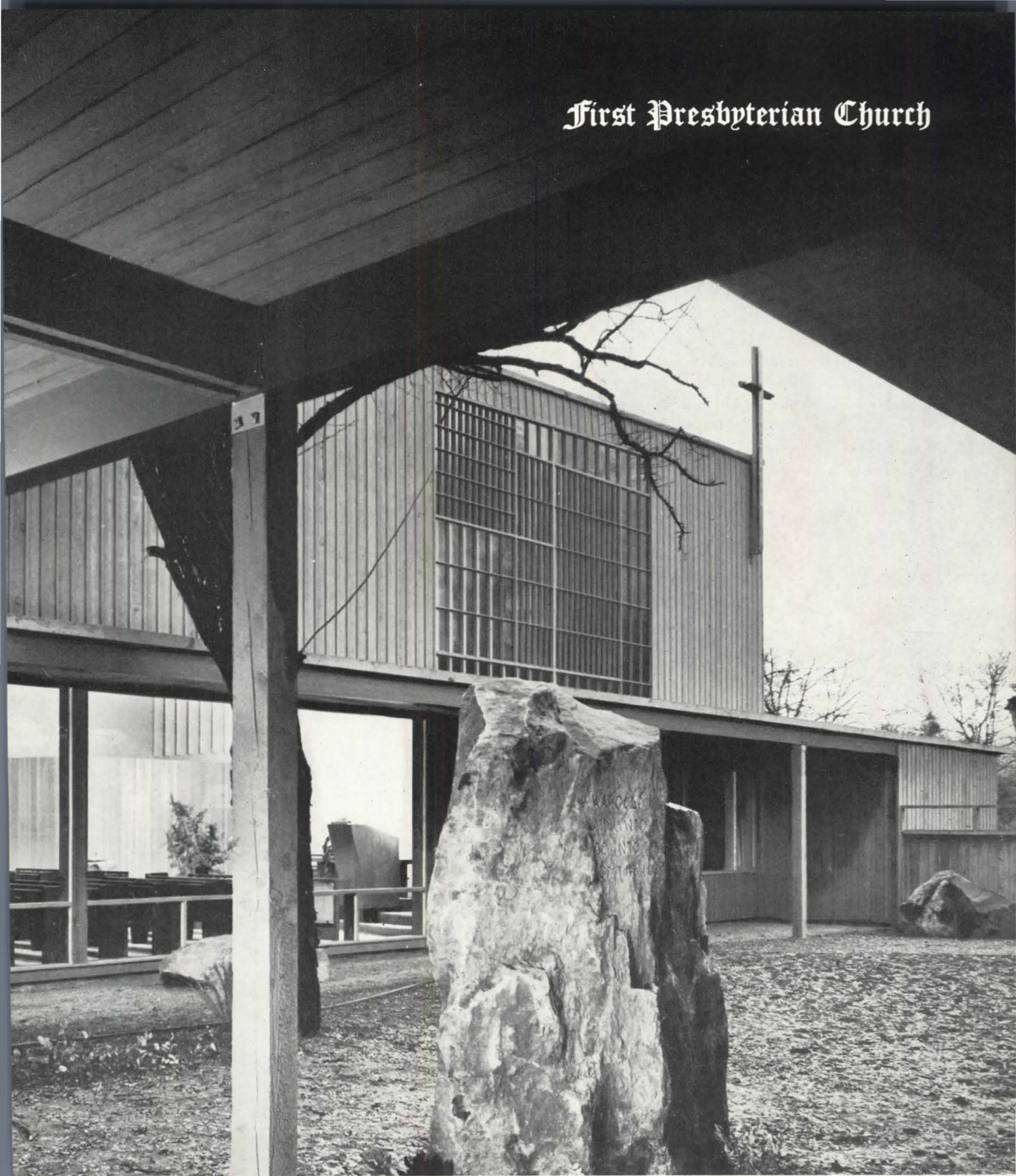


# First Presbyterian Church



Location | Cottage Grove, Oregon  
Architect | Pietro Belluschi

Forecourt looking toward the great chancel window. Exterior walls of the frame structure are rough-sawn fir boards and battens. The inscribed boulder at the entrance (foreground) symbolizes the joint spirit in which the church was built. "We almost gave it up," the architect reports, "as being too heavy and costly a job . . . but the committee decided that if the old Egyptians could move obelisks, they ought to be able to move small boulders. So they went ahead on their own . . . That's the kind of swell committee we had to deal with."

