

PAUL RUDOLPH Y EL PROYECTO DE LA FINNEY GUEST HOUSE

PAUL RUDOLPH AND THE PROJECT FOR THE FINNEY GUEST HOUSE

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doi: 10.4995/ega.2021.15082

El artículo analiza la relevancia del proyecto de la *Finney Guest House* en la trayectoria profesional de Paul Rudolph, y su relación con otros dos proyectos realizados en los mismos años, la *Revere Quality House* y la *Healy Guest House*. En los tres aparece como cliente o promotora Roberta Healy Finney, lo que lleva a pensar que la *Finney House* pudiera ser un antecedente de la *Healy House*. En el texto se comentan algunos de los mejores dibujos realizados por Paul Rudolph en los años cuarenta, entre ellos un ejercicio de proyectos realizado, bajo la dirección de Walter Gropius, para obtener la titulación de Máster en Arquitectura por la Universidad de Harvard.

PALABRAS CLAVE: PAUL RUDOLPH,
RALPH TWITCHELL, FINNEY HOUSE,
HEALY HOUSE

This article considers the status of the project for the Finney Guest House within the professional career of Paul Rudolph, and its relationship to two further projects carried out during the same period, the Revere Quality House and the Healy Guest House. In all three cases Roberta Healy Finney appeared as the client or promotor, which leads to the thought that the Finney House might be a precedent for the Healy House. This text comments on some of the best drawings made by Paul Rudolph in the 1940s, including an exercise in the form of a project that he completed under the direction of Walter Gropius, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of Master in Architecture at the University of Harvard.

KEYWORDS: PAUL RUDOLPH,
RALPH TWITCHELL, FINNEY HOUSE,
HEALY HOUSE



Paul Rudolph y Ralph Twitchell en Florida

En los últimos años, la arquitectura de Paul Rudolph ha despertado un nuevo interés, como lo demuestra la publicación de varios libros y artículos sobre su obra (Rohan 2014; Bell 2020). Gran parte de este interés se debe a la monografía *Paul Rudolph The Florida Houses* (Domin y King 2002), ilustrada con las excelentes fotografías en blanco y negro realizadas en su día por Ezra Stoller, y con las innovadoras perspectivas con las que el joven Rudolph solía enriquecer la presentación de sus proyectos en las revistas especializadas.

Resulta sorprendente, ojeando ese libro, volver a comprobar la alta calidad de diseño y de experimentación formal que consiguió Paul Rudolph, en sus primeros años de ejercicio profesional, con las viviendas unifamiliares proyectadas en Florida. Viviendas que le darían a conocer como una joven promesa a tener en cuenta en el panorama de la arquitectura moderna en la postguerra.

Entre las primeras obras que cimentaron su prestigio, se encuentran la *Finney Guest House*, la *Revere Quality House* y la *Healy Guest House*, proyectadas entre 1947 y 1948 en el paraje conocido como Siesta Key, en el condado de Sarasota. Mientras que la *Revere* y la *Healy* llegaron a ser construidas, la *Finney House* se quedó tan sólo en proyecto.

Lo interesante de estos tres encargos es que están interrelacionados y responden a los requerimientos de una misma cliente, Roberta Finney, con la que estaba íntimamente involucrado Ralph Twitchell (1890-1978), el arquitecto con el

que comenzó a trabajar Paul Rudolph al acabar sus estudios de grado en arquitectura ¹.

Paul Rudolph había conocido a Ralph Twitchell en la primavera de 1941, cuando, a la espera de poder realizar el Postgrado en la Universidad de Harvard, fue contratado durante unos cinco meses para trabajar en su estudio en Sarasota, llegando a participar en el diseño de la casa de su mentor, la *Twitchell Residence* (Howey 1997).

En septiembre de 1941 Rudolph se incorporó a la *Graduate School of Design* de Harvard para realizar los dos cursos de postgrado bajo la dirección de Walter Gropius. En diciembre de 1941 Estados Unidos entró en guerra y en la primavera de 1942, tras finalizar su primer curso, se incorporó a la Armada, siendo destinado a la reparación de buques de guerra en los astilleros de Brooklyn. En septiembre de 1945, finalizada la guerra, fue desmovilizado.

Ralph Twitchell, que no había perdido el contacto con Rudolph en aquellos años, le volvió a ofrecer un puesto de colaborador en su estudio, que aceptó aún sabiendo que debería compaginar su trabajo con la conclusión de sus estudios. En su segunda estancia en Harvard, en el semestre de otoño de 1946, siguió trabajando con Twitchell en varios proyectos de viviendas unifamiliares en Siesta Key, hasta que en 1948 se asocia con este, con el que trabajará como *partner* hasta marzo de 1952, en que disolvieron la sociedad, fundando cada cual su propio estudio.

Durante su colaboración, Rudolph se encargaba más del diseño, mientras que la tarea de Twitchell se centraba en desarrollar y definir los aspectos constructivos, en la di-

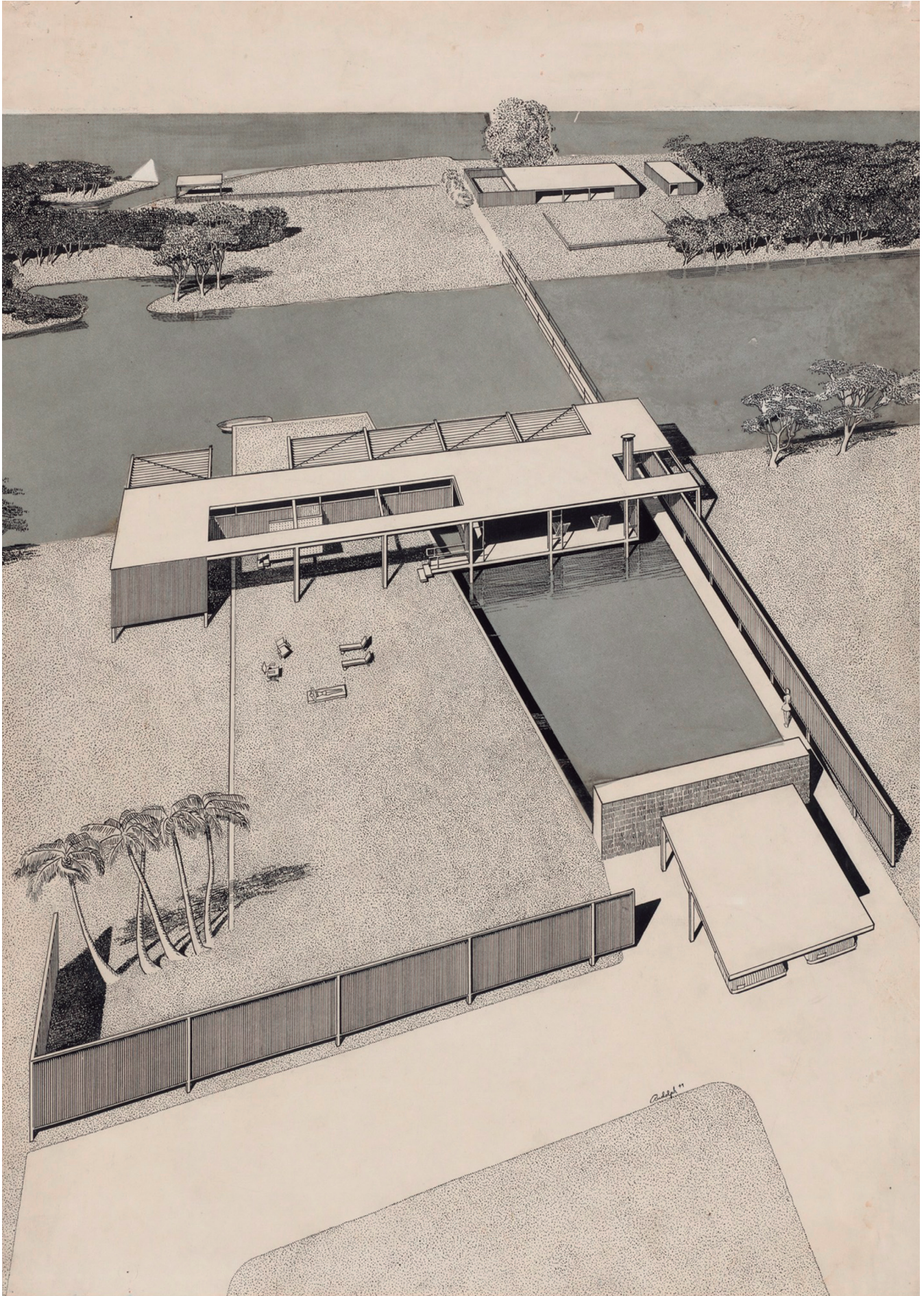
Paul Rudolph and Ralph Twitchell in Florida

Over recent years, Paul Rudolph's architecture has aroused new interest, as is shown by the publication of various books and articles on his work (Rohan 2014; Bell 2020). A great deal of this attention is due to the monograph *Paul Rudolph: The Florida Houses* (Domin and King 2002), illustrated with the excellent black and white photographs taken by Ezra Stoller in the 1950s, and with the innovative perspective views that the young Rudolph frequently used to enhance the presentation of his projects in specialist journals.

