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**Oral history interview with Lawrence Anderson,
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Transcript

Interview

Interview with Lawrence Anderson
Conducted by R. Brown
January 30, 1992

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Lawrence Anderson on January 30, 1992. The interview was conducted by R. Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

R. BROWN: Your parents had come from Denmark --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes --

R. BROWN: Both of them. What was their social class, let's say, when they arrived?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I would say they were almost peasant class, certainly agricultural primarily, small town. At that time, in the late 19th century, Denmark was pretty much a rural country except for one big city. And when my father's father died rather young, my father who was the eldest in the family knew that he had to find some way to support his mother and three siblings, and he chose to come to this country where he got a job in Geneva, Minnesota. I don't know by what mechanism, but I'm sure there were roots at that time.

R. BROWN: Did he ever talk to you about why a young man -- what was he, about 14? -- would come to America. Was it so common that it was no big deal?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He never discussed it with me, but I think it was pretty common because there were many other Scandinavians settling in that part of the States at that time. They faced hardships at home: growing population and scarce resources, and some jumped at the chance -- many of them -- to come here and start a new --

R. BROWN: Geneva was a very small place, you said, about 200 people -

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: About 200 people, and as I mentioned it had been founded by people who had come from Geneva, New York, who were I think Anglo-Saxons for the most part. When they came I don't know -- perhaps before the Civil War. In any event they seem to have been small-towns people, but even at that time they must have had hardly any other purpose than to service the farmers in the neighborhood of the towns which at that time out there were perhaps ten or fifteen miles apart or less. Most, say all of the tillable land had been cleared and used for some time.

R. BROWN: Would there be a few businesses typically?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, like a grocery and a drug store and a bank and maybe a hardware store and a two-room school. And that would be the basis.

R. BROWN: Would that school carry one through high school or would you have to go away for that?

[LAWRENCE ANDERSON answer of "yes" follows a knocking sound and, since it's an ambiguous answer to the question, may represent an interruption of the interview.]

R. BROWN: Your mother's family had come to Minnesota from Denmark somewhat earlier than your father's, is that right?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. They must have come about '75, because my mother was little more than an infant but she was among the youngest of a big family. They settled in Clark's Grove which was a town about seven miles south of Geneva, and of a different ethnic composition. They were mostly from the same part of Jutland and were all Baptists. They rallied around the new church there, which they made much of, and it was sort of the center of that town which otherwise, I suppose, was like other small towns. But Geneva was more mixed immigrants. We had Germans, Scots, Irish.

R. BROWN: You said your mother was a Baptist. Was that rather strict regulations?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, it was. We had to go to church in Clark's Grove. My father sort of gave up his Lutheran inheritance -- I guess except for his mother who when she still went to church went to the Lutheran church in Geneva, which was a tiny one -- and from then on we went to the Baptist church. I visited that a few years ago when I was there, went over the details of the baptismal font and stuff. It was interesting.

R. BROWN: You and your siblings were baptized there?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. I was able to look up in the book of records when that happened. But it was too narrowly sectarian to suit me so that as part of my growing up and, I guess, rejection of the family environment I rejected that aspect as well.

R. BROWN: By going into another religion?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, just by drifting away. Like with so many other things, when we became city dwellers, and [I was] going to university, whole new areas opened up, so that we tended to turn our backs on where our people had come from.

R. BROWN: Now your parents were married about 1899?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Or 1900, I'm not sure.

R. BROWN: Your father by then had acquired a 40-acre farm?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. That's where we lived until I was eleven.

R. BROWN: What did he carry out on that farm? Did he have plans for expanding?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was a mixed-subsistence farming type of thing where we had cows and took the milk to market. We had pigs and slaughtered them ourselves. We had chickens. Occasional guinea hens. (Question to R. BROWN: Do you know when that thing [recording device] is working?) So it was pasture land, crops, corn and hay, some wheat. A little of everything.

R. BROWN: Would that have been enough for your father to have turned a profit?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He must have made some savings because he began to buy property in and around the town. He found a twenty-acre parcel on the outskirts of Geneva where his mother

could be settled and where we moved to in 1917 to live with her, and let the farm be run by somebody else.

R. BROWN: So they retained the farm, but they retired effectively?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, although they still grew crops on the twenty acres, mostly corn as I recall. And my father opened up a gravel pit and made concrete blocks with another man as a sideline.

R. BROWN: There was considerable demand for them as building material?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, there wasn't any local stone or brick available, so blocks were the obvious economical material to use.

R. BROWN: Did you happen to work in that at all when you were a young man?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Occasionally, yes. It was a rather boring thing. We mixed the mixtures by hand and took careful control over the wetness especially. Then there was a collapsible iron mold where you could mold a few blocks at a time, tamp the mixture in, keep it moist, and finally remove the cast or mold --

R. BROWN: It was a rather slow procedure --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Slow procedure. And then you had to rack them up outdoors, sprinkle them periodically, and let them cure. Kind of a boring business, but it may have brought some cash. My father became a director of the local bank, and he used to pore over those figures, adding them up. I remember that was before any mechanization of these processes.

R. BROWN: So you would say he was probably a very prudent man?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He must have been prudent.

R. BROWN: Would he talk to you about these things?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, no. I guess I was too young to be concerned. He wasn't very talkative about any of his pursuits.

R. BROWN: How about your mother?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, she had been a school teacher. She was very interested in our education. I was lucky enough to have a sister a year and a half older than me who went to school before I did and of course had brought home her new-found knowledge and passed it on to me, so that I was reading stuff before I started school, and trying things out on the piano, and so on. So I had a kind of a head start -- what they call a head start now -- owing to that circumstance.

R. BROWN: Music was a part of the family's life too?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: A little bit, but not intensively at all until I got to be a student at the university when it was suddenly decided that I ought to learn to play the violin. So I had a teacher named Engebretsen who was a violinist in the Minneapolis symphony, and I took some lessons. I guess I must have been maybe second year in university at that time, that is seventeen years old. After about a year of this -- I had other pursuits, of course, and couldn't spend a lot of time -- he

roped me into being an assistant to him in his teaching, class teaching. He had what he called an international studio in St. Paul, and there I took over teaching the class of maybe fifteen or twenty children from the ages of four to maybe twelve. That was really excruciating, because you can imagine trying to keep twenty of them in tune -- [laughs] you can spend all your time just doing that. Not only that, but I had a long streetcar ride over and back. I quit it after a while. The university was taking up more of my time, so I just dropped it. And I didn't do anything more with it [i.e., violin] until perhaps 1950 or so here in Lincoln when I met some other people who were interested in playing stringed instruments -- notably a cellist who's now dead. We did organize a quartet, and we engaged George Brown who's a cellist to come every week and coach us. That was a wonderful revival, focusing pretty much on Haydn but with explorations to others.

R. BROWN: So Mr. Engebretsen had given you a basic training --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Reasonably good.

R. BROWN: You've not forgotten him!

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yah, but of course I never had the physical dexterity to become a good player. I was relatively clumsy.

R. BROWN: Before you moved to Minneapolis, you were hired out for a time to a farmer?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Your father had arranged for that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think so, yes. That was sort of a rite of passage.

R. BROWN: Sort of toughening --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Toughening, he thought. It was a more prosperous farm with a more vigorous, younger boss, bigger and stronger horses. I think with him we did mostly hay, mowing it and harvesting it.

R. BROWN: Humph. But you never felt disposed to agriculture yourself, particularly, did you?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, I didn't enjoy that so much. It was more or less of a chore for us to do these things.

R. BROWN: You were about fourteen, then, when your family moved to Minneapolis?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Let me think. It was in 1920, so yes, that's right.

R. BROWN: Why did they move there?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They moved there because they wanted to get advanced education for all three of us. My oldest sister was, I think, already in university. The younger sister and I were lucky to get into the university high school which had an excellent program on the university campus.

R. BROWN: You'd already taken some their courses and tests, hadn't you?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I was two years ahead of my age in ranking so I got a diploma from the high school after two more years.

R. BROWN: Can you describe the high school? It was a rather select one, wasn't it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I don't know how selective it was, but it was certainly peopled primarily by children of university faculty, I think. The education department of the university of course used it for practice teaching, but there was a permanent teaching staff of high caliber, about 300 students I think, which meant --what? 60 or 70 graduating, it couldn't have been more than that, maybe less.

R. BROWN: Did you have particular interests developing while you were in high school?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I developed an interest in French language, in English, in history, and in mathematics. Those were the standard academic courses, of course. There wasn't a great deal of specialization, but what they did was good.

R. BROWN: So you fit right in, you thrived.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. I loved it.

R. BROWN: Were there other projects you undertook during those years?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I was made the editor of the year book, to my surprise, and I had to try to organize that, which was entirely new to me and not easy, but we got it done. I think that what we did in those days was look at last year's book and get advice from the teachers and, you know, put in the standard stuff.

R. BROWN: Were you quite a sociable young man?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Not at all, not at all. I was younger than the other students and unquestionably very naive and a country person, whereas the others were city-born pretty much.

R. BROWN: You mentioned that your French teacher was at that point being courted by a teacher in the architectural school, and this led to some curiosity on your part about architecture.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think it must have, although I don't remember thinking seriously about it until I went to the department and saw what they did.

R. BROWN: Well one summer in high school you worked at something that could be construed as connected, as a bricklayer's helper.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right. That was instructive because I carried bricks and mortar to a Swedish brick mason who was very experienced and very much a craftsman. We were building a church which, it turns out, had been designed by one of my future teachers.

R. BROWN: Who was that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Rhodes Robertson.

R. BROWN: Did you become interested at all in how it was designed or how it would appear eventually?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Not so much. It's funny. I guess I had a purely layman's attitude toward it, not wondering very much about how it happened to be that way.

R. BROWN: Was it well designed? I mean did it turn out to --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it was a kind of English gothic inspired building of load bearing masonry. As I recall it was at least in part faced with local stone, Mankato limestone I think, and it had all the usual eclectic gothic features. Load bearing masonry, no steel skeleton, until you got to the roof anyway.

R. BROWN: You said that your boss had worked on restoration in his native Sweden.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right. So he was very sophisticated about the craft.

R. BROWN: So you couldn't have had a better teacher of that craft.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He was a good teacher, yes.

R. BROWN: Did you enjoy that work?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes I did, although it was pretty strenuous.

R. BROWN: Okay. Then you were only sixteen when you entered the university.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. And I had kind of a tough freshman year with health problems mostly to do with my throat. But I had some very good teaching -- again in English, mathematics, and history primarily. And having had a couple of years of good high school French, I thought I would keep on with that. I could have gone into French literature or some other aspect, but I was attracted to a conversation course run by a native French visitor, Mlle Guinotte, who was a superb teacher and had us talking briskly for an hour every time in her language. I think she came from Touraine and spoke beautiful French.

R. BROWN: You had a facility for that I guess.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, it came easily to me for some reason. I enjoyed it.

R. BROWN: Your illness in your freshman year, did it cause you to have to drop out of school for a bit?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it wasn't enough to cause me to not get through all my courses ultimately. I was encouraged by my uncle who was a professor of mines --

R. BROWN: What was his name?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Peter Christianson. He was sort of our conduit to the university in a way, the only really academic member of our two families.

R. BROWN: And he gave you encouragement to keep going?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, that things would get better. And they did.

R. BROWN: Was he a figure you were close to for the rest of his life?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, quite. He and his wife -- they were childless -- they lived in a house very near the architecture department, which has since been torn down as the university expanded. I used to visit them even before we moved into Minneapolis. I remember once being so young there than when they had to leave me alone when they were going somewhere, they instructed me on

how to go to the local cafeteria-restaurant and suggested that I have a ham sandwich and apple pie, which certainly were conservative [laughs], and a glass of milk, and left me the money for it. I suppose I was maybe nine or ten at that time.

R. BROWN: Your mother had some boarders, including many who were students, is that right?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right.

R. BROWN: You said that one of them was a cousin from Sioux Falls who was interested in drawing, and with you. The two of you did some drawing.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes we did.

R. BROWN: Had you always drawn, even when you lived in Geneva?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes to some extent. I suppose as much as could be encouraged in the school. But for some reason we got to drawing portraits, he and I, of anybody who would sit for us. I still have one of him and one he made of me. One of our boarders was a girl at the university who had a younger sister -- a very much younger sister, I think -- who visited us, and I made a pastel portrait of her when she was maybe three or four years old. I mention this because the mother of those two girls was herself a painter, Lillian Elwood [?] Lee, who wanted to paint but her husband thought it was silly to do that; but he died, and she was then able at sixty or so to take up painting, and she became a regular Grandma Moses type of painter, and she's still living at the age of a hundred and I don't remember what.

R. BROWN: What is her name, by the way?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Her name is Madison. She and the younger daughter are I think respectively living and working in the same nursing home. The elder daughter, who was the student boarder with us, never married. She lives in San Francisco and is getting on in years, too.

R. BROWN: At the university itself there was no Art History department; you said there was Art Education only.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: There was Art Education.

R. BROWN: Was that anything that interested you?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, I couldn't see that it would lead to anything other than a teaching job teaching art in public schools. The kind of art they were interested in wasn't very inspiring either. So I wandered into the architecture department and was interviewed by one of the older students who was very kind to me, explaining what architects did. And sure enough in my second year of university, I enrolled there. So that although their program was a four-year undergraduate program, and it took me five years to get there, I had the benefit of a broader general education because of my having made a late decision. I never regretted the way that worked out.

R. BROWN: Were by and large your fellow students in the architecture department rather narrowly focused by comparison?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well some of them, of course, were looking at it as a way of making a living and not much else. But there was a good deal of idealism, too. You know, of course, that the profession was much smaller and more informal at that time. Easier to get into, I suppose, fewer credentials required. It was a largely unknown activity, and yet there was a good deal of ambition

among the students, too. It was a small faculty. There was the head, or chairman, who had graduated from MIT in, I think, 1896: Fred Mann who taught at a couple of other universities -- I believe Washington University in St. Louis and University of Illinois -- before founding the school in Minneapolis, I would guess around 1911.

R. BROWN: What was his specialty?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He taught history. And he had a practice, mostly houses. I did some renderings for him of those houses which were pretty much derivative of English models from the 19th century. The design faculty -- there were principally three -- the senior person was Leon Arnal who was from Marseilles and who had done the Beaux Arts with distinction. How he found his way to Minnesota I don't know. He was a bachelor in my day, and curiously the other two were also bachelors. The second in command was Roy Jones who had been educated at the University of Pennsylvania, and who was the only one among them to take part in the Association of Collegiate Schools, attending their meetings, and co-authoring with a man at Cornell a survey of architectural education which was one of the milestones on the status of teaching.

R. BROWN: Was that carried out about the time you were a student?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, I think it came later. I don't remember how much later, but you wouldn't have trouble identifying that book.

R. BROWN: What was the reason for its impact?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I think it was the sensation that there were enough schools now in various state universities and elsewhere that somebody ought to be taking a look at what was going on and evaluating it. I think it was the Carnegie Corporation who financed the study which became kind of an official guideline for a long time. It was the first thing of its kind in this country.

R. BROWN: As you said earlier, the profession generally had been rather informal --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, yes. When I was a student I did renderings for a man named Thorshov, who was Norwegian. I suppose he learned the profession in Norway and came as an immigrant. There were a number of other reasonably good firms in Minneapolis I sometimes worked for.

All of those three design teachers had jobs in offices. They were not acknowledged to be partners, but they were let's say the chief designers in their respective offices.

R. BROWN: Who was the third design teacher? You mentioned Arnal and Jones.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was Rhodes Robertson who came, I think, from Harvard. He was also a design teacher, and a good one. I became very friendly with all three of them.

R. BROWN: What was the design curriculum? A sort of careful progression?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. In the first of four years there was mostly sort of technical instruction: in perspective drawing, in shapes and shadows, in what they called...some kind of geometry, I've forgotten right now what, projections, I guess, which was the basis of how you prepare plans and sections and elevations, architectural drawing. Then in the second year you had design under Robertson, the third year under Jones, and the fourth year under Arnal. And that was it. There was also a collateral program in history, several years of that --

R. BROWN: Was this largely taught by Mann?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, entirely so. Then there was studio work. We had two studio teachers, one a watercolorist, a Native American named Elmer Young, and an English immigrant in drawing, Chatwood Burton. In the drawing class we drew mostly from casts and also from live models; in watercolor we did mostly still lifes until the weather got good enough to go outdoors. But this was a pretty serious part of the curriculum and took a lot of time; it sharpened our observation and graphic skills very markedly. Then there was Bob Jones whose ancestry was Welsh, who couldn't get along with Roy Jones although they had the same last name. Bob Jones was the teacher of construction.

R. BROWN: What would that consist of?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It would consist of examining how ordinary buildings are built -- what's a cross-section of a double hung window, for example, or about insulation, waterproofing, and so on. It wasn't analytical or technical. For that we had courses by the engineering faculty in mechanics and calculus and the strength of materials, how to design trusses, and what about foundations, and all those engineering aspects of building. Those were of course based on the earlier theoretical courses, physics and mechanics--

R. BROWN: Which you'd had earlier.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: The design teachers, then, were teaching more specifically the aesthetics of architecture, whereas the drawing and watercolor teachers were teaching just general facility and developing powers of observation?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I would say that's a decent generalization, but of course the design studios were rather academic in the pattern of the Beaux Arts tradition. The second year work was likely to be things like a pavilion in a park or a gateway or a monument, something that had no complex planning involved with it but which was meant to familiarize you with the problems of proportion, scale, details, and so on.

R. BROWN: And these were taught according to French academic precepts?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Pretty much, yes. Then of course in the third year they got more serious, and in the final year the projects were bigger but they were still pretty much limited, they didn't extend into the kinds of things architects were building very much.

R. BROWN: Was that ever a concern to you students, that what you were learning there might not be applicable?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I guess we were too naive to worry very much about it. After all, that had been going on in the Beaux Arts for many, many years. Their rationale was you chose these problems or projects not for the inherent real life situations but in order to arrive at certain abstract principles of what makes a good composition. And people were pretty sure they knew what those things were, people like Gaudet and Gromort. They made rules that were generally accepted.

R. BROWN: There was no reason to challenge them.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Not much. I believe it was when I was a student that I was introduced, probably by Arnal, to the work of Tony Garnier who had won the Grand Prix in '98 or 1900 or something like that. (I guess we can find out.) But instead of doing the usual measured drawings of

Roman buildings that scholars were supposed to be doing down there in Rome, he insisted on designing an industrial city, an abstract exercise but one which incorporated early ideas of zoning, dwelling, and public health kinds of issues as well as socialistic idealism --

R. BROWN: All of which were not within the traditional program of the Beaux Arts.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, and they were badly received by the academicians when he exhibited them.

R. BROWN: So that from him, through Arnal, you got some notion of this thinking.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yup. I don't remember under what circumstances. I think it must have been at that time that we first learned about that.

R. BROWN: Your work was juried, wasn't it? I mean professors -- the idea of the Beaux Arts jury was that it was done by professors acting as a committee. You passed in your projects. It must have been a time of great tension. You had no chance to defend the work.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. And then after the jury the drawings would be hung and they would be ranked according to their supposed excellence. And one of the members of the jury would explain the reasons for the selections.

R. BROWN: This was with the whole troop of students listening?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but of course that was limited to our university. We didn't go to any bigger juries. There was already at that time the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design in New York that had been organized by Americans who had studied in Paris and had brought back the modus operandi of the Ecole to try to apply it in American circumstances. Whereas in France there were various ateliers under the charge of various teachers, each atelier teaching beginners all the way through, and maybe one or two regional ateliers, they were all working on the same program. The professor of theory of the Ecole delivered lectures on theory, based pretty much on Gaudet and Gromort, and he wrote all the programs, so that maybe twenty ateliers would be solving the same problem on their own terms under their own teacher, all brought together in the Salle de Melpomene des Beaux Arts. There would be a big bash with representatives from all the ateliers' teachers, and they would look at several hundred projects and award medals and mentions, hors concours, or whatever. And that's what the Beaux-Arts USA -- the BAID, so-called -- tried and did organize in New York. Many schools belonged to it and worked on common programs and sent the results in. I attended some of those juries in New York where they would do some of the work before dinner and then have a very convivial dinner and then go on until ten o'clock or more.

R. BROWN: That was later, after you were out of --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That was later. But we were never a part of that and yet we did conduct the juries in the same way. It wasn't actually until Bill Wurster came as Dean to MIT -- which was what, 1945? -- When he upset that system by inviting the students to explain their work in the jury.

R. BROWN: And this was one of the first times that had happened?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I believe so.

R. BROWN: Well, we can talk about that somewhat later. It created an entirely different atmosphere.... But you also apparently had no practicalities of getting a job upon your completion --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: There may have been sort of a seminar. I can't remember because I confuse it with other schools. But usually at that time in a school there would be a kind of one-day-a-week meeting with the dean who would bring in perhaps practicing architects discussing how offices worked, and how the profession was organized, and the building industry. Some of those courses probably were pretty good, but they were very peripheral to the curriculum.

R. BROWN: The core matter was sound training in principles of architectural design.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's it, yes. And fortunately people could agree on pretty much what they were. [Laughs] Unfortunately, that didn't last.

R. BROWN: Did you come through your four years having done very well?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. I think the only time I was disappointed was when I only placed second in a competition which was, in fact, the design of a church. The man whose project was considered better than mine was Lester Cameron who subsequently turned up as a teacher of English at the University of Wisconsin so [laughter] you can never tell.

R. BROWN: You left the University of Minnesota, you finished in '27?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I thought I would be popping right into an office --

R. BROWN: You did at the time, didn't you?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, mostly in summers, you know.

R. BROWN: You mentioned you did renderings for a firm in Minneapolis.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. I also spent a summer doing shop drawings for a granite quarry in northern Minnesota. That was a very good experience.

R. BROWN: In what sense was that a good experience?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, because it gave me some connection between the work of an architect and the work of a supplier because we had to study the architect's own drawings in order to itemize stone by stone what had to be supplied and make an axonometric drawing of every stone with its dimensions and any peculiarities in it, on 8.5 X 11, turning out a document which the architect had to approve, and then going into the shop where the stone would be processed for delivery. So I saw the quarrying, the sawing in blocks, and whatever had to be done in the way of --

R. BROWN: Dressing --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Dressing them up, making moldings, and so on.

R. BROWN: It sounds like a very good experience to have had.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: A very good experience I thought.

R. BROWN: You mentioned when you worked for one firm in Minneapolis you observed that the architects' dealings with the subcontractors were very, very time-consuming.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and it seemed like very petty business. I guess the office manager

taking a lot of responsibility for sort of job management in the field must have been the case.

R. BROWN: Did your experience with the quarry give you a considerably clearer picture of how the two sides had to work together?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Well, as I said, I was going to go into an office, and was looking forward to it. [Then] Professor Mann approached me and said he had had word of a very attractive teaching position at the University of Virginia, and I ought to consider it. The school at Charlottesville was not very old at that time. I think it had been started by Kimball, Fiske Kimball -- Fiske Sidney Kimball, because we used to call him Fiske Kidney Simball [laughter] -- and continued by Joseph Hudnut who later came to Harvard, as you know; and by Lawrence Kocher, who had been a journalist architect, or journalist. And then in 1927 it got a new director, Edmund Campbell who I think had been trained at the Armour Institute which became IIT, in Chicago, and had perhaps taught there, and then had been director of the Beaux Arts Institute in New York for a time. He was an entirely different kind of director than they had previously had. The others had been scholarly types. He was a rough and ready Scotsman, a watercolorist, not a scholar, didn't practice much. When I arrived there I found that there was a two-year, or [rather] three-year, History of Art course that was in the catalog and had to be taught. Campbell refused to touch it, so I taught the first year which was Ancient history and the third year, which came in alternative years with the second year; and the third year was Renaissance.

R. BROWN: The second year was what?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: The second year was medieval and Byzantine.

R. BROWN: And this was architectural --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, architecture as well as art. I had to handle painting and sculpture, too. Since I had not really spent any scholarly time on these matters, I had to resort to books. I had a good slide collection, thank goodness, because of my predecessors there.

R. BROWN: But you'd had some preparation at Minnesota, hadn't you, on account of Mann?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: But that was purely architectural. And of course you can't very properly talk about say Greek architecture without saying something about Greek sculpture.

R. BROWN: And you did! But you said it was tough trying to stay abreast of it --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was tough! I had to read many books every week and do the best I could. There was no problem in finding factual material, thank goodness there was plenty of that, and not very much judgmental.

R. BROWN: Was the school very much like that at Minnesota?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, quite different. Less career-oriented, I would say, and there was a local culture very different from that in Minneapolis. That particular history course was open to anybody in the university, so that it wasn't only architects that I had to lecture to. There were perhaps eighty students in the classroom. That was a tough year.

R. BROWN: Students with any sort of particular interests or just general students?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, mostly just idle curiosity, I think. Many of them probably thought it

was an easy course because it was. The people who had set it up loved to talk about these matters and didn't care too much what was made of it. [laughs]

R. BROWN: Did you bring in any drawing or things like that? Did you have the students --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, not in that course, but I was teaching beginning design, and I got the students to get stepladders and measure the orders that Jefferson and others had used in designing the pavilions on the Lawn, which I think was educationally good for them because whereas I had chosen to do that as kind of a reflection of the French Grand Prix winners measuring Greek and Roman examples in situ I had to work at it second hand, but these were also historical elements that deserved to have some attention.

R. BROWN: And it did have a successful result.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I think so. I think it was a good education.

R. BROWN: Were these students who were concentrating in architecture -- what was your estimate of their quality?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They were mostly people from that region.

R. BROWN: With a rather provincial outlook?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, of course once they were in Charlottesville they were heavily conscripted into the Jefferson ideology, which outsiders sometimes have a little too much of. The buildings that were being built by the university were aping the columns and entablatures and brickwork of Jefferson. In fact you really couldn't build anything unless you could swear it was faithful to -- In fact, you know, Jefferson had his own struggles. Out on the campus you can find his attempts to do Corinthian capitals in cast iron. He eventually had to import Italian sculptors to come and carve them. He made those pristine white columns of brickbats with plaster.

R. BROWN: So that a bit of a struggle lay behind the construction, behind this pristine --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right, right.

R. BROWN: Was this a point you would make evident to your students?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Insofar as I knew anything about it, yes.

R. BROWN: Right, because that would be very detailed historical knowledge. Was the culture of the campus quite different from Minneapolis?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, Minneapolis was a pretty serious, quasi-vocational approach. Down there it was more laid back, and there was a youth culture down there that was very free and easy, based pretty much on fraternities, football, and quite a lot of drinking. But it was informal and very agreeable for a young person to be in. I roomed in a rooming house with older students who were not much younger than me, if at all, and made some friends who lasted many years.

R. BROWN: You were studying about this time by mail at the Beaux Arts Institute of Design?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right. I contributed projects there.

R. BROWN: And you did this why? Just to keep yourself being tested?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and to see if I could get somewhere in the academic world. I hadn't had any experience with the BAID previously from Minnesota. Campbell was an enthusiast, of course, for that organization, so he encouraged it. But the school was in what had been a small gymnasium, one big room with a few small ones attached; and then it had been I think a biology laboratory. Fayerweather Hall it was called. Now, of course, they've got a big new modern building and much bigger clientele. I was able to live as a bachelor on the range, having a room with a fireplace to myself.

R. BROWN: Were you in danger of adopting the genteel life style had you remained?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I could have continued without being unhappy. I suppose ultimately I would have rebelled and tried to go somewhere else. Then Campbell, during my second year there, encouraged me to apply to graduate school, and at that time in his opinion the two schools were Harvard and MIT each of which had a distinguished French principal critic. What was the name of the Harvard one?

R. BROWN: So you got to know the French critic at Harvard who knew Arnal.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. And also, of course, my own critic was Carlu.

R. BROWN: So you chose MIT over --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I chose MIT.

R. BROWN: What was the deciding factor?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think it was the persuasiveness of Campbell who steered me in that direction. The dean at MIT at that time was a man named William Emerson, who was a really splendid figure of a person, and according to Campbell the balance should go towards MIT, so that's where I went. And as a graduate student I was only there for one year. That's all it took to become a Master in those days.

R. BROWN: Maybe you can describe what was required to become a Master in Architecture.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, we had some general lectures. There were some very good lectures on European civilization and art. But we were still in Boston at Copley Square, or near it, in the original MIT building whereas the rest of the Institute had moved to Cambridge in 1916. I came in '27. [29 -- Ed.] In the interval the School of Architecture had developed into a rather independent enterprise more closely tied up with the practicing architects of Boston. Most of the offices at that time -- or many of them -- were in the Back Bay area. It was hard for students to get over to take courses on the Cambridge campus. Transportation wasn't direct, and still isn't.

At that time the Institute didn't have as extensive requirements in general education as it does today, and the Architecture Department pretty much determined its own fate. We would borrow somebody from the Physics Department to come over and teach the students what they called "general science," and that was, with all due respect, probably some elderly member who had gone past his usefulness in the Physics Department. [laughter]

R. BROWN: They were glad to send him across the river.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yeah, they were glad to have him involved in that. So we were hardly a part of MIT, really. We had our own lecturers in history and art --

R. BROWN: Do you recall who some of those were?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. [Thinking] Well, the names, I will remember them in a moment.

R. BROWN: But they were well known figures?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They were good lecturers. They were architects who had special interests. But mostly of course, especially in the graduate school, everything was focused on the studio, and the studio was more like an en loge Beaux-Arts scene. The French studios, as I came to know them a little later, were big sort of mixed-up places where people shouted and sang and played trumpets and stuff. But when you had to go up for a sketch problem into the bowels of the institute, or the academy, you were in a curtained-off loge, and you had a wood partition between the facing loge, and a hole there with an electric light in it lighting both of them; and you had about an hour, or twelve hours, or twenty-four hours, or whatever it would be to do your own work. Somehow at MIT under Carlu we had a similar system, that is we had pipe things which allowed us to pull curtains around our work place. And there was not a spirit of discussing your work with the other students very much, because it was deemed a competitive thing.

R. BROWN: That is when you were into your special projects.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, because it's a graduate school at MIT.

R. BROWN: And the graduate level was generally doing in-depth projects?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Fairly big projects, yes. We did an office building, I remember, and other fairly big buildings. Then the competition for the Paris Prize came up as it did annually, and under that system anybody who was eligible -- that is, who was unmarried and below 27 -- would be able to take a first twelve-hour sketch, which was not a planning project. It was a monument. And out of that would be selected maybe twenty or so nationally by the New York jury.

R. BROWN: This was all the Beaux-Arts School of Design?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, yes. And this was extra-curricular as far as MIT was concerned, that is it wasn't part of our regular diet of course work. Then the next exercise would be twenty-four hours, a planning project. It was judged almost entirely on the plan, and that would be a Beaux-Arts kind of composition of some eleemosynary institution or other, agency, or whatever, on a big piece of land. You've seen those, I'm sure.

R. BROWN: In the course of these were you to have looked at all at the society cultural history, or was it all done more or less in the abstract?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, more or less in the abstract --

R. BROWN: For some utopia.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yup. Big projects might be something like a summer residence for a mayor of a big city on an island. You could let your imagination run wild and make a palace, do you see? With boat landings and the works.

R. BROWN: So they were somewhat fun to do, were they?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh yes, they often were quite fun.

R. BROWN: How would you squeeze these in among the work you were doing for MIT?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, the twelve-hour sketch was done at MIT. The twenty-four hour sketch was done -- I think it was done...well, I'm not so sure. It may have been done only in New York, but I think it was also locally supervised, probably at one place for Harvard, MIT, and the Boston Architectural Center. Anyway, the result of all this commotion was that about five candidates would be designated as finalists who would then be given a more ambitious program.

R. BROWN: You were one of them?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I was one of those.

R. BROWN: This was about 1929, 1930?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. I guess it began about January of '30. I studied this project. I was the only -- no, there were two of us from MIT. I guess I was -- yes, I had criticism from Carlu on it. But then to prepare the final drawings, they had to be done in New York, en loge so-called, that is again you were in a curtained-off cubicle or enclosure, and you could talk to your competitors, go to lunch with them, but you weren't supposed to know what they were doing. And that took quite a long time because the details of the presentation were considered very important.

R. BROWN: Was the program rather elaborate?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it was elaborate but it was conventional. You know, there would be one big central room, an auditorium probably, and then a whole bunch of repeating things -- might be offices, might be laboratories, might be workshops depending on the nature. There might be a library, there might be conference rooms, offices, administration -- anything you can think of. But you also had to invent the environment for it and the landscaping, the forecourt and how you handled the gates, getting in with vehicles, what the relation with the streets was; but they didn't tell you -- the only thing they said about the site was that it was of certain dimensions, rectangular, flat, facing such and such a street. [laughs] The place had never existed.

R. BROWN: Was this expected to be carried to the rendering level? Very, very finished?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh yes. I think we were using mostly pastel in those days, with very little color. Anyway, it transpired that when I was doing those final drawings of course I was no longer in Cambridge, and I lost touch with what the other students were doing. One of my fellow students, George Nakashima who subsequently became a famous woodworker, did come and help me in New York for a little while -- I forget on what. But other than that I was all by myself. The things became due and became judged in I guess May or June, simultaneously with the academic year closing. It transpired that I was the winner, and they of course gave me credit and the degree at MIT. I had one shortcoming. I had to show skill in modeling, which I never had. Skill in modeling meant, actually, sculpture. It wasn't making architectural models; that was completely unknown in those days. So during the summer I took a photograph of some sculpture by Cellini, I think, and made a bas relief based on that. That qualified me.

R. BROWN: Humph! You'd satisfied the MIT requirements by getting this prize.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: I thought for a moment you were suggesting that there were certain things you'd skipped or didn't have to take at MIT because of your involvement.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I'm not sure whether that's the case or not. I probably didn't participate much in the final project work. Couldn't have. But whether there were other courses that I was involved with and forgiven for I don't remember.

R. BROWN: Then the conservative French system and its goals were held up by the leading architectural schools in this country as well?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Pretty much. Harvard, Cornell, Yale, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and some of the other western schools were all part of the Beaux Arts system for quite a long time.

R. BROWN: Well maybe I should get back to asking you, you went along with all this as a student in those days. What about Professor Carlu? Was he quite an influence and effect on you?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Perhaps you could say something about him.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He was the brother of a well-known poster artist in Paris, Jean Carlu, who was more famous. But Jacques had won the Grand Prix and had made some stunning renderings of interpretations of Roman temples with brilliant colors rendered in tempera. He was a strange guy in many ways. He spent nine years in this country. His success in Paris as a student had been, I suppose, somewhat disrupted by the war. He must have come in the early '20s to MIT, '23 or '24. I guess -- I don't know why -- it was part of the American schools' policies then that if you wanted to be anywhere you had to have a senior French critic who had done well in the Beaux Arts. They were recruiting these people over there. Emerson may have recruited Carlu. I suppose he did. Emerson was a man of wealth, especially when he married a woman of greater wealth. He had been practicing in New York. He was in the war more or less as a conscientious objector. He drove a Red Cross ambulance. He was a Francophile to the teeth. I don't think he'd ever studied at the Ecole himself, but of course he had many friends who had, and he certainly was responsible for getting Carlu to MIT.

Now Carlu did a certain amount of practice when he was here. He had a wife who was known as a muralist, and he did mostly commercial interiors. One of his clients was the Eaton store in Montreal -

R. BROWN: A department store there?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and elsewhere in Canada. And I worked on some of those. He had a big office in MIT, and he did it there, which would be contrary to modern standards of conflict of interest. He had a senior teaching critic, a very strange bachelor named William Cash, who also worked in that office along with me, and we did drawings of those interiors as I recall. So I suppose I was kind of a favorite student of his.

R. BROWN: What was his method of teaching?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It's hard to describe. [Pause] It's very hard to describe. I don't know quite how to go about it.

R. BROWN: Would he critique? Sort of come around?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, yes, and he'd discuss and work over what you were doing, but of course we weren't concerned with the issues that concern architects today. In an office building, for example, which had retail on the first floor, the first floor plan is very important -- were we to show

what the occupancy of those retail things was? The answer was no, they remained white on the paper whereas the circulation and the lobbies and the elevator access would be elaborately worked out in what we called mosaic.

R. BROWN: Which meant what?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, to the extent that there would be patterns in the floor based on old stone tile precedents. And part of the rendering of plans of course was their elaboration with things of that sort rather than with elements of occupancy like desks and chairs. In facades he was a minimalist in the sense that he wanted to have all of the pomposity of classical architecture without the details of workmanship, so everything was very clean and abstract -- no historical details at all, but no real modernism either in the sense of what came to be known as modernism. He was helpful, but in the long run I don't think he had a very great influence on me. He went back to Paris -- I guess Paris became more prosperous -- and he had to cash in on the obligations that the establishment there owed him for having been a Grand Prix winner, and he got to be the architect for the new Trocadero which is a good illustration of the kind of architecture that he was doing. When I was in Paris with him as a scholar in the Ecole, I worked with him for a time on the competition for the Place Maillot, but otherwise I didn't see a great deal of him over there.

R. BROWN: And then the dean William Emerson was a wealthy man. Was he something of an introduction to Boston?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, yes. He had a house on Brattle Street in Cambridge. It has a name, it's a famous house, and I was there for dinner once or twice. I remember, I think, once when I was all alone after having been designated the prize winner. They were very nice. He had a great collection of William Blake drawings, one of his enthusiasms. His wife was older, but she was very hospitable. He helped out from his personal funds any shortcomings in the way of scholarships that people really needed. Many people, I think, thought him a stuffed shirt -- stuffy, which in a sense he was, but he was a product of that environment although he had been a New Yorker. He couldn't have been any more like The Proper Bostonian you imagine. There are books about him and by him. He certainly was a great leader. He had another predecessor, a man named Chandler, who had also been a distinguished head of the school. The school had been founded by a man who went to Columbia later, William Ware. And that was it.

R. BROWN: They had some special lecturers who came and talked on the fine arts?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: We had some very good people. I'd have to look up the names. At my age I can't seem to hang on to ...

(END TAPE 1)

LAWRENCE ANDERSON
Interview with R. BROWN, Archives of American Art

Tape 2, side 1, 2/6/92

R. BROWN: ...Beaux Arts Institute of Design.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Was that a condition of the prize, that you study in France? Could you travel?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No. That was a condition of the prize. The purpose of the prize was to get American students into the Ecole des Beaux Arts and to have that experience which the founders of the prize had had themselves. While you were there, of course, you were allowed and expected to travel elsewhere in Western Europe. Later on I think they had to change it, perhaps for economic reasons. You know, like any endowed enterprise if inflation goes haywire the thing doesn't yield enough to do what it was supposed to do. It was established during the period when American money could buy a lot in Europe, which over time became less and less the case.

R. BROWN: Do you think looking back that it was a good stimulus to young Americans?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well yes it was, certainly. But it didn't prepare us very much for the changes that were coming very soon, because it was after all a traditional enterprise -- that school which had been going pretty steadily since Napoleonic times and had become a kind of a rigid institution by the time I got there. It didn't disappear until 1968 in the rioting which changed architectural education in France completely.

R. BROWN: Until then there was at least a remnant of --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, right. In fact it was until then the only -- no, it wasn't the only architecture school. There was the Ecole Speciale which was also in Paris; I think it must have been a more or less private enterprise, I'm not sure.

