

Events

**DOCOMOMO NY/TRI-STATE EVENT:
ELIOT NOYES: PIONEER OF DESIGN
AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE AGE OF
AMERICAN MODERNISM**
March 15, Knoll Inc., see p. 11

**MODERNISM: DESIGNING A NEW
WORLD 1914–1939**
March 17 through July 29
Corcoran Gallery of Art, DC

**SHIN BANRAISHA:
A CULTURAL MEMORY**
Through April 1
Noguchi Museum

**GIANTS: THE TWIN TOWERS AND
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**
Through April 15
Skyscraper Museum

DETAILS AND MORE, P. 15

Meetings & Events

For news about local DOCOMOMO meetings and events sign up for our email list at: www.docomomo-us.org (NY/Tri-State chapter page). You'll get all the details delivered to your box.

Contact Information

NEW YORK/TRI-STATE CHAPTER
nytri@docomomo-us.org
P.O. Box 250532
New York, NY 10025

DOCOMOMO US
info@docomomo-us.org
www.docomomo-us.org

ROMANTIC MODERNISM WRIT LARGE: EDWARD DURELL STONE'S ALBANY CAMPUS

In the entrance to Raymond Gomez's Science Library, an extension to the main campus of the University at Albany, stands a statue of Minerva. She provides an appropriate founding myth for the unique campus that surrounds her. In the Greek version, Zeus had a headache. Prometheus obligingly hit his head with a rock and out leapt Athena, fully armed, and raring to go. Zeus, of course, was Nelson Rockefeller. The headache was the projected demand for public higher education in New York state. Edward Durell Stone wielded the rock. The main campus of the University sprang with astonishing speed from the sandy plain of a former country club. Stone's plan was unveiled in June 1962 and the first dorms were occupied in October 1964. The



Stone embraced the "opportunity to plan a great formal composition in a pastoral setting"

Promethean labors included pouring 270,000 cubic yards of concrete on a building site where dust storms and snow storms sometimes raged simultaneously (Birr, p. 127). The locals were awed. "You've got to get a load of that place," a cabdriver told the *New York Times* in 1969. The "place" is a compact, rigorously formal composition that arrays thirteen buildings with quadrangles, pools and fountains on an elevated podium framed by four high-rise dormitories.

The Rockefeller years were a golden age for Modern architecture across the 64 campuses of the SUNY system. The Governor's commitment to public higher education in a state historically dominated by private schools, his genuine and well-informed love for Modern art and architecture, and the institutional breakthrough of the State Construction Fund (1962), streamlined the building process, empowered architects, and provoked "discreet rejoicing in the architectural profession" (Bleeker, p. 145). The Albany campus project fell to the Stone firm in 1962, when Wallace Harrison's efforts were diverted to the city's other mega project, the Empire State Plaza. Stone was given a relatively free hand and embraced the "long-sought opportunity to plan a great formal composition in a pastoral setting." The result stands out among the dozens of contemporary efforts across the SUNY system for its ambition, scale and unity.

By 1962 Stone had rejected the International Style



Aerial view of SUNY Albany, now the University at Albany, soon after completion, c. 1968.

and settled into the small but distinctive vocabulary he was to deploy on projects as varied as the Kennedy Center, a civic center in Tulsa, a Unitarian Church in Schenectady and the US Embassy in New Delhi. The Albany podium is a compendium of his favorite gestures: horizontal lines, colonnades, pools, planters, quadrangles, and formal, restrained pavilions disposed in a frame of rigid symmetry. The only missing element is Stone's trademark grilles. At the time, critical assessments of Stone's mature style were quite negative ("schmaltz," "candy box," Ada Louise Huxtable; "camp," "interminable," "confection," Vincent Scully) and the campus

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AFTER A DOWNHILL COURT BATTLE, MICHEELS HOUSE BY PAUL RUDOLPH IS DEMOLISHED

Welcome

We all like the reliable constants in life, even if they're only occasional like this newsletter. We've been publishing it since the early days of our chapter and are happy to report that once again, Brent Harris, a supporter of Modern architecture on many fronts who has been funding this project since 2001, has extended his generous support and vote of confidence in DOCOMOMO's work. We trust this thank you speaks for our readers as well.

Thanks also in equal measure to all those who have written for us over the years. The content is quite a mix and we encourage everyone to submit to future issues in the same spirit. We'd even add a "Letters" column if anyone ever wrote to voice an opinion. Submissions—and opinions—can be sent to nytri@docomomo-us.org.

Thank you all for helping us build this newsletter and a better understanding of Modern architecture wherever these pages land.

—Kathleen Randall, editor

P.S. We have other projects waiting in the wings for like-minded donors: reprinting of the *Manhattan Modern Map*, a NY/Tri-State chapter website, sponsorship of our email news, office space. Just ask.

