

The Yale Building Projects of Paul Brouard

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With Admiration

Yale School of Architecture

Distributed by Yale Unofficial Press, New Haven

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Foreward

Adam Hopfner

Nobody would ever call Paul wordy, so it is only right that I be brief. Paul can't stomach pretense. He has always been suspect of those who speak too articulately, too confidently. And this mistrust has continually been a source of comfort to his students. During the crush of first year, when students are simply trying to keep their heads above water, Paul has been a lifeline to that humanity which architecture, and the Building Project, is supposed to serve. Within the heady realms of Rudolph Hall, and into the swelter of the ground in summer, Paul has been ardent in his belief that there is an education to be had in doing. It seems he has always known when to speak, intervene, assist; and when to remain quiet, stay back, and allow learning to come from within. His restraint is borne not from reticence, but from an intelligence that fosters his students' discovery and growth and compassion.

For 42 years, with over 2000 students, through six deans, alongside some 150 critics and 20 some clients, Paul has been steadfast in his commitment to the pedagogy of design build. He embodies it. The images and memories recorded herein are testament to that. It has been my honor to be your student, your assistant, your colleague and your friend.

- Adam

The Paul Brouard Years: 1971-2013



Naomi Darling, BP 2004

Building Project is one of the reasons I was interested in the MArch program at Yale. I visited at the fall open house of 2002 when I was trying to decide where I would apply and I made a point of meeting Paul, the Director of the Yale Building Project. Perhaps my timing was bad - I entered the room as Paul was wrapping up talking to a rather large group of prospective applicants - but my first impression of Paul was that he was gruff. How wrong I was!

Through working on BP 04 as a student and then as a TA for BP 06 I came to know Paul as someone who worked tirelessly and patiently with students who knew so little. I was impressed at Paul's agility as he clambered up the ladder to the roof and climbed down into the hole for the foundation. I observed as Paul took a student or two under his wing to run all the mechanical ducting through the house. I remember talking to Paul at 6am on mornings when it was pouring rain to start the phone chain and delay our start time or being on site on days when it was so hot that just moving the sweat would drip. Regardless of the weather, Paul always had on a pair of jeans and a long-sleeved blue shirt - he never looked uncomfortable or hot as he checked in on everyone on site, making sure we were all staying on track. The leadership that Paul provided was calm and steady while giving the students room to take initiative and feel pride and ownership in our work.

I feel fortunate that my relationship with Paul has matured and Paul and Linda are a part of our community and life - people with whom we exchange Christmas cards and visit on a summer day to see the garden. Thank you Paul for all that you have done guiding students to realize designs in built form and for modeling the cooperation and team work that is necessary to complete any great project. Thank you and Linda for the friendship that you have extended to Darrell and I and to our two sons.

2004



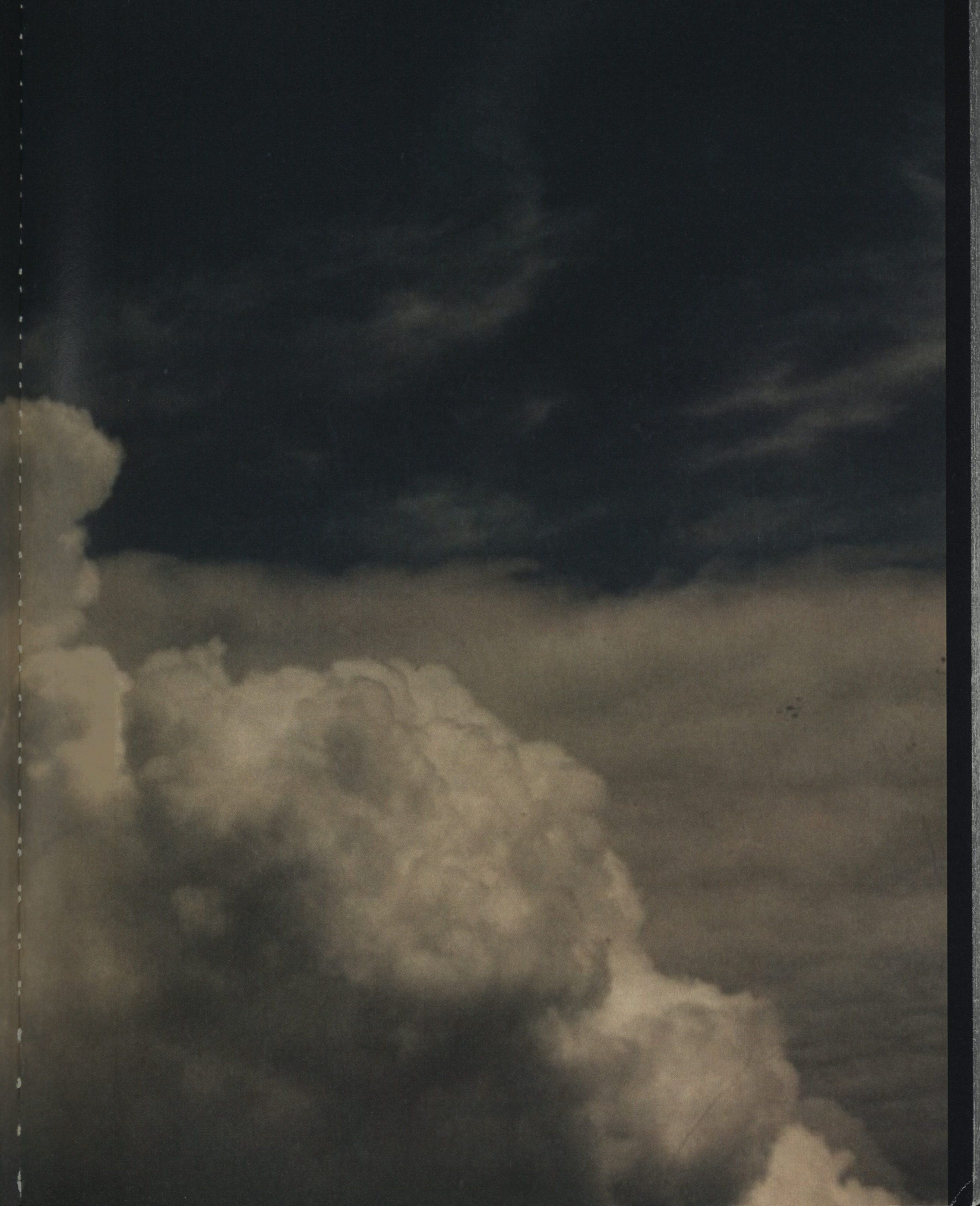




previous and current
spread: 2006 BP house in
New Haven











previous spread, opposite
and above: the 1987
BP concert pavilion in
Bridgeport





2012

opposite above: Paul and
the group

opposite above: Sheena
Zhang and Paul
above: Caroline Van Acker
and Ian Svilokos

Caroline VanAcker, BP 2012

I was part of the 2012 Building Project, and to this day, some of my clearest memories of that summer involve Paul. Part of this is because Paul was always the first person we saw on site - rain or shine. Three of us made the 30 minute walk from campus every morning, yet every morning Paul would be there before us, coffee in hand and ready to work. It became such a routine that the one day Paul had to run an errand before arriving on site, we had no way to get inside the gate! It seems like a small thing, but while people on the summer crew could have alternates come in to work for a day or two, there was no substitute for Paul. This was also because he could fix anything and everything on site, including one particularly temperamental nailgun. More than a few of us tried to repair it, only to give up wrestling with it moments later. Paul, on the other hand, would just good-naturedly roll his eyes at us and fix it every time. So every morning, Paul was there, and every time we needed him, he was there as well - and always knew exactly what to do (especially when we did not). My memories of Paul are these small moments that when added up over the course of a summer show just how much he meant to every one of us working on that house. So thank you, Paul, for the support and time you dedicated not just to my year of BP, but for every year. We could not open the gate without you, but in all seriousness, we definitely could not have finished our house without you, either.









