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Emily Lombard skiing in front of her house at 441 Glen Road in January 1957. Architect Hugh Stubbins designed the house in 1950 for her parents, George and Mary Esther Lombard. (Courtesy Emily Lombard Hutcheson)

Modernism in Weston, 1930-1970 Part II

This is the second of a two-part issue on modernism in Weston. Copies of Part I, in the Fall 2009 issue of the *WHS Bulletin*, may be obtained at a cost of $5.00 from the Weston Historical Society, P.O. Box 343, Weston, MA 02493. We welcome information about other modern houses in Weston. Send us your stories!

Part I: Fall 2009

Part II: Spring 2010

Mary Esther Lombard with son Josh (age 12) and daughter Emily (age 3) in February 1952, the first winter they lived in the Glen Road house. They are eating breakfast outdoors, which Mr. and Mrs. Lombard always did, rain or shine, year-round. (Courtesy Emily Lombard Hutchinson)

The Lombard family, December, 1957, in front of the fireplace at their Glen Road home, designed by Hugh Stubbins. Note the odd sail-like chimney. There was no mantel from which to hang Christmas stockings, so George Lombard would rig up a wire.(Left to right) Esther, Posy, George, Annabel (baby), Mary Esther, Mike, Rachel, Josh, Emily. (Photo by Robert Ogilvie, courtesy Emily Lombard Hutchinson)

Growing Up Modern: The Lombard Family

*George F. F. and Mary Esther Lombard House, 441 Glen Road (1950-52)
Architect: Hugh Stubbins. Builder: Custance Bros., Inc.

George and Mary Esther Lombard moved to Weston in 1937 and initially rented buildings on the Charles Jones estate on Glen Road. George Lombard was a professor of Human Relations and later Associate Dean at Harvard Business School. According to daughter Emily Lombard Hutcheson, it was her mother who wanted a modern house. She had grown up in California and had a strong artistic sense. The couple hired Hugh Stubbins, a modern architect and professor at Harvard's Graduate School of Design. At the time the Lombards had six children, and Mary Esther told Stubbins she wanted room for a dozen (ultimately, there were seven). She wanted the kitchen to be central, and it was the heart of the house.

Left: Emily Lombard in the kitchen at 441 Glen Road, and (below) playing in the snow in front of the house in the 1950s. (Courtesy Emily Lombard Hutcheson)

The kitchen overlooked the playroom and was open to the living room, dining room, and Mr. Lombard's desk/work area, with only built-in-counters marking the divisions. "Really, it was just one large open area—this is what Mother wanted," according to Hutcheson. There were six bedrooms. When it came to bathrooms, "Mom wanted to be sure there was no waiting, so there were five small places that one could close a door on oneself. One had just a sink."

The house was sited in the middle of the woods on top of a hill, with rock ledge all around. According to Hutcheson, the Olmsted Brothers firm may have worked with Stubbins on the siting and driveway placement Public rooms were on one level and bedrooms were either up or down a half-level, such that the house conformed nicely to the contours of the land. Stubbins oriented the house facing south, and it had beautiful views of the sunset to the west.

"The house had an open plan on the inside" says Hutcheson, "and because of the large plate glass windows, it was open to the outside as well, almost like living outside. It was a great house to grow up in." Overhanging eaves blocked the summer sun but allowed winter sun to warm the interior. At one end was a large clothes yard where laundry was hung out to dry.

Josh Lombard was 10 years old when the house was built. Home movies show him directing the bulldozers, and he became an architect. Emily Lombard Hutcheson recalls that her mother was unusual. She liked starting the day with her husband, away from the children. No matter what the weather, they would have breakfast outside in one of several favorite spots. “Dad would carry out a tray with bread, jam, and a toaster that could be plugged into an outdoor plug. Mom followed with omelets on two heavy china plates,” she recalled. Emily remembers making toasted cheese sandwiches outside for lunch. “Some of my happiest memories are of eating outside in the snow.”

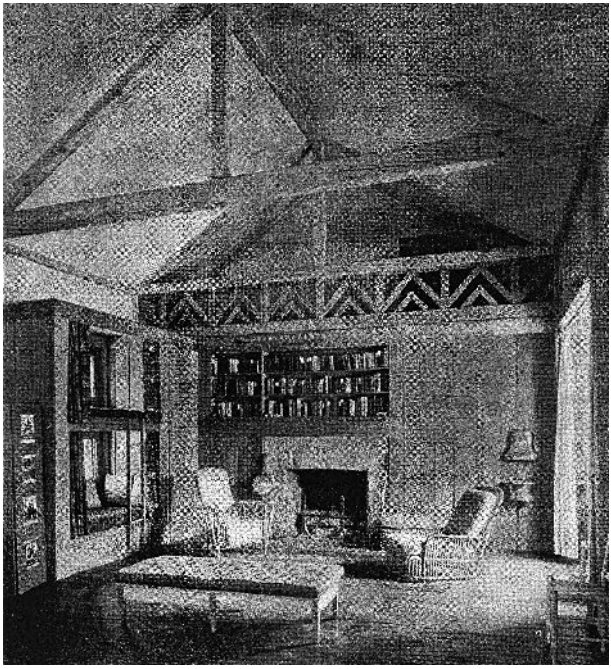
In the mornings, Mrs. Lombard always had the school lunches ready, She would decorate the lunch bags in crayon each day, with the different design for each child. She was very creative, and “this was her way of including something beautiful in her day,” her daughter explains.

Emily Lombard moved from Brook School Building C to the newly built Country School in the middle of first grade. Because it was also designed by Hugh Stubbins, she felt right at home. No. 441 Glen Road remained in the family until 2004, and the new owners have chosen to preserve it.

Eleanor Raymond: Pioneer in Contemporary Design and Energy Conservation

Not only was Eleanor Raymond (1888-1989) a successful woman architect at a time when the profession was dominated by men, but she was also a prolific innovator interested in the modern aesthetic, solar power, environmental compatibility, and new structural technologies. By necessity and choice, she concentrated on domestic architecture. She was interested in how people live and how to improve that life by providing convenience, comfort, and beauty in daily living spaces.

Raymond was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts and educated at Wellesley College (Class of 1909) and the Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture for Women. After practicing for almost a decade with Henry Atherton Frost, she opened her own office in Boston in 1928. In 1931, she designed and built a house in Belmont recognized as one of the first International Style examples in the United States. Rather than simply importing the style as she had seen it in Germany, she transformed it by using rough-sawn cedar boarding in keeping with New England landscape and building traditions.



In 1929, Eleanor Raymond transformed the interior of an old barn on South Avenue into an artist studio. The barn had no hand-hewn beams so the architect added pine beams and California redwood paneling. The new space was comfortable and uncluttered. The client, Marguerite Mitchell, enjoyed the studio so much that she gathered a group of 14 women that she called "The Mondays" to meet there every week to draw and paint. (Photo from House Beautiful*, September, 1933)*

Raymond was also interested in historic architecture, particularly simple vernacular examples, and published the book *Early Domestic Architecture of Pennsylvania* in 1931. Many of her projects involved sensitive restoration and adaptive reuse of existing buildings, such as an old barn and a hen-house in Weston. Raymond is also known for designing, with Dr. Maria Telkes of M.I.T., the first successful passive solar house in the Northeast, in Dover, Massachusetts, in 1949.

Eleanor Raymond's Weston Houses

* still standing

Marguerite Mitchell Studio, 111 South Street (1929)
The transformation of the Mitchell's barn into an art studio was published in *House Beautiful* in September 1933. The spacious new interior, with stone fireplace and balcony at one end, was paneled with California redwood. (Demolished)

*Addition to Marian Farnsworth House,"Exmoor Farm," 751 Boston Post Road (1935)

Eleanor Raymond worked with Marion Farnsworth, a serious gentlewoman farmer, and her partner, Helen Stanley Johnson, on several projects at Exmoor Farm, a large property that remains largely intact. Farnsworth purchased the farm in 1922. In 1935 she hired Raymond to move the c. 1721 Colonial farmhouse to its present location 700 feet back from the road. Raymond designed rear wings that doubled the size of the house to accommodate a growing family including five young female boarders and an adopted daughter.

*Marian Farnsworth, Farm Manager's House, "Exmoor Farm" (1938)

Raymond converted an old hen house into a two-story apartment for the farm's manager. The so-called Apple House Apartment (also known as Apple Flat) featured storm windows turned on their sides, a flat roof (since changed to a gable because of leaks) and a bridge to reach the second floor from the adjacent higher ground.

*Marian Farnsworth, Rental Houses, 52 and 56 Gun Club Lane (1938)

On nearby Gun Club Lane, Raymond used timber from trees downed in the Hurricane of 1938 to build two rental houses, mirror images in plan, known as the Red Houses. They reflected Raymond's interest in economical design, local materials, and the colonial vernacular. Now privately owned.

