

EVENTS

ISAMU NOGUCHI AND MODERN JAPANESE CERAMICS

Through September 7
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
Smithsonian, Washington, DC

ARCHITECTURE OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION, 1959-1969

September 2003
Storefront for Architecture

IN OUR OWN TIME: MODERNISM IN LITCHFIELD 1949-1970

Through November 18
MARCEL BREUER "SALON"

July 30
SYMPOSIUM
September 26
Litchfield Historical Society
Litchfield, CT

ART DECO MANHATTAN WALKING TOUR

Sunday July 27

EVENT DETAILS, PAGE 8

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Second Tuesday of the month,
6:30pm at Polshek Partnership
E-mail docomomo_ny@hotmail.com
to confirm date and location.

SUMMER VACATION--NO JULY MEETING!

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INCONSPICUOUS SERENITY: NATIONAL AIRLINES "SUNDROME"

Quietly awaiting demolition next door to TWA Terminal is the National Airlines 'Sundrome', now home to the well-marketed discount airline JetBlue. Designed by I. M. Pei and completed in 1970, the transparent open structure evokes in name and spirit National Airlines' sunny Florida destinations. According to the Port Authority's current Terminals 5 and 6 Redevelopment Project the 'Sundrome' along with portions of the TWA Terminal will be razed. In the project's EIS, only Saarinen's terminal is addressed as possessing importance. National Airlines Terminal is not mentioned as having any significance or value. With TWA occupying center stage, National Airlines Terminal's importance and imminent demise has effectively slipped under the radar of preservationists.

"THE USE OF GLASS MULLIONS WAS UNUSUAL AT THE TIME AND PEI'S BUILDING IS THE FIRST INSTANCE OF THE DEVICE IN THE UNITED STATES."

The design for the National Airlines Terminal was the result of a limited, blind competition held by the Port Authority between 1959 and 1962 with entries by top architects of the day, including B. Sumner Gruzen, Morris Ketchum, Philip Johnson and I.M. Pei. The Port Authority jury, including architects Wallace K. Harrison and Pietro Belluschi, selected the I.M. Pei scheme of a clear-span glass pavilion.

Pei's design was innovative in its progressive strategy for handling increasing airport congestion. The main pavilion is essentially a double-height glass box attached to the rear airport gates by two raised walkways. This allowed Pei to effectively double curbside access with a separate roadways in the front and back of the building for departures and arrivals. In addition, Pei's extensive use of glass for the main pavilion was significant, setting a trend in future airport construction in contrast to TWA, and still present, for instance, in the new Terminal 1. Moreover, the design incorporated glass mullions to support double-height glass walls giving the building transparency and apparent weightlessness. The use of glass mullions was unusual at the time and Pei's building is the first instance of the device in the United States. The window walls were suspended from a space frame roof supported by exterior concrete columns.

Adding to the transparency of the building were the reflective surfaces of the interior. Baked-finish aluminum is used for framing, partitions and signage, allowing light levels inside to be as close as possible to the natural light outside. A rich use of travertine is applied on the building's interior and exterior, on walls, columns and furnishings. The light and airy interiors remain largely unaltered, maintaining views of nearby terminals, including a remarkable perspec-

tive of TWA Terminal from the main hall.

Following completion, a review in *Architectural Record* (August 1972) referred to the terminal as "an island of conspicuous serenity" for its "calm clarity...in the midst of wildly divergent, self assertive forms." The building won the Concrete Industry Board Award in 1970 and the City Club of New York's Bard Award in 1972. The clear-span pavilion space of the terminal was influential in later I.M. Pei works, showing up in the dramatic central open space of the National Gallery's East Building, the John F. Kennedy Library and the Louvre Museum "pyramid."

JetBlue, one of the few airlines not adversely affected by the present downturn in the airline industry, is currently conducting a "Terminal 6 Enhancement" project. The various aspects of the rehabilitation project include new security areas, additional gates, road improvements, new doors and improved concessions. Expansion has so far been function driven with a reconfiguration of space largely keeping in context with the terminal and its original design intent.

The National Airlines 'Sundrome' is old enough to quali-



NATIONAL AIRLINES TERMINAL, JFK, I.M. PEI, 1970.

fy as a New York City Landmark and could be determined eligible for the National and State Registers of Historic Places. The building has proven to be adaptable over the last thirty years and deserves recognition and protection as a significant example of the Modern Movement for its aesthetic qualities, technological innovations and as an early work by an uncontested modern master. National Airlines 'Sundrome' must be acknowledged for its beauty and 'serenity' amongst the chaos of JFK.

—Serianne Worden

WELCOME

MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN LITCHFIELD TOUR

2003 is off to a challenging first half with preservation battles everywhere we look. Educating the public and public officials about the significance of Modern architecture and its culture is part of DOCOMOMO's core mission. It's difficult, often urgent work that we will be doing for a long time.

Preservation emergencies in our own back yard include: TWA Terminal's abandonment (p. 5); the precarious state of Connecticut General; partial demolition of the Breuer's Pirelli Building for an IKEA parking lot (p. 4); the threatened state of Hoboken's Maxwell House factory (p.4); and the lack of a landmark hearing for 2 Columbus Circle (p. 5). Each one of these campaigns expands the public awareness of Modern architecture.

DOCOMOMO has contributed to recent preservation successes and increased the visibility of Modern architecture through its events, educational activities and advocacy. Tours, student internship opportunities, presentations at our monthly meetings by those leading important advocacy efforts, working meetings to plan our own strategies and collaborations with organizations such as Landmark West! and the Municipal Art Society are all essential parts of DOCOMOMO's work to help bridge the Modern architecture knowledge gap.

To continue this work we need your support—both membership and participation in our all-volunteer organization. Join us on the second Tuesday of the month (details p. 1). Watch for upcoming programs: an advocacy planning session and preservation primer workshop late summer; a fall discussion on Modern public spaces; a November screening of *My Architect* directed by Nathaniel Kahn (Louis Kahn's son); as well as tours and special events. The more involvement we have from members and friends of DOCOMOMO, the more events we can make happen. Lastly, thank you to all of you who have been active participants.

—Nina Rappaport
Chair, DOCOMOMO New York/Tri-State

Early on the gray and rainy Saturday morning of April 12th, Modern enthusiasts from DOCOMOMO New York/Tri-State along with students from Barry Bergdoll's architectural history seminar at Columbia University, boarded a bus for a little-known corner of modernism—Litchfield, CT. The tour was organized by DOCOMOMO's Nina Rappaport and Carol Berens and professor Bergdoll to take advantage of a flurry of research and activity surrounding the exhibit, "In Our Own Time: Modern Architecture in Litchfield, 1949-1970." The exhibit, on view through November 30, was guest curated by Rachel Carley, who also did a magnificent job as our tour guide.

