

**the  
institute  
for  
advanced  
study  
princeton**

**ideas**

**people**

**landscapes**

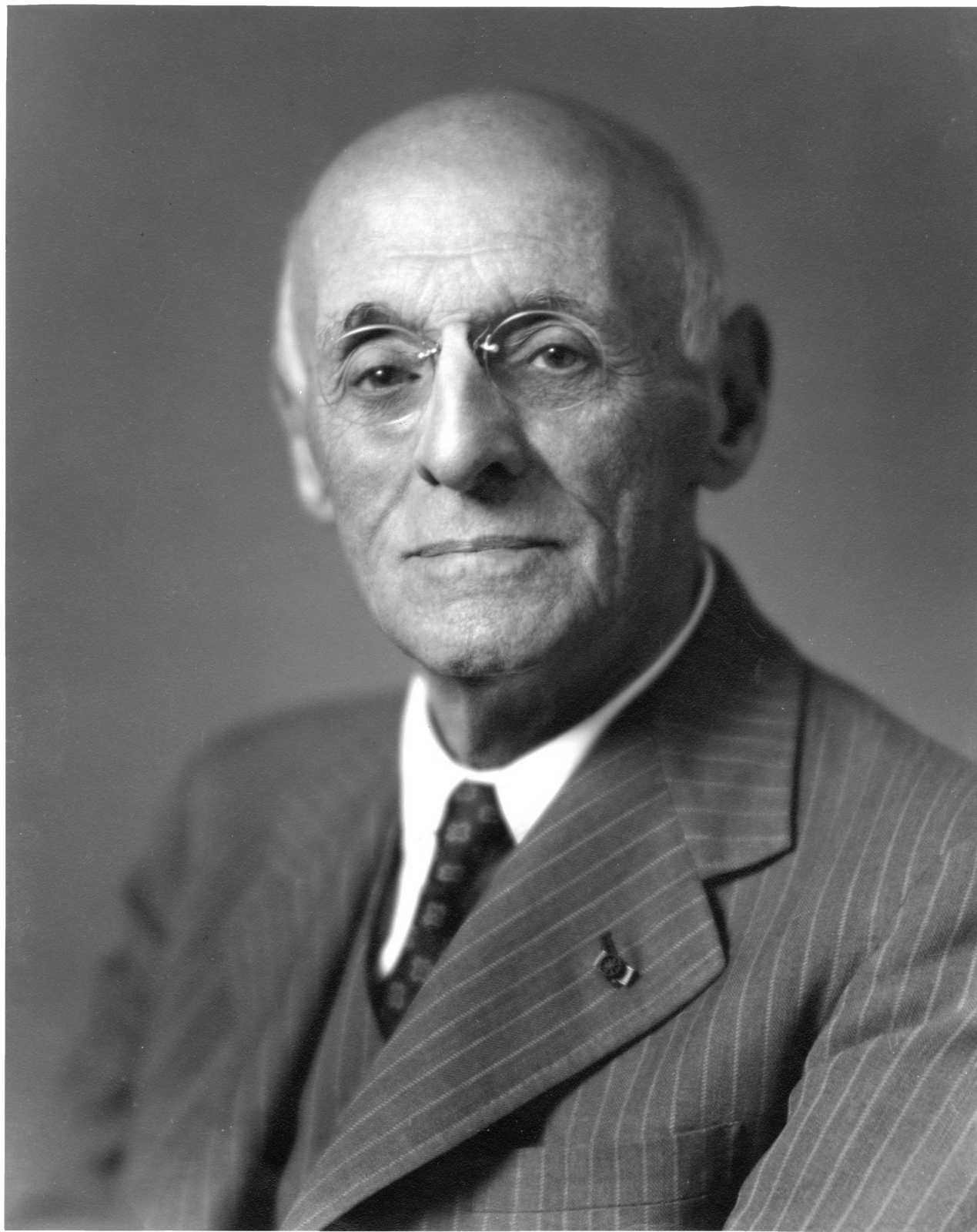
**buildings**

**at the Institute of Advanced Study**





*Handwritten text, possibly a signature or date, located in the bottom left corner of the card.*



