
LUSTRON HOUSES

From 1948 to 1950, Carol Strandlund manufactured all-steel houses at his Columbus, Ohio factory. These houses were shipped on flat-bed trucks in about 3,000 pieces that could be assembled on a concrete slab in about a week. Strandlund persuaded the federal government that the Lustron house was the answer to America's housing shortage, and over three years, over \$37 million in public funds were committed to this project. By 1950, however, it became apparent that the public would never buy enough of these houses to break even, and the company was shut down.

Lustron houses were made almost entirely of enamel-coated steel, including the interior walls; if you wanted to put up a picture, you used magnets. At under 1,000 square feet, the houses were tiny by today's standards, but a godsend for space-starved Americans of that era.

St. Louis had an unusually large number of Lustron houses, partly because the distributor was the well-known owner of the St. Louis Browns, Charles DeWitt (father of the present Cardinals part-owners).

During their brief heyday, about 2,500 Lustron houses were erected, and over the years they have attracted more and more attention. For a time one of them in northern Indiana was operated as a museum, and there are several websites about them, notably The Lustron Connection (<http://home.earthlink.net/~ronusny>) and the Lustron Luxury Home (<http://www.piranhagraphix.com/Lustron/>). One good published source is H. Ward Jandl's chapter in *Yesterday's Houses of Tomorrow* (Preservation Press, 1991).

Lustrons have become preservation concerns in many communities, as more of them have been remodeled or demolished. The biggest loss is currently underway: 60 Lustron houses are being removed from the Marine Corps base at Quantico. Webster Groves is one of the communities considering making its Lustron houses local landmarks.

DISASSEMBLING A LUSTRON HOUSE

Tom Bakersmith, the man everybody turns to in St. Louis for information about Lustron Houses, alerts us to the following information he found in a document from FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, "A

Lustron House at 1166
Pembroke Avenue at Wimbledon
Avenue in the Village of
Marlborough, built in 1950 for
Lewis and Carol McDonald. It
is the only Lustron house in the
area with its own Lustron
garage.



Report Describing the Dismantling of the Historic Lustron House, Grand Forks, North Dakota,” by Rurik Ekstrom (FEMA, 2001): Although the house originally took thirty days to assemble, it was taken apart in nine days in the Spring of 2001. FEMA documented this process through photographs and a video recording to assist in the reconstruction of the house. At this date, the house components have been cleaned and stored, and the original site of the house has been restored to green space. The house now awaits reconstruction at its new site.

“This proved a successful alternative to demolition, thus minimizing the “adverse effect” to the Lustron House. From FEMA’s standpoint, the project was successful in achieving hazard mitigation goals - removing people and property from an area subject to frequent flooding - and preserving a unique facet of twentieth century history.”



Lustron House at 1166 Pembroke Avenue at Wimbledon Avenue in the Village of Marlborough, built in 1950 for Lewis and Carol McDonald. It is the only Lustron house in the area with its own Lustron garage.

