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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

(2) PORT CHESTER SYNAGOGUE
Knesses Tiffereth
Israel Synagogue.

(2)

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

Report On Construction

The Daily Item August 1954

Work On New Synagogue To Start Soon; Plans Hailed By Widely-Known Architect

Although ground for it has not yet even been broken, the proposed synagogue building of Congregation Kneses Tifereth Israel has been proclaimed by an architect of high reputation in the field of modern building—Eero Saarinen of Detroit—as unique among the world's places of worship.

The day soon may come when local people will have a chance to share the enthusiasm of this expert, since construction of the new building is expected to begin within a month. It should be completed by this time next year.

The structure—which was designed by Philip C. Johnson of New Canaan, Conn., director of architecture at the Museum of Modern Art, New York—will be modern in every respect. According to Mr. Johnson the Jews have no tradition of gothic or colonial architecture such as manifests itself in even the most newly-built Christian churches. For this reason, synagogues are always in a style contemporary

to the time in which they were built.

On 10 Acres

The building will be situated on 10 acres of land, heavily wooded with maple, spruce and linden trees, and located on King Street, a short distance from the new elementary school.

About 100 yards of lawns will slope from the street to the building, which will be of gleaming white stone in contrast to the green which will predominate in its surroundings. The walls will consist entirely of tiers of seven-foot stone panels, set somewhat apart from each other. The cracks between the panels will be about eight inches in width and will contain pieces of stained glass.

The building will take on a magical appearance at night, according to Mr. Johnson. These small pieces of colored glass will number in the hundreds and will probably be alternately red, yellow and blue. "When it is dark outside and the interior is lighted, the pieces of glass will gleam like jewels," he said.

40-Foot Ceiling

The main part of the building will be a long hall which includes the sanctuary, a reception hall and an auditorium. The ceiling here will be 40 feet high and it will be separated into its three component rooms by two 10-foot soundproof walls. Those walls will be divided into sec-

tions and will be removable to make one large hall, as may be necessary on certain feast days.

One of the unique features of the building will be the source of light in this main hall. There will be two strips of skylights running the length of the ceiling, but these will be hidden from those below by a series of seven white plaster domes, hung so that they only touch the side walls at widely-spaced intervals.

These domes will reflect the light from the skylights into the hall, bathing the walls with a soft, reflected glow. Artificial sources of light also will be located above the domes, and it will be possible to make these brighter or dimmer at will. With the manipulation of a switch, the hall can be bright enough to read by, or bathed in a religious twilight.

Oval Altar

The Bemah—or altar—will be an oval platform slightly forward of the front wall of the sanctuary. Behind it will hang a heavy curtain of some rich material and probably colored gold, and on it will be a cabinet, probably of oak, to hold the congregation's sacred scrolls.

Also on the Bemah will be two pulpits, one for the rabbi and one for the cantor, and overhead will hang the eternal light which will burn day and night, as long as the building is used as a place of worship. On the wall to the right will be the traditional seven-branched candlestick.

The auditorium opposite the sanctuary is expected to become important in the life of the community. It will have a stage which can be removed when the room is to be used for other purposes, and the seats in it will be movable so that they can be turned around when the auditorium is used as part of the sanctuary or removed entirely when it is used for banquets.

The main entrance to the building will consist of double oak doors leading into an oval shaped, domed foyer. Flanking these doors on the outside will be two columns containing delicately worked bronze figures of

the 12 signs of the zodiac. These will be floodlighted at night.

Kitchens Planned

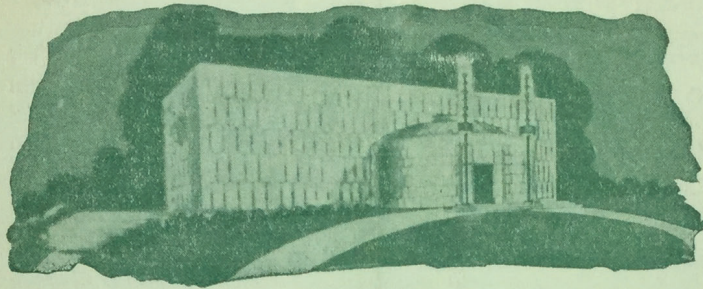
Opposite the foyer, on the other side of the hall, will be a wing containing a dairy kitchen, a meat kitchen, a storage room and rest rooms. Below the wing will be a basement containing a daily prayer room looking out onto a sunken terrace, a lounge, and more rest rooms.

Among other work done by Mr. Johnson are the new wing of the Museum of Modern Art, now under construction next door to the present edifice, and the Schlumberger Laboratories in Ridgefield, Conn. He has been a member of the architectural faculty at Yale and at the Pratt Institute.

The synagogue represents the fulfillment of a 30-year dream for the members of the congregation. Worshipping at present is done in two different places—in rooms set aside as chapels at the Jewish Community Center and in a small synagogue on Traverse Avenue.

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34



Ground Breaking Ceremony

FOR THE NEW

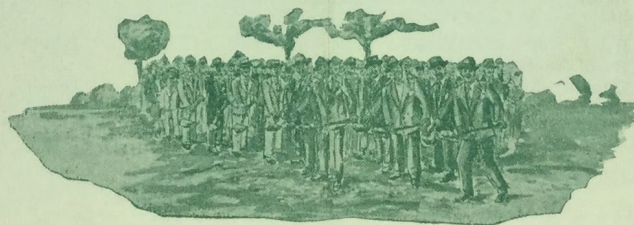
**CONGREGATION
KNESES TIFERETH ISRAEL**

575 King Street
PORT CHESTER, NEW YORK

•
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1954

2:00 P. M.

14 ELUL, 5714



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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

PROGRAM

PRESENTATION OF MASSES COLORS.....Boy Scouts of America, Troop 9
 NATIONAL ANTHEM
 HATIKVAH.....Mrs. Harold Schwartz and Choir
 INVOCATION.....Rabbi Julius Rosenthal
Hebrew Institute, Greenwich, Connecticut
 WELCOME.....Victor Goldman
President, Congregation Knesses Tifereth Israel
 WELCOME.....Mrs. David Lefferman
President, Congregation Knesses Tifereth Israel Auxiliary
 REMARKS.....David Azorsky
Project Committee Chairman
 REMARKS.....George E. Gruber
Building Committee Chairman
 GREETINGS.....Mayor Anthony B. Gioffre
 GREETINGS.....Supervisor Anthony Posillipo
 ADDRESS.....Rabbi Joseph Speiser

GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY

RESPONSIVE READING

Our God and God of our fathers,
 Do Thou bless us as we gather here with grateful hearts to consecrate ourselves to Thee.
 Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power
 And the glory and the victory and the majesty.
 We know that except the Lord build the House,
 They labor in vain that build it.
 May this house that we build be our fortress of strength,
 To give us courage for the challenges of life.
 We thank Thee for the joys we will find here in the fellowship of worship,
 For the blessings of faith, comfort, and peace.
 We thank Thee for the will to strive and the wisdom to accomplish,
 For hope when despondent and faith when in doubt.
 Thy House is our bond with the past, our hope for the future
 Our fathers' bequest and our children's sacred trust.
 May we maintain and preserve what our forebears have built
 And bring to fruition the seeds they have sown.
 We will come here with our children to pray at Thine altar,
 That their hearts, like ours, may be lifted to Thee.
 Our old and our young will here worship together;
 Renew here the pledge that their forefathers made.
 Accept then, O Lord, our hearts' earnest devotion,
 And keep us united in service to Thee.

VOICE OF THANKSGIVING
 VOICE OF REMEMBRANCE
 VOICE OF CONSECRATION.....Philip Arian
 Miss Esther Falk
 CLOSING HYMN.....Hebrew School
 BENEDICTION.....Rabbi Moses J. Shragowitz
 MASTER OF CEREMONIES.....Morris Goldman

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 Mrs. David Lefferman, *President K. T. I. A.*
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 Abraham Langer, *Secretary, K. T. I.*
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 Philip Johnson, *Architect*
 David Azorsky, *Project Chair. and Ex-Pres. K. T. I.*
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 John Cott, *Chairman, Special Gifts*
 Harry Gantz, *Chairman, Special Gifts*
 Jack Gantz, *Chairman, Special Gifts*
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 Harry Archer, *Project Attorney*
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 Moses J. Shragowitz, *Rabbi*
 Leon Kahan, *Ex-President of K. T. I.*
 Maney M. Bauman, *Ex-President of K. T. I.*
 Dr. I. Edwin Zimmerman, *Ex-President of K. T. I.*
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 Joseph Lefferman, *Ex-President of K. T. I.*
 Maurice Singer, *Ex-Project Chairman*
 Milton H. Lewin, *President, Jewish Center of Port Chester*
 Morris Levine, *President, Jewish Community Council*
 Albert A. List, *Outstanding Neighbor*

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Abraham Abel	Arthur Hammell	Jacob M. Rosen
Sidney Benerofe	Jacob Hayman	Israel B. Rosenberg
Irving Blonder	Joseph H. Hirschhorn	Irving Saltzman
Sol Brenner	William Isrow	Henry Secan
Charles Cohen	Maurice Jacobs	David S. Shuer
Samuel Cohen	Meyer E. Jacobs	Isadore Silverman
Sol Cott	Samuel Kaplan	George Steinberg
Fred Ellenbogen	Morris Karnes	Elias Tunick
Louis Falk	David Lefferman	Harry Tunick
Samuel Friedman	Dr. Max Marshall	Richard Tunick
Joseph Gans	Samuel Meltz	William Tunick
Joseph Goldae	Louis Miller	Jack Warsaw
Jacob I. Goldberg	Jacob L. Mulwitz	Malcolm Wein
David Goldowitz	David Rednick	David Werner
Jonas Goldowitz	Irving Robinson	Samuel Yolen
Henry Goldowsky	Jacob Rogowsky	

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

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EDWARD J. HUCHES.....Editor, Macy Chain Newspaper
MAURICE A. DOUGHERTY.....Editor, Port Chester Item

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

ARCHITECTURAL NOTES London Times Sept. 11, '57

Significant Influence of Philip Johnson

Authority of New Aesthetic Ideas

By Our Architectural Correspondent

Mr. Philip Johnson has occupied for some years a unique place among modern American architects, which has caused him to exercise an influence over stylistic trends and developments that is out of all proportion to the size or public significance of his executed works. The extent of his influence is only partly due to his position as head of the architectural department of the Museum of Modern Art in New York; far more is it due to the unusual course he has followed in his career.

He began as an amateur in the strict eighteenth-century sense of the word, cultivating a connoisseur's taste for modern architecture and, as one of its leading apologists on the other side of the Atlantic, showing much skill in interpreting its mysteries. Only after he had firmly established his principles and beliefs as a matter of theory did he begin to apply them in practice. But he still preserved a degree of detachment, and it is his conscious exploration of new aesthetic ideas, theoretically and practically, that has given him his unique authority, which, however, is exercised in so many indefinable ways that he may justly be described as the *eminence grise* behind some of the most advanced architectural movements.

UNCOMMON FEATURES

His own work, besides being the laboratory, as it were, in which his aesthetic experiments are worked out, has therefore the additional significance that it often offers a clue to future trends, and so particular interest attaches to the fact that his newest building, a synagogue at Port Chester, in New York State, is dominated by a vaulted roof and a detached domed entrance hall, uncommon features in the modern American scene.

The curvaceous forms he has introduced in this building are especially foreign to the kind of architecture with which Mr. Johnson has hitherto been associated. He has always been regarded as a disciple—indeed as one of the most distinguished disciples—of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, that strict architectural disciplinarian whose frankly exposed, infinitely refined, rectilinear structures have come more and more to dominate American architecture since he arrived as a refugee from Germany in 1938 and settled in Chicago. Moreover it is doubtful whether the exposed metal frame would have spread its influence so widely if Philip Johnson had not so cunningly played *Père Joseph*, so to speak, to Mies's *Richelieu*.

A BOLD PATTERN

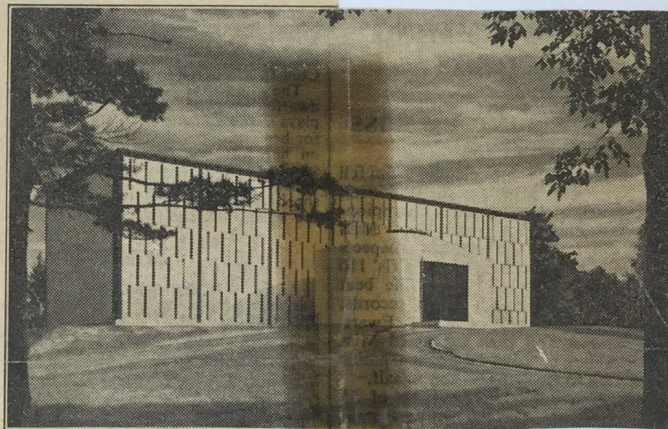
Now he has moved in another direction. The Port Chester synagogue (Mr. Johnson's first work other than a private house, except for a small annexe to the Museum of Modern Art that he built in 1953) consists of a simple rectangular hall, 37ft. high, entered in the centre of one of its long sides through a detached oval-shaped pavilion. The hall is lighted by a number of vertical slits which separate the white stone blocks of which the walls are composed. These are arranged in four tiers, creating a bold geometrical pattern inside and out, and the longitudinal walls are subdivided into seven equal compartments by the vertical members of an exposed steel frame.

The circumscribed shape and the relative darkness of the entrance pavilion serve to enhance the drama of the vaulted space into which the visitor emerges from it. The

main interior is wholly white, but there is strong jewel-like colour in the stained glass that fills the window-slits—a separate colour in each; the furnishings are light grey and gold. At night the walls are floodlit from a source partially concealed behind the floating plaster vaults, which span each of the seven bays of the structure. More lights, directed downwards, are set in the ribs between the vaults.

FLOATING VAULTS

These floating vaults, almost detached from the walls, are reminiscent of Soane, whose work Mr. Johnson greatly admires—a Soane-like obsession with pure geometry is evident in nearly all his work. This same purity of conception is of course what even his new work retains in common with that of Mies van der Rohe, from whose fixed path Mr. Johnson has not wholly diverged; in fact they have since collaborated over



Synagogue at Port Chester, N.Y., by Philip Johnson.

the design of the bronze-clad Seagram building now nearing completion in New York.

But the synagogue indicates a move towards a conscious monumentality of effect of which the Miesian method is hardly capable. Some would say that neither is such monumentality desirable in our day, and would accuse Mr. Johnson of returning to that eclectic attitude on which modern architecture, by its very nature, has firmly turned its back. Nevertheless, he is responding to a widely felt need, and the important thing is that his personal sensibility and his artistic integrity have ensured that his experiment in monumentality, although to some extent tentative, is neither ponderous nor platitudinous.

STORE'S SEARCH FOR NEW PREMISES

The directors of Paulden's, Ltd., whose store at Manchester was destroyed by fire on Sunday night, yesterday decided to look for temporary premises near the city centre. Mr. W. J. Mullins, managing director, said: "We require 100,000 square feet of floor space which we can use for temporary trading. Provided the building does not require much alteration and is suitable, we can perhaps resume temporary trading within two or three months of acquiring such premises."

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

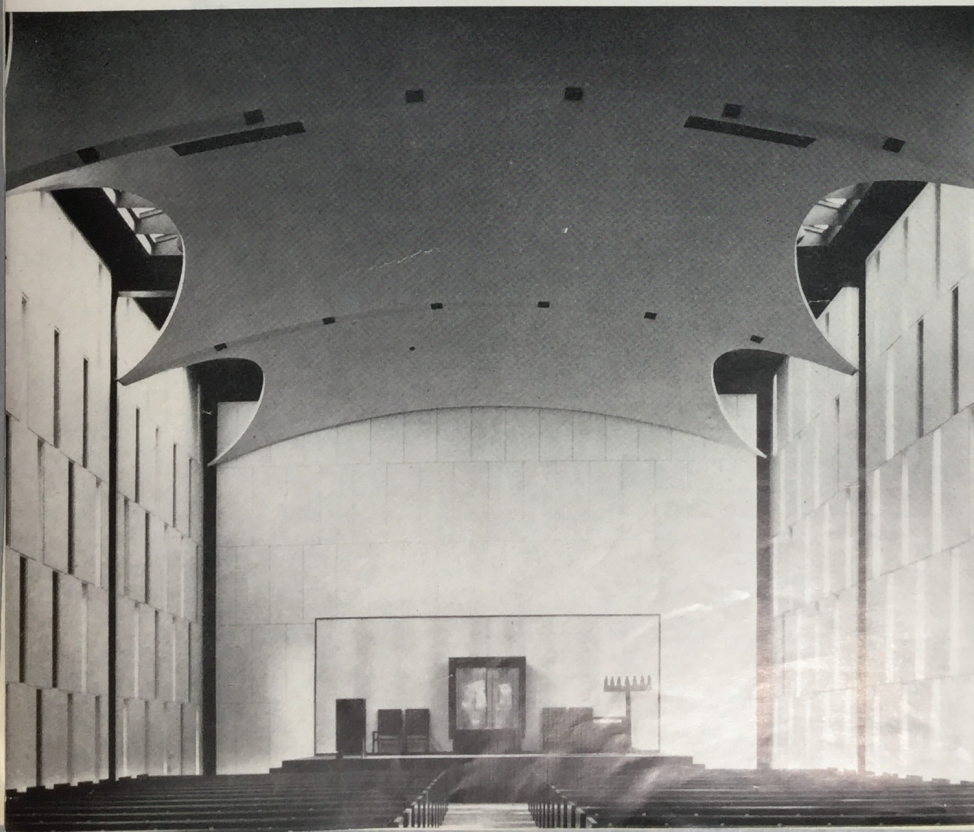
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW SEPTEMBER 1958

(Duplicate)

2



The flat saucer dome of the Breakfast Room in Sir John Soane's Museum is an early, but significant, break with the tradition of the ceiling as a monolithic closure — light wells between the vault and the wall imply another cover at a higher level, as with the ceiling of Philip Johnson's Port Chester synagogue, below. The structural status of Soane's ceiling is arguable, but Johnson's is emphatically a suspended ceiling of the sort discussed in Michael Brawne's article, opposite.



The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II.34

Michael Brawne

LOOKING UP

SUSPENDED CEILINGS AS AN ELEMENT IN INTERIOR DESIGN

When it became necessary to house the convolutions of pipes and ducts which form the heating, cooling, ventilating, lighting, communication and fire protection systems inevitable in even so simple a space as that enclosing a dozen young women typing and telephoning, it soon became obvious that the ceiling was the only place for them. The inevitable result was visual chaos. It was found, however, that the confusion could easily be obliterated by a suspended membrane which, conveniently, was also able to reduce the general noise level. The suspended ceiling, as we know it, thus became a new and accepted building element; the easy answer to a series of complex and related problems. Until its advent, the surface overhead had often been dramatic and decorative: mosaic and fresco, pompeian plaster and lincrusta. There is, of course, no reason why the provision of services and visual pleasure should be mutually exclusive, although rather too many buildings testify to the contrary. It would seem that too frequently the care given to the ceiling has not gone beyond making sure that the different parts from the catalogue fit together. The purpose of this article (and, indeed, of the two articles on 'Suspended Ceilings' in the Skill section which should be read in conjunction with it*) is therefore to draw attention to a neglected surface. The ceiling is, after all, an important part of the visual field; in the past it has in fact been accepted as giving the architect one of the most challenging opportunities. Today others certainly think this. A glance at the rich variety of products made for ceilings displayed in the Skill articles on Suspended Ceilings shows that this section of the building attracts a great deal of commercial attention, much of it well conceived. There is, evidently, money in the ceiling. Yet even the best products fail to give that lasting satisfaction which is felt when a building form achieves the level of architecture; nor, it would appear, when the

* The first of these appeared in the July AR, page 59; the second is to be found on page 201 of this issue.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II.34

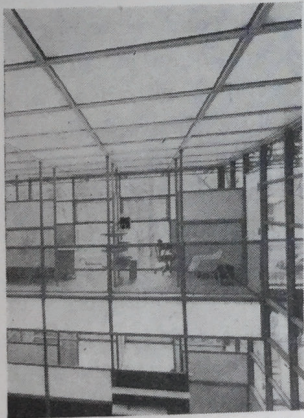
Michael Brawne: LOOKING UP

matter is looked at carefully, is the functional performance of these ceilings as high as one might expect. These two aspects, though distinct, go hand in hand; and perhaps the ceiling will not perform visually or functionally as it should, until it is considered as an important and form-giving element of each design.

The multi-storey office block poses the problems of the suspended ceiling in its commonest form. The expensive and therefore overcrowded floorspaces obstructed by office paraphernalia, the outer walls pierced by windows, the inner walls non-existent or forever moving as staff groups and re-groups, only the ceiling remains to provide a standard of environmental comfort which may have to be of a relatively high order. Visual tasks may be exacting requiring both high levels of illumination and lack of contrast between task, surround and light source; the noise produced may be considerable and will need reduction for reasons of comfort and communication; winter heating will be essential but will only be needed for about eight hours a day; summer cooling may be necessary especially as intense light sources and electric business machines add to the heat and even such sedentary exertions as typing soon become uncomfortable. Apart from this, ventilation must be adequate to cope with tobacco and humanity. These are the relatively simple criteria of an office space. Laboratories, shops, restaurants and so on each create their own specialized conditions.

The choice of ceiling material, shape and construction is dependent on the methods used to provide this environmental control and itself considerably influences them. It should not therefore be undertaken haphazardly. 12 in. by 12 in. perforated fibre tiles on a 'patented' suspension system are seldom the only, and rarely a sufficient answer.

The great danger inherent in an architecture assembled from factory-made components is that



1, the additive architecture of the 'Unistrut' Experimental Building at the Michigan University: additive space can, through the repetition of similar materials within a strictly coordinated structure, create the unity aimed at in curvilinear spaces as 21.

each set of elements, whether it be the curtain wall, the suspended ceiling or the movable partition, can so easily be considered in isolation. Yet the effect of these elements on each other and the building as a whole should not be underrated. Their relation is not only one of simple dimensional co-ordination, it is more fundamental than that.

Suspended ceilings, for example, are normally considered as obvious sources of artificial light. But it ought not to be forgotten that any ceiling surface will also influence the natural light conditions of an area receiv-

ing daylight. The reflective factor of luminous ceilings with plastic eggcrates, to take a common form, may be extremely low. Such a room will thus appear unnecessarily dark unless the lights are turned on. Similarly a ceiling composed of vertical fins or coffered recesses with luminous inserts will create large areas of shadow. Evidently certain forms of luminous ceiling demand that, once installed, they are used continually. This in turn poses the question that if illumination is to be provided entirely by artificial light, what reliance should in fact be placed on daylight? Even if for psychological reasons some kind of outlook is thought advisable, this may well take a quite different form from the transparency necessary for efficient daylighting. Thus the seemingly simple choice of a particular suspended ceiling has serious repercussions on the treatment of the elevation.

If, moreover, the gap between a louvred ceiling and the underside of the structural slab is a continuous open space (i.e. to house lamps and heating ducts) or itself acts as a plenum, partitions will fail to act as sound barriers. The main function of rigid partitions having thus been lost, it seems questionable whether they need be retained. If office space is not to be subdivided and if there is no need to rely on daylight for illumination, the traditional shallow arrangement on either side of a corridor will no longer be necessary. Much deeper undivided areas become the logical answer. These will in turn demand artificial ventilation which will itself modify the design of the suspended ceiling. The luminous ceiling, therefore, not only suggests certain elevational criteria, but also radically amends the plan form and service installation of the building.

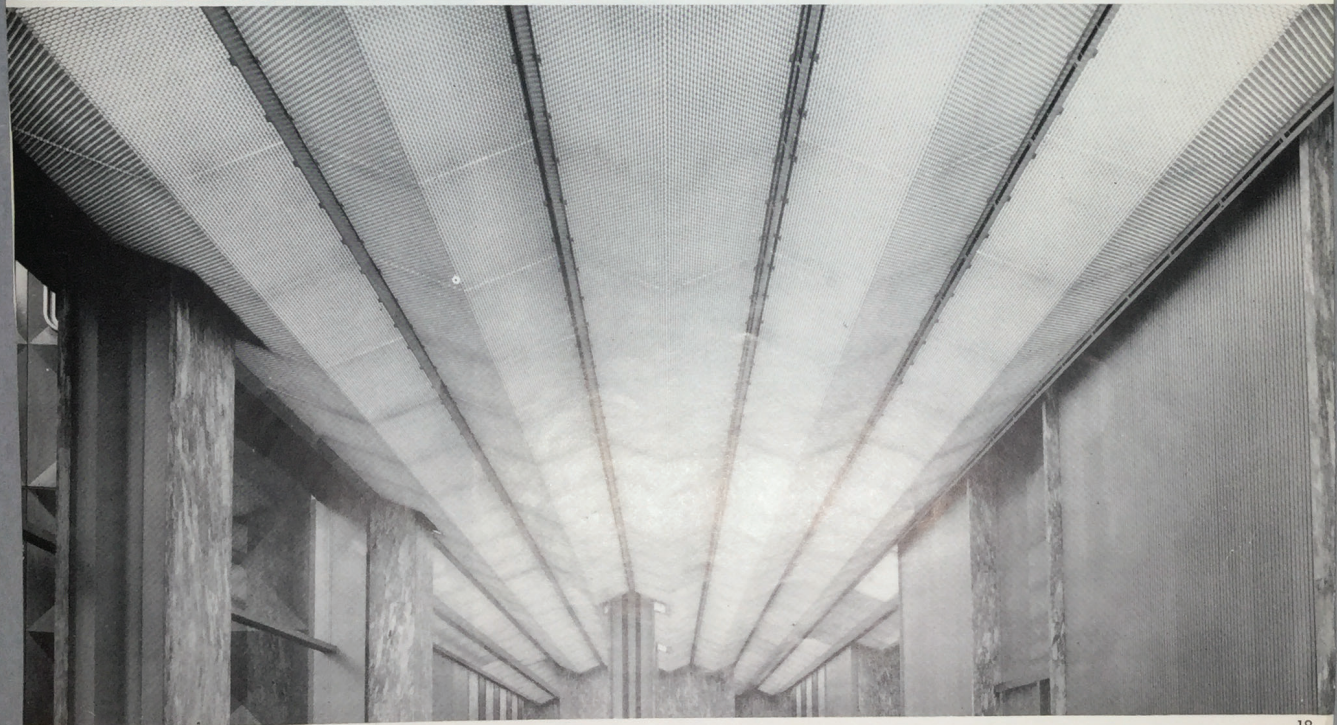
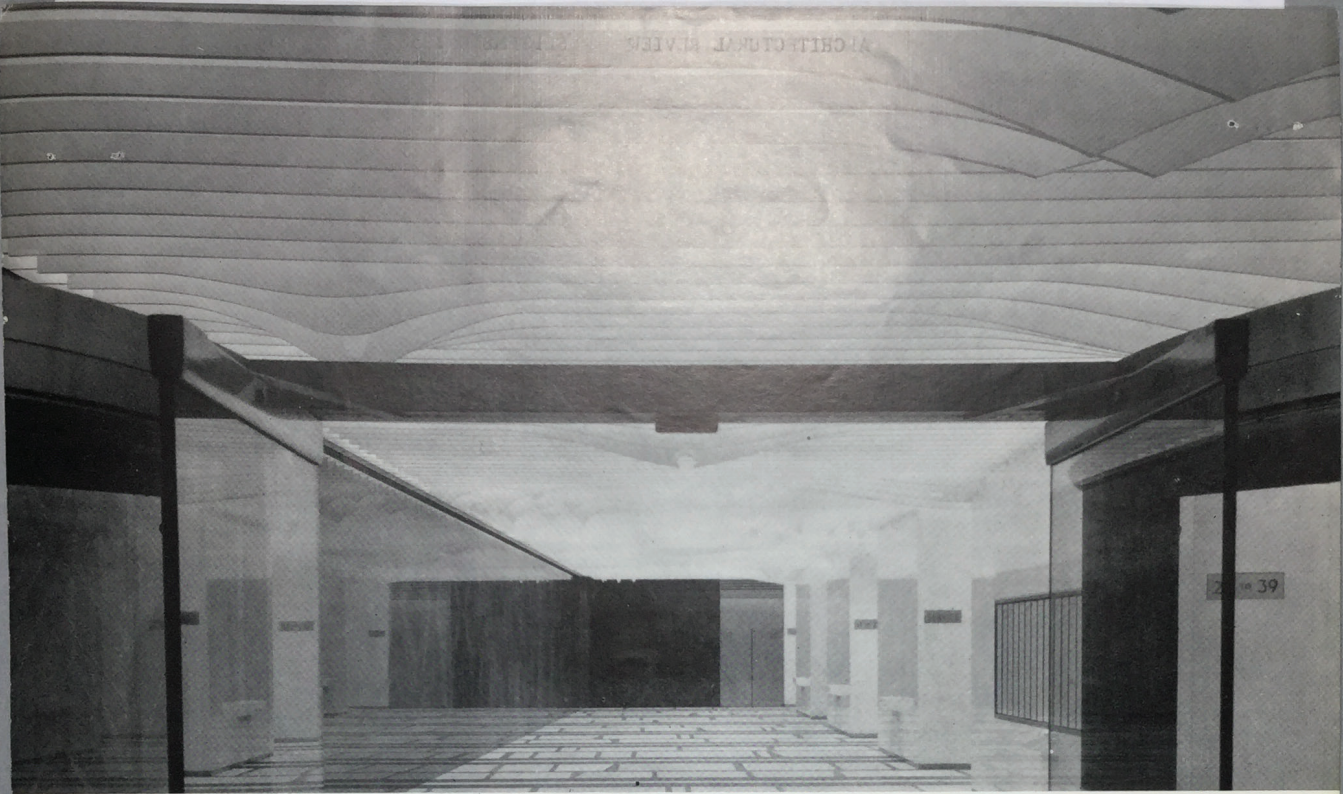
Certain recent offices in the United States and elsewhere have accepted these conclusions. Except for shops, complete reliance on a luminous ceiling is, as yet, infrequent in this country. The suspended ceiling is thought of primarily as a sound absorbent area; but here again, choice is not merely a matter of deciding between dots, stripes and a travertine finish.

Sound absorption to be effective can only be determined when the use of the space is known. A suspended ceiling over the workshop floor of a factory may be far from helpful if its absorption coefficient is low for the particular frequencies at which the machine noise is loudest. The value of the absorption coefficient at 128 cycles, a value which will almost certainly be critical, can vary between .09 and .53 for a perforated cane fibre tile depending on its thickness and mounting. The too frequent reference to coefficients at 512 cycles may be a useful shorthand but it may also be very misleading.

Precise function is just as important a determinant in an office building—the private office, the conference room and the clerical space each demand separate treatment. In the private office there will probably be

(continued on page 169)

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II.34



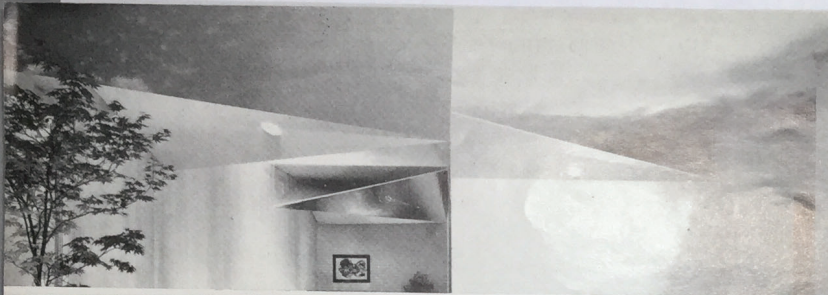
17, Ford Motor Car Central Office Building, Dearborn, where more complex patterns are achieved by the regular intertwining of identical units.
18, the entrance hall of the Tishman

Building, Fifth Avenue, NY, by Carson and Lundin, has a ceiling of cloud-like metal fins by Noguchi which are a highly successful excursion of a sculptor into industrial design.

19, the lobby of the Alcoa Building, Pittsburgh, by Harrison and Abramowitz; the suspended aluminium mesh is also an early attempt at the dapple effect now so often used by Edvard Stone.

18
19

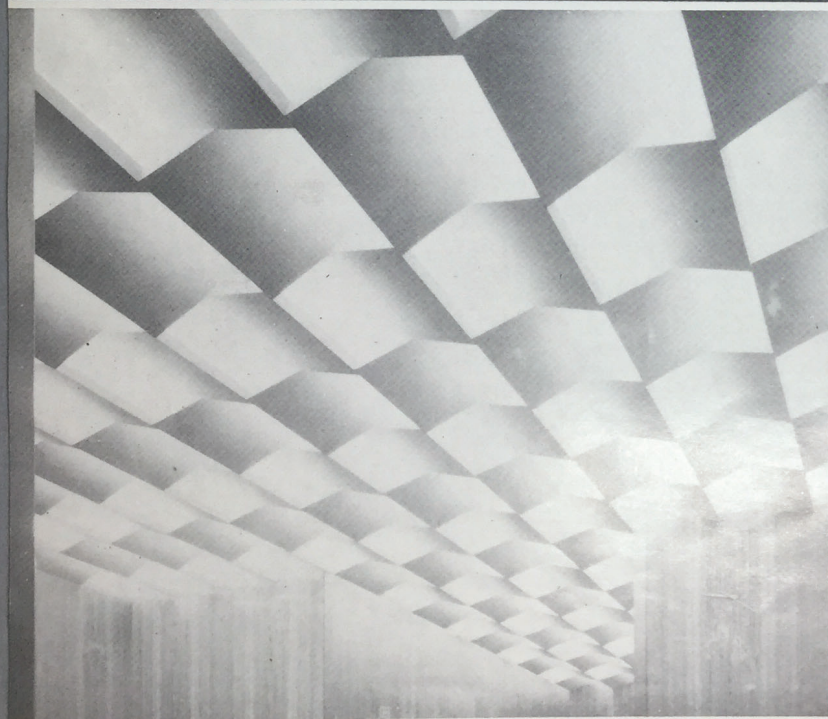
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II.34



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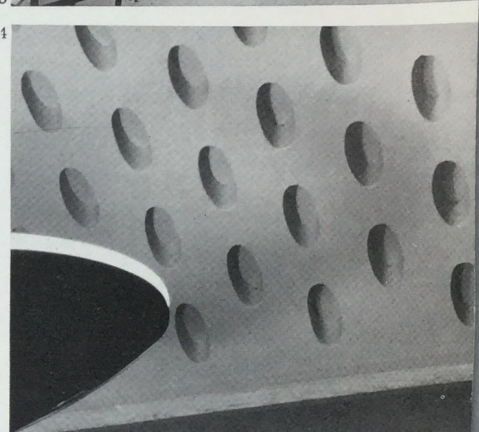
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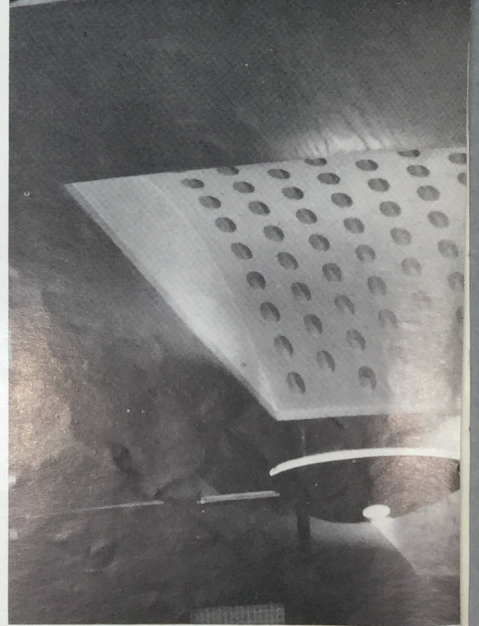
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23



24



The suspended ceiling, although technically always an added element, need not be left out in the early consideration of the room. 20, Knoll Showroom, Milan, with its folded planes over an equally divided room. 21, World House Gallery, New York, by

Kiesler and Bartos. 22, Bank at Tulsa, Oklahoma, by Carson, and Lundin. 23, Philip Johnson's Guest House, New Canaan, Conn. 24, Tea Bar, Lower Regent Street, by the

Design Research Unit. 21 and 23 demonstrate that wall and suspended ceiling can achieve a sculptural unity which becomes the regulating element of the space.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II.34

The Architectural Review, September 1958

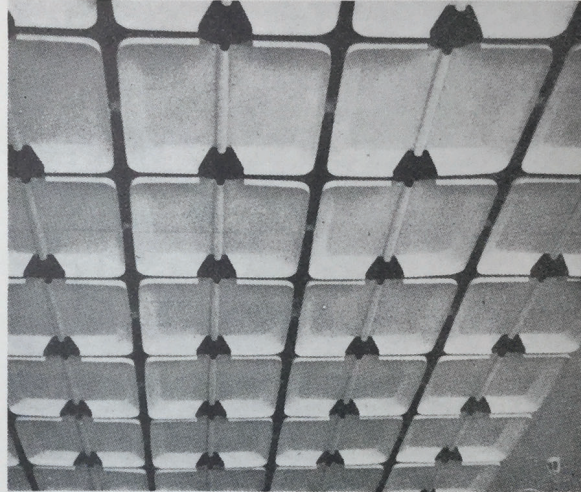
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little need for absorbing any of the sound generated within the room. Design must concentrate on excluding noise from neighbouring areas. Such sound reduction can only be achieved by mass and the blocking of all connecting air spaces. Partitions must either be taken up to the underside of the structural slab and fit tightly or the suspended ceiling must be composed of relatively heavy sound reducing elements. The difference between the average noise level in a large office and that acceptable in a private room may be 20 to 25 decibels. Sound absorption of this order is unlikely to be achieved by a rigid vinyl diffuser or $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick cane fibre, but could, for example, be realized by suspending sheets of 32 oz. glass with their edges sealed. In the conference room sound absorption will most likely be provided by a carpeted floor and wall linings and the ceiling may have to be of a reflective material; it may also be advisable for this surface to be faceted so as to diffuse sound.

The most complex problem occurs in the general office space. Here two criteria ought really to be satisfied: the general noise level, and particularly noises at some distance, should be reduced; but at the same time the level of speech must not be lowered to the extent that it is overlaid by the background noise. Unfortunately the flat ceiling of absorbent material tends to work against these conditions, since the degree of absorption is proportional to the angle of incidence of the sound wave. In other words, the ceiling will be most efficient in relation to noise directly underneath it and least efficient in relation to distant noises hitting it obliquely—a situation, the reverse of the ideal. This problem can be overcome by turning the absorbent material through 90° and suspending it as a series of fins. Saarinen's General Motors Technical Center, 7, and Skidmore, Owings and Merrill's Connecticut General Insurance Building, 2, have adopted this solution with results which seem both visually and functionally highly successful. The suspended fins can also act as light baffles and, in the case of Connecticut General, actually provide sufficient visual cut-off to conceal service runs. In view of the simplicity and usefulness of this arrangement it seems surprising that it has not yet been used in this country.

So far the suspended ceiling has only been discussed in terms of certain notions about light and sound. It has often, however, to perform tasks in connection with heating and ventilation either separately or simultaneously with the first two. The ceiling developed in conjunction with the Wakefield Lighting Company for General Motors Technical Center incorporates luminous panels, sound absorbent baffles, air-conditioning outlets, fire sprinklers and partition fixings and is probably the best co-ordinated building element available 'off-the-peg.' The apparently divergent demands of these separate functions need not, it would seem, conflict.

Some suspended ceilings, like Aalto's delightful inverted trays at the Social Security Building in Helsinki, 25, concentrate on fulfilling only one function, in this case radiant heating. Others like the standard suspended ceiling of perforated metal tiles combine heating and ventilation with some sound absorption



25, restaurant at the Social Security Building, Helsinki by Aalto.

