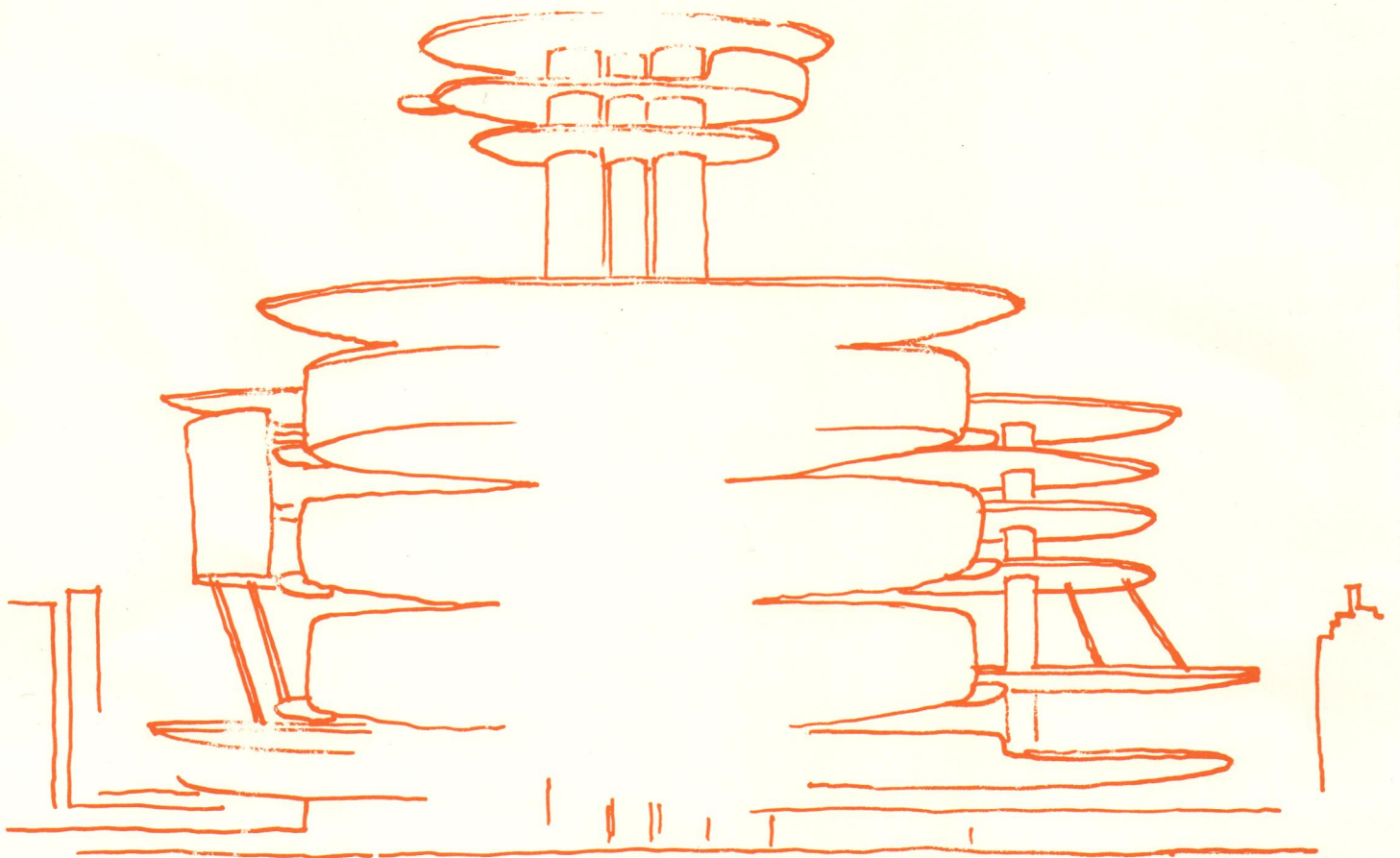


THE LIVES OF AN ARCHITECT

J. WEST

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T L O A A



J WEST

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Death asked to see me in the morning and I said no.

He suggested then the evening and I paused
because I knew

He would be coming soon and I should not make
our meeting inopportune

I shall call him and suggest we do it all at lunch.

J. West

1967

C O N T E N T S

PERSONAL:

EPISODE 1, WAR/ARCHITECTURE, *Page 3*

EPISODE 2, JOYCE, *Page 6*

EPISODE 3, WHAT NEXT?, *Page 9*

EPISODE 4, MARJORIE, *Page 10*

YALE:

EPISODE 1, DESIGN AT YALE, *Page 15*

EPISODE 2, DESIGN PROJECT, *Page 19*

EPISODE 3, SUMMER WORK, *Page 22*

WORK:

EPISODE 1, TWITCHELL AND RUDOLPH, *Page 29*

EPISODE 2, FIRST OFFICE, *Page 33*

EPISODE 3, TWITCHELL PARTNERSHIP, *Page 38*

EPISODE 4, McANSH SQUARE AND AFTER, *Page 43*

SUMMING UP:

Page 128

G R A P H I C S

1. Yale House Project
2. Yale Thesis Project
3. Yale Dormitory Project
4. Tobin House
5. Lebar House
6. Canal House
7. Knotts House
8. Tyler House
9. Dennis House
10. Nokomis Beach Plaza
11. Nutto House
12. Brownrigg House
13. Kantor Project
14. Englewood Elementary School
15. Fruitville Elementary School
16. Landmark Hotel
17. Knotts Guest House
18. Architect's House II
19. Hilton Leach School of Art
20. Hall House
21. Tuttle Elementary School I
22. Tuttle Elementary School II
23. Main Street Revisited
24. Fallout Shelter School Competition
25. Champ Chanyatah
26. Wood House I
27. Weld House
28. Arvida House
29. Daugherty Office Building
30. Sarasota City Hall
31. Low-rent Housing Projects
32. Sarasota County Chamber of Commerce Building
33. Vinton House
34. West and Conyers Building
35. Boylston House
36. Longboat Key Town Center
37. Football Hall of Fame Competition
38. Pringle House
39. Longboat Key Racquet Club
40. Downtown Library
41. Architect's House III
42. Paris Competition
43. Spot Pond Pumping Station
44. First Federal of Manatee in Sarasota
45. Lemon Avenue Parking Structure
46. Lindsay Caretaker's Cottage
47. First Federal of Manatee at Bayshore
48. Lemon Avenue Bicentennial Park/Mall
49. Forker House
50. Ringling School of Art
51. Kahn House
52. Vietnam Veterans Memorial Competition
53. Charlotte County Administration Center
54. Gulfgate Library
55. Lido Beach Resort Hotel
56. Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

PERSONAL

WAR/ARCHITECTURE

may or may not have been a product of my generation but from adolescence through college I was a pacifist; not in the sense that I harbored religious or moral scruples against war, but because war seemed to be so wholly incapable of resolving differences or solving problems. Rather than a pacifist, perhaps I was a cynic.

At the University of Illinois, two years of basic training in R.O.T.C. (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) was mandatory. My brother Bill, two years my senior, had opted for advanced training and would graduate in two years as a second lieutenant in the field artillery. He loved horses and, at that time, the student artillery pieces were horse drawn. My lack of interest in anything military had no part in my choice of R.O.T.C. service. The choices were infantry, artillery or cavalry. While I did not quite share my brother's enthusiasm for horses, I found the idea of a horse cavalry romantic. Watching the polo team practicing (the polo ponies were the finest horses in the R.O.T.C. program) I even began to imagine myself a polo player. The time was September, 1940 and I had just begun my first year of college and my brother his third.

On Sunday, December 7, 1941 Pearl Harbor was attacked and that evening I sat with my friends drinking beer and singing, "Good-bye Green Street, Hello Hong Kong, we're really going to win this war." The next morning a few left for Canada to enlist. My reaction was one of surprise and amazement; it only seemed to me such a stupid action of the Japanese. I felt a sense of detachment.

As a student of engineering, I was classified by the Draft Board as 2A (in training for a job essential to the war effort) and, therefore, ineligible for the draft. In the meantime, I watched my friends slowly leave the campus as they volunteered or were drafted. Those involved in the advanced R.O.T.C. program entered an accelerated program which enabled them to graduate early. The military horses were removed from the campus: duty on the Mexican border, rumor had it. After a brief stint at Fort Dix, my brother saw active duty overseas.

My brother and I had grown closer in college and we corresponded regularly. His letters were marvelously cheerful and his advice was both constant and firm: stay out if I could. Intellectually, the war still seemed so stupid. We were bombed by Japan so we finally had an excuse to declare war on Germany and of course Italy. But my friends and my brother were risking their lives and I was not. To hell with intellectual detachment; I volunteered for the draft and the V12 program of the Navy which allowed me to graduate from the University of Illinois in an accelerated academic and physical training program.

Bill had been wounded in the Italian campaign and to our family's knowledge he had not yet returned to active duty—a kind of bittersweet ambiance. One of my classes was interrupted and I was asked to report to the office of the commandant. I remember borrowing a bicycle and as I pedaled I wondered about my strange

summons. I remember, too, a tenseness and a pervading dread. The message was that I must call home. My father took the call and said that Billy was dead.

My life has been scathed by other tragedies, but nothing has equalled my sorrow felt on that day.

I was given a few days emergency leave. I traveled by train from Champaign-Urbana to Galesburg where my parents met me at the station as they always did. We needed to be together. My father and mother invested almost all of their ambition and hope in their children and now their eldest son had been killed at the age of 23.

Life, of course, continued for them and for me, but it would never again be quite the same. My brother became our Saint.

I graduated in the uniform of an apprentice seaman. It was January, 1944. Officer training schools took qualified applicants and after training, commissioned them as officers. They were called "90-day wonders" and with good reason. My 90 days were spent at Midshipman School in New York aboard the ancient battleship Illinois, now a training vessel and dormitory tied up in the East River. I opted for destroyer duty and spent another month training aboard destroyers and living in B.O.Q. (Bachelor Officers Quarters) at the mammoth naval base in Norfolk, Virginia.

Finally, I was assigned to my ship, a destroyer escort which was in the Philadelphia Navy yard undergoing conversion to the A.P.D. 57, the U.S.S. Barber. In December, 1944 we embarked from Philadelphia and made our way to San Diego via Norfolk and the Panama Canal. We spent a week in San Diego while our hull received a new camouflage paint job. The beauty of the California coastline between San Diego and La Jolla made a lasting impression as I tried to capture it in pastel studies.

I had always been fascinated by art and had always drawn—albeit never well. When starting college I had an idea that I might become a writer; the negative response of my professor of short story writing dispelled that! After two years of college, each student must choose a major. For me this was extremely difficult. I gave no thought at all to art or architecture; they were fascinating but, of course, I had no talent. It seemed to me at the time that I was good at math and so engineering might be a logical choice. I was told that you can't expect to get a job in "general" engineering, so I flipped the proverbial coin and chose mechanical engineering. Now I was assistant engineering officer aboard ship.

From San Diego we proceeded directly to Pearl Harbor. The channel from open sea to the naval base was long and difficult. As we slowly proceeded past the hulls of vessels sunk by the Japanese, the reality of the war was felt by all of us.

We stayed at Pearl Harbor several days and I tried to see and explore as much as I could in the short time there.

While walking on the beach below Diamond Head I was invited into one of the homes for a drink. The owner turned out to be an architect, Bert Ives, who apparently had practiced for many years in Hawaii. His home, midway up Diamond Head, was set on several levels, overlooking the Pacific. I found the house completely fascinating. When I saw the small guest bedroom, simply decorated and with a small low bed, the scale of which transformed this small ordinary space into something quite special, I

knew that I would become an architect. It was an instantaneous decision for which I had probably long prepared and one I would embrace for the rest of my life.

My commitment to the idea of becoming an architect—becoming anything for that matter—was solidified during my tour of duty in the South Pacific. It was the Battle of Okinawa.

We were stationed on the “picket line,” a ring of ships surrounding the island with the mission to protect and defend our forces fighting on Okinawa. More specifically, we were there to monitor incoming Japanese flights with our radar. The war was drawing to a close and the Japanese had resorted to Kamikaze strikes on our navy.

There was very little effective action we could take to avert the collision of a Japanese pilot who was directing his zero against one of our ships. The result was that the United States suffered greater losses in the Battle of Okinawa than in any other naval battle in its history.

We saw the ravages of Kamikaze attacks at very close range. A destroyer, the U.S.S. Hadley, was on the outer picket line and had been hit. We were dispatched to rescue the survivors. When we arrived—perhaps 20 minutes later—we could see that she had been hit amidships and was already partially sunk. We successfully took aboard the survivors which included a large number who were badly burned. Several died before we could reach a hospital ship.

We were fortunate; we had not been hit. Then one evening around dusk, while I was in charge of C.I.C. (Combat Information Center) we picked up a blip on radar. The Kamikaze was on a collision course with the Barber. At five miles I asked the bridge to sound general quarters. When I had been relieved by a fellow officer, I moved swiftly to my own battle station in No. 2 Boiler Room. I had closed the hatch and as I was moving down the vertical ladder I heard the explosion. At first I thought we were hit; later I was told that the Kamikaze hit the water and exploded within 50 yards of our ship.

While still at “general quarters,” I made that second decision. Life itself, at that moment, seemed to me to be of little significance. Suddenly, the only thing that really mattered was the contribution of the individual. If you did not produce for your society, your civilization - you were merely another success or failure, as judged by each generation’s passing fashions.

At that precise moment I resolved to practice architecture without compromise and without regard to money or fashion.

JOYCE

To identify lost loves, real loves, even a current love, is a subjective process; it may even be an irrational process. Even though, like nothing else in the world, it requires the mystical bond between two persons, its identification must be an entirely personal and not always mutual conviction. My first love was to become the mother of all of my children and the shattering, guilt-ridden enigma of my life after her death.

Almost from the womb we experience joy in particular relationships with other persons: mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, friends. And from puberty onward we feel the sweet and often bittersweet surges of sexual excitement caused by some uncanny chemistry triggered by a chance meeting, an intimate experience or even by the fleeting glimpse of an unknown figure speeding by in a bus or train. But the love of which I speak is the perceived need to share the body and the mind and the life experiences of a person to whom you are impulsively and intellectually drawn.

I met Joyce Saville when I was in the fifth grade. When we were in our first year at Lombard Junior High in Galesburg, Illinois we knew we were in love or so I believed. Our kisses were few but they were incredibly sweet and warm. On our first formal date we attended the movie "A Star is Born" with Janet Gaynor and Frederick March. We sat in the balcony and during the feature, Joyce slowly and methodically tore her handkerchief into tiny shreds.

We drifted apart shortly after we had both begun our first term in high school; she moved to Des Moines, Iowa to live with her mother's sisters. Even today I do not know the details, but Joyce's relationship with her stepfather was apparently unsatisfactory. Her mother had to choose between her husband and her only daughter and so Joyce finished high school in Des Moines.

Joyce and I rekindled our mutual expectations on the night I graduated from Midshipman School in New York. My date for the graduation dance demurred with a rather good excuse: acute appendicitis. I remembered that I had promised a childhood friend, Lloyd Mason, that I would look in on his current girlfriend and my old chum, Joyce, now living and working in New York. A phone call produced a single sensational date that unleashed old feelings in a new and compelling environment that changed both of our lives - totally. We never made it to the dance but we talked and talked and talked. But more about the person, the human being, my wife Joyce.

She had confided in me that she had felt no sexual feelings of any sort toward any other man. She was a virgin when we were engaged and very nearly one when we were married in 1946. At that time she was a writer and assistant producer in the early days of television in Chicago.

During our honeymoon in Florida (we lived in Keystone Heights, a very small, beautiful town located about five miles from Green Cove Springs where I was stationed while our ship was being "mothballed" in the St. Johns River nearby), I was surprised and

curious about Joyce's reliance on radio. The radio was on during every moment we were awake. Later on in her life, she was transfixed by the television set. Who knows what happens in other people's marriages; it is difficult enough to truly understand one's own. Certainly we both entered our marriage with total commitment to our love for each other and to our union. Our first daughter, Jan Winsome, was born in 1952 and our second daughter, Jill Winfield, a year and half later.

Joyce was bright, charming and attracted friends of both sexes far more easily than I. She enjoyed possessions and esteem but foremost she was committed to her marriage and to her children. Our wedding anniversaries, our children's birthdays and especially Christmas were very, very special events to her. Our third child, Jessica Gideon, was born in 1960. After 1960 our intimate love life together slowed and finally ceased entirely. Its absence created no discernible change in Joyce; but for me it was the painful beginning of inescapable concerns about our past and future and my own intensely personal needs.

Looking back with considerably less than detached objectivity, it seems to me now that I deluded myself. My love—indeed my sexual attraction—for Joyce remained undiminished. I loved each of my children and aimed to defend our family ties with everything I possessed. But something had been happening to my beloved wife and my children's mother about which I was either unaware or refused to recognize.

On January 1, 1969 I asked Joyce for a divorce. Did I hope to bring to a head problems about which I could only guess? I do not know. I only thought that something had to change. At first she was unbelieving; then she was shattered. I moved out and consulted my attorney. He was also our family friend and would not become involved. I consulted another attorney, also a friend, who had lived next door for two or three years.

What I imagined would be routine consultations with him regarding the tedious details of divorce settlements turned into the unlocking of some of my innermost fears. His immediate understanding, even full understanding of my predicament caught me completely by surprise. He knew (did everyone know except me?) I had an alcoholic wife, that it had been going on for a long time and that our family life together had been very seriously affected.

The recounting of our marital problems became for me the trigger that unleashed fears and the understanding of them that I had for years suppressed. My attorney's office became a psychiatrist's couch.

Had I provided the help she needed? I had made an appointment for her to see a psychiatrist (she wouldn't even discuss it); I had not done enough. Slowly I began to understand the dimensions of our problems. I knew that there could be no easy solution but I also came to realize that divorce was certainly not any part of any solution. The next day would be our wedding anniversary. That evening I vowed that I would invite Joyce to an anniversary dinner, propose a reconciliation and ask for her forgiveness. When I arrived at my office in the morning a phone call was awaiting me. My daughter Jan said that she thought her mother was dead. I drove home with many wild thoughts racing through my brain. At home Joyce was in our bedroom. She had apparently slept with our youngest daughter, Jessica. Jessica did not know anything was amiss but her mother was a tiny white body completely lifeless. Her suicide was a shattering experience to our

two older daughters and to myself. Sleeping pills and alcohol. A full bottle of pills. Jan, my eldest daughter, still carries the misplaced guilt that she somehow should have kept the pills away from her mother (she would later transfer a portion of that guilt into blame for her father).

WHAT NEXT?

My three daughters and I put our arms around each other as in a football huddle and cried together. It was oddly comforting. The police arrived. The hearse arrived. Our yardman who cut our grass arrived and, seeing the hearse, left. He never came back.

I suppose the only rational aftermath to tragedy is to resolve to continue. I resolved to continue.

I told my children we would be leaving in an hour for Marco Island. I dropped my youngest off at her grandmother's (my wife's mother) and asked my two older daughters to pack. I went to my bank and asked for an immediate loan of a thousand dollars. It was given, no questions asked. We drove to Marco Island, lunching along the way and later had room service send up fried chicken for dinner.

We had been to this two-story gulf-side motel before. We walked on the beach and once again Jessica filled the bathtub with toads. We were going to make it.

I guess we stayed at Marco four or five days and then, by unspoken mutual consent, we drove toward home. We stopped in Fort Myers, spending the night at a downtown motel and the next day toured Thomas Edison's home and grounds. We had somehow missed this close-by attraction during the many years we were in Sarasota and another day seemed just right to prepare each of us for re-entry into our everyday lives.

Jan, my eldest, could not cope with the peer pressures of high school and dropped out of her normal classes and attended special night classes allowing her to graduate on schedule that spring. Jill, an iconoclast like her father, stayed with her schooling but with great difficulty. On learning that Jessica (age 8) had been moved into a special classroom for slow learners, I visited her class and realized that it was really a place for children with discipline problems. The teacher was barely able to keep a semblance of order. I removed Jessica the next day and placed her in a private school on the same Key where we lived. Her new classroom was not ideal, but it was small and the teacher at least maintained order. At this point so did our lives.

MARJORIE

Marjorie was a divorcée with four children. She had been raised in the small town of Norway, South Carolina. Her childhood had been a combination of rejections and hope. Her remembrances of her mother were difficult for her because they touched upon cruelty. Her father was a kind of tragic hero to whom she gave all her childhood love and affection. Like myself and so many Americans, she was implanted with inner visions of ultimate romantic love.

Marjorie attended Winthrop College, a small girls school in South Carolina, where she generally prepared to teach. When her parents cut off necessary funds, she moved to Washington, lived with her brother and his wife and found a secretarial job. While in Washington she met and married Waldo Proffitt. Nineteen years later, her vision of romantic love unfulfilled, she divorced her husband and became the head of a single-parent family. Beating the feminist movement by a year or so, she chose independence over security. With only minimal financial support from her former husband, her new life was not easy.

Marjorie and I had met casually just after she and her husband arrived in Sarasota, but I did not have an opportunity to know her until I was appointed to the Sarasota (City) Planning Board in 1962. She became secretary to the planning director and we almost immediately established a silent rapport at meetings, sensing our likeness of thought which led us almost always to be on the same side of controversial issues. I know now that I was also romantically drawn to her; although at that time I would not have allowed myself such a luxury of fantasizing. In any event, I considered myself happily married.

My wife's suicide in 1969 left my daughters and myself with many unanswered questions, some of which persist to the day of this writing. But I could not wait for our grief to subside and thank God I did not. I telephoned Marjorie and there began (against all reasonable previously held expectations) the most moving romantic experience of my life. Nor was it easy. Jan and Jill opposed our romance with every weapon in their considerable arsenal. But we had such happy times - so romantically fulfilling and at the same time building toward great friendship. In August, six months after Joyce's death, I realized I had fallen in love; Marjorie and I were married on October 10, 1969.

Our honeymoon was a pilgrimage to see some of the pre-Columbian city ruins on the Yucatan Peninsula. I had previously only seen the great ruins of Teotihuacan near Mexico City. Marjorie had seen no ancient pre-Columbian architecture in Central America. We flew to Merida and motored to a small hotel on the site of Chichén Itzá. We were both overwhelmed by the beauty and majesty of the structures, their siting and the glimpses they gave us into a remarkable civilization located so close to home. Marjorie's reactions, almost a mirror of my own, lent credence to our new union and

blossoming friendship. But our marriage did not stand up to the continuing hostility of my children. And like myself, Marjorie was stubborn and could not bend before the unceasing winds of adversity.

With each day filled with Jessica's tears, Marjorie's or both, our home environment deteriorated. Marjorie would say she wished she could afford to leave me. The time came when she made her decision to leave and I agreed. She packed up and left for Gainesville, Florida in July of 1975. After our divorce, we each tried to build a new life. I was unable to.

Jessica lived at home with me through high school. When she attended Manatee Community College in nearby Bradenton, she moved into her own apartment close to campus. I tried to reestablish my old relationship with Marjorie.

Four years had elapsed and it could not be the same relationship. But I think we were both a little wiser and a great deal more knowledgeable about our family relationships. Like politics, marriage is, after all, the art of the possible. Her relationship with my children improved but I understood its limitations. I believed that our lives were joined; apparently, so did she. We remarried on October 10, 1979.

YALE

The catapult-like change was immense, from the frustration of high school and the University of Illinois to the big dream and Yale Architecture. Only in later years did I understand that the opportunities, the thoughts, the studies and even the prejudices formed during my three years of architecture would always be with me: to build upon, to reject and to synthesize.

With the war somehow already assimilated, with a new wife and a new dream, I knew precisely why I was there: to gather knowledge and experiences that might be of benefit to me as an architect.

The architecture student loves design and many of us carry on this love affair for the rest of our lives. I think both the best and the worst of architectural education lies in the design studio; but the real heart of architectural education is contained in the less personal but absolutely vital areas of history, science, engineering and the humanities. Looking back, some of my most meaningful experiences took place outside of the curriculum.

Because of my prior engineering training, I was allowed to choose many elective courses. The one course that stirred me most was in the School of Engineering: "Structures" taught by the legendary Professor Hardy Cross, originator of the theory of "Moment Deflection." His ability to graphically convey the characteristics of continuous structures under stress gave me a basic understanding and intuition about structural design.

We were fortunate. Through the G.I. Bill, the government paid for all of my tuition and books plus \$115 per month. Joyce found a secretarial job but money was still quite scarce. I obtained a job as a slide projector operator at 50 cents an hour; and with this job I gained some of the most enjoyable, memorable and important experiences at Yale.

As a slide projector operator I had the opportunity to monitor every course in the history of architecture and fine arts at the university!

Yale Architecture, like many other schools in the country, was in a period of rapid, even radical transition. During my first year (1946-47) I heard Dean E. B. Meek's last lecture on Gothic Architecture. As he spoke he would draw gothic sections and elevations on the chalkboard. It was a vintage performance.

My natural love of watercolor was whetted by Professor "Shep" Sheffield. Under Shep we practiced washes and copied ornament.

The first design project was a student room, presumably my own. King-lui Wu, right out of Harvard under Walter Gropius, was my design instructor. With the Bauhaus stamp still burning on his back, King-lui and I clashed.

All of the room designs resembled the same cookie as a result of only one cookie cutter. Except mine. I was told that the jury wished to fail me but finally gave my

design the worst grade above failure.

At this time, with all of my aspirations riding on design and with an absolutely dismal response to my design ability by the faculty, I discussed with Joyce the possibility of chucking it. It was my decision. I would stay.

The influence of Harvard and Gropius was sweeping the country. Harold Hauf, a structural engineer by both training and experience, became acting head of Yale Architecture.

In my second year, our delineation medium changed to colored pencil and tempera. Now we drew and painted "emotion" and other abstractions. Vincent Scully, a young professor of architectural history and a devotee of Henry-Russell Hitchcock, completely dazzled us with slides of modern architecture shown simultaneously with recordings of classical music and even modern jazz.

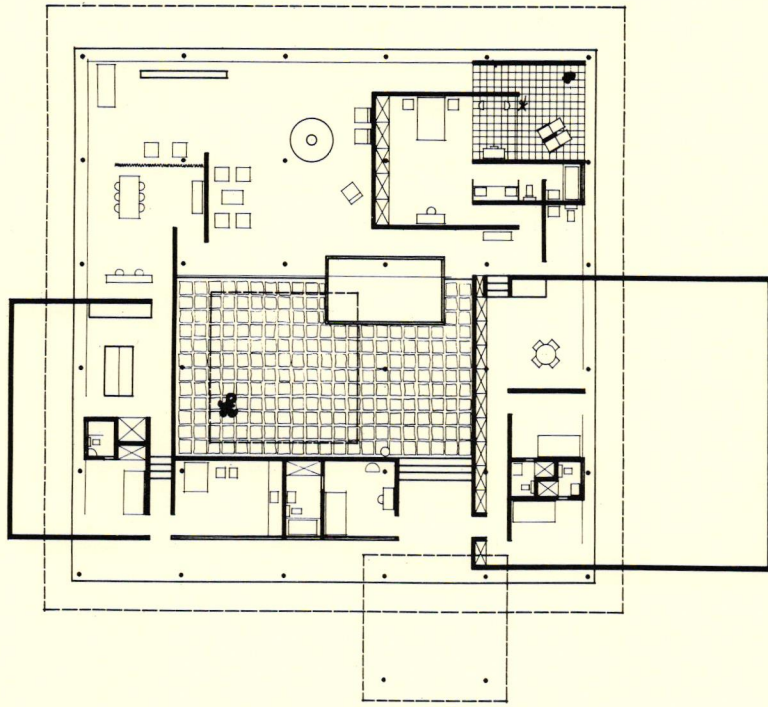
Our design professor was now an interesting little fellow, Louis Kahn. Louis was informed, good-humored and smoked small thin cigars. Most of us tried smoking the same cigars. He was not a very famous architect at that time, but he had a passion for design that was contagious.

He did not hand down preconceived design solutions from some intellectual plateau; he worked with each of us and tried to perceive what each of us was trying to express. He was unstinting in the time he gave. And, of course, we loved him.

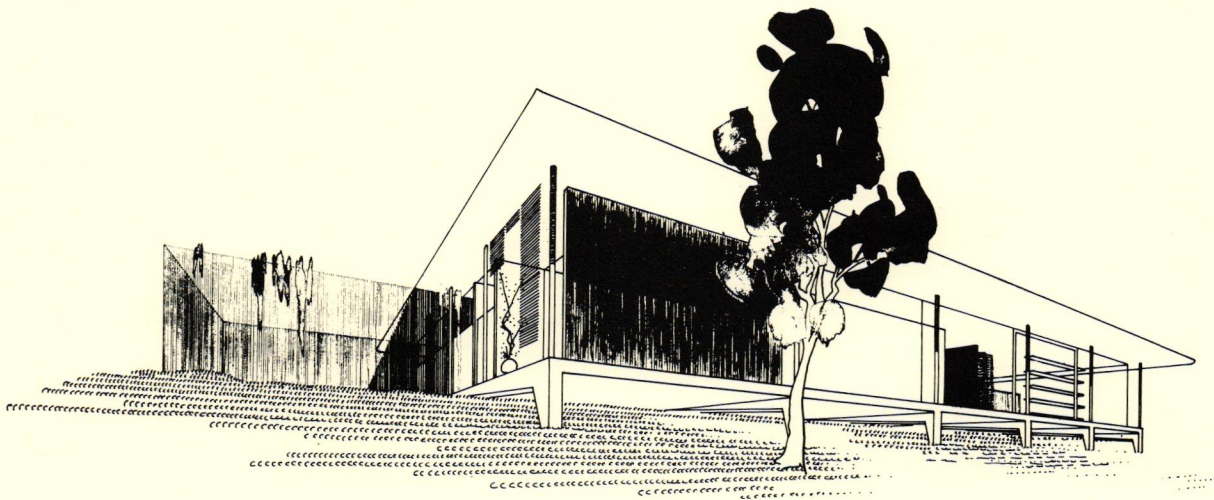
The house which I designed with the help of Louis Kahn would seem to have very little Kahn in it, except for its structural system. Uniform bays and the visual expression of rational structure were his teaching trademarks.

This house, shown in Graphic 1, embodies feelings about the need for privacy and horizon—the relationship of man and nature and the almost infinite practical and subconscious habitat requirements about which I still feel strongly and will always try to solve.

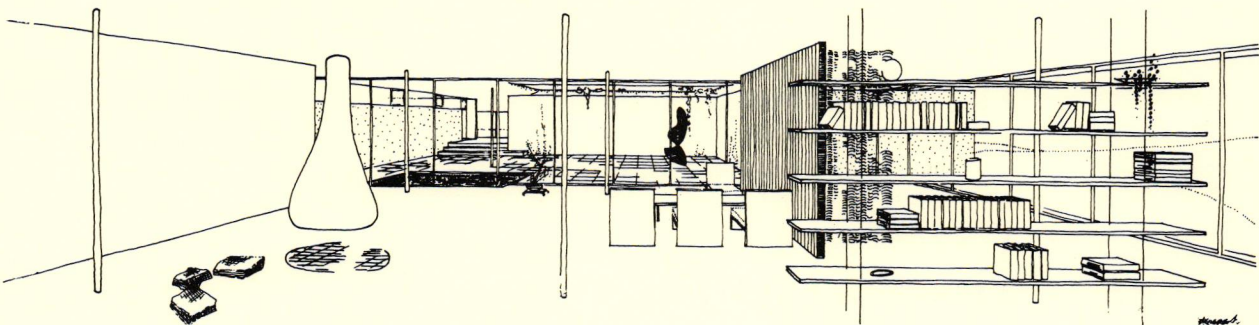
My thesis project was probably an unrealistic, sophomoric dream: a small urban mixed-use building with my wife's gift/book shop on the ground floor and two rental apartments on the second floor, one of which would be occupied by ourselves. As every architect knows, no project is more difficult to design than his own. How on earth can you come up with a budget? This project is shown in Graphic 2.



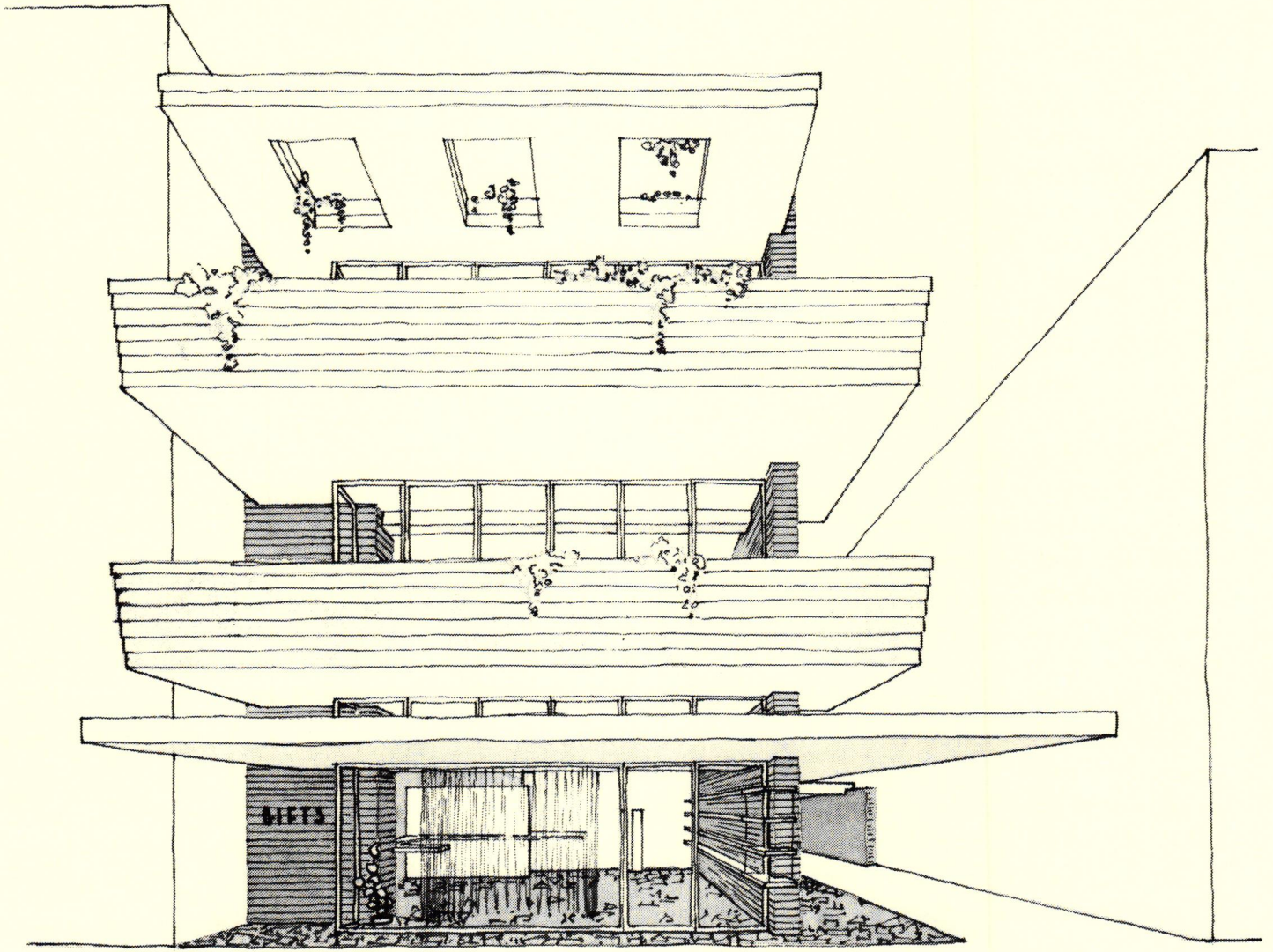
PLAN



EXTERIOR PERSPECTIVE



INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE



PERSPECTIVE

DESIGN PROJECT

During my second year of design at Yale Architecture, Eero Saarinen was our visiting critic. At that time, the School of Architecture invited four outstanding practicing architects from all over the world to come to New Haven for one or two months to live and to teach. It was a marvelous opportunity for the students to become acquainted with the professional giants not only through the usual communicative devices but also on a one-to-one, coffee shop/cocktail party basis. And, of course, the talk was architecture because nothing else entered our minds or our dreams. It was a sought after honor for the architects too: an opportunity to interrupt a busy practice with a stimulating pause at a famous university, close to eastern urban centers and with impressive quarters and reasonable remuneration. Of course, all artists believe that they have a sacred obligation to pass on the secrets of their genius to adoring students.

Eero had graduated from Yale Architecture when it was Beaux Arts (i.e., design based upon historic models). He enjoyed displaying some of his student projects—all beautifully rendered in ink and watercolor. Now he was emerging as not only one of the most talented young architects, but also an architect who had not chosen to invent or inherit a personal style. For him, each new project seemed to be a challenge to create new forms and even a new vocabulary. For me he was the 20th-century architect with the greatest promise of things to come.

Personally, Eero was a very warm human being who was so approachable he sometimes seemed common. Some visiting critics entered our drafting room with well cut suits; not so, Eero. He invariably arrived with suspenders (known as braces to some at the college) and looked more like a red-faced farmer than a distinguished architect already internationally famous. Through a special relationship with President Griswald, he received commissions to design a new hockey rink and a new residential college for Yale. Eero shared the residential college project with us by giving us a dormitory to design, but on a different site than his own.

Traditions are important at Yale and Eero was not a modernist who flaunted tradition. The relationship of his buildings to their site and to their neighbors was of tremendous importance to him. Each of his students soon learned that the scale of the dormitory was to be in keeping with the existing two-story residential colleges of the university. And this conclusion was logical both aesthetically and practically. Elevators could be eliminated. With the periodic movement of students to various classes and activities, stairs were a better solution.

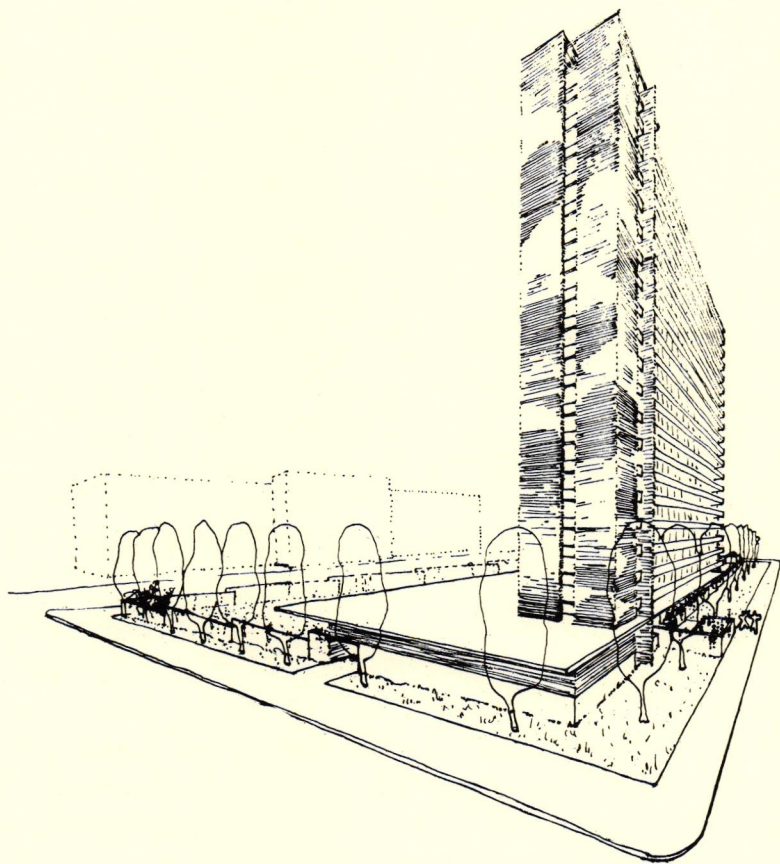
Before the war, I had experienced several different living arrangements at the University of Illinois. I lived in independent dormitories, a fraternity, a guest room in a single-family home and shared apartments with friends. Now I had the opportunity to devise from my research and past experience the ideal living environment for a college student. Or so I thought. I chose to encourage the pride of belonging to a small, intimate group in which all could become closer friends thus forming a new, extended

family. And so I opted for a high-rise dormitory with small floors accommodating only 15 students. While there would be activities and common rooms for the entire dorm, each floor might represent a close semi-family unit.

Each time that Eero would come to my board to review my progress he would discuss the various good and bad aspects of my design. He would also let me know gently but firmly that I was on the wrong track with my solution.

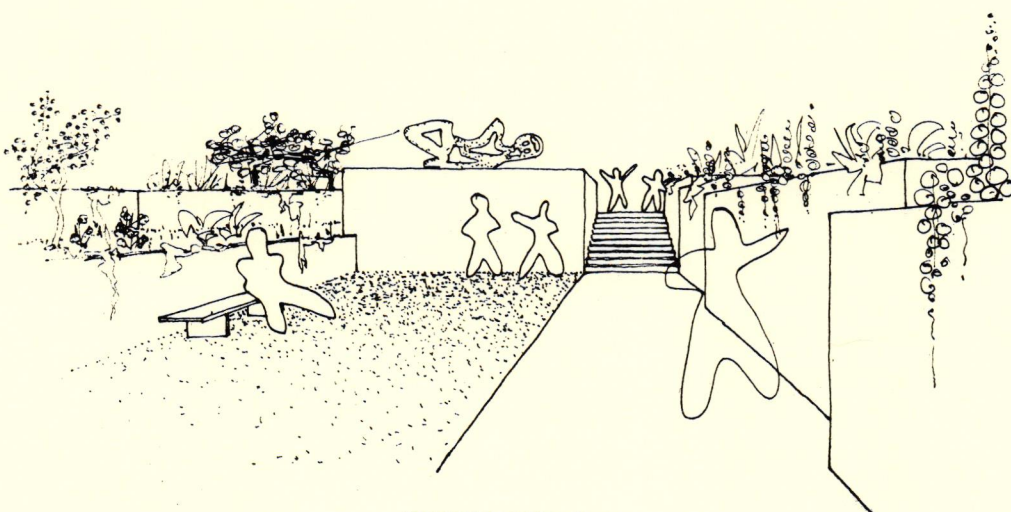
The practice, then, was to hang all projects after the deadline and to convene a jury to observe, discuss and finally grade each student's work. The grades were commendable, creditable, acceptable and unacceptable. The jury consisted of faculty members and, of course, the visiting critic. While each had a vote which was equally weighted, the visiting critic usually held the upper hand. After all, he had written the program for the project and his credentials normally included an international reputation seldom shared by mere professors, assistant professors and assistants. (Louis Kahn was Professor of Design at this time but had not yet designed the Yale Art Museum, the start of his climb to worldwide fame.)

I was not present when the jury stopped to examine my project but I was later told that Eero was both adamant and thorough as he detailed its shortcomings to the other members of the jury. The other members of the jury apparently said nothing, only nodding agreement as Eero spoke. A grade of "accept" was quickly confirmed (after all, the building was too handsome to fail) and was written upon the face of my number one illustration board. The jury passed to the next project but before discussion began, Eero walked back to my project, put a line through "accept" and scribbled the word "credit." (Graphic 3.)



CR
[Signature]

EXTERIOR PERSPECTIVE



WALKWAY PERSPECTIVE

SUMMER WORK

I had been at Yale Architecture from the fall of 1946 through the summer of 1947 and the following school year. It was nearing the end of June and while I had been profoundly influenced and stimulated by my new curriculum, I felt that a pause was in order to try the icy waters of the real world. The objective: a summer job in New York.

I was not without credentials (I thought): I had graduated in mechanical engineering from the University of Illinois and had spent three years in the Navy, returning to civilian life with the rank of Lieutenant Junior Grade having served as assistant engineering officer, engineering officer and finally executive officer of my ships.

With the addresses of the famous and the name of an unknown but uncompromising modernist, I took the train to New York with a portfolio of my school projects. It was early July 1948. I will never forget this series of experiences.

Surprising (to me), while none of the “famous” firms would give me a summer position, I had no difficulty in speaking personally to almost all of the principals. Their kindness to an untried student draftsman knocking unannounced on their doors made me remember to this day how alone and insecure each student can feel. And how rewarding to be spoken to as a fellow human being. But being turned down by virtually every firm in New York was discouraging, to say the least.

The architect whom my friends in New Haven had described as “having a small office but was uncompromising” conjured in my mind the strong, quiet genius of the hero of *The Fountainhead*. I would work for him for nothing.

I could find only one Cramer in the yellow pages of the telephone directory—or was it Kramer? In any event, I tracked down my quarry to the second floor of a rather seedy office building. I presented myself to his secretary in a reception room which did nothing to heighten my hopes; it was simply tawdry. Mr. Kramer would see me. I was ushered into a small conference room whose walls were covered with industrial buildings, several of which I noticed were in the style (or lack thereof) of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company. I had started to explain my awe in being on the same planet with an architect of such integrity when, I suddenly realized I was in the wrong office. Mr. Kramer immediately understood my problem and seemed to me to become sad. Perhaps he was reminded of the professional compromises he had made. He was gentle with me—which I certainly did not deserve—and I left with embarrassment.

On a park bench overlooking the North River, wallowing in my despair and simultaneously enjoying the different, exciting environment of New York City (and feeling guilty because of that enjoyment), I poured out my bitterness in a hastily written poem:

They lift their faces to the sun
and walk on grass.

But afterwhile,
their inherent groping stops;
they become men and women and forget
how broad, how long...

A white yacht glides past the tug -
how many yachts?

Do yachtsmen lift their faces to the sun?
Destroy thyself, Manhattan
and lo
perhaps the souls you hold will spill
back on the earth's green face.

Back in New Haven, my spirits low, I received a call from the school. An alumnus, Anthony Lord of Asheville, North Carolina, had a summer job for a Yale architectural student and I had been recommended by the department. Would I take the job? What a question.

Mr. Lord was unbelievable. He was not only old school tie, a gentleman, a totally ethical architect; he was also kind and generous. Except, of course, for the salary. Twenty-five dollars a week plus train fare to and from New Haven.

This would also be the first (and last) major separation of myself and my wife. Joyce remained in New Haven, working. I took up residence at the YMCA in Asheville and was reintroduced to the loneliness I had known for so many years before my marriage.

Don't shed a tear quite yet. Jim Mitchell, an earlier classmate at Yale, learned of my presence in his home city. His father was manager of the Biltmore Dairies and he included me in several cocktail parties at the country club. He also escorted me on a tour of the Biltmore Mansion, that magnificent house and gardens in what seemed to me to be such an unlikely location.

In this one brief summer I was responsible for the preliminary design of a college dormitory, a residence remodelling and the remodelling of a mountain top castle belonging to an English general. Amazing. Of course, I found my castle project captivating. Set on a mountain overlooking Asheville, half of the building was a Moorish style stucco castle to which had been added a stone English manor house in the grand style. The owner's problem with the house had to do with its large, rambling style and the difficulties of efficient heating despite what appeared to be an existing heating system intended for a hotel.

My solution was to tear down the original Moorish castle which I considered aesthetically and structurally inferior and to preserve the remaining and beautiful stone

mansion. The servants' quarters were larger than required for an affluent family and so I remodelled them into a contemporary, air-conditioned family residence, leaving the great halls and rooms in their original condition for use in pleasant weather or for balls and parties. One day I will return to Asheville and search for my castle.

My Asheville experience was memorable and I wanted my wife to share at least a part of it. We had read together *Look Homeward Angel* and so we were doubly intrigued by this unique city. As my summer job drew to a close, I asked Joyce to join me for a weekend. I leased a large bedroom in a rooming house near the office and we enjoyed one weekend together before leaving Asheville. Much to Mr. Lord's surprise we invited the whole office (3 or 4 people) to our rooming house for cocktails with a choice of martinis or martinis.

On my last day, I received my paycheck but no money for a ticket back to New Haven. Mr. Lord said that he was not aware of any obligation to pay for my return trip. When he learned that I had insufficient funds to purchase a ticket and that the alternative would be a penniless Yale student on his doorstep, he reconsidered.

WORK

TWITCHELL AND RUDOLPH

My father had always regarded Yale with awe and so it was only natural for him and my mother to visit us in 1947 in New Haven. We walked around the campus and he was particularly impressed by the oldest portion of the campus. This would be the last time we would talk; he died the following year of a cerebral hemorrhage at age 59. Up until his last brief but fatal illness he had been active as an operating engineer with the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad.

My mother was left with a modest railroad pension, some small savings and our home in Galesburg. And so, during my last year at Yale, it came as both a surprise and another moving example of her love and hope for my future when she offered us the choice of a trip to Europe or a new convertible Chevrolet as a graduation present.

We had managed to save enough money during our three-year stay in New Haven for me to buy a new business suit and to have sufficient funds remaining to allow two months for me to find a job. We did not wish to return penniless from Europe and so we accepted the car with gratitude.

I started at Yale Architecture in September 1946, and graduated in September 1949. Throughout my New Haven schooling, each month I eagerly awaited the newest issues of several architectural magazines to keep abreast of who was doing what. Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe were the stars. Through these periodicals I also became aware of some very progressive work, mostly residential, being accomplished in Sarasota, Florida by a firm called Twitchell and Rudolph. Our remembrances of Florida's Gulf Coast, which we saw on our way back to Galesburg from Keystone Heights, were second only to my fondness for Southern California and Hawaii. I resolved that my first effort in seeking a job would be with Twitchell and Rudolph in Sarasota. We drove directly from New Haven to Sarasota where we secured a room at an inexpensive motel on the Tamiami Trail (Route U.S. 41). The following morning at 9:00 a.m., I was on the doorstep of Twitchell and Rudolph—my gods of the moment. I, of course, had no way of knowing what to expect. Their office turned out to be a small house on Siesta Key overlooking Big Pass and the Gulf of Mexico. Paul Rudolph was in New York. They had no draftsmen. They had a secretary and bookkeeper. (I later learned that Bert, the secretary, was also Ralph Twitchell's live-in mistress and would later become his wife.)

Ralph was cordial. He examined my school work with great interest and told me that he had fired their only draftsman the day before. Yes, he was looking for a draftsman, but an *experienced* draftsman. I was certainly anything but that. It began to seem hopeless.

How much salary did I require? I truthfully said it did not matter. His face brightened. Would I accept \$35 per week? I said that I would be delighted and I was hired on the spot to start immediately. I mentioned that Joyce was in the car; Ralph went outside, introduced himself and his small staff to Joyce and really could not have

been more charming. This began one of the most exciting and memorable learning experiences of my life. Joyce, too, was bowled over by Ralph's graciousness and warmth. I had much to learn about the realities of practicing architecture and much to learn about two very fascinating people: Ralph Twitchell and Paul Rudolph.

Almost from the beginning, Joyce and I were welcomed into Ralph and Bert's personal life and we were both flattered and delighted. We were invited to live in the large and beautiful home owned by Ralph's divorced wife, Luciene, while we were looking for an apartment and until the winter season when the house would be rented. It was next door to the office and overlooked Big Pass. In exchange for cleaning up the house in preparation for the seasonal rental, we paid no rent. Luck, luck, luck.

As I became familiar with Twitchell and Rudolph through Ralph's tutorage, I became aware that the business consisted mostly of their custom designed residences. Associated Builders, a general contracting firm wholly owned and operated by Ralph, built most of their work and always on a "cost plus" basis. The superintendent for Associated Builders was Ralph's nephew, Jack Twitchell. I soon learned that Jack was not only a skilled carpenter, he was also a very intelligent builder with an unusual ability to read and properly interpret the most complicated details. As a craftsman, he was a perfectionist. Jack and his wife Ingrid participated fully in this genial extended-family relationship and Joyce and I became their personal friends as well.

Until Paul returned to Sarasota, all of my information regarding the firm came from Ralph. Until I had met Paul and experienced the realities of their partnership, I had the impression that Ralph was the teacher and Paul the student. Paul had started working for Ralph as a student and later became an "associate." When Paul received his Florida architectural registration, he and Ralph became equal partners. (In what was a most amusing irony, I was told that Paul failed design when taking his Florida Board Examinations and received his Florida registration by reciprocity after successfully passing the considerably more difficult examination in New York.) When Paul returned from New York, he was not altogether pleased to find that Ralph had hired me. He seemed somewhat mollified when he learned about my salary. It was then that I slowly began to piece together the most interesting puzzle of their working relationship.

For many years, Ralph had practiced both in New England and in Sarasota. The style of his early work in both places was Colonial. At some point before Paul arrived, he limited his practice to Sarasota and embraced the modern idiom. He began to use concrete block, stacked and exposed (unpainted) inside and outside. Originally he specified a block manufactured in Ocala, Florida. The aggregate used in this block was natural limestone and imparted a pleasing buff color. Frank Lloyd Wright was first to use stacked concrete block, both plain and patterned, but Ocala block became Ralph Twitchell's trademark in southwest Florida. The block was stacked, with the joints aligned vertically as well as horizontally and the horizontal joints were reinforced. The interior surface of the block was sanded smooth under the meticulous scrutiny of Jack Twitchell.

Into this environment Paul arrived, first as a talented architectural graduate from the University of Alabama and then again as the ambitious and confident graduate of the Harvard Graduate School of Architecture under Walter Gropius. Gropius had

understood Paul's talent and they kept in touch after graduation. Paul told me that Gropius was usually quite critical about preliminary designs but always flattering and supportive upon seeing the finished buildings.

I was the only draftsman and for two years, Ralph, Paul, Bert and I worked closely together in one large room. There were very few secrets and except for occasional business arguments between Ralph and Paul, we worked together in considerable harmony. I learned that Ralph's real love was building, not designing, and discovered that Paul was one of the most brilliant design talents in the world. Ralph, of course, knew this too, but he preferred to allow his clients to continue to believe that his was the major design talent of the firm.

As my admiration for Paul Rudolph's talent slowly increased, so did my respect for his humanity. My first impression was that Paul was somewhat cold and detached. I was wrong. He was a warm and caring person, always willing to explain his design processes and share his design philosophies with his draftsman. I had the opportunity to watch, first hand, his design genius begin and finally solve various design problems. Of course he knew he was talented and had what Frank Lloyd Wright called, "honest arrogance." How could anyone else believe in an architect who didn't believe in himself?

