The Architecture of Alfred Browning Parker



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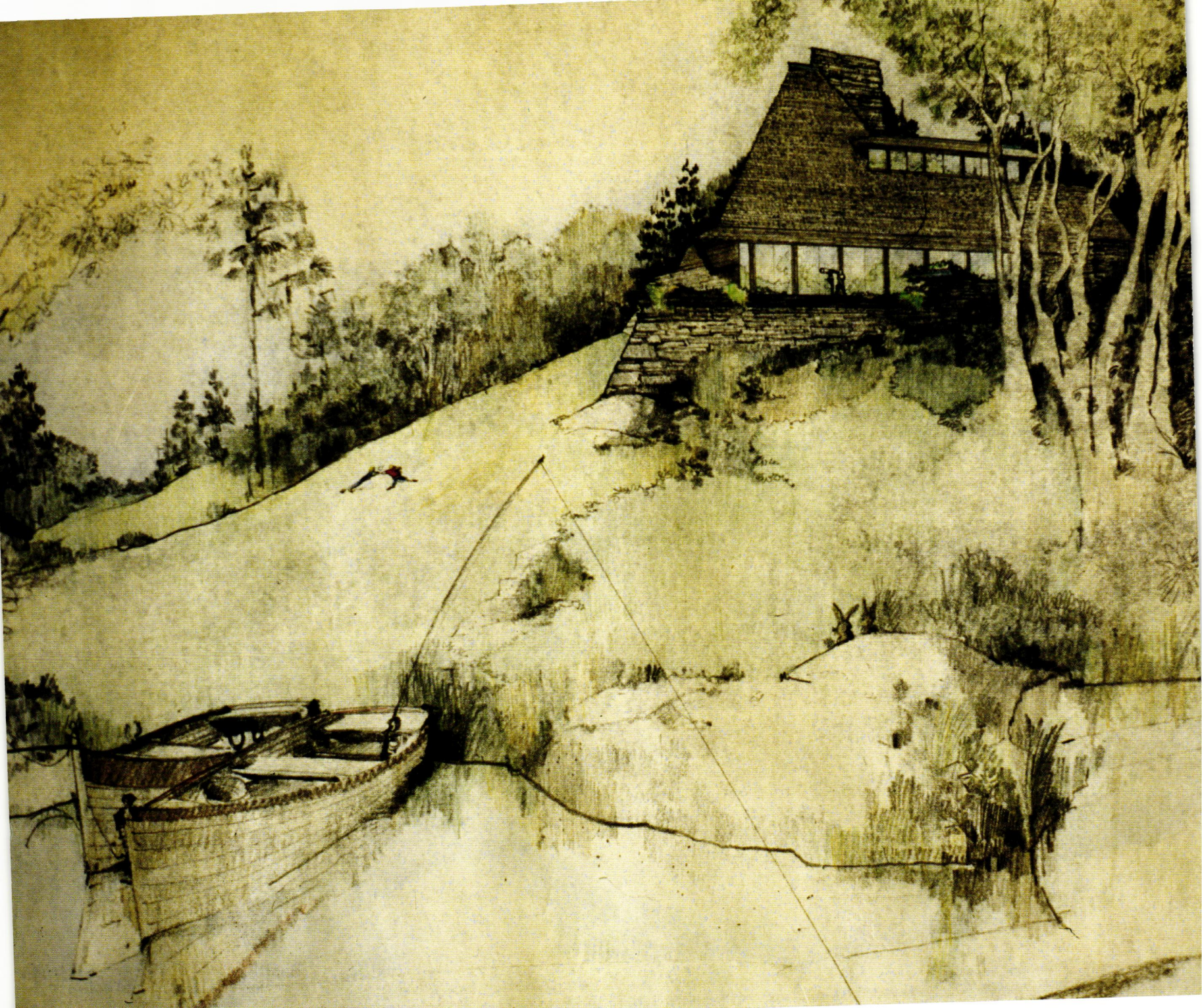

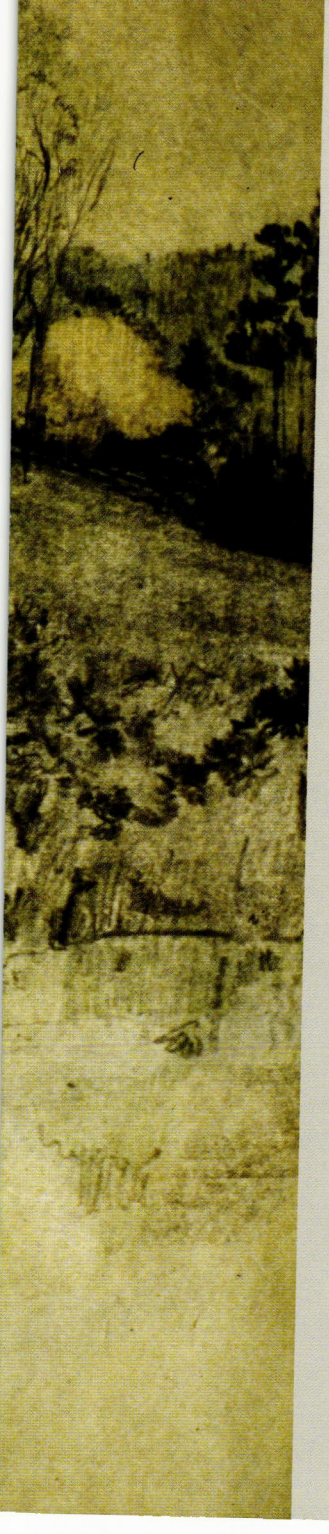

The Architecture of Alfred Browning Parker

MIAMI'S MAVERICK MODERNIST

Randolph C. Henning

Foreword by Robert McCarter

UNIVERSITY PRESS OF FLORIDA

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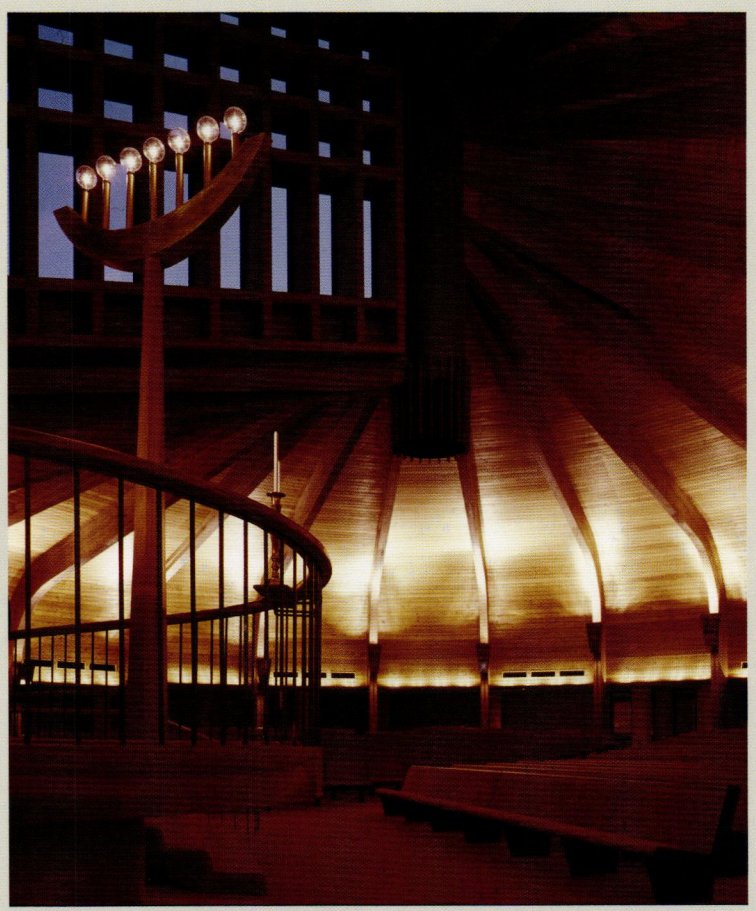

To Alfred Browning Parker
for his trust in me,
his creative energy in architecture,
and his passion for life

and to Maggie, Michael, and Christopher

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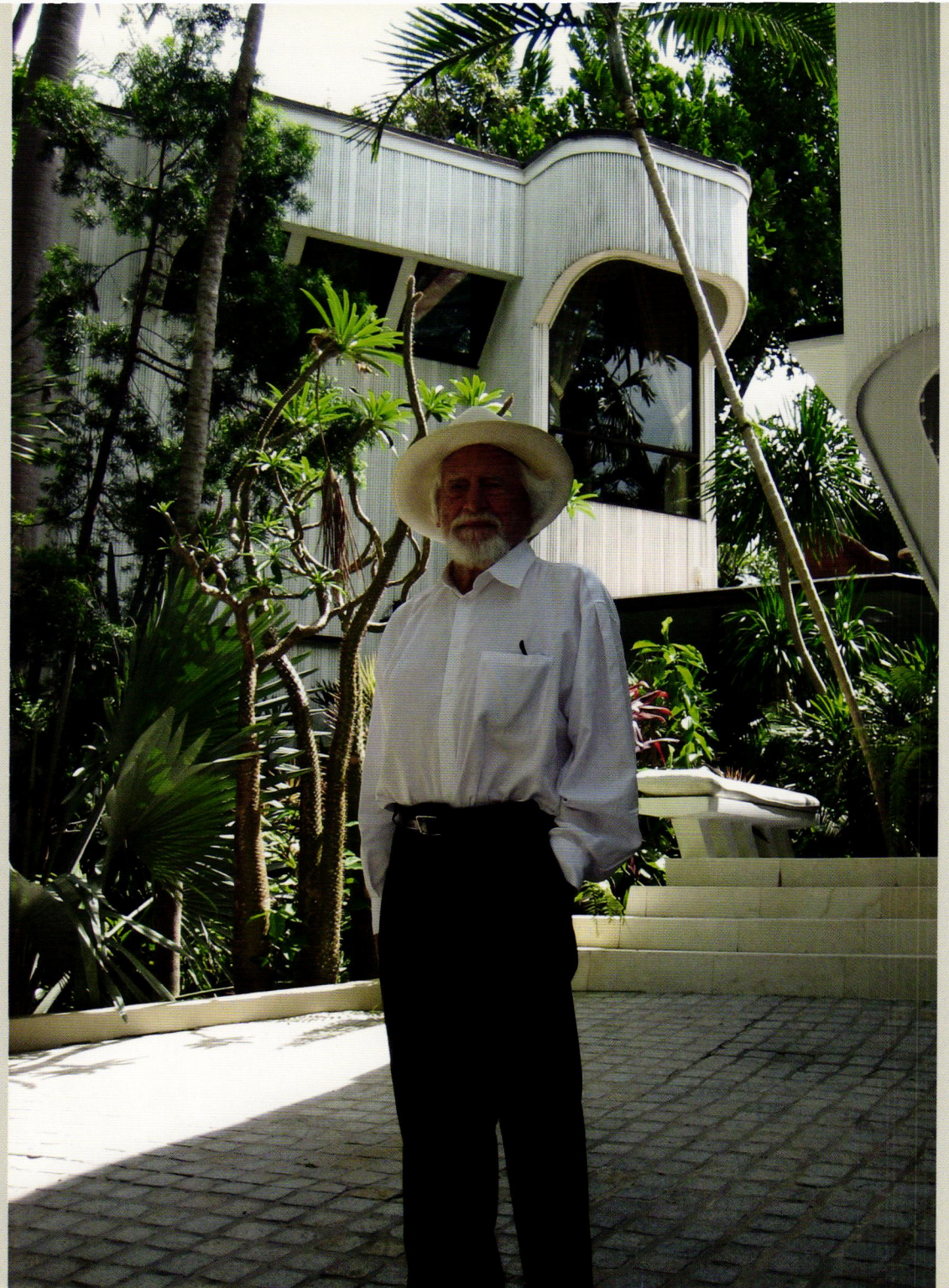

Alfred Browning Parker, December 2007. © Dereck Winning, used with permission.

Foreword

Along This New but Ancient Way: Alfred Browning Parker and Modern Architecture in Florida

This Florida house aims for the highest goal to which architecture can aspire: organic architecture. Along this new but ancient way a home where the enlightened mind can flower, where people can develop their fullest potentials, is still a possibility.

- **Frank Lloyd Wright on Parker's Royal Road house, *House Beautiful,* November 1953**

Alfred Browning Parker may rightly be called Florida's foremost modern architect. This ranking rests not on any chronological priority but rather on the remarkable length of his practice, the early and extensive national recognition his architecture received, and the constructive influence of his works on generations of Florida architects.[1] For sixty-five years, from 1945 to the first decade of the twenty-first century, Parker's buildings have exemplified a regionally inflected modern architecture's characteristics of engagement and enhancement of the environment; accommodation of the landform and plant life of the site;

forthright expression of construction, engagement of local building traditions, authenticity of materials, and the use of natural materials from the region; ability to house new and differing lifestyles; and spatial freedom combined with the sense of place. In his architecture, Parker has consistently made unique places where contemporary cultural, social, and domestic aspirations are realized in harmony with the climate, topography, and environment of Florida.

In order to understand Parker's place in Florida modern architecture, we need to briefly examine the overlapping paths by which modern architecture became established in Florida. From the beginning of human habitation in Florida, in the settlements of the Native Americans, the way in which it was necessary to build was largely determined by environmental and climatic demands. This environmental imperative led to the development of diverse types of architecture that, consistently across cultures, were appropriate to the subtropical humidity and subtly varied but uniformly fragile ecology of the peninsula. Early buildings in Florida included both stereotomic, ground-engaging mass structures, such as the shell and earth mounds at Mound Key and Lake Jackson dating from 500–800 AD that were built by Native Americans, and the shell-stone forts built by European settlers at St. Augustine and the Dry Tortugas dating from 1670–1800; as well as tectonic, lightweight, wood-framed platform-and-roof structures, which created shade and were open to the breezes, such as the thatch-roofed houses of the Seminoles, and the metal-roofed "Cracker" houses of the earliest European settler farmers.

Modern architecture, understood in this nonstylistic, environmental definition, first arrived in Florida with the young Bernard Maybeck—famous for his later works in California—who was the construction architect for Carrère and Hastings's Ponce de Leon and Alcazar Hotels, built in St. Augustine in 1885–86. Rather than the design of the buildings, it was their innovative construction, including the deployment of cast concrete incorporating local coral stone as aggregate and using iron railroad rails as a kind of primitive reinforcement over openings, that marked these works as modern. The adaptation of new construction techniques to regional traditions of building and locally available materials is perhaps the most important constant we can follow though the works of succeeding generations of Florida modern architects.

As regards modern architecture, Florida could be said to have been "Wright from the start."[2] While not well known, the earliest examples of what is formally recognized as the modern tradition in Florida were the works of 1910–20 of Henry John Klutho in Jacksonville and Antonin Nechodoma in Tampa and Puerto Rico, both of whom were directly inspired by the Prairie Period works of Frank Lloyd Wright.[3] Related to

Florida as part of the Caribbean region, we might also note the work of Heinrich Klumb, who worked for Wright at Taliesin from 1929 to 1934, later collaborating with Louis Kahn in Philadelphia in 1937 before moving permanently to Puerto Rico, where he realized a number of environmentally inflected designs of the highest caliber.

Wright himself brought his regionally and environmentally determined interpretation of modern architecture to Florida in the late 1930s when he began work on what would eventually be the largest collection of his buildings anywhere in the world, Florida Southern College in Lakeland. Wright's designs, which received the widest possible publicity, predated and paralleled the arrival of the Art Moderne–style hotels in Miami Beach, and they had a far greater impact on the evolution of modern architecture in Florida. Contemporary with Fallingwater, the Johnson Wax Building, Taliesin West, and the first of the Usonian Houses, the buildings of Florida Southern College were markedly different from these other works by Wright, in particular in the manner in which he used two scales of concrete to respond to the landscape of existing citrus orchards. Near the ground, and close to where people walked in the shade of the citrus trees and his low, cantilevered canopied esplanades, Wright made the building walls of small-scale, custom-designed, intricately detailed concrete blocks, often with colored glass inserts. Above the trees, and visible only from a distance, Wright made the walls of large-scale, smooth-plastered monolithic cast concrete, which stood and shone in the strong Florida sunlight. In February 1939, at the very beginning of the construction of Florida Southern College, which extended from 1938 to Wright's death in 1959, Parker first began to correspond with Wright.

Despite Wright's consistent efforts to adapt his designs to local conditions, in the years immediately following World War II, International Style architecture appeared to have achieved universal dominance, its standardized formula intended to be the same around the world. Yet it is hardly coincidental that, exactly at this moment of universal stylistic unification, several important outbreaks of regional architectural character were also taking place, including the Bay Area School in San Francisco, the Case Study Houses in Los Angeles, and the Sarasota School in Florida. Contrary to its universal aspirations, articulated in the Museum of Modern Art's International Style exhibit in 1932, the constructed embodiment of modern architectural principles seemed to require their being grounded in the unique characteristics of a particular place and time.

Wright's ongoing work in Lakeland both served as an inspiration for those young architects already

living in Florida, including Parker, and drew a new generation of young architects to Florida, most notably Paul Rudolph, who came to Sarasota to work with Ralph Twitchell in 1941 and again from 1946 to 1951. It is important to note, however, that before his partnership with Rudolph, Twitchell had already engaged Wright's work in the design of several houses built in 1940–42. Like many of the regional modernist movements, the Sarasota architects did not see themselves as unified in their interpretation of modern architecture, and yet despite their remarkable diversity, the designs of such architects as Victor Lundy, Tim Seibert, William Rupp, Mark Hampton, Gene Leedy, and Carl Abbott all show to a greater or lesser degree the influence of Wright's increasingly regionally-inflected work.

While the Sarasota School has received the most publicity in recent years, modern architecture had in fact been practiced in the Miami and Fort Lauderdale area since the early 1930s, before Wright began work on Florida Southern College. This other regional movement, which we might call the "tropical modern school," has arguably had a more significant influence than the Sarasota group on the long-term development of modern architecture in Florida. This South Florida group includes both the Wright-inspired works of Parker, Wahl Snyder, Robert Hansen, Robert Bradford Browne, and George Reed and the more International Style–inspired works of Rufus Nims, Robert Law Weed, Robert Little, Russell Pancoast, and Igor Polevitsky.

Another regional interpretation of modern architecture in Florida is what I have called the "concrete block school," which sought to engage concrete blocks, those "cast-offs" (to use Wright's term) of the construction industry that Wright had been endeavoring to ennoble since the early 1920s. In addition to Wright, this group was inspired by the brief three-year career of Jacksonville architect Robert Ernest, who realized three built works of his own design, all constructed with concrete blocks. Of particular relevance to this discussion is Ernest's Becker House of 1960, with its unique, locally fabricated, rhomboid-shaped concrete blocks and Wright-inspired hexagonal planning grid. In addition to Ernest, the members of this "concrete block school" include Lowell Lotspeich, Milton Harry, Don Alford, and Donald Singer, and we should note in particular the Wright-inspired works of Dan Duckham, Robert Broward, Jack Clark, and William Morgan.

For architects around the world searching for alternatives to the universal formula of the International Style, the work of these regional schools in Florida came as a revelation, embodying an entirely new vision of the relation of modern architecture to its place. Today the concept of "critical regionalism," first

articulated by Wright disciple Harwell Hamilton Harris in 1954 and later championed by the most important architectural historian of our time, Kenneth Frampton, calls for exactly this kind of regionally inflected modern architecture, true to the universal intentions of spatial liberation, yet capable of engaging local climate, landscape, building traditions, and materials. While united by the intention to appropriately adapt modern architecture to Florida, and sharing an ecologically balanced approach, the wide variety of designs among the members of these regional architectural communities also defies the stereotypical representation of modern architecture as lacking richness and diversity.

Parker may be considered the leader of the Wright-inspired "organic school" of Florida architecture, which included members from a number of the regional schools, such as Broward, Duckham, Snyder, Hansen, Reed, Browne, Lundy, Singer, Morgan, and Clark, as well as Nils Schweitzer, who oversaw construction of Florida Southern College for Wright, Will Miller, and even Rudolph, whose Burkhardt House of 1956 is related to both Wright's work and his Japanese sources of inspiration. Wright's architecture was embraced by these diverse practitioners not only because it was modern but, more important, because it was regional; it was profoundly affected by the place in which it was built. Yet while Wright was, for most architects, necessarily always at some distance, many of Florida's modern architects, such as Singer, looked to Parker as much as to Wright, particularly given Parker's numerous built works that engaged the climate, economy, building traditions, and lifestyle of Florida.[4]

Parker was in many ways a follower of Wright, yet Parker's work is dramatically inflected by the tropical climate and oceanfront geology, a context in which Wright only rarely worked. The need to lift the main levels of the house above the storm surge on waterfront sites, which we see in all Parker's works, would appear to make impossible Wright's typical concrete floor slab set directly into the ground, a feature of virtually all of Wright's Usonian Houses after 1935. One example we have of a Wright-designed house built on an oceanfront site, the Fuller House of 1951 in Pass Christian, Mississippi, was in fact lifted a full floor off the ground on concrete block piers. While this could protect against normal storm surge, it unfortunately proved to be no protection against Hurricane Camille, which destroyed the house in 1969.

Parker also followed Wright in viewing the affordable middle-class house as one of the absolutely essential challenges for modern architects to meet. Like Wright's Usonian Houses of 1935–59, Parker designed a series of affordable houses, pointedly published as being the houses of "a house painter" and "a postman," as well as speculative development houses. Also like Wright, Parker endeavored to engage new

construction technology while continuing local craft traditions. In this, Parker's own Royal Road house, built in Coconut Grove in 1952, is a perfect example, with its local scrap stone walls and advanced cantilevered concrete floor slab construction. In building the concrete floor slabs of this house, Parker employed a system of construction new to Florida at that time, and the concrete formwork in which the cantilevered floors were cast was shared with his friend Rufus Nims, who used it on his Adler House in Miami Beach that same year.[5] This incident is indicative of an important aspect of the early modern architecture in Florida, in that Parker and Nims, whose work followed Wright and the International Style respectively, shared a modern agenda of building in the tropics that was more important than any formal style.

What sets Parker apart from his Florida contemporaries, even Rudolph, is the national recognition and extensive publicity he received for his designs starting in the 1950s, including several *Life* and *Look* magazine house profiles and, most notably, repeated publication in the leading home-owner magazine of the time, *House Beautiful*. When Parker's 1952 Royal Road House was chosen as the Pace Setter House of 1954 by *House Beautiful* magazine, the 143-page article began with a quote from Wright, one of his few positive comments on the work of a contemporary architect: "This Florida house aims for the highest goal to which architecture can aspire: organic architecture. Along this new but ancient way a home where the enlightened mind can flower, where people can develop their fullest potentials, is still a possibility."[6] Like Wright, Parker was a close friend of the photographer, Ezra Stoller, and of the editor of *House Beautiful*, Elizabeth Gordon. At least partly as a result of these relationships, Parker had houses of his design selected as *House Beautiful* Pace Setter Houses in 1954, 1959, and 1965, and in *The House Beautiful Treasury of Contemporary American Homes*, published in 1958, six of the twenty-three houses not by Wright are by Parker, a total exceeded only by Wright himself, with nine.

What Parker shares with his Florida contemporaries is his engagement of the tropical environment. Parker, who was educated in Florida and did postgraduate work in Mexico City, was always acutely aware that great architecture has its roots anchored deeply in its regional context.[7] In this, Parker's work is part of the living tradition of modern architecture—that is, modern architecture practiced as a way of designing and building that, from generation to generation and contemporary to contemporary, shares not a fixed style or set of forms but the same fundamental ordering principles. Primary among these for Parker would be minimizing energy, material, and damage to the environment while maximizing the richness of

the experiences of the inhabitants, the accommodation of a lifestyle appropriate to the tropics, and the engagement of each building with its natural environment and climate.

Before air-conditioning, uniformly flat site grading, and "landscaping" made all places and climates alike and separated us from our place in the natural world, architects had no choice but to engage their climate. This was an environment imperative, having nothing to do with our contemporary expectation of a "choice" of style for our buildings. In Parker's engagement of this tradition of ecologically responsive building, both the vernacular and the work of his predecessors became critical—not to be able to learn from form or style, but to learn methods of construction that would last and techniques for the appropriate engagement of climate. Parker's buildings were built largely before air-conditioning, and they take advantage of prevailing breezes and employ sun-shading, nestling into their sites, adjusting themselves to nature without in any way imitating it. This sense of economy, of gaining the maximum benefit for the enrichment of the inhabitants' daily rituals, over the lifetime of a building, from the smallest energy and material investment, has always been part of the best modern architecture—and an ethical imperative for Alfred Browning Parker. Following this modern tradition, the work illustrated here, like the best architecture around the world, is defined first and foremost by the quality of our experience of inhabiting it.

Robert McCarter
Ruth and Norman Moore Professor of Architecture
Washington University in St. Louis



Parker residence (Woodsong / Seminole), Coconut Grove, 1967.

© Bo Parker Photographer.

Preface

This is my last year at the University of Florida. Embarking upon an architectural career is rapidly becoming a strangely thrilling and sometimes frightening experience. Naturally I wonder where my place is, and what my contribution will ultimately be. I do have a passionate desire to accomplish something worthwhile. I make that statement with the utmost sincerity. My ability may be small and my education to date somewhat superficial but my ambition is as honest as my desire is simple. . . . I do believe that I am an individual and as such will I act. . . . Truly your life and work—your life-work—has been an inspiration in my thoughts these few weeks past. Not in a sense of imitation have I enjoyed a few contacts with what you have done and are doing, but in thinking that I must do my utmost to live to the best that is within me.

- **Parker to Frank Lloyd Wright, February 5, 1939**

In the seventy-plus years since he wrote those words, Alfred Browning Parker produced designs for more than five hundred projects. In addition, builders and developers constructed hundreds of speculative production homes throughout Dade and Broward Counties based upon prototypical domestic designs by Parker. Most known for his residential architecture, his career was actually hugely varied while

consistently creative—encompassing airports terminals, resorts and motels, recreational facilities, yacht clubs and marinas, high-rise condominium towers, apartment buildings, warehouses, cemetery master plans and affiliated structures, golf clubhouses, bowling lanes, restaurants, theaters and performing arts centers, commercial office buildings, banks, retail stores and shopping centers, churches and synagogues, horse ranches, schools, clinics, and high- and low-income housing, as well as entire residential subdivisions and urban planning. He created at least three temporary product exhibition structures. He designed furniture for mass production and for individual clients. He worked comfortably in both the private and public sectors. The majority of his work is located in South Florida but certainly not limited to that area. Owing much to the national coverage afforded his work by several popular home and lifestyle magazines—*House Beautiful* in particular championed his work[1]—commissions came from throughout the United States as well as Mexico and the Caribbean. His clients included the popular television entertainer Jackie Gleason, the television reporter and Timex spokesperson John Cameron Swayze, pharmaceutical titan and philanthropist Robert Wood Johnson, financier and developer of Freeport on Grand Bahama Island Wallace Groves, plus two clients connected previously with the iconic American architect Frank Lloyd Wright: Leigh Stevens and Samuel Johnson.

When Parker began his practice in the mid-1940s, South Florida architecture was predominantly of the Spanish Mediterranean style, especially in residential and civic design. Parker's architecture ran counter to the popular derivative style. His work has been characterized as modern or midcentury modern, or, because of Wright's inspiration, as tropical organic modern. While his architecture sustained the organic philosophy of his architectural hero Wright—and of Henry Hobson Richardson and Louis Sullivan before Wright—it was always more an honest response to the tropical environment and climate and to the use of local materials.

Parker likened his architectural practice to a workshop. While his colleagues and competitors moved towards larger multidisciplined and often specialized architectural practices, Parker's remained a small general practice. He took pride in his competent staff, most often numbering fewer than a dozen and usually including architects, draftsmen, secretaries, and clerks of the works. He stated in his office brochure that "smallness is possibly a source of achievement and wellspring of pleasure."[2] Its manageable size allowed Parker to always remain in control of the creative design process and the overall quality of the work.

Like Frank Lloyd Wright, Parker lectured often throughout his career. He wrote prolifically for magazines and newspapers, authored the book *You and Architecture*, a primer on architecture, and even contributed audio spots, largely on architecture, to a local radio station in Miami for almost ten years.

Parker's built works received local, state, regional, and national attention, amassing many design awards. Parker himself received widespread accolades as well, from his peers and from society at large. The American Institute of Architects designated him a Fellow (FAIA) in 1959 for his achievements in design and public service. The Florida Association of the AIA in 1967 made him the first recipient of its Award of Honor for Design, and his own Florida South Chapter of the FA/AIA bestowed on him the Silver Medal for twenty-five years of service and achievement in 1975 and the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010. In 1975 he also received the degree of Doctor of Fine Arts *honoris causa* from the International Fine Arts College of Miami, and in 2001 he was named Distinguished Alumnus by the University of Florida. Also well recognized and respected in the community, Parker involved himself outside his architectural practice, sitting on committees, bank boards, and the like. In 1961 he was approached by a local delegation to run for a seat on the Miami city commission, which, after careful consideration, he politely turned down.

With tireless enthusiasm and passion he advocated for his profession, the environment, alternate energy sources, and conservation of natural resources almost forty years before these became an urgent and grave topic of consideration. In 1975 he founded the Solar Reactor Corporation, and starting in 1984 he was chairman of Solar Reactor Technologies. In a 1974 article Parker wrote:

> Shape the earth to man's need? No!! Emphatically No!! We have with more conceit than intelligence advanced this earth-shaping credo. I propose the opposite approach. I suggest the shaping of man to meet earth's need. The peril of our time is not from our external surroundings but from within ourselves. . . . Man *cannot* "conquer" the earth. He *can* establish a symbiotic relationship. He *cannot* control nature; he *can* live in harmony with it.[3]

I grew up in Pompano Beach, a city north of Fort Lauderdale on Florida's Gold Coast, where I began my journey to be an architect. Prior to my first year of high school, I had to choose between mechanical and architectural drafting, having enjoyed and excelled in a ninth-grade drafting class. After looking at numerous architecture books, I not only determined my future vocation but developed a serious and voracious passion for the work of the American icon Frank Lloyd Wright. In pursuit of my passion while living in

South Florida, I soon discovered the wonderfully creative tropical organic architecture of Dan Duckham and Donald Singer in Fort Lauderdale and, eventually, of Alfred Browning Parker in Miami. All three stood out as having sincere affection for Wright's work, a thorough understanding of its components, and serious respect for his principles, while designing for the particular South Florida tropical environment and climate. In fact, the excitement of discovering and then incessantly leafing through Parker's book *You and Architecture* is one of my earliest memories from the period when I was exploring the possibilities and promise of architecture.

I first met Alfred Browning Parker in his Coconut Grove residence Woodsong on the morning of August 6, 1983. The idea for this monograph, more an architectural biography focused on the architecture of Alfred Browning Parker, was officially formulated almost ten years later when I requested Parker's cooperation and endorsement on May 5, 1992. I felt strongly that his work should be seen and studied by a larger audience—that it deserved its own book—as did he. And now, with the newfound concern for sustainability and "green architecture," as well as the rediscovery and increasing stature of midcentury modernism throughout the United States, an awareness of Parker's work is of even greater importance.

Acknowledgments

While my preference among the philosophers is for the humanists, in the sciences I have always possessed an interest in ecology. I delight in Man's search to attune himself to the rhythms of the universe and in our effort to regenerate our environment.

- **Parker, in *The Golden Anniversary Book of Congregation Beth El*, 1976**

Alfred Browning Parker deserves the most credit for this effort (and for any subsequent publishing success). It was a privilege to receive his endorsement, trust, and support. Unfettered access to him personally as well as to his office archives was a priceless resource. He often referred to me as his "official biographer" and I have been blessed in many ways by the experience of knowing such a proud, confident, and creatively energetic individual. One could not help but fall in love with Alfred Browning Parker—his forthright honesty and passion for life, his welcoming and embracing charm, his broad-reaching intelligence, his enthusiastic optimism tempered with a real sense of the real world—a true Renaissance man. His wife Euphrosyne additionally championed this effort to place his architectural legacy in print, not to mention extending every courtesy and hospitality along the way.

Indispensible too, in working with Parker's archives, was the enormous cooperation and assistance of the Special Collections staff of Smathers Library at the University of Florida, especially John Nemmers and Mil Willis, and previously Carl Van Ness and John E. Ingram.

Historical information, pragmatic requirements of program, personal recollections, and a particular insight into the creative interaction of client and architect were graciously afforded by original Parker clients and/or their descendants—William Abelove, Jane Atkins, Mary J. Bastian, Betty Waddell Bowman, Harvey Caplan, Pat Cayce, Lawrence Corliss, Art and Jane du Rivage, John and Esther Floyd, John Richard "Buck" Fulp Jr., Joyce Gann, Don Gayer, Graham Groves, Homer and Dolly Hand, Sir Jack Hayward, Edwin H. Hill Jr., Bill and Dorothy Hopwood, Gene Johnson, Linda L. Kendall, Ted and Lydia Kohler, Kirk and Bea Landon, Helen Lucken, Adele Manus and daughter Jane Manus, Leonard Mass, Charles and Lisa Menefee and son Charles Menefee Jr., John H. Moynahan, Mikal Mullikin, Diane Simon, Mark Spalding, Herbert and Marcia Stettin, Richard Strauss, Benmont and Katie Tench and daughter Rachel Tench, Richard and Joan Titleman, Harold and Caryl Unger, William Waddell, and Milton Wallace. In addition, Hope Lutheran Church, Maximo Presbyterian Church, the *Miami Times*, Northeast United Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Towers, St. Louis Catholic Church, and Temple Beth El all allowed me to tour and experience their Parker-designed buildings.

Access and/or information was also kindly provided by current but not original owners of Parker-designed homes, especially Mary J. Bastian (Parker's Gables Estates residence), Alan C. Brody (Epstein residence), Don and Andree Dowling (Wade residence), I. M. and Julie Ibrahim (Fulp residence), Enrique Parades and son Fernando A. Paredes (Weiner #2 residence), Roy A. Saper (Good residence in Michigan), and Diane Sepler (Dubrin residence).

The cooperation, interest, and support of many other individuals was critical, and appreciated. Those who have been along with me on this journey include Edward Cella, David R. Chessrown, David DeLong, Anthony Denzer, Jane Dreyfus Diniz, John Duclos, Holly du Rivage (who is working on a documentary film on Alfred Browning Parker), Jodi Mailander Farrell, Elizabeth Gordon, Ines Hegedus-Garcia, Heather Herrmann (who scanned all the drawing fiches), Mark Hertzberg, Kimberly Hinder (who assisted with Bazaar International and the Trylon Tower), F. H. Hohenschutz, Fred Horning, Jeff Knee, Martha Kohen, Whitney Kraus, Frank Laraway, Brian Hal Leslie, Thomas S. Marvel, Augustus Mayhew, Carlos Anthony Mindreau, Emily V. Obst, John O'Connor, Johnnye Palmer, Monica Penick (who has accomplished considerable

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Institutions that were helpful in my research include, in Washington, D.C., the American Institute of Architects Archives and American Institute of Architects Library; in Florida, the Bass Museum of Art, Boca Raton Building Department, City of Coral Gables, Dade County Building Department Records, City of Miami Building Department Records, and City of South Miami Parks & Recreation; in Arizona, the Frank Lloyd Wright Archives (Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, Oskar Munoz, and Margo Stipe) and Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation (Richard Carney) at Taliesin West; in California, the Huntington Library Rare Books Department in San Marino; in Colorado, the Denver Museum of Nature & Science; in North Carolina, the Town of Santeetlah; and in South Carolina, York County Library.

Past office employees who provided additional insight into the workings of Parker's office and assisted with fact checking include John Griffith Adams, Sanford Goldman, Terry Henn, Jan Hochstim, Earl Mark Kaplan, and William Jerome Miller.

The entire extended Parker family, including his children Robin Parker, Jules (Bo) Parker, Quentin Parker, Gifford (Bebe) Parker Coyle, and Lebritia Parker Kendrick, and his former wives Martha Melahn and Shirley Maslow, welcomed me within their warm and entertaining circle many times during this book's gestation.

In any architectural monograph, the photography of the built work is extremely important. Alfred Browning Parker was lucky to have had the preeminent architectural photographer Ezra Stoller photograph many of his projects from the late 1940s through the 1960s. In fact, owing to demolition or significant and usually insensitive alteration, a great many of these early works unfortunately now exist only through Stoller's extraordinary images. Stoller's daughter Erica runs her father's successor firm, Esto Photographics. Many of Parker's later projects were photographed by his son Bo Parker, who apprenticed under Stoller before opening his own photography studio in 1972. The contributions by Bo Parker and by Erica Stoller—assisted by her staff Justin Stewart, Ryan Rothman, and Amanda Jinks—to the legacy of Alfred Browning Parker, in comprehensively allowing their images to be reprinted in this book, are inestimable. Quality images of seven never-before-published projects were supplied by Bill Bennett of WorkHorse Images (the Lucken residence), Mark Da Cunha (the Hayward residence), Dave Trumpie of Trumpie

Photography (the Good residence in East Lansing, Michigan), Carlos I. Morales of Carpeluz (the Weiner #2 residence), Mark Hertzberg (the Johnson residence), Whitney Kraus (the Floyd residence), and Accent Photography's Jeff Sanders assisted by Edie Matthews (the Fulp residence).

Individuals and institutions that financially supported the author's early research during travels to Florida and Vermont and contributed to the publication of the book were Lydia Bacon, Mary J. Bastian, Howell and Ann Breedlove, John Custer, Giles C. Fischer, Gary Gerson, Victoria Golden, Aaron G. Green, Homer and Dolly Hand, Jim and Shirley Henning, John Howey, Betsy Kaplan, Seymour Keith, Segisberto Leon, Robert and Donna Litowitz, Nita Maercks, Myron Marty, Cynthia Moore, Enrique Paredes, Daniel Perez-Zarraga, Sir Edward and Lady Anna Lee Porter, Marcia Raff, Lorna Robertson, Kenneth and Helyne Triester, Donald Singer, Spillis Candela & Partners, Ivan and Mildred Taylor, Harold and Caryl Unger, Milton and Patricia Wallace, Jeanne Wolf, and the College of Architecture at the University of Florida. Others that supported this effort in important ways were Robert C. Broward, John Byram, R. Wayne Drummond, Dan C. Duckham, Larry Wayne Grantham, Brian F. Hart, Patrick J. Meehan, William B. Scott Jr., and Todd Shoaf.

Given Robert C. McCarter's passion for the architects of the modern era, his appreciation of many mid-century Florida architects, his stature as scholar and author, especially on the modern masters Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Kahn, and his association with Alfred Browning Parker while both were on the faculty of the College of Architecture at the University of Florida, there was no question who should be asked to contribute the foreword. Professor McCarter's insightful view of Parker's work in the larger context of Florida's architectural heritage enriches this book immeasurably.

The University Press of Florida expressed early and sustained interest in this presentation of Florida's most famous and creatively talented architect. I thank them for their commitment, assistance, and guidance throughout the process. And Anthony Abbate and Allan Shulman provided encouragement and constructive comments with their review of the manuscript.

Finally, I couldn't have done this without the love and support of my parents Jim and Shirley Henning, my sons Michael and Christopher, and my wife Maggie, the love of my life and my best friend.

The Architecture of Alfred Browning Parker



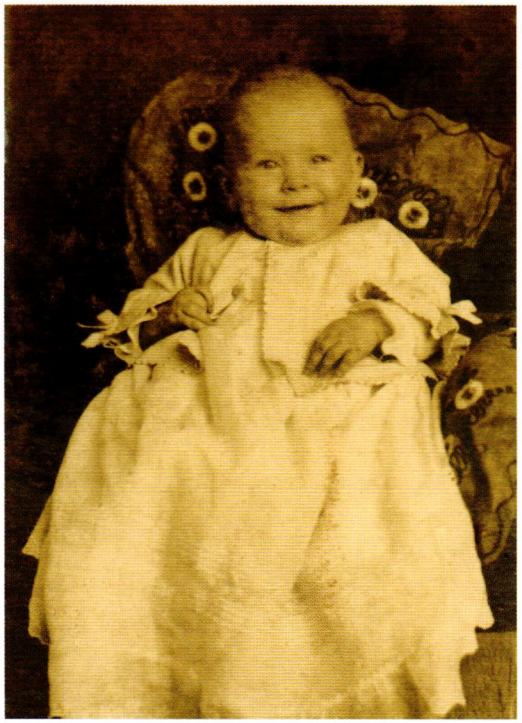
Alfred Browning Parker, 1939. From the author's collection.

Biographical Sketch

Naturally I wonder where my place is, and what my contribution will ultimately be. . . . My ambition is as honest as my desire is simple. . . . I do believe that I am an individual and as such will I act. . . . I must do my utmost to live to the best that is within me.

- **Parker to Frank Lloyd Wright, February 5, 1939**

James and Jewel Parker's only child, Alfred Browning Parker, was born on September 24, 1916, in Boston. The boy was named after his mother's father, Alfred Fry, and his father's father, whose middle name was Browning. James Arden "Jack" Parker had been born in Rockdale County, Georgia, in 1883 and Jewel Rhae Fry in Natchitoches, Louisiana, in 1890. They married in 1912 and settled in Boston, where Jack soon became the manager of the Wilson Company, sellers of bacon, ham, and lard. Alfred Browning Parker's early childhood years in Boston living at 50 Brighton Avenue were fairly normal. He vividly recalled an early enthusiasm to "read and to build things"; he learned to read before first grade. However, after he had a serious bout of pneumonia, the family doctor told his parents he would probably not survive another Boston winter. Seeking a less threatening climate, they spent a year in Atlanta before moving in 1925 to Miami, where Jack became a real estate salesman, initially for George Merrick, the developer of Coral Gables.



Parker at three and a half months, 1917. From the author's collection.

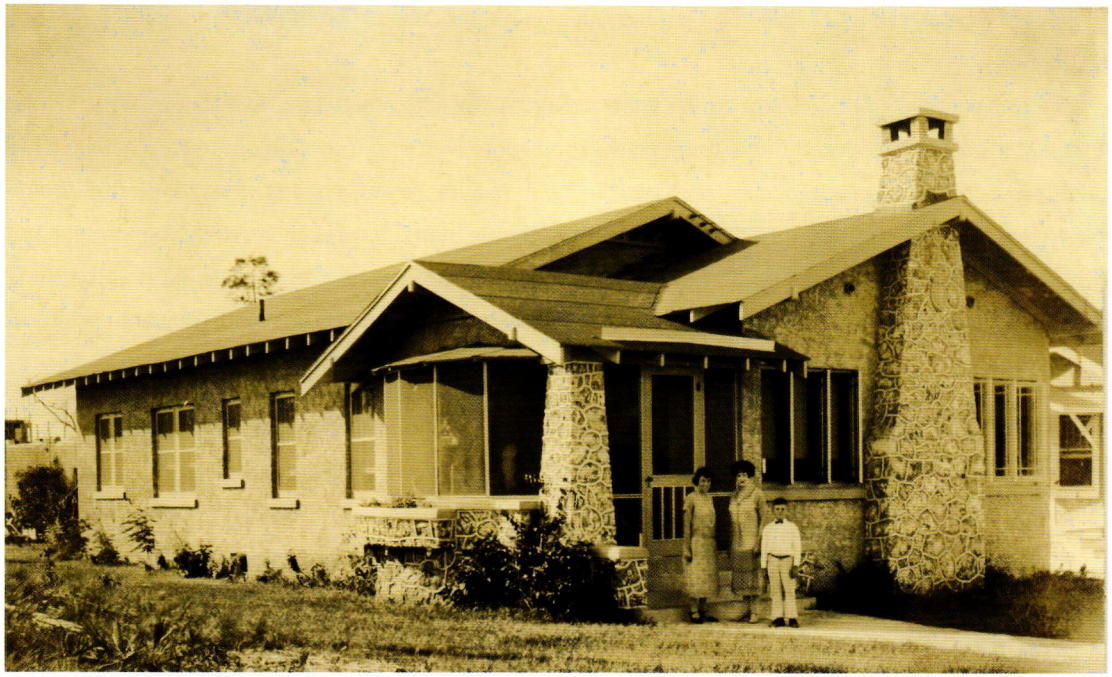
Parker's parents were instrumental in instilling in their only child the core values that provided him with a foundation as a well-rounded individual. His abundant self-confidence was in evidence very early in life, along with eagerness to learn and general curiosity. Jack and Jewel were proud of their son's achievements and always encouraged him to excel. On Parker's twenty-first birthday, when he was away at college, his father wrote, "All I ask you to do is to always conduct yourself as a gentleman should, which I know you will do, be honest with yourself and everyone else, tell the truth at all times, and be just as good in the future as you have up to this time, show progress each day if possible, work hard, play hard and have a good time, write us often, and hit the ball."[1] Over the years his mother kept scrapbooks containing photographs, newspaper clippings, academic records, announcements, invitations, and the like, all recording the successes of his life and career.[2] And she always remained close to her son, working in his office as receptionist, and becoming his client with her home in Coconut Grove, not far from his own.

After early schooling at Miami's Riverside Elementary and Citrus Grove Elementary, Parker attended Shenandoah Junior High from 1928 to 1931 and graduated in 1934 from the recently built Miami Senior High, which was only blocks from his home. In fact, he recalled watching in fascination as the school was built. He also recalled "never having a bad teacher."

During Parker's adolescence, he was an active youth with an abundance of both curiosity and energy. He enjoyed outdoor activities and intimately absorbed the tropical nature of South Florida—the topography, the fauna, the climate—in all its abundance. And early on he personally learned about weather's fury, experiencing both the 1926 and 1928 hurricanes that plowed savagely through South Florida. In the 1926 storm the garage collapsed, destroying his brand-new bicycle.



Parker with parents, Jack and Jewel, 1919. From the author's collection.



Parker (right) with mother (center) and unidentified woman, at the Parker residence, 210 NW 24th Court, Miami, 1926. From the author's collection.

Throughout Parker's high school years he shone not only scholastically but socially and athletically. He was voted best all-around senior by his graduating class. But more important, as an outgrowth of his keen interest in literature and the fine arts, his fascination with architecture was developed. He excelled in mechanical drawing, taught by a teacher who, he recalled, was really a frustrated architect. Learning of Parker's interest in architecture, the teacher encouraged him to draw buildings. He even entered one of Parker's sketches into a local competition put on by the *Miami Daily News*, where the drawing placed first. Interviewed as a graduating senior, he expressed a desire to return to Boston to study architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

MIT was not in his future, owing to cost considerations, but architecture clearly remained his pursuit. Parker started his college courses in the fall of 1934 at the University of Florida's School of Architecture and Allied Arts, which he was able to attend, as a Florida resident, tuition free. During his college years as in



Peabody Hall, University of Florida, ca. 1925. The School of Architecture and Allied Arts held classes in the building's attic. Courtesy of Special and Area Studies Collections, Smathers Library, University of Florida.



Rudolf Weaver, ca. 1935. Photo by Paul Briol, courtesy of Special and Area Studies Collections, Smathers Library, University of Florida.

high school, he excelled not only in his studies but in extracurricular activities, earning many awards and distinctions.

The University of Florida's School of Architecture and Allied Arts was still a relatively new school when Parker started, and compared to the more established, more Ivy League schools of the East, it was rather unique in its progressive approach toward teaching architecture. Parker credited its first director, Rudolph Weaver, as the reason. Indeed, reflecting upon all the people in his life who affected his own growth and achievements, without hesitation he credited Weaver as his principal mentor. Most schools at that time still taught architecture from the historical perspective, using the Beaux-Arts method. Weaver himself had been taught in this manner. Parker recalled in a radio spot in 1968:

> He had a concept of an integrated educational program long before it became a popular thing throughout the country, as it is today. By integration, I mean that he integrated structure, materials and methods of construction, history, graphic design, plumbing, air-conditioning, heating, and ventilating. He integrated all these things into a single unified course. This was a great advantage in giving his students an idea that architecture was not a piecemeal situation, but was indeed a culminating result of man's disciplines working toward the creation of a building.[3]

Not only was Weaver the school's director, he maintained an active practice and was the architect for the State of Florida's Board of Control, responsible for the design and supervision of buildings on the campuses of the University of Florida, Florida State College for Women, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College, and the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind. Parker worked for Weaver during his years in college and gained invaluable practical experience.

While in college Parker discovered the creative architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright. When he saw the January 1938 issue of *Architectural Forum*, wholly devoted to the architecture of Wright, "it hit me square between the eyes, especially Fallingwater." Wright became another of Parker's mentors, albeit at long distance. Parker, in Florida, began his relationship with Wright, of Wisconsin and Arizona, with a fan letter

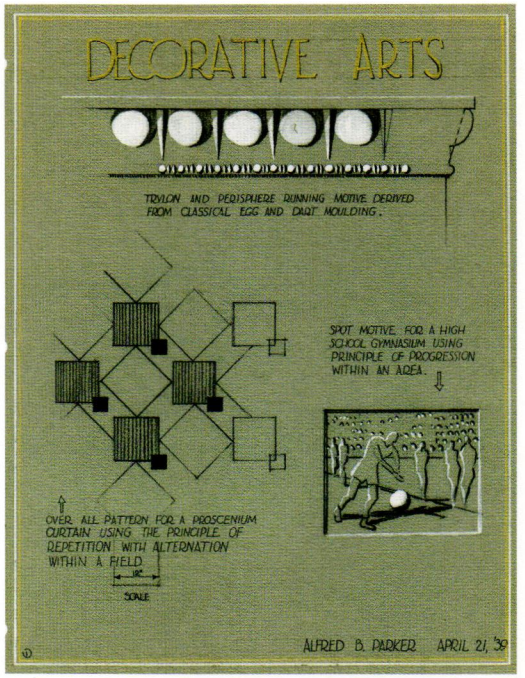
sent in early February 1939. Parker was actually considering becoming an apprentice but eventually decided that he didn't want to be a "little Wright." However, they continued corresponding sporadically until Wright's death in 1959. (They didn't actually meet face to face until 1954, an encounter arranged by *House Beautiful*'s editor Elizabeth Gordon in New York City.)

Parker graduated on May 29, 1939, from the School of Architecture and Allied Arts with honors, one of four receiving the Bachelor of Science in Architecture degree. During his academic career he received many honors—the presidency of the student architectural fraternity Gargoyle, membership in Phi Kappa Phi and Blue Key, and induction into the University Hall of Fame, as well as the Fine Arts Society award as the most outstanding senior.

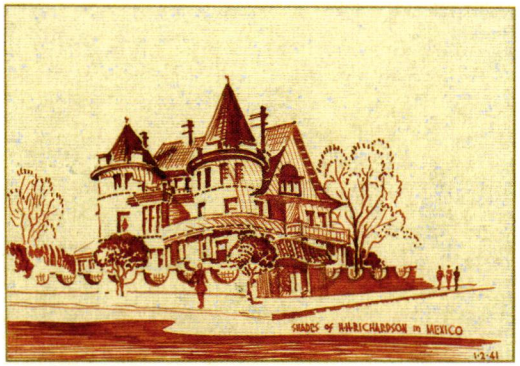
After graduation Parker remained briefly in Gainesville working for Rudolph Weaver. On July 24 he left for Sweden on a one-year exchange scholarship from the American-Scandinavian Foundation. He studied at both the Royal University of Technology and the Royal Academy in Stockholm, under the guidance of Swedish functionalist architect Paul Hedquist. Parker found "a sense of modernism with creativity" in Sweden, "nothing stereotypical." He lived on Lidingö, an island outside Stockholm, in a residence that overlooked the villa and gardens of the sculptor Carl Milles, who was then on an extended stay at the Cranbrook Academy of Art near Detroit. Unfortunately, the escalating European war interrupted Parker's studies when, late in 1939, he was arrested as a Nazi spy by local police who saw him photographing ships in the harbor. U.S. senator Claude Pepper and Secretary of State Cordell Hull, along with the U.S. ambassador to Sweden, interceded, and at the urging of many, Parker boarded a ship in Bergen, Norway, bound for America. The perilous voyage took them first through mine-infested waters and then, after some hours' detention by a German U-boat, across the open ocean. Parker landed back in New York on December 29 and hitched to Washington, D.C., where he found a job with the architectural firm of Arnold Southwell in order to earn the money for a plane ticket home.

Parker spent the first half of 1940 as an instructor under Rudolph Weaver's leadership until he received a traveling fellowship to Mexico, sponsored by Pan American Airways. In June of 1940 he left for two weeks in Cuba, a week in Mérida on the Yucatan Peninsula, and eight months in Mexico City as an exchange student in the School of Architecture of the National University of Mexico. He returned to Gainesville in mid-February 1941 to resume teaching and working with Rudolph Weaver.

It was at this time that Weaver called to Parker's attention something written by Dr. John Gifford, a



Class assignment by Parker, dated April 21, 1939. From the author's collection.



Parker drawing, *Shades of H. H. Richardson in Mexico*, dated January 2, 1941. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

pioneering ecologist and professor of tropical forestry at the University of Miami. Parker found parallels between his own architectural philosophy and the ecological theories professed by Gifford, and he looked him up during his next visit to Miami. He even audited a course Gifford was teaching at the old San Sebastian Hotel in Coral Gables. He also met Gifford's teenage daughter Martha Ann, who was to become his first wife.

When the United States entered World War II, Parker soon enlisted in the navy. He was stationed in Miami and worked within the Office of Naval Intelligence, where he was placed in charge of the drafting and photographic laboratory. On September 17, 1942, Parker married Martha Gifford. She worked alongside him at many tasks on three of his first four self-built homes in Florida—his remodeling of a gas station into his first home and architectural studio at 2921 SW 27th Avenue in Coconut Grove, his Six-Week Wonder in Gainesville, and their Royal Road house in Coconut Grove. Parker remarked, "She is probably the only pregnant stonemason I shall ever employ." Martha also raised their growing family, which started the following year with Derek, followed by daughter Gifford (Bebe) in 1944, Robin in 1946, Jules (Bo) in 1948, and Quentin in 1953.

Before he left for the war, Parker had promised his mentor Weaver that he would return to teach at the University of Florida. Weaver had passed away in November of 1944, but soon after his discharge from the service, in June 1945, Parker fulfilled his promise. He purchased an acre of land for $700 out in the woods near the university and built his second home in a matter of six weeks, hauling material from Miami to Gainesville in an old war-surplus Dodge weapons carrier.

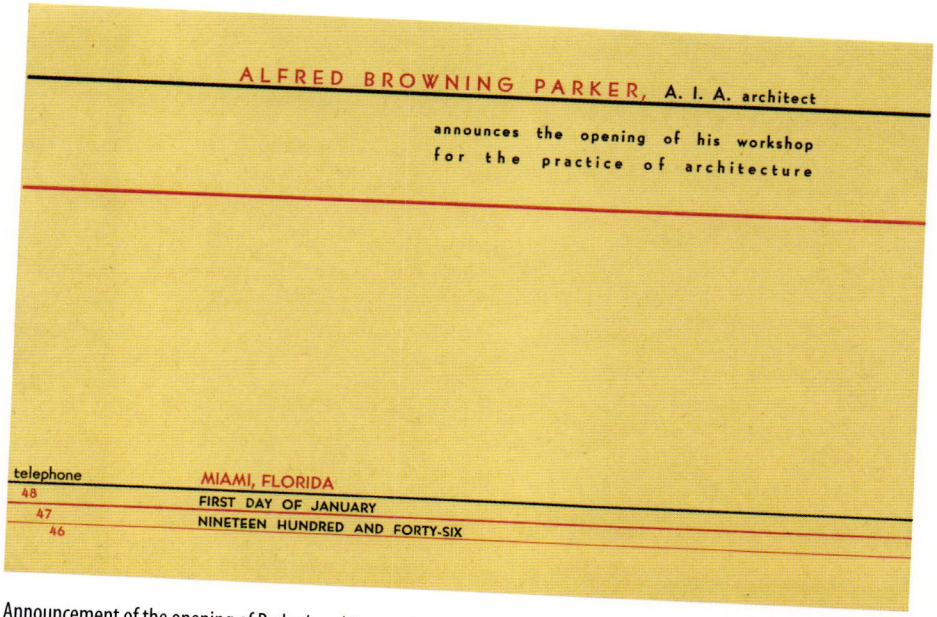
Soon after meeting the state licensing requirements, Alfred Browning Parker proudly and boldly announced the opening of his workshop for the practice of architecture in Miami on January 1, 1946. In hindsight, his timing couldn't have been more fortuitous. The boom in postwar housing was increasing, especially in South Florida, where many servicemen who had been stationed there decided to remain. Parker's parents certainly opened doors for him, especially with Jack's connections in the real estate business. And, of course, Parker's own contacts and connections from his years of living in Miami, his time at the University of Florida, and his subsequent military service brought him early commissions.

Parker's almost forty-year association with the American Institute of Architects began in 1946 when he authored an article on Miami that was published in the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, a public relations piece for the upcoming national convention hosted by the Florida South chapter. (He

published another two-part article on Miami that same year in the *Miami Builders Journal*.) In three years he was the president of his AIA chapter, which took him to Houston for the 1949 national convention, where he first saw Frank Lloyd Wright. In 1948 he started his sixteen-year stint on the editorial board of *Florida Architecture* magazine. He was also at this time chosen as a delegate to attend the Pan American Congress of Architects, held in Cuba. Always available to the community to assist in social causes, Parker in 1947 began his lengthy tenure as a charter member of the Coconut Grove Citizens Committee for Slum Clearance.

During the early years his practice, while somewhat varied, was primarily in the residential market—both custom homes and, more, speculative homes. Parker designed prototypes for area builders, who in turn offered them to the public in the new communities and neighborhoods being developed for the flourishing postwar marketplace. Parker was soon garnering attention from the National Home Builders through the pages of *House & Home*, a magazine widely read in the trade, and attending their conventions as guests of his clients.

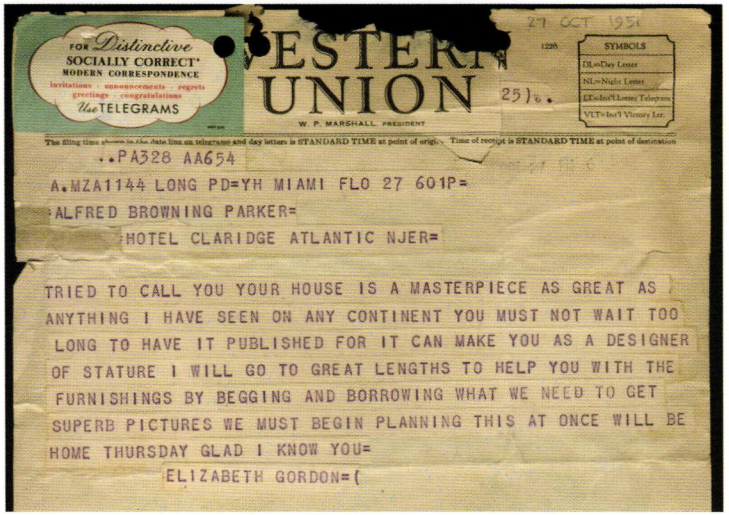
Parker's initial work did not go without broader recognition, as he almost immediately began receiving notice in local newspapers and in regional and national magazines. His own residence/office at 2921 SW 27th Avenue in Coconut Creek was featured in the professional journal *Architectural Forum* in February 1945 as well as in the mass-market *House Beautiful* in March 1946. The annual publication *Florida Architecture & Allied Arts* spotlighted his Thunderbird project in 1947; his Gainesville Six-Week Wonder, an early scheme for his Royal Road house in Coconut Grove, and three houses he designed in a Coconut Grove rockpit (the Hopwood, Marsh, and Chandler residences) in 1948; and his remodeling of the Everglades Hotel Annex and an addition he designed for the Keyes Company office building in Miami in 1949. Magazine after magazine featured early Parker projects—*American Home*, *House & Garden*, *Architectural Record*, *Progressive Architecture*, *Architectural Digest*, *House & Home*, *Florida Builder*, *Florida Building Journal*.



Announcement of the opening of Parker's architectural practice, 1946. From the author's collection.

It was at this time that a long and close relationship began between Alfred Browning Parker and editor in chief Elizabeth Gordon of *House Beautiful*. In the years 1946–65 Gordon published Parker's work in fifty issues, including ten cover stories. She selected three of Parker's designs as Pace Setters—for 1954 his own Royal Road home, for 1959 the Graham Miller residence in Coconut Grove, and Parker's later Gables Estates residence in Coral Gables for 1965—while no other architect had more than one. And several issues featured more than one Parker project. Without question, Gordon's championing of Parker's work brought him national attention and clients who would otherwise not have been aware of his work. Also through Gordon and *House Beautiful*, Parker met and quickly befriended the architectural photographer Ezra Stoller, who would record for posterity a great many of Parker's early works.

As Parker's career took off in the mid-1950s, his personal life had some setbacks. His father passed away in June of 1955. The following February, Parker and Martha divorced after thirteen years of marriage. On June 12, 1959, Parker married Jane Margaret Britt, an airline stewardess and model from Houston; they had



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TRIED TO CALL YOU YOUR HOUSE IS A MASTERPIECE AS GREAT AS ANYTHING I HAVE SEEN ON ANY CONTINENT YOU MUST NOT WAIT TOO LONG TO HAVE IT PUBLISHED FOR IT CAN MAKE YOU AS A DESIGNER OF STATURE I WILL GO TO GREAT LENGTHS TO HELP YOU WITH THE FURNISHINGS BY BEGGING AND BORROWING WHAT WE NEED TO GET SUPERB PICTURES WE MUST BEGIN PLANNING THIS AT ONCE WILL BE HOME THURSDAY GLAD I KNOW YOU=

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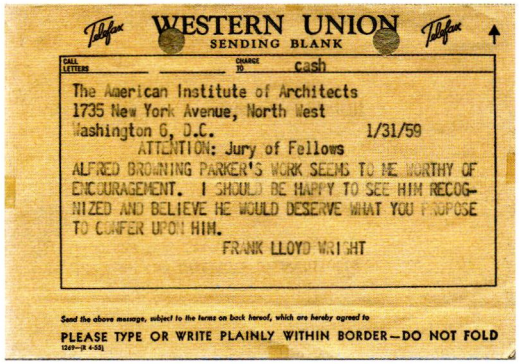
Elizabeth Gordon telegram to Parker, October 27, 1951. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Parker with Elizabeth Gordon in foreground working at Royal Road, 1953. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Parker at Royal Road ringed by (clockwise) wife Martha, Robin, Jules (Bo), Gifford (Bebe), and Derek, with Great Dane Sans Souci above, 1953. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



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The American Institute of Architects
1735 New York Avenue, North West
Washington 6, D.C. 1/31/59

ATTENTION: Jury of Fellows

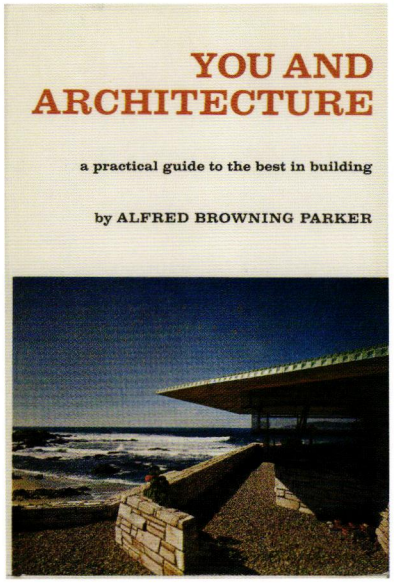
ALFRED BROWNING PARKER'S WORK SEEMS TO ME WORTHY OF ENCOURAGEMENT. I SHOULD BE HAPPY TO SEE HIM RECOGNIZED AND BELIEVE HE WOULD DESERVE WHAT YOU PROPOSE TO CONFER UPON HIM.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

Send the above message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

PLEASE TYPE OR WRITE PLAINLY WITHIN BORDER—DO NOT FOLD

Frank Lloyd Wright telegram to American Institute of Architects, January 31, 1959. © 2011 The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, from the collection of Kevin Spolski, used with permission.



You and Architecture cover, 1965.

one child, Lebritia, in September of the following year. After Frank Lloyd Wright publicly praised Parker's Royal Road house and Elizabeth Gordon discovered the two had not yet met face to face, she arranged for Parker to finally meet his inspirational pen pal in New York in August 1953. In November 1955, when Wright and his wife were in Miami Beach for a lecture, Parker hosted the couple at his home on Royal Road. And in 1959, only months before his death, Wright sent a telegram to the American Institute of Architects on Parker's behalf endorsing Parker's nomination as an AIA Fellow.

The 1950s and 1960s were arguably Parker's most prolific and creative years, producing work all over the country as well as the Caribbean, including many projects within the new city of Freeport on Grand Bahama Island. The single-family residence continued to be the mainstay of his practice, but as he became better known, he was afforded opportunities in larger projects in both the private and public sectors.

This period brought a spate of local, state, and national awards for projects that included Parker's own Royal Road residence and later his Windsong, the George Washington Carver Elementary School, the Baldwin office building, the Bal Harbour Club, the Alliance Machine Company, and Hope Lutheran Church as well as the Mass, Friedman, Kitchens, Jewel Parker, and Ewing residences. His overall excellence in residential design was noted by *House & Home* when the magazine presented Parker with a Merit Award in 1956 for his outstanding contribution to quality housing. Recognition came also from his peers, as Parker was accorded the distinction of Fellow in the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects in 1959 for achievement in both design and public service. He attended the national convention in New Orleans to receive the award while on his honeymoon with Jane.

In June of 1958, Parker traveled to France and Italy to visit architectural sites. His firsthand experience of the proportions of Notre Dame Cathedral and the urban design of Piazza San Marco would have an appreciable impact on his work to come.

Late in 1961 Parker considered, albeit only briefly, running for the Miami City Commission. In 1966 he began providing weekly radio spots on the local station WIOD, where he was free to address varied topics—architecture, urban planning, recycling, environmental concerns, alternative energy sources, natural resources, ecology, preservation—a series that continued through 1975. During the 1960s he would also occasionally be interviewed by the local radio personality Larry King, who later hosted long-running national radio and television talk shows.

Early in 1954 Parker began to think about compiling an anthology of signature writings on modern

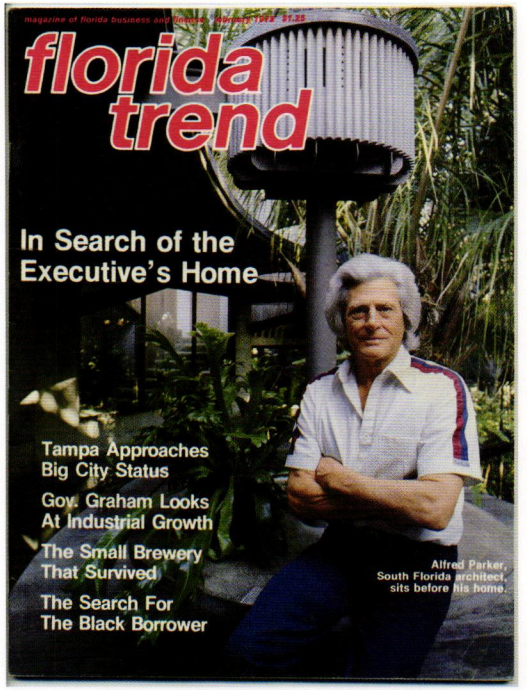
architecture. The idea morphed into a book he would write himself, a primer on architecture. In mid-May 1962 he completed the manuscript for *You and Architecture*. His aim, Parker wrote, was "to transmit both enthusiasm and knowledge concerning architecture. . . . my efforts are primarily directed to those individuals who are interested in buildings and who would like to have some yardsticks to measure their architectural worth. This book is intended to inform the public and to stimulate in them an appreciation of architecture."[4] Writing to Wright in 1958, he explained his reasoning: "Somewhere I read that a man should have a son, plant a tree and write a book. Having taken care of the first two items in a fairly thorough manner, I am now engaged in writing a book."[5] *You and Architecture* was well received but has been out of print for many years. Parker attempted to have the book reprinted years later but discovered that, without his knowledge, the publisher's plates had been destroyed.

During the 1960s Parker also moved around a lot. After selling his Royal Road home in June 1962, he designed and built his Gables Estates residence in Coral Gables. Although it became his third Pace Setter home, designated by *House Beautiful* as Pace Setter 1965, his tenure in Gables Estates was brief, as he sold the house in mid-May 1966. Purchasing property on Seminole Street in Coconut Grove, he designed and built his sixth home, Woodsong, moving in in 1970. Also, with business still booming and larger projects more frequent, his staff was expanding, so Parker purchased and sensitively remodeled the stone-and-wood Gifford homestead in Coconut Grove, originally a fruit-packing plant, and relocated his architectural practice there in June of 1968.

Parker continued to reap recognition in his professional life. In October 1967, when the Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects inaugurated their Award of Honor, they bestowed it on Alfred Browning Parker for his "continual high quality and originality of work over an extended period of time." And in 1975 Parker received the Silver Medal Award from the Florida South Chapter of the AIA for twenty-five years of service in architecture.

In Parker's personal life, the late 1960s and early 1970s were a time of sadness. His beloved mother suffered a stroke in July 1968, languishing for several months before passing away on December 10. Then his wife Jane was diagnosed with cancer. The couple spent considerable time in both the United States and Germany searching for a cure, to no avail. Jane died on July 29, 1971.

During the 1970s Parker did a prodigious amount of traveling, and skiing. In 1973 alone, he traveled in Europe in late February, skied in Switzerland in April, and toured Russia in late May, while also making four



Parker at Woodsong, February 1979. *Florida Trend* cover photo by Richard Riley.



Parker in Vermont, April 1990. © Bo Parker Photographer.

trips to Vermont. Indeed, Vermont was now a regular destination. Parker had already made some fifteen trips there in the previous decade, and in the 1970s the number rose to fifty. In 1977 he started building his northern retreat, Windsong.

As the nation passed through an economic slowdown during the 1970s, Parker survived thanks to his commercial, banking, and housing projects. More selective in his residential clientele, he designed far fewer homes than in previous decades. Meanwhile the 1973 oil crisis sharply focused his interest and passion for the environment, sustainability, and alternate energy sources. With the founding of Solar Reactor Corporation and, later, SRT (Solar Reactor Technologies), Parker's activities shifted noticeably from architecture to working toward the potentials offered in alternative energy.

The 1980s in Parker's life were years of slow transition from a burgeoning architectural workshop to a diminishing, almost dormant practice. He relocated his office from the larger premises on 27th Avenue into Woodsong in May 1983, maintaining a skeleton staff. He increasingly focused on seeking research-and-development funding for SRT. Handing the official and administrative reins of SRT to his son Robin in 1984, he continued to work diligently behind the scenes to seek out backers. The slowdown in his practice was partly attributable to a national recession, but most likely also to the growing popularity of postmodernism in architecture—a movement that favored a return to arbitrary traditionalism and interbreeding of historical styles, which Parker refused to recognize.

On the personal side, in May 1980 he married for the third time, to Shirley Aronow, former wife of the flamboyant Miami speedboat designer and racer Don Aronow. The marriage ended amicably less than five years later in November 1984.

The 1990s brought more changes to Parker's personal and professional life. Tragically, his firstborn son Derek died on August 27, 1991. SRT continued to survive, but progress was slowed by lack of financial commitment and resources from both the private and public sectors. On February 7, 1992, Parker married his fourth wife, Euphrosyne Nittis, a model born in Ethiopia but living and working in Miami. And later that year, after the horrifically devastating Hurricane Andrew, Parker decided to relocate permanently to his remote Vermont retreat near Middlebury on the western slope of the Green Mountains. With his architectural practice lethargic and the South Florida context and environment having less appeal, he was looking forward to the change of scene, the slower pace and improved quality of life, and the opportunity to pursue some creative ideas in art and sculpture—not to mention producing his own brand of maple syrup

from the trees on his land. He sold Woodsong and moved north to Windsong, setting up his workshop in what he referred to as the Annex, a barn he had remodeled along with a substantial addition as an art and architecture studio and gallery.

Parker's intention to reside permanently in Vermont was short-lived as, in 1994, R. Wayne Drummond and Robert McCarter of the University of Florida's College of Architecture persuaded him to return to his alma mater to teach, just as he had almost a half century earlier. In 1998 he moved to Gainesville, becoming Distinguished Professor—by title and repute—and later professor emeritus. Only eight years after receiving the university's Distinguished Alumnus award in 2001, early in 2009 Parker became a victim of economic cutbacks when his faculty position was unceremoniously eliminated.

His practice produced very little during the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century. After Hurricane Andrew ravaged the South Florida city of Homestead, Parker suggested a concept to rebuild the city, calling his project the Eco-logical Eco Community. It fell upon deaf ears. In 1996, teaming with fellow faculty members R. Wayne Drummond and Karl Thorne, he designed a theater project for Paul Newman's Boggy Creek Gang that was proposed for Orlando. In 1997 he designed and built his eighth home, Skyview, in Gainesville. This was a two-story home featuring a large skylit upper level containing the great room, kitchen, guest room, and master suite. After selling Skyview several years later, in 2004 he started to design his final residence, Euphrosyne Isle, located on South Main Street against the west side of Colclough Pond south of downtown Gainesville. A straightforward single-story edifice elevated above the ground and sheltered by a wide overhanging hipped roof, the design seems to revert in its simplicity to Parker's earliest architectural roots.

During his final professional years, he continued to receive recognition. He was featured often by newspapers and magazines, and his work was included in several books on Miami and modern architecture. In 2001 the University of Miami presented an exhibition of his work; the Bass Museum on Miami Beach included architectural drawings and furniture designed by Parker in their 2007 exhibition titled "Promises of Paradise: Staging Mid-Century Miami," featuring the work of various Florida midcentury modern designers; and in 2008 the School of Architecture at the University of Florida hung a small retrospective exhibition titled "Of the Master's Hand." In 2004 Parker was further honored by the University of Florida with the creation in the George A. Smathers Libraries of the Alfred Browning Parker Architectural Archives Endowment, an "initiative intended to support and strengthen the . . . historical records that document Florida

architecture and architects."[6] And in 2010 Parker received the AIA Miami's prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award, to honor his contribution through design and to the profession of architecture.

An outgrowth of a special studies class taught by Parker where his students studied the homes Parker had designed and built for himself, Parker developed a class that taught a philosophy he dubbed "3 in 1: Client, Architect, and Builder," in which he presented the scenario of the architect being also the owner and builder.

Parker had practiced the 3-in-1 philosophy since 1943, when he began his first home in Coconut Grove—a project that he saw as "the best postgraduate study" he could obtain ("I wanted to learn about architecture and build a few things"). During his career he designed, built, and owned eight different homes . He was also the builder as well as the designer of at least two speculative homes (the Chandler residence in Coconut Grove and the Runge residence in Miami), his own architectural office in Coconut Grove in 1967 (the remodeling of Dr. Gifford's homestead), his art and architecture annex to Windsong, and two custom homes for specific clients (the Hopwood residence and his mother's). Parker was quoted in the *Miami Herald* in 1964 as saying, "I know of nothing I like better than to build with my own hands. The strongest training for the architect is to build—to have knowledge of how things are put together. Otherwise he tends to become less of a realist and more of a dreamer."[7]

In late June 1998 Parker penned his own obituary:

> Alfred Browning Parker is dead. His life was an unusually fortunate one. The only child of loving parents, he was also blessed with a host of doting, hardworking relatives who inspired him with their interest and their humor. As he was learning to walk, his mother also taught him to read. This lifetime reading habit was an advantage in his educational process. His many teachers were all friends and never failed to challenge his mind by their dedication to his education.
>
> A true Homo Faber from childhood, he found pleasure in making things. This felicitous discovery was a constant source of satisfaction to him and frequently to others. He earned his keep as an Architect, possessing a reasonable degree of diligence and a capacity for work. As a conservationist of both human and physical resources, he sought to understand our incredibly beautiful balanced eco-system. He helped in the evolution of an energy conversion system to eliminate the need for fossil fuels, one that would be economical, abundant and non-polluting.

In some manners he was obstinate, willful, stubborn and pertinacious. Nevertheless his wives, children and grandchildren were devoted to him beyond reason and apparently have not unduly suffered from their delusions.

Recalling his often expressed desire for a going-away party, lovely Euphrosyne will celebrate her husband's demise with a wake. She describes the social event as a memorial to those living, not for but from the deceased. The party, complete with food and drink, will include music and storytelling. All attending should remember at least one humorous story and be prepared to stay as long as they have the strength to laugh and dance.

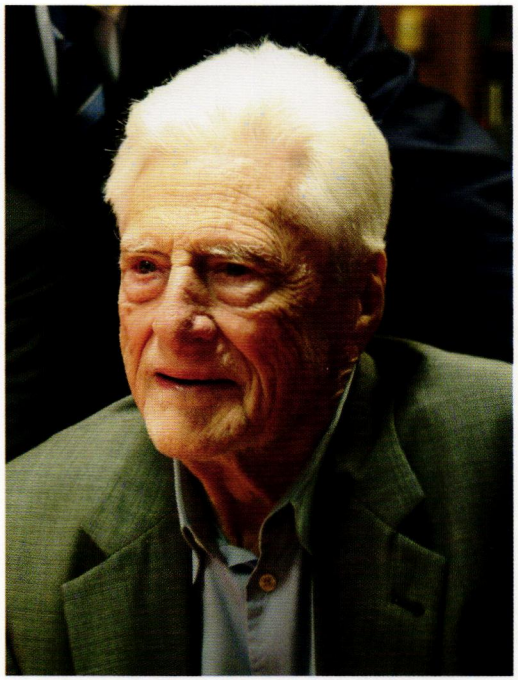
The departed was aware of his kinship with earth and its inhabitants, human and otherwise. When he was very small, an animal once gave him fleas, but he considered it inconsequential compared with the pleasure of snuggling a puppy. The underlying harmony evident throughout the universe was a constant source of amazement and delight to him. Although never fully expressed, he had a gratitude without limit for love, family, friends, work and freedom. As he expired, those witnessing his passing believe they heard him whisper, "Life is generous."[8]

A summation that, like his architecture, is hard to improve on. Alfred Browning Parker died in Gainesville, Florida, on March 11, 2011.

■ ■ ■

I'm not as good as once I was but I rejoice in what remains. I can't see as once I saw but there is much I'd rather not see. I don't hear as once I heard but there is much I'd rather miss. I can't bite like once I could but dentists are remarkable. I can't propagate like once I could but my genes are spread enough. My heart doesn't beat as strong as before but it has served me well. I count my blessings and am content.

■ **Parker to the author, September 22, 2003**



Alfred Browning Parker, September 2008. © Bo Parker Photographer.



Selected Works

We should judge architecture by how well it serves the growth of the human spirit.

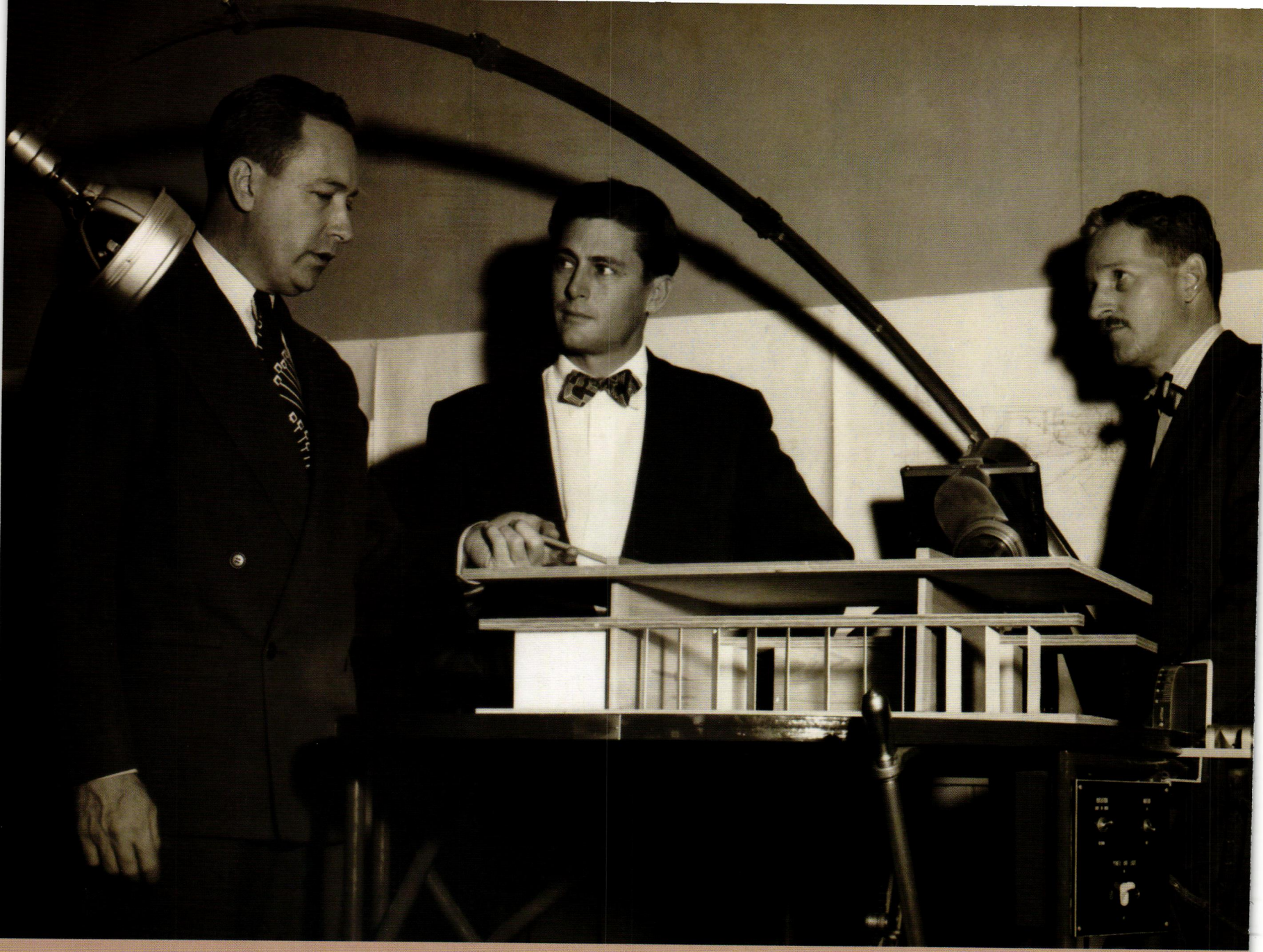
Architecture is for the use and delight of the family of man happily at home on earth.

- **Parker, in *Architecture for Florida Living*, 1968**

The sixty-nine works explored in these pages have been selected because they represent the breadth of Alfred Browning Parker's vast experience, creative growth, and imaginative genius.

Note: The project dates indicated are for design inception, as nearly as can be determined. Parker did not keep consistent yearly logs or chronological project lists, and his drawings were infrequently dated. When dates were not found on drawings, they were therefore sought from various other sources—client-architect agreements, project correspondence, property records, published articles, and, as confirmation, Parker's own recollection. Also, when common names or known labels were ascribed to particular projects, such as Royal Road or Pace Setter 54 for Parker's home on Royal Road in Coconut Grove or Pace Setter 65 for his Gables Estates home in Coral Gables, these are noted in parentheses after the project name. Narratives for the selected works are based on correspondence and interviews with Parker, interviews with project clients or their descendants, available project files, architectural drawings on microfiche in the ABP Collection, miscellaneous information in the author's collection, and additional specific sources as noted.

Facing: Living area of Jewel Parker Residence, Coconut Grove, 1957. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Early Work 1942–1953

Let me suggest that buildings play an important role in any comprehensive survey of our resources. Organically honest, indigenous buildings of great simplicity and repose should become a Florida goal, as well as a national goal.

- **Parker to Colin English, (Florida) Superintendent of Public Instruction, February 7, 1947**

The initial work undertaken in the early years of Parker's practice, while somewhat varied, was primarily in the custom and speculative residential markets. In the late 1940s and the 1950s his ventures with area builders and developers into the speculative production housing market were numerous. The subdivisions on which he worked included Anderson Heights (263 homes), Essex Village (in Hialeah, built by Thomas Coogan), Oak Ridge (117 homes built by Porter-Wagor-Russell), Pinecrest Manor (8 homes in Coconut Grove for Nathan Rood), Pine Tree Estates (128 homes in South Miami built by Maston O'Neal Jr.), Short Hills (850 homes), and Town and Ranch Estates. Parker designed dozens of different prototypes, with the total number of built units difficult to calculate, but considerable. With cost of primary concern to the builder-client, Parker was able to convince them that an architect-designed production home is worth

Left to right, Bill Arnett, Parker, Tom Grand, ca. 1948. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

the additional fee because of its more efficient and effective design. Builder Maston O'Neal was quoted in the February 1953 issue of *House & Home*: "But I give myself credit too—for picking an architect who understands the builder's problems and costs as well as he understands design."[1] The floor plans were efficiently laid out and the exteriors straightforward in appearance. Most had wood-framed roofs supported by concrete masonry walls on a concrete slab-on-grade. Parker provided his developer clients with efficient plans that responded to the competitive speculative market; his clients often publicized the fact that the houses were architect designed to market their product. The homes were less than exceptional, but better designed than the standard builder-designed tract houses.

Parker was also afforded many opportunities to design homes for custom clients. These designs tended to be more individualized to both the client and the site. Parker's drawings typically included the orientation of the home on the site and the direction of prevailing winds—evidence that his desire to appropriately locate and orient the home on the property was a prime consideration. The palette of materials Parker used in many of these early custom works were predominantly rustic, his rudimentary solutions somewhat eclectic and sometimes crude (Adobe Villas, his own house in Coconut Grove, and the Chandler-Marsh-Hopwood trio are a few examples). He deliberately steered clear of the neo-stylistic expressions then popular with many of his peers and attempted to provide more modern solutions, albeit less refined than his later residential works. He sought a more honest expression of site, use of local materials, and accommodation of the client's needs and budget.

The notable exceptions to residential work during his early years were the Thunderbird development in North Carolina for Kenneth Keyes Sr., a remodeling and expansion of the Everglades Hotel annex building to house the Keyes Company in Miami, Adobe Villas on the boundary of Dade and Broward Counties, the George Washington Carver Elementary School in Coconut Grove, the Repp Medical Clinic in Miami, an office building for the Baldwin Mortgage and Insurance Company in downtown Miami, the Terry Art Institute veterans apartment building in Coconut Grove, a showroom for Hudson-Estaver Motors in Miami, Cloverleaf Lanes in Miami, and the Bal Harbour Club.

Parker, always a confident but gracious extrovert, was not shy of publicity. The local newspapers, the *Miami Herald* and the *Miami Daily News*, covered both residential and commercial real estate news and often featured Parker's work. He also started receiving attention from local, regional, and national

magazines, including *Florida Architecture & Allied Arts*, *Miami Builders Journal*, *Florida Builder*, *Architectural Record*, *Architectural Forum*, *American Home*, *Architectural Digest*, *House & Garden*, and *House Beautiful*.

Parker's architectural experiments were many during these exploratory initial years. His philosophically determined Tropical Subsistence Homestead was more about the idea, a speculative idea in human ecology, than the architecture. The house itself was fundamental at best—on purpose, so the owner could construct it himself. Parker's plan for the Farmer residence was an interesting combination of two differing geometries. The third house he designed and built for his own family, in the subdivision of Miami he named Rocks and Short Pines, was the seed for some of his later homes containing interconnected but clearly defined separate forms for specific separate functions, including the Streate and Gayer residences, his mother's Jewel-in-the-Treetop, and Woodsong. The Cayce residence, designed for a property in the Florida Keys and thus elevated to withstand the potential storm surge, featured a set of structural triangular stilts. The angular Rice residence was Parker's first notable achievement of a complex geometric scheme—a valid response to the constraints of the site—incorporating a hexagon and 60-degree angles. And Parker's unique design for Daniel Caudle, which he named A Cave With a View, was a diminutive cabin buried into the side of an Ohio hill, a precursor to his own Windsong residence in Vermont, designed twenty-three years later. The first scheme for the combined residence and studio workshop that he contemplated for his Royal Road property would have been an interesting and dramatic mix of forms and functions, although it lacked the organic and more refined qualities of the built design he started two years later.

His first home, on 27th Avenue in Coconut Grove, and his fourth, on Royal Road, are bookends to this early segment of Parker's work—the former symbolizing the beginning of his practice, the latter his rise in prominence. Interestingly, both received almost immediate publicity through the pages of *House Beautiful*, although Royal Road's coverage was considerably greater.[2] When one considers these two works, built less than ten years apart, and the work in between, there is an obvious and significant growth and marked progression. Parker's Royal Road house, designated Pace Setter 1954 by *House Beautiful* in the November 1953 issue, was unquestionably an early landmark, if not a pivotal point in his career.

Parker and *House Beautiful*'s editor in chief Elizabeth Gordon had met in Chicago in February 1950. On a layover in Miami in late October 1951, Gordon saw firsthand the Royal Road house under construction.

Parker was out of town at the time. However, Gordon was so taken with the home's obvious potential that she immediately sent a telegram to Parker at the Hotel Claridge in Atlantic City:

> Tried to call . . . your house is a masterpiece as great as anything I have seen on any continent . . . you must not wait too long to have it published for it can make you as a designer of stature . . . I will go to great lengths to help you with the furnishings by begging and borrowing what we need to get superb pictures . . . we must begin planning this at once . . . will be home Thursday . . . glad I know you.[3]

Later Frank Lloyd Wright, in Gordon's New York office, noticed the pictures of Parker's Royal Road house taken by the world-renowned architectural photographer Ezra Stoller for the 1954 Pace Setter issue and was so taken that he offered to write captions for the article. Gordon had started the Pace Setter program in 1948. With Parker's Royal Road opus she would publish the largest issue in her then-twelve-year tenure.[4]

■ ■ ■

I try to achieve the beauty that springs from factors of safety, logical arrangement, durability, and economy affirming the thought that the architect should be a creative artist. I further believe that a building reveals the man behind it (the architect). The more the man combines the essential traits of the craftsman, engineer, businessman, biologist, climatologist, artist, and philosopher, the closer will he come to producing architecture. It is time we abandoned the construction of barren stucco boxes, graced only with luxuriant foliage and anachronistic high-sounding names. Let us put ourselves to the task of enclosing space in the vital, compelling way that does characterize architecture. Perhaps this is getting too involved. Let's say I want to build handsomely, safely and soundly. I think this is done by using creative imagination and intelligence.

■ **Parker, quoted in *Florida Sun & Riviera Times*, March 5, 1950**

TROPICAL SUBSISTENCE HOMESTEAD

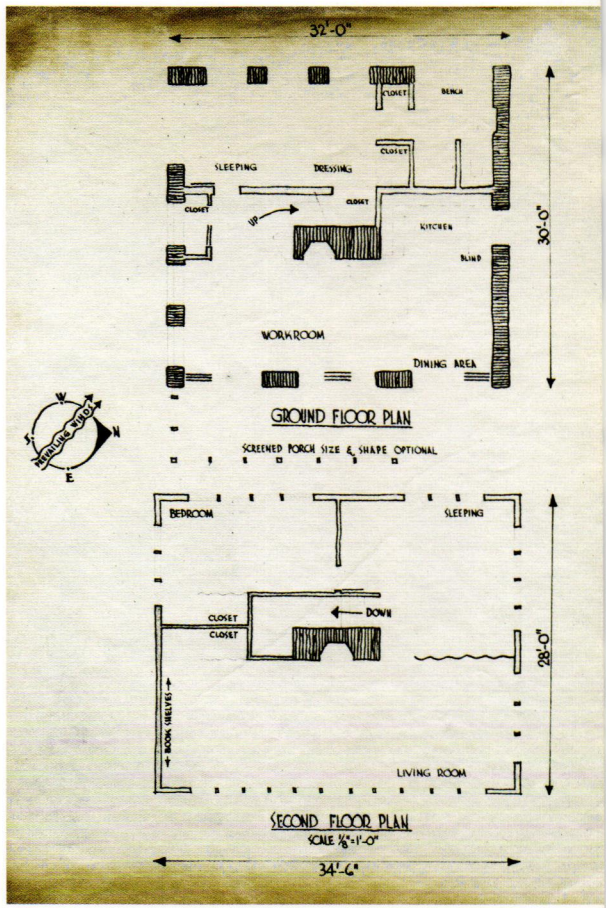
Dade County, Florida ▪ 1942 ▪ Unbuilt project

This modest but genuinely revealing project, designed very early in Parker's sixty-plus-year career, was more about the vision than the result. For Parker, the Tropical Subsistence Homestead represented an appropriate formula for living in Southeast Florida. He identified this project as "my first design of any consequence."[5] He first started thinking about the visionary idea early in 1941 when he wrote ecologist Dr. John Gifford (who later became his father-in-law) at the University of Miami, requesting a meeting:

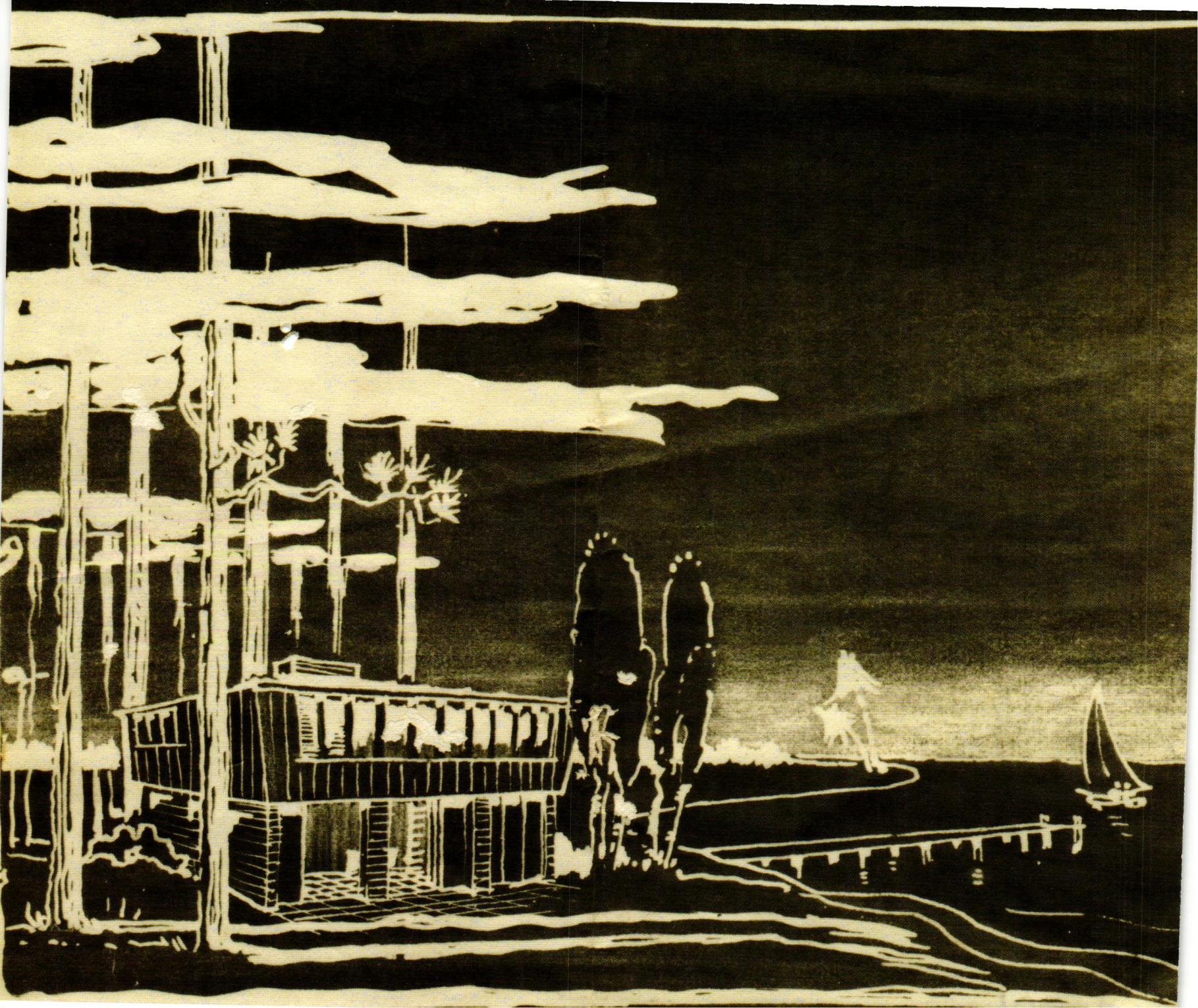
> May I call upon you when I return to Miami in June? Recently I read your paper "Florida Keys." . . . I have an interest in the sub-tropical regions and the existence possible for man in these regions. I have been thinking about buildings in our region of the State (Miami and South). My views coincide with yours in a great many ways, that is, as you stated your views in your paper. I had been thinking about using indigenous materials in a logical way to serve all requirements in a happy fashion, and, at the same way, to resist hurricanes. Possibly the best way to do this is to root the building into the ground even as a tree is rooted, and this could be done with a heavy central element such as a chimney. For most locations in the Keys I am convinced that the building elevated from the ground by a considerable number of feet is the best solution for many of the problems presented by water, termites, etc.[6]

Parker offered a formula for living that had only three simple steps: find five acres of undeveloped land "for a song," build a comfortable and artistic house using native materials, and plant an assortment of native plants and trees that provide a healthy and adequate diet. He advocated that the home be designed to take full advantage of the prevailing climate and views while protecting from potential hurricanes.[7]

Parker's speculative design was a two-story house built of native wood and stone. "Always build of native materials, wherever you happen to be building your home as they are infinitely cheaper, they always fit into the surrounding landscape, and they are friendlier than foreign or imported materials." Parker incorporated a massive central fireplace in his design to tie down the edifice in strong hurricane winds. He might have also been alluding to Frank Lloyd Wright's use, in his earlier Prairie style designs, of the



First- and second-level floor plans. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



fireplace as the center or heart of the home. The upper level, raised off the ground with load-bearing masonry walls below to protect against high water, was to contain the living area, two bedrooms, and a bathroom. The walls of the upper level, sided with cypress, were slanted outward to increase the perception of spaciousness. The angular corners provided additional deflecting defense against hurricane winds. The lower level, enclosed with thick masonry walls, would contain a combined play and work area, kitchen and dining, and a third bedroom. The design provided for cross-ventilation, screens against mosquitoes, and plumbing concentrated into one area. Parker was confident that the house could be built for $1,400.[8]

A 1942 *Miami Herald* newspaper article stated, "Parker's idea of subsistence farming isn't new—half a dozen enthusiasts, including our own Dr. John C. Gifford, have advocated it. But his solution of the housing problem is original." (In fact, Parker named his project after a book written by Gifford titled *The Tropical Subsistence Homestead*, published by the University of Miami in 1934.) The *Herald* continued:

> What does he offer you for your $1,400? Three roomy bedrooms—no less; a thirty four foot living room, with a wide fireplace and bookshelves to the ceiling on one wall; a concentrated kitchen, with connecting dining space; a large "work area"; a comfortable bath; a "terrace-porch," screened top and sides; plus plenty of cupboards and storage space . . . planned to insure all the principal essentials of Florida living—outdoor space, protected from mosquitoes, airiness, light, protection from tropical rains, big living spaces, coolness and "atmosphere."[9]

The article suggested that Parker was actually planning on building the home and living the formula himself after the war. Without question, this newspaper article on his tropical subsistence home design certainly provided Parker with attention and local exposure as a creative architect, three and a half years before he opened his architectural studio in 1946.

