

# CARPENTER CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

## HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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# CARPENTER CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

## The Architect

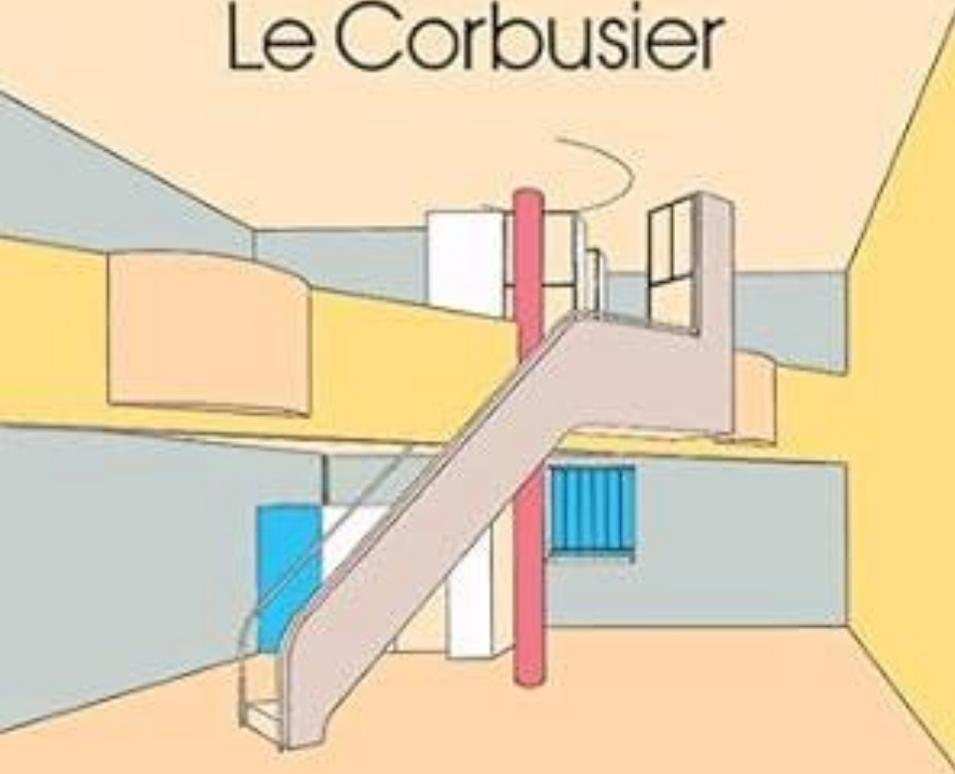
- Le Corbusier  
(Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, 1887-1965) .
  - Swiss-born Architect and city planner
- A principal figure of the “modern” movement of architecture, and highly renowned within the “International School.”

THE CARPENTER CENTER  
FOR THE VISUAL ARTS



# TOWARDS A NEW ARCHITECTURE

Le Corbusier



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### The Architect

- Towards a new architecture published in 1923 is a collection of Le Corbusier's articles published in L'Esprit nouveau.
- Translated to English in 1927.
- Still considered to be one of the most influential architectural books of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Known for "Five Points of New Architecture."
  - Pilotis
  - Roof Garden
  - Free Plan
  - Free Façade
  - Ribbon Windows

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## THE COMMISSION



- In the mid-1950's Harvard endeavored to create a new department dedicated to the study of the visual arts and formed the Committee for the Practice of Visual Arts.
- As part of this effort alumnus Alfred St. Vrain Carpenter and his wife Helen Bundy donated \$1.5 million for the construction of a new building.
- The committee had recommended the building be designed by "a first rate American architect".
- Josep Luis Sert, Dean of the Graduate School of Design and committee chair recommend his friend and previous collaborator, Le Corbusier.
- After a series of delays Le Corbusier made his first of two visits to Cambridge in 1959.



