

# Breuer House Iterations: An Analysis of Breuer's Abstract and Relative Stylistic Development

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# Abstract

Keywords: Marcel Breuer, Analysis, Relative Style, Absolute Style

This study contributes to the understanding of Breuer's architectural style and provides insight into the evolution of modernist architecture in the mid-twentieth century whereby it examines the progression of Marcel Breuer's architectural style using Breuer House I (1939), Breuer House II (1948), and Breuer House, New Canaan II (1951) as case studies. Using Viollet le Duc's conceptual framework of absolute and relative style, Breuer's correspondences from the archive about the project are analysed to classify his style accordingly. Thereafter, a comparison is made between the dwellings to extract his progression. The study finds that Breuer's style is characterised by astute attention to detail, an emphasis on materiality, and a strong economic awareness. Breuer's style also progressed in terms of layout and organisational principles, with a shift towards prioritising all spaces in the dwelling, as opposed to just served spaces.





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# Introduction

The main focus of this study is to examine Marcel Breuer's personal domestic projects, namely Breuer House I (1939), Breuer House II -also referred to as Breuer House New Canaan I (1948) - and Breuer House New Canaan II (1951). With the study of these projects, the overall aim, and research question entailed in this project is to investigate the progression of his style using the aforementioned projects. While style analyses exist in other contexts, there is currently no specific research into Breuer's style, other than the classification of Breuer belonging to a mid-century modernist architectural style. Due to a large number of architectural movements, it proves to be helpful to classify architects and their works in this way, however, it often oversimplifies and classifies architects into a broad group that offers very little further information on their personal styles.

Breuer's style will be classified using Viollet-le-Duc's interpretation of style as the theoretical framework. Each work's relative and absolute style will be extracted from Breuer's original drawings from the archive. This will be done using correspondences between Breuer and others from the archive to extract a list of things that he either had to compromise on or did not want but was imperative in the development of a housing project (absolute style) and elements that he was set on from the beginning (relative style). Finally, once completed for each project, to trace the progression of these styles, a comparison will be made on the extracted styles of the individual projects.

Following the introduction, there are 7 chapters. These are ordered in the chronological order that the research was undertaken so as to see the thought process of this analysis. Each topic is subdivided for a clearer understanding of the methodology that occurred to undertake that section.

Firstly, the theoretical framework section refers to the research part of the paper that aims to concretely define the framework upon which the analysis will be based. This section comprises Chapter 2 (*Theoretical Framework*). Chapter 2 aims at defining the concept of style using various architectural literary resources.

Secondly, the analysis section uses the previously defined conceptual framework and applies it to each Breuer House in chronological order. Chapter 3 (*Breuer House I, 1939*), Chapter 4 (*Breuer House II, 1948*) and Chapter 5 (*Breuer House, New Canaan II, 1951*) discuss the Breuer Houses individually with subchapters separating the absolute and relative analyses of the houses in reference to style.

With the analysis complete, to define the development of Breuer's style in these projects, Chapter 6 (*Style Comparison*) offers a comparison between the styles.

Finally, in Chapter 7 (*Conclusion*) an overall definition of Breuer's style and a summary of findings will be discussed.

# Theoretical Framework

The definition of style is an important step in the procedure of a style analysis, as there are many different views on the subject, and it is typically difficult to analyse (Unwin, 2014). To ensure a suitable definition, and thus conceptual framework, a few definitions were explored in chronological order.

The first definition belongs to Blondel (1705–1774). Blondel defined two important concepts belonging to his definition of style. The first concept refers to a ‘true style’ (Wang, 2018) which implies an architecture that is pure in its means of expression; all components refer to that style. The second concept alludes to a style influenced by the culture and traditions (Kruft & Taylor, 2014) in which the architecture is placed.

The second definition belongs to Quatremere (1755-1749), who states that “style is synonymous with character” (Quincy, 1999). In this way, he implies that this definition of style relates more to the physical work and its creator than the previous definition of style, which is only related to the expression of a work. This differs from Blondel’s definition in that Blondel’s definition of style is used more as a tool to unify works of architecture, while Quatremere’s definition is used more as a tool that further explains a work.

Finally, Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879) defines style as “appropriate to its objective” (Viollet-le-Duc, 1875). He further elaborates on two distinct kinds of style: absolute and relative.

“In art, then, there is absolute style; there is also relative style. The first dominates the entire artistic conception of an object; the second can be modified depending upon the purpose of the object. The style appropriate for a church would not be appropriate for a dwelling; this is relative style. Yet a house can reveal the imprint of an artistic expression [just as can a temple or barracks] that is independent of the object itself, an imprint belonging to the artist or, more precisely, to the principle that he took as a starting point: this is style.” (Viollet-le-Duc, 1875)

Absolute style in this context refers to the function of the architectural project as dictating its style. Relative style is then the style relative to the architect’s personal style. This concept of style refers more closely to Blondel’s definition, in that it consists of two distinct parts, one belonging to the idea of the objects, and one belonging to the external influence of said object.

Based on the above definitions, I find that Viollet-le-Duc's definition is the most relevant in the context of this analysis due to its black-and-white nature; a dwelling has a style that belongs to it because it's a dwelling and a style that belongs to it because of the architect's personal style. At the extraction of absolute style, the relative style is also one that refers to Breuer's style which is specifically relevant in this instance due to the absolute style being the same in all cases (relating to housing). While Blondel's concept also has this nature of clarity, it seems less relevant to Breuer's works when compared due to the similar cultural context of all the dwellings.

To analyse Breuer's works specifically using the chosen method, the absolute and relative styles will be classified separately. In this context, the relative style is classified according to elements that Breuer has a clear desire for; elements that have affected and changed the design and become a main characteristic of the dwelling. The absolute style refers to elements required in the design of a functional home, but may not reflect Breuer's personal approach. This means that external influences may hinder Breuer's relative style, but a compromise has to be reached in order to ensure a fully functional home, which will then classify the element as absolute.

# Design Analysis

## Breuer House I, 1939

Breuer House I is situated in Lincoln, Massachusetts. The land upon which the house was built was owned by Helen Storror, who also paid for the completion of the house, along with other architects' homes such as Walter Gropius and Walter Bognar. Breuer paid 10% of the construction price per year as rent (Cobbers, 2010) and eventually had the option to purchase this land, but never did (Breuer, Letter, 1940). Despite not having owned the land, it is clear that his intentions were always to live in this home regardless (due to the constant reference to the home being "my home" (Breuer, Letter, 1938)). The home was initially designed as a "Bachelor Pad" for Breuer, who eventually got married in 1940, a year after the completion of the project in 1939 (Cobbers, 2010). The family eventually moved out of the dwelling when they moved to New Canaan, Lincoln, and began the development of Breuer House II.

## Absolute Style

This particular project is interesting because there was a big financial constraint apparent in a lot of the correspondences for this project, which ultimately affected the final dwelling. This first becomes apparent with the fact that Breuer builds the house on a piece of land owned by Helen Storror, and pays off the construction price of the project in 10% increments over the years he lived there (Cobbers, 2010). There is also an overarching theme within the correspondences studied whereby Breuer consistently asks to be refunded for products that weren't of sufficient quality (Breuer, 05-09-1939) and confirms prices and deals (Breuer, 28-01-1939; Breuer, 15-11-1939). This financial constraint meant that materials had to be substituted for cheaper materials (Breuer, 28-01-1939), which meant that overall, a lot of the material choices made for this project might not reflect his personal style, but rather the requirement for financial savings.

There were also external factors to consider that Breuer included, but were not ultimately his ideals. An example of this is the inclusion of a "servant's room" (Breuer, 03-01-1939). It seems from this correspondence that while Breuer had no use for this wing of the house, he included it due to possible power dynamics between Breuer and Storror because of her financial input in this project.

The design of the utilitarian spaces in this project was outsourced, such as the kitchen being designed as the "Oxford" line (Breuer, 15-12-1938) and the bathrooms being the "simplicity line" (Breuer, 07-12-1938). Breuer ultimately had great attention to detail as is often seen as a theme in his correspondences (an example of this being the specification that the radiators he ordered be cased in plywood to match the rest of the home). Thus,

'layout of house separated into serve vs served

Need to think about form of building & why?

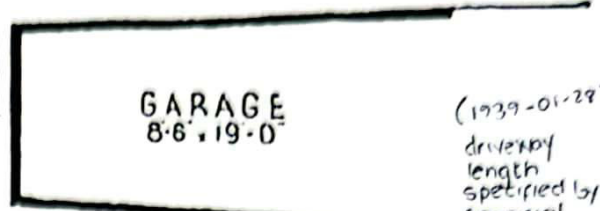
Furnishing:  
 -bought a lot of it & thought he would make it (1939-08-03)  
 (1939-09-05)

Finance issue:  
 (1939-11-15)  
 (1939-06-28)

(1938-12-07)  
 (1938-12-15)

Built by  
 Cushman Brothers, Inc.

kitchen: "Oxford" line  
 → enamel finished wood cabinetry  
 → linoleum sink + countertops



(1939-01-29)  
 driveway length specified by financial restrictions

design of kitchen outsourced to Steelkraft Co.

"Bachelor Pad" → service spaces are not of importance

(1939-02-10)  
 Radiators designed to be wooden

170' length means cheaper price

Bathrooms also outsourced "Simplicity line" (1938-12-07)

Final price of house \$10,224.89

Intention to buy: (1939-09-28)

"American Country Life" (1939-06-08)

(1939-08-17) granite stone veneer → keep dimensions (1939-01-28)

absolute

3" concrete floor with granolithic finish

Materiality of porch relative → defined + pushed for at early stage

made from douglas fir (1939-01-28)

↑ a "paired columns"

2 columns → a motif that appears often



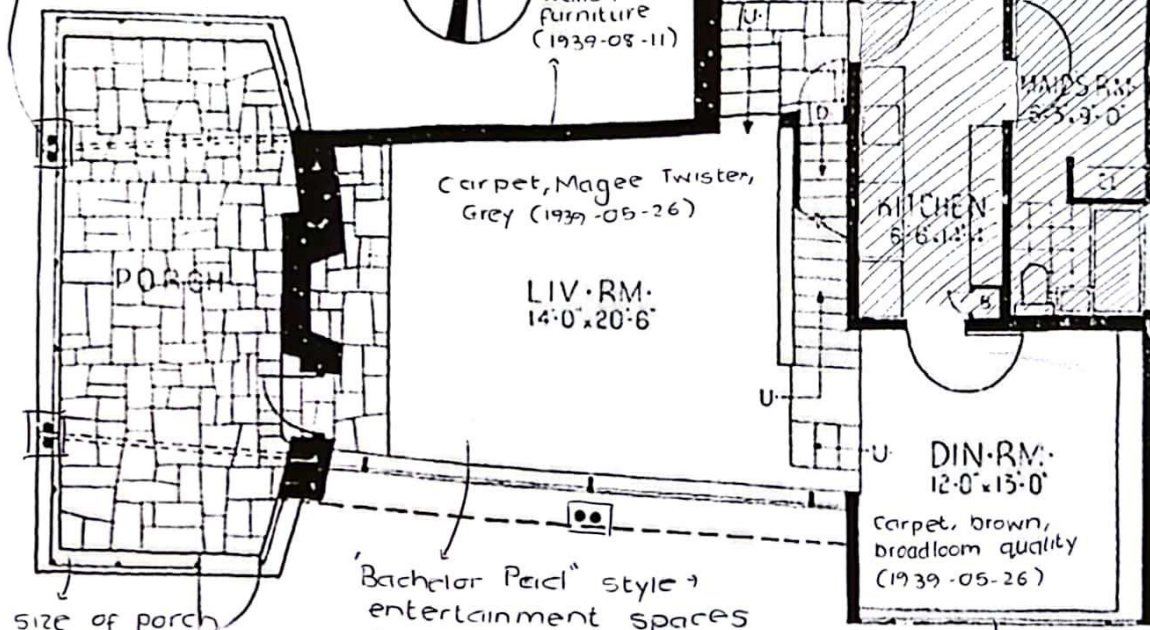
Plywood used for walls + furniture (1939-08-11)

"Modernfold door" prefabricated (1938-12-03)

Didn't originally want, pushed by

Storero to include used as guest room (1939-01-03)

\$3000  
 Plot of land: less privacy, less views, less practical possibilities (1939-10-02)



Carpet, Magee Twister, Grey (1939-05-26)

LIV. RM. 14'0" x 20'6"

KITCHEN 6'6" x 13'2"

DIN. RM. 12'0" x 13'0"

Carpet, brown, broadloom quality (1939-05-26)

size of porch  
 "large enough for ping pong table"

"Bachelor Pad" style → entertainment spaces given the most space  
 "bachelor who is...never home" (1939-09-05)

→ Samuel Cabot's Roof (1939-03-24)

Problems heating?

Steel windows, (1939-01-28)

used carpet from Figure 1. Annotated Plan Breuer House I



while Breuer decided upon the overall dimensions and placement of these spaces, they reflect very little on his relative style.

A factor that also cannot be ignored in deciding the absolute style is the inclusion of Gropius in this design. This building was built under “Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer, Associated Architects”, and in a specific correspondence (Breuer, 25-10-1939) where Breuer House I was being published, Breuer corrects the publisher in specifying that the building be published with Gropius’ name in it. While the potential influence of this on the design cannot be ignored, it is not clear what influence Gropius had on this design as there are no correspondences with him and little written about his collaboration on this specific dwelling.

While everything included is ultimately finally decided by Breuer, there were a lot of compromises involved in the completion of this project, and overall there were a lot of factors that contributed to the absolute style of this project, both finances as well as external factors, such as Storror’s input.

