Towards a New Urban Panama
George J. Moreno & Partners and Moule & Polyzoides have joined professional forces to provide urbanist and architectural services to Panamanian clients. Following is a selection of our joint projects since 2011 in Panama City and vicinity, which illustrate our commitment to generating urban places and buildings worthy of a world-class capital city and country.
A neighborhood at the east of the town center, Nativa abuts a sloping forest on the 4,900-acre decommissioned Howard Air Base. The 950-acre plan creates a network of six blocks with seven east-west streets punctuated by a variety of public greens that connect the town center to the forest edge. The central street terminates above the town center at a club house where the jungle canopy blurs the line between wilderness and community.

The 126 lots are modeled in four detached and attached single-family dwelling types of various sizes. All homes are designed as massing variations of ground-floor typical plans with atypical upper-floor plans. Privacy walls create a mediating frontage to the streets, accented by gates, trellises, screens and vines that add color to the streetscape. Carefully designed in response to the tropical climate, all houses feature rooms with natural cross ventilation and a variety of screens and louvers that create a rich architectural vocabulary throughout the neighborhood.
Club and pool house
Typical street frontages

Extraordinary patios, terraces and interiors
A 46-acre sustainable village located in central Panama, Kalu Yala has been developed according to principles of environmental conservation and preservation. Designed as an organic network of blocks and streets, the town is sited on a gentle slope fronted by the Pacora River in a dense tropical forest. An agricultural field devoted to organic farming is located at the lower edge.

Framing the entrance at the site’s lowest point, a stone archway opens to the village center which is composed of three-story arcaded buildings that house retail on the ground floor. Housing types range from townhouses and cottages to compounds that can be subdivided as needed for growing families. Large single-family towers offering views over the village are located at the site’s highest elevations. All buildings are designed to ensure ample cross ventilation so that the Panamanian breezes minimize reliance on air conditioning.
(above) Typical streetscape
(left) Entrance gate and inn
(opposite) Plaza at the descent to Kata Yala Valley
Pacifico Court

Panama Pacifico, Republic of Panama

This modest 40-unit project was designed as the first multifamily building at Panama Pacifico, the most prominent new urbanist development in Panama, now under construction. Designed as a traditional court, the buildings are accessed directly from the street or courtyard rather than through common entrances, corridors or elevators. Dwellings are of a variety of sizes, with public rooms facing the central courtyard and all vehicles parked underground. The architectural character of the building responds to the single-family scale of its surroundings, and the tropical climate of Panama, with passive cooling, protection from the sun and rain and appropriate materials incorporated into the design. The project is inspired by many of the traditional buildings built in the Canal Zone in the early 20th century.
Located on a beach front in central Panama, Lago Mar is a 55-acre new town on sloping terrain that offers spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean. The town comprises four distinct Neighborhoods: Alto del Mar, an acropolis-like Village Center atop the site’s dramatic southern palisade; Playa Baja, a beach Village; Vista del Mar, a denser, central Neighborhood; and Estanque de las Palmas, a verdant Hamlet. Each is designed as a walkable network of intimate blocks and streets, carefully sited to augment views and preserve the natural terrain. Expansive urban spaces such as plazas, raised terraces and gardens, as well as a trail system that connects to beaches and lush arroyos offer recreational and gathering opportunities for residents and tourists alike.

Housing is designed to facilitate constant cross-ventilation, mitigating the region’s humid climate. Residential types include high-, mid- and low-density courtyard housing; townhouses; compounds of detached fee-simple houses; and stacked lofts and flats with terraces and balconies. Lago Mar integrates nature and village life, merging traditional Urbanism with contemporary tropical living.
Located in Western Panama, Torio’s hilly forested site provides spectacular views for residents of this 40-unit project. Designed around a single loop road with houses located both up- and downhill that are all specifically designed to respond to their respective topographies and views. A community center and pool are located along a bend in the road, offering magnificent ocean views. A funicular provides access from the neighborhood to the beach below. Numerous trails winding through the forest connect various parts of the site. A multi-purpose building located at the project entry provides daily amenities to the community.
Altos de Morrillo