Bank



Ben Smith, BP 2013

Dear Professor Brouard,

Thank you for all that you have done for the Yale Building Project over the years. It is one of the things that makes the Yale School of Architecture such a special place. Your dedication and passion for this program was made evident to me last summer during the 2013 Building Project. You were always one of the first people on the site. Your experience and expertise were greatly appreciated. Thank you for a great summer!

previous spread: Paul, JT
Keeley, and Hank Mezza
pouring concrete opposite
above: Ben Smith
opposite below: Hiba
Bhatty, Ben Smith, Jean-
nette Penniman, Meghan
McAllister, Meghan
Lewis, Tamrat Gebremi-
chael, Michael Cohen

2013

Louise Harpman, BP 1991**Recollection No. 1**

When I was a first-year student in the summer of 1991, all the students were required to be on site in June and certain students were "invited" to stay for the whole summer to complete the house. I didn't stay the whole summer, but went instead to intern at Peter Eisenman's office.

Like many classes, ours had its share of "characters," one of whom was George Kapelos, a much older student from Toronto, now a Dean at Ryerson University. George was a very cheerful man, and was always trying to be helpful and make "contributions" to the class. He was very much looking forward to the Building Project, but was worried that he wouldn't be able to participate completely because he was terrified of ladders. He shared this deep-seated phobia with some of us, but we didn't really know how to help him. The pounding pulse, perspiration, and flushing were very much in evidence when George even talked about ladders.

I don't know exactly how it worked out, but George and Paul arranged a plan: George came to the site early each morning and took out all the tools, including the ladders. After some days, he even opened the ladders. And within a couple of weeks, he was "practicing" going up and down a few steps on the ladders with some of us "spotting" him. By the time we were installing the roof trusses, George was offering to go down to the ground to get whatever supplies we had run out of. By then, he loved ladders. It was really very funny. I'm sure that Paul was a support to George in all this little drama. George was always good at poking fun at himself, but his fears were real. It was inspiring for all of us as classmates to see how Paul worked with George to put this problem to rights.

Recollection No. 2

I returned to Yale as a design critic in the spring of 1995, teaching as one of the core faculty members in the first year design studio. For eight years, I was a Critic in the studio that included the famed Building Project. For seven of those years, I was the Studio Coordinator with Paul as Field Director. In those years, the "studio" teaching team included people like Turner Brooks, Joel Sanders, Brian Healy, and Alan Organschi. Herb Newner was the school's liaison with the community partners. And Adam Hopfner came on board to join the field operations a few years after he graduated.

The spring semester was structured so that the students were set one design problem, usually a small institutional building, up until spring break, after which the Building Project began. Most students seemed to feel that the hypothetical studio project was important, but the REAL work was the Building Project.

Fred Koetter was the Dean when I began teaching, and Bob Stern re-hired me after he arrived. I recall clearly that Bob wanted to be VERY INVOLVED in the final selection of the house during his first year on the job. Our community partner was Neighborhood Housing that year, with Henry Dynia playing a lead role. As always, the discussions around the Final Four were heated. And no consensus emerged while we were debating and deliberating in front of the students. So, the studio critics, the neighborhood representatives, Paul and Herb, along with the Dean "retreated" to a closed conference room. While the critics advocated for the project we thought was best, Bob made it clear to me in a sidebar (you know how those whispers can sound like shouts!) that he greatly preferred one house over the others. It happened that I agreed, so I was able to make the case for the house that was ultimately selected. After which, Henry Dynia said I was the "Mother Theresa" of the building project, supporting the projects that were the most pathetic and least likely to succeed!





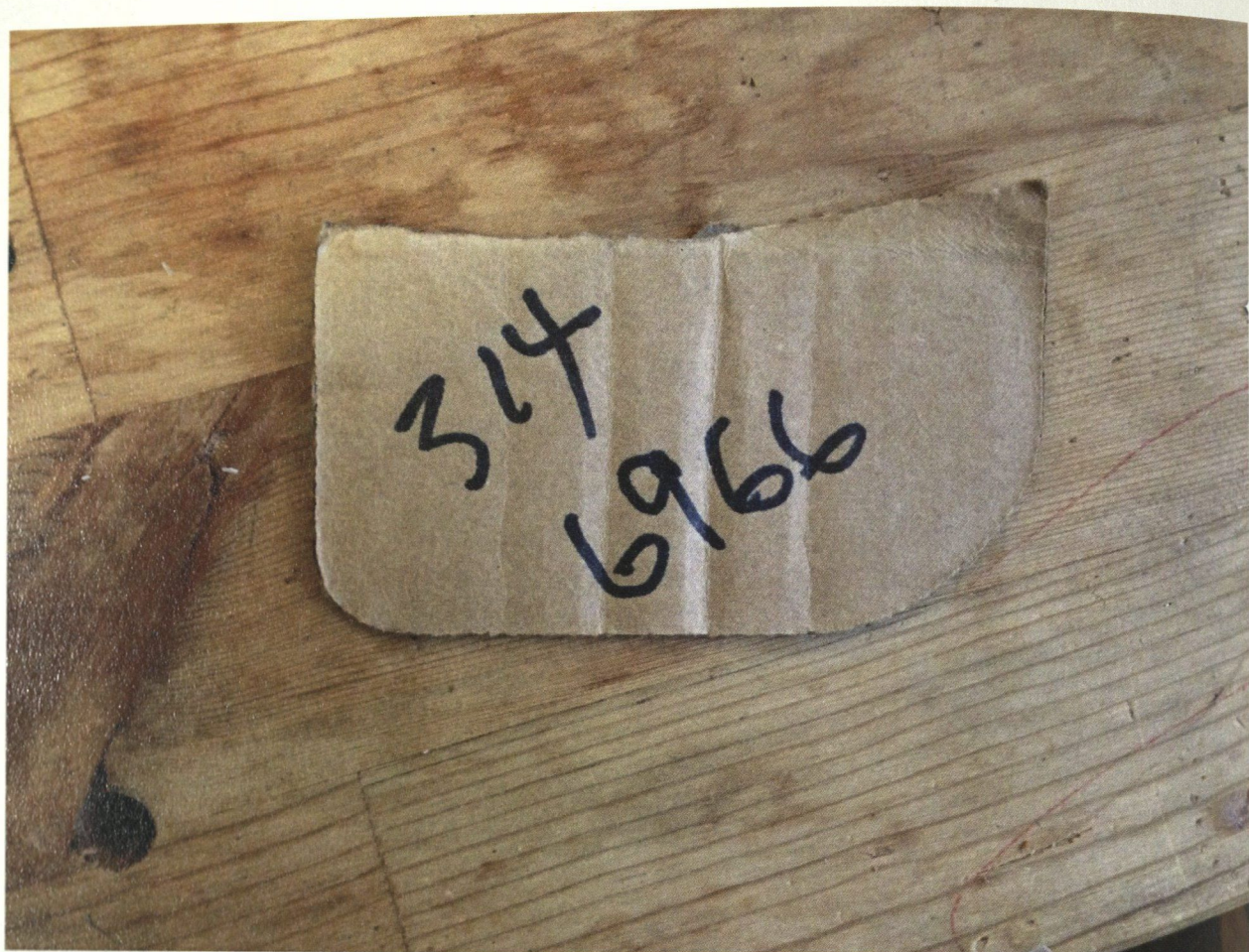
Duncan Stroik, BP 1985

Dear Richard,

I have very fond memories of Paul showing us how to dig, pour concrete and raise beams in East Rock park! And when things went awry amongst the design team and their colleagues he worked hard to help mend the breaches.

