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Interview with William Grindereng: Longtime Architectural Associate of Architect Paul Rudolph. Interviewed by Bruce Barnes. Recorded in Boston Massachusetts June 28, 2006.

Transcript of a video recorded interview with architect William Grindereng, in which he recounts the portion of his career (1955-1972) he was associated with architect Paul Rudolph. Among the many major projects discussed is the Government Service Center in Boston, the Bangladesh (Formerly East Pakistan) Agricultural University and SMTI / University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Also in attendance, Grattan Gill, also a former architectural associate of Rudolph as well as job captain or project manager for SMTI / UMass Dartmouth during the construction of the campus in the 1960s.

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**Bruce Barnes:** If you could, give me a brief biography of yourself, how you came to be an architect, and your connections to Paul Rudolph.

**William Grindereng:** I first graduated from Ohio University with a degree in architectural engineering. Following that, I worked four years full-time for architects in South Dakota and Ohio. I decided that I needed to fill in some gaps in my education so I applied to Yale. I went there with advanced standing and graduated after two years with a Master of Architecture degree.

While at Yale, I was fortunate to have had Paul Rudolph as a visiting critic. It was actually his first two visits to Yale. The first project that he gave us [1955] was a weekend sketch project was for a Tastee Freez stand which he had done in Sarasota. The second project was a six weeks project for the Jewett Arts Center which he was at that time designing. He took us up to Wellesley to show us the site. Construction hadn't yet started. It was very exciting having him as a critic. He was the best critic that I had ever had. Everyone in the school, I think, was excited to have him there.

When I graduated, I came up to Boston and went to work for one of the old-line firms. I worked for them for one summer and I hated it. I was living in Cambridge at the time. Rudolph had an office at 26 Church Street. I ran into him a number of times in Harvard Square. I was about to quit my job and go someplace else. I thought "Why don't I ask Rudolph for a job?" and so I did. To my astonishment, I was hired. The office at 26 Church Street was on the second floor. It was basically one big loft space with a flimsy partition between our space in the back and Serge Chermayeff in the front. You could hear everything that went on either office. Serge Chermayeff and his partner, [Hayward] Cutting, would get into horrendous arguments. Of course, we could hear everything, which was kind of entertaining. Eventually Serge and Cutting went their separate ways and we took over the whole space. When I went to work for Paul, the only other person

in the Cambridge office was Wes Weidner who had been hired a few weeks earlier so it was all new. I was very nervous because I knew the work was going to be very demanding.

**BB:** What year was that?

**WG:** That would have been 1956. I worked in the Cambridge office for two years. During that time, I had two stints in Sarasota. I was sent down to work on the first Sarasota high school, the Riverview. I worked on the working drawings for that. I went down again to work on the second Sarasota high school, the one that was done in concrete. For that one, I wrote the specifications with a little help from Gene Leedy.

It was a very nice little introduction.

I had a little house on one trip. The first one, I was there for a fairly long period of time. I had a little house right on Sarasota [Siesta] Key, right near the water. It was right next door to the Cocoon House. The Deering House was just down the road. The office was a third floor walk-up down near the bay on Main Street. You went up this narrow, steep flight of stairs, up to this third floor loft. The air conditioning was from the Ringling Brothers. The gorilla had died. Rudolph acquired the air conditioner. That was our air conditioning. It was very inadequate. It was very hot most of the time. The air conditioner barely handled the little front office.

**BB:** How big was the office in Sarasota?

**WG:** There were three or four. Projects that were underway. The Jewett Arts Center was under construction at that time. He was still working on a few little details like the sun screens. He was working on the Blue Cross, Blue Shield Building. We were also working on the [Greeley] forestry lab at Yale.

After two years in Sarasota, Rudolph became chairman of the Department of Architecture at Yale and moved the office [from Cambridge]. I went down to New Haven with him [1958]. The office there was on Chapel [High] Street. It was on the top floor of a house. Rudolph was designing an apartment for himself in the back of the building. The office was very nice. It was all glass looking out to the rear of the building. The entrance had a stairwell that came up through the floor in the middle of the office where a stairwell would naturally be in an old house. There was always kind of an element of danger in most of what Rudolph did for himself and sometimes for other people. This stairwell came up through the floor. It was just a hole in the floor with no railing around it. The building inspector insisted that he put a railing around it. He said, "I'll move out of this building before I do that." He could be very stubborn. He never put a railing around that stairwell.

