

## Keeping It Modern

### 2015 Architectural Conservation Grants



Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning Center of the University of São Paulo in Brazil.  
Photo: Marina Brandão, 2015

#### **Fundação de Apoio à Universidade de São Paulo**

*Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning Center, João Batista Vilanova Artigas and Carlos Cascaldi, 1969, Sao Paulo, Brazil*

In the early 1960s the School of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of São Paulo turned to one of Brazil's most important modernist architects, João Batista Vilanova Artigas, to design a new faculty building in collaboration with Carlos Cascaldi. Taking their cues from the Brutalism of the late Le Corbusier, Artigas and Cascaldi created a monumental structure that emphasizes the elegance of

modern materials such as concrete and glass with minimal decoration. One of the building's most prominent features is its dramatic roof, a large grid of skylights set into reinforced concrete that fills the courtyard below with natural light. While past repairs have been undertaken on a case by case basis, now faculty are embracing the development of a conservation management plan with Getty support to produce a holistic approach to the maintenance of the building's key features. This methodology will be integrated into the teaching curriculum as a tool to educate the next generation of Brazilian architects on the value of strategic planning for the conservation of historic sites. *Grant support: \$200,000*



The Solar Observatory Einstein Tower on the Telegrafenberg in Potsdam. Photo: J. Rendtel / Leibniz Institute for Astrophysics Potsdam (AIP)

#### **Leibniz-Institut für Astrophysik Potsdam**

*Einstein Tower, Erich Mendelsohn, 1921, Potsdam, Germany*

The solar observatory at the Leibniz Institute for Astrophysics in Potsdam, better known as the Einstein Tower, is architect Erich Mendelsohn's signature building and a paragon of German expressionism. As the first solar tower telescope in Europe, the building was intended to support Einstein's study of relativity, and it continues to function as a research center today.

Breaking away from the paradigm of rectangular post and beam architecture, Mendelsohn crafted an organic and sinuous form to reflect the new theories of the

universe. The use of reinforced concrete to create a smooth, unified skin over the building's

brick substrate was innovative at the time and enabled its expressive plastic form. However, this experimental combination of materials has left the structure vulnerable to water infiltration that threatens the safety of its scientific equipment. A Getty grant will support an in-depth study of the building's moisture problems, including the thermal stress of fluctuating seasonal conditions that is a shared concern among concrete buildings in temperate climates. *Grant support: €43,000*



Hill House, Front Entrance. Photo: The National Trust for Scotland

### **The National Trust for Scotland**

*Hill House, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 1904, Helensburgh, Scotland*

Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh firmly believed in the house as a "total work of art" and roundly applied this principle to the Hill House he designed for publisher Walter W. Blackie in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Located outside of Glasgow, the building departed from its Arts and Crafts counterparts and decisively shaped the course of modern design with the introduction of clean lines and broad unadorned planes interrupted only for

simple, inset windows. To achieve the building's unified exterior aesthetic, Mackintosh covered the structure with a relatively new material at the time, Portland cement. Unfortunately the property's signature cement envelope has weakened over time, and this process has been exacerbated by its seaside location. The National Trust of Scotland, which has served as a faithful custodian of the site, has completed various studies to address this problem but has found a piecemeal approach unsatisfactory for the creation of lasting solutions. The Getty grant will support the completion of a conservation management plan for the property that unifies all of the prior research to create an integrated approach to the long-term care of the building. *Grant support: £95,000*



The Gandhi Bhawan in Chandigarh, India. Photo: Vanicka Arora, Associate Architect, DRONAH

### **Panjab University**

*Gandhi Bhawan, Pierre Jeanneret, 1961, Chandigarh, India*

The Gandhi Bhawan of Panjab University in Chandigarh is an architectural centerpiece of the campus and a stunning example of modernist architecture in India. This distinctive concrete building was the result of a 1960 proposal that a Gandhi Bhawan (Gandhi Center) be established at each university in India "with the object of promoting the study of Gandhian ideals and his way of life." Swiss architect Pierre Jeanneret's building used innovative cast

concrete to evoke an abstracted floating lotus flower, marrying angular lines with swelling organic forms, all fittingly set into a large reflecting pool. A Getty grant will support an

integrated and sustainable plan for the future management of the building, based on extensive background research, testing of materials, and technical analysis. The project will also build lasting capacity by supporting training workshops for experts of modernism in India, as well as for local professionals who care for the Gandhi Bhawan and other modern buildings in the region. *Grant support: \$130,000*



North view of the Abbey and University Church.  
Photo: Fr. Geoffrey Fecht, OSB

### **Saint John's Abbey, of the Order of Saint Benedict**

*Saint John's Abbey and University Church, Marcel Breuer, 1961, Collegeville, Minnesota*

