



Breuer



Nervi



Le Corbusier

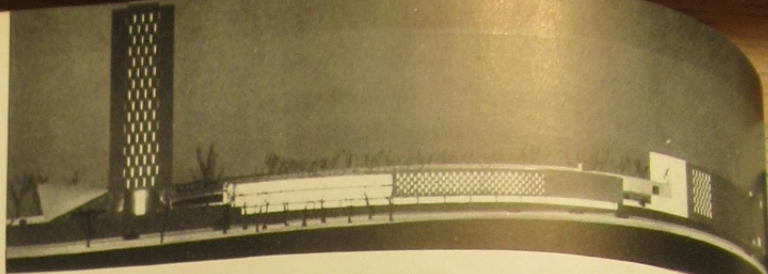


Gropius

Le Corbusier



Breuer, Gropius



Above and below: Breuer-Zehrfuss-Nervi model for Unesco headquarters. At left: Architects concerned with Unesco. Top, from left: Saarinen, Nervi, Rogers, Gropius, Le Corbusier, Markelius. Second: Rogers, Gropius, Zehrfuss, Le Corbusier, unknown, Breuer, Markelius.

For your information

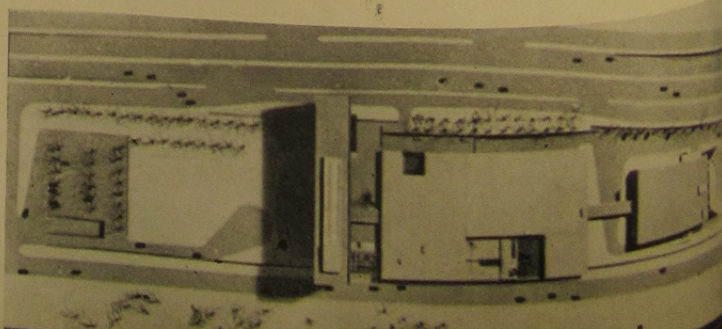
Complications for Unesco

In drawing up a statement of requirements for a Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) headquarters building in Paris, a committee formed of the representatives of ten nations (Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Egypt, France, Italy, Japan, Peru, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America) stipulated that the building not only serve its functions as a place of work and meeting center where Unesco can "encourage and coordinate collective and individual endeavors aimed primarily at contributing to the maintenance of peace through education, science, and culture;" but also that it "express by its design the spirit of Unesco and symbolize its purpose and ideals. To achieve this, more is necessary than purely pictorial or sculptural representation of Unesco's work on the walls or about the passages and halls of the building; the building as a whole must be created as an integrated work of art in which plan, structure, technical equipment, and every expressive element of the building are synthesized into a symbol and expression of Unesco. In the achievement of this, every opportunity should be given to the architect to enlist as his colleagues the finest artists of the day who can work in close sympathy with him. This does not mean that paintings and sculptures and other forms of plastic art must be forced into, or on to the building, but that the building, as a whole, by its form, color, light, and space shall be a synthesis of all the arts and give suitable place for the actual introduction of painting, sculpture, and the other plastic arts."

To bring such a wise intention to pass, Unesco voted that an international group of five exceptional architects be appointed as advisors and critics for any Unesco headquarters design. Under recommendations of member states, and of the International Congress for Modern

Architecture and the International Union of Architects, the five chosen were: Walter Gropius of the United States, Le Corbusier of France, Lucio Costa of Brazil, Sven Markelius of Sweden, and Ernesto Rogers of Italy. These five quickly rejected an original plan for Unesco designed in a traditional French manner by French architect Eugene Beaudouin because of its failure to express either the young and creative spirit of Unesco or the 20th century hope of international accord—a hope not much bothered with in earlier times. Besides, the site chosen by Beaudouin—a corner of the Place de Fontenoy, a strong symmetrical plan by 18th century architect Jacques-Ange Gabriel—would put any new building there in a distinctly subordinate position to the central building, the Ecole Militaire.

