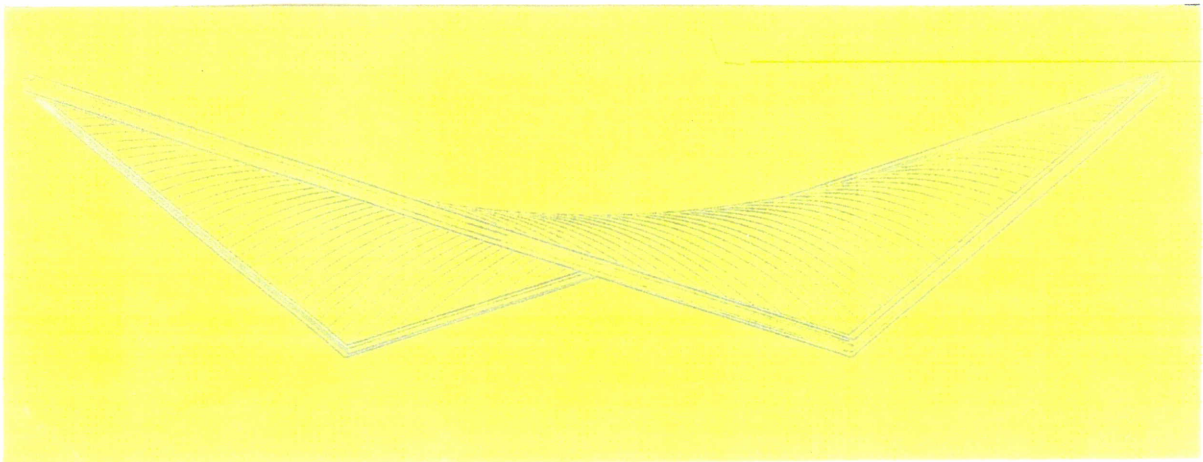
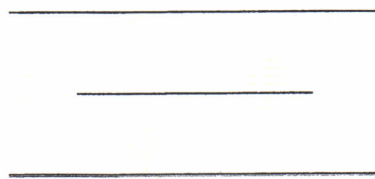


FINE THOUGHTS

A STORY ABOUT A HOUSE

AND A VISION



BY
Arch E Lynch Jr
Raleigh, North Carolina

FOREWORD

Commenting on the structural techniques of master builders Le Corbusier, Mies Van Der Rohe and Frank Lloyd Wright, architectural historian Peter Blake observed:

Great buildings tend to have several lives. Life One begins as the building is completed; its success or failure is then judged according to whether or not the building works. Life Two begins a generation or two later, when everyone has forgotten whether the building worked out particularly well in terms of budget, comfort, or planning; by that time it is looked upon simply as a work of art - good, bad, or indifferent. Sometimes there is a Life Three that begins much, much later; any building that lasts until Life Three gets a real break, for in Life Three the mere fact that a building is very old makes it valuable - even though it may be as ugly as sin.

Continuing,

People still look at them in terms of how much they cost, how well they function, whether they are too hot or too cold - in short, whether the roof leaks or doesn't. To select these three men and call them outstanding architects of their epoch is taking something of a risk. Yet there is one measure that can be applied to gauge the greatness of an artist even during his lifetime; that is to ask how strongly he has influenced his contemporaries, how visible an imprint he has left upon his time.

Blake, Peter
The Master Builders
W.W. Norton & Company,
1976, Preface, at page xiv.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTORY TO REFLECTIVE MOMENTS 1

DESCRIPTION OF A MASTERPIECE 2

A NEW JOURNEY 4

FOREBODING TIMES 16

ADVERSE DEVELOPMENTS 21

EXPERIENCES OF LIVING 24

COMMENTARY 26

FINALITY OF CIRCUMSTANCES 28

THE AFTERMATH 31

IN MEMORY OF ARCHITECT AND A MASTERPIECE

**A
VISION**

A PERSONAL MEMORIAM

INTRODUCTORY TO REFLECTIVE MOMENTS

PERSONAL, OBJECTIVES

There will always be an appropriate time to pause and reflect back on moments or events which affect us in a meaningful and personal way. For me, some of these moments came out of the pursuit of a legal career for over fifty years. These moments, as well as others that relate back to past personal events, have a different reflective meaning now than in the past. My personal "reflect back" focuses on two happenings that took place in the 1970's - first, a breakup of my marriage in 1975 - second, the selection of a new and different place to live with the purchase of the Catalano House in 1978. These two events are totally unrelated. Yet, the second would never have happened without the occurrence of the first.

Focus on past events calls to mind other things which just randomly happen at the time without reason or purpose. However, these events take on greater significance later, as relates to the decision I make some twenty years later to become the proud owner of the Catalano House. There can be no question. The Catalano House is recognized as one of the most significant residential dwellings ever built in the United States. In spite of this recognition, it was demolished in 2001 as a place no longer safe to occupy as a residential dwelling. This is a place where I will live for eighteen years with ownership continuing another four years.

The tenth anniversary of the Catalano House's destruction will take place in March 2011. At this time, I feel it appropriate to revisit some of the happenings that took place over my ownership period of some twenty years. I am frank to say; this is a difficult task. It involves a recollection of different feelings, and even emotions, that were experienced during my stay there. Questions also are there that require a search of my innermost feelings for credible responses. I must undertake to recall specific events like, when did that happen and why? I did this, or didn't do that, during my stay. All of these are personal inquiries, which I have directed to myself on numerous occasions. So how do I go about doing this? Is there an acceptable format? Should emphasis be placed on this factor as opposed to some other circumstance? What overall purpose is to be served by delving back into something that has happened and is gone or perhaps forgotten? Should I take a position that this story should be limited in scope to a review of what it's like to live in a unique place recognized for its architectural distinctiveness? Do I have the right to simply enjoy living there, as would be the case if I had elected to live at a less regarded place? Have I forced upon myself the role of a caretaker or custodian simply because I decide to live there? Are economic restraints relevant in decision-making associated with its continuing viability as a residential dwelling? Does the place deserve a better fate simply because of its status as an architectural masterpiece? All of these inquisitive concerns are real. At the same time, there are reasonable limitations that may intervene. Paradoxically, a masterpiece may be subject to limitations because there are limits to the creativity which brought about its very existence.

The current year also marks the first anniversary of the passing of the architect, Eduardo Catalano. This untimely event does cause me and many others, and rightly so, to pause and reflect back on the real and significant loss that has taken place from this somber occurrence. This loss also leads to a resurrection of attention to the 2001 destruction of

what I believe he considered the “crown jewel” of all the acclaimed architectural gems he had created.

Notwithstanding, the purpose of this story is not to explain why the deterioration and later demolition of the Catalano House happened. For that determination, the architects, civil engineers and other experts may be able to come up with an accurate and reliable assessment of the cause or, for that matter, a succession of causes. Moreover, it is not the purpose of this story to resort to a second-guess of decisions that were made, nor to question the authenticity of methodologies and technologies, nor the interactions among architects, designers and technicians in a world of creativity through applications of technological advances. In these instances, I can give a clear response of a “certainly not,” simply for the reason I’m not qualified to address these subjects. But what I can do, however, is attempt to relate certain facts and circumstances which, to my best personal knowledge or recollection, did take place in the course of my stay there. Equally as important, I am uniquely in position to state what was done, or for that matter, what was not done in the course of my response to unanticipated events that took place during my stay there. In any event, what was done was directed to avoiding, or at least forestalling, its ultimate demolition in 2001.

Certain matters that did occur during the course of my stay at the Catalano House are very personal in nature. I may consider them as such and, perhaps, may decide they should stay that way. In any event, I will attempt to stay on course and deal with these subjects fairly and openly, and to that end, in the manner that I may choose.

This revisit to the above subjects does encourage me, in a light-hearted way, to recall some of the anecdotes that are told, for example, about houses with leaky roofs designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. One of the most popular, had to do with the call Wright receives from a client who informs Wright that he really enjoys his house, but while having dinner with guests his head got soaked from a roof leak. When he asks for advice as to what he should do, Wright responds, “Move the table.”

In a spirit of joviality, I have managed to adopt one or two “wise sayings” of my own. At the same time, I suggest some state of concern, frustration and consternation in my own behalf. Rather than the horns of a dilemma, or between a rock and hard place, I give thought to something like the following expressions: Sometimes, I feel like the guy who bought a yacht and couldn’t afford the gas - may have a ring of truth. As this story unfolds, I begin to feel like the guy who didn’t have enough thumbs to stick in the dike - may have a similar ring.

DESCRIPTION OF A MASTERPIECE

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES, FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

In order to know what the Catalano House is about, some recognition must be given to what the Catalano House is or what it represents. This understanding does relate to and involve subjects of architecture and design technology that play an important role from its inception as well as the aftermath.

The Catalano House is comprised of a hyperbolic parabolic-shaped roof system. The

terms, or comparables, of “unique roof” and “glass box” are descriptive only in an “at first blush” or appearance sense. They are not used to suggest the Catalano House is some inert object. It is far greater and a more complex living “thing” than that, as I hope this story will reveal.

Because of the unique design and structural characteristics of the above referenced roof structure, the roof system is the most significant feature of the House. It’s effectiveness as a place of abode is totally dependent upon the structural integrity of its roof system. It is composed of layered deck-type plywood panels faced on the interior side with “tongue and groove” hardwood flooring, which serves in appearance as the finished ceiling. The exterior surface is covered with protective lining, insulation and rolled asbestos as primary roofing materials. This structural composition affords internal tensile strength and flexibility characteristics of a hardened shell. The structured decking is then encased or “sandwiched” between two “over” and “under” steel beams located around the entire perimeter of the roof structure. The exposed exterior ends of the decking, positioned within this “bite” of the steel beams, are sealed from exposure to weather. A supporting steel beam is placed vertically at each of the two high points of the roof system. Each of these two supporting beams is recessed at the 12 foot overhang line to form a corner of the enclosed glass “box” below. The two low points of the system are wedged and “locked in” between two massive concrete buttresses. Except for bolted metal plates that tie the two stabilizing steel beams to the roof decking, the roof system is not dependent on any other means of vertical or lateral support. There is no contact with any other load-bearing materials or otherwise, inclusive of the metal framing that holds in place the plate glass walls (or plate glass panels) that enclose the glass “box” below. These structural features give an appearance that the deck system is suspended in midair and “floats” over the perimeter line of the formal house enclosure. The structural elements of the roof shell afford the requisite tensile strength needed to span the entire area covered by the roof system with the above limited means of support.

