

FOREWORD

A Place of Wonder

Carl Abbott FAIA

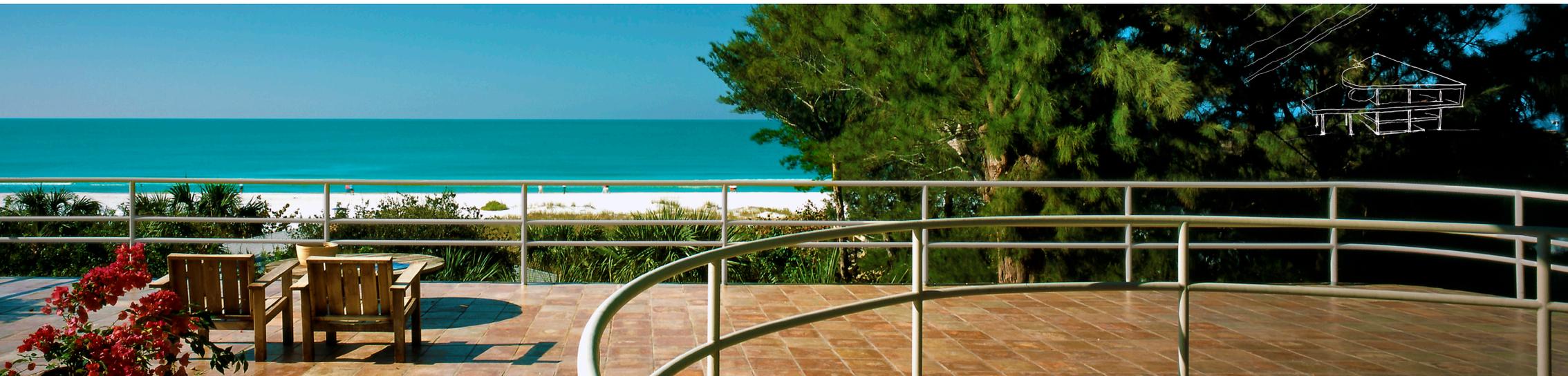
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In the South, the land is among the most beautiful and diverse of any place on Earth. In the lore of the early explorers of the 'New World' there are many sentiments in awe of the land —

So marvelous that it seems a man would never want to leave this Earthly Paradise... these mountains are most beautiful, slopes filled with trees so tall, they seem to touch the sky.... here there are marvelous big lakes, rivers and harbors beyond compare... the islands are the most beautiful... a place of Wonder.

The South is a land with a great range in climate and topography - from the majestic mountains to the lowlands stretching out to the Gulf of Mexico and the vast Atlantic Ocean, and the islands with beaches reaching out to the horizons of infinity.

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Look around you.

Does your home embrace the beauty of Nature?

I recall my early years in a small town in coastal Georgia; giant oak trees heavy with Spanish moss, the vast expanses of marsh — a sea of grass with seasonal transformation from brown to green then gold — the rivers, the animals, the breezes, the changing patterns of the sky. The atmosphere was tactile, the mystery of history was always present — all around were the ruins of the Old South.

My first memory of experiencing architecture was in my aunt's large antebellum home (one of the few buildings in our small town that escaped Sherman's fire in his 'March to the Sea'). I recall approaching the house with its wide brick stairway leading up to the porch with its long row of columns. A formal front door leading to an entry hall with a grand stair to the upper level bedrooms. The large living room was a tall space with triple-hung windows that reached from floor to ceiling. A sequence of separated rooms — the living hall, dining room, kitchen, bedrooms. Many years later, I realize that her home required many servants to make it function. The typical antebellum home was very rigid and symmetrical with style being more important than function.

Today, the world in which we live is very different. Let's stop and consider where we have come from in the

history of architecture and construction. In the early 1900's the world went through vast social changes that evolved through the Industrial Revolution - the positive birth of the middle class, the devastating pollution and destruction of the City and also the development of many new materials - including ferrocement, steel to create large spans, large panels of glass.

At the same time there were other major changes in movement, in technology, in communication — the automobile, the airplane, electricity, radio, the telephone, the camera. With the camera, many felt this would be the end of painting - why paint a portrait, a landscape, when the camera could more perfectly catch the image. As we all know, the camera did not replace painting -- instead this pushed the artist to look more deeply, to reach into their imagination and create amazing new ways in which to see the world — impressionism, cubism, abstraction.