R. BROWN: Were you aware of that when you were a student there? The Ecole Speciale?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, I don't think I was. But one of our alumni subsequently became the head of it, Anatole Kopp, who's still living but no longer an educator. He was the one who wrote a good book on 1920s architecture in Russia. You may have seen it.

R. BROWN: And he was someone who was a student --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He was a student both before and after the war. He had a war experience and came back and did more studies later.

R. BROWN: Your project, your theme, was for a national school of fine arts.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: I just looked at the plans and elevations and so forth in the MIT Museum. Was this a subject of your own choosing or the school of design set?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, no, no. That was the Beaux-Arts Institute that set it, somebody wrote it, and it was typical of the kind of program that you'd find in the Grand Prix de Rome.

R. BROWN: You learned in June of '30 that you'd won?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right.

R. BROWN: I think I just saw that it was the twenty-third Paris Prize offered.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, that was it.

R. BROWN: Was there ever any question when you won the prize that you'd go?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No indeed!

R. BROWN: Did you go directly from Cambridge or from home?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I went home that summer, and I didn't leave again until September. As I recall -- and I'm reminded by my own letters -- I was accompanied by a friend from the University of Virginia, an architect named Lucian Dent who was a native of Memphis and with whom I may have traveled earlier. I'll have to look that up. Anyway, when we got to Paris there were some formalities for entry into the school. He and I stayed in a place called the Hotel de Seine for a little while.

R. BROWN: Was this a government facility?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, no, no. You know Paris had a lot of little hotels, little more than rooming houses. This was a fairly big one but it didn't have a restaurant or anything like that. Then I had to decide which atelier to enter. At that time there were interior and exterior ateliers. I think there were three within the school --

R. BROWN: Those were the interior.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. They were lodged in the buildings of the school which, as you probably know, are at the Quai by the river where the rue Bonaparte comes down from St. Germain-des-Pres. And there were perhaps a dozen exterior ateliers. Now I'm not quite sure how official the exterior ateliers were. I have the impression that they could form themselves rather spontaneously if a group of students or a practicing architect who wanted to teach would organize that, because it was the only school in France except the Ecole Speciale which may not even have existed then. Anybody who was capable of setting up an atelier would have been known to the school anyway.

R. BROWN: And they were perhaps registered with the school?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, they must have had some official connection. The patrons were attending the juries and so on.

R. BROWN: How did you make your selection? Did you just go shop around?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I talked to the Americans who came before me. There was Tom Locraft who came from Catholic University, who had won the award two years earlier so he had lived there for that time. And then there was Joe Murphy who had come from MIT before me. By the way, he has a lovely drawing in the Museum -- a restaurant in the air; unhappily he's now a victim of Alzheimer's disease in St. Louis. And there was also Isadore Silverman who had been a student at Harvard, and I think had placed second in the competition that had taken place three years before; his talent was so evident that one of the jurors in New York underwrote him to come to France and to join the Ecole. Silverman and Murphy were already in the atelier that I chose. Locraft I think was in Pontremoli, another one of the exterior architects. There was also Caleb Hornbostel, the son of Henry Hornbostel, who was in the atelier Expert, and an architect from Chicago named Dectatelle [?] who was the only -- no, Caleb was also married, and Dectatelle was married. So those were the closest American associates we had, and I really don't know why I came into the Atelier Defrasse-Madeline-Aublet except that it had a good reputation. I got to know of course Murphy and Silverman who were both in it, and we quite immediately got to work on projects that autumn.

R. BROWN: So you didn't go talk to the particular -- there was more than one teacher, is that right?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: There were three. Defrasse himself who had won the Grand Prix. He was a man in his sixties or seventies, a very much revered guy by the students, but he wasn't really a gifted teacher. You know those exterior ateliers had to rent their own space and govern

themselves, and the professors were also practicing architects and they didn't get to the atelier until late in the afternoon, and they might stay until say eight o'clock. But the students were free to work at any time in the atelier, night or day. And we had a sort of cramped place on the rue Visconti [?] which is very close to the Ecole.

R. BROWN: That was the atelier. Were these quarters that the architect would have rented for his school?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I suppose that may be the case, but the affairs of the atelier were run by the students. There was a massier who was elected by the students, and he ruled the roost and took care of whatever financial affairs there were. They were very modest.

R. BROWN: Was there a bit of a hierarchy there? I mean you mentioned the leading teacher --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, Defrasse. The first name I don't remember, maybe Alphonse. He became a member of the Academie while I was there, and the students designed his ceremonial sword and presented it to him. The second younger man was Louis Madeline who had an office in the Grand Palais because he was the official architect of the Grand Palais, and who was the professor of theory at the Ecole, which meant that he gave the lectures on theory. And he wrote all the programs for all the projects. So we didn't see very much of him. He came in maybe once a month or so. The youngest was Aublet, Louis Aublet, who had been out of the school all of two years but was very sympathetic to the students and was a good go-between towards the older teachers. I remember Defrasse would comment on the students' work rather bumblingly for a while, and then he would turn to Aublet and say, "Would you make the sketch, Aublet?" It was traditional that the teacher would lay tracing paper over your work and, consistent with what Defrasse had sort of laid out, make a rough sketch suggesting the direction to go.

R. BROWN: He would have Aublet do that.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: So this thing happened regularly whenever Defrasse was there, this would be typically what they would be doing --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Going from one to another. Now the students were all mixed up from beginners to ancients. They didn't have separate rooms. The atelier had a kind of a courtyard and then rooms around it on a couple of levels. The nouveaux were of course expected to fetch and carry and go out on errands, and if somebody won a prize they were expected to pay for drinks and the nouveaux were sent out to get a case of bubbly wine, or if anything else was needed. If a man needed help on his drawings, a nouveau --

R. BROWN: Did you come in as a nouveau?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, no. See, my status was what we in this country would call "special student" by virtue of this prize, which had been worked out by the American Beaux-Arts Institute with the government, [and by] which we were allowed into what was called the First Class. There was Third Class, Second Class, and First Class, where the designation for First Class was the senior people, and I was allowed to go into that with the other Americans. But we were not candidates for the degree. You couldn't be a candidate for the degree unless you'd gone through the whole shebang, and that would be time-consuming although some Americans did it. Hornbostel did it --

R. BROWN: Caleb Hornbostel --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Most of the students who got into the school had taken several years' preparation in order to qualify because they had to take entrance examinations. Probably the most important examination was a sketch which they had to do in the Ecole en loge, and it was a gateway or fountain or something of that sort, and there they were supposed to display their knowledge of the orders, proportion, or whatever.

R. BROWN: But this was for admission to the third stage, not the prize. Your Paris Prize project was more complex than that.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh yes, much more so.

R. BROWN: You've mentioned how the head of the atelier, the youngest of the three people, would correct drafts, suggests directions, but was there a curriculum beyond that? Were there courses? You said one was the lecture in theory at the Ecole. Would you have had to attend those?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I didn't have to. I did because I liked Madeline. But there were other lecture courses as well, lectures in history and construction I think, which I didn't feel obliged to go to. I suppose they were required of the other students, but I kind of doubt that attendance was taken. It is true, however, that every student, at least in those days, before he could become diplomable -- that is, eligible to do a thesis -- had to do a construction project in which he would supposedly make a set of working drawings from one of his schemes.

R. BROWN: Not have to carry it out, but at least show by these drawings that he understood.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Did you take technical studios or courses at all while you were there?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No. The pattern was that there would be sketch problems, which were a lot of fun really. Normally twelve hours. There were also twenty-four-hour sketch problems which were more planning projects, less decorative. There was the esquisse which started every long project. The long projects were about five weeks usually. You went up to the Ecole and you got your program, which you hadn't seen before, and you went into a loge and made a sketch which you were supposed to follow in the project. That was supposed to be your individual input, you see.

R. BROWN: Did that sketch have to be approved by --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it would be attached to your final drawing, and if there was not sufficient agreement, you would be thrown out of the competition. The idea was that the teacher should be helping you to develop your own thoughts. But of course people got very skilled at making sketches which said virtually nothing. [laughter] You divided the page in three parts both ways, and then you drew a diagonal, you made certain figures which suggested that it could become unsymmetrical if need be...[laughter]

R. BROWN: So there were ways --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Sometimes you even set up a nouveau to do the sketch for you if you were out of town! [laughter] It wasn't that serious.

R. BROWN: What was the sketch done in? In what medium?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was done in pen and ink on a piece of tracing paper, I guess, only 8.5 by 11, and a copy was made, I think, and kept in the Ecole until you submitted your project.

R. BROWN: And you were to go off with your copy of the sketch and start five weeks or so of rendering.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but the first two or three weeks of any project were the best time to take a trip somewhere. And if we were living too high on the hog in Paris, we'd go to Greece for a couple of weeks and save money. [laughs]

R. BROWN: How nice! Before I ask a bit about some of those trips, when your atelier got a program from the Ecole it was common to all ateliers, is that right?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: So in that five or six-week period the students from whatever atelier, whether exterior or interior, were working on the same thing.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: I was going to ask -- you say you took trips. Five weeks, what could you have done over your drawing board for five weeks?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well I suppose you could have studied it intensively.

R. BROWN: Were some of the problems set very tricky, very complex?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Not really, no. And the range of kinds of solutions to them were quite limited. I mean they had to fit conventional notions of what a good plan was.

R. BROWN: What about within these would style [clatter obscures rest of question].

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It depends on the project. Most of the things of that nature were in special competitions, endowed by various donors in the past. There was a Prix Chaudzee [??], for example, and some of the others I don't remember. You had to be, I think, in First Class to get into those. There was a Prix American even, which was closed to all Americans, offered by the New York boys.

R. BROWN: But this wasn't throughout the year, these prize programs -

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They came up outside the schedule. They would have their own dates. If somebody in the atelier wanted to go after one of them, the other students would normally pitch in and help. I worked on one, for example, done by a very unimaginative I should say, but competent Swiss student. It was a romantic program, not a very big building. It was a retirement home for sailors, and it was to be on the Brittany coast overlooking the sea. Well, came time to make the final drawings, and the whole atelier converged on it because the plan was probably not more than say six by eight feet, and [-----name----- Palenchamps?] did that pretty much himself. But there was an elevation -- I don't know that there was any limitation on the size of drawings -- but it seems to me that this was about five feet high and thirteen feet long. It was already mounted on a board, and it had sort of a cliff up to a moor on the top where the building itself was about as big as your hand, with some windblown trees up there.

R. BROWN: So there wasn't much of a building shown.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No! Then down below you saw the ocean breaking on the rocks, a long pier, and a Breton town with a steeple and fishing boats, and sailors handling their nets and their sails. And that was all being worked on by this army of kids who would dip their brushes in Chinese

ink and put in human figures and whatever. We did it very skillfully: the man won the prize, and the jury commented on his sympathy for the Brittany coast. [laughs]

R. BROWN: So he didn't have to show his hand very much by way of the building.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, the buildings was --

R. BROWN: Incidental.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Very incidental! But most of them were more serious than that.

R. BROWN: But why would you have all pitched in to help someone else?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was just traditional. We learned that way.

R. BROWN: You weren't in direct competition or anything, so --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No.

R. BROWN: What would you be doing day-to-day, say, if you weren't rendering a prize competition?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I probably would have been fussing away with sketches in my hotel room. I had a drafting board there. Or I might be doing something quite unrelated in Paris.

R. BROWN: When you went on trips, or when you went around Paris, did you tend to do things "cultural" for the most part?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I was curious about the countryside and getting out of the city. I would often take a brief train trip on a weekend and stay maybe a couple of nights in a hotel and come back. I remember one time telling myself, well this time I'm going to go some place that begins with E. So I looked up the schedules and said do I want to go to Etampes or whatever? I'd just pack up and go, find a cheap hotel, and case the town, have fun looking at what was there, come back.

R. BROWN: Did you sketch quite a bit when you were on these trips?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. And then sometimes three or four of us would get together and somehow get a hold of a car and go out further into Burgundy or whatever.

R. BROWN: You talk about the various friends you had.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, certainly at the beginning there was an American canon of the Episcopal church who took an interest in Americans' studies in Paris.

R. BROWN: He was a resident in Paris?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and he sometimes took us out socially. I remember his taking us to a restaurant where we had turkey on Thanksgiving. Then I had a professor from Minnesota whom we've already talked about, Rhodes Robertson, who had a house in Vezeley which he lived in the summers, and I would visit him there sometimes with French friends. And I soon got to be friendly with some of the students. There was a young man named Rabaud who was the son of a man who was at the time director of the conservatory of music; he had been for a year conductor of the Boston Symphony.

R. BROWN: Rabaud?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: [spells name] The father was Henri, the son was Olivier. He and I became very close. He would have me to their apartment which was on the top floor of the conservatory itself, near the St. Augustin Terminale area --

R. BROWN: So you were accepted in this family?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, which was really quite a great honor in a way. They don't do that so much. But he had two sisters and the mother and the father, and it was a nice place to be for dinner; they had other young friends, of course. Then there was Rene Coulon [?] who lived on the Ile St. Louis in an old apartment, and who liked to play the hunting horn in the atelier.

R. BROWN: He'd play hunting calls?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: [laughs] Yes. I remember I went to his wedding out in the place where his wife's family came from, and as part of the ceremony they had hunting horns playing the mass of St. Hubert through the open window; they were out in the woods. Very romantic.

R. BROWN: He was a fellow student then, Was Rabaud too?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. We were all in the Premiere Classe, and we all did projects together. And then there were students in the atelier who had been sent there by Tony Garnier. Garnier had one of the few provincial ateliers, in Lyon. But he thought that his best students should go to Paris and finish their work there, so there were three or four of them in the atelier. They came to our atelier for some reason.

R. BROWN: Would their vocabulary have been classical as yours was?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, although with the Garnier slant which was very much more minimalist and functional and socially directed than the traditional Beaux Arts.

R. BROWN: At that point had you and your fellow students ever discussed among yourselves, or even with your teachers, why are we doing these elaborate --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: We discussed it among ourselves, not very much with our teachers except maybe with Louis Aublet, the youngest. It was sort of -- we knew it was a charade, everybody knew it. There was no pretense that it was the real thing, but it was sort of accepted as a thing you had to go through and which probably embodied principles that were valuable but not very practical. One of the ex-students of Garnier was a man named Georges Dengler [LAWRENCE ANDERSON spells] who got into the competition for the Prix de Rome that first year. That had the same kind of a structure as the Paris Prize in the sense that you had progressive eliminations. He got into the finals, and I did some work for him as a "nigger" and got to know him very well. He would send sketches back to Lyon and get criticism from Garnier on how he was developing. It was a program not unlike the one I had: there was a big central hall which most of the contestants would put a dome over, but for Garnier the dome was too traditional, so it was a different form. I remember his stressing to Dengler that he must have drawings that presented themselves to the jury like a girl in a white dress at her first communion -- nothing extraneous, simple, light weight, pure -- making all the other entries look like mondaines. And it worked! He won. [laughs] He subsequently went to the University of Pennsylvania for about three years, where he met his wife and married her, and came back to Paris and had for many years his own atelier, which I don't think he inherited from anybody else.

R. BROWN: That was sometimes the case that these ateliers were passed on?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Another one of the Lyonnais was Louis Piessat who became a close friend. There was another one, Bordaix [?], who was also in the competition for the Prix de Rome. These two went back to Lyon later and practiced there and became assistants there to Garnier in the atelier as younger teachers and took over the atelier when Garnier retired. Piessat, in fact, wrote a biography of Garnier which I translated and tried to market here without much success.

R. BROWN: Has it ever been published?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No. It's been published in France. In fact, it's in its second edition, I think, but Conover over at the MIT Press thought it was too much just a tribute of a disciple and not critical enough. And I didn't know what to do with it. I didn't want to change it, and I didn't want to negotiate with Piessat about rewriting or re-editing it for an American press. It might still appeal to somebody. I don't know.

R. BROWN: You seem to have been to a degree curious about the other winds blowing, namely Garnier's.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but curiously we were not very aware of what was happening in Germany.

R. BROWN: Did you ever go there on your trips?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I don't think I did until after I had been back again in this country and traveled in Europe later. But other American students who were not involved in the Ecole would tell me that they had been there and tell me all about it. But the French, you know, were not very open to German ideas at that time. The only out-and-out modernist -- well, there were others, but Le Corbusier was of course the conspicuous figure. And I remember going to the Salle Pleyel with a lot of Beaux Arts students who sat up in the balcony while he gave one of his lectures. But he wasn't taken very seriously by the students.

R. BROWN: Was he thought to be just a passing phenomenon?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, he was an exhibitionist and firebrand. He was certainly very polemical: he wasn't just quietly doing his thing, he was making a big noise!

(SIDE 2)

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Auguste Perret, who was a contemporary of Garnier who had attended the Ecole but had not finished his diploma. His father was a contractor and his brother was a contractor as well. His father knew that Auguste was gifted and sent him to the Ecole to be a designer but then captured him within the firm --

R. BROWN: Before he could complete his --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. He didn't think a diploma would be important because he was going to work in the firm, sort of a design and build operation. That's where he made his career. They were of course the entrepreneurs of many of those buildings themselves. But we went to see the -- what was the name of the theater? -- and the garage, and --

R. BROWN: That Perret designed?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. He was very respected.

R. BROWN: Partly because of his precocious use of new materials?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. He pioneered concrete quite wonderfully. There were also a few others. I remember also Mallet-Stevens who did some interesting work.

R. BROWN: And you would go see this work?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, yes.

R. BROWN: Were you at the stage in your student years when you would perhaps try to seek out an experienced architect to talk with them? Or were you mainly among your peers?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Not very much. I guess I was too timid to do that unless I was with other native students. I remember having a very nice lunch with four students with Louis Madeline in his Grand Palais office, for instance, with a very free discussion.

R. BROWN: Do you recall at all what sort of things he would have discussed? What was of interest to him, and you of him in a situation like that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, not really.

R. BROWN: It would have been very wide-ranging, I suppose.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: When you saw him there, I guess no one was tactless enough to ask what did an architect of one building do, who was in residence there?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it was traditional in France to do that. If you'd been a Grand Prix winner or otherwise distinguished yourself as a young man you could be given sort of a government privilege like that. And I guess Madeline operated his office within the Grand Palais, and he was responsible for taking care of the building --any change in the building or its maintenance, and maybe had something to do with whatever construction had to be done for exhibitions and that kind of thing, but I'm sure he was also allowed to practice from that center. It was sort of one of the perks of the government which I guess had come down as a privilege from maybe royal times. We don't have anything like that in this country: when you get out of school, no matter how distinguished you may have been in the school you're on your own. That's probably the way it should be.

R. BROWN: Do you say that because -- did you detect some of your French contemporaries hoping they would get some sort of sinecure?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. I don't recall very much success along that line, though, except Dengler's atelier which his reputation may have helped.

R. BROWN: You mean his reputation as a prize winner.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: And also having been a teacher at the University of Pennsylvania.

R. BROWN: During this time you won some things in France, too, didn't you?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I made a couple of medals, but I also did quite a lot of unsuccessful, undistinguished work. There was a project for a stadium which I got a first medal in, along with a

first medal by my close friend Olivier Rabaud. We each got first medals.

R. BROWN: And this would be in one of those endowed competitions?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, this was a regular First Class project.

R. BROWN: I noticed in the MIT Museum there was a study for a sort of coastal camp. What was that all about?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: [Big laugh!] I think it may have been a twenty-four hour sketch problem, I'm not sure. But it was kind of typical: the program was realistic enough, it was a camp on a beach but a camp that would be permanent, and there were lodging and there was a gymnasium and there was a restaurant. The thing was to be situated on a broad beach. It was a little bit like that Breton village project that I told you about. The notion was not so much to make some fine buildings but to show a grand relationship between buildings and nature and the vastness of the beach.

R. BROWN: Yes, I'd say about half of the plan is just open space.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right. Just water or paper. [laughs] Did you see the design for a tapestry?

R. BROWN: Yes, I'd like to ask about that.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I'd forgotten all about having made it! That was one of the special competitions. It must have been the Godeboeuf I remember another Godeboeuf which was the ceiling of a theater. That was very hard to invent, I found. One of the bright boys in our atelier made a marvelous design which consisted only of pricks that he'd made in the paper that made a beautiful pattern. [laughs]

R. BROWN: Well, you were there three years, right?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes --

R. BROWN: And your years were interspersed with these competitions, and otherwise you were gradually honing your skills of -- what skills were they trying to hone?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Your sense of bigness, of the grandeur possible in architecture, and monumentality, and what they called the immutable rules of putting things together, which you could find in Gaudet and Gromort who wrote books on the subject, or in the lectures on theory.

R. BROWN: So the immutable rules and the capturing of the feeling of grandeur or monumentality.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Function -- well that was something that you couldn't escape and a part of life and you'd find it later on.

R. BROWN: It was secondary --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes --

R. BROWN: As you studied a problem, because you were trained with problems, weren't you? They weren't necessarily real problems, but--

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, but they were genuine and they had to be followed. There were a

certain number of different kinds of rules. They had to have different degrees of access and availability. One of the very strong points, I thought, was circulation, but of course there was in those plans much more circulation than was needed; on the other hand, that was done in order to develop a priority as to how you came in, what your reception was like, what the first big room would be and how you would get from there into other parts of the building; and if it was something important but maybe sort of removed from the immediate access -- where that would be, on the second floor perhaps, at the back. Everything in its place. One of the things that I discovered was that it was only fairly late in architectural history that corridors were invented. You go into a place like the Palace of Versailles, for example, and you don't have corridors; you go from one room to the other.

R. BROWN: Then the Hall of Mirrors is an exception.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but it's a room in itself, see. One of the principles of the Beaux-Arts planning was to have corridors, and circulations generally, in this hierarchy of importance. No corridor was to be double loaded, it was always to have windows. You didn't have dark spaces in buildings so there were courtyards, single-loaded corridors, and such. But there was always a principal room which could be glorified into something that would stand out against the sky, and then there were generally always foreground appurtenances creating forecourt -- the tradition that started in the baroque past of doing that still maintained. In fact at the Ecole itself you would go into a courtyard through a grilled entrance and there would be architectural fragments in the court, and then you would go to the various places from there. I guess that's true of all the big important buildings in France pretty much, except the ones that are very public.

R. BROWN: Well, the wish for a great deal of connection and circulation and light -- these are perfectly twentieth century concepts in themselves.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: True enough.

R. BROWN: Therefore when you went to see a Perret building or a Garnier building --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: On the other hand, of course, the typical Parisian building is indeed the typical Berlin building or London building not following those rules at all. They were squalid, poorly lighted, unhygienic --

R. BROWN: I was going to ask. You were there at the beginning of the Depression. It must have been a pretty -- apart from you life as a student and your friendships -- a pretty bad time, wasn't it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I guess it was.

R. BROWN: You perhaps weren't too aware of it.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I wasn't too aware of it, and maybe it wasn't so severe there as it was in America. But one was aware of the coming unrest, and it was the time of the Weimar Republic I think, but Hitler was on his way up. There were scandals in the French government which attracted quite a lot of attention, but the Dreyfuss case was in the past of course, and so was Jaures' socialist career. Still the socialist idea in France was still a very important political element.

R. BROWN: I assume that's the sort of thing you students talked about from time to time.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Were there any German students around there?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, I don't think there were. In fact there were not very many foreigners except Orientals. There was a very nice Egyptian student whom I've heard about recently, still being with us I think. And then there were a number of South Americans, Chinese -- not a great number. In fact there was, I believe, an official quota beyond which the Ecole could not accept foreign students. But there were no British or Spanish or German or Italians for that matter. They kept to their own resources.

R. BROWN: That's different from the contemporaneous Bauhaus which had quite an international -

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I think that's true --

R. BROWN: Quite a few English, some Americans. Those people that you mentioned, some of the Orientals and the South Americans would have gone back a generation or two there in their interest in things French --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, the French colonies. For example Indonesia [means Indochina], North Africa --

R. BROWN: But also there weren't all that many Americans at the Ecole.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No. I think I reckoned there may have been ten or twelve --

R. BROWN: Spread throughout the --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Architects. Now whether there were painters and sculptors in addition to that I don't know. My impression is that the schools of painting, for example, in the Ecole des Beaux Arts were not as important as some of the other schools of painting in Paris -- the Julian Academy.

R. BROWN: I also saw a project that looked like a study, historical and site plan and all, dated 1933, of Avignon.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: What did that represent?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, that was an independent project of mine, unrelated to the Ecole. But I'd observed these competitions for the Prix de Rome. Even back in school in America I had studied the reproductions of the envois that the winners of the Prix de Rome prepared, primarily restorations of Greek and Roman projects which they measured in situ and rendered as beautifully as they could. There was a publisher named Dessepuis [? Auguste Vincent??] who published those in plate form. They were part of any architect's or student's library -- not personal library but school libraries. In fact at MIT we had open boxes in the library, and these plates, among others, would be mounted on cardboard and you could riffle through them in order to be inspired by that. I thought, you know, wouldn't it be nice -- I had, I think, my position at MIT already waiting, but it was the summer of '33 and there wasn't any work at the Ecole, so I thought wouldn't it be nice to make a kind of envoi of my own. I had visited Villeneuve, which is a town across from Avignon before, and that attracted me. So I got into that. There was a paperback history of Villeneuve that had been written by some scholarly priest well before my time, which gave me the necessary historical data. Then I had maps to go by, visits, sketches, and I had the help of my colleagues; in fact I think we did

the final project in the apartment of my friend Rabaud in the conservatory of music. He helped me, and then when the rendering came along three or four others of the class came in the traditional way and helped.

R. BROWN: And what was your aim in doing this?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I just thought I would in gratitude show this to the Beaux Arts Institute when I got back, or exhibit it at MIT and so on. It never attracted a great deal of attention, but somehow or other the Museum kept it. I'm glad they did.

R. BROWN: What were your intentions apart from that? What were you trying to bring out?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I was trying to learn something about the past, for one thing --

R. BROWN: And the evolution of that place.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. It was an interesting town because the papacy was in Avignon during a critical period, as you know, and that brought a lot of dignitaries and cardinals many of whom were part of the establishment, and they built palaces for themselves. Villeneuve was a suburb of that. There had also been a military history of the place. The hill had been fortified early. There was a big monastery that had fallen on bad times but the remains were there. A couple of churches. In fact it had elements of medieval and royal and papal vestiges.

R. BROWN: So you were able to parallel in a way the envois that the Prix de Rome [winners] were sending back.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: On your trips -- and you mentioned your short trips, you mentioned having gone to Avignon -- were there any other very extensive trips.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, with Rene Coulon, the man who played the hunting horn. He and I took his Ford and went to Spain, camping out more or less in northern Spain in April in Catalonia. I think it was in spring and it was rather cool. I remember the dew would be heavy when we got up and, after we'd had our breakfast, we'd take the spark plugs out of the car and put them in the skillet or fryer to get them hot and dry so then we could start the car. [laughter] Before that I'd also made a trip with some other Americans. There was a man named Gruzen who later established a very important firm in New York. Sumner Gruzen of Barnett Sumner Gruzen. He and his wife -- he was not at the Ecole but he was traveling over there -- and three of us (Lucian Dent, Joe Murphy, and I) crowded into the back and off we went from Paris to Spain. And we took time off and went to Majorca; we got as far as Grenada, I think.

R. BROWN: Sketching? Is that what you were doing?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, sketching and taking pictures and seeing things. A grand tour. I remember in southwest France on the way down, we were driving, and the lights of the car gave out. It was dark. We had to seek lodging as fast as we could. We stopped at a little cafe, and they agreed to put us up for the night. So we had one big room with this husband and wife and three young boys. In the morning I remember the husband of the woman who ran the cafe appearing with a great big round loaf of rye bread and a very long sharp knife and sawing us great slices of breakfast. It was superb how nice they were. That was sort of an introduction to a thing that I learned, and that was that once you got out of the city people's reception and attitude were quite different; they wouldn't be suspicious and sophisticated and cynical the way they might be in the

city, and that French living out in the provinces was really very good. Every small town had a little hotel, very inexpensive, and two or three really very good restaurants that didn't cost much, and that was a really good life. The same was more or less true in Italy and Greece. Greece was a little more rugged. I traveled in Greece for about a month with Max Abramovitz who had been in the Paris Prize competition himself -- I don't remember whether he was an actual winner or not, but anyway he was there.

R. BROWN: You met him in Paris?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think in Paris, yes.

R. BROWN: Your aim in Greece -- I think it would be obvious, the classical sites?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Sure, although we were very impressed with the Byzantine.

R. BROWN: There wouldn't have been too many tourists to speak of in those days, would there?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, not really, but we found that we could rent a car and a driver on our stipend -- it was affordable -- and take a look at places like Delphi and some of the monasteries. My recollection is that I went to the American Bank in Paris every month and picked up my month's stipend, which I believe was a hundred and ten dollars worth of francs. I had to live on that, but it wasn't all that difficult. I finally found a room in a tiny hotel on a little dead end street called the Impasse des Deux Anges. The hotel has since been torn down for an expansion of the Ecole de Medicine designed by my professor Louis Madeline of the Grand Palais.

R. BROWN: Torn down when?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Torn down after I left. But that I think cost me \$16 a month. It didn't have a bathtub, and the water closet was on the landing; it didn't have a restaurant. All it had was a concierge to get in and out. I had a lavatory in my room, and that was it. If I wanted to take a bath I'd go up the street. Near the Cafe de Flore there was a bath place where you could just have a rudimentary bath, or one with soap and towels of different sizes according to what you wanted to pay, and you'd get into one of those great big tubs filled with very hot water and relax, but that didn't happen to me more than once every week or two. And as for laundry, I've forgotten just how I did that -- whether I did my own. I can't remember. But all the students from out of town in the atelier were living on the same terms pretty much, so it happened that we would have breakfast together in the cafe -- notably the Deux Magots on the square, which was within a stone's throw of the Ecole. And then we would congregate there usually in the evening at six or seven, half a dozen of us, and have aperitifs and decide where we would have dinner because we had to eat in restaurants. If we had enough people we could easily pay for a taxi to take us to some other part of the city. We'd have a meal that somebody would have chosen, and then usually we would walk all the way back and see Paris at night. It was not bad! It was beyond the real time, I guess, which was in the '20s with Hemingway and those people, but it was very close to that time.

R. BROWN: Would you sometimes go to a cafe or a place where you knew certain notables hung out, perchance you could be with them whoever they were, listen to them?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I suppose there were notables going to those cafes, but we never were aware of them. The Cafe de Flore, which was a couple of doors down from the Deux Magots, was favored by the existentialists and by the surrealists. And the Brasserie Lipp across the way was also frequented by literati, but I didn't see very much of them as people. The Lipp has become

a very prestigious place, very costly, but in our day it was accessible and the beer was not any more expensive than it would be anywhere else, and their food was too, especially if you didn't order oysters or anything very expensive.

R. BROWN: I gather that you, and perhaps the other Americans, began to acquire at youthful ages some interest in the amenities like eating well and --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh yes, especially food.

R. BROWN: Not simply quantity as is typical in a young man, but quality.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, in fact when I got back into this neighborhood I had to cook my own in order to approach the standard that I'd become accustomed to.

R. BROWN: New England cooking was quite the --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It wasn't very well developed then, and anyway it was more expensive. So I got interested in cooking, which I've kept. I still do it. And wines. We've never been without wine in this house. It may not be good for us, but anyway it seemed like a part of life.

R. BROWN: That civilization, contemporary French culture, had a pervasive effect.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It sure did.

R. BROWN: You mentioned a trip you took with your friend Rabaud.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, there was an exhibition in Rome honoring the tenth anniversary of the founding of fascism. Mussolini had made it known that if anybody would travel through Rome and get his ticket stamped at the exhibition, there would be great reductions in fares and so on. I think we paid something not very much more than ten dollars to go through Rome to get to Sicily, and maybe spent half an hour or so at the exhibition.

R. BROWN: How did fascism affect you when you saw this exhibition and saw the evidence of it in Italian life at the time.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: We made fun of it. As a matter of fact the French attitude toward the Italians was very condescending. They thought they were headstrong, unheeding, undisciplinable -- although the facts belie it because things worked if you didn't do wrong there. But it kind of got in the way of enjoying Italian town life the way we did the French. It was a different atmosphere.

R. BROWN: You mean they couldn't be as free and easy with you?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: We sort of got that feeling, that it was in some way an oppressive place. And there were a lot of people in uniform everywhere, which you never saw in France -- or almost never.

R. BROWN: I assume you went to see classical sights primarily?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, the works. Renaissance and early Christian and Roman.

R. BROWN: Did your friend have the same interests?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh yes. Sicily was great fun. We traveled by train in Sicily, believe it or not.

R. BROWN: What was memorable about it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, those marvelous Greek sites like Syracuse, Agrigento, several others, _____ [other site name], and the city of Palermo with all the Norman mosaics.

R. BROWN: For two young foreign men was there a problem with travel in places like that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, not really. There were always some kind of accommodations to be had. And the food -- well, we got a little tired of lemons and olive oil, but it was pretty good.

R. BROWN: Unlike say Paris or Rome, these were not very visited places in those days, were they?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, they weren't. I understand that western Sicily has now become one of the vacation places that has been developed in that way.

R. BROWN: But you never got to northern or central Europe in those years?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: In those years I don't think so. Holland and Belgium, yes --

R. BROWN: The architecture particularly?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. But it was only I guess when my wife and I went there in 1936 -- no, '37; we were married in '36. We traveled in France with Rabaud and his wife, but we also took three weeks and went to Scandinavia: to Denmark and to Sweden and to Finland. Then my wife and I went back in '81 [71! --Ed.] to Norway. And of course later on I had a Fulbright in Copenhagen.

[END TAPE 2] [Transcriber's note: Names of ateliers, teachers, Ecole prizes, etc., that appear without queries have been verified.]

LAWRENCE ANDERSON

Interview with R. BROWN, Archives of American Art

Tape 3, side 1, 2/13/92

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: ...a faculty teaching design, and he [transcriber's note: probably Herbert Beckwith] and I had similar ideas. Both of us were anxious to be influenced by modernism, so we were finding ourselves to be the young Turks in the school, with some adherents from other teachers. But in juries we often clashed with Emerson and Gardner who represented the more traditional classic upbringing. We challenged them. They would say, well Frank Lloyd Wright is a very gifted guy, but his work is not beautiful. And we'd ask why is it not beautiful? What are the criteria?

R. BROWN: Did they become defensive or were they pretty good sports about it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well --

R. BROWN: They were redoubtable debaters?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They were pretty good sports. I guess they saw the handwriting on the wall. But the local architectural establishment was of the same kind of orientation as they, and the school was very much oriented toward the practice. The school [MIT Architecture] was still in Boston, mind you, until 1937. And curiously -- looking over some of the records -- it took a long, long time for the program to fully develop. In the beginning, and for years, the majority of students were not looking for a degree. They were either part time or they were in a two-year special program. There were scholarships for special students. It had started, I guess, with Ware introducing a really

grass roots kind of a program. So the interesting quotations from his intentions -- I was just looking at here [rustling of papers] --

R. BROWN: So it seemed until rather late -- what? You would get some training in architecture so that you could go back into an office --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, that's right --

R. BROWN: And function as a draftsman or something else?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: A man named Tschumi [?] who did a PhD on Ware's career says, "Ware constructed an essentially American curriculum with inputs from French and English but not German Technische Hochschulen. This was later [called?] Ecole des Beaux-Arts by others."

R. BROWN: So Ware evidently didn't buy the whole Ecole way of doing things --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, no --

R. BROWN: But rather looked --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think in the description of what a school should be that he prepared, I think before he was appointed -- I've seen a copy of that -- he bemoaned the fact that practitioners were not sufficiently informed [of], he said "the simplest, cheapest, and most enduring ways of doing things found out and made public." He gives five examples: "the brief and neat way of getting out his quantities [for?] jumping at his sum total, admirable system in his specifications, the convenient trick in perspective or in making working drawings. The trouble is technological. There is a want of system and method." He was a very much practical guy, and that seems to have persisted for quite a long time.

R. BROWN: But neither Emerson nor Gardner, however, would have been exemplars of that.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, they were more theoretically oriented and more inspired by the Ecole, although both of them would have said that they didn't want to be influenced too much by foreign models.

R. BROWN: What in their case do you suppose an American model would have been?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: MIT was the first.

R. BROWN: I mean models in architecture, of buildings themselves.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh, of the practice?

R. BROWN: Richardson? They would have accepted him?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but maybe only barely. I'm not sure. Their model was more likely to be McKim Mead & White -- especially Charles McKim. Although Ware had arguments with McKim at Columbia, I understand. I don't know what the issues were.

R. BROWN: When you came on in May of '33, Ralph Adams Cram -- who was one of the, if not the most senior Boston practicing architect -- writes Dean Emerson of his pleasure at your appointment because you're an American.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He didn't even know me if he wrote in May --

R. BROWN: But as a matter of principle he thought it was a good thing, right?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right. In the meantime the University of Illinois had looked to the German and Swiss examples in their curricula. I have some data on that.

R. BROWN: And that was quite a different one at that time?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. It was closely connected with engineering and had probably less influence from Paris than any other European -- Spain and Italy and even the Scandinavian countries took Paris as their model more or less. The English were also somewhat more down to earth, but again different from German.

R. BROWN: Your fellow teachers: you mentioned Gardner and your contemporary Beckwith. He taught what? Design as well?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, in the lower grades.

R. BROWN: And this was a three or four year curriculum at that time?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was a four-year curriculum at that time. But there was a graduate school. That's what I was working at. I think the first class of mine must have had 12 to 15 students among whom was Bunshaft, Gordon Bunshaft. I guess initially I tended to have them work on programs that were not dissimilar to what I'd studied in Paris, but as time went on we got more and more functional. I even went so far as to write programs for an SPCA hospital, a Sears Roebuck warehouse, and things of that kind where process was important. I wanted them to think through how buildings worked and what they were supposed to do. This I guess was probably in the wind everywhere at that time. It resulted in a kind of minimalist sort of architecture where how the building looked was less important. It was not expected to carry reasonable [?] messages of abstract nature. But it had to work: you had to know where to go in the building and what to do when you got there. You couldn't forget that every building had to have a chimney, the stairs had to be such that you could use them, and so on. And the students would get rather badly treated if they didn't have things that could be used.

R. BROWN: On the other hand, that did lie within the Beaux Arts tradition too, didn't it? I mean you mentioned circulation as --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Circulation from a hierarchical, idealistic, rhetorical interpretation rather than something you might actually do.

R. BROWN: And yet your buildings in the Beaux Arts tradition were supposed to have in part some of that feeling of grandeur, importance.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Were you beginning to -- how am I going to give an effect of grandeur and importance to a building if I discard the Beaux Arts baggage, particularly the ornamental?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, we began to feel that that was a whole lot of unnecessary baggage. It wasn't really worth building before. It wasn't appreciated by anybody but the designers. Let's forget about it for a while.

R. BROWN: Did most of your students accept the way you felt pretty readily?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, yes.

R. BROWN: But you mentioned that Gardner and Emerson resisted somewhat.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, yes.