- Duncan

1985



Katie Stranix, BP 2012

Paul is the most valuable person on a job site - the one who knows how to do everything and more importantly how to fix anything. In the fall of 2012, a few of us were working with Paul to finish the house for the opening. Before heading out for the day, he scribbled his cell phone number on a piece of cardboard and told me to call him if we ran into any issues locking up the house. We only had a few things left to finish and we assured him we'd know exactly what to do. Unfortunately, we couldn't get one of the doors to close. I called Paul and he spent an hour on the phone with me, patiently walking me through the different steps and scenarios. When it still refused to shut, he drove back out to the site to take another look. Of course he fixed it within seconds, but he also took the time to show me how he did it.

Paul is someone you can always count on, regardless of the scale of the problem. He I haven't had to call him since, but I've held onto his number just in case.

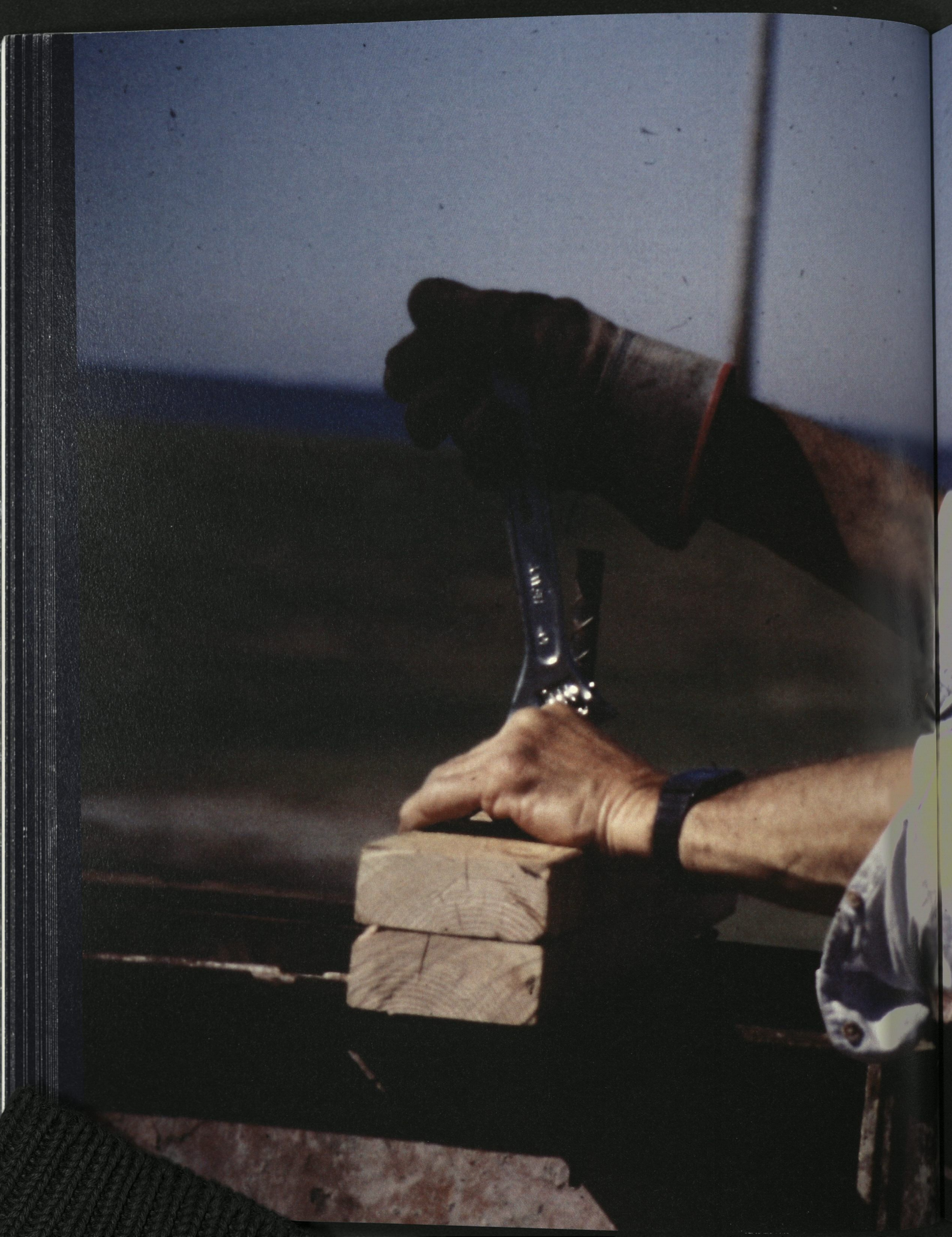
2012

Alisa Dworsky, BP 1990

Paul Brouard's name comes up in the most unexpected places.

Here's a little context. The Vermont Historical Society, as part of a project celebrating women's history in Vermont, invited me to speak as part of a panel focused on women artists in Vermont. The moderator asked us to introduce ourselves and to discuss our mentors and how they had influenced us. I immediately thought of Paul and The Yale Building project. I explained to the audience that I had come to the Yale Building project with a background in studio art, with an appreciation for working with materials directly and an inclination for drawing inspiration from materials in developing the content of my work. I had chosen Yale because of the building project, but I had no experience as a carpenter and very little experience in architecture. I described how Paul instilled confidence in us all, particularly those of us (many of them women) who had never built before. Paul would teach a couple of us how to assemble some component - how to frame a wall for example. Then, we became the experts on the site in that one task - charged with passing on our knowledge to our classmates and heading the group that completed that given task. I was hired as one of four first-years (three women and one man) to lead a team of Habitat for Humanity volunteers and work through the summer to close in the house on Tracy Street. Neighbors driving by the site would call up to us "ladies, ladies, ladies", a mixture of astonishment and support. That and Paul's confidence in us, his calm and sometimes bemused manner, kept me going that hot summer of framing and roofing. I became physically and emotionally stronger for that experience. I learned that what seemed to be an incredibly complex system, completely opaque to me, could be understood and broken down into basic tasks that I could master and even teach to others. This became the model for how I understand and approach any complex project, goal or system....I break it down into a series of tasks, I try to understand the details and then I start framing.

1990







previous spread, above,
and opposite: the 1987 BP
project in Bridgeport



Danny Sagan, BP 1990

I teach design-build studios, and Paul is often in my mind when I work on projects with students. Paul is committed to the idea that the students must be in control of the work, and I hold this as one of my first principles. This sometimes results in moments during construction when the jobsite devolves into a state where it is not completely clear to the students who is in charge. I see these moments as Brouardian.

I can remember a day, in 1990, when we were building the house at Rosette street. There was a moment when we are all arguing over a detail and we went to Paul with our grievances. He responded to our questions by saying, "I don't know, you figure it out." It was both a moment of shock and clarity; it was profoundly liberating to know that the project belonged to us and that Paul was willing to depend on us. That moment of empowerment stays with me and still informs my teaching of design-build today.

1990





Andrew Knox, BP 1985

The one I recall best:

Towards the end of the summer as the skeleton crew was desperate to finish the picnic pavilion at the foot of East Rock Park, Paul would have only one of two answers to any issue that came-up: "Go get the chain-saw, or go get the sledgehammer...."