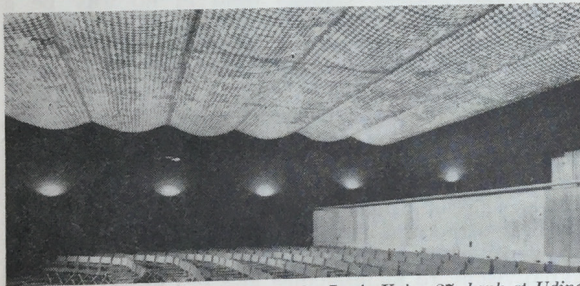
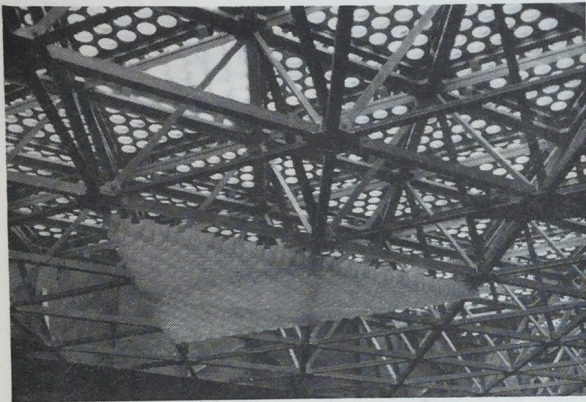
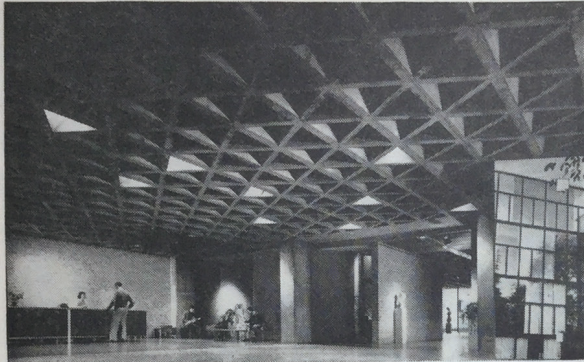
though, of course, sound isolation becomes impossible since the whole of the hollow space between ceiling and slab is used to convey hot air. The merits of using the overhead plane as a heating element are debatable since the desirable heating gradient assumes greatest warmth at floor level. The reverse naturally applies if summer cooling is considered and the ceiling is, therefore, an excellent location for air diffusers or radiant cooling panels. The functional complexity of such multi-purpose ceilings need in no way be a justification for second-rate solutions; it can, on the contrary, if treated with wit, create the sort of visual richness which Finn Juhl achieved in the Trusteeship Council Chamber at the U.N., 3.

The problems of the suspended ceiling are impossible to treat in isolation, for not only is the ceiling itself frequently an intricate combination of several functions, but there is also a continual reference back to the basic assumptions governing the building: to plan form, to structural choice and economy in relation to the depth given up to the ceiling, to cladding, to space sub-division, to maintenance and fire protection. On some of these aspects the architect is able to get specialist advice, though the number of such consultants in this country independent of particular business organizations is relatively small. The meshing of the separate and possibly conflicting advice given by these consultants is still the architect's responsibility. In the last resort it should, perhaps, always remain so. But there does seem a place for a group practice covering the whole range of specialist fields which could advise an architect at the earliest possible stage of design on the implications of the alternative choices. It is this sort of fundamental advice which it is so hard to get at the moment.

The most encouraging recent development in the use of suspended ceilings has not been the refinement of technique—radical technical changes await the commercial introduction of such devices as electroluminescence—but the marked extension of its visual vocabulary. This extension has been brought about by the belated awareness that a suspended ceiling is not

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II.34

Michael Brawne: LOOKING UP



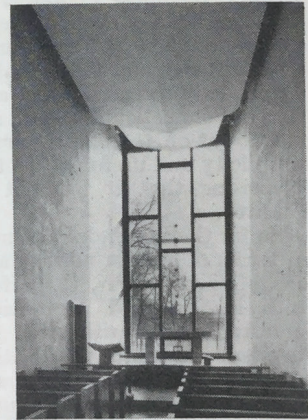
26, entrance hall, Yale Art Gallery, by Louis Kahn. 27, bank at Udine by Studio Valle, during construction. 28, auditorium at the Fine Arts Center of the University of Arkansas by Edward Stone.

an imitation plaster surface with a smooth trowelled finish, but more often an assembly of a large number of separate pieces and that these pieces have an expressive quality in their own right which can easily be exploited. (To get such an assembly absolutely flat and aligned has always been rather difficult, particularly if the light sources are very near the ceiling when they turn the slightest imperfection into a noticeable shadow.) The additive nature of the suspended ceiling has now been adequately demonstrated by such examples as Breuer's Bijenkorf, 11, Juhl's Trusteeship Council Chamber or Valle's Bank at Udine, 6. The forms which a ceiling designed on such assumptions can take have hardly been exploited yet. Louis Kahn's concrete tetrahedra at the Yale Art Gallery, 26, though not in any way a suspended ceiling, show a possible line of development. The prefabricated suspended

ceiling—as distinct from the suspended ceiling of plaster or sprayed asbestos—is, like the curtain wall, essentially additive architecture.

There are many approaches to the possibilities and problems of this kind of additive design. The most obvious assembly consists of taking acoustic panels, lights and their supporting grid and letting each stand separately. Breuer's ceiling in Rotterdam or Farmer and Dark's ceiling at Marchwood, belong to this category. At the other end of the scale there is Studio Valle's brilliant device of combining an opal acrylic honeycomb into a ceiling plane and then adding this entire plane to the underside of a complex truss so that structure and ceiling combine to form a shimmering surface overhead. This shimmering effect, as of light coming through moving leaves on a spring day, achieving the apparent paradox of restful excitement, is also the intention of the dapple ceilings with which Edward Stone has recently been experimenting. The courtyard of the U.S. Embassy at Delhi will be covered by necklaces of aluminium discs diffusing the light onto the water garden below. Dapple ceilings do not, however, depend on Indian sunlight. Stone has hung a similar ceiling over an auditorium at the Fine Arts Center of the University of Arkansas and hidden electric lights and ducts behind it, 28.

Together with the appreciation of the additive quality of many factory made ceilings has come the awareness that the suspended ceiling can, whatever its construction, be a form-giving component within the organization of a space. This second discovery may, in the end, prove more important than the first. Phillip Johnson's attenuated and Soanesque vaults in the brick guest house which faces his glass enclosure at New Canaan, Connecticut, 23, were perhaps the first to make this point. Johnson has now used a similarly taut ceiling in his synagogue at Port Chester, N.Y., where its obviously suspended canopy-like nature becomes even clearer. Both these ceilings are, despite their acknowledged superimposed character, controlling elements within each space. The same may be said of the ceilings in the chapels at Brandeis, 29, the Knoll Showrooms in Milan, 20, and Kiesler's World House Gallery in New York, 21, where suspended ceiling and suspended wall merge into a continuous flow.



29, Protestant chapel at Brandeis University by Harrison and Abramowitz.

These faceted or curvilinear forms are evidently part of a new sculptural awareness of space which we are currently experiencing. A new visual feeling often precedes the technical innovation which will in fact make it possible, and it may be, that these moulded ceilings are the fumbling prototypes of forms which will become commonplace in what might perhaps best be termed the 'resin' age.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

Synagogue
 Commentary - Feb. 1956

MODERN ART IN THE SYNAGOGUE: II

Artist, Architect, and Building Committee Collaborate

WILLIAM SCHACK

IN MY first article in the December 1955 issue of COMMENTARY, I asserted that in the last few years American synagogues were, "for the first time, beginning to make full use of the related plastic arts for both interior and exterior decoration."

Not every temple has gone in for full-scale use of all the decorative arts. As a beginning, many of them have modernized their exterior decoration only to the extent of simplifying it. Sometimes such decoration goes but a step beyond the conventional menorah. But you can find modern mosaics and stone carvings in the small temples of towns like Lock Haven and Greensburg, Pennsylvania; and the work of Braverman and Halperin throughout the Middle West contains carvings by Esther Samolar, Frank Jirouch, and Arnold H. Bergier. For Temple Israel in Canton, Ohio, Bergier was asked to prepare four stone panels, and A. Raymond Katz a hammered-brass menorah for a free-standing pylon in the courtyard. (Mr. Katz provided another menorah and a cast-bronze decoration for the Ark in the interior.)

In other temples, however, the arts have been employed more extensively. Percival Goodman, of New York, has been more active perhaps than any other architect in pursuing this goal, as he has in creating a modern synagogue style. His temple in Mill-

burn, N. J., built nearly five years ago, has already exerted a considerable influence on other architects: its one-story construction, use of a narrow, decorative brick (left naked on the inside surface), dispersion of rooms into wings rather than centrally massing them, use of an attractive, economical, and durable vinyl plastic partition rather than one solid wall for the sanctuary (the partition can be folded away to make a single large room)—such elements are being widely adopted. What distinguishes Millburn is its taste and tact: how its wings join each other, the varied decorative treatment of exterior walls and windows, the adornment of the brick walls of the sanctuary with Scriptural quotations wrought in brass set into them. And, beyond taste and tact, there is the boldness of its decoration.

Not the least interesting aspect of the integration of architecture and the plastic arts in the new temples is that virtually all the artists brought into the collaboration can be called modern, and quite a few of them advance-guard. When an architect like Goodman is asked to submit half a dozen names for the projects in a given temple, he does not try to make a three-way compromise between modern, moderate, and conservative in hopes of pleasing every taste, but asks for a completely modern group of artists whose work will be consistent with his own taste and style. In Millburn he engaged Robert Motherwell to do a mural for the lobby, Adolph Gottlieb to design the curtain of the Ark, and Herbert Ferber to create a sculpture outside the sanctuary.

Each of these works enhances the architecture without competing with it. Ferber's piece, based on the theme "And the bush was not consumed," is not representational but an abstraction. You cannot see an actual bush in it, or a flame, but, keeping the subject in mind, you can feel the suggestion of flaming branches in the complex thrusts of its curvilinear shapes even though this

THIS is the second of two articles (the first appeared in December 1955) in which WILLIAM SCHACK reports on the postwar boom in synagogue and center art. Mr. Schack is a free-lance writer whose critical pieces appear frequently in COMMENTARY; he has also contributed to numerous other journals, among them *The Arts*, *American Magazine of Art*, and *Architectural Forum*, and is the author of the unique *And He Sat Among the Ashes*, a biography of Louis Eilshemius, the painter. Mr. Schack was educated at Cornell University and now resides in Redding, Conn.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

MODERN ART IN THE SYNAGOGUE: II

153

twelve-foot sculpture is a thing of copper and lead sheeting and rods. Uniquely mounted on a wood panel, it rises clear above the roof of the sanctuary; and this soaring note is in happy contrast with the low, spread-out stability of the building itself. Some people will find it a more effective religious symbol than the familiar Shield of David worked into the window frame beside it.

Motherwell based his design on traditional symbols—the Tables of the Law, a menorah, etc.—combined with invented symbols (which I will discuss later), all kept flat to make the painting a part of the wall: the theme of it is in fact “The Wall of the Temple.” To make more interesting patterns, Motherwell does not render the symbols literally: the menorah, for example, is not sedately symmetrical—none of its opposing branches pairs off from the central support. In view of its large areas of apparently bright orange and white, the mural is surprisingly subtle in its color harmony. Somehow the small areas of yellow ochre and gray balance the ingeniously toned-down orange and white. To my eye, the painting is somewhat too large to be seen effectively even across the full width of the lobby, which is rather narrow; it is, nonetheless, a highly successful design in itself and at the least an arresting decoration in its position.

Into the severe sanctuary, Gottlieb introduced an accent of vivid color and rich patterning at the focal point of the ritual: the Ark, which is otherwise set in a simple recess flanked by polished birch slabs from floor to ceiling. The curtains, their long red velvet folds richly varied with appliquéd patterns derived from traditional symbols, ingeniously (a few perfunctorily) simplified, are therefore more than accessory decoration: they are at the heart of the service. In his easel painting Gottlieb has worked frequently in a “pictographic” idiom, and this was easily adaptable to the design of the curtain.

IN MILLBURN, Goodman was designing a structure suitable for a congregation of two hundred souls and for a capacity attendance (on the High Holidays) of six hundred. Recently, in Springfield, Mass., his Congregation Beth-El was completed, which accommodates five hundred families in its main chapel. In itself, the increased size of the temple would have little meaning; what

is significant is that here, in working on a larger scale, and with a completely free hand, Goodman has achieved his outstanding design to date. The structure, occupying less than a quarter-acre of its twelve-acre setting, is every inch of it “built”—in the sense that one speaks of a story being fully “written.” Everything has both an aesthetic and a functional point. From the sanctuary to the custodian’s apartment, nothing seems careless or accidental or unnecessary or not thought out: the building is thoroughly realized as a temple.

With a certain Japanese quality due to its canted eave-beams, its portico, and its sensitive use of wood (combined with a richly decorative brick—there is hardly any steel in the structure), the temple makes, too, a quasi-Japanese impression of economy in many details. It is said, for example, that by use of a plastic partition somewhat similar to the one in Millburn in place of a contemplated all-wood wall, enough money was saved to pay for virtually all the temple’s art work, which cost around \$25,000. The total budget for building, decoration, and furnishings was \$750,000—a modest sum for so magnificent a result. In the enthusiastic opinion of Beth-El’s Rabbi Eliezer Levy, every building committee should be made to know that the beauty and economy of his temple are owed to the free hand given the architect.

The free hand included the planning for the decoration, and the choice of the artists to execute it. Millburn had been a pilot venture; its success encouraged Goodman to incorporate a greater number of art works in Springfield in keeping with its larger scale. The exterior sculpture here, designed by Ibram Lassaw, on the theme of the “Pillar of Fire,” soars to a height of twenty-eight feet, yet—situated as it is in a shallow niche of a huge brick wall, where it can be clearly seen from the avenue of approach to the temple as well as from the broad lawn before it—it falls lightly into place, an airily monumental work. Like Ferber’s “And the bush was not consumed,” this sculpture is also completely abstract, and in the same open-work idiom. It has, however, a quality of its own derived from the sculptor’s way of producing variations within the seemingly equal lengths and identical shapes of its metal strips curving upward to suggest flames. Yet, at a distance or even closer up at first glance,

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

all this writhing metal seems almost decorous in its symmetry, a charming symbol for the temple.

In the sanctuary, once again Adolph Gottlieb's work provides the high color notes. For the Ark he designed a red and white curtain and a shallow V-shaped valance close-packed with traditional and other symbols to give it the richness of a Torah crown. For the rear wall opposite the Ark he has created a panel of twelve more open designs, easier to see as a whole than the valance: these, executed in tapestry by Edward Field, are entirely abstract, though the motifs allude somewhat to the twelve major days in the Jewish religious calendar. Between these beautiful linear patterns and harmonies in rose-violet-gray-buff-black expressive of the holidays, and the vivid valance symbolic of the Torah, the gamut of Jewish life is encompassed. At the same time, they furnish the needed brighter hues and tones to contrast with the dull browns of woodwork and upholstery and the bronze of Lassaw's fine menorah and Eternal Light.

The sanctuary is full of ingenuities and harmonies which can only be tediously described in words. It does not, however, entirely escape a touch of theatricality in the area of the Ark, where the white of the curtains seems to "jump," and the free-standing wall of marble behind the Ark makes a kind of backdrop for the too obviously balanced tall redwood columns that are the sentinels of the Ark. The *bima* has assumed something of the air of a stage which is set for a morality play in modern dress. Perhaps this is not altogether out of keeping with the spirit of a congregation composed very largely of college graduates.

Beth-El has a secondary chapel for memorial services and other small gatherings. This chapel is intimate not only in dimension but also in decoration: the menorah stands near a small Ark (designed from the description of the original Ark in Exodus); there is a row of miniscule stained-glass windows in solid luminous colors. For this room Motherwell designed a combination rug and wall hanging (behind the Ark). Imaginatively conceived for this particular position, the rug is not equally felicitous throughout; there is more invention on the wall than on the floor: perhaps the artist should not have been asked to combine two essentially sepa-

rate objects in one design. One of the rug's details raises an interesting point. To break up the monotony of the extensive border, the artist used the names of the Patriarchs and the Twelve Tribes in a regular Hebrew script. To the naive eye of someone who does not know Hebrew or Yiddish well, this would seem to be an ingenious device—a variation on the use, in Cubist collages, of a printed page or, in Cubist paintings, of a few carefully traced capital letters—to enrich otherwise blank planes. But to someone who knows either language well, the device is naive—literal and formal, the equivalent, in English, of writing "Abraham, Isaac, Jacob," etc., in Palmer penmanship. For such a person, the lettering becomes decoration only when it is treated with imagination.

Several over-door sculptures by Lassaw handsomely round out the decoration of Beth-El. One other feature, which I believe unique, has been devised to preserve the aesthetic purity of the temple. In place of the memorial tablets that are usually mounted chaotically on lobby walls, Beth-El has a rack in which the nameplates of the families holding memorial services on the given day are placed. Afterwards these plates are filed away. The dead are thus publicly remembered every year, and perhaps more effectively than by a permanent clutter of tablets of conflicting styles—when they have any style at all.

THREE times as large as Beth-El is another edifice designed by Mr. Goodman in association with Braverman and Halperin—Fairmount Temple in Beachwood Village, a suburb of Cleveland. Scheduled to be completed some time this year for the 2300-family congregation of Rabbi Barnett R. Brickner, it will be one of the largest temples in the country. It includes a sanctuary connected with a large social hall; a separate chapel building; a separate auditorium building; and three school buildings. It will also have large office units to accommodate three rabbis, the school supervisory staff, and the administrative staff; and a recreational unit. All of these structures are one story high and continuously interconnected, with three garden courtyards to provide "breathers." These widespread multiple units make up what Rabbi Brickner calls a "campus temple."

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

MODERN ART IN THE SYNAGOGUE: II

155

By way of decorative art the plans call for mosaic columns at the entrance, bronze reliefs in the sanctuary, specially designed menorah and Eternal Light, tapestries on the movable wall dividing sanctuary from social hall, and some other small pieces. Although the roster of artists cannot be given yet, it is an all-modern cast and includes at least one eminent artist who has not hitherto worked in the field of synagogue art.

It is interesting to note that Park Synagogue in Cleveland, designed by the late Eric Mendelsohn and built in 1950 at a cost of some two million dollars (it is estimated that Fairmount will cost a quarter of a million more), limited its decorative treatment to the background of the Ark, and kept this treatment purely formal in character. Possibly the architect did not wish any art with a power of its own to compete with the "floating dome" he created over the sanctuary. This structure of blown concrete (over various materials: copper-sheathed outside and lined with acoustic tile inside) is 110 feet in diameter and rests on seven pillars embodied in the walls of the room, so that the "ceiling" is all dome. This is engineering become a work of art. One clause in the contract is worth noting. It specifies that, while the decorations may be abstract in over-all design, they must nevertheless be based on recognizable motifs.

AT FIRST glance, Congregation Kneses Tifereth Israel, now under construction in Port Chester, N. Y., seems less indebted to architectural traditions than any of the new synagogues. It is wholly modern in style. But it is modern without bleakness, achieving both exquisiteness and classic dignity—even a kinship with the classic. Not that this temple designed by Philip C. Johnson is Greek re-revival. It has no entablature resting on columns—it has no columns. Mr. Johnson works in an entirely contemporary idiom; he is well known for his Museum of Modern Art in New York and the glass house he built for his own home in New Canaan, Conn. The ground plan of the synagogue is an ellipse set against a rectangle, the long axis of the ellipse being parallel to but shorter than the length of the rectangle. The structure built on the ellipse constitutes the entrance; the one on the rectangular plan, the sanctuary and related rooms; and

the first rises only part way against the façade, so that the two units do not compete for attention: the sanctuary is dominant, as it should be. Not in any external likeness but only in the purity of the proportions—in length, width, and height—of these two simple, mathematically fundamental shapes does the synagogue recall the seemingly inevitable unity of the Greek temple. In a happily distant way, too, the curved shape of the entrance contrasting with the right-angled block of the sanctuary recalls round columns before rectangular peristyle. The synagogue's whiteness (but it is sheathed in an off-white pre-cast stone, not marble) also recalls the Greek temple—at least as we know the ruins today, with their original paint eroded.

That the worshipper—and sightseer—should not merely glimpse such beauty in passing, Mr. Johnson has set the main façade at right angles to the street. One has thus, as one approaches from a distant gate (the temple is set in a ten-acre tract), a good long satisfying look at it.

Derived, again distantly, from another tradition are the stained glass windows (the colored glass windows of the average *shul*, crude in color and design, can hardly be dignified as "traditional"). These are narrow panels, each of a single luminous color (as in the small chapel of Beth-El, in Springfield), distributed in five tiers across the façade. On the exterior they provide an accent in the stone surface, but the awesomeness of their pure color is felt only in the transmitted light of the interior: in the morning sunlight pastel-soft violet, red, green, yellow beams stream through the air and lie aslant the floor in rich patches. One's eyes are naturally drawn upwards to the topmost of these glowing panes, so that they add to the mere physical height (40 ft.) of the sanctuary something of the *loftiness* which is the incomparable property of the soaring arch. This effect, however, is felt maximally only at the High Holidays, for it is only then that the entire space below becomes the sanctuary. To allow the temple to carry out its year-round secular and quasi-religious functions, the architect frankly divided up the main floor with aluminum partitions eight feet high: these are easily "knocked down" when the full congregation of four hundred families attends the major

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

service of the year, and nothing then stands between the eye and the windows.

At this writing, with the temple itself incomplete, I cannot speak concretely of the accessory decoration. To avoid conflict with the stained glass windows, Mr. Johnson is confining the interior decoration to carved doors for the Ark (which he is designing himself), and a screen behind it. Outdoors, there will be bronze columns before the entrance. All of this, together with a menorah and Eternal Light, will be the work of Ibram Lassaw, whose style, the architect feels, is consonant with that of the temple itself.

One looks forward with more than mere curiosity to Temple Beth Sholom in Philadelphia, which has been designed by America's old master in architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright. Under consideration for several years now, the temple is scheduled to rise from the ground this spring.

How much should be spent on art for the synagogues, temples, and centers? Only too often people who do not care for art raise their voices when they ask the question, as if it were unanswerable—or as if they did not want to hear a reasonable answer. But, coolly considered, the question can be reasonably answered. Percival Goodman tries to get 2 per cent of the building cost allocated for art. While he admits that he does not always get that much, it is his hope that “as time goes on, it will be taken for granted as a necessary element in the cost.” In Springfield, he got more than 3 per cent. In Hillcrest in Queens—not Mr. Goodman's work—the art came to 2.6 per cent of the \$600,000 building cost.

The centers have nothing comparable to show. Yet if only one per cent of the 45 millions budgeted for the 135 new community centers had been allocated for art and the sum divided—let us say equally, for the sake of simplicity—it would have come to no more than \$3,300 a piece, enough to hide the aesthetic nakedness of many a too practical building. Actually, the sum spent for decorative art was only a small fraction of one per cent. Even in Buffalo, which paid a moderate \$2,600 for its mural, the expenditure was only 0.3 per cent of the building cost. To pass by such smaller centers as those of Columbus and Englewood, not one dollar

will have been spent for art in the million-dollar jobs in Syracuse, N. Y., New Haven, Conn., and the \$1,750,000 center in Milwaukee (compare this with the \$750,000 total cost of Beth-El, in Springfield, with all its fine works of art).

Apologists assert that it is easier to obtain money for art in a synagogue than in a center, that donors readily understand that a place of worship is “something special”—and that something special costs money. This is undoubtedly true, and in several of the postwar synagogue-centers (generally called “Jewish Centers”) the synagogue has been the avenue of entrance for what art there is. In a place like the Forest Hills Jewish Center in Queens, N. Y., however, the chapel is too detached from the huge center proper to permit the Ark area, which is its sole adornment, to carry over. (And the sanctuary would be better off, too, in this case without its wall of intricate rococo symmetries designed by the late Arthur Szyk, the miniaturist painter, in the manner of a traditional Torah breastplate, magnified a thousandfold.) But some of the synagogue-centers have also integrated the arts with their architecture, and in these the religious unit gives its blessing to the social unit in various measure.

At the Rego Park Jewish Center, which is not far from the Forest Hills Jewish Center, the architects Frank Grad and Sons, of Newark, N. J., related the two-story center unit, with its simple façade, to the imposing five-story temple structure by giving them a common flight of steps and a common basal course of red granite; the facing of their separate entrances is in the same material. This kind of unity is rather contrived, an architectural marriage of convenience. But the temple's art also serves the social area in part. Thus, the foyer is bounded on all sides by massive birch doors bearing symbolic wood carvings in high relief by Don Benaron: one pair of these doors gives on the lobby of the social center. More importantly, the mural designed by A. Raymond Katz, six feet high and extending over the thirty-six-foot width of the temple's entrance, is on perpetual loan to the social center. The rest of the decoration belongs exclusively to the sanctuary.

The mural by Mr. Katz is executed in mosaic, a medium that has come back to life

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

MODERN ART IN THE SYNAGOGUE: II

157

in recent years and which this artist has used skillfully, sometimes dryly, in synagogue decoration. Here, at Rego Park, he has interwoven motifs of the Jewish holidays and symbols of the names of God in a complex design in full palette where the exuberant flow of line and color holds the eye rather than any single detail. Even the boldness of the hand holding a ram's horn which is the central motif is unstressed by ambiguity, for the fingers also shape the letter *shin* (standing for *Shaddai*). The fluency of this design is of the order found in good easel painting, and if one doubts for a moment that such subtlety is appropriate for so stubborn a medium as ceramic and glass, he has only to recall that the great Byzantine mosaics are more subtle in their modeling and means of modifying areas of solid color than their "primitive" quality would lead the unsubtle to think.

(In his book published three years ago, *A New Art for an Old Religion*, Mr. Katz has given examples of the tremendous pictorial possibilities of the characters of the Hebrew alphabet, based either on their pictographic origins or, more significantly, on the aesthetic manipulation suggested by their shapes and lines. Possibly his finest demonstration of these possibilities is to be found in his mosaic mural in Temple Beth Shalom, in Union, N. J. High on the wall above the Ark, it is an invocation of the seven names of God—*Echod*, *Shaddai*, *Adonai*, and so on—given only by their initial letters. These are modified, almost transformed, by twisting and swirling, by elongation and fantastication, against a background of calm cloud forms in solid color. What began as an *ayin* becomes a plant in the tornado of Yahweh's wrath; a *shin* quivers in multi-color. With their emotive quality, these straining figures communicate a sense of the Ineffable Name disguised in the seven. I say "figures" because the letters are as "real" as chairs or faces. Only to one who did not recognize the Hebrew letters as such, would this mural seem wholly abstract.)

In the sanctuary of Rego Park, Mr. Katz was given another and even more difficult assignment—stained-glass windows (another medium which modern artists are reviving. In Temple Emanuel, Cleveland, the seven sprightly, semi-abstract panels by Merle

James are small, and intended as decorative accents rather than major elements. In Har Zion Temple, Philadelphia, the design of a large memorial window of unusual dimensions was approached with considerable imagination by Dr. Stephen S. and Louise Kayser, even if it is not as competent as their windows in the sanctuary and assembly hall. These, in turn, contrast favorably with the technically more accomplished but wholly conventional rose windows over the entrance to the sanctuary. It is significant of the change of taste in the past quarter-century that it will not be feasible to use any of the once-prized Tiffany-designed windows in Rabbi Brickner's present Euclid Avenue Temple for the new Fairmount Temple, as originally proposed.) In Rego Park, two obstacles hampered Katz and to some degree defeated him in advance. First, the center building occupies practically its whole site, for no additional land was available in this built-up neighborhood. As a result, the lower left-hand windows (as one faces the pulpit) do not receive natural daylight; and an unilluminated stained-glass window is a contradiction in terms. Secondly, apparently for engineering reasons, part of what should have been window space is taken up by wall; that is, instead of three stained-glass windows on each side, there are six. This more than doubled the artist's difficulties. Faced with the alternative of making twelve independent designs or attempting to unify each top and bottom unit, he chose the latter. By various devices and a vigorous baroque design in a harmony dominated by deep blues and ruby reds, he appreciably overcame the handicaps which should not have been imposed on him in the first place.

The Ark and its setting are an elaborate—to my taste, over-ornate—composition in wood and marble by Edouardo Battisti. But there is simplicity in the small chapel, where Mr. Katz had another inning: his pair of hammered-brass menorahs, small and delicate, make the large bronze ones in the sanctuary look like what they are—solid, competent objects from a standard catalogue.

Nor many miles from Rego Park, at the Hillcrest Jewish Center, the sharing of the decorations by center and temple has been solved in a more subtle and satisfying way by the associated architects Glaberson-

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

COMMENTARY

Klein, of New York.* Though the exterior form is as plain as a Friends' meeting place, this is a beautifully integrated work of architecture and art, of religious and social center.

Since there is a single entrance and a common lobby, the mural on the façade and the mural in the lobby perforce serve both the religious and the social units; and the curvilinear shape of the lobby makes for a more animated relationship between the two and suggests their manifold activities. Justly enough, the third work of art belongs to the sanctuary: it is, on the doors of the Ark, a charming miniature mosaic by Raymond Katz blending a few traditional motifs into its largely abstract play. The sanctuary itself is as small and intimate as a jewel box, and one structural detail (among others) contributes to that feeling: a niche-like wall behind the Ark broadens upward and outward to become a kind of canopy, a hung ceiling in which a large glass panel bears a wooden Shield of David. This sweeping panel almost physically unites rabbi and Ark and congregation. The beauty of Hillcrest's large auditorium is also architectural: in its proportions, the overlapping shell design of its lofty ceiling, and its simplicity of surface. Moreover, the simplest of color schemes carries out the structural feeling.

Both the exterior and the lobby murals were designed by Anton Refregier. The first, executed in ceramic tile, consists of five panels, each of which is a packed composite of motifs expressing its theme: the Sabbath, Peace, the Fruitful Life, Righteousness, and Eternity. Although the thematic burden is heavy, the artist has assimilated it and it has not thrown him off balance. Each panel comes through cleanly in a flexible use of the medium: the background tiles are of solid color, mottled, or formally patterned, as their part in the over-all design dictates, while the design proper is applied in simplified planes and in as varied a color range as if it were on canvas. In "Jacob's Dream," the mural in the lobby, the artist uses the same simplified realistic style to flatten the forms and make them part of the wall. Set in a shallow recess and well lighted, the painting is a cool harmony of yellow-reddish brown

earth colors and blues. Like the ceramic tile mural outside, this is not especially stirring art but, intelligent and skillfully executed, it achieves both the symbolic and decorative intent it strives for.

ONE of the most challenging problems in any of the new communal buildings was the façade of the four-story Milton Steinberg House, a memorial to the late rabbi of the Park Avenue Synagogue, New York, which adjoins it. Here it was decided to use a stained-glass "curtain wall," as a façade without structural function is called. That the commission should have been given to Adolph Gottlieb, who is an outstanding advance-guard painter of easel pictures, many of them in a "pictographic" idiom that some people find cryptographic, and who had never worked in stained glass before, is surprising enough. So is the solution with which he came up—partly on its own account, partly because it demonstrates how persistent is the hard-won style of an artist who knows his own mind in whatever medium he turns to.

Since the Milton Steinberg House is essentially a secular building, largely given over to classrooms and offices, Gottlieb reasoned that the over-all design transmitting subdued, glowing colors as traditionally used for high-ceiling sanctuaries was not appropriate. The space behind the curtain wall was divided into four floors, so that one could only have seen fragments of an over-all design from any room; and students and teachers were there, not to indulge in mysticism, but to make a rational attack on Hebrew grammar, history, or whatever subject, and for this they had to use their eyes on books. The beautiful radiance of stained glass was not optically desirable for sustained reading. On the other hand, artificial light within the room overpowers the light transmitted by stained glass, and in effect blots out its design.

In an effort to use daylight to maximum advantage, Gottlieb arrived at a compromise solution: confining his pictographic designs to narrow strips, he used a diamond pattern in pale pastel shades for the rest of the window. This, made of a highly translucent type of stained glass, admits daylight to the class rooms, while the richly colored inscribed panels decorate them. The panels are made up in twenty-one different designs sug-

*See Morris Freedman's "New Jewish Community in Formation" in the January 1955 COMMENTARY for a detailed description of this center.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

MODERN ART IN THE SYNAGOGUE: II

159

gested by the Jewish holidays, interpreted largely in traditional symbols and partly in invented ones.

Happy as Gottlieb's solution may be (he looked vainly for a precedent to guide him), it may still be said that the diamond pattern is too easy a way out and dodges the task of exacting the full design-potential of so rich a medium as stained glass. And it is true that in both France and Germany all-over designs of both figurative and abstract character have been achieved. But none of these, so far as I know, compares in size with the Gottlieb window or is limited by the architectural conditions imposed on him.

The building committee of the Park Avenue Synagogue must have had an uneasy time deciding on the general style of the memorial, for the synagogue itself, built a generation ago, has the elaborate façade and interior of the then favored "Oriental" look. To set up an annex (with corridors leading to the synagogue) in a modern style would make for architectural discontinuity and perhaps reflect on the style of the old building; but to make the new building pseudo-Oriental to match it, when the trend to the contemporary was so strong, would be to invite mockery. No compromise was possible; it was one or the other. The decision to be contemporary has been justified by the result. Even the cost of the curtain wall—\$46,000—is said to be less than what an all-marble front would have come to.

ONE naturally asks what the public reaction has been to such modern art in the synagogue. The art magazines have of course covered it as art, but even the general press has given it a good deal of attention as news, perhaps as sensation but without playing it up as such; *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* have all lavished color coverage on it. But we may assume that the press would never say a harsh word, fearing that it would be mistaken for disrespect to the religion and an insult to the congregation (the artist's susceptibilities wouldn't matter). The feelings of the congregation are more significant; and there seems to be little doubt that a majority have approved of most of the art, sometimes hesitantly but often enthusiastically. That there is a minority which doubts and dislikes it is not surprising—the surprising thing is that it is so small. For the division of opinion among

laymen over a modern work of art (and all art is created for the layman) is inevitable, when even an academic mural like Winters' arouses controversy. And it was not many years ago that a magazine as progressive as *Harper's* could print an article which seriously contended that Cézanne was no painter at all but a fraud promoted by a phony cult.

People come to art with varying degrees of experience of it—the only way one can learn to "know" art. Those with little experience are most impressed, perhaps only impressed, by a work which, they think, exactly reproduces nature. This has probably been true in all eras; what changes is the standard of what it is that constitutes "just like" a face or tree. In 1953, Katz painted four true fresco panels for Congregation Beth El, Norwalk, Conn. The themes were the Revelation at Mount Sinai, Prophetic Idealism, Jewish Learning, and the Rebirth of Zion. The artist submitted his sketches and they were approved. But when the paintings were finished the sponsors were dissatisfied with them—not with their weak points but with a certain archaism in the drawing of some figures and a primitive quality of space and scene which happen to be their chief merits. In other words, the pictures were not "real" enough. Apparently, the judges thought that the sketches were intended only to give a rough idea of the subject matter, which would be "fully" rendered in the final paintings. In the second panel, for instance, they may have been expecting Jeremiah, Micah, and Isaiah as "shot" by a candid camera on the Street of the Prophets. The "just like" standard in our time for many is the photograph.

How square this with the acceptance of modern art elsewhere? For there is no reason to suppose that the people of Norwalk are aesthetically more benighted than those of Millburn. Partly, perhaps, the curtains of the Ark have been fairly easy to take, and they have helped to make the other modern works acceptable. For from ancient times there has been a play of free forms, of wholly abstract shapes, in the fabrics of many peoples. If you have to go to a museum to see Peruvian textiles, you can see the cross-stitch pattern of a Russian blouse on the street, the closely packed Yemenite embroidery on dresses off every ship from Israel, and a greater variety of abstract patterns on the curtains, rugs,

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

piece goods, and flooring materials on sale in every department store. So prepared, the ladies of the congregation at Millburn and elsewhere, even if they do not hang Picassos in their living rooms, were quite at ease in executing the advanced designs for curtains of the Ark.

The appeal of being up to date has counted heavily in the acceptance of modern architecture and design for the building itself. The follow-up, that you should install modern art in a modern building, has been considered logical enough, but harder to sell. There is no gainsaying the fact that in many cases it has been a determined few on a building committee who have persuaded their colleagues or, failing that, "rammed down their throats," as one rabbi frankly put it, the notion that modern art was the most suitable expression for them. Once the art is finished and in place, the will to believe it is good spreads from building committee to the rest of the congregation; approached in that spirit, with misgivings held in abeyance and dispelled by a good press, the art has time to work. If one has felt that El Greco's "View of Toledo" is great painting, one comes in time to feel that Picasso's "The Three Musicians" is great too. And the artists I have reviewed here are not more difficult than El Greco or Picasso.

ALL this fine building and fostering of the arts has happened so fast that people in widely separated communities have hardly been aware of it as a general phenomenon. That is becoming manifest now as the movement accelerates. Whether the new temples and art will also help to evoke, along the way, a viable Judaism; whether the members of centers and synagogues, pursuing the American way of life in a tangle of dramatics and dances, gymnasiums and banquets, social hall log-rolling and in-sanctuary business deals (which are, however, standard practice in old-fashioned synagogues as well), will manage also—to quote an old friend's pun—to become rejuvenated, is for the future to tell. The uncertainty finds its reflection in the prevailingly rationalistic approach of most of the artists to their work in the synagogue and the way they make use of the symbols of Judaism.

A self-conscious religiosity marks the mural by William Halsey in Percival Good-

man's Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, which includes in its decorative plan a menorah and Eternal Light, and a Chanukah menorah by Arnold H. Bergier; a memorial book by Arnold Bank; and, designed by Amalie Rothschild, an ingenious four-part panel in *gros point* for the doors of the Ark: when the doors are open, the congregation sees two unbroken compositions.

Mr. Halsey's mural—based on a high-flown exposition in words by Paul Goodman—"employing the traditional story and prophecy," attempts nothing less than directly to "meet the modern, present-day way of posing the problem of religion . . . [which] has two integrally related parts: the Living God and the Messianic hope." Conceived clearly in visual terms, the painting does not too visibly strain under its verbal burden—it arrives at a well-knit composition. It is serious and purposeful. But even if it were not so derivative in style—employing the arbitrary raying lines of one form of Cubism, the formalized drawing of the icon and the simplistic drawing of the comic strip, the stark line and the spirit of Blake—it would have been hard put to it to "prove the religion, especially to young people who question and think hard."

Goodman's italicized demand is rather too much to ask of one artist in a single try. Not even the minority of artists engaged in the new synagogues who acknowledge some religious belief would attempt so much. And the majority—which is my chief point—will not attempt it at all: primarily they are doing an aesthetic job. The spirit cannot be forced: the unreligious will not take root in the floor of a synagogue, nor even, when artists are called in early to plan its decoration, in its soil.

That is why they are uneasy with the traditional symbols of Judaism. Gottlieb, for example, uses them grudgingly, though ably, on the hypothesis that they are aesthetically dead; hence he prefers to devise new motifs which may or may not be understood as symbols. I have referred also to Motherwell's invented symbols. The fact that he is not Jewish is hardly relevant, for he, like his fellow Gentile, Refregier, has for that very reason made a close study of the traditional symbols, which are not too familiar to him to have lost their evocative power. (True, he went astray in the lettering on the rug in Springfield, but a Jewish artist unfamiliar

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

MODERN ART IN THE SYNAGOGUE: II

161

with the Jewish alphabet could have erred in the same way.) If the invented symbols were really symbols, they would be a welcome addition to a fixed inventory, but they are generally motifs having only aesthetic significance: their imputed symbolism is pure rationalization. I have in mind one panel of Gottlieb's window which is said to symbolize Yom Kippur. Actually it is a subtle, involuted design, which the artist felt, apparently, as an expression of introspection—nothing more precise than that. Translate introspection into religious terms and you have mysticism, an inner reckoning—the spirit of Yom Kippur. But would a believer respond to this? He would probably do so more readily to Gottlieb's device for Tisha b'Av in his wall decoration at Springfield: rectangular shapes at oblique angles to each other, which may be understood as the falling columns of the Temple.

In Motherwell's Millburn mural twelve dots are said to stand for the twelve tribes of Israel. But dots do not evoke any more associations than asterisks or ampersands; they are in fact merely algebraic symbols. Criss-crossing past the dots in the mural are straight lines in an irregular, closed pattern whose function, aesthetically, is to break up the whiteness of the area. Symbolically, the artist calls the lines "the Diaspora, the dispersal of the Tribes." If the dots were valid as symbols, the lines would then be validated by their association with them; as it is, they fulfill only an aesthetic purpose.