R. BROWN: But the other teachers were more of your way of thinking?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: There weren't so many others. One of them, who's still rather active in Boston, is Robert -- he became a partner in Hepburn, Shaw --

R. BROWN: Oh, Dean.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Dean! Robert Dean.

R. BROWN: Which did the work on Colonial Williamsburg.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right.

R. BROWN: How would you characterize him?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, he was a fervent modernist in intent but didn't seem to be able, you know, to behave like an innovator. Another one was John Gunther who I think had been there when I was a student. He was somewhat older than I. A very lovely man.

R. BROWN: What did he teach?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He taught design as well.

R. BROWN: So it was arranged that there were a number of design teachers, is that correct?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Traditionally there would be, say, somebody in charge of second year, a different person of third, and a different person of fourth. This may shift around a little bit from time to time, but that was usually the way it was. But all the grading decisions were made by a committee of the teachers with people from outside coming in from time to time.

R. BROWN: You were teaching design to graduate students who were there for what? a one or two year program?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That was only a one-year program at that time.

R. BROWN: Just as you had gone from Minnesota to MIT.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Exactly.

R. BROWN: Did you find that the backgrounds of these graduate students varied a great deal?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, enormously. At that time it wasn't so hard to get into MIT, or any prestigious school for that matter. And it was a little hard to see how some of the people who were students at that time got there because they came from such different backgrounds. I've said once before, I think, that George Nakashima was one of the students in my class.

R. BROWN: And his background was what?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: His background was that he was Japanese born in Washington, state of Washington, who had finished a course there in Seattle and then come on as a student. But he didn't know at that time that he would become a woodworker. He had the dreadful experience of being in a camp for Nisei during the War. That changed his life. Bunshaft had a colleague named Heisen [?] who seemed to be just as good a student as Gordon but who never got into the big time. He's now retired, living in California, and I correspond with him. Another student was Winston Close who had been in my class in Minnesota and who wanted to get some graduate experience. And then there was Leisel Scheu who came from Vienna. Her family had been clients of [intervening discussion as LAWRENCE ANDERSON tried to remember name] Loos.

R. BROWN: And she came with what kind of background?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: She came with I guess the equivalent of a Master's degree from whatever institution she attended over there.

R. BROWN: It was likely to have been a little more technical?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It may have been. She and Close became very close and they married. They went back to Minneapolis and have had a long practice there. She'd been in recent years president of the local AIA chapter. They're happily retired there now. I saw them earlier in 1991.

R. BROWN: Did certain of these students stand out in your mind in your first year or so of teaching?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Those four notably. The rest I can't remember very much about. Later on we had Harry Weese and Walter Netsch and _____ [garbled].

R. BROWN: Yes, each of those men you've interviewed at some point. In fact Weese in his interview with you mentioned his struggles with trying to solve a problem on a difficult site, and I think Netsch says more or less the same thing, that you kept throwing questions at him. Was this your conscious teaching method or was it something you evolved, like a Socratic dialogue?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it was instinctive to me to do it that way, to avoid telling them what to do if I can find out what they were capable of doing on their own. You of course know that Louis Sullivan had been a student. Arthur Rotch, Grant Lafarge, Henry and Charles Greene, J. G. Howard, Fred Mann, Guy Lowell --

R. BROWN: Yes, a number of distinguished --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: A.D.F. Hamlin, Ellis Lawrence who went to Oregon, Kocher, Campbell, Ed Stone, Welles Bosworth -- we're only now getting into my era: Harlan McClure, John Russell. Sam Chamberlain was teaching when I got here.

R. BROWN: He was teaching at MIT?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. It was a part time thing. He was teaching printing. He had his press up there --

R. BROWN: Wouldn't that sort of thing have been an elective for the students?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I think it was.

R. BROWN: Did you get to know him a bit?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. He was a very close friend of Emerson's who admired his work very much. Skidmore had come and gone by the time I got there. Bill Hartmann, who was president of SOM later, was in the class of '37, I. M. Pei in '40. Charles Correa, Bill Caudill was there, and Clarence Y. Yokomoto, and so on down the line.

R. BROWN: In those first years did people like Bunshaft stand out particularly?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Bunshaft was certainly one of the better students in his class.

R. BROWN: I'm not trying to -- just because people went on to immense practices... Was there a correlation in your experience between those who really came along? Or how much did temperament play a role?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think temperament is very important, and opportunity as well. It's very difficult to tell at student age what the future is going to bring for a student. They haven't changed as much as all that but at the same time, although you recognized that they had talent when they were students, you couldn't really put them on a pedestal in relation to others -- in most cases.

R. BROWN: So very early on you increasingly made your programs modern ones, that is the ones you set for the students. Was this being paralleled in some of your own thinking? When did you first begin to design and build yourself? Only when you began your practice in '37?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. That's about the earliest that I did anything that got built.

R. BROWN: Well the Depression must have had a rather depressing effect.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh Lord yes, although the worst of it was over by the time I started to teach.

R. BROWN: You traded places with one of your former teachers in Minnesota for one term in 1935?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, with Roy Jones.

R. BROWN: You'd been two years at MIT. How did you compare it with your old school?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I don't think I've been asked that before.

R. BROWN: You were seven or eight years out of Minnesota.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They hadn't changed very much, I found. It was still very, you might say, provincial although the level of practice in the Twin Cities has always been pretty high, I think, and their likely to be most responsible for that. Arnal was still they're as the chief critic, so was Robertson. Jones took my place at MIT for a semester. I think he was invited to do this because they wanted to have a look at him as a possible new dean. Emerson was getting on in years, although he didn't retire until 1940 I guess. But Jones had made a certain stir in the ACSA national activities --

R. BROWN: Schools of architecture --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and therefore was someone who should be considered. I take it he didn't strike a major chord. Nothing came of it. I think that MIT looked more toward Europe and

toward the other Eastern cities. We were at MIT closer to collegiality with Harvard and other eastern schools of long standing. We had more visitors from abroad and so on. But other than that there perhaps wasn't an enormous difference in outlook.

R. BROWN: Did you get to know somewhat very early on about the Harvard program? about the faculty and curriculum?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Was it quite similar to MIT?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think more similar than it is today. They also had a graduate program not dissimilar to ours. The Boston Architectural Center was located on Beacon Hill at the time, in an historic building there --

R. BROWN: That's the third school in the area. That's quite a density of schools.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right. They always had a good reputation. And in fact my teacher Carlu, and Haffner whose name I couldn't remember --

R. BROWN: Robert Haffner?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Jean Jacques Haffner, I think, taught Monday nights there as Ralph Rapson and _____? did later and as I have done in my time. It was voluntary, unpaid, but it was also a meeting ground for the three of us. And there was what was then considered an important competition three times a year, a two-day sketch problem with a fifty dollar prize, which wasn't peanuts then, with programs coming from each of these schools, juries in common. That was quite an exhilarating competition. None of these three was active in the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design juries except very occasionally.

R. BROWN: Was that dominated by New York architects?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but there were other school adherents. I think particularly the more provincial schools felt the need of having that avenue of contact with supposedly the biggest assortment of acting professionals who were on juries as well as with what the other schools would produce. In the Beaux Arts tradition, the results of those competitive projects would be that the best ones would be published and they would be circulated and in turn influence rather broadly.

R. BROWN: Were the competition projects gradually changing? Were they less traditional than the one you had?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They tended to stay more traditional --

R. BROWN: Right through the '30s --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right, because the men who organized the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design were Americans who had studied in Paris and who wanted to make that experience transferable to American education.

R. BROWN: Because they stayed traditional, did that mean that by the late '30s, let's say, they were becoming less of interest to a number of architectural students.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I think that's the case.

R. BROWN: Except the prize and so forth was very desirable, unless you'd ruled out going to Europe at all.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Which people did not, of course. It was still the prime experience for an architect.

R. BROWN: You in '36 were married.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Was this someone with also an architectural background?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No. My wife had graduated from Wellesley with a major in Fine Arts and was until our marriage working in the Fogg library at Harvard, in charge of the slide collection.

R. BROWN: The two of you traveled, you said, in '37 to Europe. With particular goals?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I wanted to look up my old friend Olivier Rabaud who also had been married, perhaps a couple of years before we were. We traveled together, the four of us, in their car I guess, mostly in Burgundy. He was at that time interested in Romanesque architecture and had vaguely the idea of getting into whatever the organization is in the central government that takes care of monuments historiques. I guess that's where I became really enamored of Romanesque churches, which I've been ever since. But we also took three weeks off, just the two of us, and went to Copenhagen and Stockholm and Finland -- Helsinki. We looked up Alvar Aalto and his wife and saw some of his buildings.

R. BROWN: He was someone who was getting pretty well known in the States?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He'd been discovered, I think, mostly by the English architectural journalist -- what was his name? I don't remember -- but anyway anybody who subscribed to the Architectural Review would have noticed that he was an up-and-coming person with something very original to say. His wife and he had established this furniture industrial design shop where they also had a whole line of furniture and glassware that they had designed themselves.

R. BROWN: Did this make quite an impression -- this whole range of design?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh yes! I was deeply stirred by it.

R. BROWN: What was he like when you met him?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He was the most affable guy right from the beginning. Incredible. I remember a later occasion in '56 or '57 when I was at the Royal Academy in Copenhagen on a Fulbright lectureship, I made a trip to Helsinki. I ran into him in the airport in Helsinki. He was returning to his home from having a conference with his French client for whom he built a house. (I met that client later, but I don't remember his name.) But it was about six o'clock in the evening. He had a black overcoat and a black Homburg. He was very proper. He had a big car with a driver outside. By that time I knew him very well because he'd been at MIT. But he took me to see all his recent work, including that big auditorium for the labor union which was under construction, and the insurance building, and so on. And then he insisted on taking me to his house where we arrived at perhaps eight o'clock. His wife was horrified meeting us at the door because there was in the living

room an important meeting of the Society of Finnish Architects who were discussing boycotting the government because they didn't like the terms that the government was requiring them to meet for commissions. They had it in Alvar's house because of his stature and leadership. I guess he knew about it, but he hadn't gotten there! And we hadn't had dinner, so the whole thing was kind of a mess. [laughs]

I remember also a wonderful meeting in _____? Benedictine monastery a few years ago in which his second wife, the widow, said that when Alvar was Italy he would telephone the office in Helsinki to find out what time it was. [laughter] He was a raconteur, an extraordinary talent, a rather heavy drinker, but the most convivial, kindly person you ever saw.

R. BROWN: What you would have seen elsewhere, I guess, as well as in Finland and Scandinavia, would have been a real marriage of architecture, design, crafts, manufacture with a lot of hand work. Did you look, for example, at the various workshops in Helsinki? (Except that you saw Aalto's.)

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, I didn't. I probably should have. But that tradition of hand work and craftsmanship is strong in all the Scandinavian countries, notably in Denmark I think.

R. BROWN: This was '37. Did you happen to have a chance to go to the Exposition?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Did that create an impression?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: What was that Exposition called?

R. BROWN: It was one of the World's Fairs, I think.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Is that the one where he did the Finnish Pavilion?

R. BROWN: Exactly, but there was a fairly good collection from various countries of state-of-the-art --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, it was very interesting. That's a digression. What else?

R. BROWN: I was interested in that travel because coming back from such travel seems to bear on your teaching and your practice.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, very much.

R. BROWN: You had a greatly increased vocabulary I would suppose.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think so, and I think everything we did from then on was really quite influenced by Scandinavian work in general. We designed the swimming pool not long after that, for example.

R. BROWN: That was 1939. How did that come about? You were both on the faculty --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and we were both in practice. We had been given a commission to do a locker room shower thing for the field across Mass Avenue --

R. BROWN: Briggs Field House --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Briggs Field, which wasn't a particularly successful thing, but it was kind

of a trial of our ideas. Whoever made the decisions then decided that we should do the swimming pool. We tried to get it to be built over on the other side of Mass Avenue where we saw the future of athletics to be, but Vann Bush, who was Vice President, would have none of it, so it was built where what I think had been the original track and field events, before anything happened on the other side.

R. BROWN: So it didn't have the kind of site where it could become the core of a growth plan.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No. We were interested in the technical aspects. My partner particularly was anxious to have state-of-the-art everywhere. We had a purification system designed by a professor in Mechanical Engineering who -- or was it Civil? -- anyway, he had an important practice as well; and one of the other faculty members in the Engineering School did the heating and ventilating. Then we had an interesting technical problem of poor soil conditions and having to dig caissons, a round shaft through the earth which belled out below, to get a broader bearing. That bearing, the kind of soil it was on, and everything about it had to be looked at the end of the day by a foundations engineer so they would know the next day whether to make it deeper or bigger or what before pouring the concrete. So it was really touch and go because, you know, you had to have a pool in which the gutters were horizontal and would remain so. [laughter] And you had to have a monolithic piece of concrete boat for the pool that wasn't going to crack up or settle on one end or another.

R. BROWN: The site's a landfill, isn't it, for the most part?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. There were sort of prehistoric stream patterns which had governed the distribution of sand and clay far down, and they all had to be reckoned with. But it was fun. We were also very interested in human comfort, the problem of making people who didn't have clothes on and their skin was wet feel happy next to a big window.

R. BROWN: That's quite a trick. You had to have a screen of some sort?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: We had only a single glass grade window over the south side.

R. BROWN: Whose idea was that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think we arrived at it together.

R. BROWN: That's quite a spectacular feature of it.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Then inside that, at about that distance [LAWRENCE ANDERSON presumably demonstrating distance] was another screen of glass and underneath, between them, warm air came up so that the glass next to the bench was warm and the warm air came up into the room. And yet we couldn't afford to douse the spectators with this kind of moist moat, so we had to sort of try to make that a little different. And the acoustic problem was ...[end of side, cut off]

TAPE 3, SIDE 2

R. BROWN: You wanted a more uniform, continual type --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. We had a very good tile contractor who was also very interested in quality, and the contractors, Aberthaw, were able to provide a tank where the shrinkage of the concrete had been controlled by one-foot gaps between different sections which were filled in only later when the sections had taken on their major shrinkage, which was pretty complicated because of all the reinforcing steel that ran back and forth.

R. BROWN: You had to bridge each gap with rods?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, tying the whole thing together.

R. BROWN: So when the major portions had cured, they would then fill in with the remainder.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: These were technical matters that greatly interested you and your partner. To what degree did they influence the design of the swimming pool?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Actually the design was fairly simple: lots of sunshine, a good control office where the person in charge could see what was happening, taking care of the swimmers with their showers all on one level -- except for the women who at that time were not given equal status, of course; they were on the second floor; they had to climb down the stairs, at risk to their selves, with wet feet. And underneath the stands, the spectator stands, there were lockers and showers, of course. But it was interesting, and it was really a collegial kind of thing where several faculty members and other people in the contracting field were really collaborating; and it fit right in with our notions of what practice ought to be. And MIT was sympathetic because they, you know, had been through the worship of classicism by Welles Bosworth and his insistence on domes and high lobbies and things like that that they found a little pretentious and were only too glad to embrace this pragmatic and technologically advanced approach. I still think it's about the best building we did. It was the first modern building on the campus.

I discovered later in the magazines that there had been a somewhat similar pool in Lund, in Sweden. I don't remember the architect's name. It also had a big south window, except that I think he also made his retractable for summer weather. We tried to provide a garden to make a buffer between the window and the world, in the hope that in good weather swimmers would go and sun themselves. We even dreamed that, with a walled garden like that, maybe men would swim without suits when there were only men in the pool -- and therefore you would avoid catching all that lint in the filters. [laughter] That's the kind of concern that had to be thought about.

R. BROWN: Did the garden come into being?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, it came into being. It was never very luxurious, but it had some nice trees and shrubs in it. Later I talked over the design with Alvar Aalto, and he suggested that it might have been nice to have had a kind of a greenhouse outside the window, with plants growing in that. And not too many years ago they were talking about updating the pool building, and I made a sketch showing how that might work. It would be nice to have sun coming through foliage like that, tropical foliage. But they haven't gotten to it. I guess they don't have the funds to do that sort of thing at the moment.

R. BROWN: Was there a good deal of building going on at MIT at this time?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Quite a lot, yes, but there was more at the time of the war.

R. BROWN: Yours was the first, though, modernist type building there.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, the first one that didn't have any classical orders.

R. BROWN: In your teaching -- back to that for a moment -- you had mentioned that you were I gather perhaps the first to introduce model-making into the training of potential architects.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. We started out using clay -- just mass models for site design and

that kind of thing, and to imitate topography. But then we also developed into cardboard and balsa wood and that kind of stuff. But that was one of the arguments with Emerson and Gardner, because they had not had that in their background, didn't think it was relevant.

R. BROWN: What was your argument for it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Our argument for it was that it was a closer, in some ways better, way to visualize what you were going to build because you could see it in three dimensions from various angles. Of course it's obvious that it can be as much a bag of tricks as perspective drawings, which are technically accurate but can be very misleading too. But it was another dimension, and we thought a good one.

R. BROWN: Were you backed in this eventually? Were you allowed to --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. We even had to present our case to President Compton who thought it was reasonable.

R. BROWN: So the older school architect was really rather narrow in his or her outlook or approach to teaching?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, they didn't think it was narrow. They thought it was broad, principled, and full of theory, of course, but the theories were based on reality as they saw it.

R. BROWN: You also did a research building at MIT in '41.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. In fact, there was also the Sloan Laboratories for gas turbine engine design. And then when the war came, before the United States got into the war, we had a big program on radar research. The Radiation Laboratory was built at that time, and that was pretty much a very quick solution because there was high pressure. Some of the most brilliant physicists in the country worked there. This was before the bomb, and it was related to radar primarily.

R. BROWN: So the kind of building you had to put up then you sort of had to put together very quickly.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Very quickly, and without the kind of sophisticated laboratory fittings that characterize buildings today.

R. BROWN: I suppose without attention to texture or color or--

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right. We were using yellow brick, which had been used on the back facades by Bosworth and which we had used in the pool and, as a matter of fact, which were the most common masonry material in most of Scandinavia, so were not averse to it. Although most people think it's a deadly material, I never thought so.

R. BROWN: Were you still commuting from Boston over to Cambridge for these projects?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: When we were first married we lived in Cambridge in an apartment on Mount Auburn Street, and then later in part of a house on Fresh Pond Road [Lane?], and then in 1942, I think, we moved to Lincoln. We rented two houses there while we designed our own house which we didn't build until after the war. We started it in '49 and finished it in '50.

R. BROWN: Well, there was another move as well. The Department of Architecture was moving from those buildings in the Back Bay in Boston. Was there objection to this? I mean did people in

Architecture wish to stay there?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I don't know. It may be so. I didn't hear any expressed. As a matter of fact they couldn't very well have moved us over there without the Department wanting to go -- the School. The big event, of course, had been in 1916 when the entire Institute, without us, went over there, and there was the famous boat of Ralph Adams Cram and all the pageantry. You've probably read about that. There wasn't much pageantry connected with our move. There was a big gala dinner in the lobby of Building 7, which was atrocious acoustically for after-dinner speaking [laughter], but it was a nice event. As I recall it, George McGuinniss [?] spoke, and I enjoyed it very much. He was really a golden-tongued orator.

R. BROWN: He was an architect of the old school, of course. You would have known him also at the Boston Architectural Center, too.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: When did Aalto come over to MIT, and who invited him?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it was primarily John Burchard --

R. BROWN: He was a teacher already in the '30s?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I don't think he ever did much teaching. He had been studying at the University of Minnesota in a pre-medical course, and then he got into architectural engineering at MIT. We had a special program in that which had a kind of curious history because it had started while we were still in Boston, as sort of an architectural engineering branch, under a very fine teacher named Lawrence. When we got to MIT we found that there was already a department in the School of Engineering called Building Engineering and Construction, which sort of took over, and our program was kind of phased out. But John, I think, had graduated from that in 1926 or '27. Then he went to work for Bemis, Albert Farwell Bemis, an MIT entrepreneur who had made a fortune in bags, making bags -- Bemis bags.

R. BROWN: And he was a man who gave money to MIT.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He gave money to MIT. At first it was an independent laboratory working in Boston. He was interested in housing, especially the technical side of housing -- prefabrication. So John went to work there. But then -- whether Bemis decided -- there was some other shift, it came under the wing of MIT and was conducted at MIT, and John was I guess the first head of that, but hadn't been close to Architecture in that fashion. He was interested in the School, sort of on its fringes, because he became Director of Libraries, I think, and later on built up the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. He was kind of a Renaissance man, wrote books about architecture which haven't survived very well.

R. BROWN: So he was a quick learner --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Quick learner and very glib and full of ideas all the time, but maybe not a true authority in any branch. He was important in the war. He was involved with President Compton and others in the applications of science, especially in the Navy in the Pacific, and there was a study group at Princeton, I think, that he was associated with. I'm sure all that is probably well documented.

R. BROWN: But this Bemis -- it was called the Bemis Foundation?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and that persisted, and when he left it it was put in charge of Burnham Kelly who had been originally a lawyer who studied city planning at MIT and became one of its early faculty members and directed the foundation which did research in prefabricated housing and published exhaustive surveys of the field.

R. BROWN: Was it in this respect that they decided to bring over a European who had some experience in this?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, Alvar had been involved in the Finnish government's need to find housing for refugees from the war from the Soviet republics, so he had obligations there. I think Burchard got him because of that relationship, but it wasn't one of the things that Alvar did best, yet I think it was his *raison d'etre* for being at MIT originally. He went back and forth several times because he had obligations in Finland, and Bill Wurster, who became Dean after the war --

R. BROWN: Was there an acting dean after Emerson retired?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: There was a man named MacCornack, an architect from Cleveland, that had been hand-picked by Emerson to be his successor. But MacCornack was academically a misfit. He didn't do anything as a dean. Of course the enrollment fell off. We were still a one-department school. The classes were small. I don't remember whether we gave up the graduate class entirely -- I think we did for a few years. But when Wurster arrived, he had traveled with Catherine Bauer, his wife, and they knew about Aalto as well, and Alvar came over then as a teacher in the graduate school for some visits.

R. BROWN: But he had been here before the war as well?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and during the war also. It's all very complicated. Finland had two wars with Russia. I tried to find the whole record of when he had been here by studying the archives, but I couldn't because they'd make an appointment, put it on record and what the salary was and everything, and then he wouldn't come. Or he would come and have to go back. It was very hard to piece together what actually happened.

R. BROWN: Well, this area [had a] number of people coming from Europe -- thrust out of Europe or coming on their own by the later '30s. I'm sure you got to know some of them pretty well during those years. The best known one was, of course, Walter Gropius who came in 1937 from Britain.
LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and I remember watching his house go up.

R. BROWN: Was that by the way a reason why you came to Lincoln as well?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, I don't think it was, no, but it could have been I suppose. We had -- there was a time when the Bemis Fund, well the Foundation seemed to be at a dead end as to what to do with itself because prefabricated housing wasn't really taking off. So the money was devoted to visiting professorships, and we had (I've got a list here): Louis Kahn, Edgar Kaufman, Robin Boyd from Australia, Doxiades, Rudofsky, Lewis Mumford --

R. BROWN: Of course this is well after World War Two --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: This was in the '50s, I would say the middle '50s. Hudnut after he retired from Bowdoin --

R. BROWN: Bowdoin?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He retired as Dean from Harvard, and then he spent five years at Bowdoin College teaching a very successful freshman class there where he sent the kids out to study on the weekends and see how things worked in cities and come back and discuss it. He did the same thing here for about five years.

R. BROWN: Back to the '30s and some of these others. We talked about Gropius. Did you get to know him right away?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Not very much. Of course we had still those famous sketch problems that I mentioned earlier, and in which we shared a jury with Harvard, and Gropius and his assistant Breuer became known to us. Gropius was a somewhat forbidding personality, as you probably know, although warm-hearted when you got to know him. Breuer was more outgoing and easy to be next to. I got to like him very much. But that, of course, was a real departure for Harvard because they had previously depended on Ecole des Beaux Arts for their major teachers. It was Hudnut who brought Gropius, and unfortunately the two developed a mutual antipathy later on, which I've never heard a full account of.

R. BROWN: Is Hudnut someone you'd gotten to know in the 1930s?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Maybe not that early.

R. BROWN: He was something of an innovator then?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, at first he was. Everybody was quite surprised that he would bring a Bauhaus man. It seemed out of character. He was a sensitive, shy, a scholarly person who wrote well but who didn't say much, had practiced in a more or less conventional manner earlier on. I guess Gropius had notions of sort of a continuation of the Bauhaus with emphasis on workshops and materials and craftsmanship, and had not maybe a notion of what it meant to be in a university like Harvard where you just couldn't do those things so easily. And I suppose that Hudnut having to be caught in the middle there, between the university and Walter's ideas, was I suppose what led to an impossible situation.

R. BROWN: What were you doing -- what was your practice and so forth during the war?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: We had been resorted to by the Institute for a number of buildings after the pool, including the Radiation Laboratory. I guess they gave us favored treatment at the time, but of course later on they found that that was probably not the best thing to do.

R. BROWN: Why? Because it created tensions and --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Because you really should select an architect on the basis of how you thought he would approach the work; was he the best man you could find anywhere to do it? and we wouldn't always be in that category, as we found early on. But of course there wasn't a great deal of building at that time. We did one or two fairly significant houses. I think gradually my partner spent more of his time managing the firm, getting the work out, and I less so because I became more and more sequestered in the academic routines.

R. BROWN: And that worked out all right?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It worked out all right for quite a long time. If I found somebody approaching me for a commission then I would initiate it, run it through the development and construction. But mostly, I guess, the work was obtained by him and managed by him to the extent

that I didn't get deeply involved in it. We did some other buildings for MIT, including the Life Sciences building in two phases. And during the war -- or immediately after the war, it was -- we did the Cage. Have you ever seen that? There were some wooden trusses that had to be cut in two and brought up by barge from Norfolk. They were made available by the day, and it worked out quite well. Charles Correa thinks it's the best building on the campus, but it's probably not going to be there forever.

R. BROWN: During the war were you able to maintain your practice? You didn't have to get involved with the military?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I wasn't. Beckwith went to Princeton where, in fact, he was chairman of the Department of Physics because the physicists were all somewhere else on the war effort, so there was a hiatus. Not much was done in the way of practice during the actual hostilities.

R. BROWN: Following that -- well, you say MacCornack lasted what, through the war?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: And then the administration decided they needed someone else.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was mostly Killian, I guess, who developed Wurster as a candidate. Wurster had I guess come to a turning point in his career. He had done some marvelous houses in California, but he was pretty much a self-made man. He met Catherine Bauer, they got married --

R. BROWN: She was quite well known in her own right?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: She was well known as a public housing authority and public policy maker and one of the truly splendid heroines of the early days of city planning. She knew Lewis Mumford; in fact they had an affair years ago; it's in his book. And of the other people who were important in housing -- I guess it was Germany between the wars where the socialist governments made rapid strides and lots of construction for subsidized housing. Everybody else first studied that and wondered why it couldn't happen in the United States, but it pretty much didn't. Anyway, I think Bill was seeking a set of more sophisticated bases for himself, and he was studying at Harvard and then Yale and looking up people he ought to know, and he got to know Jim Killian who was president, John Burchard who was active, and so he became the dean in, I think, '45, right after the war.

R. BROWN: Was that a bit of a surprise to you? Did you know anything of him?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I knew him, but I hadn't known him very long. Everybody liked him.

R. BROWN: Did you perhaps think that here ought to have been a better known architect at the --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, no. I was a little surprised that he would be brought from California, but he was studying in the east with the idea of graduating from a regional status into something more important. He really was a strong candidate, very obviously. Stanford Anderson has also made much of the axis between Scandinavia and MIT and Berkeley, believing that there was an affinity between these centers which was distinct from the CIAM and the German components, the Bauhaus people; a more, shall we say, a more friendly architecture, or more interested in the quality of materials and attention to climate and local conditions than seemed to be the case with the doctrinaire modernists. But partly that's due to the fact that Wurster and Belluschi both came from the West Coast.

R. BROWN: Not necessarily by design were they hired.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, they weren't hired to do that function, but it resulted in --

R. BROWN: No, I mean it was no design of the Institute that this sort of axis be perpetuated.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, no. I think it was sort of Killian having confidence in his attraction to Wurster and to his wife. And of course Wurster set about rebuilding the department which had shrunk during the war. People had retired and hadn't been replaced, or withdrawn from teaching, so there weren't many of us left. He's the man who identified Gyuri Kepes, for example, as a key figure although he wasn't at that time very broadly known -- from Chicago; and Kepes brought Preusser and Filipowski who were in charge of the studio programs, that is the visual design aspect rather than strictly architectural design.

R. BROWN: How did that fit within the department, or the school? Was it a separate department unto itself?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, it was part of the curriculum and later became also one of the options open to all the students in the Institute as a humanities experience. There had been an earlier tradition of abstract composition and color and free hand drawing and all the rest of that academic kind of art work.

R. BROWN: You mean even under Emerson in his day?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, yes, very definitely.

R. BROWN: That would be what, various artists would come in and work with students?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. For example Chamberlain was an example. But there was also a more organized free hand drawing course which everybody had to take, and one of our contemporaries, John Lyon Reid was in charge of that for many of those early years. Later he withdrew and moved to California and became a rather prominent architect out there mostly, in the beginning at least, doing schools. So in a sense Kepes and Preusser and Filipowski were carrying on something, with a different emphasis, but it already had a place in the curriculum.

R. BROWN: What was its effect when these people came over from the so-called new Bauhaus in Chicago? Did it have a very gradual effect or did it have any pervasive effect at all?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I think Kepes was immediately recognized as a leader, but it turned out after a few years that he wasn't really all that interested in bringing people up from nothing to some understanding of the visual arts. He got interested in the establishment of the Center for Advanced Study.

R. BROWN: But he preferred to work with people who were already grounded and experienced.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right, yes. Also Kepes' personality, you know, is very humanistic and very altruistic. He's not at all like some of the hard-nosed guys who came out of that tradition, like Albers, for example, or Moholy under whom Kepes had studied and worked. Kepes was interested in having some kind of a fusion between science and art, was terribly interested in micro-photography and things of that sort for their artistic possibilities. And in fact one of his chief motivations was to explore the relations between science and art; he became the Institute figure espousing this.

R. BROWN: I assume that was rather attractive to the scientific --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Very!

R. BROWN: That's the proper dominating element of MIT, isn't it, the scientific.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: On that topic for a moment, did the School of Architecture sometimes feel it was peripheral?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh, we've always been peripheral [laughter], and always felt so. I don't think we're respectable academically, but the same is true of most architecture schools. Because the tradition is not -- you know, marrying it to American universities has proved to be expedient. It was the Americans who did it. In Europe in most countries the schools of fine art were not university departments. Many of them have become so over time, but in Germany and Switzerland it was technical institutes, and in France and many imitating countries it sort of started out as royal prerogative buttressed by Napoleonic influence --

R. BROWN: Apart from the ancient university --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: And kept apart from the University of Paris or the Sorbonne or any of those. In fact I think a candidacy [?] is not the same as our education, although what it is today I couldn't say.

R. BROWN: Do you think it might not have been a bad thing in this country if, let's say, schools of architecture had been separate?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, a lot of people thought they should be, especially in the '20s and '30s, even the '40s. But of course the rest of us thought that you couldn't really be a professional in a service profession of any kind without higher education in a general sense, of which science would be an important part -- mathematics, the humanities, literature, music -- and the only way to get those would be to have that affiliation.

R. BROWN: Have you ever noticed that your European colleagues are less broadly educated?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: [hesitantly] Yes. There certainly was a shortcoming on the part of many in that respect, but on the other hand I think their pre-professional education was in most respects more advanced than ours, and by the time they started to study architecture they were better educated than our candidates, and often they enjoyed a superior image in their countries. Aalto, for example, was a national treasure and treated as such.

R. BROWN: Almost up there with Sibelius, huh?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right.

[END OF TAPE]

LAWRENCE ANDERSON
Interviews with R. BROWN, Archives of American Art

Tape 4, side 1, 2/20/92

R. BROWN: You'd been speaking about your teaching and the Architectural Department.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and the fact that in America, really, that there arose the idea of combining architectural schools in universities. During the middle of the nineteenth century, as you know, there was a lot of advancement in technology, and new fields of engineering were being created, new applications of science. And architecture was thought of by Ware and other people who originated things --

R. BROWN: You mean [William] Robert Ware --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, -- to be a question of technology to a large extent, which it was obvious could be greatly improved. There weren't really yet high standards for certain kinds of craftsmanship, and heating and ventilating and plumbing and electrical and all those things were just sort of coming into their own. That was one of the, I'm sure, motivations for thinking that the association with engineering would be a healthy thing. Schools like the University of Illinois whose founders were connected to the German technical high schools by reason of their outlook and experience were even more committed to that. The people who founded the eastern schools, notably MIT which was the first work of the eastern establishment; and many, or most, of the successful architects of that time were living and practicing in New York or Philadelphia or Boston and had studied in the Ecole des Beaux Arts, which was not a university school. But they brought those conceptions of education into the founding of the new curricula together with the notion of the need for better technology.

R. BROWN: And the technical departments being established were run quite differently from the architectural, is that correct? I mean they had technical training, of course --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, they had a more rigorous base in physics and chemistry and mathematics. During the 28 years of interregnum --or schism -- when the Architectural School stayed in Boston and the rest of MIT moved to the campus in Cambridge in 1916, that difference became more and more pronounced. Karl Compton came into the presidency, and he was a scientist rather than an engineer, and he saw the need for building up the expertise, or the status, of the science departments; but the engineering departments were growing rapidly as well, and they were quite definitely based upon the rigorous introduction of science and mathematics, which during the schism the architects did not partake of. So when we moved in '37, I think, to the new Rogers building on the Cambridge campus, we as the younger faculty were intent on gradually becoming more a part of that educational community than we had been in Boston, whereas over time the Institute itself took an increasing interest in the humanities and the arts, partly due to the leadership of John Burchard who had been through the architectural-engineering curriculum but who had close relations with Killian and others in the administration that had been cemented again during the war.

R. BROWN: This was happening during the '40s?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and the '50s.

R. BROWN: And this had an impact not only on the School of Architecture but also generally throughout the Institute?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, my implication is that the Institute was broadening its base to take more account of social and cultural questions involved in their fields, whereas the architects were trying to get closer to the scientific community by requiring the same undergraduate standards,

embracing the requirements for the Master's degree which in effect were two years of pretty solid math and science with some humanities also required -- and some of those courses were of course electives and extended through the third and fourth years. So we had to build a curriculum that was more technical than it had been in Boston, and one of the sad things that had to be done was to diminish the requirement for three years of historical study that had been characteristic of the Boston environment. It was a Professor Seaver who had that course in his hands, and in order to find room in the curriculum for more technical subjects we had to make optional the history courses. That was maybe unwise, and certainly an unhappy ending for his career which had been a very honorable, popular one.

R. BROWN: This occurred in '37 when you moved?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: In the years following that. I don't remember exactly the moment when the four-year course became a five-year course in order to be more inclusive of all aspects of practice, and also to get a better general education included. That probably happened -- well, the record will show, but it may have even happened when I was still abroad. We were the only department that had a five-year program for the Bachelor's degree, and that became more and more sort of declassé in a way, because the other people in engineering were going five years and getting a Master's degree. And also, the architecture schools in general, or at least many of them, were saying that the professional degree -- the one that could be accredited by the profession itself -- should be the Master's degree. So it finally evolved that the one-year Master's program was enlarged to a two-year program, and the Bachelor's four-year degree was called a Bachelor of Science in Art and Design in order to remove any implication that it was professionally architectural. And then the Master of Architecture was available to the graduate of that. But also we had this problem: that increasingly there were students coming in with Bachelor's degrees from other colleges, transferring into architecture, and if they did that in the old system the sequence of design courses was such that it would take them three years to get their professional degree. But we had a lot of good people coming from Wellesley and Amherst and even Harvard to the program. And it would still take them three years, maybe even three and a half if they hadn't studied anything about architecture, to get a professional degree. For a long time we were in a steady state, I would call it, in which the applicants for admission to the graduate school, who would be much more numerous than what we could accept; and about half our admittees would be people from our own Bachelor's course, and half coming in fresh from the outside who didn't have the kind of background that our own students had had, obviously.

R. BROWN: So it would take them longer to get through program?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It would take longer, but also when they left they would not have had the scientific background that our undergraduates had. In slow stages after the war, all of the old prestigious universities became more and more elitist, both in the undergraduate schools and in the graduate schools. And I remember vividly coming to realize in the faculties that not to be able to admit all the qualified people who applied was a sign that we were doing well, that this should be cultivated, that we should limit the enrollment according to our facilities, and we should do our best to choose the most promising people. And during those days it wasn't too uncommon that you would admit only ten or fifteen percent of the applicants. That meant that the people who had your own Bachelor's degree couldn't get into the graduate school because of competition from apparently more gifted students coming from other institutions. You see, it was a tricky balance there.

R. BROWN: Who'd had more technical training in the Bachelor's degree?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They had maybe more scientific, but they were not in possession of a degree that would bring them architectural registration. So they were then driven to other architectural schools that were less choosy, only to go into something else. And so we acknowledged that that Bachelor's degree was in Science of Art and Design, and that gave opening to many different kinds of careers.

R. BROWN: This was after World War Two that you had such a pool of applicants, a rise in numbers.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and I would say it was continually pressing for the next two decades at least.

R. BROWN: Did this concern you that you turned away so many qualified people?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, because we thought that -- a lot of people would like to play in the Boston Symphony, but there's only a limited number that can be admitted. They audition, and they either get in or they don't. It doesn't mean they can't have a good career somewhere else. It's like the tenure system, faculty spending -- at least in my day I think it was seven years, the maximum time for reappointment without coming up for tenure. (Well, there were some other rules, too.) Harvard, for example, was only too happy to deny tenure to promising people because the fact that they had been teaching at Harvard gave them good entry into other teaching situations somewhere else, so it was regarded as kind of a seeding project for higher education in general. The Korean War and the Vietnam War of course brought in, after they ended they brought in veterans who swelled the applicants for a few years. Also it became more necessary to cope with married students -- what kind of housing they should have. And then finally the unrest of the '60s brought into question whether the high selectivity for faculty and students was really a socially desirable outcome, because obviously most of the successful admittees were coming from suburban families with good incomes and had had good schooling and knew how to take the tests and were largely white Anglo-Saxon people; it was representative of neither the ethnicity of our country nor its distribution of talent. So ever since that time it has been a problem for admissions offices and for tenure committees to worry about things like affirmative action and how to get a reasonable number of non-whites into the system without cutting the standards of performance. A very difficult matter. The idea of setting goals to have, say, ten percent blacks in the faculty was extremely difficult to achieve because where would these people come from? What kind of qualifications would they present in comparison with others who'd had a more advantageous preparation? So those were some of the difficult issues.

R. BROWN: By this time you were Dean, weren't you?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I was Chairman for a longer time than Dean. The Deans then in power were Wurster and Belluschi -- that's for twenty years after the war. They were maybe not so deeply involved in these demographic issues as I was.

R. BROWN: Yes but neither man, neither Wurster nor Belluschi, came out of academia --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right. They were really professional people, and in fact they were acting the part of professionals publicly and in the field. I was too, but my background was primarily academic right from the beginning.

