functions only as a signifier in the text for the agent who makes the buildings. Lawrence is candid in her introduction about bypassing biographical detail in order to concentrate on selected projects, but this approach results in some surprising lacunae. For example, she never mentions the considerable time Stirling spent teaching at Yale during the years the book encompasses. This is an aspect of Stirling’s development that could have deepened her discussion about the strained postwar Anglo-American relationship. His World War II service also is not mentioned. In the Düsseldorf chapter, the reader realizes with surprise that Stirling must have been in the conflict when Lawrence remarks obliquely that it must have been significant for a British paratrooper to design a project for a bomb-devastated site in Germany. Nevertheless, Lawrence’s book is more than just a skillful exercise in method. It stands as a lucid, new interpretation of Stirling that raises the level of analysis about his architecture head and shoulders above the rest.

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Notes

Mary Anne Hunting
*Edward Durell Stone: Modernism’s Populist Architect*

Although Edward Durell Stone’s work is highly visible, he remains relatively unknown to both general and architectural audiences. Mary Anne Hunting’s *Edward Durell Stone: Modernism’s Populist Architect* is an attempt fill that gap. To start, she reminds us that this lack of recognition was not always the case. During his career he was very well known as the designer of the original Museum of Modern Art building, the “lollipop” building on Columbus Circle, both in New York City, and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Along with Eero Saarinen, Paul Rudolph, Philip Johnson, and Minoru Yamasaki, he was considered to be part of the much-maligned “ballet school” of architecture, whose members challenged modernist orthodoxy by championing expressive and ornamented forms.¹ His late work, such as the American Embassy in India, incorporated highly patterned ornamental screens, a motif that was much copied.

In Hunting’s chronological narrative we also learn that Stone’s career was fueled by personal connections and media exposure. He grew up well-to-do in Fayetteville, Arkansas. He was a lifelong friend of J. William Fulbright, who, as a US senator, helped Stone secure a number of key government commissions. By all accounts, he was an affable and gifted colleague, “able to ‘draw anything except a sober breath,’” that is, until he quit drinking in the late 1950s. As a twenty-year-old he moved to Boston, where his brother was a practicing architect. His drawing ability landed him a job at Coolidge, Shepley, Bulfinch and Abbott, where Henry Richard Shepley took him under his wing. In Boston he attended—but did not graduate from—Harvard and MIT, where he received a Beaux-Arts education. In both places he was a nonmatriculated special student. (As he admitted himself, he was never much of an academic.) It was Shepley who aided his admission to Harvard, and their relationship had a lasting influence: Shepley was on the juries that awarded Stone a Rotch Travelling Scholarship and, much later, the Indian Embassy commission.

After school and a tour of Europe, Stone found himself in New York City working for Wallace Harrison preparing drawings for the gilded art deco interiors of Radio City Music Hall and the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel (under Leonard Schultze). Sensing a cultural shift, during the Depression he designed a series of International Style houses for wealthy clients. He befriended Howard Meyers, the editor of *Architectural Forum*, who promoted the dissemination of his work and introduced him to Henry and Claire Boothe Luce. These early houses and friendships helped Stone become the architect (in conjunction with Philip Goodwin) of the Museum of Modern Art’s building in Manhattan. Before and after World War II, he designed a number of long and low houses made of brick and wood; many of these were featured in the architectural and popular press. It was only in the 1950s that the symmetrically planned, concrete-screened, gold-white-and-red-decorated buildings became his signature style as embodied in the aforementioned embassy in India and the Kennedy Center.

These and many other facets of Stone’s life are presented in this thoroughly researched, well-documented, highly illustrated book. Hunting’s is the first dispassionate account of Stone’s career: a scholarly complement to the two autobiographical tomes Stone penned in the 1960s and the biography recently published by his youngest son.² Perhaps Hunting’s most important contribution is to document the ways Stone leveraged his charisma and connections to become an effective architectural operative and media star. Here the book complements recent research on the similarly media-propelled careers of Eero Saarinen and Philip Johnson.³ It is also indebted to Alice Friedman’s *American Glamour and the Evolution of Modern Architecture* in its exploration of the “glamorization” of the modern style.⁴ In comparison to these books, however, Hunting’s account of Stone’s career is not as thoroughly historicized or theorized but instead attempts to reposition Stone’s legacy in an enthusiastic and well-written biography.

Stone’s work was widely published and reviewed from the 1930s, often in Luce-run publications such as *Architectural Forum* and *House & Home*. The Luces would become good friends and clients. Buckminster Fuller and Frank Lloyd Wright were also close acquaintances: there seem to be few who were not charmed by him. In the 1950s, his second wife, Maria—who officially acted as his publicist—transformed him into a media star, persuading him to change his name from Ed Stone to Edward Durell Stone. Like Saarinen and Yamasaki, he was on the cover of *Time* magazine and, like Johnson, was often on TV with appearances on the *Ed Sullivan,*
Mademoiselle of savvy celebrity. In other words, they formed the image of the architect to that profession. And the early twentieth century witnessed the transition of architec
tural practice in the postwar years. If the ongoing transformation of architecture was a media darling, supplements research on facts over ideas is consistent with the goals of large government and corporate institutions like the State Department and the Standard Oil Company helped keep him in the limelight for more than a decade. This stance, combined with his high-powered network of friends, makes it difficult to reposition him as populist (a term Fulbright also used to describe him) in the vein of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown.