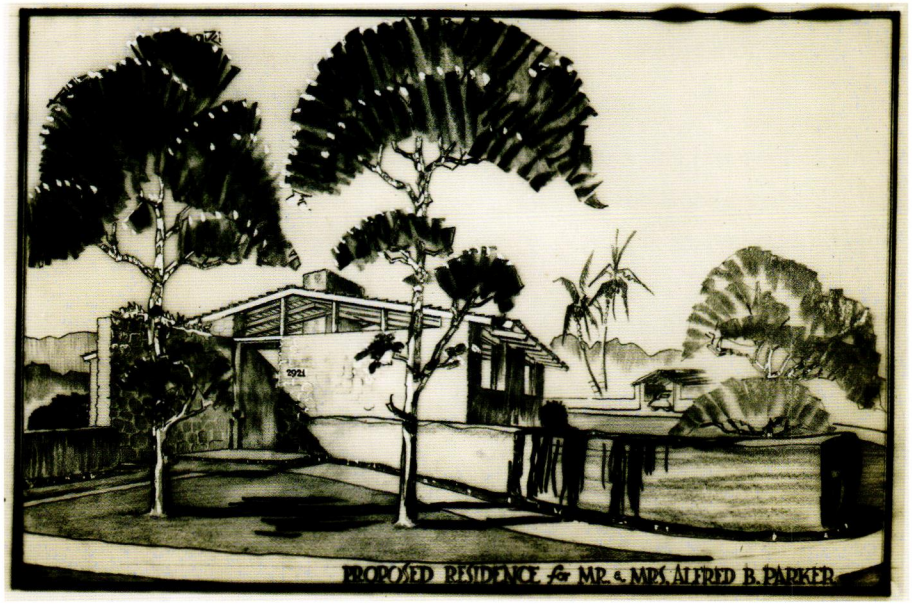
Almost eight years later, a January 1950 newspaper article in the *Miami Herald* identified this design as a home for Lewis M. Adams, a retired New York publisher, to be built on Elliott Key in South Miami.[10] Obviously Parker continued to see the validity of this design in the Miami market. But the house was never built and the visionary formula, albeit preached continuously and passionately by Parker, was never tested or realized.

Exterior perspective. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

PARKER RESIDENCE AND STUDIO

Coconut Grove, Florida ▪ 1943 ▪ Built project—extant

Parker began the construction of his first home while an enlisted naval officer stationed in Miami during the war. Now having a wife and growing family, he purchased property from his father-in-law, Dr. John Gifford. The property had an existing structure that was originally a service station. Parker's design and construction efforts were extremely restricted, mostly because of war rationing limiting construction costs to $200 per year. In addition, the zoning of the lot required that a house cost $5,000 minimum, and Parker's naval responsibilities required him to be on duty from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. six days a week. He canvassed the neighborhood and successfully petitioned the Planning Board to lift the $5,000 minimum. Building the home with his own labor and with found, scrounged, and salvaged materials allowed him to stay below the yearly $200 limit for the first two years. After the war ended, he spent $900 to finish the three-year project.

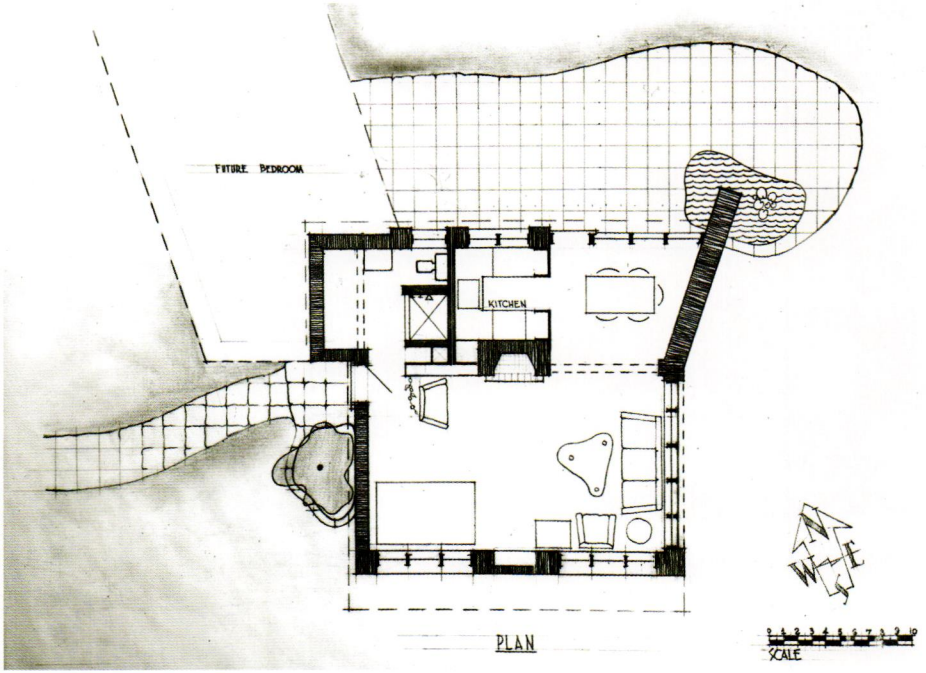


Exterior perspective. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

His initial design was for an extremely small wood-and-coral-rock house responding to the site, climate, and budget. He saved several stone columns from the existing building, to conform to the restriction against construction of a new house, and demolished the rest. The original living room wing, centered on a generous stone fireplace and furnished with built-ins and furniture designed by Parker, was completed and occupied on November 11, 1943.[11] Over the next two years the home was expanded horizontally and vertically, basically completed in 1945. However, Parker continued to rework and refine the project, and when his Royal Road residence was completed, it served as the studio workshop for his architectural practice until he moved across the street in 1968.

The home was certainly an introductory view of how Parker approached the design of his own residences. It was quite rudimentary when compared with what he did as he matured and, obviously, had larger budgets to work with. Nevertheless, he was always quite proud of this start. He sent Frank Lloyd Wright photos and sketches during its early development. In a letter dated March 29, 1944, Parker wrote:

> The photographs are of a house I am building with my own two hands. To this house I have been all trades (as often unskilled as not). Building hours have been Sundays and evenings this past year (since Jan. '43). I was lucky to have the time being in the Navy. Then too there was a marriage and a youngster within a year, and now another one on the way—but no autobiography—just the merest background of a house. This is my first building.[12]

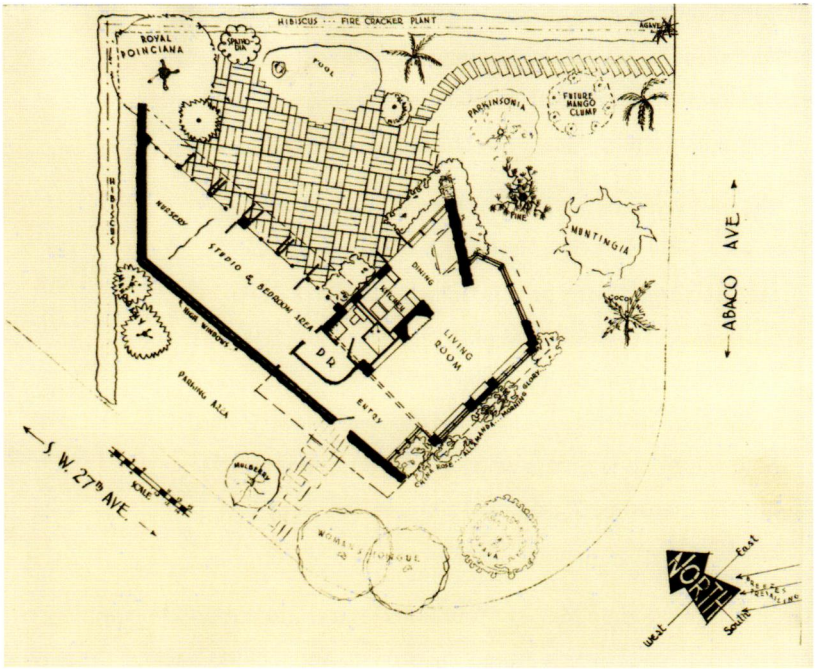


Floor plan of initial phase. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

Wright responded on May 23: "Your house is a crude but good beginning."[13] The local newspaper and several national magazines featured the project. And looking back on the experience garnered with the construction of his first home, Parker was quoted in a May 3, 1964, article in the *Miami Herald*: "That's where I really got my postgraduate work. I dug the stone out of the ground and heaped it in place with my own hands."



Parker residence and studio. Exterior. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Expanded floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

Living area. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



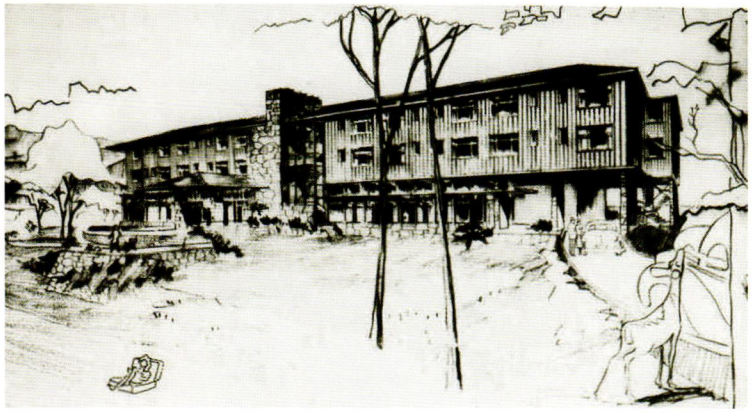
THUNDERBIRD

Lake Santeetlah, North Carolina ▪ 1945 ▪ Unbuilt project



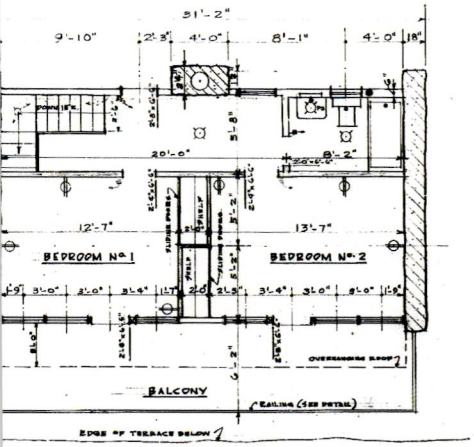
Perspective of two-story lodge unit. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

One of Parker's earliest opportunities was Thunderbird, a vacation resort development that was envisioned for a peninsula jutting out into Lake Santeetlah in the Nantahala National Forest of the Great Smoky Mountains in western North Carolina. His master plan, dated December 17, 1945, delineated five detached lodges of varying sizes and types along the shoreline of the peninsula, a three-story lodge, and a combination service station and country store at the entrance. Numerous secondary service buildings, pavilions, and shelters were designed as well. The materials proposed, wood and stone, reflected the rural character of the region. Parker termed the architectural design "sophisticated rustic."[14] Parker even designed the project's logo, a stylized bird incorporating the name of the development. The Thunderbird project never progressed beyond the preliminary stages, owing to a continuing failure to find potable water. After some early clearing for roads in anticipation of the project—and in accordance with Parker's master plan—the development was abandoned.

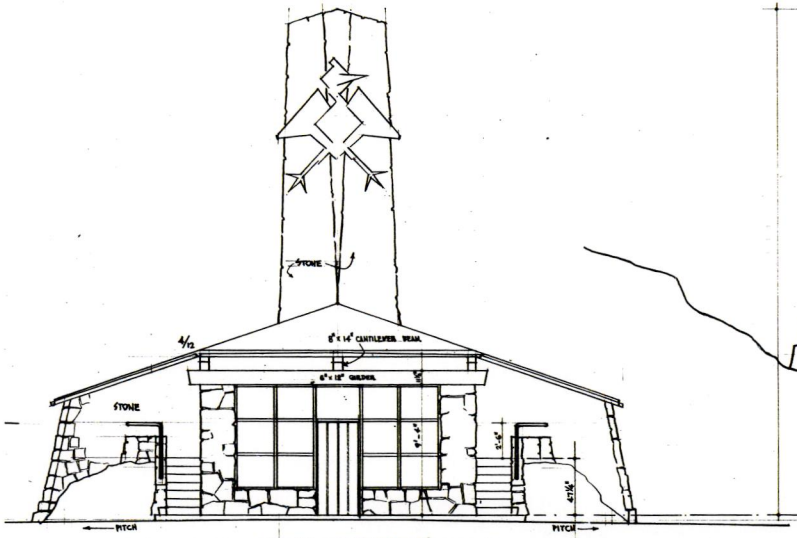


Worm's-eye view of three-story main lodge building. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

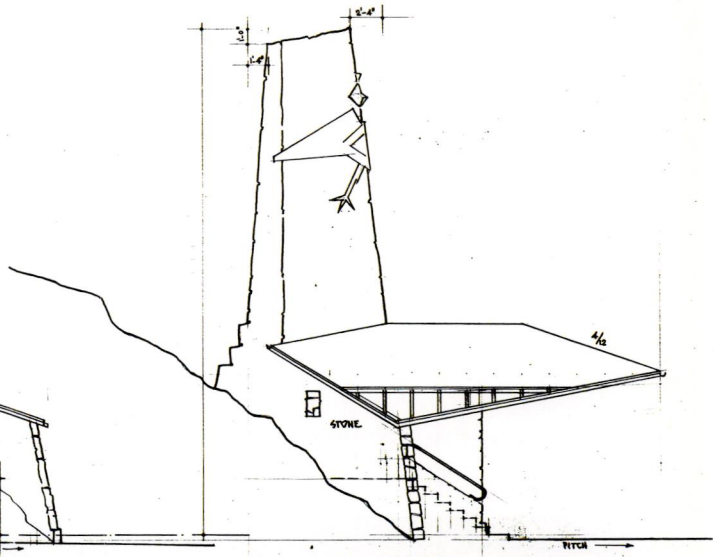
Parker's client was Kenneth Keyes, a Miami-based developer who had most likely become aware of the young architect through Parker's father's connections within the South Florida real estate business. Parker also was stationed in the navy with Keyes's son Ken Jr.[15] Keyes was an early patron of Parker's, retaining him in 1944 to design a project for the nonprofit Institute for Non-Aristotelian Research and Education in South Miami, in 1945 for Thunderbird, and in 1946 for the remodeling of the Everglades Hotel annex on Biscayne Boulevard for his company's offices. Undoubtedly, over the years, Keyes directed other work and clients Parker's way as well. He eventually sold the North Carolina land in 1958 to a Broward County developer. The Thunderbird peninsula now is the Town of Lake Santeetlah. Its singular entrance and primary perimeter roadway closely match Parker's 1945 design.



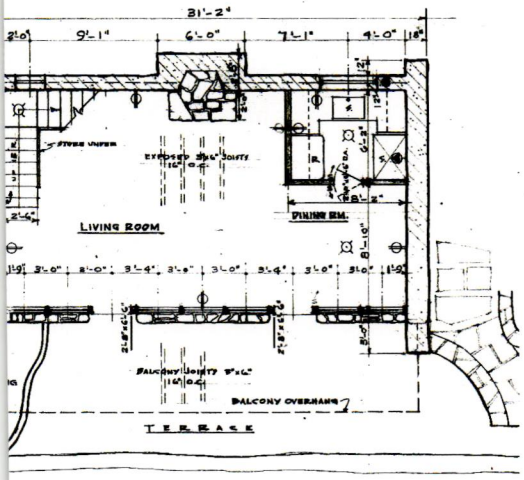
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



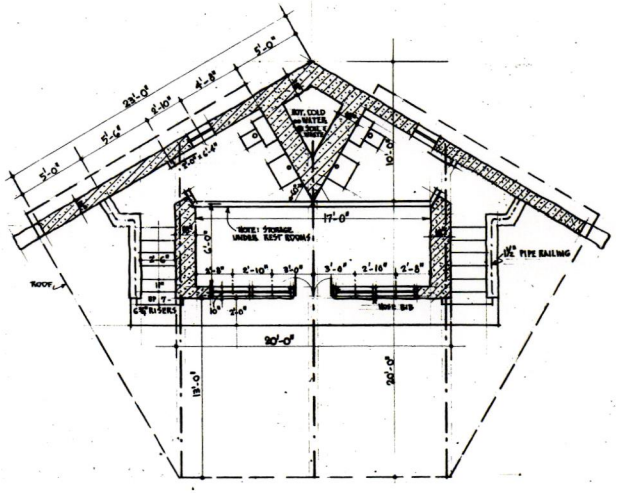
FRONT ELEVATION 1/4"



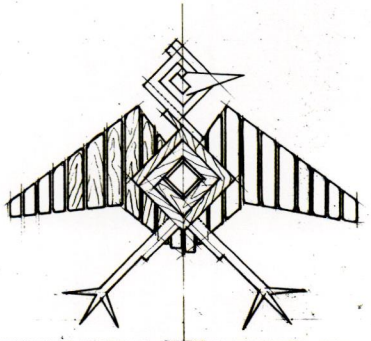
SIDE ELEVATION



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



PLAN



DETAIL
SCALE: 1½" = 1'-0"

WORKING DRAWINGS for THE ENTRANCE
THUNDERBIRD ESTATES INC.
LAKE SANTEETLAH, NORTH CAROLINA

Ground- and second-level floor plans of lodge unit. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

PARKER RESIDENCE (SIX-WEEK WONDER)

Gainesville, Florida ▪ 1946 ▪ Built project—extant

After Parker's discharge from the navy in the spring of 1945, he soon returned to Gainesville to honor a promise he had made to his recently deceased mentor Rudolph Weaver to teach at least one year in the School of Architecture and Allied Arts at the University of Florida, to help with the greatly increased post-war enrollment and attendant problems. Parker eventually purchased an acre of property north of campus for $700 and began planning a home. Hauling material to Gainesville from Miami in a surplus Dodge weapons carrier, he personally began construction on August 10, moving in at the end of the following month. The modest 1,450-square-foot home quickly became known as the Six-Week Wonder.

Parker said the design was an attempt to fit it to its climate and environment, "to cuddle down around the pines."[16] For his family, now including three young children, Parker designed an affordable home, efficient in plan and natural in materials. The lower level contained the primary living-dining-kitchen functions, with a focus on a southern garden patio, intimately connecting the interior with the exterior. The upstairs had three bedrooms and one bath. Alternating courses of 4-inch and 8-inch concrete masonry units, beige in color to blend in with the sandy soils, enclosed the lower level. Deeply raked horizontal mortar joints, with the vertical joints flush, created a subtle emphasis on the horizontal, a detail learned from studying Frank Lloyd Wright's work.

Living area. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

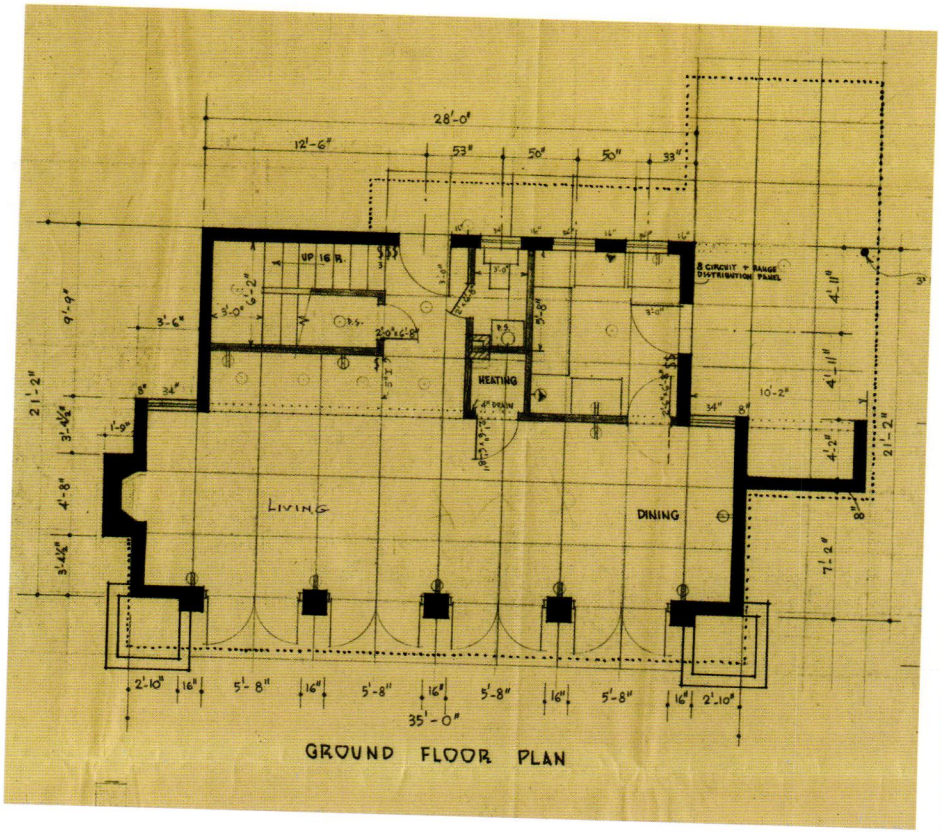


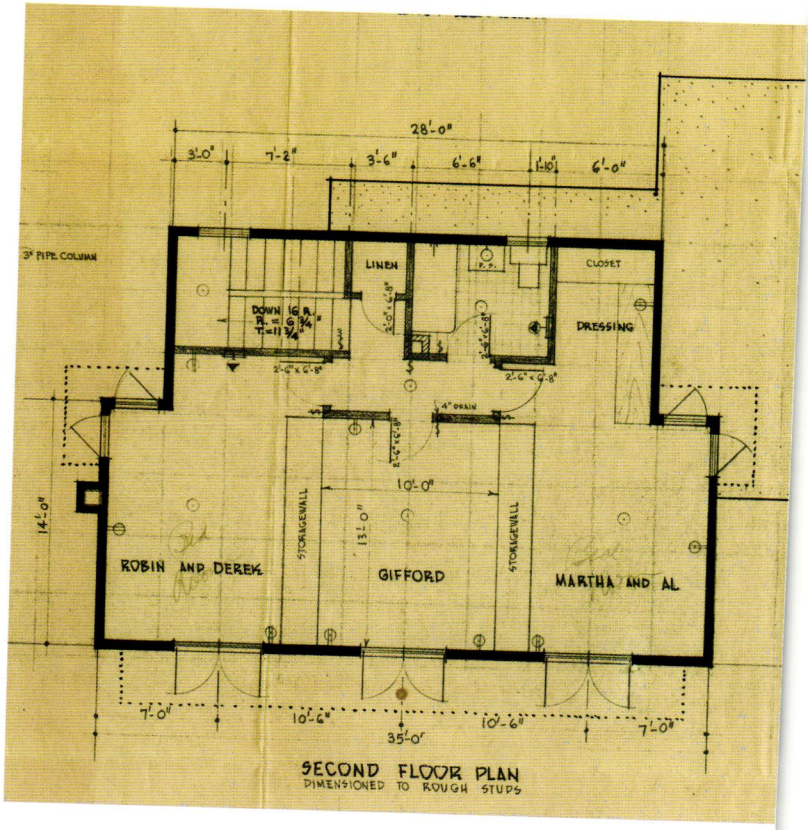
South side, with (left to right) Alfred Browning Parker, Martha, Gifford, Derek, and Robin, ca. 1945. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



The material enclosing the overhanging upper level was random widths of Florida tidewater red cypress boards from nearby Palatka. It received a muted green stain, matching the color of the leaves held up to the sunlight. Parker constructed not only the house but all of the numerous built-in furnishings. The south-facing windows allowed for cooling breezes in the warmer months and heat in the winter—an early and deliberate harnessing of passive solar energy.

Parker lived in the Six-Week Wonder for less than a year, then sold the home to a fellow faculty member and returned to Miami to focus on his architecture practice.



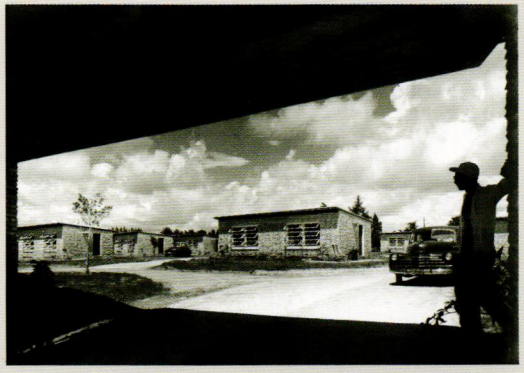


Ground-level and upper-level floor plans. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

ADOBE VILLAS

Miami, Florida ▪ 1947 ▪ Built project—demolished

The day after the Miami newspapers printed the announcement that Parker had opened a studio for the practice of architecture, Hector Caravacci, formerly of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, hired Parker to design a small tourist motel on a one-and-a-half-acre parcel of land fronting US 1 just a hundred feet south of the Dade-Broward county line. Caravacci wanted to develop the project for his son, who, like Parker, was recently discharged from the navy, and who would manage the motel. The complex consisted of thirteen freestanding units, twelve of which were duplex efficiency bungalows. The thirteenth, at the front of the project, contained the larger manager's unit, complete with office, and another separate efficiency unit connected by a flat roof that doubled as the complex's entrance archway. The fireplace chimney above the manager's unit, with multiple flower boxes stepping up its sloped side, became the landmark signboard that displayed the words "Adobe Villas" for many years. Parker utilized inexpensive materials—white adobe masonry units, inside and out, for the walls, and exposed cypress-wood timbers for the low-slope roof structure. Parker's master plan for the project oriented the buildings to capture the prevailing southeasterly breezes, terraces were provided for each unit, and the overall landscaping of the complex was designed to afford maximum privacy for each 225-square-foot efficiency unit as well as to exhibit the variety of tropical plants grown in South Florida. Built by the John B. Orr Company, the project, exclusive of the land, cost $140,000.[17]



Individual rental units. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

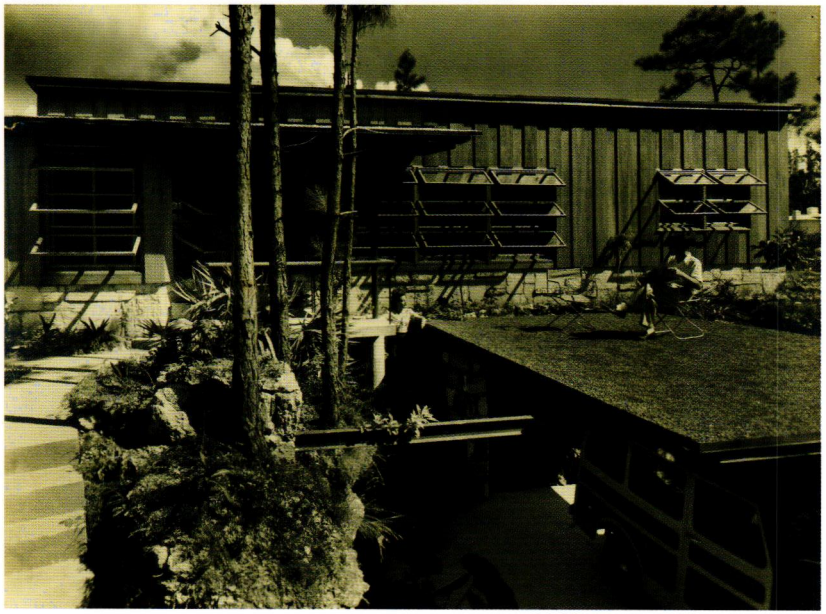


Office unit. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

HOPWOOD RESIDENCE

Coconut Grove, Florida ▪ 1948 ▪ Built project—extant

Parker always fondly recalled the Hopwoods as his "first clients." While this was not strictly accurate, William and Dorothy Hopwood hired Parker in the infancy of his career and gave him an opportunity not only to design their home but to build it as well. Parker also assisted the Hopwoods in locating property, "finding a piece only an architect would appreciate."[18] They purchased an acre lot in Coconut Grove for $750. It was unique in that it was on the edge of an old rock pit, offering a topographical condition rare in South Florida—a ten-foot change in elevation.

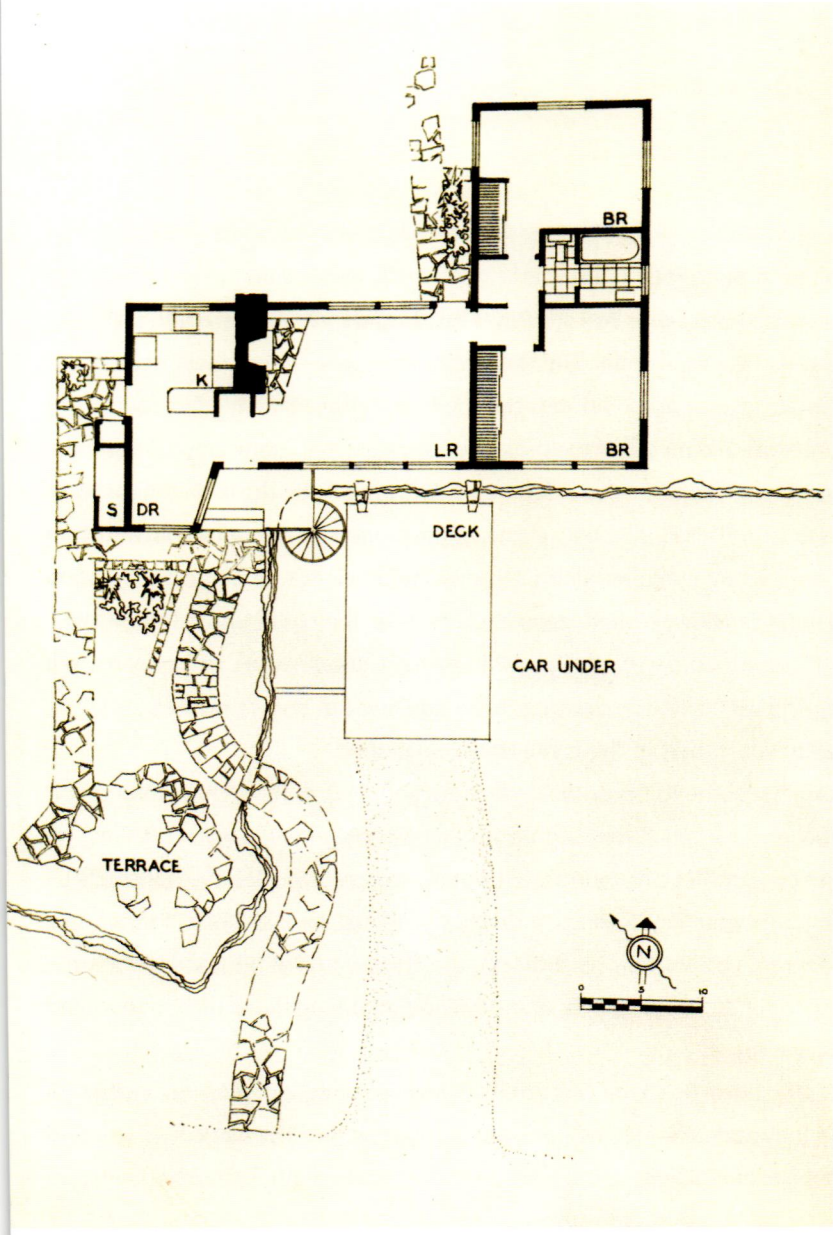


Street side. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

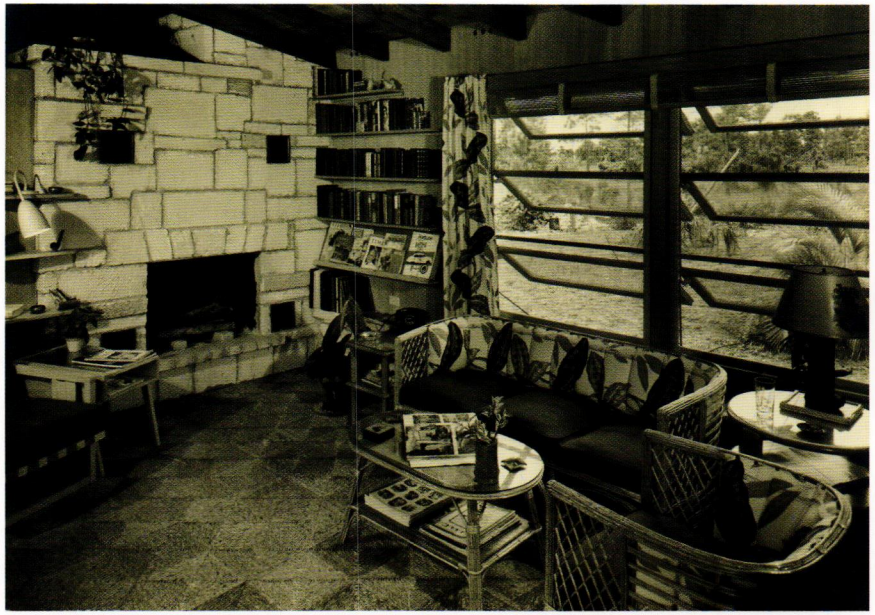
The small two-bedroom, one-bath house was built of concrete, native cypress, and stone. It was placed upon the top shelf of natural stone, which was approximately halfway back on the 125-foot-deep lot. The living area was basically one room deep and faced south, opening up to the prevailing breezes. Parker utilized a fireplace mass to separate the living area from the kitchen.

The Hopwoods couldn't find a builder interested in constructing Parker's design on such a challenging piece of property, so for $10,000, their budget, Parker built the home himself—as he would do with the house he designed in 1949 for the Chandlers on the adjacent lot to the east.[19] The Marsh residence, on the Hopwoods' other side, was a Parker design but was built by the client without supervision and with considerable changes.

An architect personally building projects for clients at this time was most uncommon. While rather rudimentary and rustic in their fruition, these projects gave a youthful and enterprising Parker an early boost of confidence: he could not only produce a design for a difficult site but could actually carry it out.



Floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Living area. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

PARKER RESIDENCE (PACE SETTER 1954 / ROYAL ROAD)

Coconut Grove, Florida ▪ 1950 ▪ Built project—extant

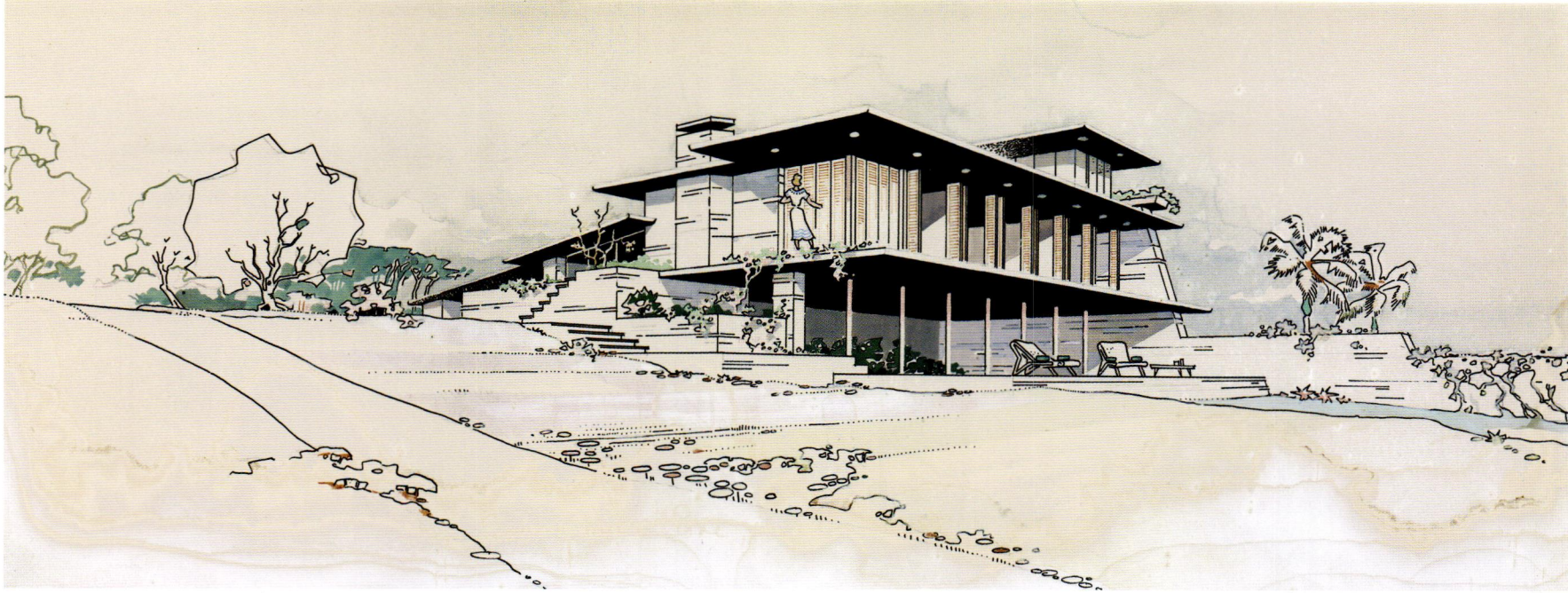


Bird's-eye perspective of 1948 unbuilt scheme. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

Without question, Parker's Royal Road residence was one of his masterworks and an early watershed in his career. Much credit goes to Elizabeth Gordon and her *House Beautiful* magazine for placing Parker's Royal Road residence squarely within the national scene as its 1954 Pace Setter. The November 1953 issue—the largest issue *House Beautiful* ever did, at 365 pages—introduced the Pace Setter, while the first four issues in 1954 featured bits and pieces of the project in greater detail. Frank Lloyd Wright was so impressed with its design that he offered to write captions for the initial *House Beautiful* feature. He said, "This Florida house aims at the highest goal to which architecture may aspire: organic architecture. Along this new but ancient way a home where the enlightened mind can flower, where people can develop their fullest potentials, is still a possibility."[20] Elizabeth Gordon wrote, "I have seen many good houses. I have seen some great houses. And we have been showing them regularly. But this is the first time I have wanted to say to you, 'This is it! This is The House Beautiful.'"[21]

Parker's original home in Coconut Grove, now doubling as his architectural office, had quickly become too small. He sought land that was closer to the water, and on Royal Road off Main Highway in Coconut Grove he found an extremely narrow spit of land, 90 feet wide by 715 feet long, that sloped down to Biscayne Bay. Seeing its inherent potential, he purchased it for $7,000. He also became aware of its inherent challenges—its setbacks, the adjacent neighborhood school, the low elevation (more than 85 percent of the property was prone to flooding during hurricanes), and a deed restriction requiring an all-masonry house.

Parker's initial 1948 design for the Royal Road site was a highly unusual combined residence and architectural workshop. He oriented the residence with its exposure toward the bay. The workshop was perpendicular to the residence and elevated above and dramatically cantilevered out, with a huge picture

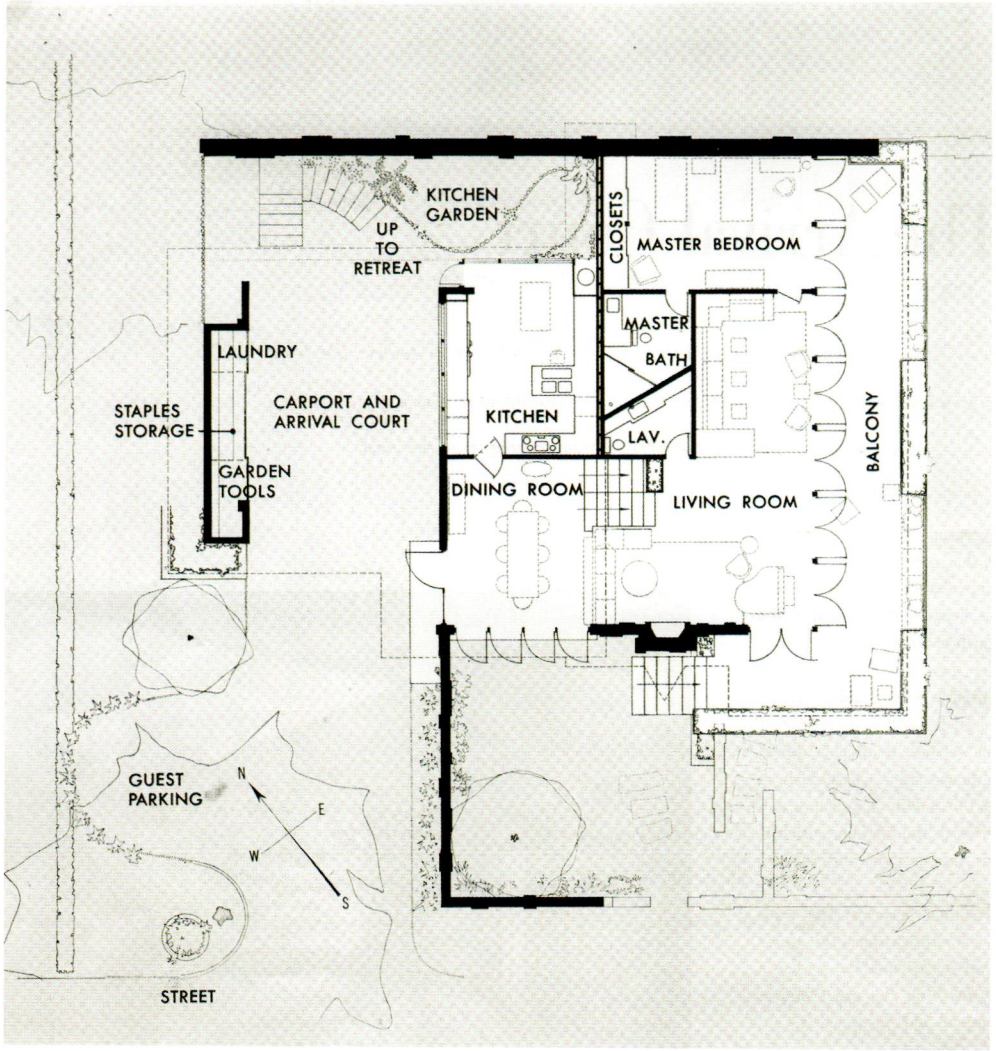


Exterior perspective. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

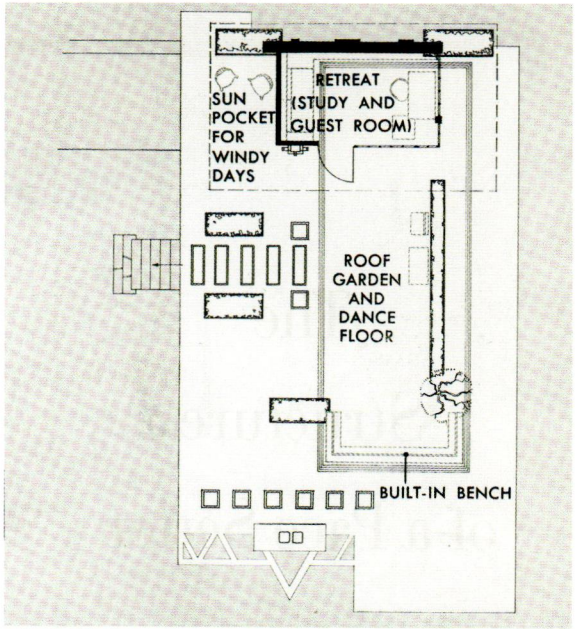
window at the end facing the bay. After multiple studies and even being featured in *Florida Architecture* magazine,[22] it was abandoned.

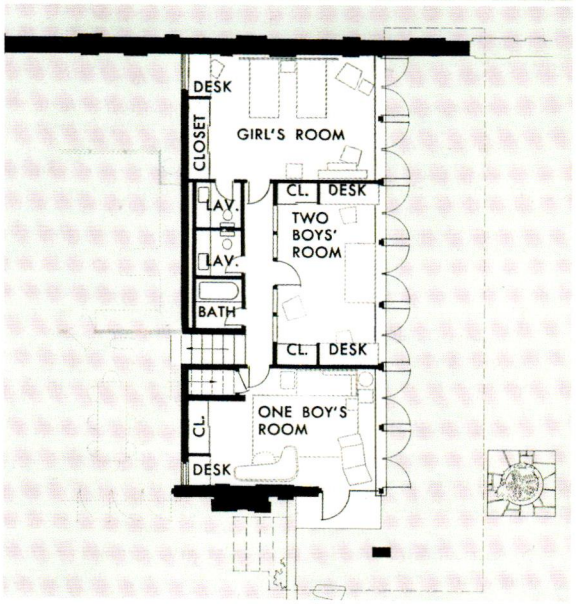
The residence that Parker began designing in 1950 retained a few aspects of the previous design. Again, he sited the roughly 3,100-square-foot home at the uppermost end of the lot and designed the living areas to take full advantage of the view down the property to the bay, as well as the prevailing breezes to cool the home year-round. However, in the new design he organized the rooms on a split-level concept and designed thin cantilevered concrete floor slabs structurally held up with solid load-bearing walls and seven structural vertical steel columns. This allowed Parker's favored persiana doors to be used along the entire living room wall facing the bay, affording maximum exposure or enclosure.[23]

The simple structural design permitted an extraordinary interior openness. The cantilevered floor and roof slabs allowed for protection from the sun and rain as well. The living room was above the children's rooms, which were on grade, with the kitchen and dining room at the half level between. The master bedroom was off the living room. Parker added an additional 2,800 square feet of outdoor living area by making the residence's roof an exterior terrace, where he also erected a diminutive retreat containing a combined guest room and office.



Main-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.





Above right: upper-level floor plan; *right:* lower-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Entry side.
Photo by Ezra
Stoller © Esto.

As he did on his previous three homes, Parker acted as the builder for Royal Road. Construction took more than three years and, as before, he proceeded with a passionate purpose and a restricted budget. He found a source of quarried keystone.[24] All he had to do was haul it to the site. He mixed the mortar. He laid the stone in a fresh and uniquely refined geometrical pattern, obviously inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's limestone walls. Fifteen years later, during a radio show on WIOD, Parker talked about this favored building material:

> One example of a local material well suited to indigenous construction is limestone, which underlies practically the entire area. This material was early discovered by John Sewall to be of exceptional value in building roads. Could this limestone, sometimes known as Miami oolite or oolitic limestone, be pulverized, moistened, pressed into building blocks, dried in the sun, and utilized in a structure without further exterior surface treatment? The block could be designed in such a way as to adequately guard against water seepage and other problems of insulation and construction. It would be possible to derive a handsome pattern integral with the process. As this type of block would age and weather, a beautiful patina would develop which would require no further manicuring or maintenance treatment. The appearance of the building would improve with age rather than deteriorate as is customary.[25]

The structural steel columns were salvaged from a nearby building that was being demolished. Parker designed and hand-made the numerous built-ins throughout the home, many pieces of furniture—among them the dining room table and living room sofa, both poised upon keystone bases—and furnishings including rugs, bedspreads, light fixtures, and personal stationery. He estimated the cost of construction at $30,000 not counting his own approximately 6,000 man-hours of labor.[26]

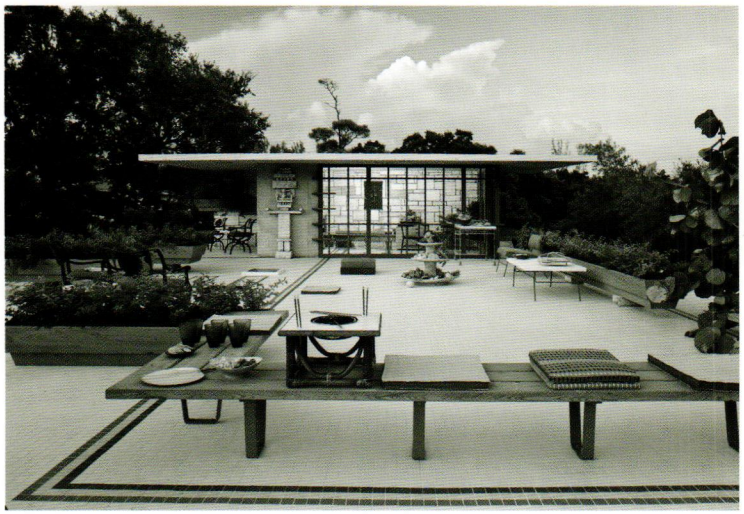
On November 18, 1953, Robert Moser, an architect who had apprenticed with Frank Lloyd Wright, wrote to Elizabeth Gordon regarding the 1954 Pace Setter:

> To you my humble congratulations for your presentation of the Pace Setter House. Seldom have I so wanted to know another Architect as I now wish I could meet and know Alfred Parker. This house shows a warmth and human quality seldom seen in this day of emotional sterility. This honest mastery of material and ornamentation as it relates to the very human experiences of family life is truly inspiring to me.[27]



South side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.





Left, bay side; *right,* sky garden with retreat (study/guest room); *facing,* Living area. Photos by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

It was in this house that the Parkers entertained Frank Lloyd Wright and his wife Olgivanna when Wright was in Miami in 1955 to give a lecture. While at Royal Road, they enjoyed the Bushmills Irish whiskey preferred by Wright. The ninety-year-old master noted that Parker's keystone was similar to the Japanese volcanic Oya-stone he had used in the famous Imperial Hotel. Wright also noted a unique detail of the stairs: Parker had sloped the riser to eliminate the standard nosing. While Parker was explaining his reasoning, Wright feigned tripping on the stairs, to the alarm of his wife and the Parkers, and, with a gleam in his eye, asked the younger man, "What would it look like if the world's most famous architect tripped and broke his neck on your stairs?"[28]

Parker sold Royal Road in June 1962, for $125,000, after which he pursued his next home—his fifth, and his third Pace Setter—in Gables Estates.

Parker's vision at Royal Road became a significant architectural achievement, a unified whole that expressed his philosophy of utility (the practical realities) and beauty (the intrinsic oftentimes romantic vision). It practiced what Parker preached about appropriate architecture—suitability to its site, use of native materials, serious respect for the climate, correct allocation of space, and full coordination of the interior and exterior architecture. Royal Road exists, but after a series of unsympathetic owners, little remains of Parker's architectural poetry.





Living area, with Parker's Great Dane. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.









Parker residence (Pace Setter 1954 / Royal Road). *Top left*, dining area; *top right*, retreat (study/guest room); *bottom left*, living and dining areas; *bottom right,* living area. Photos by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

STREATE RESIDENCE

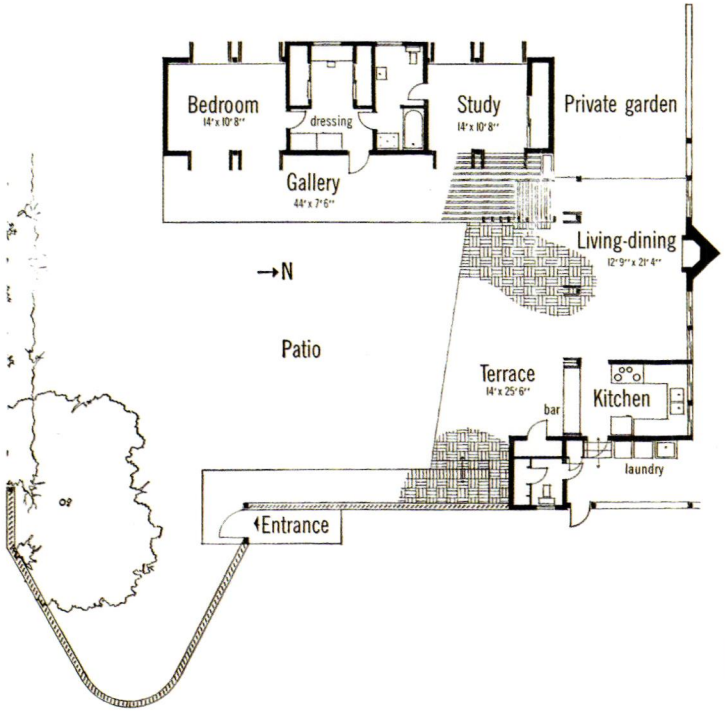
Miami, Florida ▪ 1950 ▪ Built project—extant



Above and facing: Terrace. Photos by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

House & Garden magazine featured this small but nonetheless spacious house in its August 1952 issue.[29] The title, "This House Lives Beyond Its Walls," was accurate. Slightly less than 1,500 square feet, the L-shaped wood-framed home almost entirely opened out onto the 90-by-120-foot lot, creating the feeling of a much larger area and effectually blurring the line between interior and exterior. One leg contained the living areas and the other the bedroom and study. A perimeter fence and hedgerow ensured privacy from the street and neighbors. Parker raised the bedroom wing up off the ground to provide for passive cooling. Jan Streate was the Home Fashion editor for the *Miami Daily News*, and wrote often about Parker's residential work in the Miami area.

Parker always pointed to the Streate residence as the precursor, in concept, to the Gayer residence, his mother's Jewel-in-the-Treetop, and his own residence Woodsong.



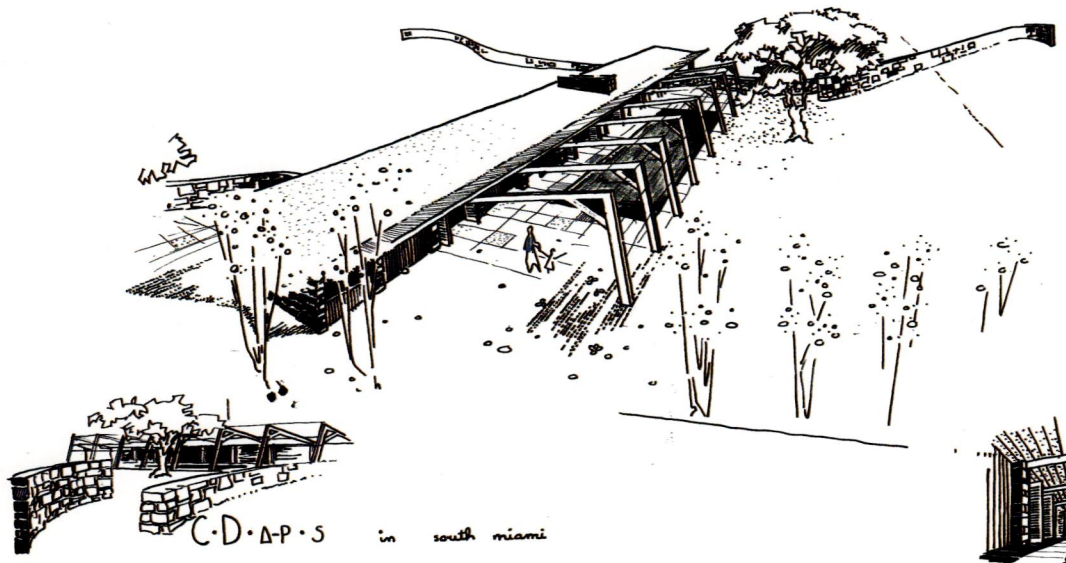
Floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



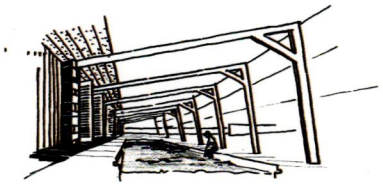
LITSEY RESIDENCE

South Miami, Florida ▪ 1952 ▪ Built project—extant

Richard Litsey, a pilot for Eastern Airlines, approached Parker about designing a home that Litsey himself would build for his family, including his wife and their two children. He had seen an article about Parker building his own home and was inspired to do the same. The two had known each other for a while, as the Litseys lived in an apartment in Coconut Grove near where Parker lived and worked. Parker not only drew up plans but incorporated in them some weathered scrap timber from an abandoned water tower he had recently received and now offered to the Litseys. The heavy Dade County hard pine timbers became the structural members for the house and the adjoining screen-enclosed pool and patio. The long, linear single-room-deep design, 15 by 84 feet, focused entirely out onto the screened pool. To funnel rain away from the pool and patio area, Parker created a butterfly roof with a soaring roof line. He bermed the earth up against the long solid rock wall on the side facing the street to create privacy from the road. The wall had high windows grouped together to allow for improved cross-ventilation. Its extreme efficiency in plan and structural simplicity were both obvious responses to owner construction and a tight budget.

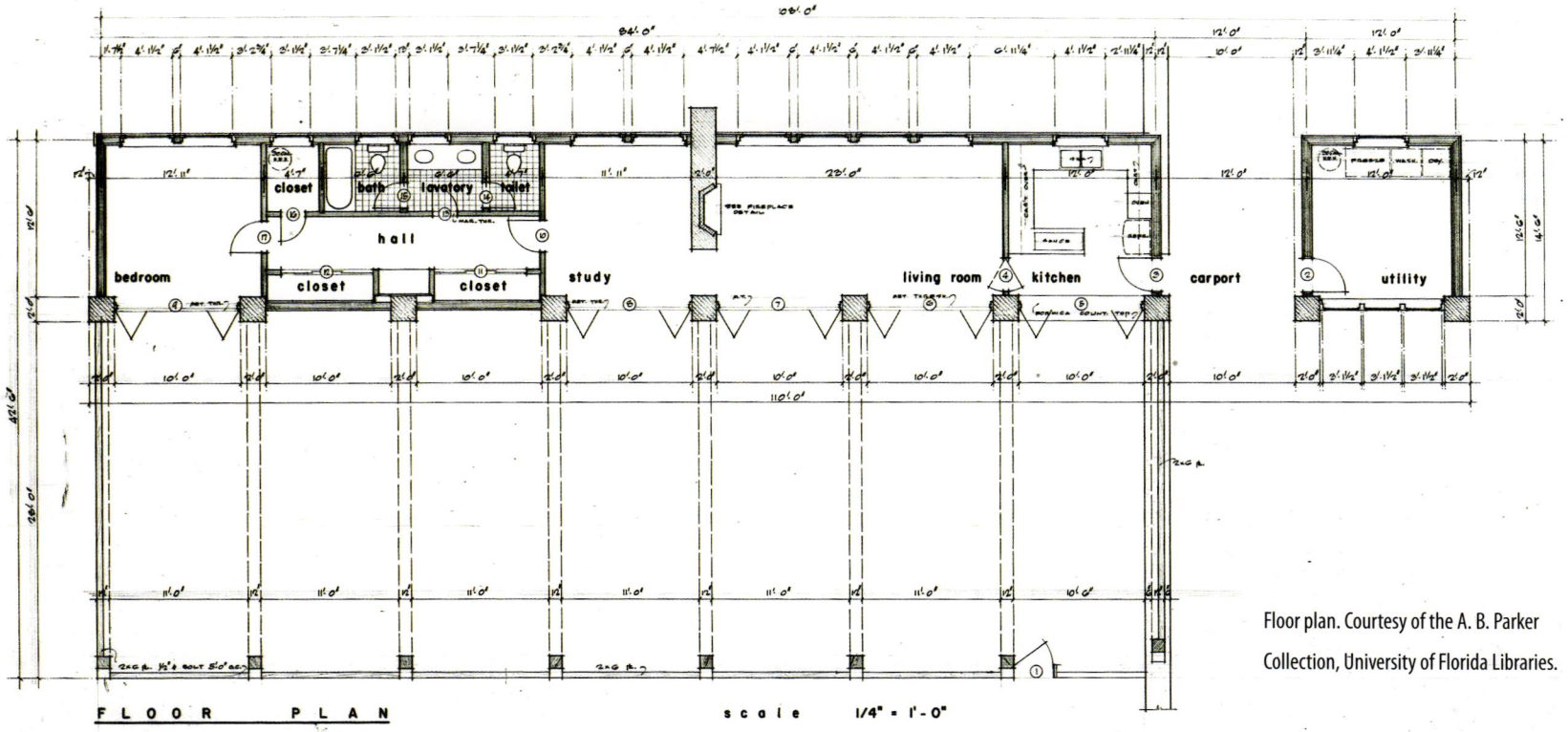


Preliminary design sketches. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Screened-in pool area. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.





Floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



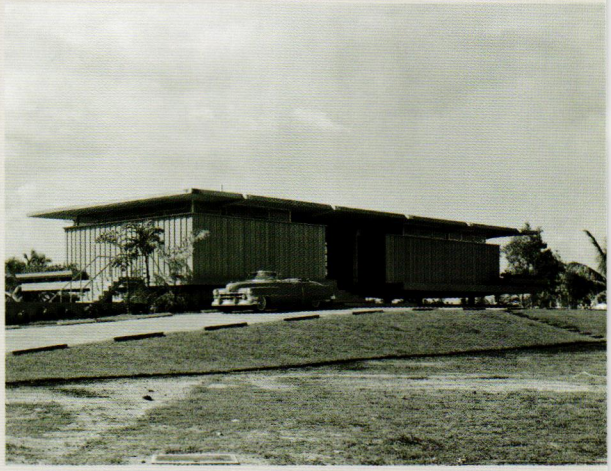
Living area. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Materials used were the Dade County pine beams, Florida tidewater red cypress board-and-batten exterior siding, cypress paneling for the interior walls, coral rock for the fireplace, and brick pavers for the floors. Persiana doors faced out toward the pool and patio. While the rooms are purposely and efficiently small, as in most Parker homes they feel remarkably larger because they are directly connected with the outside environment. Laura Tanner wrote of the house, in an article in *House Beautiful*, "There are no visual barriers to the sky, no barricades to stop the welcome breezes. Life is lived more out of doors than in, and here throngs of happy children come to swim, and entertainment is informal and relaxed."[30] The house was completed in ten months at a cost of less than $16,000. Four years later the Litseys added a third bedroom and second bath for approximately $5,500.

BAL HARBOUR CLUB

Bal Harbour, Florida ▪ 1952 ▪ Built project—demolished

Parker's straightforward solution to the requirements of this project—to permit club members to freely socialize while viewing boating activities—was accomplished by elevating the primary floor almost nine feet above the ground. This floor, roughly 25 by 100 feet, provided the necessary space for the club's functions in a clubroom, lounge area, galley (kitchen), and rest room. The abundant use of glass and persiana doors allowed the southern and western walls to completely open up and out onto a 10-foot-deep roofed balcony overlooking the club's own private cove, just off the Intracoastal Waterway in Biscayne Bay. Vertical one-by-ten lapped cypress boards were used on the northern and eastern walls, where views weren't optimal. Constructed by Miami Beach general contractor Rodgers Zurwelle Whittaker for approximately $65,000, the building was primarily constructed of poured-in-place exposed concrete and was designed structurally and conceptually to withstand hurricane and tidal forces—another reason for elevating the primary functions.



Land side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Interior. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

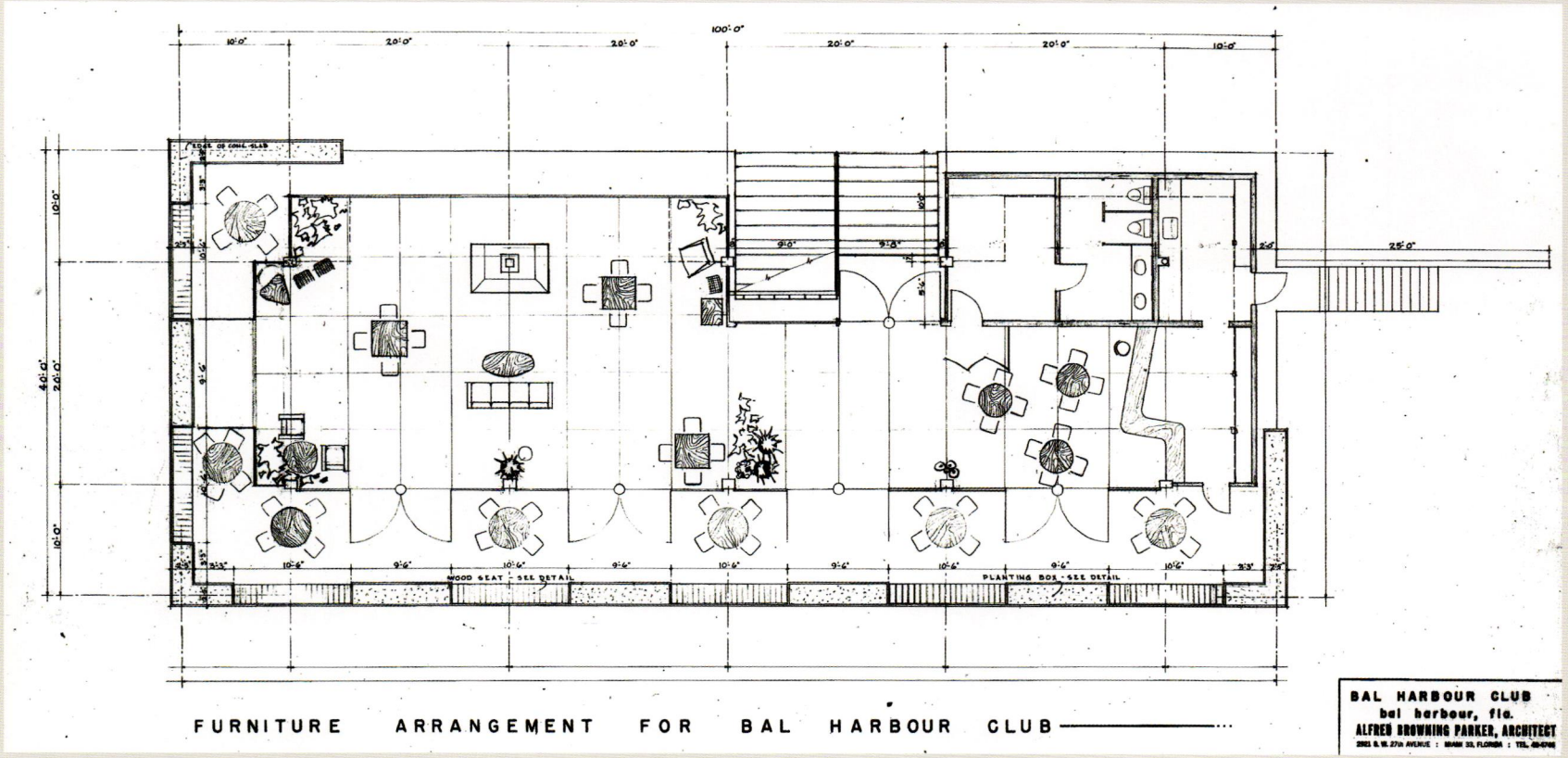


The persiana doors were later replaced with sliding glass doors when air-conditioning was added. Originally only a small service room and a men's rest room were constructed on grade below the elevated floor. Later some further enclosure occurred when additional storage was needed. The building's plan was based on a 5-foot-square grid. A freestanding fireplace, sheathed in copper, graced the clubroom.

After its opening in 1954, the simplicity of the building's design brought Parker both recognition and two separate design awards. Unfortunately, its use diminished over the years, and eventually it could not survive the escalating value of the site. It was demolished in 2001.

Facing: Water side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Main (elevated) level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



FRIEDMAN RESIDENCE

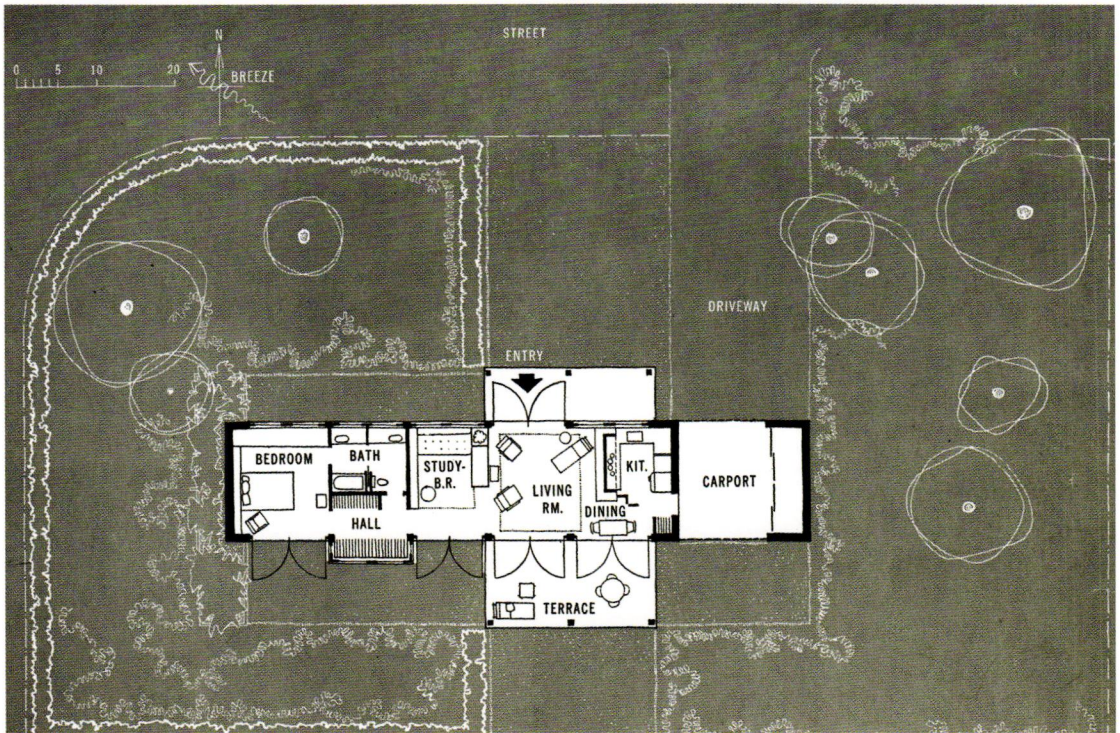
Coconut Grove, Florida ▪ 1953 ▪ Built project—extant



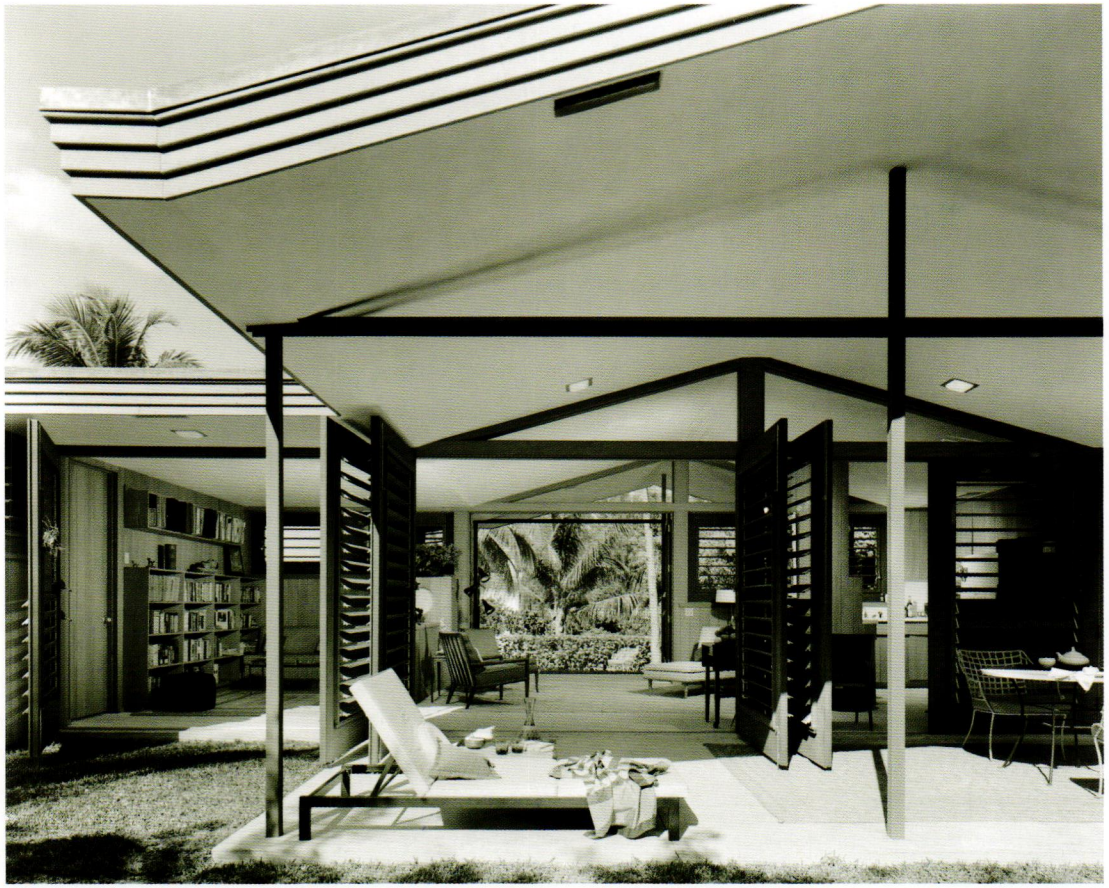
South side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Featured in a *Miami Daily News* article titled "A Roof For the Walls That Open,"[31] the house for Bert Friedman in Coconut Grove is another example of Parker's expertise in small-house design. "It just about reaches the ultimate in making plush living quarters out of a breezeway," the *News* declared. Built by Miami contractor E. T. Rourke for less than $20,000, the rectangular 850-square-foot compact home is an essay in maximizing the minimum.

Friedman, a bachelor, worked as a court reporter in Miami City Hall. He requested, according to Parker's initial program notes, "a simple easily maintained one level home which would address his needs, possessions and interests: books, hi-fi equipment, a large record collection, a shaded terrace, a place to entertain, a carport and a guest room for the occasional overnight guest."[32]



Floor plan. Reprinted with permission of *House Beautiful* © 1956.





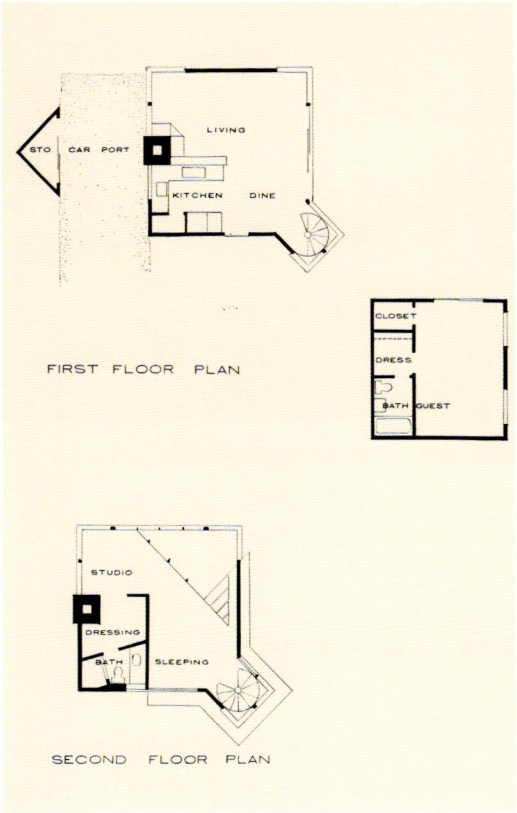
North (street) side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Terrace. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

The home turns its back to the road and is oriented on the small rectangular quarter-acre corner lot to take full advantage of the existing trees and prevailing breezes from the south. The one-room-deep house's entire south-facing wall is a series of persiana doors that, when open, allow the interior to expand into the exterior, becoming one space. With its concrete floors, exposed concrete blocks, louvered windows, and cypress paneling inside and out, the entire opus is a maintenance-free affordable solution. *House Beautiful* summed it up as "quite a big little house for its cost."[33]

GAYER RESIDENCE

Coconut Grove, Florida ▪ 1953 ▪ Built project—extant



First- and second-level floor plans. Courtesy of *Florida Architecture* magazine.

Facing: Main house. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Florida Architecture magazine said of the Gayer residence, "Here is a house of wood, stone and glass, skillfully wrought to form a comfortable and inspiring background for living and working close to the ever changing landscape."[34] Don Gayer, a bachelor, insurance executive by profession, with painting as a hobby, requested of Alfred Browning Parker a large living room, small kitchen, one bedroom with a shower, a carport, storage for yard equipment, and an outdoor terrace. He also requested provision for a future guest house with a bedroom and bath. Parker's design is a direct result of Gayer's expressed needs, his limited budget, and the diminutive (less than a quarter acre) wooded site in Coconut Grove just off Main Highway. A *House Beautiful* article on the project was titled "A Square Is Not a Box,"[35] which couldn't have been more true in this case. As Frank Lloyd Wright preached the destruction of the box, Parker took the advice to heart and created an explosion of space—or, as *House Beautiful* often tended to say in connection with Parker's work, an "adventure in space"—where exterior and interior are so intertwined that the transition is sometimes hard to fathom. Central to this work by Parker was the use of corner windows.

Conceptually the Gayer residence can be regarded as an advancement of the concept of Parker's third home in Rocks and Short Pines and the Streate residence, and an early predecessor to the further refined Jewel-in-the-Treetop, built for his mother on the lot adjoining Gayer's, and to Parker's own Woodsong only two miles away. After the Parker's Rocks and Short Pines residence and the Streate residence, the next three were all compositions of interconnected sheltering cubes of differing functions. The Gayer residence is the unification of two cubes by an exterior terrace under the shade of a giant banyan tree. The two volumes had separate purposes—the two-story cube with 21-foot sides was Gayer's, and the slightly smaller cube with 18-foot sides was for his guests.

In February 1954 the bids for construction came in,[36] at $17,000, which allowed the construction of both cubes. The house was primarily glass and Florida tidewater red cypress wood, with a coral rock fireplace. The oak treads of a circular staircase were supported by a large pine log. In the early 1960s Parker modified the original design at Gayer's request, adding a larger kitchen in place of the carport.





Mitered corner window. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Gayer penned his recollections:

> Good design in a home is a living investment. Like the pleasing composition of a painting, it is always with you. At breakfast the morning sun creeps through the corner windows and makes interesting shadows on the walls. At dusk, from the patio, the roof angles have the abstract excitement of a Japanese woodcut. There is never a moment of the day or night when some corner of the house is not a pleasing pattern. Like most worthwhile things, good design in a house is not always cheap. Perhaps, the house Alfred Parker designed for me cost more than the traditional project, two-bedroom, two-bath home of the same square footage, but I have that intangible something, living satisfaction. Being an amateur painter myself, I know the best efforts of an artist—painter, sculptor, architect, are obtained when they are least restricted. Leave an artist alone and his creative genius will ferment and explode into something exciting and different. Therefore I left Parker alone. Take my living needs and design me a house to fulfill them—but remember the budget. The result is remarkable—on a small city lot with a dense growth of giant bamboo, with very little money, he has created an unusual structure that sings of beauty and begs to be lived in.[37]

Gayer's home survived the devastating category-5 Hurricane Andrew in 1992 relatively unscathed. He later recalled that a friend had told him he ought to thank God. Gayer told his friend, "I don't know about thanking God; I think I'll call Al Parker and thank him."[38]



Living area. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Alfred Browning Parker, 1953. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Emerging Work
1954–1962

I am an architect because I have to build. Never does one hit the mark squarely, but what a thrill in trying.

- **Parker to Frank Lloyd Wright, October 12, 1955**

Parker's fourth and fifth homes—the Royal Road house in Coconut Grove (*House Beautiful*'s Pace Setter 1954) and the house in Gables Estates (*House Beautiful*'s Pace Setter 1965) that he designed and built roughly ten years later—generally distinguish his emerging years. While Parker's practice still included the design of speculative production housing for real estate developers and builders, he was more frequently commissioned to design custom homes. And the quality of his opportunities increased with the celebrity gained from his Royal Road house, for the most part thanks to Elizabeth Gordon and *House Beautiful*, which not only devoted the November 1953 issue entirely to the Royal Road opus but in the first four issues of 1954 featured articles on specific components of the home. Before Royal Road, Parker's work was almost entirely limited to South Florida. Once *House Beautiful* published the Pace Setter 1954 feature,

Parker's opportunities expanded nationally, with clients coming from the Carolinas, Maryland, New York, Missouri, California, and even Mexico.

This segment of Parker's career was arguably his most productive, in quantity as well as quality. His residential designs ranged from smaller homes, well designed and crafted, including the Ewing, Marko, Kitchens, Hoggarth, Miller, and Fardig residences, to larger and bolder expressions including the Mass, Cohen, and Manus residences in Palm Beach, Parker's own Royal Road and Gables Estates residences, his mother's Jewel-in-the-Treetop, the Groves, Hayward, and Ludwig residences in the Bahamas, the two Good residences in Florida and in Michigan, and the geometrically interesting Fulp, Epstein, and Floyd residences. In Fort Lauderdale for W. T. Collins he designed a rather understated stucco and white-tile-roofed residence complete with a boatport, allowing the owners' boat to pull in off the Cordelia River and right into the home, as a car would pull into a carport. A few years later in the same neighborhood Parker designed the Lake residence—a spread-out collage of interconnected octagonal forms on a prominent site overlooking the New River. Some of the more pivotal unrealized projects were the visionary Mayan-esque Garza residence in Mexico City, three tropical retreats—for John Cameron Swayze on Île St. Martin, for Robert Gervais on Tahiti, and for Robert Graham on Andros Island—and the geometrically complex but engaging Leopold, Kohler, Haight, Waddell, and Tench residences. And all the while Parker retained a relatively small office of draftsmen to maintain a high level of both design creativity and quality control.

His commercial work increased appreciably as well. The Alliance Machine Company, Cloverleaf Lanes, Bazaar International, General Capital, and the PGA clubhouse were significant projects that most likely would have previously eluded Parker's office. He was also a part of the creation of an entire city—Freeport, on Grand Bahama Island. For his clients in Freeport he designed the majority of the original buildings, including the airport (twice, since the first burned to the ground shortly after completion). A relationship began with Flagler Federal Savings and Loan, bringing dozens of bank projects to Parker's office over the next twenty-five years from Flagler Federal and other banking institutions. The new sanctuary for Hope Lutheran Church was the first of six religious projects. And Parker remodeled a historic movie house in Coconut Grove into a theater and later, for the same client, designed a multipurpose theater project, unrealized, on the Galt Ocean Mile in Fort Lauderdale.

Parker would often design furniture for clients' homes, but this period of his career brought him opportunities to design furniture for the mass market as well.[1] And with his celebrity and the success with

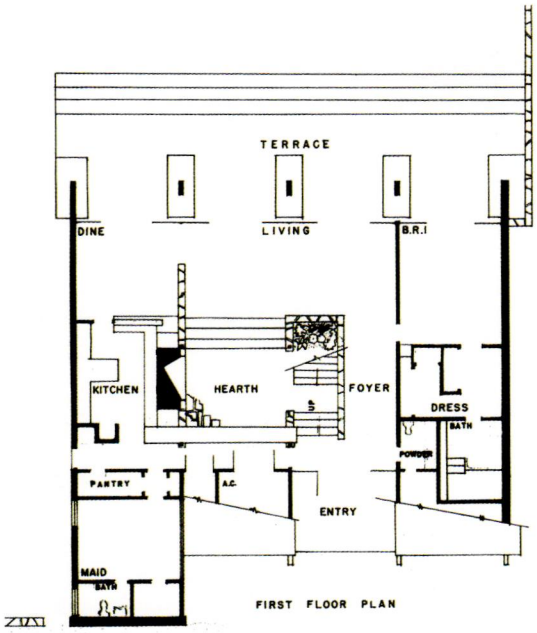
House Beautiful, other magazines retained his services for their own programs—*Popular Mechanics* hired him to design what would be advertised as a Minimum Maintenance house, and for *Woman's Day* he was commissioned to design prototypical vacation homes.

During this period Parker's architecture continued to evolve and mature, remaining true to his tenet of conjoined utility and beauty. Notably more refined than his earlier work, it showed a growing confidence in the frequent use of better materials such as locally quarried natural stone, Honduran mahogany, ceramic tile, Ludowici-Celadon wall and roof tile, and travertine marble.

■ ■ ■

The more years that I accumulate, the more I see that it is not so difficult to have ideas about the shape of the world as one would have it, but rather the difficulty lies in achieving the reality of tangible form for one's ideas. You must find this true also as you evolve a monthly issue with clarity and direction. All of us desire to bring closer our ideals and the reality of our work. Instincts, intuitions, ambitions, experience, training, intelligence, all of these things contribute their measure. The spirit of the thing is perhaps its most important ingredient.

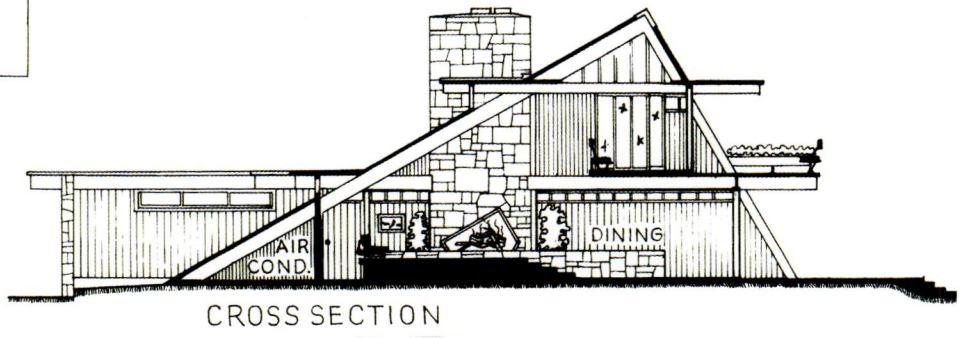
■ **Parker to Elizabeth Gordon, December 28, 1959**



First- and second-level floor plans. Courtesy of *Florida Architecture* magazine.



Across the pool. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Cross-section. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

Leonard, the Masses' only child, recalled that the finished home was "almost spiritual" and, once completed, was immediately revered.[4]

The property on which the Mass residence was built, at the southeast end of Everglades Island Drive, afforded a remarkable 270-degree vista across Lake Worth. The lot was rather large by Florida standards, almost one acre. It was essentially flat and offered almost 400 feet of water frontage. The house was sited 45 degrees off the north-south axis, with the private (water) side facing southeast toward the prevailing breezes and open to the incredible views.

Parker designed a relatively small home for the Mass family. However, because of the vertical openness, interior transparency, and horizontal extension to the outside, Parker's design felt much larger. Predominant throughout the interior and exterior was the honest, straightforward expression of the home's structure, which was based on the 30-60-90-degree triangle. The plan was organized geometrically on a 4-foot-square grid, with the five dominant triangular structural steel frame elements spaced at 16-foot intervals. The upper or mezzanine level was supported by and cantilevered out from these structural elements, which lent the appearance of floating in air. Despite the commanding structural elements, the home had a considerable feeling of airiness and lightness.



Southwest side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

The ground floor level, only four steps up from the yard outside, contained essentially one large open space off the entry foyer for living and dining areas. The more secluded master bedroom suite was also off the foyer. Parker elevated a portion of the living area up four more steps, creating an intimate and controlled sitting area focused on the fireplace. This hearth area was where the stair to the upper level started. Maid's quarters were located between the kitchen and carport, with the laundry room at the end of the carport. On the water side the home was completely opened to the view, and a simple terrace stepped down carelessly to the lakeside lawn. The upper level contained a second bedroom and full bathroom,

above the master bedroom, and a study above the kitchen, linked by an open mezzanine over the living area. A balcony overlooking the lake ran the entire length of the mezzanine level and opened it, like the lower level, totally to the outside.

The materials Parker used were few but enduring—concrete, ceramic tile, terrazzo, quarried keystone, Florida tidewater red cypress, glass, steel, and copper roofing. Parker designed not only the house but also the built-in elements, occasional furniture, light fixtures, pool, and landscaping. The triangular motif was carried through in many of the elements and details such as the fireplace opening and light fixtures. Thanks to the clients' unusual but unwavering confidence in their architect, the house "demonstrates a unity in all of its parts, furnishings and landscaping because of this single design responsibility," said a feature in the 1957 issue of *Florida Architecture* magazine.[5]



Northwest side (front entry) with carport. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

The general contractor was Butler & Oenbrink, the firm that later built Mass's Bazaar International project.

Once it became evident that the Masses needed a greater capability to entertain large groups, Parker expanded the existing kitchen in 1961. The new 250-square-foot bay, extending the house 16 feet to the northeast toward the pool, was done in the same vernacular and grammar as the original—a logical and seamless solution.

Parker became a faithful customer of Stylon, using their tile in many of his projects, his mother's home in Coconut Grove among them. Mass also returned to Parker when he required an architect for his business. Parker designed a showroom and warehouse building for Stylon Tile of Miami in 1955 and exhibit sets that the Stylon Corporation used in photography for their print advertising in 1959 and 1961. And Parker and Mass collaborated on Bazaar International and Trylon Tower, Mass's commercial real estate development venture in Riviera Beach.

Unfortunately, the Mass family lived in their dream house less than ten years, as Mass's real estate development hobby led to financial troubles. In a futile attempt to stave off bankruptcy, they sold the home in 1963. A subsequent owner used it only seasonally, and it came into serious disrepair. It met with the wrecking ball in 1977 without fanfare when the fourth owner desired a larger home on this prime piece of

property. Interestingly, a later client of Parker's, who had obviously seen the extensive press coverage and become smitten, in 1963 built an approximate replica of the home on a lakefront site in Ladue, Missouri, just west of St. Louis.

Reflecting upon his youth growing up in this masterwork, the Masses' son Leonard recollected that "the home had wonderful arms that wrapped around you whenever you were there. Al Parker had a vision . . . translation of stone, woods and metals into something soft, gentle, warm and welcoming."[6]



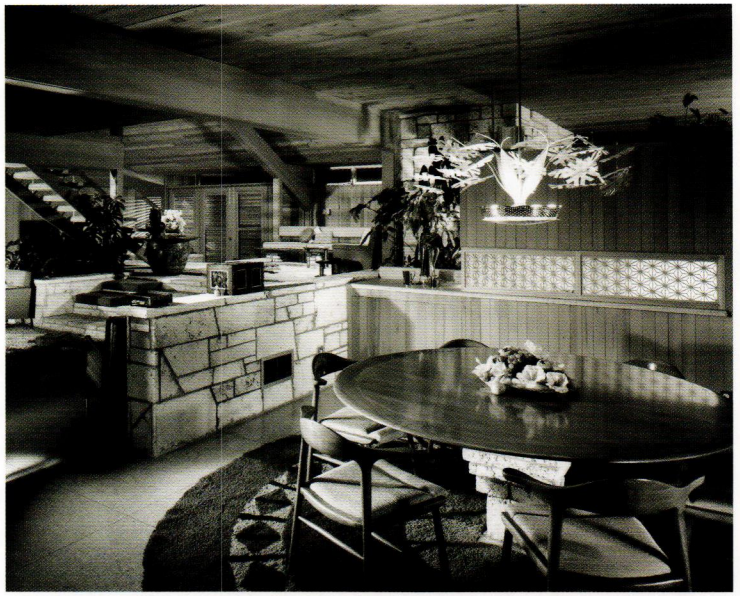
Southeast (rear) side.
Photo by Ezra Stoller
© Esto.













Mass residence. *Facing, top left,* mezzanine balcony; *facing, bottom left,* entrance, from carport; *facing, right,* mezzanine; *above left,* living area with stair to mezzanine; *above,* dining area; *left,* living area, with hearth area at rear. Photos by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

EWING RESIDENCE

Coconut Grove, Florida ▪ 1955 ▪ Built project—extant



Exterior from Main Highway, looking northwest. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Facing: Living area. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

When the diminutive and widowed Dora Ewing retired from Palatine, Illinois, to the Coconut Grove area of Miami, she asked Parker to design a modest home that would allow her both to entertain and to pursue her interest in ceramics. Parker's solution fulfilled her requirements, as well as responding to the site they had selected together—a corner property on a relatively busy street. He lifted the living areas up off the ground into the lush tropical tree canopy to secure privacy and to better capture the natural breezes. The smaller base contained an open carport, plus an enclosed space for Dora Ewing's hobby. Between grade and the elevated main level Parker designed a switchback ramp. Halfway up the ramp, at the turning, he located a 15-foot-square landing and called it a tree veranda—a place for Mrs. Ewing to pause as she ascended the ramp, and a place for entertaining within the trees.

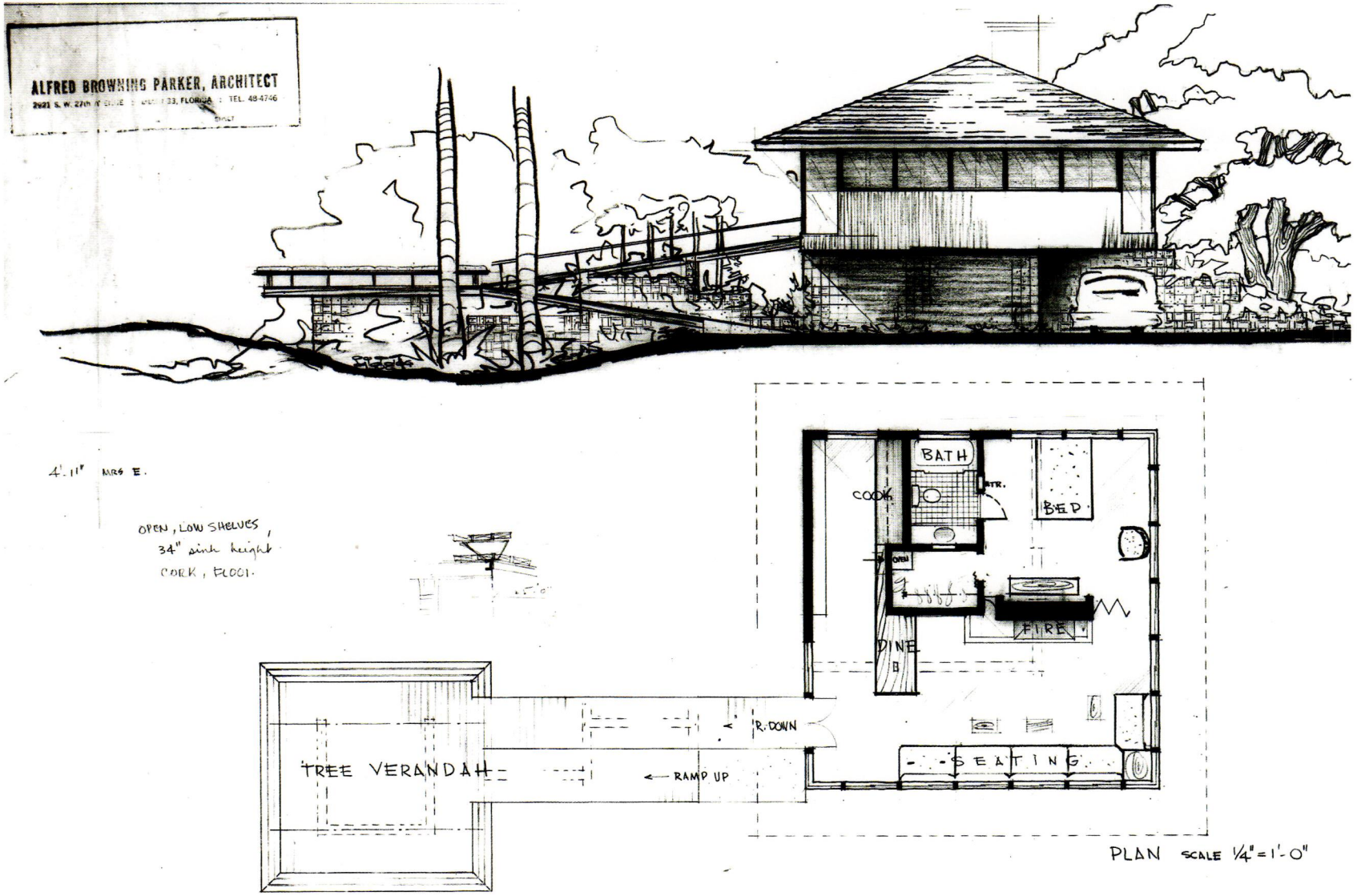
Built in 1956 by one of Parker's favored builders, Albert Hallquist, the 26-foot-square home cost $16,000. It was featured both in *Look* magazine and in *House Beautiful*, which presented the home as "Palatial Living in a One-Room House."[7]

A broad wood-shake hipped roof shelters and shades the operable horizontal ribbon windows and cypress-clad walls. For the fixed vertical corner windows Parker installed butted glass. Frank Lloyd Wright had used this detail as a mechanism to dissolve the corner of the box, expanding the interior space outward. The supporting walls below were of simple natural gray concrete masonry units turned on edge.

Other than the bathroom and closet core, the entire house is open in plan. The central copper-faced fireplace is the primary focal point, around which revolves the various functions—kitchen, dining, living, and sleeping—creating a simple and efficient circumstance. A ceramic mosaic floor and walls of Florida tidewater red cypress boards of random widths were the predominant materials. Parker designed built-in furnishings that he subtly but deliberately conjoined into a single piece through the entire house.