Photos: Julius Shulman



## First Presbyterian Church

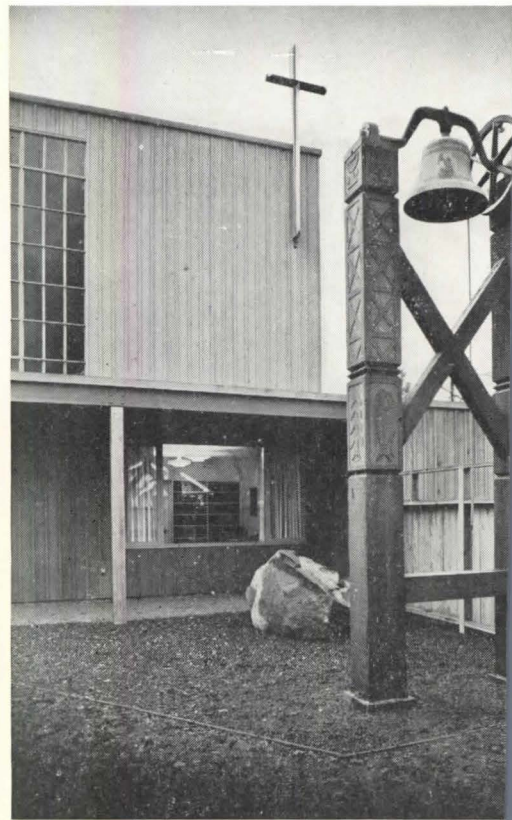
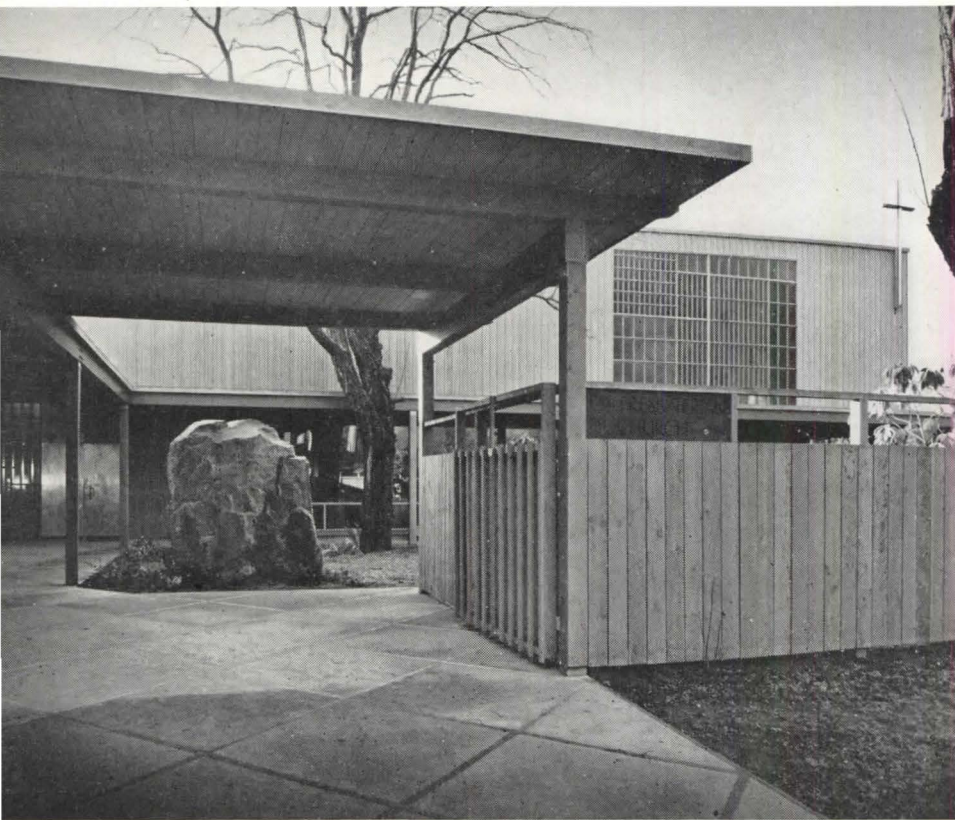
In approaching the problem of designing a religious building, Belluschi comments that "the contemporary architect is confronted by the difficult problem of creating forms appropriate to a modern society without destroying the symbols that have given formal validity to the idea of 'church' in the past." While Belluschi refuses to build with tools of the past or imitate old forms, he believes in respecting and preserving "that feeling of emotional continuity which is the very essence of religion." In designing the Cottage Grove Church, "the aims