ST. LOUIS AREA LUSTRON HOUSES

With model numbers

compiled by Tom Bakersmith

Verified by site visits – May 1993 to Dec. 2001

- | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. 921 Berry Road, Oakland, 02 | Razed August 1996 | |
| 2. 6352 Bradley, St. Louis, 023 | a rare model | |
| 3. 4848 Germania, St. Louis, 03 | a rare model | |
| 4. 856 Liggett, Crestwood, 02 | | |
| 5. 8836 Moritz, Brentwood, 02 | | |
| 6. 6531 Marquette, St. Louis, 02 | | |
| 7. 6541 Marquette, St. Louis, 02 | | |
| 8. 4123 McDonald, St. Louis, 02 | | |
| 9. 4122 McDonald, St. Louis, 02 | | |
| 10. 1166 Pembroke, Marlborough, 02 | | has a Lustron made garage |
| 11. 7003 Stanley, St. Louis, 02 | | |
| 12. 6900 Woodrow, Beverly Hills, 02 | | |
| 13. 6906 Woodrow, Beverly Hills, 02 | | |
| 14. 232 Baker, Webster Groves, 02 | | |
| 15. 237 Baker, Webster Groves, 2 | | |
| 16. 324 Hazel, Webster Groves, 2 | | |
| 17. 330 Hazel, Webster Groves, 2 | | |
| 18. 208 West Old Watson, Webster Groves, 02 | | |
| 19. 505 Ridge, Webster Groves, 02 | | |
| 20. 540 Ridge, Webster Groves, 02 | | |
| 21. 224 Simmons, Webster Groves, 02 | | |
| 22. 226 Simmons, Webster Groves, 02 | | |
| 23. 228 Simmons, Webster Groves, 02 | | |
| 24. 241 Simmons, Webster Groves, 02 | | |
| 25. 308 Simmons, Webster Groves, 02 | razed Feb. 1995 | |
| 26. 2401 Annalee, Brentwood, 02 | | |
| 27. 604 Fair Oaks, Webster Groves, 02 | | |
| 28. 8914 Litzsinger, Brentwood, 02 | | |
| 29. 8918 Litzsinger, Brentwood, 02 | | |
| 30. 8920 Litzsinger, Brentwood, 02 | | |
| 31. 8924 Litzsinger, Brentwood, 02 | | |
| 32. 8928 Litzsinger, Brentwood, 02 | | |
| 33. 8934 Litzsinger, Brentwood, 02 | | |
| 34. 8938 Litzsinger, Brentwood, 02 | | |
| 35. 411 Maple, Webster Groves, 02 | | |
| 36. 2001 Urban Drive, Brentwood, 03 | | a rare model |
| 37. 1108 Bopp Road, Des Peres, 02 | | |
| 38. 1126 Vanetta Dr., Des Peres, 02 | | |
| 39. 1140 Vanetta Dr., Des Peres, 02 | | |
| 40. 1143 Vanetta Dr., Des Peres, 02 | | |
| 41. 44 Hart, Webster Groves, 02 | | |
| 42. 657 Elmwood, Webster Groves, 02 | razed July 1995 | |
| 43. 6848 Glades, St. Louis, 02 | | |
| 44. 4743 Theiss Rd., St. Louis County, 02 | | |
| 45. 8500 Genevieve, Brentwood, 02 | | |
| 46. 8505 Henrietta, Brentwood, 02 | | |
| 47. 8520 Joseph, Brentwood, 02 | | |
| 48. 7632 Flora, Maplewood, 02 | | |
| 49. 3035 Coleman, Maplewood, 02 | | |
| 50. 25 South Dellwood, Dellwood, 02 | | |
| 51. 9407 Gates Manor, St. Louis County, 02 | | |
| 52. 2529 Louis, Brentwood, 02 | | |
| 53. 1104 Pike, St. Charles, 02 | | |
| 54. 1157 Tompkins, St. Charles, 02 | | |
| 55. 403 South 6 th , St. Charles, 02 | | |
| 56. 104 Ward Terrace, Crystal City, 02 | | |
| 57. 149 Ozark Drive, Crystal City, 02 | | |
| 58. 2043 Westview, Kirkwood, 02 | | has a basement |
| 59. 115 West Pitman, O’Fallon, 02 | | |
| 60. 676 Plateau, Webster Groves, 023 | | a rare model |
| 61. 124 Eldridge, Webster Groves, 023 | | a rare model |
| 62. 121 Eldridge, Webster Groves, 023 | | a rare model |



Herbaceous border leading from house to pool, Warren Manning for J. Gates Williams, Ladue.

Commissioned photographs cover only five projects, those for Oliver Anderson, August Busch Junior, J.D. W. Lambert, A. W. Shapleigh, and J. Gates Williams. The Williams garden is the only Missouri project represented in the Parks Library at Iowa State, but that documentation is extensive, totaling 56 separate items that represent 22 different designs for various parts of the garden and one for the residence, which remained unfinished.

An understanding of Manning's way of doing business and an appreciation of the stamina that enabled him to accomplish so much can be gained by reading his daybooks, which are small, narrow vest-pocket calendars into which he penciled notes about his daily schedule in a crabbed hand. They show that he traveled around the country by night train, often remaining away from home for weeks at a time. Sometimes he was accompanied by one or more employees, while in other cases employees charged with certain projects or areas of the country would travel on independent schedules, meeting where necessary.

On Saturday, November 24, 1923, for example, Manning left Cleveland at 8 p.m., arriving in St. Louis at 7:45 the following morning. At 10 a.m. he met Mrs. Harry S. Knight and her architect Harrie Lindeberg (who had come from New York) to discuss her enormous new house on South Warson Road. Mrs. Knight had made reservations for Manning at the Chase Hotel, which had been open only a short time, and when he got there, he wired the office his schedule. He continued to work with the Knights on Monday and departed that evening. Back in St. Louis on January 19, he kept a similar schedule, with an extra day to work with Ralph Bixby on the plan for Upper Ladue Road, then referred to as R.F.D. #1, Clayton. The sleeper to and from Cleveland cost \$25.23 each way.

