

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN COMPETITION

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

NEW BUILDING FOR THE
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDING PLANNING

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

1 MAY 2009

MOSHE SAFDIE AND ASSOCIATES



SKIRBALL CULTURAL CENTER, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, USA

Responding to the site's steep and complex topography at the base of the Santa Monica Mountains, the Skirball Cultural Center forms a series of building clusters tucked longitudinally against the hills. Indoor and outdoor spaces are integrated throughout the complex, creating a series of gardens, an amphitheater and courtyards.

The Skirball Cultural Center features a museum of Jewish-American experience, galleries for changing exhibitions, a conference and educational center, a 350-seat auditorium, and Ahmanson Hall (a multipurpose auditorium). Underground parking accommodates 400 cars and an additional garage, which is currently under construction, will accommodate 500 cars.

The courtyards and gardens open to views of the hills beyond and further serve to integrate the building with the natural beauty of the site. The courtyards connect to a sculpture garden located between the building and the hills, providing a contemplative transition zone between the natural and built environment.

The building's cast-in-place architectural concrete frame has stainless steel infill panels and stainless steel vaulted roofs which reflect the dynamic and changing sky. Exterior concrete walls are clad with bands of pink-flamed granite.

For More Information:

http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=34

Client:
Skirball Cultural Center

Architect:
Moshe Safdie and Associates

Program:
Gallery space (permanent and traveling), multi-purpose hall, classrooms, auditorium, administration, research library, conference center, Discovery Center, gift shop, restaurant, amphitheater, courtyards and gardens, structured parking

Total Area:
224,000 sq. ft.

Cost:
\$105,000,000

Status:
Phased construction 1996-2010



SALT LAKE CITY MAIN PUBLIC LIBRARY, SALT LAKE, UTAH, USA

The Salt Lake City Public Library complex features a five-story, triangular-shaped, main building housing the stacks and general facilities, an adjacent rectangular administration wing, and a glass-enclosed "Urban Room," contained by a crescent-shaped retaining wall that may be ascended to a rooftop garden for dramatic views. Flowing into the piazza, the Urban Room is generously endowed with daylight and open to views of the surrounding Wasatch mountain range; the space ascends the full height of the building and thus provides a pivotal point of visual orientation.

Reading areas are housed in the unique crescent wall space, which embraces the other elements and gestures out to the city beyond. The children's library, on the lowest level, spills outdoors into an amphitheater and children's garden in the piazza. At night the glass façade, lit from within, is reflected in a crescent-shaped pool extending into the outdoor space.

For More Information:

http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=33

Client:
Salt Lake City Library

Architects:
Moshe Safdie and Associates
VCBO Architecture
Associate Architects

Program:
Library, administrative offices, "urban room", outdoor piazza, retail, cinema

Total Area:
225,000 sq.ft (20,902 sq.m)

Cost:
\$78,000,000

Status:
Opened 2003



PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM, SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS, USA

Set in Historic Salem, the expansion of America's oldest museum, The Peabody Essex Museum, presented the challenge of weaving together the old and new, preserving tradition, while making a bold new statement about the future. Constructed in several phases over the past 150 years, the objectives of its major expansion and reorganization were to create an architecturally dramatic addition emblematic of the museum's new identity as a museum of art and culture, to unify a disparate group of buildings and join them with newly doubled gallery space, and to help make the museum a coherent whole welcoming to visitors. The building has definitely fulfilled these goals.

To that end, a curved, glazed arcade aligned over the existing Liberty Street forms the spine of the new wing and, together with a courtyard, weaves together the old and new buildings. A series of two-level, house-like galleries, scaled to echo Salem's historic residential fabric, is strung along the east side of this glazed arcade; these structures are spaced apart to allow natural light into both lower and upper levels. The distinct silhouette of each roofline indicates a unique interior space within.

For More Information:

http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=30

Client:
Peabody Essex Museum

Architect:
Moshe Safdie and Associates

Program:
Galleries, indoor public courtyard, collections, storage, curatorial offices

Total Area:
101,000 sq.f. (9,383 sq. m)

Cost:
\$54 million

Status:
Completed 2003



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE, WASHINGTON, DC, USA

Located at the intersection of 23rd and Constitution Avenues, the building occupies one of the last available sites on the National Mall facing the Lincoln Memorial. The building is organized around two atria fanning out from a corner entrance – one towards the Potomac River, and the other towards the Lincoln Memorial. The first serves as the centerpiece for the spaces devoted to scholarly research, while the other acts as a focus of public activity and conferences.