**BB:** Is that the house at 31 High Street?

**WG:** Yes, it was not Chapel but High Street.

**BB:** The building still stands although not in very good condition. I took a picture of it as I walked from the A&A to the Temple Street Parking Garage.

**WG:** His apartment was similar to several of the apartments he did in New York. There was kind of a mezzanine level in the back of the apartment and a cantilevered stair with no railing. It went down to the living room which opened out to a tiny little garden. People would be terrified walking up and down that stair. Similarly, to pursue this notion of danger in Rudolph's work, his apartment at Beekman Place in New York underwent a number of reincarnations. One of them, I think it was the second one to the last, featured a bird walk, like Wright's at Taliesin. It was a very narrow little gangway that went out to a little seating area with seats on two sides. It was supported on some very, very tall steel columns underneath this little seating area. The ground sloped away precipitously to Roosevelt Boulevard and the East River. The frightening thing about it was this thing was constructed all of metal grating. When you went out there, you could look down and see through. It was very unsubstantial. Rudolph loaned me that apartment once when he was out of town and I was doing something in New York. I stayed there. I went out on this bird walk to the little seating area and it was really scary. I mentioned this to Rudolph when he came back. He said, "Yes, I'm afraid to go out there myself."

Back to New Haven. He, of course, was working on preliminary drawings for the Art and Architecture Building, and the New Haven Parking Garage. The forestry building was under construction. I supervised the construction of that building. The office had four or five people working in the office in New Haven. Nobody was taking charge of anything. To fill the vacuum, I became the Office Manager. Rudolph, oftentimes, never designated anybody to do something. If you picked up and did it, you were it. I became the Office Manager.

We had a secretary. The first secretary, Mrs. Bundy, was totally out of sync with the office. She wore long black dresses. I think of her as having a buttoned-up collar. She was very straight-laced. Everybody loved her. She managed to fit in somehow even though people were surprised to see her there.

When we were finishing up the office space, it came time to lay the carpet. Rudolph had someone working for him. Walter James had been doing some handiwork for Rudolph around the apartment. He asked Walter to lay the carpet. Walter called this friend of his, Jeff Meekins. Jeff came over and they laid the carpet. Jeff stayed on and became a handyman around the place and Rudolph relied on him. Eventually, he went to New York with Rudolph and became sort of a valet. He was a very funny and very nice person - really comical! I remember that Rudolph didn't like the telephones being black. He asked Jeff to paint the telephones white, which he did. It was a disaster. Rudolph never acknowledged that it had been a mistake. There are all sorts of funny things like that that went on.

**BB:** Do you remember the color of the carpet?

**WG:** It was a sisal carpet.

**BB:** How long did you stay in New Haven?

**WG:** I stayed in New Haven for two years. After four years working for Rudolph [1956-1960], I was totally burned out. I decided I needed to get away and applied for a Fulbright to Japan. I spent two years in Japan.

When I came back, I went up to New Haven to see Rudolph. He wanted me to come back to work for him to start an office in Boston. The Government Center project was requiring him to have an office there. I kept putting him off. I wasn't sure if that's what I wanted to do. He said, "Why don't you spend the spring term here as a visiting critic and we'll see what happens?" I spent one term at Yale. In the end, I came up here starting the office in Boston [1963]. We started out with a little office in the Little Building on the corner of Tremont and Boylston. Terry Mullin was the first person that we hired. The second place we moved to was 6 Beacon Street where Desmond and Lord had their office. We were on the floor below. It was a little office that overlooked the old Granary Burial Ground.

The next person we hired was Raj Saksena from India. He had gotten his degree from a college in the south [Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Master of Architecture degree, 1964]. It was his first job in America.

It was during that time that Rudolph was offered a job doing the East Pakistan Agricultural University in what is now Bangladesh. He had done some preliminaries for it, but had not gotten very far. He was getting busy. He wasn't sure if he wanted to do it. He asked me about it. I said I thought it was important to do it – to do a good job. He signed a contract, I think kind of reluctantly. I think he really did it because he thought it would be good for me. We started working on it. He hadn't gotten very far. It was a series of rectangular buildings laid out on a grid. I worked on it for a while. I thought if I was going to spend two or three years in East Pakistan working on this project, I ought to be more excited.