On Saturday, January 13, one of Paul Rudolph's most notable private homes was destroyed in Westport, CT. Despite the efforts of community members, various historic preservation commissions and organizations, architectural historians and the Paul Rudolph Foundation, a Connecticut judge decided, only a month after ordering the suspension of the demolition process, that the state had no jurisdiction over the preservation of the building. The verdict was such because the house was not yet listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was built in 1972, and therefore was not in the realm of protection by Westport's Historic District Commission as it was not over 60 years old. The original owners, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Micheels, who had commissioned the house from Rudolph and were integral to the design process, claimed that they had advertised and publicized the sale



Micheels House, Westport, CT, Paul Rudolph, 1972

of the house for a year and a half as a work of the world-renowned architect, but they received no offers. After changing their sales pitch to emphasize the waterfront property, they received a number of offers, most coming from those who wanted to tear down the house. David Waldman and his wife, who were the ultimate buyers of the residence, cooperated for a short time in December and January with those trying to prevent the destruction of this historic site, but eventually did not agree to negotiate with a new buyer who wanted to preserve Rudolph's work.

The 4,200-square-foot house, which was located at 16 Minute Man Hill, called to mind a synthesis of the modernist simplicity of the International Style of Le Corbusier, and the layered cantilevered slabs and flowing spaces of the American prairie style of Frank Lloyd

Wright. Rudolph (1918–1997) designed about 70 private, public and commercial buildings in his career, but numerous privately owned residences such as the Micheels house, have escaped the notice of preservationists.

Since the upsurge of interest in the preservation of the house did not arise until over a year and a half after it was first put on the market, those with a stake in preserving the life of this magnificent home by such a seminal postwar American architect, had little legal foundation on which to stand. Many would agree with Michael Glynn, an architect who headed up much of the effort to stop the demolition process, that this situation reveals why a comprehensive survey of architecturally significant homes needs to be completed so that this type of destruction becomes rare. Without the help of preservationists and Modern architecture enthusiasts, buildings



Rudolph roof detail, Micheels House

under 60 years of age are vulnerable to destruction. Buildings that are considered landmarks today such as Wright's Robie House in Hyde Park, IL, are only standing because of the efforts of preservationists, and it is important to note that many of Wright's other homes were destroyed in the same context as Rudolph's Micheels house.

David Waldman worked with the Westport Historical Society and the Historic District Commission to document the property with photographs, and he also donated the original plans to the Rudolph Foundation, but these efforts will of course not make up for the great loss of the actual building as an invaluable, architectural treasure.

—Maggie Hartnick

FALL TOUR: NAKASHIMA & RAYMOND— MODERNISTS INFLUENCED BY JAPANESE CRAFT

On Saturday September 16, DOCOMOMO US New York/Tri-State organized a trip to New Hope, PA to study the work of the Japanese-American woodworker and architect George Nakashima, and the work of the European born and trained architects, Antonin and Noémi Raymond. DOCOMOMO member John Arbuckle did an excellent job planning the tour. The first stop was the Nakashima compound, followed by the nearby Raymond Farm, and finally, the University of Pennsylvania's School of Design in Philadelphia for a curator's tour of the exhibit, "Crafting a Modern World: The Architecture and Design of Antonin and Noémi Raymond."

Much of the excellent new research undertaken for the exhibit and its accompanying monograph was done by William Whitaker, Mari Sakamoto Nakahara and their co-curators, on repeated trips to Japan, Europe and India over four years. However, Whitaker and Nakahara—our tour guides—were well-versed in the New Hope properties and used them effectively to explain the pro-

showrooms, two woodworking shops, a museum/gallery, lumber barn and drying room, pool house, private house and reception house. Most of the structures feature concrete or plywood paraboloid roof construction, illustrating Nakashima's fascination with thin-shell construction.

It was particularly interesting to tour the site with Nakashima's daughter, Mira. Among the many personal insights Mira shared about Nakashima (1905–1990) were her



Nakashima showroom



George Nakashima's love of thin-shell concrete is evident throughout the compound, starting with this entry footbridge.



Mira Nakashima puts meaning behind her father's work.

fessional and personal relationships between Nakashima and the Raymonds and to illustrate firsthand the respect for nature and the love of Japanese craftsmanship embodied in these artists' architecture and design work.

The tree-filled Nakashima compound is open to the public most Saturdays and includes three studio/

recollections of the shock her father, who had architecture degrees from the University of Washington and MIT, felt at being interned during World War II; the family's enjoyment of an Edward Fields rug that her father designed for the Rockefeller's Kykuit estate only to be rejected by the Rockefeller's decorator; the depth of her father's friendship with

artist Ben Shahn; and his annoyance with Louis Kahn over Kahn's criticism of the compound's barrel-vaulted pool house because it was rendered in unfinished, exposed plywood. Throughout the tour, Nakashima's belief that "a tree is our most intimate contact with nature" was evident.

