



## Weathered Stone

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Posted on Thursday, September 15, 2005

URL: <http://www.nwanews.com/story.php?paper=adg&storyid=128526>

FAYETTEVILLE — The grounds are desolate, the balconies are rusting and parts of the concrete lattice-like facade that surround the exterior of the buildings are stained and crumbling.

The Carlson Terrace apartment complex at the University of Arkansas has turned into a decaying eyesore, a striking contrast to a time when it was hailed as an aesthetically pleasing answer to married student housing.

If an architect's legacy is cemented by the duration of his buildings, then Edward Durell Stone is having a rough go of it lately. From this Ozark college town where he was born in 1902 and reared to the bustling streets of Manhattan where he built his international reputation, Stone is the subject of a spirited debate, and his work is coming out on the losing end 27 years after his death.

Stone was a renegade who flaunted his individuality while conceiving the Pine Bluff Civic Center, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, the General Motors Building in New York and many other projects. He also designed furniture with his friend, the late Arkansas U.S. Sen. J. William Fulbright.

In New York, a battle has pitted preservationists, who want to keep the integrity of the building Stone designed at 2 Columbus Circle intact, against the City of New York and the Museum of Arts and Design, which has commissioned architects to change it.

In Stone's birthplace, the University of Arkansas System trustees authorized the demolition of Carlson Terrace, sparking an outcry from Fayetteville preservationist Paula Marinoni, who helped lead the fight to save the university's Carnall Hall from destruction. There's more bad news for Stone's admirers. Busch Stadium in St. Louis, his foray into baseball parks, is

scheduled to be demolished after the Cardinals complete this season. "Well, you hate to see things go," says Ernie Jacks, who worked with Stone and was an associate dean at the University of Arkansas School of Architecture. "But he has left quite a legacy. He believed in a gradual shift in architectural thinking. I think his works have shown that kind of idea, and there was a certain amount of dignity in them."

At first, Stone embraced the modernist ideas of the day after studying art at the University of Arkansas and architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the 1920s. Propagating the prevailing design schemes and working in the mechanical and austere constraints of International Style architecture, he helped develop the plans for the stripped-down Museum of Modern Art in New York with Phillip L. Goodwin in 1939.

But just over a decade later he reversed course and began adding more ornamentation to his work. In his design of the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India, that was completed in 1958, Stone incorporated marble and gilding with elaborate grillwork that was used to deflect the intense sunlight. This did not endear him to some of his colleagues. "Dad was resented for breaking modernist walls," says Hicks Stone, a 50-year-old architect living in New York. "There is a period where dad's work was not viewed fondly."

But while the embassy design caused some architects of the day to shudder, one building on the Upper West Side of Manhattan has sparked awe and contempt for more than 40 years.

In crowded Manhattan, the 10-story white structure that once housed the art collection for A&P supermarket heir Huntington Hartford is barely tethered to the city's architectural landscape. Positioned on the edge of Columbus Circle, it is the antithesis of the tall skyscrapers that line the streets. The steel and concrete exteriors and large windows that typify buildings that tower over the city are noticeably absent, replaced with white marble, small portholes and Venetian columns that The New York Times architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable described as resembling lollipops.

Now, 41 years after it opened, a permit has been issued to the Museum of Arts and Design to rework the building's facade.

Brad Cloepfil of Allied Works Architecture has been commissioned to make the changes. Cloepfil's design will allow more light into the interior, forsaking the signature element of Stone's design that darkened rooms and limited their exposure to the outside. Patrick Keefe, a

spokesman for the Museum of Arts and Design, says he couldn't comment on the plans because of ongoing litigation, although he indicated the renovation would cost \$30 million. "I think [Stone] would be very disappointed about 2 Columbus Circle," Jacks says. "My generation felt that we shouldn't change another building. I don't know if this generation has the same ethics. I don't think they do."

For Kate Wood, executive director of Landmark West! preservation group, the moral debate extends beyond the differing ideas of two architects. She says history and the right to hold on to it have become victims in the fight over the future of the building. "We are disappointed this [City of New York] administration has not recognized what the world has recognized — that this building is endangered and one of most recognized sites in the world," says Wood, who has family ties to Quitman.

In 1975, the structure was acquired by the City of New York and housed its Department of Cultural Affairs until 1998. In June 2002 the city agreed to sell it to the museum. Landmark West! and other organizations have tried to persuade the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission to hold a hearing and prevent the building from being changed. Several lawsuits have been filed against the museum and the city, contesting that the \$17 million sale of 2 Columbus Circle to the museum had not been evaluated properly. The New York State Supreme Court disagreed in a decision Sept. 1. Since then, an appeal was filed by Landmark West! and the deal between the city and museum has yet to be completed.

Still, the latest news doesn't sit well with the World Monuments Fund, which listed 2 Columbus Circle as one of the 100 most endangered architectural sites on earth. "I think we are just getting to the point where we can appreciate contributions to 20 th century architecture," Wood says. "To lose those buildings would be so regrettable."