The public spaces in the building are roofed by a series of undulating spherical and toroidal segments, constructed of steel frame and white translucent glass. The roofs form a series of wing-like elements, white on the exterior during the day, and glowing from the light within at night. The building's exterior and major interior walls are clad with light-colored limestone, and the saddle-shaped roof is leaded copper.

For More Information:
http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=49

Client:
United States Institute of Peace

Architect:
Moshe Safdie and Associates

Program:
Administrative headquarters, research center, conference center, auditorium, museum and parking

Total Area:
150,000 sq. ft. building
100,000 sq. ft. parking

Cost:
\$110 million

Status:
Under construction to open 2010



VANCOUVER LIBRARY SQUARE, VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

Containing Vancouver's Central Public Library, a Federal Office Tower and retail and service facilities, Library Square occupies a city block in the eastward expansion of the downtown core of Vancouver. Designed as a public space with a civic identity, Library Square is an open and inviting addition to the heart of Vancouver.

Centered on the block, the library is a seven-story rectangular box containing book stacks and services, surrounded by a free-standing elliptical colonnaded wall containing reading and study areas that are accessed by bridges spanning skylit lightwells. The Library's internal glass façade overlooks an enclosed concourse formed by a second elliptical wall that defines the east side of the site.

This generous, glass-roofed concourse serves as an entry foyer to the Library and creates a dialogue between the contemplative spaces of the library and the more lively pedestrian activities at ground level. The arcaded wall of the concourse ascends to a twenty-one-story height to the northeast, forming one face of the Federal Office Tower and creating continuity between the two structures.

For More Information:
http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=36

Client:
City of Vancouver

Architects:
Moshe Safdie and Associates,
Design Architect
Downs Archambault & Partners,
Associate Architect

General Contractors:
PCL Contractors Pacific Inc.

Program:
Central public library, retail and service facilities ; (350,000 sq.ft, 32,500 sq.m) ; Federal offices (300,000 sq.ft, 27,900 sq.m) ; 700 below grade parking spaces

Cost:
C\$109,000,000

Status:
Opened 1995



FEDERAL COURTHOUSE, SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS, USA

The Courthouse forms a continuum in the institutional district of a city rich in history. The building containing four courtrooms (with a fifth for expansion), forms a spiraling crescent around three existing heritage trees ranging in age from two to five hundred years old. A colonnaded entry pavilion facing the visual axis from the downtown leads to a curved colonnade accommodating a pedestrian promenade and a grand stair. The stair ascends to the building's third and principal public level, where the courtrooms and judges' chambers are located. A curved gallery tracing the colonnade and the trees – with views of the south and downtown, and containing public sitting areas – leads to the courtrooms.

The public spaces are formed by a series of layers: a pre-cast concrete colonnade, a glass screen with minimal framing, a limestone wall with large openings, and an inner wall. Each are sky-lit from above. The innermost wall was designated for the GSA "Art and Architecture" program and accommodates a two hundred foot-long mural by the American artist Sol LeWitt.

The required security measures for a Federal Courthouse have been accommodated with minimal visibility and without compromising the sense of openness, extroversion, and transparency for a publicly accessible building.

For More Information:
http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=14

Client:
United States General Services Administration

Architects:
Moshe Safdie and Associates

Program:
Four courtrooms plus one future courtroom, court-related departments include clerks and probation, non-court agencies include U.S. Marshals, U.S. Attorneys and U.S. Congressmen, 90 parking spaces

Cost:
\$55 million

Status:
Opened 2008



EXPLORATION PLACE, WICHITA, KANSAS, USA

Exploration Place is located near downtown Wichita at the point of confluence of the Arkansas River and its tributary, the Little Arkansas. With a mission to provide scientific and humanistic education meaningful to people of all ages, the center organizes interpenetrating elements of the continuous river's edge, public park and museum. Visitors enter through a vaulted pavilion holding the gift shop, cafeteria, Cyberdome, Simulation Theatre and curatorial wing, and cross a channel to the exhibition pavilion, surrounded by water and dedicated to the human experience on earth. The building's diverse exterior and interior geometries are created by the intersection of the undulating walls and the surfaces of two giant toroids. The "island" exhibition building is generated by a toroid whose center is high in the sky, forming a series of concave roofs, facing skywards, like a giant receptor dish or observatory. The "land" building toroid has its center deep underground, creating vault-like roofs descending into the earth.

