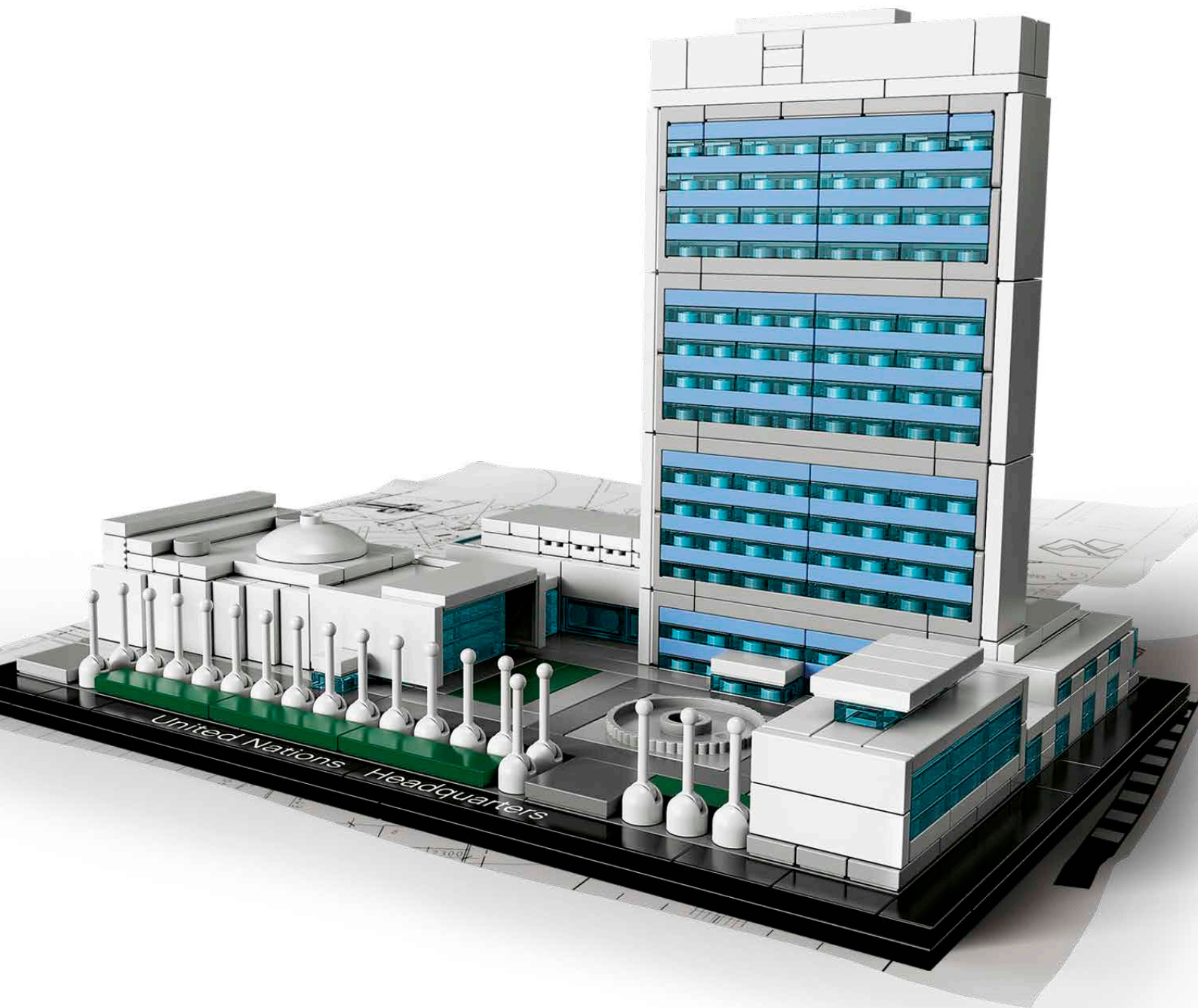




Architecture

United Nations Headquarters

New York City, NY, USA





United Nations Headquarters

Standing on the eastern shore of Manhattan, on the banks of New York City's East River, the United Nations Headquarters has become an acclaimed modernist architectural landmark. In an ambitious attempt to match the United Nations' own spirit of international cooperation, it was created through the collaborative effort of a multinational team of leading architects that included, amongst others, Oscar Niemeyer and Le Corbusier.

History

The United Nations organization was officially formed in October 1945 as the Second World War came to an end.

In December of that year, the Congress of the United States unanimously resolved to invite the United Nations to establish its permanent home in the USA. Thereafter, a special United Nations site committee studied possible locations in such places as Philadelphia, Boston and San Francisco.

While consideration was given to areas north of New York City, crowded Manhattan had not been seriously investigated. A last-minute offer of \$8.5 million by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., for the purchase of the present site was accepted by a majority of the General Assembly in December 1946.

The site chosen by the United Nations was a 17 acre (69,000 m²)



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run-down area of slaughterhouses, light industry and a railroad barge landing. Once the site was agreed upon, the next task was to design the Headquarters itself. Delegates decided that the United Nations home should be the joint project of leading architects from many countries. Wallace K. Harrison of the United States was appointed chief architect and given the title of Director of Planning. A ten-member Board of Design Consultants was selected to assist him, composed of architects nominated by member States.