The following is based on reliable source information heard from future architects, engineers and others, who at the time participated in or were present during the 1954 construction of this unique roof system. The roof system with supporting scaffolding is first constructed and suspended at the proper height level before the enclosed glass box is assembled and put in place. However, when the supporting scaffolding is removed, the two high points of the system began to droop or sag. To remedy the situation, a decision is made to fix a steel cable diagonally between the two high points. Each end of the cable is coupled with a 10- inch turnbuckle for use as a manual means to place the cable under tension, and eliminate or curtail any further droop or sag of these two points.

This “floating” appearance of the roof system mentioned above caught my attention when I first began negotiations for the purchase of the Catalano House in 1978. I had the same or similar impression of the roof system, and that continued until changed by deteriorating roof conditions as later observed.

After I had moved and settled down in the Catalano House, I always was fascinated by certain features of the roof system and, particularly, the manner in which the shell form roof/ceiling with all of its contours and shapes could position in the same plane over the straight and even-lined curtain glass walls and glass wall panels of the 38x38 foot square glass “box” below. It may be that’s what the term “parabolic” is all about.

Another interesting feature of the roof structure is the way the roof system moves in counter response to gusty winds and seasonal changes. Significantly, from the time I move in until years later, there is a 3-4 inch space or void that separates the underside of the roof/ceiling from any direct contact with the metal frame that supports the glass walls and glass panels below. This void or open space is filled with a flexible tube-like membrane. At that time, I could only conclude that the open space allows for adjustments to the up and down movements of the roof system to accommodate the forces mentioned above, and also to meet normal expansion and contraction of the melded steel beam/wood decking materials. The fill membrane inserted in this open space also affords insulation from the elements.

With a layman's description and understanding of the Catalano House and its roof system, it may be informative to go back in years before 1978 to identify contacts I previously had with the Catalano House.

A NEW JOURNEY

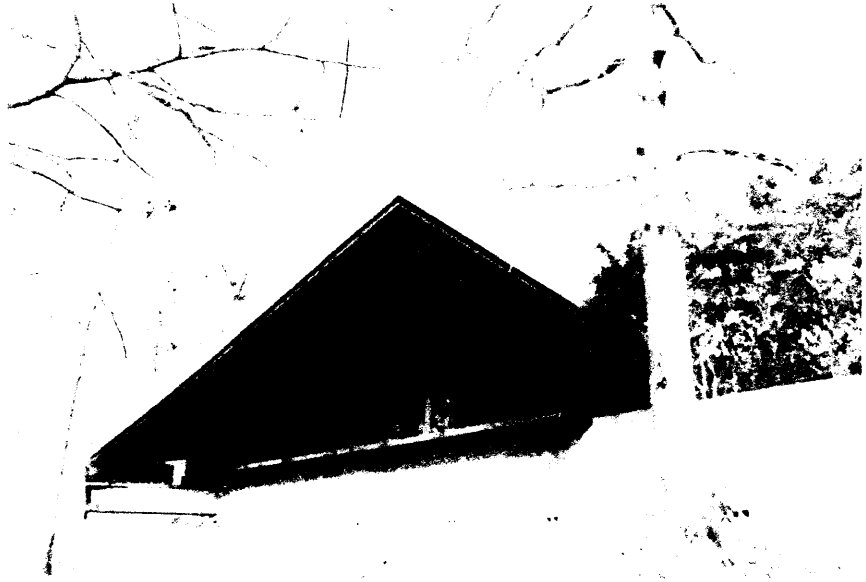
CONTACTS, OWNERSHIP, SHORTCOMINGS

The initiation of my legal career in 1957 led my wife and I to select Raleigh, N. C. as our place to live, and that started at a duplex on Lewis Farm Road. It did not take long for my longtime interest in contemporary architecture to realize that an architectural gem was located a little more than a mile away - off Ridge Road. My intuitive instincts directed me on two occasions to go over and just take a look. I did, and was amazed. Later, we were invited by friends to go as their guests to a social function of the Ezra Meirs (then owners). We went and again, I was impressed. I never forgot that visit.

After the passing of many years, and having separated following some twenty years of marriage, I bought a small place in North Raleigh that had some semblance of a contemporary house. In 1978, restless in anticipation of something more real, I began to look around for a new and different place to live. After months with no success, I ran across a real estate sales brochure which showed the Catalano House was on the market. My first reaction, "My God, It's for sale!"

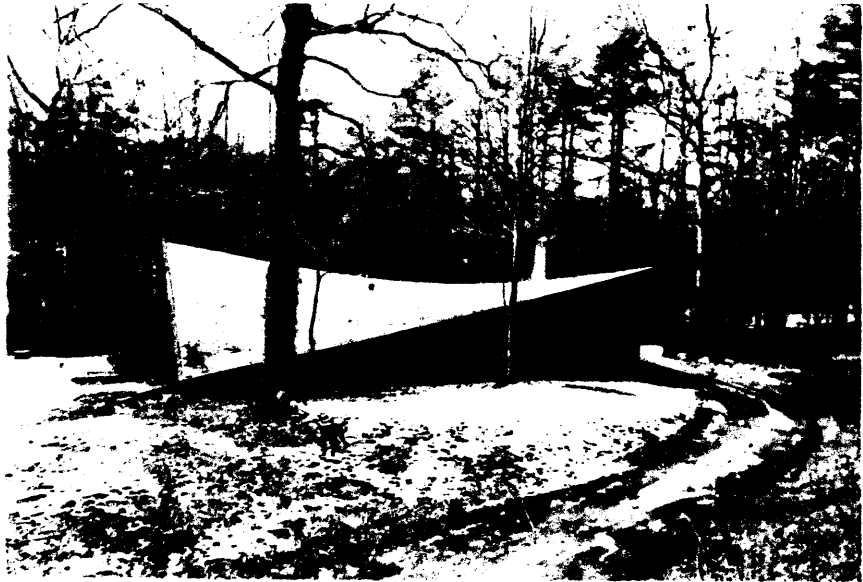
I arranged for an initial "walk through" visit to the Catalano House with the real estate agent, who had given me some promotional materials about its status as an architectural gem. The materials included some photos of premises that focused on the exterior features (See Plate I). This rather hurried visit called for a return. This time, I had a personal friend go with me for advice on whether or not to buy. Some serious talk then took place. More photos were taken, which showed the fireplace (added as part of a rear patio enclosure by former owner) to be tilted and out of alignment, and the exterior utility shed walls to be in need of repair (See Plate II). Even additional pictures were taken of the interior and, particularly, the kitchen area (See Plate III). At that time, it was readily apparent the condition of the roof would require some work because of noticeable leaks. I gave another day or two of thought about a purchase. Weighed against needed repairs, and a replacement of kitchen appliances (worn and antiquated), I made the decision to buy. The offer of \$60,500 for the Catalano House is accepted with the understanding that at the Closing, \$1,000 from the purchase money would be held in escrow to fix the leaky roof.

PLATE I



**REAL ESTATE AGENT PRESENTATION
1978**

PLATE I
(cont'd)



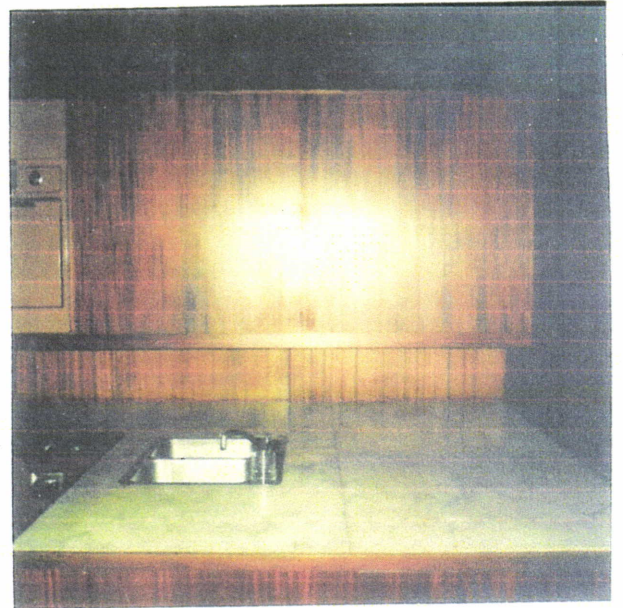
**REAL ESTATE AGENT PRESENTATION
1978**

PLATE II



**EXTERIOR FIREPLACE
AND UTILITY/STORAGE FACILITY
1978**

PLATE III



ORIGINAL KITCHEN APPEARANCE
At 1978

Later, a local roofing company gave an estimate of \$500 to fix one or two existing leaks and billed \$280 for the repair work actually done. Expecting that other leaks would soon develop, and they did in a matter of weeks, the roofing company was reluctant to do any more repair work. In early 1979, I approached the same company about an estimate on a new roof membrane cover and insulation. One was given at approximately \$12,000. It was not financially feasible for me to have the work done at that time. I still had to sell the other house that I had just left and continued to own. I concluded that if the roofing company could fix leaks with the use of a tar bucket, I could do the same for the foreseeable future.

An immediate move into the Catalano House had to be postponed until the kitchen renovation work had been completed. More photos were taken of appliances that had to be replaced. Dimensional drawings and sketches in relocating selected substitute appliances were made, along with changes to built-in cabinetry to accommodate the new appliances. Instead of the old refrigeration system that had been installed in upper cabinets, two refrigeration units were selected for installation in lower cabinets and a third freezer/icemaker unit for installation in upper cabinets. Work on the updated kitchen was completed by a local contractor at a cost of approximately \$5,000. I was pleased with the result.