Curiously enough, there is a valid symbolical association in Refregier's mural at Hillcrest, "Jacob's Dream." Here the Twelve

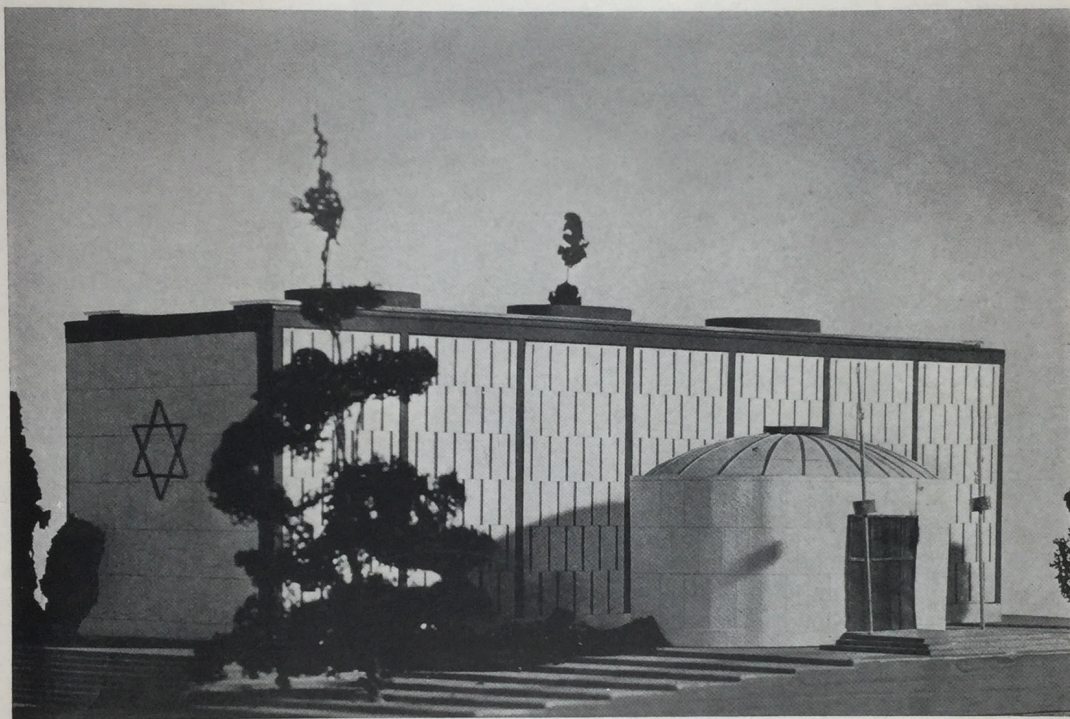
Tribes are symbolized by stars, which have point in the context of the heaven-bound dream, and the lines which join them do convey, as they are intended to, a sense of unity. It is, of course, almost too obvious a device. Symbols should be more imaginative, and it is their imaginative variation that should be the goal of invention. If invention cannot achieve anything better than dots (and Gottlieb also used them in one of his window panels), the artists would be wiser to rely upon tradition for symbols, and play with them as freely as Katz does with the Hebrew letters. Has the inflexibility of the cross, as a design, hampered the painters of Christian themes?

In their sculptured menorahs, Katz, Laszaw, and Lipton, among others, have shown that the old basic form, which has been modified to the taste of so many times and countries, still lends itself to fresh design; and there is no reason why the old symbols cannot be revived in two dimensions, too. A start has been made, and if it has been attended with some self-consciousness, that is symbolic of the uncertainty of present-day Judaism itself. But wherever the new temples—and centers—may lead spiritually, they will have performed a notable aesthetic service, having fostered a little renaissance.*

*Individuals as well as institutions may foster it: Ira Haupt recently commissioned a memorial chapel to his parents in Temple Beth Miriam, Elberon, N. J. Raymond Katz was the artist, designing the Ark, a mural, entrance doors (decorated with wood carvings and panels of carved glass), wrought iron lighting fixtures, curtains, and podium cloth.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

* K. T. I. SYNAGOGUE, PORT CHESTER, N. Y.



Emilio De Cusati

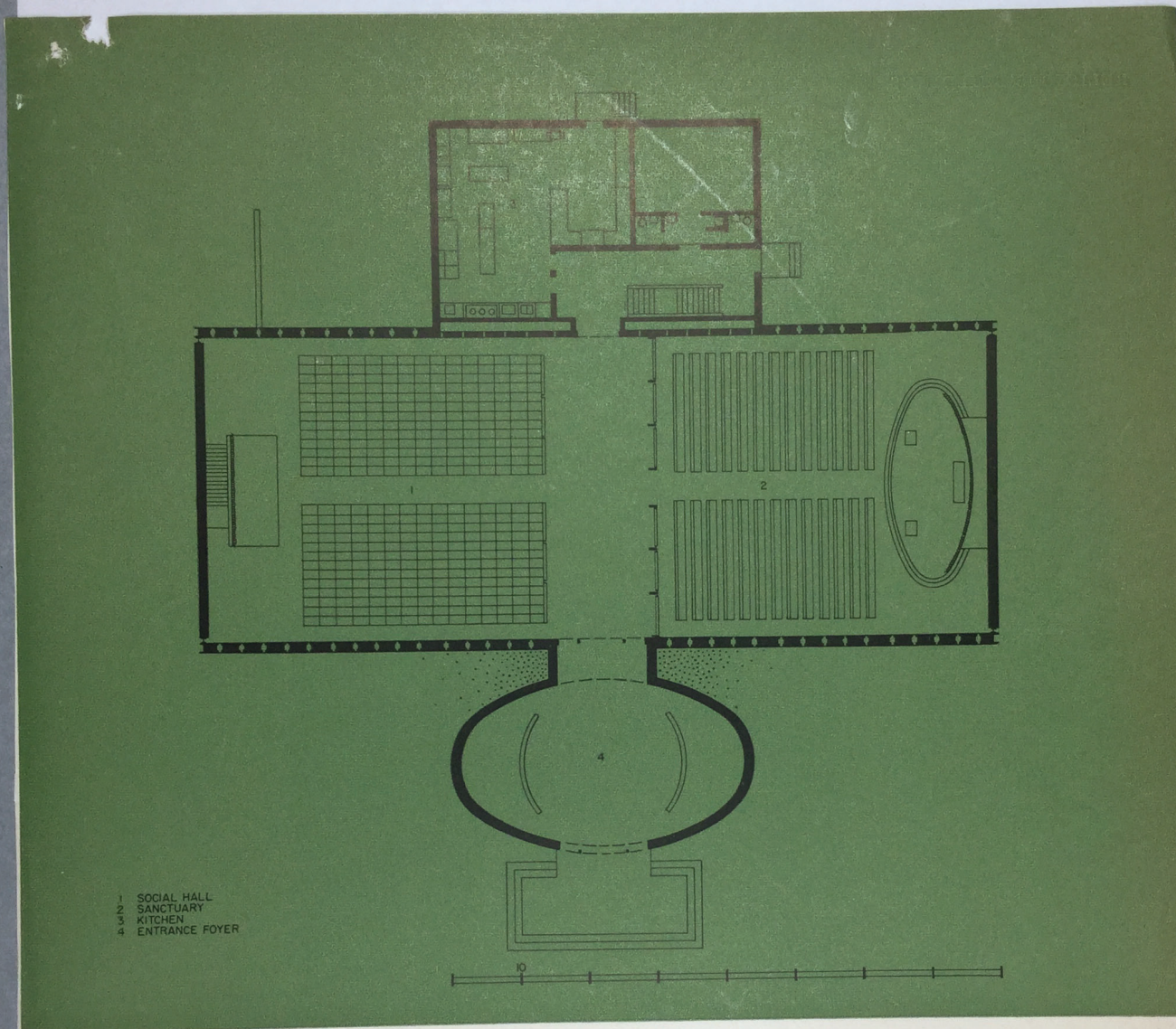
Philip C. Johnson, Architect
Marcello Mezzullo, Contractor
Richard Kelly, Lighting Consultant
John Johansen, Stained Glass Consultant

* *Kneses Tifereth Israel*

IN THIS SYNAGOGUE, whose sanctuary seats 300, it is necessary on certain occasions to accommodate more than 1000. The social hall can seat over 700 for services or 400 at dining tables. The daily prayer room seats 150.

The direct handling of this practical problem of flexibility in such a way as to make a virtue of the necessity is particularly noteworthy. The employment of the curvilinear entrance room as a space of preparation is unusual and effective. The ceiling treatment in the principal room, its height, and the pattern of stained glass slits are worthy of remark. Construction is planned for completion in October of this year.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34



FROM THE ARCHITECT: The plan of KTI differs from most contemporary synagogues, in which the Temple is separated from the social hall by a complete wall, in that it is conceived of as one room 37 ft high with 8 ft partitions only between the part used as sanctuary and the part used as social hall. By this means the building looks its best on High Holidays when the maximum audience attends the services.

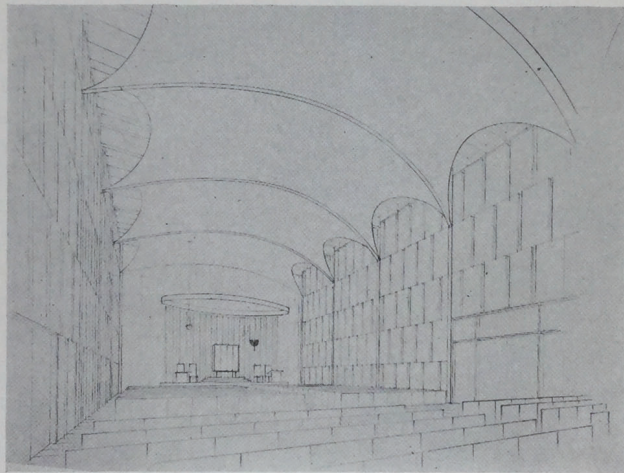
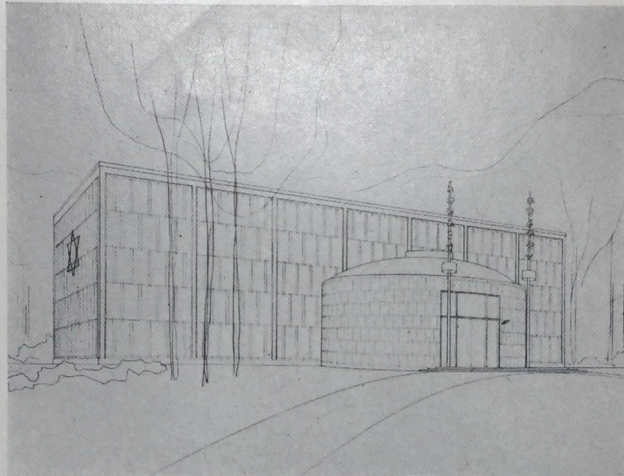
To introduce hieratic and professional effects the entrance foyer is constructed as a separate building oval in shape, thus preparing the visitor more than would the normal vestibule. In order to introduce more spiritual feel-

ing into what has been the rather cold style of architecture which we call modern, I have, besides designing ceilings higher than the usual synagogue, introduced vaulted "sails" of plaster which are intended to give a sense of containment to the space and also to act as light baffles for daylight and artificial lighting. The entrance pavilion has an oval dome to suggest the interior as well as to free the exterior pavilion as a shape set against the rectangularity of the main hall.

The exposed steel skeleton, however, still dominates the design. Only the infill is new: door size slabs of artificial stone separated by 8 in. by 7 ft lights of stained glass.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS



Foundations of this building are in reinforced concrete; framing is entirely of steel in a carefully organized system permitting the exposure of the principal vertical members. Exterior walls of the synagogue consist of slabs of artificial stone 8 ft high arranged as infilling between the exposed steel columns. Interior walls are of plaster as are the curvilinear ceiling surfaces. Window openings are reduced to 7 in. slits and with their lights of stained glass spaced over the entire wall surface "should glow like a box of jewels" at night. It is expected that sculptural decoration will be added.

*Cost: \$400,000
Area: 15,000 sq ft*

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

Suburban Synagogue Designs Linked to New Patterns of Life

New patterns of Jewish life in the suburbs are finding architectural expression in some of the original and emancipated designs for synagogues, according to Irving H. Lurie, a consultant on architecture to the United Synagogue of America.

Mr. Lurie, an architect and real estate financier here, has aided in the design of more than 600 synagogues throughout the hemisphere in the last twenty-two years.

The United Synagogue of America, which speaks for the Conservative branch of Judaism has no authority over affiliated congregations, but its suggestions on financing, location, design and construction are usually accepted, Mr. Lurie says.

He explains that the suburban synagogue has taken on a social role in addition to its traditional religious and educational functions. The relative abundance of land in the suburbs has also given the architect greater freedom to design along horizontal lines.

Mr. Lurie rejects criticisms that architects are designing synagogues that resemble secular schools, libraries or laboratories and that they look less "Jewish" than the older synagogues.

Such nostalgia rests on a misconception, he contends, asserting that there is no such thing as "Jewish architecture."

Both in ancient Israel and in other lands where they settled, he says, the Jews were content to adapt local building styles to their own use. The dome, once popular for synagogues, was derived from the Byzantine Christian architecture of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, says Mr. Lurie.

Moorish designs, favored by many Sephardic congregations descended from Spanish Jews, recall the golden era of Jewish life in Moslem Spain.

The first American syna-

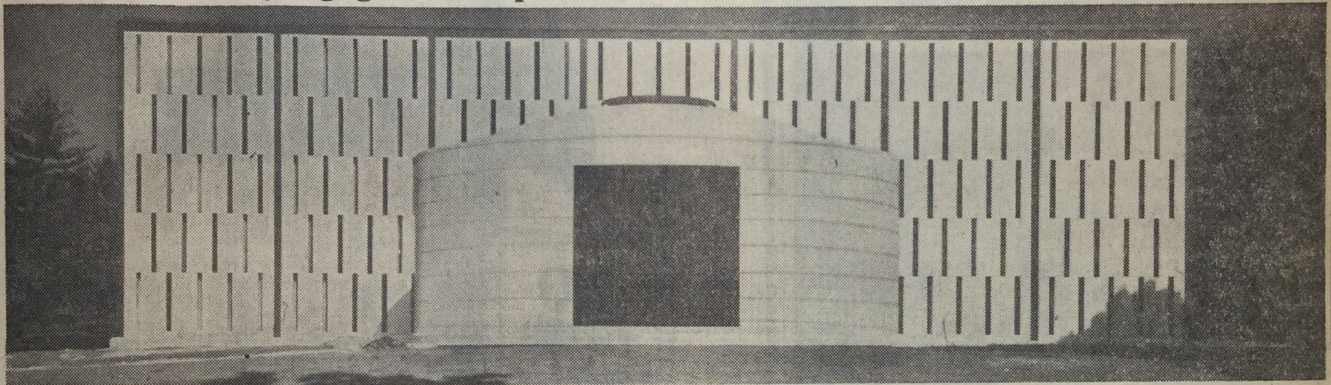
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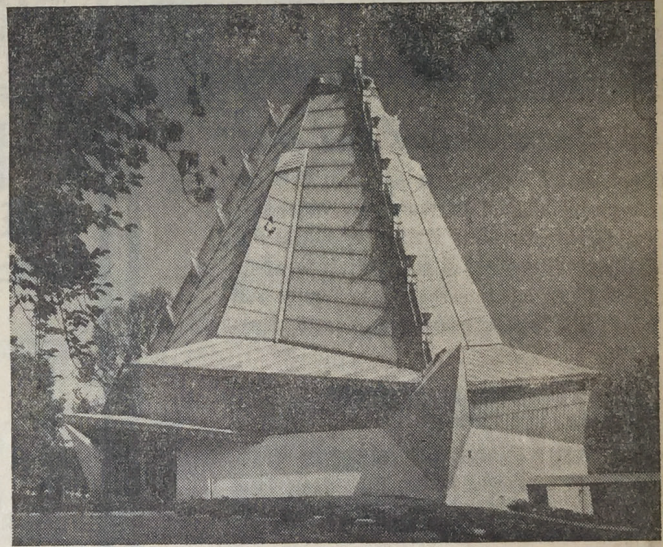
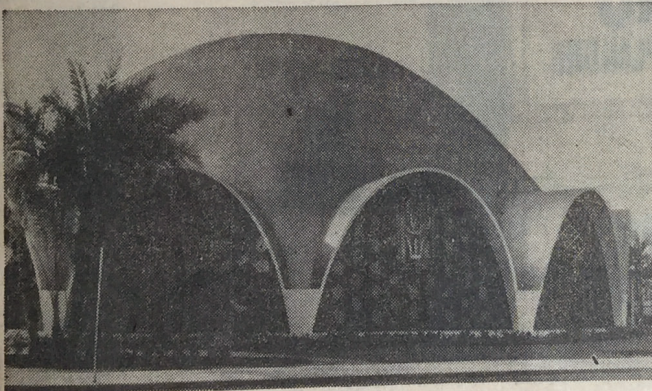
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JULY 29, 1962.

New Suburban Synagogues Incorporate Traditional Jewish Themes in Modern Designs



Kneses Tifereth Israel Synagogue in Port Chester, N. Y., above, was built in 1956 from plans drawn by Philip Johnson, architect. The Beth Sholom Synagogue, shown at right, is at Elkins Park, Pa. The design for this house of worship was created by the late Frank Lloyd Wright. Percival Goodman was the architect for Temple Beth Sholom in Miami Beach, shown below. The buildings are representative of the individualism that is being expressed in the building of synagogues and temples.



Jacob Steiman

NEW LOOK HAILED FOR SYNAGOGUES

Continued From Page 1

gogues also followed local patterns, using Colonial or Georgian lines of the Protestant churches of the period. As examples Mr. Lurie cites the Touro Synagogue, built in 1763

in Newport, R. I., and the Greek classical Beth Elohim built in 1840 in Charleston, S. C.

Between World War I and World War II he finds that synagogue architecture in this country was derivative. He cites "the distinctly Italian Romanesque flavor" of Temple Emanuel of New York.

Mr. Lurie contends that the present approach, striving toward new forms of expression, gives American Judaism its best

chance of achieving a true architectural tradition by building on the solid foundation of function rather than by imitating other cultures and styles.

Nassau Hotel Planned

Construction is about to begin on the Lord Nelson Hotel, a 144-room oceanfront structure in Coral Harbour on the southwest shore of New Providence Island in Nassau, Bahamas. It will be built by the Caribbean Hotels Corporation.

New Leaflet Describes Housing Agency Functions

The Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency has published a ten-page leaflet, "Housing and Home Finance Agency—What It Is, What It Does."

The leaflet, available to the public, defines the responsibilities of the agency, the functions of its constituent agencies, and

the functions of the Office of the Administrator.

The constituent agencies are the Federal Housing Administration, the Public Housing Administration, the Community Facilities Administration, the Urban Renewal Administration and the Federal National Mortgage Association.

Copies can be obtained through the agency headquarters, Washington 25, D. C., or through its regional offices.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection: Philip Johnson	Series.Folder: II. 34
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11 SEP 1957

ARCHITECTURAL NOTES

Significant Influence of Philip Johnson

3058

Authority of New Aesthetic Ideas

By Our Architectural Correspondent

Mr. Philip Johnson has occupied for some years a unique place among modern American architects, which has caused him to exercise an influence over stylistic trends and developments that is out of all proportion to the size or public significance of his executed works. The extent of his influence is only partly due to his position as head of the architectural department of the Museum of Modern Art in New York; far more is it due to the unusual course he has followed in his career.

He began as an amateur in the strict eighteenth-century sense of the word, cultivating a connoisseur's taste for modern architecture and, as one of its leading apologists on the other side of the Atlantic, showing much skill in interpreting its mysteries. Only after he had firmly established his principles and beliefs as a matter of theory did he begin to apply them in practice. But he still preserved a degree of detachment, and it is his conscious exploration of new aesthetic ideas, theoretically and practically, that has given him his unique authority, which, however, is exercised in so many indefinable ways that he may justly be described as the *eminence grise* behind some of the most advanced architectural movements.

UNCOMMON FEATURES

His own work, besides being the laboratory, as it were, in which his aesthetic experiments are worked out, has therefore the additional significance that it often offers a clue to future trends, and so particular interest attaches to the fact that his newest building, a synagogue at Port Chester, in New York State, is dominated by a vaulted roof and a detached domed entrance hall, uncommon features in the modern American scene.

The curvaceous forms he has introduced in this building are especially foreign to the kind of architecture with which Mr. Johnson has hitherto been associated. He has always been regarded as a disciple—indeed as one of the most distinguished disciples—of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, that strict architectural disciplinarian whose frankly exposed, infinitely refined, rectilinear structures have come more and more to dominate American architecture since he arrived as a refugee from Germany in 1938 and settled in Chicago. Moreover it is doubtful whether the exposed metal frame would have spread its influence so widely if Philip Johnson had not so cunningly played *Père Joseph*, so to speak, to Mies's *Richelieu*.

A BOLD PATTERN

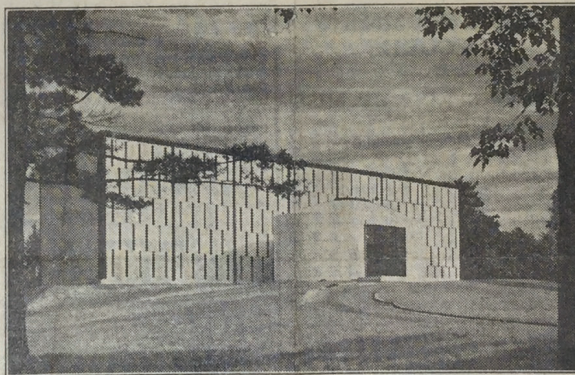
Now he has moved in another direction. The Port Chester synagogue (Mr. Johnson's first work other than a private house, except for a small annexe to the Museum of Modern Art that he built in 1953) consists of a simple rectangular hall, 37ft. high, entered in the centre of one of its long sides through a detached oval-shaped pavilion. The hall is lighted by a number of vertical slits which separate the white stone blocks of which the walls are composed. These are arranged in four tiers, creating a bold geometrical pattern inside and out, and the longitudinal walls are subdivided into seven equal compartments by the vertical members of an exposed steel frame.

The circumscribed shape and the relative darkness of the entrance pavilion serve to enhance the drama of the vaulted space into which the visitor emerges from it. The

main interior is wholly white, but there is strong jewel-like colour in the stained glass that fills the window-slits—a separate colour in each; the furnishings are light grey and gold. At night the walls are floodlit from a source partially concealed behind the floating plaster vaults, which span each of the seven bays of the structure. More lights, directed downwards, are set in the ribs between the vaults.

FLOATING VAULTS

These floating vaults, almost detached from the walls, are reminiscent of Soane, whose work Mr. Johnson greatly admires—a Soane-like obsession with pure geometry is evident in nearly all his work. This same purity of conception is of course what even his new work retains in common with that of Mies van der Rohe, from whose fixed path Mr. Johnson has not wholly diverged; in fact they have since collaborated over



Synagogue at Port Chester, N.Y., by Philip Johnson.

the design of the bronze-clad Seagram building now nearing completion in New York.

But the synagogue indicates a move towards a conscious monumentality of effect of which the Miesian method is hardly capable. Some would say that neither is such monumentality desirable in our day, and would accuse Mr. Johnson of returning to that eclectic attitude on which modern architecture, by its very nature, has firmly turned its back. Nevertheless, he is responding to a widely felt need, and the important thing is that his personal sensibility and his artistic integrity have ensured that his experiment in monumentality, although to some extent tentative, is neither ponderous nor platitudinous.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

Edilizia Moderna N. 67

Dec. 1959

Sinagoga a Port Chester, New York

Progetto Philip Johnson architetto

Questo edificio si trova in una delle città satelliti della grande New York sulla strada che conduce verso il Connecticut ed è situato su King Street, importante arteria della cittadina, in una zona ricca di alberi, contro i quali si staglia bianchissimo e con aspetto monumentale.

La costruzione è di una grande purezza di linee come sempre le opere di Philip Johnson (vedi Edilizia Moderna n. 65 pag. 1 e n. 66 pag. 45) ed è costituito da un vestibolo ellittico che si apre sulla grande sala rettangolare dove a destra di chi entra si trova il santuario e a sinistra simmetricamente lo spazio per le riunioni sociali. I due ambienti sono separati da otto pareti mobili in alluminio e controventatura in acciaio che possono essere tolte facilmente in occasione delle grandi feste.

Al di là del grande rettangolo sullo stesso asse del vestibolo si trova un corpo minore pure rettangolare che contiene la cucina e gli altri servizi.

Il corpo principale rettangolare è costruito con cinque corsi di pannelli: questi sui lati maggiori sono separati l'uno dall'altro da sottili fenditure chiuse da vetrate colorate.

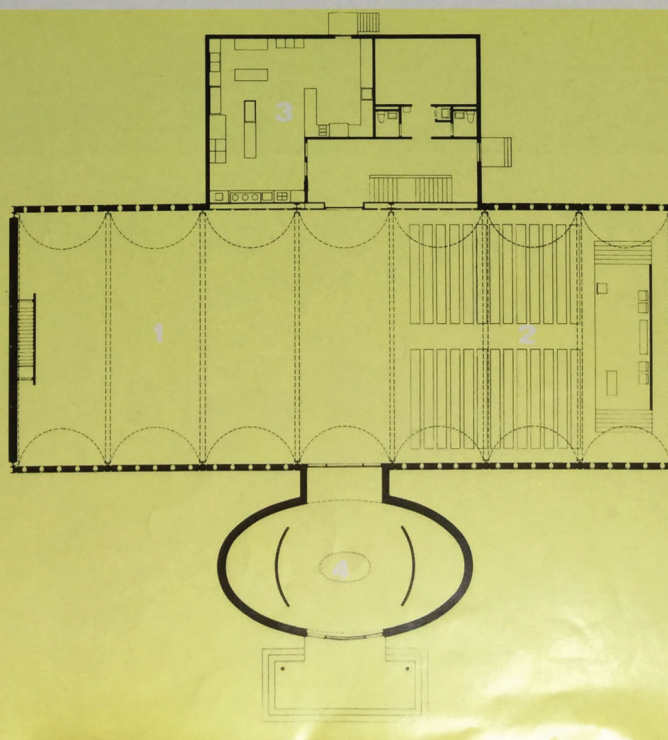
Ognuno di questi corsi di pannelli è più alto di un uomo

(per cui l'edificio è in realtà assai più grande di quanto appaia in fotografia). Le testate sono invece piene. Anche le pareti del vestibolo sono piene e questo locale riceve l'illuminazione dall'alto.

L'interno è completamente bianco ma assume coloriture diverse per effetto delle vetrate colorate: in ogni fenditura la vetrata è di un solo colore e qua e là vi sono vetrate trasparenti per permettere una illuminazione interna sufficiente. Il pavimento è in piastrelle termoplastiche bianche lievemente striate di grigio. I 300 posti a sedere del santuario sono ricoperti in stoffa grigio argento. La «benna» è ricoperta da tappeti di tono dorato mentre lo schermo sulla parete dietro ad essa è in una stoffa di un bianco metallico.

Il soffitto della grande sala è costituito da sette volte a vela che di giorno hanno la funzione di modulare meglio la luce interna e contengono nella costola le apparecchiature per l'illuminazione notturna. Questa è completata da riflettori nascosti sopra le volte che versano la loro luce sulle pareti maggiori in modo che dallo esterno tutto l'edificio appaia risplendente attraverso le fenditure, come «una scatola di gioielli».

Pianta della costruzione. 1. Social hall. 2. Santuario. 3. Cucina. 4. Atrio.



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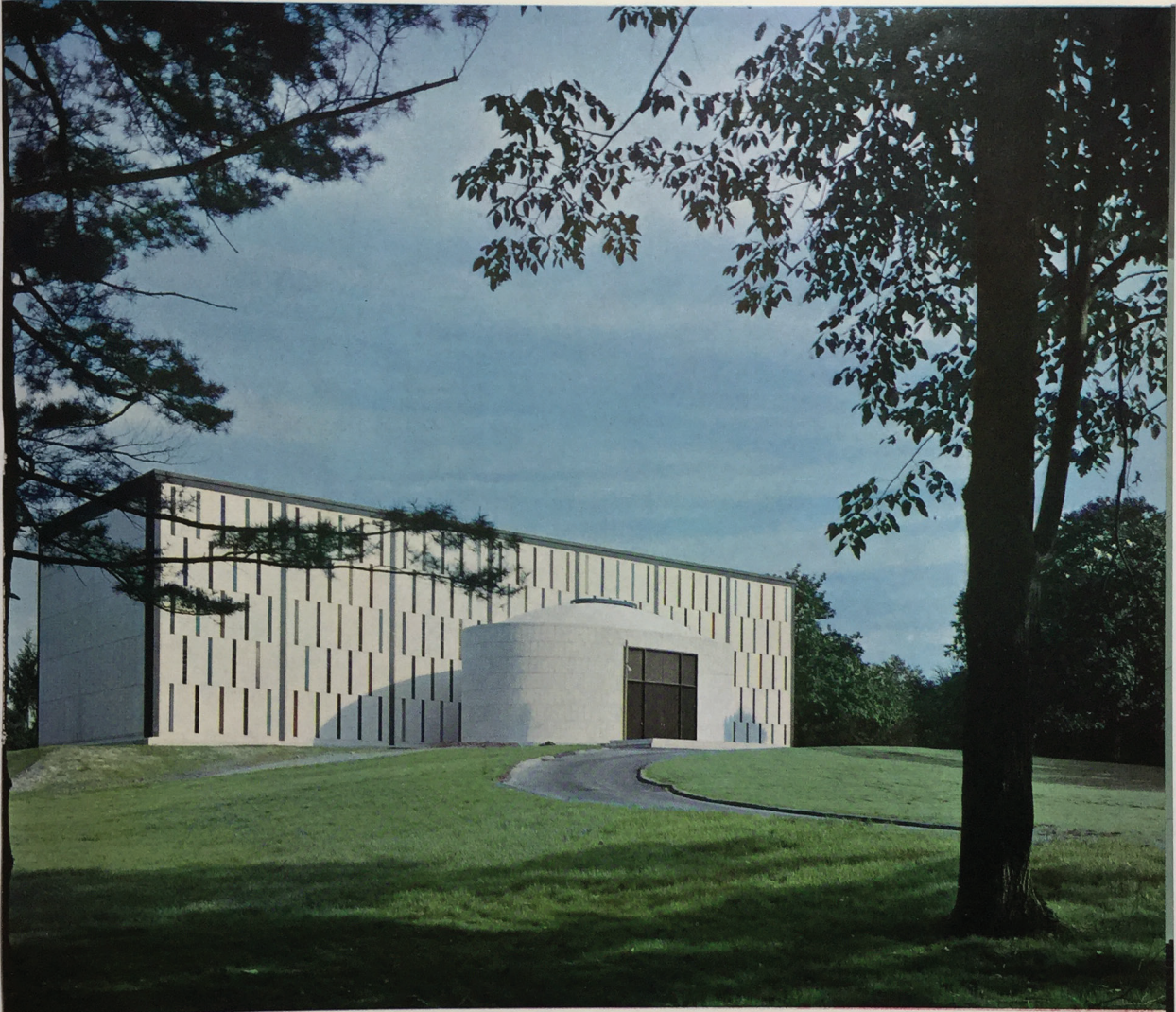
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	Philip Johnson	II.34



Veduta notturna della sinagoga.

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	Philip Johnson	II.34



I vetri colorati montati sulla facciata principale dell'edificio producono un effetto cromatico sia di giorno che di notte.

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	Philip Johnson	II.34



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	Philip Johnson	II.34



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	Philip Johnson	II.34



Nella pagina precedente e in alto. Due vedute della sinagoga. I vetri policromi formano un effetto suggestivo anche nell'interno.

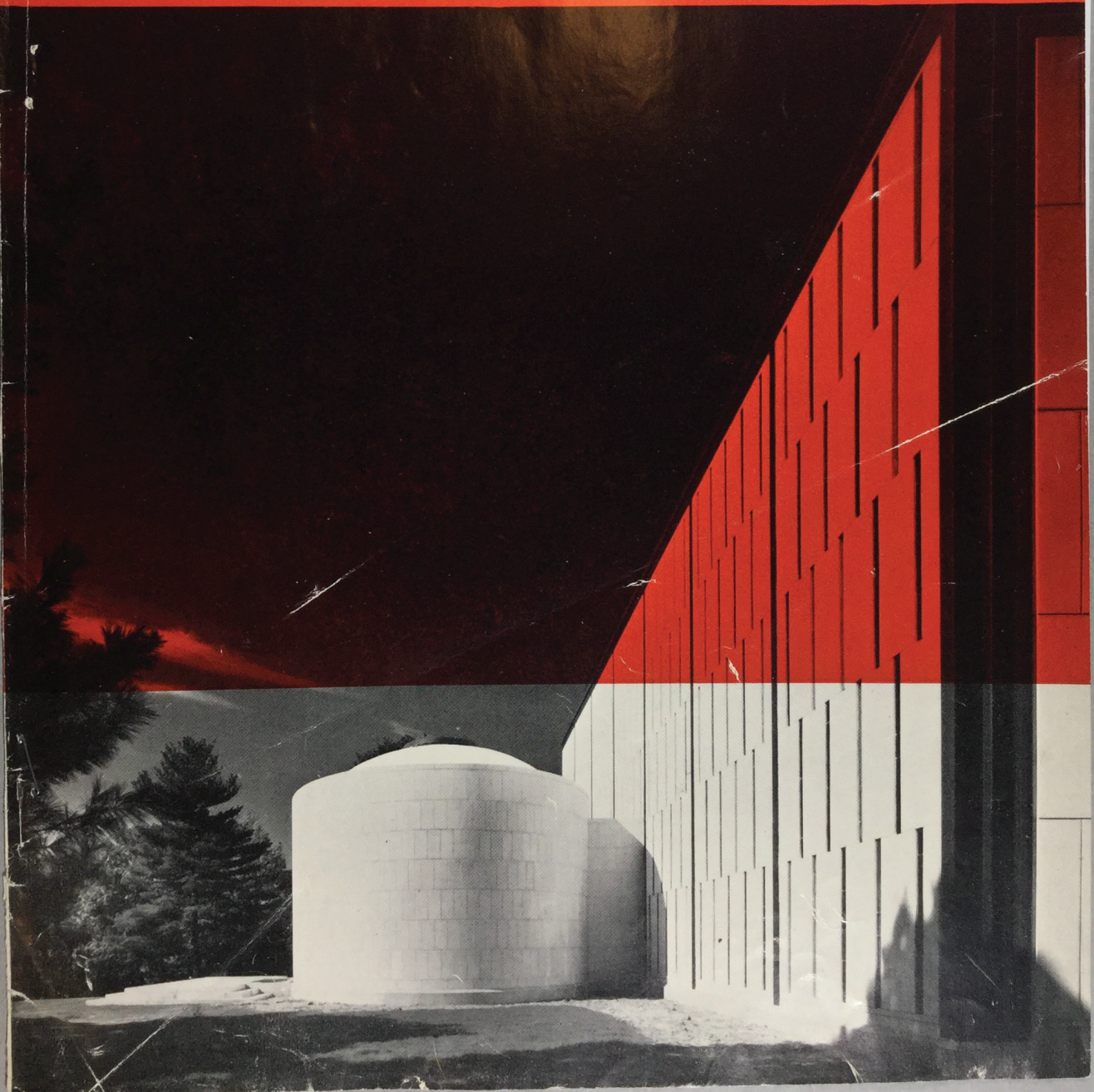
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	Philip Johnson	II.34

52 The Architect & Building News

28 December 1960 V.218/26 1s.Weekly

School at Scarborough
Hostels at Glasgow and Liverpool
Market prices



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	Philip Johnson	II.34



synagogue at Port Chester, U.S.A.

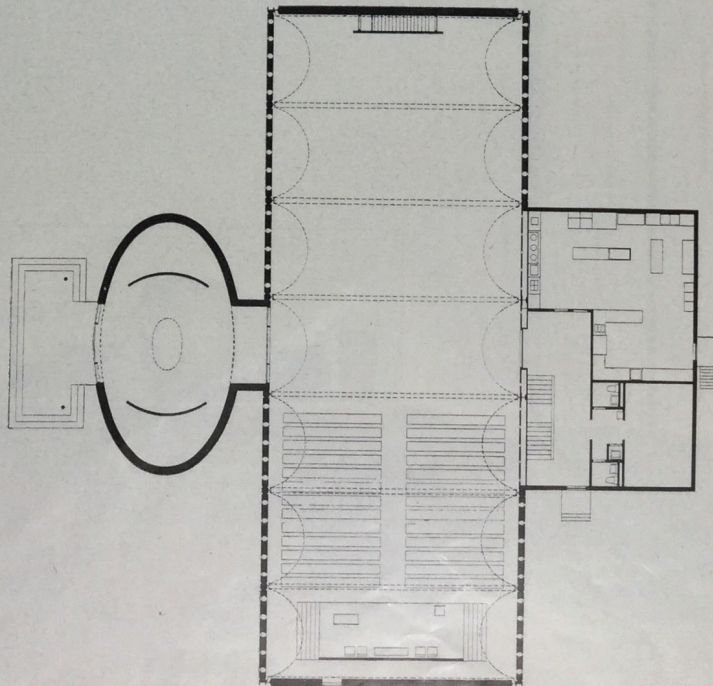
Philip Johnson, architect

The site is at Port Chester, New York, where the Kneses Tifereth Synagogue sits high and white against a background of trees.

Entrance to the synagogue is through an elliptical vestibule, the interior form of which makes an interesting spatial contrast with the main hall.

The hall of worship, some 37ft high, has enclosing walls made up of white stone panels 6ft high, narrow slits between the panels containing stained glass. An arched plaster ceiling is suspended below the structural roof, which contains rooflights. The floor is finished in white streaked light grey asphalt and the seats are upholstered in light silver grey.

Designed to accommodate 1,000 people the floor area of the hall may be reduced by means of 8ft partitions framed in aluminium with steel bracing. These are bolted to the floor and can be easily removed when necessary.



The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II.34

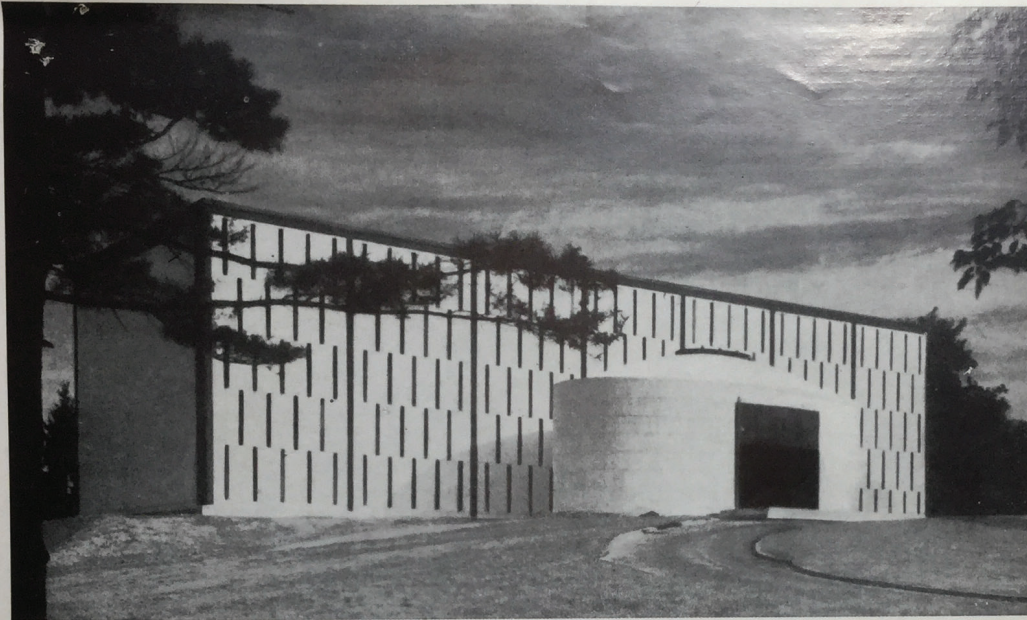
822 **synagogue**

The Architect & Building News, 28 December 1960

The hall of worship is a classical composition in black, white and greys. Designed to accommodate a maximum of 1,000 people, the hall may be reduced in area by means of moveable aluminium partitions



The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II.34



Prismi trasparenti, ma non di cristallo

Architettura #18
April 1957

architetto Philip Johnson

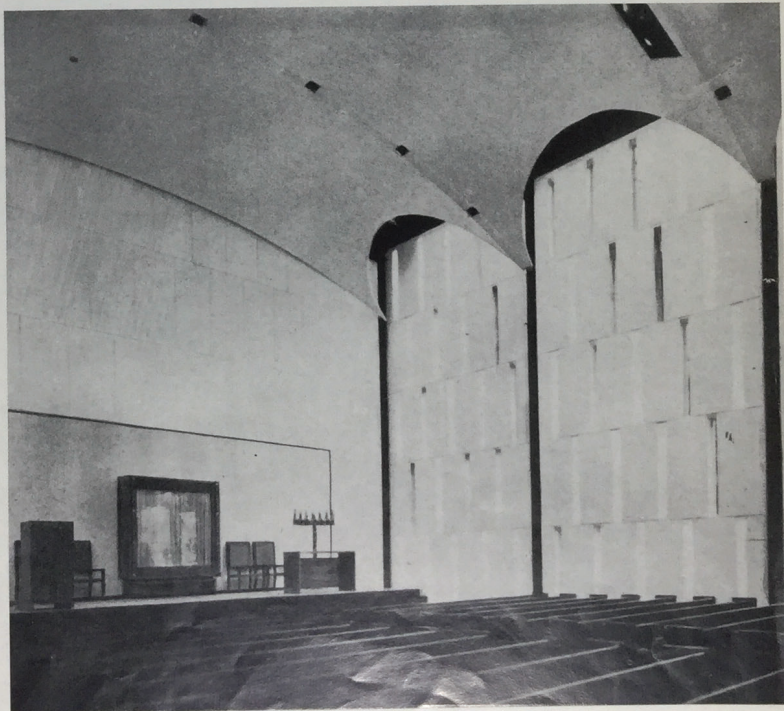
▼ K. T. I. Synagogue at Port Chester, N. Y.
▼ K. T. I. Synagogue à Port Chester, N. Y.