It is striking, on leafing through this book, to see once again what high-quality design and experimentation with forms was achieved by Paul Rudolph during his first few years of professional practice, in the single-family dwellings for which he undertook projects in Florida. These were houses that would make him known as a promising youngster who had to be kept in mind within the panorama of modern architecture in the post-war period. Among the earliest pieces of work that copper-fastened his prestige are to be numbered the Finney Guest House, the Revere Quality House and the Healy Guest House, proposed during 1947 and 1948 on the island of Siesta Key in Sarasota County. Whilst the Revere and Healy houses were built, the Finney House never got beyond project stage. The interesting thing about these three commissions is that they were interlinked and met the requirements of one and the same client, Roberta Finney. She was intimately involved with Ralph Twitchell (1890 to 1978), the architect with whom Paul Rudolph first worked after completing his first degree in architecture ¹.

Paul Rudolph had become acquainted with Ralph Twitchell in the Spring of 1941. At this point he was waiting to start his postgraduate studies at Harvard University, and he managed to secure some five months' employment in Twitchell's architectural practice in Sarasota. He even took part in the designing of his mentor's house, the Twitchell Residence (Howey 1997).

In September 1941, Rudolph enrolled in the Graduate School of Design at Harvard with the intention of completing a two-year postgraduate programme directed by Walter





1. P. Rudolph, *Finney Guest House*, 1949
(MoMA, 65 x 48 cm)

rección y ejecución de las obras y en el trato directo con los clientes. Esta relación permitía a Rudolph tener su independencia, trabajar a distancia en sus diseños, y poder dedicar parte de su tiempo a publicar su obra y a establecer útiles contactos en los círculos arquitectónicos de la costa este.

Publicitando sus viviendas unifamiliares

Resulta sorprendente el número de artículos en revistas especializadas que difundieron los primeros proyectos de Twitchell y Rudolph (Domin, p. 241). Entre 1947 y 1951 aparecieron unos veinticinco, en revistas como *Architectural Forum*, *Architectural Record*, *Progressive Architecture*, *Interiors*, *Arts & Architecture*, *House and Garden* y *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*.

Prácticamente todas sus obras tuvieron una cobertura en los medios, a saber: la *Denman* (1946-47), la *Harkavy* (1946), la *Miller Boat House* (1946), la casa *Miller* (1947-48), la *Finney Guest House* (1947), la *Shute Residence* (1947), la *Rusell* (1947-48), la *Revere Quality House* (1948), las *Lamothic Houses* (1948), la *Siegrist* (1948), la *Deeds* (1948-49), la *Healy Guest House* (1950) y la *Leavengood* (1950-51). Todo ello contribuyó a que jóvenes arquitectos se instalaran en la costa de Florida, dando lugar a una arquitectura atenta al modo de vida, al entorno y a las condiciones climáticas, que llegaría a ser conocida como la *Sarasota School*.

Resulta esclarecedor, entre todas estas referencias bibliográficas, el artículo “Maisons en Florida”, aparecido en 1950 en *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*.² Se trataba del primer artículo en una

1. P. Rudolph, *Finney Guest House*, 1949
(MoMA, 65 cm x 48 cm)

revista extranjera, por lo que es de suponer que Paul Rudolph eligió con tiento las obras que deseaba mostrar, puesto que iba a compartir páginas con Richard Neutra, Marcel Breuer, Philip Johnson, Ralph Rapson y Paul Laszlo, considerados por la revista francesa como los más conspicuos representantes de las nuevas tendencias en la construcción de viviendas unifamiliares en los Estados Unidos.

Pues bien, nuestro arquitecto seleccionó cinco obras: las casas *Siegrist*, *Rusell*, *Miller*, la *Revere Quality House* (enunciada como un prototipo experimental adaptada a las condiciones climáticas de Florida), y la *Finney Guest House* (Fig. 1).

Cabe preguntarnos por qué Rudolph escoge la *Finney*, que no estaba construida, dejando de lado la residencia *Denman*. Una primera respuesta sería por los elegantes planos y perspectivas con los que Rudolph nos describe su proyecto (Figs. 1-5). De hecho, las perspectivas de la *Finney* fueron realizadas en 1949, quizá mientras disfrutaba de la beca *Wheelwright Traveling Fellowship* en Europa, con vistas de su publicación tanto en la revista *Interiors* (enero de 1950), como en *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* (julio de 1950).

Aunque Rudolph solía acompañar sus proyectos con perspectivas, para que los clientes tuvieran una imagen certera de cómo se vería la vivienda terminada, nunca lo había hecho con tanto esmero como con la *Finney Guest House*, que incluye tres perspectivas y una espectacular vista aérea, donada por el arquitecto al MoMA y reproducida a página entera en muchas publicaciones (Fig. 1). Rudolph practicaba un tipo de dibujo minucioso, con finos rayados y punteados a tinta, y

Gropius. In December 1941, the United States came into the war. In consequence, in the Spring of 1942, on completing his first year, Rudolph joined the Navy, being posted to work repairing warships at Brooklyn Navy Yard. In September 1945, as the war had come to its close, he was demobilized. Ralph Twitchell had not lost touch with Rudolph during the war years, and once again offered him work in his architecture office. Rudolph accepted, even though he realized he would have to reconcile his work with finishing his programme of studies. During his second stay at Harvard, in the autumn semester of 1946, he continued to work with Twitchell on various projects for single-family dwellings on Siesta Key. In 1948 he became Twitchell's partner, this lasting until March 1952, when the partnership was dissolved and each of the two set up a personal architecture firm.

During their collaboration, Rudolph tended to be more involved with conceptual design, while Twitchell concentrated mostly on developing plans and defining construction features, directing and carrying out building works, and face-to-face contacts with clients. Such an arrangement allowed Rudolph a good degree of independence, as he could work on his designs from a distance, and so give over part of his time to publicizing his creations and to establishing useful contacts in East Coast architectural circles.

Publicizing His Single-Family Dwellings

It is surprising how many articles in specialist journals gave details of the earlier projects by Twitchell and Rudolph (Domin, p. 241). Between 1947 and 1951, around twenty-five such items appeared in publications like *Architectural Forum*, *Architectural Record*, *Progressive Architecture*, *Interiors*, *Arts & Architecture*, *House and Garden*, and *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*.

Practically all their work was covered in these media. The buildings covered comprised the *Denman Residence* (1946/47), the *Harkavy House* (1946), the *Miller Boat House* (1946), the *Miller Residence* (1947/48), the *Finney Guest House* (1947), the *Shute Residence* (1947), the *Russell Residence* (1947/48), the *Revere Quality House* (1948), the *Lamolithic*

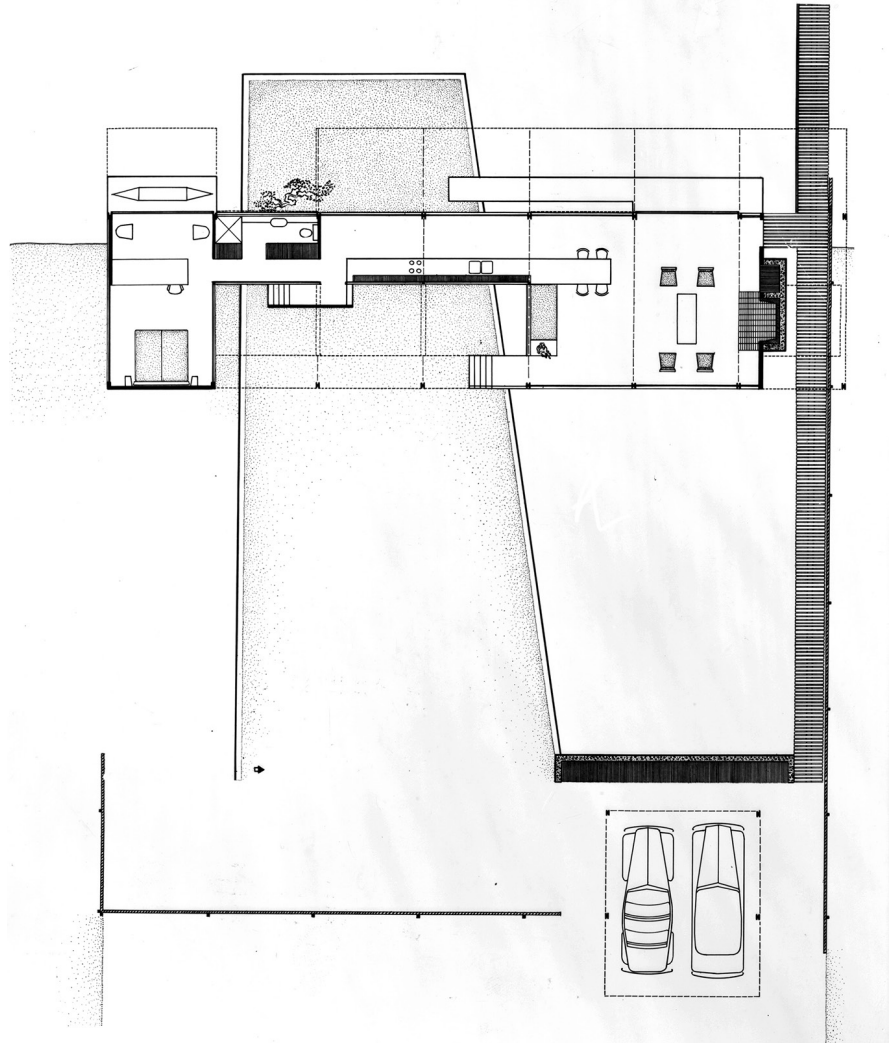


Houses (1948), the Siegrist Residence (1948), the Deeds Residence (1948/49), the Healy Guest House (1950) and the Leavengood Residence (1950/51). All of this contributed to encouraging young architects to set up shop on the Florida coastline, giving rise to an architecture sensitive to the way of life, the surroundings and the climatic conditions of the area, which eventually became known as the *Sarasota School*.

