

2025 Summer Lecture Series

The Terra Cotta Highrise

Thomas Leslie, FAIA

Professor of Architecture,
University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign



May 28, 2025, 6:30 PM

Thomas Leslie, FAIA is professor of architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research into the historical relationship between engineering, design, and construction has produced books on Chicago Skyscrapers, the Italian engineer Pier Luigi Nervi, and Philadelphia architect Louis Kahn.

Leslie is a founding member of the Construction History Society of America. He has appeared as an expert on building technology and history for outlets such as the BBC World Service, the New York Times, and the Discovery Channel program Impossible Engineering. Leslie has co-curated the current Skyscraper Museum exhibition, The Modern Concrete Skyscraper, and he maintains an active on-line research notebook, Architecture Farm, that is regularly cited for its explanations of building science in the news.

Brick in Design, Design in Brick

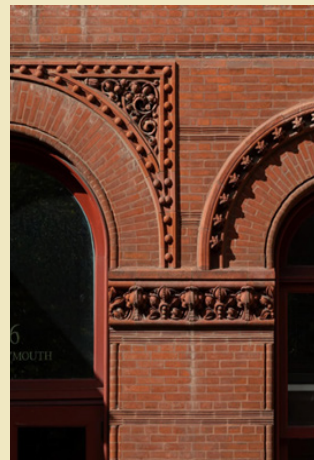
Will Quam

Brick of Chicago



June 25, 2025, 6:30 PM

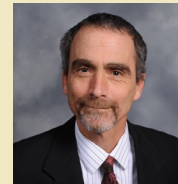
Will Quam is an architecture historian and photographer. He has been called “Chicago’s premiere brick expert” by PBS Chicago, and his photography and passion for Chicago’s brick history have been featured on Block Club Chicago, WTTW, *The Chicago Tribune*, WGN and more. His architecture tours were named some of Chicago’s best by *Curbed* and the *Chicago Reader*. His book on this history of brick architecture in Chicago, *Fire and Clay*, will be published by the University of Chicago Press in 2026.



Restoring Two Art Deco Terra Cotta Masterpieces

Edward Gerns

Senior Principal, WJE



July 23, 2025, 6:30 PM

Edward Gerns is a senior principal at WJE, an international interdisciplinary company that specializes in the evaluation and repair of existing buildings and structures. He primarily focuses on historic building facades and performs evaluations of a wide range of building materials including brick, terra cotta, stone masonry, cast iron, sheet metal facades, and steel and wood windows. Mr. Gerns has overseen preparation of repair documents for contemporary and historic buildings and structures. His project list

includes two iconic art deco skyscrapers – the Carbon and Carbide Building in Chicago and the Eastern Columbia Building in Los Angeles.



Going for Zero:

Decarbonization of the Built Environment
on the Path to Our Urban Future

Carl Elefante

FAIA, Principal Emeritus
Quinn Evans



August 6, 2025, 6:30 PM

Known worldwide for coining the phrase: “the greenest building is...one that is already built,” Carl Elefante is Principal Emeritus with Quinn Evans, recipient of the 2024 AIA Firm Award. In 2018, Carl served as President of AIA, the culmination of leadership positions in architecture, historic preservation, and sustainable design organizations. In 2023, Carl was the inaugural visiting scholar at the University of Notre Dame Duda Center for Preservation, Resilience, and Sustainability. Carl is a Senior Fellow with Architecture 2030, a charter member of the Climate Heritage Network, and a Fellow of AIA and Association for Preservation Technology International (APT).



NATIONAL BUILDING ARTS CENTER

The National Building Arts Center (NBAC) inspires understanding of America’s built environment—past and future—by promoting creative public engagement with its unparalleled collection of architectural artifacts and archives.

The National Building Arts Center (NBAC) summer lecture series is free to the general public. Tickets are required for all attendees through the NBAC web site.

The NBAC is certified by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) as a provider of Continuing Education Credits (CEU). The fee for AIA members is \$20 per session, to be paid at the site.



<https://web.nationalbuildingarts.org>