Through Paul we met A. Everett ("Chick") Austin, then director of the Ringling Museum of Art and Henry-Russell Hitchcock, the famous architectural historian; and through Chick Austin, architect Philip Johnson. Ralph introduced us to George Nelson, architect and author. These were heady and stimulating times. Joyce was working as an interior designer with a local furniture store and we had completely redone a third story loft in an old Dwight James Baum building in downtown Sarasota. We were a block from the John Ringling Hotel, also designed by Baum, and we worked and partied in what I remember as the stimulus of a Camelot. We met and were accepted by most everyone in this small beautiful coastal town.

In late 1950 I took the Florida Architectural Board exams and passed. My salary was immediately raised to \$75 per week. By this time I had become a more competent draftsman. Paul no longer checked my work so meticulously. I was given an occasional unimportant small building to design and I performed most all of the engineering design. I knew that I had received invaluable experience in this small office, but was interested in trying out a large firm. And, always in the back of my mind, I wanted to practice completely independently.

In 1951 I resigned from Twitchell and Rudolph and resolved to give Southern California a try. But first, I hung out my first shingle on our loft building, "J. West, Architect." I received a first commission to design a small apartment building. The job folded, but I was paid \$1,000 and this helped finance our cross-country drive to Los Angeles. Just before we left, Joyce told me that she was pregnant with our first child.

The earth is a wonderland and every part has held for me both fascination and something to be learned. I sometimes think that we must all be dead for I cannot imagine a heaven more beautiful than our earth. And so our drive, once more along the Gulf and then through Texas to the Mexican border, through Devil's Canyon and finally the great Arizona desert was an enchanted journey. We stopped to see Frank Lloyd Wright's "Tallisen West" in Arizona and I learned something more about Wright.

I circled the complex and from each angle the buildings were beautifully composed, compatible with their desert environment and always a stunningly delightful man-made surprise! I thought the interiors were somewhat compromised to obtain the exterior elevations and I long contemplated what kind of architect would cut a circular hole in a glass window in order to achieve the literal piercing of that transparent plane by a vase!

From Arizona we continued to Las Vegas where we each lost a quarter to the famous slot machines and then to the Grand Canyon and the great Hoover Dam. There is little to be said of the grandeur and immensity of the Grand Canyon which has not already been said. I found Hoover Dam almost as impressive: a breathtaking piece of architectural engineering which rivals the pyramids of Egypt.

A week from our start in Sarasota we arrived in Anaheim, California, where we stayed with my "best man" and roommate from Illinois, Robert Reed Austin and his wife Nan. Reed was now a young doctor interning in Los Angeles and preparing for his specialty of open heart surgery. We sensed that all was not well in their marriage; they were later divorced. Well, we were in Southern California and I was able to share my war-time remembrance of the beautiful cliffs and secluded beaches overlooking the Pacific with my wife. But they were more difficult to find now and Los Angeles even then seemed endless.

I found a job with one of the larger firms there, Pierra and Luckman. Charles Luckman, former president of Lever Brothers, was a human dynamo/super salesman who brought in a backlog of work which kept the firm growing as long as I was there. William Pierra was design oriented and quite talented. They had been friends and roommates when both were studying architecture at the University of Illinois. My best guess is that Chuck Luckman created the kind of dynamic organization which prevented Bill Pierra from practicing the kind of design control he sought and so after a few years, he returned to a smaller, more personal and more creative practice.

We found, or rather Reed and Nan found, an apartment for us to sublease in Brentwood, part of the Los Angeles complex of suburban cities. The owner was a friend of the Austins and the rent was about half of what it should have been.

It was quite an experience and quite a change going from a personal design studio to a bureaucracy—but a bureaucracy finely tuned to obtain work. It was a lesson well worth the effort. Like other very large and, I must add, high-quality architectural firms, Pierra and Luckman produced a generally professional product. But great art it was not and I wished to practice architecture as a great art. I began to think wistfully of Sarasota. It was a small town in a beautiful Gulf-coast environment. Perhaps, yes perhaps there was opportunity for me there.

FIRST OFFICE

My stint as a draftsman with Pierra and Luckman came to a close when, at an office cocktail party, Charles Luckman called me Donald. I knew then that if one of my two bosses still didn't know that I had been called Jack since I was an embryo, my future with this firm was in doubt. I shortly resigned and we, with I believe complete unanimity, motored back to Sarasota.

When we arrived, Joyce was able to reobtain her old job as interior designer with "Berts," a local furniture store. I opened my first office on the second floor of a downtown store building (210 Main Street) for rent of \$50 per month.

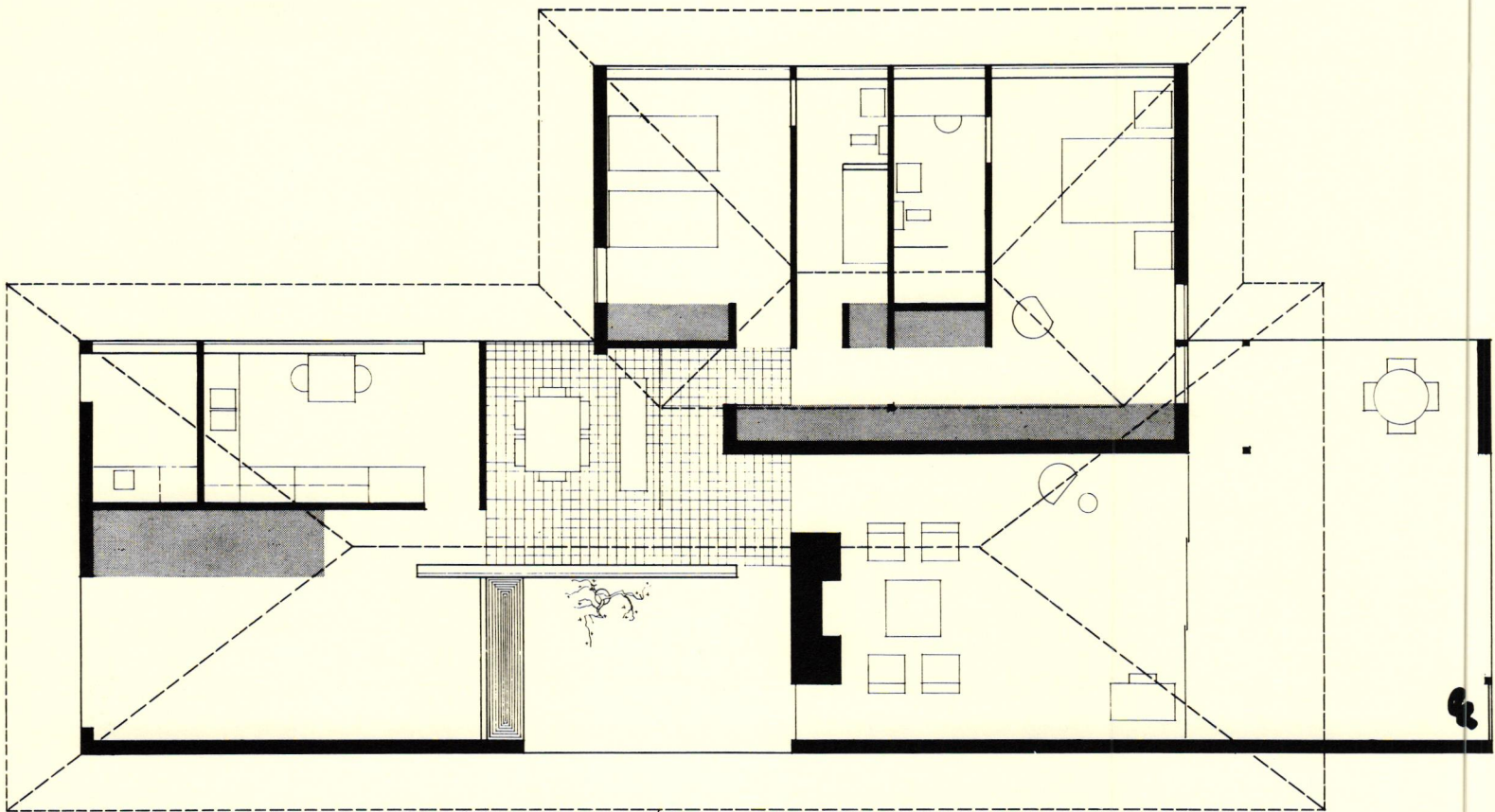
My first client was the son-in-law of the owner of a downtown shoe store, Cy Tobin. The frustration of wishing to design a unique architectural work of art for a client who only wishes to have an ordinary nice house at a low fee (otherwise why did he choose a young, untried architect) was the harbinger of many similar experiences yet to come. But persistence can prevent capitulation. And the result of compromise can represent progress and learning for a somewhat arrogant young architect needing to chip away at the pain of rejection, perhaps to achieve a little more success each time. This house design is shown in Graphic 4.

My second client was a jeweler, Sidney Lebar. The design of his residence was the springboard to several other commissions which included the remodelling of his store.

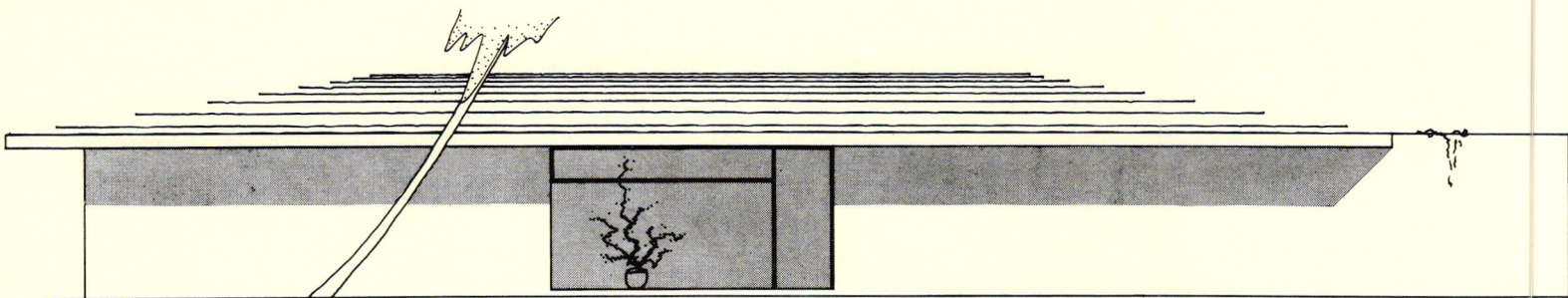
In the design of his residence on Sarasota Bay, while I was limited by a very low budget of \$25,000, Sidney and his delightful wife Buddy were in many ways ideal clients. The house was wood frame and raised above grade about three feet. Upon completion of the house, Sidney gave me a wristwatch which I still proudly wear. The house is depicted in Graphic 5.

Since my father's death in 1948, my mother had continued living in her home in Galesburg. She enjoyed visiting us and with a lifetime railroad pass as the widow of an operating engineer, it was economically much easier for her to visit us than vice versa. And so about this time, she expressed an interest in building a small inexpensive house in Sarasota where she could stay each winter. For me this was a delicious and rare opportunity to choose a site and design a house with a low budget being the only limitation! What a labor of love! At this time, Siesta Key had just begun to be developed. I found a site on the Grand Canal and bought 100 feet at \$16 a front foot. Low even in those days. The house was 16 feet by 36 feet with the sleeping area raised above the ground and the living area at ground level. We instinctively claimed this house as our own. Together we laid the bricks for the floor of the living room and I built the kitchen cabinets in Jack Twitchell's shop. Joyce and I ended up moving in with our two girls, Jan and Jill. When mother informed us she was coming to take up residence we moved, but not without tears. This house is shown in Graphic 6.

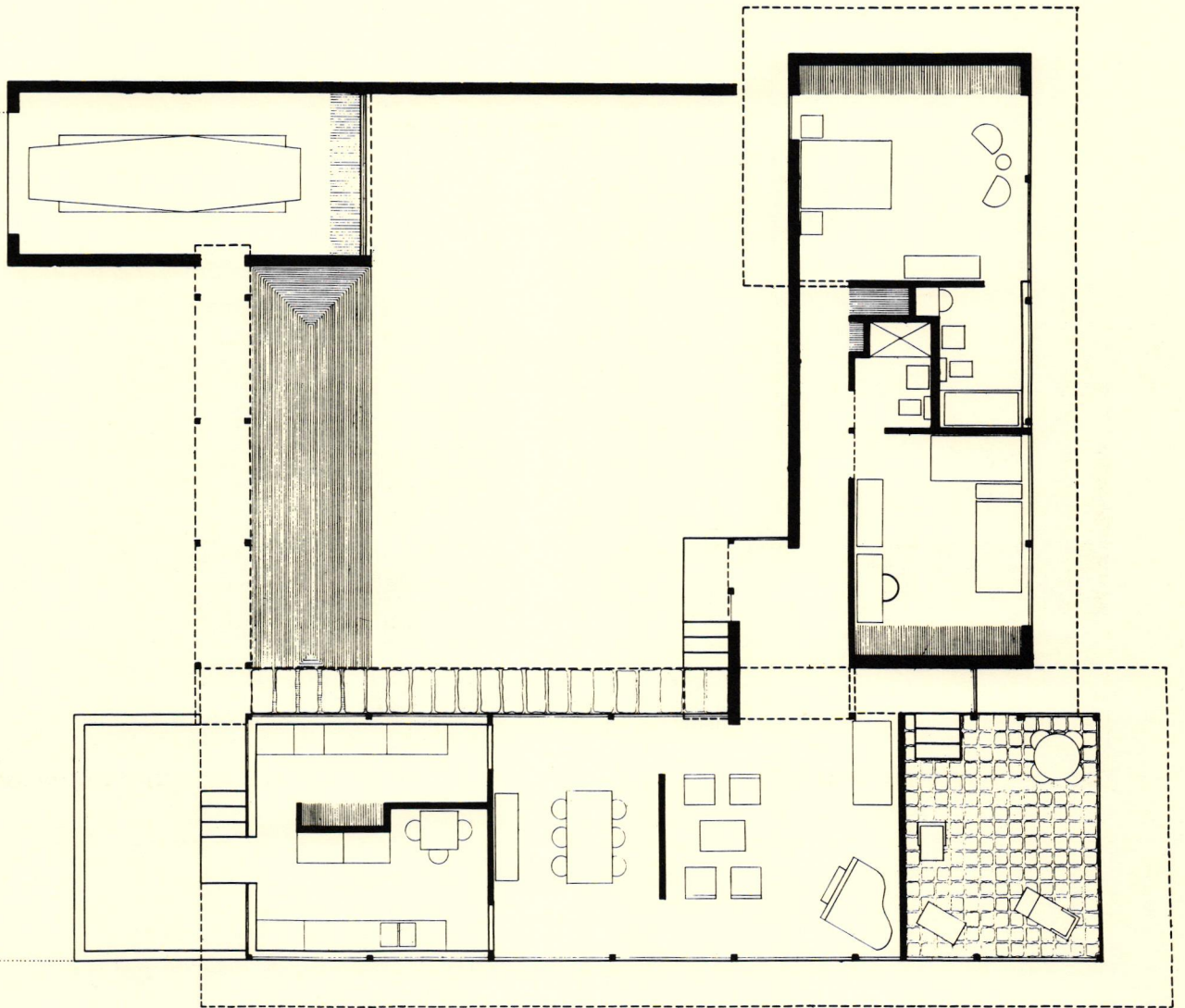
My office at this time was a single room, roughly 12 feet by 12 feet. I had no secretary, no draftsman and I was using an old dining table for my desk and drafting board.



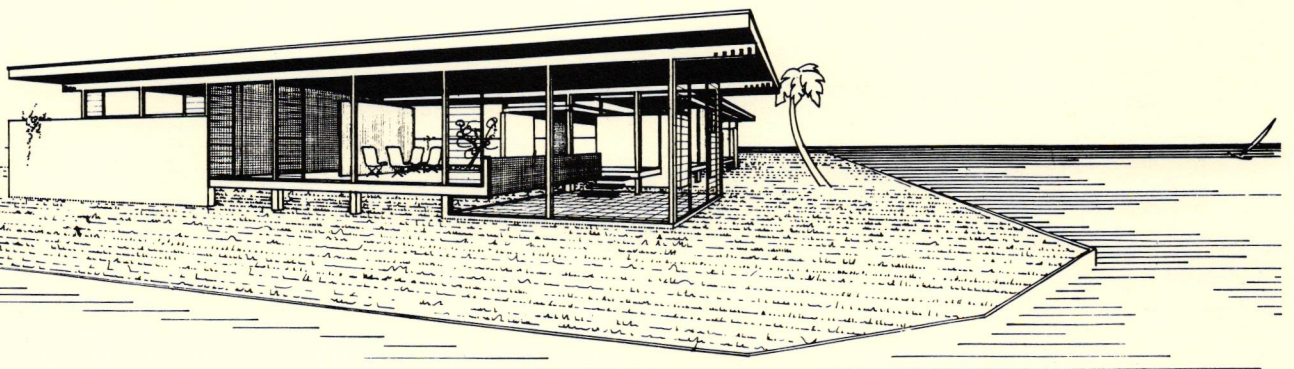
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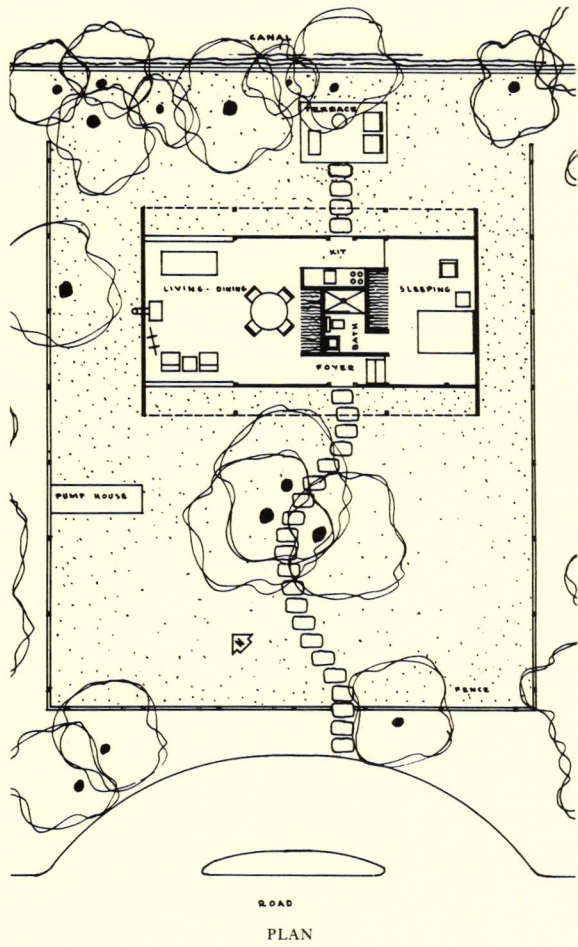
ELEVATION



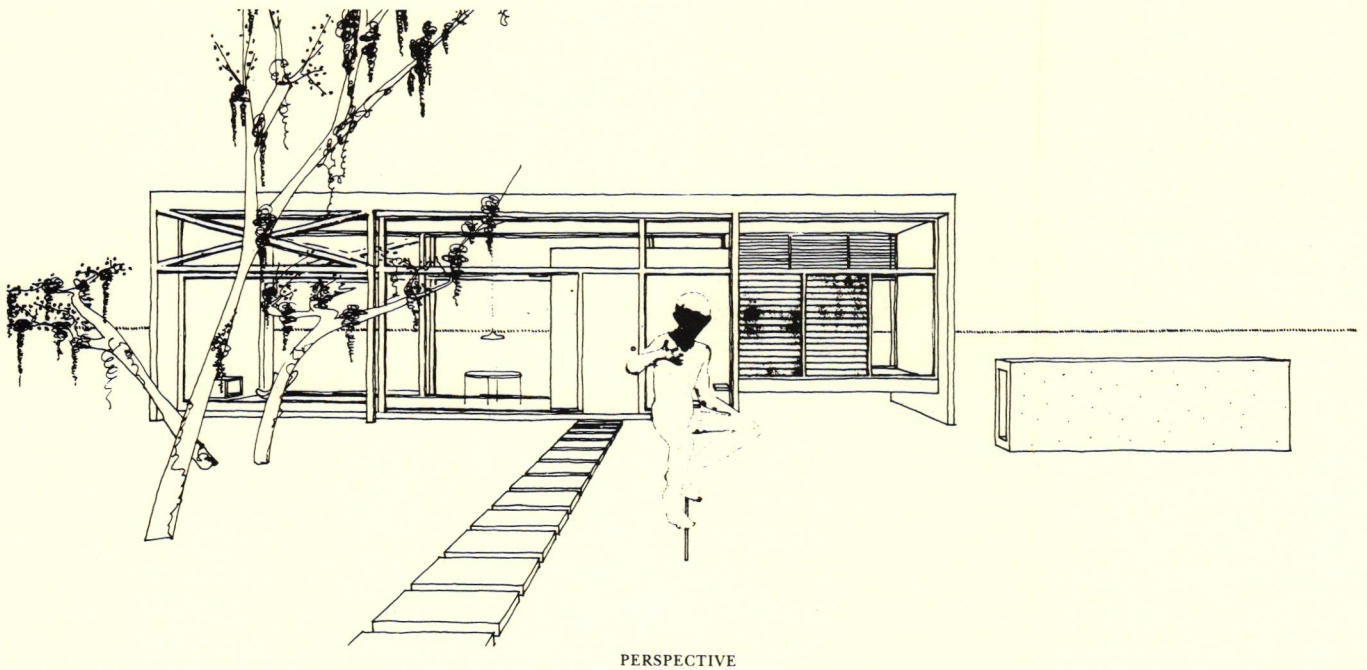
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PERSPECTIVE



PHOTOGRAPH



What a pleasant surprise to have three gentlemen enter my office and offer me the commission to design a major motel on the beach. During our first meeting a contract was hand written by a Mr. Nadelman (who later turned into a client, as well as friend and mentor). It was, of course, a terrible contract. The project was divided into two phases and the bulk of the fee was to be paid during the course of the second phase. By the time the second phase came, the motel had been sold. But it was a learning experience. I designed the entire project and produced working drawings and specifications for the first phase. My services were completed and therefore I was not involved during construction. One day, while driving past, I noted the omission of a line of columns. I, of course, informed the contractor who did not seem very pleased to learn of his error.

Martin Nadelman later purchased a lot further south from the motel and gave me the commission to design his new home. The budget was \$100,000 which in 1953 was very large for Florida's west coast. It was an exciting time—a gift from the gods. My concept was a spacious, flowing, single-story plan with a great, laminated wood-bent roof which left most of the interior space without columns. Mr. Nadelman loved it! My career, at last, was launched.

A week later, after he and Mrs. Nadelman had stayed in a ground-floor hotel room, he said Mrs. Nadelman felt uneasy with the bedrooms of their new house being located on the ground floor: please redesign and move all sleeping areas to the second floor.

It was the wastebasket for Plan I. I started from scratch and conceived of a two-story scheme with the bedrooms on stilts projecting toward the beach accessed from both circular interior stairs and exterior stairs off a balcony overlooking the Gulf. All walls touching the ground were to be our local travertine stone rubble combined with heart cypress. While working on a fixed fee, no effort was spared in the new preliminary design. I even built a complete study model. Once again the Nadelmans loved it. The next day he called: "Proceed with working drawings and specifications, but please make one change. We don't like flat roofs. Don't change the plan but change all the roofs to hip roofs." The bomb had exploded. I was positive that Ayn Rand's hero in the *The Fountainhead* would surely have shot his client.

Joyce was once again pregnant and our savings account was zero. What the hell. I compromised as I said I never would do. The house was redesigned and built with hip roofs; the Nadelmans loved it but I shall never forget my sad decision. Shortly before its completion, I realized there were insufficient jobs in the office to pay our expenses, let alone take care of the birthing costs of our second child.

I had to close my office, terminate my practice and make the rounds of architectural firms again in search of a job. My first stop was Ralph Twitchell.

After I had resigned from Twitchell and Rudolph, Mark Hampton (who became a very talented architect) took my place as sole draftsman for about a year or two. Then Paul opened his own independent practice in Sarasota.

Once again, Ralph hired me on the spot and fired his only draftsman the same day. And once again the salary was minimal: \$75 per week, but for us it was a marvelously generous gesture at a time when we were about as depressed as we had ever been. A new relationship was begun and, so too, a highly productive two-year association.

TWITCHELL PARTNERSHIP

It was 1953 when I started working again for Ralph Twitchell. This time Paul Rudolph was practicing on his own in Sarasota. Ralph's basic love of architecture was as a builder, but he retained strong feelings about what architecture ought to be and always considered himself a participant in the design process. Quite humanly, he continued to deceive his friends and clients regarding his responsibility for design. Within a month he suggested that we form "Twitchell and West/Associated Architects." On my insistence, having intimately known Paul's problem with Ralph regarding finances, my share was to be simply my weekly salary plus 10 percent of the gross architectural fees. We were both satisfied, or so I thought.

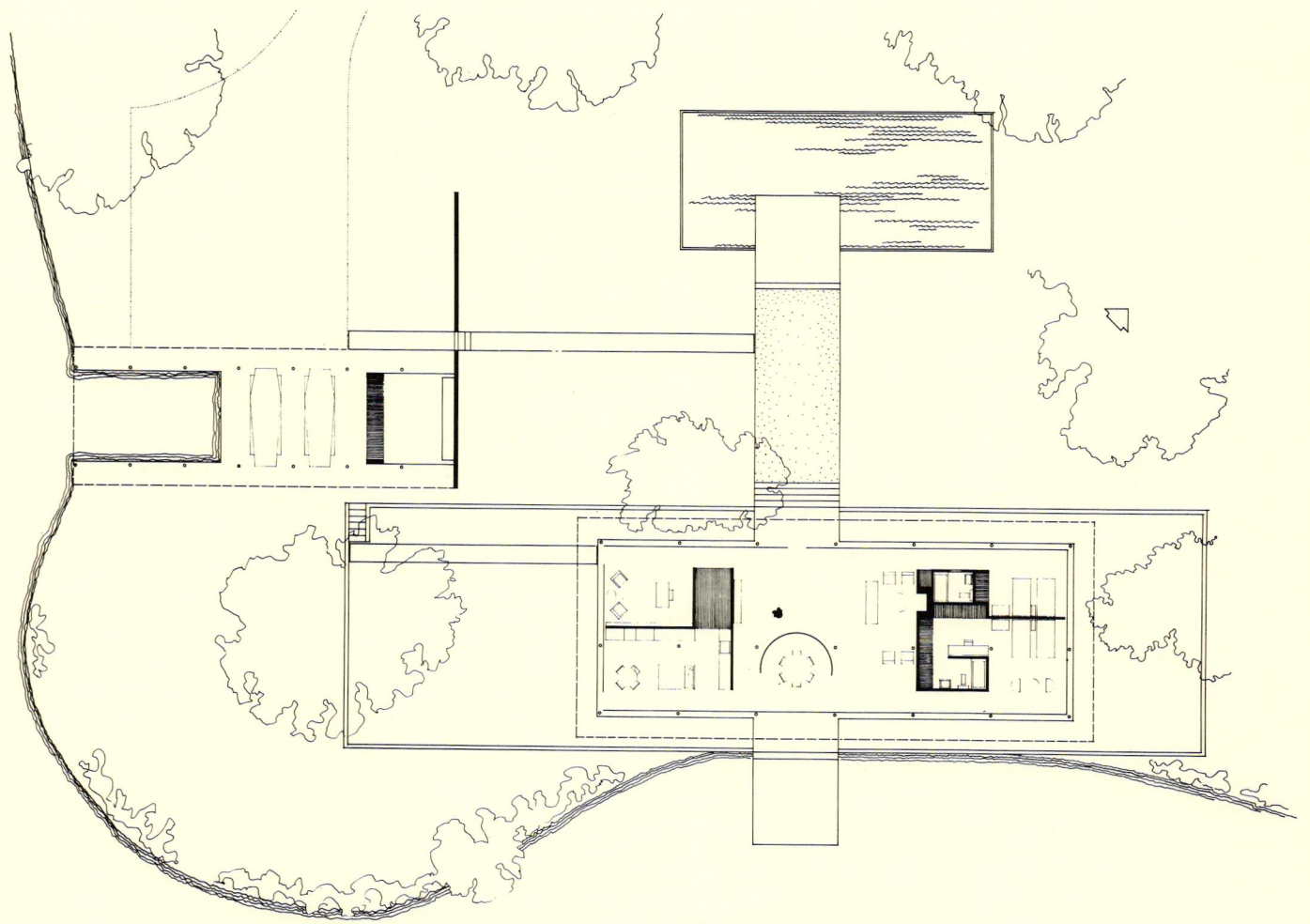
My first design with the partnership was a house for Eugene Knotts on a beautiful site overlooking the Withlacoochee River near Yankeetown, Florida. Years before, when I was a draftsman for Twitchell and Rudolph, Paul had designed what I considered an absolutely magnificent house for Knotts using bent plywood vaults. At the time, my impression was that Knotts liked the design very much but was concerned about the probable cost. By this time, Mr. Knotts' finances had improved but the decision was made (before my participation in the project) to abandon the earlier Rudolph designs and to initiate a completely new approach. My design perhaps shows more influence by Mies van der Roë than Paul Rudolph. (Graphic 7.) Ralph was the owner of Associated Builders, a general contracting firm which had built all or almost all of Twitchell and Rudolph's work in the Sarasota area. The firm was the general contractor of the Knotts house and Jack Twitchell, a very talented builder in his own right, was the superintendent of construction.

During this same period, Mr. Knotts, who owned much property on the Withlacoochee, sold a building site to Mr. and Mrs. Tyler. My design for the Tylers was published in *Arts and Architecture* and once again was constructed by Associated Builders with Jack Twitchell the superintendent. Mies, once again, served as my mentor for this Florida house. (Graphic 8.)

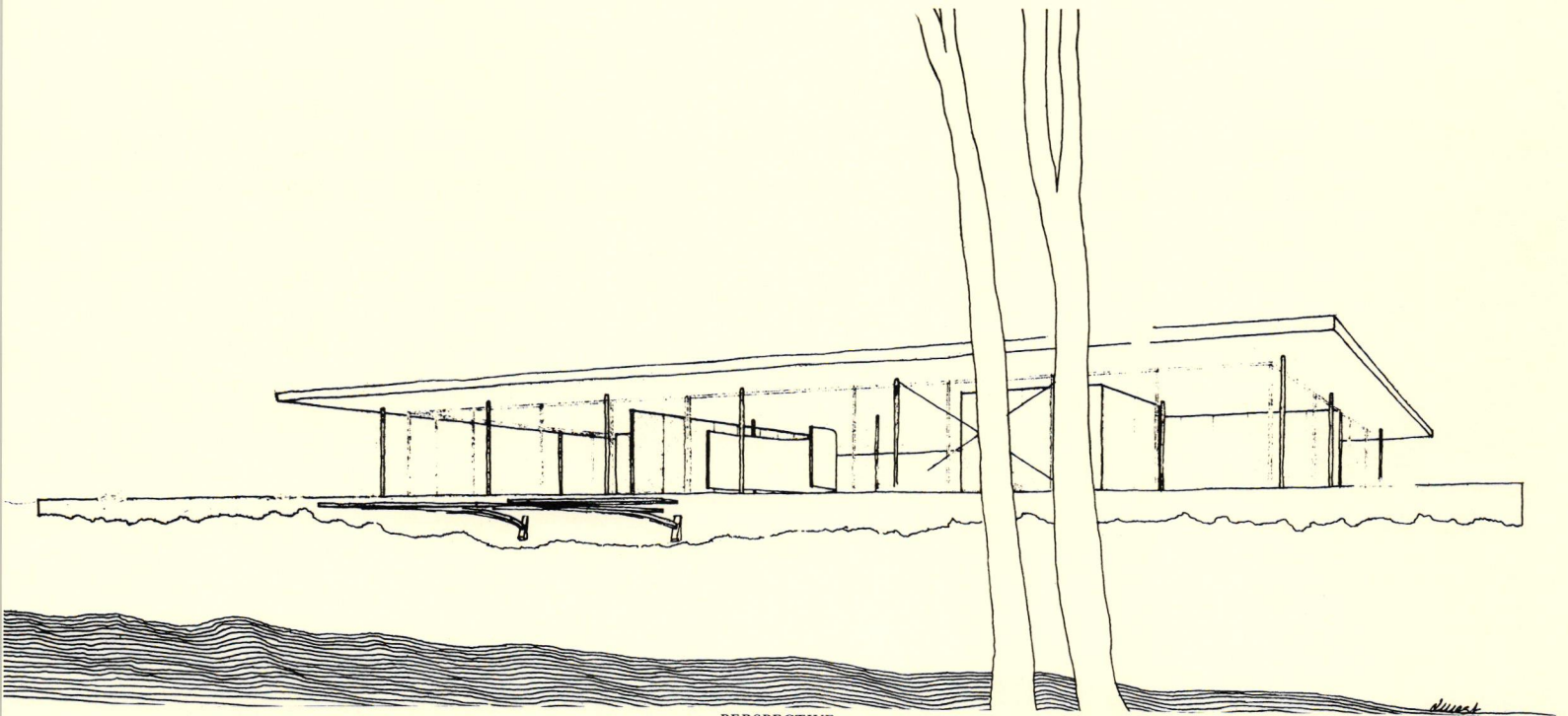
Dartha Dennis and her husband Bill were residents of Glasgow, Kentucky where they were in the hatchery business. She came to us in early 1954 and described property on which they wished to build a house in Glasgow. This was the first and only time in my professional life I designed a building without first seeing and experiencing the site. The construction of the house went forward and Dartha became a close friend to both my wife and myself. (Graphic 9.)

Interior furnishings are equally vital to the architectural integrity of a building. I was very fortunate to be allowed to design or select all of the furnishings. The Dennis house won an honor award from the Southeast Regional AIA Conference, later held in Sarasota.

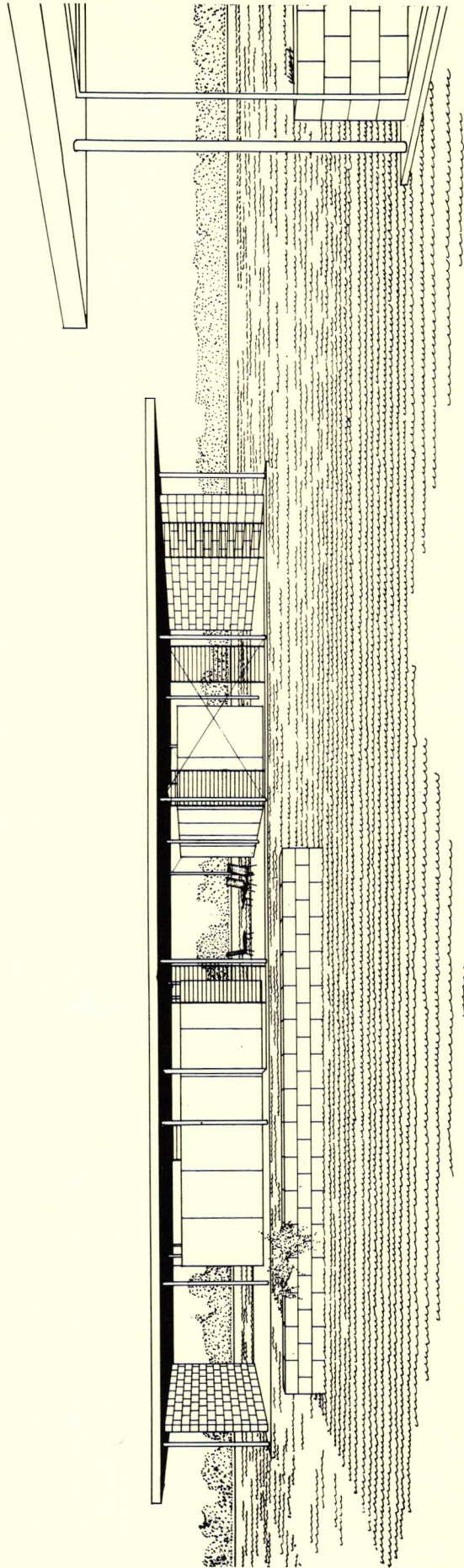
When the Dennis house was completed my family and I drove to Glasgow to see the completed project. Without my personal supervision, a few mistakes were made. But



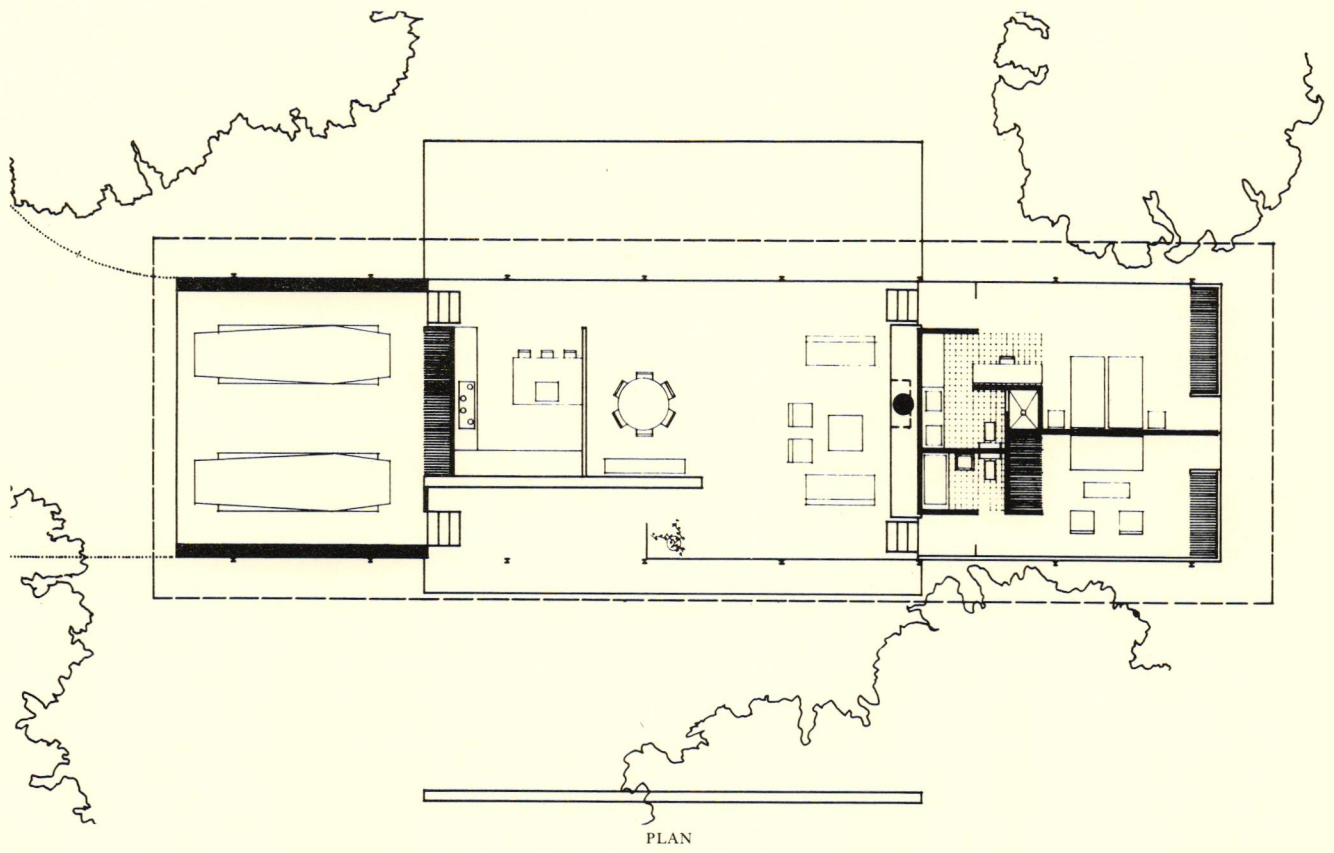
PLAN



PERSPECTIVE



PERSPECTIVE



PHOTOGRAPH

with the tireless efforts of Dartha, the house was very well constructed. I was particularly pleased with the quality of the stone walls.

On a personal basis, Ralph and I had always maintained a warm and friendly relationship. And Ralph's second and relatively new wife, Bert, was a close friend of my wife Joyce. But in matters of business, Ralph was a maverick. After hearing complaints from some of our clients (Eugene Knotts once complained in a good-natured way that Ralph even included the cost of the stamp on his monthly statements), I reviewed the contractor's billings on several of our jobs. I was both dismayed and amused to find there was little consistency in adding the "plus." Percentages added to cover overhead and profit bore no relationship to the contracts. In fact, they seemed to vary both up and down depending upon Ralph's prevailing mood of the day.

Be that as it may, I was relatively content with our arrangement. I had total design responsibility and was satisfied with my remuneration. However, while my name was alongside of Ralph's on all the drawings, I knew that he often implied to our clients that my design role was subservient to his own. The only written communication I had ever received from Ralph discussing our professional relationship was a long, rambling letter which he had sent while vacationing on the Cape. I concluded that we should have a written agreement setting forth the details of our professional association under which we had been operating for almost two years.

I prepared such a written agreement on August 20, 1954 and asked Ralph to sign it. He did not wish to do so. I terminated our partnership and opened a small one-man office at 1342 McAnsh Square in downtown Sarasota.

McANSH SQUARE AND AFTER

Two small rooms and a bath became my new office upon leaving my partnership with Ralph Twitchell. My wife Joyce worked with me as secretary/bookkeeper and to do so we would drop off our young children, Jan and Jill, at a baby-sitting service situated in a nearby downtown house. So concerned about losing a potential prospect, I had a phone installed in the bathroom.

After World War II, Sarasota (and the entire coastal area of Southern Florida) experienced unusually rapid growth. The incorporated city at least had building and planning laws already in place; however, the county lacked any such controls. While still associated with Ralph, I was appointed to the first planning board (at that time called the Planning and Zoning Commission) in county government. As its elected secretary and the only member with any kind of planning educational background, I wrote the first zoning regulations for Sarasota County, several aspects of which were somewhat innovative:

- Setbacks were flexible except that minimum front setbacks were determined on the basis of distance to the center lines of streets. This included both present and future major and minor thoroughfares, thus facilitating the acquisitions of future rights-of-way.
- Height was only indirectly limited through open space provisions and privacy fences were encouraged.

As a result of my involvement in the county planning process, I helped write the first subdivision regulations and the first sign regulations for the county. And it was through these associations that I was selected to design the first county beach pavilion for the public beach located at Casey Key near Nokomis (a very small unincorporated town near Venice).

With a budget about the size required for a modest residence, I designed the Nokomis Beach Plaza. (Graphic 10.)

The Plaza was completed in 1955. About a year later I was able to convince my friend and long-time Sarasota painter, Hilton Leach, to paint the murals—so long as I furnished the paint. He executed the murals in a single day with house paint, a spraying machine, cardboard templates which he had made and the encouragement and constant suggestions of the architect.

The resulting murals were breathtaking and added a whole new dimension to the architecture. If an architect's life is a roller-coaster it is also true that the dips are self-inflicted. But when confronted with a choice to do nothing or do something it is very difficult to do nothing. I should have expected that painted murals on a public beach would have a limited life. And, of course, my fountain attracted the gulls. While the public loved the spectacle, the maintenance people did not. The fountain was filled with earth and "planted." This would not be the first time that my fountains were

destroyed by the generally unfeeling bureaucracies.

During my first year at McAnsh Square, two new clients appeared out of nowhere and each desired a modest house. Francis X. Nutto and his somewhat dominating wife allowed me to design a pavilion house, a form of architecture which has long fascinated me for our subtropical climate. (Graphic 11.)

About this same time Betty Brownrigg, an attractive widow with two daughters, had purchased a beautiful, large site on Siesta Key. The two houses were each designed with an exposed (painted) steel frame and in each I tried to solve those seemingly conflicting requirements which have fascinated me ever since architectural school: namely, in the dwelling unit to provide both an expansive opening—out to a distant view or a created garden—and to provide that feeling of privacy which all human beings find absolutely essential. Our lives must relate to natural beauty and to our most private needs. The house is the one place where these apparently opposite needs meet in the same crucible. (Graphic 12.)

What happened when Mrs. Brownrigg sold the home? Why, the new owners filled the indoor pool with concrete, of course.

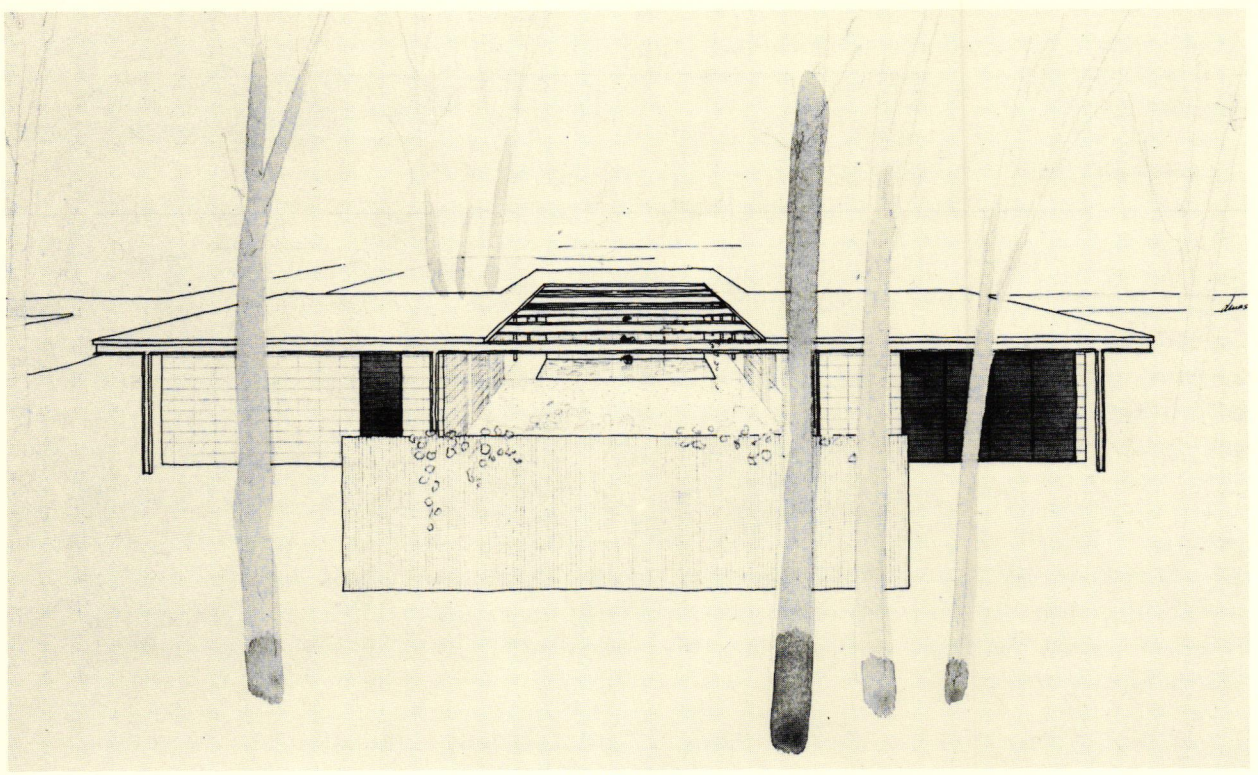
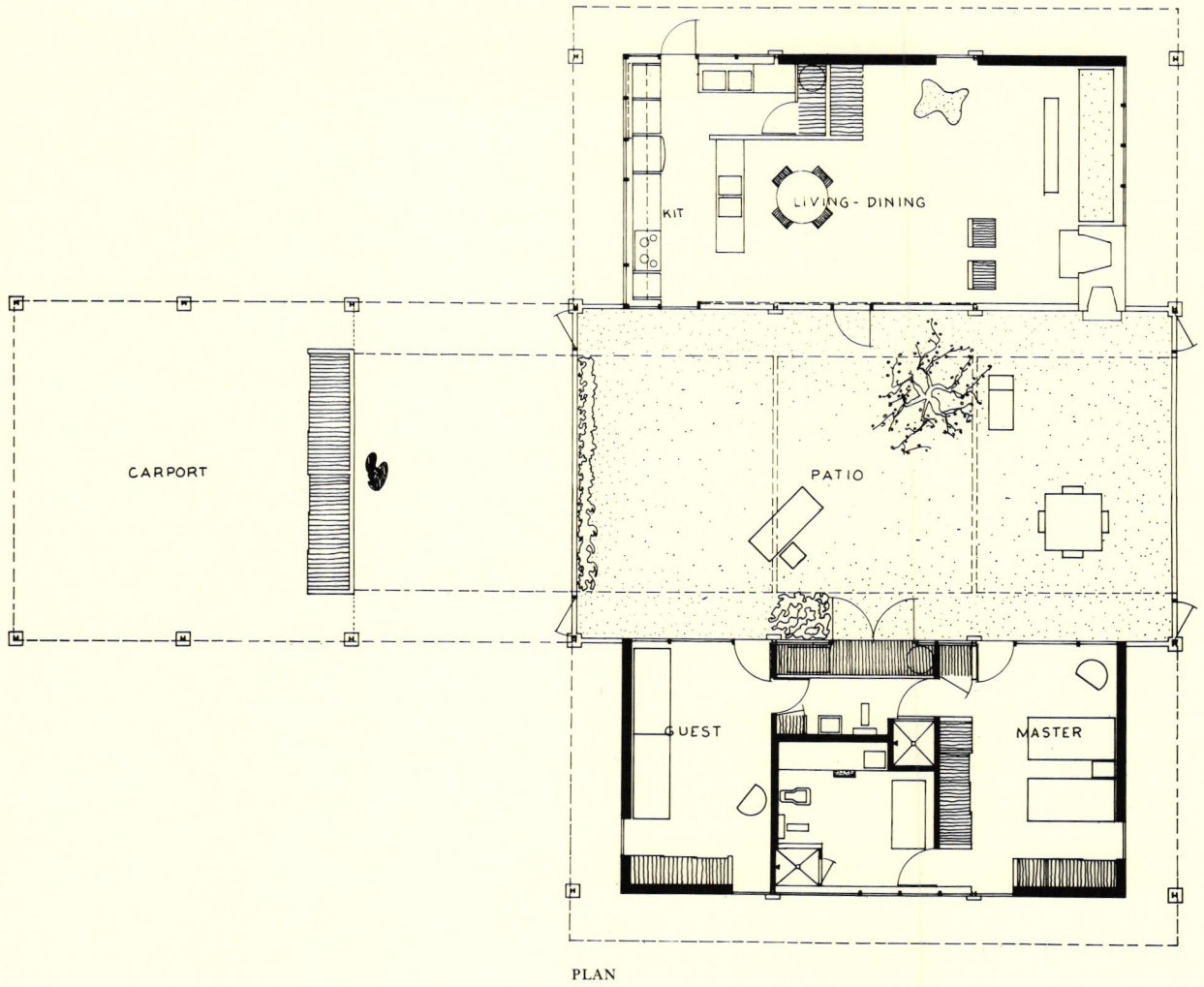
Perhaps the most famous author and locally prominent personality at that time was MacKinlay Kantor. During the time when the Plaza restaurant was both the best and the only quality restaurant in town, several of the local authors met there for lunch every Friday. Now it so happened that my wife, Ralph Twitchell's wife, Bert and Juanina, the wife of interior designer Phil Hall also met there at the same time.

