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Design and Construction - The Industry “In the Arena” - by Eric Goldman

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One of my daughters is almost four, and we play word association games to pass the time in the car. When it comes time to think about summer, there are easy associations that come to mind. BBQs. Vacation. Fourth of July. Leadership. The Man in the Arena. This line is part of my favorite, and often quoted, speech from our 26th president Theodore Roosevelt, given in 1910 on a post-presidency European tour at the Sorbonne in Paris (as a dad of two girls please allow me the liberty of making some literary modifications):

It is not the critic who counts; not the [wo]man who points out how the strong [wo]man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the [wo]man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds...

Applicable to anyone, this rallying cry for those that act is especially meaningful to the construction and design industry. The scrutiny on a job site for craftsmanship. The client’s review of a design. The public scrutiny and hearings for a developer’s proposal. All these are examples of warranted oversight or opportunities for constructive criticism, but let us not forget the persons who, though the margins might be tight or the hours long, take that action in the first place. Not forgetting that the similarities we share in this industry can make the difference in the next meeting, proposal, or hearing.

To that end, I am excited that the design and construction industry in Fairfield County is bursting with projects aimed at revitalizing downtowns. In downtown Darien, the Corbin District development is adding over 100 residential units including housing for adults with developmental disabilities, 85,000 s/f of Class A office space, and close to 100,000 s/f of retail and restaurants. After 15 years acquiring land and approvals, Baywater Properties has initiated construction in this phased project. It will add on to a revitalized small business downtown that is home to artisan bakeries, fish markets, a butcher shop, and coffee shops that, together, are reminiscent of amenities all towns offered

historically.

In Stamford's South End neighborhood, visionaries are betting on the economic development and growth opportunities with a 133,000 s/f waterfront indoor-outdoor multi-use campus called "The Village." The LEEDv4 campus will provide co-working and meeting spaces, production facilities, indoor/ outdoor rooftop space, and increased access to the marina. Anchor tenants include a multi-faceted media company called Wheelhouse, an independent production company called ITV America, Cisco Brewers, Mike's Organic, and locally sourced restaurant called The Wheel. Besides job creation and expanding the diversity of opportunities for the region, the economic multiplier and increased tax revenues from these types of developments are encouraging signs of the region's vitality.

These are just a few of the reasons why I am looking forward to supporting the services, restaurants, and businesses in these towns. Most importantly, I am energized about the building blocks being put in place for my daughters and future generations to continue to act upon so long as we all continue to "strive to do the deeds."

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