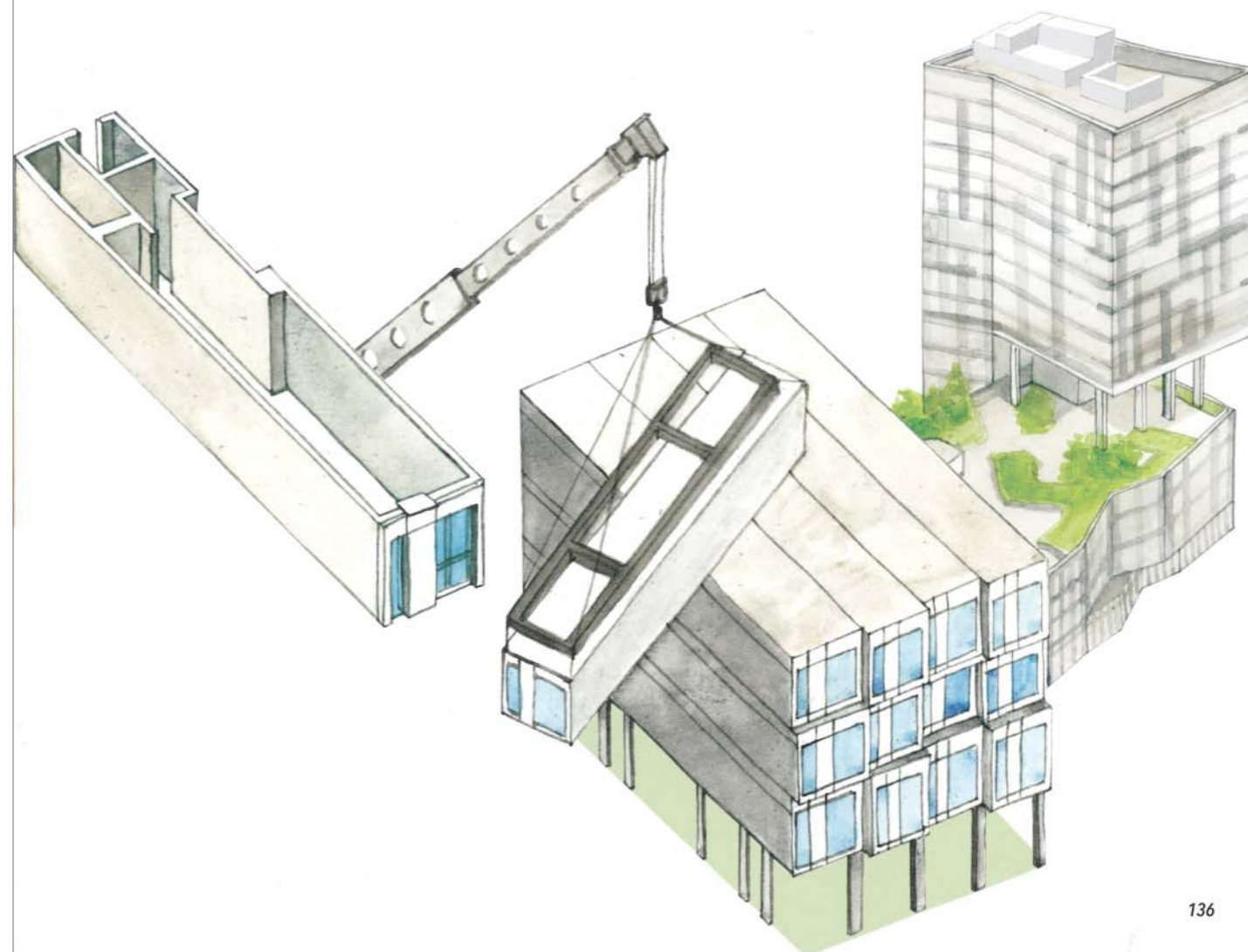
1 oz. West Harlem vermouth

Stir ingredients over ice 20 times. Strain and serve, garnish with dandelion leaf.

### West Harlem vermouth:

Combine one bottle Uncouth Vermouth Butternut Squash Vermouth, 1 bottle Malbec, 1 cup honey, 1 cup chopped dandelion leaf, 1 cup chopped arugula, 2 sprigs fresh basil, and macerate for 3 days. Strain out solids.

Peter Gluck wanted me to think about his work and studio in terms of its association with West Harlem. So I imagined the possibilities of making a vermouth with weeds found in the city streets and parks (I did not actually forage weeds in West Harlem for this drink).





BRIDGE, PHILADELPHIA, PA

We are a design-build firm, but I don't like talking about it so much because everybody wants to just talk about it.

The way the construction process is organized is that the general contractor takes the architect's drawings, which are fixed and cannot be changed, to subcontractors. He's hamstrung. He can't really get any feedback from the construction world. **The whole secret is feedback from the construction world.** Similarly, it's feedback from the town, like the way we got a zoning change was by understanding what they were interested in. It's a dialogue.

Buzzwords such as "partnering" and "advocating for a client" mean developing a project framework and interpreting codes, rules, and best practices to maximize the allowable scope of a project. It requires knowledge of construction. It means understanding real estate values, doing test fits for alternate sites. It means taking responsibility for success rather than avoiding risk and remaining above the fray.

**As architects, our role has always been to enhance the public realm,** to create beautiful spaces, elegant forms that reflect their use. As modernists, our office is interested in housing within easy walking distance to public transportation, in space for community needs, schools, shopping—all the real stuff of life in the city.