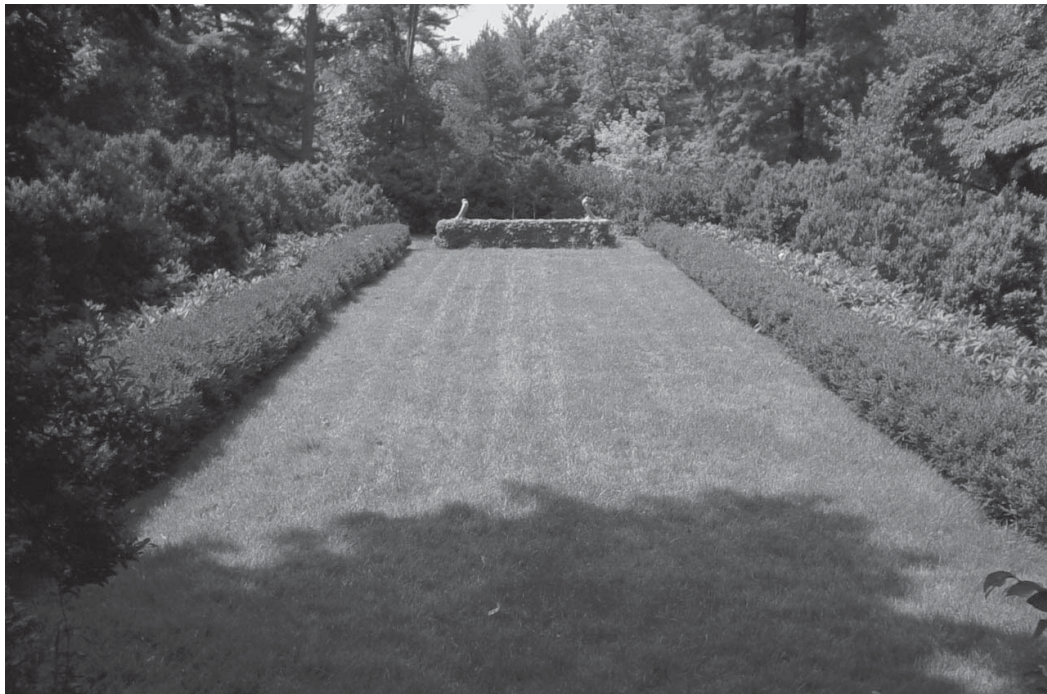
Manning visited St. Louis twice more in 1924. In April, he brought his secretary Miss Bullen and another employee named Egbert Hans, and they enjoyed an air flight over St. Louis. Manning's clients Harry Knight, J. D. Wooster Lambert, and Harold M. Bixby (Ralph's brother) would back Charles Lindbergh on his historic flight three years later.

The daybooks show that Manning met John Gates Williams on September 24, 1924 and Harry Potter the next day – the train to Chicago was \$19.80 that time. His St. Louis connections increased in 1925 during two more visits in March and April, bracketing trips to Chicago and Michigan. It was on this visit that he met Lambert, Anderson, A. Wessel Shapleigh, August Busch, and Joseph Pulitzer; he joined the Pulitzers for dinner on April 2. He sent a note to his son saying, "Cold here, heavy coat a comfort."

Manning's practice of working closely with the architects is suggested by appointments with Raymond E. Maritz at his offices in the Chemical Building and with Preston Bradshaw. A notation about Day & Klauder, the Pittsburgh-based architects of Concordia Seminary's new Clayton campus, suggests Manning's involvement there, but that possibility was apparently not followed through. He twice visited the Clayton offices of Charles W. Fullgraf, who described himself as a forester and landscape engineer and who often worked with Maritz & Young and other leading St. Louis architects on everything from gardens to airports.

The 1926 daybook does not indicate any further excursion St. Louis way, so many of Manning's later projects here must have been handled by his employees. This is suggested too by some of the few letters from clients that survive in the Lowell archives. Oliver J. Anderson, for example, writes not to Manning himself but to "Gentlemen," saying, "I consider the work done by Mr. G. Weir Wilson and Mr. Hans most efficiently carried out." J. Gates Williams writes in 1926 directly to Wilson: "Everyone who has seen it [my place in the country] has expressed a keen delight and appreciation of the remarkable way in which you have accomplished the planning of the place. I am looking forward to seeing you here again in the Fall." Two years later Williams wrote to Egbert Hans, "Both Mrs. Williams and I feel more than satisfied with the work that you accomplished on our place, and you have permission to use the sketches that you developed for it in any way that will benefit you." Joseph L. Werner apparently also worked with Hans, writing, "Mrs. Werner and I are very well pleased with the plans you sent us and we intend going ahead gradually to carry them out. . . I hope when you come to Saint Louis you will drop in to see us."