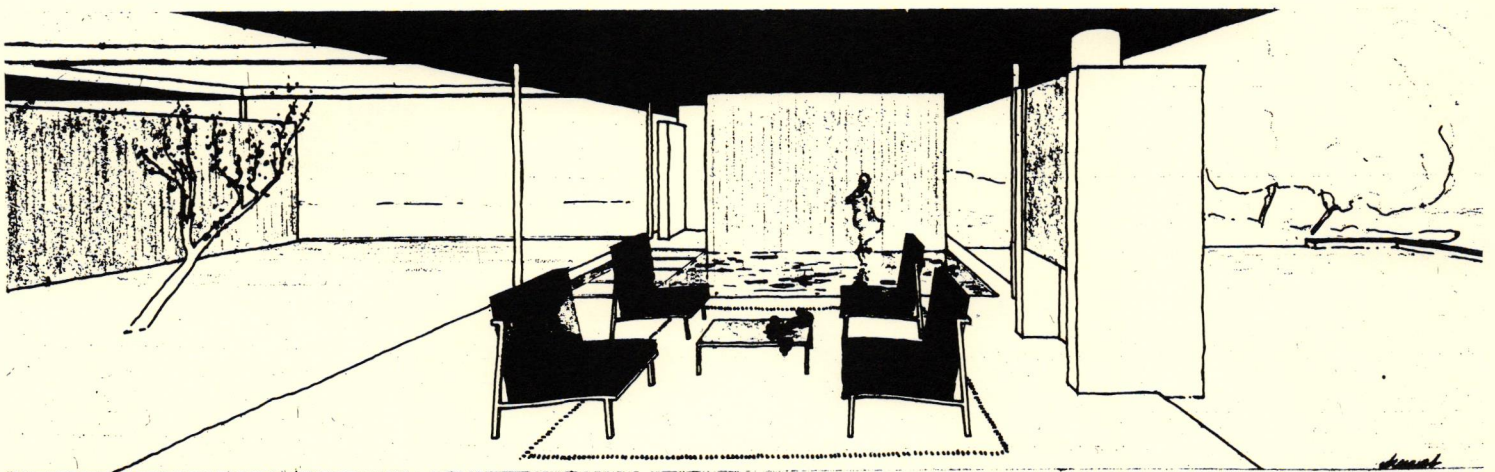
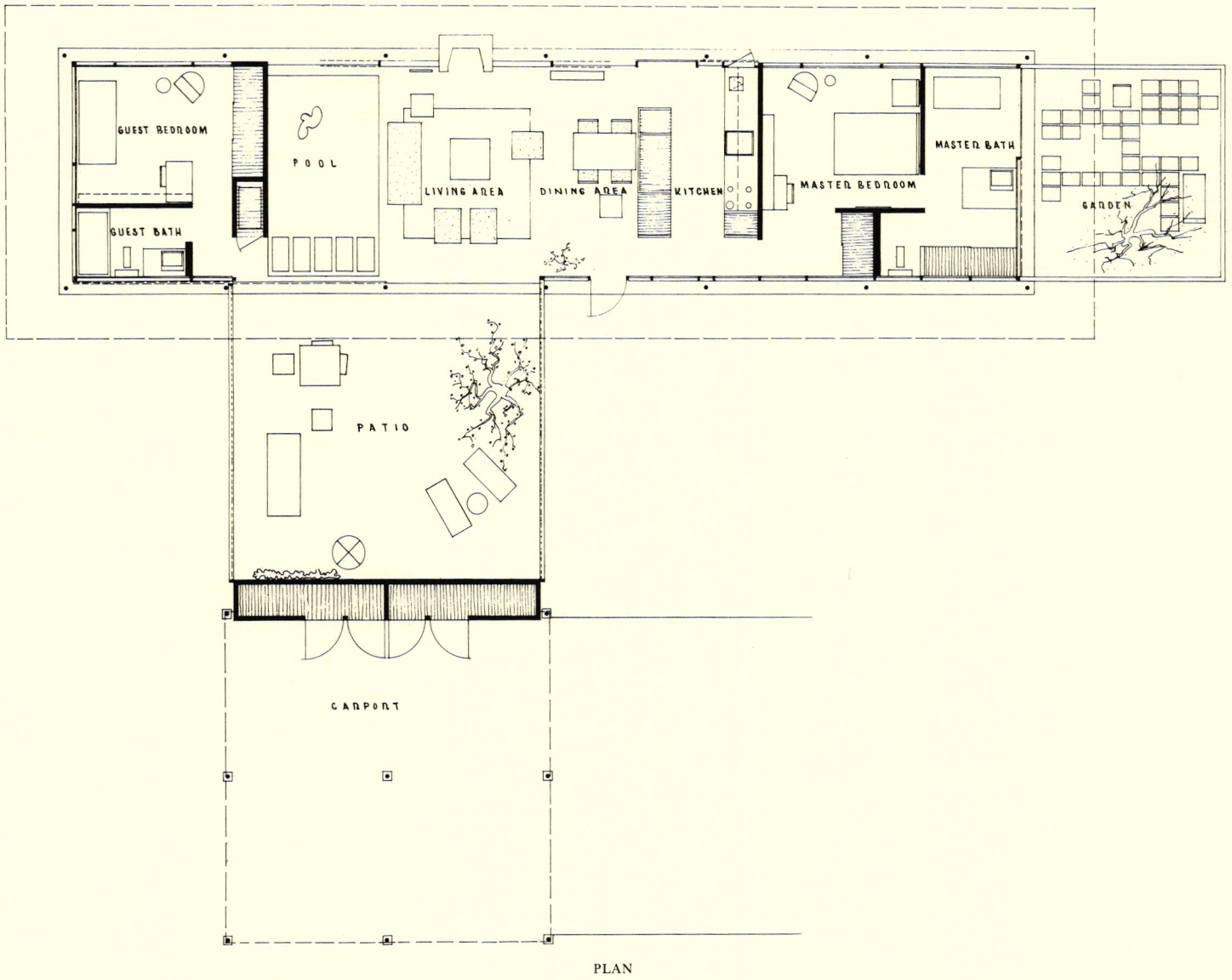
At the authors' luncheon, in addition to an exchange of stories and shop talk, currency poker was inevitably played—with dollar bills. No outsider was ever allowed to participate with the exception of Joyce. As a result, no doubt, of this association, MacKinlay Kantor asked me to design a major remodelling of his residence on Siesta Key. It was a very small house originally designed by Ralph Twitchell (before Paul Rudolph) but situated on a beautiful site on Siesta Key overlooking Big Pass, the major connection between Sarasota Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.

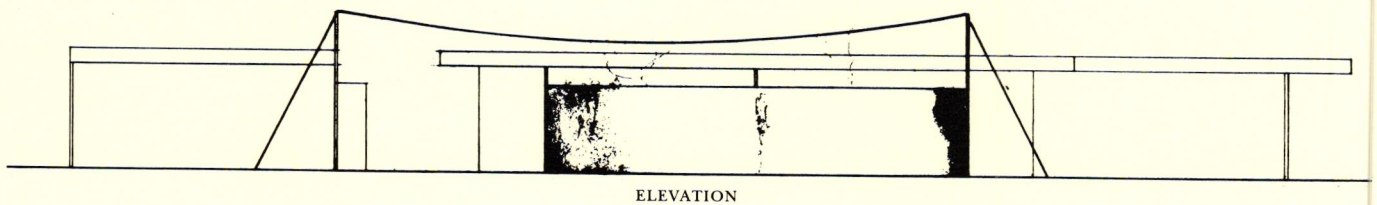
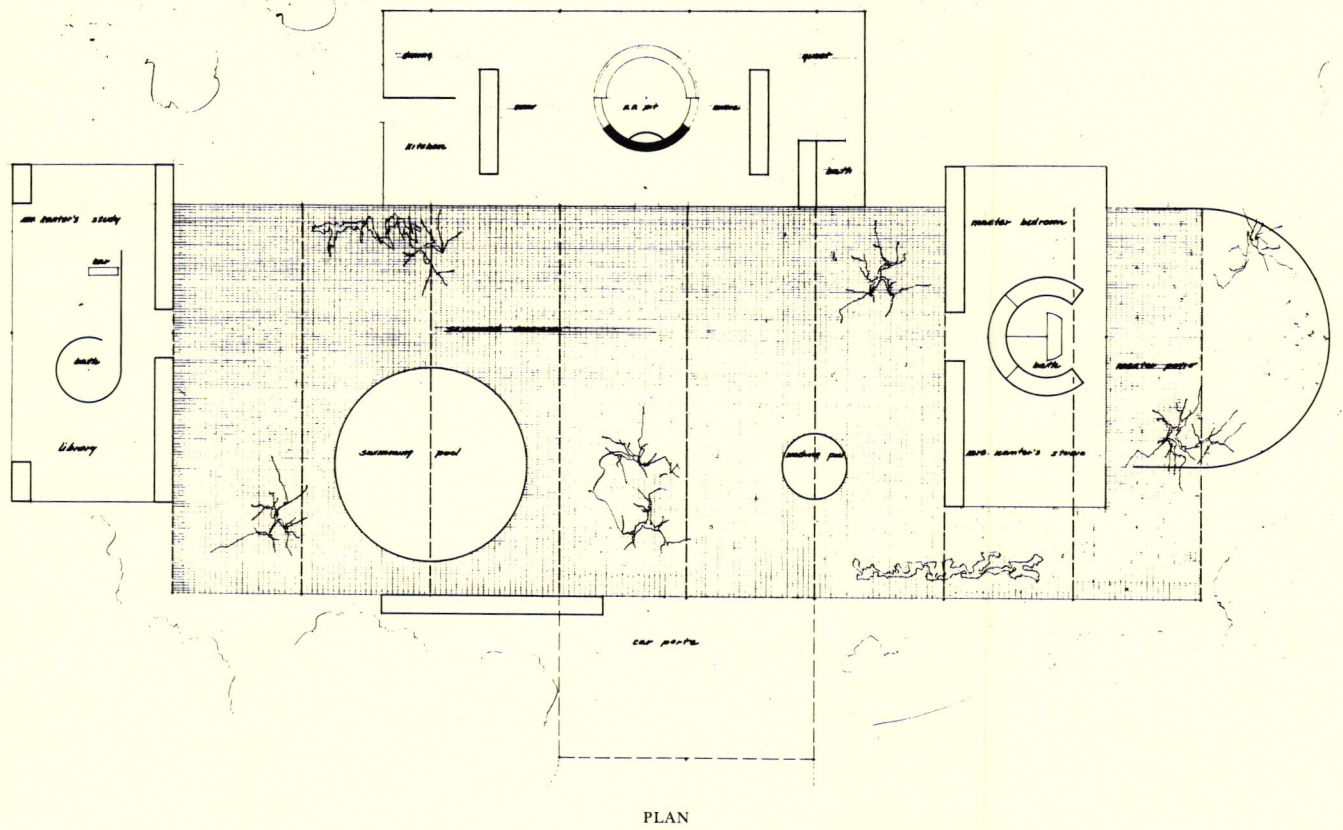
What an opportunity! A beautiful site, an ample budget and a famous client.

After literally dozens of designs, all rejected, I sadly learned that I must please Irene, Mac's wife. I'm not sure she even showed him all of my schemes. While being an extremely nice person, Irene was a painter and like so many artists (architects included) she believed that her talent must find expression in all of the other art disciplines including architecture. We ended up with a mundane remodelling neither very exciting to Mac or myself. The design I most wished Mac to build and which I doubt he ever saw is shown in Graphic 13. Once again I opted for separate pavilions, this time to articulate the isolation of Mac's study when he carried out his writing. The site was heavily wooded and so the screen enclosure not only aesthetically tied together the building group, it also provided protection from mosquitoes. The form of the suspended screen structure is somewhat reminiscent of Paul Rudolph's design of the Healy House Roof.

Elizabeth Boylston was an architectural student when I first met her. I was then working for Twitchell and Rudolph. She had a great interest in modern architecture







and in the work of Ralph and Paul. She went on to become an architect and married Gil Waters, also a good friend, who worked as a reporter for the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, the local daily newspaper. Gil's fascination for architecture and planning prompted him to suggest a partnership between Beth and myself. The Boylston family was an old and prominent Sarasota family and in addition to liking and respecting Beth, I thought that such an association would produce the kind of architectural commissions which might be difficult for me to obtain on my own. We entered the partnership West and Waters, Architects, in 1956, sharing a room in the McAnsh Square office.

Personally and professionally, Beth and I got along very well indeed. Her interest in the partnership did not include design which allowed me to continue with a free hand. Her interest was in how buildings go together and so she enjoyed producing working drawings and, in particular, solving detail problems. Ours was the kind of dove-tailing of talents which produces a good partnership; but we experienced two problems. While Beth was working only half-time, we equally shared the profit. This arrangement had to be modified when it became apparent that Beth was not obtaining her quota of new clients. But a second problem arose which could only be solved by dissolution. It is very difficult for an architectural practice to long occupy a minority position in one's life. While Beth's husband was supportive of her architectural involvement, playing the roles of mother, wife and active architect did not create a satisfactory life-style for Beth. She left our partnership in 1960 and was never again active as a professional architect.

During our partnership we worked together on some fascinating and frustrating projects.

In 1952, an architectural buff/patron and entrepreneur named Philip Hiss, successfully ran for the School Board of Sarasota County. He became chairman and virtual dictator of school building policy. Architects were commissioned for reasons of talent alone and public school design blossomed in Sarasota as it never had done before nor would likely do again. The new schools went to others, but in 1957 we were given two elementary school additions in joint venture with Bolton McBryde, an experienced school architect practicing in Fort Myers.

Bolton and I agreed to independently design each school and later meet to agree upon the better design concept.

I produced a master plan for each school; Bolton allowed several members of his staff to do the same. Our meeting to determine the winning concept was, in retrospect, amusing to say the least.

These were our first school commissions, while Bolton had been responsible for many good and successful designs. Our joint criticism of the several designs was long and not untouched by subjectivity. I don't know whether the best designs won; I only know that Bolton decided that day he would either agree to accept my designs or ask the School Board to scratch one of our contracts. He graciously accepted my designs for both the Englewood and Fruitville schools and the additions were built according to my master plan.

On the Englewood school I worked directly with Dr. John Goodlad whose "team-

teaching” concepts were embodied into the design. Englewood Elementary School thus became one of the first if not the first, in the United States, to be designed specifically for team teaching in a flexible ungraded curriculum. Classroom sizes were varied to include both large and small teaching groups. Movable partitions allowed classes to be combined to free teachers for other assignments. Storage and furnishings were on casters to facilitate the creation of special work settings. A covered outside play/assembly area and patios contiguous to the classroom extended activities to low-cost exterior areas, practical because of Florida’s climate. Perspectives of master plans are shown in Graphics 14 and 15.

Into our office in 1958 walked Martin Nadelman. The house on Lido Beach which I had designed for him in 1953 had been sold, and the new owners had defaulted on the mortgage and now he had re-claimed the property. His objective was to convert the house into a hotel. Thus began the saga of the Landmark Hotel.

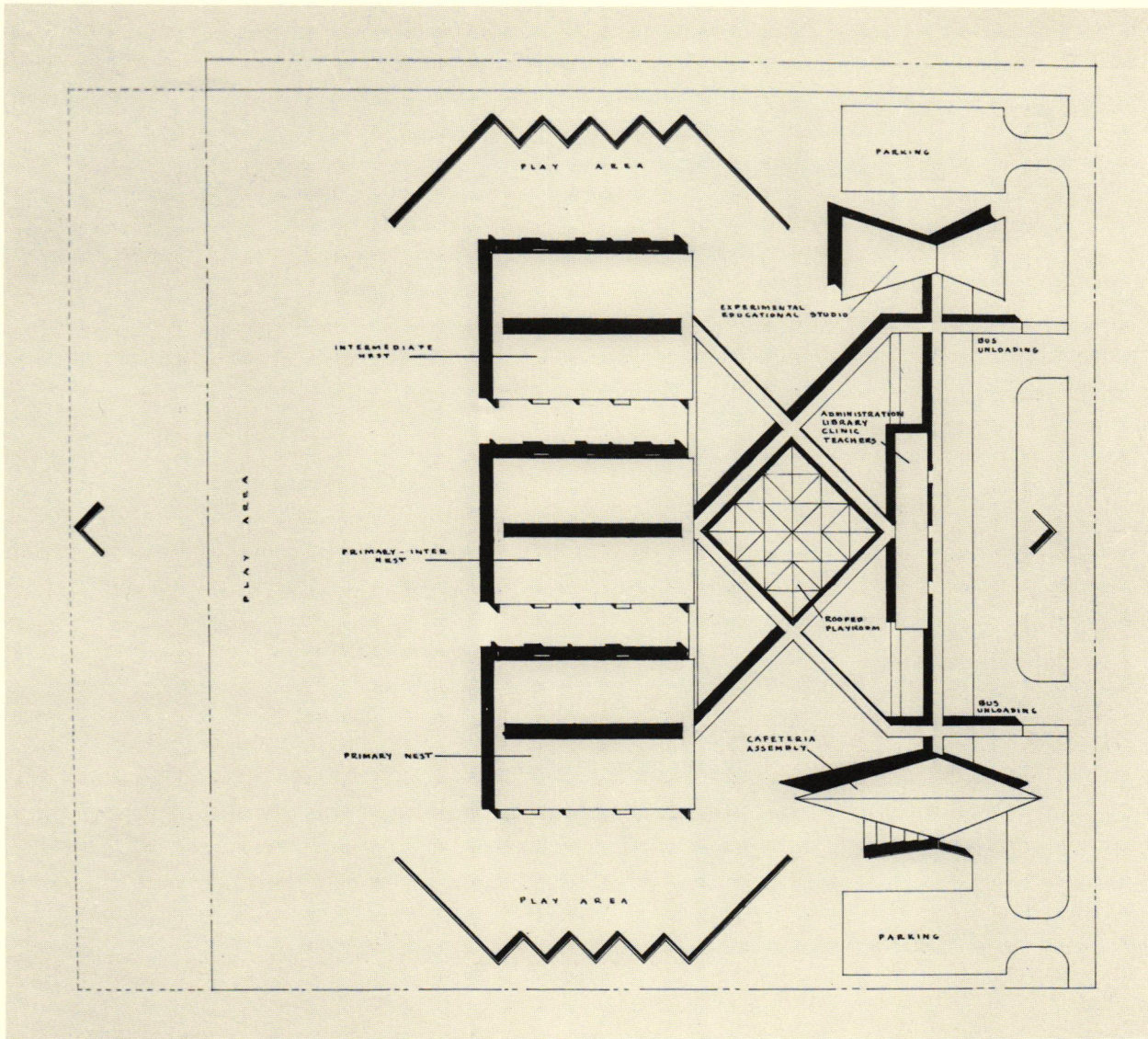
I arrived at a concept in which the residence would be converted to dining room and bar downstairs while utilizing the second floor bedrooms as guest rooms. The site was deep but only 100 feet wide. I tied the house to two beach towers on stilts with only covered walks. Each tower was 12 stories high, one room on each floor with a 360° view of the Gulf and bay. (Graphic 16.) How this original concept was distorted over the years to the final hotel configuration is a story with chapters of which I am only partially familiar. Let me just say that Martin Nadelman was a wonderful person, a good friend, but his own worst enemy. He tried to play manager, architect, interior designer...too bad he could not be content with being a superb entrepreneur.

Eugene Knotts, for whom I had designed a glass house on the Withlacoochee River during my brief partnership with Ralph Twitchell, asked me to design a guest house. Though it would provide only a small commission, the chance to work again with Knotts was acutely important to me. I had never known whether he understood my role as the designer of his home. In fact, I did not believe that he understood that Paul Rudolph had been solely responsible for the original design of the great vaulted house which, unfortunately, was never built.

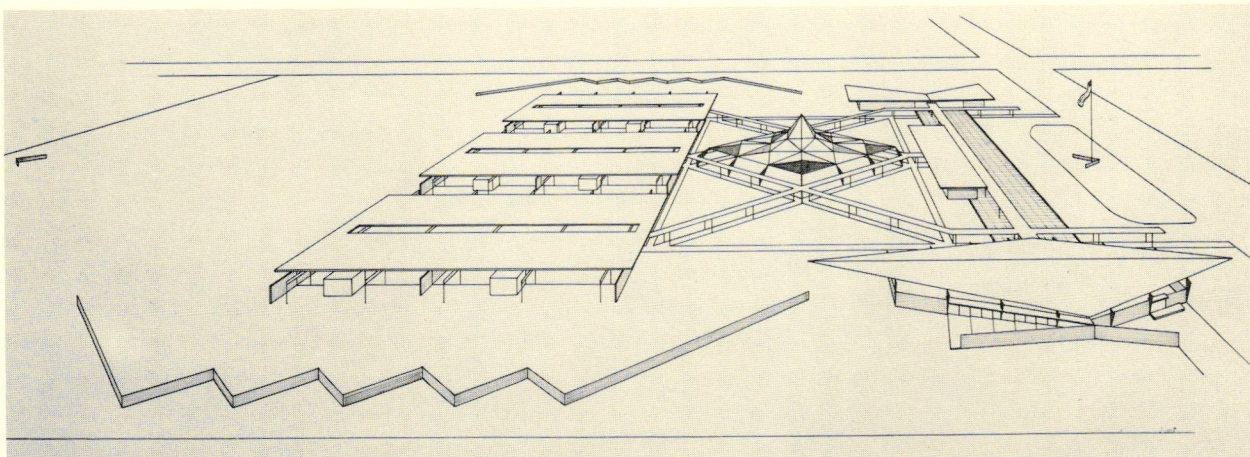
I designed a small pavilion separate from the main house, perched on low stilts at the edge of the river. He liked the design (Graphic 17) and authorized Beth and me to proceed with working drawings and specifications. He had promptly paid our bill for preliminary design studies. When we sent a bill for the working drawings and specifications, he denied he had authorized the work and refused to pay our very minor bill. I never saw or heard from him again. One of life’s mysteries.

A year or so earlier I had acquired an acre of land on Siesta Key in exchange for the design of a subdivision. This property, while not on the water, was beautiful; it was full of live oak trees covered with Spanish Moss, cabbage palms and cedars: typical of a Florida island allowed to become a semi-tropical jungle. During ownership of this property, I probably sketched at least a dozen different house designs. One design actually went through working drawings and bids. Unfortunately it was never built. It is shown in Graphic 18.

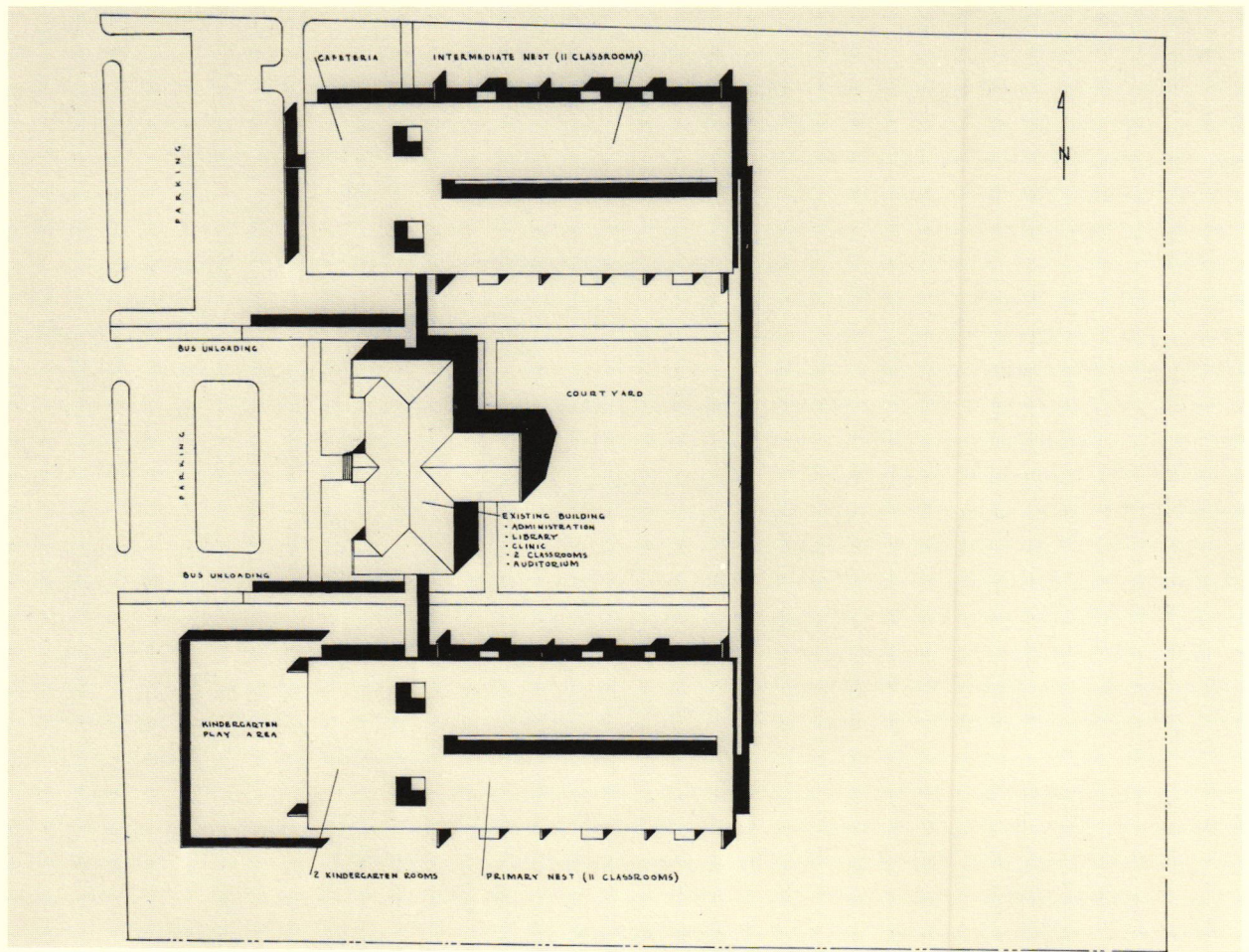
Hilton Leach and his wife Dorothy were each prominent local painters and Hilton



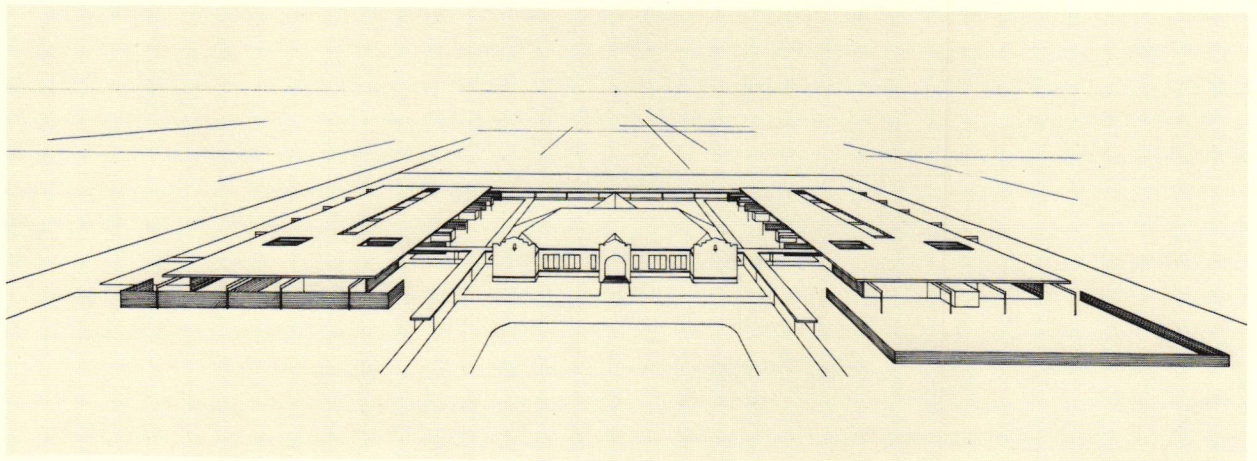
SITE PLAN



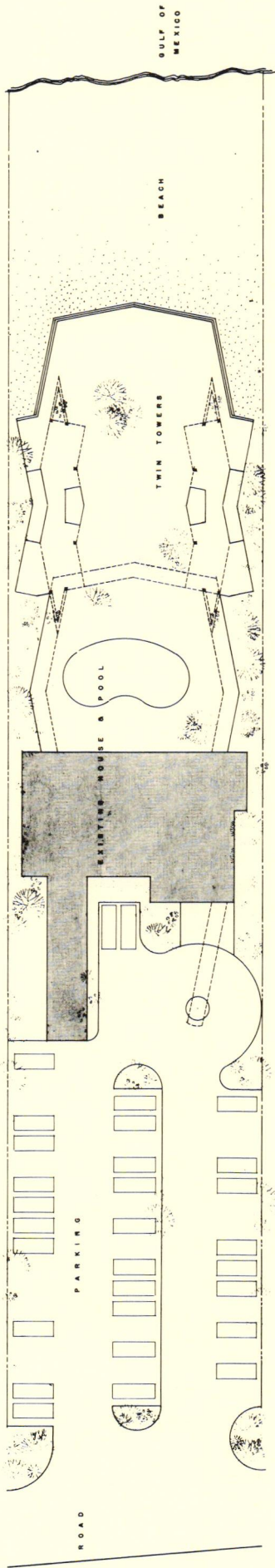
PERSPECTIVE



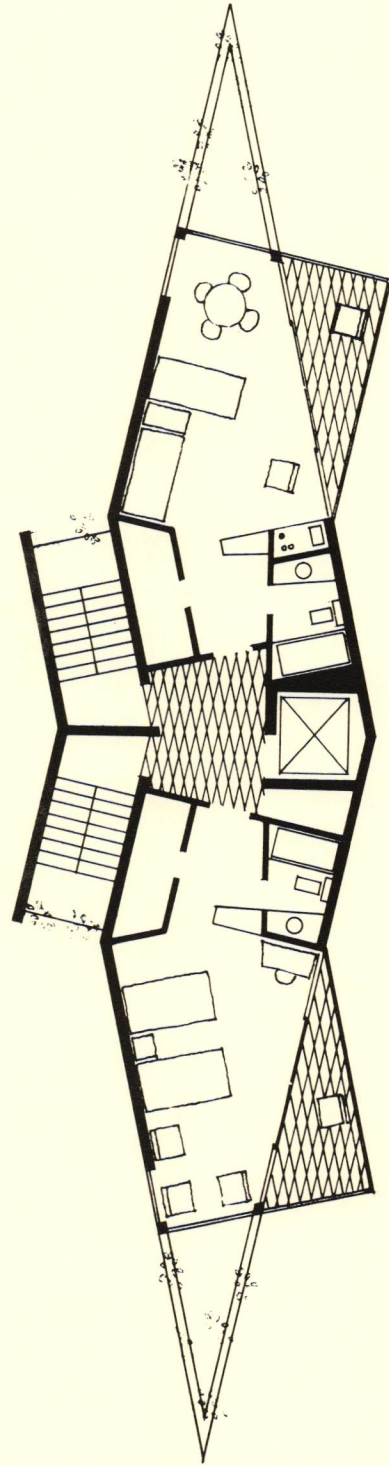
SITE PLAN



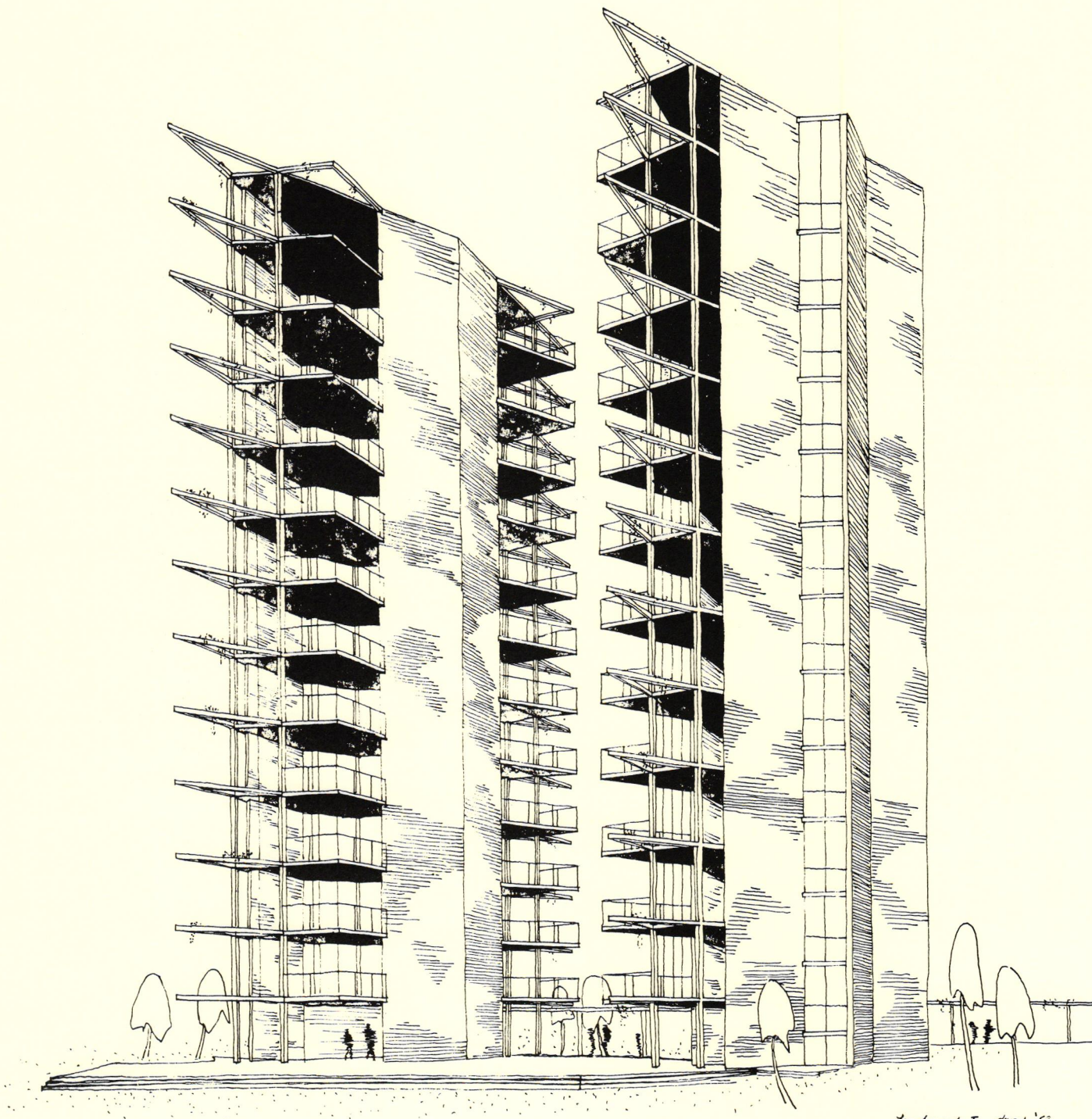
PERSPECTIVE



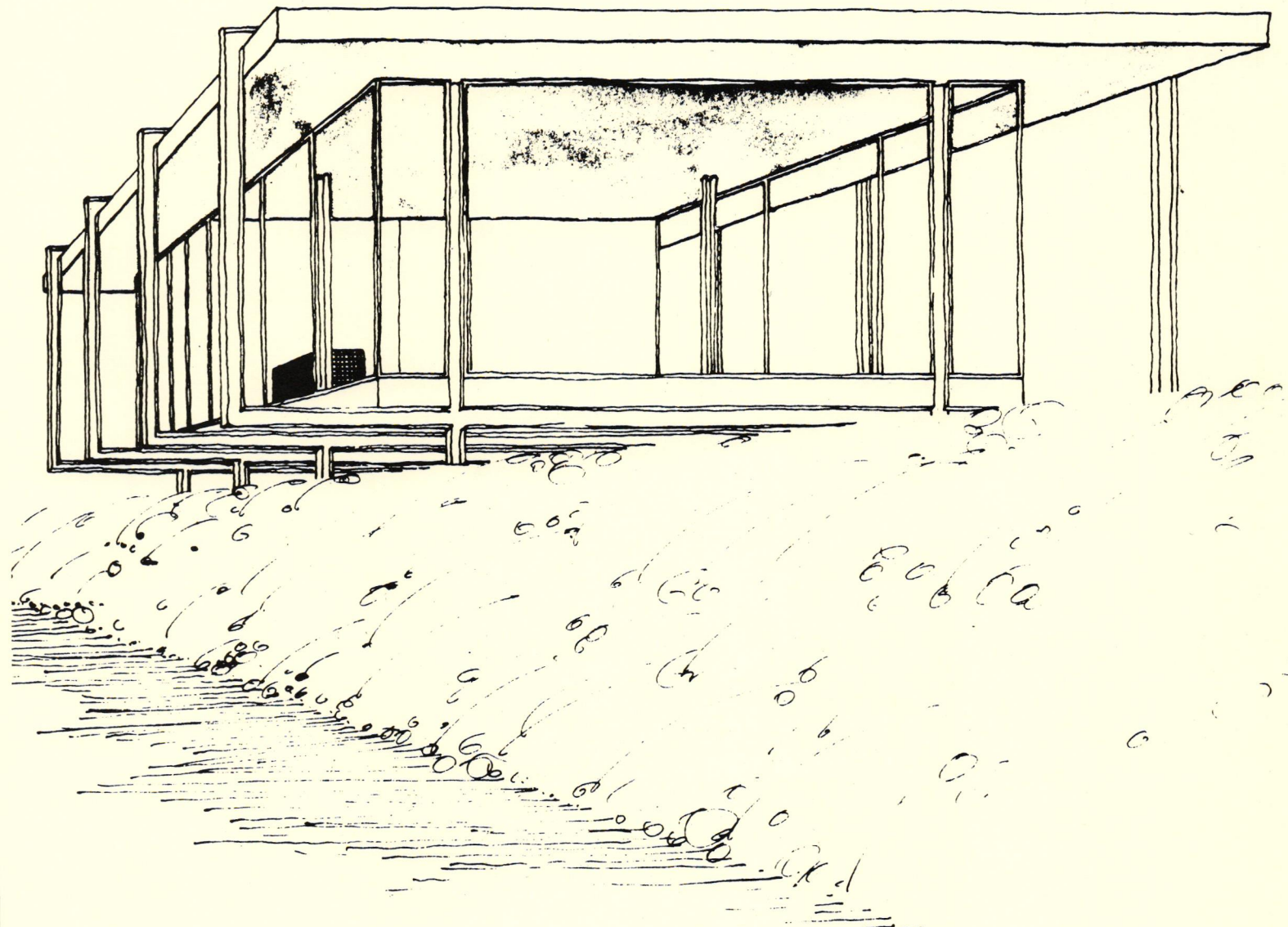
SITE PLAN



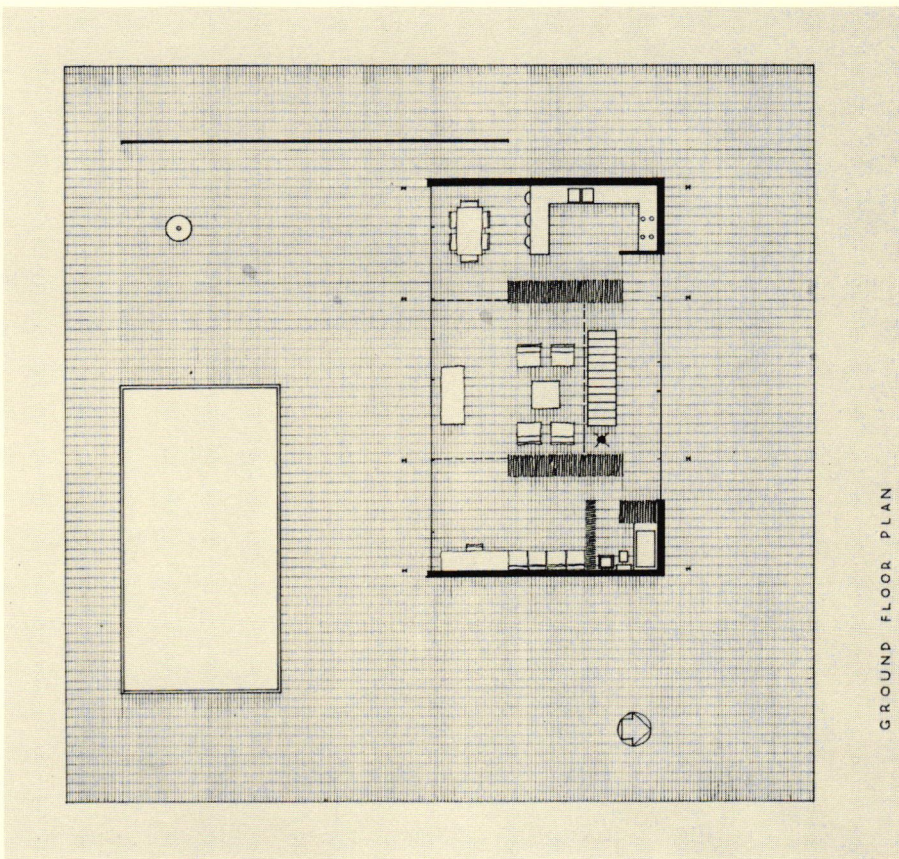
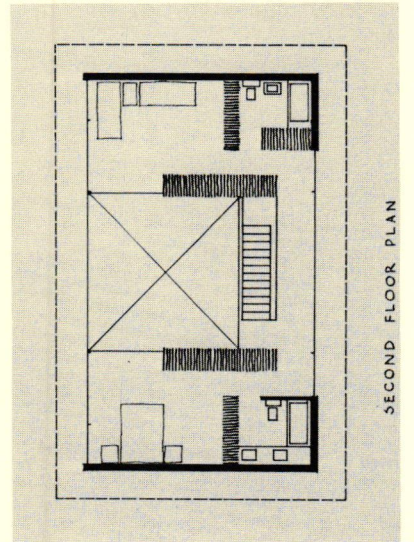
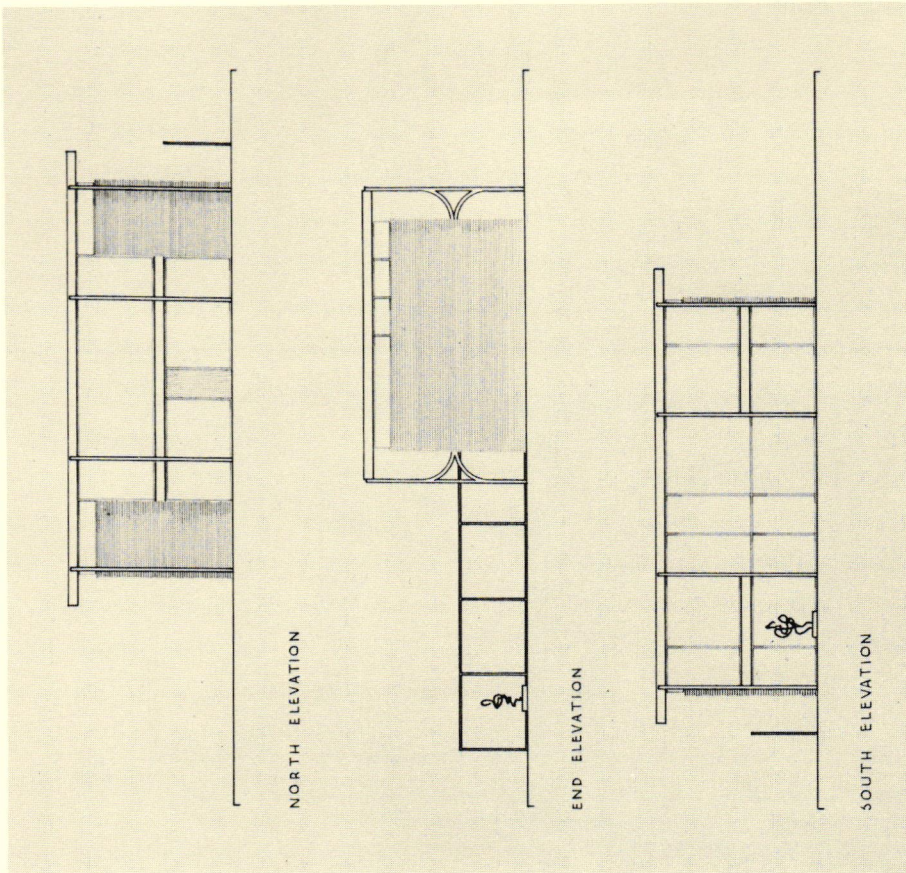
TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN

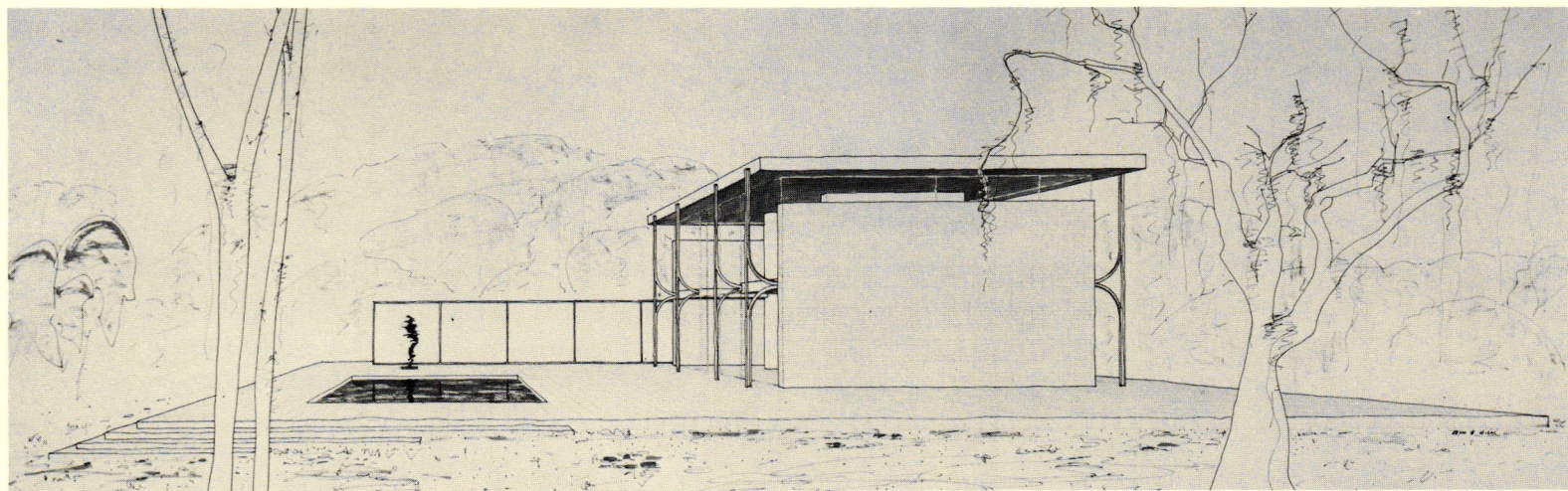


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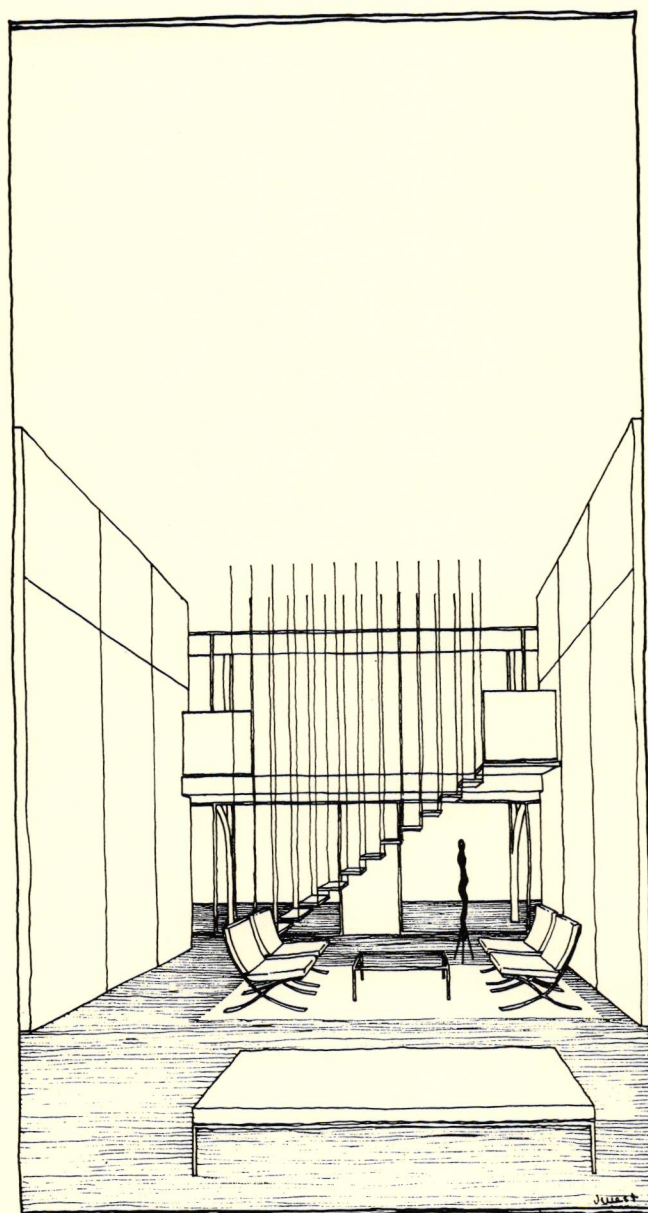


PERSPECTIVE





PERSPECTIVE



INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE

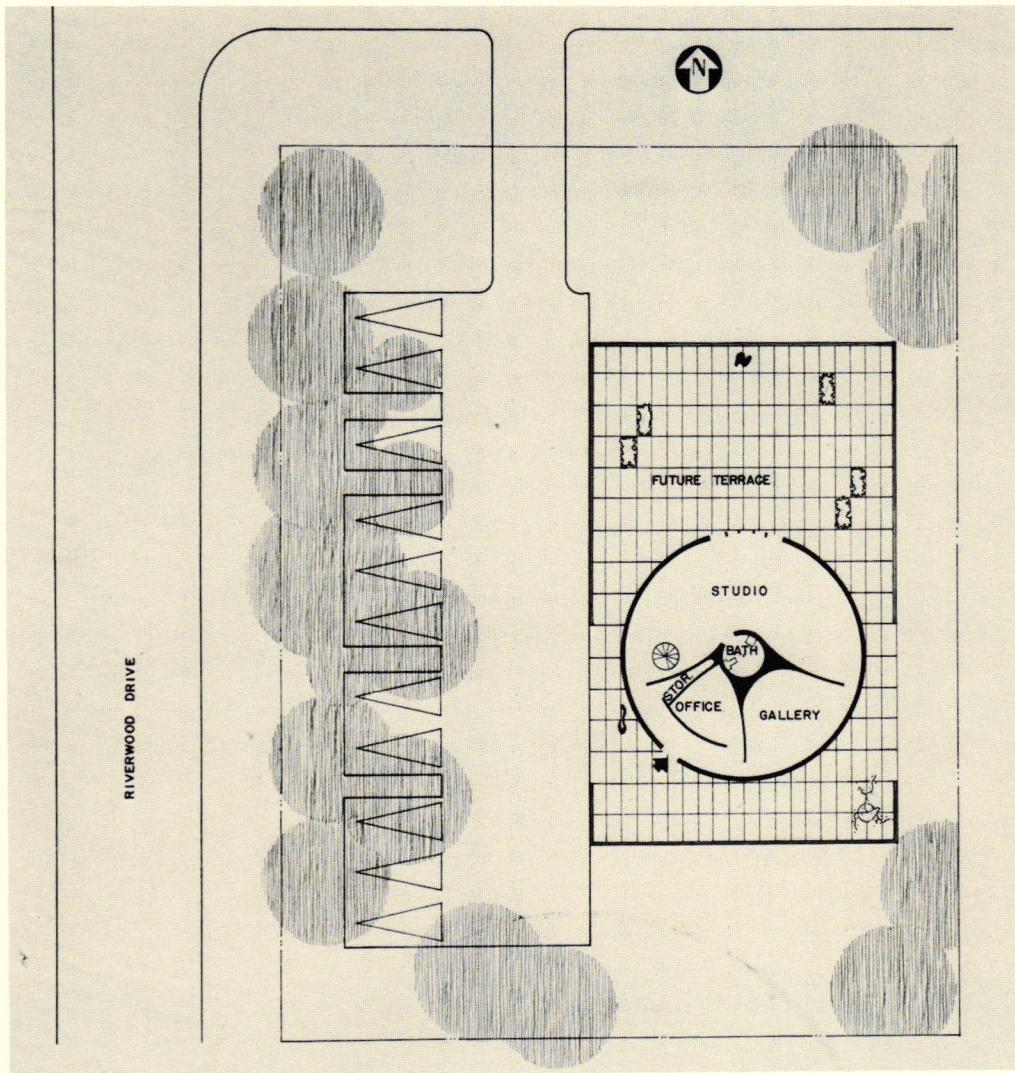
had for some years conducted a painting school from his home and studio. In 1959 they acquired property on Phillippi Creek and he asked me to design a school building. The main criteria was cost. It was not to exceed the cost of \$20,000. I have always loved curvilinear forms and this seemed to be an opportunity to work with a cylinder. It was an efficient (minimum perimeter) shape and I felt that with a reasonably large radius the masons could manage to lay their concrete bricks with little or no premium over a straight wall. I turned out to be right and the building came in on budget. It is depicted in Graphic 19.

The last project of any significance planned during our partnership was a small house for the Halls in the Laurel section of Sarasota. Their site had many specimen trees and the Halls were particularly sensitive to and appreciative of nature. How appropriate I thought it would be to find a clearing among the trees and there place a small house, as though a ship from outer space had set down to study life on earth without disturbing a single tree. I designed what I thought to be a functional house that also served as a marvelous observation platform from which to view the natural beauty of the land. With exuberance we sent the preliminary drawings to our clients for what we hoped would be appreciative acceptance. They wrote back saying please design a more ordinary house. From the pinnacle of expectation to the racks of rejection. The lives of an architect! The original design is shown in Graphic 20.

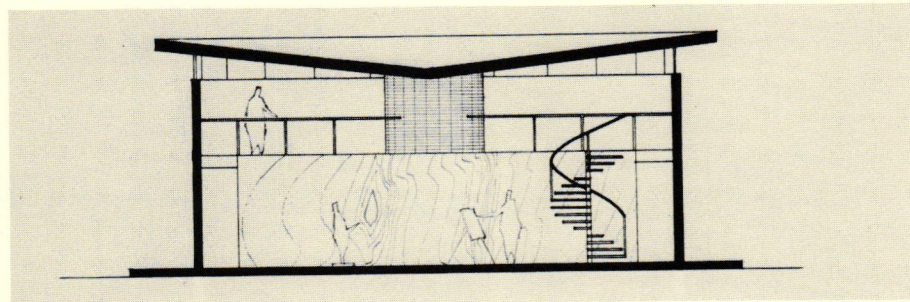
The year was 1960. Concurrent with Beth's leaving our partnership I formed a new firm, calling it "J. West, Architect, A.I.A. and Associates." The name proved to be overly optimistic; I was never able to expand sufficiently to include any associates. In any event, I moved into a new location at 536 South Pineapple Avenue. At that time the passenger trains were still operating upon the tracks in front of the office, but this was hardly a disadvantage. My two daughters loved to visit so they could place a penny on the track just prior to a train rolling by.

Since the much publicized school work of the '50s, public opinion became strongly critical of several of the new schools of that era. Singled out for disdain were Paul Rudolph's handsome new high schools, Sarasota and Riverview. Victor Lundy's new Alta Vista Elementary School also came under attack. In one of his last acts as chairman of the school board, Philip Hiss awarded my firm the design of the first new elementary school to be built in the '60s. Mark Hampton would design the new middle school. Through a grant from the Ford Foundation, we were both sent to Cambridge to visit with Robert Anderson, Ph.D. and others with the Harvard Graduate School of Education. In addition to seminars and briefings, we toured what Harvard considered the finest examples of public primary and secondary schools in Massachusetts. I returned to Sarasota buoyed up to design the finest "team-teaching" elementary school in the country. To make life even rosier, the superintendent had appointed Billy Reaves as principal of the new school so he could work with me during the design process. Billy was perhaps the finest elementary principal in Sarasota and fully committed to implement team teaching in his new school.