In the 1950s, the Benedictine monks of Saint John's Abbey made the daring choice of Bauhaus architect Marcel Breuer for the design of a new church for its growing monastic community and student community located on the joint campuses of the Minnesota's College of Saint Benedict

and Saint John's University. In response to the clergy's call for a church that would be "an architectural monument to the service of God," Breuer deployed a striking combination of concrete and stained glass to create a masterful juxtaposition of levity and mass. The church's entrance is framed by a weighty bell tower, a dramatic contrast to its perforated, honeycomb façade. Encased stained glass, as well as large interior skylights and windows spanning the building's sides, flood the church interior with light and balance the massive concrete framing buttresses. Today the structures are the architectural centerpiece of more than a dozen other structures by Breuer on this multi-use complex, forming the largest collection anywhere of a single modernist architect's work. A Getty grant will support a conservation management plan to guide a long-term preservation strategy for these buildings. *Grant support: \$150,000*



Arthur Neiva Pavilion – Fundação Oswaldo Cruz.  
Photo: Barbara Cortizo de Aguiar, 2013

### **Sociedade de Promoção da Casa de Oswaldo Cruz**

*Arthur Neiva Pavilion, Jorge Ferreira, 1942, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*

In 1942 Jorge Ferreira, a central figure in Brazil's modernist movement, adapted the international style to tropical conditions with his design of the Arthur Neiva Pavilion on the main campus of the Fundação Oswaldo Cruz (Fiocruz) in Rio de Janeiro. Divided into two connected structures, one with classrooms and laboratories, the other with an auditorium, the reinforced-concrete

ensemble is unified by a garden and brilliant blue tile mural by celebrated Brazilian artist and landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx. The pavilion pairs the long, lean lines and geometric order of European modernism with verandas, brise-soleil, and trellises that acknowledge the surrounding environment with a sensitive balance of indoor and outdoor space. A Getty grant



will support the completion of material and technical analysis of the building, resulting in a comprehensive preventive conservation report and a public seminar to share the project's outcomes with local architects and increase professional awareness of the planning protocols. *Grant support: \$60,000*



Exterior of Historic New England's Gropius House in Lincoln, Massachusetts. Photo: courtesy Historic New England

### **Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Inc.**

*Gropius House, Walter Gropius, 1938, Lincoln, Massachusetts*

When Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius moved to the United States, he settled in Lincoln, Massachusetts, where he built his family home. The house is modest in scale yet revolutionary in impact, embodying the Bauhaus principles of simplicity, economy, and restrained beauty. It combines traditional elements of New England architecture—wood, brick, and fieldstone—with innovative materials rarely used in domestic settings at that time, including

glass block, acoustic plaster, chrome banisters, and the latest technology in fixtures. The house is recognized as a National Historic Landmark for its influence in bringing international modernism to the United States. A Getty grant will support the development of a conservation management plan for the building and site, to ensure the preservation of its characteristic features for the home's continued use as a teaching tool to transmit the tenets of Bauhaus design. *Grant support: \$75,000*



Exterior of the Rietveld Schröder House, which is part of the collection of the Centraal Museum. Photo: Ernst Morritz

### **Stichting Centraal Museum**

*Rietveld Schröder House, Gerrit Rietveld, 1924, Utrecht, The Netherlands*

An incongruous end to a block of traditional brick row houses on the edge of Utrecht, the Rietveld Schröder House of 1924 is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site for its radical innovation in domestic architecture. Developed by renowned Dutch architect and furniture designer Gerrit Rietveld for his client Truus Schröder-Schräder, the residence is the first large-scale declaration of De Stijl design ideals. The house is now maintained by the Centraal Museum Foundation, but Rietveld's experimental use of materials, combined with the wear-and-tear from thousands of visitors each year, creates a demanding maintenance schedule. A Getty grant will support the development of a conservation management plan that balances sensitivity to the architect's design intent

with the building's complex conservation needs. The project includes an oral history that will capture the knowledge of one of Rietveld's assistants, who played a pivotal role in past

interventions to the home, as well as the broad dissemination of the project research through a free online publication. *Grant support: €125,000*



The tower of Het Schip. Photo: Amsterdamse School Museum Het Schip / Alice Roegholt

### **Stichting de Golf, Amsterdam School Museum Het Schip**

*Het Schip, Michel de Klerk, 1921,  
Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

Het Schip, or The Ship, is a remarkable monument of 20<sup>th</sup>-century urban design that exemplifies the bold expressionistic architecture of the Amsterdam School. Developed by Dutch architect Michel de Klerk, Het Schip, also dubbed the Worker's Palace, was an ambitious new type of housing for the working classes who lived in deplorable conditions. This unprecedented experiment in designed living was completed in 1921, as an urban block containing over 100 apartments, a post

office, and an elementary school. No detail escaped de Klerk's attention, as is evident in the structure's surface designs, including small, carved windmills and other flourishes set into its façade. The complex continues to serve residents today and also houses a museum dedicated to the Amsterdam School and the social idealism of De Klerk's goals of making good design accessible to all. A Getty grant will support research into the design of the building's unique decorations, restoration of damaged and missing elements, the development of a maintenance plan, visual documentation and dissemination, and a guide for sustainable care for the custodians of Het Schip. *Grant support: \$180,000*