In the same way, the Industrial Revolution pushed architects to reevaluate the art of architecture. Instead of copying past styles a whole new way of building was opened. From this evolved two basic schools of architecture: in Europe the International Style of the Bauhaus and in America the Organic of Frank Lloyd Wright. To the Bauhaus, everything came from the machine and the buildings expressed that — engineered steel columns, buildings separate from the land... to



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Wright, everything came from the Earth even if touched by the machine, so the buildings expressed that — stone, wood, buildings nestled in the land.

In the South there was a unique movement which melded these two schools. This movement became the 'Sarasota School of Architecture' which began in the 1940's. This 'School' became widely known for its innovations in building technology and comfort that made the dreams of modern living in the south a functioning reality. The leading architect in this group was Paul Rudolph who later became head of Yale's

School of Architecture. Through the many international students who were influenced by Rudolph at Yale, the concepts of the Sarasota School spread throughout the world.

The 'Sarasota School' learned from traditionally southern details while reinventing them and creating a unique architectural language.

Some of these include:

grills, trellises and shutters to filter light

deep overhangs to shade and cool the building

*rows of columns to create outdoor rooms
without walls*

*the veranda, balcony, and courtyard to extend
the living space to the outdoors*

*sun orientation for heat in the winter and cool in
the summer*

*the dog-trot plan with breezeways and separa-
tion of private and public rooms*

*tall rooms, floor to ceiling windows, clerestories
to allow natural ventilation*

*the house raised above the ground to escape
dampness*

This approach — old lessons combined with new technologies — formed an architectural movement suited to its region. Doors of sliding glass, brise soleils, walls of hinged shutters, latticed roof umbrellas..... creating a regional language, a lineage from which our contemporary buildings evolve.

Today there is a sense of freedom — awareness of our new technologies, new possibilities allowing us to move forward. Walls can now be made of glass to strengthen the connection between inside and out. Spaces, once compartmentalized, now open and fluid to strengthen family bonds. The kitchen, once a separate space off to a corner, can become the heart for family activity — a major part of the home's function.

Of all building types, the home is the one place that can most clearly support the changes, the needs, the functions, the reality of the people for whom it is constructed. The home expresses the personality of the family through its plan, its color, its texture, its form... Looking, exploring, can lead you into a new awareness of what is beauty, what is of our time and what is timeless.

To move through and around a well designed building can be a rewarding experience — inviting you to explore the full freedom of our four-dimensional world. This movement through space and time is a unique quality

of Architecture. Not only is Architecture the most public of all the Arts, Architecture must give protection, it must function and exist in the context of the man-made and the natural.

In this book, you will see some modern homes that do work beautifully with the land. Does your home allow you to experience Nature? Your home strongly affects the physical and psychological world in which you live. The quality of place can enrich your life. The goal is to create protective, functional designs which are supportive and inspiring environments. As Churchill said '...we shape our buildings, thereafter they shape us'.

We want lives that are full of the richness of beauty and light. A home that inspires and supports our busy lives and creates a private world within a world. The modern home, informed by the land, can be a place that will enrich the quality of your life.

ABBOTT PROJECT PHOTOS

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- A Casa Del Cielo, photo by Steven Brooke
- B House of Columns, photo by Sean Harris
- C Hilltop Residence, photo by Alison Dunlap
- D Lido Bay Residence, photo by Steven Brooke
- E Seaside Estate, photo by Steven Brooke

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Carl Abbott is a practicing architect and speaker. His work has been published internationally in numerous books, journals, and films. For over four decades, Carl's firm, located in Sarasota Florida, has been one of the most highly awarded in the South. Carl graduated cum laude from the University of Florida before studying in the Masters program at Yale under Paul Rudolph. He is now the leading member of the innovative Sarasota School of Architecture.

In addition to the South and the Caribbean, he has worked in Hawaii, in New York with Pei, and in London with Yale classmates Foster and Rogers. The Florida/Caribbean AIA has honored him with many awards including the Medal of Honor for Design and the Outstanding Architectural Firm Award. Nationally he was elected an American Institute of Architects Fellow.

'IN/FORMED by the LAND', the book of Carl Abbott's award-winning Architecture has received international acclaim.