I did a site plan which took the main road on the river and the railroad track which were all sort of parallel. A north-south axis had to be maintained because of the prevailing breeze which is terribly important in Pakistan. I worked out a scheme that utilized a triangular grid that was set up by the north-south axis and these roughly parallel elements. I went down to Rudolph and I showed it to him. I don't think anybody had ever done this before. He was a little upset. He rolled up his sleeves and sat down at the drafting board. He quickly worked out the basic scheme that we followed for the project, which was this building here.\* 5042

Even the structural elements ended up being on that triangular grid. All of the buildings were either single loaded corridor or courtyard buildings. All of the faculty buildings were courtyard buildings. The idea was that there would be large openings on one side

and small openings on the other. You would have the Venturi effect [air speed increasing as it travels through narrower openings].

The original buildings were designed by [Richard] Neutra. They were double loaded corridors. They were untenable in the warm weather. It's very humid. We took this as a kind of kit of parts. We developed all the faculty buildings and the incidental buildings that were not part of the large teaching buildings but were specific laboratories, and things. The auditorium was taken over by Rudolph completely. This project has not gotten much publicity whatsoever. Rudolph, for some reason, never got that interested in it.

This is a model of one of the faculty buildings.\* 5044

This is a portion of the covered walkway that fed into the central courtyard.\* 5043

This is the site plan.\* 5040

This is the first thing that was built – the Engineers' Compound.\* It was used during construction as the headquarters. It was a building with a godown on one side. 5046

This is the godown, or warehouse.\* 5047

This was a covered spot for vehicles.\* 5049

**BB:** How much of it got built?

**WG:** It's all built. I made nine trips out to Pakistan during the design and construction phase.

**BB:** I was under the impression that this project wasn't built. It's even listed in some books as "not built."

**WG:** I know it's listed as a project in some books. Rudolph never saw it. He was in Dhaka a couple of times and each time he made a point of telling me he did not visit it. He had a funny relationship to the project. I developed this engineers' compound. I remember when it was under construction. The first thing that they did in this compound was to lay the brick pavement.\* 5071 (photograph not on DVD) That was so when the rains came, they would have something solid to work from. Then they started building walls. I have some early photographs where there's nothing but a few ramps and a few foundations. It looks like a project that's being excavated. It's all very clean. I remember that when this compound was finished, Serge Kadleigh was the person at the World Bank who was in charge of the project, and happened to be out there at the same time. Kadleigh said he walked into this compound and felt a sense of relief because all of the buildings that had been built before were so uncomfortable. He said there was finally some sense of order. That was his take on this.

When I showed Rudolph the photographs of the godown, he said, “You know what this looks like, don’t you?” referring to [Louis] Kahn. The rest of the compound was developed from Rudolph’s kit of parts. When we got toward the end of the project, there were a few things that Rudolph simply let me do. One was the gymnasium, the student housing and the faculty housing. I designed those.

During the time that the revolution started and the job was not progressing, Rudolph tinkered with them. He added some vertical elements to the faculty buildings. I had done everything as a flat roof. He built some of these elements up. I only saw them from some very bad slides that Bill Bedford and a few other people had taken.

This was one of the faculty buildings. All the spaces had through-ventilation.\* 5056

This was a perspective that Jerry Downs did in the office of the faculty buildings.\* 5057

These were some of the subsidiary buildings that we put together from, again, the kit of parts.\* 5059

These were student housing buildings.\* 5060

Originally, it was a series of units built around a courtyard - themselves forming a courtyard. The reason for that, the government was very security conscious. They, the West Pakistanis, wanted to be able to lock the students up when there were difficulties. Rudolph took that basic scheme and broke it open. He strung them out so they were not so confined.

I think he changed some other things after I left the office. I was told he had taken the mosque (each of the compounds had a little mosque or prayer hall.) and had put them up on the top floor. According to Bill Bedford, they were built but didn’t conform to Muslim usage so they couldn’t use them.

The last trip [1971], to Bangladesh I was expecting to stay there the next two or three years. I’d given up my apartment in the Back Bay, packed everything away in storage, and moved out to Bangladesh. I got out there on possibly the last plane that got in before the whole country was shut down with a general strike. Sepp Firnkas, the structural engineer, was out there at the time making an inspection trip.

With this general strike, we were totally cut off. There was no telephone communication, no mail, no flights in or out except military flights from West Pakistan. The whole country was in an uproar because for the first time, East Pakistan had won a general election and they were entitled to form their own government. The West Pakistanis refused to let them do that. [Zulifakar] Ali Bhutto was the main force behind that. There were demonstrations every day in Dhaka. Sheik [Mujibur] Rahman was the hero of the revolution (who later made a very poor prime minister) would make rousing speeches every day.