Amidst all this bibliography, it is particularly revealing to consider the article entitled "Maisons en Florida", which came out in 1950 in *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* 2. This was the first article on this topic in a foreign publication, so it is to be assumed that Paul Rudolph chose with great care the works he wished to show. This was all the more so because he would be sharing space with Richard Neutra, Marcel Breuer, Philip Johnson, Ralph Rapson and Paul Laszlo. These latter were seen by the French journal as the most conspicuous representatives of new trends in the building of single-family dwellings in the United States.

In the end, the architect selected five works. These were the Siegrist, Russell, and Miller Residences, the Revere Quality House, which was described as an experimental prototype adapted to climate conditions in Florida, and the Finney Guest House (Fig. 1).

It may be asked why Rudolph chose the Finney Guest House, which had not been built, and omitted the Denman Residence. One answer might be the elegance of the plans and perspectives that Rudolph provided for illustrating the project (Figs. 1 to 5). In fact, the perspectives for the Finney building were drawn in 1949, perhaps while he was on his "Wheelwright Traveling Fellowship" in Europe, with an eye to publishing them both in the *Interiors* magazine, where they appeared in January 1950, and in the July 1950 issue of *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*. Although Rudolph usually provided perspective views in his projects, so that clients would have a clear image of what the building would look like when finished, he had never done this so painstakingly as in the case of the Finney Guest House. There were three perspectives and a spectacular aerial view, donated by the architect to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and reproduced as a whole-page illustration in many publications



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en ciertos casos con incorporación de tramas (Cervero 2019; Galván, Álvaro-Tordesillas, Jiménez 2018). Una manera de dibujar que volvería a emplear en la *Healy Guest House* (Figs. 6 y 7) y que, con las lógicas variaciones de cada época, llegaría a ser una señal distintiva del trabajo de Paul Rudolph (Bell 2020).

Hay un pequeño dato que interesa anotar. En el índice del número de *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, al indicar los autores de los proyectos publicados, aparecen por este orden: *Paul Rudolph et Ralph S. Twitchell*, cuando lo habitual hasta entonces era dar preeminencia al arquitecto *senior*. De hecho, así sucede al presentar las primeras cuatro viviendas en el interior, pero no con la casa *Finney*, en la que vuelve

(Fig. 1). Rudolph practised a style of drawing in meticulous detail, with fine-line shading and stippling in ink, and sometimes cross-hatching (Cervero 2019; Galván, Álvaro-Tordesillas, Jiménez 2018). This was a drawing method that he used once again for the Healy Guest House (Figs. 6 and 7). Given certain logical variations as time went by, this became a typical marker of the work of Paul Rudolph (Bell 2020).

There is one small point that is worth noting. The table of contents for the issue of *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* indicates the architects for the projects there published as *Paul Rudolph et Ralph S. Twitchell*, in that order, when the norm up to that point had been to mention the senior architect first. Indeed, this is exactly what is done in the presentation of the first four buildings in the magazine, but this does not happen for the Finney House, where the same order is adopted as in the table of contents, as if there were a wish to emphasize that responsibility



2. P. Rudolph, *Finney Guest House*, planta

3. *Finney House*, perspectiva vista hacia la fachada oeste

4. *Finney House*, perspectiva vista hacia el noroeste

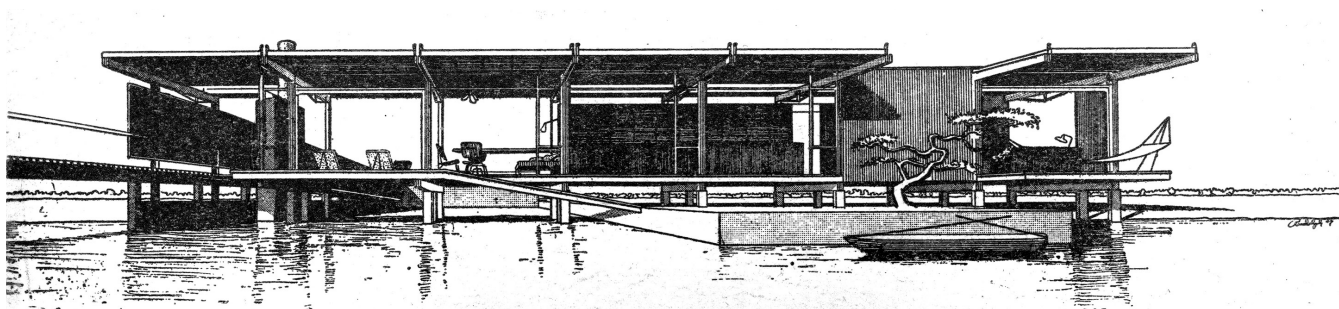
5. *Finney House*, sección transversal fugada por la sala de estar

2. P. Rudolph, *Finney Guest House*, Floor Plan

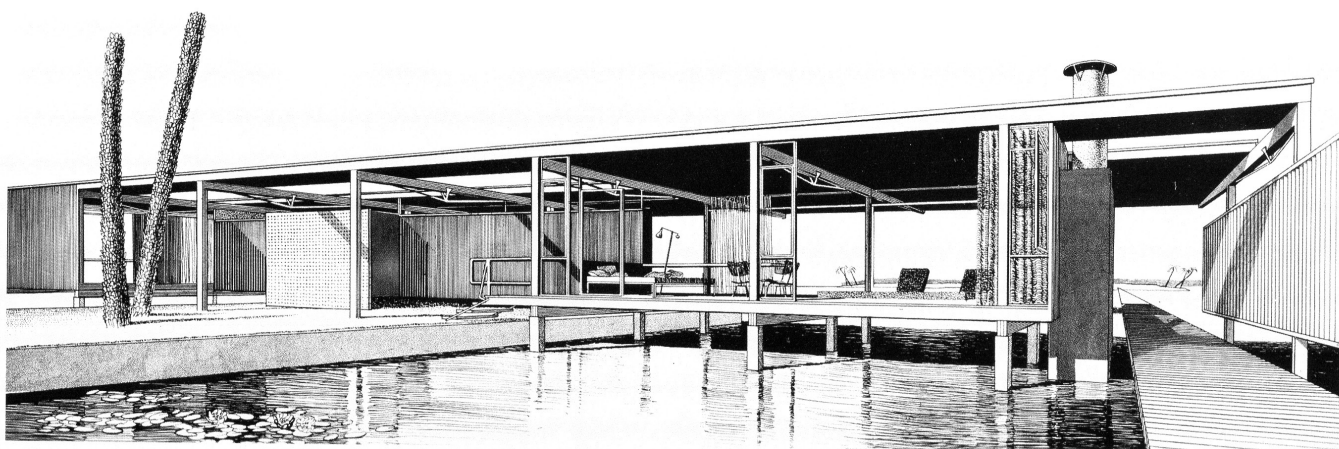
3. *Finney House*, View of the Western Façade

4. *Finney House*, View towards the North-West

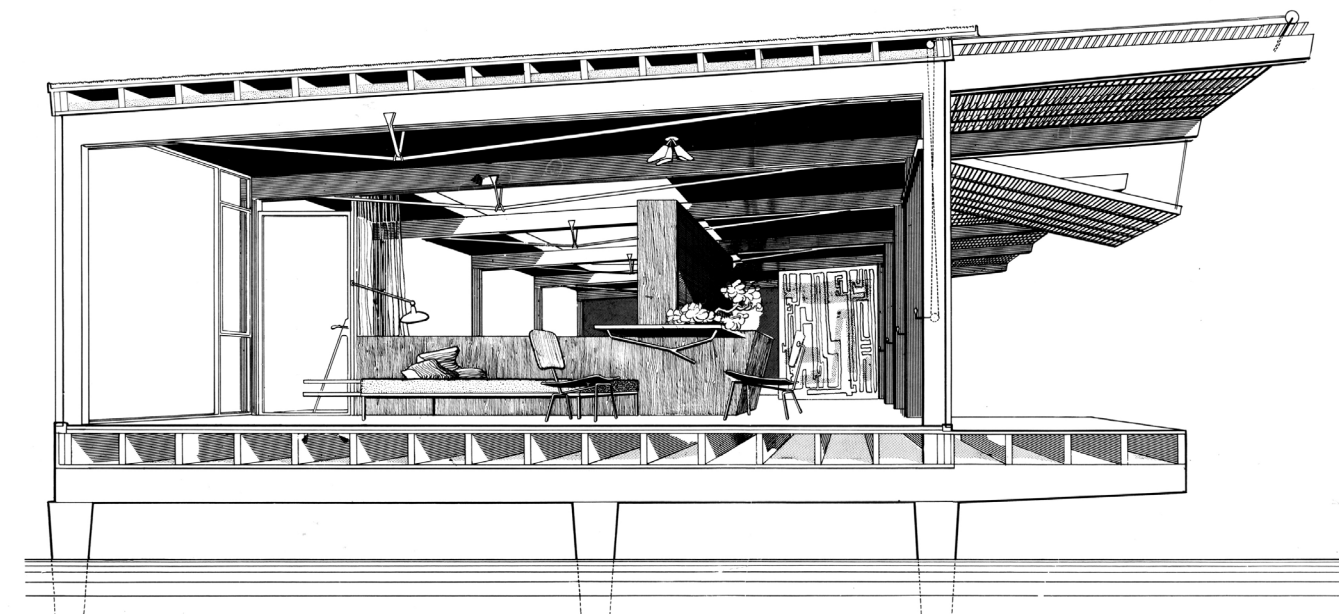
5. *Finney House*, Cross-Section in Perspective of the Living Room