## **Relative Style**

Breuer’s relative style in this specific dwelling is characterised by great attention to detail and a desire for quality. This is seen in his uncompromising attitude towards material quality, whereby he is unafraid to request materials be replaced if they are not at his standard (Breuer, 05-06-1939). This is specifically seen in a correspondence whereby he insists that the top of his dresser be replaced if broken as it came delivered in a material different (and more expensive) than the one he specified (Breuer, 05-06-1939). If this is the attention to detail he pays to furniture, it can be assumed that this same level is applied to the larger scale of his house.

This first dwelling is referred to as a bachelor pad (Cobbers, 2010) which is a style that typically reflects on entertainment spaces (also seen as served spaces) such as living rooms, dining rooms and outdoor areas (Osgerby, 2005), which, contrasts the outsourcing of the design of servant spaces. This theme of prioritisation of entertainment programs is shown both in the generous sizing of these spaces - in contrast to the servant spaces, such as kitchens, bathrooms and the “servant” quarters – as well as the great attention to detail in these spaces. An example of this can be seen in the sizing of the porch, which is specified as a space large enough to fit a ping pong table (Breuer, 12-12-1938), showing its intent to be a space dedicated to entertainment.

Because of the clear financial constraint in this project, the absolute starts to blur into the relative style. The material choices, for example, in this project, might not have been Breuer’s first choice, as in multiple correspondences, it can be seen that Breuer tends to opt for the cheaper material. However, this material choice becomes important in the overall style of this house, as it becomes a house characterised by its excessive use of plywood



(Breuer, 11-08-1939). Breuer also had certain material images in mind from the conception of the project, such as the stone wall in the living room, which he specified was to be stone on both the interior and exterior (Breuer, 07-12-1938). Another material motif that is also recurrent in a lot of his projects is the wooden paired column (Cobbers, 2010), showcasing the importance of material choice and articulation in his projects.

The form of this dwelling is also of great importance. Most of the house is rectangular in that it consists of rooms made up of ninety-degree angles. This, however, does not apply to the living room, porch and garage, whereby walls are either curved or diagonal. As can be seen in his initial sketches (see Appendix 30 and 31) for this project, this organicism is something he consistently experimented with and developed. This can be seen in the use of and experimentation with curved walls to create an organically shaped architectural volume. The program for these spaces also refers back to the served spaces, whereby the breaking of the strict perpendicularity gives the organic spaces even more emphasis, creating a sense of hierarchy between the different spaces.

Overall, Breuer's relative style in this specific project is characterised by its association with a bachelor pad, whereby emphasis through size and arrangement of commodities is placed on entertainment spaces. It is also characterised by its attention to detail and materiality - affected by financial constraints. The organicism of landscaping as well as the diagonal forms of the dwellings are also of importance in the definition of Breuer's style within this particular project.

## **Breuer House II, 1948**

The Breuer household purchased the property on which this house is placed in May 1947. The plot is situated in New Canaan, a part of the United States famous for its substantial amount of mid-century style homes (Earls, 2006). The house itself was designed for Breuer's growing family which consisted of his wife and his two children. During the construction phase of this dwelling, Breuer was in South America, so the construction was overseen by Eliot Noyes and Harry Seidler. The dwelling, once completed, is nestled in a hilly plot surrounded by forestry. This house was eventually renovated and sold to his former partner, Herbert Beckhard, in 1986. In 2005, the house narrowly avoided demolition, was renovated again and eventually listed in 2015 for \$5,800,000 (Donofrio, 2015).

### **Absolute Style**

The main effect distinguishing the absolute style in this project was an incompetent contractor. This meant the project was delayed in its completion, but also that the level of craftsmanship – characterised by his acute attention to detail - may have been compromised, which is typically something that Breuer's style is characterised by, as discussed in the previous chapter. A second distinguishing factor in Breuer's absolute style is his financial limitations in the completion of this project.

An overarching theme in the correspondence for this project was the incompetence of the contractor of Breuer House II, Irving Wood. This led to a lot of issues in the completion of the project. There were instances where people weren't being paid for the jobs they completed because Wood failed to send cheques, which led to threats of lawsuits (Breuer, 09-12-1947). Overall, there was an overarching theme that the level of craftsmanship organised by this contractor was subpar. The wood panelling used did not match in certain aspects of the house (Breuer, 24-11-1947) and he neglected to insert drainage tiles (Breuer, 18-03-1948), leading the basement to get flooded. The doors organised were also warped and made in an "uncraftsmanlike" manner (Breuer, 01-12-1947), and were eventually used despite their defects, which also shows that Breuer's high standard of quality was in due course compromised to accommodate for time lost due to the contractor's delays.

There were also financial restrictions prevalent in this project, however, less so than in his previous project. Breuer classifies housing in the range of \$12,000 to \$15,000 as minimum cost housing (Breuer, 12-05-1947) while his house was built for \$10,687.16 (Breuer, 06-05-1949), which already depicts his outlook for spending money in this project. There were many instances in this project whereby he asks for discounts (Breuer, 11-12-1947; Breuer, 30-04-1948; Breuer, 20-09-1948). While this build was prized for its economic sensibility (Breuer,

→ grain various sheets plywood to match (1947-10-06)  
 "A ceiling dry's ... (48-03-27)

aircraft photography:  
 (47-11-26)

attn to detail

waterproof fir plywood  
 (47-06-03)

Leakage in wall insulation  
 (47-12-11)  
 (48-01-08)

dishwasher in plywood  
 (48-01-05)

asbestos ceiling  
 (48-01-05)

Doors are warped, hard to be used  
 (47-12-01)  
 replaced eventually  
 (48-01-07)

living, dining + entrance hall  
 Cypress Plywood ceiling, 3/4" tongue and groove, hidden nailing (1947-11-24)  
 no finish on it so needs care  
 (47-12-01)

made by Hans Knoll  
 (48-09-20)

All carpet had to be replaced on colour  
 (47-12-01)  
 But paid for expensive option in the end  
 (48-02-16)

what he leaves most, caused problems

The hill → water pressure → flooded the basement  
 (48-03-22)

His wishes "out of the ordinary" (47-12-09)

masonry sliding doors (48-01-05)  
 inadequate (48-03-03)

problems with cantilever → bent because not pre-stretched + snowfall (48-01-05)

Neutral with colour pops  
 (48-06-22)

also plumber



MAIN FLOOR PLAN



insatisfactory contractor (absolute)  
 (47-11-24) (48-03-18)  
 (48-01-05) (48-06-18)  
 (48-03-03) → fired

"minimum cost houses" \$12000-\$15000  
 (47-05-12)  
 paid \$8000 for his inexpensive (48-06-22) MCMMA:  
 (48-06-16)  
 Sold House: April 18th, 1951 (48-06-22) (51-04-05)

Discourts: (47-12-22)  
 (48-04-30)  
 (48-09-20)  
 (47-12-11)

07-05-1949), Breuer's frugal mindset was in certain instances uncompromising. This is seen in his choice of carpet for this dwelling. In correspondence, the supplier mentions that the carpet ordered is expensive and not in stock because of this (Breuer, 08-12-1947), however, Breuer orders it despite this remark (Breuer, 16-02-1948). This shows that when an element is important enough to him, he is unwilling to compromise on the cheaper option.

## **Relative Style**

A large part of the style within this dwelling relies on the fact that this is a cantilevered house. This was accommodated through multiple scales and was of very clear importance in this dwelling. A further development of style is that Breuer is an astute craftsman.

The style itself starts with the dwelling's site, where the house is placed on a hill. Breuer mentions that he appreciates dwellings placed on ground level due to their easy access to the outdoors, but also mentions he likes dwellings on stilts due to their ability to provide views (Cobbers, 2010). While this defined part of his style for this build, it also caused issues in the construction stage. Because the building was recessed into the hill, the basement was eventually flooded due to insufficient drainage of the basement (Breuer, 18-03-1948). In spite of the fact that this design was part of Breuer's ideals, it was not the easiest solution to construct the dwelling in this way.

The cantilever in this dwelling means that the top of the dwelling is larger than the area on the ground floor which is also an economical decision made by Breuer (Breuer, 22-06-1948), whereby the foundations and more utilitarian spaces placed on this floor are at a minimum.

“The lower portion of the house is, for economic reasons and for reasons of ‘no-need-to-be-bigger,’ reduced as much as possible... less foundation, less masonry, less concrete work, less insulation, less expense wherever you are connected with the terrain.” (Breuer, 05-01-1948)

Alongside this, the lightness of the structure used, replicated that of the typical American house, however further developed to accommodate the number of cantilevers used (Breuer, 22-06-1948). From all levels of detail, it can be seen that Breuer aimed to facilitate the cantilever which was of great importance within this design.

“The great change in architecture has been the shift from simple compression structures to continuous, fluent tension structures. This change is so radical that it alone would justify a completely new architectural concept. The past used gravity to defeat gravity; the Egyptian pyramid is broad at the

base and narrowing to a point at the top. The ‘new structure’ in its most expressive form is hollow below and substantial on top – just the reverse of the pyramid. It represents a new epoch in the history of man, the realization of one of his oldest ambitions; the defeat of gravity.” (Earls, 2006)

Once again, Breuer’s attention to detail also characterises his general approach to architecture. This is seen in his ability to pick up minor incorrect details (Breuer, 01-12-1947) as well as his approach to assuring the materiality of all objects is coherent, seen in the example whereby he cases his dishwasher in plywood to match the rest of the kitchen (Breuer, 05-01-1948).

Overall, this house is developed to accommodate his family using his ideals of a hillside house using cantilevered spaces in an economical manner. The materiality and the attention thereto also define Breuer as a master craftsman with acute attention to detail whereby he characterises his style.



## **Breuer House, New Canaan II, 1951**

Breuer House, New Canaan II - referred to as Breuer House III from here on out - was built in 1951. This is the last dwelling Breuer designed for himself and his family. He lived here until 1976, which is longer than any of his previous dwellings, which is interesting considering this is the dwelling with the least amount of documentation. When the dwelling was eventually sold, Breuer's partner, Herbert Beckhard, designed additions to the dwelling.

### **Absolute Style**

A seemingly consistent factor in Breuer's absolute style specific to his personal projects is his limited finances. On top of this, there are occasional issues regarding the quality of items and requirements for different products that ultimately affected the overall quality and style of the home.

The economical approach is clear in correspondences within this project. There were instances where Breuer ensures that he receives discounts (Breuer, 18-06-1951), and where he asks if tasks could be completed bearing his financial restrictions in mind (Breuer, 26-03-1951; Breuer, 04-04-1951). This, as in other cases, means that if Breuer was not constricted by his financial means, perhaps the overall design might have been different.

There were external factors involved in disturbing what could be perceived as Breuer's "pure" style. The limited availability of a material used for his couch meant that he had to choose a different, cheaper material than his ideals (Breuer, 18-10-1950). This meant that the living room, the first room you see when you enter this dwelling, was not to his original standards, and the couch, which he called a "show piece" for this room, was not ideal materially.

Another case of external factors compromising his ideal quality was relevant to the windows. Breuer originally commissioned a mill from New York to produce his window frames (Breuer, 16-07-1951), which, while being further than a New Canaan-based mill, had superior quality. However, this original mill could not complete the order. This meant Breuer had to compromise and use another mill, which ultimately provided windows that were of inferior quality (Breuer, 17-03-1952). In this dwelling, a large amount of the surface area of the facade is made up of windows, therefore it ultimately has a drastic effect on the dwelling's aesthetic quality, which meant Breuer had to compromise on a significant part of this dwelling's appearance because of this.

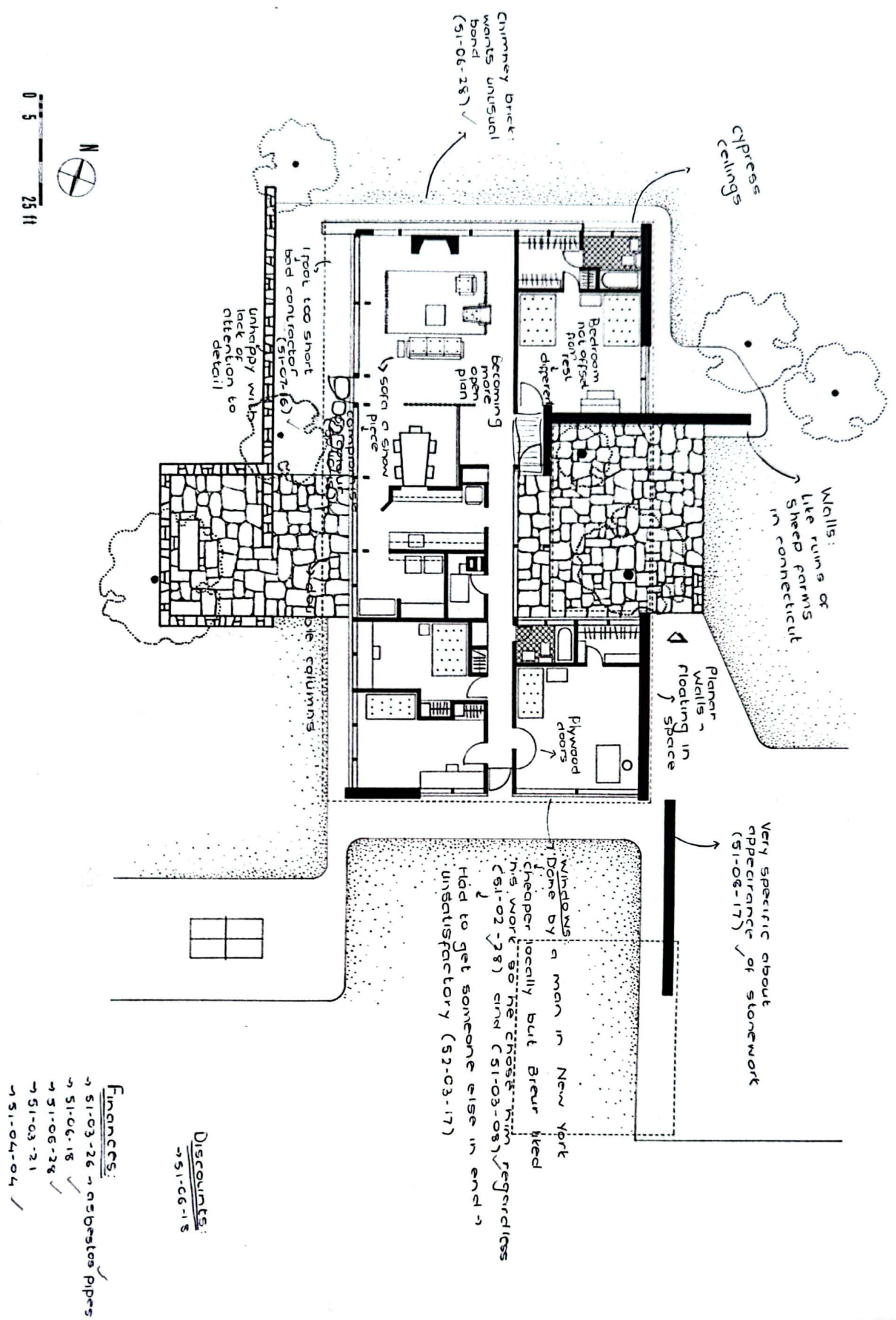


Figure 3. Annotated Plan Breuer House, New Canaan II  
14

The final external factor was based on the contractor's inattention to detail. This was apparent in many ways (Breuer, 16-07-1951), however, the largest was that the overhang on the west façade of this house was one foot shorter than it was originally meant to be.