**Abraham Flexner**  
**Director 1930 – 1939**









## THE USEFULNESS OF USELESS KNOWLEDGE

BY ABRAHAM FLEXNER

IS IT not a curious fact that in a world steeped in irrational hatreds which threaten civilization itself, men and women—old and young—detach them-

mental problems. I have no quarrel with this tendency. The world in which we live is the only world about which our senses can testify. Unless it is made a



DIRECTORS HOUSE



VIEW ① ON CONTOUR MAP











2 November 1937

Dear Mr. Aydelott:

I enclose on a separate sheet a  
list of possible architects - Wright  
is in a class by himself: the rest  
have such varied virtues that I  
should hesitate to rank them.

They are drawn only from the  
East - except Wright. If it  
is for another part of the country  
I am less prepared to suggest  
names.

With thanks for your interest &  
hospitality

Yours fully  
Mumford

CRAM AND FERGUSON  
ARCHITECTS  
248 BOYLSTON STREET

RALPH ADAMS CRAM    FRANK E. CLEVELAND  
CHESTER N. GODFREY    ALEXANDER E. HOYLE

BOSTON

June 15, 1938

Dr. Frank C. Aydelotte  
President, Swarthmore College  
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

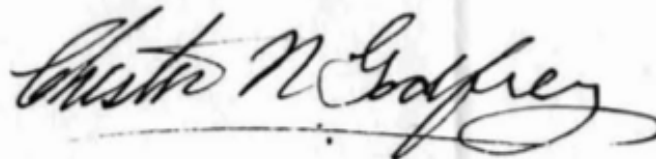
Dear Dr. Aydelotte:

While in New York yesterday, I called Mr. Maass on the telephone and learned from him that no decision had yet been reached on your architectural problem at Princeton, but that it was expected to be accomplished early in July. This was good news to me, for nothing in the way of an architectural commission has seemed so important for a long time as this Princeton work.

I am under the impression that the material which we have sent to your Committee has not been in every way satisfactory, but if, in view of the reputation of this office for satisfactory production over a long period of years, some of you are still interested in the office, we could enter into an arrangement for services contingent upon our producing an acceptable design.

There is no doubt in my own mind that, given an opportunity to discuss the situation with your Committee, we could possibly fail to produce exactly what you require. We never have failed in the past, and I am sure we could solve this problem.