Radiating glue laminate beams, acting in tension in the island building and in compression in the land building, have spans as long as 56 feet and, because of their toroidal geometry, all have a constant radius. The gallery interiors ascend from 16 feet at the central spine to upwards of 70 feet. Installations take advantage of these volumes, which provide for multi-leveled displays. The entire complex is dramatically lit at night, appearing in the city's skyline as floating, twisted plane reflected in the river.

For More Information:
http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=20

Client:
Exploration Place Inc

Architect:
Moshe Safdie and Associates
Shaefer Johnson Cox Frey and Associates, PA,
Associate Architects

Program:
Galleries, Cyberdome theatre, simulation theatre, curatorial and support space; 20-acre site comprising exhibit buildings, landscaped public areas, community playground, riverwalk, miniature golf course, surface parking

Total Area:
100,000 sq.ft (9,290 sq.m)

Cost:
\$27 million

Status:
Opened April 2000

NATIONAL CAMPUS FOR THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ISRAEL, JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

The new National Campus for the Archaeology of Israel campus will be located on a steeply sloping site adjacent to the Israel and Bible Lands Museums. The site overlooks the Hebrew University campus and offers dramatic views of the city beyond.

The program combines operational and research components of the Israel Antiquities Authority with a public outreach wing of museum exhibits, laboratories, offices, and storage. In addition to indoor and outdoor galleries, the building will accommodate a center for the research, restoration, and exhibition of fifteen thousand fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The design concept seeks to recreate the character of archaeological excavations with its tradition of expansive shading tents.

Organized around three descending courtyards, the building is just one story in height at the entrance so that all indoor space is located below street level and the view across the valley is unimpeded, even as one enters the building. A tensile steel and glass canopy, reminiscent of the shades over excavation sites, covers the principal courtyard. The building's inward-facing surfaces are glass curtain walls and silver metal panels, while the outward-facing walls have additional stonewall screens.

For More Information:
http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=46

Client:
Israel Antiquities Authority

Architects:
Moshe Safdie and Associates
VCBO Architecture
Associate Architects

Program:
Public exhibition space, a 200-seat auditorium, a library, archives, offices, management facilities, laboratories and storage for artifacts, 200 parking spaces

Total Area:
25,000 sq. m. (250,000 sq. ft.)

Status:
In Design

UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE LAW SCHOOL, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, USA

The law school was designed to be an urban landmark – ever changing in its silhouette: its tower slender, culminating in a radiant crescent, its atria visible from afar, it marks both the university and law school as seen from all directions – a gateway to the city. The unwinding spiral generates the plan – a gesture of both gathering and focus. The component parts, blocks of classrooms, library, clinic, forum, each maintain a formal autonomy – interwoven by the spiral into an institutional whole.

A base of seven floors containing classrooms, a library, and mock courts, surrounds two atria, all generated by a spiral of galleries at each level. Additional classrooms and offices extend thirteen more floors. Two great spaces are formed; the law forum, and the garden, serving as places for meeting and socializing. The law forum, visible from the surrounding streets, is a setting for lectures and discussions, a tiered amphitheater when needed, or for random gathering and study space. The garden opens to the library and surrounding rooms – a place for contemplation. The roof of the seven story base forms a continuous roof garden with magnificent views of the city.

For More Information:
http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=97