The Ewing house was designed for a single person, had one sheet of preliminaries, one sheet of working drawings, and one piece of built-in furniture that flowed throughout the one-bedroom, one-bath home—"a sort of oneness with the nature of things," as Parker often pointed out.[8]





Floor plan and elevation. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

Guy Henle wrote in *House Beautiful* about the Ewing design,

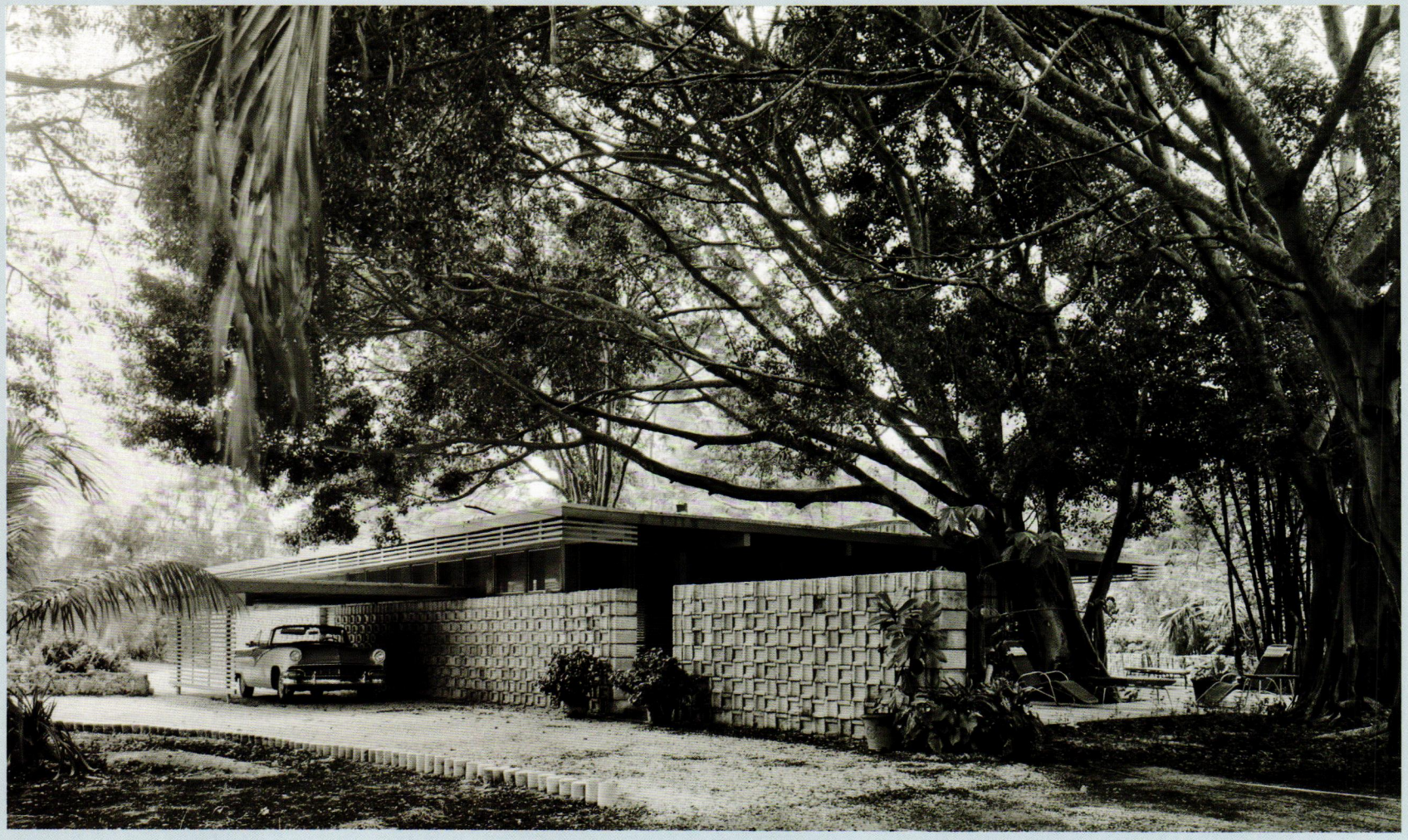
How simple the plan for this house, but how complete, with everything needed for one person. The life of ease enjoyed here could well have been called palatial 100 years ago. Looking into the living area, you quickly sense how rich life can be, even in so small a space. To live here among the treetops, amidst such beauty, is indeed palatial, even as nobility reckoned it.[9]

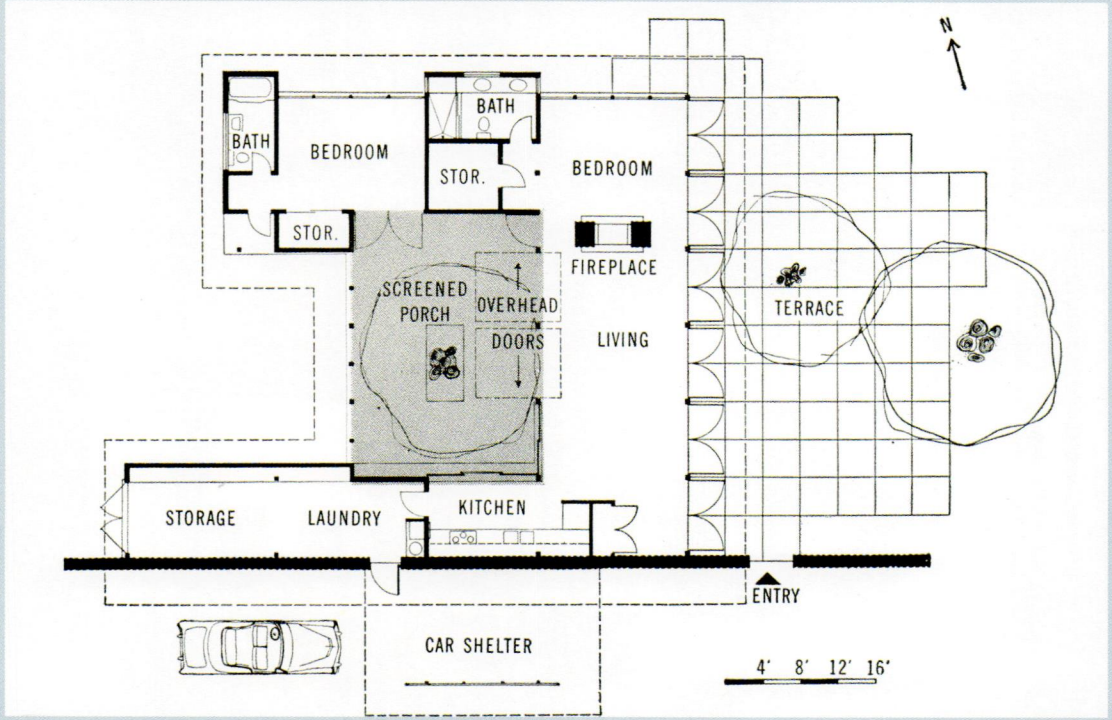


Exterior, with tree veranda in foreground. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

MARKO RESIDENCE

Coconut Grove, Florida ▪ 1955 ▪ Built project—extant





Floor plan. Reprinted with permission of *House Beautiful* © 1956.

House Beautiful's November 1956 feature article on the Marko house started out, "This home . . . proves that, in America, no man need be common, no life need be ordinary."[10] The Markos approached Parker in 1955 after seeing the *House Beautiful* issue featuring Parker's own Royal Road house and reading the article contained in that issue titled "How to Build the House You Can't Afford." Mrs. Marko was quoted as saying that the title of that article was "the most provocative sentence I've ever read." Parker designed this economical and beautiful home—in reality half house, half garden—for a working couple. Samuel, a house painter, and Ann Lee, a registered nurse, both sacrificed so they could attain their two-bedroom, two-bath dream house. The home is truly an exercise in eradicating the line between architecture and the warm tropical environment of South Florida. Parker utilized sliding screens similar to Japanese shoji, hinged persiana doors, and pivoting tilt-up doors to allow most of the rooms to completely open to the outdoors. The thick opaque linear wall that shields the home from the busy street was made of weathered concrete

Facing: Street side. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

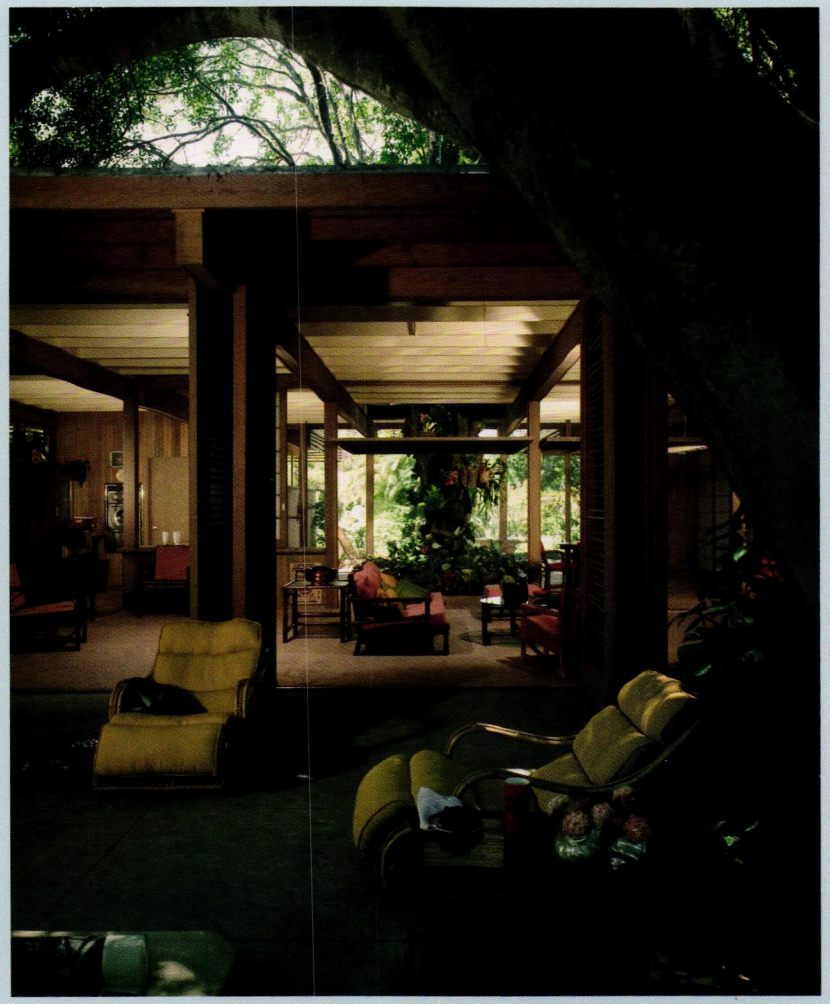


blocks. Parker recalled discovering these: "A large number of concrete blocks had been abandoned on the site for many years. They were weathered heavily, some had fungus growing on and in them. They were beautiful. Naturally, I left them as they were and even made certain the masons did not clean them."[11] He had these blocks installed in an unusual manner, with the ends exposed and alternated, providing an interesting composition in pattern and texture not usually associated with ordinary concrete block.

The home was built for $22,000, not a small undertaking for a couple with a combined yearly income of $6,000. But, as Parker recalled, "It was an essential part of the problem that economy should rule both in construction and in maintenance. However, it was not the intention of the owners to compromise their desire for a handsome, spacious, well-proportioned place in which to live."[12]

The trees on the site were deliberately integrated into the overall composition, affording protection from the sun, rain, and heat, all the while contributing to the experience of the intimate relationship between architecture and nature. Parker's logical and intuitive planning of the house created distinct zones on the property—house, tree room, terrace, garden—where the Markos could enjoy daily living in accordance with the tropical nature of South Florida. Thus the trees became a living asset to the entire opus. The kitchen opened into both the interior living area and the exterior tree room.

Terrace. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Living area. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

COHEN RESIDENCE

Palm Beach, Florida ▪ 1956 ▪ Built project—demolished

The Cohen residence was both quietly compact and spatially provocative. Why Abe Leo Cohen retained Parker as his architect has been lost to memory, but it quite possibly could have been because of the recently completed Mass residence on Everglades Island, approximately five miles to the south. Cohen's residential waterfront lot in Palm Beach was approximately a half acre, with Lake Worth to the west. Parker created multiple levels to provide for spatial separation while keeping the living areas open, allowing for natural ventilation by the prevailing breezes as well as opening the house to the expansive vistas across



East (entry) side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

the water. The plan was basically T-shaped. The leg of the T, parallel with the waterfront, contained the primary living area. The top of the T was two-story. The lowest level, four steps (24 inches) down from the living area, contained a bedroom and bathroom for the two grown sons, an open den area, the kitchen, another open area designated for dining, and a carport with a maid's room on the far side. The upper level, 6 feet 8 inches above the main living area, contained the master bedroom and bathroom suite with a cantilevered sun deck.

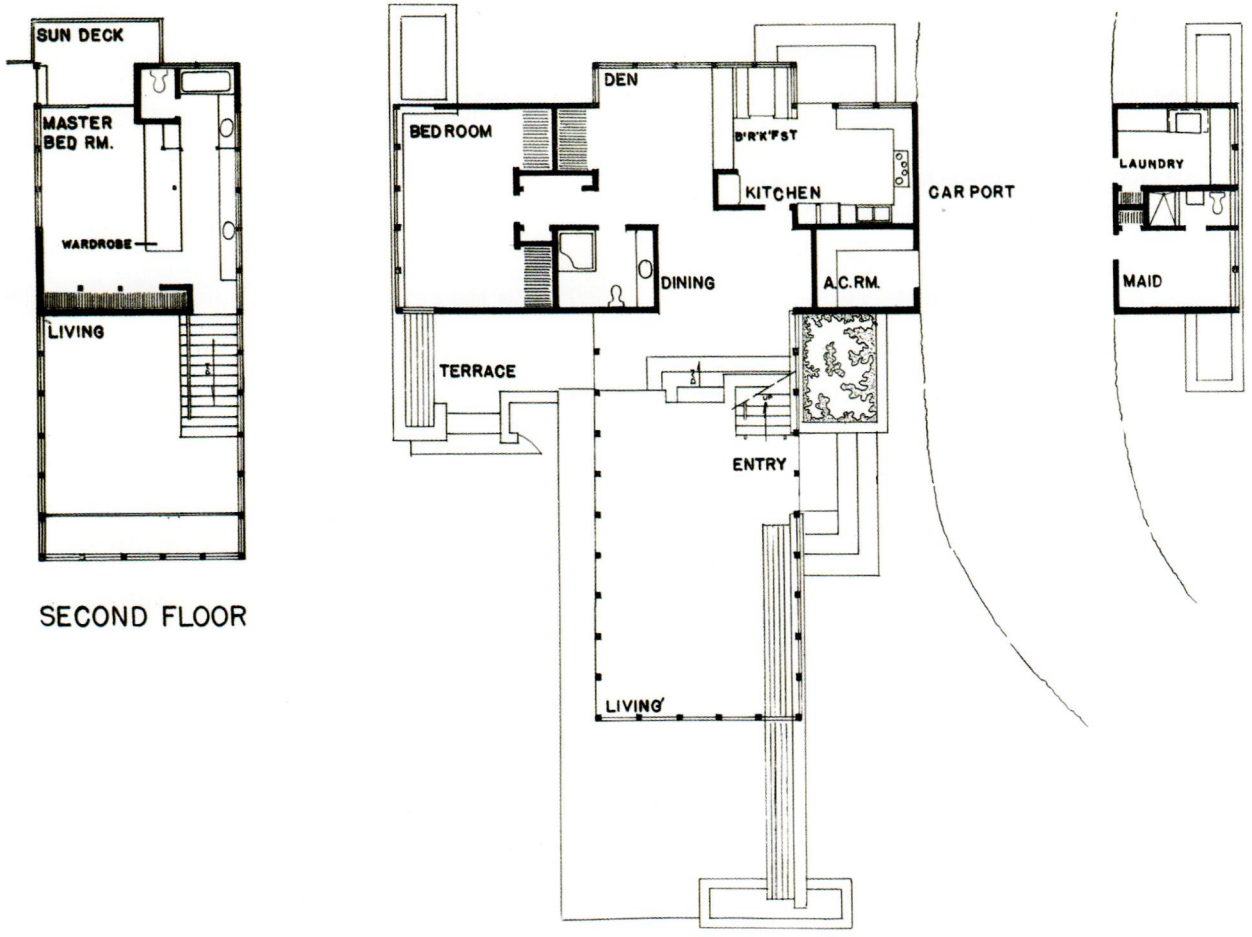
The design was a symphony of rectangular forms and natural materials—quarried and cut keystone anchoring the house to the ground, lapped horizontal cypress boards inside and out, banded windows and doors, flat overhanging roof planes engaging the human-scale volumes.

The living space was exceedingly open, with banded windows and doors on all three exposed sides. Facing Lake Worth, a 32-foot-long built-in bench seat, half indoors and half out, ran from the entry door along the back wall of the living area and continued visually through the exterior wall of glass out onto the raised patio, terminating in a stone planter.

The almost-two-story-high entrance foyer featured a large built-in wall mural designed and installed in late July 1957 by artist Eugene Masselink,[13] an apprentice and personal secretary to Frank Lloyd Wright. Masselink's one-of-a-kind design, executed in paint and gold leaf on cypress plywood panels, was an abstract expression of the exuberant forms found in the tropical foliage of South Florida.



Entrance foyer, with Eugene Masselink mural in situ. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



First- and second-level floor plans. Courtesy of *Florida Architecture* magazine.

The Cohen residence was built by the Wiggs & Maale Construction Company. According to records at the Palm Beach building department, the 3,526-square-foot home was built at a cost of $65,000. After Abe Cohen died, his widow sold the home in 1980. The new owners, obviously valuing the property in the affluent Palm Beach area more than the house, tore it down in October 1980.[14] Cohen's widow had the foresight to remove the Masselink mural prior to the impending demolition and shipped it to the Frank Lloyd Wright Archives in Scottsdale, Arizona, where it is presently held.[15]

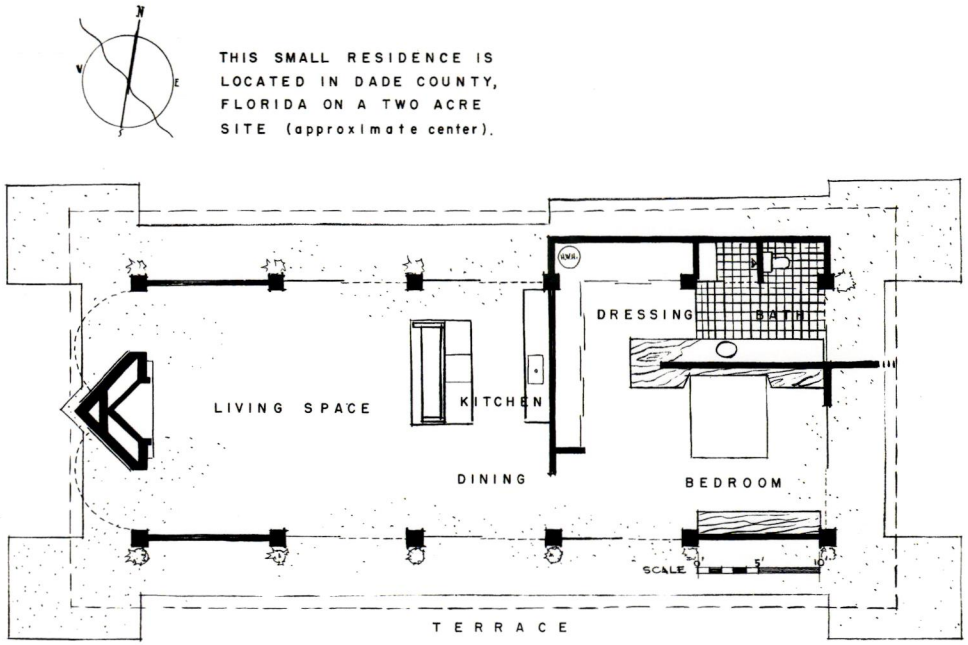


Living area. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

KITCHENS RESIDENCE

South Dade, Florida ▪ 1955 ▪ Built project—demolished

While their house was being built, Russ Kitchens kept saying to his wife, "This is the way to live."[16] So they named the house Tha-Wa-Ta, southern slang for "the way to." Parker designed a gem of a small house, a simple rectangular structure containing a living-dining area, kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom. The Kitchens meant to live within their means—he was a special delivery postman—and Parker's nearly-1,250-square-foot design was built in 1957 by builder Charles Thomas for $19,600. The *Miami Herald* wrote it up in a December 1958 titled "It's Special Delivery by an Architect."[17] *House Beautiful* devoted an article to the house the month before, calling it "The Little Palace of a Postman."[18]



Floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



South (rear) side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

The Kitchens wanted their home to be elevated—something not easily attainable in South Florida—so they brought fill material onto their five-acre site and spread it out to create an upper terrace on which to place the house. The materials used were simple and low maintenance. The home was set on a concrete slab that extended beyond the four walls, forming a perimeter walkway and patio sheltered by a low-sloped roof. The six wood trusses supporting the roof were exposed to the interior, with the connections emphasized with ornament, and were supported by piers consisting of alternating masonry column blocks and thin concrete blocks, much as in the Marko residence designed a year earlier. The exterior walls were either vertical cypress board-and-batten or sliding glass doors. The living area focused on a masonry fireplace with operable wall panels on either side that, when opened with the sliding glass doors, created almost a parklike pavilion. The orientation of the home, its sheltering roof, and its plentiful glass worked together to provide passive cooling in the summer and heat in the winter.



Kitchens residence. West side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Bedroom. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Living area. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



ALLIANCE MACHINE COMPANY

Coconut Grove, Florida ▪ 1957 ▪ Built project—demolished



Street front facing Bayshore Drive. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Facing: Building corner. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

In 1957 the Alliance Machine Company, an Ohio-based manufacturer of heavy industrial and materials-handling equipment, approached Alfred Browning Parker to design a facility for international and domestic engineering and development as "their gateway to South America."[19] Located on Silver Bluff, a site sloping toward Biscayne Bay on South Bay Shore Drive in Coconut Grove, the two-story, 11,500-square-foot reinforced concrete building contained spaces for administration and sales, as well as a 35-by-85-foot drafting room for their design, research, and engineering division.


THE ALLIANCE MACHINE COMPANY



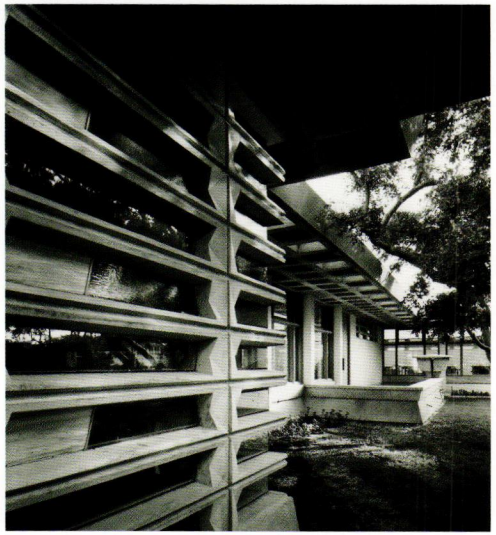
Detail view looking towards Biscayne Bay. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Construction was essentially completed in May of 1958, and the award-winning building opened to wide acclaim. But the escalating real estate market made its demolition inevitable. Less than fifteen years later, in February 1973, it made way for a high-rise condominium project. Parker tried to save it from the wrecking ball by showing how the existing building could easily be incorporated into the design of the condominium, but the developers failed to recognize the need or validity of such an exercise.[20]

The building's window walls were constructed of 48-by-12-by-10-inch precast concrete block units with integral glass inserts, both clear and colored. Parker noted, "A strong sense of order is achieved by establishing a module for the construction of the building."[21] For the wide overhanging roof and the upper-level floor, reinforced concrete was poured using 2-foot-square paraffin-coated cardboard boxes, a cost-saving idea of Parker's: "The Alliance Machine Company building . . . is built on a module derived from the size of cardboard boxes which were used for concrete forms."[22] The entire building's structure was designed to allow for an additional two floors to be constructed in the future, if needed.

Domestically scaled, harmonious with the site, and satisfying its function, the relatively inexpensive facility was built by the Avant Construction Company, a Miami-based general contractor, at a cost of $180,000.

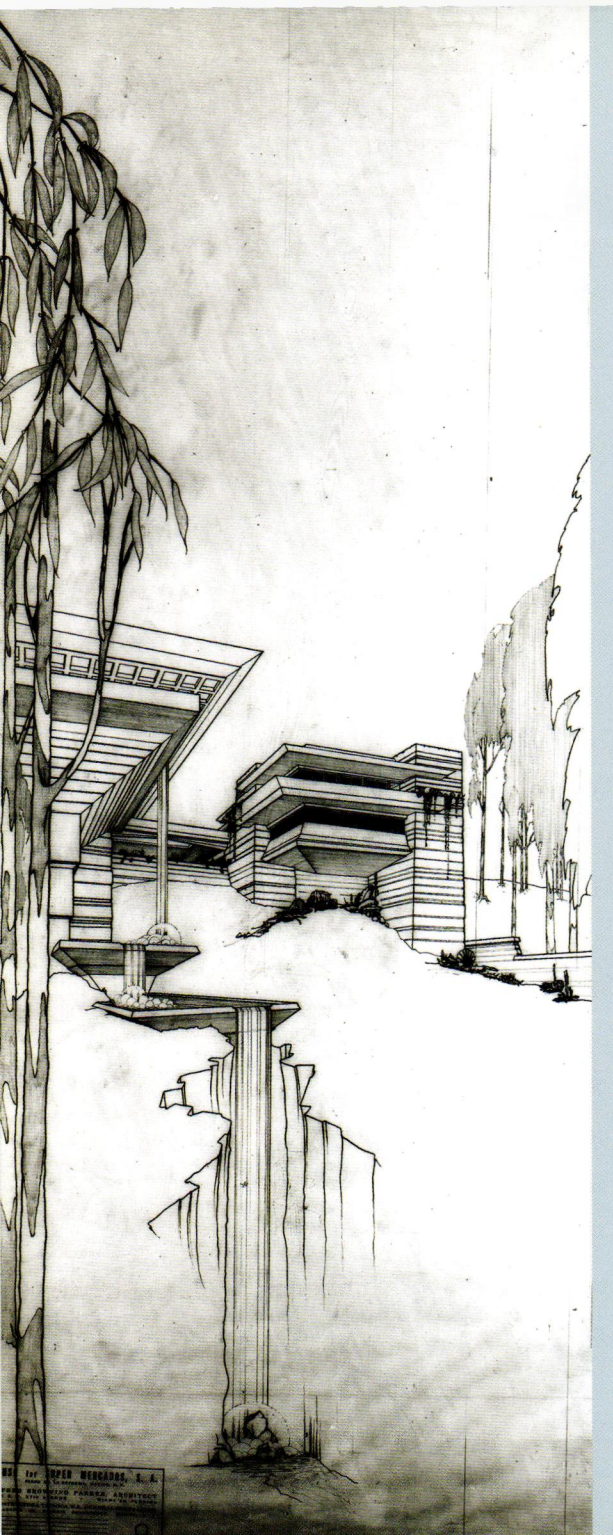
Parker's friend Marjory Stoneman Douglas, the famous writer, journalist, and environmentalist, was obviously fond of this particular Parker design, saying in 1958, "Al really spit on his hands for the serious best that is in him. . . . this new building expresses a harmony not only of function but of essential meaning, which makes it high art."[23]



Detail view of custom concrete wall units. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Executive office suite. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



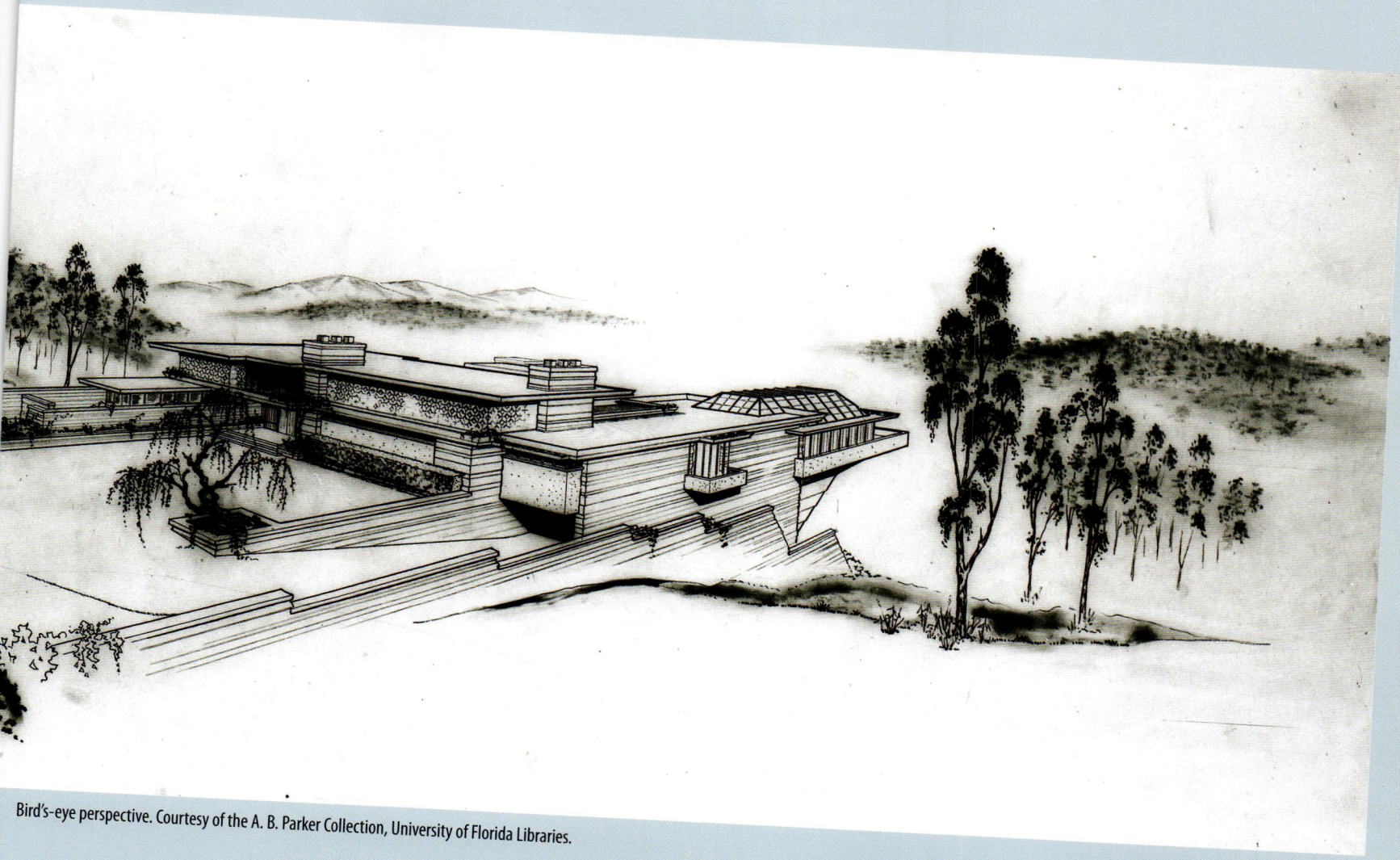
GARZA RESIDENCE

Mexico City, D.F., Mexico ▪ 1957 ▪ Unbuilt project

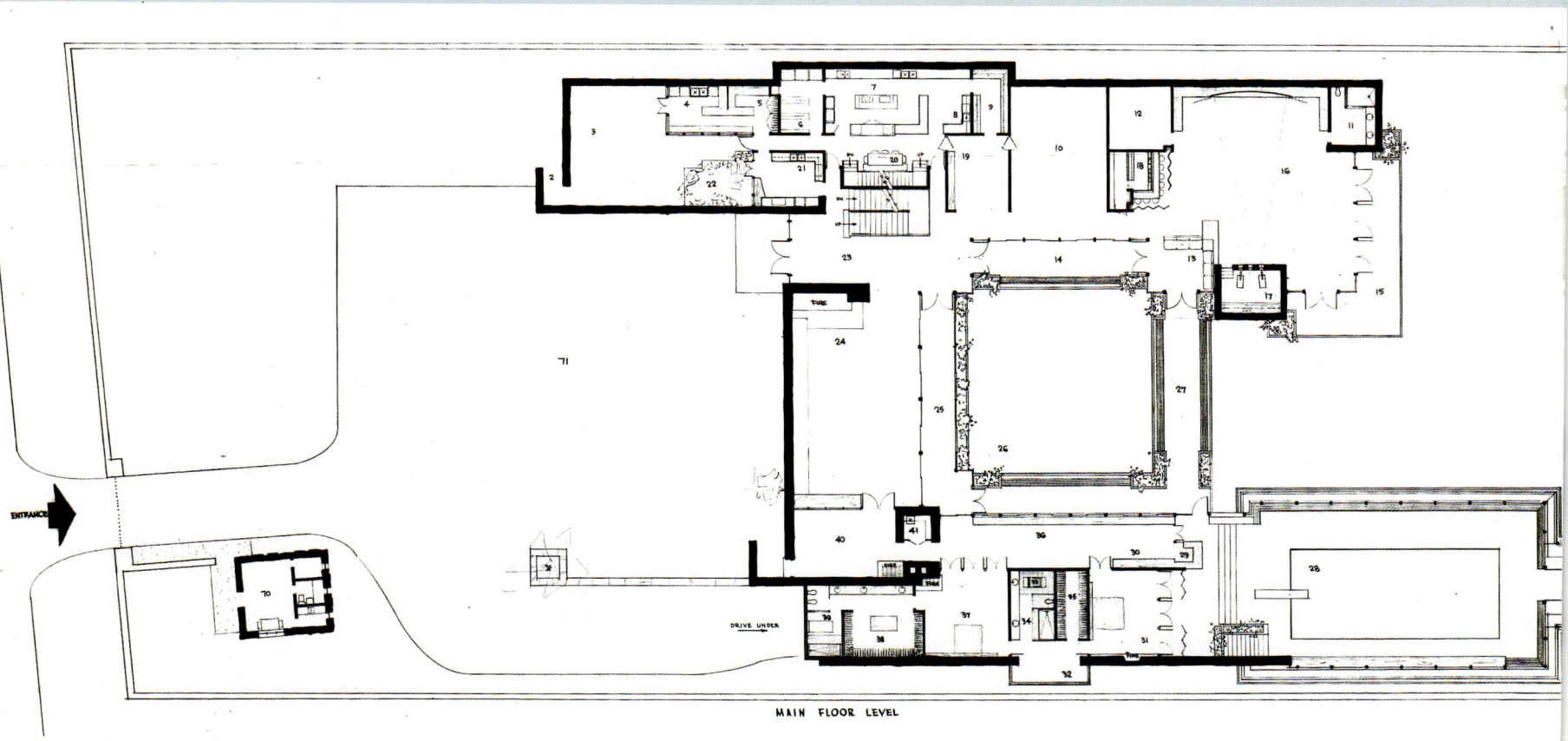
Regarding this extraordinary project, little documentation has survived beyond the few drawings, Parker's own recollections, and two entries in his yearly diaries. The client, Jaime Garza, was the successful owner of a grocery store chain and had property at Chapultepec Park in Mexico City.[24] Parker actually visited the spectacular site and clearly came away inspired. The client requested a home expressive of his proud heritage. The asymmetrical design seems to be anchored into as well as balanced off the sloping site, creating a juxtaposition of horizontal and vertical. The three-level home was to be quite large, for the family and servants—"they had servants waiting on servants," according to Parker.[25] Parker's design would utilize masonry materials laid in a manner suggestive of Mayan architecture. According to Parker, Garza loved the design and recognized that Parker had created exactly what he hoped, but Garza's wife vetoed the project, as she was expecting something in a more American style.



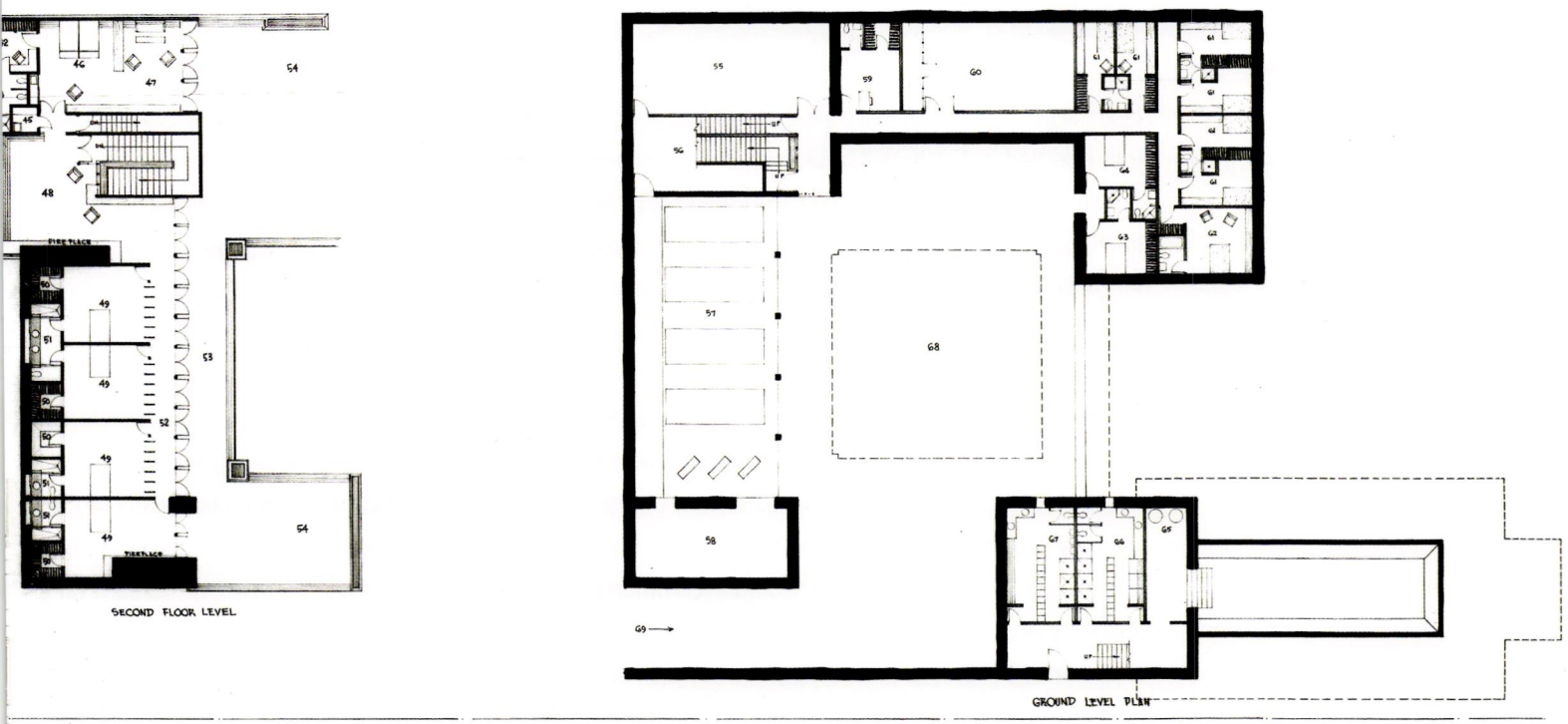
Worm's-eye perspective. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Bird's-eye perspective. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Primary-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection,
University of Florida Libraries.



Upper- and lower-level floor plans. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

HOGGARTH RESIDENCE

Miami, Florida ▪ 1957 ▪ Built project—extant

Like the Kitchens residence built the previous year, the 1957 Hoggarth residence is a modest 1,100-square-foot one-bedroom home that blurs the line between the inside and outside, creating the feeling of living in a larger space. However, unlike the Kitchenses,' the Hoggarth plan is an open L-shaped design, with the kitchen and dining area tucked in the intersection of the legs. The 18-by-27-foot living room occupies the long leg of the L, with a solid wall on the street side and the opposing wall made up of six pairs of persiana doors facing the garden and back terrace. The other leg contains the entry and the home's single bedroom, with a bathroom between.

The Hoggarths were from Ashland, Kentucky, where Ernest had been the golf pro at the Bellefonte Country Club. They were well acquainted with Miami, as Hoggarth had also been the pro at Granada Golf Course in Coral Gables, and they had wintered often in North Miami. When they retired to South Florida, they wanted to live in harmony with the casual lifestyle and climate of the tropics. They sought property and the design of a home that would accommodate this, and Ernest's desire to fish. Bea found a pie-shaped piece of property overlooking Arch Creek at the end of a residential street in northeast Miami. They had seen some of Parker's earlier work, and both liked what they saw.

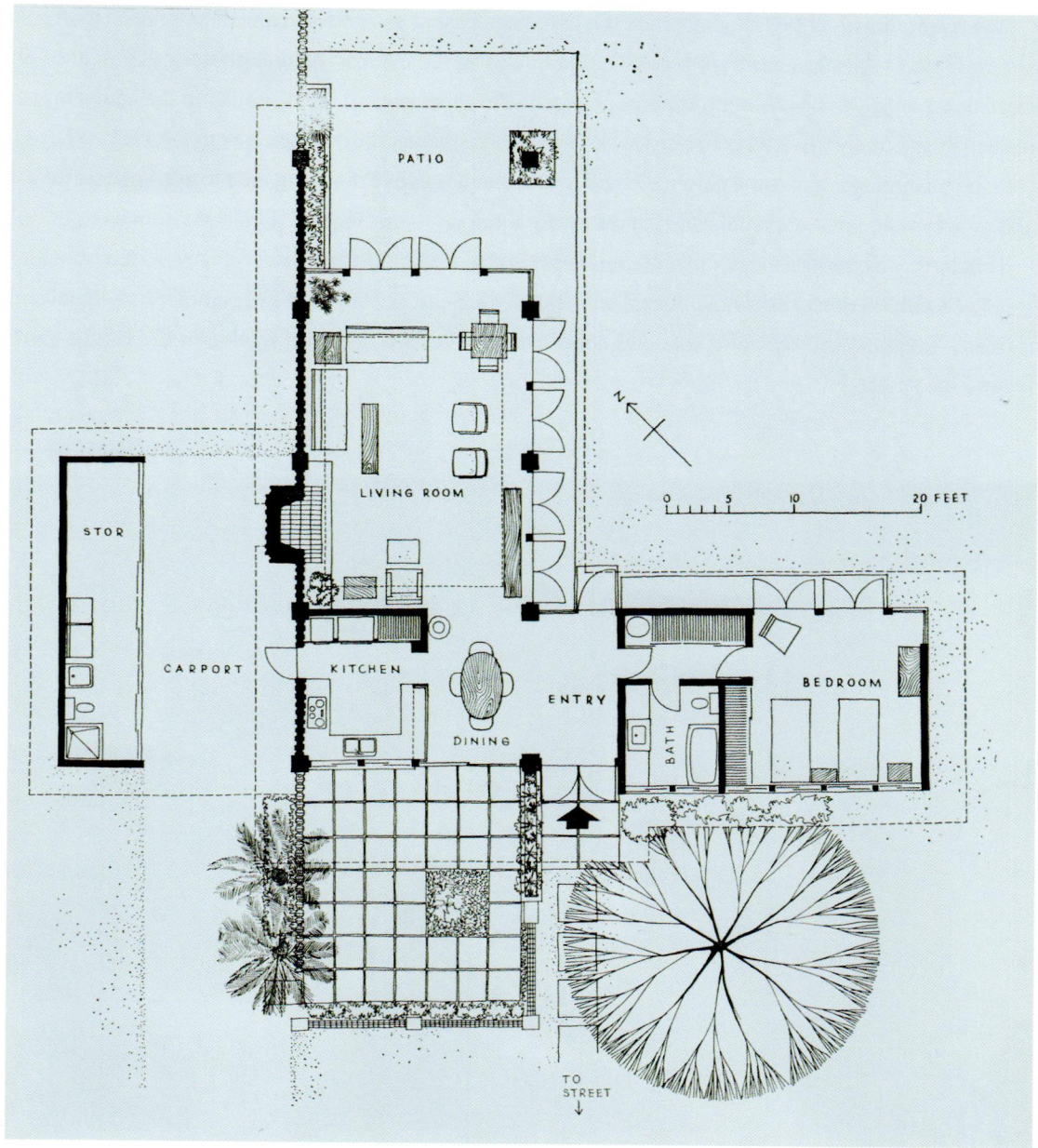
The unpretentious house is positioned to take advantage of the prevailing easterly breezes and achieve a sense of openness while maintaining privacy from the street. Although it is small in area, its generous overhanging roof and the open quality of the exterior walls adjacent to the terrace and gardens, contrasted with the solid masonry walls opposite, all work in harmony to extend and expand the interior space outward without losing the overall and all-important sense of shelter. No mechanical air-conditioning or heating was incorporated; Parker's sensitive siting and the addition of a fireplace in the living room eliminated the need.

The Avant Construction Company built the home at a cost of $30,000. The low-maintenance materials are presented honestly—concrete block, Florida tidewater red cypress, natural plaster ceilings, and terrazzo floors are given no cosmetic application of paint. In a manner not too dissimilar to the earlier Marko residence, the freely exposed concrete blocks are laid in a stacked bond fashion with lug ends exposed, creating an interesting textural pattern. Parker raised the roof above the living area to add spatial interest and to accommodate horizontal bands of clerestory windows for balanced natural light from all sides.

Hoggarth was quoted in 1961 in a *Miami Herald* article featuring the home: "Why we got a home instead of a house I don't know how to explain it, but if you'd just sit here on a hot summer day—cool and relaxed—watching the light and shadows come and go, the tree branches waving in the wind—you'd know what I mean."[26]



Rear side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Hoggarth residence. Floor plan. Reprinted with permission of *House Beautiful* © 1961.





Living area. Photos by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

MILLER RESIDENCE (PACE SETTER 1959)

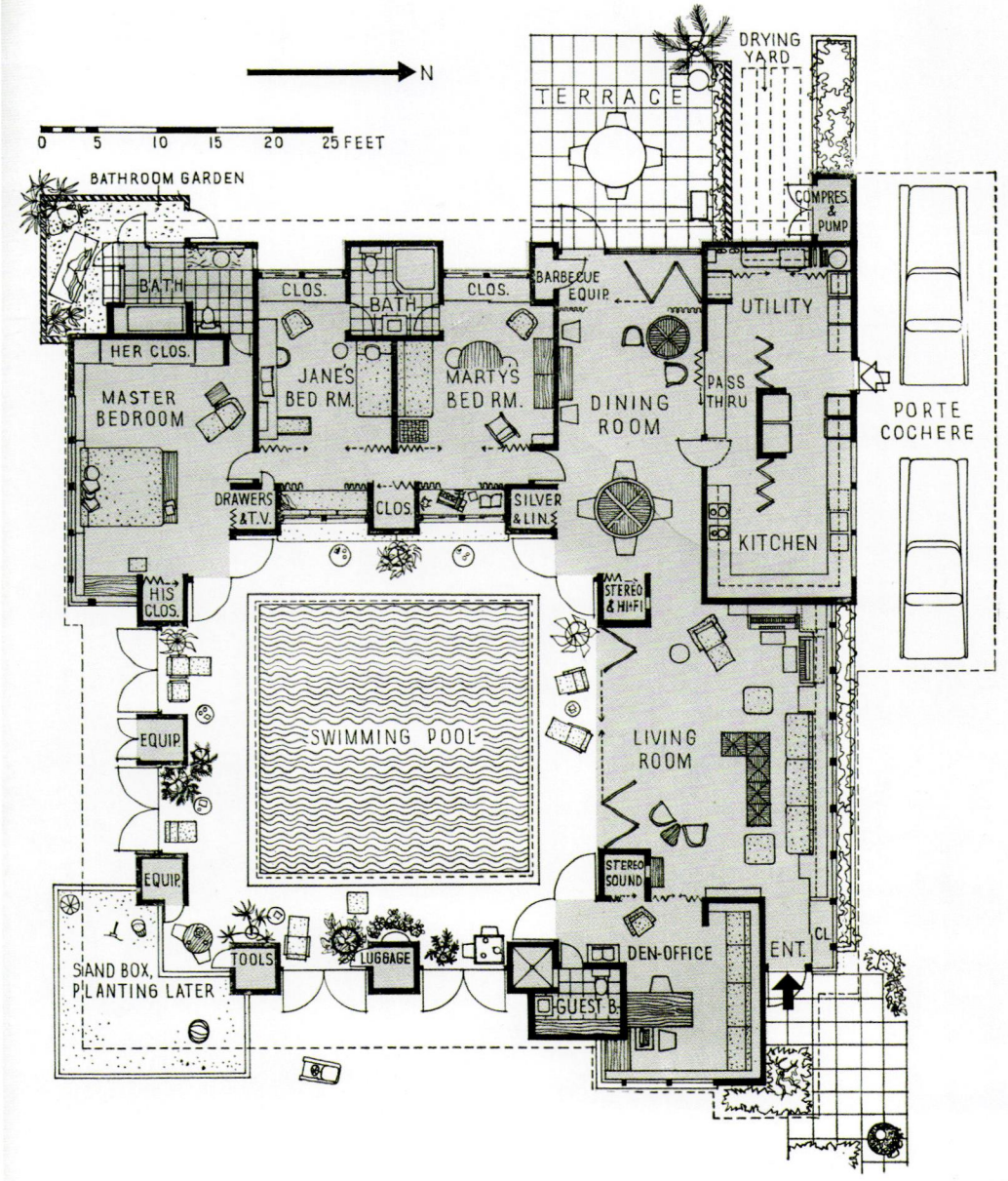
Coconut Grove, Florida ▪ 1957 ▪ Built project—extant

In a letter written to Frank Lloyd Wright on January 13, 1959, Parker mentions the Graham Miller residence to be featured in the upcoming February issue of *House Beautiful*.[27] "Perhaps more than most houses they publish—the 59 Pacesetter owes considerable to your life-work. I hope you will be pleased with the emulation of the principles to which you have subscribed so long and faithfully."[28]

The Miller house was designed for a couple in their thirties with two daughters aged five and eight. The site was an unremarkable suburban lot in Coconut Grove, and Parker, while not totally denying views out onto the property at appropriate places, decided that the house needed an in-look or inward emphasis



Entry side. Note cantilevered roof for carport, far right. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Floor plan. Reprinted with permission of *House Beautiful* © 1959.



Screened-in patio and pool. Note space frame skylight above. Photos by Ezra Stoller © Esto.





Miller residence. Living area. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

for the spatial concept, and interior vistas. Therefore he purposely created a central skylit courtyard with a pool as the dominant heart of the home, with all other spaces radiating as extensions. Over the pool Parker chose to make the three-dimensional space-frame a pyramidal shape. The emphasis on diagonal movement and vistas creates greater breadth and depth. In the third dimension Parker modulated and overlapped the ceiling planes for further interior identity, intimacy, and interest—the clerestories between provide a well-distributed and pleasantly diffused interior light—while clearly maintaining a sense of human scale. Overall the inward-turning house, uncommon in Parker's career,[29] was an attempt to afford more control over the environment of a relatively small suburban city lot.

Graham Miller, a local attorney and longtime friend, knew early on that when he was ready to build his home he would retain Parker. In 1957 he had a 125-foot-square lot and a desire for a house that had an informal and relaxed atmosphere—something he knew couldn't be accomplished with a more traditional-minded architect.

The 3,100-square-foot home, with an additional 1,600 square feet of enclosed screened area, was built by Albert Hallquist for $51,000. Along with the open living and dining areas off the kitchen, it has three bedrooms, with an additional den-office that can also be used as a guest room. All the primary rooms have physical and visual connections with the courtyard. A dramatically cantilevered roof off the kitchen identifies the two-car carport. The principal materials are concrete, steel, Florida tidewater red cypress, and glass.

The Miller residence became *House Beautiful*'s 1959 Pace Setter, Parker's second. Extolling the home as "an adventure into the frontiers of inner space," *House Beautiful* explained,

> This Pace Setter faces today's problems with realism and solves many of them common to everyone. For example, the pool can become a garden in a northern climate without affecting the principle of privacy. Chiefly, the house is optically much more spacious than the square feet indicate because there is no sharp demarcation between outdoors and indoors—achieved at only one-third additional cost."[30]

PARKER RESIDENCE (A JEWEL-IN-THE-TREETOP)

Coconut Grove, Florida ▪ 1957 ▪ Built project—extant

"Le Petit Grand—American Style,"[31] proclaimed *House Beautiful* when Alfred Browning Parker designed and built A Jewel-in-the-Treetop for his recently widowed mother. Two independent pavilion-like structures—one a 20-foot-square main living unit and the other a 16-foot-square guest house—were connected by terraces and by a carport element to create a straightforward tropical expression of sheltered openness. Built in 1957 at a cost of $31,000 by Parker along with Charles Thomas, the residence featured Florida tidewater red cypress for its wood surfaces and trim, persiana doors from Cuba, a cedar shake roof, and mosaic tile floors throughout.

Ideally suited to Jewel Parker's lifestyle, it remained her home until her death in 1968 at the age of seventy-eight. Not too distant was her son's Royal Road residence, and adjacent to her property was Don Gayer's residence, an earlier Alfred Browning Parker design. Jewel Parker would regularly have Don Gayer over for Sunday brunch—"Bloody Marys and ham with redeye gravy."[32] Referred to by Parker often as "a happy companion to the Banyan tree,"[33] it was described in the magazine *Architecture for Florida Living* as "a house for quiet reflection in which one can enjoy the shadow-flecked calm of a genuine sunny day."[34]

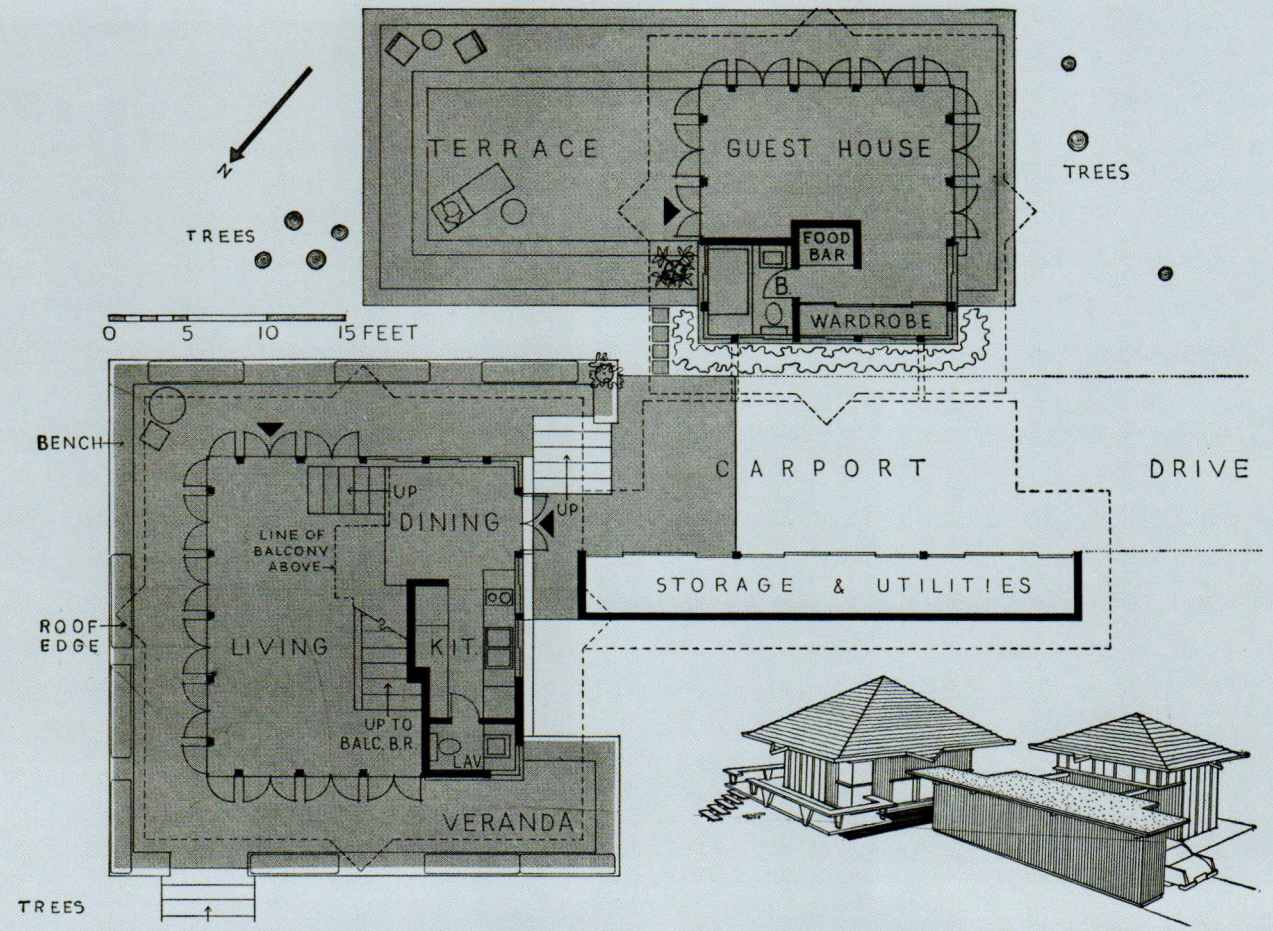
Parker wrote to Curtis Besinger, the author of the *House Beautiful* article on the project, in late October 1957,

> I was pleased by your story on several counts. First, you treated the matter for what it was intended—a nice little house spreading out, even as the banyan spread over it. Second, it is common to develop much mawkish sentiment about mothers. This was not my goal. Love, affection, good humor and style can be shown in subtler ways and this you recognized and expressed very well . . . My thanks for your participation in construction and presentation of Jewel's home. Believe me, she is enjoying it to the brim of its spreading roof. Sincerely, Al.[35]



Living area. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Comparing this project with the adjacent Gayer residence, designed and built four years earlier, it is apparent that the general concepts of the two are quite similar, only more refined in this later work for his mother.



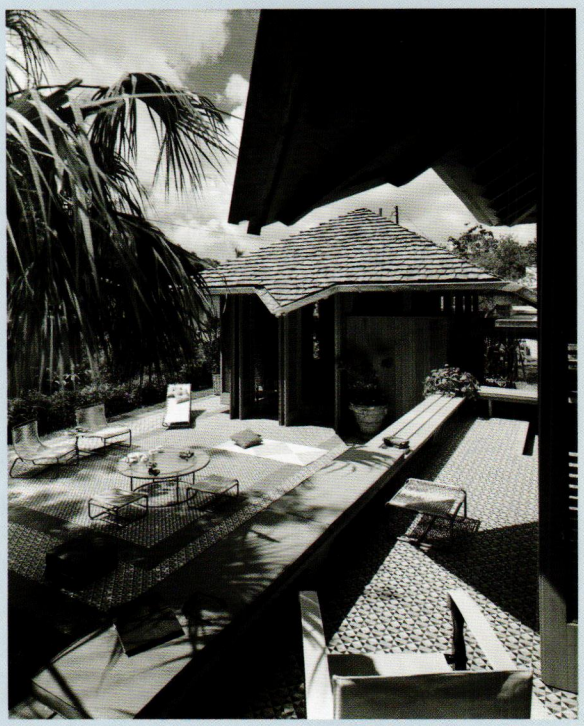
Floor plan. Reprinted with permission of *House Beautiful* © 1957.

Facing: Exterior terrace and main two-story living unit. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.









Parker Residence (A Jewel-in-the-Treetop). *Above,* living area; *top right,* guest house; *right,* guest house and exterior terrace. Photos by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

TENCH RESIDENCE

Gainesville, Florida ▪ 1957 ▪ Built project—extant

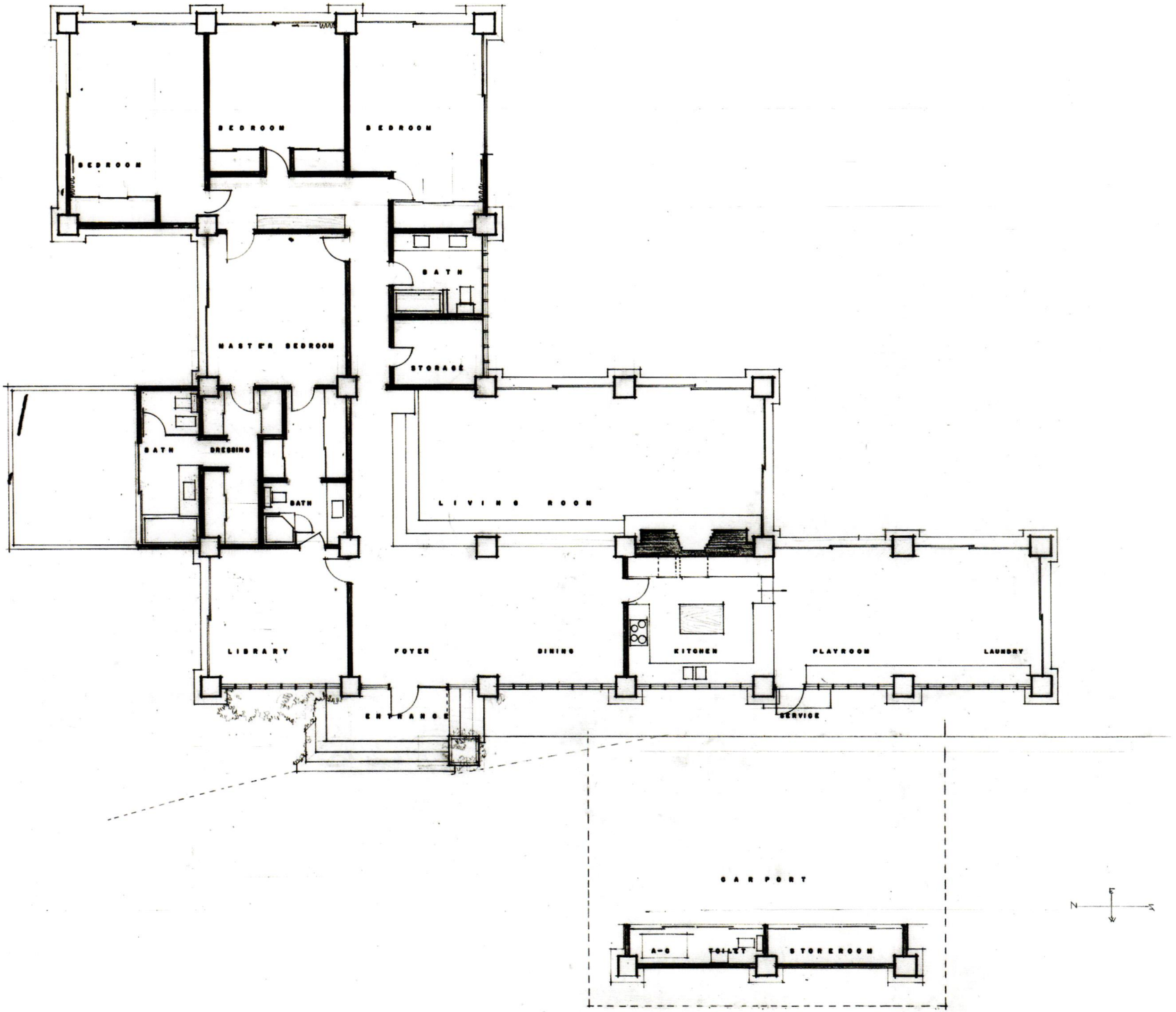
Benmont Tench Jr., a University of Florida alumnus, shortly after graduation from the University of Virginia Law School in 1947, returned to his hometown of Gainesville, where he worked as an attorney and later became a Circuit Court judge. He also was the Florida Association of Architects legal counsel and legislative representative and was involved with Florida's Board of Architecture as a legal representative and investigator. In 1957, when he and his wife Mary Catherine (Katie) decided to build a home in Gainesville, he retained Parker, a fellow Florida alumnus, whom he had gotten to know well through his association with the FAA.

Parker's initial design for the family of five—which, during the prolonged design period, became six—was a bold two-story residence, triangular in plan, that Parker labeled the Tench Tentative on the preliminary drawings.[36] While Katie, an artist, was captivated by its potential, the more conservative Benmont found it too radical.[37] Parker followed the more daring initial scheme in 1960 with a spread-out single-story residence, rectangular in plan and based upon a three-and-a-half-foot-square module. Construction was deferred, as the estimate came in at $60,000 and Tench's budget was $40,000. Then in 1962 Tench took a temporary appointment as a U.S. embassy attaché and director of the Agency for International Development mission in Panama.

Interestingly, during this interlude Parker used the basic design, although scaled down for a lesser budget, in a residence for Art and June du Rivage in Huntington, New York, on Long Island's north shore. Evidently he saw the similarities in the two clients' sites, family size, and needs. And he made it no secret from either client.[38]



West (street) side. Photo by author.


BEDROOM
BEDROOM
BEDROOM
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LIVING ROOM
LIBRARY
FOYER
DINING
KITCHEN
PLAYROOM
LAUNDRY
ENTRANCE
SERVICE
CAR PORT
A-C
TOILET
STOREROOM
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E

Upon the Tench family's return to Gainesville, they increased the budget for the residence, altered the design slightly, and signed a contract with the Tassinari Construction Company in Gainesville to build the project. The cost of construction was stipulated not to exceed $88,880, but finally came in at $115,000. The Tenches occupied their home in late 1967, ten years after the design process began.

The modified L-shaped residence of 3,750 square feet is sheathed in vertical board-and-batten cypress siding and considerable glass—especially the numerous large sliding doors on the east and south walls, giving on the sizable secluded backyard—with 20-inch-square brick columns. The primary roof is flat with generous overhangs, while a low-slope hipped roof and vaulted ceiling above the living room are anchored by the brick fireplace chimney. The wire-cut red brick comes from North Carolina. Parker utilized a design detail favored by Frank Lloyd Wright, specifying deeply raked horizontal mortar joints, with the vertical mortar joints to be flush, thus emphasizing the horizontal—"the line of domesticity," according to Wright.

The planned circular swimming pool off the family room was never built, nor the detached guest house. Also unrealized were the fantastic vertical inserts of leaded glass for the double entry doors as well as triangular ornamental corbel supports in copper above the brick piers, both features fully detailed on the construction drawings. The design of the residence was patently inspired by the physical principles of Wright's Usonian homes—no basement, no attic, low sheltering roofs, a distinct demarcation between the street-facing public side and the private side, a diminishing of the transition (thus an increasing of the connection) between the interior and exterior, designated zones for various activities, open living areas, use of natural materials common to the exterior and interior, and carports in lieu of garages.

The Tench house has significance outside the field of architecture. Benmont's son and namesake, Benmont III, who as a young teenager developed into a musician, befriended another local musician named Tom Petty and became the keyboardist for the local band Mudcrutch, which included Petty and Mike Campbell on guitar. They often used the Tench residence to practice their music, and they recorded live to tape, in the home's living room in the summer of 1973, the demo that Petty took to Los Angeles that facilitated their reemergence as Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.[39]



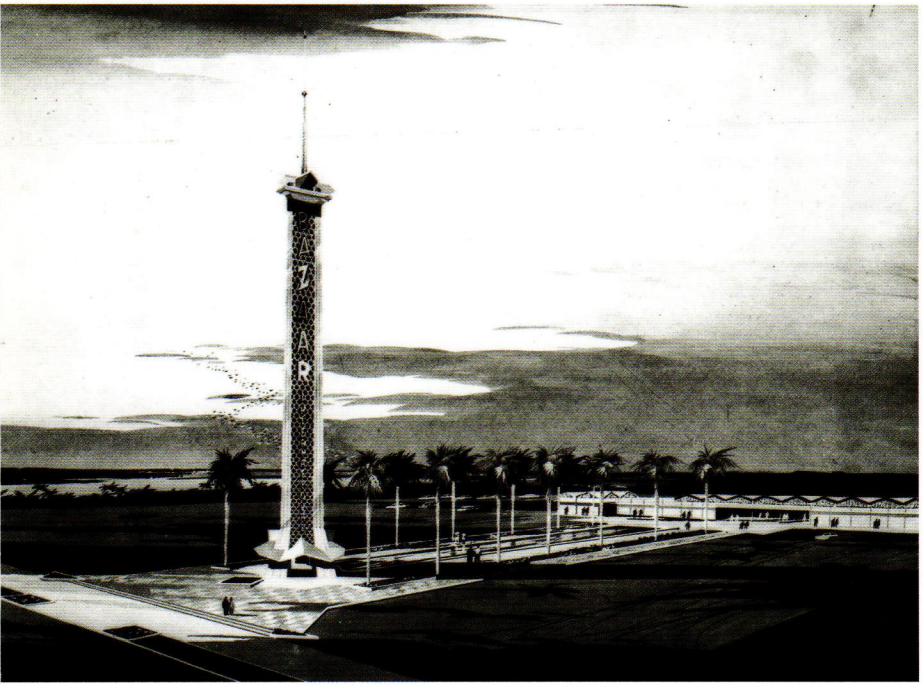
East (rear) side. Photo by author.

Preliminary floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

BAZAAR INTERNATIONAL AND TRYLON TOWER

Riviera Beach, Florida ▪ 1958 ▪ Built project—demolished

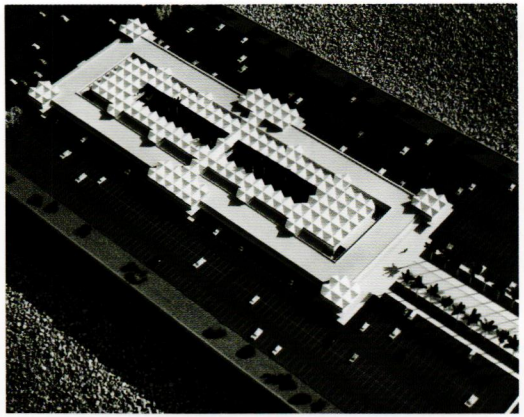
Commercial real estate development was a hobby of Parker's client Joseph Mass. After the celebrated success of their recently completed Everglades Island residence, Mass approached Parker with a new opportunity—the design of an innovative concept in retail sales. Mass had purchased property just across the Palm Beach County line in Riviera Beach, across from the Port of Palm Beach. Initially he thought warehousing would best suit the location, given the needs of its neighboring business. However, after travels in Italy during which he saw the Galleria in Milan, Mass retained Parker to design Bazaar International.



Bird's-eye perspective. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

Bazaar International, a then unique concept in retail architecture, might easily be recognized as a forerunner of the modern mall. It represented the realization of Mass's ambitious dream of an architecturally unique plaza centered around fifty shops and restaurants that showcased merchandise from countries around the world. Given its poor location, on a twenty-acre site near the Port of Palm Beach, and its lack of a major tenant, Parker sought to create an internalized marketplace-like environment for the shopping customer. He designed a rectangular building enveloping a lush open-air tropical oasis. The overall building was 280 feet across the front (facing Broadway, US 1) by 600 feet deep. Provided parking totaled 1,200 spaces. The corners of the building, double-height volumes, relieved the horizontal emphasis of the long facade. A second story, for rental offices, overlooked the open-air interior courtyard. Reinforced concrete was used throughout, from the building's structural elements to the intricate decorative ornamental detailing. The building was laid out on a 20-foot-square structural grid. Repetitive geometric details appeared throughout the design, bringing continuity to the project in the hexagonal fenestration, glazing (including stained glass), balustrades, light fixtures, pavers, planters, and furnishings.

Perhaps recognizing the lack of a major tenant as a detriment, Parker designed a vertical feature, the Trylon Tower, standing 230 feet tall, as the project's symbolic exclamation point. It contained a glass-enclosed elevator that took as many as eight people up 180 feet to the tower's observation deck, replete with telescopes, at fifty cents a trip. The tower's superstructure was an arrangement of three triangular reinforced concrete columns connected by a weblike concrete grillage. At the very top of the tower a navigational light beacon, also functioning as an aircraft warning signal, was incorporated. The integrated lighting within the tower was a significant feature in its evening eye-catching appeal. It was designed as a



Bird's-eye view of model. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Interior courtyard. Note kiosk and Trylon Tower beyond. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Trylon Tower base, plaza, and main building. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Corner anchor tenant. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

forward sentinel to Bazaar International, to attract attention to the retail complex from afar. At the time of its construction, it was the tallest structure in Florida. Parker connected the tower to the shopping center with a 34-by-170-foot reflecting pool with fountains, flagpoles, and landscaping, all accentuating the central axis between the tower and the large Bazaar International center as well as mirroring the image of the tower.

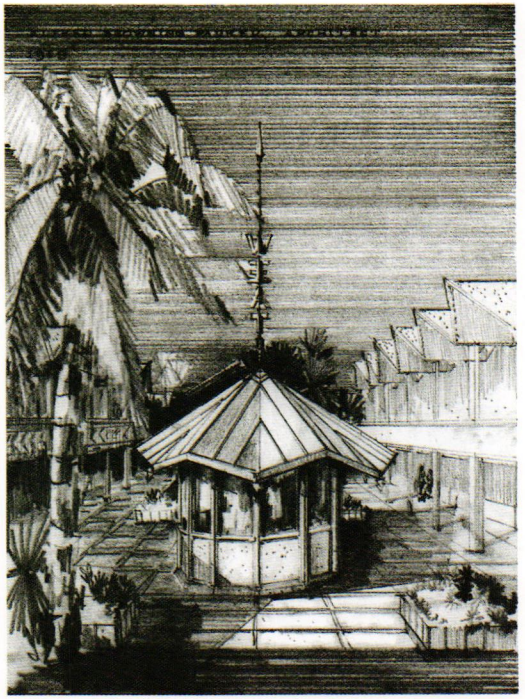
Parker's design was unveiled to the public on January 5, 1959.[40] Foundations were under way in April 1959. Previewed by the public on January 25, 1960, the project officially opened with ceremonial fanfare on Veteran's Day, November 11, 1960, with the completion of Trylon Tower. The project was constructed at a cost of approximately $2 million by Butler & Oenbrink, the contractor that had built Mass's home on Everglades Island in Palm Beach.

Parker separately designed a large single-story discount center that was to have been located to the rear of Bazaar International (never built), as well as additional outbuildings including a Laundromat building and a kiosk for a satellite station for WEAT radio.[41] He also was responsible for the design of many of Bazaar International's tenant spaces.

The pilot project won initial acclaim, and Mass envisioned building Bazaar International marketplaces throughout the country. Parker arrived in a helicopter at the project's well-attended opening, "the architect descending from the heavens" as he recalled.[42] To *House Beautiful*'s editor in chief Elizabeth Gordon (who was staying at the Frank Lloyd Wright–designed Imperial Hotel at the time) Parker wrote about Bazaar International in late December 1959, "certainly there is nothing very small about the idea and if it does flop you will hear the thud all the way to New York or Tokyo."[43] Whether the thud was heard or not, Bazaar International failed after only a few years, precipitating Mass's bankruptcy in 1964. Retail historians could argue that its failure was due to its location, the absence of major anchor stores, the concept's being ahead of its time, the decline of the neighborhood surrounding Bazaar International, or shoppers being attracted to the newer air-conditioned Palm Beach Mall. Over the ensuing years, with a steady decline in its immediate neighborhood, it remained, albeit misused and abused. An eleventh-hour effort to have the Trylon Tower deemed historically significant, and thus save it from demolition, met with little support from the state's Division of Historical Resources. The Trylon Tower was torn down in March 1998. The independent automobile service station, Laundromat, and Bazaar International, without fanfare, have since been demolished as well.



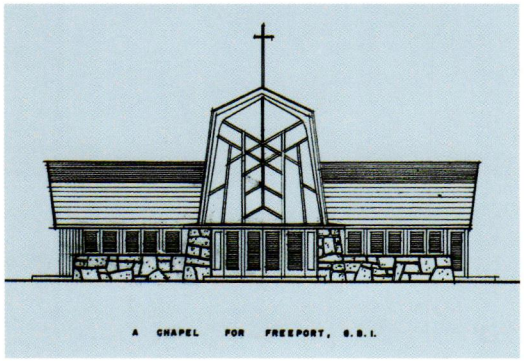
Interior courtyard. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Perspective of kiosk. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

FREEPORT

Grand Bahama Island ▪ 1957–1964 ▪ Partially built project—partially extant



Elevation study for chapel in Freeport. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

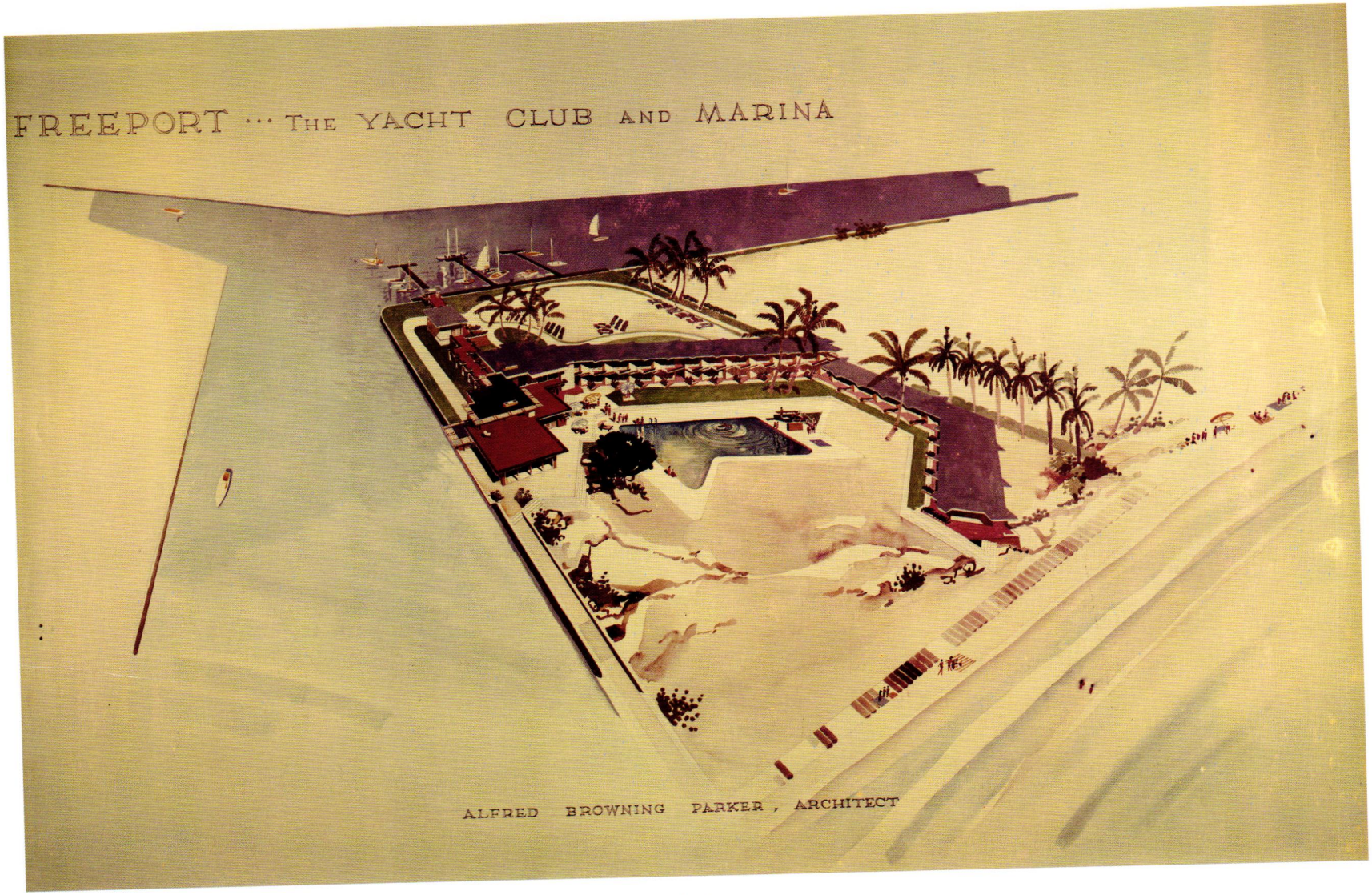
In 1955 Wallace Groves, a Virginia financier with lumber interests on Grand Bahama Island, began to build the new Bahamian city of Freeport on 50,000 acres of the swamp, sand, and scrub of Grand Bahama Island, fifty-five miles by sea east of Palm Beach.[44] His focus was twofold: to cater to industry with a tax-free deepwater seaport (thus the name Freeport), and to create a thriving tourist destination. As Groves's vision became reality, Freeport quickly became a quintessential tropical Caribbean playground. In the early 1950s the island's population numbered around 500. By 1963, after Groves received unprecedented support from the Bahamian government, it had grown to some 9,000. In the next four years it quadrupled.

Groves retained Parker in 1957 as his architect of choice for Freeport, an arrangement lasting six years until, in early 1964, the Grand Bahama Port Authority / Development Corporation replaced Parker with the internationally recognized city planning firm Harland Bartholomew and Associates. Nothing suggests that Parker had any city planning responsibilities in the design of Freeport. However, he did design many of the initial public buildings, including Freeport's airport terminal building (constructed twice, as the first was burned to the ground shortly after completion), the Port Authority's office building, the Rand Medical Clinic, a public school, a shopping center and market, an automobile service station, a motel, apartments, a bowling alley, a drive-in movie theater, a church, several yacht club and marina developments, two restaurants, and a Barclay's bank. Parker also designed a speculative residence for production and six custom residences—for Groves himself, for Groves's investment partners and friends Jack Hayward, Barney Diamond, Daniel Ludwig, and Keith Gonsalves, and for Dr. J. Albert Avrack. Evidence suggests that only the residences for Groves, Hayward (on an adjoining oceanfront parcel), and Gonsalves were built. Ludwig's was started but abandoned. Four of the six designs, the Groves, Hayward, Diamond, and Ludwig residences, were significant solutions by Parker to an appropriate tropical organic architecture, and they should be included among his best works designed for Freeport.

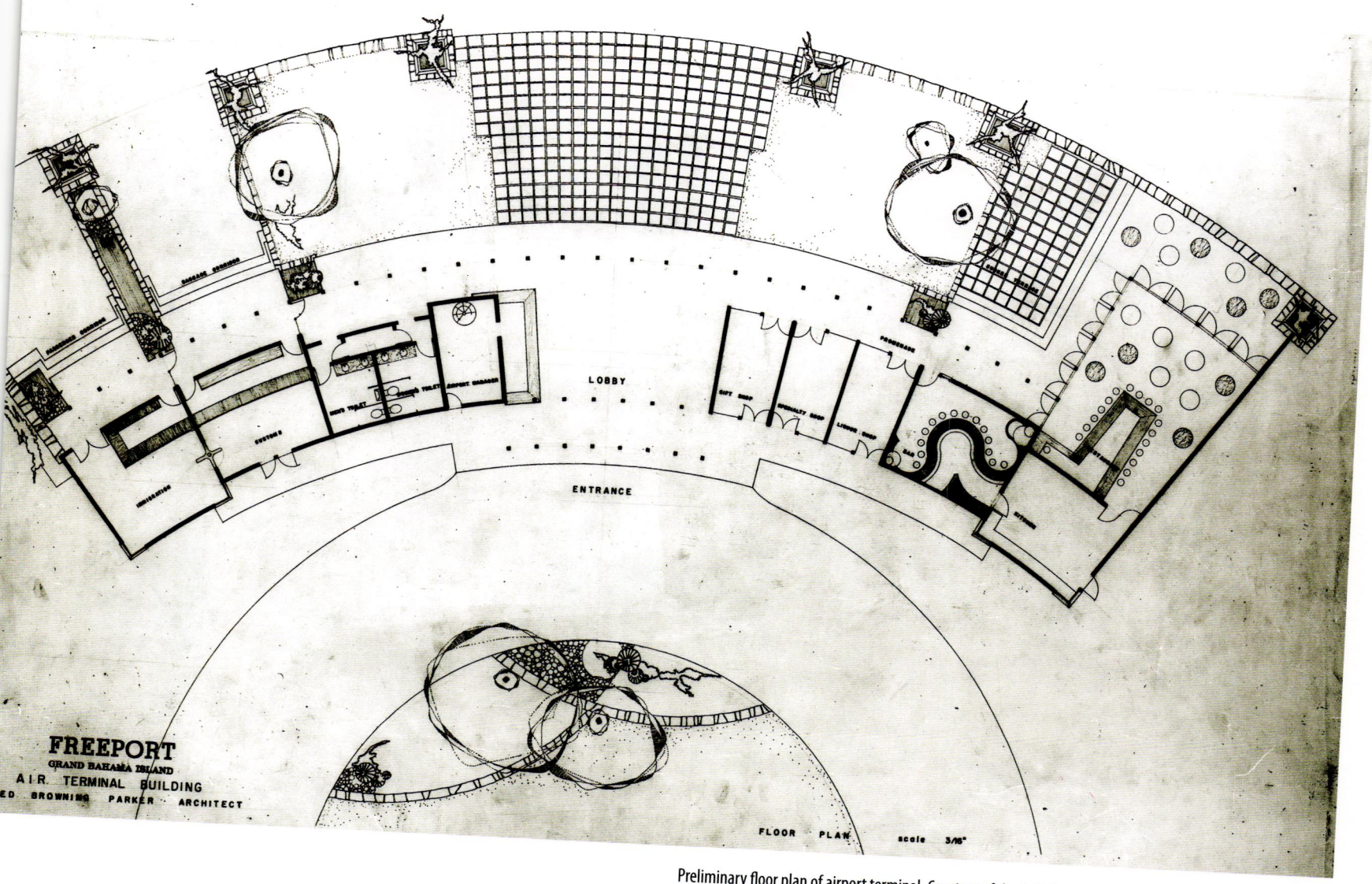


Bird's-eye view of Freeport clubhouse model. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

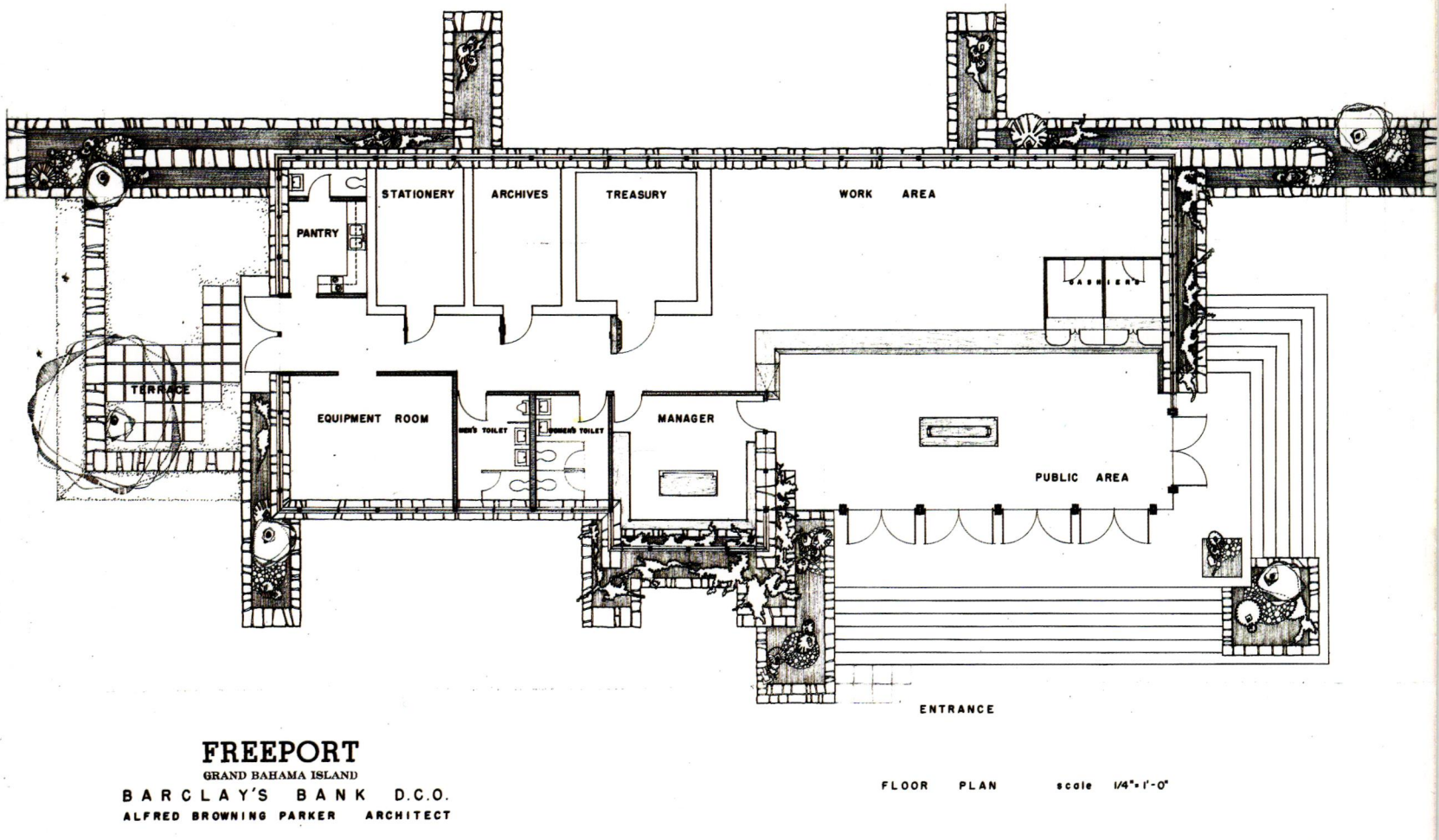
Unfortunately, the majority of Parker's built works in Freeport no longer exist, including Groves's own residence, and the few that survive, with the single exception of the Hayward residence, have been significantly altered.



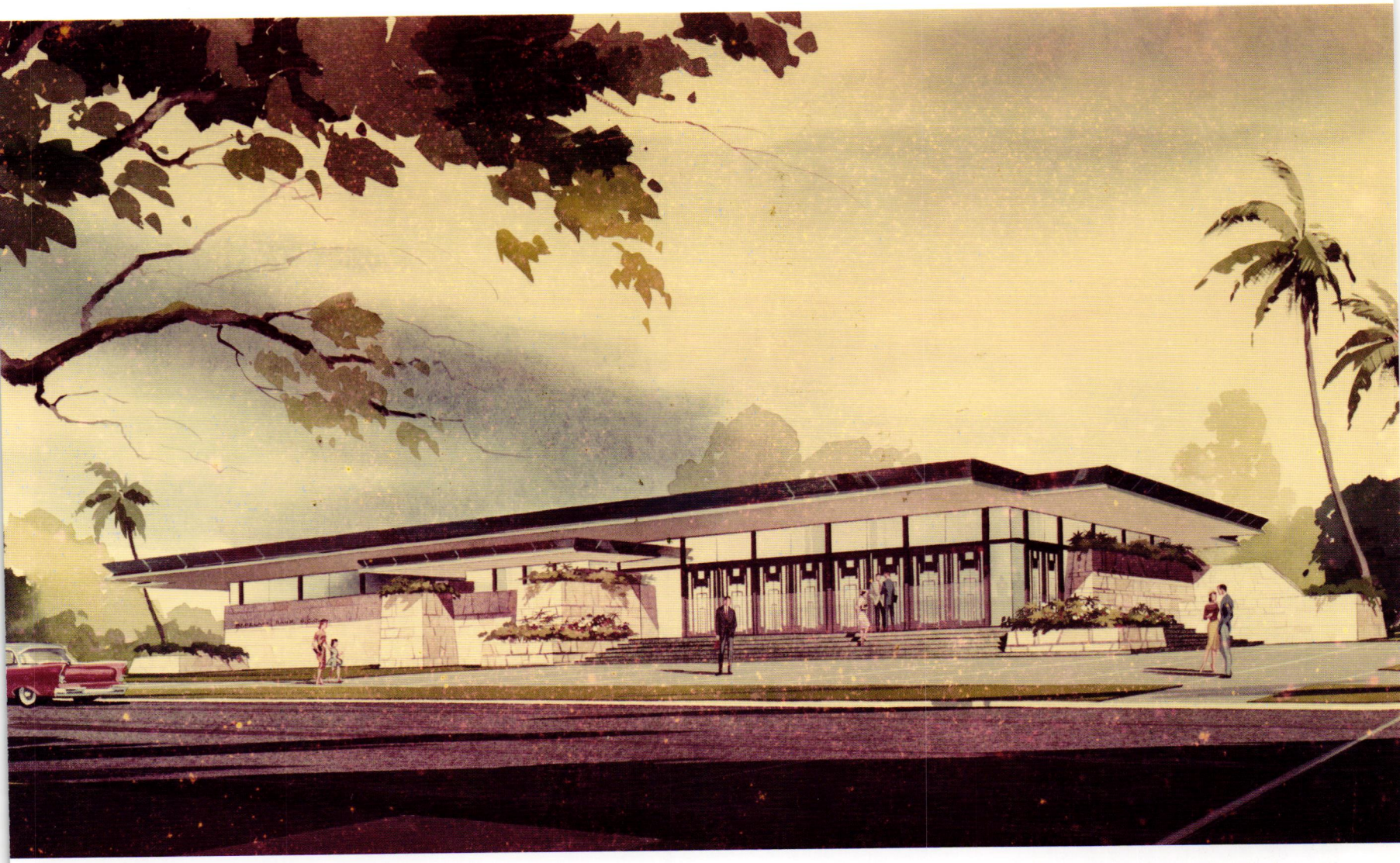
Bird's-eye perspective of Freeport yacht club and marina. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Preliminary floor plan of airport terminal. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



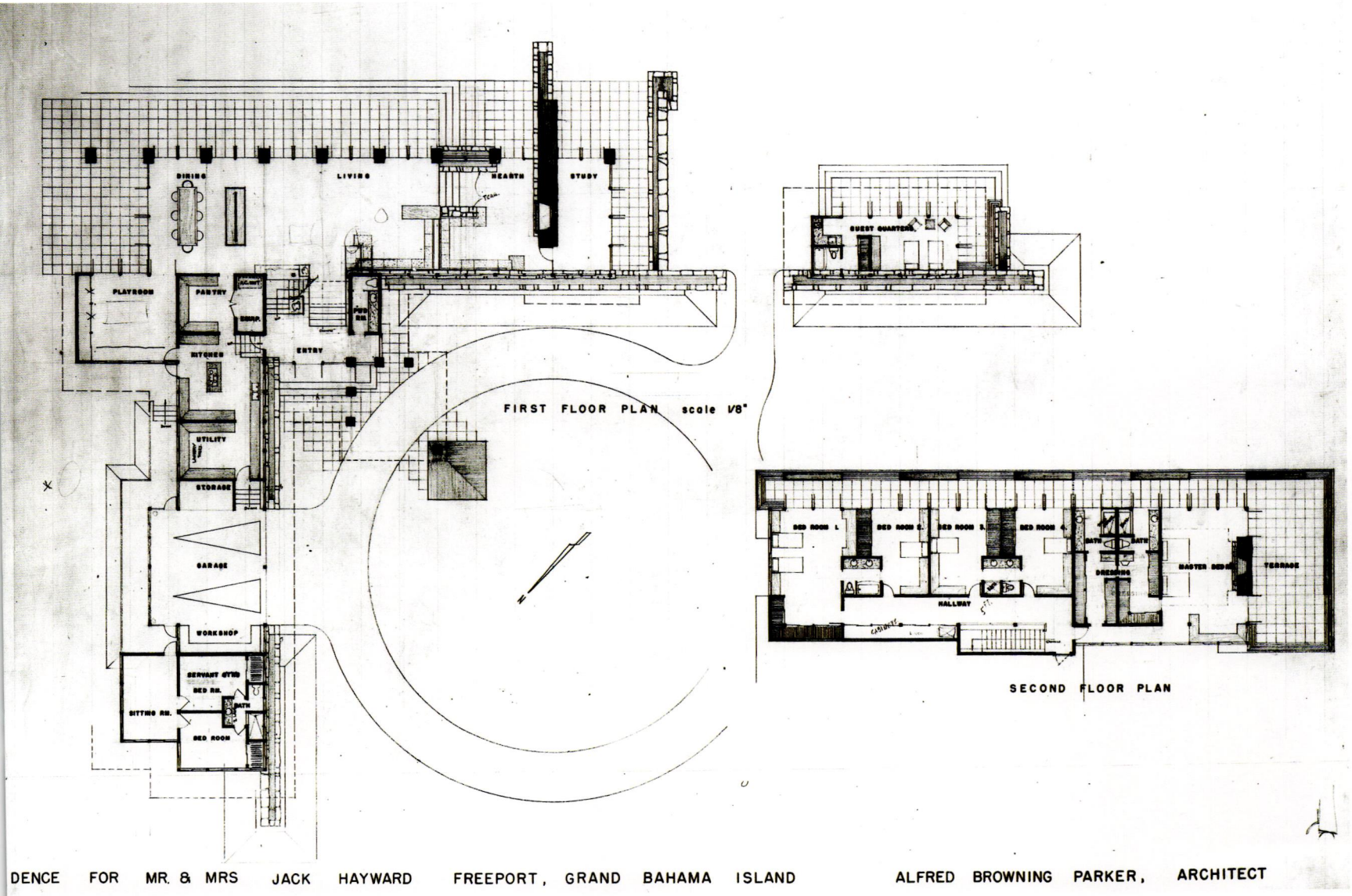
Barclay's Bank floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Perspective of Barclay's Bank. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



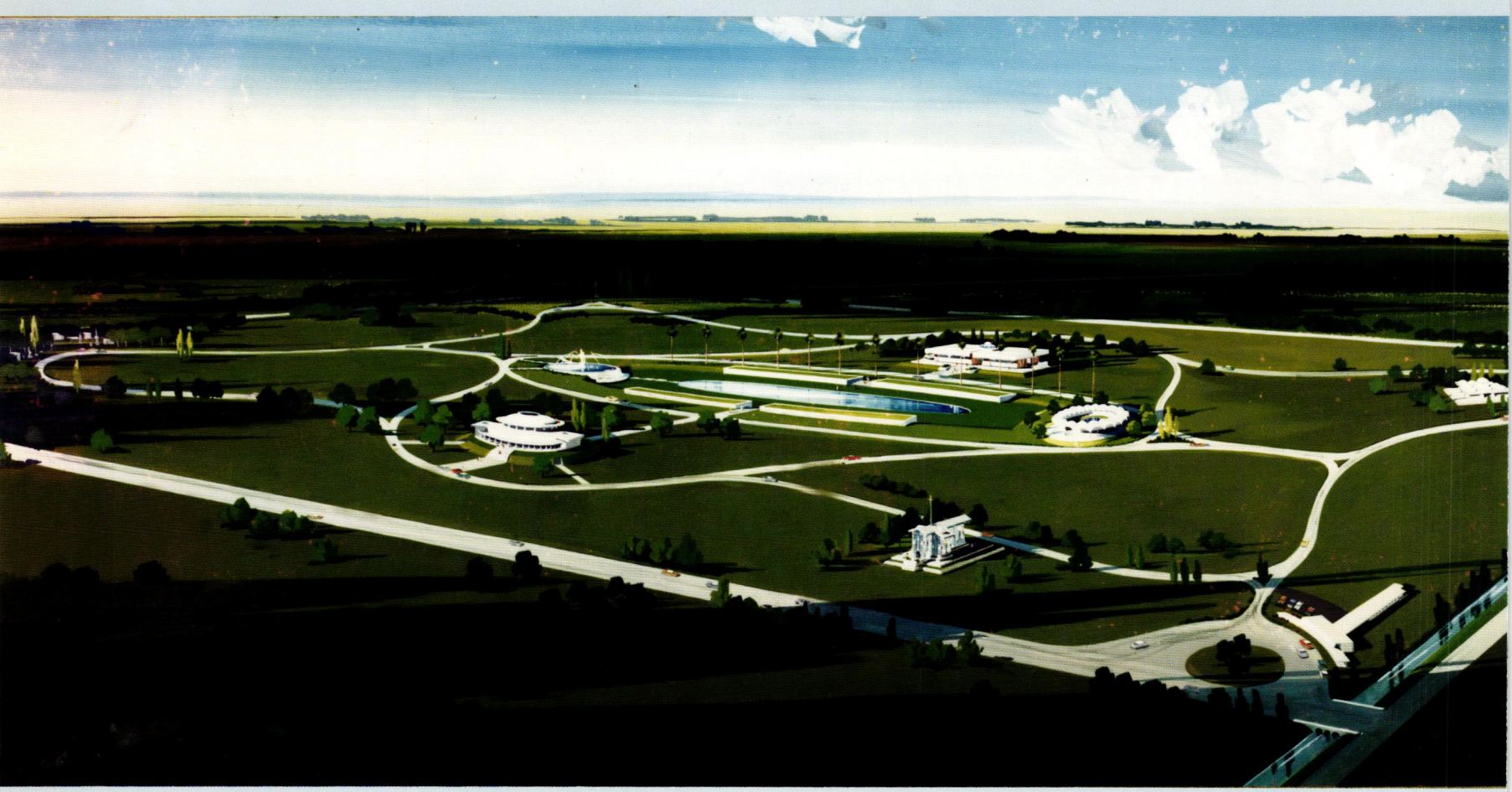
Hayward residence. Photo by Mark Da Cunha © 2009.