As living in the Catalano House commenced, it became obvious that other problems had to be dealt with. These problem areas related to washer/dryer service, lack of adequate heating, absence of cooling, clogged drains, and cracked water closet. Contractors were brought in to help solve these problems. An air conditioning company advised that ducts built into concrete terrazzo covered floors were clogged due to collapse of some interior form of lining, such that a proper level of air flow would be impractical, if not impossible, and that the only way to provide for an effective cooling system would be through overhead ductwork. This curative approach was not a viable or acceptable solution. I might add that at least five years later, a window air conditioning unit was placed in the main bedroom and helped cool things down. A heating contractor suggested that the old and worn-out oil-fired furnace and under ground storage tank should be pulled and a new, more efficient gas furnace substituted. This was done years later, but propane gas with above ground storage tank had to be used because natural gas people would not extend a gas line to premises just to accommodate a single user. In efforts to provide laundry service at premises, a plumbing contractor indicated the drain line was clogged and any effort to clear would likely damage or break the worn out piping located below the concrete floor. Laundry services were provided locally and after 1988, at the beach condo that I had purchased. The cracked toilet was replaced. Due to concerns about the purity level of water derived from the private well, for some 12 years bottled water was brought in for drinking purposes.

Other minor renovations and corrective changes were later made to make the Catalano House a more practical place for a single person. The partition wall between the two children's rooms was removed to provide for a new main bedroom. The old main bedroom was changed to a study/dining room with mirrors added to walls to enhance size appearance. The added room formed by enclosing the rear patio was updated by covering old wood paneled walls with fabric and black plastic panels. A framed mirror was placed over the mantle. The family room was renamed the "media room." It seem appropriate.

In addition to a continuing concern about the condition of the roof system, another problem area had to do with interior flooding. The Catalano House was situated at a level below the grade of two on-premise, unimproved access roads or paths. One path was used to allow for parking close to entry to the patio on the south side of premises. The other path led downhill for entry into carport area along the north side of premises. In case of a heavy rain, both of these paths carried a heavy volume of water runoff from the higher elevation. Through the early 1980s, excess water runoff on occasions would flood the interior through side entry door on east side of premises, as well as side entry door on north side of premises at rear of carport area. Many times, I would return from work after a heavy rain and find the interior area flooded. I would get the towels and sponge the floor dry. If the rain storm took place at night, I would man the push broom and attempt to sweep the water away to avoid the threat. Something had to be done to alleviate or curtail this problem. This was done through landscaping efforts undertaken during the 1984-5 years as later described.

Attempt was made to meet the ongoing deteriorating condition of the roof system by installing a new roof cover system in early 1983. Recognizing that rolled asphalt had been used as the basic roof cover material, I began a study to determine if some form of elastomeric membrane could be used as an effective materials cover for the roof. I also looked into the possibility of using a form of spray elastomeric foam system that could be applied over the rolled asbestos roof as a possible solution to the deteriorating roof condition. I called a roofing contractor in Southern Pines, N. C, who specialized in that form of applications system. A representative visited premises to evaluate the effectiveness of that type system and, if favorable, to give a firm estimate as to costs. The representative indicated the spray polyurethane system, followed by a spray protective elastomeric cover, would work. I asked if it would be possible to add a second coat of the spray foam limited to the roof area directly above the enclosed interior as added insulation. He indicated that could be done with a taper of the added coat edge to avoid a seam appearance. I thought it would be helpful if I discussed the matter with an architect in Southern Pines, who I had met through business dealings in the area. Since he was a N. C. State graduate, he was generally familiar with the Catalano House. He indicated he had used this roofing firm on occasions and found the firm was reliable and did quality work. He thought that the elastomeric system would probably be effective (but admittedly not certain for lack of a comprehensive knowledge about all the underlying circumstances that would be involved in the application). In any event, I decided to proceed with the roofing firm's proposal. During April 1983, the application of this new roofing system was completed at a cost of \$5,800. Nothing seems to "go right" without something else happening.

The morning after the new roof system had been installed, I observed what appeared to be loose wiring hanging off the edge of the roof. I thought it was probably some electrical or telephone line. I went out to take a look at the new roof cover. I was wrong. It was not wiring. The diagonally positioned support cable between the two high points of the roof system had broken (or had been severed). After an immediate call to the roofing firm for an explanation, I got the classic answer, "It was broke when we got there." Almost speechless in giving a response, I did manage to pose the question of how a steel cable in place for some 30 years could "decide to break" within hours before the time his crew arrived to do work that became easier without the presence of the cable. No response was given, and I really didn't expect one.

My first impulse after this cable break, was to call Frank Walser, the original builder of the Catalano House to get the broken cable fixed. Luckily, I was able to reach him. After explaining the situation, he informed that he did not initially install the cable in the course of constructing the house, but would come over and see what he could do. A day or two later, he came over to see what could be done. At the time, my only instruction to him was just make sure the new cable was placed under as much tension as possible, because the cable supported the two high points of the roof system. The cable was replaced. However, I know nothing about the steps, if any, he undertook to see that a proper cable tension level had been restored.

The remainder of 1983 and years 1984-5 were spent on miscellaneous repair and improvement projects within the south side patio area of premises. These undertakings involved: (i) replacing the deteriorated trail deck located along the south border; (ii) replacing and repairing the two side entry trail decks; (iii) designing and constructing a 7 foot high wooden screen (consisting of 3 panels made from 1½ inch square wood stringers, with 1½ square block insertions in a tree-design motif), and to be attached with support posts along the south border cinder block retaining wall as a “privacy” screen for the “just occupied” and recently constructed dwelling located on the adjacent lot; (iv) planting of shrubbery, including two hemlocks at both corners of patio area; and (v) painting all trail decks, including elevated 12x12 foot deck and connecting trail deck that ran across the west side of premises. Decorative sculpture pieces were added to patio area, including a Buddha statute, a metal bird -in -flight wire sculpture, and a white free form sculpture that I had created from a 125 lb. pouring of plaster of paris into a styrofoam box that had housed a Mercedes engine block. Surprisingly, the sculpture turned out fine. In a more subtle effort, the main cedar (6'-8' width) at the entry was shaped and clipped into a Bonsai form. The patio area had been brought around in impressive style (See Plate IV).

At the same time, I came up with a plan to solve the water runoff and flooding issue. This would be done in two phases. First, the level of carport area would be raised through use of custom made concrete beams, 2x6s, 9 feet plus in length, for a layout that would form nine 3 foot squares, each to contain gravel fill and drop-in of nine custom made white concrete, graveled- faced pavers. The new patio area was set back from north exterior wall to allow for movement of doors to outside storage cabinets. The entry to carport area was then closed by use of additional concrete beams to prevent flooding into side entry door in the east wall and side entry door at the back of carport area. Second, two loose stone retaining walls were placed in lower path to parking area close to front patio area with fill dirt added behind the 3 foot in height retaining wall to remove the downward slope of that area. A third loose stone retaining wall was added at highest point of the ridge, which point was leveled with additional fill dirt to form a new parking area overlooking premises. These changes and additions effectively solved the flooding problem.

A beautification project was undertaken to improve the hard-pan ground area surrounding the front entry and east side of premises. The project also embraced the slope area and plateau area located along the east property line. This plateau area is bounded on the south side by a 20 foot square concrete slab that was intended by former owner Ezra Meir to form the base for a studio building he planned to construct there. He never did. The concrete slab is located a few feet from the rear of an old Barn structure located on premises. The project directed to these yard areas involved hauling in by dump truck of over 100 cubic yards of fill dirt and top soil. After break-up of the hard-pan ground surface, top soil was distributed to these areas. Fill dirt was used to form berm and other

PLATE IV



**VIEW OF PATIO AREA
19985**

mound forms for aesthetic reasons. Satisfied with the “lay of the land,” sod was then trucked in by deliveries spread over a couple of weeks for placement timing reasons. After the sod program was completed, over 3,000 sq. ft. of sod had been laid. This was the most satisfying part of the project. The appearance change to premises was striking. Custom pavers and runners were added to form a new outside entry from upper parking area to patio area (See Plate V).

As a final touch, heavy brush and small saplings on the east slope beneath the upper plateau were cleaned out. Topsoil was added and 30-40 azaleas were planted. This slope later became a very scenic spot.

After all the above had been done, ordinary maintenance of premises continued routinely. One of the maintenance jobs from the very beginning was the roof itself. Because of its size, the roof area collected a lot of fallen sticks, leaves and other debris. It was important that all roof debris be moved at regular intervals to avoid blocking the roof drainage system. A drain cutout hole lined with metal penetrates the roofing deck at each of the two anchored low points of the roof system. At the front low point, a buried drain pipe carries water runoff to a point beyond the concrete entry and steps leading into the patio area. On occasions, this drain line, as well as the drain hole, would clog, forcing runoff water to overflow and flood the patio area. A similar drainage layout is in place at the back low point of the roof system. However, overflow by clogged conditions there is simply directed downward into the wooded area.

The surrounding trees gave the Catalano House an attractive appearance in many ways. However, as the trees matured in size and height, the potential for problems was there. Their closeness to the House could have some impact on the viability of the roof system itself. Certainly, over time the volume of leaves covering the roof on a seasonal basis substantially increased. The time the roof was exposed to warmth by direct exposure to the sun gradually diminished. The best way I found to handle the removal of leaves was to collect in roof piles, place on tarps, and carry away and dump at the deepest point along the rear property line. The blower approach was not used, because leaves that accumulated close to premises caused vines and underbrush thickets, and that was not good. A lot of tarp loads was necessary to “clear the deck.” The work was never a problem; nothing but time. I can’t evaluate what the reduced amount of time exposed to the sun may have done insofar as any adverse effect on a “drying out” process. That process could have been helpful in the control of dampness that had permeated the roof decking structure.

As the yard matured, mowing the grass was added to the agenda, but that was not work. It was a delight. Oftentimes, I would finish the mowing, say as dusk moved in, would stretch out on the grassy knoll and simply stare in amazement at the beauty of the Catalano House, silhouetted against the setting sun. The House always had given me the impression of a space ship on its pad about to launch. As I stared in anticipation of a “blast off,” I could only give a muted response, “Beam me up, Scotty.” Mowing the grass was just the price of admission to enjoy a very special moment.

After subsequent roof deterioration issues had developed and were continuing, I thought it advisable to have some tree-clearing work done out of some concern about the reduction in sun exposure issue, but also for general maintenance and aesthetic reasons, and simply to improve access to that woody area of premises. In June 1994, I retained a tree service company to remove eight trees and underbrush growth, some of which had sprung forth

PLATE V



LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS
1984-1985

PLATE V
(cont'd)



LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS
1984-1985

from my leaf disposal plan. That was done at an expense of \$6,000. That clean-out project was good only for a limited time, and the underbrush growth had to be kept in check periodically. An annual check-up with a pick-axe helped keep this woody area under control.