Mira currently oversees design and production at the Nakashima compound, which has a two-year backlog of orders from around the world. The work includes maintaining an inventory of a barn-sized shed of exquisite hardwood slabs selected by her father for future projects. At the end of our tour, Mira spoke about the Peace Project her father started in 1984.

Although Antonin Raymond (1888–1976) and Noémi Raymond (1889–1980) worked all over the world and are largely known for their works of Modern architecture in Japan, they lived in New Hope, PA from 1938 to 1947. During these years they maintained an architectural office in New York City with various partners. In 1943 the Raymonds

sponsored Nakashima, allowing him and his family to leave an internment camp in Idaho and come to New Hope. Nakashima had worked with the Raymonds on projects in Japan, India and the US, and when he built his house and workshops he chose a nearby site.

Upon arrival at the Raymond Farm we were greeted by a bald man

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dear friends:

When a building such as the Micheels house by Paul Rudolph (p. 2) is demolished, and the reason is most likely lack of awareness of its architectural significance and up-for-sale status, our immediate response is: How could "they" not know? Who did "we" not reach? But the reality is, our network of informed eyes and ears is not wide enough and our building surveys too few and far between.

Organizing for advocacy is real work. We know what it entails: research and strategizing; testimonials and letter writing; a dizzying number of email exchanges, often all at rapid-response speed. Ultimately, all our chapter's work hinges on expanding general awareness and understanding of Modern architecture; so despite advocacy's urgency, we can't shortchange our educational efforts—lectures and tours, surveys, register documentation and this newsletter. And the fact is, our chapter is still a very small, all-volunteer organization.

One thing every successful non-profit organization learns to do is politely and repeatedly request assistance. Volunteers are great; a part-time, paid professional to orchestrate our trusty network of volunteers would be even better. We need your support to work more proactively and more consistently on advocacy issues. Here's our request: Support DOCOMOMO US New York/Tri-State and we'll use our new found resources to keep Modern architecture—the innovative, optimistic and progressive architecture of the twentieth century—a visible and vital part of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. There's the membership option (p. 16) and, better yet, the envelope waiting in the middle of this newsletter.

—Nina Rappaport, chair
DOCOMOMO US New York/Tri-State

STAR-ARCHITECTS OF THE 1950s

dateline

• **October 2006** • At the **DOCOMOMO IXth International Conference** held in Istanbul and Ankara, Turkey, DOCOMOMO's governing council selected the Netherlands for the 2008 conference, returning to the organization's birthplace for its **20th anniversary year**. The council also approved five new national working groups—Colombia, Cyprus, Malta, Morocco and Puerto Rico—bringing the total to 52. Contact information for all national working groups can be found at: <http://www.archi.fr/DOCOMOMO/index.htm>

• **November 2006** • Per *The New Yorker*, **Julius Shulman**, the 96-year-old architectural photographer known for his stunning images of iconic modern architecture, was in town, New Canaan that is, to photograph Philip Johnson's **Glass House** and its accompanying structures. Shulman had shot the Glass House before, in 1963, but vowed to start fresh without any past references. Christy MacLear, executive director of the property for the National Trust, commissioned Shulman after realizing that Johnson's estate, and now the Trust, did not have rights to any of the thousands of images taken of the house. After two days at work with an assistant doing the heavy hauling, Shulman had sixteen images. Coming soon to a postcard near you?

• **December 5, 2006** • Architect and author **Peter Blake** died at age 86. Singled out by this audience for his witty, often blunt, personal diatribes on modernism as a movement in the US—most notably *Form Follows Fiasco: Why Modern Architecture Hasn't Worked* (1977)—Blake authored hundreds of articles and a dozen books during his career. Following his tenure as architecture and design curator at MoMA from 1948 to 1950, he took over the editorship of *Architectural Forum* until

This article started with a simple premise: that DOCOMOMO members might like to know which architects got the most professional press attention in the 1950s. The 1950s was chosen for several reasons: it is an easily defined period of great concern to DOCOMOMO; it was a period of intense building after the World War II interruption; it was the first decade in which the US profession, schools, and the press were fully committed to Modernism. And pragmatically, the handy annual *Architectural Index* started in 1950 to list the subjects published in US design magazines (and still does so; see archindex.com).

The project seemed conceptually simple, if a bit tedious. The method was to count pages listed by architect (one of the Index's several categories). Brief items had to be distinguished from multi-page features, and the Index indicates page ranges (i.e., p. 132–135—which counts as 4 pages).