Our first stop was the Litchfield Historical Society for viewing "In Our Own Time," which presents the history of Litchfield modernism as the story of personal relationships and strong personalities. A mural-sized photograph taken of a small gathering including Constance Breuer and her husband's clients, Leslie and Rufus Stillman, lounging in a 1950s living room complete with Japanese straw mats recalled a time when architects and clients became friends, when friends argued aesthetics, and when a few people could change the look of a small town. Or, as Marcel Breuer said, speaking of Litchfield, "Somewhere somebody starts something, and then it spreads."

Litchfield's enthusiasm for Modern architecture began in 1949 when Rufus and Leslie Stillman visited Breuer's "House in the Museum Garden" model house built in MoMA's courtyard in 1949. From then on, as Rachel Carley writes, the Stillmans "regarded modernism as their only valid design choice." In 1950 they hired Breuer to design a 2,400sf house for \$24,000. Not only did the Stillmans "move up" and commission two larger homes from Breuer over the next 24 years, they encouraged their friends to move to Litchfield and build Modern houses. (They have since moved back to the first house.) Later Stillman helped influence the school board's decision to commission both Breuer and John Johansen to design schools for the district. Correspondence between clients and architects displayed in the exhibit attested to an easy rapport and a collaborative design process.

The first stop on the tour was a 1953 house designed by John Johansen for the Huvelles on a parcel of land split off from the Stillman's. Dr.



LONG, LOW STONE WALLS DEFINE OUTDOOR SPACES AT THE MARSTERS HOUSE. EDWARD LARRABEE BARNES, 1955



THE BUTTERFLY ROOF OF THE GAGARIN II HOUSE, BY MARCEL BREUER, FEATURES AN UNUSUAL SUPPORT.



A TRANSPARENT ENTRYWAY LINKS THE TWO WINGS OF THE HUVELLE HOUSE, DESIGNED BY JOHN JOHANSEN.

Huvelle was Stillman's boss and agreed to build "Modern," as a condition of the land offer. Mrs. Huvelle greeted us in the house she has lived in, virtually unchanged, for 50 years. The compact, flat-roofed, five-bedroom house was designed for three generations, with a granny-suite on the main floor, separated from the living room by a glazed entryway. As with the other houses we visited, the living room was the largest room in the house and looked out over the surrounding landscape through floor-to-ceiling windows. The era's ubiquitous radiant heat (still working!) was located in the floor and ceiling of the main level.

The Marsters House in nearby Milton, designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes in 1955, was next on our itinerary. Located on top of a hill adjacent to a working farm, this single-story flat-roofed house sprawled across the hilltop. Low stone walls embraced the landscape and created grass courtyards that acted as extensions of the living and dining rooms. The public rooms were linearly arranged to overlook the valley, while the private wing of four bedrooms parallel to the living areas had views toward the fields behind the house.

The last stop on the tour was also the last house Breuer designed. The Gagarin II house (1973-1974, with Tician Papachristou) is still home to Mrs. Gagarin. The Gagarins were also a repeat client for Breuer, who designed their earlier and larger house on an adjacent lot in 1956-1957. This butterfly-roofed house engendered the most interest among the group, mainly concerning an exterior frame supporting a strong roof cantilever—some believed it to be a reference to early Breuer work, others thought it a structurally necessary afterthought. Others were just taking advantage of the sun's coming out and enjoying what had become a lovely spring day. Although compact in size, the house's materials, detailing are furnishing were meticulously designed and cared for.

The only non-residential building we toured was Eliot Noyes' 1965 Oliver Wolcott Library addition. The one-story addition's garden wall of painted white brick acted as a backdrop to the library's original Colonial house when viewed from the street. Tucked behind the wall, at the connection between the two structures, was the Library entrance. John Harwood, a graduate

continued on next page

LITCHFIELD, CONTINUED

student from Professor Bergdoll's seminar, talked about Noyes's embrace of "the box." This project does not break this mold; however, it took full advantage of the long-span concrete panel roof system, which permitted a column-free interior.

We also passed by two school buildings—Litchfield High School by Breuer (1954-1956) and the Junior High School by Johansen (1965). Litchfield's proposed school reconstruction plan anticipates the demolition and replacement of Breuer's expressive "Y" plan gymnasium structure at the High School.

The Litchfield area is a pocket of Modern few people have discovered. Within Litchfield and the "next-door" towns are buildings by Edward Durrell Stone, Richard Neutra, Herbert Beckhard and Ulrich Franzen, in addition to those already mentioned. Alexander Calder lived in the area and collaborated with the architects and their clients on many projects for these houses, from murals to mobiles. The tour was a refreshing surprise—proof that even a quintessential New England town known for its exquisite Colonial and Colonial Revival architecture could become a center for new ideas by virtue of a few devoted, creative individuals.

—Carol Berens

SEE PG. 8 FOR SUMMER/FALL EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE LITCHFIELD EXHIBIT.

CALL FOR PAPERS

IMPORT-EXPORT: POSTWAR MODERNISM IN AN EXPANDING WORLD, 1945-1975

In April the Program Committee of the VIIIth DOCOMOMO Conference issued a Call for Papers. The full document is available at www.docomomo-us.org or www.docomomo.com. It can also be requested by mail from: DOCOMOMO-US, P.O. Box 230977, New York, NY 10023. Deadline for abstracts: September 15, 2003

MARCUS GARVEY VILLAGE: A LOW-RISE, HIGH-DENSITY MODEL

Publicly sponsored working-class housing is a sociological affair but never only so. Everything made takes form, so design matters as well as urbanism. Contemporaneously with the demise of the notorious Pruitt-Igoe project in St Louis, there rose in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn an unsung low-rise modernist project by Kenneth Frampton, the architectural historian and critic. Under the 'low-rise, high density' rubric of the time this project deserves to be better known.

Frampton, who trained as an architect at the Architectural Association in London, designed Marcus Garvey Village in 1976 in collaboration with Arthur Baker of the long since defunct Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies and Theodore Lieberman, staff architect within the New York State Urban Development Corporation, presided over by the late Ed Logue. In the vicinity are several generations of run-of-the mill, high-rise 'slum-clearance' projects of no artistic interest except for the low-rise Brownsville Houses (by Frederick Frost and John Ambrose Thompson, 1943-47), a late-constructivist development with rotated cruciform plans that was rehabilitated in the 1990s. Marcus Garvey Village is not made up of super-blocks, but of four-

Within the city blocks likewise paired and complementary elements surround open, orthogonal but articulated courts or 'mews' units by virtue of multiple shifts and permutations in the basic elements. Where possible, downstairs units sport little backyards, raucously jumbled with plantings and outdoor equipment yet, because they are sunk below sidewalk level, gently subordinated to the common closes. Together,



VIEW FROM THE STREET LOOKING INTO ONE OF THE COURTYARDS OR 'CLOSES.'



A TYPICAL STRIP OF STREETSIDE ROW HOUSES (NOS. 227-47, DUMONT AVENUE).

storey terraces and so called 'mews' blocks within the given urban grid, north and south of Livonia Avenue, over which runs an elevated subway.