The factors mentioned above, both internal and external, meant that the dwelling's quality, and thus style, was shaped to create a dwelling different to one purely made from Breuer's ideals.

## **Relative Style**

Breuer's relative style in this project was characterised by the importance of material and its related spatial influences, an evolving approach to the separation of the dwelling, and overall attention to detail.

Stone can be seen as the primary building material of this project and greatly characterises Breuer's style in this project. The stone and its layout are reflective of the ruins of sheep walls left by farmers prominent in this part of Connecticut (Earls, 2006). The importance of these walls is also shown in Breuer's great attention to detail in their aesthetic quality. After the wall's completion, Breuer asked if more variation in stone sizes and irregular joints (Breuer, 17-08-1951). This reflects his acute attention to detail, as well as the importance of the aesthetic quality of this focal point within this dwelling.

“Crystalline quality of an unbroken white flat slab is there, together with an in contrast to the rough, ‘texture-y’ quality of ... broken stone.” (Earls, 2006)

The massiveness of these walls also contributes largely to the planarity that this house has. Due to the disconnected nature of these large pieces – also seen in the interior, where large stone elements are connected by glass – the planar nature of this dwelling is emphasised. This effect is further highlighted by the fact that very few walls feel as though they have corners (Earls, 2006), again attributed to the stone. As a whole, the stonework in this dwelling makes up a large part of the dwelling's style.

Breuer's attention to detail, as mentioned in previous chapters, is a large part of what contributes towards his style. As highlighted with the stonework, whereby he clearly specifies the appearance of the stonework. Breuer also notices instances where people's attention to detail is not as acute as his, as seen in the previous chapter, whereby Breuer scolds his contractor for his inattention to detail (Breuer, 17-03-1952).

The placement of different programs within this dwelling is noticeably different to the other dwellings and thus also makes up his style. Typically, within his other dwellings, the entrance is at the core of the home – the collective, more public spaces such as the living room, dining room, and kitchen. In this dwelling, however,



Breuer has placed the bedroom right next to the front door, along with the living room. On top of this, Breuer's dwellings are further progressing into a more open plan, with more connections available to the public spaces of the home.

Overall, this dwelling is characterised largely by the materiality, and the attention to detail therein. The progression in placement and orientation of program is also something that characterises this house.

# Style Comparison

Breuer's style developed throughout his personal residential projects. The form and layout of these dwellings were clearly very different from the other, however a deeper understanding of what might have prompted these decisions is discussed herein.

A part of his style that was consistent throughout was his keen eye for detail. Breuer was scrupulous about the quality and appearance that his dwellings had as a whole, ensuring that tasks were repeated if they weren't up to his very high standards. In Breuer House II, Breuer's plumber noted that he occasionally did tasks in exceptional ways to achieve Breuer's high standards. In Breuer House, New Canaan II, Breuer specifically asked that the stone walls be added to because their appearance was too uniform.

Breuer's eye for detail followed into the importance and detailing of materiality, which was also a dominant factor throughout, however in different ways. In Breuer House II, materiality was seen as a way of achieving the distinguishing style factor in this dwelling: the cantilever. This meant that the construction of this dwelling was designed in a lightweight manner to ascertain the functionality and stability of the cantilever in a way that it appeared aesthetically weightless. There was also the factor of continuity of materiality in these projects. In Breuer House I, Breuer ensured all radiators were covered in plywood so that they had the same aesthetic quality as the rest of the house. This process was repeated in Breuer House II, whereby Breuer encased the dishwasher with plywood so that it had the same appearance as the rest of the kitchen.

The material types themselves were also often repeated throughout all Breuer houses. In Breuer House I, the work becomes praised for its way of showcasing the use of plywood. The use of plywood is again seen in Breuer House II and Breuer House, New Canaan II on the ceilings. Stone is used to accentuate the organicism and highlight the connection between interior and exterior whereby the stone wall is a single element. In Breuer House, New Canaan II, the use of stone comes back and is again a single element on the interior and exterior of the home, but is also used to pay homage to the site's heritage of sheep farming.

Repeatedly, Breuer also aimed to achieve his dwellings as economically as possible. While this is considered a part of his abstract style, the repetition of this act despite his economic progression throughout can lead one to believe that this forms part of Breuer's relative style, despite it being an external, uncontrollable factor. Breuer's economic standings meant that he had to compromise on quality in specific scenarios, as seen in Breuer House

I, whereby Breuer agreed to use Douglas fir, in place of the more expensive cypress, despite it being the primary material in this dwelling. The main style of Breuer House II – the cantilevered house – was characterised by the economic decision to save expenses on an expensive part of the house: the foundations. This particular dwelling's identity becomes altered by Breuer's economic awareness, whereby an article was published claiming how Breuer used a dollar to buy more room (Breuer, 07-05-1949). This specific factor makes Breuer's personal projects interesting in extracting his style in contrast to his other projects, whereby it appears that there is an infinite amount of funding, characterised by his wealthy clientele.

In Breuer House I, a large part of the style of this dwelling was that it was designed in a way that prioritises entertainment spaces, and other spaces were designed in a purely utilitarian manner. This meant that the complete design of kitchens and bathrooms was outsourced, and purchased as complete, premade packages. In future dwellings, Breuer designed bathrooms and kitchens himself, which shows a progression to the design of both served and servant spaces.

Breuer House I was required to have “servant's” quarters by Helen Storrow, the person who sponsored this house. In contrast to this, Breuer House I and Breuer House, New Canaan II were designed to consider a “servant-less” life. This meant that the kitchens were in close proximity to the dining room, and guests were prompted to assist with the cleaning by handing plates from the dining table to the kitchen. This shows how external influences shape the design as opposed to when Breuer has free control.

The program and layout of these dwellings also progressed throughout their designs. Chronologically, the houses became more open plan in nature where the kitchen, dining room and living room became less separated. In Breuer House, New Canaan particularly, there was the biggest adjustment in organisation principle due to the placement of the primary bedroom within the more collective spaces of the home. This contrasts the previous iterations, whereby bedrooms were in proximity to each other, but was also harshly separated from the collective zones of the dwelling.

Overall, the analysis of these dwellings shows certain patterns of emphasis, progression or stark levels of change throughout.

# Conclusion

Overall, the analysis of Breuer's style in this way presented potential drawbacks. It did, however, lead to a conclusive list of what could be considered Breuer's style, which is an important step in recognising the individual style of the architect. Finally, using this methodology in this way proved successful in answering the research question of tracking the progression of Breuer's style using these projects.

Style - specifically the classification of personal style - is under-researched, which is contrary to the fact that it makes up an important factor of architecture, and its history, as a whole. It's an important research topic, as it defines a historical period from which the architect comes, as well as providing a deeper knowledge of their bases, rather than framing an architect solely on the movement to which they're classified. This study is even more applicable today, where there are no clear architectural movements defined. Nowadays, the broadest architectural movement to which buildings are classified is the contemporary movement, which does not prove sufficient in a deeper understanding of the goals and characteristics of a certain movement, because this classification is too broad. Using the method used here proves useful in classifying architects to more personalised, smaller movements than to a broad movement that reflects very little of the people involved therein.

Using Viollet-le-Duc's conceptual framework proved to be useful, however, there were potential drawbacks to this methodology. There are also instances where the absolute style and relative styles merge, as was the case with Breuer's economical solutions, where elements that may be external start to define the design and later become recognising factors of the architect. Additionally, since Breuer's correspondence was used, the list of style created is one extracted using primarily Breuer's own opinions. While this would provide a concrete list of what Breuer considers to be his style, subjective interpretation of these correspondences is involved, and thus Breuer's style becomes an interpretation of his style based on subjective patterns drawn.

Thus, Breuer's style, subjectively defined, could be considered as one that embraces the precision of materiality in an astute level of detail. Economic minimisation is also to be noted when considering his style, as this was also eventually something others picked up and Breuer became known for.

Overall, Breuer's style progressed in terms of the organisation principle he uses; these dwellings became more open plan in nature while trying to accommodate a "servant-less" lifestyle. His style also progressed by means of prioritising all spaces, as opposed to the previous prioritisation of served spaces.

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# Appendix

## Breuer House I

Gropius & Breuer  
1430 Mass. Avenue  
Cambridge, Mass.

ATTENTION: MR. KENNEDY

Gentlemen:

SUBJECT: MRS. STORER'S RESIDENCE  
LINCOLN, MASSACHUSETTS

For the sum of ONE HUNDRED TEN (\$110) DOLLARS we will furnish f.o.b. our factory, freight allowed to Lincoln one junior Modernfold door for opening 7' wide x 6'3" high and including the track. Material to be duPont fabricoid, bone white.

The installation of this can be readily done by any good mechanic. We will apply the hinge on the face of the front stile as explained.

Very truly yours,

NEW CASTLE PRODUCTS

H. A. SEELEY CO., Agent,

By *H. Seeley*

Appendix 1. Letter to Breuer from New Castle Products (Source: Breuer, Letter, 03-12-1938)

Mr. Marcel Breuer,  
c/o Gropius & Breuer,  
1430 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, Mass.

RIC	B	
ans'd		

Dear Sir:

We quote as follows for Simplicity Design Bathroom

Accessories made by the Charles Parker Company:

1	Medicine Cabinet	#7007	list	\$23.00
1	Towel Bar	#220 - 18"	"	4.00
1	"	220 - 30"	"	4.70
1	Recessed Paper Holder	#228	"	3.40
1	" Soap & grab	#230	"	3.80
1	Shelf 18" black	#218	"	5.70
1	Double Hook	#227	"	1.50

P. O. B. Meriden, Conn. - - - - - 46.10

discount 25% making this list net \$34.58. The express charge on this shipment would amount to approximately \$1.00. We suggest carrying an allowance ~~for~~ <sup>of</sup> \$36.00 for these fixtures.

Appendix 2. Letter to Breuer from W.C. Vaughan Company (Source: Breuer, Letter, 07-12-1938)



bedrooms, kitchen, bath, and heating-room, (which is also used for storage).

To the west side is a porch, (large enough for a ping-pong table); to the east are the bedrooms and bath; the kitchen is to the north, and to the south are the dining-room and studio.

The large window of the studio is protected from the summer sun by the cantilever part of the roof.

I think that this house would be liveable, for a couple as well, even with a child, if there were no servants living in the house. But I think it is wise to take into consideration now a possible enlargement, whereby two or three bedrooms and one or two bathrooms could be added to the house.

It would be a sort of guest house, adjoining the north wall of the entrance hall, so that it could be approached directly from the entrance, and the bathroom of the new wing could be made available for the main floor use, also.

Appendix 3. Letter from Breuer to Helen Storrow (Source: Breuer, Letter, 12-12-1938)

I intend to cover this glass door in the winter with a removable, plastic form, as the porch won't be used during that season, and I should prefer to have an uninterrupted wall around the fireplace, without the door.

The stones of the curved wall of the fireplace are without plaster, inside and out, so that one has the effect of the natural texture of the stone, in the interior as well. Otherwise, I think all the inside walls will be of natural wood paneling, with ceilings plain white.

The garage, with space for garden tools, etc., will be entirely separate from the house, at the new road.

I hope to get the house for no more than \$8,000; the possible enlargement would cost about \$2,000 or \$3,000.

I should be very glad to hear your opinion about the plans. After your approval, I shall start building as soon as possible, so that I may move in by the beginning of the summer.

Appendix 4. Letter from Breuer to Helen Storrow (Source: Breuer, Letter, 12-12-1938)



We will furnish our "Oxford" line of quality made enamel finished wood cabinetry in conjunction with "Oxford factory built linoleum sink and counter tops for the sum of...\$279. delivered.

Items included under this quotation as below:

Elevation "A"

- 2-30H Wall cabinets
- 1-30B base cabinet with metal bread drawer and divided silver drawer
- 1-42M sink closure and bottom plate
- 1-30BL all drawer base cabinet
- 1-102" long by 25" wide linoleum sink top with 18"x24"x8" deep cast iron porcelain enamel sink bowl installed and trimmed with stainless steel molding. Sink top is ready to set in place on bases when delivered to job
- 18-sq. feet of prestwood backsplash including S. S. moldings.