The Five Architects recommended an entire new start, with architects Marcel Breuer of the United States and Bernard Zehrfuss of France and engineer Pier Luigi Nervi of Italy as designers. In less than two months, and with the finest amity, this team submitted a fresh design for a new site heavily approved by the Five Architects, bordering the Bois de Boulogne between the Porte Dauphine and the Porte Maillot, where Unesco headquarters would fall into step with a series of great and historic edifices—Notre Dame, the Louvre, the Invalides, the Etoile, the Arc de Triomphe. The building, consisting of a 16-story glass-walled Secretariat slab raised on eight V-shaped concrete stilts, a low rectangular conference center behind, and behind that, a plenary hall like a square box, was commended by the International Panel of Five Architects, who said: "The plans as submitted reveal an understanding of the obligations of architecture and are not only practical, but inspired, and capable of attaining Unesco's aim in the building of its Headquarters, which is destined to become a symbol of world's significance."



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structure, the building emphasizes the plastic qualities of reinforced concrete, which is used throughout. The architects were careful to specify places where paintings, sculptures, compositions, murals, and fountains would integrate with the building.

The Five Architects, along with Eero Saarinen of the United States, who acted as consultant to the architects, felt some changes ought to be made, though, and Breuer, Zehruss, and Nervi modified the design, following the Panel's recommendations. The entrance canopy, a huge, gracefully curving concrete shell that rests on two points, was shifted to the right to run in a series with the conference center and plenary hall. To preserve a balance the Secretariat facade, now that the entrance was off center, the concrete facing up the right of the facade was narrowed to a sliver, but that on the left kept broad for a heavy frame.

Then, the eight concrete stilts were turned upside down to look like rather steadier A's than V's. The piazza in front of the entrance was greatly enlarged, to give the building stature from respectful vantage points. Side walls of the plenary hall were tapered a little so that it looks less like a box, and there is a lively perforated pattern on part of its facade, as there is in the other buildings. Photos on page 18 are of the revised model.

But by now, this building is only of historic interest. The French Government has had to withdraw its offer of the Bois de Boulogne site because the price of the land turned out to be four times as much as it had expected. Breuer, Zehruss, and Nervi are now designing an entirely new structure for the Place de Fontenoy site, for which the Beaudoin project had been planned. They have been assured by the Paris authorities that there will be no

restriction on the architecture, that it need not humiliate itself to the Ecole Militaire.

Meetings

Design Directors

The next meeting of manufacturers, design directors, and designers will be at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn on January 21, sponsored by Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art. A. J. Kostellow, chairman of Pratt's Industrial Design Department, and John S. Griswold, manager of the Design Research Laboratory there, will describe their department's work and purposes. In the afternoon, brief talks by Leo Lionni, art director of *Fortune*—1951 Aspen Design Conference; Alfred Auerbach, president of Alfred (Continued on Page 132)

For Your Calendar

Through January 16. *Winter Market. American Furniture Mart, Chicago.*

Through January 16. *International Homefurnishing Market. Merchandise Mart, Chicago.*

Through January 16. *Winter Market. Waters and Exhibitors Building, Grand Rapids.*

Through January 18. *Union des Artistes Modernes, Contemporary French Art and Architecture. College of Applied Arts, University of Cincinnati.*

Through January 24. *Contemporary Swiss Architecture (AFA). Georgia Institute of Technology.*

January 14-February 15. *Florida Architecture and Interior Design Show. Florida Gulf Coast Art Center, Clearwater.*

January 12-21. *Prize-winning Designs from the 12th National (Canadian) Industrial Design Competition. Canadian Furniture Mart, Toronto.*

January 15-16. *Symposium on Architectural Acoustics. Southwest Research Institute, San Antonio, Texas.*

January 18-February 8. *1951 Annual A. I. D. Association. University of Florida.*

February 1-28. *Scalamandré Exhibit—Contemporary Woven Textiles. University of Missouri Art Gallery, Columbia.*

February 1-28. *Scalamandré Exhibit—Textiles in the Colonial National Shrines of America. Slater Memorial Museum, Norwich, Connecticut.*

February 1-28. *Scalamandré Exhibit—Textiles in the Italian Renaissance. Rochester Memorial Museum.*