Hayward residence floor plans. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

VISTA MEMORIAL GARDENS

Hialeah, Florida ▪ 1959 ▪ Partially built project—extant



Bird's-eye perspective of master plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

Parker's creative experience in funerary architecture took place in Hialeah. In 1958 he was approached by Oakridge, Inc., to design a large comprehensive cemetery development to be called Vista Memorial Gardens. The client had obtained a parcel of land at the northwest corner of Red Road and NW 142nd Street, on the western edge of the Opa Locka airport. Parker's original letter of understanding, dated July 24, 1958,[45] outlined the basic services offered—architectural planning, design, construction drawings, and the administration of the construction. It also definitively stated, "It should be mentioned that my architectural philosophy envisions always a completely integrated design job in which site planning, buildings and furnishings, landscaping, signs, etc. are coordinated for a maximum effect of beauty and utility."

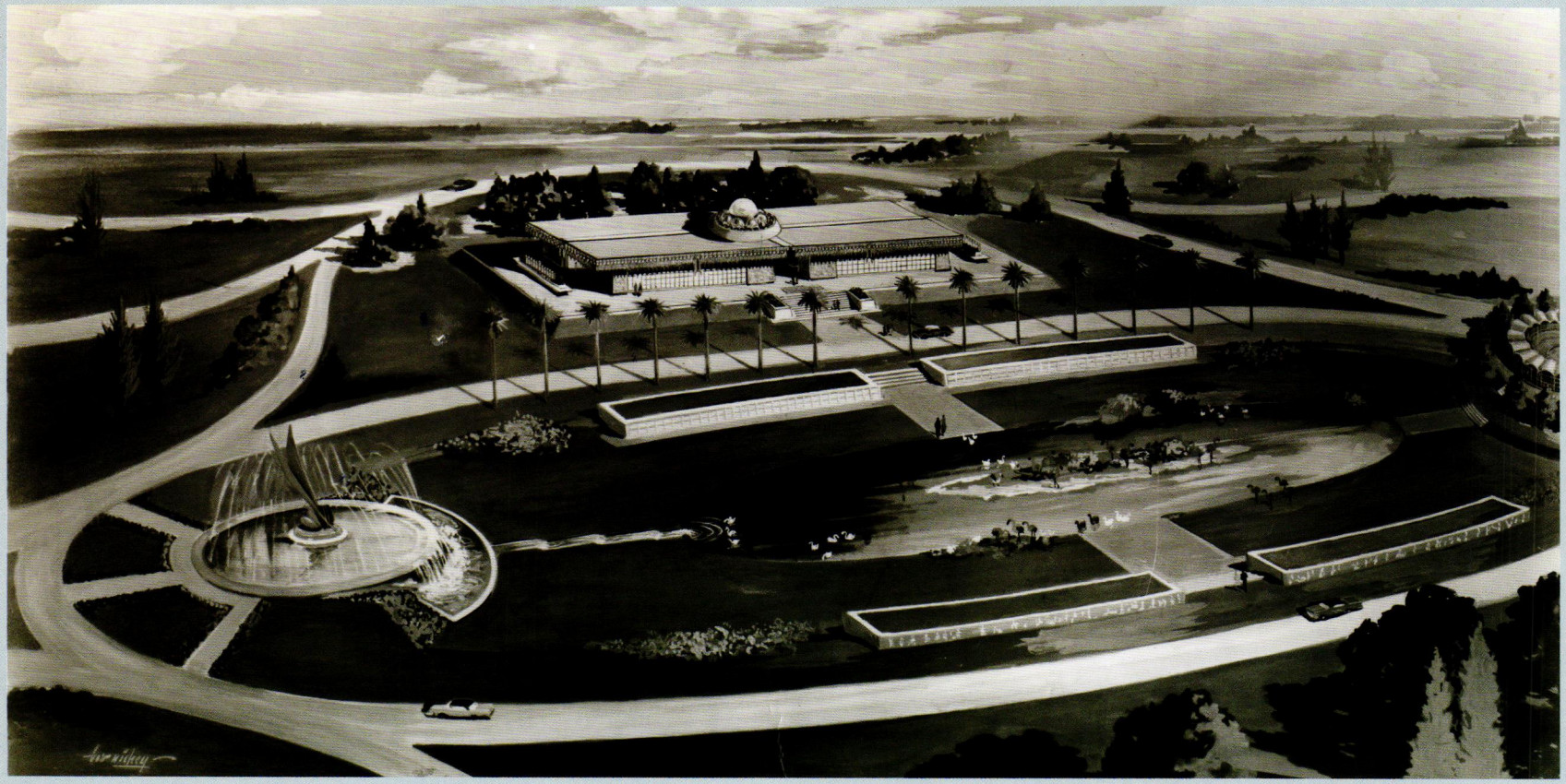
Parker designed the master plan and a dozen buildings and structures, along with benches, landscaping, fountains and water features, and sculptural elements. Preliminary sketches were made for two chapels, the crematorium, mausoleum, columbarium, garden crypts, and a service building. However, during the development of the property, Parker's master plan was only marginally adhered to. Just three Parker structures were eventually built: the service building, the main entrance, and a sculptural feature that Parker named the House of God. The initial phase of development was mostly completed by early 1962. A 12-foot-diameter circular fountain to be located under the arches of his House of God was designed in the early 1970s by Parker, but it was never constructed.

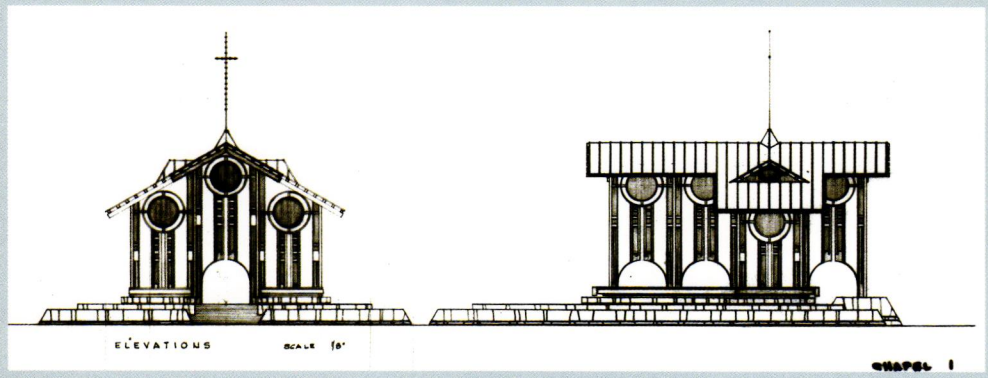
For the single-story crescent-shaped service building, Parker's construction system was similar to what he had recently used for the Alliance Machine Company building. The exterior walls were built of custom-designed concrete masonry units with colored glass inserts. The service building contained a sales area and administrative offices for the operation of the cemetery as well as the caretaker's small two-bedroom apartment. The unadorned and austere House of God sculptural feature was constructed around a man-made knoll. It consisted of a series of eleven uncomplicated open arches in precast concrete, each 32 feet high, laid out in a 32-foot-diameter circle.

Not only the cemetery's architect, Parker also sat on the board of directors. Speaking generally, he noted: "Boy, what a business—you buy land by the acre and you sell it by the square inch."[46] Parker's son Derek and second wife Jane are both buried in Vista Memorial Gardens, near the House of God feature.

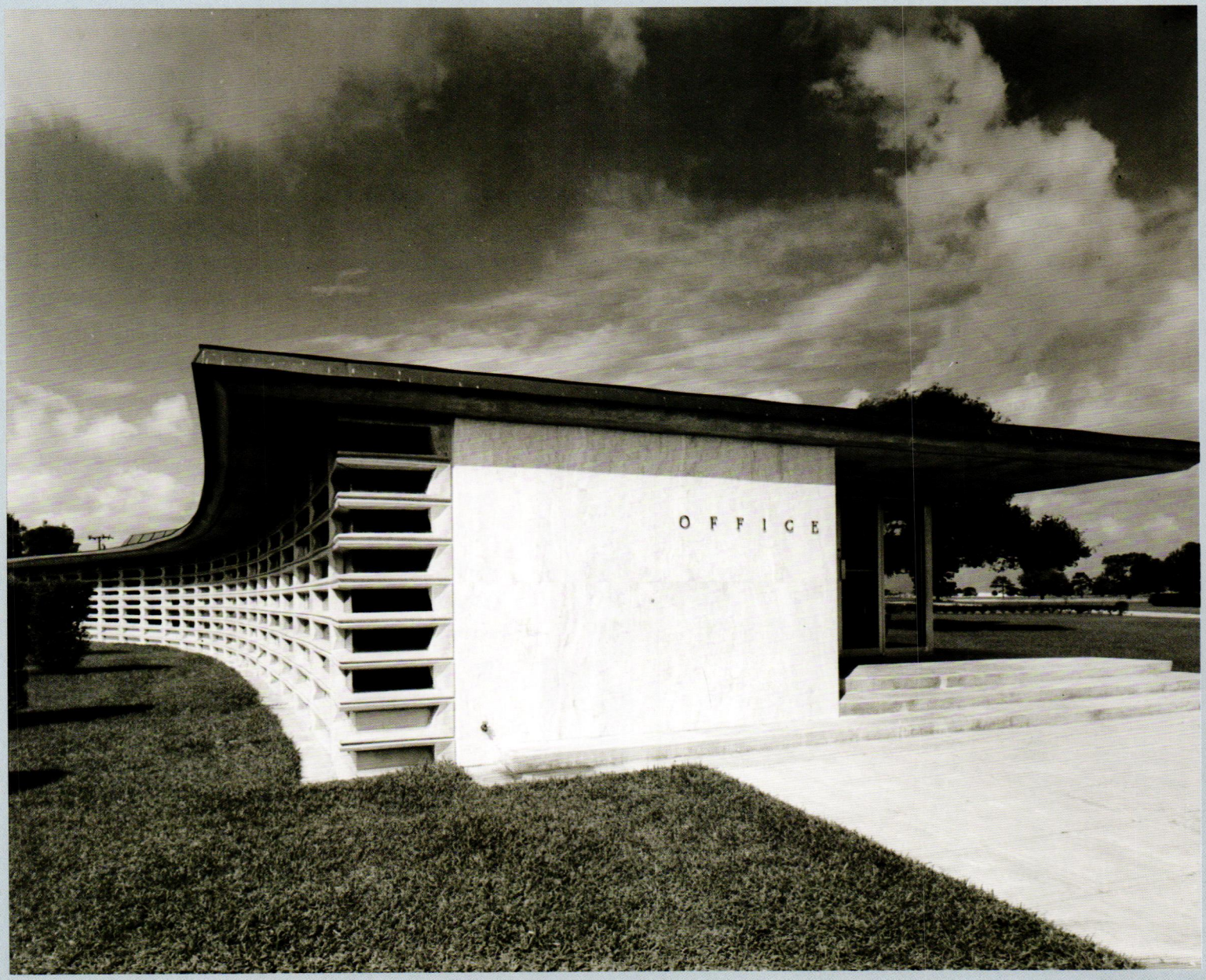


House of God. Photo by author.





Vista Memorial Gardens. *Above*, Bird's-eye detail of master plan; *bottom left*, exterior elevation study of chapel; *facing,* Service building. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.


OFFICE

ALSPACH RESIDENCE

Key Biscayne, Florida ▪ 1959 ▪ Built project—demolished

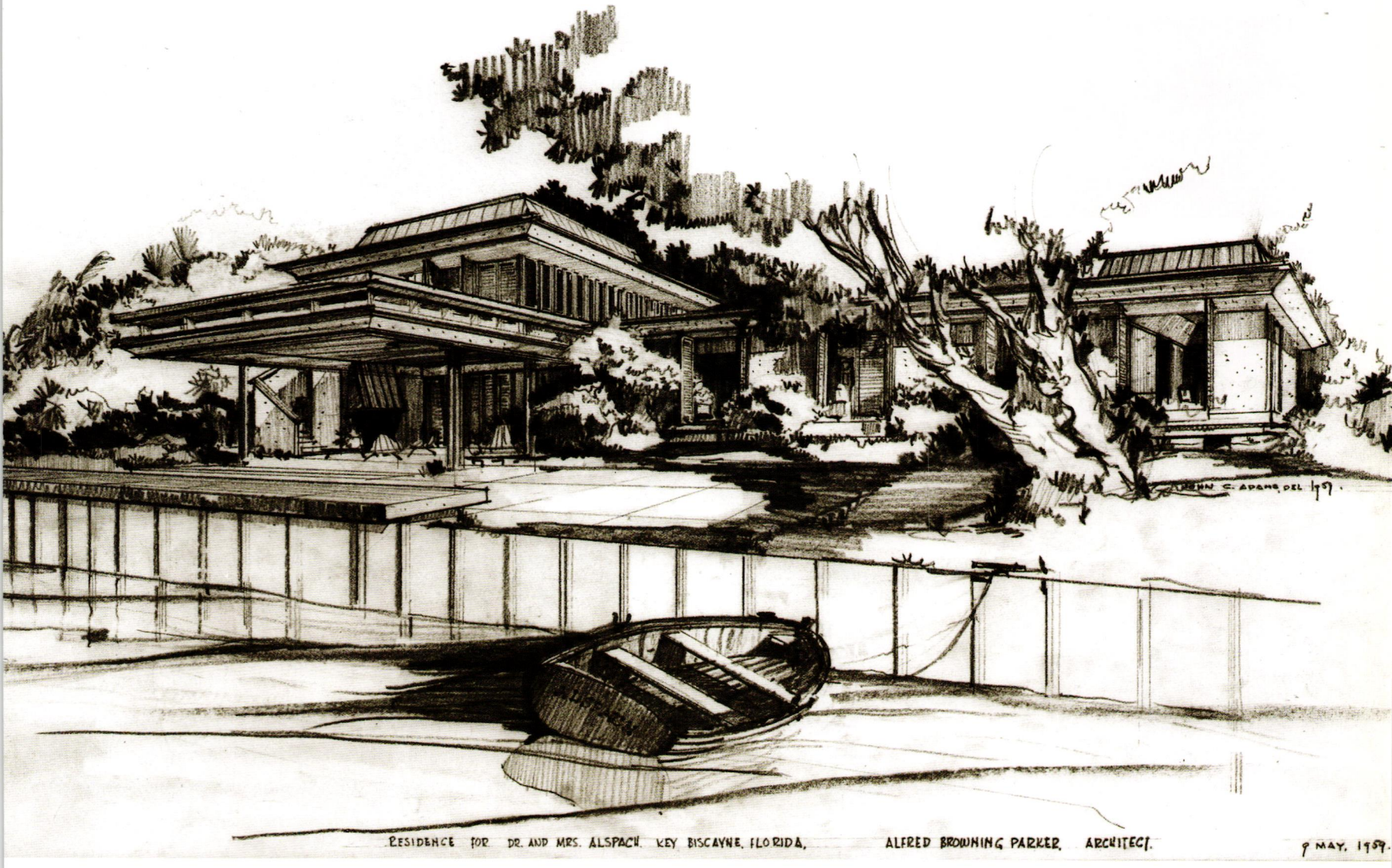
Parker recalled the Alspach residence, located on Mashta Island in Key Biscayne, as a "nice little cypress house in the nature of a proper house for Key Biscayne . . . a lovely site."[47] Parker obviously found the site and Dr. & Mrs. Bruce Alspach to his liking, and he designed a notable home that met the requirements of his clients as well as sensitively responding to what the site offered. Parker's design elevated the home to protect against rising tidal water by allowing the water to pass below. Raising the home also yielded greater views of the ocean and Biscayne Bay, not to mention the prevailing breezes across the bay.



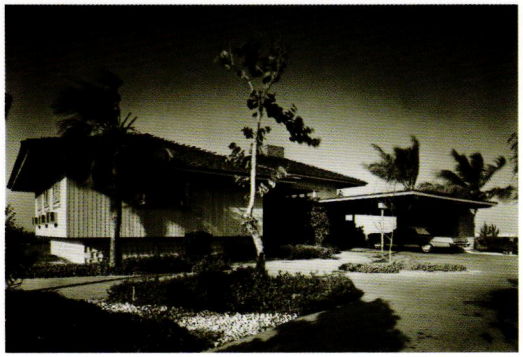
Waterfront side, facing Biscayne Bay. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

The home, built by Gunn and Gunn, contained three levels. Parker located the primary living spaces on the 32-foot-square top level—the living, dining, and kitchen, in an open plan with a brick fireplace in its center. Persiana doors lined the living room, opening onto a balcony and the vistas beyond. Below, Parker located the master bedroom suite and a maid's room and bath. Opposite the breezeway entry, on an intermediate level, were three additional bedrooms and two baths for the children.

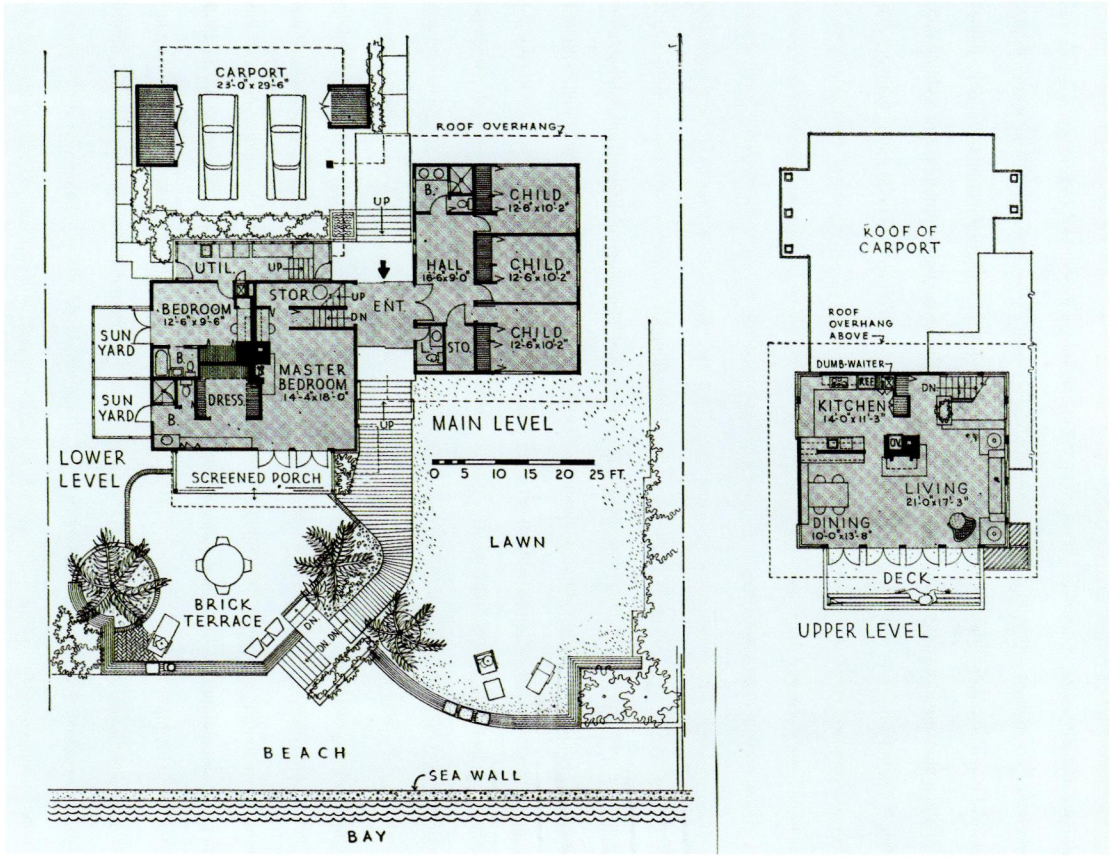
Parker's initial design scheme, presented to his clients in May 1959,[48] showed a basically flat roof, but the final design called for a more conventional hipped roof (probably for cost considerations) covered with hand-split cedar shakes. The exterior walls were vertical tongue-and-groove cypress siding. The interior material was primarily wood. As in Parker's earlier Ewing residence, the corners of the upper level featured mitered butt-glazed fixed windows.



Perspective of preliminary scheme. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Street (front) side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Ground- and upper-floor plans. Reprinted with permission of *House Beautiful* © 1964.

Interestingly, the initial abandoned preliminary design was suggested in 1964 for the unbuilt Kearney residence in New Jersey. As Parker put it, "Kearney not built—Alspach accomplished . . . all dogs have their day. And I didn't abandon a plan just because it was not executed. Besides the sites were not dissimilar."[49]



Dining alcove. Note mitered corner window. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Living area. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

GENERAL CAPITAL CORPORATION

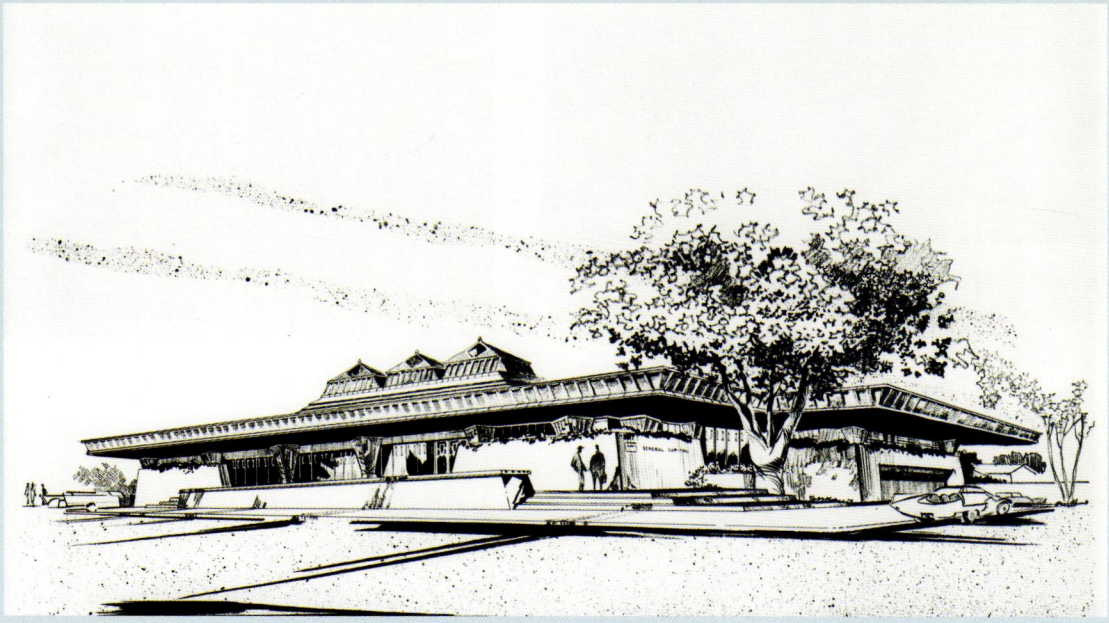
Miami, Florida ▪ 1959 ▪ Built project—extant



Detail of corner. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Reminiscent of his earlier Alliance Machine Company building in Coconut Grove, Parker described the building for General Capital Corporation as basically a monolithic chunk of solid concrete—floors, walls, and roof.[50] Built for $162,000 in 1959, this 6,000-square-foot building contains a raised and covered north-facing entry porch, a vaulted lobby top-lit with three large skylights, four private offices, an open accounting area, a vault, and a computer room identified as "the IBM room," plus rest room facilities. A 775-square-foot fireproof basement is dedicated to record storage.

Parker integrated the letters *G* and *C* into the design of the ornamented precast concrete columns—virtually making General Capital the capital of the column. The roof is faced with copper. The interior has



Preliminary perspective. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Street (front) side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

few opaque partitions; glass walls allow natural light to penetrate the inner spaces. The building's horizontality relates to its location on a busy commercial streetfront. But with its broad and sheltering roof, it also respects the adjacent residential area.

The client moved in upon completion on April 29, 1960. The building remains virtually intact, thanks in part to the stewardship of its current owners, the publishers of the *Miami Times* newspaper.





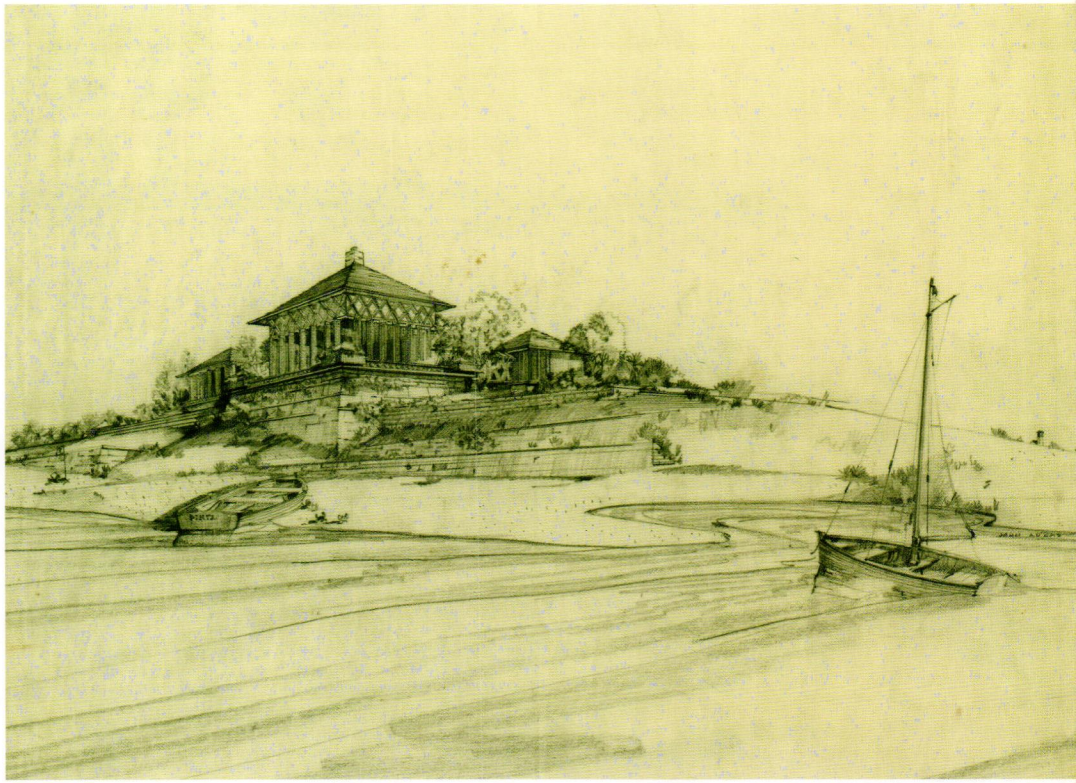
General Capital Corporation. *Above*, main business lobby; *left*, accounting area. Photos by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

GRAHAM RESIDENCE

Andros Island, Bahamas ▪ 1959 ▪ Unbuilt project

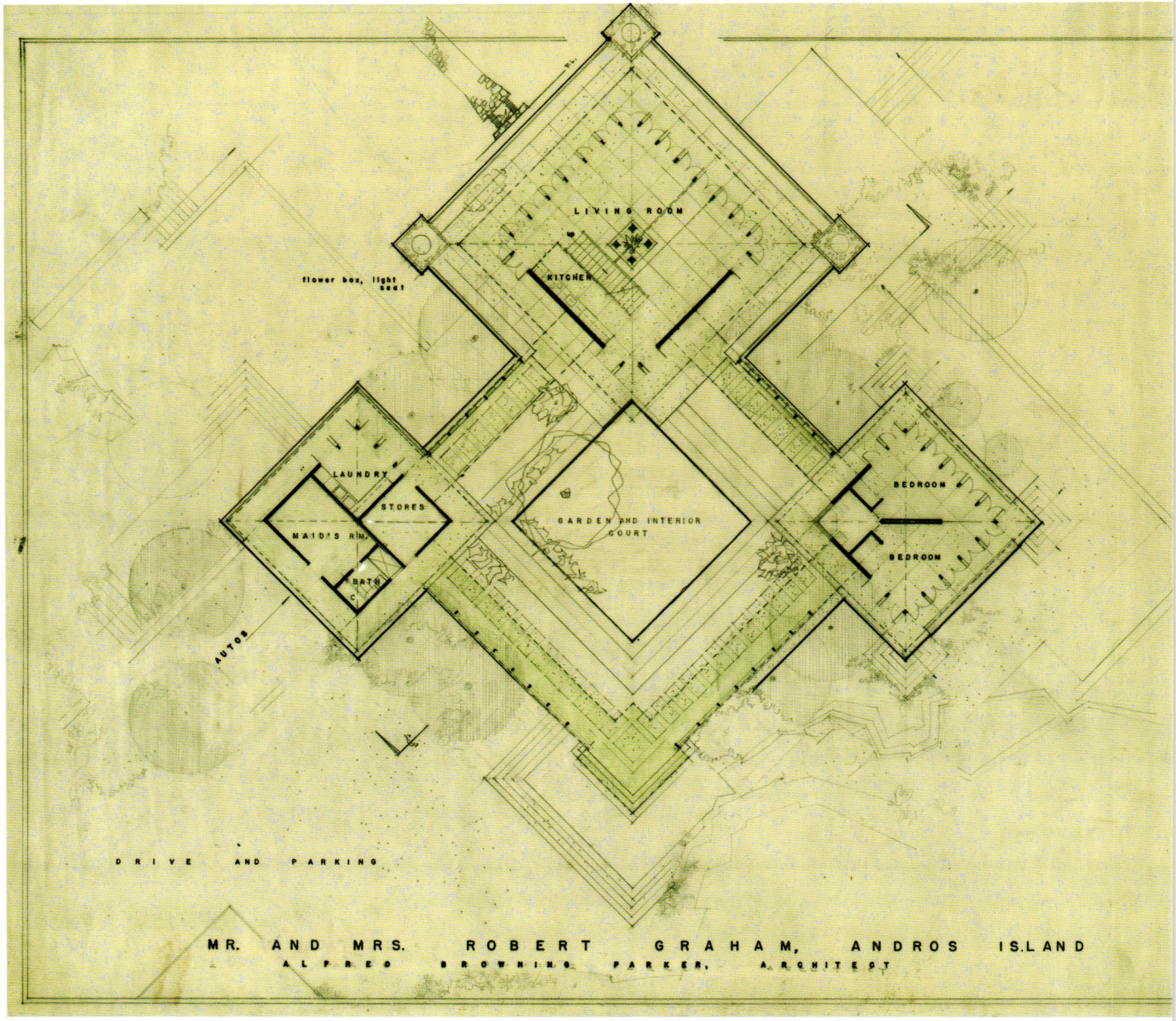
Robert Graham, a high-powered New York art dealer, approached Parker after learning of the design for John Cameron Swayze that Parker was then working on, and he met with Parker in Miami. The two projects had manifest similarities, as both were for vacation homes in tropical island settings. It does appear that the site for the Graham project afforded an opportunity for a much more dramatic result, being well elevated above the water. But both were destined to remain unbuilt, even after detailed construction drawings were prepared.

As Parker designed the Graham home, he kept in mind the resources of local labor and local materials. A broad and stable masonry base was to support a precut wood structure manufactured in the United States and then shipped to the island and assembled on site. The remaining prefabricated components—windows, persiana doors, siding, shingles—would also be shipped for onsite assembly by local labor, supplemented by imported craftsmen for specialized jobs.

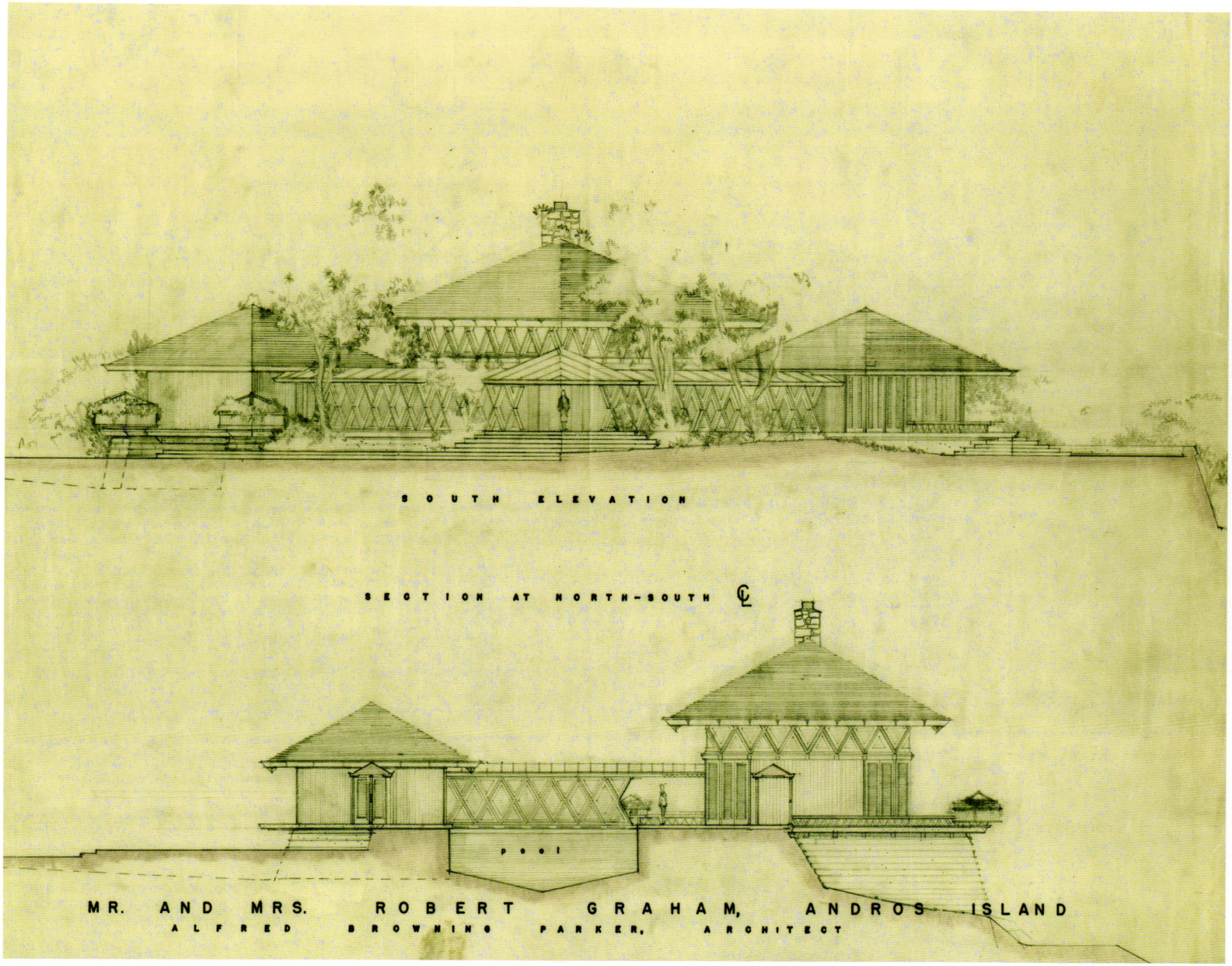


Perspective from water. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

The Graham design was an enlargement of the Swayze project. Four distinct structures were proposed, connected by 4-foot-wide covered walkways. The shelters, which Parker referred to as pavilions, had the same orientation as their platform terraces, whereas in the Swayze project each pavilion was rotated 45 degrees from the orientation of the terrace base.



Graham Residence. *Right,* ground-floor plan; *facing,* exterior elevations. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

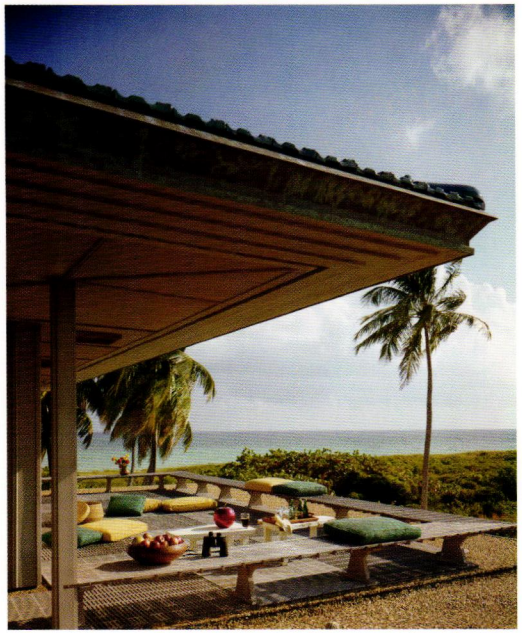


MR. AND MRS. ROBERT GRAHAM, ANDROS ISLAND

ALFRED BROWNING PARKER, ARCHITECT

GROVES RESIDENCE

Freeport, Grand Bahama Island ▪ 1959 ▪ Built project—demolished



Roof terrace off upper-level master bedroom. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

With the development of Freeport thriving, Wallace Groves and investment partner Jack Hayward obtained two large adjoining oceanfront lots and contracted Parker to design their family residences. The larger of the two was for Groves, who was quickly becoming known as the Monarch of Grand Bahama Island. Groves and his wife Georgette had five adopted children, and they also needed to do a good deal of entertaining.

In a letter to *House Beautiful*'s editorial director James DeLong, Parker described the Groves residence:

> It is a very large home designed for a family with many children. All the principal rooms open to the ocean on one side and to terraces, pool and patio on the opposite side. This permits a complete cross flow of air. In addition, the rooms are air conditioned for summer days which can become extreme in temperature and humidity. On the ocean side plants that thrive on the beach have been selected for landscaping such as coconut palms and seagrapes. Even the wild beach grasses have been utilized as ground cover. The patio was designed as a protected area from the wind and salt spray where rare and exotic tropical plants could be grown with an abundance of moisture and plenty of shade—in other words a simulation of deep hammock (climax forest of the tropics). The building materials are quarry keystone cut on the island (oolite limestone), concrete, steel, wood and ceramic tile. The woods are primarily cypress and teak. The ceramic tile is a bright blue-green color similar to the Gulf Stream which flows in the Atlantic not too far from the dwelling. All of the metal work on the exterior is of copper which has been encouraged to weather to a blue-green patina.[51]

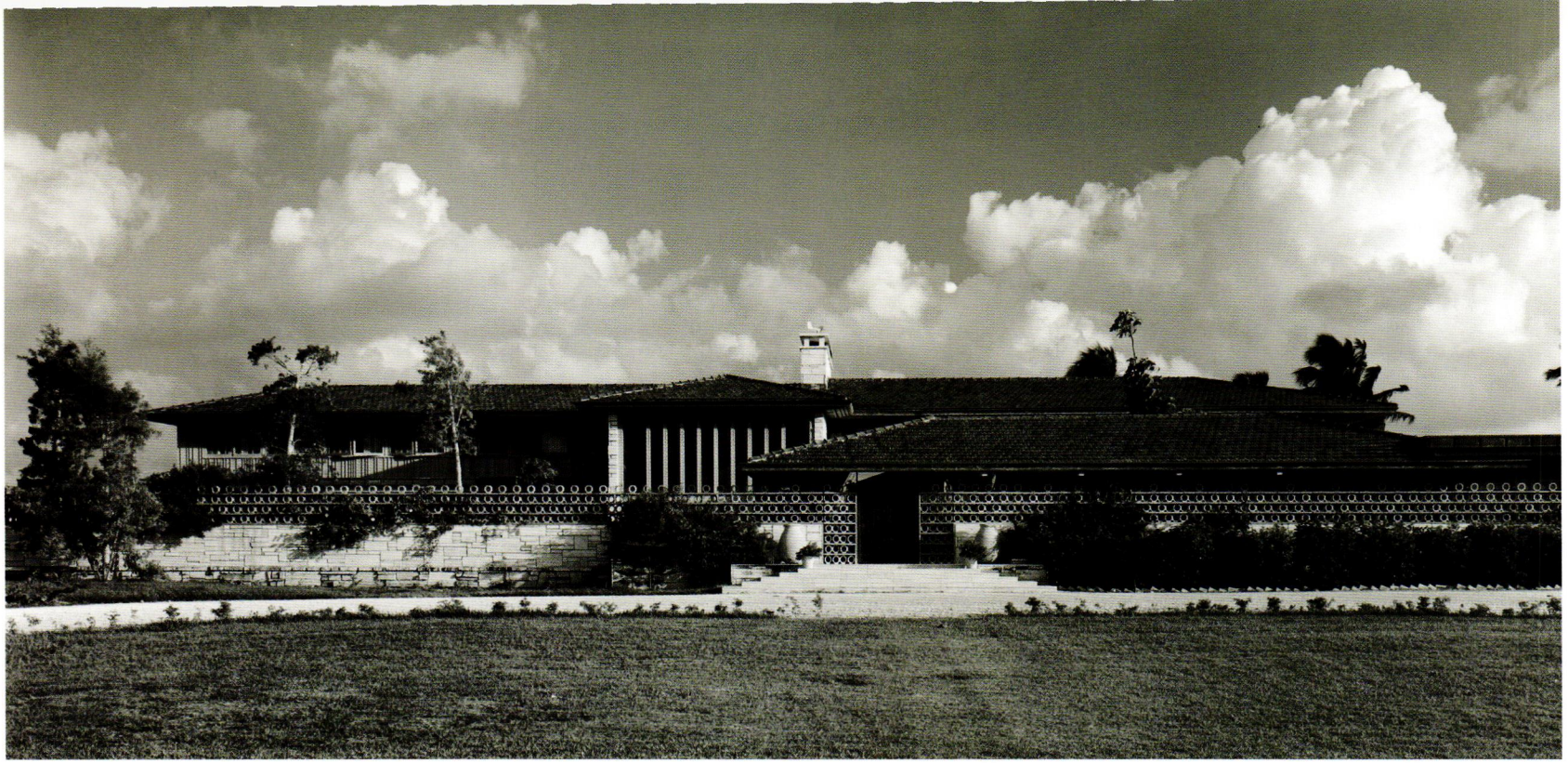
The elongated two-story house stretched to almost 200 feet in length, but rarely more than 30 feet in depth. The entry sequence was carefully controlled—from the parking area, visitors ascended steps through a double gate in a privacy wall into a lush patio leading to the main double doors. On admittance, they encountered an intimate inglenook directly ahead, large open informal areas for living, entertaining, and dining to the right, and grand stairs to the left to access the upper floor. Beyond the stairs



Water side facing Atlantic Ocean. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

were the playroom and guest suite. The upper floor contained a master bedroom suite with exterior deck, three additional bedrooms with two bathrooms, and a large study. The garage, servant quarters, kitchen, and service and utility areas were located off the dining area on the ground floor.

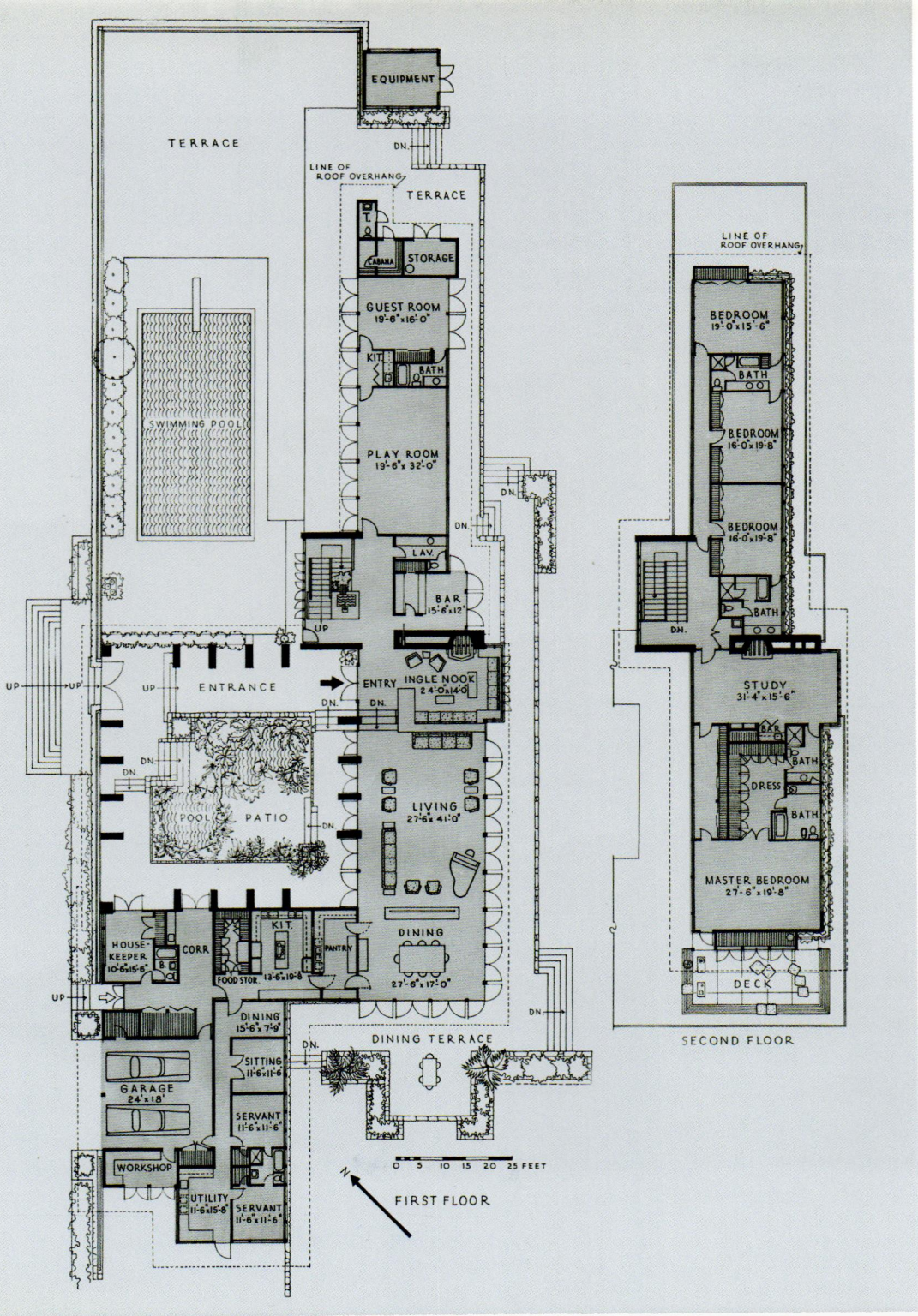
The home evoked some of the general characteristics of the early Prairie-style houses of Frank Lloyd Wright—emphasis on horizontality, low-slope hipped roofs with wide overhangs, grouped windows, and the use of natural native materials. To take full advantage of the views from the residence, the design incorporated continuous windows around the primary perimeter, protected decks on the second floor, and elevated exterior terraces.



Land (southeast) side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

The construction cost of the Groves home, built by Marine Construction Company, was in the neighborhood of $1 million. The adjacent Hayward residence was built for half as much. While the Hayward residence remains largely intact, the Groves residence, which was sold after Groves passed away in 1983, was demolished in 2003. The unsympathetic subsequent owner had it torn down because "for my taste it had far too low ceilings—therefore not allowing me any meaningful renovations."[52]

Simultaneously with the Freeport residence Parker designed a second, larger home for Groves, for an undisclosed location in Maryland. It remained unbuilt, although construction drawings were completed. The two designs shared the same program requirements and were similar in layout. However, the Maryland residence, which featured a two-story living area, extensive use of stone and exterior plaster stucco, and steeper sheltering hipped roofs, was to have been located on a large tract of land and situated prominently on a hilltop sixty feet above the access road.



Ground- and upper-level floor plans. Reprinted with permission of *House Beautiful* © 1964.



Groves residence. Central stair. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Pool, terrace, and front entrance loggia. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.





Entrance loggia. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Living area. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

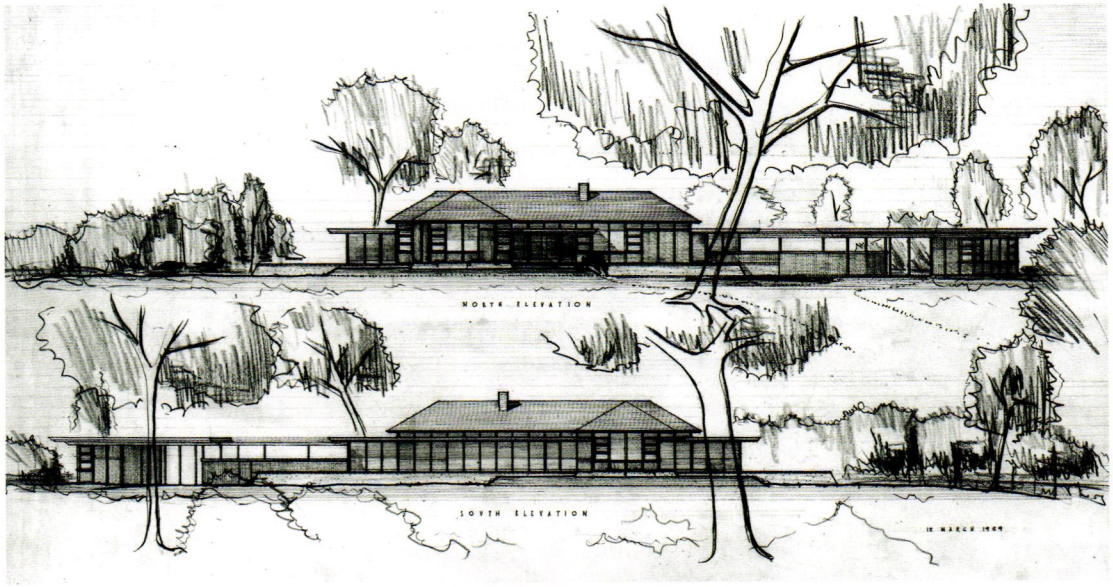
MENEFEE RESIDENCE (YAUPON)

Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina ▪ 1959 ▪ Built project—extant

Like so many non-Florida clients, Charles and Lisa Menefee discovered Parker's work in the pages of *House Beautiful*. Lisa, who had once desired to be an architect herself, had a special affection for his architecture. The Menefees asked Parker to design a home for them and their two children (with another on the way and a fourth added soon after) on a sixty-five-acre tract of land in the Lowcountry outside Charleston. They recognized the inherent beauty of their land, and they wanted a home that was beautiful, functional, and affordable. Lisa Menefee recalled that at the time Parker was designing a house for John Cameron Swayze in New York and "he stopped by on the way through on the other client's dime."[53] After Parker viewed the property, he produced a design that responded well to their stated needs and to the context of the property. Parker located the residence well off the access road, ensuring a high degree of privacy while providing plenty of play areas for the soon-to-be-large family. And he elevated the entire single-story residence approximately 42 inches on average to protect against rising floodwater from storms. Around the home Parker provided a variety of raised paved patios and grassed terraces, all acting to further expand the enclosed living spaces of the relatively small home—just under 2,000 square feet of enclosed heated area. A pool, some distance away, was added later.

The central focus of the home is a large brick fireplace that separates the open living and dining areas. The single-room width with generous windows and persiana doors on both sides affords cross-ventilation as well as ample views of Lowcountry vegetation and wildlife—alligators, eagles, deer, ospreys. The mahogany persiana doors were shipped from Cuba to Canada and then south to Charleston, owing to the tenuous political situation between the United States and Cuba. They open the dining and living areas out onto a substantial screened porch. The kitchen is at one end of the house and the three bedrooms and two bathrooms at the opposite end. The plan, organized on a 4-foot-square grid, resembles a stout-legged T. Beyond the kitchen and outdoor dining terrace Parker placed a carport, terminated by an enclosed shop and storage area, at a curious angle to the primary axis of the home.

The siding is vertical cypress boards, with hand-split cedar shingles on the roof. All the flashing and



Exterior elevations, north and south sides. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



South (rear) side. Photo by author.

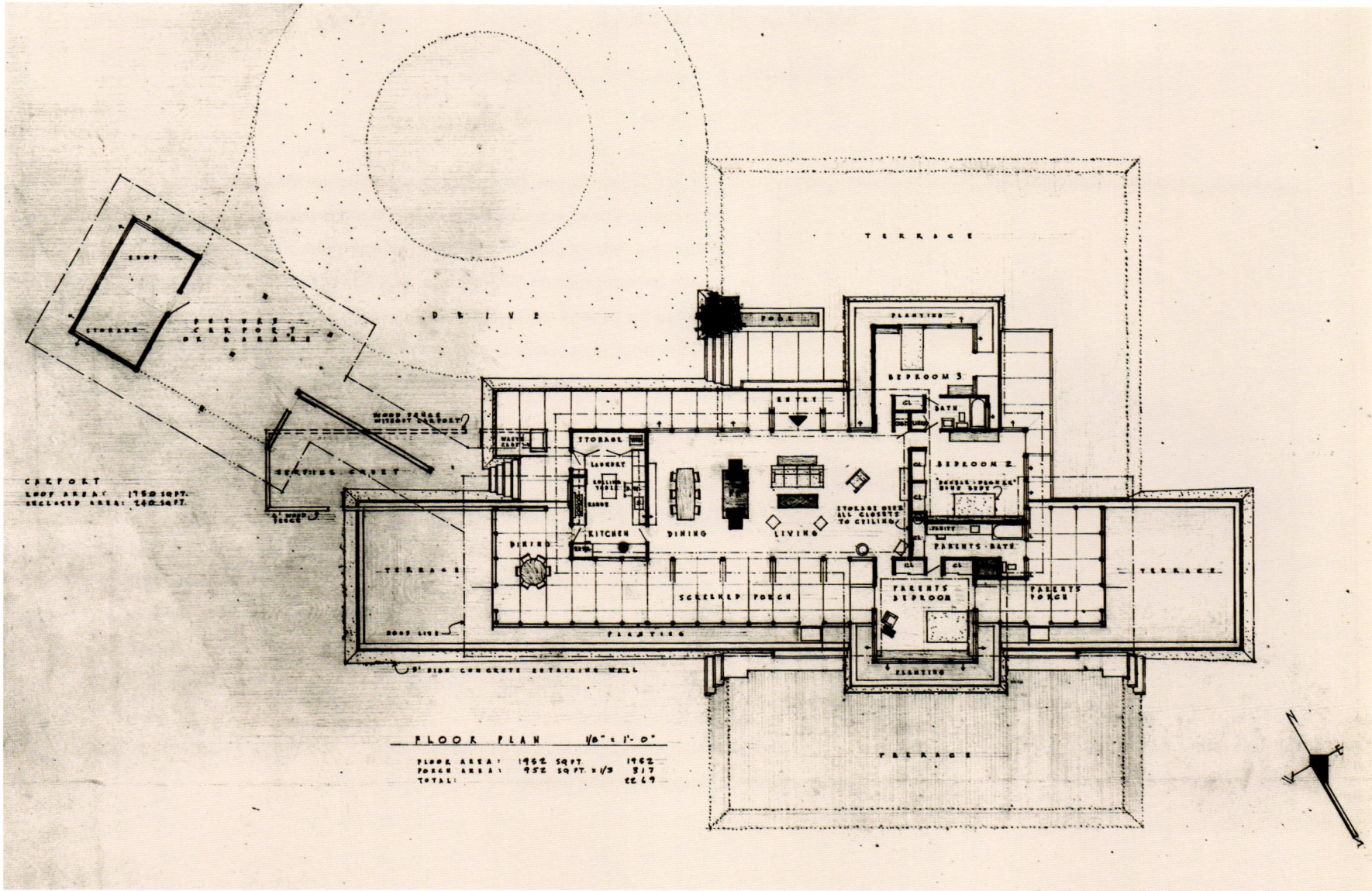
metal trim is copper. Just below the roof overhang Parker added a foot-high continuous band of clerestory windows, which create the illusion that the roof is floating above the walls. The living-dining area ceilings are open, exposing the wood decking over roof beams rhythmically spaced at 4-foot intervals, between the banded windows. Lisa recalled the home fondly: "Its bones were lovely."[54]

Parker named the home Yaupon, a local Indian word for the caffeine-laden cassina bush. The name was inlaid into the concrete planter adjacent to the pond, steps, and patio that Parker designed for the entry sequence. Construction of Parker's design was completed by early 1960. Lisa remembered that Parker cautioned them to "compromise on certain things but not on structure."[55] The home survived many storms, including the horrific devastation of the category-4 Hurricane Hugo in 1989.

The residence has been slightly altered, with a high degree of respect and sensitivity, by the clients' son, architect Charles Menefee III.



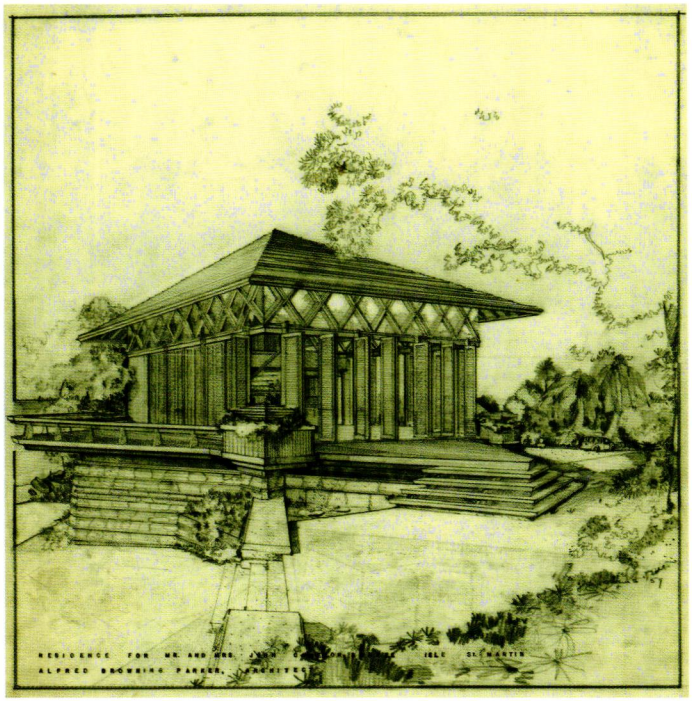
Living area. Photo by author.



Floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

SWAYZE RESIDENCE

Île St. Martin ▪ 1959 ▪ Unbuilt project

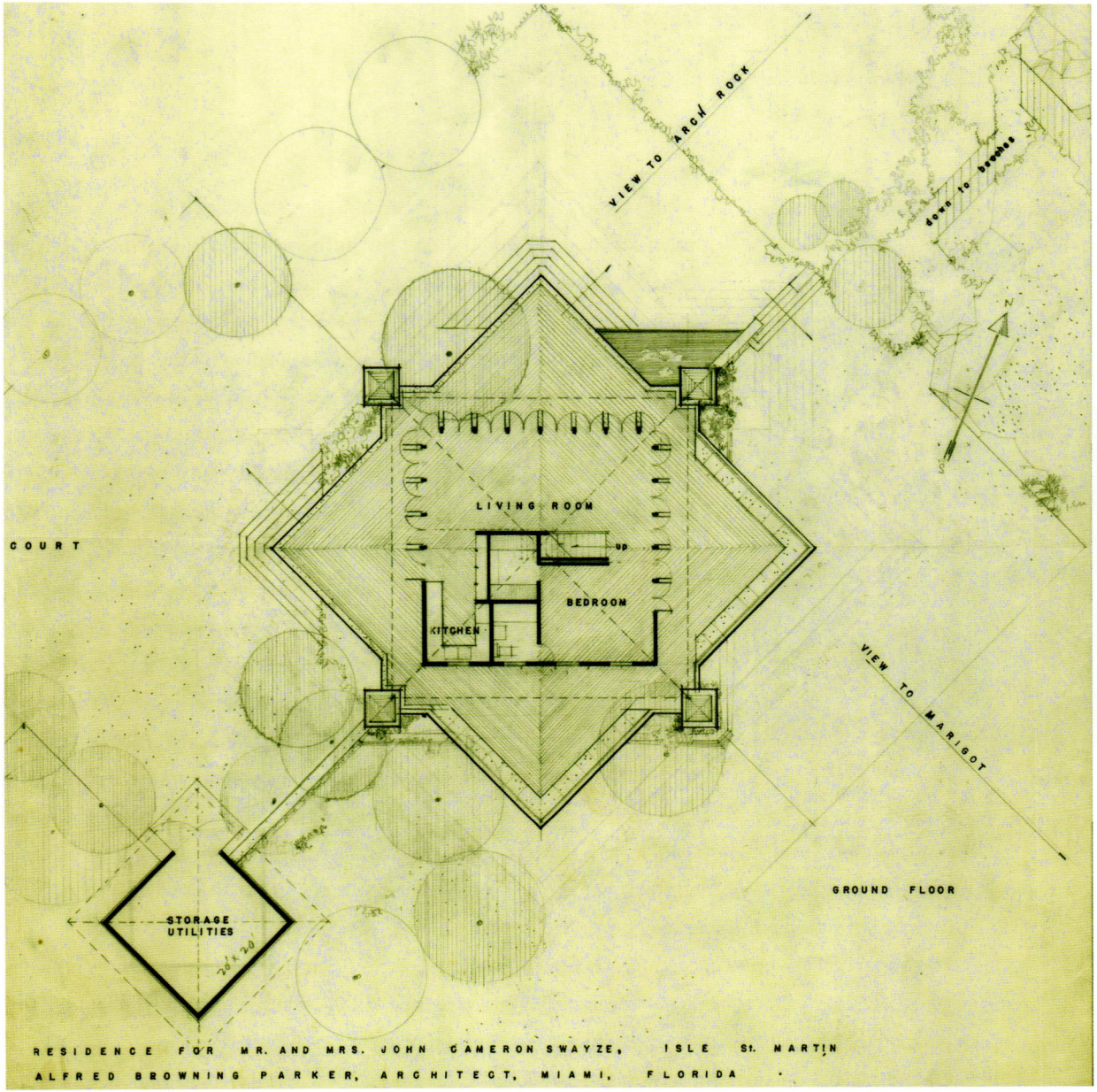


Perspective. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

Little is known about the project Parker designed for John Cameron Swayze, a popular midcentury news commentator and game show panelist, NBC's first television news anchor, and through the 1970s the commercial spokesperson for Timex. The project was to have been located on St. Martin, a half-French island in the eastern Caribbean. Parker visited the project site in April 1959,[56] and he soon created a simple and open solution to the tropical experience and environment—something he expanded upon in his article "What You Need to Know Before You Build in the Tropics" in *House Beautiful*.[57] The project, undoubtedly a vacation destination, was not built, as Swayze was too busy to pursue its construction.[58] Modified slightly, the design was proposed to Robert Graham for Andros Island and was later incorporated into the master plan for the Navy Island development as one of the speculative dwellings.

The house was to be a 28-foot-square open plan—living, dining, cooking, and eating areas below, a loft above containing a bedroom and study, with bathrooms on each level—set on a 46-foot-square raised platform terrace. The house and the terrace platform were juxtaposed at a 45-degree angle, creating four separate and somewhat private triangular sitting areas. A detached and remote 20-foot-square storage building was also proposed.

"The tropics offer a setting of rare beauty," Parker wrote; " . . . it is hardly necessary to describe the advantages of the indolent life in the tropics."[59]



Ground-floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

EPSTEIN RESIDENCE

Miami, Florida ▪ 1960 ▪ Built project—extant



East (rear) side, facing Biscayne Bay. Photo by Alan Brody, used with permission.

After seeing Parker's Flagler Federal Savings and Loan building in downtown Miami, Joy Epstein urged her husband Arthur, a local contractor, to consider Parker as the architect for their new home. She liked his style, and after they met Parker and toured some of his work in Coconut Grove, the Epsteins were both convinced that he was the man for the job.[60]

The property was a narrow waterfront lot with a wide vista across Biscayne Bay to Miami Beach. Instead of orienting the walls parallel and perpendicular to the waterfront, which constricts the vista, Parker's idea was to open up the panoramic view by placing two walls at a 45-degree angle to the shoreline. His two-story solution provided what the Epsteins required for a family of five. The main level consists of an entrance foyer, living and dining rooms, kitchen, dual studies, and a powder room. A single-story connection between the home and the two-car carport contains maid's quarters and utility functions. On the second floor are four bedrooms, a small playroom, and three bathrooms. All the bedrooms open out onto a large interconnecting balcony overlooking the yard and waterfront.

The two-story open foyer and stair is a feature and orienting device of the home. At the entrance the exterior appears to be sheathed and sheltered by repeating vertical wood pickets over the glass window wall behind, offering privacy and sun screening while still admitting light during the daytime, and becoming a huge light during the evening hours.

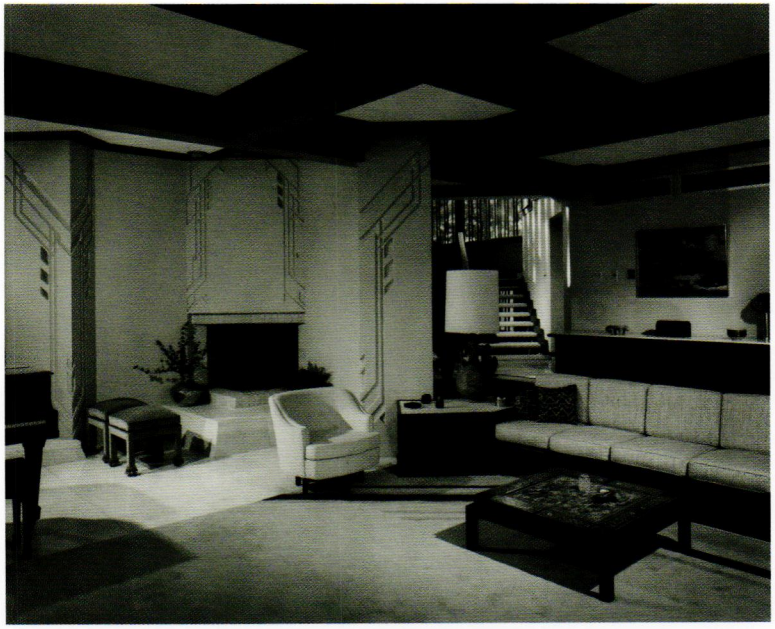
The horizontal structure of the home is poured-in-place concrete, with the vertical load-bearing walls being stucco over reinforced concrete masonry. A deep-sloped fascia of copper defines the edge of the angled sheltering roof line. Parker used either sand-finished plaster or mahogany paneling for the interior walls, and plaster ceilings and trim in the interior, with finely detailed and executed built-in cabinetry

throughout. The dining room table was designed by Parker, as was the living room rug. The stair railing, cabinetry pulls, and incised graphic design at the fireplace were added details that created both continuity and additional interest.

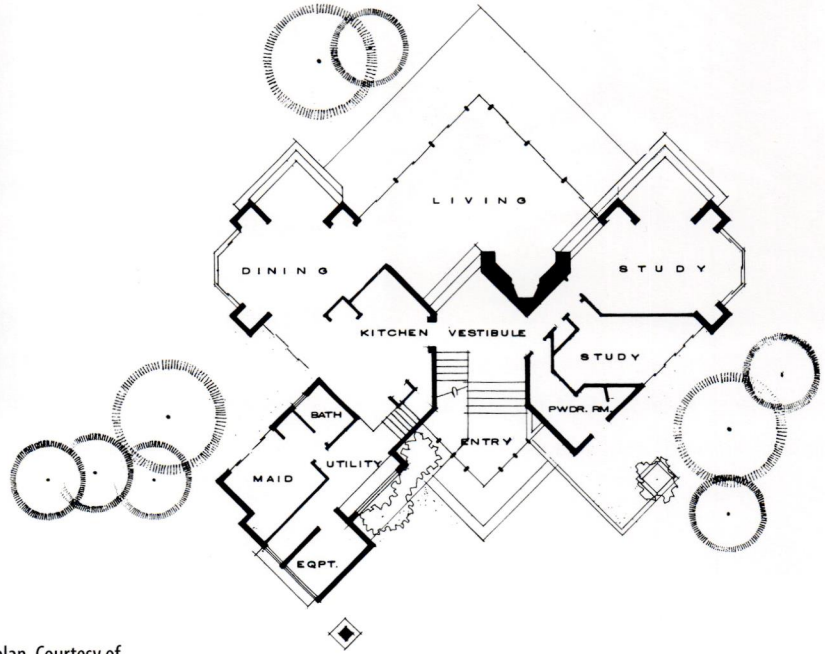
The home was designed in 1960 and completed in 1961. A pool was added later, though not built according to Parker's master plan, and the adjacent lot to the south was acquired for a tennis court. Parker also designed an addition enlarging the playroom off the carport, but it was never executed.



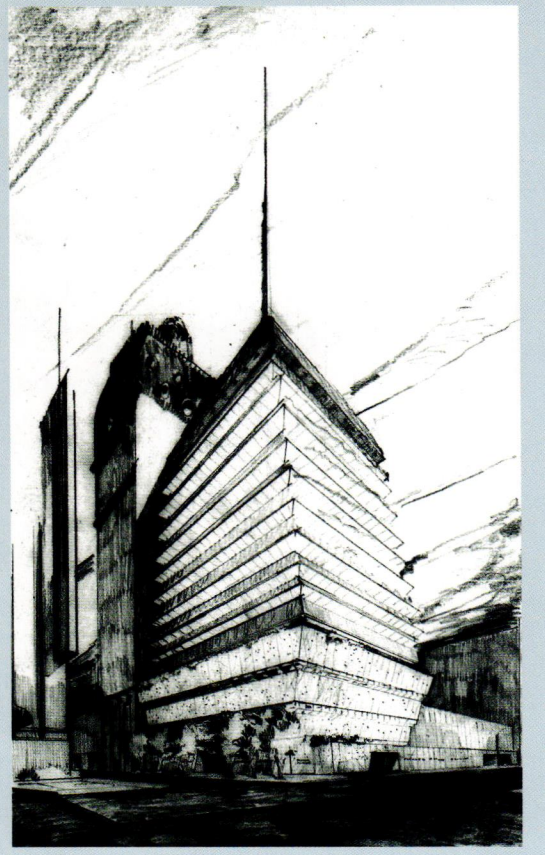
Front entrance. Photo by Alan Brody, used with permission.



Living area. Photo by Black-Baker Photography.



First-level floor plan. Courtesy of *Florida Architecture* magazine.



Perspective concept sketch of Flagler Federal Savings and Loan downtown headquarters, unbuilt scheme. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

FLAGLER FEDERAL SAVINGS AND LOAN

Miami, Florida ▪ 1960 ▪ Built project—extant

Bank projects were one of the mainstays of Parker's office for approximately a quarter century, from the mid-1950s through the 1970s. His bank clients included Flagler Federal Savings and Loan, First Federal Savings and Loan, Sunshine State Bank, United National Bank, Coconut Grove Bank, Bank of Florida at Homestead (also known as South Dade Farmers Bank), First National Bank of Riviera Beach, Barclay's Bank, and Royal Bank of Canada. Some were single buildings; some were both main and branch buildings; some were interior spaces within existing commercial and retail buildings.

Parker had his longest history with the Flagler Federal Savings and Loan Association. He designed their first location in downtown Miami in 1955 and their first branch at the Biscayne Shopping Center in 1958. His initial design for the new downtown headquarters in 1960 was one of the largest projects he had undertaken and certainly one of his most daring bank designs. Its location on a prime corner in downtown Miami was the catalyst that caused Parker to create a bold and visionary design. It also was a significant step in the recently formulated Magic City Center Plan for the rehabilitation of downtown Miami. Parker used the term "pagoda" to describe the design. The thirteen-story skyscraper was the vertical corner element, with the adjoining five-level parking deck (complete with a heliport) filling out the block horizontally. The main public banking function was on the ground floor, accessible from both streets, with the next three floors containing offices. The bank planned to lease the remaining upper floors, making the tower an income producer for the client. The top floor was to have been a television studio, with a communications microwave tower above. And a basement level was proposed, containing a well-equipped bomb shelter. Parker specified a solid Italian travertine marble sheath on the building's base. The tower of glass would have a central skylit atrium, and the cantilevered floors were designed to shade the perimeter ribbon glass. The base would be set far enough back from the allowable building line to create a tree-lined plaza along Third Avenue and First Street. Parker proposed phasing the construction. The five-story base, containing the banking functions, along with the associated parking deck, could constitute the initial phase, with the tower a speculative future phase.[61]



Concept model of Flagler Federal Savings and Loan downtown headquarters, unbuilt scheme. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Entrance to Flagler Federal Savings and Loan downtown headquarters, built scheme. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

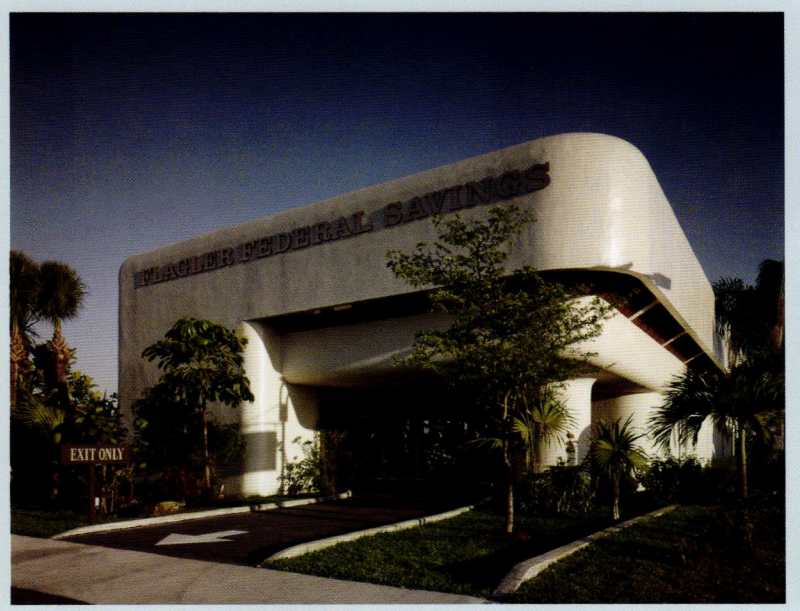
Even though the design was announced in both the *Miami News* and the *Miami Herald*,[62] the initial scheme for the downtown headquarters was not realized, as the bank failed to secure the necessary funding. Being a relatively new bank, Flagler Federal had to look elsewhere for a construction loan, and the cost, estimated by Parker at $3.5 million, proved too high. Parker's initial provocative vision was scaled back considerably, and in less than a year a revised, less daring design—a six-story rectangular box sheathed in Italian travertine marble with vertical windows—was constructed.[63] The building's general contractor was Frank J. Rooney, and the cost was $1 million. Parker retained the tree-lined pedestrian plazas along both streetfronts and, to shelter the bronze doors at the two entrances, he designed cantilevered canopies, ornamented and copper clad. The minimal exterior fenestration and durable materials achieved the goal of energy conservation and minimum maintenance.[64] The interior banking room on the ground floor was a two-story volume, with the second floor overlooking the lobby and containing executive offices. Additional banking services and functions, both public and private, were on the third and sixth floors, leaving the fourth and fifth floors for rentable office spaces. Parker personally selected or designed each piece of furniture in the building, making the interiors as "modern as tomorrow; however, in every aspect the best traditions of the past have been observed in obtaining the dignified character that is essential in a building for Flagler Federal."[65]

Parker oversized the building's foundation so that additional floors could be added in the future—at a minimal cost in 1960 of $9,000. In 1980 three floors were added by the contractor M. R. Harrison at a cost of $2 million—half the building at twice the price. The *Miami Herald* article describing the impending addition quoted Parker: "So I had to be satisfied with building a strong little piggy bank with bronze doors. Now as we are going higher the proportions are getting better."[66] The building still exists, but has been significantly altered and is no longer used for banking.

Parker was a founding member of the board of directors of the Flagler Federal Savings and Loan Association, served as its senior vice president, and remained on the board for many years. Parker was also



Flagler Federal Savings and Loan, North Miami Beach branch. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Flagler Federal Savings and Loan, Westchester branch. © Bo Parker Photographer.



Flagler Federal Savings and Loan, Kings Bay branch. © Bo Parker Photographer.

at various times on the boards of other banks, including First Federal Savings and Loan, Coconut Grove Bank, and the First National Bank of Riviera Beach.

Among the notable projects Parker designed for Flagler Federal Savings and Loan were the curvilineal North Miami Beach branch at NE 165th Street and 15th Avenue (1969, probably his most open bank design), the monolithic Westchester branch on Coral Way in Miami (1972), and the smaller, octagonal Kings Bay branch on South Dixie Highway at SW 144th Street (1979).

GOOD RESIDENCE

Sea Ranch Lakes, Florida ▪ 1960 ▪ Built project—extant

In 1960 Harold Good, a General Motors executive from Michigan, and his wife Wilma (whose family started Smucker's Jelly) retained Parker to design their winter home in Sea Ranch Lakes, a small gated community of 205 home sites bounded by Lauderdale-by-the-Sea to the south, A1A and the Atlantic Ocean to the east, Pompano Beach to the north, and the Intracoastal Waterway to the west.

The Goods wanted a home that reflected the informal Florida lifestyle. While their property was located within an exclusive private community, it was nevertheless a flat, uninspiring 100-by-130-foot residential lot. Parker's unpretentious single-story 2,700-square-foot design was based upon a diamond-shaped module, a geometric grid he infrequently used. He not only designed the house but sited it on the lot and designed the landscape features, the interior built-ins and furniture, and the three primary area rugs, each of a different geometric shape. Parker located two bedrooms, a study, and two and a half baths along the eastern side of the home. The open foyer and the living and dining areas, with a solid concrete fireplace at the center, were collectively sheltered by a soaring vaulted ceiling. The kitchen and utility areas were on the western side. Across the rear (northern) side was a large screened porch accessible from the living area and the master suite.



Street (front) side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Parker used simple, low-maintenance materials—stacked concrete masonry block exterior, concrete roof tiles, terrazzo floors, plaster interiors with cypress wood trim. The open design of the home allowed for cross-ventilation by the constant ocean breezes, while the wide roof overhang sheltered the glass from the sun's glare.

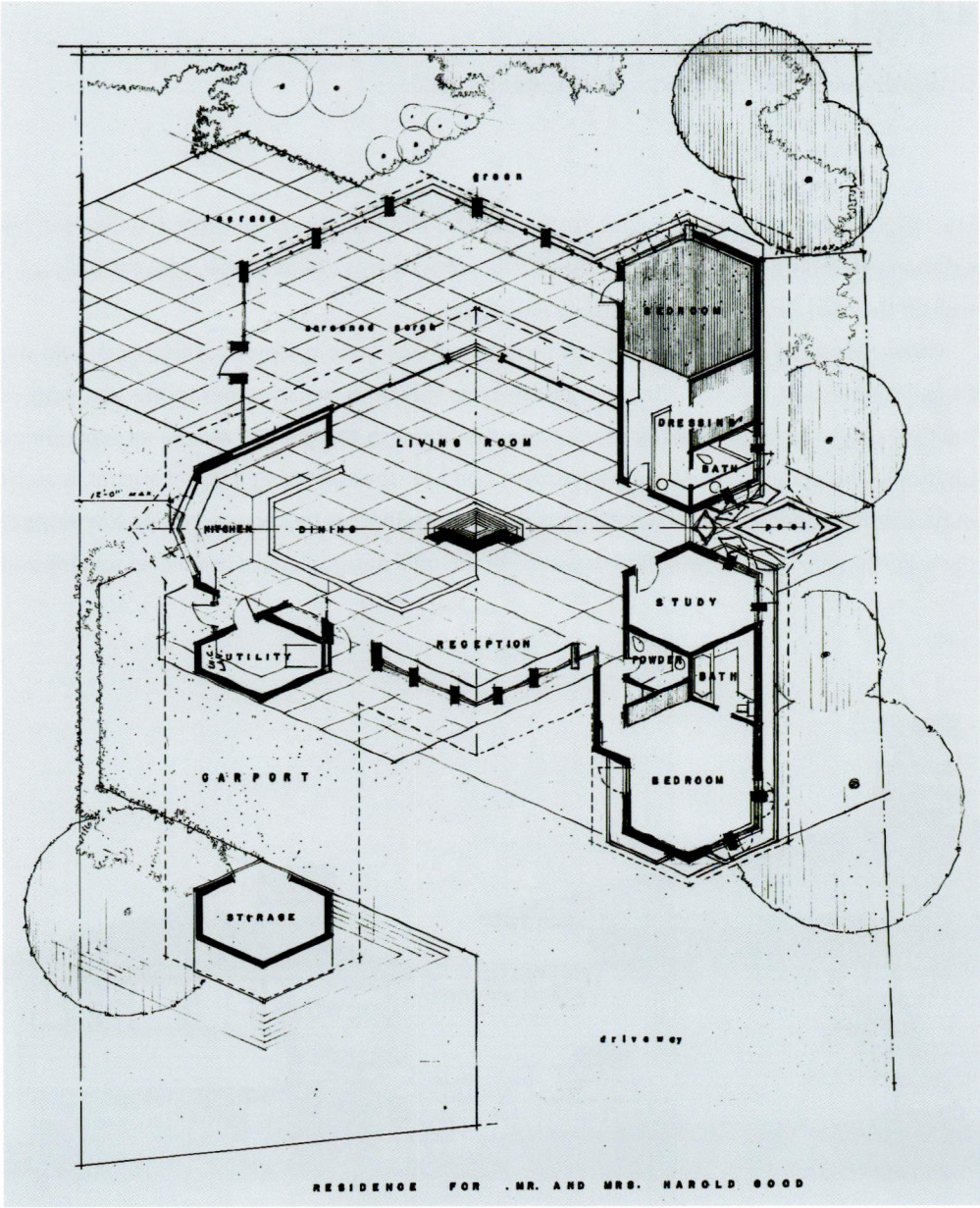
The Goods utilized Parker's services again five years later for the design of their new home in East Lansing, Michigan. While different in its plan geometry, it is somewhat similar spatially to their Florida residence, featuring soaring living and dining spaces dominated by a tall fireplace mass.



Living area. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Great room. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.





Foyer area. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

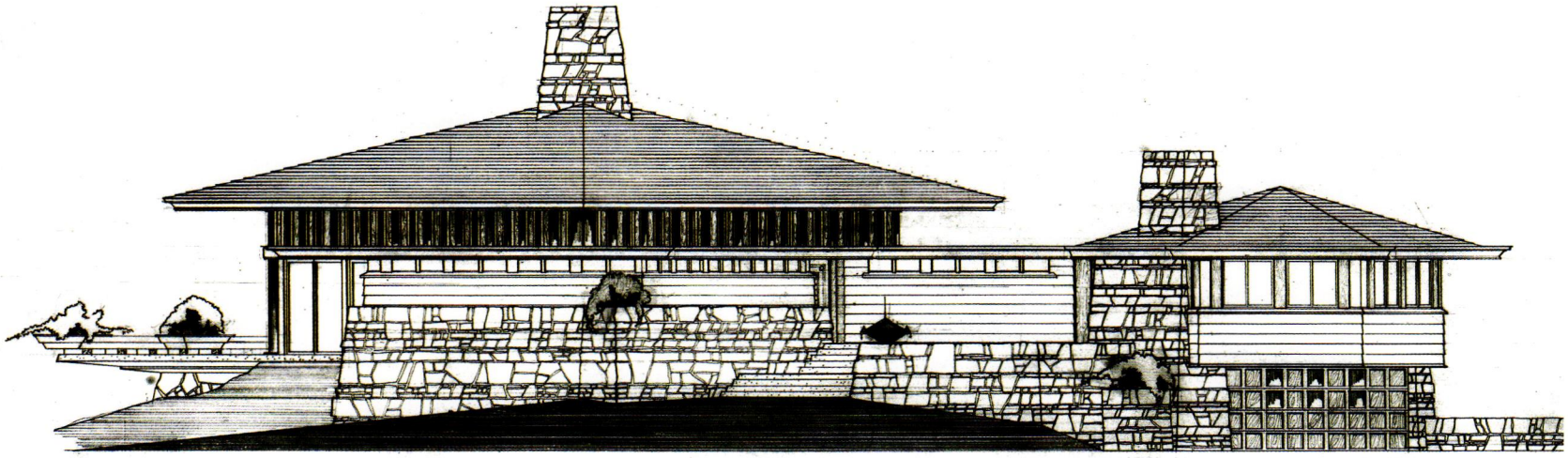
Floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

HAIGHT RESIDENCE

Bedford, New York ▪ 1960 ▪ Unbuilt project

Eric Haight contacted Parker in 1960 to design a home on property he owned in Bedford, New York, an exurban community in Westchester County. The property was a large parcel, with the building site located well off the road and approximately sixty feet above.

Parker designed several schemes, all based on a triangular geometry. This was a bold departure for Parker. All the schemes also shared a sensitivity to marrying the structure to the site, with Parker using multiple levels, terraces, and patios, all tying the home to the ground as well as expanding it outward physically and spatially. The base was to have been of stone, creating a visual anchor, with balcony rails of horizontal wood siding, and continuous ribbons of windows below a sheltering low-slope hipped roof of shake shingles. The construction drawings of the final design detail a multilevel scheme with the main



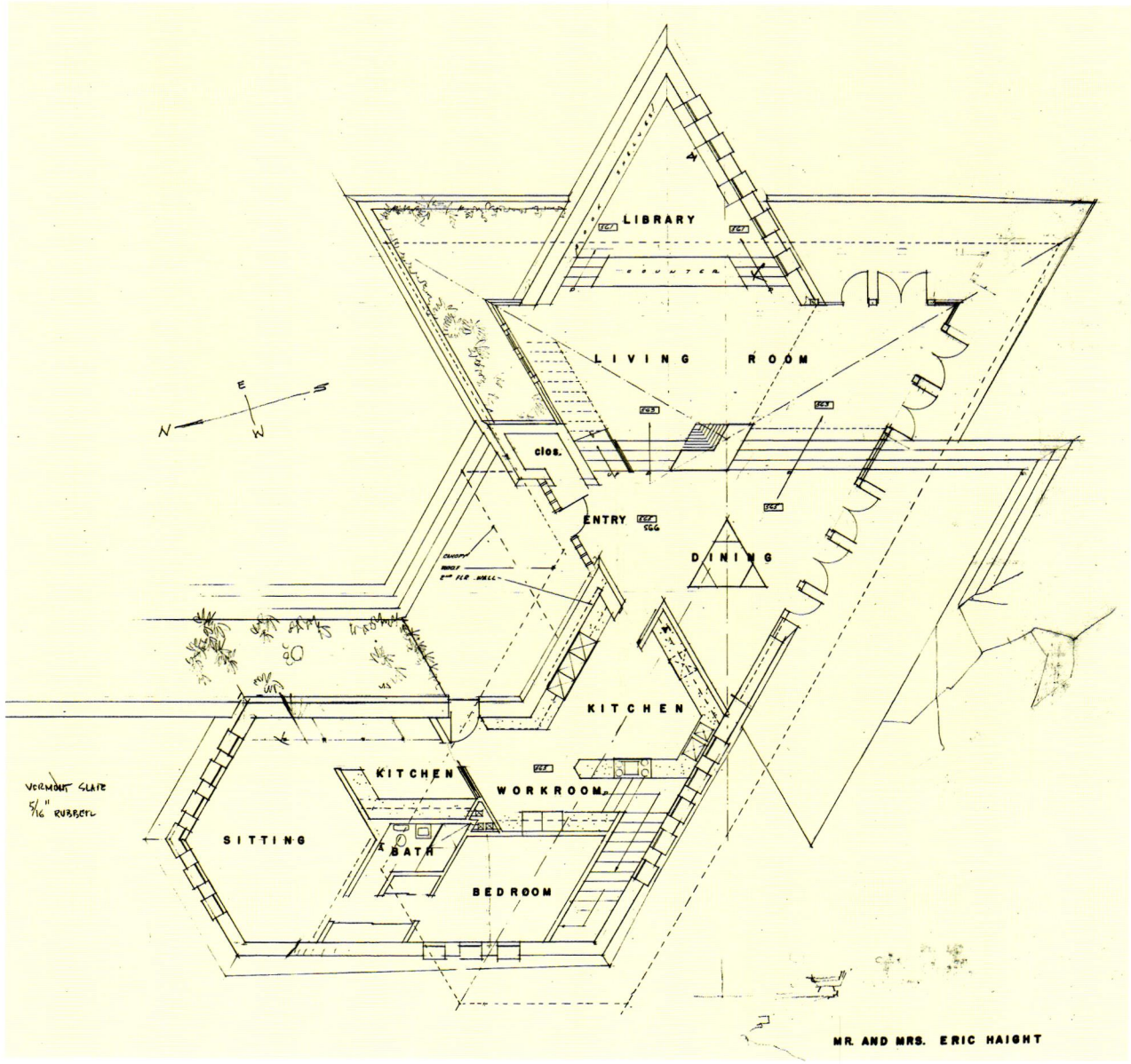
Exterior elevation. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



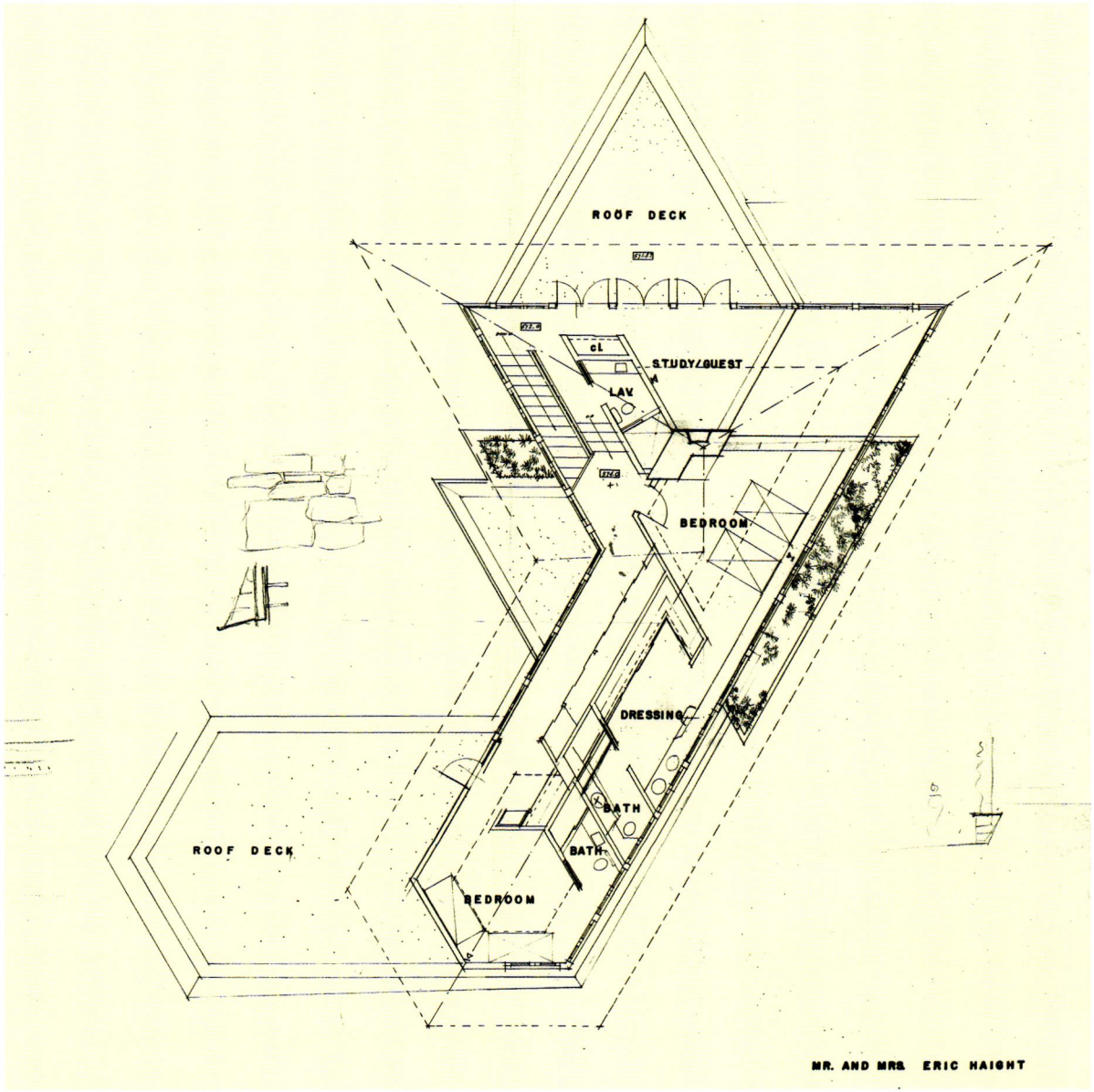
Worm's-eye view of study model. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

living spaces—foyer and living and dining areas—incorporated in a large equilateral triangle with a fireplace mass in the center. A garage and mechanical space was located in a lower basement.