I would go up to Mymensingh, stay up there for a few days. No construction was happening. I'd return to Dhaka for a few days. I would drive up to Mymensingh through a forested area that was notorious for bandits. You'd have to fly this little black flag on your antenna, the anarchy flag, so they'd know what side you were on. The last time I came down to Dhaka, there was a USAID group at the university. They said, "Don't go back the Mymensingh because if anything happens, you'll be cut off." So I stayed there.

Sepp finally got out of the country after spending about three nights sleeping on the floor in the airport. Somehow, he caught a flight out of the country. The only way you could tell what was going on was by short wave radio. You could listen to Air India and get the news.

I was in Dhaka in the hotel one night. In the middle of the night, I woke up to gun-fire out on the street. I looked out of the window and there were tracer bullets whizzing around on the street. The newspaper office had been set on fire. The army had killed everybody inside then burned the newspaper office. They were shelling the university in Dhaka. This was the start of their revolution.

The next day I went down into the lobby and Ali Bhutto was in the hotel. I saw him leaving the hotel walking out to his car. He didn't look right or left – just looked at his shoes on the way out.

They said, "There's martial law. Nobody can leave the hotel. Everybody should stay inside. Otherwise, you may be shot on sight." Everyone stayed in the hotel. After lunch, it was OK to go out to a poolside area. There was a pool, with pavement around it, and a lawn. Around the lawn was a little brick walkway and a tall hedge. Everybody went out to the lawn. The hotel was full of newspaper reporters who set up tables around the pool with their typewriters. If you weren't a newspaper man, the rest of us sat on lounge chairs on the lawn.

It was absolutely surreal because all the while there was a thick pall of smoke from the fire and scattered gunfire all around. The most disconcerting thing was when a machine gun operated. It sounded like it was just over the hedge. Nobody knew what they were shooting at or who they were. In the meantime, everyone is sitting around trying to look very calm. It was really bizarre!

Then a few nights later, in the middle of the maidan, a big park-like area right next to the hotel, a race course and some government buildings around the fringe, was a little Hindu village, just huts and a few shrines. In the night, the military moved in on this tiny group of huts – you could see the tank treads the next morning– and killed everybody in sight. They urged everyone to go out and see so they would know. I walked through the little village and everybody was dead except one very old man. He was sitting there in the middle of all this, totally out of his mind, just shaking and weeping. You could see young children and everything. I finally got out of Pakistan after ten days.

Originally, they wouldn't allow foreign countries to fly in and take out their nationals. They didn't want to say there was an evacuation. Anybody could leave on Pakistan Airlines, but you couldn't leave on Pakistan Airlines because there was only military traffic. After ten days, they finally loosened a few planes and flew us into Karachi. People from the United States Embassy came out. They wanted to take everybody to the embassy to debrief them. I heard how Nixon had quote "tilted" toward Pakistan. I knew how wrong that was. I didn't want anything to do with it. I went over to the airline counter and booked a flight to Thailand. Next morning, I came down for breakfast. The hotel was right by the river with a nice terrace over the river. A guy from the hotel came over and said I had a phone call. Nobody knew where I was. Nobody knew I'd gone to Bangkok. I went to the phone and picked it up. It was Fern [Mintz], our secretary in the office, who had tracked me down. Absolutely amazing!

I hung out in Bangkok for a few days waiting to see if the situation would settle down to go back or not. I went to Singapore and came back to Bangkok. It was obvious nothing was going to happen that would allow us to go back, so I came back to Boston.

That's my story.

**BB:** What's the status of the school now?

**WG:** It was built. It was completed. The project started up again three years later after India had come in and kicked the West Pakistanis out of Bangladesh. Rudolph called me and asked me if I would go back out. At that time, I had started my own office and I declined. Bill Bedford went out and stayed a couple of years and I don't know who else. It was finally completed and I never saw it.

**BB:** When did you officially leave the employ of Paul Rudolph?

**WG:** 1972, when Rudolph closed the Boston office. There was no longer a need for it with the completion of the Government Center. Terry Mullin took care of a few left over projects that were in various stages of completion - things that he had been involved in and I hadn't. There really wasn't a place for me anymore. I went down to New York and had lunch with Rudolph over in the Oak Room. He told me he was closing the office. Terry Mullin would take care of what was left over. He said, "Of course, you can come down to New York if you want to." It wasn't very encouraging. I didn't want to. That was the end of my employ with Rudolph. At the same time, Grattan [Gill] was managing the New York office and decided to leave on the same day. We went to the Algonquin Hotel which has this wonderful little bar. We proceeded to get fairly smashed.

