



TOP PROJECTS: The Bakken Museum renovations, above, matched its creativity while respecting the original landscape. One of Wings Financial Credit Union's design goals, left, included increasing the potential for collaboration.

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LIKE NO OTHER

It sounds like a gross understatement to say that 2020 was a year like no other. In a year of pandemic, the country and the world stopped. All of us waited in fear of illness and of the economic destruction it would leave in its wake. And the tragic murder of George Floyd not only triggered outrage but also set in motion our collective reexamination of race in America, in law enforcement and in all of society, including the economy.

In this issue, we begin that conversation as it affects the construction industry right here in Minnesota. Reporter Brian Johnson spoke with many Black builders, architects and developers to hear their stories and learn more about their struggle to gain an industry foothold. “When you don’t have folks that look like you in this space, the barriers to entry are so high it de-motivates you to continue

on this path,” says Johnny Opara, a Twin Cities developer of color in the feature story. “Or if you’re already on this path, the stress alone, the uncertainty alone, would have you thinking, ‘Am I doing what I’m supposed to be doing?’”

Uncertainty affected all of us this past year. Yet, this issue celebrates an industry that carried on despite the odds. Schools, public buildings, museums, corporate headquarters, an array of housing sites and styles. Each is represented on the following list of award-winning Top Projects. They would be impressive any year, but the fact that each project was completed in 2020 makes them that much more remarkable. These past months have tested our resilience, opened our eyes and challenged our thinking for the years ahead.

Congratulations to our Top Projects honorees. Thank you for the work that you do and the example you set during a year like no other.

Photos courtesy of Wings Financial Credit Union and The Bakken Museum