R. BROWN: As Dean, how was Wurster? What was his style? He was there from the late '40s into the early '50s?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, he was a wonderful character because he was a refreshing -- like when you dip a hot iron into cold water. Very effusive, very willing to state a position and even get vehement about it, and a no-nonsense person who, although he admired the great designers very much and courted them, he somewhat pooh-poohed the notion that God is in the details. I mean he would say, after all the mills and the carpenters have been working for hundreds of years to find out how to build windows; why should we sit in an office and tell them to do it differently? that many of the things that architects seem to think are precious to them are counter-productive and ill-suited to real life, and we'd better get down to business and get back in touch with the world.

R. BROWN: What might he have had in mind there, about things that were too precious for the real world? Refinements of design?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, well certainly the use of the orders, or ornament. More than that I think the attachment to dogma. His background had been mostly in residential buildings in California, in the abundance of the redwood period and the rather forgiving climate out there. It had been a very pragmatic approach, making people live happily in the environment -- having good views and convenient arrangements and climatic adjustment, which were more important to him than facade-ism or fancy details.

R. BROWN: At the time he came along in the '40s was there very much dogmatism, or was there arising a new kind of dogmatism?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh, the whole modern movement was as dogmatic as all get out!

R. BROWN: The old dogma was pretty well gone. In your case you'd gone through that --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: But who was the famous Swiss architect, whom I met later? There was a publication of modern schools of some kind, I've forgotten what, and on one school that he had designed (this may have been a monograph of his work -- it was Brosse [??], what was his first name?) he apologized for this building because it had a sloping roof. He said that's what the local people had insisted on. It was in the Alps somewhere. [laughter] And, you know, we had the same trouble, and we were dogma-ing clientele's flat roofs on the Lincoln schools in the late '40s, let's say. But the more conservative and the practical minded people on the committee and in the town were not very happy about this. And we came out with sloping roofs ultimately, with asphalt shingles [laughs], but we managed to get clerestory lighting out of it [by] making clerestory windows over the corridors -- the corridors were flat-roofed.

R. BROWN: You made good use of this compromise.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, we didn't regret it later on.

R. BROWN: Looking back now at, for example, the flat roof aspect of modernism, why did people cling to things such as that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: [laughs] Well, you should have heard Ise and Walter describe the wonderful rewards of flat roofs: you know, the drainage would be inside, the moment the pipes dropped down into the house it would be warm so it wouldn't freeze, and you wouldn't have this problem of what to do with water running off the roof and eroding the landscape, or clogging up the gutters -- everything pointed in favor of flat roofs, as they saw it.

R. BROWN: What would you do with that water? Where would it eventually go?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well it would go out into the --

R. BROWN: Foundation!

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Drainage system. It would go out and leach into French drains or into a storm sewer system if there was one. Well, it was logical enough, but the fact is it's still not easy to build a flat roof and be sure there aren't going to be leaks. The trouble with the leaks is that you can't find out where they're originating, but they spoil the ceilings and do all kinds of damage. In Denmark, when I was there in the '50s, the general attitude was that they gave up on flat roofs. They had a good system for baked clay tile sloping roofs, and they clung to it. Fisker's work, for example, is almost entirely sloping roofs. But there was a kind of aesthetic dogma about this; that was what it came down to. You've seen Gropius's house here. This is a gem; you can't imagine it with a sloping roof. But they were so convinced by this that even when transferring from concrete and stucco to wood, they still kept the same smooth surfaces, and no projections from the roof, flat roofs, and all the things that they decided were the right way to do it.

R. BROWN: And yet it's been described, I think he said that this is an adaptation to the traditional architecture of this region, with the use of wood. But what you're saying is that he smoothed it to make it look almost metallic or --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it had to fit the concept.

R. BROWN: His aesthetic was really foremost.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. When he commented first on Aalto's dormitory building -- you know, the Baker House, which is of dark brick with black mortar. And he said 'Oh, it would have been a wonderful building if only he had used only the palest materials so you could have transparency in the shadows.' It was the wrong materials. But later on he accepted -- you couldn't live twenty-five or thirty years in Harvard University without finally coming to terms with red brick! [laughter] But it took a long time.

R. BROWN: But Wurster was looser limbed.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He was looser limbed, yes.

R. BROWN: And Belluschi --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Belluschi! Belluschi was quite different, really. Belluschi was a much more straightforward aesthete with extremely high standards, so high that he excluded a lot of things that I, with my more catholic taste, was very ready to like. He had done some beautiful wooden churches in Oregon, very fine, very free, and very personal. I'm not sure he maintained that standard as he had to apply it to skyscrapers and more important buildings, and where the imposition of commercial interests were much stronger.

R. BROWN: Was he a day-to-day manager of the school?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, not really. He participated in juries, but he didn't worry all that much about curriculum. I think he didn't pay a lot of attention to the Department of City Planning which more or less carved out its own situation without much help from the Dean. I may be doing him a disservice; I'm not sure.

R. BROWN: And that department had been there quite a long while?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That department was created in 1948 when Wurster divided the School into two parts. The School of Management is still the only school that has only one department; all the rest have several.

R. BROWN: So Belluschi himself didn't pay much attention to the planning side of the School.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I don't think so. It could be, in part, that I wouldn't have seen very much. I guess the planners were probably sort of let down after Wurster and Bauer left because he and she had had such a strong interest in the development of that profession --

R. BROWN: Right. Catherine Bauer did major writing on housing. Did that make sense to you when they split the School in '48?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh yes, definitely. And Jack Howard, who was one of the first chairmen of that department --

R. BROWN: John Galen How --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, not John Galen, Jack Howard, who still lives in Annisquam --

R. BROWN: Was he the first head of that department?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, I think Fred Adams was the first, and he and I were very close friends. His widow died only last year. What was I saying --

R. BROWN: Did you support this division?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh certainly, but I was a little taken aback by the notion that I would be chairman. I didn't know that this was something that I aspired to. Anyway, Jack Howard said that their department could just as easily be in, let's say, Humanities and Social Sciences along with Political Science and departments like that, Economics, because they honed in finely on all sorts of urban problems that had little to do with the physical features of a city -- although that part of it that grew from its origin in architecture and went through Kevin Lynch and those people still remains strong, with Gary Hack for example -- that is attention to the physical forms of cities. Although we never embraced the notion of urban design as being different from that of architecture. Harvard has a program in urban design as a separate degree.

R. BROWN: Why did MIT not think to do that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, we didn't think it was that different from architecture as a whole. It needed to be -- I guess we were sort of of a mind of the influence of Scandinavian countries, for example, which is always strong with us. For instance the architect who did the Copenhagen airport -- I have a lamp shade that he designed; it's in our front hall. Architects did wallpaper or silver or whatever came to mind.

R. BROWN: Or could possibly have planned a new town.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: You mean the basic ability to design and conceptualize was there.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. It shouldn't be too much differentiated. But you know the history of

the Planning Department at Harvard: it was finally moved over into, I guess, the government school, although the School of Design retained, or tried to retain, a semblance of the architectural side of it through their programs. I don't know that story too well, but it's an illustration maybe of the growing independence and even, let's say, misapplication of value systems -- or the application of different value systems that led planners away from problems of aesthetics.

R. BROWN: You sort of being in the same town as Gropius -- now he would have had a sort of more all-embracing conception of architecture, wouldn't he?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but his vision was more directed downward into the industrial arts, from the Bauhaus conceptions.

R. BROWN: In Germany, for example, in the '20s, there was a tremendous amount of large scale design and building --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Especially in housing --

R. BROWN: Housing and urban problems. So you felt that that separation from architecture at MIT was enough, it shouldn't have gone any further?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Well, you as chairman from '47 to '65 of the Department of Architecture within the School -- did this alter your career? your role?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. It meant that I had to do a lot more office work, worry about more policy problems than I had previously. Previously as a teacher, you know, you would just worry about your course and being close to the students. It was hard to maintain that and worry about appointments and promotions and personnel, and at the same time keep a foot in practice. It was hard for me, and it became as time went on harder to operate in the administrative needs of the School and at the same time teach and practice. I guess the Rochester project may have been one of the last important ones, if not the last; that was in the early '60s, after which my practice role diminished slowly. And then while I was Dean I became a cardiac patient; I had a bypass in '71, an operation, and that further reduced my involvement in many things. In fact that was more or less coincident with my official retirement at 65.

R. BROWN: Do you regret having taken on these administrative posts?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: In a sense, yes. But I never got full recognition of any architectural achievements in practice. I've never gotten anything published except in a rather peripheral fashion. Somehow the stuff I did wasn't newsworthy. And I got gradually -- you see, having won the Paris Prize on a design project, I guess I had delusions of grandeur of being a hotshot designer, and it turned out not to be the case. It took quite a long time to make that self-discovery.

R. BROWN: Surely you were appointed to these positions as Chairman and Dean because you had some other gift as well, that the institutions must have --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh I suppose, in the way of administrative -- Yes, I think -- well it may have been, of course, nobody else available -- but also I think my persona is one of a neutrality and awareness of other people's problems, so that I could be sympathetic to questions that come up in the faculty without being too one-sided. It could also mean, maybe, that there was a paucity of leadership that I, that I clearly should have been more doctrinaire, more inner-directed, more

visionary in building the school than I actually turned out to be. It's hard to know.

R. BROWN: But you were saying earlier that a great deal did happen: waves of new students, what you called "elitism", that is further screening, higher standards. Surely much of it was your doing.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, it was the wave of the time.

R. BROWN: Within the -- is it the School or the Department? -- there's also a design component, well the thing that Kepes does, and several men who were in that with him. Was that the equivalent of say earlier in your days of having a design teacher, someone to teach life studies and drawing?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think that when I was a student the concept was that you needed to develop your visual skills, much as a person who was going to write had to learn how to use the verbal language through a lot of exercise. And that's why we write essays in school, so that we develop that ability. So it was reasoned that if you're going to be concerned with something that has to do with visual things, forms and functions, that you ought to have a lot of experience dealing with that so that you could develop the skill of representing it, first of all, and then using that skill to refine what you have in mind, just the way you cross out a sentence and rewrite it. And I still think that's a rather decent motivation. But when the Bauhaus teaching came in, the emphasis shifted away from skill development into more abstract, more intellectualized conceptions.

(SIDE 2)

R. BROWN: So that one shouldn't take the presence of designers in the School of Architecture and Planning as necessarily simply an updating of the training --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, it was a quite different approach. For example, we would be drawing from observation of the human figure, or painting a still life, or sketching outdoors. But when Kepes came, Kepes would assign a problem to make a light box, make a composition in color and light in a box which you would have the ability to look into it and control the forms and the color in there, and the lighting. That was not representing what you saw. It was trying to imagine something and then convey it visually. It was a difference, a big difference. It went with Cubism and Abstract Expressionism and all those non-representational moves in the art world.

R. BROWN: Did you begin seeing, say in the '50s, some changes occurring in the what the students were doing, in what their expectations --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: In what they did in the architecture studio? --

R. BROWN: As a result of having this? Design was required of everyone, is that right?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, it certainly brought vast changes in the kind of work they did in the architecture studio.

R. BROWN: Did they convey as well as formerly?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, and that's one of the losses. Students would submit work on tracing paper, unfinished, and so on. In the old days you had to turn in stuff right up to the last minute, and if it were a minute late it would be either marked unaccepted or marked down; and it had to be on substantial paper. But those standards were relaxed over time, and it would have been impossible in the '50s and '60s to produce a public published work like that with any meaning, because the stuff was too ephemeral.

R. BROWN: Whereas in the 1920s and '30s you had very substantial projects.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Now it isn't that the students didn't think as deeply. In fact, they were more deeply involved with ideas, I think, and what their own mind was capable of, than we were when I was a student. But it didn't show very much in the work, which was thought to be a passing phase anyway, and not worth remembering.

R. BROWN: Did that make it increasingly difficult to judge the students?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. As I told you earlier, Wurster had introduced the idea of the student being present at the jury. But that notion, especially when it was combined with inviting outsiders -- practicing architects or famous people would come in and be on the juries -- that invited a lot of grand-standing and position-taking by people, different professors or different members, often to the detriment of the students' interest, I think. For quite a few years now we have not juried projects that way. What we have at MIT has been, in the last decade or so -- each student has a section of wall to display the work he did. There is a jury, but there might be some introductory remarks with everybody together, but then the different members of the jury would circulate among the students, talk to the students, and review the work, make suggestions and comments, give advice, praise; but this would not be any kind of a vote. You would hope that every jury member would get around to see all the work if he didn't have a luncheon engagement or something that would interfere. But it was the student -- or, rather, the professor in charge of that studio who would give the grade, and that would be a term grade, not a project grade. So it was an evolution to a wholly different kind of evaluation system.

R. BROWN: So the professor of the studio was the person who gave the official --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right, just like all courses in the Institute are in charge of somebody, even if he didn't do all the teaching himself, and he had to submit the grades.

R. BROWN: But would he then be getting feedback, as we now say, from other jurors or --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I suppose so, but he had a better idea than the jurors pretty nearly always about the value of a student's contribution.

R. BROWN: So it's become in your opinion a fairly sound system?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think so, yes, but not as much of a spectacle as it was before.

R. BROWN: It's not unlike in some manner the master in the atelier in the Ecole. I mean he passed the judgment on the students, is that right? Although then you competed for various prizes, of course.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh no. All the juries in the Ecole were central in the school.

R. BROWN: When you went in for your final --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Anything that was submitted for judgment.

R. BROWN: Then that was it, the judgment on which you rose or fell.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and the number of credits you got, or mentions, medals, determined the rate of advancement. It wasn't the amount of time you spent.

R. BROWN: But that system worked --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: In its way.

R. BROWN: Whereas you're saying that the celebrity and grand-standing system that became endemic was not.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That was not always so good. And the students would be pilloried because, you know, they would be, perhaps after two or three sleepless nights, having to defend their thing. I had a young history teacher at MIT who told me the other day that he was studying at the University of Virginia, and they had a very difficult program that had many requirements that had to be met; and he worked very hard to satisfy all those requirements, thought he'd done a good job, and Ralph Rapson came from the University of Minnesota to be a guest juror. Ralph is in some ways kind of a strange person anyway, but he, apparently looking at this student's work, said "and that plan, that's crap!" [laughter] That was all he said. Now that's pretty tough, you know. If you can't say anything good --

R. BROWN: And the resident faculty doesn't take him aside --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, he was an educator himself. He should have known better. But no, I suppose the resident faculty would let the student weep on his shoulder later. That's about all you can do.

R. BROWN: So that was one system that you're glad is gone. It's gone somewhat back to the way it had been.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No.

R. BROWN: We talked a little earlier about the design people. Kepes was brought in by Wurster, I guess --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: You know when you say "design" you confuse me because architectural design is the main stem.

R. BROWN: I didn't mean to confuse you.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Visual design, I think we'd better call it.

R. BROWN: Okay. I brought it up merely because it was within your department, right?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. And he encouraged us to recruit Richard Filipowski and Bob Preusser, a sculptor and a painter, to teach the routine whereas he paid attention to the graduates or to the advanced students, and ultimately branched off into the Center for Advanced Visual Study, of visual design, where he became the director of this small group of men. They got along on a shoestring, but they did a lot of interesting things and still do. Well, Preusser and Filipowski were good men, good teachers, but didn't have the conspicuous leadership qualities that Kepes had, so nothing very new happened there for quite a long time. There was a general Institute development of requirements in the humanities and the arts, and there were courses in literature and linguistics -- whatever fields the Institute thought appropriate in Social Sciences -- and music. Music was always quite strong. And then there were these studio courses in visual design in our department. Plus in our department as well history of architecture and, for a time, a strong department of art history and criticism.

R. BROWN: That came along when you were --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and when the Institute decided to give definition to the various options that were available to undergraduate students to meet their requirements in the humanities and the arts, our offerings in history, theory, and criticism, and in visual design studio were accepted as general fields available to all people in the Institute for credit toward their Bachelor's degree. So we found a lot of scientists and engineers and management people coming into those studio courses, and that seemed to be a very good thing for quite a long time. But now they're both retired, and there's a new man whom they had some difficulty locating, I guess. It's not entirely clear to me what he is doing. I'm sure there's a big change in direction.

R. BROWN: You're speaking now of design studio.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Visual design.

R. BROWN: Visual design. Sorry.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: But until a few years ago the department had trouble financially, and instead of replacing Preusser and Filipowski with people in that field they used the funds -- this is when Jack Myer was Chairman, I think -- for other offerings which seemed to be more necessary to architects than that had become. It was a few years ago when another review by an all-Institute committee of offerings in the arts, and the arts in general at MIT; there it was discovered that there had really been a hiatus, there was a vacuum here needing to be filled, so funds were somehow found, I guess, to keep the studio alive. We also had during that expansive period a good course in photography under Minor White.

R. BROWN: Did you get to know him quite a bit?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, very well. I remember getting his teaching darkrooms for him in the Armory. They're trying to revive that, I believe. There was also under Leacock a cinema program, and I guess some part of that is still moving in the Media building -- Arts and Media building.

R. BROWN: All of this was within the School of Architecture and Planning?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was within the department.

R. BROWN: Did you in general approve of the creation of visual design, photography --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, yes. I was so happy that there would be something in the department that non-architects could think of as educational, that we could have people in other fields come and participate in.

R. BROWN: Were these three or four areas, were they also required material for those who were going on as architects? Were they required to do something in visual design?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, there was a kind of a difficulty of definition here, whether if we required them as professional courses they could also count as humanities credit. But that was just quibbling.

R. BROWN: Did in fact a good many architects-to-be take these courses.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, they did. Of course the history of architecture was considered to be

pretty much necessary. That blossomed out into a number of non-repeating graduate seminars type of thing, and a Phd. program was introduced, so there were lots of opportunities for going quite deeply into that if you wanted to.

R. BROWN: Was that a good thing in your opinion?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think so.

R. BROWN: Did that occur mainly under Henry Millon?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Henry Millon was a great starter, initiator. Before him, in my student days, we had J. J. Sumner and C. Howard Walker and Mr. Seaver who were all good generalized, popular history teachers. But after that, you know, under the Bauhaus influence, history was given a bad name for quite a while; Gropius thought that it was a mistake to teach history until you had already become an architect and had your ideas formed. We didn't necessarily agree with that, but we had trouble with the teaching of history and we brought in people from other institutions. John McAndrew, Henry Russell Hitchcock, and the man from Dartmouth who was an expert on Sullivan, the man who's now at Wellesley --

R. BROWN: O'Gorman?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: O'Gorman, people like that who were really not regularly part of the faculty but contributed a semester at a time, or two semesters at a time, part-time. Eventually we got Millon, who had the advantage of having an architectural degree from Tulane plus his work in history and theory. I think he was the first full-time appointment of that sort. Well there may have been Albert Bush Brown before that, I'm not too sure.

R. BROWN: Who went on to the Rhode Island School of Design.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, yes, and then on to Long Island.

R. BROWN: Did Millon outline a more ambitious program in history?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and then gradually we took on Stanford Anderson and Wayne Andersen, who was interested primarily in painting but also in modern sculpture.

R. BROWN: Did he come along under Millon?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Stanford, I think, was the person who suggested Wayne. Rosalind Krauss, for instance --

R. BROWN: Modern sculpture --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: And any number of other people there. I can't tell you exactly how many there are on the staff now, but it certainly is no longer a one-man operation.

R. BROWN: You mention Wayne Andersen. I think of him -- perhaps I shouldn't -- in conjunction also with the Council of the Arts at MIT which was what? To furnish the Institute with artists and art?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was to advise on that sort of thing and provide works of art, find funding for them, and generally oversee not only the visual arts but the performing arts as well -- particularly music in the performing arts was always very strong. Drama and dance existed, but they

were much smaller.

R. BROWN: Was that committee very effective? Was it set up in the '60s or had been existing for some time?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I can't tell you exactly, but there was an exhibition program in the beginning; in a room in the central library there would be exhibits. And the person in charge of that was my own partner, Herbert Beckwith. We had two men working in the department who were supposedly taking care of keeping a record of student work, but who were able to mount exhibits. Sometimes these were temporary exhibits. Sometimes they were more pedagogical -- that is, for example, Greek art, Greek sculpture would be the motif. But that was really not authoritative enough to suit the committee, the Council on the Arts. Kay Stratton, the wife of president Jay Stratton, was very interested in the visual arts. She and a New York woman were very much proselytizing the whole business. They created a print collection that students could borrow and things of that sort. And when Wayne Andersen came on the scene, he more or less took that over without any official blessing. I think Herb Beckwith thought that he had been unfairly crowded out. Wayne was a very ambitious guy -- so ambitious that he eventually left teaching and went into the business of advising corporations on their art, which was more rewarding to him.

R. BROWN: Did he ruffle quite a few feathers while --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I would say so. But -- I don't know. It was a very complicated period. I'm not sure that I could have had it come out any differently than it did.

R. BROWN: Well, was the net effect that the Institute did, in fact, acquire more art?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, it did acquire more, especially pieces of sculpture.

R. BROWN: What, do you suppose, was the more profound effect upon the students? Did it appreciably affect them at all having shows, more glamorous exhibitions?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it led to what is now the List Gallery, which is a very avant garde place -- and avant gardism is fine, but it is not the whole art. I think the MIT Museum is gradually filling some of the things that the List wouldn't want to do. As far as I know, nobody is unhappy with that kind of division at this moment. Certainly everybody has to admit that Seamans has done a wonderful job in developing that, and the List is doing well too as far as I'm concerned; it's still very much in the public eye as far as the art world is concerned, but not at all interested in any artistic contributions from among the Institute community, and maybe from our point of view maybe a little too much a reflection of the New York art market than some of us -- it's a pretty iffy commercial proposition in many ways.

R. BROWN: What place do you think something like that has at the Institute?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I think a place largely populated by scientists and engineers and managers takes very readily to all forms of art, including music, and maybe even more to especially what's current.

R. BROWN: So it satisfies a need to keep up with the main stream or celebrity level?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. That was certainly Wayne's outlook -- that we didn't have the kind of library or historical experience to make museum curators or whatever out of scholars, but we did have the possibility to stimulate them to think about these matters by these exciting new

developments. There wasn't much point in our trying to have them look at the Hudson School of painting or whatever; they could go to the Museum of Fine Arts for things like that. And I guess that was probably correct because it meant a sharper focus and something which was more within our means because after all, we're not the Fogg Museum.

R. BROWN: Do you feel, let's say, that by the time you retired in the '70s that students coming out of the Department of Architecture were -- were you satisfied? You mentioned some shortcomings in the jury and this and that. When they came out of that Master's program, the equivalent of what you had when you finished at Minnesota -- or you extra year at MIT and then Paris --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It couldn't really be the equivalent because it was quite a different preparation. Actually I don't know how to answer such a question because the reputation of the students for easy advancement in the profession suffered, I think, as compared to other schools which focused more directly on practice, I suppose. For example, at Harvard you'd find a much higher standard -- at least during a long period (whether it's still true I don't know, but I guess it probably is) -- higher standard of draftsmanship and presentation and more professional-looking drawings than we produced at MIT. I mean Mike McKinnell at juries, for example, he would be quite horrified at the lack of professionalism of some of the work. But many of those fairly recent graduates are doing pretty well, very well, locally and elsewhere. Of course they were strong to begin with, good people. The quality of the students that you can attract is probably the most important factor, maybe even more important than what you can do with them when they're there.

R. BROWN: I sense you feel there's been a loss in getting away from the fine training, but on the other hand there may be a gain compared to some of the other schools.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It's very hard to evaluate these things.

R. BROWN: The last thing we mentioned already that you had conducted interviews with three of your former students. One person was Harry Weese who was Class of '38 or '39, and he talked about how you just very subtly suggested the problem, and you went on, "and in the student it was a self-discovery."

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's what I tried to make it, yes.

R. BROWN: I don't know right now if we want to go on, but I'd like to talk maybe next time to some extent about some of these students. Do you want to go on or should we hold on that?

[2/20/92 interview ends. 2/28/92 interview continues on the same tape.]

R. BROWN: We ended the last time talking a little bit about your teaching, your style of teaching, and then decided we would now talk a little bit about certain of your students over many years, from the 1930s to the 1970s, perhaps what you might want to say about them, at least as you recall them as students.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Ten years ago I made out a list of some eighty-four alumni with the idea of selecting among them for interviews the history of the School. They are in chronological order, and they go from the Class of 1926 to that of 1980. Obviously the latter part of the list are people that I have not actually taught personally --

R. BROWN: And the earliest ones are obviously fellow students, outside of your career.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I've got Robert C. Dean here as number one. I've talked with him,

and I think I was a partner in a competition entry with him when he was on the staff, but that was about the extent of it.

R. BROWN: Is he of that well known restoration firm, Perry --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They were primarily restoration at that time. They have since become somewhat more broad; well, they've been doing all kinds of architecture with different kinds of principals. But Dean was one of the most long-lasting partners and designers in that firm. In fact I'm not sure that he's even fully retired today; he must be pretty close to it. The next people on the list I was just in the act of writing a letter to when you came, are Win and Leisel Close. I think I spoke to you about them.

R. BROWN: I'm not sure. C-L-O-S-E?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. He had been a classmate of mine at the University of Minnesota in the class of 1927, and then he came in 1933 to the graduate school at the time I was appointed at MIT, and so also came Leisel Scheu from Vienna. When they graduated they married and set up a partnership which has been going all these years in Minneapolis.

R. BROWN: Was Win Close a man you were particularly close to when you had been in Minnesota?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. And later he taught somewhat at the University, but he became a campus architect. He had for many years the office of the Campus Architect, which job was especially to ferret out the future needs of the University in terms of facilities and to somehow get them into a priority and find out the extent and the program needed, and to take part in overseeing the selection of architects and following through.

R. BROWN: Would he himself have entered such competitions or would that have been --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That would have been a conflict of interest. Meantime she, I think, had no connection with the University, but their practice was a good one. They didn't do very big buildings on the whole -- mostly houses, I think. But they did do a music school for the University finally. She became president of the local chapter of the AIA.

R. BROWN: Her training had come from Vienna?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, she had an architectural degree from Vienna. Her parents had been clients of Adolf Loos, so she was very interested in architecture and is a very interesting person. They had three children. I'm not sure about all of them. One of them is a landscape architect. Another I think is in charge of foreign language teaching at Carleton College -- in other words, they've all done very well. They're still in the house that they designed way back in I guess the late '30s or early '40s.

R. BROWN: Would you characterize their work in a general way as Modernist?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, they were Modernists to the end, I would guess. Wynn was an extremely careful functionalist: everything had to work in its proper place; if anything wasn't serving that purpose, why it shouldn't be there. That was one of the rather extreme but somewhat admirable preaches of modern movement, I think, to leave that kind of responsibility to the client.

R. BROWN: In your experience did most Modernists also hue the line there, not merely speak of functional but also acted on it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh, they varied all over the map, obviously. Now, in the following year there was Bissell Alderman who has retired from his practice in western Massachusetts. He's had a very good career there. For a time he was on the teaching faculty, after graduation. He married the daughter of president Compton, and they have lived a good life. He has been active in community affairs, particularly in the arts.

R. BROWN: In western Massachusetts?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Arman Bartos, 1935 --

R. BROWN: You would have had him as a student.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I think I had him in my first teaching year, although he didn't get his degree until '35, apparently.

R. BROWN: What was his background?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I think he came from New York. He became a very wealthy art collector. It may be that his marriage helped him in that connection. One of the rooms in the Center for Arts and Media at MIT is called the Bartos Room. He's been very generous and become a member of the Council for the Arts. Then I have William Hartmann of 1937 who became the senior partner of SOM in Chicago, a very influential person who went to see Picasso personally in order to get a piece of sculpture for an important plaza in Chicago.

R. BROWN: Was SOM something that had been started actually back in the '20s or so?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Skidmore had been an alumnus of the Institute, but I had scarcely known him because he was out of there before my time. I think he must have been Class of '25 or '26. Owings came from Cornell, I believe. He was a fantastic spokesman and salesperson, a very expressive public kind of person, an exponent of architecture on the grand scale. And Merrill was the practical engineer of the outfit.

R. BROWN: Even in the Depression they were beginning to roll?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, yes. There was a big exposition in Chicago in -- what was it? '35?

R. BROWN: '33, Century of Progress.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right, right. They had somehow gotten some good work there, and that started them off.

Then William Purcell is next on the list. He's of the Class of '38. He came to the graduate school only, from South Africa. He worked for our office in the important early days when we were doing the swimming pool. He later went to New York and worked for Henry Dreyfuss and became a senior member of that firm and ultimately in charge of the office that -- what's the name of the California city that has the Rose Bowl? Pasadena! Pasadena office.

R. BROWN: Of that firm. Was he a designer largely?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but I guess he became what we would call an industrial designer. That was the nature of their work, but he must have been to a large extent an administrative person in that --

[END TAPE 4]

LAWRENCE ANDERSON

Interviews with R. BROWN, Archives of American Art

Tape 5, side 1, 2/28/92 (cont.) [NB: Transcriber's copy of this tape is dated 2/26/92, but at beginning of interview on Tape 4, Brown indicates orally that the interview is taking place on the 28th.]

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I don't see Purcell and his wife very frequently, but now they're living in Cambridge in retirement. They have a house in Rhode Island, however; they spend more time there, I think. Then Harry Weese who was in that class.

R. BROWN: Of '38?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, of '38. We know all about him.

R. BROWN: Do you recall him as a student?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. He was brilliant, erratic, intuitive, but very, very clever indeed.

R. BROWN: He came out of Chicago as well?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, he came from Chicago and went back there, of course. He did work for the foundation as part of his career here.

R. BROWN: What was that involved with, the Bemis Foundation?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, that was the research in industrialized housing. I have a remembrance of Harry from when the School moved to Cambridge from Boston in '38, he designed a mug -- one of the things that were distributed. [laughter]

R. BROWN: Was beer supposed to be drunk from that? or coffee?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Either one, or tea -- whatever. An interesting guy next on the list is Robert Van Nice from Washington, interesting because of his career. He was buttonholed by William Emerson, the Dean, to assist him in measurements of Santa Sofia in Istanbul, which was undertaken largely with Emerson funds for a time. And Van Nice is the person who has over the years crawled over that building and known it from top to bottom with all of its historical excrescences and deficiencies.

R. BROWN: Did he continue here as something of a restoration architect, or was his own practice quite different?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I'm really not sure what else he must have done, but he certainly put in the majority of his career in obtaining that complete story of Santa Sofia, and the most meticulous, accurate, and marvelous looking drawings you've ever seen, which I guess are in the custody of that museum in Washington.

R. BROWN: Dumbarton Oaks? The Byzantine --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Dumbarton Oaks. Right.

R. BROWN: And Emerson helped fund that from his own money?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, he did.

R. BROWN: Was Van Nice indeed someone that you thought -- he was not restless?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He was not personally ambitious, not really with the zeal of a designer, I don't think, but a very intelligent man, and a man who was able to put his entire life, sort of, towards that objective. It's unusual to find such a person anywhere. Um, I'm going to start skipping a few people.

R. BROWN: Right, just ones you particularly want to say something about.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Frederick Roth came from the University of Minnesota. He was a Wisconsin native originally, a bright designer in the Class of '42 as a graduate student. He practiced with Vincent Kling, who was also of that period -- a big practice, institutional buildings, and he ended up as a member of the faculty at Clemson.

R. BROWN: Did he have a bit to do with developing a department there, or had there been one?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, there had been one for a long time, but the department there is really the work of Harlan McClure who somehow doesn't seem to be on this list but who was a contemporary in that class, who had worked in Scandinavia, and who was a draftsman-designer kind of person and I think taught at the University of Minnesota later and then went from there to Clemson and built up Clemson in a wonderful way, getting the support of the entire building industry in South Carolina for research, and establishing an important program in Genoa, where there hadn't been any important American architectural program I think.

R. BROWN: In Genoa?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: In Genoa. They occupy a modest palace there, a very interesting place, and there's room for a class of students in the studio. They're good relations with local architects who are helping to teach. I think Roth was at Clemson partly because McClure knew about him.

R. BROWN: What was Roth's specialty, strength?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Designer. That was the way Kling used him, I think. He's living in the house he designed for himself, a very interesting place. I visited him there some years ago along with McClure. Also at about that time, in 1943, was Walter Netsch. I remember Walter because during the war most of the faculty went off into war activities, and I was one of the few people left teaching; and of course the number of students dwindled as well, so it was a rather intimate situation -- quite different from what it became a few years later.

R. BROWN: Was he one that you remember a bit more than others?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, in fact I've been in pretty close touch with him.

R. BROWN: He was one of the people you talked with.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right, we had that extensive interview. He had been a bachelor for a long time, a partner I guess in SOM, but a rebellious one in a sense in that the firm was going in a direction under Bruce Graham that was contrary to Walter's instincts. Walter was always trying to invent something new in the way of form; some of them were not very palatable, but anyway they were original --

R. BROWN: Whereas SOM wanted tried and true?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and finding better solutions even if it needed computerization to do it. Anyway, his career is well enough known, I guess, so we don't need to expand on it. I was going to say that he married late, a woman who is important in the Democratic party and who served many years as a state senator in Springfield.

R. BROWN: This was in Illinois?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Was Bunshaft also one of your people?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. I don't have him on the list, but he was.

R. BROWN: Had he gone into SOM a bit earlier?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, in Chicago.

R. BROWN: Did you know him fairly well?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Fairly well, yes. Less well known is Arnold Gangnes of Norwegian descent. He came from Seattle, went back to practice there, and he became a specialist in the needs of disadvantaged people. Burton Rockwell who is in San Francisco, Class of '46, practiced there extensively for quite a long time, a partner with Reid.

R. BROWN: What sort of things did he do?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Schools originally, but many other things later. He taught at Berkeley. I guess he's probably retired now. Tom Dorste is from Indianapolis, practiced there his entire career. He fathered a new firm a few years ago.

R. BROWN: Would you say that at least into the '40s many of these people might go back into the area they came from?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They seemed to, yes.

R. BROWN: And you said somewhat earlier that at least through the '30s, maybe the '40s, that once you graduated there was usually some sort of job, there was such a need for design.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. An astonishing fraction of the graduates of the School have gone into academic life in a big way, not just incidentally but as a major career. But this has been true ever since the beginning.

R. BROWN: What do you think accounts for that, at least in your experience?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, part of what accounts for it is that certainly in the beginning there were very few schools. MIT was the first by a slight margin. And suddenly there was a sharp growth because of the growth of American universities under the land grant policy of the central government. And since there had been precedents for architectural education in the private universities of the East, and also at the University of Illinois and a few other places, it was the graduates of those schools that were in demand for peopling the new ones, which they did.

R. BROWN: By your time, when you were teaching -- are you a little surprised, or can you account for such a high percentage of your former students having academic careers?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I'm not so sure whether it was just a kind of momentum that had been established and was continuing, or whether there were other conditions that were causing it.

R. BROWN: Was your program at MIT possibly more academic, more intellectualizing?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It may have been --

R. BROWN: As opposed to more practical programs.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, probably. I have here the name of Enslie Oglesby, called "Bud" Oglesby, who came from Dallas and who is practicing there with a good deal of respect from everybody. I did some work down there consulting on a couple of architect-selection jobs, and I got to see more of him. A very good person and a good architect. Spero Daltas came from the University of Minnesota to be a graduate student --

R. BROWN: When was that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He got his degree in '48. But then he went on to win the Rome Prize, and he liked living in Rome so much that he sort of decided that the Mediterranean was his field, and in fact, of course, his ancestors were Greek. He got a job for a princess in Iran and did a palace for her early in his career, which was one of the very first manifestations of the Islamic countries importing western architects. But that put him on the map.

R. BROWN: I suppose it was also a lucrative kind of project.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I suppose so. Anyway, the firm became known as Brown Daltas. I never met Brown I don't think, but they've been having a Boston office as well.

R. BROWN: But they're based in --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They're based in Rome. When I visited there in '74 -- I was at the Academy for a little bit -- I socialized with that firm, and there were maybe four or five or six MIT graduates in the office. It was a big office.

R. BROWN: And he stood out as a precocious student? He won the Rome Prize.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but he was a little bit on the glib side as well. A self-promoter, I guess.

R. BROWN: As late as '48, the Rome Prize: well, what would it consist of at that point? of the traditional or something else by then?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, I think it was more classical in a general way. It gave residence in the Academy for three or four years and a good deal of freedom to do whatever interested you. The use of a studio. Everybody was encouraged to produce whatever was in him. In that respect it was different from l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts, but not so different from the French Roman academy, which I had also visited, where there was even more freedom, I think. It also included, in both cases, musicians and sculptors and painters; and academicians -- historians of art, and archeologists, especially the classics. I found in '74, however, that it was quite a -- I don't know, sort of an isolated

enclave. There was a music composer there who had been there for a couple of years, had never been in downtown Rome and didn't expect to go there.

R. BROWN: Yes, it is a bit removed. He was mentally as well.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. I tried to get some of the scholars to join me in trips to some of the hill towns around, but there was no interest in that. They had some very gifted people.

All right. Here's John Desmond who is from Louisiana and is chiefly known, as far as I'm concerned, for the marvelous drawings he does. Perhaps you know them? I've got a print. His son was studying under Stanford Anderson, and he gave me a print of an aerial view of all of Boston with the prominent buildings shown. I've got it upstairs if you want to see it.

R. BROWN: Was that his particular interest even then?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. He was such a marvelous draftsman, but I think he's been a good practicing architect as well, as far as I know.

Robert Bliss in '49. Bliss -- I'm not too sure just where he did come from originally, but he had studied briefly at Black Mountain. He not only studied at MIT, but he worked in our office. Then he went to Utah, and he's been teacher and dean there for many years, now retired.

R. BROWN: Were you quite aware at that time of Black Mountain College?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, rather. It was being talked about, although not much was known about it really.

R. BROWN: You never went down --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I never went down to see it, no.

R. BROWN: When Bliss when he got to MIT, could you see some effect of that place?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, more I think in the case of his wife, Anna, who is a painter very much influenced by Mrs. Albers.

R. BROWN: Was Pei in your class or was he a very early student?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, he was one of the people who graduated back in the '30s. I didn't have him on this list because he went to Harvard Graduate School. He got our Bachelor's degree and studied there under Gropius.

R. BROWN: Was that fairly common then or, in fact, the other way around was more common? To come, say, from Harvard or elsewhere?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I don't know if it predominated either way. But of course when Gropius came, which I guess was in '37, the school became a magnet school and attracted many gifted people at the expense, I suppose, of other schools.

Where were we? Oh yes. In 1950 graduated Zachary Rosenfield. He had been, he was the son of the Rosenfield in New York who was a hospital designer, consultant, and Zachary went into that as well and is still active, I think.

R. BROWN: Mainly doing institutional buildings?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. He became very knowledgeable about that, which was a very difficult area to get into deeply.

R. BROWN: Did you ever get your toes into such a thing? You did schools --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: We did mostly schools. We did some hospital buildings. We did a building at the Boston University Medical Center, which I think is a pretty good building. And then my partner Bill Haible did a building at Emerson Hospital, but later on they expanded greatly under a different architect.

R. BROWN: But it's just highly specialized work, isn't it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Ordinarily it is because there's so much technical involvement, not only in the mechanical equipment but also in the knowledge about medical practice in general and how it works.

Now: Maria Bentel, Maria Azzarone of Italian parentage is her maiden name. She and her husband were in the Class of '51 and practiced and principals, partners, on Long Island for many years. She's a fellow of the AIA, a championess of women in architecture.

