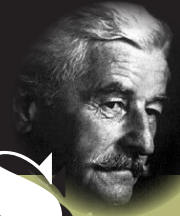


Don't bother just to be better than your contemporaries or predecessors. try to be better than yourself. **WILLIAM FAULKNER**



# Blueprints

ISSUE 8

*Occasional Musings of a New Jersey based architect*



MacPhail house, unchanged for 60 years



Rendering of MacPhail house, updated for the next century

## SAVED FROM THE WRECKING BALL

### ARTIST-BUILT MID-CENTURY MODERN HOME TO GET A MODERN RENOVATION.

**A**rtists and educators Robert and Rowena MacPhail designed this unique mid-century modern style home during the 1950s. With the help of the stage tech crew from Millburn High School and from local craftsmen, Robert built the home during weekends and vacations over the course of eight years. It sits on a wooded, almost five-acre site in Harding Township. He and his students felled black walnut trees from the property and used the beautiful wood for the floors, cabinets, trim, and furniture.

The home provided rustic living. For a time, it sported plastic-covered window openings (awaiting glass installation). Running water came late to the home. With their home complete, the couple filled it with their artwork and that of their friends. Rowena continued to live

in the house after Robert's passing. After she also passed, her children decided to put the house on the market. Initial interest was mostly from builders who wanted the property for the land value in this affluent community, and the family resisted. When a couple from New York showed interest in purchasing the home with the intent to renovate and preserve the character of the home, the sellers felt thrilled that the home they grew up in and loved would be saved.

The house had never been upgraded, and while the new owners plan to expand and renovate to contemporary levels of energy efficiency and comfort, their wish is to preserve as much of the original character as possible.

A garage with rooftop garden will be added, designed to create a welcoming entry court. Adding to the existing two small bedrooms and study will be an airy master suite, while the Living spaces will be reorganized. We also will re-use original walnut cabinetry, refinish the wide board walnut flooring, and re-purpose other elements of the house in the new design. Landscape architect Theodore Hoerr of Terrain Work is developing, in tandem with us, an integrated garden and outdoor living spaces.

**NJ RESIDENTS:  
ACT QUICKLY FOR THAT  
ENERGY EFFICIENCY  
REBATE!**

NJ Financial Incentives for energy upgrades expiring soon! Home Performance with ENERGY STAR offers “whole house” solutions to reduce both your energy costs and carbon footprint. Installing energy efficient upgrades in your home can save you up to 30% on energy costs and increase the comfort, safety, and durability of your home. Home Performance will help resolve indoor air quality problems in your home. Health effects from indoor air pollutants may be experienced soon after exposure or, possibly, years later. Learn how detrimental poor indoor air quality can be to your family’s health. New Jersey homeowners now have until June 30, 2017 to receive up to \$4,000 in financial incentives. You may also qualify for 0% interest financing (up to \$10,000 with a 7-year maximum term) or 4.99% financing (up to \$15,000 with a 10-year maximum term) to help pay for the energy-efficient upgrades! For more detail, <http://www.njcleanenergy.com/residential>



## **Antiques Roadshow: It's not just about the money!**

I grew up in the world of antiques and never left, sharing professional time as a dealer, auctioneer, lecturer and author. Invited to attend the very first US taping of Roadshow in 1996, I have since been to the majority, over 100 in all. Appraisers are chosen by WGBH in Boston, and are on their own dollar. There is no compensation for appearances, hotel or travel expenses, and all sign an agreement prohibiting commercial activity related to the show. This is PBS after all, and integrity is essential. I believe that is largely why (over 10 million viewers each week) love the show, and why we all keep coming back for more. The TV viewer sees less than 1% of up to 10,000 items brought to a typical taping. Every guest gets an appraisal and commentary, but most are off camera, filtered through a web of about 70 specialists at twenty stations divided by category. Anything the appraiser feels may work is brought to the attention of a producer, who makes the final decision. After a long day of taping, WGBH hopes to have enough footage for three hours of Roadshow, plus a little extra for special episodes. In early days most guests wanted to know little more than the value of their treasure.....some bought at last week's yard sale, some held in families for centuries. In recent years though I have seen a change. When I ask “what would you like to know?” to start the two minutes or so a typical guest can expect with an appraiser, many are consumed entirely with history: “Where did it come from?”, “could great aunt Mary have brought it by covered wagon?”, “what was it used for?” These are the questions appraisers love to answer, especially if monetary value is next to nothing, as it typically is...So what is the lesson here? I know the ‘reality’ and ‘game show’

elements of Roadshow have entertained millions of Americans, but perhaps our most valuable role is that of history teacher, right there in your living room every Monday night, enlightening every member of the family. “The only thing new in the world is the history you do not know” according to Harry S. Truman, and art and objects are the perfect vehicle to navigate though history's infinite expanse. Recently on the train to New York on a father recognized me and shared how much he enjoyed watching the show with his children, ‘for the history’. Thank you PBS.