Parker recalled the project's primary obstacle: "a difficult site. It cost so much to get a road to the building site there wasn't enough money left for the house."[67]



Haight residence. Main-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



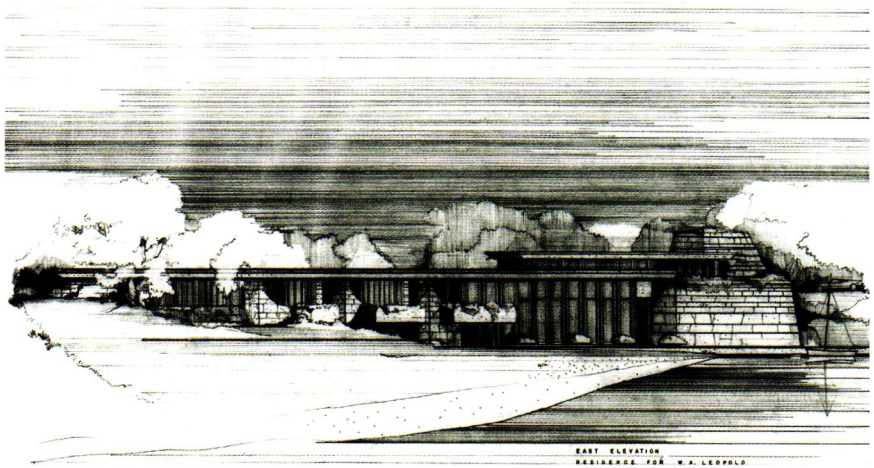
Upper-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

LEOPOLD RESIDENCE

Ladue, Missouri ▪ 1960 ▪ Unbuilt project

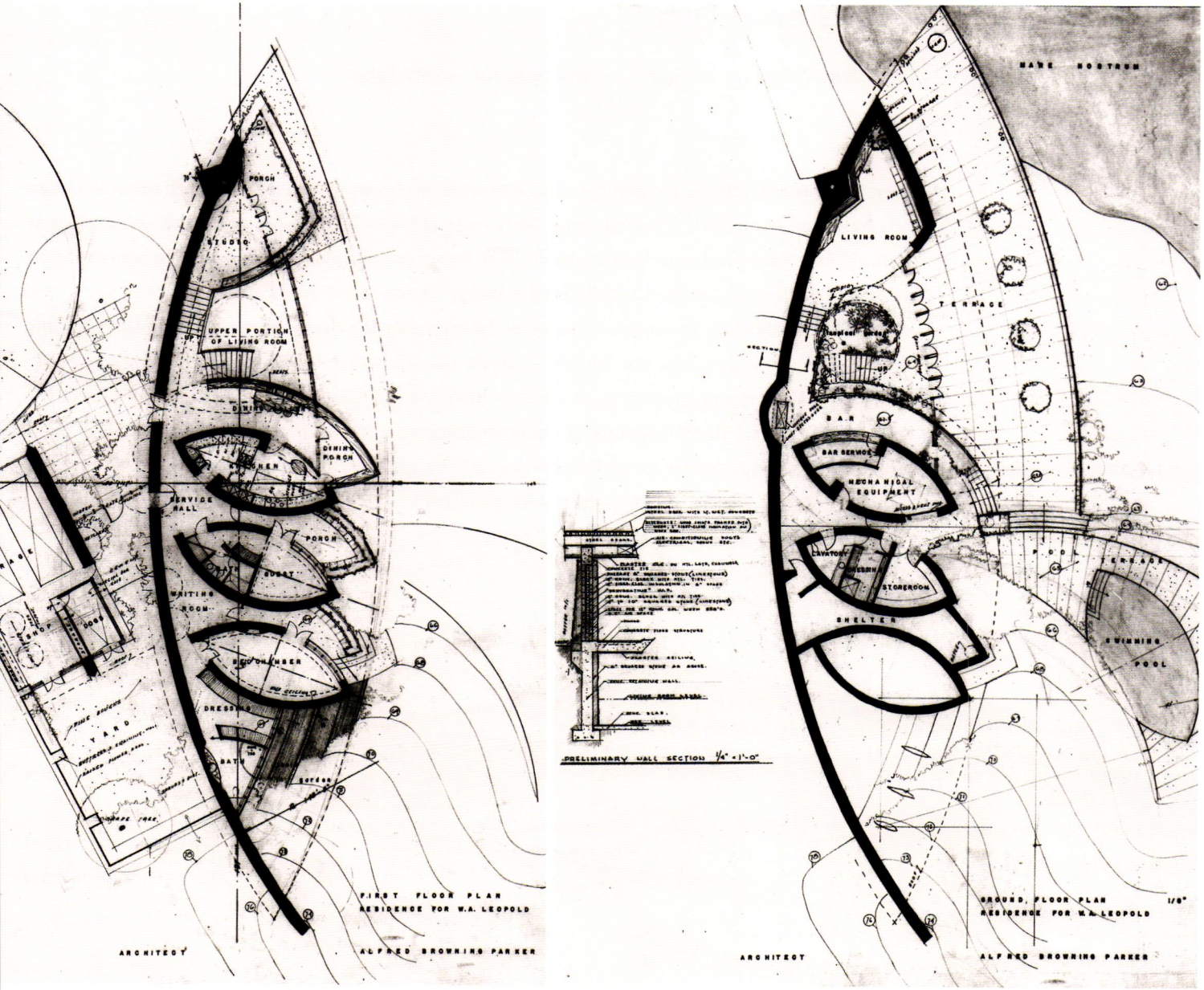
The Leopold project ranks as one of Parker's most extraordinarily innovative works. It was designed for a lakefront property in Ladue, Missouri, just outside St. Louis. Its unconventional plan is a combination of football-shaped forms assembled in such a manner as to create an entirely unique interior experience. Parker tried, in his own words, "to out-Wright Wright. . . . He inspired me. . . . He would have loved it and been delighted to show me how to improve it."[68] The two-story exterior fit well within the contour and context of the sloping site down toward the lake, with the entrance side at the upper level exposing a single story embedded into the earth. The two-story side facing the lake was almost entirely of glass, while the opposite side presented to the street a curved and battered solid wall with limestone facing punctured only by a door. The exterior materials were simple—an alliance of limestone, plaster, and glazing under a flat roof. Parker's bold master plan for the project included a football-shaped pool and multilevel terraces cascading down to a bridge over to an island in the lake with a small circular pool and fountain. The design even contained a bomb shelter.

Exterior elevation viewed from lake. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Two factors sealed the fate of the project. Parker was extremely busy, so the design process took longer than the clients wanted to wait. Then when the estimates started coming in, they found that the construction would have cost more than they had allotted (the steel price alone exceeded their entire budget).[69] They parted with Parker amicably and in 1964 hired Dan C. Duckham, a younger Fort Lauderdale architect who was an ardent admirer of Parker, to design the home they eventually built.

Across the lake from the Leopolds' site is another Parker opus, albeit unsupervised—a home commissioned by Albert Gottlieb that is a loose duplication of Parker's earlier Mass residence built in Palm Beach.



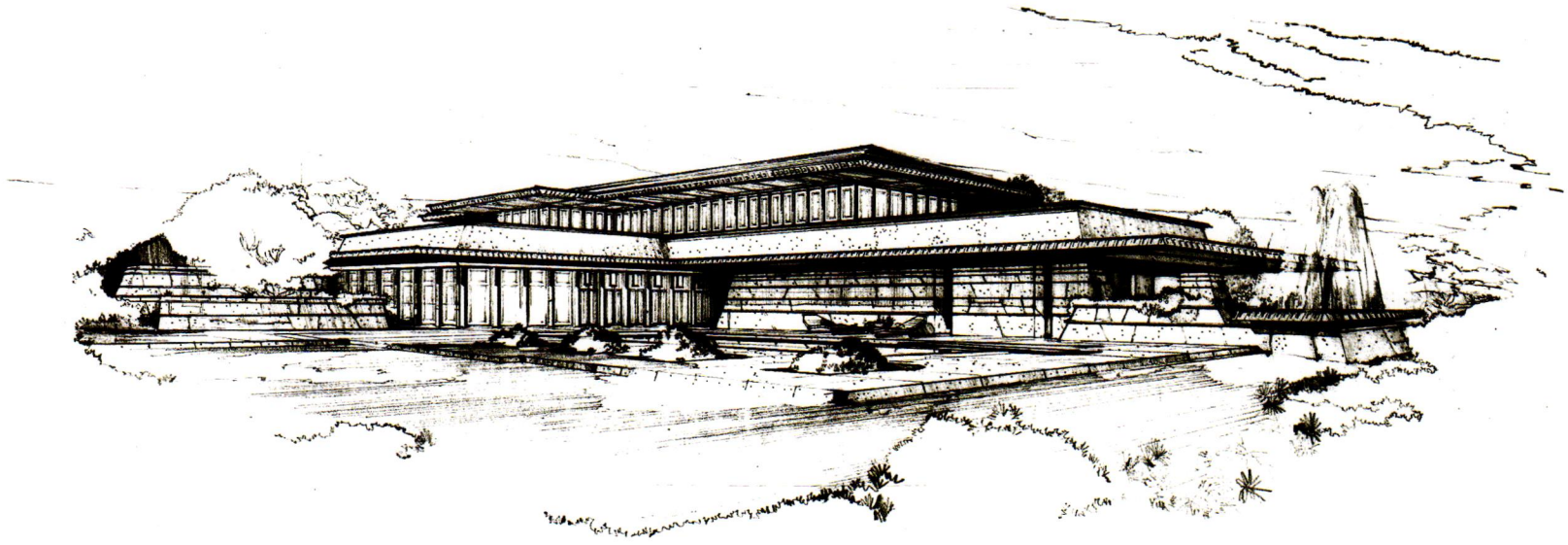
Upper and lower-level floor plans. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

MANUS RESIDENCE

Palm Beach, Florida ▪ 1960 ▪ Built project—demolished

Allen S. Manus, a Canadian entrepreneur and promoter, once owned the Lucayan Beach Hotel on Grand Bahama Island. He and his wife Adele most likely knew of Parker through his recent and well-publicized work either in Palm Beach or in the Bahamian city of Freeport. They retained Parker early in 1960 to design a home on Wells Road, less than 500 feet off the Atlantic Ocean, in exclusive Palm Beach.

The Manus residence, located on one acre at the west end of a two-acre parcel, was in fact relatively small—the Manuses had only one daughter—but it was appointed with extraordinary lavishness. Travertine marble and Honduran mahogany were the materials of choice. The glazed oriental roof tiles were a striking jade green. The combination of materials imparted a strong sense of warmth, creating "a quiet statement in terms of good materials achieving a mellowness from the patina imparted by time," as a 1963 *Florida Architecture* feature article on the residence stated.[70]



Exterior elevation study. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Exterior. Photo by Black-Baker Photography, courtesy of *Florida Architecture* magazine.

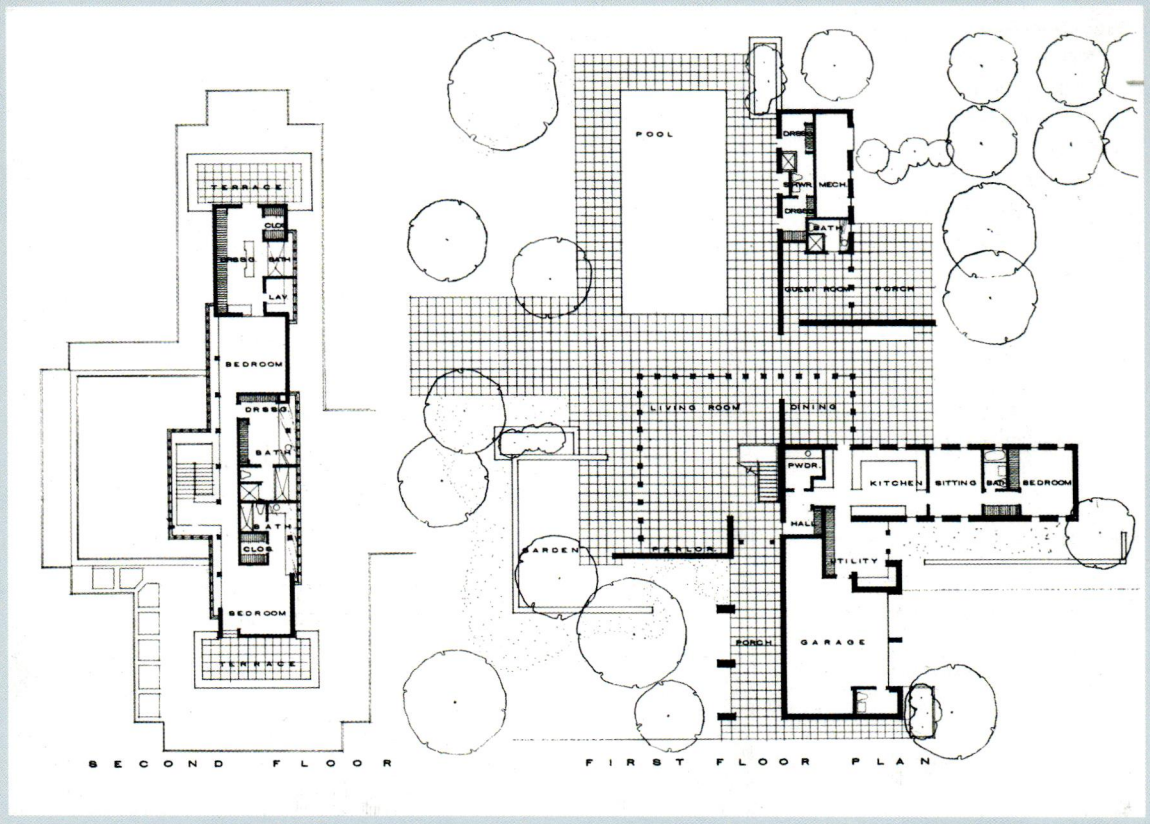
The two-story design was organized into four distinct zones—public spaces, service areas, private family rooms, and a separate guest area. Most of the rooms were oriented toward the numerous exterior patios and walled gardens and the 24-by-50-foot pool. On the first floor Parker located the public spaces plus the servants' quarters, detached guest quarters, kitchen, service areas, and garage. The second floor, spanning the garage on the north to the detached guest quarters and pool building on the south, contained the daughter's bedroom suite as well as the master suite. Both bedrooms had rooftop terraces overlooking the grounds.

As in most of Parker's homes, there were strong, overlapping spatial and experiential connections between the interior and the exterior, achieved through the generous use of glass and through artful

siting of public and private terraces, enclosed patios, pool, and so forth. This reinforced the perception of a much larger home and, for the Manuses with their predilection for entertaining, it effortlessly accommodated formal and informal gatherings. Parker admitted the Manus house was an impressive edifice with its elegant materials, but, he pointed out, "it was not huge. I rarely forgot the human scale."[71] The entire edifice presented a refined, organic, and harmonious modern environment.

The house was built by C. G. Warner Construction at a cost approximating $1 million. The Manuses lived in the home for almost twenty years, selling it in 1979 to fellow Canadian marketing tycoon Jack Stupp. After Stupp's death in 2008, his daughter and her husband decided it wasn't large enough, and, against concerted public outcry, it was demolished.

Manus also retained Parker to design two different single-story residences for the adjacent two half-acre open lots east of the family home. These speculative projects shared a number of characteristics with the Manus residence but were obviously less costly ventures, for instance specifying a stucco exterior in lieu of travertine marble. For reasons unknown, they were never built.



First- and second-level floor plans. Courtesy of *Florida Architecture* magazine.

WADE RESIDENCE (QUAIL HIGH)

Village of Golf, Florida ▪ 1960 ▪ Built project—extant

Albert Geoff Wade, a high-powered advertising executive from the Chicago suburb of River Forest, and his wife Marie coined the name Quail High for their Parker-designed residence.[72] Quite aware of the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright in River Forest and the neighboring Oak Park area, and knowing that the recently deceased Wright had praised Parker's work, they sought out Parker to design their Florida home. It was one of the first to be built in the Village of Golf, the 542-acre gated community developed, beginning in 1955, in southern Palm Beach County on land previously used for hunting small game. The Wade property was a northeast corner lot with views across the golf course to the rear. Parker arranged the home diagonally across the lot, affording maximum views over the twelfth fairway.

The home is a tri-level design. The street side presents a horizontal two-story flat-roofed mass, while the side facing the golf course has a low-slope roof over a single story almost midway between the two levels at the front. This allowed Parker to provide dramatic height in the main living area. At the front



Pool and terrace area. Photo by author.

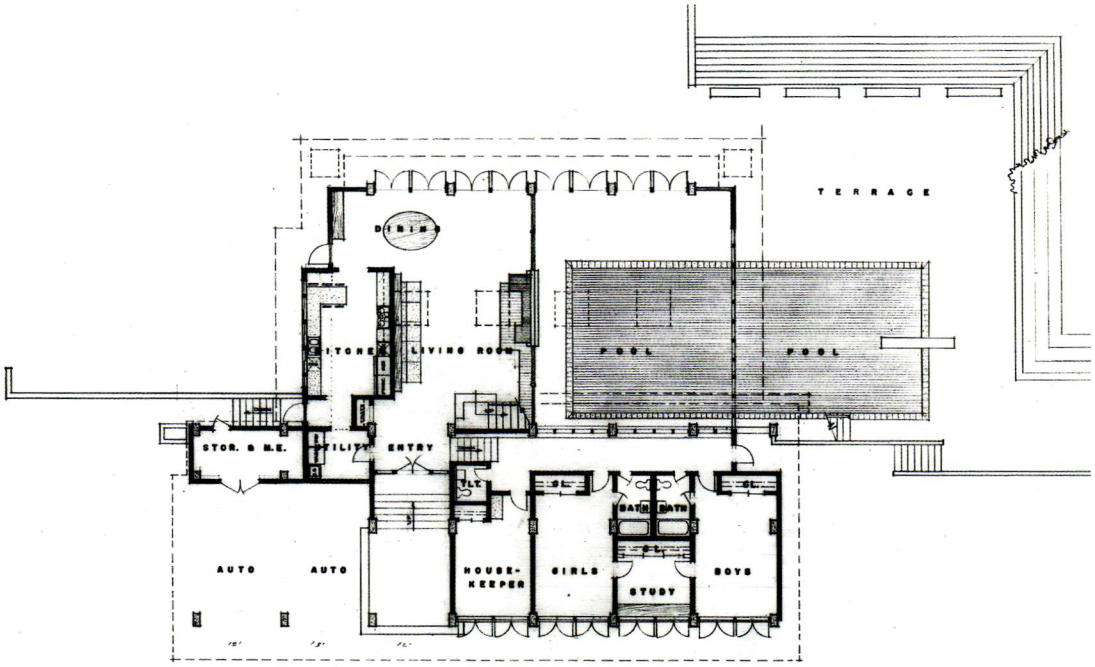


Golf course (rear) side. Photo by author.



Front entrance area. Photo by author.

entrance, three steps under a low sheltering balcony lead into the foyer. Up three additional steps is the spacious living area with, off to one side, a freestanding masonry chimney mass and the pool beyond. Straight ahead through the living room, a raised terrace overlooks the golf course. On the main streetfront level are two children's bedrooms—one for the girls and one for the boys—a bedroom for the housekeeper, two bathrooms, and a children's study area. Above are two bedroom suites, one of them designated for the grandfather, and both giving on sizable rooftop terraces. Off the master bedroom Parker designed a study, a room specifically requested by Wade as a "getaway from the noisy family life." Parker recalled it as "a small but comfortable and well-furnished space closed off and apart from the rest of the home, where he could retreat alone and 'sulk' if the need possessed him."[73] The pool was designed to be one–third roofed and screened in and two–thirds open to the exterior.



Ground-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Street (front) side. Photo by author.

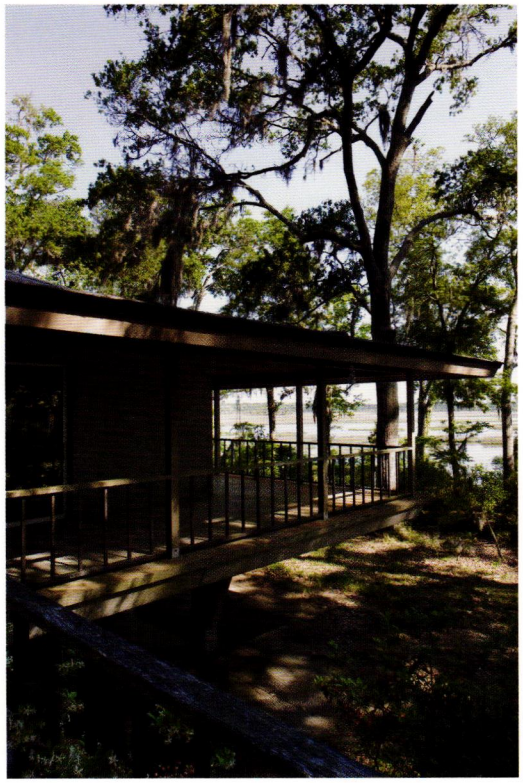
Sharing a concept with the Mass residence, Quail High is organized with exposed glulam wooden structural members spaced at equal 12-foot intervals. However, the Wade house's form, rectilinear but still unique, differs from the Mass house's more radical triangular 30-60-90-degree geometry. The long spanning members are supported by 16-by-40-inch rectangular concrete piers.

The working drawings were dated June 1960, and construction was completed the following year. Parker had incorporated the motif designed for Quail High into many household items, from dishes to napkins to stationery. He capped the project with a brass plaque designating the home Quail High, adding his name and the year 1961.

Parker acknowledged that his later design for Sam Kusworm in Biscayne Point owed much to the Wade residence. It was not built.

LUCKEN RESIDENCE

Savannah, Georgia ▪ 1961 ▪ Built project—extant



Exterior, with Vernon River beyond. Photo by Bill Bennett © WorkHorse Images, Inc.

Nicholas C. and Helen Lucken were clients who, like many others, discovered Alfred Browning Parker through the pages of *House Beautiful*. When they purchased a large parcel of land on the southern shore of the Vernon River, a meandering tidal creek in historic Vernonburg, south of Savannah, they traveled down to Miami on their next vacation to meet Parker and hire him to design their home. Parker produced several designs over the next year, refining while simplifying. The construction took an additional five years, with the Luckens moving into the home in 1967.



Exterior. Photo by Bill Bennett © WorkHorse Images, Inc.

Elevated 10 feet to overlook the creek and river to the north-northeast, the house features an 8-foot-deep screened wraparound porch. Parker told his clients, "Every southern home should have a porch like that." It expands the area of the home and opens it to the breezes while protecting its inhabitants from the ever-present insects of this Lowcountry marshland. Parker based his straightforward and logical floor plan on a 4-foot-square grid, with the two bedrooms in the corners on the west side, and the open living and dining areas on the east. A substantial concrete fireplace anchors the outside corner of the living area. The bathrooms and kitchen and an open study are placed between the public and private zones. A carport, utility room, storerooms, and a fallout shelter occupy the level below, at grade. On the eastern side, a somewhat monumental cascading staircase conducts visitors to the elevated screened-in porch. Inside, a more utilitarian stair leads up from the carport. A simple low-slope hipped roof tops off the rectangular house. The overall enclosed area is less than 2,000 square feet.

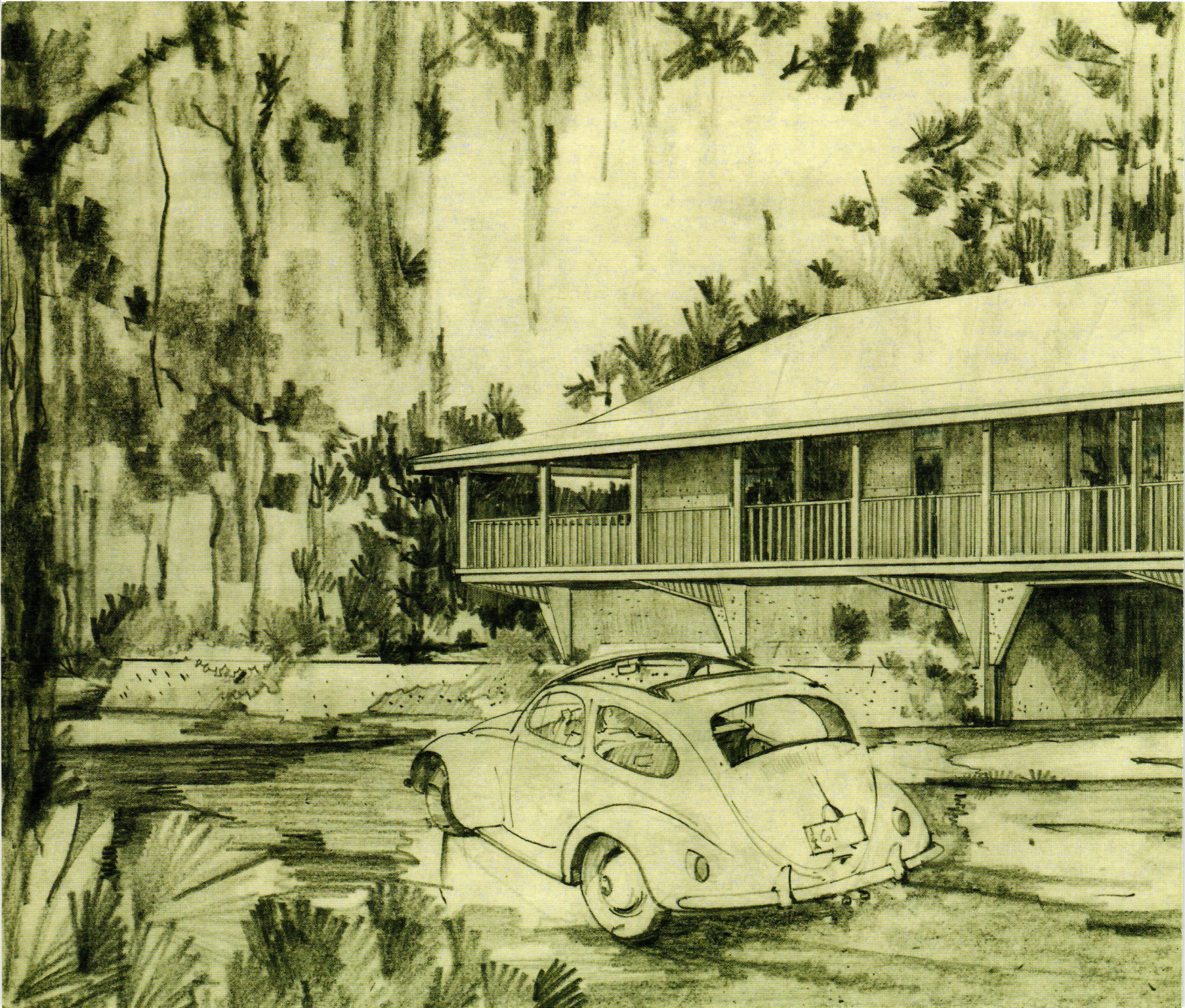
The primary structural material was poured-in-place concrete—not coincidentally, as Nick Lucken was in the cement business—with concrete block for the perimeter walls and wood for the roof structure. Parker designed the elevated floor to function like a waiter's tray, supporting the walls and roof above while itself being supported by a series of concrete columns with ornamented fingers reaching out for added bracing. Helen Lucken saw these ornamented fingers as wings, allowing her home to float.[74] She added that she always felt that the home was "open and airy" and "different and yet southern."[75] She also humorously recognized one of the benefits of the wraparound porch: "If you aren't talking with a neighbor on one side, you can move to the other side."[76]

The Luckens contemplated a two-bedroom addition and explored the possibility with Parker in 1980, but the project never progressed beyond preliminary discussions.



Exterior detail showing "wings." Photo by Bill Bennett © WorkHorse Images, Inc.

Following page: Perspective. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.





PARKER, ARCHITECT

POPULAR MECHANICS HOUSE OF MINIMUM MAINTENANCE

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida ▪ 1961 ▪ Built project—extant



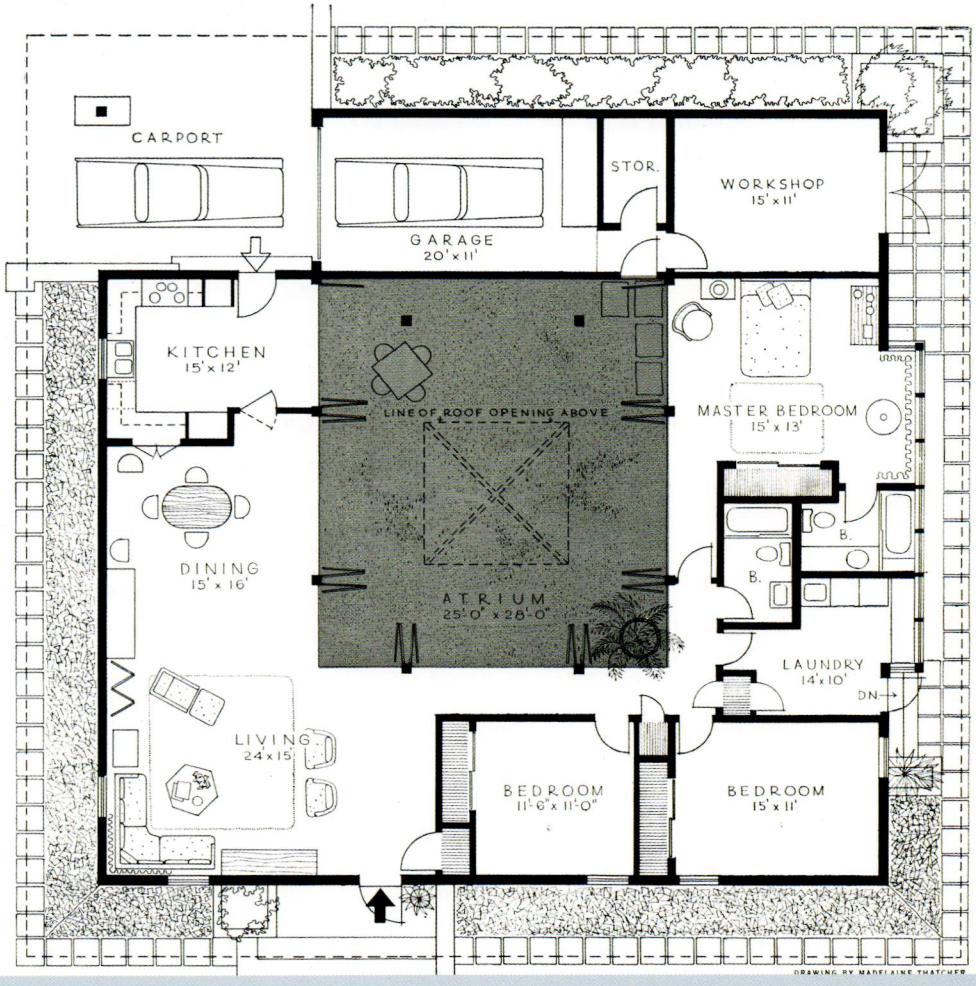
Street (front) side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Popular Mechanics magazine, seeking an architect to draw up plans for a House of Minimum Maintenance that would be published as a national promotion, solicited Parker's interest in early summer 1961.[77] The editors wanted to feature the home and all its minimum-maintenance material and method innovations, an obvious focus of their subscribers. They intended not only to commission a celebrated design but also to sponsor the construction of several Houses of Minimum Maintenance across the country. Their program requirements called for a three-bedroom home of 1,800 to 2,000 square feet "which lives up to its name . . . designed to ease maintenance chores for both the man and his wife . . . indoors and outside." Parker's initial response to the magazine's inquiry was affirmative:

> The subject of "Minimum Maintenance" has also been close to my heart. I have made a conscious effort on each job to incorporate materials of durable nature in a way that would require the least possible maintenance. It has been also my intent to explore the nature of certain materials in an effort to discover how they weather and then to finish those materials in a way that cooperates with the natural processes of nature rather than doing an anti-natural finish. Most of my clients have heard me express the thought that they should not have to constantly "manicure" their homes.[78]

An informal understanding was reached in August, and Parker traveled to the *Popular Mechanics* offices in Chicago in late September to discuss the specifics and formalize the relationship.

Parker forwarded the project's completed working drawings to *Popular Mechanics* on December 19, 1961, along with a cover letter informing them that the multimillionaire insurance magnate and Florida real estate developer John D. MacArthur had agreed to provide a choice lot on Military Trail in Palm Beach Gardens, his new development in northwestern West Palm Beach, for this pilot project. Parker was already involved with MacArthur, designing the clubhouse facility for MacArthur's new 36-hole golf course for the Professional Golfers Association in Palm Beach Gardens. Parker also recommended Pritikin Construction of Miami to build the house.



Floor plan. Reprinted with permission of *House Beautiful* © 1963.

Construction was completed in time for *Popular Mechanics* to do a photo shoot and feature the House of Minimum Maintenance in the September 1962 issue as its House of the Year. The lead article began, "It's a house of care-free living—and lots more. It's a house of gracious living . . . of family living . . . a house of outdoor living indoors."[79] The project received additional press locally, as well as in the magazines *Florida Architect* and *House Beautiful*.[80]

Parker's inward-looking design is similar in concept and a smaller version of his Pace Setter 1959, the residence he designed for Graham Miller. The distinguishing feature of both homes is that all the rooms focus on a sun-filled central atrium. The use of the atrium space can be varied; in the case of the constructed home it was a grassed lawn (later turned into a putting green by the first owner). A pyramidal roof roughly 67 feet square shelters the actual living area, which is just under 2,000 square feet. Five-foot roof overhangs shade the exterior walls, and earthen berms around the base of the perimeter walls provide additional insulation. The roof, covered with a metal alloy, curves up to the skylit peak, a design detail that Parker, when asked to remove it to save cost, steadfastly refused to eliminate.[81] The interior materials were chosen by Parker for low maintenance—coated cork floors, redwood paneled or plastered walls, redwood French door frames, and plaster ceilings. The furnishings, however, were what one might expect for a speculative production venture of this sort and were not selected by Parker.



Popular Mechanics House of Minimum Maintenance. Living area, with enclosed atrium beyond. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

While the magazine article suggests that a second, adapted version of Parker's House of Minimum Maintenance was built in Houston, it is not known if the design for *Popular Mechanics* was ever built elsewhere. Parker's Biegelsen residence, designed in 1961 and built in Hollywood, Florida, was similar but larger. Parker also designed two unbuilt works, the McCory and Rockwell residences, generally invoking the basic inward-looking concept.

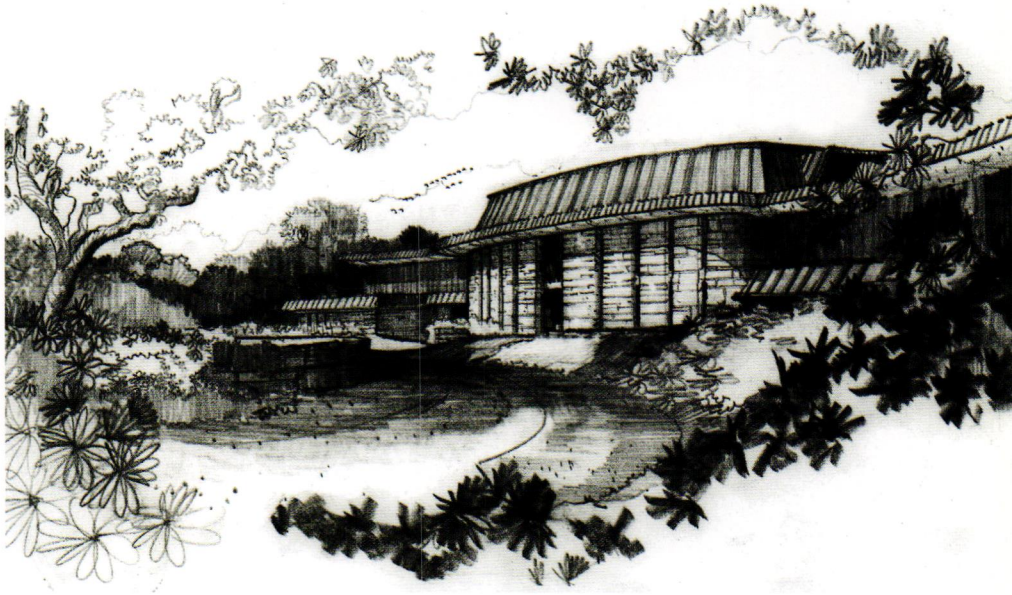
FULP RESIDENCE

Anderson, South Carolina ▪ 1962 ▪ Built project—extant

The residence Parker designed for John Richard "Buck" Fulp Jr., his wife Mikal, and their two infant children was arguably his best built work never published. With the affluent client providing the mission and the means, Parker created a grand opus of abundant beauty on a spectacular secluded seventy-acre site, including a thirteen-acre fully stocked pond, on the outskirts of Anderson, South Carolina. It is among the few Parker-designed homes that remain relatively intact as conceived and constructed.

The Fulps interviewed several South Florida architects.[82] Quite aware of the earlier Parker-designed Mass residence in Palm Beach, in early August 1962 they sought out Parker as well. The Fulps recalled being overwhelmed both by Parker's creative work and by his commanding personality.

Buck Fulp was the heir to a fortune made in the textile industry through the family-owned Abney Mills in nearby Greenwood. For this client of abundant means, Parker designed a multilevel but distinctly horizontal house of concrete, fieldstone, copper, and wood. The basic shape is a sweeping crescent with a radius of approximately 200 feet, its inward side curving around a circular entry drive and its outward side opening to the lake and expansive vistas. Parker referred to it as "my wrinkle on the solar hemi-cycle type of plan,"[83] recalling the second Jacobs residence designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1943. Logically the views to the north are minimized and understated, with fewer than a dozen 19-inch-wide vertical slit windows, while the views to the south are maximized with continuous glass windows and doors. The residence is anchored into the prow of a knoll above the gently rolling grounds by the massive vertical chimney of its wedge-shaped fieldstone fireplace, 4 feet wide and 30 feet tall.



Perspective of entry side, facing north. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Front door. Photo by Jeff Sanders © Accent Photography 2009.



Pool (rear) side. Photo by Jeff Sanders © Accent Photography 2009.



Looking east toward entrance. Photo by Jeff Sanders © Accent Photography 2009.



Living room fireplace. Photo by Jeff Sanders © Accent Photography 2009.



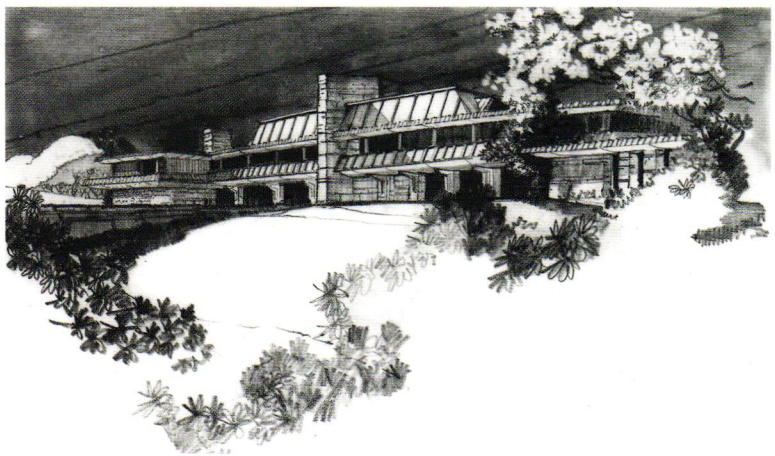
Part of living room, with library loft above. Photo by Jeff Sanders © Accent Photography 2009.

Design proceeded from mid-1962 through the following year, with final drawings ready in mid-1964 and a contract signed with Yeargin Construction in June. Construction took a little over a year, and a housewarming party was held on September 26, 1965. In August 1983 the home was sold to a Texas-based savings and loan.[84] Two years later in June 1985, in the midst of the savings and loan crisis, I. M. and Julie Ibrahim became the new owners. They have remained steadfast stewards, maintaining the home while changing very little. Ibrahim added a large detached garage building across the driveway from the original garage for his collection of Ferraris and other exotic foreign cars, detailed in a manner consistent with the grammar of materials on the rest of the property. While Parker had no involvement in the design of the garage, after he saw photos he noted that it had "same masonry and copper panels that match existing. What a pleasure to observe such appreciation."[85]

The almost 12,000-square-foot home is entered at the lowest level on the north, across a stone slab bridging a reflecting pool (later changed to a planter) running with the curve of the wall facing the circular drive. From the foyer one can move horizontally into the primary informal zone of the home or

vertically, using the stair, into public and private zones. A library and study loft within the two-story living-room volume overlooks the massive fieldstone fireplace and chimney. Off the living room to the west are four bedroom suites, and to the east is a dining area open to the living room, plus the kitchen and other service areas. Below the service wing is a four-car garage. A carport for two more cars acts as a breezeway between the north and south sides of the house. Below the public areas and bedroom suites, on the lower level off the foyer, is a large recreation room with built-in bar, opening onto an elliptical fieldstone terrace and pool. Separate men's and women's cabanas are also incorporated, as is a projection booth to show movies in the recreation room. A balcony off the master bedroom overlooks the pool and terrace. There is a second fireplace in the master bedroom suite and a second stair between the recreation room and the bedroom wing. Concrete, ornamented concrete structure, fieldstone, vertical board-and-batten siding, and weathered copper are the primary exterior materials. Interior materials include fieldstone, plaster, mahogany, and rosewood. Parker designed and detailed the entire opus, including built-ins, cabinetry, a custom door at the main entrance, and a stair railing that incorporated a geometrically stylized version of the letter *F*. In the bedroom hallway on the upper level, at the top of the private stair between the recreation room and bedrooms, Parker designed a niche as a tokonoma, containing built-in cabinets and shelves around a natural wooden pillar of Japanese origin that he had found and integrated into the house as a housewarming gift for his clients.[86] At the entrance to the property, a Parker-designed feature with motorized gates and fieldstone walls and planters was added in early 1970.

Perspective of pool (rear) side, facing south. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Parker also was involved in the design of a large multilevel headquarters building for Fulp's company Abney Mills in 1965. Parker envisioned a long horizontal building that accorded with the rolling topography. From the exterior, he expressed the upper floor as a continuous ribbon of glass (detailed similarly to Miamarina, which was in design at the same time) sitting delicately upon a lower-floor solid base expressed in heavy masonry stone (changed to brick in the final drawings) with vertical slit windows. After comprehensive construction drawings were prepared, a corporate decision was taken not to pursue the project.[87]

Pool area. Photo by Jeff Sanders © Accent Photography 2009.



HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Miami, Florida ▪ 1962 ▪ Built project—extant



East elevation, looking southwest from SW 63rd Avenue. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

While it wasn't Parker's first project in religious architecture—he had designed a three-story classroom and auditorium additions for the Church-by-the-Sea in Bal Harbour in 1957—Hope Lutheran Church provided Parker with the opportunity to design his first actual space for worship. Outgrowing their small social hall, the church looked to Parker to design, within a budget of $100,000, a sanctuary that would seat three hundred.

Parker expressed to the congregation his thoughts on the new sanctuary building:

> The heart of the matter in architecture is the enclosure of space. As with individuals, the best part should be on the inside. Spaces may be enclosed in ways that stir the emotions in the minds of the beholders. In a religious sanctuary it seems appropriate for the spaces to express both mystery and awe. The insignificance of man and his vulnerability may be contrasted by his aspiration and his hope revealed through his construction.[88]

Having recently returned from a family trip to Europe, Parker determined the vertical and horizontal proportions by using the general proportions of the famous Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, but "reduced in scale to this modest wooden church."[89] He thus successfully created a cathedral-like spiritual quality. Parker utilized wooden glulam structural members for the first time, as he learned that they could be made rather inexpensively and allowed for a clear span without interior columns. Interestingly, Parker designed the glulam members that support the church's end wall in the form of an expressed cross—essential both structurally to the building and philosophically to the church. The plan has the traditional linear axis, but no center aisle. Entering by side aisles, the congregation all sit together within the nave. The third dimension reinforces the linearity of the plan, with the overpowering height emphasized. On the exterior of the building, the long side walls and roof are clad continuously in one material. Parker had hoped to use copper for the roofing, and for the long side walls as well, but budgetary constraints dictated the use of Ludowici-Celadon tile shingles instead.

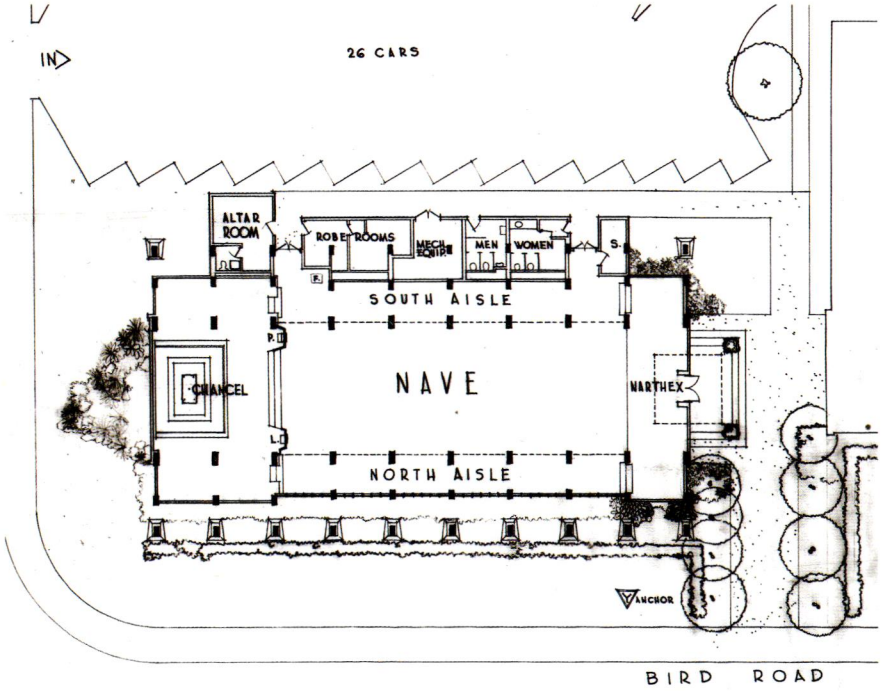


Preliminary study. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

Parker discussed the sanctuary's design:

> While the past is reflected strongly in the proportions of the sanctuary, the techniques were completely modern to realize an economical building. Methods of laminating wood arches and erection procedures with huge cranes were all a part of the structural realization. Hope sanctuary is a constant expression of wood construction in which all of the details have been evolved with an eye toward the overall unity of the whole.[90]

Parker was responsible for the interior furnishings, including a massive altar of coral keystone that he personally selected, and he coordinated the iron Crown of Thorns sculpture and the cross fabricated by Albert Vrana. The sculptural pieces were created from scrap auto parts that were then rusted over a twenty-four-hour period in Biscayne Bay at Parker's Gables Estate home, which was then under construction.



Preliminary floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Interior, toward chancel. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

The groundbreaking ceremony took place on February 3, 1963, and the completed building, constructed for $105,000 by the Gafney-Nelson Construction Corporation, was dedicated on December 8, 1963.[91] In 1966 it was recognized nationally with a citation as "an outstanding example of contemporary ecclesiastical architecture" by the National Council of Churches.

Parker's own view was expressed in an exchange with a parishioner:

> I recall a question from one of the members of the church during the presentation of the design drawings. This questioner was concerned with the height of the Sanctuary and requested an explanation for the use of "all that upper space." The best reply that could be made was to the effect that this space was for the soul.[92]



Entrance. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Interior, from chancel. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



PARKER RESIDENCE (PACE SETTER 1965 / GABLES ESTATES)

Coral Gables, Florida ▪ 1962 ▪ Built project—extant

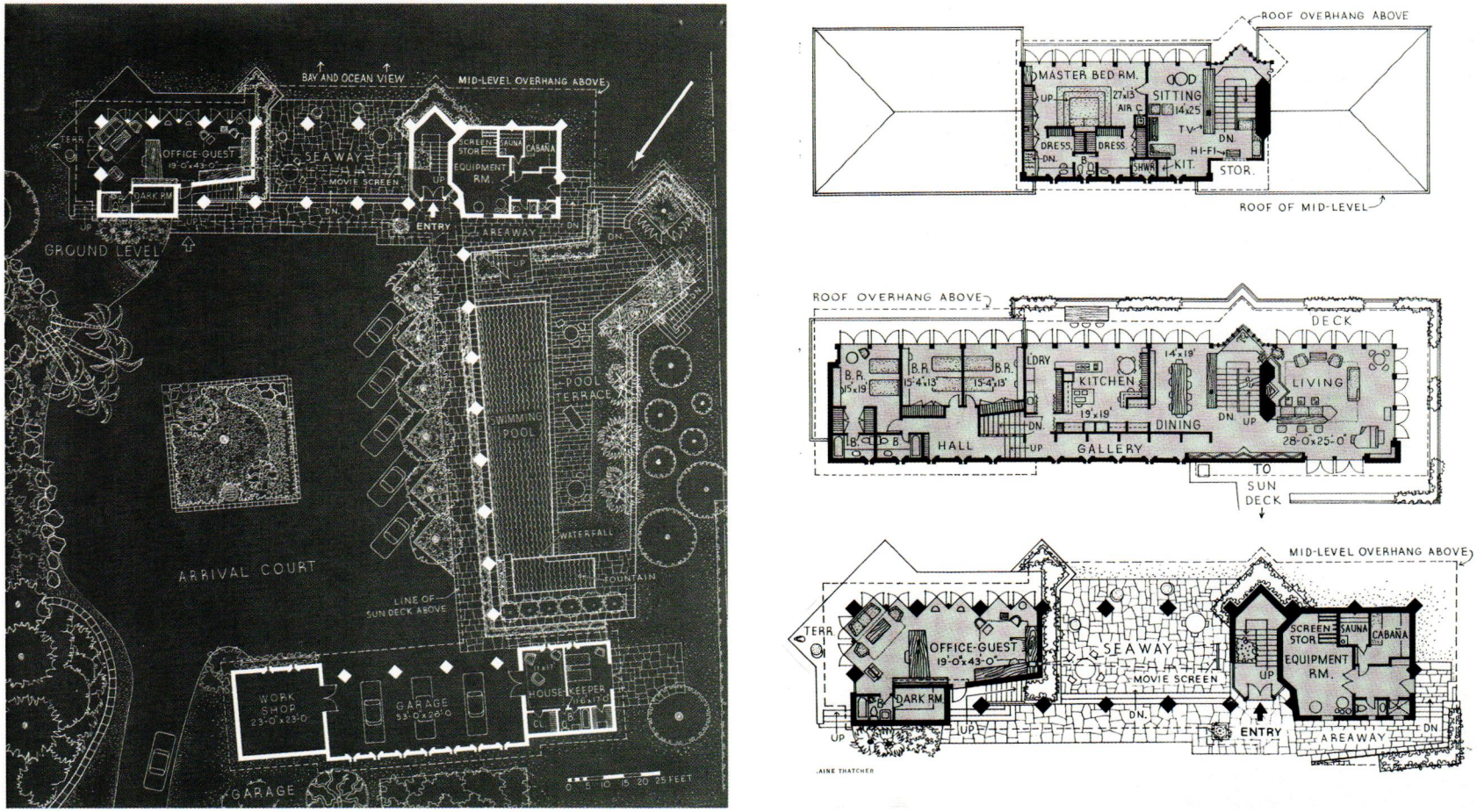
Facing: Bird's-eye view. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

After he sold his Royal Road residence to James Deering Danielson, the grandnephew of the owner of Vizcaya, for $125,000 (Danielson later sold it for $1 million), Parker considered moving north to Fort Pierce. In the end he decided to stay in the Miami area, and he started looking for property, actually renting a helicopter to scout potential sites. He eventually settled on the new two-hundred-acre community of Gables Estates, located between Coral Gables and Biscayne Bay, being developed by the renowned industrialist and real estate developer Arthur Vining Davis. Parker was attracted to Gables Estates' prime location, limited vehicular access, and deepwater canals, and the fact that it was planned as an exclusive gated community. He was very familiar with this area, having played as a child in the mangrove swamp it then was. Parker purchased one of the first lots available, one and a half acres for $39,400. As a pioneer resident, he was offered a 10 percent rebate if he built within a year—a rebate he was able to earn. The property was approximately 315 feet deep, with 200 feet of bay-ocean water frontage on one end, with the street and a deepwater canal on the other.

When Parker applied to the City of Coral Gables for a construction permit, the "Beauty Board" (as he referred to it) issued a denial with typed comments on "two pages, closely spaced," Parker recalled.[93] The main objections among many were the building's height (which was within the limit, but the board objected to its being three stories), its second kitchen in the master bedroom suite, and its nonconformance to Coral Gables' preferred Mediterranean style. Parker appealed to the City Commission, and after he addressed the issues both logically and passionately, the City Commission unanimously overruled its own "Beauty Board" and approved the project.

The piles were being driven in mid-March 1963. Parker lived in a trailer during construction. Albert Hallquist assisted Parker in the construction of the home, along with a Swedish carpenter named William O. Sjögren and a Danish mason, Carl Strandberg. With the assistance of Parker's artist friend Albert Vrana, stylized and geometrically ornamented bas-relief corbels were incorporated into the quarried-keystone-veneered structural concrete columns, based upon various crabs and other creatures found in the nearby Atlantic.



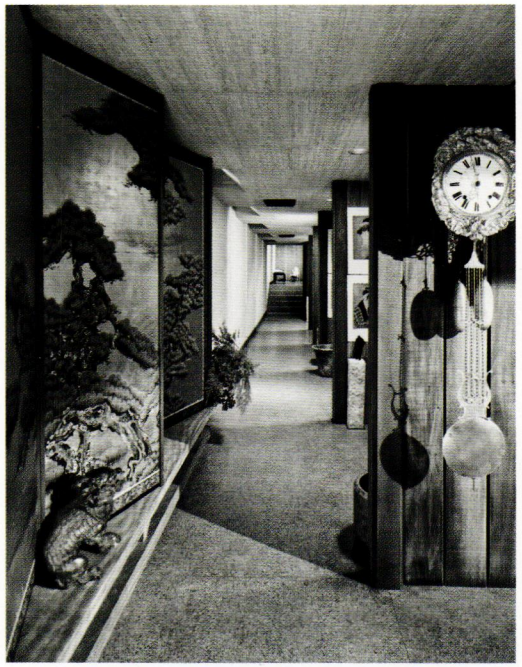


Site plan and floor plans: upper level, main level, ground level. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

When the construction was completed, Parker hosted a reception attended by several hundred people. As the house was one of the first actually finished, the occasion was the unofficial christening of Gables Estates. The home was immediately featured in a local newspaper,[94] and in the May 1965 issue of *House Beautiful* magazine as its Pace Setter 1965—Parker's third Pace Setter distinction. Coincidently, this became Parker's swan song in *House Beautiful*, as his chief ally Elizabeth Gordon, after an almost twenty-five-year tenure as editor in chief, was terminated in 1964.



Bay (rear) side, facing Biscayne Bay. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Gallery. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Sadly, Parker soon recognized that the house was too much for his needs. So, after enjoying the fruits of his labor for less than three years, he sold Gables Estates in mid-May 1966 to James A. Ryder for $675,000. The price included much of the furnishings and artwork. Astonishingly, one piece that remained with the house, a twelve-panel built-in Japanese screen of the Kano school adorning the upper entrance hall, is valued in today's dollars at a higher price than Parker obtained in 1966 for the entire home.[95]

The Gables Estates home represents, to many, Parker's most mature work in residential architecture.



Without question, it can be counted as one of his masterworks. The home is, in Parker's eyes, a modernized version of the Mediterranean style of Coral Gables as it should have evolved: "it met the spirit of the Mediterranean style—verandas, interior spaces amply open to the exterior, views of the water, a pool in the courtyard, etc."[96] Paramount in its design is its acknowledgment from almost all rooms of the incredible views across Biscayne Bay to the Atlantic Ocean. Parker's favored persiana doors are in full use along the entire bay-ocean side, taking advantage of the prevailing southeast ocean breezes, and allowing complete openness, partial enclosure, or a virtually solid wall. It its May 1965 issue *House Beautiful* recognized this supreme asset: "seascape, landscape, skyscape, cloudscape—from every corner . . . a different vista delights the eye."[97]

Elevating the living areas allowed the creation of what Parker referred to as a seaway, an open channel allowing the breezes to flow below the house for additional cooling. By incorporating angular planting boxes, terraces, and supporting columns along with the seaway, any incoming hurricane wind and water is split into manageable furies and routed through the seaway across the ample arrival court.

Besides the primary residence on the bay-ocean side of the property, Parker built a three-car garage, complete with workshop and housekeeper's apartment, nearer the street. The two structures were subtly connected by an elevated swimming pool and terrace along the southwestern side of the property, with the arrival court in the middle of the three elements. The relationship between the elements is purposely not parallel or perpendicular. As Parker wrote in *House Beautiful*, "Remembering the fine Italian hand of those responsible for Piazza San Marco in Venice, we increased the illusion of space by three major devices: open angles, modular rhythms, and exaggeration of perspective."[98]

The materials Parker used were his favored concrete, quarried keystone, copper, ceramic tile, terrazzo, teak, and Honduran mahogany. For the roof and the upper wall surfaces, he applied a custom bronzy-green-gray glazed ceramic tile made by Ludowici-Celadon, matching in color a sample of the surrounding vegetation. While not the typical Spanish tile roof, it is Parker's homage to the Mediterranean style required by Coral Gables.

Sarah Tomerlin Lee, who replaced Elizabeth Gordon as editor in chief of *House Beautiful*, said of Pace Setter 1965, "It is a home that makes a heroic statement in its inner vistas and serenities, its lofty prisms of glass and stone. A true Pace Setter in concept and innovations."[99] The home survives and is one of the best preserved works of Alfred Browning Parker.



West side at entrance off street. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Facing: Elevated terrace and pool, with Biscayne Bay beyond. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Parker residence (Pace Setter 1965 / Gables Estates). *Right*, living area; *bottom left*, seaway detail; *bottom right,* master bedroom, with panoramic view of Biscayne Bay. Photos by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

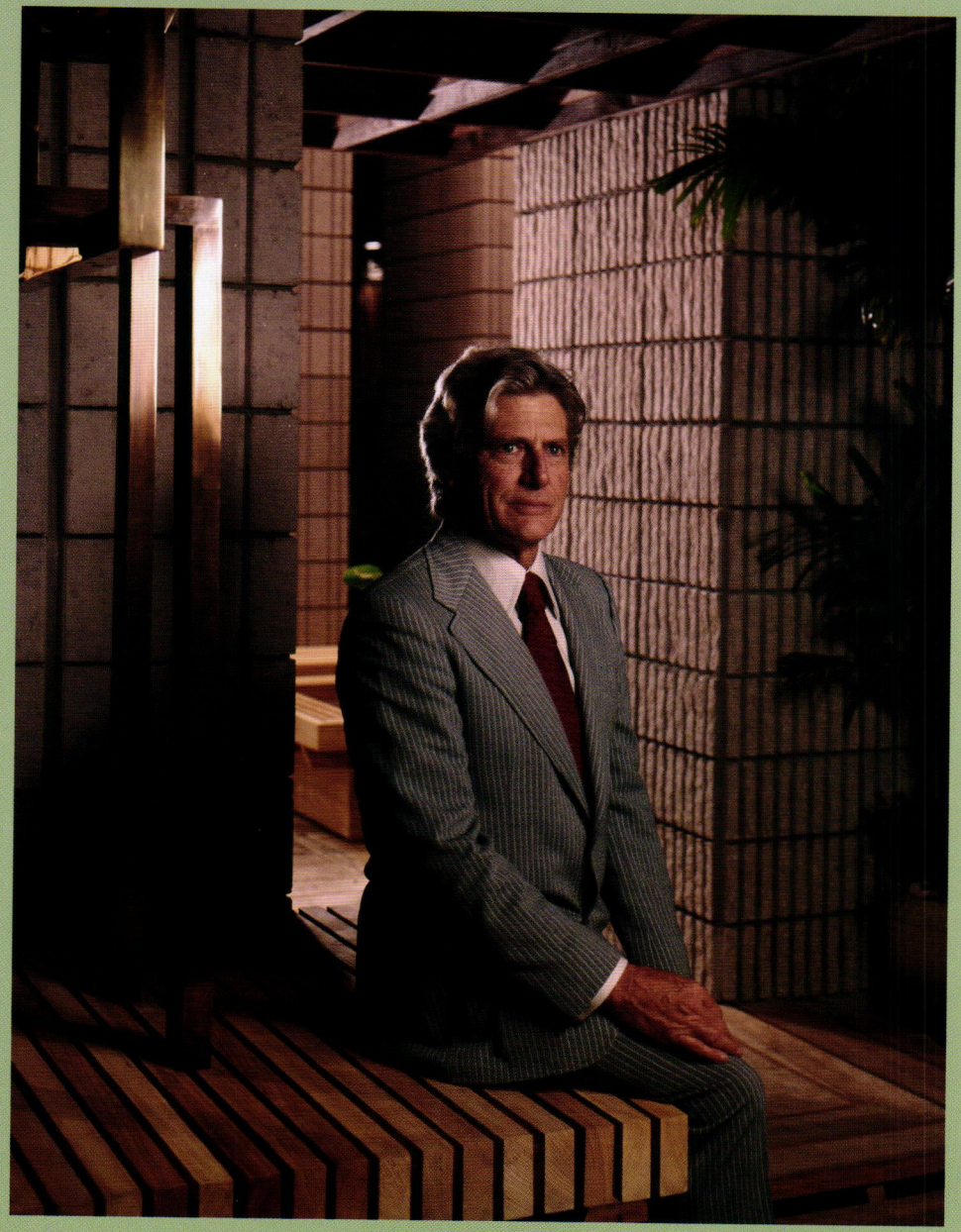








Main stair. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Alfred Browning Parker, 1973. © Bo Parker Photographer.

Mature Work
1963–1972

I'd rather make these things my own honest failure than a good imitation.

- **Parker, quoted in *Miami Herald*, May 3, 1964**

Parker's mature work, generally categorized as the period between his fifth home, Pace Setter 1965 in Gables Estates, and his seventh, Windsong in Vermont, is more varied, larger in scope, progressively bolder than his previous work. While he continued to design custom homes for the residential client, he became more selective as the number and size of the projects in his office grew. Some clients waited a year or more before he could get to them. His work for speculative home builders lessened greatly. His commercial opportunities were many, and he entered the public sector market, where he designed large-scale public housing, schools, and civic buildings.

Looking at the residential projects designed during this time, it is clear that Parker made a conscious effort to become more fearless both geometrically and three-dimensionally. The strongly angular Kohler house in California, the Hill house in Gables Estates, and the semiburied Waddell, Kearney, and Floyd homes are five very different examples. His experimentation with loosely connected separate structures housing specific functions continued with the design he did for Robert Gervais in Tahiti and the Sanders

residence on Sanibel Island, culminating in his own sixth home, Woodsong, in Coconut Grove. Both the Hand and Magnuson designs featured gambrel roofs, a shape not common in Parker's previous repertoire but most likely an outgrowth of Hope Lutheran's steeply sloped roof. The vertically pronounced house for Mary Crane was reminiscent of his earlier unbuilt Belin Bay Tower and one of his vacation home schemes for *Woman's Day* magazine. For the entertainer Jackie Gleason, Parker designed a partially buried multilevel house that offered ample interior and exterior spaces for entertaining, while appearing to be secluded on its own island (Parker proposed submerging the driveway in just a few inches of water, so only Gleason and his guests and staff would know how to approach).[1] The unrealized Navy Island development provided yet another opportunity for Parker to explore a modern organic architecture suitable for the tropics.

Atypical of his practice, during this decade Parker was involved in the remodeling of two historic structures in Coconut Grove. The first, in 1965, was the historic 1904 Matheson estate, remodeled and enlarged for James Deering Danielson. The second, in 1967, was a fruit-packing plant originally built in 1909, subsequently converted into a residence by his father-in-law Dr. John Gifford, and now altered by Parker to accommodate his own architectural workshop. In a project similar to those brought in by *House Beautiful*, *Popular Mechanics*, and *Woman's Day*, the Weyerhaeuser Company commissioned Parker to design a building of his choice that would showcase the use of wood. Parker designed and detailed an architect's office that would have been entirely of wood, including all joints and connections. He actually contemplated razing the fruit-packing plant to build the Weyerhaeuser design for his own workshop, but decided to remodel the Gifford residence instead. "First intent was to demolish the old building and to this end a new office was designed. When the time for demolition arrived, sentiment for the ancient stone walls and columns was too great and a complete rebuilding began. All roofs, floors and walls (except those of stone) were reorganized and rebuilt for the spaces required."[2]

The commercial work during this period also included larger, bolder designs. For Abney Mills, the family-owned company of his South Carolina client Richard "Buck" Fulp, Parker proposed a headquarters building that fit into the natural hillside of its site, with a prism-glazed upper story supported by a substantial masonry-enclosed lower level—a precursor to his Miamarina. He entered the multifamily housing market with the Surf Club Towers in Surfside and the high-rise office market with Ryder Tower in Coconut Grove (precipitating the demolition of his own Alliance Machine Company building, much to his dismay).

Neither project was built. Nor was his visionary proposal for George Engle, his Coconut Grove Playhouse and Galt Ocean Mile Theater client, to build a 2,000-foot-high tower. Parker continued, with more success, his work for financial institutions, including buildings for the Bank of Florida at Homestead and the First National Bank of Riviera Beach, and several for Flagler Federal Savings and Loan and First Federal Savings and Loan of the Florida Keys. The success of Hope Lutheran Church brought commissions for other religious projects. Maximo Presbyterian Church, the first of three in the St. Petersburg area, was followed by a multibuilding religious campus for Northeast United Presbyterian Church and then by Presbyterian Towers. Parker's proposal for University Christian Church in South Miami attracted notice but remained unrealized. His Temple Beth El was perhaps his culminating project in religious architecture, receiving press accolades both locally and nationally.

With his celebrity and reputation, Parker was now offered projects of much larger scale. He worked with Dade County designing several HUD-subsidized public housing projects and a prototype elementary school that was built at several sites. His Presbyterian Towers, a fifteen-story housing project for the elderly in St. Petersburg, was also built, but unfortunately the final scheme was much watered down from his initial bold design. His octagonally-shaped Miamarina project, for the City of Miami, was a multiuse complex that included an anchor restaurant resembling a spaceship, a marina, a pedestrian walkway elevated above traffic, and parking on Biscayne Bay at the north end of Bayfront Park. A response to the larger urban context, Miamarina was arguably Parker's signature project during this phase of his career.

■ ■ ■

We need much less look-at-me constructions. We need more buildings that are difficult to see—difficult because they fit so completely into their sites and the surrounding landscape. We must get over the notion that a building, to be successful, must hit the passer-by in the eye, must demand attention. It should do just the opposite.

■ **Parker, on WIOD radio, June 29, 1967**

FARDIG RESIDENCE

Miami, Florida ▪ 1963 ▪ Built project—extant

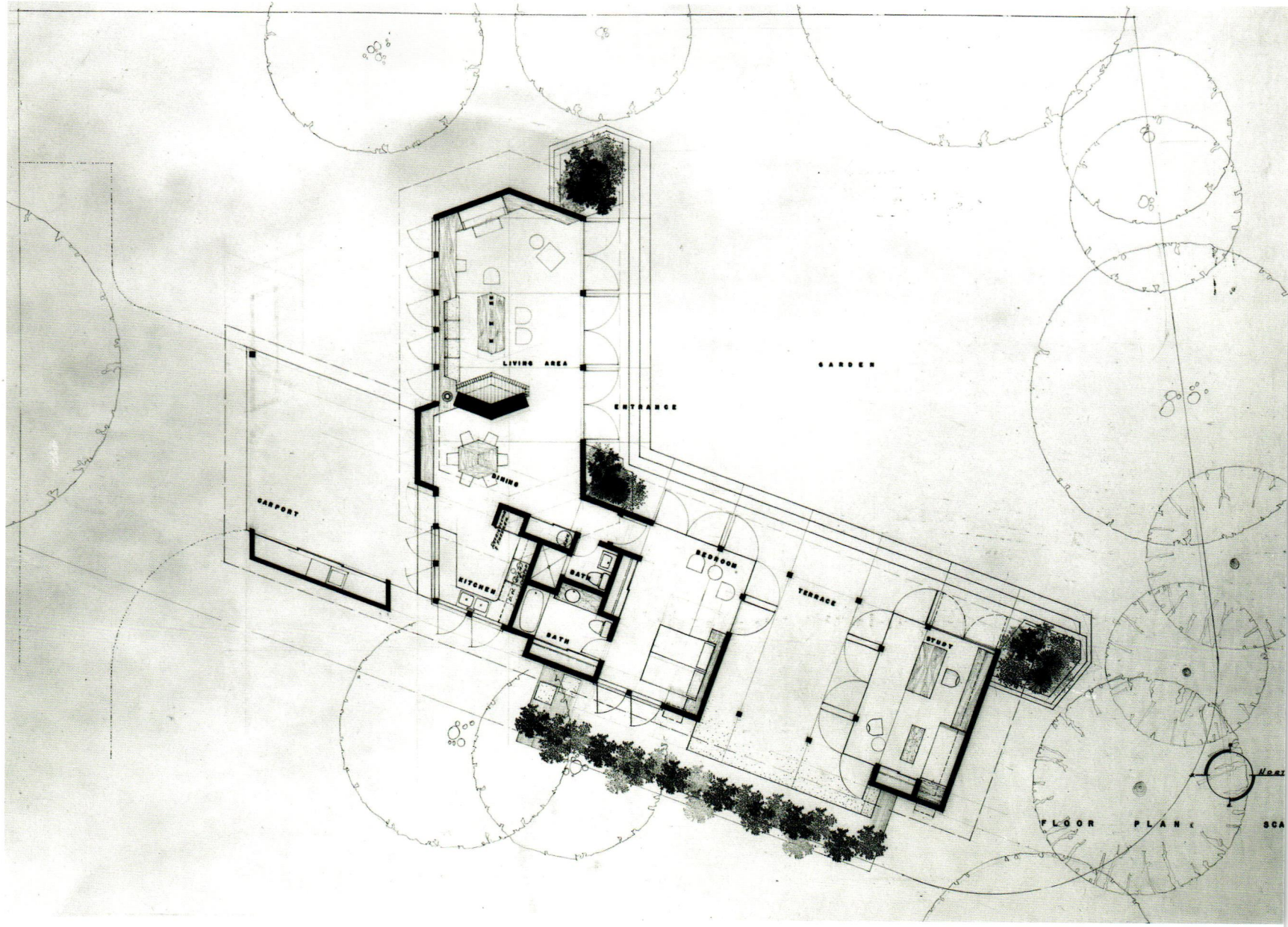
Parker created another of his small gems for the Fardigs, two high school teachers. Set upon a concrete slab-on-grade base, several steps up from the ground, this one-bedroom house in South Miami satisfied both the needs and the budget of the clients. An opened-up "lazy L-shaped plan,"[3] it has living and dining areas in the shorter leg, divided by a fireplace mass, while the longer leg contains the bathroom and an additional half bath, the bedroom, and, beyond a breezeway terrace, the Fardigs' study. A carport with work area adjoins the kitchen, which is located at the intersection of the L. Parker chose the lazy L in part to preserve an existing large tree and in part to increase the home's size and perspective. Its shape, together with its location on the small quarter-acre lot, creates a private, secluded garden area, which the house opens onto.

The roof of the long leg is flat, while a gabled roof over the shorter leg lends spatial interest to the living and dining areas. The exterior walls are sheathed in vertical one-by-six lapped siding. Exposed wood is the predominant interior material. Parker designed a very unusual fascia detail, utilizing copper with vertical battens every 24 inches. During construction he revised it, replacing the more expensive copper with wood shingles to match the gabled roof.

Of particular note for such a small-budget home are the numerous built-ins designed by Parker, the massive angled brick fireplace, and the living area's end wall window set upon a concrete base.

Garden (rear) side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.




LIVING AREA
GARDEN
ENTRANCE
DINING
CARPORT
KITCHEN
BATH
BEDROOM
TERRACE
STUDY
FLOOR PLAN





Fardig residence. *Facing,* Floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries. *Above,* Dining area; *left,* Living area. Photos by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF RIVIERA BEACH

Riviera Beach, Florida ▪ 1963 ▪ Built project—demolished



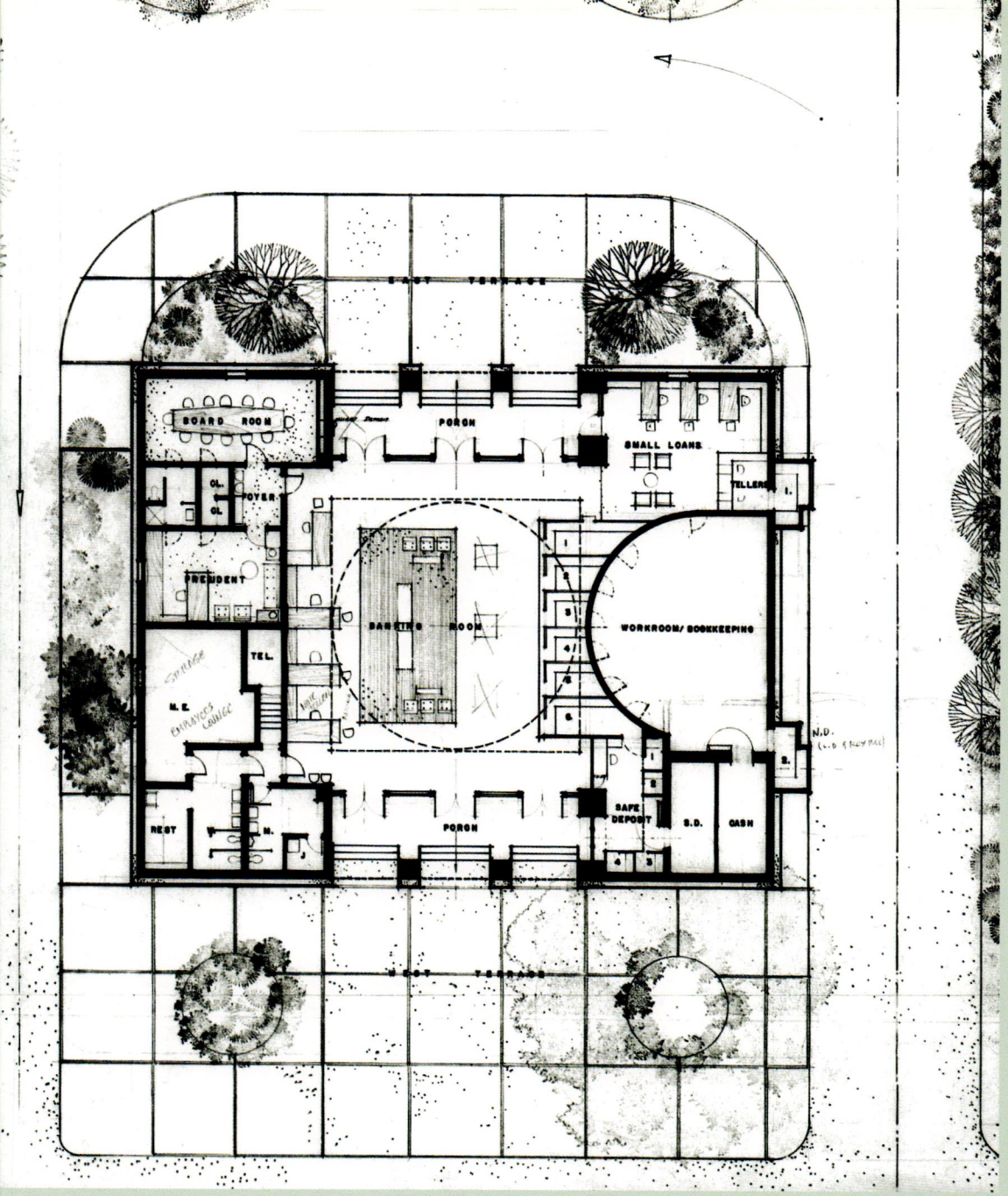
Exterior. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Little is known about this rather diminutive building constructed for the newly chartered First National Bank of Riviera Beach, north of the port of West Palm Beach. Most likely Parker, who was well connected in the South Florida banking industry, received the commission due to the recent completion of the nearby Bazaar International in Riviera Beach as well as his experience in the design of banks.

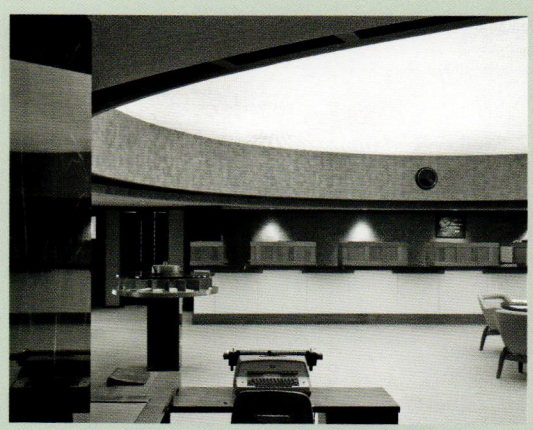
The one-acre site was a narrow rectangular commercial lot facing the busy highway US 1. Parker's design produced a simple classic box situated close to the street, with three half-circle arched portals gracing both the recessed west-facing entry porch on the public side and the east-facing rear, giving on the parking lot for customers and employees. The front and back entrances, through their trio of arches, were three steps above the public plazas. In the center of the 95-by-75-foot building was the open banking area, which was lit from above by a circular luminous ceiling, approximately 40 feet in diameter and 3.5 feet higher than the adjacent 7-foot ceilings. Various other banking functions surrounded the central area. Both the president's office and the bank vault featured acoustical plaster barrel-vaulted ceilings.

The building was built to last, using 12-inch-thick load-bearing walls of reinforced concrete masonry to support the structural steel joists that in turn supported the flat roof. The monolithic 16-foot-high exterior was primarily clad in plain unadorned Granolux, a trowel-applied marble aggregate surfacing, with the only ornamental features being horizontal recessed bands circling the building 12 inches above its base and at the top. The lower recessed band also encircled each of the three arches at front and rear, tying the entire composition together like a ribbon and anchoring it visually to the ground. The building's exterior thus clearly evoked both strength and security.

Parker joined the bank's board of directors, but he eventually resigned his position because of the excessive travel and time demands of his schedule.[4] The bank was almost immediately successful, experiencing phenomenal growth. Its expanding customer base necessitated expanding the building as well, to the detriment of Parker's design. For reasons long forgotten, the building was demolished. Only a few photos, Parker's revealing design studies, and the construction drawings remain.



Floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



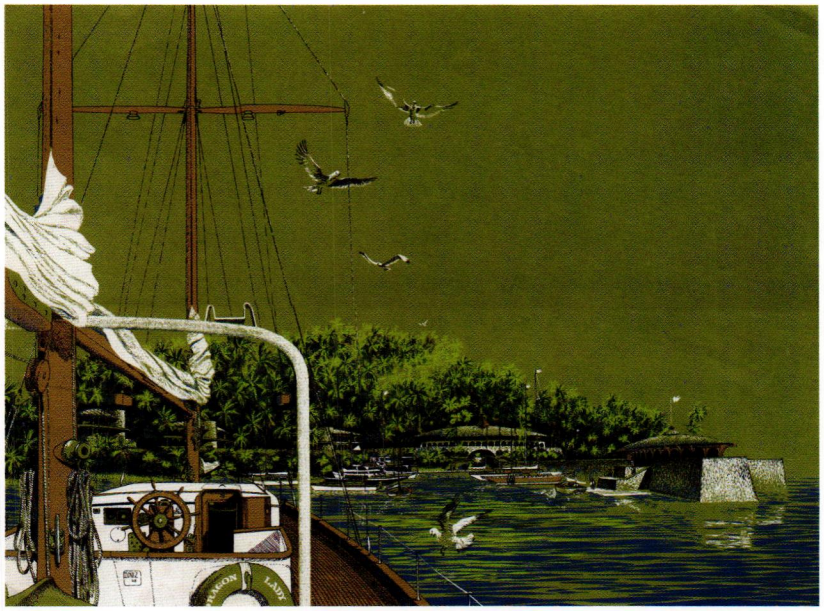
Central banking room. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

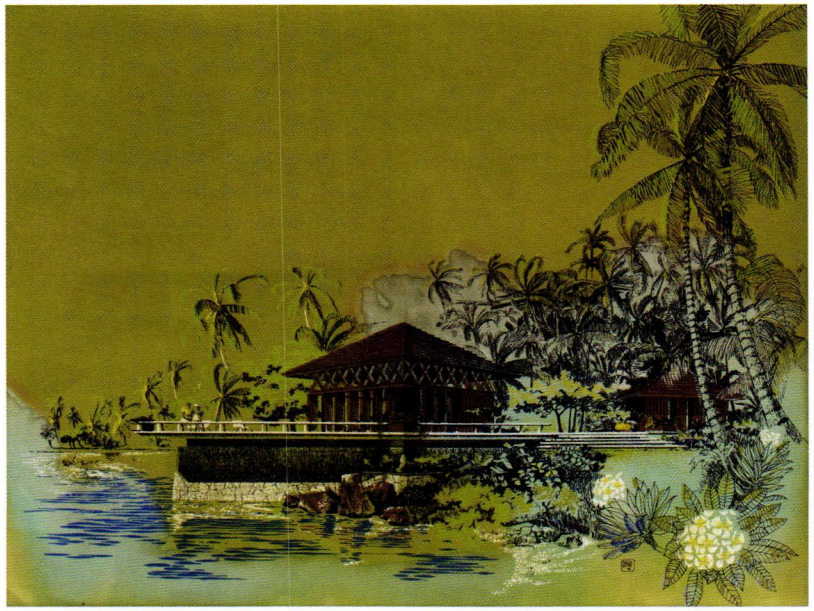
NAVY ISLAND

Port Antonio, Jamaica, West Indies ▪ 1963 ▪ Unbuilt project

Master plan of development. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.







Navy Island, once owned by the famously flamboyant actor Errol Flynn, lies just a hundred yards to the north of the Titchfield Peninsula on the island of Jamaica in the western Caribbean. Len Koutnick and Ray Crandall, two developers from Los Angeles, approached Parker,[5] asking him to design a comprehensive tropical resort and vacation destination "developed to augment the natural migration of tourist trade to this lush part of Jamaica" while recognizing its natural beauty as "an uncut emerald in a sapphire sea."[6] They went on to say, "We had found the most beautiful spot in the world—it must be planned and shared without flawing its beauty." The sixty acres of varied terrain and its serenely lovely natural tropical environment provided an inspiring canvas for Alfred Browning Parker's creativity.

Parker's plan included fifty-nine home sites and a park with a lake, plus a hotel, yacht club, and marina. Carlos Diniz, a nationally recognized architectural illustrator, was retained by the developers to render Parker's vision into a full-color, exquisitely printed large-format book presenting the development to potential customers.[7] A smaller sales brochure was also produced.[8]

Parker's master plan interestingly (and for presentation purposes only) included graphic representations

Left, perspective of hotel, with yacht club and marina beyond; *right*, perspective of speculative residence. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

of sited homes that he had designed previously, including the Mass, Rice, Gayer, Alspach, Kitchens, Lake, Ewing, and Jewel Parker residences. However, Parker actually did design two speculative houses specifically for Navy Island, as well as the yacht club and marina. The latter, which Parker referred to as the Boatel, was to be located on the protected bayside of the island and to include a fueling pier, docks, club building with dining room, kitchen, and lounge, and four separate apartment buildingsfor the boatsmen. The club building's form was derived from the sea slug mollusk. The residences were reminiscent of his previous designs for John Cameron Swayze and Robert Graham. In a letter to James DeLong, the editorial director of *House Beautiful*, Parker described the two tropical dwellings specifically designed for Navy Island:

> Both dwellings are built of frame placed upon large masonry platforms. The woods used in the construction will be cypress, mahogany and other tropical hardwoods. The roofs are constructed of hand split wood shakes. The truss-like frame over all of the doors is a stiffening device. The openings in these frames will be glazed and in some sections the glazing will be hinged to permit the passage of air through the upper parts of the building. All of the doors are of the persiana type which permits flexibility of arrangement for air, light, privacy, and equally important as a storm shutter for closing up the entire building. The floors will be of tile and the entire concept is one which permits the buildings to be hosed down even as a boat is cleaned. It was considered desirable to explode these houses into various functional components connected one to the other by covered walks. Tropical breezes can be better utilized in this manner of planning and shady terraces and courts are always adjacent to all of the spaces. Maintenance and ease of opening and closing seem to be important attributes of vacation buildings in the tropics. When these houses are built it is intended that non-corrosive fastenings will be used in the construction and that all of the wood will be treated by bleaching oils, stains or other forms of treatment that have a long life and that offer soft shading to blend the buildings into the environment that is riotous with color.[9]

Parker wrote an article, "What You Need to Know Before You Build in the Tropics," which further described and illustrated these two dwelling designs for Navy Island.[10]

Unfortunately, the project never progressed beyond the visionary designs. The developers discovered that the cost of bringing water across the harbor to the island was prohibitive.[11]

MAXIMO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

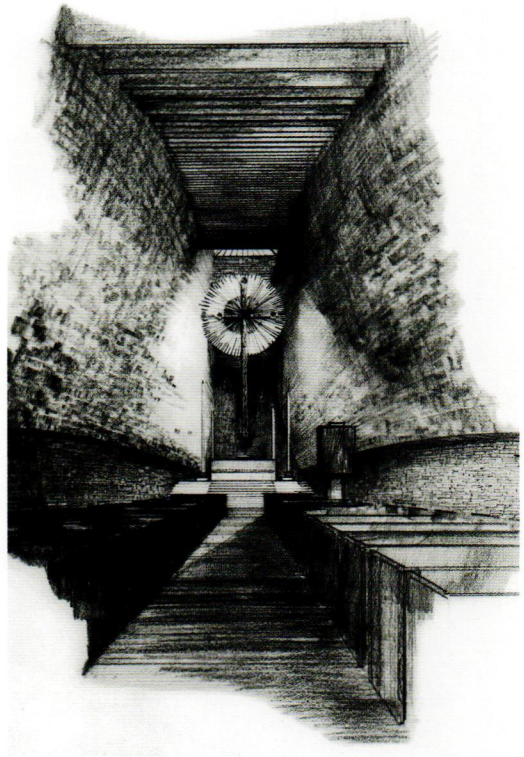
St. Petersburg, Florida ▪ 1964 ▪ Built project—extant

On Larry King's radio show on WIOD in Miami, Parker stated:

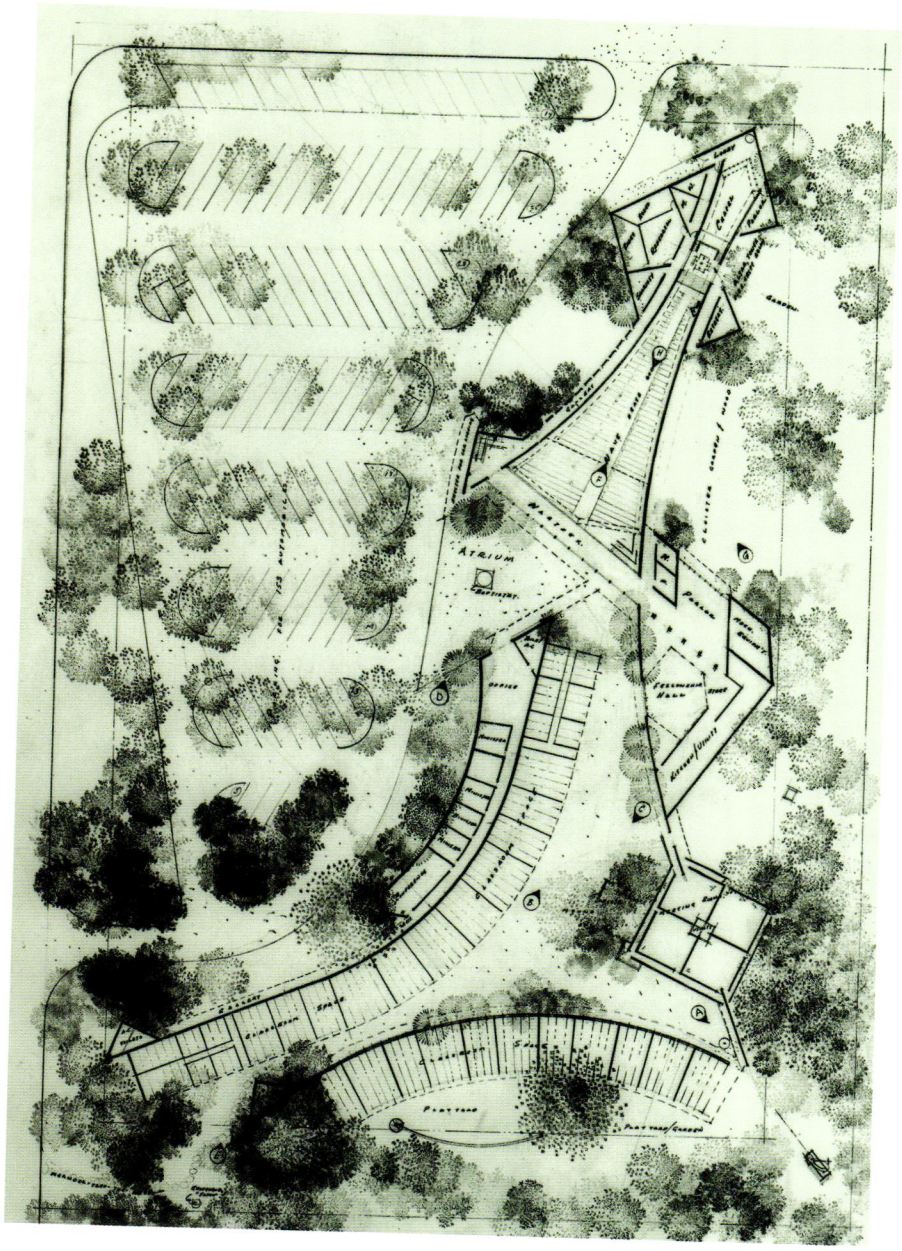
> Every architectural commission is both a trust from the present and a pledge to the future. For obvious reasons, this is especially true in a religious assignment. Architects fulfill a noble and traditional function in bringing their best creative efforts to the church. A church exists because of people with mutual beliefs. A church in the truest sense never begins with a building. It is a church because of what people believe, not because of carved limestone and elaborate wood screens. While the great monuments of medieval times may excite our imagination and even lead us down primrose paths of imitation, we must remember they came into existence as the by-products of an intense religious spirit. Many of the architectural features commonly attributed to churches are trappings, and expensive ones at that. They are never substitutes for a vital congregation. Many designers of religious buildings are fond of saying that a church must proclaim its position in the community. I suggest that such proclamation need not be a shout, but rather a quiet assertion of strength and refuge. The major errors we architects make in the design of religious buildings fall into two categories. The first is the trap of tradition in which a stage set is produced in Gothic manner, Colonial style, historic Byzantine, or whatever the antecedents of the individuals in their community. The second snare is the self-conscious effort to be different. Church buildings will be different if they successfully solve the manifold problems presented by their members. Difference in this context is admirable and should be sought.[12]

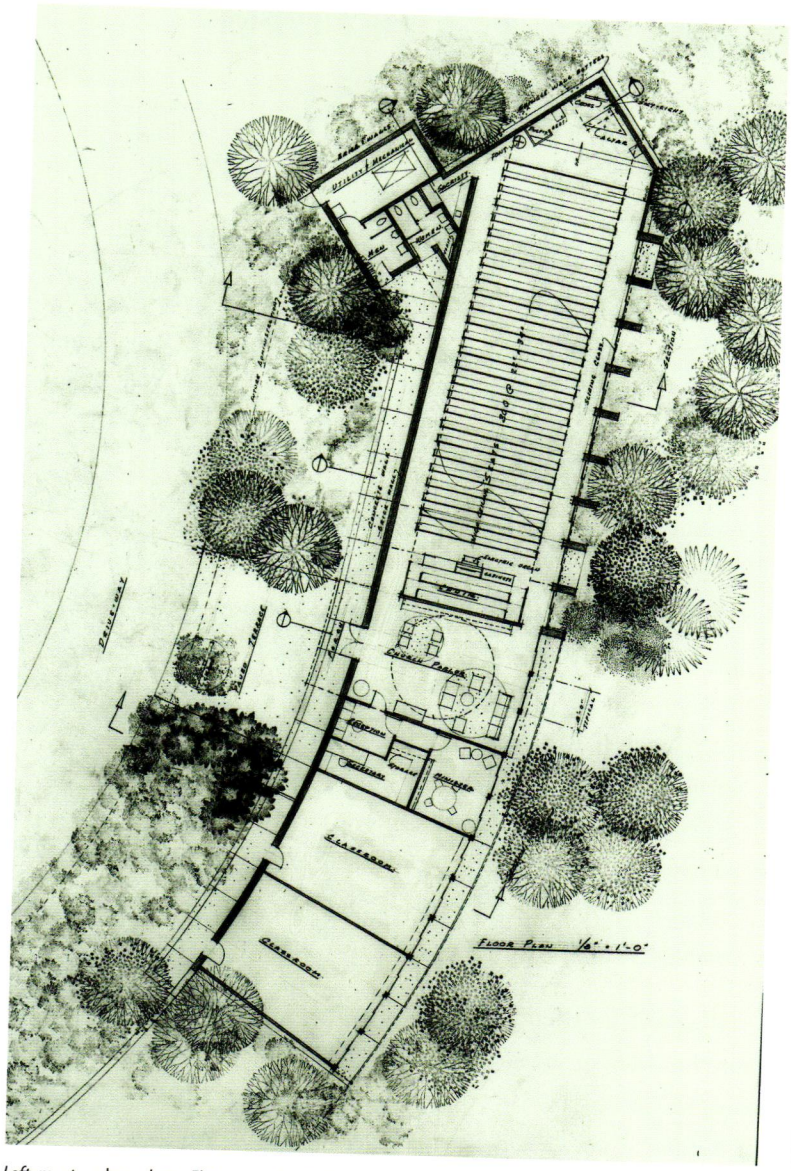
The radio spot captures some of the ideas behind the design of Maximo Presbyterian Church. Even with the visionary master plan only partially realized, the built initial phase provides a clear hint of what could have been, if it had been fully realized, a certain masterwork.

Parker's St. Petersburg work includes two partially realized religious building projects, Maximo Presbyterian Church and Northeast United Presbyterian Church, and a built housing project for the elderly sponsored by the Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Towers. Maximo Presbyterian was the first of the three.

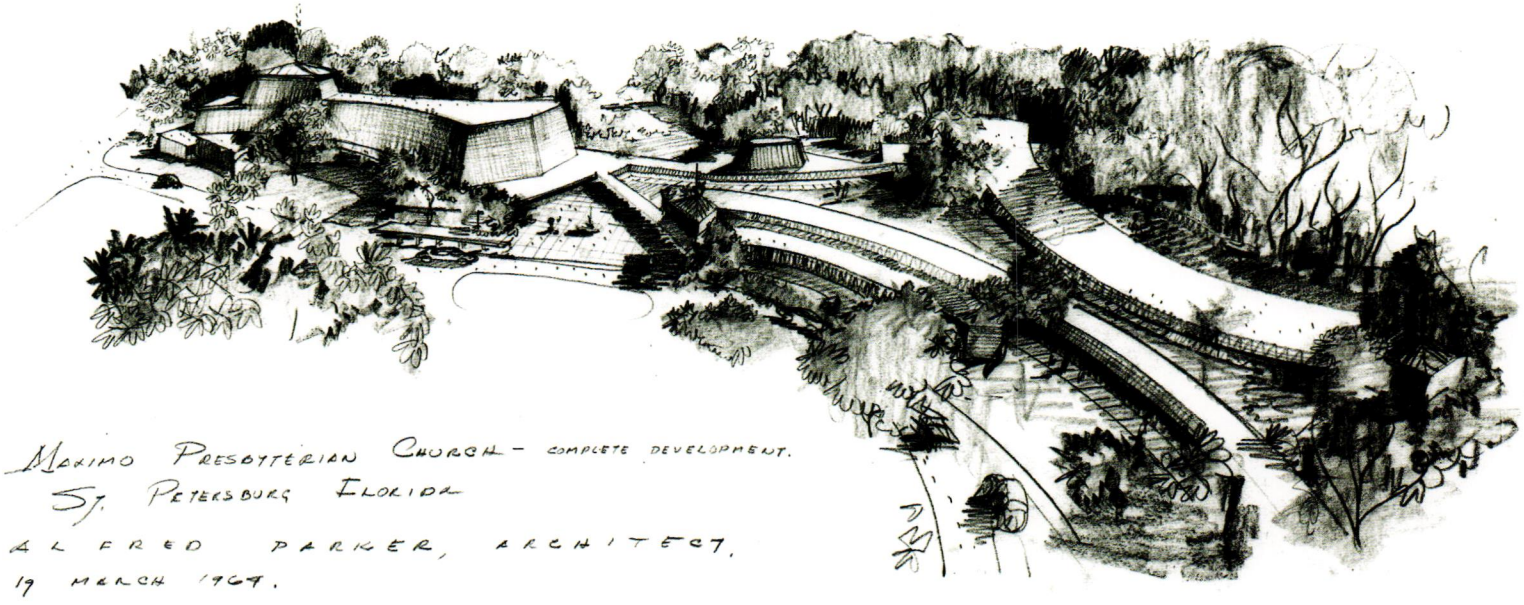


Perspective interior study of sanctuary. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.





Left, master plan; *above*, Floor plan of initial phase. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Bird's-eye perspective. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Sanctuary. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Less than three years old, the congregation of Maximo quickly grew and began discussing building their own edifice. Even before they had a site, in November 1963 they retained Parker as their architect. By March 1964 they had purchased six and a half acres in southern St. Petersburg near Maximo Park.[13]

Parker designed the visionary master plan, dated March 1964, to fit among the many large trees on the site. None was cut for the first phase of construction, although eleven palms were relocated. Parker combined sweeping curves and triangular shapes, creating opportunities for dramatic and inspiring interior and exterior spaces.