The complex still shows what 'utopic' level can actually be attained, despite constraints, when realistic planning does not oblige one to totally discount architectural art. Several blocks and the adjacent side streets are set with basically four-storey, multi-family rowhouses deployed along the street frontages of the city blocks, and in the 'mews' blocks that provide quiet removal from the streets. The upper two stories of the straight street terraces commonly extend forward to the building line over a deeply recessed ground floor, with the cavity beneath punctuated, as a mass within a volume, by a solid stoop with a side-saddle flight of stairs. Flush beneath the overhang, the stoops also lend formal justification to what must be fire-escape hatches poking above the roof. Laterally, the facades are articulated by fusion of the units into pairs, occasional triplets and longer runs, with odd single units, especially on ends.

The plastic conviction of the whole is largely due to a compositional device whereby the even rows of houses are subtly syncopated by stopping the 'leg' of every other party-wall "T" well back from the house line, rhythmically breaking up symmetrical pairs of units and subordinating them to a larger but subtler symmetry like that of the alternating "T" and "I" forms between the roof terraces of Mies van der Rohe's famous Wiessenhof apartments at Stuttgart, of 1927.

the rows, yards and closes uphold a complexity that, urbanely enough, never turns gratuitously picturesque.

Last fall the closes seemed less well-kept as to gardening and tidiness than on a prior visit two springs before, though that might simply indicate a summer's hard use. Also, one end-of-row unit seemed to have suffered a fire (with no external evidence of spreading) and to have gone some time without repair. Although modernist design often proves surprisingly accommodating of ad hoc modification—here even of ubiquitous tacked-on exterior wiring—the Village's maintenance does seem in decline. Yet it is a safe bet that the boring rows of jerrybuilt, anti-collective—yet

TOGETHER, THE ROWS, YARDS AND CLOSES UPHOLD A COMPLEXITY THAT, URBANELY ENOUGH, NEVER TURNS GRATUITOUSLY PICTURESQUE.

hardly individualist—row houses put up privatistically over the last few years with government encouragement in great patches east of Garvey Village will hold up far less well by 2030 than Garvey Village, notwithstanding a quarter century of scrimping maintenance. Those slums of the future have tight little own-turf parking spaces despite the proximity of the subway, many punctuated by heraldic lions guarding their brick front posts—'Privat!' One easily imagines them ramshackle by the time the mortgages are paid off.

Four if not all five of New York's boroughs have neighborhoods with such street upon street of privatistic, wannabe-yuppie townhouses much duller than the unfashionably governmental Garvey Village rows and courts. What with only public housing towers freestanding in gardens, there seems to have developed a certain amenity-envy on the part of the better off but space-deprived, who despise 'modern architecture' along with 'big,' i.e., publicly beneficial, government, and have lately been imposing not only their own economics but also a distinctly anti-urban aesthetic of quasi-suburban forms and details. Frampton warns in a recent text "On the Predicament of Architecture at the

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MIDTOWN MODERN

The survey of midtown modern architecture has been reactivated with the assistance of a new grant and the work of recent architecture school graduates and volunteers who are continuing to document and write historic descriptions of over 200 buildings in midtown. In the coming months the Manhattan survey project will broaden its scope to Lower Manhattan and the boroughs in an effort to collect basic information on the important Modern buildings in the city. The end goal is a base from which to recommend potential landmarks to the Landmarks Preservation Commission so that Modern buildings are no longer considered "non-contributing to a historic district" but can actually comprise districts or be evaluated as individual landmarks.

On the horizon is an exhibition and discussion on the issues of preserving corporate Modern buildings. The pressing question: How can these buildings be modified to meet current real estate and programmatic needs while maintaining the essential technical and design details that communicate the spirit of Modernism?
—Nina Rappaport

OVERHEARD

"IT'S ONLY THE MOST POLITICIZED BUILDING IN THE CITY RIGHT NOW..."

**JUNE 18TH, 2003
2 COLUMBUS CIRCLE PUBLIC HEARING**

Senior City Planning Commission staff person explaining to a visitor why there is such a crowd outside the Commission auditorium.

ADVOCACY UPDATES:



ROBERT NARRACCI

CONNECTICUT:
**PIRELLI BUILDING
(ARMSTRONG RUBBER)**

MARCEL BREUER, 1969
DEMO OF HORIZONTAL
SECTION UNDERWAY

In 1969, with the support of New Haven Mayor Richard Lee, Marcel Breuer designed the Pirelli building as headquarters for what was then the Armstrong Rubber Company. The building, which was radically conceived and precisely executed, has been on the State Historic Register since 2000. The form of the building is unique, with a four-story tower of deeply sculpted concrete hanging from a series of concrete "T"s. A void remains between the tower mass and a two-story plinth below. Breuer's intent was to create a striking profile visible from the adjacent interstate at high speed.

In the fall of 2002 the Swedish mega-retailer IKEA announced plans to acquire the site and to construct a 300,000-sq.ft. store, demolishing all or parts of the plinth and warehouse extension for parking. The company has no plans for the Pirelli Building and has only retained the tower portion at the insistence of the current administration. In examining the proposal, architectural, planning, and environmental groups determined that demolition of the plinth gained only 150 parking spaces, on top of 1,100 and advocated for retaining half of the plinth. Without apology, IKEA stated parking as their rationale and proceeded. Amidst protests from the Connecticut AIA, the Alliance For Architecture, the Urban Design League and the Long Wharf Advocacy Group, and with little design compromise, IKEA began demolition April 8. IKEA has removed the entire low warehouse component, neutralizing the building's formerly dramatic asymmetry. Plans to develop ninety percent of the site as paved area will also eliminate one of New Haven's most monumental green spaces. For updates visit the Long Wharf Advocacy Group's web site at: www.breuernewhaven.org.

—Robert Narracci



ANNIE SCHLECHTER

NEW JERSEY:
**MAXWELL HOUSE COFFEE
PLANT BUILDINGS**

H.K. FERGUSON, 1939
DEMOLITION PLANNED
FOR OCTOBER

Developers plan to commence Phase I demolition at the Maxwell House Coffee Plant site in Hoboken, NJ, in October. Their proposal for a new 840-unit residential complex was approved by Hoboken's mayor and planning board and awaits final sign off by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Planning (DEP) due to its waterfront status. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) will weigh in as part of DEP's approval process.

The original six buildings (H.K. Ferguson, 1938-1939) are excellent examples of industrial Modernism as practiced by progressive architects and their equally forward looking clients. When built, it was the largest coffee manufacturing

facility in the world. Like competitors Albert Kahn and the Austin Company, Ferguson combined the best functional concepts of American factory engineering with International Style design concepts absorbed from Europe. The combination was a new American factory type—buildings functionally and aesthetically modern.

