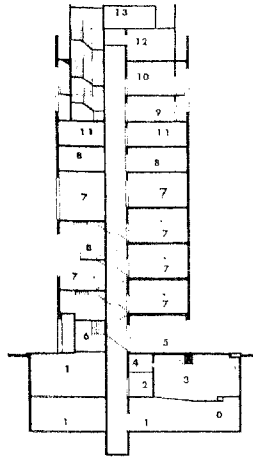


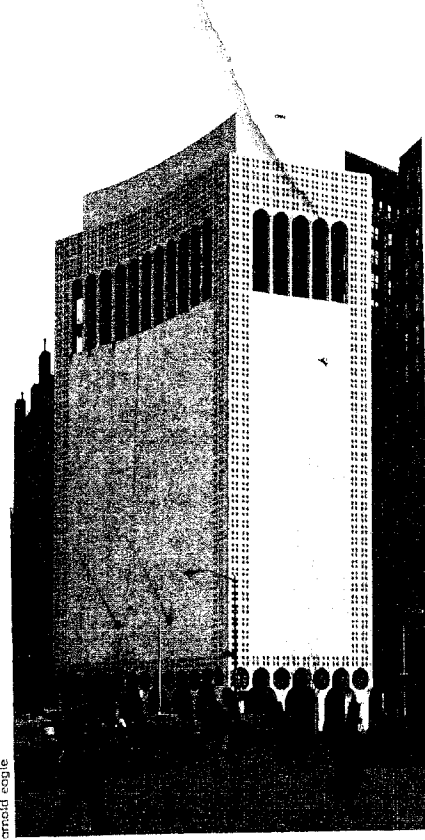
# NON-CONFORMITY ON COLUMBUS CIRCLE

For Huntington Hartford's trend-defying art collection  
Edward D. Stone produces a site-defying building with disarming interiors

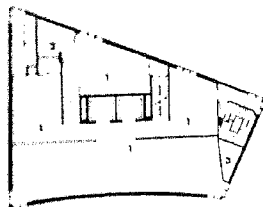


- 1 basements
- 2 auditorium lobby
- 3 auditorium
- 4 projection booth
- 5 building lobby
- 6 checkroom
- 7 galleries
- 8 storage
- 9 lounge
- 10 dining
- 11 offices
- 12 fan
- 13 elevator motor

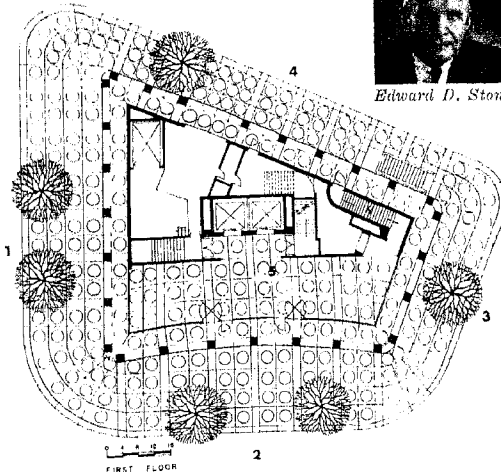
Below street level the auditorium and sub-basement project into city property. Above the street the building measures 40'0 1/2" (8th Ave.) x 75'11" (Broadway) x 75'9 1/2" (Columbus) x 67'1 1/2" (58 St.) x 150' high.



Arnold Eagle



- ABOVE GALLERY FLOOR 3
- 1 Electric
  - 2 Stair
  - 3 Storage
- TO RIGHT: STREET FLOOR
- 1 Broadway
  - 2 Columbus Circle
  - 3 8th Avenue
  - 4 58th Street
  - 5 Lobby



Edward D. Stone

A & P scion Huntington Hartford has worked hard to earn an honored place among the public-spirited tycoons (like the Rockefellers) who shower all manner of cultural amenities upon the community. In 1949 he had architect Lloyd Wright do a Huntington Hartford Foundation building in Los Angeles; in 1954 he rebuilt a theatre there (Helen Conway, A.I.D., did the interiors); recently he transformed Hog Island (off Nassau) into a resort which deserves its new name of Paradise Island (Mildred Hull did those interiors). In 1960 he launched a theater-arts magazine, *Show*, admired for visual and verbal dazzle (though keeping it afloat costs a pretty penny).