**BB:** You mentioned that you first met him at Yale as a critic. What was he like as a teacher?

**WG:** He was the best teacher I ever had. He was wonderful! He never tried to impose his solutions on anybody. He would just help you out in the direction you were headed in. A great teacher!

**BB:** Did you ever meet any of the other students like Stern or Foster while you were there?

**WG:** I never met Stern or Foster. I met a lot of the leading architects of the time. He was very generous about that. People were visiting him all the time. He would take me to lunch or dinner with Eero Saarinen, Kenzo Tange. He was very good that way.

I remember when we were in the Cambridge office. Wes Weidner was invited to have dinner with Rudolph and Henry Russell Hitchcock at Locke-Ober's, probably the most expensive restaurant in Boston at the time. At the end of the dinner, he whispered over to Wes, "Wes, I forgot my wallet." Wes ended up paying for the dinner which was probably two weeks salary. Wes was very stubborn about this. He never mentioned it to Rudolph. Rudolph never paid him back.

**BB:** What was he like to work for?

**WG:** He was very demanding. What you really had to do was, in a sense, to get inside Rudolph's head and know what he wanted. Take some rough yellow tracing paper sketches and develop them in a way that Rudolph would do it himself. In Boston, Rudolph would sometimes come up every week. Sometimes it would be two or three weeks before he'd come up. In the mean time, we had to work with what we had and develop it.

It was an amazing performance when Rudolph would come to town. He would go around from table to table, and it wouldn't matter how long ago he had been there, he would sit down and focus in. He would know what was there when he left, see what was done, and whether it was done in a way that satisfied him. If not, out would come the yellow tracing paper. He would sit down and work feverishly over these drawings that people had done. He would focus in immediately on what the situation was at the time.

He could instill fear in you. We used to refer to Rudolph's visits to Boston as "orge" day. I didn't know what it meant, but it wasn't very charitable. It was stressful at times. Rudolph never got angry by raising his voice, but when he was not pleased, he could cut you with just a word or two. He could be cold as ice. At other times, he was very warm, a very warm person.

**BB:** Rudolph seems to have engendered a strong loyalty among those that worked for him. How did that come about?

**WG:** Everybody thought it was a great privilege to work in that office. People came because they were familiar with his work and they felt privileged to work for him. Our office in Boston was like an adjunct of the United Nations. We had a Portuguese from Mozambique, Americo Andrade. We had someone from Australia. We had three or four Indians, one of whom was a Sikh and wore a turban every day to the office.

**BB:** Did he talk about other architects, contemporaries or those from the past that may have inspired him?

**WG:** Not very much. He mentioned Walter Gropius being a great teacher, but a bad architect. He admired Lou Kahn very much. Wright was probably his greatest source of inspiration.

**BB:** Was he friendly with any of his contemporaries?

**WG:** Very much. Philip Johnson. He never had anything bad to say about people - except Walter.

**WG:** Kahn was at Yale when I was there. It was one of the reasons I went to Yale actually. Unfortunately, he was only there for my first year and I missed having him as a teacher. He went on to the University of Pennsylvania. He was a very intense person. He was in love with architecture. He was very scholarly. He would bring his old books up to the drafting room with Baroque and Roman architecture. He would discuss these buildings with his students. He was probably the most traditional-minded of the modernist and postmodernist group of architects. He never copied anything but was always inspired by the past. I saw his capital building in Dhaka, which was a stupendous group of buildings. The main assembly hall hadn't been roofed yet but the rest of it was pretty complete.

**BB:** What Rudolph projects that you worked on were most memorable?

**WG:** The Government Center in Boston, which unfortunately was never completed and what brought me up here. It was tragic that it was never finished because Rudolph had told the Government Center Commission that it was essential that the whole project be sent out to bid at the same time. Three other architects were involved. Desmond and Lord had originally been designated for a mental health center; Shepley Bulfinch [Richardson and Abbott] for a health and welfare building; and M.A. Dyer for the tower. We had meetings almost weekly where Rudolph would meet with all the other architects. They would thrash out the details. They were quite interesting. M.A. Dyer didn't participate very much. [Jean Paul] Carlhian from Shepley Bulfinch was very articulate - a teacher. He and Rudolph used to get into very heated discussions about detailing of the buildings. Rudolph told the Government Center Commission it had to go bid at the same time. For political reason, they didn't do that. They sent out the Shepley, Bulfinch building first and it came in a little over the bids. They gave Vappi [Construction Company] the contract. That was under construction. Then the mental health building came along. It came in quite substantially over the budget. They signed the second contract. Vappi was contractor for both parts. Vappi was in control of the site. They sent out the tower and no one would bid against Vappi. It came in way, way over the budget, so it was never built.

