

editor's note



AS I LAZED ABOUT ONE SUNDAY MORNING, READING THE PAPER AND GENERALLY IGNORING THE HAVOC MY KIDS WERE CREATING (yes, my wife was out or I'd have never gotten away with it), I was rendered thoughtful by a story from Blair Kamin.

Kamin is the *Chicago Tribune's* Pulitzer Prize-winning architecture critic, and I often find him a bit too strident. In this article he was complaining about the increasing trend towards "façade-ectomies" in Chicago. This trend in preservation simply keeps the façade of a historic building and attaches it to a new structure behind. And often the new structure towers over the historic portion.

While Kamin doesn't out-and-out condemn the practice, he is hostile to it since too often merely preserving a façade creates a record of a city that never existed and destroys the community fabric it was intended to preserve. I kind of like the trend, though. The first time I saw it done well was up in Toronto at BCE Place, a modern steel temple where a strip of historic façades are preserved not on the exterior of the building, but rather inside the main atrium. It creates amazing visual interest while preserving at least a slice of the past. Yes, there are bad examples too. But there are also a lot of poorly designed buildings out there in general—both being built today and designed decades ago.

And I do agree with at least one thing Kamin said, at least once I got past the first two pages of his rhetoric: "The city is a living museum of architecture, not one frozen in time." But I would add that it's the new that adds vibrancy.

This same need to adapt the past to the present is behind AISC's online continuing education program. We've toyed with online continuing education in the past, but now we've relaunched it in a bigger way.

Last summer we presented four of our most popular continuing education seminars during one week in Chicago. But this time, we digitally recorded the presentations. And now we've put the four programs online. When you take the course online, you see the same PowerPoint presentation you'd see if you attended the course in person. And you hear (and see) the presenter. (In the near future, seven lectures from the recent NASCC: The Steel Conference will be added.)

We also thought about how to price these programs. In keeping with AISC's philosophy of making information as readily available as possible (for example, everyone can download current AISC specifications at no charge), we've decided to allow everyone to view these courses for free. That's right. If all you're interested in is expanding your knowledge, feel free to enjoy all four courses at no charge. However, if you also want your CEU certificates, then you need to pay a fee (there really is no free lunch). Each of the programs offers 0.6 CEUs (or 6 PDHs) and costs just \$100 for AISC members or \$200 for non-members. (Of course, if you're a structural engineer and plan on taking one or more courses, you should join AISC and save some money.)

To access these courses, simply visit www.aisc.org, click on "Learning Opportunities" and then click on "Online Seminars."

To join AISC, visit www.aisc.org and click on "Join AISC!"

Welcome to the vibrant new future!

SCOTT MELNICK
EDITOR

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