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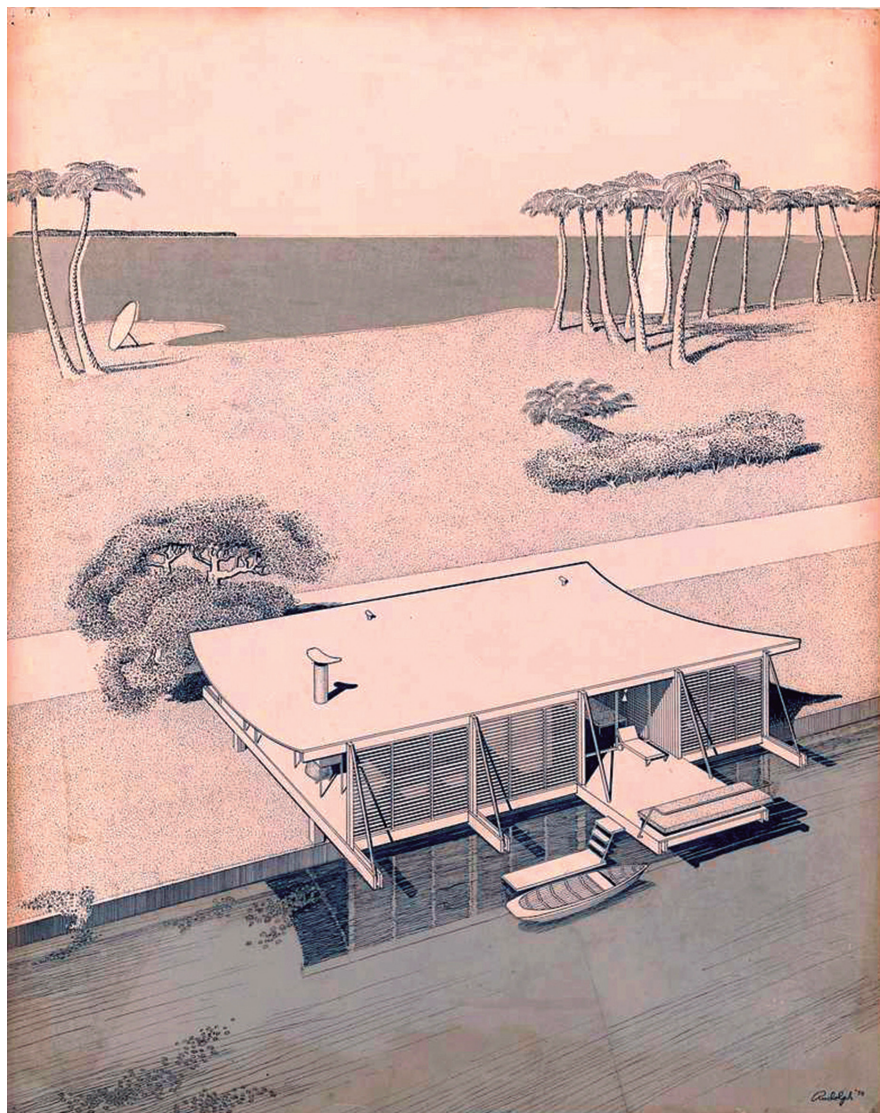
for that dwelling was especially Rudolph's **3**. This is a minor detail, but it may be revealing of a distancing between the two architects and point to the break-up of their partnership a year and a half later **4**.

Finally, the ambiguity surrounding the commissioning of the Finney House has yet to be clarified. Rudolph dated it as from 1947 in publications on his works. However, hitherto no investigation has been undertaken to discover whether the commission really existed as such, and whether Mrs Finney was truly the patron involved. The scant references that survive lead more to the conclusion that it was an experimental project, intended to promote the type of architecture that Twitchell and Rudolph produced, the pretence being put forward that there had been a professional commission that in the end had not come to fruition. This is what may be deduced from the meagre commentary by Paul Rudolph in the first monograph on his work (Moholy-Nagy, p. 32). He states that the design for the building had its roots in an exercise undertaken at the Graduate School of Design in Harvard, later developed into a project. Curiously, those who have looked into Rudolph's work in Florida have not studied this academic exercise, even though it appeared in the book by Christian Bjone, *First House: The Grid, the Figure and the Void* (2002, p. 163), and more recently in another work by Timothy M. Rohan (p. 17), although it is true that in both it was just as a simple illustration and without further commentary of any detail in the text.

The Master's Project at Harvard.

Paul Rudolph went back to Harvard in September 1946 to finish off his postgraduate course. During that semester he completed two projects for Walter Gropius (Fig. 8). He was able to avoid writing a dissertation, since Harvard, like a number of other universities, sometimes aided its students returning from military life to obtain their postgraduate qualifications quickly so they could get back into the world of work. Thus, he was awarded the degree of Master in Architecture in February 1947 **5**.

Of the two projects, the one that is relevant here was entitled *The Design of a Week-End House* for a young architect (Rohan, p. 17). This was a short-term exercise, since it was set on 25 September 1946 for submission on



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a suceder lo mismo que en el índice, como queriendo indicar que la autoría de esa vivienda era especialmente de Rudolph **3**. Se trata de una minucia, pero puede ser reveladora del distanciamiento entre los dos arquitectos y de la ruptura del estudio año y medio después **4**.

Por último está por investigar la ambigüedad sobre el encargo de la *Finney House*, que Rudolph dató en las publicaciones sobre su obra en 1947, pues hasta ahora no se ha estudiado si realmente existió como tal, y si la señora *Finney* era en realidad la comitente. Las escasas referencias que nos han llegado nos llevan a pensar más bien que se trataba de un proyecto experimental, destinado a promocionar

el tipo de arquitectura que realizaban Twitchell y Rudolph, simulando que hubiera habido un encargo profesional que finalmente no llegó a buen puerto.

Esto es lo que se deduce del escueto comentario de Paul Rudolph en la primera monografía sobre su obra (Moholy-Nagy, p. 32), en la que afirma que el diseño de la vivienda tuvo su origen en un ejercicio realizado en la *Graduate School of Design* de Harvard, más tarde desarrollado como proyecto. Curiosamente, los que se han ocupado de estudiar la obra de Rudolph en Florida no han analizado este ejercicio escolar, a pesar de que apareció en el libro de Christian Bjone, *First Houses* (2002, p. 163), y más



6. P. Rudolph, *Healy Guest House*, 1950 (Library of Congress, 63 x 50,5 cm)

7. Paul Rudolph, sección fugada de la *Healy Guest House* (1949)

6. P. Rudolph, *Healy Guest House*, 1950 (Library of Congress, 63 cm x 50.5 cm)

7. Paul Rudolph, Cross-Section in Perspective of the *Healy Guest House* (1949)

recientemente en el de Timothy M. Rohan (p. 17), si bien en ambos casos como una simple ilustración y sin mayores comentarios en el texto.

El proyecto de Máster en Harvard

Paul Rudolph volvió a incorporarse a Harvard en septiembre de 1946 para ultimar sus estudios de postgrado. Durante aquel semestre realizó dos proyectos para Walter Gropius (Fig. 8), sin tener que realizar su tesis, ya que algunas universidades facilitaban que sus estudiantes acabaran pronto el postgrado para incorporarse a la vida laboral, pudiendo así obtener el título de Máster en Arquitectura en febrero de 1947 5.

De los dos proyectos el que nos interesa es el denominado *The design of a week-end house* para un joven arquitecto (Rohan, p. 17). Se trata de un ejercicio de breve duración ya que se propone el 25

de septiembre de 1946 para ser entregado el siguiente 2 de octubre. Resulta de interés leer el enunciado redactado por Gropius (Fig. 9), pues nos aclaran algunos aspectos generales del ejercicio realizado por Rudolph:

Un joven arquitecto con suficientes ingresos, ha adquirido un atractivo solar alejado del ‘mundanal ruido’. Desea construirse una casa para pasar los fines de semana, días libres de trabajo (con o sin familia y/o zona de invitados) y en especial durante el verano. Al no ser una casa de uso permanente, desea aminorar los costes y la calidad de la construcción respecto a lo que sería de desear en una vivienda de uso diario. En cualquier caso, como la casa servirá para dar a conocer sus dotes profesionales, lo que puede ser para bien o para mal, pretende lograr una calidad en el diseño arquitectónico en cuanto a su aspecto agradable y funcionalidad.

Cada uno puede asumir algunas decisiones respecto al tamaño de la familia, la localización geográfica, forma del terreno, orientación del solar, disponibilidad de materiales, etc.

Tu eres ese arquitecto.