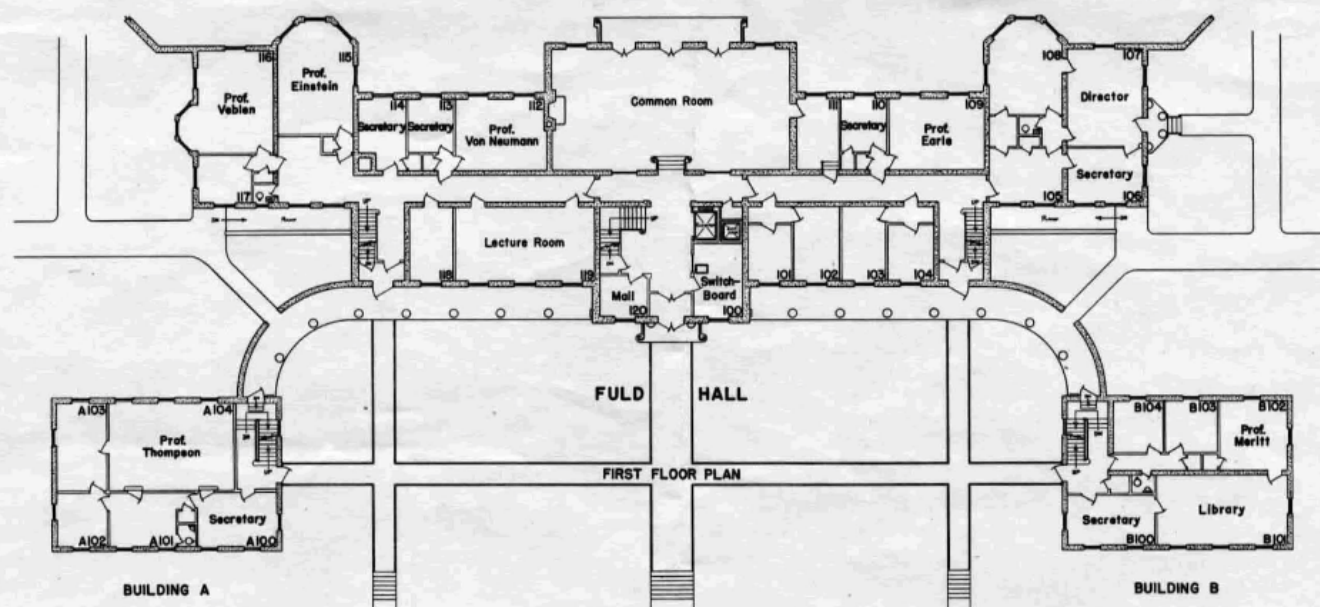
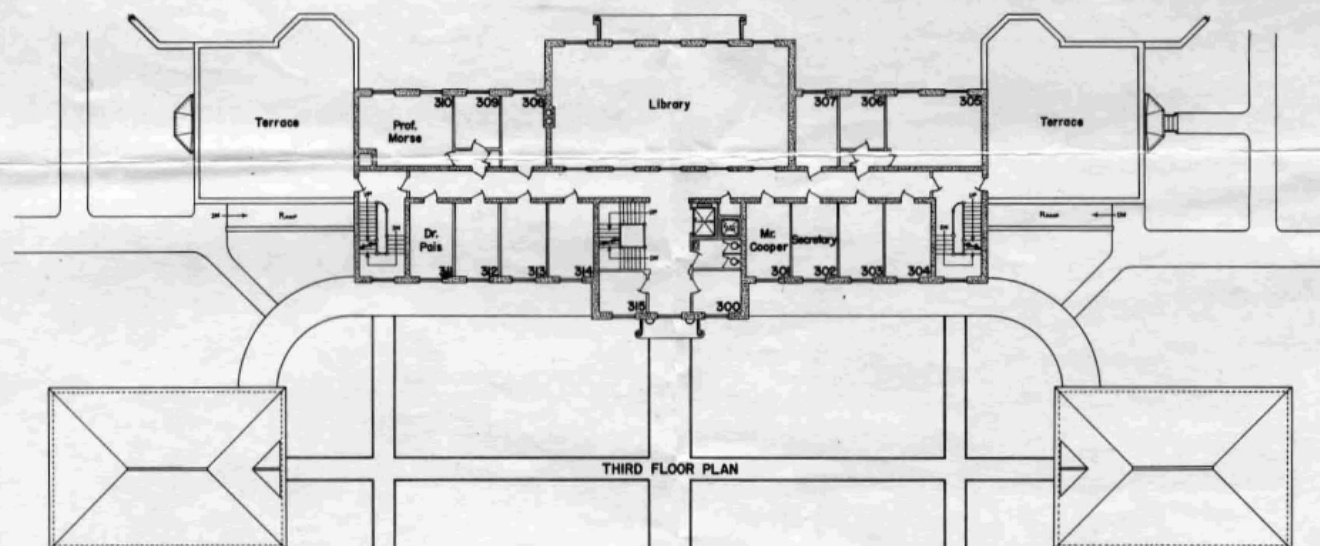
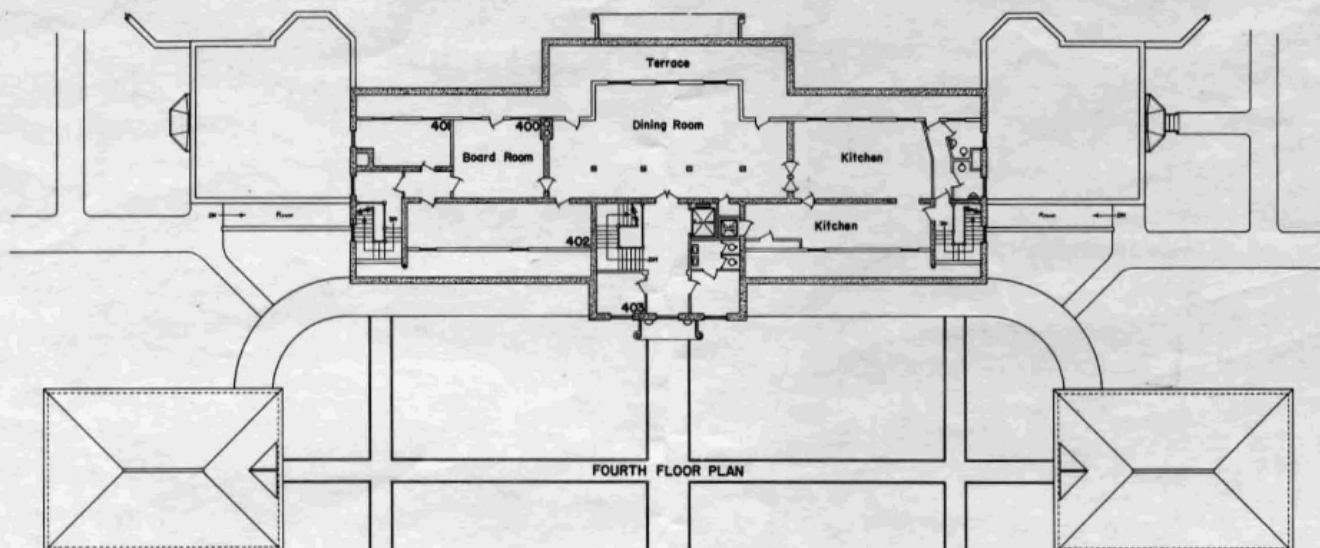
Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Chester N. Godfrey". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Very truly yours,".