Elevation "B"

- 2-30H wall cabinets
- 1-4224H over range cabinet
- 1-30BA base cabinet
- 1-30BA base cabinet
- 2-30" long linoleum counter tops trimmed with S. S. moldings
- 18-sq. feet of prestwood backsplash including S. S. moldings

All cabinetry is completely and beautifully finished in four coats of baked enamel at the factory and includes attached

Appendix 5. Letter Steelkraft Co. to Breuer (Source: Breuer, Letter, 15-12-1938)

As an alternate to the above quotation, we will furnish our Metl-Kraft line of enamel finished steel cabinetry in conjunction with "Oxford" linoleum sink and counter tops for the sum of.....\$294. delivered.

Metal cabinetry is rigidly constructed of heavy guage cold rolled steel, reinforced at points requiring unusual weight or strength. Cabinets have attached hardware of attractive design and exceptional ruggedness. Finish is tough, durable vegetable base baked enamel designed to last indefinitely.

It is our opinion that this arrangement will serve the best interests of your client at the same time providing this residence with facilities which are sufficiently out of the ordinary to insure extra living comfort and pleasure.

We trust that we leave with you the impression that our primary concern is to enhance the interior design of this home as well as to make available to your client the unusual features which are incorporated in these manufactured cabinets.

May we have the pleasure of serving you in this connection?

very truly yours,  
STEELKRAFT CO.

J. J. Owens  
General Manager

JJO/SS

Appendix 6. Letter Steelkraft Co. to Breuer (Source: Breuer, Letter, 15-12-1938)

Mrs. James W. Storrow  
Fair Winds  
Tuckers Town  
Bermuda.

Dear Mrs. Storrow:

Thank you very much for your letter and for the returned drawings.

I am very glad indeed you approve of the house and shall certainly build it in the spring.

I think your question about not providing a servant's room is very justified, but as I don't intend to have a servant living there, but one who comes in daily, this problem is not yet actual for me. The heating will be 100% automatic, and if I should happen to be away during cold weather, it could be controlled by the same person who took care of the house otherwise.

I intend to build a special wing for servants' and guests' rooms later, and I shall take this into consideration in all plans, heating arrangements, water and electric supplies, etc.

With my best wishes for the New Year,

Very sincerely yours,

Appendix 7. Letter from Breuer to Helen Storrow (Source: Breuer, Letter, 03-01-1939)

with the following changes taken into consideration:

Inside, 3 3/4" horizontal sheathing <sup>Douglas fir on sheathing,</sup> instead of 3 5/8" cypress. This inside sheathing should be smoothed and sanded, but without any finish. If it should be necessary to protect some parts of the wall with a finish of one coat of white shellac, there would be an addition of \$.10 per square yard. The outside sheathing in Western Red Cedar instead of cypress, with one coat of special oil, instead of backpriming and varnishing.

The entrance hall would be made in granite stone veneer, keeping the inside dimensions of the room.

The wood columns would be made in Douglas fir instead of cypress.

Allowance for steel windows, \$361, instead of \$526; screens, \$231 instead of \$256. Allowance for lighting fixtures, \$100 instead of \$150. Garage floor same as driveway. Frigidaire and range allowance, \$260 instead of \$310.

Further, you offered to charge \$1.45 per foot for the trench, water, electricity and telephone connection included, for anything over 100', and to charge \$4.00 per yard for driveway, 8' wide, for anything over 120' length.

Appendix 8. Letter from Breuer to Howard E. Custance (Source: Breuer, Letter, 28-01-1939)

In the event that you have the opportunity to build another house next door to my site, your price for my residence will be reduced by \$200.

Would you please let me know if this covers exactly our conversations?

Very sincerely yours,

Marcel Breuer

MB:L

Appendix 9. Letter from Breuer to Howard E. Culance (Source: Breuer, Letter, 28-01-1939)

c/o Gropius & Breuer  
1430 Massachusetts Ave.  
Cambridge, Mass.

ans'd			

Living Room - Under windows - 2 #5100 Convectors  
2 Enclosures, square grilles, 105 $\frac{1}{2}$ " long, 6" wide

Rear Living Room Wall - 1 #578 Convector  
No metal enclosure. Architect to substitute wooden grille - 72" long, 6" wide.

All enclosures listed below are measured above baseboard:-

Kitchen	-	Enclosure	-	33" long,	20" high
Hall	-	"		45 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	26" "
Bedrm #1	-	"		30 $\frac{1}{2}$ " "	18" "
" #2	-	"		58" "	18" "

Bathroom - To be a Sunrad radiator - 24" long, 20", 5" wide. To be installed in the room.

Submitted by

Appendix 10. Letter from W. S. Philips to Breuer (Source: Breuer, Letter, 10-02-1939)



Dear Mr. Custance:

Thank you for your letter of March 9 regarding the proposed changes for the Storrow house in Lincoln. We understand that the following work is to be done:

Basement

- 1) Omit the heater chimney.
- 2) Omit one vent brick under living room.
- 3) Omit two steel beams under bearing partition.
- 4) Excavate space under living room and do all extra masonry in connection therewith; that is, the retaining wall between the unexcavated part and the excavated space and any additional masonry needed under the walls shown on the original drawings.
- 5) 3" concrete floor with granolithic finish.
- 6) Area on north side of house with one foot gravel fill at bottom.
- 7) New wood basement sash and frame.
- 8) Add an 8 x 12 terra cotta flue to living room chimney for heater.
- 9) Basement stairs, fir treads, no risers. Simple handrail.

Appendix 11. Letter from Breuer to Howard E. Custance (Source: Breuer, Letter, 13-03-1939)

Mr. Howard Custance  
Custance Brothers Inc.  
68 Bedford Street  
Lexington, Massachusetts.

Dear Mr. Custance:

To confirm our conversation of to-day: I agree to use the lighter colored plywood as per sample,  $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick, for the inside, instead of  $\frac{3}{8}$ " fir as specified.

We further agree to accept a Samuel Cabot's roof, 15 year bond, instead of Barrett's, as specified, but we do this on the understanding that they are of equal quality.

We further agree to have the inside fir sheathing according to your sample, but with a V joint and without hollow back.

Sincerely yours,

Appendix 12. Letter from Breuer to Howard E. Custance (Source: Breuer, Letter, 24-03-1939)

Living Room: Fitted, machine bound, and laid, in Magee Twistex, #6416, grey.

Dining Room: Fitted, machine bound and laid, Bigelow carpet, #31042, brown, firm twist broadloom quality.

Bedroom #1: Fitted, machine bound, and laid, Bigelow carpet, #31021, blue, firm twist broadloom quality.

Bedroom #2 and Upper Hall: Cutting, laying and fitting of existing carpet; the hall carpet with the center joint. The existing carpet is in my apartment at 19 Everett Street, Cambridge, apartment #47, and has to be taken from there and shipped to Lincoln.

You also kindly promised to take out the matting from my present apartment and ship it out with the carpets to Lincoln.

It is understood that the carpets for the two bedrooms and for the upper hall are to be tacked down, but the carpets for the living room and dining room are to loose, so that I may roll them back upon occasion. It is further understood that the carpets for these two rooms, which are loose, must fit exactly the shape of the room, and be tight to the wall.

All the above mentioned carpets will be furnished by you with a 32 ounce felt lining, moth proof.

Appendix 13. Letter from Breuer to Mitchell H. Otash (Source: Breuer, Letter, 26-05-1939)

MB:L  
Encl. 1.

P.S. It is agreed between us that the steel angles of the living room window, which haven't been satisfactory, shall be left off, hoping that they won't be necessary. However, if it is shown that these angles, (as shown in the drawings), are needed, you will supply them without charge.

The same arrangement is agreed upon in regard to the baseboards, which are specified but shan't be supplied for the time being. We shall first try it out to see if it is all right without them.

The top of the closet in bedroom #1 is specified in plywood but supplied in solid wood. As you know, I am afraid this solid top will show deformations and, eventual cracks under the influence of the central heating. However it is agreed between us to keep them as they are for the present, but in case of deformations or cracks, you will replace it by a plywood top without charge, inclusive of painting

Appendix 14. Letter from Breuer to Howard E. Custance (Source: Breuer, Letter, 05-06-1939)

Dear Mr. Gane:

Many thanks for your letter of May 18.

"The Flat Book", which is very interesting indeed, has safely arrived, and I am very glad to to have it.

I still very much hope that you will come over for the World's Fair and give me the opportunity to show you my new house in Lincoln, near Cambridge, where you may like to try out the American country life, if you have time for it, for a few days.

Very sincerely yours,

Appendix 15. Letter from Breuer to Crofton E. Gane (Source: Breuer, Letter, 08-06-1939)

Mr. David H. Howie  
10 Post Office Square  
Boston, Massachusetts.

Dear Mr. Howie:

The Westinghouse Refrigerator for my house was slightly defective, but without influencing its appearance or functioning, so I decided to keep it and got a reduction of \$8.00 for the fault.

You find enclosed a check made out and endorsed by the Ames Company for \$8.00. Please deduct this from the total cost of the house.

I hope you agree with this arrangement.

Very sincerely yours,

Marcel Breuer.  
(signed by Secretary, in

Appendix 16. Letter from Breuer to David H. Howie (Source: Breuer, Letter, 28-06-1939)



New England Reed Company  
11 a Green Street  
Boston, Massachusetts.

Att: Mr. Canty

Gentlemen:

This is to confirm my order for three chairs at \$9.00 each, according to my drawings and my discussion with you yesterday. These chairs are to be delivered August 9.

Will you please let me know when I can see the pieces half finished in your shop?

Very sincerely yours,

Marcel Breuer

Appendix 17. Letter from Breuer to Mr. Canty (Source: Breuer, Letter, 03-08-1939)

United States Plywood Corporation  
616 West 46th Street  
New York City.

Att: L. H. Meyer, Advt's. Manager

Gentlemen:

Many thanks for your letter of August 8.

I am sorry I can't send you photographs of the house now, as they have not yet been taken. If I have some made, I certainly will advise the photographer to send you some of his shots.

However, if you want to have photographs made by your own photographer or have some special pictures made of the interior where plywood is used quite extensively for walls and furniture, please let me know.

Very sincerely yours,

Appendix 18. Letter from Breuer to L. H. Mayer (Source: Breuer, Letter, 11-08-1939)



Enclosed you will find the final bill of my house and a certificate for the final payment of \$1,568.41. The total costs of my house and garage, etc., is so far \$10,224.89. Kindly add to this the amount paid in advance for refrigerator and range.

There will be some additional expenses for a change in the grading on the southwest corner in connection with some trees which should be moved to this spot to provide privacy for the house and porch towards the south. This planting can only be done at a later date, probably next Spring.

I am wondering if you want to fix the total costs of the house now and according to this the rent that I have to pay. Also, I would be glad if you would let me know on what date you wish the payments of the rent to commence. Probably it is also agreeable for you to settle the agreement between Mrs. Sterrow and myself regarding this house in the next time.

May I invite you to see the finished house now, at any time you wish after the 28th of this month as I am going away for the next week. Please let me know when you wish to see the house.

Appendix 19. Letter from Breuer to David H. Howie (Source: Breuer, Letter, 18-08-1939)

Enclosed you find my check for \$69.25, in payment of your charges of July 28 for the items as follows:

- 1 Manchester Rug
- 1 Sisal Rug
- 1 Mattress
- 1 Cambria Box Spring
- Installing Wheel Castors

Regarding the three curtains which you made for me, as per your charge of August 16: As you know, I cannot accept these curtains. Immediately after the curtains had been delivered, I visited your shop and told your salesman about my objections. The curtains were made too narrow, apparently the result of a misunderstanding of your salesman, and in any case, not in accordance with my instructions or with usual

Appendix 20. Letter from Breuer to Paine Furniture Co. (Source: Breuer, Letter, 05-09-1939)

I am awfully sorry not to have received your letter of August 31, (together with your letter of September 2), until after my return from a trip to New York.

I would like, of course, to show the house to you and Mr. Howie personally, but I am afraid this won't be possible because you are away from Lincoln until next Friday and I have to go to Pittsburgh Thursday night, returning Sunday morning. Sunday night I have to go to the hospital for my operation which will probably keep me there for ten or fourteen days.

If it is possible for you and Mr. Howie to see me any time on Sunday, please let me know, - not by mail but by a note on the door of my house. However, if this is not convenient for you, please come any time you like after Friday, after getting in touch with Mrs. Cropsius, with whom I shall leave the key when I leave for Pittsburgh. Of course I would very much like to show you the house myself, but there are the complications of a bachelor who is practically never home!

I enjoy very much the few evenings and Sundays I spend out in Lincoln and am very glad indeed to have the house.

Appendix 21. Letter from Breuer to Helen Storrow (Source: Breuer, Letter, 05-09-1939)

Dear Mr. Howie:

Many thanks for your memorandum of September 26.

May I suggest starting the payments on my rent from August 15, 1939? I believe that was about the date the house was completed. Assuming that you will agree with this, may I send you enclosed my check for \$232.50, as payments for August, September and October? Please confirm your agreement to this arrangement.

I wonder if you have prepared an agreement regulating the lease and also giving the arrangement for the eventual purchase of the house and site.

Very sincerely yours,

Marcel Breuer

Appendix 22. Letter from Breuer to David H. Howie (Source: Breuer, Letter, 28-09-1939)

Mr. David H. Howie  
10 Post Office Square  
Boston, Massachusetts.

Re: Storow-Breuer House

Dear Mr. Howie:

I am quite sure that I can finish the planting of my house this fall and immediately afterwards I shall get in touch with you again to settle the final rent for my house.

For the duration of the lease, I should suggest at least three years, and an option for me for another three years, at the same rent, with three months' notice. If you don't approve of this, please make another suggestion.