*Marian Farnsworth Rental House, 745 Boston Post Road (1941)

The Colonial Revival house at 745 Boston Post Road was Raymond's last commission for Farnsworth. Influenced by an 18th- century house in Barnstable, it remains largely intact except for a rear addition.

*Henry and Martha Wile House, 141 Meadowbrook Road (1944-46)

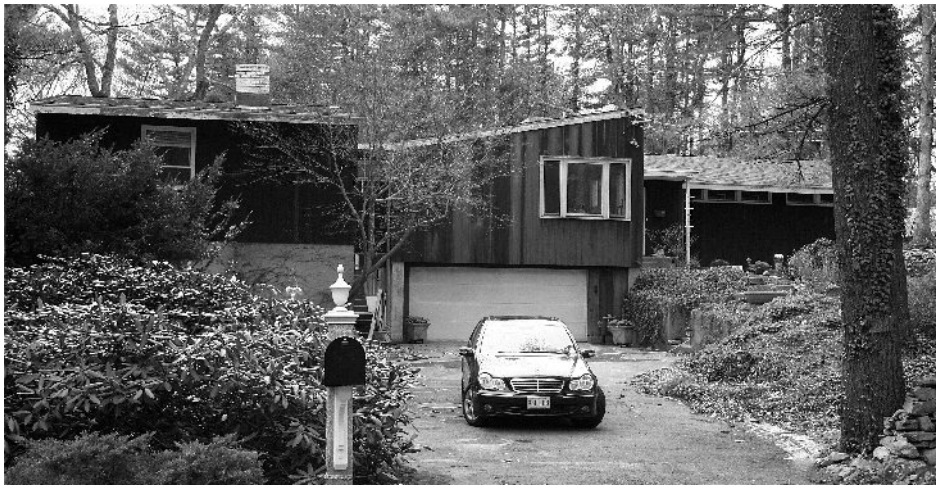
This house incorporates modern elements into the traditional Colonial Revival form.

*Carl and Frances Von Merten House, 200 Lexington Street (1969-71)

Major References

1) *Buildings of Massachusetts: Metropolitan Boston* by Keith N. Morgan, University of Virginia Press (2009), Society of Architectural Historians series of Buildings of the United States.

2) Cole, Doris, *Eleanor Raymond, Architect* (The Art Alliance Press, 1981).



Above: The Rolf Stutz House at 146 Conant Road was featured on a 1955 tour of contemporary houses. (2009 photo by Pam Fox)

A 1955 Tour of Contemporary Houses

On September 24, 1955, the Waltham Hospital Associates sponsored a tour of contemporary houses in Weston. The tour brochure began with this explanation:

> *The following group of houses clearly shows why contemporary architecture has made such homes practical, easily maintained and charming to live in. Designed for the individual family, they combine ideas of the past with today's materials. Most have large areas of glass, radiant heat and natural plantings. All were designed for families living in traditional neighborhoods.*

*The tour list and information is printed below. Houses that are still standing in February 2010 are marked with an asterisk**

***1. Mr. and Mrs. Rolf Stutz**
146 Conant Road; Architect: Phinney 1949 – Stutz 1955

> "Living area and master bedroom wing built first. Children's bedrooms and play area built this year as completely independent, but integrated unit. Intercom between rooms, separate terraces good features."

***2. Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Bevelander**
255 Conant Road; Architect: David Fried 1949

> "Early contemporary in traditional neighborhood. Treeless lot now beautifully landscaped. Stepdown living room. Balcony dining room."

***3. Dr. and Mrs. John R. Brooks**
95 Church Street [now 2 Coburn Rd]; Architect: Arthur H. Brooks 1952
[Editor's note: John R. and Arthur were brothers]

"Designed to fit a sloping lot, a family of five and a small budget. Combines easy maintenance with ample space."

***4. Dr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Holmes**
29 Summer Street; Architect: Edwin B. "Ned" Goodell, Jr. 1954

"Unusual living, dining, kitchen area open to each other to enable this family of four to be together while working or playing. Central air conditioning." (See *WHS Bulletin*, Fall 2009, pages 5-9)

***5. Dr. and Mrs. Gordon A. Gauld**
14 Farm Road; Architect: Carl Koch 1951

"Set in an orchard, this is an unspoiled natural site for informal living. Open living, dining, kitchen area with free-standing fireplace. Built on budget for easy maintenance."

***6. Dr. and Mrs. Harold Rheinlander**
[46] Cedar Road; Architect: Henry B. Hoover 1953

"Sloping site facilitates zoned planning. Radiant heat. Designed for expansion – complete master and adult section now – children's wing later. Glass walls open house to woods." (See pages 16-17)

***7. Mr. and Mrs. Walter H. Trumbull**
185 Meadowbrook Road [now 12 Dellbrook Rd]
Architect: Hugh Stubbins, Jr. 1951

"On a secluded rocky ledge in woods this one floor home has full height windows, is compact with sense of spaciousness, delightful with antiques." (See *WHS Bulletin*, Fall 2009, pages 2-3, 34-35)

8. Dr. and Mrs. William T. VanHuysen
24 Hidden Road [now 1 Dogwood Rd]; Architect: Henry B. Hoover 1953

"Glass areas enlarge the size of the living and family rooms. Central kitchen, radiant heat in ceilings. Planned for adult privacy and easy supervision of children in house and woods play area." [demolished 1994]

The Country School (see *WHS Bulletin,* Fall 2009, pages 29-32)
Architect: Hugh Stubbins, Jr. 1954

"Will be open for inspection from 3 – 5 P.M. only, by courtesy of the Weston School Committee." [demolished 2002]

Henry B. Hoover: Lincoln's First Modernist

The editor would like to thank Henry B. Hoover and Lucretia Hoover Giese, children of the architect, for providing the following biographical information and helping to document Hoover houses in Weston.

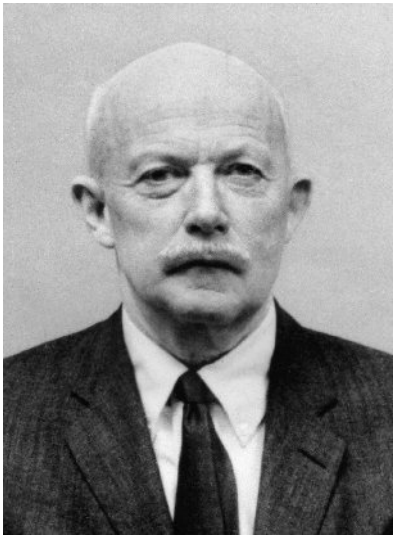
While better known in his hometown of Lincoln, Henry Brown Hoover (1902-1989) designed some of Weston's most important modern houses. Between 1950 and 1964, Hoover designed at least ten houses in Weston for clients looking for an alternative to the traditional Colonial.

Henry Brown Hoover was born in Iowa and earned his BA from the University of Washington in 1924 and architectural degree from Harvard in 1926. Upon graduation, he was awarded Harvard's Sheldon and Robinson Traveling Fellowships.

During graduate school he worked for noted landscape architect Fletcher Steele, and in 1926, he joined Steele's firm as lead designer and draftsman. In 1937 he began his architectural career with his own house in Lincoln, constructed a year before Walter Gropius build his own well-known house. In 1939, Hoover was commissioned to build a large house in Lincoln for two M.I.T. professors, Dr. and Mrs. Glennon Gilboy.

During the World War II years, lack of building materials brought residential construction largely to a halt. Hoover worked as an industrial designer at Raytheon and taught design at the Lowthrope School of Landscape Architecture, Gardening, and Horticulture for Women in Groton, Massachusetts. He resumed his career in 1947 with the completion of his first post-war house, on Lexington Road in Lincoln. The 1950s has been called "Hoover's richest and most consistently exuberant creative period." The postwar economy was good and clients looked toward the future with optimism and creative vigor. From 1955 to 1962, he worked in partnership with another modernist architect, Walter Hill, and took an office in Harvard Square. They worked separately on their respective projects but were able to support a growing number of clients seeking their brand of modernism.

Hoover notably remained a residential architect for his entire career. His total work is over 100 houses, principally in Massachusetts with examples also in New Hampshire and Georgia. In addition, he designed several public buildings.



Left: Architect Henry B. Hoover. (Courtesy Harry Hoover)

After his death in 1989, Hoover's three children, Henry B. Hoover, Jr., Elizabeth Hoover Norman, and Lucretia Hoover Giese, established the Henry Brown Hoover Fellowship Fund in honor of their father. The fund provides yearly financial aid to a Harvard Graduate School of Design student with an interest in residential architecture. The following is from an interview conducted with Henry Hoover's children on July 7, 1999.

Our father received what one would call a classical architectural education at Harvard in the Beaux-Arts tradition, based on copying distinguished buildings. He never spoke of a seminal European movement or particular pedagogical thrust of his education. In that regard, he followed the early training of 19th and 20th century artists, who copied museum works as part of their creative training. We still have a number of his drawings from that early period.