1985



Daisy Ames, BP 2011

Paul was my "On Site Partner" for two Vlock Building Project summers - after my first year as an Intern in 2011 and after my third year as an Instructor in 2013 - we tried to do most our tasks together. We tied down the floors of the Orchard Street House together, he introduced the meaning and importance of duct tape to me along with trim and shims, and I broke one of his oldest and prized tools at the Greenwood Street House. But beyond the truly learned experiences Paul was able to give me, the memories that he has ingrained in my mind are his readiness to smile, and the sound of his voice when he got on site in the morning yelling, "Hay DAY-Zay!" I was never too far away, and hope to never be.

Below are two images that captivate his willingness work on impossible tasks, and his readiness to smile.

2011





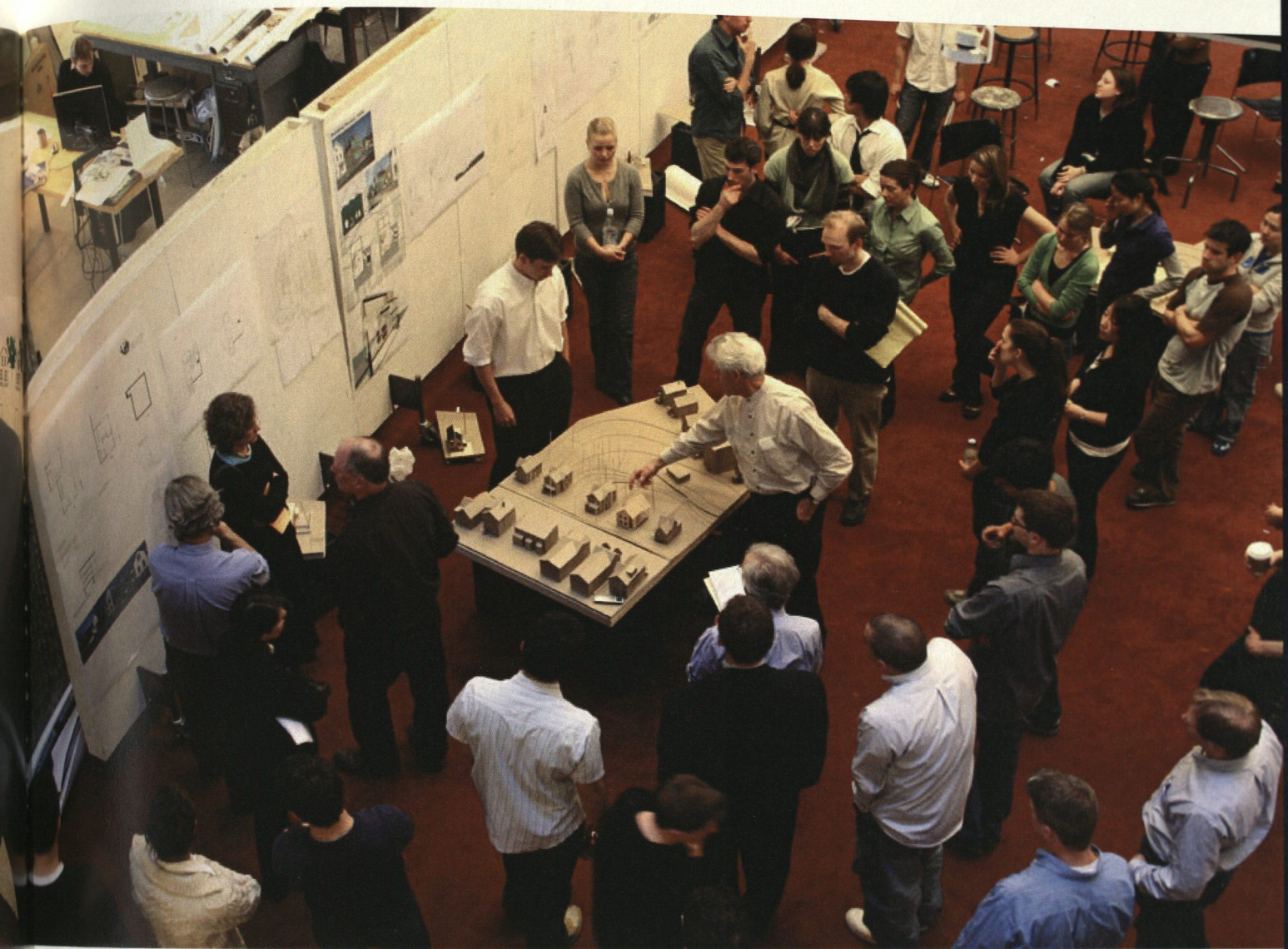
opposite: Leah Abrams
and Daisy Ames
above: Chris Parkinson
and Daisy Ames, TA's for
the EP 2013 house



Herb Newman

Paul and I started working together when he was a student, and I, a teacher. I think it was in the 19th century. His approach then and through all the years of wonderful successes from Kentucky and West Virginia to New Haven; from community and health center, to day camps and homes. He is blessed with "can do" attitude. Always positive, no matter how daunting the problems, he has been deeply engaged and responsible for everything that got built. He taught by doing and answered questions, by demonstrating, what to do and how to do it, and by allowing students to discover through their own bruised thumbs and hernias to match his own. His down-to earth, "Clint Eastwood attitude" (not dirty Harry, but, "Million Dollar Baby") has made the Building Project help students become master-builders.