But in New York, Hartford's gestures of largesse have won more rebuffs than thanks. This may be because he flouts our acknowledged tastemakers. Unlike the Rockefellers, who are a mainstay of the Museum of Modern Art, Hartford has particular antipathy for a leading art idiom of our times—the non-representational painting and sculpture which are “intelligible only to the initiated.” In 1955 his resentment reached such a pitch that he bought full pages in several newspapers to challenge “the high priests of criticism and museum directors and teachers of mumbo jumbo.”

Unlike the universally admired buildings and public spaces which the Rockefellers have contributed to the Manhattan scene, Hartford's proposals for Columbus circle—an art gallery at its rim and a nearby restaurant on Central Park footage—have aroused critical hoots and catcalls since he first voiced them in 1956. The restaurant is currently blocked by civic groups who prize the Park's inviolable greenward and open air above such prosaic facilities as restaurants—which abound in the surrounding concretescape.

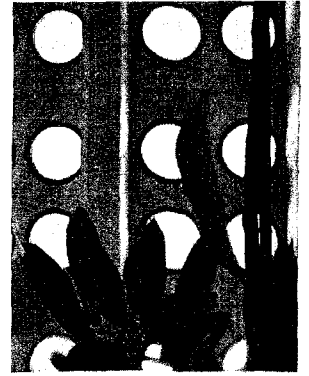
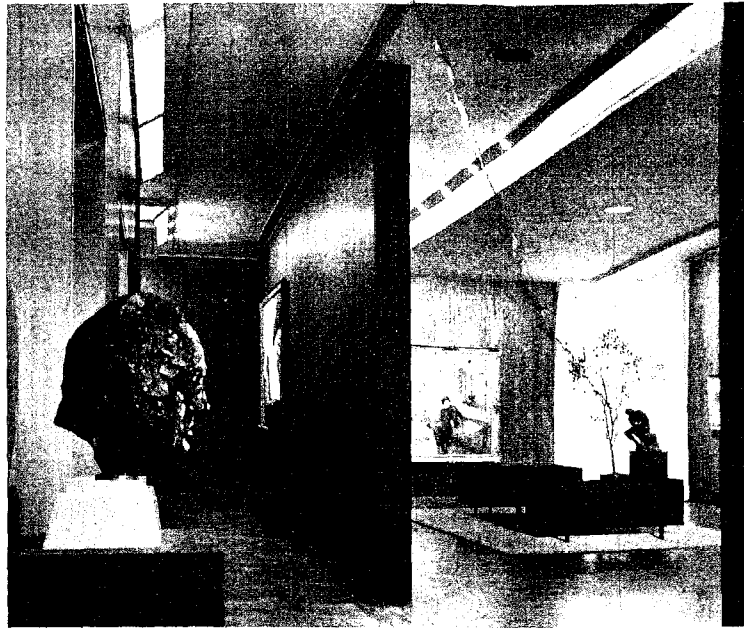
The gallery, though admissible, was criticized for its hemmed-in site. An inept preliminary “artists conception” hardly helped. Even after architect Edward D. Stone tackled the job, observers took a dim view as the unveiling was repeatedly delayed to the tune of rising costs. (A \$7 million tote for land and building is unconfirmed.)

All winter before last March's opening, the building stood forlorn at the sooty apex of Central Park West and 59th Street—a ladylike apparition in immaculate fancy dress tip-toed at the knees of General Motors' callous brute of a skyscraper. Forlorn and absurd!

But by opening day both press and public were feeling more gallant. The collection—starring two huge Dalis, several pearly Corot landscapes, an abundance of lesser pre-Raphaelites,

Dali Gallery neatly fits a stair landing.

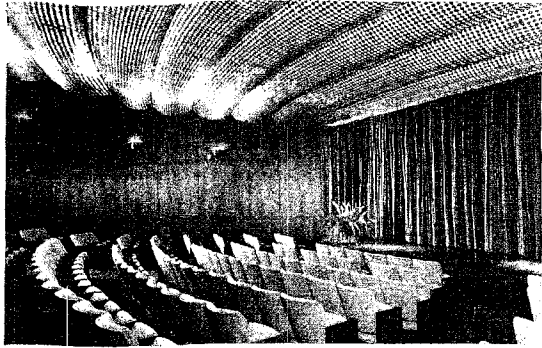




Above: Facet-like stone cutting and brass rims on "partholes."  
 At left: View from elevator lobby (5th floor) into gallery. Below: Gallery vista shows alignment of architecture and interior features. Walls are in blueprint-matched walnut paneling ("Algoma"), floors are oak "Parquet de Versailles." Abe Feder's warm, natural unobtrusive, adjustable fluorescent-incandescent picture lighting is superb. Rugs are oyster, upholstery black. In the window recess broods a Rodin "Thinker."

all photos of the interior by louis reens





an appetizing Bougereau nude, and the most Tchelitchevs ever brought under one roof—was greeted with gingerly politeness by the art critics. There is nevertheless no point in denying that this romantic 19th and 20th century sampling is second rate.