Consultants commissioned by the developers prepared a Cultural Resources report to satisfy SHPO's research requirements. The report concluded that the Maxwell House buildings were not architecturally significant and went as far as listing pre-demolition mitigation measures. Alarmed by the shortcomings and misstatements of the report several DOCOMOMO members prepared a comment document in rebuttal that was submitted to the SHPO in early June. It provided missing analysis of the intersection between the Modern movement and industrial architecture, and placed Maxwell House in this context.

The SHPO asked the developers revisit their plan with the goal of saving and reusing the two buildings considered most architecturally significant. The developer's response was that their required, magic number of units precluded reuse of any of the buildings. (The same developers, in March 2000, presented a plan that reused three buildings.)

Demolition will be gradual; the City of Hoboken is in the process of issuing a new Master Plan that promotes reuse of the City's existing buildings; DEP has yet to stamp its approval and the economy is anyone's guess. Should the developers seek alterations to their plan new reviews will kick in. We'll be following this one.

—Kathleen Randall



ROBERT NARRACCI

CONNECTICUT:
**VETERANS MEMORIAL
COLISEUM, NEW HAVEN**

ROCHE & DINKELOO, 1972
UNCERTAIN

In 2002, the City of New Haven announced plans to demolish Veterans Memorial Coliseum designed by Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo & Associates (1972). The building falls clearly in the realm of heroic modernism and as such, has generated controversy since its construction. Veteran's Coliseum was greeted with skepticism by the public because of its monumental and unconventional appearance. Built of exposed Cor-Ten Steel, which oxidizes to a deep brown, and partially clad in dark ochre tiles, the high-cantilevered building forms and sweeping ramps hearkened back to the height of American industry and agriculture. However, architectural references to titanic eastern steel mills and midwest grain silos were never acknowledged by the general public. Contributing to the negative perception was the fact that designs for ground level retail and grand glazed public spaces were never realized. Also, the general economic malaise of the 1970s disabled efforts to redevelop the surrounding blocks.

The City of New Haven has no specific plans for the site and commissioned a conceptual master plan only after the State of Connecticut noted the lack of goals and denied demolition funds. In this tightened economic climate, it is uncertain that those funds will materialize soon. For the time being, supporters and detractors of the building plan to convene, communicate and participate in the future of the site. The first such event, "Coliseum Re-Vision" a symposium workshop on the building, was held at Artspace June 16th.

—Robert Narracci

BUILDING REGISTRY

SPORTS AND THE BODY IS THEME FOR 2003

DOCOMOMO International's Registry Committee is requesting fiche forms on a specific theme this year—sports and the body. Buildings selected from the New York/Tri-State region for documentation and submission include Louis Kahn's Trenton Bath Houses, to be written by Susan Solomon and Eero Saarinen's Ingalls Rink in New Haven, CT, by Jayne Merkel. Other buildings being submitted from the US include Lawrence Anderson's Cambridge Alumni Pool at MIT and SOM's Memorial Coliseum, 1960, in Portland Oregon. The buildings will be presented at the Registry committee's fall meeting in Greece.

"Fiches" are standardized documentation forms, similar (but significantly simpler) than National Register nominations. The fiches are used to compile both DOCOMOMO's national and international registry of important Modern Movement buildings and sites around the world. Copies of fiches for each registry building are kept with DOCOMOMO US and in Amsterdam at the Netherlands Architectural Institute. DOCOMOMO's ultimate goal is to eventually have worldwide registry data available online.

If you have knowledge of or access to a particular Modern building worthy of registration, or simply an interest in research and writing basic building documentation, please help expand the registry by preparing a fiche. Visit the DOCOMOMO/US website (www.docomomo-us.org) for the fiche forms or contact New York/Tri-State chapter for additional information and assistance (docomomo_ny@hotmail.com, attn: registry).
—Nina Rappaport

K. RANDALL



NEW YORK:
**GUARDIAN LIFE
INSURANCE ANNEX**

GORDON BUNSHAFT, 1960
SEEKING LANDMARK
STATUS

When many corporations were leaving the city in the 1950s to build new, larger headquarters in suburban pastures, the Guardian Life Insurance Company held its ground at Union Square and Park Avenue South. In 1960 the company commissioned Gordon Bunshaft of SOM to design a low-rise annex within the block of row houses on 17th Street behind its 20-story Beaux-Arts building. The four-story annex is a distinctly refined essay in the International Style, besides being one of the finest examples anywhere of an infill building. It is an incomparable asset to New York as a lesson in possibilities: Bunshaft produced an elegant Modern building, while respecting the low-rise character of the mid-block site and the existing street wall. The Guardian Life Annex's meticulously crafted curtain wall of aluminum spandrels set flush with large glass panels provides a time-stamp counterpoint to the neighborhood's 19th-century fabric.

Two years ago the Union Square Community Coalition along with other community organizations around the city started a letter writing campaign to secure a Landmarks Preservation Commission hearing for the Annex. The campaign started after the main building and annex were purchased by The Related Companies. No hearing has been scheduled despite a wellspring of support from community groups and politicians alike. Guardian Life's main building was landmarked in 1988. In 2000 its exterior and public rooms were restored as part of the redesign of the building for the W Union Square Hotel. The hotel's adaptive reuse project won a 2002 award for excellence from the Preservation League of New York State and was touted as an imaginative project juxtaposing a historic building with new design. Now it's time for the Bunshaft-designed annex to gain the same landmark status and protections as the building it complements. The Related Companies owns both buildings but leases each to sympathetic tenants. Air rights are not an issue as the annex tucks into a residential block zoned R-8B. Visit the Annex and join the campaign by writing to Commissioner Robert Tierney requesting a hearing.
—Caroline Zaleski

ANNIE SCHLECHTER



NEW YORK:
**2 COLUMBUS CIRCLE/
GALLERY OF MODERN ART**

E.D. STONE, 1964
FACADE AND INTERIOR
REWORKING PENDING

On May 8th Community Board 5 approved the property transfer of 2 Columbus Circle from the City of New York to the Museum of Arts and Design despite public testimony during which the nays outnumbered yeas by five to one.

On June 18th the City Planning Commission (CPC) held its hearing on 2 Columbus Circle (2CC). Over 30 people testified in favor of holding a Landmarks Preservation Commission hearing before the building is transferred and subsequently modified beyond recognition. Testimony in favor was

diverse—from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, to state elected officials to the author Tom Wolfe. Two weeks later, during its July 3rd review session the CPC voted to approve the "disposition" of 2CC.

Landmark West! conducted extensive research into the history behind the City's deal with the Museum and has been following the ULURP process through which 2CC is winding. Executive Director Kate Wood and staff prepared a submission to the CPC, presented at the hearing, outlining among other things, errors and contradictions in the Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) prepared by the Deputy Mayor's office. The EAS concluded that allowing the transfer and design overhaul to proceed would have no impact on any historic resource. (Under EAS guidelines, "historic resources" include properties that have *not* been identified by the Landmarks Commission, but meet eligibility requirements.)