Green Garden on axis with pool;
Warren Manning for J. Gates Williams,
Ladue.



WARREN MANNING'S MISSOURI CLIENTS

Oliver Anderson, 1925

9530 Ladue Rd.,
Maritz & Young

Mrs. Harold Bixby, 1926

9610 Ladue Rd.,
Beverly Nelson

R. F. Bixby, 1924 (Ralph

Foster Bixby)

Upper Ladue
Subdivision

Adolphus Busch III, 1925

Grandview, Gravois
Road, Sunset Hills demolished

August Busch, [Jr.], 1925

5577 Lindell Blvd.

August Busch, [Sr.], 1926

Grant's Farm, Gravois Road

N[elson]. C. Chapman, 1898, [Mary Bridge]
subdivision

Samuel Davis, 1925

601 Barnes Road (house replaced 1959)

Louis Hager, Jr., 1926 [Alice Busch]

2801? S. Lindbergh (demolished)

Harry F. Knight, 1924

2601 Warson Rd., Harrie T. Lindeberg

J. D. Wooster Lambert, 1925

15 Pine Valley Dr., LaBeaume & Klein

Mrs. C. S. S. Langenberg, 1926 [Katherine]

44 Glen Eagles, St. Louis Country Club

John A. Love, 1926 [Mary Potter]

9630 Ladue Rd, Jamieson & Spearl

Middleton Realty, 1925

Mrs. [G.] Hayward Niedringhaus, 1926

[Lorna Tweedy], 7 Sunningdale,

St. Louis Country Club

Percy Orthwein, 1926

2701 S. Lindbergh, Maritz & Young

Mrs. H. Pettingill, 1926

34 Glen Eagles, St. Louis Country Club

house 1923, Maritz & Young

H. Clay Pierce, 1902

40 Vandeventer Place

H. Clay Pierce, 1902

Bellefontaine Cemetery

Harry Potter, 1924

(Litzsinger & Warson)

Joseph Pulitzer, 1925

701 Barnes Road, house 1915

Boyle Rodes, 1925

8 Upper Ladue Road

house 1927

Eleanor Ryan, 1926

Clayton

St. Louis Country Club, 1926

400 Barnes Rd, Mauran, Russell & Crowell

S. Cupples Scudder, 1926

(Warson Road)

A[lex] Wessel Shapleigh, 1925

23 Fordyce Lane

Stark Brothers, Nurseries and Orchards Co., 1926

Louisiana, Mo.

W. J. Stevens, 1903

Webster Tilton, 1926

"Jarville," 1723 Mason Road

Joseph L. Werner, 1926

9625 Ladue Rd., Hellmuth & Hellmuth

Mrs. Eugene Williams, 1926, [Marie]

31 Glen Eagles, Study & Farrar

John Gates Williams, 1924

1203 Log Cabin Lane, Jamieson & Spearl

Orian [Orion] J. Willis, 1926

2 St. Andrews Dr., St. Louis Country Club



St. Charles County Community College, St. Peters, Missouri.
 George Nikolajevich, Design Principal.
 Photo credit: Robert Pettus Architectural Photography

the first four buildings of the St. Charles Community College campus. The undulating roof of the Oak Brook Elementary School in Ballwin has caused it to be dubbed “the rollercoaster school” by enthusiastic students.

George Nikolajevich was born in 1946 and grew up on the Adriatic coast of Yugoslavia, with its Mediterranean landscape and Italian influenced architecture. He studied at the University of Belgrade. He came to St. Louis 27 years ago and received his Master of Architecture degree from Washington University. Before Cannon, he was with Pearce, Turner, Nikolajevich, He is married and has two children.

