

The Carpenter Center for Visual Arts

Sports

Features

MEDFORD MAIL TRIBUNE

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Harvard and Radcliffe undergraduates studying design will find their drawing boards and work benches Monday in the new Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts—North America's first structure by the French architect, Le Corbusier.

The students will take up their drawing and construction under the Sculptor Mirko Basaldella, in open studios and workshops, decorated by window panels of red, yellow, green and white, broken only by widely-spaced columns of concrete. They will look through glass walls to a variety of outdoor terraces.

All the studio and workshop areas are shielded from the direct rays of the sun by L. Corbusier's familiar "brises soleils"—concrete sun breakers.

Several Seminar Rooms

Above the two floors of design studios and shops, under a large bubble-dome in one of several seminar rooms, Prof. I. A. Richards will teach "Visual Communications," and Prof. Edward F. Sekler will discuss "Urban Design."

At the top, in a terraced studio on the fifth floor, Mirko Basaldella has established his own workshop, peopled with scores of figures in wood, bronze, alabaster and styrofoam.

In the basement, in a multi-use experimental auditorium, Prof. Laurence Wylie will show films of French life to his class on "The Civilization of France," and the department of history will present a lecture course in the history of American architecture.

Behind the auditorium projection wall, Robert Gardner will direct the installation of light and communication studios, with facilities for editing, cutting, sound-mixing animation, and storage of film. Behind the opposite wall of the auditorium, workmen will be completing a series of photographic darkrooms.

Varied Program of Activities

Course offerings and a varied program of activities and exhibitions to be initiated next fall are being planned by a Faculty Committee on the Practice of the Visual Arts. In addition, the committee is considering how the Center can best support the strong undergraduate interest in the visual arts which has been fostered within the Harvard Houses.

The Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, given through the Program for Harvard College by A. S. V. Carpenter and the late Mrs. Carpenter of Medford, will be dedicated late in May with a simple ceremony and an exhibition of the works of the architect, Le Corbusier. There also will be a graphic presentation of the creative development of the building from the first rough sketches to the finished drawings.

Carpenter expressed his hopes for the new Center in these words: "I think of the building as opening the door of future and present enjoyment to those who pass lightly through. I see no need of making it the exclusive path for those who are going to spend their lives in some one of the branches of the visual arts."

Members of the Harvard-Cambridge community, meanwhile, have been interested in the curves and angles in Le Corbusier's concrete-and-glass design, set between two neo-Georgian orthodoxies, the Fogg Art Museum and the Harvard Faculty club.

Seems Richly Complex

To the passerby, the exterior seems richly complex. The five floors are all different in configuration: Rectangles and squares broken by asymmetrical curves. Each floor is provided with indoor and outdoor terraces, while a pedestrian ramp extended through the building at the third floor, connecting Quincy st. and Prescott st.

Many of Le Corbusier's familiar devices are present in a statement of his philosophy: the inter-penetration of outdoor space and indoor space, the natural concrete surfaces, the ramp, pilotis (columns) supporting the various floors, and the brises soleils (sun breakers).

The building is supported by concrete columns, varying in diameter with the load each supports. From Prescott st. can be seen columns rising 22 feet to support the overhanging lobe of the third floor.