above and opposite: the BP
1987 crew



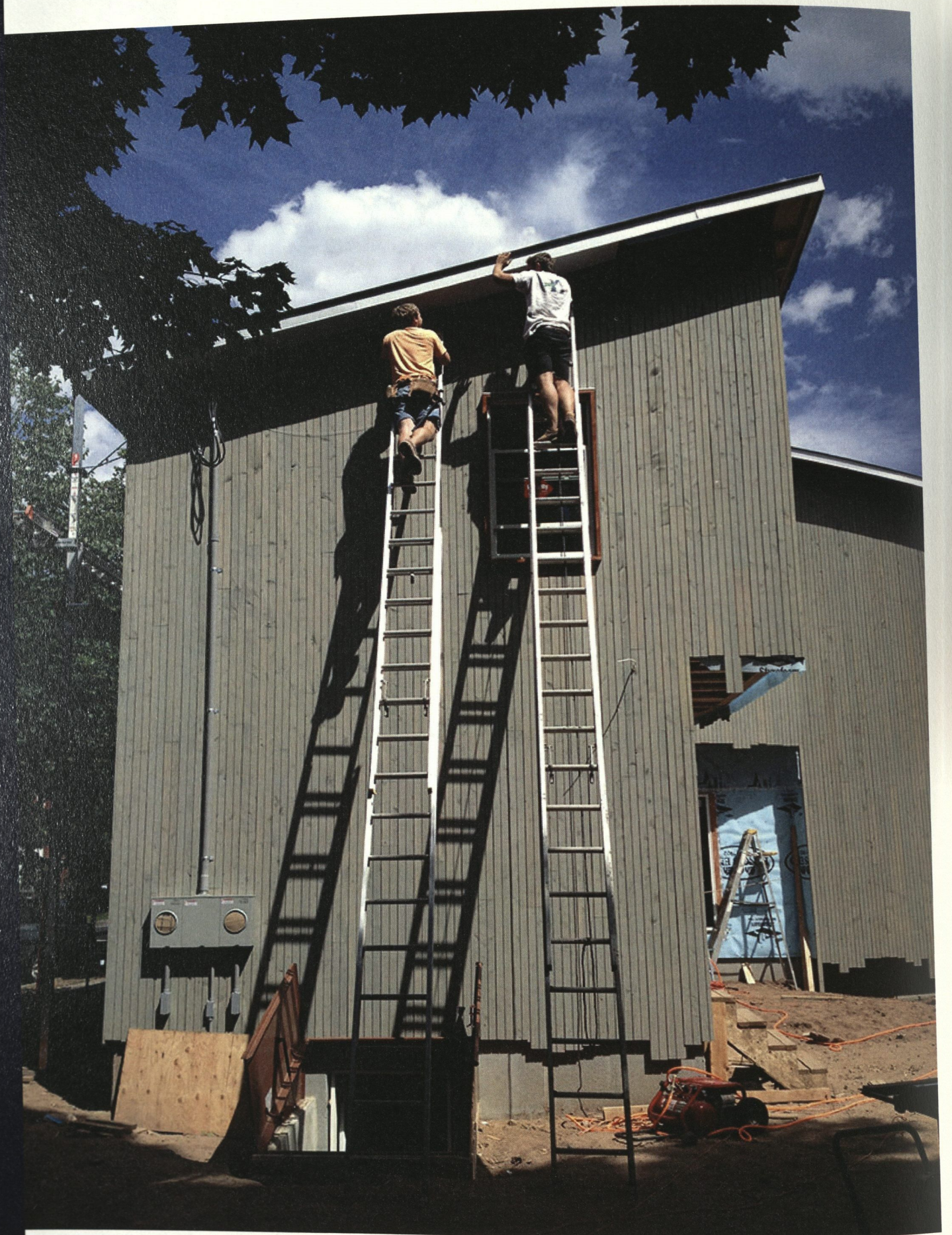


David Waggoner, BP 1973

My memories of the first year project are of people working together, first on the design that was selected with Carl Pucci and Jim Jorgenson, then engineering where we faced the choice of adding columns or losing skirt, through our amateur enterprise on site at Camp Farnum building the pavilion with friends like Peter Zander and Andy Stevenson who knew much more about construction. I remember the smells of fresh concrete and cut wood, the satisfaction of being in the air nailing rafters, the messiness of roofing with untrained hands, the camaraderie at end of day in the forest. Paul was the leader who organized us all to do our work, then stood aside so we could learn, central to the enterprise though never the focus of activity, ever patient, a model for us all of architect as problem solver, builder, teacher, friend.

I apologize for brevity of recollection, but time, well time..
Hope you are well today

1973





opposite: Brian Maddock
and Will Sheridan
above: Paul and the 2012
BP team

Cynthia Barton, BP 2000

I worked on the summer crew for the house of the class of 2002. It's a two-story house, but it's a really tall building, especially at the corner of the roof that peaks at a weird angle. If I remember correctly, this roof move was called "the wink." The wink clinched it for the design. Turner Brooks dug the wink.

Somehow I wound up soliciting a standing-seam roof for the wink. I cold-called. The first place I called went for it. They delivered materials and a seamer (which, for those of you who have never used one, is basically a remote-controlled dune buggy with a trash compactor feature). Somehow I became the one who was going to put the roof on. I was supposed to take a bunch of metal sheets up on the wink and mash them together with the dune buggy. Rhiannon Price and Brian Papa were implicated in this as well. Somehow Paul seemed fine with this. He was good with our framing. This I know because as we framed out the wink he would swing up from time to time. You'd see a glove on a rafter, maybe a flash of bicep, and then he'd be standing there. He'd give some kind of approval and by the time you registered that the way you'd framed the wink was really okay, you'd see him two floors down, getting into his truck.

The seaming went like that. We'd stand on these slippery sheets of metal forty feet up with a harness system I didn't quite believe in with the dune buggy mashing the panels together and he'd hop up from time to time and be fine with all of it. Delighted, even. We finished without incident, we had a good time, we learned a lot. I don't think the roof leaks. Paul was behind all of that. We adored him and were grateful for him every day.





opposite: the venerable Apollo getting love from Ross McClellan, Suhni Chung, and Adam Hopfner
 above: Chris Parkinson, Belinda Lee, Meghan Lewis, Daisy Ames, Avi Forman

Avi Forman, BP 2010

Within the first month of my first building project, I set up a ladder at too shallow of an angle and climbed it only to have the bottom slip out from under me. As soon as I hit the ground, my first instinct was to run to Paul...to apologize.

In retrospect, I think that instinct stemmed from witnessing why the building projects boast such an incredible record of safety; it was Paul, scurrying around the periphery making all the essential tweaks to insure our inexperience didn't translate into our injury. While Paul would let students struggle through erecting the scaffolding he would be there to make sure the pins were properly registered. While he would let students wield the skill saw, it was him that made sure the blade was properly secured. While he would let the students construct and raise the wall, it was always Paul that was there to insure the hurricane clips weren't forgotten.

Paul was superlatively consistent. He was the first one on site and the last to leave, everyday. He brought a measured calm and wisdom to what can otherwise seem a chaotic and unruly process. When the energy levels came to a frenzied peak, I would look to Paul, completely unperturbed and grin knowing that he had done this 40 times before. I credit Paul with saving my life, the only question in my mind is just how many times. Thank you for every tweak you made that we didn't know we needed! I learned so much from everything you said and did and and everything you didn't.

Avi



Ben Bischoff, BP 1998

Paul,
Packed in a box, I've got photos of some really good times building those houses. And my hammer is still caked with three summers worth of tar, I do wish I could tell you I am still using it more often I really am. I do still course out siding and floor boards just like you taught me. But mostly I think about how much you imparted to me while making me think I was figuring it out on my own the whole time. Building those houses was such a exhilaratingly demanding process- you had us all right on the edge of ourselves the whole time, and we finished each day having accomplished something we didn't even know how or where to begin when the day started. The confidence I learned, the trust in my abilities to figure it out, the need to trust in others to really figure it out, I still put all of that into practice each day, and those are the memories that endure from the three summers when I had the privilege to work with and learn from you.

Congratulations on all you have done to make the Building Project such a defining part of Yale, and many thanks for your lifelong commitment to teaching us all that you know and all that you love about building. I am grateful that I get to put it to use each and every day.

With much admiration,
Ben Bischoff

1998







above: Leah Abrams and Sarah Smith installing sill plates on the BP2013 house

Sarah Smith, BP 2013

Our year was a trying year for BP - with Paul getting horribly attacked, and the storm that ensued, as well as seemingly everything else falling behind schedule despite all our efforts. By mid August we were only just beginning interior finishing, after both the insulation and drywall crews had delayed the move from exterior to interior. We were starting to install the very first kitchen cabinets and a crazy storm blew in and the sky went eerily dark, as if it was 9pm. So, here we are, after handfuls of setbacks, and we still can't work because the house is too dark. Then Paul emerges out of nowhere and illuminates the space with a couple of flood lamps. It was our "there will be light" moment of BP2013, and an image I will never forget. I snapped this photo of Paul, calm as can be, but I wish I would have captured the smiles and cheers from everyone working inside the house.

Paul, our class didn't get to know you as well as years past. But your tireless contribution is not lost on us!

2013





opposite: Paul brings light
to BP 2013 house
above: Kirk Henderson
installing the kitchen
cabinets

Charlotte Breed Handy, BP 1986

Dear Paul,

I was pleased (for you), surprised (because you don't seem old enough to retire) and amazed (to think that you have been teaching for more than 28 years) to hear about your retirement this Spring. I wish I could attend the festivities, but we will be on a family trip that week. I wanted join the chorus of voices that will laud you on April 21st.