But others wonder if the architecture of the modernist era was intended to endure for generations. "In the modern movement it was critical for architecture to respond to technical and functional elements of the time," says Ethel Goodstein-Murphree, an architecture professor at the University of Arkansas. "The modernist tendency was to demolish buildings and start from scratch. They believed in full eradication of buildings of the past and creating a new architecture and life to go with it."

That idea seems to be embodied in the major league baseball stadiums constructed at that time.

Only three ballparks still being used were built before 1960 and those constructed after that date have come and gone. St. Louis' Busch Stadium (1966), one of the famous cookie-cutter baseball pantheons, is to be demolished. Along with the mound that Bob Gibson pitched on and the batter's box that Ozzie Smith once stepped in, Stone's arch-motif design will also disappear. "It's a lot to ask that any stadium short of the Roman Colosseum stand the test of time and human comfort," says Hicks Stone. "When new users occupy space, they want to adapt to the needs." That is the argument the Museum of Arts and Design is using to advance with its renovation of 2 Columbus Circle and the University of Arkansas is making to justify the destruction of the Stone-designed apartment complex.

Jennifer Derosé, weighed down by her backpack, walks along a path that lines one of the buildings that make up Carlson Terrace, a complex that includes large green spaces, a creek and playgrounds. Derosé has never heard of Edward Durell Stone, but has developed an affinity for his design. She is a big fan of Stone's signature concrete grillwork. "It doesn't look attractive because we are not from the era it was built in," she says. "But it's so cool because you can appreciate seeing out and no one sees in. I love it."

Administrators at the University of Arkansas apparently don't feel the same way. University of Arkansas System trustees voted June 3 to raze the entire complex. Five of the 15 Carlson Terrace apartment buildings have been torn down. The university will keep the remaining 10 buildings open this academic year.

Fourteen years ago, university administrators tried to raze Carlson Terrace when construction plans for Bud Walton Arena were under way. But after the protests of 400 Terrace residents, the basketball palace was built across the street.

Now, administrators say it would cost \$5 million to refurbish the complex and bring it to a contemporary standard that would still be lower than other housing options on campus.

If the complex is torn down, that will leave two other buildings designed by Stone at the campus — the old Sigma Nu fraternity house and the Fine Arts Building. "Some units were already not functional and, generally speaking, the functional quality of all units was not very good," says Don Pederson, the UA's vice chancellor for finance and administration. "It appears to me that the historic value is not sufficient in comparison to the intrinsic value placed on the units to cause the board of trustees to desire to see the units kept."

However, Carlson Terrace is still the only married housing option available on campus, and it has been that way for 44 years.

Built between 1958-1961, the complex accommodated the growing number of married veterans who were taking classes with assistance of the GI Bill. The cost to build each apartment was \$6,000 and rent was originally set at \$65, according to a glossy brochure that was distributed at the time it opened.

Jacks, who oversaw the construction of the apartments, says they were built to meet the university's small budget while incorporating a design scheme that reflected Stone's ambitions. "We think we had done them pretty well and we did not design them for short-term use," Jacks says. "The construction was economical. That was an overriding issue. You lose longevity for that."

But Jacks says the buildings have not been maintained well, as the terraces have become corroded with rust and the concrete exterior stained with grime. "The [administrators] have been charged for decades for intentionally letting buildings go into decline so that they can tear them down," says Marinoni, who plans on documenting Carlson Terrace's last days.

Meanwhile, the university is planning a 6.45-acre park on the site of the razed buildings.

The UA architecture school's Community Design Center and the Audubon Society have been surveying the land in an effort to provide the UA Facilities Management Department with a campus watershed management plan for the area along Razorback Road, which runs along the west side of Carlson Terrace. They are also working to develop renovation options for the area where the apartment complex is located, according to Steve Luoni, director of the UA Community Design Center. "It's fairly complicated," Luoni says. "On the one hand, it is an important piece of architecture. On the other hand, the architecture itself is fairly relentless, and you can see why people who are not architects don't like it. We are trying to find a way to enrich what is there and expand what Stone did. But because of the construction system, it is costly to renovate."

The Office of University Housing hired the consulting firm of Hanbury-Evans, Newell and Vlattas from Norfolk, Va., to help develop a master plan for housing on campus and will not make any plans on the future of any of its residential halls or apartments until this fall when the study will be completed. "Since the UA has a campus housing master plan project under way, the

[Community Design Center] work on housing may or may not fit into housing plans depending on how the housing master plan guides the campus development," Pederson says.

Marinoni, who chairs the West Lafayette Street Historic Neighborhoods Association in Fayetteville, expects the worst and says it is a shame that Stone's work is being destroyed in the town where he was born. "They have gotten so callous about tearing down buildings with historic value," Marinoni, founder of the Washington County Historical Preservation Association, says. "He is the most famous architect the state has produced. But the university is going to, by God, do what it wants."

Edward Durell Stone, meanwhile, will never have the opportunity to defend his work. Instead, he is forced to rely on others to determine the value of his architectural contributions — everywhere from large cities to small college towns. But if Stone could speak his mind, he would probably stand by the words he penned in his autobiography, *The Evolution of an Architect*. "Architecture is a grimly serious business," he wrote. "It should be timeless and convey by its very fiber the assurance of permanence."

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