

LOST OLIVETTI SHOWROOM, MANHATTAN

Designed by the renowned Milan firm of Belgiojoso Peressutti & Rogers, the showroom at 584 Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, displayed the company's highly-regarded typewriters. Completed in 1954 and demolished in 1970, it challenged convention by extending the interior treatment through a recessed glass front to the edge of the sidewalk. Notable features included the stalagmite-like typewriter pedestals that rose out of the green marble floor. One of these was outside the glazed wall, offering a typewriter the public was invited to try out. Features of the interior included colorful hanging Venini lamps and an extensive sand mural by sculptor Costantino Nivola, a native of Italy then living and working in the Hamptons.—JMD



© Ezra Stoller/Esto

LOST & FOUND

FOUND UNITED CHURCH OF ROWAYTON

Along the road winding down to the harbor of Rowayton, CT, an unlikely structure appears: the United Church of Rowayton. Completed in 1962, the building was designed by the architect Joseph Salerno to meet the needs of two merged congregations. It occupies a very visible site on a knoll overlooking Five Mile River. In shaping the church as a soaring spiral, Salerno was exploiting the potential of glulam (glued laminated wood) structural members. The interior soars 90 feet to a pinnacle over the altar. A gap toward the peak of the swirling roof is filled with tinted glass that illuminates the ceremonial area. A cantilevered deck, usable for entry or for gathering after services, offers a view down the river.—JMD



© Estate of Pedro E. Guerrero. Courtesy of Edward Cella Art+Architecture and the Estate of Pedro E. Guerrero.



LOST 137 E. 57TH STREET

One of New York's earliest examples of the International Style was haplessly lost in 1983. Located at the NW corner of Lexington Avenue, 137 E. 57th Street was a structurally daring, technologically determined seven-story commercial building designed by Thompson & Churchill and completed in 1930. Because of a subterranean stream crossing the NW corner of the site, columns were set nine feet behind a crisp façade of steel-framed casement windows and architectural terra cotta tiles. The facade and perimeter floors hung from roof girders and steel tensile straps. A September 1982 public hearing to consider designation of the building was canceled when the Landmarks Preservation Commission learned that the owner, Madison Equities, had already received permits to remove the top five floors and the penthouse. Today the site is occupied by a decorative tempietto in the plaza of Kohn Pederson Fox's Postmodern office tower of 1987. —JK

PR009 (Browning Photograph Collection), box 7, folder 53. © Collection of the New-York Historical Society.

LOST & FOUND



© Marissa Marvelli

FOUND/LOST

BROTHERHOOD IN ACTION

Located at 560 Seventh Avenue, this unassuming building is a late work of Swiss-born architect William Lescaze, best remembered for the 1932 Philadelphia Savings Fund Society tower he designed with George Howe. The boundary-pushing spirit of PSFS was gone by 1959, when Lescaze designed this building to house a synagogue and cultural center for the community improvement organization Brotherhood in Action. Completed in July 1963, the building is set back from the avenue street wall and raised on a low podium. Its exterior of limestone cladding framed by exposed steel shows the influence of Mies. This subdued approach was likely meant to reflect Brotherhood in Action's commitment to inclusivity. Sadly, that inclusivity is not being extended by New York's rabid real estate industry. Parsons the New School, the building's latest owner, recently sold the property to a developer with the announced intention to build a 20-story hotel complex on the site. —MM