FOREBODING TIMES

ADVERSITY, CONSULTATION, CORRECTIVE EFFORTS

From an interior vantage point, I began to notice the space void at the top of the glass wall and panels and beneath the plane line of the roof ceiling had begun to close. The fill membrane was barely visible. During earlier times when I would walk on the roof (easy to mount, just one step upward from ground level), I could feel the roof vibrate and, in a minimal way, move with each step. Now, that was no longer the case. The roof seemed more rigid and fixed in place. It appeared, and also felt like, the roof was “resting” on the window metal frame line underneath. I didn’t know exactly what that meant, and still don’t. But this I do know. The height level of the void space, even seasonally, no longer changed as it did in the past. The void space continued to diminish over the next year or so, until it actually appeared the underside of the roof was physically attached to the metal frame of the glass perimeter walls. It caught my attention at the time, because I recalled some observer had volunteered a comment to the effect that he had heard of a situation where a glass walled enclosure had imploded because of the vacuum effect of a sealed and closed condition. Not able to think of a situation where this vacuum condition might develop (not an expert on the subject), the point was not taken seriously.

Afterwards, in 1991 and continuing into 1992, I began to notice that parts of the roof overhang over the center point of the east wall had begun to pull apart, and this same condition appeared in the overhang at a similar point along the north wall. This out-of-tongue and groove condition began to affect more board strips. The deteriorated and pull-apart space grew and became more pronounced to such a degree that board ends began to come loose and sag in those areas of the roof overhang. In addition, the 1983 installed roof cover began to form “blisters” on the surface and, over time, those “blisters” began to crumble and ultimately caused splits and crevices to appear at various parts of the roof surface and, particularly, in the roof overhang areas. The roof surface also began to bulge outward in certain areas, and this condition was readily noticeable in the two areas of the roof overhang where metal plates secured the stabilizing steel beams.

On one occasion when cleaning the windows around the entire perimeter, I first noticed that upper glass panels around both of the two corner stabilizing steel beams had pulled out of the connected metal frames, leaving an open area of about ¼ inch along the exposed edge of these panels. This condition began to worsen in 1992. These open glass pull-out areas increased at the widest taper point to around ½ inch. Not able to determine what was happening visually with the vertical alignment of the two stabilizing steel beams bolted to the roof decking, I used a level to find that both steel beams were slightly off center (a condition that may have existed for some time.)

In any event, I thought it was time to get in touch with Eduardo Catalano. I got his number from the N. C. State School of Design and made the call. Briefing him on what I thought might be a serious roof problem, we agreed on the time for a meeting.

I drove my auto to Boston/Cambridge and met with Catalano in his office on September 10, 1992. At this our first meeting, he was very courteous and thoughtful, and was deeply interested in the reason for my visit. Of course, that purpose related to the deteriorating condition of the roof system. He had lunch brought in. Afterwards, we spent about an hour discussing that area of concern. I asked specifically if it would be possible to add a course of tongue and groove flooring beneath the existing lower level course, as opposed to initiating a cure from the upper side of the exterior surface. He pointed out his concern that any new course on the underside would have to be securely attached to the perimeter steel beams. He then gave me a first introduction to compression/tension issues in his discussion of that and other factors that had to be considered.

Catalano gave me a copy of the original plans, sketches and drawings of the Catalano House. He then introduced me to a model layout of his plan for a National Peace Garden along a Point off the Potomac in Washington, D. C. He indicated his Plan had been approved for construction but was never built because of “one vote and for political reasons.” Research for this story revealed that of over 900 competing submissions made in 1989 for this prestigious award, Catalano’s planned layout of the National Peace Garden won First Prize. Limited research sources at least through 2005 indicate a landscaping firm (among the top 25 in the 1989 submissions) had been selected to do the National Peace Garden. Apparently, construction of the project has never been initiated or completed. Catalano’s Plan was breathtaking - another example of fine thoughts that would have created another artistic gem had his Plan been implemented.

I told Catalano I would go back and outline in greater detail the approach I had briefly discussed with him as a possible way to handle the roof system issue and, if he had the time, I would greatly appreciate hearing from him.

Before leaving, he gave me a copy of a book he had published about his career accomplishments as an architect, endorsed the book with a personal message, and signed his name. When I read the message, I didn’t know what he meant, was not able to comment about his message, and just gave him an appreciative nod. I left with my plans and sketches, and his autographed book.

After returning from this trip, I began to prepare a more detailed written description of the suggested approach to the roof problem briefly discussed at our meeting. It was put in letter form and mailed to him on September 15, 1992. He sent me his response comments to what we had discussed at our meeting, but without reference to what was said in my September letter. The faxed copy of his letter sent to me on September 21, 1992 carried a statement to the effect that his letter had been completed one hour before I arrived at our meeting. His response letter basically dealt with tension/compression issues, including rough sketches as to how any such plan would have to be structured. The key point of his letter was his suggestion that would involve adding two additional courses of flooring over the top of the three existing layers in a desired tension/compression sequence. I got the impression that technology and the effectiveness of this approach would be difficult if not impossible to implement, because of the unfavorable condition of both the upper and lower level surfaces of the roof structure. In concluding his remarks, he describes the roof as complex and extends that thought by stating, “Do not forget that the shell is an organism. A wound in one place hurts everywhere.”

After I had finished reading the book he had given me, I still was confused as to the intended meaning of his message endorsement.

During and at the end of 1992, other personal changes were taking place involving the ongoing relationship with my law firm. Because of mounting pressures and stressful conditions that had been developing for two or three years, I reluctantly made the decision that it was time to retire. The decision had been made in April of that year, and would become effective at year -end. This decision was made out of personal health concerns at the time. I felt the best thing to do was just step away from the stressful conditions of work that had developed. I did elect to continue with the firm in an "of counsel" status to be effective beginning in 1993. This new status would be on a part-time basis with a corresponding reduction in compensation.

As to my future living plans then, I truly believed the Catalano House would be around for an unlimited period of time. I would continue to live there with more time available to spend at the beach condo. Also, a part-time involvement in the legal business would allow me to spend more time to find a solution to the continuing deterioration of the roof system. This was what I wanted to do, and this is what I attempted to do during the years that followed.

After adjustment for changes at the law firm, some preliminary actions were undertaken. During early 1993, I made a trip to High Point, N. C. to get some idea about how much it would cost if you applied just a single course and, in effect, duplicated the 4,000 sq. feet of tongue and groove flooring course used as the exposed ceiling layer of the roof system. I had thought that, perhaps, this additional course could have been added in stages with the first stage limited to sufficient coverage of the 12 foot overhang, plus an additional two feet of coverage within the interior ceiling space. Catalano never commented on this "stage approach" as I had outlined in my letter of September 15, 1992. Upon presenting a sample taken from the roof, an estimate received from a lumber mill engaged in that type custom work was \$30,000 - \$35,000. My reaction was a surprising "Hmmm." With that number in mind, I continued to press forward.

It became apparent that I would need some form of facility for storage of building materials on premises. I decided the old Barn might be made suitable for that purpose. All the stored junk was cleaned out and hauled away, leaving about 3/4ths of the enclosed space available for storage. This use could not be accomplished, unless a wooden floor was added. This was done.

With storage space now on line, lumber materials were brought in and stored in the old Barn to be used for two purposes. An initial order of 2x4s, 12 foot in length stringers, was purchased to replace the deck surface of the 12x12 foot elevated deck in the patio area. I purchased and stored fourteen solid core exterior doors for use in a complete renovation of the utility/storage shed at the rear of old carport area. This type of door use with insert wedges the vertical length, was the method used in the initial construction of the shed.

However, a need more complex than storage had to be addressed. It was readily apparent that the two-high points of the roof system had sagged some 10 -12 inches from the level that existed at the time I purchased the Catalano House. I now had to confront the problem of how to restore these two high points to a level that, hopefully, would reopen all or some part of the 3-4 inch space void that had existed between the glass perimeter walls

and the underside of the roof deck. The elevation of these two high points, so I thought, also might diminish the downward load/stress, and perhaps control any further change in the geometrics and torque aspects of the two supporting steel beams and of the roof structure itself. These factors appeared to contribute to the “pull apart” condition as the tensile strength of the shell form continued to decline.

Towards the end of 1993, I contacted a local crane company to come over and evaluate the prospects of providing the necessary lift service. Its representative appeared. I explained the need for a positioning of two pieces of crane equipment to effect a low tolerance lift, with minimal height increases, and at both high points, simultaneously. In effect, the representative responded that one crane would have to cross over and be anchored in some rough terrain, and he was not interested in putting at risk a \$150,000 piece of equipment under those circumstances, and he left. If the truth were known, I believe he left because of what the job would have entailed; a high risk and potential liability situation, and he simply said “no thanks” by his departure. Where do I go from here?