The building project was a real highlight in my time at the Architecture School. As a concept or pedagogical tool, it is a brilliant end to First Year. It focuses the class on a design competition, teamwork, and on building something real- all essential aspects of the architectural process. You are a gentle, knowledgeable and capable leader. The team I was on was comprised of people with a good mix of skills- Alan Organschi, Bill Vinyard, Aubrey Carter, Steve Strassbourg and me. Alan made a cool laminated curved model of the roof. I guess he still makes some things with that esthetic. Steve, may he rest in peace, was a great draftsman, and I remember him laboring over the details during the working drawing phase. Bill provided the caustic commentary that pushed us all to a refined design. It was a lesson in collaboration and a real learning experience. I particularly liked the building phase of the project, though it had a few bumps, as is to be expected.

I attempted to add Ornament to the beautiful spare design. Kent Bloomer and I thought that some Egyptian details would be lovely and I lobbied for adding some vertical accents to the formwork for the "pylons" that held up the roof, to no avail. The modernists prevailed! The team did allow a metal column to be added in the end, a sculptural element by Bruce Graham that was nothing if not ornamental. But I digress...The Pavilion was a beautiful design and I hear it has held up fairly well for.... 26 years this summer. Much like you have....

I hope to reconnect with you sometime, perhaps when I'm in New Haven in May. In the meantime, a hearty thank-you for all you've done for Yale and its Architecture Students over the years, and a personal thanks from me for being a calm and reasonable presence and for stewarding that most important experience for our class and for me.