The initial phase of the master plan consisted of a 2,000-square-foot worship space, later slated to become the church's social hall, and four 500-square-foot meeting rooms, each provided with a movable partition down the middle for flexibility. The entry narthex, identified by Parker on his plans as the "church parlor," divides the two distinctly different worship and educational functions. A choir loft is above and to the rear of the high-volume sanctuary (and partially above the narthex), and a sacristy is off the chancel area. Retained from the master plan is the skillful combination of gently sweeping curves and triangular shapes. A circular skylight is located above the altar. The chancel area, communion table, and apse all are triangular, their shape responding to the symbol of the Trinity. Placed on an east-west axis with a glass



Street (front) side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

wall facing south, the worship space receives natural illumination throughout the daylight hours from a continuous series of glass doors looking out upon a secluded and protected natural garden area. Parker used natural materials throughout—brick pavers and brick veneer (with deeply raked mortar joints), hand-split cedar shakes, Canadian spruce decking, exposed steel structural beams, and Honduran mahogany paneling. Unique at Maximo Presbyterian is Parker's use of shallow arched brick headers over the doors, a detail requested by the client.[14]

The official groundbreaking for construction of the initial phase, their House of God, was June 28, 1964.[15] The contractor was Howard Woodward Construction and the cost $110,000. The dedication of the built phase took place almost five months later, on November 8, 1964.[16]

In the dedication booklet printed by the church, Parker was quoted:

> I remember that upon my first meeting with your Building Committee I quoted from "Dr. Hudson's Secret Journal" by Lloyd Douglas. "Some of our churches are built of concrete blocks in imitation of stone, and some of our wooden steeples fussy with jigsaw ornamentation are painted gray to resemble stone. I had never considered this matter, but it occurs to me now that a church should never be an imitation of something. If the church wants to have a steadying effect upon the people, it must begin the task by being absolutely honest." It seems to me that we have made a sincere effort to express the nature of materials with which Maximo Presbyterian is concerned.[17]

On December 28, 2003, in one of his last sermons given at Maximo Presbyterian, Reverend James R. Harwell spoke of Parker's creation:

> I love this building . . . because it is an almost perfect example of the calling to discipleship. It is honest; its essentials are open to view. The design is imaginative. The workmanship is superb. . . . Look how straight and perfect these lines are. This arch is a jewel; it is an arch upon an arch connecting to an arch. The architect, Alfred Browning Parker, twice had it torn out and when nobody else wanted to try to put it in, Parker put on his coveralls got a trowel and hod and he put it in. Note that all the materials are natural and exposed. Note the use of light—to look out at God's creation and to cast a shadow from the Cross. . . . Here is imaginative use of the primordial light that began when God said, "Let there be Light and there was light."[18]

HAND RESIDENCE

Belle Glade, Florida ▪ 1965 ▪ Built project—extant

Belle Glade is an isolated rural community surrounded by dairy farms and sugarcane fields. Local residents Homer and Dolly Hand retained Parker for the design of their home after seeing his work in *House Beautiful* and the *Miami Herald* as well as his Miami area projects firsthand, especially Hope Lutheran. His approach appealed to their vision of what they desired in a home—"wood, openness, angles and glass."[19]

Parker's initial design for their flat ten-acre property, dated April 21, 1965, was a two-story octagonal house, answering their desire for angles. After much deliberation, though, they felt that "the scheme just wasn't what we wanted."[20] On March 11, 1966, Parker presented a second, entirely different design. This was



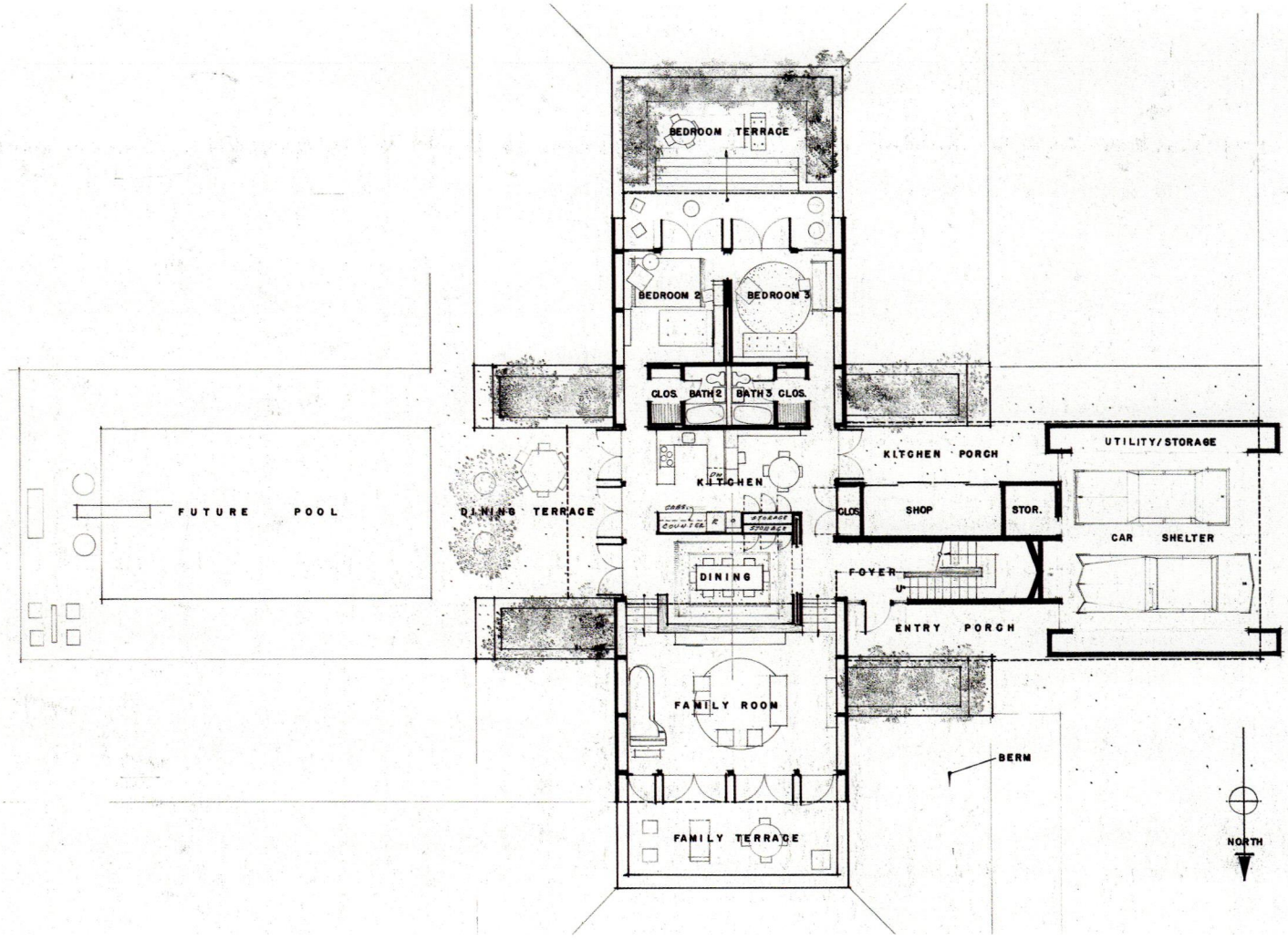
Street (front) side. Photo by author.



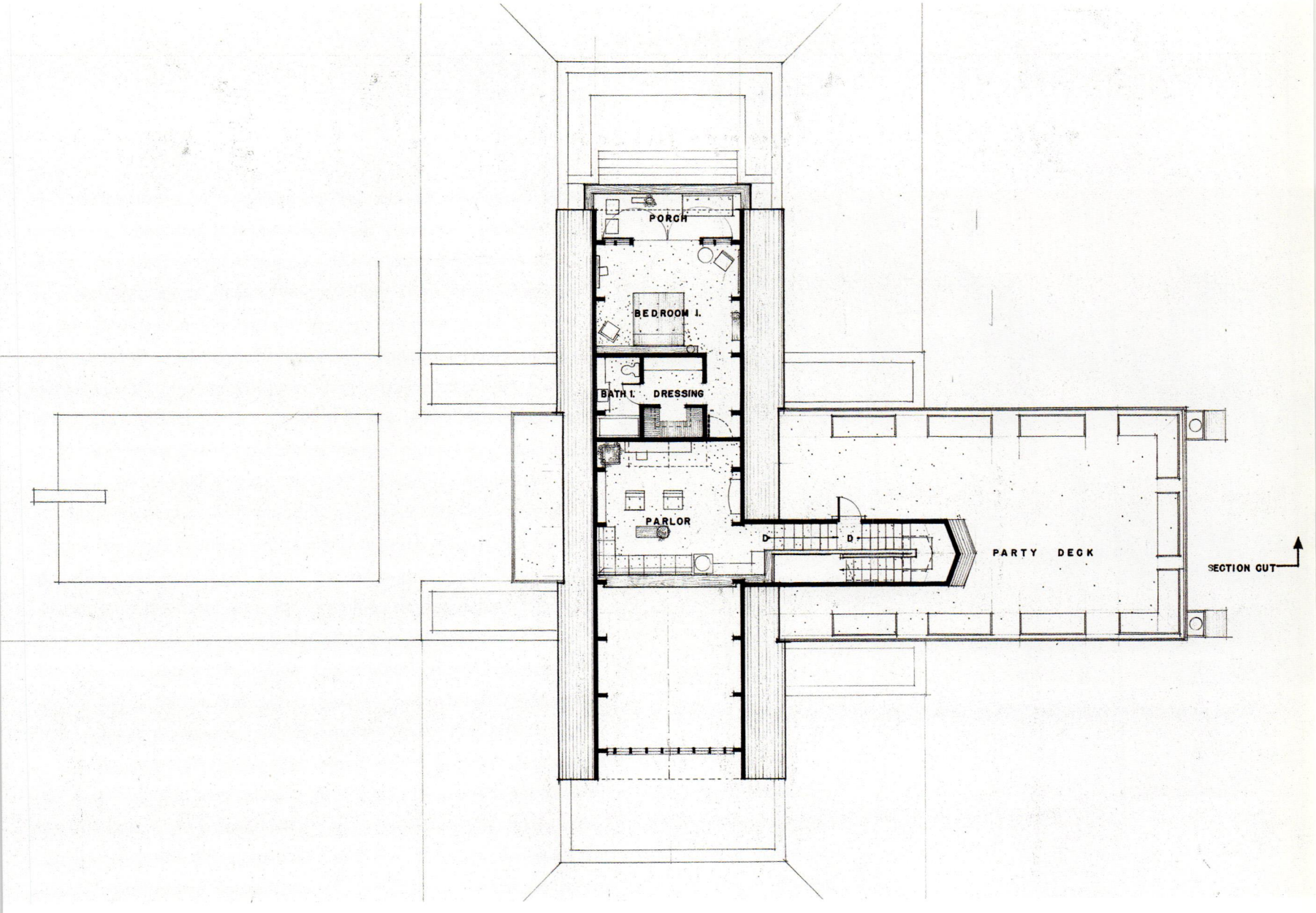
Rear side. Photo by author.

again two stories, but now the plan was cross-shaped. In elevation, Parker bermed the ground up against the perimeter walls and featured a sheltering gambrel roof—perhaps responding both to the Hands' affection for Hope Lutheran and to the agricultural nature of the area. The first level included a two-story living room with terrace, a kitchen and dining, two bedrooms and baths, and a Florida room. A two-car carport was the lower terminus of the cross, with a swimming pool at the top end. The second floor contained the Hands' master bedroom suite, with a sitting area overlooking the living room below, and master closets and bathroom spaces between the sitting and sleeping areas. Parker included a balcony off the more secluded sleeping area, providing views across the vast open cane fields.

The Hands moved into their completed home on November 1, 1970. In 1987 they retained Parker to design modifications to add a shop and a bar, enlarge the Florida room, and convert the carport into a garage.



Hand residence. *Above*, Ground-level floor plan; *facing,* upper-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.


PORCH
BEDROOM 1.
BATH 1.
DRESSING
PARLOR
D
D
PARTY DECK
SECTION CUT

KOHLER RESIDENCE

Calistoga, California ▪ 1965 ▪ Unbuilt project



Worm's-eye perspective. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

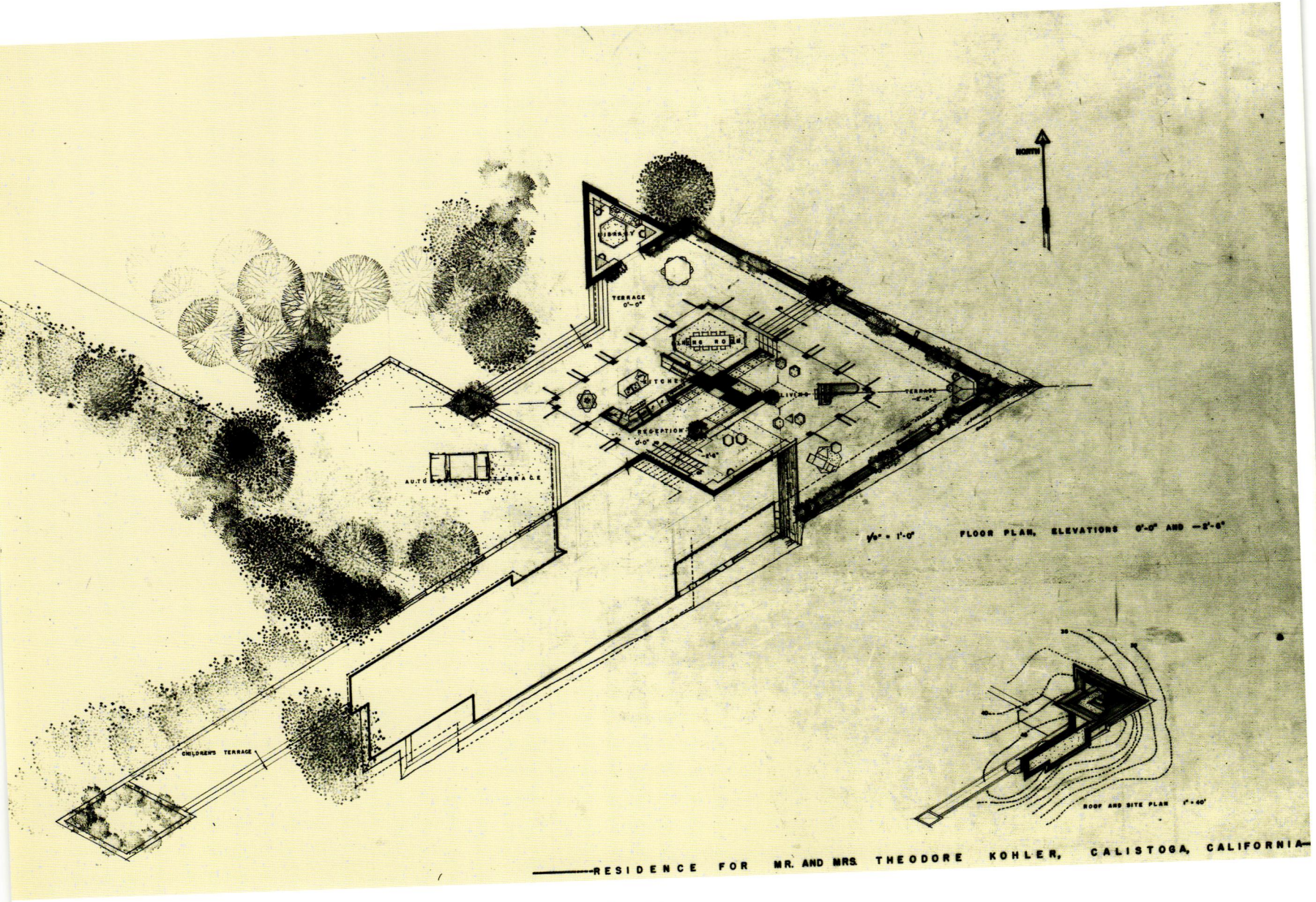
Parker never met Theodore and Lydia Kohler or even visited their home site. However, as clients, they displayed great faith and commitment to his creative potential, and his eventual design rewarded their confidence. They first contacted Parker on February 22, 1963, writing to ask if he would be interested in designing their home "despite the handicap imposed by distance."[21] The Kohlers subscribed to *House Beautiful*, where they fell in love with Parker's work, especially his Pace Setter 1954 on Royal Road. Parker agreed to design their home but suggested an association with Aaron G. Green for the construction supervision. Green was a practicing architect in San Francisco who earlier in his career was Frank Lloyd Wright's West Coast representative. Parker even suggested that they seriously consider Green as their primary architect, since he was much closer. They contacted Green, but he was busy with large projects and could not commit his time to their residential commission.[22] Green did agree, as a professional courtesy, to lend Parker a hand if and when needed. Parker wasn't able to start the design of their project until more than two years later. He wrote the Kohlers in March 1965 asking if they still desired his services.[23] They answered affirmatively, and the preliminary design was sent to them in early November 1965.

During the almost three-year wait, the Kohlers completed initial work on their property—they constructed a one-acre pond with dam and spillway, a mile-long road to the building site, and a temporary octagonal shelter to use as their residence until their Parker opus was completed. The extremely rural property, some sixty miles north of San Francisco, consisted of more than 250 acres of raw, wooded, very hilly land with an inexhaustible supply of stone. The site chosen for their home was a rocky knoll

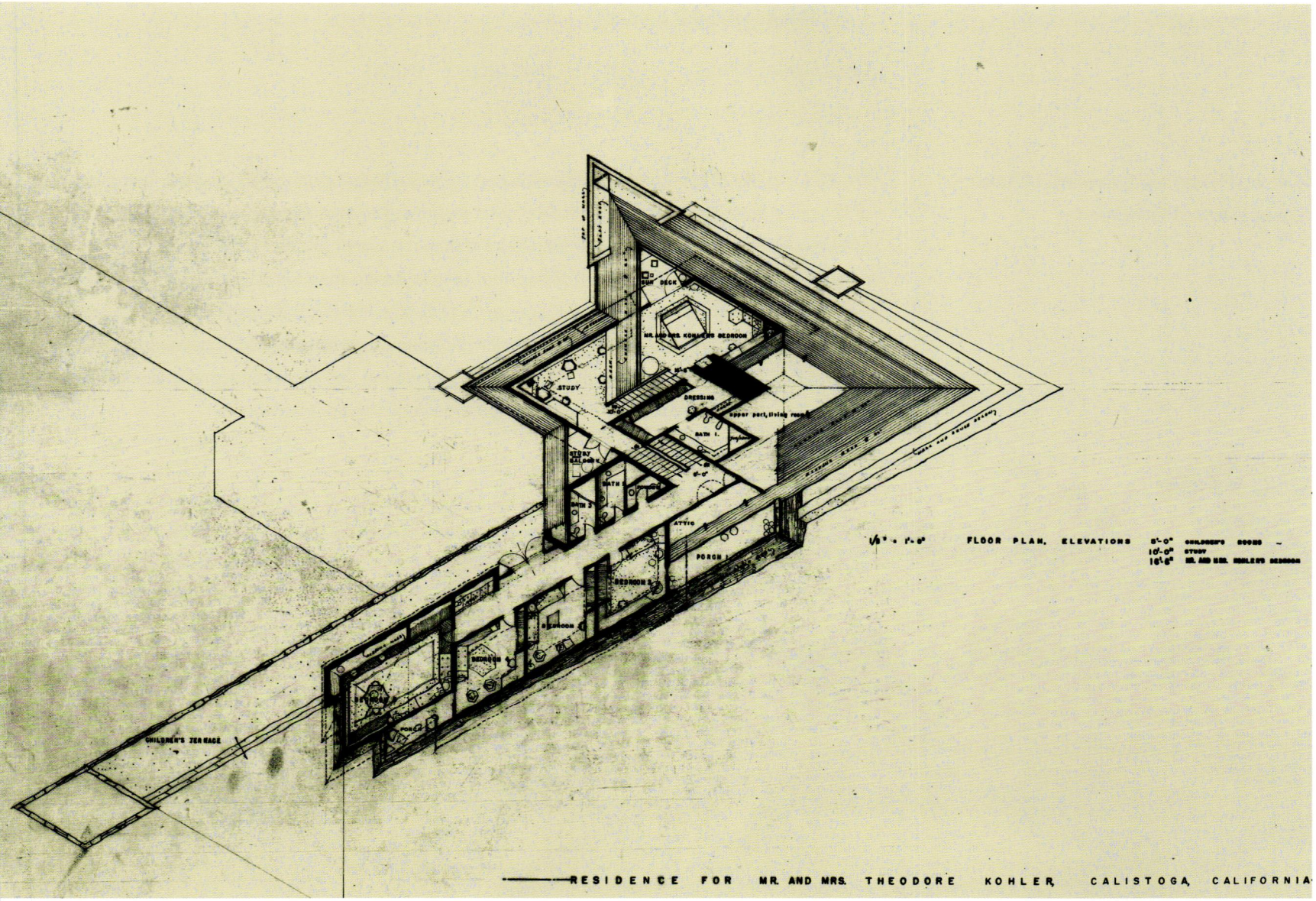
overlooking the pond. Living on the property allowed the Kohlers to experience the inherent beauty but also the natural difficulties, which included both floods and fires.

Parker explained to the Kohlers that his preliminaries depicted an organic "building which would be a part of the knoll and complement its form,"[24] with the hope that it would only minimally disturb the site. His design responded to something Mrs. Kohler said: "I like some mystery about a home (like anything else in life)—to wonder what might lie around the corner."[25] It was conceived with numerous levels and spaces, intimate and low in places, high and soaring in other places. The plan was obviously based on a powerful triangular geometry. (Parker also ascribed the design, in part, to "some frustration at the demolition of the Mass residence.")[26] The main level, designed to fit efficiently within a diamond shape, contained the public spaces—reception area, living and dining areas, and a kitchen, all revolving around a central stone fireplace core, undoubtedly situated by Parker to anchor the entire house to its site. The living area, part a high and soaring space, opened onto a terrace overlooking the pond and views. A small triangular library sat slightly remote from and loosely connected to the main house. The upper levels, under a steeply pitched roof, accommodated the more private spaces—four bedrooms for the children, two and a half baths, and a master bedroom suite with triangular study.

Although the Kohlers enthusiastically endorsed the design, they wrote Parker in December explaining that several things had changed that would affect the immediate construction of their home. The initial estimates, even figuring in their anticipated sweat equity, still exceeded their budget. The almost three-year delay since their initial contact with Parker also greatly influenced the decision: their family size had increased by one (they now had five children) and college wasn't too far off for their oldest son and daughter. They chose postponement rather than revision, not wanting to "tamper with its basic concept nor reduce nor dilute its quality or scale in any way which would destroy for us the feeling it conveys."[27] The project was destined never to become reality.



Kohler residence. Lower-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



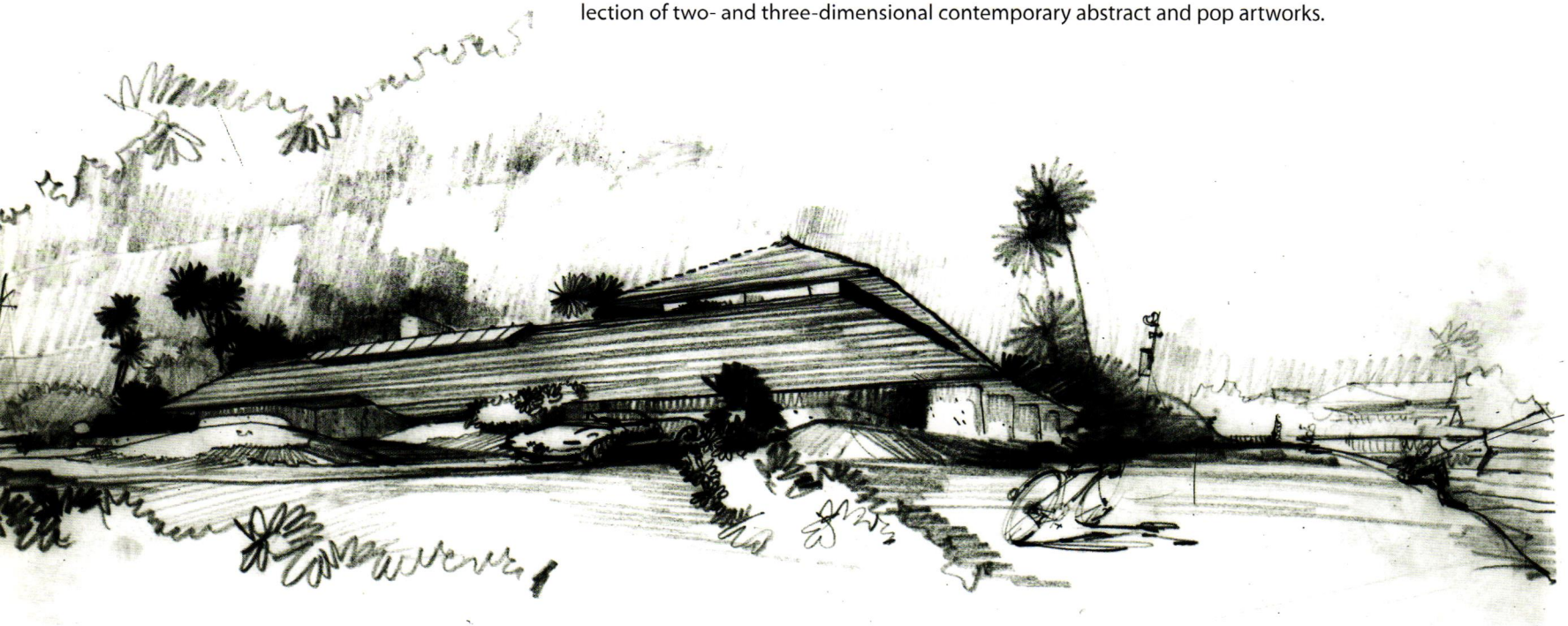
Upper-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

LANDON RESIDENCE

Coral Gables, Florida ▪ 1965 ▪ Built project—extant

Perspective preliminary study. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

The Kirk and Bea Landon residential commission singularly owed itself to Bea Landon's longtime dream of living in a home designed by Parker. (Her other dream was to own a Henry Moore sculpture, which she achieved as well.)[28] Shortly after marrying Kirk Landon, the owner of American Bankers Insurance Company of Florida, she retained Parker in late April 1965 to design their home on an oversized waterfront lot in the gated community of Gables Estates in Coral Gables. Bea was passionate about the arts, and the large brick home Parker designed was a refined and distinguished solution with spacious interiors and an understated courtyard with a fanciful pool, all complementing and accommodating their extensive collection of two- and three-dimensional contemporary abstract and pop artworks.







Above, pool and terrace. Note spiral staircase from pool to upper diving platform; *left*, Pool, terrace, and loggia beyond. © Bo Parker Photographer.



Landon residence. Living area. Photo by author.

The waterfront lot is an irregular one, located at the cul-de-sac terminating Casuarina Concourse, just down the street from the Parker-designed Magnuson residence. For privacy, Parker wrapped an assemblage of organized functional components, sheltered below a single encompassing hipped roof, around a pool and terrace. The separate component buildings include a garage with shop and boat storage, a small guest house, a pool building with a dressing room and sauna, and the primary residence. The primary residence has a skylit living area of exceptional size, 24 feet wide and more than 60 feet long, divided into east and west living rooms by a massive but whimsical brick fireplace chimney positioned on an angle and extending out through the exterior wall onto the pool terrace. The lower level also contains a dining area, kitchen with breakfast porch, large playroom with lounge, and two bedrooms with individual bathrooms and a smaller playroom between. A library loft and the master bedroom suite with east- and west-facing exterior decks are located on a second floor, above the kitchen and playroom.

Parker utilized brick as the predominant material for both the exterior and interior wall surfaces, with a tiled hipped roof.

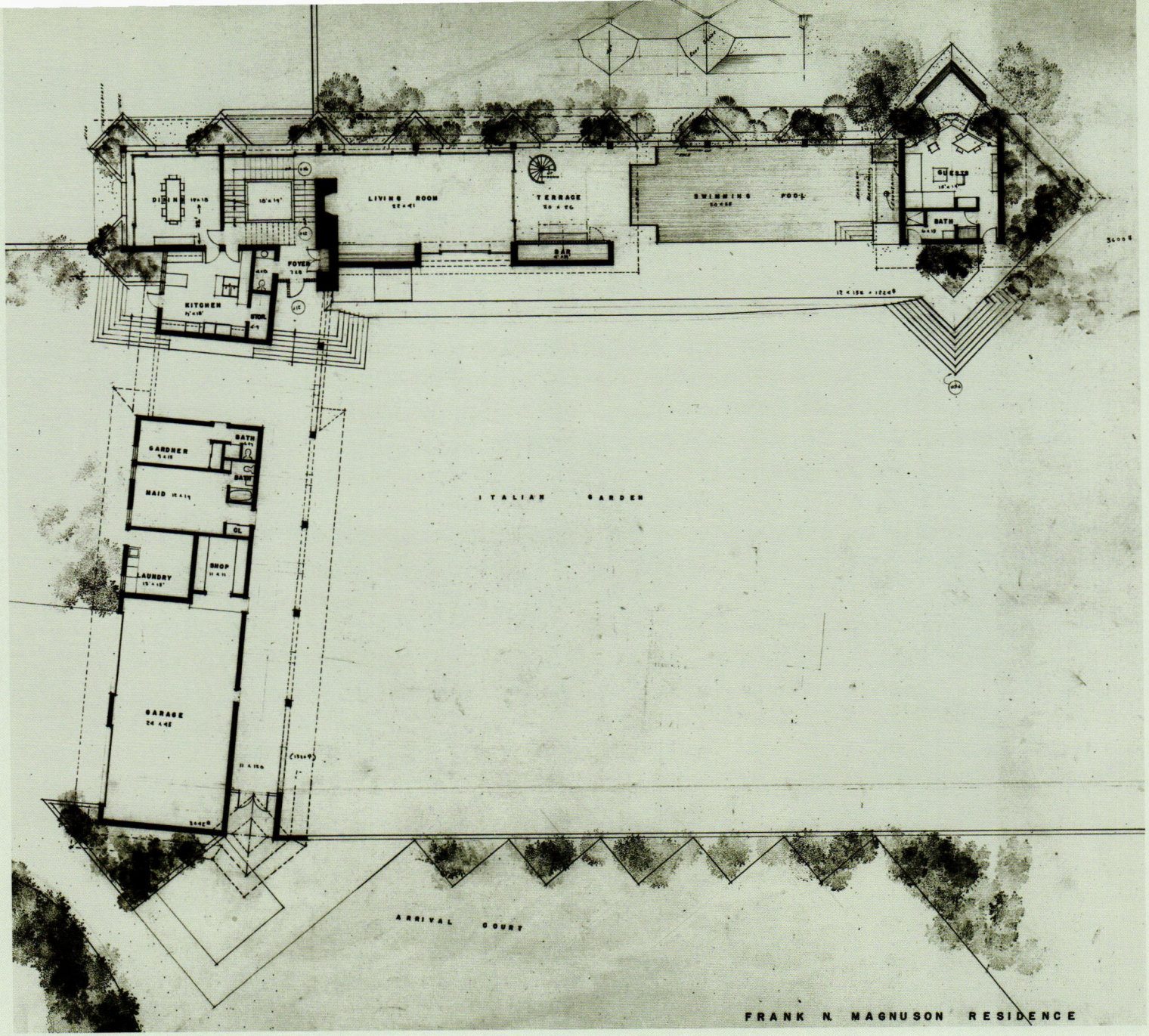
MAGNUSON RESIDENCE

Coral Gables, Florida ▪ 1965 ▪ Built project—extant

For Frank N. Magnuson, a real estate developer, Parker designed a large home on a secluded choice waterfront lot in the gated community of Gables Estates in Coral Gables. Magnuson knew of Parker through his brother-in-law and partner, John H. Moynahan. Parker deliberately located the basically one-room-deep house across the width of the lot near the water's edge on Biscayne Bay, providing a superb east-facing view of the bay from all the primary areas while creating space on the inland side for a large walled garden, variously labeled on drawings as formal, Italian, and orchard. The house and its gardens are visible only after passing through a gated entry off the arrival court.



West (front) side. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.


DINING
LIVING ROOM
TERRACE
SWIMMING POOL
GUEST
BATH
FOYER
KITCHEN
BAR
GARDNER
BATH
MAID
CL.
LAUNDRY
SHOP
GARAGE
ITALIAN GARDEN
ARRIVAL COURT
FRANK N. MAGNUSON RESIDENCE

The plan of the house is L-shaped, with the L opened up slightly beyond 90 degrees—a technique Parker used to increase the apparent size and the perspective of his architecture, learned from studying the design of Piazza San Marco in Venice and applied successfully to his own home and to the Landon residence that he also designed in Gables Estates. At the intersection of the wings Parker located the grand elevated entry and interior stairs connecting all three levels, against the backside of the fireplace. Parker chose the gambrel, used recently for the Hands in Belle Glade, as the primary roof form. However, in this instance the roof was supported by a series of geometric load-bearing arches to rhythmically organize this strongly linear plan. The dramatic and highly refined result created a home visually larger than its actual dimensions.

As in his own home, Parker incorporated strongly expressed forms, with planters at the base on the bay side, angled at 45 degrees, to act as breakers for the surge of water during storms. Again, Parker's one-room-deep design, coupled with its orientation and expansive openings, allowed for maximum exposure to the prevailing southeast breezes.

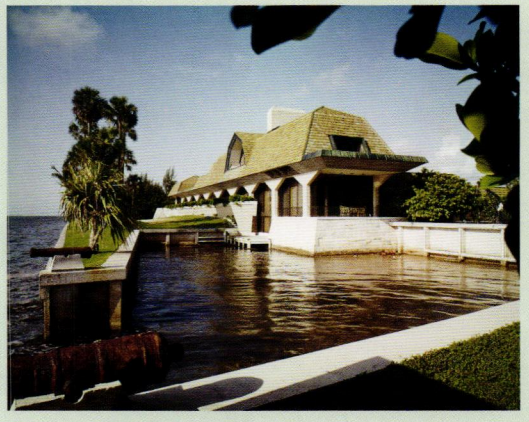
The main level contained a living room, foyer, kitchen, and dining area. The wing of the L parallel with the northern property line contained the garage and support spaces. The wing parallel with the shoreline of Biscayne Bay accommodated the primary spaces of the home. On the uppermost level was a single bedroom, albeit a luxuriously large suite, for Magnuson, a bachelor. A lower level housed primarily mechanical spaces. In addition, there were staff rooms scattered throughout the home and a guest suite at the southern end, separated from the main house by the pool.

The Magnuson residence is another masterwork created by an obviously confident, mature architect for a trusting client on a spectacular site.

In 1981 Magnuson sold his home to the developers of Grove Towers,[29] a new high-rise condominium project just under construction in Coconut Grove. As part of the deal Magnuson obtained one of the multistory penthouse units in the project. Parker was retained to design the interior modifications for the penthouse suite. Tragically, Magnuson committed suicide the following year and never saw the completed project.

Magnuson's Gables Estates residence was altered by Milton Wallace, the second owner, in accordance with input from Parker, and without sacrificing its original design.

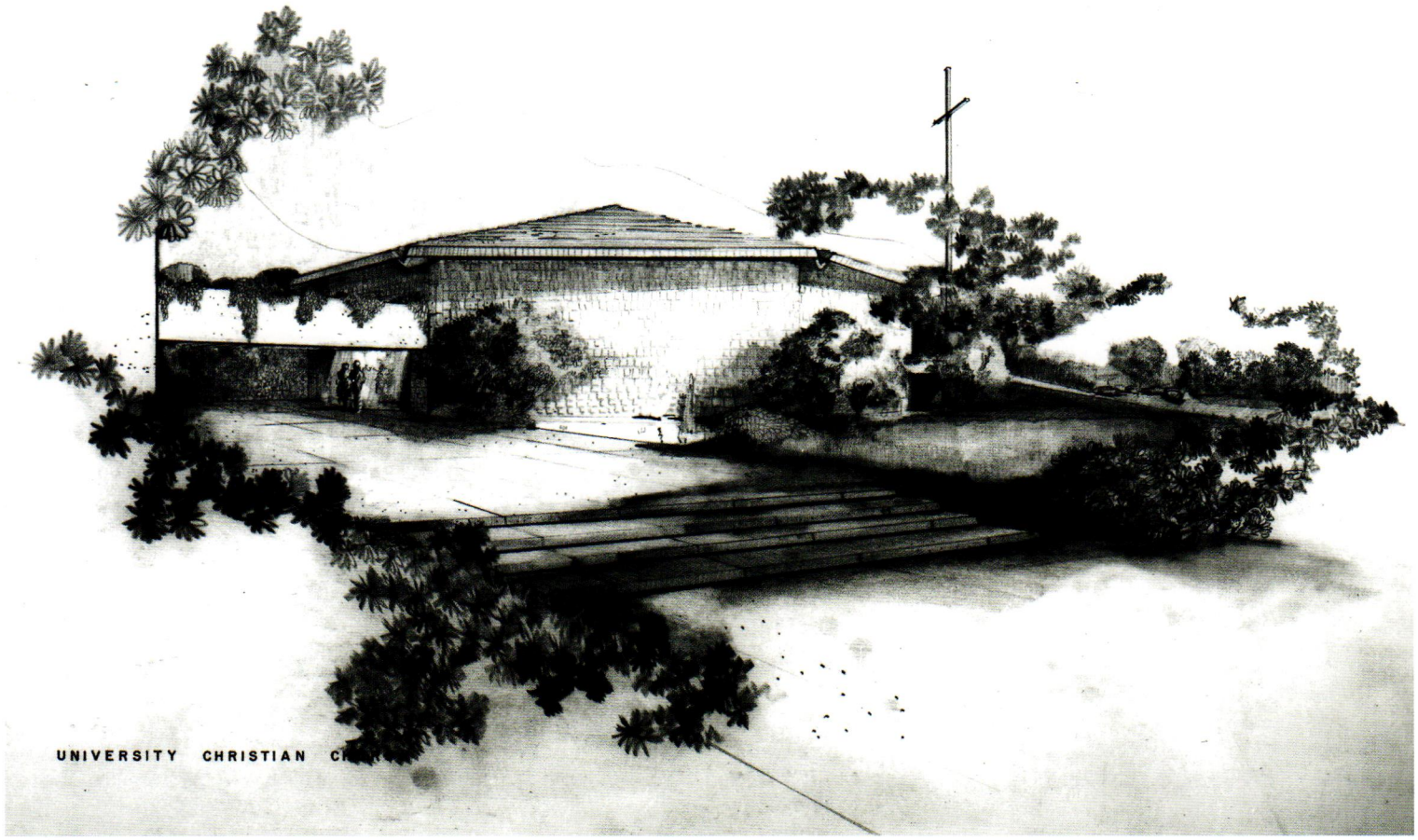
Facing: Ground-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



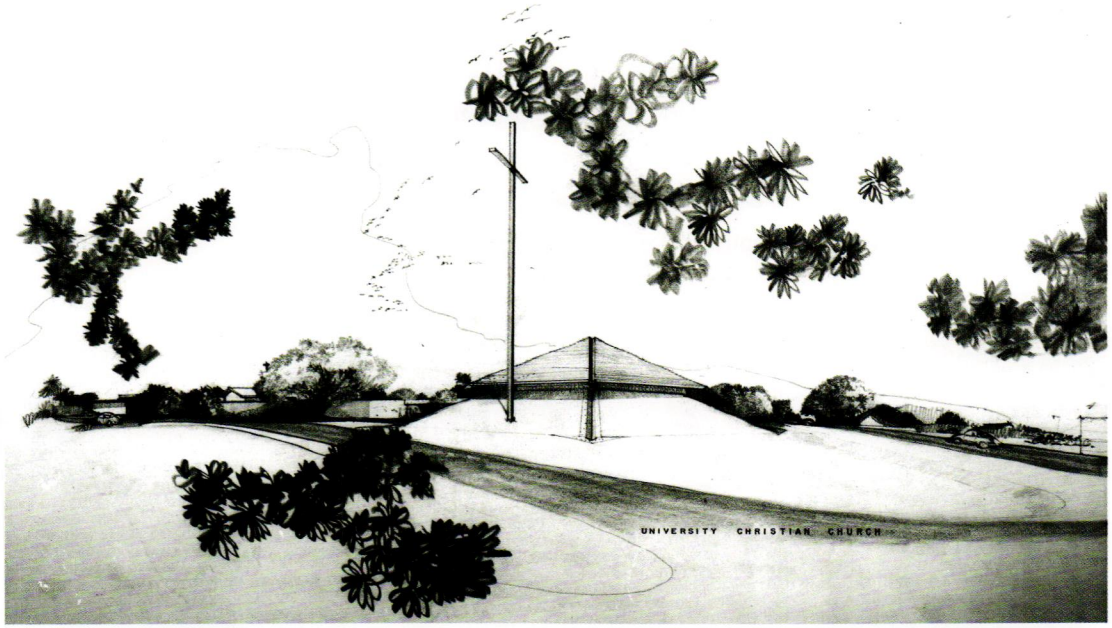
East side, facing Biscayne Bay. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

South Miami, Florida ▪ 1965 ▪ Unbuilt project



Perspective study of entrance. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



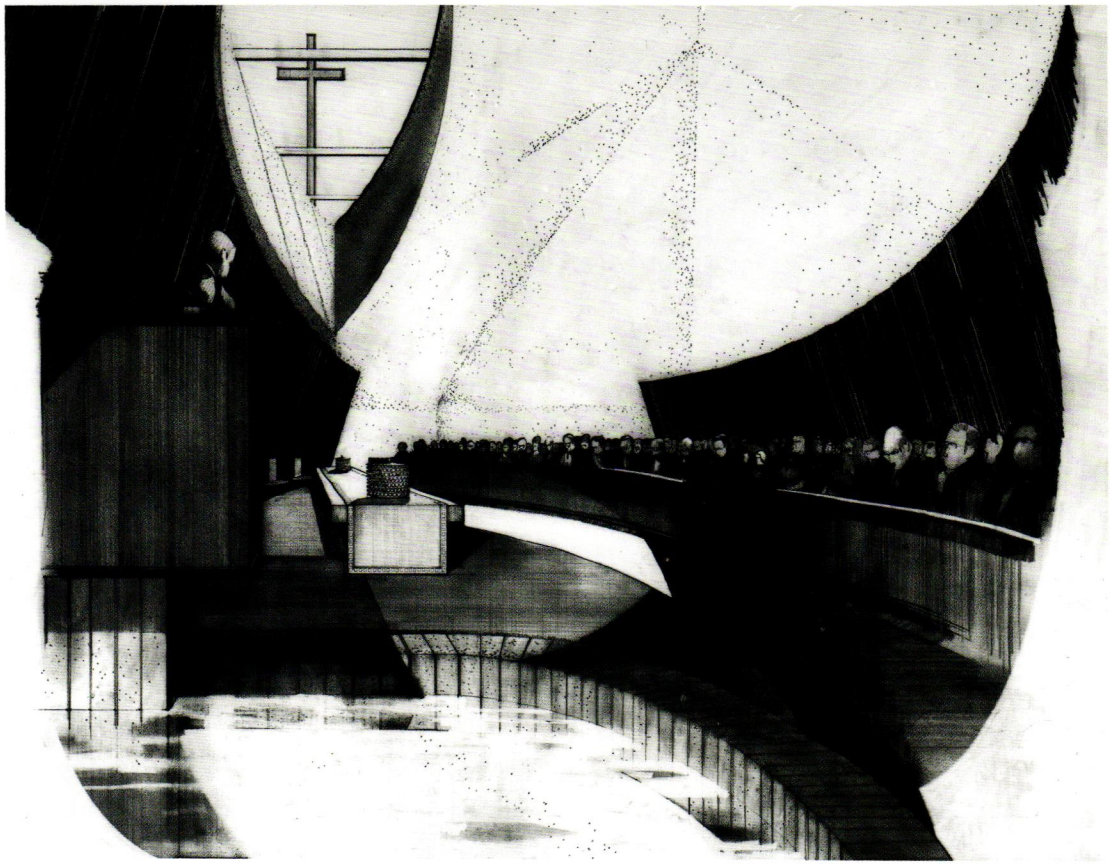
Perspective study of street side. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

Parker's plan for a sanctuary addition for the University Christian Church Disciples of Christ began with his response to the site. An uninspiring flat and treeless meadow bounded on two sides by heavily traveled streets in South Miami, it impelled him to create an internally focused, underground worship space. Parker was quoted as saying about the concept, "The non-being of the outside was intended to increase the significance of the space within. The earth mound proposed for this location would have eliminated noise, simplified maintenance, reduced cost and emphasized a community presence of repose and harmony within the earth."[30] Earth was to be bermed up against the exterior walls, culminating in a football-shaped skylight through which the worshipers would have a view of a simple but dominant cross. At night the cross would have been illuminated by light emitted from within through the skylight.

The theological and practical requirements were clearly addressed in the plan, which seated the congregation as a unified group and reduced the overall distance between worshipers and liturgical elements—a table for the sacrament, a baptismal pool, and both a lectern and a pulpit. Parker's plan

proposed an encompassing exterior of combined octagonal and circular shape enclosing two independent and opposing curved walls symbolizing cupped hands "holding the congregation."[31] This would have created an intimate space suitable for its intended use and appropriate to the site.

The visionary project, while supported by many, proved too controversial for the congregation as a whole and never proceeded beyond design. The building committee and minister required unanimous congregational approval. As Parker commented, "The fatal flaw was the erroneous concept that everyone in a large group would be unanimously in favor of anything at all."[32]



University Christian Church. Perspective study of sanctuary. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

TOWER FOR GEORGE S. ENGLE

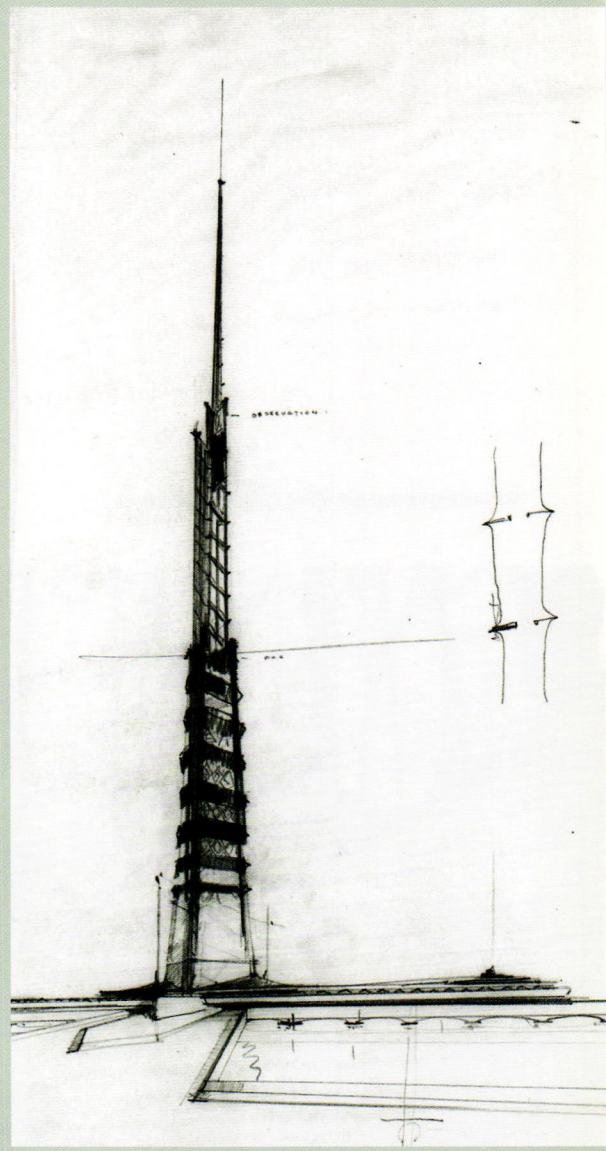
Fort Lauderdale, Florida ▪ 1965 ▪ Unbuilt project

In 1955 Parker remodeled the Coconut Grove Playhouse for George S. Engle. Four years later Engle again approached him, to create a new multipurpose theater for a site near the ocean in Fort Lauderdale, north of Oakland Park Boulevard in an area known as Galt Ocean Mile. That project was never constructed. In 1965 Parker approached Engle in turn with a design for the Galt Ocean Mile site. It was a 2,000-foot-high needle-thin tower, what would have been the world's tallest building at that time. Parker was quoted in a newspaper article: "This not only could be a profitable commercial enterprise, but also a fantastic tourist attraction and a symbol in this hemisphere."[33]

The project's final scheme had parking for 800 vehicles at the building's base and an auditorium seating 1,600 people. A restaurant-in-the-round was located at the 250-foot level. One hundred stories up, Parker planned a circular cocktail lounge, and at the 1,600-foot level an observation platform with television, radio, and electronic transmitting antennae rising to the pointed summit.

Reinforced concrete was Parker's material of choice. The structural concept of the tower was similar to his 230-foot-high Trylon Tower, built in 1960 as part of the Bazaar International in Riviera Beach. Parker estimated the cost of the Fort Lauderdale tower project at $2million.

While the original 10-foot-high color rendering of what quickly became known as Parker's Dream has been lost, several surviving sketches vividly suggest the magnitude of the visionary project.



Perspective of exterior concept. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

FLOYD RESIDENCE

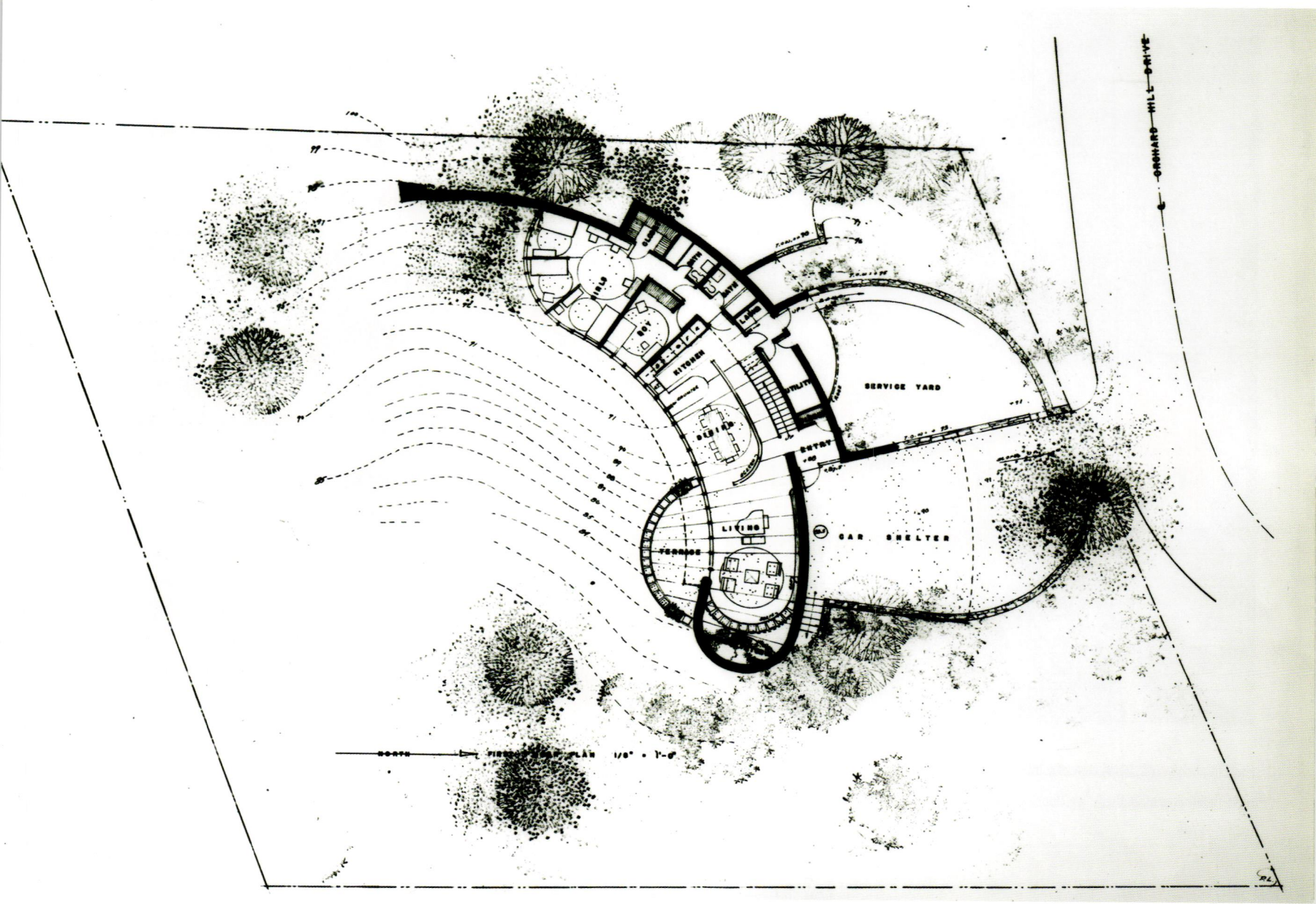
Ann Arbor, Michigan ▪ 1966 ▪ Built project—extant

Knowing Parker's work through *House Beautiful*, John and Esther Floyd contacted him in the spring of 1964, after they purchased property bordering the Michigan Arboretum in Ann Arbor. One of the neighboring houses coincidently was the Palmer residence that Frank Lloyd Wright had designed around 1950. On a trip to East Lansing the following year to monitor the construction progress of the Good residence, Parker stopped in to meet the Floyd family, see their property, and discuss their requirements. The preliminary plans arrived in August 1966 showing a peanut-shaped house sensuously nestled into the hillside, accommodating the sloping site and the needs of the client. It also exhibited some similarities with Wright's solar hemicycle house designs, which Parker acknowledged. After some minor modifications to the layout, construction drawings were completed in the summer of 1967. Failing to interest six different area contractors,[34] the Floyds finally found Joe O'Neal, a local builder, who expressed genuine excitement and enthusiasm for the project. They worked together for several months to bring the house to the budget of $130,000, with the Floyds supplying magnolia and cypress lumber from Esther's brother in Louisiana. Construction began in September 1968, and in August 1969 the Floyds moved in.

Worm's-eye view of rear. Photo by Whitney Kraus.



Facing: Upper-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.


ORCHARD HILL DRIVE
SERVICE YARD
KITCHEN
DINING
ENTRY
LIVING
TERRACE
CAR SHELTER
NORTH
FIRST FLOOR PLAN 1/8" = 1'-0"





Floyd Residence. *Left*, Detail view of southeast wall looking north; *right*, Detail view of southeast wall looking south. Photos by Whitney Kraus.

All the primary rooms in the house enjoy views out into the protected natural area of the Arboretum. The upper (entry) level contains the living areas, while the lower level contains four bedrooms, two bathrooms, and the master suite.

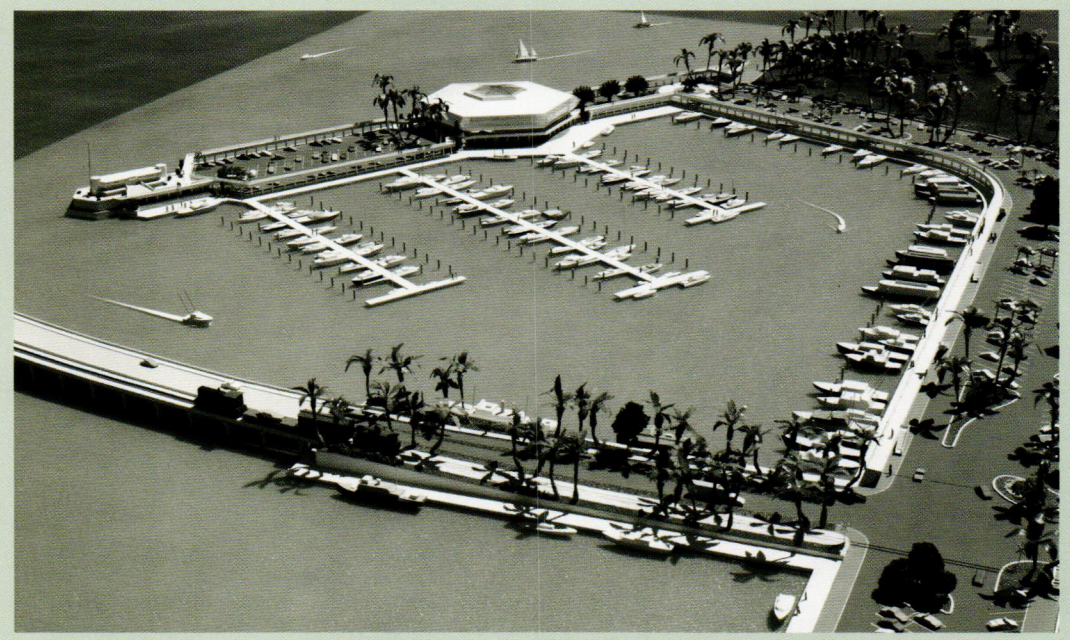
In 1977 Parker also designed a small retirement home for Esther Floyd's mother for property in Pineville, Louisiana.[35]

MIAMARINA

Miami, Florida ▪ 1966 ▪ Built project—extant

In 1970, speaking on Larry King's radio show on WIOD, Parker recalled:

Miamarina has been faithfully constructed in accord with the original concept. This envisioned two elements, Mariana and Restaurant, operating as an integral unit for the benefit of boating enthusiasts and other citizens. The stated goal was to achieve a place of interest and delight for all citizens and visitors. Now with the opening of the "Promenade Restaurant" and "The Landing," we have a fully completed facility. The intention of the City Administration was to revitalize Bayfront Park, utilize a marvelous scenic location for a public facility and rebuild dilapidated piers. Hopefully this first step in the Downtown Development of Miami will be used and cherished by all of us.[36]



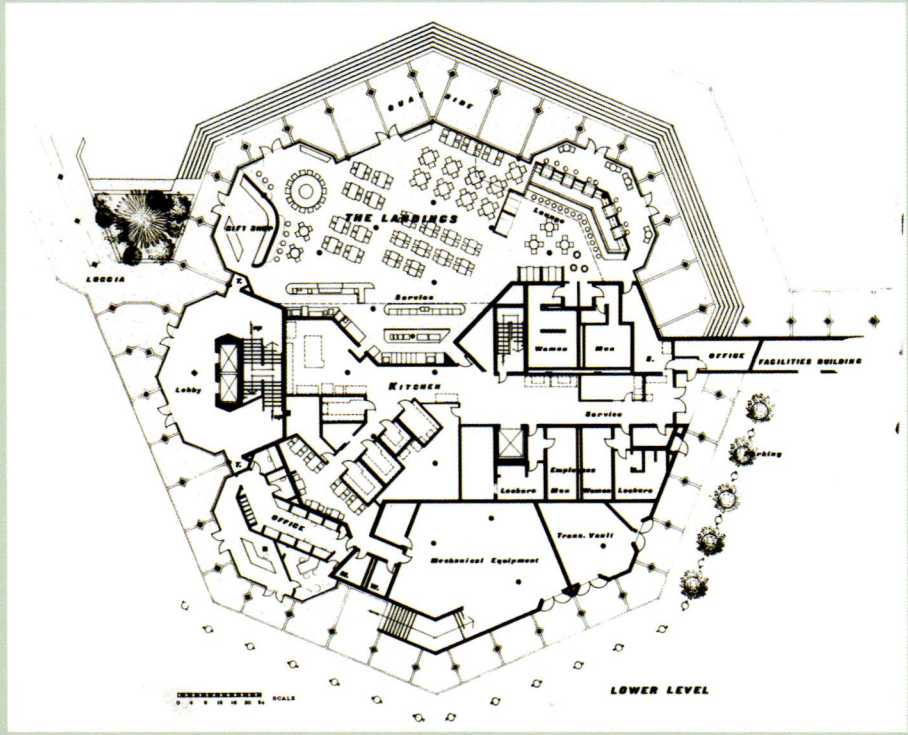
Bird's-eye view of preliminary design model. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

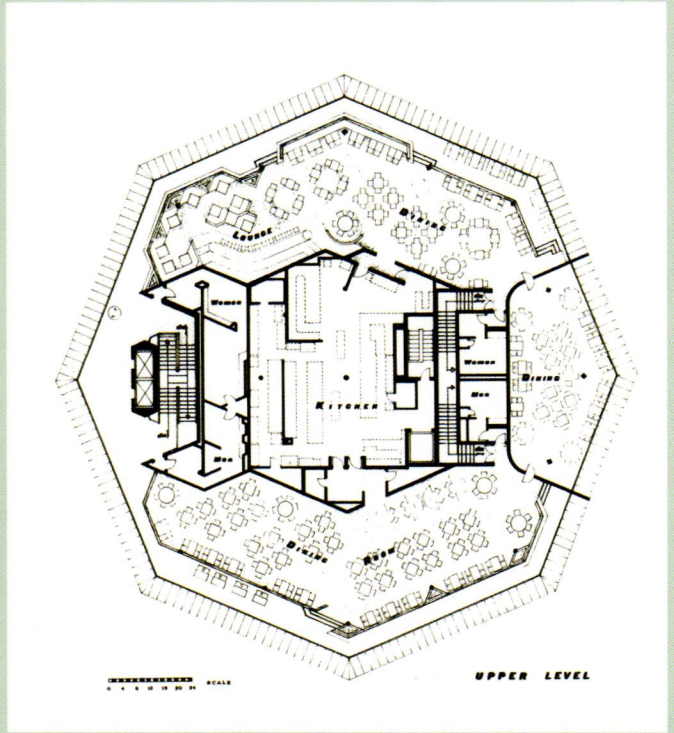
Parker's interest in regional, urban, and neighborhood planning was an inherent part of his architectural philosophy. In the first year of his architectural practice, Parker wrote an article titled "We Beg to Present—Florida." In the article, written to introduce Florida to attendees of the AIA's national convention, held that year in Miami, Parker didn't hold back in his criticism of his Florida colleagues: "Through the years architects have striven to bring into harmony the various functions of their buildings with their environment in a manner calculated for efficiency, economy, and beauty. Nowhere have architects had greater opportunities, nor have they so ingloriously fallen on their faces."[37] But he also expressed a guarded optimism that it would improve. "There is little doubt that the Florida architects are looking forward rather

than backward in their work. If the average quality of the work is not inspiring, it is no condemnation of their ideals but merely of the ability."[38]

Parker was part of a team of local architects including Russell Pancoast, Rufus Nims, Robert Fitch Smith, and Robert Bradford Browne with Hugh Ferriss—and later including nationally recognized architects Marcel Breuer, Louis Kahn, Paul Rudolph, Harry Weese, Edward Durrell Stone, and others—who were involved in the development of Interama, envisioned as a permanent World's Fair, designed in fits and starts from 1950 through the early 1970s. The idea was to create an Inter-American Cultural and Trade Center devoted to expressing the cultures of Western Hemisphere countries and promoting mutual trade and friendship. The ideas evolved into an exceedingly visionary city that was to have been built between Biscayne Boulevard and the bay in North Miami, but the project got diluted into a less ambitious effort over the years leading up to the nation's bicentennial.

Lower-level and upper-level floor plans. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.







Miamarina, with promenade at right. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Also in the 1950s Parker gained experience in the design of several Dade County neighborhood and residential developments with real estate developers and builders. He designed prototypical speculative production houses for the masses which focused on quality rather than quantity, while remaining affordable. Parker's participation as part of the development team brought proven success to each venture.

In October 1965 the City of Miami requested proposals from architects to provide professional services for a million-dollar Bayfront Park marina. The new marina was to replace the city's Pier 5, which had recently been damaged by the category-4 Hurricane Betsy. But the larger context was the opportunity to dovetail with concurrent extensive urban development plans. Parker was selected for the project in December 1966. The program required recreational facilities for pleasure, commercial, and sight-seeing craft of varying sizes, plus adequate parking and a terminal building containing food service, administrative offices, and attendant functions. The budget grew to over $2 million in March 1967 when Parker unveiled his preliminary plans for the project he dubbed Miamarina. Parker's design was a sophisticated modern tourist and commercial attraction. He proposed a new breakwater into Biscayne Bay with docking for 100 boats, an additional 212 docks for commercial and private craft, services and facilities for attendants, parking, and a double-decker promenade a third of a mile long connecting a restaurant building (capacity, 600 diners) with the Port Bridge. His design was an ambitious and visionary attempt to initiate the revitalization of Miami's Bayfront Park. Parker felt strongly that downtown Miami must have "better rapport with its Bayfront Park."[39] With his double-decker walkway, he created the beginning of something he hoped would take hold—the routing of pedestrians above the hazardous Biscayne Boulevard. In his initial proposal to the City of Miami, Parker stated: "The Bayfront Park location is not suitable for a Miamarina of huge capacity, however a facility limited in scope will serve many interests. A place to go, a thing to see, a port of service for boaters and non-boaters in the very heart of the City." He saw Miamarina as the first of many phases needed to redevelop the face of the community, extending "the City into its unique marine setting."[40]

The general contractor M. R. Harrison was awarded the construction contract, at a cost exceeding $3 million, in May 1968. With labor problems and weather delays including hurricanes, the initial estimate of fourteen months for construction increased to almost three years, with the facility basically completed in May 1971.

At the architectural core of Miamarina was its futuristic restaurant building. This dominant two-story

structure was an enlargement and resourceful refinement of Parker's earlier Sip & Sup restaurant project, designed in 1963 for a site at the 79th Street Causeway. The dock level of the building was for more informal food service. The upper level, however, was a bold octagonal spaceship-shaped bronze glass prism enclosing more formal dining and lounge areas overlooking the spectacular panorama of the city, Bayfront Park, Biscayne Bay, Dodge Island, and the marina. The perimeter dining and lounge areas enveloped the central kitchen and service areas. The exterior materials, chosen for low maintenance, were concrete, metal, and glass. Besides glass, Honduran mahogany was the interior's predominant material (along with



Dining and lounge areas. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

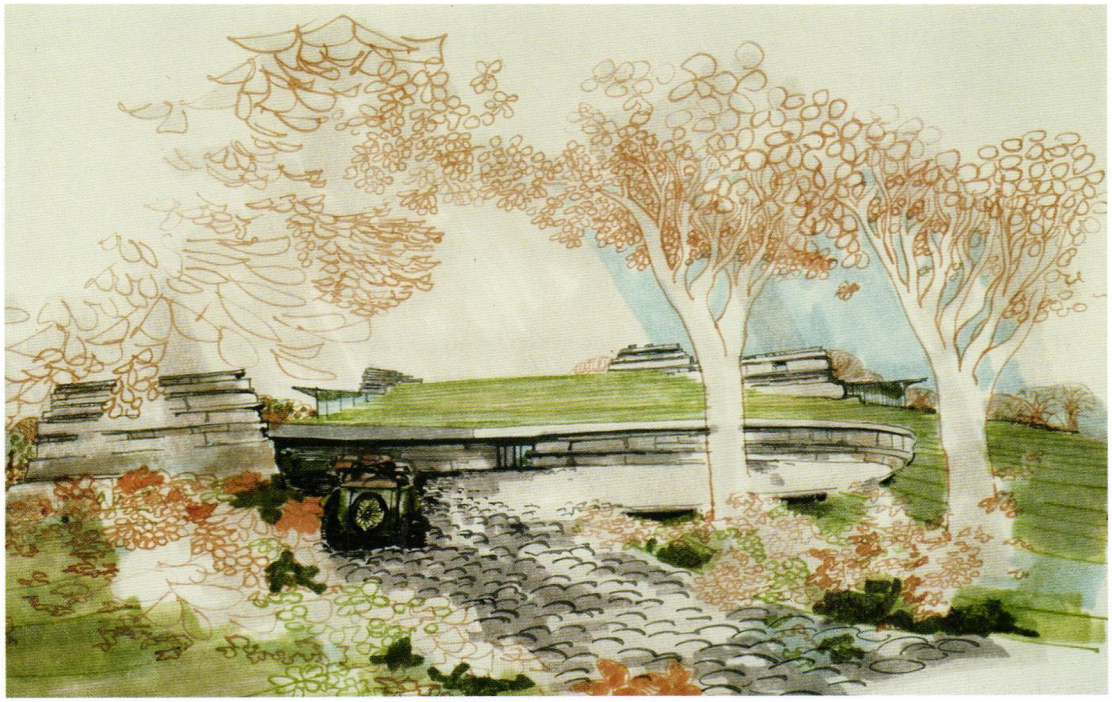
the heavy shag carpet popular at the time). Early in the construction process, Parker's glass prism exterior wall system—specially tempered heat-absorbing plate glass three-eighths of an inch thick, embedded in steel-ribbed frames—was tested in a lab at the nearby University of Miami to acertain that it could withstand the anticipated high winds and deluge of water from hurricanes.[41] The shape of the building was also designed so that hurricane-force winds and waves would pass under and around the upper-level restaurant. Lastly, the building was anchored with reinforced concrete and steel tied to 50-foot-deep pilings driven into bedrock. The Miamarina building still exists, although known by a different name and considerably altered. Parker used elements of Miamarina in his design for the unbuilt Abney Mills headquarters and, almost twenty-five years later in 1989, he returned to a similar parti when, as architect and developer, he proposed to build a restaurant around a historic powerhouse on a spectacular site overlooking Otter Creek in Middlebury, Vermont.

Parker's last, unrealized planning projects were his most visionary, and ones he would champion through the 1970s and into the 1980s. Called the Parker Plan and incorporating his Bay-Urban Plan and River-Urban Plan, his proposal for revitalizing downtown Miami was basically to transform the waterfront into an open parklike green space flowing from the MacArthur Causeway on the north to the Miami River on the south, anchored at each end by huge residential megastructures. Keys to his plan would be overhead pedestrian walkways, safely and efficiently connecting downtown buildings with the residential structures and waterfront parks, and relocating people from suburbia into the city center as in-dwellers—"the warp and woof of an urban fabric."[42] Also, late in his career, after the city of Homestead was devastated by the category-5 Hurricane Andrew in 1992, he proposed a comprehensive new conceptual approach to rebuilding Homestead Air Force Base. Called Eco-logical Eco Community, it was never seriously considered.

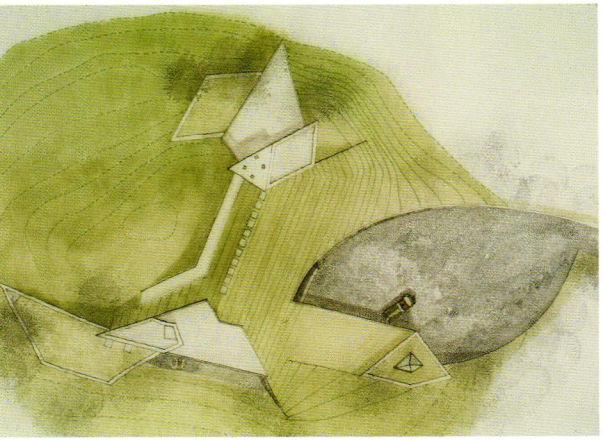
WADDELL RESIDENCE

Galax, Virginia ▪ 1966 ▪ Unbuilt project

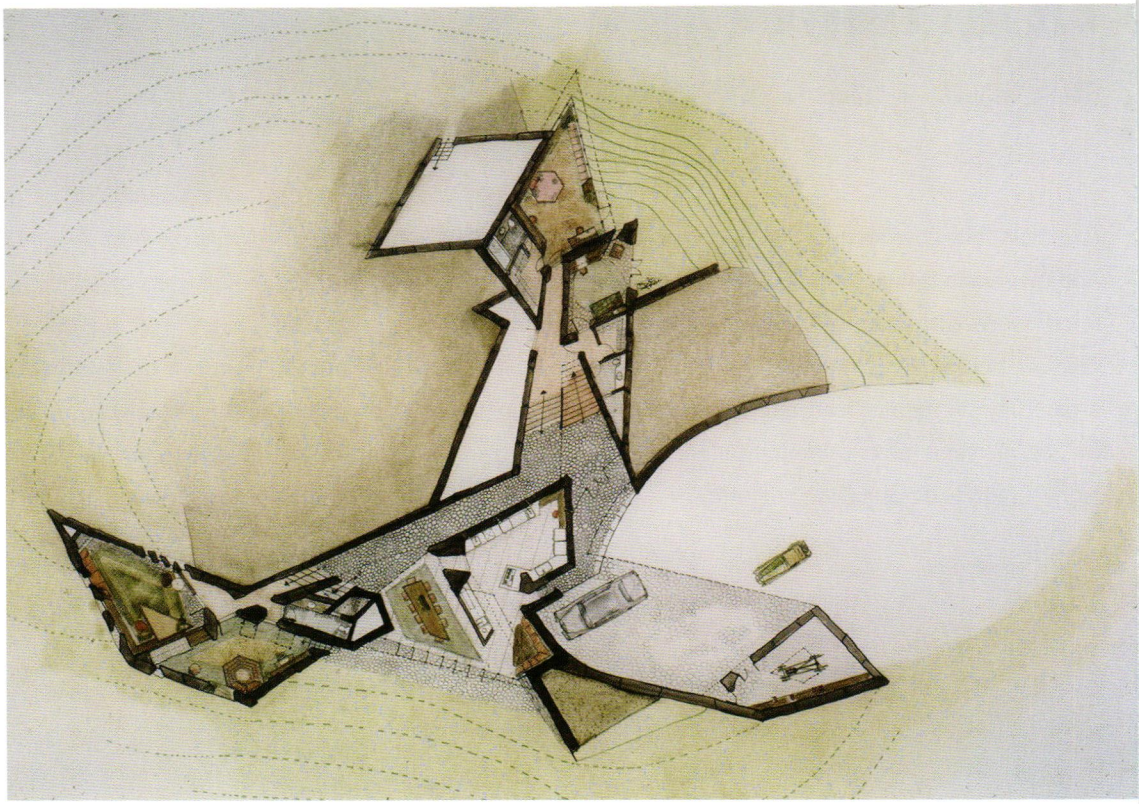
Like the Kohlers before them, Bill and Betty Waddell knew of Parker through the pages of *House Beautiful*. And they had a similar property—forty wooded acres with a primary eight-acre building site on a hill with a 300-degree vista but overlooking the city of Galax in the Blue Ridge Mountains near the Virginia–North Carolina border. Parker insisted the house had to belong naturally to the site. He drew up a powerful, organically geometric, freely angular floor plan, unique in his career. The client enthusiastically embraced the design, yet it never came to fruition. Bill Waddell, more than twenty-five years later, said, "One of our biggest regrets is not having built it."[43]



Perspective of approach toward entrance. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

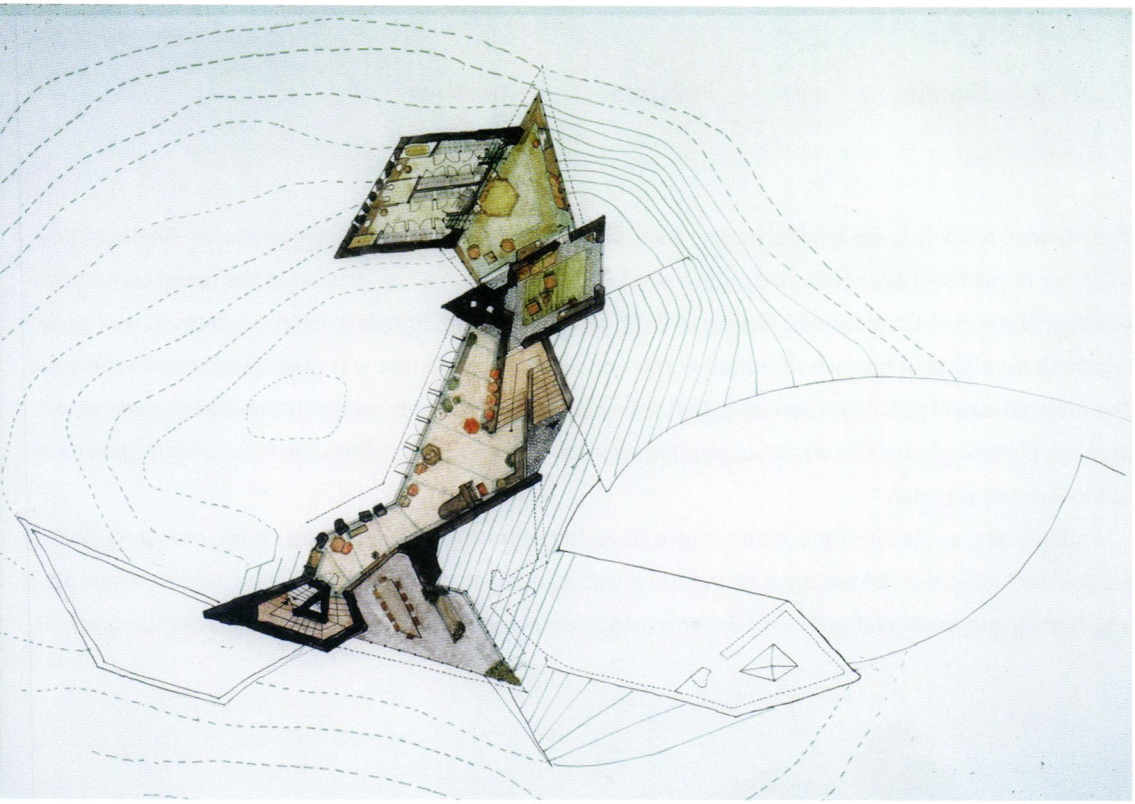


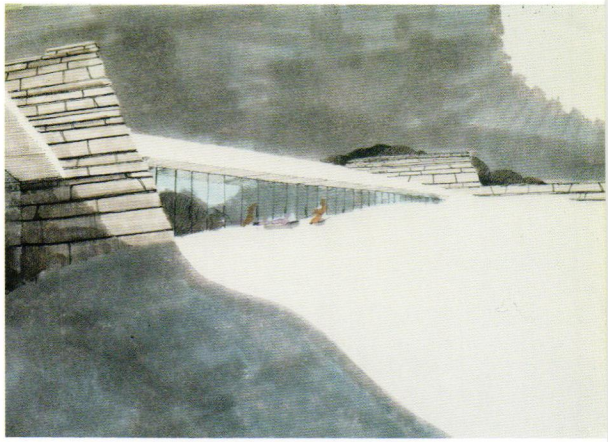
Site plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Lower-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

The Waddells and Parker first met in June 1965, when he agreed to design a home for the couple and their two children. Parker initially visited the site in mid-1966 and, as the clients vividly recall, perched upon the tallest rock outcropping to survey the possibilities. He returned to Galax twice in late 1966 and again in mid-July of 1967.[44] His complex and mysterious two-level design evoked the site's natural context. The exterior walls were almost entirely of stone and appeared to be coming out of the ground as rock outcroppings, enveloping the spaces naturally. Parker specified sod for the sloped roofs, to reinforce the organic nature of the home and to further marry it to the site and its surroundings. The lower level, at grade, was the entry level, with both the service entrance and the reception foyer directly off the lozenge-shaped arrival court. Three bedrooms with baths, a cavelike triangular study, a recreation area, the





Perspective of hillside in winter. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

Upper-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

kitchen, and a two-story dining space as well as a more intimate breakfast area were assorted throughout the lower level, along with a car shelter, large workroom, and housekeeping center. The upper level contained the living area and gallery. The master bedroom suite, accessed at midlevel off the main stair landing, came complete with a sitting room, sleeping area, dressing room, and bathroom.

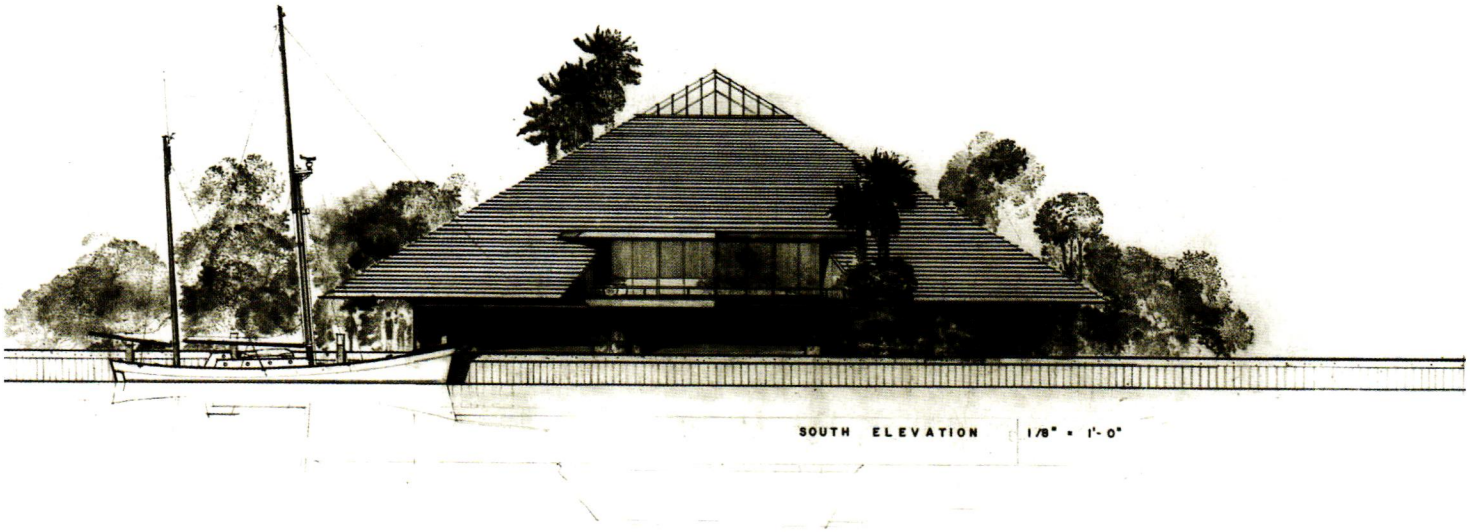
Parker issued a partial set of construction drawings for pricing in August 1967. Unfortunately, the clients never built the house because they determined that, at approximately 7,000 enclosed and heated square feet, it was too large for their needs. Also, it would have greatly exceeded their $100,000 budget, given that the bids for the concrete alone came in at $90,000.[45]

ABELOVE RESIDENCE

Coral Gables, Florida ▪ 1968 ▪ Built project—demolished

The Abelove residence was a novel project for both Parker and his clients. William and Joan Abelove came to Parker in 1968 and asked him to design a residence for them on a one-acre lot in the gated community of Gables Estates in Coral Gables. Having already designed several homes in Gables Estates as well as living there for a time in his own designed home not too far away, Parker was quite familiar with the area. The unusual aspects of the project were that the Abeloves wanted only one bedroom (there were no children) and, although their lot was a waterfront property, they desired the house to focus inward toward an indoor swimming pool.

Parker's design elevated the entire house, save the entry foyer and powder room, one story above grade—including the swimming pool. In form it was an equilateral triangle 64 feet on a side, centered on a 16-foot-diameter circular pool with the entry stairs wrapping around it, complete with circular porthole



Study of waterfront elevation. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Exterior view. © Bo Parker Photographer.



Interior detail of entry stairs, with porthole into pool. © Bo Parker Photographer.

windows to view into the water. The whole open-plan great room—living, dining, kitchen, studio, gallery, bedroom, and reading areas, plus an enclosed bathroom and pantry—was covered by a pyramidal roof with skylights at the peak, directly over the central pool. One wedge-shaped window bay was incorporated into the living area to provide a view on the canal.

In 1972, two years after moving in, the Abeloves returned to Parker requesting an addition, as the need for guest quarters had became evident. Adjacent to the existing house they built a smaller elevated triangular pyramid containing a circular guest bedroom suite, with the closets and bathroom located in the three points of the triangular plan. Below, Parker located a circular studio and greenhouse. Between the two forms Parker designed an entry for the bedroom addition, with a tight circular staircase. While maintaining the guest bedroom's independence, he opened up a view from the original residence into the two-story entrance of the addition, but he purposely provided no direct physical circulation between the original house and the new addition.

The materials Parker utilized were plaster stucco for both the exterior and interior surfaces, interior cypress paneling, cypress beams supporting the vaulted interior wood roof decking, and cedar shakes for the roof. Parker recalled that the Abeloves furnished the home with rare pieces designed by the Japanese American woodworking artist and furniture maker George Nakashima.[46]

The Porfiri Construction Company built both the original residence and the addition. The house was demolished in 1993, replaced with a larger residence.[47] The singular originality of the Abeloves' residence most likely contributed to its demise, after an existence of only twenty-five short years.



Exterior view, after addition. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Interior view of great room, with pool dominating center. © Bo Parker Photographer.

PARKER RESIDENCE (WOODSONG / SEMINOLE)

Coconut Grove, Florida ▪ 1967 ▪ Built project—extant

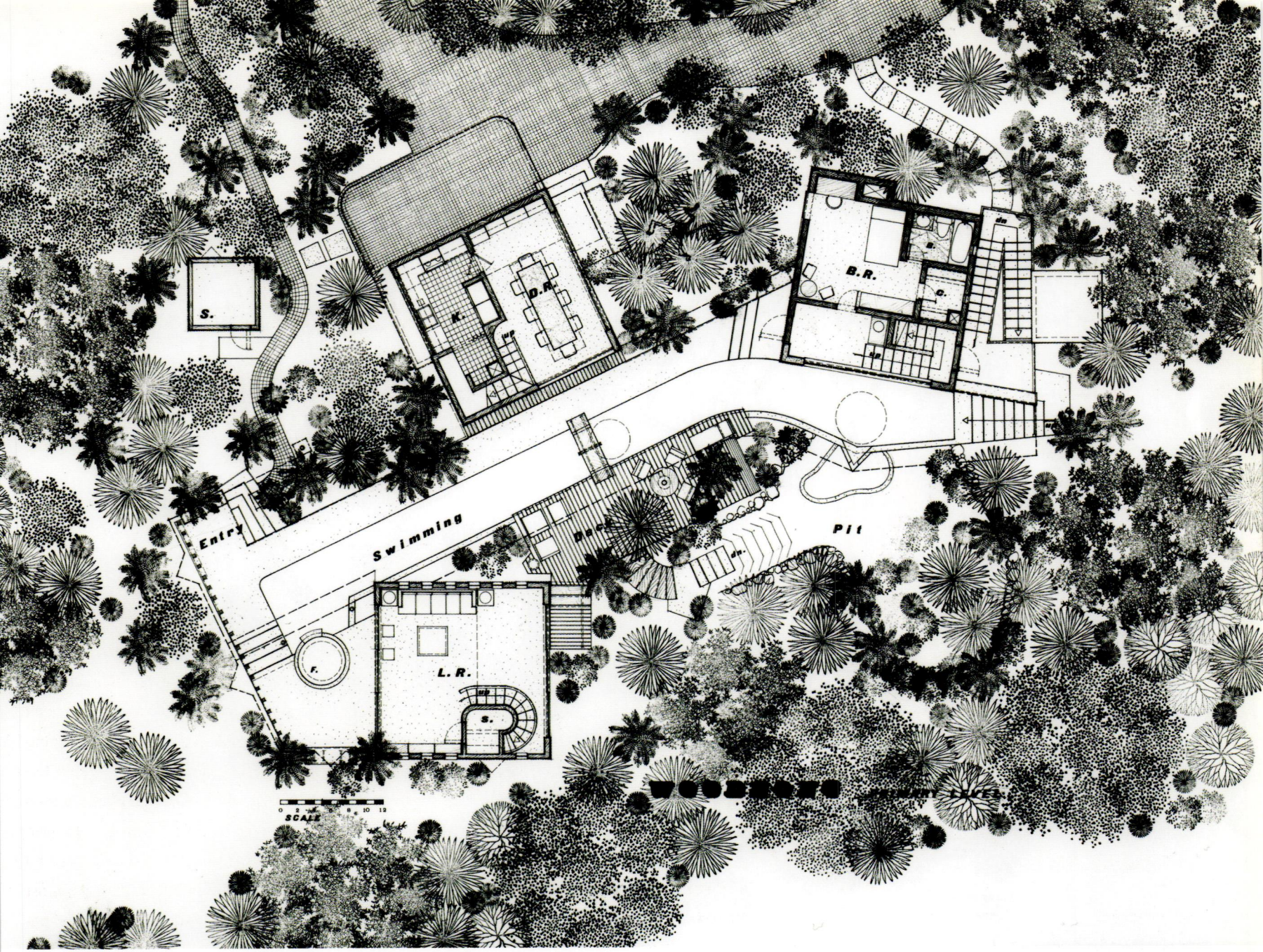


Entry area, with living cube adjacent to fountain. © Bo Parker Photographer.

Facing: Primary-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

In May 1967, Parker purchased property on Seminole Street just off Tiger Tail Avenue in Coconut Grove for less than $20,000 to build his sixth home. The rather small suburban lot, just 135 feet square, was almost entirely wooded by hundreds of species of rare and exotic palms. Parker promised the seller, Juanita May, a well-known area ceramic artist and his prospective neighbor, that he would preserve all foliage or, if removal became a necessity, plant two trees for every one removed.[48] Plans were completed and in for permit review by September 1968. Parker persuaded his Swedish friend and master carpenter William O. Sjögren to come out of retirement to assist him. In 1970 construction was complete enough for Parker to move in.

Parker's sixth home was an engaging divergence from his previous five. Obviously, given the site constraints, it provided a challenging opportunity. And his personal needs were simpler, requiring less space—he was now designing only for himself, his second wife Jane, and their young daughter Lebritia. His five children from his first marriage were out on their own. The property offered three relatively open areas where Parker placed three 20-foot-square multilevel cubes—one for living and study; one for eating, with kitchen, dining area, and a guest loft above; and one for sleeping, with a master bedroom suite and a suite for daughter Lebritia. In the interests of cooling, insect protection, and drainage, the buildings are set above the tropical ground on elevated concrete slabs. All three are linked by a covered but skylit swimming moat 6 feet wide and 88 feet long, a forerunner to the now popular lap pool, with adjoining mahogany deck and concrete walkway. The pool uses well water from the site: a fountain at the entry terrace pours water into one end of the pool, which overflows into a rock pit at the opposite end and is then recycled through the fountain. Parker designed a movable mahogany bridge to cross over the moat from walkway to deck. The layout placed the three volumes askew from one another, which subtly created changing vistas, something Parker learned from his study of the Piazza San Marco in Venice. The almost 2,500 square feet of enclosed area actually felt much larger, given the additional 4,000 square feet of patios, terraces, and pool.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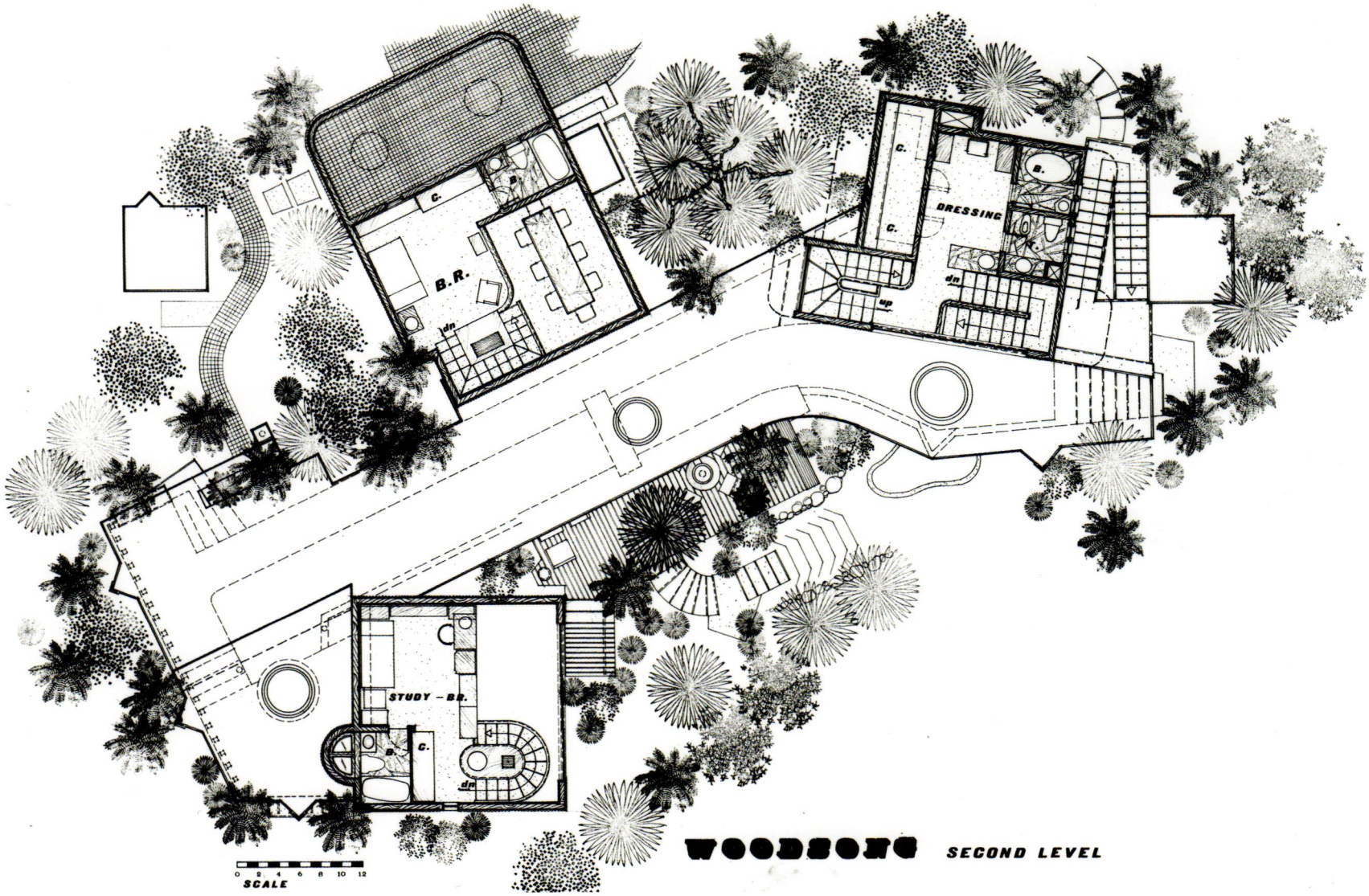
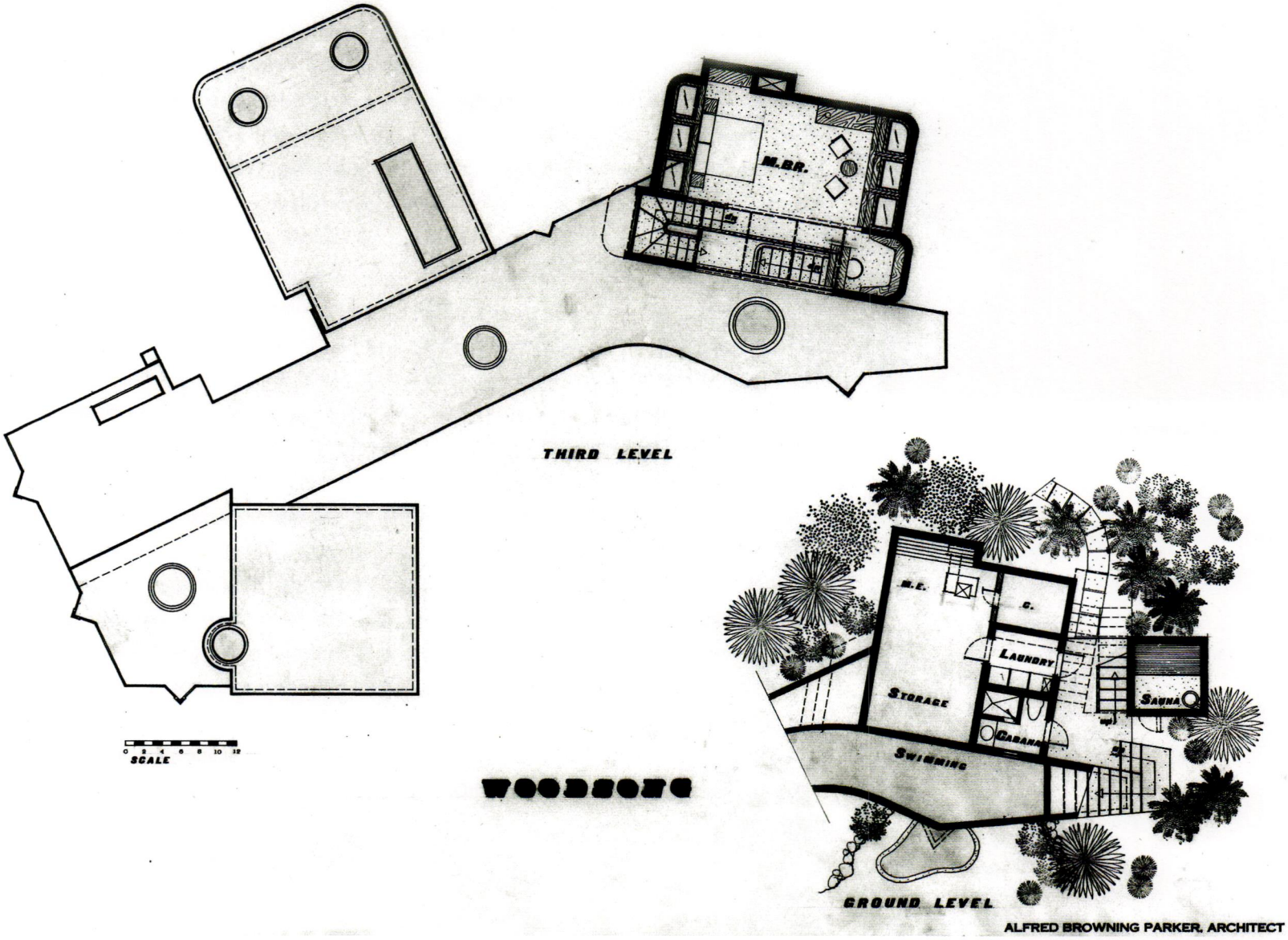


Second-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Third- and lower-level floor plans. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Exterior detail of window hood. © Bo Parker Photographer.

The buildings were constructed almost entirely of wood. The exterior siding of prefinished bleached and weathered Honduran mahogany was milled and installed vertically in random widths and striated patterns resembling the wooded context of the palm fronds, celebrating its tropical setting. Parker used quarter rounds at all corners, mimicking the trunks of the palms. He named this home Woodsong for what he felt were obvious reasons. Unique in his work to date was the absence here of his favored stone, and of a fireplace. Also, in lieu of persiana doors, Parker installed sliding glass doors to further diminish the line between interior and exterior. Parker-designed built-ins and furniture completed the opus.

Obviously, Woodsong was an extension of his past exploration of using individual, but connected, volumetric cubes containing the required functions, as in his earlier homes for Streate and Gayer and his mother's Jewel-in-the-Treetop. But, given the site, it was certainly not so much a preconception of Parker's as a legitimate and logical reaction to the challenges and opportunities afforded by the property. His experience with the concept's predecessors gave Parker the confidence to achieve the appropriate solution.

Parker lived at the Seminole address longer than at any of his previous houses. He also relocated his architectural practice into Seminole in late spring 1983 after realizing that the decline in projects made his large office on 27th Avenue unnecessary. Unfortunately, Parker's tenure at Woodsong was longer than his companion wives'. Jane passed away in late July 1971, a little more than a year after the completion of the home. Parker's third wife, Shirley Aronow, lived there four and a half years, from their marriage in May 1980 until their divorce in November 1984. His fourth wife, Euphrosyne, lived there with Parker for only a brief time after they married in early 1992, as in the same year they relocated to his Vermont retreat Windsong, leaving Miami behind permanently. Woodsong was sold in April 1993. Other than minor modifications and the painting of the original silver gray siding to white, Woodsong remains essentially intact.