R. BROWN: Do you think that's been an issue or just something that's evolved -- the lack of women? Increasing numbers now, I suppose.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it's the general trend of the times, of course, and long overdue. I think Belluschi was embarrassed by an interview he gave to an insurance company. They were interviewing well known people as to their professions, and as sort of a side remark he said that he didn't think it was a profession for women. [laughter] He got hell for that!

R. BROWN: Was that very long ago?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh yes! I'm sure he wouldn't subscribe to that now.

R. BROWN: You didn't!

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, no, in fact some of the best students I can remember have been women -- not many on this list, of course. But I've got here Henrik Bull who is principal in a firm in San Francisco.

R. BROWN: What is memorable about him?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: What seems to be memorable in my recollection is that there was a curious kind of a competition for a new capital city in Alaska, which was conducted under some kind of charrette principles. I don't know. They were all there together, and interviewed, and did sketches, and so on. And that firm was chosen to be the designer. I can't give you the full name of the firm, but you can look it up.

R. BROWN: And where was it based? San Francisco?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. It was to be a new city near Anchorage. However, I guess that idea has gotten stuck. I don't know whether it's the recession or what, but it didn't seem to have gone very much further.

R. BROWN: Is the charrette system unusual?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. It is quite contrary to the regulations laid down years ago by the AIA as to how competitions are to be conducted. Of course those regulations were aimed at protecting the architect against exploitation of the process. But they were so one-sided: they decreed that all members of the jury had to be architects -- no! the majority had to be -- so that they dominated the discussions and chose things on architectural grounds as they saw them, and the minority members of the jury had only to concur.

R. BROWN: And so in this case they went --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They went with a different system, and I don't remember -- his name is almost on the tip of my tongue -- the man who was also an MIT alumnus who engineered it. He had been dean at New Mexico, I think, only a year or so when he was tapped to go up there and recommend a process to them.

R. BROWN: So this process involved what? open discussion with [garbled]?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I've got some documentation on it, I think, if you want to go into it.

R. BROWN: Was it one familiar to you? I mean right off you said "the charrette process".

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, not really. I think this was one of the early examples of it.

R. BROWN: It's become more common?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think it has. There's been much more willingness to interact with lay people in hammering out programs and solutions, and what the public wants and what it will accept, which I guess is definitely a democratic trend that ought to be encouraged. Because I think our profession has, you know -- it started out being a plaything of kings, who were the only patrons almost, or popes. It's taken a long time to kind of extend our proclivities to help the common man. The socialist governments between the two wars in Austria and Germany did a lot in that direction in public housing, and all the European countries have made great progress along that line. We have been much slower, I think because everybody is supposed to be on his own keel in this country, and if you're not there, God help you!

R. BROWN: So as a result public housing and large scale public projects are -- an architect may be involved, but there's not the competition necessarily?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: For a long time it was not the kind of work that architects wanted. Too many regulations, too much kibitzing, not enough payment, having to settle for what might be corrupt construction agreements, and so on. It was a political game pretty much. It must have been that in Europe, too, but somehow or other they were able to -- at least in some cases -- bring to bear a more egalitarian attitude.

In the Class of '51 also I've got Bernard Rothzeit who's a respectable practitioner in New York that we hear about once in a while. Bernard Spring, who taught for a while at MIT, went on to Princeton, became Director of the Boston Architectural Center, and recently retired.

R. BROWN: And was he in practice as well?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: To a certain extent, yes, but mainly he's an educator. Sanford Greenfield, who also came from New York I believe along with Rothzeit and Spring, is now director of the school at the New Jersey Institute of Technology.

R. BROWN: And he was at one time at the Boston Architectural Center.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, he was director there too, before Spring.

R. BROWN: Were these two men sort of academically inclined when they were at MIT?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I shouldn't say so. No. I guess Rothzeit, who didn't go into academia, was the more contemplative of the three. Spring and Greenfield were not especially interested in learning at that time, in a general sense, but were ambitious and talented and good students. I've got Piotr Kowalski from 1952, who became a sculptor.

R. BROWN: But he came in with the intention of being an architect. What was his background, or his interest at that time?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I'm a little bit dim in recollecting this, but he was a friend of Jack Myer's who was also a classmate. He did very interesting sculpture later. I guess his interests at that time were clearly in that direction. Then there's William Warner who practices in Rhode Island, respectably but on a modest scale. He did win a competition, I think for a theater somewhere down there which was praised. Richard Donkervoet, who has been a principal in Baltimore. And in 1954 Ezra Ehrenkrantz -- you know about him?

R. BROWN: A little bit. Maybe you can tell us about him.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, Ezra was a very capable student and an ambitious one. He and Fred Stahl, an architect in Boston, were together at MIT. They both got Fulbright scholarships and they both went to England; but their interests were quite different. Ezra got wrapped up in the school research thing --

R. BROWN: What was that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: After the war there was for some reason not quite clear to me, in England -- well there was a need for a lot of new schools because their education system was being revamped. And there came to be a rather successful series of prefabricated approaches to that, coupled with a concern for the well-being of students in their growing periods, particularly with respect to light. They went out of their way to find out about daylight and climate, and they elaborated formulae for calculating in a room, given a certain placement and number area of windows, what segment of the sky would shine in that room, with what effect; what's the difference between light from the zenith and non-sunlight from lower down and sunlight. We never got into that; it didn't seem to be terribly important in this country. It shaped Ezra a good deal, I think.

R. BROWN: You mean it affected his design?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. I haven't followed his career in detail, but I know it has often hinged on technical-scientific issues and the applications of pragmatic approaches.

R. BROWN: Well Stahl I first ran into as a restoration architect, wasn't he?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well he may have been in that, yes, but he was a partner with the Deitz firm for quite a long time. He had studied at Dartmouth, so he was a graduate student. (I think he was also an undergraduate -- I'm confused.) Well anyway, he's been, of course, here locally with considerable responsibilities and success.

Paul Spreiregan is interesting because he's the only one that I know of who has had a consistent

interest in competitions, in their conduct and in their improvement.

R. BROWN: Oh I see: you mean he's studied the matter and been involved in AIA policy.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and in educational policies generally. I guess he's practiced, too. I don't know. I never have heard much about that, but when a few years ago I went down to Austin, Texas, they were having a big symposium down there on the state of architectural education, and he was a person there involved. I had prepared a paper, and he commented on it and made suggestions for changes, and we did it right there together. He was a nephew of Sam Zissman [?], who had taught with me. He was teaching design -- that is abstract design or visual design in the early days. We talked about the transition from just drawing from observation to drawing as design, and he was an early exponent of that. He and I went west together in 1934, I guess. He settled finally in San Antonio with O'Neill Ford and Associates [?] down there. He's dead now. He had a heart attack.

R. BROWN: The uncle, Zissman.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Sam Zissman.

R. BROWN: But Spreiregan's interests were rather unusual?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Very unusual, I think.

R. BROWN: Well what was the AIA by the time you came along? and during your career? It became much more influential or had it always been something of a power?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it had always been something of a power, but it had become over the years a more and more democratic power. They've enlarged their membership greatly, and they're just flooding us with all kinds of papers about how to conduct your practice, what to do about litigation, and all kinds of things. But in early days they were rather -- um, I'm looking for the right word -- rather strict about how competitions should be conducted. There was a man -- I've forgotten his name for the moment -- who wrote the code, which was the Bible. I think Paul did something to loosen all of that up.

R. BROWN: So Spreiregan made it in effect rather liberal?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I think so. He's a very intelligent person, very well read, not necessarily a gifted architect.

John Dixon of New York is editor of Progressive Architecture.

R. BROWN: How would you characterize that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, as I know John and remember him, I think he's well suited to that kind of a career, investigative and journalistic in a nice way. He has good judgment.

R. BROWN: Did Progressive Architecture come along to try to provide something that was lacking in the literature.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Maybe. I don't know. I haven't followed the journals all that much, but it was originally Pencil Point and it became Progressive Architecture, signaling a new path; but that was quite a long time ago.

R. BROWN: In fact you just said you don't follow the journals very much. Do you think the profession in general does, or is it sort of a showcase more than anything else?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think so [meaning profession follows] -- well, maybe it is to a large extent a showcase. I know that students find it very important as a window on what's going on. But I think many architects, who are of course not always so young and so eager, tend to feel that the journals are too tendentious and are seeking out stuff that is newsworthy and original rather than stuff that might be of lasting value. Of course I'm very old fashioned now because of my age. I subscribe to Architecture as a member of the AIA, but I can't read very much of the stuff that is being published. I wrote a letter to them recently objecting to one of their publications, or rather objecting to one of the things they had published. They didn't publish it [the letter].

Next we come to Astra Zarina who was a graduate student only, in 1955. She came to the United States as a person without a country in the '40s, the late '40s I guess, a sort of a displaced person.

R. BROWN: From Eastern Europe?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: From I think -- yes. She studied architecture at the University of Washington in Seattle and then came as a graduate student to MIT, and was a very brilliant person as a designer. She worked for a while for Yamasaki, and I guess for Eero Saarinen, maybe. She went finally to Seattle and became a member of the faculty at the university. When she was a student at MIT she was married to a man who was studying for his Master's degree at Harvard; however that marriage broke up, I think because of his ill health. She married another man who turned out to be a designer in the office of Brown Daltas, and she wanted to be part of the year at least with him in Rome --

(END SIDE 1)

(SIDE 2)

R. BROWN: Was this an arrangement that was effective?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think it was cramped, but effective. I don't know where the kids lived. She was trying to get the university to do something better for that program, but apparently it was hard work. They had an apartment in the via Monserrato in the -- what do you call the area of Rome that is on the east side of the river but right below the Academy?

R. BROWN: Trastevere?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Trastevere, yes. I saw quite a lot of her -- we saw quite a lot of her at that time. But it seems they don't have that apartment anymore, at least when I send them a Christmas card it doesn't get there.

R. BROWN: So many of these people you've been talking about have gone into academia and developed new programs. Do you think perhaps that that had some effect on their designing, their practice? I mean their willingness to be administrators, as you were. You said last time for example that meant you had [less] time or energy to channel solely and wholly into design and coming up with the -- over actively, I suppose -- doing new challenging, or even risky commissions and the like.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I guess academic activity is in some ways a -- can be an avenue for people who don't have the trust or the ego or the hard shellness required to be a big-name architect, and they don't want to be a small-name architect. [laughs]

R. BROWN: I see. But it does in fact require a real hard shell and a lot of aggressiveness?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think it does. It requires some kinds of qualities that are rather mysterious but either make or break a person in the public eye. The American public is a funny animal. Many of the people that I observe becoming suddenly famous -- it's changed them as persons. And also some of them are really famous only for a very short time, and then they're ignored, and that must carry an awful price. I don't know. There's something curious about being in such a big country, and having so many of us, and having to live by our wits in a way, and at the same time be willing to take the risks of big commissions and big organizational tasks which would break most people, and do break a lot of marriages. It's a tough life.

Well, Tom Hodne, '56. I think he came from Minneapolis and went back there, but he worked also for us on a rather wonderful project in Cleveland. Our firm was teamed with Adams, Howard, and Greeley, the planning firm, to make a study of a place in Cleveland which came to be called University Circle. Do you know Cleveland at all? Well, you know that out in the symphony and art museum area there are many institutions, cultural and educational --

R. BROWN: Yes, is this about a mile away from the lake and the commercial downtown?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, more than a mile. Well, we did a study. There was a family living in Bratanahl, on the shore, that funded the study -- this study and others -- to see if there was some way of working out a community consciousness of these institutions. The head of the investigation was Kevin Lynch, and we had an office out there.

R. BROWN: He was then a colleague of yours at MIT?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right. And Jack Howard was sort of looking over his shoulder, and I was looking over the shoulders of people like Tom Hodne and one or two others who assisted in it. We turned out a report which was adopted, which led to the organization of the University Circle Incorporated, a non-profit organization, independent, however, of any of the institutions or of the city. I think it has furnished kind of a role model for what other towns and cities have been doing. It's a holding company for land acquisition; it's a parking authority for the region; it has its own police, its own internal jitney or bus system, and it also has a degree of control over what gets built and its design, and sometimes even in the selection of an architect. Normally the institution that wants to build something selects its own architect and comes with a proposal which the board of -- I'm trying to think of the official name, the architectural review board which numbers anywhere from three to five people, and which I served on until a year ago from way back then.

R. BROWN: Was it set up to create sort of a special type of zoning?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, not zoning but --

R. BROWN: You mentioned community involvement with the institutions --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well you see, if the institutions wanted to grow or if a new institution wanted to be established in the area, there tended to be competition between other institutions who also might want in their future to have this. There were two universities that later fused; but they were in some way in conflict in their growth. And there needed to be somebody who was sort of keeping the peace so to speak. It wasn't a question of zoning, but it was an acknowledgement that there were indeed some forty institutions of different sizes and importance more or less in this area. There were problems like could they get enough housing for people so they wouldn't all be commuters, what to do about that; somebody had to take the initiative. The separate institutions

didn't seem to want to do things like that. We were community oriented. [brief interruption as someone says "hello."] For me it lasted a long time.

R. BROWN: I guess it covered all sorts of considerations that architecture and planning needs to address. And you were involved as an advisor for twenty-some years?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: I know there was also tremendous urban decay in places like Cleveland.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well yes. There were problems outside the borders of University Circle. A tremendous black area immediately between the circle and downtown, and also a more prosperous but predominately black area to the north and, you know, we got reflections of the city's overall problems --

R. BROWN: But it was flexible enough so that you could adapt and also coordinate the needs of the institutions.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well yes. The Circle had to get city approval for any, say, traffic change or even the design of a building. There was another municipal review board that passed on those things, and the city planning office was in close association with everything. There were severe traffic problems there.

R. BROWN: So your former student Tom Hodne was involved --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON; Tom Hodne. He was on the staff, but then he went to Minneapolis and practiced, quite successfully, but suddenly a few years ago he surprised me and others by accepting the job of being director of the school in Winnipeg, so he packed up and went there. He came to see me before he did that. I note that he is not any longer in charge of the school. I don't know what happened, but it can be that somebody who has been primarily a practitioner can wish for policies in the school that are not congenial to the existing faculty. I'm not saying that's what happened; maybe he was disillusioned. I think he's still a member of the faculty. There's also Peter van Dyck who's practicing as a principal in Cleveland with one of the leading firms there. I don't remember whether he came from Cleveland originally, but I guess he probably did.

R. BROWN: What do you recall of him?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Good student. A very good student, a very good designer. Peter Samton in '57 is the chief designer and the partner in the Gruzen partnership. The original Gruzen was a little older than me, an MIT graduate, but whom I knew with his wife in Paris, and he traveled in Spain with three of us bachelors in the back seat. He was very much a New York Jew with a good deal of commercial ambition; he was a good architect and designer as well. And he started that firm in New York, which went well. Then he had a son, Jordan, who came to MIT, and in Jordan's class I think was Peter Samton whom I've got down here. But I don't have Jordan because Jordan stayed as the administrative head of Gruzen associates, and Samton, as I say, was the partner who was mainly the sensitive designer.

R. BROWN: How would you characterize their work?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Actually it's been pretty high quality. They've done some things that have been very well commended in New York. They came back to do some work at MIT because MIT had concern about its growth toward the northeast, toward Kendall Square, where there was a

mish-mash of industrial and commercial buildings, and a need for renewal. And MIT thought it should have a master plan for that. I was at that time on the building committee at MIT, along with the president and some others, and we finally recommended that the Gruzen firm make a joint commission with Mitchell/Giurgola, with I guess the implication that Giurgola would be the principal contributor.

R. BROWN: Why did you think of him? He was quite noted at that time?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He was quite noted already and highly respected. Well, it was not an easy commission, and there were many meetings, and I guess not enough liberty for anybody. The planning office at MIT ruled rather firm hold on the kind of buildings that could be tolerated. But there is nevertheless as a result some progress toward how to adapt that area ultimately to the campus, and it resulted ultimately in Mitchell/Giurgola being architects for the medical building which is relatively new over there, and which makes a transition between the grid of MIT and that part of Cambridge, which is different.

R. BROWN: That was from '76 to '82, or something like that, that you were involved in the building committee.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I guess it must have been.

R. BROWN: I take it it wasn't particularly satisfying work since you were under the thumb of the Institute on that.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well no, it took us seriously for the most part, but it came to the question of who should be the designer of the Arts and Media Building, which is part of the overall plan. Unfortunately there didn't seem to be some obvious candidate. I was hoping that Lyndon and his firm would be given serious consideration because of the work that Donlyn had done preparing the need and goal of such a thing.

R. BROWN: He was on the faculty at that time?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Or he had just gone back to Berkeley, I don't remember which. Anyway, it became clear that the president didn't feel comfortable with anybody but I. M. Pei; but Bill Porter and I, who were on the committee, opposed that, and I guess that kind of broke up the committee because [laughs] from that time on we were not consulted.

R. BROWN: You already had an I. M. Pei building over there anyway.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right. It makes a certain amount of sense to let him do several buildings in that area, but we were afraid that he wouldn't take seriously the needs of the users, that he would be interested primarily in the public space part of the building and its external statement.

R. BROWN: Is he typical of the sort of egocentric celebrity-level person you mentioned earlier?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think so. He seems to want to make his mark in aesthetics quite strongly, under all it's been a big motivation, and never very participatory as far as I can tell with the needs of the client, which can be very troublesome in an academic situation where there are many different voices.

R. BROWN: And you didn't so much need public spaces as you needed --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Work spaces!

R. BROWN: Work spaces. Right.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's what I thought.

R. BROWN: And you needed buildings that would connect with that next grid more effectively, the industrial-commercial --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. One of the issues was -- there's a need at MIT, that still exists, for facilities for the performing arts. Kresge's inadequate for that --

R. BROWN: The Saarinen auditorium?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. And one of the notions is that it should be between the Arts and Media Building and Memorial Drive, in that area, which is very accessible publicly, but it would have to involve removal of existing buildings. We wanted it so that when that came about it would be interconnected with the Arts and Media Building, but I guess that either would have cost a little more or would have upset the notion of an over-riding structural grid that the Pei office had in mind. It just didn't fit with their considerations at the time, so we were defeated on that issue.

R. BROWN: You were here when Saarinen did his auditorium and his chapel. How did that evolve?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: We were still mesmerized by Eero at that time, I think. Eero was a tremendously thorough guy who wanted to try every possible kind of solution he could think of whenever anything offered the possibility. Many of these ideas -- at that time in his career, anyway -- were rather far out structural notions, like Dulles airport and the Yale skating rink. So he hit on this eighth-of-an-orange type of thin shell, which made an awful lot of appeal and sense as a structure and yet had basic difficulties with it: the first and most important difficulty was that it more or less wiped out any back-stage space, which would have to be behind one of those points. Also it was structurally a little bit insecure; the big arches that leaned outward had to be stiffened to keep them from wobbling, or deflecting, so it wasn't structurally ideal either. And from the point of view of construction it turned out -- you know, you see the thing as a finished form, in your eye it's a thin four-inch shell covering this vast space, it's lovely. But in order to achieve that you had to have a forest of scaffolding inside to put the concrete on, and while you're doing that you can't do anything else. That's a tremendous waste of lumber in a sense because afterward it's no good for anything - - or much. But also Eero and his team were very scrupulous and studious about so many of the details in that building, which are very elegant.

R. BROWN: You say you were mesmerized, or many people were, at that time, but as the project unfolded you began to see these shortcomings?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. It turned out there was a small theater underneath the big one, which is okay but it couldn't have stage scenery either because of what was above it. The rehearsal rooms were down there; they were sort of strangely shaped. Everything, in other words, had to be apprentice to this idea of that form whether it corresponded to what people needed or not.

R. BROWN: Why did the Institute [buy] the form do you think?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I'd say they were mesmerized. I guess all of us were. We thought this was a bold thing that ought to be done. It's hard to account for these things when you think about them

later. [laughs]

R. BROWN: Did you get to know him a bit?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh yes, I knew him quite well.

R. BROWN: How would you compare him with Aalto, an older Finn whom you'd also known?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Aalto was much less American. Eero grew up in America, studied in America, and had American values.

R. BROWN: How would you compare those, say, with Finnish ones?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it's a little hard to define but Alvar was always much closer to the people who were going to use the building, I think, than Eero ever became.

R. BROWN: So Aalto had grown up in the European Modernist tradition of working for the state, say, or being very, very practical --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but he was never really part of the Modernist movement. He had his own aesthetic.

R. BROWN: So maybe I should have said socialist outlook, service to society?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, yes, yes. Eero did a lot of work for big business. That tends to shape a person in a certain way. I think Eero was kind of a man of a single idea: once he accepted it, he would carry it out no matter what happened. Whereas Alvar was more flexible, and his art was such that you could keep on developing it through its shape without having any fixed idea at the beginning exactly what it would be like. Whereas Eero tended to study a thing to death, but then he would finally come up with something that just had to be so strong that you couldn't resist it.

R. BROWN: So he did a great deal of preliminary investigation --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh yes. Big scale models and an immense amount of thoroughness, and yet it didn't lead a kind of all-encompassing solution which addressed all aspects of the problem.

R. BROWN: Do you think of him as you look back as architecture-as-sculpture -- sort of the vogue for that that was getting underway at that point?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, that's part of it. The thin shell business which was so appealing for quite a long time was part of it, and the tension structure as well. Those were ideas that seemed to be capable of shaping the future, but you know both of them have sort of subsided now.

R. BROWN: Well they're rather expensive to do, aren't they?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They tend to be, and they don't seem to provide any new benefit that we haven't already enjoyed.

R. BROWN: You mentioned dire functional shortcomings of the auditorium.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Also there was an acoustic problem and a roofing problem. Too much sun, too much wind.

R. BROWN: And an acoustic problem, too.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it was a thermal problem as much as anything else. You had first of all the slab, but that was concrete and hard and being concave tended to focus sound, so there had to be a solution involving sky clouds, which in a sense are corrective. I think Eero made a good way of handling them architecturally, but still the musicians complain that they get too bright a sound and that they can't hear themselves enough, and so on. But the most serious part was that actually there was insulation on top, and then another layer of concrete I believe was to add mass so that the sound wouldn't be transmitted from, say, flying airplanes. But that meant that the outer layers of roofing and concrete were thermally insulated against the inner slab; the inner slab or shell being kept at a more or less constant temperature year round, and the outer one being free to expand and contract according to the changes in the climate, with the result that the original roof, which had been some kind of a Hypalon or other plastic application that was supposed to cure everything, didn't last and had to be replaced. I think there was a second replacement as well. I believe they have now, with expanding seam copper construction, got something that can move enough in response to these forces without leaking.

R. BROWN: And that's something that's been put on when? much later?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. So that's the kind of thing that isn't solvable at the beginning when you have such an idea.

R. BROWN: Do you think seeing that every day -- the process going on -- did it affect your practice, your teaching?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think so. I guess it made me more conservative in construction habits.

R. BROWN: And in your teaching?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: To some extent, yes.

R. BROWN: Several of the former students interviewed said you were very good at throwing something out and listening and sort of having a dialogue -- as you suggested with Aalto, sort of maintaining the flexibility, keeping it open, until they themselves had come up with a solution.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, where were we? [brief discussion] Samton, yes, okay. Then there's Ralph Knowles who is an educator and researcher. Have you seen any of his work regarding the shaping of tall buildings to protect against too much sun? USC, I think, may still be his headquarters; I don't know.

R. BROWN: But he's done a good deal in that -- you would say he's a leader in that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, or was at least. Theodore Musho is one of the designers of I. M. Pei. I think he was in charge of the design for the Kennedy Memorial Library. And he is a formalist, fits with the Pei office number of big geometry, whether or not program-appropriate.

R. BROWN: In other words, there's a certain design bias that he has from the beginning.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, yes. He won't like my saying this, of course, and the attitude that the chief purpose of architecture is to provide lasting cultural images rather than to meet the needs of the client. All right. He would say that that was true.

George Pillorge is, I think, the senior designer in the Baltimore firm of RTKL. M. A. Piomelli, an Italian girl, wife, who was pregnant when she was a student: she was briefly dean of the City College of New York, is it? architecture school.

R. BROWN: City University?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: City University, yes. Abercrombie, who is the other journalist, came from somewhere down south, maybe Virginia.

R. BROWN: When was he?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: '61.

R. BROWN: What was his first name?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Stanley Abercrombie.

R. BROWN: He's gone into architectural journalism.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think he writes for The Architect, mostly on interiors I think now, and things like that. Freebairn-Smith, hyphen word, who has his own office in San Francisco.

R. BROWN: What about him?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I just think he's a good all-around architect without having become famous. I saw him at the inauguration of the Rotch extension, which was just this year. He came for that. I hadn't realized that he was a library trustee, or advisor, or something. There is a book store in San Francisco which is the very personal creation of a single man, an architectural book store; do you know of it?

R. BROWN: No.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: You sort of have to find it because of the inconspicuous door in the townhouse, but it's a good book store. I was in there -- oh, I guess twelve years ago maybe -- picking up a group of books that I couldn't seem to find anywhere else, and I found that they wouldn't take my charge card and wouldn't take my check because it was an out-of-town check. So I was about to give up the enterprise when Freebairn-Smith walked in; he had an office right across the street. He paid for the books, and I wrote him a check. [laughter] He's a very fine guy. Well, that was '61. I guess that was about the time that I became so involved in administrative duties that I sort of lost --

R. BROWN: You became Dean in '65.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but I'd been Chairman also, and that got to be more and more of a job. However, there's Ralph Tolbert who practices in Boston and who married one of my secretaries. There's Duane Nuzum who's an educator out in the Rockies somewhere. Chuck Thomson whom I liked immensely because there was a time when Dan Kiley and Belluschi and I were on an advisor group at the University of Minnesota thanks to the intervention of Winston Close. The university was _____ an expansion on the west side of the river, of the river gorge there, and we were advising on new buildings there. One morning in our hotel we were having breakfast, and Charles Thomson appeared, about to graduate from the university in architecture. He wanted to learn more about MIT and should he go there, should he apply. Well, he did and he was admitted. Then he wound up in the Caudill Rowlett and Scott firm which, as you may know, became one of the largest firms in the country. Caudill, whom I didn't mention, was one of the early students; I don't know why he wasn't on the list -- I guess because he's now deceased. He pioneered in Texas the notion that schools ought to be for children and not be local monuments: they shouldn't be built of too

permanent materials, they should be preferably all on one level, well ventilated, and so on. He struggled for years with this and made some progress. He had a research institute out there; he was teaching also. Finally it grew into Caudill, Rowlett, and Scott. I remember how surprised I was to find that they pioneered the use of their own airplane to get to jobs. Texas is a big place!

R. BROWN: Monumental air!

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Chuck Thomson became an important guy in that firm. I think he introduced the computer, for one thing. But I remember I was at an AIA convention down there, and I was in the lobby, and he came in with a friend of his. They were very jubilant and they wanted to celebrate, and I asked them why. He said well, the bids had just come in for that city we're building in Saudi Arabia, and they're under budget. I asked him what the size of the budget was, and he said something like three and a half billion dollars. [laughter]

R. BROWN: Right! He got some good work there!

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh yes! Well, he was a good student, too. Then there's Stanley Hallet who's a local boy who became an educator at Salt Lake City. He had a Fulbright to Afghanistan and made much of that before the war that occurred there.

R. BROWN: You mean he wrote about it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: His wife was a film-maker, and they took a lot of photographs and made a film. He always had an interest in film-making himself. I think he was tapped to go to Catholic University of Washington to direct that school when what his name retired (who had also been at BAC, what was his name?)

We are coming definitely to the end of my people except for George Claffin, who graduated in '69, was for quite a few years director of the school at Temple University. He's still on that faculty. Maria Ogrzydziak I taught with when I was a part-time teacher; she married a man who finally settled down at the University of California at Davis. I visited her there. She teaches some drawing at the university, or design.

R. BROWN: You taught part time even when you were Dean?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: After I was Dean. You see, when I retired the rules were such that you could be reappointed half time for the next five years, so I was. That's why I got to know Maria so well. There's Lawrence Speck, who's '71, who is an important member of the faculty at the University of Texas at Austin. There's Wassim ben Mahmoud, an architect in Tunis. And there's Marietta Millett who is also an educator in this country. Roger Goldstein who's an important guy in Goody and Clancy's office.

R. BROWN: Here in Boston.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Anne Beha who practices for herself. Gail Boyajian, I taught with her as well. That about does it.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON
Interviews with R. BROWN, Archives of American Art

Tape 6, side 1, 3/6/92

R. BROWN: This morning we'll start by talking about more examples of work of you and your firm,

Anderson, Beckwith, and Haible. In the late '40s you began a series of public schools here in Lincoln, of which the first was the Smith School. This was your first school.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Was this a big sort of thing an architect had to consider in the postwar period? There was a great need, wasn't there?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: There was an expanding need. It was just beginning, the great suburban growth after the war. We were part of it, and we moved out here just before the war. When the war was over of course there was a big gap in building from the war; it had to be met, and the industry had to be revived. And suburbs like this one began to feel the need of additional school space. Many people were moving to places like Lincoln in order not only to get closer to nature and away from some of the distractions of the city, but also in the hope of being able to build up schools and to have something to say about their policies and take part in the growth of the schools.

R. BROWN: In other words there was a bit of civic responsibility that led people to move to these suburbs?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Civic responsibility plus their own interest to do the best for their children, which didn't seem really likely in the middle of the city where the jobs were still. Lincoln until that time had been a place where there were city people, but they had been mostly people of wealth, people like the Storrows, for example, and the Condons [?], and the Smiths; remnants of those families were still living here. They tended to be very conservative. There were people who were their supporters, often Irish or Italian Catholics as opposed to the predominately Protestant people in charge, so to speak -- the elitists. And when the growth of the suburbs was at its height, it was then a different kind of person -- professionals, academics, people in the money-handling businesses who all had jobs in Boston or Cambridge or nearby suburbs but were learning that you could, with an automobile, live out here and get into town quite easily. These people, of course, had a different attitude toward well-being and progress and modernism and everything than the more traditional people. The growth in Lincoln was, though, very strongly controlled early on, I think partly because the terrain is not favorable to development everywhere; there's a lot of swamp, a lot of wetland, and a lot of wooded hills that are difficult, and that certainly was a factor. But also the landed gentry aspect, there were these families with rather large estates from back in the 19th century, and they tended to put a brake on things. I served, for example, for five years on the Planning Board, and we had these bouts of zoning restrictions. From early on, even before we came, the lots developed for residential purposes had to be an acre or more; and after that it was 80,000 feet, which is two acres nearly. So I guess that I got into the school building program because of being a resident architect in the town, known to some people.

R. BROWN: You were on the Planning Board from '46 to '51, so you very soon after moving here got involved in town affairs.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right. But it was a very interesting campaign to sell the town on a school because there hadn't been a new school since one which is now town offices, which was built, I believe, in 1904; that had six classrooms in a very traditional neo-Colonial -- or neoclassical -- building. It had been well built, and people were proud of it. It was a local monument. There was first of all an argument, now where should any new school be? There were people who wanted to simply add to that building; it had some playground space. But then there were those who argued that it ought to have a place where it could expand and needed more space than was available there, and also a place where there wasn't so much traffic possibly. I remember serving on a town committee

to recommend a site; and here we were on touchy ground because the best site, which was the one finally chosen (the old ball field site, which had been an informal ball field for quite a long time) belonged to Sumner Smith, one of the old family members who was still active and a powerhouse in the town; nobody wanted to cross him if it could be avoided. And he had that land staked out as developable ultimately. We recommended, I think, the place that's now conservation land over on Baker Bridge Road and Route 126 in the western part of the town, which was quite suitable in the sense that it was relatively flat, open land and quiet, but it was quite a ways from the center. The town actually overcame the recommendations that we made in order to put pressure on Sumner Smith to make the ball field site available. It promptly did become available. I guess there is generosity.

R. BROWN: But it was the town meeting that put the pressure on him.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but so many evening meetings and arguments between these groups of people. It was quite an experience. It was the first time I was really bathed in that kind of local decision-making, and it was very educational. Of course we, as architects, wanted to follow the trends in some of the European countries, for example in Scandinavia where the emphasis was on one-story schools, and in England where they were so conscious about daylight. And you could only get really good-sized classrooms with more than one source of daylight by having only one story buildings, which eliminated a lot of confusion involving stairways; when students change classes there's quite a confusion if you have to go between floors. So we wanted a kind of a spread out business, even to the extent of having semi-enclosed outdoor classrooms between indoor classrooms and that kind of thing. It of course developed that we would be spending more money per classroom if we did everything of that sort that was wanted. And there were enough conservative people in town who held our feet to the fire on this issue. Also they black balled the notion that the thing should be entirely flat-roofed. There is a contemporary school in Concord with all flat roofs, and it's a little bit stony, icy, I think -- a little bit bony in that environment.

R. BROWN: You mean it looks rather too stark and forbidding?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. We fought the sloping roof issue for a while, but in [retrospect] I'm certainly glad we did adopt sloping roofs for that first school.

R. BROWN: Yes, you pointed out too the shortcomings of the flat roof, the dogmatic insistence.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right. Anyway, I think that first school -- it was pretty much a success. People seemed to like it. Teachers and students liked it.

R. BROWN: Was this one of the earlier schools in this area or in the country of this type?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well yes. It came in, you know, three or four years after the end of the war, just about as soon as it could come since during the war you couldn't consider that kind of thing at all. It was a time when of course the growth of students was beginning to pick up speed from the arrival of these new family-forming, younger, professional people who quite soon really began to control the town pretty much,

R. BROWN: Was the Smith School publicized? Did you get some publicity out of it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Not very much, no. Nobody paid great attention to it. I can't recall a suburban school building that did excite anybody very much, I mean in the architectural field. I don't know why. Maybe it was considered a too utilitarian kind of building. Well, I don't say that there

wasn't some attention given to it, but maybe not quite so much as it merited. Later on, of course, any commission for a local architect without competition to do a school like that was no longer possible. We would look at the trade announcements that such-and-such a town was contemplating a school, and then we would submit our credentials and spend maybe half an hour, or three-quarters of an hour with the committee along with ten or eleven other architects in the same evening.

R. BROWN: Oh my!

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It got to be a very competitive exercise and not so easy to prevail in. Though we did prevail later in the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, the first building --

R. BROWN: In the late 1950s --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and I had quite a lot of activity on the committee to determine the site and the program as well.

R. BROWN: That is a school that was rather publicized.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Not very heavily.

R. BROWN: The architectural --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, it was published, I think, but no great emphasis.

R. BROWN: Was this a matter of much concern to you and your partners, whether or not you were -
-

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: We weren't thinking in those terms. I don't think one did in those days.

R. BROWN: That's a later phenomenon, is it, where celebrity is --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. I think the magazines back in those times were more interested in the bigger projects where something important might be said, or some milestone turned, and if all suburbs in the nation were doing similar things there weren't any monuments being created.

R. BROWN: Can we look a moment at the design of a couple of Lincoln elementary schools, the ones you began in the late '40s? If there's any particular point you want to make on that -- it was in two or three stages, wasn't it? You came back several times.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: [They're looking at drawings.] Well, for example, here the kindergarten is expressed as a separate element almost, with just a connecting passage. And an almost enclosed court here, with the administration. But then a typical section would have a corridor and small support rooms, with a flat roof, and then the classroom side -- which in this case was either east or west so that we could get them a kind of cross-lighting.

R. BROWN: Explain a little bit about this lighting. It looks like there are some windows to the outside and also rather indirect lighting.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I guess there's not a section here, but whether ...[some muttering here as LAWRENCE ANDERSON searches through drawings, not worth transcribing] From the inside you can tell -- the ceiling slopes, and there's a high end over the corridor in which there are windows

above the roof of the corridor. On the other side there are windows that are perhaps ten feet high, and they have an outdoor shield of wooden shutters or sun screens --

R. BROWN: The outdoor windows --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. And then Venetian blinds above that so that at all times, with this also happening there on both sides, the room would be always protected against direct sun which might be distracting. On sunny days even then the light would be diffused throughout the room and be indirect.

R. BROWN: Now the clerestory, the higher windows, what side were they?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They would be either on the east or the west, most of them on the west, I think, in the original school. There you see the external sun shield.

R. BROWN: I see, yes, this little projecting cantilevered arrangement. And this broke up the sunlight?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It broke up the sunlight, but it didn't interfere with the view, you see; you could sit there at your desk and look out at the landscape.

R. BROWN: I see. That's why from the inside it appears there's nothing screening at all. So the arrangement of buildings and units within this complex, as well as the lighting, were two of the more important aspects of this new kind of school architecture.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. And then in the addition this was pursued again in these classrooms, but there was a gymnasium as well which we developed with laminated wood frames. There's no photograph of it here. Maybe I -- [LAWRENCE ANDERSON searches elsewhere].

R. BROWN: Laminated structural support, is this?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. It's very common now.

R. BROWN: But then it was not.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, it was not then; it was just being developed. It was a way of spanning the rather long span of a gymnasium without having a truss, so that the room would extend right up to the roof, and there would be high windows along both sides. It had this disadvantage: that it was expected to serve as an auditorium as well as a gymnasium, which of course -- it can't very well do both.

R. BROWN: But the planners thought --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, you could get away with it for a while, but finally the town developed a later addition which gave a bigger auditorium which really had sloping seats and whatever was necessary so that you could see the stage.

R. BROWN: Wasn't there at that time some attraction to multiple-use rooms?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Sure.

R. BROWN: Flexibility --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Very much so. But it was before the period in which classrooms were clustered in such a way that you could break down the partitions between them and have a still more open --

R. BROWN: So these are still distinct and unto themselves.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right. They're identical, and they're separate. The partitions between them are concrete block, and they're structural, not meant to be moved.

R. BROWN: About this time, '49, you built this house?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right.

R. BROWN: What can you say about that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, this was something that took a long time to develop, but we had a long time to develop it. We moved into Lincoln just at the beginning of the war, and we lived in two houses at the Center -- both at the place where the Library and the white church are. We lived across Library Lane in that big white house for some time; we rented that. And then we moved across the street into a house we rented from the Chapins [?], another old family who owned most of the property there back of the church. Meanwhile, as the world was going on, there wasn't much practice and there wasn't much going on at MIT either, for that matter. Classes were small --

R. BROWN: Yes, you mentioned how classes really had shrunk.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right. So we examined this -- well, the whole thing began back in Cambridge with some friends that we had there who wanted to move to Lincoln, and they discovered this piece of land which had been owned by the only town policeman at that time, Mr. Keliher [?]. He had a plan for maximizing the number of lots in it, although the terrain is rather difficult, and he was talked out of that by a colleague of mine, Walter Bognar [?], who was a professor at Harvard who had a client, an elderly spinster, who built the house right next to here. He persuaded Mr. Keliher that it would be equally profitable and better ecology to have only one street and have bigger lots -- which is sort of the story of Lincoln all over. And so we did buy this lot. We had to survey for the topography, and we scrambled over it every weekend to determine what its characteristics are, and then we devised the house in which we had to make terms with the outside on many different levels. Because here, for example, the land rises a little bit before it falls, and further down there's a big ledge outside the living room windows. The choice had to be either you kind of suspended the house free of all these entanglements with the ground, or you tried to adapt the house to fit it, and we chose the latter of course. But over the years we produced many different versions and finally decided where all the closets were going to be, and all that stuff. So that by the time we got to building it, it was a very deliberate and completely organized affair, which turned out to be a nice thing to do because in the fairly early years of our marriage we did find what we both agreed should be the characteristics of such a house, and it has helped to hold us together as a family, I think for that reason.