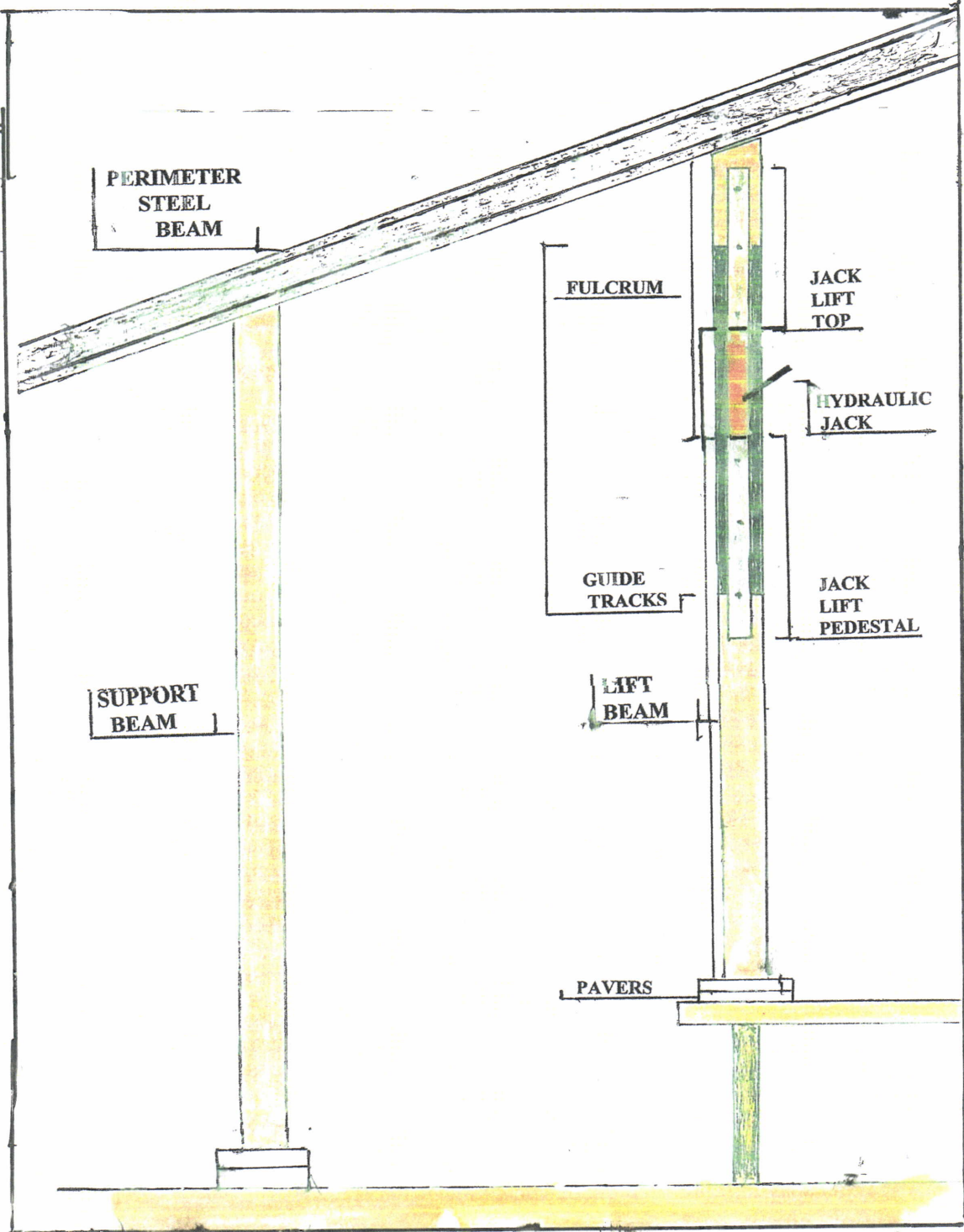
After the “no crane” help, I went to the drawing board in an attempt to find a way to build my own lift system capable of raising the two high points of the roof system. At this juncture, I readily admit some difficulty in describing the lift system that was “thought up,” an effort that is as difficult as building the lift system itself. No question, some of the details could have been left out. I do find a description of the system with words, a challenge. For outline sketch of lift system, see “Illustration I.”

I took a 6x6 inch wood beam approximately 7 feet in length and bolted to opposite sides (approximately one foot below the top line of beam) two 4x4 inch wood beams approximately 3 feet in length to serve as lift platforms for two 2-ton bottle-type hydraulic jacks. A companion 6x6 inch beam, approximately 3 feet in length, bolted with matching 4x4 inch side pieces, set flush with the bottom line of beam. This would be the lift fulcrum placed on top of the lift beam with room to accommodate the height of the two hydraulic jacks. Then two 2x2s, approximately 4 feet in length (total of 4 used), were placed along side each of the two base lift beam pedestals to act as a guide track to assure a vertical alignment of the lift fulcrum beam when the hydraulic jacks were activated in lift mode. It was intended that this lift mechanism would be operated in phases, with each phase to afford a lift attainment (considered a “tranche” only in a risk sense) of approximately 2 inches. Each lift increment would be locked-in by use of a second 6 x 6 inch beam, set full length from ground to lower line of steel beam with angle cut to secure fit. As the lift progressed, the base of each of the two lift beams would be raised by each increment increase through use of concrete stepping stones placed at base level. The base of the lift fulcrum would similarly be raised and also locked in placed by 6 x 6 inch inserts across the top level of the lift beam below.

Three separate lift systems would be deployed in the lift process. One would be located at each of the two high points, at a point approximately 8 feet from the corner. The other system would be positioned at the center point of the interior ceiling area to control any possible downward thrust as the two high points were elevated.

Next, in order to further control any slack or loss of tension in the diagonal support cable as the two high points are raised, a lever/winch device (what I would call an old-time fence stretcher) would be installed. This required that the overall length of the support cable be increased about 15 feet at each end. This excess length would allow each cable end to pass

ILLUSTRATION I



HYRDAULIC JACK LIFT SYSTEM

freely through each eye of the turnbuckle. A six inch loop with cable clamps would be formed to attach to the hook connector on each end of the lever/winch device. By operating the lever and the winch, the new cable would be placed under greater tension and then locked in place by a securing cable clamp just above the eye of each connecting turnbuckle. This lever/winch system was installed. The cable that had been installed after the cable break in 1983 was replaced by a longer cable with total length of approximately 130 feet.

With the hydraulic lift system in place, and operated in combination with the lever/winch tension control device, I was able to raise and secure the two high points about 8-10 inches (4 tranches). Each lift system was activated to effect each increment increase, and was also locked in place to secure each increase.

It took a couple of weeks to gain the 8-10 inch level increase. After the 4th tranche, I noticed that the common point between the two -piece lift beam began to “push outward” from a true vertical plane, caused in some measure by the change in angle of the perimeter steel beam as it was raised. Perplexed as to whether to continue for another tranche or two, my engineer neighbor came down to check the work in progress. He told me that if I was up on that ladder working those jacks, my head might be taken off if that system kicked out or collapsed. With those words, the work in progress came to a halt.

The diagonal steel cable was secured with cable clamps. The lever/ winch device was removed and the excess steel cable lengths were “hack-sawed off.” The three lift system units stayed in place. Even five years later, the two outside lift units were used to position the two steel beams that were welded in place as part of the “secure the premises” actions undertaken in 2000, as later discussed.

ADVERSE DEVELOPMENTS

SUPPORT CABLE, HURRICANE FRAN, PRESERVATIONISTS

The year 1995 brought on more bad news for the Catalano House. In March of that year, I had returned from my stay at the beach condo. I found the Catalano House in shambles. The connecting loop cable threaded through drilled holes at the steel beam corner of the roof overhang, at the northernmost high point, had broken. The release pressure caused the loose end of the diagonal steel cable to fly across and over the opposite side of the roof. A quick look at the damage showed the permanent metal framed glass panel forming a part of the twenty foot partition sliding wall system off the patio area had imploded, broken glass was everywhere; the center beam lift system was down; both exterior hydraulic jack lift systems were still in place, but the supporting ground level beams at both high points were down. Strange as it may seem, the glass panel above the permanent glass door pane that had shattered was not damaged. Wood panels enclosing the utility/storage shed had buckled outward. A “ripped apart” or open break approximately 8 feet in length had occurred in the roof area around the stabilizing beam at the elevated deck corner of the patio area. The perimeter steel beam supporting the exterior roof line on north side had dropped to a level that made contact with and crushed the roof/ceiling of a part of the ceiling in main bathroom and over the utility part of storage shed at rear of old carport. The mirror above the fireplace in the enclosed patio room had been shattered. The black plastic panels used as wall covering had been cracked and knocked off the wall.

It appeared that the center point of the interior ceiling line had dropped about 3-4 inches. There was nothing I could do but wait until morning.

The next day, I purchased two new pieces of steel cable, each about 8 feet in length. I ran one cable length through the recovered turnbuckle eye connected to the loose end of the support cable. With use of a protective metal shield, both ends of the new cable were threaded through the drilled holes in the steel beam corner. The overlapping cable ends were secured with cable clamps underneath the “sandwiched within” decking. I followed the same procedure and used the other cable length to replace the old connecting loop cable at the other high point. Although that connecting loop cable had not broken, it had been around a long time and this was the time to replace. Turnbuckles were closed to restore as much tension as possible to the diagonal support cable.

The next few days were spent removing glass breakage, and repositioning the support beams that went down. This required use of the hydraulic jacks of lift beams still in place, but limited to minimal tension lift purposes only. As to the open space caused by the glass panel “blowout,” this open area was fitted with plastic panels and plastic sheets.

The structural and interior damage caused by the cable break left the premises in an intolerable state. Later, as a result of rain seepage and flooding of critical living areas, use of parts of the main bathroom and main bedroom, and even the fireplace room, had to be abandoned. The sofa became my new bed. Even so, I continued to spend the greater part of my time at the Catalano House, until I relocated to the place I purchased in 1996. The two lift beams and the diagonal support cable seem to control or minimize any significant change in the level of the two high points during that time of my stay there. I’m certainly pleased that was the case.

I cannot diagnose what my continuing presence in the Catalano House under the conditions that existed had to do with health issues. All I can say is that beginning in 1993 and continuing through the latter part of 1997, I received medical treatment for severe headaches and hearing disorders. However, I believe I can fairly state that my presence there during the fourteen-month period after the above cable break disaster until I purchased the new place to live, did not have any curative value. In the course of that fourteen months, I felt it was time to look for other living accommodations, and I did so by the purchase of my present home in May 1996. This purchase required that I list the beach condo for sale, which I did. The sale of the beach condo was not completed until September 1998, more than 2 ½ years after the listing.

After this cable break development, discussions were started with professors at the N. C. State School of Design, other architects, and members of the N. C. Preservation Group. Visits to the premises were made and various opinions were given by experts as to the estimated cost of replacing the roof system. These estimates were in a \$150,000-\$200,000 range, with substantial increases likely because of the complexity of the system. However, these estimates did not take into account any need for other structural changes brought about by bent, warped or twisted support steel beams or out-of-sync alignment of any other structural members. Any chance of restoring the roof structure on any financially feasible basis as a viable system seem dismal at best.