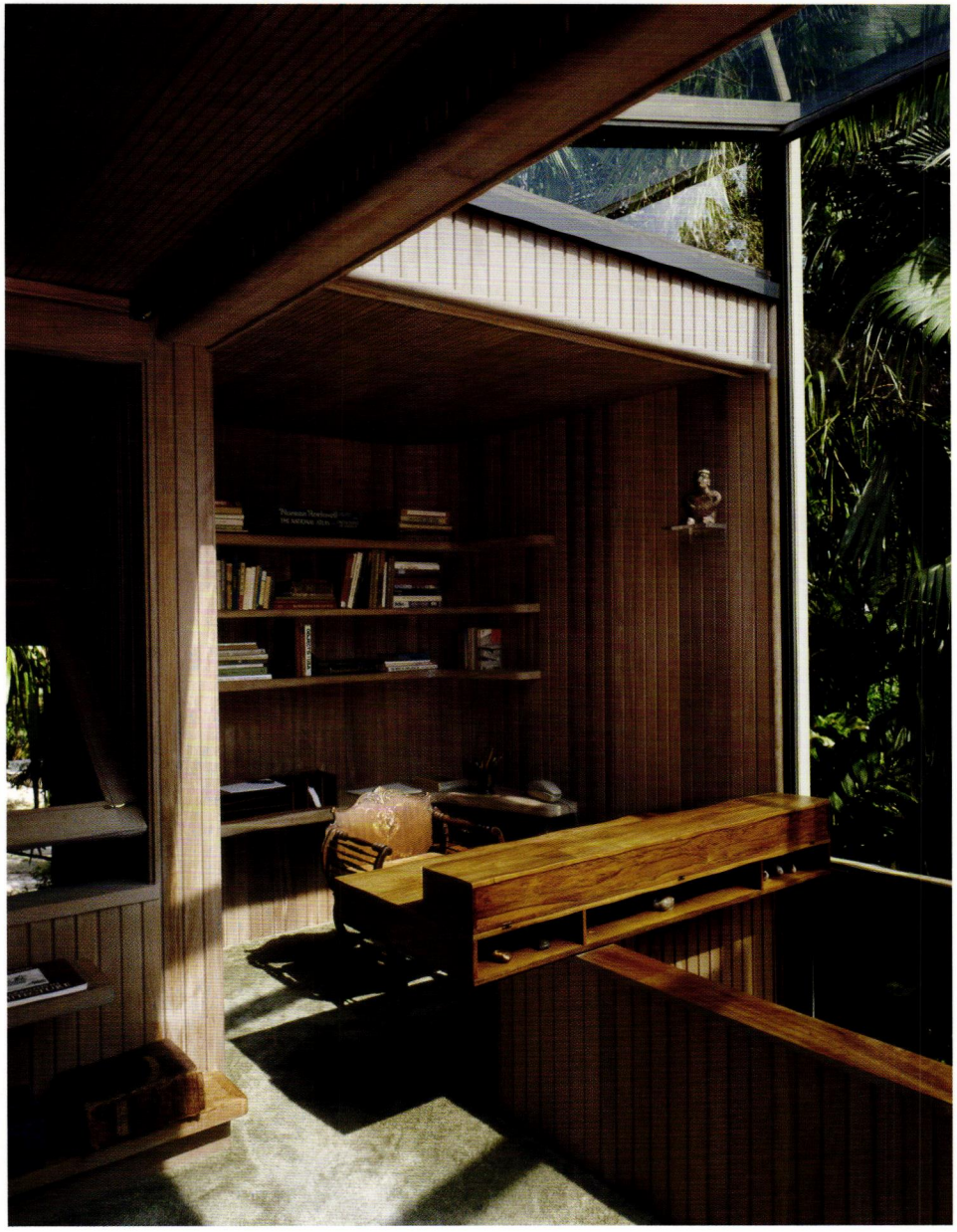
Parker described the well-publicized, award-winning Woodsong as a "marriage between steel, a masculine product . . . hard, unyielding, un-penetrable; and wood . . . a feminine material, warm to the touch, resilient and penetrable."[49] Joan B. Reynolds described it as "a song to nature, a song to wood, a song to the genius of Architect Parker."[50]

Connecting pool, walkway, and terrace. © Bo Parker Photographer.





Living area, with staircase to upper study loft. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



Study alcove, off master bedroom. © Bo Parker Photographer.



Dining area. © Bo Parker Photographer.

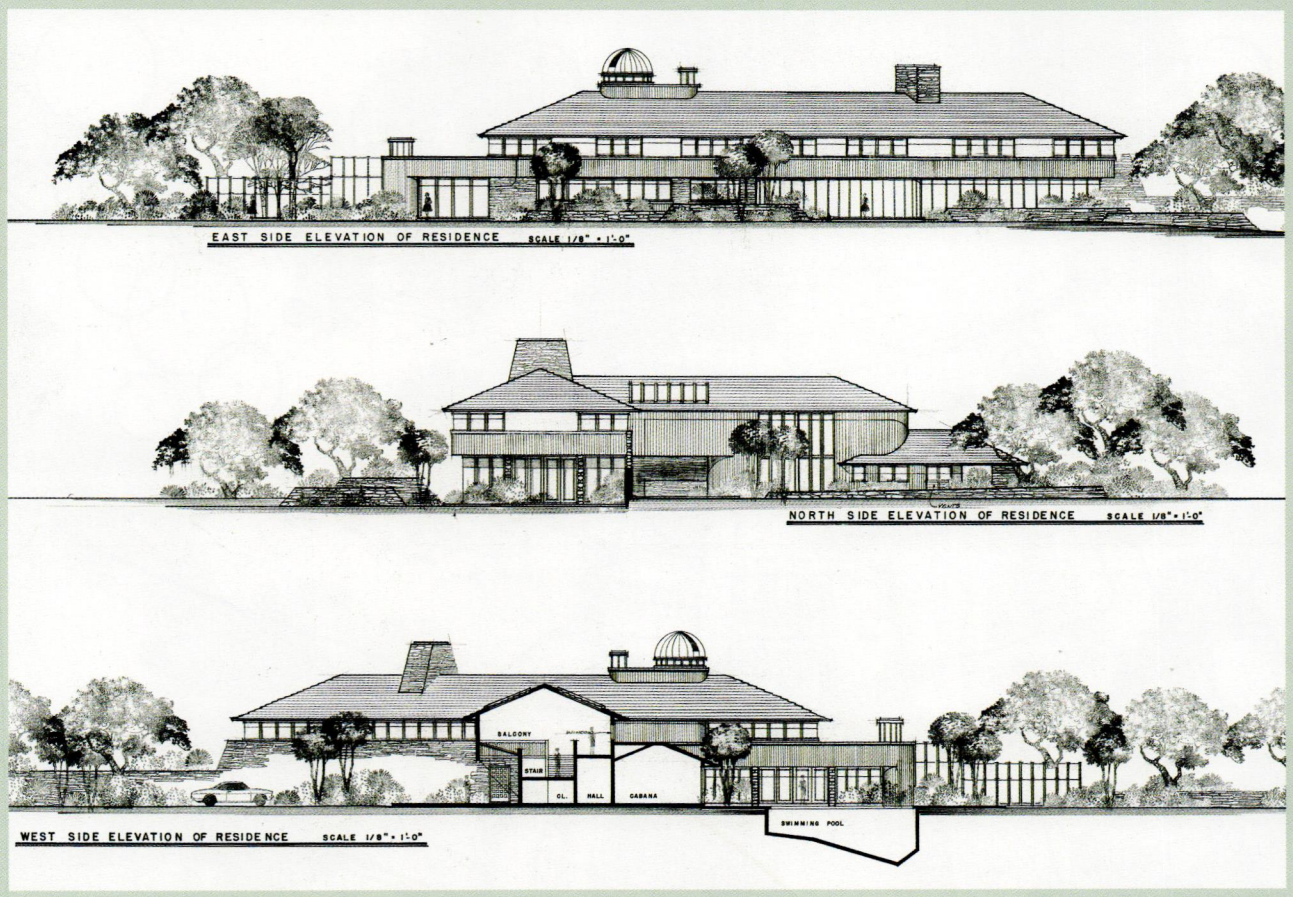
JOHNSON RESIDENCE

Wind Point, Wisconsin ▪ 1968 ▪ Built project—extant

Samuel Curtis Johnson grew up in Wingspread, the home in the village of Wind Point designed for his father and stepmother by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1937. His father also commissioned the Johnson Wax Administration Building, another masterwork designed by Wright a year earlier. Sam was the fourth generation of his family to lead SC Johnson & Son. When it came time for Sam and his wife Imogene (Gene) to build a home for themselves and their four children, they sought out Alfred Browning Parker in 1967. Wright had died in 1959, and even though Wright's successor firm, Taliesin Associated Architects, was

East side, facing Lake Michigan. © Mark Hertzberg Photographer.

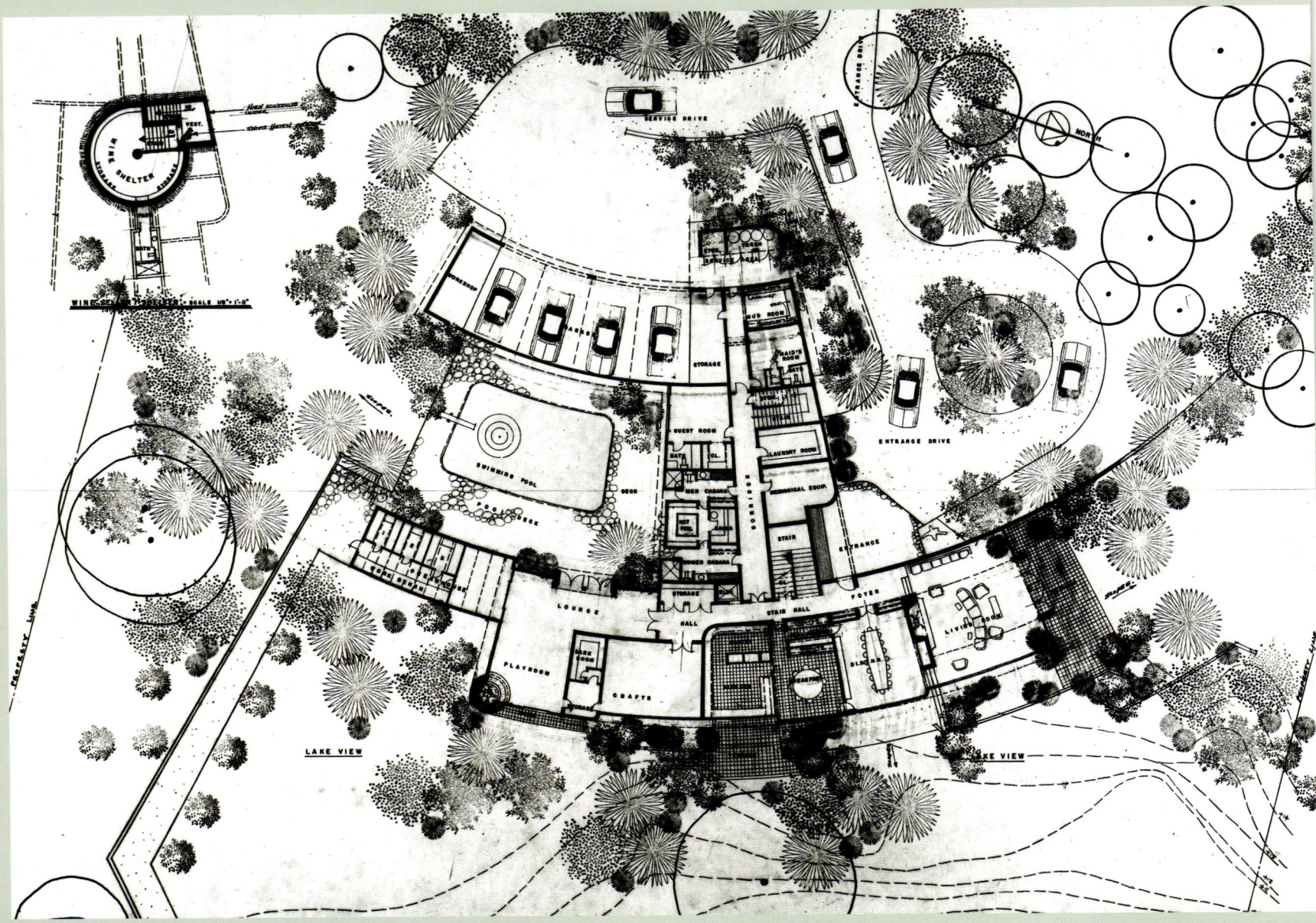




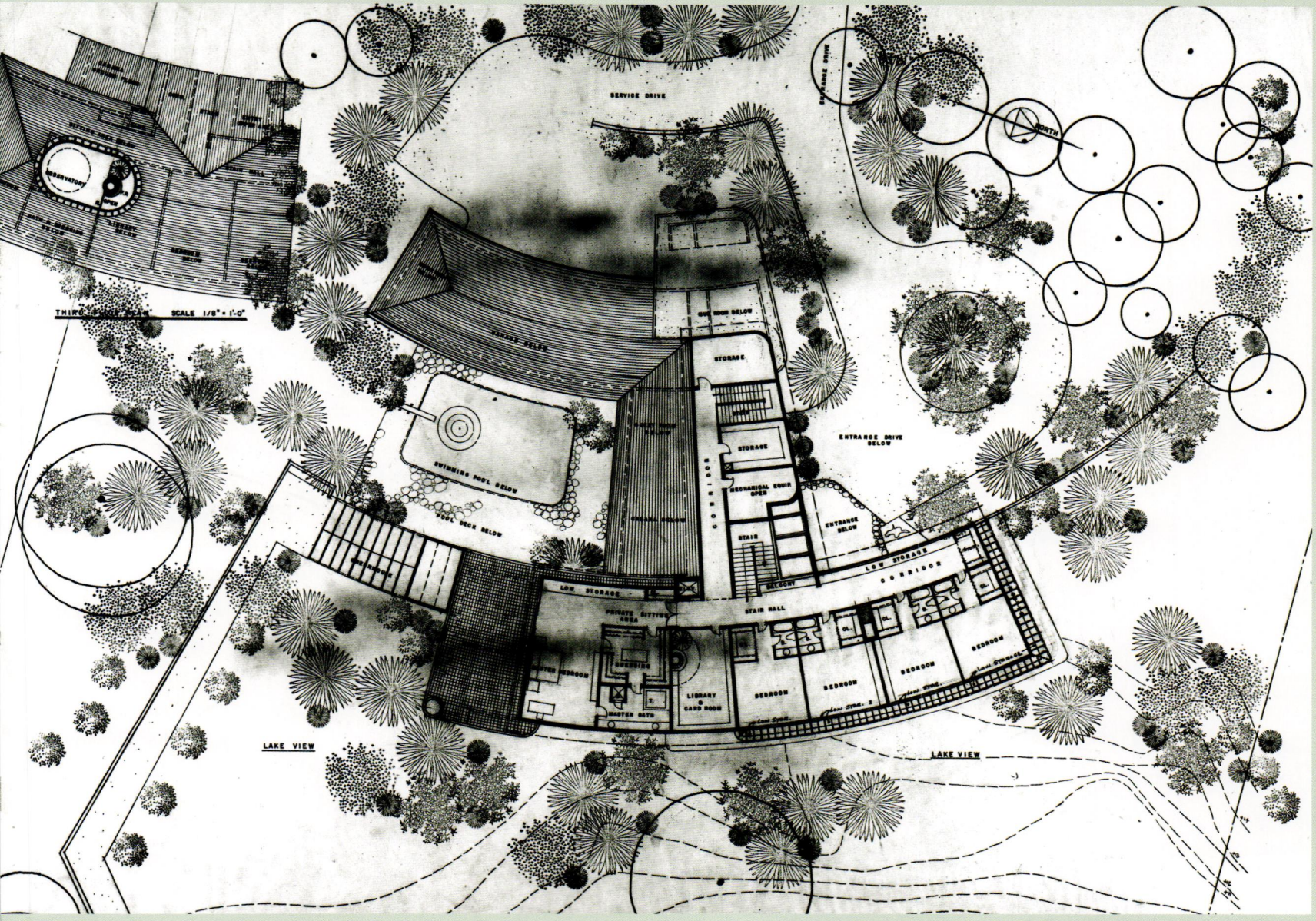
Exterior elevations. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

actively involved in projects in the Racine area, they felt that they needed someone different—"but not too different."[51] They found Parker the way many of his clients did, in the pages of *House Beautiful*. After they visited with Parker in Miami in the early spring of 1968, Parker traveled to Racine in early September to discuss the project further and see the site.[52]

The Johnsons were very hands-on clients, both of them involved at every step in the design of their home. The property was a large lot between Lighthouse Drive and Lake Michigan near Wingspread and approximately four miles north of Racine. Fundamental goals expressed by the Johnsons were to provide



Ground-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Upper-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

maximum exposure, so that sun could infiltrate the home in winter, and to locate all the primary living spaces along the lakeside perimeter to take advantage of the striking wide vista over Lake Michigan.[53] They also suggested a curved shape for the house, saying that "our only reason for it was to have the view of the lake more panoramic from each room, and also to avoid looking from one room into another on the lake side."[54]

Parker continued to refine the plans, with constant client input, from mid-1967 through early 1971. The approved design proposed more than 14,000 square feet on two stories, plus a four-car garage, swimming pool, greenhouse, tennis court, English garden, helicopter pad, and observatory—and, eventually, a skating lagoon and pond. Parker designed not only the house but also the site and landscaping. Gene Johnson was quoted as saying, "It's a little hard for an architect to believe that we need an astronomical observatory, a heliport, a woodwork shop, a rock-cutting and polishing studio, an orchid greenhouse, and space for tropical fish."[55] There was also a small residential elevator. The first floor contained the living and dining rooms, a breakfast room, crafts room, playroom, a guest room, and sundry service areas including the kitchen, maid's quarters, laundry, storage, and mechanical spaces. On the second floor were the four children's bedrooms, each with a bathroom, and, separated by a library/card room, the master bedroom suite. A wine cellar occupied a basement space, and above the second-floor library was a small observatory, accessed by a circular stair.

Construction drawings were complete enough for work to begin in mid-1971. The home was built by Johnson and Hendricson Builders, with James C. Inloes, Johnson Wax's construction engineering manager, overseeing the work for the Johnsons and Parker. In mid-1973 the Johnsons were able to move in.[56]

The exterior walls were glass, bleached mahogany paneling, and stone, with copper gutters and roof. The interiors used wood, plaster, and stone. Spatially the home is not as complex as others Parker had designed, but perhaps the size, the client, the nature and volume of work in the office in the late 1960s, and the serious health issues of his wife Jane and his mother drove Parker's simpler and more straightforward solution. It was unquestionably one of his largest residential projects.

While the Johnsons were extremely pleased with Parker's design, changing very little in the ensuing years, their one disappointment was that their architect never saw the house completed.[57]

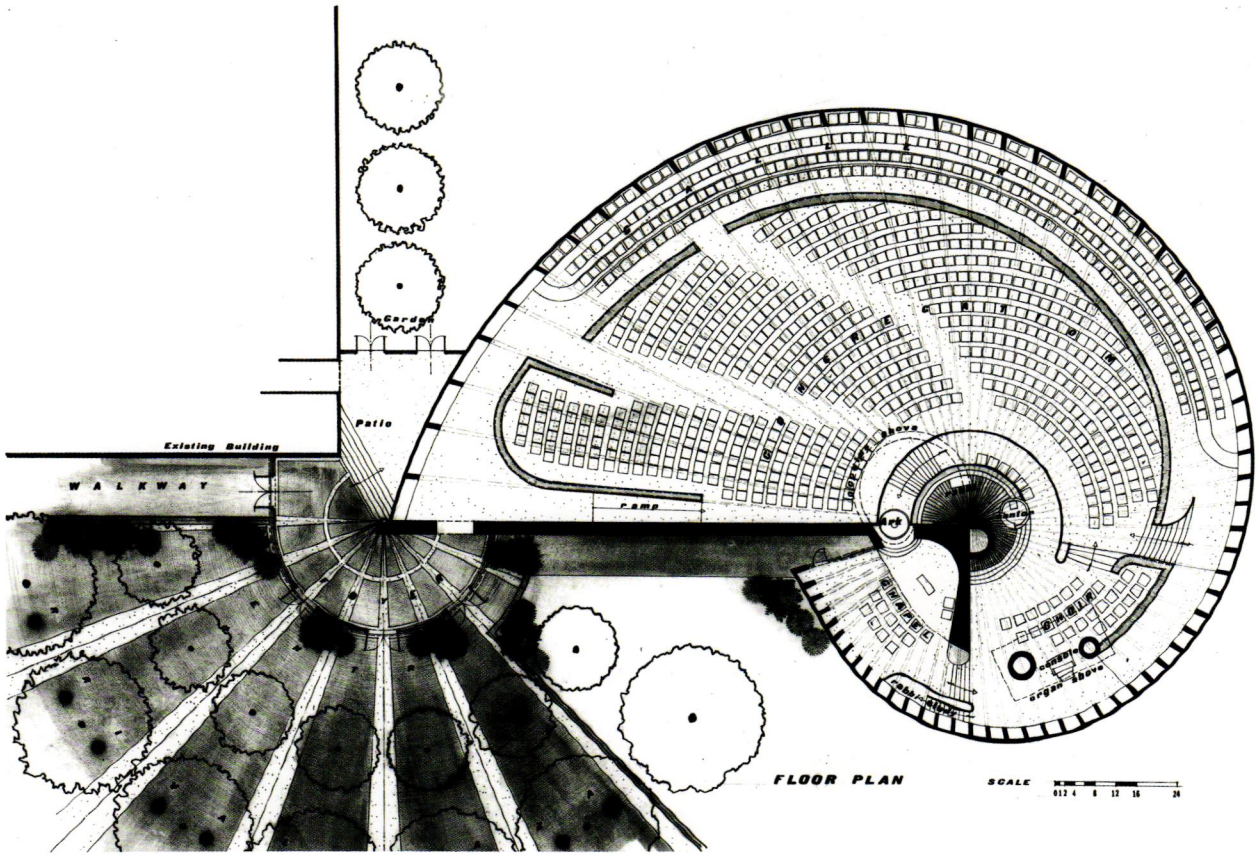
FREAD SANCTUARY FOR TEMPLE BETH EL

West Palm Beach, Florida ▪ 1971 ▪ Built project—extant

Fread Sanctuary was an addition to the existing campus of Temple Beth El, located on A1A in West Palm Beach. Temple Beth El, formed in West Palm Beach in 1926 by twenty people, had purchased land and built their initial multifunctional religious and education building in 1957. By 1970 it was obvious that the growing congregation, numbering over 400, required a larger worship space. After seeing Hope Lutheran in Miami, they sought out Parker as the architect for their new House of Prayer. The contract was formulated in May 1971. Parker recalled Temple Beth El's then president Robert D. Rappaport as being "the building committee."[58]

Fread Sanctuary at Temple Beth El. © Bo Parker Photographer.



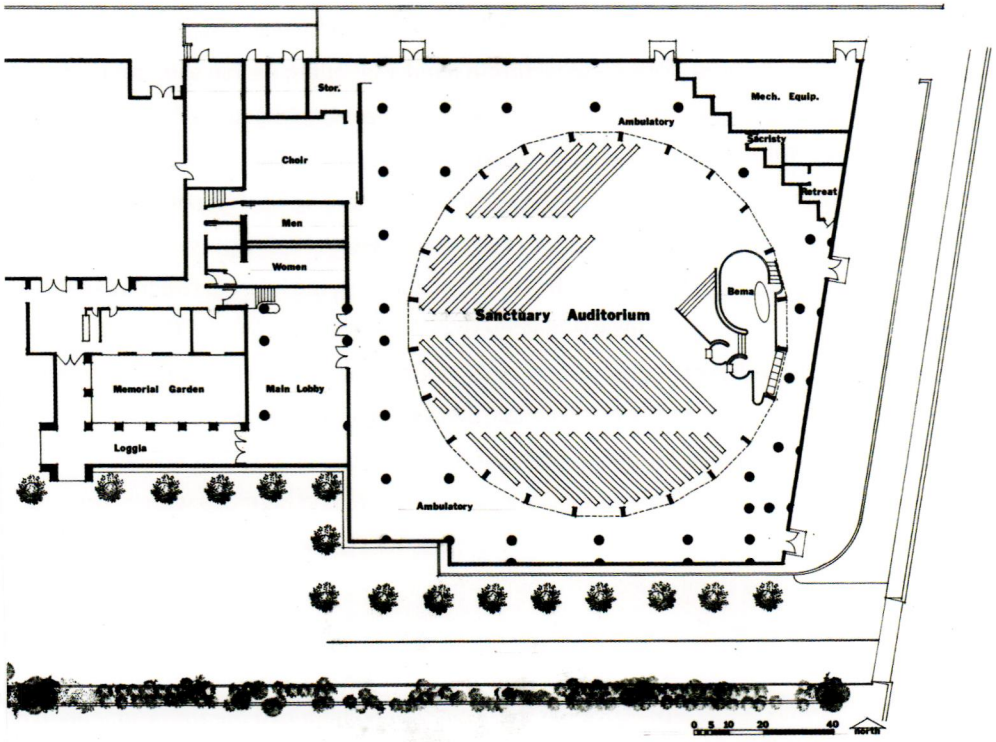


Floor plan of unbuilt scheme. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

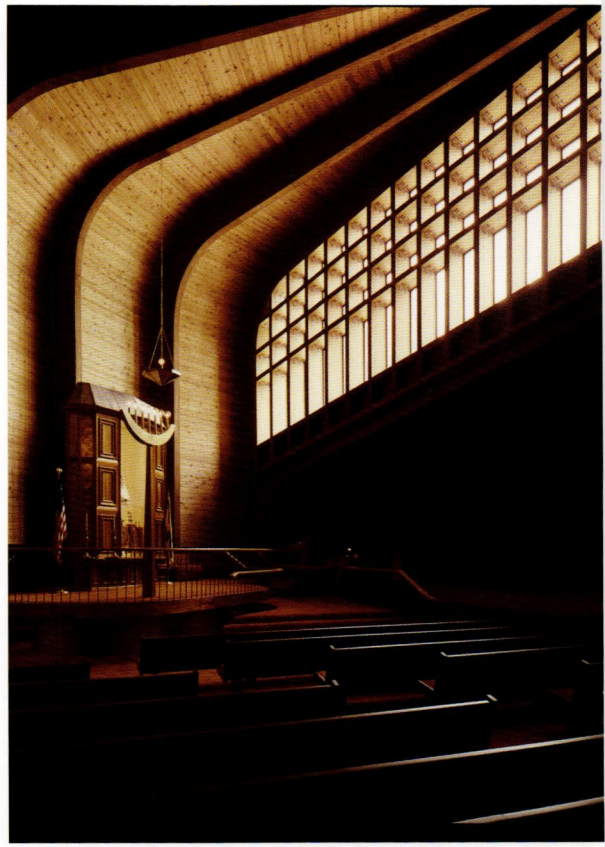
Parker felt strongly that a special interior space must exist in religious buildings, a space that is functional but is in itself an inspirational sacred element. Parker's spiraloid staircasing design concept for the sanctuary provided an aura of ascension through the engulfing atmosphere of the circle. The initial design utilizing primarily concrete eventually proved to be too costly. Parker reworked the design and materials while trying to leave the basic idea intact. The concrete structure was changed to glulam southern pine arched wood beams, creating a masterpiece in wood. The twenty-four beams, spaced at 15-degree intervals, arch upward from just under 30 feet to almost 52 feet overhead. The building addition totals

more than 23,000 square feet. The worship space is contained basically within the 110-foot-diameter circle seating 800, with a peripheral space accommodating an additional 200 seats during the High Holy Days. The plan nevertheless affords greater intimacy to the congregants. The potential for a complex space exists. Yet in reality the spatial experience is straightforward in its clarity, with quiet repose and a profound sense of spirituality.

Fread Sanctuary was built for $1,300,000 by Butler & Oenbrink, the general contractor that also built the Mass residence and Bazaar International and Trylon Tower, all designed by Parker. Construction began in 1974 and was completed for dedication on February 15, 1976.



Floor plan of built scheme. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

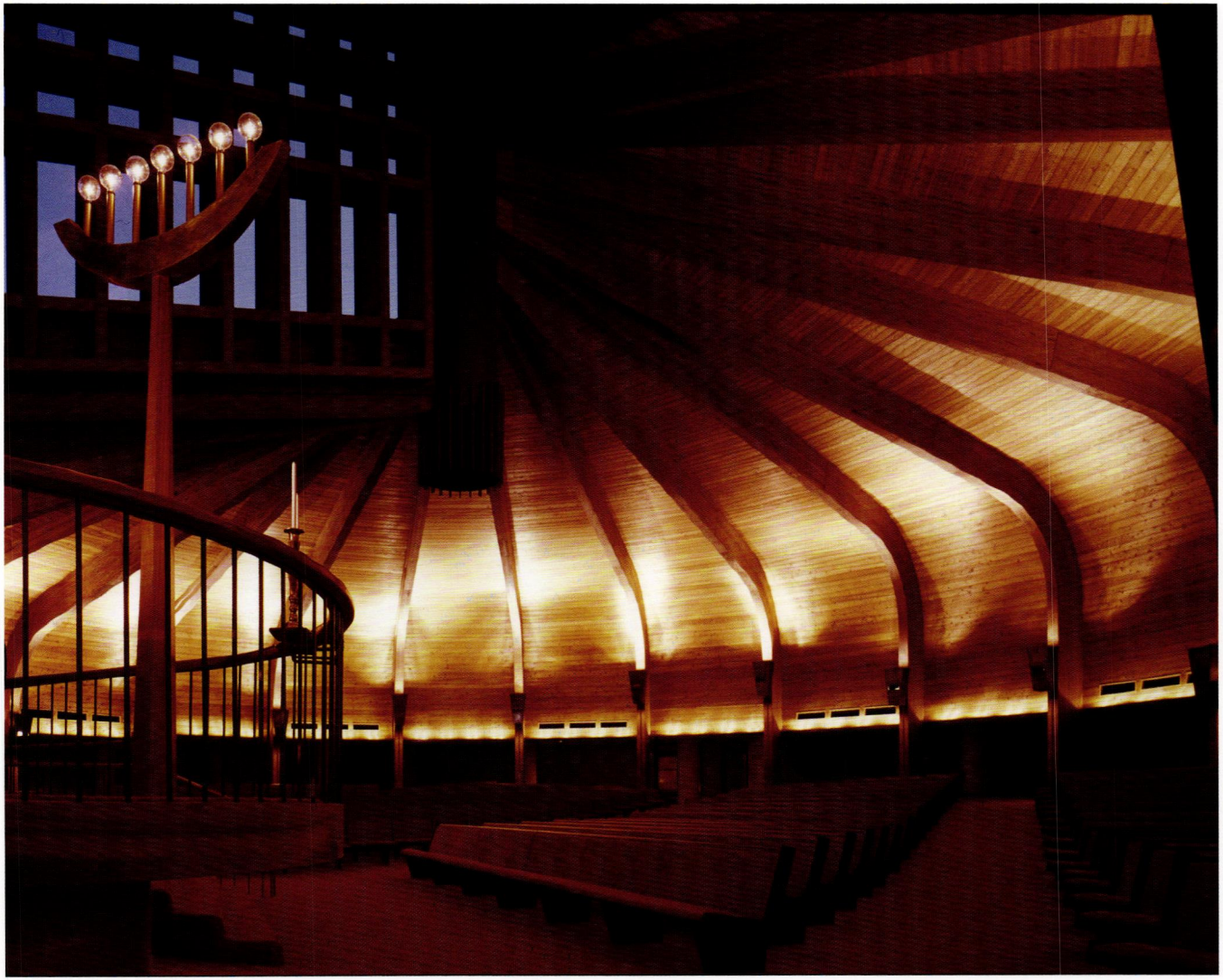


Sanctuary. © Bo Parker Photographer.

Parker was quoted in the dedication book:

The present structure is the result of three comprehensive studies and plans. The first two proved too expensive—especially in view of the world situation that developed during the planning stage . . . the Israeli-Arab confrontation, after which virtually every Jew diverted funds to Israel, and the current economic situation. . . . When I began this job, and I guess it is true of every religious building I have undertaken, I first become absorbed in the religion. I learned about the trials and tribulations of the people and how the Hebrews managed to survive all these centuries. I have learned of their primal instinct to live and of their laws and customs which have been universal enough to ensure survival and contribute greatly to civilization. I learned of the role of the Rabbi, whose is not at all the same as other religious leaders. He is more of a philosopher, friend, respected advisor. I have also studied the history of synagogue architecture, finding no true style. There is an abundance of sizes and shapes and individuals trying to be different. With these factors in mind, I set out to design something stirring and satisfying in form. I feel that beauty and utility are both essential in architecture. One cannot exist without the other. It's like the clasp of a handshake: it takes two people to make a meaningful group. In uniting the limited space, I followed my belief that architecture is as much a thing of spirit as it is of substance. In buildings, as in people, the internal part is what matters. In evolving a simple, disciplined space, I started with the logarithmic spiral—which is found in nature in the internal structure of the chambered nautilus. [Note: this is also called the "golden spiral"—a repetitive pattern found throughout nature.] The Sanctuary consists of a spiral of laminated wooden beams, ascending until it culminates in the "great window." This window allows a certain amount of light from above to penetrate the internal structure and is symbolic, I suppose, of the notion that from God springs human knowledge. I always use simple and natural materials. I allow the building to find harmony with its site and endure over time. The natural wood in the building will age beautifully and will crack naturally—in a sense wrinkling like people. The spiral dome of the building is, in part, covered with lead—a durable, handsome, natural, and nicely-weathering substance. The bima is unique—designed to comply with the needs of the Rabbi, Cantor, and elders. Exterior color comes from the trees and flowers. Internal color comes from the burnt orange carpet covering the great sloping floor and the subtle gradation of orange color covering the pews.[59]

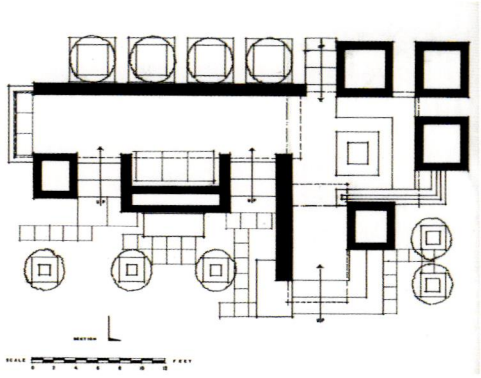
Interestingly, in 2007–8 Temple Beth El reclad the sanctuary's cedar roof decking, replacing the original more economical asphalt shingles with standing seam 24-gauge copper, as Parker had always intended.



Sanctuary. © Bo Parker Photographer.

CONCRETE MASONRY ASSOCIATION PAVILION

Miami Beach, Florida ▪ 1972 ▪ Built project—demolished



Floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

A Parker-designed pavilion was constructed as the indoor centerpiece for the fifty-third annual Concrete Industries Exposition of the National Concrete Masonry Association, held in the Miami Beach Convention Hall to showcase the latest possibilities in concrete masonry. Parker utilized ten different customized masonry units as the primary material, creating, as he suggested, a potpourri of patterns.[60] Two masonry block units designed by architect Paul Rudolph and one designed by Parker for the Marko residence were included. A wooden trellis above, a built-in bench and upholstered seat, a sculpture by Joan Lehman, artwork, lighting, and natural plantings completed the composition.

Beginning in June 1972,[61] Parker worked closely with the general contractor, C. A. Davis,[62] to orchestrate the advance coordination of the materials and details for rapid construction (and deconstruction) of this temporary small exhibit structure. Parker designed the plan to accommodate the flow of the exposition's





Left and right: Exterior. © Bo Parker Photographer.



Left, Exterior; *right*, Interior. © Bo Parker Photographer.

attendees and selected the customized units, and the overall forms constructed with them, with a vertical emphasis to work together with the horizontal planes of the wood floor and the trellis structure above.

In a sales brochure, Parker was quoted as saying,

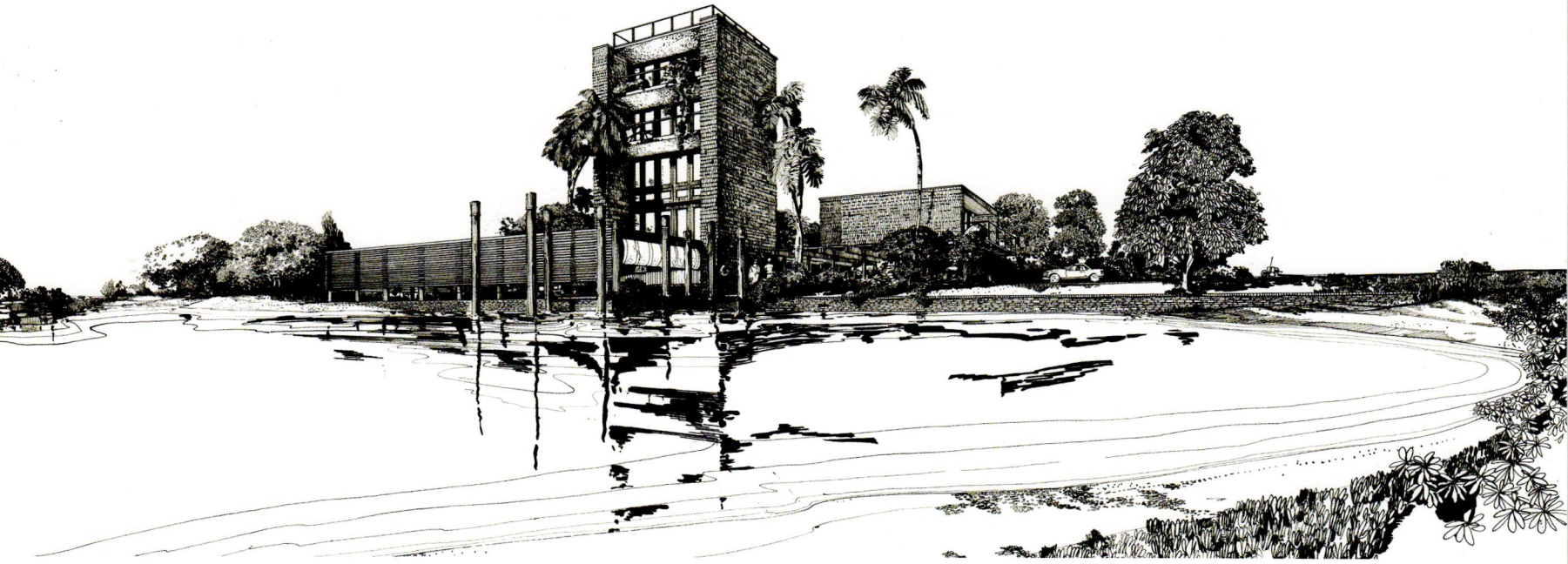
> Pavilion '73 was a centerpiece, designed to demonstrate ten different customized masonry units, including the most recent by Paul Rudolph. I felt it was important to suggest how customized masonry interacted with wood and planting to show a pleasing relation. Customized masonry permits a designer to create a unit that is unique for his work, hence he can control the richness of the wall through whatever scale, texture that he desires. Obviously, this encourages an original building.[63]

CRANE RESIDENCE

Marathon Shores, Florida ▪ 1972 ▪ Unbuilt residence

Mary Winslow Allen Crane, a lifelong collector of Indian artifacts and relics, conservationist, bird-watcher, orchid grower, and dog breeder, first met with Parker—"a famous modern architect in Miami," as she wrote to a friend[64]—in Miami in early January 1972 to discuss the design of a new home for her on a large lot she already owned in Marathon Shores in the Florida Keys. They met later that month at her property, where he promised her something unusual and interesting for the waterfront at Little Crane Point.[65]

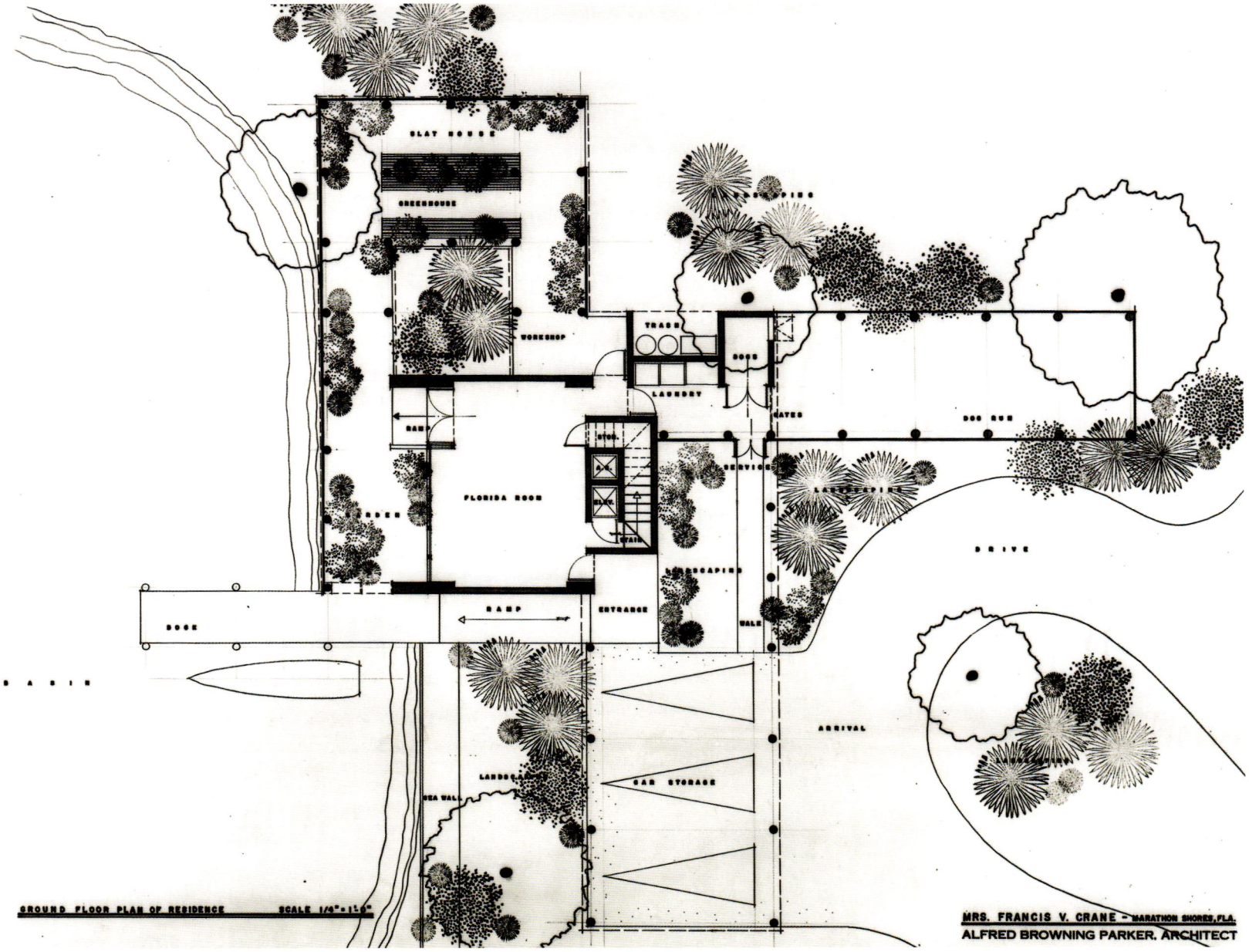
Perspective from water. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Parker created three similar schemes, vertical solutions of three, four, and five stories. His focus was obviously to provide sweeping views across the Bay of Florida and the Gulf of Mexico beyond. The scheme associated with the rendered perspective view was most likely the final one proposed to Mrs. Crane. It had five floors plus an observation area on the roof. The ground floor, larger than the others, contained a three-car carport, the casual Florida room, the greenhouse or slat house, a laundry area, and a doghouse and run. The second floor had the kitchen and dining areas, plus a separate guest apartment over the carport, accessed across a rooftop terrace. The third floor housed the living room. The fourth floor had the study, doubling as a guest bedroom, with bath. The master bedroom suite was located on the fifth floor. Parker provided access to the upper roof via a small enclosed sitting area. Interior stairs and an elevator connected all six levels.

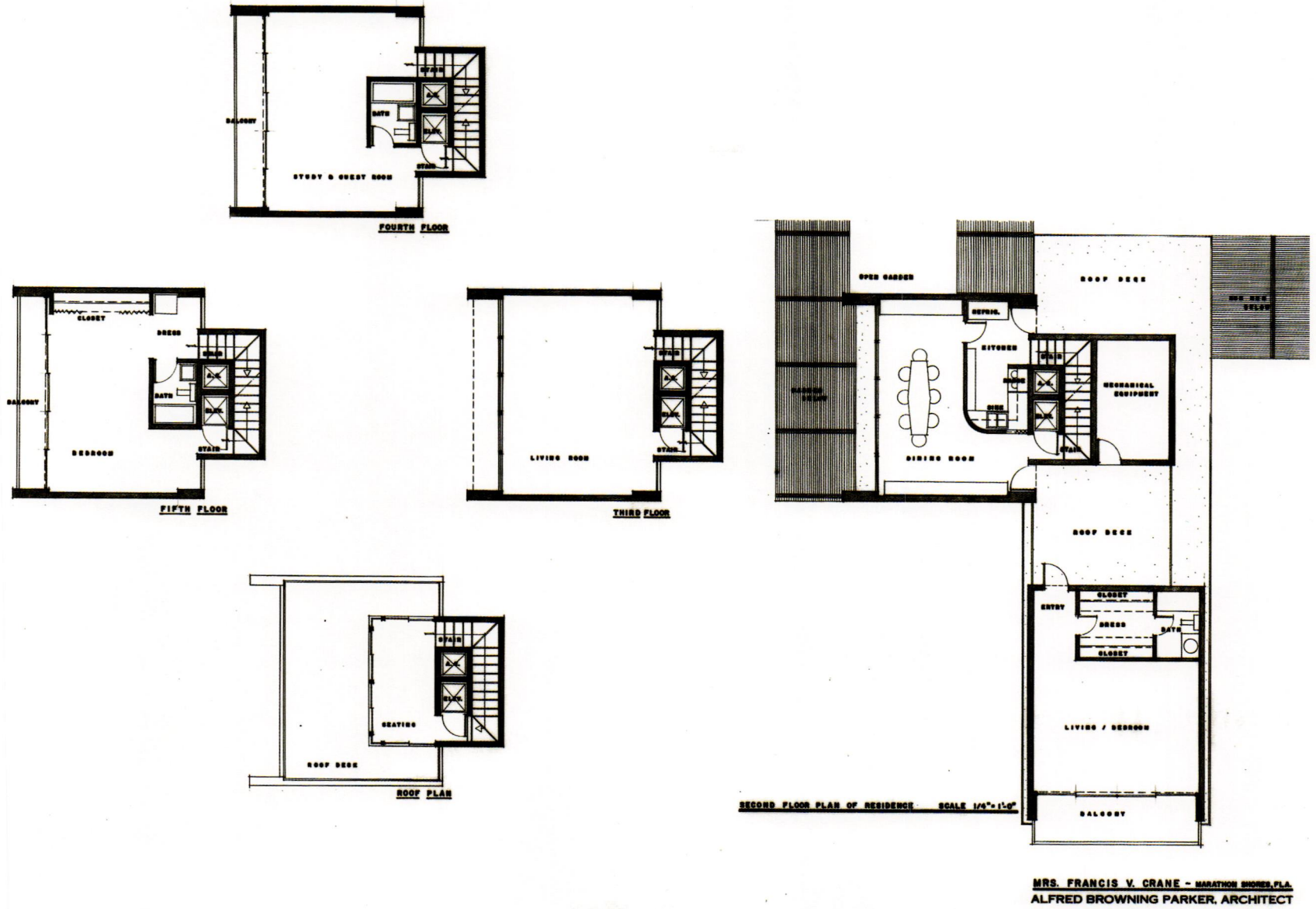
The home was to be built almost at the water's edge. The primary facade, facing the water and view, was entirely of glass. The other three sides were mostly opaque. Parker, knowing the vulnerability of the location in hurricane conditions, intended to use concrete floors supported by structural shear walls of solid concrete masonry. The rendering indicates cedar shakes used as a veneer over the concrete masonry, with stucco at the balconies.

While Parker referred to Mrs. Crane as "an elderly adventuresome widow,"[66] she unfortunately was not daring enough to go through with his design. The cost of the endeavor was the primary obstacle, one that was never overcome. Mrs. Crane died ten years later. It is interesting to compare Parker's earlier Belin Bay Tower and his vertical *Woman's Day* project with the Crane design. All three had similar partis, elements, and expressions, and all three had similar fates. It is also interesting to note that the museum established by the Cranes in Marathon around midcentury, the Southeast Museum of the North American Indian, had a vertical component housing a large totem pole, that was similar to the Parker design in having opaque sides and five expressed levels. Whether this was a factor in Parker's design has been lost to memory.

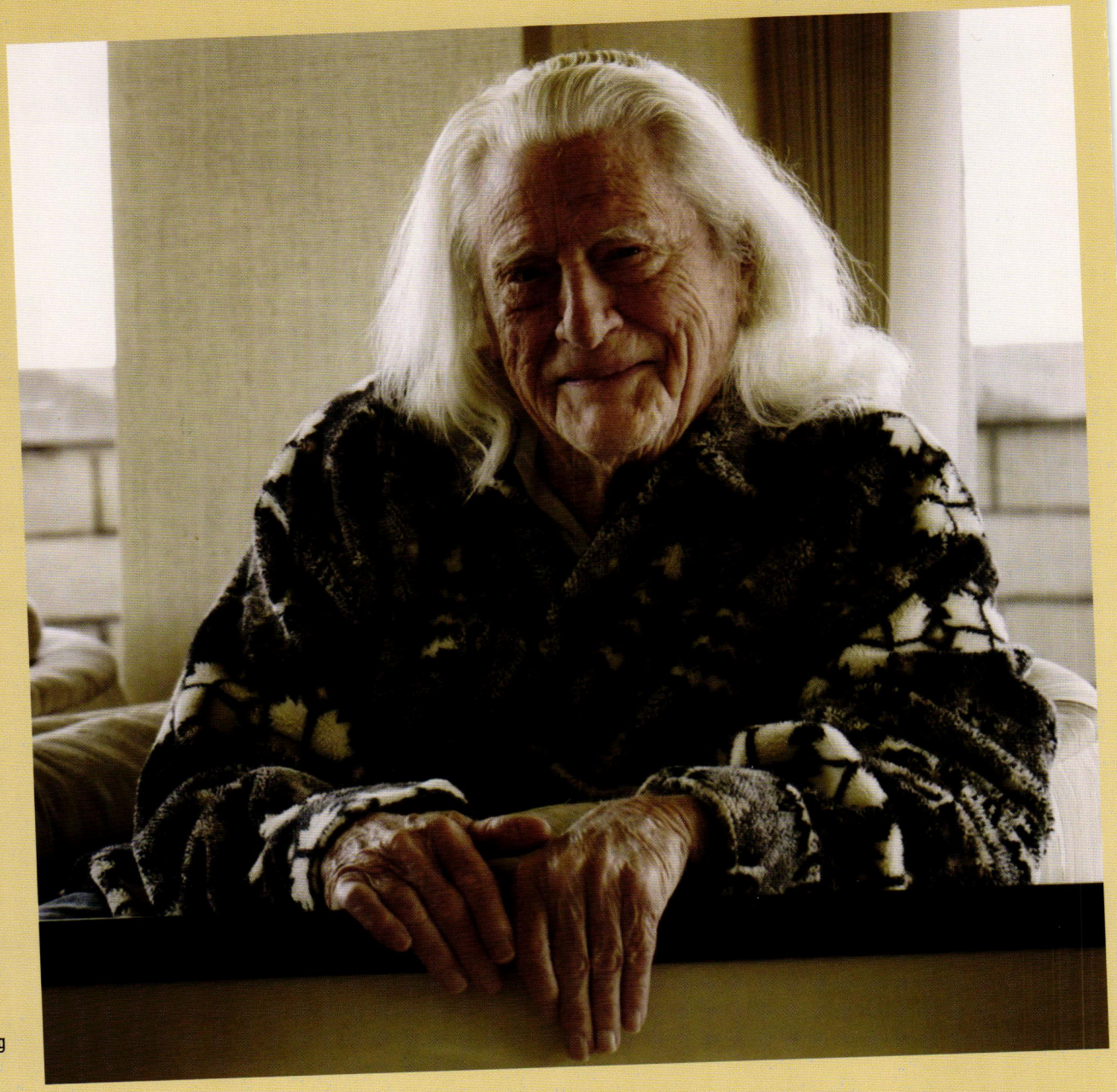


GROUND FLOOR PLAN OF RESIDENCE SCALE 1/4"=1'0"

MRS. FRANCIS V. CRANE - MARATHON SHORES, FLA.
ALFRED BROWNING PARKER, ARCHITECT



Crane residence. *Facing,* Ground-level floor plan; *above*, Upper-level (2, 3, 4, 5, and roof) plans. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Alfred Browning Parker, June 2007. Photo by Doug Finger © *Gainesville Sun*, used with permission.

Late Work 1973–2011

It's been my belief for many years that man must constantly seek to live harmoniously in the environment that we find around us. We must be conversationalists of both human and material resources. Sometimes we are blindly concerned with material possessions as we pile up sticks and stones and sticks, bricks and wood. Yet the human resources and the conservation of natural resources are of infinitely greater importance. It is obvious to informed ones among us that we are simply children playing with our planet rather than maturing heirs to a beautifully balanced system. This system works with checks and balances beyond belief. It will continue to work if man has the creative imagination to find his place within the eco-system and permit it to operate.

- **Parker, recorded interview for the American Institute of Architects, January 14, 1973**

Overall, Parker's later years saw a steady decline in architectural commissions. While the 1970s continued to bring in commercial projects, his residential practice waned in quantity and quality. By 1983, when he moved his architectural workshop out of his larger office on 27th Avenue in Coconut Grove into his Woodsong residence on Seminole Street in Coconut Grove, his staff numbered only a few and his practice was largely dormant.

In response to the energy crisis of the 1970s and his ever-present concern for the natural environment, his personal focus became more centered on renewable and alternate energy sources than on his architecture. His commitment to his Solar Reactor Corporation and SRT enterprises intensified and commanded more of his attention. He preferred to speak on ecology, alternate sources of energy, renewable resources, and sustainability than on architecture and his own past.

His primary commercial work in the 1970s continued to be for banking institutions, now including the Coconut Grove Bank, Sunshine State Bank and United National Bank. His final religious project, a worship space addition for St. Louis Catholic Church in South Miami, was a tour de force in circular geometry. Several larger projects never came to fruition, including his design for a Coconut Grove condominium called Grove Tower and, in Vermont, the Powerhouse Restaurant, a development he proposed to design and build on the waterfront in downtown Middlebury. Starting in 1974, Parker began design work on the exclusive gated community of Quayside, bringing him the largest architectural fee of his career.[1]

Parker's residential opportunities not only lessened, but fewer of those came to constructed fruition (the unbuilt houses for Rutenberg, Scharlin, and Caplan are three of many). Classic Acres, the horse ranch he designed for Sam Knight in Ocala, was a notable exception. He also received opportunities to revisit and modify previously designed and built homes for Homer and Dolly Hand in Belle Glade, for new owner Thad Boyd at Classic Acres, and for Milton Wallace at the Magnuson home in Gables Estates. Several speculative residential ventures came his way from developers, although only one was built, for Michael Burrows in Palm Beach. Starting in 1985, he designed and built an addition to the historic barn on his property in Vermont, calling the multilevel building the Annex. Here he installed his extensive personal and professional library, a workshop for his architectural, art, and sculpture projects, and a gallery to display his work. Guest quarters occupied the lowest level. After relocating back to Florida, Parker designed his eighth and final built home, Skyview, in Gainesville, not far from the University of Florida campus where he taught. It featured a skylight, open to the upper living floor, that was almost half the roof. His final home design, named Euphrosyne Isle for his wife, between Main Street and the banks of Colclough Pond less than two miles south of downtown Gainesville, was conceived as a small single-story home but elevated above the pond for the same reasons he designed and elevated many of his earlier works—for views, protection from insects, and to take advantage of prevailing breezes.

Curiously, during these years Parker's use of his favored native Florida stone gave way to a more frequent and liberal use of white exterior plaster stucco—as evidenced by the Abelove residence, St. Louis Catholic Church, Northeast United Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Towers, the Stettin residence, and his own Skyview, to name a few. His architectural forms became increasingly softer as he tended to suggest rounded, eased corner in lieu of right angles. In this period he also employed a simpler geometry, notably the circle, especially in his residential work.

In 1988 Parker produced his final furniture designs, a series of outdoor furniture for the Sunburst Company, including a chaise longue chair he named after the constellation Cassiopeia.

■ ■ ■

It was apparent to me early on that the two elements—utility and aesthetics—interrelate. Beauty and utility work as a grip. It takes two hands shaking to make a meaningful grip, and so it is in architecture.

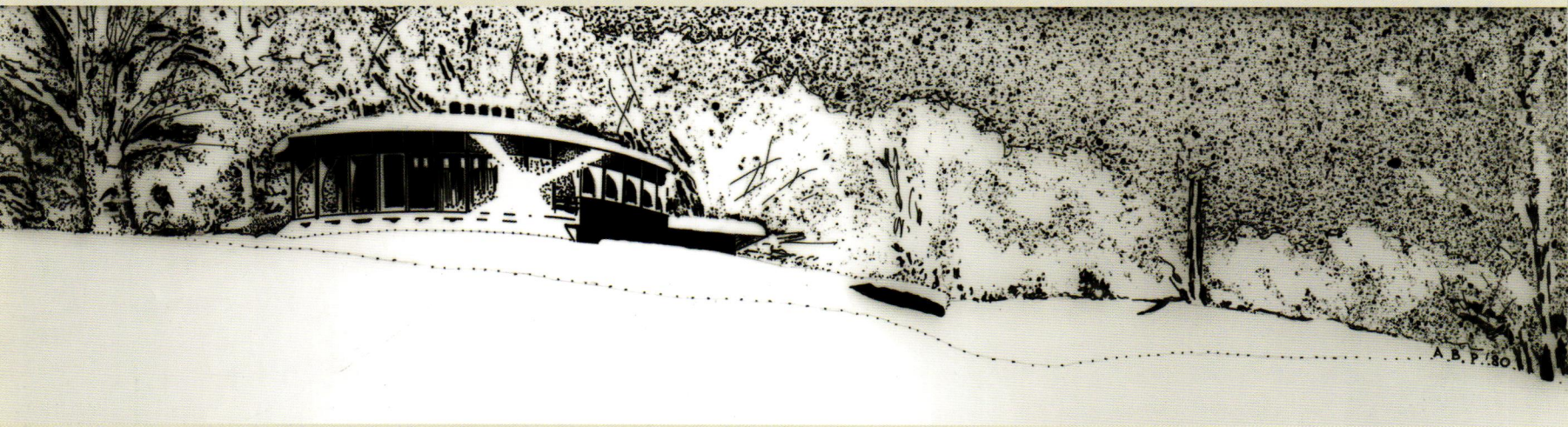
■ **Parker, interview by Kathryn Howard, *Florida Home & Garden*, January 1989**

PARKER RESIDENCE (AERIE / WINDSONG) AND BARN ANNEX

Lincoln, Vermont ▪ 1973 ▪ Built project—extant

Seeking out a location to build a second home for a recreational escape and an alternative to the tropical environment of South Florida, Parker traveled with his new wife Jane and their three-month-old child Lebritia to Vermont in 1960 looking for land. He had been skiing there occasionally since the mid-1950s and enjoyed the change of scenery as well as the different lifestyle. In 1961 he found and purchased two adjoining farms nine miles outside Middlebury, near Lincoln. The property offered sweeping vistas of the Green Mountains.

Parker eventually designed and built two structures on a relatively steep south-facing slope—the upper house, which was his primary residence, and an annex, which was actually an addition to an existing historical barn that he preserved. The two-level upper house, known first as Aerie and then as Windsong, was located below the ridgeline of South Mountain. Parker designed Windsong in 1973, with construction ongoing over the next several years. The four-level annex, also called the barn addition, designed in 1985,



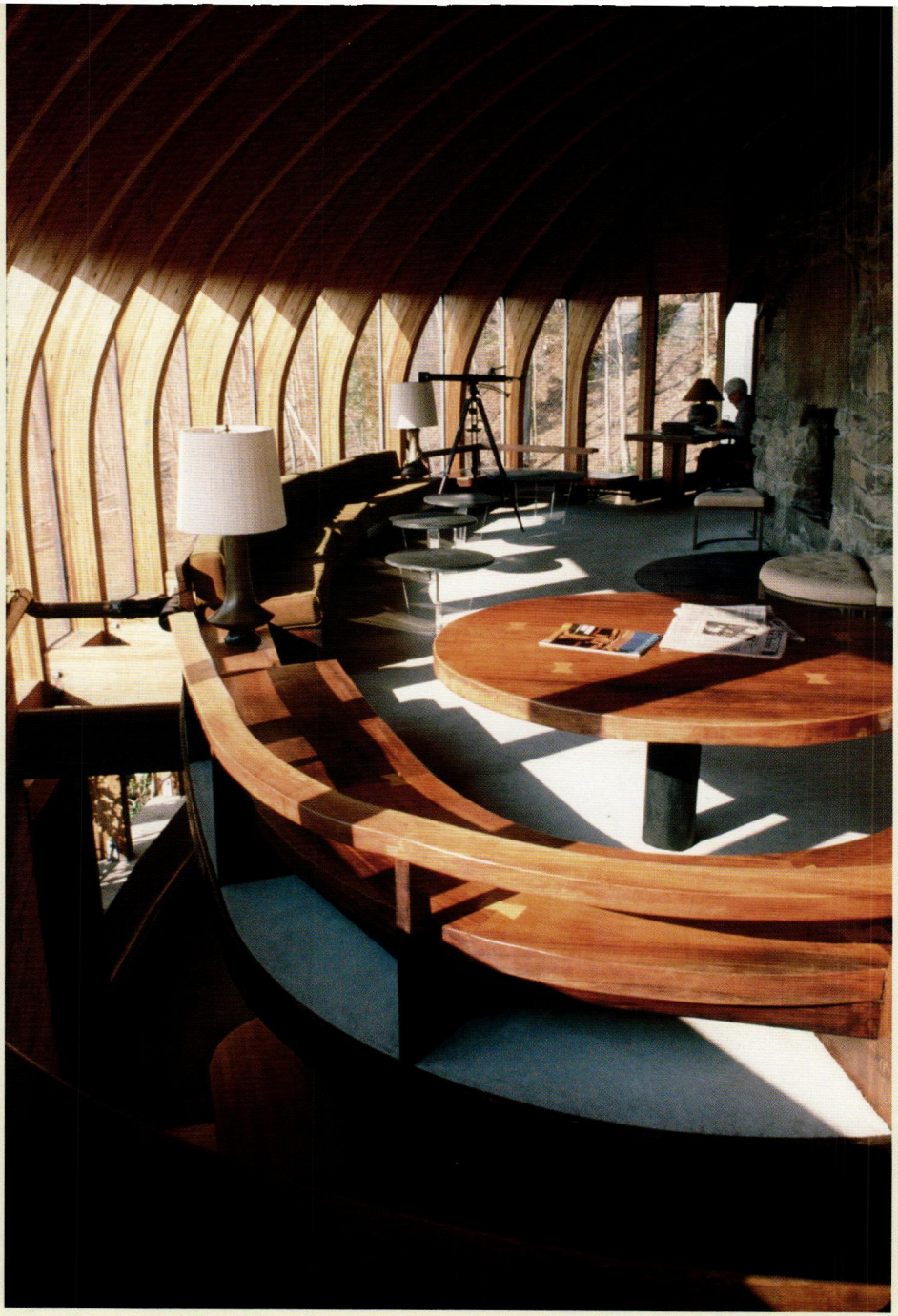
Worm's-eye perspective in winter. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



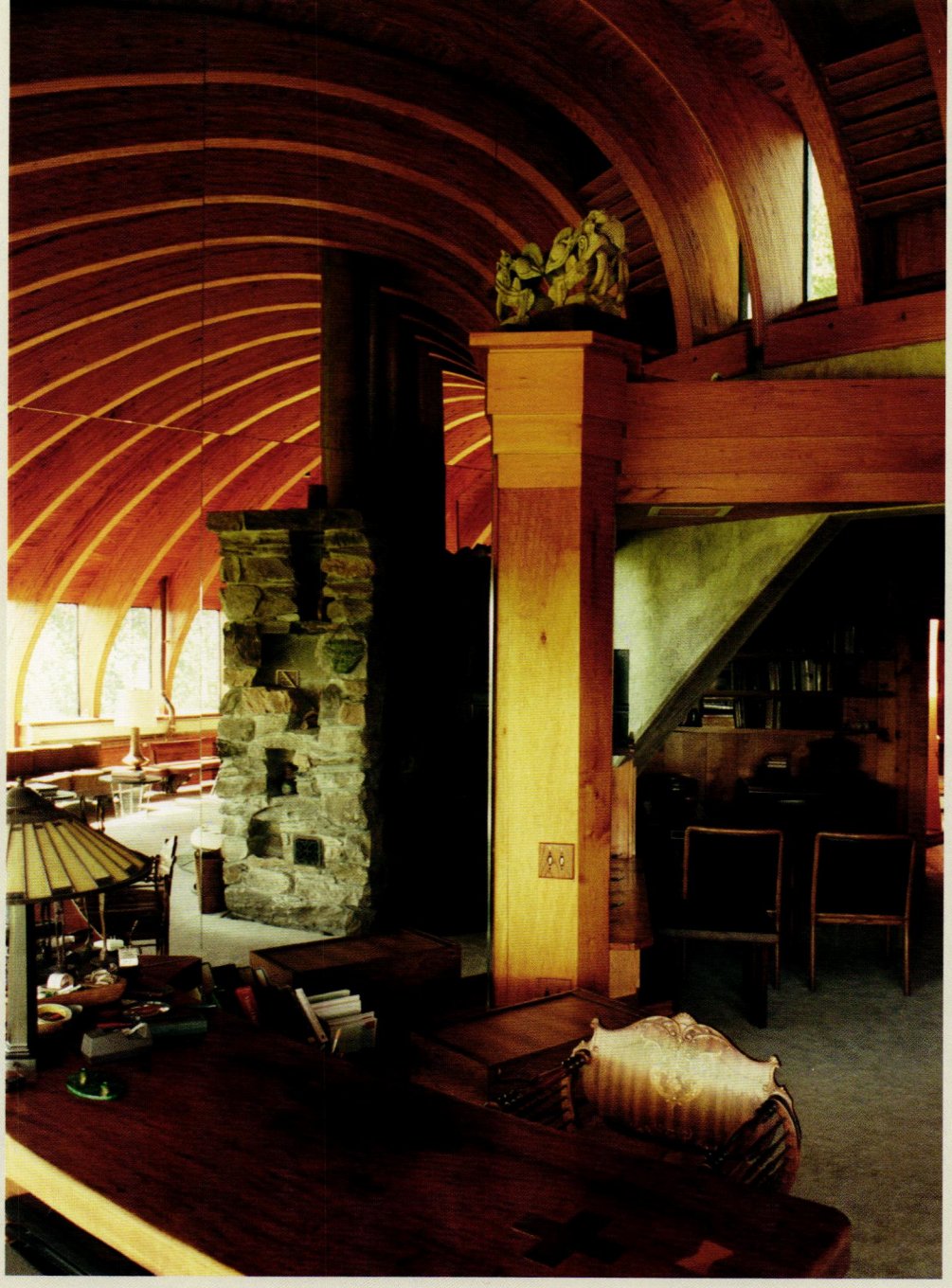
Exterior of Windsong. © Bo Parker Photographer.



Exterior of Windsong. © Bo Parker Photographer.



Living and dining area. © Bo Parker Photographer.



Study alcove. © Bo Parker Photographer.



Exterior view of Annex. Photo by author.

was located two hundred yards below the upper house and contained guest quarters, a multipurpose studio and gallery spaces, workshop, library, and office. As he did with all his own homes, Parker acted as the builder.

Frank Lloyd Wright often preached that an architect should design a home that fit so well into the physical nature of its site that it actually improved on nature itself. Parker sought to achieve such a lofty goal with Windsong. The upper house is set almost entirely into the ground, with its backside sheltered from the northern storms, while the entire two-story southern exposure is open to the sun and the incredible views. In addition, Parker designed the southern glass facade as a sweeping curve to match the contour of the land. It is a tour de force in proper harmonious siting, appropriate design—that is, organic architecture, as distinguished by Wright—and the seamless utilization of passive energy components. The buried north wall is entirely naturally insulated and sheltered by the earth, while the south-facing glass maximizes the solar heat gain in the predominantly colder months when the house would be occupied. The design goals, structural grid and elements, form, and simple grammar of materials all are presented logically and poetically.

The structure consists of radiating wood glulam beams growing up out of the southern base of the home and then over, supporting the roof and seemingly returning into the ground above. These structural elements are exposed to the interior, with the preponderance of wood adding to the overall feeling of warmth in the residence. Copper and glass are essentially the elements exposed to the exterior, with wood (mahogany and butternut) the predominant interior material. A substantial stone fireplace in the center of the space appears to secure the entire residence naturally and convincing to its site.

In 1992 Parker relocated permanently to Windsong, where he attempted to pursue a less hectic life, continuing his architectural practice while exploring his passion for art and sculpture. However, it was shortlived as, in 1994, he returned to Florida to teach in the School of Architecture of the College of Design, Construction, and Planning at the University of Florida in Gainesville. Windsong was sold in 2000. The new owners have subsequently altered the home and annex and demolished the historic barn to make way for an addition to the Annex, none of which was designed by Parker.

ST. LOUIS CATHOLIC CHURCH

Miami, Forida ▪ 1978 ▪ Built project—extant

The pastor of the Church of Saint Louis in Miami wrote in a letter to his congregation that "our architect was given the commission to design a space which strengthens community (our bond with each other), facilitates communication (so each of us feels a part of the sacred action), all with a feeling of intimacy (that special sense of the sacred and divine)."[2] At the time he wrote those words, Parker had completed his preliminary design for the project—an addition of a sanctuary space accommodating 750 worshipers with a sense of beauty and sacredness. They also requested a smaller chapel, to seat 150, and an exterior gathering plaza for social interchange. Parker's design enclosed approximately 13,600 square feet. The original church facilities, on a ten-acre tract of land in the Kendall area of South Dade, had been built in the mid-1960s.

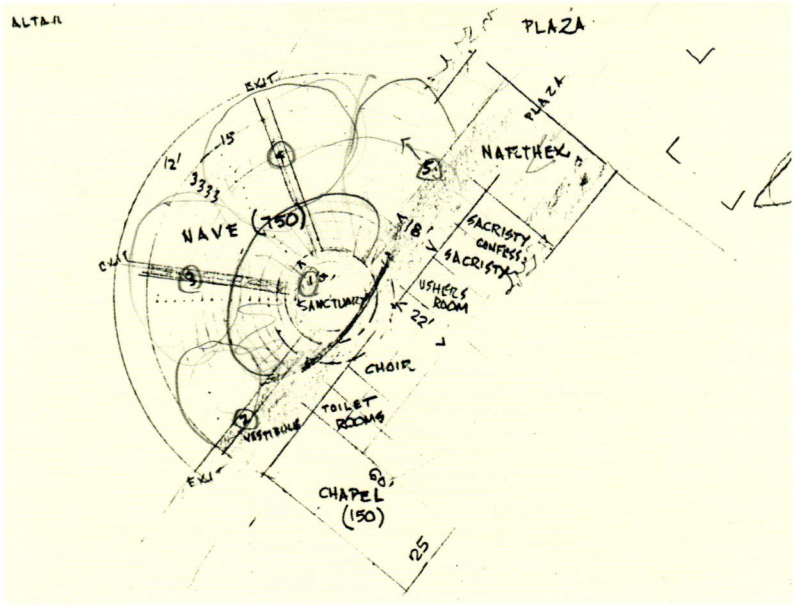
Interestingly, the circle, the predominant geometry Parker used at St. Louis Catholic Church, allowed Parker to create intimate spaces, all with the celebrant close to the parishioners. The basic structure was glulam wood beams forming a clear open domed space. The roof was covered in copper. The enclosing walls were poured-in-place reinforced concrete. Three identically sized domes, 44 feet in diameter, sheltered the sanctuary, chapel, and exterior gathering plaza, with the sanctuary dome given dominance both by its height and by its relationship to the roof of the surrounding nave.

The general contractor was M. R. Harrison, the contractor for Miamarina. Built for a little more than $1 million, the church addition was dedicated on September 27, 1980.[3]



Bird's-eye view. © Bo Parker Photographer.

Concept sketch of floor plan.
Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection,
University of Florida Libraries.

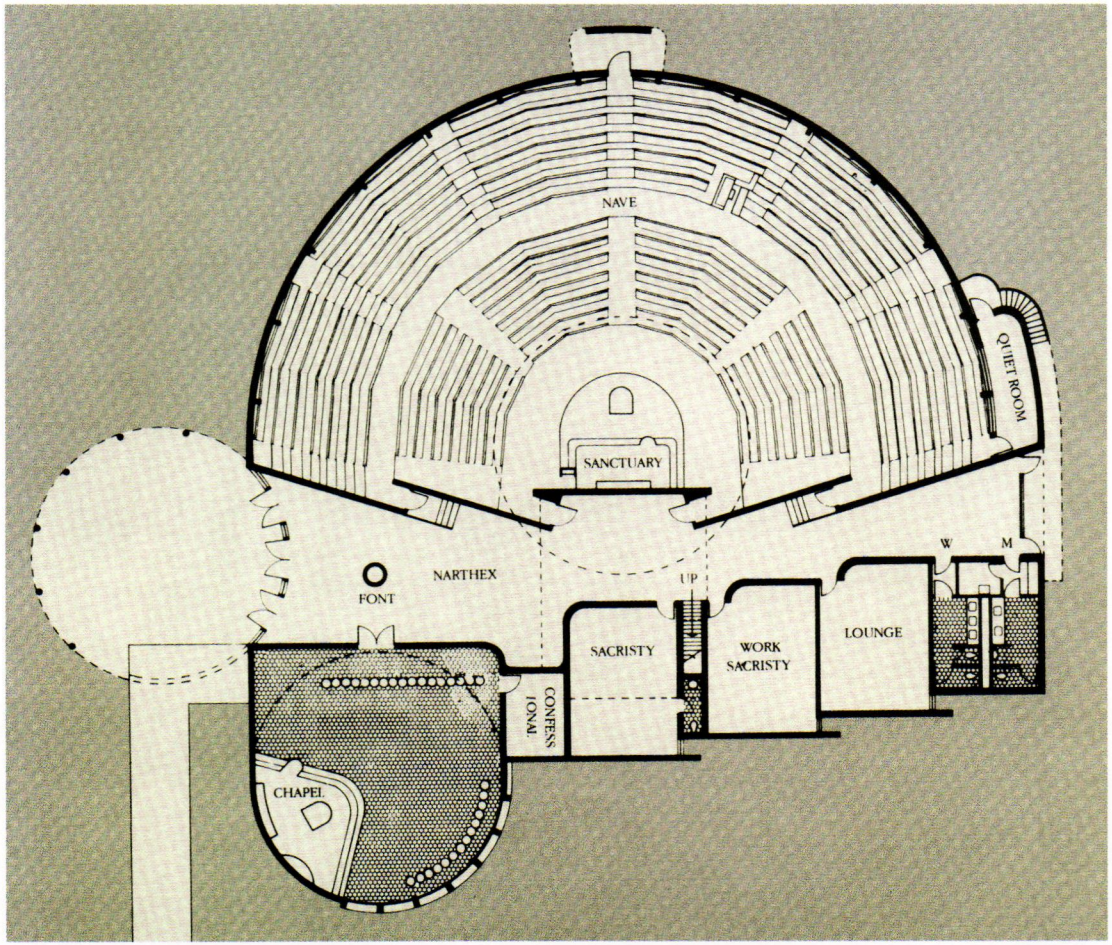


Parker recalled that Pastor David R. Russell challenged him for the best from the beginning. "He was an absolute gem of a priest, young, smart, well-trained and completely devoted to the Catholic Church."[4] Pastor Russell wrote in the dedication booklet,

> We have tried to create a building truer to our self understanding after Vatican II. A single entrance to express our oneness. We enter by the baptismal font (no longer in a corner) to renew our baptismal commitment to Jesus each time we enter. The space aims to gather us around the altar. The priest stands as servant in the midst of, rather than above, God's people. An organ makes honest sounds for prayerful song. Lighting can be controlled to aid concentration. Use of media makes available modern technology. The building is, I believe, beautiful. The large ribs remind one of the ribs in a boat . . . Peter's bark. Some with a glint in their eye have said the exterior resembles a space ship. Perhaps there is something very significant and valid in that. We are on a journey to the Lord . . . the space within. Jesus had an eye for beauty, shape, balance and form. He was a carpenter, a maker of things. I like to think this structure pleases him. God is beautiful. Ugly buildings lie about God. Nothing pretends to be what it isn't. A building dedicated to the truth of God shouldn't lie.[5]

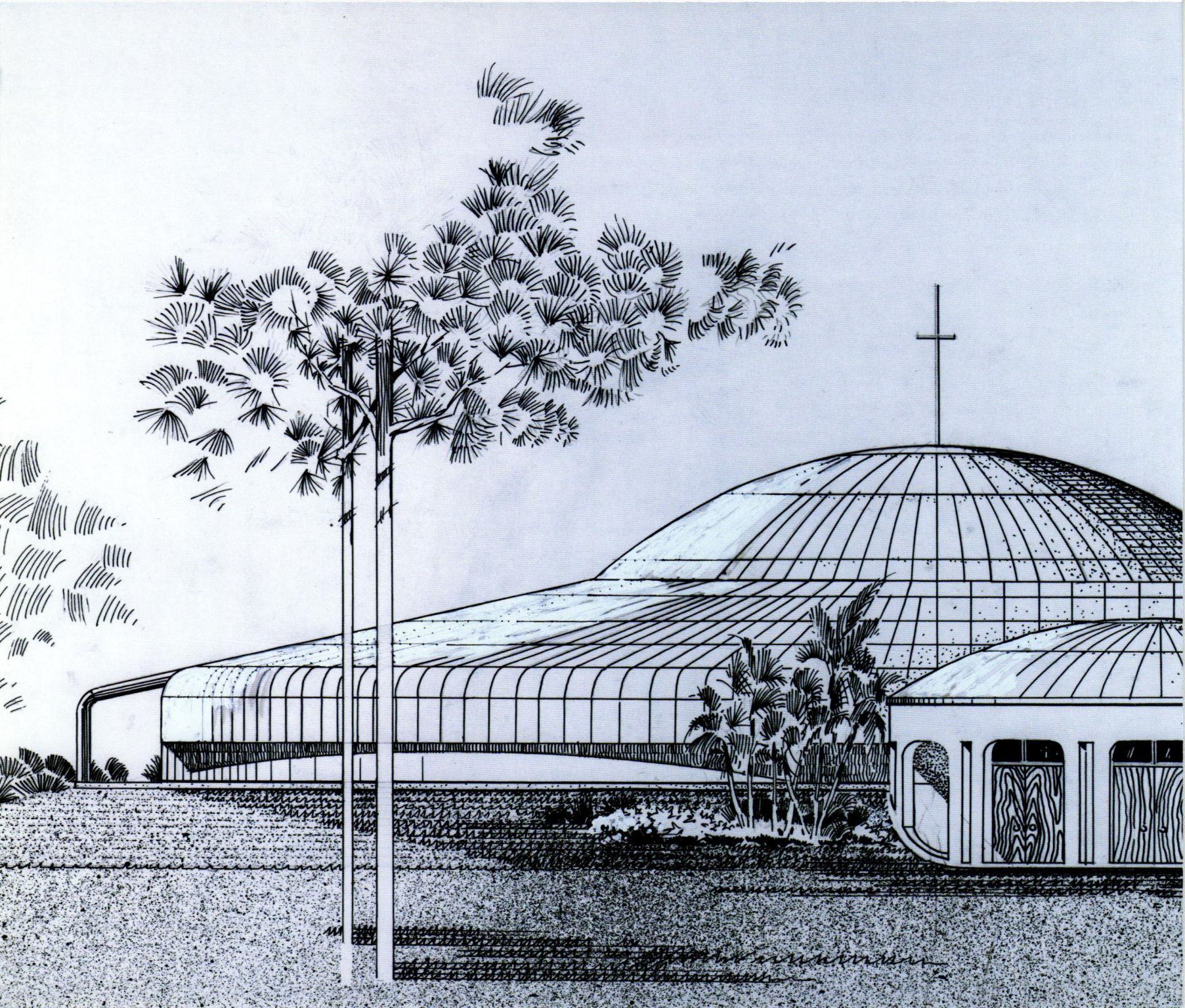
Parker stated in his essay in the dedication booklet,

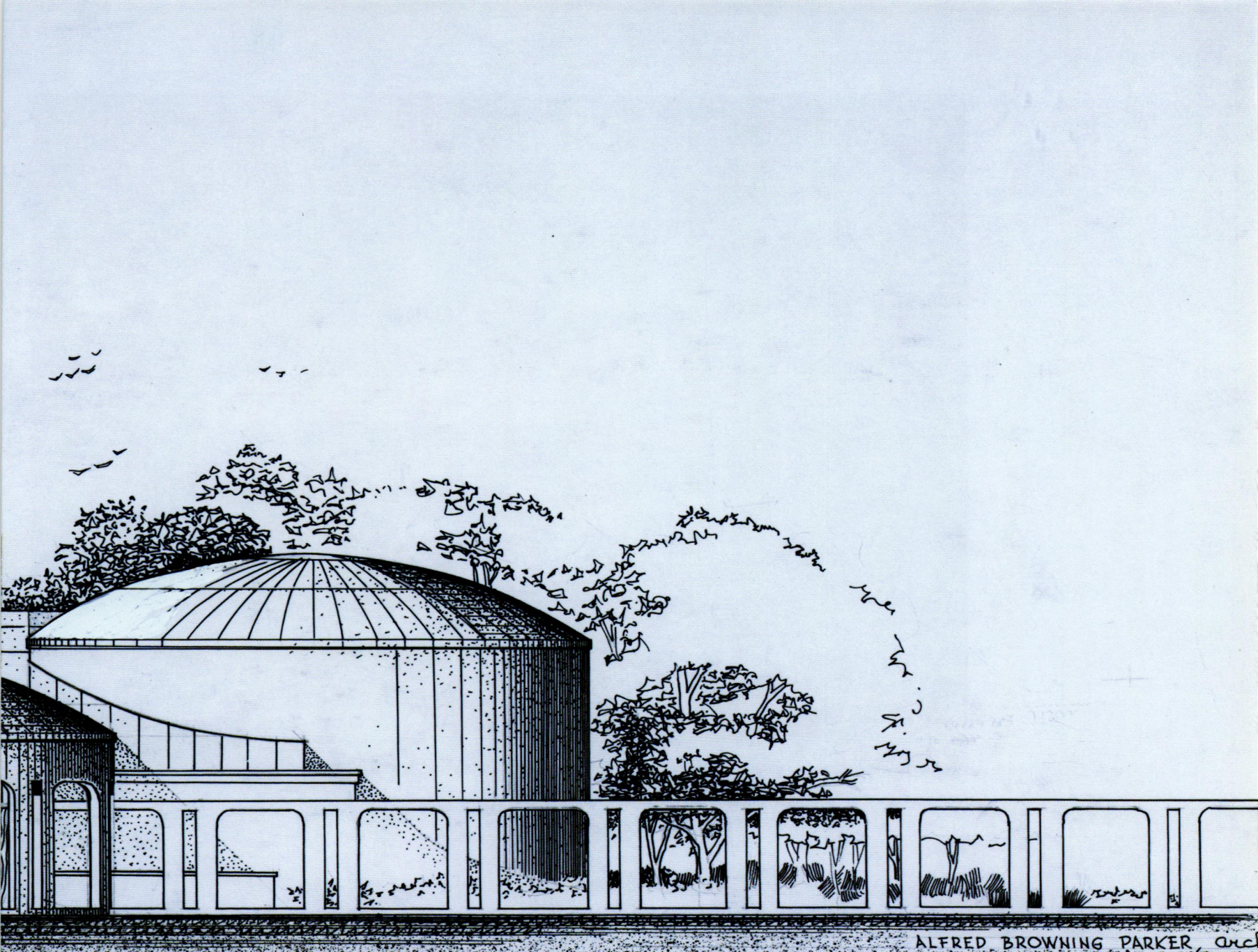
> Architecture encloses space so that Beauty and Utility become one. The interiors of St. Louis derive their significance from the celebration of this event. . . . The larger principles on which the Church is founded will always eclipse mere temporal situations; nevertheless a felicitous building is not a handicap. May this building become a continuing and deepening experience for those who worship within.[6]

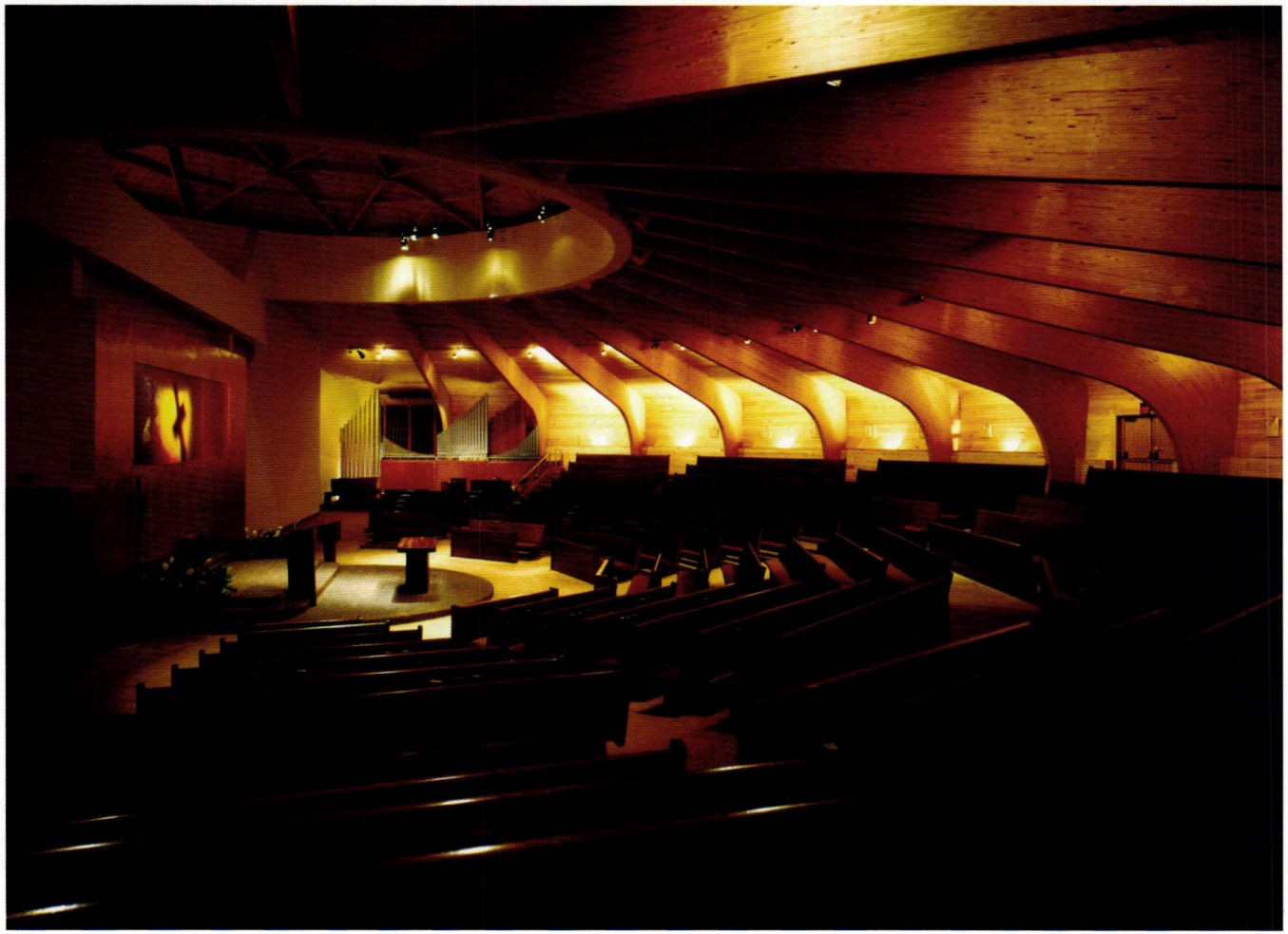


Floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

Following page: Exterior elevation. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.




ALFRED BROWNING PARKER, arch



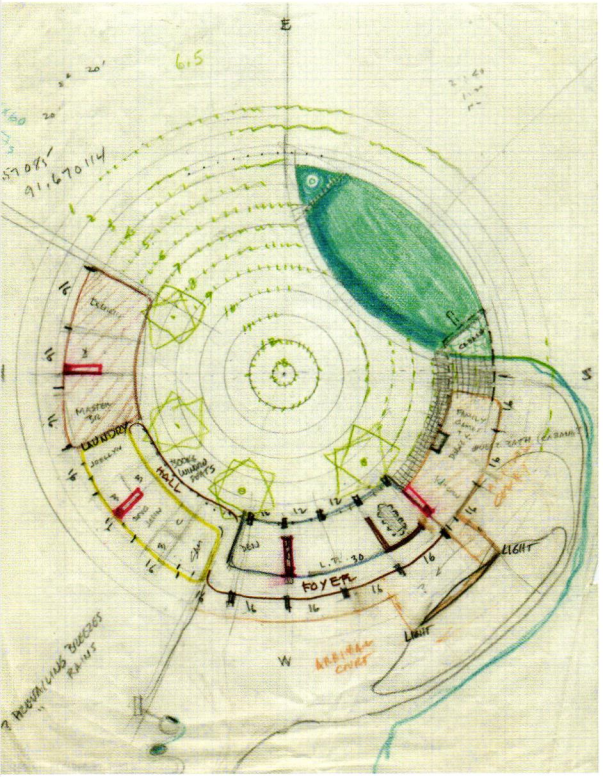
Sanctuary. © Bo Parker Photographer.



Chapel. © Bo Parker Photographer.

KNIGHT RESIDENCE AND HORSE FARM (CLASSIC ACRES)

Ocala, Florida ▪ 1979 ▪ Built project—extant



Concept sketch of floor plan. From the author's collection.

In 1979 Samuel and Mona Knight commissioned Parker to design a new working farm for thoroughbred horses in Ocala, including the master planning of the entire eighty acres, the design of the main residence, barn, and recreational facilities, exterior landscaping and amenities, and the interior architecture, including material and color selections, built-ins, artwork, and furnishings. They were relocating from Belle Glade north to Ocala, an area more suitable for raising horses. The project became known as Classic Acres, a name carried over from the Belle Glade ranch.

The property included rolling pastures, four ponds, and numerous old-growth oak trees. Meeting in the summer of 1979, the Knights provided Parker with a list of requirements for the home desired for their family of six, which included three boys and one girl.[7] They suggested stone, wood, and glass as the predominant exterior materials and outlined their spatial requirements—foyer, den, living room, kitchen, dining room, family room, guest suite, children's bedrooms with bathrooms, a master suite, laundry, exercise room, pool, and patio. They specified plenty of built-ins, and specific materials for the interior surfaces and fixtures and furnishings.

Parker carved out seven pastures, all radiating from the center of an ancient oak by the new barn. Parker built the two-story segmented residence "around a knoll (the highest point on the site). . . . The circular plan form evolves spaces that have variety without losing the unity that is derived both from the shape and from the use of the exterior materials on the interior."[8] The barn and a small recreational building containing a gymnasium, racquetball court and rooftop viewing platform for the racquetball and tennis courts were also designed by Parker. The predominant materials were wire-cut brick from North Carolina, Honduran mahogany, glass, copper, and Ludowici-Celadon roof tiles, and the structure was a composite system using concrete, steel, brick, and wood. Parker commissioned brick artist Mara Smith to create large carved brick murals for the main residence, the barn, and the racquetball court.

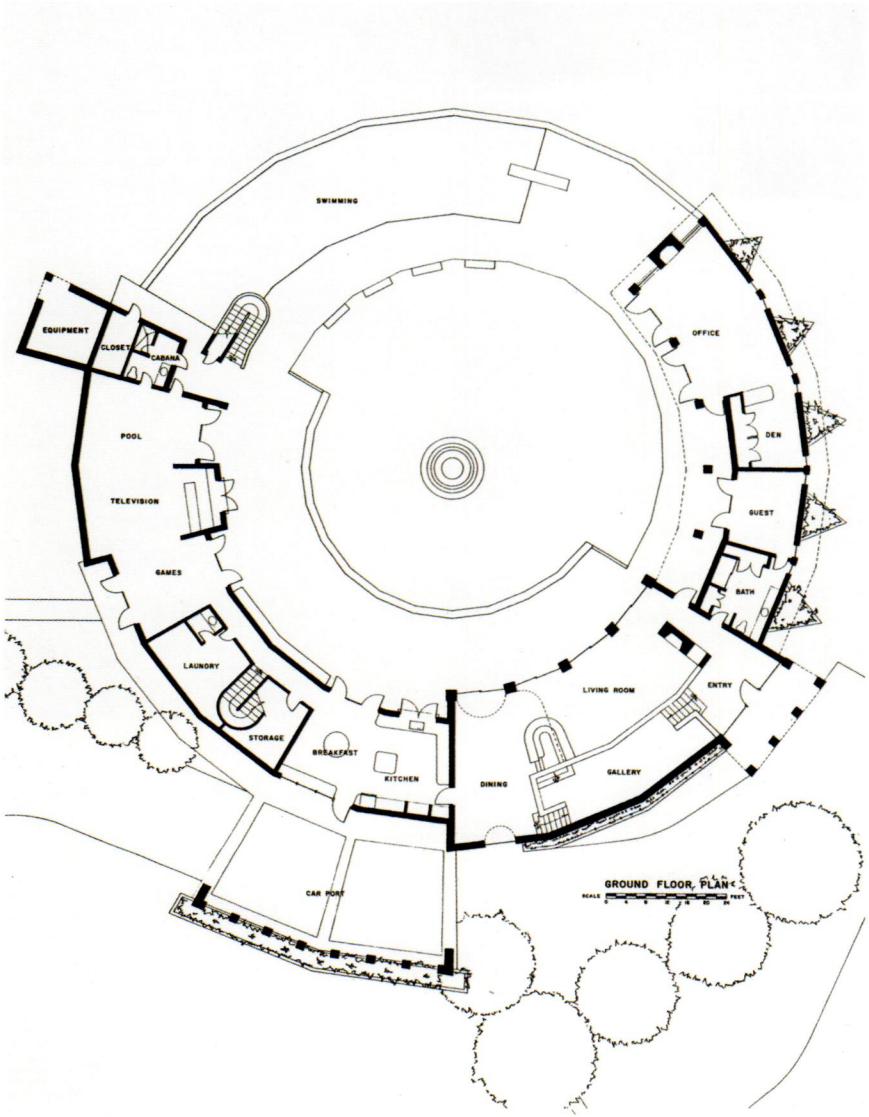
The home has a multilevel skylit central space containing the entry foyer, living and dining areas, and stairs to the second floor. Below the floating concrete stairs is a sunken bar with a wine cellar. Off this large



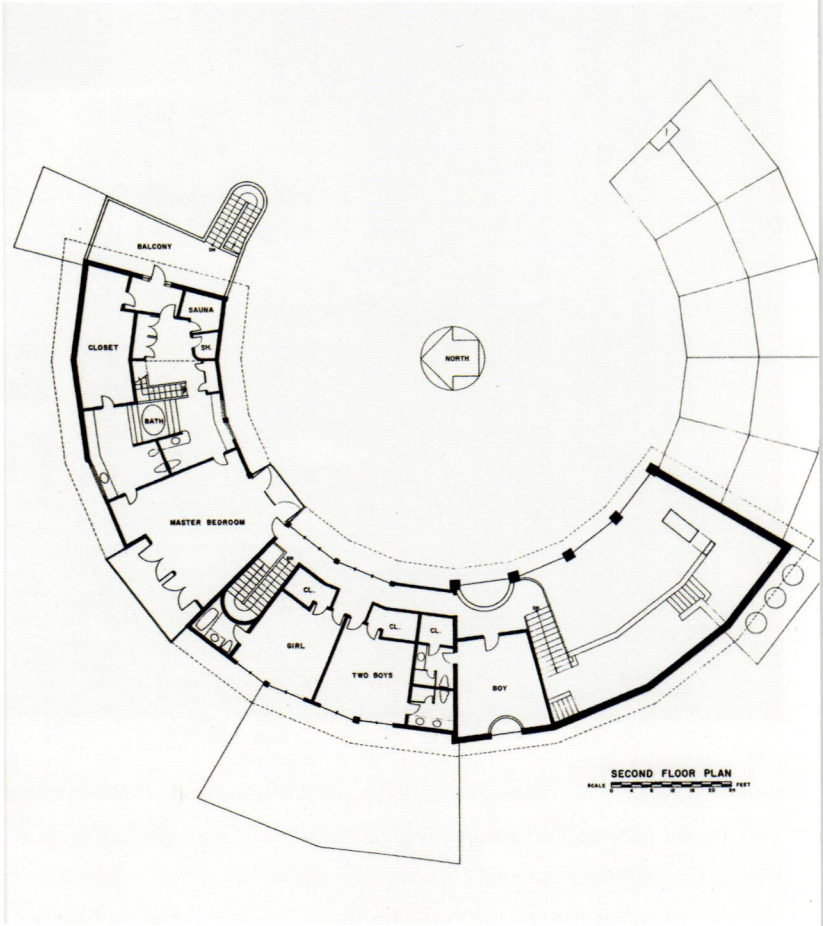
Looking across pool and terrace into interior knoll. © Bo Parker Photographer.

space in one direction Parker provided a guest room with bathroom, den and office. In the opposite direction, Parker provided an eat-in kitchen, laundry and storage, family room, and cabana bath for the pool. Within the large central space Parker devised an art gallery located at midlevel between the main and second floors. On the second floor are three bedrooms and bathrooms and the master bedroom suite, including a sauna.

Parker's preliminaries were completed in several months. With the working drawings following, construction was under way in late 1980. The project was built by Wes Clyatt and Don Peavy,[9] completed by 1982 at a cost of just over $1 million for the residence, plus an additional $500,000 for the barn, sheds, recreational courts and buildings, landscaping, and site amenities.[10] The Knights only briefly resided in their new home, almost immediately selling the ranch to area businessman Thad Boyd in 1984. Boyd retained Parker for additional modifications.