R. BROWN: What were the basic requirements you had?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, we had three children who were growing up and getting into school age, and we wanted to have a room for each of them; we wanted to have our own master bedroom and connected with it a studio for me, which turns out to be this one -- the studio remote enough from the rest of the house so that when the children were having their own guests they wouldn't

have to disturb us, or we them. An ample entrance closet, a private place to telephone, a good-sized kitchen where we could eat as well as cook food, and if possible a good basement; a combined living room-dining room with a somewhat higher ceiling -- those were sort of the basic outlines.

R. BROWN: Was the living room partly a place for music? You were getting quite involved in music in these years, weren't you?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right, right. So there's kind of a music corner, and an eating corner, and a sitting area.

R. BROWN: And your decision was to nestle this into the terrain.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, which means there's no basement under this bedroom wing because it's all bedrock. We had to do quite a lot of blasting to get a basement under part, only, of the kitchen-dining-living room area. On the landing going down from the kitchen to the basement is a room which is underneath the outdoor terrace, so that it's cool during the summer because it's surrounded on two sides by earth and the floor, where we kept tinned goods and jams and jellies and wine and stuff like that. Another thing about it: we deliberately made sloping roof, having been converted by the school experience, I guess, and we kept the slope low and the ceilings low over the corridors and bathrooms so that the bedrooms are actually higher than the corridors and permit openings into the attic high against the ceiling. Over the front door we put a big slow-moving fan. When you have an attic, especially if the insulation is in the floor of the attic as ours is, you need to ventilate the attic particularly during summer. Most people are satisfied just to ventilate the attic but our theory was that at the end of a hot summer day you would turn that fan on and open the windows in the house, and the cool air would be brought into the house and up through the openings between the bedrooms and the attic, and out of the house, cooling the inside of the house as the temperature cooled outside, or even bringing the air by closing the house windows and opening the basement door or windows we could bring the air up from the basement and get it further cooler. And that has proven to be a very advantageous thing to do.

R. BROWN: At the other end was the matter of heating. Could you explain slightly?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. We chose to do radiant heating. There was an engineer named Leo Bricette [?] who was an enthusiast for radiant heating and had a company that made these installations, so we have pipes in the floor where there's concrete, and pipes in the plaster in the ceiling where there isn't.

R. BROWN: In other words, it's both in the floors and in the ceilings.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. In this room it's in the floor and it's also in the ceiling. But in most of the bedrooms it's only in the floor, and in the living and kitchen area it's in the ceilings because that's a wooden floor on a wooden frame, and it wasn't so convenient to put the pipes there.

R. BROWN: And how has that sort of system worked? Quite well?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It works very well, with hot water, three different zones controlled each by its own thermostat, with a pump, and each with a number of different coils -- depending -- each for a separate room, so that you can, by valving, change the proportion of heat that goes to the different rooms and thus balance the system. We don't touch that much anymore, but it's a possibility still. It's been very comfortable heating, and clean. There are no radiators to bump into,

and no drafts created by the heating system itself as sometimes happens with a warm air system. The warm air systems have the advantage of greater flexibility; if the temperature changes fast they respond right away.

R. BROWN: They just shut down or off right away.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, whereas with radiant heating you get the floor hot, or the ceiling hot, and if it turns warm outside it doesn't do any good that the thermostat says no more heat; the heat's already there. It's _____, in other words, that makes the response slower. But on the whole it's been performing well now for forty-two years. Whether it's going to last much longer, God knows, and what the alternatives will be when it gives out -- there haven't been any leaks, nobody has carved into the floor and broken a pipe, or into the ceiling, and so far we've been very lucky. But there may come a time, as there has with neighbors that we know, when leaks occur or trouble arises, and something has to be done. But the same thing is true about the plumbing because we buried the pipes bringing water and the drains carrying away the waste under the floor here in the bedroom wing; it's a concrete floor, and while these are exposed in the basement where they can be, if something should happen or if changes had to be made we would then have to run the pipes somewhere else or dig up the floor and start over again.

R. BROWN: Digging up the floor wouldn't be a simple proposition.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, it's complicated, especially with the heating there.

R. BROWN: Now you were shortly after that time, I guess, at MIT involved with a solar energy conversion project. Had you considered that yourself for this house, or was that really very little known in the '40s?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was known. Hoyt Hottel, a professor in Chemical Engineering had built an experimental house, I think before the war, which we knew about. But we knew that it was a hedge against the future. At that time the price of heating oil was very low; it would be impossible to make solar heating pay off economically. In a solar collector we figured out from experience and experimentation and formulas that we couldn't collect more usable heat than about five cents' worth per square foot, and collectors were expensive. The situation is still pretty much that way, although the price of fossil fuel is greatly increased of course, more than inflation I suppose but still not enough to overcome the difference. I think solar energy is more promising in its atmospheric help to generate power in satellites and so forth, or in generating electricity in unusual areas, or for distilling water where the water is very, very scarce, such as Israel. And it's good for domestic hot water in many areas if you don't mind a little irregularity in the performance, but if you're in an area where the sun is more constant and you can heat enough water so it will be hot in the morning, it's a good bet. It's in common use in the Southwest, I think, and other parts of the world.

R. BROWN: With your house did you begin thinking of doing more and more domestic buildings?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, we didn't think of that as our primary thrust at any time.

R. BROWN: You did do another house here in Lincoln shortly afterwards, the Abbott house.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: The Abbott house is right down the street, and we did the Preston house which is over on the other side of the pond, at the same time as ours. And we did another house, a small house, on this road, which has now been demolished. It's a curious thing. I think we built a little two-bedroom house for a dentist who moved away; I guess it cost something like twelve thousand

dollars. It finally got occupied by a family, a couple; she became a widow, and when she reached the age of going into a rest home she sold the property for \$275,000. The man said he was going to rehabilitate the house and maybe add to it and sell it. But he tore the house down and built a very big, costly house. He had to: I mean if you're going to pay that much for the land, you want to get your money back and you've got to give them a lot of house. So he has an atrium and trees growing in it; he doesn't have an interior swimming pool I don't think, but --

R. BROWN: It's almost like a public building.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right.

R. BROWN: Well the houses that your firm designed here, they were much more modest. They were tied to the utilitarian needs by and large?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, pretty much. Preston was a physicist at Harvard. The Abbotts -- he was a doctor, and she was a dietetics professor at -- what's the name of that women's college? -- Simmons College. They're both living and living there.

R. BROWN: These were people who would want something straightforward?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They would want something straightforward, practical, and not necessarily some new tendency in architecture. And we treated them accordingly. Let's see. Did we do any other houses? Well, early on we did a house in Brookline for a rather wealthy couple, and I think both of my partners did houses for other people. I have been talking about houses that I intervened in directly.

R. BROWN: In the early '50s you designed also I guess an addition to the YWCA in Cambridge.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: There were two additions: there was a swimming pool and attendant features --

R. BROWN: Now what was the problem? You had a fairly large existing corner --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: A fairly large existing building, a rather nice building, but quite old, and some land adjacent on both sides of it. There was a swimming pool side, this had contemplated a gymnasium on top but we didn't get to do that. And then a dormitory over there which turned out to be more or less a square tower with central bathrooms and elevators and stairs inside, in a ring corridor around with bedrooms.

R. BROWN: What were you to do in the additions you put on, the first one, the gymnasium, and then the building that links the older building with the gymnasium?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it was primarily lockers and things of that sort that connected the old building to the pool, and the pool itself occupied that big wing. Very simple and straightforward, I think.

R. BROWN: Well you were now working entirely in -- what would you call it? -- the modern idiom?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: There was no thought in your mind in the '50s about employing some of the lovely detailing that you had learned as a student?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, no. That's right. I became what's called a rationalist, I suppose. Not attempting anything ornamental. It was partly the thrust of the times, partly our temperaments, and partly economics I guess. We seemed to pay a lot of attention to what the client seemed to think, what the client wanted, and not so much to what the papers might celebrate.

(END SIDE 1)

(TAPE 6, SIDE 2)

R. BROWN: Your clients, though, in choosing a type, a style devoid of ornament were themselves fairly exceptional in those days, weren't they?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, they became less and less so. We did an addition to the Stone church here in Lincoln at about that time, 1952; it's an inconspicuous building sort of hidden behind that big Richardsonian granite building of the 1892 church. We made it of concrete block bearing walls, rectangular windows, and stucco exterior. We were lucky with the stucco because it isn't used much in this climate, it doesn't seem to behave too well, but we had a very good contractor who insisted along with our specifications that the stucco be sprinkled for about a week more or less, intermittently.

R. BROWN: You mean after it's applied?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, which gives it time to shrink and settle down and harden without forming major cracks. I think that unless you do that you're in trouble. But they wanted a masonry building, a relatively fireproof building, and one which wouldn't swear with the stone church too much. It has a sloping roof, but it's just a simple rectangle. Later on another architect was appointed to do a house for the minister behind even that, still further away from the road, and that was built of wood with clapboards.

R. BROWN: Was there in many of these buildings a wish by the clients, say in housing and in schools even, to try to look traditional to this area, that is use clapboard and that kind of thing?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Not after that first struggle. What I remember mostly about the committees after that was their insistence on absolute economy because they had to fight the town to get a budget; somebody had to sit down and decide not only what should be that budget, what the town would accept as a matter of bonding. It had to have a two-thirds vote in town meeting in order to issue bonds and borrow money. Too frequently that budget was a little on the skimpy side. You could do it, but you couldn't have any frills. That led us into what maybe wasn't ideal in the sense of performance. For instance, in the clerestories in the high school in Sudbury we used corrugated plastic to make the light diffused. I don't know how long that's going to last. We also perhaps put in an insufficient number of ventilating windows so that, although the school's not in session much during the hot weather, there are times when you're not getting enough air movement. Things like that were sort of trimmed to the bone.

R. BROWN: And that of course, among other things, would preclude the use of ornaments.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It certainly did, yes.

R. BROWN: Or beautiful materials of a traditional sort.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. And if we used wood we tended to use it stained rather than painted, rough sawn rather than planed, because it didn't require so much maintenance and have

to be painted every four or five years. But the windows were still using a lot of wood frames which did require painting of course. The all-metal frame, factory-coated, wasn't in use nor was double glazing.

R. BROWN: As you said earlier, your involvement with MIT was really picking up, and you were Chairman and then Dean. But in the early '60s you mentioned you were involved with a major project to re-site the Rochester Institute of Technology. You were particularly involved with buildings for science and applied science. Perhaps you could describe that process. You said you organized this.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well I was supposed to be the coordinating architect, but that meant mostly communication, as far as we interpreted it, between the different offices. When there were important decisions to be made about the use of a material, for example, we tried to get a consensus from the other architects. Actually they were bigger and more powerful than we were, so that I didn't feel that I could dictate to Barnes or Weese or Roche or Stubbins about the design. They had their own clients, their own committees of the university to satisfy. But we did hammer out an overall plan. I think our science building is probably more successful than the engineering building which is next to it. It sort of broke my heart to have a great south wall on that science building without any windows in it looking out over the landscape, or facing the landscape shall I say. But that was a laboratory side, and it was full of fume vents and service piping because we chose to do it that way, and that's the way the client wanted it, too. Anyway it made for an awful lot of bricks of the same color on that campus, and it took a while for it to become settled in. There weren't many trees.

R. BROWN: Yes, it's a rather looming -- what we call megastructure, right?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: You said also that the whole thing wasn't as successful as it might have been because there were problems with cost overruns.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: There were cost overruns, yes, and I don't know to what extent to blame the architects, because the architects were involved in their initial estimates and the setting of budgets, but somehow or other were not able to keep them.

R. BROWN: And so did that mean the institution had to scramble for funds?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I think so, and they were unhappy about that. Well, of course it's not the first time that that kind of thing happens.

R. BROWN: Why did they wish to have a number of well known architects? Was it for their egos as an institution do you suppose?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I doubt it. Of course Mrs. Webb influenced it very greatly --

R. BROWN: The lady who had brought the school from _____? to RIT.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right. And she was of course very aware of the New York scene and the architectural world and wanted to get good talent, as much of it as possible. Dan Kiley, who was also a part of the organization of designers, knew all these architects, having collaborated with them.

R. BROWN: In his capacity as --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, you know, landscape architects, there aren't very many of them, and they don't very often get into the driver's seat; they're considered to be accessories. But here was a case where thanks to Mrs. Webb he was an important part of the architect selection and the overall site management. But at the end he, too, fell into disfavor and was discharged before his work was over, I don't remember exactly over what issue

R. BROWN: He had worked with Mrs. Webb?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: And what role did she play?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think she was a Trustee, but a very interested one, a very committed one, and one who came to all the meetings and said what she thought.

R. BROWN: And you were at these meetings as the supervisory architect. How were you selected? She knew of you?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think it was through Dan Kiley, and Dan didn't know me very well at the time. I guess they thought I would be a neutral guy, which I guess I am by nature. But some other campuses like that have involved different architects working together seem to have come off better when the coordinating architect is one who sets the design himself, the site plan, and assigns different parts to different people and requires them to adhere to it. Barnes has done that in a noteworthy -- State University of New York, New Paltz. I guess architecturally they work out better. How difficult it is to get people who are well known architects to accept that I don't know. I haven't tried to do it myself.

R. BROWN: Did you have difficulties with any of them at Rochester?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, except that I was disturbed when budgets were overrun or when deadlines didn't get observed. Barnes had a difficult time at that time. He had started out rather small and done some rather modest but distinguished buildings that -- he was certainly becoming much better known, and the office had to grow, and he had to move to other quarters. He took on new personnel, and what happens then, of course, is that it takes time to get these people into the working habits of the office, which in the case of an office that has strong design leadership -- you know, you have to get used to it, and in the meantime the commissions may suffer, maybe not in quality but at least in adherence to time schedules and production and that kind of thing. Roche-Dinkaloo were in charge of the student union and athletic facilities, one big cluster, and they got into some kind of a jam with their getting all the facilities in place, and they intruded upon the axis. One of the notions of the plan was that there was a long axis to the residential part, which meant that you could see from one end to the other, maybe half a mile or so. And it turned out that their building had to protrude in such a way that you had to work your way around it. I didn't find that offensive; I thought it might be really a good thing to soften up the axis --

R. BROWN: [garbled]

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but the owners -- the president and the chairman of the Trustees -- thought it was awful that that should happen!

R. BROWN: Did the administration, for example the institute president, work on this process to some degree?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Of course they were interested in the process from the point of view of getting it done, and getting it funded.

R. BROWN: Who was this? Ellingson [?] ?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Ellingson, yes, and I can't for the moment remember the chairman -- he was a Rochester lawyer as I remember.

R. BROWN: Would you say you enjoyed this kind of supervisory role?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was mixed, I think. Another kind of experience which is not too different is the joint venture kind of thing where you're not the designing architect but the producing architect. The first real encounter with that was in the Wellesley Art Center. I had served as an advisor to the College for selecting the architect and interviewing a few big, and we agreed that we should appoint Rudolph, Paul Rudolph.

R. BROWN: This was in the '60s, wasn't it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Late '50s, I think. He was up and coming, being suddenly nationally recognized, having had his practice in Florida -- or a limited one -- and not having really any organizational backup to come up with anything. We were dragooned into being the associated architect. I felt a little bit that maybe it was a conflict of interest since I had been the consultant to the college before that, but they prevailed upon me. So then our staff was given the job of making the estimate and preliminary and working drawings for this center, and that left me in sort of a vague position of not being the authoritative designer --

R. BROWN: Because that was Rudolph?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That was Rudolph.

R. BROWN: He would set general ideas?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, he would come in and work in the office, and we'd have meetings and so on. But the spirit of the thing was that he was the man to be listened to as far as design was concerned. We had some very good people working on it. We did, I think, do good drawings. But there came a time when the most recent estimates showed a serious overrun, and the thing had to be revised in order to diminish that. And at that particular moment I had the opportunity to do something I'd been planning for many years, and that was to have a Fulbright lectureship in Copenhagen, which was a four-month thing. So I went on that and left it to the staff to cope with the problem, which they did -- with Rudolph's help, of course. But Mrs. Clapp [?], who was president, took it very unkindly of me to have abandoned her, she thought at that point.

R. BROWN: Had she been used to leaning on you, or chatting with you?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well yes. I guess she thought that I would be more dictatorial than it's my nature to be.

R. BROWN: Do you think the result was a good one?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh yes. I think it's a good building, although from the design standpoint I would certainly make criticisms of it. I think the sun screens are an exaggeration. They're identical both on the north and on the south sides even though the climate conditions are different. Rudolph

couldn't seize the notion of dissymmetry in a case like that. And it has some strange stylistic qualities, but on the whole it's been pretty good. I think one of the great problems -- Mrs. Jewett felt that they should be trying to integrate the performing arts and the visual arts. To that end the museum is placed in the center, right over that great stairway, and it's arranged so that it can be opened broadly toward the concert hall-lecture hall on the one hand, and on the other hand be available to students in the visual arts programs. But that's not in the nature of a museum to be that way: a museum is like a library; there should be only one access really. They have to control things very strictly or else they cannot accept traveling exhibitions, for example.

R. BROWN: Yes, security matters.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Security, yes. And when you open this end wall to connect it to the lobby of the auditorium, you lose the wall space that these sliding panels were providing so they wind up not using it very much. Now the question is, of course, they have a new donor and they have a new museum under construction: How do we use the old museum? I think it probably should be a reading room or a study room.

R. BROWN: And you've been a consultant on this, at least at the selection stage?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but I was not involved in the production of the building at all because that was taken over by another Boston firm. It remains to be seen how successful the new building will be, but it will be a building with a good deal of character.

R. BROWN: By which you mean what? A distinctive design?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, the creation of a very imaginative, intelligent architect, unused to American ways.

R. BROWN: Who is that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: The Spanish architect who was appointed as chairman at Harvard, Moneo, who was of course experienced in the European architectural habits, which are quite different from ours. I think the architect there is considered more independent of the practical matters and the administration than in this country

R. BROWN: So it could be difficult to --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It might be difficult to get next to him or to influence his thinking sufficiently. I don't mean to be critical. I think they're getting a good, even a fine building, a very interesting building.

R. BROWN: Well you had a first hand experience, then, in '57 when you did take this fellowship to Copenhagen and taught at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts for what, four months you said? Six months?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think it was four months.

R. BROWN: Can you describe that experience? What did you find? You hadn't really been there, in Europe, to speak of in twenty years, for any length of time.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right, but of course I'd been a fervent reader of the architectural press from all the Scandinavian countries, and I guess we had been quite influenced by them, by

their use of brick and wood --

R. BROWN: Laminated wood? Furnishings?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Their furniture particularly. They didn't have any structural wood left; they imported teak to make their furniture. But their craftsmanship and their sensitivity to all their materials, brick particularly, and windows impressed us deeply, and I was happy to see those things in Copenhagen. But I was also really astonished by the Danish countryside. I hadn't expected it. Everybody who talks about Denmark refers to Copenhagen. Copenhagen, of course, is a very heterogeneous, civilized, liberal place. What I didn't know was the strong village traditions, in particular the churches. Almost anywhere in Denmark in the countryside you can look around you and see a church in the distance. These churches were all built during the early days of Denmark's adoption of Christianity, which was also the time of Romanesque and particularly early Gothic development elsewhere in Europe. By that time they'd more or less run out of stone -- there wasn't much. And they're brick and yet they're vaulted in much the same way as the French, for example. I guess they were proselytized by the French monks. But this was all a new world to me. Now, at the time of the Reformation these churches, many of them, had interior frescos; that was considered to be a bad thing, and they came and white washed everything inside and out which gave a sudden austerity, a certain puritanical look, to all of these buildings. But since they're so small and so intimate and relatively -- there's no other word but intimate, in scale, that makes a mixture which is very appealing. They all have many common features, and they all have their differences. The stepped gable is one common feature. On the south side usually there was a porch and a vestibule called a volvenhus [?] where men left their weapons when they went to church; they weren't supposed to come in with swords. Well, this was all new to me as was all the great half timber earlier construction, when there was still oak available on the market, and thatched roofs. It's astonishing how much of that stuff is still there.

Well, we got to see that because it happened that at the time I was to be in Copenhagen, Kay Fisker, sort of the major architect of the time in Copenhagen was due to spend a semester at MIT. And after a day or two of looking around where we would live, he took me to the bar of the Hotel d'Angleterre, and I had a bitter campari for the first time. He agreed that, or we negotiated, a thing where I would pay his rent at the hotel in Cambridge and give him the use of my car, and he would let us live in an apartment in the building called the Charlottenburg [?] which had been built in the late 17th century for an illegitimate son of the king who became a prominent public figure. The Academy is in that building.

R. BROWN: That had been an apartment of Fisker's?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, right within the palace, as a privilege of being the Dean. One of his perquisites.

R. BROWN: So you worked all this out only after you got there?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. He had a Ford car in a garage a couple of blocks away. We used that on weekends and went out exploring. This was primarily confined to the island of Sjælland; but we went to Paris at Easter time and drove back in a rented car, and drove up through Jutland and saw much of that area as well, and the life of the ferries from island to island, which are models of archipelago navigation. You go to use one of those partly to have one of the best meals you've ever had in your life.

R. BROWN: On the ferry?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yep. These are short voyages, an hour or two, where instead of just sitting huddled up and trying to keep warm you have a splendid meal, full smorgasbord if you like, ale, aquavit -- with your car on board, of course.

R. BROWN: Did you look at where your parents had come from? or the general area?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I did. Yes I visited there. I didn't know much about it at the time. I subsequently, thanks to the -- I've been trying to make a family tree. One of my relatives is a Mormon, and I got to see her research which identified some of our ancestors. And I know the district, but I didn't have time to look into the parish records or that kind of thing. My sister later on tried to do that but wasn't successful either.

R. BROWN: But in general did you get a sense of something you'd never known before as you saw all this?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Sure did.

R. BROWN: Were they rather fine villages where they may have come from?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, rather closely clustered little towns, and the rest of it very intensive agriculture. There was also a typical farm house which was a rectangle or square around a courtyard, one story or at most two stories, usually one story. One wing would be the residence, and the rest of it would be for farm animals and farm equipment, all of it entered from this courtyard. Well that, of course, is a fairly common general disposition in northern Europe, but in Denmark I found that it had a special character. It's quite a windy country in the wintertime, and I could see how it developed. Although there is, of course, a Mediterranean version of the interior courtyard which is quite different, smaller and more shaded. That was interesting. And of course the life of Copenhagen is in itself a great pleasure, I guess even to this day.

R. BROWN: What were your duties at the Academy?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They were pretty vague. I collaborated with design teachers, let's put it that way, without being permanently committed to any particular group. And I attended juries. There was of course a language barrier. They would feel they had to speak English when I was around, and they could for the most part; but I was not able to reply in Danish.

R. BROWN: You had very little?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I had very little. I can read it with a dictionary, but it's hard to use a dictionary for Danish because, I suppose like German, there are so many long words that are composed of six or seven different things put together. There are also many words that have many different meanings, and you don't know which one. But it was helpful that I had heard it spoken when I was a boy and had some small vocabulary even at that time.

R. BROWN: Did you make some particular contacts or friends?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Many. Of course my being there was part of an exchange which took place throughout the '50s and maybe even a little earlier, in which we would have mostly the young teachers and give them appointments at MIT which would be the same kind of appointments we would give to assistant professors, and they would be able to live on that. In return we would send mostly Fulbright scholars, so that would be our younger graduates and staff, people who were probably destined to go into teaching. So when I got there in '56 [sic] already knew quite a few of

these people who had been at MIT. I've kept up with some of them.

R. BROWN: You mentioned have met, I think it was during that year, Rasmussen.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, Steen Eiler Rasmussen. He died recently. He was not the leading architect, but a man of great scholarship and writing gifts. He was a brilliant essayist, not only in architecture but in general, a very public-spirited man. He did erect a lot of fairly sizable works, but they were not really quite good enough to become famous. But he taught at Berkeley, he taught at MIT. He gave at MIT a series of lectures which became the book *Experiencing Architecture*, which appeared in English finally. The other great architect of the time was, of course, Kay Fisker himself. His hundredth year birthday is coming up next year. He was born in 1893, he was about the same age as Steen Eiler. And he has a son who is collecting a book from different contributors, for which I've got to write a chapter, and Stanford Anderson who will write one, and the rest will be Danes. So I've been going over some of his architecture, and I see more and more affinities with what I was doing at the time. I must have been inspired by the publication of Danish works, but it was sympathetic to me even without very much communication.

R. BROWN: Roughly speaking those affinities would be -- what would be some of the expressions of that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, relative simplicity in architecture and an acceptance of materials like brick, sloping roofs, the use of a certain kind of windows, the attention to sunlight and fresh air, and their great interest in their housing problem which I guess is the bulk of Fisker's work, and of many architects there. The city was growing rapidly, as all cities do as the result of the Industrial Revolution, and cities sometimes had to manage this in some way. There was of course the *siedlungen* in Germany between the wars, which were very important. But the Scandinavian countries, Sweden, and Oslo and Copenhagen particularly, had their own solution to these problems. In Copenhagen they developed a very successful and efficient electric subway train system, and it gave rise to a thing called a "finger plan," where each railroad would spark a development along that line with rather high density housing so people could walk to the stations. And then in between there would remain open tilled land, which was a rather nice way to do it. And there were many such projects in Copenhagen at that time, ranging all the way from sort of row houses on an intimate scale, very dense but with lots of open space near at hand, to high rise elevator things which employed a lot of precast concrete and industrialized methods of building.

R. BROWN: You saw a number of happy solutions. This all surely contrasted with the situation then and now here, where there's not quite the control of urban expansion,

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right. It's much more of a hodge-podge here.

R. BROWN: Nor is it something to which major practicing architects very often turn their attention.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, that's right, they didn't. A country like Denmark is much less individualistic. The people are accustomed to living at small scale with not much space and not much leftover squandering of anything; and they seem to be willing to live in rather tight quarters, or at least were at that time. They didn't have automobiles to a great extent until let's say twenty years ago anyway. At the time when I was there in the late '50s there was still relatively small automobile ownership in the hands of a relatively small part of the population because they didn't really need it. And they couldn't afford it, of course. But the thing about automobiles is that it takes so much more space, and it permits the development to expand at much lower densities, as here in Lincoln, which has advantages and disadvantages to it.

(END TAPE 6)

LAWRENCE ANDERSON

Interviews with R. BROWN, Archives of American Art

Tape 7, side 1, 3/6/92 (continued)

R. BROWN: In Denmark and Scandinavia at that time you had the high standards of craftsmanship which had been applied on the other hand to production, hadn't they? I mean did you find that in furnishings, and perhaps in architectural components as well, there was great attention to quality, to finish?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Very definitely, but this was a very craftsman-like approach. I guess it did ultimately get into industrial production. I remember, as far as furniture was concerned, a distinction was always made between furniture as a craft and furniture as an industry, and designers would work in both modes. People like Hans Wegner who did the chairs in our living room exemplify the craftsmanship school. He was not an architect but a furniture designer. But he also did chairs that could be made in factories. Seemingly there was a difference between a craftsman's shop, where the designer would be right there, and a factory where probably he wouldn't be. Now in that many architects also took up furniture design -- Arne Jacobson, for example, but he was only one of many.

R. BROWN: I believe it was the person you mentioned, Wegner?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. W-E-G-N-E-R. They pronounce it "Winer."

R. BROWN: He also did, he and others, such quite different tasks as ship's fittings.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: I've talked with the Danish-born furniture designer Frid [?], Kay Frid, whose first job, I think, was under Wegner in the design of wooden components, so that had some industrial design work as well, mass-produced work.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: There was a very famous, splendid museum of art industry in Copenhagen not far from where we lived, which had the work of Klint, the son. Kaare Klint. Particularly the design of the show cases, for example, is so beautiful. Another things about this craftsmanship: I don't know how people prepared for it, because I didn't see any evidence of it in the architecture school as an educational thing. The students came partly through an academic route which would identify people who were intelligent enough to be professionals and let them in. But there was also a different kind of school in Denmark at that time, probably still is, which is more like a trade school or -- what do we call them? technical school. And about half the students were coming out of that environment. Probably that's where they got their sense that craftsmanship was important. And at that time, when I was there, they felt that that mixture was a good thing. It probably was.

R. BROWN: But would, say, the academically trained architect who apparently had no direct training in craftsmanship would he, as distinct from this country, be able to hand the craftsman something designed in such detail that the craftsman could go right to it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Not entirely from his school experience, I don't think. But he was certainly influenced by the general atmosphere that craftsmanship was important.

R. BROWN: So it influenced his own design?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but it resulted in buildings in which there wasn't very much bold innovation in terms of structure or whatever. But you know, when you look at those buildings you've got a feeling that they don't leak! They're secure against the climate forever. The brick doesn't have the florescence on it, there aren't any marks of deterioration anywhere. Alvar Aalto tells the story -- I don't know whether he originated it; he may have because he was always inventing yarns. But he used it as the difference between Danish architecture and Finnish architecture. He had a friend, Kaare Klint, who was the son of the architect P. V. Jensen Klint who designed the big brick church in a suburb of Copenhagen. Well, Kaare Klint was an architect and a craftsman, designer, and they hadn't seen each other for five years, Alvar and this man. So when they got together and settled down to talk Klint asked Alvar what he'd been doing in this five year period, so Alvar described all of his commissions, that he'd been doing a house for an art collector in France, that he'd been doing some work in Wolfsberg and Helsinki and this and that, and elaborated the very big important things he'd been involved in. Then when he finished he asked Klint, "and what have you been doing in these five years?" And Klint said, "Well, do you remember that chair I was working on when I last saw you? Well, I finished it." [laughter]

R. BROWN: Great story!

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Fisker did a monograph about Klint.

[End of 3/6 interview]

Tape 7, side 1 (cont.) 3/13/92

R. BROWN: Perhaps we can talk for a while about your role as an advisor. You've done a great deal of that. I suppose it's related to your being a chairman, a dean, an administrator. You mentioned earlier that you supposed you were seen as a rather neutral expert.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think so. I think they often call on academic people for that kind of advice -- institutions, government agencies, other colleges.

R. BROWN: Well one of the earlier ones that you were involved with was at Wellesley College, I guess in the late '50s when they were discussing a new art center. Was that a new concept at that time, an art center?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I wouldn't say that it was entirely new, no. But they needed one certainly at Wellesley very much because they had started a museum long before, and they were receiving gifts, and the teaching program was taking on form both in music and in the visual arts, painting and sculpture. One of the faculty at that time was John McAndrew, an architectural historian whom I knew. There was also Lilian Anderson, who was then the wife of Stanford Anderson. And the woman you just mentioned --

R. BROWN: Agnes Abbott [?]

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Agnes Abbott. I had some knowledge of all three of those. I can't remember how it came about that I was suggested for this role. They may have come first to Belluschi, and he may have suggested that I do it. In any event it was a question of how to go about selecting the best architect for this particular project. I think the location had already been pretty much decided as being an unbuilt upon part of that hill where the administration building and the science building are. And I recall having prepared a list of architects that I thought were worthy of

consideration. I don't remember all the names on that list, but one was Eero Saarinen and one was Paul Rudolph. I suppose they had undoubtedly a local committee who would go over the qualifications of these people and interview them. And I set up visits to the campus by these people, and my recollection is that Eero Saarinen was the first, and that Paul Rudolph was the second. Paul Rudolph at that time was a rising young architect.

His practice had been in Florida pretty much, and pretty much in houses, so he didn't have a big staff or a very big record behind him but he was so appealing and persuasive in the interview. I just had a call the other day from a woman at Wellesley who's writing a history of the museum, that he emphasized so much the effort he would make, if he were appointed, to make something consistent with the existing buildings and try to form a quadrangle up there that would be worthy of the site. It was a splendid site, of course, looking out over the great green area and connected closely to these other buildings. The committee liked him so much, and I suppose John McAndrew probably was very influential as knowing quite a lot about present day architecture. So they didn't go all the way through all of the interviews. They wanted to get started, and they appointed Rudolph. At that time he needed a local affiliation, and it was a difficult situation for me because they asked that our office handle the actual production of the drawings, estimating, and supervision and all the rest of it. I didn't know whether I should refuse to do that because of conflict of interest, but I finally relented.

R. BROWN: This didn't come anything close to AIA standards or ethical questions?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I don't think so, no. It was only avoiding the appearance of conflict which - I suppose there's a standard you ought to adhere to. We had at that time, I suppose, maybe twenty people in the office and some other projects, but not too busy. So the project got underway.

R. BROWN: Did Rudolph perch up here quite a bit?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes he did. He spent a lot of time up here, and I don't think he rented office space of his own -- he may have -- but he came to our office and worked with the people who would be in charge of preparing the design, which put me sort of off to the side in the sense that I would no longer -- you know, I was not in a position of interpreting him to them, but he was working directly. The design got to the point where there would be a final evaluation of the budget, and the estimates came in too high. This was about '55 or '56, and I had a long-standing commitment to go to Denmark on a Fulbright lectureship which I didn't want to give up. And Miss Clapp [?], who was president of the college thought I should give it up and ride herd on the revisions that would be necessary to bring it down to budget. I don't think she ever forgave me because I did go to Denmark. [laughs] But the staff did prune the thing down so that it could pass muster with the agreed amount of money that was available without giving up too much, I think. I don't remember much about the details of that. So it was constructed --

R. BROWN: Fully, despite the shearing of the budget? The elements were preserved?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Pretty much.

R. BROWN: What did they consist of? A museum --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: There was a museum, and the notion was that it would be a connecting link between the music school and the art school, and so arranged that when the performance center and the music center would be open to the public for some event a lobby of that room would be thrown open by rolling partitions to the gallery or museum, which was a single room. There was a corridor, also, that bypassed the museum so you could get from one building to another without

going through the museum. But the notion, which was partly the donor's idea, that the attempt should be made to make some kind of a fusion between the performing arts on the one hand and the visual arts on the other -- well, it's hard to do that, and it was hard on the museum functioning to do it as was later apparent.

R. BROWN: In what way?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: A museum really wants to be an entity by itself, not a pathway to something else. There's a security problem for example, and if you want a crowding exhibition it won't come to your place unless you satisfy certain requirements which the insurance would cover if there were a loss, but only in the case that the thing was well protected. And then, you know, a museum also needs storage space and work space and receiving space and all that. Owing to the location of the museum, it was not really possible to put those very close to the museum; they had to be elsewhere in the art building. But the great feature of the plan -- it was in the shape of an L, and it provided a closure to the quadrangle up above in a very handsome way --

R. BROWN: There was a pre-existing quadrangle up above at a higher elevation?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, built in red brick with more or less _____ gothic tendencies. It did this without closing up the view toward the south, that wonderful landscape with those great trees. The big feature architecturally was the approach from the west which involved this great monumental stair that came up under the museum, arriving at the upper quadrangle. Rudolph labored over that in order to make it as perfect as he could. It was the days before you had to provide easy access for handicapped persons, and stairs having been so important throughout Renaissance and baroque history it was a natural thing to continue to elaborate. The only way you can get in even now without using the stairs is to go in the service entrance, which is off the drive that's immediately under the building on the south side, and there there is an elevator.

R. BROWN: How was Rudolph to work with, at least as your staff found him?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think they were happy together. We were on good terms. I think many things about the building are quirky, perhaps unnecessarily elaborate, but that's just my personal evaluation. I think the art building is better than the music building on the whole.

R. BROWN: The music building is to the north end of that complex?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. During that period there was a good deal of interest in the problems of sun control, and the windows in the art building were screened by this elaborate metal louver system thrust outward from the wall a couple of feet; and that was placed not only on the south where it was needed but also on the north where it wasn't. Things like that are sort of things that I wouldn't have done; I would have insisted that the north facade wouldn't look like the south facade. That was not in Rudolph's picture, let's put it that way.

R. BROWN: So that at the time he had the job he had control of the --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh yes. That was the purpose of appointing him.

R. BROWN: Why do you suppose a college, and many corporations and institutions, for instance, why do they want a rising star? Do they want a recognizable name?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I think in such a situation there are two things about it. One is that if you want security you select somebody who's very well known, who has already a big reputation, a well organized staff. But the risk in doing that is that you don't know what fraction of that office

you're going to get the attention of; the man who's in charge of the design, the name architect, may be so busy with other things that he can't really give it his full attention. If he's got 95% of his office working on other things which may be bigger and equally important in his view, the project might not come out as well as you had hoped. If you choose a younger person you have the assurance that you get fully his attention.

R. BROWN: He still has a reputation to make.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right. It's also wonderful for the owner if he can be the person who identifies the promise in this person and makes it the first important building that this person does. It puts the college in a good light as having really taken the risk, if you will, but used its sophisticated knowledge to identify a real coming artist. Especially the art and art history part of the program, who would be especially interested in finding somebody like that; whereas if it were a building for science or engineering or whatever, they wouldn't be so committed to that principle. It was a very interesting time.

R. BROWN: When you came back from your time in Denmark was there still a good deal more to be done?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, it was about ready then to be constructed. The little college was smart enough to negotiate among a small number of builders with good reputations and got a very good contractor who really put a lot of effort into doing just the right thing. For example, the columns, which are conspicuous under part of the art building -- Rudolph, no doubt partly in the interest of having some echo of Gothicism in the older buildings, designed a column which looked like a kind of a cluster. It had four cusps on it. Each cusp was not very big in diameter, so that it called for a very sophisticated concrete placement. Also he was interested in getting a rough aggregate kind of surface on the concrete while still retaining these rather refined shapes. That caused a lot of effort for different methods to do that on the part of the contractor, but I think they succeeded very well. There's been no conspicuous concrete failure anywhere.

R. BROWN: And the stairs themselves you could almost think of as an evolution [?] to gothic or Renaissance Europe.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I was more reminded of the Spanish Steps in Rome than anything else, which of course are baroque.

R. BROWN: So once you had this first taste of an advisory role were you ready for more?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I guess so, although I tended after that to shy away from also taking on the burden of preparing the drawings and documents.

R. BROWN: Well one of the ones fairly soon after that was that you were the professional advisor to the City Hall competition in Boston, the Government Center commission. That was about 1960. How did you get involved in that? What did you know about it? Had there been much talk about it? There probably was.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: There was. The architect James Lawrence was very instrumental in promoting the idea of a public competition.

R. BROWN: Yes. He was also a man who says he was inspired by the Stockholm civic space.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. There were other competitions at that time, the one for a city hall in

Toronto, for example, and I guess later on the one for the opera house in Sydney. But he must have been the principal person who persuaded the mayor and his commission to make a public competition. The mayor was John Collins, and the chairman of the commission was the president of the Boston Five Cents Savings Bank, an excellent person, very sympathetic.