Regarding the \$3000 for the lot itself: I feel that my lot has relatively less value than either of the others, as it has less privacy, less view, and less practical possibilities. Although I don't intend to make an important point of this, I would be glad if you would reconsider the price of the lot.

With many thanks for your visit in my house,

Very sincerely yours,

Appendix 23. Letter from Breuer to David H. Howie (Source: Breuer, Letter, 02-10-1939)

Dear Richards:

I am glad to hear that the Review continues as it would be a great loss for us all if the war situation should interrupt your work.

Regarding the publication of the photographic material you have from us: Please don't reproduce the exterior photographs of my house, which are now in your possession, because, as I wrote you before, they are not good. I hope that in a week or so I will be in a position to send you other better photographs.

May I remind you that my house also should be given as the work of the architects, Gropius and Breuer.

Please give my best regards to my friends there, - first of all to those in the Architectural Press.

Very sincerely yours,

Appendix 24. Letter from Breuer to J. M. Richards (Source: Breuer, Letter, 25-10-1939)

Jordan Marsh Company  
450 Washington Street  
Boston, Massachusetts.

Att: Mr. Dooley, Credit Dept.

Gentlemen:

I should like to order forty (40) yards of material as per the attached sample, (which is 50" wide at 65¢ per yard), to be delivered C.O.D. to the above address. Mr. A. B. Quin of Department 34 is holding this material for us until your approval of the 10% discount, which I understand is given to architects and decorators, is obtained.

I should appreciate receiving this material as soon as possible.

Very truly yours,

Marcel Breuer

Appendix 25. Letter from Breuer to Jordan Marsh Company (Source: Breuer, Letter, 15-11-1939)

November 17, 1939

Mr. Howard Custance  
Custance Brothers Inc.  
68 Bedford Street  
Lexington, Mass.

Dear Mr. Custance:

My house in Lincoln which you built gives me a great deal of pleasure and I would like to express in this letter my utmost satisfaction with your work.

You did a really good job there. And I only hope to be in a position in the future to have you as our builder many times.

May I also send you my best thanks for the fine and agreeable way in which you handled our business affairs and to send my best wishes for your future jobs.

Very sincerely yours,

Marcel Breuer

Appendix 26. Letter from Breuer to Howard E. Custance (Source: Breuer, Letter, 17-11-1939)



Sudbury Nurseries, Incorporated  
Maynard Road  
South Sudbury, Massachusetts

Gentlemen:

The pine tree which you planted recently at the north east corner of my house is not exactly what I had in mind. Neither is the location of the tree quite correct. I wonder if you are willing to change this tree. Otherwise I will probably have one or two smaller trees planted next to it to correct the appearance.

I am afraid all this cannot be done until Spring. If you see any possibility to do it soon, I would be glad if you would give me a ring early some morning, before 8:15, so that I can discuss the matter with you.

As the matter of these trees is not yet settled, would you please send me a corrected bill of December 2, with the omission of this tree. I will then have this bill paid through Mrs. Storrow's office.

Very sincerely yours,

Appendix 27. Letter from Breuer to Sudbury Nurseries, Inc. (Source: Breuer, Letter, 01-12-1939)

Attention: Mr. Howard Custance

Dear Mr. Custance:

I am sorry to trouble you now with various points in my house which I believe have to be mentioned here.

1. The leakage of the roof which is apparently repaired was, according to the man who repaired the job, due to cracking of the soldered joints at various points. I feel very uncomfortable about this even if it is repaired as it indicates that the soldering of the copper flashing was not done with the necessary care and I am expecting also other joints to be cracked by the constant movement in the copper caused by changes in temperature. There is also the problem of what happened with the insulation in the roof which, I suppose, is now full of water which cannot dry out. I wonder what your point of view is about this. Shall we open the ceiling now to see how it looks inside or shall we wait to see if the trouble with the flashing is really corrected since we will probably have to open the ceiling again later. I would like to discuss this personally with you. I wonder if you can call me up to make an appointment about this, either in my home before 8 o'clock in the morning, except Saturday, or in my office.

2. I am now sure that the domestic hot water part of the boiler is defective and has to be replaced. This, in my opinion was stated also today by the service people adjusting my oil burner. You may remember that I mentioned the inadequate domestic hot water service of the boiler right from the begin-

Appendix 28. Letter from Breuer to Howard E. Custance (Source: Breuer, Letter, 07-12-1939)

enough or it does not circulate properly. Would you please arrange with your heating engineer to get in touch with me in my office to discuss this matter with me?

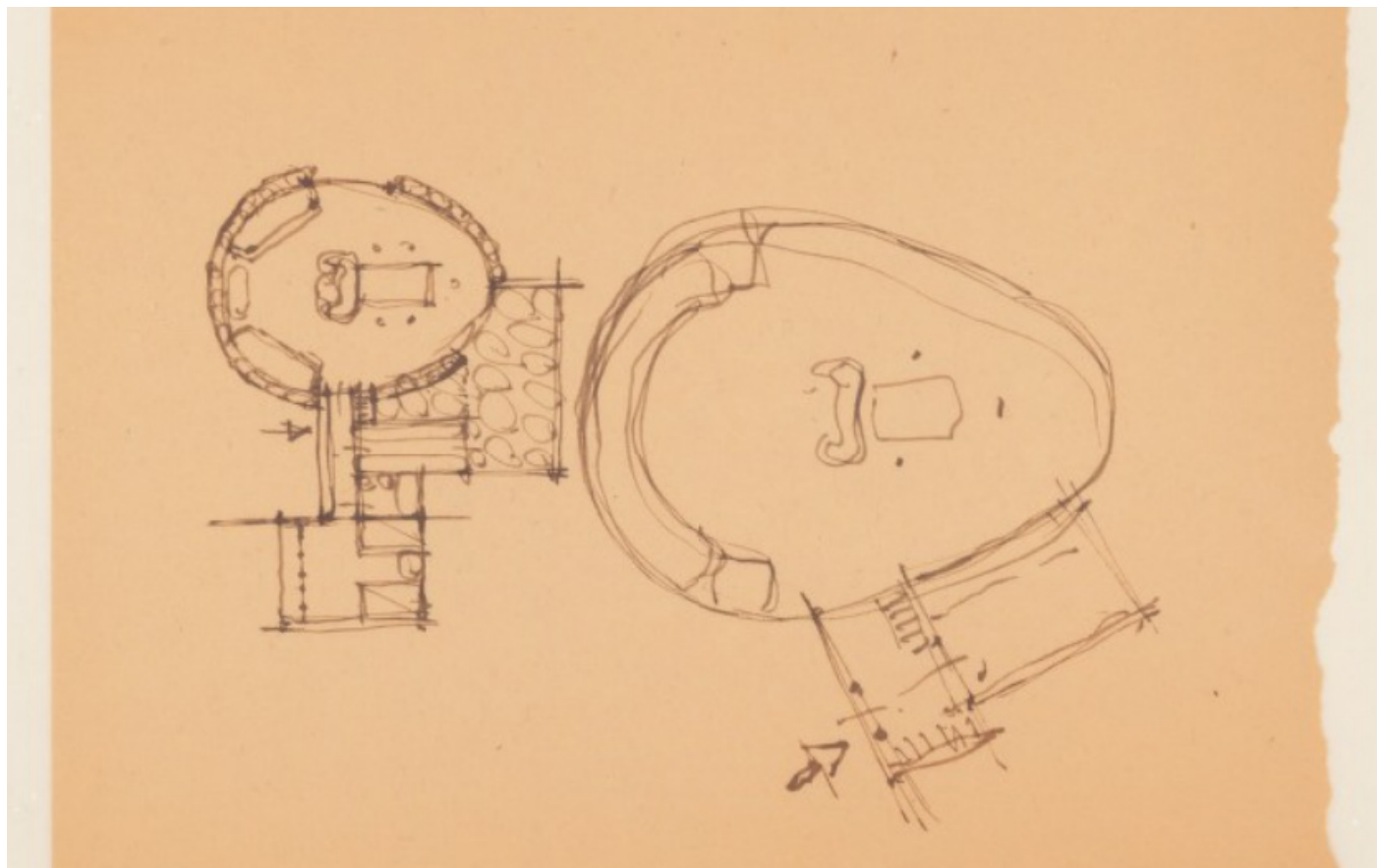
4. The amount of oil used last month was so great that I am seriously concerned about the efficiency of the heater. However, the oil service people today stated that with their readjustment the amount of oil used will be much less so I just want to mention this point depending on whether their readjustment is really effective or not.

Very sincerely yours,

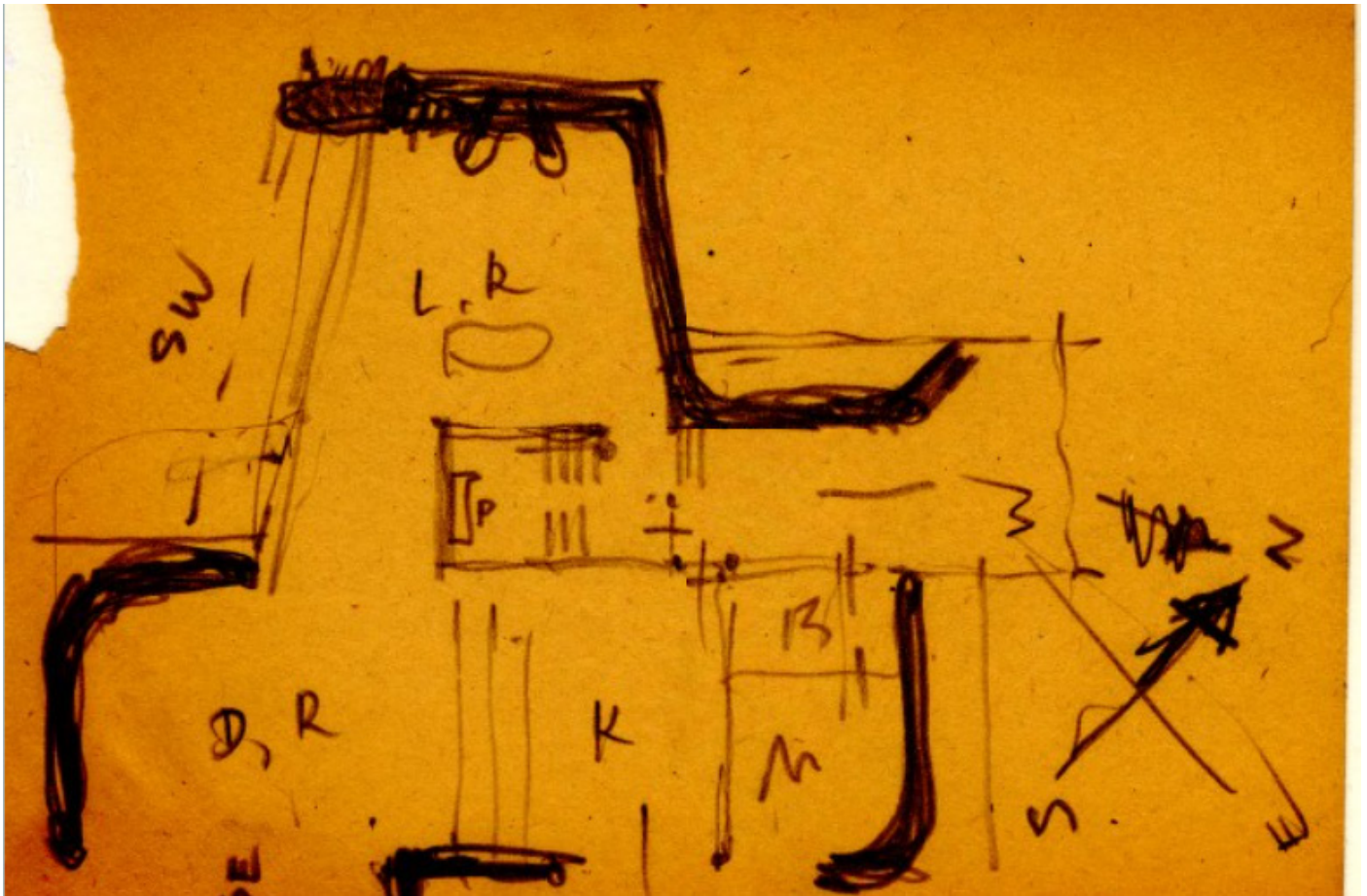
Marcel Breuer

MB:P

Appendix 29. Letter from Breuer to Howard E. Custance (Source: Breuer, Letter, 07-12-1939)



Appendix 30. Sketch for Breuer House (Source: Breuer, Sketch No. 371, n.d.)



Appendix 31. Sketch for Breuer House (Source: Breuer, Sketch No. 15, n.d.)



## Breuer House II

Dear Mr. Vaughan:

There are now five houses detailed in my office, construction of which starts this spring. Two of them are rather good-size, more or less luxurious homes, three of them rather minimum cost houses in the \$12,000-\$15,000 class.

I wonder whether it is practical to handle the hardware for these houses through you, and I would appreciate your frank opinion about it. I feel that, as in your case, personal contract with the architect is very valuable, and also because many details, especially of the more luxurious homes, will be worked out during execution, and the complete hardware list, which can be prepared this month, will have to be completed later and probably revised. If you think that the job could be handled by you over the distance from Boston to New York, I would appreciate it if you would let me know and suggest a method as to how the matter should be handled.

If you think that this type of work could not be handled from Boston, I would be grateful if you would give me the name of a New York firm who could render the same service as we have received from you during many years.