and reasons expressed by the architects were shared by Pastor and congregation."

The lot, in the midst of a residential district, had beautiful trees on it, which have been preserved. The design aim was to produce an intimate and inviting atmosphere. Hence the landscaped forecourt, to provide a sort of transition area "to dispose the churchgoer inwardly, and to create a feeling of space and expectation . . . The materials used are humble ones, and the details very simple, chosen more to convey the idea of purpose than that of richness,

and to prove that architecture is an intrinsic art and not an arbitrary dress to applied at the designer's whim."

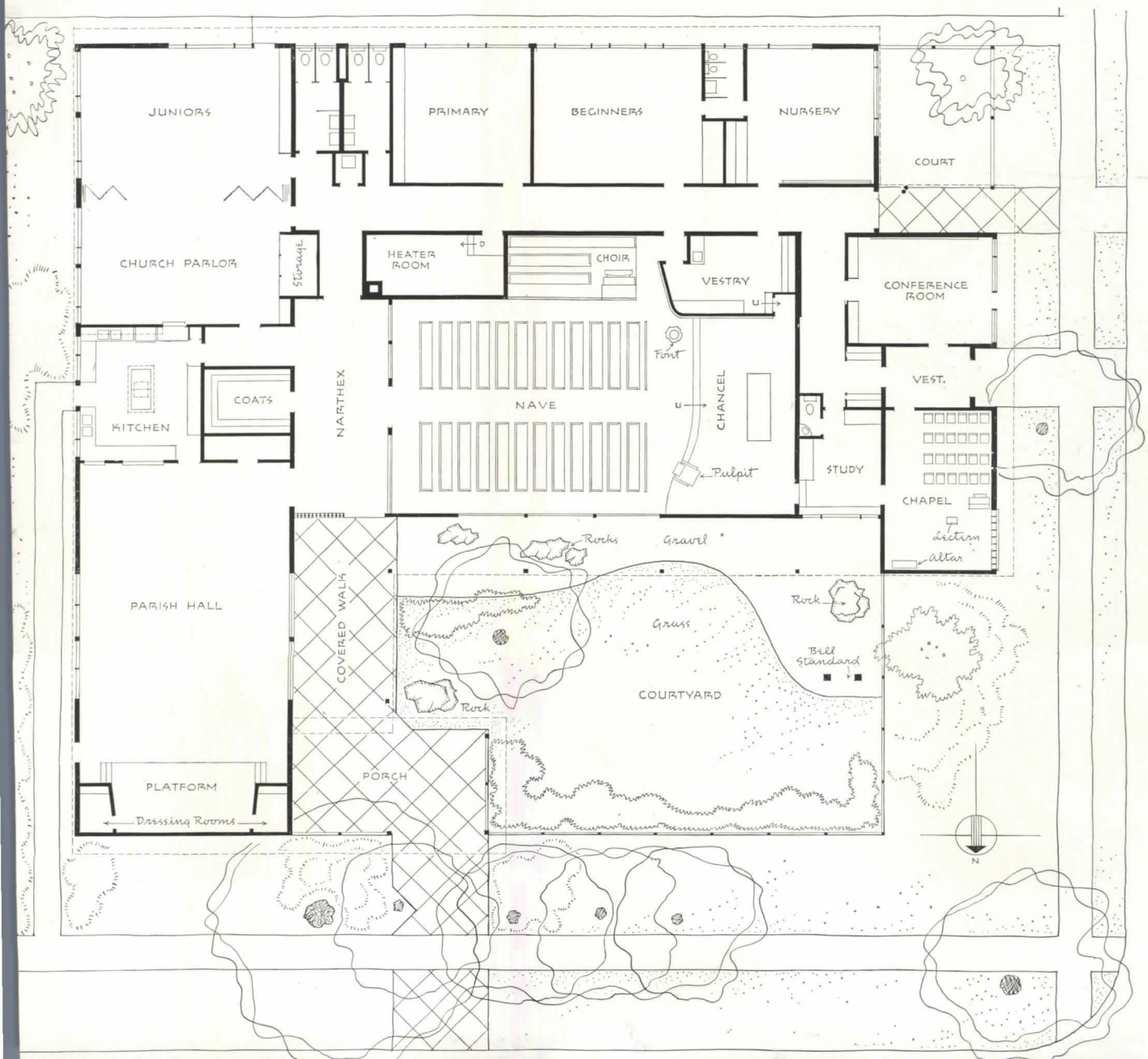
D. Hugh Peniston, the Pastor, carries the posts of the bell standard himself. He feels that "everything about the plan suggests a small friendly church where people know one another, and work together to God's will. It is not a small-sized model of a large city church . . . We have tried to be honest . . . expressing our faith in terms of our own day. Whatever else you may say of the building, it is our own."