R. BROWN: That was Robert, um -- How was it? When were you brought in on this? About 1960 toward the very beginning? Had they already set up a Government Center commission?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and they issued the question of who should be the professional advisor. They went to Harvard and they went to MIT. From Harvard they got Walter Bogner, a professor there in the architecture department, and from MIT they got a hold of me. We both were interviewed by them, and they decided they would stick with me. And then I had the job of writing a program. There had been a technical study about the needs, so that the office spaces were all marked out and given areas that had to be respected, which was also at the same time a kind of a guide to how the government was organized. It fell to me to try to put this in context with, you know, the expressive needs of the situation, the division actually of the building into about three parts, one being the place where a lot of people would come to pay their bills. For some reason or other many people don't want to do that by mail, and that's quite a big enterprise in itself; it's like a bank. And then there is the representational side of it, which is also policy-making -- the mayor's suite and the councilors' meeting room and whatever spaces are ancillary to that. Then thirdly would be the offices of the bureaucracy, including the Boston Redevelopment Authority and all the others which, at that time, were partly in an office building built for the purpose and partly in rented spaces all over the place. But it took quite a long time to get that program approved by all the people that had to approve it because it contained a form of contract that was proposed for the architect.

R. BROWN: You mean it was quite fixed?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. The architect entering the competition would know what his fee would be and how it would be paid and everything involved in that contract, and that had to get by the city's attorney -- I don't remember what his official title is. And I remember that being rather difficult.

R. BROWN: And this all preceded your coming on board?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No. I was putting that in the contract. See I would start from that AIA form of contract which would make every effort to protect the architect from being taken advantage of, and he came in from the point of view of the city; so it had to be a negotiation in which you gave up something.

R. BROWN: Had they by that time already razed the very old Scollay Square area? Was that already demolished?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think so.

R. BROWN: And there'd been no objection to the destruction of all those old buildings?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Not much. There were a couple of plans for the Government Center. There was one that we participated in, along with a planning firm and Jack Myer and a few other people on the staff. And then, I believe at the time that the man from Yale, from New Haven -- the development man --

R. BROWN: Oh yes, Logan?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Logue was appointed, he felt he needed one from I. M. Pei, and we had, I think, some differences. Pei came to somewhat different conclusions. He maintained the curved street, for example, on the east side which we thought wasn't so important if you were going to have to tear down the other side of the street; and he outlined a space where the building had to be, which we had left more loosely. Anyway, that was all sort of in the cards by the time the competition started. And it was a public competition that we advertised broadly so that there were a lot of entries; I think there were two hundred and fifty some entries. And that made for quite a large jury which I think we had in what is now the restaurant or cafeteria of the Museum of Science as I remember. I'd assembled a jury. And the mayor wanted publicity; he wanted people to know, you know, that there weren't delays, that the process was going on, that there were some interesting designs. But we said no, you have to keep mum because this is a competition and the competitors shouldn't be aware of what the others are doing. But we selected, I think it was six for the second stage and had another jury when they came in --

R. BROWN: A separate and new jury?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Same people!

R. BROWN: Did you select the jurors?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, with the approval, of course, of the commission. There had to be commission members on it, but I appointed Belluschi and Rapson, who at that time was at Minnesota, Walter Netsch from Chicago, I don't remember who else but anyway there was a majority of architects on the jury.

R. BROWN: The commission itself, who was on that? What was its composition, roughly speaking?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well there was Morgan who was a financial man. There was a contractor, and, I think, an engineer, and a lawyer -- you know, sort of all of the people from the professions that would be interviewed. It was a political composite, but they worked pretty well together, I must say.

R. BROWN: So there was no venality or no sort of horse-trading politicians directly involved in this?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, no. It was free from that. And the final competition was in the Museum of Fine Arts, and it was announced immediately in a ceremony.

R. BROWN: That was in May of '62, I guess.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That would be about it.

R. BROWN: Did the jury come to a decision quite quickly?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Quite easily, yes. The finalists were very different one from the other. There was a very interesting one by Mitchell and Giurgola, which many people thought might have been the winner -- many of the architects who saw it thought that it might have been the winner, and I think many people referred to it as having been the runner up, although we never characterized it that way. It was around a courtyard on that site. One of the things we had against it was that it didn't complete itself, in other words if you were at one end of it and wanted to get over to the other side you couldn't take the short-cut, you'd have to go all the way around. That seemed to us maybe stretching it too far.

R. BROWN: Would it have encompassed more of the site than the present winning design?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, no. I got a concession on that. Pei had outlined a square as I recall it, and I succeeded in extending it further to the west so that the designers wouldn't be so cramped and wouldn't be forced to adopt some pure polygon a la Pei but could differentiate the parts if that was their desire. Some of the competitors produced sort of ordinary rectangular office buildings which didn't seem appropriate. Giurgola and Mitchell's was much more poetic than that and very appealing.

R. BROWN: In the program you wrote did you allude at some point or another to what the intention was? I mean apart from the function it must serve the ceremonial function, or the aesthetic one, or linking with the surroundings?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I tried to do that. I've got a copy of that program if you want to see it. Well, we were lucky, I think, although today the building is not always looked on very kindly, especially by non-architects, as being cold and unresponsive. But I think it has a good deal of merit. It was, of course, the first significant building of that firm.

R. BROWN: The winners were of course Gerhardt Kallmann and Michael McKinnell.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: And there was a third, Knowles from New York who, when they came to Boston to set up their office to polish the design, he stayed in New York. They associated with Aldrich's firm --

R. BROWN: Nelson Aldrich?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, Campbell & Aldrich, and together they did the drawings and other documents. And then Wood, Henry Wood, who had been in the Campbell & Aldrich office, joined Kallmann McKinnell to form a firm which is still one of the best, if not the best, in Boston.

R. BROWN: So they came to be here.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Was the reaction to this sort of top-heavy design, was it mixed or was it by and large sort of favorable? I mean we can look at the press where years ago someone said it looks like a filling station. That's the uninitiated and --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it depends on who was commenting. It was of course a form and details quite unfamiliar to lay people who weren't used to seeing that kind of a building. I suppose that it had a good deal of affinity to what in England was called the "New Brutalism" in which they were trying to exploit ways of using concrete; instead of baring it in the building or having it look like a classical trim with brick infill or something, they'd actually make the building of concrete and be proud of it, and it was just beginning to be possible to do that through quality control of the material. But it did tend to lead to rather harsh outlines, very assertive, and many people didn't like that. In fact that tendency kind of died out, although it was pursued for quite a long time by Marcel Breuer in his concrete works, especially in Europe. Kallmann McKinnell and Wood then went to do some other buildings, and they did the gymnasium at -- what's the academy in....

(End side 1)

(Side 2)

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: [something lost here] ...I was later involved in making a competition for the design of the addition to the Boston Five Cents Savings Bank, Mr. Morgan's bank. He thought so well of the process that he had a competition for that addition, and that I think turned out very well. It was a curved building. You've probably seen it. They worked with an Israeli engineer named Eliahu Traum who had been teaching at MIT, and part of the brilliance of that work I think is to his credit. There's also the municipal garage down there at the Government Center which they did; that's also in a strongly assertive concrete style. Then later on, not through competition but through interviews, they succeeded in getting the commission for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences --

R. BROWN: In Cambridge?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: In Cambridge, at a time when I was advising the Academy and organizing the selection process.

R. BROWN: That would have been in the mid-70s?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: And that's of course a quieter, less assertive building.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That right. We were trying to make something gentler and [laughs] -- what was Bush's phrase?

R. BROWN: Kinder, gentler.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right. Kinder, gentler, and something which would have the spirit of an English club, sort of, where you would find a lot of nice upholstery and carpets and furniture. They were rather new to that, though they tried very hard; some of the things didn't turn out so well, but on the whole I think it's a very good building.

R. BROWN: Well at the time of the City Hall, you said, I guess there was a good deal of admiration for this rough, sculptural use of concrete. Was there any regard to the climate, that is the appearance of concrete in a northerly climate -- a good deal of grayness?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I don't think that was a factor. It's true that this is an area where brick has been the predominant masonry form, but brick didn't lend itself quite so well to these bold new shapes that were in the air.

R. BROWN: Now what about the sitting? A lot of people have said why, again in this climate, do we have such a huge open plaza which is comfortable in the spring and the fall and part of the summer?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think that may have been also a bad feature, that this search for a new kind of monumentality kind of imposed that sort of thing in admiration for the Italian piazzas, many of which are pretty big; and even in northern Europe you sometimes get bold plazas with vast distances. But it would have been more ingratiating, I think, to have had more planting. But some of that planting was hard to get. I remember Gropius objecting to putting any trees in front of the building he was doing --

R. BROWN: The government --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, because then they wouldn't see it. May he rest in peace, but he had some strange, extreme thoughts.

R. BROWN: Like what?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, like that! You shouldn't let trees interfere with the architecture. [laughs] You could let trees be the architecture, as so often was done in classical past.

R. BROWN: Your writ with the city commission was the City Hall itself. Others took care of the overall cluster of buildings?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Except that the architects for the City Hall had some jurisdiction over how the piazza was developed. In fact I think they had a separate contract to design the plaza with all of its pavements and stairs and whatever -- a fountain that didn't turn out too well, and so on. They did use brick, too, both in the pavement and in part of the building.

R. BROWN: The linkage, or the view through to the old buildings, Faneuil Hall, Quincy markets, the harbor -- that was very carefully thought out, at least in the sitting, the placement --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Very carefully. Everyone wanted to reaffirm the connection to the harbor as best they could, which of course was not too easy with the expressway there.

R. BROWN: The elevated road?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. And the mayor's office was expressed very strongly in the facade, and it was placed where it would be right within view from streets that converged there. I think Washington Street stops there. And I think the adaptation to the site was very good. I think that Kallmann McKinnell and Wood went on in some of their later work to be even more conscious of context, architectural context as well as site. The buildings they did at Washington University in St. Louis, for example, would bear that out.

R. BROWN: You at the same time, and for a longer period of time, were on the design advisory panel of the State Department for buildings being built for it overseas. Could you comment a bit on what that entailed? You began in 1960 and continued right through the '60s on that panel.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I was ten years on that panel. There were only about three at a time on the panel, but the others came and went more frequently, I think. I don't recall precisely who shared it with me at any point. There was a very nice man named Larson [?] from Philadelphia, for example, and I believe that Dan Kiley may have been on it.

R. BROWN: These weren't all architects, then, Kil --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, architects. It's strange how little I remember about specific projects. But the service, that office was trying, under pressure from others, to really get some good buildings in foreign countries. It appeared that the other leading industrial countries -- England, France, Italy, whatever -- were willing to spend more thought and effort and money on being represented abroad. They would, for instance, have really high quality antiques from their own country in buildings and provide more of a budget for really representing the culture that they were representing. Our country has always been sort of niggardly about that, not always well represented in its buildings. But there was a period then when they were really trying hard and selecting the architects with care. We didn't have much to do with the selection of architects. What I think they worked upon was files of architects who had written in and wanted to be considered, the way it often happens

with big agencies. There might have been, of course, some pressure from congressmen for their own boys at times, but we didn't see too much of that.

R. BROWN: But you weren't passing on competitions.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: There weren't formal competitions, no, at least not very many of them. One of the most interesting ones that sticks in my mind is the one for Sri Lanka. The architect is on the tip of my tongue -- I'd have to look it up.

R. BROWN: Sri Lanka, that was Ceylon, I guess.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. I wish I could remember the name of the very interesting young architect who got appointed for that and who took so seriously the climate and culture of Ceylon, and trying to make something compatible with that. He came up with a very interesting design.

R. BROWN: Your panels, then, were always to approve that design?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: We would meet, and he would make a presentation. There would be also the officials of the office. They had an architect on the staff named Tom Pope, who was a very good person, a very generous and judgmental guy, and there may have been a few others who sat in while the architect presented the work. Then we would discuss it with him and ask him questions about why he did this or that, and offer suggestions. Not very often did we do anything that would upset the apple cart actually. Now I remember also buildings which we didn't review, which came either before my service or afterward. One of the ones is that charming building that was designed by Harry Weese in Ghana, I think, which had its limitations as a building but had a lot to say about bridging the gap between their conditions and our habits.

R. BROWN: Can you recall any specifics?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, it was around a square courtyard. It was up on stilts off the ground, and there was sort of only one way up an open stairway and then you had circulation around to go into the offices. But it wasn't a very big building. There were some interesting considerations for the design of those buildings because it was a time when most architects wanted to make very open buildings with a lot of glass and show the liberalism and generosity of the U.S. But there was also some tension because in many of these cities there can be public manifestations and riots. In fact the one in Pakistan was torched, a good building done by that Philadelphia -- Geddes, Quallis and Cunningham. Then I remember also the one in Moscow which I followed because the architect sent me reproductions of presentation drawings; that's the one that cause such a scandal because it was found to have been bugged from the beginning, and I guess they're still not using it.

R. BROWN: No, it was finally written up only a few years ago to have been bugged, wasn't it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. It did give us some indications in sort of secret sessions down there as to what were some of the methods used by people who wanted to bug a building. They took to having an inner meeting room where the policy makers could meet, a room within a room that they could swear was leak-proof, in most of the buildings. There was also the Athens building by Gropius's group.

R. BROWN: The Architects Collaborative?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Was that a fairly successful building?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I don't think it was particularly good. It seemed to go against the grain to make buildings which were patently fortress-like and could be sure of a restricted entry, because it ran counter to what modern architecture was trying to do -- the sense of openness and liberality. I don't think it's one of The Architects Collaborative's best buildings. We didn't have anything to do with that or with Moscow. What I remember most clearly about all of this is the trips: I took two trips with Tom Pope of the staff. One trip went to Brazil. At that time -- what was his name? -- Kubitschek, or something like that, was trying hard to get the Brasilia city established as the real capital, and everybody who lived and worked in Rio didn't want to leave the place because it's such a dolce far niente environment, you know, great beaches right there in the city, lovely climate. So there was some resistance to doing this. We went first to Rio, to talk with the staff primarily, and then we went to Brasilia. We were interested in two things. The embassy site [sound of drawing unrolling]. Here's the plan of that part of the city. We were interested in the embassy site which was somewhere near the center here, and also with what they were considering to buy for the residence. The ambassadors wanted to have residences separate from the chancery, not on the same block even. They felt that they had a right to a private life and social life of their own. So it was down in here. Now this I think is a lake which the architects thought was going to be such a wonderful place when all the frontages here were boating clubs and such; it turned out to have disease carriers -- I've forgotten just what -- so nobody could go in the water.

R. BROWN: Your trip with Tom Pope there, was that an exceptional circumstance? Was there something you had to look at in person?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He probably did it with others, but it was necessary in many of these cases to have on site investigations in order to really tell what was happening. Here is the United States' site. And here is Portugal and the Vatican having the most significance because of the relationship --

R. BROWN: With the church.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yup. And here's the USSR with France, and then Holland, South Africa, and so on.

R. BROWN: They were strung along a road in sort of a linear pattern.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. And I think Le Corbusier was to do a building for France. Whether it actually got built I can't tell you. This says OAS right here.

R. BROWN: So the site adjacent to the USA is the Organization of American States.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: There was already a building on the site. It was just a practical building done by a not too conspicuous architect, and this is it. This is the road that you see here, I think. (I didn't take that photo, obviously.)

R. BROWN: By the time you got down there was the building going up?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: This building?

R. BROWN: Not this building, but the permanent structure?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, no, it was not, and we were trying to promote Mies to be the

architect, but I don't think we prevailed. Well, these pictures are mostly of Niemeyer's work down there.

R. BROWN: These were major Brazilian governmental buildings.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right.

R. BROWN: How did you think these worked. I mean they're spectacularly sculptural --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Spectacularly sculptural but maybe not what I would have thought they should be.

R. BROWN: What do you mean?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, so formalistic, and particularly the rigidity of putting all those rectangular buildings with elevators in a row. It seemed very inhuman.

R. BROWN: Was their idea a very formalistic one for this new city? It was as much ceremonial as anything else, wasn't it? But they expected people to live there, is that right? You alluded earlier to --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Here's a plan for an office building, for example: two slabs slapped right up against each other without any connection between them, unless there's a bridge somewhere.

R. BROWN: And there were vast areas, weren't there, all spread out, whereas the site you were supposed to work on for the embassy had the buildings relatively close together.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Here is a detail of that existing embassy, and what we were able to learn about Le Corbusier's design is indicated there. Niemeyer was a very splendid architect in form-making. He grew into that, I think. Now this is the department of foreign affairs, which was under construction.

R. BROWN: He grew into what?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's a more subtle... [sound of rolling paper overcomes voices here] Look at this, for example, it's that you find the War Department in one and the Navy in another --

R. BROWN: The ministries just tromping right across the horizon --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Without any differentiation whatsoever. And, you know, there were supposed to be these slick and modern buildings but, like Chandigarh in India, they were not built and treated and used the way they would have been in New York.

R. BROWN: You mean people came in with vernacular usages?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, you look at an interior plan of one of those slabs. The circulation is atrocious, and you don't know how people could get out alive if there were any trouble. These are mostly of the residential site we were looking at. You see how big and empty and undeveloped the whole place was.

R. BROWN: It was sort of a fairly high area of slightly rolling hills?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Pleasant enough as climate.

R. BROWN: The climate was temperate?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: This sort of sums it up here: your photograph of the Supreme Tribunal with the head of the president, Kubitschek, on the museum. There was to be an art or a national museum of some sort right there. So there was sort of an authoritarian overlay to this, was there?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, with a democratic front to it, I guess.

R. BROWN: So it was like this: you and Pope were discussing things to make a report when you got back to the United States?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and I've got a thing here which I haven't read but which summarizes, February 1967, that trip. A fourteen page memo with recommendations, my recommendations.

R. BROWN: And these would be things that when they began planning for a permanent building --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They would consider. But I don't think they built an embassy residence where we were looking, and I don't really know anything about the embassy chancery either, what happened, whether they're still struggling with the same older building.

R. BROWN: But the idea of having Mies van der Rohe design --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It didn't fly.

R. BROWN: This must have been a rather different experience for you, working with a very large American bureaucracy.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, we didn't see very much of the bureaucracy --

R. BROWN: You merely dealt with Mr. Pope?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right, and then the officers of his office. There was a congressman by the names of Hays, I think he came from Ohio, who was I believe chairman of whatever committee had jurisdiction over these buildings. [Rep. Wayne Hays, Chairman of Subcommittee on Appropriations -- Ed.] He was kind of difficult to please because he didn't have any kind of sophisticated taste about design. So it was not easy -- but we didn't see him or talk to him, couldn't reason with him.

R. BROWN: And you made one other trip, you said. Was that after a building was up?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: We made a trip which included Cairo and Beirut and Tehran, and it was later that same year, I believe. I don't remember where we went first, but in Tehran I got to see the embassy compound where later the hostages were held. They had an office building there that, somebody called it "sombodys high school." It looked like a high school, like an American high school. But it was a fairly big compound with gates. And there was an embassy residence not far away which already existed and had been designed by a man whose cousin by marriage, Sam Homsey and his wife Victorine --

R. BROWN: Of Delaware.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Wilmington, yes. They were a little appalled because somebody had

redecorated the interior of that residence and put a lot of black wallpaper and things like that that didn't appeal very much, and glitzy furniture; and somebody had come along and had redesigned the garden. They had done a garden in sort of the Persian manner with a little rivulet of water coming down, and fountains, and plants that were native to the region. But this woman had come along and made it all into grass, quite unlike anything else in Iran. Anyway, there wasn't any question about doing anything with the residence. The question was whether the embassy building itself should be enlarged, or what should happen. I don't think we came to any clear conclusion. We went to Beirut where there was an existing American embassy, and I guess it's still there, right in the center of the town, with a compound right near the American University, where it happened that one of my alumni, Ray Goshen [?], in charge of I guess engineering and architecture, and he was a very nice host to us. The question there was whether we should ask the government to buy a piece of land out on the southeastern part of the city, which was on a slope overlooking the sea, and closer to the airport, which appeared to be a very excellent site for a new chancery. I can't tell you whether it was built. I don't think I remember seeing it published, but I believe that the Gruzen partnership in New York was to be the architect. We also then visited an embassy residence which had been designed and built by a young Iranian architect who had studied at Berkeley, and it was nice. It was done with local stone, very beautifully carved and shaped, quite successful. You know, it needs to be a kind of a building which is not out of keeping with its surroundings culturally and yet which represents an entirely different culture; it's a difficult row to hoe. He being Iranian but having studied in the United States seemed to have the wisdom to do it with good taste and judgment. Then we went to Cairo. There there was, and maybe still is, a compound with several buildings which served the embassy. But there again there had been riots and the government of Egypt was, I think, promoting an embassy row which would be on the west side of the Nile rather than in the center of the city. There was already a large new USSR building on one site there, and we were to look at a site not far from there which seemed to be sort of better because not so close to the intensity of the center of the city and yet in a dignified location. I don't know what happened.

R. BROWN: Would you in most of these cases, or all these cases, meet with the ambassador and get his observations on that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, yes, and his preferences which didn't always coincide with those of the agency. The man in Egypt, both he and his wife were very cultivated people with some means, and they had spent their own money on their residence, furnishing it properly -- art objects and so on. Not all of the ambassadors had that kind of sympathy with the design of their environment.

R. BROWN: But most of these embassy people you talked to were people who were somewhat expert on the country where they were, weren't they? They weren't these sheer political appointments which were sometimes criticized.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, the ambassador himself was likely to be a political appointee, but I guess we did talk to members of the staff who were more professional as well. But they all had preferences. They wanted normally more space than the government was ready to give them, for instance, but they had good reasons for it, too. I mean they wanted to be able to entertain properly and make a good face of it because I think that diplomatic circles seem to require that kind of receptions and Fourth of July parties and that kind of thing. So you had to have a facility for that even though it might not be used every day.

R. BROWN: Did you find this kind of work fulfilling?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I thought it was very exciting, yes, to be sort of allowed to see how these things happen.

R. BROWN: There was also -- maybe it had begun even earlier -- an art-in-embassies program, right? I think it began in the '50s. You weren't involved in that, were you?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, and I don't remember very much about it.

R. BROWN: But there would have been representatives of American art in many of these spaces.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I guess so. But there again it would depend on who did the choosing and, you know, in these political matters you don't always get the best.

R. BROWN: You were also about that same time, for about eight years I guess, involved with your alma mater, the University of Minnesota in a campus design, as a consultant. Was that pretty time consuming?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, it was time consuming but quite interesting. There the campus was finding difficulty in expanding over on the east side of the river and proposed to start a new campus on the west bank, which is the bank on which the center of Minneapolis is, however, a couple of miles to the north. There was the Washington Avenue bridge there, existing, which ran through the original campus on its way to St. Paul. And there was land available on the west side in what had been a rather run-down, depressed area which was up for renewal of some kind or other. So the university took advantage of that even though it meant that anybody who was going over there on foot from the east side would need more time than would normally be allowed between classes because the distance was several hundred yards. And it was the only way to cross the river because the river's in a limestone gorge there; maybe there's a hundred feet drop. We got into this because the university architect -- there was an office to that effect -- was in charge of a man I'd gone to school with there, and he'd been one of my graduate students at MIT as well. He wanted to organize an advisory group especially for this new campus. And so I think it started out with Belluschi and Kiley and myself, and didn't last more than a few years. But there were several buildings built over there at that time, and I remember advising about them and meeting with the architects.

R. BROWN: Was it a fairly challenging or exciting thing?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Rather, although I don't think it was as exciting as the Foreign Office buildings thing, of course. The architects were competent but mostly local, and I don't think any great buildings resulted from it. But it's viable. Then there was that long association with Cleveland which started way back in '57 --

R. BROWN: That continued. You mentioned that.

(End tape 7)

LAWRENCE ANDERSON

Interviews with R. BROWN, Archives of American Art

Tape 8, side 1, 3/13/92 (continued)

R. BROWN:again about 1966.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and that was very interesting because of the people who were on it, for one thing. There was Joe Passoneau who had been dean at the School of Architecture at Washington University in St. Louis, and a very intelligent man; and Chuck Moore in his salad days was a member. After Passoneau moved to Washington to follow the job his wife had there, George

Anselevicius who succeeded him at Washington University came on, and he is an interesting and voluble chap, and good company. We used to be met at the St. Louis airport by a university plane which had maybe half a dozen seats in it and would be flown to --

R. BROWN: Carbondale.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Carbondale or some interesting territory including some open field mining. And then we'd have that leisure time to talk about the state of the art on the way and on the way back. We holed up in a motel which I remember cost \$9 a night; it wasn't too uncomfortable. It was fun. There was a --

R. BROWN: What was the purpose of your visits there? It was an expanding, a rapidly growing --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, it was growing quite rapidly, and it did have a university architect who had an office and who got these projects into some kind of an order so we could do something with them. He was a pretty good guy. We helped select architects, which was one of the only occasions when we could really do that.

R. BROWN: Usually you don't have that role to play.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No. In Cleveland at the University Circle, University Circle would not be the client, but some institution there would be and they would have their own architect; and in the Foreign Office Buildings we sometimes put an oar in about architect selection but basically we couldn't control it. At the University of Minnesota I don't think we made the decision either, although we may have commented on it. Well, we got -- God, it's embarrassing, I have such trouble remembering names at my age -- of Quallis Cunningham in Philadelphia was appointed to design with his firm a big building for the humanities.

R. BROWN: This is in southern Illinois.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. By that time he had gone to Princeton to be dean there and more or less ran his own smaller office; but it was very pleasant working with him in producing that design. And we brought in John Reid from California and Ralph Rapson from Minneapolis and other people of that scope.

R. BROWN: So a number of people devoted a great deal of time to that sort of thing, is that right?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh yes.

R. BROWN: Why? Was this prestige in your profession to be part of a process like that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh, not so much, and you weren't paid very much. But you know, we were educators; we didn't have unlimited opportunities to do our own practice. This was an opportunity to meet with other practitioners and to see what actually is going on out in the field, put your finger on the state of the art so to speak. It was just interesting to do that.

R. BROWN: And this great growth of college campuses was a major focus in this country for new buildings, innovation, lots of big projects coming on in the 1960s --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right. I think the earlier campuses had been dominated by a few people who specialized in that kind of building, like Charles Cluder [?] and others, whereas it took a much greater number to do it later. Berkeley campus is another one I followed, not because I had

any direct responsibility but because I knew about Wurster and I visited there fairly often. I knew something about the history of the place.

R. BROWN: And you later taught a bit there.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: The perhaps smaller scale, or different sort of things in the early '60s, '61, were involved with redevelopment in Providence, Rhode Island, the east side -- block after block of older buildings.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, we didn't do very well there.

R. BROWN: What was it? You were thwarted?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, it wasn't so much that. I guess we didn't come into gears with the planners who were undertaking it. We were supposed to provide architectural guidance to determine which buildings in this area, which had Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design in it, were important to save, and any other recommendations having to do with improving the quality in that part of the city.

R. BROWN: Well that became a very notable place for historic preservation. Was that underway at that time?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well yes, but I don't think it had developed to the dimensions that it later took. I just don't think we served them very well. I can't explain why. I guess we were more, still at that time, limited to our vision of buildings as buildings rather than whole districts, which was our shortcoming.

R. BROWN: You were on the design advisory committee for the redevelopment of Boston from '62 to '78. Would that be more typical of your focus at that time?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes because --

R. BROWN: There you would have to deal with the matrix of an old city.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: True enough, but there was Logue, of course, who had ideas about what should happen in the center city, and the other members of the committee were important people like Stubbins and Sert and Belluschi and Aldrich. And the projects were big -- mostly commercial projects, but they were having an impact on the city. So there was some real movement going on there. It didn't last for very many years but for a while there, under the guidance of an architect who was the Boston Redevelopment Authority staff person who conducted this whole operation, who resigned and joined his own firm and died rather young. But he was a vigorous organizer and promoter of design, and that sort of helped in making our voice heard with the Authority. Logue himself, of course, was a man who appreciated good design; maybe he was a little too addicted to, you know, finding people who were famous no matter what rather than looking directly at the design needs of any particular thing; but he was certainly in favor of doing things the way they should be done and a strong personality as well.

R. BROWN: Now you all looking back -- a lot of people would say 'well an awful lot of those structures are awfully big, you know, a great deal of concrete.' But at the time you felt much of the commercial area in Boston needed --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, that whole area which had been adjacent to -- what's the name of the place that was destroyed, where the Howard Theater was?

R. BROWN: Scollay Square.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Scollay Square, yes, was pretty well run down and needed refurbishing. The government center idea sort of dictated what the theme should be. The problem then was to come up with commercial buildings that would be compatible with that idea.

R. BROWN: Was the idea that spanking new high rises, for example, which were quite unusual for Boston until then -- that they would set the tone, that they would attract? If the City, the Redevelopment Authority spearheaded these efforts that others would follow?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Of course the fact that they got to be so big was pretty much an economic thing over which it's hard to have any control. The Boston Society of Architects was trying to promote the idea of having what they called a "spine," a sort of row of tall buildings extending from the Government Center all the way down to Copley Square where there were big buildings going up; in some effort to unify the thing, they proposed that all buildings should be organized along that spine. And there were other ideas like that, accepting the fact that Boston would have to get used to skyscrapers and couldn't always remain a happy little colonial environment.

R. BROWN: On the other hand you were chairman of a committee on Commonwealth Avenue, the spine of the Back Bay, in '63, and there you all felt that some of Back Bay should be preserved whereas the Mayor felt that the physical deterioration should be reversed by putting in high rises, sort of the rationale used downtown.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: But we felt that Commonwealth Avenue was the best street in Boston and that it shouldn't be modified by bringing in something that was an entirely different scale. I think he was under pressure, the Mayor, of course, from developers who saw an opportunity, and those pressures can be pretty strong.

R. BROWN: Yes, here's the Mayor quoted in the paper in 1963: "I am reluctant to believe that the aesthetic possibilities of any structure depend exclusively on its height." [LAWRENCE ANDERSON chuckles] So you could have a beautiful building no matter what --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, of course that's true, but he wasn't thinking about the consistency of the environment as a whole, and Commonwealth Avenue is certainly a great treasure the way it is.

R. BROWN: Whereas downtown Boston you felt was already a jumble of sizes?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right. There wasn't anything down there that really commanded that kind of respect.

(END 3/13/92 interview.)

(3/30/92)

R. BROWN: We've been talking about various advisory work you've done, and I just wanted to continue on that. What about the Committee on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, the committee which you chaired in 1963 and 1964?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, some developer wanted to build higher buildings than the Back Bay was zoned for, at the intersection of [Clarendon?] Street and Commonwealth Avenue, and the Mayor was in favor of his going ahead. This was reported in the newspapers, and there was a zealot who lived in the Back Bay who felt that something ought to be done about it. I can't even remember his name, but anyway he came to me and together we organized a committee and had a few meetings and we wrote letters to the papers deploring this what we called "the violation of Commonwealth Avenue," pointing out that it was one of the few examples in Boston of a really courageous and wonderful conception of a broad avenue in a residential area which gave so much character to the Back Bay as it developed. And I guess ultimately we did succeed in blocking the project. That's about all there is to it.

R. BROWN: What were the Mayor's reasons?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I think that he was interested primarily in the prosperity, the jobs, the tax returns that the developer would bring through this action.

R. BROWN: This was the same mayor, wasn't it, Collins with whom you were involved in the City Hall competition?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: And there too wasn't part of his interest in reviving downtown Boston?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, that was a very important thing.

R. BROWN: In fact it affected you all. You all felt that something had to be done.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, sure. In fact it had been growing slowly for several years, the idea of a government center area in downtown Boston. I think I have --

R. BROWN: Oh, you have some material related to that.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Here's a report of 1959 called "The Government Center." There's the setting, it's here in red. There's the way it was.

R. BROWN: It was quite a large area, wasn't it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: I guess I've asked you before, but the fact that there was a very old and very run down neighborhood on the site -- people didn't really think of refurbishing that neighborhood. They thought it should just be eliminated at that time?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: There was a great need for government buildings.

R. BROWN: City Hall was completely overrun?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right, and everybody felt that it had to be central, and it shouldn't be haphazard, it really should be part of an overall plan. So here you see City Hall and the Federal Building --

R. BROWN: And the parking building.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and various other elements. You see that here is that wonderful curved street -- what is its name? I've forgotten --

R. BROWN: Which is now a flank of --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It's here. This plan got reworked by I. M. Pei in a separate, later contract, and he restored one side of it --

R. BROWN: Yes, the Sears Crescent.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: But on the other hand the rest of it, together with all the traffic problems of these tunnels, held up pretty well. The public buildings are all in white --

R. BROWN: And in that sort of indication they're rather scattered, aren't they?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, they've got black dotting in there for new private buildings --

R. BROWN: Focusing upon the city hall.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and tying together the county courts and all this stuff up on the Hill.

R. BROWN: The State House --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: And creating a plaza and trying to get through to Faneuil Hall and the waterfront as best it could.

R. BROWN: That was the idea, to give the feeling of a corridor from the waterfront all the way to the government buildings?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. It subsequently gave rise to things like the new Freedom Trail. There's always been a desire to somehow cut through the Expressway and other obstacles and get down to the waterfront which was Boston's initial reason for being.

R. BROWN: Even then was the Expressway thought to be a terrible barrier? something of an eyesore as well?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: But there was no thought at that time of simply removing it, was there?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well no. It didn't seem to be a possible thing to do.

R. BROWN: And also there were a great many parking facilities. I guess there was the thought of promoting the ease of automobile traffic and not tackle the very expensive questions of enhanced mass transportation. There wasn't much talk of that, was there?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, there was here in this municipal garage seven hundred cars, a bus terminal --

R. BROWN: A bus terminal integrated?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Of course there's a train station just to the north. Would you say you preferred these distinctly urban projects, such as Back Bay or the most complex being this one? Or another project on which you were involved as an advisor was the National Aeronautics and Space Administration research center in Cambridge, Massachusetts. You were the design consultant there for three years, from 1966 to '69. What was the given there that you had to work with?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well the given was that they had appointed Ed Stone, the office of Ed Stone, as architect for what they believed was going to be a continuously growing laboratory or administrative center for NASA. I don't remember quite how I got into it except that the director must have felt that he needed some input other than from the architect. And since it was a close neighbor to MIT he probably for that reason came to me. I was rather critical of Stone's design which tended to be a narrow tower predominating, where the head administration would be; but the area per floor was so small that I thought it wouldn't be a very adaptable kind of administration building, and I said so. But the whole master plan for that gradually faded away because of decisions made in Washington which took away the support for such a big enterprise in Boston.

R. BROWN: At the time it was thought to have been political. When President Nixon came in the hopes for such a thing in Cambridge were rolled back, is that right?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I think that's probably the case. So it gradually leaked off into other uses, and now it's become primarily a commercial developer's paradise.

R. BROWN: There is a core, a Federal Transportation Research building. Is that the one relic of what was to have been a much larger --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I guess so.

R. BROWN: Was that area in general, adjacent to MIT, fairly nondescript?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, it was quite run-down, actually. That whole area of Cambridge there and northward was early industrial use -- warehousing and things like that. It's gradually been gentrified by having the old buildings fixed up and modernized, and new activities coming in, not so much manufacturing but research institutions and other businesses, so that it's changed its character very markedly. Also the part of Cambridge near the courthouse up near Lechmere has also been part of that development. It's so near Boston, so accessible, that it finally could no longer be considered a wasteland, although there's still quite a lot of railroad trackage and stuff that I suppose will ultimately disappear. There have been lots of plans for it.

R. BROWN: Do some of those plans even go back many years? Can you recall any earlier when you first came back here to teach?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, not that far, no. But MIT has had a good deal of interest in that, of course, because the Institute's going to have to expand over time and erode into that district and meet up with the subway system at Kendall Square, all of which is happening slowly.

R. BROWN: Now about that time your department sent down things for an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, in 1967, called "The New City, Architecture and Urban Renewal."

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I don't remember having had much to do with that.

R. BROWN: Do you recall the exhibition?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: When was it?

R. BROWN: 1967. For an exhibition like that, very severe instructors would have pulled that together and sent some student work down.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: You were for a number of years, from 1973 to 1985, involved in a rather large-scale project, the Inner Harbor project, Charles Center, in Baltimore. What was your role there? You were on the Architectural Review Board, I notice.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, that was perhaps patterned after University Circle in Cleveland. In any event, it was a semi-public organization set up to control and encourage a redevelopment of the inner city of Baltimore. There was an inner harbor which had fallen into disrepair which, if you look at the map, the ocean-going vessels can penetrate deeply up into, near to the center of the business district. The early years of that redevelopment were what was called the Charles Center portion, which was mostly done before I arrived on the scene. There was an important office building by Mies and some other things. Then as that got filled up, attention turned to the inner harbor that was adjacent to the southeast. There various things happened, like the International Trade Center by I. M. Pei's office, which dominates that part, and the new Museum of Science by Ed Stone, the Aquarium by Cambridge Seven, and finally the Constellation Plaza I guess it's called, which is Ben Thompson's contribution of up-scale retail and restaurant business, which brought a lot of people into the area. Through the supervision of an imaginative group, they were able to supervise things like the treatment of the pedestrian areas, the gating [?] in the harbor, the lighting, and the planting -- all of those things. There had been an earlier commissioned study for that area, and I was reminded the other day in a conversation with Vernon DeMars that he had worked on that back I guess in the '50s or so. So that from the beginning there was a kind of an overall intention, and there were very dedicated and well informed people running this organization, so that it was firmly focused at all times. I thought it was really very good.

Now most of the people on the design advisory board were from Philadelphia -- _____? Perkins and George _____? and Phoebe -- I've forgotten her name right now; you can look it up, an architectural historian from --

R. BROWN: Phoebe Stanton?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Phoebe Stanton, that's right, were the ones I chiefly remember. Phoebe's a Baltimorean and knows the city very well. I had to come down the night before, stay at a hotel, and then take pot luck coming back the same day of the meeting. It got to be kind of a burden, and I gradually eased out of it. The other people, the Philadelphians, just had to get up an hour earlier and get on the train and it was no problem. The meetings wouldn't start until ten o'clock or so, anyway, and by that time I was well through my breakfast and ready to go.

R. BROWN: What was the role of the architectural review board?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, as various projects would come up they would have their own sponsors or clients and their own architects, you see. It would be our job to comment on the appropriateness of the architecture in the setting and to explore how it should relate to other new things happening there so as to be sure that things would fit more or less together.

R. BROWN: Your board didn't play any role in selection of the architects?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, we did not.

R. BROWN: The private or governmental client did that.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right. I remember one very interesting project which was the Convention Center. It wasn't exactly next door to the inner harbor, but it was a very brilliant design job mostly credited to a Seattle firm. There were also a number of other interesting things: a Hyatt hotel of considerable size, some office buildings nearby. And then there would also be things brought up by the staff that would -- things like 'what should we have as regulations for signage?' what about a fountain that somebody wanted to build here? things like that -- to explore these issues even before they came to a head and to advise the staff whether they should employ consultants to work these things out, or what should be done. So there was always kind of a -- leftover attachment issues which would not be the responsibility of the new project itself but which somebody had to tend to if they were going to not involve conflicts. That group did indeed go into a lot of detail. If somebody wanted to change a sign on a building, we would talk about it for several hours maybe; it could get to be kind of too much of a good thing.

R. BROWN: Did your board have enforcement power? That was local, wasn't it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: We had enforcement power in the sense that anything that was done in that area had to have the approval and the support of the management organization.