**BB:** Who designed the tower?

**WG:** Rudolph designed the tower. Rudolph was constantly at work on his renderings. Typically you would come up to the drafting room on a weekend and he would be hard at work on these pen and ink renderings. I asked a number of people if they ever remembered seeing him lay out one of those drawings. Nobody ever owned up to seeing that process. I don't know how he did it. Usually, they would be all laid out and he'd be working away on it. I never saw the process of laying out a little section of a drawing.

**Grattan Gill:** Later in New York, he did train a number of the fellows in the office to draw like he did – render perspectives like he did in ink. Then he tuned them up.

**WG:** I asked Bert Brosmith once and he didn't know either. He developed this technique in Florida for the houses. The magazines loved it! Nobody had ever seen this kind of thing before. A large part of his initial success was due to those drawings. He had the best photographer in the business. [Ezra Stoller] photographed all his buildings.

**GG:** The perspectives were developed because of their ease of reproduction. Newspapers and magazines loved them because they were all ink, black and white, line drawing, simple. He knew they'd get published.

**BB:** How did he make the transition from the small, light Florida houses to the big concrete projects?

**WG:** I think Rudolph had a hard time of it at first. The Blue Cross Blue Shield Building shows that. It's a nice little building but there's nothing terribly startling about it. The Jewett Arts Center is very much better. Grattan and I went out to see it recently for the first time in many, many years. I was astonished at how good it was. When he went to New Haven, Rudolph was really a quick study. The Art and Architecture Building was the next really significant building that he did. He went through a whole series of sketches developing that building. In the end, I think it's probably my favorite building of Rudolph's.

**BB:** Did you do any work on that building?

**WG:** Maybe a little work on the preliminaries. The biggest project I worked on in New Haven was the Parking Garage. When I decided to go to Japan, the Art and Architecture Building was just in preliminary design stage. We had just completed the working drawings for the Parking Garage and the forestry building was completed by then. That was the point at which I left the office. When I came back, it was like magic - the Parking Garage was completed! There it was! Same way with the Art and Architecture Building. It was in the final stages of being finished. I remember Rudolph took me over to see it. He was so proud of the thirty-two levels in the building. While he was showing me around, he pointed out some place he wanted to go and couldn't figure out how to get there.

**BB:** Did you work on the First Church project in the Back Bay?

**WG:** I didn't work on it myself but it was in the Boston office. Hans Fulscher was in charge of the drawings for that. He is among a number of people you may want to talk to.

**BB:** How do you think the First Church project worked out?

**WG:** I think it worked out beautifully! Rudolph was very sympathetic to the portions of the building that were left. Part of the old elevation had a rose window in the tower. He was uncompromising in his addition. I think his addition respected what had remained from the old church.

**BB:** They have reproduced the textiles, curtains, etc. in Rudolph's original red and purple color way. The church administration appears very sensitive to the architect's intent in preserving the building. It's in great condition but difficult to photograph. It stands out in the Victorian neighborhood.

**WG:** It fits in somehow. Like the Carpenter Center [Le Corbusier, 1963] at Harvard that I've always admired very much. You can walk down that street and never notice it's there, it fits in so perfectly.

**BB:** In your reminiscences, you mention a project called the Fishman Building. What was that?

**WG:** That was a project that was never built. It was the first thing I worked on. Fortunately, it was never built. It wasn't very exciting. It was a two-story building with exposed steel columns on the outside. Rudolph had intended to do it in anodized gold aluminum.

**BB:** Where was it going to be built?

**WG:** It had a site in Sarasota, but it was never built. Like Wright wanting to use gold leaf on the terraces at Falling Water.

**BB:** Were drawings prepared for it?

**WG:** I think we were in early stages of development. Somehow, it just collapsed. I was glad that it did. It wasn't my favorite building.

**GG:** How about Tastee Freez?

**BB:** Did that get built?

**WG:** Yes.

**BB:** That's listed as a project that never got built as well.

**WG:** It was built. In fact, Rudolph had a model he used to carry around in a very carefully constructed wooden case.

**GG:** It had an exposed steel structure. It was very Miesian.

**BB:** How about the Orange County Courthouse?

**WG:** No, but I understand it's in danger.

**BB:** I visited this site. It looks like it's in good condition. The grounds appear to be well cared for. The outside seems well maintained.