▼ K. T. I. Synagogue in Port Chester, N. Y.
▼ K. T. I. Sinagoga en Port Chester, N. Y.

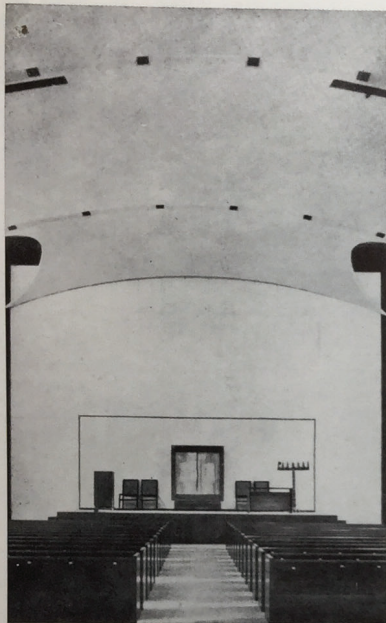
Dell'architetto Philip Johnson, che fu per molto tempo direttore del dipartimento di architettura del Museo d'Arte Moderna di New York e, in qualità di critico, contribuì in modo decisivo alla conoscenza e all'apprezzamento dell'opera di Mies van der Rohe, è specialmente nota la Casa a New Canaan, Conn., del 1949. Un prisma interamente di vetro incorniciato da una struttura di acciaio: una versione della Casa Farnsworth presso Chicago di Mies compiuta nel 1951 in chiave classica, ostile ad ogni dinamismo costruttivo e figurativo.

Un'altra opera di Philip Johnson, illustrata in *L'a*, supplemento al n. 2, pp. 298-99, è la casa Wiley: anch'essa un prisma strutturalizzato di vetro sospeso su una piattaforma di muratura. Quale che sia la valutazione finale sull'originalità creativa di Philip Johnson, una cosa si può dire a suo favore: è un architetto che, avendo scelto attraverso una lunga esperienza critica un maestro, una volta giunto alla professione, lo ha eletto a modello, orgoglioso di essere un dichiarato seguace di Mies van der Rohe. Scegliersi un maestro, seguirne i metodi di lavoro, riviverne la coerenza: ecco una strada sicura, e antichissima, per diventare un artista indipendente. Ne è prova questa Sinagoga di Port Chester, N.Y., pubblicata su «*Architectural Record*» del dicembre 1956.

Qui l'ovoidè dell'ingresso è pieno. Il prisma principale, pur mettendo in evidenza la struttura e le pannellature, non è più di cristallo. Il contatto tra spazio interno ed esterno non è assiomaticamente continuo, e la trasparenza è dosata. Rimangono di Mies il rigore costruttivo, il gusto della riduzione dei mezzi figurativi («*il meno è il più*»), una qualità monumentale che è intrinseca alla purezza stilistica e che qui trova una valorizzazione «classica» e quasi diremmo «attica» nel proporzionamento dei volumi, e nella loro «scala» rispetto all'uomo. Basti vedere il rapporto del corpo d'ingresso col blocco principale e giudicarlo in funzione dei due diversi trattamenti parietali.



The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II.34



Tempio di Port Chester, N. Y.

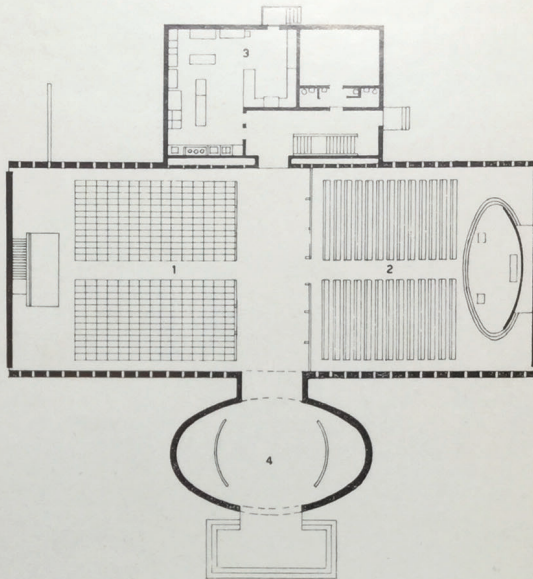
Nella pagina a sinistra: in alto, l'edificio visto prospetticamente dalla strada d'accesso. In basso, l'angolo tra il fronte dell'altare e la parete destra.

In questa pagina: in alto, veduta della navata e pianta (1, centro sociale; 2, sinagoga; 3, cucina e servizi; 4, ingresso). In basso: la connessione tra l'ovoide d'ingresso e la facciata principale.

Lo schema planimetrico è elementare e ripete quello adottato anche nelle sinagoghe di Erich Mendelsohn: un grande ambiente « sociale » è disposto vicino allo spazio riservato al culto, e può duplicarlo nei giorni delle grandi ricorrenze religiose mediante la totale abolizione della parete divisoria.

Attraverso un grande scuro portale si entra nell'ambiente racchiuso e compresso del vestibolo: dalla luce esterna all'oscurità, e poi di nuovo in uno spazio esplosivamente luminoso, ma controllato dai diversi colori delle lastre di vetro. La parete di fondo è di materiale acustico, e su di essa brillano gli elementi dorati dell'altare. La divisione tra sinagoga e centro sociale è realizzata con una parete scorrevole di alluminio. Il soffitto è formato da sette volte sospese di intonaco, che si congiungono ai montanti verticali della struttura senza fondersi con essa. Questo gioco di ondulazioni determina effetti sfumati di luce e accentua il contenimento del prisma spaziale. La luce artificiale proviene da questo soffitto e si avvale dei suoi ritagli a contatto delle pareti laterali.

La dura equazione misiana, il cui ultimo esempio - il nuovo Padiglione dell'Illinois Institute of Technology di Chicago - è stato pubblicato in *L'a.*, n. 13, pp. 512-13, trova dunque in Philip Johnson una originale interpretazione. Che non rinuncia al rigore tecnico del maestro, ma lo integra col commento di superfici ondulate e col colore.



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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

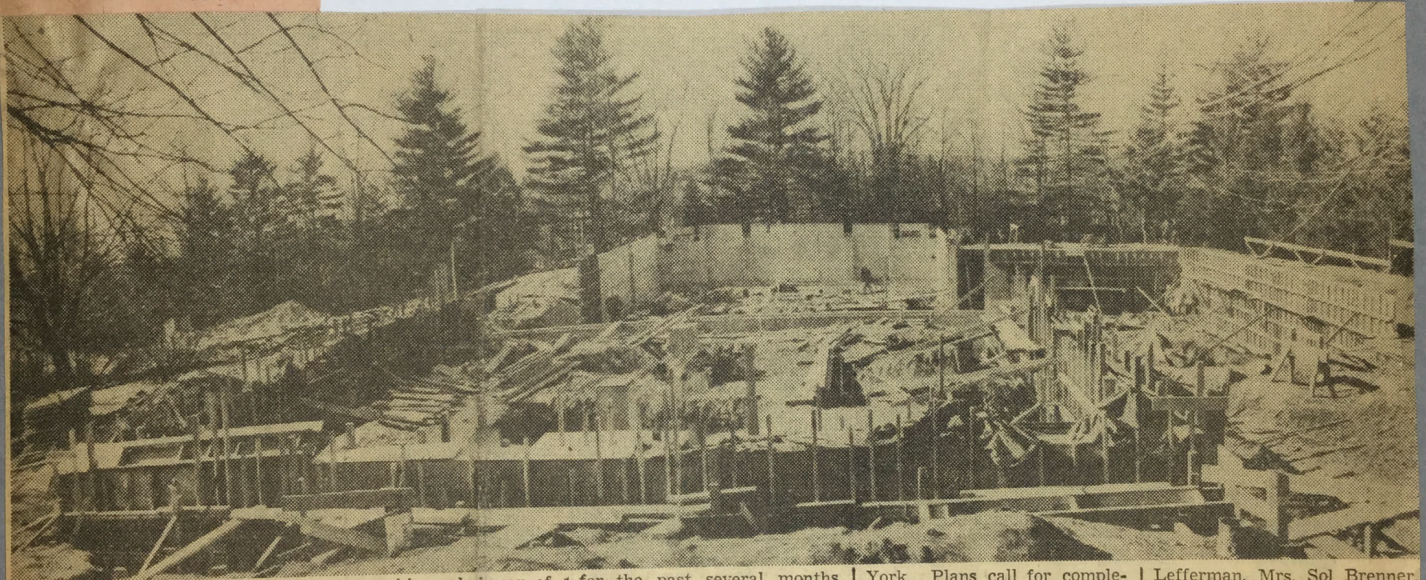
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PORT CHESTER, N. Y.
ITEM

JAN 22 1955



TO FINISH THE JOB— a campaign to raise \$100,000 will be launched Sunday to complete the new synagogue shown under construction by the Congregation Kneses Tifereth Israel of Port Chester. In announcing the drive, Her-

bert Rogowski, co-chairman of the KTI building finance committee pointed up the need for the new construction: "This is the only synagogue in the Village of Port Chester and the Town of Rye." The building under construction

for the past several months has been hailed by architects as one of the more outstanding synagogue buildings in the world. It was conceived on the drawing boards of Philip Johnson, international architect and a director of the Museum of Modern Art in New

York. Plans call for completion of the structure in September of this year. Those who have volunteered their services as captains for the \$100,000 campaign drive are Mrs. Irving M. Granowitz, Mrs. George Gruber, Mrs. Arthur Hammel, Mrs. David

Lefferman, Mrs. Sol Brenner, Mrs. Benjamin Sherman, Mrs. David Oshatz, Mrs. Irving Wein, Mrs. Jack Abramson, Mrs. Bernard Goldowsky, Meyer Steinberg, Joseph B. Katz, Max Greenbaum, Samuel Kaplan and Alfred Jacobs.

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

MODERN ARCHITECTURE¹

Vincent J. Scully, Jr.

In a paper of this length it will be less valuable, I think, to begin by attacking the admittedly ambiguous concept of style than to accept the word in broadest terms as meaning a body of work exhibiting family resemblances. In dealing with the modern world it is especially necessary to do this, since we need an eye for resemblances to guide us as we seek an elusive image which is essentially of ourselves. All of us who engage in this search owe a debt to work which has gone before, especially to Hitchcock's pioneering studies, embodied in his *Modern Architecture* of 1928 and in his and Johnson's *International Style* of 1932. Yet by far the most influential book which has dealt with this problem has been Giedion's *Space, Time, and Architecture*, published in 1941 and now in its third enlarged edition. Giedion's view of nineteenth- and twentieth-century architectural development has been especially influential among architects, who, through an iconoclasm they have imbibed from some of their pedagogical masters, have otherwise tended to be suspicious of historical investigation in any form. Their approval of *Space, Time, and Architecture* would seem to have arisen from the fact that it gave them what they wanted: a strong technological determinism, a sense of their lonely, rational heroism in the face of an unintegrated world. But it gave them more: myths and martyrs, and a new past all their own. It presented them with an historical mirror, so adjusted as to reflect only their own images in its glass. What they did not want was to be told that they were working in a style. That is, they wished to be recognized but not identified, and for this there were many reasons, some superficial and some profound. *Space, Time, and Architecture* brilliantly avoided the difficulty of identification by producing instead a formula, that is, "Space-Time." This cabalistic conjunction (or collision) had both the qualities necessary for an acceptable architectural slogan: at once a spurious relation to science and a certain incomprehensibility except in terms of faith. Like all the best slogans it could mean anything because, even as one shouted it, one might entertain the comfortable suspicion that it need not, in fact, mean anything at all. It is, on the other hand, a phrase which one can all too easily avoid using when seeking definitions. For example, the events of the years around 1910, which do in fact culminate a long development, may be described in simpler and more generally applicable words, such as fragmentation and continuity: frag-

¹This article appears in substantially the same text in *Perspecta*, 4, Yale School of Architecture.

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

Giedion's early research into the Romantic Classicism of the later eighteenth century had convinced him that the effects of this period were largely negative so far as the development of contemporary architecture was concerned. Thus he tended to look back beyond it to his own view of the Baroque for historical precedent, and to see later creative architecture as developing despite the events of those revolutionary years. Yet if we seek an image of ourselves it is precisely at the beginning of the age of industrialism and mass democracy that we first find it, in terms of fragmentation, mass scale, and a new, unfocused continuity. In Piranesi's prophetic *Carceri* etchings of 1745 (Fig. 1), the baroque harmonies of subordination, scale, climax, and release are fragmented and exploded into a vast new world of violence. The orbits of movement come into collision, and the objectives of the new journey are as yet unknown. Man is small in a challenging but crushing ambient, which seems to work according to its own laws and from which the elements, such as columns, to which the individual had been accustomed to orient himself, have been removed. Through this new world the engineers, released by nineteenth-century positivism and materialism from the burden of humanist tradition, have moved freely. The Galerie des Machines of 1889 creates the new scaleless ambient in steel, to serve a typical program of mass industrialism: the housing of vast batteries of machines, symbolized by Henry Adams' *Dynamo*. In Max Berg's reinforced concrete Centennial Hall of 1913 at Breslau (Fig. 2), the world of Piranesi houses mass man, almost as Piranesi himself had imagined it. Vast scale, the smallness of the individual, and violent continuity are its themes. Similarly, in the Livestock Judging Pavilion at Raleigh, in an advanced structure of continuous parabolic arches from which a canopy in tension is slung, men and animals are small together in a disoriented universe of flight and movement—one which creaks and groans as the structure moves like the rigging of the *Pequod*, wind-driven on a quest one cannot name. Here that vision which Focillon recognized in Piranesi is realized: of ". . . une architecture à la fois impossible et réelle."

If one turns once more to the later eighteenth century, one finds a further fragmentation of the Baroque synthesis of freedom and order in terms of two movements: one an impatient, revolutionary search for harsh, pure, geometric order alone and the other for an apparently total freedom from geometry. Each of these movements continues in a sense to the present day. The first, which may loosely be called Romantic-Classicism, can be seen alike in the projects of Ledoux and in the earlier work of Le Corbusier. This relationship is ignored by Giedion but was pointed out by the late Emil Kaufmann in his book of 1933, *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier*. The other movement, exactly contemporary, may loosely be called Romantic Naturalism, and its asymmetry and nostalgic naturalism in siting and materials are demonstrated alike by Marie Antionette's *Hameau* of 1783 and by much present suburban architecture, especially on the West Coast of the United States. Critics such

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34



Fig. 1. Piranesi Carceri, plate XV, etching 1745.

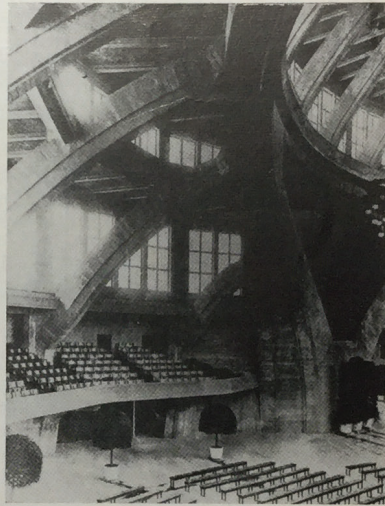


Fig. 2. Centennial Hall, Breslau Max Berg 1913 Interior: detail.

mentation of objects into their components and the redirection of these elements into a continuous movement in space.

Yet *Space, Time and Architecture* has had considerable effect upon us all, and conclusions as influential as those presented by it cannot be challenged without alternative conclusions being offered at some length. Therefore I feel compelled to attempt what perhaps should not be attempted at this restricted historical distance: that is, not only to isolate, if possible, the primary characteristics of the architecture of our era but also to name it. I should like to call it what Wright calls his own work but with, I hope, a more historically based and objective use of the term: The Architecture of Democracy. This architecture has grown out of the programs of modern mass democracy and it demonstrates the character of that democracy. I see it as having developed in two great phases, with a third phase just beginning. The first may be called the phase of fragmentation, the second the phase of continuity, and the third the opening phase of a new humanism. This last word also I would hope to define in precise architectural terms. The development between phases is chronological but overlapping, and none of the phases, not even the first, has wholly ended. Under them all, and usually in tension with them, has run a counter instinct toward what I think we must call "classic" or, more correctly, "classicizing" values, and this instinct is probably stronger at present than it was a generation ago.

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34



Fig. 3. Milá House, Barcelona A. Gaudí 1905-10 Exterior.

as Bruno Zevi have held the later phases of this movement to be of overriding interest and importance.

Yet to accept "classicism," so-called, and "romanticism," so-called, as polarities which are typologically irreconcilable, as the nineteenth century tended to do, is to accept as a natural state that fragmentation of human experience of the whole which the nineteenth century for a time created. To believe that variety and change (the "picturesque" of the nineteenth century) should be necessarily antithetical to order and clarity, is not only to see the past in fragments, as a part of nineteenth-century thought did, but probably also to encourage that desire for restricted identifications—such as national ones—which has been a counter irritant in, though hardly a solution for, modern mass society.

When the dubious polarities are finally brought into resolution toward the close of the nineteenth century they are resolved in terms of an even more insistent nineteenth-century belief, that in the dynamism of morphological continuity. Scientifically oriented, such confidence embodies, as Egbert has pointed out, a kind of Darwinian optimism in the emergence of species and types through the process of development itself. In America, characteristically the most typical offspring of the new age, Sullivan, himself enthusiastic about "morphology," produces out of the materials of mass industry the types for the new mass metropolis: vertical continuity for the freestanding tower, ideally to be set in a square or a park; horizontal continuity for a space-bounding

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

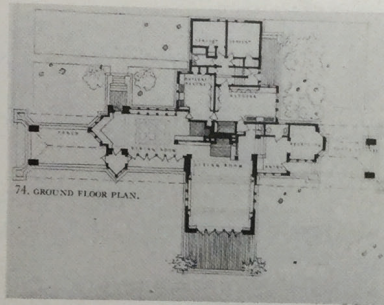


Fig. 4. Ward Willits House, Highland Park, Illinois, Frank Lloyd Wright 1902, Plan.

building, to define a street or a square. Thus in the Guaranty Building, in a plastically plaited system, the vertical supports are stressed and visually doubled; in the Carson-Pirie-Scott store they are withdrawn behind the surface (except at the corner) and especially masked by ornament on the lower floors so as not to interrupt the horizontal continuity of the window bands and of the volume of the building above. Sullivan's ornament carries continuity out into more fluid forms, and in Europe during the same period, in Art Nouveau and its related movements, such fluidity is intensified (Fig. 3). In Horta and Gaudi the images evoked are those of the forces that move through nature, as seen especially in water, plant life, and lava flow. One feels oneself in a Bergsonian world of flux and becoming, in an endless continuity which recalls, at the end of the scientifically confident nineteenth century, the intuitions of the first scientists of all in western civilization: of those Ionian philosophers who themselves embraced the concept of continuity and who, in Thales, saw water as its essential element. Once more, with Heraclitus, we "cannot step twice into the same river, because fresh water are continually flowing in upon . . ." us.

During the early twentieth century, however, we encounter in Europe a reaction against these images of continuity on grounds both technological and classicizing. In Perret, in 1905, the union of a kind of Cartesian rigor of thought with a technological determinism like that of Viollet-le-Duc produces in reinforced concrete a closed and visually discontinuous rectangular skeleton which is in the tradition of French classicizing design. Similarly, in the work of Behrens and Gropius in Germany, the determining factors are a rigid technological *Sachlichkeit* and an aesthetic preference—justified by Gropius on moral grounds and clearly arising out of the work and polemic of Adolf Loos—for the clear, sharp-edged, unornamented forms of German neo-classic design. In a sense Romantic-Classicism and a new Romanticism of the

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

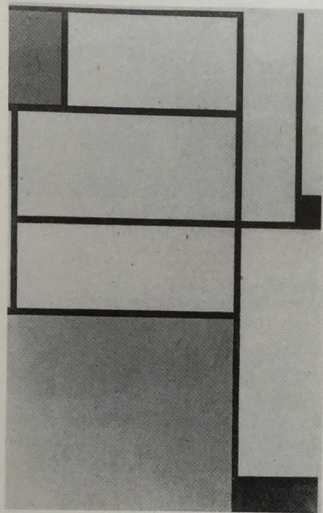


Fig. 5. Mondrian *Painting #1*, 1921; Basel, Muller-Widmann Collection.

Machine coalesce here. Both represent, despite Gropius' glazed corners in the Fagus factory, a reaction against continuity in favor of a machined permanence of classicizing order.

In America, however, the compulsion toward continuity was strong. In a development out of nineteenth-century resort houses by the sea or in the suburb, Wright develops, by 1902, his cross-axial plan and his interwoven building fabric of continuous roof planes and defining screens (Fig. 4). He attacks the concept of the skeleton frame, and says "Have no posts, no columns." Again, ". . . In my work the idea of plasticity may now be seen as the element of continuity," and again, "Classic architecture was all fixation . . . now . . . let walls, ceiling, floors become seen as component parts of each other, their surfaces flowing into each other." He goes on, "Here . . . principle . . . entered into buildings as the new aesthetic, *continuity*." And he acclaims ". . . the new reality that is space instead of matter." He calls this new reality of continuous space "The Architecture of Democracy," and hails Whitman as its prophet. The analogy here is in fact profound. D. H. Lawrence, for example, has made us aware of the deep compulsion toward movement, toward "getting away," which has played so large a part in American symbolism. In Cooper, Dana, Melville, and Mark Twain the symbols evoked are those of the sea or the river. In Whitman they focus upon the

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

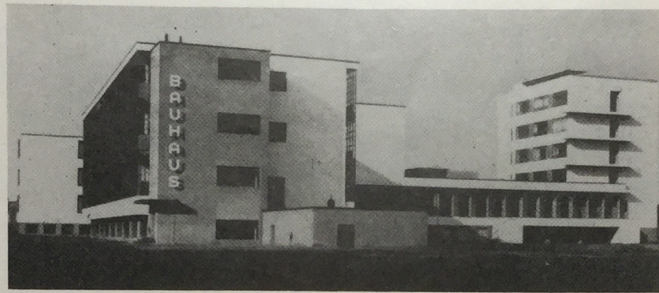


Fig. 6. Bauhaus, Dessau; Walter Gropius, 1925-26; Exterior.

"Open Road," along which—in terms of a democratic mass compulsion which would have been understood by De Tocqueville—*everyone* must travel and for which there is no goal but forward. The cities of men are to be left behind, as Jefferson would have had them left, and the infinitely extending axes of movement cross like country roads in a boundless prairie. In the low ceilings—" . . . I broadened the mass out . . . to bring it down into spaciousness," wrote Wright—there is compulsion forward and flow like Twain's river carrying us along. The compulsion is to get away: away from the traditions of western civilization, farther west to Japan and the Orient, if possible, as Tselos and others have pointed out.

There is no need to dwell here upon Wright's direct influence, through the Wasmuth publications of 1910 and 1911, upon Gropius and other Europeans in the 'teens, since this has already been indicated elsewhere. But one should point out that in a Mondrian of 1915, touched by this spirit, there rises a deep bloom like the sea which then resolves itself into crossing currents like those of the Wright plan. This profound impulse toward continuity is then "classically" stabilized by Mondrian (Fig. 5) in the forms of clear rectangles sliding and moving around an armature of interwoven lines: which, it is just possible, may owe something to drawings and stripping details by Wright, reproduced by Wasmuth. These lines Mondrian himself writes of as being "continuous" beyond the painting frame. Mondrian's synthesis then forms the basis for a compromise in design in the work of Gropius and the Bauhaus (Fig. 6). The continuous armature, which would be the building frame, is discarded, but the planes are used as thin sheets which enclose or define spatial volumes. Continuity in the form of a sliding relationship between elements is brought into a kind of union with the fragmentation of building mass and with picturesque composition, and the separate functions are enclosed in those same sharply defined boxes which are at once machined and neo-classic. This amalgamation or synthesis becomes the "International Style" as isolated for us by Hitchcock and Johnson and as influential upon the work of many architects ever since.

However, it was the most romantic-classic of all the German architects

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

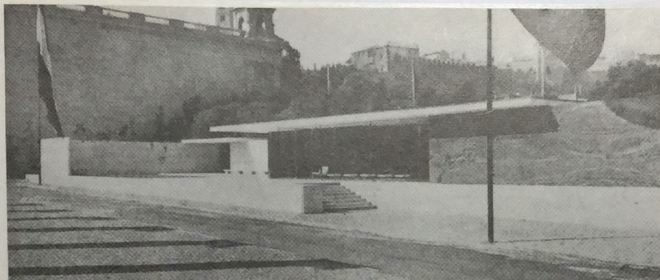


Fig. 7. German Pavilion, International Exposition, Barcelona; Mies Van Der Rohe, 1929; Exterior.

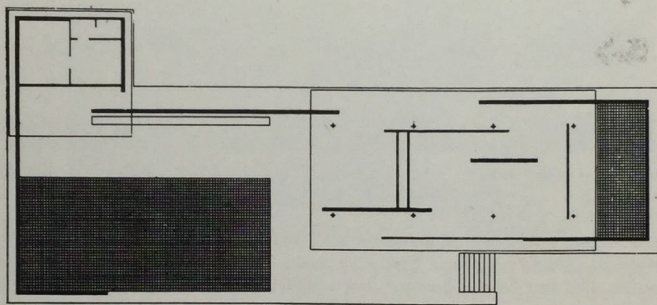


Fig. 8. German Pavilion, International Exposition, Barcelona, Mies Van Der Rohe 1929 Plan.

of the twenties—another pupil and collaborator of Behrens—who most fully developed, in Europe, the examples toward continuity which had been offered by Wright and De Stijl. In Mies Van Der Rohe's Brick Country House project of 1923 a cubical massing is stretched in plan by the continuous, directional lines of Mondrian. The discipline is that of crossed spatial axes which recall Wright's cross axis plans of many years before. Now, however, the movement is less compulsive and even more flowing, loosened and syncopated like a dance pattern and certainly owing much to the researches into continuity and its interruptions which had been carried on by such De Stijl artists as Van Doesburg.

By 1929 Mies has found a way to bring opposites into harmony. His Barcelona Pavilion (Fig. 7, 8) is a masterpiece of the "International Style" precisely because it brings together as a harmony—and in a clearly separated structural and screening system—the American compulsion toward that Open Road which allows of no conclusion and the deeply seated European instinct for defined permanence and enclosure. Present, too, in the gleamingly polished surfaces, is the European Romanticism of the Machine. In a way the Barcelona Pavilion represents a new system of freedom and order, but one which

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

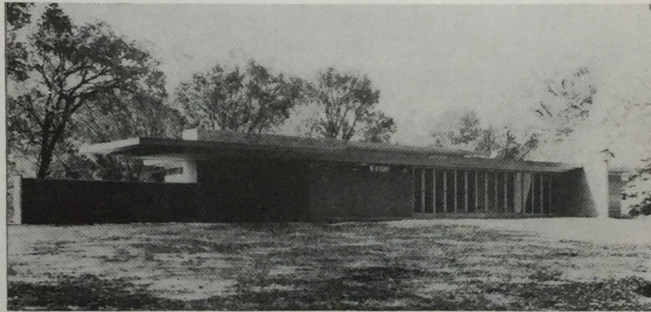


Fig. 9. Winkler-Goetsch House, Okemos, Michigan; Frank Lloyd Wright, 1939; Exterior: entrance side.

acts within a restricted emotional frame, and, unlike the Baroque synthesis, without a single focus or a fixed conclusion. Nor is it a plastic and pictorial system like that of the Baroque, but a skeletal, planar, and "constructivist" one.

For a period during the thirties this international synthesis of the nomadic and the permanent was apparently sympathetic to Wright, at least in compositional if not in structural (or polemical) terms. A comparison between the Barcelona Pavilion and a Wright house of ten years later (Fig. 9) should make this fact clear; and the adjustments expressed here have also continued to direct the work of many architects.

But unlike Mies, Wright, like Picasso, is mighty; and like Picasso he thinks in terms of compelling force. The monumental stability which both Wright and Picasso achieve in the later thirties out of the most violent oppositions and movements make both *Falling Water* and the *Guernica* "classics," as it were, of the continuous phase in modern form.

Yet Wright is driven by his compulsion toward movement (Fig. 10). Only the complete continuities of the circle can answer his needs, and his poetic imagery remains close to the great nineteenth-century symbols of the road, the sea, and the river. The human observer is pulled inexorably into a current. This sweeps him under water into a cave which opens up into a pool. He is compelled to undergo a kind of rite, as of immersion and purification. The building solids, whether structural or screening, are treated even more than before as purely space-defining elements; they enclose it like a shell or they grow in it. Truly space, not matter, is the "reality" here. This fact raises certain questions concerning the position of man. As he is compelled into the ultimate continuities where all is done for him, against what

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

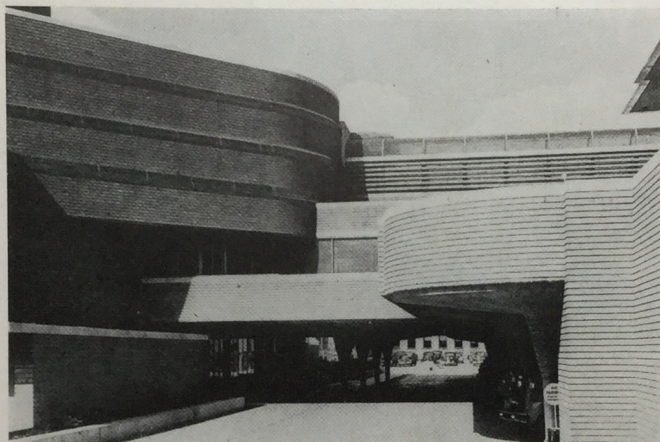


Fig. 10. Administration Building, Johnson Wax Company, Racine, Wisconsin; Frank Lloyd Wright, 1936-1939; Exterior: entrance.

does he judge himself? Where does he define his stand? How, on the one hand, can he be released from compulsion in order to know himself; how, on the other, can he be challenged not in terms of changing ambients but in unmistakably human terms?

Wright's answer is that of the westering pioneer: that one need not ask the question but go on. He will not provide humanity with references to itself in building mass. When, in the 'teens and 'twenties he had sought a monumental weight to answer human needs for ceremony more deeply than his suburban tradition had been able to do, it was to the compact, hill- or mound-evoking masses of Mayan architecture that he had turned, as in the Barnsdall House of 1920. Again: it is outside of classic humanism. Similarly, at Taliesin West, it is the Mexican dance platform which has been compacted; above is spread its opposite in the tent of the nomad (Fig. 11). All the forms have reference to those of nature, not of man, and the building fabric as a whole, however massive or interwoven, is still expressed not as a sculptural body but as a flexible and opening sheath which defines a channel of continuous space. Along this dry river the viewer is compelled, through a building which is pure ambient, to carry out that journey which culminates the myth. He must move forward, beyond the places of men, until he comes at last to the pure emptiness of the desert and the beckoning hills beyond.

However, since 1937, when Mies Van Der Rohe came to the United

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

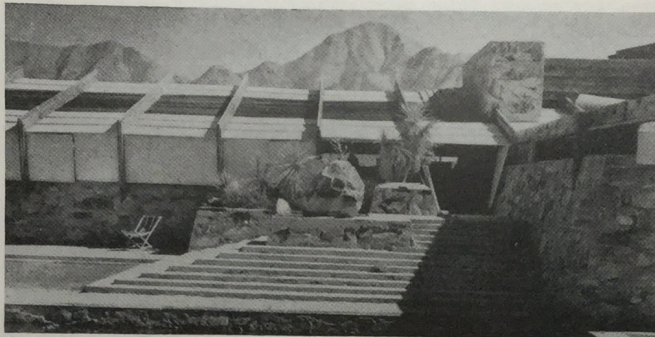


Fig. 11. Taliesin West, Phoenix, Arizona; Frank Lloyd Wright, 1936-1940; Exterior.

States, a movement has been growing in this country to reject such compulsive continuity and its concomitant asymmetry and to create instead a more fixed and symmetrical kind of design. Mies' early classicism thus serves him well at the Illinois Institute of Technology, where he lets what continuity there is expand naturally from a symmetrically conceived central space. In this way his cubical buildings are in modular harmony with the rectangular spaces created by them, and he is released from the compulsion, present in the Harvard Graduate Center, of forcing closed blocks to define a continuous and fluid space which is out of harmony with them and which properly belongs to another mode of building.

Mies thus rejects the old International Style compromise and insists, with a new compulsion, upon the skeleton cage of the steel frame. This is the classicizing "fixation" against which Wright had inveighed. It is also the lines rather than (or as well as) the planes of Mondrian. It involves a classicizing sense of types, where the vertical and horizontal solutions of Sullivan are further clarified and frozen (Fig. 12). Mies' recent design, in its modularity and urbanity, has often been compared with that of the Renaissance. Certainly, in contrast to Wright's Broadacre City and its images of the Open Road, Mies now offers the images of the Renaissance townscape and the permanent order of the urban piazza. But Mies' forms in steel frame are thinner, less sculptural, than those of Renaissance buildings, and they have also the sharply willed linearity which seems typical in all ages of classicizing or neo-classic work.

In the buildings of such distinguished architects as Philip Johnson and Eero Saarinen who have acknowledged their debt to Mies, this classicizing

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34



Fig. 12. Lake Shore Drive Apartment House, Chicago, Illinois; Mies Van Der Rohe, 1951; Exterior.

or, in their case, more markedly Romantic-Classic quality is intensified (Fig. 22). For example, the release from a compulsion to make space flow asymmetrically and the acceptance of fixed discipline and order often given rise in their work to a rather Palladian *partie* of closed corners and central openings. It also produces the separate forms of vaults and domes once more—where men are no longer directed along flowing routes but are left alone in a clear and single volume—and the buildings themselves are seen as sharp and abstractly scaled entities which recall those of Boullée and Ledoux. At the same time, while these architects humanely react against the narrow expediency of much contemporary building, still their buildings would not yet seem to be fully humanist ones. Saarinen's auditorium at M.I.T. and Johnson's Synagogue at Portchester (Figs. 13, 14) are certainly the result of a humanist search for clear, permanent, and man-centered forms, but—though bright in color and luminously conceived—they are still curiously lunar and

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

College Art Journal
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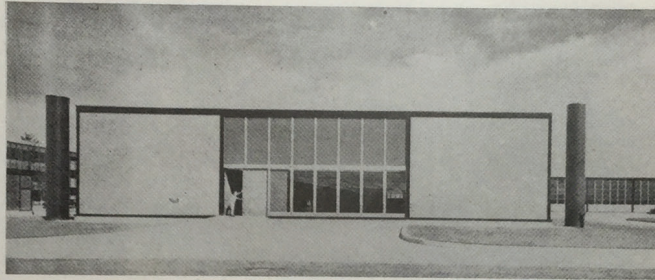


Fig. 13. Engineering Administration Building, General Motors Technical Center, Detroit, Michigan; Saarinen and Associates, 1951-1956; Exterior: facade.

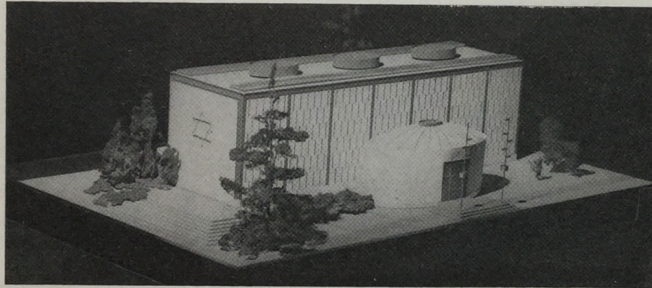


Fig. 14. Synagogue, Port Chester, N.Y.; Philip Johnson, 1955-56; Exterior: view of model.

remote. Eloquent but rather detached and brittle, the buildings of these architects sometimes seem to embody, perhaps most appropriately at the necessarily machine-like General Motors Research Center, a certain quality of modern mass anonymity—at its best releasing, at its worst inadequately cognizant of the vital pressures and tensions which make human life. Their thinness and weightlessness also arise from another fact, however, which is that, in their design, space is still the "reality" over matter, and the solids are either simply a frame or a thinly stretched membrane which encloses a volume (Fig. 15). Thus the buildings are not bodies but containers, and there is good reason to believe that Johnson and probably Saarinen as well are aware of the limitation. Saarinen's chapel at M.I.T. would especially lead us to believe that this is so.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34



Fig. 15. General Motors Technical Center, Detroit, Michigan; Saarinen and Associates, 1951; Exterior, Exhibition Dome.

We are now brought to a central problem. It has been accepted by most critics of recent times that space is in fact the "reality" of a building. Indeed, our generation has talked of little else. Yet, whether or not we accept Kaschnitz-Weinberg's conclusions in his book, *Die Mittelmeerischen Grundlagen der Antiken Kunst*, we still find that there is imbedded in the mind of western man the memory of two opposing architectural traditions. One tradition, which becomes Italic, is indeed concerned with the dominance of interior space and with what Wright has termed the "great Peace" of such space, since it is associated with the protection and hope of rebirth offered by the female deities of the earth and—in the neolithic period, as in Malta—may indeed be a constructed hollow cave, in the shape of the goddess herself. One is reminded of Wright's obsessive business with the water glass and of many of his later curvilinear spaces. Le Corbusier, attempting like most modern men to reconstruct a usable past for himself, has studied such architecture in its Roman phase, as at Hadrian's Villa, where Hadrian himself would seem to have been evoking the images of this tradition (which brings to mind, for example, the modern cult of the house) (Fig. 16). Le Corbusier, like Hadrian, understood perfectly what this was all about. "Un trou de mystère," he writes, and we are shown his cave-sanctuary project for Mary Magdalene, commissioned by the possessed Trouin at Sainte-Baume. But there is in antiquity, according to Kaschnitz, and obviously, another tradition, having to do not with the female engulfment of interior space but with a sculptural, challenging evocation of the gods of the outside and of the sky. Thus the megaron cella is surrounded by the peripteral colonnade. Now rises an architecture which is upright and which supports weight, and which has at once a purely sculptural scale and a curious analogy, felt empathetically, to the standing

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

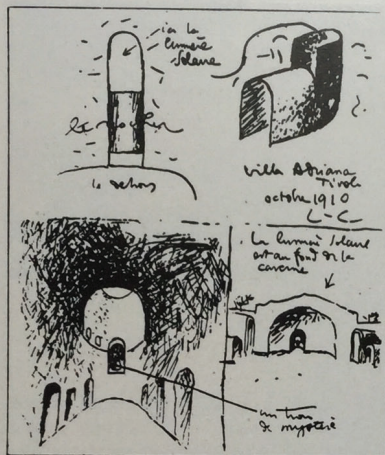


Fig. 16. Le Corbusier: Drawings of the Serapeion, Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli.

bodies of men. Le Corbusier writes in 1923 of the Parthenon columns: "nothing . . . left but these closely knit and violent elements, sounding clear and tragic like brazen trumpets." And he speaks of the space as swinging clear from them to the horizon verge. We should remember that Le Corbusier's comments were published in a book entitled *Towards a New Architecture* (*Vers Une Architecture*).

The problem of the volume as interior and having essentially no exterior—unless one allows the space to be the whole "reality," as Wright would do—has concerned all architectural ages which have cared for the image of man. The Romans masked the volume with the column until a dwindling of classical tradition made it seem no longer so necessary to do so. The Gothic architect, on the other hand, organized his vaults so that the whole system became an integument like the column system itself, though on rather dematerialized and scholastic terms. The Renaissance engaged the columns in the wall or built up its window details as aggressive solids.

Le Corbusier grapples with this problem from the very beginning of his design. His Citrohan houses of 1922 are pure megaron volumes, with an open end and closed sides—though with an interior space which, one should point out, seeks the tumultuous and challenging qualities of cubism rather than the flow of Wright and De Stijl or the "great Peace" of feminine protection. On the exterior Le Corbusier finally supports his volume upon his columns,

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

Fig. 17. Swiss Pavilion, University City, Paris; Le Corbusier, 1930-1931; Exterior.



but both are thin and tight in the manner of the twenties, and the space is still the "reality," with the solids affecting us only as poles or membranes. By nineteen-thirty, in his Swiss Pavilion, Le Corbusier has gone a step further (Fig. 17). Two opposites are joined. Some of the pilotis have the muscular mass of weight supporting elements, but the box of rooms above is still pure skin around a space.