*The entry porch (above) and side loggia provide covered passage into the church. The bell standard, with posts carved by the Pastor (above, right), is freestanding, in the courtyard just outside the Pastor's study. Panels on the church side of the narthex (right) may be opened to take care of overflow congregation. The Pastor's study may be reached directly from the side street (right of general view, acrosspage).*







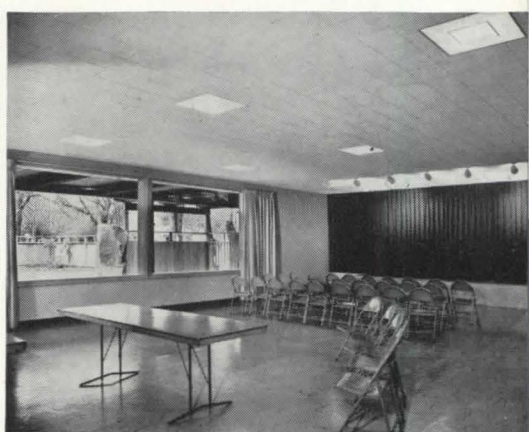
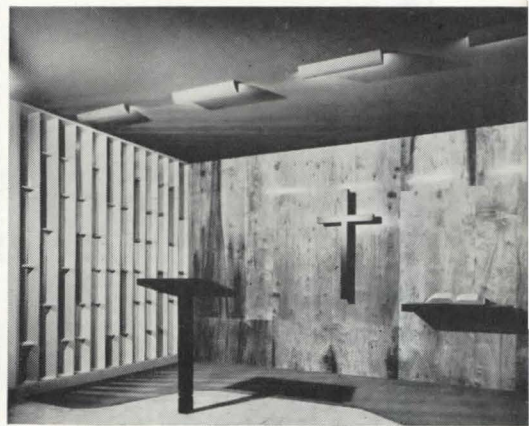


## First Presbyterian Church

*Interior walls are of plaster or spruce flooring. The church ceiling, that curves upward above the chancel, and the rear wall of the church are of grooved spruce, the grooving providing inexpensive acoustical correction. Flooring is asphalt tile. See Selected Detail of the pulpit, page 68. Heating is handled by a radiant floor panel system.*