The two traveling fellowships were pivotal to father. He was given the gift of time and free reign, and he used both well. He traveled quite widely without any particular agenda, looking not only at big pieces of architecture but taking in everything: gardens, buildings, people, and cities. He often spoke of how gardens he saw in places like Seville had made an impact on him. The drawings and paintings we have from his travels incorporate the landscape and are more lively than the purely descriptive drawings of his formal education. They reflect the enormous influence the traveling fellowships had on him, his love of both urban and rural settings.

Henry Hoover's abiding philosophy, as an architect, was that a house must grow from the land, not just sit on it. The site was the starting place. The house should be responsive to the character of the land. His early work as an architect and landscape architect with Fletcher Steele affirmed his desire to create a practice based on architecture that integrated man with nature. His best work treats the house as an integral part of its site. There is no better example of this than the 1939 Gilboy house in Lincoln. Before considering any plans, he would walk over a site with the client to determine where the views should be, where the sun would enter a room, what major features of the land could be retained.

We have pictures of our father as a boy, camping in the woods with his family in Idaho, where he grew up. Ever since childhood, nature had been very important to him, and he cultivated a deep respect for the land. In his view, architects often erred in placing the house on the most beautiful part of the property. He thought it was just as important to see the beauty of the property from inside the house as from the outside.

Our father was intelligently inquisitive and had a dry sense of humor, which endeared him to everyone who knew him. He had a gift for establishing a relationship between himself and his clients that continued long after he finished their houses. His sensitive designs reflect his sincere caring for people. Through his imagination, the act of moving through a house becomes a visually exciting experience. His visual acuity and perception were constantly at play. The pencil never left his hand.

. . . Henry Hoover believed that architecture was a means of improving quality of life and uniting man with the land. To him, architecture was not a commercial venture but a personal commitment. He was concerned about the survival of residential architecture as a profession. Through this fund we seek to affirm the value of his work and to perpetuate residential architecture as a vocation by encouraging young architects who have an interest in the field.

The following account is quoted from "A Hoover Historical District" by Mary Ann Hales, printed in the Lincoln Review *of July 4, 1979. It was written before Hoover's death in 1989.*

Henry Hoover is a soft-spoken man who has built homes in this town for forty-two years. And I say homes intentionally, for to Mr. Hoover, building a home for people is a joint effort to create a unique space in which to live.

Mr. Hoover began his distinguished career with the building of his own home in 1937. In his delightful manner he described the difficulty of obtaining money from the banks to begin building, for one bank said his house was too far from the main road to be practical as a filling station (which they said was what it looked like), or was too small to be useful as a hospital (which another bank said it resembled).

Yet, when I asked Mr. Hoover why he decided to build a house which was so different from what was then being built, he answered that he had been asked many times what made a house "modern." He felt that any house with indoor plumbing could be considered modern. He built his home (as all the others) to fit the site. The land shaped the house. Then he considered orientation toward the view. . . and sun angle. The sun must enter the house in the winter and not in the summer.

And, yes, he said, you must have a little sunshine in the late afternoon to perk up the spirits. The house must be as maintenance-free as possible and most of all must be designed to suit the people who live in it and their own way of living. He did admit to me that he was horrified by the price of his land — $500 an acre!

As we talked about subsequent houses he had built, it became clear that two main philosophies shape Mr. Hoover's homes into the unique and very special dwellings they are. First is his immense respect for the land, his determination to leave it as untouched as possible and to consume as little of it as he can . . . We use too much land around houses, he believes, attempting to find privacy when in truth the setting and placement of a house are the keys to privacy. When I looked at the photographs of his homes, I saw that they were indeed designed "from the land up" and nestle into their sites.

The second philosophy concerns the interior of his homes. A house must be like a piece of sculpture which you view from within and which surrounds you. The areas inside a home must have a certain quality of space and of light. You cannot truly capture a house in a photograph, said Mr. Hoover, because you lose so much. One should feel the house is a pleasant place to be and feel good to come back to after being away.

A house should make a clear statement when you enter. Visitors should know immediately what room they are in. Mr. Hoover cited the formal entry foyer which has closed doors leading to other rooms. Without the host or a servant, the visitor does not know which door to enter. Doors are needed for privacy, however; Mr. Hoover carefully designs his homes to give each person a private place to be.

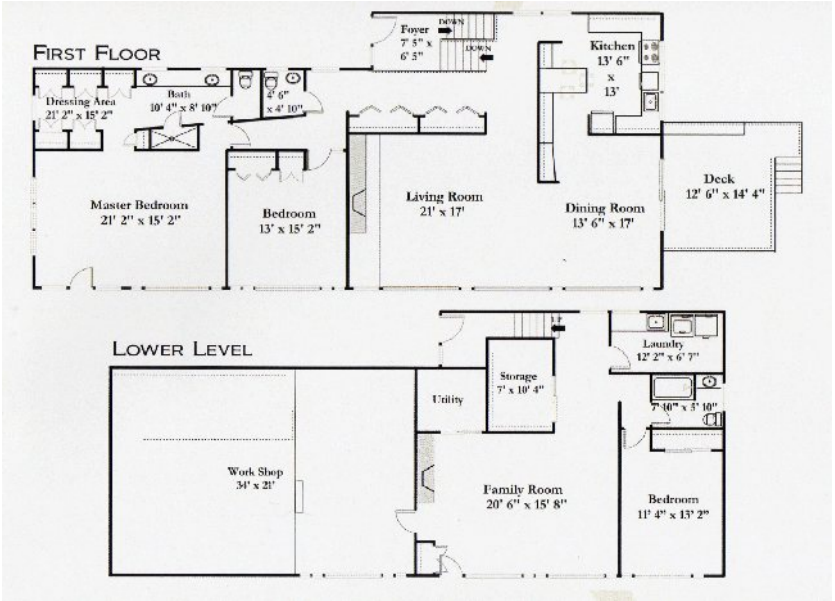
46 Cedar Road was designed by Henry Hoover for Harold and Eleanor Rheinlander. (2009 photo by Pam Fox)

Henry Hoover's Weston Houses

Listed in order of construction date. Those still standing in October 2009 are marked with an asterisk. Information on builders and estimated costs is from a building permit ledger located at Weston Town Hall.*

*Harold and Eleanor Rheinlander House, 46 Cedar Road (1952-54)
Builder: H. Tobiason. Original estimated cost: $14,000 (plus $9,000 for the carport added 1956). Harold Rheinlander was a surgeon. Updated in the 1990s by The Architects Collaborative (TAC). Remained in the Rheinlander family until July 2008. (See page 16-17)

Dr. William T. and Yvette Van Huysen House, 24 Hidden Road [now 1 Dogwood Rd] (1953) Builder: Ernest L. Johnson. Original estimated cost: $25,000. William Van Huysen was a physician. House was included on the 1955 Waltham Hospital Associates tour. (See page 9). (Demolished 1994)



Floor plans, Rheinlander House, 46 Cedar Road (Courtesy Barrett Signature Properties)

Dr. Charles G. III and Margaret Child House, 15 Dogwood Road (1956-57)
Builder: Moore Construction Co. Original estimated cost: $55,000. Charles Child was a physician. The Child family lived here until 1958; the second owner was M. Erich and Johanna Reissner, beginning in 1959. Erich Reissner was a professor. The house was included in the 1967 modern house tour sponsored by the DeCordova Museum. (See page 30). (Demolished 2005)

*Allen and Patricia Cole House, 40 Loring Road (1955-56)
Builder: H. Tobiason. Original estimated cost: $16,000. Allen Cole was a scientist. Remodeled and enlarged, 2007-08, in compatible style by the present owners, who are both architects. (See pages 23-24)

*Dr. Daniel J. and Charlotte Blacklow, 20 Rolling Lane (1956-59)
Builder: Murray Burke. Original estimated cost $36,850. Daniel Blacklow was a physician.

*Arthur and Eleanor Nelson House, 75 Robin Road (1958-59)
Builder: Moore Construction Co. Original estimated cost $53,000. Arthur Nelson was a scientist and lawyer. Still owned by the Nelson family. (See pages 17-19)

*Kenneth and Pauline Germeshausen House, 240 Highland Street (1959-60)
Builder: C.B. Westgate & Sons. Original estimated cost: $38,000. Kenneth Germeshausen was a scientist. Published in the *Boston Sunday Herald* in 1960 and featured on the 1967 modern house tour sponsored by the DeCordova Museum. Remained in the family until 2008. (See pages 20-22)

*Homer and Lela Lucas House, 121 Rolling Lane (1959-60)
Builder: Maurice A. Dunlavy. Original estimated cost: $15,740. Homer Lucas was president of a publishing company. His second wife was Alice. Remodeled in 1988.