Sincerely,
Charlotte Breed Handy

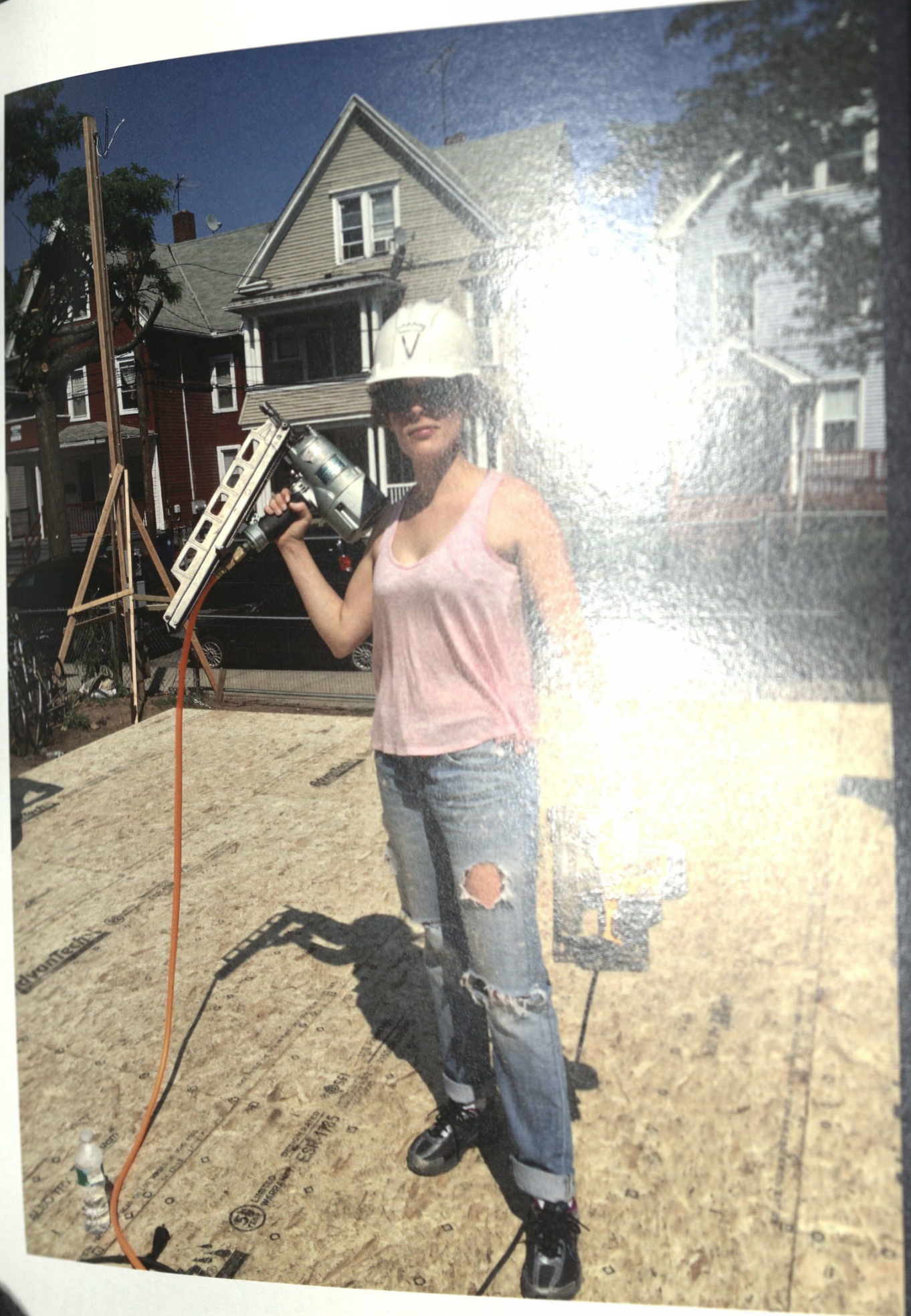
1986

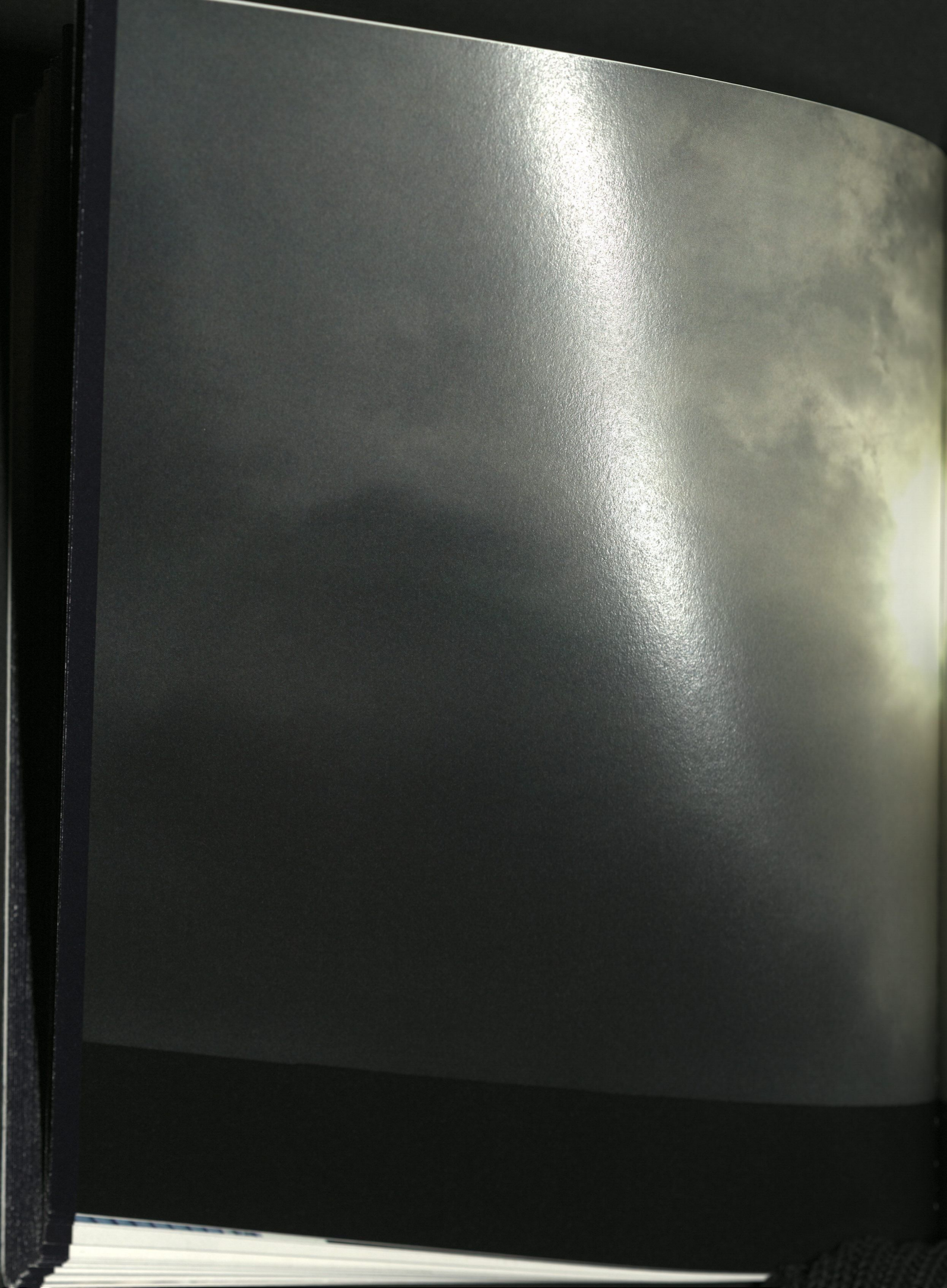




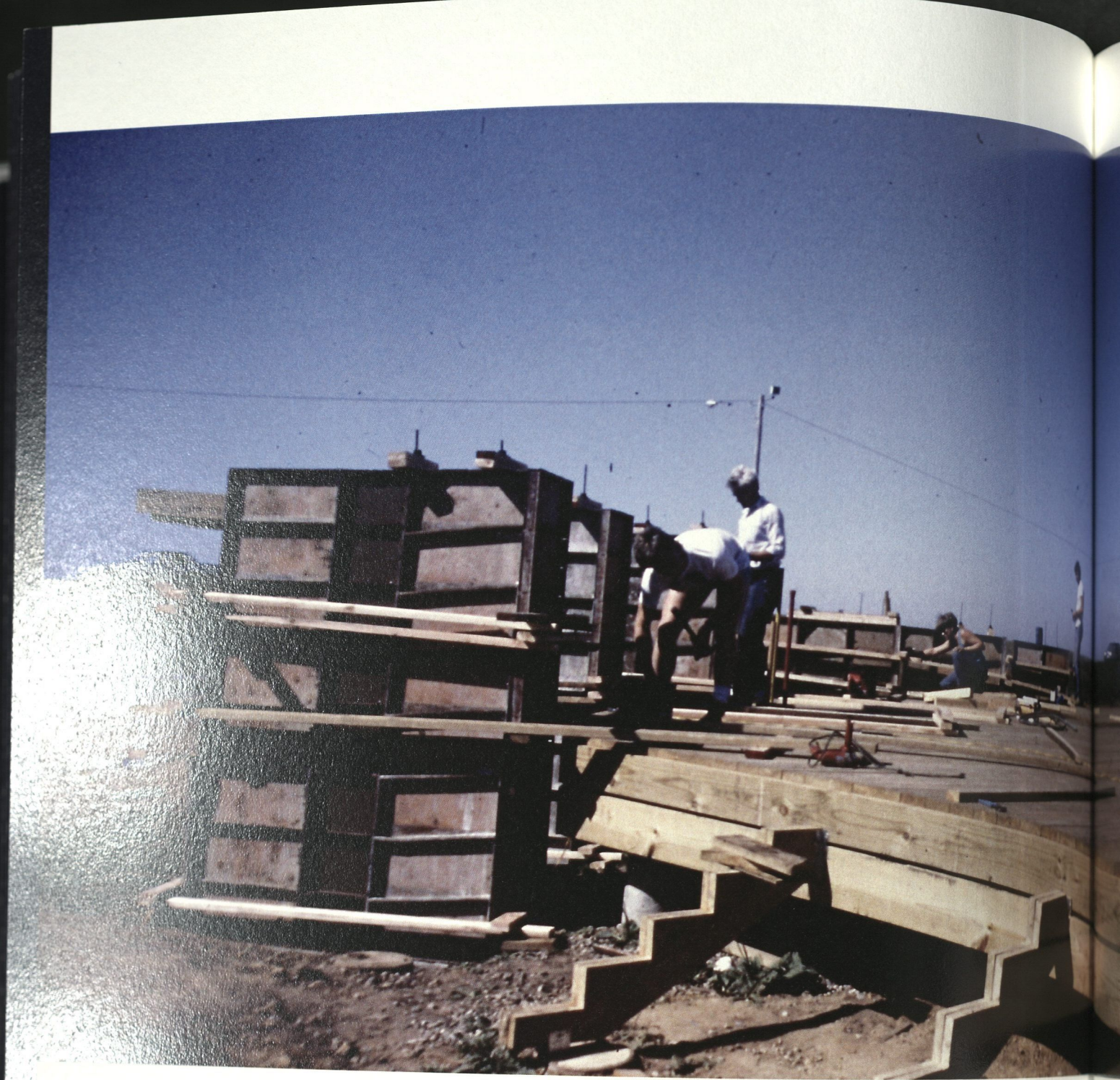


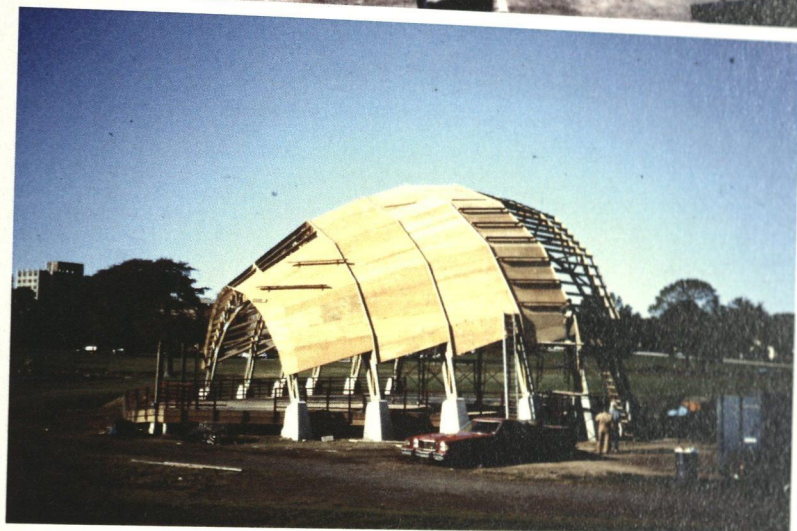
previous spread: Perry
Winberg, Tamrat Gebre-
michael, Meghan Lewis,
Emily Bell, and Evan
Helson
style: Ross McClellan
and Daisy Ames
opposite: Maya Alexander
next spread: Leah Abrams











Mark Simon, BP 1970

It is said that St. Vincent Ferrer is the patron saint of builders, but I know it is really Paul Brouard. Who else could suffer the maniacal dreams of architecture students for 35 years and actually get buildings built despite them, or perhaps even out of them?

1970

Hiba Bhatti, BP 2013

Paul was one of my critics during the building project's design phase. Although he was a man of few words, when he did talk, he spoke with wisdom and with passion. The night the BP results were announced, and our class was enjoying a wonderful evening at Gray Organschi Architecture, I had the pleasure of sitting by Paul for dinner. It took a little while for him to warm up, but once I began asking him about his experiences with the Building Project he opened up and shared so many wonderful stories. His tone was heartfelt and genuine, and I could immediately tell he was a man who, despite his quiet demeanor, was full of wisdom and loved to foster education. This positive energy and endearing attitude continued even through the summer. I cannot count how many times I had asked Paul to get grout, paint, Phillips heads, paint stirrers, latex gloves, shims, and did I mention Phillips heads?! And not once was he annoyed. He was after all the most energetic person at the site and his positive attitude could only bring a smile to our faces after a long, exhausting day in the sun.