Hurricane Fran’s visit to the Raleigh area in October 1996 further contributed to the misfortunes of the Catalano House. In addition to downed trees on premises, one large

tree close to the Catalano House had been uprooted. The private under ground septic tank was cracked and the connecting septic lines were destroyed. The roof system sustained additional damage. The "off center" alignment of the roof system and the stabilizing corner beams had increased noticeably. Further damage was inflicted to the utility/storage shed. Some side panels and the entry door had been ripped off and destroyed. Power, telephone and cable lines were broken. The gas line to the above ground propane tank had been severed. Two of the three wooden privacy screens on the front patio retaining wall had been blown to the ground. The other screen was still in place but badly damaged. I received an award of \$1,400 for the septic tank damage and a fixed allowance of \$500 for all downed trees. Both of these awards were used to help pay for the expense incurred in moving all downed trees from premises.

Later, I received from the waste water regulatory agency of Wake County a permit (good for 5 years) authorizing replacement of the septic tank and lines, accompanied by the undertaking of a qualified plumbing contractor to provide the tank, lines and work for \$1,450.

The necessity of depending on a private well system as a source of water supply, and a private septic tank system as well, seem rather unusual for a residence in that part of the City. More than two years earlier, I had discussed with officials of the Raleigh Utilities Department the prospects of extending the City water line to premises and providing a connection to the City sewer line that ran just beyond the rear property line. By letter of June 3, 1994, I requested that both of these services be made available at the Catalano property. The letter also states: "the septic tank system is antiquated to say the least, and to such a degree that I firmly believe the entire septic tank system should be terminated and abandoned. In this regard, the septic tank was drained over this past weekend."

After follow-up visits and further discussions about these matters with Utilities Department officials, they pointed out the practical problems of extending the water line, which should be done in combination with street paving and curb and gutter assessment issues involving Caminos Drive and, particularly, when such services would only benefit a limited number of property owners. During the time that I lived there, the requested extension was never done. They told me the sewer connection could only be made if a private easement was given by an adjoining property owner whose land would be crossed by the connection. Later, a phone call to the adjoining property owner about such an easement received a reluctant response. The owner did indicate he might be interested in purchasing the property. Any such purchase would have involved a destruction of the Catalano House, and was not an acceptable choice. Since those unsuccessful efforts, the water and sewer line connection issues were not pursued.

Notwithstanding all of the encountered adversities, efforts were continued to find investors interested and financially capable of expending the time and money necessary to preserve the Catalano House. These efforts also were directed to the possibility that Catalano himself might contribute to this endeavor and, if not to preservation, to the use of salvageable parts of the House in the construction of a new hyperbolic-paraboloid roof system as an integral part of a pavilion to be built at another site. This pavilion concept, rather than a house approach, was the route Catalano wanted to take. In 1998, and at later times, he made statements to the effect that this is what he wanted to do.

EXPERIENCES OF LIVING

REFLECTIONS, REMEMBRANCES

One of the comfortable day-to-day things about living at the Catalano House was the feeling brought about by just being there. It was a feeling of you were very proud of where you lived, and that's what I experienced. It wasn't just limited to living there so much as the fascination gained by every arrival and entry into the place. Of the many days I would park the auto and head for entry through the patio, every single one of those days became a special day, and that's what makes for fond memories. This was not like entering a building or a shelter. You were attracted, and you were drawn there. A feeling of being mesmerized might be more descriptive. All of this just becomes a part of the mystery and intrigue that awaits you every time you arrive and enter. This is an everyday thing; and no matter the time of year, the weather or any other condition. In essence, I was never able to overlook that the place I live is special.

On some occasions, I may have taken this feeling of pride a little too far. For example, during the early years of my stay there, if I went out for the evening, I made sure I had a picture of the Catalano House with me. If I ran into someone I knew, and after exchanging pleasantries, I would invariably close the remarks by the comment, "Oh, by the way, let me show you something" and out came the picture with the observation, "That's where I live." I really felt good about going through this little exercise, and I did so, time and time again. I guess most people would consider it ostentatious behavior, and I would be inclined to agree. Even so, if the opportunity presented itself, I knew what would happen.

Proudly speaking again, another one of those little daring things I would arrange was the enjoyment associated with the opportunity to go through a "search" for architecture and design books at libraries, bookstores, museums or any other place they may likely be found. If a particular book cover suggested that "it may be one", I'd go to the Index to see if the name "Catalano" appeared. If it did, the book reference would generally contain descriptive information about the architect and there, or on the next page or two, would be a picture of the Catalano House. The presence of that picture was almost a certainty, and the book would be added to my collection.

I recall that back in the '80s, I would take several business trips to Chicago. After business was over, I'd hail a cab and head for a high-end contemporary furniture store called **Luminaire**. The store had a section devoted to books, architecture, design, etc. After checking out the furnishings, I would peruse the book section for a new find. On one such occasion, I spotted an architecture book that I already owned. With no intention to purchase the same book twice, I took the book to the counter, placed it there, and finally got the lady assistant's attention. She asks if I want the book in a bag. I say, "No, I would like to show you a picture of the house where I live." She takes one look, and says, "Are you kidding?" I reply, "No" almost simultaneously with her "Wow." I leave after I tell her, "You just made my day."

One of the futile exercises I did engage in had to do with a movie being made at different locations in and around the Raleigh N. C. area. That was the 1983 filming of the movie called "Brainstorm," starring Robert Wagner and Natalie Wood (who died before the film

had been completed). One of the filming locations was within the confines of the Burroughs Wellcome corporate headquarters building (now GlaxoSmithKline) in the Research Triangle Park. This building was designed by the esteemed architect, Paul Rudolph. My architectural fantasy mode began to work. What would be more appropriate for a planned residential scene in Raleigh than an equally renown place such as the Catalano House? I pulled all of my materials on the House, stuck in an envelope with a note to the effect this would be a most worthy for the local film "shoot" to take place. I mailed to the Research Triangle Park address, directed to the attention of Director Douglas Trumbull. He either didn't receive or decided that was not the thing to do. I never met Director Trumbull; probably had other plans. I tried to accept that as the reason.

The above incidents, and some of their repetitions, just kept alive my true feeling about living where I did. But living at the Catalano House was more than just a comfort thing. Living there embraced the good times as well as the bad moments. I was always very proud of that fact, and regardless of the circumstances, I was never too proud not to proclaim, if given the chance.

Also, it was more than just living at a house. This draws attention to a perplexing dilemma. When does a house become a home? What makes the difference? Does the concept of a home suggest it's a place where family traditions hold forth; the "pitter-patter" of children's feet, the clang of pots and pans, a place where Sunday "dinner" is served, an environment where all the trials and tribulations of a harmonious family togetherness are both shared and endured? Even though the nomenclature doesn't really matter - what chance does a single individual have to enjoy his living moments in a home-like atmosphere?

A cave-like description of a house reduces it to a place of refuge that meets the physical needs of humankind, and its essential purposes as a place of shelter and comfort and security. That is what a house is about in an existential sense. In my view, a house can become a home in more of an every-day approach to living. Within the meaning of this concept, a home is not limited to a place where family traditions are served. As applied to my experiences at the Catalano House, it may be I can convince that my stay there was more than just a place of shelter or refuge.

After delving into these practical considerations about what the Catalano House meant to me personally, I engaged in other performances in the open stage-like atmosphere within the friendly confines of the Catalano House.

One of the first things I did when I moved into the Catalano House was to buy a Bang & Olufsen stereo system. This was followed by the purchase of what was then considered a large screen TV. Both the TV and stereo system had surround sound capabilities, and the TV had a laser disk player attached. I used these systems both routinely and on special occasions. The special occasions for the TV often would depend on the weather and seasonal changes. When the occasion was right, I could be sitting in the "media room" and take a 180 degree panoramic view of the surrounds. It might be a cold, wintry day with a lot of snow and ice hanging around. I would pull my laser disk of "Dr. Zhivago", fast-forward to, say Phase 12, and I would be riding in the sleigh with Dr. Zhivago and friend across the frozen white tundra of the Siberian steppes to a crystallized ice palace and a special home. A magical journey, and I didn't leave my seat. If from my panoramic view, it is a beautiful spring day that shows the green and blossomy look of spring, I would put

on my laser disc of “Out of Africa”, look up at the winged high points of the ceiling/roof above me, fast-forward to, say Phase 9, and amazingly, I would be in that plane flying with Robert Redford and Meryl Streep across the green hills and valleys of East Africa. Never left my seat.

I could go through similar experiences with the stereo system. If my panoramic view shows winter or spring seasonal changes, I would play the CD recording of Vivaldi’s “Four Seasons,” and a trip to Venice is in the offing. Better still, I could put on a recording of my favorite, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, and after a fleeting glance at the shell features of the ceiling/roof above me, I would be seated in a distant concert hall under the multi-shell dome of the Sydney Opera House.

True, all of the above involves a stretch of one’s imagination, and even fantasy. But even so, these were living experiences. The Catalano House made it all happen, and that is real.

I hope the above statements are not taken to mean or suggest that I did not have family ties during my stay there. To the contrary, I had many visits by my two daughters, most enjoyable at Christmas time, and frequent visits by other family members, guests and friends. Perhaps, these visits do not partake of many of the traits that traditionally would accompany a harmonious family life. What it does do, however, is express familiar experiences that I enjoyed there and to the fullest extent possible.

COMMENTARY
HIGHLIGHT MOMENTS,
BEAUTY, CREATIVITY, FORM

One of the beautiful things about the Catalano House was not only its architectural form, but its ability to stimulate and create ideas and thoughts of those who were curious or intrigued by even a visual reference or a personal association. I had made an earlier reference to Catalano’s own description of the shell-like roof as an organism - “A wound in one place hurts everywhere.” But the Catalano House was more than that. It became for me a living thing, simply because it became an integrated part of my own life. When it hurt, I hurt as well.

In the course of my stay at the Catalano House, it became a matter of great personal interest to achieve an atmosphere there that identified its own appearance and even personality. I started with an attempt to create a Mexican influence, perhaps at the time a preferred taste of my own. But it didn’t work. Finally, I settled on what I considered an appropriate style or taste, and that was one that had an oriental touch. It worked, and the oriental theme was carried out in the interior furnishings as well as in the exterior decorative objects. I think both of us were comfortable with that (See Plate VI).

