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Summary

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe
Associate Architect: J. Lee Jones

The School of Social Service Administration Building at the University of Chicago

1965

(Pages 170–173)

The new building for the School of Social Service Administration is located at the corner of South Ellis Avenue and East 60th Street, on the south side of the Midway Plaisance, directly opposite the University of Chicago Hospital complex. This two-level steel-frame building accommodates nine classrooms, 60 faculty offices, four seminar and research rooms, a lounge, a lobby which can be used as a 300-seat auditorium, a library, and utility rooms. It contains 50,000 square feet of floor space.
The building will serve all of the foreseeable space needs of the School of Social Service Administration. The School offers a graduate level program. The faculty and staff is large, so extensive general and private office space is provided. A student body of as many as 300 is anticipated and classroom space for all of the School's courses is included. An integral part of the School is its Research Center, for which office and work space is provided. A branch library, selected and equipped to serve the School's special needs is included. All of these aspects of the School are interconnected by and to a considerable extent interact within a large central hall space.

Structure
The main structure consists of a welded steel column and girder system planned on a 40 foot square bay with a clear height of 19 feet. The roof construction is carried on steel decking welded to steel purlins which are in turn bolted to the girders. The direction of the purlins and decking alternate from bay to bay in order to give an even distribution of the roof loads. Around the perimeter of the building each bay is divided into 10-foot modules by rolled steel mullions which support the glass. The same rolled steel section is also used in the built-up columns at the corners of the structural bays.

Hall
The entrances from the front terrace lead directly into a large, high Hall. This Hall serves a wide variety of functions for both the daily and occasional use of the building. A central core houses an office, a meeting room and lockers, all for student use, as well as a kitchenette and mechanical facilities. The perimeter walls of the Hall are of glass in steel frames and buff brick, with the exposed structural elements painted flat black. The walls of the core are of walnut panelling, with a rich, very dark brown finish. The floor is medium grey-green terrazzo. The ceiling is large fields of white acoustical tile with exposed structural elements painted flat black. Lighting is by recessed fluorescent trouffers of the air-handling type; hence, although the building is completely air conditioned, no separate air diffusers are employed.
A receptionist is stationed in this space, and lounge furniture, mostly designed by Mies van der Rohe is provided. In addition to the functions already indicated, the Hall can serve a wide variety of special needs. Receptions for 300 to 400 persons can be accommodated. Seating for lectures can be temporarily installed for up to 350 persons. As many as 200 could be accommodated for catered luncheons. Exhibitions of many kinds and of any normal size can be installed. A wide variety of performances or other entertainments could be accommodated.

Library
The Library is located directly south of the Hall. Here the glass walls are draped with a translucent beige fabric. Seating is provided for 91 persons. The initial installation contemplates 5000 volumes plus some filed and microfilmed material, and eventually as many as 10,000 volumes can be housed. A workroom is provided.

Classrooms
Although this is essentially a one storey building, an intermediate floor level extending across the three bays at each end of the building is raised seven feet above the level of the Hall and Library to accommodate two similar classroom areas. Located on these upper levels is a seminar room for 20 persons, two classrooms accommodating 50 persons each, and a large classroom. The large classroom on the east seats 150 persons and is equipped with a retractable projection screen. On the west side the large classroom seats 130 persons, and is equipped with a folding soundproof wall enabling it to be divided into two classrooms seating 50 persons each. The finish in all classrooms is buff brick and glass walls, white acoustical tile ceilings, black with white fleck vinyl-asbestos flooring. The glass walls in the classrooms are equipped with oyster-white venetian blinds. All classroom seating is movable, the small classrooms and seminar rooms being equipped with stacking chairs and folding tables and the large classrooms having chairs with tablet arms.

Offices
The basement of the building is split into two levels in a manner somewhat similar to the main floor. On the upper basement levels, immediately under the classroom wings, are general and private offices for faculty and staff. Here, the walls are of plaster painted white with doors and frames painted black. The ceilings have fields of white acoustical tile and the floors are surfaced with black with white fleck vinyl-asbestos tile. All windows are equipped with oyster-white venetian blinds.

Stairs
The classroom and office areas are connected by broad stairways which remain open to, and actually form a part of the space of the central Hall. These stairways continue down to large open lobby spaces at the lower level of the basement where additional student lockers are provided. The Research Center is planned below the central Hall and is entered from these lobby spaces, as are also the building toilets and other service facilities. Finish in the Research Center is similar to that of the office areas.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

Highfield House Apartements, Baltimore, Maryland

1964

(Pages 174–176)

The fourteen storey Highfield House, which was completed in 1964 contains 165 apartments ranging in size from efficiency to three bedroom units. Located on a steeply sloping two acre site on North Charles Street (an important thoroughfare leading into downtown Baltimore) the building is set back 100 feet from the road thereby opening up the street and giving a sense of isolation and privacy to the apartment tenants.
The 15-foot slope in the site has not only enabled all car parking to be located out of sight under an extensive ground level terrace but has also made possible the planning of an 80-foot by 100-foot sunken, recreational court containing a swimming pool and a fountain. This court is enclosed on three sides by brick walls which isolate it from the garage and on the fourth side is a recreation room which can be opened up to create a single space with the landscaped court. The lower elevation of the side street is utilized for direct access to the parking and delivery areas which with tenant service and mechanical equipment areas compose the balance of the lower level.
Within the 16-foot-high ground floor the only solid elements are two symmetrically located brick stair enclosures and a central elevator core faced with Roman travertine. A glass walled area surrounding the elevator core contains the reception lobby and lounges on the entrance side and a mailroom and management offices in the rear.
The building's structure consists of a fully expressed reinforced concrete frame having bay sizes of 23′-6″ × 23′-6″ and 23′-6″ × 18′-4″ and a floor to floor height of 8′-9½″. Set between the exterior columns are black finished aluminium hoppered window frames glazed with grey tinted glass, and low under window spandrels of buff facing brick. The building is air conditioned.
The Structural Engineer was Farkas & Barron and the Mechanical Engineer was Cosentini Associates.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

Meredith Memorial Hall, Drake University of des Moines, Aowa, USA

(Pages 177–180)

This two-storey building with basement provides all facilities for the School of Journalism as well as classrooms and faculty offices for general use. The classroom activities and the faculty offices are separated by a 44′ × 66′ interior court. The structure is steel and the exterior of the building is steel with glass panels set in steel angle frames. Glass is floor to ceiling and completely fixed. The entire building is air conditioned using a double duct system. The basic structural element of the building is a 22′-0″ square bay. The building is eleven bays long and five bays wide, each bay is divided into 5′-6″ modules. Total floor area is 70 000 square feet. The building was completed in 1964.