AIA TWENTY-FIVE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS

Starting in 1969, the American Institute of Architects has honored buildings 25 years old or more which have retained or increased their significance in the eyes of the younger generation. In the first 31 years of the award, six of the winners have been by Eero Saarinen, including the Arch, and four each by Wright, Kahn, and SOM. Charles & Ray Eames, Bruce Goff, and Richard Meier are among the other winners. An accompanying book by Roger Shepherd, published by McGraw-Hill, documents the design process of each building in detail. Here is the whole list:

- 1969 Rockefeller Center, New York City, Reinhard & Hofmeister; Corbett, Harrison & MacMurray
- 1971 The Crow Island School, Winnetka, IL, Perkins, Wheeler & Will; Eliel & Eero Saarinen
- 1972 Baldwin Hills Village, Los Angeles, Reginald D. Johnson; Wilson, Merrill & Alexander; Clarence S. Stein
- 1973 Taliesin West, Paradise Valley, AZ, Frank Lloyd Wright
- 1974 Johnson & Son Administration Building, Racine WI, Frank Lloyd Wright
- 1975 “The Glass House,” New Canaan, CN, Phillip Johnson
- 1976 860-880 North Lakeshore Drive Apts., Chicago, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe
- 1977 Christ Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Saarinen, Saarinen & Assoc.; Hills, Gilbertson & Hays
- 1978 The Eames House, Pacific Palisades, CA, Charles & Ray Eames
- 1979 Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CN, Louis I. Kahn
- 1980 Lever House, New York City, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
- 1981 Farnsworth House, Plano, IL, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

GEORGE NIKOLAJEVICH: A RETROSPECTIVE

Yugoslavia-born St. Louisan George Nikolajevich is principal of Cannon Design, a firm with offices in St. Louis and Chicago. He is one of only four St. Louisans honored as fellows in design by the American Institute of Architects (the others are Bill Bowersox, Gyo Obata and Louis Sauer). An exhibit of his work will be at the Sheldon Art Galleries June 7 to October 11 (see Event Calendar). He is also the subject of a new book from Balcony Books, a division of the Princeton Architectural Press, edited by Danette Riddle and introduced by Cliff Pearson. (Another recent book about a St. Louis architect is *Contemporary World Architects: Adrian Luchini*, by Oscar Riera Ojeda, with introductions by Enric Miralles and Lauren Kogod, published in 2000 by Rockport Publishers).

Pearson writes, “while some modernist buildings are proud and aloof, Nikolajevich’s works are proud and inviting.” His work has been praised for its quiet sculptural quality, unexpected spatial solutions, and authentic expression. Perhaps his best known designs locally are

**Exhibit: “Structures of Our Time:
31 Buildings that Changed Modern Life:**
Museum of Westward Expansion, Gateway Arch
Tuesday, May 6 to Sunday, August 3
Summer hours 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The 25-Year Award was created by the American Institute of Architects in 1969 to honor buildings which have stood the test of a quarter century. This traveling exhibition illustrates them and describes their significance. See accompanying article for the full list.

**Exhibit: “Retrospective – The Architecture
of George Nikolajevich”**
The Sheldon Art Galleries, 3648 Washington Ave.
Saturday June 7 through Saturday, October 11

See also the accompanying article and the talk September 18. This exhibit of the work of one of St. Louis’s leading architectural designers includes his distinctive pen and ink sketches and accomplished watercolor studies, as well as computer drawings and photographs of his buildings. Gallery Hours: Tuesday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Wednesday, 9 to 5, Saturday 10 to 2, and one hour before concerts and during intermission.

**Exhibit: “The Automobile in the Garden:
Suburban Photographs by Barbara McDonnell”**
The Sheldon Art Galleries, 3648 Washington Ave.
Saturday, June 7 through Saturday, September 27

St. Louis photographer Barbara McDonnell investigates the changing landscape of the city’s Western suburbs using a 7 x 17-inch panoramic “banquet” camera and cool-toned palladium contact prints. She chronicles the transformation of the rural Midwest into a modern suburbia of strip malls, subdivisions, parking lots and corporate structures, all dependent on the automobile. McDonnell’s work has been seen in many St. Louis galleries, and she did the photos for the 2000 inventory of St. Louis County cemeteries, “Sacred Green Space.”

Catsup Bottle Summerfest
Collinsville, Illinois
Sunday, July 6, 2003

The 5th annual Downtown Collinsville World’s Largest Catsup Bottle Summerfest Birthday Party and Custom ‘n’

Classic Car ‘n’ Truck Show Bash is a big event, with an even bigger name. All day long there’s music, crafts, food, fun, and games. Something for everyone. Bring the family! Over 300 historic vehicles parked along the streets of historic downtown Collinsville make this the biggest and best show in Southern Illinois. From humble beginnings, this event has grown to be a huge kid-friendly, family-oriented, alcohol-free day of enjoyment. Birthday party games for kids of all ages include Hula Hoops, Please Pass the Catsup, Musical Chairs, Water Balloon Toss, and our very own special version of Spin the Bottle. Do you think you know your catsups? Take the “Brooks Catsup Tangy Taste Test” and see if you really can tell the difference! Other highlights include the Collinsville Poms Dunking Booth, the Jaycees Game Pavillion, the Scottish Rite Child I.D. Program, and the Celebrity Taste Test Challenge!

