

1996

Architecture at The American College

The American College

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Recommended Citation

The American College, "Architecture at The American College" (1996). *Archival Documents*. Paper 8.
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ARCHITECTURE

AT

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE
1996

The architectural firm Mitchell/Giurgola Associates (Ehrman Mitchell/Aldo Giurgola) was responsible for the design of the major buildings of The American College and for the master plan for the development of the College campus.

The firm established an international reputation for elegance and sophistication in design. Two of the buildings on The American College campus, Huebner Hall and MDRT Foundation Hall, were awarded the highest medal of excellence in design by the American Institute of Architects. The most recent work of Aldo Giurgola is the design of the five-acre esplanade for new Center For the Arts in San Francisco.

The original partnership is known internationally for designing the Parliament Building in Canberra, and for the Volvo plant in Sweden. The Liberty Bell Pavilion is among the many Philadelphia buildings designed by the firm. In recent years the original firm has undergone changes in management and identity.

Huebner Hall - 1961

Placed along a ridge that dominates the site, and positioned so as to eliminate the need to destroy trees, Huebner Hall commands extensive views.

The structural system is unique for an integration of cast-in-place, precast, and precast/pre-tensional concrete components, cellular steel floor panels, and masonry cavity walls. The concrete window slabs provide inside/outside walls.

Huebner Hall is the headquarters of the American Society of CLU and ChFC.

Myrick Pavilion - 1965

Once the carriage house to the estate upon which Huebner Hall is built, the architects retained the original walls of locally quarried stone, and wrapped glass walls around them, providing substantial and handsome inside walls and useful space with a view. Note the use of chain instead of the usual water downspouts. Originally restored by Mitchell/Giurgola to become a dining area, it has been modified to accommodate meeting and conference space.

The Ponds - 1968

The architects designed a water focal point for the campus by creating the restored pond area and the concrete sculpture with a bas relief by Edward Fenno Hoffman III. Hoffman, now deceased, was an elected member of the prestigious National Academy of Design.

The ponds are again scheduled for restoration in fall 1996, and rededication in 1997.

MDRT Foundation Hall - 1972

As they positioned the building on the site, Mitchell/Giurgola once again took advantage of a topographical ridge to nestle a five story building into the hill in a manner that makes it aesthetically pleasing in a residential area. The architects expressed the idea of using natural materials in a partnership with nature--grey granite, baked earth-color clay tiles, and large windows to reflect the outside inside.

The building was also designed to make use of new technology, including a TV studio and the most advanced computer capability for education and research.

MDRT Foundation Hall houses the library, faculty offices, and the office of the president.

Davis W. Gregg Educational Conference Center - 1981

Throughout its history, The American College has recognized the importance of continuing professional education and graduate education. This building was designed to provide classrooms and residency rooms for graduate and continuing professional education programs for the College and for clients who use the facility for educational and management training seminars.

An art gallery was incorporated into the main floor and ground floor corridors for aesthetics and maximum use of space. Glass brick was used in the fire towers to provide light and to be energy efficient. The architects have again taken advantage of a hillside site to place the building so it fits naturally into the landscape and leaves open the stream valley. Included are three wings -- one wing contains fifty sleeping rooms; the center area is devoted to classrooms; the third section contains the dining and commons areas and auditorium. The American College Archives Room is located in this building.

Mitchell Hall and the New MONY Plaza

Mitchell Hall and MONY Plaza are currently under construction and will be dedicated in May 1997 at the College's 70th Anniversary celebration. It is significant for the purposes it will serve and because no new long term debt will be created.

Here a Georgian brick mansion built in 1924 -- which might otherwise have been razed -- is being restored to create much needed office space and linked to a sound 1980s building through the new MONY Plaza.

The complex will effectively add needed office space and MONY PLaza will provide a great location to entertain alumni and guests. It will provide a new hub of campus activity. The College is most fortunate to have the generous support of all who have made this possible.

ARCHITECTURE AT THE AMERICAN COLLEGE

1998

The architectural firm Mitchell/Giurgola Associates (Ehrman Mitchell/Aldo Giurgola) was responsible for the design of the major buildings of The American College and for the master plan for the development of the College campus. The architects created a formal master plan for the campus.