Frank and Dorothy Tucker House, 77 Westcliff Road (1961-62)
Builder: Maurice A. Dunlavy. Original estimated cost: $42,000. Frank Tucker was a professor. Substantially rebuilt in 1995.

Richard and Phyllis Campobello House, 25 Westcliff Road (1964-65)
Builder: Osmond Brothers. Original estimated cost $42,000. Richard Campobello was a CPA. (Demolished 2006)

Major References:
1) Hoover, Henry B. Jr, "The Architecture of Henry Hoover, Lincoln's First Modernist," written for a Lincoln house tour on April 30, 2005, co-sponsored by Historic New England and The Friends of Modern Architecture, Lincoln (FoMA).
2) Hales, Mary Ann, "A Hoover Historical District," *Lincoln Review,* July 4, 1979.

The Rheinlander House

Karen Rheinlander grew up at 46 Cedar Road in a house designed by Henry Hoover for her parents, Harold and Eleanor Rheinlander, in 1952. The following information comes from an interview with Pam Fox in August, 2009, when the house was for sale.

Karen remembers driving around Weston area with her mother and seeing new Colonial style houses being constructed. Her mother would say "Why are they building a Colonial—the Colonial days are over."

When they first moved into the house, her mother was upset and worried that she couldn't live there, because the living room/dining room had such huge plate glass windows and was totally open to the outside. She remedied the situation by making curtains out of a neutral-colored hand-woven fabric from Mexico.

Eleanor Rheinlander was the better designer of the couple. She had a good eye and good taste. She liked to maintain a neutral background color for the walls and then add fabrics for color. At first the couple had a Moroccan rug in the living room that was oatmeal colored with a simple design with brown

Above: 2009 photo of the Rheinlander House living room at 46 Cedar Road (Courtesy Barrett Signature Properties)

stripes. Later they had oriental rugs. They decorated the house with hand-woven hangings such as a Navajo rug in the front hall, flat-weave wool rugs, oriental rugs, and colorful Marimekko pillows. The pillows on the built-in bench next to the fireplace were covered with a Bauhaus fabric. She loved the Design Research store in Cambridge.

As they had sufficient funds, the Rheinlanders purchased modern furniture by well-known designers including Alvar Alto, Charles and Ray Eames, and Hans Wegner. Most of the furniture was "Danish modern." Harold Rheinlander had a large workshop in the basement where he built furniture and did some of the cabinetry in the house.

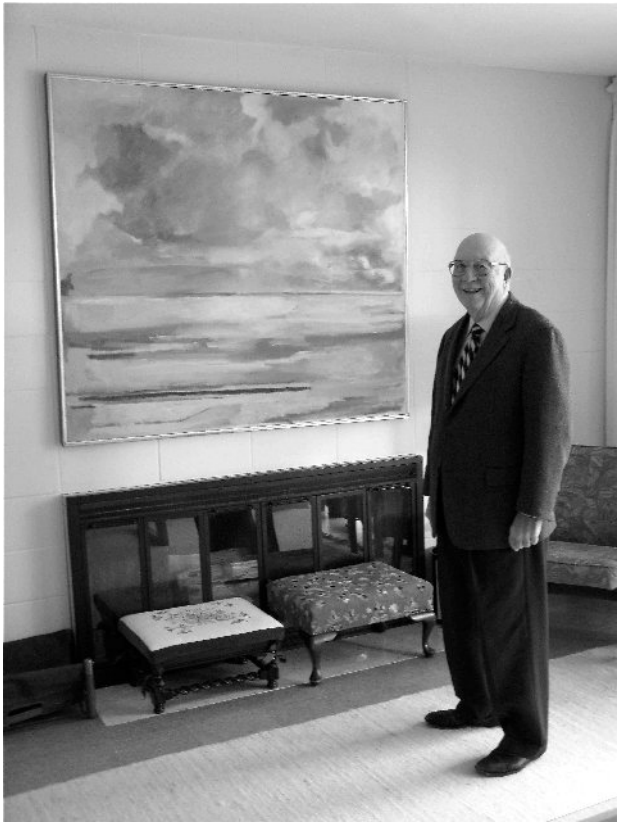
In the early 1990s, the Rheinlanders hired The Architects Collaborative (TAC) to "refresh" the house. The kitchen was updated with new cabinets, and a large picture window was installed to bring in more light.

The Nelson House

Arthur and Eleanor Nelson built their house at 75 Robin Road in 1958 from designs by Henry Hoover. Arthur Nelson still lives in the house, which remains virtually unchanged. The following information comes from Mr. Nelson's autobiography and an interview with Pam Fox in October 2009.

Arthur Nelson was born and raised in Lawrence, Kansas, and attended the University of Kansas, where he majored in mathematics and physics. In 1943, he was one of a group of young physicists recruited to work on a top-secret war project at M.I.T., developing advanced radar systems. In 1954, he married Eleanor Thomas, whose family lived on Meadowbrook Road in Weston. The young couple initially lived in Cambridge.

Eleanor's father, Alfred Thomas, was on the board of the Weston Real Estate Trust, which oversaw development of the former Winsor estate. Thomas told the Nelsons that the Trust was laying out a new area called Robin Road. The surveyor, Charley Stimpson, took them out to Summer Street and showed them how the new road would follow a brook that was tumbling down a ravine between two hills. The Nelsons climbed a rocky hilltop and could see the Boston skyline in the distance. They knew immediately that this was their lot. Since they were first to buy on Robin Road, the Trust moved the property line so they could buy the whole top of the hill. The only thing they complained about was the price of the land. They paid $9000 for 3.5 acres and thought it was "highway robbery."



Left: Arthur Nelson in his living room at 75 Robin Road. Nelson still lives in the house he and his wife Eleanor built in 1958 from designs by Henry Hoover. Below: The living and dining areas form a single open space divided from the hall by a free-standing storage unit seen in this picture. Next page: A glass corridor connects the "living house" to the "sleeping house." (2009 photos by Pam Fox)

The Nelsons drove around the area looking at houses of all styles, not just contemporary. The ones they liked were different from each other but were all designed by the same architect, Henry Hoover. His office was in Harvard Square. Nelson recalls what happened next:

> So, I went to see him and asked him if he'd be interested in designing our house. He came out to look at the land and said, "This is a real challenge." He would sit up there on the rocks and think. It took him a long time before he said, "What you really need is two houses—one here and one there. And since nobody can look in your house without getting on your property, you can have a lot of glass to connect the two parts, and to give a sense of living outdoors."

The "living house" has a living room/dining room, breakfast room, glassed-in sunroom, and combined kitchen and family room. At the other end of the glass corridor is the "sleeping house," with four bedrooms. The Nelsons raised their three children here and enjoyed it thoroughly. The house has remained unchanged for 50 years. It retains its mid-20th century features and furnishings, now old enough to be deemed "historic," while at the same time feeling remarkably fresh and up-to date.

Major References:

1) *Arthur H. Nelson: An Autobiography,* edited by his daughter Pamela Nelson.
2) Pam Fox, 2009 interview with Arthur Nelson

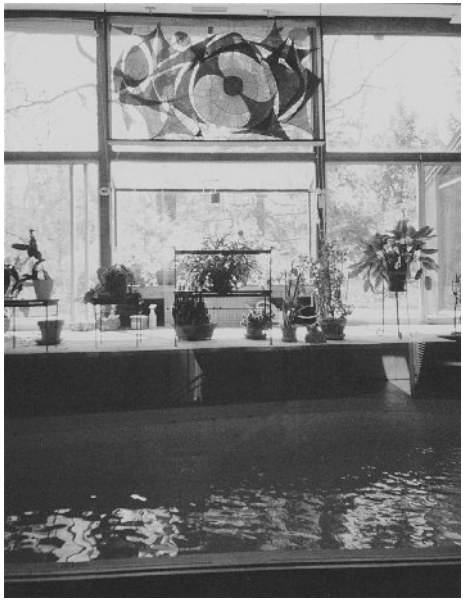
Above: The Germeshausen House was designed by architect Henry Hoover in 1959. (2006 photo by Harry Hoover)

The Germeshausen House

Polly and Kenneth Germeshausen built their house at 241 Highland Street in 1959-60 and lived there the remainder of their lives. A few years after Polly Germeshausen's death in 2005, their daughter Nancy sold the house to a couple who have preserved it.

In an interview with Pam Fox in 2000, Polly Germeshausen recalled that she and her husband probably learned about Henry Hoover through M.I.T. Kenneth Germeshausen was an M.I.T.-trained scientist and founder of E. G. &.G., Inc, a technology company that became a national defense contractor. The couple knew a number of young professors living in apartments in Cambridge and looking to build in the suburbs. Hoover's houses were "not typical modern." One had a tree right in the middle of it. "We were a little bit crazy then," Polly remembered with a smile.