Then there is the more challenging question of which magazines to count. Throughout the 1950s, there were three nationally distributed architecture magazines: *Architectural Forum*, *Architectural Record*, and *Progressive Architecture*. It seemed that the most authoritative national picture would be obtained by limiting the counts to that big three, leaving out pages in more regional or specialized journals. But the existence of the few other publications listed in the Index has an effect on these statistics.

For the entire decade, the feisty little *Art and Architecture* was being published in Southern California.

Focused heavily, if not exclusively, on architects from that region, A&A inevitably somewhat limited big-three coverage of firms from its region. In this field, magazine editors are averse to duplication, and architects whose work was published in A&A had reduced incentive to try for big-three publication. If A&A had been included in this tabulation, Richard Neutra (including his partnership with Robert Alexander) would have ranked much higher, and the top 20 list might have included such names as Anshen & Allen, Craig Ellwood, and A. Quincy Jones.

Another magazine listed in the index that affected big-three pages was *House & Home*. Created as an offshoot of *Architectural Forum* in 1952, this journal had a residential focus, thus reducing the pages on these subjects in the big three. The effect was seen most sharply at *Architectural Forum*, since management for the two magazines (Time Inc. in the 1950s) reserved some choice residential subjects—houses by noted architects, key works of firms specializing in housing—for *H&H*. (From the mid-1960s on, under different management, *H&H* became more of a housing industry vehicle.)

The names of firms shown in these lists—some of which took several forms over the decade—have been simplified. And the numerous projects credited to more than one firm have been allocated only to the firm listed first. Thus the Harrison listings counted below include pages variously indexed under Wallace Harrison, Harrison & Abramovitz, Harrison, Abramovitz & Abbe, etc., as well as joint ventures where Harrison's firm is listed first. The many pages on the Seagram Building credited to Mies and Johnson are counted only as Mies's. Pietro Belluschi is notable for embracing the consultant role during the 1950s (after selling his Portland, Oregon, firm to SOM), so most of the work listed under his name was done in joint ventures.

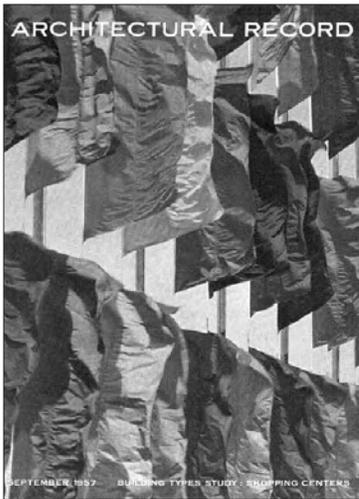
The evolution of the firms that included Hellmuth, Leinweber, and Yamasaki posed a knottier problem. Since by the late 1950s they coalesced into two distinct high-profile firms, they are listed separately. Pages listed here under HOK include listings for Leinweber, Hellmuth & Yamasaki (1951 and 1954), Leinweber, Yamasaki & Hellmuth (1952, 1953, and 1955), Hellmuth, Yamasaki & Leinweber (1953 and 1956), and finally Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum (1955 through 1959). Minoru Yamasaki is listed without partners (1951), as Yamasaki, Stonorov & Gruen (1955 and 1956), Yamasaki, Leinweber (1956, 1957, and 1959) and Minoru Yamasaki, again (1957 through 1959). There is undoubtedly a fascinating saga behind these shifting alliances.

The result of the tabulations? Listed at left are the 20 architects with the most published pages in *Architectural Forum*, *Architectural Record* and *Progressive Architecture* in the decade. SOM's remarkable total represents an average of 1.6 pages for every issue of the big three magazines published in the decade (360 issues, that is). Of course, this listing favors firms that

TOP 20 ARCHITECTS

*ranked by number of pages published in the big three design magazines during the 1950s

1. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill/SOM	594
2. Harrison, Wallace/Harrison & Abramovitz	313
3. Eero Saarinen	273
4. Frank Lloyd Wright	249
5. Marcel Breuer	218
6. Edward Durell Stone	211
7. The Archs. Collaborative/TAC/Walter Gropius	203
8. Victor Gruen	202
9. Caudill, Rowlett & Scott/CRS	173
10. Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum/HOK	159
11. Paul Rudolph	155
12. Perkins & Will	150
13. Minoru Yamasaki	149
14. Welton Becket	130
15. Hugh Stubbins	127
16. Mies van der Rohe	126
17. Pietro Belluschi	125
18. Ketchum Gina & Sharp	121
19. Curtis & Davis	120
20. Richard Neutra/Neutra & Alexander	118



produce a lot of work, whether through the corporate model of SOM and HOK, or through production under a powerful individual such as Frank Lloyd Wright or Mies van der Rohe. Architects working in studios with one or two assistants cannot command many magazine pages.