This 360-unit village is located on a hilly forested site in Panama with spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean, and fronts one of the best surfing beaches in Central America. The project has three parts: a town center at its south-eastern corner centered on a beach-facing plaza, a medium-size single family neighborhood on the flatter southern portions of the site, and large single-family villas rising up the hill. It is designed around a sensitively created network of winding streets and open spaces that respect the topography, minimize cut and fill, and also conserve the existing arroyos and tree clusters. Most blocks have internal block stepped walkways that connect streets at different levels. Dwelling types range from stacked apartments and town homes to detached cottages and large villas.
Clubhouse
Lunch on the beach
Typical street scene
La Chorrera Town Center

LA CHORRERA, REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

This 27,500sm retail and office, and 600 dwelling unit Town Center is located in the suburbs of Panama City. It is organized around a network of slow streets and a set of public spaces that are meant to make it a place that provides families with an engaging urban experience. The streets are interconnected and walkable under all weather conditions. Street and lot parking in various configurations is dispersed throughout the site, including some underground, and is designed to be convenient and to appear fully integrated into street life. The buildings are designed in a variety of styles, contemporary and traditional, and in an urban form that can attract and sustain the interest of shoppers and visitors. The distribution of uses favors the location of anchors in key places within the scheme, and sustains the Town Center as the center of entertainment, fashion, public life and excitement in LA Chorrera, on a 24/7 basis.
Alta Terra

PANAMA CITY, REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

This 1500 residential development is located in one of the tallest and most visible hills in Panama City. The project has two parts: a lower-density residential cluster in the flat portions of the site, and a high-rise residential one, in the upper parts of the hill. The high-rise buildings are located on two sides of a central road. They are designed to respond to the challenging topography, with parking podiums tacked into the hill, and to respond to the tropical climate by allowing cross-ventilation and creating ample terraces for semi-outdoor living. The development creates an iconic skyline that both offers 360 degree views of the cityscape, and is also visible from the entire city.
Santa Maria Neighborhood

This design proposes the forming of a new urbanist neighborhood within one of the islands of the golf course of the Santa Maria project. With its 600 units and adjacency to its mixed-use Town Center, this is an exemplary arrangement of residential buildings of many types, attached to a network of slow streets and verdant parks. The entire project is surrounded by an edge road and linear park, that includes provisions for biking, jogging and walking. It is also anchored by a club house and sports facilities for swimming, exercise and tennis. Its variety of building types and unit types can attract people to live here across a wide swath of the social spectrum. The project is walkable, secure and amenity-rich. A place where families can enjoy life in the confines of their beautiful, unique dwellings, and also with sharing a sense of community that is enabled by the rich public realm of open space that surrounds all buildings.
Embassy Heights
PANAMA CITY, REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

The Embassy Hills project is situated on a narrow, hilly, 20-hectare site located in Clayton, Panama. The site is bounded to the east by the United States Embassy, and on all other sides by recent suburban development. The scheme provides a rich mix of residential types, along streets that are slow, multimodal and well planted, and next to numerous parks and greens. A mixed use village center is located on the southern end of the site.

Despite the severe topographical constraints of the site, the design creates the ambiance of a charming hill-town neighborhood. Individual single or multifamily dwellings provide maximum privacy for their residents, while their urban form and shared facilities promote a traditional sense of community. This project will be a unique place to live and upon completion will also become a national precedent for future, market-driven, neighborhood-centered development in Panama City.
This project is envisioned as a world-class tropical resort and an exemplar of sustainable urbanism. Its site is located on a spectacular coral-laden natural sea cove near the islands of San Blas, in the north of Panama. A vast natural preserve of rainforest separates the site from the rest of the country. It is designed as a series of distinct precincts, each organized around a unique natural or man made place. The Town Center with its Plaza on the upper marina, a luxury hotel and large residences on the magnificent Caribbean beach, a residential neighborhood on the lower marina, and a small cluster of houses on the edge of the rain-forest. They are all connected by a network of pedestrian-friendly streets and a grand promenade on the marina edge. The Coral Bay Resort is the first genuine compact, mixed use, walkable town to be built in this part of the world in generations.
Promenade at town center