Client:
University of Baltimore

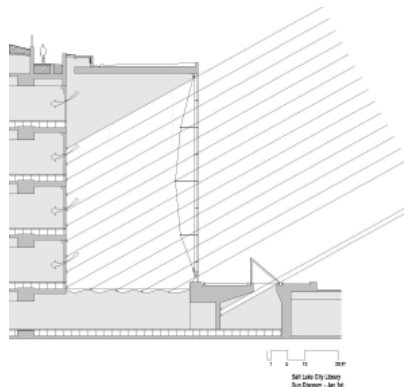
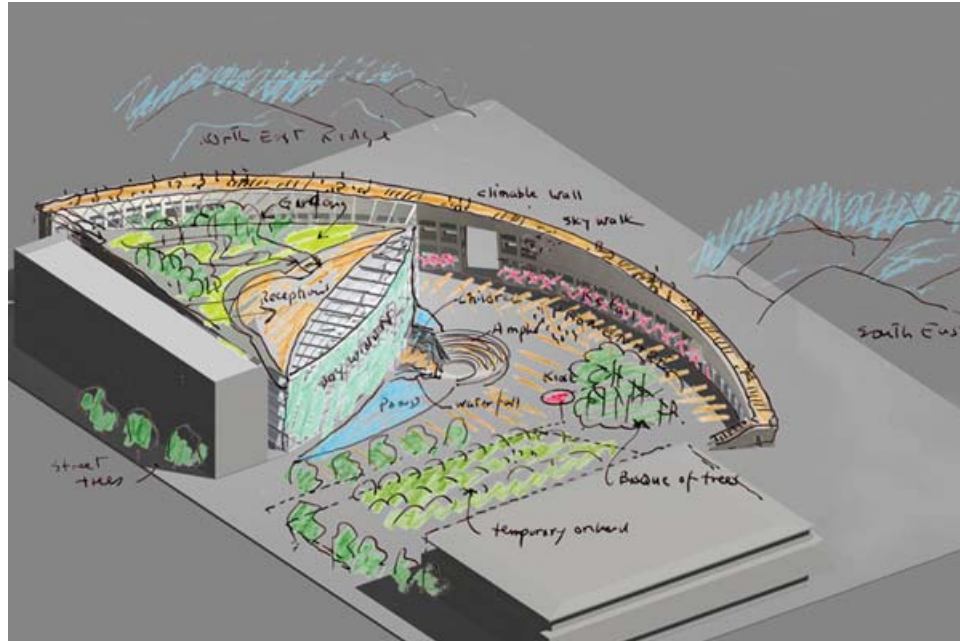
Architect:
Moshe Safdie and Associates

Program:
Classrooms, library, mock courts, atria, offices, law forum, and garden

Total Area:
101,000 sq.ft. (9,383 sq. m)

Cost:
\$107 million

Status:
Unbuilt



SALT LAKE CITY MAIN PUBLIC LIBRARY SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, USA

The Salt Lake City Public Library complex features a five-story, triangular-shaped, main building housing the stacks and general facilities, an adjacent rectangular administration wing, and a glass-enclosed "Urban Room," contained by a crescent-shaped retaining wall that may be ascended to a rooftop garden for dramatic views. Flowing into the piazza, the Urban Room is generously endowed with daylight and open to views of the surrounding Wasatch mountain range; the space ascends the full height of the building and thus provides a pivotal point of visual orientation.

The building was designed to focus on Salt Lake City's view of the Wasatch Mountains to the southwest. This design subjected the completely glazed structure to the greatest sun exposure. The mechanical engineer utilized the atrium to work as a chimney. As the sun heats air within the glass-enclosed space, the heat rises and escapes through openings at the roof. Solar gain is expelled before it enters the rest of the library.

Placing the Children's Library at the base of the Lens created a space that is flooded with sunshine. When the sun's heat is too intense, the children's librarian can shield the space with 'cloud cover' by pressing a button to roll out a fabric shade. In winter the shade is used to deflect the cold down draft from the glazed façade.

The void between the triangular building and the crescent wall is an atrium known as the Urban Room. The Urban Room is comfort cooled by free spill air from the triangular stack building. In the winter the occupied zone is warmed by a radiant heated floor.

The roof garden, atop the triangular building and accessed by the inclining crescent wall, is another feature of the Library's environmental strategy. The planted area protects the building from excessive solar gains and by absorbing heat it reduces the building's heat island effect on the Salt Lake climate.

For More Information: http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=33



BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND FIREARMS HEADQUARTERS WASHINGTON, DC, USA

GOLD LEVEL CERTIFIED
Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
United States Green Building Council

This Federal Building serves as a headquarters for a federal agency requiring the highest security standards. It is located at the crossroads of New York and Florida Avenues, in an industrial area that is at the beginning of the process of urban renewal and rejuvenation. The building accommodates general office space, laboratories, an auditorium, and auxiliary services.

The challenge of the design was to generate a building that can act as a catalyst for the district's renewal. Notwithstanding security setback requirements, the building complex engages the street edges. With the entrance positioned across from the new Metro station on the southeast corner, retail facilities line Second Street (to the east), and a trellised garden wall defines N Street (to the south), contributing to the animation of the street edges while enhancing the project's security. In addition, a three-story planted, arcaded crescent contains the site towards the north and west, enclosing a 4,500-square-meter internal garden, and serving invisibly as a security barrier.

The office space consists of relatively narrow floor plates surrounding a large atrium in the center of the structure, thus affording daylight for all workspaces. Maximum flexibility is achieved through the provision of a technical sub floor for the distribution of data, mechanical, and HVAC services.