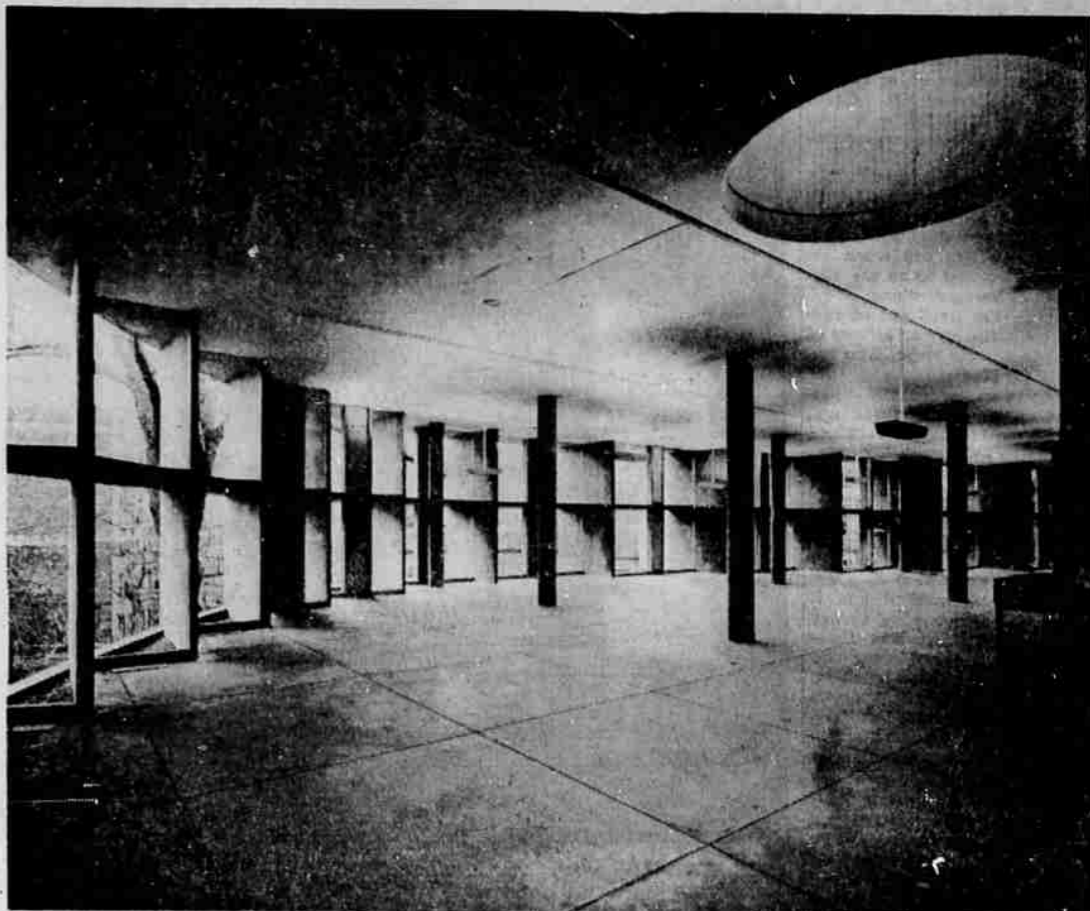
In setting up its program, the Committee on the Practice of the Visual Arts asked for a building that would be mainly "atelier." Le Corbusier found such a program exceptionally compatible with his own sense of what a workshop in the visual arts should be, and provided Harvard with a building where open space, light and color provide a maximum studio atmosphere. In his own words, delivered with the first plans of the building, Le Corbusier wrote (in French):