Exterior of the Strutt House. Photo: Titania Truesdale

### **Strutt Foundation**

*Strutt House, James Strutt, 1956, National  
Capital Area, Canada*

Canadian architect James Strutt used the development of his own home outside of Ottawa to push the boundaries of geometric design and construction systems, launching a career-long exploration of how to achieve maximum structural strength through minimal, lightweight materials. The house displays a deceptively simple combination of architectural design and building science, including its undulating

wooden paraboloid roof which was the first of its kind in Canada. The house was also among the first in the country to use a curtain wall building technique that relieved exterior walls from the burden of structural support to create elegant expanses of uninterrupted glass. A Getty grant will support the establishment of a conservation plan that incorporates extensive research about the building's materials, its ground-breaking curtain wall feature, and the



investigation of potential leaks in its envelope through thermographic analysis and air-pressure testing. *Grant support: \$50,000 CAD*



Interior view of the Arts Building with cantilevered stairs and mezzanine. Photo: César Bagues Ballester

**Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania**  
*Arts Building and Cloister, George Nakashima, 1967, New Hope, Pennsylvania*

The George Nakashima House and Studio is a collection of 21 highly experimental buildings created by this Japanese-American woodworker and designer in the 1960s following deep consideration for its forested surroundings in the Pennsylvania countryside. Nakashima used novel engineering techniques and materials to create a unique aesthetic that blends Japanese craft traditions with a midcentury

modernist sensibility. Two of the earliest buildings erected on this National Historic Landmark site, the Arts Building and Cloister, best exemplify Nakashima's design ideals with a soaring hyperbolic paraboloid plywood roof and an open interior with extensive wood surfaces and expansive glass walls. A Getty grant will support the development of a Conservation Management Plan that will incorporate an in-house training program for the conservation and maintenance of the campus, drawing on the expertise of the University of Pennsylvania's Historic Preservation program. *Grant support: \$100,000*



Unity Temple's west façade with stylized concrete piers. Photo: courtesy of the Unity Temple Restoration Foundation

**Unity Temple Restoration Foundation**  
*Unity Temple, Frank Lloyd Wright, 1908, Oak Park, Illinois*

In 1905, after a fire destroyed the wood frame Unity Church in Oak Park, Illinois, the congregation turned to Frank Lloyd Wright as a fellow parishioner to rebuild. Wright's bold, experimental design was a radical departure from existing typologies of religious architecture, and was among the first monumental public buildings in the world to use in-situ cast concrete as an artistic architectural medium. It has been designated a National Historic Landmark and was recently nominated for listing as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This

meticulously planned and researched conservation treatment offers a model to the field for the preservation of the original aesthetic of a building that has already had extensive restoration treatments—a common condition for many historic concrete modernist buildings. Getty funds will be applied towards hard construction costs for restoring the concrete surfaces of the north façade, the public face of Unity Temple on Lake Street. *Grant support: \$200,000*



Looking towards the Vela, with skylights that illuminate the interior "street."

Photo: Giorgio Casali, Milan

### Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo

*"Collegi" buildings, Giancarlo De Carlo, 1962–1982, Urbino, Italy*

Italian architect Giancarlo De Carlo, a core member of the radical architecture collective Team Ten, achieved international acclaim when he created the five "Collegi" buildings (Colle, Tridente, Serpentine, Aquilone, and Vela) at the Università degli Studi in the rolling landscape near the medieval city of Urbino. He championed the philosophy that modernist architecture should support social change, and used this principle to design over 62,000 square feet of buildings that function as "an organism in the form of a city" by repeating simple structural elements that respond subtly to the surrounding hillside topography. A close relationship to nature is reinforced by a series of

open public spaces that are connected through a unique system of flowing internal "streets." Unfortunately, the palette of modern materials selected by the architect have not performed well over time and current safety regulations and campus usage patterns have led to the under-utilization of many of the open spaces at the heart of De Carlo's design. A Getty grant will support a comprehensive conservation plan for the structures that will address material deterioration and adaptation that is sensitive to contemporary use but also respects the architect's original vision. *Grant support: \$195,000*



View of the Jewett Arts Center at Wellesley College from Severance Green. Photo: Wellesley College Communications and Public Affairs

### Wellesley College

*Jewett Arts Center, Paul Rudolph, 1958, Wellesley, Massachusetts*

In 1958 architect Paul Rudolph completed his breakthrough building, the Jewett Arts Center at Wellesley College. That same year he assumed the chairmanship of the Department of Architecture at Yale, where he became a key figure in fostering the modernist aesthetic he had embraced as a student of Walter Gropius. Designed to house the Departments of Art and Music as well as galleries for the college's sculpture and painting collections, the Jewett Arts Center is a masterful assimilation of modernist materials and structural framing into a surrounding collegiate Gothic setting. Clustered concrete aggregate columns, pointed aluminum skylights, and expansive bay windows repeat the motifs of nearby buildings using an updated,

modernist idiom. A Getty grant will support a conservation management plan that prioritizes the retention of the building's historic fabric in future planning, makes better use of existing spaces, and develops a treatment protocol for significant building components. *Grant support: \$120,000*