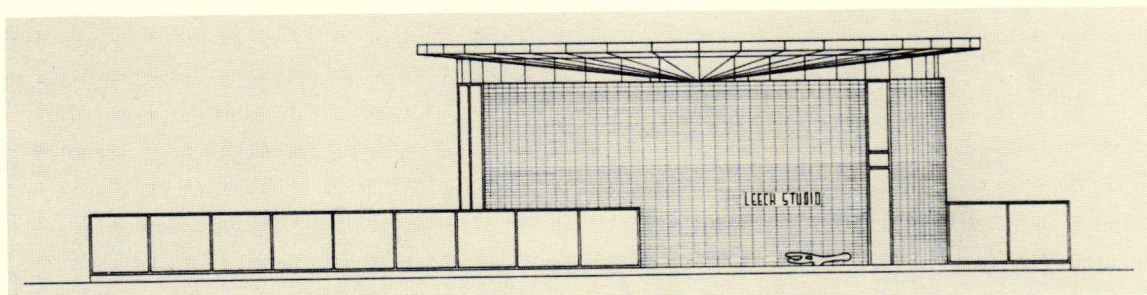
I designed a school like no other. Classrooms would have maximum flexibility both in size and groupings. The flow of students and faculty through the school would be free and easy. The library would be central and accessible to all. A combination theater



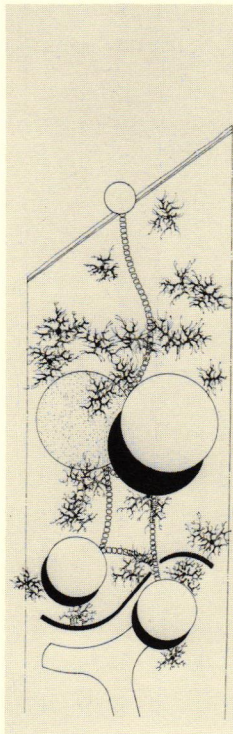
PLAN



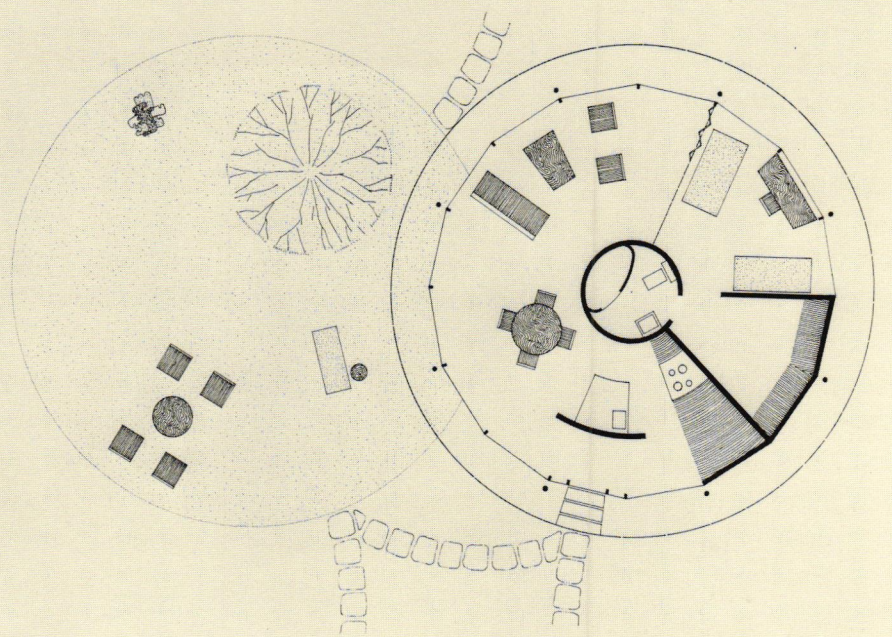
SCHEMATIC SECTION



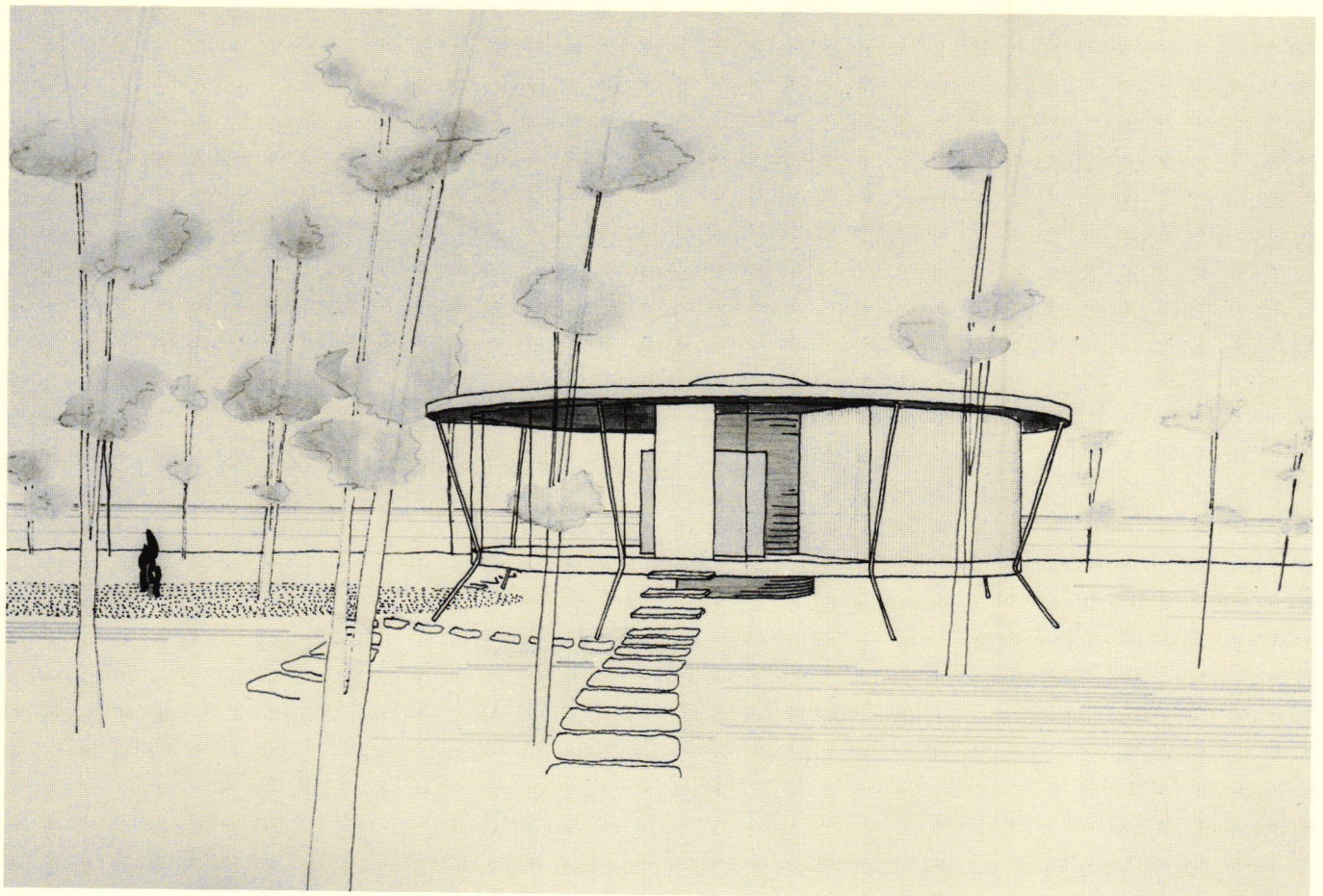
WEST ELEVATION



SITE PLAN



FLOOR PLAN



PERSPECTIVE

and dining hall would be used for presentations of all media, creating excitement for learning. Teachers would plan their activities in teams or groups to best utilize their own individual talents. Depending on the individual requirements of the students, classes could be combined or reduced. We built a model which looked more like a combination of circus tents than a school. See Graphic 21.

I was visited by one of the new school board members who intimated that the school board had enough of unique looking buildings; for God's sake, don't rock the boat! The board would not accept the design unless it was "toned down." Philip Hiss was no longer on the board but he was still influential or so I believed. I arranged a private showing for Phil, who was also a friend, enlisting his aid toward the approval of the preliminary plans. He, too, was unenthusiastic. Back to the drawing board.

The Tuttle School which was finally built came in well under the budget and the Sarasota School Board was pleased, the public appeased. Team teaching was still encouraged through flexible design. Principal Reaves followed through and during his tenure the Tuttle Elementary School became one of the finest team-teaching examples in the county. He later used both the school and its design process as the subject of a presentation which he conducted throughout the Southeast. But as he later admitted, a great opportunity was lost because the original design was not built. The final design is shown in Graphic 22.

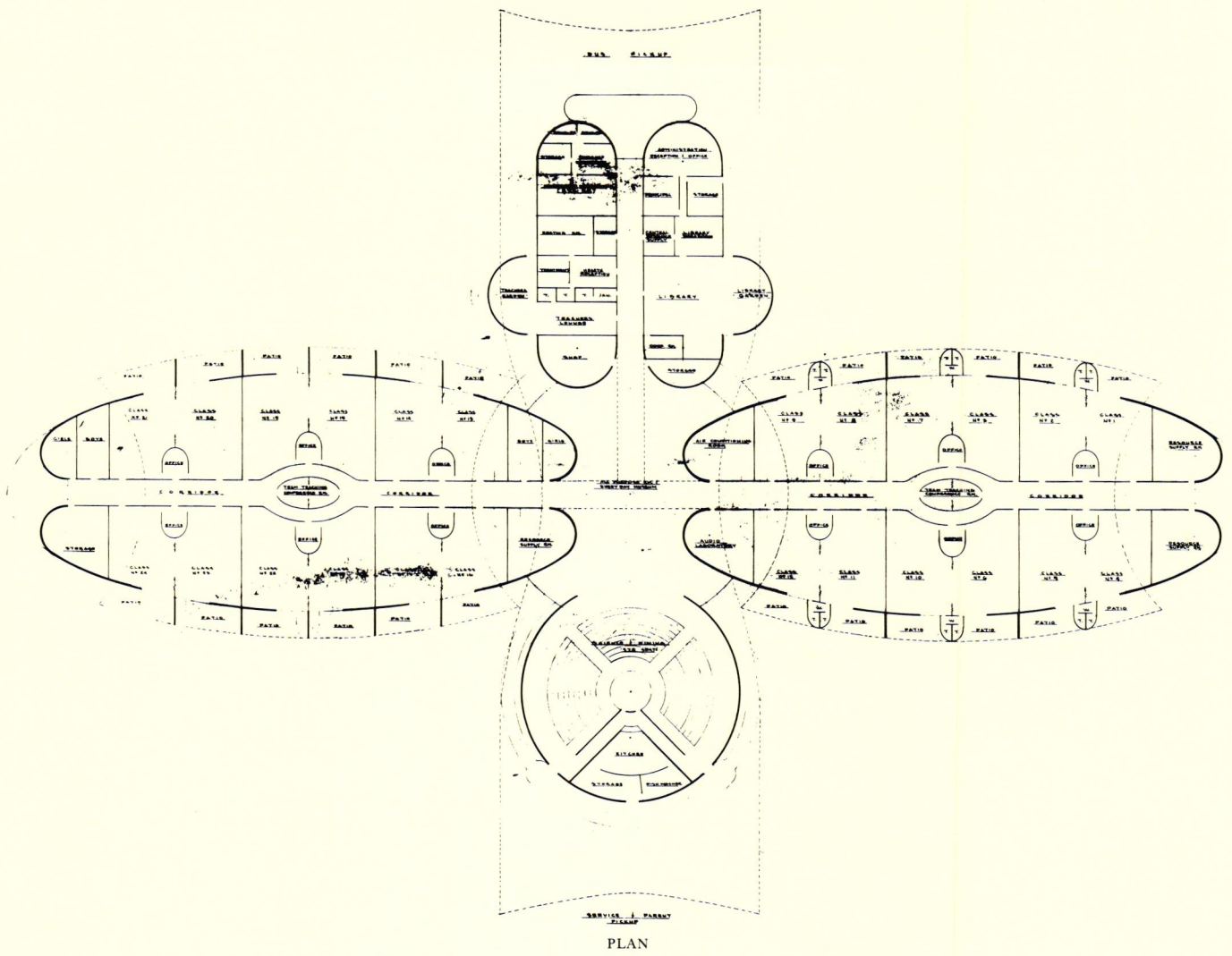
On August 17, 1960, our third daughter, Jessica, was born and we moved into our newly purchased old house located on Siesta Key overlooking Bayou Louise.

While the Sarasota area was booming in 1960, her downtown had been bypassed. Main Street stores were vacant and downtown property values had plummeted. The three local banks began a series of meetings on a presidential level to determine what could be done to reverse this appalling trend. My friend and past client, Martin Nadelman, advised that a plan to revitalize the downtown area was needed. He was given a go-ahead by the banks and I was given the job by Martin—for "out-of-pocket costs" of course. But it was an opportunity for which I had been waiting. At last a chance to integrate the city planning lessons I had learned from Christopher Turnard at Yale: urban design on a grand scale!

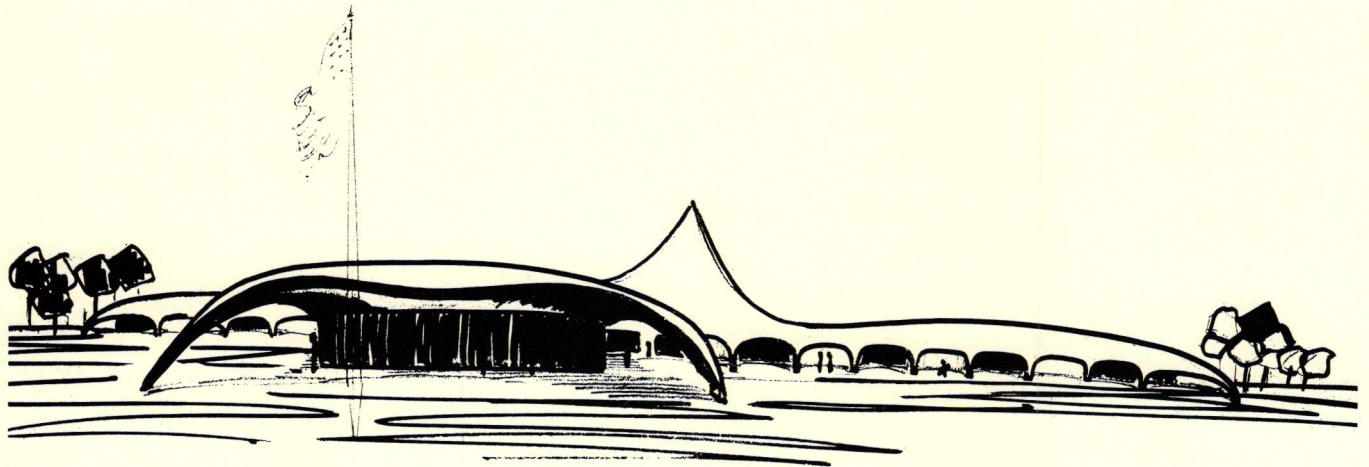
A new bayfront highway had literally separated Main Street from the waterfront and, in the transition from horse transportation to the automobile, both parking and vehicular circulation were lacking.

I chose lower Main Street for the focus of my design. It was the most decayed and had the greatest dramatic potential. My scheme was to separate vehicular and pedestrian circulation by lifting a new pedestrian plaza above the street level, connecting to a new island and marina in the bay by leaping over the bayfront highway; provide a circular multi-level retail mall and dome with parking and service on the lower level; and to stimulate investments by making the project a joint government/private enterprise endeavor with the city building a new city hall tower and convention center/concert hall, and the private sector building a new hotel tower, marina and shopping mall.

We completed our preliminary design and we were given a green light to build a model! The model was 25 feet long with electrified people movers and all the trim-



PLAN



SKETCH

mings. It was placed in an empty store on Main Street.

A consulting firm from Miami was retained to conduct an economic feasibility study. The results were enthusiastic.

So what happened? The three bank presidents concluded that my scheme was too extravagant. They hired a New York architect who specialized in shopping centers to produce new preliminary studies. (While he was in Sarasota we conferred: he told me, eye-to-eye, that he could bury me.)

His new scheme was a typical strip center, stripped of beauty, stripped of vision and stripped of any chance whatsoever of exciting the kind of community support such a project must have to be at all viable. I called our project "Main Street Revisited." While the final drawings are lost, the preliminary studies and photographs of the model are shown in Graphic 23.

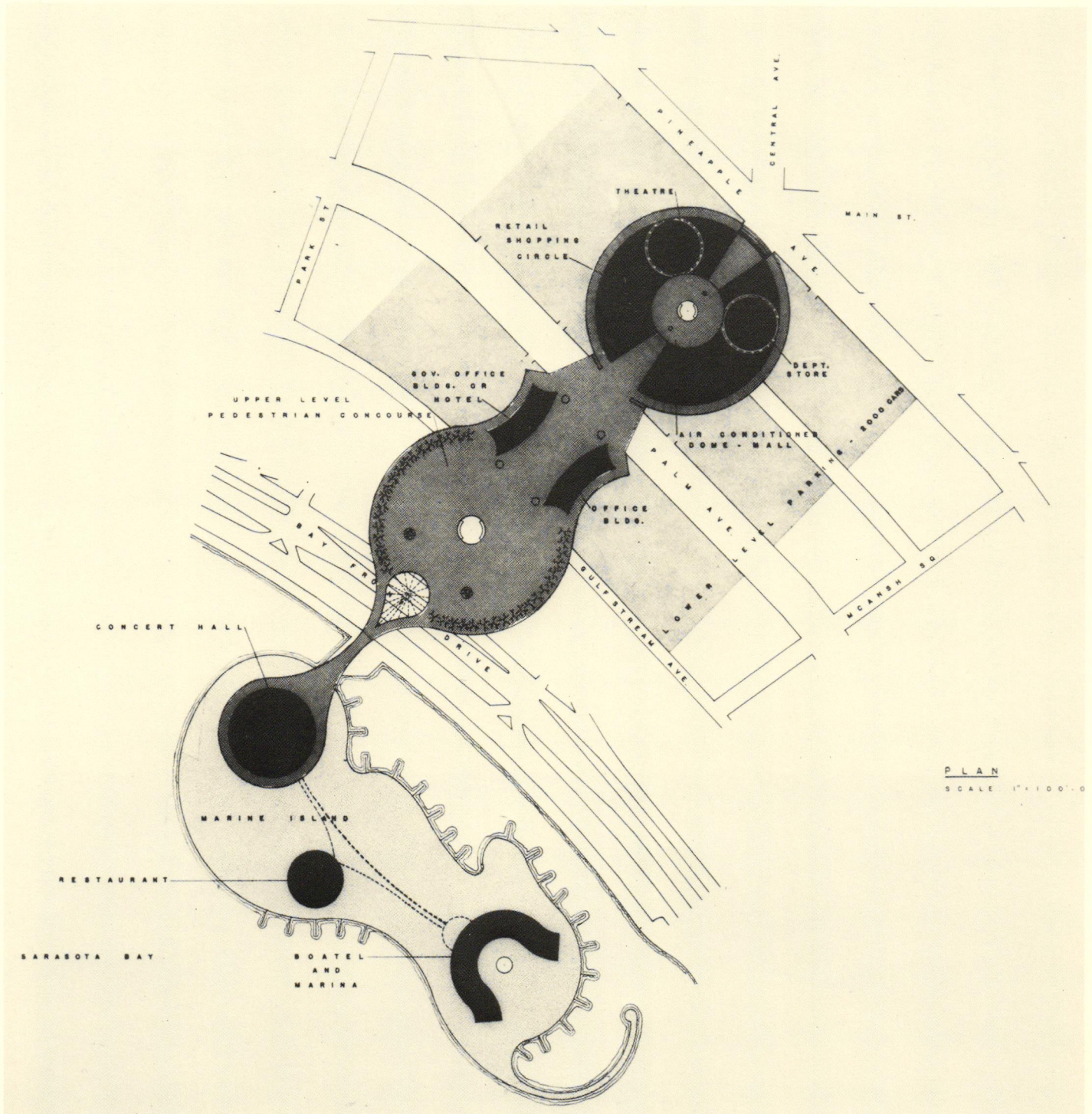
Some of my frustration with the Tuttle Elementary School experience was mitigated by my entry in the Fallout Shelter School Competition, which I entered in 1962. I presume that the jurors were not looking for a progressive educational concept. However it gave me the opportunity to include several educational design concepts which I had been working on during the early scheme for Tuttle School. This project is shown in Graphic 24.

After serving for many years on the Sarasota County Planning Board, I was appointed (no doubt through the good offices of Ken Thompson, city manager and friend) to the City of Sarasota Planning Board, in 1962.

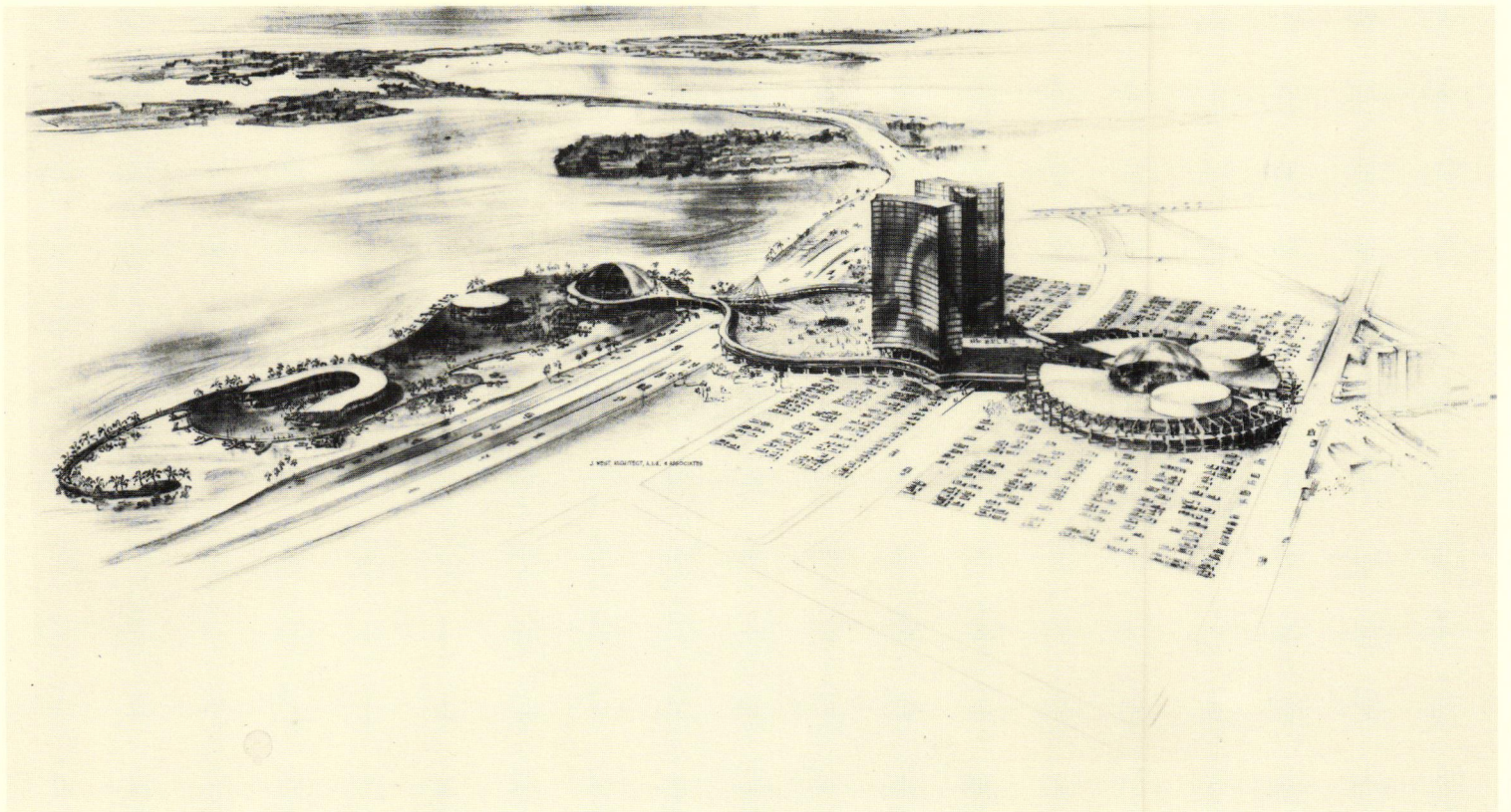
At this time, when our finances were once again at the bottom, I was asked to design a camp in DeSoto County for the Gulf Coast Girl Scout Council. It was an unusually varied and beautiful site overlooking the Peace River. The design and construction of Camp Chanyatah (as it came to be called) was one of my happiest interludes or, more accurately, series of interludes.

It is the custom in building projects for all of the people who work on the construction to visit the site with their families from time to time, either late in the day or on weekends. I believe this is especially so with architects because subconsciously we believe that until our client takes possession it is really our own. And so, Camp Chanyatah is filled with memories of visitations: solitary, with my children and finally, after the death of my wife, with my new love and future wife Marjorie. Some of the buildings are shown in Graphic 25.

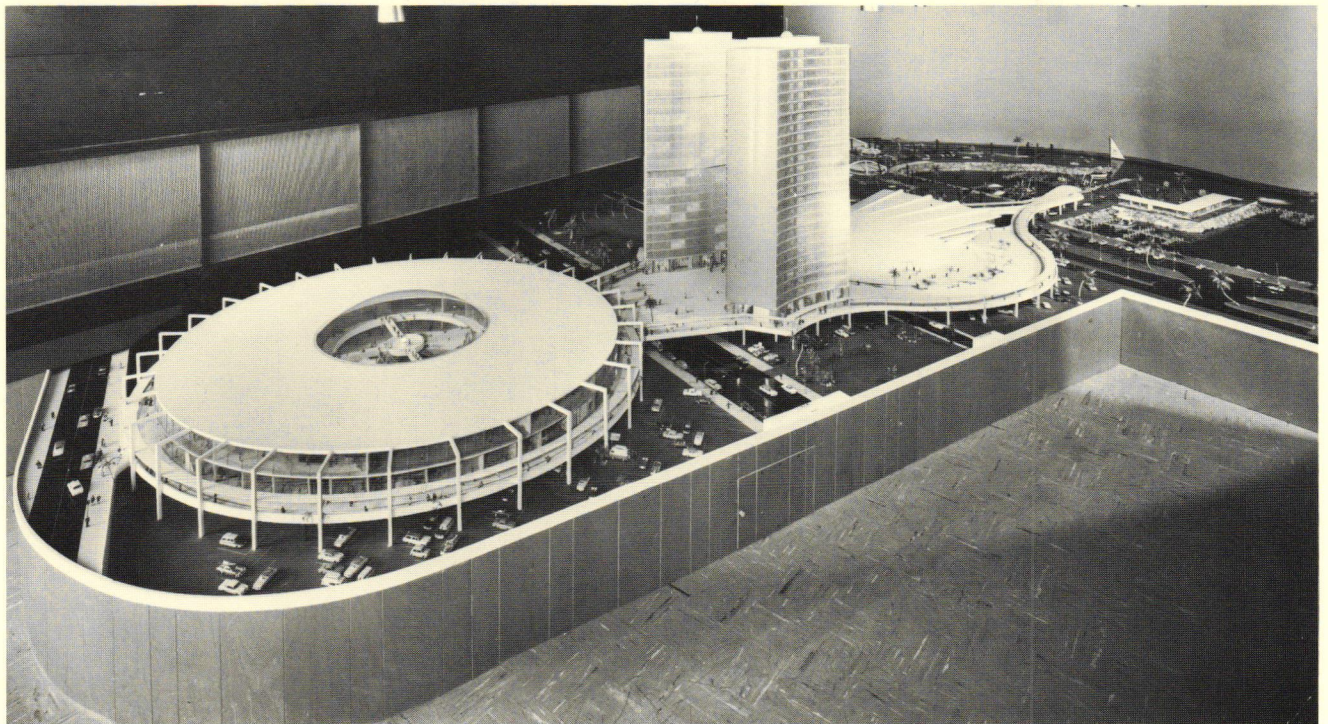
John Wood and his wife had purchased a lot on Bird Key in Sarasota with a view to the south toward Big Pass, a major channel between Sarasota Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. It was a wonderful site and an exciting commission. In my preliminary presentation (Graphic 26) I conceived of a single-story series of vaults set on an axis with the great view and orientation southward to Big Pass. With my draftsman Ted Pinard, we prepared drawings and a perspective and our expectations were high. The Woods flatly rejected our design as "too modern." Another life slipped through God's giant sieve. We regrouped and I launched a completely new design with a curvilinear roof of cedar shakes supported by laminated wood beams based upon a somewhat similar plan. The Woods approved and authorized the preparation of working drawings and specifica-



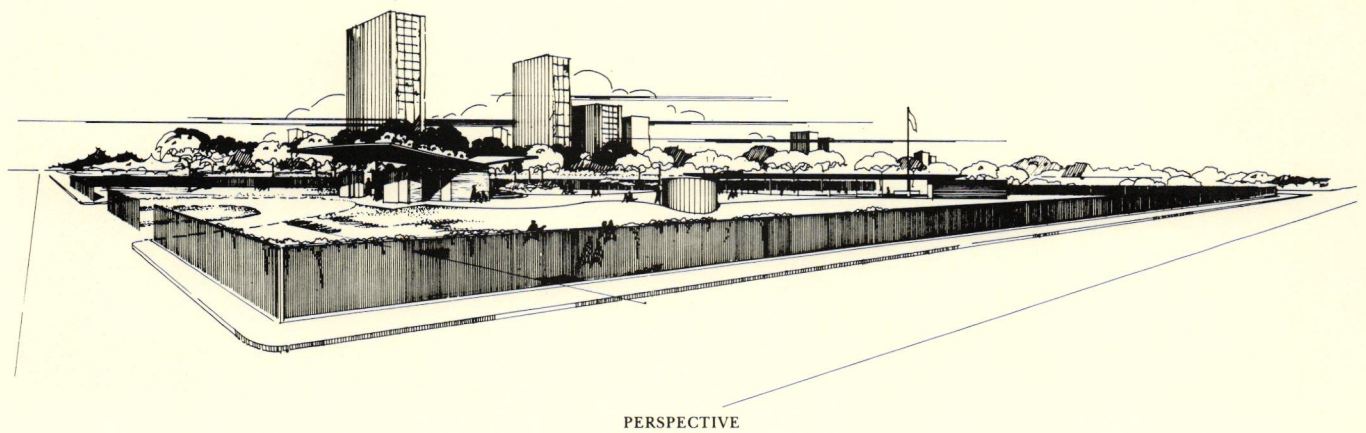
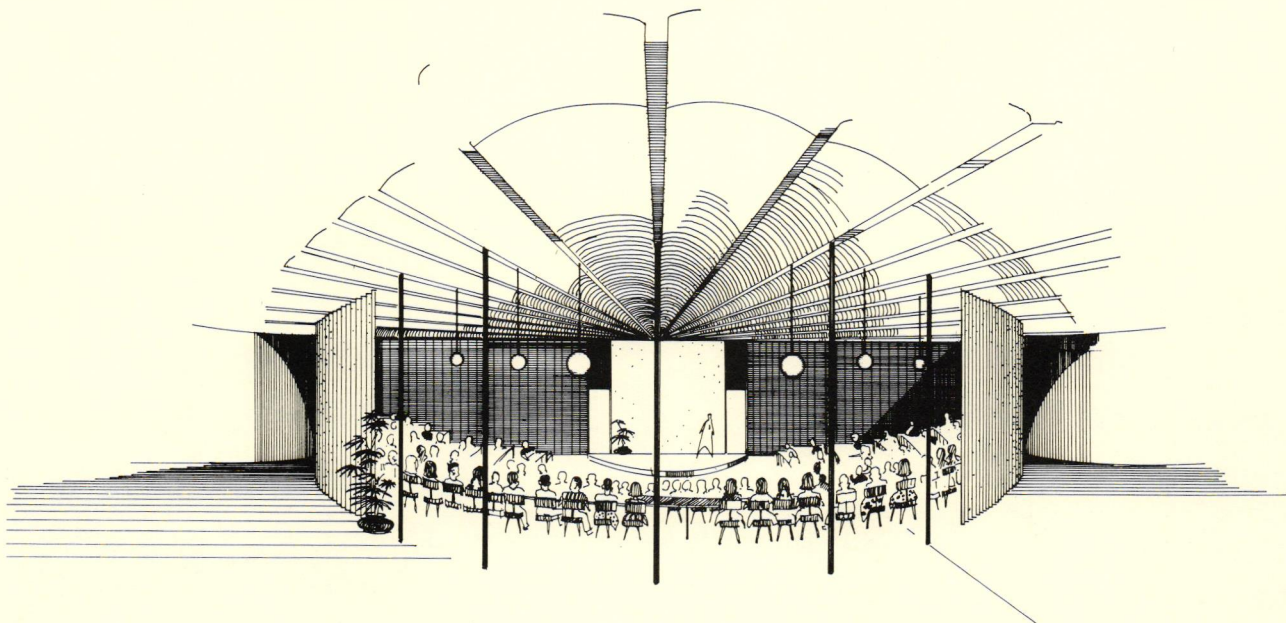
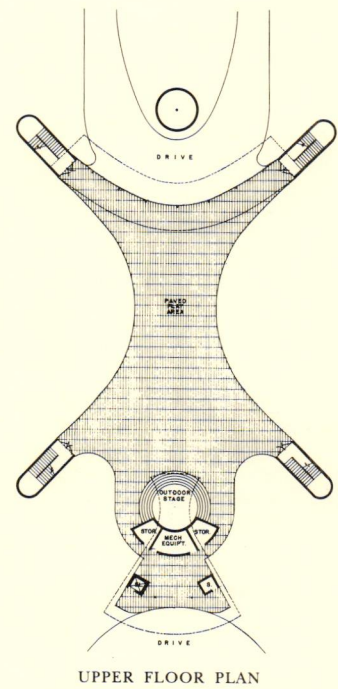
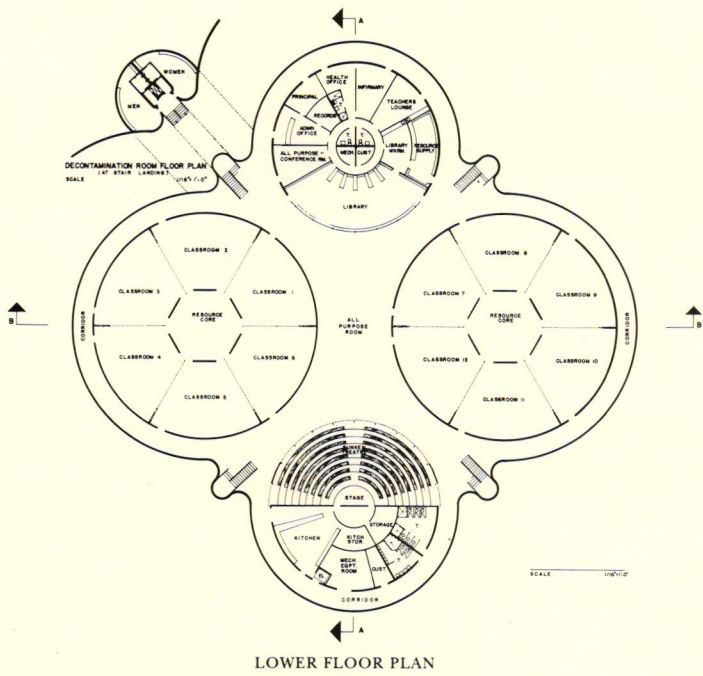
SCHEMATIC PLAN

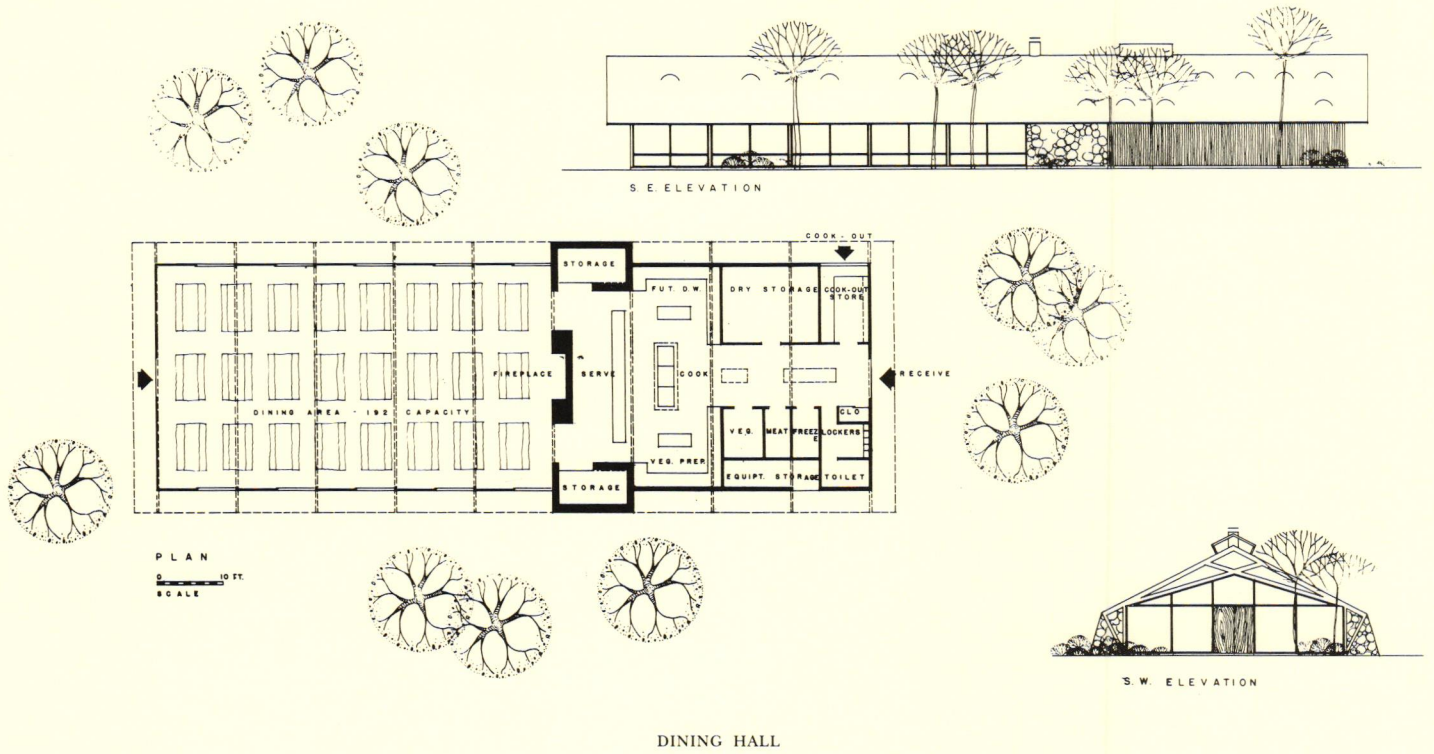


PERSPECTIVE



PHOTOGRAPH OF MODEL





DINING HALL



PHOTOGRAPH OF PRIVY

tions! We received competitive bids and the lowest bid was twenty percent over budget. Time for confessions. My clients (who had now become friends) said they really wished to build a more “traditional” home; they had accepted the second design only because they did not wish to injure my feelings. Once more I heard the refrain, “Please design a new and more ordinary house.” T.L.O.A.A.

They paid for the work which was wasted. I designed a third, more “ordinary” house and through it all, eating away at my soul, was my vow to be an uncompromising architect regardless of the circumstances. The project was completed below budget, which the Woods loved. It helped feed my wife and children for a while.

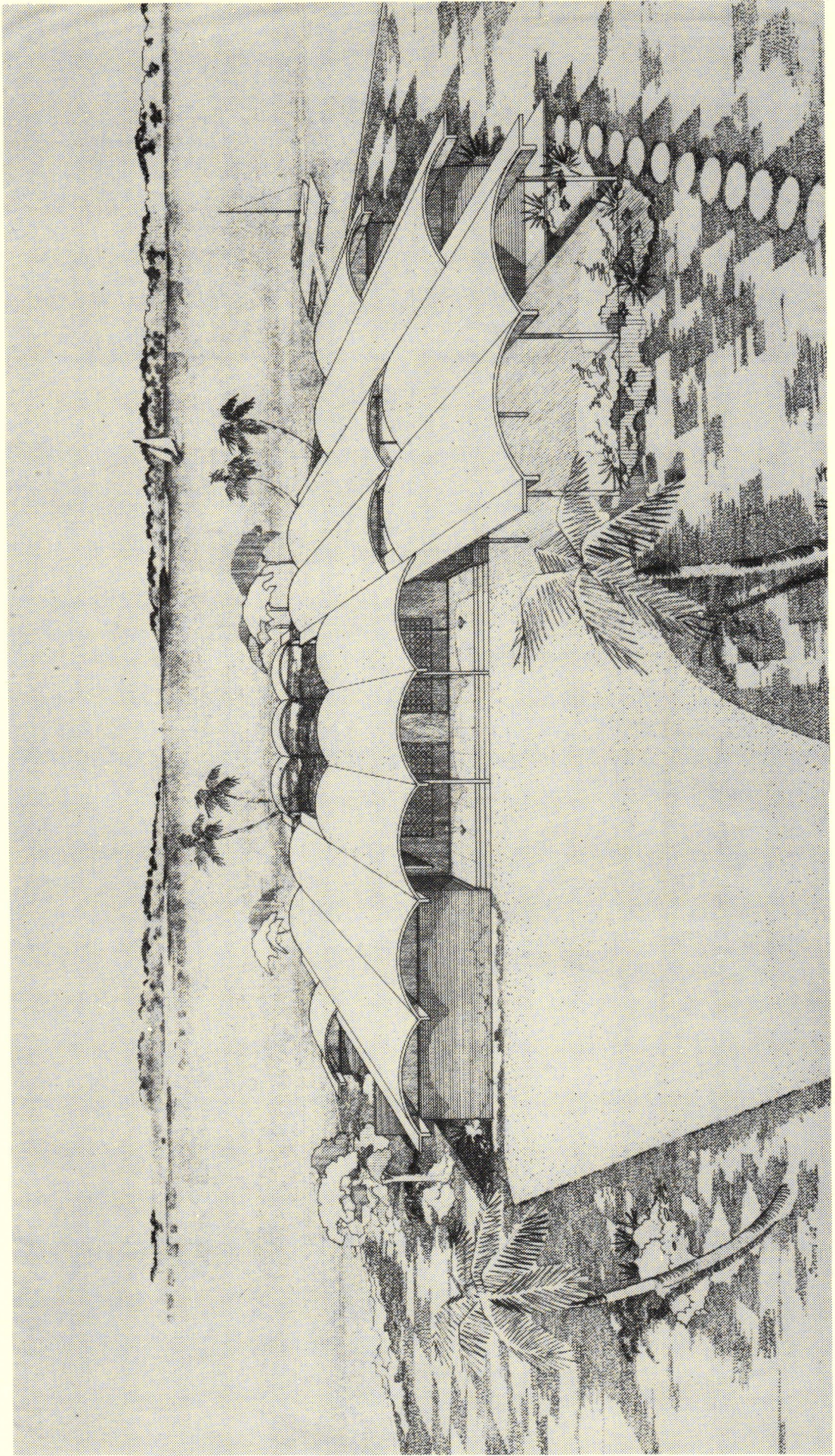
I had long felt an inner need to design curvilinear structures; arches and domes had always excited me, be it cathedral or aqueduct. But in 1964 my clients expected me to build homes for about twelve dollars per square foot: a very modest budget indeed. And so I began experimenting with the “warped plane”—a curvilinear surface formed by a series of straight lines. My first opportunity came with a commission to design a home for William Weld and his wife. Their site was on Siesta Key and overlooked Sarasota Bay to the northeast. The contractor didn’t realize that the roof was rounded until it was up. We met the twelve-dollar budget and the Welds were delighted with their unique home. (Graphic 27.)

About the same time as the Weld residence, Arvida Corporation, the developer of Bird Key, was anxious to encourage a more rapid development of their Key subdivision. They asked four local architects to prepare designs for model homes, fully furnished, to be exhibited and finally sold.

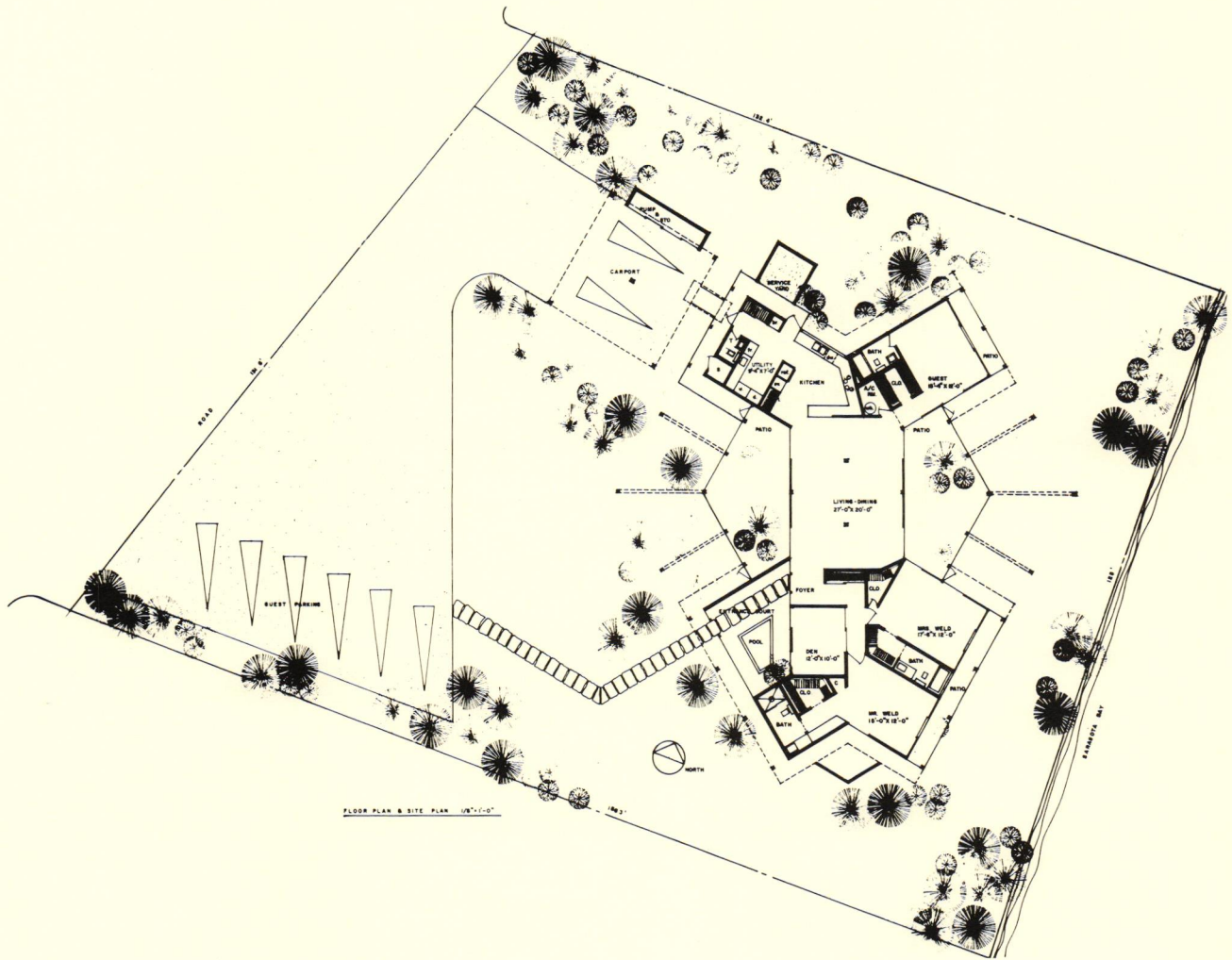
I called my design the Courtyard House and I had the very real pleasure of working with Terry Rowe, a local interior designer of talent and integrity. The design won a “Homes for Better Living Award” and was widely published. (Graphic 28.) Unfortunately, the Arvida Corporation experienced some difficulty in selling the Courtyard House. I never again was retained by the Arvida Corporation, one of our most important architectural patrons in Florida. T.L.O.A.A.

When I was designing the Landmark Hotel, I had retained Allan Ozell, a structural engineer originally from Turkey. He designed all of the structural systems which were beyond the scope of my own firm. At that time a young engineer, Albert Conyers worked for Allan in Sarasota. Albert (Al) later became chief engineer for William Daugherty in Lake City, Florida, a highway and bridge engineering firm.

In 1964 Daugherty wished to build an office building for his firm in Lake City. Al recommended me. Daugherty was a dynamic entrepreneur and I was surely dazzled by his wish to build nothing but the best. I was pleased to oblige. His site was outside of the small town, flat — essentially rural but with a lovely background of pine trees. Due to possible flooding problems we designed, at Bill’s suggestion, a building raised about three and a half feet above grade. I seized upon the rigid-frame truss as a spanning means. We built a model and Daugherty was very impressed until he realized how much it might cost. And so I designed a more economical structure. Once again, Terry Rowe collaborated with me on the interior design and the results are depicted in Graphic 29.