CNG/ETH







FLOOR PLANS OF FULD HALL AND BUILDINGS A AND B  
INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY  
Princeton, N.J.

Drawn by  
PETER PANAGOS







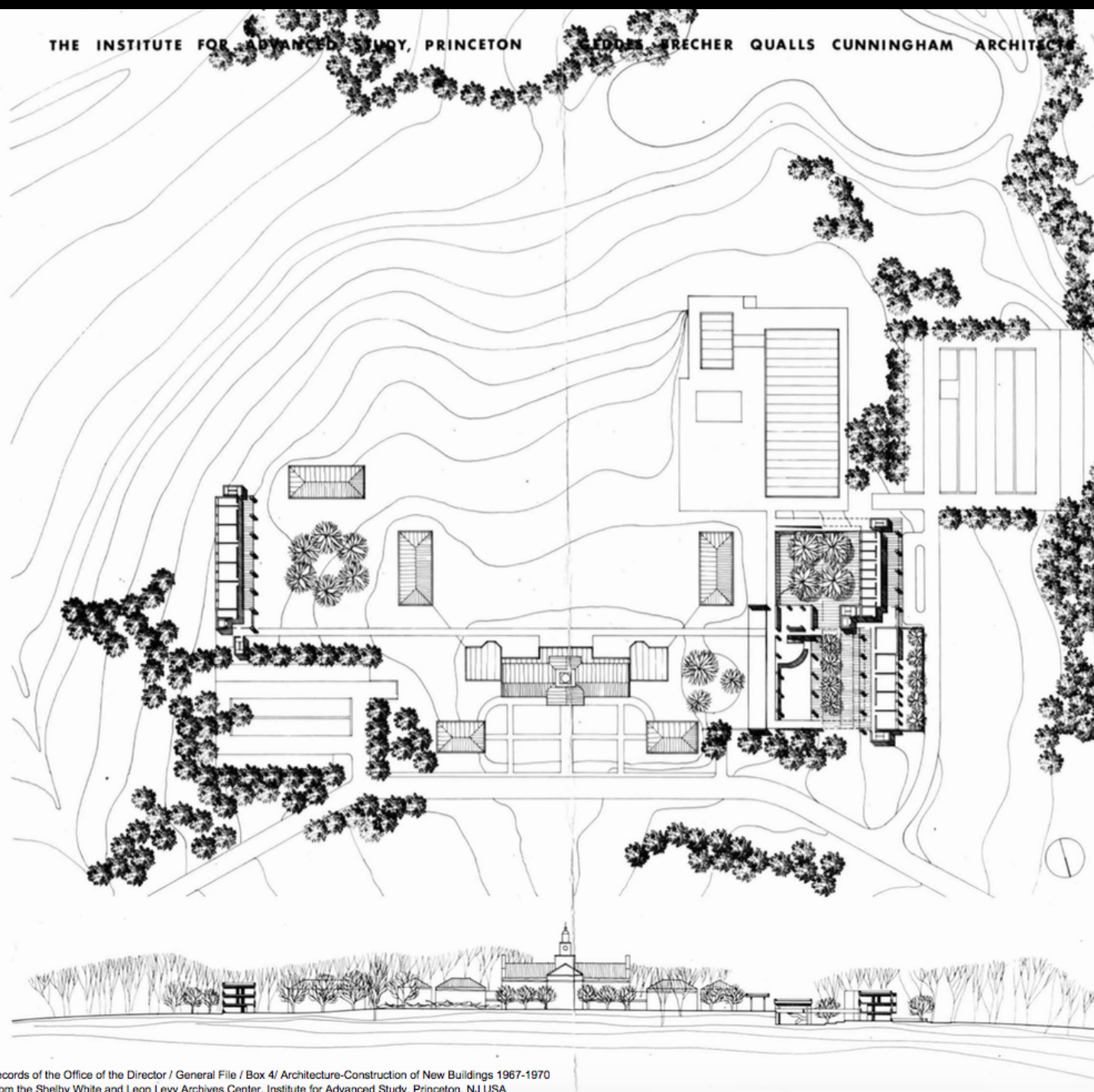
**Carl Kaysen**  
**Director 1966 – 1976**