As to the building, the *Times*' wispish Ada Louise Huxtable called it a "die-cut Venetian palazzo on lollypops" but significantly buried the barb in a report of amazing amiability. For these miniature red granite-trimmed, green-marble-lined colonnades, these rows of portholes like borders of eyelet hand-embroidered on a marble christening robe are too winsome for heavyweight architectural criticism. Only a Bauhaus ogre with hardened arteries could fail to smile at them.

Moreover, as everyone immediately realized, architect Stone had solved the "insurmountable" Gallery requirements on the cramped site with masterful grace (see plans), hoisting the visitor up by elevator and sending him down via galleries which are partly distributed on stair landings, one of which achieves grandiloquent height. Every inch of the site's building envelope is occupied. And every conceivable trick has been used to hide that fact—e.g., the play of circles on facade and paving that distracts the eye from the hard building outline.

Wall-to-wall carpeting, parquet, and walls sheathed in wood and linen make the galleries look less like a museum than a home. How can one apply harsh museum judgments here? Why should one not relax, rendezvous, and enjoy the glamour-studded openings?

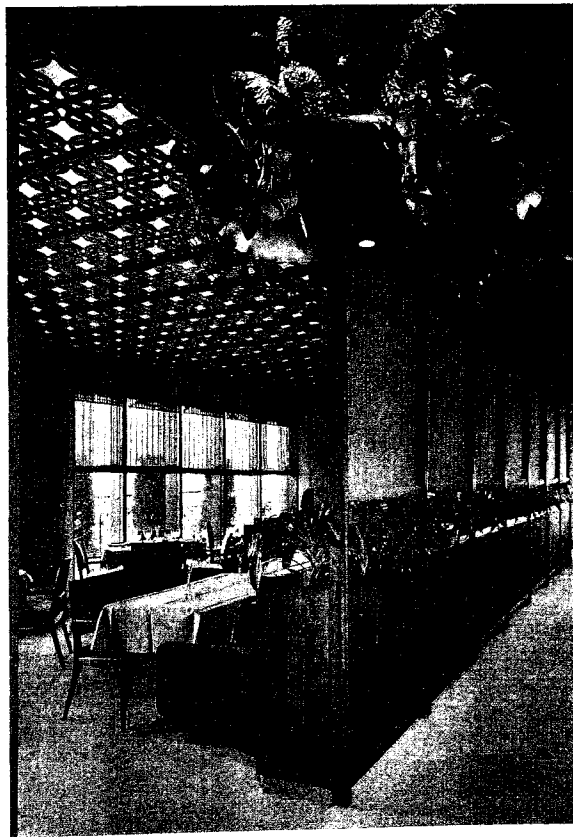
But while waiting for a seriously significant exhibition, let us note that the gallery can cope with one when it comes—with thoroughly professional facilities such as lighting by Abe Feder. Meantime the lounge and dining room are delightful places to pass the time. To serve both his client and the public, architect Stone has solved an architectural dilemma.—O. G.



Auditorium seating 154 glimmers under gold-hued metal mesh ceiling. Carpeted back wall, burgundy floor carpet, gold curtain, gold nylon plush upholstery muffle echoes. Intaglio circles adorn bronze doors.

Lounge is a sumptuous space (for 60) where Macassar ebony walls, red Danish wool on unobtrusive modern walnut furniture and gold carpet focus attention on Hartford's spectacular Oceanic art.