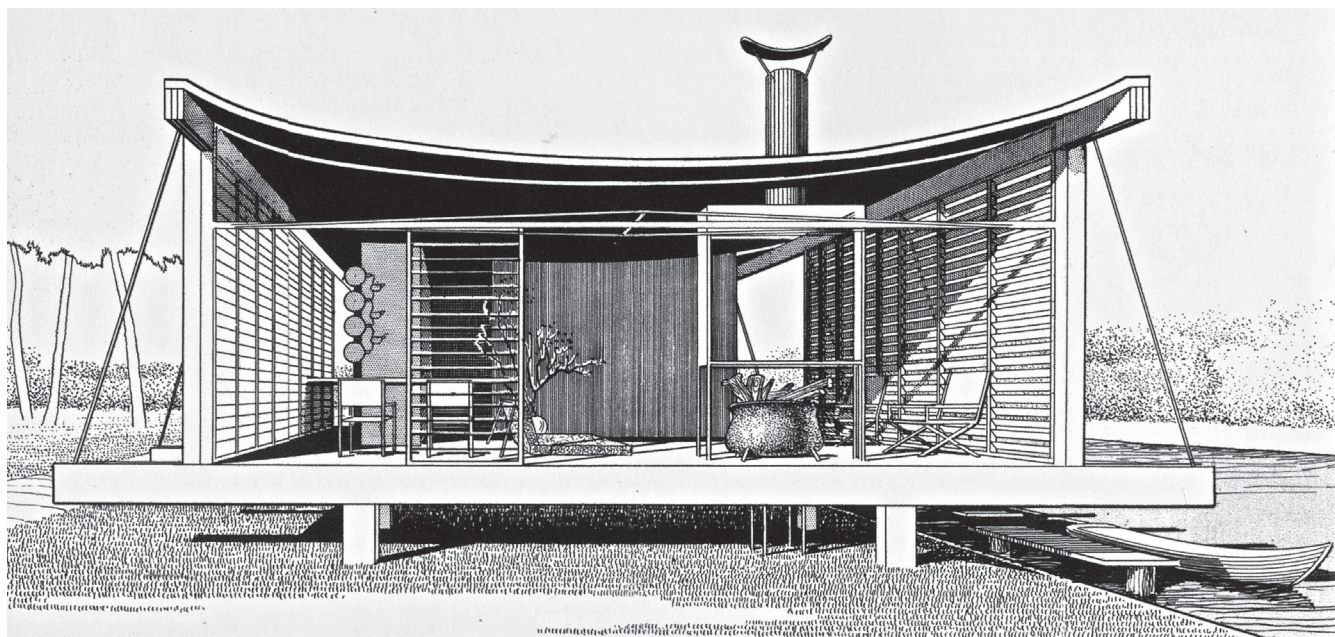
2 October. It is of interest to read the rubric drawn up by Gropius (Fig. 9), since it clarifies several general features of the piece of work completed by Rudolph:

A young architect with a moderate income has acquired an attractive house site well away from ‘the maddening [sic] crowd’. He wishes to build a week-end and vacation house for his own use (with or without family and/or guests), principally in the summer. As this is not his permanent home, it is his desire to keep costs and general quality of construction at a lower level than he would for a year-around house. However, as the house will advertize his professional services for better or for worse, he wants to achieve a definite architectural quality in terms of charm and liveability.

Any assumptions may be made as regards the size of family, geographic location, terrain features, orientation of the site, availability of materials, etc.

You are the Architect.

Rudolph, following the requirements for the task set, chose as the locality a place that was very well known to him, Siesta Key, and imagined himself as the client. The design of the whole project is on a single sheet, which includes the site and floor plans, the four elevations, construction details and notes in ink, with exaggerated linear perspective, the viewing point being the extreme north-west corner (Fig. 10).





Analysis of this exercise demonstrates that the design for the Finney House was already comprehensively developed in it, so Rudolph could rightfully claim full authorship. Since this was so, it is easier to understand why the project is so unrealistic, with a footbridge across Bayou Louise, which would have interrupted recreational small-boat traffic along that canal, with an extensive plot and with costly earth-moving needs. Moreover, the task as set by Gropius makes mention of the possibility that the house of the imagined architect might serve as an advertisement for his talent. This may have led Paul Rudolph to do just this with his Master's final-year project. Thus, a guess may be hazarded that he was so enthused by his design that he felt it could be used to gain publicity in some magazine for the sort of architecture that he was promoting with Ralph Twitchell in Florida. Hence, he did fresh drawings with some small adjustments like the hinged overhanging panels or flaps, reduced earth-moving requirements and ramps giving access to the Bayou on the western side, put it into the format of a preliminary design, and published it as an unrealized commission. However, for this purpose there was a need for a real or putative client, and Mrs Finney took on this role.

Rudolph, siguiendo los requerimientos del enunciado, elige como localización un paraje muy conocido por él, Siesta Key, actuando él como cliente. El diseño de todo el proyecto se recoge en una lámina, que incluye el plano de situación, la planta, los cuatro alzados, un detalle constructivo y un apunte entonado a tinta, con exagerada fuga y el punto de vista situado en el extremo de la esquina noreste (Fig. 10).

Analizando este ejercicio comprobamos que el diseño de la *Finney House* se encuentra plenamente desarrollado, pudiendo Rudolph reclamar toda su autoría. Siendo así, se comprende lo utópico del proyecto, la pasarela sobre el *Bayou Louise* (que interrumpiría el tráfico fluvial de recreo), la amplitud del solar y el costoso movimiento de tierras.

Es más, el enunciado de Gropius, en el que se refiere a que la

8. Walter Gropius en un jurado de calificación de proyectos en Harvard (h. 1947)

9. Enunciado del primer ejercicio en la GSD de Harvard (1946)

10. Paul Rudolph, *Ejercicio de Proyectos en la Universidad de Harvard* (1946)

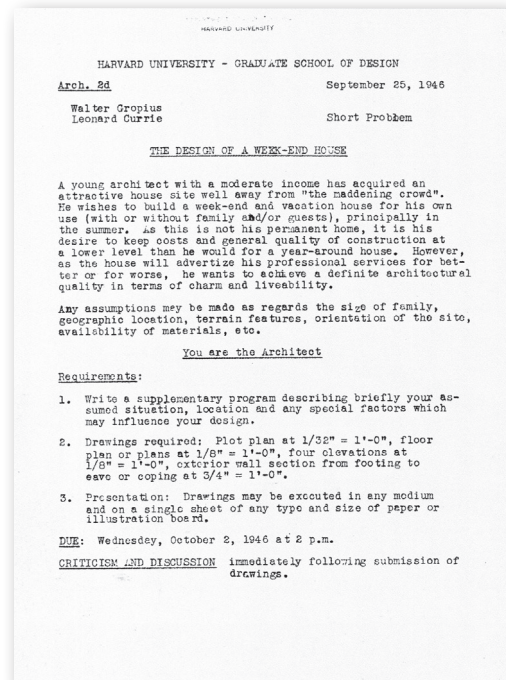
8. Walter Gropius in a Board of Examiners for Projects at Harvard (around 1947)

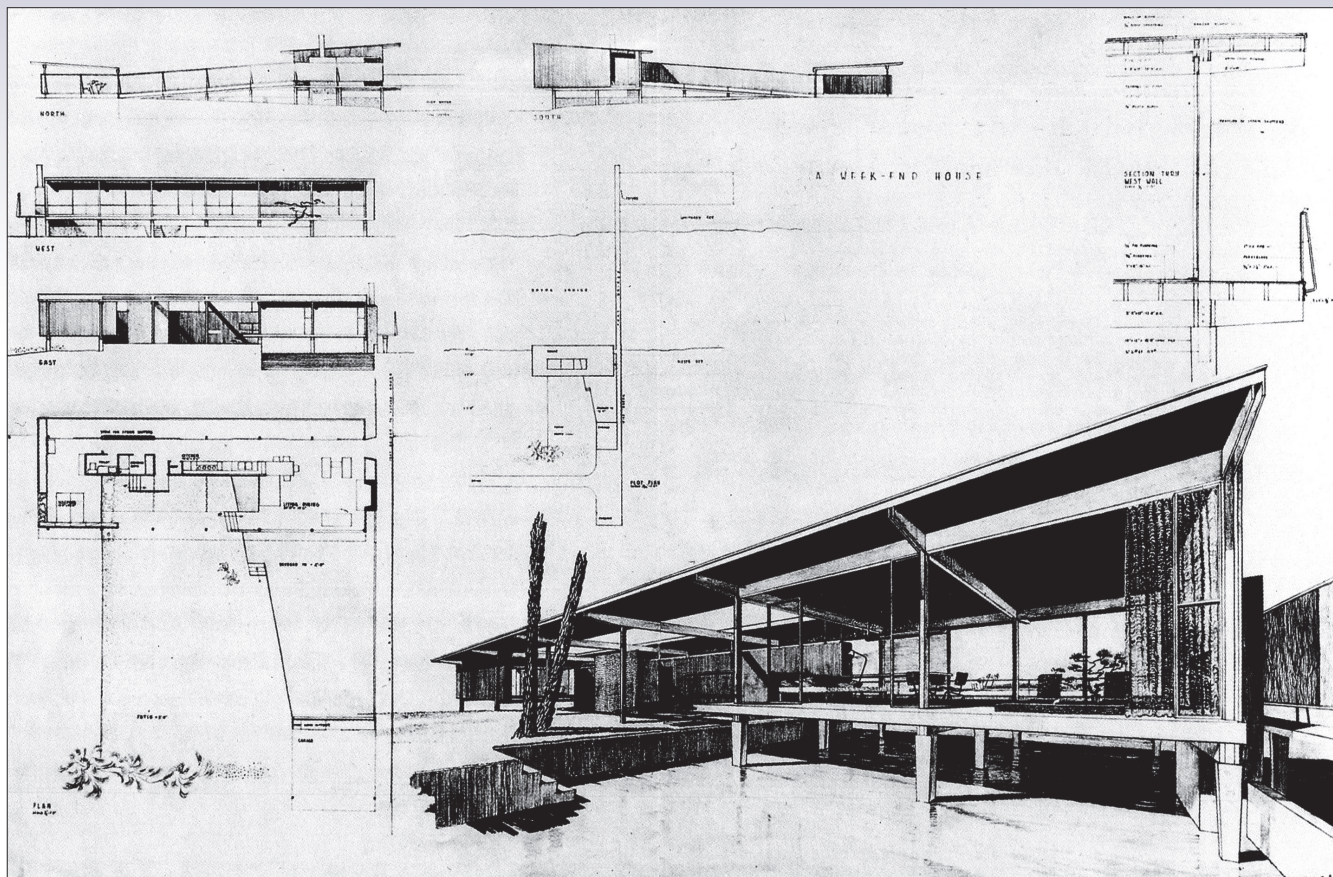
9. Rubric for the First Exercise in the Graduate School of Design at Harvard (1946)

10. Paul Rudolph, *A Week-End House*. Project Exercise for Harvard University (1946)

casa del supuesto arquitecto le podría servir como autopromoción de su talento, pudo inducir a Paul Rudolph a hacer lo mismo con su proyecto fin de Máster. Cabe pues aventurar que, entusiasmado con su diseño, pensó que podía utilizarse para publicitar en alguna revista el tipo de arquitectura que estaba promoviendo con Ralph Twitchell en Florida.