Which leads to the real question surrounding 2CC: Why has there not been a Landmarks Preservation Commission hearing? The City's eligibility criteria encompasses any building that "has a special character or special historical or aesthetic interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, State or nation." On aesthetic *interest* alone 2CC squarely meets eligibility. A building is eligible for National Register listing if it "embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction."

"Distinctive characteristics of a period" is 2 Columbus Circle's overriding contribution to New York's cultural and architectural history. Modern architecture is a broad and diverse body of work that cannot be defined by easy and obvious examples alone—the Lever Houses and the Guggenheims. The record must include later postwar buildings and work by Modern architects who sometimes sailed against the prevailing winds of taste and custom. Stone's building is such a record.

Unfortunately the process of determining 2 Columbus Circle's future use has been incredibly political from day one: A Freedom of Information Act request by Landmark West! was stymied by EDC; a former Chair of the LPC was hired as Director of the Museum of Art and Design's New Building Program; city planners have advised their friends in preservation to steer clear, "it's too political;" the EAS was prepared by the city itself. Perhaps as important as saving 2CC, this is a test of a vital public process.

DOCOMOMO will continue to press for a designation hearing and beyond that, for a compromise that will preserve the primary facades of E. D. Stone's most talked about building.
—Kathleen Randall

ONLINE FORUM TACKLES 2 COLUMBUS CIRCLE, E.D. STONE AND MORE

The recent online discussion organized by Landmark West! and moderated by Paul Goldberger is still available for reading and public comment at www.collectorsworld.org. Panelists Terence Riley, Witold Rybczynski, Diane Lewis, Michael Sorkin, Thomas Mellins, Karrie Jacobs and John Kaliski provide thoughtful fuel for the no-middle-ground discussion surrounding the merits and shortcomings of E.D. Stone's building and even larger questions—as Goldberger asks: what is a fair definition of an iconic structure anyway?

The smart, sharp commentary from both sides is a very lively read. Where else have you heard 2 Columbus Circle noted "...For the charms of its weeny aedicular verve" (entry #19)?

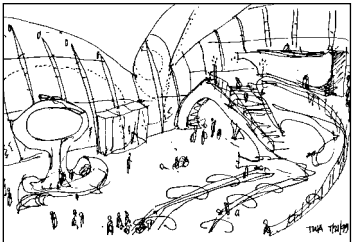
MOMO AT THE MOVIES

**CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
DIRECTED BY STEVEN SPIELBERG, 2002**

"Do you know why the Yankees always win? Because the other team can't keep their eyes off the pinstripes."

Frank W. Abagnale, Sr., played by Christopher Walkins

Catch Me If You Can is based on a true and unbelievable story. Frank Abagnale, Jr. is a brash and talented teenager who gains wealth by posing as an airline pilot, doctor and assistant attorney general. By the tender age of 17, Frankie had written over \$4 million in forged checks. He is eventually captured in France by a dogged FBI investigator (Tom Hanks). The real story is Frankie's lonely and disconnected grifter existence. Not a traditional criminal, Frankie is a confused young man trying to restore his parents broken marriage, which he blames on financial stresses. Leonardo DiCaprio plays the character of Frankie with unexpected skill.



JEFF MILES

Modern architecture fans will enjoy the two brief glimpses of Eero Saarinen's TWA Terminal (1956-1962). The terminal was freshened up by set designer Jeannine Oppewall and looks terrific on screen. The late-Sixties visual environment is meticulously recreated in true Spielbergian excess. One is dazzled by the metaphorical pinstripes: orange stewardess uniforms, period graphics, google curves, sixties cars. Spielberg makes the age appear, from contemporary hindsight, as hopelessly naïve and perky. Frankie moves through this unsuspecting world like a shark.

TWA Terminal was designed as the crown jewel of the Port Authority's "Terminal City." Its design incorporated innovations still used today such

continued next page

ADVOCACY UPDATES, CONTINUED



DAVID CALLAGHER/WWW.LIGHTNINGELED.COM

NEW YORK:
TWA TERMINAL AT JFK
EERO SAARINEN, 1962
VACANT/ENDANGERED

After the publication of its initial master plan, followed by an extended period of comment under the Section 106 review process, a series of draft Memorandums of Agreement and a Solicitation of Interest (SOI) effort, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has taken little further action (at least publicly) on the fate of TWA Terminal.

Comprehensive comments from various consulting parties, including DOCOMOMO/US, along with letter and e-mail campaigns, led to some improvements in the master plan, however the most significant concerns—partial demolition of the satellite gates and their boarding tubes and sheer engulfment of the terminal itself—remain. Even though a large number of responses resulted from the SOI, the Port Authority has not taken the next step, that of issuing a formal RFP. Given economic conditions in general and within the airline industry, this is not entirely surprising. The only recent action has taken place outside the Port Authority's purview. On May 29 the National Trust for Historic Preservation announced its "America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places" list for 2003 and TWA Terminal was at the top.

The Municipal Art Society has taken preservation efforts a next step and has introduced a series of alternative plans. These plans, prepared by a group of airport architects and planners, show how TWA Terminal could be integrated into a new terminal in a more meaningful way without the loss of the satellites, and possibly, reusing the main structure of I.M. Pei's National Airlines Terminal.

While there is no indication of any immediate action two concerns have to be cited. The expansion of JetBlue operations at JFK continues (see article, p. 1). This could pose a threat to the TWA. The Port Authority's master plan envisioned a 750,000 sq. ft. semi-circular terminal behind TWA, a portion of which was to be occupied by JetBlue (the majority spoken for by United Airlines). This need for expansion might result in the stopgap solution of building a section of the new terminal. The second concern applies to any significant building that is empty. All too often they fall prey to vandalism or casual destruction despite efforts to secure the site. A viable preservation solution must be found soon that not only places the building back in an air travel related service, but safeguards its future.

—Theo Prudon



GIL AMAGASHIRAI/PHOTOGRAPHERS

NEW YORK:
**EAST 87TH STREET
GROUP RESIDENCE**
HORACE GINSBERN, 1968
DEMOLITION APPROVED

One of Manhattan's few examples of Brutalist architecture is slated for demolition by its new owner the Church of Latter Day Saints. The Jewish Board of Guardian's Group Residence

For Young Adults at 217 East 87 Street (Horace Ginsbern & Associates, Architects, 1968) is going down with only a few people speaking out in its defense. The building is the real thing, a rare, very Sixties work of art celebrating dynamic massing achieved through the plasticity of concrete and the textural hallmark of *béton brut*, with clear references to Le Corbusier's La Tourette monastery (1954-1959). Designed to work comfortably with its neighbors, the upper floor projects over a façade of cubic projections terminating flush with the courtyard wall at street level.

Horace Ginsbern (1900-1969) is one of those very good but never widely recognized or aggressively promoted architects who trained at Columbia University in the 1920s. Ginsbern worked in a variety of architectural styles from Art Deco apartment buildings on The Bronx's Grand Concourse to Modern housing projects in Harlem. The Group Residence—his last building—is astoundingly well designed considering Brutalism was a new language in Ginsbern's chameleon-like repertoire. In 1969, Horace Ginsbern & Associates received a Certificate of Merit from the AIA/NY for the Group Residence.