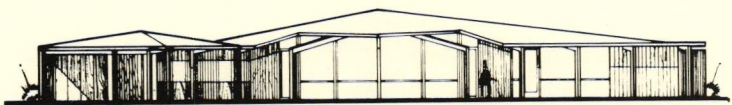


PERSPECTIVE

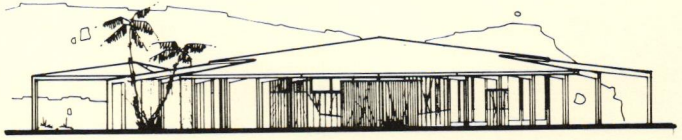


FLOOR PLAN & SITE PLAN 1/8"=1'-0"

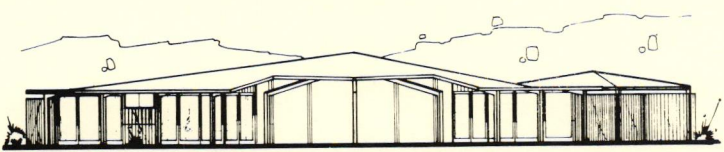
PLAN



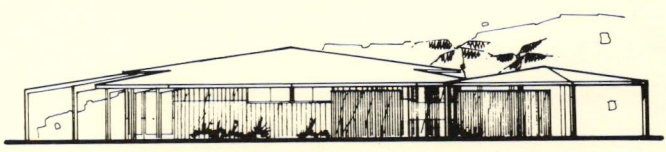
WEST ELEVATION 1/8"=1'-0"



SOUTH ELEVATION 1/8"=1'-0"

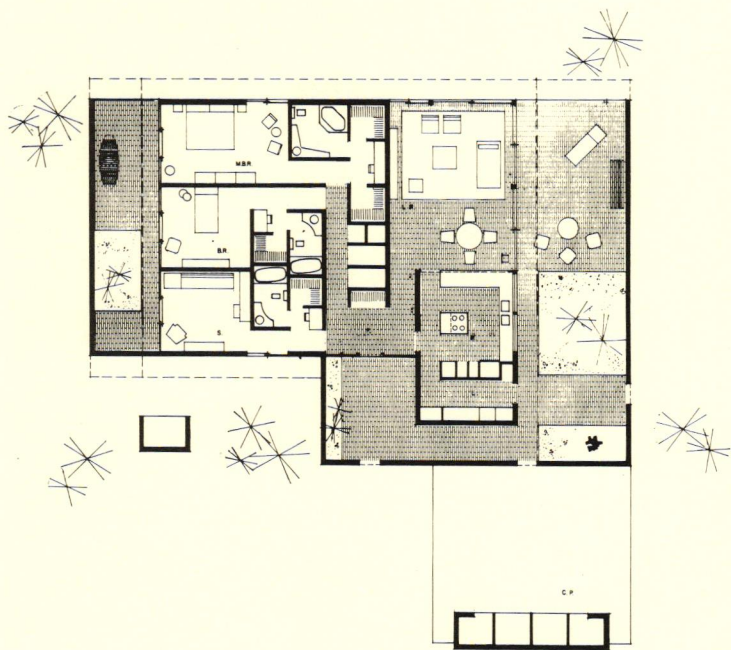


EAST ELEVATION 1/8"=1'-0"



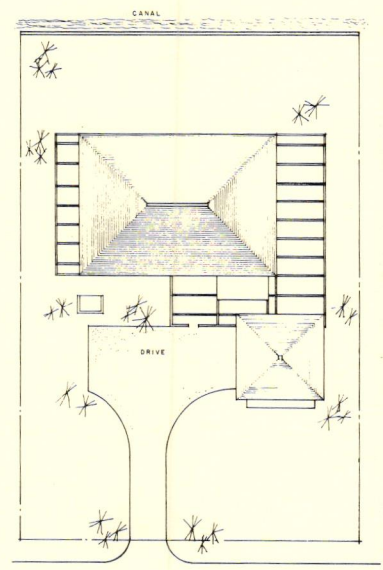
NORTH ELEVATION 1/8"=1'-0"

ELEVATIONS



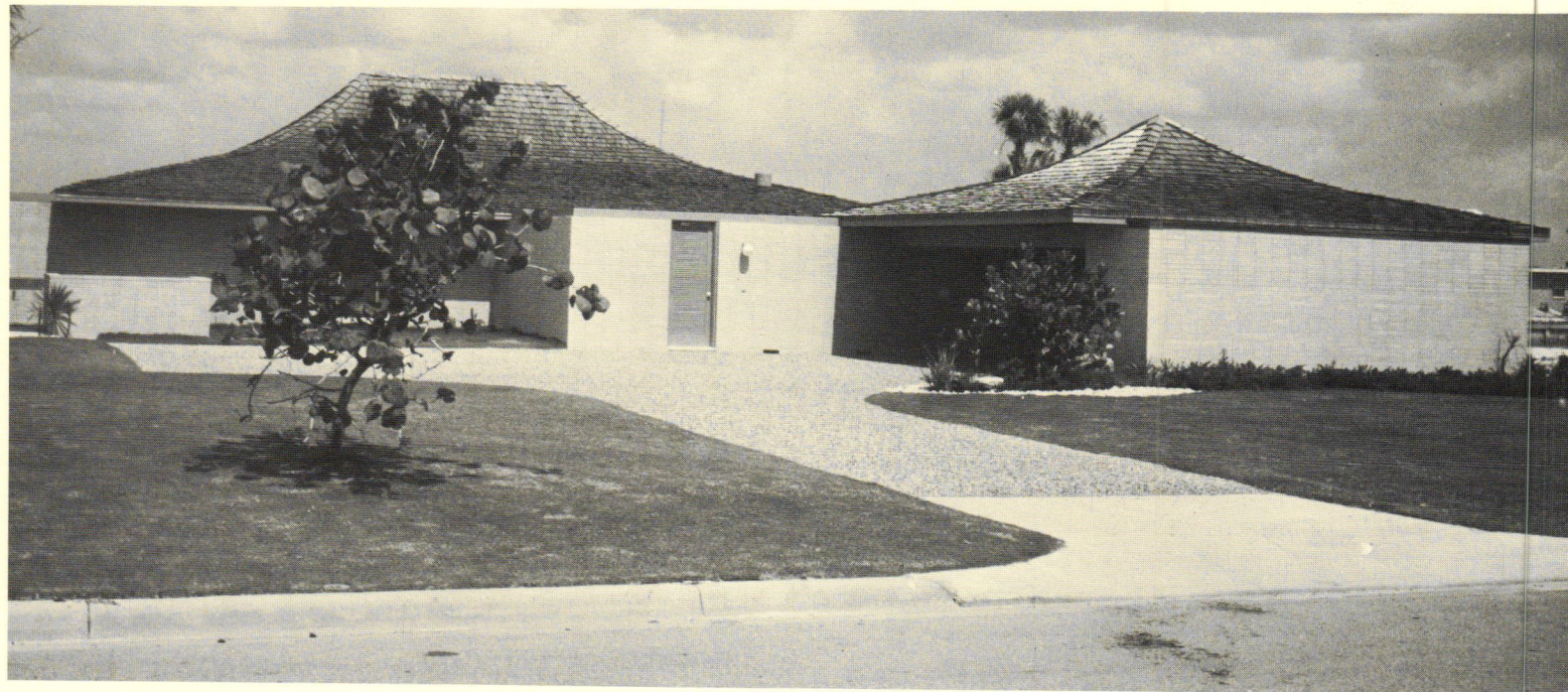
FLOOR PLAN 1/8"=1'-0"
 0 5 10 15 20

PLAN

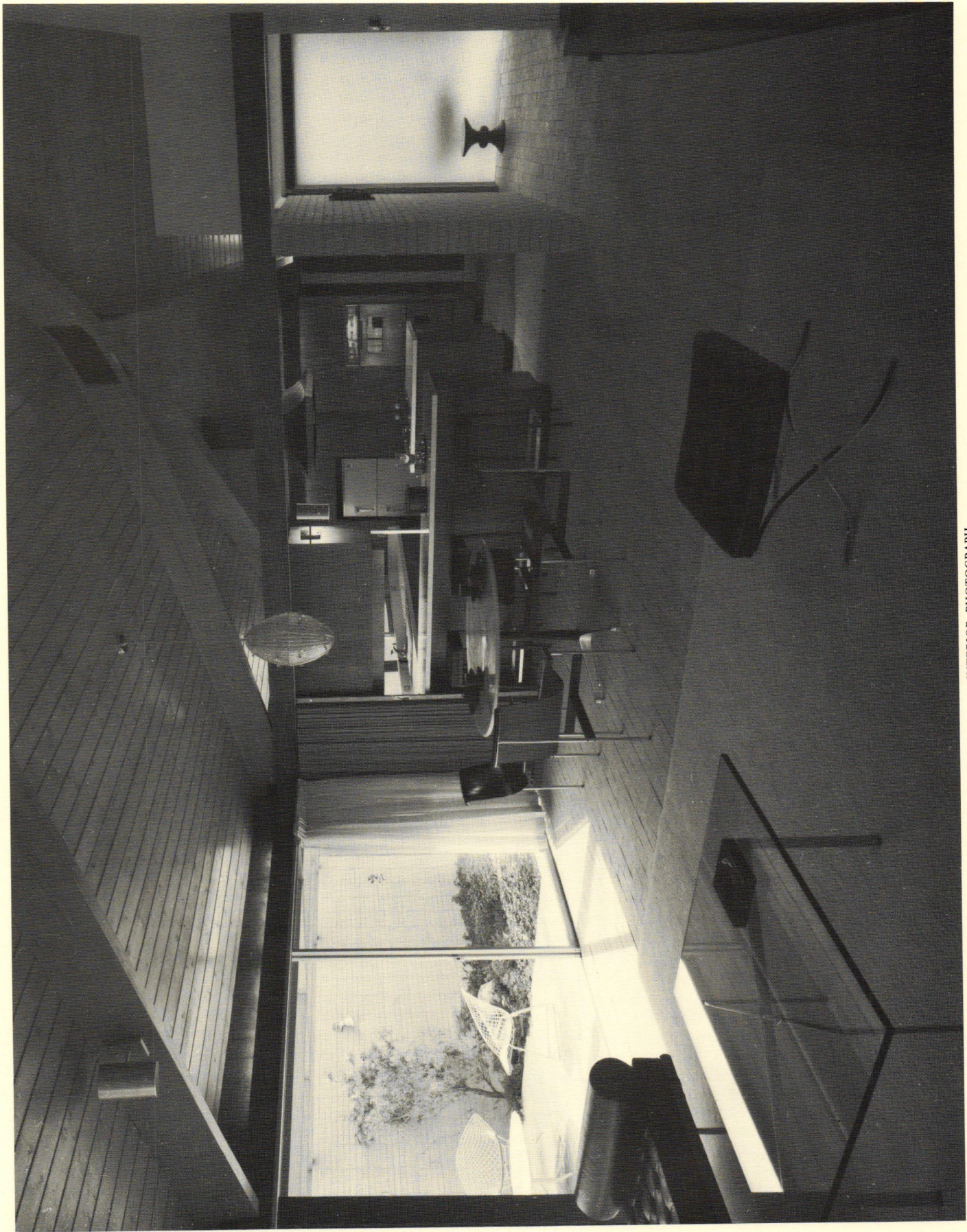


PLOT PLAN 1/8"=1'-0"
 0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40

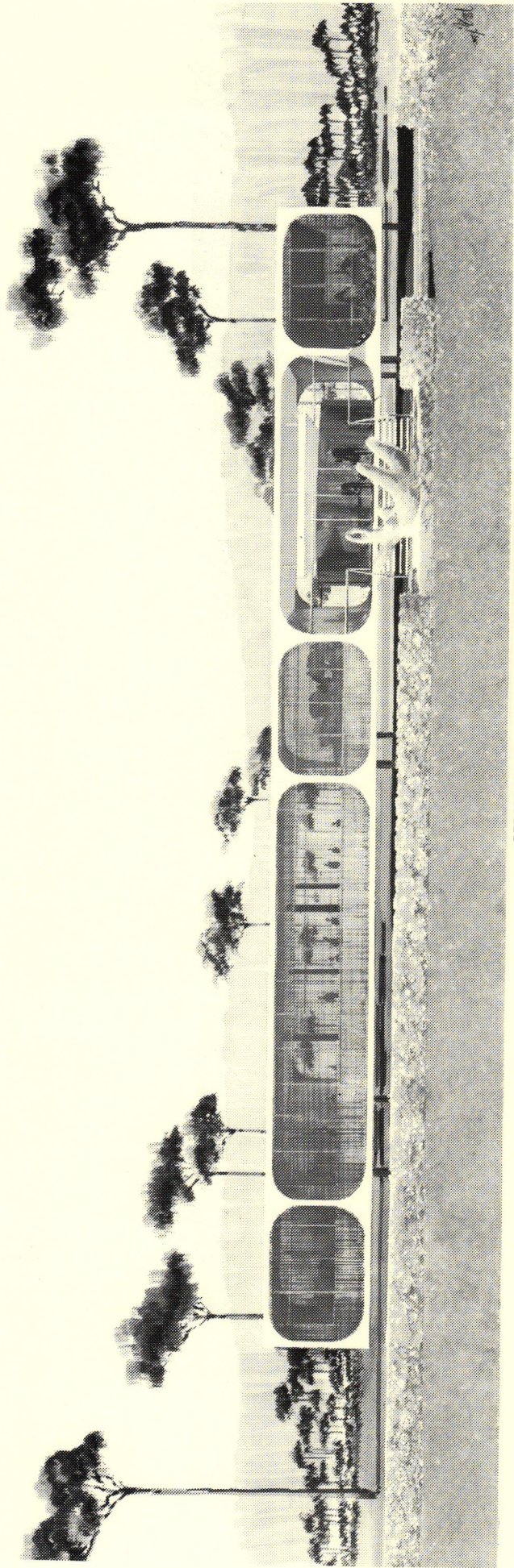
SITE PLAN



EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPH



INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPH



PERSPECTIVE

Meantime, Bill Daugherty conjured up the idea of forming a new architectural/engineering firm to be called West, Conyers and Daugherty/Architects and Engineers. His expectations for the firm dwarfed Skidmore, Owings and Merrill but, in actuality, only one commission materialized: the State Exchange Bank in Lake City. Therein lies the story of how I became the architect of a pseudo-colonial bank.

The major shareholders of the State Exchange Bank were its president and attorney. Their telephone conversations constituted board meetings and they informed me that they wished to build a new Williamsburg-style colonial bank in downtown Lake City. With the courage of my convictions (but not much common sense) I offered them a sporting proposition: I would design a colonial and a contemporary bank and they could choose whichever design they preferred. Needless to say, they chose the pseudo-colonial and I became the embarrassed architect. T.L.O.A.A.

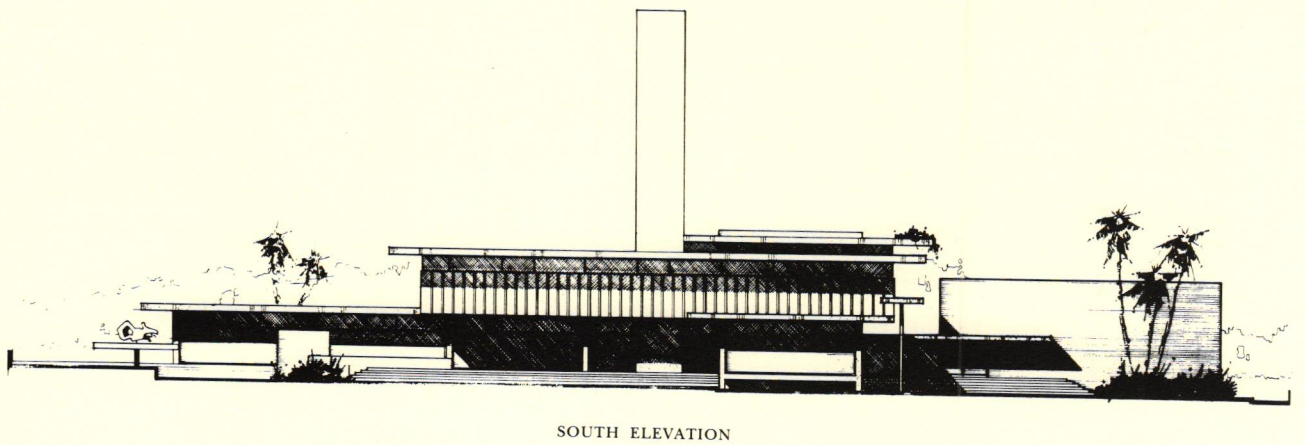
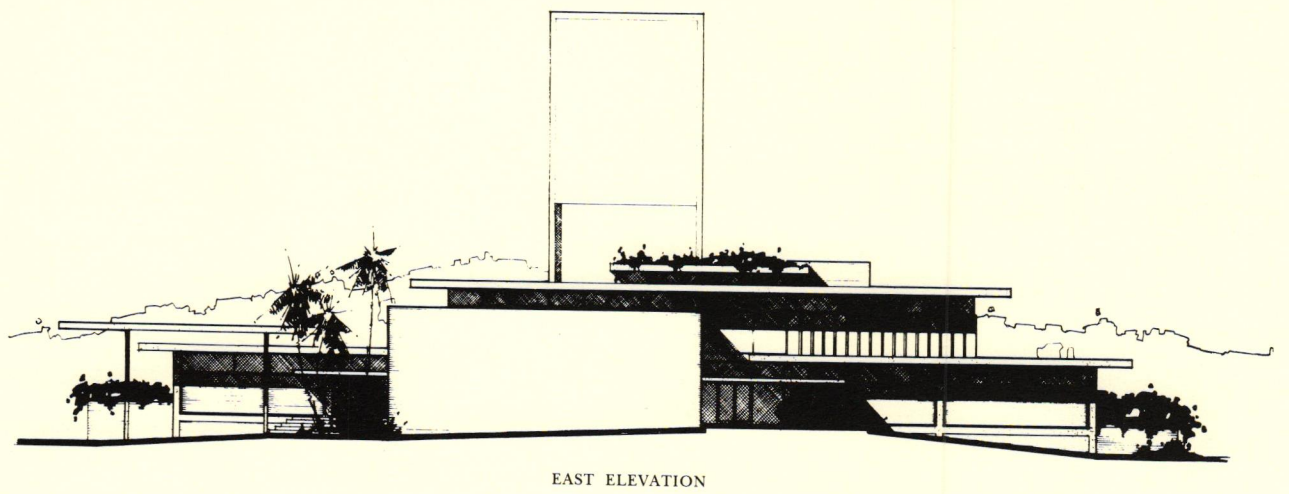
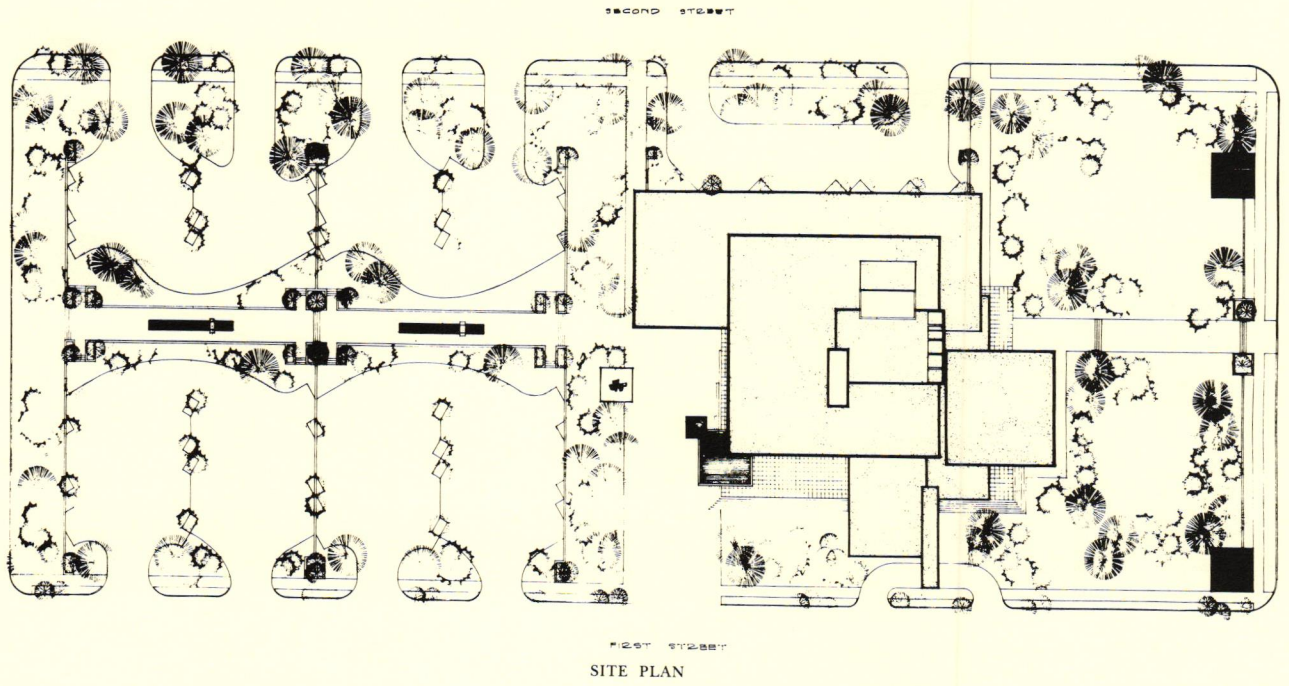
In 1965 I was awarded the contract to design a new city hall for Sarasota. The budget was a million dollars, not an inconsiderable sum in those days. The site was a level downtown area with neither a view nor even an interesting tree. I envisioned a low series of connected geometric shapes and gardens all connected to a paved plaza with sculpture and pools—and with the site lifted to provide a commanding aspect. It included a clock tower and my concept was for it to be built of brick, concrete and copper to last a thousand years!

We constructed a model of the building and included adjacent portions of downtown, indicating opportunities to create “cut-through” malls and even a future parking structure using the air rights over an adjacent street. The design is shown in Graphic 30.

As my design progressed, so did the thinking of the City Commission. When we were finally ready to go out for bids in 1966, the city had utilized bond monies to purchase additional property until the new City Hall site had become an entire city block. This was a farsighted move and one which I supported; but it was not accompanied with the injection of additional capital to build the new building. Instead the budget was reduced from \$1 million to \$600,000. The lowest bid received was \$840,000 and I was told that the budget could not be increased nor could the size of the building be reduced. The architect could not eat or sleep.

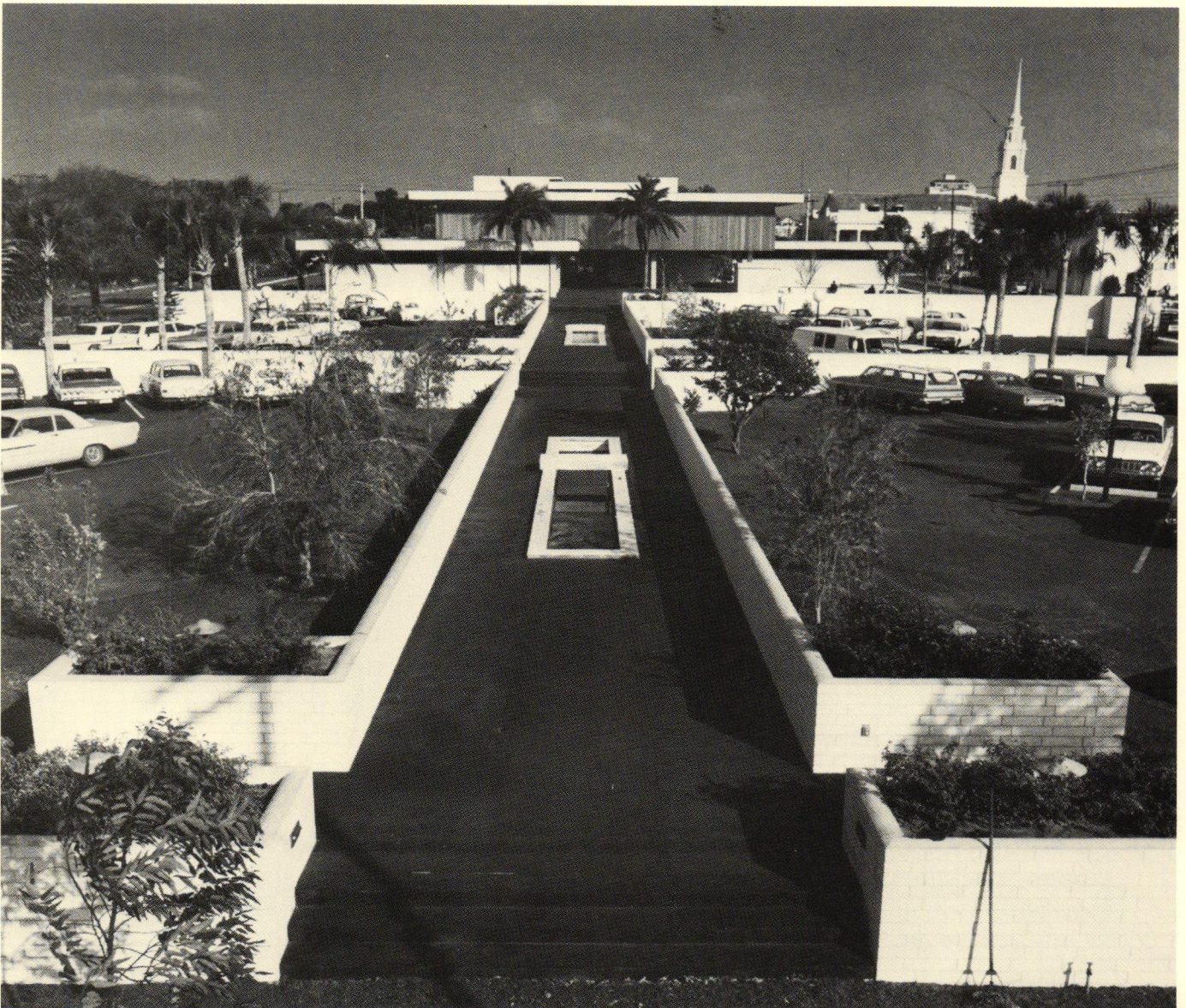
The low bidder, Gene Simmons, was a local contractor and friend. It was he who made the suggestion to substitute concrete block for the brick and who worked closely with me in the complete revision of drawings and specifications to lower the cost by 40 percent. The building was built a far cry from the original design but still retained many of the original concepts. Within one year after completion (in 1967) a city commissioner fell into one of the pools and ordered the pools in the east-west walkway filled with concrete.

Aspects of the City Hall project were heartbreaking; but not the major sculpture. I had included a cash allowance for sculpture which I considered a major part of the design. I chose my friend Jack Cartlidge, an extremely talented and less than fully appreciated local sculptor, who produced a \$100,000 monumental sculpture in copper for \$4,000. The sculpture depicted the five city commissioners and was entitled “Nobody’s Listening.” No one understood the delicious humor except the sculptor, the architect and Ken Thompson, the city manager. Thank goodness! T.L.O.A.A.





PERSPECTIVE



PHOTOGRAPH

In 1965 I was approached by Col. Rolland W. Sellew, also a local architect and Yale graduate, to joint venture with him in the low-income housing program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.). Sellew was to be responsible for securing the commissions, dealing with H.U.D. and making the bulk of the construction inspections. My firm would have the complete responsibility for design and the preparation of working drawings and specifications. As Sellew and West, Associated Architects, we designed and constructed projects in Tarpon Springs, Dunedin, Venice and Sarasota.

The objectives of government subsidized housing in this country have been commendable: to provide a decent housing environment for the poor until they can afford their own private housing. Unfortunately, the record of public-assisted housing has been to perpetuate the poverty class and to segregate it, thus forcing it to feed upon itself. I refer exclusively to family housing; elderly housing has by-and-large been far more successful.

From a sociological point of view, our original Tarpon Springs project was the most successful because it did not appear to be a "project." There we designed "sprinkle" housing; that is, we introduced one or two buildings at random intervals into an existing neighborhood. Our Dunedin project was a successful attempt to achieve high density single story dwelling units with private courtyards.

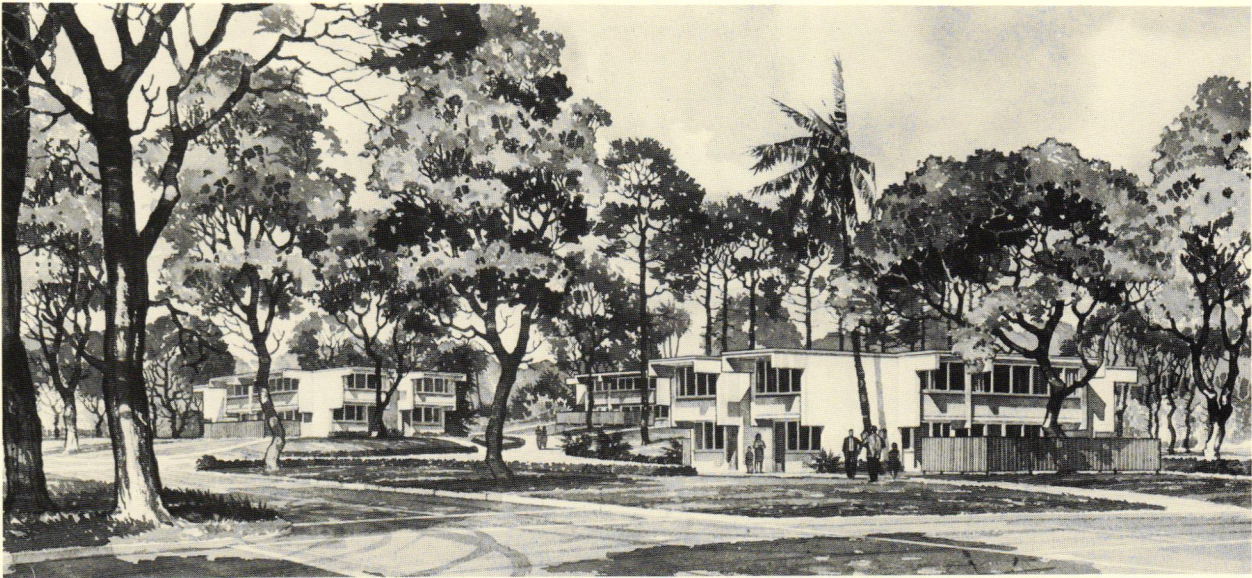
In Sarasota and Venice we utilized the two-story townhouse concept, placing the living-dining-kitchen area on the ground floor with the bedrooms on the second. Because the area required for the second story far exceeded that of the lower level, we were able to introduce sheltered patios for the living areas by creating a cantilevered second floor. This was an economical solution and also introduced drama.

In both the Sarasota and Venice projects all dwelling units were originally designed with overhangs. The elimination of these overhangs in order to reduce costs was a decision which I shall always regret. T.L.O.A.A. The housing projects of the Sellew and West Joint Venture are depicted in Graphic 31.

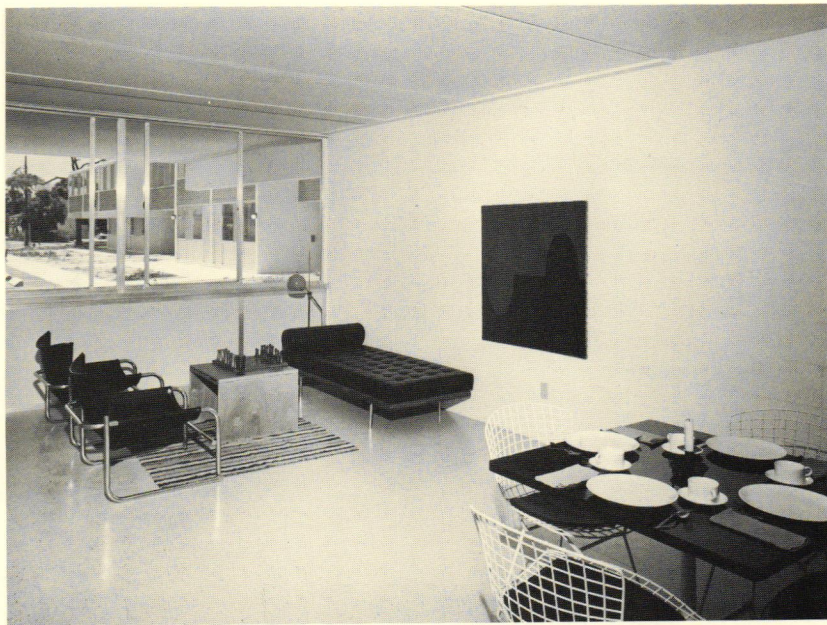
In 1966 I was asked to design a new headquarters building for the Sarasota County Chamber of Commerce. The site was a small 100' x 105' lot across the street from the City Hall site. With a tiny budget I wisely chose the same materials which were used to reduce costs on City Hall. A three-story scheme retained ample use of open space. The variation of volumes on each floor, I believe, brought considerable verve to the building. Terry Rowe, my collaborator on the interior design of City Hall, also worked on the Chamber of Commerce building. (Graphic 32.)

In this same year my tennis friend, Dr. Richard Vinton, asked me to design a home for him which would be built on a beautiful site overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. Richard's only instruction was, "We don't like to be hemmed in." To answer this criterion, I designed a multi-leveled house on stilts overlooking both the water and a large two and one-half story courtyard. They certainly never complained about feeling hemmed in. This house is shown in Graphic 33.

December 1, 1966, I invited Al Conyers to join me in a partnership to be called "West and Conyers/Architects and Engineers." He accepted. Al had already provided



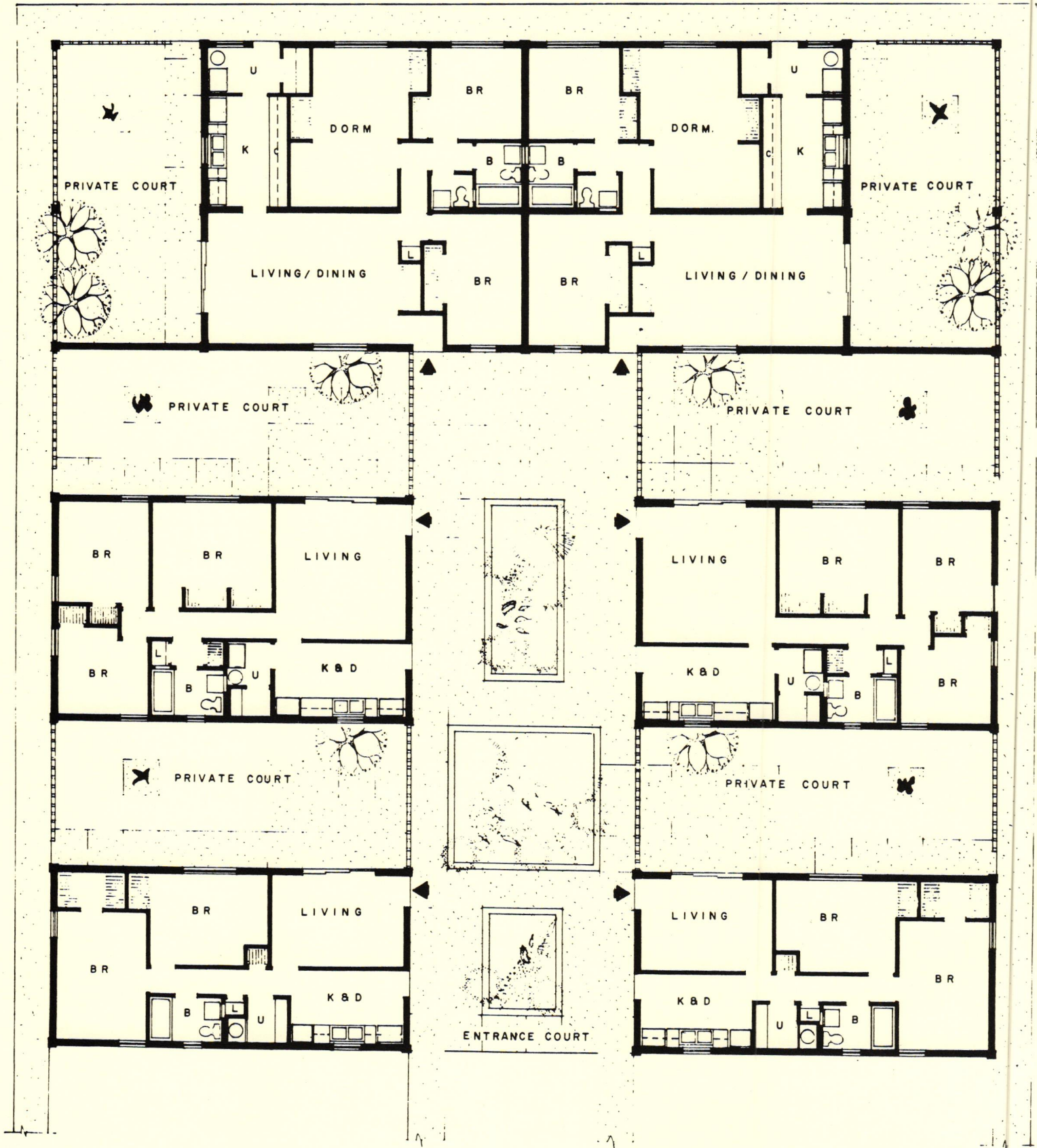
TARPON SPRINGS PROJECT PERSPECTIVE



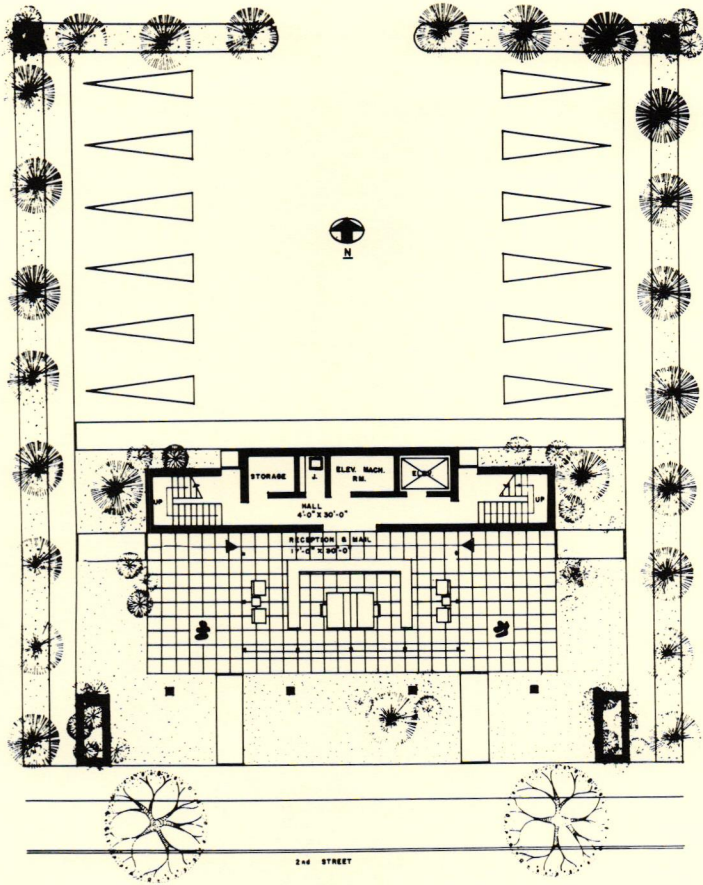
SARASOTA PROJECT INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPH



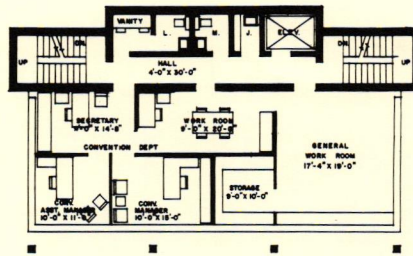
SARASOTA PROJECT PERSPECTIVE



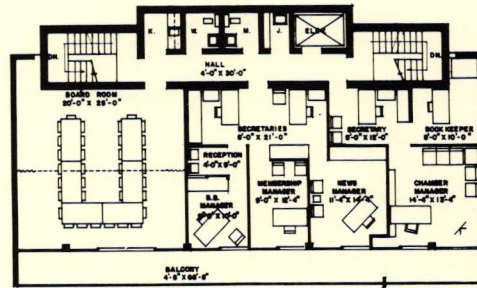
DUNEDIN PROJECT: PLAN



SITE PLAN



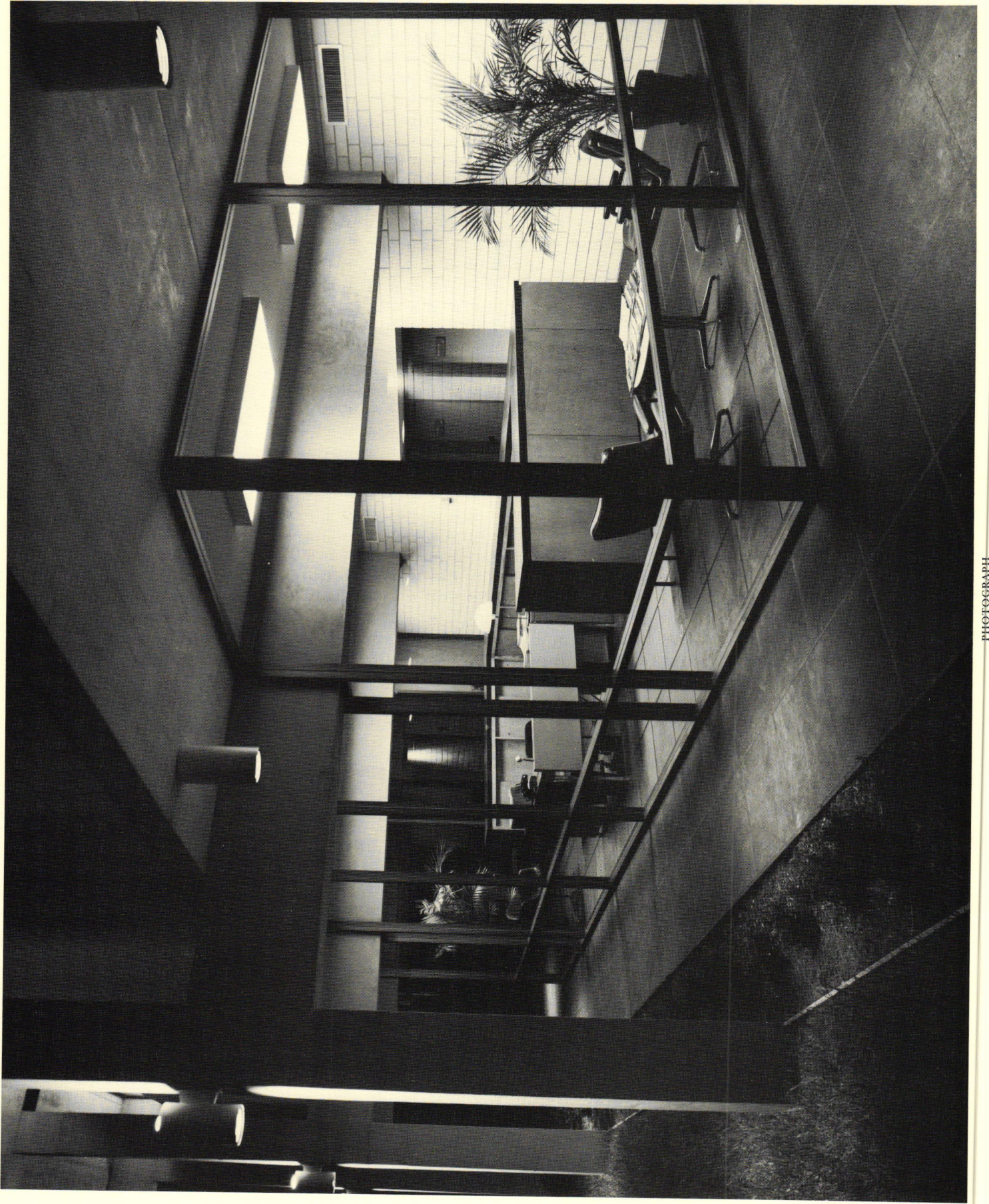
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



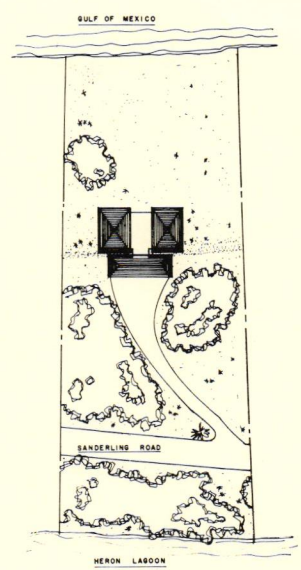
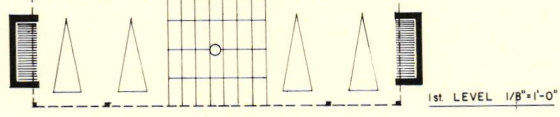
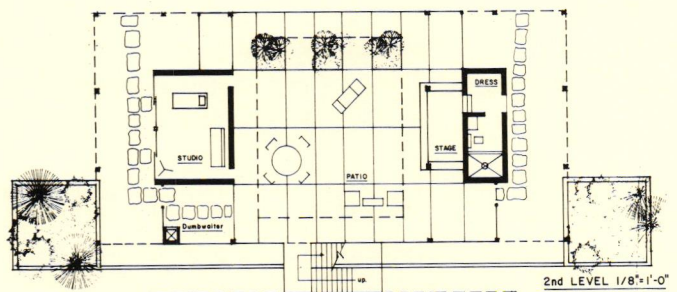
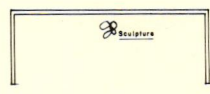
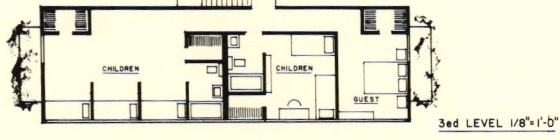
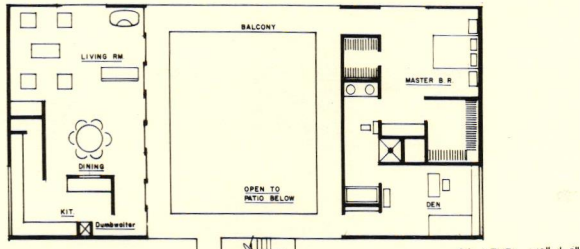
THIRD FLOOR PLAN



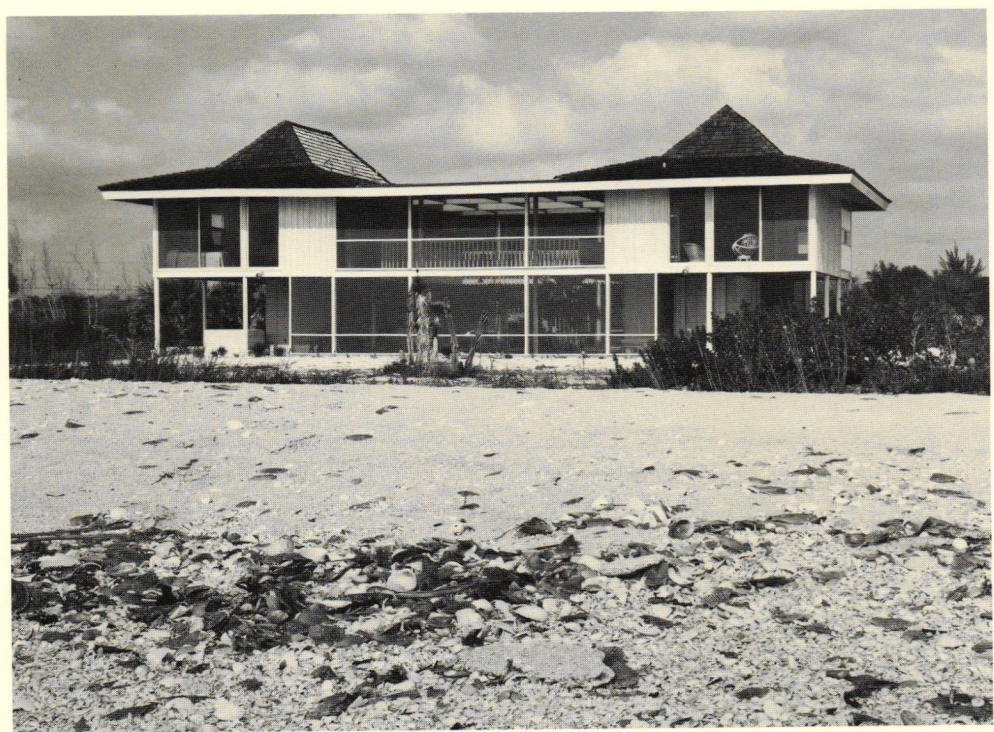
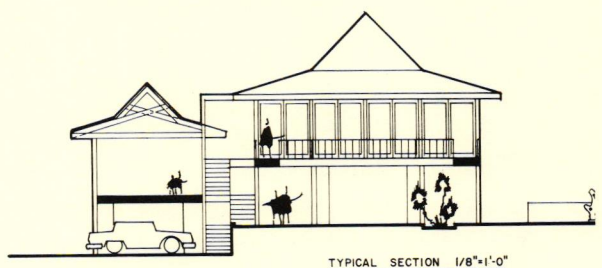
PHOTOGRAPH



PHOTOGRAPH



SITE PLAN 1"=50'



PHOTOGRAPH

the structural design for the Daugherty and Bank buildings in Lake City and I was much impressed by his work on City Hall.

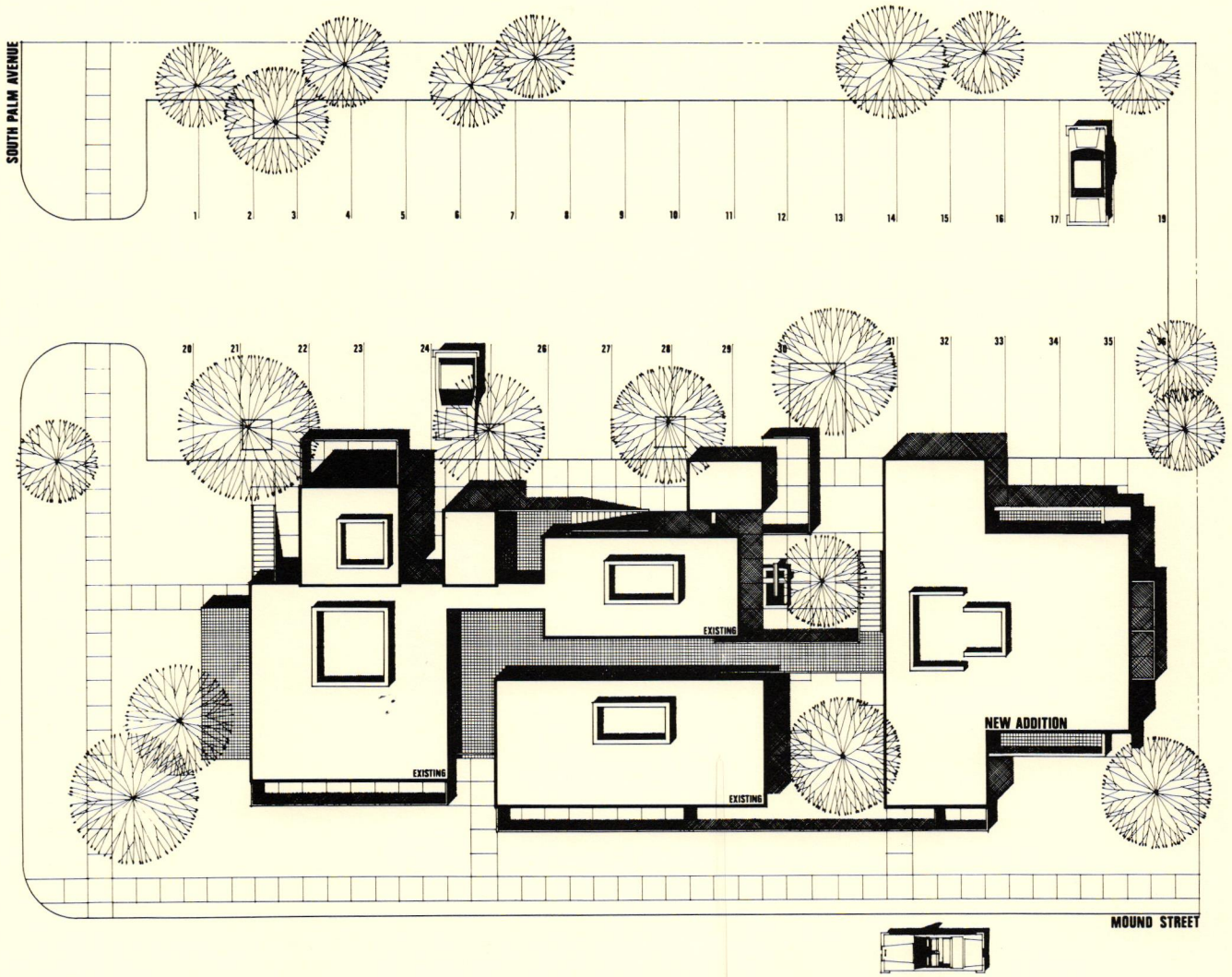
About this same time, I learned of a small property well located in downtown Sarasota. The price tag of \$16,000 was a bit much for me, but Al encouraged me to join him in its purchase. We built our mixed-use office/apartment building on the site and a separate real estate partnership was born, an endeavor which would produce for me the very minor amount of wealth I was unable to realize from my beloved mistress architecture. Our building was completed in 1967. (Graphic 34.)

Also, in 1966, William Boylston, my attorney, friend, and brother of my former partner Beth, wished to build a home on a beautiful, deeply wooded site on Siesta Key overlooking Little Sarasota Bay. He and his wife Gay presented me with a modest budget of \$35,000, but the opportunity was exhilarating. I designed a multi-level home with a series of pitched roofs, partially on stilts. Bill and Gay were thrilled. Of course, nothing makes an architect happier than a supportive client. We prepared working drawings and specifications and I lingered over the selection of each plumbing faucet, each lighting fixture, each lockset.

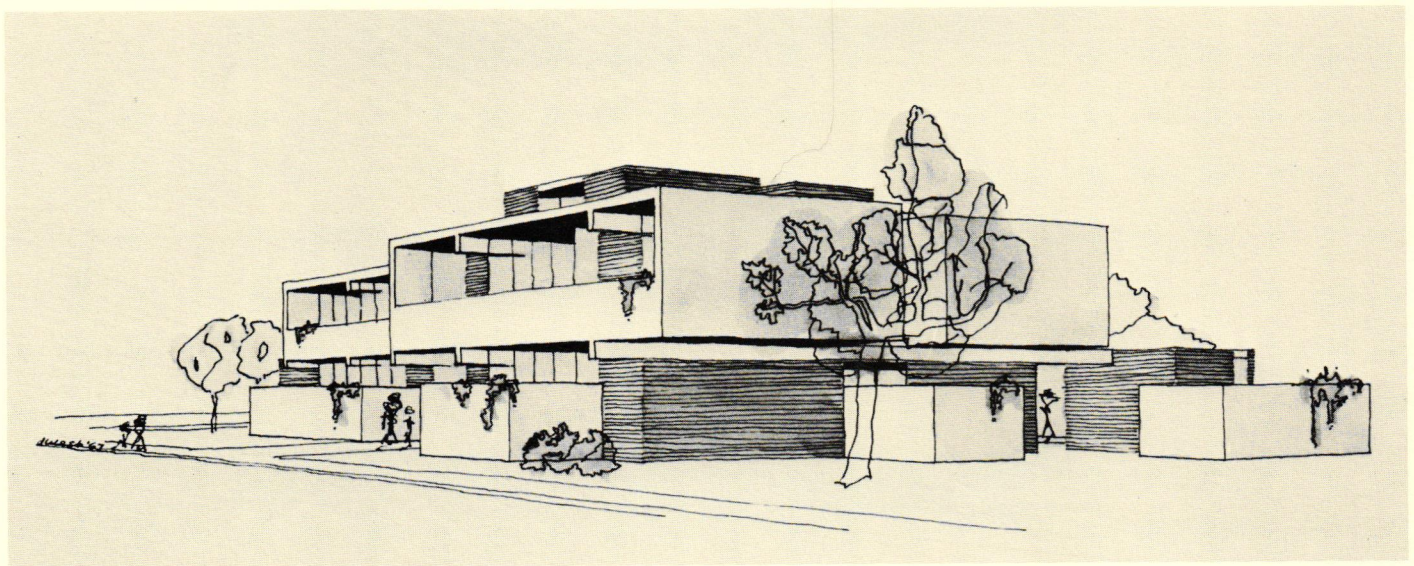
Jack Twitchell, who now headed his own contracting firm, was the low bidder – \$48,000. Jack and I worked together to reduce the cost. Through various changes we trimmed the cost to \$37,500. But it was not enough. The budget Bill had given was firm. I designed a totally new house and prepared working drawings and specifications for no additional fee. This time the low bid (by another contractor) was below budget and the house was built. T.L.O.A.A. (Graphic 35.)

Samuel Gibbon, a retired resident of Longboat Key, decided to run for the City Council of that very small town in 1967. One of the campaign issues was the location of a new town center. Sam thought it might be pertinent to choose a site and commission an architect to design such a center for use during his campaign. He asked me to prepare preliminary drawings and I did so with great delight. (Graphic 36.) Longboat Key Municipal Center was built, but in a different location and with a different architect.