By 1946, however, in the *Unité d'Habitation* at Marseilles—in a housing program which attempts to answer one of the typical challenges of mass democracy—Le Corbusier has arrived at a more integrated system (Fig. 18). The mighty pilotis support a framework in which the megaron-like apartments are set. Each of these has its pronaos or porch integrated with a brise-soleil which makes it impossible for the eye to read the building as merely a skin around a volume. Similarly, use-scale elements, which also cause us to see a building as simply a hollow, are suppressed. On the other hand, the *Unité* cannot be read as a solid, like an early Mayan building, nor as a frame, like a Japanese one. Instead its solids appear to be in an almost one to one relationship with its voids. Since, therefore, the building seems to have

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

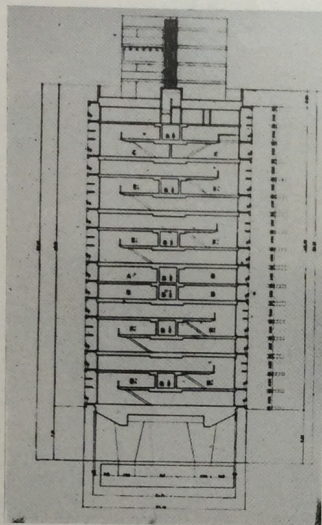


Fig. 18. Unité d'Habitation, Marseille; Le Corbusier, 1946; Section.

only that space which is integral to the articulated system of its mass it can no longer be seen as an ambient or a box or a hill but only as a sculptural body, a fact which has been noted by many critics. Since, moreover, we empathetically experience upright bodies in terms of our own, the building may be said to become a humanist one. I define architectural humanism here in the terms used by Geoffrey Scott in his book *The Architecture of Humanism*, of 1914. Of the humanist architecture of antiquity and the Renaissance Scott wrote: "The centre of that architecture was the human body; its method to transcribe in stone the body's favorable states; and the moods of the spirit took visible shape along its borders, power and laughter, strength and terror and calm." Such humanism, as found in Le Corbusier's work, does not yearn weakly toward an Edwardian sediment of worn-out details, as a small and rather mauve group of critics now does. Instead it seizes and challenges the present, makes especially the alternately cyclopean and airborne world of the engineers comprehensible in human terms, and seeks its fellowship in the deepest patterns of the human past.

Scott then went on as follows: "Ancient architecture excels in its perfect definition; Renaissance architecture in the width and courage of its choice."

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

In these terms it would appear that the *Unité d'Habitation*, in the modern material of reinforced concrete, is even more like Hellenic architecture than like that of the Renaissance to which it bears certain resemblances. It would seem to have passed beyond choice toward a new definition of space and body and to have brought the modern age, finally, to the frontiers of a new humanism. As the impatient nineteenth-century discovered the joys of spatial continuity, the beleaguered twentieth seeks a new image of man.

Now the human being returns to the landscape; he no longer dissolves into it as he may do in the lonely dream of Wright. Nor is he an intruder there who simply interrupts the land—as a classicizing cube might do—instead, as in the Greek temple, his architecture is one which, through its purely sculptural scale and its implied perspective, can at once leave the major landscape elements alone to be themselves and can at the same time bring the whole visible landscape into human focus. It deals once more with the old double reverence, both for the earth and man.

But it does more than this. Like Classic Greek architecture itself it stretches us with the challenge it presents in terms of our capacity to grasp the whole of things afresh, and the images it evokes are multiple. Like the Parthenon dedicated to the Virgin Athena (whose attributes were alike of mind and force, of female sympathy and male power, and which was, of course, during the middle ages a church to the Virgin) Notre Dame du Haut at Ronchamp is active, but instead of rising tensely upward toward its center, as the Parthenon does, it splits out of the Euclidean envelope in a weight-shifting lunge to the southeast corner (Figs. 19, 20). Its architect tells us that the form, as a "vessel" on a "high place," was intended to respond to a "psycho-physiologie de la sensation . . ." which is Scott's "empathy," and to ". . . une acoustique paysagiste, prenant les quatre horizons à témoin. . . ." Indeed the outside pulpit is like the clapper in a great bell. But Ronchamp is other things as well. Its hooded chapels (the hidden one behind the lectern, is blood-red) are apsidal megara, which recall in plan and elevation not only Le Corbusier's drawings of the Serapeion in Hadrian's Villa (Fig. 16) but also certain neolithic earth sanctuaries in Sardinia which are related in shape to the Serapeion. Rising and turning from its chapels, the main body of the church, instead of bulging with its contained volume—which would cause it to be seen simply as a shell—instead presses in both walls and catenary slab upon its interior space until, within, one is conscious of enclosure in a positive body, and, outside, the whole becomes one pier which thrusts upward as a material force. Cave and column—in the words of the Litany, ". . . Spiritual Vessel . . . Tower of David . . . House of Gold . . . Tower of Ivory . . ."—become one.

Thus we cannot look at Ronchamp without considering the capacity of architecture to function as a sculptural "presence," as a Greek temple does. Perhaps alone of modern buildings Le Corbusier's church deserves the Acro-

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

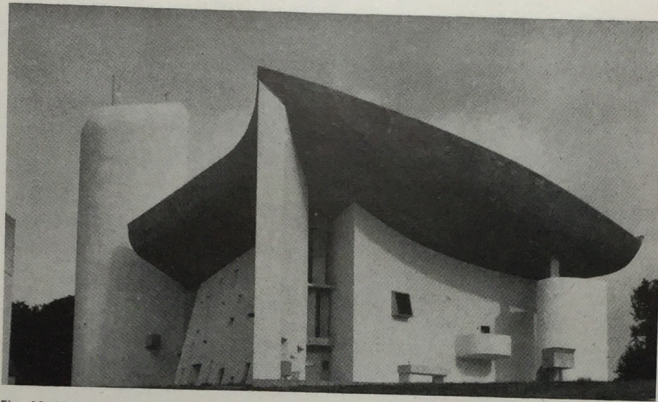


Fig. 19. Notre Dame du Haut, Ronchamp; Le Corbusier, 1955; Exterior.

polis, and, in the mind of its architect, indeed swings upward from it into splendid sound, itself a "brazen trumpet," an acoustic bell.

It is clear that architecture has come to a challenging moment. The "problem of monumentality," which is the problem of commitment both to the absolutes of completeness and to the present, now solves itself. Now the image of the river—along which we float like Huck and Jim, fugitives and spectators in a dreamlike time—is arrested by the image*of the demanding presence on the high place: in the fixed temenos, rising from the caverns of the earth, but turning toward the open sky. It may not be fortuitous that we are also driven here away from Henry Adams' symbol of the Dynamo toward his counter symbols of the Virgin and St. Michael, where the Archangel, too, "loved the heights." We are informed, at any rate, that our fate in the present remains more wholly human than we had recently been led to believe and that the world as we can know it is made up not only of nature, nor of machines, nor the search for an illusory security, but of the blazing ardour of searching men. It may be that in the face of total challenge the values of humanist civilization, as yet not dead, call to us, and we take our stand.

Yet a further point, and an obvious one, should be made: Ronchamp is not the Parthenon which, though blazing, is cool and, though intellectually clear-eyed, retains a pure tribal reverence. Ronchamp is both more primitive and more detached, like modern humanity. Its hooded towers are at once primitive fetishes and anthropological demonstrations. It is aware of the primitive shout of triumph and the shriek of fear and, at the same time, of

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

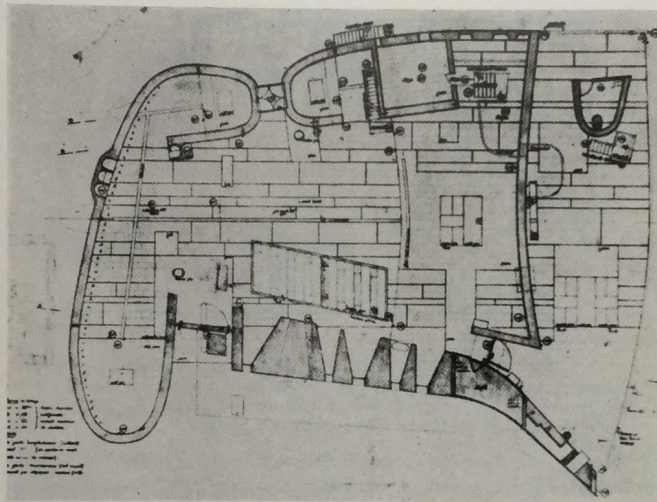


Fig. 20. Notre Dame du Haut, Ronchamp; Le Corbusier, 1955; Plan.

the fortress which is no fortress, the roof that breaks apart, the precarious balance of forces over the threatened door. Ronchamp is thus not the clear, poised union of physical and metaphysical experience which the Parthenon is. Instead Ronchamp rises up desperately in violent challenge like a burst of engines. Yet its essential choice is that of Camus who, like Le Corbusier, fixes finally upon Hellenic values as a means of bringing to a close that destruction of the present created by "L'Homme Revolté." The image for both these artists is of man born again to a sense of his tragic dignity, "a shaft which is inflexible and free."

In the end the historian himself can probably seek definition of style only in this way. Slogans, tags, and formulas of development are useful, but in the end they cannot define modern architecture or any art as it exists but only as it becomes. Thus at their worst, when dealing with the present, they may at once undervalue it, limit it, even destroy awareness of it, in their will for change. True definition, for any period, can only come when the nature and especially the objectives of the self—with its hope, its memory, and its consciousness of the present—are truly identified and humanly defined. Out of such definition arises that sense of identity which is style.

Yale University

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	Philip Johnson	II.34

RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

by

GEORGE EVERARD KIDDER SMITH

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P. 6

RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE. This article is concerned with the development of western religious architecture in the 20th century. After a brief introductory account, the countries that have contributed most to this development are examined. For earlier religious architecture of the western world. *see*: BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE; ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE; GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE; RENAISSANCE ARCHITECTURE; BAROQUE ARCHITECTURE; MODERN ARCHITECTURE. For the religious architecture of other parts of the world, *see* appropriate headings; *e.g.*, CHINESE ARCHITECTURE; IBERO-AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE; INDIAN ARCHITECTURE; ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE. *See also* PAGODA; TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE.

Historical Background.—When Constantine recognized Christianity by the edict of Milan in A.D. 313 a pattern of church architecture as such did not exist. The earliest Christians had worshiped in the houses of wealthier members or in the catacombs,

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

in New York city, are among the country's outstanding Gothic revival churches. External form, however, not structural purity, was predominant. St. Patrick's vaults are not self-supporting; its flying buttresses receive no load.

At the end of the 19th century the two largest churches in the U.S. were projected: St. John the Divine, New York (begun in 1892), and the cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul, Washington, D.C. (begun in 1907). Both of these are genuinely in the medieval Gothic, stone-by-stone tradition (although St. John was originally planned as Romanesque-Byzantine). Churches of such enormous size take years to build, and both of these Episcopal churches were put into use before completion.

U.S. architecture in most of the first half of the 20th century lagged far behind that of Europe, except in skyscraper construction. Notable buildings were built, but they were few in number and not widely accepted. After World War II however, the U.S. produced a great many excellent structures in all categories and public acceptance of new work was widespread.

The contemporary tradition in U.S. church building has distinguished roots in Unity temple, Oak Park, Ill., built in 1907 by Frank Lloyd Wright, and in the First Church of Christ Scientist, Berkeley, Calif. (1910), by Bernard Maybeck. Although neither constituted the architectural revolution which the Perret's church at Le Raincy occasioned, they are unquestionably landmarks in the evolution of contemporary church architecture. Wright maintained his high standard in his chapel at Florida Southern college, Lakeland (1941), the First Unitarian church in Madison, Wis. (1951), and the striking Beth Sholem synagogue in Elkins Park, Pa. (1958). His son, Lloyd Wright, built one of the country's memorable churches in the beautifully situated Wayfarer's chapel at Palos Verdes, Calif. (1951). The design is composed basically of frames of redwood and sheets of clear glass so that the sea and surroundings seem to become an intimate part of the service itself.

Pietro Belluschi, who went from Italy to the U.S. in 1923, designed a number of churches which are models of elegant simplicity, sympathetic scale and carefully considered natural lighting. His Zion Lutheran, Portland, Ore. (1951), First Presbyterian, Cottage Grove, Ore. (1951), First Lutheran church, Boston (1957), Church of the Redeemer, Baltimore (1958), with Rogers, Taliaferro and Lamb, and his Portsmouth Priory, Portsmouth, R.I. (1959), with Anderson, Beckwith and Haible, greatly encouraged and enriched the U.S. church-building scene.

Eliel Saarinen and his son, Eero, both born in Finland, were among the pioneers in contemporary U.S. church design. Their Tabernacle Church of Christ in Columbus, Ind. (1942), was one of the important earlier ones built in the U.S. They collaborated even more successfully in Christ Lutheran church in Minneapolis, Minn. (1950), which was Eliel Saarinen's last work. The younger Saarinen then designed the nonsectarian cylindrical Kresge chapel at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge (1956), a brilliant example of religious architecture, and several college chapels, notably at Stephens college in Columbia, Mo. (1956), and the chapel at Concordia college, Fort Wayne, Ind. (1958). Another university chapel of note is at the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago (1952), by the German-born Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

Two striking religious buildings of large size are the Air Force academy chapel at Colorado Springs, Colo. (1961), and the First Presbyterian church in Stamford, Conn. (1958). The Air Force academy chapel is of aluminum skinned tetrahedral frames, graphically suggesting the daring spirit of the air age. Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (called S.O.M.) were the architects, and Gordon Bunshaft and Walter Netsch the designers. Wallace Harrison's Stamford church is one of the most powerful modern churches in the world. Its exterior is of canted, angular planes, resembling some great fish, with a soaring colour-drenched nave within. A dazzling flood of light fills the interior from windows that rise from the floor to the ceiling ridge. These windows are filled with 20,000 pieces of inch-thick *Betonglas*, designed by Harrison and executed

by Gabriel Loire of Chartres, France. The Crucifixion is depicted in abstract style on the north side and the Resurrection on the warmer, south side.

Harrison and his partner, Max Abramovitz, also designed an Interfaith centre for Brandeis university, Waltham, Mass. (1955). Instead of a single convertible building for the three faiths represented, there are three separate, individual chapels, Jewish, Protestant and Catholic, sensitively grouped around a common pool and landscaped setting.

Synagogue architecture in the U.S. is of a very high level. Eric Mendelsohn, who lived in the U.S. after 1942, designed several fine temples, among them Congregation B'nai Amoona, St. Louis (1952), Congregation Emanuel, Grand Rapids, Mich. (1951), Mount Zion temple, St. Paul, Minn., and the Cleveland Park synagogue, Cleveland, O. (1954).

Percival Goodman also designed splendid synagogues: Congregation Beth El, Springfield, Mass. (1953), Temple Beth El, Providence, R.I. (1953), Fairmount temple, Beechwood village, Ohio (1957) and Temple Mishkan Tefila, Newton, Mass. (1958). They are further distinguished by their excellent use of art by some of the finest artists in the country. The co-operation of architect and artist from the beginning achieved superior results.

Two of the handsomest synagogues in the U.S. are the Temple Emanu-el, Dallas, Tex. (1957), by Howard R. Meyer and Max Sandfield, and Philip C. Johnson's elegantly beautiful Kneses Tifereth Israel synagogue in Port Chester, N.Y. (1956). This clean, geometrically precise temple is a sharp contrast to the freer, more rugged design of Wallace Harrison's First Presbyterian church in Stamford, less than ten miles away. Though poles apart architecturally, they are two of the finest religious buildings in the country.

In contrast to its magnificent accomplishments in Europe, the Catholic Church in the U.S., as in Latin America, espoused relatively traditional church forms for new building. In the first half of the 20th century there were few Catholic churches of distinctive contemporary design. Among the most notable Catholic buildings are Robert Anshen and W. S. Allen's Chapel of the Holy Cross, Sedona, Ariz. (1956), and Marcel Breuer's Benedictine Abbey of St. John in Collegeville, Minn. (1961).

Two Protestant churches are of interest in that they illustrate the problems of the automobile age: St. Clement's Episcopal church, Alexandria, Va. (1948), by J. H. Saunders and the former rector, Darby Betts; and the Venice-Nokomis Presbyterian church, Venice, Fla. (1953), by Victor A. Lundy. The first, being flanked by roads with noisy traffic is of windowless, soundproofed design, artificially lit and air conditioned. The Florida chapel is just the reverse: it is an open-air, drive-in church. See also Index references under "Religious Architecture" in vol. 24.

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(G. E. K. S.)

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	Philip Johnson	II.34

Stained glass strips in K.T.I. Synagogue by Philip Johnson. Architect, use light to produce design effects both night and day. Lighting consultant was Richard Kelly. Stained glass consultant, John Johanson.



© Ezra Stoller

LIGHTING *A Basis for Design*

In some areas of the building art, technology has barely kept pace with architectural concepts; in others it has gone hand-in-hand; but in the case of lighting, developments in sources of light (technically speaking) have been made available commercially much faster than they have been fully assimilated (in an architectural sense). This is not to say that in work-a-day situations lighting has not improved greatly—especially during the last 20 years since the introduction of the fluorescent lamp. The quantity of light available for offices is rapidly approaching the 500 foot-candle level—that is to say, it is feasible and is being done in demonstration situations. Even a 1000 foot-candle room exists! Along with these developments, studies have been made to determine optimum levels of illumination for specific tasks. And new results are being announced on the facility of recognition when certain tasks are viewed under “critical” levels of illumination. It should be emphasized that these studies have been almost completely in the realm of “human engineering,” with practically no at-

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

tention to psychological-emotional responses of people working and living under these levels of illumination.

Practically everyone agrees that much more skill and knowledge must be put to the lighting problem before it can contribute something more than simply the ease of seeing. Architects are quite disturbed over the bland effect that has resulted from some of the newer luminous environments: the lighting has made every part of the space equally bright, and therefore equally important; at the same time the space has lost "dimension."

It would appear that the trouble today is not so much in having the proper light sources available, as in architects appreciating how these can be used successfully, and more specifically, what they really want them to contribute to the total design—in other words, accepting the premise that lighting is an element of design, what are the lighting effects that are desired? After all, lighting should not be thought of as something over and above good or bad architecture—that which is applied to the good to make it better, or the bad to save it; for surely it is a fundamental element in design. While the architect may feel he is striving for certain visual effects, what he has in mind generally is the appearance of fixtures per se, rather than light itself as it is reflected from various surfaces.

There are several hurdles in the way of more expressive lighting. First of all the architect has to be able to state the lighting problem for a particular building. For what purposes is light to be used: in a purely functional way (for reading; for following paths of circulation) or, in addition, to make a room seem large or small, gay or restful, or enhance emotional and tactile sensations through color and texture? Unfortunately the architect has come to rely too heavily on the engineering specialist for design suggestions. There is much stimulus to be gained from some of the engineering tools at hand. But it often happens that the engineering technique is made to take over and serve as the prime expression for the building without sufficient regard to the overall intent of the program.

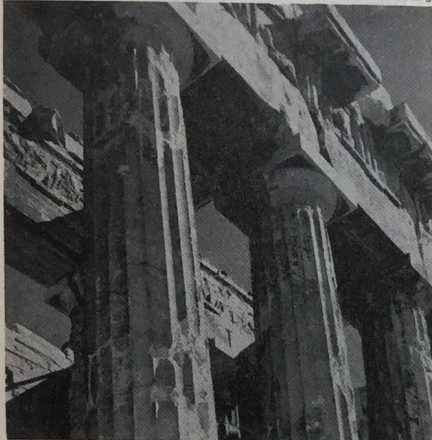
Experienced and thoughtful architects undoubtedly have developed a sense of what sort of atmospheres are most appropriate for different situations. The crucial step that follows, however, is in properly interpreting this to the lighting engineer. Some architects and engineers have suggested that an approach to this is thinking of space in terms of brightnesses as well as textures, and expressing lighting in drawings that will be meaningful to the engineer. Even so, since lighting is so subjective in its influence there is little doubt that architects don't have available to them sufficient information on emotional response to lighting stimuli. In a general way, maybe they do: warm and cool, advancing and receding colors, etc. Certainly a feeling of well being is just as important as is the physical ease of seeing with which tasks can be accomplished—but how to achieve this must wait to some extent for better information from the psychologists and their confrères.

Another hindrance in the way of more "quality" in lighting is the manner in which lighting equipment data is presented to the architect. Distribution curves can be used successfully by the engineer to obtain prescribed foot-candle levels on room surfaces. Unfortunately this type of information means little to the architect. It doesn't tell him what sort of patterns of brightnesses and shadows will occur when a certain type of fixture is used on a particular spacing and installed in a particular way.

All in all, the fact remains that light can make a much greater contribution to building design than it has made. And just as other technical areas, such as acoustics, have been incorporated into the building vocabulary, so it is time now that light begins to work positively.



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	Philip Johnson	II. 34



Courtesy N. Y. Public Library

Architects of Hellenic Greece were conscious of how bright sunlight could give sharp modeling effects by narrow flutings on columns

Architects of medieval cathedrals designed structural tracery of stonework to allow soft daylight of their climate inside



Ely Cathedral, England, photo by A. F. Kersting

By Derek Phillips, A.R.I.B.A. and Lighting Consultant, London

Architectural Design Factors

A work of architecture is governed by a number of "design factors" which have various degrees of importance in different architectural programs and in different localities, and have been given different emphases throughout history. Some of these factors may be basic to the design, while others may be only of passing or local importance.

Included among these factors are the satisfaction of man's physical needs (such as space, heat and light) and his intellectual and emotional needs (such as unity and variety, proportion, scale and color). Lighting is certainly *sine qua non* for the latter group, because although light-

ing enables the building to be used through man's senses, it should also contribute to appreciation by his mind.

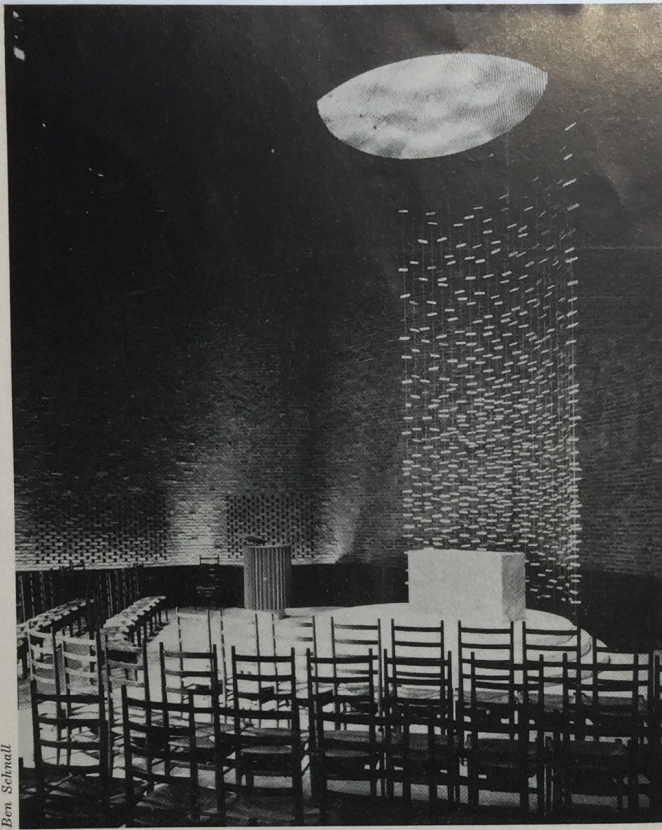
In almost all cases design factors have been given varying importance throughout history, and it can be demonstrated that different sets of conditions determine the weight which is attached to any one of them at any particular moment. However, the factor of lighting has been regarded as important in almost all periods of history. In Hellenic architecture bright natural light was utilized to gain heavily etched modeling from comparatively shallow moldings, while daylight was scarcely admitted into the building at all; an

occasional roof opening allowed a dramatic shaft of light to fall on an important statue.

In medieval cathedrals, the structural tracery of the stonework and flying buttresses was designed to allow the softer daylight indigenous to more temperate climates to be admitted to the interior, and the art of stained glass which flowered at this time was carefully related by the architects of the period to the emotional quality of the interiors.

The Baroque period saw the subordination of such factors as structure and space utilization to the sculptural effects of freely molded shapes and space, and the wealth and richness of the architecture can be par-

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	Philip Johnson	II.34



Ben Schnackl



G.M. photo

Glittering screen in the M.I.T. chapel suggests a Baroque richness which still has meaning in today's architecture

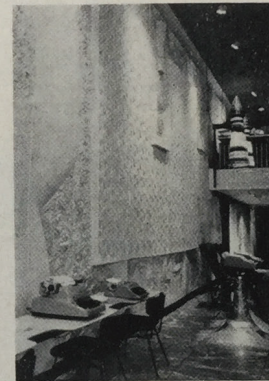
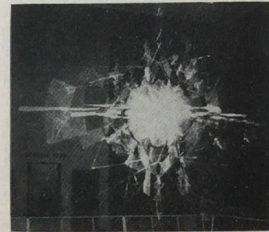
Saarinen's dome of light in G. M. Technical Center (left) is made possible through advances in lighting technique

Sculpture, "The Sun," by Richard Lippold (right, above) has brilliance often suggested by crystal chandelier

Sculptured concrete wall by Nivola in Olivetti showroom shows how light and form can work together

Glitter . . . Form

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art (temporary exhibit)



tially accounted for in terms of what can be accomplished by light when daylight openings and candelabra are carefully related to richly molded forms.

Architects have not entirely forgotten the use that natural light can be put to in modern buildings, not only for functional reasons, but to add richness to what is in many cases doomed by modern economics to soul destroying monotony. But electric lighting that is possible today has not yet achieved the maturity which should come when its possibilities are fully integrated with architectural principles. For almost anything is possible in lighting, and what may appear to be advanced systems

should be accepted merely as the stepping stones to the future; the run of the mill incandescent and fluorescent schemes of fixtures added to predetermined structures should be considered as more akin to lighting of the gas age.

The fact that electric lighting as we know it was not used as a basic design factor in buildings of other periods, or in a sense may seem "old-fashioned" or inefficient in some more recent buildings now, makes life very difficult for the architect or lighting engineer who has the unenviable job of trying to design lighting for them. Where a building has been designed with no thought of electric lighting, other than that

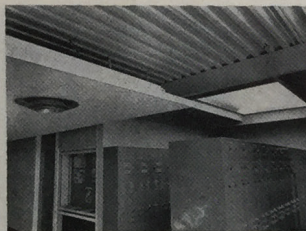
which was a bare minimum to enable a man to pass through in comparative safety, adding lighting to it afterwards can never do more than light it up—in many cases a mistake—and at worst it can completely spoil the appearance in daytime by the addition of unrelated fixtures.

There may be justification for large scale schemes of artificial lighting applied to important buildings of past periods of architecture, where modern custom requires their use at night, but then it is well to achieve sufficient illumination and to reveal the characteristics of the architecture in such a way as to infringe as little as possible upon the daylight appearance of the building.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34



Louvered grid in Connecticut General Bldg. by Skidmore Owings and Merrill hides fluorescent tubes, ducts and diffusers; provides sound control



In Northport School by Ketchum, Giná and Sharp, dropped ceiling at entrance has fluorescent tube above to light ceiling. Skylight has lamps for night



Same school as above uses wood baffles in front of fluorescents to light display board and corridor. Downlights are in dropped ceiling for entrance



Charles Payne



Ceiling in cafeteria of Northport school has gaily colored fixtures on dropped panels. Fluorescent tubes atop edges of panels light cellular decking above which is bright orange

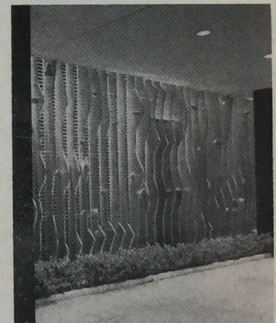
Wooden grid with lamps behind in Japan Airlines office resembles shoji screen. Junzo Yoshimura, Archt.

Luminous ceiling in dining room of G. M. Technical Center integrates sound baffles with air diffusers

Stainless steel sculpture by Isamu Noguchi is decorative element in lobby of 666 Fifth Ave. Mercury lights make waterfall behind shimmer



G. M. photo by LaRue



J. Alex Langley

Function . . . Decoration

Importance of Lighting as a Design Factor

We have said that lighting is a design factor which must provide for the physiology of seeing and must satisfy the mind (reason and emotion) also. It is important that lighting first of all should be adequate for the task to be performed, whether this is operating a piece of machinery, walking through a building, or even listening to music; and that the lighting should be arranged in such a way as not to inhibit man's visual or other body mechanisms by causing undue strain due to glare. (The provision of adequate illumination, in a manner related to man's body economy, can

be considered as straight illuminating and human engineering; these are only the mechanics by which "positive" lighting is achieved.) This article is devoted chiefly to consideration of the less tangible aspects which satisfy man's mind.

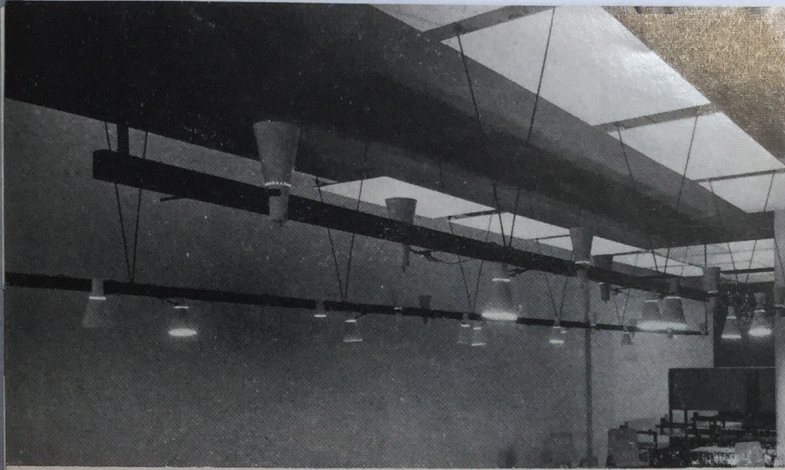
To illustrate—even though the richly molded and gilded forms of past architectural styles may not have relevance today in terms of either 20th century economics or design philosophy, the glitter and sparkle provided by the original flame chandeliers satisfied a deep human need; and that this is so, is obvious from the manner in which many present-day lighting fixtures attempt to achieve similar characteristics by

means of highly polished and perforated materials.

And while the M.I.T. chapel belongs to today's architecture, providing a measure of counterpoint to the larger auditorium, certain features suggest a Baroque richness, one being the metal-leaved sculptural screen at the rear of the altar, which owes much of its success to the carefully planned and executed lighting.

These references are not intended to suggest that essentially all there is to be done is recapture stimuli which had meaning in past ages in new wrappings. Effects can now be achieved in buildings never dreamed of by Michelangelo or Sir Christopher Wren; but had modern meth-

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34



John Maltby F.I.B.P.

Suspended lighting system (often called Rotterdam Ceiling) "lowers" ceiling for a store. Downlights give modeling and accents; uplights shine on panels for indirect illumination

Creating an Illusion

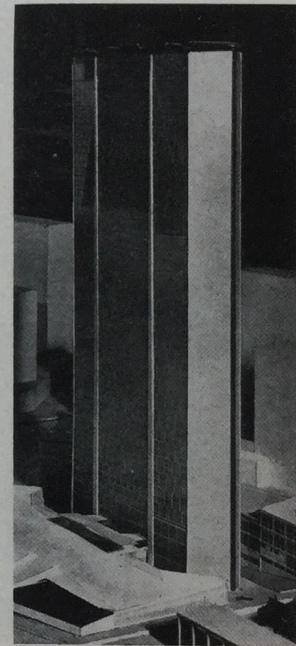


B.H.T. Co., Ltd. photo



Factory in Brynmawr, England has two sets of ceiling openings, with same geometry, one for daylight, the other for electric light. Good example of thoughtful lighting for a thin shell

Architecture for Night and Day



ods of lighting domes been available to these architectural giants, it is certain that they would have used them, and their architecture would have taken them into account. The result would not have been in the same "form" as Saarinen's smooth flowing dome for the display of new automobiles; it would have been related to the cultural and architectural needs of a different age and society, and it would have resulted in a *different* architectural form in which artificial as well as natural lighting were carefully considered.

Thus it is possible for new forms to be evolved today related to the light sources available: they might be sculptured concrete walls, strong in

compression, light in feeling, which have a textural and esthetic appeal over and above their structural qualities, which varies in relation to the lighting.

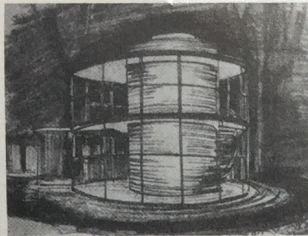
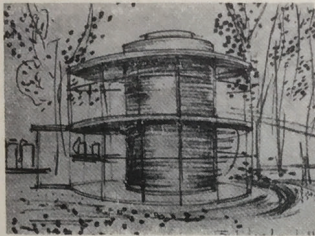
The Positive Use of Lighting

Up until this point the principles and objectives of "positive" lighting have been discussed, sometimes in abstract terms, along with historical references which indicated the influences that caused lighting to be a design determining factor. To further amplify what is meant by "positive" uses of light, a number of contemporary examples will be illustrated and discussed. It might be possible to infer from what has already been

said that "positive lighting" as a design philosophy applies only to the more dramatic situations, where appearance is primarily an esthetic consideration; this, at least, is where lighting design weaknesses are most prominently exposed. But positive lighting as a concept can apply to any lighting situation—office building to concert hall.

This is demonstrated in the Northport, L. I. school by Ketchum, Giná and Sharp, where the corridor has lighting which serves both function and effect. A dropped ceiling with recessed incandescent light has been put at the entrance to emphasize this fact (it contains a diffuser and conceals ducts as well). A plastic sky-

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	Philip Johnson	II.34



Proposal for gasoline station (above) by the author considers how light can enhance its form, day and night

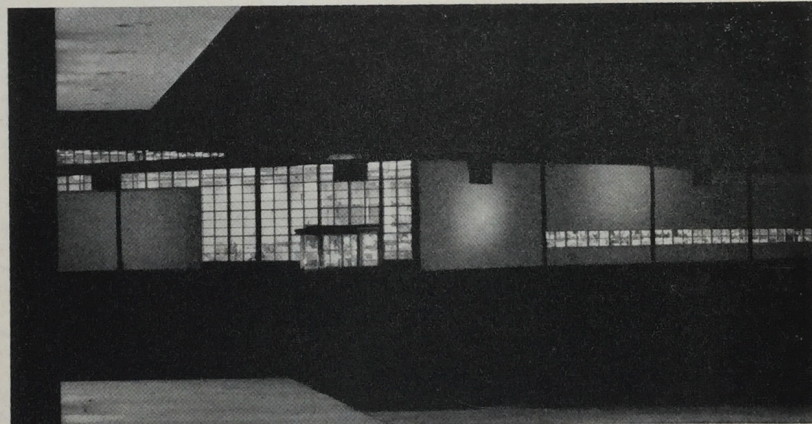
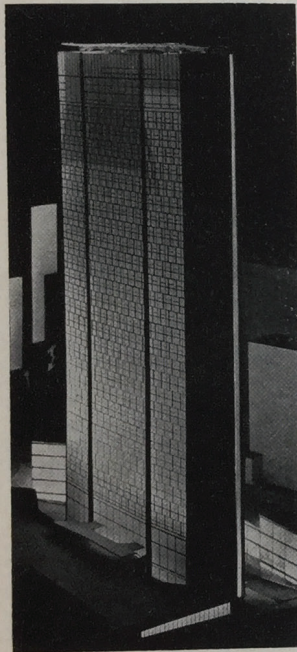
Seagram's Building now glows at night on the New York skyline. Perimeter of each floor is a band of light

Gio Ponti speaks of the night appearance of buildings as the "second aspect of architecture." It is exemplified in the Pirelli Bldg. (left)

Johnson & Johnson plant by Walter Kidde has special lights shining at random on white brick panels—a big improvement over "floodlighting"



Maurey Garber



Joseph W. Molitor

light over the locker area has fluorescent tubes above it for night use. Along the side walls are shielded fluorescent tubes which provide both light for the corridor and the display board as well.

One of the most difficult jobs for the architect and lighting engineer is the coordination of lighting with the many structural and mechanical components required in the ceilings of office buildings. The needs of structure, noise reduction, lighting, heating and cooling, and sometimes fire protection devices, as well as telephone and sound systems must all be coordinated. The "design" solutions to this problem can be either very good or very bad. Materials and

equipment are available to permit commendable designs, but the quality of the result rests in the ingenuity of the designer.

In the category of suspended ceilings (using the term somewhat loosely) it is possible to create the illusion of a lowered ceiling through lighting. For instance, the apparent ceiling height can be reduced by using a simple wooden framework in which the lighting is incorporated, giving emphasis at a low height where it is required. This is carried to an extreme in the "Rotterdam Ceilings" so popular now in shops and store lighting.

Lighting equipment itself, whether a window to let in daylight, or a luminaire, has its own appeal over

and above the lighting job it is called upon to perform.

The ceiling has been a traditional position for decorative effects, whether the painted ceilings of the renaissance or the plastered ceilings of English country houses. The functional effect of the lighting in these installations is less important than the appearance of the ceiling related to the whole design of the room.

"Second Aspect" of Architecture

In the same way that natural light reveals the physical form of a building by day, so the artificial lighting must be used positively to create a definite impression by night. It is

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

important for an architect to ask himself whether he wishes the night impression to be similar to that by day, or whether for some valid reason this may be altered. An example of this might well be in a restaurant where, during the day, an even illumination over the room suits the mood of the daytime customer, but at night moods change and a more intimate atmosphere needs to be created in which the customer finds himself to some extent isolated in his own little circle of light. Other cases where light can be changed are shops and stores, theaters, etc., where the emotions can be stimulated differently according to the time of day.

In general it is true to say that the nighttime impression of a building should be consistent with the daytime one, at least to the extent of aiding recognition by expressing the essential form of the building.

(The Seagram's Building in New York will be lighted the same day and night by a luminous plastic band in the ceilings which runs around the periphery of the building. During the daytime, the illumination will be 100 ft-c maintained, and at night this drops down to 25 ft-c, except where someone may be working, and then the full illumination can be left on. Philip Johnson, commenting on this design, said that the architects didn't want the building to look as though it were the open mouth of a person who had some teeth missing.)

The "appearance" of a building by night has been described by the Italian architect, Gio Ponti, as the "second aspect" of architecture, worthy of as much consideration as the appearance by day. This concept would have been impossible as little as 50 years ago, but with the lighting we now have, it is quite acceptable.

A theoretical example of how this might be done is shown in the two sketches for a gasoline station. The daylight form is a solid brick cylinder surrounded by a glass screen, with two floors through which the brick cylinder passes. During the day the underside of the two floors is dark against a light background seen through glass, with the brick cylinder slightly lighter due to ground reflection. At night the form of the building can be revealed by making the undersurface of the floors light against the dark background of the night, while the cylinder is lit to a

slightly lower brightness. To carry the effect to its conclusion, the top of the brick drum on the outside should be lit to an intensity similar to that inside—a real reason for what is generally thought of as external floodlighting. Perhaps a more appropriate example of doing this might be to allow the internal light to flood upwards by leaving a gap between the brick drum and the roof, filled in with glass or plastic. By this means the shadow patterns are reversed but the form of building as revealed by artificial light corresponds to the daytime experience.

The railway station of Rome is a magnificent example of this feeling for the night appearance of a building which must of necessity be used at all hours of the day. The way in which the lighting has been integrated with the original concept of the form shows distinctly that there is already an awareness on the part of some architects of the importance of this new design factor.

Gio Ponti shows in his new office building for the Pirelli Company that even in the very practical problems of this type of space the lighting factor should be considered. This building answers the complicated problems of structure, planning and services, but it goes further than this in appealing to our emotions in a "formal" sense. Daylight is admitted to the building by glass walls oriented to suit the climatic conditions and the internal accommodations, and at night these glass walls form a very positive visual impression when lit from inside. In addition to this, the service elements, staircases, etc., have been grouped at each end of the building in such a way that when lit at night, the resultant pattern contributes to the "second aspect" of architecture in achieving an architectural unity—different from, but expressive of the daylight impression.

This is an entirely different concept than the floodlighting of buildings from the outside which can surely only have validity when the purpose of the building is such as to require emphasis for commercial or other reasons at night, without the building being in use. In modern buildings the large areas of glass make the general use of this form of lighting almost impossible since the inside and outside space is so closely related. The inside of the building

often can be seen clearly and the building must be acceptable from the inside as well as the outside. The lighting must assist in unifying both.

The problem facing the architect is how to do this in a way in which the lighting equipment itself does not conflict with either the daytime or nighttime impression. The latter is more a problem of technique and the lighting engineer together with the architect should be able to solve this, provided the architect knows what he wants to do, and the lighting engineer is capable of understanding the idea and executing it.

New Structures and Lighting

Many new forms of structures are being made possible by developments in engineering design and new materials. These have led to the use of new structural systems employed with tremendous enthusiasm and very little thought for other factors—and lighting is surely one of them—which are of importance in the creation of a building to satisfy all man's needs.