For More Information: http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=72



CONNECTICUT CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND EXPLORATION HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT, USA

The Connecticut Center for Science and Exploration strives to create urban connectivity, while being a unique element in the skyline – connectivity aimed to weave together public paths and terraces, contributing to the urban whole. Given, however, that the site is surrounded by relatively tall commercial buildings, the Connecticut Center for Science and Exploration must assert itself, its image evoking the sciences, its geometrics reminiscent of great astronomical instruments, challenging our curiosity, uplifting our spirit.

Two nacelles are perched atop a podium, juxtaposed side-by-side they are shaped as segments of two great toroids. The structure is made up of a laminated wood lattice – a diagrid – which rotates about their surface in an ordered and repetitive geometry. The two nacelles are united by a great roof structure that is the surface of a sphere – an inverted dome. The geometrics of each part intersect to form a cohesive and ordered whole.

The podium roof surface is an extension and part of Hartford's series of linked piazzas, which also bridge to the river abutting the site – the city's upper platform. Below the podium, public parking, offices and back-of-house spaces of the museum are accommodated. The Connecticut Center for Science and Exploration is organized into six levels. The first level is the entry at the street; the second is the podium or Piano Nobile; the third and fourth levels, within the nacelles, are exhibit and theater levels; the fifth level, also within the nacelles, is the upper mezzanine; and the top level is the roof garden.

For More Information: http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=87



KHALSA HERITAGE MEMORIAL COMPLEX, ANANDPUR SAHIB, PUNJAB, INDIA

For More Information: http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=27

WORKING GLOBALLY

Our firm has built worldwide in places as diverse in character as Vancouver and Savannah, Los Angeles and Chandigarh, Wichita and Singapore, and Ottawa and Jerusalem. It is our general practice when working on projects around the world that we associate with a local architectural firm that has complementary skills to match ours. The degree to which the local architectural firm will participate depends on the technical capabilities of that firm. When our local associate has strong technical skills and management capabilities, such as with our local partners for the Vancouver Public Library and Salt Lake City Public Library, we have been able to have them develop the majority of the construction documents. We accomplish this through a well-honed set of procedures and methods for controlling the design. We establish the working arrangement from the start by having our partner's senior staff members work with us in our office through the design phases. Our senior members also work on the design in the local partner's office during the construction documents phase – a process we call cross-residency.



TELFAIR MUSEUM OF ART, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA, USA

For More Information: http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=35

WORKING WITHIN HISTORIC BUILDING CONTEXT

Moshe Safdie and Associates has been building a new structures in a historic context for the past 30 years. Working in Jerusalem in the 1970s, we were responsible for a combination of restoration and new infill construction of two-thirds of the historic Jewish Quarters in the walled city of Jerusalem. This involved the restoration and recycling of numerous residential and institutional buildings, bringing them to new technical and program requirements while preserving their historic architectural character. Innovative techniques for intervention in masonry construction, waterproofing, and fungus control were developed by our office in response to specific conservation issues. In the Mamilla Complex, also in Jerusalem, we have restored numerous buildings to commercial and institutional use, including the dismantling and reconstruction of four historic buildings with elaborate masonry detailing to facilitate the construction of infrastructure facilities while reconstructing the buildings above.

- The Quebec Museum of Civilization incorporated two historic 18th and 19th century buildings as part of the museum's expansion.
- The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts expansion integrated a 1912 Italianesque classical apartment building, (in this case, only the façade was to be preserved) adding new galleries behind while restoring and integrating the façade into the overall architecture.
- In Ottawa City Hall we restored a heritage building – Canada's first modernist building by Bland Trudeau while tripling its size for expanded city services.
- For the Peabody Essex Museum, two centuries of historic buildings were totally restored as we created a major expansion of new galleries and museum facilities. The new complex has been hailed as a model of integrating old and new construction, for the cohesiveness of the total complex, and for the effective relationship between the old and the new.
- The Jepson Center for the Arts is an extension of the Telfair Academy – the oldest art museum in the South. Savannah Georgia, with its historic context and famous city grid, provided a unique opportunity to design a modern building in a place steeped with history. As the design architects we worked carefully to meet all the guidelines of the Savannah Historic Commission – to insure compatibility with the historic neighborhood while also providing a design that is contemporary and contextual. We presented several schemes to the Historic Review Board, and worked back and forth with them until consensus was met that the building met all the compatibility requirements. In the end, the design of the Jepson Center was enriched by the process.