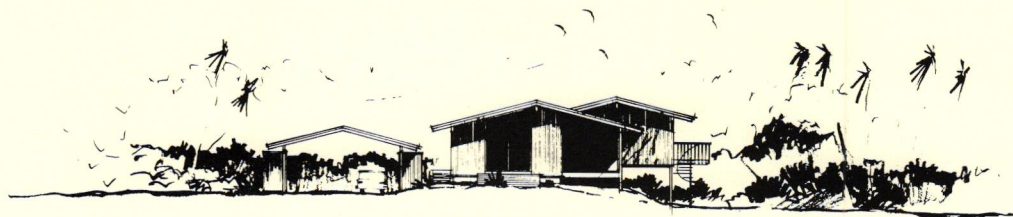
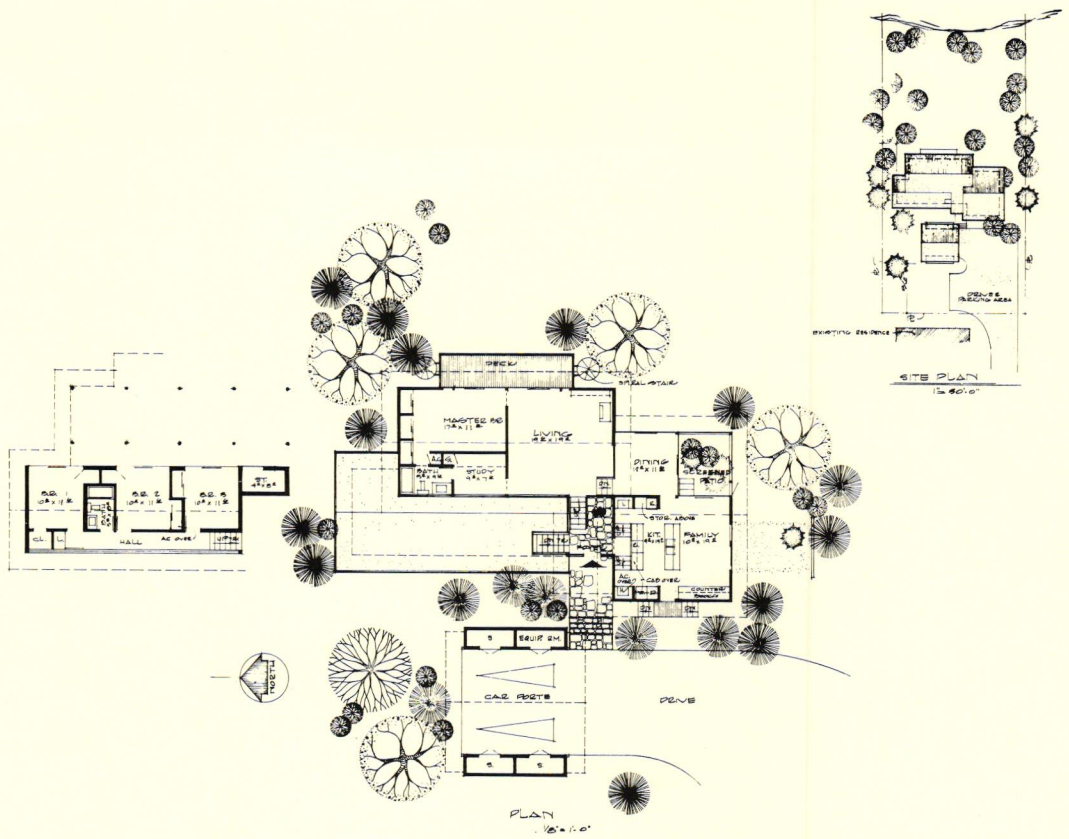
Before 1964 all of the renderings not made in my own office were made by a talented local delineator, Bob Nicol. In 1964 I met Bob Davis, a teacher of architectural rendering in the School of Architecture at the University of Florida. Bob had an uncommon talent and I particularly loved his watercolor technique. We became close friends and he soon was doing all of our out-of-office renderings. His personal life was a disaster waiting to happen; but, I had no reason to talk. My later son-in-law, David Zimet, remarked that my own life sounded more like a soap opera. In 1968, I entered the "Football Hall of Fame Competition." I had completed my design only the day before the deadline to submit. I telephoned Bob for his assistance and he invited me to come to Gainesville. We enjoyed a fine dinner and many drinks before tackling my project. He worked all night to complete the rendering. His work amazed me. He was a better artist drunk than I was sober. The only error I could find in the rendering was the stone planters. They were supposed to contain low shrubs and vines. In their stead, he drew giant poplars. Maybe he was right. (Graphic 37.) I made the deadline but never heard a word from the professional advisor. To this day I do not know who



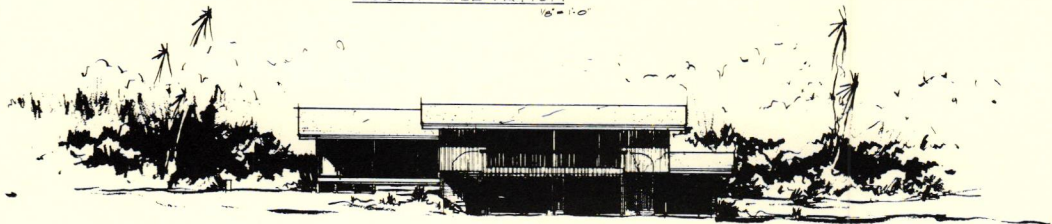
SITE PLAN



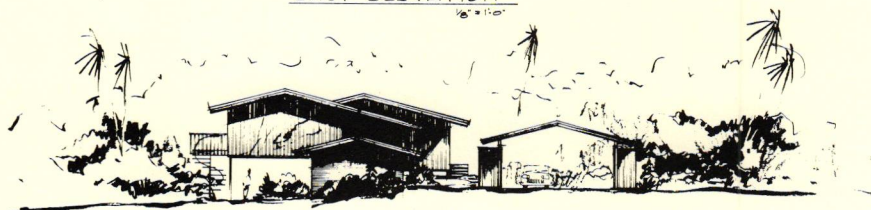
PERSPECTIVE OF ORIGINAL BUILDING



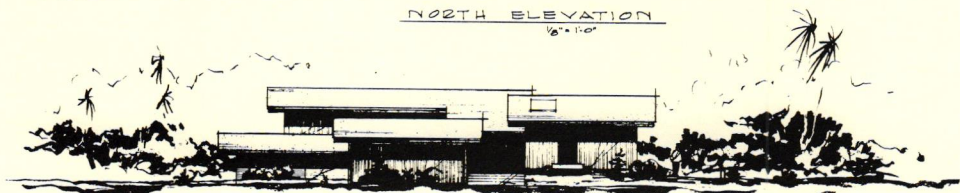
SOUTH ELEVATION
1/8" = 1'-0"



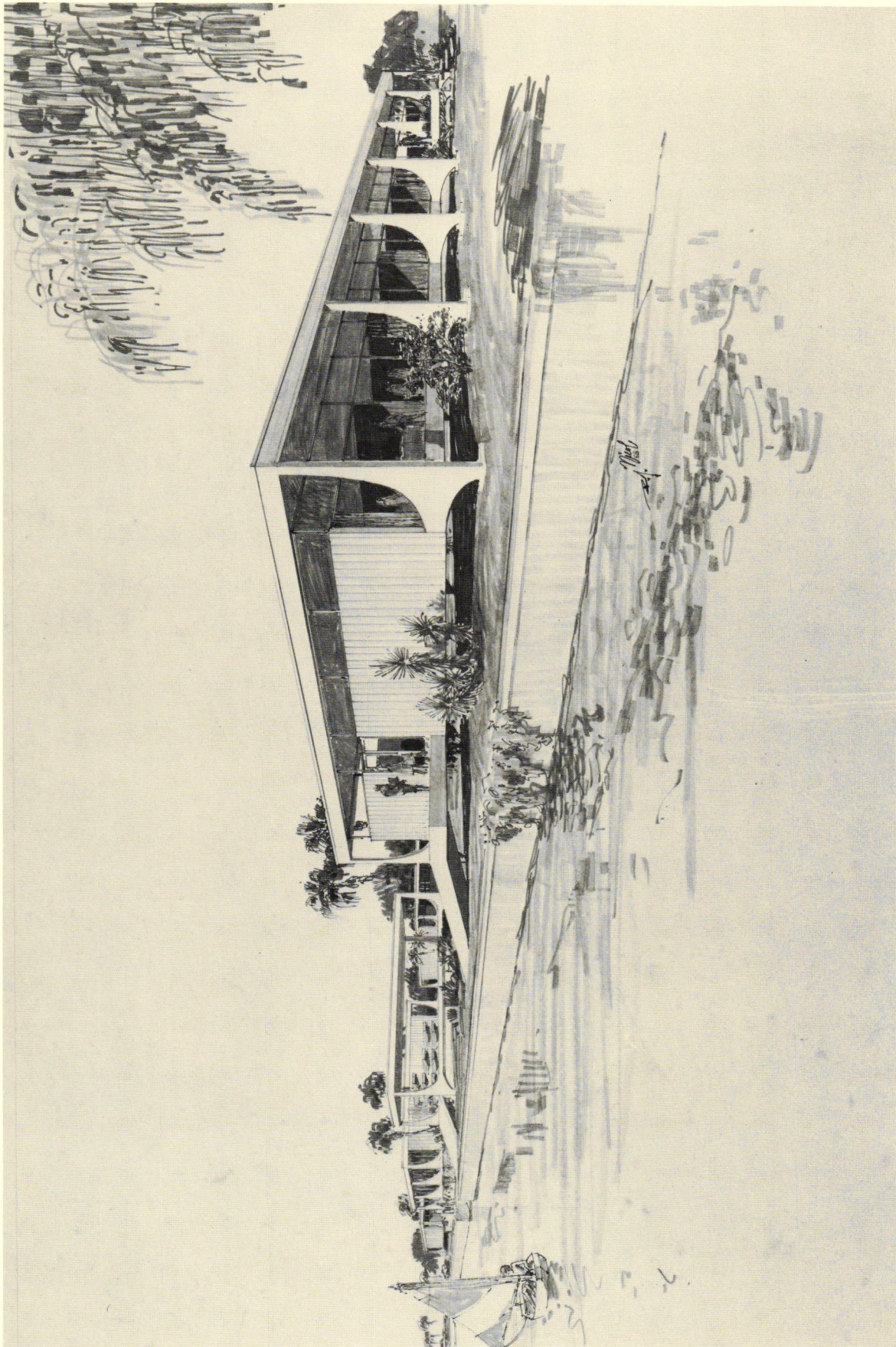
EAST ELEVATION
1/8" = 1'-0"



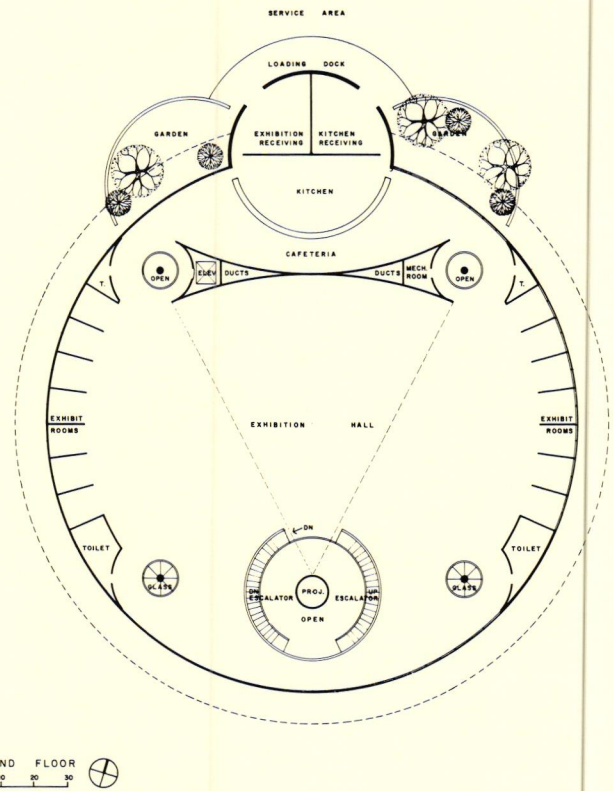
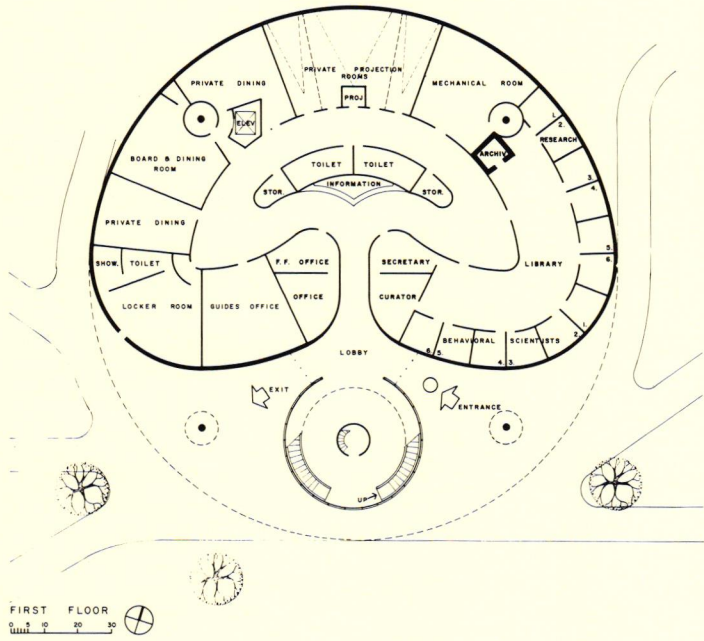
NORTH ELEVATION
1/8" = 1'-0"



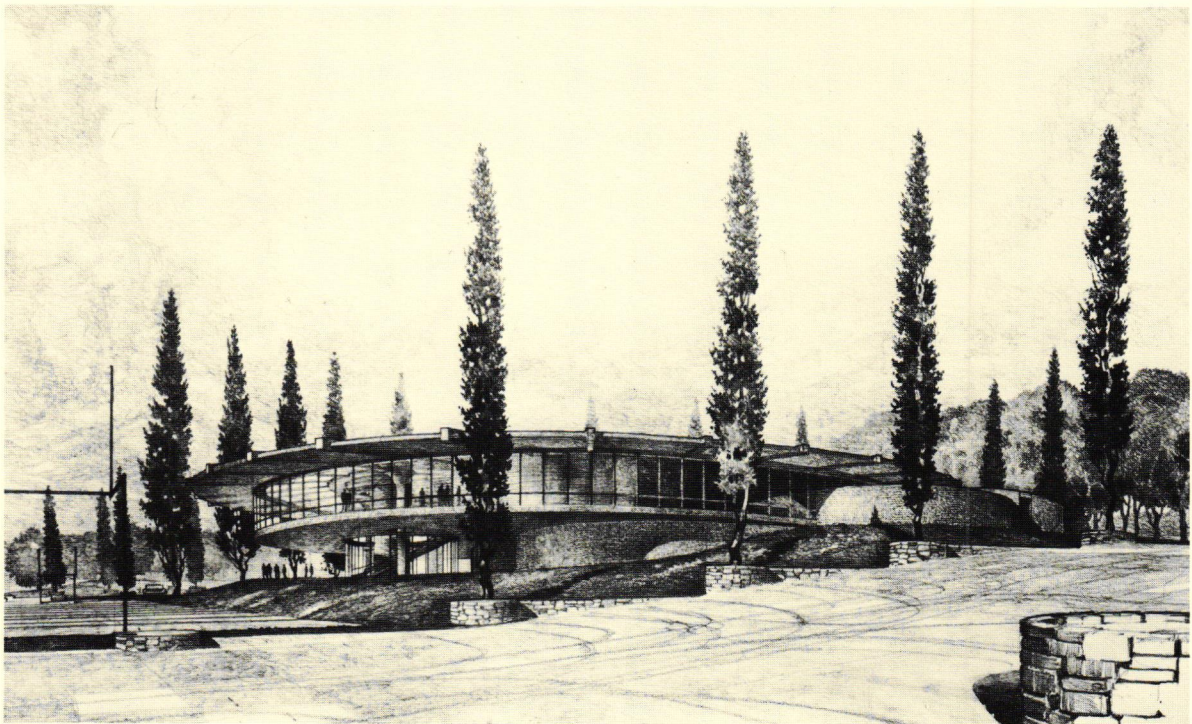
WEST ELEVATION
1/8" = 1'-0"



PERSPECTIVE



PLAN



PERSPECTIVE

won the competition. T.L.O.A.A.

I designed two projects in 1968 which added to my frustration. The Pringle residence (Graphic 38), with a budget of \$22,000, had a low bid of \$24,000 and was not built. Our Sarasota Racquet Club project was proposed for Longboat Key (Graphic 39), but when it came time to provide a deposit on the site our clients declined.

The following year was one of desperation. On February 27, the date of our wedding anniversary, my beloved wife of 23 years committed suicide. In June, my daughter Jill graduated from high school, flew to New York City and disappeared for several months. It was also during 1969 that I fell in love with Marjorie and we were married.

That year I received the commission to design a major public library for Sarasota. The site was ideal: a block from Main Street, adjacent to my City Hall and my Chamber of Commerce headquarters building. Was the world really my oyster? What an opportunity. The design of three of the major public buildings within the same visually encompassing area in the heart of downtown Sarasota!

A minor thorn in my side was Ralph Ulveling of Chicago who served as library consultant. His inflated ego and pompous manner did little to cement any kind of solid working relationship, let alone encourage warmth in a personal relationship. He wished to be the consultant and the architect, it seemed to me. Our relationship was stormy to say the least. He was, thank God, replaced down the line by a Mr. Mohrhardt, his associate with whom I fared much better and whose support I certainly appreciated.

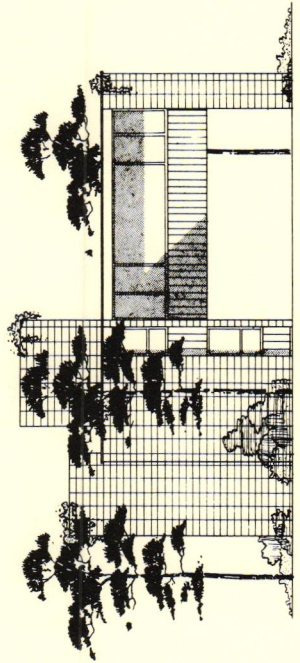
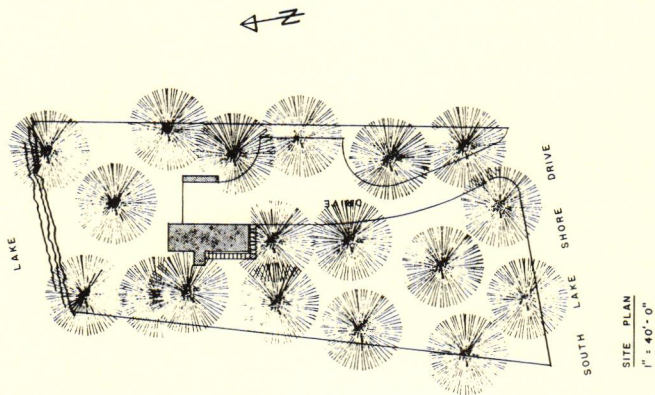
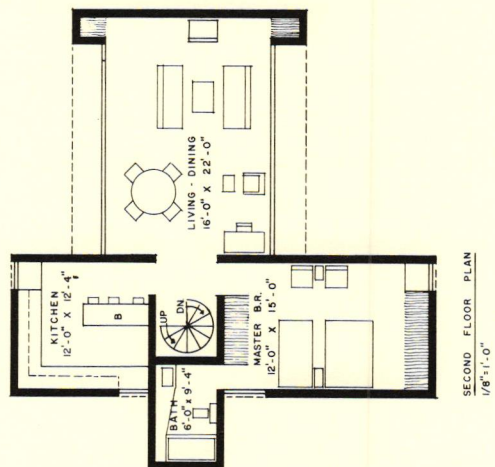
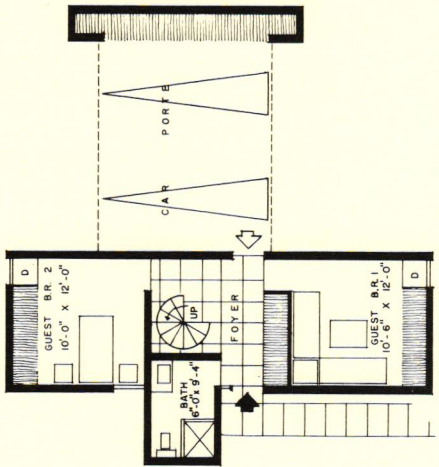
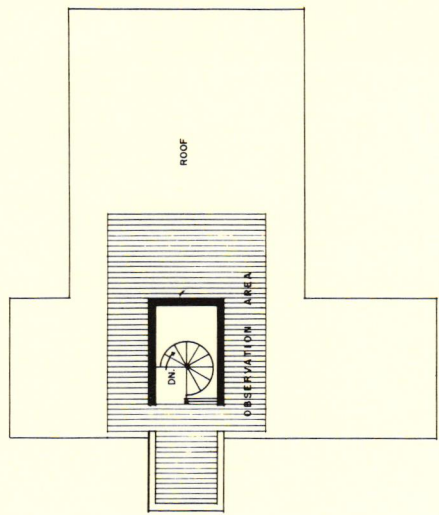
My idea was to relate the three buildings and to particularly tie in the library with City Hall because of a natural east-west axis existing between the two. I wished also to link the library with Main Street, just a block away to the south; and so I proposed a park/mall connection. We built a large model which showed not only the proposed library but also City Hall and the new proposed park/mall. (Graphic 40.)

The site for the library was owned by the City of Sarasota and was being used as a parking lot. While our plan provided sufficient parking for the library, the city insisted on a referendum vote to allow the people to decide whether or not to purchase additional property to replace the parking that would be lost due to library construction. In essence, the referendum to purchase the property was a vote for or against the library.

The sponsoring organization, the "Friends of the Library," believed there was overwhelming support for both the concept of a major downtown public library and for my particular design. Neither they nor I realized until after the vote that the piece of city land we had chosen for the library was also property coveted by the Palmer Bank to make possible their ambitious expansion plan. The bank had been working covertly toward the defeat of the bond issue.

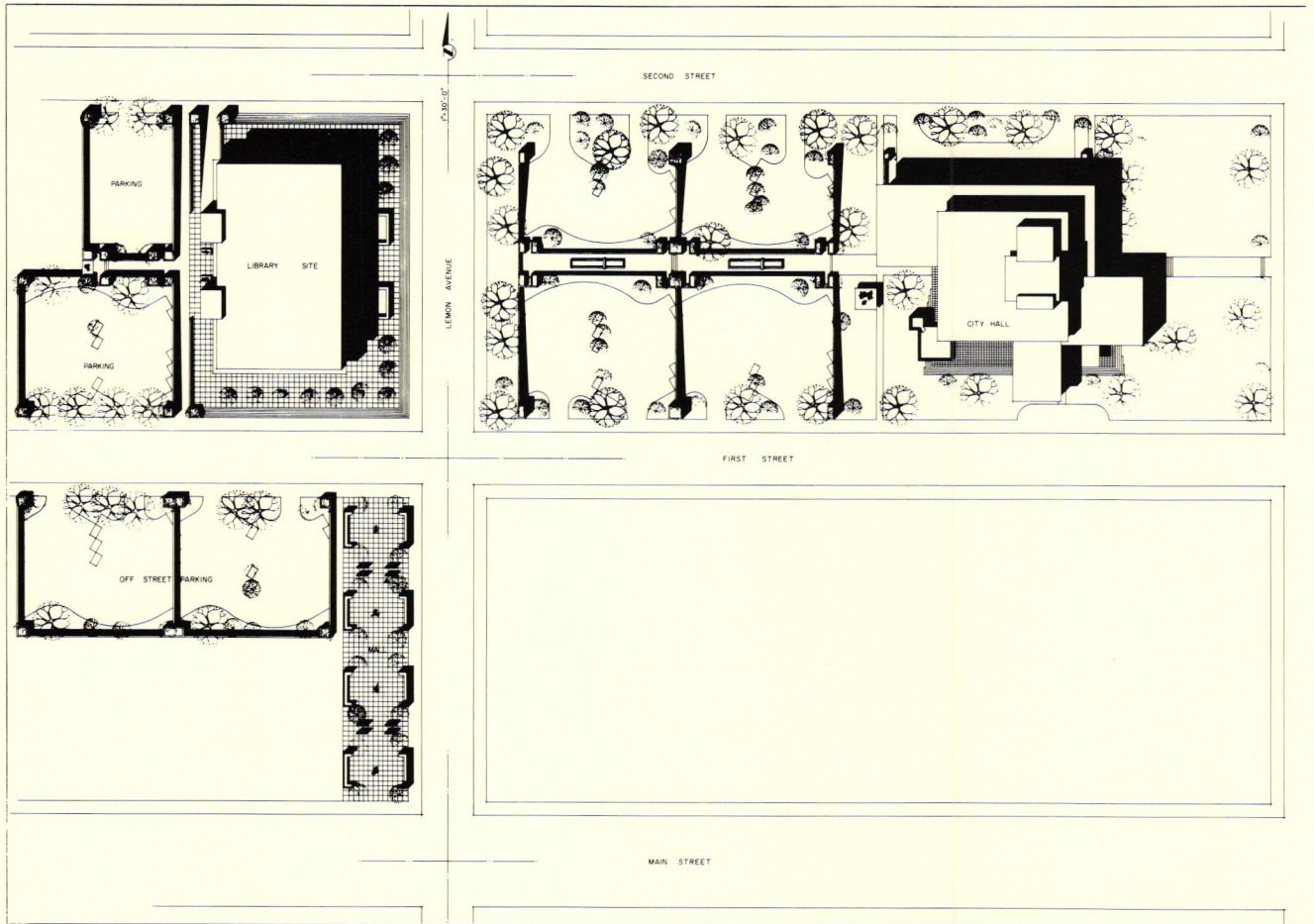
The vote was very close. The bank won. The community lost. T.L.O.A.A.

In 1963, I had visited Mexico City and its environs as a guest of my clients Wally and Phyllis Hamilton. In addition to seeing many interesting portions of the city and nearby towns, I spent a day alone wandering through the ruins of Teotihuacán. At that time I determined that I would one day see the great city ruins of the Maya Indians

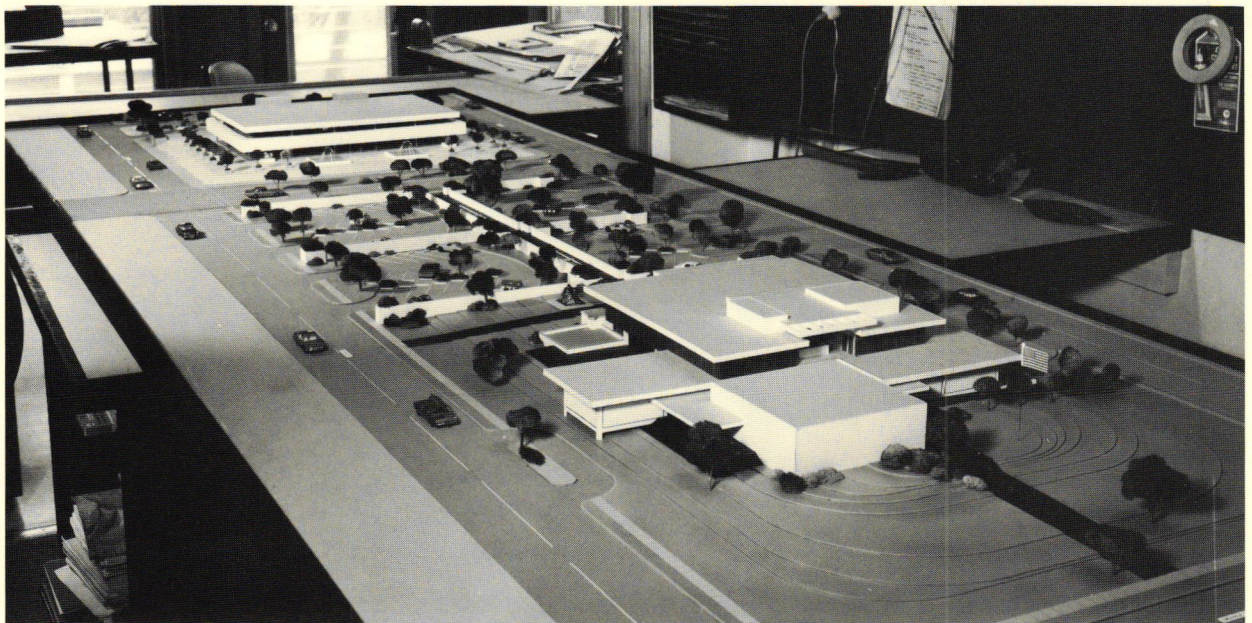




PERSPECTIVE



SITE PLAN WITH CITY HALL



PHOTOGRAPH OF MODEL

spread throughout the Yucatan Peninsula and south into Guatemala and Honduras.

Six years later, as the site for our honeymoon, I suggested to my new wife, Marjorie, either Brasilia or Yucatan. We did not have enough money to go to Brasilia so we went to Mexico. We flew to Merida and from there motored to Chichén Itzá and Uxmal. We were both overwhelmed by these ruins. Egypt, Greece and Italy are pivotal and great, but the content of sheer beauty I found in the ruined cities of the Yucatan completely stunned and bedazzled me. My delight was equally shared by my new wife. At Uxmal, the slight remains of a ruin called "The House of the Old Woman," located a bit beyond the major structures, stirred within me a yearning to leave a few fragments of a house of my own design.

We returned from our honeymoon to a house encompassing two families with my own children claiming homestead rights. A new home was a must.

Marjorie found an acre on Little Sarasota Bay with fine live oaks and cabbage palms. Better still it was located not far from a trailer park so it was affordable. With the inspiration of the Maya and Toltec cities of Mexico still lingering in my mind, I designed a cross between a Mayan city and a low-cost housing project. My residence on Hollywood Boulevard included important elements of each. (Graphic 41.)

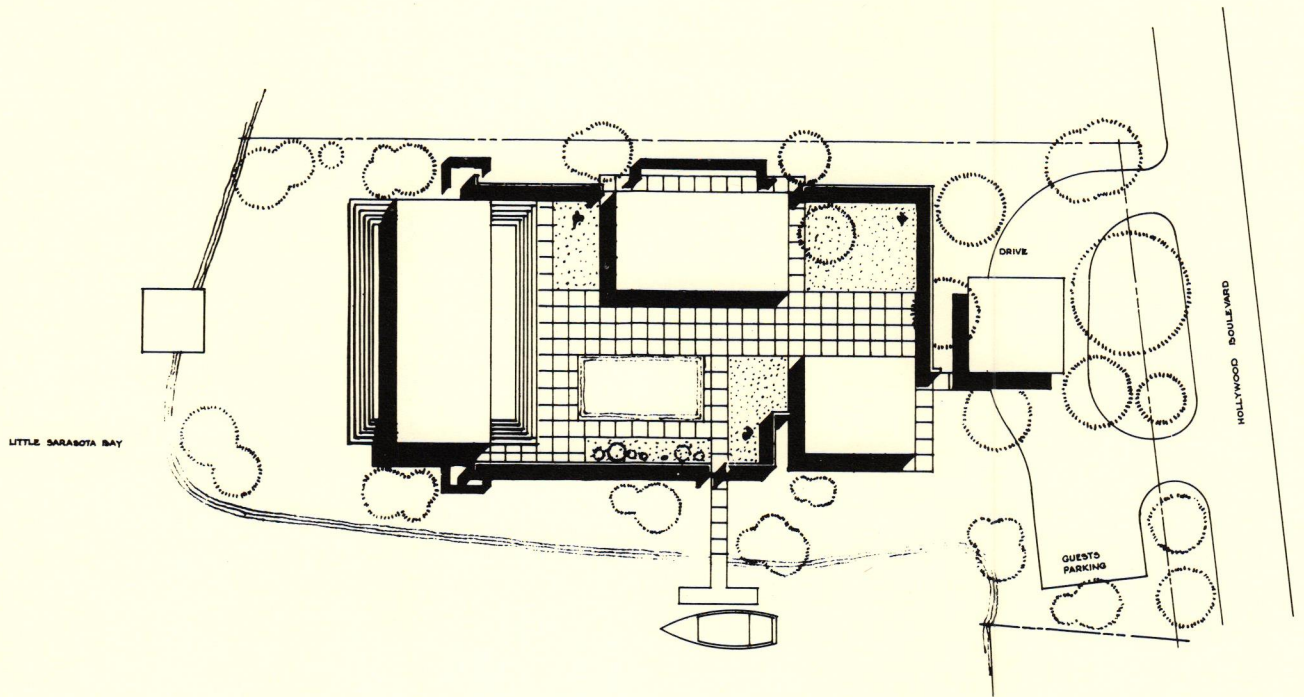
In 1971, a major international competition was announced. It was for the design of a Fine Arts Complex in Paris to be called the Pompidou Center. For a practically unknown architect working in a very small architectural/engineering firm in a small town in Florida, such a grand project was too exciting to resist. With my partner's approval and active participation we entered.

How can an architect, in good conscience, design a building for a site and city he has not seen and experienced? He cannot. Al and I separately flew to Paris to research the site.

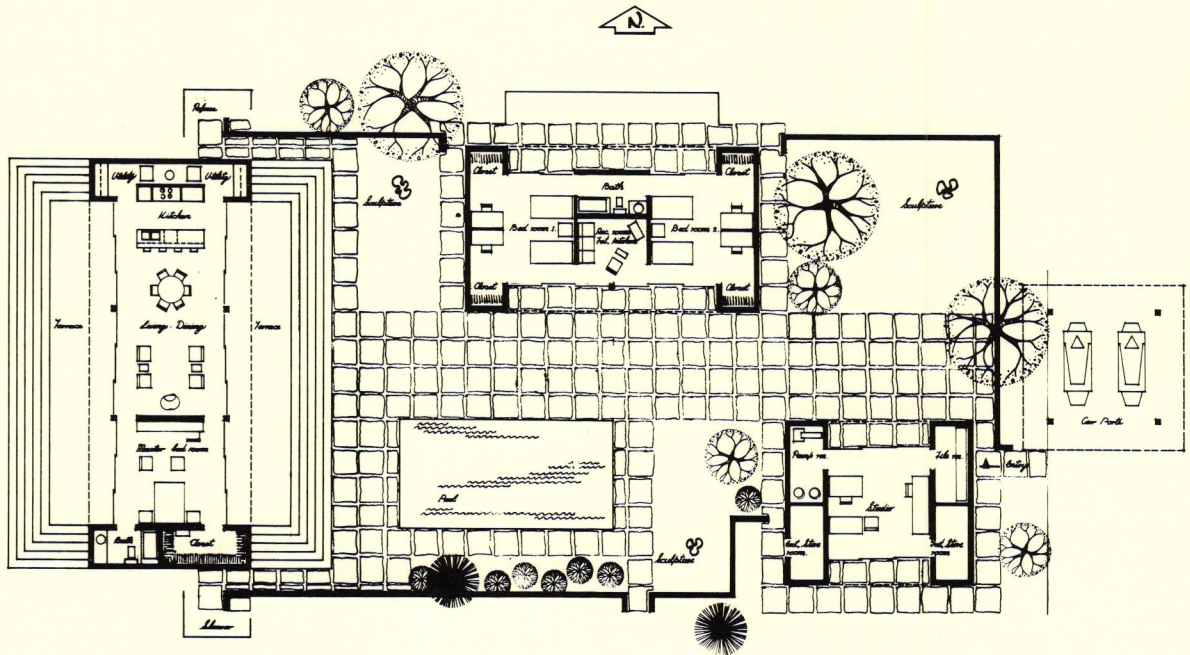
For Marjorie and me, this was our first trip to Europe and we took this opportunity to also see Florence, Pisa, Milan and Venice.

Having written a paper on Napoleon III's great plan for Paris, while in architectural school, I was particularly keen to see first hand this beautiful and monumental city. Paris is cold in March but we walked and walked and walked. I was familiar with the ambitious new development of parks and recreation complexes to be built to the west of the site in the Los Halles district.

The site for the Pompidou Center was a combination of nondescript buildings and parking lots. But its location was strategic in its relationship to the new planned complex to the east. In addition, the surrounding buildings were architecturally and historically significant. I envisioned a new major center or junction which would involve significant open space and a truly noble building complex. To properly relate to the whole city I felt a need to create a curvilinear, even baroque architectural concept. (Graphic 42.) It was widely believed that Philip Johnson held great sway with the jury. Perhaps so. The winning entry was a glass box whose only successful architectural element was an interesting exterior escalator. By the time the Pompidou Center was built even the design of the escalator was changed to coincide with the mundane quality of the whole. T.L.O.A.A.

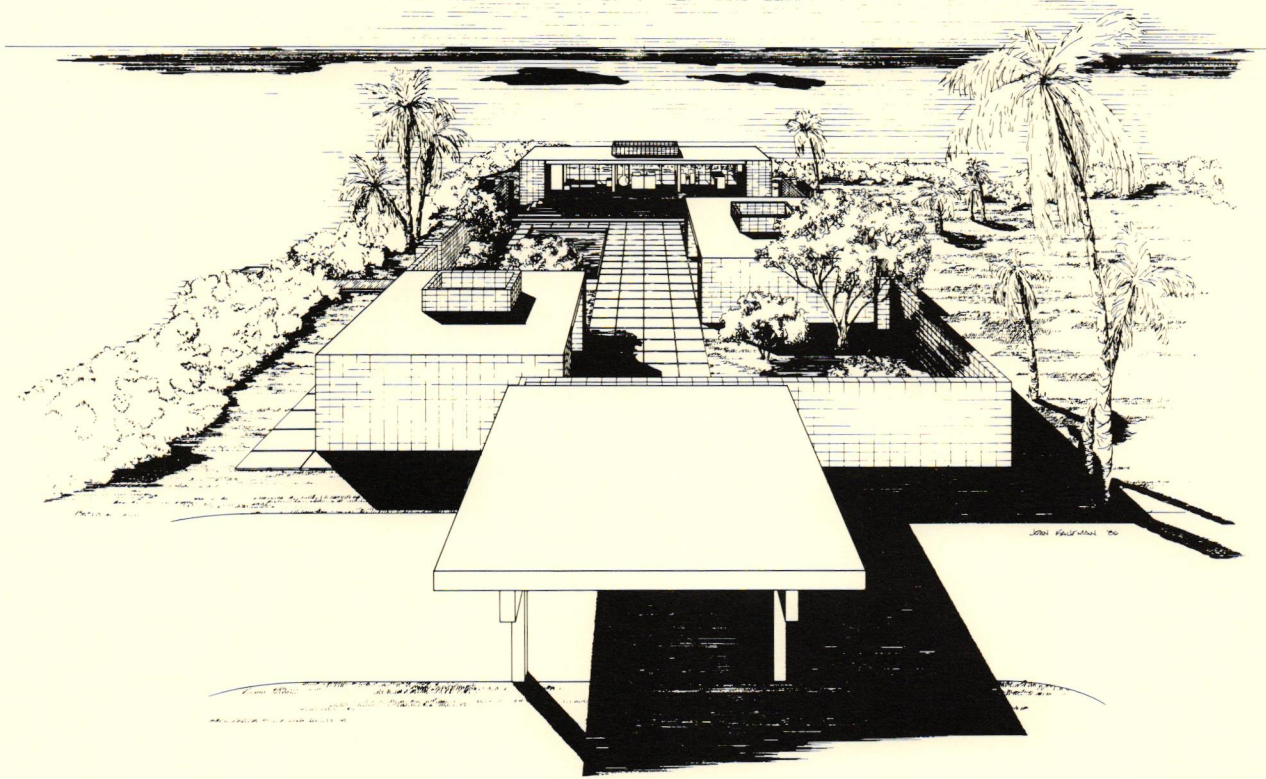


SITE PLAN

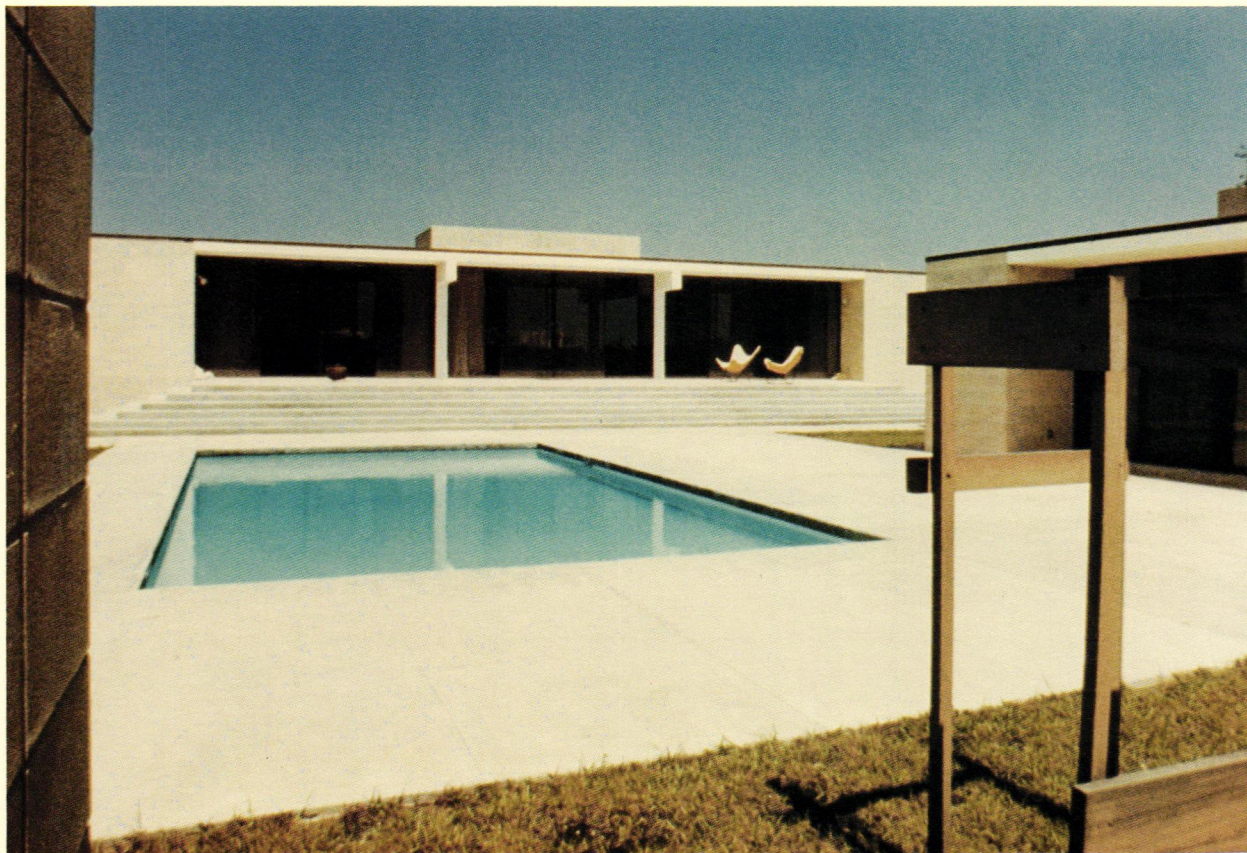


PLAN

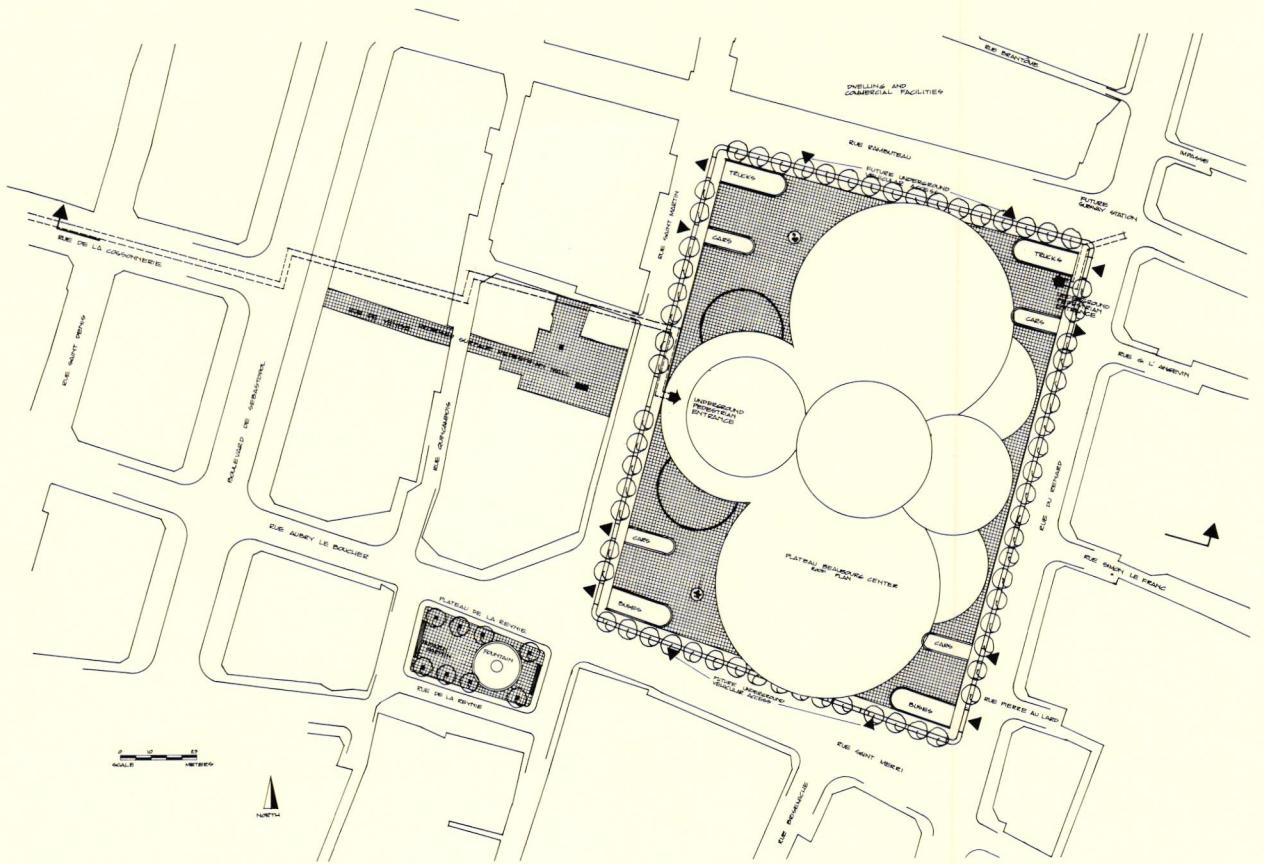




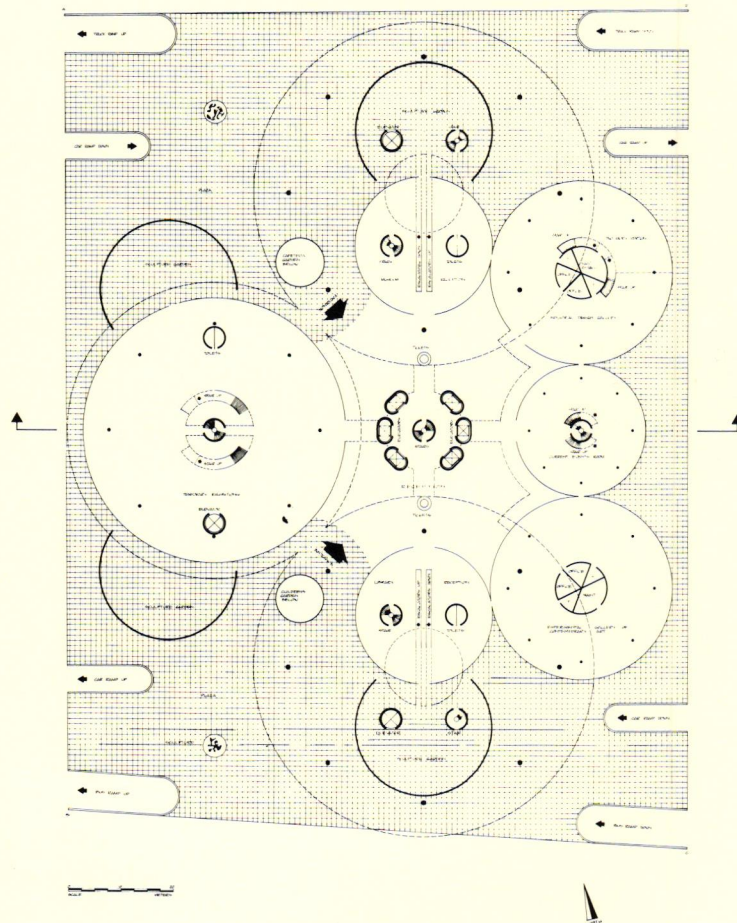
PERSPECTIVE



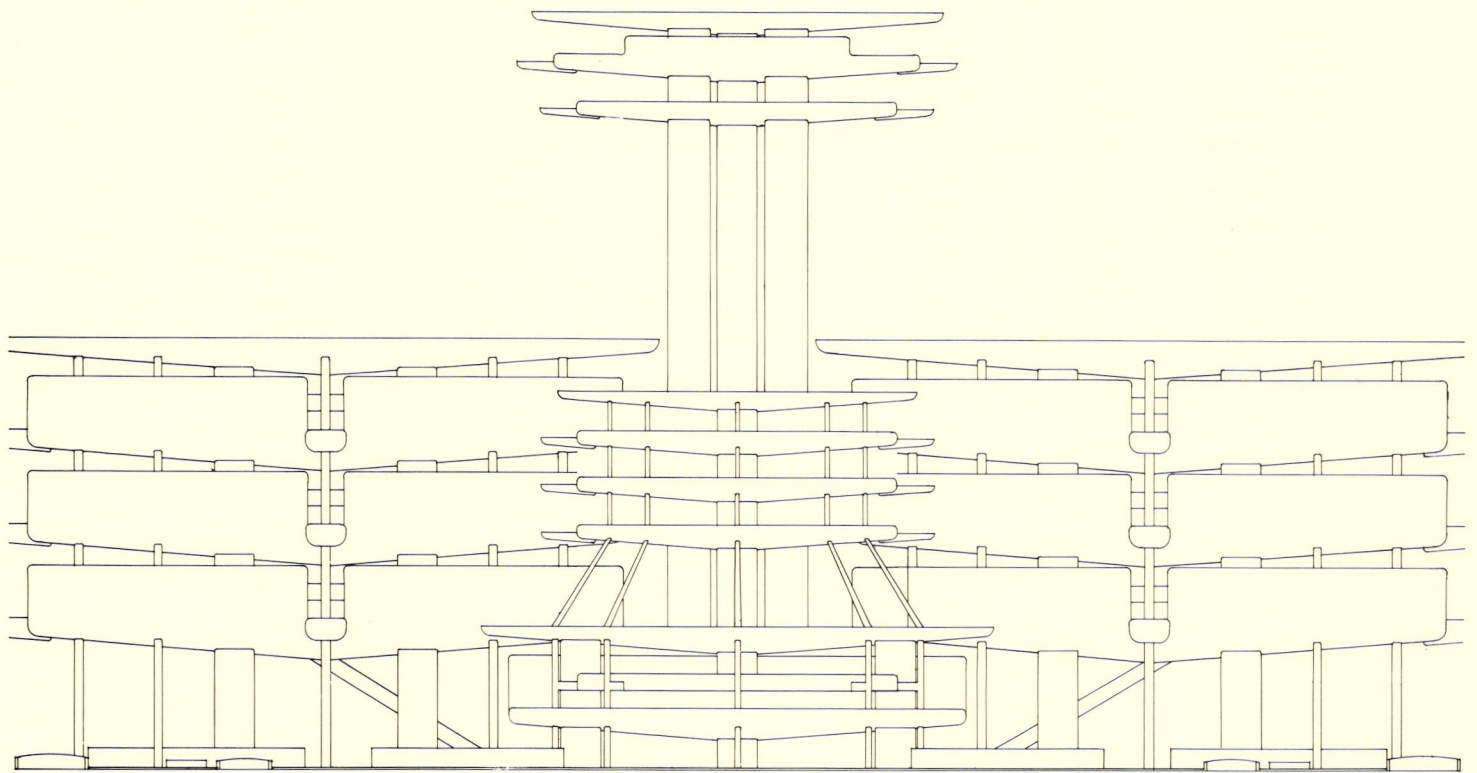
PHOTOGRAPH



MASTER PLAN

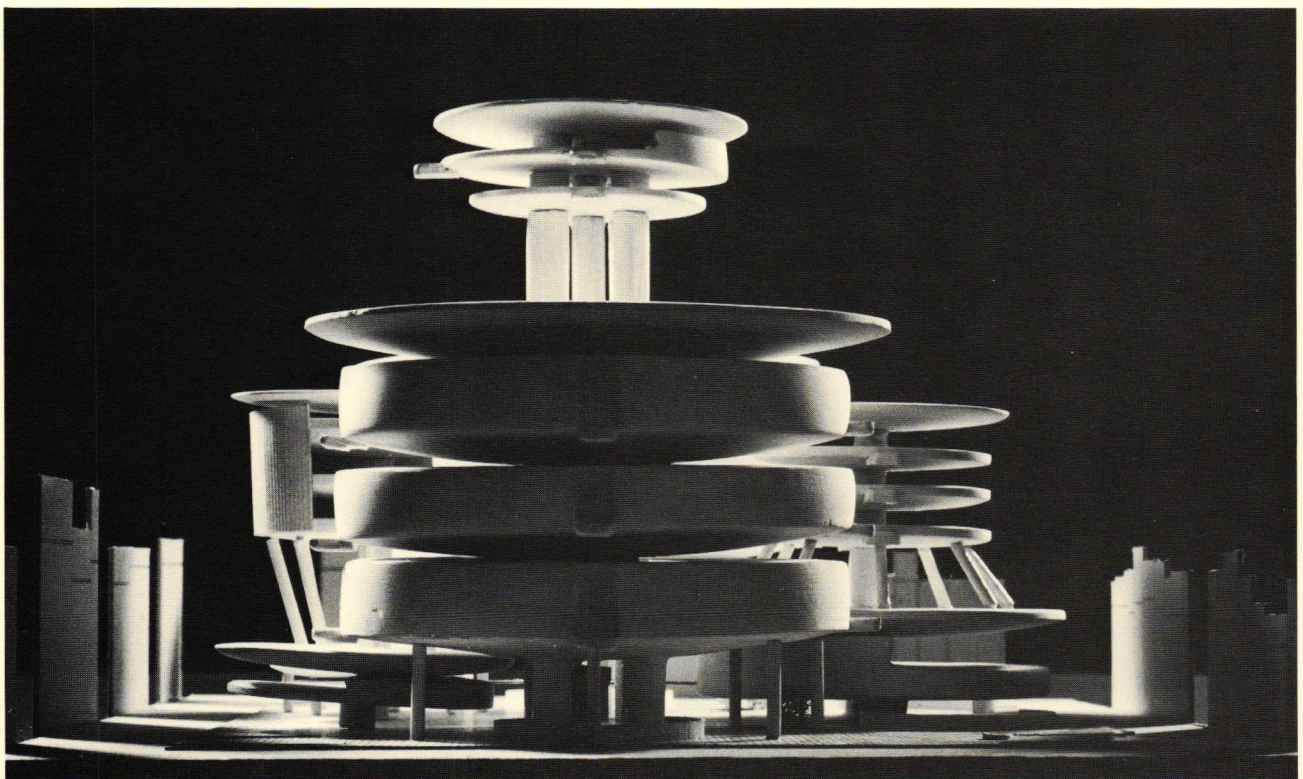


GROUND LEVEL PLAN



0 10 20 30 40 50
SCALE METERS

WEST ELEVATION



PHOTOGRAPH OF MODEL

The following year, Jack Adams (John I. Adams, Jr.), president of Coffin & Richardson, Inc., an established consulting engineering firm in Boston, called upon me to discuss the possibility of a joint venture of our two firms. Jack and his wife owned an apartment on Longboat Key and had learned of my firm through the local press. His interest was two-fold: he wanted to establish a foothold in Florida to extend the geographical area of his own firm and he also needed an architect to fill a gap in his own practice which covered most of New England. We agreed to such a joint venture in February of 1972.