Early shell concrete buildings illustrate this point very clearly, for with this new tool the architect gaily went ahead and designed shell concrete buildings in which no provision was made in the structure for heating, ventilation or artificial lighting, and when the building was completed, the beautiful simplicity of the shell lines was spoiled by all manner of apparatus and contraptions suspended anywhere they could be fitted in.

This didn't happen in a factory at Brynmawr, England, where the architects designed the shell roof to accommodate openings for both daylight and artificial light. The lighting for factory processing comes from the same direction both day and night, and has broadly the same geometry so that functionally it meets man's needs, as well as appealing to his sense of order.

In the brilliant engineering of Nervi, a new structural esthetic seems to be found, a joy of structure for its own sake, and it seems almost a pity that because the Turin Exhibition has to be used at night, it was necessary to add the lighting in long lines across the structural member—instead light might have been worked into the undulations, so that their integrity was maintained at night too.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection: Philip Johnson	Series.Folder: II. 34
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NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, THURSDAY, MAY 7, 1959

Suburbia Today

The Church Grows as Social Hub

(Here is the eleventh article of a series on the expanding suburbs.)

By Jo-ann Price

New York's suburban residents are plunging into the activities of religion with a vigor that vitalizes their communities. Churches and synagogues are being built at a rapid rate. Established congregations are expanding.

This energy of growth is the one common characteristic reported by Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish leaders in summing up what is happening in religious circles outside the city.

Many Roles

The role of a church in the suburbs is a mixture of sociability and salvation, parking problems and prayer, mortgages and zeal, status and religious education and a very real search for God.

The large numbers of persons on membership rolls are called part of a genuine religious revival by some observers. Yet not a few denominational leaders will criticize the suburban church for being "superficial" and for failing to bring about a religious commitment from its members.

The Rev. Dr. George G. Parker, minister of the Congregational Church of Manhasset, explained the growth of his church in words which might speak for all of them.

"We arrived at the right place, at the right time," he said. "Great numbers of people without a church relationship moved into this area, so it was all here to be tapped." His church is only eighteen years old, and has 3,300 members, property worth \$1,250,000, four choirs, a church school of 1,200 members and 400 teenagers in members and 400 teen-agers in

Sites Surveyed

Protestant leaders today depend more on surveys and less on chance in the placement of churches than they did in 1941. Almost every Protestant council of churches, for example, now has a "comity" committee, by which the various denominations agree among themselves who will build where. If an area is already served by a Methodist church, for example, the committee may advise the Methodists to build in some other place that has no Protestant church.

Spokesmen for the suburban Roman Catholic dioceses say that, with the great need for parochial grade and high schools, the first building in a new parish is often a school. Many of the schools now being built serve churches, with mass in the gymnasiums and auditoriums, until the churches can be built.

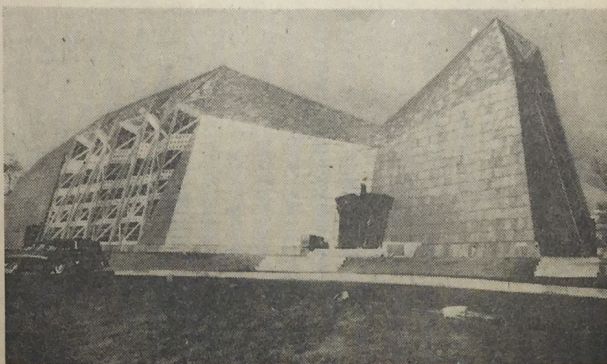
'Real Pioneers'

"Most people out here are real pioneers," declared the Very Rev. Donald B. Macdonald, director of the Zuiliding Office of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre. "They have to pay for and build their own schools at great sacrifice," he said.

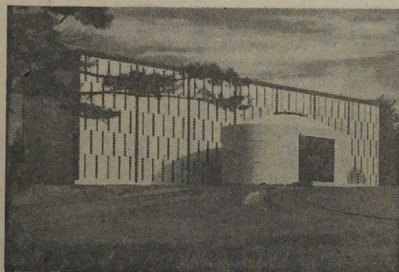
It is not unusual to find that, in a new area, enrollment in the local Catholic school outdistances even the most extravagant estimates of anticipated school population. When, for example, St. Catherine's parish in Spring Lake, N. J., opened its school in 1952 it had 100 students from that area; it now has 600 pupils from within the parish boundaries.

Services in Theater

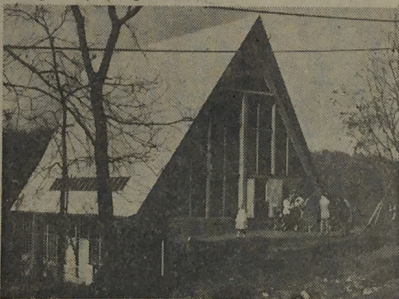
The suburbanites who are starting new churches and temples on the fringes of the city will use almost any kind of meeting place from firehouses



NEW STYLES IN PLACES OF WORSHIP IN SUBURBS—The First Presbyterian Church in Stamford, designed by Wallace Harrison, of Harrison and Abramovitz.



The Kneses Tifereth Israel Temple in Port Chester, designed by Philip Johnson.



The St. Barnabas Protestant Episcopal Church at Heatherdell Road and Revolutionary Road, Ardsley. The architect was William H. Van Benschoten.

to dance halls to get organized. Look at what is happening on Long Island.

The Commaek Baptist Church uses a small prefabricated portable chapel for Sunday services.

At Brentwood, some 4,000 families of St. Anne's Catholic parish attend masses every Sunday at the Bay Shore Fifth Avenue Drive-in theater, following the prayers with speakers hooked to the windows of their cars.

And at Valley Stream, the Judea Reform Temple has hired the upper floor of the former municipal building for Sabbath services and meetings which are frequently attended by the mayor.

The shape of some new edifices has changed the horizon, too, of many a small town. They range from wigwam shapes to synagogues-in-the-round.

One of the most provocative of the modern style churches on the eastern seaboard is the fish-shaped First Presbyterian Church of Stamford, Conn., designed by Wallace Harrison.

What does the suburban church or temple mean to the worshiper?

Religious sociologists and individual pastors seem to think

these churches are often superficial. And they aren't doing much to crack this superficiality, either. A lot of suburban churches aren't even touching the problems of alcoholism or delinquency."

The Rev. Dr. Truman Douglass, executive vice-president of the Board of Home Missions of the Congregational Christian Churches, takes a more optimistic view of the state of religion in suburbia. Salvation is not impossible in the suburbs, he believes.

'The Real Center'

"The church has the chance to be what it was in colonial America and later on the frontier—the real center of community life," Dr. Douglass said. "Frequently the new church provides the only public building in the neighborhood."

The suburban Catholic has quite a different outlook from his or her immigrant grandparents, commented the Rev. Andrew M. Greeley, of Chicago, in a recent issue of the national Catholic magazine, "Ave Maria."

"We are becoming the Church of the well-to-do and are ceasing to be the Church of the poor," he observed. The suburban Catholic today is better educated, more community-minded and regards himself as being more "in the main stream" of American life than his forebears.

'Desire for Belonging'

The growth of Jewish temples and synagogues is marked not only by a desire by young parents to provide their children with a Jewish education and experience but also a "desire for belonging," in the opinion of Jack Mittleman, director of activities of the Metropolitan Council of the United Synagogue of America.

The Jew in a new suburb, wishing to identify himself with his heritage, finds himself in a "new form" of Jewish community. Like the suburban Catholic, he is better educated and better off economically than his ancestors.

A sense of urgency pervades all three branches of Judaism in the suburbs.

"People in the suburbs are longing for a kind of Judaism that will work in the circumstances and the ideological climate of our time," Mr. Mittleman said.

"They're interested in the religious education of their children and they're willing to go to a lot of trouble to schlep (haul) their kids around to temple," declared Rabbi Daniel L. Davis, director of the New York Federation of Reform Synagogues.

(Tomorrow: Some suburbanites move back to the city.)

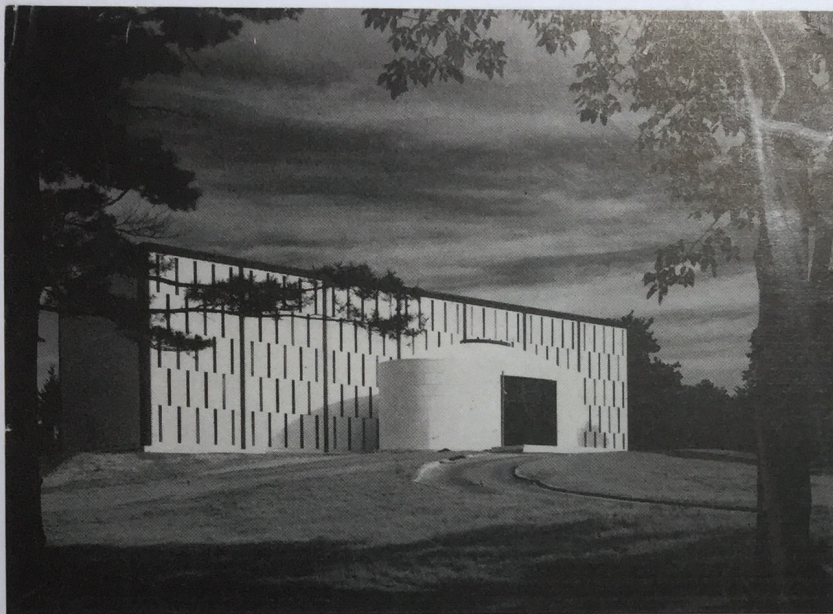
Problems Noted

In addition to this search for "status," Protestant migrants to the suburbs find they cannot mingle easily with nor are they welcomed by members of existing churches, according to the Rev. Meryl Ruoss, executive director of the Department of Urban Church of the National Council of Churches.

"So they build a new church, their own church, for their new community," Mr. Ruoss said. "This leaves the old churches with tremendous problems and deep prejudices."

"What I worry about is that

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II.34

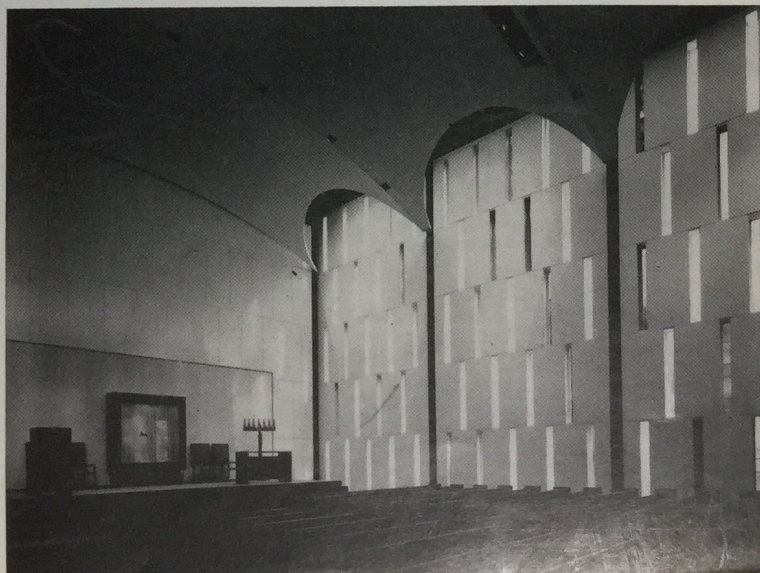


KNESES TIFERETH
ISRAEL TEMPLE
Port Chester, New York

Philip Johnson, A.I.A.
Architect
New York, New York

*Photos by Ezra Stoller
Rye, New York*

Sitting on a knoll among trees, the straight clear lines of Kneses Tifereth Israel Temple in Port Chester, New York, delight one's sense of the beauty to be found in precision blended with color. Here is an example of almost severe architecture tempered with the inspiration of controlled light. The many slits of glass, ranging from white to deep red and blue hues, lend unique interest to the exterior and bathe the interior in a glorious wash of multi-colored impressions. It has been truly called a "Joseph's coat palette of stained glass." Inside, above the sanctuary and the social hall, are seven gently curving canopies of plaster which seem to float free and which give further interest to the pattern of light control. The emotive effect of light is further used to advantage in the building entrance. One comes into the dim, elliptical hall from daylight and then proceeds from there to the brilliance of the sanctuary.



The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II.34

A HOUSE FOR OUR GOD

*The modern synagogue
must give
meaningful form to
religious and
human needs*

by MILDRED CONSTANTINE

"All architecture," according to Mies van der Rohe, the great architectural innovator of our times, "must stem from the sustaining and driving forces of civilization." These forces, created by the traditions of the past and by the complicated expressions and flux of the present, influence every aspect of civilization. There cannot be an involvement of art, literature, or religion without an involvement with life. There cannot be architecture, born out of function and purpose, expressive of the basic substance, without an involvement with life.

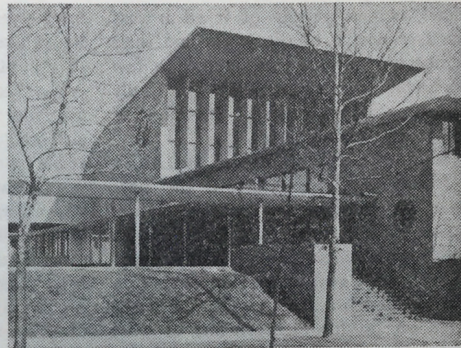
Religion is a piece of the changing fabric of civilization. It too is structured of the past, the present, and the future. It is many-faceted: its past is subject to many disputatious interpretations and its present is complicated by allegiances

Mildred Constantine is Associate Curator of Graphic Design of The Museum of Modern Art in New York. She has written and edited numerous museum publications, the latest, "Sign Language."

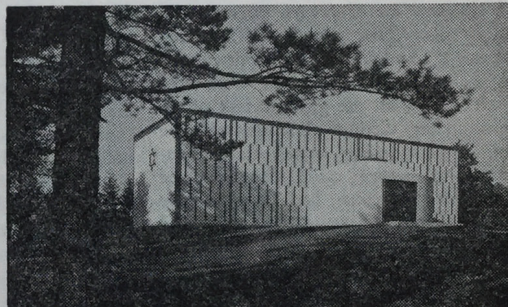
which have modified and expanded the external aspects of belief and the essence of the divine spirit.

One of the major developments of our contemporary civilization has been the new temples of worship. What do we demand in such structures — a monument to the spiritual, a manifestation of the material, a home for tradition, or a transcending expression of timelessness? Can the physical, psychological, spiritual and social factors be combined with such specifics as air, light, heat, and shelter, to produce a building that represents the dynamics of architecture and religion? Can the realistic needs and requirements of a congregation be met in a devotional space in which the immanence of the divine spirit exists?

Many of our Jewish theologians and writers have indicated that there is no one or preferred form for the synagogue. The Jews have always tended to build their houses of worship in conformity with the architecture of their environment.



B'nai Amoona Synagogue and Community Center, St. Louis, Mo. Eric Mendelsohn, architect.



Knesez Tifereth Israel Synagogue, Port Chester, N. Y. Philip Johnson, architect.

The Lord, requesting that Moses ask his people to make Him a sanctuary, made known His wishes as to materials, size and scale (the cubit is used as the measure — the distance between the elbow and knuckles) as well as decorative elements for the ark, the mercy seat, the table, candlesticks; for the tabernacle, the curtains (twined linen, and blue and purple and scarlet), the altar, the chambers, the holy garments, and so forth (Exodus 26).

When Solomon built the first Temple for the Lord, he embodied human acts, human thoughts, and human expressions in relation to the spirit of God. Solomon was instructed as to the length, breadth, and height of the House, the porch before the temple of the House. House windows of narrow lights were specified. The House was built of stone, made ready before it was brought to the site so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron head in the House while it was seen, even the floors were covered with beams and boards of cedar. No stone was seen, even the

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

floors were covered with fir. It took seven years to build and the cedar trees, fir-trees, gold, were furnished by Hiram, King of Tyre (First Book of Kings).

In our times, we have a choice. We can preserve an attachment to the past, we can adapt the characteristics and look of tradition, or we can reflect our age — change, action, movement, and create new expressions which the moral and creative resources of man can express.

Just as there is controversy in the "fitness" of aspects of Jewish belief — the conservative, the orthodox, the reformed, — so there is controversy in the tangible expressions of these aspects. There are those who prefer the traditional forms without the distractions of visual elements felt to inhibit religious expression. Their belief is that the emotional aspects of worship inhibit true religious experience. They point to the Second Commandment as the source for this belief. But scholars have argued that this commandment does not really imply stricture on decoration but only on the representation of human form. One critic of modern synagogue buildings complained of the paucity of congregations that will plan for costly and fine adornments. While objecting to a barren look, he found no satisfaction in modern art embellishments chosen by architects. There is justification for criticizing both architects and congregations who do not plan for the future generally. But modest decoration is very much in order. A modest decorative form can be very helpful in a sparsely decorated structure.

The source of light too, has been open to many discussions. On the one hand, an exclusion of the world is felt to be essential in a house of worship to encourage immersion; others have asked for houses of worship open to the world, to nature, and to the sky. It is true that intensely religious experience needs no aids, yet music, painted walls, carved wood, and other embellishments have been used throughout the ages to aid the worshipper to commune with God.

In our age of conformity, buildings of all kinds have had a tendency to look alike. However, a place of worship is not like the neon-laden theatre. Given the human equipment, the all-encompassing and progressive technology of our times, and the vast choice of ma-

terials, the architects of our time can produce a diversity of forms with which to express the current diverse spiritual needs.

It has become popular to mix "the good, the true, and the beautiful" in religious buildings at the expense of genuine spiritual and architectural expression. The temples then are addressed to the congregations and their need or demand for ostentatious display. Architects must possess a force of character, integrity, and creative instinct, to fuse the sternly practical and the inspirationally beautiful, compatible with the logic of religious demands. The outworn concept of modern architecture guiding itself solely on the "form follows function" dictum is belied by the Philip Johnson structure, which could be anything. The architect must understand the conditions under which he can proceed. The Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center was designed by Joseph Neufeld with the knowledge that Chagall's marvelously symbolic windows were to be the dominant element in this simple structure. The square building was planned so that the windows would not be considered decorative, but an integral part of the entire synagogue. This is what the modern architect is coming to realize.

As early as 1945, Eric Mendelsohn's first synagogue was also his first actual commission in the United States and one of the first contemporary religious buildings in this country. His solution for accommodating larger congregations for the High Holy Days and other social functions by means of disappearing walls and folding doors is now fairly standard procedure in modern synagogue architecture. The St. Louis Temple *B'nai Amoona* unites temple, assembly wing, and school, all tightly arranged around an enclosed garden. The temple is under a parabola which projects far beyond the front window, thus shielding them from a western exposure. This produces a most startling and effective interior.

Philip Johnson and Walter Gropius offer two handsome examples of successful religious architecture. Johnson's classical concern for beginning, middle, and end in the organization of space is clearly reflected in his great synagogue *Knesset Tifereth Israel* in Port Chester, New York. This monumental white building is orchestrated like a symphony. It sits gleaming and quietly compelling

among the trees — its whiteness heralding the approach. Out from under the sky, one enters, through large dark doors, a small low elliptical vestibule, passing through it into a bright large rectilinear hall. This classic sequence of light to dark to light spaces ends in a crescendo not a little aided by the clearly contrasting colors used on walls, on seats, on floors. This seemingly formal purity is unabashedly emotional — its physical scale meant to elevate man to a spiritual response and enjoyment.

While Johnson's building relies on its interior spaces to create spiritual elation, the *Temple Obek Shalom* in Baltimore evokes a spiritual reaction by the emphasis of its exterior. Gropius and the other members of The Architects Collaborative together with Leavitt & Sons have successfully merged symbolic imagery with architectural expression. The four arches on the facade, suggesting the Tablets of the Laws, create a vaulted roof line. The upward sweep of the arch and the rhythmic movement of the repeated pattern creates an immediate religious character. In the interior, there is careful control of illumination. Sunlight does not enter the building directly and wall fenestration is minimal. Colorful vertical stained glass windows can only be seen on the retreat from the sanctuary above the entrance. Predominant tones of blue in the seat coverings, carpeting, and walls help to convey the remote and quiet air.

An amalgamation of art and architecture can be seen in the *Congregation B'nai Israel* in Milburn, New Jersey, whose facade of cypress paneling is enlivened by the Burning Bush sculpture of Herbert Ferber. Frank Lloyd Wright's *Beth Shalom Synagogue* in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, expresses his creative originality in the evocative shape of his building — a pyramidal shape, which has been described as a traveling Mt. Sinai in glass or a mountain of light.

The synagogues illustrated range in time from 1945 to the present and are presented as contemporary architectural expressions in tune with new religious and human requirements. The heavy, low, traditional domes have given way to joyous, adventurous, and frankly proud buildings. The expansion of our spiritual needs is being given meaningful form.

(Portions of this article appeared previously in "American Judaism")

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II.34

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Saturday, October 5, 1963

THE NEW YORK TIMES,

Architecture: Designs for American Synagogues

Recent Building Models at Jewish Museum

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

THE Jewish Museum's opening show of the season, "Recent American Synagogue Architecture," runs through its old galleries in the converted Felix Warburg mansion at Fifth Avenue and 92d Street, into its new wing, completed early this year.

It unites two buildings that have been joined in a kind of shotgun structural marriage, but will never speak to each other architecturally. The exhibition will run from tomorrow through Dec. 8. The buildings will be on display a good deal longer.

The Warburg house, a richly detailed and beautifully executed chateau (c.1908) in the elaborate French Renaissance style favored by turn-of-the-century bankers, was not a design breakthrough in its day. The breakthrough had been made in the 15th century. But it had what is inelegantly called "class."

The new building, which ostensibly looks forward rather than backward, is the last word in contemporary facade cliché—an art form of terrifying possibilities as new developments in structure and materials invite mushrooming parodies of progressive trends. Its class quotient lies somewhere between resort modern and the avenue's jazzier apartment house entrances.

The problem that it poses, with its dubious decorative arches and patterned panels of concrete aggregate, is the legitimate or not-so-legitimate ways in which the enlarged vocabulary of today's energetic, exciting and genuinely experimental architecture can be used. The exhibition points up the problem in its clearest terms.

Religious building is one of the most difficult assign-



Model of Louis Kahn's design for Mikveh Israel Synagogue

ments of modern architecture. It is fraught with traps, the prime one being its greater freedom for creative flights of fancy. Given this freedom, many able architects not only fail to soar; they fall flat on their faces.

In the 17 examples that the museum shows in photographs, models, and reproductions of drawings, the striving is almost audible. They have been well selected and sympathetically installed by Richard Meier, with a judicious eye to quality; the exhibition samples the best work in the country. Labels are thoughtfully written, explaining the functional program of the

synagogue with commendable clarity.

Among the respected architects present are Pietro Beluschi, Marcel Breuer, Philip Johnson, Louis Kahn, Eric Mendelsohn, Minoru Yamasaki and Frank Lloyd Wright. The resources available to them, in terms of the effects that can be wrung out of new ways of building, are formidable. But the failures outnumber the successes, and the solutions, too often, are no more than a cataloguing of the possibilities.

If architecture is defined as the making of spaces—and this is the current view, against the facadism of the past—then religious archi-

Philadelphia Project by Louis Kahn Is Shown

itecture is the expressive making of spaces. In addition to filling functional needs, it must produce results of emotive and spiritual power. It does so only rarely, as in Le Corbusier's chapel at Ronchamps. More frequently, as here, it produces a refined bag of tricks.

One design stands out: Louis Kahn's Mikveh Israel Synagogue, projected for Philadelphia. Kahn's buildings move the spectator tremendously, even when they work less than well, which is not uncommon. They have a powerful magic; an archaism of forms and masses that seems to exist from the beginning of time, expressive in the highest architectural sense.

Next to this building, the rest seem like exercises in tasteful, decorative, pragmatism, or free-wheeling eclecticism, like the museum itself. Even Wright's Beth Shalom Congregation, in Elkins Park, Pa., in the vein of his late work, is gaudy theatricalism. And the others are more convincing intellectually than emotionally, a fault that may be less in the architect than in our own times.

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

MY WEEKLY READER

November 9-13, 1964 Issue 9

Architecture
NEWS
SECTION ⑤

New Religious Buildings In the United States



The Air Force Academy Chapel at Colorado Springs is one of the important new religious buildings in the U.S. The architects were given a prize for the design.

The 150-foot aluminum spires of the chapel can be seen for miles around. The building has three chapels under one roof: Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

New Designs for Religious Buildings

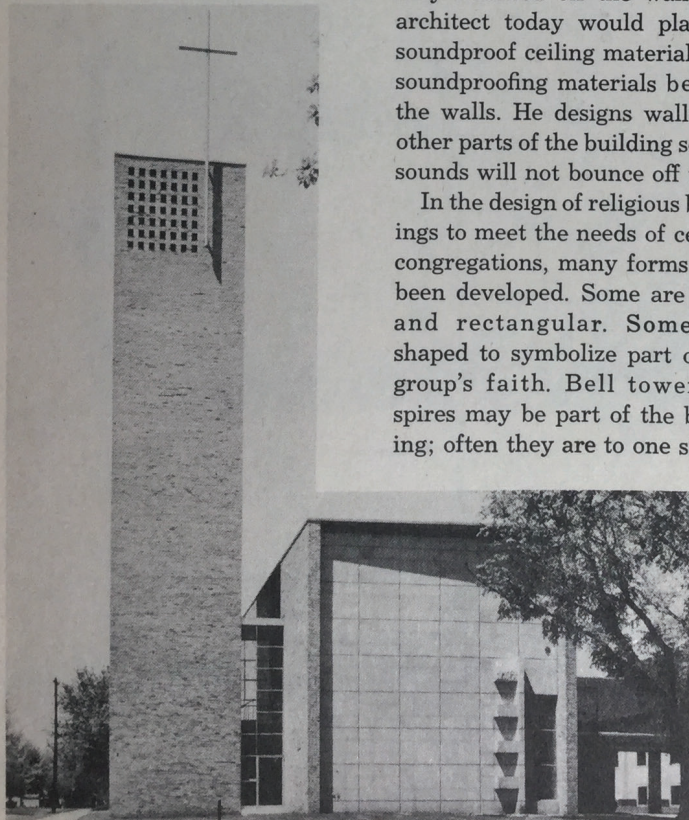
Each year, a billion dollars worth of new religious buildings rise in the United States. Of the thousands of churches and synagogues built each year, one out of two is of modern design. Ten years ago, only one out of four was of modern design.

"Modern" means that the architect has not followed an old design in planning the building. In drawing the plans, he has kept in mind the kinds of services to be held in the building and other uses to which the building may be put. The result is a building suited to one particular congregation, as a house may be designed for one particular family and its needs.

When religious buildings of modern design first appeared, people complained, "They don't look like churches." The buildings did not look like the churches with steeples or towers the people had been used to seeing. Congregations have come to accept the new forms. They find that the new architectural forms better meet their spiritual needs. People like the practical benefits, too. An architect free to design a building can provide for the latest ways of heating, lighting, and ventilating.

An architect uses modern knowledge of sound to make the acoustics perfect. In ancient churches, sounds echoed, because they bounced off the walls. An architect today would plan for soundproof ceiling materials and soundproofing materials behind the walls. He designs walls and other parts of the building so that sounds will not bounce off them.

In the design of religious buildings to meet the needs of certain congregations, many forms have been developed. Some are plain and rectangular. Some are shaped to symbolize part of the group's faith. Bell towers or spires may be part of the building; often they are to one side.



Saarinen, Saarinen, & Associates, architects

Large stone blocks form the front of Christ Church Lutheran in Minneapolis. Side-walls and the bell tower are of brick. The passageway between the tower and the church is glass-walled. Window frames are aluminum.



Philip Johnson, architect

Photo b

The K. T. I. Synagogue, Port Chester, New York, is of white masonry. It is much larger than it appears to be. The panels along the walls make it seem smaller.



Paul Thyry, architect

Built on a hill in Washington, D.C., this beacon at night is made of plate glass. It is meant to suggest a modern religious building.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II. 34

Materials Help Architects Plan Designs

The new forms of today's religious buildings depend on imaginative use of materials. The architect uses the materials with an eye to color, space, light, and texture.

An architect can create a new form by the novel use of building materials that have been used a long time—brick, stone, and wood. Brick and stone, or wood and stone, are carefully combined for a beautiful effect.

Many of the materials the architect uses are products that have been developed by industries. Among them are steel, aluminum, plate glass, a new kind of stained glass, reinforced concrete, prestressed concrete, and laminated wood. Many architects feel that these new materials *require* new designs. They feel that the materials are not put to best use in copying an old building design.

The modern architect is not, for example, content to use glass

only for windows. Plate glass or stained glass form entire walls. Or the glass may be used in narrow slits cut in the wall.

Steel, aluminum, and copper are used for the main parts of the building and for decoration.

Of these construction materials, prestressed concrete is the newest to come into use. Both reinforced and prestressed concrete contain steel to make them stronger. But prestressed concrete can take heavier loads and is actually flexible. A church of prestressed concrete was recently built in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Its walls and roof and a spire standing apart from the building were made of prestressed concrete.

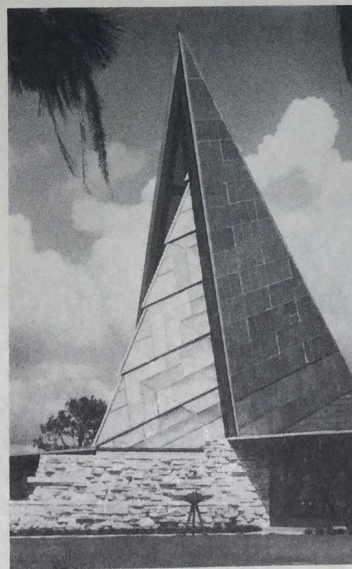
Ceramic (clay) materials, plastics, and new kinds of easy-to-clean tiles are also used.



Photo by © Ezra Stoller Associates



Built on a hilltop, the Mercer Island, Washington, Presbyterian Church is a beacon at night. The walls are of plate glass. The concrete roof is meant to suggest cupped hands up-lifted.



John Randal McDonald, architect

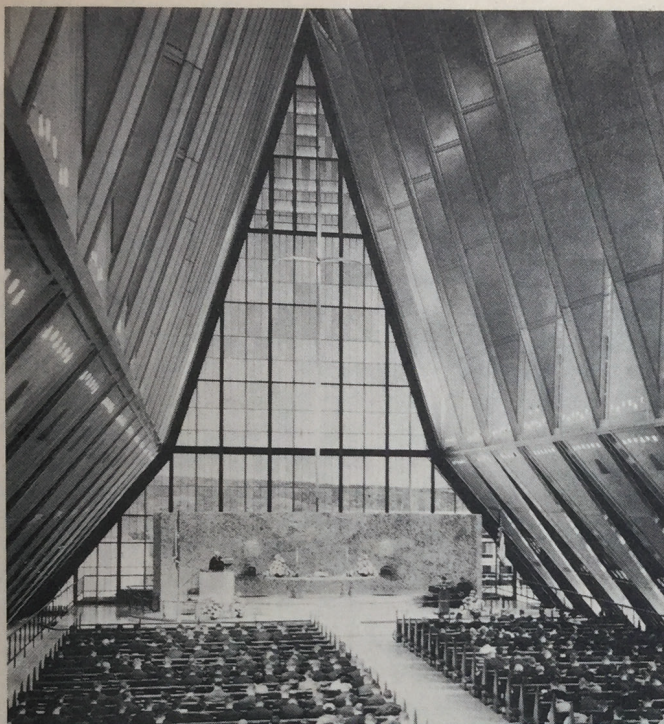
The Church of Christ in Clearwater, Florida, has a foundation of uncut stone. Gold metallic cloth is embedded within the panels of the roof.



Anshen & Allen, architects

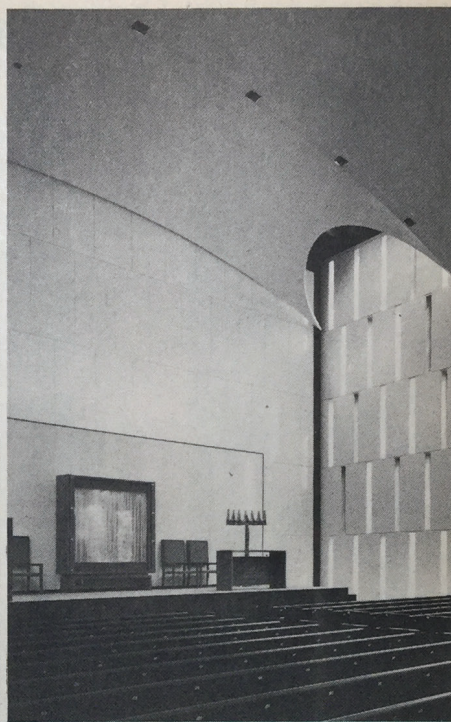
The Chapel of the Holy Cross was built on a high spur of rock near Sedona, Arizona. Constructed of concrete, the chapel has large plate glass windows.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II.34



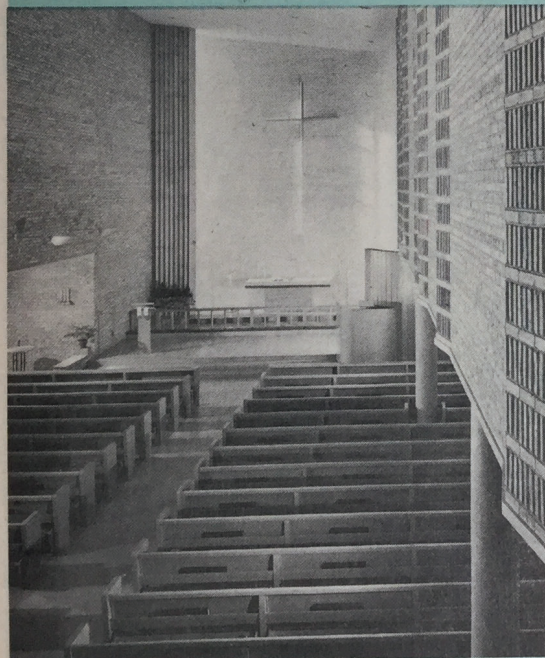
Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill, architects

Modern architects let worshippers see the structure of the church. The interior, as here in the Air Force Chapel, shows the basic structure of the church. Churchgoers find that the exterior aluminum spires form the ceiling inside the chapel. Panels of colored glass are visible between the spires.



Philip Johnson, Architect Photo by © Ezra Stroller Associates

The ceiling in the K.T.I. Synagogue is a plaster canopy with lights set in it. White and dark are used in the interior. Jeweled light comes in through stained glass in the slits between the panels.



Saareinen, Saareinen, & Associates, architects

Ceiling inside Christ Church Lutheran, Minneapolis, is slanted to keep sounds from echoing. The curved wall at altar end and irregular open brickwork wall at right keep sound from bouncing off walls. Soundproofing material is behind the brickwork.

Think About What You Read

1. Does the Air Force Academy Chapel seem to be a suitable design for a flyers' school?

Why or why not?

2. How would you describe the aluminum spires?

3. Why may some of the members of a congregation want a new church to be a copy of a church of an earlier time?

4. List the kinds of materials used in the construction of the religious buildings shown in this section. Circle those that you were most surprised to find being used.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection: Philip Johnson	Series.Folder: II. 34
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Art

New Styles in Synagogues

by Emily Genauer

Today the Jewish Museum, at Fifth Avenue and 92d Street, opens an exhibition called "Recent American Synagogue Architecture." A decade of synagogue construction and design all over the country is shown in models, photographs and drawings.

The new exhibition, well worth a visit for its own sake, comes at a time when church architecture is getting a good deal of attention. A week ago the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, in Rome to address the second session of the Ecumenical Council, asked bishops throughout the world to enlist the cooperation of young architects in the design of churches that will be "beautiful and simple, liturgical and functional." A month ago, to mark the 24th celebration of National Liturgical Week, Philadelphia's Convention Hall was the scene of a major exhibition of contemporary liturgical art, in which much attention was paid to new church architecture.

The great wave of church and synagogue construction in the U. S. since the second world war has left in its wake continuing controversy and debate—little of it, as it happens, within the clergy. There seems to be little question among churchmen of all creeds that the design of new houses of worship should use modern shapes, materials and construction techniques. It is generally agreed that structures which are "unintelligently derivative" or mere "essays in historical styles," to use the phrases applied to them in Philadelphia, are "debased" in the sense that a structure honoring The Lord of Creation ought to be a creative rather than an imitative concept.

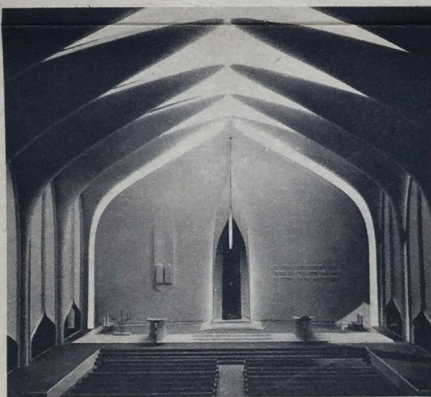
Among the factors promoting hospitality to new forms here have been several great ventures in liturgical art and architecture abroad, notably the Dominican church at Assisi, in the French Alps, decorated with the art of Leger, Rouault, Bonnard, Matisse, Chagall and Lipchitz, among others; the great church designed by Le Corbusier at Ronchamps, France; and the synagogue with magnificent stained-glass windows by Chagall constructed just outside Jerusalem.

Rather, the controversy is among architects of stature, conviction and experience who have very different notions about what ecclesiastical design should be. Congregations are understandably confused by those conflicting approaches, and by their own insecurity. The congregations know their decisions involve more than taste, pride and cost. They will affect lives in their community for generations to come, and, perhaps, the place and influence in that community of the particular faith they profess.

The Jewish Museum show, assembled by architect Richard Meier and opening today, presents the designs of 17 synagogues either recently completed or now under construction, all by architects of renown. Since most of the architects represented have designed houses of worship for other faiths, this exhibition's special value is in what it reveals about synagogue design and its peculiar problems. Ancient texts and more than

5,000 years of tradition provide few proscriptions or injunctions to guide or bind architects in synagogue design. Even rules that exist are open to fairly broad interpretation. But one problem comes built-in. It stems, as Philip Johnson (who designed the Knesset Tifereth Israel Synagogue, in Port Chester, N. Y.) puts it, from "the habits of the High Holy Days, when attendance, shall we say, swells." It is a fact of contemporary Jewish life in the United States that synagogue attendance doubles, even quadruples, on the two days of the New Year and on the evening before and during the Day of Atonement. How, then, shall an architect design a building that can expand like an accordion for only four days in the year and also provide classrooms, a library, social hall, even a kitchen?

The usual solution, clearly seen in the models and photographs on view at the Jewish Museum, has been to design what is, in effect, an expandable auditorium. Build a series of more or less ingenious sliding curtains or doors, and, when they are opened, space can expand to accommodate thousands. Close them and you have the smaller special areas required for daily use. This solution is justified not only on grounds of practical necessity but also of theory. Teaching and the so-called "social" functions of a congregation are not subsidiary



Model at the Jewish Museum of a synagogue designed by Yamasaki and being constructed at Glencoe, Ill.

but basic functions of the Jewish faith. By ancient definition, a synagogue is a place of assembly. The late Eric Mendelsohn, represented in the exhibit by his Mount Zion Temple and Community Center, in St. Paul, Minn., and one of the most influential figures in synagogue architecture, stressed the importance of the use of the "House of God as an inspiring place for festive occasions lifting up the heart of man."

But there is a serious disadvantage in a plan that makes the need for readily expandable space primary. In its "opened-up" form, the synagogue generally resembles a large auditorium, as in Marcel Breuer's handsome Temple B'nai Jeshurun, in Short Hills, N. J. And an auditorium, however beautiful, is hardly the most appropriate space for Hebrew worship, which is in its essence not the witnessing of a spectacle but the active participation in sacred ceremony.

There may be architects who have solved the

problem satisfactorily. If so, their solutions are not included in the new exhibition. The handsomest synagogue designs seen are those which are not accordion-auditoriums but, so to speak, theaters-in-the-round, allowing for congregation participation, and not expandable at all. One is Louis I. Kahn's design for his Mikveh Israel Synagogue, in Philadelphia, still incomplete and shown only in a rendering. Mr. Kahn's approach was to go back to the ancient orthodox traditional form in which, in a fixed space, the congregants face a central raised platform for the rabbi and the reading of the Torah.

Another solution is Werner Seligmann's design for Beth David Synagogue, in Binghamton, N. Y., where a separate sanctuary was designed. Seligmann placed it on the rooftop, surrounded by a garden and reached by a flight of outside stairs.