Por ello, tras redibujarlo con unos pequeños ajustes (como son los *flaps* movibles, el movimiento de tierras y las rampas de acceso al *Bayou* en la fachada oeste), y darle el formato de un anteproyecto, lo publicó como un encargo no ejecu-





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tado. Pero para ello debían contar con un cliente supuesto o real, asumiendo este papel la señora Finney.

Roberta Healy Finney

Roberta Healy Finney (1915-1966) era la hija de Warren R. Healy e Isabel Halls Coombs, quienes en 1948 encargaron al estudio Twitchell & Rudolph la *Healy Guest House*, más conocida como la *Cocoon House*, sin duda la casa más mediática e innovadora de ambos arquitectos, reproducida en incontables ocasiones 6.

Roberta se había casado en 1932 con un tal Charles Finney de quien se divorció en 1950 para contraer nuevo matrimonio con Ralph Twitchell, a su vez divorciado en 1947 de su primera mujer 7. Resulta pues realmente curioso saber que un desconocido Charles Finney fue quien diera nombre a uno de los proyectos más celebrados de Paul Rudolph.

Roberta Healy y Ralph Twitchell debieron conocerse a comienzos de la década, ya que ésta se hizo cargo como *business manager* de los asuntos administrativos del estudio de Twitchell mientras éste servía como reservista del ejército en una base aérea en Carolina del Sur. Es de suponer que hacia 1947 (fecha del supuesto encargo) Roberta debía ser ya la *fiancée* de Twitchell 8.

Entre tanto, en una de las visitas de Rudolph a Nueva York para establecer contactos con colegas, antiguos compañeros de estudios, como Philip Johnson, o editores de revistas, le recomendaron ponerse en contacto con el consorcio *Revere Cooper Company* para promover, junto con *Architectural Forum*, un conjunto de viviendas (Howey, p. 46).

Rudolph y Twitchell proyectaron un conjunto de seis viviendas unifamiliares en unos terrenos adquiridos por Roberta Finney, de

Roberta Healy Finney

Roberta Healy Finney (1915 to 1966) was the daughter of Warren R. Healy and Isabel Halls Coombs, and in 1948 she commissioned from the Twitchell and Rudolph architecture firm the Healy Guest House, better known as the Cocoon House. This is doubtless the most photogenic and innovatory house by either architect, views of it being reproduced on very numerous occasions 6.

In 1932, Roberta had married one Charles Finney, whom she divorced in 1950, thereafter marrying Ralph Twitchell, himself divorced in 1947 from his first wife 7. It is really strange to learn that an otherwise effectively unknown Charles Finney was the man whose name designated one of the most famous projects by Paul Rudolph.

Roberta Healy and Ralph Twitchell must have got to know each other in the early 1940s, since she acted as his business manager, taking charge of administrative matters in Twitchell's office while he was on active service as a reservist on an air base in South Carolina. It may be surmised that by around 1947 (the date of the supposed commission) Roberta was already Twitchell's fiancée 8. In the meantime, during one of Rudolph's visits to New York to establish contacts



with colleagues in the profession, former classmates like Philip Johnson, or magazine publishers, he was recommended to get in touch with a consortium known as the Revere Copper Company so as to promote a set of houses in conjunction with the *Architectural Forum* magazine (Howey, p. 46).

Rudolph and Twitchell drew up plans for a set of six single-family homes on land purchased by Roberta Finney. Only one of these was actually built, the Revere Quality House (Fig. 11) dating from 1948. Once construction of this house was complete, it was opened to the public in 1949 and received more than sixteen thousand visitors. It was extensively publicized by the Revere Copper Company consortium, and by journals such as *Architectural Forum*, *Architectural Review*, or *House and Garden*, among others.

This Revere House was bought by Roberta Finney for \$18,500, and in 1950, after her marriage to Twitchell, it became the couple's

la que construyeron tan sólo una en 1948, la *Revere Quality House* (Fig. 11). La casa, una vez construida, fue abierta al público en 1949 y visitada por más de dieciséis mil personas. A su vez, fue ampliamente publicitada por el consorcio *Revere Company*, y por las revistas *Architectural Forum*, *Architectural Review*, *House and Garden*, etc.

La *Revere House* fue adquirida por Roberta Finney por 18.500 dólares, para convertirse en 1950, tras su matrimonio con Twitchell, en la residencia de ambos. A poca distancia, tras cruzar el *Bayou Louise*, Twitchell y Rudolph proyectaron por entonces la casa de vacaciones de los padres de Rober-

11. Paul Rudolph, anteproyecto de la *Revere Quality House* (1948) y del *Revere Development*
12. Primera propuesta con el emplazamiento de la *Finney House*
13. Segunda propuesta con el emplazamiento de la *Healy House*

11. Paul Rudolph, Preliminary Project for the *Revere Quality House* (1948) and the *Revere Development*

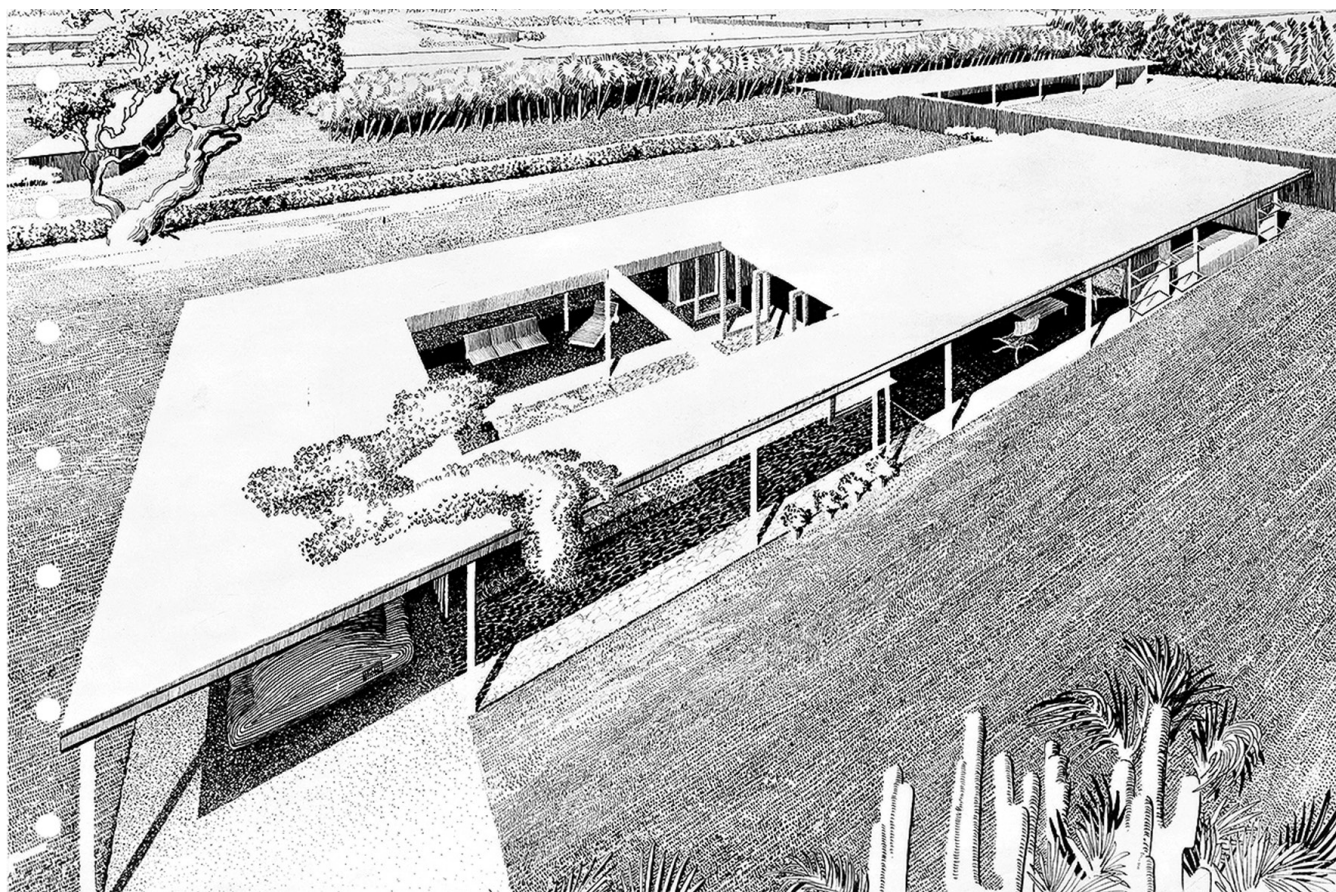
12. First Proposal for the Siting of the *Finney House*