The twenty-year period (1961 to 1981) during which Mitchell/Giurgola Associates created new buildings and restorations on The American College campus reflects the development of the architects' style over a twenty-year period. Our campus buildings are an architectural museum of the architects' work.

The firm established an international reputation for elegance and sophistication in design. Two of the buildings on The American College campus, Huebner Hall and MDRT Foundation Hall, were awarded the highest medal of excellence in design by the American Institute of Architects.

The original partnership is known internationally for designing the Parliament Building in Canberra, and for the Volvo plant in Sweden. The United Fund Building and Liberty Bell Pavilion and an addition to the University Museum are among the Philadelphia buildings designed by the firm.

Huebner Hall - 1961

Huebner Hall was the first building designed for the College when it moved from Philadelphia to Bryn Mawr. It was placed along a ridge that dominates the site, and was positioned so as to eliminate the need to destroy trees. Preservation of trees began with the groundbreaking for Huebner Hall and laid the foundation for establishing The American College Arboretum.

The structural system of the building is unique for the integration of cast-in-place, precast, and precast/pre-tensional concrete components, cellular steel floor panels, and masonry cavity walls. The concrete window slabs provide inside/outside walls.

Huebner Hall is the headquarters of the Society of Financial Service Professionals.

Myrick Pavilion - 1965

Once the carriage house to the estate upon which Huebner Hall is built, the architects retained the original walls of locally quarried stone, and wrapped glass walls around them, providing substantial and handsome inside walls and useful space with a view. Note the use of chain instead of the usual downspouts, which was considered to be a very advanced design. Originally restored by Mitchell/Giurgola to become a dining area, it has been modified to accommodate meeting and conference space.

The Wolff Ponds - 1997

Wolff Ponds were dedicated in 1997. Through a generous gift from Bette and Tom Wolff a major water feature was restored in the campus stream valley.

There had been a large lake below the site for Huebner Hall on the original estate the College purchased. The original dam broke in the 1930s flooding the valley and could not be replaced so in 1968 the College architects designed stone work to create two ponds.

By the 1990s, the ponds were silted and through a generous gift from Bette and Tom Wolff, a major restoration was made possible using advanced stream management techniques. The ponds were drained and dredged. New stonework, a terrace, and landscaping have created a beautiful water feature which was dedicated in 1997.

MDRT Foundation Hall - 1972

Mitchell/Giurgola took advantage of a topographical ridge to nestle a five story building into the hill in a manner that makes it aesthetically pleasing in a residential area. The architects expressed the idea of using natural materials in a partnership with nature—gray granite, baked earth-color clay tiles, and large windows to reflect the outside inside.

Advanced for its time, the building was designed to make it possible to use new educational technology. It includes the Barry Kaye Media Center, a TV studio, and advanced computer capability for educational purposes. The library, faculty offices, and the office of the President are in MDRT Foundation Hall.

Davis W. Gregg Educational Conference Center - 1981

Throughout its history, The American College has recognized the importance of continuing professional education and graduate education. This building was designed to provide meeting rooms, classrooms, and residency rooms for graduate and continuing professional education programs for the College and for clients who use the facility for educational and management training seminars.

An art gallery was incorporated into the main floor and ground floor corridors to maximize an attractive use of space. Glass brick was used in the fire towers to provide light and to be energy efficient. The architects have again taken advantage of a hillside site to place the building on the ridge so that it fits naturally into the landscape and leaves the stream valley open. The building has three wings—one wing contains fifty sleeping rooms; the center area is devoted to classrooms; the third section contains the dining and commons areas and auditorium. The American College Archives Room is located in this building.

Mitchell Hall and MONY Plaza

Mitchell Hall and MONY Plaza were dedicated in May, 1997 during the College's 70th Anniversary celebration. Mitchell Hall effectively adds new campus offices and meeting rooms. MONY Plaza provides the unique space that links two restored buildings into a useful complex.

It is particularly significant that a needed, useful modern building was created by restructuring Dechert Hall, a Georgian Mansion, and the General Services Building, built in 1978 and linking them with the handsome MONY Plaza. The restoration was made possible by the Roy O. Mitchell estate, a gift from Eugene Seamon and his wife, Ellen, and generous gifts from individuals and associates from MONY.