The building never benefited from a city-wide advocacy campaign, although certainly Friends of the Upper East Side has worked diligently for the building's recognition and protection. Friends presented the Group Residence as a "significant building" to the Upper East Side Community Board, yet the board gave it no backing. It was included in Friends' "Modern Architecture on the Upper East Side: Landmarks of the Future" exhibit last year, and in 1992, the Landmarks Commission and Department of Cultural Affairs touted the Group Residence in their exhibition, "New York City's Great Unheralded Architects." Some members of the community bring up the building's "bad" associations as a center for troubled youth. Such associations aside, the community board expressed near unanimous dislike for its architecture. These opinions held sway in the decision to approve the demolition. This outcome is, in itself, sad, but it is also a reminder of the advocacy groundwork that needs to be done identifying, studying and presenting lesser-known Modern buildings in a proactive way. Educating the public, politicians and city officials about the wide range of Modern architecture found in our city is a looming, but critical endeavor.

—Caroline Zaleski

APT SYMPOSIUMS HIGHLIGHT MODERN STRUCTURES IN NEW HAVEN AND ALBANY

Association for Preservation Technology (APT) Northeast Chapter, together with the Yale School of Architecture, sponsored a symposium and Annual Meeting February 1, 2003. Robert A.M. Stern, Dean of the School of Architecture opened the event, which was held in the Rudolph-designed Art and Architecture building on the Yale campus. Approximately 140 people attended from APT's Northeast region (New York, Massachusetts, Vermont and Maine). Kyle Normandin, APT Northeast Vice President and DOCOMOMO member organized the symposium together with Nina Rappaport, of DOCOMOMO and Pamela Delphenich, campus planner at Yale University.

Presentations focused on preservation projects undertaken by the University's planning and facilities division and

continued next page

MOVIE, CONTINUED

as baggage carousels and satellite gates. The dramatically vaulted and sky-lit concrete structure is relentlessly organic. The floor, stairs, walls and roof are one continuous surface, as if the terminal were carved from a single rock by Piranesi and Hanna Barberra cartoonists. The terminal was a tremendous success. Even Saarinen's critics grudgingly admitted the terminal "transcended the dangers of self-assertion." (Jencks, 1973)

The emotional climax of *Catch Me If You Can* takes place in the fabulous boarding tube of Satellite No. 1, where Spielberg takes cinematic advantage of the horizon produced by the curved floor. The TWA tubes are one of the most intense spatial experiences ever produced by Modern architecture. It is not a wow space, like the main terminal vaults, although the indirect lighting and elliptical section give it a Space Age flavor. Instead, it condenses the act of departure, arrival, separation and air travel into a hundred human strides. Walking through the tubes recreates Columbus' sailing away from Spain, dropping over the horizon and leaving behind his entire world. It is a subtle kinetic and psychological amplifier used by Kubrick in *Space Odyssey 2001* and by innumerable building designers.

Saarinen was a versatile and eclectic architect in the organic Modern style. His Ingalls Hockey Rink (1953-59) and Dulles Airport (1964) are examples of his sculptural approach. In the context of Bauhaus Modernism, Saarinen's work was both admired and reviled by his peers as being showy and egocentric. Today, with the star architect system firmly established and architectural style devolved into brand-name image-making, this criticism seems rather prophetic.

As jets got larger and the number of air travelers increased, TWA Terminal's small size was seen as a disadvantage. The terminal was vacated in October 2001 and its future remains in limbo. *Catch Me If You Can* reminds us that to appreciate this masterpiece you must travel through it, something more than Hollywood can provide.

-Jeff Miles

VIIIth DOCOMOMO CONFERENCE: 2004

The VIIIth International DOCOMOMO Conference will be held September 29 to October 2, 2004 in New York City at Columbia University. To complement the conference, a series of one- and two-day technical workshops will be offered to conference participants and professionals in the Tri-State area. The workshops are intended to focus on the technical issues related to preserving buildings constructed during the Modern Movement, addressing work by professionals in other countries as well as US projects. Workshops currently under consideration include:

ASSESSING THE 20TH CENTURY CURTAINWALL

Although the curtain wall is considered a quintessential element of the post-war highrise, its use was not limited to the US. The investigation, assessment and repair of curtain wall systems presents technological problems and philosophical issues unique to different building types and materials and to different countries.



CONGRESS COMPLEX, BRASILIA (OSCAR NIEMEYER, 1958)
SHOWN WITH TOWER CLADDING REPAIR UNDERWAY

MARCUS GARVEY HOUSES, CONTINUED

Turn of the Century," introducing his *Labour, Work and Architecture* (2002), that though needed all the more today in the face of a global dilemma of metropolitan housing, the low-rise, high-density approach lacks the necessary "political and cultural will" even for suburbs.

Regrettably, the recently revised *AIA Guide* perpetuates a standing injustice in its critical estimation of the project, begrudging Garvey Village's being "effective" only to hold it off as a "pretentious experiment"... "Austere and reminiscent of the fanatically regimented Amsterdam housing of the 1920s, it is more a scholastic architectural thesis than a prototype for urban development." Actually, that same Amsterdam housing was admired and imitated precisely for its good design, as in Dublin, where the low-rise, Amsterdam-style projects still look downright beautiful. It must embarrass speculative capitalism when public housing is

CONCRETE RESTORATION IN MODERN BUILDINGS

Concrete found wide application in both poured-in-place and precast panel applications during the 20th century. Use of special finish techniques and exposed aggregates was also common. The preservation, conservation and often replication of both material and finish are one of the most problematic areas in the conservation of Modern buildings.

STONE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MODERN MOVEMENT

Technologies for fabricating and building with stone changed significantly after World War II. Buildings began to be constructed using various types of dimension stone, veneers and even composite stone panels. Some Modern buildings over the past 20 years have undergone radical renovations while others have undergone stabilizations and various types of interventions to deal with the deterioration or failure of stone claddings

CHROMA: COLOR AND CONSERVATION IN MODERN BUILDINGS

The use of color is one of the most misunderstood components of Modern architecture. Often, the assumption is made that architects of buildings constructed during the Modern Movement did not utilize color schemes or shades of color. This workshop will investigate, analyze and reproduce various types of color schemes and patterns to explore and study the use of color during specific periods.

APT REPORT, CONTINUED

included some stellar Modern structures: The British Art Centre presented by Bruce Kaskel; Beinecke Library presented by Steve Ruggiero and Pamela Delphenich; and the Yale Ice Hockey Rink presented by Jayne Merkel. Other presentations covered the use of digital technology and documentation at Harkness Tower, presented by Michael Petermann, Richard Moses and Kent Diebolt, as well as work on buildings of earlier vintage. Late afternoon tours of the various campus projects rounded out the program.



