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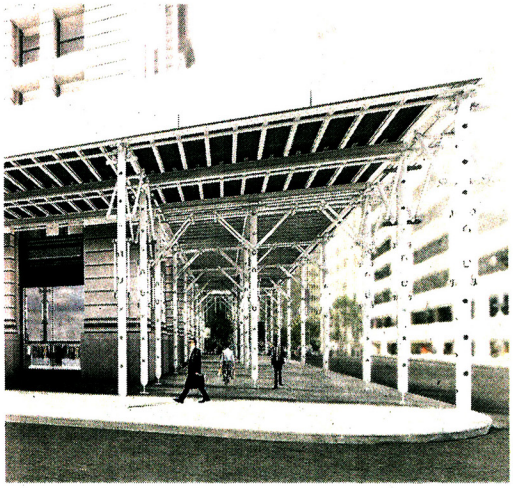
# New Designs for Sidewalk Safety

GANNETT FLEMING ENGINEERS AND ARCHITECTS

**LIGHTER AND MORE COLORFUL: Four designs for sidewalk sheds, those structures that protect pedestrians from falling objects, were chosen as winners of a competition held by the New York Building Congress. The 'ScaffoldWing' rendering, above, by Gannett Fleming Engineers & Architects P.C., pushes the columns in from the curb to free up space on the street and sidewalk.** **Spaces A24**



GENSLER


TOP TO BOTTOM: FRANCIS CAUFFMAN; PLATT BYARD DOVELL WHITE ARCHITECTS LLP

# Sidewalk Sheds That Please As Well as Protect

**Top left, a rendering of Gensler's G-Shed concept. Above, the Side+Ways+Shed concept by the Francis Cauffman firm. Below, PBDW Architects' UrbanArbor concept. These were among the four winners of a competition aimed at improving sidewalk construction sheds.**

## Contest designs add color, light and space

SPACES
KEIKO MORRIS

In a city undergoing a construction boom, the tunnels and chutes created by the prolific sidewalk sheds have become a common pedestrian hurdle—usually safe, to be sure, but often dreary.

Now industry leaders are aiming to upend the standard shed with structures that add light and color, open up the sidewalk and offer more visibility for shops beneath.

Four designs will be unveiled on Thursday as winners of a competition held by the New York Building Congress and its philanthropic arm, the New York Building Foundation. All offer a contrast to the usual latticework of steel beams sheathed in painted plywood. The designs were required to take into account city Department of Buildings standards.

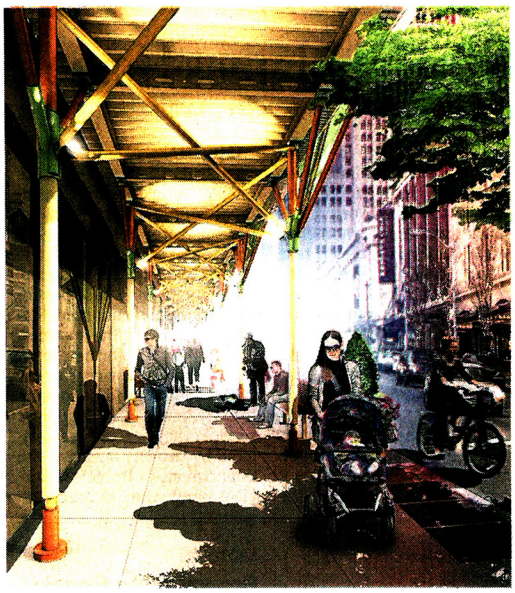
The concepts already have drawn interest from owners and developers, said Frank J. Sciame, chief executive of Sciame Construction LLC and chairman of the competition committee.

While the designs vary, they all strip away the low horizontal beams that restrict movement between the sidewalk, curb and street.

"ScaffoldWing," designed by Gannett Fleming Engineers & Architects P.C., pushes the columns in from the curb to free up more space on both the street and sidewalk, said Huzefa Irfani, architecture department manager and part of the Gannett team.

The design uses translucent panels instead of the plywood for its roof, which allows more light on the sidewalks. The roof also is pitched to direct rainwater toward the building and away from the pedestrian.

The "G-Shed" concept, from design firm Gensler and engineering firm Gilsanz Murray Steficek LLP, raises the height of the columns and the roof to 20 feet and brings LED lighting closer to the pedestrian level, said Gensler principal Joseph Lauro. Retailers would also



be visible and no longer need the signs often posted on the exterior of sheds.

"It was more about finessing an existing approach," Mr. Lauro said. "We wanted to design something that we knew a scaffolding company would be willing to embrace."

"UrbanArbor" also minimizes the number of vertical posts used. It provides structural support with vertical columns that branch out at their tops to provide support for the guard rail on the shed roof and cross bracing. LED lights nestle at the base of the shed's "branches," said Serena Losonczy, senior associate at PBDW Architects LLP.

The design can be dressed up or dressed down, with transparent colored panels fitted on the Y supports that mimic a tree canopy.

"All of the structural stuff happens over head an takes away the visual noise at the eye level of the pedestrian," said Ms. Losonczy, whose team members are from PBDW Architects and Anastos Engineering.

"Side+Ways+Shed" from architecture firm Francis Cauffman does away with any tunnel effect by placing the columns close to the building and cantilevering the shed roof over the sidewalk. Wrapping the columns is weatherproof fabric featuring commissioned art work or colorful patterns. Solar-powered light fixtures on the vertical posts and horizontal beams provide softer lighting than today's typical shed, said James Crispino, design principal and president of Francis Cauffman.

"New York City streets inspired the idea," Mr. Crispino said. "We wanted people to remain connected to the street even if they were walking past a construction site."

The Building Congress estimates the designs initially would cost 10% to 30% more than a typical shed, but prices would likely drop as inventory increases and the labor force becomes more familiar with them. A rough estimate from industry experts puts the cost of a standard shed today at about $300 per linear foot of shed erected for three months, with additional monthly charges after that.

Already the designs have takers. Pizzarotti IBC LLC plans to use Gensler's G-Shed for its condominium project at 251 W. 14th St. in Manhattan. The Durst Organization is considering some of the designs for its luxury rental building at 625 W. 57th St., designed by the Bjarke Ingels Group.