The planning process took about two years. Hoover had an office in Cambridge where they met once a month. The plans would be sitting there, in the same place on his desk each time. When they asked Hoover a question, he didn't like to be pinned down. "It was his way or else," Polly recalled, adding that he was a good architect but they weren't used to someone who said 'I'll get to it when I get to it.'" But he never said "No, you can't do that."



Left and below:Polly and Kenneth Germeshausen's house at 241 Highland Street was centered around an indoor pool. The photo at left shows the pool and the stained glass panel by Joseph Ferguson. As with other owners featured in this issue, the Germeshausens decorated their rooms with contemporary furniture and art. (2006 photos by Harry Hoover)

As part of Kenneth Germeshausen's work, the couple had lived in Hawaii in 1956. Their Weston house plan had its genesis there, as Polly described in a 1960 article in the *Boston Sunday Herald*: "[the Hawaiian houses] were so open, airy, and life centered around swimming pools. When we built our house, this was what we wanted." Because of the short summer season in New England, they put the 10 X 23 foot pool indoors and made it the hub of the house. In the 1999 interview, Polly stated: "It was a wonderful place, like a greenhouse, great

for growing plants because of the light and moisture. It also gave the house a look of having more space than we really had. It was nice in cold weather, when the sun warmed up that area." The four-bedroom house had two wings of identical shape and size, one on each side of the pool. Kenneth Germeshausen planned the heating and cooling systems.

The exterior of fir and redwood had a creosote and stain-wax finish. Interior finishes were also chosen for easy upkeep. Walls were fir, beams were redwood, and floors in many rooms were of imported Welsh tile. The fireplace walls in the living and family rooms were made of fieldstones taken from the 31-acre property. Sliding glass walls along the south, west, and east sides filled the house with sunshine. From one window, the family could see the Blue Hills on a clear day.

For furniture, the Germeshausens purchased items from George Nakashima, an American of Japanese decent who graduated from the M.I.T. School of Architecture and then became a furniture designer. They assembled one of the largest private collections of his simple, contemporary furniture. In a 1967 article in the Boston Globe, Polly explained "We picked out the wood and told Mr. Nakashima what we wanted." Nakashima's furniture retained the wood form while turning it into a functional object. Colorful abstract paintings on the walls also reflected the couple's modern tastes. A stained glass panel by Joseph Ferguson framed the pool itself.

For the landscaping, the goal was a naturalistic look and minimum of upkeep. Will Curtis, creator of Garden in the Woods in Framingham, was involved in the landscape design. The native plant preserve, now headquarters for the New England Wildflower Society, was a source for plant material.

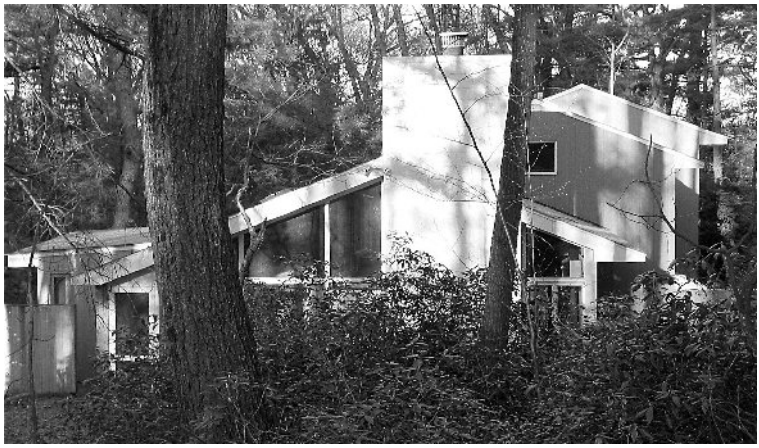
Major References

1) "Island Paradise in Weston," *Boston Sunday Herald*, June 5, 1960
2) 1999 interview by Pam Fox with Polly Germeshausen
3) Coons, Phyllis, "Weston Word: Contemporary," *Boston Globe*, May 1967 (exact date unknown)

Life in a Henry Hoover House:
The Allen Cole House

The following article was written by David N. Fixler, FAIA and Phyllis L. Halpern, AIA, owners of the Hoover-designed house at 40 Loring Road. The editor would like to thank them for sharing their enthusiasm for Hoover's work.

Right: West elevation, Allen Cole House, 40 Loring Road (2006 photo by David Fixler)



40 Loring Road was commissioned by Allen Cole in 1949 and completed construction in 1955. It is a small house for big people. Although in its original form a two-bedroom house and under 1,700 square feet in all, it nonetheless is planned such that all of the spaces are gracious and airy. Even in the lower level with its 7'-2" ceiling height, one never feels constrained. Much of the success of this design comes from the sectional arrangement of the house, which is a simple but sophisticated split level. There is a main level with entry, gallery, galley kitchen, and living-dining area, and two levels tucked into this plan that hold two bedrooms and a bath above a family room, small study, and second bath. There is otherwise no basement or attic. This arrangement, which is massed as a pair of interlocking volumes with gently pitched gable roofs, enables both very tall spaces on the main level and an interpenetration of space between the different levels such that one's sense of space is constantly expanded through awareness of the connection to the natural landscape.

Mr. Cole, from whom we purchased the house in 1992, spoke lyrically of the hours that Henry Hoover spent on site in order to provide the optimal relationship of the house to its environment. This is not surprising given Hoover's training in landscape design with Fletcher Steele. A genius for sensitive siting is evident in most of his houses. The orientation of the house, its relationship to the surrounding woods, and the depth of the roof overhangs are such that winter sun floods the house, while it is largely kept out in the summer. The original part of the house has never to this day had air conditioning. The heat is equally well thought through with radiant floors and ceilings, although some of the floor radiation failed in the mid-1990s and had to be replaced with flat panel radiators.

The material palette reinforces this connection to nature, with the use of vertical redwood siding both inside and out (the interior is left natural, exterior is stained), bluestone floors on the main level, and generous areas of glazing throughout. The construction detailing is fine and simple; the house was built by the Tobiason Brothers shortly following their arrival from Sweden, and there is a palpable sense of Scandinavian precision in the quality of the original work.

We had always planned to do some sort of addition to the house, and after twelve years, we finally did add a third bedroom and bath over a studio and utility area, as essentially an extension of the two-story volume. We were, however, very careful not to lose anything of the original house. The addition is pure in that sense – none of the original interior spaces have been lost or significantly altered, and on two sides of the house – including the signature living-dining space, the exterior as well is untouched. We have continued Hoover's palette and proportioning system on the exterior with one important exception – a change from the original steel casement windows to wood casement units, which we have left with a natural finish to distinguish them from the originals.

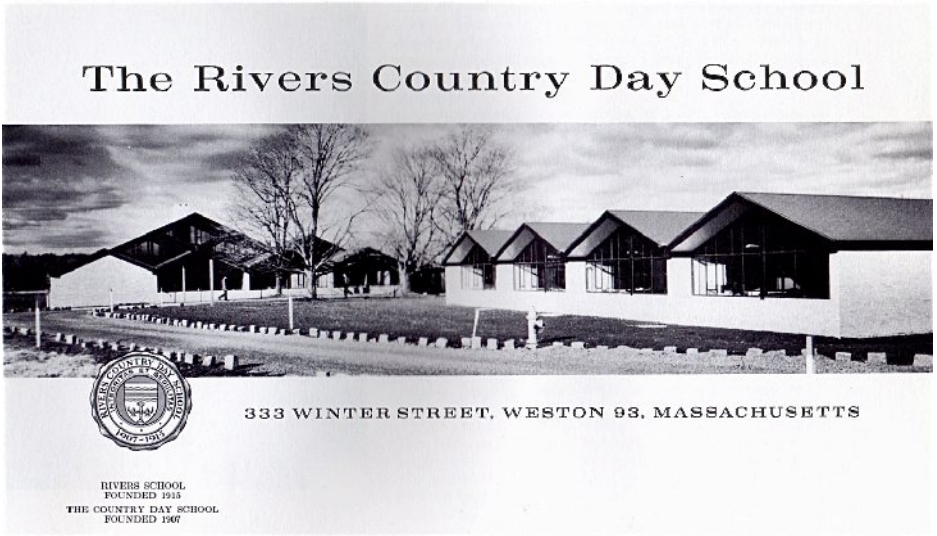
Our first reaction upon seeing the house in November of 1991 was "uplifting," and after a year of house hunting, we knew within five minutes that this was our house. In 18 years of living and raising a family in this house, it has consistently proven to be that and more.