Appendix 32. Letter from Breuer to W.C. Vaughan (Source: Breuer, Letter, 12-05-1947)

Enclosed please find blueprint of my house now under construction in New Canaan, Conn., on which are indicated the bathroom doors and the cabinets to be used, which I would like to repeat here:

- 1) Pattern X517, blue. The wall behind the shelves from floor to ceiling, also the hatch door towards the utility room above the W.C.
- 2) Pattern X505-.020H. All shelves white, also edges; also the two faces of the projection in the corner adjacent to the shelves; also the wall which is above the long side of the bathtub, and from one corner of the room to the other corner.
- 3) X103-.020H. The remaining two walls of the bathroom from floor to the ~~ceiling~~ *all* of the clerestory window at the wall towards the hall, and from floor to ceiling of the opposite wall. The door to the trance hall will remain natural color plywood without your finish.

Appendix 33. Letter from Breuer to Irving Wood (Source: Breuer, Letter, 03-06-1947)

1) You promised Harry and Mrs. Breuer several times that you would have the floors covered with paper to protect them before the movers came, so that dirt would not be ground into them while still unfinished. I was very much distressed to see not only that there was no paper anywhere, but also that the floors had not been completely finished. In some cases there has been damage, or at least dirtying, of the unfinished floors as a result of this omission, and I hope you will take immediate steps to correct it.

2) While Mr. Breuer told you that the grain of the various sheets of plywood could not be matched it was understood, of course, that there would be some care used in selecting similar types and colors to go together. In the kitchen this seems to have been done. In the laundry, however, there are two dark panels which look very badly with the surrounding walls. In the ceiling of the living room-dining room there are four very pink panels, two small pink panels over the dining table, and one dark brown panel in the living room. The dining room side of the 5' wall is a jumble of different colors, and a very bad selection of pieces was made for the hall side of this same wall. It will be necessary to move these around to get all the brown ones together, and to make the ceilings a consistent color. While you can undoubtedly reuse in new locations some of this that must now be taken out, you will probably also need a few additional sheets.

Appendix 34. Letter from Breuer to Irving Wood (Source: Breuer, Letter, 06-10-1947)

This promise of yours is one of many similar ones which have not been kept, and after I have tried with all means, and with considerable personal sacrifices of time and money to carry out this work with you in a friendly way, I have to admit now that my patience is completely exhausted with the way you carry on your business and with the whole job.

This letter is to serve you notice that if the house is not completed in a satisfactory way this week, with the exception of the two points I mention below, I will, on the basis of article 10 of my contract with you, terminate this contract and have all the work still to be done carried out by another contractor of my choosing, all of which work will be at your expense.

The two items referred to above are:

- 1) All the Masonite panels themselves can wait for a week or two longer. However, the framework for them should be finished this week.
- 2) The re-doing of the ceiling in the living room, dining room and entrance up to the end of January, as per my enclosure.

Appendix 35. Letter from Breuer to Irving Wood (Source: Breuer, Letter, 24-11-1947)



As to the plywood ceiling in the living room, dining room and entrance hall area of my house, which, as you know, is unsatisfactory workmanship and cannot be accepted, we came last Friday to the following agreement:

You will remove the plywood ceiling in the above mentioned area and put on a new ceiling of 3/4" board, tongue and groove joints, hidden nailing in furring, boarding to run parallel with the joists. In the basement, you will erect the studding for the partitions shown by dotted lines on the basement plan, including door frames, hanging the doors, and covering the partitions on one side with the plywood which you remove from the living room ceiling. All the work will be carried out by you as replacement value for material and labor losses in connection with removing the ceiling. However, all costs for the materials will be carried by me. Work is to be completed by the end of January at the latest, and is to be done in a continuous period of one week. If work in connection with this is not finished up to the last day of January, 1948, it will be carried out by another contractor at your expense.

Appendix 36. Letter from Breuer to Irving Wood (Source: Breuer, Letter, 24-11-1947)

NOW IS THE BEST TIME--for a Senix Aerial study of your property--when from the air leafless trees reveal the earth's contours, streams and boundaries--ground details which show up completely only at this time of the year. No wonder that this is our busiest season.

Only an aerial photograph can show the relation of buildings to property and property to surroundings so graphically and realistically that it takes the place of a hundred ground shots.

As specialists in aerial photography, Senix Aerial maintains a modern laboratory and the best camera equipment to insure the finest quality finished work.

Senix Aerial comes to you--at your convenience and without obligation and goes over your property with you to ascertain the main points of interest you wish emphasized. At the same time we show you examples of studies completed recently and go over the various sizes and finishes from which you make your selection. Prices depend upon your selection. A leather bound portfolio study with your name in 24Kt gold is very popular and makes a fine gift.

So that you may take advantage of this most favorable time of the year, including snow just ahead, let us know when it will be most convenient for our pilot to call and show you examples of work done nearby. Do it today without obligation.

Appendix 37. Letter from Don Pruess to Breuer (Source: Breuer, Letter, 26-11-1947)

George E. Mallinson Importing Co.  
295 Fifth Avenue  
New York 16, New York

Attention Mr. C. P. Stites

Gentlemen:

A few weeks ago I asked you by telephone to send me some samples of your China matting. I understand that you do not have it now in the natural color but in the vari-colored mixed with natural, and I would very much appreciate if you could send me a sample of this very soon.

Would you also please let me know when you expect the China matting in natural color, and whether I could see a small sample of the material you expect. I need quite a bit of this material, which I would like you to reserve for me ahead of time.

Yours very truly,

Marcel Breuer

Appendix 38. Letter from Breuer to C. P. Stites (Source: Breuer, Letter, 01-12-1947)

Referring to my order, confirmed with your letter of July 3rd, as you know, we have had a lot of trouble getting these doors, and now that the order has been completed, we are very disappointed indeed.

Most of the doors are badly warped, even before being used, and were delivered in that state.

We have had to use some of them, as it was impossible to leave the house longer without doors, and so we used the exterior doors you sent us and three of the interior doors, selecting the ones which are the least warped. However, of those which we used one is badly warped and the other somewhat less.

Further, apparently at the putting together of the frame of your doors you use metal clips. This is, of course, very unexpected and is an uncraftsman-like method to use, because in adjusting the doors to existing conditions you hit these metal clips, and the results are not pleasant for anyone concerned.

The five interior doors we haven't used (two 2'-8" wide and three 2' wide) are in the basement of my house and they are herewith returned to you. Please pick them up at your earliest convenience. Of course, I will not accept any responsibility for

Appendix 39. Letter from Breuer to L. Rukeyser (Source: Breuer, Letter, 01-12-1947)



Re: Breuer House

Dear Mr. Wood:

In connection with my letter of November 26th re changing of the ceiling of the living area, etc., and putting up partitions on the ground floor, it is understood between us that your work does not include the hanging and fitting of the doors; it includes, however, everything else mentioned in my letter. I would like to call your attention to the fact that the walls will be finished and that the new ceiling will be natural color without any finish on it, consequently the work should be carried out with the utmost care and cleanliness.

Please sign a copy of this letter as your confirmation and return it to this office.

It is also understood that you can put up the basement partitions at your convenience, and that the one week continuous period mentioned in my previous letter refers only to work which is done upstairs.

Sincerely yours,

Appendix 40. Letter from Breuer to Irving Wood (Source: Breuer, Letter, 01-12-1947)

Dear Sir:

Re: China Matting - Your letter  
December 1st

We are sending you samples of the available China Matting. This, as Mr. Stites informed you, is all in miltured designs. We have no all natural on order, and because of high prices do not expect to import seme for the time being.

We have a small stock of the mixed color China matting, as per samples, and we offer this to you subject to prior sale at a price of 40¢ per sq. yd., by the roll only, with terms of 1% 10 days or net 60 days.

Very truly yours,

GEO. E. MALLINSON IMPORTING CO. INC.

WMB:VW

*William M. Braun*

Appendix 41. Letter from William M. Braun to Breuer (Source: Breuer, Letter, 08-12-1947)

During our part in the construction of your home I at no time hesitated or complained to fulfill your desires in supervising an excellent and workmanlike installation. Sometimes I might have thought your wishes to be somewhat out of the ordinary, nevertheless I saw them through willingly. We have built a large business through that service and we would like to continue serving you in a friendly manner.

I believe, with the exception of replacing the toilet tank trip lever, our part of the contract is complete, and has been for four weeks. Of course you have the ordinary full years guarantee against defective materials and workmanship, consequently we feel that the balance of our money should be paid immediately.

We mailed you an estimate not to exceed \$2700.00 but that did not include several extra items which confronted us, such as wiring for the Oil Burner. We took care of these matters, without authorization, for your comfort. For every dollar we billed you I can show you value received. You do not have to pay us in excess of the original figure but I believe it would be the nice thing to do. You will remember that I took the time to point out to you some of the items called for in you plans and specifications which could be omitted or cut down in quantity and size and still give you the same results or better results for the above figure of \$2700.00.

Mr. Breuer again we would like to settle in a friendly manner and we are expecting a reply within five days.

Appendix 42. Letter from William M. Braun to Breuer (Source: Breuer, Letter, 09-12-1947)

Gentlemen:

Referring to your monthly statements, I would appreciate very if you could separate all your charges to me in three categories:

- a) Kitchen equipment, such a refrigerator, range, washing machine or sink, all of which charges have to go through Mr. Wood, and with 10% discount.
- b) The charges in connection with wiring and lighting fixtures of my house, which were contracted with Mr. Taylor.
- c) The various purchases, such as hardware, paint, etc. which Mrs. Breuer, I, myself, or my painter have bought from you.

I am sorry to bother you with this request but for bookkeeping records it is absolutely necessary that I have these three types of charges clearly documented in your bills.

Yours very truly,

Appendix 43. Letter from Breuer to Silliman Hardware (Source: Breuer, Letter, 11-12-1947)

With reference to your telephone call to my office two days ago, this letter is to say that you don't need to be worried about getting your bills paid. As you may remember, your first two payments were made immediately after your request was made, and I usually pay my bills during the week when I receive them, assuming that they are okay. Consequently, I don't expect to receive telephone calls like the other day, but your regular statements on the 1st of the month.

As to your installation in my house in New Canaan, there is again a leakage in a radiator in the south bedroom. I noticed the leakage by an icicle hanging down from the ceiling of my overhang under the main floor, and I am quite worried about this point. The water from the radiator apparently ran down the floor into the insulation and, as you know, if the insulation is wet it has no insulating effect, and it is possible that the pipes there will freeze. I would appreciate your giving this your immediate and careful attention.

Appendix 44. Letter from Breuer to William N. Bouton (Source: Breuer, Letter, 11-12-1947)

Attention Mr. Armstrong

Gentlemen:

Thank you for your letter of December 19th. I would appreciate if you would set up an account for me such as you suggest, i.e., a separate business account which would carry a 10% discount on material purchased.

Thank you also for your telephone call this morning informing me that the work bench was not available. I hope my message to cancel my order for a circular saw and motor reached you and that you will take care of this cancellation. If the work bench should become available before too long, you might let me know.

Sincerely yours,

Appendix 45. Letter from Breuer to Silliman Hardware (Source: Breuer, Letter, 22-12-1947)



to be made by you. Material is to be provided by you, except interior boarding, which will be the same cypress as the ceiling.

It is understood that you will not pay anything for any of the doors used in the house, which means that you have the equivalent in the four doors now in place (2 bedroom doors, bathroom door and basement entrance door) for additional work and material for the new porch and main entrance door.

The lowest tread of the porch stair: Before this tread can be fastened, according to our recent discussion, the porch has to be lifted into a horizontal position, also the sunshade (the steel cables apparently were not pre-stretched, and have been stretched considerably under the load of the recent snowfall).

2 x 3 partitions in basement, fastened to floor and to ceiling, covered one side with plywood, using the gum plywood of the present living, dining room and hall ceilings. These basement partitions will be ready with door jambs, etc. for the fitting and hanging of doors, but the hanging and the supplying of the doors and setting of the hardware is not your work.

The plywood ceiling of living, dining and entrance area will be removed, and as mentioned above, used for the basement partitions. A new ceiling of T&G cypress boarding on furring will be executed by you, according to my letters of November 26th and December 1st. The cypress, however, is to be supplied by me.

Appendix 46. Letter from Breuer to Irving Wood (Source: Breuer, Letter, 05-01-1948)

Steel windows are to be checked as to opening. Some of them hit the wood part or the sunshade so that they cannot be opened.

The sill in the living room north window is leaking at one end, and this should be fixed. Apparently no mastic was used there to tighten the connection between the boarding and the end of window sill. There is a heavy icicle there and the water enters behind the outside boarding. As a matter of fact, this window sill was not even primed, which should have been done by you before glazing. I would appreciate if you would prime the window sill now, as it should be protected from the hazards of the weather.

Asbestos ceiling and fascia board over entrance porch to be replaced.

Fir floors: Wherever blocking between joists over basement walls have pushed up the fir flooring, it has to be fixed and the blocking checked so that this won't happen in the future.

Utility room ceiling under water pipe has to be closed up with 1/4" plywood, as no ducts will be made for kitchen fan.

Fir flooring has to be checked as to loose ends.

Wavy homosote under overhangs has to be fixed.

Appendix 47. Letter from Breuer to Irving Wood (Source: Breuer, Letter, 05-01-1948)

I hope very much that the schedule I have set will be adhered to this time by you, and also I expect confirmation of this letter with your signature on the enclosed copy. If this confirmation is not in my hands the end of this week, I shall have to assume that all my efforts to get the house finished by you in a normal and friendly way have failed, in which case I will make preparation on Monday, January 12th, to engage another contractor who will carry out the work on time and at your expense. Of course, I would hate to do this, but I don't see any other way to get the house finished.

Sincerely yours,

Marcel Breuer

Appendix 48. Letter from Breuer to Irving Wood (Source: Breuer, Letter, 05-01-1948)

Two Masonite sliding doors between kitchen and dining room. Masonite will be provided by me and is to be cut to size by you.

Plywood side enclosure on dish washing unit in kitchen, to be placed and securely fastened to steel parts.