While we were unable to generate any projects together in Florida, I spent about two years commuting to Boston to collaborate on several projects there. By far the most interesting was a new pumping facility to be constructed at Spot Pond, a reservoir located on the outskirts of Boston. The pond was an absolutely beautiful area with an existing brick pumping station about 100 years old and of quasi-Victorian design. This marvelous old building and pond, set in a restricted wooded area, was a superb visual resource. An overlook was provided by an adjacent highway.

After carefully checking all of the engineering design considerations, I proposed that the new pumping station be located across the road and behind a bluff where it would not visually be a part of the Spot Pond nature sanctuary. It turned out that the cost would even be less than locating the building at the edge of the pond, adjacent to the road. (Graphic 43.)

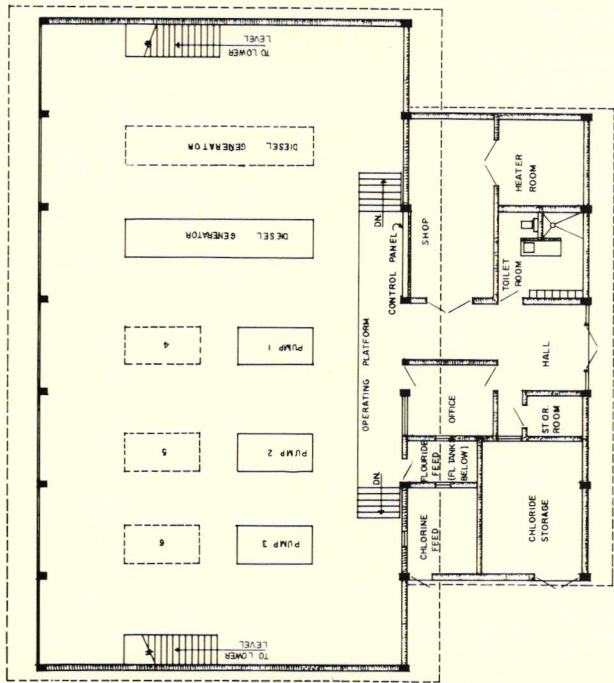
We were dealing with Commissioner John W. Sears of the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), whose concept was to build a Gothic castle in the pond and connect it to land by bridge. Sears was an engaging fellow and I immediately liked him. He even complimented me on my architectural concept for the new pumping station. In keeping with the environmental movement sweeping the country, Sears' chief and trusted advisor was a young environmental graduate whose new-found power had totally corrupted his good sense, if indeed he ever had any.

Of course, we were directed to redesign the pumping station to be located in the water adjacent to the highway. A prototype design produced by Commissioner Sears' environmentalist was given to us to copy and "make workable."

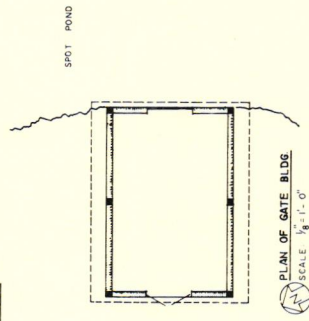
After several redesigns and frequent confrontations in which the environmentalist and I exchanged insulting remarks, the MDC wisely chose to incorporate the new pumping station into the historically-significant building. Frustrating? Yes. But the opportunity to observe and experience Boston was well worth the effort.

It was not altogether a year of frustration. Jim Heagerty, president of First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Manatee County, Florida walked into my office and said that First Federal was planning to open a branch office in Sarasota and hoped that the building would make an important architectural statement. Hurrah!

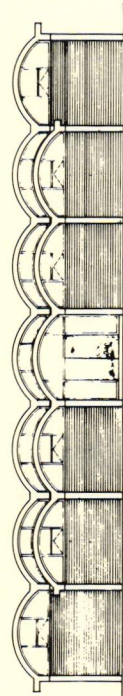
The property required a major rezoning effort. We built a model of the project which included an entire city block. Our concept was a three-story office building set on a plaza with fountain and sculpture. It was to be a park-like setting, easily accessible to the neighborhood. When the adjacent property owners became familiar with our intent, their initial opposition turned to outright support. The rezoning succeeded and



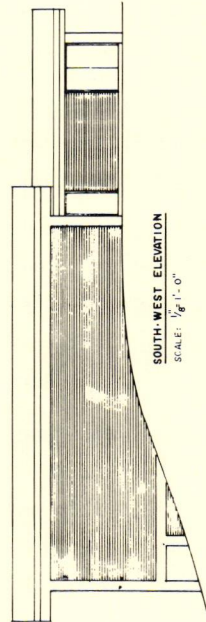
PLAN OF PUMPING STATION BLDG.
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



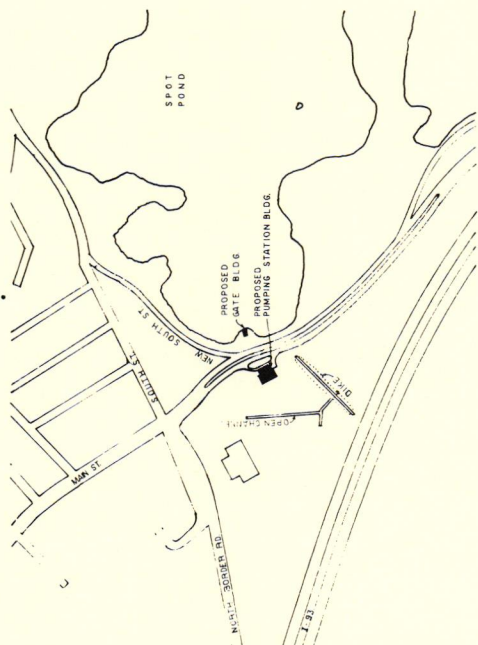
PLAN OF GATE BLDG.
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



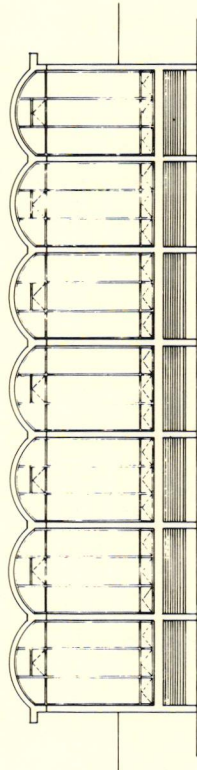
SOUTH-EAST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



SOUTH-WEST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



LOCATION PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 300'-0"



NORTH-WEST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

PLANS AND ELEVATIONS

the project was built! But, as almost always, not without a series of peripheral victories and defeats.

First the victory. We included in the specifications a cash allowance to cover the inclusion of a major sculpture and a fountain. Once again I asked Jack Cartlidge to create the sculpture and he did so with considerable success. The sculpture remains on the plaza as of this writing. (Graphic 44.)

The interior design story was something else again. I asked my friend Terry Rowe to collaborate with me on the interior furnishings and, with the approval of Jim Heagerty, Terry accepted. Believe me, the interior design of a building, the selection of furniture, draperies and art work are as integral a part of the architecture as the structure and the fenestration.

In our past projects, Terry was, I believe, sincere and even adamant in his belief that the major interior design decisions be made by the architect with, of course the close collaboration of the interior designer. But over the years, Terry had become, a very successful designer with a national reputation.

In retrospect, I believe we had a clash of egos. He realized before I that there could not be two dominant designers. He resigned from the project and I suspect that I lost forever his great talent and perhaps his friendship too. I hope not.

In reporting this event to Jim Heagerty, I proposed to replace Terry with myself. Jim was cool to the idea but allowed me to put together a complete preliminary interior design concept and to make a presentation directly to his Board of Directors. My presentation was reproduced onto slides and I put on what seemed to be a totally successful and impressive presentation. The board voted unanimously: "No."

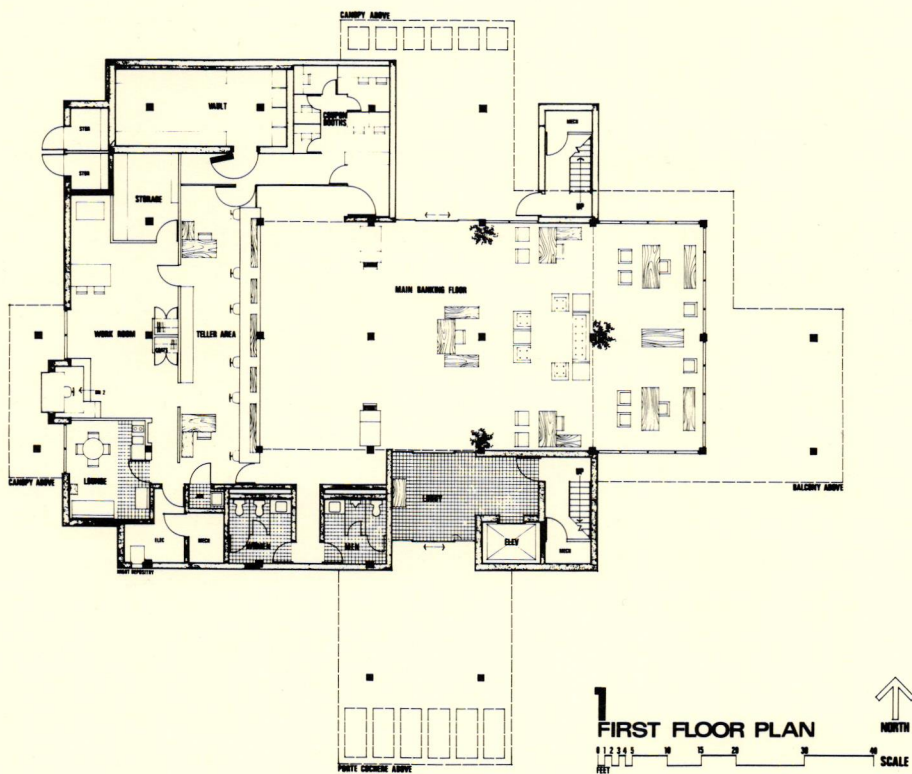
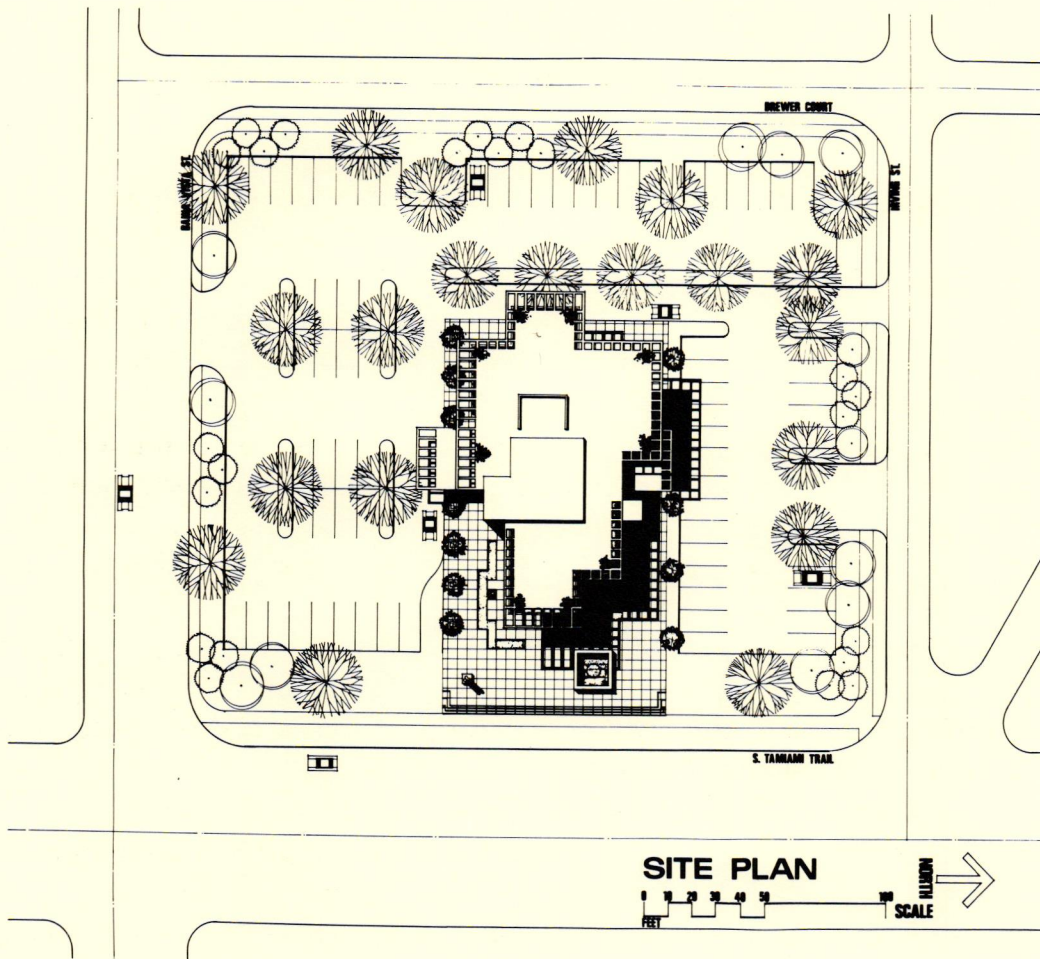
The completed building was a study of the cantilevered concrete slab. The concrete structure was exposed throughout and its relationship with the natural clay brick exterior walls was both compatible and dramatic.

And so my client painted all of the exposed concrete; and he filled the fountain with dirt. T.L.O.A.A.

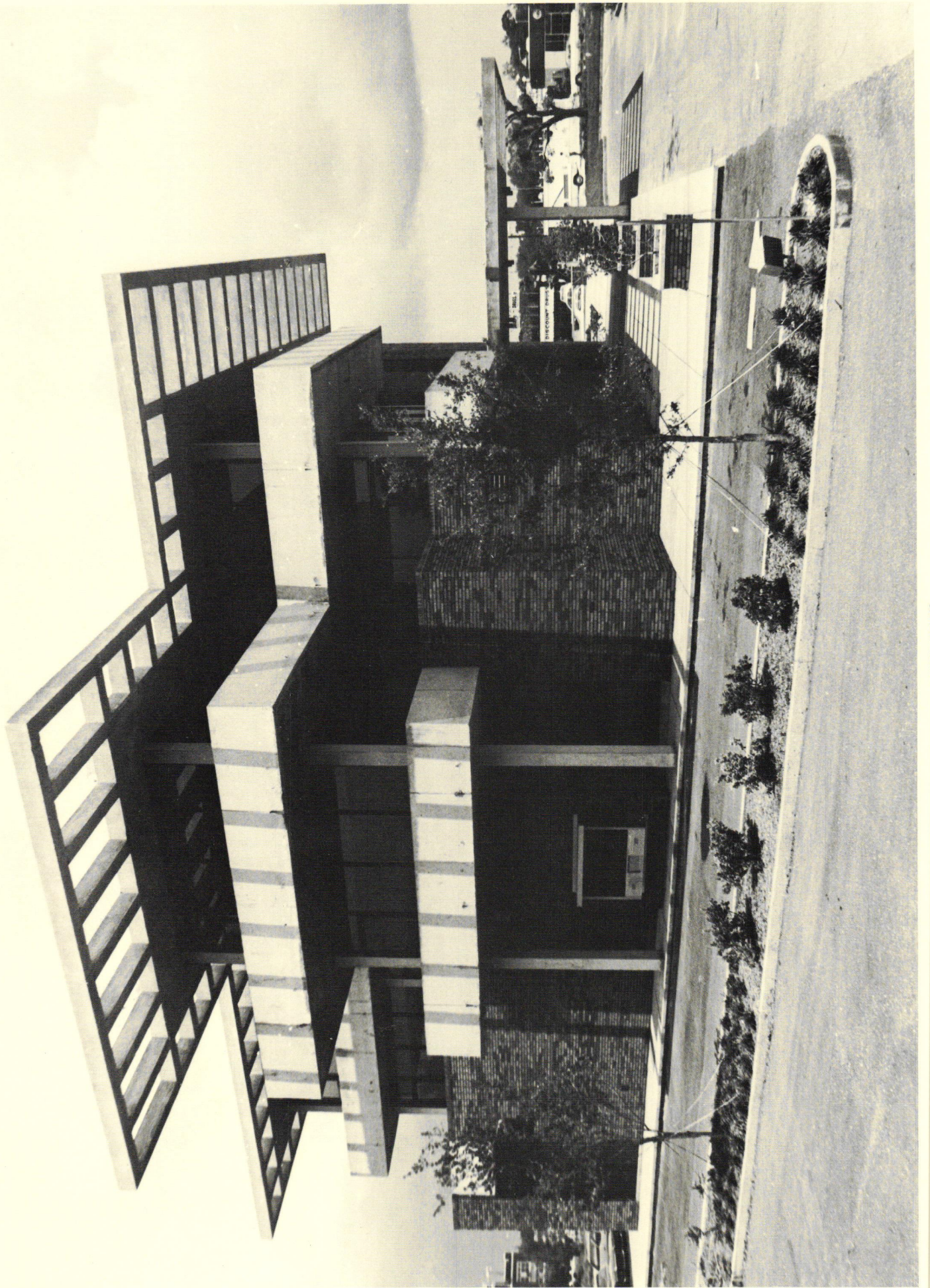
In conjunction with our design for the Sarasota City Hall in 1966, we had proposed that a parking structure be built over Lemon Avenue (located on the west boundary of City Hall). It would be connected to Main Street by a new block-long park/mall, utilizing the property of the railroad station.

In 1972 we were commissioned by the city to prepare preliminary plans for these facilities for a bond issue that would include the widening of Lemon Avenue. Our design is shown in Graphic 45. A bond issue was eventually passed and it included our park/mall but not the parking structure. The park/mall later became the Sarasota Bicentennial Park/Mall which was redesigned and built.

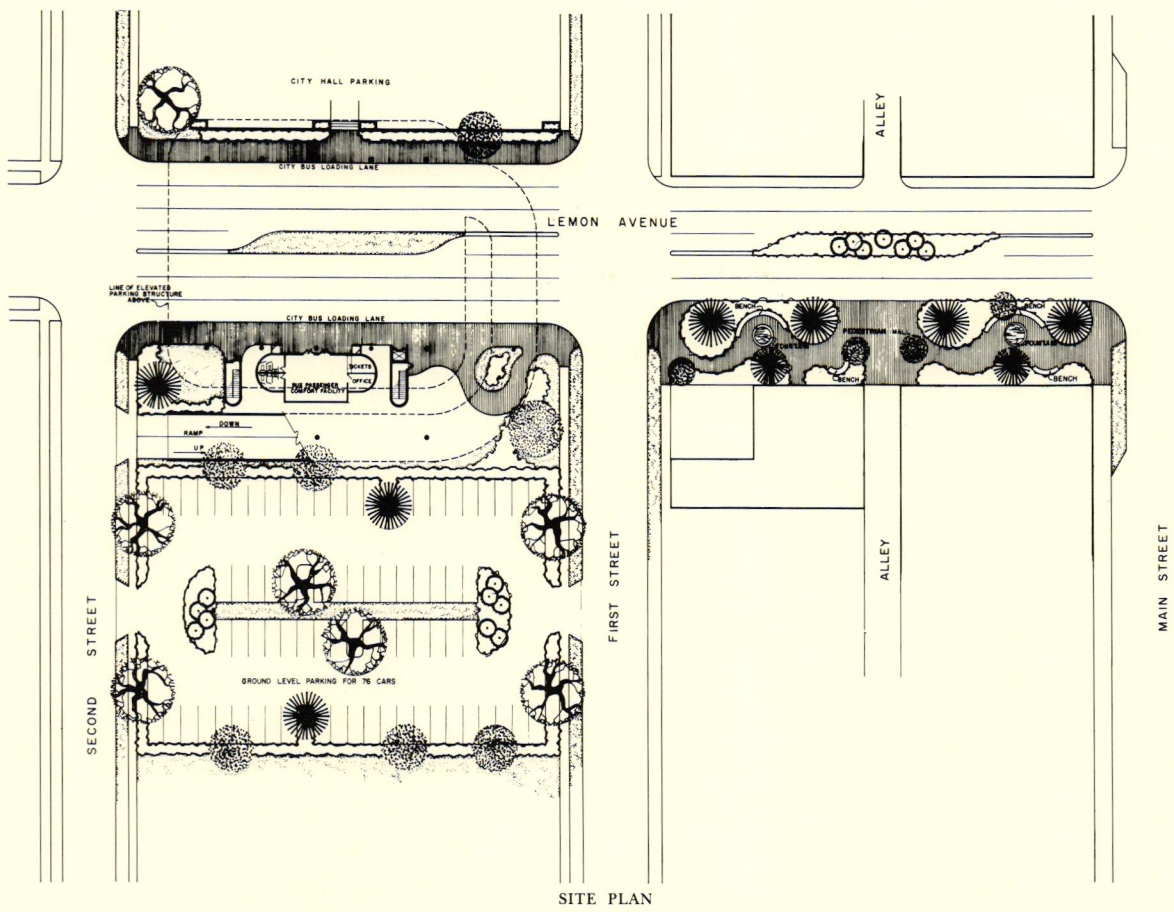
David B. Lindsay, Jr., at that time, was the owner and publisher of the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*—the only local daily newspaper. For this reason he was also very powerful. While friendly with David and his wife, Elizabeth, I had never been asked to do any work for them; I was delighted when Elizabeth asked me to design a caretaker's cottage for their extensive warehouse property adjacent to the airport. David was an avid pilot and was involved in the rather exclusive business of distributing parts for the



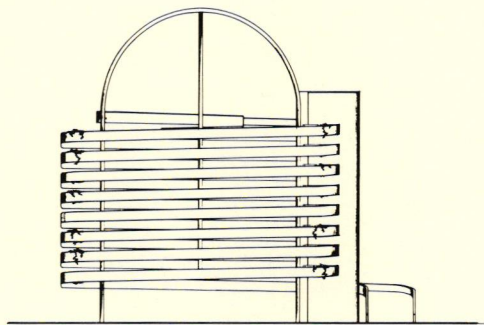
GRAPHIC 44 FIRST FEDERAL OF MANATEE IN SARASOTA



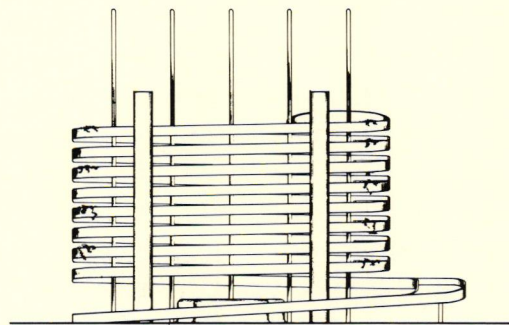
PHOTOGRAPH



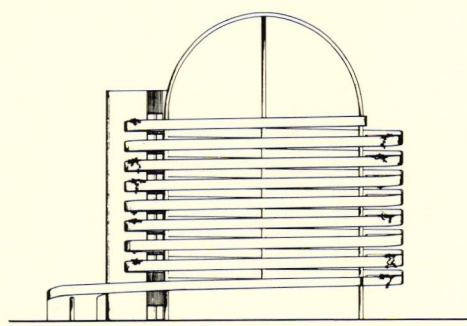
SITE PLAN



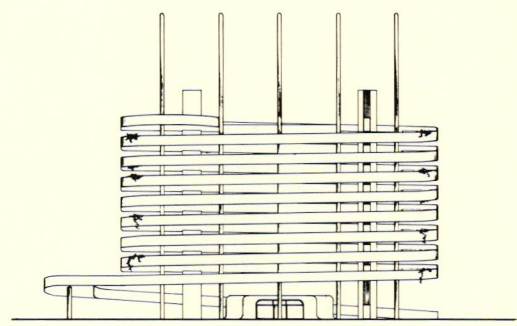
NORTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION

BUILDING ELEVATIONS

WWII P51 fighter plane. The caretaker's cottage would also serve as an entertainment and rest facility for the Lindsays during their frequent flights to and from the airport, as well as for their airport-related business interests.

I chose to elevate the cottage with a large balcony overlooking the runways. The entire second floor would be cantilevered from a central staircase with the east and west solid walls providing a very economical cantilevered structure. (Graphic 46.)

The conception was dazzling; it also solved the stated requirements. Elizabeth told me it was "imaginative" and paid my bill. I did not hear from them again regarding the project. T.L.O.A.A.

In 1973, the First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Manatee again asked me to design for them. This time it was a building for their branch office in the Bayshore area of Bradenton. The budget was quite low. Marjorie and I had just returned from Rome, a city which once again reminded me that architectural quality may be obtained whether the project is large and complex or small and simple.

In order to accommodate the (unduly) large number of tellers, I seized upon a circular scheme not unlike the "House of the Vestal Virgins," the ruins of which I had so recently seen at the Roman Forum. My scheme was approved by the association's president, which ordinarily would mean automatic acceptance by the Board of Directors. Not so. The Board of Directors instructed me to design a larger, more "monumental" building befitting such an important and "prominent location." The budget was substantially increased.

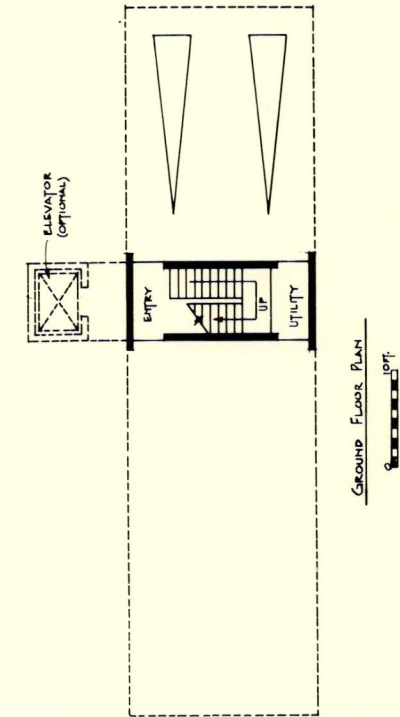
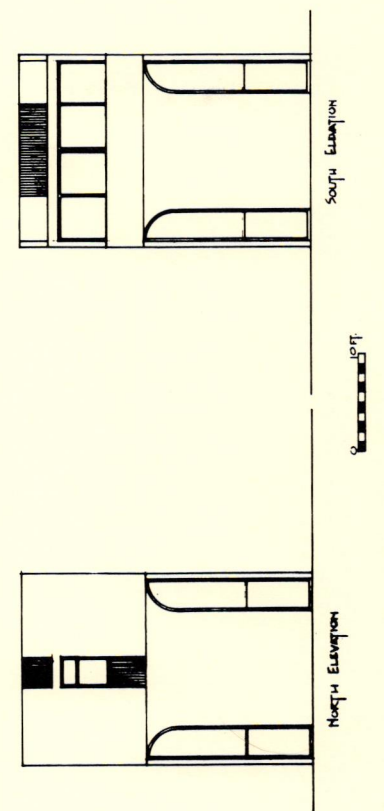
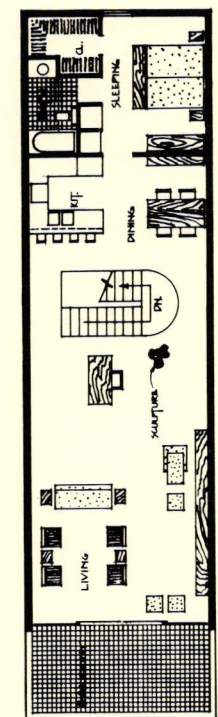
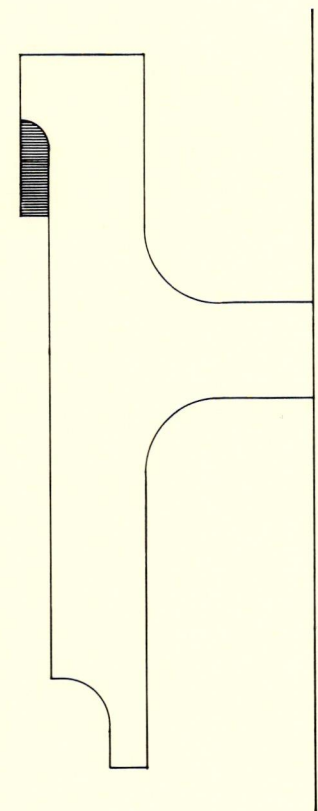
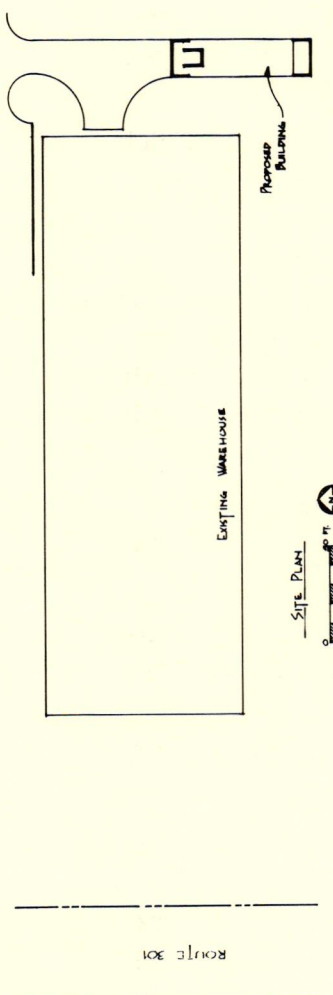
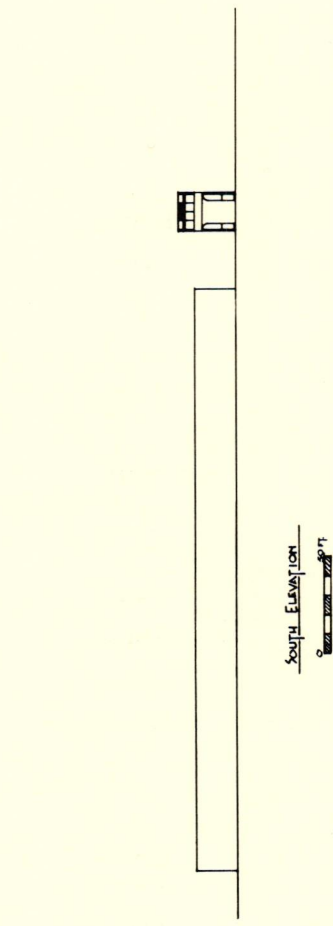
Well, this architect was, by this time, used to setbacks. But this was a setback which sounded like an exciting challenge. With considerable gusto I evolved a completely new concept: a one story building leaping upward to the height of a three-story building, visible from all directions like an ancient Gothic cathedral in a small French town. (Graphic 47.) The preliminary drawings were quickly approved. We prepared working drawings more in depth than we had done for the original working drawings of City Hall. Well, the bids came in slightly higher than budgeted. Even with the changes that would have reduced the cost to budget, the Board of Directors would have none of it. "Design a new building," they said.

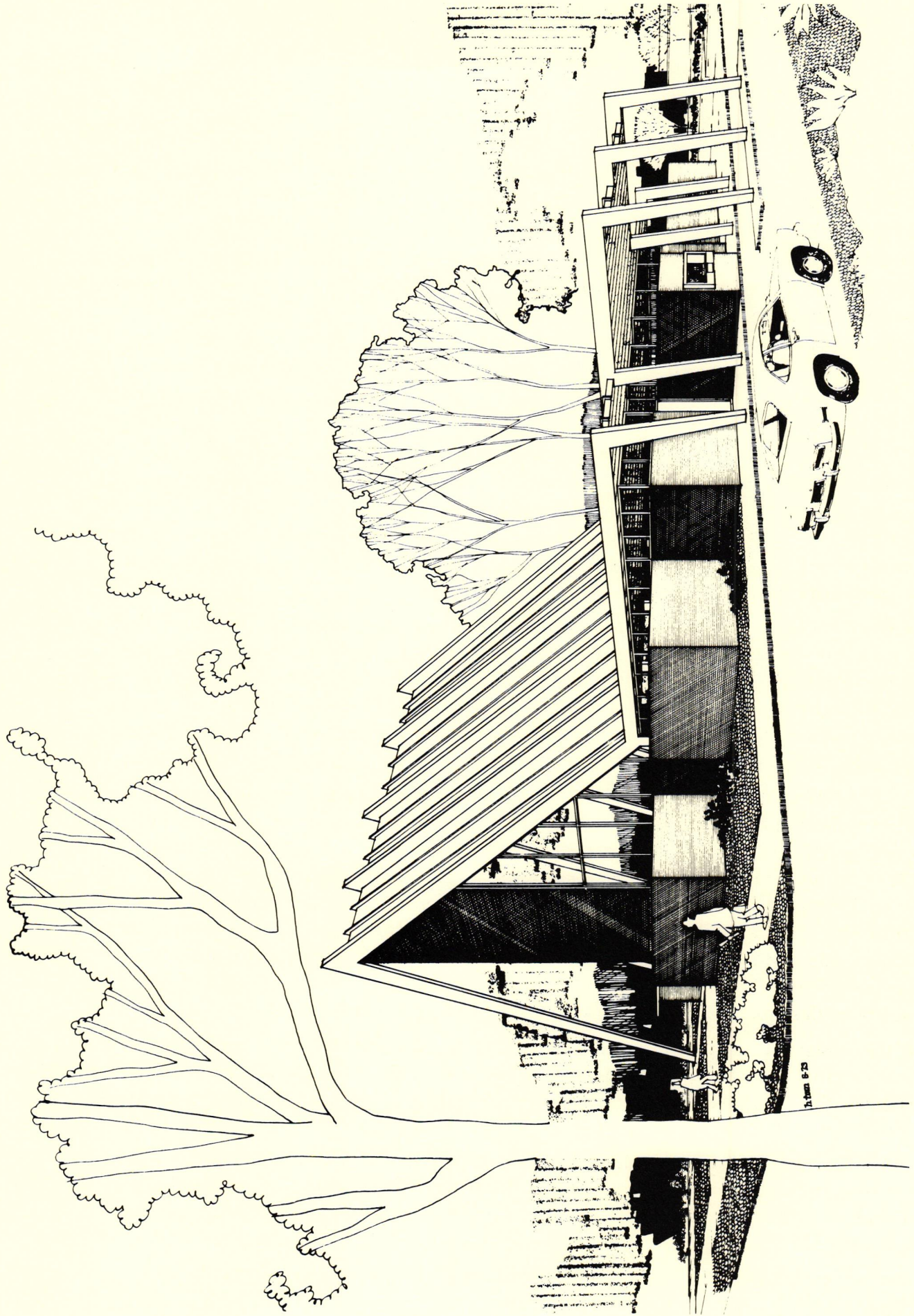
Design a new building I did; it was approved; it was built and this enlightened establishment would not pay us for our work on Version II. (We had not even billed for the preliminary studies prepared for Version I.)

Our third design was less spectacular than either of the other two, but it was a good design and we were able to choose the proper brick. Once again the inclusion of a "cash allowance" allowed me to include a fine Jack Cartlidge copper sculpture.

When the construction had been completed, we threatened to sue First Federal for the fees owed to us; upon advice of their counsel, they settled out of court. T.L.O.A.A.

Making payroll and supporting my family had never been easy. Major projects were few and far between; even minor projects did not come into the office easily. I learned to treat even the smallest commission with great respect and to give my utmost. And so I had always been involved in small remodelling projects, many of which were of little consequence. Where additions were involved I tried to hue to this principle: If the





PERSPECTIVE

original structure had some integrity of style and/or materials, I would design an addition to be in harmony with the original. Where I believed that the original structure was worthless and therefore expendable (or where its problems were nearly insoluble), I attempted to design a totally new concept. If it contrasted with the original structure, so much the better.

Jack Cris Kahn, a personal friend, asked me to help with a small remodelling problem in a house he had purchased in Harbor Acres in 1973. It was an unusually large house with an exceptionally small kitchen. I converted the kitchen into a bar and designed a completely new kitchen/breakfast addition to the house. My friend and superb builder, Jim Rule, did a magnificent job and while Jack and his wife Suzanne were somewhat shocked initially by the cost (as much as the original house), they were both delighted by the results.

Each of us has all manner of dreams tucked inside; one of mine is to see all the great architecture and architectural ruins of the world. I continue to whittle away at it, but in 1974 I was able to hack out a large notch. Marjorie and I visited Greece and visited many of the Greek Islands including Crete and Rhodes. Once again I was reminded of the significance of even the smallest fragment of architecture as a part of a cohesive work of enduring art.

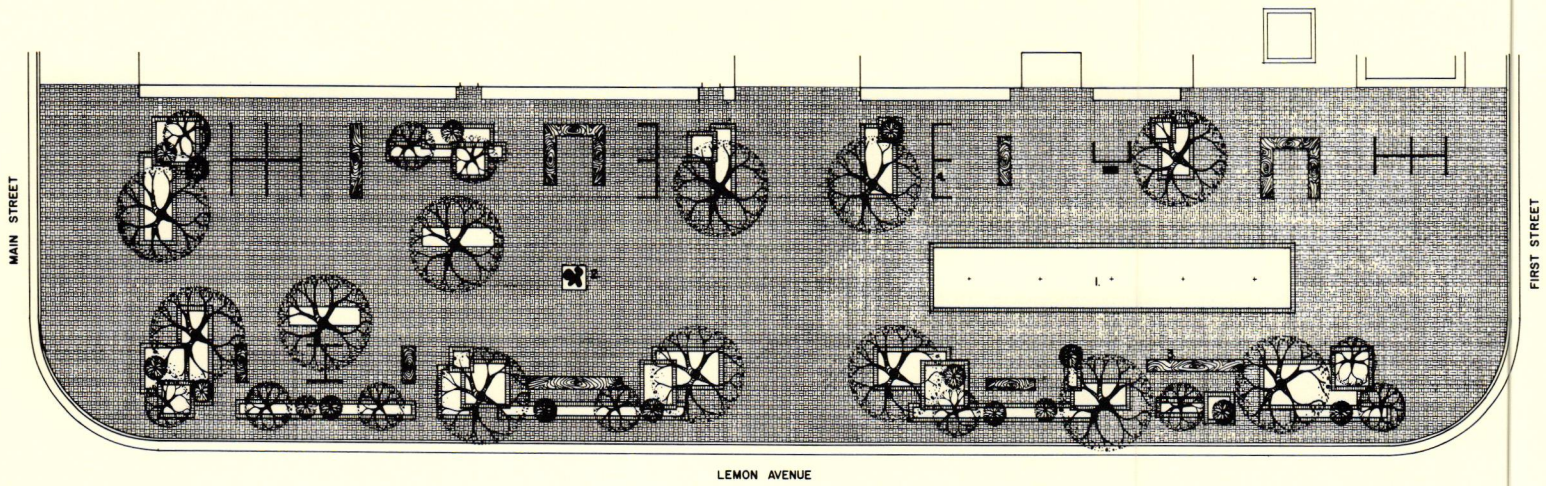
A city bond issue had passed and included in it were the extension of Lemon Avenue in downtown Sarasota and a small park 60 feet wide and one block long between Main and First streets. We called it the Lemon Avenue Park/Mall because we had earlier thought of it as a link between Main Street and a downtown library and parking structure at First Street. This park/mall was dedicated the following year and renamed by the City Commissioners, the Lemon Avenue Bicentennial Park/Mall. (Graphic 48.)

Also in 1974 I was introduced to J. Tyson Forker, an eccentric millionaire who was married to both a charming woman and the desire to build a home to his own rather exacting specifications—I learned with dismay. He lived in an absolutely mediocre builder's house on Bird Key and wished to build a significant piece of architecture with some of the aspects of a Spanish country house. This seemed a splendid opportunity to utilize the vault, this time in concrete. My preliminary drawings only indicated to him that I had not followed his instructions to the letter. Though they met his requirements completely, the design was mine and not his. He rejected it and one of my finest house designs would never be completed. (Graphic 49.)

If the design of a city is the ultimate triumph for an architect, then the design of a college campus must be the next best thing—at least if his design is realized. In 1975 I was given the commission of a lifetime: the design of a new campus for the Ringling School of Art.

This art school, for 40 years, had occupied a variety of commercial buildings all designed for other purposes (including a grocery store). Their Board of Trustees, under the leadership of their president, Robert Perkins, initiated this ambitious project and set the stage for the first fund-raising drive in the school's history.

The design challenge of a new campus master plan was only sharpened by the emergence of two major problems: The campus was intersected by two major streets



PLAN



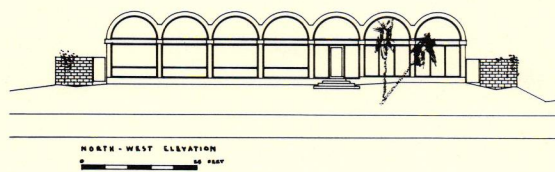
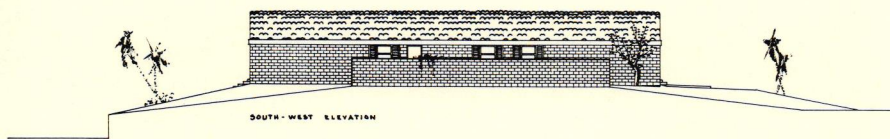
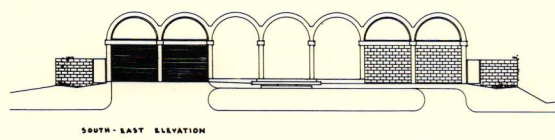
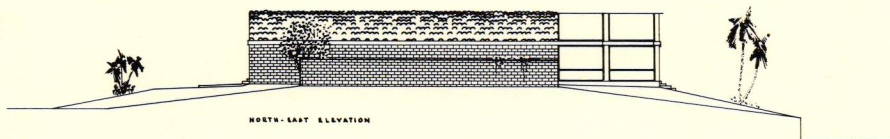
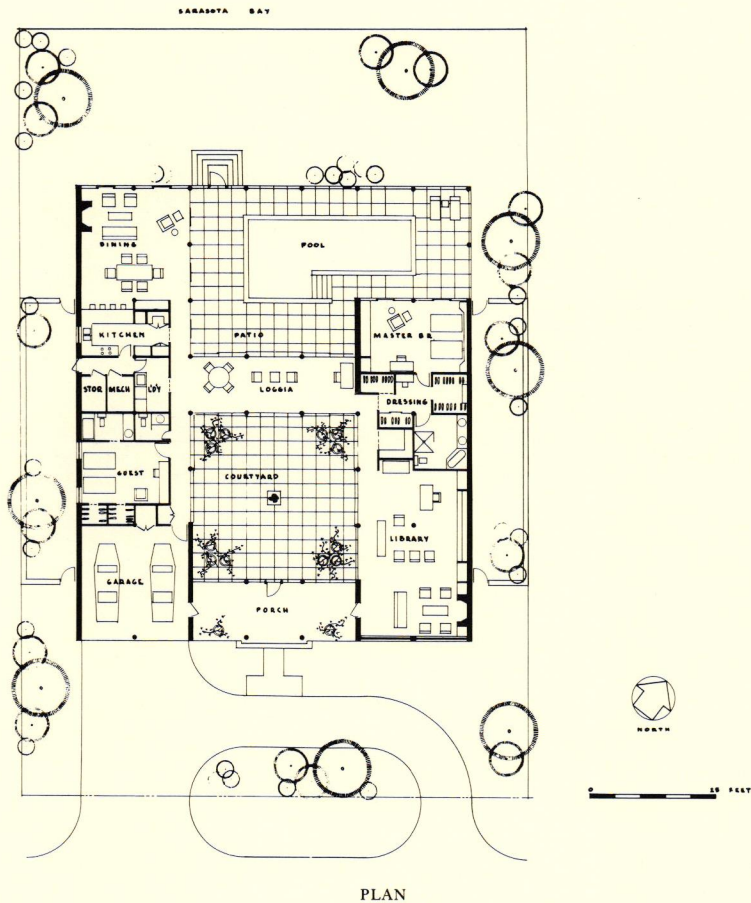
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LEGEND

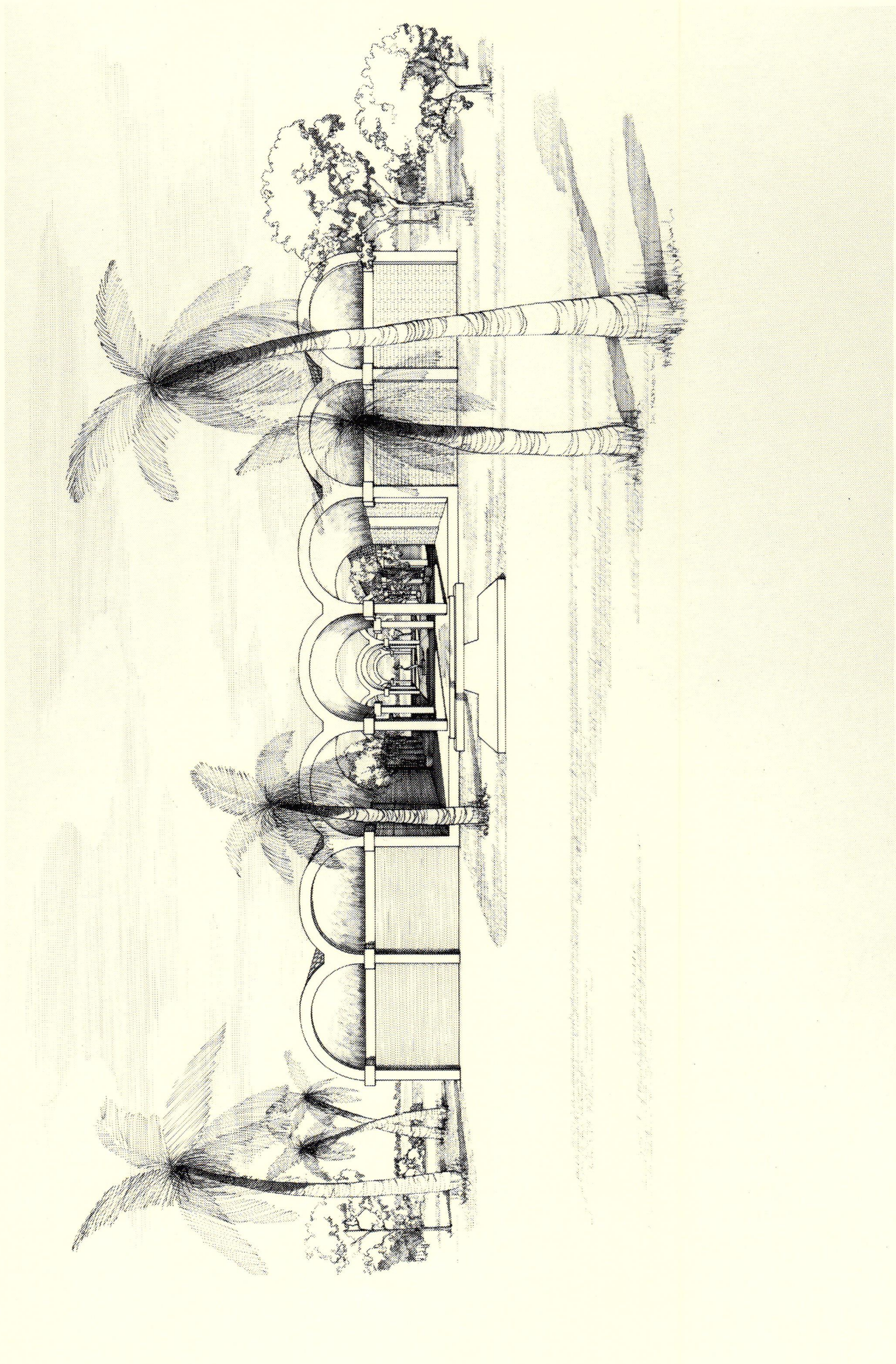
- 1. LAGOON WITH FOUNTAINS
- 2. SCULPTURE
- 3. BENCHES
- 4. PAINTING RACKS



PHOTOGRAPH



ELEVATIONS



PERSPECTIVE

and the new construction had to be accommodated without unduly disrupting the use of existing school buildings. By closing a minor street, the major portion of the campus could be unified, and by keeping the parking of automobiles on the campus perimeter the campus could be designed for essentially pedestrian traffic.

The climate of Southwestern Florida calls for covered walkways and luxuriant open spaces. The small size of the campus required an economical use of the property. My solution was a megastructure based upon octagonal modules. In this way the campus could grow and change without the overall form looking unfinished. The majority of the self-contained modules would be interconnected, allowing for movement and the socialization of students with roof protection from Florida's fierce sun and frequent showers.

I thought that my master plan was well received. President Perkins asked his staff to build a model of the new campus, with the help of student volunteers. The Board of Trustees decided to proceed with the new campus, choosing the library as the first important element to implement the master plan.

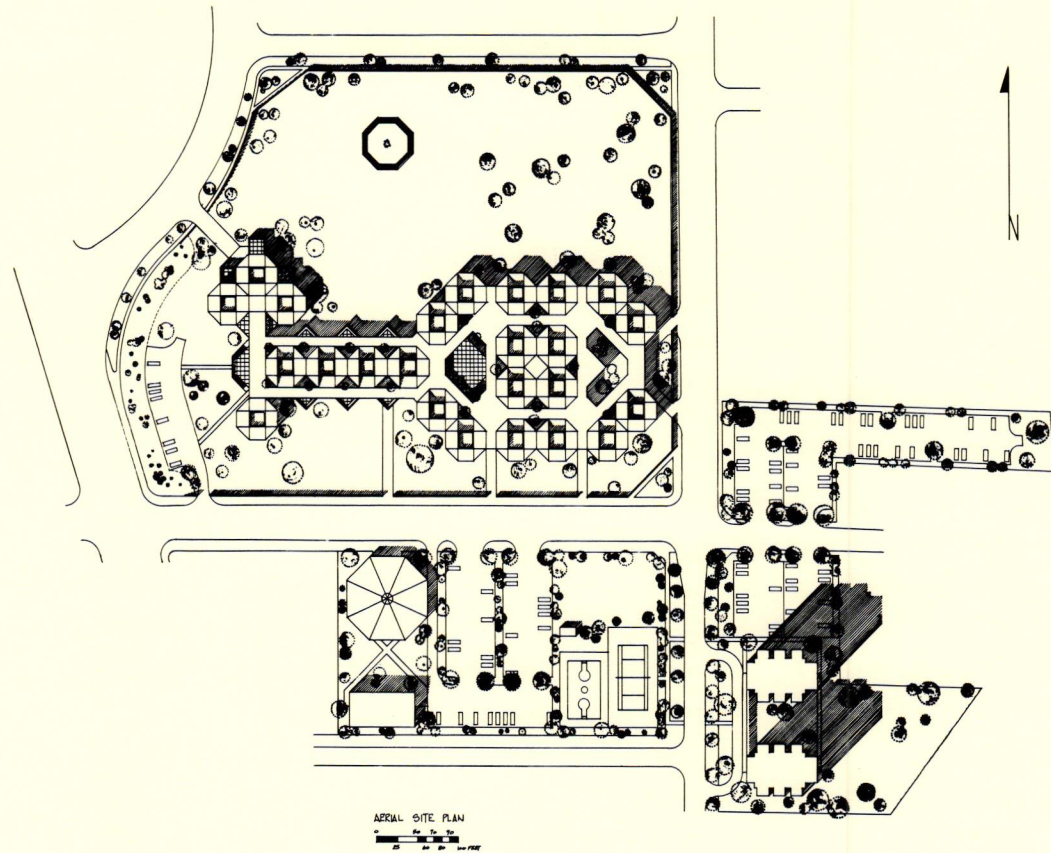
Several very strange, even bizarre incidents occurred. One of the members of the Board of Trustees proposed that the campus master plan be rotated 180 degrees. I was shocked, stunned and disbelieving. I once again appeared before the Board to defend my original plan. The rotation idea was supported by President Perkins and so ordered by the Board.

On my recommendation, a contractor was selected with whom to negotiate a contract for building the library (in a re-aligned location). To my chagrin, this contractor would not allow me to see the bids and breakdown. This contractor informed the Board and President Perkins that the building was "over designed" and exorbitant in cost. I recommended that the contractor be dismissed (as was allowed in their contract) and that a more cooperative contractor be chosen to negotiate a contract. I was informed (after completing a meticulously detailed set of working drawings and specifications) that I was discharged. Fired.

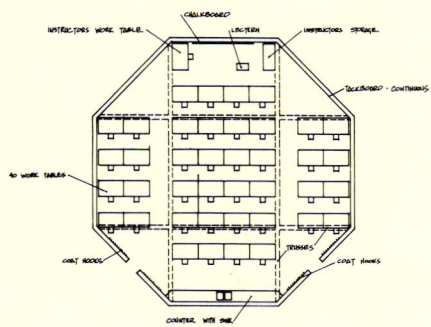
The Board of Trustees kept the contractor, hired a new architect, and built an ugly new library which was obsolete in five years. They of course scrapped my master plan. T.L.O.A.A. (Graphic 50.)

The Kahn family had owned a resort hotel on Longboat Key for many years. I had helped Jack Cris Kahn remodel his home and in 1976, Jack Kahn, Jack Cris's father, asked me to design a house on a beautiful bayfront site also on Longboat Key. Having lived for so many years in his hotel apartment, Jack wished for space and to enjoy an easy view of the water and close-in mangrove islands, a sanctuary for a variety of birds and other wildlife.

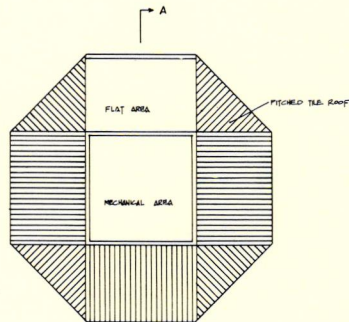
Once again, I turned to the "warped plane" roof with the buildings unfolding to the water while following the circular sea wall. We were authorized to complete working drawings, specifications and select a builder. Then, Jack, prodded by his wife who foresaw security problems, purchased two contiguous condominium apartments and asked me to stop work. T.L.O.A.A. (Graphic 51.)