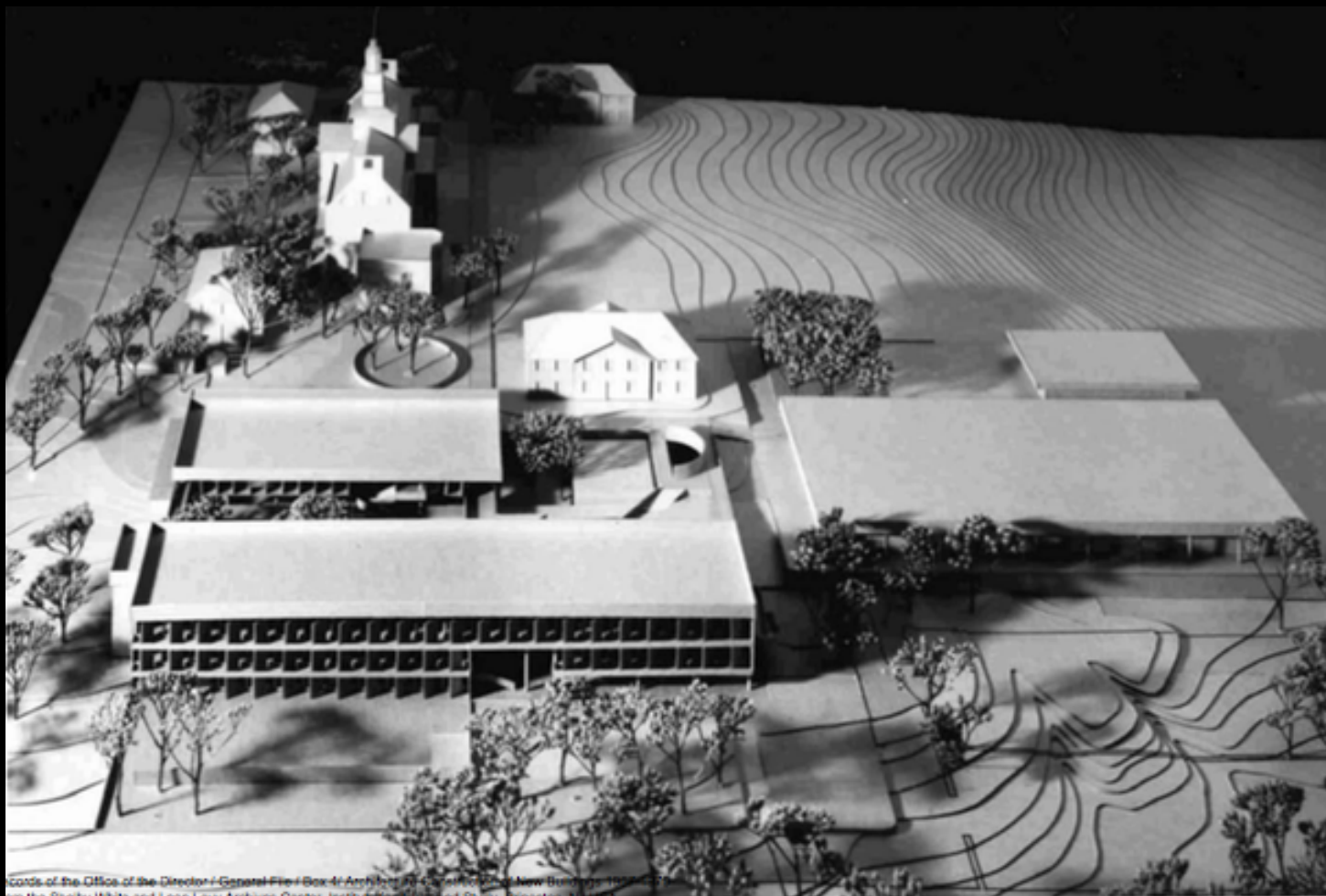




THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY, PRINCETON

EDDIE FRECHER QUALLS CUNNINGHAM ARCHITECTS





Records of the Office of the Director / General File / Box 4 / Architectural / Proposed New Buildings / 1964-1965 / The Stanley White and Leon Leon Andersen Center, Inc.



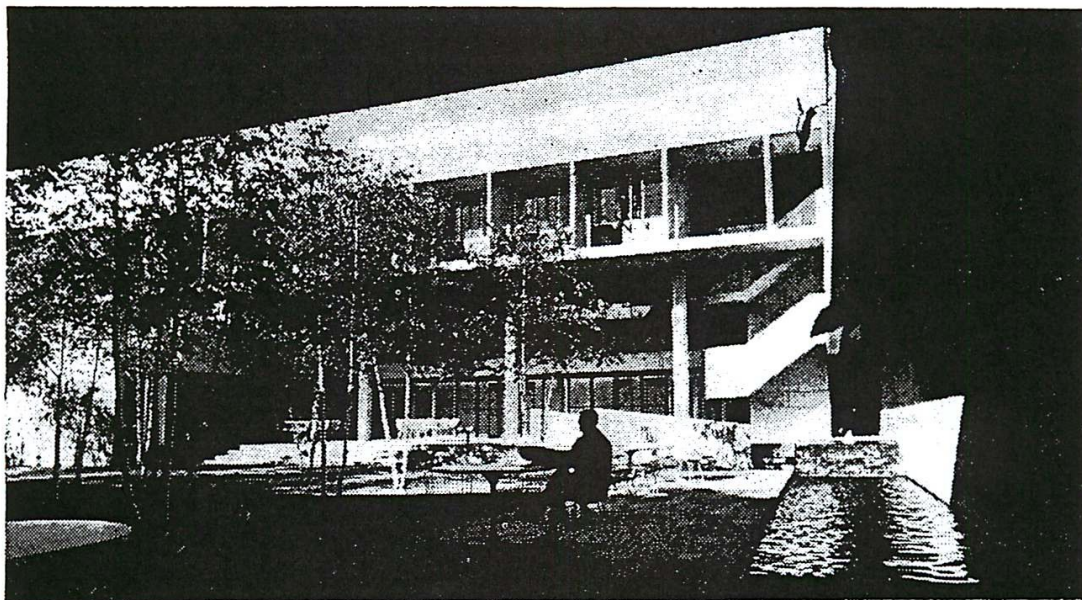








# Architecture at the Head of Its Class



The New York Times/Tom Christie

A view of the Institute for Advanced Study near the campus of Princeton University