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### THE PLAN

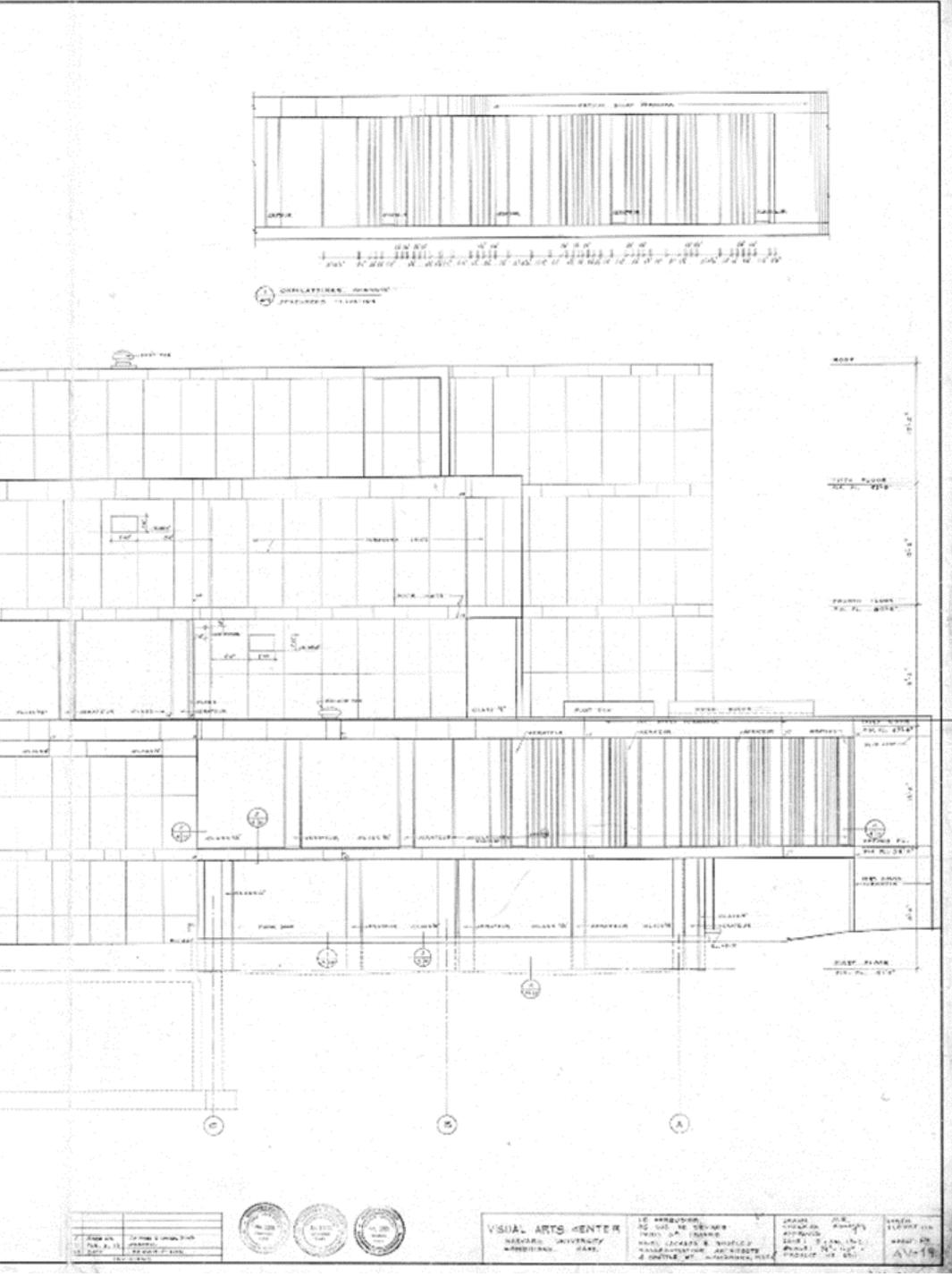
- The site of the building is located on a confined site off the edge of Harvard Yard between neo-Georgian buildings.
- The central feature of the building is a “S” shaped ramp linking the streets on either side of the building and serving as a continuation of the paths through Harvard Yard.
- The building also highlights Le Corbusier’s use of Roof Gardens, free facades without ornamentation, and ribbon windows creating connections to the outdoors.

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## THE PLAN

- Le Corbusier's response to the site was implementing his free plan ideology through the use of:

- Pilotis
- Brise-Soleil
- Aerateurs
- Ondulatoires



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## THE RAMP

- The cast-in-place concrete ramp is the central organizing feature of the building connecting the sidewalks on Quincy and Prescott Streets.
- The ramp draws students to the center of the building.
- The top of the ramp is now the entrance to the Sert Gallery.



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## THE RAMP

- As the ramp bi-sects the building pedestrians have an unimpeded view into the studios, showcasing the work of the students.



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## ROOF GARDEN

- The design includes areas for gardens and connection to the exterior on each level.
- The only roof garden to be implemented can be seen at the top of the ramp outside the Sert Gallery.