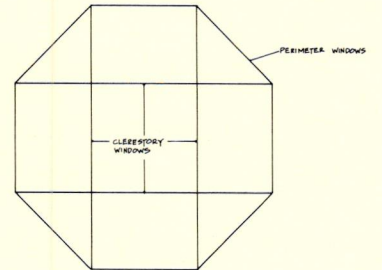
AERIAL SITE PLAN
 0 20 40 60 80 FEET



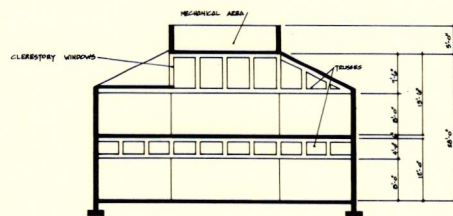
TYPICAL CLASSROOM LAYOUT



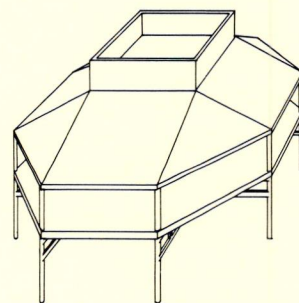
TYPICAL STUDIO ROOF PLAN



FENESTRATION POTENTIAL



SECTION A

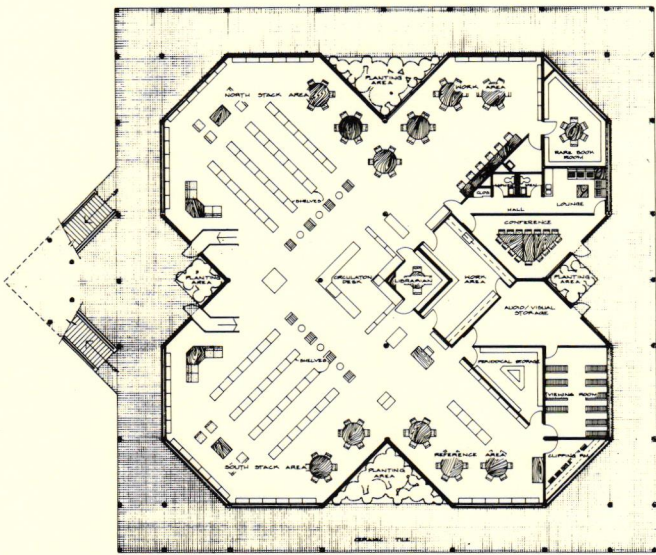


DIAGRAMATIC PERSPECTIVE OF OCTAGONAL MODULE

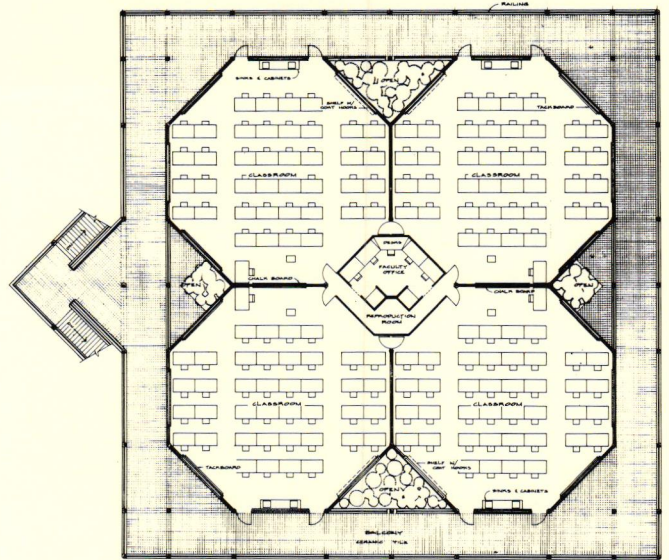




PERSPECTIVE



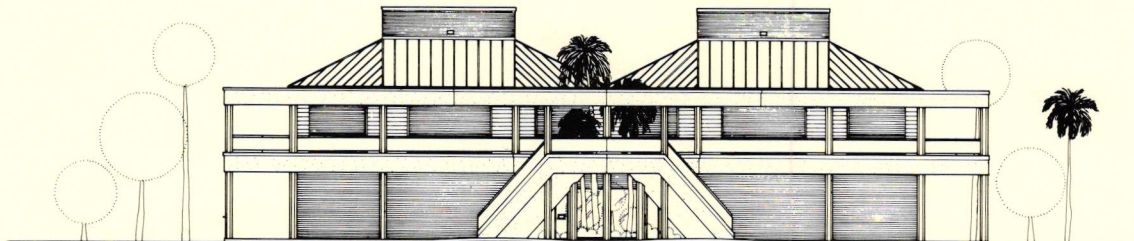
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



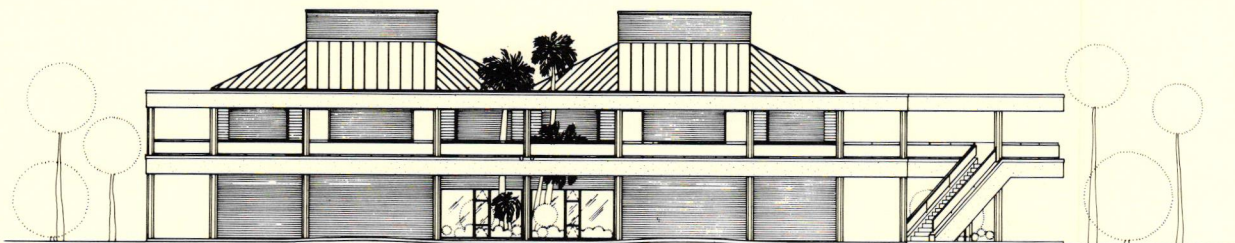
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



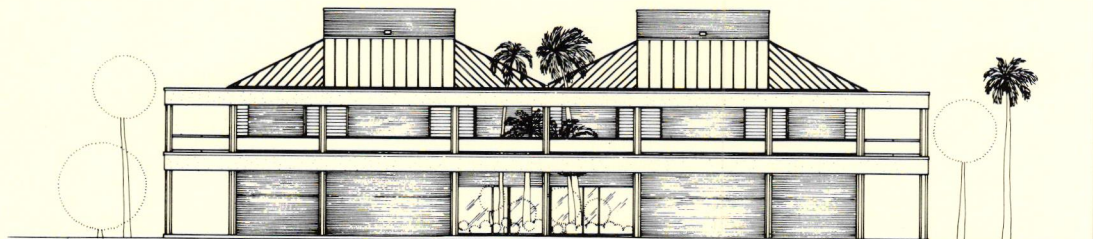
SOUTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

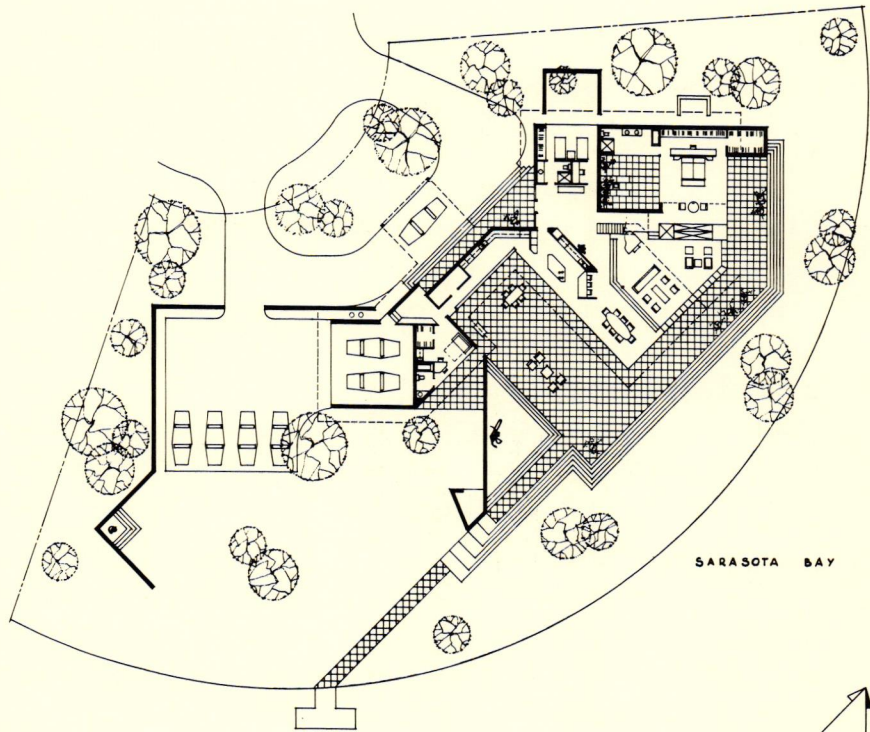
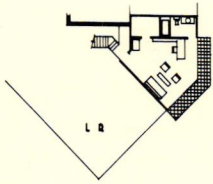


NORTH ELEVATION

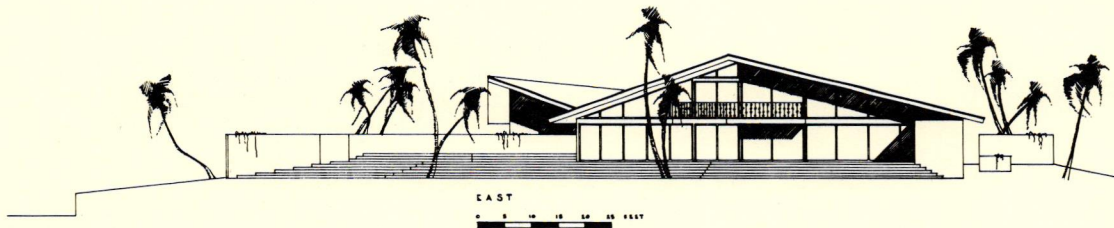
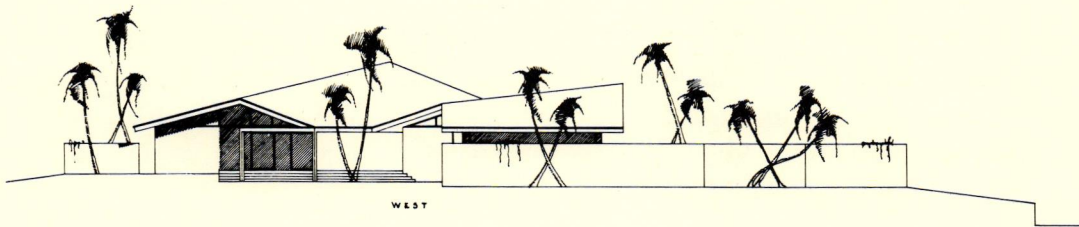
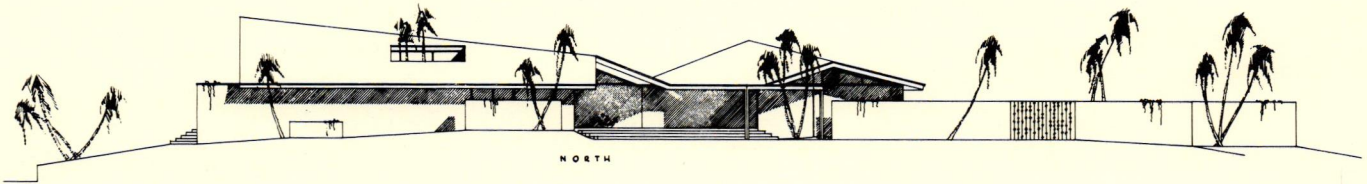


EAST ELEVATION

SECOND FLOOR STUDY



PLAN



ELEVATIONS

The paucity of architectural quality in our nation's capital during recent years has been a thorn in the side of many admirers and observers of our country's governmental center. When, in 1976, Bob Hope and others spearheaded an effort to build a memorial to the Vietnam veterans on the mall adjacent to the Lincoln Memorial, I felt my pulse quicken. The design of this memorial turned into a national competition which I entered with high enthusiasm. In the cold of early spring, Marjorie and I once again visited the Washington Mall. The site was a low hill with scattered trees just off the main axis of the mall within close proximity to the Lincoln Memorial, the White House, Washington Monument, and Capitol Hill.

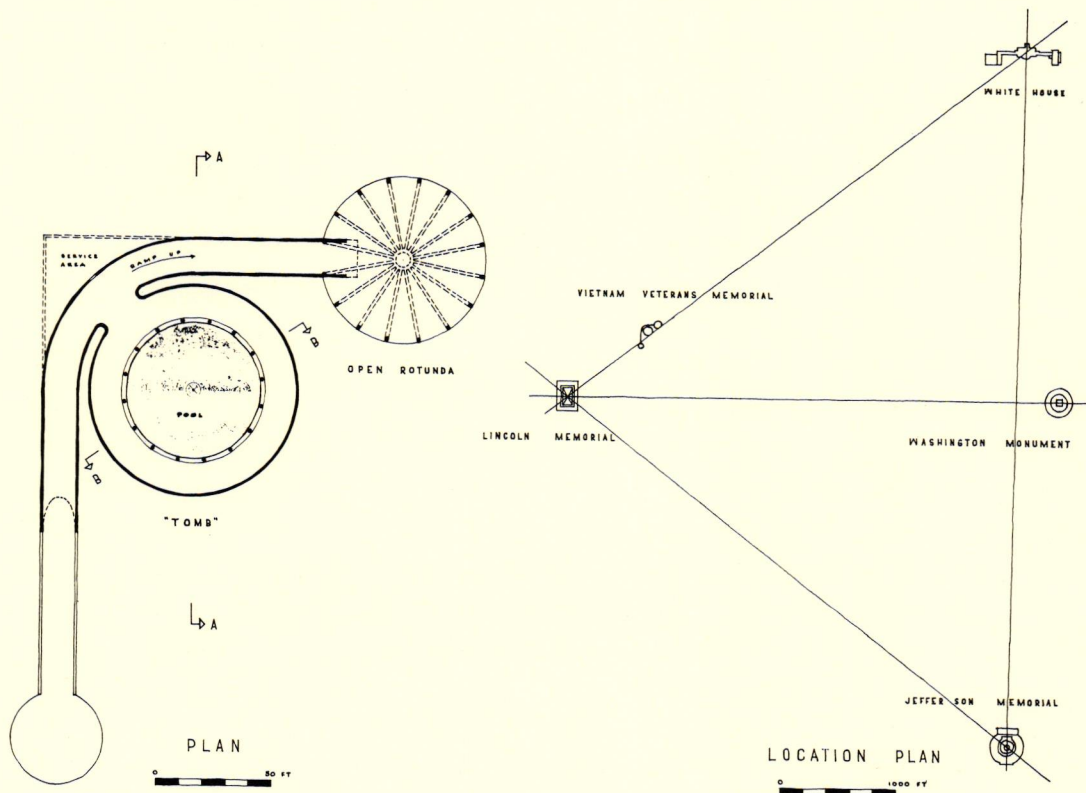
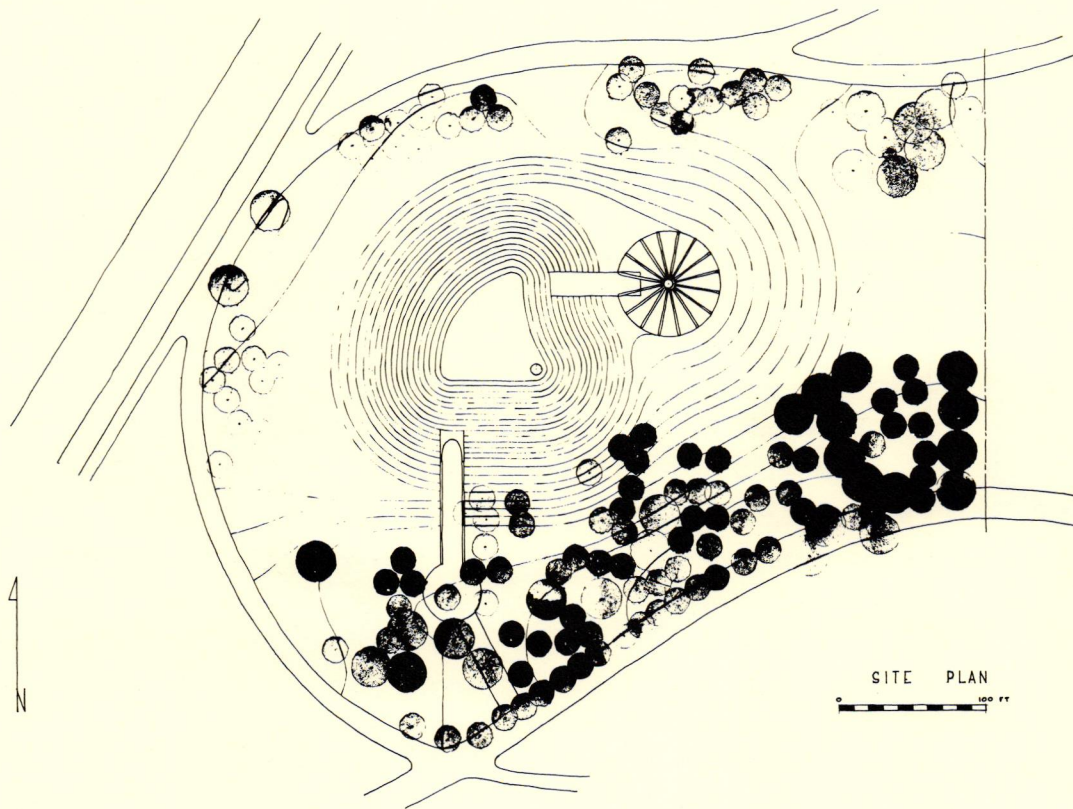
With the anguish of this undeclared major war yet to be fully absorbed in the nation's consciousness, I sought in my design to portray the experience of sacrifice and dying. I wanted it to remind all who came that it was a heroic, tragic episode in our country's life: that while we must remember the past, we must continue with optimism to seek a better future. (Graphic 52.)

Along with the submission of my design, I sent the following description:

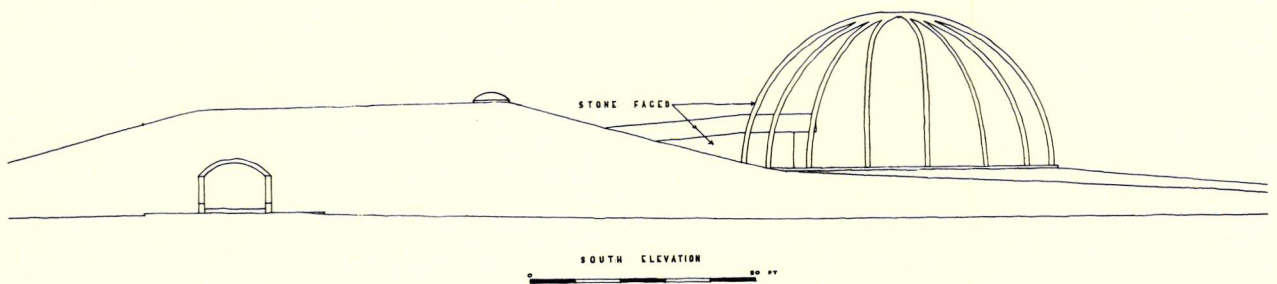
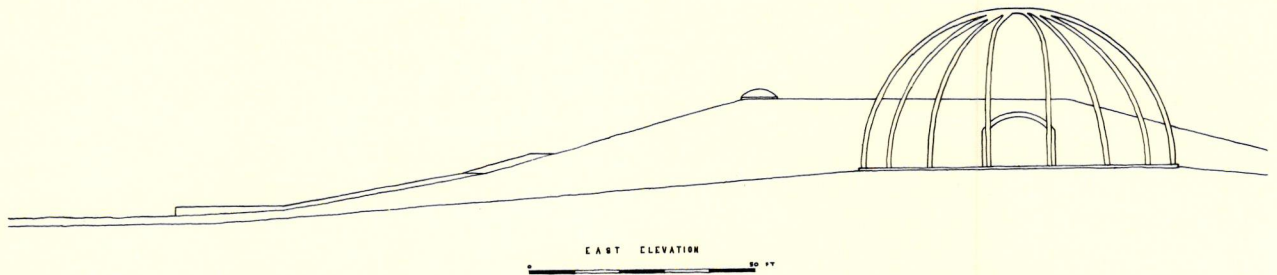
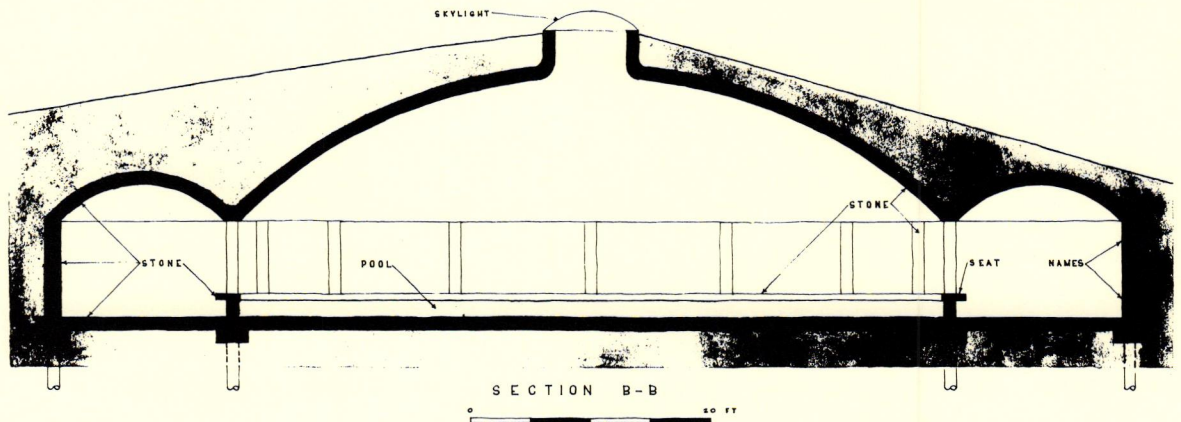
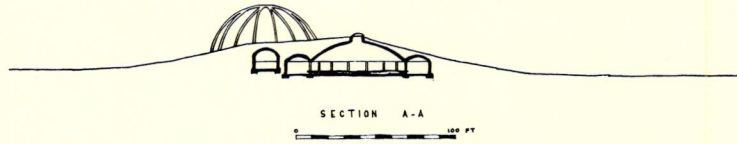
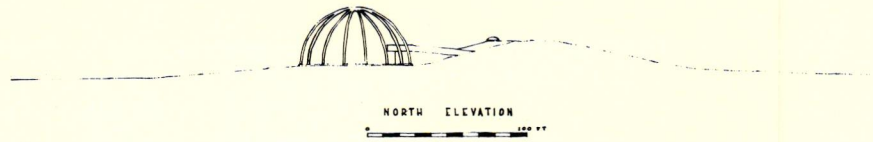
"A continuation of the existing peripheral walkway connects to the round, stone platform from which a stone walkway changes from an open walk to a vault as it enters the hillside. The vault floor rises slightly and opens into a large circular underground space which we call *The Tomb*. In the center of the tomb is a pool with low bubbling fountains to provide the continuous sound of water. A vault surrounds the pool and the names of the Vietnam veterans who are dead or missing in action are inscribed on the outer peripheral stone wall. The edge of the pool is designed as a seat for those who may wish to meditate or to further absorb the spirit of the space. The tomb is lit by a skylight which pierces the top of the hill. From the tomb a vaulted ramp curves upward to the Open Rotunda. From the somber interlude in *The Tomb* (representing the Past), we move into the open space created by the arched structure of the *Open Rotunda* with its close proximity to green grass and trees and its distant panoramas of the nation's capital buildings with their sense of National Purpose and Hope (the Present and the Future). From the Open Rotunda we may return as we came or we may continue down the hillside."

The winning entry was a retaining wall containing the names of the dead and those missing in action. A flag and sculpture were added (despite the objections of the winning entrant) by some unnamed but ever-present governmental bureau. At the time, I thought that the Athenians were fortunate that their Acropolis was not encumbered by the Vietnam Memorial jury. T.L.O.A.A.

In 1976, my firm was chosen to remodel the old Sarasota Terrace Hotel (built in the 1920s) into the new Sarasota County Administration Center. I chose to restore the old hotel exterior and interior lobby at a time when restoration was not yet fashionable—at least to our local county commission. The project was quite successful but became a political issue in the county commission election which occurred during the middle of construction. After the election I found myself dealing with a governing body of five, four of whom were opposed to the project. One of our problems was that in the third and final phase (as it turned out) the low bidder underestimated the cost and bid



GRAPHIC 52 VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL COMPETITION



almost \$200,000 below both our estimate and the official budget. Very strange politics that two new commissioners ran on a campaign stating the project ran “over the budget.” However all was not lost. Our experience with the Sarasota County Administration Center enabled us to design a completely new administration complex for Charlotte County (the county directly to the south of Sarasota).

The seat of Charlotte County government was in the courthouse in Punta Gorda. The building was overcrowded and the Charlotte County Commission, in 1977, determined that the administrative functions should be separated from the judicial and that the location should be closer to the approaching center of population, Port Charlotte. The elevation of the land in Punta Gorda was well below hurricane flood planes and so the safety of higher property was also sought and found in a 25-acre site, suburban in character.

With the participation of landscape architect Lane Marshall, we prepared a master plan which treated the site as a park. In addition to the buildings, we provided a lake with a bandstand, walking and bike paths, picnic areas, nature trails as well as sculpture and fountains and landscaped parking, of course.

Our concept of the administration center and what was then projected as a central county library, was a megastructure concept not unlike the Ringling School of Art campus master plan design. We used the octagonal module again, but this time we devised a concrete frame which would allow both horizontal and vertical expansion. Al Conyers’ design of the great octagonal column was reminiscent of the Tinkertoys we owned as kids. Our design was a combination of one or two stories with flat roofs to facilitate future vertical expansion. Our concept combined a strong commitment to natural beauty through exterior and interior gardens plus a major design emphasis on energy conservation.

Energy conservation was nothing new but a concerted movement in the industrialized world had shifted new emphasis on this eternal problem. Our design concept included the following tenets:

- All buildings contained windows for natural ventilation.
- All windows were equipped with exterior extruded aluminum louvers operated from within to control the sun and provide hurricane protection.
- All major circulation areas were roofed but otherwise open to the elements.
- Construction would include brick cavity walls and maximum use of insulation.

With the skillful leadership of Admiral Shade, originally Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, and the support of John Printon, the efficiently professional county administrator, the first phase of the project (about 25 percent of the total) was constructed.

Just as it had happened in Sarasota, the Charlotte County Commission underwent an election. Admiral Shade chose not to run. John Printon resigned and the new com-

mission has not as yet shown any inclination to complete the project in accordance with the master plan. T.L.O.A.A. (Graphic 53.)

Also in 1977, the Shah of Iran announced an international competition to design a new national library for his country. I was excited by the project and immediately entered the competition and flew to Teheran.

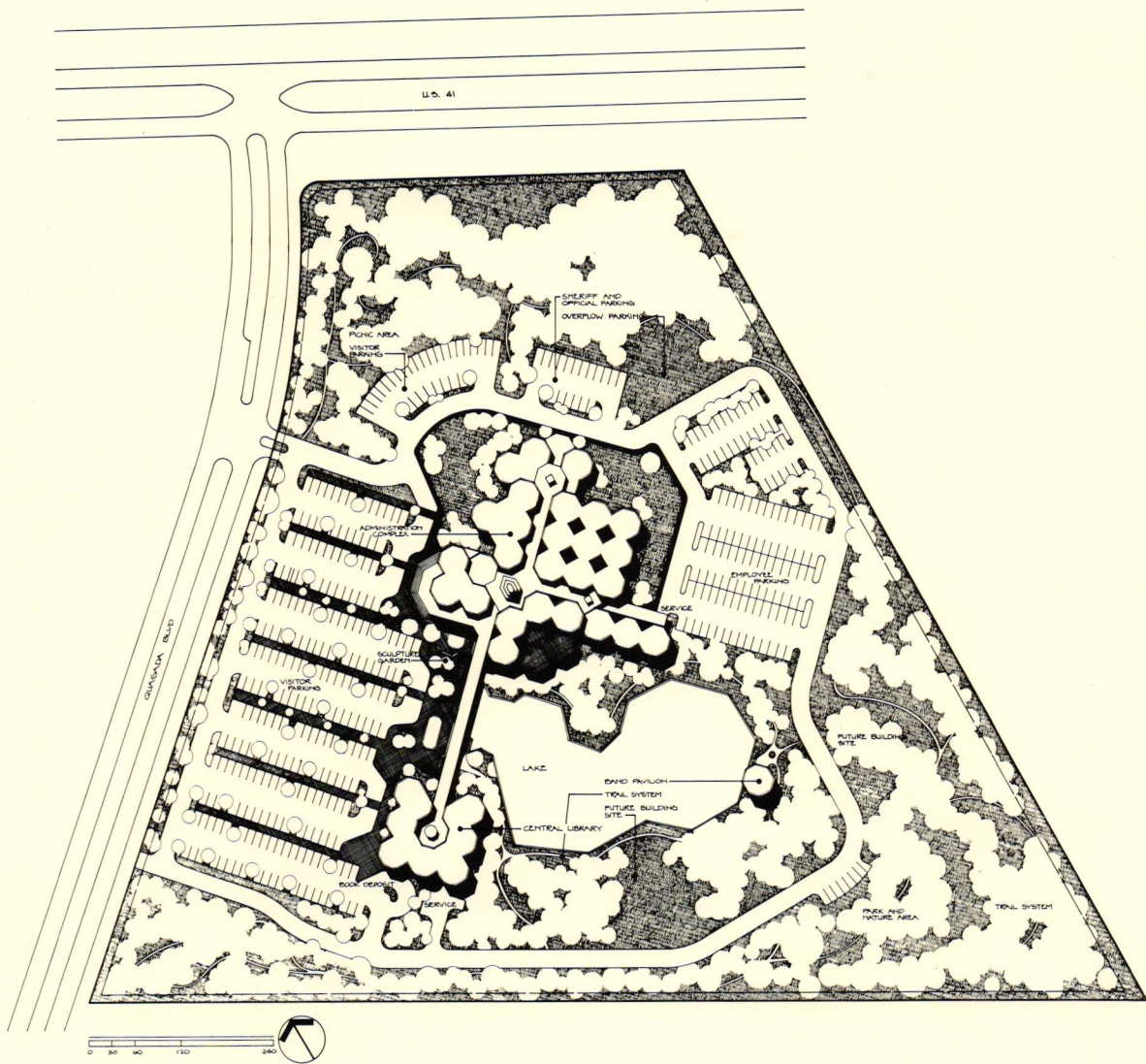
In 1975 (or was it 1976) Marjorie and I divorced because of grave differences relating to my children. And so my trip to Iran via London was, I must say, very lonely. But London was sunny and stimulating both before and after Iran. And Iran was quite an experience. The site was just outside of Teheran and part of a larger, very ambitious government complex. I stayed at the Intercontinental Hotel in Teheran for several days to study the site and prepare exploratory sketches. I also wandered through the vast bazaar and explored the great new university and contiguous parks. This was just before the fall of the Shah. I was certainly impressed by the progress the Shah apparently was making. But, of course, I wanted to understand not only the program and the site but also the architectural character of ancient Persia. I was disappointed that I was unable to see the ruins of the ancient Persian capital Persepolis, but I did manage to make a rewarding visit to Isfahan.

Shah Abbas was perhaps the most enlightened ruler of Persia and he transformed Isfahan into the capital during his reign. His architectural legacies remain in relatively excellent condition and they are impressive. The mosque of the Shah (Masjid-i-shah) was particularly magnificent; I will remember always the beauty and obvious utility of the great domes with roofs of mosaic tile. Not all of his domes were tiled (some were painted to resemble tile). But such are the time restraints of rulers. Shortly after my trip the Shah was deposed and the competition cancelled. I never finished the design for the national library.

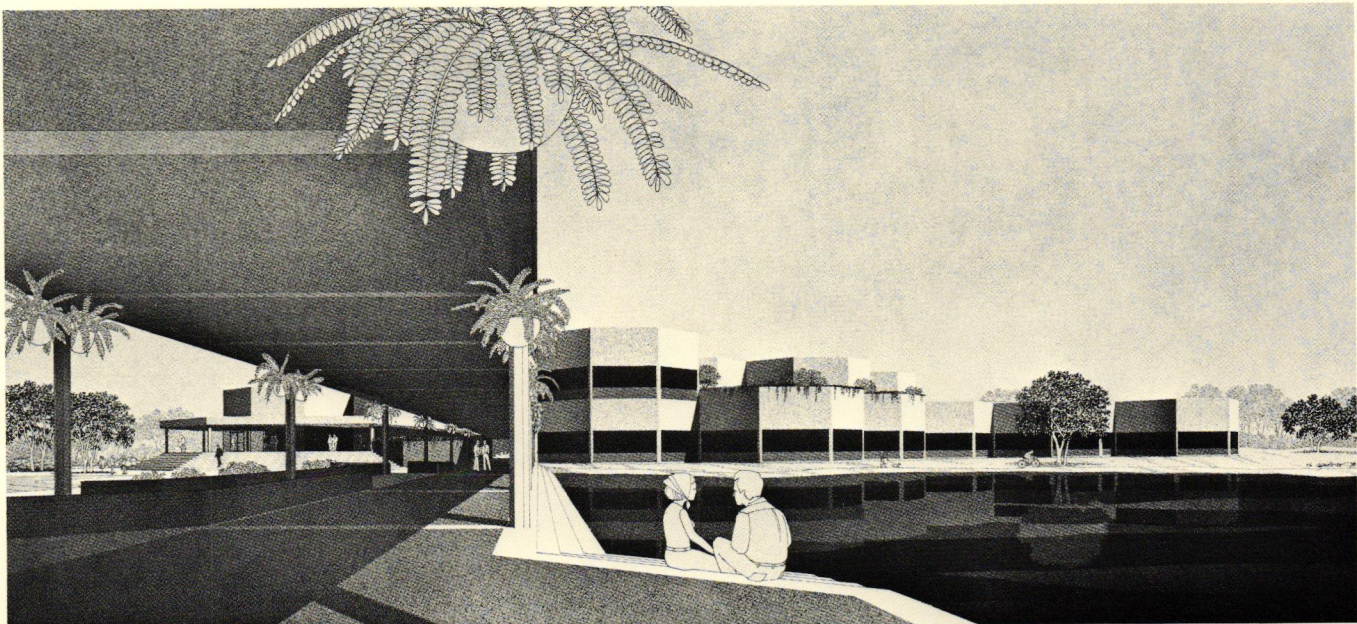
By 1979, my youngest daughter, Jessica, was attending Manatee Junior College, located in nearby Bradenton and had moved into her own apartment. I felt free to remarry Marjorie and as luck would have it and against the advice of her children, Marjorie agreed to try once again.

Between 1977 and 1984, I designed the Gulfgate Library (which was not built—see Graphic 54), along with a number of projects which now seem to be of no particular significance. In 1982, Marjorie and I visited Egypt and I was overwhelmed by the beauty and variety of ancient Egyptian architecture. What can I say that has not already been said of the pyramids? However, the temple architecture, particularly the Temple of Karnak in Luxor was endlessly fascinating. The juxtaposition of different groupings and sculptures mirrored on the sacred lake—the perspective of unfolding courtyards and colonnades with sun and shade sculpturing the surfaces—these experiences even now are remembered with pleasurable inner feelings of excitement. What is the lesson to be learned from the great works of art of the past? Easy. Build as well as you can and as durably as you can and pray for luck! T.L.O.A.A.

Two fascinating projects were undertaken in 1984: the design of a resort hotel and the design of a master plan of development for Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. During a lull in business activities, Edmund Danzig, a controversial entrepreneur, real estate broker, developer and probably many other things too, walked into my office and



SITE PLAN



PERSPECTIVE



PERSPECTIVE

said, "How would you like to design a world-class resort hotel on the site of your old Landmark Hotel?" I answered that I would gladly give an arm and a leg for such an opportunity. Edmund said that money was no problem and that the only objective was the pinnacle of quality. My client was to be a corporation (of course) but the major investor was the Muller family. Lloyd Muller was the owner of a motel in Sarasota and had owned hotels in New York. I came up with what I felt was a beautiful and practical hotel design which would only improve with time. We needed some zoning relief from the city and approvals from the Florida State Cabinet.

Edmund added to the ownership of the hotel John Basset, a wealthy Canadian investor and winter resident of Longboat Key who, in turn, brought in wealthy Hollywood actor Burt Reynolds, who had a great interest in Florida and, finally, Donald Trump, a young and hugely successful real estate investor from New York.

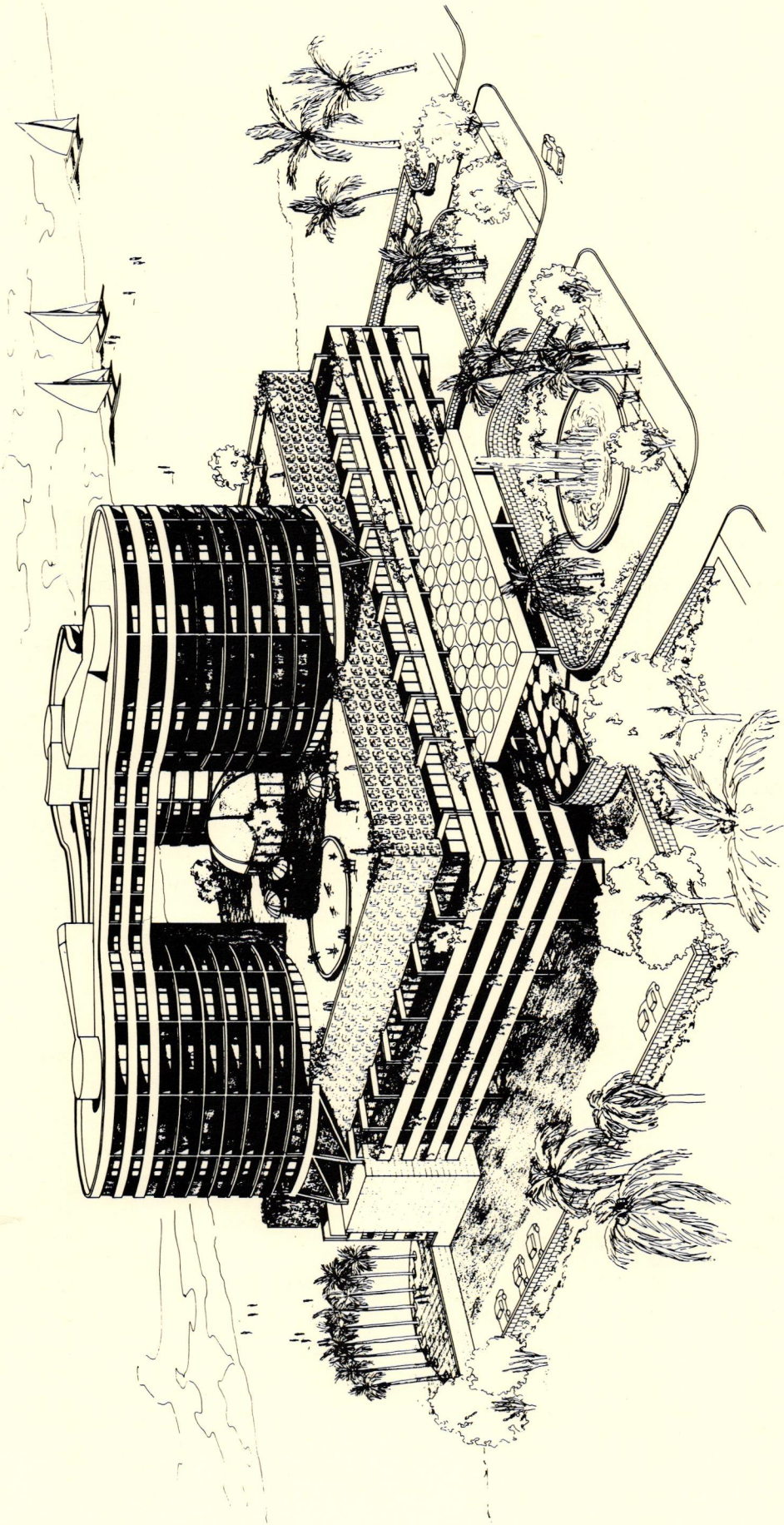
The city appeared to move into a position of support; I was assured that the State Cabinet would likely look with favor on the project.

A brain tumor was discovered in John Basset and he and his friends wanted out. As of this writing the episode has not concluded, but I believe the handwriting is on the wall: the J. West resort hotel will probably never be built. (Graphic 55.)
T.L.O.A.A.

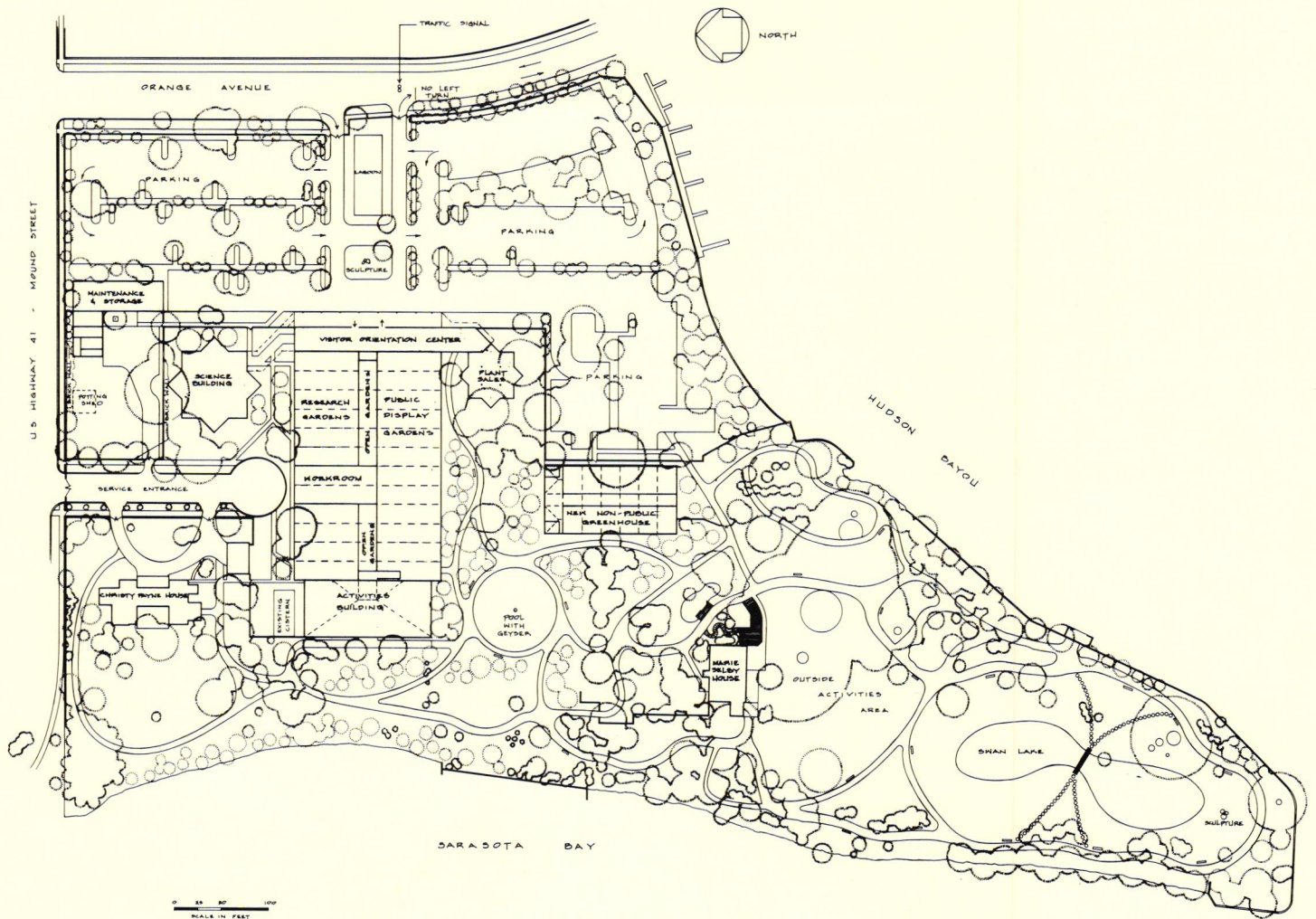
Really just across the street from my office (I can view its perimeter from my desk) is the Marie Selby Botanical Garden. Located in the midst of downtown Sarasota, yet bound by both Sarasota Bay and Hudson Bayou, it is a unique institution, specializing in tropical plants, especially orchids. Starting with the house and garden of Marie Selby, a wealthy widow who bequeathed her property to the formation of a botanical garden, the area has already more than tripled in size but without a cohesive plan and sadly lacking in the quality buildings that might complement the botanical specimens.

In 1984 my firm was chosen to produce a master plan for development. I spent many days wandering through the grounds and greenhouses to obtain a feeling for the special character of the gardens and to identify both strengths and weaknesses. I concluded that this small urban garden was quite unique and quite wonderful but had not grown as constructively as it should have. The garden is bisected by a public road which could be closed and absorbed into the gardens. The remaining privately owned properties, contiguous to the gardens, should be purchased and also added to the grounds. I envisioned a new entrance from the east along a lily studded reflecting pool. From a new entrance building, the public could either go directly into a large new greenhouse and then to the garden paths or directly to the paths. The public greenhouse would connect to a new activities building overlooking the bay. We would retain the historic Selby and Payne residences and restore them to their original materials and configuration. When closed, Palm Avenue would become both a service road and a part of the historic urbancape with its fine brick paving.

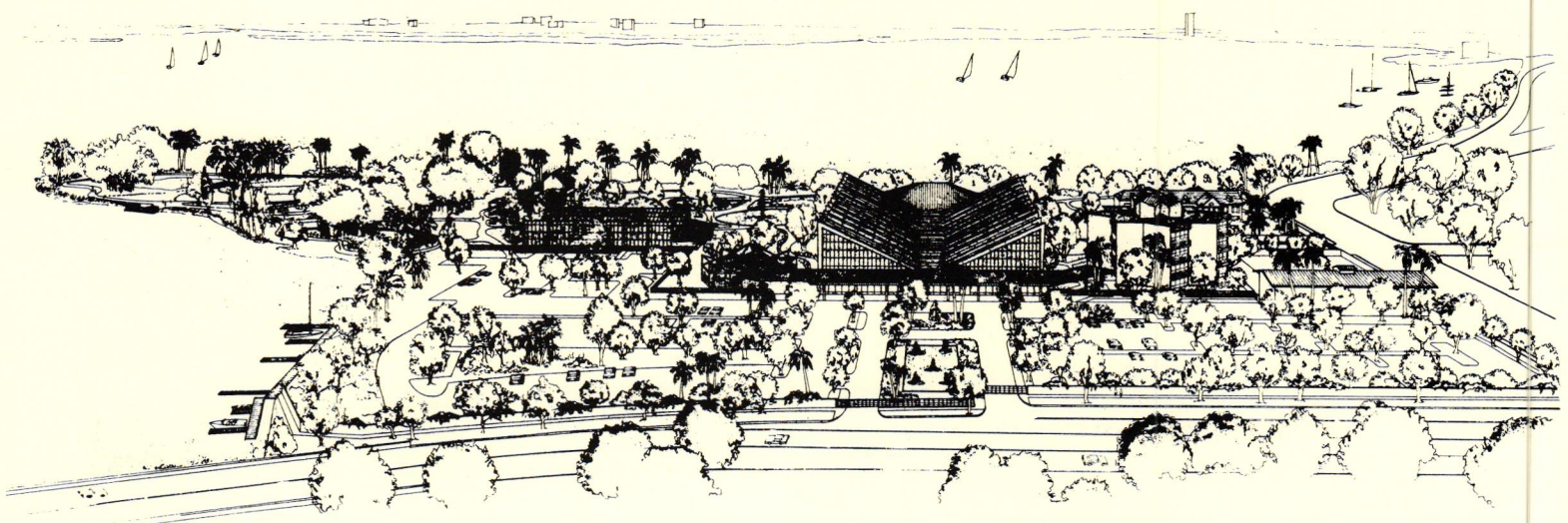
My master plan of development is shown in Graphic 56. The plan may be completely implemented, partially implemented or rejected. *The Lives of an Architect.*



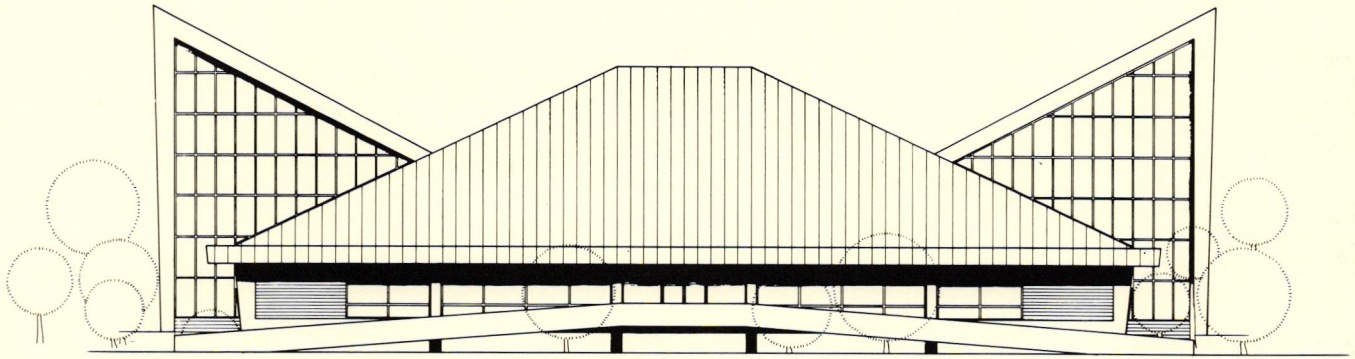
PERSPECTIVE



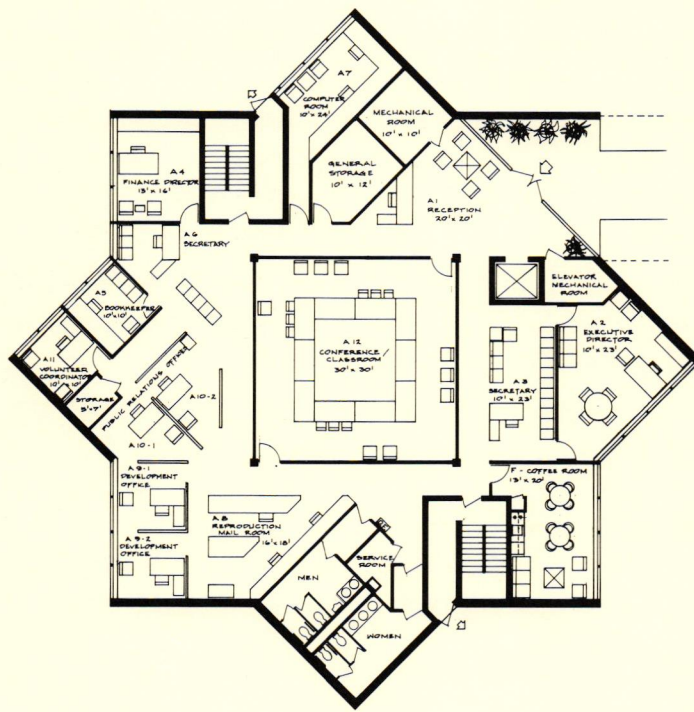
SITE PLAN



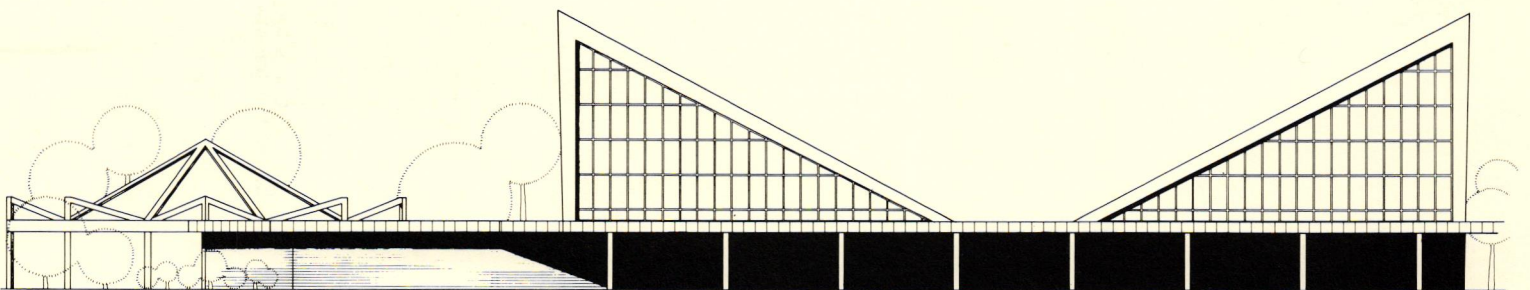
PERSPECTIVE



WEST ELEVATION
ACTIVITIES BUILDING
SCALE IN FEET



GROUND FLOOR



EAST ELEVATION
VISITOR ORIENTATION CENTER
SCALE IN FEET

It is too early to sum up and too late. Like life, architecture is a dichotomy, seemingly combining totally diverse and incompatible elements; but then when the fog begins to clear, both appear to contain the same clay. Fine architecture is quite something to behold: if it has beauty or power or both we immediately grasp and feel the spell, whether it be under construction or a crumbling ruins. Like all of the arts, architecture becomes independent unto itself and forges its own special life oblivious to both its creator and original purpose.

But the architect cannot afford the luxury of pursuing this one god. If he does he will discover that such single-mindedness inevitably leads to the stereotype and may even instill vindictiveness.

I have found that I must attack the fortress of absolute beauty at the same time I must solve both the main objectives and the minor needs of my client. If either is forgotten or given a lesser role, I will not be content with the final result. And what if my client's perceived objectives completely lack the door to the larger scope which includes at least the opportunity for universal and lasting beauty? I try to change his perceptions. And if I cannot, I die in another one of my lives.