R. BROWN: It sounds as though it was a fairly flexible, an open-ended mechanism they had.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Quite so. They had a substantial staff and kept an up-to-date model of the whole district with its new buildings, and every time a project came up that would be fitted into the model and discussed as to its impact on existing structures. There were of course some old things, like a paint factory -- what was its name? -- right on the waterfront, that had started out being a factory and I guess became an office building, but couldn't very well be eliminated except over very long pieces of time.

R. BROWN: So they did work with some old buildings --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Did you notice that it had an effect on its surroundings beyond the inner harbor, for example residential areas?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Curiously not very much. Sometimes if I had a little spare time I would walk over to the CBD, which lies more or less to the west of this --

R. BROWN: CBD? What was this?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Central business district. And there it would become evident that there was a commercial life in Baltimore that was quite distinct from the sort of elitist stuff in the inner harbor. The inner harbor consisted of public things like the museums, and office buildings. There was one for USF & G, for example, a company that pre-existed there. But they didn't generate much pedestrian traffic until Ben Thompson's and -- what's the developer's name who did so much --

R. BROWN: Rouse?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, put in the commercial development, several buildings with boutiques and food stores. A lot of people could be seen promenading up and down, being admiring of the

splendor of the place even though they weren't affording to use it. I guess that happens in Boston, too. Tourists begin to be attracted.

R. BROWN: Do you think that that was a phase, this business of redoing urban cores?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, because once having done it you can't do it again for quite a long time in any one place. But it is a more or less continuous, although episodic, process in every big city.

R. BROWN: And one hears there it involved large areas of 19th century housing as being rehabbed and so forth. Perhaps that is a result of this.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It may be. Yes, I think that restoring the inner life of the city, or rebuilding it in some form, is certainly going to have an economic impact on the region. It's a problem for big industrial cities, which grew in the 19th century, to continue to advance and to upgrade themselves in order to be seen as not too decrepit in comparison to Dallas and places like that,

R. BROWN: In fact one of your next jobs as a consultant was in Dallas for the Museum of Fine Arts, in 1977. What did that work consist of?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, there was a committee, of course, and their first job was to find out, to designate an architect, and they called me in as a consultant. And so we went through a process that I guess most institutions do in some form nowadays to find out whether there really are people who want to be the architects and find out whether there are people who haven't shown an interest but who might have the right resources to do it, and making up a master list of possible candidates including some local people who are probably not going to make the grade but, for public relations reasons, need to be considered, and then to accumulate data about these firms -- asking them to submit their credentials and also scouring the magazines and books to find out more about them; and finally discussing, discarding, and winnowing down to perhaps twelve or fifteen or so, or even less, and then setting up interviews for the people to come and talk to the board, the committee.

R. BROWN: By that time the architectural firms had been notified that they were being considered?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and so they would be, I guess paid for coming to town and having an hour or so conversation with the committee.

R. BROWN: Was this committee any different from others you'd been on? Quite fine? Quite good?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was a good one. They were mostly business people of some repute plus I suppose categorically what you could call boosters who spent all their time promoting the interests of the city, and then people who knew a lot about art -- maybe trustees from the museum, collectors, people like that. But it couldn't be too big a committee; ten or twelve was enough to get around a table and discuss these candidates.

R. BROWN: Was it a matter of starting from scratch or was it to add on to an existing building in this case?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was a new building that was proposed, and there was a consultancy established to generalize on location. That was done by Carr Lynch who were originally MIT people. They identified a part of the downtown where things like a museum and a concert hall quite simply could be placed. Without going into any great amount of detail, the previous location for the

museum was not felicitous: it was away from the center, it was out on the fair grounds somewhere, as I remember. But they had a vigorous new director, and he and the chairman of the committee came to Boston to persuade me to help them and stuck with it through the whole procedure. Now they ultimately chose Ed Barnes to be the architect.

(SIDE 2)

R. BROWN: The Dallas Museum of Art.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, this is the plan Ed Barnes came up with. The entrance is down here on the lower level, and then you come up at this point at get to a higher level for the galleries, and go down hill. Then there are courtyards.

R. BROWN: So it's quite an interesting and varied layout, is it? Multi-level and taking advantage of a warm climate and a good deal of openness?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Quite a lot, yes. Outdoor sculpture, of course, is pretty important nowadays, and they needed places for that. Harry Parker was the name of the director.

R. BROWN: Did he work quite closely with your board? I assume he did.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Very much so, yes. He knew what was going on at all moments.

R. BROWN: Did he have fairly fixed ideas or was he more open?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: He was quite flexible, but it was obvious that he had the confidence of the supporters on the committee and others. I guess he's still there, still doing it with great panache.

R. BROWN: You must have been known nationally, then, as an excellent person to have as an advisor or a consultant. You say the director and another board member came all the way to Boston to ask you to take on this job. Do you think that's fair to say? You undoubtedly had quite a reputation.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I guess I got some notoriety somehow out of doing these things. Of course the relationship with Dallas was partly an MIT friendship because the McDermotts had supported projects at MIT and Mrs. McDermott, the widow, was very supportive and she is also a collector.

R. BROWN: And they were major backers of the Dallas museum?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. So they may have felt at home getting somebody from MIT.

R. BROWN: You also by that time -- this is 1977, but beginning in 1974 at MIT you were on its Council for the Arts. Was this something -- you were approaching retirement then. Did you think this was, you wanted to get involved anew in something slightly broader or what?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, the Council for the Arts is I guess a hundred or more people, mostly chosen from outside the Institute and mostly with a view toward their patronage for the arts, but as a matter of course they do put people on the Council who know the Institute and who have had some connection hopefully with the arts, so that you'd find that the Dean of Architecture and Planning would naturally be ex officio. That's what it turned out to be for me.

R. BROWN: Did you find that an engrossing bit of work?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It wasn't very much work. No. They met only once a year at a business meeting and then it was primarily an occasion for the members who didn't know the Institute as well to visit what was going on in the arts, and that kind of thing. It was pleasant to socialize with these people.

R. BROWN: But any real work to get them to do something for the Institute was going on during the year, not necessarily at those meetings, is that right?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well what their purpose should be was something that was later discussed in depth in an ad hoc committee on the status of the arts at MIT which was done in the late '80s, which I also participated in. The things they had done which were notable was the print collection -- works on paper -- to encourage that, and to encourage a system whereby even students could borrow works like that to have in their dormitories. And of course music, I would say has always been strong at the Institute, and there were unquestionably many ways in which the Council could support that by helping to have concerts off campus, and so on. So they were doing quite a lot of good, but at the same time there was a kind of a tenuous relationship between them and what was actually going on on campus, including the administration. They made every effort to try to bridge that gap, but it was not always successful, I guess. Still, it often worked and it still exists, I guess.

R. BROWN: Did you have by then growing up a museum of the Institute --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: The MIT Museum.

R. BROWN: You have an art gallery, and now in the mid-80s you get a second art facility, the List Center.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes --

R. BROWN: Just thinking of the visual arts and the historical institutions alone.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right. And the growth of things like music, and the introduction and strengthening of drama and dance. As far as the visual arts are concerned, history of art and architecture has been part of the humanities sequence, but it isn't as strong now, I guess, as it was in the days of Wayne Andersen who has left the Institute. And we had studio work, also, which had been generated by Kepes' presence over the years in the Center for Advanced Visual Studies, and men that he had picked out, Filipowski and Preusser, were teaching studio courses which were part of the humanities sequence. And we had photography under Minor White for quite a few years. So there was a time, at least, when that enterprise was doing well. But in later years it has kind of diminished. Minor died, and the leadership for photography has been less strong. Preusser and Filipowski retired, and they appointed a teacher of studio, also in the Department of Architecture, to accept students from all over the Institute in the humanities program. I don't know really how well that's going. There's also been another development, and that is the media arts, which actually generated a wholly new building on the East Campus, that's concerned I guess primarily with how images and sounds can be computerized, thereby giving new tools to composers and performers and artists in general. That is now so specialized that it hardly seems like a part of the department and may someday become a department of its own. Everybody thinks that that's probably what should happen.

R. BROWN: It sounds as though many of these things have gotten underway because of the strength of particular individuals, not as part of any overall plan.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right.

R. BROWN: You mention Wayne Andersen in the visual arts, Kepes in instruction in the visual arts --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: And Negroponte in the media arts. Whatshisname in cinema --

R. BROWN: Peacock?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Leacock.

R. BROWN: Do you see that as a weakness, or do you think that's been a strength of the Institute?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think you have to have people like that in order to get anywhere. The problem is finding them and getting them appointed and getting them funded.

R. BROWN: But then when they depart --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Then you have to start over again, and you may want to go off in a different direction.

R. BROWN: But is that in your estimation quite in keeping with a major research --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It's the history of MIT, really. We used to have meteorology, for example; it was a branch of aeronautics. Hardly an important activity anymore. We used to have public health, but I guess we decided that Harvard could do that better. We used to have mineral studies of some kind or other; now it's gotten to be Materials Science, a much more inclusive thing. In almost every case there have been people who had the conviction and the energy and the clout to get themselves started in programs like this, get funding from some source or another. The magnet laboratories, for example: they had a setback when Congress decided to use federal funds somewhere else even though Florida wasn't as well equipped to do this, they felt for political reasons I guess that --

R. BROWN: They would have it in Florida.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Things like that are happening all the time. But there's always somebody new who's got a bee in his bonnet, and most people at the Institute encourage that. I don't think you can do these things anonymously.

R. BROWN: The central administration at MIT has generally speaking been quite loose? It's not a heavy presence particularly?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well they don't -- I mean they're accustomed to the truth that everything is changing all the time, and things are coming along. That's probably the soul of technology after all, so they're used to it. The presidents, for example, and the provosts have been not always very knowledgeable about the arts, but have nevertheless been supportive because there was clearly a need to keep MIT from becoming exclusively a specialist school for scientists and engineers. The School of Management also mitigates this, and Humanities has become very important with things like linguistics and philosophy [which] are in good hands.

R. BROWN: Well Architecture itself was about the earliest example of this, wasn't it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, we were there from the beginning, and of course in the beginning I think the concept of the field of architecture was quite different from what it has become.

R. BROWN: How would you say? Then it was -- what?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was more technical. The construction science and heating and ventilating and electrical and plumbing -- all those things were new and were being developed rapidly. It was felt that the architects needed preparation in those areas, and if you could have a school that would be also a medium of exchange and of communication with practicing architects and of promotion of developments in the field, that was what was needed. And it indeed was because most architects, certainly in the earlier part of the 19th century before MIT was founded, were self-taught or taught from books, word of mouth.

R. BROWN: Apprenticed in an office maybe.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: So the design vocabulary was secondary? That was assumed, I guess, and therefore what you were doing was properly technological. Now you found, certainly by the time you went to school there, that this was beginning to change, a new aesthetic wave was coming in.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right. Also we became separated from the rest of the Institute for twenty years while --

R. BROWN: Oh physically, while you remained in Boston and they moved to Cambridge --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: And that led to development away from cohabitation with the institution, which it took us quite a long time to overcome.

R. BROWN: By the time you retired in the mid-seventies, how would you characterize the balance there between technology and design?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well design and theory had become vastly more important, and technology was reduced in emphasis partly because all the problems of technology in building had been more or less solved by experience, and people on the engineering faculties were into much more advanced problems so they didn't show much interest, with a few exceptions, in building construction problems. I think that there have been some promising efforts now to get to a more human face in some of these engineering disciplines; the mechanical engineers, for example, have emphasized design and imagination in their projects, and civil engineers are taking a look at some of the old problems. So I think there's an atmosphere now of more collaboration in these matters. But for years we had to rely on rather inconspicuous people to teach the necessary construction knowledge to students. And, of course, there's always the limitation of what school can do. You know, many of the things that are important for architects in practice you simply can't get students interested in, or if they become interested they're not realistic about it. The only way you can really get a feel for many of these things is to be on an inspection team for an office that is building something and seeing what the problems are in the field that have to be met.

R. BROWN: Was there opportunity for your students to attach themselves to field work?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: We've tried to do that, but there are term limitations.

R. BROWN: What were some of the things that they really couldn't do well at MIT? I assume running an office, administration.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Well, I don't know where to begin, there are so many things. What is the nature of brick work, for example: how do you get good brick work, and things like that. In part it's a scientific problem of mortars and the absorbability of the bricks; there's also the problem of workmanship.

R. BROWN: Of course that's one thing you learned about very early, even before you went into architectural school.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well I had some field experience, yes.

R. BROWN: That's your point here, too, even today and in the future would be the field experience. The school cannot carry that responsibility.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: There just isn't any way you can do it in school, or very much of it. You can have projects that deal with real clients, but you very rarely get into the construction phase of things like that.

R. BROWN: After retirement I guess there were six years that you were on the MIT Building Committee as a consultant in architecture. Was your role partly to supply that design critique?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I guess so. The most important thing that I remember about my experience is the project for exploring the master plan possibilities of expanding MIT towards the east. [Sound of paper unrolling] This is Main Street and this is Memorial Drive. Here's the president's house and the apartment building that Wurster promoted and over here is the School of Management, the Sloan, that was the -- what's the name of that soap company? -- Lever House originally. This is a library for the Sloan, here's a residential tower, and this is Kendall Square. Well, you can see that the streets in this part are running this way as a grid, but there's also the MIT grid which is parallel to the drive, to the river, and one of the problems was how to absorb that confrontation of the two.

R. BROWN: Was there any thought given to sort of accentuating that change in grid, from one on a diagonal to orthogonals or --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, complicated by the fact that here's a building that exists is another one that exists, and they're too good to tear down. This was one kind of search that had to be made.

R. BROWN: That's where the art area is, including where the Arts Center has been put in subsequently. And this -- what was MIT College supposed to be? Was that a new --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I think it was one of those interdisciplinary initiatives. The Planning Office had requirements. They felt that we ought to continue our network of circulation indoors, in other words the most places you could go either way without getting out of the corridors.

R. BROWN: As in the buildings of the 1920s, the original buildings.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. [Beginning of phrase obscured by rustling paper] ..of many of these plans, but you didn't know how they could be carried out, or when. It had to be just piece by piece. And you couldn't be too forthright about it because there were private interests in here that had to

be mollified.

R. BROWN: There's a great deal of greenery in some of the plans, isn't there?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, probably less than can be preserved. Well, it gives you some idea of what we were concerned with.

R. BROWN: So that was the principal thing you were concerned with those six years?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes but it wasn't the only one. There was the Media Building itself, which is about the end of our organizational control over building.

R. BROWN: And was that an existing building that was being redone for them?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh no, that was a new building that Pei did, the Arts & Media Building.

R. BROWN: In terms of design was there thought of trying to create some homogeneity, because there was originally but then, for example, Pei's Earth Sciences building is a great tower, almost windowless.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well before I was on this group Belluschi had been a very important advisor, and his notion was that Pei should have preference over a certain area of development on the campus and the Netsch of SOM in Chicago should be given similar responsibility the part up on Vassar Street. So that Pei got to do not only the Earth Sciences building but the Chemistry Building and the Chemical Engineering building and ultimately the Arts & Media building across the street; so that whole sector is really something that he developed. And Netsch did several buildings in the northern part of the campus.

R. BROWN: You continued with campus advisory work with Wellesley in the late '80s when you were on the board to select an architect for the expansion of its arts center. Was that something that was to merge with the Paul Rudolph Jewett Art Building?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, it would have to be attached to it, at the very least, and that was not such an easy matter. But it also involved alterations in the existing building, the Jewett Center, plus alterations in Pendleton Hall, which had been the scientific department, to accommodate some of the art studio work which had greatly expanded since Jewett had been built. I guess part of my responsibility was to decide whether the program, which had been worked out in considerable detail by Taylor [?], the director --

R. BROWN: The museum director --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: The museum director. Because the new construction would be her bailiwick. I had to work out whether it would indeed be possible to do that on the site, because the site is limited. There are important roads that limit it, and buildings too. And what I tried to do was to show that you could indeed, on two levels, spin it out over most of that area and get it all in. I thought that that might be the way to approach it because of the fact that in a museum it's desirable to have things more or less easily accessible, and to go from one gallery to another easily. As it happened, of course, the architect had different ideas and his are better. He stacked the galleries one above the other. These galleries, by the way, were built upon the existing collections and their expansion so that there would be a classical gallery, a medieval, Renaissance, baroque, 19th Century, and modern, and a place for traveling exhibitions.

R. BROWN: So you're saying that he was not too far -- if you were pushing for convenience --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I was pushing for convenience, but he --

R. BROWN: The architect was the Spaniard at Harvard?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Rafael Moneo, who went into a joint venture with --

R. BROWN: So you didn't have that much control over, if the chosen architect wanted a two-story museum, so it would be.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well sure. He had of course to convince the client, the museum people, that what he was proposing was correct. He has a very interesting building which has several floors of galleries, four or five, lit from a whole lot of skylights above and so arranged that there are slots between galleries so that daylight can wash the walls of the gallery below and that kind of thing. It's going to be very interesting. And like a museum that Breuer did in New York, the Whitney, it relies on elevator service but with an interesting public staircase in this case. I guess the [Sakler] Museum has some elements in common.

R. BROWN: At Harvard. Is that a tide you favor? You seem perhaps to like things on one or two floors.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, I think if you had your druthers I'd do it like Dallas --

R. BROWN: Or Oakland. That would be another case.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, yes. But where you have a limited site.... And it's primarily a study collection anyway; I mean it's going to be used daily by students, you see? It isn't something whose main thrust is to attract tourists.

R. BROWN: Well, you've been -- I suppose it's somewhat different than being an advisory; you're not involved for a length of time. But when you're on competition juries, this is work you've undertaken I suppose for many years. Is this something you started when you were a fairly young architect?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. I was looking earlier today... Do you remember an art center at Wheaton College?

R. BROWN: Yes.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I was on that jury.

R. BROWN: This would have been what? the late '30s?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: The late '30s, yes.

R. BROWN: That was considered an important modernist project when it got underway.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. I wasn't much more than thirty myself.

R. BROWN: Was the Wheaton project then one of your earlier ones as a juror?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Do you recall who you served on that one with? If not, was there some question of whether it would be a modern structure or not?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, it was an issue. There was a great confrontation over this. It got into the public realm, affected the selection finally. I don't even remember how it turned out, but it's all in the books. There's a book --

R. BROWN: There has been one recently on that competition.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: On several competitions, including that one.

R. BROWN: But that time was a watershed, wasn't it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was, yes, definitely! The next one I think that I served on a competition for a development in downtown San Francisco, on the waterfront. I wasn't very experienced then, either, but I remember feeling that I was put on the spot because we were required to make statements that we taped as to what we thought of the different entries, and I felt a little self-conscious doing that. It was a complicated thing, but the man -- I don't remember his name -- who was in charge of the redevelopment of the city was intent on having good architecture; that's why they had a competition. But the competition entries were developers with their architects. We were trying to judge the architecture, how it would work and how it would meet the needs of the city; but of course the financing element would have to be looked at as well by the city, and we didn't have any jurisdiction there.

R. BROWN: How did that affect things if the developers came in with their own architects?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well that was kind of new, because in those days the notion that you had to rely on a relatively new profession, a developer, in order to get things done in urban renewal was an idea whose time had come, I guess.

R. BROWN: You mean an entrepreneur, a go-between?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: We'd always had entrepreneurs; but somebody who would have the energy to get the thing organized and designed and built and take the risks involved in it, and then probably when he had got it built get off the hook because he didn't want to manage it, who would want to take the profits and go off and start another development somewhere else. That seems to be the nature of the game these days. And you keep asking yourself whether -- you know, it's the developer who has more influence on the design nowadays than anybody else because he's constricted by his financial needs, and he's being hounded by the city to do right by the public, and so on. And he's the guy who takes the heat on this. The only thing the architect can do is to defend the design, and that turns out to be a not so overwhelming part of the responsibility. It's bad, because I think earlier on architects had more to say about what the whole thing was --

R. BROWN: But in this case you say the developers brought in their own architects. I mean they'd already selected them.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's right.

R. BROWN: They were in the employ of the developers, the architects were, so they were quite constricted.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: Was this around 1960? You've got the Golden Gateway project --

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Golden Gateway, that's it.

R. BROWN: Was this project therefore deprived of some different things that weren't even considered by the developers?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, I think there was a good range of proposals, but God knows how successful they could be. It eventually had to be such that you had to live in a high rise for the bulk of the thing, and some of the best architects tried to combine that with townhouses where you'd have your own building so to speak, or part of a building, without having to use an elevator. And there also was the problem of garaging; since the thing was several blocks in extent, some of them had means of bridging across the street for pedestrian access and developing the roofs of the parking garages as not only the bases for the tall buildings but also public plazas on which the townhouses could face. That's a heady mixture and a difficult thing to pull off.

R. BROWN: It sounds as though it was to be a rather massive thing, all told.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was big, yes.

R. BROWN: Well that's relatively interesting and involving, I guess, being a juror. There are others you've talked of, for example here in Boston the Architectural Center around 1964. It was for one of the oldest architectural clubs in the country. Did they desperately need new quarters? Did they want a more visible one? And they ran a school, is that right?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, but the school they were running was in an old building up on Beacon Hill which originally had been not only the school but also headquarters for the Boston Society of Architects. Ultimately the Society and the Center separated, and the Center is devoting itself to education entirely, and the Boston Society is the professional group which has their own agenda. Well, I don't know how they could afford to do it, how they did afford to do it, but they did get a place in the Back Bay near the Mass Avenue station where they could build a building for educational purposes. And I think, as I remember it, Walter Bogner was the professional advisor, and the jury was composed of local people like myself pretty much.

R. BROWN: Was your aim to create the best features, as you'd known them then for some thirty or forty years, of an architectural facility.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Of course I think the program was pretty clear about what spaces were asked for: an exhibition space on the street level so that we could attract people in to look at things, and an administrative space, and a library, and the rest was lecture rooms and studios.

R. BROWN: Maybe we've discussed it a bit, but what was the role of the Boston Architectural school or Center as it's now called. It's practically as old as MIT, I mean it goes way back. It's mostly after hours, night school, isn't it?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, in the early days of architectural education there was some question whether the education should be as part of a university or whether it should be performed by independent studios governed by practicing professionals; because there were models for both things, and particularly for the latter scheme because at least in France, which most people were looking to, the architectural schools were independent of the universities and run by the profession in an indirect way. It grew easily enough out of a whole tradition of Renaissance studio-ships where first people learned by working in an office and then they began to study at home and the practicing older people would give them assignments and tutor them, rather than in office hours on

other time. And that could grow into evening clubs for this kind of, sort of the next stage after apprenticeship. There were several clubs like that, the Triangle Club in Philadelphia, for example, and others in New York and elsewhere I guess. But the thing that's remarkable about Boston is that it survived and grew and produced good practitioners and ultimately got accreditation from the National Architects Accrediting Board, so that its degree is considered the equivalent of others. They've never had any trouble, I don't think, in getting teachers. There are always a lot of young architects, graduate students maybe, who might want to teach and try it out to see how well they do at it; it's a way for a young person to get started. They don't pay anything at the Center except for a very few people. But there are also active practitioners who are quite willing to come one evening a week and spend a lot of time with the students, and faculties of Harvard and MIT as well often participate. I guess probably on a whole the reason for its survival may well be because of the presence of Harvard and MIT; because they offer a complimentary service quite different from the more academic ones, and yet which has proved itself over time. Since they're relatively easy to get enrolled in -- they always try to keep that as open as possible -- they're a haven for people who maybe couldn't get into more a more selective school and who may be refugees from some other professional effort, changing their careers. The ideal is to have the students working in an architectural office while they're studying, but sometimes they're working in some other kind of activity and still do it.

R. BROWN: So it performs a valuable, and for some time an almost unique, role in the architectural profession?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Well there are other schools that are not unlike it now. Los Angeles, for example, has one.

(END Tape 8)

Tape 9 (3/30/92, continued)

R. BROWN: One particular jury experience you wanted to talk about, and that was in 1976 you were chairman of the jury for the Bahrain National Cultural Center. What did you wish to say?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Did we talk about that in any detail before?

R. BROWN: No.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, we had a student from Lebanon, named Ray Goshen [?], who got at MIT a degree in architecture and also one in civil engineering. And he went back to Beirut and practiced, and he ended up being dean of engineering at the American University there. He had had a student from Bahrain. This student turned out to be in charge of public works for the emirate, I guess it is, of Bahrain -- although some newly wealthy countries in the gulf were trying hard to bring education and knowledge to their people. And one of the things they were trying to do was to introduce them to performance arts and visual arts as practiced by the Western cultures. So they had a project for a cultural center in Bahrain, and this minister of public works who had been a student of Goshen asked Goshen to organize a competition. Regrettably, the competition couldn't include a native architect because there weren't any, so what Ray did was to have an invited international competition; he invited architects from Switzerland, Spain, France, Finland, England, and the United States -- I believe that was the list -- to take part. Then to judge it he had a representative from every one of those countries, and in that way I got to know the other members of the jury better: Alfred Rote [?] from Switzerland who had done some work in Kuwait; and Tobias Faber from Copenhagen because Utzon had been invited as a competitor; and an English architect

I don't remember, and a Spanish architect. We assembled in -- I don't remember the name of the city in Bahrain for a week. We stayed at the Holiday Inn and considered these proposals.

That's a peculiar environment for construction because, in the first place, water that isn't salty is very scarce; in the second place, the sand is salty and it doesn't make good aggregate. Cement they don't have, they have to import it. Steel they don't have, they have to import it. As far as modern heating and ventilating and electrical equipment are concerned, it's got to be coming in from the outside. And the architecture also has to come from the outside. But it was curious how impractical some of these solutions were. The one from England, for example, had great ponds of water over all of its roof areas, with fountains; the architect thought this would be the way to keep the place cool, but of course there isn't any water so you couldn't very well do that. The successful competitor was a Finn who made structures very much in the local tradition of rather poor quality concrete block and short spans and narrow passages, lots of shade -- really very well adapted to conditions there. And he was easily the winner in our judgment. He came to see me afterwards, some months later, and he'd visited them to talk about next steps and they said -- this was probably in June or July -- can we start building in September? And he said no, it's going to take me two years to do the working drawings on this, this is a complex business after all, and the drawings I've made so far are only ideas, a competition entry. They were astonished, angry, and disappointed. Whether it ultimately got built I never did find out. I hope someday maybe I can go there and see it.

R. BROWN: Did you have direct dealings yourself with the local Arabs?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Very little. The minister of public works, yes; he was a nice man, and apologized for not being able to serve us beer because of the religious rules. But the man we mostly dealt with was sort of an executive officer for the department of public works, and he was a Swede. [laughs] It gave me a real window on what the problems are in some of those parts of the world. Some may have the resources to participate in the culture we know, but don't know how to do it, can't do it by themselves. That happened in Africa, you know, right after the war. The Africans were getting independent from their old colonial masters; they wanted to have experts from Europe and America to come and help them with their problems, and that lasted for several years but then all of a sudden they felt they'd learned enough and didn't want them any more. In many cases things have gone from bad to worse. Well, I don't know how you work these things out. It takes an awful lot of time.

R. BROWN: So in this case of Bahrain you left with nothing certain at all, particularly after you talked with the winning architect about how things were going to turn out. Was that a problem that interested you? Working in a -- not simply that they were isolated in terms of technology and materials, but working with very, very simple materials such as were forced upon you there?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. I think that's something that may have been to some degree overlooked with architects getting enormous jobs out there to build a whole city or a whole university, bringing in contractors who were accustomed to dealing with modern techniques. They're likely to overlook a lot of local things that might be important. I had a friend who taught at the University of Petroleum and Minerals in Saudi Arabia, and that was an entirely new campus; he found that the only open spot where people could say their prayers in the direction of Mohammed was basically the public toilets, and that seemed really quite inappropriate [laughs]. But those are things that an architect in our culture has a hard time finding out about.

R. BROWN: And these programs as, for example, in Bahrain weren't exactly spelled out in detail. I mean the cultural milieu wasn't quite spelled out.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, you can't really convey all of that in a document.

R. BROWN: I wanted to ask you, just briefly: you've mentioned here various publications of yours, a couple that you wanted to say something about. The first was a report in 1969 for California, the Coordinating Council for Higher Education, a report called "California Education in Environmental Design and Urban Studies." That's surely important, at least to judge from the growth of interest in each of those areas. [Some chat here while LAWRENCE ANDERSON searches for report not transcribed.]

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, they have a clearing house group for all of the tax-supported universities of California. Some of them had been technical colleges who graduated to become institutes or universities. So that was one group, and then there was the other group which is the vast organization of the University of California with all its campuses. And how it started I don't know, but they were having schools of architecture and planning appearing in these different colleges, and they didn't know what to do about them -- whether they were really needed, whether they should be in the right place, or whatever. They wanted to assert some kind of coordination over these things, decide what to encourage and what not. So that was what they wanted from the report. What it meant was that I visited every university where there was such a school and talked to the faculty and to the administrators, and in places where schools were apparently being organized, and tried to put it all together and say how long each program had been in process, how many students it had, how many it had graduated, and so on; and what their resources were. Then I tried to figure out the rate of growth of the state's public for higher education and the need for architectural services in the popular civil arts in that state; and tried to figure out if they needed more architecture they'd be relying upon immigrants from states that had been educated elsewhere, or should they be educating their own citizenry, and to what degree, and so on. I had to, in that report, cast a little cold water on some of the initiatives that were being taken while trying to be tactful, but I guess I did stir some animosity. I don't know.

R. BROWN: Do you recall what some of those might have been in general?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, some of the border conditions were in places, Pomona and I don't remember the others, where it was kind of doubtful that they were going to succeed.

R. BROWN: They didn't appear to you to be particularly viable programs?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, but of course you can never predict just what's going to happen. I don't know how much use the report really was. They were cautioning that the overall university systems had been growing at a great rate for quite a few years; there would be coming a time when the growth rate would slow down, and they were quite right about that.

R. BROWN: Even in California...

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Even in California! An interesting thing: in Florida it was much the same problem, but Florida's still very much a growth state. You talk to people in Tampa, for example, and they see no limit whatever to growth. They're going to become the second or third largest state in population before they get through, that's their view of it. They're just behind California, that's all.

R. BROWN: Whereas in California there's thought to be a leveling off, at least of the middle class population?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, a leveling off in the sense that it is harder and harder for people to get into a state that's already rather well populated. There are limited parts of the state that can be used for development; the rest is mountain and desert.

R. BROWN: Somewhat like Bahrain, with Bahrain being more extreme in that, whereas Florida seems more open-ended.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Right.

R. BROWN: So did you settle in in Florida in 1983? Take a trip to each of the campuses, discuss programs?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was organized differently in the fact that there was a board, and they represented different people -- that is architects and interior designers and industrial design and planning and I forget what else, landscape architecture. So when we got to a school the different members of the board went to meet with maybe different people on the faculties and got different viewpoints; we'd have to discuss this among ourselves and decide where things fit. The main thing that grew out of that was a kind of a controversy about the school in Miami, Florida International University, that had been open especially to Hispanics and blacks and was trying to provide them with opportunities that hadn't been readily available in that area, because the existing schools in that region tended to feel that this was sort of truly what they ought to be doing. There was also Florida A & M University in Tallahassee, which had been openly black and which was trying to become more inter-racial and get a better reputation and in fact the director at the time was a man who was an alumnus of MIT. So those were the interesting places for me.

R. BROWN: And were these areas more than just a normal interviewing process where you had to take into account pressures and tensions and rather high feeling, I suppose?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. For instance the director of the school who was trying to do something at Florida International University that would be of professional caliber was himself an Iranian and that of course raised some hackles. It was as ecumenical as all that.

R. BROWN: I suppose in a sense both the California and the Florida project had an excitement for you -- such burgeoning states, weren't they, with population composition that was changing and so forth. Would you work up portions of this? You were the lead consultant in Florida and I guess perhaps in California as well.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I was alone in California.

R. BROWN: This kind of work must have taken a great deal of time.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Oh yes. It did. In the Florida one I got different reports from the members of the board and then edited them and wrote, and rewrote, the overall conclusions.

R. BROWN: This kind of work you did, would you say, in the spirit of public service?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Well, we were paid for it, not so as to get rich or anything, but it also offered an opportunity to learn more about the world and see parts of it that I wouldn't otherwise get to.

R. BROWN: Now related to that, I guess, is something else I guess you want to say something about. You were on an Indo-US Subcommittee on Education and Culture. You were a visitor in India in 1979.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, I had applied for a grant because I was curious about the education in India, and I'd never been to India and I wanted to go. It was the last major travel project on which

my wife would accompany me. I limited my studies to the northwestern part of India, which is where most of the schools were: Ahmedabad and Bombay, New Delhi, a few other places, Baroda -- what's Le Corbusier's --

R. BROWN: Chandigarh.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Chandigarh. There's a school there founded and run by a man who worked in Le Corbusier's office, very interesting.

R. BROWN: And this was commissioned by a joint governmental group?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: It was part of the Indo-U.S. Subcommittee on Education and Culture, and I don't know who they report to.

R. BROWN: Well, was the aim of your report -- which was a rather short one by comparison with the Florida and California ones -- was it not so much to sketch out a practical program?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, just to learn what actually was going on.

R. BROWN: And to pass that along to them.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, and to the people in the various schools who didn't always know very much about each other.

R. BROWN: Even though they were in the same country.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Big country!

R. BROWN: Well, now there by contrast with Bahrain was a culture that had been touched by European culture intimately for generations, so were the schools much further along?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, I can't say they were. There's a very excellent school in Ahmedabad in charge of a man named Doshi who also worked in Le Corbusier's office and who's one of the two or three leading architects in the country, I would say. He comes often to America, is well known here, and his school is a pretty good one. It has its own building which he designed, and you can talk about the same things there that you can in any American school. But in Bombay, for example, although it has good architects -- for instance Charles Correa who is an alumnus of ours, who got the gold medal from the British Institute of Architects this year or last year -- there are two or three schools there, and not very good.

R. BROWN: To what do you attribute that?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Lack of resources. I mean you go in and they don't have a file, they have maybe one telephone or one secretary; no records, no policies, no real facilities, no library, and they're run by people who are just operating them more or less as sort of private enterprises. So it's not a very promising picture.

R. BROWN: Do the people who go through those schools, do they then go as sort of draftsmen in offices?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I don't really know, and I don't think anybody knows. I know that years ago, in the '50s let's say, lots of people from countries like India and from India were coming to

graduate schools in the United States and other countries. And the most influential architects in India still are people like that, but they complain too that the country wasn't ready for them, that in order to have professional work you have to have clients that want it and are able to pay for it and recognize its value. Somebody said that India is twenty percent westernized and eighty percent still the old India with villages, and what can an architect do in a village? Also, the British tradition had given primary significance to engineering, and they did wonderful things with railroads and canals and other public projects in India, but great from the engineering standpoint rather than -- well, of course they had Lutyens at Delhi and good things like that, but it wasn't until Nehru came to power that they tried to get really sophisticated results in Chandigarh.

R. BROWN: Did you visit that as part of your ---

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes.

R. BROWN: What was your opinion about it as a city in India?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Very mixed, very mixed. Especially the parts done by Le Corbusier I think are not well suited to the culture or the climate.

R. BROWN: But I assume that your graduate, Mr. Correa, who has a practice in Bombay has somehow been able to come to terms with it.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes, he's done some very good things. He's done a lot for the expansion of Bombay, across the bay, to determine policies for housing and city planning there. He's done a very distinguished tall apartment building. He's done museums and hotels. I have a monograph of his work. It's very impressive. So there's room for a few people like that, but I think not very many yet. He was five years at the University of Michigan and one year with us, so he got quite thoroughly Americanized.

R. BROWN: Now he's been quoted, and others have been quoted, about you as a teacher -- that you taught practically by indirection. If they were in the process of doing something you would sort of move them left or right, or critique in a rather subtle way what they'd been doing. Do you think this has generally characterized your practice, too? I mean you get into the problem, or you're being a judge as you so frequently did, that is as an advisor or a juror. Here Correa says that you give him clues that are quite subtle for someone didactic, though your opinions are very clear.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: That's a very nice thing to say. Yes, I guess I've tried to see what people could do more or less by themselves, asking them why they did this, why it takes this shape, and so on, and try to find out what their efforts are.

I don't know if you would be interested in my long-standing relation with the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, where I helped them select the architect for their new building. I wrote the program for it, and I have a copy here --

R. BROWN: That was in the late '70s?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. Then -- I happen to be a member of the Academy -- they put me on the House Committee and for the last ten years, or it's eleven I guess since the building was finished, I've been in on retro-fitting, correcting deficiencies, adapting spaces for unforeseen needs, and that kind of thing. It's been kind of harrowing at times --

R. BROWN: In the new building?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. There have been some rather difficult hassles. For example, in the lecture hall -- a sort of jewel of a little room for two or three hundred people where they have their stated meetings -- there's a rug over all and upholstery on the benches; there are benches rather than individual seats. The architects wanted to have these all the same color red, but of course carpets are not like upholstery, they're different in their provenance, and it was discovered at some point that the upholstery materials had not been flame-proofed which is required by Cambridge code. So they had to be replaced but replacing them was a headache because they were no longer making that material, and when they flame-proofed it they changed the color; they couldn't match the color that was needed, and anyway the flame-proofing is only a temporary and not very full correction to flammability. So that can lead to an awful lot of headaches, that kind of thing. And then there were problems of acoustics, lighting, heating, and so on and so on, which are still being explored. I think the architects were probably insufficiently experienced with that kind of a high-performance building.

R. BROWN: What was their experience?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: They had done the Boston City Hall.

R. BROWN: Oh, this was Kallmann and McKinnell.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Kallmann and McKinnell, and Wood now. And they'd done a gymnasium of some importance. But they hadn't done a building of that refined kind where everything had to be very comfortable and also as beautiful as possible and as well-built as possible. But they had a great deal of sympathy for wanting to do that kind of work and on the whole I think were very successful, but not without some problems.

R. BROWN: So there's a case where you're the advisor in perpetuity perhaps, depending on your health.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: [laughs] That's right. We have a working agreement with a man who's a mechanical engineer, a Harvard professor; he takes care of all the roof leaks and I take care of all the wall and window problems.

R. BROWN: Did you ever figure that this was what you'd be doing now?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: No, no. It's an unpaid service. But I had to design storm windows where they were not provided. You know the roof is copper and it comes down in stages, and under certain snow conditions the snow slides off an upper levels and it falls onto a lower level of copper; if it's icy it damages the copper. So there had to be devised a transparent plastic covering for that part of the roof that was vulnerable to the ice falls. That seems to work.

R. BROWN: Do you think your patience -- you seem to have patience -- your sort of judiciousness, would you say that's been a leading characteristic throughout your life?

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I suppose that's true. That's part of my deficiency as a designer. I'm not pig-headed enough to push things through against other people.

R. BROWN: Yes, but you've pointed out the shortcomings of designs which are pig-headedly pushed through, from time to time. And in '84 you were given the first annual medal of the Boston Society of Architects, surely considerable recognition in that.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: Yes. That was very nice. I have another thing here. I taught for a term in

Santiago [shuffling of papers]... and this was attached to it. It's a sort of travesty on the official kind of recognition that the honorees get.

R. BROWN: This was mostly from the students, I suppose. [laughs] And you had taught there and a variety of places. Even since your retirement, particularly, you've had these chances to teach.

LAWRENCE ANDERSON: I'll have that framed, I think.

Last updated... *Month day, year*