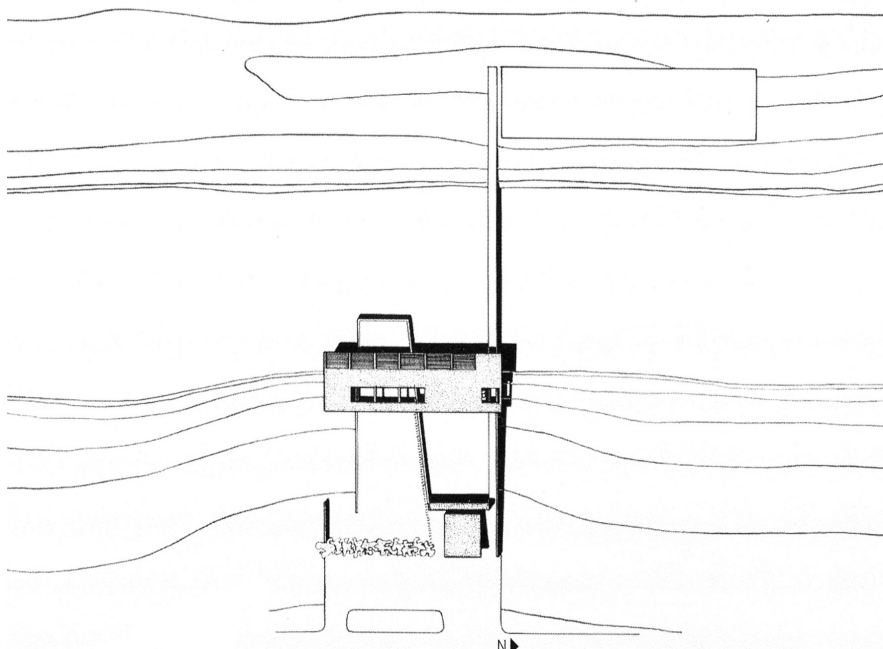
13. Second Proposal for the Siting of the *Healy House*

ta, la *Healy Guest House* (acabada en 1951), en este caso en terrenos propiedad de Twitchell.

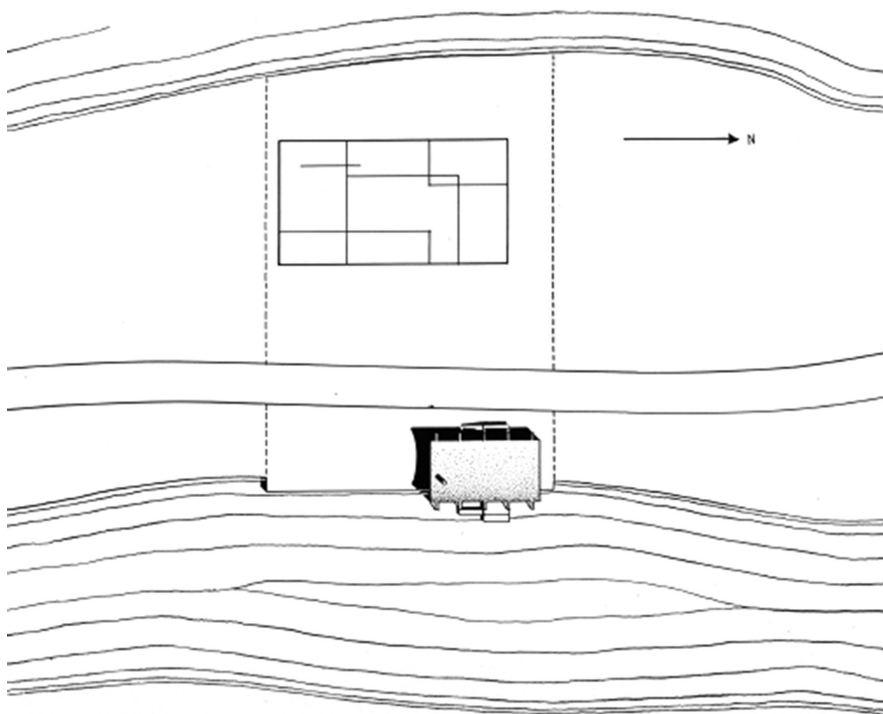
Conclusiones: de la Finney a la Healy House

A partir de las anteriores premisas, cabe pensar que Roberta Healy Finney pudo estar implicada desde 1946 en el proyecto de una casa de vacaciones para sus padres. Se trataría de un pabellón o *Guest House*





12



13

a construir cerca de la que habría de ser su futura residencia familiar cuando pudiera contraer matrimonio con Ralph Twitchell.

Paul Rudolph desarrolló esta primera idea en su proyecto del máster en Harvard de finales de 1946 (Fig. 10), situando, la que unos

años después sería conocida como la *Finney Guest House*, en la ribera este del *Bayou Louise*, comunicada mediante una pasarela con una vivienda familiar más amplia, que Rudolph no desarrolla en este estadio del proyecto, marcando solamente el posible emplazamiento en

home. A short distance away, just across Bayou Louise, Twitchell and Rudolph made plans at around this time for a holiday home for Roberta's parents, the Healy Guest House, completed in 1951, in this case on land owned by Twitchell.

Conclusions: From the Finney House to the Healy Guest House

On the basis of the facts mentioned above, it may be surmised that Roberta Healy Finney could have been involved as early as 1946 in a project for a vacation residence for her parents. This would have been a guest cottage or house, to be constructed close to the building that was intended to be her future family home when she was able to marry Ralph Twitchell.

Paul Rudolph worked out this initial idea in the project he presented as part of his Master's degree at Harvard towards the end of 1946 (Fig. 10). In this he located what a few years later would come to be known as the Finney Guest House on the eastern bank of the Bayou Louise, linking it by means of a walkway or footbridge to a larger family dwelling on the other side. Rudolph did not develop this second building at this stage of the project, merely indicating its possible siting on the islet or Key with a view over the Gulf of Mexico (Figs. 1 and 12).

It is obvious that the visionary, tentative nature of Rudolph's project took it well beyond the size and budget for what was supposed to be a small guest cottage. Hence, in 1948 the Healy couple commissioned plans more attuned to their needs, which gave rise to the Healy House project.

Likewise, the promotion of the Revere Quality Houses in 1948 on the lands situated on the eastern bank of Bayou Louise prevented the intended guest house from being located there. Consequently, the decision was taken to site it on the opposite bank (Fig. 6). Indeed, there is an intermediate drawing of the Healy Guest House in this new position, with a dwelling of larger size sketched in a few metres away on the same plot (Fig. 13). This idea, too, was rejected in 1949, when Roberta Finney and Ralph Twitchell decided to purchase the Revere House, rather than building an entirely new home for themselves. This was the one single house from the



failed promotion of six dwellings that had actually been constructed, and apparently had attracted no purchaser.

Hence, the Finney Guest House may be seen as a predecessor of the Healy Guest House, which makes sense in view of the experimental character of both. In fact, the siting of both houses is the same, resting lightly on the bank and running out over the Bayou (Domingo 2009, 97). Moreover, if the floor plans are compared, the Healy House can be read as if it were a compacted and compressed Finney House, decreasing from six to four modules or compartments, and sharing a number of construction and structural features. Thus it is not surprising to note that Rudolph once again took pleasure in making images of the two projects in 1949 and 1950, drawing several perspective views of each of them so as to highlight the best aspects of his design.

Furthermore, if the present-day locations of the Guest House and Revere House are observed, it can be appreciated that, as had been the case in Paul Rudolph's initial project (Fig. 12), they stand on opposite banks of Bayou Louise (Fig. 14). The sole difference is that the main dwelling is not sited on the Key looking out over the sea, but inland, this altering the relative situation of the two buildings.

Be that as it may, whether or not there was a commission, the Finney Guest House and the Healy House came to be Paul Rudolph's best known projects in Florida. The reason for this was both their daring forms and the extensive publication of the magnificent drawings. ■

Notes

- 1 / Paul Rudolph completed his undergraduate studies at the Alabama Polytechnic Institute in Auburn, where the teaching still followed a *Beaux Arts* line. Even then Rudolph stood out as a brilliant draughtsman, a gift that he retained and broadened over the whole course of his professional career.
- 2 / Rudolph received the "Wheelwright Traveling Fellowship" from Harvard University, which allowed him to take a study trip around Europe from Summer 1948 to Summer 1949. During his stay in Paris he got in touch with the magazine *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, offering to co-ordinate a monographic issue on Walter Gropius, which appeared in February 1950, and also contributing details of five of his projects for the July issue devoted to single-family homes. While he was in Europe he continued working on projects for the firm, sending drawings and plans to Twitchell.
- 3 / In books on his work, Rudolph was keen to have it stated that he was the sole designer of the Finney House (Moholy-Nagy 1971; Nakamura 1977). This is indicative of the great store he set by this project, confirmed by his donation of the aerial view to the MoMA.
- 4 / Among the causes for the break were various comments Rudolph had made, claiming that he was the sole designer

14. Vista actual del emplazamiento de las dos viviendas

el cayo abierto al golfo de México (Figs. 1 y 12).

Es evidente que el carácter utópico y tentativo del proyecto de Rudolph superaba en tamaño y presupuesto, lo que debía ser una pequeña *Guest House*, de ahí que los señores Healy encargaran en 1948 un proyecto más ajustado a sus necesidades, dando lugar al proyecto de la *Healy House*.