And below are the top five architects, based on number of pages, for each year in the decade. Some of them, such as Wallace Harrison and his firms, peaked early in the decade. SOM gets little recognition in 1950, but comes on strong for the rest of the decade. The "star-architect" for SOM for most of the 1950s was in fact

Gordon Bunshaft, the design partner presiding over much of the firm's 1950s work. Minoru Yamasaki gets hardly any pages in the first five years of the decade, but gets enough press thereafter to reach the top 20. The works of some architects, such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Marcel Breuer, make few appearances in these yearly top five lists, but their consistent press coverage over the decade places them high in the top 20 for the decade.

Architectural stars who got some press coverage in the 1950s but would become the published stars of later years include Louis Kahn (outshone in the 1950s by Albert Kahn), Philip Johnson, I.M. Pei, Edward Larrabee Barnes, John Johansen, John Carl Warnecke, Victor Lundy, Ernest Kump, John Lyon Reid and Eliot Noyes.

Famous foreign architects got relatively few pages in the American design magazines. Le Corbusier, understandably, led them all in pages, with 92 for the decade, with Oscar Niemeyer (38) and Kenzo Tange (28) as distant runners-up.

This modest tabulation is only one of many ways to assess the contributions of the architects shaping our heritage in the 1950s. One could survey the relatively little coverage of architecture in the popular press of the time; one could examine numerous books that survey the architecture of the period; one could examine the various awards conferred during the period—all to find out how the architects of the 1950s were perceived at the time. Then, of course, one could examine the coverage of that decade from the perspective of recent years to see how perceptions have changed. Maybe future articles could follow these approaches. At the very least, such studies could help define DOCOMOMO's priorities.

Then, of course, we could turn our attention to the 1960s.

—John Morris Dixon

ANNUAL TOP FIVE ARCHITECTS/FIRMS

*ranked by number of pages published in the big three design magazines during the 1950s

- 1950:** 1. Harrison; 2. Saarinen; 3. Holabird & Root & Burgee; 4. (tie) Eames; 4. (tie) TAC
- 1951:** 1. Wright; 2. Loeb Schlossman & Bennett; 3. SOM; 4. Belluschi; 5. (tie) Holabird & Root & Burgee; 5. (tie) Stone
- 1952:** 1. SOM; 2. Harrison; 3. Breuer; 4. Pereira & Luckman; 5. Albert Kahn
- 1953:** 1. SOM; 2. Stone; 3. Harrison; 4. (tie) Carl Koch; 4. (tie) Jose Luis Sert
- 1954:** 1. SOM; 2. CRS; 3. Saarinen; 4. Perkins & Will; 5. Harrison
- 1955:** 1. SOM; 2. Harrison; 3. Saarinen; 4. Le Corbusier; 5. CRS
- 1956:** 1. Saarinen; 2. HOK; 3. Gruen; 4. TAC; 5. Anshen & Allen
- 1957:** 1. SOM; 2. Stone; 3. (tie) CRS; 3. (tie) Gruen; 5. (tie) Breuer; 5. (tie) Yamasaki
- 1958:** 1. SOM; 2. Saarinen; 3. Breuer; 4. Stone; 5. Yamasaki
- 1959:** 1. Wright; 2. SOM; 3. TAC; 4. Rudolph; 5. Belluschi

dateline cont.

1972, after which he started his own magazine, *Architecture Plus*. Blake designed numerous modern buildings, many of these signature beach houses in the Hamptons.

December 5, 2006 • The **Citizens Emergency Committee to Preserve Preservation (CECPP)** filed a petition before the Supreme Court of the State of New York to force Mayor Bloomberg to reappoint or replace Commissioners of the **NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC)** whose terms have expired. The purpose of the petition is to help preserve—more importantly, restore—the independence of the LPC. At this time, 8 of the 11 commissioners have expired terms. As drafted, the original Landmarks Law called for three-year staggered terms.

CECPP's petition outlines the impact of delays in reappointment or replacement of commissioners: a negative and harmful effect on the Commission's independence and effectiveness; circumvention of checks and balances essential to popular democracy and vulnerability of the holdover commissioners to direct and indirect pressures from City Hall and from developers.

Launched in May 2006, the CECPP is a grassroots response to what many in the preservation community view as the steady erosion of LPC's power and effectiveness. CECPP's larger mission covers three areas: ensuring fairness and transparency in the LPC's activities, reestablishing commission independence from City Hall and its influencers, and securing the resources necessary for the LPC to carry out the mandates of the Landmarks Law as written. In addition to the lawsuit, CECPP is working with City Council Member (and chair of the Landmarks Subcommittee) Jessica Lappin to introduce legislation to make the landmark nomination and review process more open. As budget negotiations get underway, CECPP will also take action to

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secure more money for the LPC. Unknown to many, the LPC's budget (in constant dollars) has decreased 35% since 1990 and is a mere .007% of the city budget.