If I could select one other important highlight moment, it would be the occasions when students of Frank Harmon at N C State’s School of Design passed through the Catalano House on their annual tour visits. These visits took place during the early and mid ‘80s, and would not have happened without the tutelage and guidance of Frank Harmon. I always looked forward to these tour visits and enjoyed them immensely. Frank Harmon is

PLATE VI



VIEW OF LIVING ROOM
1985

now an esteemed architect in his own right.

As I reflect on my association with the Catalano House, it calls to mind a movie that I thoroughly enjoyed, "The Life of a House." This movie, in short, relates to the disappointing career of an architect, his suffering from cancer, and pursuing his lifetime goal of building his own dream house before he dies. In pursuit of that dream, he revitalizes the relationship with his son. Somewhat intrigued, my research on the internet revealed an interview that had taken place with the architect lead played by actor Kevin Kline. In the course of that interview, he makes the following statement, "A house is an expression of yourself, as well as refuge and shelter, and it's got an interior and an exterior; it's like life. Like a person, maybe." Kevin Kline has said so eloquently what I have tried to say.

What does this mean? My little summation is simple. A house becomes a home when it becomes a part of your life. You enjoy the experiences of life there. It makes you feel good just to be there. It also encourages one to reveal almost intuitively his own imaginative thoughts and ideas. That is why the Catalano House became my home.

I would like to close this commentary and my quixotic search for eloquence. In matters associated with love, form, beauty, and creativity, I yield to the greatest philosopher of all ages. It is Plato who says:

"For he who would proceed aright in this matter, should begin in youth to visit beautiful forms; and, first, if he be guided by his instructor aright, to love one such form only - out of that he should create fair thoughts, and soon he will of himself perceive that the beauty of one form is akin to the beauty of another, and that the beauty in every form is one and the same."

*

-

FINALITY OF CIRCUMSTANCES

SNOW STORM, ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS,
PRESERVATIONISTS ' UNDERTAKINGS

The next incident that took place, and ultimately led to the destruction of the Catalano House, was the snow storm of February 2000. This storm brought about snow accumulation in excess of twenty inches. Although the storm caused further damage to the Catalano House, it was primarily aesthetic rather than structural. The weakened roof system and the "ripped" condition that occurred after the 1995 cable break disaster was simply not adequate to support the weight of the tremendous buildup of snow on the roof at that specific location. As a result, a substantial part of the roof overhang area was torn away, collapsed and fell to the ground. The collapse caused an "L" shaped hole or void in the roof surface of at least 400 sq. ft. This collapse effectively destroyed the overall structural integrity of the roof system itself. It also brought to an end the viability of the Catalano House as a habitable structure.

A few months later, the unsightly appearance of this gaping hole in the roof overhang area and of hanging pieces of shattered roof materials, prompted a parent in the neighborhood to express safety concerns about this condition to Raleigh's Inspections Department. The Inspections Department initiated action under the City's "fix or destroy" policy, as applied to structures deemed "unsafe" and a "public nuisance." On a later visit to the premises to

do yard work, I found a Notice attached to the support beam in the patio area and to the effect that the structure has been declared “an unsafe building” and that it is unlawful to remove the notice until the structure “is repaired, vacated or demolished in accordance with the notice which has been given the Owner, Occupant... and all other Persons having an interest in this Building.” I was fuming after reading this Notice, not so much at the “unsafe” finding, but because I had never received any such prior notice, and was not otherwise aware, that any such action had been initiated. Upon complaint to the inspection official about this inaccurate notice recital, I did receive such notice by certified mail some two weeks later.

As required by applicable State law and City ordinances, I then initiated action to have the matter reviewed on technical grounds, followed by an appeal of an adverse ruling to the Raleigh City Council. From a confirming ruling of the Hearing Officer, appeal of this ruling was set for hearing before the Raleigh City Council on June 20, 2000. The matter on appeal before the Council was not directed at the merits of the “unsafe” building finding. It was directed to the grant by the Council of additional time to comply with the “fix or destroy” directive by the cutoff date of August 2, 2000. The need for additional time would be shown as appropriate because the Catalano House was a historical and significant building worthy of preservation, and efforts were being actively pursued to accomplish that objective.

To aid in the appeal before the Raleigh City Council, discussions were renewed with officials of the N. C. Preservation Group in order to establish a basis for that position. Preservation Group was aware of special individuals and groups who had expressed interest in preserving the Catalano House, but additional time beyond August 2000 would be required to pursue these leads. We negotiated an effective way this objective might be achieved. I agreed to give Preservation Group an option to purchase the premises at fair value, less a discount of \$40,000. Exercise of the option was subject to the condition that Preservation Group find an investor/ purchaser ready, able and willing to undertake the restoration program at an estimated cost of \$500,000 to \$1,000,000, plus the option exercise price, and on a basis compatible with the unique structural format designed by Catalano. The option agreement was entered into on July 31, 2000 with provision for an exclusive right to purchase during the 90-day option period expiring October 31, 2000 with option to extend an additional 60-day period expiring December 31, 2000. Other provisions of the option agreement called for payment to Preservation Group of a finder’s fee of \$10,000, if this objective was successfully achieved. Any real estate agent exclusively representing the investor/purchaser would receive a 3% sales commission. The option agreement also provided that I would be willing to finance 2/3ds of the option exercise price on a short term basis.

In preparing for the Raleigh City Council hearing on June 20th, I began to assemble all of the materials I had collected over the years with respect to the recognized status of Eduardo Catalano as an architect held in high esteem, both nationally and internationally, and also of his creativity relating to his design of the Catalano House. Separate portfolio sets of those materials were prepared for use by each member of the Council. At the hearing, I approached the podium for my few remarks with an armload of portfolio sets. While being distributed to Council members, Mayor Charles Meeker opens the hearing with the remark, “I hope you don’t think we’re going to read all this material?” Caught by surprise, I attempt a response by saying, “No, Mayor, just look at the pictures.” After viewing the picture flashed on the Council screen that showed rather glaringly the

damaged roof condition of the Catalano House, I wonder what the Mayor's reaction would have been if I had expressed what I truly felt at that time. " Mayor, the purpose of this appeal is to gain additional time to find the means to heal the broken wing of a magnificent and majestic bird no longer able to fly."

After my brief remarks, Preservation Group presented its case for extending the cutoff date by stating there was a reasonable chance the Catalano House could be saved if sources were found to fund repair expenses estimated at within a range of \$500,000-\$1,000,000. It concluded that for historical reasons, the Catalano House was worthy of preservation. The Council honored our request and granted an indefinite period of time to accomplish this preservation objective, provided a security fence was placed around the premises and other protective safeguards approved by the Inspections Department were put in place. All of these security measures had to be completed and approved by the cutoff date of August 2, 2000.

There was one dissenting vote to the action taken by the Council. The minutes of the meeting shows Councilman Odom's negative vote is based on his concern about restoring the house "as he believes if it is restored it will be 99% new construction so it would no longer be a historic building it will be a new building." At the time he stated that concern at the meeting, I felt that it was understandably a plausible position to take.

A couple of days later, I went back to the Council's main office and asked the Secretary if it would be possible to get a return of the portfolio sets (eight) that had been provided for use at the hearing. She replies, "You certainly may, but only three were turned back in." I took the three sets and left.

The Preservation Group devoted a tremendous amount of time and energy in its resolve to find an interested individual or group qualified to undertake the preservation and restoration project. Leads were aggressively pursued. A wrath of promotional materials, brochures, pamphlets and advertisements were used in the effort. Regrettably, a qualified investor/purchaser was not found by the option termination dated of October 31, 2000 or (as limited by agreement to a reduced extended period) by the option extension date of November 30, 2000.

Responsive to actions directed by the Raleigh City Council, an individual contractor, who I had used before, his associate and I completed the installation of all security measures at the premises by the cutoff date of August 2, 2000. Before proceeding with certain security measures, application was made for a building permit, and after lengthy negotiations, one was finally issued by the Inspections Department. The security measures inspected and approved by the Inspections Department included installation of a steel link security fence, with access gate, pouring of concrete footings for placement of steel beams welded to the two high point corners of the roof structure, a complete "tearing down" and rebuilding of the utility/storage facility, and a "seal-off" of all open areas affording a means of access to the House itself. In the rebuilding of the storage facility, the fourteen exterior doors previously stored in the old Barn were used. During the week-end that followed, I returned and painted that new facility a glossy grey color. It did add a fresh look to the place.

Approximately \$12,000 was spent in the placement of the above security measures, and only to be lost some 6 months later. Even so, that was a small price to pay for a reasonable

chance at preservation, and the superb effort of so many was well worth it. As I look back, I would say over half of that expense was directed to completely rebuilding the utility/storage facility. Why not! The fourteen exterior doors were stored on the premises. Besides, it would serve as a neat storage area for tools and equipment when the restoration work began. Was I optimistic that would happen? Of course, we even provided the entry door to the facility with a lock and key for that reason. The key was never used.

THE AFTERMATH ALTERNATIVE CHOICES, DEMOLISHMENT

After expiration of the option agreement effective at the end of November 2000, the efforts directed at preservation had subsided but were ongoing. In late December 2000, two individuals developers had approached me about buying the Catalano property. One developer gave me a single page contract of purchase at a fixed price, but I rejected with the explanation that an effective purchase arrangement would involve a number of conditions relating to termination rights and removal of structural materials, if efforts to save the Catalano House should later materialize. The developer pulled his purchase offer. The other developer initially extended a letter of intent to purchase the property, but that was rejected also. However, he understood my protective concerns about the Catalano House and was fully cooperative in our negotiation of terms of purchase directed to those concerns. We entered into a rather detailed contract of purchase on January 12, 2001. It gave this developer the exclusive right to purchase the Catalano property on an "as is" basis at a negotiated price, upon terms and conditions stated in the contract, subject to the still pending actions of the Inspections Department that had declared the Catalano House "unsafe," as well as and any other directives or orders that may be issued in these proceedings.

The contract of purchase also provided that upon payment of a \$5,000 termination fee, I could cancel the contract if any interested party, inclusive of Catalano, found someone that had the interest and the financial means to preserve and restore the Catalano house. I also had the right to relocate certain removable items from premises, even structural parts of the Catalano House to another site, if feasible to do so at the instance of Catalano or other interested party. The termination rights had to be exercised before January 31, 2001. The removal rights had to be exercised at least 15 days before the closing. Neither of these reserved rights was exercised.

