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PLUS

The Affordable Mixed-Use
An Edible Barn by SPF:2a
Stair-Case Studies

memory

by Aaron Betsky

MR. ED'S SHED

For a barn on the California coastline, hay is both fodder and façade at the hands of SPF:a.

BY ABBY BUSSEL | PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN EDWARD LINDEN



The open-air horse barn is a constantly changing presence on this 40-acre property in a small farming community. As hay bales are removed from or added to a perimeter storage shelf, the façade's appearance is altered.

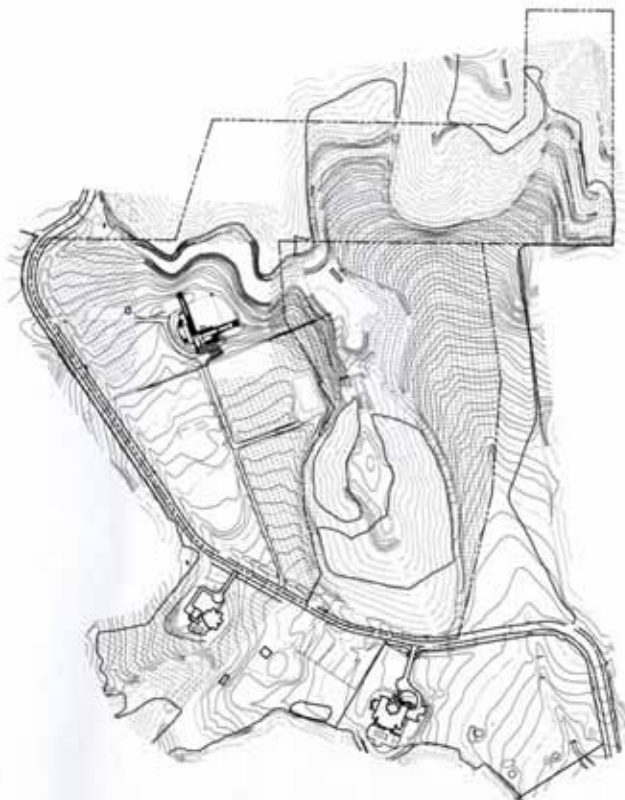


The barn holds four stalls and an enclosed room for farm equipment, feed, and tack. Hay bales are stored on a galvanized-steel grate supported by a painted-steel outrigger fastened to structural columns.

In 1999, the jury for Architecture's P/A Awards gave a citation to a horse barn clad in bales of hay (April, page 104). Juror Thomas Fisher called it "the horse's version of the gingerbread house; you eat it as you go. It solves the problem in a new way, yet it's just a horse stable. How many architects are rethinking the stable?" Turns out that at least one architect, Zoltan Pali, had been thinking about the typology for about a decade.

Back in the late 1980s, a drywall contractor named Steve Sharpe commissioned Pali, principal of Los Angeles-based SPF:a, to design a house on a 40-acre lemon grove in Somis, California, a small coastal farming community about 45 miles west of L.A. "It was during this time that Steve asked me to design a barn" on the same site. "I went through a series of ideas—including a Quonset hut—to do something a little more interesting." Time passed, and the house's design evolved, as did the proposal for the barn. Fast-forward to 1999: "Three days before the P/A Awards deadline, I came up with the [hay-bale cladding] idea," says Pali. Pleased with the design and hoping to push the project forward, he submitted the scheme to the awards program without his client's knowledge. The project earned a citation and, last year, the barn was raised. (The house, an L-shaped ranch wrapped in titanium shingles and stucco, is under construction.)

The architect got his exposed hay-bale barn, but some changes were made to the original design, despite his



site plan ——— 310' 



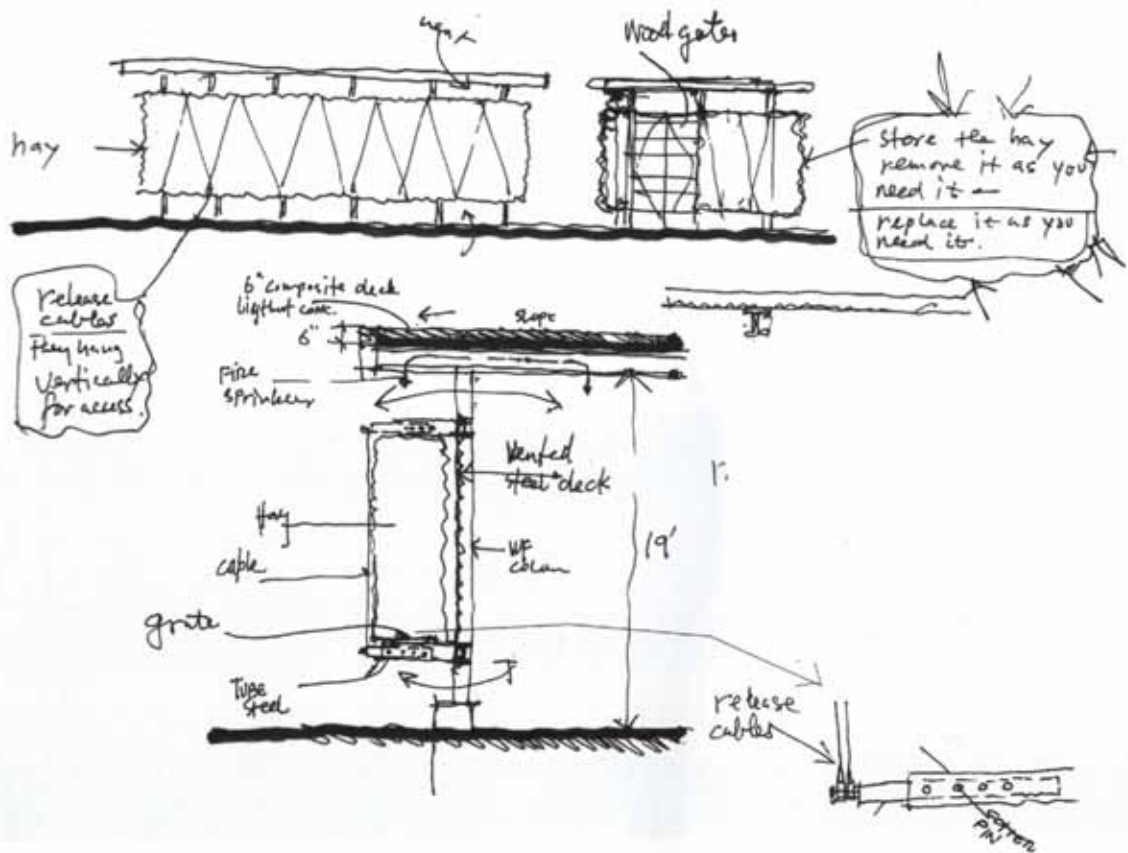
The metal roof deck extends well beyond the barn's edges to protect interior spaces and the stacked bales of hay from the rain.