To learn more about the CECPP and to support its efforts visit www.savelpc.org.

• **December 2006** • Pre-demolition HABS drawings have been made. A new visitor's center housing a restored cyclorama painting will open in 2007. A Section 106 review of the Gettysburg National Battlefield master plan approved the National Park Service (NPS) plan to build a larger visitors center on a new site and return the battlefield to its "authentic" period appearance



RICH RAY

by razing the **Cyclorama Center** designed by **Richard Neutra** in 1962. (The latter raises the question "if period appearance is so important, why did the NPS build the Center in the middle of the battlefield.")

The Cyclorama Center closed to visitors at the end of the 2006 and demolition could be imminent. Hope for a reprieve, and more specifically a relocation of the Neutra building, now rests with a lawsuit filed by the **Recent Past Preservation Network** on December 12. The lawsuit alleges that the NPS has moved forward on the demolition plan without any public notice or involvement resulting in multiple

MODEST CONNECTICUT LANDMARK THREATENED

A little-recognized building by Raymond & Rado in Old Greenwich, CT, has survived since its 1950 completion with only minor alterations, but is now threatened. Currently known as the Greenwich Civic Center, this recreation and meeting facility was built in 1948–1950 as an employee recreation center for the Electrolux Company, whose sprawling vacuum cleaner plant was just across the street. Around the same time, Raymond & Rado designed several recreation centers, as well as a much larger warehouse addition to the Electrolux plant. In his autobiography, Raymond says that "Rado led in the design" of both Electrolux projects.

The Electrolux warehouse was much larger than the recreation center, with bolder, more minimalist forms that suited its function. After the factory closed in 1987, all of its buildings were demolished, to be replaced by a spec office building and a complex of low-rise market-rate apartments. The employee parking lots, comparable in area to the factory itself, have been replaced by upscale single-family houses. The value of what had become prime real estate was surely one of the reasons the plant is no longer here. (The adjacent Northeast Corridor railroad tracks—which used to have a siding for the plant—have not deterred redevelopment.)

The recreation center and adjoining playing fields had been bought by the town in 1966, and they have been intensively used ever since. During its 40 years as a public facility, the building has been subject to modest alterations and the limitations of municipal maintenance. The original lounges have been converted to day care and offices for a community service organization, but original minimalist fireplaces remain. The bowling alleys shown on the building plans have been removed (assuming they were actually installed) to provide a large multi-purpose room. Exposed concrete and brickwork are damaged, but not seriously. The railings of the interior grand stair have been made safe, but not defaced, with clear, rigid plastic.



JOHN MORRIS DIXON

The Civic Center as it appears today. The facility has weathered over 50 years of continuous service amazingly well despite deferred maintenance in recent years.



THE ARCHITECTURAL ARCHIVES, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Greenwich Civic Center, Old Greenwich, CT, originally recreation center for the Electrolux Company, Raymond & Rado, 1948–1950.

In recent months, however, threats have surfaced. Someone has put white paint on the hitherto pristine concrete of its entry canopy—apparently failing to see that it is integral to the exposed concrete framing of the building—the rest of it unpainted, so far. White paint makes any building prettier, right? Late last month, the local newspaper briefly reported on a "private group of citizens developing plans for the aging facility." The town was said to have earmarked \$8.5 million to renovate the center, but the citizen group is also considering raising private funds and replacing it. While extraordinary efforts are made to preserve the town's buildings of earlier decades, 1950s Modernism gets little respect. Whether through demolition or insensitive alterations, Raymond & Rado's admirably understated and long serviceable building could be lost or irreparably damaged. —John Morris Dixon

NEW CANAAN STUDENTS EXPLORE "BACKYARD" ARCHITECTURE LAB

Third-year architecture students at New Canaan High School are enjoying a unique opportunity: after learning about Modern movement architecture in class, they are visiting the mid-century houses designed by some of the architects they studied, many at the forefront of the movement in the late 1940s. New Canaan, a living museum of one of the largest collections of Modern houses in the country, has become the students' own "backyard lab" for understanding how its architects influenced residential architecture in America following World War II.

"We are fortunate to have this architectural legacy in our town," says Tom Smith, architecture teacher at New Canaan High School, "but even more fortunate is that the architects, Modern home owners, historians and preservationists in New Canaan have been so generous with their time, speaking with the students, welcoming them to their homes, and helping make this program a really meaningful experience. These high school students are having personal guided tours of modern icons, an opportunity that even graduate architecture students seldom have."

