

February 20, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

Please consider this letter to be my strong recommendation for Clara Dykstra. While employed at rePLACE Urban Studio, I was Clara's direct supervisor for several projects. Without a doubt, Clara was one of my favorite colleagues to work with during my 17-year career as an architect and urban designer.

During her 3 years at rePLACE, Clara contributed to – and at times led – a diverse array of projects. Besides being incredibly hard-working, Clara has a multifaceted set of skills and traits that make her a very well-rounded designer:

- She is analytical by nature, which has allowed her to understand parts of the New York City Zoning Resolution that are highly complex. I have yet to meet another young designer who has taken on our city's arcane zoning code with such enthusiasm and fortitude. This goes beyond NYC: Clara did the same for a project in Miami, FL, where she led the Concept Design phase for a 560,000 ft<sup>2</sup> mixed-use development. She is able to uncover the intent, or *spirit*, of the law (not simply the text), which fosters highly creative responses to specific sites.
- Clara has an artistic sensibility, a great eye for proportion and composition, and thinks three-dimensionally. This aided her design process for a 7-story mixed-use project in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The project was located in a neighborhood undergoing rapid change, and she needed to respond to existing context while capturing a sense of novelty and beauty in a highly competitive real estate market.
- She is extremely organized, which allowed her to lead four separate projects for a single client with significant schedule overlap. This particular client trusted Clara as they would trust one of our senior partners. She was highly effective at managing her time independently, kept impeccable notes, and constructed emails to clients at the highest levels of their organizations.

Clara often finds an elegant bridge between research and design. For a project in downtown Newark, NJ, she created a historic map of the city's streets, leading to our concept of a revitalized alleyway system. For the Urban League of Essex County, she helped conduct an exhaustive analysis of the Fairmount Heights neighborhood (also in Newark) and designed a community center with a holistic approach that considered ecological, social, and economic systems.

Perhaps most important to mention is the amount of trust we had in Clara. She could lead a project from start to finish, give presentations to clients without help from senior leadership, and was often self-directed. During her time here, she was highly communicative and always asked me thoughtful, organized questions when she found herself hitting a roadblock in her work. She would do this in a way that was always respectful of my time.

Simply put, Clara was one of the most professional and gifted employees to work at rePLACE Urban Studio. I would highly recommend her to any firm or organization looking for a smart, hard-working, talented designer. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like more specific input.

Sincerely,



Erik Kath  
Associate Director, rePLACE Urban Studio  
erik@replace.nyc | 917.584.1429

February 13, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that I am writing this reference letter for Clara Dykstra for the job of architectural designer. She is one of the best Urban Designer that we have employed at rePLACE Urban Studio.

After showing herself to be intelligent, creative, hardworking, an excellent collaborator, and a great communicator in my Urban Systems, Architectural Technology class at Columbia University GSAPP, I hired her as an intern the summer before her final year in the Master of Architecture program. Following graduation, she came to work for me in the role of Urban Designer.

Clara immediately gained my trust during her first project at rePlace Urban Studio as an Urban Designer, which was also our first project with the YMCA of Greater New York. She designed a site strategy and floor plans for the development of a new community center for the YMCA in Flushing, Queens. She led the work for this project and together we met with the client weekly and presented the final proposal to the YMCA Board of Directors. Within three months of our final presentation, we were contacted by the YMCA to work on another community center with them, an indication that our client highly valued Clara's work.

After excelling at her first project, Clara was the Urban Designer in the office we consistently turned to first, to work on projects that require accuracy and creativity. With urban design and schematic architectural work, attention to detail and creativity is critical as our clients need both accurate numbers to test the viability of the development and inventive perspectives to distinguish the project. I have always been confident that Clara could be counted on to understand fully how the underlying zoning and the site context affected a project, and to use that knowledge to design intelligent site solutions.

I recommend, without reservation, Clara Dykstra to any organization looking to hire a talented designer. If you would like to discuss this recommendation further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Philip J. Palmgren AIA  
c. 646-344-2610

February 13, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a letter of recommendation for Clara Dykstra. Clara worked for rePLACE Urban Studio for three years, and in that time, she quickly rose to be one of our top employees. She is a thoughtful, self-directed, diligent, well-organized designer.

At rePLACE, Clara worked on a wide variety of projects. These projects ranged in scale from a single parcel up to an entire district. On each project, she demonstrated a great capacity for analyzing complex regulatory processes and finding creative solutions. In particular, her daily work included developing building massing schemes, testing plan options, and creating site development strategies.

While working with Clara on the design of a community center site in Newark, NJ, I saw first-hand her great capacity for effective collaboration and her strong work ethic. Consistently, she worked skillfully, alone and with others, to create innovative design solutions for our client.

Clara has my highest recommendation; she will be an asset to any practice that employs her.

If you wish to discuss my recommendation, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Peter Syrett AIA LEED AP BD+C  
Founding Partner  
rePLACE Urban Studio