

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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HOUSE IN MUSEUM GARDEN DESIGNED BY MARCEL BREUER TO OPEN APRIL 14

The House in the Museum Garden, designed by Marcel Breuer, which stands in the Sculpture Garden behind the Museum Of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, will open to the public on April 14 to remain on exhibition through October 30.

The house is described by Mr. Breuer as an up-to-date solution for an individually built, architect-designed country home for the commuter, intended to be built by any local contractor. An entrance to the house has been provided by the Museum at 4 West 54 Street. A separate admission fee of 35¢ is charged. Members of the Museum staff will be on hand to answer the public's questions about the house.

An outstanding characteristic of the long, rectangular structure is its unusual profile, resulting from the "butterfly" pitch of the roof, the two sections of which form a V shape rather than the upside-down V of the conventional roof. This eliminates the necessity for gutters and drains around the edge of the roof. Instead, a single drain passes from the roof down through the center of the house where the inside heating prevents winter freezing. In addition, the gradual upward slope of the roof allows space for two stories at the highest end.

Details of the house are described by Mr. Breuer as follows:

"It is an expandable house. The first phase includes a living-dining room, two bedrooms, children's playroom, bath, kitchen and utility room. Later, when the children are older and additional funds are more likely to be available, one may add a garage-storage section and above it an additional bedroom with private bathroom and sun terrace. The house as it appears now, in the Museum garden, is in its final expanded stage.

"The kitchen is central, controlling all activities. Kitchen, utility room and service yard are adjacent and equipped so that housework is reduced to a minimum. The utility room can double as an emergency bedroom for night sitters or occasional help.

"Special consideration is given to the children. In the first phase of the house, stairs are completely eliminated. The children's playroom has a separate entrance. In the second phase, if there are more than two children, they can take over the master bedroom of the first phase and use the children's playroom as their own living room or study. They are near the living room and kitchen, easily supervised, and yet they are separated.

"The outdoor areas are subdivided by means of free-standing louver partitions and bench-like stone walls into the following distinct areas: the parking area in front of the garage, the patio-like entrance terrace, the service yard, the flower garden areas off the bedrooms,

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the children's play yard, the partly-covered main terrace adjacent to the living-dining room."

Other features include:

Cypress tongue-and-groove vertical boarding on the outside of the house which does not require paint. This material is also used on the ceiling of the living room and some walls of bedrooms.

Natural wood of the interior, in contrast to the white and off-white, greys and clear blue, is co-ordinated in color with the furniture and draperies.

Stair and balcony railing of heavy rope held in place by stainless steel thin wire cables such as used for rigging on sailboats.

Flagstone flooring in most rooms, intended for radiant heating installation.

Horizontal, wall-strip, indirect fluorescent lighting units in living room and in bedrooms.

Children's indoor play area adjoining children's rooms. View from kitchen of both indoor and outdoor play areas.

Windows of living room have roof overhang providing shade for interior of the house and covering for part of the terrace. Other rooms are protected by overhangs which keep out high summer sun, let in low winter sun.

Low stone walls surrounding outdoor terrace can be used as benches; one of these walls also supports outdoor grill.

Playroom furniture in box units can be combined to produce tables, benches, shelves, which grow with the children. Separate rubber cushion-mats can be used on top of boxes or on the floor. Boxes can also serve as oversize toy building blocks.

Dining space in living room separated from kitchen by sliding panels covering counter and open shelving. This permits conversation between living room and kitchen and saves many journeys between kitchen and dining space.

Accommodation for handling and storage of dishes within easy reach of dishwashing machine.

A bedroom, which doubles as a balcony to the living room.

Radio-television-phonograph in two units, designed by Marcel Breuer, and shown to the public for the first time. Dials can be manipulated without getting up from couch. One unit, designed as a coffee table and book rack, has switches and controls. Second unit contains two-speed record changer, speaker, radio and phonograph apparatus,

television tube and record storage space. This table-height unit is supported by X-shaped metal legs. Finish is black and chromium.

Breuer-designed tables in various sizes, each molded entirely of a single piece of plywood; also, a new line of chairs by Breuer made of cut-out plywood with cane seat and back. Other furniture, already on the market, done by the well-known designers Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen.

Draperies are Chinese silk shantung throughout: natural color in living room, screen-printed in broad stripe pattern of brown and blue on natural ground in playroom.

Abstract relief by Jean Arp over stairway in living room. Stabile in metal designed by Alexander Calder affixed to west outer wall, painted black, to contrast with natural wood. Also paintings by Juan Gris, Paul Klee and Fernand Leger from the Museum Collection.

Ticket booth designed by Marcel Breuer, in harmony with architecture of the house.

The landscaping installed in the limited space around the House in the Museum Garden merely suggests the approach to be used in landscaping the acre of land on which the house is intended to be built. Besides low retaining walls, a half-enclosed entrance patio and macadam play area for children are featured.

MARCEL BREUER: Born in Hungary 47 years ago, Marcel Breuer originally wanted to be a painter or sculptor. But after he began his studies at the famous Bauhaus school in Weimar, Germany, he decided to become an architect and furniture designer. At the age of 23 he built the first chair made entirely of chromium plated tubular steel, and from this time on he continued to develop furniture some of which represents revolutionary developments in that field. He also concentrated on the design of prefabricated houses, apartment interiors, stores, residences and exhibition pavilions in various parts of Europe and in England. In 1937 he came to this country to teach at Harvard where he remained for 9 years and, in partnership with Walter Gropius until 1941, designed some of the finest modern houses in this country. Now practicing in New York, he is particularly interested in the adaptation of modern architecture to American needs and technical possibilities.

General contractor for the House in the Museum Garden was the Murphy-Brinkworth Construction Corp. Furnishings and accessories were assembled by New Design, Inc. A complete list of contributors may be found in the pamphlet about the house, issued by the Museum.