

Lessons in architecture



The Republic photo by Andrew Laker

Architect Deborah Berke leads a group on a tour of the Irwin Union Bank building she designed at 707 Creekview Drive. Deborah Berke & Partners Architects, which also designed the Hope Branch Library, work in institutional, commercial and residential architecture.

Architect designs ‘sleek, modern’ bank

By Brittany Hart
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Renowned architect Deborah Berke and her partners sketched ideas on a cocktail napkin as they flew back to their New York offices from Columbus.

The simple and modern Irwin Union Bank emerged from the airborne architecture session eight months later.

Berke explained her building design and modernist approach to Columbus East High School architecture students Tuesday for the bank’s Creekview Branch’s grand opening at 707 Creekview Drive.

Berke refers to the Irwin Union Bank building as a “simple and bold design.”

The 4,000-square-foot structure holds its own among superstores and parking lots. Suspended circular lamps and recessed fixtures bounce light off the white walls and the main lobby’s vaulted ceiling while lit glass roof panels give

Deborah Berke & Partners Architects

WHAT: New York-based architectural and design firm.

DESIGNS: Irwin Union Bank – Creekview Branch; Hope Branch Library; 21c Museum Hotel, Louisville; Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York City and more.

ON THE WEB: dberke.com.

the exterior a bold glow.

“It’s a modernist building, but it’s absolutely inextricably linked to this site in relation to visibility,” Berke said.

The clean lines and bright lighting of Eero Saarinen’s downtown Irwin Union Bank and Trust Co. design carried over to Berke’s vision for Irwin Union Bank’s latest building.

In the tradition of great banking halls,

it was important to Irwin Financial Corp. that the design be representative of a safe and accepting environment for a feeling of equivalence among customers, Berke said.

“It’s very sleek, very modern, but still very inviting,” said architect student Alyse Zook, 16.

The design was used at two other Irwin Union Bank locations in the U.S., winning an “Award of Merit” in the Institutional Category of Interior Design Magazine’s 2006 “Best of Year Awards.”

Deborah Berke & Partners Architects work in institutional, commercial and residential architecture.

The firm also designed the Hope Branch Library. Other designs range from sleek Calvin Klein store interiors to the unique exteriors of Yale University’s School of Art and Theatre and the Cerulean Estate in the West Indies.