THE 1/4-MILE-LONG SWAN STREET BUILDING, ALBANY
(CARSON, LUNDIN & SHAW, 1971)

APT Northeast organized a second symposium in Albany on May 31 at the New York State Museum, part of the Empire State Plaza complex (Wallace Harrison, 1962-1977). Eight presentations covered topics related to the use of technology in the preservation, rehabilitation and stabilization of various projects in Albany. Stabilization and restoration of the marble cladding on the nine buildings that comprise the Empire State Plaza and stabilization of the Llenroc stone cladding the Plaza's massive podium focused not only on the materials in question, but the sheer volume of cladding that needs repair.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.APTI.ORG

obviously better qua architecture than even luxury commercial housing.

A generation old and looking good in a neighborhood still considered beyond the pale is saying quite something for a public housing design that the *AIA Guide* persists in dismissing as arty and too impractically idealistic for its own good. If anything, the example of Garvey Village suggests that the social versus the artistic in architecture may be just as false a dichotomy now as it was between the World Wars in much functionalist antiformalist polemic. Maybe one reason why Garvey Village can be said to 'work' at all is that it is a fine work of art. Too bad we can't all live in such beautifully designed houses—and if this is "effective" working-class housing, it can't be that middle-class people can't afford to, in that perennial excuse for banality.

-Joseph Masheck

EXHIBITIONS

National Design Triennial: Inside Design Now Through August 3 Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum

The Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum's second "Design Triennial" features the work of over 80 designers and firms representing the latest in contemporary design in the US. The works encompass architecture, interior design, product design, fashion, new media and graphic design. Information: (212) 849-8400

Raymond Loewy: Designs for a Consumer Culture Through August 3 (extended) The Hagley Museum and Library Wilmington, DE

This comprehensive exhibition covers the preeminent industrial designer's life and body of work, including his architectural and interior designs. Information: www.hagley.lib.de.us

Isamu Noguchi and Modern Japanese Ceramics Through September 7

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Smithsonian, Washington, DC
"Isamu Noguchi and Modern Japanese Ceramics" presents 38 works in clay by Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988) along with the works of nine leading Japanese ceramic artists of the period. Information: (202) 633-4880 www.asia.si.edu/exhibitions/current/noguchi.htm

In Our Own Time: Modernism in Litchfield 1949-1970 Through November 30 Litchfield Historical Society, Litchfield, CT (see p. 2)

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT AND MID-CENTURY MODERNISM

September 3-7, San Francisco

"Frank Lloyd Wright and Mid-Century Modernism" is the theme of this year's Annual Conference of the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy, to be held in San Francisco September 3-7. Speaker presentations will examine Wright's mid-century work, the impact of European modernism on that work, and Wright's influence on contemporary practitioners such as Harwell Hamilton Harris and Gregory Ain. Tours will visit many of Wright's buildings throughout the Bay Area, as well as some Eichler homes and possibly a house by H. H. Harris. For information or to register, visit the Conservancy's website, www.savewright.org, or call 773-324-5600.

TOURS

Art Deco Manhattan: Featuring the Work of Ely Jacques Kahn Sunday July 27, 2:00pm

This Art Deco Society of NY walk explores the architecture that virtually defines the city's 20th-century character. Visit an array of restored commercial buildings featuring bold geometric design, art, restored facades and iconic set-back massing, including the works of 2 Lafayette co-designer Kahn. For details and reservations: (212) 679-DECO.

Philadelphia Skyscrapers: Old & New Saturday August 23, 2:00PM

Walk Philadelphia's exploration of Penn Center—one of the country's most famous examples of post-WWII urban renewal—reveals how city planner Ed Bacon tapped William Penn's vision to create this commercial complex. Meet at the south portal, City Hall. \$10/\$8 students. Information: walkphiladelphia@centercityphila.org.

TALKS/SYMPOSIA

The following events are planned in conjunction with the Litchfield exhibit. The "Salons" will be held in different houses and feature scholars, owners, architects and clients. Space is limited. The cost is \$75 per person.

Marcel Breuer Salon Wednesday July 30, 7:30pm

Isabelle Hyman, author of *Marcel Breuer, Architect* and Leslie and Rufus Stillman, clients.

John Johansen Salon Tuesday October 7, 7:30pm

John Johansen, architect and Mrs. C.H. Huvell, client.

ARCHITECTURE OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION, 1959-1969

September 2003, Storefront for Architecture

Curated by Eduardo Luis Rodriguez

Contact Storefront for Architecture late summer for specific dates (212) 431-5795; www.storefrontnews.org

Over the past 40 years Cuba's unique political, ideological and cultural climate has produced a narrative of the built environment unique within in the history of Modern architecture. "Architecture of the Cuban Revolution, 1959-1969" will focus on the years immediately following the armed revolution in January of 1959. This work represents the heroic, visionary period of revolutionary architecture in Cuba, the product of an idealistic moment when the artistic and intellectual avant-garde and its new revolutionary government were in mutually stimulating alignment.

"Architecture of the Cuban Revolution, 1959-1969" will introduce new audiences to an extraordinarily creative, experimental, and visionary body of work that is virtually unknown outside of Cuba. The exhibition will connect to the growing academic and popular interest in the artistic production of the 1960s by positioning the work of Cuban architects in a larger, international context. Over 130 photographs, along with plans and other drawings, documenting over 50 projects built by the Cuban government will be featured. The images are mostly period photographs—printed for the exhibition from recently discovered negatives—taken by government photographers documenting projects for the Ministry of Construction.

Storefront for Art and Architecture is producing a video of interviews with many of the surviving architects from the period, filmed on the sites of their projects. The film documents the buildings in their present, disparate states of preservation and records the vivid memories of the architects of the time and circumstances of their construction.

The exhibition's curator, Eduardo Luis Rodriguez, is the author of *Havana Modern* and was one of DOCOMOMO New York/Tri-State's featured speakers at the Americas Society in October 2001.

—Belmont Freeman and Sarah Herda



CONCRETE STADIUM CANOPY, JOSÉ MARTÍ SPORTS PARK, HAVANA, CUBA, OCTAVIO BUIGAS, 1961.

Symposium September 26

An all-day symposium is being planned to bring together architects, scholars, original clients and the public to discuss the development of Modern architecture in Litchfield during the 1950-1970s and its relevance today.

Please contact the Litchfield Historical Society to be put on the mailing list for the symposium program.

For reservations and information please call: (860) 567-4501 www.litchfieldhistoricalsociety.com

CONFERENCES

National Trust for Historic Preservation "New Frontiers in Preservation" September 30-October 5 Denver, CO

Anti-terrorism measures for historic properties, innovative tax exemptions, preserving New Deal buildings and art, and combining housing production and historic preservation to revitalize communities are some of the topics to be covered at the Trust's annual conference. There's a wide array of special events and field trips by foot, bus or bike. Details and registration: (800) 944-NTHP or www.nthpconference.org.