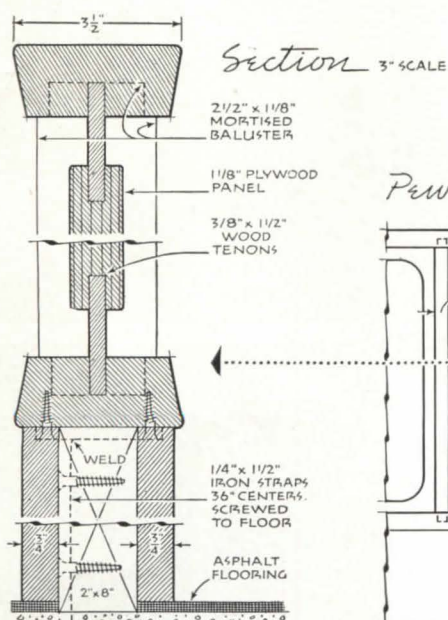
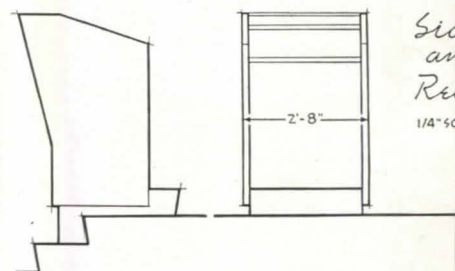
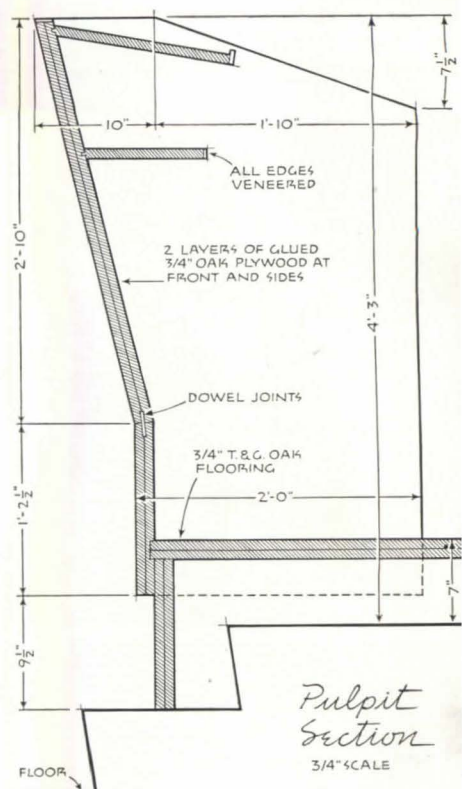
*The chapel (right, top) is open at all times for prayer and meditation. At the end of the parish hall (second photo in strip) is a stage. The church parlor (third photo) has a folding partition that creates two classrooms. At the south-west corner is the nursery classroom (bottom photo). Acoustical tile surfaces the ceilings. The architect asks that special credit be given to the contractors, Albert Vik & Son: "The workmanship throughout is superb. . . . They were inspired in their work."*



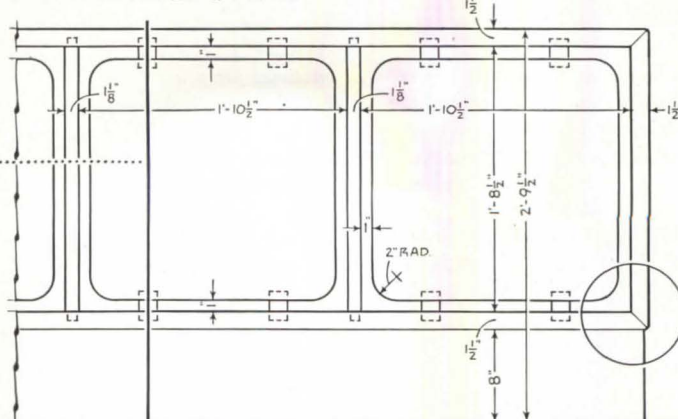




JULIUS SHULMAN

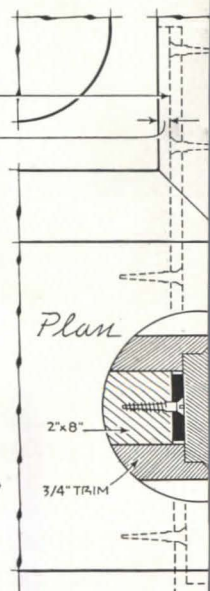


*Pew Rail* 3/4\"



*Elevation* 3\"

1/4\" x 1 1/2\" IRON STRAP AT EACH END OF RAILING, SCREWED TO FLOOR  
1/4\" x 1 1/2\" WOOD INSERT GLUED OVER IRON STRAP



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Cottage Grove, Ore.

Pietro Belluschi, Architect