

Harry Weese

Harry Mohr Weese (June 30, 1915 – October 29, 1998) was an American architect, born in Evanston, Illinois in the Chicago suburbs, who had an important role in 20th century modernism and historic preservation. His brother, Ben Weese, is also a renowned architect.

Harry Weese grew up in this house in Kenilworth, Illinois.

Harry Mohr Weese was born on June 30, 1915 in Evanston, Illinois as the first son of Harry E. and Marjorie Weese. In 1919, the family moved to a house in Kenilworth, Illinois, where Harry would be raised. Weese was enrolled in the progressive Joseph Sears School in 1919. By 1925, Weese decided that he wanted to be either an artist or an architect.

After graduating from New Trier High School, Weese enrolled at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1933 to pursue a Bachelor in Architecture. Weese also took architecture classes at Yale University starting in 1936. Weese studied under Alvar Aalto at MIT and fraternized with classmates I.M. Pei and Eero Saarinen. As his schooling was at the height of the Great Depression, Weese eschewed studying the expensive historical revivals in favor of more affordable modern styles. In the summer of 1937, Weese toured northern Europe on a bicycle, fostering his appreciation for the modernist movement.

Upon his return to the United States, Weese was offered a fellowship at the Cranbrook Academy of Art through Eero Saarinen, whose father Eliel oversaw the school. There, he studied city planning, pottery, and textiles while learning more about Modernist principles. He worked alongside other emerging Modern designers such as Ralph Rapson, Florence Knoll, and Charles Eames. Weese formed an architectural partnership in Chicago with classmate Benjamin Baldwin upon their graduation in 1940. He would later marry Baldwin's sister, Kitty.

Pentagon City Station, a typical stop on the Washington Metro, considered one of the best examples of brutalist style architecture.

Following the brief partnership, Weese joined the firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM). Soon after joining, however, Weese enlisted as an engineering officer in the United States Navy for World War II. Weese moved back to Chicago after the war in 1945 and rejoined SOM.

In 1947, Weese started his independent design firm, Harry Weese Associates. His first commissions, such as the Robert and Suzanne Drucker House in Wilmette, Illinois, were houses for family members and close associates. By the late 1950s, Weese began to receive major commissions. Although he continued to plan houses, Weese also received civic projects such as the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago and the Washington Metro in the District of Columbia. The Washington Metro project helped Weese become the foremost designer of rail systems during the peak of his career. He subsequently was commissioned to oversee rail projects in Miami, Los Angeles, Dallas, and Buffalo. He was named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1961 and received the Arnold W. Brunner

Memorial Prize from the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1964.

Weese was also well known for his firm advocacy of historic preservation and was remembered as the architect who "shaped Chicago's skyline and the way the city thought about everything from the lakefront to its treasure-trove of historical buildings." He led the restoration of Adler & Sullivan's Auditorium Building, and Daniel Burnham's Field Museum of Natural History and Orchestra Hall.[disambiguation needed] Harry Weese & Associates received the Architecture Firm Award from the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1978. Weese also served as a judge for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial design competition.

Awards-

In 2007, the design of the Washington Metro's vaulted-ceiling stations was voted number 106 on the "America's Favorite Architecture" list compiled by the American Institute of Architects (AIA), and was the only brutalist design to win a place among the 150 selected by this public survey. In January 2014, the AIA announced that it would present its Twenty-five Year Award to the Washington Metro system for "an architectural design of enduring significance" that "has stood the test of time by embodying architectural excellence for 25 to 35 years". The announcement cited the key role of Harry Weese, who conceived and implemented a "common design kit-of-parts" which continues to guide the construction of new Metro stations over a quarter-century later.

Works-

Mercantile Bank in Kansas City, Missouri, a 20-story office tower on a pedestal base of steel columns with striking exposed triangular trusses.

Seventeenth Church of Christ, Scientist, Chicago, Illinois.

Weese is best known as the designer and architect of the first group of stations in the Washington Metro system. Other well known works include:

Robert and Suzanne Drucker House in Wilmette, Illinois

Alpha Sigma Phi, Alpha Xi Chapter House at Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, Illinois

The United States Embassy Building in Accra, Ghana.

Arena Stage, Washington, D.C..

Time-Life Building, Chicago, Illinois.

First Baptist Church, in Columbus, Indiana.

Seventeenth Church of Christ, Scientist in Chicago, Illinois.

The Marcus Center for the Performing Arts in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Humanities Building at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, widely considered one of the Midwest's best examples of brutalist architecture but slated for demolition soon.

The Chazen Museum of Art at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, formerly known as the Elvehjem Museum of Art.

The Upper School (high school) building of The Latin School of Chicago in Chicago, Illinois.

Pierce Tower, an undergraduate residence hall at the University of Chicago.

Mercantile Bank, Kansas City, Missouri.

Westin Crown Center Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri.

The former US Embassy to Ghana in Accra.

Fulton House at 345 N. Canal Street in Chicago. Converted 19th century 16-story cold-storage warehouse building to condominium building.

Fewkes Tower at 55 W. Chestnut Street (formerly 838 N. Dearborn Street) in Chicago

River Cottages at 357-365 N. Canal Street in Chicago. Sloped, structurally expressive facade responds to the angle and cross bracing of the railroad bridge directly across the river.

William J. Campbell United States Courthouse Annex in downtown Chicago (formerly known as the Metropolitan Correctional Center, Chicago.) Federal temporary holding prison which has no window bars, instead each cell is provided with a vertical 5" slot window. Weese was mandated to follow then new federal prison architectural guidelines, like cells having no bars and by original design each prisoner had his own room.

Middletown City Building, Middletown, Ohio.

Formica Building, Cincinnati

Sterling Morton Library, The Morton Arboretum.

O'Brian Hall at the State University of New York at Buffalo

The Healey Library at the University of Massachusetts Boston

The Given Institute, Aspen Colorado

St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Menasha, WI. A striking building, similar to the aforementioned First Baptist Church in Columbus, IN, but with an even more sweeping roof design and towering steeple.

Weese also led numerous restoration projects including-

Louis Sullivan's Auditorium Building in Chicago, Illinois 1967.

Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois

Orchestra Hall, Chicago, Illinois

Union Station, Washington, DC

And 80+ single home and residential buildings including:

His primary residence in Barrington IL

"Shadowcliff", Ellison Bay, WI

Evanston, IL

Glen Lake, MI

Muskoka Lakes, ON, Canada

Red House, Barrington, IL

Wayne, IL