SALT LAKE CITY MAIN PUBLIC LIBRARY, SALT LAKE, UTAH, USA

For More Information: http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=33

COLLABORATION

We do not believe in working in isolation, parachuting fully evolved designs for the client's consideration. We believe in an intense dialogue of collaborative effort as an essential ingredient in interpreting program requirements and evolving a design that resolves the multiplicity of issues presented. Towards that end, we have developed a methodology of evolving and presenting several alternative schemes at the embryonic phases of development. We discuss these at length. We share preliminary conceptual sketches and we use the process of choosing between alternatives as one that clarifies issues and enriches the final product.

Achieving a successful fit between a building's purpose and its design requires that the Architect and the Client engage in a process of exploring the values and choices that will evolve into the final form of the building. An architectural program lists quantitative requirements, but often misses many qualitative issues. Through dialogue, we draw out the subtleties and address the complex issues of a building's function, character, image and symbolism. In designing a school, for example, we must ask the fundamental question: what makes a wonderful place for learning? There are obviously many answers. We search for the most appropriate solution in the context of each particular place and time.

Early in the design process, we propose that the principal representatives of the Client, Users, and Architect visit together and/or study projects comparable to the proposed project. From this experience, lessons – both positive and negative – are to be learned. In addition to these lessons, this process provides a unique opportunity for the Client, Users and Architect to develop a common language and understanding of the issues that will influence the project, as well as to discuss these in an informal setting. These relationships between the Client, Users, Architects and Consultants will continue throughout the design process, and will address issues appropriate to each stage of the process as it evolves. It is through this close collaboration that the most successful design will be achieved. We will develop the Design Criteria and create the functional building blocks along with preliminary systems selection.

CLIENT REFERENCE

Dr. Uri Hersher
President
Skirball Cultural Center
(310) 440-4500
pburdette@skirball.org

MOSHE SAFDIE

Moshe Safdie was born in Haifa, Israel, in 1938. He later moved to Canada with his family, graduating from McGill University in 1961 with a degree in architecture. After apprenticing with Louis I. Kahn in Philadelphia, he returned to Montreal, taking charge of the master plan for the 1967 World Exhibition, where he also realized an adaptation of his thesis as Habitat ‘67, the central feature of the World’s Fair.



HABITAT ‘67, MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA
For More Information:
http://www.msafdie.com/php/print_project.php?id=16

In 1970, Safdie established a Jerusalem branch office, commencing an intense involvement with the rebuilding of Jerusalem. He was responsible for major segments of the restoration of the Old City and the reconstruction of the new center, linking the Old and New Cities. Over the years, his involvement expanded and included the new city of Modi’in, the new Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum, and the Rabin Memorial Center. During this period, Safdie also became involved in the developing world, working in Senegal, Iran, Singapore, and in the northern Canadian arctic.

In 1978, following teaching at Yale, McGill, and Ben Gurion Universities, Safdie relocated his residence and principal office to Boston, as he became Director of the Urban Design Program and the Ian Woodner Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. In the following decade, he was responsible for the design of six of Canada’s principal public institutions, including the Quebec Museum of Civilization, the National Gallery of Canada, and Vancouver Library Square.

In the past decade, Safdie’s major cultural and educational commissions in the U.S. have included: the United States Institute of Peace Headquarters on the Mall in Washington, D.C.; the Skirball Cultural Center and Museum in Los Angeles, California; and Exploration Place in Wichita, Kansas; educational facilities such as Eleanor Roosevelt College at the University of California in San Diego; civic buildings such as the Springfield, Massachusetts, and Mobile, Alabama, Federal Courthouses; and performing arts centers such as the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in Kansas City, Missouri. In addition to major works of urbanism, Safdie’s work includes two airports - Lester B. Pearson International Airport in Toronto and Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv.

Recent building openings include the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Headquarters in Washington, D.C. (2008), the Springfield Federal Courthouse in Springfield, Massachusetts (2008), and the Telfair Museum of Art in Savannah, Georgia (2006).

Major complexes currently under construction include the Khalsa Heritage Memorial Complex, the national museum of the Sikh people in the Punjab, India; the National Campus for the Archeology of Israel in Jerusalem; the West Edge project, a mixed-use facility in Kansas City, Missouri; the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas; the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in Kansas City, Missouri; and the 9 million square foot Marina Bay Sands, a mixed-use integrated resort in Singapore.