A Ground Which is Favorable

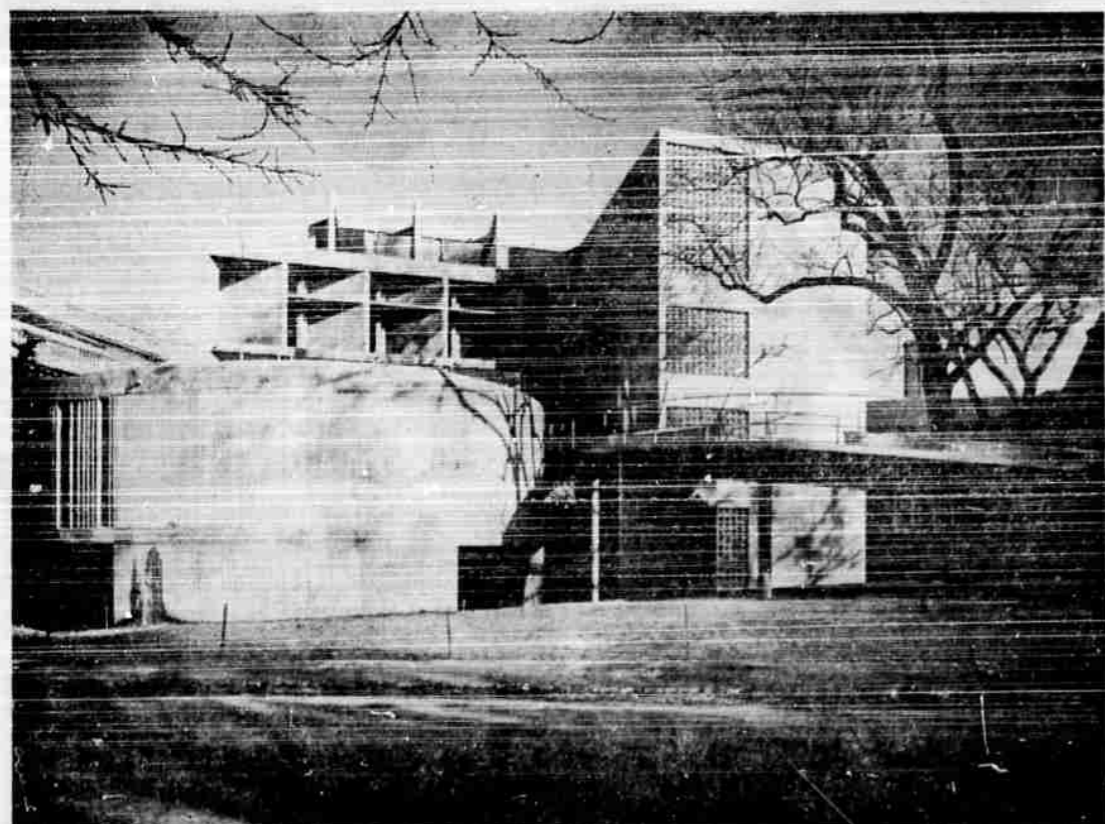
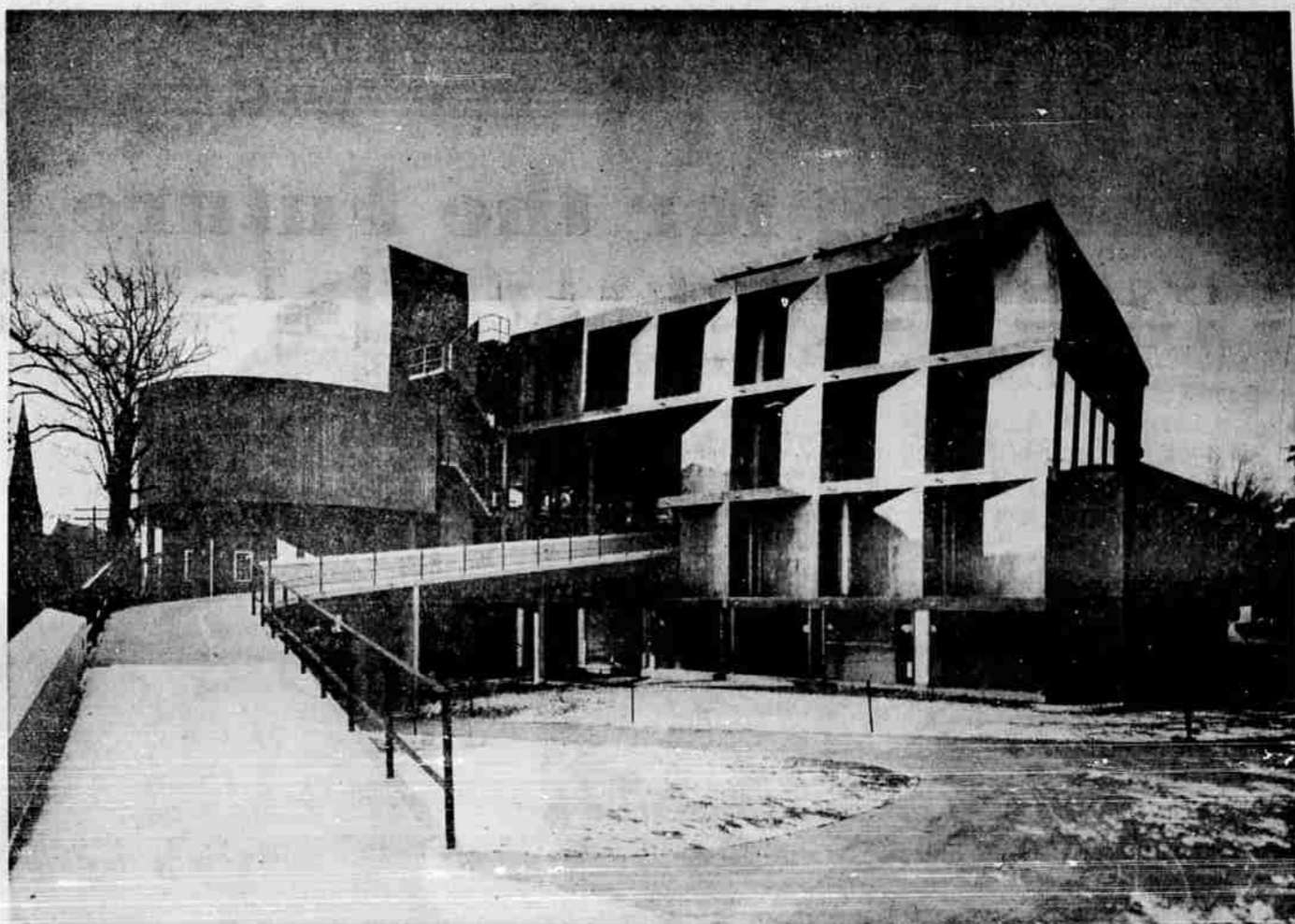
"Harvard university's initiative has found in Le Corbusier a ground which is favorable to the implantation of the ideas which constitute the present programme of this university."

The building is organized by floors: basement, multi-purpose auditorium, light and communication studios and photographic dark rooms; first floor, administrative areas and common room; second floor, workshop for three-dimensional design; third floor, workshops for two-dimensional design, and exhibition space; fourth floor, seminar rooms and special projects; fifth floor, artists' studio.

Still incomplete in detail, the building will come to full life in late spring when greenery flourishes on the terrace levels and exhibitions are in place.



Sun-breakers for light, columns for strength are seen in part of the open studio for two-dimensional drawing in the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard university.



Views of The
Carpenter Center
For Visual Arts