In the course of preparing for closing, environmental examinations conducted by the developer/purchaser disclosed and required that the old oil storage tank buried on premises, and its contents, had to be removed from premises. This inspection also found that demolition procedures would have to be followed in the removal and disposition of roof materials found to have traces of non-friable asbestos. The added expenses relating to these environmental issues were shared on a negotiated basis. Approximately \$4,000 in shared and other allocated expenses were paid by me at the closing.

The contract of purchase contemplated that after the closing, the Catalano House would be demolished, subject to the condition that the property will be used as a "site for construction by Buyer of one (1) single family dwelling."

The closing of the purchase took place on March 1, 2001. At that time, the purchaser indicated he would not object to a removal of any objects, even structural, pertaining to any of the improvements on premises, provided it was done before the start of demolition operations scheduled for March 7-12, 2001.

During Catalano's visit to the area back in September 1997, I met with him at premises to view the deteriorated condition of the Catalano House, and to discuss future prospects. During that meeting, he expressed disappointment at what he saw, but indicated the possibility that the roof system could be saved. He then poses the question to me, "If I replace the roof system would you come back here to live?" Reluctantly, I say, "No," and give him the following reasons. I had just purchased a new contemporary residence and that is the place I had decided to live. The beach condo that I own has been listed for sale. It would take more than just replacing the roof structure to get me to return. Other issues had to be addressed; such as city water and sewer connections, heating and cooling services, worn out pipes and drain lines, outdated electrical wiring and other internal factors. I then state that if these problems could be addressed, I would consider coming back.

Attention was then directed to other possibilities, if the roof structure could be saved; use of the premises as a guest house for visitors to NC State University, a museum or perhaps a pavilion. He left without expressing any view that the Catalano House could not be saved.

In March 1998, I received a letter from Catalano which expressed disappointment about the condition of the House. He further stated that it could not be saved and directed that the House be destroyed. By a subsequent phone call, he asked if I had received his letter and of any future prospects directed at saving the House. He closed the phone conversation by reiterating that the House could not be saved and any restoration would require that the present structure be torn down to the foundation and totally rebuilt.

Almost up to the very date of the closing of the purchase transaction on March 1, 2001, indications of interest still continued from an individual in California, who had inquired about the "existence" status of the Catalano House. On February 26th, I receive a phone call from this individual. During my follow-up call, we spent about an hour discussing its present status. When he asks if the Catalano house could be moved to a new location, I suggest that he immediately get in touch with architect Catalano for a response. The phone call ends around midnight.

On March 4, 2001, after the closing, I call Catalano to see if this individual had contacted him as suggested. He said he received a phone call from the gentleman, but told him that due to the damaged state of the supporting beams and other structural members, time would not permit any such relocation. At that moment, we both realized that the Catalano House had been lost. I told Catalano that the purchaser had indicated demolition would take place during March 7-12th, and that was a sad moment for us both. I then tell him when that happens, "I will have to leave Raleigh." He replies, "I will have to leave the planet." We conclude our conversation, but he did ask if I would do one thing for him. I answer, "of course." He then asks me to go back to the Catalano House and take out and place in storage all of the marble that was installed on the kitchen counter, including the marble over the connected 6 x 8 foot platform area. He states that he wants to imbed the marble as a "footprint" of the old kitchen area in the new floor of the pavilion he plans to

build. Assuring him that would be done, we end our last conversation with this request, and one I will never forget.

The next day, my contractor friend and I went back to the Catalano House. As best we could, but still without some breakage, we removed all of the marble, placed on his truck, and he left to store the marble in his warehouse.

Time passed, and nothing ever firmly developed about construction of the new pavilion, or even where the pavilion might be located. A couple of years ago, I ran into my contractor friend and asked about the marble he had placed in storage. His response at that time led me to believe the marble was no longer available.

I did make one final trip to premises. On the second day of the demolition period, I forced myself to go back, and it wasn't easy. The tear-down and crush work of the mighty bulldozer had reduced the House to a mass of debris. A single tear swells in flood-like proportions. A shaky knee marks the occasion. It is a stare in shock and disbelief moment. In a matter of minutes, I watch the old Barn reduced to the same state. Having been told the patio destruction would not take place until the following day, I hurriedly bring a landscaping crew to the scene. They remove the two hemlocks and the Bonsai cedar with an indication the cedar would not likely survive. The privacy fence is left behind. The other decorative objects had been removed earlier (except for the Buddha statute which had been previously captured and taken away by vandals). The hemlocks and cedar were replanted at my "other" home location. I did lose half of the cedar, but now it is bigger than ever and still in its Bonsai form. I did go back to the debris pile that evening and retrieve four pieces of the old tongue and groove boards that formed the ceiling. As a final remembrance, a picture of the Catalano House was placed on the mantel of my home, has been there ever since, and will continue to be there.

IN MEMORY OF ARCHITECT AND A MASTERPIECE

This may be a proper time to end this story, but I feel compelled to say more.

So many people have a deep and sincere feeling of respect and admiration for architect Eduardo Catalano, and his contribution to the architectural profession. Students, architects, engineers, designers and others share these sentiments. What I have attempted to describe in this story generally has taken place during the twenty-two years that I owned the Catalano House. There are a lot of hurts and disappointments that have followed in the wake of its loss. I can't think of anything eloquent to say now, but I am prompted to make the effort after listening to a song recorded on a blu-ray disc I recently purchased. The song is called "Defying Gravity," and is the lead song performed by Idina Menzel, a talented artist, as a member of the original cast of the Broadway musical hit *Wicked*. She received a 2004 Tony award as best actress performance from a musical. After listening to her rendition of this song, I went to the internet, copied a version of the lyrics, and even had them memorized by the end of the week.

There is a reason why these lyrics just seem appropriate for the occasion. In a publication by author Paul Heyer entitled *Architects on Architecture*, the included Article on Eduardo

Catalano (pages 235-241) was made a part of the portfolio materials made available to the Raleigh City Council at the hearing on June 20, 2000. This Article contains quoted passages taken from personal statements Catalano has made as an architect in materials he has published. One of these quoted passages reads,

“Structures of readable and clear geometry, springing from the ground as if freeing themselves from the forces of gravity, are ever present in the buildings I design. The Raleigh House is the best example of it: a shell spanning 87 feet, supported on two points.”

As a more recent example, the above Article refers to Catalano’s design of the Student Center at M. I. T. An additional quoted passage taken from this same source publication reads,

“The structure of the Student Center, with its large cantilevers - symbols of tension and defiance of gravity . . .”

The reference to these lyrics is now being made as a symbolic gesture to show appreciation to so many who share this loss and disappointment, inclusive of the N. C. Preservation Group, who worked tirelessly in the “operations” room to save a life, and its associates, Director J. Myrick Howard, Barbara V. Wishy and others; and to those students, architects, designers, engineers, and others who admire his work, notably but not limited to Frank Harmon, the late Robert Burns Jr., Dan Becker, and neighbor T. C. Howard. Acceptance of their accordant response is done in memory of the indomitable creative spirit of architect Eduardo F. Catalano; and this is accomplished by the lyrical expressions taken from “Defying Gravity,” and ceremoniously attributable to the Catalano House, as follows:

*My future is unlimited,
and I just had a vision,
almost like a prophecy.
I know this sounds truly crazy,
and true, the vision’s hazy.
But, I swear, some day
I’ll be flying so high (defying gravity).
Kiss me goodbye (defying gravity).*

*So if you care to find me,
{ look to the western sky.}
as someone told me lately,
everyone deserves the chance to fly.
I’m defying gravity,
and you want bring me down,
bring me down, bring me down.*

If I had the choice of an alternate for the line in brackets, I would substitute and add three additional lines so that quoted part would read:

*So if you care to find me,
to see if I’m alive,
then watch me fly, across the sky,
above Caminos Drive.*

A VISION

Several weeks ago, I happen to drop by a local newsstand. While glancing through a recent issue of "Metro Magazine" (Holiday, 2010), the following news article, prepared by writer J. Michael Welton, gets my attention (at page 26):

"Talks between the late Eduardo Catalano's family and N. C. State's College of Design about a memorial in the architect's name are ongoing, said Dean Marvin Malecha. Whether that means Catalano's iconic, parabolic-roofed residence will be rebuilt remained unknown at press time. 'The family wants to do something thoughtful in his name,' Malecha said. 'We've presented several options to them, and they're weighing them all, including what it means to rebuild without their father there to be part of it.' Catalano established a \$400,000 endowment in his name at the school before he died, and the family 'intends to be generous once again, one way or another,' Malecha said."

Maybe, the "vision" is clear and the "prophecy" becomes a reality. I truly hope so.

Let me say this in concluding this story. Yes, Councilman Odom, you may have been partly right. The Catalano House has been destroyed and will not be reconstructed. Yet, the vision emanating from the creative ideas and fine thoughts of Eduardo Catalano still lives. In reference to the quotation attributed to Plato at page 28, the near future may see a rebuilding or perpetuation of that vision in the real and visual form of a new pavilion "akin" in outward appearance to the beauty of the original creative form, The Catalano House. **

In an earlier part of this story, I made reference to the book Catalano gave me with his endorsed message and signature. Now, I believe I know what he meant. His message reads, "Thanks for understanding." My answer today, "You're welcome."

Thankfully,



Arch E. Lynch, Jr.

5/17/11

A PERSONAL MEMORIAM

The Catalano House is a symphonic expression, as classic in style as a rendering of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony under the baton of maestro conductor Arturo Toscanini; yet this is a composition of fine thoughts, and is a rendering of a vision in the beautiful form of a masterpiece under the auspices of maestro architect Eduardo F. Catalano.

aeljr

* Plato: Symposium (written 360 B.C.E.), translated by Benjamin Jowett in *The Portable Greek Reader*, ed. W. H. Auden (New York 1948), p. 496.

** Ibid. Quoted provision is consonant with the view of scholarly experts that Plato's theory on the universality of the search for truth and beauty emerges from his finding, in the words of writer Erik Anders Nelson, PE, SE, in his published article appearing on the internet entitled "Architects are from Plato,"(at page 2) , "that general forms in nature, what he called archetypes, are immutable and eternal ideas or patterns that reflect truth and have a divine significance."