BRIDGE, PHILADELPHIA, PA

**Architects have given up their responsibility to deal with the construction process.** They've been told that that's where all the liability is, so they don't do it. After years of not walking on a construction site, they have very little understanding of process; they've lost touch with these kinds of issues.

*IS: How did you make the transition from doing architecture exclusively to being part of the building team, as in the case of the Bridge apartment tower in Philadelphia?*

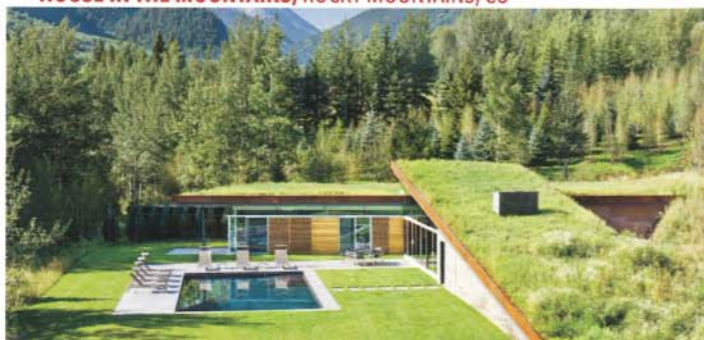
What's more fun and more exciting than construction? Buildings look great when they're under construction, and then they look terrible once they pull their pants up. The reality is that on a project like the Bridge, there's only one person who's personally liable if anything goes wrong, and that's me, the architect. I put that stamp on the drawings, so I'm liable.



TOWER HOUSE, CATSKILL, NY

We understand the value of mixed-use buildings that express the inherent differentiation of use. We try to make more muscular buildings with appropriate materials that reflect the sky and create patterns of shade and light.

HOUSE IN THE MOUNTAINS, ROCKY MOUNTAINS, CO



CARY LEEDS CENTER FOR TENNIS & LEARNING, BRONX, NY

Why would I give that responsibility to some other person I don't know anything about, who might be a nefarious individual over whom I have no control. Why would I let him control my liability? **It always seemed to me that if I'm going to build a building, I'm going to make sure it's built right.** And if I have to build little buildings that way, then that's what I'll do. But it turns out you can build big buildings that way, too.

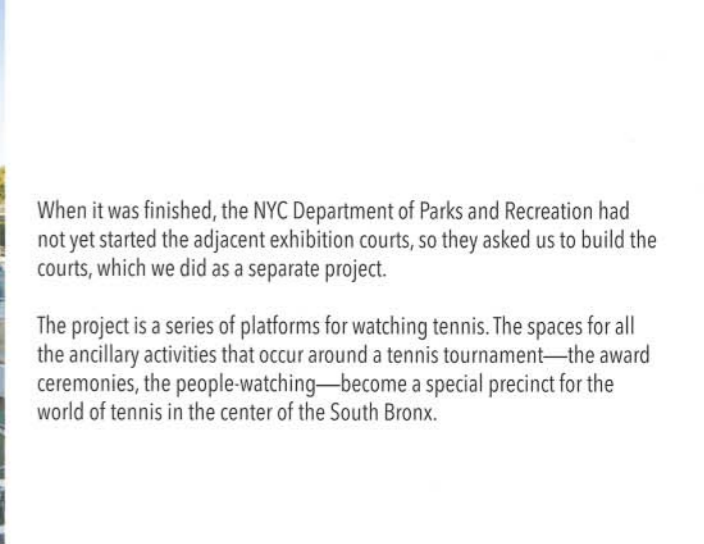
We recently finished the Cary Leeds Center for Tennis and Learning in the Bronx for Arthur Ashe's tennis program. Its mission is to get inner city kids into tennis and, through tennis, into doing their homework and ultimately into building their lives—as well as, of course, building their own strategies for tennis.



LITTLE AJAX AFFORDABLE HOUSING, ASPEN, CO

"How do you get this job?" is always a question architects ask when we show this kind of project. **We do not sit by the phone waiting for it to ring. We go into the community to understand what the needs are.** We worked on this project for 12 years.

We did test fits for six or seven sites while working for the non-profit organization. We did not work for free, but certainly not for profit. We built the Billie Jean King Clubhouse. We are a design-build office. We design and build most of our buildings.



When it was finished, the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation had not yet started the adjacent exhibition courts, so they asked us to build the courts, which we did as a separate project.

The project is a series of platforms for watching tennis. The spaces for all the ancillary activities that occur around a tennis tournament—the award ceremonies, the people-watching—become a special precinct for the world of tennis in the center of the South Bronx.



THE EAST HARLEM SCHOOL, NEW YORK, NY

*IS: In addition to all the construction challenges that you describe, finance really drives how buildings are built, and investors expect a certain return. Developers value-engineer a building. They cheapen the materials. There's a whole financial model built on how long the developer will actually hold a building if it's rental apartments, which impacts the quality of the architecture. I see a lot of buildings that look to me like they're built to last 30 years. It's kind of scary. **Are we building the slums of tomorrow?***

That's a good question. I have this theory that, in the early 1900s, buildings were designed to last for about 110 years. In the 1950s, buildings were designed to last about 60 years. In the 1980s, they were designed to last about 25 years, so next Tuesday the whole world is going to fall down. We don't really know what's going to happen. It's really interesting.

DUKE UNIVERSITY MARINE LABORATORY, BEAUFORT, NC