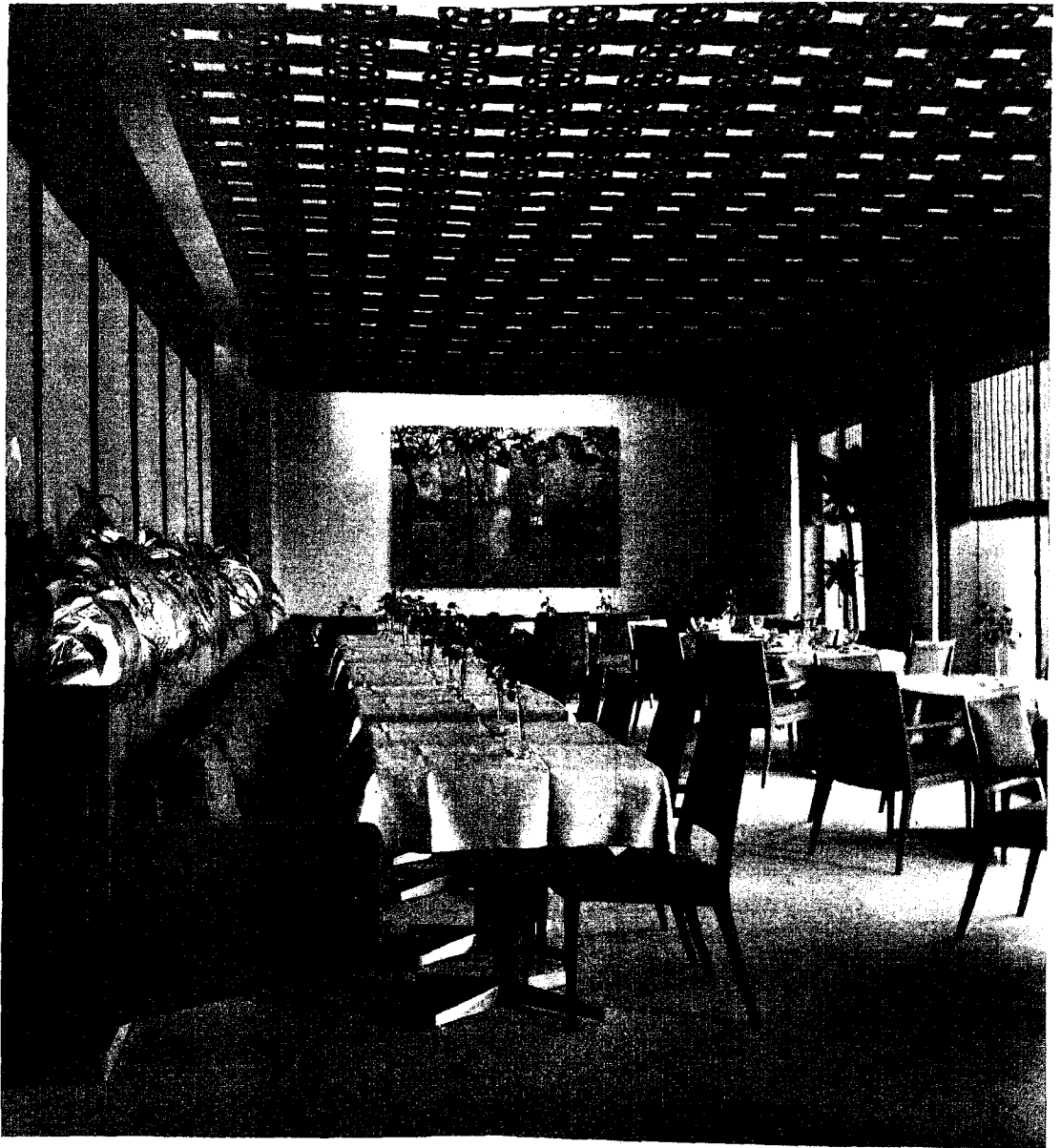
Ninth floor "Gauguin" dining room seats 52, is recessed behind the building's high galleried balcony and offers a view of Central Park. Matchstick blinds sheath windows.



EDWARD D. STONE, ARCHITECT

John C. Rainey, architect in charge of interiors

Wood-grille ceiling gives depth to richly understated Gauguin dining room. Tapestry version of Gauguin's "Nave Nave Mahana" hangs on Japanese grasscloth wall. Banquettes are cantilevered on concealed beam. Table crystal in golden opal, echoes gold carpet; upholstery, Chinese red.



Paneling (galleries and auditorium): United States Plywood Corporation (lounge): William Marshall Ltd.  
Carpeting: Templeton  
Rugs: James Lees & Sons  
Oak Parquet flooring: Coughlin Flooring Company  
Interior planting: Everett Conklin  
Cabinet work: Haggerty Millwork  
Auditorium seating: American  
Stage curtain: Dazian's (special)  
Gallery sofas: Harvey Probbler  
Gallery tables: Directional  
Gallery benches: Lehigh Furniture  
Gallery upholstery: Arthur H. Lee  
Gauguin tapestries: Arthur H. Lee  
Gauguin furniture: Cumberland  
Gauguin woven shades: Tropicaft