The members of the Board were Nikolai G. Bassov (Commonwealth of Independent States-former Soviet Union); Gaston Brunfaut (Belgium); Ernest Cormier (Canada); Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, better known as Le Corbusier (France); Liang Seu-Cheng (China); Sven Markelius (Sweden); Oscar Niemeyer (Brazil); Sir Howard Robertson (United Kingdom); G. A. Soilleux (Australia); and Julio Vilamajo (Uruguay). The Director and the Board began their work early in 1947 from an office in the Rockefeller Center. Some 50 basic designs were created, criticized, analyzed and reworked. The planners had to take into account the structure of the United Nations with its General Assembly, three main Councils and permanent Secretariat.

Design & Construction

From the 50 designs evaluated by the Board, scheme 32, submitted by the Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer, was initially selected as the most interesting plan.

Niemeyer's original idea for the site included three structures standing free, with a fourth lying low behind them along the river's edge. He chose to split the councils from the Assembly Hall, creating a grand public plaza in between the two areas.

The only board member who wasn't completely won over by Niemeyer's elegantly articulated composition was Swiss-born Le Corbusier. His design, scheme nr 23, had proposed a single block in the center of the site containing both the Assembly Hall and the different councils.

Le Corbusier approached Niemeyer and suggested repositioning the Assembly Hall to the center of the site. Although this would radically change his idea of a large, open civic square, Niemeyer accepted the modification and both

architects re-submitted a joint plan, which is the building complex that can be seen today.

The original budget for the project was first estimated at \$85 million, but savings and re-workings of the plan reduced this to \$65 million. The United States Government provided an interest-free loan for the whole amount to cover the entire construction costs.

With the plans approved and the finances in place, the action to carry them out moved ahead quickly. Nineteen months later, on 21 August 1950, the first Secretariat workers moved into their new offices.

As the chosen site was relatively small, bounded on one side by the East River Drive (later the Franklin D. Roosevelt East River Drive) and on the other by the East River itself, it was obvious that a tall building would be required to house offices. Niemeyer's 39-story Secretariat Building was controversial in





its time, but has since become an icon for the modernist style of the complex.

The exterior facings of the 550-foot tall (167.6 m) Secretariat Building were made exclusively of aluminum, glass and marble. Wide areas of green-tinted glass were unbroken by conventional setbacks. In contrast, the windowless north and south facades of the building were faced with 2,000 tons (1814 metric tons) of Vermont marble.

In keeping with the international character of the Organization, materials for the Headquarters were selected from many lands. Limestone for the facings of the Assembly and Conference Buildings came from the United Kingdom; marble from Italy;

office furniture and shelving from France; chairs and fabrics from Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic) and Greece; carpets from England, France and Scotland. In addition, tables were purchased from Switzerland; and various woods for interior finishing came from Belgium, Canada, Cuba, Guatemala, the Philippines, Norway and Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo).

From 1951 to Today

Over the years, the interiors of the buildings have been altered to accommodate the many States that have joined the United Nations since its inception. In 1947, when construction plans were drawn up, there were 57 Member States, and provisions were made for an increase in membership to 70.

This anticipated increase was already exceeded by 1955, and an expansion program was completed in 1964 providing space for a membership of 126.

The most ambitious renovation to date was launched with a groundbreaking ceremony in May 2008, marking the beginning of a five-year, \$1.9 billion complete overhaul of the UN landmark complex. When completed, the complex is expected to be more energy efficient and have greatly improved security. The installation of a new glass facade of the Secretariat Building was completed in 2012. It retains the look of the original facade but is more energy efficient. The first UN staff returned to the newly renovated building in July 2012.



The Architect

(1907 - 2012)

Though the design of the United Nations complex was officially a collaborative effort by a multinational team of architects led by Wallace K. Harrison, it is generally accepted that the elegant architecture was the result of the vision of one man, Oscar Niemeyer.

Oscar Ribeiro de Almeida Niemeyer Soares Filho was born in the city of Rio de Janeiro on December 15, 1907. He graduated with a BA in architecture from the city's National School of Fine Arts in 1934 and began working without payment in a local architecture studio. In 1936, Niemeyer met Le Corbusier, who became a strong influence and teacher. By 1939, Niemeyer was leading a team that had been given the task of creating the first state-sponsored modernist skyscraper.

Niemeyer's worldwide recognition was further confirmed in 1947 when the then 40 year-old architect was invited to be a part of the team working on the design of the United Nations Headquarters. By the middle of the 1950s, Niemeyer was involved in one of his largest and most complicated assignments:



the design of the new Brazilian capital city, Brasilia. Niemeyer would use this project to test new concepts of city planning.

Regarded as one of Modernism's greatest luminaries, Niemeyer was famous for his use of abstract forms and curves. His buildings are characterized by an elegance and harmony, often made possible by his pioneering work with reinforced concrete.

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[I am not attracted to straight angles or to the straight line, hard and inflexible, created by man. I am attracted to free-flowing, sensual curves.]