The three-year architecture program is part of the school system's Career and Technical Education offerings, all of which aim to prepare students for real world experiences while

have included the Boissonas House by Johnson where they talked with the owner who restored it; the Gores Pavilion, introduced by Tom Nissley of Friends of the Gores Pavilion; the home of Landis Gores where they met with Mrs. Pamela Gores; a home

Historic Resource Inventory. In some cases, they will be interviewing owners and architects for new information. Serving on an advisory committee for the program are Janet Lindstrom, high school parents Barbara Al-Haffar and Gwen Reiss,



Modern architecture students at New Canaan High School, are (L to R) Duncan Littlefield, Zak Al-Haffar, Andrew Campbell, Janelle Pelli, Bri Davis, Tom Michael and Patrick Cleveland. (Not pictured is Suzanne Roath)

designed by Allan Gelbin, an associate of Frank Lloyd Wright; and the Goldberg House, where Alan Goldberg, Noyes' business partner, described the notable elements of a Modern house. He discussed the role of sustainable architecture and his latest

and Historical Society education director Linda Righi Faltn.

"As the word gets out about how enthusiastic and excited the students are," commented Lindstrom, "we are getting offers to visit even more of the Modern houses here. That's helping to continue to raise the profile of the importance of preserving these houses and to demonstrate that they can be elegantly restored and updated, rather than being demolished." Tom Smith will be coordinating the students' final projects to be included in what will be a permanent exhibition on Modern movement architecture at the Gores Pavilion in Irwin Park.

"It is the hope that New Canaan students and others will benefit from New Canaan's unique architectural heritage," commented Alan Goldberg, "and that a new generation of visionary architects will emerge from their ranks to meet the challenges that future architecture will face."

—Barbara Al-Haffar

work on a Prototype Hydrogen Fueling Station/Information Center. Other nationally known architects to be covered in the class are John Black Lee, Victor Christ-Janer and Hugh Smallen, to name a few.

Janet Lindstrom, executive director of the New Canaan Historical Society, introduced the students to the photographs, articles and documents on New Canaan Modern architecture that the society holds in its archives. The students, as part of service to the community, will be helping to document houses whose preservation files need to be completed for the Connecticut State

The students, as part of service to the community, will be helping to document houses whose preservation files need to be completed for the Connecticut State Historic Resource Inventory.

giving them the chance to the apply math, science and writing skills they have picked up in their more general courses. The architecture program, which covers residential and commercial construction and 2-D and 3-D CADD software, evolved—many times over—from the "industrial arts" drafting courses of the 1970s.

After studying the Bauhaus and researching the New Canaan houses of Harvard Five architects Marcel Breuer, Landis Gores, John Johansen, Philip Johnson and Eliot Noyes, the students started their local inquiry with the League of Women Voter's Modern House Tour. Since then visits

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violations of the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. In addition to being a rare example of Neutra's civic architecture and of the cyclorama building type in the US, the Cyclorama Center has reached significance as an icon of the NPS's own **Mission 66** program—a series of visitors centers designed by leading architects of the day to meet the surge of attendance at park sites after WWII. To sign a petition of support and find out the latest visit: www.mission66.com/cyclorama or www.recentpast.org

• **December 2006–February 2007** • A slew of activity has surrounded the long-running campaign to save the **Paul Rudolph** designed **Riverview High School** in Sarasota, FL from demolition. In early December the **Save Riverview** committee submitted Riverview High School (1958) to the National Trust's "America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places" list for 2007. Selections for the list will be announced May 15.

Meanwhile, at a City Commission hearing urban planner Andres Duany, a heavyweight in Florida planning and redevelopment circles, spoke against demolition of Riverview High. As quoted in the *Herald Tribune*, "It doesn't matter how many concerts you have and how many art museums you have. You will be considered forever barbarians if you take it down."

A team from *Metropolis* magazine spent five December days in Sarasota filming a documentary on the school and its perils. Susan Szanasy, editor in chief of *Metropolis*, said the film stems from an editorial she wrote titled "What We Value," and hopes that it can be shown to widely as a guide to other communities trying to preserve their architectural heritage.

And most promising, on February 7, the school board bent on demolishing the Rudolph building, accepted a proposal by the Save Riverview committee to let the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** facilitate a

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three-day workshop to examine the feasibility of rehabilitating the school's courtyard buildings. At the end of the charrette the National Trust facilitators will make a recommendation to the school board, which the board can accept, reject or modify. To follow all of these developments use the extremely well done blog site at <http://saveriverview.blogspot.com/>

January 2007 - With the **Irwin Pool House (Landis Gores, 1960)** now firmly in the town of New Canaan's master plan for Irwin Park, **Friends of the Gores Pavilion**, the local preservation group working to restore the site, is moving toward its goal of making the house a small gallery and event space. With the assistance of the **New Canaan Historical Society**, the Friends have raised half of the funds needed for restoration. Plans are complete and some programming for the future space is also in the works. For more information or to financially support this worthy project visit: www.fotgp.com or call the New Canaan Historical Society at (203) 966-1776.