Main entrance door and porch door, including metal thresholds, to be built by you. Material is to be provided by you, except interior boarding, which will be the same cypress as the ceiling.

It is understood that you will not pay anything for any of the doors used in the house, which means that you have the equivalent in the four doors now in place (2 bedroom doors, bathroom door and basement entrance door) for additional work and material for the new porch and main entrance door.

The lowest tread of the porch stair: Before this tread can be fastened, according to our recent discussion, the porch has to be lifted into a horizontal position, also the sunshade (the steel cables apparently were not pre-stretched, and have been stretched considerably under the load of the recent snowfall).

Appendix 49. Letter from Breuer to Irving Wood (Source: Breuer, Letter, 05-01-1948)



Two Masonite (pressed wood) sliding doors in linen closet, Masonite to be provided by you.

Two Masonite sliding doors between kitchen and dining room. Masonite will be provided by me and is to be cut to size by you.

Plywood side enclosure on dish washing unit in kitchen, to be placed and securely fastened to steel parts.

Main entrance door and porch door, including metal thresholds, to be built by you. Material is to be provided by you, except interior boarding, which will be the same cypress as the ceiling.

It is understood that you will not pay anything for any of the doors used in the house, which means that you have the equivalent in the four doors now in place (2 bedroom doors, bathroom door and basement entrance door) for additional work and material for the new porch and main entrance door.

The lowest tread of the porch stair: Before this tread can be fastened, according to our recent discussion, the porch has to be lifted into a horizontal position, also the sunshade (the steel cables apparently were not pre-stretched, and have been stretched considerably under the load of the recent snowfall).

Appendix 50. Letter from Breuer to Irving Wood (Source: Breuer, Letter, 05-01-1948)

Dear Mr. Rukeyser:

Thank you for your note of January 6th. Unfortunately the doors are no better but are probably worse than they were before, and they don't show any tendency to straighten out. I would appreciate very much if you would pick up the doors not in place in my house, because as I wrote you before, they may be damaged there, for which I would not like to be responsible.

As to the two exterior doors which are in place but which are so badly warped that they cannot be used, I will now have to have the builder make doors for me, and to remove the old doors, put on the new doors and change the hardware will cost more than the four doors of yours (three interior and one exterior door) I ~~don't~~ want to keep. Consequently, I think it is fair that we charge you for labor and material for the two new exterior doors, changing hardware, etc. against the cost of the doors used.

Sincerely yours,

Appendix 51. Letter from Breuer to L. Rukeyser (Source: Breuer, Letter, 07-01-1948)

Probably Mrs. Breuer has already told you over the telephone that in the southwest corner of my basement there is a leakage in a heating pipe, which has produced quite a bad spot on the basement floor. Can you please give this matter your attention.


There are also two points behind the outside skin of the house where icicles have formed under the overhang, which may be leakages in the radiators or water pipes. One is on the south wall near the radiator in Tomas' room, and the other is in the north wall under the west end of the radiator. I hope that these two icicles are not due to leakage in the radiators supply or return pipes. I mention this because I have not been able to trace any dampness on the floor under the radiators.

When you have checked on these matters, would you please give me a call and let me know what you have found.

At the same time, you probably will put in the additional pipe for filling the oil tank.

Appendix 52. Letter from Breuer to William N. Bouton (Source: Breuer, Letter, 08-01-1948)

**FLOOR COVERINGS**



**Geo. E. Mallinson Importing Co. Inc.**  
295 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 16, N. Y.

	DATE 2/16/48
MARCEL BREUER 430 E. 68TH STREET, NEW YORK 28, NEW YORK	INVOICE NO. <b>P 6129</b> OUR NO. <b>0302</b> YOUR NO. 6272 8/0 7256 8 SALESMAN SNOW
<i>All goods shipped at Purchaser's risk      Payable only in New York funds</i>	TERMS: NET CASH

ALL OBJECTIONS OR CLAIMS FOR ALLOWANCE OF ANY KIND MUST BE MADE WITHIN 15 DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF GOODS

HARTIAN RUSH SQUARES			
NATURAL SGR#	1 BALE	215 S.F. @ .30 S.F.	64.50
		LESS 1%	.65
			64.15

PAID

FEB 19 1948

G. E. MALLINSON  
IMPORTING CO., INC.

Appendix 53. Invoice No. P 6129 (Source: Breuer, Invoice No. P 6129, 16-02-1948)



Enclosed please find cheque for \$148.25 covering your bill of February 29th, 1948. I imagine there is an error in this bill in the listing of 200 ft. of 1x5 cypress at \$50.00. As you may remember, I telephoned you about this item, which is replacement for the defective portion of the cypress you sent me in January (1,000 sq. ft.). This cypress, which was intended for interior use, had a lot of split pieces, also pieces where the tongue was split off and where the checking was rough, etc., so that we had an unusually high percentage of waste. When I explained that to you over the telephone, you said you would replace it. I, quite naturally, assumed that this replacement would be made without charge, and this is also what the man who delivered the cypress in January told me, to whom I mentioned that quite a large portion of the material would not be useable. This is also the reason why I did not pay your January bill in full but retained a part of it.

Of course, I want to settle this in a fair way and so I expect you to let me know if you feel that you are entitled to some further payment. The enclosed cheque is for your bill less the \$50.00 (and \$1.50 for tax) for the replacement cypress.

Sincerely yours.

Appendix 54. Letter from Breuer to Charles Schwarz (Source: Breuer, Letter, 03-03-1948)

In the week of February 16th to February 19th you gave me and Mrs. Breuer four times promises for four different days when you would come and set the glass in the bathroom, and do the remaining part of your unfinished work in the house. We haven't heard from you since.

As you haven't come, and as this is just a continuation of a long struggle to keep things going with you, I regret that I will have to finish the rest of the work in my house with someone else, and, of course, charge you with this expense. Still unfinished in the house are the following items:

1. One glass pane in bathroom.
2. Homosote boarding under overhangs.
3. Oiling of exterior fir boarding.
4. Priming and caulking of window sills.
5. Inadequately executed sliding doors in hall.
6. Screen doors.

Judging from your staying away and feeling no obligation to notify us, or otherwise indicate that you intend to work on the house, I, for my part, have decided not to let you continue work.

I want to finish our business in a fair way, and this letter is to request you to let me have all the claims, if any, in the form of your own bill or bills of subcontractors, outstanding against me in connec-

Appendix 55. Letter from Breuer to Irving Wood (Source: Breuer, Letter, 03-03-1948)

Yesterday, about 12:15 P.M., I called you up to tell you that the heater room of my house was under water, and that you should come over and see what could be done in this emergency. You came in about three-quarters of an hour, and you have seen that the corner where the oil pipe enters the heater room is not tight (water was entering through there even during construction, and you were supposed to have fixed this).

You left, giving me assurance that you would get the mason and start work to repair the damage. It was obvious that the danger was that the whole ground floor would be flooded, and I had to work constantly and without interruption, with sponges, etc. to keep up with the water, which was entering the basement in considerable quantity. You said also that you would telephone me and let me know whether you had found the mason and when you would start work. You left shortly after one o'clock, and I haven't heard from you since, nor from your subcontractor, and you did not even feel obliged to call up or inquire about the state of things caused by negligence in the execution of your work.

When I had a trench dug yesterday afternoon just north of the basement wall, to create drainage for

Appendix 56. Letter from Breuer to Irving Wood (Source: Breuer, Letter, 18-03-1948)

floor of my house. The water, under pressure of the hill, entered the heater room, and it was a specially lucky circumstance that I was at home at that time, and by hard work, and with the help of other contractors, prevented flooding of the whole basement.

On this occasion we dug down at the north side of the basement, just outside the foundation, and did not find the drainage tile which was requested in my specification, and in various talks with Mr. Wood. In the specification it was clearly stated that the north side, the west side and the south side of the house should have open joint drainage tiles set in a trench filled with crushed stone and connected with the dry well.

Mr. Re has just told me that he connected only the roof drainage with the dry well, but not the two ends of the drain tiles around the foundations, and that, as far as he knows, no drainage tile was provided at the north of the house, and that is where the entering of the water the other day occurred.

All this work was included in Mr. Wood's contract with me. I don't, of course, know exactly what his arrangements were with you; also I don't know to what extent the specifications were known to you, nor to what exact performance Mr. Wood contracted you. If the drainage tiles around the foundations, and their connection to the dry well, were included

Appendix 57. Letter from Breuer to Carl Buccino (Source: Breuer, Letter, 22-03-1948)



The Hoyt Nurseries  
New Canaan  
Connecticut

Gentlemen:

As Mr. Breuer does the landscape gardening on those houses which he designs, I am wondering if this would entitle him to a professional discount at your nurseries. Would you be kind enough to let me know, and also to let me know the amount of such discount.

Many thanks.

Sincerely yours,

Secretary to Mr. Breuer

mf

Appendix 58. Letter from Breuer to Hoyt Nurseries (Source: Breuer, Letter, 30-04-1948)

438 E. 88th Street  
New York, N.Y.

Re: Breuer House

Dear Sir:

As per your request, on April 14th, 1948 we submitted to you an itemized statement of Mr. Wood's account as it appeared on our books with relation to the Breuer house. Since that time we have received no communication from you or Mr. Wood with regard to settlement of this account.

We would very much dislike to take the necessary legal steps to collect the sum due us as this would involve lawyers, courts, etc., but we feel that it may be necessary to do so.

Please communicate with us on this matter.

Appendix 59. Letter from Martin Gruss to Breuer (Source: Breuer, Letter, 26-05-1948)



The Department of Architecture is preparing a circulating exhibition of four post-war houses, and would like to show your own house in Connecticut. We feel that this is one of the best domestic buildings produced since the war, and know that the public will enjoy seeing it.

To help us plan the show, we would appreciate it very much if you would send us some information. We would like a brief statement about the house, a simple, not too technical description. If there are any details or innovations of particular note, or special problems, we should like to know about them. We need accurate information about the following:

1. Construction
2. Materials, interior and exterior
3. Colors, interior and exterior
4. Important details, interior and exterior
5. Plan (we have no plan of the house)
6. Special comments on plan and design
7. Description of site and view
8. Anything interesting about furniture and equipment
9. Heating, insulation and services

Would you be kind enough to answer as soon as possible? We are already behind schedule, and cannot proceed without your help. I trust that this will not inconvenience you too greatly. Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix 60. Letter from Ada Huxtable to Breuer (Source: Breuer, Letter, 16-06-1948)

Not knowing actually to what performances he has hired you, just for your information I would like to say here that in regard to the masonry and similar work, the following omissions and deviations have been made from my drawings and specifications, which were incorporated as part of my agreement with Mr. Wood.

1. The drainage tiles along the footings of the foundations have been carried only on the west side and on the south side of the house. They have not been carried on the north side, and the ends have not been connected with the dry well.
2. The footings of stone walls are not carried to the depth shown on my drawings.
3. The portion of the basement walls below grade have not received cement plaster, as specified.
4. Concrete floor slab in basement has not been laid on 6" crushed stone fill.

May I refer your also to my letters of February 10th and March 22nd, 1948.

Sincerely yours,

Appendix 61. Letter from Breuer to Ernest R. Rau (Source: Breuer, Letter, 18-06-1948)

Dear Mrs. Huxtable:

In connection with your letter of June 16th and our recent telephone conversation, please find below a description of my house in New Canaan, Connecticut, in the same sequence as the points in your letter.

- 1) Construction of the house is very similar to that of the so-called American frame house. The traditional frame construction is, however, adapted to achieve very large cantilevers without heavy framing members, or steel or concrete members. You will note on the plans that the two ends of the house are cantilevered about 10' on each side. This cantilever is supported by the stiff ends of both long walls of the house, which walls are rigidly and structurally supporting by means of disagonal sheathing and diagonal boarding. I enclose a photostat of a schematic drawing explaining this idea of the construction.
- 2) The ground floor is concrete blocks painted inside and out. The elevated main floor is T&G vertical or diagonal boarding outside; the interior finish is painted plywood throughout, except the ceiling of the living-dining entrance space, which is cypress boarding, and the larger bedroom, which is natural gum plywood. Floor surfaces are Haitian mattings, bluestone and black asphalt tiles. Kitchen walls and shelving in natural wood.

\* ceiling

Appendix 62. Letter from Breuer to Ada Huxtable (Source: Breuer, Letter, 22-06-1948)

The ground floor is concrete blocks painted inside and out. The elevated main floor is T&G vertical or diagonal boarding outside; the interior finish is painted plywood throughout, except the ceiling of the living-dining entrance space, which is cypress boarding, and the larger bedroom, which is natural gum plywood. Floor surfaces are Haitian mattings, bluestone and black asphalt tiles. Kitchen walls and shelving in natural wood.

- ) Painting is white throughout combined with natural wood surfaces, which are mentioned above, and certain walls in quite definite colors. For instance, the north wall of the living room is a strong cobalt blue, low screen wall between dining room and entrance is the same color on both sides, so is one wall of the larger bedroom, with the adjacent walls one white and the other one a dark, neutral brown, and the fourth a medium gray. The doors of the bathroom and the two bedrooms are in the three basic colors - light cadmium yellow, strong cobalt blue and Chinese red.

Appendix 63. Letter from Breuer to Ada Huxtable (Source: Breuer, Letter, 22-06-1948)



- 4) It may be considered an interesting detail that the porch is suspended from the main body of the house by means of steel cables. The anchorage of the steel cables to the porch and to the house is by means of the type of hardware and turnbuckles used for the rigging of boats. The exterior stair is suspended from under the floor. Porch parapets are considered as structural plate trusses. East windows are protected by sunshades, which are supported by tension cables. All details simple carpenter work, including shelving, built-in closets, etc. Much of the shelving in the house is construction lumber, 2x8's or 2x10's.
- 5) I enclose blueprints 101 and 102, showing plan, etc. of the house.
- 6) As is demonstrated by the plans, the main living functions are on one level - bedrooms, eating, living, even utility room next to the kitchen (for washing, sewing, ironing.) This level is elevated over the natural ground, which is quite hilly. The lower portion of the house is, for economic reasons and for reasons of "no-need-to-be-bigger," reduced as much as possible....less foundation, less masonry, less concrete work, less insulation, less expense wherever you are connected with the terrain. This is the main reason for the cantilevered type of construction, which is large in the upper main level in relation to a small lower base level.