Paul is the BP superhero extraordinaire. We appreciate his selfless, generous and contagious positive attitude, and we will all miss him very much!!!

opposite: Hiba Bhatti carrying a stud much bigger than herself





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Brigid Williams, BP 1976

Here I am at the Spring 1976 Building Project - probably listening to Paul tell me that I shouldn't take my shoes off on a construction site!

1976

Rhiannon K. Price, BP 2002

Summer crew Building Project for class of 02'/Teaching fellow summer 03'
Paul handed me a framing hammer from the shared hammer bucket and said "Now, this is a good hammer. Use this one." The hammer felt like a mid-weight hammer with a slightly worn grip on the handle and appeared slightly older than the rest. From that day forward that was my hammer; I would arrive at the site early to pick out that one particular hammer, recognizing it's dents and markings from use, and eventually I boldly left it in my tool belt due to personal attachment. By the end of the summer Paul noticed this hammer/hand relationship, and handed me the hammer while smiling and saying, "Keep it"

A few years later I was employed as a teaching fellow for the Building Project (with Paul Brouard and Adam Hopfner managing). Our building site was broken into and my hammer was stolen out of the bathroom of the second floor along with my tool belt. I felt as if I had lost a family heirloom and that my hammer had been violated. My hammer was a gift from Paul and that meant so much to me.

Post BP

Post-building project I was worked for a construction company in Manhattan as a foreman. One of the younger labourers on site named Ivan, grew to have a keen interest in carpentry craftsmanship and on his last day of work at the end of the project he came up to me and said that he had learned so much. At that point I passed him a wrapped hammer that I had bought him for his birthday, which happened to coincide with the last day of work and said, "This hammer is for you, it is a good one, keep it." Ivan responded with "thank you, it means so much to me..."

Understanding the importance of weight, grip, technique of craftsman, and shifting one's body in different ways in order to build more effectively, precision, strength and grace (while maintaining a sense of humour) are a mutually important role in my personal and professional design education. I worked with Paul...and unsurprisingly I have worked in construction ever since.

Paul Brouard said to me while I was finishing architecture school, "Don't become an architect, do something different, you are much too creative to become an architect, you would make a great architect, but you would be bored in an office drafting parts of buildings." That suggestion has resonated with me since and I now smile understanding what he meant. Paul's words have weight beyond construction equipment and architecture, and when work is over he makes time to pause in order to actively participate in conversations, picking...which says more than words to me.

THANKS PAUL!

2002





Kevin O'Brien, BP 1986

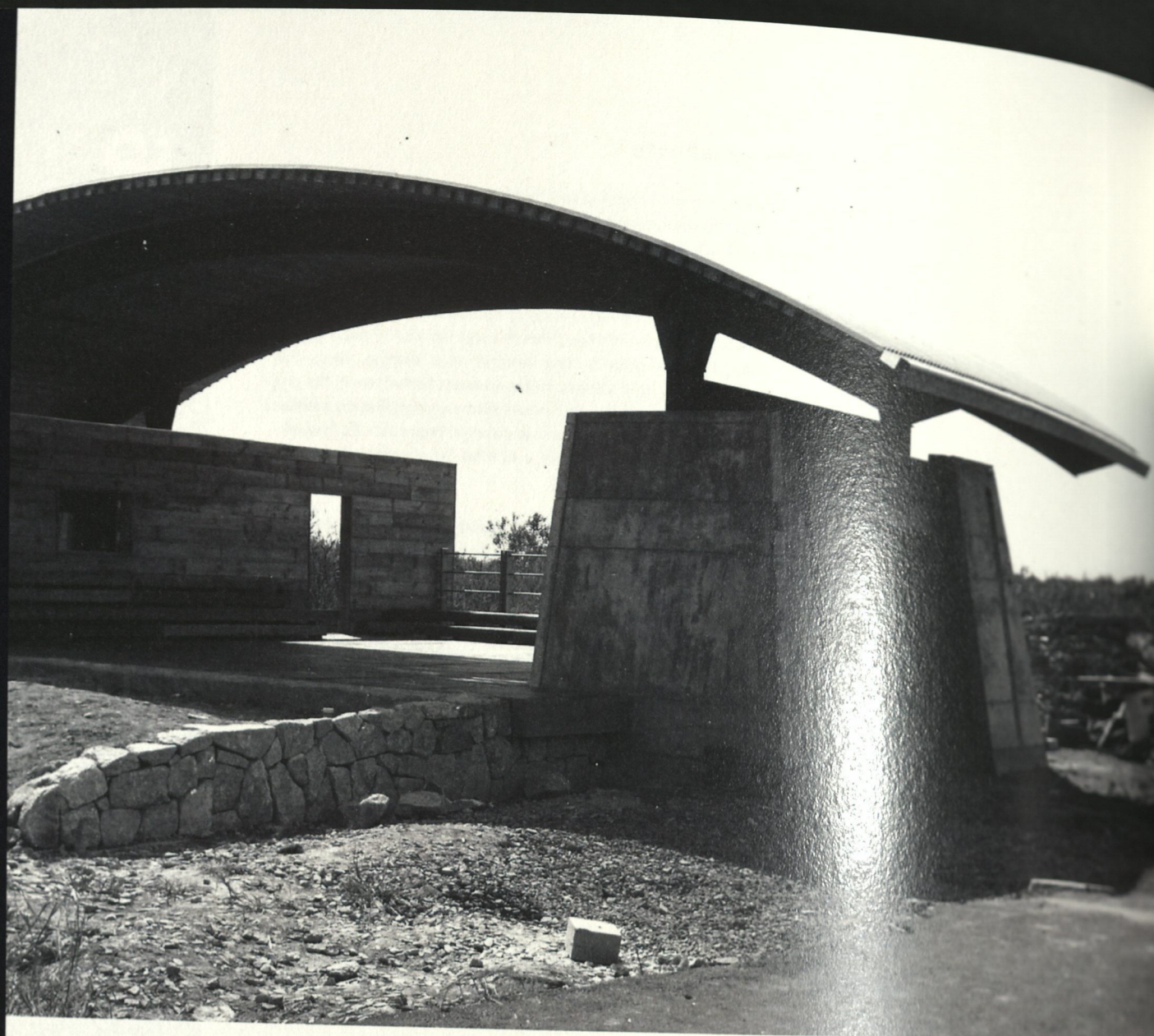
The time we spent with Paul building the Fort Nathan Hale project was one of the more important formative experiences of my education as an architect. Of the many lessons Paul struggled to share, one lesson in particular stands out –

Our 'client' for the project [the acting president of the Fort Nathan Hale Society] had requested that we install a family heirloom – this nautical brass porthole from some old ship – into the pristine concrete wall of the project. Paul strongly suggested we consider this rather minor alteration. To us, this little token of nostalgia was unthinkable in the abstract perfection of the project, and I couldn't understand how Paul could even suggest that an architect should actually listen to their client [let alone do what they ask]. As I recall, Paul called me an asshole and stalked off, and after the stunned silence we reconsidered our position.

I'll always be grateful to Paul for his patience, good humor, and wisdom in what [in retrospect] was a Sisyphus-like task. I wish him all the best!

Fond regards,
Kevin O'Brien

1986





photos of the Fort Nathan
His Education Pavilion,
1978