Side street at town center

Main street at town center
Guna Island homes

(above) Marina villas
(right) Beachfront hotel, main building
Sailing into the new harbor of Coral Bay
Las Tablas Town Center
LAS TABLAS, REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

This 26,000 sqm town center located at the eastern edge of the village of La Tablas is Panama’s first exurban commercial development based on new urbanist principles. The pedestrian-friendly main street is anchored by a grocery store at one end and a square at the other. This square is defined by a mixed-use building connected to a corner plaza activated by a museum and church. Two- and three-story structures with rich frontages line the main street which features street-level retail below hotel, commercial and residential uses, creating a vibrant public environment. The southern edge of the site facing a principal arterial road has been organized along a new frontage road lined with mixed-use courts consisting of residential above ground-level commercial.

In collaboration with George Moreno & Partners.
Located on the Carretera Panamericana in Santa Clara, this town center contains 17,000 sm of retail stores, restaurants and entertainment venues, 2,700 sm of office space, a 40-room boutique hotel and 50 units of housing. The Center is organized in the form of a traditional main street with buildings defining a lively public realm that attracts people to walk and spend time outdoors. Its entrance is on the Panamericana and its terminus on a lagoon it shares with the Santa Clara Resort. Parking is distributed among garages and parking lots in the middle of blocks and on the street.

The five-part commercial scheme is organized with highway-related uses located on the northern edge; local-serving stores on the northern half; fashion-centered businesses with offices above along the main street; restaurant, entertainment and evening uses around a pond and park connecting to Rio Patiño; and local community-centered uses on Lagoon Promenade and the adjacent hotel. Housing fronts Rio Patiño and a plaza on the west side of the project. The synergy between these program components generates a genuine walkable urban place where tourists and local families will spend pleasant times shopping, eating and entertaining themselves, particularly during evenings and weekends.

This is the first of a three-phase project.
George J. Moreno III  ARCHITECT, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT | DIRECTOR OF DESIGN, PRINCIPAL

George J. Moreno III’s experience includes the design of housing, commercial, hospitality, clubs, resort communities and urban design. He earned a Master’s in Planning, Urbanism and Landscape in Louisiana University. He participated in the professional program of the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University and studied abroad in Italy. Mr. Moreno’s designs include two of the only new urbanist projects that have been built in Panama. He is cofounder of the Panama Green Building Council.

Lina Maria Samudio  DIRECTOR OF DESIGN

Director of Design Lina Maria Samudio’s experience includes the design of housing, commercial, hospitality and communities. She studied at the School of Architecture and Design Isthmus in Panama and received a Master’s in Bioclimatic Architecture from the Polytechnical University of Barcelona. Lina is oriented to architecture that transcends time and responds to the climate and place.

George J. Moreno II  ARCHITECT | CEO, PRINCIPAL

George J. Moreno II’s experience includes the design of housing, commercial, hospitality and urban design. He studied at Miami University and at the University of Panama. He is member of a great number of societies, including the Society of Architects and Engineers of Panama, Vice President of the Tropic Star Lodge and Director of the Yacht Club of the City of Panama.

He has won architectural awards for the Union Club in Panama, Hotel Bambito in Boquete, Panama, Marbella Plaza and the National Bank of Panama. Mr. Moreno has been involved with several projects that have changed Panama’s architecture in a positive way.