Allan Chapman: Designing the Rivers Country Day School

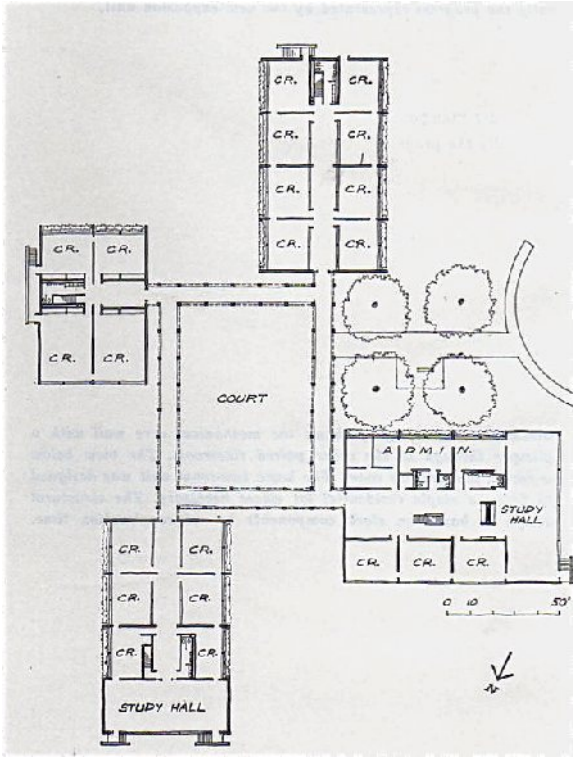
Weston resident Allan Chapman (b. 1926) received his architectural degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1954. Over the course of his long career, Chapman focused on multi-family and institutional work including The Mews and Popponesset Marketplace in New Seabury on Cape Cod, Glover Landing in Marblehead, and school buildings in Dover, Boston, Vermont, and New Jersey. He designed his own house at 15 Myles Standish Road and several others in Weston.

The following is Chapman's account of how, as a newly-minted architect, he and his first partner, Rem Huygens, secured the commission for classroom buildings and a gym at the new Weston campus of the Rivers Country Day School, then a school for boys located on Heath Street in Chestnut Hill:

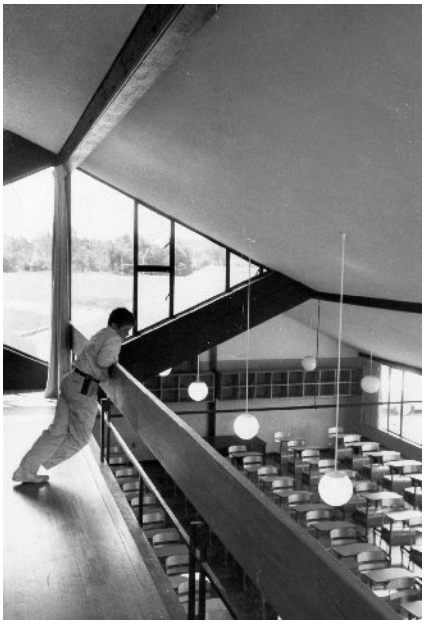
My partner at that time was Rem Huygens (1932—2008). We had built one residence on Long Island, and Rivers was our first major project. Rem was from Holland, where he had met the Bauhaus architect Marcel Breuer when Breuer was building the American Embassy there. Breuer had offered him a job in his office in New York City, where I was working at that time.

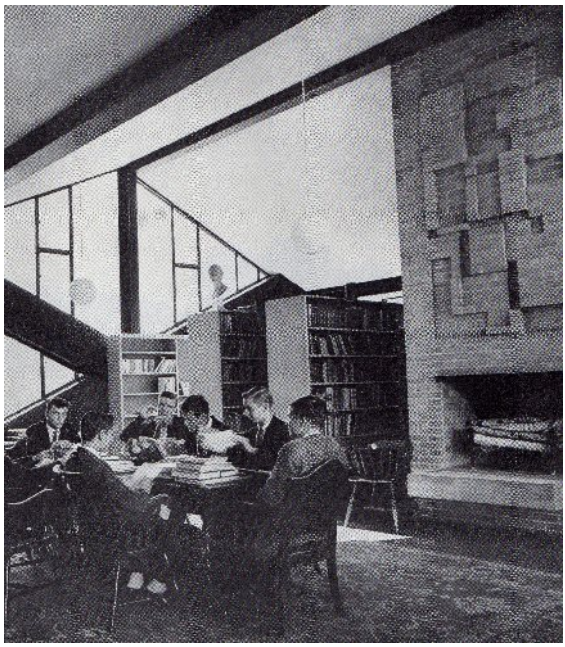


Above: This early photograph of the new Rivers classroom buildings appeared a 1960s school brochure. Constructed of rough, buff-colored brick with gray asphalt shingled roofs, the buildings were designed to fit casually into the unspoiled rural site. The repetitive pattern of pitched roofs suggested a group of informal farm buildings. (Courtesy of Allan Chapman)



Left: Site plan for the Rivers Country Day School, designed by Huygens and Chapman and built in the early 1960s.The plan shows the four separate buildings around a central courtyard bordered by a walkway canopy. School officials requested the open plan, which provided students with healthy air as they walked between classes. (Courtesy of Allan Chapman)

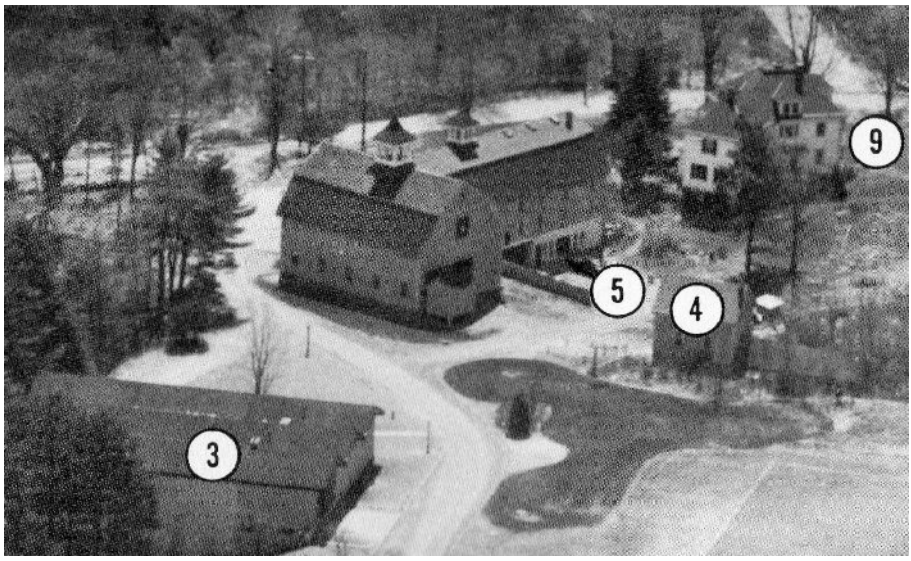




Rivers School interiors. In the lower photo, the brick mural above the fireplace in the Rivers School library was designed by his wife, artist Amy Chapman, who also designed wall murals in schools throughout New England. This photograph appeared in an article entitled "Four Buildings on an Open Court," which appeared in a 1960s issue of Architectural Forum. *(Courtesy of Allan Chapman)*

Marcel Breuer had come to the US to teach at Harvard with Walter Gropius (Director of the Bauhaus in Germany.) I had worked in the office of Gropius while I was at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. I met my wife, Amy, at Gropius's office, where she designed murals and selected colors for the firm. Amy had studied at Yale with another of the Bauhaus faculty, Josef Albers. Amy designed the three-dimensional wall mural over the fireplace at Rivers.

Rem met Ethel Blackwell, wife of the Rivers headmaster, George Blackwell, on the boat coming to the US. The school had just purchased the Weston property and the Blackwells lived in the old farmhouse on the site. The school itself was still in Newton. I suggested to Rem that we send some ideas for a new school to the Blackwells in the unlikely chance that they would select a couple of young architects, particularly from NYC. I was right. The Blackwells were encouraging, but the trustees were difficult. I believe they would have preferred a more traditional style. Without being officially hired, we designed five buildings: four detached classroom buildings (about fifteen classrooms, a large study hall, offices, and a



Above: This detail from a 1960s aerial photo of the Rivers School campus shows the original Loker farmhouse, now Rivers Music School, and the Loker barn, which was later destroyed by fire. (Courtesy of Allan Chapman)

library) along with a separate gymnasium. They liked our designs and this presented another problem. What would be the effect of NY architects on fund raising? We agreed to move to Boston. Rem built a house in Wayland and I built in Weston. I had three children (all now architects) and the reputation of the Weston schools influenced our decision.

The old barn on the Rivers property was yellow at that time. It later burned down. We thought a brick building would not be right in what was then an open meadow. The concept of detached buildings, connected by an open covered walk, had been a tradition when the school was in Chestnut Hill. It was then a boy's school, and the theory was that a little cold would be healthy. The two classroom buildings housing the offices and library, along with the gym, were built first and dedicated in 1960. Two other classroom buildings were constructed some years later. The cost worked out to $18.50 per square foot. We also designed a music building that was never built."