Talk: “Diners, Bowling Alleys & Trailer Parks”
Schlafly Branch Library, 225 N. Euclid at Lindell
Tuesday, August 5, 7:30 p.m.

Andrew Hurley, associate professor of history at UMSL, will speak about his recent book., *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks: Chasing the American Dream in the Postwar Consumer Culture* (see NewsLetter Summer 2001). All three of these now nostalgic institutions exploded in popularity after World War II as symbols of affordable modernity but then were left behind by increasingly affluent society.

Talk: George Nikolajevich
Sheldon Concert Hall, 3648 Washington Ave.
Thursday, September 18, 11:30 a.m.

In connection with the Sheldon exhibit (see above), Nikolajevich will talk about his work. Admission is free; for a lunch reservation (\$9) call 533-9900, x31.

**Walking Tour: Grand Center,
the Forgotten Residential Buildings**
Saturday, September 20, 9 to 11 a.m.

Meet in the parking lot just west of the Sheldon, 3648 Washington Avenue. David J. Simmons will lead a tour concentrating on the surviving residential buildings from the 1880s and 1890s, when this was the premier residential neighborhood in St. Louis. The tour will include some interiors and will end with a chance to see the McDonnell and Nikolajevich exhibits.

AIA TWENTY-FIVE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS (cont.)

- 1982 Equitable Savings and Loan Building, Portland, OR, Pietro Belluschi
- 1983 Price Tower, Bartlesville, OK, Frank Lloyd Wright
- 1984 Seagram Building, New York City, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe
- 1985 General Motors Technical Center, Warren, MI, Eero Saarinen & Assoc. with Smith, Hinchman & Grylls
- 1986 Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York City, Frank Lloyd Wright
- 1987 Bavinger House, Norman, OK, Bruce Goff
- 1988 Dulles International Airport Terminal Building, Chantilly, VA, Eero Saarinen & Assoc.
- 1989 Vanna Venturi House, Chestnut Hill, PA, Robert Venturi
- 1990 The Gateway Arch, St. Louis, MO Eero Saarinen & Assoc.
- 1991 Sea Ranch Condominium I., The Sea Ranch, CA, Moore Lyndon Turnbull Whitaker
- 1992 The Salk Institute for Biological Studies, La Jolla, CA, Louis I. Kahn
- 1993 Deere & Company Administrative Center, Moline,

- IL, Eero Saarinen & Assoc.
- 1994 The Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, ME, Edward Larrabee Barnes
- 1995 The Ford Foundation Headquarters, New York City, Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo & Assoc.
- 1996 The Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel, Colorado Springs, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
- 1997 Phillips Exeter Academy Library, Exeter, NH, Louis I. Kahn
- 1998 Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Louis I. Kahn
- 1999 The John Hancock Center, Chicago, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
- 2000 The Smith House, Darien CN, Richard Meier & Partners
- 2001 Weyerhaeuser Headquarters, Federal Way, WA, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
- 2002 Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, Spain, Sert Jackson & Assoc.

Annual Meeting
announcement?

News Letter

© 2003 The Society of Architectural Historians, St. Louis and Missouri Valley Chapters.

NewsLetter is published quarterly by the St. Louis and Missouri Chapters of the Society of Architectural Historians.

Please mail editorial correspondence and submissions for publication to: Esley Hamilton, Editor 7346 Balson Avenue, University City, Missouri 63130 or contact him by telephone: (314) 615-0357, by facsimile: (314) 615-4696, or by email: ehamilton@stlouisco.com. Deadlines for submission of material for publication in **NewsLetter** are as follows:

Spring issue	15 February
Summer issue	15 May
Fall issue	15 August
Winter issue	15 November

St. Louis Chapter, SAH 2002 - 3 Board of Directors

Peter Wollenberg	President
Kristina Gray Perez	Vice President
Mimi Stiritz	Secretary
Karen Bode Baxter	Treasurer
Esley Hamilton	NewsLetter Editor

Memberships:

Individual, \$10	Student, \$5
Supporting, \$25	Joint, \$15

**St. Louis and Missouri Valley Chapters
Society of Architectural Historians
Post Office Box 23110
St. Louis, Missouri 63108**