**Nick and Rosemarie Dawes have lived in Millburn for over thirty years where they raised three sons. Nick is familiar to many through over 20 years of appearances as an expert appraiser on the Emmy-nominated PBS program ‘Antiques Roadshow.’ I asked Nick to tell me how things work behind the scenes.**



# First Impressions

From Public street To Front door.

Recently I met with a prospective client at their house for an initial consultation. Arriving at the address, a corner property, I was confused how to enter; should I be entering on the street of the address, or go around the corner? The front of the house looked like the back, and from the direction I was coming, I couldn't see an entry door. I continued driving towards the corner and finally saw the door, hidden in a corner setback of the house.

The clients, aware of the problem, stated that one of their priorities was to create more curb appeal and make clear where to enter.

This moment of confusion reminded me the power and importance of that transition from street to dwelling.

Most commonly the home entrance faces directly onto some type of a public thoroughfare like a street or public path, and a visitor expects the entrance to be clearly signaled. Some entrances are scaled large and grand, signifying the owner's desire for public prominence. Others might be more subtle, offering privacy for the comings and goings of the household.

Usually the entrance offers some kind of overhead protection from the elements, and whether the door is centered on the front facade or asymmetric, these type of entries make a clear statement about what might be expected when you walk through the door. There might be a double height foyer that creates a sense of having arrived somewhere special, and encourages the visitor to pause or a single story height that is more cozy.

The landscaping between street and house adds to the overall feel of the approach. A straight sidewalk with formal rows of plantings and paving focuses attention directly on the door and creates a very different feeling than a path that wanders through a more garden like design.

There are however other factors that might require the front



**The front door facing the street is easily the most common design for a house entrance (top), but a variety of circumstances could determine that the door face another direction, such as those imposed by the Vastu principles applied in the design of the house below.**

door to in fact not face the street. This was the case when I designed a house for a client who wanted to use Vastu principles, which required the entry to be oriented in a particular direction, in this case sideways to the street. (Vastu is an ancient Hindu approach to harmony in home and architecture, with some similarity to the more familiar Chinese Feng Shui.) And along with the use of a canopy and low retaining wall distinguishing the entry area, any visitor would find themselves comfortably ushered from street to this house.

Regardless the style, the grandeur, the orientation of the house, a clear point of entry from the street is the first essential step to welcoming visitors.



I love to turn Ugly Duckling houses into modern, elegant Swans. Mid century ranches and split levels are ideal candidates for makeovers for an owner who wants to create something different than the typical luxury home in this area. See the blog post on my website that features a dramatic makeover of an early 60's split level in Scotch Plains. If you hear of anyone who might be interested in a similar type project, feel free to pass on the link.

<http://www.garyrosard.com/from-unloved-orphan-to-cool-kid-on-the-block>

## FAQs

### Custom home Design Projects

#### DO I NEED BOTH AN ARCHITECT AND INTERIOR DESIGNER FOR MY PROJECT?

THAT DEPENDS ON YOUR CHOICE of architect and your preferences. Typically, architects are responsible for the space planning, structure and exterior of the building, while interior designers are called upon to do kitchens, bathrooms, and select interior finishes. However, some architects (including us) also excel in interior planning and finish work, so you will have a **single source of both creative vision and responsibility**. If you use a separate designer, make sure they collaborate with the architect so all decisions are coordinated to achieve an harmonious design throughout.

#### HOW CAN I GET A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENT DESIGN STYLES AND FIGURE OUT WHAT I LIKE BEST?

UNTIL RECENTLY, PEOPLE WOULD buy design magazines and cut out pictures they liked. Today's online resources provide a much easier process and more comprehensive range of images to search and select from. A great website for residential design is [houzz.com](http://houzz.com). They have an enormous library of images submitted by architects, designers and suppliers that are easily sorted by room type, style, and budget. You can create "Ideabooks" on their website, where you save images you like. Use them like file folders to separate different aspects of the project. After a while you will notice patterns develop that illuminate exactly what "your style" is. This is also a great tool to share with your architect, who can then help you synthesize this into a cohesive design aesthetic that you helped to create. Pinterest is another source for searching for images with keywords. Like houzz, you create "Boards", which are collections of images with links back to the original source. You can "pin" photos from almost any source to your Pinterest boards, so you're not restricted to their own web site for reference material.

#### HOW LONG WILL MY PROJECT TAKE?

THINK ABOUT AND SHARE WITH your architect key target dates that are important to you. When do you want to start and finish the project? Bear in mind, as a rule of thumb, depending on the scope of the project, it takes at least 4-8 months to finalize the design, prepare construction drawings, hire a contractor, and obtain building permits before construction work can begin. If you need a zoning variance to build your project, this process can add several months. You are less likely to be disappointed if you allow at least 6-9 months for work on existing homes and about 12-18 months for new homes. Times may vary depending on the scope and complexity of your project.

Gary Rosard Architect, NJ

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Find answers to frequently asked questions about custom home renovations at our website:

**GARYROSARD.COM/RESOURCES**