A Gores "skinny" door, kitchen, Irwin Pool House.

STRANGE YET RIGOROUS, EDGAR TAFEL'S CHURCH HOUSE DESERVES A SECOND LOOK

As the Guggenheim Museum was approaching completion in 1959, construction began on one of the few other buildings from the Wrightian camp in Manhattan. Strikingly, this building was opposed to the Guggenheim in every way—dark, orthogonal, recessive and historically referential—and has remained as obscure as the museum is famous.

At the southwest corner of 5th Avenue and 12th Street a passerby might notice, set behind the side yard of the First Presbyterian Church, a strange and eclectic block that serves as the Church House. The first impression is of a pastiche of historical motifs decorating a functionalist body, possibly the result of some 1930s architect's naïve but charming stab at Modernism. However, the Church House actually has more sophisticated origins in the postwar work of one of Wright's most successful protégés, Edgar J. Tafel. Tafel is best known for memorializing his experiences working on the Johnson Wax Building and Fallingwater in his book "Apprentice to Genius," but, in addition to a clear reverence for Wright, his recollections suggest a degree of resistance and realism that led him to leave Taliesin in 1941 and become one of its few alumni to develop a significant independent career.

After relocating to New York City, Tafel created a body of work, often for religious institutions, that broke from Wright's standoffishness toward historical precedent. Perhaps as a way to step away from Taliesin's influence, he opened up his designs to an almost excessive range of stylistic and contextual allusions. The joy of Tafel's work is in the promiscuity of his references and, especially, the pictorial skill with which he arranges and integrates them.

The Presbyterian Church House reveals itself in three stages. At first, it is hardly noticeable, set back behind a lawn along the north flank of the 1842 church building, and masked by trees. Its near-monotone sepia masonry—exactly the same color as the church—makes it recede even further. On a second look, you begin to take in the fact that it doesn't belong to the same period of the church at all, and actually has a quite ambiguous presence and origin. It seems to be a slightly facetious mash-up of gothic, deco and middle-European early Modernist motifs that resists speculation about its date of construction.

Finally, pushing aside the veils of its reticence and then of its strangeness, the Church House is revealed as rigorous and considered. The body of the building is a

simple block of brown roman brick with large steel sash windows. Apart from slight modulation of the window dimensions and the brick planes to emphasize corners and piers, there is an overall deadpan regularity. Onto this plain body, Tafel applies a grid of fancy articulation according to strict rules: on the horizontal, cast stonework of repeated quatrefoils to literally match the grilled parapets of the original church, and on the vertical, deep-green glazed terracotta ridges that recall the color and profiles of the church's window tracery. This tartan

gridding is one of the few emphatically Wrightian characteristics, although here it is transformed from a spatial operation in plan (as Wright typically used it) to a device for ordering the façades. It does give rise to one explicitly Prairie Style episode: the entrance arcade cut into the front of the building and entered perpendicularly from the street.

The overall dark color of the Church House camouflages the sparseness and schematic quality of the ornament, but it is startlingly obvious upon study. Both the horizontal quatrefoils and the vertical mouldings sit out from the surface of the masonry volume. The terracotta seems (possibly) integral to the fabric of the building, but the strips of quatrefoils are "clipped on," to the point that they become shallow balconies with no returns at

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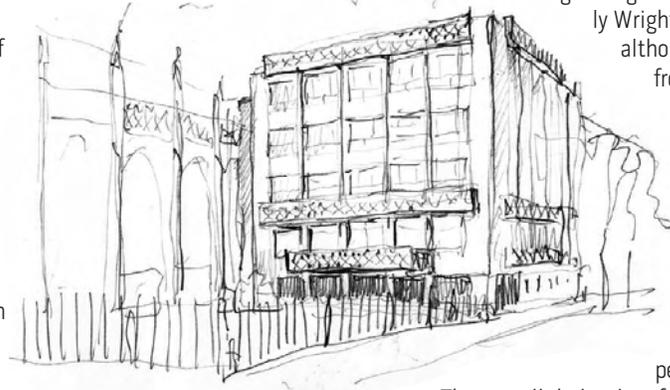
the sides. The top of the Church House is ornamented with a semi-detached cornice of the horizontal quatrefoil strips as well, and these do not meet at the corners—the edge of the plain masonry box is exposed from top to bottom.

Tafel adjusts the horizontal and vertical emphasis of the ornament-grid to produce various directional motions within a single, simple mass. In the bottom stories, the horizontal quatrefoil strips are most prominent, and

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actually project out far enough to become true balconies at the second floor, rippling from the plane of the lawn up into the building and creating a visual base for the façade. Above, the vertical moldings run continuously up to the quatrefoil "cornice," giving the upper floors a slight lift. In this way, Tafel uses a limited system to produce the

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