Above: The New England character of the Chapman's 1965 house at 15 Myles Standish Road is evident in this early photograph. The meadow in front was later replaced with more traditional landscape materials. The Chapman House was published in Better Homes and Gardens *(Courtesy of Allan Chapman)*

Weston Houses by Allan Chapman

*Allan and Amy Chapman House, 15 Myles Standish Road (1965)
The Chapmans were in their 30s and had three children when they built the house in the Kings Grant neighborhood of Weston. The house was set back for privacy and oriented to the south to maximize light. The front courtyard is surrounded on three sides by the house, creating a secluded patio area. Double glass doors and windows open this space up to the house. The dramatic two-story living room, with its large brick fireplace, separates the upstairs into two zones. What was originally planned as a garage became a artist's studio for Amy. The exterior walls and roof are covered with wood shingles, giving the house a quintessential New England look despite the contemporary design. Allan Chapman designed some of the furniture. According to Chapman, the neighbors referred to the house as "the chicken coop."

*David Nassif House, 55 Scotch Pine Road (1973)

*Patricio and Rebecca Vives House, 512 Glen Road (1988)
While technically a remodeling, the original house was torn down except for the chimney. The white stucco house has an octagonal stair tower.

Weston Houses of Imagination: The 1967 DeCordova Museum Tour

On May 20, 1967, the Associate Council of the DeCordova Museum held a Weston House Tour to benefit the museum. Seven modern-style houses were open to the public. Five were new construction and two were remodeled from earlier structures. The following descriptions are from the newspaper article "Weston Homes of Imagination on DeCordova Tour Schedule," in the Town Crier *of May 11, 1967. Houses still standing in February 2010 are marked with an asterisk (*)*

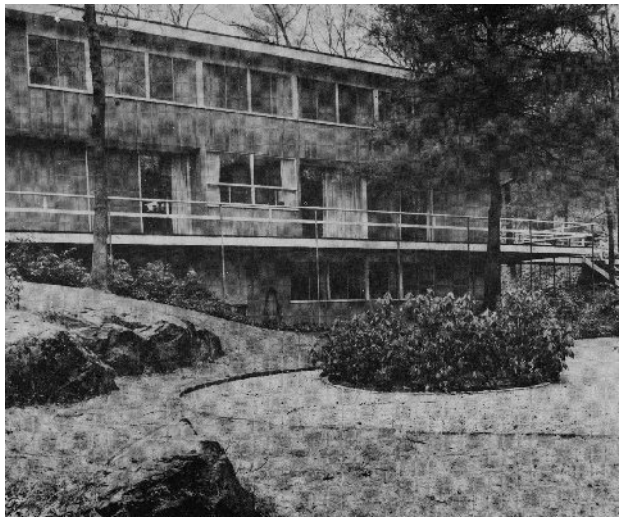
*1. Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth J. Germeshausen, 240 Highland Street (1959-60)
Architect: Henry Hoover; Landscape: Will Curtis, Garden in the Woods. (See also pages 20-22)

2. Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel S. Balkin, 44 Spruce Hill Road (1956)
Original house: Techbuilt, Carl Koch, 1956; Architect for addition: Haywood Rowe

> "Lack of space for a Goeblin tapestry caused Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel S. Balkin. . . to expand their Techbuilt house, and almost all the existing rooms were enlarged, and an addition put on the rear of the house. There is ample room now to display the wide variety of handiwork which the Balkins collect on their shopping trips all over the world. Mr. Balkin is owner of Décor International, Boston, and goes on buying trips twice a year. A skylighted sunken garden room gives an alfresco feeling even during a snow storm, and the high ceiling living room opens onto an enclosed porch for additional guest and family use." (See also *Weston Historical Society Bulletin*, Fall 2009, p. 20-29)

*3. Mr. and Mrs. Gene Strimling, 63 Westcliff Road (1966)
Architect: Maurice Smith.

> "A rock formation on the property . . . determined the width of their home on Westcliff Rd. Architect Maurice Smith designed the house to take advantage of the rock as a foundation, and the portion that is above ground serves as a background for natural plantings. Each room was designed to have a southern exposure, and the placement of windows at various levels of the multi-level house gives each room several views; the feeling of being in a "tree house" is increased by the decks which open off all bedrooms and most living areas."



Left: The Erich Reissner House at 15 Dogwood Road, since demolished. (Courtesy DeCordova Museum)

4. Mr. and Mrs. Erich Reissner, 15 Dogwood Road, (1956-57) [originally built for Dr. and Mrs. Charles Child III]. Architect: Henry Hoover (Demolished)

"This three-story redwood contemporary home . . .was designed and sited to take full advantage of its setting amidst beautiful small scale views in all directions. The middle floor with large living room and family dining room-kitchen is surrounded by a deck which becomes a bridge on one side of the house. The modern woodland garden designed for interest and low maintenance throughout the year received the 1964 Burrage Porch Prize of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society."

*5. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Scott, 119 Orchard Ave
Contemporary remodeling of a late 19th century farm outbuilding. Architect Earl Harvey.

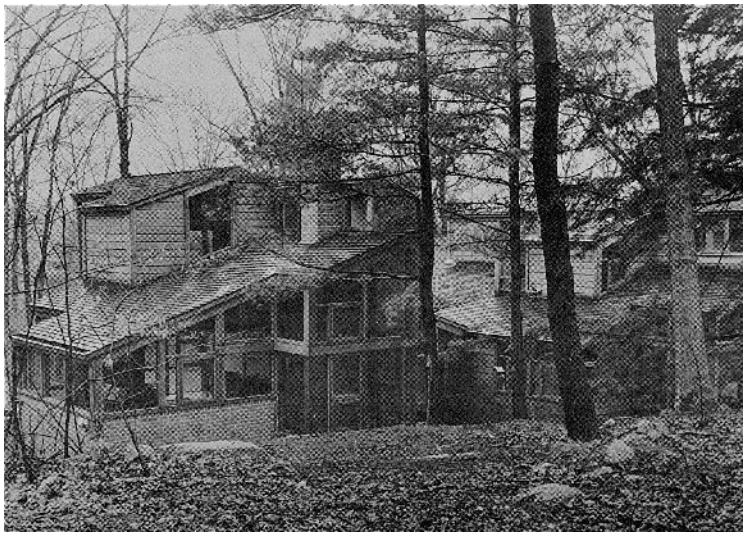
*6. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. Hardenbergh, 12 Robin Rd
Contemporary remodeling of a 1930s Colonial. Architect Thomas E. Hardenbergh

*7. Mr. and Mrs. Allan Chapman 15 Myles Standish Road (1965)
Architect: Allan Chapman,

"Built with conventional New England materials and constructions, this house was planned by the architect-owner for a family of five with the added requirements of a studio and separate office. The house is arranged to form a courtyard which faces the sun, catches the summer breeze, and also provides a sheltered entrance on an open site. The rooms all have large windows, and each area of the house—living, kitchen, sleeping—is a separate unite connected to the others. Some of these units are two stories high and add further dimension to the various rectangular areas of the house."

Major References:

1) "Weston Homes of Imagination on Decordova Tour Schedule," *Town Crier,* May 11, 1967.
2) "Weston Word: Contemporary," by Phyllis Coons, *Boston Globe*, May 1967 (exact date unknown).
3) Tour materials prepared for Weston House Tour, Saturday, May 20, 1967, sponsored by the DeCordova Museum.

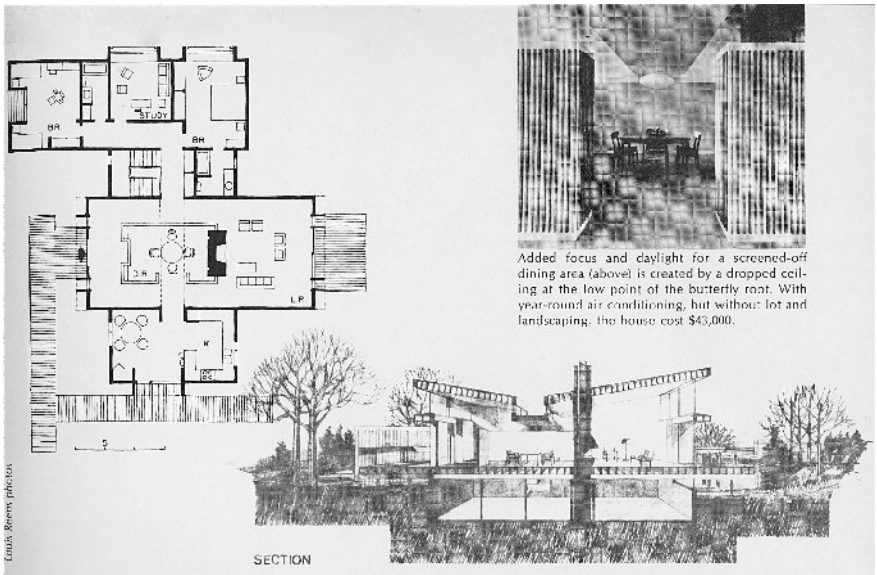


The Gene Strimling House, 63 Westcliff Road, designed by Maurice Smith and included in the 1967 DeCordova Tour. (Courtesy DeCordova Museum)

Earl Flansburgh: Modernist and Lincoln Neighbor

Architect Earl R. Flansburgh (1931 – 2009) lived just over the Weston line in Lincoln, where his award-winning house on Old Colony Road is built around an interior garden courtyard. Flansburg grew up in Ithaca, New York, and studied architecture at Cornell, graduating in 1954. After earning a master's degree in architecture at M.I.T and studying in England on a Fulbright scholarship, he established his own practice, Earl R. Flansburgh & Associates, in Cambridge in 1963. His buildings won more than 80 regional and national design awards; and in 1999, Flansburgh received the Boston Society of Architects lifetime achievement award.