Luis Campana  ENGINEER

Luis Campana works within the firm, specializing in the planning and design of transportation and infrastructure projects and site development. Services include master plan development, infrastructure design, lot segregation, permitting, roadway design, transportation planning and traffic analysis, and construction supervision. Mr. Compana has ample experience in roadway and infrastructure planning and design as well as the development of construction drawings and specifications.
Ms. Moule’s career includes architecture, urbanism, teaching and writing. She is a cofounder of the Congress for the New Urbanism, an emeritus member of its Board of Directors, and a coauthor of the Canons of Sustainable Architecture and Urbanism, the companion to the Charter of the New Urbanism. She currently leads the design for a residence hall at Scripps College and a new neighborhood design in Winnipeg. Recent projects include the Pasadena Conservatory of Music, a streetscape design for Lancaster, California and a 55-acre new town in Panama. Ms. Moule designed the LEED Platinum west coast headquarters for the NRDC, two hotels in West Hollywood and multiple campus projects. Her work has been published widely and she has contributed articles to many books and periodicals. She is a founding partner of Moule & Polyzoides and, with her partner, is a Seaside Prize recipient for 1998.

Stefanos Polyzoides’s professional experience includes the design of educational, institutional, commercial and civic buildings, historic rehabilitation, housing, campus planning, and urban design. From 1973 until 1997, he was Associate Professor of Architecture at the University of Southern California and from 1983 through 1990 he was on the Advisory Board for the School of Architecture at Princeton University. He is a cofounder of the Congress for the New Urbanism and, with his partner Elizabeth Moule, he founded Moule & Polyzoides, in 1982. Mr. Polyzoides has led projects throughout the world, including in Massachusetts, Florida, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, New Jersey, Guatemala, Mexico, Dubai, and Saudi Arabia. He has completed significant projects for many educational institutions, including Occidental College, New College of Florida, the UCLA, Scripps College, Pomona College and the University of Arizona.

Christian Allaire serves as a senior architect, often working with institutional, higher education and private clients. He is currently leading the design for a new residence hall at Scripps College and recently completed the LEED-Gold Academic and Administration Building for New College of Florida, a 34,000-square-foot, $8.48 million project that is the first structure to be realized from the 2006 New College Master Plan, prepared by Moule & Polyzoides One of a series of buildings that form the College’s main quad, it includes offices, classrooms and support space. Mr. Allaire’s work has also included serving as senior project architect for two urban courtyard housing projects, both of which carry forward the firm’s deep commitment to this building type. Mr. Allaire brings a deep commitment to sustainable design, and is a LEED Accredited Professional.

Moule & Polyzoides's professional experience includes the design of educational, institutional, commercial and civic buildings, historic rehabilitation, housing, campus planning, and urban design. From 1973 until 1997, he was Associate Professor of Architecture at the University of Southern California and from 1983 through 1990 he was on the Advisory Board for the School of Architecture at Princeton University. He is a cofounder of the Congress for the New Urbanism and, with his partner Elizabeth Moule, he founded Moule & Polyzoides, in 1982. Mr. Polyzoides has led projects throughout the world, including in Massachusetts, Florida, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, New Jersey, Guatemala, Mexico, Dubai, and Saudi Arabia. He has completed significant projects for many educational institutions, including Occidental College, New College of Florida, the UCLA, Scripps College, Pomona College and the University of Arizona.

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Director of Design Vinayak Bharne is a leading thinker and practitioner in urbanism and architecture and brings significant domestic and international experience in new town and neighborhood design, transit-oriented and mixed-use development, multi-family housing and campus architecture and planning. Mr. Bharne is currently directing two projects in El Paso, Texas: a 350-acre town center and a 280-acre mixed-use new town center. His extensive campus planning experience includes the Southwest Campus Student Housing Master Plan for UCLA; a residential master plan for the University of California, Santa Barbara; and campus plans for Fuller Seminary, Scripps College and the Brooks Institute. Mr. Bharne also holds a joint teaching appointment at the University of Southern California in the schools of public policy and architecture.