Still another, and perhaps the most beautiful in the exhibit, is Minoru Yamasaki's sanctuary for the North Shore Congregation Israel, in Glencoe, Ill., arrived at despite Mr. Yamasaki's apparent confusion over Judaic practice, which, he says, "places man and God side by side."

Percival Goodman, one of the country's most experienced and gifted designers of synagogues, sounds a rather plaintive note in the show catalogue's compilation of architectural credos. Mr. Goodman says that he agrees with the separate unexpandable, orthodox sanctuary idea, and always recommends it—but with little success. Goodman is represented in the exhibit by two of his efforts, Congregation Shearey Zedek, in Southfield, Mich., and Congregation Beth El, in Rochester, N. Y., and both use the accordion approach.

There are problems in synagogue (as well as in church) design beyond that of expandable space. One stems from the degree in which basic building design—not its interior decoration—shall be determined by religious symbolism, in view of the absence any precise, hard-and-fast rules. Harold Edelman and Stanley Salzman designed the sanctuary of the Sinai Reform Temple in Bay Shore, L. I., in the shape of a Star of David, not because of its symbolic importance but because the plan brought each seat in the sanctuary physically close to the central platform. It worked in this project because the plan was architecturally sound, not because of the symbolism involved.

And that leads to the only conclusion one can sensibly draw from an exhibition as varied as this, and about a problem as complex. Philip Johnson states it simply. "The Jewish temple merely has to be beautiful." The best synagogues are the purest and most straightforward in their design. Symbolism is (again one must distinguish between building shape itself and ritual objects) an unnecessary complicating factor (the congregants can't see their temple's symbolic form as they worship. And most important of all, the ancient and orthodox forms just happen, paradoxically, to be the ones that make for the best modern design.

What to do, then, about the thorny problem of accommodating swollen High Holy Days attendance? Two possible solutions occur. One is to build a beautiful, pure, simple, fixed sanctuary, and put all the High Holy Days faithful in a separate area, even a handsome tent, which is, after all, an ancient and approved usage deriving from the first synagogue.

The other has nothing to do with architecture. It's nothing less than for religious leaders to work toward a whole new (?) concept of religious observance. If everybody, say, would just faithfully attend synagogue on the Sabbath...

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II.34

36



Midland, Michigan's, First Methodist Church has been built in stages around a central court, which makes effective use of the serene calm of a reflecting pool. Alden B. Dow, architect.

The late Eliel Saarinen's plan for Christ Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, combined materials and form in a way which transcended the controversy between modern and traditional design.



THE CHURCHES GO MODERN

By PIETRO BELLUSCHI

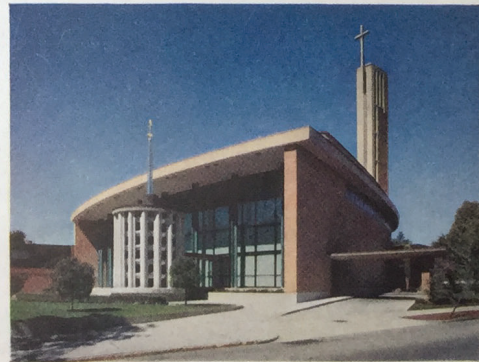
Saturday Evening Post

October, 1958

"But they don't look like churches!" many parishioners complain. Here, a famous architect defends the spirituality of the new design in houses of worship.

This is a time of enormous activity in the construction of religious buildings and, likewise, of significant change in church architecture. What has happened, and is happening, should cause no surprise. Church membership has grown from 35 per cent of the 75,000,000 who populated these United States in 1900 to 60 per cent of today's 170,000,000. We will spend close to \$1,000,000,000 for new churches this year, and it is estimated that \$6,000,000,000 will be devoted to the construction of 70,000 houses of worship during the next ten years.

The gradual transformation of the churches themselves, both as institutions and as buildings, is more interesting than numbers. "Modern," or "contemporary," design has taken



Architect Joseph D. Murphy used curving lines in the design of the Roman Catholic Church of the Resurrection, in St. Louis.

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	Philip Johnson	II.34



Chapel of the Holy Cross (Roman Catholic), Sedona, Arizona, blends a statement of man's faith with the majesty of Nature. Anshen & Allen, architects.

October 4, 1958 Saturday Evening Post

hold. One out of every four of the new churches was modern in style prior to 1954. No other one is modern today. Not a single example of Gothic or Georgian or other traditional design was picked for a top award in recent annual contests of the Church Architectural Guild of America, a private organization composed of architects, craftsmen and laymen. Every winner was contemporary, and so were the winners among the church entries in the American Institute of Architects' annual honor-awards competition.

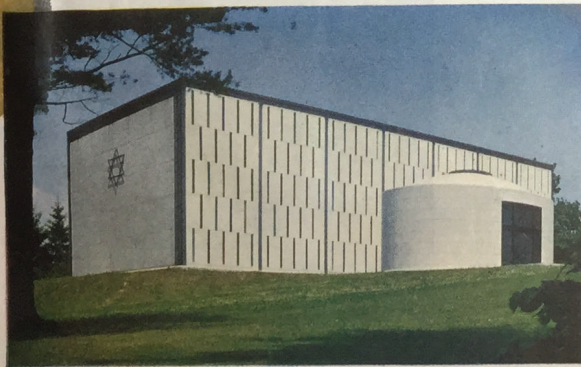
Some of these buildings have caused people to say, "But they don't look like churches." In turn, one may ask, "What is a church?" This question is not as simple to answer as it was in

our forefathers' time. It leads us to think more about the meaning of religion and the ways it may fill man's need for spiritual guidance in a modern society. With few exceptions, all faiths and denominations have come to feel that they must address themselves to the people in words and deeds related to present-day conditions. They must show the questioning young men and women who have turned to them that religious institutions are not obsolete establishments but lively and sympathetic instruments of spiritual awareness.

To the uprooted and lonely man of the machine age, the church must offer fellowship and something approaching the social intimacies of the old village communities. The new

churches tend to be less stately, and they serve smaller congregations. They are not only sanctuaries but also complex meeting places with Sunday schools, auditoriums for plays and dances, social rooms with dating parlors and hi-fi. Some have bowling alleys, table tennis and outdoor tennis courts. Most have kitchens to serve social gatherings. The Wesley Memorial Methodist Church of High Point, North Carolina, has planned for ten bowling alleys, a swimming pool, an ice-skating rink, a gymnasium, three softball diamonds and several tennis courts. This may be an extreme case, but it is true that no active congregation today is satisfied with just a chapel for worship.

(Continued on Page 39)



The plain rectangle of Kneses Tifereth Israel Temple, Port Chester, New York, has jewellike colored glass in its slit masonry walls. Philip C. Johnson, architect.

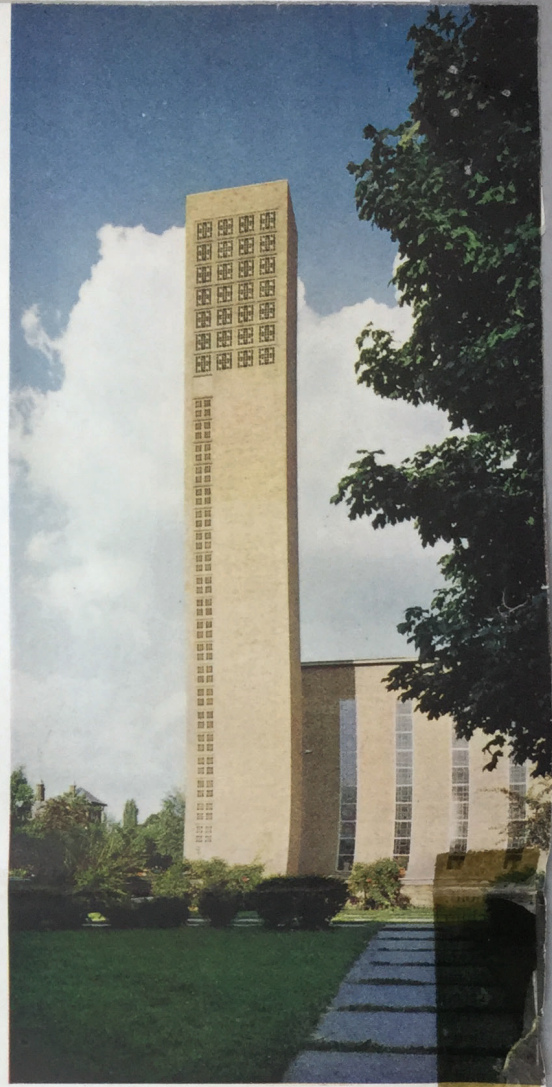


Architect Belluschi used native timber to create a house of worship which also meets the social needs for Cottage Grove, Oregon's, First Presbyterian Church.

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	Philip Johnson	II.34



Modern materials and the simple design of its impressive roof kept the costs down for St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Columbus, Ohio. Brooks & Coddington, architects.



First Church of Christ, Columbus, Indiana, designed by Eero Saarinen and Eero Saarinen, is called "a symbol of human aspirations."



The glass-walled interior of St. Stephen's contrasts the natural beauty outdoors with the religious mood of high-ceiling and subtly illuminated sanctuary.



The Columbus church's interior, for all its simplicity, has majestic scale in keeping with the dignity of religion.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Philip Johnson	II.34

(Continued from Page 37) The church as a place for social fellowship is a typical American development. It was inevitable that the fulfillment of this and other needs would produce new architectural forms. If some of these forms have so far been disappointing or uninspired, it has been because of the difficulties in finding wise interpreters and the right expressions. Emphasis on social and lay activities in the modern church, for instance, creates a problem which is not always recognized. This is the importance of preserving or even enhancing the over-all emotional content so necessary to a place of worship.

It is helpful that more and more American congregations have become less timid and have been willing to take the modern architect at his word. Building committees are less inclined to say to their architects, "Why change? Why not use traditional style for our new church?" Or "Why not use Gothic, which in many lands, through so many generations and in so many exquisite variations, has given emotional fulfillment to countless people and deepened their act of communal worship?"

If these questions, so apparently logical and sincerely felt, are asked today, the architect is ready with equally logical, if not wholly satisfactory, answers—such as the greater complexities of modern church functions, the high cost of making reasonably good copies of old styles, the disappearance of the old dedicated craftsmen who could fashion the details so much a part of their over-all beauty, the changing techniques of our builders, and the like.

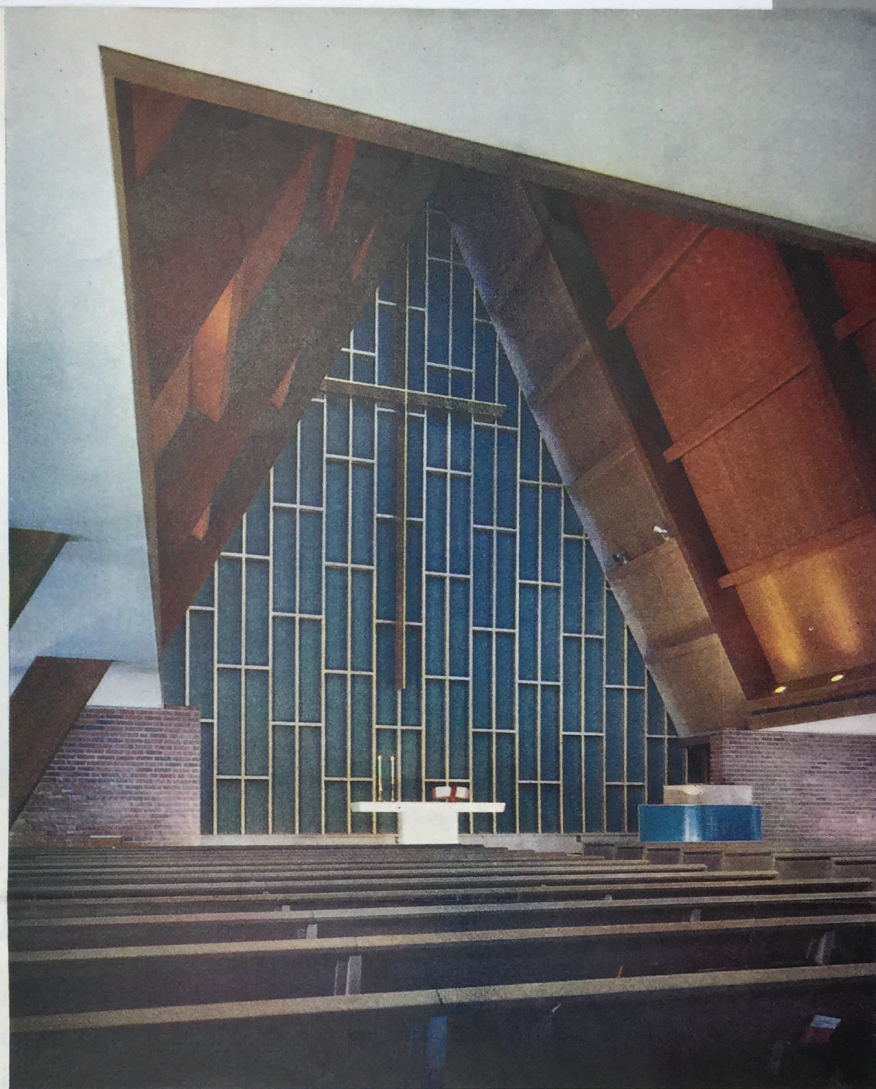
But there are deeper and more compelling reasons for the search for newer forms. These reasons are in the realm of the spirit, in man's search for knowledge of himself, of the universe and of God. This creative urge cannot content itself with pallid imitations of copies of "regurgitated" styles; it must find new ways of expressing itself.

Religion and art are both a search for truth, which is forever eluding, forever challenging, never fully possessed, only intuitively felt, and the very essence of God's mystery. The fruits of this continuous search, when made in earnest and not by repeating worn-out formulas, carry the deepest and most durable meaning through the ages. That is why the church in its glorious past has often been the fountainhead of creative arts—architecture, mosaics, painting, sculpture and music. At other less vital times, it has contented itself with imitation, timidly picking away at the past, afraid to meet the challenge of the future. The nineteenth century, although it had its exceptions, was such a sterile age.

Today the church seems on the threshold of recapturing its traditional role, and artists are called in greater number to aid our architects in their exploration of the true meaning of "church" in a modern world. Many believe that its design must bear an intimate relationship to the congregation for which it is built. The Rev. Hugh Peniston summed up the feeling of pride of his congregation in their new church in Cottage Grove, Oregon, when he wrote in *Presbyterian Life*: "It is different from any other church—but it ought to be. It is built for us—our own community, our own needs, our own faith."

When Mr. Peniston first came to see me, he and his building committee had visited many churches

(Continued on Page 66)



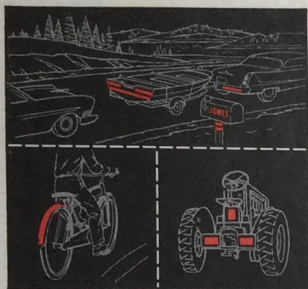
With impressive economy, architect Harold Spitznagel has achieved a setting for religious worship in the Congregational Church of Spencer, Iowa, using exposed wood beams and steel bar joists for roof support.



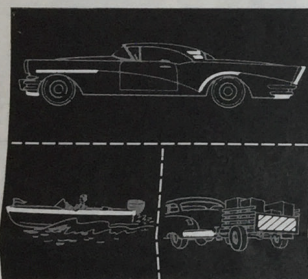
The exterior of the Spencer house of worship is etched against the early-evening sky by flood-lighting with the purpose of reminding the community that here is found "a living church."

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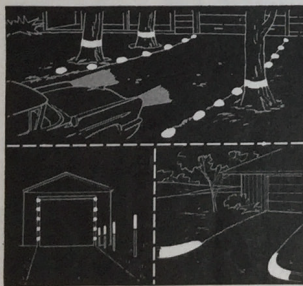
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The Churches Go Modern (Continued from Page 39)

and already knew that their new church need not be ornate, but should have character, should be distinctive and should be built to house *their* program. This, of course, is the same attitude of the man who wants to build a house for his family; it must fit his needs, his taste, his habits, his purse.

Architects today are making sincere efforts to understand the peculiar qualities and demands of their church clients. By using honest means in their churches—and avoiding the overornate—they hope to suggest true and lasting values. By using a more human scale—and not just the monumental—they impart to the whole a sense of warmth and security which may inspire its members to a renewed sense of community life. This desire to share religious experience with other people is the very nature and tradition of the church, even though certain activities may appear to be overly mundane.

Once while struggling with the problem of the kitchen for an Episcopal church in Baltimore, I let slip the remark that the kitchen seemed to have become more important than the altar. The rector, the Rev. Bennett Sims, a most enlightened man, put me right by referring me to the Last Supper, which, along with other meanings, is the symbol of the communal experience of bread breaking.

Today's need for economy is another reason why modern architects avoid designing overly ornamented buildings. Thus disciplined, they have discovered that much aesthetic significance can be imparted by the simplest materials used with a keen perception of their natural qualities. Great warmth and feeling like- wise can be achieved by the right manipulations of subtle intangibles, such as space, light, color and texture, thus returning to the essential meaning of all architecture, which is "aesthetic manipulation of space."

In sensitive and skilled hands, space creates suspense and drama; the light it receives, with its accents and its shadows, gives a hint of mystery and becomes a means to deepen space itself, while texture and color may provide a moving poetic experience. The Holy Cross Chapel in Arizona, by Anshen & Allen, frames through its large altar window the most inspiring view I have ever beheld. Here, nature through design becomes a part of the religious experience. The Christ Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, by Eliel Saarinen, and the First Methodist in Midland, Michigan, by Alden Dow, are examples of superb handling of light and materials.

By inviting all kinds of true artists to participate in the creative act, architects have added immeasurably to the spiritual message which must be conveyed. Emil Frei's large stained-glass window in the Church of St. Ann, in Normandy, Missouri, by architect Joseph Murphy, is a contribution to be remembered.

The designer who keeps in mind the needs of those who worship is apt to avoid the shallows of contemporary irrelevancies and the cheapness of the merely startling, which is the main danger lurking over all experimentation. More importantly, this disciplined and serious approach may provide the tie with the past—the continuity of real tradition—without being forced to rely on imitations of past experiences.

Actually, every style ever developed, including the much-admired, white-spired Colonial church of the New England vil- lage, was conceived that way—by tapping the spiritual resources of the citizens for

whom it was built. Architecture is, and it always has been, an expression of the human spirit. Church architecture cannot avoid the adventurous path toward self-renewal without decaying, even though the good and the bad may sprout together. The satisfying answers are not alone in the minds of architects and artists, but in the very fabric of our society.

In this respect, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. has significantly proclaimed that "the task

No American ever feels he's down and out as long as he has a tank full of gas.

HOMER PHILLIPS

of the church in the area of the arts is to know contemporary culture in all its expressions, to assess and interpret them in terms of Christian criteria and to heal the breach that has arisen between the religious institutions and those chiefly identified with the arts in our society." And it ends by insisting that "the church should have a vanguard of men and women qualified to interpret the significance of contemporary art, architecture, music, literature and criticism for the believer."

When the new chapel for the Air Force

Academy in Colorado Springs—a brilliant and forceful contemporary concept—was attacked in Congress, the members of the Commission on Architecture of the National Council of Churches voted unanimously and enthusiastically their approval and support of the design. The Liturgical Arts, a Catholic magazine, has for many years and with visible success espoused the cause of contemporary expression. The Lutheran synods have been most active in promoting an intelligent, creative approach, with significant results in all parts of the country.

It is to be hoped, however, that our acceptance of new thoughts in religious architecture be sympathetic, but not blindly so or uncritical. The bizarre, which in our Hollywood-conditioned society usually gets the most attention, should be looked upon with suspicion. The forced, the insincere, the superficial deserve no sympathy; yet we must not go the other way and build only what has been widely accepted for timidity or fear of the new.

It may be well to remember that the word "Gothic" itself first carried a derogatory meaning; it indicated "a barbaric style" imported from the yet uncivilized European north. Yet Gothic, as a bold but deeply sincere effort by twelfth-century monks, won its way and continued to grow and to renew itself as long as the appropriate conditions for its existence were present. When it became just a frozen formula, it lost its vitality and failed to provide the necessary incentive to the creative mind and to the perceptive, educated man.

THE END



You be the Judge

By JOSÉ SCHORR

Roscoe felt misgivings when his fiancée admitted she had been married three times before, but when she turned on the charm that had won her three husbands, Roscoe married her. By chance, however, he later discovered that she had previously been married a grand total of four times. Shocked, he sued for a separation.

"What difference does one marriage more or less make?" his bride asked in court.

"It's the difference that breaks the camel's back," Roscoe replied angrily. "I could understand one marriage; I could excuse two; three was my limit. Four marriages frighten me out of my wits."

If you were the judge, would you help relieve Roscoe's fright?

.....

Roscoe lost. The court said that while a much-married woman should not claim she had been married only once or not at all, "the difference between three and four marriages is too insignificant to per-

mit the husband to escape his marital obligations. It is difficult to believe that a man who was willing to wed a thrice-married woman would have balked at one who was married four times."

Based upon a 1957 New York decision.

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ARCHITECTURAL RECORD



BUILDING TYPES STUDY

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BUILDINGS

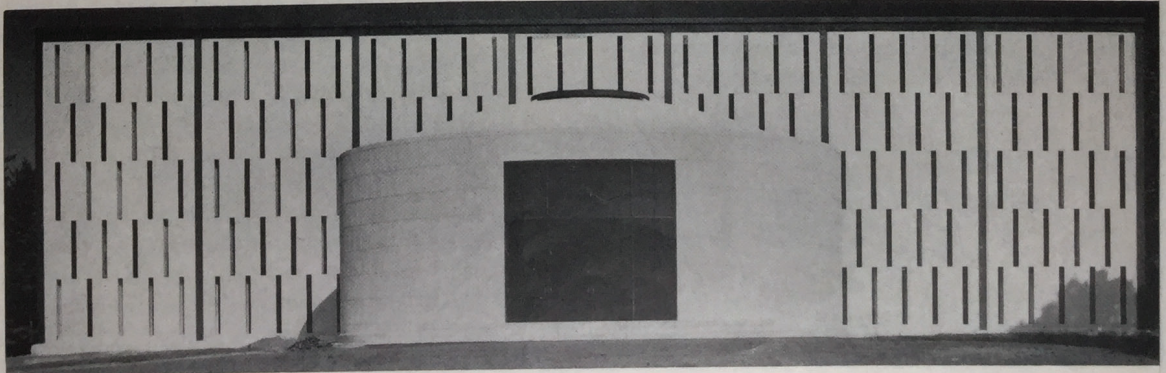
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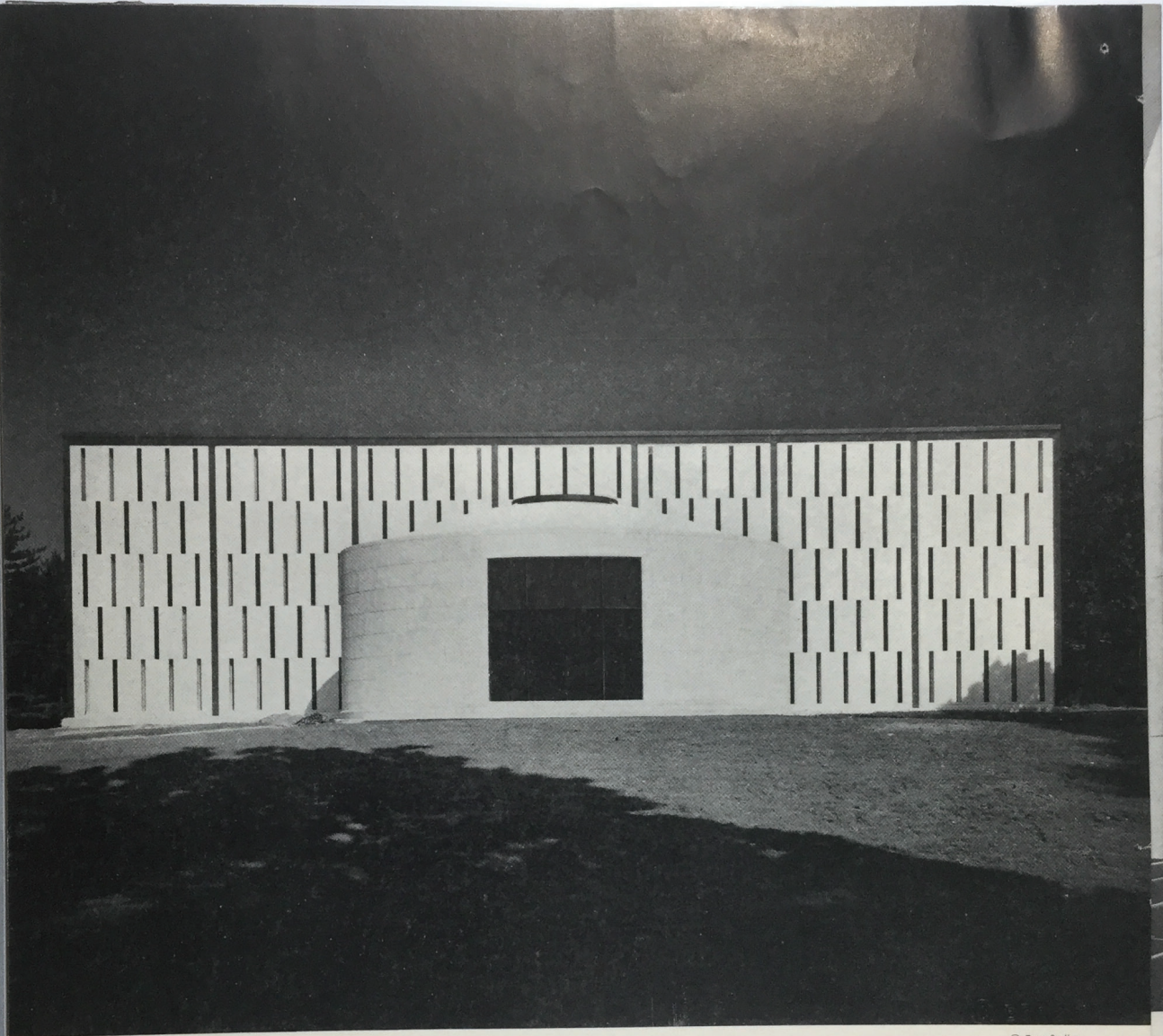
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A PLACE OF WORSHIP IS A PLACE OF LIGHT



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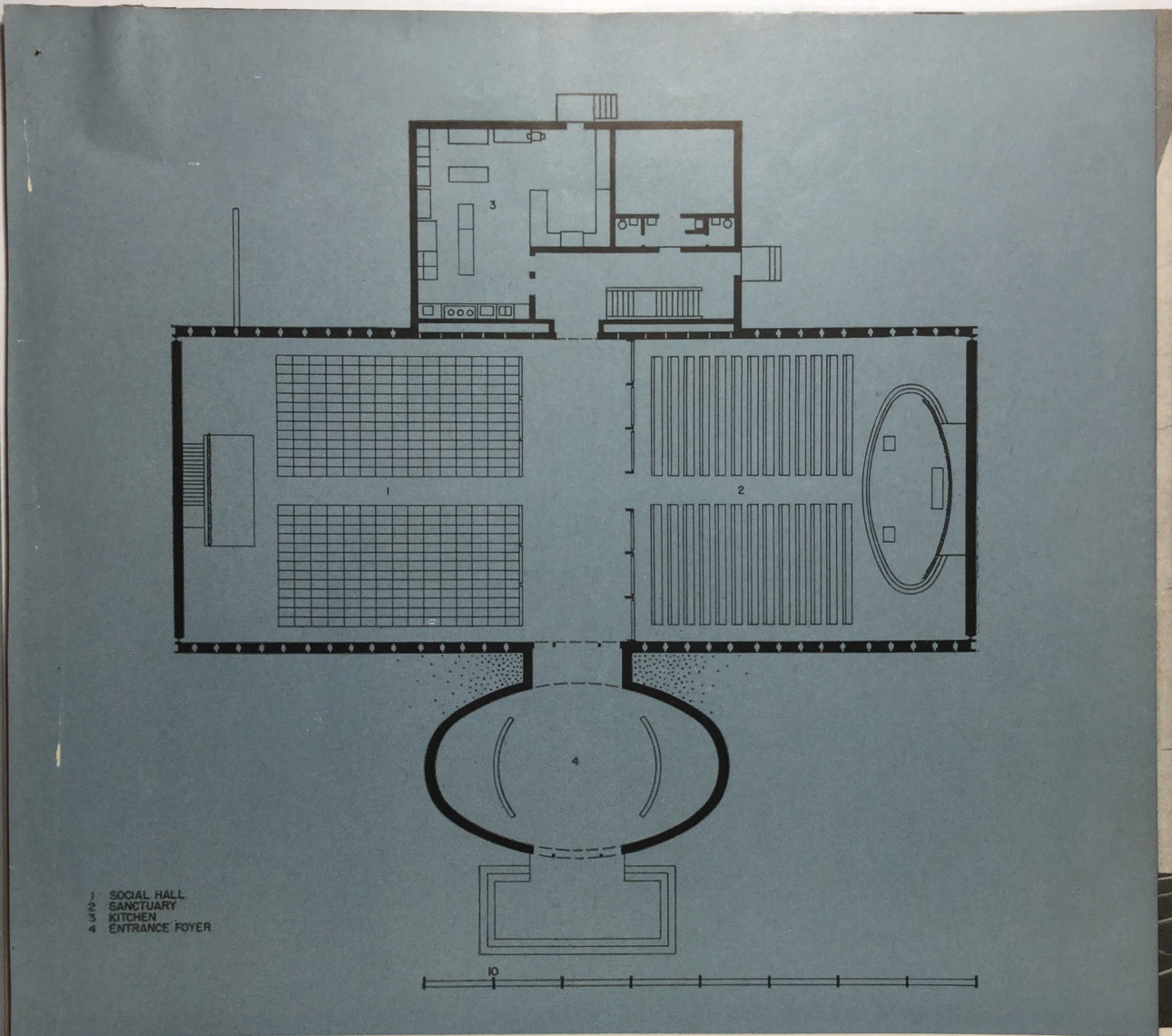
* K. T. I. SYNAGOGUE, PORT CHESTER, N. Y.

Philip Johnson, Architect
Marcello Mezzullo, Contractor
Eipel Engineering, Structural Engineers
Charles Middleeer, Landscape Architect
Ibram Lassaw, Sculpture
Richard Kelly, Lighting Consultant
John Johansen, Stained Glass Consultant

* *Kneses Tifereth Israel*

The intellectual appeal of clear, structural articulation and the sensual delights inherent in precise craftsmanship are real, though limited, satisfactions. In a time which often seems to have restricted its reverence to these particulars it is especially rewarding to find a building which provides in addition some positive and fruitful answers to problems of approach and scale and color and light. In this synagogue a full range of human and structural requirements has been accepted and organized into an instructive and inspirational example.

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FROM THE APPROACH along Port Chester's King Street, the building is suddenly seen sitting high and very white against the trees. It is bigger than its pictures have suggested and this feeling is enhanced by the way in which the entrance drive, moving parallel to the south face of the building and then half-circling back to the doors, reveals progressively that essential relationship of the small oval entrance pavilion to the large rectilinear hall which has such powerful consequences in terms of scale.

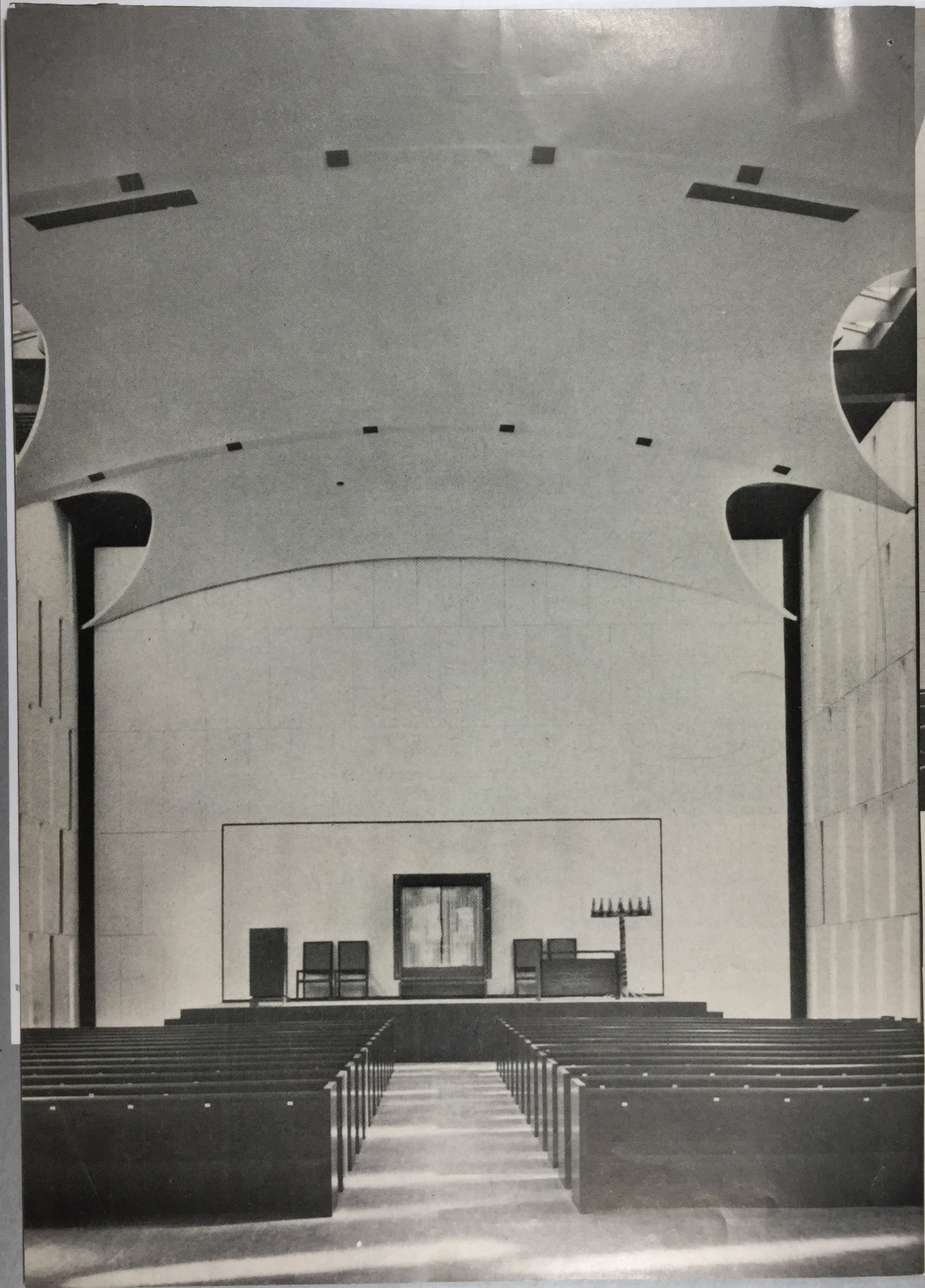
This is a monumental building and its patterns and penetrations as well as its profiles are all arranged to make it so. The panels

are just over the height of a man and they, rather than the openings, afford the kind of human dimensional identification necessary to the sense of bigness which is achieved when they are multiplied into five ascending tiers.

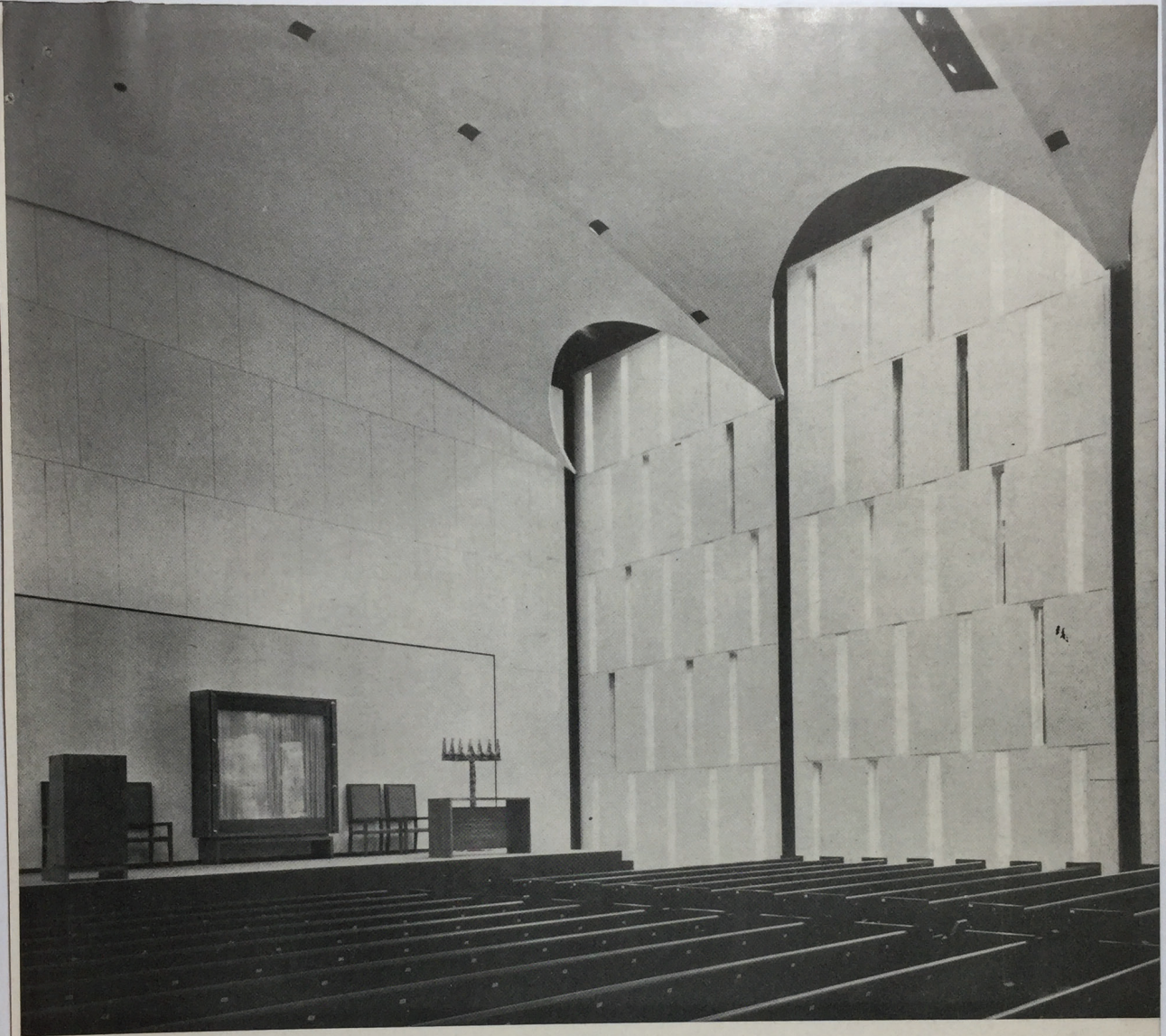
From the first this building is revealed as an accomplished exercise in scale and the conviction grows as one moves from out under the sky through the large dark doors into the small compressive ellipse of the vestibule, and from there on into the expansive—almost explosive—space of a hall which seems higher than its thirty-seven feet. And light, which contributes in so many ways to scale, has

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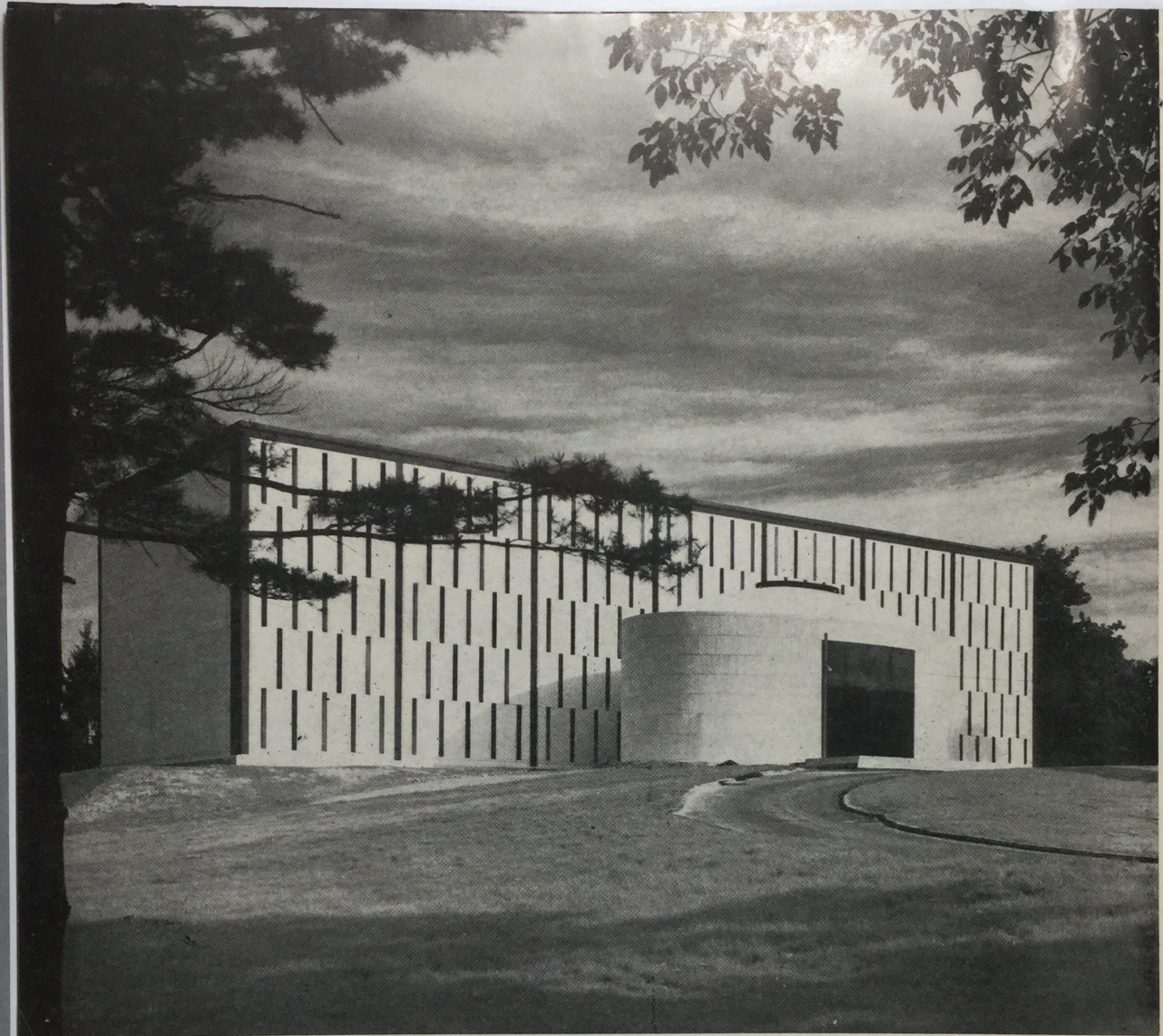
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been manipulated equally well. The organization is the classic sequence of light to dark to light again in which the transition from outside to inside is prevented from robbing the windows of either dimension or brilliance. White — again inside — is a compelling impression but here it is subtly slashed from floor to ceiling and end to end with the Joseph's coat palette of the stained glass light slits. The colors have great clarity. Each is used separately in a single slit and there are just enough clear panels to fortify the lighter colors and to contrast the full richness of the dark reds and blues. The floor is a white-streaked, light gray asphalt tile; the straight

rows of three hundred theater seats in the sanctuary are upholstered in a light silver gray which picks up just a little of the blues and reds from the glass. The bema is covered in gold colored carpeting and the screen behind it is clad in a metallic white acoustic cloth.