A su vez, la promoción en 1948 de las *Revere Quality House*, en los terrenos situados en la ribera este del *Bayou Louise*, impedía emplazar allí el proyecto de la *Guest House*. Por lo que se decidió situar la *Healy House* en la ribera opuesta (fig. 6). De hecho, existe un dibujo intermedio de la casa de los Healy en su nuevo emplazamiento, en el que se esboza una vivienda de mayor tamaño a pocos metros y en la misma parcela (Fig. 13).

Esta idea hubo de volver a rechazarse en 1949, al decidir Roberta Finney y Ralph Twitchell adquirir la *Revere House*, única casa edificada en la fallida promoción de las seis viviendas y aparentemente sin comprador, en vez de construir una vivienda de nueva planta para ellos.

De ahí que podamos considerar la *Finney Guest House* como un antecedente de la *Healy Guest House*, algo que encaja con el carácter experimental de ambos proyectos. De hecho, el emplazamiento de las dos casas es el mismo, apoyándose levemente en la ribera y adentrándose en el *Bayou* (Domingo 2009, 97). Además, si estudiamos las dos plantas, cabría entender la *Healy House* como si fuera la *Finney* compactada y "comprimida", pasando de los seis módulos o crujiás de la segunda a los cuatro de la *Healy*, compartiendo ambas varios

14. Present-Day View of the Siting of the Two Dwellings

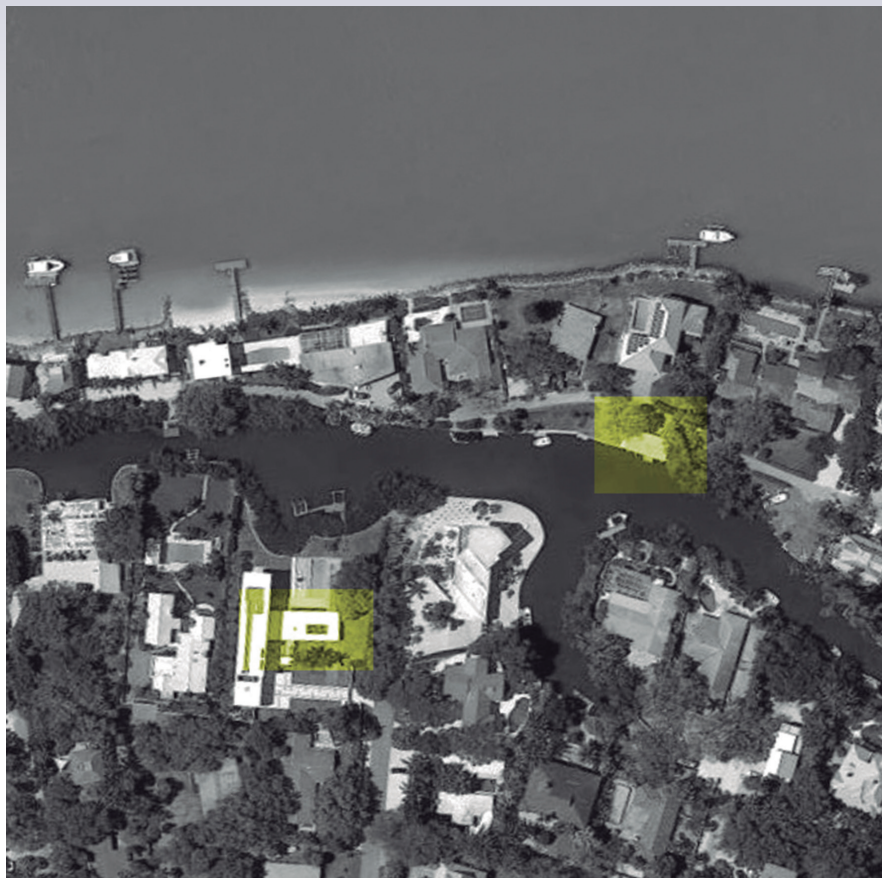
aspectos constructivos y estructurales. No es extraño, pues, que Rudolph volviera a recrearse en la representación en ambos proyectos en 1949 y 1950, realizando varias perspectivas de cada uno para mostrar lo mejor de su diseño.

Por otra parte, si observamos el actual emplazamiento de la *Guest House* y la *Revere House*, podemos apreciar que, al igual que sucede en el proyecto inicial de Paul Rudolph (Fig. 12), se encuentran en las riberas opuestas del *Bayou Louise* (Fig. 14). La única diferencia consiste en que la vivienda principal no se encuentra en el Cayo abierto al mar, sino en tierra firme, alterando así la situación de ambas viviendas.

Sea como fuere, con o sin encargo, la *Finney Guest House* y la *Healy House* pasaron a ser los proyectos más conocidos de Paul Rudolph en Florida, tanto por lo audaz de sus formas como a través de la publicación de sus magníficos dibujos. ■

Notas

- 1 / Paul Rudolph realizó los *undergraduate studies* en el *Alabama Polytechnic Institute* de Auburn, donde aún se impartía una docencia al estilo *Beaux Arts*. Rudolph ya destacó entonces como gran dibujante, dotes que conservó y acrecentó durante toda su vida profesional.
- 2 / Rudolph recibió la *Wheelwright Traveling Fellowship* de la Universidad de Harvard, que le permitió realizar, desde el verano de 1948 al verano de 1949, un viaje de estudios por Europa. Durante su estancia en París contactó con la revista *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, encargándose de coordinar un número monográfico sobre Walter Gropius, aparecido en febrero de 1950, y contribuir con cinco de sus proyectos en el número de julio dedicado a la vivienda unifamiliar. Durante su estancia en Europa siguió trabajando en los proyectos del estudio, enviando dibujos y planos a Twitchell.
- 3 / En los libros sobre su obra, Rudolph tuvo el interés de indicar que él era el único autor de la *Finney House* (Moholy-Nagy 1971; Nakamura 1977), lo que nos indica la alta estima que tenía por este proyecto, que se confirma por la donación de la perspectiva aérea al MoMA.
- 4 / Entre las causas de su ruptura están algunos comentarios de Rudolph, afirmando ser el único autor de los diseños de las viviendas. Rudolph, ya asentado profesionalmente, se sentía coartado en



14

su creatividad y se le quedaba pequeño el trabajo en Florida, aspirando a nuevos retos en su trabajo profesional y a una mayor proyección exterior. Twitchell, por su parte, además de afirmar la autoría compartida de las viviendas, pensaba que Rudolph se ensimismaba con los dibujos realizados para la publicación en las revistas, y de sus prolongadas ausencias.

5 / La Universidad de Harvard no era partidaria de acortar los estudios. Debió ser Walter Gropius el que accedió a otorgar el Máster a Rudolph sin realizar la tesis, habida cuenta de la trayectoria profesional que en paralelo venía desarrollando desde hacía un año con Ralph Twitchell.

6 / Roberta Healy Finney (Boston 1915-Siesta Key 1966), se casó en 1950 con Ralph Twitchell (1890-1978). Tuvieron dos hijos, Debora Layne Twitchell (1951) y Aaron Lee Twitchell (1952). En 1969, tras la muerte de su mujer, Ralph Twitchell volvería a casarse con Paula Behnke.

7 / Ralph Twitchell había contraído matrimonio en 1922 con Lucienne Glorieux, con la que tuvo tres hijos, el segundo, Tollyn Twitchell (1928-2020), fue arquitecto y formó estudio con su padre en 1959. Ralph Twitchell, con la colaboración de Paul Rudolph, construyó en 1941 una pequeña casa para sus por entonces suegros, la *Glorieux Residence* (1941), desaparecida hace años.

8 / No hemos podido, hasta el momento, consultar la tesis doctoral de Patty Jo Rice, *Interpreting Moods in Sticks, Stones and Sunshine: The Life and Architecture of Ralph Twitchell* (University of South Florida 1992), donde es probable que se aclaren algunas hipótesis aquí esbozadas.

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of the houses. Rudolph had already established himself as a professional architect and perceived himself as trammelled in his creativity. He felt he had outgrown work in Florida, and he aspired to new challenges in his vocation, and to gaining greater prominence elsewhere. Twitchell, for his part, not merely insisted that the dwellings were joint work, but also believed that Rudolph was too bound up in drawings made for publication in magazines, apart from being disgruntled at his lengthy absences.

5 / Harvard University was generally not very much in favour of shortening programmes of study. It is likely to have been Walter Gropius who arranged for Rudolph to be awarded his Master's degree without completing a dissertation, in view of the professional career that he had been carving out in parallel with his studies for the previous year, working with Ralph Twitchell.

6 / Roberta Healy Finney, born in Boston in 1915 (died Siesta Key, 1966), married Ralph Twitchell (1890-1978) in 1950. They had two children, Debora Layne Twitchell (1951) and Aaron Lee Twitchell (1952). In 1969, after his wife's death, Ralph Twitchell remarried, to Paula Behnke.

7 / In 1922, Ralph Twitchell had married Lucienne Glorieux, with whom he had three children. The second, Tollyn Twitchell (1928 to 2020), was an architect and set up an architecture firm with his father in 1959. In 1941, Ralph Twitchell, with collaboration from Paul Rudolph, built a small house for his then parents-in-law, the *Glorieux Residence* (1941), which disappeared years ago.

8 / It has not yet been possible to consult Patty Jo Rice's doctoral thesis, *Interpreting Moods in Sticks, Stones and Sunshine: The Life and Architecture of Ralph Twitchell* (University of South Florida 1992). It is likely that this could clarify some of the hypotheses sketched here.

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