Appendix 64. Letter from Breuer to Ada Huxtable (Source: Breuer, Letter, 22-06-1948)

as much as possible....less foundation, less masonry, less concrete work, less insulation, less expense wherever you are connected with the terrain. This is the main reason for the cantilevered type of construction, which is large in the upper main level in relation to a small lower base level.

Design and details are simple, nearly primitive, with refinements in the reverse direction. The main idea was to achieve space and enjoy the relation of the elements of this space, as inexpensively as possible.

The center of the house is the kitchen and utility room, a characteristic of the "maidless" house. Connection from the kitchen to the other rooms is without doors; kitchen shelving is connected with sliding doors to the dining table in the dining room. Dishes, etc. can be taken direct from the shelves to the dining table. Visitors help in the kitchen. From this central kitchen everything in the house and outdoors can be supervised: children, visitors, deliveries, etc.

The bedrooms are used also in the daytime as living rooms. The large bedroom is not only for beds, but includes a piano, and a large counter-desk for drawing, painting, correspondence, etc. The smaller bedroom is large enough for a similar counter and for two beds, also for comfortable seats, etc. Bedrooms are not for

Appendix 65. Letter from Breuer to Ada Huxtable (Source: Breuer, Letter, 22-06-1948)

- 7) The house is on a hillside, with a meadow to the east and a small wood to the south. There is no spectacular view, but rather an intimate one over the nearby rolling countryside.
- 8) Though, as explained above, everything is detailed in a rather unsophisticated and "anachronistic" way, the mechanical equipment of the house is highly sophisticated and up-to-date. Time saving installations are employed: dish washing machine, garbage disposal, automatic laundry, Mix-Master. Housekeeping and housework are reduced to the minimum, as indicated also in caption 6 above.

Desks, working counters, bookshelves, radio and gramophone equipment are built-in. The only movable furnishings are beds, sofas, fauteuil, dining table and chairs. The cabinet with the radio and gramophone controls is, at the same time, a coffee table. Porch furniture: built-in benches and a large dining table, all in slats with open joints, for summer and winter use.

- 9) Heating is automatic oil heater, forced hot water, convectors. Insulation double Kimsul and air spaces. Services see above (one plumbing stack, serving two bathrooms, kitchen and utility room).

Appendix 66. Letter from Breuer to Ada Huxtable (Source: Breuer, Letter, 22-06-1948)

- 10) In the lower portion of the house are all auxiliary functions: heating, storage, storage closet, second bathroom, workshop combined with guest room, playroom, and another bedroom which is occupied by my five year old son. He has, then, next to his bedroom, a playroom, and in a few years the workshop. All this on garden level, with a separate door out. This lower level is a dirt and noise trap, mainly in consideration of children.

I hope this gives you the information you want. If anything is missing, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

Marcel Breuer

MB:mf  
Encls. 3

Appendix 67. Letter from Breuer to Ada Huxtable (Source: Breuer, Letter, 22-06-1948)



250 Park Avenue  
New York 17, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

Will you please enter my order for 12 yards of fabric No. 10089, 54" wide, in dark brown, retail price \$9.75 per yd. In accordance with our telephone conversation I understand that this material is not now on hand, but you expect to have it in about ten days.

This material is for a sofa being made by Hans Knoll and should be shipped to their factory at 503 East 72nd Street, New York 21, as soon as possible. This material, however, should be billed to me at the usual decorator's discount, as per our conversation with your office a short time ago.

Thanking you for your attention to this matter,

Sincerely yours,

Harold Breuer

Appendix 68. Letter from Breuer to J.H. Thorp and Co. (Source: Breuer, Letter, 20-09-1948)

As you probably know, a leak has developed in my house in New Canaan, which drips into the smaller bedroom. One of your men was out last week, but apparently he wasn't able to do much because of the snow on the roof.

We discovered the leak Sunday, January 23rd. It was somewhat curious, because neither that day nor the day before was there any rain or snow, and the roof was clear of snow. There may be a pocket of water which has slowly found its way down through the ceiling into the room. The spot is under the southern end of the clerestory, and it may be the composition flashing which connects the roof surface with the side wall of the clerestory projection. Of course, the leak might also be somewhere else and just showing itself on that spot.

Would you please give this matter your personal attention and drop me a line what in your opinion is the cause of the leakage. I would also like to know specifically whether the composition flashing around the clerestory, which you chose to replace the specified copper flashing, has anything to do with it.

Appendix 69. Letter from Breuer to R. W. Kleinknecht (Source: Breuer, Letter, 01-02-1949)

List of payments as letter of March 9, 1948. May 6, 1948.

	8,152.47
Ké - Wood, letter March 15.	300.00
Bauer - oiling + putty, letter March 16.	110.00
Wood - Barrett - Nonpareil, May 5.	143.00
Steel windows	362.00
Electr. work	+ 15.00
Millwork	430.00
Allowances	724.69
	450.00
	10,687.16

Contract sum Wood May 1, 1947.  
 11,910.00  
 10,687.16

Appendix 70. List of Payments as Letter of March 9, 1948 (Source: Breuer, List of Payments as Letter of March 9, 1948, 06-05-1949)

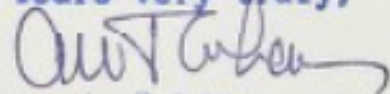
Mr Marcel Breuer, Architect  
 New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

I was very much interested in the article "A Dollar Buys More Room" which dealt with your home. This article appeared in the April issue of Science Illustrated.

I would appreciate your enlightening me on the floor construction of the cantilevered end wings.

Yours very truly,

  
 A. W. Rohde..

Appendix 71 Letter from A. W. Rohde to Breuer (Source: Breuer, Letter, 07-05-1949)

New Canaan Water Co.  
New Canaan  
Connecticut

Re: Breuer House  
Sunset Hill Road

Gentlemen:

Please note that on April 13th Mr. Breuer will turn over his house on Sunset Hill Road to the new owner, Mr. Russell Roberts. Water bills after April 13th should be sent to Mr. Roberts at that address.

Yours very truly,

Secretary to  
Marcel Breuer

*Appendix 72. Letter from Breuer to New Canaan Water Co. (Source: Breuer, Letter, 05-04-1951)*



## Breuer House, New Canaan II

Dear Hans:

About my sofa: You have probably heard from your secretary that I wanted to wait until the new gray covering was available. Now I hear that the delivery date of this fabric is very uncertain, consequently I have to come to another decision to get the sofa as soon as possible.

Would you please cover the body and the back cushions with your fabric K140/2, color beige (Devil) and the seat cushions with K240/3, color brown (Devil). Both of these materials are cheaper than the one originally selected, so I guess there will be no difficulty about them. I hope to get the sofa as quickly as possible.

As you know, it should be delivered to Sunset Hill Road, New Canaan, and the one which is now in New Canaan should be brought to my office at 113 East 37th St. I hope the sofa will arrive in New Canaan in good condition, because it is practically a show piece in our house.

Many thanks for the troubles. Best personal regards,

Yours,

Appendix 73. Letter from Breuer to Hans Knoll (Source: Breuer, Letter, 18-10-1950)

Dear Mr. Breuer:

We have checked with some of our suppliers and find that we can secure 3" cypress at this time. They do say that their supply of stock is very limited.

So, we could probably build the window frames, etc. for you.

Frankly, we still think a local millwork concern could handle this work as well as we can; especially considering the distance we have to operate from. Also, our workmen are non-union, and we don't know how that might effect the progress of the work.

Very truly yours,

THE GEORGE J. SWITZER CO.

Appendix 74. Letter from Edmund Switzer to Breuer (Source: Breuer, Letter, 28-02-1951)



Re: Breuer House

Dear Mr. Switzer:

Many thanks for your letter of February 28th. If it is not too much trouble for you, I still would prefer that you do my windows, because you have some experience with them, and because the work you did for Mr. and Mrs. Stillman is very satisfactory. Consequently, I would appreciate very much if you could give me an estimate for the windows, the exterior and interior door frames, and the exterior doors of my house. The rest of the millwork I will get locally.

If you can supply me with the just-mentioned part of the millwork at an early date, let us say around the beginning of May, we could truck the whole work down to New Canaan, and I don't think the distance would cause prohibitive difficulties or costs.

Also I have made inquiries of the builders here and find that the union builders have no objection whatsoever to getting millwork from a non-union shop. Of course, the setting of the millwork would be done by the builders anyway, so that your non-union labor would not work on the job.

*Appendix 75. Letter from Breuer to Edmund Switzer (Source: Breuer, Letter, 08-03-1951)*

The Two Thousand Four Hundred Sixty Dollars (\$2,460.00) is a maximum price, and you want to give me the benefit of all possible savings, which I would very much appreciate.

Work has to be scheduled so that on the 15th of April the main concrete slab can be poured. This slab will receive the copper coils (by another contractor) not later than April 28th. Your attention is especially called to this time schedule, as it would be quite serious if we failed to comply with government regulations.

*Appendix 76. Letter from Breuer to Clarence E. Bouton (Source: Breuer, Letter, 21-03-1951)*



### Tiling

Would you please give the commission to Mr. Peter Antonio for the tiling of both bathrooms, as discussed. The job will cost complete, including setting of accessories, \$330.00.

Color of the tiling in both bathrooms will be off white, as selected, except in bathroom No. 1 lilac, as selected, on the one wall behind the bathtub, and in bathroom No. 2, it will be pearl gray on the corresponding wall. Color of the joints is to be off white in both bathrooms throughout.

### Bills

I am somewhat concerned that I have not yet received your bills, and I would appreciate very much if you would prepare them for me. I would like to see how I stand with expenses for the house, quite naturally. I hope you have taken advantage of the usual discounts, for example on the lumber bills, etc. As you know, I am happy to make any financial arrangements which will keep the cost of the house as low as possible.

*Appendix 79. Letter from Breuer to Ernest R. Rau (Source: Breuer, Letter, 18-06-1951)*

### Brickwork

If you get the mason to make the chimneys, I just wonder whether it wouldn't be a good idea to have him put up the exterior brick walls. I think they could be put up independent of the stone walls in any case. I hope he will also do the necessary work for the well and septic tank.

I enclose a picture showing a brick wall which is somewhat different from the wall as I discussed it with you and as shown on the drawings. I like this brick wall very much, and I would appreciate if you would give it to the mason and tell him to make the joints as on this picture. This is for the exterior and interior brickwork, except, of course, the chimney in the heater room, which should be done in the least expensive way.

### Bathtubs

If the plumbing installation permits, please have the bathtubs resting on the concrete slab so that the stone bathroom floor is against the face of the tub in both bathrooms. This would mean that the bathtub is recessed in the floor finish. If the plumbing installation does not permit this, the tub should be installed in the usual way.

*Appendix 80. Letter from Breuer to Ernest R. Rau (Source: Breuer, Letter, 28-06-1951)*



I hope very much that you have put your carpenters in the house and will leave them there, working under your personal supervision, until the house is finished. I am afraid I will have to insist on this, because I feel that various mistakes have been made in the house, which wouldn't have happened if someone had been there continuously who was acquainted with the whole job. I believe in this case it is your carpenter foreman, who shouldn't be taken in and out of the job. As you know, the finishing of the house is a serious matter with us, and you will also remember that you have August 15th as the finishing date in the contract between us.

I am rather upset to see that the copper pipes near the entrance are still not covered; that some of the woodwork of window in bathroom No. 1 is damaged; that the aluminum angles are lying around on the ground and everybody walks over them; that the subcontractors are working in the house without detailed instructions and supervision (for instance, the lighting contractor); that the wood windows have been set in place without having been checked over to see how they are made; and that the west overhang is 1 ft. shorter than is shown on the drawing (this discrepancy of the detail from the main plan should have been discovered on the job).

As you may imagine, I don't like to write this letter, but

Appendix 81. Letter from Breuer to Ernest R. Rau (Source: Breuer, Letter, 16-07-1951)

Re: Breuer House

Dear Ernest:

This is just to sum up our discussions of Thursday.

1. Stonework: The stonework, which is generally all right, should have more horizontal pieces and more smaller pieces mixed in between the big ones. Whatever stone can be used from my stone fences should be used and mixed up with the stone which you can get from Patsy Moreno. The joints should be irregular, varying between  $3/4$ " and 3" in width.

Appendix 82. Letter from Breuer to Ernest R. Rau (Source: Breuer, Letter, 17-08-1951)



Dear Mr. Moje:

Please find enclosed my cheque for \$898.46 for the balance of your bill re millwork for my house. As I explained at the time when the material was delivered, the job was not satisfactorily executed, and was not one which I would have expected after the Marshad house, which you did previously.

Some of the window frames were more than 1/4" thinner on one end than on the other end; the corners did not meet, some time to the extent of 3/8" difference; none of the main dimensions were right as to the kitchen shelving; the exterior doors are now curled about 3/4". Further, before I gave you the commission, you told me that the Englund house door and window frames cost around \$1050.00. My corresponding frames are much less than the Englund house, though I have in addition kitchen and bathroom shelving. Consequently, it was surprising to me to get a bill of \$1898.00 for the work. However, as you say the bill represents your own expenses, I enclose cheque in payment.

Yours very truly,

*Appendix 83. Letter from Breuer to Joseph Moje (Source: Breuer, Letter, 17-03-1952)*