Ground-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Second-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Living area. © Bo Parker Photographer.



Sunken bar area below stair to second floor. © Bo Parker Photographer.



Dining area. © Bo Parker Photographer.

Parker was so pleased with the results of this project that he had a limited-edition hardbound book privately printed that included an introduction by the architect, twenty-seven original color photographs by his son, Bo Parker, illustrations of the master plan and floor plans of the residence, and credits to the general contractor, subcontractors, suppliers, and craftsmen who contributed to the project.[11] In the two-page introductory text Parker stated,

> It is a home of sophisticated design, built from enduring materials and based upon an integrated theme. The home is designed for a family of six: father, mother, three boys and one girl. The residence encircles most of the knoll with part open to the prevailing breezes. Winter and summer sun angles have been calculated for energy conservation. The open section of the circle is completed with the swimming pool and terrace. The circle is aesthetically a form of unity, always closing back upon itself from a given radius. The circular form is composed of identical structural segments. These modular bays are straight line construction (brick walls, beams, decking and roof) for building economy.[12]

STETTIN RESIDENCE

Miami, Florida ▪ 1983 ▪ Built project—extant

Herbert and Marcia Stettin approached Parker to design their home in early November 1983.[13] Stettin was a practicing attorney and retired circuit court judge, and he and his wife were certainly aware of Parker's reputation as a creative architect. They sought to downsize, and met Parker at their lot to discuss the project, the site, and the possibilities presented by both.[14] Parker expressed a desire to save as many of the trees as possible. This clinched the deal,[15] as the Stettins shared that desire. The long narrow lot, approximately 125 feet wide by 450 feet deep, was a heavily wooded hammock with frontage on Hammock Lake.





Rear side facing waterfront. © Bo Parker Photographer.

Ramp to entrance off driveway. © Bo Parker Photographer.



Living and dining areas. © Bo Parker Photographer.

The design process required six to eight months, and many meetings between Parker and the Stettins. The resultant design was a rather large two-story stucco home for the family of four (both children were college age). Parker chose for the basic form an L-shape, but softened with rounded corners and circular elements, a design vocabulary and detail used by Parker more often in this later stage of his career. A long ramp at the entrance provided access for Marcia's mother, who was confined to a wheelchair. The primary public spaces are on the ground floor across the rear of the home facing the lake, with the longer leg of the L containing a two-car garage, a carport for five more cars, a workroom, and yard and tool storage. A guest suite is located at the juncture of the L's two legs. The second floor, also across the back facing the lake and above the ground-floor public spaces, has two bedrooms plus the master bedroom suite with study. On the eastern side of the home at the back corner, the living room and the master bedroom directly above share an expressed circular volume that Parker enclosed with Kalwall, a translucent day lighting exterior wall system.

Construction, by the commercial general contractor Cohen-Ager, began in early 1985 and took fifteen months. The clients fondly recalled that Parker often made his weekly trips to the construction site "on a bicycle with plans under his arm," even though he was almost seventy years old.[16] The Stettins retained Howard Snoweiss, a Coral Gables interior designer, for the interiors.

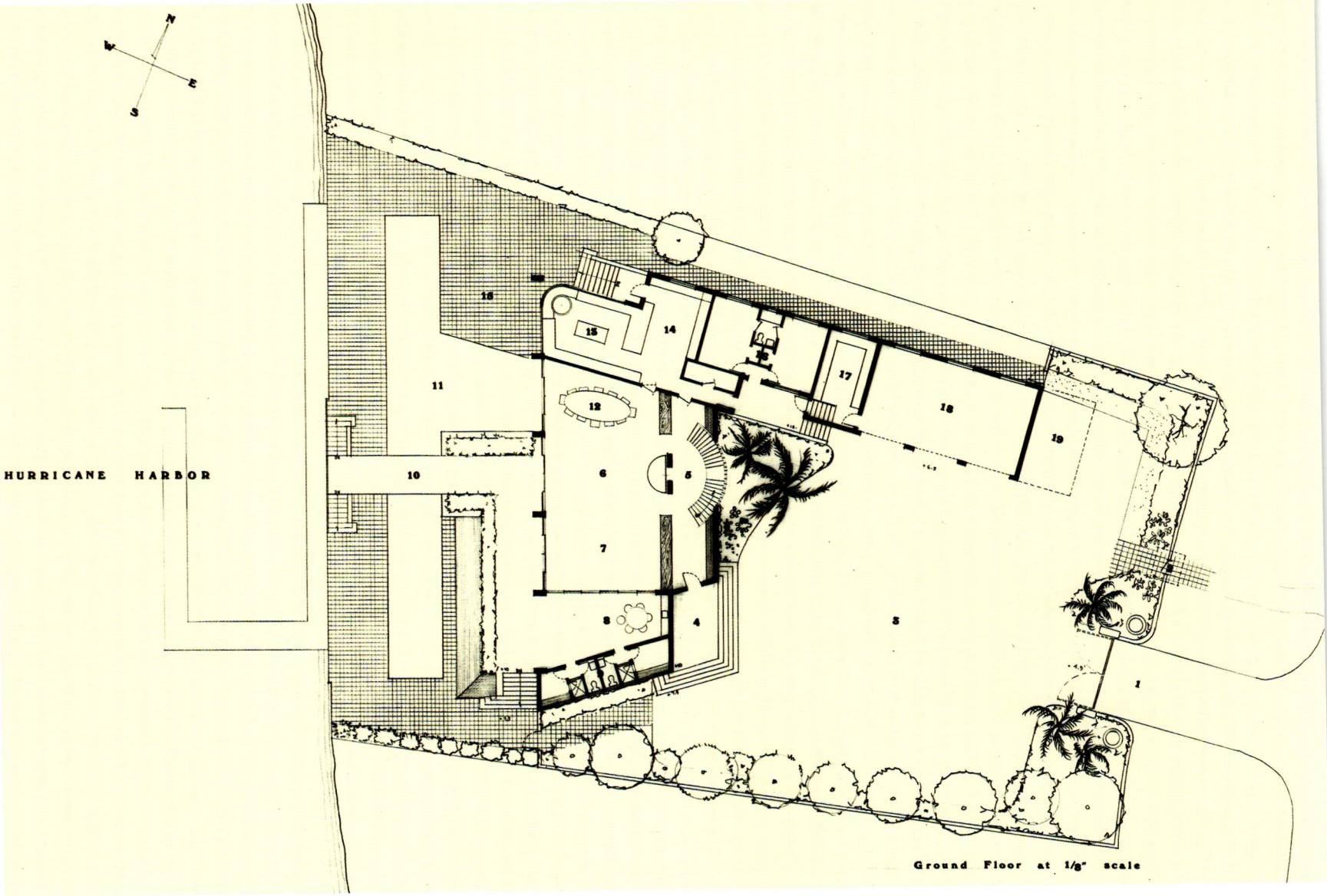
STRAUSS RESIDENCE

Key Biscayne, Florida ▪ 1984 ▪ Unbuilt project

In early September 1984,[17] Parker met with Richard Strauss, a bachelor and local businessman, regarding the design of a residence to be constructed on a half-acre waterfront lot on Hurricane Harbor in Key Biscayne. They discussed a multistory home built of durable, minimum maintenance materials with maximum focus on aesthetics and function. Strauss saw Parker as "the granddaddy of architecture around here" and sincerely felt "as a human being, he's the best."[18] Strauss retained Parker as well as another Miami



Perspective from water. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



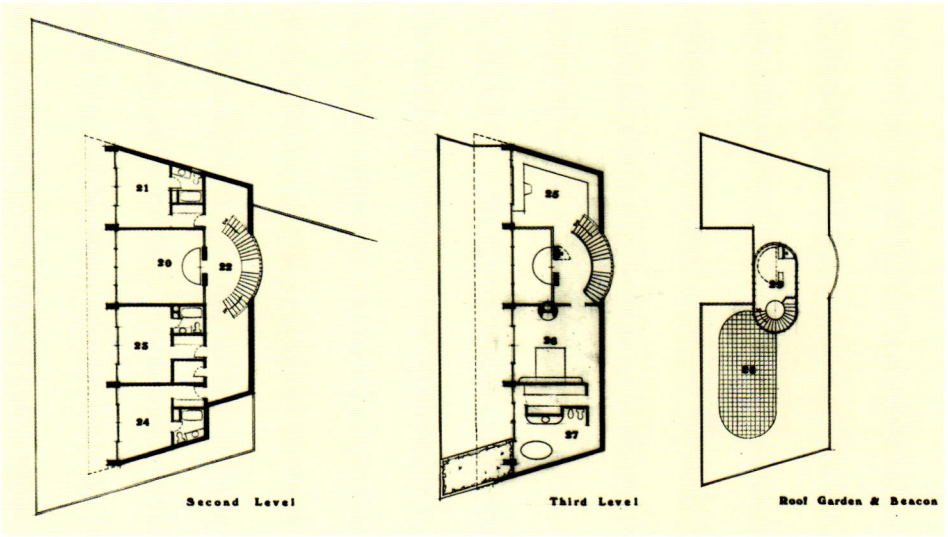
Ground-level floor plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

area architect in what he felt would be a spirited competition, prompting the best in both. Parker worked quickly, presented his design to Strauss late November 1984,[19] and soon followed the initial proposal with a second, similar design. However, Strauss decided that the modernist designs wasn't his style, and in the end neither architect progressed beyond design sketches.

The project shares some general similarities with the earlier but recent Stettin residence—waterfront views, an L-shaped plan, multistory, stucco exterior, rounded corners, and a large arrival court. The property had a fine view across Hurricane Harbor and Biscayne Bay to the Miami skyline on the west and north. Obviously Parker purposely focused his design dramatically toward the available vista, even placing the main body of the residence closer to the rear (waterfront) side of the property. Approaching the residence from Harbor Drive through a gated wall, the primary residence presented solid multistory stucco forms with eased rounded corners. The multicar garage and servants quarters formed a single-level wing at right angles to the main residence along the northern property line, with the area between open for use as an arrival court. The other side, facing the water and views, was an entirely opposite but obvious logical expression, being primarily four levels of glass and balconies placed like trays supported on exposed structural frames.

The ground-level plans called for a single large multifunction open space designed for casual living, dining, and entertaining. A portion of the open space was two stories tall. Off the large interior space to the west was an expansive patio and pool, with cabana bathrooms. The kitchen was located at the north end of the great room.

The second floor consisted of three bedrooms, all with private bathrooms and balconies overlooking the waterfront. The third level was entirely devoted to the master bedroom, with a large bathroom and dressing area plus separate study. Like the second level, the third had balconies as well. The fourth level was in reality the roof of the residence, where Parker created a rooftop garden patio.



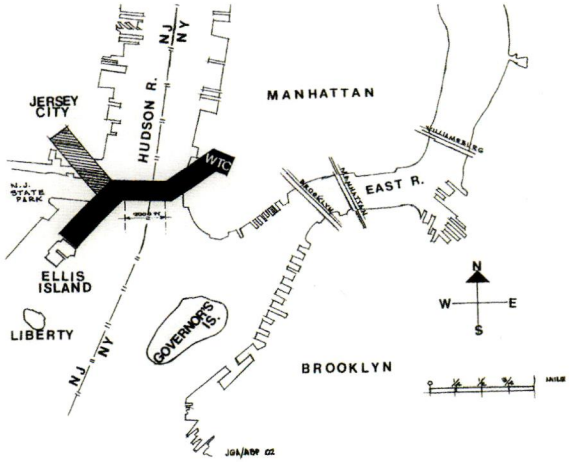
Upper-level (2, 3, and 4) floor plans. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

WORLD TRADE CENTER PROPOSAL

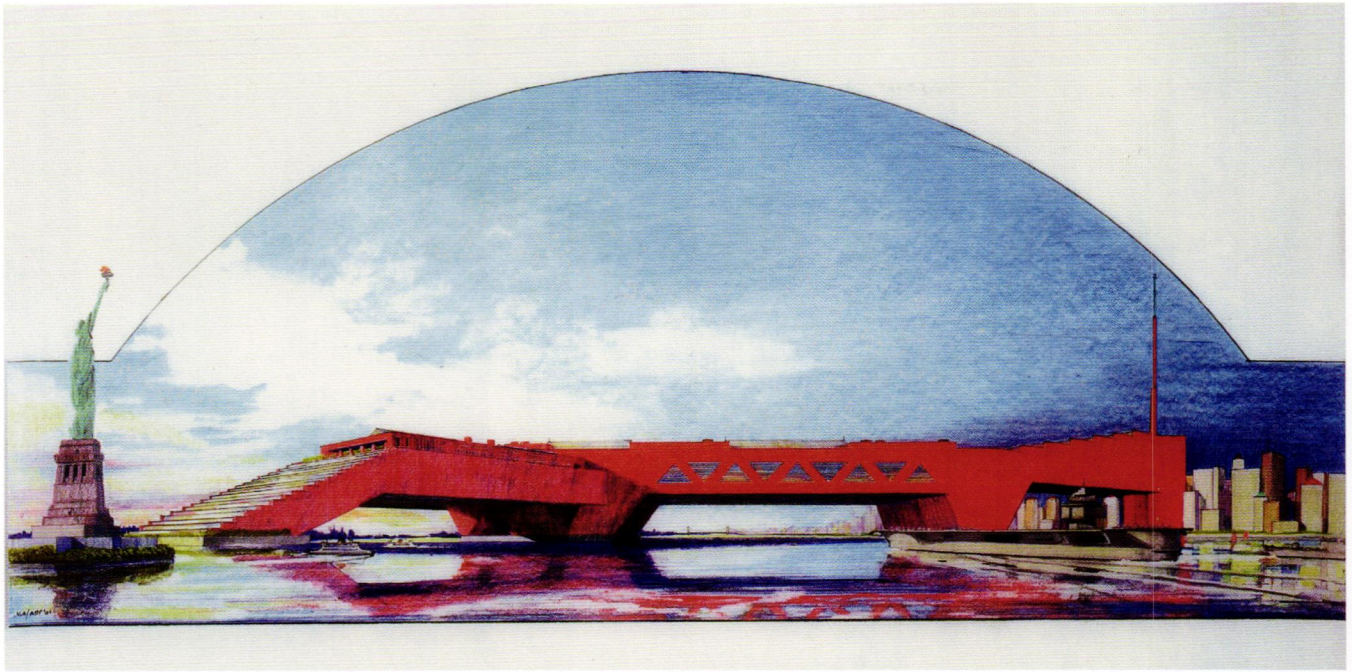
New York, New York ▪ 2001 ▪ Unbuilt project

After the tragedy of September 11, 2001, Parker challenged his students in the School of Architecture at the University of Florida to propose ideas for the World Trade Center memorial. Upon presenting their proposals, the class asked Parker what he would propose. Like many architects after the tragedy of 9/11, Parker almost immediately considered what, if anything, should be rebuilt after the collapse of the Twin Towers. He referred to his redevelopment proposal, designed a little more than two months after the event, as America's Memorial Bridge.[20] He suggested a fifteen-million-square-foot horizontal mixed-use megastructure bridge spanning the Hudson River and New York Harbor, from the site of Ground Zero in Lower Manhattan to Ellis Island. Parker felt that high-rise buildings "are an anachronism, requiring inordinate amounts of energy to build and operate."[21] A horizontal solution, to his mind, provided a more legitimate choice.

Parker saw this as an American Ponte Vecchio, containing all services required for a vibrant financial, business, and residential community. Half of the area would be dedicated to offices, shops, restaurants,



Concept plan. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



Perspective looking north. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

and public spaces, including museums, auditoriums, entertainment centers, and educational and medical facilities. The other half could be a mixture of rental apartments, condominiums, and affordable housing. The megastructure would be "the ultimate Broadband City with the latest communication technology,"[22] would have power generated by using renewable, nonpolluting hydrogen fuel, and would encompass a regional transit center including several roof heliports. Parker planned for the population of this building to exceed half a million people. He suggested a later-phase expansion leg to Jersey City, adding an additional five million square feet. At Ground Zero, formal gardens and memorials would be the focus, all merging sensitively with the existing fabric of Battery Park Promenade. Prefabricated components would come to the site via barges, with construction taking place on the water, thus not impacting the already overly congested city streets of Lower Manhattan.

While many architects and designers contributed ideas for consideration, Parker's horizontal scheme was certainly unique among them.



Landon residence, Coral Gables, 1965. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Selected Writings

If I could pass just one ordinance I would rule that nobody can build anything without first tearing down something else. Something ugly. How that would beautify our cities in a few years' time.

- **Parker, quoted in "Earth Needs Care—Parker," *Miami Herald*, April 16, 1967**

"AN ILLUSTRATED CREDO"

[Over his career Alfred Browning Parker was invited often to talk to various groups in various locations. He always prepared his lectures in advance and usually fashioned the topic to the specific interests of the group he was addressing. On October 17, 1960, he spoke to a group of architects and students at the University of Toronto.]

I believe that the spirit that creates architecture is more important than the building. Many suppose that architecture is an external affair—something planted on the outside by an impractical artist who specializes in the "looks" of buildings. Nothing could be more remote from the truth. In buildings, as in people, it is the true and natural spirit of the thing that really matters. The architect derives his name from the Greek expression for Master-Builder, or Architecture, a building by a Master. Always architecture is produced by the spirit of the man who builds. It also grows by dint of his sweat and aching muscles and with the aid of whatever animals and machines he has learned to use.

Architecture combines all of the arts and is rigorously bounded by practical considerations. Because

of the ever-increasing mechanization of our civilization, there are details to be solved that sometimes obscure the basic issues. Certainly we must have plumbing that works, roofing that does not leak, electrical devices which are safe, and so on, through the myriad components of a building. Architecture is these things and more. We must find beauty in architecture.

As I look at the natural world about me, I find it a place of great beauty. I prefer order, harmony, and conservation to disorder, frustration, and waste. Most of us admit to the same preference, yet in actuality we squander our physical resources in building ugliness and confusion, rather than enduring values. Simple, direct expressions of beauty in buildings are plainly good sense. We should understand more about these things. It is not a matter of taste, it is common sense. Architecture evolves directly as civilization evolves. When we find true serenity, dignity, and repose in our buildings, then also will we find these qualities in our lives. There is no such thing as a noble architecture without a noble race of people.

What is architecture? One of man's ancient and compelling necessities has been to build beautifully the spaces within which large amounts of his time are spent. His successful efforts are architecture. Architecture encloses space so that beauty and utility become one. It is a basic art; where we discover architecture, we find man building at his best in whatever age, whatever place.

Architecture mirrors people. Whatever we are is reflected by our buildings. There is no escaping the disconcerting fact that architecture mirrors society. Architecture demonstrates man's integrity. In buildings he extends his imagination as well as his muscles. No quality, mean or small, unselfish or grand, but what has been revealed and will be revealed by our constructions.

Five resources of the architect: Time is the first great resource. We work in the present, with our mind toward the future; however, the past and the lesson it teaches must not be ignored. All of us make mistakes. This happens to anyone actively involved in planning. To make a mistake is forgivable, to repeat the error is not. We make use of the accumulated wisdom of time in our planning. We have the ability to think not only in terms of our present needs, but we are able to go into the past and profit by the experiences and thoughts of individuals long since removed by time. We build upon the accumulated experience of all who have gone before.

Second is the resource of location. This involves not only elements as mountains, lakes, plains, or seacoast, but also climate. There is no such thing as a bad location. There are advantages and disadvantages to every place. These become planning resources. Always in planning our communities we must make the

most of our advantages and minimize our disadvantages. The site must always be at the heart of any planning program. To thoroughly understand a place is the only way to plan its optimum use.

Techniques of power and equipment are the third resource. We have many amazing tools today with which to realize our dream of shaping the earth to our needs. Almost unlimited energy and machines are at hand for man to use in the construction of his environment. Not only has the discovery of great energy sources and the machines that utilize that energy given us unprecedented means in building the physical form of our civilization, it has also reduced the time scale so that vast demolition and building schemes can be accomplished in not only a practical and efficient manner, but in also a very short span of time. When we compare our age with that of medieval times, we learn that today we can build a cathedral in a fraction of the time spent by the medieval builders.

Materials of construction I select as the architect's fourth resource. There are many materials which age well in their natural state. To mention a few, brick, stone, wood, concrete, copper, bronze, brass, and tile. All of these materials can be used in a manner so that as aging progresses, they become handsomer. Great architecture avoids the disillusionment of age. The ever-constant action of the elements, rain, sunshine, high humidity, and dryness, are agents working constant change in materials. By cooperation with nature instead of trying to thwart her efforts, man realizes the highest values in his buildings. If we observe wood on an ocean beach, we will find conditions that are extreme. We quickly see that nature seasons the wood, gives it a handsome driftwood gray patina, and actually prolongs its usefulness.

The fifth resource was mentioned when I began this talk—the resource of spirit. This resource of spirit among civilized people is an immense reservoir. I have said that our ideals shape our environment. Our highest goals involving family, education, work, mutual respect, and peace, become part of this spiritual resource for creative, imaginative planning. Of all the resources that determine the form of our communities, this resource of spirit is by far the greatest. As we think, we do. As we do, so becomes the form of our house, of our neighborhood, our community, our city, our state, our nation. The spirit of the thing is the greatest ennobling factor.

Why did I become an architect? Most of us, when we are young, like to build things. As we grow up, we get a lot knocked out of us. Fortunately for me, I never had this desire knocked out of me. I was educated to design and build. In these things I earn my way. It is great good fortune to find work you love to do in this world, and then to be able to spend your time doing it.

I have been fortunate in finding teachers who inspired both the obligation and privilege of architecture. Following graduation, I experienced an excellent postgraduate course, that of building an entire house alone. As I look back from what I hope is a mid–vantage point, I single out this experience of working with one's own hands to produce the reality of the building concept. I believe that the architect must have the spirit, if not the actual mechanical aptitudes, of a true craftsman.

It has been said that man often does the involved, complicated thing first, and then only after long and sometimes bitter experience, he evolves a simple, direct approach to his problem. I certainly have been guilty of this procedure. I have, however, recognized that architecture is not a canned product or a manufactured commodity that is to be sold by the can or turned out by the yard. The architect provides a creative personal service. In one sense, I start over again completely on each new building problem. I try to produce a reasonable statement of the problem and then try to answer that problem in terms of space. I have a clear concept that sketches, renderings, working drawings, and specifications are simply some of the tools with which an architect works to render his complete service. The architect's prime concern is to render advice and counsel concerning a building. Certainly we are concerned with the drawings. We would like to have neat drawings, legible drawings; however, drawings, no matter how beautiful, will not of themselves produce a beautiful building.

"Sticks and stones" is an expression well known to us. While other materials such as concrete, steel, aluminum, and glass will be used in increasing amounts, it is not likely that sticks and stones will ever be completely replaced. Wood and masonry either singly or in combination have been man's greatest material resources. If we could dream up ideal materials for construction without having had any experience with the two above, we might evolve two very superior products—namely, wood and stone. From mankind's earliest beginnings, shelter was an essential, and adaptations of holes, caves, and hollows gradually led to a more conscious building. Wood has held an intimate place in the memory of man. A cave with a fire burning back in its depths is still a thing of meaning to all of us. Our instincts remember the warmth, the protection, the cooking—essential for survival—all from wood. Wood is one of the basic materials with which we build. It is warm to the touch and has great visual appeal in its coloring and variations of grain. Wood is easily shaped and fastened in place. Properly selected and placed, it is durable and strong.

In building it is generally best to hang the wood vertically and to allow the bottom edges to be exposed to the air. This permits the tiny channels, which once carried sap up the tree, to serve like chimney

flues and to help the wood dry out if water is driven into it by rain or hose. The disadvantages of wood may be largely overcome by proper construction and design. Termites and fungus are essential in the cycles of the earth and plants; however, in our buildings we must combat them. Wood preservatives, chemicals, and design are the basic means of prevention. Checks, cracks, and knots are not to be escaped in any extensive use of wood. These symbols of expansion and contraction, stress and growth, when anticipated and understood, become a characteristic not necessarily unpleasant. As we age, we often acquire wrinkles, but these are said to indicate character.

Stone is another of the basic building materials. There is indigenous stone of one type or another in practically all parts of the world. While some are more durable than others, all possess considerable endurance when used where they are quarried. Always use indigenous stones for economy, durability, and beauty. What else would you wish for in a building material? I know of cases where Tennessee flagstones were sent to Florida, and Florida flagstones were sent to North Carolina. How silly can we get?

I'll pass from materials and move into another realm. I believe architecture must be beautiful, and I agree with all of you that beauty has intrigued, puzzled, and thrilled mankind through the centuries of his development. Beauty is never contained completely in objective facts. It is more in the nature of a subjective experience. However, since it is the intent of architecture to create beauty, I will try to discuss some aspects of beauty. I have some simple tests that seem to work for me in understanding the aesthetic nature of architecture and in making an evaluation of buildings.

The first characteristic of beauty that I seek in architecture is summed up by the question, Is it all one thing?

In a work of art, singleness of effect is paramount. It can be defined as oneness or coherence. I experience a building by walking around it, living inside it, standing, sitting, lying down. All parts of a building should be related in a manner that gives us a feeling of unity. Whether one is at the front or back, inside a small room or a large one, looking at a window or out of one, it should never be necessary to remind oneself where one is. The understanding gained from a unified impression is indelible. The Taj Mahal is a symmetrical building located in India. It was built over three hundred years ago by a ruler to commemorate his love for his wife. If we were to visit the Taj Mahal we would have no doubt, inside or out, as to the unity of this building. Probably ever afterwards we would instantly recognize and identify a photograph even if taken of only a fragmentary part of the building.

It should be clearly stated that literature is not music, is not painting, is not sculpture, is not architecture, but these forms of fine art all abound with examples of this quality termed "all one thing." A play from Elizabethan times by W. Shakespeare, and a recent story *Old Man and the Sea* by E. Hemingway, may with equal validity demonstrate this principle. Beethoven writes his Fifth Symphony and ties it tightly into a lucid thunder of order and beauty. Bach composed with unparalleled coherence, consistently adhering to one theme. Picasso within our days paints *Guernica*, a protest of indisputable unity. Michelangelo in the countenance of Moses, Carl Milles in the great Orpheus fountain in Stockholm, both demonstrate with intensity and feeling this concept. Each of these artists expresses a single idea in his work, and it is necessary that the architect approximate this ideal if his work is to merit the approbation Architecture. The validity of what a man chooses as significant and how he organizes these things into a unified concept is one of the yardsticks that we can use in measuring architecture.

Louis Sullivan, writing in *Kindergarten Chats*, understood the importance of unity: The essence of a great artwork lies in its singleness of view; and this implies singleness of impression and expression.

I believe that structure is a primary factor in architecture, and being consistent in his structure is perhaps the greatest aid for unity that the architect may command. Order in design, however, will not of itself create beauty. I have discovered many buildings that have a logical structural order and succeed unhappily in being only monotonous. We demand variety, and yet we must have order and significance to satisfy our instincts for the beautiful. Nature is the great teacher in this matter of achieving "all one thing" with the most satisfying and incredible variety. Look at any tree!

By using a limited number of materials the architect is prodded into a unified design of the structure which contributes to the overall unified appearance of the building. In observing structure of a building, consider the relation of the parts to each other and to the whole thing. These relationships we call proportion. The ancient Greeks recognized the value of good proportions, and this is one of the reasons why their buildings have been admired for generations. We should remember that the architect in his true province of creating volumes, must go far beyond any mechanical system of setting down on paper a few adequate proportions. Volumes, volumes, volumes—the spaces enclosed, which relate to one another and to the overall space. These were the secrets known to the great buildings of antiquity, as well as to the master builders of today. Frank Lloyd Wright, of course, was the supreme master of all time in exploding space and handling it with dazzling effect.

Mechanical aptitudes are of value to an architect, but when we analyze the differences between mere building and architecture we find that perhaps the greatest and most characteristic trait of the creative architect is visualization. Visualization is the ability to create mental images of three-dimensional forms—spatial imagination. The greater the architect's power in visualizing the three dimensions, exterior spaces and interior spaces, the greater the quality of his buildings. The most efficient utilization of space is not necessarily the most complete utilization. Frequently you may discover examples where space is apparently wasted or thrown away, however by the very emotional effects that space conveys we may determine that by apparently throwing away space we were actually using it best. This is indeed the realm of the architect. How well he uses the prerogatives determines the success of his building.

And with all these words I suppose the point is sort of like the sentence that was written at the end of a love letter, "I have written my best to you, but it is what is between the lines that really counts." So it is in this presentation tonight. How much better if we could walk into and through the buildings and talk with those who live there. Then indeed would we come much closer to a real knowledge of any architect's work.

Lacking that opportunity, let us view some slides.

"PHILOSOPHY"

[In a reprinting of his philosophy in the 1971 company brochure "An Office Profile," Alfred Browning Parker wrote, "From an early acquaintance with the writings of Whitman, Thoreau, Shakespeare and Alger, the possibilities of life were sensed; from the works of Szekely, Korzybski and Gifford an inkling absorbed of ecological destiny. Although I am a true believer of change I find principles are less subject to change. Over four years ago I was asked to write my philosophy which was published in the May 1967 issue of the *Florida Architect*."]

It is my belief that man must constantly seek to live harmoniously in his environment. He must be a conservationist of both human and material resources. It sometimes appears that we are children playing with our planet rather than maturing heirs to an incredibly beautiful balanced system. We must apply the

accumulated knowledge of many disciplines to our mutual problems. Educated and experienced as an architect, I feel an obligation to utilize whatever skill I possess to this cause.

In our democracy we have the opportunity to aspire to nobility in our thoughts and to demonstrate high purpose in our actions. While we may not be equal in our capabilities, we are the same in the freedom that we possess.

Some time ago I established these principles as guides:

- Build strongly.
- Build as directly as possible with no complications.
- Use the materials at hand and keep these as few as you can.
- Let your building love its site and glorify its climate.
- Design for use—make it beautiful.

While I have not always been successful in fulfilling these ideals, I have not changed my mind as to their validity. Paradoxically, change is a sure law of the universe. To recognize this law is a sign of maturity in architecture. To be aware of the aging process in our designs and constructions is a necessity of architecture. The maintenance and durability of a structure depend upon the selection of materials and the manner in which they are assembled.

Communication is a problem of our age, greater for some than others, but germane to any creative process. It is my desire to inspire both clients and craftsmen to the best efforts of which we are capable. Since I dislike irritation and controversy, it becomes essential for me to prepare contract documents that are clear and complete.

While my preference among the philosophers is for the humanists, in the sciences I have always possessed an interest in ecology. I delight in man's search to attune himself to the rhythms of the universe and in our efforts to regenerate our environment.

As a beginner I needed clients. Now I must be careful not to undertake too much. Opportunities may be so abundant as to prevent progress. It is rarely ever that quantity prevails over quality. As I age, my respect for material accomplishments diminishes. To produce architecture demands stamina, endurance,

energy, enthusiasm and optimistic outlook that springs from good health. For this reason I eat no more than I want my legs to carry and drink or smoke no more poisons than I can easily assimilate.

I hope for an architectural future that is a continuous attempt to harmonize buildings with our environment. Our ego in creative work is not relinquished easily or quickly, but we need much less of "look at me" constructions.

This philosophy does not lead to individual buildings sensationally formed. It does require a sensitive acknowledgment of the entire community. The individual creativity of the designer will be challenged by a more difficult job and he will be required to exercise greater discipline in his work. Buildings should not stand out in the childish sense of blatant commercialism that we see around us today. We must seek a much higher level of achievement.

We should judge architecture by how well it serves the growth of human spirit. Architecture is for the use and delight of the family of man happily at home on earth.

How satisfying to dwell in communities where unity of design prevails; where buildings are so at one with the environment that they are actually difficult to see; where trees, shrubs, flowers, and grass prevail (even weeds since they are only plants out of place and, here, all would be in harmony); where no signs, poles or wires intrude; where fresh air and fresh water seem the least heritage we can pass to the next generation (at present we discuss the high cost of ending pollution as though we had a choice. When your appendix has ruptured, do you pause to bargain with the surgeon?); where mankind grows closer to his infinite potential; where stagnation of the human soul is constantly being reduced and replaced by wisdom, vision and courage.

These are laudable goals. I will be the first to admit my inability to completely accomplish this dream, but then my ambitions have always been beyond my capacities. Some of us must try, and I prefer to be counted among those that do.

"APHORISMS FOR ARCHITECTS"

[First printed in the 1971 company brochure "An Office Profile."]

- Choose clients.
- Design down to no one.
- If your work is worth anything, get paid for it. Once you have accepted an assignment, don't keep an eye on the office budget.
- Building codes, zoning, regulatory agencies, financing institutions, etc. should contribute to a design. If they hinder the proper realization of a project, fight.
- Courage is when you do something you are afraid to do. With liability insurance rates on the increase, such a quality is required in our profession.
- A budget is an old friend and should be cherished as such. This does not mean to imply that one cannot, upon occasion, differ with a friend.
- Architects should be more loving.
- Unfortunately many buildings appear as though the owner's wife designed them. She usually does the interiors.
- Seek the problem for the answers, not in your ego. The "i" in architecture is a small letter.
- If you can't be a great artist, at least be a good carpenter . . . or a good mason . . . or a good plumber . . . etc.
- Love humanity, it's what you belong to, but don't ignore life. It is larger and wiser than we are.
- Do not make excuses; emphasize your strengths, for our environment needs all the help it can get.
- Do not adapt too perfectly to your environment. You must be able to change.
- Live harmoniously, but don't underrate the shocks.

- If you have large environmental responsibilities, move slowly and carefully, for at best our hands are far too heavy and nature's balance is a fragile equilibrium.
- We should know enough of symbiosis to apply in our daily work. Enough of heterozygosity to bless the variant among us . . . and to look up words we don't understand.
- Leave plenty of stones unturned. Earthworms are still our salvation.

"MY FATHER"

[Quentin Parker offered this memoir in December 2003.]

Yes, from my website you see I worked on many projects with ABP over many years. As a young man I often wondered if this was a curse or blessing. . . .

My most favorite projects are perhaps the more personal ones, the houses we actually lived in—for instance, assisting in the hot summer of 1970 on Woodsong construction, or going through the design process together (and overseeing construction) on the Aerie residence (Windsong) in Vermont. I spent almost the entire summer and fall of 1976 working on the building of this house, before entering Harvard the following year. I remember we set the sets of twenty-plus large glulam beams in the midst of a raging thunderstorm, because they had arrived that day and it happened to be their time to be erected. Dad giddy to see his work realized, the steel crane hoisting these large beams skyward was what I considered to be a lightning magnet. Nevertheless we were all protected, somehow, transcending physical risk with building and fastening what looked like the giant curved ribs of a beached whale on the green hillside slopes of Vermont.

Other examples: Elizabeth Virrick's house in South Miami, Frank Magnuson's penthouse in Coconut Grove, the Sam Knight residence (with untold revisions) in Ocala, Florida, even the early rebuilding of the Abaco Avenue residence of my grandmother Gifford into his architectural office, they are all projects that carry a certain imprint, intuitive almost, as to how Dad the architect set about designing a project.

Many times we'd sit in his office across from each other, separated by his huge, solid, dark mahogany

desk, and argue the different aspects and approaches to a particular design. In this office we were both affected by the presence, the spirit within this magnificent 4-inch-thick piece of solid wood. It served often as a foundation for new ideas. What I did not understand (until much later) is simply how much such inanimate objects affected our natural designs in a positive, reinforcing way.

Alfred lives his design environment with every second of his life. He forms his living places to fit his personal need—and by tailoring such external factors he becomes centered in this created space upon his own unique vision. Rarely have I seen both trepidation and boldness in activity combined so closely to create a designed product. Being a total romantic at heart, this introspection protects him from ideological distraction within his work. He simply builds what he wishes to experience. So self-centered, it often seemed to me and my brothers and sisters that his professional dedication and architectural cause went far beyond our own personal needs as a family.

He coaxed us into building a huge stone wall and steel gate in Vermont (which was to limit vehicular access to the building site), had all my brothers and me engaged in menial labor, boot deep in mud to instill within us a sense of pride of accomplishment, "for our future generations to come, your children's children will know you all built this wall here." Well, he sold the entire complex several years ago. So much for preserving our heritage.

While I design from interpretive analysis and choose to construct for direct functional issues, as Jorge Machado Moreira, Gerhard Kallman, and Richard Meier (professors at Harvard) attribute to their work, Alfred will start with a conceptual idea, and follow through with rational, subsequent design subordinations to this thought. His adept reverence to environmental conditions often defined certain select criteria, such as climate, sun, and site exposure, to enact a profile, allowing the uniqueness of a site, or certain physical properties, not just to define the ubiquitous Parker design but actually to respond to it climatologically. He is most satisfied, emotionally, when building—anything. Whether a doghouse for our German shepherd or the St. Louis Parish church, both received equal design thought and his persistence of effort.

Dad's beauty is in capturing and applying knowledge, but doing so intuitively. He loves to come back to the simple statement. It suits his approach and eloquent talent best. In today's architectural statements there is so often a pretentiousness to design, overextending on detail, irreverent to site conditions,

and monumental in language. There so much is lost of what Henry David Thoreau (his favorite writer) described as the simple life.

When you look at many of his most beautiful art statements, built objects, you'll find there is a difficult solution stated simply. He comes to what is original by what is pure. While not simplistic, Alfred's greatest contribution is in seeing clearly and responding to this observation in a most direct approach. His laminated wooden beams in Temple Beth El, the flow of the wind through the Arvida Parkway house in Gables Estates, the chlorine-bleached siding of Woodsong reflecting shadows and hue of the surrounding trees, these are the instruments which turn an orchestra of congregated individuals into symphonic harmony.

So much in architecture today is contradictory by being intrinsically unnatural in execution. Alfred's work will always stand the test of time because he blends what is complementary with what is aesthetically sequential. Whether this blending occurs by reason of site, occupant, or function, he defines beauty by the inherent strength within his observations. Akin to Frank Lloyd Wright, Luis Barragán, or even Antoni Gaudí, visionary excerpts of genius are communicated to us by the narrow focus of a man fascinated and in love with the aesthetic beauty experienced in this irreverently dispassionate world.



Detail of masonry block wall at Marko residence. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

Afterword

On March 19, 2003, the author wrote to Alfred Browning Parker:

Dear Mr. Parker,

On February 5, 1939, a youthful, energetic, and enthusiastic Alfred Browning Parker wrote a letter to Frank Lloyd Wright, making some very interesting comments regarding his future—

> "This is my last year at the University of Florida. Embarking upon an architectural career is rapidly becoming a strangely thrilling and sometimes frightening experience. Naturally I wonder where my place is, and what my contribution will ultimately be. I do have a passionate desire to accomplish something worthwhile. I make that statement with the utmost sincerity. My ability may be small and my education to date somewhat superficial but my ambition is as honest as my desire is simple . . . I do believe that I am an individual and as such will I act . . . Truly your life and work—your life-work—has been an inspiration in my thoughts these few weeks past. Not in a sense of imitation have I enjoyed a few contacts with what you have done and are doing, but in thinking that I must do my utmost to live to the best that is within me."

I know how you always prefer to live in the present day and look forward to each new tomorrow, but I am hopeful that you would consider perhaps writing a reaction to these thoughts that you wrote almost 65 years ago—consider it an Afterword of sorts, incorporated in the book, and responding through and in reflection of your own life experience and life work.

Alfred Browning Parker's response to the author, July 4, 2003:

Afterword to Frank Lloyd Wright—

When I wrote in 1939, 20 years remained for your productivity. At my age (87) here are further thoughts: My continuing opportunities to design and build are exciting. If hearing fails, there is much I need not to hear. If eyesight dims, the mind sees more. Many things in memory cherished—some probably well forgotten. I recall my feelings when I wrote so many years ago. I am grateful I still have the same.

Alfred Browning Parker



Parker residence (Pace Setter '64 / Gables Estates), Coral Gables, 1962. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

The Alfred Browning Parker Collection

In 1998 Alfred Browning Parker deposited his voluminous personal and professional papers and documents with the Special and Area Studies Collections of the George A. Smathers Libraries of the University of Florida, where they will remain in perpetuity for research and study. The collection spans almost a full century, from before Parker's birth to the present day, and includes correspondence, photographs, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, academic records, student projects, architectural office papers, drawings, photographs and slides, speeches and writings, and Parker's library. His collection was instrumental in establishing the Architectural Archives in 2004.

The Architectural Archives, a partnership between the Smathers Libraries and the School of Architecture in the College of Design, Planning, and Construction at the University of Florida, is a repository for historical records pertaining to architects and architecture in Florida. In addition to Parker's, the Architectural Archives possess the collections of architects William Morgan, Kenneth Treister, Rufus Nims, Blair Reeves, Herschel Shepard, Carrere and Hastings, and John Howey's Sarasota School collection. Other architects who have pledged their collections include Gene Leedy, Robert C. Broward, Tim Seibert, and Donald Singer. The endeavor supports scholarly research, document preservation, and the education of future generations of students by affording access to the work of celebrated Florida architects.

In 2008 the Alfred Browning Parker Architectural Archives Endowment was announced, in honor of the most distinguished alumnus and professor emeritus, to provide financial support for the further acquisition, preservation, processing, and storage of archival records and drawings of Florida architects and architecture.

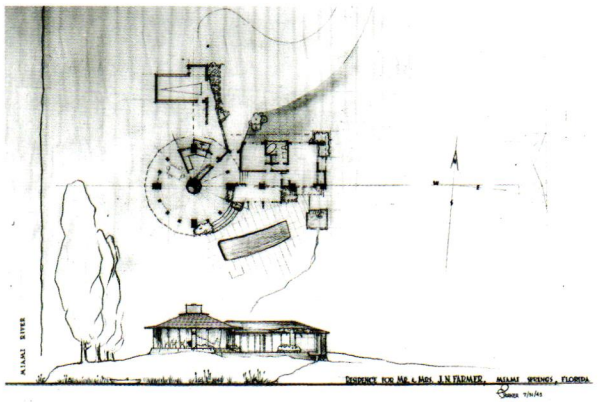
List of Works

This incomplete list includes only works for which it was possible to ascertain the client, date, location, and whether the project was built. The dates correspond, as best could be determined, to the commencement of the design process. All projects are located in Florida unless otherwise noted.

1942 Tropical Subsistence Homestead, Dade County, unbuilt

1943 Farmer residence, Miami Springs, unbuilt ■

Parker residence, Coconut Grove, built



■ Farmer residence, Miami Springs, 1943, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

1944 Institute for Non-Aristotelian Research and Education, South Miami, unbuilt ■

1945 Austin Cary Memorial Forest entry feature, Gainesville, built

Smith College dormitory (competition entry with Carl Koch), Northampton, Massachusetts, unbuilt

Tackaberry residence, Miami, unbuilt

Thunderbird, Lake Santeetlah, North Carolina, unbuilt

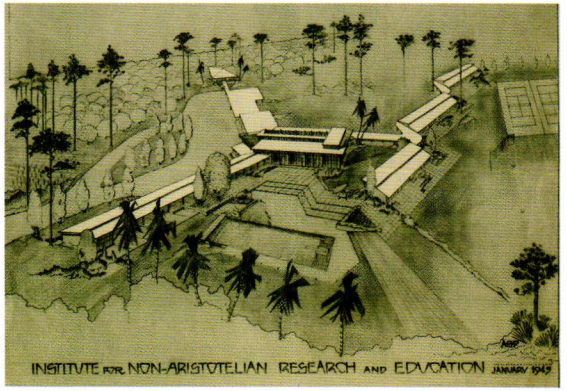
1946 Everglades Men's Shop, Miami, built

Holbrook residence, Gainesville, unbuilt

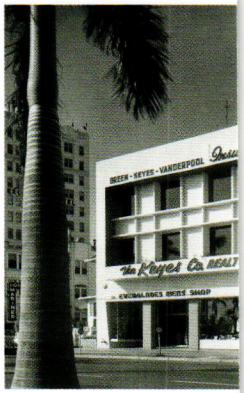
Keyes Company building remodeling, Miami, built ■

Parker residence (Six-Week Wonder), Gainesville, built

Realistic Houses for Georgia competition entry, unbuilt



■ Institute for Non-Aristotelian Research and Education (for Ken Keyes Sr.), South Miami, 1944, unbuilt. From the author's collection.



■ Keyes Company office building, Miami, 1946. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

1947 Adobe Villas Motel, Miami, built

Kappa Sigma fraternity house, University of Florida, Gainesville, unbuilt

Marsh residence, Coconut Grove, built

Moore residence (with J. L. R. Grand, associate architect), Gainesville, built

Schlotzhauer residence, Miami Shores, built

Terry Art Institute veterans apartment building, Coconut Grove, unbuilt

Troetschel residence, Miami, built

Wood residence, St. Petersburg, unbuilt

1948 Adams residence, Elliott Key, unbuilt

Hopwood residence, Coconut Grove, built

Hudson-Estaver Motors showroom, Miami, built

Keyes residence, Miami, built

Mitchell residence, Miami, built

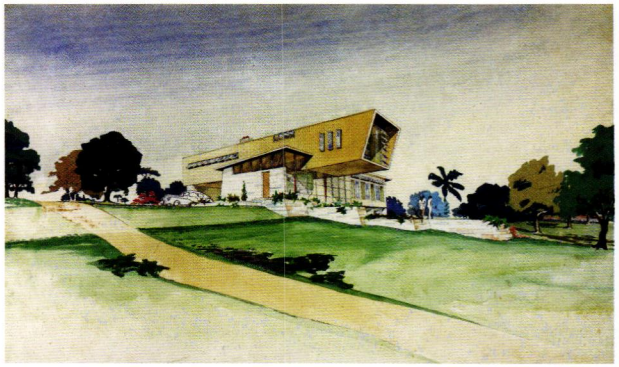
Parker residence and studio, Coconut Grove, unbuilt ■

Rose residence, Miami Shores, built

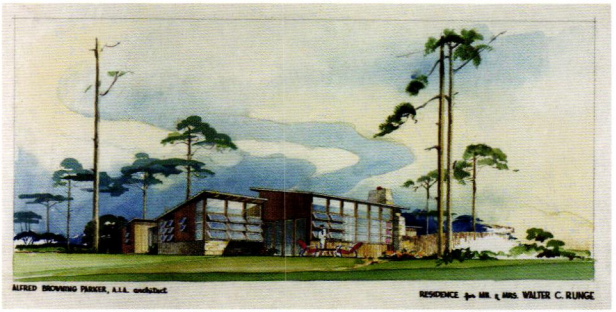
Runge residence, Miami, built ■

Tropex-pansible residence, unbuilt ■

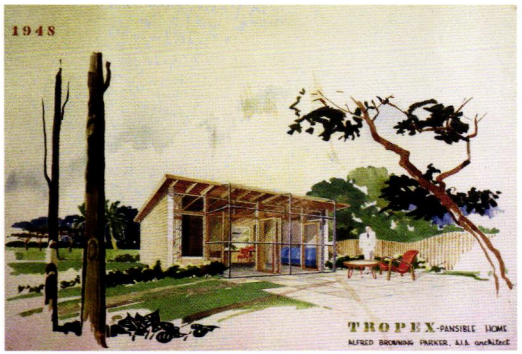
Voltz residence, Coconut Grove, built



■ Parker residence and studio, Coconut Grove, 1948, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



■ Runge residence, Miami, 1948, built. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



■ Tropex-pansible residence, 1948, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

1949 Blumberg studio addition, Coconut Grove, built

Campbell residence, Miami, built

Cannell residence, Coconut Grove, built

Chandler residence, Coconut Grove, built

Essex Village subdivision, Hialeah, built

George Washington Carver School, Coconut Grove, built ■

Girl Scout Little House, South Miami, built

Hertzon residence, Miami Beach, built

Johnson residence, Bal Harbour, unbuilt

Murphy residence, Miami, built

Parker residence (Rocks and Short Pines), Miami, built ■

Parker-Farkas residence, Miami Beach, unbuilt

Repp Clinic, Miami, built

Simmons residence, Miami, built

Wood duplex residence, St. Petersburg, built

1950 Avant residence #1, Coral Gables, built

Baldwin Mortgage office building, Miami, built ■

Caudle residence (A Cave with a View), Cincinnati, Ohio, unbuilt ■

Heller residence, Fort Myers, built

Litowitz residence, Miami Beach, built

Marks residence, Miami Shores, built

Parker residence (Pace Setter 1954 / Royal Road), Miami, built

Smith residence, Miami Beach, built

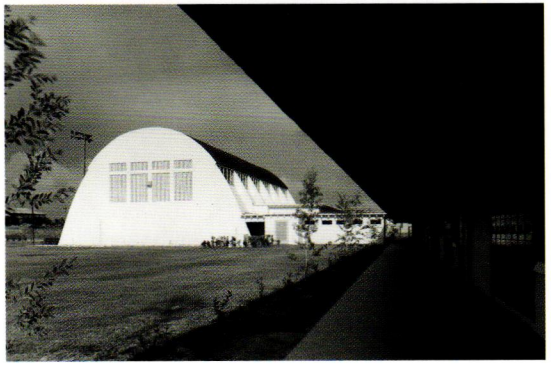
Steele residence, Miami, unbuilt

Streate residence, Miami, built

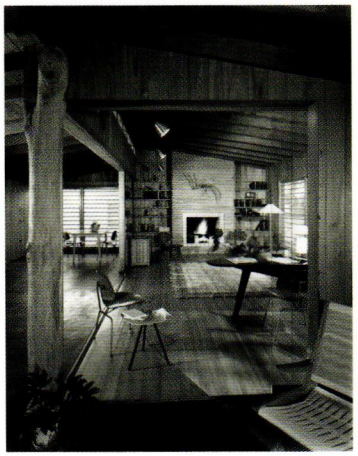
University of Miami audio center, Coral Gables, unbuilt

Wadsworth residence, Coral Gables, unbuilt

Wertz residence, Miami, built



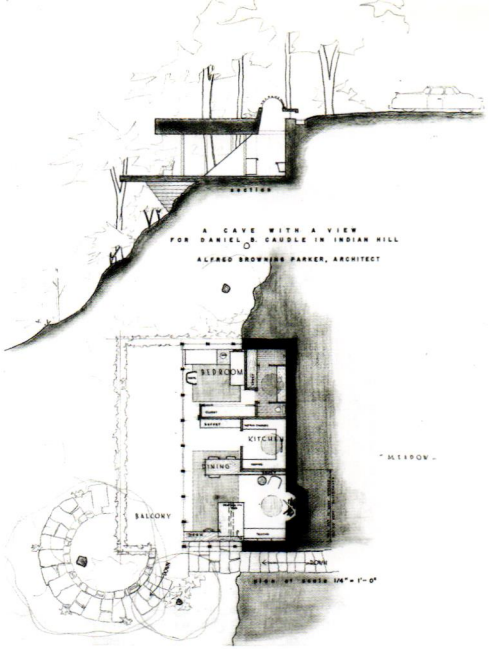
■ George Washington Carver Elementary School classrooms and gymnasium, Coconut Grove, 1949. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.





■ Baldwin Mortgage office building, Miami, 1950. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.

■ Parker residence #3 (Rocks and Short Pines), Miami, 1949. Photo by Rodney McCay Morgan © Photolog, Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



■ Caudle residence (A Cave with a View), Cincinnati, Ohio, 1950, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

1951 Beck residence, Coral Gables, built

Caudle residence, Coral Gables, built

Cayce residence, Lower Matecumbe Key, unbuilt

Langer residence, Coral Gables, built

Rice residence, Miami, built ■

Titleman residence, Miami, built

Weiner residence #1, Miami, built

1952 Bal Harbour Club, Bal Harbour, built

Caudle residence additions, Coral Gables, built

Johnson residence, Princeton, New Jersey, built

Josephson residence, Hollywood, built

Litsey residence, South Miami, built

Pine Tree Estates subdivision, Miami, built

Todd residence, Coral Gables, built

Tucker residence, Coral Gables, built

1953 Friedman residence, Coconut Grove, built

Gayer residence, Coconut Grove, built

Jenkins residence, Miami, built

Schindler residence, Miami, built

Stern residence, Coconut Grove, built

1954 Altmayer-Pontiac Motors, Homestead, built

Battersea Corporation speculative residence, Coral Gables, unbuilt

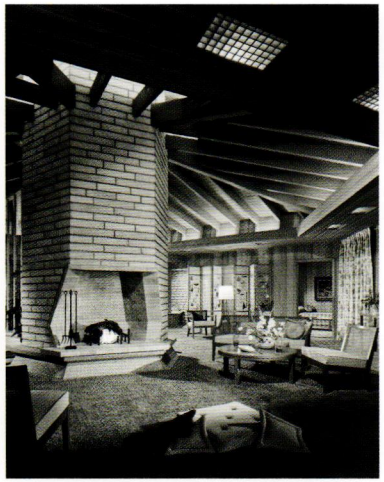
Belk Jr. residence, Charlotte, North Carolina, unbuilt

Carmona residence, Miami, built

Chepens residence, West Palm Beach, built ■

Gordon residence, Miami Beach, built

Kaplan Furniture Company prototype furniture designs, Boston, Massachusetts, built



■ Rice residence, Miami, 1951. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



■ Chepens residence, West Palm Beach, 1954. Photo by Alfred Browning Parker, from the author's collection.

1954 *Continued*

Los Angeles County Fair exhibit room (with John Dekoven Hill), Pomona, California, built ■

Mass residence, Palm Beach, built

Pinecrest Manor subdivision, Coconut Grove, built

Randall residence, Coral Gables, built

Springs residence Nataborium addition, Fort Mill, South Carolina, built

Stevens residence modifications, Yemassee, South Carolina, unbuilt

Weiner residence #2, Miami, built ■

Wood apartment, St. Petersburg, built

1955 Andreas residence, Golden Beach, unbuilt

Coconut Grove Playhouse modifications, Coconut Grove, built

Ewing residence, Coconut Grove, built

Flagler Federal Savings and Loan main office, Miami, built

Marko residence, Coconut Grove, built

Piana residence, Biscayne Gardens, built

Prefab Yard Room prototype for Jones Shutter Products, built

Stylon Corporation showroom and warehouse, Miami, built

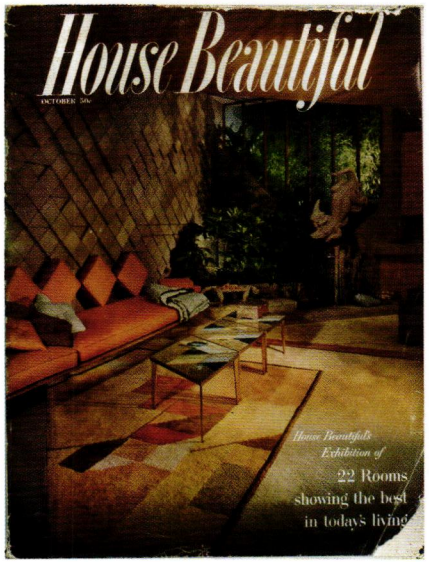
1956 Cohen residence, Palm Beach, built

Kitchens residence, South Dade, built

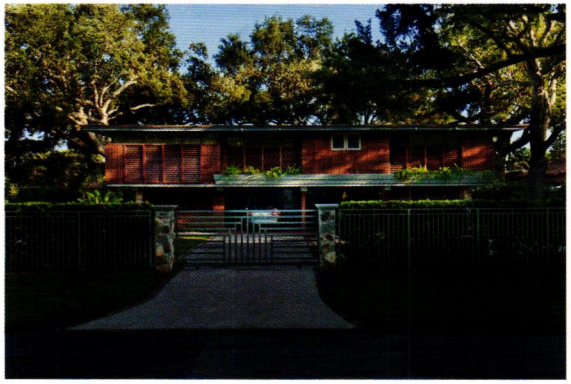
Moynahan residence, Bay Point, Miami, built

Rinker residence, Coconut Grove, built

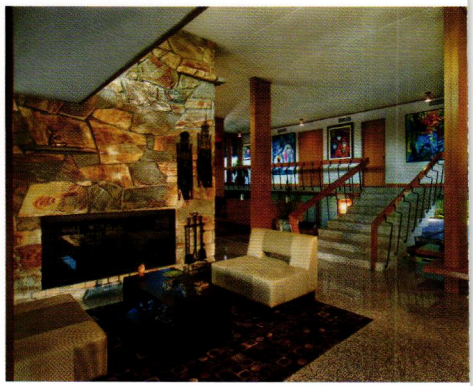
Schmidt residence, Miami, built



■ Los Angeles County Fair exhibit room (A Man's Retreat), Pomona, California, 1954. Photo by Maynard Parker for *House Beautiful*.



■ Weiner residence #2, Miami, 1954. Photos by Carlos I. Morales © 2011 Carpeluz.



1957 Alliance Machine Company, Coconut Grove, built

Avrack residence, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, unbuilt

Belin residence #1, Miami, built

Church-by-the-Sea modifications, Bal Harbour, built

Collins residence, Fort Lauderdale, built

Garza residence, Mexico City, unbuilt

Hoggarth residence, Miami, built

Miller residence (Pace Setter 1959), Coconut Grove, built

Jewel Parker residence (A Jewel-in-the-Treetop), Coconut Grove, built

Prosan residence, Miami, unbuilt

Tench residence scheme #1 (Tench Tentative), Gainesville, unbuilt

Tench residence scheme #2, Gainesville, built

1958 Arvida Oil Company service station at Bazaar International, Riviera Beach, built

Barclay's Bank, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, built

Bassett residence, Miami, built

Bazaar International temporary sales office, Riviera Beach, built

Bazaar International, Riviera Beach, built

Bazaar International Discount Center, Riviera Beach, unbuilt

Cloverleaf Lanes, Miami, built ■

Diamond residence, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, built

Flagler Federal Savings and Loan, Biscayne branch, Miami, built

Freeport Air Terminal #1, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, built

Freeport Medical Clinic, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, built

Freeport motel and restaurant (Caravel Club), Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, built

Freeport school, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, unbuilt

Freeport service station for Harold Allen, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, built

Freeport supermarket (The Arcade), Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, built

Grand Bahama Port Authority Administration office building, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, built

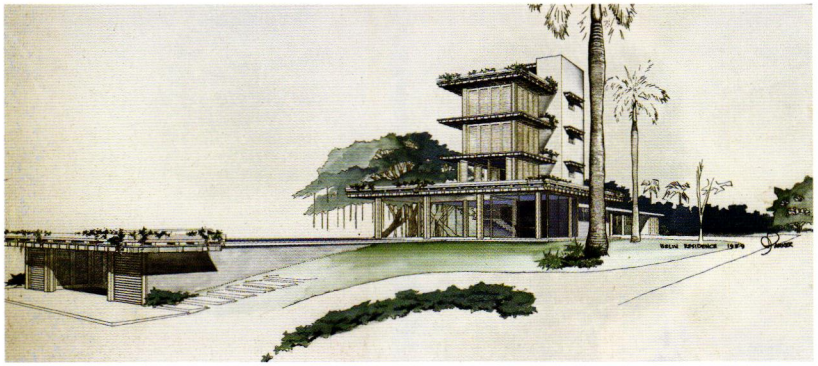
Spalding residence, Palatka, built

Vista Memorial Gardens (Oak Ridge Cemetery), Hialeah, partially built





■ Cloverleaf Lanes, Miami, 1958. Photos by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



■ Belin residence #2 (Belin Bay Tower), Coconut Grove, 1959, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

1959 Alspach residence, Key Biscayne, built

Arboriform—a Simpson Project, Dobbs Ferry, New York, unbuilt

Belin residence #2 (Belin Bay Tower), Coconut Grove, unbuilt ■

Condon residence, Boca Raton, unbuilt

Dubrin residence, Miami, built

Galt Ocean Mile Theater, Fort Lauderdale, unbuilt ■

General Capital Corporation, Miami, built

Graham residence, Andros Island, Bahamas, unbuilt

Groves residence, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, built

Groves residence, Maryland, unbuilt

Hayward residence, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, built

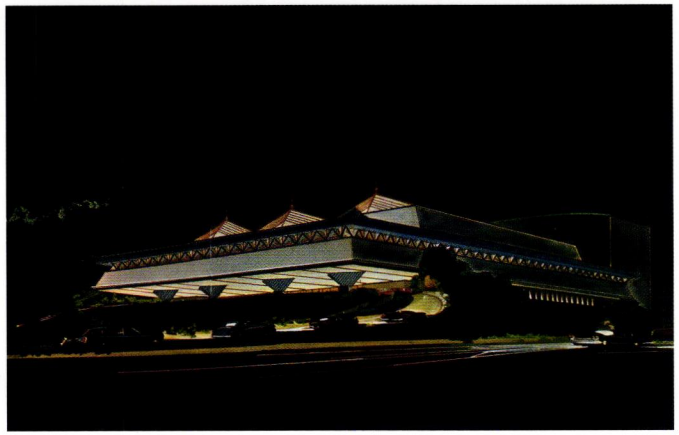
Kusworm residence, Biscayne Point, Miami, unbuilt

Ludwig residence, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, partially built

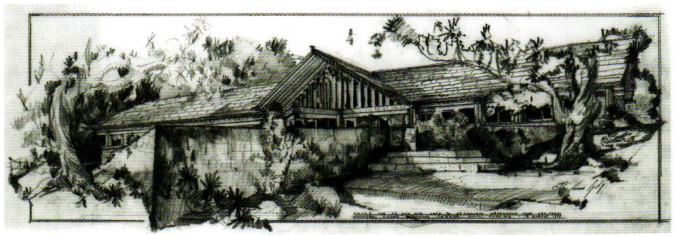
McConnell residence, Greenwood Lake, New York, unbuilt ■

Menefee residence (Yaupon), Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, built

Rutkin residence, Perrine, unbuilt



■ Galt Ocean Mile Theater, Fort Lauderdale, 1959, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



■ McConnell residence, Greenwood Lake, New York, 1959, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

Simpson residence, Dobbs Ferry, New York, unbuilt ■

Stylon Corporation exhibition and advertisement sets, built

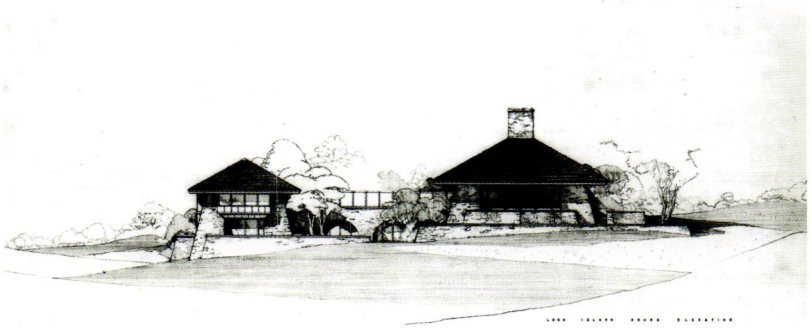
Swayze residence, Île St. Martin, Leeward Islands, unbuilt

Trylon Tower at Bazaar International, Riviera Beach, built

Woronzow residence, Coconut Grove, unbuilt



■ Simpson residence, Dobbs Ferry, New York, 1959, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



■ Lewyt residence, Sands Point, New York, 1960, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

1960 Corliss residence, Stuart, built

Stanford T. Crapo office and industrial buildings, Miami, built

du Rivage residence, Huntington, New York, built

Epstein residence, Miami, built

Flagler Federal Savings and Loan main office (scheme #1), Miami, unbuilt

Gann residence, South Miami, built

Good residence, Sea Ranch Lakes, built

Haight residence, Bedford, New York, unbuilt

Leopold residence, Ladue, Missouri, unbuilt

Lewyt residence, Sands Point, New York, unbuilt ■

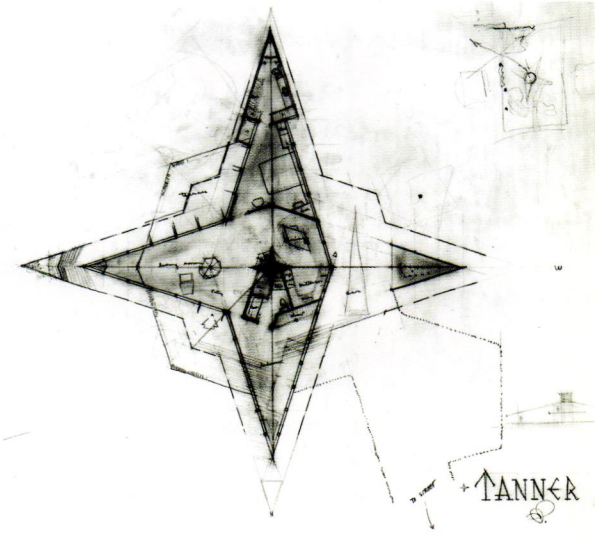
Manus residence, Palm Beach, built

Rappaport residence, Miami Beach, built

Spalding terrace house and pool, Palatka, built

Tanner residence, Coconut Grove, unbuilt ■

Wade residence (Quail High), Village of Golf, built



■ Tanner residence, Coconut Grove, 1960, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

1961 Biegelsen residence, Hollywood, built

Flagler Federal Savings and Loan main office (scheme #2), Miami, built

Freeport Air Terminal #2, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, built

Litowitz residence additions, Miami Beach, built

Lucken residence, Savannah, Georgia, built

Mass residence kitchen addition, Palm Beach, built

Popular Mechanics House of Minimum Maintenance, Palm Beach Gardens, built

Stylon Corporation exhibition and advertisement sets, built

Unger residence, Miami Beach, built

Walker residence, Perrine, unbuilt

Williams residence, Miami, unbuilt ■

1962 Fulp residence, Anderson, South Carolina, built

Goldman, Goldstein and Paczier office building, Miami, built ■

Gottlieb residence, Ladue, Missouri, built

Hope Lutheran Church, Miami, built

Lake residence, Fort Lauderdale, built

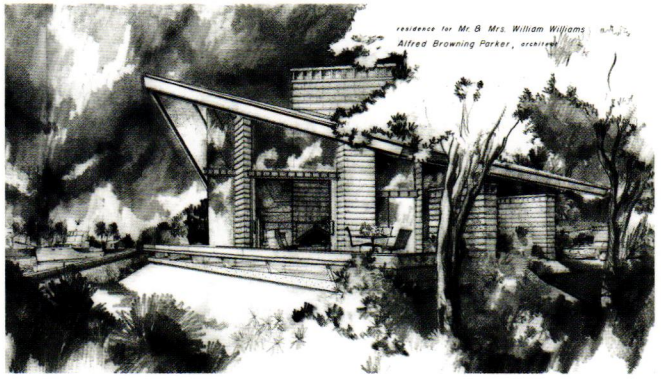
Parker residence (Pace Setter 1965), Coral Gables, built

PGA clubhouse, Palm Beach Gardens, built ■

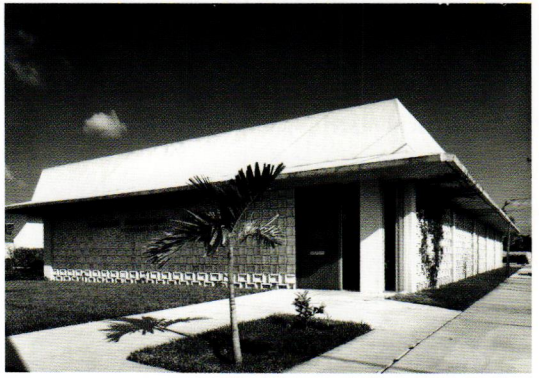
PGA halfway house, Palm Beach Gardens, built

Weitzner Liquor Store, Coconut Grove, built

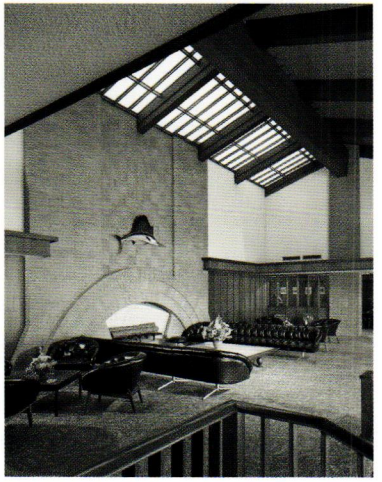
Woman's Day speculative vacation homes (two schemes), unbuilt ■



■ Williams residence, Miami, 1961, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

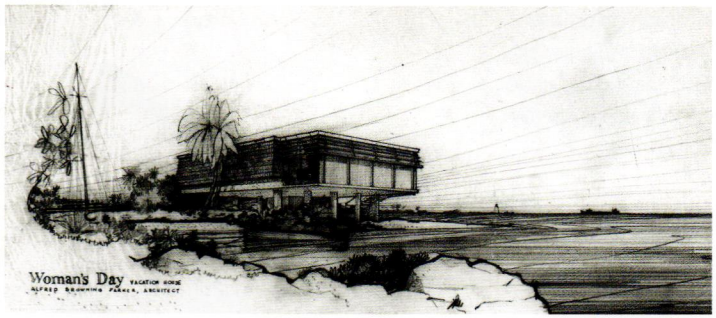


■ Goldman, Goldstein and Paczier office building, Miami, 1962. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



■ PGA clubhouse, Palm Beach Gardens, 1962. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.





■ *Woman's Day* speculative vacation home #1 and #2, 1962, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

1963 Atkins residence, Blountstown, unbuilt

Bank of Florida at Homestead (South Dade Farmers Bank), Homestead, built ■

Fardig residence, South Miami, built

First National Bank of Riviera Beach, Riviera Beach, built

Lawton residence, Hartsville, South Carolina, unbuilt

McCormick residence (The Magic Dorr), Lake Dorr, built

Navy Island development, Port Antonio, Jamaica, West Indies, unbuilt

Schultz residence, Coral Gables, unbuilt

Setnor residence, Plantation Key, built

Sip & Sup lounge and restaurant, Miami, unbuilt

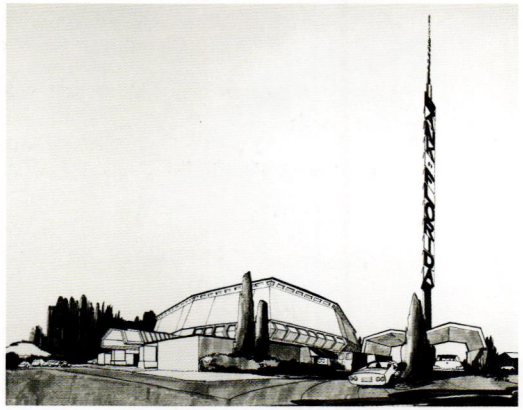
1964 Barclay's Bank modifications, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, built

Feldman residence, Miami, built

Kearney residence, Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey, unbuilt ■

Maximo Presbyterian Church, St. Petersburg, partially built

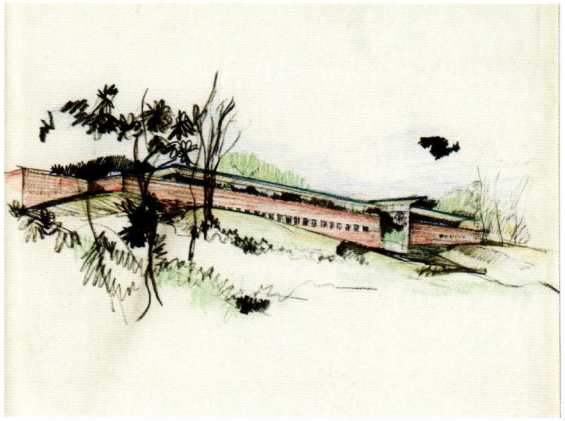
Robertson apartment building, Coconut Grove, built



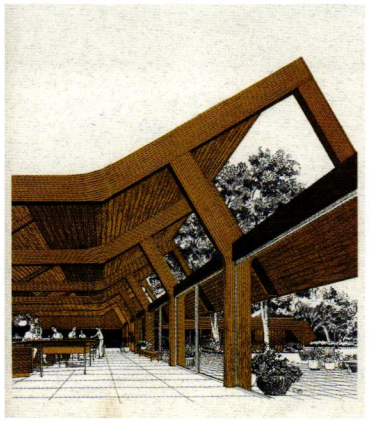
■ Bank of Florida, Homestead, 1963. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

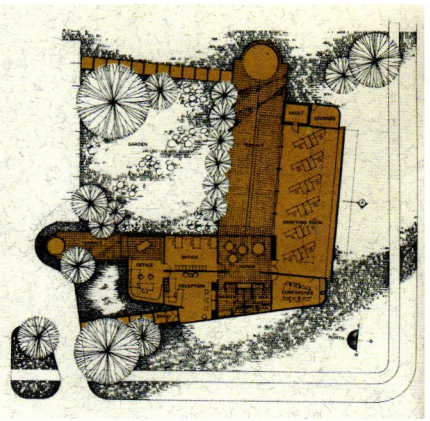


■ Kearney residence, Ho-ho-kus, New Jersey, 1964, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



■ Abney Mills corporate headquarters, Greenwood, South Carolina, 1965, unbuilt. From the author's collection.





■ Architect's office, commissioned by the Weyerhaeuser Company, Coconut Grove, 1965, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

1965 Abney Mills corporate headquarters, Greenwood, South Carolina, unbuilt ■

Architect's office, Weyerhaeuser Company commission, unbuilt ■

Danielson residence, Coconut Grove, built ■

Engle tower, Fort Lauderdale, unbuilt

Good residence, East Lansing, Michigan, built ■

Hand residence, Belle Glade, built

Kohler residence, Calistoga, California, unbuilt

Landon residence, Coral Gables, built

Magnuson residence, Coral Gables, built

Samet residence, Miami, unbuilt

Surf Club Towers apartment building, Surfside, unbuilt

University Christian Church, South Miami, unbuilt



■ Danielson residence, Coconut Grove, 1965. © Bo Parker Photographer.



■ Good residence, East Lansing, Michigan, 1965. Photo by Dave Trumpie © 2010 Trumpie Photography.

1966 Crippen Oldsmobile buildings, North Miami, built

Crippen residence, Bal Harbour, built

Floyd residence, Ann Arbor, Michigan, built

Miamarina, Miami, built

Northeast United Presbyterian Church, St. Petersburg, built

Presbyterian Towers (HUD senior housing, with Randolph Wedding), St. Petersburg, built ■

Waddell residence, Galax, Virginia, unbuilt

1967 Abelove residence, Goral Gables, built

Gervais residence, Papeete, Tahiti, unbuilt ■

Parker architectural workshop, Coconut Grove, built ■

Parker residence (Woodsong / Seminole), Coconut Grove, built

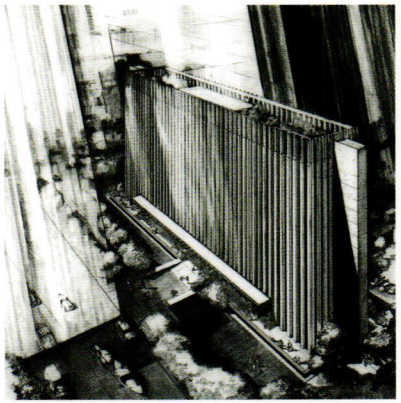
Rainbow Springs conservation/amusement park (Rainbow Springs horse farm complex), Marion County, unbuilt

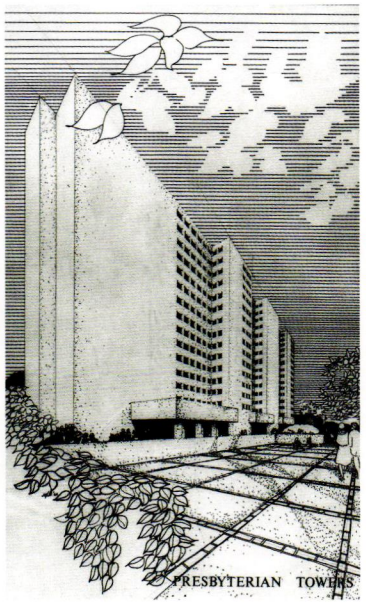
Rainbow Village (HUD low-cost housing), Miami, built

1968 Bank of Florida at Homestead modifications, Homestead, built

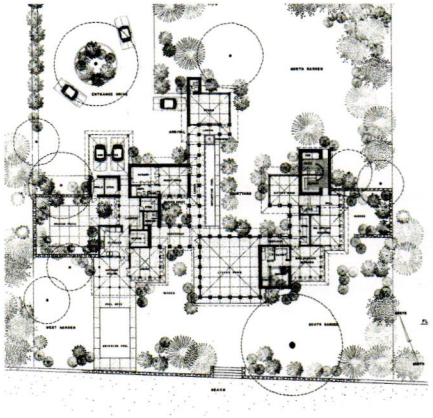
Johnson residence, Wind Point, Wisconsin, built

Titleman residence, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, built





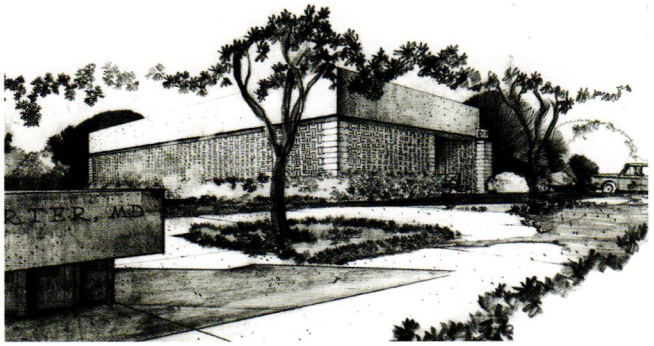
■ Presbyterian Towers, scheme #1 and scheme #2, St. Petersburg, 1966, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



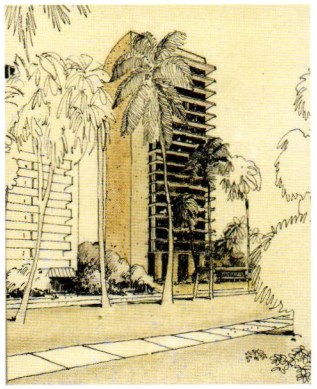
■ Gervais residence, Papeete, Tahiti, 1967, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



■ Parker architectural workshop, Coconut Grove, 1967. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.



■ Carter Medical Clinic, St. Petersburg, 1969, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



■ Ryder Tower office building, Coconut Grove, 1970, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

1969 Carter Medical Clinic, St. Petersburg, unbuilt ■

Flagler Federal Savings and Loan branch, North Miami Beach, built

Gleason residence (GreatGlea), Lauderhill, unbuilt

Hill residence (Hillhouse), Coral Gables, unbuilt

1970 Beinecke ranch (Big B Ranch), Belle Glade, partially built

Dade County prototype elementary school, Miami, built

Royal Green Elementary School, Miami, built

Ryder Tower office building, Coconut Grove, unbuilt ■

1971 Fread Sanctuary at Temple Beth El, West Palm Beach, built

Sanders residence, Sanibel Island, unbuilt

1972 Abelove residence addition, Goral Gables, built

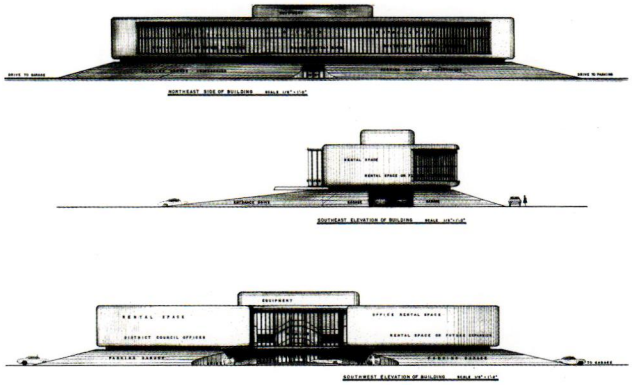
Crane residence, Marathon Shores, unbuilt

First Federal Savings and Loan Association of the Florida Keys, Key Largo, built

Fisher residence, Golden Beach, unbuilt

Flagler Federal Savings and Loan, Westchester branch, Miami, built

Musa Isle (HUD senior housing), Miami, built



■ South Florida Carpenters District Council office building, Miami, 1972, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

National Concrete Masonry Association exhibition pavilion, Miami Beach, built

South Florida Carpenters District Council office building, Miami, unbuilt ■

Sunland Training Center plant nursery greenhouse, Miami, built

Sunshine State Bank, South Miami, built

1973 First Federal Savings and Loan Association of the Florida Keys, temporary trailer, Key West, built

Flagler Federal Savings and Loan, Alton Road branch, Miami Beach, built

Holiday Springs Village clubhouse, Margate, unbuilt

Parker residence (Aerie / Windsong), Lincoln, Vermont, built

Plantation Country Club clubhouse, Plantation, unbuilt

1974 Coconut Grove Bank drive-up/walk-up tellers, Coconut Grove, built

Quayside condominium deveolpment, Miami, built

1975 Flagler Federal Savings and Loan, Alton Road branch remodeling, Miami Beach, built

1976 Flagler Federal Savings and Loan, Dadeland West branch, Kendall, built

1977 First Federal Savings and Loan of the Florida Keys, Key West, built ■

Martin residence, Pineville, Louisiana, unbuilt

1978 Broad residence, Miami, unbuilt

Flagler Federal Savings and Loan, University Lakes branch, Miami, built

Magnuson Corporation speculative residences (Florida Shores), Edgewater, unbuilt

St. Louis Catholic Church, Miami, built

1979 Suero Falla residence, Lyford Cay Club, New Providence, Bahamas, unbuilt

Flagler Federal Savings and Loan branch, Coconut Creek, built

Flagler Federal Savings and Loan, Kings Bay branch, Coral Gables, built

Knight residence and farm (Classic Acres), Ocala, built

Virrick residence, Miami, built

1980 Flagler Federal Savings and Loan, Alton Road branch addition, Miami Beach, built

Flagler Federal Savings and Loan branch, Deerfield Beach, built

Flagler Federal Savings and Loan main office additions and remodeling, Miami, built

Flagler Federal Savings and Loan branch, Surfside, built

Namon residence, unbuilt

Parker residence, unbuilt

1981 Codina residence, Coral Gables, unbuilt

Magnuson penthouse, Coconut Grove, built

Bo Parker penthouse apartment remodeling, New York, New York, unbuilt

Wallace residence remodeling, Coral Gables, built



■ First Federal Savings and Loan of the Florida Keys, Key West, 1977. © Bo Parker Photographer.

1982 Burrows speculative residence #1 (Sea Blossom), Palm Beach, built ■
Flagler Federal Savings and Loan branch, Boynton Beach, built
Grove Tower condominium, Coconut Grove, unbuilt
Haverfield residence, Fort Myers, built
Marshall residence, Charleston, South Carolina, unbuilt
United National Bank main branch modifications, Miami, built

1983 Burrows speculative residence #2, Palm Beach, unbuilt
Hand residence modifications, Belle Glade, built
McNab residence, Flagler Beach, unbuilt
Rutenberg residence, Clearwater, unbuilt
Stettin residence, Miami, built

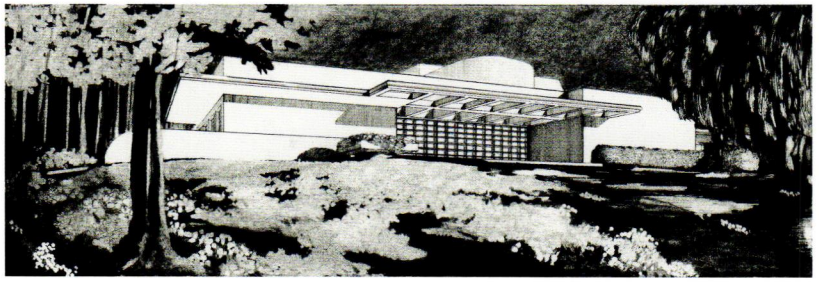
1984 Boyd residence modifications, Ocala, built
Flagler Federal Savings and Loan operations center, Doral, built
Flagler Federal Savings and Loan, Town and Country branch, Miami, built
Scharlin residence, Coconut Grove, unbuilt
Strauss residence, Key Biscayne, unbuilt

1985 Cameron residence, Indian Creek, unbuilt
Flagler Federal Savings and Loan branch, Boca Raton, built
Parker doghouse, Coconut Grove, built
Parker barn annex, Lincoln, Vermont, built

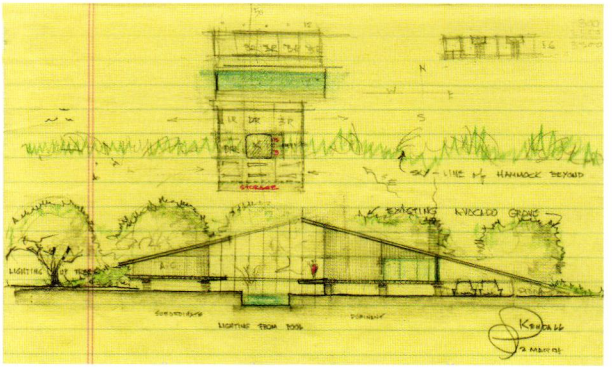
1987 Caplan residence (Caplan's Nonesuch), Short Hills, New Jersey, unbuilt ■
Hillstrom residence guesthouse, Coral Gables—unbuilt
Kendall residence, Kendall, unbuilt ■



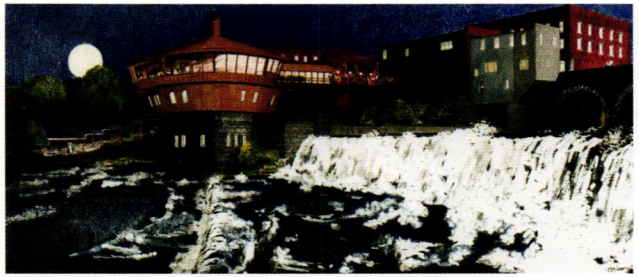
■ Speculative residence for Michael Burrows (Sea Blossom), Palm Beach, 1983, unbuilt. From the author's collection.



■ Caplan residence (Caplan's Nonesuch), Short Hills, New Jersey, 1987, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



■ Kendall residence, Kendall, Florida, 1987, unbuilt. From the author's collection.



■ Powerhouse Restaurant, Middlebury, Vermont, 1989, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

1988 Gervas residence remodeling, Miami, built

Powerhouse Restaurant, Middlebury, Vermont, unbuilt ■

Saint Alban's Day Care Nursery classroom addition, Miami, built

Sunburst Outdoor Furniture designs

1989 Salazar residence, Ocala, unbuilt

1992 Eco-logical Eco Community, Homestead, unbuilt

Simon residence, Key Biscayne, built

1996 Boggy Creek Gang theater (with R. Wayne Drummond and Karl Thorne), Orlando, unbuilt

1997 Parker residence (Skyview), Gainesville, built ■

2001 Rothblatt residence, Melbourne, unbuilt

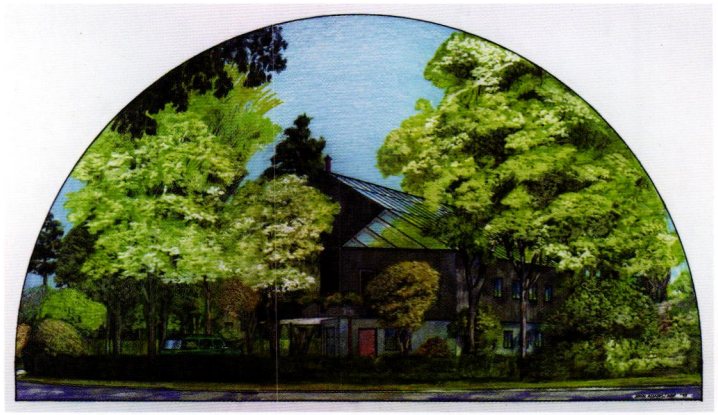
World Trade Center proposal #1, New York, New York, unbuilt

2003 du Rivage residence (Hollyhouse), Sandisfield, Massachusetts, unbuilt

World Trade Center proposal #2, New York, New York, unbuilt

2004 Parker residence (Euphrosyne Isle), Gainesville, unbuilt ■

University of Florida retreat home (M. H. Johnson renovation), Gainesville, unbuilt



■ Parker residence (Skyview), Gainesville, 1997. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.



■ Parker residence (Euphrosyne Isle), Gainesville, 2004, unbuilt. Courtesy of the A. B. Parker Collection, University of Florida Libraries.

Notes

Primary research for this book, spanning the years since 1992, included frequent correspondence and hours of personal interviews with Alfred Browning Parker, along with unfettered access to his office records, architectural drawings, and personal library, first in his office at Woodsong in Florida, then in his office at the Annex of Windsong in Vermont, and finally in the Special and Area Studies Collections at Smathers Library at the University of Florida in Gainesville, where the Alfred Browning Parker Collection (hereinafter ABP Collection) is now preserved. In addition, numerous original clients, friends, family members, and past employees were interviewed, and extant Parker-designed buildings were surveyed to the extent possible.

Items of Parker correspondence, except letters to the author, are in the ABP Collection unless otherwise noted.

FOREWORD

1. I first came to know Al Parker, whom I am honored to call a friend, in 1991, when I arrived at the University of Florida as the chair (later director) of the School of Architecture. That fall the dean, Wayne Drummond, and I invited Parker to begin teaching again at the University of Florida, where he had last taught in the 1940s. Yet it is also fair to say that I had known Parker more indirectly since 1973, when I was an architecture undergraduate at the School of Design at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, where one of my classmates was Quentin Parker, well known among the students as the son of the famous architect.
2. "Modern Architecture in Florida: Wright from the Start" was the title of my welcoming address at the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy's annual national meeting at Wright's Florida Southern College in Lakeland in November 2001.
3. The works of these architects are documented in Robert C. Broward, *The Architecture of Henry John Klutho: The Prairie School in Jacksonville* (Jacksonville: University of North Florida Press, 1983), and Thomas S. Marvel, *Antonin Nechodoma, Architect 1877–1928: The Prairie School in the Caribbean* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994).
4. Singer is one of a number of Florida architects who have related to me how important Parker was for them as a role model of a modern Florida architect.
5. This story was told to me by Rufus Nims in 2006.
6. Wright, in *House Beautiful*, November 1953, 217.
7. For Parker, this extended to more than just environmentally responsive design. He also argued that the architects who fled the Castro regime in Cuba in 1959–60 should be allowed to practice in Florida—an opinion in which he was then in the distinct minority, but which, because of his stature and fame, carried the day. This story was told by Hilario Candela, partner in the Miami architectural firm Spillis Candela, in a lecture at the University of Florida in 2006.

PREFACE

1. During Elizabeth Gordon's tenure as editor in chief at *House Beautiful*, the magazine featured more than thirty of Parker's projects in some fifty of its monthly issues over a twenty-year period.
2. Brochure, "An Office Profile" (1971), 2.
3. Browning, "Humaneering," *Florida Environmental and Urban Issues* 1, no. 3 (January 1974): 8.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Unless otherwise noted, biographical details and quotations of Parker in this section are from interviews by the author.

1. James Parker to Alfred Browning Parker, September 23, 1937.

2. Five scrapbooks compiled by Parker's mother, all in ABP Collection.
3. Transcript of radio talk by Parker on WIOD (Miami), dated September 1968, in author's collection.
4. Undated notes by Parker, in author's collection.
5. Parker to Frank Lloyd Wright, July 30, 1958, in Frank Lloyd Wright Archives, Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Arizona.
6. www.uflib.ufl.edu/spec/architecture/abparker.htm.
7. Marcie Ersoff, "An Architect Talks About His House." *Miami Herald*, May 3, 1964.
8. Photocopy in author's collection.

EARLY WORK (1942–1953)

1. "Charge Off Good Design to Sales," *House & Home*, February 1953, 135.
2. "Where There's a Will There's a Way," *House Beautiful's Guide for the Bride*, Fall–Winter 1945–46; "*House Beautiful*'s 1954 Pace Setter House," *House Beautiful*, November 1953.
3. Telegram, Elizabeth Gordon to Parker, October 27, 1951.
4. "Three hundred sixty-five pages, one page for each day of the year," Parker was proud to add (author interviews).
5. Parker to author, February 14, 2005.
6. Parker to John C. Gifford, May 10, 1941.
7. Doris Reno, "Offers Plan for Tropic House at $1,400," *Miami Herald*, June 28, 1942.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. "Designed for Wilderness Frontier," *Miami Herald*, January 1, 1950.
11. "Where There's a Will There's a Way" (see note 2), 154.
12. Parker to Frank Lloyd Wright, March 29, 1944, in Frank Lloyd Wright Archives, Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Arizona.
13. Frank Lloyd Wright to Parker, May 23, 1944, in collection of Kevin Spolski, Sanford, Florida.
14. Parker to author, February 14, 2005.
15. In 1948 Parker designed a home for Ken Keyes Jr. in South Miami, for which he designed and installed a painted multicolored cypress wood mural that was an abstraction of the letter *K*.
16. Author interviews with Parker.
17. "Contract Let for Building Adobe Villas," *Miami Herald*, September 14, 1947.
18. Author telephone interview with Bill Hopwood, 2007.
19. Parker to James Deen, AIA, March 26, 1984.
20. Caption written by Frank Lloyd Wright, *House Beautiful*, November 1953, 217.
21. Gordon, "This Is the *House Beautiful*," *House Beautiful*, November 1953, 218.
22. "Residence and Workshop—Proposed," *Florida Architecture & Allied Arts*, July 1948, 77.
23. Persiana doors were custom-made wood exterior doors with full lite openings infilled with operable wooden louvered jalousie slats, with an additional interchangeable glass storm sash or insect screening attached to the inner side of the door frame. The exterior louvers allowed for weather and light control, while the removable screen or glass panel met the needs of the season. Early on, Parker experimented using cedar, oak, and redwood, he but ultimately favored Honduran mahogany. Parker used persiana doors in many of his projects; most were handcrafted by José Cruz Naranjo in Cuba.
24. Keystone, sometimes referred to as coral stone or fossilized coral, is an oolitic limestone building material historically mined in South Florida and the Florida Keys.
25. Transcript of radio talk by Parker on WIOD (Miami), dated September 1968, in author's collection.
26. Author interviews with Parker.
27. Robert Moser to Elizabeth Gordon, November 18, 1953, copy in ABP Collection.
28. Author interviews with Parker.
29. "This House Lives Beyond Its Walls," *House & Garden*, August 1952.
30. Tanner, "Some People Build Their Own Houses with Their Own Hands," *House Beautiful*, November 1956, 326.
31. "A Roof for the Walls That Open," *Miami Daily News*, October 24, 1954.
32. Parker, "A Small House Miami Florida," one page, undated, in ABP Collection.
33. "A Pace Setter House for Less Than $20,000," *House Beautiful Building Manual*, Special Southern Edition, Fall–Winter 1956, 162.
34. "Gayer Residence," *Florida Architecture International* 26 (1958–1959), 6.
35. Besinger, "A Square Is Not a Box," *House Beautiful*, January 1957, 70–74.
36. Parker appointment book, 1954.

37. Don Gayer, "A Living Investment," two pages, undated, in author's collection.
38. Author interview with Gayer, June 12, 1994.

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1. Companies for which Parker designed furniture included Kaplan Furniture Company, Elkay Sink Company, Sunburst, and the Jones Shutter Products Company.
2. I am indebted to Leonard Mass, the son of the client, and Augustus Mayhew, a local Palm Beach County historian, for helping me fill in some of the blanks for this project.
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4. Author telephone interview with Leonard Mass, 2009.
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6. E-mail, Leonard Mass to author, September 29, 2009.
7. Henle, "Palatial Living in a One-Room House," *House Beautiful*, November 1958; "Hawaiian Way of Life Hits the Mainland," *Look*, May 12, 1959.
8. Author interviews with Parker.
9. Henle, "Palatial Living" (see note 7), 209.
10. "No Man Need Be Common, No Life Need Be Ordinary," *House Beautiful*, November 1956, 220.
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13. Eugene Masselink to Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, December 20, 1957.
14. I am indebted to Augustus Mayhew for this information.
15. Confirmed by Frank Lloyd Wright Archives, Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Arizona.
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19. Author interviews with Parker.
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25. Ibid.
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34. "Jewel Parker Residence / Coconut Grove," *Architecture for Florida Living* 1 (1968): 26.
35. Parker to Curtis Besinger, October 21, 1957.
36. I am indebted to Rachel Tench for access to the project drawings and files where this earlier unbuilt scheme was discovered.
37. Author interviews with Parker.
38. Thanks to both Rachel Tench and Holly du Rivage for assisting me with the comparisons.
39. Benmont Tench III, conveyed in e-mail from Rachel Tench to author, November 17, 2009.
40. Parker appointment book, 1959, in ABP Collection.
41. A registration form prepared on August 26, 1996, for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C., by Kimberly Hinder and Daniel Delahaye with Architectural Consultants, Inc., suggests that, in addition to Bazaar International and the Trylon Tower, Parker's designs for several outbuildings were also constructed, including Bazaar International's temporary sales office, a service station, Kiddieland amusement playground, and a boat

sales display shed. See also "Multi-Million $ Attraction Flourishes," *Palm Beach Post-Times*, November 13, 1960.

42. Author interviews with Parker.
43. Parker to Elizabeth Gordon, December 28, 1959.
44. The author is entirely indebted to Janet Albury, president, V.I.P. Services Limited, Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, for her invaluable assistance with researching Parker's Freeport works.
45. Parker to Oakridge, Inc., July 24, 1958.
46. Author interviews with Parker.
47. Ibid.
48. Parker appointment book, 1959, in ABP Collection.
49. Parker to author, February 14, 2005.
50. Author interviews with Parker.
51. Parker to James DeLong, October 14, 1963.
52. E-mail, Peter von Albedyll to author, July 7, 2009.
53. Author interview with Lisa Menefee, December 3, 2007.
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55. Ibid.
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58. Author interviews with Parker.
59. Parker, "What You Need to Know" (see note 57), 103.
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71. See note 67.
72. I am indebted to Augustus Mayhew for research assistance with this project and for his article "Fairway Modern," *Home Fort Lauderdale* 7, no. 5 (2009).
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91. See note 88.
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99. Sarah Tomerlin Lee, "This Is the Pace Setter '65," *House Beautiful*, May 1965, 153.

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