In addition to numerous articles on the theory and practice of architecture, Safdie has written several books, most notably, *Beyond Habitat* (1970), *For Everyone a Garden* (1974), *Form and Purpose* (1982), and *Jerusalem: The Future of the Past* (1989). *The City After the Automobile* (1997), details Safdie’s ideas about urbanism and city planning. A comprehensive monograph of his work, *Moshe Safdie I*, was published in 1996. *Moshe Safdie II*, a second monograph featuring work from 1996-2008, will be published in 2009. His upcoming theoretical work discusses the architecture of humanity in the age of mega-scale.

Safdie has been featured in several films, including *Moshe Safdie, The Power of Architecture*, which is a portrait film (directed by Donald Winkler, 2004), *My Architect: A Son’s Journey* about Nathaniel Kahn and his father Louis I. Khan (directed by Nathaniel Kahn, 2003), and *The Sound of the Carceri*, about Bach and Piranesi, with Yo-Yo Ma (directed by Francois Girard, 1997).

Exhibitions of his designs include *For Everyone a Garden* (Baltimore Museum of Art, National Gallery of Canada, and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1973-1974); *Moshe Safdie, Projects: 1979-1989* (Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 1989); *Moshe Safdie, Museum Architecture 1971-1998* (Tel Aviv University, 1998); *Building a New Museum* (Peabody Essex Museum, 2003-2004); and the upcoming *Global Citizen: The Architecture of Moshe Safdie* co-sponsored by Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the Skirball Cultural Center (2009).

Safdie has been the recipient of numerous awards, honorary degrees, and civil honors, including the Companion Order of Canada and the Gold Medal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.

THE BOOKS BEHIND THE BUILDINGS
BY THOMAS FISHER

Excerpt from *Moshe Safdie II*
Images Publishing 2009

Like Safdie’s office, buried in its greenery, *Beyond Habitat* and *For Everyone a Garden* articulate a more respectful and reciprocal relationship with the natural world than most architects advocated in the early 1970s. Safdie concludes *Beyond Habitat*, for example, with an ‘environmental bill of rights’, forming the basis of an imaginary platform he would propose were he to run for political office. Anticipating the current sustainability movement, that platform includes several sweeping ideas, like ending all forms of pollution, doubling the percentage of the gross national product devoted to the environment and putting in place strong regional government for more holistic planning.



Most architects avoid taking such positions for fear of angering or alienating clients, but Safdie never seems to shy away from a strong stance, evident in his buildings as well as his books. In that sense, he brings to mind another architect–writer, Frank Lloyd Wright, who also wrote polemical and prophetic texts, while producing important and sometimes idiosyncratic buildings. The difference between the two lies mainly in Safdie’s self-deprecation. He ends his environmental political platform, for instance, with the rhetorical question, ‘With such a platform, would I be elected?’ He knows the answer is ‘no’, and yet, by asking it, he sounds an alarm still worth hearing. With our declining oil supplies and rising global temperatures, we need his environmental bill of rights and environmentally oriented politicians now more than ever – reason enough to reread these two books.

From his office, which is at once a building and not a building, Safdie understands that these contradictions present paradoxes for the architect, and he expresses this idea in the poem that concludes Form and Purpose:

He who seeks truth shall find beauty.
He who seeks beauty shall find vanity.
He who seeks order shall find gratification.
He who seeks gratification shall be disappointed.
He who considers himself the servant of his fellow beings shall find the joy of self-expression.
He who seeks self-expression shall fall into the pit of arrogance.
Arrogance is incompatible with nature.
Through nature, the nature of the universe and the nature of man,
we shall seek truth.
If we seek truth, we shall find beauty.

Sounding an almost biblical tone in reframing the classical debate about the relationship of truth and beauty, service and self-expression, Safdie’s meditation couldn’t contrast more with the safe cynicism of so many postmodernists. Rather than see truth as a cover for power, Safdie posits truth as a never-ending pursuit. Rather than see beauty as a set of superficial gratifications, he recognises the paradox of finding beauty only through the pursuit of the truth and personal gratification only in service to others. And rather than see nature as a human artifice, he acknowledges the inseparable connection that exists between human nature, the natural environment and the nature of the universe itself. In our own era, awash in the hubris of religious extremists, corporate imperialists and political fascists, we would all do well to remember the humility implicit in Safdie’s notion of form and purpose.

