





Edwin Wallover III, AIA ON Archetypes in Aquatic Architecture

HOW ONE SMALL PENNSYLVANIA FIRM IS MAKING WAVES AROUND THE WORLD

by Joel Cornell

It's one thing to work a firm into a "niche" of architecture. It's another thing altogether to maintain a firm with a staff of five highly trained employees, each with a bachelor's degree in architecture, who can provide a specialized set of skills to clients, while still keeping a broad range of services open to anyone with a project that needs quality design behind it.

First incorporated in Canton, Ohio in 1982, Wallover Architects began based on founding Principal Edwin Wallover's love for historic renovations.

"We started out as most firms do," said Wallover, "as a general practice with no substantive direction or specialty at first. After I graduated from Kent State in the late 1970s, there was a big idea that adaptive reuse was the future of architectural design. Historic renovation was a big interest of mine, so we started to go that way; and fortunately that's where the industry was going too."

After their initial successes, Wallover Architects relocated to Lancaster, Pa. in 1986. One of their first successful historic renovations projects in Pennsylvania was

The Hotel Wellington in Carlisle, originally constructed in the late 19th century. The hotel was the first four-story structure in the city. It had been vacant for over a decade when Wallover took the reins, and was to be reinvented as an office and apartment space. Upon completion, the project won an award from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in 1988.

Wallover Architects took on many recreational projects in their early years, and quickly began to gain a reputation for their skill at designing recreational and aquatic facilities.

"It all started with the first few projects that we did well and enjoyed doing," said Wallover.

"My wife's career background was municipal and therapeutic recreation. This gave us the ability to view our projects from the perspective of the architect, facility managers and programmers, and also, the end user."

In addition to Wallover Architect's specialization in

designing recreational and aquatic facilities, they also offer their expertise in the form of on-site project management and feasibility projects. Wallover always maintains a close working relationship with any project that his firm designs. This hands-on approach has extended to clients who already have their designs in motion, but simply need qualified personnel acting on the client's behalf with no bias towards profit.

"Recently we've observed that contractors have had difficulty providing qualified, responsible personnel in a supervisory role on smaller projects," said Wallover. "As we tend towards a lot of municipal projects,

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PREVIOUS PAGE AND THIS PAGE:
Corona Park Aquatic Center, Flushing Meadow, Queens, N.Y. This 25 x 50 meter stretch competitive pool was developed in association with Handel Architects and Horn + Goldman Architects for a multi-use recreation facility on the site of the 1939 & 1964 World's Fair. Designed as a potential Olympic swimming competition venue and local recreation facility, the pool includes one and three meter diving, a larger moveable floor section and dual moveable bulkheads. The 10-lane, 53 meter pool is designed to maximize performance and include flexibility for multiple aquatic sports including diving, 25 and 50 meter racing, water polo, synchronized swimming, and leisure activities.

the input and desires from the individual are often put aside for the assumed needs of the community. Before any ground is broken on any municipal or community-based project, we survey the people living in the community to engage them to refine and help form the core of what the client wants accomplished.

"One of the most important parts of being an architect is the ability to communicate with everyone who is involved. Each project is unique to the wants and needs to the client, but sometimes they don't know exactly how to articulate that. Through feasibility analysis, surveys of the community and key user groups and our own experience and expertise, we're able to bring to the client everything they want and some things they didn't even know they wanted."

For the past six years, Wallover had been a featured speaker of the USA Swimming's Regional Build a Pool Conferences. USA Swimming is the national governing body for competitive swimming in the United States. These conferences help to inspire communication between architects, contractors, community leaders and swimming enthusiasts and to encourage the sport to grow in every region of the U.S.

Wallover Architect has built and maintained a reputation that has carried their name around the world. In 2008, the Ukrainian National Swimming Federation invited Wallover to speak at their national conference.

"Recently in the Ukraine," said Wallover, "there has been a significant problem of accidental drowning. There's also been a problem there, and in many former Soviet countries, of the prevalent use of tobacco and alcohol, amongst the old and the young. Our mission there was virtually the same as it is here in the U.S. We want to help to develop community facilities for recreation and sport to bring social and health issues to the forefront of people's minds."

Though Wallover Architects acts as an advisor and feasibility consultant across the country, the majority of their projects come from the East Coast, from Florida to New England.

In 2008, Wallover Architects was the aquatic design consultant working with Handel Architects and Horn-Goldman Architects, both of New York City, for a new \$66.3 million Corona Park natatorium and ice rink in Queens, N.Y.

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In conjunction with Wallover Architects, Pulsair Systems' specified and designed a SoftWater system for the new Greensboro Aquatic Center. Diffusers were installed under six diving stations including the 1 and 3 meter spring boards and the 7.5 and 10 meter platforms. The diving instructor activates the bubble generators using a hand held transmitter. For more information, visit www.pulsair.com.





The center has been awarded "Best Pool in New York City" for 2010.

Currently, Wallover Architects is part of a team of three architectural firms designing the \$19 million regional aquatic center located at the Greensboro Coliseum in Greensboro, N.C. Rosser International of Atlanta was the principal architect; TFF Architects of Greensboro, N.C. was the architect of record and Wallover architects served as the aquatic design consulting architect.

"The Greensboro project featured state-of-the-art systems for filtration and lighting," said Wallover, "and it was truly a pleasure to work on that kind of community center with such a desire to be the very best. The entire center will be a tremendous asset for the community."

Especially when dealing with buildings

for a community and not just an individual, Wallover stressed the importance of how architecture can impact people and how a community interacts.

"It's a welcome challenge to come up with facilities that respect the architecture of the surrounding environment, all while maintaining their own identity," said Wallover. "That whole idea is incredibly important in any building we do, no matter how diverse the client type or user group."

"We feel strongly about the fact that we use architecture and our profession as a way to bring a very important sports and wellness activity to communities in the U.S. and beyond. I personally love the fact that we are involving people daily outside the discipline of architecture to create a fantastic end result." *ALT*

THIS PAGE: Kennett Square Golf & Country Club swimming pool, tennis pavilion and cart storage, Kennett Square, Pa. The Project involved the design and development of a new 25-meter, 6-lane competition pool with an integral diving well, and elevated decks. The raised foundation provides both participants and spectators with an exceptional view of the golf course. Integrating a separate wading pool, snack bar and tennis facilities was an important aspect of the overall design. Effective utilization of the sloped site provided for the addition of a tennis pro shop and golf cart storage facility on ground level. The project also included new ADA compliant dressing, locker rooms and shower facilities.

All photos courtesy of Wallover Aquatics.

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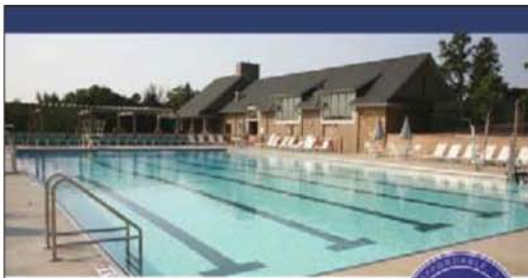


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