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE  
Special to The New York Times

PRINCETON, N. J.—The air is a bit more rarefied at the Institute for Advanced Study than in the rest of Princeton, and the new architecture, generally, is better. The institute, the prestigious center of advanced research in the fields of mathematics, historical studies and natural

**An Appraisal** of the country's sacrosanct temple of pure learning at ionosphere levels. From those wonderful people who gave you Einstein and relativity, now comes a distinguished complex of new buildings. And for once, there is a tie between standards of scholarly endeavor and the setting where it takes place.

The new, \$4-million Academic Office Building and Dining Hall Commons by Geddes, Brecher, Qualls, Cunningham, is the institute's major expansion, completed over the last year and in full use now for its first semester. Robert Geddes is also dean of the Princeton School of Architecture.

The level of the building's design suggests immediately the level of the work being done, and the appropriateness of an environment that matches intellectual and artistic excellence. If that is elitism—and it is—the most should be made of it.

The addition is no monument and does not strive for Parnassus—and what a temptation, considering the client, that could have been. At a time when arrogance is

often synonymous with architecture, these buildings teach humane and artful lessons in the built environment. They are lessons of quality, as well.

The result is an extremely thoughtful exercise in solving functional needs with a maximum of taste and sensibility, a modicum of homage to some great architectural innovators of our time, and a thorough understanding of all those relationships of space, scale and personal response that make a structure work.

It all seems a great deal farther away than New Jersey. A grassy courtyard with birch trees seen through glass walls, smooth white surfaces and the warmth of teak and fir evoke Alvar Aalto's Finland and the master's low-keyed sensuality.

Round concrete columns and framing, formwork patterns, sunshades and the indulgence of half-sphere "viewing" balconies bow to Le Corbusier. A glass-enclosed geometric stair is a genial gesture to Gropius.

## Not Brand New

But there is not the rigor of the originals, because these details are no longer absolute, revolutionary statements; they have become absorbed by another generation that bows to its sources without didacticism and makes them part of an evolutionary whole.

As another master, Mies van der Rohe, wisely said, "You don't invent a new architecture every Monday morning," although a lot of architects keep trying. Current

campus construction is full of acrobatic novelties and vacuous vulgarities, such as Princeton's own Woodrow Wilson School of Public Affairs by Minoru Yamasaki.

The Institute for Advanced Study is an autonomous school, with its own land, tied to Princeton through academic courtesy. It is part research institute, part university and part home away from home.

The group in residence consists of an intensely selective list of 135-40 scholarly visitors for one or two-year terms, and 27 professors, under the directorship of Karl Kaysen. Dr. Kaysen succeeded Robert Oppenheimer.

## Privacy and Quiet

Working on subjects from astrophysics to the recruitment of political leadership in Mexico and other non-nitty-gritty matters, members tend to be solitary and inner directed. They need privacy, quiet and the opportunity for shared seminars and optional socializing.

This is the mandate the new buildings meet. There are two structures—a three-story academic office building and a two-story dining facility, with a garden court between. They are parallel, linear buildings on a sloping site of approximately 80,000 square feet, connected by the court and bridges.

Construction is poured-in-place concrete, with column and beam framing and concrete slabs. The system is modular, forming a flexible grid.

The handsome dining hall, two stories high and glass-

walled, allows intricate views of the academic building beyond. Within it there is a "coffee balcony" partially walled for intimacy, without destroying the space, and a lounge below. The areas range from open to closed with many subtle variations between, on a graded scale of activity and psychological need.