Flansburgh specialized in educational facilities and believed firmly in modernism. His wife, Polly, remembers him sometimes telling clients "You can have any color as long as it's white." In addition to his schools and other work, Flansburgh made a point of designing a private house every year or two. He would do these by himself, without the help of staff, and picked clients and sites that he found intriguing.



Above: Floor plan and section of the Kurt Fuchs House, 460 Conant Road (From Record Houses of 1968) *Below: 2010 photo of the Fuchs House by Pam Fox.*

Weston Buildings by Earl Flansburgh

*Kurt Fuchs House, 460 Conant Road (1966)
Fuchs was a contractor and built many of Flansburgh's homes, including this one. It was tailored to the site, with a living room overlooking woods, low hills, and Valley Pond in the distance. The house has a distinctive "butterfly roof." Large well-placed windows are edged in white and stand out strongly against the stained, rough-sawn pine exterior. These windows, along with a glass clerestory, bring in an abundance of light. Later owners changed the location of the entrance and rearranged the kitchen and breakfast room spaces.

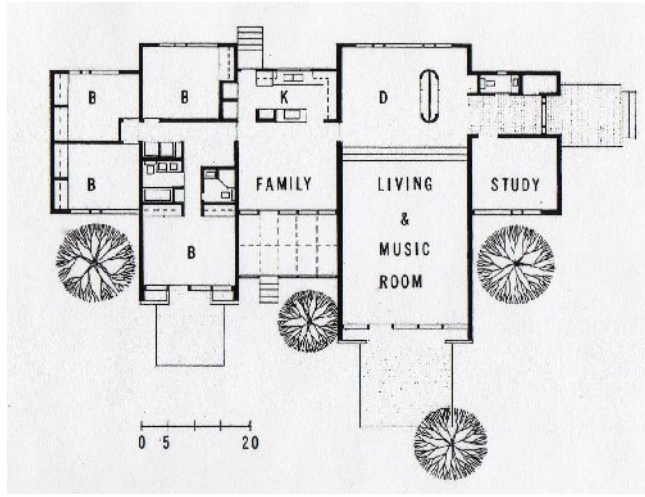
*Classroom Addition and Library, Weston High School (1966-67)

Arthur and Jean Lee House, 10 Cart Path (1974) This house has been described as "a pavilion gently hovering in an Arcadian wilderness landscape." (Demolished 1999)

*Harry C. and Dawn Gatos House, 20 Indian Hill Road (1964)
The Gatos House was one of the *Record Houses of 1965* and was also published in *House and Garden* (July 1966) in an article entitled "Planned for Music." Professor Gatos was an M.I.T. scientist and keen amateur musician. He wanted a music room that would accommodate groups for informal concert evenings. The house had a living-dining-music room with superb acoustics, the result of collaboration between the architect and a sound engineer. The site was well-wooded and overlooked a pond. Exterior walls were rough pine siding in a ship-lap pattern. The house has been substantially altered on the exterior.

Major References:

1) Campbell, Robert, "Earl Flansburgh; architect designed education facilities," *Boston Globe,* February 18, 2009 (obituary).
2) "Fuchs House," *Record Houses of 1968, Architectural Record,* May 1968.
3)"Planned for Music" *House and Garden,* July 1966.
4) "Music Room is Dominant Feature of House," *Record Houses of 1965*, *Architectural Record,* May 1965.



Harry C. Gatos House, 20 Indian Hill Road (From Record Houses of 1965*)*

Right and next page: Berman House at 484 Conant Road, designed by Leland Cott. (From Record Houses of 1977)

Modernism After 1970

This issue of the Bulletin was supposed to end in 1970, but one additional house has been included. The Berman house was featured on the cover of The Architectural Record *in the special May issue, Record Houses of 1977. The editor would like to thank Harvey Berman for his help with this article.*

*Carol and Harvey Berman House, 484 Conant Road (1975)
Architect: Leland Cott, Gelardin Bruner Cott Inc.

Carol and Harvey Berman were familiar with Weston. A few years after they returned to Newton, Massachusetts from Iowa, the couple hired an architect and began to look for land on which to build a contemporary house. They heard about a property in the north part of Weston on the Lincoln line that overlooked Valley Pond and, with the advice of their architect, they bought it.

The Bermans had chosen a young architect, Leland Cott, because he was an excellent communicator and attuned to their space and open plan requirements. Cott was also sympathetic to their interest in using industrial materials in a modernist style, which was not a common architectural design choice in Weston.

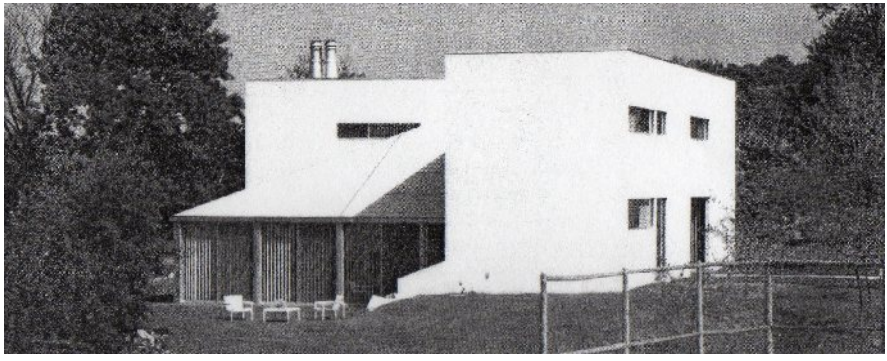
The house presents itself to the street as a two storied rectangular box, similar to the Gropius house in Lincoln, with narrow horizontal windows and an entrance set into the face of the building. The fenestration is basically closed off on the street side but the house opens up at the rear with a glass-walled living room

overlooking Valley Pond. The 30'x 30' step down living room is two stories high at its peak, with a folded shed roof made of translucent material supported at the perimeter by large aluminum box beams. As a result, the house enjoys an incredible amount of light and openness.

In addition to the living room, the first floor, which contains 2300 square feet, has a kitchen, dining room, library, large bedroom, full bath, and laundry room. The floors are covered in Pennsylvania slate squares. The 1400 square foot second floor contains bedrooms, full bath rooms, and a painting studio. The construction costs for the original house were typical of tract housing costs in 1975.

In 2000, with exception of the slate floor, every surface of the houses interior was upgraded, adding stainless steel and glass cabinetry, higher grade finishes, fixtures and materials and replacing every piece of furniture except for a lacquered Parson's dining room table and Mies van der Rohe cantilever dining room chairs. The new furniture pieces are modern classics designed by Rennie Makintosh, LeCorbusier and others.

"Just as we did before the renovation," Harvey Berman said, "we love living here. Even after 35 years we regularly experience something new and exciting about this living space. We believe we are very fortunate."



With Special Thanks

To Warren Flint for his donation of a 1913 auction poster for the Fiske Farm on North Avenue. This large poster advertises the sale of scores of items, as the Fiske family ownership of this large north side farm came to an end.

To Maxine Breen for her donation of a Foote's Ginger Ale label and also a collection of glass bottles found behind her house at 266 North Avenue. The Footes

made and sold ginger ale, root beer, and other soft drinks at their barn and filling station, located on the present Weston Market site on North Avenue.

To George Bates for his donation of glass bottles found in the area of the Melone Homestead at 27 Crescent Street.

To S. Damon Kletzien for sending eight digital scans of photographs including the Hobbs-Hagar House at 88 North Avenue, the old Hagar House on Merriam Street (no longer extant), and members of the prominent Hagar family of Weston.

To Hannah Burling for her donation of papers belonging to Dr. Benjamin James, Weston's early 19th century town doctor, including his 1809 Massachusetts medical license and a small notebook containing letters of recommendation to help the young doctor get established in Weston.

To Beverly Hastings Shephard for a typed manuscript history of the Women's Community League, including a photograph of the "Willow Tea Room" at 494 Boston Post Road.

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