CIMA- IT'S NEW

THE CONGRESS OF INTERNATIONAL MODERN ARCHITECTURE

CIMA is a not-for-profit organization with the mission to bring together architects, planners, engineers, related industry members and thinkers from the social sciences in constructive discourse on the essence of modern architecture today. CIMA views modern architecture as an evolving set of guiding principles that lead to excellence in design while enhancing architecture's relevance to society and its needs. A major focus is to guide architecture toward the service of humanity and thereby enhance the profession's social relevance.

CIMA's program for the latter half of the year includes a fall lecture series and exhibition at Cooper Union titled "Future Modern Architecture"; publication of transcripts from last fall's series; development of the CIMA web site, lunch time lectures at architectural firms and planning for its first Symposium/Congress in 2004.

CIMA was founded by a small group of distinguished architects from the Americas, Europe, Asia and Australia, all sharing the intent to enhance the relevance of modern architecture today via cross-cultural discourse. The group is based in New York and has chapters in formation in California, Germany and Australia. Membership is open to architects, architectural students and those interested in the ongoing evolution of modern architecture. Member meetings are held biweekly.

For additional information and a more complete mission statement, visit www.cimarchitects.org or call Executive Director Valerie Lucznikowska (212) 777-7997.

FOR THE MODERN LIBRARY



The Lower Manhattan Plan: The 1966 Vision for Downtown New York

Carol Willis, ed.
Princeton Architectural Press and
The Skyscraper Museum, 2002
376 pages, \$25

In 1965, shortly after the World Trade Center was commissioned, a group of private practice architects and planners—consultants to the Department of City Planning—holed up in a rented loft space above a diner on 17th Street and Broadway. A year later they unveiled *The Lower Manhattan Plan*, a 2-inch thick, hand-typed, spiral-bound report, reproduced in an final quantity of 100. As Lower Manhattan was recast in the 1960s and 1970s the group's realistically optimistic report guided the transformation. In view of current attempts at re-inventing Lower Manhattan and designing a "World Trade Center" stand in, it is tempting, but probably naive, to read the 1966 Plan as evidence of a simpler, less-politicized planning process.

This new issue of the Plan does provide a quick resource for getting up to speed on the development history of Lower Manhattan as well as the prevailing attitudes toward city making in the Sixties. The book, reproduced as a slightly smaller facsimile of the original, includes an introduction by Skyscraper Museum Director Carol Willis, a historical essay by urban historian Ann Buttenwieser, and a "looking back" piece by Paul Willen and James Rossant, lead members of the 1965 planning team.

As Willis notes in her introduction, the 1966 Report was a response to a different kind of cataclysm than the three fires that brought about early rebuildings of Lower Manhattan. By the mid-1950s port activities had shipped out to New Jersey. Goods-handling and wholesaling companies that once clustered between the financial area and Canal Street were scattering. Corporate

headquarters were vacating downtown's dusty old buildings for the orderly blocks and sleek towers of Midtown.

The 1966 Plan clearly hangs its optimism on select signs that things were turning around. One Chase Plaza, commissioned in 1955 and completed in 1965, is credited with anchoring the bank and brokerage trade and bringing Modern architecture to the canyons of Lower Manhattan. Two superblock projects, the World Trade Center and the Civic Center (never fully realized) were predicted to transform the physical and economic landscape. Interestingly, the Plan's authors were critical of the Trade Center's design and urban plan. They were also quick to see the trade offs—including landfill for the waterfront development they proposed west of the Trade Center site.

When revisiting prior "visions" the urge to see where "they" were wrong or right is irresistible. By making the 1966 Lower Manhattan Plan available and freshly contextualized this new book encourages such evaluations. The Plan's primary goals remain remarkably current. Hopefully some of its worthier proposals will be picked up on the next round.

—Kathleen Randall



Nanoarchitecture: A New Species of Architecture

John M. Johansen
Princeton Architectural Press, 2002
160 pages, \$35

John Johansen is a Modern architecture pioneer responsible for many innovative structures. A 1942 graduate of Harvard Graduate School of Design, he studied under Walter Gropius and influenced several generations of young Modern architects. His built projects include the American Embassy in Dublin (1956-63); Goddard

Library at Clark University (1968) and Roosevelt Island Houses (Johansen & Bhavnani, 1975-76). His most well-known project is Mummers Theater in Fontana, Oklahoma (1965-70), now sensitively renovated. The theater, with its exposed mechanical systems and kit-of-parts aesthetic, influenced the European high-technology crowds, pre-dating the Pompidou Center (1971-76).

Johansen believes that design proceeds from the bottom-up; from construction to image. More simply, an aesthetic should develop from structure and building technology, not from a preconceived image. This systems view of architecture leads him to an interest in ecology. Nanoarchitecture is illustrated with model photographs and line drawings of ten representative designs. Some of the models are charmingly constructed from vacuum cleaner tubes, plastic water jugs and other Canal Street bric-a-brac. Earlier projects involve magnetic levitation, large-scale fiberglass molding and other exotic technologies.

Johansen's real search is for a building technology that approaches the self-organization dynamism of living organisms. He found it in nanotechnology, as promoted by physicist K. Eric Drexler. Johansen's most radical proposals involve super-smart buildings that literally assemble themselves from nanobot molecular assemblers and raw materials. Nano-manufacturing processes would result in intensely organic structures that resembled plants. Johansen rhapsodized about futuristic structures of diamonds, furniture extruding out of walls on command, bridges growing like trees.

Johansen believes that with nanotechnology, designers could build literally anything. A building could look like a Colonial ranchburger just as readily as his images of translucent pods. But he courageously asks the proper architectural questions: "How will this building method aid in designing better buildings? What defines its character?"

I met Johansen in 2001, when he founded CIMA (see sidebar). Johansen was one of the lecturers at last fall's "Future Modern" course at Cooper Union, where I presented my own futuristic speculations on biotechnology and living architecture. Now in his mid-80s, Johansen has again demonstrated that the modernist rational is capable of producing surprises. His view of the future is beautifully optimistic.

—Jeff Miles

do_co_momo_US

documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighborhoods of the modern movement

NEW YORK/TRI-STATE SUMMER 2003 NEWSLETTER



ANNE SCHLECHTER

THE LAST DROP?...MAXWELL HOUSE, p.4

"Nevertheless there does exist this thing called ARCHITECTURE, an admirable thing, the loveliest of all. A product of happy peoples and a thing which in itself produces happy peoples." *Le Corbusier, Towards A New Architecture, 1931*

On that optimistic note, please become a member of DOCOMOMO or renew today. Your paid membership will help DOCOMOMO tremendously in its work to identify, record and protect architecture and urban design of the Modern movement.

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 Preservation advocacy Technical/conservation issues
 I am interested in working on a registry nomination for the following building or site:
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Comments, articles and news items are welcome for future issues. Send to: DOCOMOMO NY/Tri-State, P.O. Box 250532, New York, NY 10025 or email, docomomo_ny@hotmail.com
DOCOMOMO NY/Tri-State thanks Polish Partnership for generously providing monthly meeting space.

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