The two buildings are joined on a single axis that leads to the original Fuld Hall and outbuildings, neo-Georgian nonentities that can never be viewed dispassionately because they have been transfigured by association with great men and minds.

All this is implicitly respected by the new construction, which is so much better in every way than the old. The cornices of the latest buildings are level with the eaves of the old ones, and scale is consciously related.

New and old are further married through freshly landscaped courts and quadrangles, the work of Zion and Breen Associates.

The new landscape provides a forecourt for the 1964 library by Wallace Harrison—one of Mr. Harrison's more felicitous buildings that is also well integrated into the complex—as well as a setting for the additions. It does this at the same time that it respects a singularly lovely existing landscape: beautiful lawns and woods of an English-country quality that stretch beyond the buildings.

The institute is producing more than cosmic equations. It offers an important cultural and environmental lesson, as well.

# Carl Kaysen: A Legacy Worth Studying

By Edward Tenner

*The Atlantic*

Carl Kaysen was one of those people legendary to those who knew him and to a relatively small number of colleagues and historians, yet rarely recognized by the mass media until their deaths, when obituaries like that in the Times attempt to cover lost ground.

I interviewed Dr. Kaysen by telephone when I was writing an essay for Harvard Magazine on the university's surprisingly deep connections to the footwear industry.

Kaysen's economic analysis helped resolve a historic antitrust decision on United Shoe Machinery, which foreshadowed later arguments in the Microsoft case. He was not only a theorist but a practical and acute observer of management and technological style. As an administrator, he built the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study--and the office building and dining hall that are the finest of their kind that I have seen in all of academia.

Kaysen was one of the quietest yet most versatile of the major public intellectuals of the second half of the twentieth century. The risk of mutual assured destruction concentrated the minds of scientists as well as humanists, of the West and the former Soviet Union, wonderfully. For some ambitious graduate student in history or political science, Kaysen's life and papers could be a key to the changing fortunes of the American academic-government complex at its peak.



# times at the Institute

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March 2014

Institute for Advanced Study

## Designing Spontaneity at IAS

It is nearly impossible to imagine life at the Institute without our dining hall, with IAS scholars circulating and conversing within its storied structure surrounded by light and birch trees. Yet, scholars once crowded into a space on the upper level of Fuld Hall. By 1969, when lengthy conversations were no longer possible in the original, cramped cafeteria, IAS Director (1966–76) Carl Kaysen observed, “The point is not trivial: brash new ideas can be exposed in leisurely luncheon encounters that are too ill-formed to be offered in the seminar room, much less on paper.”

Kaysen sought out architect Robert Geddes to design West Building and the dining hall. Upon completion, Geddes observed that “buildings can divide and bring people together; milieus are created that enable public or private activities. A milieu in this sense is characterized by its ‘possibilities for social life.’ A planned milieu should recognize that it serves a purpose in human communications, that it creates expectations, guides behavior, disappoints or satisfies.” In his design for West Building and the dining hall, Geddes provided a milieu for the institution as a whole.

Geddes used glass extensively, created a green enclosure (known informally as the birch garden), and added solitary spaces ranging from small seminar rooms to lecture halls. In 1976, Kaysen observed, “the dining hall, two stories high and clerestory lit, with its lounges, board room, and garden, has contributed a great deal towards enlarging and humanizing the non-academic life of the Institute. New activities, to counter the tendency towards isolation felt by some members, arise almost spontaneously in its



*Lunch in Simons Hall*

setting.” Renamed the Marilyn and James Simons Hall in 2012, the dining hall continues to serve as a social hub and idea incubator, and Geddes, with his wife Evelyn, remain closely connected to the Institute as Friends.

**architecture**  
**modernism**  
**cubism**  
**transparency**  
**social form**  
**physical form**





















**two seasons  
at the  
institute for advanced study**

**photographs  
by  
arthur firestone**

# two seasons at the institute for advanced study



Arthur Firestone

**ideas**

**people**

**landscapes**

**buildings**

**at the Institute of Advanced Study**