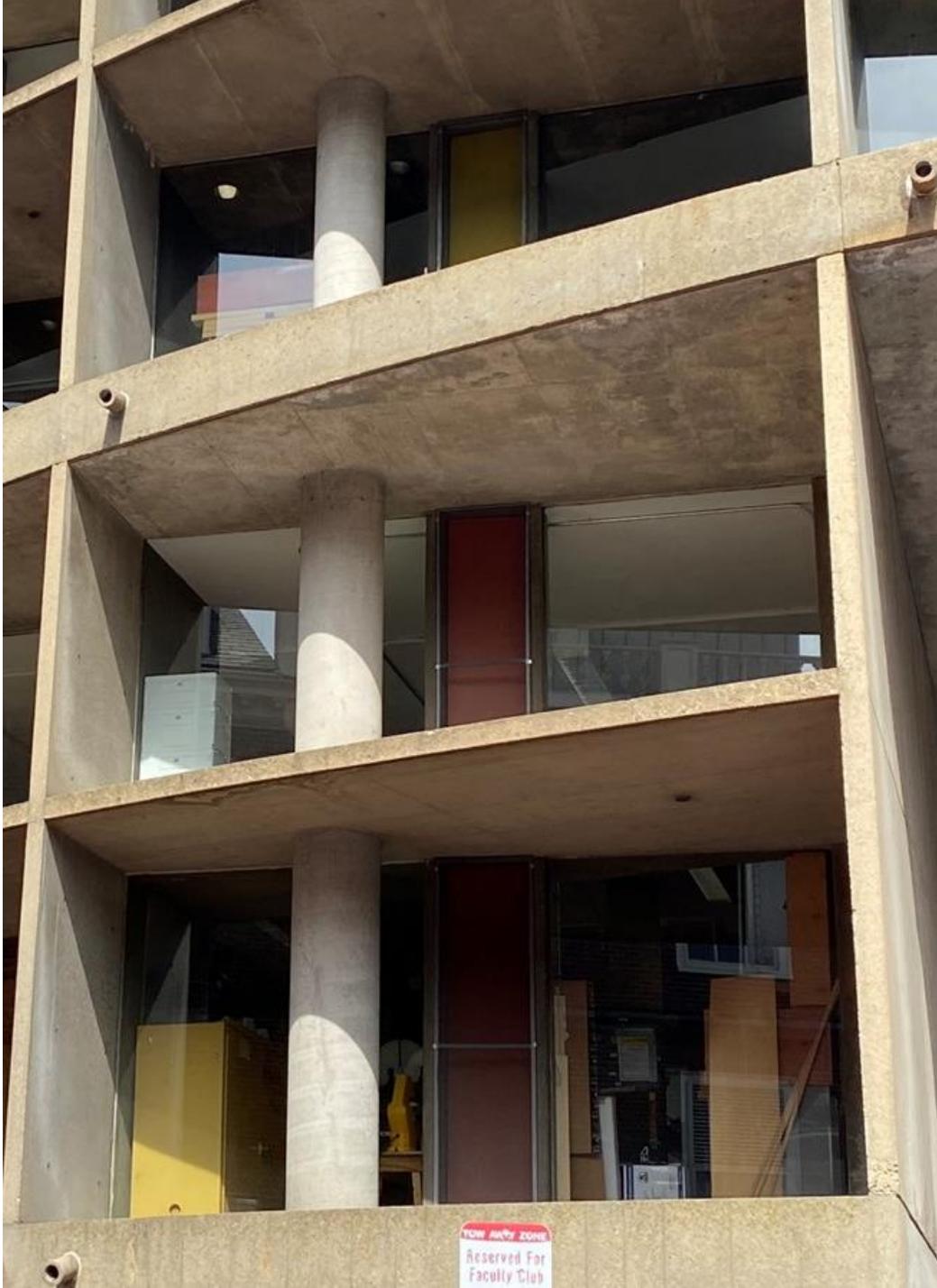




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## Pilotis

- Pilotis – Slender columns can be seen in multiple areas around the building. “Lofting” the building above grade and creating the open ground plan.



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## Brise-Soleil

- Horizontal and vertical elements designed to maximize the natural light while reducing glare and solar heat gain.



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### Ondulatoires

- Rhythmically positioned concrete vertical struts laid out according to the module



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## Aerateurs

- Aerateurs are located throughout the project between the large ribbon windows and offer the occupants the ability to open for fresh air.
- Aerateurs are also used to introduce color

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## CONDITION

- The building and its concrete are in excellent condition compared to similar buildings of its age.
- There is limited spalling and petrographic analysis has found the only shallow carbonation on the surface of the walls



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## THE EXCEPTION

- The ramp has experienced cracking, and spalling throughout its length. This is primarily due to the liberal use of de-icing salts throughout its life.



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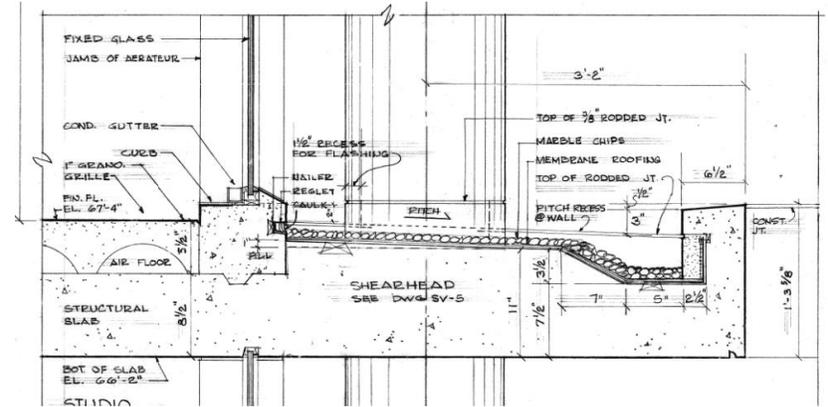
## WINDOWS

- The building has oversized floor-to-ceiling windows throughout in a ribbon-window configuration.
- Glass measures up to 12'x12' square, and is single-pane annealed polished plate glass.
- This is a character-defining feature.



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## WINDOW DETAILS



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## IMPORTANCE

- Highly-significant mid-century modernist building, construction completed in 1963
- Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, in 1978
- The **only** building in North America designed by Le Corbusier, working drawings by Sert and Associates.
- One of the last buildings constructed that was designed by Le Corbusier.
- Go visit, take the Red Line to Harvard

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