**WG:** A number of modern buildings have disappeared. There was a gorgeous Neutra house that was in the middle of a golf course. It was in perfect condition. Someone bought the site, tore it down and built some nondescript something. Of course, the Larkin Building was torn down and turned into a parking lot.

**BB:** How about the Buffalo Apartment project?

**WG:** I worked on it a little bit when I came back from Pakistan. The Library in Niagara Falls was a great project and it was built, of course. The contractor was tied in with the mob. They cheated – concrete on steel – everything. The people in government in Niagara Falls were terrified of these people. When things started to fail and leak, Terry Mullin went out during the litigation. He was afraid to go there because there were threats. Eventually, they totally emasculated the building – tore off fins that came down to the ground.

**BB:** It's still a very dramatic building. Although I wasn't able to go inside because it was closed the day I went there, it looks to be in very good condition on the outside. It's like new.

**BB:** How did he acquire commissions?

**WG:** People came to him. He was in demand. He and Kahn were the best architects of their generation, in my opinion.

**GG:** He was very charming once a client met him. He knew how to close a deal.

**BB:** What do you think about SMTI / UMass Dartmouth?

**WG:** I think Rudolph always thought of it as his best work.

**BB:** Why do you think he felt that way?

**WG:** It was a chance to take a large group of buildings - to develop the whole thing into something coherent on a scale that you don't often have a chance to do.

**GG:** It was his first chance at a real mega structure - continuity of an idea through various programs, disciplines and uses – into a cohesive entity. Each building of which engaged all the principles of design that he had accommodated for that program. The largest assemblage of that idea. When it was all over, he realized how much of an impact it had on him.

**BB:** What was his inspiration for the design?

**GG:** Wright and Jefferson. Florida Southern. The University of Virginia is UMass Dartmouth's master plan.

**BB:** Do you remember the circumstances that led to Rudolph being removed from the SMTI / UMass Dartmouth project? It's unclear to me. The trustees' minutes of June 1966 say that Rudolph may be removed from the project. The next set of minutes, he is removed but without specifics.

**GG:** The governor [Volpe] did it to be frank. Group 2 building came in over the budget. It was supposed to be \$5.8 million. It came in at \$6.3 million. A measly half a million, chump change by today's standards. Rudolph had nothing to do with the bid being over. It was all Desmond and Lord. Sadly, me and especially Dick Thissen [Head of Desmond and Lord].

I said to him, we had to set a new budget for this second building. He said, "We don't need to pay an estimator for that. Just ask Franchi Construction to do it. Have his estimator give an update. They are going to bid on it anyway. They [Franchi] were a very good firm. They did terrific work there. They estimated it without the air conditioning and laboratory equipment which was Desmond and Lord's fault, and that's where the overrun was. That estimate was what we gave the state. Without air conditioning and lab equipment, Group 1 and Group 2 were exactly the same price, \$26 per square foot. \$8 extra went for lab equipment and air conditioning, both of which were authorized by the state.

Sadly, we didn't anticipate the problem and this budget issue gave the state and other Rudolph detractors the excuse to get rid of him. The governor told Dick Thissen, the Head of Desmond and Lord, to do it and it was done.

**BB:** President Driscoll, President of SMTI / UMass Dartmouth at the time, was totally committed to Rudolph. Prior to this controversy, he and the SMTI trustees had established a building authority. The university hired Rudolph and his Boston office to design and build a Student Union, now the Campus Center. Am I right that this is the only building at the university designed by Rudolph without association with others?

**GG:** Yes, that is the only building that he had total control over.

**BB:** Was Terry Mullin in charge of this project?

**WG:** Actually, Americo Andrade was in charge of the working drawings on that project.

**GG:** Rudolph never wanted a partner but he needed one [Ralph Twitchell] to get himself started.

**WG:** I remember a story of Rudolph growing up. He was torn between a career in music, piano or architecture. He had constructed this enormous project on the dining room table. It couldn't be touched. The family had to eat in the kitchen forever.

**GG:** This story was in the Atlantic Constitution Sunday Magazine - on the cover. It was part of a downtown area.

**WG:** When Rudolph got sick, Bert [Brosmith] had a notion to gather reminiscences from all of us who had worked with him to give to Rudolph in a little book. He died before we were able to do that. Bert said that they were able to read some of them to Rudolph when he was in the hospital.

**GG:** I remember a nice luncheon in the 80s at the UN Building given in his honor, organized by the Yale people and maybe by a daughter of the Bronfman's of the Seagram fortune.