Across the middle, dividing the sanctuary and the social areas, are the parallel lines of eight-foot partitions which, framed in aluminum and steel braced, are bolted to the floor for easy removal on the High Holidays when over 1000 must be accommodated. Above all sail seven gently curving suspended vaults of plaster, giving a particular sense of containment to this space through their spe-

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cial ability to modulate the daylight and serving themselves as both light sources and baffles. In each rib are the direct downlights — six dark piercings when unlit, and only partially concealed behind the sail's incurving sides are the dimmer-controlled lights which, directed toward the sidewalls, let the building glow at night like the "box of jewels" that had been promised even in its preliminary planning (ARCHITECTURAL RECORD, June 1955).

Perhaps only in the piercing of the plaster canopies does one find anything out of harmony in this inspirational space and even here it is difficult to find fault. The downlights and spotlights which undeniably re-

move some of the free-floating quality of the ceiling are nevertheless essential to the equally important control of illumination.

Here the architect has chosen the more difficult and more commendable path. He has been willing to admit into a kind of formal purity — even at the risk of its partial dilution — the means of a larger satisfaction. This may well be the most significant story of this rewarding building. To a structural system of great precision and beautiful proportions has been added a concern for light, and color, and the way people use and experience buildings: with *all* their senses *and* their intellects.

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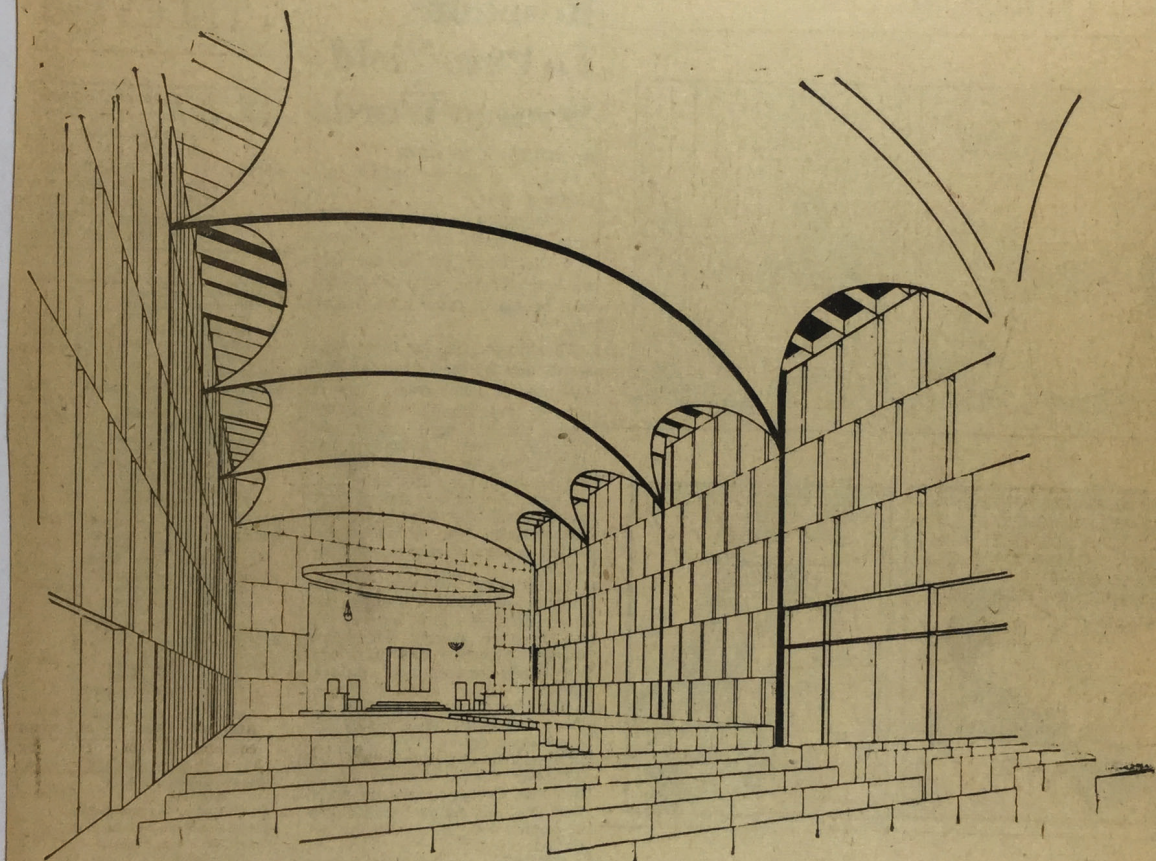
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	Philip Johnson	II.34



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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

The Daily Item PortChester, N.Y.
September 10, 1954



ARCHITECT'S RENDERING of the interior of the New Synagogue of the Congregation Kneses Tifereth Israel, Port Chester, ground for which will be broken on Sunday at its King Street site, near the new school. Shown is the sanctuary. The bema—or altar—at the front of the room is oval shaped and has twin pulpits, one for the rabbi and one for the cantor. The cabinet will

contain the congregation's sacred scrolls and above is the eternal light which will burn continuously as long as the building is used as a place of worship. Overhead hang a series of domes above which are skylights, the light from

which will be diffused by the domes, bathing the walls with a soft glow. The vertical spaces along the walls are cracks between the stone panels of which the walls of the structure will be built, and these will be filled with stained glass. Designer of the building is

Philip C. Johnson of New Canaan. Rabbi Joseph Speiser of the congregation will be the principal speaker at Sunday's ground breaking exercises, and building will be erected by Marcello Mezzullo Company of Port Chester.

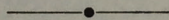
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	Philip Johnson	II.34

THE PATRON SYNAGOGUE

by

EPHRAIM FISCHOFF



Off-print from *CCAR Journal*, April 1958

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

Ephraim Fischhoff

THE PATRON SYNAGOGUE

An Analysis of the Synagogue Art Exhibits of the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

We are living in a period of the efflorescence of religious art and architecture. Controversy may rage about the central theme of the religious "revival" of the recent period, i. e., the depth and effectiveness of the contemporary concern for spiritual values. Thus a cool searching appraisal of the "religious boom or spiritual bust" question, provided in Milton Rosenberg's article on "The Social Sources of the Current Religious Revival" in *Pastoral Psychology*, June, 1957, comes to sobering conclusions. But there can be no doubt as to the proliferation of ecclesiastical edifices and decorations, and the veritable revitalization of the liturgical arts.

Impressive indeed has been the artistic harvest since World War II. Throughout the country there have arisen notable specimens of modern sacerdotal architecture. In keeping with this innovating architectural style, these structures have been suitably decorated with congruous appointments in glass, wood, metal and stone, and adorned with vestments, hangings and liturgical objects of all kinds.

An earnest of the new vitality of religious art is the announcement that

the American Federation of Artists is planning an exhibit on "God and Man." Two recent exhibits to be discussed below give evidence of the increasing range and power of the new production in religious art and the wide reaching public interest in it.

A noteworthy reciprocity has emerged in the evolving symbiosis of religion and art. On the one hand, ecclesiastical organizations and church officials, both religious and lay, have developed a stronger awareness of the importance of religious art in the service of religion, and of the necessity of employing newer art forms, designs and materials to embody and convey the modern religious mood. On the other hand, leading artists and craftsmen are now clearly interested in religious art, in spite of the tension or even antipathy between religion and art in recent times, and notwithstanding the profound polarity between the secular and the sacred.

There is an obvious recognition that the demands of an expanding religious institution in an economy of abundance and in a period of explosive population growth render the churches and synagogues primary patrons of art in the

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

present period and in the decades to come. For sheerly economic interests, much of the effort of contemporary architects and artists is directed to seeking and executing religious commissions. But as always happens in a patronage relationship, there is a certain stimulation toward the development in the artist of a deeper, more personal concern with those interests that are paramount for the patron. There has gradually become manifest some autonomous interest on the part of the artist in the spiritual concerns of religion that goes beyond the prudential relationship of artist to art patron expressed by the medieval slogan, *Wessen Brot ich esse, dessen Lied ich singe*.

The net production of notable creative work in the domain of religious art cannot fail to stimulate and advance the entire status of modern art. It is not possible to predict the total effect on both art and religion of the extension of the modern art movement into the domain of the sacred, nor of the experimentation with novel art forms on the part of ecclesiastical organizations. Unquestionably significant inter-influence and cross fertilization will take place — as in the case of the meeting of religion and psychiatry in the last decade.

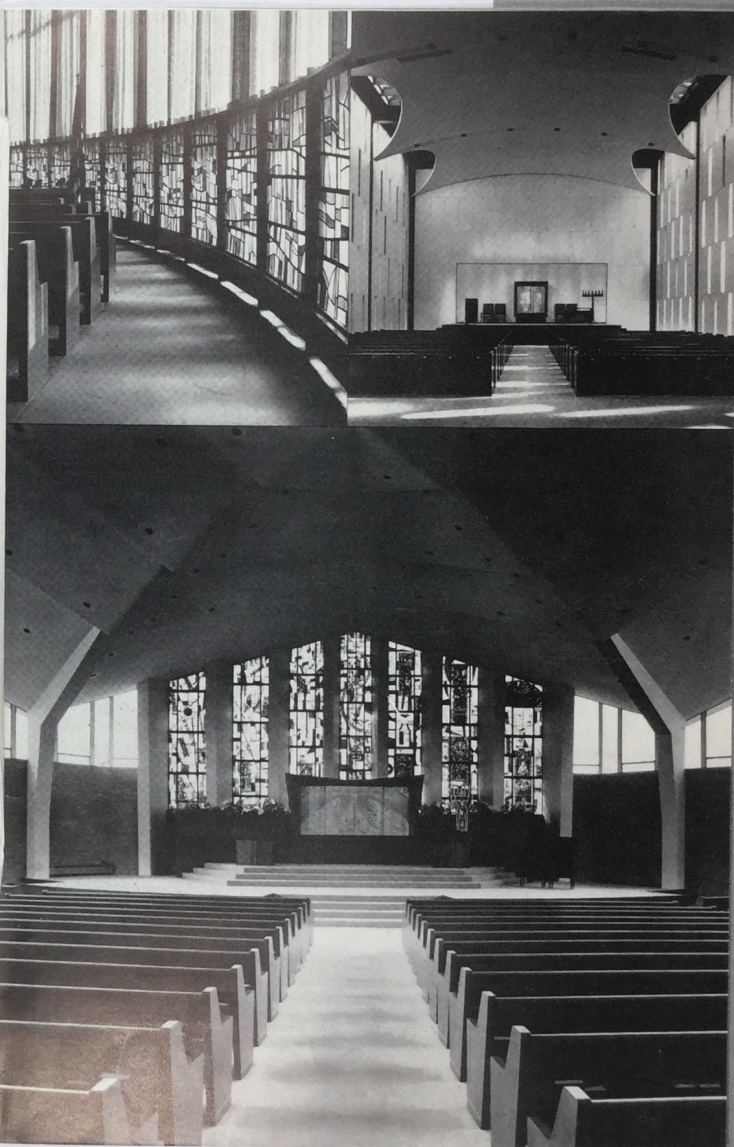
We can but speculate on what new synthesis may be achieved. It is not over-sanguine to feel that barring the cataclysm of a nuclear war, the religious art movement may continue to grow in significance. On sociological grounds alone — population increase and mobility, and the consequent formation of ever new residential communities — there is no hazard in predicting the con-

tinued growth of religious construction. Nor can it be doubted that the worsening threats to human security and even survival, as the weird products of modern technology accumulate to terrify man with the prospect of diabolical annihilation, may stimulate the religious nerve to a new vitality. The quest for spiritual anchorage may be expected to produce an unabated growth of religious membership and new religious edifices. Such a "metaphysical hunger" if sufficiently diffused may well redound to the development of a very notable religious art in our country.

THE PATRON CHURCH

Under this arresting title, the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York City arranged a superb exhibition between Oct. 11, 1957 and Jan. 5, 1958. It was a thoughtful and instructive demonstration of the achievement of art in the service of religion during the last decade, in all its vitality and diversity. Felicitations must be extended to the Museum authorities on any number of counts — the choice of the items for display, the montage and the lighting, and even the exquisite catalogue. Both in the Architecture section and that devoted to Ceremonial Objects and Appointments there were suitable specimens of Jewish artistic creation. Fourteen religious buildings were shown in photographs or models, representing

Illustration #1. Upper, right corner, Philip G. Johnson's Knesset Tifereth Israel Synagogue; Upper, left, Fritz Nathan's Jewish Community Center; and Percival Goodman's Albany Temple.



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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

diverse approaches to solutions of problems relating to site, design and materials. The choice was based not only on the excellence of design involved but also on the exemplification of the harmony of decorations, liturgical objects and architecture. It is a truism that for an ecclesiastical structure to achieve maximum effectiveness, it is necessary for it to have a unity, so that the various decorative details constitute a congruous and integral aspect of the architecture.

Among the featured architectural classics were such edifices as Frank Lloyd Wright's Wayfarer's Chapel (Palos Verdes), Eero Saarinen's Kresge Chapel at M.I.T., and the Stephens College Chapel. The Jewish edifices depicted were Fritz Nathan's Jewish Community Center (White Plains), featuring skillful reconstruction; Philip C. Johnson's Kneses Tifereth Israel Synagogue (Port Chester), with its rigid form and dramatic lighting; Percival Goodman's Temple Beth Emeth of Albany, N. Y. (see illustration #1); Kelly and Gruzen's Milton Steinberg House, Park Avenue Synagogue, New York City, and Congregation Beth El Synagogue of South Orange under construction, — Davis, Brody and Wisniewski, architects, — marked by the hip-roof design and other interesting traits.

The section on liturgical arts displayed a considerable number of actual objects from the featured churches and synagogues. The large assemblage of stained glass windows, hangings, statuary, candelabra, chalices and assorted altars, arks, and other sacred objects of both Christianity and Judaism, testified to the patronage of art by religion.



Illustration #2. Ark Tapestry by Samuel G. Wiener Jr.

Among the items of Jewish interest were wool tapestries by Abraham Rattner, Adolph Gottlieb (also a trial section of a stained glass window), and Samuel G. Wiener Jr. (see illustration #2); and an interesting Chanukah lamp of silver and wood (see illustration #5) by Herman Roth (who also contributed a model for a steel and brass sculptural screen and a stained glass window, — all for the aforementioned Congregation Beth El). Three items by the masterful metal smith, Ludwig Wolpert, enriched the exhibit: a Menorah and an Eternal



Illustration #3. Menorah by Ludwig Wolpert. Tapestry in background by Zelda Strecker.



Illustration #4. Silver breastplate by Ludwig Wolpert.

Light of brass, and a silver breastplate (see illustrations #3 and #4); and a Kiddush Cup of silver, gold, and ebony (see illustration #6) by Earl Krentzin. The sculptor A. Raymond Katz was represented by half a dozen items, in-

cluding a walnut Chanukah Menorah, a brass Perpetual Light, a plastic gesso emblem for cantor's lectern and a carved glass "Burning Bush." Other pieces of Jewish liturgical art included work by Calvin Albert, Hortense Amram, Judith

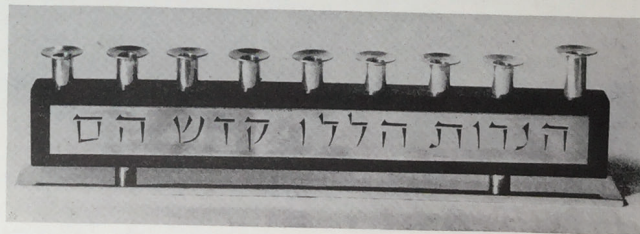


Illustration #5. Chanukah lamp in silver and wood by Herman Roth.

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Collection:

Philip Johnson

Series.Folder:

II. 34

38

FISCHOFF: *The Patron Synagogue*

Brown, Jack Lenor Larsen, Seymour Lipton, Robert Pinart, Ellen Simon, Francis Stephen, Zelda Thomas Strecker (see illustration #3), and Charlotte M. Ullman. The various craftsmen producing the religious art have endeavored to find modern forms for them.

THE U. A. H. C. CONFERENCE
AND EXHIBIT ON SYNAGOGUE
ARCHITECTURE AND ART

Over the week-end of Nov. 30, 1957 (Saturday through Monday afternoon), the Synagogue Architects Consultant Panel of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations arranged a national conference and exhibit on Synagogue Architecture and Art at the Barbizon Plaza Hotel in New York City. This well organized and administered convocation under the general theme "The American Synagogue — A Progress Report," marked the passing of a decade since the first such conference in Chicago when the U. A. H. C. moved to organize the Architects Panel. The great progress of the decade — marked by the expansion of the U. A. H. C. and the construction of many new synagogues, the adoption of modern architectural forms, and the emergence of the synagogue as a major patron of Jewish art — was clearly reflected in the lively and spirited convention.

Participants in the exhibition of synagogue architecture and art were 19 architectural firms and over a dozen artists in various media — sculptors, painters, ceramists, textile designers, calligraphers, and metal craftsmen. There

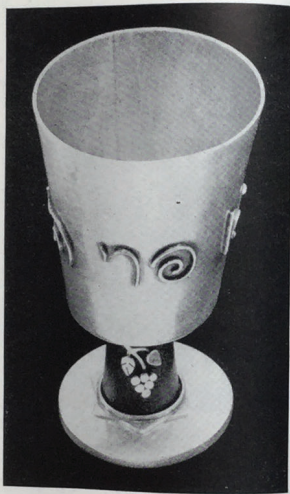
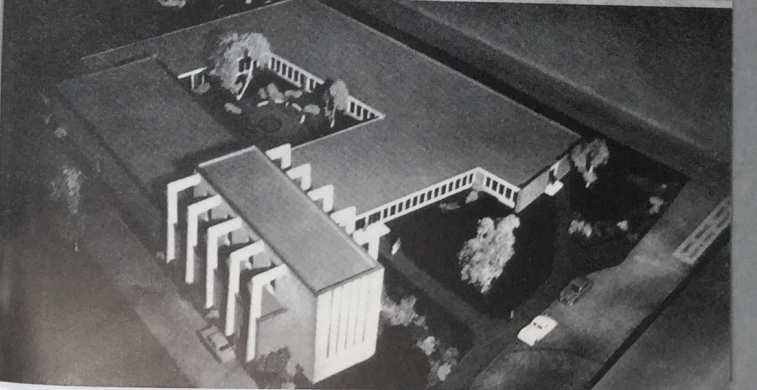


Illustration #6. Kiddush cup in silver, gold and ebony by Earl Krentzin.

were displayed sketches, drawings, plans, photographs and models of synagogues and other Jewish edifices completed, under construction, and projected. The architectural photographs were accompanied by pictures of various interior decorations, appointments, and liturgical objects which the architects had planned with the various artists and craftsmen in order to achieve the proper unity and integrity of their buildings.

Among the synagogues exhibited were

Illustration #7. Top, Beth El of Orange, N. J.; Beth El of Knoxville, Tenn.; Emanuel of Yonkers, N. Y.



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Collection:

Philip Johnson

Series.Folder:

II. 34

those also displayed at the Patron Church exhibit — Beth El of Orange, Kneses Tifereth of Portchester and the Jewish Community Center of White Plains. In addition, there were on display models of Temple Beth Emeth of Albany, Percival Goodman architect; Temple Emanu-El of Yonkers, Bloch & Hesse architects; and Beth El of Knoxville, Good and Goodstein architects (see illustration # 7).

Among the art work represented were an ark by Milton Horn, Ten Commandments by Nathaniel Kaz, a wall Menorah (see illustration #8), a chapel façade emblem, and projects in liquid marble and cement by A. Raymond Katz. Of interest also were photographs of various religious ceremonial objects by Ismar David, including a Memorial Light and panels with figures and quota-

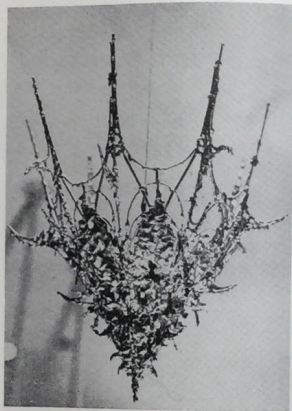


Illustration #9. Eternal Light by Judith Brown.

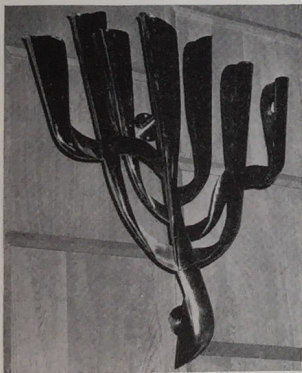


Illustration #8. Menorah by A. Raymond Katz.

tions from the Psalms, a scriptural mural and Chanukah menorah by Don Benaron (see illustration #11) and projects of stained glass by Robert Sowers and Robert Pinart.

Beginning with Saturday evening, Nov. 30, there were a series of conferences, all of which (except for the opening meeting greeted by Harry Prince, A.I.A., and Chairman of the Architects Consultant Panel of the U. A. H. C., and addressed by Rabbi Jay Kaufman) featured one main address and a panel of discussants comprising generally one rabbi, one architect, and one synagogue layman. The themes of the various sessions were intelligently selected and provided in their totality a coverage of the major problems of

synagogue construction in the present period. At Sunday morning's session, "Site Location in a Jewish Community on the Move" was analyzed by Morris Zelditch, Director of Social Planning for the C. J. F. W. F. That afternoon Richard M. Bennett, F.A.I.A. and editor of the synagogue section of *Churches and Temples* summarized "Progress in Overall Synagogue Design." He averred that advance in synagogue design during the last decade would constitute a memorable episode "in the history of American architecture for its intensity of change, its evolutionary richness and

its variety of solution and expression," but candidly admitted that not all the work being done is good.

The banquet discussion Saturday evening featured an address by Dr. Eugene Mihaly on "The Implications of Reform Ritual and the Synagogue Building." This session and the following one on "The Sanctuary," addressed by Percival Goodman, F.A.I.A., provided a searching examination of some fundamental concerns. In a scholarly address, Dr. Mihaly soberly admonished the assembled architects and artists to remember that from the view-

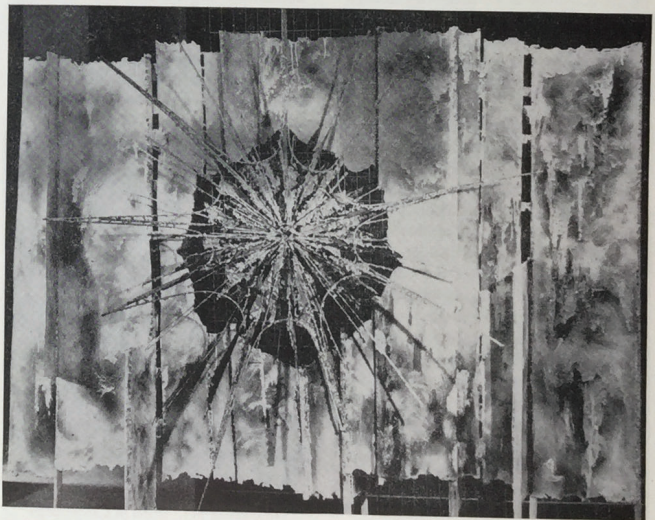


Illustration #10. Sculptural screen representing the second day of creation, "The Sun," by Judith Brown and Samuel G. Wiener Jr.

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

point of religion art, is only an instrumental value *ad majorem Dei gloriam*. He cautioned against certain tendencies in synagogue building bordering on the idolatry of the creaturely, such as a quasi-fetishistic overemphasis on the ark, and against other deviations from focal Jewish positions. A protracted and lively discussion ensued in the banquet hall in which the tension between religion and art as ultimate values was clearly evident.

Mr. Goodman's thoughtful paper on "The Sanctuary" revealed some of the dubieties and ambivalences in the mind of the architect as he addresses himself to the problem of constructing a sanctuary. Clearer and stronger guidance from Jewish religious authorities was desiderated in regard to religious ultimates and traditional lore as they bear on the construction of the sanctuary. Also a rebuke was administered for the Jewish laity's alleged lack of preparation in judging esthetic matters. Clients, he had found, were often negative, at best inert, rarely or almost never "inspiring." Rabbi Alexander Kline, one of the discussants of the Goodman paper, stressed the oft neglected intrinsically religious issues in the construction of the sanctuary. At subsequent meetings "The Role of the Architect in the Synagogue Program" was treated by Harry Prince, and "The Work of the Synagogue Architects Consultant Panel" by Myron E. Schoen, Director of the office of Synagogue Administration. Finally, the problem of "The Religious School and Social Center" was discussed by Sigmund Braverman, A.I.A.

As might be expected, most of the

prepared addresses and impromptu remarks concerned themselves with questions of means and techniques, rather than with ultimate ends. There was an omnipresent feeling based on the facts of Jewish organizational life — represented in this Freudian age by the allusion to the "Edifice Complex" — that synagogue building has become a major concern of American Jewry, and that with an American Jewish community on the move, it will remain such. Moreover, it was admitted on all sides that the increase in birth rate and the development of the multifarious social activities necessitate urgent attention to school facilities and social center space. Finally, there was an unquestioning acceptance of modern functional architecture, with a complete rout of the traditional mode. The battle of styles fought during the



Illustration #11. Model of Candelabrum by Albert Calvina for Temple Israel, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

last decade has seen the modernists in architecture achieve a complete victory.

Criticisms were formulated of current trends in synagogue building. Searching questions were raised about the stereotypization of the ranch-style country club type of synagogue and the double-use method of employing its space. Is this the most appropriate expression of Israel's religious quest and aspiration, or only a time-bound reflection of an over-prosperous, sprawling, exurbanite civilization? Among the other matters adumbrated were questions concerning the centrality of the pulpit and the desirability of experimenting with a central *Bimah*.

While some of the architects and artists envisaged their problem as one of technical resolution of a particular set of stresses and strains, with the accomplishment of order out of the inchoate chaos of originally unsubdued discords, some saw the deeper level of the problem of the relation of the synagogue and its art. From the viewpoint of religion, the artist is working within a tradition — a discipline that defines the symbolism and perspectives required by the faith of Judaism. To be sure, his endeavor is to garb them in the significant art forms of today, — but not without incorporating and transmitting a massive tradition. In a secular age, the artist will be prone to absolutize his activity and values, making a religion of his art. This is especially true of the artist who does not himself have strong religious proclivities. Consequently the interpreters of religion must maintain their part in the dialogue of the two-value realms, affirming the need of an art of religion.



Illustration #12. Chanukah menorah by Don Benaron.

At all events the opportunity afforded by this conference for an interchange between the exponents of religion and the practitioners of the synagogue arts was salutary indeed. There was apparently a growing awareness of a deeper level of problems — transcending the solution of site location, functional use of space, modernist design, or even integration of architectural forms with decorative fulfillment and adornment of the structural shell. Profound questions arise as to the ultimate relationships of religion and art, particularly in Judaism, and the mode of conveying, transmitting and liberating the sense of the sacred. Isaiah's outcry, "When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample my courts," remains a fateful question to be held up continuously for the judgment and guidance of the Master Builders. The conversation between the interpreters of religion and of art must be maintained and deepened.

Guidance must be responsibly provided by the spokesmen for religion if

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34

the proper inspiration of art is to give wings to the religious quest. Only by mature and earnest colloquy between the instructors of Judaism and the constructors of Jewish houses of worship can we avoid the production of Judaistic malapropisms. Whatever be the ultimate exegesis of *zeh eli ve-aveinu*, the affirmation and confirmation of the Transcendent remains paramount. The preoccupation with the numinous must

remain central in the synagogue building. The sanctuary must not be downgraded to the *quantité négligeable* of the synagogue; nor should the sacred become the *arrière pensée* in the massive enterprise of Jewish institutional exfoliation in the United States.

It is well to recall the perspicacious observations on "The Cleft Between Art and Religion" contained in Von Ogden Vogt's *Art and Religion*:

"We are rapidly approaching a time of far greater interest and demand for successful artistry than ever before in American life. Domestic and public architecture is improving by leaps and bounds. Better taste is being developed throughout the whole community. Larger and larger numbers of people are becoming familiar with the best products of the world of the arts. Meanwhile very few religious leaders are at all conscious of the connection between the art of worship and art in general, and there are still being built incredibly disagreeable church buildings. Religion may fairly be charged with being far removed both architecturally and liturgically from the canons of taste and of beauty which are rapidly being applied in all other departments of life.

"The charge should be extended to include blame not only for bad artistry, but for failure to make larger and better use of the positive goods to be derived from all the arts, glass work, painting sculpture, decoration, dramatic action, music, literature, and architecture.

"The fault is not wholly the fault of the church, but also of artists. Very few artists know enough about religion or the church to represent it in saying what needs to be said artistically. Few architects understand the message of modern religion. Few composers have sought to produce work which could be woven into a unified liturgical composition. Few patrons of the arts have realized the incomparable opportunity for public refinement and elevation offered by the churches.

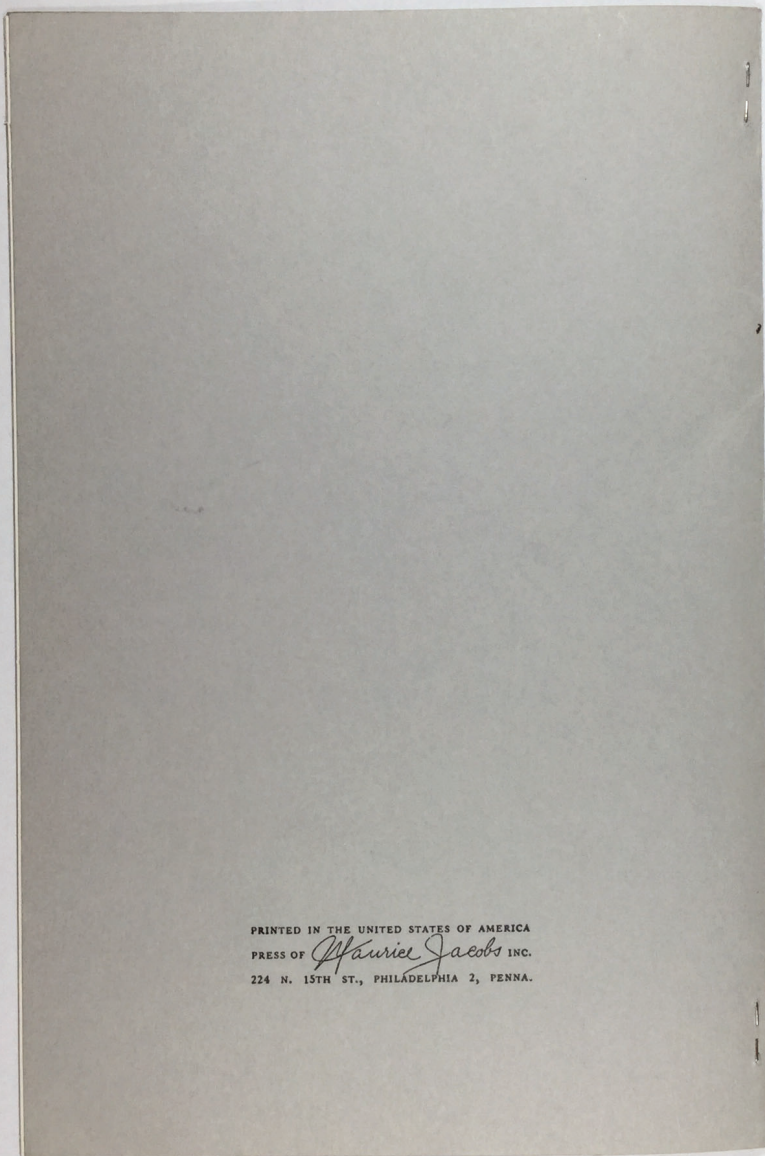
"Religion is more than beauty, and worship is more than art. If the artist is captivated by the life of beauty, the religionist is able to see the beauty of life. It is precisely because the artist is himself so good a seer, and because his work helps people to see some part of reality, that religion needs to work with him that people may be led to a more moving vision of the Whole."

A generation has passed since these words were penned and there has been some improvement. But it is only a beginning. The inspiration provided by the conference and exhibits reported

above is a significant contribution to clarification and stimulus in the development of a more decorous and profound synagogal art.

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	Philip Johnson	II. 34



Ce remarquable édifice, d'une pureté exemplaire, est certainement l'une des meilleures œuvres de Johnson. D'une composition « classique » par la rigueur de l'axe, elle tire son effet plastique de l'opposition d'un volume bas sur plan elliptique constituant le hall d'entrée à la masse cubique et rythmée du corps principal.

Dans celui-ci sont équilibrés la chapelle (d'une capacité de 300 places) et une salle de réunions séparées par des panneaux amovibles permettant la fusion en un seul volume pouvant recevoir 1.000 personnes.

La forme donnée au plafond constitué par des voûtes en staff tendues sous la charpente de couverture, symbolise la tente, forme première du temple israélite. Le hall d'entrée est en béton armé sans autre ouverture que la porte. Les murs du sanctuaire et de la salle de réunions sont en dalles de béton disposées en quinconce laissant ainsi des parties vides dont certaines sont vitrées avec des verres de couleurs. L'ossature est en acier.

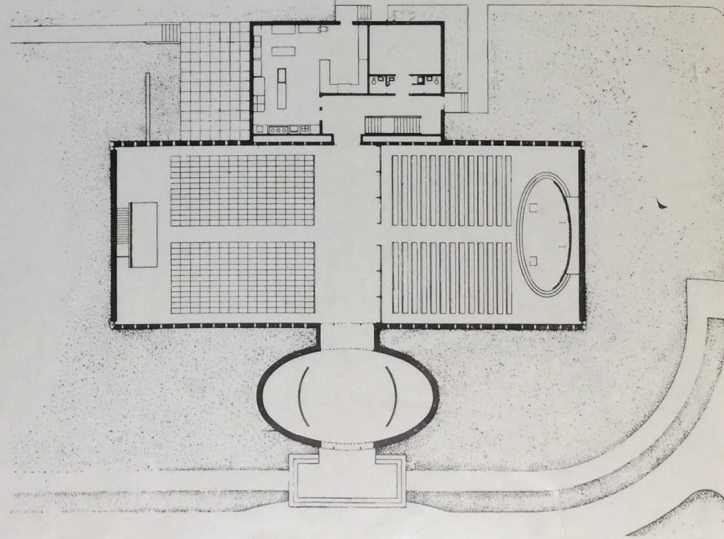
Une aile basse, sur la façade opposée à l'entrée, abrite une cuisine, des sanitaires, une salle de repos et, en sous-sol, des services annexes.

En opposition avec la réussite du volume architectural, le traitement du tabernacle et de l'Arche nous semble assez faible, manquant d'imagination et de grandeur.



**SYNAGOGUE,
PORT CHESTER, ETATS-UNIS**

PHILIP JOHNSON, ARCHITECTE

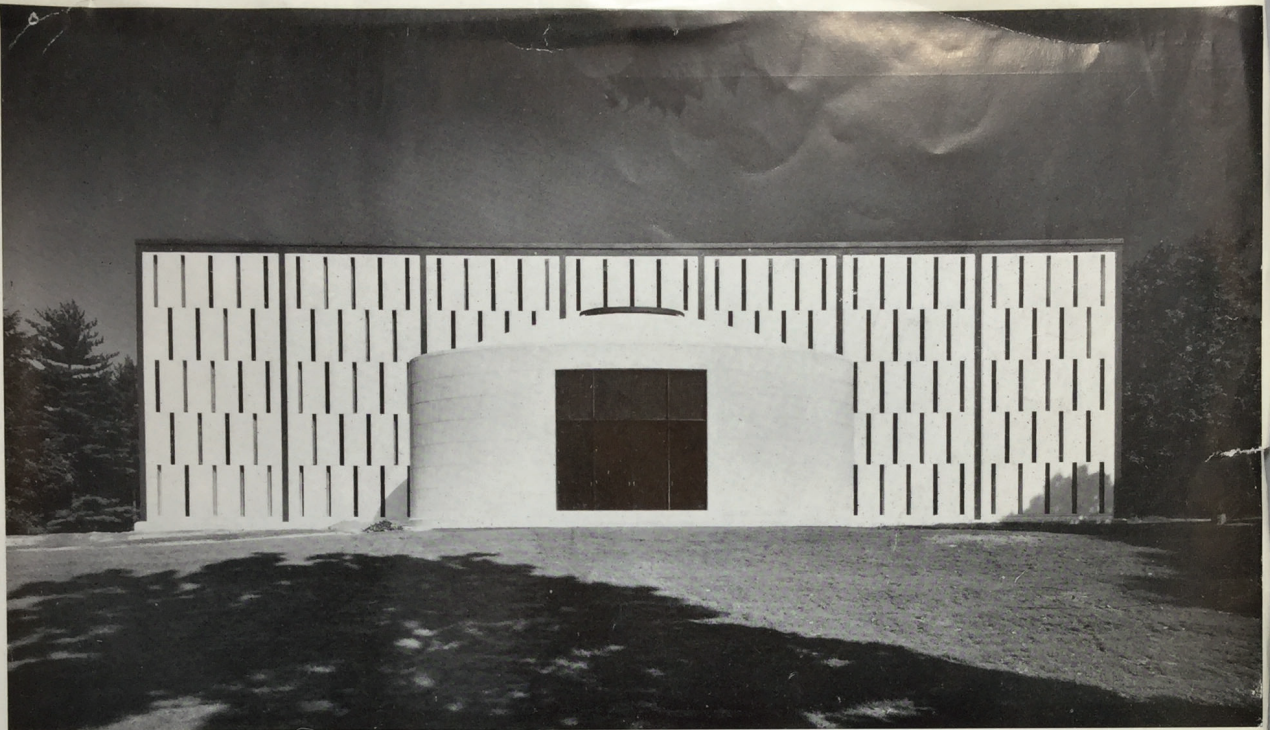


1 | 2 | 3
5 | 4

1 à 3. Vues extérieures montrant l'opposition entre les deux volumes. 4 et 5. Vues intérieures.

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	Philip Johnson	II.34



Photos Ezra Stoller