Oscar Niemeyer

Facts about UN Headquarters

Location: Manhattan, New York City, NY
 Architects: International team, led by Wallace K. Harrison, and including i.a. Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer
 Style: Modernist, International Style
 Materials: Aluminum, glass & Vermont marble
 Construction date: Started 24/10/1947 (Cornerstone laid 24/10/1949)
 Footprint: 17 acres (69,000 m²)
 Height: 550 ft. (167.6 m), Secretariat Building
 Stories: 39 above ground, Secretariat Building



Facts and Statements



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The flags of the 193 United Nations Member States provide a colorful, 500 foot wide curved approach to the Headquarters.



© wikipedia

The General Assembly Hall accommodates 193 delegations. Each delegation has six seats.



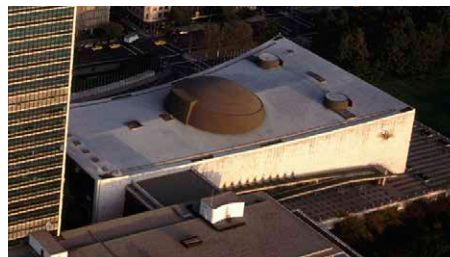
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To reduce costs the original height of the Secretariat Building was reduced from 45 to 39 stories.



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The Dag Hammarskjöld Library houses approximately 400,000 volumes in its general collection and, in addition, has several million United Nations documents.



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The General Assembly Building is a sloping structure with concave sides, 380 feet long and 160 feet wide, topped with a shallow dome.



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The glass in the aluminum framed windows in the Secretariat Building is specially designed to help retain solar heat.

A Word from the Artist

The United Nations' iconic Headquarters in New York is a famous example of the International Style and the first monument of postwar Modernism. The complex is dominated by a remarkably thin Secretariat building, whose proportions also served as a starting-point for the design of the LEGO® model.

The Tower's deceptively simple form is achieved in LEGO bricks using fairly complex building techniques, such as an almost seamless transition from an eight LEGO stud wide shaft to a nine-stud wide top of the building, which even includes some of the pieces turned upside down.

In contrast to the rational rectangular, austere tower is the more sculptural, sloping General Assembly Building. The delicate curves of its west and east long, concave facades are indicated with offsetting, which allows for small increments only half of a LEGO plate deep. The architects' original design is concluded by the low Conference Building, which connects the General Assembly and Secretariat Buildings and is cantilevered

Rok Žgalin Kobe



over the freeway along the river edge. The building's slightly trapezoid ground plan required a sophisticated LEGO design, which will hopefully translate into a fun build.

The United Nations Headquarters model was created in close collaboration with the LEGO design team. They look at the model from a LEGO building point of view and ensure the construction process is simple and logical, and a positive experience for the user.

The 'Scale Model' Line – LEGO® Architecture in the 1960s

The history of the current LEGO Architecture series can be traced back to the beginning of the 1960s, when the popularity of the LEGO brick was steadily increasing. Godtfred Kirk Christiansen, the then owner of the company, began looking for ways to further expand the LEGO system and asked his designers to come up with a set of components that would add a new dimension to LEGO building.

Their answer was as simple as it was revolutionary: five elements that matched the existing bricks, but were only one third the height. These new building "plates" made it possible to construct more detailed models than before.

This greater LEGO flexibility seemed to match the spirit of the age; modernist architects were redefining how houses

looked and people were taking an active interest in the design of their new homes. It was these trends that led to the introduction of the LEGO 'Scale Model' line in early 1962.

The name itself was a direct link to the way architects and engineers worked, and it was hoped that they and others would build their projects 'to scale' in LEGO elements. As with LEGO Architecture today, the original sets were designed to be different from the normal, brightly colored LEGO boxes, and also included 'An Architectural Book' for inspiration.

Though the five elements remain an integral part of the LEGO building system today, the 'Scale Model' line was phased out in 1965. Many of the principles from the series would re-emerge over 40 years later in the LEGO Architecture series.

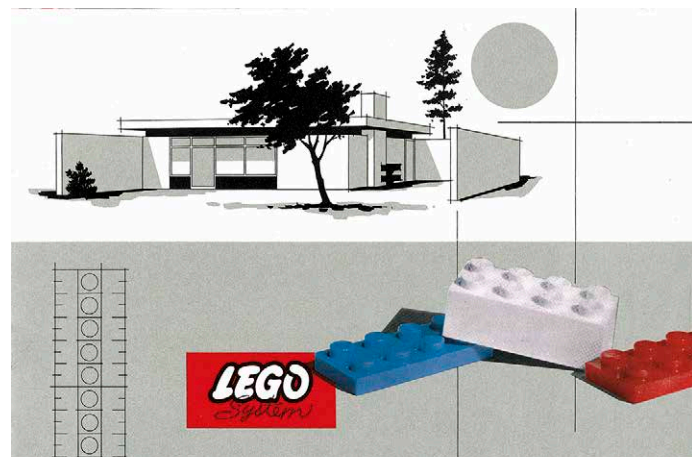
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