HE’S A REVISIONIST MODERNIST
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By JULIA M. KLEIN

Somerville, Mass.
After years in the architectural wilderness, Moshe Safdie isn’t about to feign modesty now. Tanned and vigorous, with a white shirt and white mustache, he whirls a visitor through rooms filled with sketches and models for projects on three continents.

Front and center is the \$4 billion, 40-acre Marina Bay Sands casino development on Singapore’s waterfront, with its cantilevered Sky Park and Art-Science Museum. But Mr. Safdie is also jazzed about the U.S. Institute of Peace Headquarters, about to break ground on Washington’s Mall; Khalsa Heritage Memorial Complex, a Sikh history museum nearing completion outside Chandigarh, India; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Ark; and the Free Library of Philadelphia expansion, featuring another of his signature light-flooded “urban rooms.”

The 69-year-old architect points out a sheet of Moshe Safdie stamps, from Canada, a testament to his increasing stature. Two of his projects, Ben Gurion International Airport and the Yitzhak Rabin Center, both in Tel Aviv, already have graced Israeli stamps. “No U.S. stamps yet,” he notes.

Like his mentor, Louis I. Kahn, Mr. Safdie has led a nomadic life. Born in Haifa, Israel, and educated in Montreal, he burst onto the architectural scene with Habitat ‘67, a Montreal apartment building made of asymmetrically stacked, prefabricated concrete cubes, decorated with skylights and roof gardens. Hailed as an innovative prescription for urban living, Habitat was the centerpiece of Expo ‘67 and landed Mr. Safdie on the cover of Newsweek in 1971, when he was 32. It was recently designated a Municipal Heritage Landmark, and today marks its 40th anniversary, being celebrated by a reunion of its residents, past and present, including Mr. Safdie himself.

After early success, “you then have this syndrome of ‘Can you live up to what you’ve done as a wunderkind?’” Mr. Safdie says, “which isn’t easy, because the expectations are extraordinary, and the opportunities are not automatically there.

“I struggled,” Mr. Safdie says. “First of all, I did several Habitats that never got built, so that was depressing. The ‘70s were tough years for me. In the ‘80s, I designed Columbus Center, which I thought was a breakthrough high-rise building in New York, and that didn’t go through, which was heartbreaking.” The project, meant to replace the 1954 New York Coliseum at Columbus Circle, was criticized “both stylistically—its not being postmodern enough—and because of its mass,” he says. The site is now occupied by the twin 80-story glass towers of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill’s 2004 Time Warner Center.

In 1978, Mr. Safdie moved to Massachusetts to head Harvard’s urban design program. He retained a branch office in Jerusalem, where he had helped reconstruct the Old City and was rebuilding the blighted area of Mamilla. Later, he would become the master planner for a new Israeli city, Modi’in, for 250,000 residents.

In the 1980s and ‘90s, Canadian commissions finally began to roll in: the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, the Quebec Museum of Civilization, Vancouver Library Square. Vancouver was followed by the Salt Lake City Public Library in 2003, with its soaring, glass-enclosed public spaces. Two years later, Mr. Safdie completed the new Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem.

“How you get work is strange,” he says. The Singapore project resulted from an encounter with Sheldon Adelson, board chairman of the Las Vegas Sands

Mr. Safdie positions himself, along with Renzo Piano and Norman Foster, as a revisionist modernist. “We grew out of modernism,” he says, “and we evolved it further. We made it more contextual. We expanded its technological base. And we started dealing with the sensual and symbolic aspects that modernism tended to avoid altogether. It was very puritanical.”

The revisionists also are more ecologically conscious and have “a much more highly developed sense of the individual,” he says. “Because modernism was kind of Bolshevik in some ways: Their sense of equality was that everybody’s the same.”



For Mr. Safdie, architecture is, above all, a humanistic undertaking. He offers the example of a “megahospital” he is designing in Montreal, where he aims to create “a sense of well-being” using space and light. “As I shape the building,” he says, “I have to become a patient, I have to become a doctor, I have to become a nurse completely. The more I manage to be them, the more humane and relevant the solution will be—which is what Kahn, I think, meant when he said, ‘What does a building want to be?’

“And you know—I won’t mention names—that some of the sculptural architects of the day would never even talk about it,” he adds. “They’re just expressive, creative artists. And that’s the sad part: that the avant-garde is fundamentally into architecture as high expressive art, but at the expense of being more rooted in the very purpose of why a building is being built.”