**BB:** Do you remember the so-called dare-devil office he had in New York in the 1960s?

**WG:** The office in New York was incredible! It had two layers of draftsmen working in this one space.

**WG:** He was very shy by nature. He forced himself to do things. He overcame stuttering. He was a terrible stutterer – forced himself to do public speaking, teaching. He was quite shy. Fern remembered a cocktail party with a large gathering of people and he was standing by himself. He was a very complex person. He could be warm and charming. He could be cold and cutting and shy.

**GG:** He could be hot-tempered. He'd forget it 30 seconds later.

**WG:** There was a television interview you should try to find ["Spaces, the Architecture of Paul Rudolph." New York, 1982. Ed. Eisenhardt Productions Inc. MP 695 1982 (Video)]. It was taken during the construction of the Chapel at Emory University. At one point in this interview, they got into a heated discussion about the placement of the altar. Rudolph wanted it one place and the church wanted it someplace else. Finally in exasperation Rudolph said, "All right, you be the architect!" and walked away.

**GG:** When he found the best solution to a problem, he didn't want to give it up. You had to let him solve a problem. You gave him as much information as you could to let him reach a resolution to a dilemma.

**BB:** Do you remember the Tuskegee Chapel?

**WG:** I remember that project. He sent me down to Tuskegee to deliver the model. The meeting was scheduled for the evening and I had a flat tire on the way there. I never saw the chapel. People there were very warm, southern.

**WG:** The best Rudolph house is the Bass House in Fort Worth.

**GG:** I remember a letter we received from the Bass's while I was working in the New York office which said don't worry about the budget. It was a very private commission. Wonderful clients! Art patrons.

**GG:** I remember one Christmas Eve and he was going to visit his sister in Atlanta. We're still there. It's Christmas Eve. He's still designing, looking at his watch, working until the last moment. That was how much he loved doing what he did. And he did it faster than I've ever seen anybody do it. He'd have it already done in his head. Philip Johnson used to say "The speed of his mind..." He's so underrated that way. Bill, What about the Boston office?

**WG:** The last office we had was on Commercial Wharf, on the top floor. It was just a regular office space. In the middle, there was a cube that had a toilet and storage room. Americo decided to put his office up there. He built a ladder and put his drafting board on top of the cube.

Let's have lunch.

### **Additional Reminiscences of William Grindereing – Not on Video**

First meeting with Mr. Rudolph in 1955

Second encounter, a six weeks project – the Jewett Art Center in Wellesley, currently on PMR's boards. Philip Johnson, by then apparently over his own Miesian period, roundly criticized my Miesian solution as unthinkable at Wellesley. Fortunately for me, Paul rescued my project, defending the site planning as quite in character with the existing Gothic complex.

Cambridge & (occasionally) Sarasota, 1956-58

Wes Weidner, shortly after we had both been hired, asked Paul if we would have Columbus Day off. PMR's chilly response, without looking up from his board was "Feel free to come and go as you like. I'll be here." So was Wes.

New Haven, 1958-60

Racing to the printer's with Brian Becker when PMR decided just before closing time that some drawing *had* to be immediately printed, we tried but failed to slip through a changing light. The collision resulted in one Raymond Lowey Studebaker wrapped around a telephone pole, totaled. Sitting there shaken, covered in a shower of broken

glass, my friend Brian, with nary a farewell, dashed off to the printer's on foot. If it needs to be done, just do it.

PMR in the ambulance, issuing orders all the way to the hospital after breaking an arm falling down the steps after meeting at the Comptroller's office....telephone installed in the room before even completing the admission forms....Martinis smuggled into the hospital with Charlie Brewer.

Some vignettes from High Street:

Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, in town to write the introduction to Paul's first book, locked in the bathroom...[Hans] Uli Scharnberg [Job Captain for the A & A] persuading the entire office to wear linen smocks, as though we were a European atelier...

Boston, 1963-72

First office in the Little Building...Terry Mullin, first employee.

The office as a microcosm of the U.N.:

Mozambique	Americo Andrade
India	Gandhi, Rajan, Nyak, Raj Saksena
Australia	Gary Rodd
England	Terry Jolliffe
Switzerland	Hans Fulscher

Weekly meetings with the Government Center Commission – Walking back after a particularly vexing meeting: Me – “they were pretty rough on you this morning.” PMR – “Oh, I can understand that. Everyone needs someone to kick around....I know I do.”

A favorite PMR expression – “We're just the hired hands.”

I recall once when I was office manager, two visiting architectural students dropped in. I chatted with them for a few minutes when one of them burst out with “You must have one of the 3 or 4 best jobs in the country!” And it was.

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