In conclusion, Hunting's book works best as a biographical tale. By placing equal emphasis on every part of Stone's career she allows the reader to see his mature work as the culmination of an earnest but impatient search for a unique style specific to the age. The combination of formally planned, simple white boxes with filigreed screens, golden mesh, and red-velvet interiors has a clear provenance in the earlier phases of his career. Why he stopped updating his sensibility, after thirty years of doing just that, remains unclear if not unknowable. If he had kept moving with the times, would his place in the canon be more secure? Would more glamour rather than more beauty have been enough to save his reputation? Such questions are left to future scholars, who will find Hunting's book to be a most useful starting point. In the meantime, her book suggests that other American architects of the late modern period require similarly thorough accounts of their lives. The same could be said for the current crop of celebrity architects. A comparative analysis between architects of the late modern period and current starchitects might be even more productive, as it would update our understanding of the evolving role and public image of the architect and the relationship between the profession, the public it serves, and the technologies that mediate that relationship.

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Notes
1. Coinced by the critic Reyner Banham, the term “ballet school” was heavily culturally loaded, suggesting an architecture that was, like ballet, “elitist, old-fashioned, and introspective ... with a strong homosexual following.” Timothy Rohan, “Rendering the Surface: Paul Rudolph's Art and Architecture Building at Yale,” Grey Room 1 (2000), 98.
3. Emmanuel Petit, ed., Philip Johnson: The Constancy of Change (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009); Jayne Merkel, Eero Saarinen (London: Phaidon, 2003); Eero Saarinen,
Beginning in the late 1940s, a number of Jewish intellectuals and organizations began to focus attention on Jewish art and architecture, raising the questions: How could the synagogue building better express contemporary American Judaism? What was the role, if any, of historical architectural tradition? Prominent commentators like art historian Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein and architect Percival Goodman noted that, although an ancient building type, the synagogue has never developed a characteristic form or style. The reasons for such an absence of uniformity are many, including the Jews’ peripatetic existence, laws prohibiting land ownership, the synagogue’s egalitarian nature and its multivalent role, and the desire to assimilate. The lack of architectural traditions led designers to borrow and adapt from what they saw around them, including mosques in the Middle East and Christian churches in the West. Greek-, Byzantine-, and Moorish-styled synagogues predominated in Europe, and immigrants brought these traditions with them to the United States. Both Wischnitzer-Bernstein and Goodman proposed modernist architecture as a fruitful new direction, emphasizing its functionalism and freedom from historical associations.

Two of America’s most famous synagogues, both constructed in the 1950s and both explorations in the modernist style, are the subjects of recent books of varying depth. As its title indicates, Joseph Siry’s *Beth Sholom Synagogue*, from the Sacred Landmarks series published by the University of Chicago Press, is about more than Frank Lloyd Wright’s Beth Sholom synagogue in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania (1954–59). The story of that commission and design is the culmination of six initial chapters that provide context for Wright’s ideas about modern synagogue design. Siry begins his book by examining the relationship between Judaism and Chicago’s liberal Unitarians (led by Wright’s uncle the Reverend Jenkin Lloyd Jones), focusing on the ways in which Wright’s view of Judaism was colored by the Unitarian engagement with comparative religious studies and their belief in the equality of religious traditions and the natural unity of religious worship. Siry suggests that this perspective predisposed Wright to understand and value Judaism. Working for Adler and Sullivan on three Chicago synagogues helped to familiarize Wright with the particular requirements of Jewish worship while at the same time allowing him to view firsthand the process of designing religious spaces corresponding to liturgical needs and congregational desires.

Beginning with Wright’s Unity Temple (1905–9), Siry analyzes religious and theatrical precursors to Beth Sholom extensively.1 Occupying more than half of the book, this prelude considers key works such as the steel cathedral (1926–27) and St. Mark’s Church in-the-Bowery (1928–29), his unbuilt theaters for Aline Barnsdall in Los Angeles (1916–21) and in Woodstock, New York (1931–32), the Annie M. Pfeiffer Chapel at Florida Southern College (1938–41), the Community Christian Church in Kansas City (1939–42), and the Madison, Wisconsin, First Unitarian Society building (1946–52). In these chapters, Siry develops a number of important themes. The first is that Wright’s liberal Unitarian orientation provided him with the flexibility to create successful worship spaces for a variety of religions. Second, these earlier commissions tended to involve a relationship with an “unusually intelligent and devoted religious leader” (63), often with strong ideas of his own about the new building (for example, William Norman Guthrie, Ludd Spivey, and Burris Jenkins). Further, Wright liked to design religious buildings around the notion of the auditorium, adapting his abiding interest in theater design to spiritual buildings because he “tended to see theater in religious terms, and to see dramatic spatial effects as appropriate to architecture for worship” (105).

The book’s final chapters recount the specific story of Beth Sholom’s design and construction. Siry begins by reviewing the congregation’s history and the state of synagogue architecture in the early 1950s. The youthful congregation was established in 1918 in the strongly Conservative Jewish milieu that characterized Philadelphia in the early twentieth century. Their first home was a subdued neoclassical building in an area of extensive Jewish settlement that had many synagogues. In a story repeated in cities across the country, Philadelphia’s Jews joined in the suburban exodus, and synagogues (often restricted by rules that forbade using automobiles to travel to Sabbath services) were forced to follow their congregations in order to remain viable. Rabbi Mortimer Cohen’s great ambitions for his congregation contributed to the decision to purchase property in Elkins Park and led him to solicit Frank Lloyd Wright as a potential designer. Siry explains the synagogue’s design process as a cooperative venture between Wright and Cohen. In addition to synthesizing decades of Wright’s prior theorizing and experimentation in religious and theater design, the building also represented the culmination of Cohen’s personal views on modern American Judaism. The rabbi believed Conservative Judaism was a