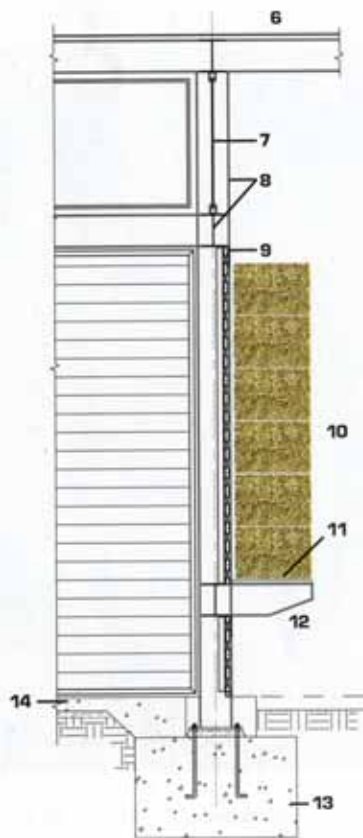
A breezeway separates the horse stalls from storage areas. The architect originally designed moveable cables to hold the bales in place, but this proved unnecessary, as the friction created by the hay is enough to do the job.



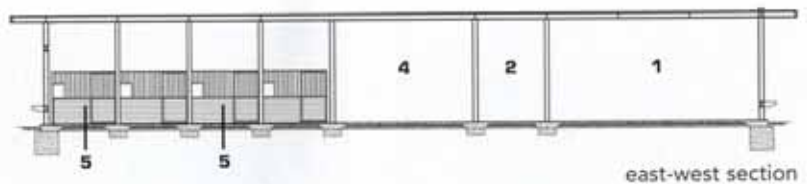
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conceptual sketches



wall section — 2'



east-west section



plan — 13' □

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 farm equipment | 8 painted-steel moment frame |
| 2 feed storage | 9 tongue-and-groove cedar planks |
| 3 tack area | 10 hay bales |
| 4 breezeway | 11 galvanized-steel grate |
| 5 stall | 12 painted-steel outrigger |
| 6 galvanized-metal deck | 13 concrete footing |
| 7 glazing at farm equipment area | 14 concrete slab on grade |

protestations. The winning scheme called for walls of vented galvanized-steel deck that didn't meet the ground: The chosen material and raised perimeter allowing air to pass through the barn and its hay façade didn't make it into the final design. The contractor Castlebrook Barns, a barn builder located in Fontana, California, fought against the vented steel, arguing that the horses could bump into it and get hurt. The contractor was, according to the architect, "hell-bent on using cedar planking to line the barn walls." Another change involved the moveable cables that were to secure the stacked bales to a shelf cantilevered from the barn's steel columns; friction, concedes Pali, holds the bales in place—no cables needed. The exposed structural frame, overhanging metal roof deck, and 12-foot grid were realized as conceived.

Despite minor alterations to the original concept, Pali's barn retains its most potent element: The dual-purpose façade—both storage and skin—produces a building in con-

stant flux. "It has rigor. It has intelligence. And a good sense of humor," commented 1999 P/A Awards juror Mehrdad Yazdani, adding that, "It takes you out of the barn typology. . . [and] combines a very industrial structure with a very agrarian program." Well, hee haw. ■

Somis Hay Barn, Lucky Dog Ranch, Somis, California

client: Steve Sharpe **architect:** SPF:a, Los Angeles—Zoltan Pali (principal); Judit Fekete, Dan Seng, Greg Smith (project team) **structural engineer:** John H. Haigh & Associates **general contractor:** Castlebrook Barns **area:** 3,000 square feet **cost:** \$280,000

Specifications

structural system: steel frame **wood:** tongue-and-groove cedar planks **Zincalume-coated steel deck roofing:** IMSA **glass:** PPG **door and stable hinges:** Stanley **high-bay lighting:** Lumark



A 12-foot grid defines the structural system. The storage room (through door at right in photo) has a glazed clerestory, while the rest of the barn is open at the roof to ventilate the interior.